SURVEILLANCE OF GLOBAL CORRUPTION BY TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL: CONSTRUCTION OF A 'CORRUPT' SOUTH AND 'CLEAN' NORTH DISCOURSE

Khorshed Alam[*]

Abstract

This study looks at how discourses of corruption in Bangladesh are discursively constructed within the official documents of Transparency International (TI), a non-profit organization that monitors corruption worldwide. It explores how an orientalist notion regarding Bangladesh is appropriated in neoliberal global discourse through TI's corruption surveillance process. A postcolonial analysis of TI's publications demonstrates a symbiotic relation between orientalism and neoliberalism. TI sets up a binary of 'corrupt' global South vs. 'clean' global North, reinforcing the uneven power relations between nation-states that can be seen as a neocolonial move for maintaining Western hegemony and enabling neoliberal ideology over non-Western territories.

[*] Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka
Email: alam_du07@yahoo.co.in

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Introduction

Transparency International (TI) is a German-based non-profit organization that monitors and publicizes corruption from an international perspective. The *2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report* indicates that TI is one of the top think tanks in the world, ranking 27 globally in 2016 (McGann, 2016). From 2001-5, five consecutive years, TI ranked Bangladesh as the most corrupt country. On the most recent lists, Bangladesh is ranked 149th for 2018 out of 180 countries. TI indicates on its website, 97% of the Parliament Members in Bangladesh are involved in illicit activities, and 70% in 'criminal activities (McDevitt, 2015; Mehta, 2012; Wickberg, 2012). Thus, Bangladesh can be an ideal example for studying the construction of TI's corruption discourse. By questioning the construction of TI's anti-corruption global narratives, this study places the perspective of TI on corruption from its institutional context and thereby reveals the inherent assumptions of its conception. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is considered the most familiar yardstick for measuring corruption in contemporary time and is popular for reporting on 'corruption' that often becomes the lead story on national media in developing countries. For instance, after the annual CPI of TI was published in 2005, *Infochange India* published a report on it with a headline of 'Bangladesh most corrupt, Africa most dishonest continent: TI survey (Infochange India) on 18 October 2005. For TI, 'corruption' is 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain' (Transparency International, 2020). TI operates its global corruption surveillance through its annual CPI that aims to rank nations according to the perception of corruption regarding the public sector of a country, and ranks around 180 countries each year on a scale of 0 to 100. Since 1993, the year of establishment of TI, it displays a binary by stating that 'very clean' countries of

the world are geographically located mostly in the global North and 'highly corrupt' countries are in the global South[1], particularly in Africa and Asia. According to the latest (2020) ranking of TI, the top 10 ranked 'clean countries' are: New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Singapore, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany; and the top 10 ranked 'corrupt countries' are: Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Venezuela, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, North Korea, and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

While scholarly literature has extensively looked at corruption as a socio-political and economic phenomenon, and few studies have been done from African perspective (for e.g., Brown and Cloke, 2011; Maria, 2008), work on discursive analysis of corruption from an Asian (particularly Bangladeshi) perspective, has been negligible. Analysis of institutional discourses has the potential to reveal the processes by which cultural meanings are produced and understood. Against this backdrop, this project argues that the construction of TI's corruption discourses about the global South, particularly Bangladesh, represents the current face of 'Orientalism', a Western assumption that believes East is not as 'transparent' as West. Through a postcolonial analysis of TI's official publications on Bangladesh's corruption as displayed on its website, this paper explores how Orientalist construction of knowledge about Bangladesh gets produced within TI's anti-corruption global discourse. The postcolonial investigation questions the representation of former colonies (global South) and colonisers (global North) in the anti-corruption discourse on its

[1] ForImas and Weston (2012), 'global South' is not a geographical division between the developed west (Europe and North America) and the underdeveloped south (Asia, Latin America, and Africa) rather it indicates the socio-economic and politico-cultural inequalities of the current world created largely through colonial and neo-colonial practices.

website, explores the rhetoric of TI's publications, the underlying meanings of texts, and concludes how Bangladesh gets portrayed in the contemporary neoliberal global sphere. Critiquing the anti-corruption discourse of TI, this essay uncovers the ways in which TI's publications are implicated in an 'Orientalist' binary construction of a 'clean' West vs. 'corrupt' East. It investigates how Bangladesh is produced by TI when it comes to discourses of corruption that covertly echo with the 'Othering modalities of Euroamerican colonial discourses' (Parameswaran, 2002). This study aligns with the argument that a postcolonial critique challenges contemporary hegemonic neocolonial and neoliberal global discourses where Orientalism 'has been reinvigorated, resurrected in the backdrop of neoliberalism – the zeitgeist of global capitalism today (Ban et al., 2013). The literature review in the following section provides a description of TI's activities and a postcolonial understanding of corruption in a neoliberal economy before moving on to analysis of TI's documents through a postcolonial lens, concluding with theoretical implications.

Anti-Corruption Discourse of Transparency International

The non-profit purpose of TI is to fight against corruption in more than 120 countries in the world and to monitor criminal activities occurring from corruption. TI develops different tools and strategies to stop corruption and has collaboration with different non-profit organisations, business institutions and local administrations to execute those tools and strategies. TI includes eight kinds of corruption in its definition such as bribery, asset stripping, extortion, fraud, favouritism, influence peddling and negligence in services (Rahman, 2018). It classifies corruption as petty, grand and political, 'depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs'(Transparency International website, 2020). The CPI of TI measures perception of corruption of a country, not the real corruption and it is a combination of polls that draws corruption-related data from third-party organisations such as African Development Bank (ADB), World Bank (WB)

and the World Economic Forum (WEF), Freedom House (FH) among others.

Critiques of TI's methodologies point to the close association between third party organisations (e.g., US-based Freedom House) from where TI collects corruption-related data and the community of American intelligence, making neutrality of information doubtful (Murphy, 2011). TI also uses surveys and opinions of different global business individuals and institutions for preparing its CPI index, which is also questionable to researchers. Maria points out that corruption perception by businesspeople respondents is not trustworthy. TI believes in the Western definition of 'corruption', and focuses on bribe-takers over bribe-payers, and on government officials keeping private sector corruption outside its purview (Maria, 2008; Murphy, 2011). Corruption is largely considered as a problem of developing countries (Andersson and Heywood, 2009;Brown and Cloke, 2011) and TI plays a role on pressuring developing countries to adopt policies in favour of Western business firms for doing business in the developing countries (Murphy, 2011). TI has a special focus on developing countries. TI acknowledges that it was born in the early 1990s from a realisation 'that corruption was directly undermining efforts to fight poverty and further development in the world's poorest countries'(Transparency International, 2020) Therefore, Murphy argues that the global corruption discourse of TI ultimately advances contemporary neoliberal globalised capitalism which, on the one hand, brings benefit for Western business organizations, and on the other hand, increases inequality in developing countries. Consequently, scholars (Hannan and Freeman, 1989; Murphy, 2011) state the need to investigate TI's historical and ideological backgrounds to explain the orientation that directed it to follow a certain way of fighting against global corruption. The demise of the cold war in the early 1990s is one of the reasons, as Murphy explains, that eliminated the 'strategic justification for Western tolerance of corruption' (Murphy,2011, p. 128). The second reason is the initiative of 'policy loan' by

WB in developing countries, which later came to be known as 'Washington Consensus'. TI flourished with an association of the WB which has a strong neoliberal agenda and became a vehicle to battle against corruption which gave it an entry point to make recommendations for 'a clean public image', facilitating multinational corporations to work in global rising markets (Brown and Cloke, 2011; Murphy 2011).

TI is more concerned about the negative effects on the business of Western companies due to corruption while governments of developing countries are in a weak position to control the exploitive nature of these large corporations. Corruption is therefore depicted as a crisis predominantly for the developing world. For Escobar (1995), the description of 'blame the victim' has been seen as a very dominant discourse in the development narrative. Hence, orientalism becomes applicable to understand how TI constructs corruption in the global South in relation to the economy of the global North. This project aims to explore how the cultural logic of neoliberalism is reinforced by the production of orientalist discourses about Bangladesh in global anti-corruption discourse as illustrated in TI's documents. The following section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of postcolonial studies used to investigate TI's corruption surveillance process.

Surveillance of Global Corruption: A Postcolonial Investigation

Postcolonial scholarship offers a significant theoretical resource to understand TI's anti-corruption discourse. TI's definition of corruption is mostly business-oriented, West-centric, a worldview based on Western civilisation, and culturally blind (Maria, 2008; Murphy, 2011). A Eurocentric idea of 'corruption' that is biased towards Western civilisation has been in practicse since the colonial period. This Euro-centric and business-oriented approach of 'corruption' becomes "a world applicable definition, and seeks to force into oblivion other less powerful constructions of 'corruption'" (Maria, 2008, p. 147). This Western production of knowledge has gained superiority since the colonial period by constructing the non-Western as mysterious,

traditional, reactionary, irrational and subjective and the West as progressive, objective and rational. Salbu (1999) talks about Western imposition into the affairs of African 'corruption' that creates a 'moral panic' causing the 'dangers of intrusiveness, paternalism, imperialism, and disrespect that comes about when a powerful state imposes its will on another state' (Maria, 2008). This Western historiography of East functions to validate the essentially Hegelian trajectory of Oriental knowledge: 'the Western assimilation of the exotic, primitive, mystic other on to the path of civilisation, modernity, and capitalism' (Ban et al. 2013, p. 281). The politics of stereotyping in order to construct the non-West and the West in binary opposition to each other, where the former is the inferior other to the superior West has been the central argument in Said's (1978) Orientalism. Binary opposition is a system by where two opposites are set off against one another (Smith 1996). For Said, "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and most of the time 'the Occident'" where 'the 'Occident' is placed in opposition to and as superior to the Orient' (Said, 1978, p. 2). Therefore, he interprets, 'Orientalism can be viewed as a Western-style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (Said, 1978, p. 3). In consequence, postcolonial scholarship takes the responsibility to challenge the universalisation process, questions the politics of dominant knowledge production as an outcome of unjust power relations between former coloniser and colonised countries (Young, 2003).

The neoliberal economy deploys a mode of surveillance on Third World countries to sustain the binaries. Lyon (2003) defines 'surveillance' 'as the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction' (p. 14). Surveillance is an 'ideal type of a social order' (Rule, 1973), which involves 'a process of data collecting for ensuring a civic life' (Allmer, 2011). However, the history of 'colonialist surveillance' is much longer and the settler state is foundationally built on surveillance. Smith (2015) suggests, 'The colonial gaze surveils native communities to monitor, measure, and account for

their 'dysfunctional behaviours''(p. 25), and the 'goal of colonialism is not just to kill colonised peoples, but to destroy their sense of being' (p. 25). Smith interprets, by identifying the native people as problematic being and insufficiently civilised, settlers demonise their societies. For instance, in the USA, the government is funding healing programmes among Native Americans, writes Smith. Drawing from Smith, it can be argued that a 'neocolonialist surveillance' mechanism is functioned in TI's monitoring process. TI displays Bangladesh as 'dysfunctional' where a system does not function appropriately due to massive 'corruption'. TI 'demonizes' the people of Bangladesh by describing them as the people of a highly corrupt country. While Bangladesh, a former colony, is rendered inferior for its corrupt identity depicted by the TI, conversely, the Western world, former coloniser, enjoys superiority with its 'very clean' image. Smith emphasises that the colonialist surveillance 'hides an analysis of the settler colonialist and white supremacist logics of surveillance' (p. 23). Such a corruption surveillance discourse of TI also conceals the root cause of corruption, which is associated with colonial past and neo-colonial present.

Method

A thematic analysis is used for studying the official publications of TI regarding Bangladesh corruption, which is displayed on TI's official website. The thematic analysis emphasises sorting and examining patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006) where themes are outlines for describing a phenomenon (Daly et al., 1997). According to Pal and Dutta (2012), 'thematic analysis starts with open coding to identify discrete concepts that could be easily labelled and sorted; subsequently, the discrete concepts that were related to the same phenomenon can be grouped under conceptual categories' (p. 238). This project examines Orientalist tropes within TI's official publications on Bangladesh corruption. The research question that guides this analysis is: **How are orientalist notions of the 'corrupt' country constructed for Bangladesh through the surveillance process of *Transparency International*?** A number of related questions

inform my research such as the following: How might a postcolonial perspective, with a critique of neoliberal global discourse, make sense of the corruption in Bangladesh as portrayed by TI? How does TI make an argument regarding corruption in Bangladesh and function as neocolonialist surveillance mechanism? Based on these enquiries, the content of the TI documents is categorised according to emerging themes. Through the coding process, three broad themes emerged and are elaborated in the next section:(a) opacity, (b) dysfunctionality, and (c) lack of governance. These represent how the analyses evolved from an identification of orientalist metaphors and tropes to an engagement with the broader neoliberal context within which these textual representations were made.

This research project purposively selects six TI publications (see Marin, 2015; Martini, 2016;McDevitt, 2015; Nawa, 2012;Wickberg, 2012) and looks at the whole documents as those provide a comprehensive overview regarding Bangladesh corruption. They are easily accessible via https://www.transparency.org/country/ BGD. The selected TI documents articulate the status of sector-based (e. g., politics, health, education, judiciary, law enforcing agencies, land) corruption in Bangladesh that can be used as the 'background documentation to inform anti-corruption strategy for Bangladesh' as claimed by TI. The author discusses the three persistent themes of the study in the following section.

Recurring Themes

Opacity

The word 'opaque' appears frequently as a metaphor in selected TI's publications to describe the characteristic of Bangladeshi culture, more of its political system. A TI publication writes, 'opaqueness and secrecy have been for many years the norm in the public sector' of Bangladesh, which has a poor history of 'promoting transparency and accountability' (Martini, 2016). TI's publications give special attention to the existing political system in Bangladesh and draw a direct connection among politicisation, patronisation, and

nepotism. TI suggests, this nexus enhances a 'culture of secrecy' in Bangladesh, particularly in the political sphere. For TI, the political system of Bangladesh becomes a process of 'criminalisation and commercialisation' and political parties are considered to 'harbour criminals and terrorists' (McDevitt, 2015). As mentioned earlier, TI claims 97 and 70 percent of Parliament Members in Bangladesh are involved respectively in 'illicit' and 'criminal' activities. According to the perception of Bangladeshi people, as TI suggests, the two most corrupt institutions are the parliament (40%) and political parties (62%) (McDevitt, 2015; Wickberg, 2012). The integrity of financing of existing parties is 'not sufficient', and 'patronage networks' have notably undermined the political institutions and public life in Bangladesh. Publications of TI cite 'Gresham's Law in politics' to describe politics in Bangladesh by stating that 'bad politics drive out good politics from the scene'. Ruling parties are described as abusers of state resources that 'buy' the support of members and supporters through jobs, licences and/or contracts, and illegitimately make money for themselves or their parties. TI states, 'political parties and parliament are increasingly being taken over by powerful business interests'(McDevitt, 2015, p. 1). Businessmen and industrialists now account for 56% of parliamentary members, compared to around 30% in 1970. TI claims that the candidate selection system of major political parties in Bangladesh 'tends to favour wealthy individuals who can buy their nomination through covert financial contributions to the party (Wickberg, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, for Iftekharuzzaman (2011), the Director of TI of Bangladesh (TIB), an election in Bangladesh is just a 'winner takes all game' that fails to ensure a democratic and participatory political practise. TI's report on Parliament watch explains it as 'paralysed' and 'monopolised territory' of the ruling party. TI further reports that nepotism prevails severely in every possible sector in Bangladesh such as politics, health, education, business, tax, land, judiciary, law, etc.

Islam is the most popular religion in Bangladesh, which makes up 86.6% of the country's population. This positions Bangladesh as the third most populous Muslim country in the world (Alam, 2021).

The country's dominant Muslim identity, by some means, associates with 'terrorist financing' in TI's publications. For TI, Bangladesh is plagued by illicit financial transfers while militants often take the advantages of this illegal finance to organise their operations. It suggests, the geographical location of Bangladesh makes it vulnerable to terrorism financing (Wickberg, 2012). Echoing with an assessment of a 2012's report of US State Department (Wickberg, 2012, p. 13), TI proposes, 'Bangladesh still needs to adequately criminalise terrorist financing; establish adequate procedures to identify and freeze terrorist assets; ensuring an operational and effective Financial Intelligence Unit, among others'(Wickberg, 2012, p. 7). The Muslim identity of Bangladesh makes it a critical geographical space as Jasbir Puar talks on the production of the 'terrorists assemblages' in post-9/11 world where the Muslim 'emerges as a potential suspect, a moving bomb and a relic of antiquated fanatical beliefs'(Ragab, 2019) for the Western governments and organizations that needs to be identified, recognized and monitored.

Under the backdrop of corruption, financing terrorism, and being blacklisted[2], Bangladesh becomes an important country, which requires being surveilled by TI. TI's corruption surveillance

[2]   When TI accused Bangladesh of financing terrorism in 2012, coincidentally, in the same year, Bangladesh was blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) alleging that it is not cooperative enough in fighting against global terrorist financing and money laundering. FATF is an inter-governmental organization established by some wealthy European and North American (G7 & EU) countries except Japan. The objectives of the FATF, as mentioned on their website, 'are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing'. In 2012, Bangladesh was blacklisted by FATF along with some other 22 countries, mostly Muslim, from the global South countries. See: http://www.fatf-gafi.org/about/.

in Bangladesh is thus eventually linked with 'terrorist surveillance' because of its Muslim identity. Jiwani (2015) writes, 'In the post-9/11 context, the Muslim body became signified as the bearer of risk, carrying within the threat of destruction' (p. 84). Similar to a Muslim body, a Muslim majority country like Bangladesh also became signified as a risk bearer country by the TI, and risk increases more while the top-ranked 'corrupt' countries are identified as some Muslim majority countries. If we see the latest (2018) ranking of TI, eight out of 15 most corrupt countries are Muslim majority, and located in the global South, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Bangladeshi political parties are identified as 'opaque' by TI. 'Opaque' body poses a threat to Western security, writes Hall (2015). She uses two terms—opaque and transparent—to explain a particular type of body in a surveillance society that creates an 'aesthetics of transparency'. In Hall's analysis, a 'transparent' body is a white body and 'opaque' body is non-white and in particular, Muslim. TI uses the metaphors 'opaque' and 'transparent' to describe the Bangladeshi 'corrupt' politics, a country of Muslim people and people with brown skin. By expanding on those concepts, it can be analysed that TI makes a binary of opaque/transparent countries and promotes an 'aesthetics of geographical transparency' which allows the citizens of 'transparent' countries to recognise themselves as fundamentally different from 'opaque' (or 'corrupt') countries.

Dysfunctionality

The 'traditional' 'archaic' and 'pre-modern' condition of Bangladesh makes it 'dysfunctional', suggests TI. Bangladesh, a former colony, lacks 'modernity', and thus still remains 'irrational and uncontrolled'[3] in the eyes of TI. Therefore, a 'third world difference' becomes prominent in TI's anti-corruption discourse. Mohanty (1984) shows how the 'third world difference' is constructed through the Western feminist scholarship where third world women are categorically

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[3] In orientalist discourse, East is depicted as dangerous, irrational, and uncontrolled, suggests Spivak (2010).

identified as not progressive, unconscious about their rights, ignorant, domestic, traditional and backward. Likewise, the publications of TI essentialise the presence of corruption in third world countries as an inherent characteristic of a 'pre-modern' society. One of the selected TI publications (Martini, 2015) provides an overview of governance and corruption-related indicators of few Central and South Asian countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. The culture of Bangladesh is articulated in that publication as a 'deep-rooted culture of secrecy' (Wickberg, 2012) and 'culture of confrontational politics' (McDevitt, 2015) where corruption control remains far from reaped because of its 'archaic system' which 'leads to unnecessary opacity' (Marin, 2015). Bangladesh becomes analogous with negative attributes like 'abuse of power', 'malpractices', 'inappropriate targeting', 'inefficiencies', 'corruption', 'fund mismanagement', 'leakages of resources', 'bureaucracy', 'bribery', 'traditional', archaic' etc. The political system of Bangladesh is 'violent' where corruption becomes an 'endemic problem' in all walks of life (McDevitt, 2015). Bureaucratic, prolonged, and complex administrative systems are identified as some major obstacles for doing business in Bangladesh, "which can encourage the use of bribery to speed up or 'grease' administrative processes" (Wickberg, 2012, p. 3). Such traditional, backward, archaic and bureaucratic societies like Bangladesh, as TI portrayed in its publications, representation a pre-modern third world culture where reforms become inevitable (Sastry and Dutta, 2012) to make it functional, progressive and smart.

A 'methodological universalism', analysing the world using a single Western method, is evident in TI's approach where 'corruption' is frequently employed without considering its specific socio-cultural and historical backgrounds. Corruption comes as a universalistic category in TI's descriptive generalisation, which is ahistorical and apolitical and requires context-specific differentiated analysis. Corruption has its historical and socio-cultural origin, and thus interpreting it from out of its own context must be an incomplete and simplified analysis demonstrated an Eurocentric notion as

critiqued by Shome and Hegde (2002, p. 260): "Eurocentrism that it either ignores completely or oversimplifies the complexity of the "rest" of the world". In the context of Africa, Gardner (2009) explores the colonial tax policy as one of the prime reasons for current corruption in some African countries such as Kenya and Zambia. Hence, socio-cultural and historical perspectives need to be taken into account to make a clear sense of corruption in a particular society like Bangladesh. TI's anti-corruption project, therefore, must be considered in the context of the contemporary global hegemonic discourse of knowledge where TI's literature reinforce Eurocentric modernity 'which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding and maintaining existing first/third world connections' (Mohanty, 1984, p. 353) with West as corruption-free and East as a corruption-prone territory.

Lack of governance

The biggest corruption allegation against Bangladesh government officials that took place in almost all selected TI's publications involves the construction of the six-kilometre-long World Bank-funded Padma Bridge (World Bank, June 29, 2012). After that corruption allegation in 2012, the WB and the ADB had withdrawn the $1.2 billion loans from Bangladesh. Corruption allegation associated with Padma Bridge is categorised as 'grand corruption' and articulated as 'one of the most widely publicised corruption examples' in Bangladesh history by TI. Though WB claims that they had credible evidence against Bangladesh government officials with an allegation of 'high-level corruption conspiracy' but ultimately fails to prove its allegation (The Daily Star, February 15, 2017). The author has no intention to claim that corruption is not associated with Padma Bridge, rather intends to draw attention to one of TI's grand corruption allegations that appeared frequently on selected publications without having any authentic basis, and that played a significant role in determining the annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of TI regarding Bangladesh in 2013-17. This case also urges to pay attention on the sources of information of TI, more particularly TI's reliance on

global donor organisations like WB and ADB.

In January 2007, a technocratic Caretaker Government (CTG) came in power in Bangladesh under the backing of the country's military which is known as 1/11 government. TI appreciates highly the 'anti-corruption' move of the 1/11 government by saying that 'the [1/11] government also engaged in the fight against corruption with a host of measures including the ratification the UNCAC [United Nation's Convention against Corruption], undertook a series of institutional reforms including the reconstitution of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)'(Wickberg, 2012, p. 2). TI publication reports that the ACC was independent and active under the CTG and raised corruption cases against some high-profile politicians but later under political government ACC's scope becomes a 'toothless tiger' and 'too vague' and is systematically subjected to political influence (McDevitt, 2015). For TI, under the two 'dynastically-ruled parties' in Bangladesh that fight against each other, the anti-corruption mission of CTG has been seriously disrupted.

TI justifies the 1/11 apolitical government by saying that CTG 'was established after months of violence and instability due to the deterioration of the rapport between the leading parties and their incapacity to reach an agreement on the formation of the government' (McDevitt, 2015, p. 2). The chief of CTG was appointed by Fakhruddin Ahmed, who was a former official of WB. The CTG, an unelected government, suppressed political activity by filing cases against 160 top political leaders in Bangladesh. The CTG also brought charges against two former Prime Ministers— Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia—who were/are the chiefs of two major political parties in the country. This led to an impression to some Bangladeshi intellectuals as that "the anti-corruption drive was a tool for what came to be known as 'de-politicisation' and, more specifically, the so-called 'minus-two formula" (Ahmed, 2014). 'Minus-two formula' is known to remove two top leaders (Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia) from Bangladesh politics during

the 1/11 regime who were the chief of major two parties (Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Awami League). The ADB provided \$150 million loans to the CTG in 2007 for fighting against corruption and establishing a structure of 'good governance', which is one of the key agenda of international donor organisations.

The CTG is accused of suppressing regular political activity and forcing into exile the top leaders of major parties, but TI gives all credits to 1/11 government and was optimistic about the activities of that non-party, unelected and apolitical CTG government backed by the Bangladesh army. The chief of 1/11 government was former WB official, as mentioned earlier, who got a loan under corruption mitigation project of ADB to promote 'good governance', which is defined by WB 'as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development' (World Bank, 1999, p. i). Donor organisations (for e.g., WB, ADB, EU) and the administration of developed countries have special focus on good governance, reform and corruption mitigation. Therefore, most of selected TI's publications (see Martini, 2016; McDevitt, 2015;Wickberg, 2012) reinforce international donor agencies' commitment to good governance as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the case of Bangladesh.

Donor organisations often uncritically accept the corruption report of TI that serves western economic and geopolitical interests (Maria, 2008) as we see WB, ADB and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) withdrew their loan from the Padma Bridge project on corruption ground in Bangladesh. TI promotes 'good governance' as part of its global anti-corruption drive in place of the regular political process. Therefore, Polzer writes, 'The rise of the 'good governance' paradigm of the contemporary world is most significant for the recent advent of the corruption discourse which goes toward the depoliticization and technicalisation of the development discourse' (Polzer, 2001, p. 7). Moore suggests that this corruption discourse advances a 'hegemonic consensus' by

fostering some rhetoric of development such as 'good governance' and 'sustainability' as cited by Polzer. Governance in developing countries is identified by international donor agencies as the basis of the crisis, and the solution to that is considered to be ensuring 'good governance' which advances a 'market-friendly' development.

Discussion

The postcolonial reading of TI's documents through the lens of orientalism reveals three themes – (a) opaque, (b) dysfunctional, and (c) lack of governance, and offers opportunities to understand how orientalist discourses around anti-corruption narratives work to sustain a cultural logic of neoliberalism. The postcolonial approach is employed in the study as it challenges Western 'epistemic assumptions' and 'allows a resistant enquiry and makes it possible to return the colonialist gaze' (Shome and Hegde 2002, p. 260). The themes from the analysis demonstrate that the construction of corruption relies heavily on and perpetuates the 'commonsensical' First World/Third World, civilised/backward, and modern/primitive binaries. Rather than recognising the inherent characteristics of the capitalist mode of production, TI one-sidedly identifies corruption as only a problem of the developing countries (Brown and Cloke, 2011). My argument here is that corruption is not only an issue only of the third-world but also global, and that exists everywhere with different forms and processes. Therefore, I question to the political economy of TI's anti-corruption discourse that asks 'how communication processes and institutions work within society, who shapes them, under what conditions and with what purpose' (Pendakur, 1993 cited by Bhuiyan, 2002, p. 118).

For scholars (Hawley, 2000; Neild, 2002; Shah, 2011), the policies of some powerful Western governments and the financial organisations (e.g., WB, IMF, ADB) shape the neoliberal form of globalisation that create a condition in third world countries for spreading out corruption. Bribing is a very common practise in Western businesses, and moreover, multinational corporations

use bribes in developing countries for doing business there[4]. Like developing countries, corruption is also a major problem for developed countries[5]. Hence, identifying corruption as a major problem of developing countries does not differ much with the experience in developed countries. The only thing is the corruption process that makes a difference between developed and developing countries. The argument here is not that corruption does not exist in Bangladesh, it, of course, exists there as it exists in Western countries. I, rather, argue that a neocolonial assumption is evident while it comes to the discussion of global South's corruption.

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[4] Hawley (2000) suggests, on an average, a large German company transacts $ 3 billion bribes in each year. He further informs, for multinationals, bribery enables companies to gain contracts... Every year, Western businesses pay huge amounts of money in bribes to win friends, influence and contracts. See, Hawley, 'Exporting Corruption'. Additionally, Shah indicates that the amount of bribes in Western countries is conservatively estimated to run to US$80 billion a year. See, Shah, 'Corruption', p. 6.

[5] For instance, the USA government is "accused of outsourcing many contracts without an open bid process... Prior to Bush, only 21% of federal contracts were awarded on a no-bid basis" (Hightower, 2007) cited by Shah, 'Corruption', p. 10. Besides, Shah reports, in the UK, according to a report of The Guardian, BAE, an arm's company, gave $150 million to a Saudi prince as part of British arms deal which is in under investigation, but the UK government intervenes in that investigation unfairly by saying that it's their national interests. Silvio Berlusconi, the former Prime Minister of Italy, is also accused of several corruption and criminal cases like tax-fraud, bribery, abuse of office, etc. See Shah, 'Corruption'.

Development strategies promoted by international non-profit organisations that often are disconnected from the local context ignore broader structural issues (Ngai, 2017). For instance, the public sector becomes the prime source of corruption for TI but the division between public and private, as Gupta (1995) argues, is not a universal phenomenon that is assumed from a European socio-cultural and historical tradition. For him, the margin between state and non-state is blurred in Indian sub-continent discussions about corruption. The process of making a 'modern' and 'pre-modern' category by TI is also problematic. This linear notion of 'Western modernity' is challenged by scholars (see Shome, 2012) where they advance the idea of 'multiple modernities' that suggest "merely marking 'difference' keeps alive the universals of Western modernity because the issue of why and how 'difference' has been produced as 'difference' remains ignored". [6] Thus, the construction of a 'third-world difference' as 'archaic' and 'pre-modern' by the TI is critiqued, and scholars (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008; Maria, 2008) consider the 'Corruption Perception Index' as an inherently flawed measurement scale that calculates proxies of corruption without considering cultural variations.

TI keeps the corporate sector out of its corruption surveillance process though studies indicate that the corporate sector is one of the major sources of corruption across the world (Neild, 2000). The global ranking of TI, according to the perception of corruption, might be different if TI focuses on corporate corruption. Consequently, TI demonstrates its support for a pro-corporate economic and cultural climate, as Maria suggests, regarding style and philosophy, TI's corruption approach is very much business-oriented (Maria, 2008). The assessment of Maria is reflected significantly in most of TI's

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[6] From Bhambra (2007), cited by Shome, 'Asian Modernities'. p. 199. Shome further adds, modernity did not only appear and travel from West, rather it has been continued in diverse geographical locations which 'not only beyond the West, but also before the so-called civilisations and colonial empires of Europe'

publications. As an instance, a TI document reflects the perception of Bangladeshi businesspeople by stating that corruption is the second most important problem in Bangladesh for doing business there (Wickberg, 2012). Therefore, it can be argued that the anti-corruption project of TI is adapted to 'cleaning up' government sectors in developing countries and derived mainly from business perceptions.

TI makes its 'corruption database 2004' by using the reports on corruption published in leading local media as a source of information. Using mainstream media as a source of corruption reports is also problematic as scholars argue that mainstream media is always profit-oriented and serves the purpose of corporate interest (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). For instance, Grameenphone (GP) is the largest mobile phone operator in Bangladesh. Bangladesh government fined GP around $25 million in 2007 for doing illegal VoIP business and, in 2008, filed a case against two top officials of GP (AFP, October 7, 2007). But negligible corruption reports regarding GP were found in Bangladeshi mainstream media as GP pays the highest amount of commercials in Bangladeshi media. Consequently, TI overlooks corporate corruption in two ways: a) keeping the private sector out its enquiry; b) selecting mainstream media as a source of information for making a corruption database. Needless to say, TI ranking would be different if the corporate sector is included. TI also depends on some global/Western donor organizations (e.g., WB, ADB, World Economic Forum) for making its corruption database, and those organizations are closely working with imperialist forces for enhancing neo-liberal and/or colonial ideology across the globe.

There is no denying that corruption exists in developing countries and, obviously, in Bangladesh. However, singling out only developing countries as the prime source of corruption is a 'one-sided campaign' (Murphy, 2011) and, therefore, a neocolonialist notion as 'colonial image' becomes prominent when a nation is portrayed as culturally inferior, non-progressive and backward (Pjesivac et al., 2018). This neocolonialist surveillance of global corruption by TI

identifies Bangladesh as a country associated with 'opaque' 'non-transparent' 'dysfunctional' 'criminalized' 'paralyzed' 'bureaucratic', 'violent' 'harbour of criminals and terrorists' which lacks some basic characteristics of being civilized and functional. This neocolonialist monitoring of global corruption by a Western organisation perpetuates a favourable environment for powerful Western states and business corporations. Corruption becomes another type of 'white man's burden' in contemporary world as Bratis analyses that due to the fall of the former Soviet Union and the rise of multinational corporations, "anti-corruption discourse has arisen as a new version of the 'white man's burden', a justification for intervention into the domestic politics of less powerful states as well as an explanation for their relative poverty" (Bratsis, 2014, p. 105). Even after four decades of Said's (1978) influential idea of orientalism, TI's discourses demonstrate how its relevance has not diminished. Said had shown decades ago that the discourse of orientalism worked in the service of the West by consistently producing the East as inferior. The corruption surveillance of TI fosters a particular way of knowing and understanding by way of constructing the binary of corrupt/clean, opaque/transparent, dysfunctional/functional where Bangladesh or the orient is the pre-modern, archaic, or inferior.

TI's rhetoric articulates a notion that corruption is inherently an oriental phenomenon, while transparency is occidental. It displays a global binary of 'corrupt vs. clean' which reinforces the historical differences between former colonies and colonisers. The corruption surveillance by TI constructs the notion that corrupt countries are geographically situated in the global South, and they need foreign assistance and fundamental reform to establish 'good governance' and 'transparency' in their respective societies. This notion builds a justification for the West to intervene in the local politics of the global South and also nourishes Western/white supremacy such that the West has the approval and responsibility to make the East 'clean' and 'transparent'. Against this backdrop, the corruption surveillance discourse of TI can be seen as a neocolonial move enabling the West to advance its neoliberal ideology and a mechanism of discipline and

control over the global South. The corruption surveillance discourse of TI thus enhances white supremacy and/or Western hegemony over Eastern countries in the post-colonial era that perpetuates orientalist colonial imagination in Bangladesh.

In conclusion, corruption is a problem all over the world, North and South, and under these circumstances, TI aims to provide a useful service. I argue, due to the methodological flaws, TI results in orientalist skewing that could be improved. I ask for different definitions and operationalisations of 'corruption' based on context and situated through interaction such that non-western ideas and orientation are not considered backward. TI would have specific and precise definitions that are supposed to be context-specific and measurable so that anything that does not fit with the global South would not be deviant, archaic, and naive. Some of the shortcomings in this study lie in the exclusive focus on TI's documents without including how other global organisations, such as the WB, deal with the issue of global corruption. This study focuses on TI's literature from a single country located in the global South. Future studies can be carried out from a comparative perspective by including TI's documents both from global North and South to see what narratives are produced to describe the characteristic of a 'clean' country.

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