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THE POLICE AND CORRUPTION

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Police corruption is a form of police misconduct in which law enforcement officers end up breaking their political contract and abuse their power for personal gain. This type of corruption may involve one or a group of officers. Internal police corruption is a challenge to public trust, cohesion of departmental policies, human rights and legal violations involving serious consequences. Police corruption can take many forms, such as bribery. **Soliciting** or **accepting bribes** in exchange for not reporting organized drug or prostitution rings or other illegal activities and violations of law, county and city ordinances and state and federal laws.

Bribes may also include leasing unlawful access to proprietary law enforcement databases and systems.[1]

Flouting the police code of conduct in order to secure convictions of civilians and suspects—for example, through the use of falsified evidence. There are also situations where law enforcement officers may deliberately and systematically participate in organized crime themselves.

Selective enforcement

In most major cities there are internal affairs sections to investigate suspected police corruption or misconduct, including selective enforcement, but there are situations where Internal Affairs also hides departmental and individual corruption, fraud, abuse and waste by individual officers, groups of officers or even unwritten departmental policies. There are also Police Commissions who are complicit in the same cover-ups, often to hide internal and departmental problems, both from public view, and also from inter-departmental reviews and investigations. Certain officers can be fired, then rehired by petition after they accrue enough signatures, often from the very criminals and violators from whom corrupt officers have garnered previous favors in exchange for officers "turning a blind eye", resulting in selective enforcement of violations being deterred, but actually promoted.

Similar entities include the British Independent Police Complaints Commission. Police corruption is a significant widespread problem in many departments and agencies worldwide.

It is not possible to measure the level of corruption in a country. Surveys of police officers, citizens and businesses can be used to provide estimates on levels of corruption. These are often inaccurate, as respondents involved in corruption are reluctant to provide any information implicating themselves in criminal activity.[2] Despite this limitation, information collected from International Crime Victim Surveys and surveys conducted by the Global Corruption Enumerated Barometer can be used to estimate the level of police corruption.

Police officers have several opportunities to gain personally from their status and authority as law enforcement officers. The Knapp Commission, which investigated corruption in the New York City Police Department in the early 1970s, divided corrupt officers into two types: *meat-eaters*, who "aggressively misuse their police powers for personal gain", and *grass-eaters*, who "simply accept the payoffs that the happenstances of police work throw their way."

There are multiple typologies of police corruption that have been asserted by academics. However, common corrupt acts that have been committed by police officers can be classified as follows:

- **Corruption of authority:** When police officers receive free drinks, meals, and other gratuities, because they are police officers, whether intentionally or unintentionally, they convey an image of corruption.
 - **Extortion/bribery:** Demanding or receiving payment for criminal offenses, to overlook a crime or a possible future crime. Types of bribery are protection for illegal activities, ticket fixing, altering testimony, destroying evidence, and selling criminal information. Bribery is one of the most common acts of corruption.
 - **Theft and burglary** Is when an officer or department steals from an arrest and crime victims or corpses. Examples are taking drugs for personal use in a drug bust, and taking personal objects from a corpse at the scene of a crime. A theft can also occur within a department. An officer can steal property from the department's evidence room or property room for personal use.
 - **Shakedown:** When a police officer is aware of a crime and the violator but accepts a bribe for not arresting the violator (Roebuck & Barker, 1973).
 - **"Fixing":** Undermining criminal prosecutions by withholding evidence or failing to appear at judicial hearings, for bribery or as a personal favor.
 - **Perjury:** Lying to protect other officers or oneself in a court of law or a department investigation.
 - **Internal payoffs:** Prerogatives and prerequisites of law enforcement organizations, such as shifts and holidays, being bought and sold.
 - **The "frameup":** The planting or adding to evidence, especially in drug cases.
 - **Ticket fixing:** Police officers cancelling traffic tickets as a favor to the friends and family of other police officers.
 - Corrupted behavior can be caused by the behavioral change of the officer within the department's "subculture". A subculture is a group of individuals within a culture that share the same attitudes and beliefs. Police officers within the department share the same norms and that new behavioral development can be attributed through psychological, sociological, and anthropological paradigms.
 - **Psychological paradigm:** The psychological paradigm suggests that behavior is based and structured through an individual's early stages of life. Those attracted to the police occupation tend to be more "authoritarian". The authoritarian personality is characterized by conservative, aggressive, cynical, and rigid behaviors Corruption may involve profit or another type of material benefit gained illegally as a consequence of the officer's authority. Psychological corruption can be a part of a department's culture or from the certain individual.
 - **Sociological paradigm:** The sociological paradigm focuses on individual exposure to a police training academy, regular in-service training, and field experience all shape occupational character. Police learn how to behave, discretion, morals and what to think from their shared experiences with other police officers New recruits develop definitions with their peers either positive or negative. These definitions are then reinforced, positively or negatively, by the rewards or punishments (either real or perceived) that follow their behavior For example, a new recruit may be given an order by his peer to arrest an individual sitting in the passenger seat for a DUI. This action can end up negatively or positively for the officer depending on how the situation is perceived by the court later on.
 - **Anthropological paradigm:** When an individual's social character is changed when an officer becomes part of the occupational culture. The term culture is often used to describe differences among large social groups where they share unique beliefs, morals, customs, and other characteristics that set them apart from other groups. Within the police culture, officers learn to be suspicious of the public. Police culture can also be quite racist, and shot through with assumptions about the criminal tendencies of certain minority groups, such as African Americans, or the competency of fellow officers from minority backgrounds which can lead officers to make corrupted choices for personal benefits or gains.
 - Accurate information about the prevalence of police corruption is hard to come by, since the corrupt activities tend to happen in secret and police organizations have little incentive to publish information about corruption Police officials and researchers alike have argued that in some countries, large-scale corruption involving the police not only exists but can even become institutionalized. One study of corruption in the Los Angeles Police Department (focusing particularly on the Rampart scandal) proposed that certain forms of police corruption may be the norm, rather than the exception, in American policing
- In the UK, an internal investigation in 2002 into the largest police force, the Metropolitan Police, Operation Tiberius found that the force was so corrupt that "organized criminals were able to infiltrate Scotland Yard "at will" by bribing corrupt officers ... and that Britain's biggest force experienced 'endemic corruption' at the time".

- Where corruption exists, the widespread existence of a Blue Code of Silence among the police can prevent the corruption from coming to light. Officers in these situations commonly fail to report corrupt behavior or provide false testimony to outside investigators to cover up criminal activity by their fellow officers. The well-known case of Frank Serpico, a police officer who spoke out about pervasive corruption in the New York City Police Department despite the open hostility of other members, illustrates how powerful the code of silence can be. In Australia in 1994, by 46 votes to 45, independent politician John Hatton forced the New South Wales state government to override the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the advice of senior police to establish a ground-breaking Royal Commission into Police Corruption
- However, in a number of countries, such as China Pakistan, Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil or Mexico, police corruption remains to be one of the largest social problems facing their countries.

Police corruption affects society, including political, economic, and sociological. The social aspect is easiest to define, because even one corrupt officer in a department can generate an overall distrust of the department (the Rotten Apple theory). This negative outlook on policing by civilians helps maintain an "us versus them" mentality among police, which only serves to further the rift between police officers and civilians. Police corruption, when brought to the public eye, increases pressures on departments by lawmakers to enact change from within. In 2013, the West Valley City, Utah police's narcotics unit was disbanded due to rampant corruption among its officers. These officers were found stealing small items from seized vehicles, taking evidence, and placing tracking devices on potential suspects' vehicles without warrants. This action, like many others, not only increases distrust among the public, but lawmakers begin to feel pressure from the masses to remove officers and revamp entire departments.

Civilian involvement

Civilians within the jurisdiction look to lawmakers and justice officials to enact justice against the officers involved. If the instance of corruption happens to fall on an election year, their re-election campaign may be lost.

In areas such as Afghanistan, media exposure and civilian involvement in combating corruption is rarely seen. Rather, international officials step in to help eliminate corruption in the department.

Depending on the number of people involved and severity of the acts, the state executive or legislature may be compelled to demand that the department be scrutinized and its policies corrected. This can involve replacing individual officers, mid-level leadership, or asking for a resignation by the department chief. Disciplinary actions depend on the severity of the act, but typically result in disciplinary actions by the department and negative media coverage for the department. In 1970, the New York City Knapp Commission began holding officers and supervision accountable and instituting real disciplinary actions for police corruption. In countries where corruption is a major issue, such as China and Russia, state government is often directly involved in investigating and disciplining cases of corruption, such as in the Chongqing gang trials, where police chief Wen Qiang was detained and put on trial for accepting bribes, rape, and other crimes during the Chongqing gang crackdown.

Social effect

While political issues can easily be worked through, the social effect of police corruption is much harder to overcome. Civilians, especially those who or know someone who has been victimized by certain types of corruption, tend to see police officers as enemy forces. Similarly, police officers view civilians in the same light. Both issues have only been exacerbated by the War on Crime and War on Drugs. The "us versus them" mentality is especially prevalent among inner city minorities, where stereotyping and racial targeting seem to be the norm.

Rotten apple theory

This theory suggests that one bad cop ruins the entire department. A single officer can not only cause leadership to initiate investigations over entire sections or the department as a whole, but that one corrupt officer/the rotten apple can bring a generally appreciated department to its knees in terms of public relations. People look at that one bad cop and assume, sometimes correctly (especially in this case, where several other officers were found to be committing similar violations) the entire department is corrupt and committing similar or worse acts

Reduced effectiveness

Police corruption not only generates distrust among the public, but undermines the criminal justice system as a whole. Judges and prosecutors may develop a negative opinion of officers who come to testify in cases, especially those who have a history of disciplinary action related to corrupt acts. The trustworthiness of officers who work in departments where corruption has been discovered is severely diminished, and even if the testimony they provide in court is an exact recollection of the events in question, a prosecutor or judge may choose to simply ignore these facts because of their association with a seemingly corrupt department. In the case of the Waldo Police Department located in Florida, the entire department was disbanded partly due to allegations of corruption, meaning county law enforcement must take over where the city failed.

Economic effects

Officer training

Should the corrupt act not be extremely severe, or the department decide discharge of the officer is unnecessary, those involved in corrupt acts may be charged to undergo remedial training. This could be inside or outside the department, and becomes another red mark on the already strapped budget of most departments. The cost of this remedial training pales in comparison to the cost of having to train new officers to replace those who are relieved of their duties, since these new hires will need to undergo initial academy training as well as whatever additional training the officer would require as they advanced in their career

Investigations

Investigation and litigation costs may be high. These investigators are either part of their own department or taken from other squads (county sheriff investigating a city department, for example), or can be private entities. The department must also invest in retaining attorneys for both themselves and the officers involved.

