

What are the causes of police corruption? According to the “rotten apple theory”, corruption is the work of a few, dishonest, immoral police officers. Experts dismiss this theory because it fails to explain why so many corrupt officers become concentrated in some police organizations but not in others. Another explanation pinpoints US society's use of the criminal law to enforce morality. Unenforceable laws governing moral standards promote corruption because they provide criminal organizations with a financial interest in undermining law enforcement. Narcotic corruption, for example, is an inevitable consequence of drug enforcement. Providers of these illegal goods and service use part of their profits to bribe the police in order to ensure the continuation of criminal enterprises. When police controls break down and a scandal occurs, special investigating commissions can mobilize public opinion and rally public support for anticorruption and antiviolence reforms. Commissions pinpoint where the internal controls of the police have failed, and recommend changes in policy. Since corruption involves criminal behavior, prosecution of corrupt police officers is possible. Since prosecutors depend on the police to gather evidence and develop cases, however, they often don't want to “bite the hand that feeds them”. Legislators could reevaluate laws that create the potential for corruption.

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Counteraction to Corruption: How Corrupt are Police in the United States?

Corruption is one of the most serious problems of the modern world. Objective factors of its development indicate that corruption poses a significant danger to the life of society, and the scale of its spread constitutes a threat to national security.

Corruption is a social phenomenon, and the struggle with it cannot be limited to the establishment and application of legal liability. An important point in the corruption prevention system is public position. There are three main components to a successful counteraction to corruption: proper anti-corruption legislation, its effective use by the relevant state authorities, the political will of the state to counteract corruption in all spheres and at all levels of government.

In the United States, anti-corruption legislation is characterized by extreme rigor. In case of allegations of corruption against a police officer, not

only his activities, but also the work of his immediate superior is subject to mandatory verification. The work of the subordinate against whom allegations of corruption are raised is checked. An American policeman is strictly forbidden to accept any offerings in any form.

There are certain places in the USA that are unusually corrupt, like some large cities and some rural areas, but 98% are totally clean. Some restaurants give cops discounts or free meals in exchange for allowing their trash cans to violate city policy.

In the US police special work on the prevention of official misconduct is organized. This is accomplished through the implementation of a system of departmental control, which is based on two elements: monitoring well-being of employees and their relatives, as well as daily control over the employee's official activities. As a result, corruption in the US police is at a rather low level.

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Police Corruption: European Perspectives

Corruption among police officers has been viewed with an increasing concern by the authorities and the public in many European states. As a result, while no common approach has ever been tested with respect to the judiciary, elected politicians or the customs, countering police corruption has become an all European effort. During the last decade, several European countries developed multi-institutional systems for police integrity. On EU level, platforms like the European Partners against Corruption (EPAC) were introduced, enabling specialized anti-corruption institutions to cooperate and share experience. In addition, Europol, Interpol and the UN developed and shared the blueprints of common standards and good practices in preventing police corruption.

After the reforms the system for internal control gradually went beyond the initial narrow framework by linking control and the professional standards in everyday police work to disciplinary and enforcement functions. This reform altered the whole approach to internal control: the new system became a management tool for guiding everyday police work. Its concept assumes active involvement of both senior and middle police managers.

The Europe system for countering police corruption is well structured and modern. It is based on the following principles: