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Research Paper

4/8/16

**The Leading Causes of the Ongoing Phenomenon of Police Corruption**

**Abstract:** There is a lot of controversy surrounding the issue of police corruption. This research explains the leading causes of police corruption. I aim to better define police corruption. This paper will analyze different types of police corruption, and look into the hiring and training process of officers. I hypothesize that the hiring and training process is not thorough enough and that enough proper training does not continue for an officer throughout their career. Lastly, I hypothesize that there is not enough observation on officers; this is where body cameras come into effect. Looking into the hiring and training process, I will find ways where it is too easy to become a cop. I find one of the leading causes of corruption is that police officers are not monitored enough, allowing them to abuse their power. Body cameras could solve this problem. The issue of police corruption is an important issue to address, as it is surrounding us today and has in the past, and it must be examined.

**I. Introduction**

The issue of police corruption has lately been a controversial issue. Well known examples of corruption include the case in Philadelphia and in San Francisco. In Philadelphia, six officers were arrested for being involved in criminal activity, beatings, threats, and unlawful searches (Assefa). Similarly, in San Francisco, two officers were arrested for stealing property and money from suspected drug dealers (Egelko). These two cases relate directly to police corruption and show that it is a major concern. In this paper I examine the leading causes of police corruption and why it continues to be a problem. This is an important question to ask because with all the controversy, many people are very interested in finding out what causes the phenomenon. Also, when finding out what causes a problem, often times one can obtain a solution for the problem by eliminating these causes. In my research I have found three main things that lead to corruption and can make a good cop go from good to corrupt: hiring, training, and monitoring. I, also, discuss potential solutions including body cameras. I conclude that the hiring process is too simple for cops; cops are not tested enough in specific situations once being hired, and it is possible for any average person to abuse power once they have it.

**II. Literature Review**

1. **Concepts**

Many scholars help to better define exactly what police corruption is. Herbert Biegel breaks down police corruption into two categories: internal corruption and external corruption. External corruption is when the police are involved with the public, and internal corruption involves relationships between police officers and the police force (Biegel, p. 135). Asfaw Kummsa’s narrows down the definition of police corruption and breaks corruption down into eight categories: “when an officer receives gratuity, free gifts, free meals, and so on, when an officer receives kickbacks in the form of money, when officers withhold money, drugs, or other merchandise for his benefit, when an officer turns an eye, when an officer provides protection to organized criminal groups, an officer provides false evidence, the officer is involved specifically in a crime, and lastly, corruption that takes place within an institution” (Kummsa, p. 4). Kummsa then goes into more detail about each of these types of corruption explaining how they work and providing specific examples of each. Another article, titled “ A Typology of Police Corruption,” by Julian B. Roebuck and Thomas Barker breaks down police corruption into similar categories.

Internal corruption means the problem exists within the police and their department, while external corruption means the problem exists with the police and an outsider. Major examples of external corruption are payoffs to police officers from people who violate the law and police accepting this money (Biegel, p. 136). Internal corruption takes on a different form. Internal corruption happens because a police officer wants to gain better working conditions or wants to gain status (Biegel p. 136). Examples of this type of corruption include paying someone within a department to get hired, to get better shifts, and to gain a promotion, just to name a few (Biegel, 136). The other types of corruption previously listed by Kummsa would fall under the definition of external corruption given by Biegel other than corruption that takes place within an institution that would be internal corruption. Both internal and external corruption are evident when looking at the Rampart scandal and the Chicago police department. The specific examples just listed, such as payoffs to officers, officers turning an eye, and officers specifically involved in a crime emerge in these controversies.

Biegel and Kummsa come to different conclusions about addressing police corruption. Biegel suggests that investigating police departments can both resolve issues and cause conflicts. He feels examining those in power will have an effect on other similar institutions. He believes that if one police department changes then many others will feel they need to change. Kummsa’s conclusion is a little different. He believes the problem needs to be viewed both from a societal and institutional perspective, that police need proper training, and the media should be used to expose corruption. The authors had different methods in their research. Biegel looked at the investigation and prosecutions of cases involving police corruption and examined the ways different types of investigations worked. Kummsa looked at the effects police corruption left on society, government, and the economy and then provided possible solutions.

We can learn much from a few specific examples of police corruption, along with useful statistics. These examples help to explain what happened in those cases and what caused the corruption. One great example is an article by Paul Kaplan that investigates the Rampart scandal. Kaplan believes the causal factors are the ideological war on crime and the privileged position of police during criminal trials (Kaplan, p. 62). This is useful in both providing an example of corruption and explaining what may cause it. For the methods of his research, Kaplan, uses a form of narrative analysis. He looked into both official and media documents and completed an interpretive analysis (Kaplan, p. 62-63). Kaplan concludes that while police corruption is an institutional problem it is likely the justice system would have to change in order to fix it. He feels they are not likely to do so and police corruption will continue to exist. Another case is described in *Brotherhood of Corruption* by Juan Juarez, in which he discusses his time as a Chicago police officer. In my analysis, I will use these specific cases of police corruption to explore what the problems were, what allowed them to happen, and how they ended.

1. **Measures and Numbers**

As one can imagine, there are statistics everywhere related to police corruption. Therefore I found a few articles containing useful statistics. David Packman and Edmond Dantes present graphs and charts showing how much police corruption, brutality, and misconduct has taken place in the United States from the years 2009 to 2010. They look at different types of corruption and show what is most common, which is police brutality (Packman). They, also, look at different states in the U.S. to show who has the highest rate of corruption. The states of Oklahoma, Montana, Vermont, West Virginia, and Tennessee have the highest rates of misconduct reports (Dantes).

Although it is hard to collect data on the issue of police corruption, some of the numbers that have been discovered are important to explore. It is hard to get statistics on the issue because much police corruption goes unreported, people turn an eye, and most officers will not report themselves as being corrupt. In the Packman article data was collected by collecting media reports, searching the web, and reviewing daily news, then it is analyzed and presented on the site by showing different datasets. (Packman). In 2009, there was approximately 2,568 alleged victims reporting cases of police misconduct, 2,854 police officers allegedly involved in misconduct, and about one out of 116 officers were reported to be involved in misconduct (Packman). These numbers can be alarming. One must remember that many of these cases are alleged, therefore it may have not happened but, obviously, in many of these cases it likely did happen and people suffered.

In the Dante’s article the statistics come from the National Police misconduct and Statistics Reporting project. From 2009 to 2010, 382 fatalities were linked to misconduct and $347,455,000 were spent on settlements and judgments surrounding police corruption (Dantes). While, not every case reported may actually be police corruption, there are many cases where people do get hurt or die, and a lot of money is spent on the issue. Even if police corruption is not as big of a conflict as some believe, these numbers should show that it is a rather large problem. However, while these articles provide useful statistics, police corruption is something that is hard to measure.

Sanja Kutnjak Ivkovic provides different ideas for measuring police corruption. She suggest things like surveying police, surveying citizens, doing scientific experiments and analyzing them in regards to an officer doing their job, and analyzing some of the best police departments. She concludes random integrity tests on officers as they are put through life-like conditions and the officers reactions are measured (Ivkovic p. 617-618). The author admits some of these measures will be harder than others. Surveying police is difficult because an officer is not likely to report themselves as corrupt (Ivkovic p. 603). Citizens are more likely to be honest if they saw an officer act as corrupt. Ivkovic concludes that there is no perfect way to measure police corruption but that to get the best measurement, one must use several methods. Ivkovic acknowledges that some of these methods are a challenge, largely, because it leaves people vulnerable to admitting their corruption, but the author suggests increasing the willingness for people to partake in these studies by building a sense of trust. This will allow the measurement of corruption to be more accurate but will still be based off of estimates (Ivkovic p. 646). Ivkovic, performed experiments, provided surveys, and analyzed different departments, including the NYPD, the LAPD, the Philadelphia P.D, and the Pennsylvania Crime Commission (p. 637). In her conclusion she states, “The first two steps in addressing the problem of police corruption are defining what constitutes corrupt behavior and seeking to determine its extent and characteristics” (Ivkovic p. 645). When determining how to measure police corruption, Ivkovic finds it is nearly impossible. She concludes that it is very difficult to measure because those who are most closely related to it, police, are unwilling to admit when it happens. Ivkovic finds that the only way to improve measuring the conflict is to enhance the number of participants, including those involved in law enforcement and ordinary citizens in research that involves the issue. (Ivkovic p. 646). This research reiterates the point that the biggest challenge for addressing police corruption may be that it is difficult to measure.

Two sources discuss other leading causes of police corruption. Tim Newburn states that the “‘causes’ of corruption include: factors that are intrinsic to policing as a job; the nature of police organizations; the nature of ‘police culture’; the opportunities for corruption presented by the ‘political’ and ‘task’ environments’ and, the nature and extent of the effort put in to controlling corruption” (p. 45-46). He comes up with this idea by looking at the history of policing, and the definitions of corruptions along with typologies of corruption (p. 14). Another source that is similar in explaining corruption is the article “Police Corruption What Past Scandals Teach about Current Challenges.” This article looks at past cases of police corruption to help explain what causes it. It suggests that police corruption is shaped by culture, that it is supported by social structures and is a way of life. In addition, it exists because problems of insecurity, untrustworthy workforces, and dysfunctional departments (Bayley and Perito p. 12). All of these concepts can be used to explain why police corruption exists. Clearly, if police corruption is shaped by culture one policy alone is not going to solve this. It takes a drastic amount of change in order to alter the values and beliefs of any culture, let alone a structural culture, like a police department.

**3. Solutions**

Officers not being monitored close enough is one of the proposals for the cause of corruption. One of the sources I have examines 50 officers wearing body cameras over ten months. Experimental data was analyzed from over 3,600 field contact reports (Ready and Young). Fifty officers were assigned to a treatment group and they wore cameras. Fifty other officers were in the control group and did not wear cameras (Ready and Young). The two treatment groups were compared. The results of this experiment were that officers were more active while wearing a camera without increasing their use of offensive tactics (Ready and Young). An officer being more active means that officers with cameras were more likely to engage in contact with citizens rather than only focus on dispatch calls. A similar study was done in Orlando. The methods were, essentially, the same. The results of this experiment showed a large decrease in an officers’ response to resistance and external complaints when officers wore body cameras (Fridell, Jennings, and Lynch). A third related article looks at how officers feel about body cameras. This article is based off of the experiment in Orlando. The researchers surveyed the Orlando officers on how they felt about body cameras. Fridell, Jennings, and Lynch conclude that officers were definitely in favor of wearing the cameras. The authors find that the officers believe the cameras improve citizen’s actions, their own actions, and other officer’s actions. All of these articles suggested that body cameras are a great idea and in their research they found really no problems, other than the cost, with the use of body cameras. The researchers recommend all police departments to use body cameras.

Another area for reform is the hiring and training process of police. The hiring and training process for becoming a cop is not extensive enough. Carter and colleagues suggest police should receive a higher education. They conclude that it is possible to do this as long as the hiring department establishes a policy document to show it is for a valid business reason (Carter, Sapp, Stevens p. 23-24). Hiring more educated police officers would help because useful skills for proper police work can be obtained through more education. A management level officer for a Florida police department writes, “We say the type of work todays police officers do requires the skills you learn from going to college” (Carter, Sapp, Stevens p.3). If they are further educated, they become better police officers, and they do their job better, leaving better officers on the street. Alternatively, Decker and Huckabee suggest increasing the age limit of officers rather than the education requirement. They found this by looking at files from the Indianapolis police department of eligible policemen to see if raising the education requirement would discriminate too many people. The researchers found that raising the education requirement would eliminate almost two-thirds of the department but if the age requirement were raised less than thirty percent of the people would be eliminated. This process would save time and money (Decker and Huckabee p. 800). Hiring older police would be beneficial because it would decrease the amount of time the hiring process takes and the cost of it and it would eliminate many applicants (Decker and Huckabee p. 798). By eliminating applicants the departments would now only be selecting from the most qualified individuals for the job, getting the best men and women on the street as police officers. Both the ideas of hiring older and more educated police are possible suggestions in strengthening the hiring process of police departments.

To understand what is meant by police corruption I have laid out my own definition building off of previous definitions that have been used. I define police corruption as an action a police officer takes part in that is illegal by the definition of the state or federal law, specifically including cases where the action is used for personal advance. Whenever an officer breaks the law, and he or she had no need to do so, the officer is engaged in police corruption. However, when looking at the use of force it can become vague if the officer is breaking the law or not. I justify this by saying the officer is not breaking the law if they have exhausted all other options and the only option to stop the situation is using force, then the officer is permitted to use it. If the officer uses force without exhausting other possible solutions this becomes police misconduct and corruption.

**III. Research Plan and Methods**

The foundation of my research approach is built off of past scandals that have involved police corruption. I explore different cases of corruption in history, focusing strongly on the LAPD of the 90’s as one specific example. As another example, my research looks into the corruption of the Chicago Police Department. These cases strengthen the context of this paper, while inferring possible reasons why corruption takes place. When looking at the Rampart scandal and the Chicago Police Department it is easy to tell that power, the lack of monitoring officers, unreliable employees, and a poor court system were all contributing factors to one of the biggest police scandals ever. I am going to use these cases and look at what caused them and how the problems were discovered and dealt with. My analysis is constructed from looking into the observation of officers while on duty, changing the hiring and training process, and different cultures and institutions all being the leading contributors in causing police corruption.

Other work looks at different types of corruption and specific examples of it. Other scholars focus on just one example or too many examples. I want to incorporate just enough so that my research is understood fully. I analyze the Rampart scandal, the corruption of the Chicago Police, and a short review of current cases of police corruption. My research examines the possible causes of specific cases of corruption. From this I then can see how things like hiring, training, oversight and body cameras would have affected these scandals.

In addition to these case studies, I examine various experiments where body cameras were used to learn how much lack of observation on police officers leads to corruption. Also, I will do an in depth analysis of the hiring and training process of different police departments to see whether it is a problem that helps to promote corruption. For this part, I will analyze bigger departments throughout the U.S. rather than just focusing on a broad range of all departments.

This research question explores the process of becoming a police officer and the training that continues throughout ones career. It will examine the way in police are observed throughout a normal work day. It will provide direct insight to the strength and weaknesses of the criminal justice system in the United States.

My hypothesis is that there are several leading causes of police corruption. The hiring, and training process of new cops is not thorough enough. Also, once a cop has been hired he does not continue enough training for, and is not tested enough. This can lead to poor decisions while on the job and these decisions going unnoticed because of a lack of observing and questioning. One final factor I believe leads to police corruption is that cops are not observed enough when handling police matters. Wearing a body camera while on the job, would likely lead to a big decrease in police corruption. However, this research I am not focusing on answering the question of how to solve corruption but rather, finding the leading causes of it.

I used mixture of a qualitative and quantitative research for this paper. The qualitative method is good for defining key terms and is helpful in developing a hypothesis. It is great for comparing and contrasting theories to other methods. The downfall of a qualitative approach is that it does not do a great job of testing the hypothesis. The qualitative approach is a good method for my paper because observational studies looked at the history of police corruption rather than forming an experiment. In addition, this is a good approach because a key element of my paper was defining what police corruption and brutality are and a qualitative method helps to define terms. This approach was, also, beneficial in the sense that I analyzed a few cases in depth. I looked at recent cases of police corruption to help explain the issue. A lot of my review, however, is quantitative, using available data rather than collecting my own. Therefore, I am using a lot of what other researchers have found to explain the causes of police corruption. This combines a broader focus on the phenomenon but also focuses on specific cases and details. I feel that my method and my data are good for testing my hypothesis from a historical and comparative standpoint.

Determining the causes of police corruption, its effects on society, and possible solutions is a very relevant and important question to ask concerning society today. We can learn from the past to make the future of police work better and less corrupt.

**IV. Analytical Review**

I analyzed police corruption, including definitions statistics, and specific cases of police corruption. The majority of my review explores two different cases. One describes corruption within the Chicago police department and the other is one of the most famous police corruption cases ever, The Rampart scandal. In addition to these conflicts, I looked in depth into the hiring and training process of police departments and lastly I examined the use of body cameras on police officers and the effects the cameras had on corruption. I analyzed these things to see how they would have altered these cases of corruption specifically.

1. **Specific Scandals and Possible Improvements**

To look at what causes police corruption, I look at two cases from America's past. I first look into one of the most corrupt police departments to ever exist, The LAPD in the 1990's, and the Rampart Scandal. The second case is the Chicago Police in their different times of corruption. Investigating these cases shows what problems led to these huge scandals, how the problems were discovered, and how they were dealt with. This, also, shows how they could have been prevented.

**A. Case 1: The Rampart Scandal**

The Rampart scandal involving the LAPD in the 1990’s is one of the biggest police controversies ever. There are two stories to this, which could both be partly true. What is known is that the Rampart scandal led to over one-hundred criminal convictions being overturned and caused the firing or resigning of twenty officers, several of whom were convicted of criminal charges (Kaplan 2009, p. 61). Regardless of what actually happened it is a severe case of police corruption. The LAPD had a version of the story saying that a small group of black and Hispanic officers were involved in all of the misconduct but this contradicted Rafael Perez’s. Perez was the one who turned the department in (Kaplan 2009, p. 61). Perez said that many officers were involved in planting evidence, providing probable cause, beating citizens, and abusing their due process rights (Kaplan 2009, p. 61). This is a clear case of external corruption.

One of the biggest culprits that led to the LAPD's corruption may be the culture that surrounded it. From the 1950's to the mid ‘90's the LAPD chiefs were no nonsense leaders who promoted aggressive and proactive policing. These leaders had an Us vs. Them theory where they labeled some individuals as good, including themselves, and others were outsiders, who they were against. No matter what, these police chiefs sided with their department (Reese p. 89). These police chiefs shaped an attitude where they were going to get the “bad” guys, or at least those that did not fit their mold of good. They felt no matter what they were the police so they were right, even if corruption was prevalent. In 1992, Willie Williams, a black man, became chief of police for the LAPD. He was more community based than the previous chiefs. This won him public support but not the support of his department (Reese p. 90). Because his department did not agree with him, officers did what they wanted rather than follow his orders (Reese p. 90). The culture the LAPD was built on promoted hard core policing, which led to the abuse of power. When it came time for change, the LAPD was not going to change. Officers were not going to change what they did for a new chief, who they did not respect.

Another factor that played into the scandal was the problems with managerial oversight. Reese writes “The supervisors in the Rampart Division endorsed the ‘just get the job done’ approach. According to one police official, a Rampart sergeant was ‘quarterbacking the whole thing.’ He encouraged the planting of weapons in shootings gone badly. Using perverse logic, many of the Rampart officers felt they were doing the right thing” (p. 91). The leaders behind the operation permitted corruption to happen, they in fact promoted it. They tried to justify it but, ultimately, it is easy to tell that what they were doing was wrong.

The final problem that permitted such a big scandal was the lack of oversight from outside the department, specifically, Civilian Review Boards. Reese writes, “Civilian Review Boards are charged with the substantial task of monitoring the behavior of a police department.” Ultimately, the police department neglected to cooperate properly with the leader of the Review Boards (Reese p. 93). If the department is not going to allow oversight it becomes very difficult to find corruption, especially from a department that always believes in its ways.

These problems with the LAPD were discovered simply by looking deeply into the department. When looking at the department’s past, it was easy to tell what kind of leadership it was under and the culture that surrounded it. The past police chiefs were not afraid to express what kind of attitude they believed in towards their department. The lack of managerial oversight was not discovered until after the case of the Rampart scandal had been closed. An officer who was in charge of the Rampart task force admitted to problems with oversight within the department. He admits that on special task forces, such as the Rampart task force there is much less oversight (Reese p. 90). This allows officers to handle things their own way rather than by protocol. The lack of managerial oversight became evident when the leaders of the Civilian Review board expresses a lot of frustration with the LAPD. Reese states “Kathleen Mader, the department’s first Inspector General, quit the job in frustration after a couple of years on the job. Her frustration centered on the department’s unwillingness to cooperate with her oversight responsibilities. Uncooperative behavior by police brass has caused the current Inspector General, Jeffrey Eglash, to encounter similar frustrations” (p. 93). From this account it is easy to gather that the LAPD did not like to share a lot of things with others, which is a major problem in because of how corrupt it was.

The end result of the Rampart Scandal was 100 cases being overturned. Rafael Perez the main culprit in the Rampart Scandal was sentenced to 23 years after admitting to attacking a man and planting a gun on him (Reese p. 88). Perez exposed the LAPD, and many officers lost their jobs or were suspended. After the Rampart Scandal it was recognized that something had to be done about the LAPD. It was decided that the Federal government would oversee the LAPD for five years (pbs.org). Basically, the federal government kept tabs on everything the LAPD did. The LAPD had to produce reports on officers involved in use of force, shooting incidents, traffic stops, arrest reports, and many other reports. The reports also had to include things like the race, gender, and age of the person involved in the incident (pbs.org). This was a major reform for the LAPD but was definitely necessary. Since this reform the LAPD has had very few scandals.

**B. Case 2: Corruption in the Chicago Police Department**

The LAPD is a huge police department, and when dealing with huge departments, police corruption is something that is a lot more likely to occur. Another department where police corruption has been a problem is the Chicago Police Department (CPD). In the book *Brotherhood of Corruption,* former Chicago officer, Juan Juarez, takes us through his times with the Chicago P.D. and the different levels of corruptness that he saw.

Juarez addresses many problems with the Chicago police department and how it operated that led to scandals. One example is a run in with a homeless man. The man was somewhere he was not permitted to be. A couple officers with Juarez offered the man a ride to a homeless shelter and were very polite. However, other officers who later pulled up on scene handled the situation differently. These officers yelled expletives at the man, who at this time was only trying to collect his belongings. In addition to being very rude to the man, one officer beat the homeless man’s bike with his nightstick. Eventually the officer who caused the chaos left after destroying the bicycle. Juarez and the original officer who offered help tried to help the man but the man neglected help because he did not trust the police (Juarez p. 179-181). This is just one of many examples of police misconduct Juarez discusses in his book.

Another case Juarez addresses is a search that took place without a warrant. Juarez and a team were searching a house for drugs, and they had a warrant to search the house, so this part was legal. However, an officer searched the garage, which was not listed on the warrant; this meant it was illegal to search the garage. Had they found drugs in the garage, they would just type the report claiming they came from the house and it would not be questioned (Juarez p. 161). While these examples may be smaller cases of police misconduct, Juarez talks about multiple similar cases happening in his time with the force. This type of misconduct was an everyday thing. An eye was hardly ever batted because it was so common.

Again the question arises of how the police are able to act like this. Juarez answers this question. The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) is supposed to be the department that polices the police. Juarez quotes David Fogel, a leader of OPS, “I have come to the conclusion that OPS gives the appearance of formal justice but actually helps to institutionalize subterfuge and injustice” (Juarez p. 287). OPS does not really do anything against police injustice but rather promotes it. “91.5 percent of cases pertaining to excessive force are unfounded. In most cases the officer or department are found not liable by OPS” (Juarez p. 287).

Another thing that led to these cases of misconduct was such small special tasks teams. This made it easier for people to follow the supervisor’s orders even if the orders were illegal (Juarez p. 287). The final issue that allowed so much misconduct was the court system. Juarez states that the identifying process for people arrested violated their civil rights. The court would assume that if the offender was arrested then they must be guilty, even if the officer testifying did not recognize the person. Juarez acknowledges that often the court seemed to treat the arrestee guilty until proven innocent (p. 292-293). From this one can gather that the reason for so much misconduct was the lack of policing the police, small teams where, and a broken court system.

There were very few prosecutions of officers in the cases Juarez mentions. The police essentially were able to get away with anything they did. In 2007, the OPS was replaced with the Independent Police Review Authority. It was designed to investigate allegations against police, on things like excessive force, coercion, and verbal abuse. In addition, the department reviews all cases of discharges amongst firearms and tasers. Lastly, it reviews complaints about the department (Department of Political Science at UIC p. 19). Even with this reform the oversight of the CPD still struggles. The Department of Political Science at UIC writes “Today there are still major concerns of accountability and transparency for the Police Board. It still has problems of transparency and difficulty earning a reputation as a fair and just decision maker” (p. 20). The CPD has made adjustments to the oversight of the department and it is doing what it can, but it is still a struggle because so much oversight is necessary.

**C. How the Scandals could have been Avoided:**

**a. The hiring, training process, and police culture**

One of the key components of my hypothesis is that I believe the hiring and training process for police officers is not thorough enough, and this is a large contributor to corruption. I looked deeply into the hiring process of becoming a police officer, the training they receive when first entering the police force, and the training one would receive throughout their career. I believe the amount of corruption in the two cases discussed could have been reduced had the hiring process been more thorough.

What I found was the hiring and training process varies across departments but for the most part is similar. The hiring process of becoming an officer consists of a basic application, a written exam, a physical fitness test, a drug test, a medical test, psychological testing, and a polygraph (discoveringpolice.org). This is more extensive and much more difficult than other hiring processes. However, this does not mean it is rigorous enough to gain the job of a police officer. All these things should be used in the hiring process of police officers. The thing I want to focus on is the psychological testing. Out of all the other testing elements, it is the hardest one to test and it can be passed when, perhaps, it should not be. And of all the testing methods it is the one that can lead to police corruption the most. Failing the physical fitness test or the written exam won’t lead to police corruption because they are most likely not going to get hired. The same goes for the drug and medical tests. But one may be able to get around a psychological test despite being psychologically unsound. A brief example of this involved a Cleveland police officer who shot a twelve year old to death. The officer failed one entrance exams from another department and was not hired by several other departments but he did pass the psychological test for the department he was hired by (Bernd). Later he was deemed psychologically unfit and was given the opportunity to resign. It was stated that during the psychological test ‘the officer seemed fairly rigid and had some dogmatic attitudes’ but the psychologist still determined him fit for the job (Bernd). This shows just how tricky the psychological testing can be. It is hard to determine what makes one unfit or fit. This is why it should be improved extensively. Real life training and situations are going to get the best measure of how psychologically sound an individual is. The psychological test is usually just an interview with a psychologist and a written psychological test/questionnaire (discoveringpolice.org). This should be part of the process but it should be more extensive. It would not be difficult to lie about things in the written portion of the test. I imagine most officers who were involved in the scandals were not psychologically sound.

When looking at some of the examples provided one can conclude that the officers were not psychologically fit. If an officer has a good psychological background they are not going to bash a homeless man’s bicycle for no reason or plant evidence. It is hard to determine if the officers involved in the Rampart scandal cheated the psychological test. The reason for this is because psychological testing was implemented directly because of the LAPD, and cases like the Rampart Scandal. Therefore, officers involved were not psychologically tested. Because of the increase in psychological testing after Ramparts, one can conclude that there is a relationship between lack of psychological testing and an increase in corruption. Before officers are hired they need to be tested extensively on how they would handle certain situations, especially when given authority. This helps to ensure they are not going to take money, plant evidence, or abuse power. The officer should then receive continuous psychological tests throughout their career, testing him in different situations, making sure they are still fit for the job. Officers need to be put through vigorous tests and be observed when handling life-like situations.

Renford Reese, acknowledges that many people like to use the bad apple theory. This would support my hypothesis as it would mean some cops are just bad apples and the hiring process needs to be strengthened to eliminate these bad apples, and advanced psychological testing could do this. Conversely, this is not the only theory that leads to corruption. Reese writes, “One must not be limited in their analysis of such a complex phenomenon as police corruption. Indeed, bad apples, leadership failures, lack of managerial oversight, a conducive organizational culture, and bureaucratic discretion were all, perhaps, causes of this scandal” (Reese, p. 94). While the bad apple theory is supported so are other theories that deal with corruption as a result of the institution. Had the hiring process been strengthened there would have been less corruption amongst the LAPD and CPD but not completely eliminated because the bad apple theory only goes so far in explaining why corruption exists.

There are different suggestions and alternatives to the current hiring and training officers that could prove to limit the amount of corruption. An interesting concept that my research has brought to attention is that it is our culture and institutions that shape police corruption rather than the individual. This idea explains that corruption exists because a culture permits it to exist. Corruption is embedded in a culture, therefore, when it takes place everyone turns a blind eye or they see it as a normal part of their life. It is the concept that police corruption is an institutionalized crime. This means that police corruption happens because certain departments allow it to happen, and there are little consequences for the crime. These are more key arguments in explaining why police corruption occurs and why it continues to take place. This is very prevalent in looking at the Rampart scandal. The LAPD’s culture allowed it to become what it was, promoting the chance for corruption to exist.

**b. Body Cameras**

The last thing I studied was the effects body cameras on officers would have had on these cases. Two experiments I analyzed showed officers were more active while wearing a camera without increasing their use of offensive tactics (Ready and Young), and a large decrease in both an officers’ response to resistance and external complaints when officers wore body cameras (Fridell, Jennings, and Lynch). This can lead us to believe that not observing officers enough leads to corruption.

Body cameras were not readily available at the time of the Rampart Scandal and the Juarez cases. However, had they been, they could have altered what happened in these two police departments. Had officers been wearing cameras it is likely citizens would have responded better to them. This decreases the likelihood of an officer behaving aggressively with a citizen. In addition, if an officer is under surveillance it is not likely he is going to plant evidence, perform an illegal search, shoot an unarmed man, or break a man’s bike. If they these things, it is all caught on camera and there would be consequences for the officer. Had there been surveillance on the LAPD, less wrongful convictions would have occurred, the trials of the officers involved in Rampart would have taken less time and money, and the court would have the evidence it needs for the trials. This would ultimately deter officers from corruption and misconduct because they would not be believed just because they have a badge. The camera cannot lie. On the other side, if the officer was right in his actions the video camera will show this.

One of the biggest problems that promoted these scandals was lack of managerial oversight. This is something that still needs to be improved but body cameras would be a step in the right direction. Departments like the LAPD and CPD are so big it is difficult to oversee everything they do. A body camera takes this burden off of those who police the police. It is now not just the police officer’s or department’s word but video evidence. This should make it easier for oversight to see both sides of the story rather than always favoring the police. Body cameras would have had a huge impact on how the Rampart Scandal would have played out along with the actions of the CPD.

**V. Discussion**

Yes, police corruption is a major conflict, but there are many departments and many cops that are not corrupt at all. We tend to pay attention to the bad ones because they often get more attention than the good ones. This may lead to a lack of numbers on police corruption, simply because it does not exist as much as people like believe it does. While making this point I would like to say I believe there are more good cops than bad, and all of our nation's law enforcement is not crooked or corrupt, but in fact, a good fraction of it is a just and fair structure. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of what causes police corruption is still intriguing and it is important to explore.

I hypothesized that there are several leading causes of police corruption. I suspected that the hiring, and training process of new cops is not thorough enough, and that cops are not trained well enough for certain situations. One other important factor I believe that leads to police corruption is the fact that cops are not observed enough when handling police matters. To explore my hypothesis I examined two specific police departments The LAPD and the CPD and scandals that surrounded them. I did this in order to find the causes that led to these scandals and to determine if the causes matched up with my hypothesis. Besides this, I wanted to examine whether police corruption would have been reduced by better hiring, training, and body cameras.

The case studies suggest there are multiple causes that lead to corruption, including the culture that surrounds the department, poor managerial oversight, and the court system. These things do not match up exactly with my hypothesis, but I would not say my hypothesis was completely rejected either. What I hypothesized as the causes may actually be potential fixes to the criminal justice system. For example, if the hiring and training process is altered for the LAPD and the department gets more cops who want the best for their department and their community, the department’s culture changes. Body cameras are a step in the right direction, enabling managerial oversight to be more productive. While poor hiring and training, and a lack of observation may not be the biggest factors in what causes police corruption, they are a gateway to allowing the bigger causes of police corruption to occur.

**VI. Conclusion**

Police corruption is a major problem in our society today. After extensive research and in depth analysis of some major cases of police corruption, I was able to conclude that the conflict is caused by the department’s culture, the court system, and poor managerial oversight. I conclude that if the hiring and training process is strengthened and body cameras are used these problems will decrease

My analysis is strong in the sense that I used specific examples from in the past to help explain what caused them to occur. I was also able to analyze how different policies could have changed the major scandals. My analysis would be stronger if I could examine more scandals and police departments in depth. Those cases would then either support the evidence; I found about the causes of corruption or bring new evidence to my attention. From this I would be able to examine what role the hiring process and body cameras would play within other departments, either giving me reason to support them or proving that they may be unnecessary.

These findings on police corruption shed new light on a very controversial and political issue. They show that police corruption is a major conflict but that it can be decreased. In order to do so the political world needs to take action. Corruption can end with the right steps.

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