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An Exploration of Police Corruption at Durban Harbour Port of Entry in South Africa

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Debra Claire Pheiffer ^α & Tanie Nothando Mkize ^σ

Abstract- This study delves into the pervasive issue of police corruption within a critical context of the Durban Harbour port of entry in South Africa. Police corruption poses a significant challenge to the integrity of law enforcement functioning of ports. This research highlights the role of inadequate training, resource constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and lack of oversight as a significant contributing factor. It emphasises the necessity of enhancing organisational accountability, improving training programmes, and fostering a culture of ethical conduct to mitigate corruption. Lastly, this article recommends that addressing police corruption at the Durban Harbour port of entry demands a holistic and interdisciplinary approach involving law enforcement agencies, government bodies, civil society, and the private sector. The insights gained from this investigation can inform targeted interventions and policy reforms to fortify the integrity of law enforcement and enhance the security and efficiency of harbour port operations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is recognised as spread through all public border services; police officials, customs and port authorities are seen to be the most unethical departments. Africa's ports suffer enormous financial losses due to a variety of factors, including incompetent staff, inadequate infrastructure, and corruption. Corruption has impeded the flow of commodities through customs and delayed economic growth. Corruption activities and opportunities to engage in corruption are influenced and also determined by the frequency of interactions between the police and customers. Clearing items without bribing the police or customs authorities is difficult. A number of illicit toll points are set up by officials, who demand money before allowing any trucks to enter or exit the port (Mugabi, 2022). Consequently, understanding the different ways that corruption appears in the public service is crucial to comprehend the notion of corruption. The organisational setting is the focal point of corruption, and the public servant's vocational level typically determines how frequently it occurs. This aim of this research is to understand the various dimensions and underlying factors contributing to corruption among

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law enforcement officers. A comprehensive study was done at Durban Harbour on the nature of police corruption, what causes police corruption and how it can be prevented.

Police corruption in ports and borders mostly takes place in terms of collusive forms of corruption to avoid tariffs, taxes and coercive bribery, where police or customs officials collect bribes from companies or individuals for performing routine processes. There is a broad general agreement in the literature that police corruption at ports and borders has a huge distraction on shipping costs, trade and revenue collection, as well as organised crime and security (Matshela, Binza & Mukonza, 2023). It is, therefore crucial that there must be a successful and well-organised process in place to combat police corruption; and to explore the challenges brought about by corruption at Durban Harbour. Through a qualitative research approach, combining interviews and literature analysis, this exploration investigates the motives, methods, and consequences of corrupt practices within this unique setting. Furthermore, it scrutinises the organisational, societal, and individual factors that promote corruption. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of police corruption at Durban Harbour, ranging from collusion with criminal elements to abuse of power for personal gain.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Badenhorst (2015), the literature review is the place where previous research is discussed and current research is discovered. The literature review unpacks the theory of the key concepts and discusses the conceptual framework of police corruption at harbour ports of entry. According to McCombes (2023), before beginning a new inquiry, performing a literature review will demonstrate the investigator's knowledge and understanding of the most recent studies on the topic. Researchers ought to be able to determine what research has already been conducted on the issue and what is unknown after conducting a literature study. An in-depth study of sources relating to the subject matter was explored, as elaborated upon below.

a) *Corruption in the police and its various forms*

Corruption is, at its core, a moral matter. Complex ethical issues are an unavoidable element of

police, which is a basic but unsettling fact. As a result, comprehensive transparency around conduct is difficult. Recognising this and being willing to debate the problems and complexities inherent in policing openly is, however, a vital part of the process of formulating coherent administrative policy responses to such concerns. Even though it is hard, considering the definition of "corruption" is an essential part of comprehending the problem. Police corruption consists of acts of omission in the ethical process, such as a promise of action or an attempted action or commissions in the form of an unethical process, a promise of action or an attempted action committed by a police officer or a group of police officers, characterised by their misuse of their official position, motivated in significant part by the achievement of personal gain (Newburn, 2015). The proper functioning of social relations and market trades within a community is dependent on law enforcement. Rule compliance, on the other hand, may not be attained if law enforcement officers are corrupt, for example, if officers bend the rules or invent new ones for personal advantage. In truth, there is rampant corruption among law enforcement officers, including the police (Abbink, Ryvkin & Serra, 2018). Even more mature democracies struggle to govern police behaviour because police service provides an apparently unique combination of pressures and incentives toward widely diversified sorts of malfeasance. These statements, spoken by two eminent experts on police corruption, highlight the importance of policing corruption being addressed on a constant basis (Porter & Prenzler, 2016).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016), South Africa is a growing source of outward investment, especially in Africa. South African companies are increasingly at risk of corruption involving foreign public officials in various stages of international business transactions, such as customs clearance, obtaining licences and permits to conduct business in foreign countries, paying taxes, and, in particular, conducting public procurement contracting. Port security, police officers and customs officials have been given the authority and a mandate to prevent the import of illegal goods (like drugs, weapons, alcohol, hazardous/flammable, and cigarettes) and persons. However, these activities are often a lucrative source of income, involving organised crime syndicates that do not hesitate to employ bribery, intimidation, and violence to facilitate their illegal transactions. Singh (2020) reports that three members of the National Intervention Unit (NIU), one of the South African Police Service (SAPS) elite units, have been detained on charges of corruption, extortion, and kidnapping. Officers were arrested after an incident in which they allegedly sought money from an employer. On August 5, 2020, police officers from the

National Intervention Unit allegedly entered a business on North Coast Road in Redhill and discovered unauthorised workers. In exchange for avoiding getting arrested, they sought money from their employer. There are many similar incidents of corruption occurring regularly at Durban Harbour port of entry, as revealed in this study.

b) *Port-related corruption*

The concept of port-related corruption is still underdeveloped. Jancsics (2019) notes that the main functions of border control agencies are national security and revenue collection. They must keep illegal goods and people out of the country while collecting revenue and taxes on goods that can enter the country. In this case study, police and customs officers have disregarded the declaration of the cargo and authorised the entry of the goods into the country while collecting incentives for the authorisation. Port corruption takes place when border law enforcement officers who are required to collect revenues and ensure security are enticed to neglect their duties and act unethically. According to Mugabi (2022), the chances of corruption are also determined by the number of interactions between police, customs, port security and clearing agents, who are more likely to extract bribes. At Durban Harbour, the corruption within the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) is a complication: all officers are vulnerable to corruption regardless of rank or position. This is because of the powers vested in police officers and the fact that some individuals wish to misapply these powers (Charlton, Mhlongo & Mistry, 2019).

Corruption is an endemic problem around the world where official positions are misused for personal gain (Albanese, 2015). During the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, customs officials and police officers were involved in the theft of a container full of whisky bottles at Durban Harbour. Subsequently, the container was recovered during the investigation. When the driver of the truck was interviewed, he stated that he had been hired by one of the police officers working at Durban Harbour to carry the container and was instructed to leave half of the goods in a tavern. The investigators found out that the tavern belonged to the police officer's brother. The other half of the consignment went to a high-ranked customs officer's home. Chêne (2018) states that corruption related to organised crime can take many forms, such as selling information to criminal groups, easing the processing of illicit goods and migrants and obstructing investigations. Selling information can include providing information to criminal groups about faulty systems (cameras), ongoing investigations, bridging processes or operational information that help criminal groups avoid detection. Criminal corruption involves criminal activities such as human trafficking, drug smuggling and container theft.

c) *Political corruption*

Corruption in South Africa is not a new phenomenon, but dates back to the colonisation in 1962. It is a constant feature in South African political life, which is deeply rooted and that it will take concerted efforts and time to defeat it. The seed of post-1994 corruption was deeply planted in the country's past (Friedman, 2020). Political corruption is the misuse of authority for personal benefit. Numerous actions and behaviours have a detrimental impact on political ethics. Political corruption refers to the attitudes and practices that undermine political ethics (Aktan, 2015). According to Kirwan and Zhiyong (2020), politics is in a crisis, the world is threatened by climate change and the extractive nature of political corruption. Mkize (2023) states that according to the Centre for the Study of Democracy (2012) political corruption takes the form of amending regulations so that the new port regulations serve the interests of certain individuals, groups, or companies. Politicians consult with border guard forces during the processing of various security-related laws and regulations, and the contribution of the forces' legal department or senior managers to the processing may be unduly influenced by the interests of private companies or individuals. According to the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (2023), corruption is a highly political phenomenon because a range of corrupt acts may be politicised. This happens when the spoils of corruption are sought and reinvested, not for personal enrichment, but to maintain and enhance a corrupt leader's hold on power.

When corruption is politicalised, corrupt acts are used to extract resources from the public coffers, which are reinvested in the structures, networks and tactics that politicians use to maintain and extend their hold on power. Political corruption is different from administrative/bureaucratic corruption. A corrupt president, government minister or ruling party is a different sort of problem than is, for example, a teacher or nurse taking bribes to offer services. The problem with political corruption is that it serves a function beyond greed and personal enrichment – the it may keep the regime together and afloat (Amundsen, 2019). Local business bosses bring cash and votes to regions that are characterised by client politics (Chêne, 2018). As a result, police must tolerate the activities of local bosses since local enterprises are involved in complicated, crooked networks that traffic items across international borders. This study revealed that political corruption can also affect port officials in various ways, for example, tempting them to amend regulations to serve the interests of certain individuals, groups, or companies (Mkize, 2023).

d) *Corruption of authority*

When an officer receives a gratuity in the form of a vacation for their whole family, all expenses paid, their

authority is corrupted. Officers benefit from their position without breaking the law (free drinks, meals, and services, for example) (Šumi & Laličić, 2015). Lee-Jones (2018) affirms that the police service is the government institution that is identified as one of the most corrupt. Corrupt police activities range from petty corruption in an act of small bribery to criminal infiltration and political corruption. The lower level of police officers is engaged in petty corruption, and it includes acts of bribery in everyday interactions with citizens (for example, by police officers at an entry and exit point at Durban Harbour). This author describes four general categories of police corruption as discussed below:

- Petty corruption among lower-level police officers involves acts of bribery in everyday interactions with citizens (for example, by police officers lying during container inspection),
- Bureaucratic corruption or administrative corruption means the misapplication of internal procedures and administrative processes and resources for personal gain, such as authorising illegal goods into the country or a lack of response to citizen's complaints against police officers,
- Corruption linked with criminal groups includes misconduct such as misleading investigations or tampering with evidence (for example, removing drugs from the container and packing them in the police van to load them back in the container in the safe area) and
- A high level of political corruption takes place where police managers misuse their power for personal gain or the benefit of political groups to whom they are formally or informally connected. Political interference may also occur in police investigations false investigations (Lee-Jones, 2018).

This study disclosed that due to corruption, police officers at Durban Harbour are involved in a variety of crimes as a result of their friendships with syndicates, making officials easy targets for being paid for a hit. Since police officials are paid to send competitors of the gang away from Durban Harbour, they conduct assault with grievous bodily harm. Citizens file these cases because medical doctors forces them at the hospital, and they do not attend court proceedings because they fear being murdered. Most examples of corruption are not documented because traders readily bribe the cops; those that are recorded are cops who were accused of being greedy, and a trap operation was carried out. The register on reported police corrupted cases from 2020 to 2022 were scrutinised, as displayed in below table.

Table 1: Reported corruption incidents at Durban Harbour

Incidents	2020	2021	2022
Armed robbery	-	1	-
Attempted murder	2	-	-
Murder	-	2	1
Theft	-	5	-
Corruption	2	4	2
Assault GBH	5	1	-

Source: Durban Harbour Departmental Hearing Database (2022).

e) *The causes and prevention of police corruption*

Policing is essential for both law enforcement and criminal justice in any given community. The police have a broad range of responsibilities, including maintaining internal order, quelling riots, and interacting with the public to promote goodwill and public confidence.

Along with this broad responsibility, preserving the rule of law, respecting human rights, and fostering good community relations are important policing values. According to Pfeiffer (2014), policing is a multi-agency multi-sectoral approach to community safety and crime prevention involves responding to a few priority problems, using multi-agency approaches. Human rights violations, police brutality, misconduct, corruption, and criminality can still occur even in highly industrialised cultures, which harms the confidence of police agencies when it is made public. The primary contributor to corruption is a lack of effective accountability systems. Police corruption can be lessened when corrupt officers are investigated or punished. Contrarily, corruption increases when police officers are not held accountable for misbehaviour or other wrongdoing (Singh, 2022). There are several underlying factors that contribute to police corruption. There are notable fixed and movable elements. Regarding the constant variables, discretion can be used with respect to licit and illicit cores, managerial absence of visibility, managers' secrecy in maintaining police culture even when corruption is prone, low salary and status issues, and affiliation with criminals that impede the performance of police duties. Low salaries can make extortion and bribery more common, especially when big families have considerable living expenses. In order for criminal organisations to continue operating illegally, police personnel may fall victim to their lucrative schemes. In hostile environments, organised criminal networks infiltrate police units to act in accordance with their specific, lucrative objectives by avoiding notice, investigation, and punishment (Singh, 2022).

Onogwu (2018) declares that the public's propensity to pay bribes to police personnel depends on the type of trade policies the country adopts. Trade policies, including free import, quota systems, high tariffs, selective import control, outright bans on imports from specific nations, and trade incentives for exporting

companies, all have a significant impact on how much corruption is reduced or increased. Corruption is encouraged by trade restrictions or bad design. Extensive quantitative limits or prohibitions, high tariffs, or both raise the likelihood of breaking the law. This research disclosed that political intervention in the country's policing plays a critical part in police corruption at Durban Harbour.

There are containers in Durban Harbour that are granted special treatment because of diplomacy, and they are not examined or stopped. When the researcher inquired about the diplomatic crates, the response was that if there is an order from above, no one can depart from it. Police corruption has come to be recognised as a personal trait of a police officer. Police organisations claimed that police personnel's poor moral standards led them to engage in corrupt behaviour (Somadiyono, 2014). The political and economic climate has a big impact on the corruption phenomena. Since people are eager to pay or offer payment in order to circumvent constraints, the more restricted and regulated the country's economic activity is, the greater the authority and power of officials in making decisions and the greater the likelihood of corruption. Where officials subject to regulation are given the option to make decisions based on discretion, there is a high possibility for corruption (Šumah, 2018).

Šumah (2018) further notes that standard police educational programmes approach police corruption from the individual level and depend on maturing individual resistance ability. The personality of the officer is one of the most important elements that affect the decision to engage in corrupt activities. While at the origin of all that is good and bad in law enforcement, there is a strong subculture that permeates most agencies. Members of the law enforcement subculture share traditions that enable officers to survive what, at times, is strenuous and emotional. Individual corruption exists because police culture accepts and protects police officers. This study determined that corrupt behaviour at Durban Harbour can be seen as a complex of social relationships and failures of organisations and institutions, and control systems either allow for or ignore corrupt behaviour. Other variables causing police corruption include pay scales, nature and hours of duty, housing issues, and specific administrative and organisational issues. Additionally, it is because of the

corrupt politicians and public officials' expanding influence. They give criminal groups a financial incentive to undermine law enforcement, unenforced moral laws encourage corruption. The prosecution of corrupt police personnel is a possibility since corruption entails criminal behaviour. However, since they rely on the police to gather proof and build cases, prosecutors frequently do not want to 'bite the hand that feeds them' (Šumah, 2018).

f) *Police corruption influenced by police culture*

The inviting edge to corruption refers to how policing is set up in a way that encourages corrupt behaviour, making anyone who fills the function of a police officer motivated to conduct improperly. Due to the fact that much police behaviour blurs the line between legal and unlawful, street officers are more likely to come into touch with criminals, which puts them under constant pressure to become corrupt. Due to their capacity to disobey or enforce the law, police officers attract corruption, making those who act unethically more susceptible to accepting bribes (Buttle, Davies & Meliala, 2015). There are cultural components to the causes of corruption as well. However, the term 'cultural embeddedness of corruption' does not allude to a retrograde, rigid, or determinist interpretation of culture. It rather focuses on certain societal norms that are prevalent in modern-day Africa and which communicate with or have an impact on corrupt activities. The logics of redistributive accumulation are inherent in the moral economy, i.e., when a government official obtains a position of authority (whether little or large), he or she not only works for the advantage of his or her immediate family but also for the benefit of his or her extended family (Malik & Qureshi, 2020). The ideals, visions, conventions, working language, procedures, symbols, beliefs, and habits of an organisation make up its culture. Additionally, new organisational members are taught the patterns of these collective behaviours and presumptions as a method of perceiving, as well as a way of thinking and feeling. The way individuals and groups interact with one another, with clients, and with stakeholders is influenced by organisational culture.

The police culture, according to this study, is a mixture of informal prejudices, values, attitudes, and working practices that are frequently seen among the upper and lower levels of the police and that affect the exercise of discretion. It speaks of the unity of the police, which might support corruption and oppose reform. It is because of this code of silence, which is built on group allegiance and pressures for approval, that officers find it challenging to report the wrongdoing of others (Mkhize, 2016).

g) *The code of silence*

According to Sarikaya (2015), one of the major causes of corruption is the use of a code of silence in the organisational culture amongst police officers. This

code obstructs both internal and external investigations of corrupt officers and encourages junior officers to join the chaos. The code of silence is ingrained in the culture of the police force. This code has been identified as one of the key enablers of inappropriate police behaviour in several types of research. The code of silence is seen as a significant impediment to managing and uncovering police wrongdoing, obstructing investigations. According to Westmarland and Conway (2020), the code of silence is an unwritten law that is also known as the blue wall or blue curtain. It encloses the feelings of loyalty and brotherhood that make policing easier while also protecting corrupt police from being exposed. Rather than exposing unethical colleagues to their superiors, police officers condone them. In fact, regardless of whether criminality is involved, devotion to other officers is a major element of the policing culture. Sarikaya (2015) states the same code and brotherhood can propagate a subculture that accepts colleagues' criminal law violations and generates a criminal police subculture. Although it is an unwritten law, it is regarded as a moral obligation. Police recruits are taught in the police academy and later by their field training officers that they should only rely on and trust their other officers because the police job is dangerous, and the danger is unexpected. Therefore, if police recruits want to be trusted by their more seasoned peers and receive support when they need it, socialisation into the police culture implies that they should adhere to the code of silence and keep any information about police misconduct committed by other police officers a secret (Ivković, Maskály, Kule & Haberland, 2022).

h) *Police discretionary powers*

Police officers govern policing powers by law, and they incorporate everything they are legally authorised to do. Most significant power is appropriate to corrupt the minds of those who own it. The policing powers grant discretion to act; this condition drives police officials to carefully contemplate and judge the results of their powers on individuals (Vilakazi, 2015). At Durban Harbour, police discretionary powers may also produce opportunities for wrongdoing, particularly under poor supervision and poor leadership. This study revealed that at Durban Harbour, police have the power to detain the container for further investigation. Police are using these powers to extort money from transporting agents, traders and owners of the cargo. Sometimes, police are working in conjunction with the transporter. The transporter will act as an informer, and the police will put a stop to that container while the transporter knows how urgent the box is needed. The transporter will inform the owner about the stop and influence the owner to pay the officer to release the cargo urgently. The urgent will be the one who is determining the amount, and they will divide the money.

i) *The contributing factors of corruption*

Corruption in the public sector is the result of a governance failure. Low-quality public sector management, a lack of accountability, bad government-citizen interactions, a weak legislative framework, a lack of openness in public sector procedures, and poor information distribution can all contribute to poor governance.

Inadequate training leads to a lack of competence and capability, which adds to governance failure. When a police department's culture allows for corruption of all forms to exist, it is considered to be the most serious case of corruption. Corruption is exacerbated by lawlessness or a weak rule of law at the federal level. When the legal system fails to establish punishments for officials who engage in corruption, the likelihood of corruption increases (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, 2019). This study determined a variety of corruption-related potential contributors that might have an impact on the parties concerned. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (2017) distinguishes between corruption in the public and private sectors as a contributing factor for the parties concerned by specifying the following interests:

- *Private sector contributing factors:* While pursuing personal gain is frequently the most common reason for corruption in the public sector, it is merely one of the reasons for corruption in the commercial sector. Where they have taken place, liberalisation and deregulation have cultivated a market characterised by fierce competition, driving businesses to use corruption to boost operational efficiency, protect development, and capture new markets. Companies that employ unethical behaviour to obtain a competitive edge have a domino effect on their industry, driving other businesses to use unethical behaviour to stay competitive. As was already mentioned, corruption reduces competition since businesses that refuse to accept bribes risk being shut out of the market. Lower competition raises prices and lowers the quality of goods and services, which ultimately hurts customers (Lee-Jones, 2018).
- *Public sector contributors:* The term "public sector" refers to businesses and organisations that exist to serve the public good. Both the branches of government and the bureaucratic structures and processes that make up government make up the public sector. Administrative services for the three branches of government (executive, legislature, and judiciary), as well as public services such as health, education, policing, military, infrastructure, water, and transportation, are provided by the public sector. At the country level, a range of factors influence the way governments and their services operate, which in turn influences the existence and

prevalence of public sector corruption. The viewpoint on how spending by the government and corruption are related. Is it an increase in the rents from criminal activity brought forth by a larger government that results in more corrupt politicians (Enste & Heldman, 2017).

j) *Procedures by police management to address corruption*

By incorporating all of the elements that motivate police personnel to commit corruption, as well as the various points of view that have been discussed throughout this study, the researcher was able to develop police corruption prevention strategies. Improving accountability, radical restructuring, risk assessments, improved working conditions, lifestyle monitoring, civilian review, and the introduction of anti-corruption agencies that are completely independent of the police are seen as some of the methods that will significantly reduce corruption rates at Durban Harbour (Holmes, 2018). Burger and Grobler (2017) police corruption can be stopped if leaders are committed to doing so and the necessary resources are available. Recent announcements from the SAPS include the creation of a dedicated capability in the Detective Service to conduct criminal investigations against members allegedly engaging in corrupt and fraudulent acts. According to Holmes (2018), it is not easy to combat police corruption effectively, but it can be done if there is an integrated strategy in place that seeks to promote integrity and support professionalism, increase accountability of those involved in police misconduct and criminality, and increase community awareness of and engagement with the strategy. Currently, the responsibility for tackling police corruption appears to rest on a number of mechanisms that are located in various structures of the SAPS.

The management of the SAPS, as also highlighted in their Annual Performance Plan (2022/2023), are very serious about the prevention, detection, investigation, and resolution of unethical conduct and corruption in the organisation (SAPS, 2022). According to Burger and Grobler (2017), there are 'several internal and external mechanisms' to be used by members of the SAPS for reporting corruption and fraud. The overarching goal of preventative approaches to police corruption is to change the underlying structures that encourage corruption and create an institutional environment that decreases incentives and opportunities for corrupt practices. This can be done by reforming the management systems and organisational culture of the institution with measures aimed at promoting integrity at all levels of the police institution, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and engaging with the community. This research recognised that the SAPS in Durban Harbour must be granted a professionalised status that denotes knowledge. The sophisticated

shoppers in the Durban Harbour area want a police officer with professional thinking skills. At Durban Harbour, the stereotype of a police officer as an unskilled night watchman needs to be abandoned in favour of a person performing a more significant and well-respected social function. If police personnel presented a more professional image to the public, it would enhance their ability to fight crime. As a result of structural changes brought on by the growth of larger police organisations, professionalism will be promoted as a strategy to increase the efficiency of police agencies. It will, therefore, be necessary to strengthen administration, legal knowledge, and overall police education.

This study revealed that departments should use caution when choosing ethics instructors. A teacher can stress and promote ethical behaviour, but one who utilises sarcasm or has a negative attitude can undermine the effort. Case studies encourage critical thinking and let police officers put their moral reasoning to the test in the classroom. A department's productivity and the preservation of good community police relations depend on reducing police misconduct. This connection is frequently evaluated based on the volume and nature of public complaints. Education has been shown to be a barrier to citizen complaints. Police officers with college degrees deal with fewer public complaints than those without. Similarly, researchers discovered that departments who do not advertise jobs with at least an associate degree as a requirement for entry-level, such officers have higher rates of public complaints than agencies that do (Basham, 2016).

k) *Initiatives to curb the SAPS involvement in corruption*

Raising compensation for public employees and other employees of the public sector is a component of nearly every anti-corruption reform initiative in many nations. It is unlikely that a police officer, doctor, or municipal worker will perform their duties well and abstain from mistreating others if their pay is insufficient to meet their own or their family's basic needs. In addition, inadequate pay devalues the work they accomplish, which can further encourage corruption. Losing a low-paying job is not a very severe punishment because it is easy to obtain one again. The evidence from around the world indicates a link between corruption and public officer compensation that is unfavourable (Demirgüç-Kunt, Lokshin & Kolchin, 2023). The traditional, modern conception of a profession, on the other hand, is that of a normative endeavour in which good practice standards are morally founded, not merely technically or legally. Being a professional cop will enhance the morale of individuals who joined the service because it is just a job, and police officers were not motivated by anything other than corruption and the ability to carry a gun. Law enforcement officers' perspectives will change if the SAPS is professionalised,

and officials will regard the police as a professional organisation (Chêne, 2015). This study recognised that in order to reprimand police officials, the Code of Conduct should be upheld in terms of the disciplinary procedure. Police officials should also be made aware that failure to comply will result in their dismissal if found guilty.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the scientific method chosen by the researcher for conducting their research using a rigorous, impersonal mode of procedure that is based on the demands of logic and objectivity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Research methodology is the path through which researchers conducting research as it provides the path through which these researchers formulate their problem and objective and present their result from the data obtained during the study period (Kassu, 2019).

a) *Research design and approach*

This study followed an empirical and exploratory research design. Maxfield and Babbie (2014) describes empirical design as being the production of knowledge based on experience or observation. Empirical research allowed the researcher to obtain information from the participants and had the benefit of permitting the investigator to probe participants' responses in much more detail during interviews. Exploratory research is a type of research design where the researcher is trying to understand a subject (Cobanoglu, 2023). Due to the scarcity of data on police corruption at Durban Harbour, a qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative research involves non-statistical examination of a social phenomenon, and using words, symbols, pictures or other non-numeric records that are relevant to the social group under study (McNabb, 2021). This research involves a subjective evaluation of attitudes, opinions, and behaviours. The perspectives of the people's beliefs, experiences, and meaning systems are of importance to qualitative researchers (Haradhan, 2018).

b) *Population and sample size*

Casteel and Bridier (2021) emphasise that the primary group about which the research is concerned is the population of interest for the study, which is made up of the individuals, dyads, groups, organisations, or other entities one seeks to understand and to whom or to which the study results may be generalised or transferred. The targeted population of this investigation was the SAPS managers employed at Durban Harbour Operational Response Services, who have broad knowledge and understanding of police corruption at Durban Harbour. According to Nuzha (2022), sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the population from whom to conduct research. The non-probability sampling technique was used in this study. Semasinghe

(2019) states that non-probability sampling is about selecting participants who have the information relevant to a particular study. It refers to a procedure where sampling units are chosen based on individual judgement. This research used a purposive sampling for the selection of knowledgeable and experienced participants in the field of policing. Faulkner and Faulkner (2019) state that in purposive sampling researchers select a sample based on their knowledge about the population or with predetermined characteristics in mind. The total sample size was six senior police officers (all managers).

c) *Data collection and analysis*

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that data alludes to the facts or information that researchers collect in order to find answers to the particular questions are asking. Data was collected by means of interviews and literature review. The interviews was semi-structured. According to Creswell (2014), semi-structure interview is the form of an interview that the interviewer does not have any set of prepared questions to follow up on, as in the case of a structured interview, and instead, there will be more open-ended questions allowing for a discussion with an interviewee. All the participants were interviewed face-to-face, in their offices at Durban Harbour.

In order to identify findings in a qualitative study, data analysis contains steps that indicate how the researcher incorporated theoretical and analytical frameworks, prior knowledge of the literature, and the focus of the research aim and questions (Bhattacharya, 2017). The following data analysis methods were used in this study as identified by Creswell (2014),

- Organising and preparing data for analysis;
- Reading through all the data;
- Coding the data;
- Interrelating themes/descriptions; and
- Interpreting the meaning of themes/descriptions.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings shows that corruption weakens state efficacy, security, and the rule of law in unstable and conflict-ridden states. Because such government institutions are weak, police officers are vulnerable to being penetrated by a criminal network's specialised financial interests in illicit trade. Criminal prosecution of political elites or organised crime groups implicated in drug-related corruption is not conceivable. The acts of the police and other law enforcement officers serve the interests of avaricious kleptocrats, political elites, and related criminal organisations. This motivates cops to participate in corrupt operations, defend dangerous neighbourhoods, and form protection networks. Corruption is institutionalised from the top down on a cultural and systemic level after it has permeated state

organisations such as a police force. When law enforcement is badly harmed, and accountability for misbehaviour is inadequate, the deterrent to engaging in corruption grows. Fighting police corruption may become an enormous task as a result of superiors covering up corruption and blaming a select few individuals rather than tackling structural causes.

This study found that police corruption consists of acts of omission in the ethical process, such as a promise of action or an attempted action, or commissions in the form of an unethical process, such as a promise of action or an attempted action, committed by a police officer or a group of police officers, characterised by police misuse of their official position, motivated primarily by the pursuit of personal gain. This research demonstrated that the presence of law enforcement authorities can encourage rather than deter criminal behaviour in circumstances where police officers frequently accept bribes in exchange for not prosecuting rule violations and extorting bribes from law-abiding residents. When officials demand money without breaking the law, the police service's value as a deterrent is manifestly diminished. This exploration further revealed that there are multiple causes of police corruption, including those at the individual, organisational, and societal levels. Starting with the awareness of complexity, realistic solutions to the challenges of police corruption must be developed.

This study determined that some police officials at Durban Harbour are corrupt. Only one manager indicated that police corruption is motivated and concealed and that its nature cannot be determined. Nonetheless, the others were all in agreement that police officers working at this harbour were dishonourable. According to Porter and Prenzler (2016), even more evolved democracies struggle to manage police behaviour since police services tend to provide a unique mix of pressures and incentives for a wide range of different sorts of wrongdoing. This implies that police corruption impedes effective property protection, crime and violence prevention, and good government. This research disclosed that in situations where it is common for police officers to accept bribes in exchange for not prosecuting rule violations and extorting bribes from law-abiding residents, the presence of law enforcement agents can encourage rather than deter criminal activity.

It was established, based on information gathered from the literature and participants' interviews, that the lack of police commitment and integrity are key reasons for corruption in the police. The majority of participants demonstrated a grasp of the causes of the SAPS officers' involvement in corruption, like poor supervision and unethical behaviours. Only one participant stated that the environment in which the police operate, as well as the lack of monitoring by team leaders and the absence of police integrity, are the causes of police officers' involvement in corruption at

Durban Harbour. According to the literature study and interviews, the causes of police corruption are factors such as managerial invisibility, managers' concealment, which protects police culture even when it is corruptible, poor pay and status issues, and connections to criminals, which interfere with the performance of police tasks. Systemic corruption can occur in organisational structures if a police service does not support sufficient remuneration, career development/promotions, and professionalism. This was identified from exploring the intrinsic aspects of policing as a profession, the nature of police organisations, the culture of the police, the opportunities for corruption presented by political and task environments, and the type and scope of efforts made to combat corruption are just a few of the general causes of corruption in the police (Somadiyono, 2014).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Police corruption can be reduced through modifying the institution's organisational culture and management practices to promote integrity at all levels of the police service, establish accountability systems, and engage the community. Frequent and continuous training is a vital component in the development of workers and leaders morals, and it must continue to be the SAPS managements' top priority during strategic planning. Line-level police officers should receive annual ethical training that includes both in-person and online case studies. Higher pay will result in greater professionalism, ethics, and less corruption. In the long run, this may boost the morale of police officers. Law enforcement officers should be compensated depending on their performance. Incentives for efficient crime fighting are critical. This article proposes that politicised policing be modified in order for police officers in management positions to be able to make informed decisions without feeling threatened by politicians in higher positions for their positions. Internally and globally, early warning methods must be created to monitor suspected corruptible police officers closely. It is critical to increase the detection and punishment of corrupt activities in order to prevent officials in all departments from conducting corrupt acts.

Given the nature of police corruption, it is advised that preventative measures be implemented in order to solve the issue. To begin with, each individual's personality contributes to police corruption. It is critical for police organisations to select individuals with great integrity in order to foster excellent behaviour and performance within the police service. This can be accomplished by instituting stricter screening methods and higher hiring standards. Background checks must be performed by recruiting firms in order to avoid hiring criminals into the police. Individuals with higher education should be encouraged to enter the industry, and those who are already employed should be

motivated to continue their education in order to widen their perspectives and strengthen their professional skills. This study recommends that enforcing an ethics code can improve the public's perception on police professionalism. It will boost employee confidence and trust in the organisation while also significantly reducing unethical behaviour, and knowledge of the ramifications of the officer's ethical decision-making. Education to improve service delivery to the society being policed by fostering strong ethical decision-making abilities. An officer's personal morality is cultivated. The SAPS should support all employees experiencing personal problems which could cause individuals to commit corruption, and other forms of criminal activities in order to overcome challenges hindering officials to act in an ethical manner during service delivery.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study recognised that with the widespread corruption among police officers, South Africans are losing patience. The public is accustomed to hearing about corruption in South Africa. As concluded in this research, due to the officials' social position, police officers are not meant to be corrupt. Citizens count on the officers to diligently serve and safeguard all inhabitants. Nothing is more upsetting than witnessing police officers get jailed. This damages the public's trust in the police. At Durban Harbour, corruption has taken on a ubiquitous pattern. It can be challenging to determine whether politicians are more corrupt than the police. The collected data showed that corrupt police personnel lose their ability to defend and assist the community. In the SAPS corruption is an open phenomenon rather than a hidden one. The Durban Harbour police have just one option – to stop corruption and win the hearts and minds of the community they serve or risk losing their jobs and/or incarceration. A democratic country cannot have lack of police accountability, this is unacceptable according to the Constitution of South Africa (1996) and the SAPS Act (1995). If the government is unwilling to work very closely with all role-players to stop corruption and do nothing about the alarming issue of police corruption at Durban Harbour port of entry, it could be at the expense of South Africa's fledgling democracy. The authors agree with Jacobs (2022) that corruption remains a phenomenon which bedevil the general society and as long as this evil is not addressed, government and affected businesses will keep on suffering financial losses. It is vital for the SAPS management to have a special task team to investigate and monitor the corruption suspicions at Durban Harbour.

VII. ABBREVIATIONS

COVID – Coronavirus

LEAs – Law enforcement agencies

NIU – National Intervention Unit
 OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
 SAPS – South African Police Service

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