



Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach (Basic Ethics in Action)

By Seumas Miller, Peter Roberts, Edward Spence, Michael Boylan

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Seumas Miller, Peter Roberts, and Edward Spence present a wide-ranging ethical analysis of corruption, divided into two main parts. This book discusses first the nature, causes, and implications of corruption, followed by a discussion of the myriad means for combating corruption. As such, it is a helpful tool for applied ethical analysis of business practices throughout the world today. *Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach* is the eighth book in the series, *Basic Ethics in Action*, edited by Michael Boylan, which is a major new undertaking by Prentice Hall covering several areas in applied ethics, including business ethics, environmental ethics, medical ethics, and social and political ethics.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

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This is a book about *corruption*, and also about *anti-corruption*. The first half of the book concerns itself with the nature, causes, and moral implications of corruption, and the second half with the means for combating corruption.

Moreover, this is a study in *applied philosophy*. As such, the book does not restrict itself to one form of corruption, such as economic corruption. Rather, it considers many forms of corruption including ones that are not economic in substance or in motivation. Consider an academic who plagiarizes her colleagues' work in order to become famous, or a sadist who abuses his political authority by mistreating subordinates because he derives pleasure from doing so.

Being an applied philosophical study, the book deals with practical issues, for example, how to combat bribery, but it does so on the assumption that prior philosophical work is required if those practical issues are to be satisfactorily resolved. Thus, we need to understand the nature of noble cause corruption, including its differences from other common or garden forms of corruption, if it is to be satisfactorily treated. Moreover, since it is applied philosophy, there is a need to take into account *empirical work*, for example, on the causes of specific forms of corruption.

Contrary to what is sometimes said and thought, corruption is at bottom a species of moral wrongdoing or of

unethical behavior. It is not simply, or necessarily, a species of unlawful activity. Here it is important to stress that law and morality are not the same thing. Therefore, our starting point in this book is that corruption is a species of immorality. In Chapter 1, we provide a *conceptual analysis of corruption*, thus understood. We also offer a number of taxonomies of corruption, for example, organized, systemic, and grand corruption.

In Chapter 2, we consider three general *conditions that are conducive to corruption*: the nature of the moral environment, absence of accountability mechanisms, and lack of transparency. Each of these general conditions has a number of specific forms, for example, the moral environment might be one in which there are great inequalities of power. In this chapter, we also consider a number of different socioeconomic contexts in which corruption might exist. Here we make use of two case studies, one drawn from Colombia during the time of Pablo Escobar, the other from the Enron scandal.

In Chapter 3, we consider a specific condition conducive to corruption, namely, *conflicts of interest*. We explore a variety of different conflicts of interest, for example, the Keating Five in the political arena, -and conflicts of interest in the media, the corporate sector, and clinical trials.

Chapter 4 concerns itself with addressing the question "What is wrong with corruption?" We distinguish between what is morally wrong with corruption *per se*, for example, it undermines a legitimate institutional process, and what might be wrong with the action at the core of a corrupt action, for example, telling a lie (that, say, undermines a judicial process). We also discuss deontological, teleological, and consequentialist arguments against different forms of corruption and do so in the context of some specific case studies, for example, Watergate.

In Chapter 5, we identify a number of different *rationalizations* used to justify corrupt actions, and we analyze two of these in detail, namely rationalizations arising out of noble cause corruption (doing evil for the sake of good) and transcultural interaction. Case studies used include the "Dirty Harry" scenario in policing, and the Lockheed and Bhopal scandals.

The second half of the book comprises Chapters 6 through 10. In Chapter 6, our concern is with the locus of moral responsibility for combating corruption. In order to focus our discussion, we consider corporate corruption in organizational settings. We describe some of the more notable corporate scandals and periods of corporate corruption, and we provide a detailed analysis of the key concept of *collective moral responsibility*. Also, we apply this notion to the modern business corporation.

In Chapter 7, we examine institutional accountability systems in relation to corruption, and specifically anti-corruption systems. We provide discussions of reactive anti-corruption systems, as well as of preventive anticorruption systems. We argue for what we term *holistic anti-corruption systems*. Our discussion ranges over both the private and the public sector. One particular issue we look at is corruption control in the context of developments in public sector administration.

Chapter 8 concerns itself with a specific anti-corruption issue, namely, *whistleblowing*. We provide an analysis of whistleblowing, including an account of the relationship between whistleblowing and corruption. Also, we discuss some of the features of institutional systems for protecting whistleblowers and handling their complaints. Case studies used here include that of Daniel Ellsberg in the United States and Mal Colston in Australia.

In Chapters 9 and 10, we shift our attention to those who are corrupt or who are suspected of being corrupt.

Chapter 9 concerns itself with the *rights of suspects* in the context of anti-corruption systems, including corruption prevention, investigation of corruption, and prosecution for corruption. The particular rights that

we examine in detail are the right to silence, the right to privacy, and the right not to be entrapped. Some of the case studies used here are the Starr investigation of Clinton and Lewinsky, and ABSCAM.

In Chapter 10, we examine the issue of corruption and punishment. We discuss the standard theoretical justifications for punishment, for example, retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation. We offer a detailed argument in favor of a particular *restorative justice* model, but we emphasize that our model is pluralist in that it has retributive and deterrence dimensions, in addition to its purely restorative justice elements.

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