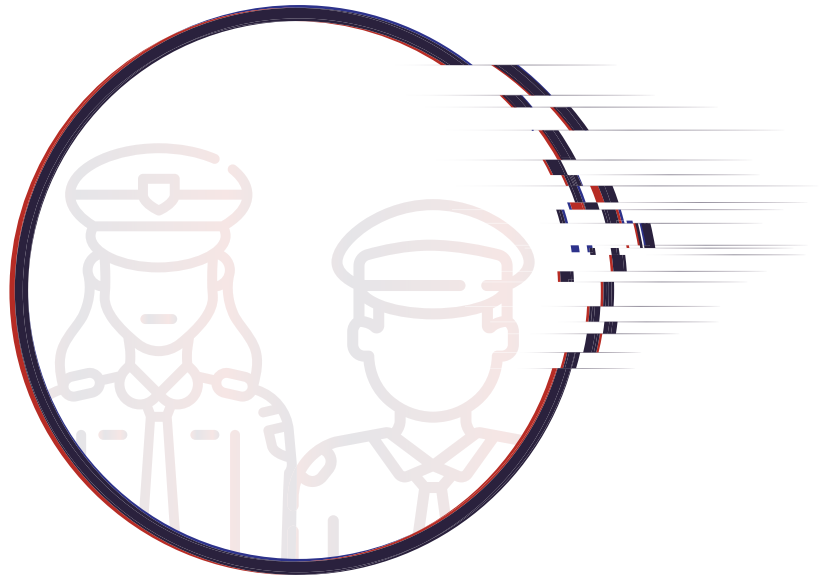


POLICY PAPER



WORKING CONDITIONS  
AND CORRUPTION  
TOLERANCE AMONG  
**POLICE OFFICERS**  
IN ALBANIA



P O L I C Y   P A P E R

# **Working conditions and corruption tolerance among Police Officers in Albania**

December 2020

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*Any views or opinions expressed in this project are solely of the implementing organization and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Government of the Netherlands.*



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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# Executive summary

*Over the past two decades, Albania has undertaken significant policy reforms to strengthen the integrity of its police system. Yet the process of developing and strengthening the integrity of the police has been slow and the police force remains one of the most exposed institution to corrupt practices. An effective system of police accountability entails both preventive and punitive measures. The latter have been often used to fight corruption in the police force but with limited results because they tend to fail to acknowledge the root causes of the incentives for police corruption. Conversely, the former has contributed to the success of many countries (such as Georgia, Singapore and Hong Kong) in fighting corruption and improving working conditions, salaries, training programmes, and the organizational rules governing the police integrity and ethics. Therefore, this paper focuses on the preventative approach to corruption in the police force. It aims to explore how working conditions (wage, professional preparation and on-job training, institutional working culture, code of ethics and internal regulations) impact the police officials' perceptions of corruption tolerance in Albania.*

*To this end, this paper uses a mixed research design, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. A public perception survey that was administered on a sample of 370 Albanian police officers in 2016 and again on a sample of 255 police officers in 2020 supplies the quantitative information. The qualitative sources include 4 semi-*

*structured interviews conducted between February and April 2020 with police officials and representatives of the police syndicate. The research finds that there is a positive relationship between perceived poor working conditions and predispositions to corruption. Correlation analysis shows that there is in general a statistically significant correlation between all variables measuring the working conditions of police officers and the prevalence of corruption they report to have experienced. In terms of police officer's perceptions, the study concludes that among many factors that are perceived to induce corruption predisposition, low wages and police ethical code are perceived to have the highest influence, followed by weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training and institutional working culture.*

*Although in the time frame of 4 years, there is a slight decrease in the tendency to perceive the above-mentioned factors as less likely to contribute to an increased tolerance towards corruption (except the perception on internal regulations and ethical code which have slightly increased recently), the percentages are still considerable even for 2020. Adequate working conditions, in particular, are perceived to be essential for police officers to effectively carry out their duties. The level of satisfaction with the workplace environment is also an important indicator of whether police officials are committed to high professional standards. This study's findings and recommendations seek to inform and contribute to the development of effective anti-corruption measures in the Albanian State Police.*

# 1. Introduction

Police forces play an important role in upholding the rule of law by detecting and preventing crime, protecting life and preserving public order and security. Their monopoly on the use of force, legal authority, and proximity with citizens can make it tempting for police officers to engage in corrupt practices and unethical behaviour (Lee-Jones, 2018). The fact that the law grants police officers certain privileges and discretionary powers further exposes them to the possibility of manipulation for political purposes or private gain (Chêne, 2010). Police corruption can take many forms, such as petty corruption and small-scale bribery, bureaucratic corruption, collusion with criminals and infiltration of law enforcement institutions with criminal organizations, and state capture. In each case, corruption has a devastating impact on the rule of law, as it undermines public trust and compromises the institutional integrity of the police force. Understanding and measuring corruption is challenging, as corrupt practices are constantly shaped by a whole set of economic, political, social and cultural factors (Lee-Jones, 2018; Seleim and Bontis, 2009). Furthermore, the hidden and highly collusive nature of corruption makes it difficult for researchers to gather empirical evidence in this area. Incidents of corrupt practices are less likely to be reported or recorded officially, since police officers are quite reluctant to report on their own or their colleagues' misconduct (Klockars et. al, 2000).

Anti-corruption efforts highlight a wide range of control measures and prevention mechanisms that aim inter alia to strengthen police integrity and accountability. Promoting a culture of integrity has become the hallmark of a democratic police force, including in Albania. In the past two decades, Albania has stepped up its efforts to curb corruption in law enforcement agencies. Successive Albanian governments have undertaken significant reforms to strengthen the integrity of the police system.<sup>1</sup> At present, anti-corruption efforts have gained a new momentum thanks to

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1 Some anti-corruption measures include: amendment of legislation, enhancement of anti-corruption measures, and engagement of public in fighting corruption; increased surveillance by installing camera systems in police patrol vehicles. See IDM, 2016, for more comprehensive overview of measures.



the launch of the vetting process of the Albanian State Police.<sup>2</sup> This process, which is still ongoing, has led to several dismissals and resignations of police officers (KJV, 2020).<sup>3</sup> Yet the overall process of developing and strengthening the integrity of the police organization has been slow and the police force remains one of the most corrupt institutions in the country (Dyrmishi et al., 2016). According to a survey on police corruption and integrity carried out by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation in 2016, 18% of the respondents indicated that they had been asked by police officers to pay a bribe, and 17% admitted to have paid a bribe to a police officer (Dyrmishi et al., 2016).<sup>4</sup> Data from a national public perception survey conducted by IDM between 2014 and 2016 suggest that poor income, working conditions, and training are seen as the main culprits for police corruption. Almost half of the respondents in this poll thought that the work culture of the police force (50%) and low salaries (47%) were the two major factors driving corruption in this public sector. Deficient training and bad working conditions were ranked third and fourth, with 37% and 20% respectively. Furthermore, a significant number of police officers believed that low pay (52%), deficient training (28%), and work culture (28%) were linked to corrupt practices.

The same study shows that, according to police officers, some of the most effective measures to combat corruption include an increase of salaries (74%), the improvement of working conditions (65%), and more education and training (60%) (Dyrmishi et al, 2016). However, the general public's perception differs on the proper mechanisms for reducing corruption in the police force. Research suggests that the public is more in favour of measures that entail the strict punishment for offenders (26%) and police force managers (18%) as the means of preventing police corruption (Qirjazi, 2017). Still, both the general public and police officers seem to agree on the importance of higher salaries to prevent corruption in the police force. This highlights a clear avenue for action to curb corruption (Dyrmishi et al, 2016). While there is no silver bullet in the fight against corruption, studies

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- 2 Police vetting process is designed to check the moral integrity, professional and personal background in the ASP. See Law No. 12/2018, "On Transitional and Periodic Evaluation of Officials of the State Police, Republican Guard, and Service of Internal Affairs and Complaints in the Ministry of Interior"
- 3 For more information on the Albanian Police Vetting see <https://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Monitoring-report-on-the-Police-Vetting-Process-2020.pdf>
- 4 This study examines police corruption in Albania in order to assess trends of police corruption and anti-corruption measures during 2014-2016.

(Lee-Jones, 2018; Chene, 2010) underscore the effectiveness of interventions and control mechanisms aimed at decreasing incentives and opportunities for corruption. The success of many countries (such as Georgia, Singapore and Hong Kong) in combatting corruption can also be attributed to efforts to improve working conditions, salaries, training programmes, and the organizational rules governing the police integrity and ethics (Lee-Jones, 2018; Devlin, 2010; Chene, 2010).

This paper focuses on the preventative approach to corruption in the police force, paying particular attention to measures that target the factors which have been proven to increase the incentives and opportunities for police corruption. The main goal is to understand the extent to which current working conditions and the organisational culture shape police officers' perceptions on corruption tolerance in their line of work. The analysis addresses the following questions:

- How do human resource management systems (reward management, such as pay, benefits and training)<sup>5</sup> affect predispositions to corruption?
- How does the organisation's ethical climate (the existence and communication of ethical and integrity guidelines, or a code of conduct) impact on predispositions to corruption?

The first section of the study provides an overview of existing means of curbing police corruption, focusing particularly on preventive measures in countries where they had been successfully implemented. The next section uses data from a public survey and interviews with police officials and representative from Police Syndicate to check whether working conditions influence corruption perceptions. The final section draws conclusions and provides recommendations on how to enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures in the Albanian police force.

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5 Reward Management is concerned with how employees are rewarded in accordance with their value to an employer. This includes both financial and non-financial rewards and recognition. Typical elements of a reward system include pay rates, bonus schemes, sales incentive schemes, company car benefits and medical schemes. <https://www.gravitashr.co.uk/reward-management>. For more information on human resource management see Paauwe, J., & Boon, C. (2009). Strategic HRM: A critical review. In D. G. Collings, G. Wood (Eds.) & M.A. Reid, Human resource management: A critical approach (pp. 38-54). London: Routledge.

## 2. Fighting police corruption around the globe

Curbing police corruption is necessary to enforce the rule of law, restore and strengthen public trust and confidence, and build the legitimacy of law enforcement state institutions (UNDOC, 2011). Anti-corruption measures in the police force have evolved over time and differ considerably from one country to another. There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution. Although several best practices that address police-related corruption advocate for a comprehensive anti-corruption intervention, all efforts have to be embedded in the local context. Therefore, when developing a strategy to promote integrity and fight corruption, a holistic approach seems appropriate, including both repressive and preventive measures, as well as awareness-raising about anti-corruption efforts.

This three-pronged approach was first adopted in Hong Kong and later replicated throughout the world (UNDOC, 2011). The method emphasises preventive measures that may help to shrink the space for corrupt practices, and then advocates for polices that aim to deter corruption through the punishment of corrupt individuals. Positive experience with police reform in countries such as Singapore, Georgia and Hong Kong indicates that working conditions of police officers are strongly correlated with corrupt practices. These case studies show that police corruption is driven, amongst others, by poor working conditions, including low salaries; poor recruitment and selection procedures; the lack of training programmes, and inadequate check and balances (Quah 2001; Lee-Jones, 2018; Di Poppo, 2010).

All these countries adopted reforms and drastic measures to minimise corruption among their police forces, which are considered to have been highly effective. Their efforts focused on eliminating opportunities for corruption by introducing corruption-resilient practices. Some of the specific changes involved an improvement in the working conditions, selection procedures and training programmes, salary rises, adjustments

in the recruitment and promotion of officials, and the enforcement of integrity rules and regulations (DCAF, 2012; Lee-Jones, 2018; OSCE, 2016). The cases of Hong Kong, Georgia and Singapore highlight how a holistic and multi-layered anti-corruption approach with wide alliances between the public, private and civil society sectors can make a huge difference in the anti-corruption reform efforts (Lee-Jones, 2018). These countries are often cited as successful examples in the fight against police corruption.

# 3. Methodology

This paper uses a mixed-methods approach to explore the research questions from multiple perspectives.

First, it relies on a public perception survey that was carried out twice in the time span of 4 years. The field research for the first survey was conducted in 2016, on a representative sample of 370 Albanian police officers and for the second time, the same survey was carried out in 2020 on a sample of 255 police officers. The aim for drawing on data from these two surveys is to provide a timely comparative analysis on how working conditions impact corruption tolerance.<sup>6</sup> Respondents were previously informed about the objectives of the study and the data confidentially. In the survey, police officers were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements concerning the factors that affect the quality of their work environment using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

In order to understand how working conditions impact corruption predisposition, we used two levels of analysis.

For the first level, we tried to explore inclination toward corruption, based on police officers’ perceptions of working conditions. The survey questions solicited police officers’ perception on their working conditions, which could potentially incentivise corruption.<sup>7</sup> For the second level of analysis, we used correlation analysis as a statistical method<sup>8</sup> to extract

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- 6 For the purpose of this paper working conditions refer to different aspects of human resource management in the organization of the police (that is, salaries, reward management, training and promotions) as well as institutional working culture; police ethical code, police internal regulations.
- 7 We rely on DCAF definition of corruption to refer to “any course of action or failure to act (‘omission’) by individuals or organisations, public or private, in violation of law or trust for profit or gain”. DCAF, p.22. Retrieved from [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Toolkit\\_ENG\\_screen.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Toolkit_ENG_screen.pdf)
- 8 Correlation is a statistical measure that describes how two variables are related and indicates that as one variable changes in value, the other variable tends to change in a specific direction.

the measure of correlation between different variables measuring the working conditions for police officers with the prevalence of police officers reporting they have witnessed cases of corruption, which is the strictest measure of corruption among police officers as reported by them. (See table 10). We included questions measuring the influence of low wage on corruption, influence of weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training on corruption, institutional working culture, code of ethics and internal regulations as well as vetting process impact on corruption.

This paper uses as well qualitative approaches, which provide greater explanatory depth and a nuanced understanding of the research areas. In total 4 individual in-depth interviews with key actors were conducted, three with police officials and one with the representatives of the Police Syndicate, to gain insights into the research questions posed. These interviews complement the quantitative data from the survey. One interview was conducted face to face and two others by video call. The interviews were semi-structured and they were all tape recorded after oral consent from participants. The first part of interview consisted of more general questions regarding current job position and expertise as well as general overview of police working conditions. The second part of the interview consisted of more specific questions regarding particular problems and challenges police officials face in terms of corruption predisposition and correlation with police salaries, promotions and training, ethical climate and internal regulations.

Third, it employs desk research, covering a wide range of studies and reports on police corruption and integrity, the existing and proposed legislative, policy and administrative frameworks for the Albanian State Police (ASP); publications on ASP by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Union (EU); reports from the Central Labor Inspectorate, Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Committee, Helsinki Committee in Albania, Albanian State Police, Police Syndicate; international and national reports and documents regarding police anti-corruption reforms; studies, articles, petitions and official documents from the Police syndicate; and media reports and coverage of ASP.

# 4. Analysis: Working conditions and corruption propensities among Albanian police officers

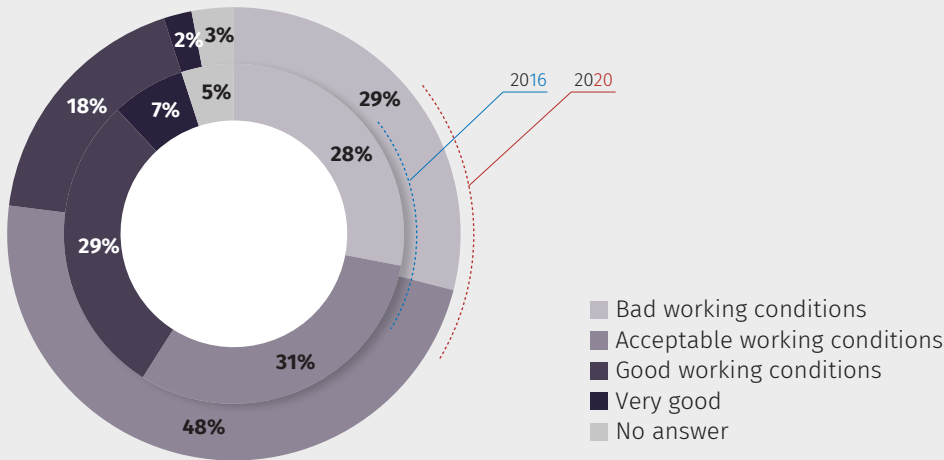
This section presents Albanian police officers' perceptions of their working conditions and explores how particular elements of the working environment (that is, human resource management systems and the organisation's ethical climate) seem to affect their predisposition to corruption.

## 4.1 Perceptions on working conditions

Working conditions are key to an employee's overall performance and satisfaction with the job. The level of job satisfaction is also a good indicator of whether an employee will be committed or not to high professional standards (Kemboi and Moronge, 2016). Studies show that a high level of job satisfaction is associated with better workplace performance, which, in turn, raises the employee's overall satisfaction with the job (Mabila et al, 2014). Adequate working conditions also seem essential for police officers to carry out their duties effectively (UNDOC, 2011). Research indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between poor working conditions and predispositions to corruption.

Moreover, poor working conditions can reduce the ethical integrity<sup>9</sup> of police officers (Lee-Jones, 2018). The working conditions of the Albanian State officers are regulated by the State Police Regulation. The scope of the regulation is to define the “rules on the organization and functioning of relations within and outside the State Police structures; principles, standards, and norms that regulate the professional and ethical conduct of police officers during and outside service; career advancement and management of human resources; performance evaluation of the State Police structures and the rules on discipline and procedures to be followed in case of disciplinary violations.”<sup>10</sup> The new regulation incorporates in one single document the (1) State Police internal rules; (2) State Police ethics; (3) procedures for career advancement; and, (4) disciplinary rules.<sup>11</sup>

Graph 1. Proportion of police officers reporting on perceived working conditions. Source IDM, 2016-2020



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9 According to DCAF definition integrity is “the principle of consistently behaving in accordance with ethical values.” Retrieved from [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF\\_PIBP\\_Training%20Manual\\_ENG\\_2019\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_PIBP_Training%20Manual_ENG_2019_web_0.pdf)

10 Council of Ministers’ Decision No. 750, dated 16.9.2015, Regulation of the State Police Regulation of the State Police, Article

11 Article 2 of Regulation of the State Police Regulation of the State Police



The data presented in graph 1 show that Albanian police officers are divided in their perception of working conditions. Despite this polarization, the proportion of those who believe that working conditions are bad have not changed in the last four years. Thus, overall, 28% of those surveyed in 2016 and 29% of those surveyed in 2020 believe that working conditions are bad, while 7% for 2016 and 2.4% for 2020 claim the opposite to be the true. Yet, the percentage of those who perceive that working conditions are acceptable is higher in 2020 (almost half of the respondents 48%), in 2016 only 31% of respondents report acceptable working conditions. Thus, these data might indicate that the efforts undertaken over the past few years to ameliorate working conditions among police officers<sup>12</sup> do not seem to have yet produced a sustainable positive change in working conditions.

## 4.2 Human resource management systems

The existence of professional human resource (HR) management systems is of paramount importance for the integrity of institution, since it can help to guarantee transparent and merit-based recruitment and career development for police officers. This section looks at different aspects of human resource management in the State Police, that is, reward management, training and promotions, and seeks to understand if human management practices affect corruption predispositions.

### 4.2.1 Reward management: Salary and benefits

#### Police salaries

Studies show that improving the reward management systems, including salaries and other workplace incentives,<sup>13</sup> can be a good stimulus in any effort to curb corruption (Chene, 2010; Quah, 2006). Even among Albanian police officers, studies indicate that low salaries could push police officers to seek financial and material gains by exploiting the discretionary powers

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12 For example, increase in police salaries. See footnote No.1 and No.2 for more information on police reforms.

13 Such as free medical aid, free accommodation for married personnel, and the introduction of educational allowances, remuneration for extra hours, night shifts and work performed on national holidays

they enjoy by virtue of their profession (APU, 2012). The Albanian Police force has the lowest salaries compared to any other country in the Balkan region (IBNA, 2016). In 2017, the Council of Ministers (DCM) decided to increase by 17% the salaries of State Police officers. As a result, a starting level police officer is currently paid 450 euros (690 ALL) per month.<sup>14</sup> Prior to 2017, a police officer was paid 34% less than other employees in the public administration. More specifically, a police officer of the General Patrol, for example, was paid less than a cleaner who worked in the administration. Despite the government's increase of the ASP's pay rate twice in the last decade<sup>15</sup>, salaries in the state police remain still remain low.<sup>16</sup> Studies reveal that well-paid staff is less likely to be involved in corrupt activities (Lindner, 2013). Among Albanian police officers, those with the highest predisposition to be involved with petty corruption practices are the ones who are worst paid, such as police employees on the operational level (Albanian Police Union, 2012). However, there are no recent studies deliberating on the link between low wages and their impact on petty corruption or grand corruption among police officers in Albania.

### **Remuneration for extra hours, night shifts and work performed on national holidays**

The normal working week of police officials consists of 40 hours and the monthly working time should not exceed 174 hours.<sup>17</sup> The working time of police officers is organised in 3 shifts per 24 hours (8 hours per shift). According to the Council of Ministers, any working hour performed during night or on official holidays entitles the employee to additional remuneration. Employees working overtime can demand leave equal to the duration of the performed job, plus an extra pay and no less than 25% of an average salary. This share amounts to 50% in the case of work performed during night shifts or national holidays. Data on additional work is limited and rosters can be unpredictable, creating undue stress on police

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- 14 In 2020, the national minimum wage in Albania remained fixed at 213.5 € per month, <https://countryeconomy.com/national-minimum-wage/albania>
- 15 Police salaries increased by 10% in 2014 and 17% in 2017. See IDM, 2016
- 16 <https://faktoje.al/rama-dhe-pagat-e-policeve/>; Interview No. 1, representative from Albanian Police Union, February 7, 2020; Interview No.3, Police Official, April 6, 2020.
- 17 DCM 101, date 15.02.2017, "On work and rest time in the State Police".

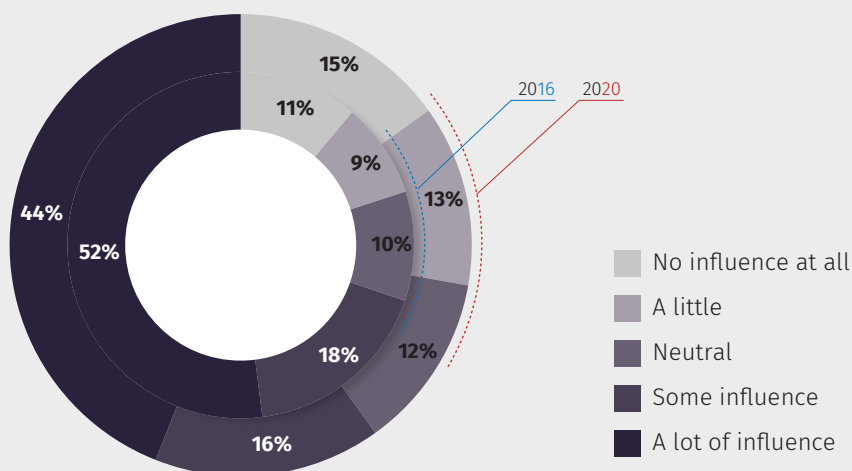
officers.<sup>18</sup> However, compensation for the extra hours and night shifts rarely takes place.<sup>19</sup> Supplementary payments for police officials, such as daily allowances, have not been paid since 2013,<sup>20</sup> and payments for years of work experience have not been offered since 2007.<sup>21</sup> Another challenge faced by police officials is the rent refund for those who are being transferred in other cities. If they rent an apartment, they will not receive the compensation amount they are entitled for the distance.<sup>22</sup>

Among many other factors, low wages may increase the predisposition to corruption. As the following chart shows, the percentage of those who believe that low wages have an influence on corruption predisposition (a lot of influence and some influence) is higher in 2016 (70%), compared to 60% in 2020. In 2020 there is a slight increase in the percentage of those believe that low wages do not have any influence at all on corruption predisposition (15%) compared to 11% in 2016. These data indicate that, in the time frame of four years less police officers give importance to wages as drivers of corruption. This slight decrease could be attributed to the fact that police wages have increased once during this period, which seem to weaken the perceived impact of low wages on police corruption. Yet, regardless the decrease in the proportion of police officers reporting that low wages influence corruption in 2020 vs. 2016, the share of those reporting low wages is influential to corruption is still high, which might potentially indicate the fact that, low pay might lead to corruptive practices among state police, a finding in line with previous research on this subject.<sup>23</sup>

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- 18 Interview No.2, Police Official, April 6, 2020.
- 19 Interview with representative from Albanian Police Union, February 7, 2020; Interview No.2, Police Official, April 6, 2020.
- 20 Interview No. 4, Police Official, April 7, 2020.; DCM 494, date 01.08.2007 "For the approval of the norms of food treatment of the Albanian Police officers, students and cadets in police schools and of the detainees up to a clarification of their position from the Council of Ministers from 01.08.2007 and in continuance" [http://www.gjykataadministrativeeapelit.al/lista.php?page\\_id=&data=7&muaji=02&viti=2018&pn=4](http://www.gjykataadministrativeeapelit.al/lista.php?page_id=&data=7&muaji=02&viti=2018&pn=4)
- 21 These payments make up almost 18 of police salaries see <http://sindikatapolicise.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/gazeta-QERSHO-2014l.pdf>; Interview with representative from Albanian Police Union, February 7, 2020 <https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/albania/>
- 22 Interview No. 4, Police Official, April 7, 2020.
- 23 <https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/albania/>

Graph 2. Proportion of police officer reporting low wage has /has no influence on police corruption



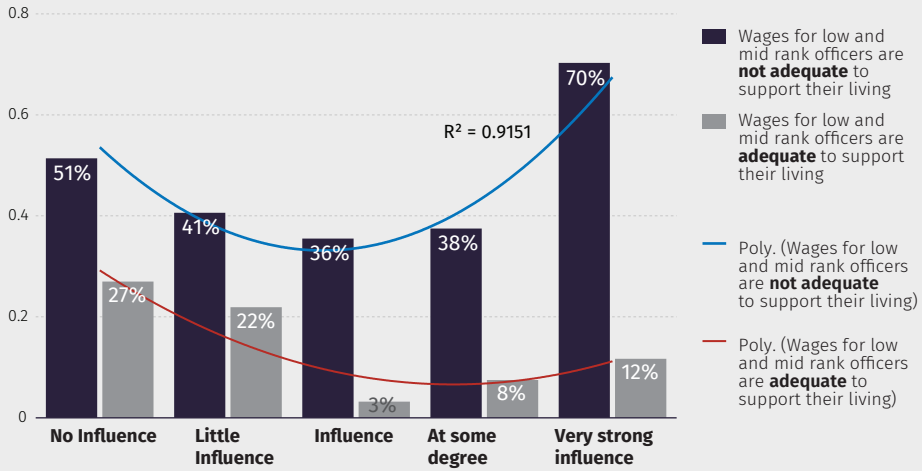
Source IDM Survey 2016-2020

Police officers were asked to report if they agreed/disagreed on the fact that wages for police officers per different rank are considered adequate to support their living. We cross tabulated the responses of police officers on the adequacy of wage with the degree of influence of wages on corruption. There is a statistically significant difference between the perceived level of influence of low wages on corruption and the wage adequacy per different ranks.<sup>24</sup> The proportion of those reporting low wages have a strong influence on corruption is very high, 70% of respondents who believe wages for mid and low rank officers are not adequate for ensuring them a normal living, do believe that a low wage becomes a driver of corruption. Proportion of those reporting that wages of mid and low rank officers are adequate to support their living and that believe that low wages are driving corruptions falls to 12% of respondents.

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24 Chi Square statistics is 48.614\*\*\* (p=0.000) for low rank officer wage adequacy. A chi-square statistic is one way to show a relationship between two categorical variables.

Graph 3. Proportion of police officer reporting low wage has an influence on police corruption, if they strongly agree that wages are not adequate to support police officers living



Source IDM, 2016-2020

We checked the correlation between the variable “low wages are influential to corruption” and the responses of police officers – “Yes, I have witnessed cases when police officers receive a bribe” and the responses - “yes, I have witnessed police officers asking for a bribe”. There is a consistent positive correlation between reported corruption and police officers perceiving low wages to be an influencing factor to corruption”. The correlation coefficient shows that if a person perceives that low wage influences corruption strengthens by 1 scale of measurement, the prevalence of the police officers witnessing corruption increases by 15% (in case when police officers receive a bribe from a citizens) and 16% in cases when police officer is asking for a bribe (see table 1).

**Table 1: Correlation between experienced corruption and low wages are influential to corruption (IDM survey 2020)**

Correlation		Police officer receiving bribe	Police officers asking for bribe
<b>Low Wages are influential to corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	.150**	.160**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.012
	N	249	249

\*\*\* Correlation<sup>25</sup> is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.2.2 Promotions and training

A professional, reliable and efficient police organisation is crucial for an effective fight against corruption. The lack of appropriate training, especially on professional standards of ethical integrity, can hamper the development of a professional police force. The introduction of professional training and the development of police force was another key measure adopted by governments that succeeded in minimising police corruption in their countries<sup>26</sup> (Chene, 2010). For instance, in the case of Singapore, the government introduced 40 hours of basic training courses for both junior and senior police staff. The training module placed an important emphasis on disciplinary-related issues, corruption, integrity and ethics, the code of conduct, police regulations, and government instruction manuals. At the same time, various handbooks and guidelines on ethical decisions were used to enhance the skills of police officials (Quah, 2006). Singapore reduced police corruption by educating police officials and training them to strengthen professionalism, awareness and adherence to human rights and the rule of law (DCAF, 2012; Lee-Jones, 2018). The Albanian State Police regulation foresees the continuous professional

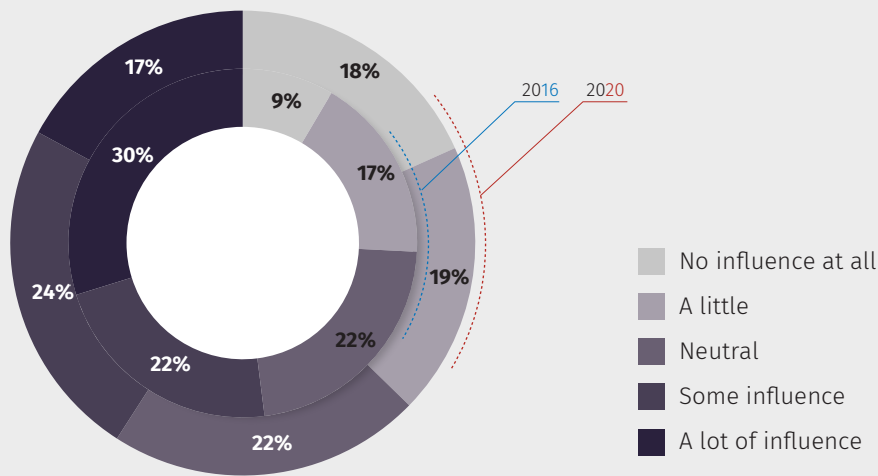
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25 Pearson correlation (r) is used to measure strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables.

26 such as Georgia, Singapore and Hong Kong

training of police employee.<sup>27</sup> This training is based on the needs assessment of the police structures across the country and it is planned throughout the calendar year (Kuçi and Begaj, 2016). Yet, respondents suggest that the current level of training among Albanian police officers leaves gaps in the amount of information and education that police officers receive with respect to ethics, integrity and human rights.<sup>28</sup>

Graph 4. Perceived influence of weak professional preparation and training of police officers on corruption predisposition. Source IDM, 2016-2020



As illustrated in graph 4, the 2020 survey indicates that 41% of the respondents believe that weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training of police officers increases the predisposition of police officers to be corrupt, compared to half of the respondents (52%) who thought the same in 2016. The percentage of those who are neutral in their opinion is the same for both years (22%). Some 19 % of the respondents surveyed in 2020 believe that weak professional preparation and lack of on-job

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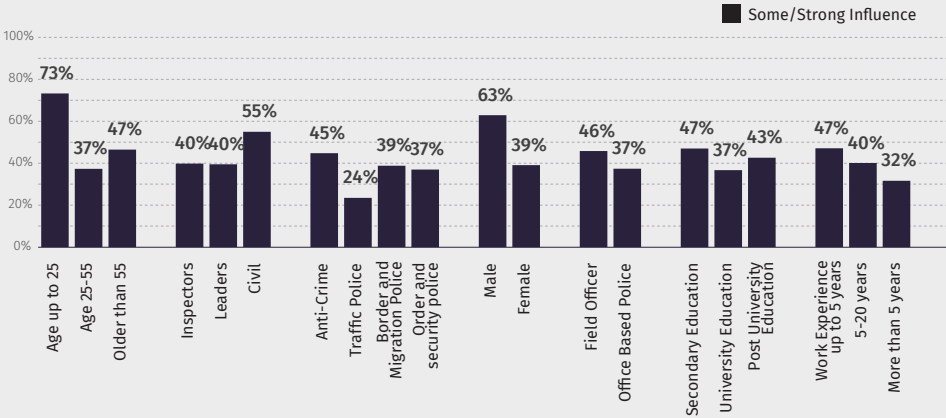
27 Article 156, Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 750 of 16 September 2015 "On the Adoption of the Regulation of the State Police".

28 Interview No.2, Police Official, April 6, 2020; Interview No.3, Police Official, April 6, 2020.

training has a little influence on corruption, which is a bit higher than those surveyed on 2016 (17%). Moreover, the percentage of those who report no significant influence of weak professional preparation and training on corruption predisposition is doubled for 2020 (18%) compared to only about one tenth (9%) of those surveyed in 2016.

These data suggest that those interviewed in 2020 seem less likely to perceive corruption as a consequence of low professional preparation and lack of training among police officers. Nevertheless, for 2020 there is still a considerable percentage (41%) of those who believe that weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training could lead to corruption predisposition. Among police officers, the prevalence of reporting weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training become drivers of corruptive practices is higher among young officers (of age up to 25 years old), as 73% of them believe that weak professional standards influence corruption. Male police officers, field police officers and civil police officers do also have a higher prevalence of believing that weak professional preparation and training strengthens the corruption predisposition (see graph 5). These data might suggest that despite the recent improvements, there is still a need to further update the training curricula in order to provide police officers with adequate knowledge on anti-corruption legislation or instilled in them a culture of integrity.

Graph 5: Proportion of Police officers responding that weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training poses some/strong influence on corruption among police officers (in 2020, per different categories of police officers).





A similar pattern of correlation is observed for the influence of weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training of police officers on likelihood of observing corruption among police officers. If the perception of police officers that weak professional preparation and training influence corruption strengthens by 1 unit of measurement, then the likelihood to witness corruption as a demand by police officers increases by 24.6%, while corruption induced by the citizens behaviour increases by 16.5%

**Table 2: Correlation between experienced corruption and weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training are influential to corruption (IDM survey 2020)**

<b>Correlation</b>		Police officer receiving bribe	Police officers asking for bribe
<b>Weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training induce corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	.165***	.246***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000
	N	249	249

### 4.3 The organisation's ethical climate

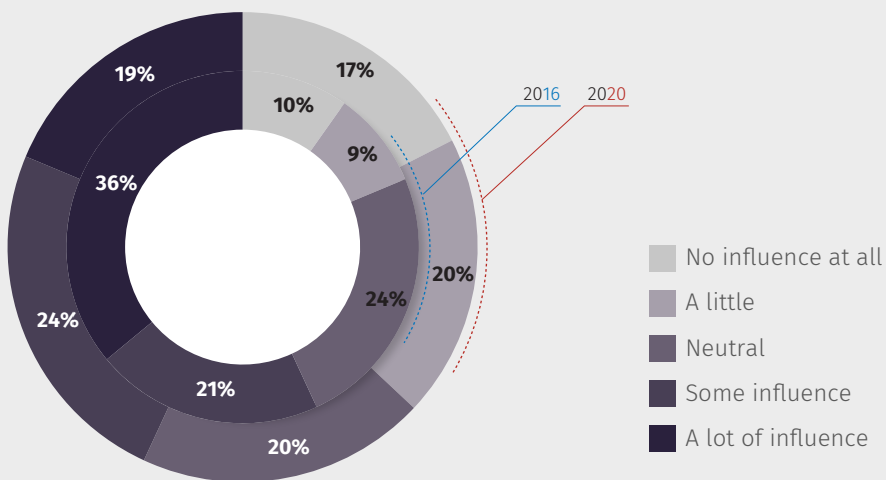
Schein (1992, 469) defined police occupational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration”. In a similar vein, Manning (1989, 360) describes it as the “accepted practices, rules and principles of conduct that are situationally applied and generalized rationales and beliefs.” Thus, the institutional culture allows individuals of the same community to better understand and engage with one another. It also helps to build inter-personal trust and group cohesiveness through shared norms and values, which, in turn, are instrumental in delivering effective solutions to common problems.

A large part of the literature considers institutional occupational culture as an indispensable component of the fight against corruption (Ewin, 1990). In order to behave ethically, it is crucial for the police to know how the organizational rules, particularly those that govern corruption and ethical principles, are established, communicated, and understood internally.

Yet, institutional culture might also produce some unwanted effects with regards to police integrity. Other studies reveal a general culture of silence among police officers, meaning that the willingness to report offences and unethical or corrupt behaviour tends to be low (IDM, 2016; Sulstarova, 2019).

To the question of whether the institutional working culture influences corruption predisposition, the 2016 study finds that 36% of the respondents express strong agreement as compared to almost half of them (19%) in 2020. However, a bit less than a fourth of those surveyed (24% for 2020 and 21% for 2016) either indicate that there is some influence between the two or are neutral in their perceptions (24% for 2016 and 20% for 2020). An even smaller percentage of people (10% for 2016 and 18% for 2020) report no influence of institutional working culture on corruption. The data reveal the fact that while for 2016, there was a sharper difference in the perceived link between institutional working culture and corruption predisposition, this perception has been improved at some degree in the last couple of years as the perception that institutional culture causes corruption weakens.

Graph 6. Institutional working culture influence on police corruption.  
Source IDM, 2016-2020



Positive correlation is found between the impact of institutional culture on corrupt practices. If institutional culture is believe to induce corrupt practices then the likelihood of experiencing corruption increases by 15.6 % (for citizens bribing) and 24.5% for cases when police officers demand a bribe from a citizen.

**Table 3: Correlation between experienced corruption and institutional culture on corrupt practices (IDM survey 2020)**

Correlation		Police officer receiving bribe	Police officers asking for bribe
<b>Institutional culture is believed to induce corrupt practices</b>	Pearson Correlation	.156**	.245***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.000
	N	244	244

Apart from the occupational culture, police ethical norms and internal regulations on ethics and integrity also play a crucial role in curbing corruption. In their everyday line of work, police officers are constantly faced with complex ethical dilemmas<sup>29</sup> concerning their workplace behaviour, and the lack of ethical and integrity guidelines can prevent or discourage police officers from reporting an incident of misconduct. Thus, having the opportunity to openly discuss the complexities of such issues within their institutional structure is necessary for developing an occupational culture of integrity.

Codes of conduct are particularly important in guiding police officers to achieve high ethical standards. They are often quite practical by setting benchmarks for disciplinary proceedings, or stating clearly which type of behaviour should be avoided or encouraged (UNDOC, 2011). In the end, the set up for ethical infrastructure, awareness of these rules and their proper enforcement are key elements in the effort to strengthen police integrity (Klockars et al, 2006).

In general, Albania has taken progressive steps to establish an appropriate ethical infrastructure in the police force (IDM, 2016). The Police Code of Ethics<sup>30</sup> is the first ethical document adopted, which seeks to fight corruption and strengthen police integrity. The Code of Ethics highlights

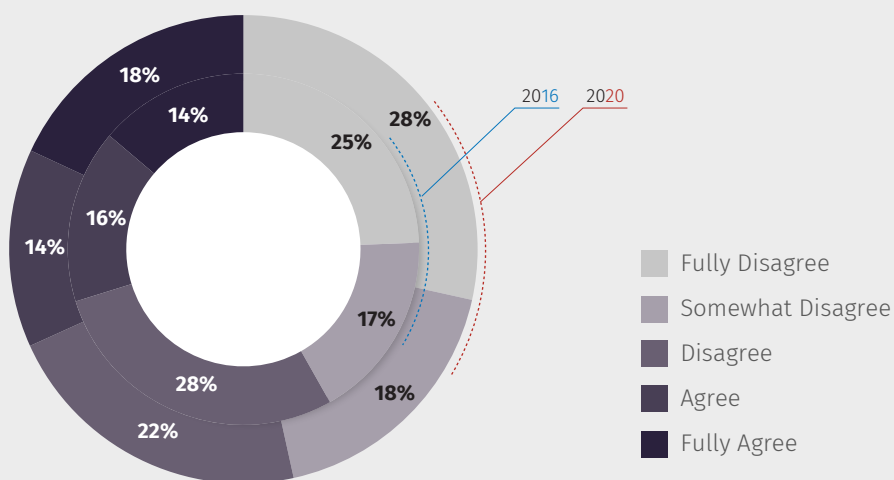
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29 Whether certain behaviours are unacceptable or corrupt.

30 Adopted by Law No. 8291, dated 25.02.1998, On the Code of Police Ethics

the police officers' obligation "to fight corruption with determination" and to report "any act connected to corruption and abuses".<sup>31</sup> However, studies shown that police officials' knowledge of the code is limited and the document is rarely used in the every-day work of the police (IDM, 2014). Irrespective of the existing legal and institutional set-up, training on integrity and ethical issues seems necessary to inform police officers and raise their awareness about this topic.

Graph 7. Ethical police norms do have a positive impact on preventing corruption. Source IDM, 2016-2020



Around 30% of respondents surveyed in 2016 either fully agree, or agree that ethical police code do have positive impact on preventing corruption, which is somehow the same percentage 32% compared to those surveyed in 2020. The percentage of those who claim that ethical police code does not a positive impact on corruption is somehow the same (68% in 2020 compared to 70% in 2020). It is interesting to note that in 2020 the share of those who are convinced that the ethical code can have a positive impact on corruption predisposition is almost the same as those interviewed 4 years ago. The police ethical code has not been improved in the last four

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31 Law No. 8291, dated 25.2.1998, "On the Code of Ethics of the Police", Article 5

years and this might explain the reason why there is a smaller percentage of those who are skeptical about the statement that ethical police code might reduce corruption predisposition. This highlights the need for more efforts to streamline and update the police ethical code and make it more comprehensible to police staff.

A positive correlation is found between the likelihood of reporting corruption among police officers and the impact of police code on inducing corrupt practices. If police officer's perception of Code of Ethics influence on corruption strengthens by 1 degree of measurement (for example from thinking that there is no influence to there is little influence), then the likelihood of experiencing corruption increases by 12.6 % for cases when police officers demand a bribe from a citizen.

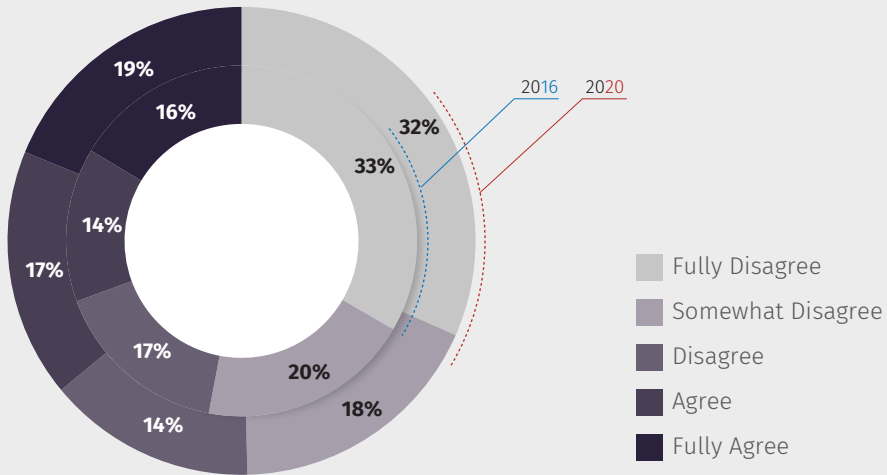
**Table 4: Correlation between experienced corruption and the likelihood of Code of Ethics to induce corrupt practices (IDM survey 2020)**

<b>Correlation</b>		Police officer receiving bribe	Police officers asking for bribe
<b>Code of Ethics is believed to induce corrupt practices</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.095	-.126**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.137	.048
	N	246	246

The graph 8 shows that the majority of respondents disagree with the statement that internal regulations leave room for corruption. This percentage has slightly decreased in 2020 (64%) compared to 69% in 2016. In contrary, the percentage of those who indicated a positive correlation between internal regulation and corruption predisposition has slightly increased in 2020 with 6% (overall 36%) compared to 30% in 2016. These data show that there is a considerable percentage of police officers that disagree with the fact that internal regulations leave spaces for corruption, which has slightly decreased in the past few years. This might indicate that recently there is a slight decrease in the perceived effectiveness of these regulations in curbing corruption. Internal regulations might be allowing space for corruption either because they are poorly implemented due to a lack of adequate infrastructure or that they are, quite simply, not clear

enough. In addition, insufficient training or ineffective communication about the organisational rules or ethical standards of police integrity could also explain their poor salience and perceived ineffectiveness.

Graph 8. Internal regulations leave spaces for corruption. Source IDM, 2016-2020



When measuring correlation between internal regulations influence on corruption and the prevalence of corruption they report to have experienced, data show that there is a statistically significant correlation between the two variables. If police officer' perception of internal regulations influence on corruption strengthen by 1 degree of measurement (for example from thinking that there is no influence to there is little influence), the probability that they report corruption as "I have witness police officers receiving a bribe from a citizen" increases by 13.3% (for citizens bribing) and 10.3% for cases when police officers demand a bribe from a citizen. Internal regulations have as well helped in reducing the likelihood of police officers reporting to experience corruptive practices.

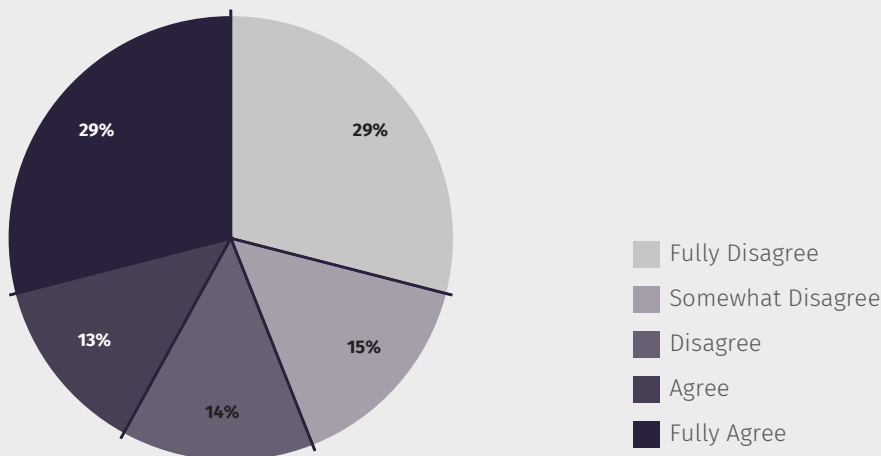
**Table 5: Correlation between experienced corruption and the likelihood that internal regulation induce corrupt practices (IDM survey 2020)**

Correlation		Police officer receiving bribe	Police officers asking for bribe
<b>Internal Regulation are believed to induce corrupt practices</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.133**	-.103*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.106
	N	247	247

#### 4.4 Police Vetting reforms vs corruption

In 2018 the Albanian government undertook a drastic police reform- the police vetting process to reduce corruption among ASP. The primary objective of vetting in the State Police is to guarantee and promote integrity and enhance the professionalism of employees of Albanian agencies responsible for public order and safety. This political objective materialized with the adoption of Law No. 12/2018 “On Transitional and Periodic Evaluation of Officials of the State Police, Republican Guard, and Service of Internal Affairs and Complaints in the Ministry of Interior,” which entered into force on 4 April 2018.

Graph.9 The Police Vetting process and corruption. Source IDM, 2020



When asked about whether this reform would reduce corruption among ASP, almost 60% of the respondents are pessimist for any positive outcome of this reform. Actually, the transitional evaluation process of State Police employees has progressed at a slow pace, since it began 9 months later than envisioned. Until now, only 8% of high ranking officials targeted by the first phase of the process have been evaluated between November 2019 and August 2020. This skeptical climate could therefore be attributed to issues related to independence, transparency and impartiality of the process as well as low efficiency of the evaluation bodies which might have dimmed the respondent's trust and expectations in the reform.<sup>32</sup>

We found little evidence that if vetting is believed an effective instrument to fight corruption, than the likelihood of police officers experiencing corruptive practices reduces. However, the evidence is weak and not statistically sound, a longer time span of observation would help to consolidate this result.

**Table 6: Correlation between experienced corruption and Vetting process of State Police (IDM survey 2020)**

Correlation		Police officer receiving bribe	Police officers asking for bribe
<b>Vetting of State Police will reduce corruption among ASP</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.009	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.886	.289
	N	247	247

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32 See the Monitoring report on the Police Vetting Process. <https://idmalbania.org/monitoring-report-on-the-police-vetting-process-2020/>



## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

Corruption erodes public trust in institutions and damages their credibility. In the case of the police force, corruption practices can discourage citizens from cooperating with the police, thus reducing overall public security. The legitimacy and credibility of law enforcement bodies are essential for the application of laws and overall good democratic governance. Police corruption is a derivative of multiple factors. Yet this paper focused on analyzing the impact of working conditions (such as salaries and HR management) and organizational culture on police officers' predisposition towards and tolerance of corruption. The analysis, which drew on previous research, combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were collected through a survey conducted with police officers, while qualitative information came from interviews with local stakeholders. The quantitative data are drawn between the survey of year 2016 and year 2020.

Correlation analysis, shows that there is in general a statistically significant correlation between all variables measuring the working conditions of police officers and the prevalence of corruption they report to have experienced (see the table below). Among many variables, the highest correlation is observed for the variable of "weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training" and "institutional culture", followed by "low wages", "internal regulations" and finally "code of ethics".

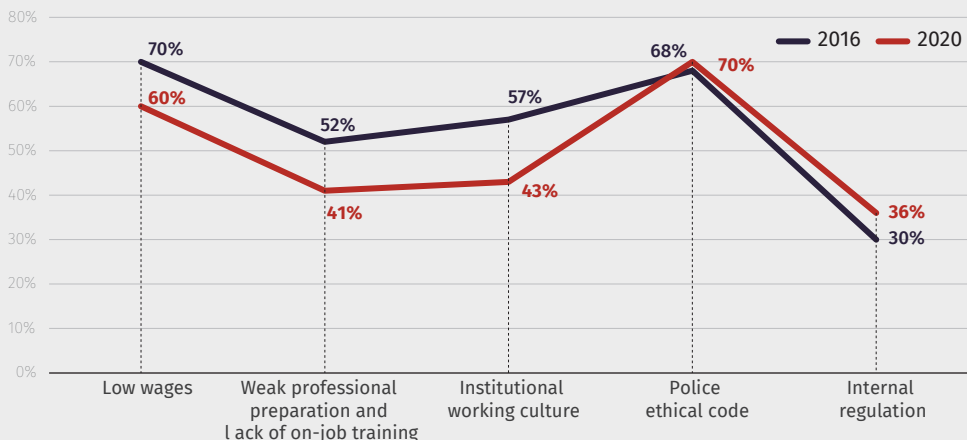
**Table 7: Correlation between experienced corruption and variables measuring working conditions for the police officers (IDM survey 2020)**

<b>Correlation</b>		<b>Police officer receiving bribe</b>	<b>Police officers asking for bribe</b>
<b>Low Wages induce corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	.150**	.160**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.012
	N	249	249
<b>Weak Professional Preparation and lack of on-job training induce corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	.165***	.246***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000
	N	249	249
<b>Institutional Culture induces corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	.156**	.245***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.000
	N	244	244
<b>Vetting of State Police induces corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.009	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.886	.289
	N	247	247
<b>Code of Ethics induces corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.095	-.126**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.137	.048
	N	246	246
<b>Internal Regulations induce corruption</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.133**	-.103*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.106
	N	247	247

\*\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

In terms of police officer's perceptions, the study concludes that among many factors that are perceived to impact corruption predisposition, low wages and police ethical code are perceived to have the highest influence, followed by weak professional preparation and lack of on-job training and institutional working culture. Although in the time frame of 4 years, there is a slight decrease in the tendency to perceive the above-mentioned factors as less likely to contribute to an increased tolerance towards corruption (except the perception on internal regulations and ethical code which have slightly increased recently), the percentages are still considerable even for 2020 (see graph 10).

Graph 10: Perceived working conditions that influence corruption predisposition



The police force, as an institution, should strive to establish proper mechanisms that strengthen its integrity and accountability system. A system of accountability involves first of all effective mechanisms for internal and external checks and balances. This means that police officers should be expected to perform their job with professionalism, remain open to public scrutiny and be held to account if they act dishonourably. To this end, measures should be taken by ASP, for example, to strengthen the control and oversight mechanisms that prevent the misuse of police powers and to increase the level of transparency and the openness to scrutiny, which are fundamental for an accountable police force. In order to curb corruption in the police force, tolerance towards corruption must

also be reduced to the extent that police officers are either deterred or disinclined to partake in acts of corruption. To this end, all institutional structures involved with the ASP should increase their efforts to improve the overall working conditions and to inculcate an institutional culture of integrity which stands against corruption and reports violations.

**More specifically,**

- The Albanian State Police (ASP) and Ministry of Interior should re-consider the salary ranges of police officer, boosting remuneration better match the staff's expectations.
- The ASP should develop curricula which are congruent with contemporary ethical requirements and institutional integrity and should make sure that those guidelines are enforced. Training on such curricula should be consistent, conducted throughout the institutions and regularly repeated to reinforce the taught principles.
- The ASP should develop and apply communication strategies aimed at raising awareness about ethical standards.
- In order for the police force to be able to carry out their job effectively and fairly, more effective and understandable internal guidelines, regulations and codes of conduct should be set in place by the police institution. In addition, more adequate professional training on these regulations need to be provided systematically.
- The ASP should conduct more systematic checks on police officers, on ethics, integrity, and professional conduct in order to limit their predisposition towards corruption.
- Reporting and monitoring mechanism, such as the Service of Internal Affairs and Complaints or the Directorate of Professional Standards, should also be strengthened and well regulated, to enable greater visibility against potential corruption attempts.
- The ASP should be consistent in the promotional standards it applies. This can reduce unpredictability and enable police officers to build trust in the system. Promotion procedures should be more transparent, and should allow police officers the adequate time to prepare for testing.
- The ASP should conduct better financial planning so that it matches its operational needs. Police organization should carefully assess how

to better address its employees' financial needs. In particular, it should consider the extra duty pay which police officers are entitled to but never receive.

- The ASP should assess working conditions on a more regular basis and ensure that they meet operational requirements. This would enable a more satisfying workplace environment for police officers.

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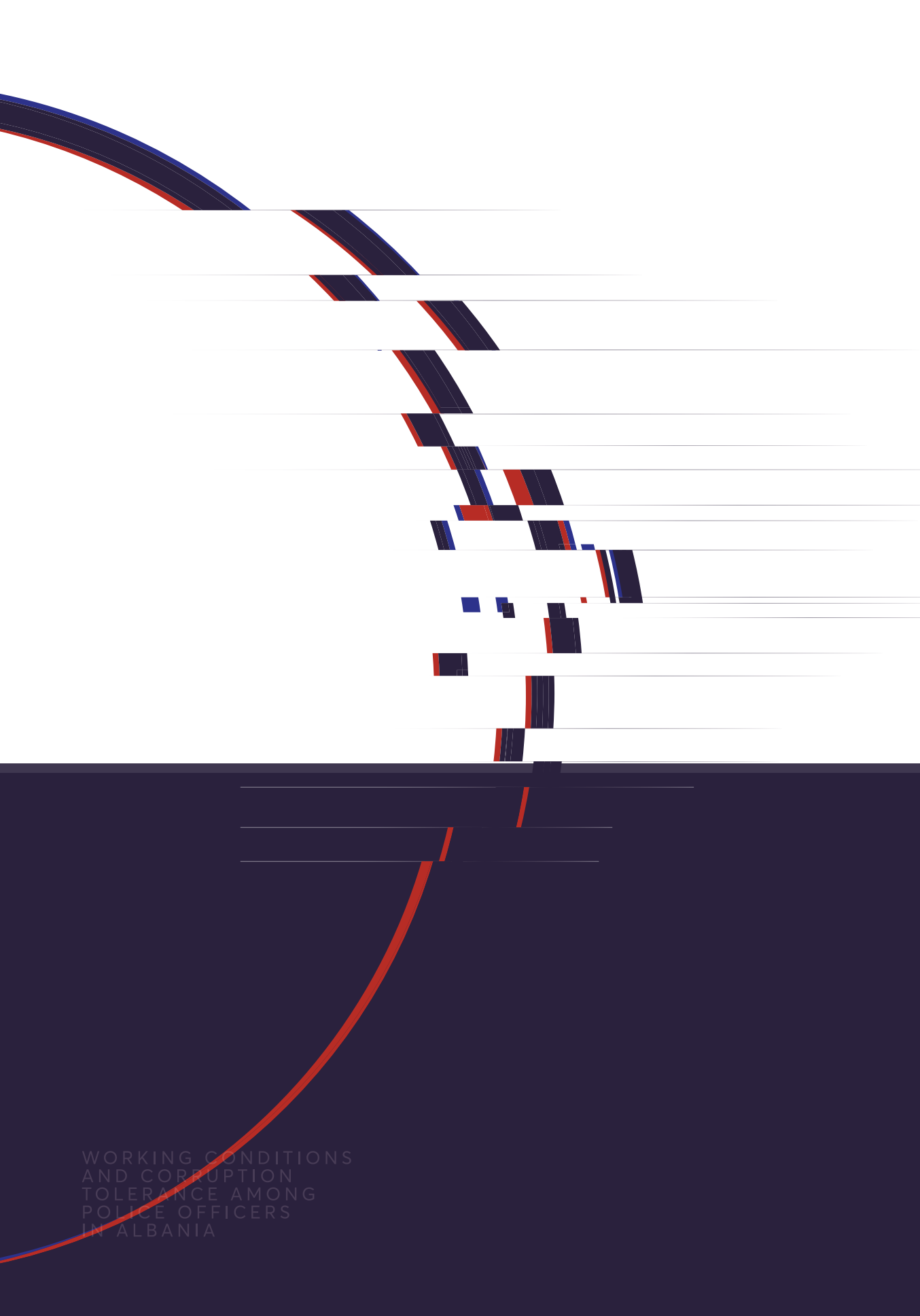
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WORKING CONDITIONS  
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