

The criminal justice system and its ethical egoism criminology essay

[Law](#), [Criminology](#)



Egoism is a self-centered way of acting towards other people (Banks, 2012). Most people who are egoists are inconsiderate and have no pity for other people problems. They often put their own well-being above and beyond anyone else's actions. Egoism may harm a person with self-interest and create superficial behavior. The criminal justice system may have become a place where some people are content with selfishness and big egos. Some police officers and even supervisors have developed attitudes for misdeeds, dishonesty, and self-motives. The purpose of this paper is to conclude that the theory of ethical egoism exists in the criminal justice system and how it is applied in ethical dilemmas. It also helps justify why people are treated differently from others through conflict of interest in the criminal justice system.

The Criminal Justice System and Its Ethical Egoism

Ethical egoism is the idea that people act out of their own self-regard. Ethical egoism may also help some produce feeling of satisfaction. The ethical system claims good results from pursuing selfishness is defined as egoism. The concept of egoism states that it is one's best interest to help others in order to receive help in return. Egoism also suggests that what is good for one's survival and personal happiness is moral (Banks, 2012). In the criminal justice system there are some police officers who have some conceit and unethical ways. Police officers should never be in a position to operate on the assumption that they can do whatever benefits themselves. Some probable ethical problems in policing may include use of excessive force, corruption, entrapment, uncivil conduct discrimination, and violation of rights to privacy, negligence, violation of law enforcement policies or procedure, and abuse of

the professional code of ethics. These ethical problems only create a bad perspective of the criminal justice system and its ethical egoism is often encountered when some policing conditions turn into dishonest practices. Ethical egoism creates many questions and opinions for what is bad and what is good. Some ethical dilemmas may arise when police officers and supervisors are confused about the right thing to do because sometimes the right thing to do carries a considerable cost. However, there are some efforts to control police officers and supervisors behavior through the code of ethics and conduct. Police officers may still retain broad discretion in making choices when performing police work. Generally, the ability to exercise discretion comes with responsibility and police officers are held accountable for their actions (Cohen & Feldberg, 1991). However, corrupt agents and police officers make the criminal justice system look bad. Their past actions may reveal a pattern of unethical activity and they may also use their ethical egoism. Sometimes ethical egoism theories in the criminal justice system may also come from some the self-interest of police officers, the right of entitlement to police officers, corruption of supervisors, the self-preservation of police officers, and the secret police code of silence for loyalty to corrupt officers. One example is when law enforcement officers sleep on duty, even in instances when they are expected to be vigilant and alert (Souryal, 2006). Another example is when there are police officers who may assume that businesses are to provide them with special benefits like a free meal or free coffee (Souryal, 2006). The law enforcement agency becomes corrupted when police officers intrude upon the law themselves on behalf of personally desires and moral values. Police officers are also more closely analyzed and

possibly subject to more misinformed criticism than any other professional group. While every day citizens have unethical reasons for misconduct such as peer pressure, social factors, or psychological problems the unethical conduct by law enforcement is a conscious decision to abuse authority and engage in corruption. When a police officer's position of public trust becomes unethical or illegal, their behavior is a result of a conscious decision to act in a way that is not appropriate for the situation. Some consequences of a decision are bad and the criminal justice system does not support it. Ethical egoism may also occur in the criminal justice system because of the personality make-up a police officer who may develop a greater pleasure from being considered a hero of society. Often there are times when decisions are motivated by personal gain which is best characterized as self-absorption or egoism. For example, police officers attempt to rid society of criminals and may use any means necessary to get rid of the criminal society (Cohen & Feldberg, 1991). If a police officer is willing to do almost anything to achieve this towards criminals then they may have corrupted themselves and their profession (Crank & Caldero, 2000). These behaviors are incorrect and disrespect the vital nature of ethics. This unethical behavior and criminal conduct of the police officers is a negative impact on the public's image of the police. In assessing consequences of choices and actions there are different approaches to making morally correct decisions for police officers. Ethical systems provide the guidelines or principles to make moral decisions. Ethical egoism suggests that an individual should act to create the greatest good for self (Northouse, 2001). These decisions that are made by police officers are created to achieve crime reduction. They are established by their

law enforcement agencies in order to gain promotions and rewards. They are put in place to protect and help their officers. The noble cause for police officers is a commitment to do something to prevent illegal human behavior and apprehend criminal offenders. It inspires officer values and for some officers it justifies their actions. Professionalism for police officers involves more than effective law enforcement and courtesy towards the general public. Professionalism is staying true to oneself and keeping a good public image of the police. Although police officers do need moral insight to make good moral decisions, they are based on the personal independent of what they believe. There are several basic ethical principles that can be derived from the theories to fight ethical egoism. These principles include refraining from harming oneself or another, due justice, reparation, appreciation, and confidentiality. Egoism can cause police officers to choose the wrong course of action in many scenarios and yet not violate any law or department policy. For this reason, it may seem at times that the criminal justice system and the law enforcement agencies may approve of egoism. There is no way to write a policy for each dilemma that an officer will face. Police officers each need a clear set of principles that are process oriented and can help them weigh their options when faced with an ethical dilemma to fight egoism.