

Why Individuals & Organizations with Good Intentions Make Bad Ethical Decisions

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Outline

- Background/Context
- Objectives
- Why people make bad ethical choices
- Summary and Conclusions
- Recommendations

Ghana's Efforts to Curb Ethical Misconducts

- **Article 35(8) of the 1992 Constitution:** “The State shall take steps to eradicate corrupt practices and the abuse of power.”
- **Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice ACT, 1993 (ACT 456), Sections 7(a, f), which charges the Commission to:**
 - (a) investigate complaints of violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power and unfair treatment of any person by a public officer in the exercise of his official duties;
 - (f) investigate all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriate steps, including reports to the Attorney-General and the Auditor-General, resulting from such investigation.
- **Internal Audit Agency Act, 2003 (Act 658) Section 3 (3c):** “facilitate the prevention and detection of fraud.”
- **Anti-Money laundering Act, 2008 (Act 749)**
- **Office of Special Prosecutor Bill, 2017:** Investigate and prosecute specific cases of corruption involving public officers.

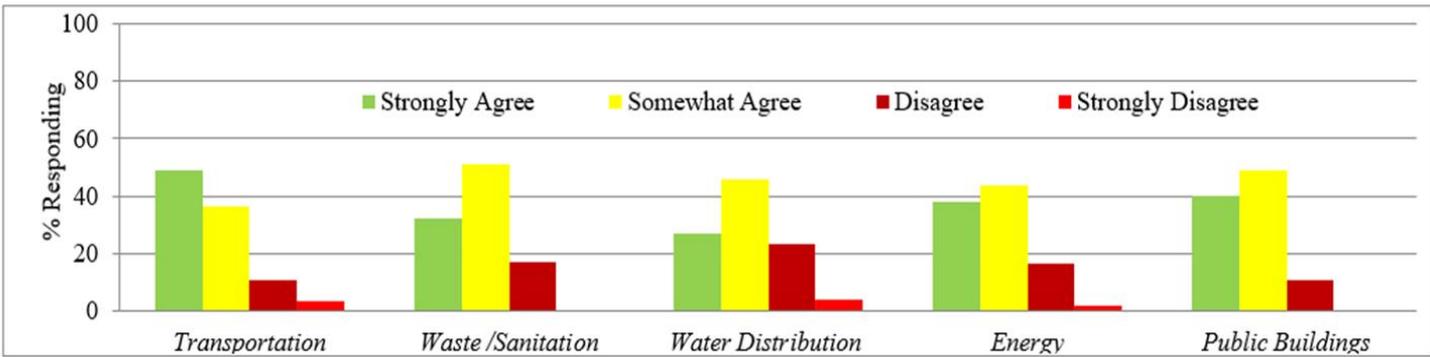
Ghana's efforts to curb ethical misconducts

- ***Serious Fraud Office Act, 1993 (ACT 466) Section 3* charges SFO to:**
 - a. investigate any suspected offence provided for by law which appears on reasonable grounds to involve serious financial or economic loss to the State or to any state organization or other institution in which the State has financial interest;
 - b. monitor economic activities likely to cause financial or economic loss to the State;
 - c. take reasonable measures to prevent the commission of crimes which may cause financial or economic loss to the State.
- ***Ghana is a signatory to the treaty of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)***
 - Treaty requires parties to implement several anti-corruption measures that focus on five main areas: prevention, law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, and technical assistance and information exchange
- ***Ghana participates in Transparency International's corruption perception projects*** that results in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which indicates how corrupt Ghana's public sector is perceived to be.

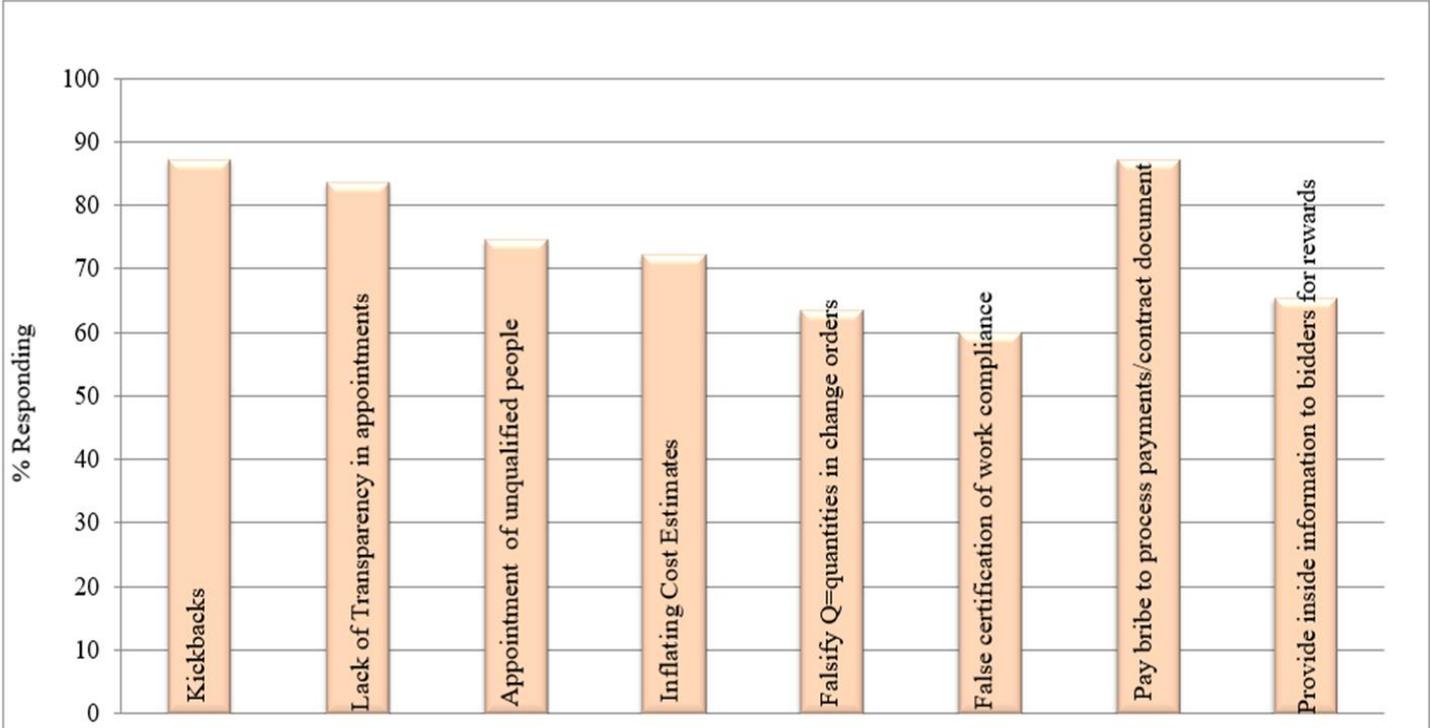
Despite Efforts...

“Ghana may be drifting to the tipping point of irredeemable corruption. Is there some salvation on the horizon? Not if you listen to the political class and the debates in the media. For them, corruption is not the issue. The issue is who is better at it, which party has been more corrupt. It tells us that we are in danger of coming to accept the inevitability of corruption as our way of life. And there is plenty of evidence that points in that direction. We are all on what I call a corruption carousel” ---

Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu, II at the 19th Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) Awards



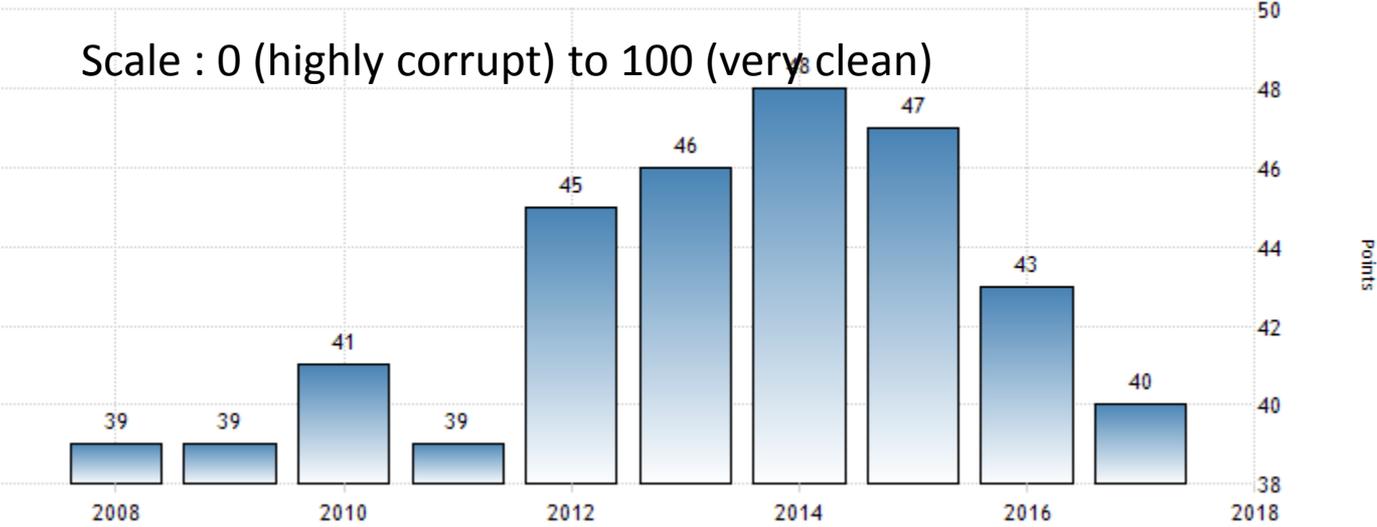
(a) High Level of Corruption in Infrastructure



(b) Forms of Corruption

2014 Infrastructure Perception Survey of Built Environment Professionals in Ghana

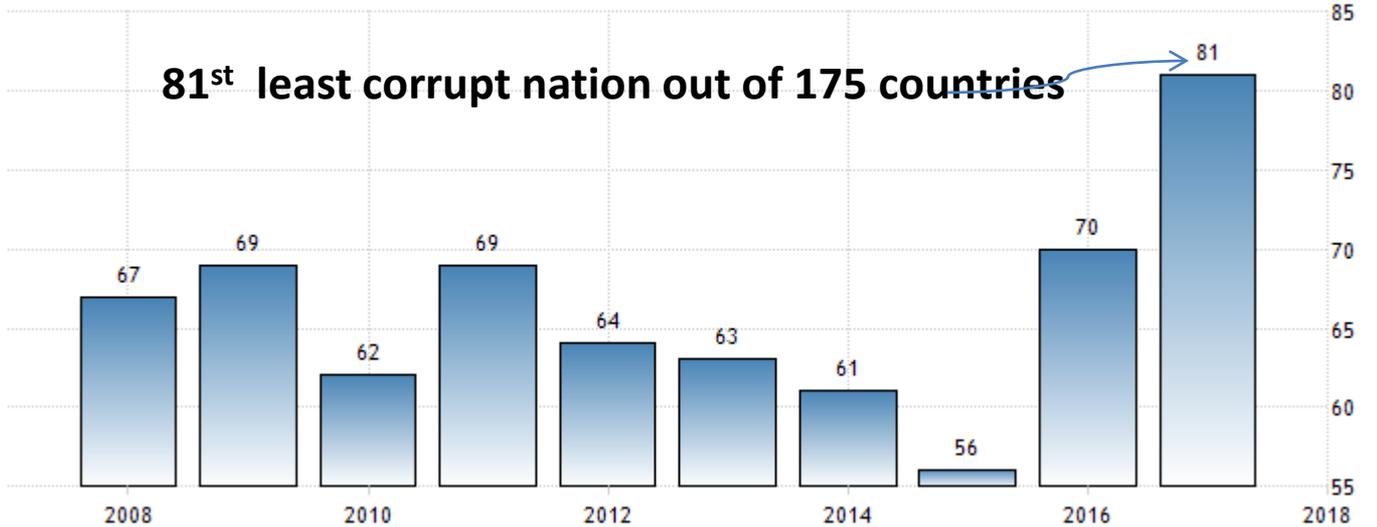
GHANA CORRUPTION INDEX



SOURCE: TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be

GHANA CORRUPTION RANK



SOURCE: TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

Objectives

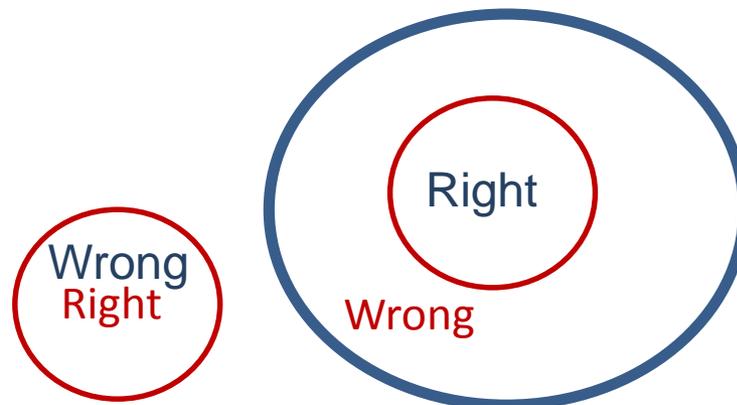
- Examine factors that drive ethical misconducts at the workplace
- Propose approaches to improving ethics at the workplace

Ethics vs. Morals

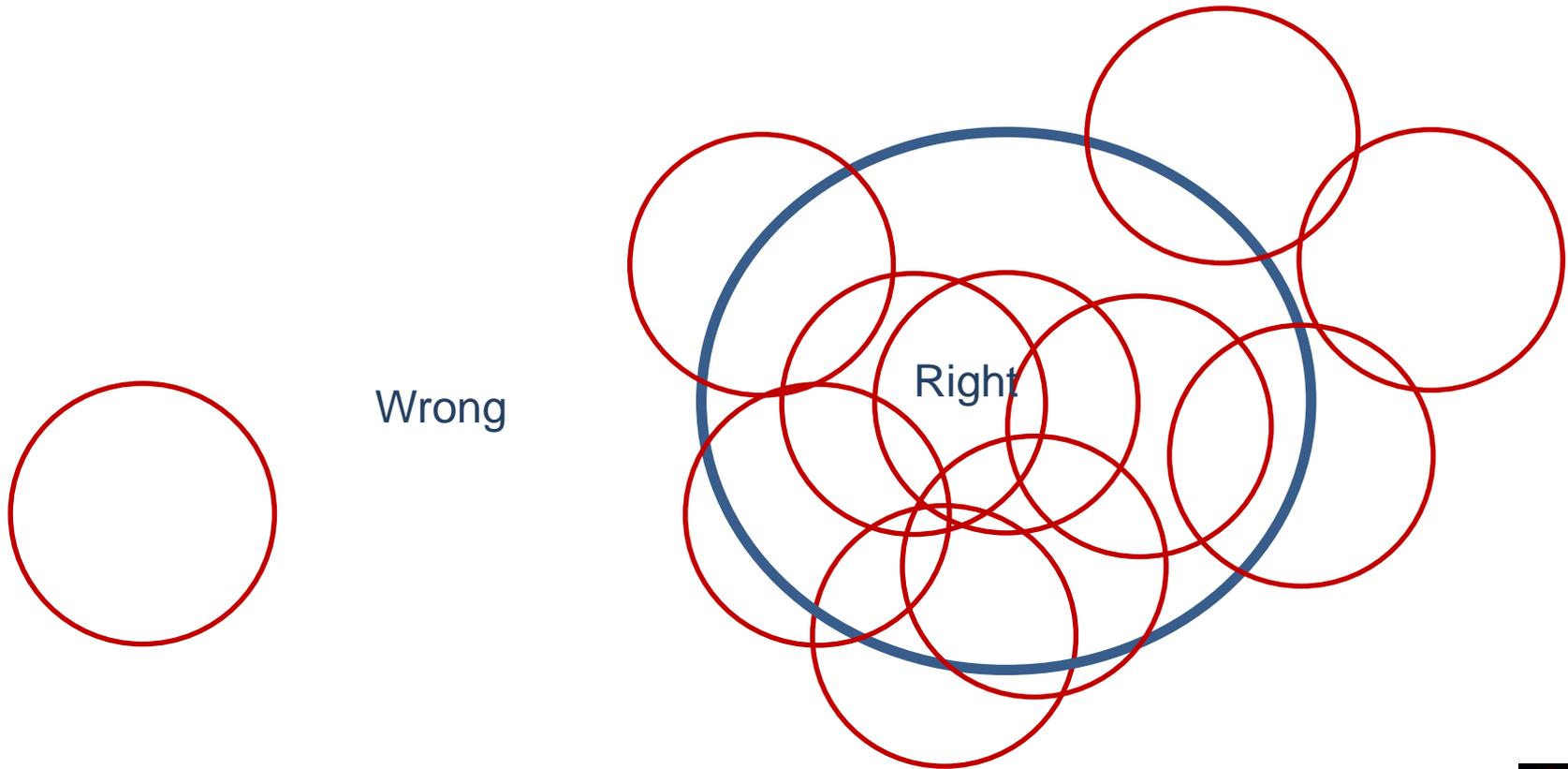
Both deal with *right* vs. *wrong*

Ethics are *external rules of behavior established* by a group or society based on ideas about what is morally good and bad

Morals are an *individual's values concerning what is right and what is wrong* → *embodiment of what an individual stands for*



Ethics vs. Morals



What Influences Individual Moral Development?

- Childhood upbringing
- Religious Beliefs
- Cultural Values
- Education
- Life Experiences
- Social Pressures

Core values

- a. Write on the ___PINK___ note card your topmost ***personal*** core value

 - b. Write on the ___YELLOW___ note card one core value of your ***workplace***

 - c. Write on the ___GREEN___ note card one core value of your ***country of birth***
- DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON ANY CARD

Sample Workplace Ethical Misconducts

- Lie to employees, customers, vendors, or the public
- Violate company policies related to Internet use/ health or safety regulations/employee benefit rules
- Harassment
- Discrimination against employees
- Improper hiring practices
- Retaliation against someone who has reported misconduct
- Delivery of substandard goods or services
- Falsifying time reports or hours worked
- Sponsoring events with wrong motives



NOTICE



**CELL PHONES
MUST BE
TURNED OFF
DURING WORK HOURS**

NOTICE

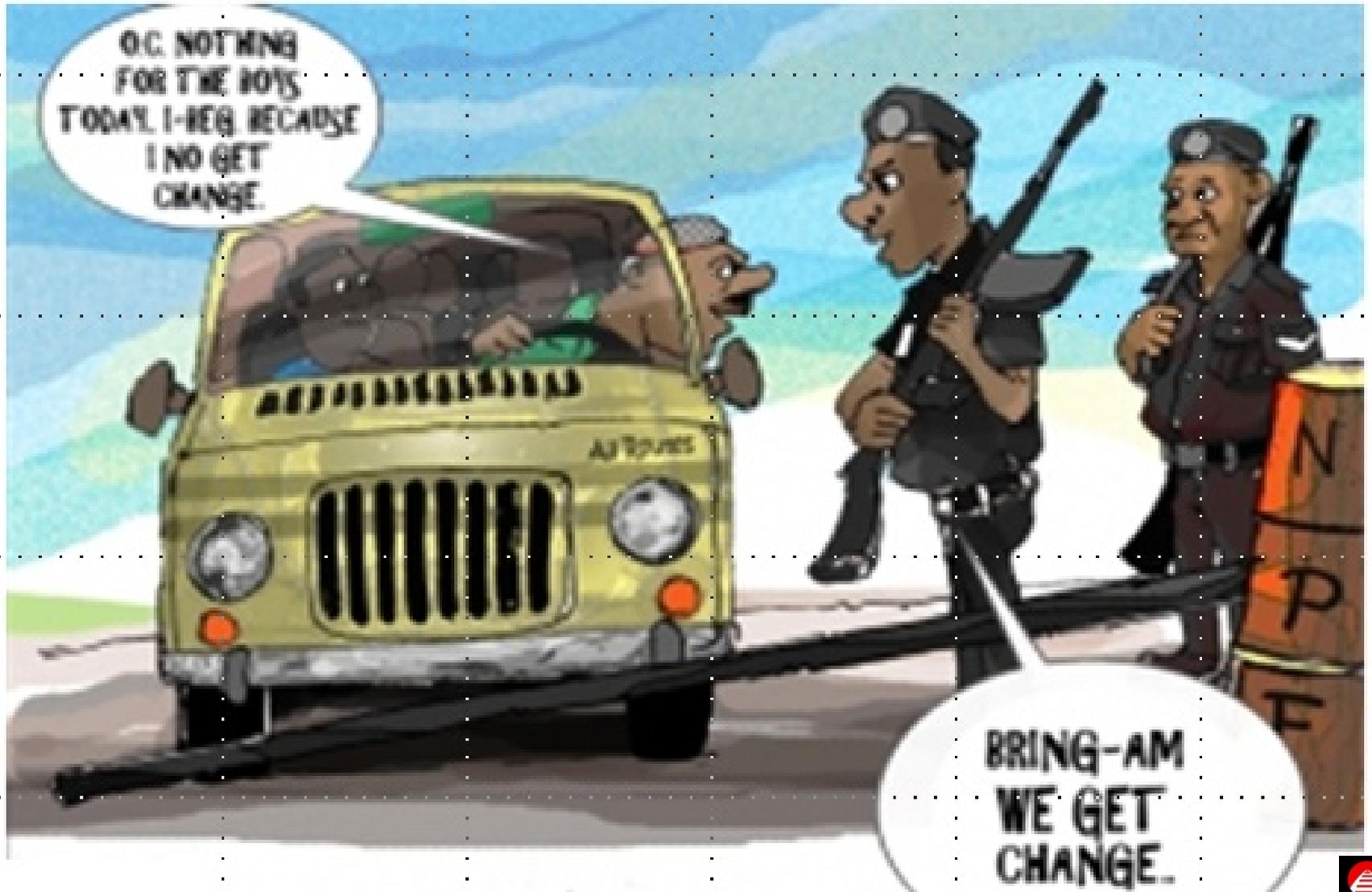
**WORKPLACE BULLYING
IS AGAINST
COMPANY POLICY**



Factors Influencing Ethical Decision Making

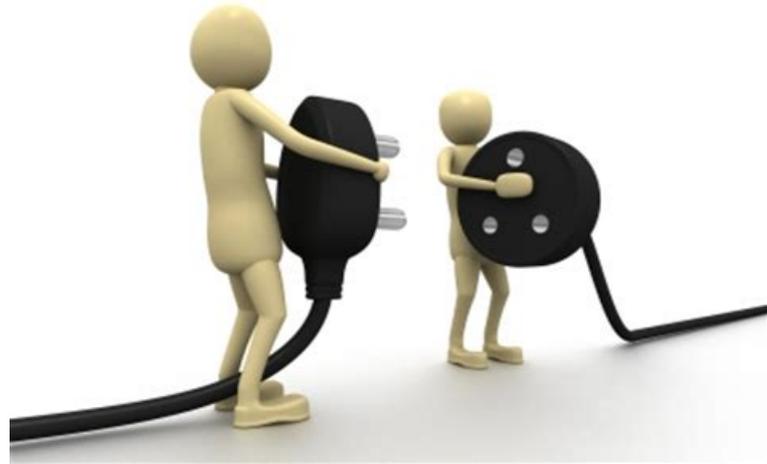
- Politics/Governance
- Social/Cultural & Organizational Challenges
- Cognitive Limitations
- Situational/External Factors

Lack of legal and regulatory enforcement



Improper Hiring and Personnel Management Practices

Recruitment, transfers, assignments, and promotions are often based on favors and **connections** with people in power rather than merit



Inadequate institutional capacity

- Limited staff with right expertise
- Limited resources
- Limited access to information
- Low public service salaries

Holding affluent people in high esteem regardless of the source of wealth

=> Unhealthy competition, greed, selfishness etc.



Sympathy for Perpetrators of Misconduct on the basis of Religion

Let's blame the
"Pitchfork" guy for
our bad decisions

Really..?

Let's not go there!!



Lack of Understanding of what Government Services Constitute Social Justice or Human Rights Requirements

Developmental projects → often considered a favor to
communities

=> Communities' appreciation is expected in the next
election or a gift has to be sent, else...

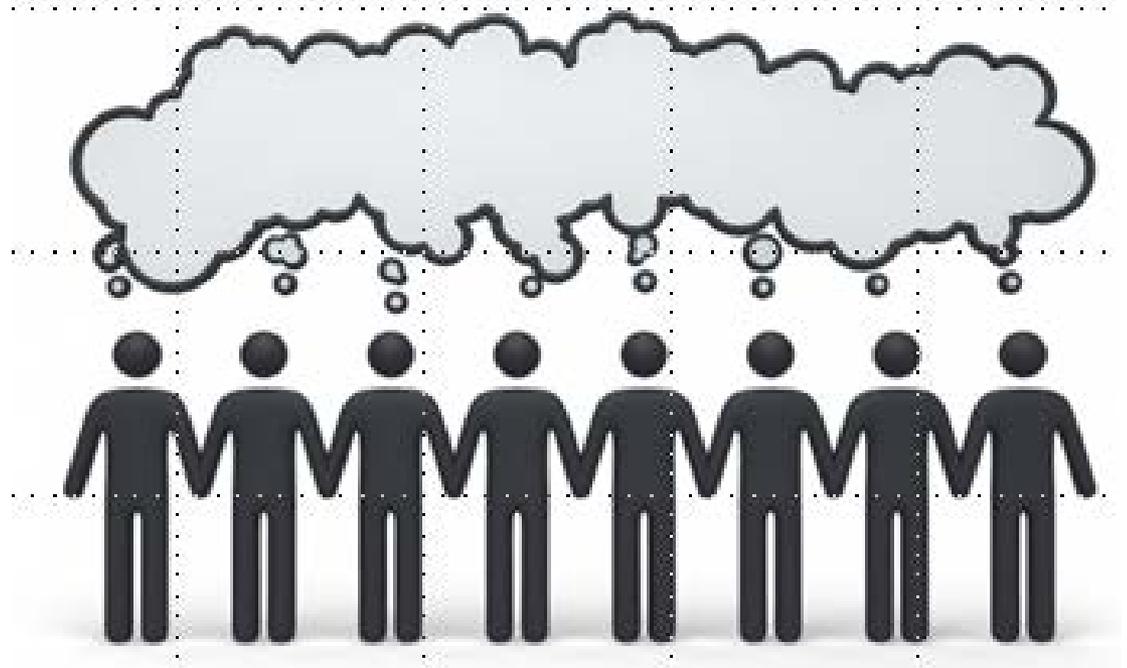
Obedience to Authority/Valuable Client

Complying with
unethical request of
supervisor



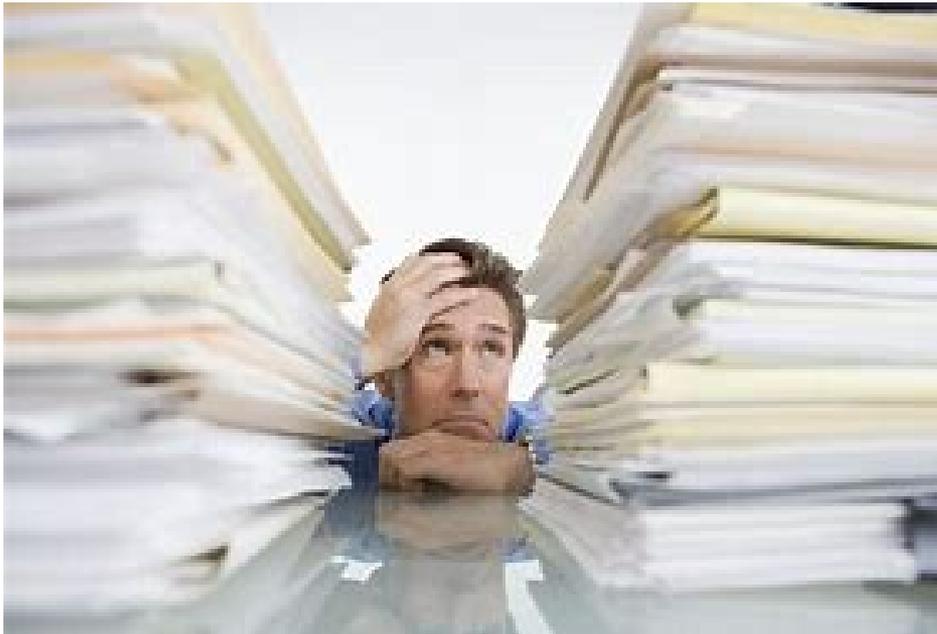
Conformity Bias

Don't want to be different. Everyone does it so...



Time Constraints

- Potential for compromised safety, quality/standards when under time pressure



Fatigue



--More likely to act
unethically when tired

Self-serving bias mentality



What
interests
me? What
can I take
credit for?

Slippery Slope Syndrome



- Repeated exposure to unethical behavior is desensitizing; can cause one to unconsciously lower ethical standards over time through small changes in behavior

Overconfidence



Can lead to unrealistic optimism or less reflection about decisions with serious ethical implications

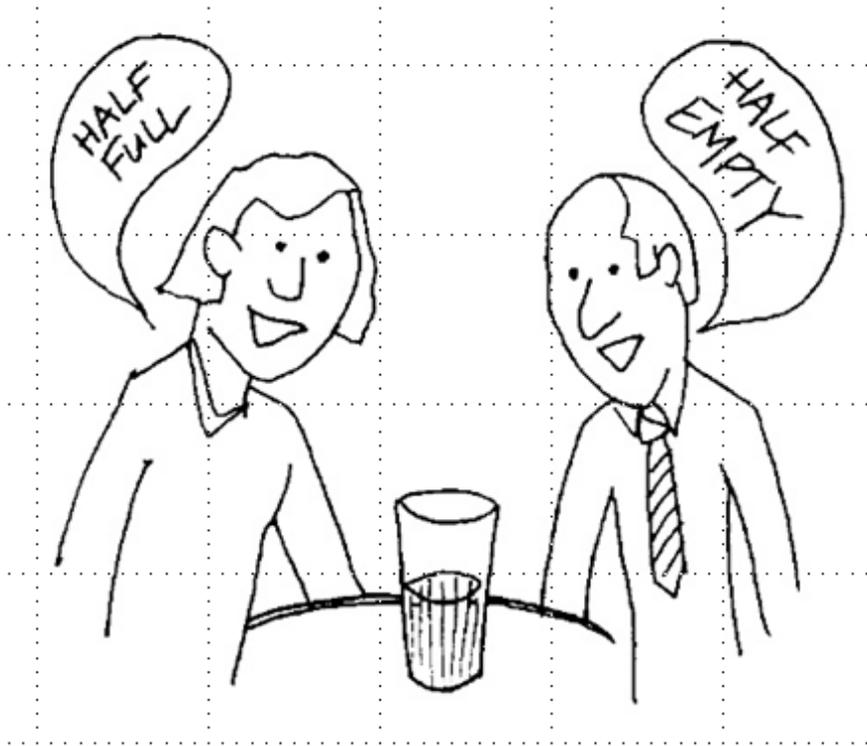
Loss Aversion



Do you hate to lose more than you enjoy winning?

=> potential exists to cover up mistakes

Perception is reality



- We only see the world through our own eyes
- We have no accurate way to see the world through others eyes, which makes it harder for us to understand how our actions affect others.

Framing

- Involves how responses to issues are determined based on how those issues are formulated
- Example Issue: Gold Mining in Ghana
 - Promote all forms of mining to create more jobs (→ Economic)
 - Limit mining activities to preserve environment and protect drinking water sources (→ Health, safety, well-being, aesthetics)

Summary and Conclusions

- We are not always rational thinkers even when we think we are
- Cognitive limitations, social, cultural, political organizational pressures, and situational factors make it hard for well-intentioned people to act as ethically as they would like

What is the way forward?

- Provide workplace ethical behavior expectations to all employees; publish at organization's website
- Communicate ethics as a priority and enforce ethical behavior at the workplace
- Give timely and appropriate response/discipline to perpetrators of workplace misconduct
- Set up a hotline for ethics related questions or advice
- Leaders must keep commitments and model good ethical behavior
- Regular training on ethics for all employees
- Include ethics in periodic performance evaluation of employees

What is the way forward?

- Publish names of perpetrators of ethical misconducts at organization's website to include type of misconduct and organization's actions
- Conduct and report on annual/periodic surveys of workplace misconducts [types, patterns, perpetrators, reporting methods, actions to address misconducts etc.]
- Always ponder over the beautiful phrases of the Ghana National Pledge in your ethical decision making
 - *I promise on my honor to be faithful and loyal to Ghana my motherland
I pledge myself to the service of Ghana with all my strength and with all my heart....*
 - and I pledge myself in all things to uphold and defend the good name of Ghana. So help me God.*

Thank YOU!
Questions??