

# Evolving righteousness in a corrupt world

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Initially cooperative societies devolve toward corruption, but introducing small "payments" in conjunction with punishment can lead to stable, righteous societies, according to a modeling study published Sep. 12 in the open access journal *PLOS ONE*.

It has been difficult to fully dissect the interplay between cooperation, corruption, and punishment in determining societal wellbeing, but the authors of the current study, led by Edgar Duenez-Guzman of Harvard University, found that payments such as increases in social status, combined with strong egalitarian [punishments](#), can eradicate corruption.

Moreover, once corruption has been eradicated, it can be held at bay indefinitely, even if power inequalities return.

**More information:** Evolving Righteousness in a Corrupt World. PLoS ONE 7(9): e44432. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0044432](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0044432)

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