

How can New Zealand maintain its low corruption rating?



Main research findings

The following characteristics are found in the least corrupt countries:

- Value individual autonomy
- Value social diversity
- Value egalitarian structures
- Value a good quality of life
- The right to freely express one's opinion.

A larger government is linked to lower corruption, potentially due to increased social services, law enforcement, and job opportunities.

Overall, corruption decreases with increasing wealth within a country.

Democracy is not linked to a decrease in corruption.

RESEARCH

'Predicting societal corruption across time: Values, wealth, or institutions?'

by Seini O'Connor and Dr Ronald Fischer (2012)

Published in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43(4), 644-659.

Background

In 2009, New Zealand was named the world's least corrupt nation, outranking countries like Denmark, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland. Somalia, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sudan ranked at the bottom of the list.

Remaining in this position is essential to the New Zealand economy, as it has a direct influence on factors such as trade and migration.

The Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research, part of Victoria University of Wellington, undertook a study about the underlying mechanisms of New Zealand's anti-corruption rating and how it can be maintained.

Relevance of findings to New Zealand

To ensure New Zealand continues to lead as one of the least corrupt countries in the world, policy makers need to continue strengthening social diversity and egalitarian systems.

Freedom of speech needs to be continually supported by relevant policies, as it is one of the pillars of a corruption-free society.

'Civic-mindedness' should be encouraged.

A focus on economic wealth is likely to be a viable path to reducing corruption.

Other factors that reduce the risks include: providing incentives for individuals not to use corruption and putting restrictions in place that regulate and rule against corruption.