Illinois Municipal Officers' Perceptions of Police Ethics

September 1994

by
Christine Martin
Statistical Analysis Center
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Peter B. Bensinger, Chairman
Thomas F. Baker, Executive Director

This report was developed under grant number BJS-10-0069601 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. The points of view expressed are those of the Authority and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois
order 95-2/1,250 copies/September, 1994

120 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, Illinois 60606-3997

153377

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by
Illinois Criminal Justice
Information Authority / BJS / DoJ
to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

Acknowledgments

This project could not have been completed without the assistance and advice from the members of the Project Advisory Committee. Their practical guidance and genuine support and advice over the course of this project was invaluable. The following people acted as members on the Project Advisory Committee throughout the project:

Peter Bellmio
Former Director of Safety Services
City of Decatur Law Enforcement Center

Richard Beese
Commander
Village of Mundelein Police Department

Gerald Cooper
Chief
Evanston Police Department

Donald Cundiff
Vice President
Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Ralph Evans
Chief
Tower Lakes Police Department

Bill Geller
Associate Director, midwest office
Police Executive Research Forum

Michael Haeger
Chief
Wheeling Police Department

Dr. Linda Heath
Psychology Department
Loyola University

Ernest Jacobi
Retired Chief
Evanston Police Department

Dr. Thomas Jurkanin, Director
Illinois Law Enforcement Training
and Standards Board

Frank Kaminski
Deputy Chief
Evanston Police Department

George F. Koertge
Executive Director
Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Dr. Thomas Regulus
Criminal Justice Department
Loyola University

Raymond J. Rose
Chief
Village of Mundelein Police Department

Art Stone, former director
Fraternal Order of Police
State Lodge

Perhaps the most important contributions were made by participating police departments and police officers. The selected Illinois municipal police officers provided the data needed to understand the issue of ethical misconduct from their perspective.

The Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (Training and Standards Board), and the Illinois State Police (ISP), in addition to serving as advisors to the project, provided

information necessary to select the sample and assisted in survey distribution. (The Training and Standards Board, especially Mobile Team Unit (MTU) Directors, was extremely helpful in the early stages of the project coordinating the distribution of the surveys at centrally-located police departments, MTU centers and Illinois State Police district headquarters.)

Special thanks are due Prof. Ken Johnson, Loyola University Chicago, and Prof. Paul Levy, the University of Illinois, Chicago, for their unlimited advice concerning statistical analysis and sampling technique.

Many people at the Authority contributed to this project including Carolyn Rebecca Block, Sharon Bond, Peter Van Dyke, John R. Firman, Roger Przybylski and Puling Zhang. Captain Daniel S. McDevitt was temporarily assigned to the project by the ISP, and his ideas were extremely helpful in coordinating the distribution of the questionnaire and maintaining data security.

Table of Contents

Executive summary

While media scrutiny and public concern have focused attention nationwide on public perception of attitudes and ethical behavior among law enforcement officers, no existing research looks at how Illinois police officers themselves view those issues. To address this, Illinois was one of three states (along with Ohio and Pennsylvania) selected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, to study officers' own perceptions about police ethics and their attitudes about certain behaviors. Results were obtained from a questionnaire completed by 861 law enforcement officers statewide. The survey asked law enforcement officers for information in three areas: 1) violations of ethical behavior the officers had observed in the past year and during their careers; 2) how serious they thought various hypothetical ethical violations were; and, 3) what punishments they thought should be meted out to officers who violated various ethical or legal standards of behavior. A similar study took place in Ohio at the same time; there was no study conducted in Pennsylvania due to objections raised by the Fraternal Order of Police there. The Chicago Police Department declined to participate in the study because of objections raised by the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police. This report focuses exclusively on findings from Illinois outside of Chicago.

Before the questionnaire could be designed, the central question of how to define ethical behavior among law enforcement officers had to be addressed. The Illinois Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, which every municipal officer in the state is required to adhere to, was the standard used to determine what was and wasn't considered ethical. In addition, an Advisory Committee reviewed all questions on the survey. Substantial input into the overall purpose of the survey and the questionnaire's design came from this committee which consisted of law enforcement experts (see Appendix A for a complete list of members), and representatives from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (TSB) and the Illinois State Police (ISP).

A great deal of support for the survey came from Illinois' law enforcement community. TSB provided access to its law enforcement officer database to select the officer sample, and its mobile team units were used for remote site interviews and survey completion. The Illinois State Police districts served as additional survey sites. Most importantly, the officers selected to be surveyed, and their respective chiefs, supported the research goals.

Although there was strong support for the study, Authority staff found research in the field of law enforcement ethics a difficult undertaking. In addition to Pennsylvania and the Chicago Police Department's decision not to participate, other major concerns encountered included the issues of anonymity and how findings would be publicized. Despite all the difficulties, this study succeeded in providing data about how law enforcement officers in the state perceived the behavior of their fellow officers. The study does not provide data on how many actual incidents of unethical behavior occur in the state annually.

Some key findings:

- Non-serious violations were observed more commonly than serious violations.

- When asked to react to hypothetical ethical violations, officers assigned high levels of seriousness to major ethical infractions (using the Code of Ethics as the bellwether) such as theft, bribery, use of drugs, perjury and failing to respond to a call for service.

- When asked what punishment should be meted out to officers found guilty of hypothetical ethical violations, officers assigned harsher penalties for the ethical violations they ranked highest in seriousness.

- There was a reasonable degree of consensus among our respondents concerning very specific ethical behavior, but for the most part, there was much more gray area or lack of consensus.

- For most kinds of behavior, rank and years of service were not associated with observations of unethical behavior. For the few kinds of behavior where there was an association, newer patrol-level officers were more likely to report having observed unethical behavior than veteran, higher-ranking officers.

- Female officers were more likely to report having observed unethical behavior than their male counterparts, regardless of rank.

The survey found that Illinois officers reported they had seen many types of what they perceived as ethical lapses, ranging from "less serious" (flashing badge to avoid a citation) to "very serious" (falsifying an arrest report) and that surveyed officers consider ethical violations such as improper use of force, theft, bribery, perjury or dereliction of duty to be very serious. The survey also showed that officers who filled out questionnaires wanted to see strong sanctions applied to officers who violated serious ethical standards. Table A shows the percent of respondents who reportedly observed misconduct and their reported observations.

The design and results of the study are described in the following sections of this report. The Authority and the project Advisory Committee intend this data to benefit the law enforcement community. The findings may be of use in designing training on ethical standards. It is clear the Illinois law enforcement community takes the issue of ethics seriously and wants all unethical behavior eradicated. We hope the study will serve as a catalyst for more exploration of the issue.

Table A Reported observations of misconduct for the past year by type of conduct.

Officer Conduct	% observing misconduct (past year)
Violation of civilian rights	
Illegally search suspect to remove drugs	24.8
"Stop & frisk" offender to harass	23.7
Give false testimony in a traffic case	4.1
Give false testimony in a criminal case	2.9
Falsify the arrest report	6.7
Unlawful use of force	
Use of more force than necessary	20.4
Cover up excessive force incident	5.6
Fail to report excessive force	8.3
Unauthorized conduct during investigation	
Commit felony in undercover investigation	0.1
Plant a weapon on a suspect	0.0
Failure to provide adequate service	
Fail to respond to a call	14.3
Avoid a patrol area because it's dangerous	9.2
Exploiting job autonomy	
Speeding when there was no emergency	77.3
Sleep while on duty	35.0
Harassing a citizen	
Harass a citizen because of their race	26.2
Sexually harass a female on duty	8.6
Force a confession from a suspect	8.0
Harass gay/lesbian	6.3
Drop a suspect off in a bad area	0.8
Using drugs	
Drive under the influence of alcohol on duty	5.8
Abuse prescribed drugs while on duty	1.1
Use drugs while off duty	0.9
Use drugs while working undercover	0.2
Use drugs while on duty	0.1
Misuse of authority	
Accept free coffee or food	79.9
Display badge to avoid traffic citation off duty	46.6
Violate surveillance laws to obtain evidence	1.2
Fail to arrest a friend/relative	1.1
Accept payment to overlook illegal activities	0.1
Purchase stolen merchandise	0.4

Introduction

Media coverage of unlawful use of force and police brutality has brought ethical conduct of law enforcement officers to the forefront of public concern. Unfortunately, isolated incidents can sometimes be misconstrued in the public's mind to represent how an entire department operates, despite the good work of countless police officers. Law enforcement administrators are looking for empirical research to define whether there is a real problem and to assist with training so individual officers always act in the most professional, ethical manner. Up until now, however, research in this area has been minimal, particularly with regard to law enforcement's perception of ethics problems.

This research explores the issue of police ethics in a manner useful to the law enforcement community. Illinois police officers are presented with a standard code of ethics as part of their basic training, and as sworn officers agree to live and work by this code (see Appendix B for a copy). This research asked them about their perceptions and attitudes concerning behavior that violates that code. As part of the study, Illinois police officers answered the following questions about ethical behavior:

- What are the most commonly perceived types of unethical behavior by Illinois officers? In other words, what percentage of officers report having seen certain types of unethical behavior?
- What kinds of behavior are considered serious by Illinois officers?
- What do they think the consequences of violating ethical standards should be?

The answers to the above questions are presented in the "Results" section of the report. Before discussing results, however, the study's background and design will be described.

Background of the study

This research into police ethics was not restricted to perceptions and opinions of Illinois municipal officers. It started in Ohio with a United States Department of Justice/Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) grant to the Ohio Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Services for a study of police behavior. BJS then decided that ethics in law enforcement was a national issue and that possible unethical behavior in just one police agency had important ramifications for law enforcement personnel nationwide, so they expanded the study to include two more states, each of which received grants of approximately $30,000 to conduct research on the topic.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, assisted by an advisory committee of law enforcement experts, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency joined the research effort, but the study was dropped in Pennsylvania because the Pennsylvania Fraternal

Order of Police encouraged officers there not to participate. Illinois researchers faced similar opposition when the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police decided not to endorse the project. As a result, the Chicago Police Department, which represents approximately one-half the full-time municipal police force in Illinois, declined to participate.

Study Design

A representative sample of full-time municipal officers in every locale across Illinois (except Chicago) was selected to complete a 25 minute questionnaire. Sampling began in October 1992. The data collection was completed in October 1993; the response rate was 83.4 percent. This high completion rate could not have occurred without cooperation from officers and their chiefs and the collaboration between the project team at the Authority, the Training and Standards Board (TSB), the Illinois State Police and the Advisory Committee.

The Illinois Officers' Perceptions of Police Ethics Advisory Committee was an indispensable and necessary part of the research team. The members represented all facets of law enforcement (for a list of Advisory Committee members, see Appendix A) and provided insight and experience concerning law enforcement in general and police ethics in particular. The membership includes chiefs from police departments across the state, police policy groups such as the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and the Police Executive Research Forum, educators specializing in psychology and criminal justice, and training officials such as the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. Their advice and guidance ensured objective gathering, interpretation and presentation of the information.

In collecting a representative sample of full-time municipal officers and relying on the advice from law enforcement experts, the ultimate goal of this project was to provide information to help chiefs, educators, trainers, legislators, police officers and law enforcement policy groups better understand the issue of police ethics. We hope not only to improve understanding of how Illinois officers perceive ethical standards but also to begin providing trainers with tools to assess training needs.

Research design

The project team and the advisory committee met in September 1992 to identify the target group whose perceptions were being sought, what questions needed to be asked to get the required information, how the information was to be gathered and how the information was to be analyzed and presented. A four stage project design was developed that included questionnaire development and revision, population and sample selection, survey distribution, data collection and data analysis. Because of the sensitive nature of the research topic,[1] and based on the recommendations of the advisory committee, great lengths were taken to gain the confidence and trust of respondents and minimize response bias.

Population selection

The population for the Illinois study included all full time municipal police officers in the state, except Chicago. Part time officers were excluded from the study because only full time police officers are subject to standard training procedures, with all of these full-time officers required to graduate from a training academy.[2] Sheriff's police and other non municipal officers were excluded because many references to questionable behavior reported in the news media include only local municipalities and municipal police officers. Research teams in Illinois and Ohio selected comparable groups of individuals so responses could be compared.

The sample

The project team and advisory committee developed a sampling plan to ensure the selection of officers would be representative of all full-time Illinois officers working in municipal jurisdictions outside Chicago. In selecting the sample, the research team attempted to ensure representativeness of the target population and the ability to compare data across states. In the following section, the sampling design used in choosing the respondents will be explained.

Sampling design

The sample base was a roster of the 12,281 non-Chicago, full time municipal police officers in Illinois, as compiled by the Training and Standards Board in June 1992 (see Table 1). The Training and Standards Board is mandated by law (Public Act 79-720 and Public Act 79-652) to collect and update semi-annually a roster of law enforcement personnel in Illinois.

[1]For a discussion on the problems of researching sensitive topics see Renzetti and Lee (1993).

[2]There are some exceptions to this, including a waiver for training elsewhere, and officers hired before the mid-1970s when they were not required to complete standard training.

Table 1 Sampling strategy: population, sample and response rate by department size

Department size (officers)	Population: Illinois officers, June 1992	Sample size + 12% additional	Sample size (original)	Lost to attrition	Available sample	Actual responses	Response rate (%)
1-3	450	105+13	118	36	82	54	66
4-7	622	112+13	125	29	96	87	91
8-12	888	119+14	133	27	106	86	81
13-19	938	120+14	134	17	117	105	90
20-29	1,521	126+15	141	19	122	102	84
30-49	2,541	130+16	146	13	133	115	86
50-106	3,266	131+16	147	24	123	104	85
106+	2,055	290+35	325	72	253	208	82
Total	12,281	1,133+136	**1,269**	237	1,032	861	**83**

The information collected includes: first and last names, Social Security numbers, titles or ranks, dates of birth, dates of appointment and employment status (full-time, part-time or auxiliary). This information must be submitted to the Training and Standards Board by January 31 and July 31 of each year. The Training and Standards Board explicitly asks police agencies not to include civilian personnel in their listings. At the suggestion of the advisory committee, the study sample was divided into eight strata, or sections, by size of the department. This was to ensure that departments of different sizes would be adequately represented.

Because of the time lag between compiling the sample (June 1992) and administering the survey (May 1993), the Training and Standards Board anticipated that 12 percent to 15 percent of the officers who had been originally identified would be lost through attrition (retirement, resignations, transfers, terminations). To assure that we would maintain sufficient respondents to represent the opinions of the population, the original sample was increased 12 percent for each department stratum; these numbers are presented in the third column of Table 1. The numbers of respondents actually lost to attrition are presented in the fifth column of Table 1. The number actually lost to attrition in each stratum was more than anticipated. For example, 13 people (12 percent) were added to the sample of officers from department sizes of one to three officers (column 3), but 36 people (31 percent) were actually lost through attrition in this stratum (column 5).

The sample was randomly drawn from populations of different department sizes (strata). However, to ensure that we would have enough cases to adequately represent the smaller departments, we "oversampled" them. That is, respondents in different strata had a greater or lesser chance of being selected. For example, officers in one to three officer departments had a one-in-four chance (450 ÷ 118) of being selected compared to officers from 106 or more officer departments who had a one-in-six chance (2,055 ÷ 325) of being selected. This becomes important when combining the subsamples for data analysis of total Illinois municipal officers. When results are combined to present a composite picture of the whole sample, the disproportionate sampling could confound the results. If we simply added the responses, the results would be incorrect. Instead, we must use weights to account for the differential chances of being selected, which involves assigning a number to each subsample that multiplies the sample size to its population size. Results in this report that are from the combined responses of the total sample are appropriately weighted (see Appendix C for the weights assigned to the sample).

For each stratum, a separate sample size large enough for the responses to be representative of the stratum population was determined. Of the total number of officers, 1,269 were randomly selected to participate in the study (Table 1). Column 4 in Table 1 shows these original sample sizes for the eight strata. Based on these original sample sizes, we were at least 90 percent confident that responses would be true for each stratum, within a range of ± 7 percent.[3]

After officers were selected and all surveys were completed, however, a substantial difference between anticipated and actual attrition was discovered. This means precision of the sample was less than anticipated. If the actual attrition had been as anticipated and all who were available to answer the survey did so, we would have been 90 percent confident their answers represented the true values of the population within ± 7 percent. As Table 2 shows, though, in most strata, the actual error range was larger. In the sample from the smallest stratum, departments of one to three officers, estimates represented the true values of the population within a range of ± 12.2 percent.[4] For each of the strata between four and 106 officers, the error range was within 10 percent or less. For the largest stratum, departments of more than 106 officers, estimates represented true values ± 6.3 percent.

---

[3]This assumes the following: a 100 percent response rate, and for any response to the questions concerning observed misbehavior, 50 percent of the responses will be yes and 50 percent will be no.

[4]This assumes the actual response rate (54÷450) and for any response to the questions concerning observed misbehavior, 50 percent of the responses will be yes and 50 percent will be no.

Table 2 Population, sample, attrition and sample precision by department size

Department size (officers)	Population: Illinois officers, June 1992	Sample size + 12% additional	Lost to attrition	Actual responses	Precision rate (%)
1-3	450	105+13	36	54	±12.2
4-7	622	112+13	29	87	±9.4
8-12	888	119+14	27	86	±9.9
13-19	938	120+14	17	105	±8.8
20-29	1,521	126+15	19	102	±9.3
30-49	2,541	[illegible]+16	13	115	±9.0
50-106	3,266	131+16	24	104	±9.5
106+	2,055	290+35	72	208	±6.3
Total	12,281	1,133+136	237	861	

The available sample (Table 1, column 6) is the original sample minus the number lost to attrition. The actual number of responses from each stratum (column 7) divided by the available sample equals the response rates (column 8) for each stratum and for the entire population. The original sample numbered 1,269 officers. Of that number, 237 officers (19 percent) were lost to attrition, bringing the total available sample to 1,032. Of those 1,032 officers, 861 completed a survey, putting the overall response rate at 83.4 percent (861 ÷ 1,032).

The response rate was much lower for the smallest stratum (66 percent) than for the others (from 81 percent to 91 percent). In addition to the relatively lower response rate, the attrition for this group was the highest. Thirty-one percent of respondents in departments of one to three officers were lost through attrition (36 ÷ 118) compared to 9 percent for departments of 30 to 49 (13 ÷ 146) and 22 percent for departments of 106 and more officers (72 ÷ 325). One explanation for the lower response rate for this group is their limited number of officers. Perhaps, because of their small size, they could not afford the time or the staff to participate in the survey. The higher attrition rate among this group suggests there is more turnover in personnel than in the other groups. Because the high attrition rate and lower response rate substantially weakened the precision of estimates from the one-to-three-officer stratum, the results from this group are not as reliable as the results from the other strata.

Population sample comparison

To examine the possibility of sample bias, gender and race/ethnicity information was collected about the July 1994, population of full-time non-Chicago municipal officers in Illinois. This information was provided by the Training and Standards Board and was available only for gender and ethnicity. The purpose of this examination was to see if the sample matches the profile of the total population.

Gender distribution:

	Full-time officers July 1994 (%)	Sampled[5] respondents (%)
Male	12,712 (95.2)	11,623 (95.9)
Female	634 (4.8)	502 (4.1)
Total	13,346 (100)	12,125 (100)

Race/ethnic distribution:

	July 1994 full-time officers (%)	Sampled[6] respondents (%)
White	12,699 (95.0)	11,285 (93.3)
African American	549 (4.0)	431 (3.6)
Latino	88 (0.6)	241 (2.0)
Other (including Asian, Arab and Pacific Islander)	10 (0.4)	143 (1.2)
Total	13,346 (100)	12,100 (100)

Overall, the sample's racial and gender characteristics matched those of the current population of full-time municipal officers in Illinois (excluding Chicago). The proportion of males was almost exactly the same. There was a slightly larger proportion of Latino and "Other" respondents in the sample, compared to their total numbers in the population (2.2 percent Latino and 1.3 percent other sampled, compared to 0.6 percent and 0.4 percent respectively, in the total population).

[5]These figures are from weighted data. See page 5 for an explanation of how data are weighted.
[6]Ibid.

The questionnaire

To collect information about the most commonly perceived types of unethical behavior, what behavior is considered serious and what Illinois officers think the consequences of misconduct should be, the questionnaire was divided into three sections (see Appendix D for a copy). The first section provided hypothetical vignettes where an officer's action might be viewed as unethical. These vignettes and observation questions represented concrete behaviors that violated concepts contained in the Illinois Code of Ethics and included such things as stealing property or abusing illegal drugs, harassing a suspect because of his or her race or sexual orientation, committing perjury or accepting gratuities. Media accounts and literature concerning police ethics formed the basis for the initial questions and vignette situations. The second part provided examples of specific questionable behavior; respondents were asked if they had personally observed that behavior in the previous year and also during their career. The last section asked for basic demographic information.

The 35 vignettes in the first section were written images that provided pictures of situations under which police officers might behave unethically. The purpose of these questions was to determine what kinds of behavior are considered serious by Illinois officers. For example, one survey question painted the following picture:

> A police officer discovers a *white man/black man/Hispanic man* trying to enter a house at night through a first-floor window. The man explains that he has lost his house key. The incident occurs in an area with *almost no criminal activity/ moderate criminal activity/a lot of criminal activity*. The officer *does nothing/ questions the man/orders the man to freeze/points a gun at the man and orders him to freeze.*

The race of the person entering the home, the crime level of the neighborhood and the reaction of the officer in this scenario alternated in each questionnaire so that the situation was different from one respondent to the next. In this question, there were three possible choices for the suspect's race; therefore, one-third of the respondents might have been asked this question about an African-American suspect, another one-third might have been asked this question but the suspect's race was white; and, a final one-third might have seen this question with a Latino suspect.

This technique of alternating characteristics in the vignette to generate different situations for the same group of respondents is called *factorial survey approach.* It is designed to more efficiently extract information about judgments, such as the seriousness of misconduct, without creating a cumbersomely long instrument. Also, by including more than one factor that might affect judgement, such as race and the level of crime in the community, the complexities involved in unethical situations are better illustrated for the respondent and the researcher is able to better isolate what variables (i.e., race or crime in the neighborhood) are most influential in respondents' judgments of misconduct. In the current example, the person's race was either white, African-American or Latino; the level of crime in the neighborhood was little, moderate

or high; and, the officer might have reacted by doing nothing when s/he encountered the person, questioning the person, ordering the person to freeze or pointing his or her gun and ordering the person to freeze.

The responding police officers rated how serious they thought the portrayed behavior was. Did respondents consider it more serious when an officer pointed a gun at a white suspect compared to an African-American suspect, even when the crime level in the community was the same? Were officers consistent in their perceptions of appropriate behavior in a possible burglary, regardless of the person's race or crime level of the community?

As part of the factorial survey, respondents were asked to rate the seriousness of the officers' behavior portrayed in each vignette on a scale from 0 (not serious at all), to 15 (extremely serious). They also were asked to provide a consequence for each action, from no consequence to dismissal or referral for criminal prosecution.

The 35 vignette questions were placed in a different order on each survey. For example, the question about a possible burglary might have been question one on one respondent's survey and question 35 on another respondent's survey. Randomly ordering the questions on each survey eliminated the chance of bias in responses due to the way questions were ordered.

The second part of the survey instrument asked questions to measure the most commonly perceived misconduct. Respondents were asked if they had personally observed a police officer engaging in each of 30 specific unethical behaviors in the past year, or over their career. These acts ranged from accepting a bribe or giving false court testimony in a criminal case to harassing a citizen because of his or her race or sexual orientation. These questions were designed to find out what Illinois officers perceive to be the most common types of unethical behavior. Following is a list of the 30 behaviors described in the second part of the survey:

- illegally search suspect to remove drugs
- give false testimony in a traffic case
- falsify the arrest report
- cover up excessive force incident
- commit felony undercover
- fail to respond to a call
- speeding when there was no emergency
- harass a citizen because of their race
- force a confession from a suspect
- drop a suspect off in dangerous area
- abuse prescribed drugs on duty
- use drugs while undercover
- accept free coffee or food
- violate surveillance laws
- purchase stolen merchandise
- stop and frisk offender to harass
- give false testimony in a criminal case
- use more force than necessary
- fail to report excessive force
- plant a weapon on a suspect
- avoid a patrol area because it's dangerous
- sleep while on duty
- sexually harass a female on duty
- harass gay/lesbian
- drive while intoxicated on duty
- use drugs while off duty
- use drugs while on duty
- display badge to avoid traffic citation off duty
- fail to arrest a friend/relative
- accept payment to overlook illegal activities

The last section asked for basic demographic information such as race/ethnicity, income range and rank. The demographic questions, revised using suggestions obtained in pretesting, made sure officers could not be identified based on their responses and observations. For example, respondents were asked for an income and age range instead of actual date of birth or specific dollar amount of their yearly pay.

The research team in Ohio designed the survey instrument by approaching individuals known for their work in the area of police ethics. The team asked Tom Barker of Jacksonville State University, David Carter of Michigan State University and Hans Toch of the State University of New York at Albany School of Criminal Justice to help refine the initial questions.[7] This review group provided advice and suggestions about behaviors not included in the original list. It also gave advice about questions that did not specifically apply to police work, such as taking office supplies for personal use. The Ohio team incorporated the changes from the review group and presented the revised version of the questionnaire to the Illinois and Pennsylvania research teams for further review.

In Illinois, the project staff and the Advisory Committee made suggestions concerning the questions and vignette contents. After further revisions were made, the project teams pretested the questionnaire in each state. There was one final version of the questionnaire used in all participating states.

In Illinois, the Evanston Police Department pretested the questionnaire. Eleven officers ranging in rank from patrol officer to commander filled out the survey. The officers were given a copy of the questionnaire, with a blank sheet of paper inserted after each page so they could make general comments about the survey and specific comments about the questions. The survey took approximately 25 minutes to complete, including comments. The suggestions made by the officers were extremely useful, and many were incorporated into the final draft.

Survey distribution and data collection

The surveys were distributed in three discrete phases. During the first phase, police departments of officers included in the sample were identified. Also, large police departments, ISP district headquarters and Mobile Team Unit offices located near departments with participating officers from Illinois were identified. Participating officers were asked to come to these locations to complete the questionnaires. The second phase involved mailing questionnaires to departments with participating officers who did not respond when asked to come to centrally located sites (this was the first follow-up mailing). During the final phase, questionnaires were mailed to those departments with participating officers who had agreed to go to central locations but were unable to make it (second follow-up mailing).

---

[7]This information was provided by Mark Davis, Project Director of the Police Ethics Study at the Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Services.

Distributing surveys and collecting information involved the following steps:

- Identifying sites across Illinois and getting permission for officers to use them to complete the survey.

- Selecting the sample, using a map to mark the location and number of respondents, and identifying the sites closest to departments with participating officers.

- Mailing 470 letters to chiefs of departments whose officers had been randomly selected as part of the sample, requesting they allow their officers to come to the sites to complete questionnaires.

- Receiving response letters from 344 of the 470 chiefs contacted, confirming the participation of selected officers and the location where officers were to be sent to complete the survey.

- Calling chiefs of the remaining 126 departments who did not return a response sheet from the initial request for participation and mailing surveys to sampled officers in those departments. (This was the first follow-up.)

- Receiving completed surveys from all sites and identifying 348 respondents (and their departments) who were unable to complete a survey at the site.

- Calling chiefs of departments with the 348 selected officers who agreed to come to sites but were unable to, and mailing surveys to their departments. This was the second follow-up.

- Collecting completed surveys from Mobile Team Unit sites and individual police stations. (This was handled by Training and Standards Board staff.)

- Collecting surveys from sites in the southern part of the state and delivering them to the Training and Standards Board's regional office in Springfield, where an Authority staff member picked them up and brought them back to Chicago. Again, Training and Standards Board staff was responsible for collecting the surveys.

- Delivering surveys from sites in the northern part of the state directly to the Authority. (Training and Standards Board staff handled this aspect.)

- Mailing surveys completed at ISP sites directly to the Authority's office.

Central sites

Initial plans called for all questionnaires to be completed at selected host sites in many of Illinois' 102 counties. Letters were sent to chiefs of departments with sampled officers. These letters listed the names of officers working in their department who had been randomly selected to be in the study. The letters asked whether each officer was still employed full time and provided the name and address of one or more locations where the officer could complete a survey. In response to the 470 letters sent to chiefs with officers included in the sample, chiefs from 344 departments said they would have their officers participate and fill out surveys at those central sites.

The project staff, Training and Standards Board staff and Captain Daniel McDevitt from the Illinois State Police (ISP) collaborated to select central locations throughout Illinois where officers could come to complete a survey. These locations included 16 Training and Standards Board Mobile Team Units, 25 centrally-located police departments and 15 ISP district headquarters. Centralized survey sites were available May 1 through May 15, 1993, and ISP districts and large police departments were open 24 hours a day so respondents could come during any shift to complete the questionnaire. Criteria for sites to be selected were availability of quiet areas in neutral locations where officers could sit down and complete surveys without disruption and where they felt comfortable responding honestly. The sites also had to be convenient enough so travel time and other administrative costs were kept to a minimum for the respective police departments.

Table 3 shows, by strata, the total number of departments with selected officers, the number of departments whose chiefs agreed to send selected personnel to central sites, and the response rate of those departments that sent officers to sites. Based on the figures in Table 3, the central site idea was better accepted by chiefs of larger departments than by those of smaller departments. The departmental response rate in column 4 illustrates the usefulness of providing central sites for distributing surveys. It shows the percent of departments whose chiefs agreed to send sampled officers to site locations. As the size of departments increased the percentage of departments whose chiefs agreed to send at least one officer to site locations also increased. For example, 72 percent of the 8-to-12-officer departments with sampled officers agreed to send one or more officers to sites, compared to 84 percent of departments with 50 to 106 officers.

The pattern that set departments of one to three officers apart from the rest, such as higher attrition and a lower response rate from the sampled respondents, continued with this aspect of the survey. Only 48 percent of the departments with one to three officers agreed to take advantage of the central sites. Again, this may have been due to their small size. It may have been difficult for these departments to afford the time or staff to leave departments and complete surveys at sites. This analysis lends support to the previous note of caution that the results from this group are less reliable than results from the larger departments.

Table 3 Survey distribution, departmental response to sites and first follow-up mailings

Department size (officers)	# of departments with one or more selected officer(s)	# of departments sending at least one officer to sites	Departmental response rate (to sites)	# of departments in first follow up
1-3	98	47	48%	51
4-7	83	64	77%	19
8-12	71	51	72%	20
13-19	52	40	77%	12
20-29	52	43	83%	9
30-49	59	51	86%	8
50-106	43	36	84%	7
more than 106	12	12	100%	0
Total	470	344		126

The central site idea was designed with the anonymity of officers from smaller departments in mind. Even though the surveys could not be linked to the respondent, anonymity for participants in smaller departments was more difficult to achieve. For example, if one person from a three-officer department completed the survey at his or her home office, a connection could be made by the coordinator or chief responsible for collecting and delivering the surveys back to the Authority. However, if that one respondent were on a list of 20 other respondents from neighboring departments and each completed a survey at a remote location, anonymity could be assured.

First follow-up

Staff contacted chiefs from the 126 departments who did not respond to the initial request. This was the first of two follow up mailings. Table 3, column 5 shows by strata the number of departments involved in the first follow-up. During the first follow-up, chiefs were asked to accept the surveys by mail and distribute them to the selected officers. For this phase, individual officers gave their completed surveys to their respective chiefs, or some other person designated by the chief, who then placed the questionnaires into one large envelope that was mailed to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. When the selected officers finished the survey, the chiefs crossed participants' names off a sample list.

Second follow-up

Officers who did not come to the host sites were handled in the same way as those in the first follow up. Questionnaires were mailed to chiefs (or designated alternates) and then distributed to individual officers. As with the first follow up, completed questionnaires were given to the chief, who crossed the names off a participant list. Also as before, the surveys were put into one large envelope and mailed back to the Authority. Table 4 shows the total number and percent of: 1) sampled officers who were assigned to sites by their chiefs; and, 2) the number and percent of sampled officers who received surveys during the first follow-up mailing.

Table 4 Respondents assigned to sites and those who received surveys during first follow up

Sampled officers assigned to sites by chiefs	825	80%
Other sampled officers (first follow-up mailing)	207	20%
Total available sample	1,032	100%

Of the 1,032 respondents who were available (not lost through attrition) to fill out the survey, 825 (80 percent) were assigned to sites. Chiefs of the other 207 (20 percent) did not respond to the initial request to complete surveys at sites but received their surveys through the mail (first follow-up mailing). Of the 825 respondents who were assigned to sites by their chiefs, 477 (58 percent) actually completed their surveys at the site (Table 5). The remaining 348 (42 percent) received their surveys through the mail during the second follow up.

Table 5 Respondents who completed surveys at sites versus number assigned

Sampled officers who completed a survey at the sites	477	58%
Other sampled officers (second follow-up mailing)	348	42%
Sampled officers assigned to sites by chiefs	825	100%

As it turned out, using one method to distribute surveys was not enough. The distribution strategy had to be expanded to include two follow-up mailings. Even though the follow-up mailings were necessary to collect enough information to complete the project, not all respondents completed surveys under the same conditions. Because of this, the possibility that bias influenced answers had to be considered. For instance, those that completed surveys in their home departments may have been more conservative in their survey responses than those who completed the survey at neutral sites, especially respondents from departments of one-to-three-officers. As a result, the information presented in this report could well be a conservative estimate of Illinois' officers' perceptions of ethical misconduct.

Anonymity

Staff took several measures to assure respondents' complete anonymity, whether officers completed surveys at host sites or at their home departments. At the host sites, people distributing the surveys were given a box of blank questionnaires in unmarked envelopes with a list of officers assigned to that location. They were instructed to allow each officer to select a survey packet from the box and to remind the officer not to make any identifying marks on the return envelope. The instructions accompanying the blank questionnaire assured participants there was no way to link them with their individual surveys. When the survey was completed, each officer was asked to seal the questionnaire in the provided envelope and reminded not to make any marks on it. Once the survey host received the sealed envelope, the officer's name was crossed off the participant list.

At the home departments, the same basic procedures were employed. The surveys were mailed directly, in over-sized envelopes, to departments with sampled officers. Chiefs, or their designated alternates, were asked to act as coordinators for the surveys' distribution, collection and return. The coordinators' packets included blank questionnaires inside their own envelopes with instructions on how to compete the survey; a participant list and instructions for the chief or coordinator; and, a postage-paid, self-addressed oversized envelope to mail the completed survey to the Authority. The instructions for the chief or coordinator asked that each officer be allowed to select their own survey packet. Once the officer returned a completed, sealed survey, the coordinator was asked to cross the officer's name from the list of participants. Once all surveys were completed, the coordinator was asked to seal them in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope and mail them back to the Authority. The instructions accompanying the blank questionnaires gave the same assurances to participants of not linking their responses to the surveys. Participants also were instructed to seal the survey in its envelope without making marks on the envelope and to return the sealed, completed survey to the chief or coordinator.

Despite the steps taken to ensure anonymity, some respondents were still concerned. Two respondents who received surveys by mail feared their chiefs or coordinators might open their completed questionnaire after it had been sealed. One of these respondents suggested that his remarks had been read before they were returned to the Authority, adding that he believed fellow officers who received the surveys through the mail may have been answering the survey under similarly strained circumstances. In response, a few exceptions were made for some officers who called Authority staff and asked if they could mail their questionnaires separately, personally paying for the postage.

Response rate

The considerable lengths to which researchers went to ensure completion of the surveys resulted in the high total response rate of 83.4 percent. The available sample, excluding those officers unavailable because of attrition (death, transfers, part-time status, etc.,), totaled 1,032. Of those, 861 completed a survey, putting the total response rate at 83.4 percent. The response rate ranged from 81 percent to 91 percent in each stratum, except for those from departments

with only one to three officers (see Table 1). It is possible that lack of personnel at these small departments made it difficult to travel to a host site, contributing to the relatively low 66 percent response rate. Also, for departments with so few officers, the 25 minutes needed to complete the survey and ensure it was mailed back to the Authority may have required an unreasonable amount of time and effort.

Although the study sampled individual officers, the cooperation of the chiefs in departments with sampled officers was necessary. As Table 2 shows, there was a high departmental response to sending selected officers to central sites. The response rates from departments where chiefs agreed ranged from 77 percent from departments with four to seven officers to 100 percent from departments with 106 or more people. Departments of one to three officers were not as responsive as other departments to the central site idea, with only 48 percent of those departments agreeing to send officers to sites.

Characteristics of the respondents

The sample was drawn from a list of full-time municipal police officers in Illinois, excluding Chicago Police Department officers, compiled in June 1992. This list included officers from suburban, rural and big town (more than 105-officer) police departments. Certain demographic and personal characteristic questions were asked of this group in the third section of the survey. The demographic profile of the sample is described below; the questions used to create the profile follows.[8]

Officers in our sample were not rookies (Table 6). More than one-half the respondents had been full-time officers for more than 10 years, and almost 21 percent for more than 20 years. Less than 10 percent had been officers for three or fewer years.

Table 6 How many total years of service do you have as a full-time officer?

Years of service	Percent of respondents
Less than one year	0.6
One to three years	9.0
Four to seven years	19.4
Eight to ten years	11.6
Eleven to fifteen years	18.9
Sixteen to twenty years	20.0
More than twenty years	20.5

[8]These percentages are based on weighted data.

Our sample consisted mostly of police officers (57.8 percent). Eighteen percent were first-line supervisors and 11.4 percent were detectives/investigators (Table 7). Less than 13 percent of the respondents were either mid-level supervisors such as lieutenants and captains or administrators such as deputy chiefs and chiefs.

Table 7 What is your present rank?

Present rank	Percent of respondents
Police officer	57.8
Detective/investigator	11.4
First line supervisor	18.0
Mid level supervisor	6.2
Administrator	6.6

Relatively few officers in our sample worked beats with high criminal activity (Table 8). Most described their assigned area as having moderate (49.3 percent) or little (33.2 percent) criminal activity. Only 17.4 percent described their beats as having much criminal activity.

Table 8 How would you describe the beat or area to which you are now assigned?

Type of beat	Percent of respondents
Little crime	33.2
Moderate crime	49.3
Much crime	17.4

Most sampled respondents thought the public's opinion of the police had changed in the past five years for the worse (65.4 percent) and only 19.9 percent thought the public's opinion of the police was more positive (Table 9).

Table 9 Do you think the public's opinion of the police has changed in the past five years?

Public's opinion	Percent of respondents
Public more positive	19.9
Public not changed	14.7
Public more negative	65.4

Most (90.7 percent) of the respondents in our sample had some form of college education, which included either some college course work (35.5 percent), an associate's degree (25.8 percent) or a bachelor's degree (20.6 percent, see Table 10). About 9 percent either had some graduate work (5.3 percent) or had completed their master's degree (3.5 percent), while 9 percent had high school diplomas. Less than 1 percent (.3 percent) did not have high school diplomas. No respondent reported having a doctoral degree.

Table 10 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Education	Percent of respondents
Less than high school	0.3
High school diploma	9.0
Some college	35.5
Associate's degree	25.8
Bachelor's degree	20.6
Some graduate work	5.3
Master's degree	3.5

Nearly 97 percent of respondents had had at least 20 or more hours of in-service training in the past 10 years, and 23 percent had had more than 500 hours (Table 11).

Table 11 How many total hours of in-service training have you had in the past 10 years?

Hours of in-service training	Percent of respondents
Less than 20 hours	3.1
20 to 99 hours	18.2
100 to 299 hours	33.6
300 to 499 hours	22.2
500 or more hours	22.9

Most (58.4 percent) respondents had had a course on cultural differences, but a substantial number (41.6 percent) had not had training on cultural differences (Table 12).

Table 12 Has your police training included a course on cultural differences?

Cultural training	Percent of respondents
No	41.6
Yes	58.4

Most (61.2 percent) of the respondents said they had had a course on ethics in law enforcement. But a substantial number (38.8 percent) said they did not have training in this area (Table 13).

Table 13 Has training included a separate course on ethics in law enforcement?

Ethics training	Percent of respondents
No	38.8
Yes	61.2

The gender distribution of the sample was predominantly male (95.9 percent) with only 4.1 percent of the sample consisting of female officers. The overwhelming majority of respondents were white (93.7 percent of the men and 84.3 percent of the women). A larger proportion of female respondents (15.7 percent) than male respondents (3.0 percent) were African-American (Table 14).

Table 14 Racial and ethnic distribution

Race/ethnicity	Male (%)	Female (%)
White	93.7	84.3
African American	3.0	15.7
Latino	2.1	0.0
Asian	0.1	0.0
Other	1.1	0.0

More than 95 percent of the officers in the sample were between 25 and 54 years old, with 39.1 percent between 35 and 44 years old and 34.1 percent between 25 and 34 years old (Table 15). No one in the sample was younger than 21 years old.

Table 15 What is your age?

Age	Percent of respondents
21 to 24 years old	1.7
25 to 34 years old	34.1
35 to 44 years old	39.1
45 to 54 years old	22.0
55 years or older	3.1

Most (84.8 percent) respondents earned a yearly income between $25,000 and $75,000. No one had a household income of less than $9,000 (Table 16).

Table 16 What is your combined yearly household income?

Income	Percent of respondents
$9,000 to 15,000	0.1
$15,001 to 25,000	3.5
$25,001 to 50,000	48.2
$50,001 to 75,000	36.6
$75,001 to 100,000	9.9
More than $100,000	1.7

Overall, the people in our sample could be described as white males with moderate incomes and college backgrounds, who ranged in age from 25 to 54 years old. They mostly were police officers, although there were some administrators, supervisors and detectives. There were fewer new officers or rookies (three years' experience or less) than veteran officers. These sampled officers mostly worked in areas with little to moderate criminal activity. Most had both cultural differences and police ethics training, but a substantial number reported they had not had either type of training. Most of them thought the public's opinion of the police was more negative now than five years ago.

Analysis Methods

Vignette data and information about personal observations were analyzed to answer the following research questions: 1) What percentage of the officers reported seeing certain types of unethical behavior? 2) What kinds of behavior are considered serious by Illinois officers?; and, 3) What do they think consequences of these actions should be?

Perceptions of Seriousness

In the vignette section of the survey, officers were asked to provide a seriousness score ranging from 0 to 15 for each behavior described in 35 vignette questions. Staff calculated and ranked average seriousness scores from the most serious to the least serious for each of the 35 vignette questions. For example, respondents gave "accepting a bribe" an average seriousness score of 14.5 and ranked it as the most serious behavior of the 35.

To determine if serious misconduct was commonly observed by Illinois officers, the most and least serious behaviors that were portrayed in the vignettes and rated by survey respondents were compared with similar behaviors the respondents had observed. In other words, were survey participants seeing what they perceived to be very serious ethical lapses, or were observations of minor lapses more common?

Perceptions of Consequences

Respondents were asked to provide a consequence for each vignette question, with choices ranging from no consequence to referral for criminal prosecution. These choices were used to measure officers' perceptions of punishment of ethical misconduct. The percentages who chose the most-often and second-most-often consequences for each of the 35 vignettes were used, to measure the level of consensus among officers about appropriate sanctions for misbehavior.

Observations of Misconduct

To gather information on whether officers had personally observed unethical behavior in the previous year or during their entire careers, officers were asked if they had observed any of 30 different behaviors that covered a variety of possible infractions, from violating a civilian's rights to exploiting job autonomy. The 30 scenarios were grouped into eight general types of unethical behavior for this report:

- violation of civilian rights
- unlawful use of force
- unauthorized conduct during an investigation
- failure to provide adequate service
- exploiting job autonomy
- harassing a citizen
- using drugs
- misuse of authority

Finally, an analysis was performed to determine the association between reported observations and various demographic characteristics, including years of service, rank, department size and gender. Also, an analysis was done to determine how much influence these respondent characteristics had on reported observations of misconduct.

Results

This section presents the information gathered in the study and shows what officers perceive the seriousness and appropriate consequences of ethical misconduct to be; officer consensus concerning the seriousness and consequences of misconduct; and, the extent to which misconduct was observed, as well as the association between respondent characteristics and the observation of misconduct.

How did Illinois officers define ethical misconduct?

To measure the perceived seriousness of misconduct, each respondent was asked to rate the 35 vignettes on a scale from 0 (not at all serious) to 15 (extremely serious) (see Graph 1). Behaviors perceived as the most serious by the respondents and their attendant scores include:

- accepts a bribe (14.5)
- steals property (13.8)
- fails to respond to a call (12.7)
- commits perjury (12.4)
- falsifies an arrest report (11.7)
- watches excessive force (11.5)
- engages in sex while on duty (11.3).
- plants a weapon on a suspect (14.2)
- uses drugs (13.6)
- buys stolen merchandise (12.5)
- gives false court testimony (11.8)
- covers up excessive force (11.6)
- abuses Valium (11.5)

Behaviors perceived as the least serious and their attendant scores include:

- reacting to a speeding motorist because of his or her race (1.5)
- flashing a badge to avoid a traffic citation (2.5)
- reacting to a possible burglar because of his or her race (3.0)
- speeding when there is no emergency (4.1)
- fixing a parking ticket (5.8)
- conducting an unauthorized record check (5.8).

How much agreement was there among the respondents about the seriousness of the 35 acts of misconduct? Was there consensus in the way they responded to each vignette? The more widespread the seriousness scores were for a vignette behavior, the less agreement there was among the respondents. For example, if each respondent assigned a score of 15 when asked to rate the seriousness of an officer accepting a bribe, there would be complete consensus concerning the seriousness of that behavior. On the other hand, if the scores given for a behavior had a wide range -- some respondents considered it extremely serious, with a rating of 13, 14 or 15, while others considered it moderately serious, with ratings of 7, 8 or 9, and still others did not consider it serious at all, giving it a rating of 1 or 3 -- there would be much less agreement concerning the seriousness of the behavior.

Graph 1 shows 35 response scales, one for each of the 35 vignettes. Seriousness scores are plotted along a scale that ranges from 0 to 15. The scores for one-half of the respondents are grouped into boxes in Graph 1 to show the spread of scores for each behavior.[9] This spread shows us how much consensus there was among respondents about the seriousness of each behavior. A "cluster" around a particular score indicates strong consensus, while a spread of scores across the range indicates very little agreement as to the seriousness of the behavior.

To measure the amount of consensus among the respondents about the seriousness of each behavior, examine the length of the boxes in Graph 1. These boxes represent the degree of consensus among the middle half of the respondents. The bottom 25 percent and the top 25 percent (above the 75th percentile) have been left out of Graph 1, because these may represent extreme opinions. There is great consensus if the middle half of respondents' seriousness scores cluster around either one score or only a few scores. This equates to a "short" box on the graph. For example, the box for "plants a weapon" is much shorter than the one for "drops a suspect in a bad area." The scores for "plants a weapon" are clustered around 14 and 15 while the scores for "drops a suspect in a bad area" are spread across the continuum between eight and 14. The range in scores for one behavior (plants a weapon) has a shorter span (one score) while the range for the other behavior (drops a suspect in a bad area) has a longer range in scores (a range of 6). This means that respondents agreed more on the seriousness of planting a weapon on a suspect than they did on the seriousness of dropping a suspect in an area that would put that person at risk.

The median score also is plotted for each vignette and is represented on the graph by a dark vertical line. The median is the score that is in the middle of the distribution, meaning 50 percent of the officers scored the particular vignette above the median and 50 percent scored it below. For example, the vignette "harassing a gay or lesbian" has a median of eight, which means one-half the respondents scored its' seriousness as equal to or higher than eight, and one-half scored it equal to or lower than eight.

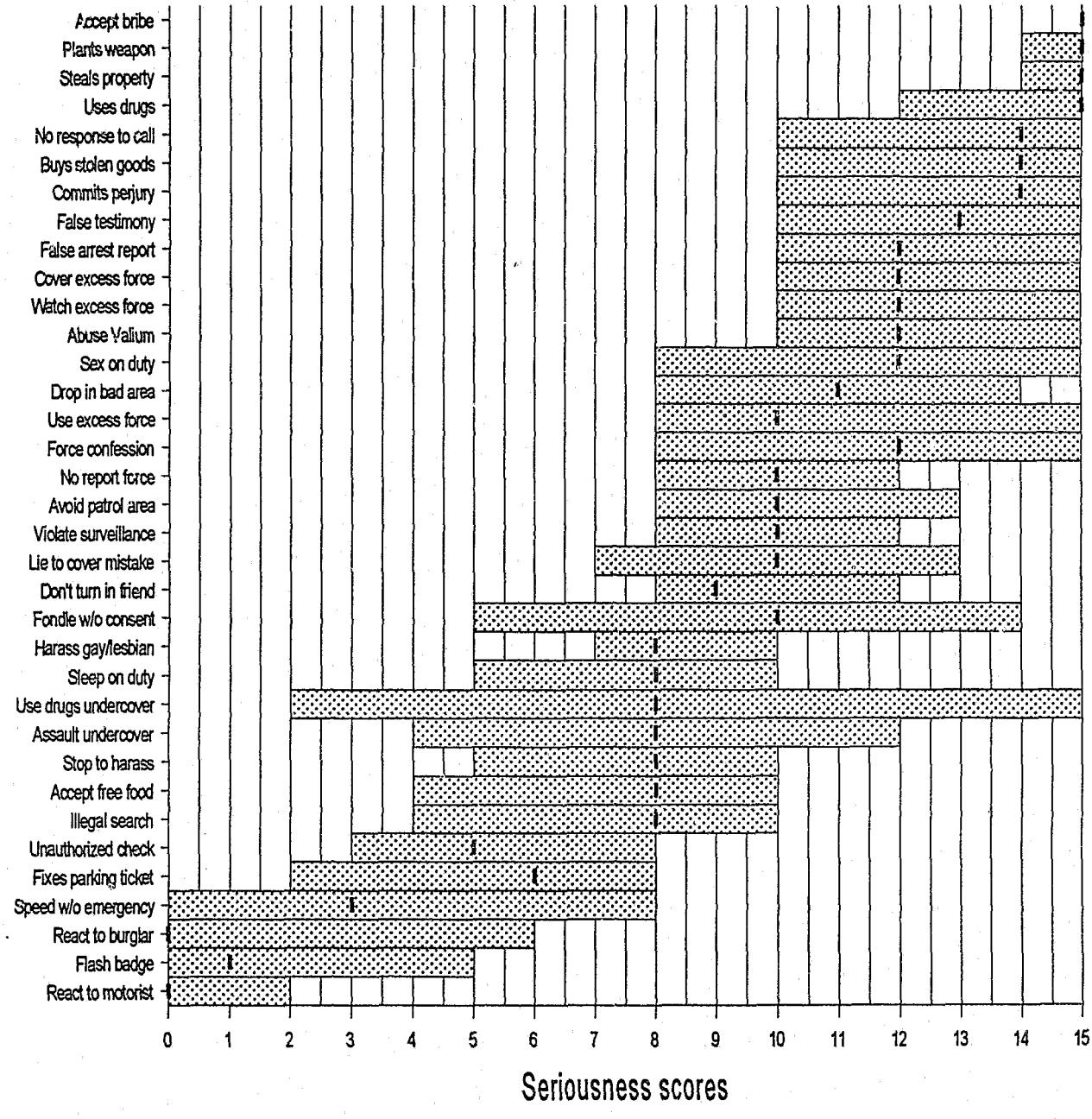
As shown by the different lengths of the boxes in Graph 1, there was considerable disagreement among respondents concerning the seriousness of misconduct. Of the 35 vignette behaviors, only one (accepting a bribe) had almost complete agreement as to its seriousness. The seriousness scores for this vignette were clustered around one score, 15. Since almost all of the respondents gave this vignette behavior a score at or close to 15, there is no graphic display of a box. The absence of a box and the clustering of values at 15 tells us there was consensus among these respondents that accepting a bribe is very serious. Even though they were from different jurisdictions, which may have different tolerance levels for ethical misconduct, almost all of these officers agreed about this behavior.

---

[9]The scores from the 25th percent of the sample to the 75th percent of the sample (which mark the left and right borders of the boxes) were chosen for the box plot because these scores represent the degree of consensus among the middle 50 percent of the respondents.

Graph 1

Median and quartile range of seriousness scores for 35 vignettes



There was less agreement about the seriousness of other behaviors. For example, the vignette behavior "uses drugs while undercover" had the widest spread (the lowest level of agreement and the longest box) in seriousness scores of the 35 vignettes. In contrast, the degree of consensus on vignette behaviors "plants a weapon," "steals property," "reacts to a speeding motorist because of his or her race" and "harasses a gay or lesbian," is relatively clear.

Respondents tended to agree about the seriousness of those vignettes that were ranked as either the most serious or the least. The three most serious behaviors (accepts a bribe, plants a weapon and steals property) with mean seriousness scores of 14.5, 14.2 and 13.9 respectively, and the least serious behavior (reacting to a motorist because of the motorists's race) with a mean seriousness score of 1.5, had very high, and in one case almost complete, consensus. The spread in scores for the other vignette behaviors indicates a gray area in what respondents agreed is serious ethical misconduct.

Discussion

As Ward and McCormack (1987) point out, the issue of how officers define unethical misconduct must be addressed when conducting research in police ethics. They found that certain kinds of unethical behavior were tolerated in some departments but were considered misconduct in others. The analysis of consensus among respondents about unethical misconduct attempts to address that question.

Part of the variability found in seriousness scores for the 35 vignettes could be due to the situational attributes surrounding the acts of misconduct portrayed in the vignettes, such as a suspect's race. As mentioned in the "Research Design" section, these attributes change from one respondent to the next. However, whether or not the survey questions accurately portrayed unethical misconduct is not the issue. As was stated earlier in this report, the survey questions were developed and tested by law enforcement experts and personnel and all behaviors described or asked about in the study were relevant to police work and could be interpreted as misconduct. What was measured in this study and in Ward and McCormack's study was the degree of consensus among officers concerning unethical misconduct.

The results support the claim by Ward and McCormack that tolerance levels of ethical misconduct within the police community are different. There was a reasonable degree of consensus among our respondents concerning very specific ethical behavior, but for the most part, there was much more gray area or lack of consensus.

Did Illinois municipal officers agree on the appropriate consequences for misconduct?

In addition to rating the seriousness of the hypothetical misconduct presented in the vignettes, respondents were asked to provide a consequence they felt was an adequate response to each unethical act. The choices were not placed in any order of severity for the respondent on the questionnaire, though some were clearly more severe than others. The consequence choices included:

- no consequence
- refer for additional training
- refer for counseling
- mandatory participation in alcohol/drug treatment
- verbal reprimand
- written reprimand
- one-day suspension without pay
- three-days' suspension without pay
- 14-days' suspension without pay
- 30-days' suspension without pay
- demotion
- forced to resign or else be dismissed
- dismissal
- refer for criminal prosecution.

Table 17 presents the most-often and second-most-often-chosen consequence for each of the 35 vignettes and the proportion of respondents who chose that consequence, grouped according to nine general categories. It illustrates the connection between perceived seriousness and severity of consequences, and the level of agreement among respondents about appropriate consequences.

Seriousness and severity of consequences

In general, the more severe consequences, such as prosecution, dismissal or suspension without pay, were most often assigned to behaviors with the highest average seriousness scores. Either prosecution, dismissal or three-days' suspension was the most frequent choice for all but three vignettes with average seriousness scores higher than 11.0 (Table 17). As the perceived seriousness of behaviors lessened, the most frequently chosen consequences also become less severe. The most commonly chosen consequences for behavior with average seriousness scores of less than 10 included: written reprimand; verbal reprimand; additional training; and, no consequence. These kinds of consequences are much less severe than prosecution, dismissal or suspension without pay, which were the most often chosen consequences for the most serious behaviors.

The level of agreement among respondents is shown by the percentage who picked the most-often-chosen consequence. For example, "steals property" had an average seriousness score of 13.9. The most-often-chosen consequence was prosecution (38 percent) and the second-most-often-chosen consequence was dismissal (23 percent), so that a total of 61 percent of the respondents agreed on either prosecution or dismissal as a consequence. In contrast, "uses more force than necessary" had an average seriousness score of 10.5, and the consequences chosen were generally severe -- prosecution as a first choice (16 percent) and three-days' suspension as a second choice (13 percent). However, there was less consensus concerning the consequence of this behavior than for stealing property. Only a total of 29 percent agreed on their first or second choice of consequence.

Table 17 What are the most-often-chosen consequences for officer misconduct?

Officer misconduct, by type	Average seriousness score	Consequence most often chosen	% of respondents	Second most frequently chosen consequence	% of respondents
Engages in criminal activity					
Steals property	13.9	prosecution	38	dismissal	23
Buys stolen merchandise	12.5	prosecution	23	resign	13
Violation of civilian rights					
Commits perjury	12.4	prosecution	25	dismissal	13
Gives false court testimony	11.9	3-day suspension	15	written reprimand	13
Falsifies arrest report	11.7	3-day suspension	20	written reprimand	19
Lies to cover mistake	9.4	written reprimand	22	verbal reprimand	18
Stops suspect to harass	7.6	verbal reprimand	30	written reprimand	22
Illegally search suspect	6.9	verbal reprimand	24	no consequence	21
Unlawful use of force					
Covers up excessive force incident	11.7	3-day suspension	22	30-day suspension	15
Watches excessive force incident	11.6	written reprimand	19	3-day suspension	18
Uses more force than necessary	10.5	prosecution	16	3-day suspension	13
Fails to report excessive force	9.8	written reprimand	31	3-day suspension	15
Unauthorized conduct during investigation					
Plants a weapon on a suspect	14.2	dismissal	27	prosecution	25
Commits assault working undercover	7.9	no consequence	18	written reprimand	15
Failure to provide adequate service					
Fails to respond to a call	12.7	3-day suspension	19	counseling	12
Avoids patrol areas	9.8	additional training	22	written reprimand	20
Exploiting job autonomy					
Sleeps on duty	7.9	verbal reprimand	33	written reprimand	25
Speeds when no emergency	4.1	no consequence	40	verbal reprimand	32
Harassing a citizen					
Drops suspect off in dangerous area	10.8	written reprimand	21	3-day suspension	18
Forces confession from suspect	10.5	3-day suspension	12	verbal reprimand	12
Fondles female without consent	9.1	no consequence	18	3-day suspension	11
Verbally abuses homosexual	8.7	written reprimand	28	verbal reprimand	26
Reacts to possible burglar	3.0	no consequence	75	training	10
Reacts to speeding motorist	1.5	no consequence	80	verbal reprimand	7
Using drugs					
Uses drugs	13.7	drug treatment	49	dismissal	18
Abuses prescribed Valium	11.6	drug treatment	72	counseling	14
Uses drugs while undercover	7.9	no consequence	31	drug treatment	16
Misuse of authority					
Accepts bribe	14.5	prosecution	44	dismissal	27
Engages in sex on duty	11.3	3-day suspension	23	30-day suspension	14
Violates surveillance laws	9.5	written reprimand	24	verbal reprimand	15
Fails to turn in suspect he/she knows	9.3	written reprimand	25	3-day suspension	16
Accepts free coffee, services	7.6	written reprimand	26	verbal reprimand	22
Conducts unauthorized record check	5.9	verbal reprimand	40	written reprimand	22
Fixes parking ticket	5.8	verbal reprimand	30	no consequence	28
Flashes badge to avoid citation	2.6	no consequence	69	verbal reprimand	21

Consequences by type of behavior

Behaviors involving criminal activity, such as stealing property or buying stolen merchandise, were perceived by respondents as serious misconduct and sanctioned with severe consequences. The most-often-chosen consequence for both of these behaviors was prosecution. The second-most-often chosen consequences, dismissal and resignation, also were severe. Over one-third of the respondents agreed that prosecution was an appropriate sanction for an officer who steals property; 23 percent thought dismissal was appropriate.

Seriousness rankings for behaviors involving violation of civilian rights, including perjury, false court testimony, falsifying arrest reports, lying to cover a mistake, stopping a suspect just to harass him/her, and illegally searching a suspect, varied. Perjury, false court testimony and false arrest reports -- with average seriousness scores higher than 11.0 -- were considered more serious than lying to cover a mistake, harassing a suspect and illegally searching a suspect (9.4, 7.6 and 6.9, respectively). The most-often-chosen-consequence for the more serious behaviors was prosecution or three-day's suspension. The second-most-often-chosen consequence for perjury, which was the most serious in this conduct category, was dismissal. In contrast, written and verbal reprimands were the most-often-chosen-consequences for the less serious behaviors in this category. The second-most-often-chosen consequences for these less serious behaviors were verbal and written reprimands or none.

The-most-often-chosen consequences for unlawful use of force did not correspond with the perceived seriousness of the misconduct. Behavior with average seriousness scores more than 11.0, such as covering up and watching excessive force, were sanctioned most often by either a three-day suspension or a written reprimand. For each of these behaviors, the second-most-often-chosen consequence was more severe than the first. A 30-day suspension for covering excessive force and a three-day suspension for watching it were the second-most-often chosen consequences. Using more force than necessary was considered less serious than watching or covering up excessive force (average seriousness score of 10.5) but was sanctioned more harshly. The most-often-chosen consequence for the use of more force than necessary was prosecution and the second most often choice was a three-day suspension without pay.

Behavior characterizing unauthorized conduct during an investigation was sanctioned according to its perceived seriousness. Planting a weapon on a suspect had a very high average seriousness score of 14.2. The most-often-chosen consequence for this action was dismissal and the second-most-often-chosen consequence was prosecution. On the other hand, committing an assault while undercover had an average seriousness score of 7.9 with "no consequence" the sanction chosen most often and written reprimand chosen second-most-frequently.

Similarly, failure to provide adequate service was sanctioned based on perceived seriousness. The most-often-chosen consequence for failing to respond to a call (average seriousness score 12.7) was a three-day suspension, compared to additional training, which was the most-often-chosen consequence for avoiding a patrol area (average seriousness score 9.8). Counseling was the second-most-often-chosen consequence for not responding to a call, and written reprimand was the second-most-often-chosen consequence for avoiding a patrol area.

Behavior that exploits job autonomy was perceived as less serious and given less severe consequences as the first and second choices. Sleeping on duty and speeding when there was no emergency (average seriousness scores of 7.9 and 4.1, respectively) were sanctioned with either a verbal reprimand or "no consequence" for the most-often-chosen consequence, and a written or verbal reprimand for the second-most-often-chosen consequence. There was considerable agreement among respondents concerning speeding when there was no emergency. Forty percent of the respondents agreed that "no consequence" was an appropriate sanction for that behavior and 32 percent agreed on a verbal reprimand, for a total of 72 percent. One third of the respondents agreed that a verbal reprimand was appropriate for sanctioning an officer who sleeps on duty.

Respondents generally perceived behaviors involving citizen harassment as less serious than other types. Dropping a suspect off in a dangerous area and forcing a confession from a suspect had the highest average seriousness scores (10.8 and 10.5, respectively) in this category. Forcing a confession from a suspect (three-day suspension) was sanctioned more severely than dropping a suspect off in a dangerous area (written reprimand), even though respondents considered dropping a suspect in a dangerous area to be slightly more serious than forcing a confession.

Situations when an officer's reaction to a possible burglar or speeding motorist could be influenced by the motorist's or possible burglar's race or the crime level in the community were not considered to be acts of misbehavior. With low average seriousness scores of 3.0 for the burglar question and 1.5 for the motorist question, it appears that respondents did not see race or crime level of the community as factors in biasing an officer's reaction. However, because the attributes in the question (race of burglar or level of crime in the community, discussed in the "Research Design" section) change from one respondent to the next, the range of seriousness scores given by respondents for these two questions provides more detail in determining if race or crime level in the community bias respondents' judgment of seriousness. The range of scores for the burglar vignette was between zero and six, while the range for the motorist vignette was between zero and two (see Graph 1). These small spreads in seriousness scores suggest that regardless of the race or crime level attributes provided in the vignette, these behaviors were not judged to be serious by the responding officers. In addition, the most-often-chosen sanction for these behaviors was "no consequence" and the second-most-often-chosen sanctions were training and verbal reprimand. Three-fourths of the respondents agreed that "no consequence" was an appropriate sanction for reacting to a burglar and 80 percent agreed that "no consequence" was appropriate for the response of the officer toward a speeding motorist. Thus, both the judged level of seriousness and the consensus on this level indicate that respondents did not see any bias (racial or crime level of the community) in the officer's response to these situations.

Respondents viewed behavior involving the use of drugs as a health issue more so than a form of misconduct. Using drugs (average seriousness score 13.7) and abusing prescribed Valium (average seriousness score 11.6) were perceived as more serious than using drugs while undercover (score of 7.9). The most-often-chosen consequence for using drugs and abusing Valium was drug treatment (49 percent and 72 percent, respectively), and nearly one-third (31

percent) of the respondents chose "no consequence" for using drugs while undercover. The second-most-often-chosen consequence for these behaviors were dismissal for using drugs (18 percent), but counseling for abusing prescribed Valium (14 percent) and drug treatment (16 percent) for using drugs while undercover. There was more agreement among respondents on what the consequence should be for conduct in this category than for any other category of behavior. Although almost one-half of respondents chose drug treatment as the appropriate sanction for using drugs, 18 percent chose a very serious consequence, dismissal. In contrast, 72 percent chose drug treatment as the most appropriate consequence for abusing prescribed Valium, and 14 percent chose counseling.

Behaviors involving misuse of authority were sanctioned according to their perceived seriousness. The most-often-chosen consequences for accepting a bribe (average seriousness score 14.5) and having sex on duty (average seriousness score 11.3) were prosecution and a three-day suspension, respectively. The second-most-often-chosen consequence for accepting a bribe was dismissal, and 30-day suspension was the second most-often-chosen consequence for having sex on duty. In contrast, the most-often-chosen-consequences for all other behaviors in this category, each of which had an average seriousness score less than 10, were either written and verbal reprimand or "no consequence." There was also relatively high agreement among respondents about the sanctions for behavior in this category. More than one-third (44 percent) of respondents agreed that prosecution was the most appropriate sanction for accepting a bribe, with 27 percent agreeing on dismissal. More than one-third (40 percent) agreed that a verbal reprimand was the most appropriate consequence for an unauthorized record check, with 22 percent agreeing on a written reprimand. Almost 70 percent of respondents agreed that "no consequence" was the appropriate sanction for an officer who flashed a badge to avoid a citation (average seriousness score of 2.6).

Summary

Most respondents assigned sanctions in accordance with their perceived seriousness of the actions. Respondents sanctioned behavior they perceived to be most serious with severe consequences, such as dismissal, prosecution or suspension, and less serious behavior with less severe consequences, such as written reprimand, additional training, verbal reprimand or no consequence.

However, respondents often disagreed on what the specific consequence for misbehavior should be. Only four of the 35 vignettes had more than one-half of the respondents in agreement about the appropriate sanction. For example, while 72 percent of the respondents agreed that drug treatment was an appropriate consequence when an officer abused prescribed Valium, only 12 percent agreed that a three-day suspension (the most-often-chosen consequence) was appropriate after forcing a confession from a suspect. Similarly, 68 percent of respondents agreed that "no consequence" was appropriate when an officer flashed a badge to avoid a citation, while only 15 percent agreed that a three-day suspension was appropriate for an officer who gave false court testimony.

Personal observations of misconduct

The following results explore a different concern than perceptions of seriousness and appropriate consequences of misconduct. Respondents were asked 30 questions, describing behavior similar to that portrayed in the vignette questions, to determine what types of unethical behavior were most commonly observed by the respondents. These questions asked if the respondent had personally observed an officer (yes or no) engaged in any of 30 specific acts of misconduct in the past year or during his or her career. Their responses to observing misconduct were compared with their perceptions of seriousness of misconduct to determine if there is an association between observed misconduct and the perceived seriousness of the observed misconduct.

Is the observation of misconduct associated with its perceived seriousness?

In Table 18, average seriousness scores on the vignette behaviors from the first part of the questionnaire are compared with responses to the observation questions from the second part. Table 18 illustrates the percent of respondents who reported witnessing a given behavior and compares that with the seriousness scores of similar behavior portrayed in the vignette questions. Only the 13 most serious (average seriousness score 11 or higher) and 12 least serious behaviors (scores lower than eight) are included.

Behaviors identified as the most serious were generally observed less commonly than less serious behaviors.[10] In four of the 13 most serious behaviors, there was no comparable behavior between the two sets of questions (vignette questions and observation questions). Three of the nine remaining most serious behaviors were observed by fewer than 1 percent of the respondents. The most serious conduct on the list, accepting a bribe, was observed by only 0.1 percent of the respondents in the past year. Four serious behaviors were observed by more than 1 percent but fewer than 10 percent of the sample. However, failure to respond to a call was witnessed by 14.3 percent.

In contrast, for all but two of the eight least-serious behaviors with a vignette question comparable to the observation question, at least 20 percent of respondents said they saw each act. The range extended from almost one-fourth of the sample (stop a suspect just to harass them) to about four-fifths (accept free coffee or services).

In general, misconduct perceived as less serious tended to be observed by a larger percentage of respondents, and unethical behavior perceived as highly serious by substantially fewer respondents.

---

[10]Keep in mind while reading Table 18 that the average seriousness scores represent the perceived seriousness of the listed behaviors, with a possible range of 0 to 15. The percent who reported witnessing similar behavior was used as a comparison and represents the proportion of respondents who say they witnessed the behavior. These percentages have a possible range of 0 to 100 percent.

Table 18 Comparisons between seriousness and observations of unethical behavior

13 behaviors perceived as most serious	Average seriousness score	Percent who say they saw similar behavior in the past year
Accepts a bribe	14.5	0.1
Plants a weapon	14.2	0.0
Steals property	13.8	***
Uses drugs	13.6	1.0
Fails to respond to a call	12.7	14.3
Buys stolen merchandise	12.5	0.4
Commits perjury	12.4	***
Gives false court testimony	11.8	7.0
Falsifies arrest report	11.7	6.7
Covers up excess force	11.6	5.6
Watches excess force	11.5	***
Abuses Valium	11.5	1.1
Engages in sex on duty	11.3	***
The 12 behaviors perceived as least serious	**Average seriousness score**	**Percent who say they saw similar behavior in the past year**
Reacts to speeding motorist because of their race	1.5	***
Flashes badge to avoid citation	2.5	46.6
Reacts to possible burglar because of their race	3.0	***
Speeds when there is no emergency	4.1	77.3
Fixes ticket	5.8	***
Conducts unauthorized records check	5.8	***
Illegally searches	6.9	24.8
Accepts free coffee	7.5	79.9
Stops suspect to harass	7.6	23.7
Commits felony undercover	7.8	0.1
Uses drugs undercover	7.8	0.2
Sleeps on duty	7.9	35.0

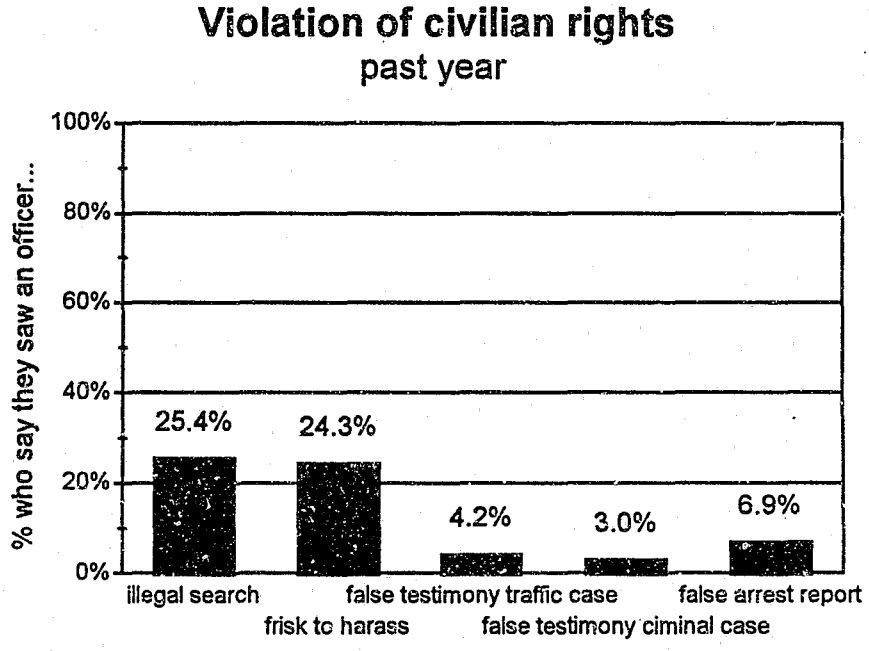
***No behavior in the vignettes that is comparable to the observation question.

What are the most commonly perceived types of unethical behavior?

The following bar graphs, organized within eight conduct categories, illustrate the behaviors that respondents observed in the previous year. Although there is a wide range of specific ethical misconduct covered, the behaviors could be grouped into eight general categories of misconduct: violation of civilian rights, unlawful use of force, unauthorized conduct during investigation, failure to provide adequate service, exploiting job autonomy, harassing a citizen, using drugs, and misuse of authority.

Five of the behaviors could be characterized as violations of civilian rights (Figure 1). Fewer than 26 percent saw any of these behaviors in the prior year. The most common observations were an illegal search of a suspect to remove drugs and an illegal "stop and frisk" of a known offender just to harass the person, which were observed by about one- fourth of the respondents.

Figure 1

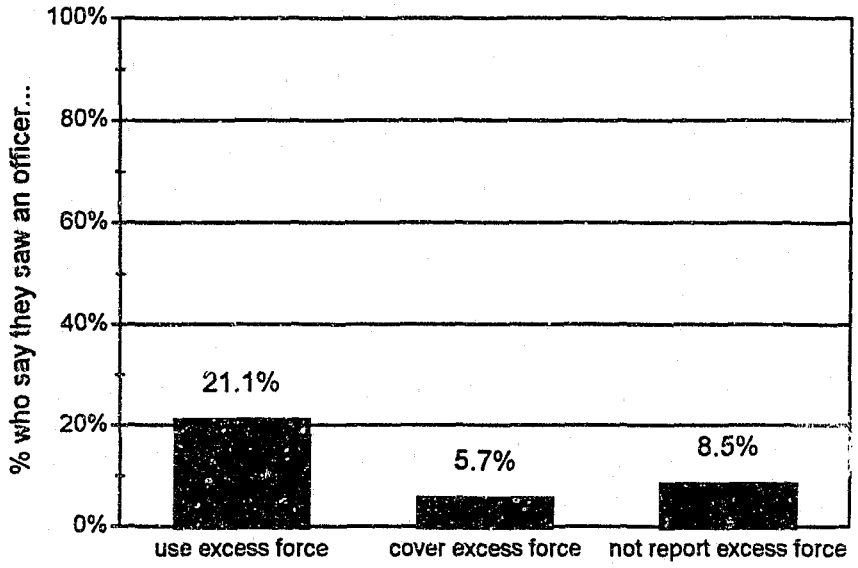


Of the three behaviors that characterized unlawful use of force (Figure 2), 21.1 percent of respondents said they saw an officer use considerably more force than was necessary to apprehend a suspect, 5.7 percent said they saw an officer cover up excessive force and 8.5 percent observed an officer not report excessive force.

Figure 2

Unlawful use of force

past year



Of the two behaviors characterizing failure to provide adequate service (Figure 3), 14.6 percent of respondents said they witnessed an officer deliberately choose not to respond to an assigned call. Nine percent said they saw an officer avoid a patrol area because he or she considered it too dangerous.

Some of the most commonly reported behaviors were those exploiting job autonomy (Figure 4). Almost 79 percent of respondents said they witnessed an officer speeding when there was no emergency, and more than one third of respondents reported seeing an officer asleep when they were supposed to be on patrol.

Of the five behaviors characterized as harassing a citizen (Figure 5), more than one-fourth of respondents (26.8 percent) said they saw an officer "harass a citizen most likely because of the citizen's race." Less than 10 percent said they witnessed any of the remaining four behaviors in this category. Dropping a suspect off in an area that put the person at risk was almost never observed, with less than 1 percent of respondents reporting they had seen this behavior.

Figure 3

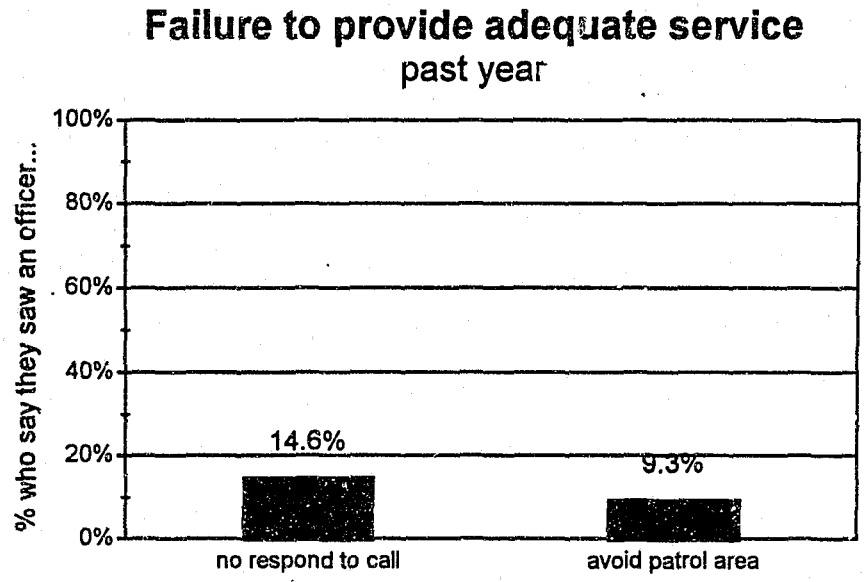


Figure 4

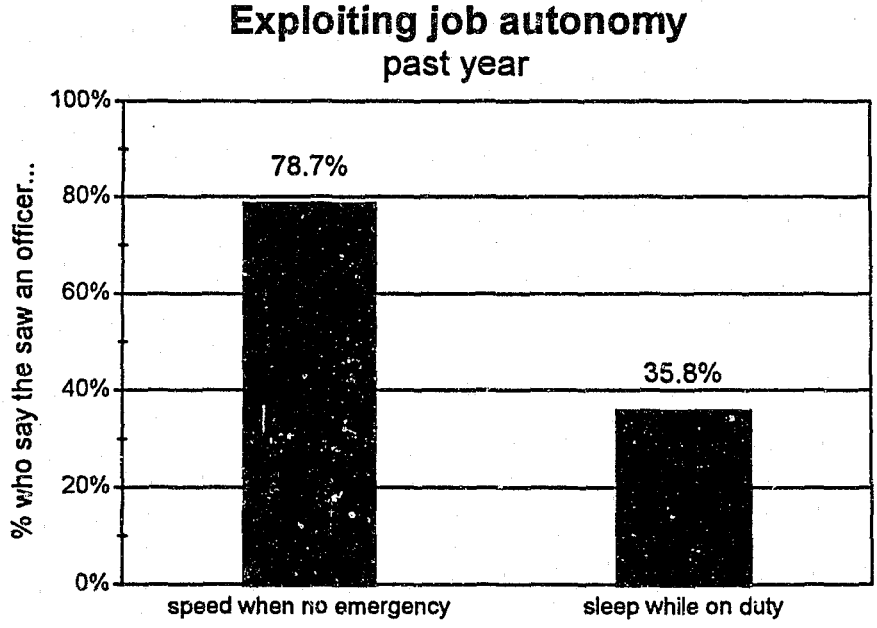
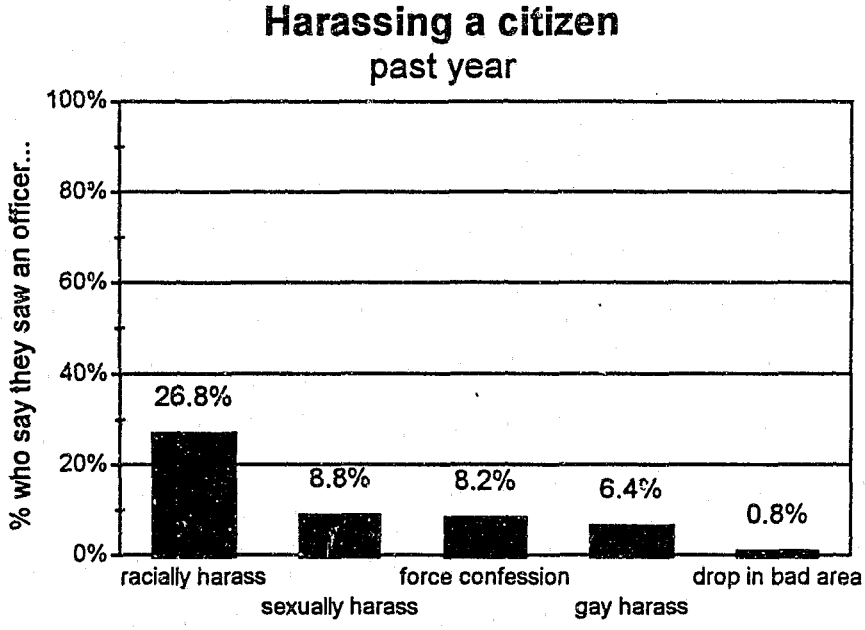
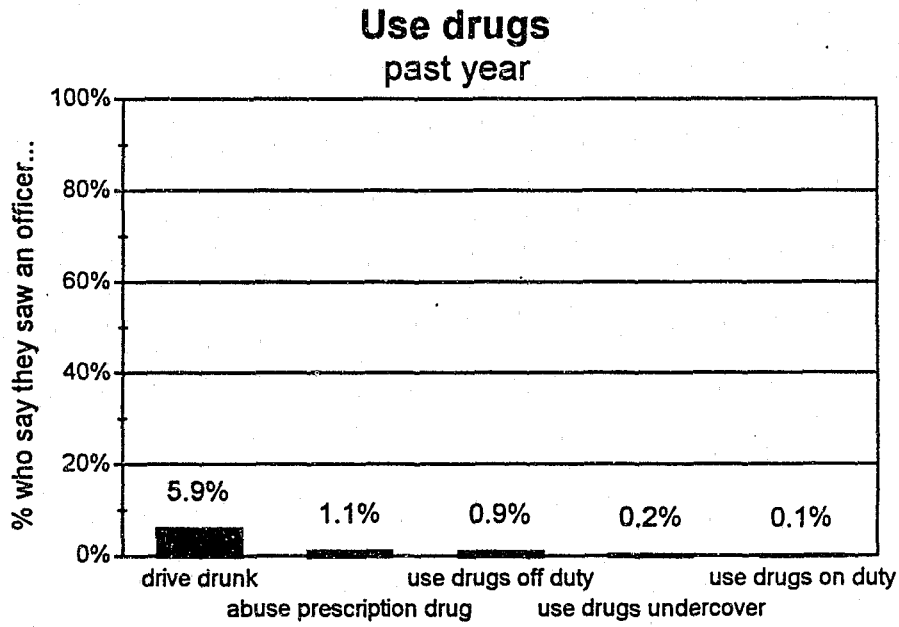


Figure 5



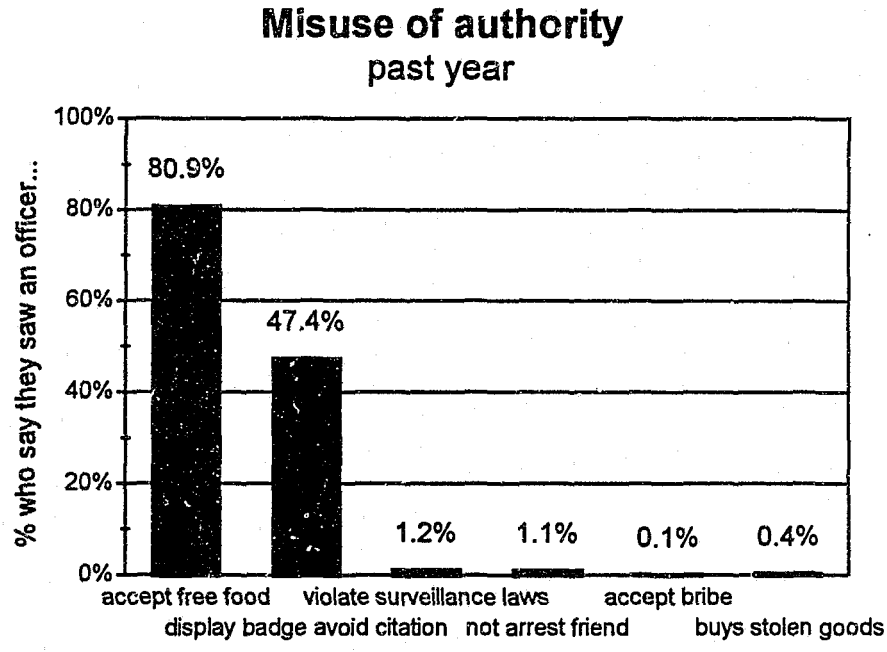
Of the five behaviors involving the use of drugs and alcohol (Figure 6), about 6 percent of respondents said they saw an on-duty officer drive under the influence of alcohol in the past year. Less than 2 percent said they saw an officer engage in any of the other behaviors involving drug use.

Figure 6



The behaviors in the misuse of authority category (Figure 7) covered a variety of acts that involve an officer's authority, ranging from accepting free coffee or food from a restaurant to purchasing stolen merchandise for personal use or gain. There was stark contrast in likelihood of observations across the six types of behavior. Almost 81 percent of respondents said they had seen an officer accept free coffee or food from a restaurant, and 47.4 percent said they saw an officer display a badge to avoid a traffic citation while off duty. On the other hand, less than 2 percent of respondents said they saw an officer either violate surveillance laws or fail to arrest a friend or relative suspected of committing a felony. Less than 1 percent reported seeing an officer accept a bribe or purchase stolen merchandise.

Figure 7



The two types of behavior characterizing unauthorized conduct in an investigation were rarely or never observed. No one reported having seen an officer plant a weapon on a suspect, and only one respondent reported witnessing an officer commit a felony while undercover.

In summary, the most commonly observed types of misconduct involved behaviors that exploit job autonomy, such as speeding when there is no emergency or sleeping while on duty. Specific behaviors that misused authority, such as accepting free coffee or food or displaying a badge to avoid a traffic citation, were also witnessed by a substantial percentage of respondents. The least commonly perceived types of misconduct involved unauthorized conduct during an investigation, such as planting a weapon on a suspect, failure to provide adequate service or using drugs, and specific behavior involving the misuse of authority, like violating surveillance laws, failing to arrest a friend or relative, accepting a bribe and purchasing stolen merchandise.

Although relatively few officers reported seeing an officer drive under the influence of alcohol while on duty (5.9 percent; see Figure 6), the Advisory Committee considered this percentage to be surprisingly high considering the consistent observation of officers during daily roll call.

Factors associated with observations of misconduct

The degree to which officers observed various types of unethical behavior may have been based on such factors as size of the department or the responding officer's length of service, rank or gender. The following discussion and bar graphs illustrate what respondents said they saw in the prior year, disaggregated by jurisdiction size, length of service, rank or gender. Of the 30 acts of misconduct, only behaviors that had statistically significant differences in reported observations are described.[11]

Jurisdiction size

Contrary to the expectations of the research team and the Advisory Committee, department size was not associated with officers' observations of most types of misconduct. Only eight of the 30 listed behaviors showed significant response differences by department size ($p \leq .05$) and only three showed large differences ($p \leq .001$). Significance at $p \leq .05$ means we are 95 percent confident the results did not come about by chance. A $p \leq .001$ means we are 99 percent confident of the results.

Department size mattered for observations of the following kinds of behavior: illegally searching a suspect to remove drugs; stopping and frisking an offender just to harass the person; covering up an incident of excessive force; failing to report an incident of excessive force; avoiding a patrol area because it is considered dangerous; harassing a citizen because of his or her race; harassing a gay or lesbian; and, displaying a badge to avoid a traffic citation while off duty. Of these, only three showed highly significant differences by jurisdiction size:

- Stopping and frisking an offender just to harass the person
- Avoiding a patrol area because it is considered dangerous
- Harassing a citizen because of his or her race

[11]The chi square statistic, which tests for statistical significance, was used to determine the likelihood that the differences in reported observations of misconduct by rank and length of service could have been due to chance. Because the chi square statistic is affected by sample size (see Norusis, 1990: 260-2), weighted data (multiplied to the size of its population) can make results significant even when they are not. To control for this limitation and still identify statistically significant differences, we used unweighted data with the chi square test. Only relationships with statistically significant differences based on the chi square test and unweighted data are included in the analysis presented in this report.

No one in departments of one to three officers reported they had witnessed an officer stop and frisk an offender just to harass the person, compared to 15.5 percent in departments of four to seven officers and 31.3 percent in departments of 30-49 (Figure 8). Similarly, no one in departments of one to three officers reported observing an officer avoid a patrol area considered dangerous, while 18.6 percent of those in departments with 107 or more officers observed this behavior (Figure 9). Only 3.8 percent of respondents in department sizes of one to three officers reported witnessing an officer harass a citizen because of his or her race (Figure 10). The most common observation of this behavior in the past year was 32.4 percent for those in departments with 20-29 officers and 32.4 percent for those in departments with 50-106 officers.

Figure 8

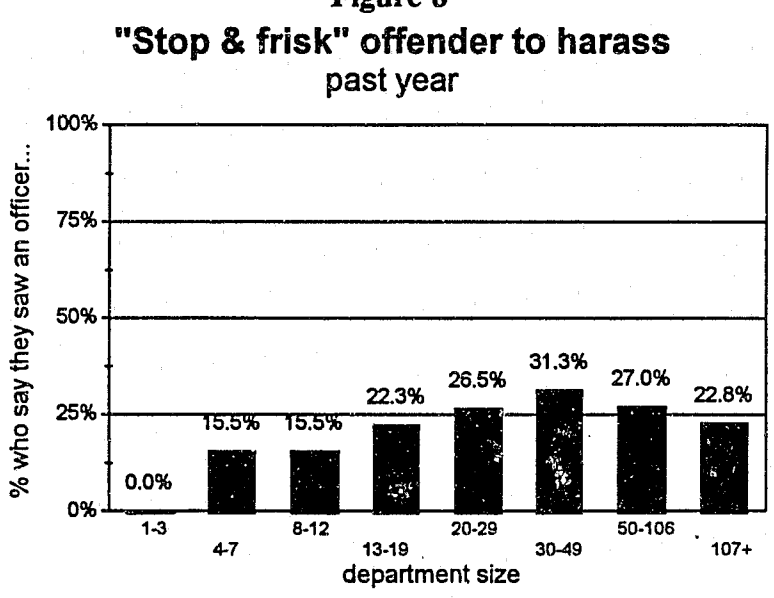


Figure 9

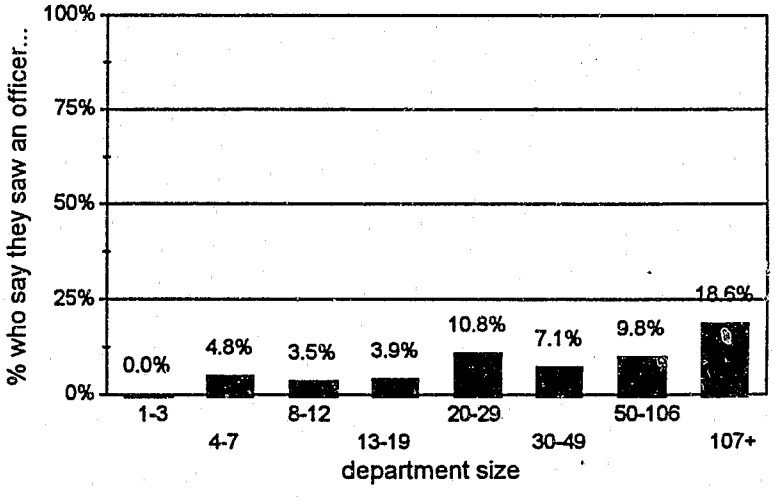
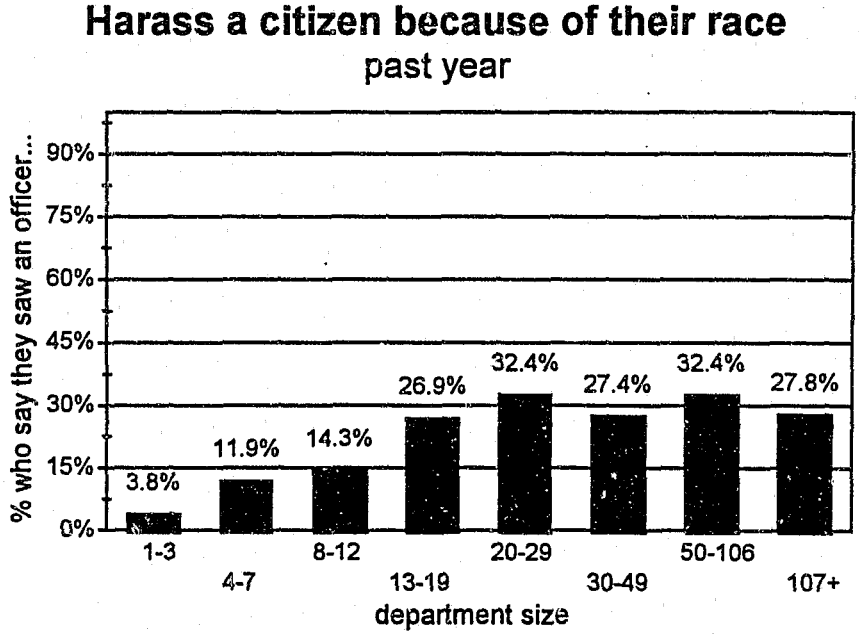


Figure 10



In general, perceptions of only a few types of misconduct were associated with jurisdiction size. Much of this association occurred only for the smallest departments. Aside from departments with three or fewer officers, jurisdiction size made little difference in reported perceptions of misconduct. It was pointed out early in this report that respondents from departments of one to three officers had the highest level of attrition and the lowest response rates by departments and sampled officers. Because of this, the precision of the sampled results was weakened. As a result, the department size analysis, which showed that much of the association between observation and department size occurred only for the smallest departments, should be considered questionable.

Length of service

Contrary to our expectations, length of service was not associated with perceived observations of most types of misconduct. Only nine of the 30 listed behaviors showed significant response differences by length of service ($p \leq .05$) and only five were highly significant ($p \leq .001$). Length of service mattered only for the following observations: harassing a gay or lesbian; accepting free coffee or food; sleeping while on duty; failing to report excessive force; speeding when there was no emergency; failure to respond to a call; illegally searching suspect to remove drugs; stopping and frisking offender to remove drugs; and, displaying a badge to avoid traffic citation off duty. Of these, only five were highly significant by length of service:

- Accepting free coffee or food
- Sleeping while on duty

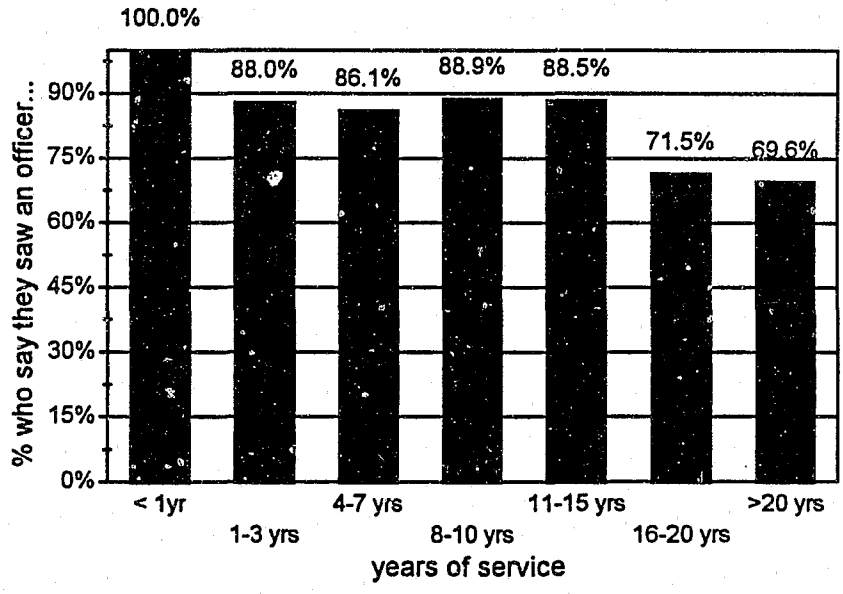
- Speeding when there was no emergency
- Stopping and frisking offender to remove drugs
- Displaying badge to avoid traffic citation off duty

All respondents (100 percent) with less than one year of service said they had witnessed an officer accept free coffee or food in the past year (Figure 11). More than 80 percent of respondents with one to 15 years of service said they had witnessed this behavior, while about 70 percent of respondents with 16 to more than 20 years of service had observed it.

Figure 11

Accept free coffee or food

past year



Forty-two percent of respondents with less than one year of service reported witnessing an officer sleep while on duty in the past year, compared to 38.2 percent of respondents with 11 to 15 years of service and 22.9 percent of respondents with more than 20 years of service (Figure 12). All respondents with less than one year of service reported witnessing an officer speeding when there was no emergency, compared to 85.1 percent of respondents with 11 to 15 years and 67.8 percent of respondents with more than 20 years of service (Figure 13).

More than half the respondents with less than a year of service said they saw an officer stop and frisk a known offender to harass them, compared to 31.8 percent of respondents with eight to 10 years of service and 12.5 percent of respondents with more than 20 years of service (Figure 14). Almost 72 percent of respondents with one to three years of service, compared to 49.4 percent of respondents with eight to 10 years and 28.2 percent of respondents with more than 20 years, said they saw an officer display a badge to avoid a traffic citation while off duty (Figure 15).

Figure 12

Asleep while on duty

past year

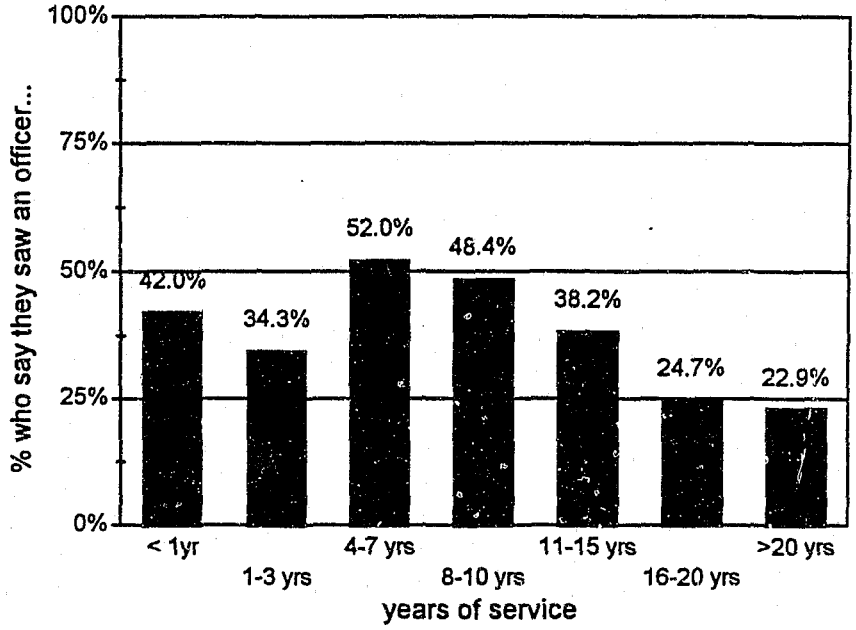


Figure 13

Speeding when no emergency

past year

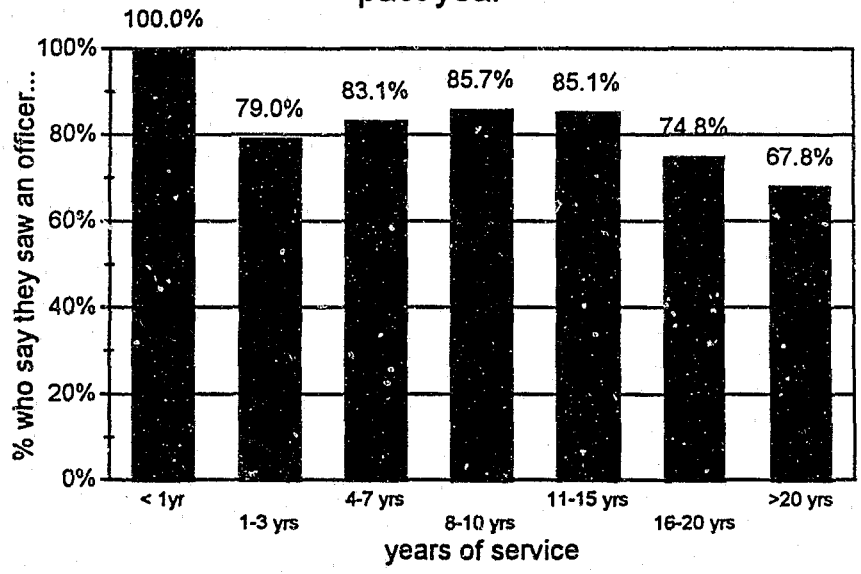


Figure 14

"Stop & frisk" offender to harass

past year

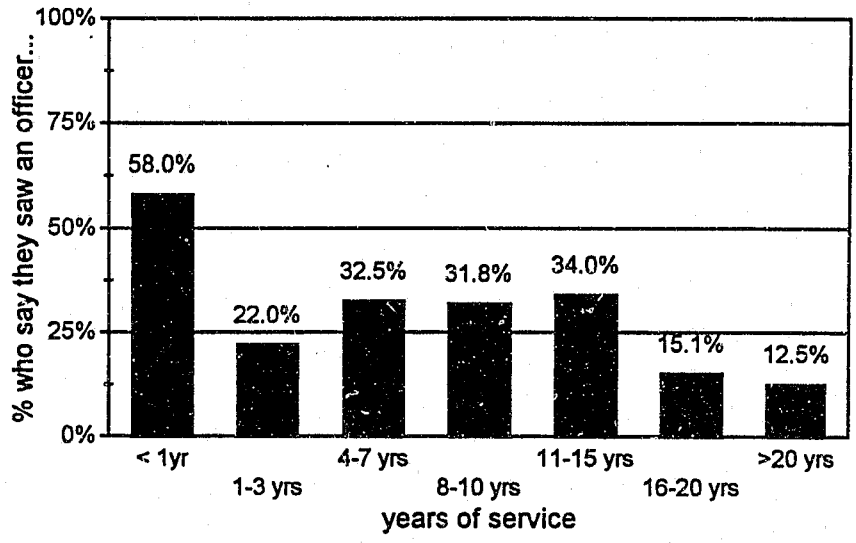
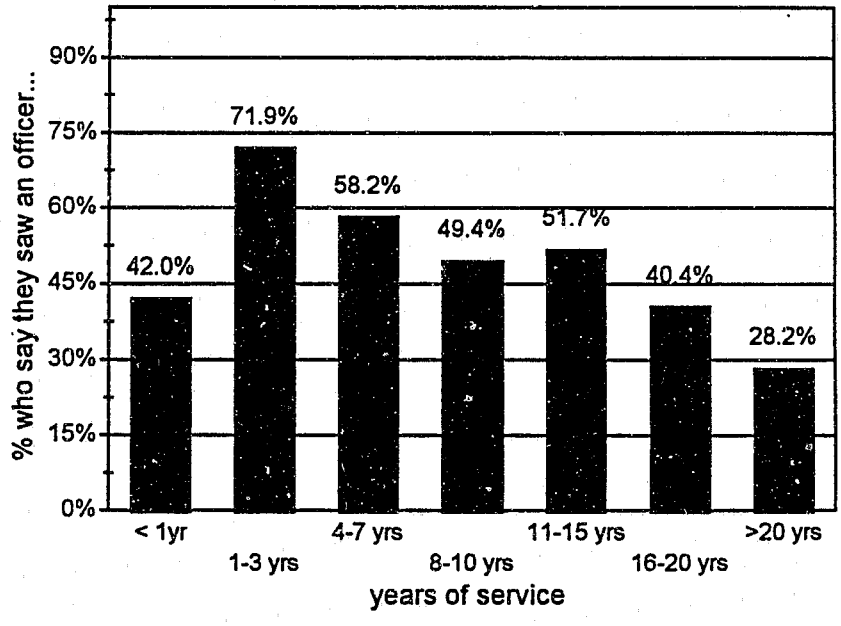


Figure 15

Display a badge to avoid a citation

past year



Although only five of the 30 types of perceived misconduct were strongly associated with length of service, in these cases newer officers reported witnessing these specific behaviors significantly more than their experienced counterparts. It may well be possible that officers' perceptions, knowledge and subsequent decisions regarding ethical behavior change over their careers. It is also possible that training and experience may be related to observations of misconduct, and also may be related to length of service.

Rank

Thirteen of the 30 listed behaviors showed significant response differences by rank ($p \leq .05$) but only four showed highly significant differences ($p \leq .001$). Rank mattered for the following observations: harassing a gay or lesbian; harassing a citizen because of his or her race; using more force than necessary; accepting free coffee or food; driving under the influence of alcohol on duty; sleeping while on duty; avoiding a patrol area considered dangerous; speeding when there was no emergency; failing to respond to a call; illegally searching suspect to remove drugs; falsifying arrest report; stopping and frisking offender to harass; and, displaying badge to avoid traffic citation off duty. Of these, only four showed highly significant differences by rank:

- Accepting free coffee or food
- Sleeping while on duty
- Stopping and frisking offender to harass
- Displaying a badge to avoid a traffic citation

Almost 87 percent of respondents with the rank of police officer said they saw an officer accept free coffee or food, compared to 71.6 percent of mid-level supervisors and 58.9 percent of administrators (Figure 16). Similarly, 41.4 percent of respondents who were police officers and 40.4 percent of first-line supervisors reported observing an officer sleep while on duty, compared to 17 percent of mid-level supervisors and 13.2 percent of administrators (Figure 17).

More than 27 percent of respondents who were police officers and 30.8 percent of first-line supervisors reported witnessing an officer stop and frisk a known offender just to harass the person, compared to 18.5 percent of detective/investigators, 9.9 percent of mid-level supervisors and less than 4 percent of the administrators (Figure 18).

Again, more lower-ranking respondents reported seeing an officer display a badge to avoid a citation than respondents with higher rank. Almost 56 percent of respondents who are police officers reported witnessing this behavior compared to 42.3 percent of first-line supervisors and 24 percent of administrators (Figure 19).

Figure 16

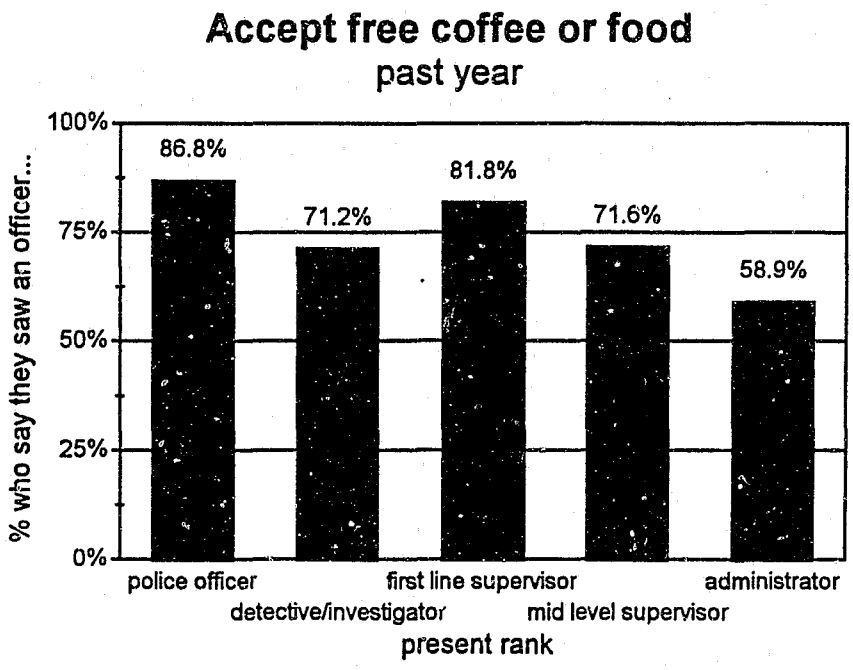


Figure 17

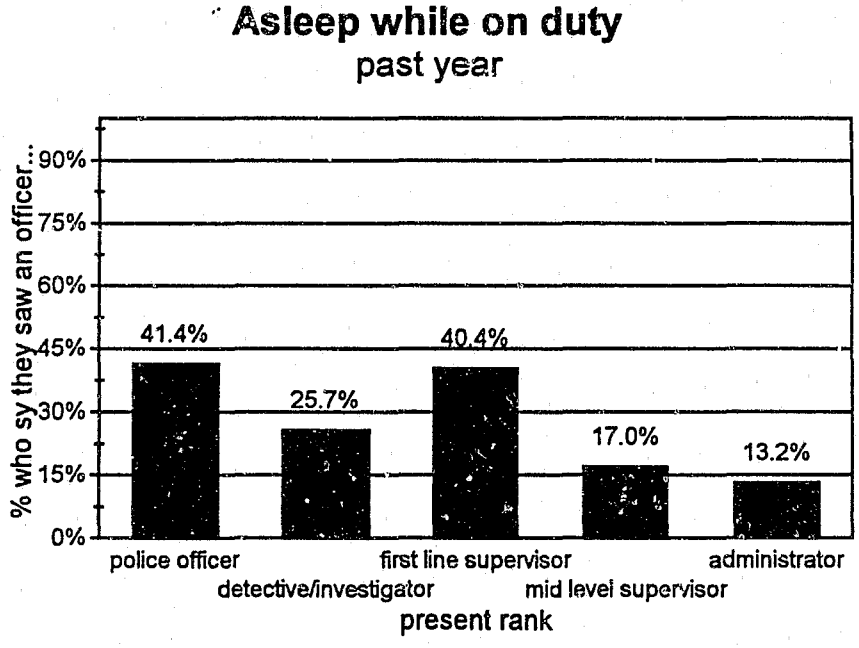


Figure 18

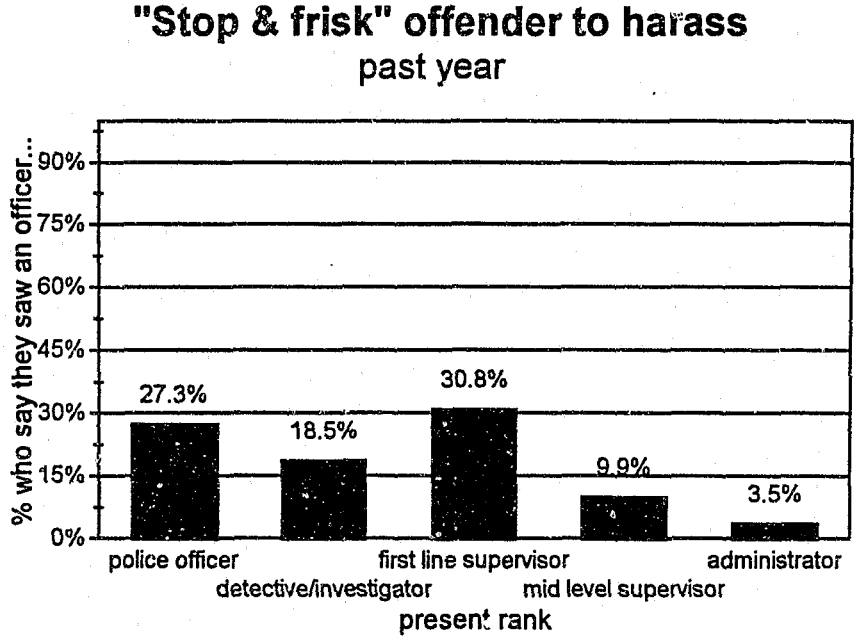
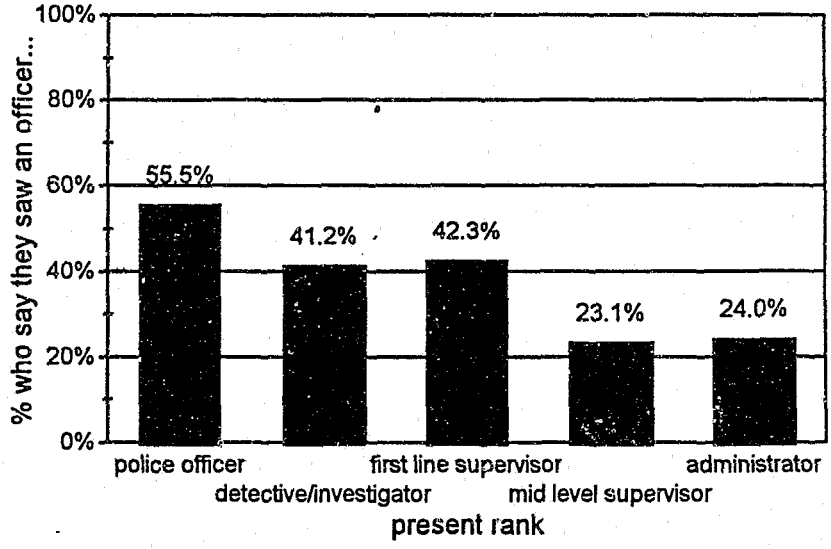


Figure 19



Rank was associated strongly with only four of the 30 types of perceived misconduct. Lower-ranking officers, particularly police officers, generally reported observing these four specific behaviors significantly more than higher-ranking officers such as mid-level supervisors or administrators. As seen with length of service, officers' perceptions, knowledge and subsequent decisions concerning ethical behavior may change during the course of their careers. This might be reflected in the above analysis if higher-ranking officers are more likely to be experienced while lower-ranking officers are newer to the force. On the other hand, an officer's rank might put him or her at greater or lesser exposure to misconduct, which in turn might influence the perceptions or tolerance of misconduct by differently-ranked officers.

Gender

Contrary to the weaker associations, which occurred only for a limited number of behaviors, between observations and jurisdiction size, length of service and rank, significantly more female officers said they had witnessed incidents of misconduct in almost every conduct category in the prior year. In addition, there were highly significant differences between the observations of men and women for one half of the 30 types of misconduct. This section compares the differences in observations between men and women for these 15 types of misconduct. These comparisons are presented by conduct category.

For conduct that violates civilian rights (Figure 20), almost twice as many women as men reported witnessing an act of stopping and frisking known offenders just to harass them (45.9 percent for women versus 23.1 percent for men); more than twice as many witnessed false testimony in a traffic case (10.9 percent for women versus 3.9 percent for men); for false testimony in a criminal case the percentages were 6.5 percent for women versus 2.8 percent for men; for a falsified arrest report, the percentages were 15.9 percent for women versus 6.3 percent for men.

For conduct involving the unlawful use of force (Figure 21), twice as many women reported observing incidents of covering up the use of excessive force (13.0 percent for women versus 5.3 percent for men) or failing to report excessive force (25.7 percent for women versus 7.6 percent for men). More than 38 percent of women said they observed an officer use excessive force in the past year compared to only 19.5 percent of the males.

For conduct involving the harassment of a citizen (Figure 22), more than twice as many women reported observing an officer sexually harassing a female on duty (18.9 percent for women versus 8.2 percent for men); almost three times as many women reported witnessing an officer force a confession from a suspect (22.1 percent for women versus 7.5 percent for men); and, more than three times as many women reported observing an officer verbally abuse a citizen thought to be gay or lesbian (19.7 percent for women versus 5.8 percent for men). More than 36 percent of women, compared to 26 percent of the males in the survey, said they had observed an officer harassing a citizen most likely because of his or her race in the past year.

Figure 20

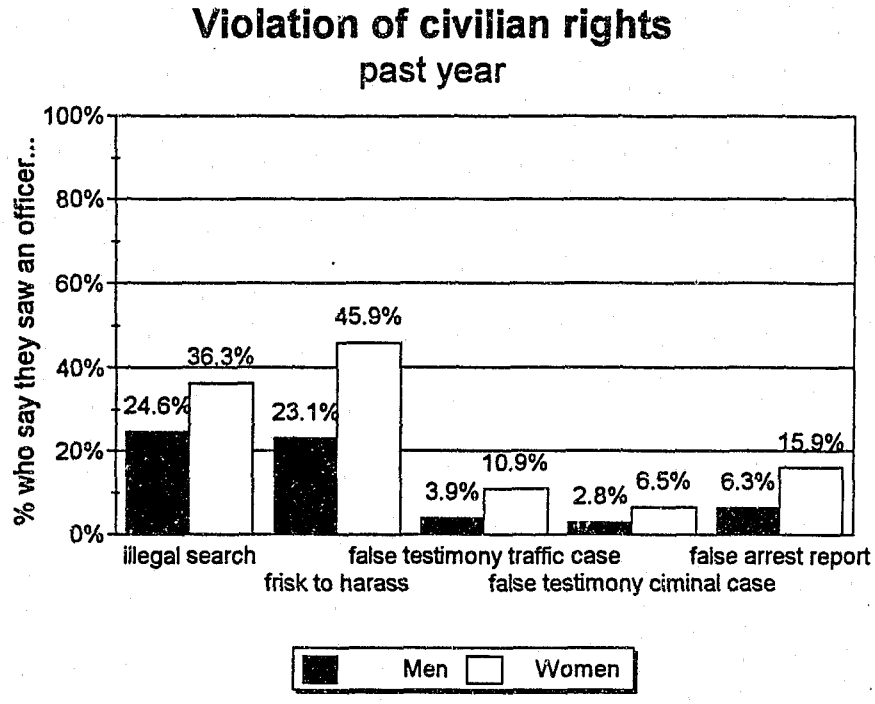


Figure 21

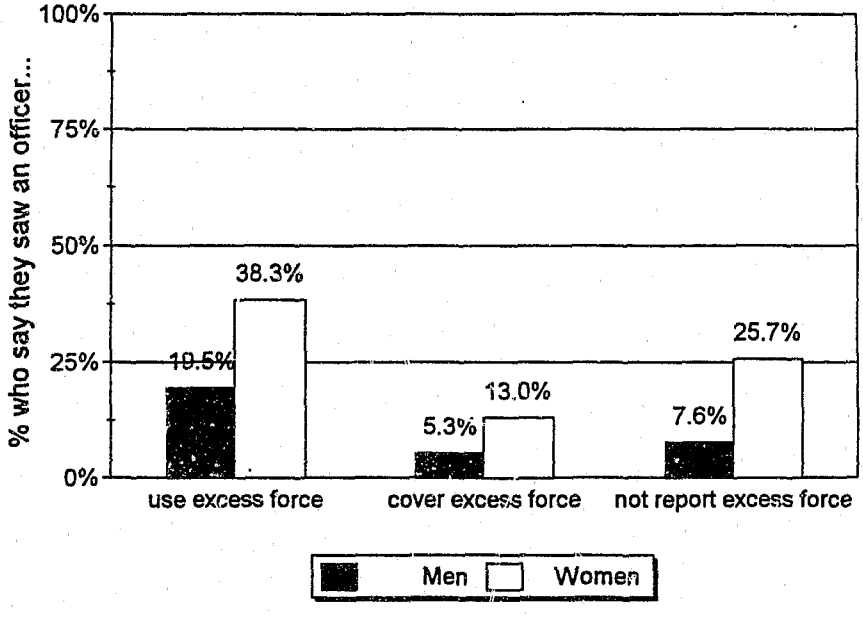
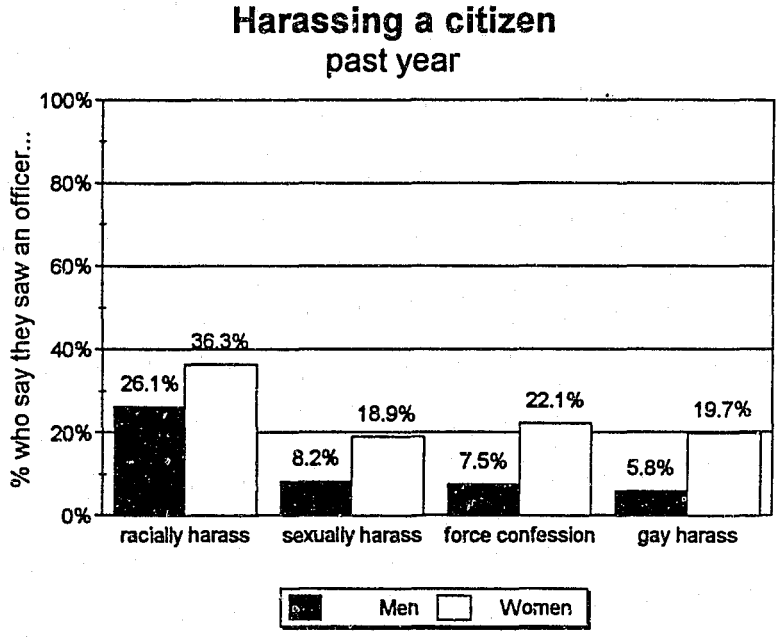
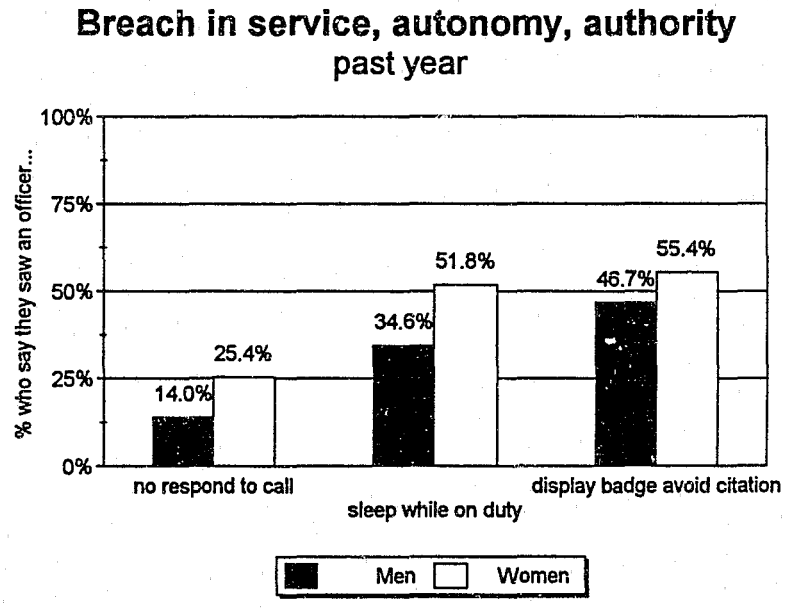


Figure 22



Women also were more likely to report having witnessed behavior involving failure to provide adequate service, exploiting job autonomy or misusing authority (Figure 23). More than 25 percent of the women said they witnessed an officer failing to respond to a call, compared to 14 percent of the men. Almost 52 percent of women said they witnessed an officer sleep while on duty, compared to 34.6 percent of the men; and, 55.4 percent of the women reported witnessing an officer displaying a badge to avoid a traffic citation while off duty, compared to 48.7 percent of the men.

Figure 23



Based on these findings, it appears an association exists between respondents' gender and their reporting of unethical behavior. More women seem to report observing unethical acts than men. However, this might not be due to a real association between gender and observation, but only to an association between gender and length of service or rank. Since length of service and rank are associated with observations of misbehavior, if women have fewer years of service or lower rank, this would cause an apparent association between gender and observation. As explained in the next section, a multivariate analysis was conducted to control simultaneously for all these aspects.

Discussion

The above analysis addressed the question of association between department and respondents' characteristics (rank, length of service and gender) and the observation of misconduct. The results showed that for most kinds of behavior, there was not a strong association between reporting and jurisdiction size, rank or length of service. However, for the few kinds of misbehavior where there was an association, more newer officers reported seeing the specific behavior than experienced officers, more respondents from smaller departments reported seeing behavior than those from larger departments (again, keep in mind that the interpretation of jurisdiction results could be questionable), and more respondents of lower rank reported seeing behavior than higher-ranking officers. There is an association between a respondent's gender and the observations of most kinds of misconduct.

We now know an association exists between certain respondent characteristics and reported observations of some specific events. The next analysis combines the effect of all these characteristics on reported observations of misconduct to decipher how much influence each of these characteristics had on observations of misconduct.

Considered together, how much influence did respondent characteristics have on reported observations of misconduct?

Many factors could influence the likelihood officers would observe misconduct, including jurisdiction size, length of service, rank and gender. Although there was an association between respondents' personal characteristics and observation of misconduct, it is uncertain how much influence each characteristic had on the reporting of observed misconduct when they were all considered together.

The choice of which characteristics to consider was based on the Advisory Committee's suggestions and on a study conducted by Arthur Niederhoffer (Niederhoffer, 1967). Niederhoffer found that certain demographic characteristics such as years of service and rank had an influence on police cynicism. In addition, jurisdiction size and gender were recommended by the Advisory Committee. We attempted to answer two questions: "Which variables have the most or least influence on reporting observations of misconduct?" and, "In what way is this influence exerted?"

We conducted this analysis on the most-observed behaviors from each conduct category.[12] They were:

- Illegal searching of a suspect to remove drugs;
- Using more force than necessary;
- Failing to respond to a call;
- Speeding when there is no emergency;
- Harassing a citizen because of his or her race; and,
- Accepting free coffee or food.

Table 19 summarizes the results of this analysis, including whether or not the characteristic was significant (to have had any influence at all, $p \leq .05$), what the most influential characteristics were for each of the chosen behaviors, and the direction of the influence. For example, years of service had the most influence (*) of all four variables on the observation of illegal searches. Its influence was statistically significant (Y) and as years of service increased, the likelihood of reporting an illegal search decreased (-).

Table 19 Combined influence of respondent and department characteristics on observations: six selected types of misconduct

Y = significant N =not significant (-/+) = direction * = most influence	Illegally search suspect to remove drugs	Use of excessive force	Fail to respond to call	Speeding when no emergency	Harassing citizen because of race	Accepting free food/coffee
Years of service	Y (-) *	Y (-)	N	Y (-)*	Y (-)	Y (-) *
Gender (male = +)	Y (-)	Y (-)*	Y (-) *	N	Y (-)	N
Department size	Y (+)	Y (+)	Y (-)	Y (-)	Y (+)*	Y (-)
Rank	Y (-)	N	Y (-)	Y (-)	Y (-)	Y (-)

[12]This was done not because of methodological concerns, but because of time and resource constraints. Complete analysis of all 30 behaviors could be performed.

From Table 19 the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Years of service, taken together with other variables, proved to be an extremely important influence on observing the behaviors. Not only was it significant for all but one behavior, it was also the most influential variable for three. When all factors were considered together, officers with more years of service were *less* likely than those with fewer years of service to say they witnessed an illegal search for drugs, use of excessive force, speeding when there was no emergency, harassing a citizen because of his or her race or accepting free food or coffee.

- Of the six behaviors considered, gender mattered in four. In each of the four, male respondents were less likely than female respondents to say they had seen the behavior. When all individual and department factors were considered together, gender was the most influential variable for observation of two behaviors: failing to respond to a call and use of excessive force.

- Department size, when considered with other demographic characteristics, mattered for each of the selected behaviors and was the most influential variable in one -- citizen harassment because of the citizen's race. However, the *direction* of the influence changed from one behavior to the next. When considering illegal searches, use of excessive force and citizen harassment because of race, officers from larger departments were *more* likely than their smaller department counterparts to say they witnessed the specific events. On the other hand, officers from larger departments were *less* likely than those from smaller departments to say they witnessed failure to respond to a call, speeding when there was no emergency or accepting free food or coffee.

  Note: Department size results should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations in the one-to-three-person department size sample. The limitations already outlined in this report for this group may be reflected in the "mixed direction" of the influence exerted by department size.

- Finally, rank mattered for observations of five of the six behaviors. For each type of behavior, higher-ranking officers were less likely than lower-ranking officers to report observed behavior. However, when all of the factors were considered together, rank was never the most important variable.

In summary, it appears that some characteristics exert more influence on observations of misconduct than others. The influence of respondents' gender, length of service and rank on these specific behaviors is consistently in one direction. In other words, women were more likely than men, newer officers were more likely than veteran officers, and lower-ranking officers were more likely than higher-ranking officers to say they saw these specific events. In general, more experienced, male higher-ranking officers were less likely to report they witnessed the above behaviors.

Years of service exerted more influence on observations of these specific events than other characteristics. It was the most influential variable for three out of five events. Rank, on the other hand, was not the most important variable in any of the listed acts of misconduct, though in five of the six behaviors, as rank increased the likelihood of reporting decreased.

Conclusions

In this study, Illinois municipal officers outside of Chicago provided information about their perceptions of police ethics and personal observations of misconduct. This information was gathered to understand what kinds of behavior are considered serious by Illinois officers, whether there is consensus on the definition of misconduct, how Illinois officers would sanction misconduct and whether there is consensus concerning sanctions for misconduct. Following are the conclusions drawn from the findings.

How do Illinois officers define ethical misconduct?

Although Illinois officers use a code of ethics as a guideline for performing their jobs, the definition of an unethical act may differ from one department to the next. This is an important issue to trainers and police policy groups who are interested in establishing a standard by which all police forces, regardless of demographic differences or jurisdictional size, abide. Not only is it essential to determine how officers define misconduct, assessing how much agreement there is among officers concerning ethical acts provides a more complete picture.

Respondents judged the seriousness of 35 hypothetical acts of misconduct. Their average seriousness scores plus the range of their responses tells us that some behaviors were perceived as more serious than other behaviors (accepts bribe versus flashes a badge to avoid a citation). However, only one of the 35 vignette behaviors (accepts a bribe) had almost complete agreement about its seriousness. Respondents generally agreed about the seriousness of behaviors ranked as most serious or least serious. For example, the seriousness scores assigned to the behavior "accepting a bribe," considered to be the most serious kind of misconduct, were consistently high with little variability among respondents. The seriousness scores assigned to the behavior "reacts to a speeding motorist," considered the least serious kind of misconduct, were consistently low with a range for the middle half of respondents between zero and two. However, there was much variability and a wide range of perceptions in the respondents' definition of misconduct for behavior that fell between the two extremes of seriousness.

Was there as much consensus among the respondents concerning the punishment of misconduct as with seriousness? In addition to judging the seriousness of 35 hypothetical acts of misconduct, respondents chose a consequence they deemed appropriate for sanctioning the misconduct. There was much variability and thus little agreement about appropriate sanctioning in all but four of the 35 hypothetical acts of misconduct. Only these four had more than one-half the respondents in agreement about the appropriate sanction.

How officers would sanction misconduct provided a clue to how they perceive themselves as upholders or possible breakers of the law, laws that not only sanction criminal infractions but those designed by the police community to govern police behavior. To tap into the lawfulness of the police, we asked if the punishment of misconduct, chosen by respondents, matched their perception of the seriousness. In general, the severity of the most-often-chosen sanctions

corresponded with the perceived seriousness of the event. Respondents tended to sanction behaviors considered not serious with either a written or verbal reprimand or with no consequence, but tended to sanction behaviors considered highly serious with dismissal, prosecution or suspension without pay.

Observations of misconduct in the prior year

Respondents said they saw more of the behavior they considered less serious and rarely observed the behavior they considered serious, such as accepting a bribe. In other words, misconduct perceived as less serious was observed by a larger percentage of respondents. The *most*-commonly-observed types of misconduct involved behavior exploiting job autonomy, such as speeding when there is no emergency or sleeping while on duty. Specific behaviors that involved the misuse of authority, such as accepting free coffee or food or displaying a badge to avoid a traffic citation, were also witnessed by a substantial percentage of respondents.

The *least*-commonly-observed types of misconduct included unauthorized conduct during investigations such as planting a weapon on a suspect, failure to provide adequate service, such as avoiding a patrol area because it's dangerous, use of drugs including drunk driving, and, specific behavior involving the misuse of authority, such as violating surveillance laws, failing to arrest a friend or relative, accepting a bribe or purchasing stolen merchandise. The Advisory Committee was especially surprised about the 5.9 percent of respondents who reported witnessing an officer driving under the influence of alcohol.

There was an association between respondents' characteristics and the observation of unethical events. The association between observation and respondent's department size, rank or length of service was limited to a few specific behaviors. More respondents in larger-sized departments than smaller departments reported witnessing three specific unethical acts. More newer officers than respondents with more years of service said they saw five unethical acts, and more respondents in lower ranks than those in higher ranks reported witnessing four of the 35 unethical acts. However, because of the low response rate (by department and sampled officers) for departments of one to three people, the results for the department size analyses are less reliable than the results from the other samples. Therefore, the department size analyses should be interpreted with caution. To more accurately assess the influence or relationship between department size and observation of misconduct, a separate analysis, leaving out departments of one to three officers, should be performed.

In contrast, the association between respondents' gender and the observation of unethical events was more widespread than the association between observation and department size, rank or length of service. There were significant differences in the observation of misconduct between men and women for one-half of the 30 types of behavior. More of the female than male respondents reported witnessing each of the behaviors.

When considering the simultaneous effect of these four aspects of departmental and respondents' characteristics on six selected types of misconduct, results show that three were

consistently significant for at least four behaviors. Years of service was significant for five of the six behaviors (see Table 19), and when considered together with other characteristics, proved to be the single most important factor influencing the observation of three behaviors (illegal searches to remove drugs, speeding when no emergency exists, and accepting free food or coffee). Gender was significant for four of the six behaviors (see Table 19), and when considered together with rank, length of service and department size, was the most influential factor in the observation of two behaviors (use of excessive force and failure to respond to a call). Rank was significant for five of the six behaviors (see Table 19), but when considered with the other departmental and respondent characteristics was never the most influential factor in the observation of these behaviors.

Department size was significant for all six behaviors and was the most important for harassing a citizen because of race. However, the significance was in different directions. For example, officers from larger sized departments were more likely than those from smaller departments to say they saw a citizen harassed because of race. On the other hand, officers from larger departments were *less* likely than those from smaller departments to say they saw an officer fail to respond to a call. This lack of consistency in the influence of department size on observed behavior could possibly be due to the low response rate from departments of one to three officers.

In general, male, experienced, higher-ranking respondents were less likely to say they saw certain unethical acts such as illegal searches or harassment of a citizen because of his or her race. Newer officers and women were more likely to report witnessing these events than veteran or male officers.

Policy implications and suggestions for further research

These findings suggest that perceptions of misconduct and ethical behavior -- at least behavior that fell somewhere between what was considered extremely serious and not at all serious -- were different among Illinois police personnel despite the universal exposure to a code of ethics and ethics training. Although there was little agreement about appropriate sanctions for misconduct, officers tended to be strict in their sanctioning, consistently choosing severe sanctions for serious misconduct.

What officers perceived as misconduct might differ by the demographic and departmental characteristics of the force. In addition, the definition and even the tolerance of ethical infractions may change over time or may be understood differently by officers of different rank and gender.

The results of this study raised many questions concerning the topic of police ethics in Illinois. For example:

- why do personal and departmental characteristics such as gender, department size, rank and length of service affect observations of misconduct?

- should police training in ethics be expanded to include in-service courses?

- should ethics training be tailored and targeted toward specific groups of officers, such as higher-ranking and veteran officers, with specialized curriculum to meet their special needs?

The empirical data gathered in this study are introductory but provide fundamental information about Illinois police officers' perceptions of police ethics. We hope that this research will not only be useful for current policy and training issues, but also be a motivation for further investigation of police ethics in Illinois.

Appendix A: Officers' Perceptions of Police Ethics Advisory Committee.

Peter Bellmio
Former Director of Safety Services
City of Decatur Law Enforcement Center

Richard Beese
Commander
Village of Mundelein Police Department

Gerald Cooper
Chief
Evanston Police Department

Donald Cundiff
Vice President
Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Ralph Evans
Chief
Tower Lakes Police Department

Bill Geller
Associate Director, midwest office
Police Executive Research Forum

Michael Haeger
Chief
Wheeling Police Department

Dr. Linda Heath
Psychology Department
Loyola University

Ernest Jacobi
Retired Chief
Evanston Police Department

Dr. Thomas Jurkanin, Director
Illinois Law Enforcement Training
and Standards Board

Frank Kaminski
Deputy Chief
Evanston Police Department

George F. Koertge
Executive Director
Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Dr. Thomas Regulus
Criminal Justice Department
Loyola University

Raymond J. Rose
Chief
Village of Mundelein Police Department

Art Stone, former director
Fraternal Order of Police
State Lodge

Appendix B: Law Enforcement Code of Ethics.

Law Enforcement Code of Ethics

"AS AN ILLINOIS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER...my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and, to respect the Constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice.

I WILL keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and, be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I WILL never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I RECOGNIZE the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession...law enforcement."

Source: Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, 3/23/94.

Appendix C: Table of sample weight factors by stratum.

The sample was randomly drawn from within eight populations of departments of different sizes (strata). Respondents in different strata had a greater or lesser chance of being selected. For example, one in four officers (450 ÷ 118 = 3.81) in departments of one to three people had a chance of being selected compared with one in six officers (2,055 ÷ 325 = 6.32) in departments of 106 or more.

1 Department size (officers)	2 Population: Illinois officers, June 1992	3 Sample size (original)	4 Actual responses	5 Weight factors
1-3	450	118	54	8.333
4-7	622	125	87	7.149
8-12	888	133	86	10.325
13-19	938	134	105	8.933
20-29	1,521	141	102	14.912
30-49	2,541	146	115	22.095
50-106	3,266	147	104	31.404
106+	2,055	325	208	9.879
Total	12,281	1,269	861	

Weight factors (column 5) were assigned to each stratum (subsample) to account for this disproportionate chance of being sampled. The weight factor is a number assigned to each subsample stratum, that multiplies the sample size (actual responses; column 4) so that it accurately represents its true population size. For example, 54 actual responses in departments of one-to-three-officers, × 8.333 = 450. This is essential when combining the subsamples for data analysis because when results are combined to present a composite picture of the whole sample, the disproportionate sample could confound the results.

Appendix D: Officers' Perceptions of Police Ethics Questionnaire.

ILLINOIS POLICE BEHAVIOR SURVEY

We are well aware that misconduct and perceived misconduct by police officers is a sensitive topic to discuss and to study. We know it occurs to some degree, but we don't like to discuss it, especially when its treatment in the media often seems so one-sided. Despite the good work of countless police officers, accusations about inappropriate behavior still abound.

You have been randomly selected to be one of about 1,200 full-time police officers in Illinois who will have the opportunity to share their perceptions regarding this important area. The purpose of this survey is to learn more about two aspects of misbehavior: the perceptions of municipal police officers regarding the seriousness of various forms of misconduct, and the extent to which misconduct is observed by police officers. The results will be used to help Illinois' police community prevent future incidents through improved understanding, training and education.

Your responses will remain anonymous. Neither individual questionnaires nor the resulting data set will bear any names or numbers that would permit someone to identify either the persons completing the questionnaire or their departments. We ask that you complete the survey individually -- not as a group.

This project is a joint effort of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and the Ohio Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Services. The project is funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U. S. Department of Justice.

We appreciate your participation in this project. When you have completed the survey, place all forms back in the envelope, seal it and return it as you have been instructed by your department's coordinator.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION A

Each of the items below describes an action by a police officer. While we know that real-life situations faced by police officers are complex, involving many factors, we believe that the following exercise will give us at least a rough estimate of how serious these acts are in the eyes of municipal police officers. If a question is lacking the degree of detail that you would like, please do the best that you can and assume typical circumstances for details not stated.

SERIOUSNESS SCORE:

- For each item choose a number from 0 to 15 using the scale below to describe how serious you think the officer's action is.

- Be sure to answer according to how serious YOU think the action is, not how serious someone else might consider it.

- Please write this number in the space labeled "Seriousness Score." For example, if you do no think the officer's action is at all serious, write a "0" in the space. If you think the officer's action is extremely serious, write in a "15." If your opinion of the seriousness falls somewher in between the extremes, assign a number between 0 and 15.

Seriousness Scale

Not at all serious	Not very serious	Moderately serious	Quite serious	Extremely serious

0.....7.....8.....15

CONSEQUENCE:

- **Next, please assign a consequence for the officer's conduct from the list printed below and write the letter in the space labeled "Consequence."**

- **You are to assign ONLY ONE consequence.**

- **Remember, please, that we want you to assign consequences YOU believe to be appropriate, not what your department or someone else would assign.**

- **Assume that this is the FIRST OFFENSE for the officer in question.**

Consequence Scale

a. No consequence
b. Refer for additional training
c. Refer for counseling
d. Mandatory participation in alcohol/drug treatment
e. Verbal reprimand
f. Written reprimand
g. 1 day suspension without pay
h. 3 days suspension without pay
i. 14 days suspension without pay
j. 30 days suspension without pay
k. Demotion
l. Forced to resign or else be dismissed
m. Dismissal
n. Refer for criminal prosecution

BOTH SCALES ARE PRINTED ON THE BACKS OF THE PAGES.

1 1

A police officer without intervening, watches fellow officers use excessive force on an Hispanic suspect. The suspect is known to have a record of property offenses.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 2

A police officer drops an Hispanic suspect off in a dangerous part of town in order to put that person at risk. The suspect is known to have a record of property offenses.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 3

A police officer uses cocaine while working undercover in an effort to gain the suspect's trust.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 4

A police officer stops a black motorist who is speeding to a degree that department policy specifies at least a written warning. The motorist is respectful toward the officer. The officer issues a written warning.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 5

A police officer abuses prescribed Valium off duty.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 6

A police officer, against department policy, accepts free coffee and meals worth five dollars.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 7

A police officer fails to turn in a relative who is suspected of committing a misdemeanor.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 8

A police officer knowingly violates surveillance laws to obtain evidence on a suspect who is known to have a record of drug offenses.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 9

A police officer stops and frisks an Hispanic known offender just to harass the person.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 10

A police officer steals property worth five thousand dollars from a crime scene.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 11

A police officer covers up an incident of excessive force involving a white suspect. The suspect is known to have a record of violent offenses.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 12

A police officer drives 5 miles per hour over the speed limit when there is no emergency.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 13

A police officer fails to report an incident of excessive force by an officer from another department.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 14

A police officer commits perjury to avoid harm to self and family.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 15

A police officer gives false court testimony in a criminal case.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 16

A police officer accepts a bribe worth five thousand dollars to overlook a misdemeanor.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 17

A police officer avoids a patrol area because of a lack of concern for the citizens in that area.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 18

A police officer plants a weapon on a wounded white suspect to avoid self-incrimination. The suspect is known to have a record of property offenses.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 19

A police officer conducts an unauthorized record check for the officer's friend.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 20

A police officer fixes a parking ticket for the officer's friend.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 21

A police officer purchases stolen merchandise worth five thousand dollars.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 22

A police officer falsifies an arrest report.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 23

A police officer arrests a black suspect for shoplifting. The suspect verbally assaults the officer. The officer uses more force than is necessary to effect a lawful arrest. The suspect is slightly injured. The incident occurs in an area with a lot of criminal activity.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 24

A police officer lies to cover his/her own mistake.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 25

A police officer displays a badge to avoid a traffic citation.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 26

A police officer commits a simple assault while participating in an undercover investigation.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 27

A police officer uses cocaine on duty.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 28

A police officer who is male fondles a female subordinate without consent while on-duty.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 29

A police officer discovers a white man trying to enter a house at night through a first-floor window. The man explains that he has lost his house key. The incident occurs in an area with moderate criminal activity. The officer does nothing.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 30

A police officer sleeps on duty.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 31

A police officer chooses not to respond to a call because of fear of getting injured or killed.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 32

A police officer forces a confession from an Hispanic suspect by inflicting physical harm. The suspect is known to have a record of drug offenses.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 33

A police officer illegally searches a suspect for the purpose of removing weapons from the street.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 34

A police officer engages in consensual sex while on duty with a fellow officer of the opposite sex.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

1 35

A police officer is verbally abusive toward a citizen who is thought to be gay.

Seriousness Score: _____ Consequence: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION B

▸ If you have PERSONALLY observed OTHER police officers employed by your department engaging in the behaviors listed below, please indicate by checking "YES" and write in the number of instances:
(a) over the past 12 months AND
(b) over the course of your police career.

▸ Incidents included under "a" should also be counted under "b."

▸ 'Instances' can be either acts by different individuals or the same individual who has engaged in the behavior on separate occasions.

▸ If the number you are reporting is very large, please estimate in round numbers as best you can.

▸ Unless stated otherwise, these acts relate to on-duty police behavior.

SECTION B

1. Have you personally observed a police officer verbally abuse a citizen who was thought to be gay or lesbian...

   a. in the past 12 months?
   No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
   No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

2 Have you personally observed a police officer harass a citizen most likely because of the citizen's race...

   a. in the past 12 months?
   No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
   No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

3. Have you personally observed a police officer illegally attempt to coerce a confession from a suspect...

   a. in the past 12 months?
   No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
   No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

4. Have you personally observed a police officer who used considerably more force than was necessary to apprehend a suspect...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

5. Have you personally observed a male police officer obviously sexually harass a female citizen while on duty...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

6. Have you personally observed a police officer accept payments to overlook illegal activities...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

7. Have you personally observed a police officer accept free coffee or food from a restaurant...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

8. Have you personally observed a police officer fail to arrest a friend or relative who the officer suspected of committing a felony...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

9. Have you personally observed a police officer plant a weapon on a suspect...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

10. Have you personally observed a police officer drive under the influence of alcohol while on duty...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

11. Have you personally observed a police officer purchase merchandise which the officer knew to be stolen, for personal use or gain...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

12. Have you personally observed a police officer illegally use drugs while working undercover...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

13. Have you personally observed a police officer asleep when he/she was supposed to be on patrol...

   a. in the past 12 months?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

   b. anytime during your career?
      No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

14. Have you personally observed a police officer fail to report an incident of excessive force by a fellow officer...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

15. Have you personally observed a police officer cover up an incident of excessive force by a fellow officer...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

16. Have you personally observed a police officer abuse drugs prescribed for his/her use, or under the influence of such drugs, while on-duty...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

17. Have you personally observed a police officer avoid a patrol area because he/she considered it too dangerous...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

18. Have you personally observed a police officer speeding when there was no emergency...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

19. Have you personally observed a police officer deliberately choose not to respond to a call...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

20. Have you personally observed a police officer drop a suspect off in a bad part of town in order to put that person at risk...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

21. Have you personally observed a police officer knowingly violate surveillance laws to obtain evidence...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

22. Have you personally observed a police officer illegally search a suspect for the purpose of removing drugs from the street...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

23. Have you personally observed a police officer falsify an arrest report...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

24. Have you personally observed a police officer give false court testimony in a traffic case...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

25. Have you personally observed a police officer give false court testimony in a criminal case...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

26. Have you personally observed a police officer illegally "stop and frisk" a known offender just to harass the person...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

27. Have you personally observed a police officer commit a felony while participating in an undercover investigation...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

28. Have you personally observed a police officer use illegal drugs while on duty...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

29. Have you personally observed a police officer use illegal drugs while off duty...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

30. Have you personally observed a police officer display a badge to avoid a traffic citation while off duty...

a. in the past 12 months?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

b. anytime during your career?
No___ Yes___ If yes, how many instances?____

SECTION C

▸ Please circle the appropriate letter and/or fill in the blank.

1. How many total years of service do you have as a full-time law enforcement officer?

   a. Less than one year
   b. 1-3
   c. 4-7
   d. 8-10
   e. 11-15
   f. 16-20
   g. More than 20 years

2. How many full-time officers are employed in your department?

   a. 1-3 sworn officers
   b. 4-7
   c. 8-12
   d. 13-19
   e. 20-29
   f. 30-49
   g. 50-106
   h. 107 or more sworn officers

3. How many separate law enforcement agencies have you been employed by:

   full-time?_____ part-time?_____

4. What is your present rank?

   a. Police Officer
   b. Detective/Investigator
   c. First Line Supervisor (Corporal/Sergeant)
   d. Mid-level Supervisor (Lieutenant/Captain)
   e. Administrator (Deputy Chief/Chief)
   f. Other (please specify)_____

5. How many years of service do you have in your present rank?

   a. Less than one year
   b. 1-3
   c. 4-7
   d. 8-10
   e. 11-15
   f. 16-20
   g. More than 20 years

6. What kind of work do you do more than 50% of the time?

   a. Patrol
   b. Investigative
   c. Supervisory/administrative
   d. Crime prevention/community service
   e. Other (please specify) _____

7. How would you describe the beat or area to which you are now assigned?

   a. Little criminal activity
   b. Moderate criminal activity
   c. Much criminal activity

8. Do you think that the public's opinion of the police has changed in the past five years?

   a. Yes, the public's opinion is more positive.
   b. Yes, the public's opinion is more negative.
   c. No, the public's opinion has not changed.
   d. Don't know.

9. How do you think the public behaves now as compared to when you began your career?

   a. The public behaves better in their dealings with police officers than when I began my career.
   b. The public behaves worse in their dealings with police officers than when I began my career.
   c. The public behaves about the same as when I began my career as a police officer.

10. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

    a. Less than high school diploma
    b. High school diploma or GED
    c. Some college course work
    d. Associate (two-year) degree
    e. Bachelor's (four-year) degree
    f. Some graduate or professional course work
    g. Master's degree
    h. Doctoral degree (J.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)
    i. Other (please specify)_____

11. Have you had basic police training? ____Yes ____No

12. Other than basic training, how many total hours of in-service police training have you had within the past 10 years?

    a. Less than 20 hours
    b. 20 to 99 hours
    c. 100 to 299 hours
    d. 300 to 499 hours
    e. 500 hours or more

13. Has your police training included a course on cultural differences?

    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know

14. Has your police training included a separate course on ethics in law enforcement?

    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know

15. How religious do you consider yourself to be?

    a. Very religious
    b. Somewhat religious
    c. Not very religious
    d. Not religious at all
    e. Don't know

16. Are you male or female?

    a. Male
    b. Female

17. Which group below includes your present age?

    a. Less than 21 years old
    b. 21-24 years old
    c. 25-34 years old
    d. 35-44 years old
    e. 45-54 years old
    f. 55 years old or older

18. To which ethnic group do you belong?
    a. White
    b. African American
    c. Hispanic
    d. Asian, Pacific Islander
    e. Other (please specify)_____

19. What is your current marital status?

a. Married
b. Widowed
c. Divorced
d. Separated
e. Single, never married

20. Which of the following categories approximate your combined yearly household income?

a. $6,000 - $9,000
b. $9,001 - $15,000
c. $15,001 - $25,000
d. $25,001 - $50,000
e. $50,000 - $75,000
f. $75,001 - $100,000
g. More than $100,000

21. Which of the following phrases best describe your attitude toward, and assessment of, this survey. Please circle as many as you would like.

a. I expect the results will be useful for targeting training programs.

b. I suppose it might help to get the results, but I'm not too optimistic that much will be done.

c. I'm glad I had an opportunity to help the public understand that police are predominantly reliable and honest.

d. I'm concerned that if the results show a lot of misbehavior, the image of police may be damaged.

e. I don't see that anything positive will, or can, come out of this survey.

f. I'm glad I had a chance to help reveal just how bad things really can be in police departments.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION D

In this section we would like you to evaluate the relative severity of each consequence included in your list of choices back in Section A. Please assign to each consequence a number from 0 to 15, as you did in Section A, that describes how severe YOU think it is. Please write this number in the space next to each consequence.

Severity Scale

Not at all severe	Not very severe	Moderately severe	Quite severe	Extremely severe

0.....7.....8.....15

_____a. Refer for additional training
_____b. Demotion
_____c. Verbal reprimand
_____d. Refer for criminal prosecution
_____e. 14 days suspension without pay
_____f. Forced to resign or else be dismissed
_____g. Written reprimand
_____h. No consequence
_____i. Dismissal
_____j. 30 days suspension without pay
_____k. 3 days suspension without pay
_____l. Refer for counseling
_____m. Mandatory participation in alcohol/drug treatment
_____n. 1 day suspension without pay

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY.

PLEASE BE CERTAIN THAT YOU RETURN ALL MATERIALS TO THE ENVELOPE AND SEAL IT. RETURN THE ENVELOPE AS PREVIOUSLY INSTRUCTED.

Bibliography

Niederhoffer, Arthur (1967). *Behind The Shield: The police in urban society*. Doubleday & Company, Inc: New York.

Norusis, Marija J. (1990). *The SPSS Guide to Data Analysis for release 4*. SPSS Inc: Chicago.

Renzetti, Claire and Raymond M. Lee (Eds) (1993). *Researching Sensitive Topics*. Sage Publications, Inc.: USA

Ward, Richard H and Robert McCormack (1987). *Managing Police Corruption: International Perspectives*. Office of International Criminal Justice: University of Illinois at Chicago.