

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perception of police corruption and the level of integrity among Slovenian police officers

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The survey of police integrity was conducted on the representative sample of 550 Slovenian police officers. The measurement was developed by Kutnjak Ivković and Klockarson the basis of 14 hypothetical case scenarios which describe different forms of police misconduct (i.e. conflict of interests, bribery, and theft). The results of this study demonstrate a high level of self-reported police integrity strictly connected to the code of silence into police community. As a result, anti-corruption strategies are most likely to be successful if they are directed at changing perceptions and moral beliefs about seriousness of corruptive conducts.

Keywords: police; integrity; corruption; misbehavior; police science; Slovenia

Introduction

Slovenia, a Central European country covering 20,237 km² and with 2,049,261 inhabitants (2010), declared its independence from Yugoslavia on 25 June 1991, became a member of the United Nations the following year, and joined other major international political, security, and economic organizations in the period that followed – the Council of Europe, the European Union, NATO, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Slovenian police force employed 8808 personnel: 5911 uniformed police officers, 1720 non-uniformed police officers, and 1177 other police personnel. This amounts to one police officer for 267 inhabitants (Police, 2012, www.policija.si). Surveys on police corruption and integrity of Slovenian police were undertaken soon after Slovenian independence. The first paper on police deviance, published by Meško (1994) in the *Slovenian Journal of Criminal Investigation and Criminology*, triggered angry criticism from police managers because it addressed a taboo theme. Papers and articles on ‘dark sides’ of policing – police misconduct and police deviance – have since then become part of the critical criminological analysis of Slovenian policing. The purpose of this contribution is to show the results of contemporary study of corruption and police integrity in Slovenia. First, we will provide a brief introduction of police integrity and police misconduct theory, followed by deliberation of the results of empirical study on representative sample of police officers. Although the results presented in this article relate to Slovenia, may be of interest to professionals in the field of policing in the wider international arena, both in terms of the methodology used to study police misconduct as from the perspective of the development of professionalization of police in new democracy.

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Police misconduct and police integrity

There is an expectation that police officers will take nothing, will impartially enforce the law, and their decisions will be open to scrutiny. Unfortunately, the history of policing has revealed that this is often a myth and that officers engage in a range of activity that breaks their disciplinary code and the criminal law (Newburn, 1999; Punch, 2000). Government, accountability and integrity of the police, and related aspects, are important aspects of contemporary policing that are believed to have a central role in policing as a profession (Pagon & Lobnikar, 2004). Generally, the theories on leadership found that integrity is a central trait of effective business leaders, while interpersonal and group relationship theorists have identified integrity as a central determinant of trust in organizations (Becker, 1998). Generally, integrity is associated with such virtues as purity, solidarity, involvement, sincerity, and scrupulousness (Kaptein, 2001, p. 283).

Girodo (2003) described integrity as a personal attribute and as a social construct, simultaneously. In the latter sense, it refers to the degree to which people or groups of people satisfy their legitimate expectations of the world around them (Kaptein, 2001, p. 283). We need to understand legitimate expectations as only those that are widely supported and generally regarded as appropriate (e.g. for legitimate expectations to police in Slovenia see Reisig, Tankebe, & Meško, 2012). Kaptein (2001) pointed out that law, human rights law, and internal regulations are legal expressions of integrity. Klockars, Kutnjak Ivković, Harver, and Haberfeld (2000) and Klockars, Kutnjak Ivković, and Haberfeld (2004) define police integrity as inclination among police to resist temptations to abuse the rights and privileges of their occupation.

It has been said that officers engage in a range of activity that breaks their disciplinary code. Benjamin (1990) describes five psychological types lacking in integrity. The first is the *moral chameleon*, a person who is anxious to accommodate others, while not being resistant to social pressure, thus willing to quickly abandon or modify previously avowed principles. The second is the *moral opportunist*, whose values are also ever changing, based on his own short-term self-interest. The third type is the *moral hypocrite*, a person who has one set of virtues for public consumption and another set for actual use as a moral code. The fourth is the *morally weak-willed* who has a reasonably coherent set of core virtues, but he usually lacks the courage to act on them. The final type is the *moral self-deceiver*, a person who thinks of himself as acting on a set of core principles, while, in fact, he does not.

Why do some people lack integrity? Why is it so hard to achieve it? Based on a review of objectivist literature, Becker (1998) offers the three most common reasons. First, not everyone is rational. Integrity requires the discipline of purpose and a long-range course of action, selecting corresponding goals and pursuing them fervently, carefully choosing the means to one's ends, and making full use of one's knowledge. Second, a person may lack integrity because of desires that are inconsistent with moral values. If a person, when under temptation, fails to call upon his rational mind, acting upon the whim of the moment instead, he will indeed lack integrity. Third, probably the most common reason a person may lack integrity is that he succumbs to social pressure. Social pressure may come from numerous sources (e.g. coworkers, bosses, or clients) and take many forms (e.g. physical intimidation or verbal and nonverbal disapproval). A person with high integrity will not allow popularity to take priority over rational convictions.

Police corruption *is prevalent*, for example, corrupt practices are found in some form in a great many police agencies in all societies and *are a continuing problem* because

there is evidence of corrupt practices from all stages of police history. In addition, *it is not simply a problem of the lower ranks* as corruption has been found at all levels of the police organization and *is not simply financial* (Newburn, 1999).

Corruption can be successfully tackled by carrying out careful selection of candidates for enrollment in a police organization and by aggressively prosecuting corrupt police officers and subsequently by removing them before they 'infect' the entire organization. This approach is known as the 'rotten apple theory.' When confronted with allegations of corruption for which there is supporting evidence, police agencies will generally claim that the problem identified is limited to a small number of corrupt officers who are quite unrepresentative of the wider standards exhibited by the organization. The history of policing, however, is full of examples where this explanation could simply not be sustained in the face of overwhelming evidence of organized corruption. Until recently, police administrators viewed corruption primarily as a reflection of the moral defects of individual police officers. They fought corruption by carefully screening applicants for police positions and aggressively pursuing morally defective officers in an attempt to remove them from their positions before their corrupt behavior had spread through the agency. This administrative/individual approach of police corruption has been subject to severe criticism in recent years (Newburn, 1999). Patrick V. Murphy, the reform commissioner of New York Police Department said:

The 'rotten apple' theory won't work any longer. Corrupt police officers are not natural-born criminals, nor morally wicked men, constitutionally different from their honest colleagues. The task of corruption control is to examine the barrel, not just the apples – the organization, not just the individuals in it – because corrupt police are made, not born. (Newburn, 1999)

According to Škrbec and Dobovšek (2012), both the Slovenia public opinion and the statistics of courts, prosecution offices, police, and anticorruption commission show that corruption is increasing, developing into new forms, and is spread throughout all areas of the society, particularly in the public sector. The results of corruption perceptions index (CPI), carried out by Transparency of International, were relatively good. CPI survey data show that the level of corruption in Slovenia in the period from 2003 to 2008 steadily declined. In 2003, it reached a score of 5.9 (occupying the 29th place), and scored 6.7 in 2008 (occupying the 26th place). This was the best placing to date. In 2009, it reached 6.6; in 2010, 6.4; and in 2011, 5.9 (Škrbec & Dobovšek, 2012).

In Slovenia civilian oversight in the resolution of complaints of ill-treatment by the police was introduced by the Police Act of 1998 and reinforced by legislation in 2013, with the new *Organisation and Work of the Police Act* where the process of dealing with complaints against the work of police officers is well structured. Following the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the cases of *Rehbock v. Slovenia* (in 2000) and *Matko v. Slovenia* (in 2006), a Department for the Prosecution of Officials with special authorizations within the Specialize department in the Office of the State Prosecutor General was established in 2007. In 2011, 19 police officers were dismissed because they were suspected of committing a crime.

Methods, data collection, and description of the sample

Klockars and Kutnjak Ivković (2004) developed a survey instrument that measures the extent of police integrity. Their questionnaire incorporates descriptions of 11

hypothetical scenarios, the overwhelming majority of which address various forms of police corruption, from the acceptance of gratuities and holiday gifts to opportunistic thefts and shakedowns. The questionnaire has been used to survey police offices in a number of countries across the world, from the United States, England, and Canada, to Japan and Pakistan (see Klockars et al., 2004). Out of the East-European countries in transition, it has been used in Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (see Klockars et al., 2004; Kutnjak Ivković & O'Connor Shelley, 2005).

The second version of their questionnaire includes scenarios that cover a variety of forms of police misconduct, from police corruption and use of excessive force, to planting of evidence and verbal abuse. In consultation with the Croatian police, Kutnjak Ivković (2009) added three scenarios to the questionnaire. These additional three scenarios were used also in Slovenian version of questionnaire (Appendix 1).

Each scenario is followed by the same set of questions, used both in the first and the second version of the questionnaire. The follow-up questions ask about police officers' knowledge of official rules and their opinions about the seriousness of particular rule-violating behaviors, the discipline these behaviors would deserve and would actually receive, and their estimates of how willing they would be to report such behavior (Kutnjak Ivković, 2009).

The last part of the questionnaire contains a few demographic questions. These questions inquired about the length of the respondents' police experience, rank, assignment, and whether they were employed in a supervisory position.

Data were obtained from 550 police officers (national, regional, and local). Of the 550, 88.5% were male. 25.3% worked in a small police department (up to 25 officers), 43.7% worked in a medium-sized police department (with 26–75 police officers), and the rest worked in police department with more than 75 units. 22.4% had up to 10 years of service, 42.2% had between 11 and 20 years of service, and rest 36.4% had more than 20 years of service. 81.7% held various ranks within the police, while the rest held various inspector ranks. 18.1% were public order police officers, 12.5% were crime investigation officers, 7% worked as dispatchers, 8.6% were traffic officers, 22.1% were community policing officers, and the rests work as shift commanders or administrators. 73.3% of the 550 police have non-managerial duties, while rest of the sample has some supervisory function (from shift manager, to police station commander and inspectors at regional and national level). In the sample, the number of community policing officer is overrepresented, but due the fact that CPOs perform also other police tasks (e.g. crime investigation), the sample reflected the police population in Slovenia.

All the data were collected in spring 2011. We asked police officers to fill the questionnaire, seal the envelope, and return it to research institution. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed, and participation was voluntary.

Results and discussion

Let us discuss evaluation of seriousness of police misconduct first. The respondents were asked to evaluate how serious they perceive the behaviors described in scenarios. Two questions probed the respondents about the seriousness of the behavior: The first question sought their own evaluations of seriousness, while the second one asked about their estimates of how the majority of police officers in their agency would evaluate the behavior. They were offered answers on a five-point scale, ranging from 'not at all serious' to 'very serious.' The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Police officer perceptions of seriousness.

Scenario number and description	Own seriousness		Others' seriousness		<i>t</i> -test <i>p</i>
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants	3.64	13	3.0	12	$t = 14.21^*$
Scenario 2 – fail to arrest friend with warrant	4.76	3	4.3	4	$t = 15.6^*$
Scenario 3 – theft of knife from crime scene	4.87	1	4.64	1	$t = 10.07^*$
Scenario 4 – unjustifiable use of deadly force	4.55	6	4.35	3	$t = 8.2^*$
Scenario 5 – supervisor: holiday off for errands	4.45	7	4.19	6	$t = 8.43^*$
Scenario 6 – officer strikes prisoner who hurt partner	4.13	9	3.57	10	$t = 14.96^{**}$
Scenario 7 – verbal abuse ‘Arrest asshole day’	3.66	12	3.19	11	$t = 13.77^*$
Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident	2.87	14	2.51	13	$t = 9.74^*$
Scenario 9 – auto-body shop 5% kickback	4.63	5	4.18	7	$t = 12.32^*$
Scenario 10 – false report on drug on dealer	4.67	4	4.3	4	$t = 12.24^*$
Scenario 11 – supervisor fails to halt beating	4.34	8	3.86	8	$t = 13.57^*$
Scenario 12 – failing to report hate crime	4.01	11	3.57	10	$t = 12.66^*$
Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist	4.85	2	4.64	1	$t = 7.51^*$
Scenario 14 – not reacting to graffiti	4.13	9	3.8	9	$t = 11.24^*$

* $p = .000$.

The respondents' evaluations of scenario seriousness suggest that the scenarios were generally evaluated to be on the serious side (means are clustered between the midpoint of the scale and the serious end of the scale). These evaluations ranged in terms of seriousness, from the scenario evaluated to be the least serious, Scenario 8 (describing the cover-up of police DUI), to the scenario evaluated as the most serious, Scenario 3 (describing the theft of a knife from the crime scene with the mean very close to the serious end of the scale). We can see that the case scenarios fall into three categories of perceived seriousness: Three scenarios (Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants; Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident; and Scenario 7 – verbal abuse ‘Arrest asshole day’) were not considered as very serious by Slovenian police officers – the case of covering-up intoxicated police officer was the only one where the mean was lower than 3.00. For next of two cases, the mean was somewhere between 3 and 4. Scenario 1 (free meals, gifts from merchants) focuses on the acceptance of gratuities, traditionally viewed as the stepping stone toward more serious forms of police corruption. Scenario 8 (cover-up of police DUI) is also a form of police corruption, one involving internal corruption from. Prior research on police integrity in Slovenia (Pagon & Lobnikar, 2004) shows that internal corruption has been classified as one of the least serious forms of police corruption also back in 1998 with mean score 2.41 as the second least serious scenario, together with the free meals and gifts from merchants, the scenario that was evaluated as the least serious by Slovenian police officers back in 1988 with the mean score of 2.00.

The three most serious scenarios have means substantially closer to 5 (the ‘very serious’ end of the scale). These three scenarios, plain violations of criminal law, include one scenario with opportunistic theft (Scenario 3 – Theft of Knife from Crime Scene), a scenario illustrating a failure to execute an arrest warrant on a friend (Scenario 2 – Fail to Arrest Friend with Warrant), and a Scenario 13 – taking bribe from speeding motorist. All three scenarios are plain violations of official rules in which a police officer does something that he/she was not supposed to do (e.g. steal the knife from a crime scene) or does not do something that he was supposed to do (e.g. did not arrest a friend). In

the same group, we can add also the case of shooting runaway suspect and taking 5% of repair bill from local auto-body shop owner.

Following the rule-of-thumb established by Klockars, Kutnjak Ivković, and Haberfeld (2006, p. 26), we consider only the differences of .50 or larger to be meaningful. These large and meaningful differences were found only in three scenarios (Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants; Scenario 6 – Officer Strikes Prisoner Who Hurt Partner; and Scenario 9 – Auto-Body Shop 5% Kickback).

The next questions were on opinion about the appropriate and expected discipline. The respondents were asked what they thought that the appropriate discipline for the behaviors described in the questionnaire should be, as well as what they thought that

Table 2. Views about appropriate discipline and expected discipline.

Case scenario	Appropriate discipline			Expected discipline			<i>t</i> -test
	Mean	Rank	Mode	Mean	Rank	Mode	
Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants	2.68	3	Reprimand	2.65	3	Reprimand	–
Scenario 2 – fail to arrest friend with warrant	4.93	11	Dismissal	4.36	8	Dismissal	<i>t</i> = 7.96 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 3 – theft of knife from crime scene	5.72	14	Dismissal	5.50	13	Dismissal	<i>t</i> = 5.24 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 4 – unjustifiable use of deadly force	5.29	12	Dismissal	5.53	14	Dismissal	<i>t</i> = –5.46 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 5 – supervisor: holiday off for errands	3.52	7	Reassignment	2.58	2	None	<i>t</i> = 12.93 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 6 – officer strikes prisoner who hurt partner	3.32	6	Reprimand	3.59	7	Reprimand	<i>t</i> = –3.81 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 7 – verbal abuse ‘Arrest asshole day’	2.22	1	Reprimand	2.16	1	Reprimand	–
Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident	2.26	2	None	2.81	6	Reprimand	<i>t</i> = –7.50 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 9 – auto-body shop 5% kickback	4.90	9	Dismissal	4.56	10	Dismissal	<i>t</i> = 5.29 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 10 – false report on drug on dealer	4.92	10	Dismissal	4.72	11	Dismissal	<i>t</i> = 3.93 <i>p</i> = .000
Scenario 11 – supervisor fails to halt beating	4.38	8	Reassignment	4.42	9	Reassignment	–
Scenario 12 – failing to report hate crime	2.85	4	Reprimand	2.73	4	Reprimand	<i>t</i> = 2.28 <i>p</i> = .023
Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist	5.60	13	Dismissal	5.47	12	Dismissal	<i>t</i> = 3.32 <i>p</i> = .001
Scenario 14 – not reacting to graffiti	3.06	5	Reprimand	2.77	5	Reprimand	<i>t</i> = 4.11 <i>p</i> = .000

the actual discipline meted out by their agencies would be. The answers offered were 'no discipline,' 'public warning,' 'fine in the amount of 10% of the employee's salary,' 'fine in the amount of 20% of the employee's salary,' 'reassignment,' and 'dismissal.' The percentages of the respondents who picked each disciplinary option by scenario and the modal values for each scenario are shown in Table 2.

Based on modal values, we can form three categories of appropriate discipline – the first group is the one where dismissal was the most frequent mentioned as an appropriate discipline (these is the fact in six cases: Scenario 2 – fail to arrest friend with warrant; Scenario 3 – theft of knife from crime scene; Scenario 4 – unjustifiable use of deadly force; Scenario 9 – auto-body shop 5% kickback; Scenario 10 – false report on drug on dealer; and Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist), the second group with two scenarios (Scenario 11 – supervisor fails to halt beating, and Scenario 5 – supervisor: holiday off for errands), and the third group is the one where public reprimand or no discipline were selected as appropriate (Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants; Scenario 6 – officer strikes prisoner who hurt partner; Scenario 7 – verbal abuse 'Arrest asshole day; Scenario 12 – failing to report hate crime; Scenario 14 – not reacting to graffiti; and Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident – the only scenario where police officers think that perpetrator deserve no discipline). The respondents think that the severity of discipline will be the lowest for those offenses they perceive as less serious and will be highest for the most serious cases (e.g. theft of the knife, and police officer takes bribes). We can say that respondents' views on police misconduct are very consistent: The scenarios for which the modal response is dismissal at the same time were the scenarios which the respondents most likely to evaluate as serious.

The last two questions after each scenario asked the respondents to express how willing they would be to report misconduct and to estimate how willing other officers in their agencies would be to do so (see Tables 3 and 4). The answers ranged on a five-point Likert scale from 'definitely not' to 'definitely yes.' The answers conveying their own (un)willingness to report misconduct help us assess the extent and nature of the code of silence.

Table 3. Police officer perceptions of willingness to report.

Scenario number and description	Own willingness to report			Others' willingness to report		
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants	2.76	.064	12	2.27	.047	12
Scenario 2 – fail to arrest friend with warrant	4.14	.051	4	3.51	.046	5
Scenario 3 – theft of knife from crime scene	4.6	.037	1	4.08	.041	2
Scenario 4 – unjustifiable use of deadly force	4.42	.043	2	4.15	.045	1
Scenario 5 – supervisor: holiday off for errands	3.47	.06	9	3.04	.052	8
Scenario 6 – officer strikes prisoner who hurt partner	3.16	.63	11	2.6	.052	11
Scenario 7 – verbal abuse 'Arrest asshole day'	2.7	.061	13	2.25	.05	13
Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident	2.27	.057	14	2.05	.071	14
Scenario 9 – auto-body shop 5% kickback	4.06	.051	6	3.43	.049	6
Scenario 10 – false report on drug on dealer	4.14	.049	4	3.6	.048	4
Scenario 11 – supervisor fails to halt beating	3.61	.06	7	3.11	.055	7
Scenario 12 – failing to report hate crime	3.3	.057	10	2.83	.049	10
Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist	4.42	.045	2	3.99	.047	3
Scenario 14 – not reacting to graffiti	3.49	.056	8	2.98	.049	9

Table 4. Police Officer Perceptions of Willingness to Report – comparison police officers own willingness to report to others' willingness to report.

		Paired differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Significance
		Mean	SD	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants	.490	1.204	.050	.391	.588	9.777	577	.000
Pair 2	Scenario 2 – fail to arrest friend with warrant	.624	1.036	.043	.540	.709	14.551	582	.000
Pair 3	Scenario 3 – theft of knife from crime scene	.518	.851	.035	.449	.587	14.696	582	.000
Pair 4	Scenario 4 – unjustifiable use of deadly force	.277	.764	.032	.214	.339	8.679	574	.000
Pair 5	Scenario 5 – supervisor: holiday off for errands	.431	1.064	.044	.344	.518	9.730	577	.000
Pair 6	Scenario 6 – officer strikes prisoner who hurt partner	.561	1.099	.046	.472	.651	12.286	578	.000
Pair 7	Scenario 7 – verbal abuse ‘Arrest asshole day’	.443	.997	.041	.362	.524	10.726	581	.000
Pair 8	Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident	.225	1.630	.068	.092	.359	3.320	576	.001
Pair 9	Scenario 9 – auto-body shop 5% kickback	.622	1.022	.042	.539	.705	14.682	581	.000
Pair 10	Scenario 10 – false report on drug on dealer	.538	.898	.037	.465	.611	14.446	581	.000
Pair 11	Scenario 11 – supervisor fails to halt beating	.500	1.017	.042	.417	.583	11.839	579	.000
Pair 12	Scenario 12 – failing to report hate crime	.469	.973	.040	.390	.548	11.605	579	.000
Pair 13	Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist	.432	.860	.036	.362	.502	12.114	580	.000
Pair 14	Scenario 14 – not reacting to graffiti	.511	.956	.040	.433	.589	12.862	578	.000

The scenarios fall into three categories also in case of willingness to report the misconducts. In case of verbal abusing driver, accepting gifts of food and liquor, and helping drunken police officer, the respondents were less willing to report (mean score less than three), while we can see the high will to report in cases of theft, taking bribes, protecting a friend from prosecution, falsification of evidence, taking money for arranging business, and shooting runaway suspect.

Willingness to report is in all scenarios statistically significant and positively correlated with the perceived level of seriousness of the misconduct (all correlations at the level .000; Pearson r correlation coefficient vary from lowest .251 in Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist to highest .709 in Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident) – less serious the misconduct is perceived by police officers less willing they are to report the misconduct and vice versa – more serious the behavior is evaluated higher is the will to report it. Further, respondents with more work experiences are in all scenarios more willing to report police misconduct in regard to those with less work experiences in police organization (all correlations at the level of .000; the lowest correlation in Scenario 4 – unjustifiable use of deadly force: $r = .141$ and Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident: $r = .130$ and highest on in Scenario 13 – bribe from speeding motorist: $r = .312$). And, as was the fact in evaluation of seriousness of scenarios, in each scenario, police supervisors (all those police officers at any of managerial position or with managerial duties) are more willing to report police misconduct in regard to those with no managerial responsibilities (all mean differences were statistically significant at the level of .000).

As we see, there are three scenarios in which the mean values are below the mid-point of the scale (Scenario 1 – free meals, gifts from merchants; Scenario 8 – cover-up of police DUI accident; and Scenario 7 – verbal abuse ‘Arrest asshole day’) suggesting that the behaviors described in these scenarios would be well protected by the code of silence. In addition, a separate analysis of the code of silence (measured as the percentage of the respondents who said that they would not report) shows that about from one third to almost one-half of the respondents for each of these scenarios said that they would *not* report a police officer who engaged in misconduct described in the scenario

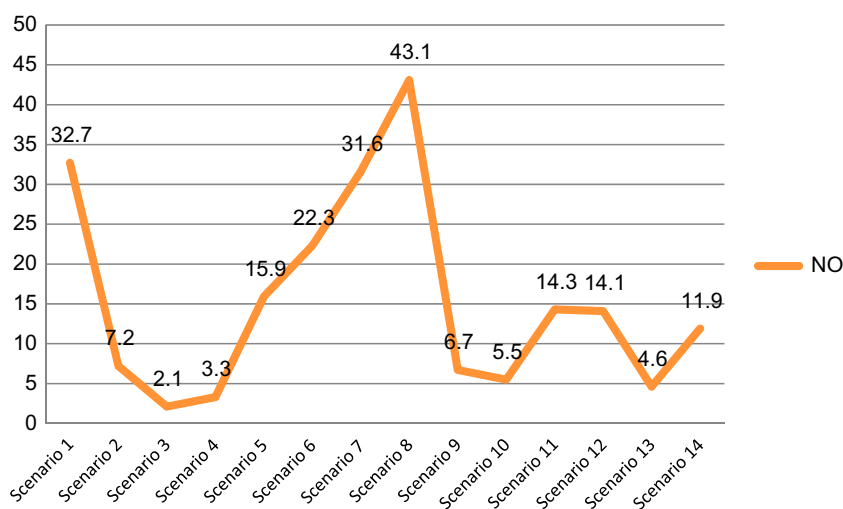


Figure 1. Percentage of police officers definitely not willing to report.

(see Figure 1). These three scenarios include the least serious forms of police corruption (i.e. the acceptance of gratuities) and the use of verbal assault as a first step of excessive use of force, as well as the one scenario with internal corruption. These three scenarios have been perceived as the least serious, least likely to be recognized as rule-violating behavior, and deserving the least serious forms of discipline.

We also compared the respondents' own willingness to report with their estimates of others' willingness to report. The mean values suggest that, in all 14 scenarios, the respondents seem to be somewhat more willing to say that they would report than they estimated that others would. Although the differences between the means for their own willingness to report and the means for others' willingness to report are statistically significant in all scenarios, these differences are meaningful at least in 4 scenarios (Scenario 2 – Fail to Arrest Friend with Warrant; Scenario 3 – Theft of Knife from Crime Scene; Scenario 9 – auto-body shop 5% kickback; and Scenario 11 – supervisor fails to halt beating).¹

To evaluate the level of police integrity within Slovenian police service, we used an aggregate measure (a sum of all 14 scenarios) of the 'own perception of the seriousness of corrupt behavior,' 'beliefs about other officers' perception of corrupt behavior,' 'expected discipline,' 'own willingness to report,' and 'beliefs about other police officers to report.' The results of the regression analysis showed that we can explain up to 68% of variance of the officers' willingness to report police corruption and misconducts with 4 entered variables ($F = 25,229$, sig. = .000). The contribution of each of the variable was further analyzed, and we can see that the officers' own perception of seriousness has the strongest influence on willingness to report ($\beta = .714$), followed by beliefs about other police officers' to report ($\beta = .690$). Expected discipline was not significant, and that officers' beliefs about others' perception of corrupt behavior was negatively correlated. We can conclude that the officers' own perception of seriousness has the strongest influence on willingness to report police misconduct.

Conclusions

We believe that the results demonstrate a high level of police integrity among police officers in Slovenia, as the officers' own perception of seriousness has the strongest influence on willingness to report police misconduct. Nevertheless, there are still some issues where additional work of police managers has to be done. First is the case of cover-up of police officer DUI (Scenario 8), where 23.6% of respondents select answer '*not at all serious*.' This is a form of police corruption, involving internal corruption. We can conclude that in this case, there is change in last decade and half and some managerial intervention is needed. Our results constitute also some evidence of the code of silence existence among the Slovenian police officers. There are three issues (free meals, gifts from merchants; cover-up of police DUI accident; and verbal abuse) where an analysis of the code of silence shows that about from 32% to 43% of the respondents for each of these scenarios said that they would *not* report a police officer who engaged in misconduct described in the scenario. These three scenarios include the least serious forms of police corruption (i.e. the acceptance of gratuities) and the use of verbal assault as a first step of excessive use of force, as well as the one scenario with internal corruption. On the other hand, our results show that there are a very low number of the police officers who would not report the most serious examples of police misconduct.

We believe that police leaders have to change police officers' perception in the area of internal corruption and code of silence by educating and training them in police

ethics. Reinforcing integrity of police officers is one of the most important steps toward professionalization of policing and one of the most powerful antidotes to police corruption, brutality, neglect of human rights, and other forms of police deviance. A practical implication of this study's findings is that efforts to manage police corruption and other forms of police misconduct are most likely to be successful if they are directed at changing perceptions and moral beliefs about the seriousness of corruption. Klockars, Kutnjak Ivković, and Haberfeld (2005) identified at least two practices that they believe enhance integrity. It is also valid for Slovenia. The first is to consistently address relatively minor offenses with the appropriate discipline. From this, officers may infer that major offenses, too, are likely to be disciplined. The second recommended practice is to disclose the disciplinary process and resulting discipline to public scrutiny. Sunshine laws may be a potent deterrent to both individual and organizational inclinations to conceal misconduct.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Note

1. Following the rule-of-thumb established in Klockars et al. (2006, p. 26), we consider only the differences of .50 or larger to be meaningful.

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Appendix 1

Case scenarios

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| Case 1 | A police officer is widely liked in the community. Local merchants and restaurant owners regularly show their appreciation for his attention by giving him gifts of food, cigarettes, and other items of small value |
| Case 2 | A police officer is aware that there is a felony warrant for a long time friend of his. Although he sees his friend frequently over a period of more than a week and warns his friend of its existence, he does not arrest him |
| Case 3 | A police officer discovers a burglary of a hardware store. The display cases are smashed, and many items have obviously been taken. While searching the store, he takes an expensive pocket knife and slips it into his pocket. He reports that the knife has been stolen during the burglary |
| Case 4 | An officer who was severely beaten by a person resisting arrest, has just returned to duty. On patrol, the officer approaches a person standing in a dimly lit alley. Suddenly, the person throws a gym bag at the officer and begins to run away. The officer fatally shoots the person, striking him in the back. It was later determined that the person was unarmed |
| Case 5 | A police officer is scheduled to work during coming holidays. The supervisor offers to give him these days off, if he agrees to run some personal errands for the supervisor. Evaluate the supervisor's behavior |
| Case 6 | In responding with her male partner to a fight in a bar, a young, female officer receives a black eye from one of the male combatants. The man is arrested, handcuffed, and as he is led into the cells, the male member of the team punches him very hard in the kidney area saying, 'hurts, doesn't it' |
| Case 7 | A police officer stops a motorist for speeding. As the officer approaches the vehicle, the driver yells, 'What the hell are you stopping me for?' The officer replies, 'Because today is "Arrest an Asshole Day"' |
| Case 8 | At 2:00 am a police officer, who is on duty, is driving his patrol car on a deserted road. He sees a vehicle that has been driven off the road and is stuck in a ditch. He approaches the vehicle and observes that the driver is not hurt but is obviously intoxicated. He also finds that the driver is a police officer. Instead of reporting this accident and offense, he transports the driver to his home |
| Case 9 | A police officer has a private arrangement with a local auto-body shop to refer the owners of cars damaged in accidents to the shop. In exchange for each referral, he receives a payment of 5% of the repair bill from the shop owner |
| Case 10 | A police officer arrests two drug dealers involved in a street fight. One has a large quantity of heroin on his person. In order to charge them both with serious offenses, the officer falsely reports that the heroin was found on both men |
| Case 11 | A police sergeant, without intervening, watches officers under his supervision repeatedly strike and kick a man arrested for child abuse. The man has previous child abuse arrests. Evaluate the sergeant's behavior |
| Case 12 | In reporting to a stabbing, a police officer arrests a skinhead for stabbing a Roma under circumstances suggest that the attack was ethnically motivated. The police officers fail to report that the attack was ethnically motivated |
| Case 13 | A police officer stops a motorist for speeding. The officer agrees to accept a personal gift for half of the amount of the fine in exchange for not issuing a citation |
| Case 14 | While on patrol in his patrol car, a police officer notice a group of juveniles writing graffiti on the building. The police officer decides not to intervene and instead drives on |
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