

ROMANIAN AND AMERICAN POLICE OFFICERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory comparative study compares how police officers belonging to two different cultures regard various types of police corruption, how severely they think transgressions should be punished, and how willing they are to report infractions. In order to measure police integrity and to identify the potential for police misconduct we applied the methodology developed in the United States by C.B. Klockars and his colleagues. The present quantitative analysis is based on survey data obtained from two convenience samples, consisting of American police officers who recently attended the Administrative Officer's course at the Southern Police Institute in the United States and Romanian police officers enrolled in or graduates of the Master's program at the Romanian Police Academy. Even if a potential for unethical behavior was detected in both groups under study, results show that Romanian police officers appear to have a higher level of tolerance toward police misconduct than their American counterparts.

Keywords: police corruption, police integrity, code of silence, Romanian police, American police.

INTRODUCTION

In October, 2011, the New York Police Department (NYPD), the largest municipal law enforcement agency in the United States and one of the most sophisticated police forces in the world faced two serious corruption scandals. After a two-year sting operation by police and the FBI, eight serving or retired officers were among twelve people arrested on charges of conspiracy to smuggle

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assault rifles, handguns and other items worth more than \$1 million. In the second scandal to hit the force in a week, sixteen NYPD officers pleaded not guilty to charges of widespread fixing of traffic tickets as well as more serious crimes. In addition, the investigation exposed an alleged failure by police to arrest an assault suspect (who had a connection with the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, the powerful police union) and then an attempt to cover up the alleged crime. Initially the probe began with an undercover operation against a uniformed officer, who was accused of using two Bronx barbershops he owned as sales points for large quantities of marijuana. An alleged drug dealer managed the barbershops, used the officer's car and his phone to organize deals, while the police officer himself was accused of transporting illegal drugs and attempted robbery. Another NYPD sergeant was also charged in connection to this case. It was during this inquiry that investigators came across a web of officers using their authority to make traffic tickets and parking tickets go away as favors to friends (Smith, 2011). Palmiotto (2005, p. 286) acknowledged that since its inception in 1844 up to the year 2000 there have been six major scandals in the New York City Police Department. The last serious corruption scandal for the NYPD was the so-called "Dirty 30" case from the early 1990s. More than 33 officers from Harlem's 30th Precinct were implicated in the probe, with most pleading guilty to charges including stealing cash from drug dealers, taking bribes, beating suspects and lying under oath to cover their tracks (El-Ghobashy, 2011).

In February 2011, 40 border police at one of the Romanian crossing with Moldova were charged with corruption for taking bribes in exchange of turning a blind eye to cigarette smuggling or incorrect documents. According to the anti-graft prosecutors the illegal acts were not individually committed; they were well organized and based on a previous understanding between all participants (Cage, 2011). Recently, in a new corruption scandal that involved Romanian law enforcement employees, 28 police agents from two precincts in Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, have been arrested and charged with bribery, abuse of power, complicity in pimping and prostitution, and excessive use of force, torture, and illegal arrest of a prostitute, who was actually an undercover female police officer. According to the prosecution, the accused have been involved from October to December 2011, in approximately 100 acts of corruption and/or police misconduct (MediaFax, 2012). A performance evaluation report of the Romanian Ministry of Administration and Interior (M.A.I.) showed that in 2010, from 1,503 persons accused of corruption by the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA), 376 were M.A.I. employees (60% of them being employed by the Romanian Police). From 222 police officers/agents charged with corruption in 2010, 109 persons were found guilty. Although the police officers/agents found guilty of corruption or serious police misconduct represent only 0.20% of the total number of persons employed by the Romanian Police (N = 54,791), it should be noted that, compared to previous years, data show an increase in the number of cases of corruption that involved the Romanian police (M.A.I., 2011, p. 14–15).

Even if most police officers follow the rule of law and due process and respect the disciplinary code of their profession, police corruption and other forms of police misconduct do exist in police departments in almost any country of the world (see Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2003; Punch, 2000, 2003). Punch (2000, p. 301), in fact, contended that "the history of policing is littered with scandals in which police officers broke the law and also in which the police organizations failed to detect the deviance (or colluded in it; or tried to deflect investigations by defensive opposition)". An analysis of recent International Crime Victim Survey data showed that police corruption is more prevalent in Eastern European, Asian, and Latin American countries than in Western democracies (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2003, p. 648).

Based on data collected by the most recent *Global Corruption Barometer*, the largest cross-country survey of the general public's views on and experiences of corruption, the international levels of corruption have increased in the past three years. In 2010 the Barometer interviewed more than 91,500 people in 86 countries, making it the most comprehensive edition since it was launched in 2003. Results showed that more than half of the respondents (58%) perceived police as being corrupt or extremely corrupt. From a list of nine services that also included the judiciary, customs, land services, registry and permit services, education services, medical services, tax revenues, and utilities services, the police were the institution most often reported as the recipient of bribes. Almost three in ten persons (29%) who in the past twelve months had contact with the police worldwide reported paying a bribe. On a scale from 1 (not at all corrupt) to 5 (extremely corrupt), the average score for perceived police corruption obtained in Romania was 3.9, which was the highest value in the European Union. Although American respondents perceived the police corruption as being lower (score: 3.3) than Romanians did, in both countries a large majority of the respondents (87% in Romania and 72% in US) believed that corruption increased during the past year and that the current government's actions in the fight against corruption were ineffective (83% in Romania and 71% in US) (Transparency International, 2010).

Based on the recently published corruption perception index (CPI), out of 183 countries and territories that were monitored there are more than one hundred countries perceived as having higher levels of corruption than Romania does. However, in Europe, only Bulgaria (CPI = 3.3) and Greece (CPI = 3.4) were perceived as more corrupt societies than Romania in 2011. In fact, in 2011 the corruption index for Romania (3.6) suggested an increase in the perceived level of corruption compared to 2010, when CPI was 3.7¹. If from 2007 to 2010, Romania

¹ CPI takes values from 0 (very high level of corruption) to 10 (complete lack of corruption). In 2011, among 183 countries and territories, New Zealand (CPI = 9.5) was ranked as the least corrupt country, while North Korea (CPI = 1) and Somalia (CPI = 1) were considered the most corrupt countries worldwide. Romania had the same CPI (3.6) as China and had a lower CPI than Botswana, Rwanda, Namibia, Cuba, or Ghana; United States (CPI = 7.1) was ranked the 24th least corrupt country. Transparency International ranks the countries on their perceived levels of corruption within the public sector (Transparency International, 2011).

was ranked the 69th least corrupt country in the world, in 2011 the country's position dropped to 75 (Transparency International, 2011). And, for the most part because corruption continued to be perceived as a serious problem in the country and efforts to tackle corruption remained unconvincing, an important 2011 objective of the current Romanian government – the country's accession to the European Union's open-border Schengen zone – failed to be achieved in a timely manner.

In the past two decades, *Romanian social scientists* (e.g., Abraham, 2005; Apostol-Tofan, 1999; Balica&Todose, 2005; Cherciu, 2004; Damboceanu, 2005; Danilet, 2009; Ioan, Banciu & Rădulescu, 2005; Mogaldea, 1998; Precupet, 2007; Rădulescu, Banciu, Balica, 1994; Rădulescu & Dâmboceanu, 2005) wrote about corruption and its trends in Romania, analyzed its roots, discussed public attitudes toward this pervasive societal illness, and made policy recommendations meant to alleviate corrupt behavior in the country. Nevertheless, even if a significant proportion of Romanians tend to perceive the police as a corrupt institution (see Ciocoiu, 2010; Transparency International, 2010) and the public trust in police is among the lowest in the European Union (see Andreescu & Keeling, 2011), there are no surveys conducted on samples of Romanian police officers that could provide useful details regarding police deviance or the police officers' attitudes toward police misbehavior. Due in part to the fact that corruption is difficult to measure and study directly, the existing scholarly literature on police misconduct in Romania is mainly descriptive, focuses on a few isolated cases (see Danilet, 2009), and/or relies on victimization surveys to assess the extent of the phenomenon. Yet, as Hubert Williams, the president of the Police Foundation noted, "in order to understand police corruption, a global phenomenon with grave social repercussions, it is necessary to examine its basic elements, the officers themselves (Williams, 2002, p. 87)." In addition, the police officers' attitudes toward corrupt, illegal, or inappropriate acts should be known because beliefs could easily translate into actual behavior, as Chappell and Piquero (2004) noted.

Despite its limitations, the present study intends to contribute to the literature on policing by examining the Romanian law enforcement's perceptions of and reactions to police misconduct and the police officers' potential for unethical behavior. The Romanian officers' attitudes and beliefs will be compared to those expressed by their American counterparts, who can be considered representatives of an institution with substantial tradition in democratic policing. This topic is of particular interest now because the Romanian police in general and border police in particular will play an important role on the international scene once Romania will become a member of Europe's Schengen area and, more importantly, because police integrity is a necessary condition of any modern democratic society, as Romania aspires to be.

The present pilot study is part of a larger research project that intends to identify the organizational culture and the integrity of the Romanian police.

Specifically, using the methodology developed by Klockars and his colleagues in the 1990s (see Klockars, 1999; Klockars, Kutnjak Ivkovic, Harver & Haberfeld, 2000), the quantitative analysis presented in this paper will examine the level of tolerance toward police deviance expressed by a sample of Romanian police officers ($N = 75$), who in 2010 when the field research was conducted were enrolled in a Master's degree program at the "A. I. Cuza" Police Academy in Romania. In addition, results will be compared to survey data obtained from a sample ($N = 140$) of American police officers who recently attended the Administrative Officer's course at the Southern Police Institute in the United States. In sum, the main objective of this cross-cultural study is to determine how police officers active in two types of law enforcement organizations that have developed in significantly different political circumstances regard various examples of police corruption, how severely they think transgressions should be punished, and how willing they are to report infractions.

RESEARCH ON POLICE MISCONDUCT: BRIEF OVERVIEW

Thomas Barker recently acknowledged that policing is a "morally dangerous occupation" and that since the creation of law enforcement, all police organizations, particularly those in free societies, have had to deal with cases of police misconduct, such as abuse of authority when using force unnecessarily or making use of unlawful means to control crime and produce a positive law enforcement outcome, (known as Noble Cause Injustice or "Dirty Harry syndrome"), corruption, and selective enforcement of the law when dealing with minorities (e.g., discrimination and racial/ethnic profiling) (Barker, 2011, p. 3–9). Police corruption is a very heterogeneous form of police misconduct and is continuously evolving. Because it is an invisible crime, hard to detect with regular law enforcement methods, police corruption is notoriously difficult to control (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005a, p. 7–8) and also difficult to measure.

Nevertheless, even if the literature on police corruption tends to be dominated by North American studies of widespread "grass-eating"² (see Punch, 2003, p. 171), particularly in the last twenty years, the larger set of activities that constitute police deviance, as well as the cultural environment of police organizations and its impact on police attitudes and behavior have been explored by research conducted in United States and also in countries, such as Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Great Britain, Finland, Hungary, Japan, The

² In the literature on police corruption the officers who accept illegal benefits as a result of some corrupt activity, but do so passively are labeled *grass-eaters*. Also in this category are included officers who know that corruption is taking place, but refuse to report it. Police officers who aggressively solicit illegal favors (e.g., bribes) are labeled *meat-eaters* (Owen, Fradella, Burke & Joplin, 2012, p. 307).

Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, or Sweden (e.g., Beck & Lee, 2002; Da Silva, 2005; Edelbacher & Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2004; Kashem, 2005; Klockars, Kutnjak Ivkovic, and Haberfeld, 2004; Palmiotto, 2005; Sarre & Prenzler, 2005; Wilson et al., 2008). The way the police from former communist European states have adapted to political transition and the extent of police corruption in the new democratic societies have been examined by several scholars as well (see Haberfeld, 1997, 2004; Kertesz & Szilinger, 2000; Kremer, 2004; Kutniak Ivkovic, 2009; Kutniak Ivkovic, Klockars, and Cajner, 2002; Kutniak Ivkovic, Klockars, and Cajner-Mraovic & Ivanusec, 2005; Kutniak Ivkovic & Shelley, 2008; Mesko, 2000).

Although most of the earlier scholarly literature on police misconduct tended to focus exclusively on police corruption³, recent research became more inclusive and also discussed other aspects related to the unethical behavior of police. Based on the organizational/occupational theoretical approach pioneered by Goldstein (1975), a new methodology proposed by Klockars and his colleagues in the 1990s (see Klockars, 1999; Klockars, Kutnjak Ivkovic, Harver & Haberfeld, 2000) suggested the usage of a new concept, *police integrity*, instead of police corruption when examining the ethical conduct of police. While police corruption covers only one aspect of police misbehavior, police integrity is a more comprehensive measure of moral behavior, being defined as “the normative inclination among police to resist temptations to abuse the rights and privileges of their occupation (Klockars, Kutnjak Ivkovic & Haberfeld, 2006, p. 1)”.

The organizational/occupational theoretical perspective focuses on the culture of the police agency and its tolerance of corruption and differs from the administrative/individual approach (i.e., the “bad apple” theory)⁴ that tended to view corruption primarily as a reflection of the moral defects of individual police officers. In addition, the organizational theory of police integrity provides a way of determining the level of integrity in a police agency, identifies specific problems, and recommends solutions to administrators (Klockars et al., 2006, p. XXIII).

In general, scholars agree that corruption as a phenomenon is extremely difficult to study in a direct, quantitative, and empirical manner. Because corruption cases are underreported and/or underrecorded, official data on police misconduct are often unreliable (Klockars et al., 2000, p. 2). In addition, what is

³ Police corruption was defined by Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005a, p. 16) as “an action or omission, a promise of action or omission, or an attempt by a police officer or a group of police officers, characterized by a police officer’s misuses of the official position, motivated in significant part by the achievement of personal gain.”

⁴ Lawrence Sherman (1974) identified four levels of police corruption at the organizational level: **1. rotten apples** (when one or more officers independently participate in police misconduct); **2. rotten pockets** (when officers work as a team and then split the benefits of their corrupt activity); **3. pervasive unorganized corruption** (when a large number of officers independently engage in corrupt activity); **4. pervasive organized corruption** (when meat-eaters and rotten pockets join forces, potentially including supervisors and executives).

labeled corrupt behavior can vary among agencies because there are jurisdictional differences in legal statutes and deontological codes of ethics (Vito, Wolfe, Higgins & Walsh, 2011, p. 153). The methodology based on the organizational/occupational cultural approach has the advantage of providing a systematic and standardized instrument (i.e., the "Klockars Scale" of police integrity) that can measure how seriously officers regard police misconduct, how open they are to support disciplinary actions for certain police transgressions, and how willing they are to tolerate misconduct in silence (Klockars et al., 2000, p. 1–3). Because respondents are asked to evaluate hypothetical scenarios (see Appendix) that depict instances of police misbehavior, the research instrument developed by Klockars (1999) has the ability to collect more sincere opinions from police officers who were usually reluctant to answer direct questions about their corrupt behavior or the level of misconduct in their agency (Klockars et al., 2000, p. 3). Furthermore, as Kutnjak Ivkovic (2009) noted, this methodology enables measurement of the changes in police integrity, which is particularly relevant for police organizations in transition to democratic policing or for a police agency undertaking efforts to improve its state of police integrity. Yet it should be noted that Klockars's scale was designed to mainly assess one aspect of police integrity – police intolerance for corrupt behavior. Only one scenario (i.e., the use of excessive force by a police officer) was not an example of a case of police misconduct motivated by personal gain. However, even if "this survey makes no observation about abuses of discretion in arrests, order maintenance, courtesy to citizens, or other police misconduct not usually motivated by temptations of gain (Klockars et al., 2000, p. 9–10)", it can be assumed "that police who steal, accept bribes or take kickbacks also succumb to the temptations to lie in court, forge records, fabricate evidence or make unwarranted searches or unjustified arrests – although gain provides no motive for doing so (Klockars et al., 2006, p. 4)".

Several research studies have recently used the Klockars scale to evaluate police integrity in law enforcement agencies all over the world. An earlier study was conducted in United States on a convenience, but large sample of 3,235 officers from 30 US police agencies, drawn from across the nation. Although there were substantial inter-agency differences in the environments of police integrity in US, results showed that the more serious a particular behavior was considered by police officers, the more severely respondents thought it should be punished, and the more willing they were to report it. Examples of opportunistic theft (e.g., stealing from a crime scene) and accepting a bribe were considered the most serious cases of misconduct and 'dismissal' was the disciplinary measure proposed by most respondents. In the same time, respondents thought that actions they perceived as minor offenses (e.g., owning and off-duty security system business; accepting free meals) should not be sanctioned at all (or should be sanctioned with verbal reprimand) and should not be reported to superiors (Klockars et al., 2000). A more recent study that also analyzed the attitudes of a sample ($N = 208$) of American police managers toward police misconduct reached very similar conclusions (Vito et al., 2011). In addition, Vito et al. (2011, p. 152) noted that the study results

indicate that in US police agencies there is a relatively high tolerance for official misconduct and a questionable moral climate. Both studies found that the use of excessive force by a police officer was similarly ranked by respondents and was part of the group of offenses considered having an average-to-low degree of gravity (Klockars et al., 2000; Vito et al., 2011). Based on their analysis of data from a large sample of American sworn police officers, Micucci & Gomme (2005) contended that novice officers, highly experienced veterans, and supervisory personnel were more likely than officers with moderate levels of experience to view excessive force as a serious case of police misconduct, worthy of more severe punishment.

In a cross-cultural study that compared the responses offered by police officers from United States, Croatia, and Finland, Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005b) found that theft and bribery were considered by respondents in all three countries as the most serious offenses. In terms of suggested punishments and willingness to report the cases of misconduct identified as the most serious, the author found an inter-country homogeneity of responses. However, there were inter-country differences regarding police officers' attitudes toward cases perceived as minor offenses. For instance, the Croatian officers considered that accepting free meals and services were more serious cases of misconduct than American or Finnish officers did. However, Croatian officers expressed a higher tolerance toward the excessive use of force by a police officer than Finnish or American officers did (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005b). A recent comparison in perceptions of corruption between police officers from Czech Republic and Bosnia Herzegovina found that while in both countries bribery and opportunistic theft were considered the most serious offenses, Bosnian line officers, possibly as a result of their experience with the war in former Yugoslavia, appeared to tolerate the use of excessive force more than their counterparts from the Czech Republic (Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelly, 2008).

At times, police subculture is described as being characterized by isolation, suspicion, cynicism, clannishness, and secrecy (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). Research focusing on the police subculture also showed that police officers appear to be significantly different from the general public in terms of their values. In general, the police appear to be more conservative and they place less emphasis on independence and more on obedience (Pollock, 2011, p. 114). Police culture has certain unwritten norms that all members of the occupation are expected to respect. One of them is the informal prohibition of reporting the observed cases of misconduct. This phenomenon usually called *the code, the code of silence* or *the blue curtain*, as well as the police administration's unwillingness to admit the existence of corruption and the fact that usually corrupt police officers engage in a victimless transaction that also benefits a second party are considered the main obstacles of identifying corruption (Klockars et al., 2000; Klockars et al., 2004; Muir, 1977; Stoddard, 1979).

The methodology proposed by Klockars and his colleagues has the ability to detect the police officers' willingness to report misconduct, to determine the amount of secrecy that exists in a police agency, and to see if this misplaced form of loyalty toward fellow officers is indeed a characteristic of the police culture at

the organizational level. Although based on a review of several studies that examined the extent of the *code of silence* in police organizations, Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelly (2008, p. 445) contended that there is no single police culture or a single code of silence, the authors noted that scholars have documented the presence of the Code in US police agencies and in a relatively large number of police agencies across the world. Consistently, research showed that police officers were usually more likely to report the cases of misconduct they perceived as being serious transgressions and they were more likely to tolerate in silence what they perceived as being minor violations of official rules.

To summarize, studies focusing on police integrity in countries in transition toward democratic policing such as Czech Republic, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Hungary, Poland or Slovenia found that police officers in these countries had (at the personal and organizational level) a higher level of tolerance toward corruption than police officers from countries without a communist past (Haberfeld, 2004; Klockars, Kutnjak Ivkovic & Haberfeld, 2004; Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005; Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2009; Kutnjak Ivkovic, Klockars & Cajner, 2002; Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelly, 2008; Mesko, 2000; Pagon & Lobnikar, 2004). We anticipate that the Romanian police officers will have attitudes toward police misconduct similar to those expressed by serving police officers from countries in transition toward democratic policing and that the Romanian police officers will have a higher level of tolerance toward police deviance than their American counterparts.

DATA AND METHODS

This cross-cultural study examines the Romanian and the American police officers' reactions to hypothetical instances of police corruptions. Data analysis is based on a survey of US police officers ($N = 140$) who attended the Administrative Officer's Course at the Southern Police Institute, University of Louisville in 2008 and on survey data collected in 2010 from a sample of Romanian police officers ($N = 75$) who were pursuing graduate studies or have just completed a Master's degree at the "A. I. Cuza" Police Academy in Bucharest, Romania.

In both surveys, we used the methodology (i.e., the scenarios and the scenario assessment options) developed by Klockars and his colleagues (see Klockars et al., 2000; Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelley, 2008, p. 471–473) to measure the extent of police integrity. The questionnaire contains descriptions of ten hypothetical scenarios. These scenarios (see Appendix) illustrate cases of police corruption (ranging from acceptance of gratuities and holiday gifts to opportunistic thefts and shakedowns) and use of excessive force. Respondents were asked to rank the seriousness of the police misconduct presented in each scenario, using a five-point scale that took values from 1 (not at all serious) to 5 (very serious). In addition, respondents were asked how serious this behavior would be considered by most

police officers in the agency and if the behavior would be regarded as a violation of official policy in the respondent's agency. Respondents were also asked to indicate what disciplinary measures should follow and would follow if an officer who engaged in the presented behavior would be discovered doing so. Respondents could select from a list of six alternatives that ranged from "no disciplinary measure" to "dismissal". A final set of questions asked respondents if they/ most police officers in their agency would report a fellow police officer who engaged in the presented behavior. A five-point scale measured responses and took values from 1 (definitely not) to 5 (definitely yes). Only responses referring to the respondent's own behavior have been analyzed here.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the socio-demographic characteristics for the US and Romanian samples of police officers included in this analysis. Although the subsamples are comparable in terms of gender structure (i.e., male respondents represent approximately 75%), the Romanian group appears to be younger (mean age = 30.0; std. dev. = 5.9) than the US group (mean age = 40.6; std. dev. = 5.4). Romanian police officers in the selected sample appear to have on average a slightly higher level of education than officers in the US subsample. In terms of 'current rank', the subsamples are relatively comparable.

Table 1
Sample structure ($N_{RO} = 75$; $N_{USA} = 140$)

Variable	RO (%)	USA (%)	Variable	RO (%)	USA (%)
Age					
20-25	24.0	.7	Male	76	75
26-30	41.3	2.2	Female	24	25
31-35	20.0	11.5			
36-40	6.7	35.3	Race		
41-45	5.3	33.8	White	100	85.7
46+	2.7	16.5	Other	0	14.3
Education					
High-School		2.9	Present rank		
Some College		26.4	Detective/Agent	9.3	4.3
College grad.	60	61.4	Sergeant	40.0	42.1
Some Grad. Studies	14.7	9.3	Lieutenant	24.0	40.0
MA/MS graduate	25.3	0	Captain	10.7	10.7
			Commander/Colonel	10.7	2.1
			Deputy Commissioner	5.3	.7

PERCEIVED SERIOUSNESS OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

A summative index that combined scores obtained for each subsample for the ten scenarios showed that on average there are no significant differences ($t=.321$; $p = .749$) between the US subsample and the Romanian subsample regarding the overall perceived severity of police misconduct instances included in this survey (e.g. RO subsample: mean = 4.24; std. dev. = .586; US subsample: mean = 4.21, std. dev. = .377). However, when scenarios are rank-ordered (see *Table 2*) for each subsample from the most likely to be tolerated (ranked 1st) to the least likely to be tolerated (ranked 10th) results show a positive, but not significant correlation (Spearman's rho = .60, $p = .067$) between the USA&RO scores.

Table 2
Perceived seriousness of police misconduct

Scenarios	RO mean (rank)	USA mean (rank)	t-test
S1 – off duty security system business	3.93 (4)	1.98 (1)	10.120***
S2 – free meals, discounts on beat	4.37 (7)	3.56 (2)	5.095***
S3 – bribe from speeding motorist	4.92 (10)	4.96 (8)	-.728
S4 – holiday gifts from merchants	3.44 (1)	3.64 (3)	-1.034
S5 – crime scene theft of watch	4.88 (9)	5.00 (10)	-2.404*
S6 – auto repair shop 5% kickback	4.27 (5)	4.83 (7)	-4.306***
S7 – supervisor trades days off for car tune-up	4.33 (6)	4.61 (5)	-2.581**
S8 – cover-up of police DUI & accident	3.92 (3)	3.90 (4)	.121
S9 – excessive force on car thief	3.56 (2)	4.66 (6)	-6.211***
S10 – theft from found wallet	4.76 (8)	4.99 (9)	-2.961**

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Note: Scenarios ranked from 1 (least serious case of misconduct) to 10 (most serious case of misconduct) in each sample.

Although based on the previously reported overall means for the gravity of the behavior it can be concluded that both groups tend to consider the examples of police misbehavior as being, in general, serious and very serious, there are some differences in ranking and perceptions of misconduct when subsamples are compared. For instance, significant inter-group differences (see *Table 2*) in perceptions regarding the seriousness of police misconduct are registered for seven scenarios out of ten.

While American police officers consider that owning an off duty security system business is the least serious (mean = 1.98) case of police misconduct, the Romanian police officers believe that receiving holiday gifts from local merchants is the least serious (mean = 3.44) case of police misconduct.

Whereas American officers rank 'excessive police force on an apprehended car thief' as the 9th most serious case of misconduct (mean = 4.99), Romanians

consider this example of police misconduct as being the second least serious (mean = 3.56).

Romanians tend to consider that a police officer who has an off-duty security business system and one who receives free meals and other presents from business owners in his/her jurisdiction represent examples of more serious police transgressions than American police officers do. Compared to US police officers, Romanians have significantly lower average scores when ranking the seriousness of five cases of police misconduct (i.e., use of excessive force on car thief; auto repair shop 5% kickback; theft from found wallet; supervisor trades days off for car tune-up; and, crime scene theft of watch). Although Romanian officers tend to have slightly lower average scores, officers in both subsamples rank the same three scenarios as being the most serious examples of police misconduct (S3 – taking a bribe from a speeding motorist; S5 – crime scene theft of a watch by a police officer; and, S10 – theft from a found wallet).

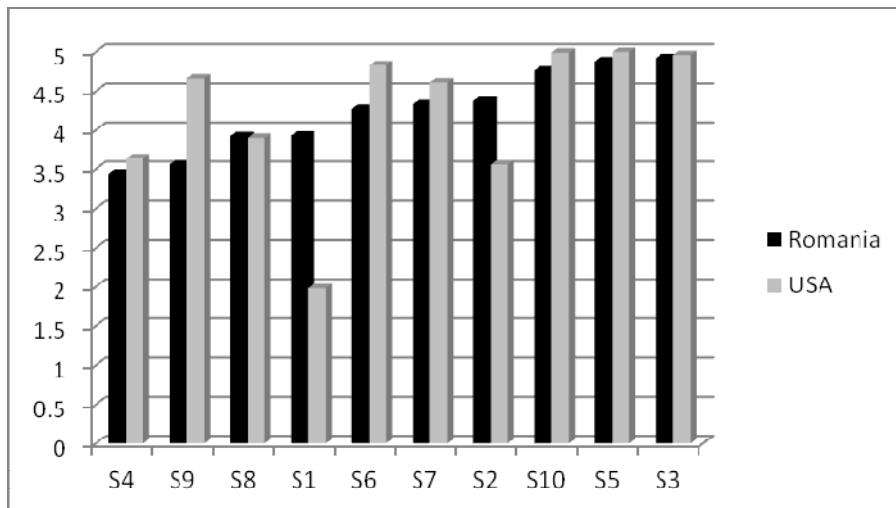


Figure 1 – Ranking of police misconduct in RO (N=75) & USA (N=140) samples.

Note: Ordering based on Romanian officers' ranking of the seriousness of police misconduct:
(1st) S4-Holidays gifts from merchants; (2nd) S9 – Excessive force on car thief; (3rd) S8 – Cover-up of police DUI & accident; (4th) S1- Off duty security system business; (5th) S6 – Auto repair shop 5% kickback; (6th) S7- Supervisor: holiday for car tune-up; (7th) S2 – Free meals & discounts; (8th) S10 – Theft from found wallet; (9th) S5 – Crime scene theft of watch; (10th) S3 – Bribe for speeding motorist.

Figure 1 also shows the inter-group comparison of sample means for perceived seriousness of police misconduct. In order to better observe the similarities and differences in police officers' perceptions, results are presented in ascending order (from the least serious to the most serious case of police misconduct), based on Romanian officers' ranking.

SUGGESTED DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR POLICE MISCONDUCT

In both subsamples the officers' selection of disciplinary measures (*Table 3*) they consider appropriate responses to police misconduct is highly related to their perceptions of misconduct seriousness. A within-country examination of the relationship between scenario ranking based on seriousness of police misconduct and the severity of the suggested disciplinary measure show significant and strong positive correlations in both countries (i.e., for Romanian subsample Spearman's rho = .891, p= .001; for US subsample Spearman's rho = .987, p = .000). While in both countries the examples of misconduct for which '*dismissal*' is the most frequent disciplinary measure considered appropriate are the same (Scenarios #3, #5, #6, and #10), it can be observed that the Romanians' tolerance toward these particular cases of misconduct appears to be higher. Specifically, the disciplinary measures recommended by Romanian police officers are, on average, less severe than those suggested by the American police officers, particularly for scenarios #6 and #10.

Table 3
Suggested disciplinary measures for police misconduct

Scenarios	RO <i>Modal ctg. (%)</i>	USA <i>Modal ctg. (%)</i>	RO <i>Mean</i>	USA <i>Mean</i>
S1 – off duty security system business	Written rep. (52%)	None (75%)	3.35	1.47
S2 – free meals, discounts on beat	Written rep.(32%)	Written rep. (37.2%)	3.64	2.28
S3 – bribe from speeding motorist	Dismissal (69.3%)	Dismissal (72.7%)	5.37	5.45
S4 – holiday gifts from merchants	None (28%)	Written rep. (33.6%)	2.81	2.89
S5 – crime scene theft of watch	Dismissal (74.7%)	Dismissal (97.1%)	5.45	5.94
S6 – auto repair shop 5% kickback	Dismissal (26.7%)	Dismissal (61.5%)	4.12	5.21
S7 – supervisor: holidays for tune-up	Written rep. (38.7%)	Unpaid leave (31.1%)	3.27	3.93
S8 – cover-up of police DUI & accident	Written rep. (41.3%)	Unpaid leave (42.3%)	3.31	3.34
S9 – excessive force on car thief	Written rep. (42.7%)	Unpaid leave (53.3%)	3.03	4.43
S10 – theft from found wallet	Dismissal (38.7%)	Dismissal (89.2%)	4.59	5.78

Note: Possible disciplinary measures are 1 (none), 2 (verbal reprimand), 3 (written reprimand), 4 (unpaid leave), 5 (demotion in rank), 6 (dismissal).

In sum, for eight out of ten scenarios, US police officers recommend on average more severe sanctions than their Romanian counterparts do. '*Written reprimand*' appears to be considered the most appropriate sanction among Romanian police officers for half of the instances of police misconduct included in this analysis. Whereas '*unpaid leave*' is never a common recommended sanction among Romanian police officers, most US officers consider that a period of suspension without pay would be the appropriate disciplinary action for three cases of misconduct.

However, while 75% of the American police officers consider that no disciplinary measure should be taken against a police officer who operates an off-duty security system business, the majority of the interviewed Romanian officers

considered that a ‘written reprimand’ would be the appropriate response to this activity. Romanians also believe that accepting free meals and discounts from business owners should be more severely sanctioned than US officers do. It should be noted that in both subsamples, ‘demotion in rank’ is the only sanction that does not appear as a modal disciplinary measure for any case of misconduct.

THE CODE OF SILENCE: POLICE OFFICERS’ UNWILLINGNESS TO REPORT MISCONDUCT

In both countries the officers’ unwillingness to report misconduct is highly related to the perceived seriousness of the transgression as portrayed in the included scenarios (Spearman’s rho for RO = .839, p = .002; Spearman’s rho for USA = .963, p = .000). In other words, with an increase in the perceived seriousness of the misconduct, the likelihood of reporting also increases. Except the officers’ reaction to Scenario #1 (off-duty security business system), the percentage of officers unwilling to report misconduct is systematically higher in the Romanian subsample than in the American subsample. Based on Chi-square and Phi values (*Table 3*), it can be observed that inter-group differences in reporting are significant at p<.000 for eight out of ten scenarios.

Table 4
Percentage of officers unwilling to report transgressions

Scenarios	RO (Scenario rank)	USA (Scenario rank)	Chi-Square (Phi)
S1 – off duty security system business	45.3% (3)	74.3% (1)	17.80*** (.288)
S2 – free meals, discounts on beat	45.3% (3)	35.7% (2)	1.89 (.094)
S3 – bribe from speeding motorist	26.7% (7)	0% (8)	41.16*** (.438)
S4 – holiday gifts from merchants	54.7% (2)	25.7% (4)	17.80*** (.288)
S5 – crime scene theft of watch	12.0% (9)	0% (8)	17.53*** (.286)
S6 – auto repair shop 5% kickback	28.0% (6)	1.4% (7)	36.09*** (.410)
S7 – supervisor trades days off for car tune-up	32.0% (5)	3.6% (6)	33.82*** (.397)
S8 – cover-up of police DUI & accident	37.3% (4)	31.4% (3)	.764 (.060)
S9 – excessive force on car thief	57.3% (1)	6.4% (5)	69.02*** (.567)
S10 – theft from found wallet	21.3% (8)	0% (8)	32.27*** (.387)

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Note: Scenarios are ranked in ascending order based on the respondents’ willingness to report misconduct to their superiors. The lowest ranking is associated with the highest percentage of officers not reporting and the highest ranking is associated with the lowest percentage of officers not reporting.

For seven out of ten scenarios the percentage of Romanian officers unwilling to report misconduct is higher than the proportion of American officers who would remain silent about the observed transgression. The largest inter-group difference refers to police attitudes regarding police brutality. While the majority of Romanian police officers (57.3%) are less likely to report excessive force used by a fellow officer on an arrested offender, only 6.4% of American respondents share the same attitude. While no American officers are unwilling to report a case of bribery, more than a quarter of Romanian officers (27%) declared that they would not report the transgression. One example of opportunistic theft is the case of misconduct Romanian officers are least likely to cover for (i.e., only 12% of the Romanian officers would not report the theft of a watch from a crime scene). At least one in five Romanian officers would not report the other nine cases of misconduct included in Klockars's scale. While the majority of US officers (74%) would not report a fellow officer for operating an off-duty security system business, there are no American officers in this study saying that they would not report the transgression described in scenarios #3, #5, and #10 (bribe received from speeding motorist; crime scene theft of watch; and, theft from a found wallet).

Figure 2 presents the ordering of scenarios based on the percentage of the Romanian officers who declared that they would not report to their superiors the cases of misconduct if they would become aware of them. This graphic presentation provides a comparison of the two groups regarding the extent of the code of silence.

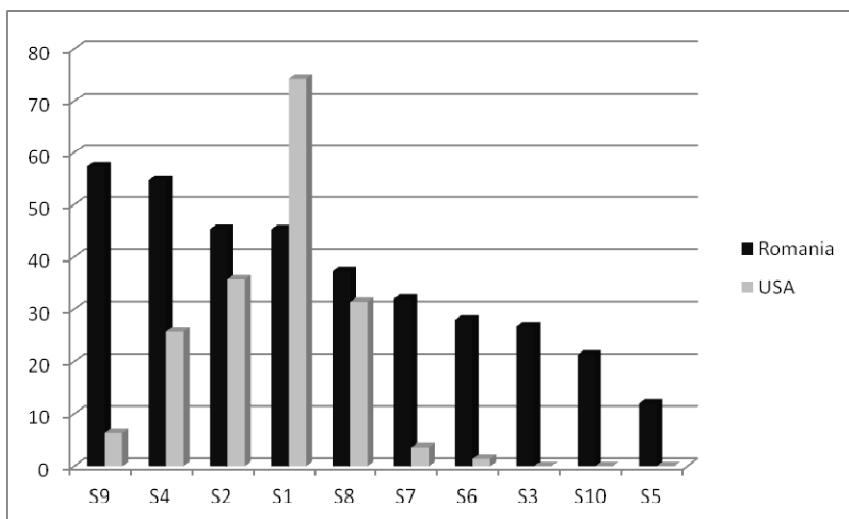


Figure 2 – Percentage of officers unwilling to report misconduct by country.

Note: The scenarios are ordered based on the percentage of Romanian officers unwilling to report the observed cases of misconduct. S9 – Excessive force on car thief; S4 – Holidays gifts from merchants; S2 – Free meals & discounts; S1- Off duty security system business; S8 – Cover-up of police DUI & accident; S7 – Supervisor: holiday for car tune-up; S6 – Auto repair shop 5% kickback; S3 – Bribe for speeding motorist; S10 – Theft from found wallet; S5 – Crime scene theft of watch.

CONCLUSION

An important objective of this exploratory cross-cultural study was to determine if there are significant differences in attitudes toward police misbehavior when Romanian and American police officers' responses are compared. Results show that, on average, the Romanian and the American police officers have very similar views regarding the overall seriousness of the transgressions included in Klockars's scale. Consistent with previous studies (Klockars et al., 2000; Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005b; Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelley, 2008), in both samples respondents identify the same three offenses (i.e., two cases of opportunistic theft and bribery) as the most serious cases of misconduct and there is a positive correlation between the assessed severity of a case and one's willingness to report it. In addition, in both samples, most respondents believe that the appropriate disciplinary measure for the three major cases of misconduct is 'dismissal'.

Yet, despite these similarities there are several inter-group differences in attitudes and perceptions. Compared to Romanian officers, in 50% of the cases, the US officers perceive the cases included in Klockars's scale as being significantly more serious than Romanian officers do. In 80% of the cases American officers tend to favor more severe disciplinary actions and even if in both groups the modal category of punishment for the major cases of misconduct is 'dismissal', the proportion of US officers who support the most severe penalty is always higher than the percentage of Romanian officers having the same opinion. American officers are also less willing to remain silent when aware of a colleague's transgression. For instance, at least one in five Romanian officers (i.e., 21% or more) would not report nine of the ten cases of misconduct presented in this study, while there are only four cases of misconduct a comparable proportion of American officers (i.e., 26% or more) would not report to superiors.

American officers rank the scenario describing a police officer who operates an off-duty security system business as the least serious case of misconduct, with an average value for the seriousness of the transgression significantly lower than the value obtained from the Romanian sample. However, almost half of the Romanians (45%) would not report a colleague who operates an off-duty security system business. Even if approximately three quarters of American respondents (74%) would keep silent in this case, it should be noted that the Romanian legislation prohibits police officers to own and operate private businesses, while in United States this is not illegal. Yet, internal regulations in some US agencies might consider inappropriate for a police officer to own and operate a security system business. Consistent with results from other cross-cultural studies (see Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005b) and similar to attitudes expressed by police officers from Croatia for instance, Romanian officers consider that accepting free meals and discounts on beat is a more serious transgression than American officers in this

study do. However, more Romanians (45%) than Americans (36%) would not report this case of misconduct.

Among the scenarios in which Romanian showed a greater willingness to tolerate misconduct and one of the scenarios with the largest inter-group difference in opinions involves the use of excessive force by police officers. Similar to responses collected from police officers in other Eastern European countries (see Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005b; Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelley, 2008), the Romanian police officers consider that the example of police brutality included in Klockars's scale represents a minor transgression, the scenario being ranked as the second least serious case of misconduct. Compared to Romanians, the average value for the seriousness of the offense is significantly higher for American respondents in this sample and similar to results obtained in previous studies of police integrity conducted in United States (see Klockars et al., 2000; Vito et al., 2011). Also similar to previous analyses (see Klockars et al., 2000), the most common disciplinary measure recommended by American police officers for the excessive use of force is 'suspension without pay', while most Romanian officers (43%) consider that 'written reprimand' would be the appropriate punishment. Additionally, the majority of Romanian respondents (57%) declared that they would not report to superiors a colleague who acted violently toward an arrestee, while only 6% of the American officers expressed the same attitude. It should be noted that the percentage of Romanian officers unwilling to report this case of police misconduct is higher than the proportion of police officers from other Eastern European countries such as Czech Republic (37% unwilling to report) or Bosnia Herzegovina (46% unwilling to report) where similar studies on police integrity were conducted (Kutnjak Ivkovic&Shelley, 2008, p. 455). Even if civilianization is a significant feature of the new profile of the Romanian police, until recently recruitment and training focused on preparation for fight against criminals and were based on a military model (see Sarre&Prenzler, 2005, p. 229–230) that might explain the Romanian officers' higher level of tolerance toward excessive use of force by police. In addition, reminiscences of former communist *militia*, known for its brutality toward those perceived as law-breakers might still influence the culture of the contemporary Romanian police.

It should be noted that all Romanian police officers have the obligation to respect the rules and regulations stipulated in the Romanian Police Officer's *Code of Ethics and Deontology*. Regarding the use of force by police, Article 9 of the code states that police should use excessive force only in extreme situations, in response to serious threats or physical violence directed at them or other persons. The code also stipulates that the police officer should always show respect for the human dignity when making use of force in the execution of the police duties. In addition, the code of ethics acknowledges that a police officer has to show integrity (i.e., to behave in accordance with the ethical norms accepted and practiced in society) and has to demonstrate loyalty toward the police and its institutional

values. Article 19 of the code specifies that a police officer is not allowed to tolerate corruption and to abuse the public authority the police are invested with. The code also forbids a police officer to demand or accept money or other material gains as a compensation for fulfilling his/her professional duties. According to the code, a police officer should take action against any internal institutional corruption, having the obligation to inform his/her superiors and other specialized units about any act of corruption the officer becomes aware of (Guvernul României, 2005). Despite the fact that all Romanian police officers are required to respect these regulations and even if a potential for unethical behavior was detected in both groups under study, results indicate that Romanian police officers appear to have a higher level of tolerance toward unethical behavior and also share a more homogenous and a more extensive code of silence than American officers do.

Although a limitation of this research was that it made use of relatively small convenience samples that do not allow for the generalization of results, it should be observed that the Romanian participants to this study are part of the new generation of police (e.g., on average, Romanian respondents were 30 years old), they are highly educated, and many of them already are or will become police managers. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that these respondents have higher ethical standards than the average Romanian police officer. Due to the fact that this preliminary study was a quantitative analysis of relatively limited data that did not include information regarding the respondents' motivation for certain attitudes and beliefs, further research is needed. Future studies conducted on probability samples could combine quantitative and qualitative strategies that may provide an in-depth understanding of the organizational culture of police. Nevertheless, the present study provided preliminary results that can serve as a basis for comparison and also exemplified how an investigative validated tool (i.e., the Klockars scale) can be used by executives in local police agencies to measure the employees' potential for unethical behavior and also to detect any changes in police integrity at the organizational level.

Reiterating the recommendations included in the 1994 Mollen Commission report⁵, Palmiotto (2005, p. 291–292) contended that incidents of corruption could be curtailed if the following measures would be implemented: periodic organization of required in-service integrity workshops for all officers throughout their careers and special integrity workshops for supervisors; an increase in the number of hours devoted to integrity training at the Police Academy, with special integrity training focusing on issues of police brutality and civil rights violations; Police Academy and in-service integrity training should focus on deterrence, should try to solve real-life corruption problems, and the training should include: real evidence of corruption (e.g., tape and video recordings, material evidence

⁵ The 1994 report of the commission (chaired by Milton Mollen) that investigated allegations of police corruption and the anti-corruption procedures in the NY police department is available at: http://www.parc.info/client_files/Special%20Reports/4%20-%20Mollen%20Commission%20-%20NYPD.pdf.

gathered in internal investigations), personal (recorded) presentations by former police officers found guilty of corruption, instruction on real-life profiles of both corrupt and honest police officers; integrity instructors should be selected to teach based on their teaching abilities and reputation in the Department; in order to expose recruits to non-police view points and minimize inbred group acculturation, civilian faculty should be also used to teach at the Police Academy classes as law, social sciences, and ethics; regular focus groups should be organized in police departments to monitor attitudes and perceptions regarding corruption and brutality; organization of a recruit mentor program that would allow recruits and new officers access to experienced, honest, and respected officers.

While police departments and Police Academies in any country could benefit from the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations, the results of the present study suggest that the Romanian Police and the national Police Academy in particular might benefit even more by applying these strategies to deter potential unethical behavior and also minimize misconduct. Compared to American Police, Romanian Police is still at the beginning of democratic policing. The Romanian National Police changed its status from military to civil only a decade ago and the new generation of Romanian police officers will need specialized training in police integrity and extensive exposure to modern policing to be able to change some mentalities and behavior evocative of communist *militia* and assimilate the ethical standards required by policing in contemporary developed societies.

In a 2007 USAID report on police integrity and anticorruption strategies it was noted that democratic policing implies the implementation within the police of reform strategies that emphasize accountability, transparency, and professional practices (e.g., well-defined job descriptions, introduction of performance indicators, usage of merit-based systems for assignment and promotion). Good democratic policing practices, such as improving standards, selection, training, and salaries, can contribute not only to better conditions of service and higher professionalism, but also to the police morale (USAID, 2007, p. 13). As one scholar recently acknowledged, given the inherent coercive nature of police work and the moral risk it poses for its workers, a commitment to ethical conduct is a must because "whatever justice is applied in a free society begins and sometimes ends with the first decision makers – the police" (Barker, 2011, p. 10).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research conducted in Romania that was used in this paper was supported by an Intramural Research Incentive Grant (IRIG program # 50566) from the University of Louisville. The first two authors of this paper were the co-principal investigators of the study "Organizational Culture and Police Integrity in Romania" that has been carried out in partnership with the "A. I. Cuza" Police

Academy/Department of Graduate Studies & Psycho-pedagogical Training. This research project as well as the study conducted by the third author at the Southern Police Institute received authorization from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Louisville, USA.

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APPENDIX***Case Scenarios⁶***

1. A police officer runs his own private business in which he sells and installs security devices, such as alarms, special lock. etc. He does this work during his off-duty hours.
2. A police officer routinely accepts free meals, cigarettes, and other items of small value from merchants on his beat. He does not solicit these gifts and is careful not to abuse the generosity of those who give gifts to him.
3. A police officer stops a motorist for speeding. The officer agrees to accept a personal gift of half of the amount of the fine in exchange for not issuing a citation.
4. A police officer is widely liked in his community, and on holidays local merchants and restaurant and bar owners show their appreciation for his attention by giving him gifts of food and liquor.
5. A police officer discovers a burglary in a jewelry shop. The display cases are smashed and it is obvious that many items have been taken. While searching the shop, he takes a watch, worth about two days' pay for that officer. He reports that the watch had been stolen during the burglary.
6. 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 payment of 5% of the repair bill from the shop owner.
7. A police officer, who happens to be a very good automechanic, is scheduled to work during coming holidays. A supervisor offers to give him these days off, if he agrees to tune up his supervisor's personal car. Evaluate the supervisor's behavior.
8. At 2:00 a.m., 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.
9. Two police officers on foot patrol surprise a man who is attempting to break into an automobile. The man flees. They chase him for about two blocks before apprehending him by tackling him and wrestling him to the ground. After he is under control, both officers punch him a couple of times in the stomach as punishment for fleeing and resisting.
10. A police officer finds a wallet in a parking lot. It contains an amount of money equivalent to a full day's pay for that officer. He reports the wallet as lost property but keeps the money for himself.

⁶ Source: Kutnjak Ivkovic & Shelley, 2008, p. 471–472.

