Ethical Decision Making: The Micro and Macro Level Evaluation of Police Subculture through Subculture Theory and Social Learning Theory

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A Research Paper Submitted to the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Middle Georgia State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC SAFETY

Macon, Georgia

December 2025

Abstract

The need for a higher level of professionalism has become more important due to the increased use of video recordings and social media. This level of scrutiny is not necessarily a bad thing. Due to the scrutiny, police departments have implemented policy and program initiatives to enhance their agency's culture, prioritize community policing models, establish and enforce a code of ethics, and integrate professional ideals into their day-to-day operations (Thompson & Payne, 2019). This paper will evaluate data taken from a RAND Corporation study, which evaluated a pilot project in the Knoxville, Broward, and Kettering Police Departments. Their study developed performance measures based upon the officer-reported data, officer-reported misconduct data, and community contact data (Davis et al., 2013). Based upon this data, this paper will explore two areas of conduct: accepting gifts and excessive force. Based upon these two areas of conduct, this paper will evaluate the macro-level influence of Subculture Theory, and the micro-level influence of Social Learning Theory based upon the combination of all three police departments data.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Since the civil rights era, police officers have been under constant scrutiny from the public, both in and out of uniform, and thus need to make sure they maintain a higher level of professionalism, integrity, and ethical principles. The need for professionalism is vital due to the increased use of video recordings and social media. Since police officers have the capability of taking away an individual's Fourth Amendment rights, an appropriate level of scrutiny holds officers accountable for their actions. In response to this accountability, police departments have implemented policy and program initiatives to improve their agency's culture, prioritize community policing models, implement and enforce a code of ethics, and incorporate professional ideals into their day-to-day operations (Thompson & Payne, 2019).

With the increase in awareness of police misconduct, this paper will assist in understanding police department subculture, the relationship between officers, immediate supervisors, command staff, and agency, and how that relationship potentially influences individual officers' integrity, ethics, and morals. This paper will accomplish this task by evaluating the secondary data taken from the RAND corporation study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, which created a uniform performance measure for officers in the Knoxville, Broward, and Kettering Police Departments. This pilot study developed performance measures based upon the officer-reported data, officer-reported misconduct data, and community contact data (Davis et al., 2013). Based upon this data, this paper will explore two areas of conduct: accepting gifts and excessive force, in conjunction with officers' perceptions of their supervisor, command staff, agency, and autonomy. This paper will utilize a logistic regression and Firth logistic regression (to account for the quasi-complete separation found in the data) to

evaluate the macro-level influence of Subculture Theory, and the micro-level influence of Social Learning Theory based upon the combination of all three police departments data.

Background and Context

Research into police subculture is not a new field of study. Ethnographic work from the 60's and 70's documented subculture characteristics, which were reinforced through quantitative research in the early 2000s (Wilson, 1968; Westley, 1970; Skolnick, 1994; Crank, 2014). Researchers have been interested in how subculture is formed, in addition to the impact of subcultures on officers' actions. With a large push for better cooperation with the public, police departments are implementing duty to intervene policies and programs, increasing ethics and professionalism training, and evaluating cultural norms and attitudes to better understand the strength and impact of a subculture on the police department (Wolfe et. al., 2024). Additionally, researchers have evaluated the formation of the "warrior" (crime fighting and officer safety) and "guardian" (community engagement) mindsets (Balko, 2021). While most agencies have started to adopt some version of the community policing model and thus adopting more of a "guardian" mindset, the mentorship model has not changed within policing culture.

This mentorship model originates in the police academy. While in the academy, Peace Officers Standard Training Counsel (POST) certified instructors teach recruits not just the approved POST material, but also overall arching themes of police subculture such as the crime fighter image, unified 'us versus them' mentality, discretion, and 'code of silence' (McDonald, 2015; Reiner, 2016; Ganapathy & Cheong, 2016, p.326; Thompson & Payne, 2019; Wolfe et al., 2024). After the academy, rookie officers are assigned to field training officers. Field training officers are tasked with teaching department procedures, how to handle calls for service, and other cultural norms within the police department. While individual agencies' subcultures vary

from department to department, the overall themes are the same. Ingram et al. (2013) found that the police subculture starts out in small workgroups, which then shape the agency. This means that while strong integrity, morals, ethics, and professionalism are prerequisites for officers, officers are influenced by the already established police department's culture and the culture of their assigned shift (Ingram et al, 2013). They learn this culture from their supervisors, command staff, and fellow officers' behaviors, which in turn shape their own perception of morals, ethics, and professionalism.

This impartation of knowledge from supervisor to officer, reinforcement through the shift, the agency, and the outside community/political environment parallels the structure of Social Learning Theory on the microlevel, and Subculture Theory on the macrolevel. Because Ingram et al. (2018) found that there was an association between subculture and use of force/complaint-related outcomes, this paper takes this idea, utilizes the RAND corporation pilot program data, and proposes that police officer behavior is influenced by both theoretical lenses instead of just one. To better understand how Subculture Theory and Social Learning Theory are applicable to this research, we will first conduct a preliminary review of both criminological/sociological theories.

Chapter II: Theoretical Lenses

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Subculture Theory

Subculture theory was theorized by Albert Cohen (1955) to explain how a group of individuals was unable to achieve an external expectation. Cohen (1955) conducted a qualitative study evaluating why individuals commit crimes, with a focus on delinquent boys. He found that these delinquent boys came from working-class families that had similar goals of success. However, there was some type of failure in their life (educational, employment prospects, etc.) that prevented them from achieving the American Dream (Cohen, 1955). Thus, this status frustration led them down a path of committing a crime as an alternative means to success. Through this alternative path, the juveniles created a subculture that valued stealing, vandalism, and truancy. When evaluating this subculture, Cohen (1955) found that there was prestige among the peer group for those who were more successful in meeting the values of the subculture.

Just like in Cohen's study, police subculture is influenced by the community that the department serves, and if negatively formed, creates a united front such as "thin blue line", and "us versus them" mentality (Manning, 1995; Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Shjarback, Nix, & Wolfe, 2018). Police subculture involves the norms, values, and expectations that have been set by officers to deal with the strains of the job (Paoline et al., 2000; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Reiner, 2016; Ganapathy & Cheong, 2016). These norms, values, and expectations dictate how officers interact with the public, other law enforcement officers, and act within their department (Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003). In general, police subculture is similar across the industry, but each department also has specific

social norms that they adhere to (Chan, 1997; Chan, Devery, & Doran, 2003). These social norms explicitly define the acceptable level of work ethic, officer/citizen interaction, conformity to the standard operating procedure, and cynicism towards the criminal justice system and other criminal justice professionals (Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Karp & Stenmark, 2011).

Terrill, Paoline, & Manning (2003) summarized police subculture as the combination of the occupational environment (interactions with the public) and the organizational environment (the interaction between supervisors and officers within the department), which best incorporates the police subculture definition mentioned previously. Within Terrill, Paoline & Manning's (2003) study, they evaluated police culture and acts of coercion. They found that officers fell into three buckets: pro-culture group, con-culture group, and mid-range culture group (Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003). In the pro-culture group, officers had a negative attitude towards citizens, a negative attitude towards supervisors, and an aggressive/crime-fighting attitude. In the con-culture group, they found that officers had a positive attitude towards officers, a positive attitude (to a lesser extent) towards supervisors, and a non-aggressive/community policing attitude. Finally, the mid-range culture group had a mix of the pro-culture and con-culture groups, with a selective approach to aggressive crime fighting (Terrill, Paoline, & Manning, 2003). The next section analyzes how the occupational environment and organizational environment impact police subculture.

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory is a theory that was devised by Albert Bandura and published in 1977. Bandura evaluated how individuals cognitively learn behaviors from others, and broke it down into four steps: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977). The first step, attention, is the act in which a particular behavior is noticed (Bandura, 1977). After the

behavior has grabbed our attention, one must remember how the behavior was displayed, which is the retention step (Bandura, 1977). The third step is reproduction or mimicking the behavior that one noticed and remembered. Finally, the fourth step, motivation, is the human agency component or the "will" to perform it (Bandura, 1977). For these four steps to occur, Bandura mentions how everyone goes through the decision-making process to mirror behavior. This is especially important, for just because a behavior is observed and remembered, it is the decision-making process within motivation that completes the cycle of learning. Social Learning Theory is studied at all developmental stages of life. Alkan et al. (2023) observed how preschool children learn hygiene, which was mirrored through pictures, verbal instruction, and implementation. They found that preschool children were able to perform the observed hygiene activities (handwashing and toothbrushing) after exposure to the desired behavior through the multimodal model (Alkan et al., 2023).

In policing, while officers are required to already have strong integrity, morals, and ethics, officers are influenced by the already established police department's culture. They learn this culture from their supervisors, command staff, and fellow officers' behaviors. These norms are passed along between supervisors and peers (White, 2000). While each officer adheres to the subculture in varying degrees, no officer is immune to it. With the increase in awareness of police misconduct, Social Learning Theory allows us to evaluate the internal workings of police subculture, the relationship between officers, command staff, and agency, and how that relationship potentially influences individual officers' integrity, ethics, and morals. Research in the field has shown that these norms and beliefs are cognitively burned in, which often impedes any further development in improving or changing established habits or ideas (Reiner, 2016). Reiner (2016) found that police subculture is changed at the rank-and-file, and therefore, the

"structural sources" are the way to reduce the negative behaviors of a police subculture. As Chong et al. (2017) noted, this cultural impediment is problematic, for "culture can determine whether or not the organization is able to survive under changing conditions" (p.975).

Microlevel versus Macrolevel Evaluation

Based upon this review, the best outlook to evaluate police subculture is by developing a conjoined theoretical lens like Convergence Theory described in Ralston et al (2025). This means that it takes a combination of both Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory to explain how police subculture is formed. Based upon the literature, the cognitive process outlined in Social Learning Theory better reflects the interactions between officers at the shift level. This means that the day-to-day operations are controlled by the learned behaviors from officers' immediate supervisors, field training officers, and other officers on the same shift. This microlevel perception indicates that an officer's interaction with the immediate shift can be positive or negative. If the relationship is positive, there should be a statistically significant positive relationship between the values exhibited by the reported officer and the responses of the agency. However, if the relationship is negative, there should be a statistically significant negative relationship between the values of the reported officer and the responses of the agency. This negative relationship is often reflected in officer behavior, particularly occupational stress. This means that the officer will either conform to the subculture or reject the subculture and leave the police department. Thus, Social Learning Theory indicates that subculture is learned and reinforced by the individual actors affected by the subculture.

Regarding the macro-level perspective, Cohen's theory is much more macro-level based, where it is the agency versus the individual. In this case, the agency has set expectations for police officer behavior. From this perspective, Subculture Theory is the overarching combination

of individual units. These combinations drive what is acceptable versus unacceptable behavior. Within this research study, if individuals align with the subculture of the police department, there should be a statistically significant positive relationship between the agency and the command staff. If there is a disconnect between the individual units and the agency, there should be a statistically significant negative relationship between the individual and the agency and the command staff. The key factor for this evaluation is evaluating the relationship of the supervisor's coefficient along with the above-mentioned analysis, because that determines if this microlevel/macrolevel evaluation is applicable. See Appendix A for a visual representation of the hypothesized combination of Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory.

Other research has provided a similar analysis of this micro/macro-level perspective. In Ralston et al. (2025), the researchers hypothesized that in business, there were two major forces that influenced an employee's behavior. The researchers indicated that this behavior was influenced by a sociocultural influence or the "social role divided between… values and behaviors" (this paper labels as social learning theory) and the business-ideology influence, or "a manifestation of which is the global-business-subculture effect" (this paper labels it as subculture theory) (Ralston et al., 2025, p.280). Ralston et al. (2025) found that business-ideological influence had a stronger effect on businesspeople than sociocultural influence. However, there were some key differences by gender that were noted based on sociocultural influence. For example, women were less likely to support maliciously intended behavior compared to men. This demonstrates that sociocultural influence may be present, but the effect of the business culture on actors is more significant (Ralston et al., 2025).

Chapter III: Literature Review

Effect of Police Subculture on Minorities: Examining Occupational Environment

The neighborhood/community in which a department resides often influences the citizens' response to police, cooperation, and fear of retaliation (Shjarback, Nix & Wolfe, 2018). The literature describes three main avenues for how racial profiling occurs: prejudice, cognitive bias, and race-based deployment, and extends into excessive force and unreasonable stop and frisks (Alpert, Dunham & Smith, 2007; Shjarback, Nix & Wolfe, 2018; Ridgeway, 2017; Milner, George & Allison, 2016). While profiling is often considered part of a police officer's job, there is inherent concern about utilizing race, which can lead to prejudice and discrimination (Satzewich & Shaffir, 2009). While on the surface, race and gender can be essential descriptors in determining the suspect, research has shown that there is an unequal investigation rate across races (Bjerk, 2007). While there is an equilibrium across all races to commit crime, if an unequal investigation rate exists, this creates a perception that a specific race is more crime-prone, and is now subject to over policing (Bjerk, 2007). Even with the implementation of a colorblind policy within a police department, Bjerk (2007) found that racial profiling and unequal investigation rates still occurred. DeGue, Fowler & Calkins (2016) saw similar results within the National Violent Death Reporting System. They found that black people were 2.8 times more likely to be killed than white individuals. When there are incidents of discriminatory treatment by law enforcement, this reinforces these negative attitudes by police and negative perceptions by the community (Milner, George & Allison, 2016).

While community-oriented policing has been one mode to break the cycle, it is harder for traditional police departments to initiate if the culture is rooted in negative stereotypes and

mistrust. If a police department has a negative perception of the community it serves, use of force rates, racial profiling, and discrimination against minorities are prominent (Bjerk, 2007; Chan, 2011). While race is just one example of stereotyping, gender can be negatively perceived by police officers and the community.

Influence of Gender in Occupational Environment

Salerno & Sanchez (2020) conducted a study to evaluate the citizens' perception of use of force situations when the officer was male versus female. Research suggests that women are not typically perceived to be as aggressive or dominant as men; therefore, citizens and other police officers may carry preconceived gender biases about job effectiveness (Salerno & Sanchez, 2020). They found that female participants trusted female officers more than male officers, and male participants trusted females and males at similar rates. Additionally, the main effect indicated that white participants trusted officers at higher rates than non-white participants. In the video where the officer did not use force, participants thought that the police officer was more effective at their job than those who did use force. When the officer used force, participants thought that male officers were driven by an internal force, not the situation (Salerno & Sanchez, 2020). The researchers found that for female officers, participants believed they were more effective at their job regardless of the use of force, and race was not a significant factor. The legality of the use of force contributes to police subculture through how and when an officer can use force. That decision-making is based upon the norms of the job. The problem with this component is that when norms and expectations of using force are influenced by biases, then it creates problems. The communities that police officers patrol may have biases like police officers' biases.

Effect of Subculture on Officers: Examining the Organizational Environment

Rose & Unnithan (2015) examined the interactions within departments. Within each department, Rose & Unnithan (2015) articulated that there are in-groups and out-groups. Depending upon where an officer falls within in-groups and out-groups of their department, can influence their overall stress level, which reduces their receptiveness towards the department subculture. Rose & Unnithan (2015) conducted a study to test group status on stress levels. Utilizing a two-model linear regression, with the stress scale as the dependent variable, they found that officers who were in the out-group experienced more stress. Because police subculture is a way to deal with stress and form bonds with like-minded individuals, by not conforming with the subculture, this causes more stress.

Influence of Minorities in the Organizational Environment

This issue is even more prominent for black officers. Dukes (2018) conducted a qualitative study interviewing retired black officers. Within the literature, black officers face this double consciousness where officers have been socialized into the subculture but are still affected by discrimination outside of the uniform (Whetten, Lewis & Mischel, 1992; Foreman & Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Britz, 1997; Whetten, 2002; Dukes, 2018). Duke (2018) found that black officers experienced higher levels of stress when working in predominantly white hierarchical structures, particularly when faced with a racist and chauvinistic workforce. While a more diverse workforce has been shown to promote a more positive subculture, the individual actors involved often face hostility and racism until there is a shift in the culture (Sklansky, 2006).

Influence of Gender in the Organizational Environment

Even before female officers are sworn in, they face many barriers into the career field. These include the physical fitness test, hostility, and lack of acceptance in the department (Bissett, Bissett, & Snell, 2012; Hoehne, 2021). Once female officers enter the profession, they are faced with sexual harassment, hostility, and denied opportunities that prevent females from promotion or desirable positions (Schulz, 2004; Morabito & Shelley, 2018). Much like minorities, women face the double consciousness of being female and being a police officer (Rabe-Hemp, 2009). He, Zhao & Archbold (2002) found that male and female officers experienced different sources of stress from the job. Male officers were more likely to experience work-related stress, whereas female officers experienced more stress stemming from the home life, sexual discrimination, and negative social interactions (Stoland, 1991; He, Zhao, & Archbold, 2002; Hoehne, 2021). Male and female officers also adopt different coping strategies, and female officers experienced higher levels of stress comparatively speaking (He, Zhao & Archbold, 2002). Even though male and female officers experience different stress on the job, r the presence of women on the force has shown an increase in closure rates for sexual assault cases, and a decrease in use of force incidents (Pyo & Lee, 2021). Even in other industries such as business, diversity has shown to positively influence workplace culture and decrease acceptance for unethical behavior (Ralston et al., 2025).

This analysis indicates that double consciousness occurs for both minorities and females when choosing their identity. If the formation of police subculture is based upon learning from one's environment and leadership, social learning contributes to this process (Chong et. al., 2017). If a person is properly socialized within the subculture, they will share similar values and norms and have less occupational stress than those who resist those norms (Rose & Unnithan,

2015; Dick & Metcalfe, 2007). Thus, this analysis is the basis for arguing that the organizational environment of police subculture is rooted in Social Learning Theory, and the occupational environment is influenced by the macrolevel Subculture Theory.

Social Learning Theory and Police Misconduct

Chappell & Piquero (2004) conducted a study to apply social learning theory to police misconduct. They looked at Akers' definition of social learning theory, specifically differential association or "the influence of those with whom one associates frequently" (Chappell & Piquero, 2004). They hypothesized that because officers often spend more time with co-workers than others, they are more likely to adopt the behaviors of their peers (Chappell & Piquero, 2004). They utilized a random sample of police officers in Philadelphia, PA, and surveyed the officers on a number of misconduct issues (Chappell & Piquero, 2004). Further, citizen complaints were pulled to see if there was a relationship between deviant peers and misconduct (Chappell & Piquero, 2004). Utilizing a logistic regression model, they found that officers who thought that excessive force was not considered *Serious*, also had a larger number of citizen complaints (Chappell & Piquero, 2004). Norms are passed down within the organization, from the veteran officers to the new officers, set the standard for what is expected, and establish protocols within the department (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). While police subculture shares many of the same goals and ideals, the nuances of the subculture can differ from department to department. This is known as organizational police subculture.

Based upon this idea, police subculture is based upon social learning, which includes learning from leadership, and the subject's environment (Chong et. al., 2017). Typically, veteran officers are the field training officers and academy trainers, so while an officer is in the academy they are socialized with the standard *one team one aim* mentality, and in the extreme, the *us*

versus them mentality (Wolfe et al., 2024). This *us versus them* mentality is associated with a cognitive distortion, and has led to an increase in community complaints, use of force related conduct, and perceive citizen interactions as greater threats (Wolfe et al., 2024). When new officers begin field training with the department trainer and first line supervisors, they learn the organizational subculture that is unique to each department (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). Within the subculture, internal pressures can influence the positive or negative change within it. Types of internal pressures include shift work, promotions, proper outfitting, training, and fighting for limited resources within the department (Rose & Unnithan, 2015). These internal pressures form the norms of the department. During this period, officers are also building confidence, working with their peers, and learning how to interact with the public. They develop their own professional identity, which is often characterized by the organizational subculture (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). If a person is properly socialized within the subculture, they will share similar values and norms and have less occupational stress than those that resist those norms (Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Dick & Metcalfe, 2007).

Karp & Stenmark (2011) evaluated a new police training program in Sweden. The program was geared towards preparing new officers for what they would face while on the road by better integration and focusing on problem solving (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). Utilizing frame factor theory (a theoretical lens that evaluates how individuals learn based upon social and political elements), they analyzed police culture based upon three key areas: training, patterns, and professional life. They found that police subculture influence started at the academy and was reinforced throughout training and into police officer life. This subculture helps develop the officer's professional identity which is why it is so ingrained into officers (Karp & Stenmark, 2011).

Chapter IV: Research Design and Methodology

To best assess the theoretical and empirical fit of these two theories, this paper will analyze three police department's subculture utilizing the secondary officer survey data collected from a 2008-2009 RAND Corporation study that created a uniform performance measure. Unlike other studies that address police misconduct through Social Learning Theory, this study includes two possible mitigating variables, human agency and supervisor influence. This is important to include, because for Social Learning Theory to apply, the influence of the immediate supervisor (this is the prime person who reinforces the agency subculture) and the individual's willingness (or in some cases unwillingness) to assimilate should be included. The survey collected data on the officer's perception of how the agency treats them, their growth within the department, their perception of their supervisor, and how the officer, agency, and command staff perceived ethical violations on the job.

This study utilizes the officer survey data collected from the three police departments: Knoxville, Broward, and Kettering, and aims to evaluate the relationship between the officer's sense of self (their morals, ethics, and integrity), the officer's perception on the agency's command staff, and the overall agency environment. This paper will evaluate this assumption utilizing two scenarios from the survey. Officers were instructed to indicate the choice that best sums up their opinion based upon a Likert scale of *Not Serious, Less Serious, Neither, Serious,* and *Very Serious* (Davis et al, 2013).

The first scenario states, "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 to not abuse the generosity of those who give gifts to him" (Davis et al, 2013, p.10). This

scenario is important because it provides insight into how officers perceive the ethical question of receiving gifts and food from their community. While most department policies do not permit free gifts due to unexpected quid-pro-quo implications, typically, this act is not considered a big deal provided officers do not abuse the privilege. This scenario was chosen to demonstrate how the front-line supervisors can influence a minor ethical decision.

The second scenario addresses the concern over excessive force. The scenario states, "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" (Davis et al, 2013, p. 13). This scenario was chosen as the *Serious* ethical decision that encompasses excessive force. While most police departments do not support such actions both in policy and practice, the severity of this scenario will help demonstrate how officers are socialized in practice, which contributes towards the overall subculture.

Evaluating Each Department

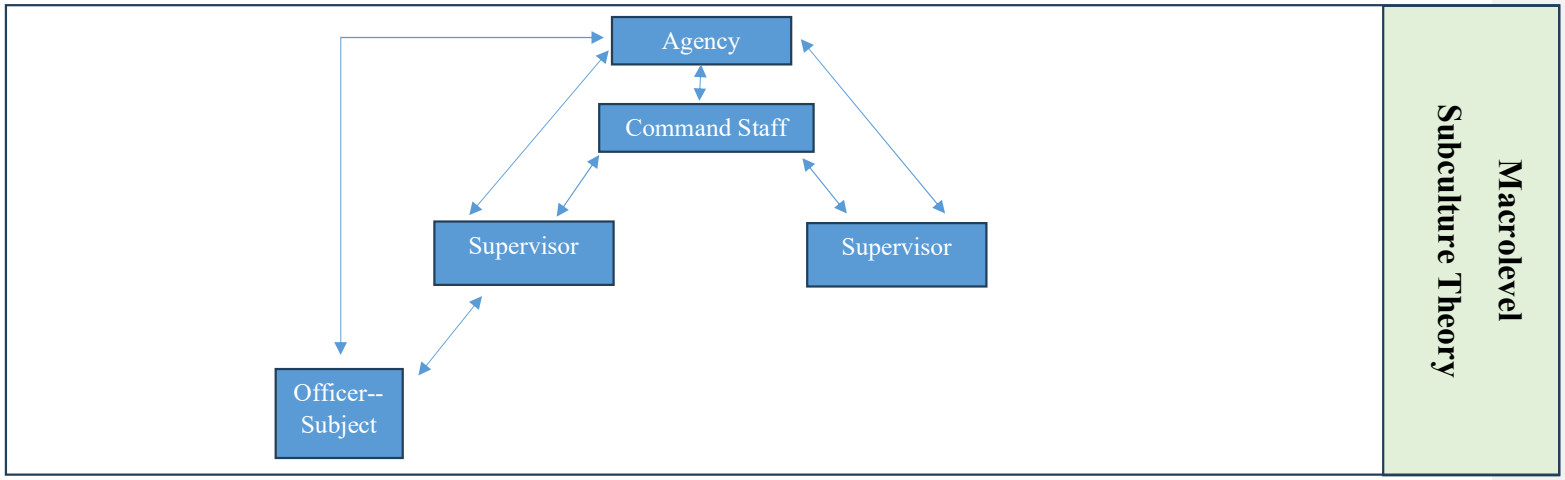
Before applying a logistic regression to test Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory, this paper evaluated if each police department can be separated out for analysis. Based upon the number of unique observations, the data set does have enough unique observations for each police department to break up all three departments into different models. However, one department only has 19 unique observations, compared to the 82, and 208 observations for the other two departments. While on the surface there are enough observations for each department, when the initial model by site is run, Kettering and Knoxville do not have enough unique

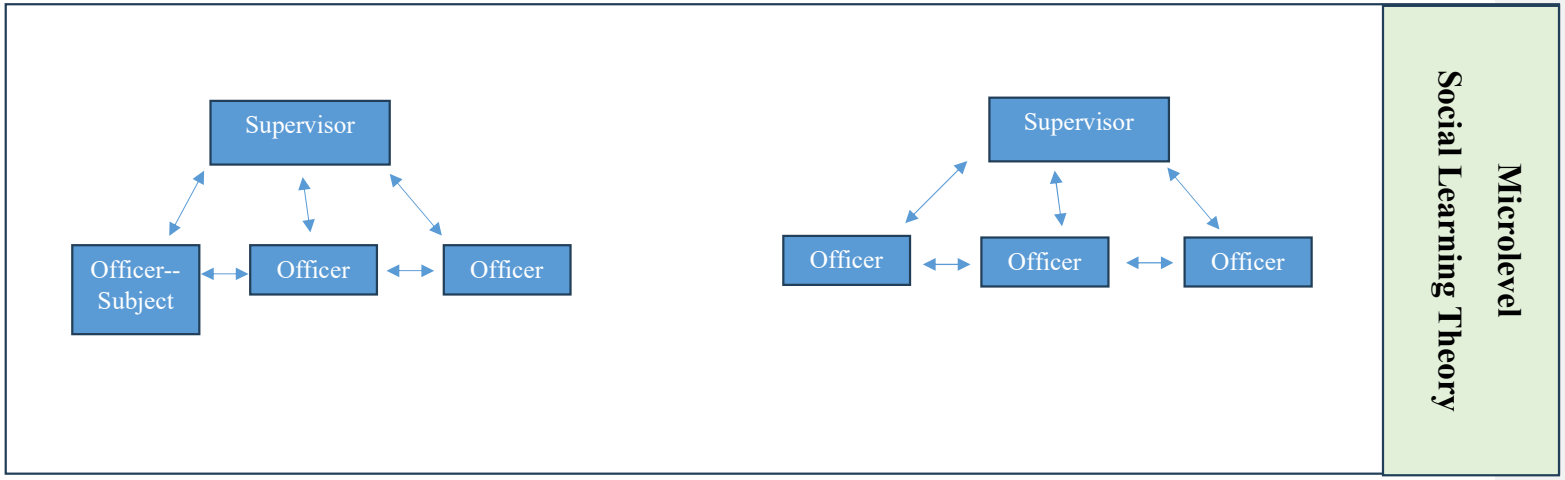
observations to make a stable model. So unfortunately, the data will need to stay combined. This is a limitation within the dataset.

To evaluate the impact of the individual officer's response, the two dependent scenario responses for officers were broken up into 5 dummy variables, each indicated by the 5-point Likert scale of *Not Serious, Less Serious, Neither, Serious,* and *Very Serious* (Davis et al, 2013). This allows us to individually test the relationship between the officer's personal ethical response, compared to the reported responses of their supervisor, command staff, and agency. With this in mind, a comparative reference group for the logistic regression was created. Because the *Neither* choice indicates that the individual does not have an opinion on the scenario or question asked, this is the foundation for our reference group. While research has indicated that respondents also choose *Neither* for other reasons such as cognitive effort, ambivalence, or social desirability, by utilizing it as the comparative group, this helps us see the strength of the relationship between the *Serious vs. Not Serious* choices. These extremes better indicate the presence of a strong subculture, which allows this study to determine the effect of Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory.

To better illustrate the micro-level versus the macro-level impact of these two theories, this paper will conduct 12 different models.

Since the scenarios chosen capture different extremes of ethical and moral decision-making, separate models to explore the impact of Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory were created. To better understand the potential impact of these two theories, look at the visual representation below:


Agency
Command Staff
Supervisor
Supervisor
Officer--
Subject
Macrolevel
Subculture Theory


Supervisor
Officer--
Subject
Officer
Officer
Supervisor
Officer
Officer
Officer
Microlevel
Social Learning Theory

Model 1-2: Social Learning Theory with Scenario 1&2

To test each of these theories, Scenario 1 & 2, rooted in Social Learning Theory, evaluate the effect of the supervisor variables to determine if these variables influence the officer's moral and ethical decision making. In addition to the impact on subculture, a positive relationship between supervisors and officers would be significantly corelated with Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory because this positive relationship reinforces the notion that front line supervisors create and enforce the subculture of the department and officers adhere to this culture. This variable is captured through the statement, "My supervisor, or someone at work cares about me" (Davis et al, 2013, p.7). For brevity, this variable will be referred to as "Supervisor." The equations for these base models are:

$$\text{Officer} = \beta\text{Supervisor} + \beta c + \beta e$$

Hypothesis Model 1: Officers' reported agreement that their supervisor or someone at work cares about them will be associated with higher odds that receiving free gifts is a very serious ethical concern (vs. all other responses).

Hypothesis Model 2: Officers' reported agreement that their supervisor or someone at work cares about them will be associated with higher odds that punching the suspect while in custody is a very serious ethical concern (vs. all other responses).

Model 3-4: Social Learning Theory with Scenario 1&2

The third and fourth models incorporate two additional variables of human agency and opportunity. Since human agency dictates how strongly subculture affects the individual officer, this variable should be accounted for. The officer survey captures this autonomy through two questions: If the officer believes that his/her opinions count, and if the officer believes that

he/she can do what they do best (Davis et al, 2013). These two questions contribute towards independence from the department, and freedom to police in his/her own ability and style. For brevity, these two variables will be referred to as "Opinions" and "Opportunity" respectively. Therefore, the third and fourth models will add these variables:

$$\text{Officer} = \beta\text{Opinions} + \beta\text{Opportunity} + \beta\text{Supervisor} + \beta c + \beta e$$

Hypothesis Model 3: Officers' perceptions that a supervisor or someone at work cares about them will be associated with higher odds that receiving free gifts is very serious ethical concern (vs. all other responses). More negative responses about whether opinions count and opportunity to do what they do best will be associated with lower odds.

Hypothesis Model 4: Officers' perceptions that a supervisor or someone at work cares about them will be associated with higher odds that punching the suspect while in custody is very serious ethical concern. More negative responses regarding whether their opinions count and/or whether they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day will be associated with lower odds.

Model 5-6: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

The fifth and sixth models evaluate the impact that command staff has on the individual officer. While research indicates that frontline supervisors have a stronger impact on the individual officers, command staff are the upper leadership of the agency and do help drive the mission and vision of the department. For brevity, this variable will be referred to as "Command Staff." Therefore, the fifth and sixth models will add these variables:

$$\text{Officer} = \beta\text{Command Staff} + \beta c + \beta e$$

Hypothesis Model 5: Officers' perceptions that their Command Staff consider receiving free gifts a very serious ethical concern will show little or no association with officers' odds of rating receiving free gifts as a very serious ethical concern.

Hypothesis Model 6: Officers' perceptions that their Command Staff consider punching a suspect while in custody as very serious ethical concern will be positively, but only weakly, associated with officers' odds of rating that punching a suspect while in custody as a very serious ethical concern.

Model 7-8: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

Models seven and eight look at the impact of the agency on the individual officer. Like the first two models, these two models are attempting to evaluate if the overall police department culture aligns with the officer. While research has indicated that the CEO of an agency has less impact upon the individual officer, this base model is important to evaluate the overall impact of the culture on the individual officer. If the model is positive and significant, we can determine that the officer's opinions align with the agencies and thus subculture theory is present. For brevity, this variable will be referred to as "Agency." Therefore, the seventh and eighth models will evaluate these variables.

$$\text{Officer} = \beta\text{Agency} + \beta c + \beta e$$

Hypothesis Model 7: Officers' perceptions that their Agency considers receiving free gifts a very serious ethical concern will be positively associated with officers' odds of rating that receiving free gifts is a very serious ethical concern.

Hypothesis Model 8: Officers' perceptions that their Agency considers punching a suspect while in custody a very serious ethical concern will be positively associated with officers' odds of rating that punching a suspect while in custody is a very serious ethical concern.

Model 9-10: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

The ninth and tenth models incorporate command staff into the subculture model. This model is important to incorporate to help strengthen the subculture model for the command staff typically have been at the agency the longest which allows them the opportunity to build the subculture and expectations. Therefore, the equations for these models are:

$$\text{Officer} = \beta\text{Agency} + \beta\text{Command Staff} + \beta c + \beta e$$

Hypothesis Model 9: Officers' perceptions that their Agency considers receiving free gifts a very serious ethical concern will be positively associated with officers' odds of rating that receiving free gifts is a very serious ethical concern, whereas perceptions that Command Staff consider receiving free gifts a very serious ethical concern will show little or no association with those odds.

Hypothesis Model 10: Officers' perceptions that their Agency considers punching a suspect while in custody a very serious ethical concern will be positively associated with officers' odds of rating that punching a suspect while in custody is a very serious ethical concern. Officers' perceptions that their Command Staff consider that punching a suspect while in custody a very serious ethical concern will be positively, but weakly, associated with officers' odds of rating that punching a suspect while in custody as a very serious ethical concern.

Model 11-12: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

Once again, since human agency dictates how strongly subculture affects the individual officer, we need to account for this variable. The officer survey captures this autonomy through two questions: If the officer believes that his/her opinions count, and if the officer believes that he/she can do what they do best (Davis et al, 2013). These two questions contribute towards independence from the department, and freedom to police in his/her own ability and style. Therefore, the eleventh and twelfth model will add these variables:

$$\text{Officer} = \beta\text{Agency} + \beta\text{Command Staff} + \beta\text{Opinions} + \beta\text{Opportunity} + \beta c + \beta e$$

Hypothesis Model 11: Officers' perceptions that their Agency considers receiving free gifts a very serious ethical concern will be positively associated with officers' odds of rating receiving free gifts as a very serious ethical concern. In contrast, officers' perceptions that their Command Staff consider receiving free gifts a very serious ethical concern will not be significantly associated with those odds. More negative responses regarding whether officers' opinions count and/or whether they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day will be associated with lower odds.

Hypothesis Model 12 Officers' perceptions that their Agency considers punching a suspect while in custody a very serious ethical concern will be positively associated with officers' odds of rating punching a suspect while in custody as a very serious ethical concern. Officers' perceptions that their Command Staff consider punching a suspect while in custody a very serious ethical concern will be positively, but weakly, associated with the officer's odds of rating punching a suspect while in custody a very serious ethical concern. More negative responses regarding whether officers' opinions count and/or whether they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day will be associated with lower odds.

Limitations

There are a few limitations of utilizing this data. There are two necessary control variables that are a part of the restricted data set, number of years on the force, and rank of the respondent, which would provide more data on the influence of police subculture and social learning theory on the individual officer. Further, because this study utilized the neutral category as the comparative group, we are unable to truly compare those who were not adequately subjected to the influence of subculture.

Additionally, there potentially could be some construct validity issues with the statement "A supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person." This statement could be problematic because a respondent may feel that a supervisor does not care about them as a person, but another coworker does. This needed to be broken into two different statements to better analyze the difference between a supervisor's influence versus an equal rank coworker.

Another limitation of this study is truly evaluating the macrolevel impact on the officer. Because the data did not have variables related to the political and community perception of police during the observation point, it is hard to evaluate the community/political/social impact on officers and police subculture. If this study was to be conducted again, including these community level variables would be beneficial to better evaluate the community perception on the individual officer, and if that is significantly correlated with the above-mentioned variables.

The last limitation of this paper is the inability to test each individual stage of Social Learning Theory and Subculture Theory. Because the survey only provided outcome variables to determine the possible effect of these two theories through scenario question response, personal buy-in (human agency) and peer/supervisor influence, we are unable to test the complete cycle of

the impact of the learned behavior starting in the academy, and the transition to the road. Additionally, it would be interesting to evaluate the impact of any desistance from the subculture, and the potential factors that influence this desistence. However, with the variables provided, we can still hypothesize that this theory is in play, particularly due to the strong positive relationship between Agency, Command Staff, and Officer.

Chapter V: Results

This paper utilized STATA MP 18.5 to conduct statistical analysis. On the surface, there is the potential for type I error through multicollinearity between the officer's response of their personal morals and ethics, and the respondent's perception of the overall morals and ethics of the department and command staff. Because we created binary dummy variables for each scenario's officer's perceptions, logistic regression is the best fit to evaluate the twelve models. There were enough unique differences between the officer's response on personal morals and ethics versus the responses given for agency ethics, command staff ethics, and perception of the supervisor. However, depending upon the model, multicollinearity became an issue, particularly for models that had sparce cell counts. To address this problem, a Firth Logistic Regression was utilized to stabilize the coefficients and predicted probabilities to combat any near-linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. To evaluate each model, four logistic regressions were used to evaluate each response—*Very Serious, Serious, Less Serious, Not Serious At All*—with *Neither* being the comparison variable.

Model 1-2: Social Learning Theory with Scenario 1&2

Model 1 and Model 2 aimed to evaluate the relationship between officer and supervisor. The equation for these two models is: Officer = βSupervisor +βc +βe. For Model 1, all four

logistic regressions were insignificant, and their Pseudo R^2 were 0.004, 0.016, 0.015, and 0.017 respectively, showing that the officers' reported agreement that their supervisor or someone at work cares about them does not explain meaningful variation in officers' agreement that receiving free gifts is a serious ethical concern. Therefore, our hypothesis was not supported.

Model 2's logistic regressions also indicated that all four were not significant and their Pseudo R^2 were 0.011, 0.016, 0.022, and 0.053 respectively, showing that the officers' reported agreement that their supervisor or someone at work cares about them does not explain meaningful variation in officers' agreement that punching a suspect while in custody is a serious ethical concern. For the *Not Serious At All* response, the regression hit a perfect prediction. Therefore, our hypothesis was not supported.

Model 3-4: Social Learning Theory with Scenario 1&2

Even though the previous model was insignificant, these two models include human agency and perceptions of the officer's role in the department. This includes the statements "I have the opportunity to do what I do best" and "my opinions count." The equation is Officer = βOpinions +βOpportunity + βSupervisor +βc +βe.

This is the first model where multicollinearity became an issue. Because there was some quasi-separation between the three independent variables, the Firth Logistic Regression was the best model for Model 3 and 4. For Model 3, all four binary outcomes evaluated responses were insignificant, even after collapsing the extremes. In the *Serious* regression for Model 3, officers reported that they *Disagree* (vs. *Neutral)* with the statement that their supervisor cares about them was associated with 65% lower odds of selecting *Serious* for the receiving free gifts (β = -1.06, OR=0.35, 95% CI= 0.122 — 0.978, p=.045). *Agree* (vs. *Neutral)* was borderline (β=-0.75,

OR=.47, 95% CI =.221— 1.015, p=.055). The model-wide Wald test was not significant (p=.233) so these coefficients should be interpreted cautiously.

For Model 4, *Serious, Less Serious, and Not Serious At All* were insignificant. For the *Very Serious* regression, which was significant at the .05 level, officers *Agree* (vs. *Neutral)* that their opinions count was associated 2 times higher odds of selecting *Very Serious* for the excessive force question (β = 0.656, OR=1.927, 95% CI= 1.014 – 3.669, p=.045).

Model 4-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βOpinions +βOpportunity + βSupervisor +βc +βe								
Dependent Variable: Excessive Force		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=18.42			Prob> chi2= 0.0185*		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval] Odds Ratio		Odds Ratio
My supervisor, or someone at work seems to care about me	Agree	0.099	0.387	0.26	0.797	0.517	2.358	1.104
	Disagree	0.352	0.495	0.71	0.477	0.538	3.762	1.422
Opportunity to do What I do Best	Agree	0.427	0.352	1.21	0.226	0.768	3.056	1.533
	Disagree	-0.636	0.416	-1.53	0.126	0.235	1.195	0.529
My Opinions Count	Agree	0.656	0.328	2	.045*	1.014	3.669	1.927
	Disagree	0.465	0.398	1.17	0.243	0.731	3.469	1.592
	Constant	-0.298	0.486	-0.61	0.54	0.286	1.927	0.742

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

Model 5-6: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

Models 5 and 6 evaluate how serious the command staff takes these scenarios. The equation for these two models is Officer = βCommand Staff + βc + βe. A Firth Logistic Regression was used for both models, and these models did not require condensing like done in Models 3 & 4. For Model 5, *Very Serious, Serious, Less Serious,* and *Not Serious At All* were all statistically significant at the .001 level. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Very Serious,* officers had 27 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = 3.299, OR=27.086, 95% CI =7.178

– 102.105, p < .001). Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Serious,* officers had 14 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = 2.62, OR=13.736, 95% CI =3.626 – 52.039, p < .001) and 31 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Serious* (β = 3.423, OR=30.661, 95% CI =8.224 – 114.434, p < .001). Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Less Serious,* officers had 4 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Less Serious* (β = 1.473, OR=4.362, 95% CI =1.672 – 11.393, p < .01) and 94% lower odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = -2.885, OR=0.056, 95% CI =0.010 – 0.313, p < .001). Finally, when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Not Serious At All,* officers had 10 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Less Serious* (β = 2.288, OR=9.855, 95% CI = 2.625 – 37.003, p < .001) and 115 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β = 4.745, OR=115.008, 95% CI= 15.211 – 869.571, p < .001).

Model 5-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βCommand Staff + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Receiving Free Gifts		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=65.11			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
How serious does the command staff consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	3.299	0.677	4.87	0.000***	7.178	102.105	27.086
	Serious	-0.689	0.909	-0.76	0.448	0.085	2.980	0.502
	Less Serious	0.281	1.06	0.27	0.791	0.166	10.559	1.324
	Not Serious at All	0.017	1.582	0.01	0.991	0.046	22.624	1.017
	Constant	-3.153	0.646	-4.88	0.000***	-4.418	-1.887	0.043
Serious			Wald chi2=40.78			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the command staff consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	2.62	0.68	3.85	0.000***	3.626	52.039	13.736
	Serious	3.423	0.672	5.10	0.000***	8.224	114.434	30.661
	Less Serious	-0.855	1.566	-0.55	0.585	0.020	9.161	0.425
	Not Serious at All	1.207	1.086	1.11	0.266	0.398	28.078	3.343

	Constant	-3.153	1.756	1.17	0.000***	0.250	243.715	0.043
Less Serious			Wald chi2=31.23			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the command staff consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-2.885	0.879	-3.28	0.001***	0.010	0.313	0.056
	Serious	-0.372	0.396	-0.94	0.347	0.318	1.498	0.689
	Less Serious	1.473	0.49	3.01	.003**	1.672	11.393	4.362
	Not Serious at All	-1.877	1.477	-1.27	0.204	0.008	2.768	0.153
	Constant	-1.258	0.308	-4.08	0.000***	0.155	0.520	0.284
Not Serious At All			Wald chi2=43.01			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the command staff consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-2.453	1.521	-1.61	0.107	0.004	1.696	0.086
	Serious	0.234	0.656	0.036	0.721	0.350	4.568	1.264
	Less Serious	2.288	0.675	3.39	0.001***	2.625	37.003	9.855
	Not Serious at All	4.745	1.032	4.6	0.000***	15.211	869.571	115.008
	Constant	-2.799	0.551	-5.08	0.000***	0.021	160.453	0.061

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

For Model 6, *Serious* and *Not Serious At All* were not significant. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that punching a suspect in custody was *Very Serious,* officers had 123 times higher odds of rating Command Staff's perception of punching a suspect while in custody as *Very Serious* ($\beta = 4.816$, OR=123.470, 95% CI= 7.228 – 2109.065, $p < .001$). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution. By contrast, when officers reported that punching a suspect in custody was *Less Serious,* officers had 86% lower odds of rating Command Staff's perception of punching a suspect while in custody as *Very Serious* ($\beta = -1.99$, OR=0.137, 95% CI = 0.019 – 1.00, $p < .05$).

Model 6-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βCommand Staff + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Excessive Force		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=65.11=69.18			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
How serious does the command staff consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	4.816	1.448	3.33	0.001***	7.228	2109.065	123.470
	Serious	0.551	1.540	0.36	0.720	0.085	35.481	1.735
	Constant	-3.367	1.438	-2.34	0.019*	0.002	0.578	0.034

Less Serious			Wald chi2=9.79			Prob> chi2= 0.0204*		
How serious does the command staff consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-1.99	1.015	-1.96	0.05*	0.019	1.000	0.137
	Serious	0.053	0.955	0.06	0.956	0.162	6.855	1.054
	Constant	-2.197	0.861	-2.55	0.011*	0.034	29.195	0.111

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

Model 7-8: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

For Model 7 and Model 8, these models evaluate the officer's perception of the agency regarding these two scenarios. Because of sparce cells, these two models also utilized a Firth Logistic Regression. The equation for these two models is Officer = βAgency + βc + βe. For Model 7, all four regressions were significant at the .001 level. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Very Serious,* officers had 1096 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = 7, OR=1096.633, 95% CI 59.145 – 20373.697, p < .001). Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Serious,* officers had 23 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Serious* (β = 7, OR=23.453, 95% CI =10.805 – 50.907, p < .001). Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that receiving free gifts was *Less Serious,* officers had 58 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Less Serious* (β = 4.06, OR=57.974, 95% CI =14.880 – 228.149, p < .001) and a 7 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β = 1.93, OR=6.890, 95% CI =1.514 – 31.343, p < .05). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Model 7-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βAgency + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Receiving Free Gifts		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=27.83			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	7	1.49	4.7	0.000***	59.145	20373.697	1096.633
	Serious	0.796	0.535	1.49	0.137	0.777	6.328	2.217
	Less Serious	-0.434	0.782	-0.6	0.579	0.140	3.001	0.648
	Not Serious at All	-1.634	1.49	-1.1	0.273	0.011	3.622	0.195
	Constant	-2.684	0.441	-6.1	0.000***	0.029	0.162	0.068
Serious			Wald chi2=98.87			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-2.722	1.452	-1.9	0.061	0.004	1.133	0.066
	Serious	3.155	0.395	7.98	0.000***	10.805	50.907	23.453
	Less Serious	0.065	0.445	0.15	0.883	0.445	2.557	1.067
	Not Serious at All	-6.92	0.631	-1.1	0.272	0.145	1.721	0.001
	Constant	-1.596	0.288	-5.5	0.000***	0.115	0.357	0.203
Less Serious			Wald chi2=72.58			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-0.809	1.562	-0.5	0.604	0.021	9.507	0.445
	Serious	0.244	0.843	0.29	0.771	0.245	6.653	1.276
	Less Serious	4.06	0.697	5.84	0.000***	14.880	228.149	57.974
	Not Serious at All	1.93	0.773	2.5	0.013*	1.514	31.343	6.890
	Constant	-3.509	0.642	-5.5	0.000***	0.009	0.105	0.030
Not Serious At All			Wald chi2=67.39			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-0.286	1.644	-0.2	0.862	0.030	18.859	0.751
	Serious	-1.21	1.640	-0.7	0.46	0.012	7.419	0.298
	Less Serious	1.268	0.991	1.28	0.201	0.509	24.779	3.554
	Not Serious at All	4.994	0.9	5.55	0.000***	25.280	861.780	147.525
	Constant	-4.031	0.824	-4.9	0.000***	0.004	0.089	0.018

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

Model 8 looks at the officer's perception of the agency's response to the excessive force scenario. *Serious* was not significant, whereas *Very Serious* (.001 level)*, Less Serious* (.01 level)*, and Not Serious At All* (.001 level) were all significant. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported that punching a suspect in custody was *Very Serious,* officers had 857 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of punching a suspect in custody as *Very Serious* (β = 6.753, OR=856.625, 95% CI =121.268 – 6051.128, p < .001). Compared to *Neutral,* when officers

reported that punching a suspect in custody was *Less Serious,* officers had 15 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of punching a suspect in custody as *Less Serious* (β = 2.701, OR=14.895, 95% CI =2.869 – 77.401, p < .001) and 96% lower odds of rating the Agency's perception as *Very Serious* (β = -3.362, OR=0.035, 95% CI =0.002 – 0.741, p < .05). Comparatively, when officers reported that punching a suspect in custody was *Not Serious At All,* officers had 305 times higher odds of rating the Agency's perception of punching a suspect in custody as *Not Serious At All* (β = 5.72, OR=304.905, 95% CI =4.923 – 18901.565, p < .01). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Model 8-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βAgency + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Excessive Force		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=54.52			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	6.753	0.997	6.77	0.000***	121.268	6051.128	856.625
	Serious	0.963	0.613	1.57	0.117	0.787	8.715	2.620
	Less Serious	-0.136	1.031	-0.13	0.895	0.116	6.586	0.873
	Not Serious at All	0.452	1.65	0.27	0.784	0.062	39.885	1.571
	Constant	-2.061	0.568	-3.63	0.000***	0.042	0.387	0.127
Less Serious			Wald chi2=30.03			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-3.362	1.562	-2.15	0.031*	0.002	0.741	0.035
	Serious	-2.839	1.564	-1.82	0.069	0.003	1.254	0.058
	Less Serious	2.701	0.841	3.21	0.001***	2.869	77.401	14.895
	Not Serious at All	0.824	1.684	0.49	0.625	0.084	61.806	2.280
	Constant	-2.433	0.66	-3.69	0.000***	0.024	0.319	0.088
Not Serious At All			Wald chi2=16.52			Prob> chi2= 0.006**		
How serious does the agency consider this problem to be?	Very Serious	-0.58	1.644	-0.35	0.724	0.022	14.055	0.560
	Serious	-0.053	1.646	-0.03	0.974	0.038	23.879	0.948
	Less Serious	1.914	1.665	1.15	0.251	0.259	177.151	6.780
	Not Serious at All	5.72	2.105	2.72	.007**	4.923	18901.565	304.905
	Constant	-4.111	1.426	-2.88	0.004**	0.001	0.268	0.016

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

Model 9-10: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

Models 9 and 10 evaluate the effect of both the agency and command staff on the officer based upon these two scenarios. The equation for these models is: Officer = βAgency + βCommand Staff + βc + βe. A Firth Logistic Regression was used because some variables had sparce cells, which needed to be accounted for. For Model 9, all four regressions were significant at the .001 level. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported receiving free gifts was *Very Serious,* officers had 6 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = 1.734, OR=5.663, 95% CI =1.143 – 28.050, p < .05) and 252 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = 5.53, OR=252.144, 95% CI =12.554 – 5110.232, p < .001).

When officers reported receiving free gifts was *Serious,* officers had 8.5 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = 2.147, OR=8.559, 95% CI =1.898 – 38.629, p < .01), 18 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Serious* (β = 2.9, OR=18.174, 95% CI =4.402 – 74.664, p < .001), 94% lower odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = -2.936, OR=0.053, 95% CI =0.003 – 0.996, p < .05), and 15 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Serious* (β = 2.685, OR=14.658, 95% CI =6.160 – 34.848, p < .001).

When officers reported receiving free gifts was *Less Serious,* officers had 92% lower odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = -2.567, OR=0.077, 95% CI =0.010 – 0.582, p < .05), 73 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Less Serious* (β = 4.288, OR=72.821, 95% CI =15.927 – 332.953, p < .001), and 9.times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of

receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β = 2.238, OR=9.375, 95% CI =1.751 – 50.149, p < .001).

Finally, when officers reported receiving free gifts was *Not Serious At All,* officers had 17 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β =-2.814, OR=16.676, 95% CI =1.246 – 223.185, p < .05), and 53 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β =3.970, OR=52.985, 95% CI =8.482 – 328.324, p < .001). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Model 9-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βCommand Staff + βAgency + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Receiving Free Gifts		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=27.83			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
Command Staff	Very Serious	1.734	0.816	2.12	0.034*	1.143	28.050	5.663
Agency	Very Serious	5.53	1.533	3.61	0.000***	12.554	5110.232	252.144
	Constant	-2.951	0.663	-4.5	0.000***	0.014	0.192	0.052
Serious			Wald chi2=98.87			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Command Staff	Very Serious	2.147	0.768	2.79	0.005**	1.898	38.629	8.559
	Serious	2.9	0.722	4.01	0.000***	4.402	74.664	18.174
Agency	Very Serious	-2.936	1.49	-2	0.05*	0.003	0.996	0.053
	Serious	2.685	0.442	6.07	0.000***	6.160	34.848	14.658
	Constant	-1.596	0.288	-5.5	0.000***	0.115	0.357	0.203
Less Serious			Wald chi2=72.58			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Command Staff	Very Serious	-2.567	1.03	-2.5	0.013*	0.010	0.582	0.077
Agency	Less Serious	4.288	0.775	5.53	0.000***	15.927	332.953	72.821
	Not Serious at All	2.238	0.856	2.61	0.009**	1.751	50.149	9.375
	Constant	-2.993	0.658	-4.6	0.000***	0.010	0.582	0.050
Not Serious At All			Wald chi2=57.97			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Command Staff	Not Serious at All	2.814	1.324	2.13	0.034*	1.246	223.185	16.676
Agency	Not Serious at All	3.97	0.932	4.25	0.000***	8.482	328.324	52.985
	Constant	-4.072	0.824	-4.9	0.000***	0.003	0.108	0.017

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

For Model 10, *Serious* was not significant, but *Very Serious* (.001 level)*, Less Serious* (.001 level)*,* and *Not Serious At All* (.05 level) were significant. Command Staff's perception was not significant in any regression. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported punching someone in custody was *Very Serious,* officers had 203 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of punching someone in custody as *Very Serious* (β =-5.311, OR=202.553, 95% CI =25.559 – 1603.590, p < .001). When officers reported punching someone in custody was *Less Serious,* officers had 97% less odds of rating their Agency's perception of punching someone in custody as *Very Serious* (β =-3.587, OR=0.028, 95% CI =0.001 – 0.769, p < .05) and 13.5 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception as *Less Serious* (β =2.605, OR=13.531, 95% CI =2.596 – 70.457, p < .01). Finally, when officers reported punching someone in custody was *Not Serious At All,* officers had 53 higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of punching someone in custody as *Not Serious At All* (β =-3.97, OR=52.985, 95% CI =8.482 – 328.324, p < .001). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Model 10-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βCommand Staff + βAgency + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Excessive Force		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=62.04			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
Agency	Very Serious	5.311	1.056	5.03	0.000***	25.559	1603.590	202.553
	Constant	-3.075	1.427	-2.2	0.031*	0.003	0.757	0.046
Less Serious			Wald chi2=30.21			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Agency	Very Serious	-3.587	1.696	-2.1	0.034*	0.001	0.769	0.028
	Less Serious	2.605	0.842	3.09	0.002**	2.596	70.457	13.531
	Constant	-3.261	1.134	-2.9	0.004**	0.004	0.354	0.038
Not Serious At All			Wald chi2=16.81			Prob> chi2= 0.0187*		
Agency	Not Serious at All	3.97	0.932	4.25	0.000***	8.482	328.324	52.985
	Constant	-4.072	0.824	-4.9	0.000***	0.003	0.108	0.017

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

Model 11-12: Subculture Theory with Scenario 1&2

The last two models combine the agency perceptions, the command staff perceptions, and if officers feel like their opinions matter along with having the opportunity to do what they do best. Both of these models also utilized a Firth Logistic Regression. The equation for these two models is Officer = βAgency + βCommand Staff +βOpinions +βOpportunity +βc +βe. For Model 11, except for the *Less Serious* regression, the officer's opinions count and the officer's having the opportunity to do what they do best were insignificant. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported receiving free gifts was *Very Serious,* officers had 316 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β =5.757, OR=316.398, 95% CI =14.411 – 6939.604 p < .001) and 5.5 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β =1.705, OR=5.501, 95% CI =1.133 – 26.709, p < .05).

When officers reported receiving free gifts was *Serious,* officers had 95% less odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β = -3.02, OR=0.049, 95% CI =0.003 – 0.923, p < .05), officers had 15 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Serious* (β = 2.685, OR=14.658, 95% CI =6.062 – 35.446, p < .001), 8 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β =2.125, OR=8.373, 95% CI =1.828 – 38.321, p < .01) and 17 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Serious* (β =2.835, OR=17.030, 95% CI =4.084 – 70.932, p < .001).

When officers reported receiving free gifts was *Less Serious,* officers had 65 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Less Serious* (β =4.172, OR=64.845, 95% CI =13.343 – 314.820, p < .001), officers had 7 times higher odds of rating

their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β =1.918, OR=6.807, 95% CI =1.185 – 39.017, p < .05). Officers had 93% less odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Very Serious* (β =-2.656, OR=0.070, 95% CI =0.008 – 0.589, p < .05) and 98% less odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β =-4.347, OR=0.013, 95% CI =0.00 – 0.686, p < .05). Officers had 7 times higher odds of rating that they *Strongly Disagree* that their opinions counted (β =1.896, OR=6.659, 95% CI =1.092 – 40.650, p < .05) and while significant at the .1 level, officers had 81% less odds of rating that they *Strongly Agree* that they had the opportunity to do what they do best (β =-1.675, OR=0.187, 95% CI =0.031 – 1.125, p < .1).

Finally, when officers reported receiving free gifts was *Not Serious At All,* officers had 32 times higher odds of rating their Agency's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β =3.481, OR=32.492, 95% CI =5.073 – 208.096 p < .001) and 20 times higher odds of rating their Command Staff's perception of receiving free gifts as *Not Serious At All* (β =2.98, OR=0.017, 95% CI =0.001 – 0.294, p < .01). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Model 11-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βAgency +βOpinions +βOpportunity + βCommand Staff + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Receiving Free Gifts		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=38.54			Prob> chi2= 0.0033**		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
Agency	Very Serious	5.757	1.576	3.65	0.000***	14.411	6939.604	316.398
Command Staff	Very Serious	1.705	0.806	2.12	0.034*	1.133	26.709	5.501
	Constant	-2.806	0.981	-2.9	0.004**	0.009	0.413	0.060
Serious			Wald chi2=84.62			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Agency	Very Serious	-3.02	1.5	-2	0.044*	0.003	0.923	0.049
	Serious	2.685	0.451	5.96	0.000***	6.062	35.446	14.658
Command Staff	Very Serious	2.125	0.776	2.74	0.006**	1.828	38.321	8.373
	Serious	2.835	0.728	3.89	0.000***	4.084	70.952	17.030
	Constant	-3.206	0.897	-3.6	0.000***	0.007	4.259	0.041
Less Serious			Wald chi2=61.01			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Agency	Less Serious	4.172	0.806	5.17	0.000***	13.343	314.820	64.845
	Not Serious at All	1.918	0.891	2.15	0.031*	1.185	39.017	6.807
Command Staff	Very Serious	-2.656	1.085	-2.5	0.014*	0.008	0.589	0.070
	Not Serious at All	-4.347	2.026	-2.2	0.032*	0.000	0.686	0.013
Opportunity	Strongly Agree	-1.675	0.915	-1.8	0.067	0.031	1.125	0.187
Opinions Count	Strongly Disagree	1.896	0.922	2.06	0.040*	1.092	40.650	6.659
	Constant	-2.732	0.993	-2.8	0.006**	0.009	0.456	0.065
Not Serious At All			Wald chi2=67.39			Prob> chi2= 0.000***		
Agency	Not Serious at All	3.481	0.947	3.67	0.000***	5.073	208.096	32.492
Command Staff	Not Serious at All	2.98	1.288	2.32	0.021*	1.581	246.164	19.688
	Constant	-4.09	1.462	-2.8	0.005**	0.001	0.294	0.017

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

In Model 12 (out of the four tested regressions), *Very Serious* was the only regression that was significant. Compared to *Neutral,* when officers reported punching a suspect in custody was *Very Serious,* officers had 351 times the odds of rating their Agency's perception of punching a suspect in custody as *Very Serious* (β =5.862, OR=351.426, 95% CI =37.826 – 3261.688 p < .001). Command Staff and opportunity were both insignificant. However, when officers reported

punching a suspect in custody was *Very Serious,* officers had 8 times the odds of rating their opinions count as *Strongly Agree* (β =2.13, OR=8.415, 95% CI =1.212 – 58.792 p < .05) and 6 times higher odds of rating their opinions count as *Agree* (β =1.771, OR=5.877, 95% CI =1.169 – 29.518 p < .05). Although the odds ratio was very large, the wide confidence interval indicates that the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Model 12-Firth Logistic Model Officer = βAgency +βOpinions +βOpportunity + βCommand Staff + βc + βe								
Dependent Variable: Excessive Force		# obs= 312	Wald chi2=59.86			Prob> chi2= 0.0000***		
Very Serious		Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P>|z|	[95% conf. interval]		Odds Ratio
Agency	Very Serious	5.862	1.137	5.16	0.000***	37.826	3261.688	351.426
Opinions Count	Strongly Agree	2.13	0.99	2.15	0.031*	1.212	58.792	8.415
	Agree	1.771	0.824	2.15	0.032*	1.169	29.518	5.877
	Constant	-3.522	1.632	-2.2	0.031*	0.001	0.723	0.030

Significance Level: *=.05 **=.01 ***=.001

Chapter VI: Discussion and Practical Implications

Discussion

When evaluating these twelve models, the first four models look at the influence of the supervisor, and human agency on the two scenario questions—seriousness of receiving free gifts, and seriousness of punching a suspect in custody—to determine if Social Learning Theory contributed towards the officer's rating in both scenarios. Models 1 and 2 had no significant effects, with very low pseudo R^2 indicating that these models do not contribute towards explaining why an officer rated the two ethical scenarios. Hypothesis 1 and 2 (positive effect of supervisor) were not supported. The influence of supervisor's care did not predict whether officers rated receiving free gifts or excessive force as very serious.

For Model 3, officers who disagreed that their supervisor cared about them had lower odds of rating receiving free gifts as a *Serious* ethical concern (vs *Neutral*). While this result did not completely support the hypothesis predicting an effect for the *Very Serious* category, it does indicate that there is a negative association between the perception of supervisor care and the likelihood of receiving free gifts as a serious ethical concern. Officers' opinions counting and the opportunity to do what they do best were not consistently significant.

Model 4 indicated that when officers reported that they *Agreed* that their opinions counted, there were higher odds of reporting that the excessive force scenario was *Very Serious.* However, supervisor care and opportunity were not significant predictors, and negative responses did not consistently correspond to lower odds. While this does not fully support the hypothesis, this suggests that when officers feel empowered to do their jobs, they view excessive

force as a very serious ethical concern. This pattern highlights the potential role of empowerment and voice in shaping a positive ethical subculture within a police organization.

Models 5 and 6 analyzed the officers' perceptions of their Command Staff based on two ethical scenarios. Both models strived to look at Subculture Theory, and how it appears within an organizational structure. For both models, the perceptions of Command Staff were stronger predictors than expected, especially for free gifts. In Model 5, the identified hypothesis was not supported. At each level, both the officers' self-ratings and their perceptions of their Command Staff showed strong alignment. The *Less Serious* category presented an interesting association between officers' perceptions that their Command Staff consider receiving free gifts as a very serious ethical concern. This is the only regression where Command Staff perceptions are both aligned, and contradictory. This could occur for several reasons. 1) Officers could have chosen *Less Serious* because this scenario may be perceived as wrong, but it is not the worst ethical scenario they can think of. 2) There also might be some differences between personal ambivalence and organizational cues. For example, the officer personally does not consider receiving gifts as a big deal, but per policy or perception, it is considered a big deal, therefore, their Command Staff would consider it a very serious deal. 3) Since free gifts are a gray ethical issue, Command Staff may publicly signal a zero tolerance but privately be more lenient. 4) The sample sizes in the *Less Serious* category are smaller, which can produce instability within the model and exaggerate contradictory signals, but it can also reflect the real-world ambivalence towards this ethical scenario.

For Model 6, the hypothesis is partially supported. The hypothesis stated that Command Staff would be weakly associated, but for *Very Serious* it was a very strong association. However, the association became negative under the *Less Serious* category. This means that

officers who said *Less Serious* were far less likely to think Command Staff viewed the excessive force scenario as *Very Serious.* These officers see a gap between their own rating, and what they believe Command Staff think. So, even though the individual officer may minimize misconduct, they don't necessarily assume their Command Staff agree. This means there is some subcultural variation, even when organizational messaging sets a stricter formal standard. Even though the confidence interval is large, this effect direction is meaningful and shows a sharp contrast between officers downgrading the seriousness of the scenario versus those who align at the *Very Serious* level.

Models 7 and 8 evaluated the officers' perceptions of their Agency regarding the two ethical scenarios. Both Model 7 and 8's hypotheses were overwhelmingly supported with Agency perceptions dominating with extremely high odds ratios. In Model 7, for each category, there was strong alignment by the agency with varying odds. This means that officers' personal seriousness ratings are linked to their perceptions of their agency's stance, with the extremes—*Very Serious* and *Not Serious At All*—as the strongest. This means that when officers hold extreme views, they strongly project those same views onto their Agency. However, when officers occupy a gray zone, alignment with Agency norms is present but less absolute. Since there is a high odds ratio for *Not Serious At All,* this indicates that there may be a permissive subcultural perception where leniency extends upwards within the organization for minor infractions.

For Model 8, the *Serious* category was insignificant, but the other three categories had varying significance. Similar to Model 7, Model 8 presented strong alignment for the extremes, with divergence in the *Less Serious* category. This divergence can be contributed to a similar perception in Model 6, where officers who said *Less Serious* were far less likely to think the

Agency viewed the excessive force scenario as *Very Serious.* These officers see a gap between their own rating, and what they believe the Agency thinks. So, even though the individual officer may minimize misconduct, they do not necessarily assume their Agency agrees. This means there is some subcultural variation, even when organizational messaging sets a stricter formal standard. Even though the confidence interval is large, this effect direction is meaningful and shows a sharp contrast between officers downgrading the seriousness of the scenario versus those who align at the *Very Serious* level.

Models 9 and 10 evaluate the two ethical scenarios based upon both the officers' perceptions of their Agency and Command Staff. Model 9's hypothesis was partially supported, where it was correct that Agency would be strongly associated, but it was incorrect in the interpretation that Command Staff would not be associated. However, Command Staff were not as significant as Agency. These results indicate that when officers make judgments about gray-zone ethical issues, they are influenced by both the Agency and the Command Staff. This may be because receiving gifts is an area where Command Staff still exerts discretion, which allows for more subcultural variation, which is why Command Staff perceptions retain some weight.

Model 10's hypothesis was also partially supported. Agency was significant, but instead of Command Staff being weakly associated, it was largely insignificant. This means that for both Model 9 and 10, Agency was the predominant variable that influenced Officers' self-rating for each ethical scenario. This means that for these types of ethical issues, officers rely on agency-wide cues rather than intermediate leadership. This result also indicates that there is less room for ambiguity and subcultural discretion, where the agency's stance is definitive and overshadows Command Staff influence. It also may reflect that the agency's excessive force policy is highly formalized through rules, training and oversight. Model 9 and 10 indicates that there is a pattern

that subcultural influence shrinks as the severity and clarity of the ethical violation increases. This means for more gray-area issues, Command Staff norms can shape how officers interpret the agency stance, whereas for clear-cut ethical violations, the agency sets the tone and there is little room for Command Staff deviation.

Models 11 and 12 combine Agency, Command Staff, and officer autonomy. Model 11's hypothesis is partially supported, where Agency and Command Staff were both significant in all categories. Opinions and Opportunity were largely not significant, except for an isolated effect of *Strongly Disagree* on opinions count in the *Less Serious* category which was positively associated. This effect suggests that those who feel most powerless may also be more willing to trivialize receiving gifts, but this was also isolated and not consistent across the other models. This means that for gray-zone issues, both institutional norms and subcultural cues matter, and autonomy plays a small role.

Model 12's hypothesis was partially supported as well but showed a unique perspective. The *Very Serious* category was the only regression that was significant. Command Staff and Opportunity were insignificant in this regression, whereas Agency was significant. What is unique about this regression is that Opinions were positively associated for both *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* categories. Instead of negative responses weakening the relationship, positive responses were directly associated with higher odds of rating excessive force as *Very Serious.* This flips the original assumption that instead of officer disempowerment undermining ethical seriousness, empowerment seems to reinforce it. Officers who feel that their voice matters are more aligned with agency norms on clear-cut ethical violations.

Taken together, the twelve models demonstrate that agency-level norms overwhelmingly shape officers' ethical seriousness ratings, while the influence of supervisors, command staff,

and autonomy depends upon the ethical violation in question. These models indicate little support for Social Learning Theory at the supervisor level, as perceptions of supervisor care did not meaningfully predict seriousness ratings. However, Subculture Theory was much more applicable. Command Staff perceptions were influential in the gray-zone ethical issue (receiving free gifts) but largely faded in significance when the violation was clear like in the excessive force scenario. This indicates that subcultural influence narrows as the severity and clarity of the ethical scenario increases. Finally, officer autonomy variables—Opinions count and Opportunity—did not consistently weaken Agency or Command Staff effects. Instead, in the case of excessive force, empowerment appeared to reinforce ethical seriousness, suggesting that voice and inclusion may strengthen alignment with organizational norms on clear-cut issues. Overall, these findings underscore that while officers may draw on multiple sources of influence, it is the agency's formal ethical culture that remains the primary anchor for shaping perceptions of misconduct, with subcultural and empowerment dynamics playing context-dependent roles.

Policy Implications

The results from this paper are important for police administrators and CEOs to reiterate what police practitioners already experience daily within the department. Having analytical data that shows the relationship between the effect that the agency, command staff, and empowerment has on an officer is the way to help change a toxic subculture. This means that to change the subculture within the department, the change starts at the top and is reinforced (or subverted) by the leadership of the department. This finding aligns with Chong et al (2017) findings based on organizational culture. They hypothesized that the top created the culture. This paper does not necessarily clash with the findings of Reiner (2016), where subculture is changed at the rank-in-file, but does provide better support that for gray-zone ethical violations, Command Staff has

more significant influence on changing culture compared to clear-cut ethical violations While police departments are moving toward transparent and community-oriented policing practices, that belief needs to start at the top, create buy-in with command staff, and the change in culture will take root.

Future Research Considerations

Based upon this research, there are three main areas to explore: the impact of police academies, evaluating a police department's subculture through a longitudinal study, and replicating these results with other departments. In the state of Georgia, there are two types of academies, general academies and agency specific academies. While this paper did not find support for Social Learning Theory at the supervisor level, there might be support at the academy level since that is where the initial influence of general and specific police subcultures is found. Additionally, a longitudinal study would be an appropriate outlet to explore how an organization's subculture changes over time, particularly through the evolution of a police department such as officers aging, officers leaving, leadership changes, and political culture changes. Finally, this study utilized three different police departments. While all three varied in sizes, this study is not generalizable. However, taking these measures and replicating this study across a nation-wide sample would provide robust data regarding police subculture, and how officers are influenced by it.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

This paper utilized a RAND corporation pilot study to evaluate the Knoxville, Broward, and Kettering Police Departments subculture through performance measures based upon the officer reported data, officer reported misconduct data, and community contact data (Davis et al., 2013). Based upon this data, this paper explored two areas of conduct: receiving free gifts, and excessive force. Through these two scenarios, the paper evaluated the formation of police subculture by exploring the relationship between supervisor and officer to determine if Social Learning Theory existed. In addition to evaluating this relationship, this paper also explored the statistical relationship between officer's human autonomy, the Agency's perceived level of acceptable behavior, and Command Staff's perceived acceptable behavior. In this research, it found that for gray-area ethical issues, Command Staff and Agency were significant, whereas in clear-cut ethical issues, officer autonomy and Agency were significant. While findings to support Social Learning Theory were minute, Subculture Theory was heavily supported.

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