Police corruption, ethics and values of police and respondents  
A study based on a citizen survey in Finland  

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1. Introduction

This paper will discuss ethical considerations about police corruption. Police corruption like any other form of public corruption reflects an underlying social and institutional framework of a given country. The reasons for the rise of ethical concerns in organisations are many-sided and complex. Corruption can be destructive and have a paralysing effect on any organisation – especially for the police organisation, which may lose the public’s trust. Organisational corruption can be viewed as a destruction of integrity or moral principles, and assumes in many forms, with different types of participants, settings, stakes and techniques. According to Lindgreen (2004), corruption is commonly defined as a misuse of position in public office of its resources to gain private power and/or political clout; it corruption can be perpetrated by individuals or organisations.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines corruption as the “perversion or destruction of integrity in the discharge of public duties by bribery and favour.” As Mungiu-Pippidi has noted, this definition of corruption emphasises “that public integrity is understood as equal treatment of citizens, which may occasionally be infringed by favouritism” (2006, 87). This means that we should understand whether corruption is the exception or whether it is the norm. In this sense Mungiu-Pippidi suggests a qualitative strategy to reach a proper diagnosis of corruption in a given society (2006, 91).

Police corruption can be defined as “illegal use of organisational power for personal use” (Sherman 1978: 30). According to Quah (2006, 61) Sherman contends that this definition is “the most useful for studying police corruption as a form of deviance that can be both individual and organisational” (Sherman 1978, 31; Sherman 1974). We can also consider this definition of corruption as a wider social question encompassing public ethics and integrity (see Goldstein 1975; Klinger 2006; Huberts 2007).

The consequences of police corruption, like any other form of corruption, are unethical and in many cases unrecognised. “Police corruption distorts police work, encourages the code of
silences, promotes resistance to accountability, and undermines the legitimacy of the police and the government” (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005, 3).

In this paper, we discuss measures the actions taken and the interaction between the Finnish Police and citizens in relation to the legitimacy and ethics of their actions, and especially corruption as part of ethical behaviour. The police are interconnected with other actors in the socio-economic and political-administrative environment. They can be influenced as an organisational unit or as an individual body due to their connections to society. In ethics, “values” signify orientations, standards and objectives which guide and steer people’s actions (Stückelberger 2002, 41).

The image of an organisation is that “it indicates something projected by an individual or group; something perceived or interpreted by others” (Cheney and Vibbert, 1987, 176). The organisation’s image is valuable with regard to their responsibilities and citizens’ trust. Therefore we should pay attention to the relationship between organisational ethics and individual values. Ethical issues relating to the police are focused especially on developing an integrity system for police.

Thee Finnish police has been reported to be the least corrupt police in the EU according to the National Deputy Chief of Police, Toivanen, on the occasion of the publication of the survey Police Barometer 2007 on April 23rd 2008. However, he was also alarmed at the development of popular opinion that the police could be corrupted and be influenced by other actors of the society or individuals. The organisation’s ability to create and manage trust in its internal and external networks may become a critical factor in the organisation’s overall performance and success (cf. Blomqvist and Seppänen, 2003). From a conceptual point of view, the police as a public organisation face a constant legitimacy challenge. The police should be regarded as responsible and accountable for their actions, both the organisation as a whole and individuals performing their police duties.

This study discusses the Police Barometer study of 2007 and a socio-demographic method of assessing the values of the respondents of this study, and why the respondents answered as
they did. The population survey was done in October-November 2007 and the results were published in April 2008. The Valuegraphics tool is based on Hans Zetterberg’s studies and a socio-demographic framework (see e.g. Zetterberg, 1997). According to Zetterberg’s definition the value dimensions are: (1) tradition vs. modernity (2) faithfulness vs. pragmatism (Weber’s *wertrational* and *zweckrational*), and (3) materialism vs. humanism (Sorokin’s *sensate* and *ideational*). Weber distinguished between *wertrational* acts, that is, those based on firm values, and *zweckrational* acts, that is, those based on instrumentality (Weber 1956, 12-13). Modern Western rationality is mostly of the latter kind.

The following figure illustrates the modified value grouping in the Police Barometer 2007 study. Nine categories are proposed in Valuegraphics system as parallel to demographics of age, sex, occupation and other dimensions used in interviews of citizens.

Figure 1 Valuegraphics value groups

The following sections will first clarify the research settings and background of the Police Barometer study. The next sections will discuss the relationship between police corruption and public ethics, the importance of police ethics and integrity, and the quest for a better understanding of human values.
We will underline a balance between organisational ethics, professional integrity, individual values and civil society. Third, we will discuss the measurement and challenges of ethics.

Finally, the paper will summarize the research findings and discuss the managerial implications and the contribution to the existing research in this field.

2. **The Police Barometer: Purpose and Research Setting**

The public are the best experts in judging how police work is seen and experienced. The Finnish Police Barometer 2007, the fifth of its kind has in this regard proven to be a successful means for the external evaluation of police work. The barometer serves the police high command in its strategic planning and decision-making, and also the societal guidance of the police.

The Police Barometer survey of 2007 was the first to include questions were about the ethical standards of the police. About one respondent in four considered it fairly, or very likely that corruption or unethical behaviour exists within the police. About one in six suspected that the police might act in an unethical manner toward outsiders, by misusing information, or mistreating detainees.

The police’s role in preventing crime and improving general security is still very important. Actions concerning youth are regarded as the most important in improving general order and security. Another important means of preventing crime is increasing the awareness of the damage to society caused by economic crime.

According to the results of the Police Barometer it seems that the police have come closer to the public. The police are to be seen more than before in the street scene. The general public is more in contact with the police, either directly as clients, as subjects or as eye witnesses and informants. The image of the police succeeding in their tasks is good and has even improved on earlier results.
The police are expected to be impartial towards interested parties and to react to matters in a way that respects an individual. Even according to the latest police barometers, the public regard the police’s actions in concrete client contacts to be of a high standard. The police’s treatment of the client, however, has reportedly deteriorated across the board. This can probably be explained by more numerous personal experiences and high expectations. The police’s behaviour in individual client contacts is a sensitive indicator of the quality of police work.

The Police Barometer indicates that trust in the police has remained strong. The police have succeeded in their mission and have efficiently influenced the stability of internal security in Finland. The challenges in crime prevention have been met, and the public do not consider international crime an especially serious threat in our county.

In monitoring traffic safety the importance of controlling heavy traffic has grown. Speed control in densely populated areas also considered more important than before. The public also pay much more attention to the information security of the Internet and the possible crimes committed through it. People do not dare to send personal information as easily as before. The information security of the Internet worries people increasingly.

The police have an extensive theatre of operations, which is something the public are well aware of. Even though the majority thinks that the police bear the main responsibility for ensuring general order and security, multidisciplinary actions are seen as the most effective means of security work and crime prevention. It was hoped that the police would invest more resources than before in drug-related tasks. Work against drugs is emphasized as an important task of the police. People especially wish the police would do more against the abuse of drugs among children and young people. The field of police work is generally thought to be very wide.

It is especially positive that a clear improvement was reported in experiences of the effects of dealing with the police among people reporting crime or reporting some other disturbance or
defect during the last two years. Almost two thirds of the respondents reported an understanding of the following procedures concerning reporting a crime. About half of the respondents thought that the reported disturbance or incident was dealt with fairly promptly and the report led to an improvement the general order of the neighbourhood. It is, however, a weakness that a third of those have reporting a disturbance thought that the police did not turn up at the scene of the event. Systematic development work is therefore to be continued.

The police must be the police of the entire population. The approach is that the police react to people from different cultures and races in the same way as they react to mainstream Finns. The results of the Police Barometer support this approach even more strongly than before.

A constant problem in Finland is the considerable amount of violent crime compared to that our western neighbouring countries. In preventing violent crime vast cooperation is needed between public health care, social administration, schools and the police among others. Special attention is to be paid to the position of children who have been victims of violence.

The research conducted by Taloustutkimus Plc and commissioned by the Police department of the Ministry of the Interior. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the assessments and the images of 15 to 79-year-old Finns of the police’s operating environment and the quality of police work. The Police Barometer survey was conducted in the years 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005. This systematic feedback serves to reveal of trends and changes in the operating environment and in police work.

The target group of the study was the 15 to 79-year-old population with the exception of the Province of Ahvenanmaa. About 1000 people were interviewed for the study. The sample was formed by quota sampling, the quotas being the target group’s age, sex, regional and municipal distribution. The sample is intended to correspond to the target group. The interviews were conducted in 95 localities in Finland as face-to-face interviews, using the computer aided personal interview system (CAPI). The interviews were conducted during the period 19 October - 8 November 2007. The mean margin of error of the overall results on a 95% confidence level is ±2.5 percentage units.
The following sections will discuss police corruption in the context of public ethics. The dynamics of police corruption are addressed from the point of view of the individual and the organisation as a whole.

3. Public ethics, integrity and corruption

The term public ethics refers to the individual and institutional values that form the foundation of integrity. In a common understanding both ethics and integrity mean comprehensive consideration aiming at positive and human consequences. In this sense “corruption” can be seen as the “disintegration” of values, norms and ethical principles that guide organisational and individual life. (see Kolthoff 2007, 7)

Ethics, integrity and corruption have several meanings, depending on whether they take place in the public or private sector. However, for most people corruption is something unethical, something considered wrongdoing. On the other hand, ethics, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is “the discipline dealing with what are good and bad...”. This means that “in general, we call unethical those actions for which there is a social consensus that they are a bad thing”, as Eiras sums up in her analysis of “Ethics, Corruption and Economic Freedom”. According to her, corruption does not always reflect so much a lack of ethics as it reflects a lack of economic freedom (2003, 1-2):

“To be sure, there are cases of corruption that responds to the unethical nature of the corrupt individual. But for the most part, the unethical behaviour stems from the environment in which individuals must interact. Convoluted regulations and weak rule of law foster a culture of corruption and informality both in the private and public sectors.” (Eiras 2003, 6)

There has always been a contradiction between private and public life regarding, for instance, the issue of corruption. On the one hand individualistic approaches have tried to explain
causes of corruption for instance through “the rotten apple” theory, and on the other hand there have been attempts to see corrupt individuals in a larger social context.

According to Kolthoff (2007, 40), corruption should be studied in the contextual sense: the wider environment and the system within which corruption takes place. The informal economy which creates opportunities for corruption is one example of this “systemic” approach. In the background, there is also an ethical stage of development from internal states towards external consequences and effectiveness.

The discussion between virtue ethics and consequential ethics especially refers to the question whether an individual or an organisation “can act ethically even when its individual members do not hold themselves to high individual moral standards”, as Kolthoff states (ibid, 41). Virtue ethics is currently one of three major approaches in normative ethics. It may, initially, be identified as the one that emphasises virtues, or moral character, in contrast to the approach which emphasises duties or rules (deontology) or that which emphasises the consequences of actions (consequentialism).1 Virtue ethics is concerned with pursuing a certain type of morally inclusive excellence. Lynch and Lynch refer to Devettere (2002), who says that modern accounts of virtue ethics usually concentrate on character virtues such as temperance, courage, justice and love. “Virtue ethics can be one of our better tools in confronting corruption”, as Lynch and Lynch argue (2003, 374).

Public ethics and corruption also refer to the development of public administration in which a current focus of concern revolves more and more around ethical issues. The past twenty years have witnessed notable changes in the public administrations of Finland and numerous other OECD countries, and behind these there have been many macroeconomic and political choices. For example, the policy of privatization and the application of management models from the private sector have profoundly affected both public service structures and various planning and budgetary resolutions.

1 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/
Since the 1980s there has been an attempt to modernise public administration in keeping with the management philosophy known as New Public Management (NPM). The main hypothesis has been that the application of market mechanisms and various contractual models in public administration yields better cost-efficiency and productivity. NPM applications have also led to many ethical questions regarding responsibility and leadership. The development has been characterised by a marked fragmentation of functions, which in turn has increased the need for coordination and internal surveillance and competition between organisations. The diverse nature of leadership has come to constitute a major challenge in the course of this development, where no model for an ultimate solution is so far in sight.

The role of public administration, however, differs between countries due to their respective political and administrative systems and the state of public finance. Not even among the Nordic countries is any completely clear and uniform administrative reform policy discernible. Nevertheless controlling the growth of public expenditure and reallocation of resources is universally considered a key starting point in the further development of administration. The fundamental issue throughout the world is to what purposes public moneys should be allocated and what in general is the role of public power in the service of the population. A good example of this is the ongoing debate in Finland on the significance of the welfare society for both the public and private sectors. For instance, recent government programmes pay particular attention to the security of the population as a social and economic issue.

The concepts of corruption and public ethics coincide with the practical considerations referred to above. For instance, in Finland the comparatively low level of corruption is likely the outcome of social equality and citizens’ trust in the political and administrative system. Finland’s administrative and legal culture emphasises the values of common good, fairness and justice. There is the moral and legal condemnation of power centralisation and socio-economic disparities in society.

Furthermore, the values of Finnish public administration are built on the value base of a democratic constitutional state and a Nordic welfare society within globalisation. Finland operates in international co-operation for the protection of peace and human rights and for the
development of society. This statement of basic values that consists of the internal and external considerations is one of Finland’s key strengths in combating corruption.

How about the formal arrangements in relation to corruption and public ethics? Finland does not have legislation such as written codes of ethics concerning public administration. Instead the provisions of the State Civil Servants’ Act serve as a code of conduct for state officials and the Act on Municipal Officeholders for local officials. These provisions, that state such traditional values as equality, legality, responsibility and impartiality, are also described in the Administration Act. "New" values as effectiveness, service principle, quality and expertise are considered by the current result-based public service culture.

There are also various guidelines and declarations on professional ethics. For instance, the Act on Health Care Professionals contains a prohibition of accepting bribes, connected with sanctions. The police, customs, taxation and many other administrations have declared guidelines for their own good governance, and started a discussion about values and what is a real ethical basis for administration and the core functions of organisations. The Ministry of Finance, which bears the main responsibility for the state personnel policy, in 2005, published a handbook "Values in the Daily Job - Civil Servant’s Ethics".2

In sum, the ethical values of Finnish public administration and officials can be interpreted as an interaction between value-based codes consisting of shared values and compliance-based codes as a set of agreed-upon standards. Ethics training will be crucial.

Broadly defined, corruption constitutes a threat to democracy and the bases of good governance, security before the law, the protection of property and free competition. The GRECO organ of the Council of Europe in a recent report on the criminalization of bribery drew Finland’s attention to the fact that corruption in its extensive form should not be seen merely as a serious economic crime, but also as criminality constituting a threat to democracy,

health and morality. Moreover, the first article in the UN general agreement on corruption promoting values or issues makes mention of promoting honesty and responsibility and the appropriate care of public affairs and property.

The GRECO country inspection of Finland in 2007 regarding funding of the political parties revealed weaknesses in electioneering funding. GRECO recommended among other things a stricter obligation to declare sources of funding such as campaign donations and payment of campaign expenses, a ban on anonymous donations, the obligation to declare donations made to political parties and that sanctions be considered to support such obligation to declare. In practice it has been difficult for the Government and Parliament of Finland to embark on legislative reforms and it has also been found difficult to set limits on lobbying. In Finnish political circles unclarities in the funding of political parties have not been considered to be corruption, nor, according to recent opinion polls, will the financial scandals have an effect on electoral activity in the forthcoming local elections.

Experts and external observers take the view that there are dire contradictions between the funding scandals of the political parties and the policy of openness so greatly emphasised in Finland, and attention was drawn to this in the Financial Times under the headline “Funding scandal taints Finland’s reputation”.

Although Finnish politicians must reveal their sources of donations received there are no sanctions in place for defaulters. According to the Financial Times no corruption has so far been proven, but public confidence in politicians and in governments has been undermined by the lax attitudes of legislators. Whether the scandal leads to an election remains open, depending on how many more politicians turn out to be implicated in the scandal and whether they are shown to have favoured their anonymous benefactors. The damage to Finland’s good international reputation is uncontested.

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4 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f93f9818-3688-11dd-8bb8-0000779fd2ac.html
The vice-chairman of the Transparency International office in Finland deplores the lack of transparency in political funding and the absence of sanctions to ensure it. Much work will be needed to formulate such sanctions, which the Financial Times claims, are long overdue.

According to Mulgan, the concept of political corruption has double-sided nature: both realist and idealist. “In the democratic game, the players may be realists but the umpires must be idealists”. The rule of law is fundamental, both for stable democracy and for curing corruption, states Mulgan (2005, 1-3).

4. Defining police corruption

Corruption in its various forms has recently become a focus of worldwide concern. Now all countries deal with the various manifestations of corruption. The fight against organised crime especially is associated with measures to combat corruption. Corruption is recognized as a major barrier to the benefits of globalisation and to world trade. “A number of parallels have been proposed for thinking about corruption” (Svensson 2005, 20).

The policing environment has become more complex and challenging. The police and other security organisations are faced with entirely new challenges and demands in this economic and social environment. According to Ratcliffe, challenges for modern policing are significant in two categories: organised crime and transnational crime. Firstly, organised crime groups are involved such activities as racketeering, political corruption, drug trafficking and black market commodity transportation. Secondly, as Ratcliffe argues

“While organised crime has been discussed and perceived as a problem since the 1920s”, the explosion in drug and people trafficking has propelled transnational organised crime into a problem that has been taken seriously only since the 1990s. (Ratcliffe 2008, 22)

Despite the fact that transnational organised crime, especially human trafficking in its various forms, is one of the most serious problems and challenges for governments and police forces
all over the world, there is no common international definition of corruption. Naturally the definitions of what should be considered as corruption varies from country to country resulting from social, political and cultural tradition. For instance, in Finland there is no official definition of corruption in the legislation, law-drafting documents or governmental programmes. But like in many other countries, in Finland too, corruption may emerge when considering essential elements of offences such as malfeasance, bribes, fraud, embezzlement, money laundering and certain types of trading on the stock market.

However, Finland has ratified all significant international agreements in fighting against corruption. For instance, at the European level one of most significant documents is the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption adopted by the Council of Europe in 1999, but it, too, provides no uniform definition of corruption. However, it aims at developing common standards concerning certain corruption offences, such as bribery (active and passive).5

Transparency International (TI) has defined corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption is also defined in general terms as the exploitation of a position of influence for private benefit6. This definition encompasses both direct and indirect corruption, and both petty and grand corruption. It also includes the exploitation of people’s positions within private enterprise and the abuse of public offices by the private sector, for example in the form of bribery. Bribery represents only one – albeit commonplace – form of corruption and no means precludes the existence of other forms. The UN Convention against Corruption also specifies embezzlement, misappropriation of property, trading in influence, abuse of functions and illicit enrichment as criminal offences.

According to the European Code of Police Ethics7, the term "police corruption" is often used to describe a wide range of activities, such as bribery, fabrication or destruction of evidence, favouritism, nepotism, etc.

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6 Combatting Corruption The Finnish Experience. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
“What seems to be a common understanding of police corruption is that it necessarily involves an abuse of position, an abuse of being a police officer. Moreover, it is widely recognized that corruption should be regarded as a constant threat to the integrity of the police and its proper functioning under the rule of law in all Member States.”

One approach to defining police corruption is a rule-based definition. Furthermore, from the ethical point of view police corruption can be studied as a value-based definition. When combining these two approaches with others we can talk about “police corruption and other unethical behaviour”, as considered in questions of the Finnish Police Barometer of 2007” (see p. 28). These two bases of defining police corruption are conceptually different. The rule-based approach could be understood as the “deontological” or compliance-based model characterized by management by rules and procedures. The value-based approach can be seen as the “teleological” or integrity-based model characterized by management and leadership according to results and the satisfaction of the general public and citizens.

Thus there is a contemporary question: Ethics or Corruption? Not even a ruled-based definition of corruption is universal. It is possible that some countries “may not even define some acts (e. g. bribery) as criminal at all”. In the book Fallen Blue Knights it is emphasized that:

“Most countries do not have a crime specifically entitled corruption, but even if they did, the definitions would probably vary at least as much as the definitions of street crimes across the world” (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005, 16).

Furthermore, according to this book the definition of police corruption is based on the common understanding that “the police officer is engaging in corrupt behaviour motivated by the achievement of personal gain”. More exactly defined:
"Police corruption is an action or omission, a promise of action or omission, or an attempted action or omission committed by a police officer or a group of police officers, characterized by the police officer’s misuse of the official position, motivated in significant part by the achievement of personal gain" (ibid.).

This definition includes four key factors: (1) the corrupt act, (2) an agreement between the corrupter and the corruptee, (3) timing of the payment, and (4) the potential personal gain resulting from the transaction (ibid.). This definition allows boundaries to be drawn between police corruption and ethical behaviour. On the other hand there must be a notion between police corruption and other forms of police misconduct. The behaviour of police officers may cross from the proper or ethical into the questionable.

The table below shows differentiates between police corruption and other forms of police misconduct (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005, 31-32).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misuse of position</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Use of force</th>
<th>Illegal gain</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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The police officer may be engaged in corruption in three illustrative cases, as Kutnjak Ivkovic argues (2005, 31). First, there is misuse of position and illegal gain is achieved as a result between the police officer and the corrupter. For instance, the traffic offender who pays money to a police officer in order to not receive a ticket; the police officer is engaged in corruption (line 1). Second, there is misuse of position and the police officer achieves illegal gain as a result of the use of excessive force or a threat to use force. For instance a prostitute who is forced by an explicit threat of force pays the police officer for protection and thereby avoids
arrest; the police officer is engaged in corruption (line 3). Thirdly, there is misuse of position and illegal gain is achieved for instance through theft and burglary, but there is neither an agreement between the police officer and the corrupter nor the use of force or threat of force; the police officer has also engaged in corruption (line 5).

On the other hand, there is also a question of a misuse of position, when the police officer is engaged other forms of misconduct, but not police corruption. According to Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005, 32), three scenarios are possible. First, there is a misuse of position, no illegal gain, but there is an agreement between a citizen and a police officer, such an agreement should be classified as other forms of police misconduct, but not as police corruption (line 2). Second, there is a misuse of position, no illegal gain was solicited or achieved, and the police officer used excessive force, such a situation is typically called police brutality or use of excessive force (line 4). Third, there is a misuse of position, but no illegal gain, agreement, or use of excessive force; such activities – sleeping on duty, “milking” calls – should be classified as other forms of police misconduct (line 6).

In many texts and studies police corruption is stressed in pragmatic questions such as how to control and measure corruption. But still there is a need for more adequate agreement about the basic issues, such as the definition of police corruption. As De Graaf has noted,

“We need more contextual corruption research; many current studies lack consistency”.


Bourdieu’s theory of social action can be understood as an attempt to find “a correspondence between social structures and mental structures”. On the other hand, Seumas Miller has studies social action “as a teleological account”. He has stated that “social actions are the actions of ordinary individual human beings. These include the actions of individuals performed in accordance with conventions, rules and norms, and the actions of individual in all social,
institutional, and professional roles”. Miller emphasizes the actions of the ordinary individual human beings and does not actually consider the “doings” of corporate entities such as governments or nations as social actions (Miller 2001, 2). In Miller’s thinking, the human dimension of social action is a crucial case. According to Miller, “social norms and individual moral principles typically coincide, but this is not necessarily the case” (ibid. 140, see also Miller 2005 and 2007).

For corruption research, the idea of social action could mean that the organisational ethics and individual values are considered in the same context. Moreover, contemporary society and organisations are characterized by two related phenomena - globalisation and information technology. The operating environment for any organisation is now global. Organisations find themselves in the Information Age as opposed to the Industrial Age. (Singer, 2002) The emergent technology creates new ways of communicating and doing business. Furthermore, the increased use of technology and information have caused a situation where developments have been too rapid for people, organisations or societies to fully register, react, discuss, assimilate or morally evaluate. Emergent technology and globalisation seem to have created ethical issues on which there is no moral consensus either worldwide or within any given society or within a specific business field (see for instance Anechiarico 1994; Gitlow 2007; Rowe 2007; Shim and Eom 2008; Silveira and Crubelatte 2007)).

The rules and practices are yet to develop. Thus, this has created a situation where the organisations are dealing with value and ethic related questions that have no previous knowledge base, like for example, the intellectual property rights in Internet, the new technology and Internet related crimes and the lack of knowledge and resources of dealing with these crimes or issues ethically. These are mere examples of the need for consensus and the discussion of legislation needs on a global scale.

5. Police integrity and civil society

Citizens are the foundation for police integrity, because the police derive their social legitimacy from citizen confidence. The current trend in public administration is that
governments increasingly rely on privatization, outsourcing and public-private partnerships to deliver services. This general development of public administration has many far-reaching and contested effects also on police services. For instance, we should become interested in the future status of ordinary citizens at recipient level of police services (public safety), and on the other hand we should ask how the police will consider citizens as a whole at systemic level (public order). There are many other comparable questions between citizen-centric police services and more customer-oriented policing practice. There is a coexistent question at both sides: What sort of a customer is the citizen? Can corporations be citizens?

The term “corporate citizenship” raises important questions about the social role of large organisations and this may also contribute to the relationship of public services and ethics management (see Moon et al. 2005; Waddock 2004; Frederickson and Ghere 2005; Menzel 2007). However, the traditional citizenship perspective is still the guiding principle for the police when protecting civil rights and public safety. But concurrently, the citizen is conceptualised as a customer and customer satisfaction is a superior value, surpassing traditional values such as fairness, social justice, equity, transparency and legality. For instance a consumerist model for processing complaints and enhancing the redress system has come increasingly to the fore, as Brewer notes (2007, 459; see also Vincent-Jones 2005). At the same time police services have launched “balanced” evaluation models which contain a customer view as one of four balancing elements. One interesting point is how to find a balance between the social effectiveness of police services defined by citizens’ needs (e.g. patrolling) and internal efficiency of policing conceptualised as an abstract level (e.g. “reducing crime”).

The interaction between the police and citizens is a fundamental question. For instance, we may ask if there are any externally ultimate ends and internal states of values. Furthermore, what does it mean that the senses of organisational ethics consisting of personal interests and the common good come from outside the individual? Is there a kind of general “Other” between individual and organisational values? Such questions inevitably refer to a quest for legitimacy in which the citizen point of view is essential. There are no exhaustive answers to these questions but we could say according to Denhardt that,
“In our view, citizens can not be reduced to customers without grave consequences for the notion of democratic citizenship. But if we focus on rebuilding the relationship between government and its citizens, we go to the heart of the public interest…The real reason people don’t trust government is because they don’t see government as being responsive, especially with respect to matters of ethics and integrity ” (1999, 287).

The notions above refer to police integrity consisting of internal and external considerations. Integrity is a central trait in democratic society that relies on the quality of the people doing the work and it is also a central determinant of trust in organisations. Many researchers agree that integrity is also central to the mission of policing, as Pagon (2003)\(^8\) points out, citing studies by Delattre (1996) and Becker (1998). Becker offers this definition:

"Integrity is commitment in action to a morally justifiable set of principles and values, where the criterion for moral justification is reality – not merely the acceptance of the values by an individual, group, or society. Because survival and happiness are the ultimate standards of morality, life – not subjective opinion – is the foundation of integrity." (Becker 1998, 154-161)

Integrity and loyalty are two key values for the police and sometimes there is no conflict between the two values, but often there is, and general dominance of the loyalty value over the integrity value, as for instance Van Reenen (1997) has pointed out. Westmarland describes in her article “Police Ethics and Integrity: Breaking the Blue Code of Silence” the tension between police culture and integrity. She refers to the tensions between professional integrity and issues of police secrecy and the blue code or curtain of silence. As she states,

…tensions mostly arise where demands or expectations of certain behaviour is “ethical” or “cultural” but the two are in opposition such as in policing where

“individual integrity and group loyalty are simultaneously expected” (Westmarland 2005, 17; see also Kleinig 1996, 67, Kleinig 2002).

In general, when ethics is associated with excellence it creates virtues. The virtues are values transformed into actions. Virtues require the attitude of seeking the good, not for selfish reasons, and not only because it is economically profitable. Aristotle also identified many important virtues to exist in the institutions: courage, temperance, prudence, justice, moderation, liberality, ambition, wisdom and friendship (Bostock, 2000).

However, an individual’s ethical decision-making process includes ethical judgment and action based on it. In organisational ethical decision-making, an individual’s ethical judgment does not always relate to an individual’s action (Trevino, 1986: Nakano, 2001).

But can we understand human values as a combination of individual needs and societal preferences? For a starting point, Rokeach defines a value and value system as follows:

“A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. A value system is an enduring organisation of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance.” (1973, 5)

Rokeach divides values into two categories: terminal values or ends values and instrumental values or mean values. The former refer to beliefs or conceptions about ultimate goals or desirable end-states of existence that are worth striving for, such as world peace, wisdom and happiness Instrumental values in turn, refer to beliefs or conceptions about desirable modes of behaviour that are instrumental to the attainment of desirable end-states, such as behaving honestly or responsibly (ibid, Rokeach 1979, 48). Accordingly, can there be inconsistency between terminal values and instrumental values that seek the former? After all, values are based on ethics and morals.
Practical examples show more generally that we live in a world of paradoxes in terms of values. When discussing the values of organisations and individuals, we should remember that as such organisations do not have any values. However, because organisations are formed by people, their cultures are shaped by values.

Values are psychological constructions that create a basis for organisations’ activity. Interpersonal relationships help to build a commonly agreed or interpreted concept of what functions an organisation has and how people should behave in the organisation. In order to survive, every organisation needs a high-quality system of shared values, although practical examples do not necessarily support this view.

As Maslow (1943) states, values serve three primary functions: defending against a perceived threat, adjusting to society, and fostering growth. These factors are equally relevant to both individuals and interpersonal relationships, such as teams and organisations.

However, the tension between individuals and organisations is, and has always been, inevitable. From the perspective of organisational development, what is important is how different value choices can affect whether organisational and individual needs are reasonably balanced. We can also ask how we could transfer from norms based on a bureaucratic organisational structure towards working practices based on humanistic values. We may also ask the value gap between police and policed. For instance Rokeach et al. (1971) pointed out in their value survey an alignment of the police on particular value clusters. The police differed from other occupations on preferred end states and modes of behaviour. Police are occupationally and morally committed to the “good end” that has been referred to as the noble cause. It is defined as decision-making that favours utilitarian ends in police activity (see Crank et al. 2007). Thus it refers to a central ethical dilemma between effective crime control and democratic values.

The police, like any structured organisations, have their own hierarchy, rules and practices. There are defined codes or documents to guide the behaviour of employees based on the values of society. Thus, the establishment and communication of the value system supporting
the organisational culture have been identified as one of the key responsibilities within the organisation (Boatright, 1993, 10-13).

Moreover, can the failure in organisational performance be caused by a lack of ethics within the organisation, and can the lack of integrity within the organisation cause a failure in the communication of the strategies? These are important questions to be discussed in ethics and integrity research.

The Finnish police have confirmed their common values, which are intended to direct the practical work of their officers, hoping for discussion in all units n the basis of material provided. Such issues are to be addressed in individual employee reviews by 2009. The four common values of the Finnish police are as follows:

Justice
“Uphold the law, norms and ethical guidelines in all official operations and in private life. Serve as an example to others and show bias to no-one. The law is the same for all. Be reliable and above bribery. This is what the police are all about.”

Professional skills
“Learn through new tasks. Learning new things is a condition of development. Bear your responsibility for the whole and try your hardest. Everybody’s work contribution makes a difference. Improve your expertise. Your operating environment is always changing.”

Service ethos
“The police provide basic security for all as laid down in the Constitution. To identify and serve the client, with client satisfaction a core value.”

Wellbeing of personnel
“Treat personnel as a key success factor. Pursue harmony and as stimulating work environment conducive to wellbeing. Reconcile work and family.”
The main message of the confirmed values is that the Finnish police will tolerate no corruption in any form and that this must be actively repelled. According to the Global Corruption Barometer survey (Transparency International) the Finnish police are above bribery. In general, one in every four citizens around the world who had contact with the police was asked to pay a bribe – and one of every six citizens reported that they ended up paying such a bribe. Barometer also examines the extent to which people perceive that corruption affects key public sectors and institutions in their country – as opposed to their direct experience of bribery. While more than four in five respondents in Cameroon, Ghana, India and Nigeria consider the police to be corrupt, fewer than two in five in Denmark, Germany, Finland, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland report the same.

6. Measuring police ethics and corruption

There are several sources and methods in use to estimate the extent of police corruption and related unethical behaviour: surveys, experiments, case studies, independent commissions (see Knapp 1972), internal agency records and the records of the criminal justice systems. According to Kutnjak Ivkovic,

“A logical source of information about police corruption is someone who knows about it, but all such people (for a variety of reasons) are apt to be predisposed not only to avoid reporting corruption but also to conceal it” (2005, 61).

While we need more information about the extent and nature of police corruption and unethical behaviour, we should pay attention to a more comprehensive policing environment. There are both environmental inconsistencies and organisational limitations around the issue of corruption. As Kutnjak Ivkovic notes, “recent surveys suggest that the public has a relatively positive opinion about police performance but, at the same time, the same public perceives that police officers engage in corruption” (39). On the other hand, a limitation of many existing police collation strategies is the dominance of law enforcement as the only

source of data and information (Ratcliffe 2008, 128-129). In the new intelligence-led policing
environment there is a need for complementary and alternative views and data. In particular,
the use of confidential sources and new technology to combat criminality is one aspect of
policing that has to be measured in proportion to the privacy and civil liberties of individuals.
This brings police officers to the heart of ethical and legal considerations and raises
fundamental questions of police legitimacy. In this sense the relationship between the
effectiveness of the police and public perceptions of legitimacy is crucial.

Citizens as respondents to the Police Barometer 2007 survey can be segmented and profiled
according to characteristics such as gender, age, education, life stage, opinions, priorities and
perceptions. These are policing values and priorities estimated by citizens – what we refer to
as Valuegraphics (see Wilkins and Navarro 2001).

The Valuegraphics tool as an analysis method of Police Barometer divides the respondents
into four different groups based on their values and actions based on their values. In general,
the choices behind the actions are: Is unfamiliar or familiar to the person who has chosen it? Is
it flexible or rigid? Is it related to material things or people?

With the value dimension, the researchers hoped to explain the responses to the questionnaire
more profoundly than by just considering the socio-demographic factors. The eight different
value groups (see Figure 1, p. 5) in the Police Barometer study and their expectations and
values are described in the following:

1. **The Daring Ones**: expect to see the police in their neighbourhood daily, cannot tell
what is unsafe, lock their bikes, believe that the police can be corrupted or act illegally;
have been in contact with the police because of a traffic offence or other kind of police
issue.

2. **The Fact-based**: expect to see the police in their neighbourhood weekly, cannot tell
what is unsafe, believe that businesses can affect safety, they have not done anything to
increase safety but they like to warn neighbours of strangers in their neighbourhood,
they believe that businesses or individuals may try to corrupt the police in their work, have contacted the police because of the traffic offences

3. **The Gourmets**: the role of the police is still very important in fighting crime and securing the neighbourhood, they expect to see the police patrolling their area several times a month or not at all, private security guards or security businesses are considered important and they are trusted, at home they have alarm systems, they do not give their personal information over the Internet, they have contacted the police because of a disturbance in their neighbourhood

4. **The Seekers**: expect to see the police in their neighbourhood monthly, going out at nights is considered to be unsafe and it is avoided, doing business at ATMs is considered risky

5. **The Attire-conscious**: expect to see the police in their neighbourhood several times in a month or not at all, private security guards or security businesses are considered important and they are trusted, they have not done anything to increase safety, they suspect that the policemen may act unethically towards individuals, they consider that the police may treat immigrants more leniently than other residents

6. **The Family-centred home lovers**: expect to see police in their neighbourhood monthly, going out at nights and everywhere is considered unsafe and they avoid it, doing business at ATMs is considered risky, private security guards or security businesses are considered important and they are trusted, the role of the schools and social workers are deemed important in increasing safety, they also warn neighbours of strangers in their neighbourhood

7. **Tradition-homelovers**: they rarely expect to see the police patrolling in their area, the church has an important role in increasing security, they consider that the police can completely take the responsibility for safety and order, they use many technical devices to secure their property and summer cottage and warn their neighbours, doing business at the ATMs is considered risky, they believe that businesses or individual may try to corrupt the police

8. **The Decision makers**: expect to see the police in their area several times in a month, they consider going out at night is unsafe, especially by car, they have acquired to protect themselves
This year's Police Barometer survey was the first to include questions about corruption and unethical behaviour against the police, within the police and against society perpetrated by the police. These three questions were as follows:

1. How likely do you think is it that citizen, business or other stakeholders will corrupt or impede police operations by unethical means (such as having an influence in crime investigation)? (very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, not at all likely, can’t choose)

2. How likely do you think is it that within the police there occurs/exists corruption or unethical behaviour (such as internal theft, fraud, misuse of state property or sexual harassment against fellow workers)? (very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, not at all likely, can’t choose)

3. How likely do you think is it that the police themselves will try to act unethically against citizens or other stakeholders in society (such as misuse of information, leaking information to the public, treating arrested persons in an inappropriate manner or other unethical strategies)? (very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, not at all likely, can’t choose)

About one in four considered it fairly, or very likely that corruption or unethical behaviour exists within the police. About one in six suspects that the police might act in an unethical manner toward outsiders, by misusing information, or mistreating those that they have detained.

The following figures show the number of respondents in different Valuegraphics groupings of the Police Barometer 2007 survey (see Figure 1 of the group definitions). Nine categories are proposed in Valuegraphics system as parallel to demographics of age, sex, occupation and other dimensions used in interviews of citizens.
Figure 2 describes the materialistically thinking tradition-lovers and fact-based thinkers who consider that there could be unethical behaviour or corruption within the police force. These unethical behaviours include internal thefts, frauds, misuse of government funds or sexual harassment of co-workers.

Moreover, 26 % of the respondents believe that corruption or unethical behaviour may occur in the police as well as in any other organisation (Figure 3).

Figure 2. About 38 % of the respondents believe that the police are being corrupted or that police work is being disturbed or influenced in unethical way outside the police organisation. The fact-based and tradition-lover materialists believe in the power of money and the corruptive power of money.

Figure 3. In the Police Barometer study of 2007, 26% of the respondents believe that there is corruption within the police force or some other kind of unethical behaviour within the police force. The daring ones believe that if there is corruption or unethical behaviour in one organization then it is likely also to happen
Among women respondents, the daring ones were those who mostly believed such corruption or unethical behaviour. However, only 2% of the women respondents belong to the daring ones. (Figures 3 and 4)

![Figure 4](image1.png)  ![Figure 5](image2.png)

**Figure 4.** Women respondents who consider that it is likely or fairly likely that there is corruption among the police force or other unethical behaviour. These respondents are mostly the daring ones.

**Figure 5.** Male respondents who consider that it is likely or fairly likely that there is corruption among the police force or other unethical behaviour. These respondents are mostly the daring ones, seekers or family-centred respondents in Valuegraphics groups.

Figure 5 shows that among men, the daring ones, seekers and family-centred groups are those who believe that it is likely or fairly likely that there is unethical behaviour like thefts, sexual harassment, misuse of government funds, and corruption in the police force. These two latter groups are more value-faithful groups, as well as more humanistic and ethical in their actions.

The attire-conscious group (21% of the respondents) in Figure 6 believes that policemen are behaving unethically towards the public or towards other actors in society.

![Figure 6](image3.png)

**Figure 6.** 21% of responders believe that the policemen behave unethically towards public or towards other actors in society.
This group has the most connections with the police. They are also more suspicious about police actions in general. This stems from their doubtful attitude towards other people, towards the groups that differ from their own reference group and from the uncertainty as to whether they are being treated fairly.

The attire-conscious group is more distrustful of the police and of their treatment, which causes them to contact the police more often than any member of the other groups. The Figure 7 depicts the female respondents view: Among female respondents the groups that believe it is very likely or fairly likely that the policemen can be corrupted or act unethically are the value-flexible, humanistic groups.

Figure 7. Female respondents who consider it likely or fairly likely that policemen may act unethically or be corrupted.

Figure 8. Male respondents who consider it likely or fairly likely that policemen may act unethically or be corrupted.

Figure 8 describes the male respondents: Among male respondents, the traditional humanists consider that it is likely or very likely that the policemen can act unethically or be corrupted. The attire-conscious are suspicious of the other people and other actors in society. The family-centred home lovers are more worried about the treatment of their close social network.

However, the strongest group is the attire/conscious group. They are more suspicious towards the other people. The gourmets group sees it essential to secure their own person, therefore, the threats towards their own person are considered difficult.
7. Conclusions

This paper underlines the complexity of studying ethics and corruption in a public sector organisation. The Police Barometer study of 2007 yielded some interesting findings. Firstly, when studying ethics and corruption in organisations, one must recognize the compatibility of organisational ethics and individual values. The ethical values in an organisation can be learned more from factors of organisational culture than from formal systems (Nakano, 2001), and the ethical values should be supported by organisational policies and strategies. Secondly, the close inter-relationship between the effectiveness of the police and public perceptions of police legitimacy must be recognized. The police derive their social legitimacy from public confidence.

In addition, this study and the views of citizens about the unethical behaviour within the police support different internal studies. Therefore, corruption and unethical behaviour can be seen as an obstacle to organisational development and change. Country-specific analysis of corruption and unethical behaviour, like the Finnish Police Barometer study, are therefore critical in designing anti-corruption and anti-unethical behaviour strategies. Anti-corruption strategies may, for example, include citizen hotlines and other confidential feedback systems. Also whistle blowing and organisational ethics can be seen as a challenge for transparency (see Ray 2006; Sturges and Cooke 2008)). Anti-unethical behaviour strategies require transparency in procedures and decision-making. These strategies can be viewed as a new lens of organisational growth: they can help the organisations to foster the transparency of public services, help to move towards greater openness as well as to improve accountability and organisational performance. Therefore, strengthening the sense of moral responsibility among employees is conducive to performance, growth and social progress as well as to the flourishing of organisations. These strategies may be reactive (e.g. when organisations defend themselves against corruption and unethical behaviour reluctantly, only when it has been observed and exposed); preventive (e.g. when organisations try to influence the behavioural patterns and ethical views of individuals in advance); or proactive (e.g. when organizations consider the circumstances, the options, choosing a plan of action, and taking responsibility
for the outcome. The first and perhaps most important factor in the fight against the corruption and unethical behaviour is the commitment and support of top management.

Finnish experiences will give the idea for a “European Police Barometer” or “European Police Quality and Ethics Monitor”. The emphasis would be on the development of a country-specific analysis and monitoring system” – not on comparing survey results as such.
References


Crank, John, Flaherty Dan and Ciacomazzi, Andrew (2007), “The noble cause: An empirical assessment”, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska, United States Fort Pierce Police Department, Fort Pierce, FL, United States Department of Criminal Justice, Boise State University, Boise, ID, United States


APPENDIX
Examples of the Police Barometer 2007 questions

P1  How important are the roles of the following officials (in preventing crimes and improving community safety)

4 important  1 not important at all

Enter a value between 1 and 4

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<td>non-profit organizations</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>church and related organizations</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Fire and rescue</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>private security related businesses</td>
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<td>activities of the private sector</td>
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<td>health care</td>
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<td>boarder control</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>customs</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Defence</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>school</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>social work</td>
<td>______</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>______</td>
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<td>P1_L</td>
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</table>

P2  Can police be responsible of public safety and security issues in Finland?

1  completely  P2
2  mostly
3  minimally
4  not at all
5  n/a

P4  Do you have own experiences of international organized crime in your community or somewhere else (e.g. international drug traffic, terrorism, hacking)

1  A lot  P4
2  Fairly
3  not so much
4  not at all

P8  How important are the following issues at the police work? ( 4 important  1 not important at all

Enter a value between 1 and 4

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<td>1</td>
<td>detection of car thefts</td>
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<td>P8_A</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>detection of apartment thefts</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>P8_B</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>detection of drug related crimes</td>
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<td>P8_C</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>detection of money-related crimes (frauds for example)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>patrolling and visibility</td>
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<td>traffic control</td>
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<td>alarm calls and response</td>
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<td>taking care of intoxicated</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>detection and prevention of violent crimes</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>detection and intervention of home violence</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>cooperation in crime related activities with other public sector actors</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>preventing white collar crimes</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>licence services</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>protecting witnesses</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>stressing the importance of informing crimes to the police</td>
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**P9** Assess the following issues in traffic safety

Enter a value between 1 and 4

(4 important 1 not important at all)

Rotate item presentation

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>speed control in densely populated areas</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>speed control in main roads</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>DUI monitoring (drunken driving)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>monitoring safety belts</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>monitoring other driving issues</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>monitoring heavy traffic (e.g. trucks)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>monitoring light traffic (e.g. mopeds)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>monitoring intersections in densely populated areas</td>
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**P10** What issues makes you feel unsafe?

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<td>1</td>
<td>1 home alone daytime</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2 home alone dark</td>
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<td>P10_B</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3 near home daytime</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>P10_C</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4 near home dark</td>
<td>DK</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5 in the centre daytime</td>
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<td>6 in the centre dark</td>
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<td>7 driving car daytime</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>P10_G</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8 driving night time</td>
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<td>9 ATM</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>P10_I</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10 late on Friday or Saturday nights at your neighbourhood</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>P10_J</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11 late on Friday or Saturday nights at your neighbourhood at the centre (near where you live)</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>P10_K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>