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A Study of Drug-Related Police Corruption Arrests

Philip M. Stinson
Bowling Green State University - Main Campus, stinspm@bgsu.edu

John Liederbach
Bowling Green State University - Main Campus, jlieder@bgsu.edu

Steven L. Brewer
PSU, slb64@psu.edu

Hans Schmalzried
Bowling Green State University - Main Campus, hschmal@bgsu.edu

Brooke E. Mathna
IUP, b.e.mathna@iup.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Author(s)
Philip M. Stinson, John Liederbach, Steven L. Brewer, Hans Schmalzried, Brooke E. Mathna, and Krista L. Long

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Article Title Page

Article title: A Study of Drug-Related Police Corruption Arrests

Author Details *(please list these in the order they should appear in the published article)*

Author 1 Name: Philip M. Stinson, Sr., J.D., Ph.D.
Department: Criminal Justice
University/Institution: Bowling Green State University
Town/City: Bowling Green
State (US only): Ohio
Country: USA

Author 2 Name: John Liederbach, Ph.D.
Department: Criminal Justice
University/Institution: Bowling Green State University
Town/City: Bowling Green
State (US only): Ohio
Country: USA

Author 3 Name: Steven L. Brewer, Jr., Ph.D.
Department: Administration of Justice
University/Institution: Penn State Shenango
Town/City: Sharon
State (US only): Pennsylvania
Country: USA

Author 4 Name: Hans D. Schmalzried, Ph.D., MSEPH
Department: Public Health
University/Institution: Bowling Green State University
Town/City: Bowling Green
State (US only): Ohio
Country: USA

Author 5 Name: Brooke E. Mathna, M.A.
Department: Criminology
University/Institution: Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Town/City: Indiana
State (US only): Pennsylvania
Country: USA

Author 6 Name: Krista L. Long
Department: Criminal Justice
University/Institution: Bowling Green State University
Town/City: Bowling Green
State (US only): Ohio
Country: USA

NOTE: affiliations should appear as the following: Department (if applicable); Institution; City; State (US only); Country. No further information or detail should be included

Corresponding author: Philip M. Stinson, Sr.
Corresponding Author's Email: stinspm@bgsu.edu

☐ *Please check this box if you do not wish your email address to be published*

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Biographical Details (if applicable):

Author 1 bio:
Philip Matthew Stinson, Sr., J.D., Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Criminal Justice Program at Bowling Green State University. His research interests include the study of police crime and behaviors impacting police integrity. He has published articles recently in *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, *Police Quarterly*, and *The Prison Journal*.

Author 2 bio:
John Liederbach, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Criminal Justice Program at Bowling Green State University. His primary research interests include the study of police behavior across community types, suburban and rural policing, police corruption and crime, and white collar crime. He has published in numerous journals, including *Justice Quarterly*, *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, and *American Journal of Criminal Justice*.

Author 3 bio:
Steven L. Brewer, Jr., Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Administration of Justice Program at Penn State Shenango.

Author 4 bio:
Hans D. Schmalzried, Ph.D., MSEPH, is an associate professor in the Department of Public and Allied Health at Bowling Green State University. His primary research interest is applied public health administration.

Author 5 bio:
Brooke E. Mathna, M.A., is a doctoral student in the Criminology Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Author 6 bio:
Krista L. Long is a graduate student in the Criminal Justice Program at Bowling Green State University.

Structured Abstract:

Purpose – The purpose of the study is to provide empirical data on cases of drug-related police corruption. It identifies and describes incidents in which police officers were arrested for criminal offenses associated with drug-related corruption.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is a quantitative content analysis of news articles identified through the Google News search engine using 48 automated Google Alerts queries. Statistical analyses include classification trees to examine causal pathways between drugs and corruption.

Findings – Data were analyzed on 221 drug-related arrest cases of officers employed by police agencies throughout the United States. Findings show that drug-related corruption involves a wide range of criminal offenses, and that cocaine is the most prevalent drug. Older officers and those employed by large agencies are less likely than others to lose their jobs after a drug-related arrest.

Research limitations/implications – The study is limited by the quality of the available content in each case. The data are also limited to cases that involve an official arrest. Additionally, the data are the result of a filtering process that includes the exercise of media discretion as to types of news stories reported and the content devoted to particular news stories.

Practical implications – The data provide documentation of drug-related corruption and the drug trade in 141 police agencies and the need for police executives to develop effective strategies to address it.

Originality/value – The study augments the few drug corruption studies published and is the only study known to describe drug-related corruption at many police agencies across the United States.

Keywords:

Police corruption, police crime, drug-related corruption, CHAID Analysis

Article Classification:

Research paper

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Running Heads:

Introduction

Police scandals during the last two decades of the twentieth century exposed dramatic cases of drug-related corruption in several major American cities. The scandals arose just as the nation embarked on a high-profile campaign to intensify drug enforcement and the ongoing "war on drugs," an irony that generated both public outrage and appeals to stem the corrosive influence of drugs on street-level policing (Dombrink, 1988). Scandal emerged in Miami (FL) with the criminal indictment of a band of rogue cops dubbed as the "River Gang" who specialized in the shakedown and theft of drug dealers (Sechrest & Burns, 1992). Scandal also erupted in two New York City precincts where investigations uncovered wide-scale drug corruption including police who burglarized drug dens, trafficked in stolen drugs, and robbed drug dealers and their customers (Baer, Jr. & Armao, 1995). In Los Angeles (CA), officers assigned to the Rampart division of the LAPD committed acts of drug-related corruption that involved participation in a bank robbery, the theft of cocaine from a police evidence room, and the beating of an arrested drug dealer (Los Angeles Police Department, 2000). A report of the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) outlined other contemporary drug-related corruption scandals in Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, New Orleans, and Philadelphia (United States General Accounting Office, 1998).

The scandals in New York City culminated in the establishment of a delegation to investigate corruption in the New York City Police Department (NYPD) commonly referred to as the Mollen Commission (Mollen Commission, 1994). The two year investigation identified an emergent nexus between police misconduct and the operation of drug markets that had transformed the composition of police corruption. Whereas previous scandals usually arose within the context of payoffs tied to gambling or prostitution rackets, the Commission described

how the burgeoning narcotics trade had become the source for more "aggressive, extortionate, and often violent" corruption that "parallel[ed] the violent world of drug trafficking ... The distinction between the criminal and the corrupt cop has disappeared. Corrupt cops no longer merely use their authority to exact payoffs; they now actively engage in criminal activity" (Baer, Jr. & Armao, 1995, p. 76). The Commission highlighted the role of cocaine and crack markets that afforded opportunities to use illegal drugs as well as engage in acts of perjury, burglary, robbery, and the brutalization of citizens involved in the drug trade.

The corruption scandals of the 1980s and 1990s also illustrate how drug-related corruption contributes to the overall production of misconduct and other forms of police deviance, at least in the composition that existed in several big-city police departments during that period. These investigations revealed how drug corruption tends to spawn impropriety and in some cases violent crimes perpetrated by police, a phenomenon the Commission referred to as the new "patterns" of modern police corruption. These patterns demonstrate the need for specific data on drug-related corruption within the more general line of research on police deviance and studies designed to explore these relationships. The importance of drug corruption also relates to problems that stem from both on-duty and off-duty, or "recreational" drug use by police, including potential safety hazards associated with the legitimate use of coercive force and encounters that require critical thinking and split-second decisions (Mieczkowski, 2002). Another factor that contributes to the importance of drug-related corruption is the potential loss of public trust emanating from cases that expose the "hypocrisy" of drug use among police—the most conspicuous actors in the enforcement of drug laws (Kraska & Kappeler, 1988, p. 4).

The purpose of the current study is to provide empirical data on cases of drug-related police corruption. Our research identifies and describes incidents in which police were arrested

for criminal offenses associated with drug-related corruption through a content analysis of published newspaper articles. The study specifically examines these cases in four parts: 1) arrested officers, the employing agencies, and the most serious offense charged, 2) drugs involved, 3) patterns or the nature of the underlying misconduct in the cases, and 4) job loss among officers involved in cases of drug-related corruption. More broadly, our goals are to provide contemporary data on drug-related corruption that augments the handful of existing studies on the topic published over two decades ago during the period of the dramatic scandals of the 1980s and 1990s; and, to describe the various forms of drug-related corruption as the phenomenon occurs in police agencies across the United States—including those unlikely to be scrutinized by a "big city" special commission or become the subject of a national scandal. Before describing our methodology in more detail, we proceed with an overview of the prior research on drug-related police corruption.

Research on drug-related corruption

The line of research on drug-related police corruption is comparatively short but does include a handful of often-cited works that provide the basis for most of our knowledge about the problem. The existing research covers a number of issues important to the study of drug-related corruption including: a) drug use by police, b) the etiology of drug-related corruption, c) the classification of misconduct involved in drug-related corruption, and d) the relationship between drug-related corruption and other forms of police misconduct and crime.

Drug use

Mieczkowski (2002) explains that very little is known about prevalence and the types of drugs used by police because these data are either not typically collected, or if they are collected are withheld from the public. Carter and Stephens (1994) conclude that marijuana is the most

commonly used drug among police and cocaine the second-most commonly used drug based on their observations in 13 agencies. More recent data derived from self-report surveys of officers in a single agency in Australia suggest that police use a wider variety of drugs including marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy, heroine, ketamine, and non-prescribed steroids (Gorta, 2009). In terms of results from drug tests, no entity collects comprehensive data on the number of law enforcement officers who test positive; but, one journalistic investigation reported a 1.1 percent failure rate (75 officers) among Boston Police Department police tested from 1999-2006, as well as the failure of 14 LAPD officers drug tested from 2000-2006. Over 81 percent of the positive tests in Boston involved the use of cocaine, and police executives indicated that they believed cocaine had surpassed marijuana as the drug of choice among police (Smalley, 2006). Lersch and Mieczkowski (2005) reported results of drug tests conducted in a large police agency in the Eastern United States in which "very few" officers tested positive (~ .005%). Of course, the results of formalized drug testing protocols could be attributed at least in part to "announcement effects" and the fact that officers employed by these agencies were aware of testing protocols (Lersch and Mieczkowski, 2005, p. 292). Also, scholars often point out that drug test results are significantly influenced by the method of testing, with cocaine the most frequently detected drug based on hair analysis and marijuana the most frequently detected drug based on urinalysis (Mieczkowski, 2002; Mieczkowski and Lersch, 2002; Lersch and Mieczkowski, 2005).

Kraska and Kappeler (1988) used participant observation and unstructured interviews of police in one medium-sized agency (50 sworn officers) to provide what is widely-cited as the only empirical description of *on-duty* drug use by police. They found that 20 percent of the officers used marijuana on duty at least two times per month, and that 10 percent had used other

non-prescribed controlled substances while on duty, including hallucinogens, stimulants, and/or barbiturates. Both pre-employment drug use and off-duty or "recreational" drug use were associated with the on-duty use of drugs. The study provided initial evidence to suggest that the problem of on-duty drug use by police is not limited to large urban departments (Carter & Stephens, 1994).

Etiology

Earlier scholarship that mentioned the etiology of police corruption sometimes focused on the role of deviant personality traits and/or defective recruitment and selection processes (see, e.g., Lewis & Blum, 1964); but, contemporary scholars usually attribute the cause(s) of police deviance and drug-related corruption to factors associated with the organization of police work and the occupational culture of police. Stoddard (1968) was among the first to emphasize the role of police culture and the nature of police work in the causation of what he referred to as "blue coat" crime. Kraska and Kappeler (1988) specifically associate drug use by police in part to the opportunity structure of street-level policing, including drug availability, lack of direct supervision, and exposure to drug users and dealers. The report of the GAO (1998) highlights the influence of deviant police subcultures that both promote drug corruption and protect police who adhere to deviant subcultural norms such as secrecy, loyalty, and cynicism about police work and the criminal justice system. Carter and Stephens (1994) focused on how police work itself seems to promote drug-related corruption. They viewed substance abuse as a "job related condition" among police, particularly those working undercover vice in jurisdictions that are drug trafficking distribution centers (Carter & Stephens, 1994, p. 107). Girodo (1991) also emphasized how assignment type promoted drug use and corruption among a small sample of undercover vice detectives.

Classification

Carter (1990) used qualitative methods including personal contacts and unstructured interviews of police in 13 agencies to construct a typology of the various types of misconduct involved in drug-related police corruption. The typology defines two distinct and "largely independent" forms of drug corruption. "Type 1" or traditionally-conceptualized drug corruption involves officers motivated by illegitimate goals including personal profit. Specific forms of Type 1 drug corruption include the extortion and robbery of drug dealers, as well as the acceptance of bribes to protect them. "Type 2" drug corruption is comprised of officers motivated by organizationally-derived legitimate goals ostensibly tied to the arrest and conviction of dealers and users. Specific forms of Type 2 drug corruption include violations of criminal procedure, perjury, and the planting of criminal evidence. Mieczkowski (2002) utilized an adaptation of this taxonomy to describe the varieties of drug-related corruption perpetrated by the "River Gang" cops in Miami (FL) during the 1980s.

Other misconduct

Carter's (1990) typology underscores the corrosive influence of the drug trade and the ways in which drug markets tend to instigate many different forms of police misconduct and crime. These markets provide opportunities for personal gain through payoffs, shakedowns, robberies, and opportunistic thefts, as well as types of misconduct tied to drug enforcement goals and violations of the rights of criminal defendants including perjury and the planting of evidence. Officers who limit their exposure to off-duty or "recreational" drug use also expose themselves to the potential for corruption because contacts with street-level dealers invariably leave them vulnerable to manipulation and coercion (Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1998). Carter (1990) concluded based on his observations of drug corruption in 13 police agencies that "the nature of

corruption has changed, particularly with respect to police drug users, the emergence of crack houses as easy targets, and the frustration with drug-law enforcement associated with the extraordinarily high volume of drug traffic"—statements the Mollen Commission (1994) would soon echo in findings that exposed the drug trade as the hub of police corruption, at least within particular crime-ridden NYPD precincts.

The present study

Data for the current study were collected as part of a larger study on police crime. The larger study was designed to locate cases in which sworn law enforcement officers had been arrested for any type of criminal offense(s). Data were derived from published news articles using the Google News™ search engine and its Google Alerts™ email update service. Google Alerts searches were conducted using the same 48 search terms developed by Stinson (2009). The Google Alerts email update service sent a message each time one of the automated daily searches identified a news article in the Google News search engine that matched any of the designated search terms. The automated alerts contained a link to the URL for the news articles. The articles were located, examined for relevancy, printed, and archived for subsequent coding and content analyses. The larger study on police crime identified 2,119 criminal cases that involved the arrest of 1,746 sworn officers during the period of January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2007. The arrested officers were employed by 1,047 nonfederal law enforcement agencies representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The present study focuses on the identification and description of the subset of cases in which police were arrested for drug-related criminal offenses.

Coding and content analysis

Coding initially involved the identification of drug-related cases within the larger data set on police crime. The nature of drug-related police corruption and official responses to the problem complicated the identification of drug-related cases. The criminal charge(s) in some cases did not correspond to the underlying nature of the criminal act(s) described in the news articles, either because the cases involved multiple forms of misconduct and/or crime or the occurrence of preferential charges presumably filed as a courtesy to the arrested officer. Another issue occurred in cases where police were charged with generic "official misconduct" crimes in lieu of specific drug-related offenses that may constitute an embarrassment to the employing agency. These issues precluded straightforward coding schemes based solely on official charges.

The drug-related cases were identified instead using Stinson's (2009) typology of police crime. The typology includes five broad categories of police crime including crimes that are drug-related, alcohol-related, sex-related, violence-related, and/or profit-motivated. Each of the 2,119 cases identified in the larger study were coded according to the five-category typology. The categories of the typology are not mutually exclusive in that police crimes often involve more than one of these types of misconduct. In a case where an officer was charged with an evidence room theft of cocaine in excess of $1,000,000, for example, the case would be coded as both drug-related and profit-motivated.

Additional content analyses were conducted in order to code the cases in terms of the: (a) arrested officer, (b) employing agency, (c) each of the charged offenses, (d) specific drugs, (e) the nature of the underlying police misconduct and patterns of drug-related corruption, and (f) organizational employment outcomes and criminal case dispositions. Each of the charged offenses was coded using the data collection guidelines of the National Incident-Based Reporting

System (NIBRS) as the protocol for each criminal offense categories (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000, pp. 21–52). Several non-NIBRS offense categories were added to the coding instrument to account for offenses not included in the NIBRS.

The research team also developed a supplemental coding sheet to identify specific drugs using the Drug Enforcement Administration's *Drugs of Abuse: Uses and Effect* table as the coding protocol (see U.S. Department of Justice, 2005, p. 75). The table consists of 26 drugs in eight classes: narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, cannabis, anabolic steroids, inhalants, and alcohol. The present study focuses on drugs other than alcohol, which was excluded from the drugs of abuse protocol. The drug crack was added as a drug variable on the protocol and distinguished from cocaine based largely on the findings of the Mollen Commission and the identification of unique problems associated with the operation of crack markets and their impact on the nature and character of police corruption.

The nature of the underlying police misconduct and patterns of drug-related corruption was coded using a coding sheet developed specifically for the present study. Variables were derived from the Mollen Commission's findings in regard to various forms of misconduct and crime associated with drug-related police corruption including drug trafficking, theft/shakedown, drug use, falsification/perjury, and facilitation of the drug trade. Facilitation cases involved officers who took actions to protect, assist, and/or hinder the apprehension of a drug dealer, most commonly the selling or providing of information to dealers to alert them of an ongoing investigation and/or impending arrest. The research team included four additional areas of drug-related misconduct not specified by the Mollen Commission including forged prescriptions, thefts from police evidence rooms, planting evidence, and sexually-motivated misconduct.

Sexually-motivated drug corruption includes cases in which the officer was involved with drug-related activity for the purpose of sexual incentives.

Reliability

Analytic procedures were undertaken to ensure reliability of the data. One of the most widely accepted tests of intercoder reliability for content analyses is the percentage of agreement test, wherein the percentage of agreement between two coders is calculated (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). Additional coders were employed to independently code a random sample of five percent of the total number of cases. The overall level of simple agreement between two coders across the variables of interest in this study (97.9%) established a degree of reliability well above what is generally considered "acceptable" (p. 147). Reliability was also computed for certain variables of interest using Krippendorff's alpha (see Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). Krippendorff (2004) has cautioned content analysts to "rely only on variables with reliabilities above $\alpha = .800$" (p. 241). The Krippendorff's alpha coefficient is very strong across 27 drug-specific "drugs of abuse" variables (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .914$), as well as for the variable calculating the "most serious offense charged" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .954$). The coefficient was not formally calculated for the "pattern of drug corruption" variables because there was 100% agreement between two coders across all of those variables in each case included in the current study (meaning Krippendorff's $\alpha = 1.00$).

Statistical analyses

Classification tree analysis was utilized as a statistical technique to uncover the causal pathways between the types of drugs involved and the forms of police corruption. This approach moves beyond the simple one-way additive relationship of linear statistical models by identifying the hierarchical interactions between the independent predictors and their compounding impact.

Classification trees, also known as decision trees, examine the entire dataset and produce a graphical output that ranks the variables by statistical importance. The most influential variable is represented at the top of the tree (known as the root node). This variable is used to split the data in a recursive manner through the creation of subsets into the lower branches of the tree. Variable selection and splitting criteria are driven by the algorithm of the tree program. Decision tree techniques have received attention due to their ability to handle interaction effects in data without being bound to statistical assumptions (Sonquist, 1970). The technique has recently been used to examine criminal justice topics including sex offenders (Beauregard & Mieczkowski, 2012), the criminal networks of delinquents (Bouchard & Nguyen, 2010), and homicide offenders (Neuilly, Zgoba, Tita & Lee, 2011).

The current research used Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID), a technique that uses the *p*-value of the Chi-square for splitting criteria (Kass, 1980). CHAID examines all possible splits for predictor variables and selects predictors based on the optimal number of splits that can be created. CHAID was performed with the following parameters: (a) tree depth set to five levels, (b) parent nodes limited to no less than 10 cases, (c) child nodes limited to no less than five cases, (d) likelihood ratio Chi-square splitting criteria.

The predictive power of logistic regression and classification trees was assessed through the area under the curve (AUC) component of the receiver operating characteristic (ROC). The AUC assesses the predictive accuracy of a statistical model and serves as the preferred method for assessing and comparing models (Dolan & Doyle, 2000). The ROC curve considers the sensitivity versus 1- specificity, a representation of the true positive rate versus the false positive rate (TPR vs. FPR). The curve is displayed graphically by plotting the true positive rate (TFP) on the y-axis and the false positive rate (FPR) on the x-axis. ROC curves are interpreted through

AUC, a score that ranges from zero to one. A straight line through a ROC curve is the equivalent of .5 and suggests that the model is no better at prediction than flipping a coin. A score of one indicates that the model is able to accurately predict all cases.

Strengths and limitations

The news search methodology utilizing Google News provided an unparalleled amount of information on drug-related crimes committed by police officers employed by law enforcement agencies across the United States. Google News is fast becoming the preferred method to conduct news-based content analyses (Carlson, 2007). Since its inception in 2002, Google News has been used to conduct content analyses of news coverage on a wide range of topics including TASER® lawsuits (Adams & Jennison, 2007), human trafficking (Denton, 2010), and a variety of medical and public health-related topics (e.g., Anema et al., 2010; Freifeld, Mandl, Reis, & Brownstein, 2008; Lee, Barr, Catherine, & Wicks, 2007; Seifter, Schwartzwalder, Geis, & Aucott, 2010). Google News offers some clear advantages over other aggregated news databases (e.g., Dialog®, Factiva®, LexisNexis®) (Cunningham, 2005; Ferguson, 2005; Galbraith, 2007; Ojala, 2002). The Google News search engine culls content from over 50,000 internet-based news sources (Bharat & Beckmann, 2010). Google News incorporates Google's automated search algorithms that are the current industry standard. The application offers more up-to-date stories and appears to be more likely to locate stories that have not been covered by news wire services. The search engine also provides multiple links to related news content. As such, if a particular story provides insufficient information, it is relatively easy to locate more relevant news sources.

There are three primary limitations of these data. First, our research is limited by the content and quality of information provided on each case. The amount of information on each

case varied, and data for several of the variables were missing for some of the cases. Second, the data are limited to cases that involved an official arrest. We do not have any data on drug-related police corruption that did not result in an arrest. Finally, it should be recognized that these data are the result of a filtering process that includes the exercise of discretion by media sources in terms of both the types of stories covered and the nature of the content devoted to particular stories (Carlson, 2007).

Results

The news searches identified 221 cases in which police were arrested for a criminal offense associated with an incident of drug-related corruption. The cases involved the arrests of 188 sworn officers employed by 141 nonfederal state and local law enforcement agencies located in 123 counties in 32 states across the United States. Some of the officers had multiple criminal cases (n = 33). There were 45 cases during 2005, 95 cases during 2006, and 81 cases during 2007. The remainder of this section is organized in four parts. Part one presents data on the arrested officers, the employing agencies, and the most serious offense charged in each case. Part two identifies the specific drugs involved. Part three describes patterns or the nature of the underlying corruption in the cases. This part of the results includes our classification tree analysis examining causal pathways between specific drugs and patterns of corruption. Part four identifies the predictors of job loss among the arrested officers.

Officers, agencies and offenses

Table 1 presents information on the cases in terms of the arrested officers and their employing agencies. Most of the cases involved male officers (94.1%). Most of the cases also involved police employed in a patrol or other street-level function (85.1%). These included a relatively small number of cases involving street-level detectives (n = 10). There were 10 cases

that involved police managers, including eight cases that involved police chiefs. The modal category for known officer age was 28 to 35 years (*n* = 93, 42.1%). The modal category for known years of service was zero to five years (*n* = 72, 32.6%). Most of the cases involved officers employed by municipal police agencies (76.4%). The modal category for agency size was 1,000 or more officers (*n* = 76, 35%); however, roughly two-thirds of the cases of drug-related corruption (65%) occurred in smaller agencies including those employing 0-24 full-time sworn officers (*n* = 55, 24.9%), those employing 25-99 full-time sworn officers (*n* = 35, 16.1%), and those employing 100-999 full-time sworn officers (*n* = 55, 24.9%). Almost two-thirds of the cases involved drug-related corruption that occurred while an officer was on-duty (*n* = 142, 64.3%), while the remainder of cases involved corruption that occurred off-duty (*n* = 79, 35.7%). Table 1 shows that only about one in five of the arrested officers (21.3%) were arrested by the agency that employed them.

<<<<< Insert Table 1 about here >>>>>

Table 2 presents the cases in terms of the most serious offense charged. The most serious offense charged was a specific drug/narcotic offense in 98 of the cases (44.3%). These cases primarily involved charges of drug trafficking or personal drug use. More importantly, the most serious offense charged was *not* a specific drug/narcotic offense in over one-half of the cases (*n* = 123, 55.7%). The finding demonstrates the variety of criminal offenses committed by police involved in cases of drug-related corruption, many of which are defined as *more serious* than specific drug offenses according to the UCR hierarchical rule, including cases that involved charges of forcible rape (*n* = 3), robbery (*n* = 42), aggravated assault (*n* = 4), burglary (*n* = 5), theft from building (*n* = 6), and all other theft/larceny (*n* = 4). Overall, roughly 40 percent of the cases (*n* = 88, 39.8%) involved charges that were more serious than specific drug offenses. The

remainder of cases (*n* = 35, 15.8%) involved charges defined as less serious than specific drug offenses including driving under the influence of drugs (*n* = 7), official misconduct (*n* = 5), destroying or tampering with evidence (*n* = 3), perjury/false reports (*n* = 3) and other offenses (*n* = 17).

<<<<< Insert Table 2 about here >>>>>

Specific drugs

Table 3 identifies the specific drugs involved in the cases. Specific drugs could be determined in 196 of the 221 cases (88.7%). A single drug was identified in 130 cases. More than one drug was identified in 66 of the 196 cases in which specific drugs were identified (33.7%). Thus, the categories in Table 3 are not mutually exclusive. The top portion of the table presents these data in terms of drug classes. More than one-half of the cases in which a specific drug(s) were identified involved stimulants (*n* = 115, 58.7%). Cannabis was the second most prevalent drug category (*n* = 78, 39.8%). More than one in five of the cases in which a specific drug(s) was identified involved some type of narcotic (*n* = 44, 22.4%). A smaller number of cases involved other classes of drugs including hallucinogens (*n* = 16, 8.2%), anabolic steroids (*n* = 15, 7.7%), and/or depressants (*n* = 7, 3.6%).

<<<<< Insert Table 3 about here >>>>>

The bottom portion of the table presents data on the specific drugs involved in the cases. Cocaine was the most prevalent specific drug, and was involved in close to one-half of the cases in which a specific drug(s) was identified (*n* = 96, 49.0%). Marijuana was the second most prevalent drug (*n* = 78, 39.8%). Cocaine and/or marijuana were involved in 174 of the 196 cases in which a specific drug(s) was identified (88.8%). Crack was the third most prevalent drug (*n* = 23, 11.7%). Taken together, cocaine and/or crack were involved in 119 of the 196 cases in

which a specific drug(s) was identified (60.7%). The drug corruption cases less commonly involved a wide variety of other specific drugs. The three most prevalent narcotics were hydrocodone (*n* = 16), oxycodone (*n* = 14), and heroin (*n* = 13). The most prevalent hallucinogens were MDMA & analogs (*n* = 7) and phencyclidine & analogs (*n* = 7). There were 15 cases that involved anabolic steroids (not testosterone). The most frequent depressant was benzodiazepines (*n* = 5). The bottom portion of Table 3 also details the 66 cases in which multiple specific drugs were identified. Two different specific drugs were identified in 46 cases (23.5%), and there were 20 cases (10.2%) with three or more different specific drugs identified.

Patterns of corruption

Table 4 presents the nature of the underlying misconduct or patterns of drug-related corruption. The categories in Table 4 are not mutually exclusive because more than one form of misconduct occurred in roughly one-half of the cases (*n* = 105, 47.5%). The most recurrent pattern of drug-related police corruption identified was drug trafficking, as officers were found to have been selling and/or dealing drugs in about one-half of the cases (*n* = 108, 48.9%). The second most prevalent pattern of drug-related corruption identified were thefts/shakedowns (*n* = 64, 29.0%). The table provides subcategories to further describe the nature of cases that involved thefts/shakedowns. The more common scenarios involved warrantless searches/seizures (*n* = 39), thefts/shakedowns of street-level drug dealers (*n* = 33), and those that involved car stops and drug couriers (*n* = 30). Thefts/shakedowns less commonly involved off-duty robberies (*n* = 9), warrant/consent searches/seizures (*n* = 8), and dispatched calls-for-service (*n* = 7).

<<<<< Insert Table 4 about here >>>>>

Cases of drug-related corruption more commonly involved police who dealt drugs or perpetrated shakedowns than police who used drugs. Less than one-third of the cases involved drug use by police (n = 61, 27.6%). The next most prevalent pattern of drug corruption involved cases in which police facilitated the drug trade (n = 40, 18.1%). These cases involved officers who took actions to protect, assist, and/or hinder the apprehension of a drug dealer, most frequently the selling or providing of information to dealers to alert them of an ongoing investigation and/or impending arrest. The cases also involved forged prescriptions (n = 13), the falsification of reports and other documents (n = 13), theft from police evidence rooms (n = 10), and the planting of evidence (n = 6). Eleven cases involved what we term "sexually-motivated" drug corruption, or cases wherein an officer was involved with drug-related activity for the purpose of sexual incentives. In some cases, the officer furnished drugs to individuals in exchange for sexual favors. In other cases, the officer attained sex by threat or use of force. A series of cases involved the sexual exploitation of children for the purpose of pornographic "photo-shoots." During the incidents, the officer furnished drugs and other controlled substances in an effort to intoxicate the children. Overall, roughly one-half of the cases of drug-related corruption (46.2%) involved multiple patterns of misconduct. Cases with multiple patterns of misconduct usually involved drug trafficking as well as various forms of thefts and shakedowns.

CHAID procedures were utilized to identify the causal pathways between the statistically significant variables to create classification estimates for six of the most prevalent forms of misconduct including drug trafficking, the three most prevalent types of theft/shakedown, drug use, and facilitation of the drug trade. Cocaine was the strongest predictor for five of the six decision trees where specific drugs were the independent variables (Table 5). CHAID also identified numerous other drugs that all significantly contributed to classification estimates

beyond the splitting criterion. The following drugs were represented in nodes below the splitting criterion: hydrocodone, heroin, marijuana, crack, anabolic steroids (other than testosterone), phencyclidine & analogs, oxycodone, and cocaine ($p < .001$). The CHAID models presented in Table 5 had varying levels of predictive power AUC = .64 to AUC = .86. The models that examined facilitation of the drug trade had poor predictive power. In contrast, the models that examined various forms of theft/shakedown had the highest levels of predictive power.

<<<<< Insert Table 5 about here >>>>>

The tree predicting theft/shakedowns of drug couriers and during car stops had the highest predictive power (AUC = .86, $p < .001$) and is displayed in Figure 1. Cocaine was identified as the strongest predictor and, therefore, was selected as the splitting criterion for the data. The remaining branches of the tree were based on the responses to the splitting criterion. Marijuana was a statistically significant predictor, but only in cases where cocaine was present. The CHAID tree also identified phencyclidine & analogs as a predictor, but only in cases involving the presence of marijuana and cocaine.

<<<<< Insert Figure 1 about here >>>>>

A second set of decision tree analyses predicted the various patterns of corruption using drug classes instead of specific drugs (see Table 5). Stimulants were selected as the splitting criterion, and were the strongest predictor for drug use, drug trafficking, and shakedowns and thefts from car stops and drug couriers. Narcotics were the strongest predictor for shakedowns of street-level drug dealers and shakedowns and thefts from warrantless searches and seizures. Anabolic steroids were the strongest predictor for facilitation of the drug trade. In addition to the splitting criterion, cannabis, depressants, anabolic steroids, and hallucinogens were all significant predictors ($p < .001$). CHAID trees that utilized drug categories as predictors had a large range

of predicted power. The tree predicting facilitation of the drug trade had a low AUC score of .55, suggesting that the tree is barely able to predict 50% of the cases correctly. The trees predicting the specific types of shakedowns each have AUC scores that exceed .84. The strongest tree predicted thefts/shakedowns during warrantless searches or seizures based on narcotics as the strongest predictor and splitting variable (AUC = .87) as shown in Figure 2. Hallucinogens were a significant variable only when narcotics were not present in the case. The tree also identified stimulants as a significant variable, but only when the cases did not involve narcotics or hallucinogens. Cannabis was significant based on either the presence or absence of stimulants and the absence of hallucinogens and narcotics.

<<<<< Insert Figure 2 about here >>>>>

Job loss

Forward binary logistic regression was conducted to determine the variables that predict job loss among officers arrested for drug-related crimes (see Table 6). Data screening led to the elimination of several outlier cases that were confounding interactions between variables and causing severe multicollinearity in regression models. Bivariate correlations computed for each of the independent variables revealed that none of the variables were highly correlated with each other. Tolerance statistics and variance inflation factors were also examined. None of the tolerance statistics were below .944 and none of the variance inflation factors exceeded 1.059, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem in the model. Regression results indicate that the overall model of four predictors—charged with a drug crime, duty status at time of crime, age of arrested officer, and agency size by the number of full-time sworn employees—is statistically reliable in distinguishing between officers who were separated from their employment as a sworn officer through either termination or resignation and those who were not

known to have lost their jobs as a result of their being arrested for a drug-related crime. The model correctly classified 68.4% of the cases and had an AUC of .72. Wald statistics indicate that all of the independent variables in the model significantly predict job loss.

<<<<< Insert Table 6 about here >>>>>

Interpretation of the odds ratios provide context for prediction of job loss. The simple odds of an officer losing their police job as a result of being arrested for a drug-related crime go down by 20% for every one unit categorical increase in agency size, controlling for all other independent variables in the model. The simple odds of an officer losing their police job as a result of being arrested for a drug-related crime go down by 10% for every one unit (3 year) categorical increase in age at time of arrest, controlling for all other independent variables in the model. The simple odds of job loss following arrest for a drug-related crime are 1.2 times greater for officers charged with a specific drug offense (e.g., possession, trafficking), controlling for all other independent variables in the model. Similarly, the simple odds of job loss are 1.4 times greater for officers who were on-duty at time of commission of the drug-related crime(s) for which they were arrested, controlling for all other variables in the model.

The binary logistic regression model was also analyzed using CHAID to distinguish the interaction effects of the independent variables. CHAID accurately classified 76.9% of the cases with a sensitivity level of 82.9% for the target category job loss. The tree had an AUC of .850 and selected the drug/narcotic offense variable as the splitting criterion. The additional predictors included agency size by number of sworn officers employed, duty status, and age of the officer.

Age had a significant impact in determining if an officer lost their job based on the size of the police department, duty status, and whether or not a drug/narcotic offense was charged against an arrested officer. For respondents who were arrested for a drug/narcotics offense (n =

161), age was only significant if the respondents were off-duty at the time of the offense and worked at a department with less than 500 officers. Officers who were younger than age 40 had a 60.5% chance of losing their job, and officers older than 43 years of age had a zero percent chance of losing their job. For officers who were on-duty at the time of the offense, age was only a significant variable when the department was larger than 500 officers.

Officers who were arrested for crimes other than drug/narcotic offenses had slightly different patterns predicting job loss. Age was significant in predicting if the officer lost their job, but only if the officer was off-duty at the time of the offense and worked for a department with less than 250 officers. Within this group, officers age 39 years or younger had a 60% chance of losing their job. Officers 40 and older had a zero percent chance of losing their job. The node "on-duty at the time of the offense" was terminal and did not have subsequent child nodes. Officers who were on-duty during the time of their non-drug/narcotics related offense had a 58.8% chance of losing their job.

Discussion

Most of our knowledge on drug-related police corruption comes from journalistic investigations and the findings of special commissions convened over two decades ago to respond to high-profile scandals in several large urban police agencies, as well as a handful of often-cited exploratory studies on the topic published during roughly the same period. The current study provides contemporary data on 221 cases of drug-related police corruption identified through a content analysis of published newspaper articles. The cases involved arrested police officers working in rural places, large cities, suburbs, and small towns located within geographic regions across the United States. Obviously, only a small percentage of officers will ever be arrested for a criminal offense or directly involved in drug-related

corruption; but, our study *does* make evident that forms of drug-related corruption including the use of drugs, trafficking, shakedowns, and other types of criminal behavior are perpetrated by officers other than those who work in drug-infested urban ghettos. The data also provide documentation of the potential for problems associated with drugs and the drug trade across the continuum of police agencies and the need for police executives to initiate strategies to address them.

Some more specific points of discussion arise from the data beyond those associated with the generalized nature of drug-related police corruption. Data in regard to the various kinds of offenses charged as well as the nature of the underlying corruption echoes in many respects the Mollen Commission's (1994) description of corruption in the NYPD and the view that drugs and drug markets had spawned new patterns of corruption that blurred distinctions between corrupt police officers and the criminals they are sworn to arrest. The most serious charge in a majority of the cases was not a specific drug/narcotic offense; and, the most serious offense charged in roughly 40 percent of the cases was *more* serious than drug/narcotic offenses—including 42 cases in which police were charged with robbery. The discretionary nature of official charging decisions can sometimes obscure the essential character of misconduct perpetrated in these types of cases; but, the content analyses often revealed patterns similar to those described by the Mollen Commission (1994) and its investigation of drug corruption in the NYPD, most commonly cases wherein police trafficked drugs themselves and/or engaged in some form of theft/shakedown. The data corroborate the notion that drug-related corruption—wherever and whenever it occurs—tends to instigate the perpetration of a wide range of crimes by police including robberies and other types of violent predatory crimes, sexually-motivated crimes, and those designed to otherwise facilitate the drug trade.

Our research identifies specific drugs involved in drug-related corruption cases and explores associations between these drugs and various patterns of drug-related corruption. The research is complicated by the multi-dimensional character of the cases and the fact that they often involve either more than one pattern of misconduct and/or more than one type of specific drug. Moreover, different specific drugs and/or combinations of drugs seem to be present in various combinations across the different patterns of drug-related corruption. Still, stimulants including cocaine and crack were the most prevalent category of drug involved in these cases. The presence of cocaine was also the most predictive variable in five of the six patterns of corruption examined in CHAID models that included specific drugs, including various forms of theft/shakedowns, drug use, and drug trafficking. The models suggest that the presence of cocaine is likely in these types of drug-related corruption cases. The Mollen Commission (1994) emphasized the emergent impact of cocaine and crack on the operation of the NYPD two decades ago; our study reports similar results in a larger and more generalizable sample of contemporary drug corruption cases. The question of *when* cocaine and crack became prevalent in drug corruption cases outside the NYPD remains unclear, but our findings demonstrate that cocaine and crack impact drug-related corruption as it presently occurs within identified police agencies across the nation. Models that summated drugs into classes rather than specific drugs underscored the importance of combinations of multiple drugs on cases of drug-related corruption. The presence of narcotics rather than stimulants, for example, was the splitting variable in theft/shakedowns that involved warrantless search/seizures and street-level dealers.

Overall, CHAID models that examined various forms of theft/shakedown had the highest levels of predictive power whether the models included specific drugs or drug categories. The predictive power of models that examined other types of drug-related corruption—drug use,

trafficking, and facilitation of the drug trade—had less predictive power. The models indicate that specific drugs and/or drug categories are best at predicting acts of drug-related corruption that involve thefts/shakedowns, and factors other than drugs are more important in predicting cases of drug-related corruption that involve drug use and/or facilitation. More data are clearly needed to further explore the associations between specific drugs/drug categories and the occurrence of different patterns of drug-related corruption, but these findings suggest the potential for remedial strategies based on the involvement of specific drugs on particular forms of drug-related corruption. The best strategies are likely to be implemented on a case-by-case basis rather than those that rely on a "one size fits all" approach given the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon.

The study identifies three significant predictors of job loss among police arrested in cases of drug-related corruption. We are aware of no empirical research on the predictors of job loss across a large number of police agencies, but our data provide the basis for some hypotheses on the operation of disciplinary processes in these cases. First, police employed by larger agencies are less likely to lose their job subsequent to an arrest for a drug-related crime than police employed by smaller agencies. The more elaborate organizational hierarchies and heightened bureaucratization of larger agencies may provide cover from the most extreme disciplinary measures, especially in cases where the pattern of drug corruption is perceived to be less serious and not a threat to organizational legitimacy. Also, the nature of our methodology and the filtering process that includes the exercise of discretion by media sources may have produced sample bias in the case that newspapers published in large jurisdictions may be less likely to publish stories on the arrests of police officers involved in some patterns of drug-related corruption. Second, older officers are less likely to lose their job subsequent to an arrest for a

drug-related crime than younger officers. Perhaps organizations are reluctant to impose the most severe penalties against arrested officers who are older and perceived to have already "paid their dues" (Stinson, Liederbach, and Freiburger, 2010, p. 428). Third, officers who were on-duty at the time of commission of the drug-related crime were more likely to lose their job. Police executives are likely inclined to define patterns of drug-related corruption that occur on-duty as more serious and a threat to organizational integrity than those that occur off-duty. Overall, more explanatory findings regarding how police agencies respond to these cases and the development of policies to mitigate drug-related corruption will ultimately depend upon further data collection and analyses designed to disentangle causal pathways and interactions between specific drugs and various forms of drug-related corruption.

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Table 1. Drug Related Corruption Cases: Officers and Agencies (*N = 221*)

	n	(%)		*n*	(%)
Sex			Agency Type		
Male	208	(94.1)	Municipal Police Dept.	169	(76.4)
Female	13	(5.9)	Sheriff's Dept.	35	(15.8)
			Other Dept.	17	(7.7)
Function					
Patrol & Street-Level	188	(85.1)	Full-Time Sworn Officers		
Line/Field Supervisor	23	(10.4)	0-24	55	(24.9)
Management	10	(4.5)	25-99	35	(16.1)
			100-999	55	(24.9)
Age			1,000 or more	76	(35.0)
20-27	19	(8.6)			
28-35	93	(42.1)	Region of Agency		
36-43	61	(27.6)	South	115	(52.0)
44-51	29	(13.1)	Midwest	45	(20.4)
52 or older	6	(2.7)	Northeast	43	(19.5)
missing	13	(5.9)	West	18	(8.1)
Years of Service			Officer Duty Status		
0-5	72	(32.6)	On-Duty	142	(64.3)
6-11	51	(23.1)	Off-Duty	79	(35.7)
12-17	30	(13.6)			
18 or more years	24	(10.9)	Arresting Agency		
missing	44	(19.9)	Employing Agency	47	(21.3)
			Another Agency	174	(78.7)

Table 2. Drug Related Corruption Cases: Most Serious Offense Charged (N = 221)

	n	%
Drug / Narcotic Offense	98	44.3
Robbery	42	19.0
Driving Under the Influence of Drugs	7	3.2
Theft from Building	6	2.7
Forcible Fondling	6	2.7
Burglary	5	2.3
Embezzlement	5	2.3
Stolen Property Offense	5	2.3
Official Misconduct	5	2.3
Aggravated Assault	4	1.8
Forgery	4	1.8
All Other Theft/Larceny	4	1.8
Weapons Law Offense	4	1.8
Forcible Rape	3	1.4
Destroying or Tampering with Evidence	3	1.4
Perjury / False Reports / False Staements	3	1.4
Other Offense	17	7.7

Table 3. Specific Drugs ($N = 196$)

	n	(%)*
Drug Classes		
Stimulants	115	(58.7)
Cannabis	78	(39.8)
Narcotics	44	(22.4)
Hallucinogens	16	(8.2)
Anabolic Steroids	15	(7.7)
Depressants	7	(3.6)
Specific Drugs		
Cocaine (Stimulant)	96	(49.0)
Marijuana (Cannabis)	78	(39.8)
Crack (Stimulant)	23	(11.7)
Hydrocodone (Narcotic)	16	(8.2)
Anabolic Steroids (not testosterone)	15	(7.7)
Oxycodone (Narcotic)	14	(7.1)
Heroin (Narcotic)	13	(6.6)
Amphetamine/Methamphetamine (Stimulant)	12	(6.1)
MDMA & Analogs (Hallucinogen)	7	(3.6)
Phencyclidine & Analogs (Hallucinogen)	7	(3.6)
Benzodiazepines (Depressant)	5	(2.6)
Narcotic (other)	5	(2.6)
Morphine (Narcotic)	3	(1.5)
Gamma Hydroxybutyric Acid (Depressant)	2	(1.0)
Hallucinogens (other)	2	(1.0)
Testosterone (Anabolic Steroid)	1	(0.5)
Depressants (other)	1	(0.5)
Cases w/Multiple Types of Drugs		
(2) Types of Drugs	46	(23.5)
(3) Types of Drugs	10	(5.1)
(>3) Types of Drugs	10	(5.1)

*Categories not mutually exclusive. Sum of (%) column ≠ 100

Table 4. Patterns of Drug-Related Police Corruption *(N=221)**

	n	%
Drug Trafficking	108	(48.9)
Theft/Shakedown:	64	(29.0)
Warrantless Searches/Seizures (n=39)		
Street-Level Dealer (n=33)		
Car Stops & Drug Courier (n=30)		
Off-Duty Robbery (n=9)		
Warrant/Consent Searches/Seizures (n=8)		
Dispatched Call-For-Service (n=7)		
Drug Use	61	(27.6)
Facilitation of the Drug Trade	40	(18.1)
Forged Prescription	13	(5.9)
Falsification	13	(5.9)
Sexually-Motivated Drug Corruption	11	(5.0)
Theft from Evidence Room	10	(4.5)
Planting Evidence	6	(2.7)
Cases w/Multiple Types of Misconduct		
(2) Types of Misconduct	62	(28.1)
(3) Types of Misconduct	16	(7.2)
(>3) Types of Misconduct	24	(10.9)

*Categories not mutually exclusive. Sum of (%) column ≠ 100.

Table 5. CHAID Analysis of Drug-Related Corruption Cases (N = 196)

	Splitting Variable	Node 1 Variable(s)	Node 2 Variable(s)	AUC
Specific Drugs				
Theft/Shakedown - Car Stops & Drug Couriers	Cocaine	Marijuana	Phencyclidine & Analogs	.865
Theft/Shakedown - Warrantless Search/Seizures	Cocaine	Marijuana	Crack	.805
Theft/Shakedown - Street-Level Dealer	Cocaine	Marijuana	Crack	.792
Drug Use	Cocaine	Hydrocodone	Crack	.757
Drug Trafficking	Cocaine	Heroin/Marjiuana	Anabolic Steroids*	.750
Facilitation of the Drug Trade	Heroin	Hydrocodone	Oxycodone	.646
Drug Classes				
Theft/Shakedown - Warrantless Search/Seizures	Narcotics	Hallucinogens	Stimulants	.872
Theft/Shakedown - Car Stops & Drug Couriers	Stimulants	Cannabis	Hallucinogens	.866
Theft/Shakedown - Street-Level Dealer	Narcotics	Hallucinogens	Cannabis	.846
Drug Trafficking	Stimulants	Cannabis/Anabolic Steroids*	Narcotics	.758
Drug Use	Stimulants	Cannabis/Depressants	Narcotics	.746
Facilitation of the Drug Trade	Anabolic Steroids*			.550

*Anabolic steroids other than testosterone

Table 6. Drug-Related Corruption Cases: Logistic Regression Model Predicting Loss of Job (N = 206)

						95% CI for Exp(B)	
	B	*SE*	Wald	*p*	Exp(B)	*LL*	*UL*
Agency Size by Sworn Officers[1]	-.231	.060	15.040	< .001	.793	.706	.892
Charged with a Drug Offense[2]	.771	.344	5.031	.025	2.162	1.102	4.242
Duty Status at Time of Crime[2]	.880	.327	7.256	.007	2.411	1.271	4.574
Age of Arrested Officer[1]	-.106	.042	6.197	.013	.900	.828	.978
- 2 Log Likelihood	254.004						
Model Chi-Square	30.329			<.001			
Cox & Snell R^2	.137						
Nagelkerke R^2	.183						
AUC	.729						

[1]Categorical Variable

[2]Dichotomous Variable

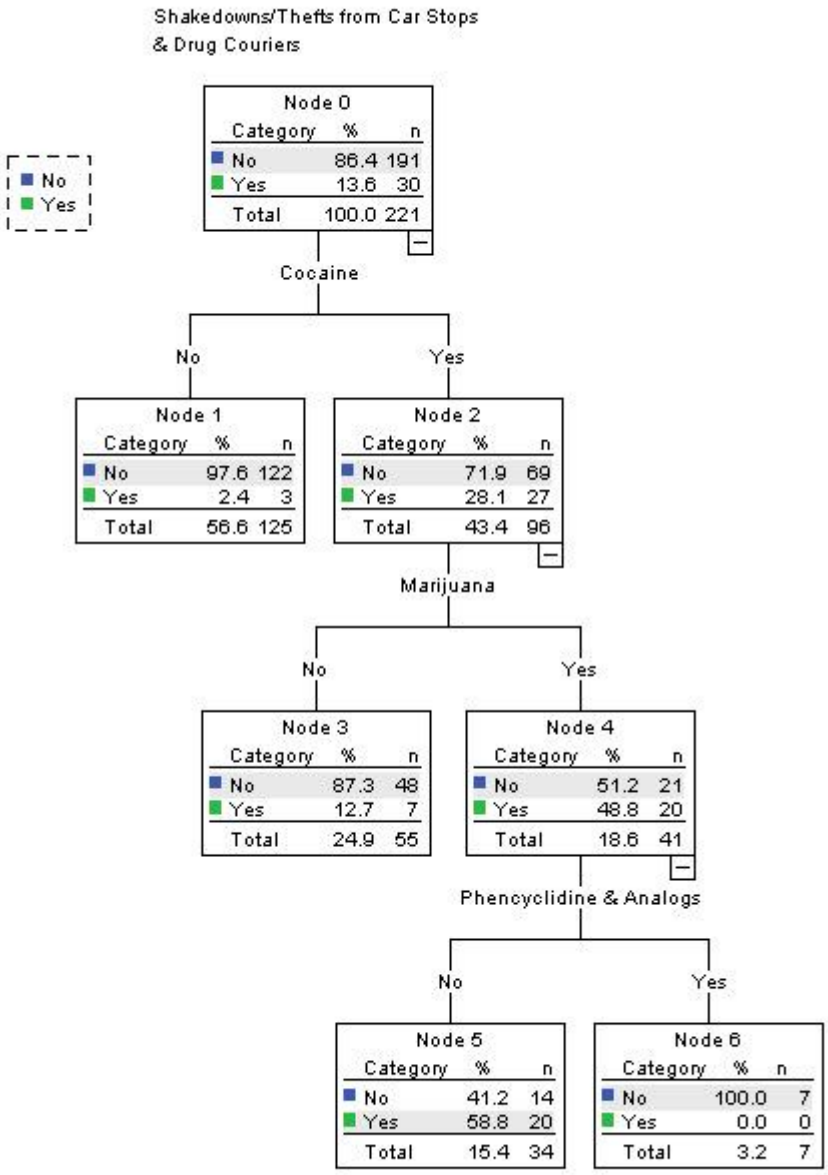

Figure 1. CHAID Classification Tree of Drug-Related Corruption: Shakedowns/Thefts and Specific Drugs.

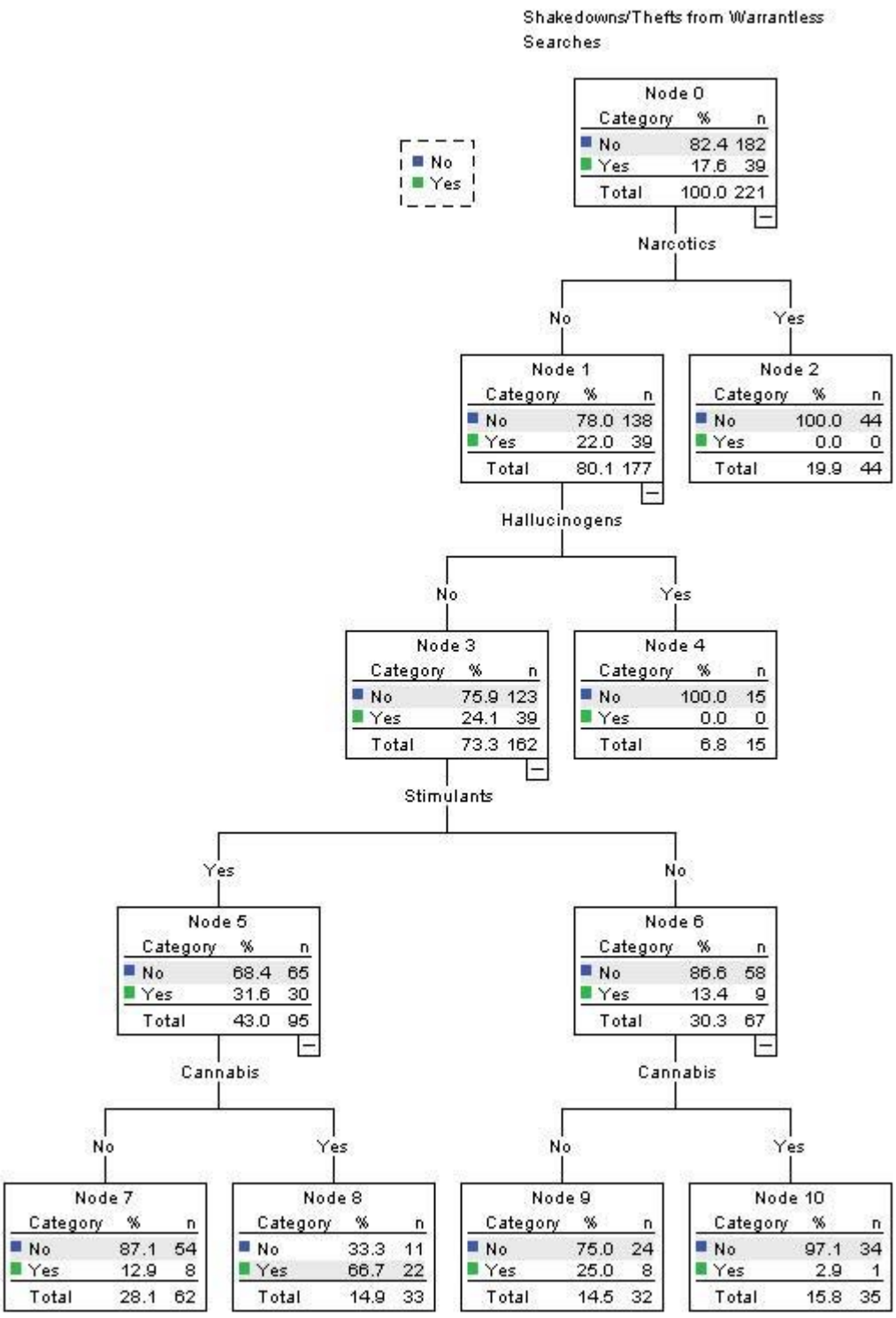

Figure 2. CHAID Classification Tree of Drug-Related Corruption: Warrantless Searches and Drug Categories.