

Understanding Subgroups Within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Community and Department Perceptions with
Recommendations for Change: Appendixes

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Preface

For decades, groups of Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) deputies have been accused of misconduct. Although LASD has acknowledged that these groups exist, their purpose and actions within the department have remained unclear. To better understand this issue, Los Angeles County Counsel commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct an independent research study on deputy subgroups within LASD. The study was commissioned to help LASD and the county learn more about how these subgroups are formed, why they exist, what actions might be taken if it is determined that these subgroups have a significant impact on LASD’s mission, and whether subgroups have affected community perceptions and trust in LASD. With cooperation from various county stakeholders, including LASD, the Office of the Los Angeles County Counsel, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, the authors of this report sought to understand the perceptions and experiences of deputies, the organizational perspective of LASD, and the community perspective on this subject to provide a comprehensive picture of existing views. The authors also aim to inform LASD and county decisionmakers in their efforts to address issues raised by the subgroups going forward. This report should be of interest to Los Angeles County officials and residents. This report was sponsored by Los Angeles County Counsel.

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RAND Social and Economic Well-Being is a division of the RAND Corporation that seeks to actively improve the health and social and economic well-being of populations and communities throughout the world. This research was conducted in the Justice Policy Program within RAND Social and Economic Well-Being. The program focuses on such topics as access to justice, policing, corrections, drug policy, and court system reform, as well as other policy concerns pertaining to public safety and criminal and civil justice. For more information, email justicepolicy@rand.org.

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Abbreviations

ALADS	Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs
CARP	Cadre of Administrative Reserve Personnel
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
FAQ	frequently asked question
FTO	field training officer
GED	General Educational Development
ICC	intraclass correlation
LASD	Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
LDA	Latent Dirichlet Allocation
SRG	RAND Survey Research Group

Appendix A. Detailed Methods

Community Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

Interview Instrument Development

The team developed one semistructured interview protocol for community leaders and one semistructured discussion guide for focus groups with community members. The protocols were informed by existing literature on community and law enforcement relations, pertinent research questions, and preliminary knowledge of community interactions with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) (e.g., perspectives captured in media accounts). Key stakeholders (e.g., LASD, County Counsel, Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission) reviewed the topics included in these protocols.

The interview and focus group protocols included three domains: overall relationship with LASD, understanding interactions between the community and deputies, and perceptions of and experiences with deputy subgroups. The protocols were intended to elicit information about community experiences with station-level personnel and perceptions of the overall department. The community leader interview protocol also sought to clarify formal and informal partnership activities with LASD and to develop broad understanding of community members' views and experiences.

Sampling

For the community component of this project, we sought to conduct interviews with community leaders and focus groups with community members who live, work, or provide services in Los Angeles County.

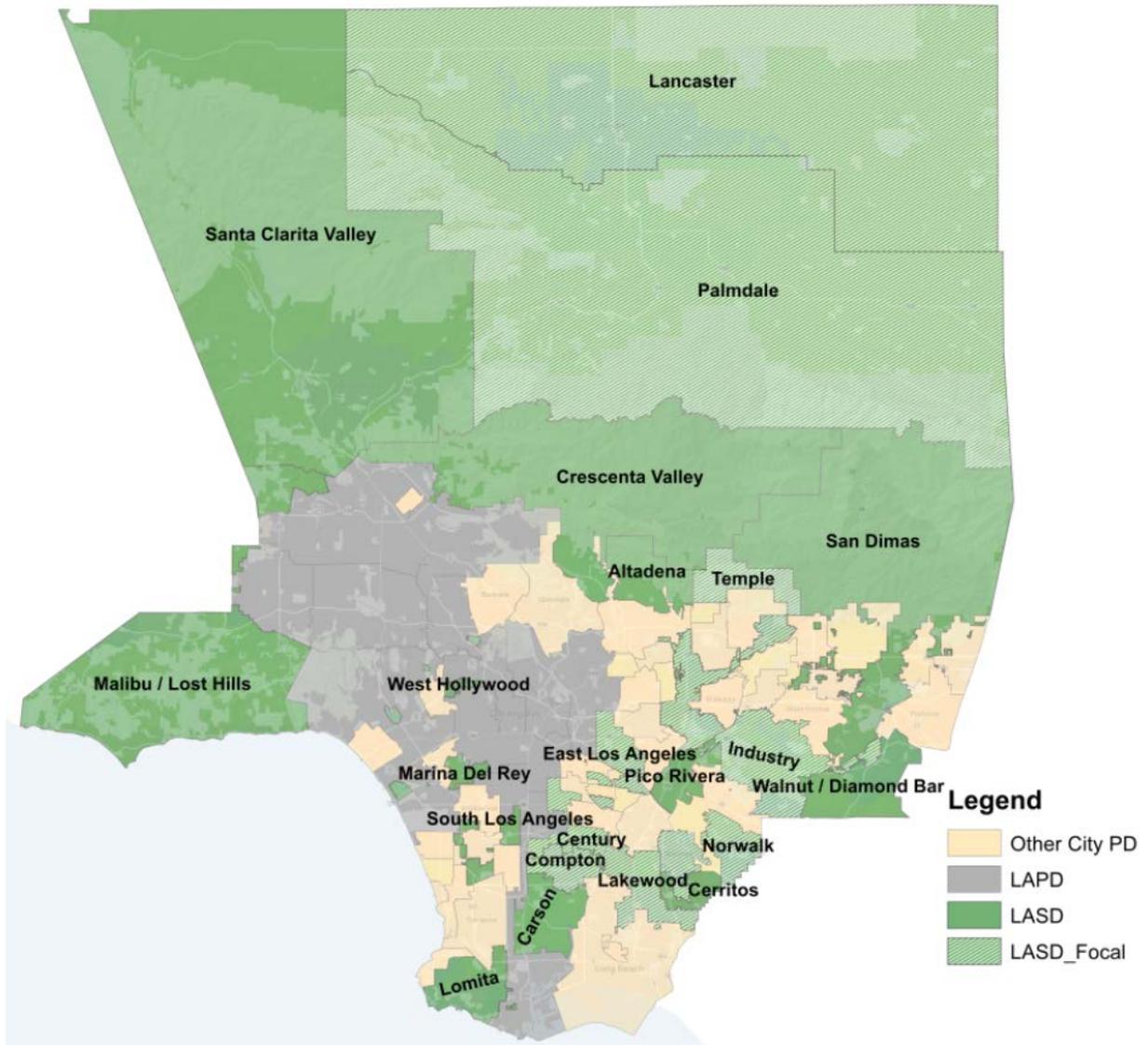
For the leader interviews, to capture a wide range of perspectives on relations between community members and LASD, we invited 103 community stakeholders from across the four patrol divisions to participate in an in-person or phone interview. To ensure maximum diversity, we also used a purposive, maximum-variation sampling strategy in which we selected participants from various organization types (community-based agencies, grassroots community organizations, faith-based organizations, civic leaders, etc.). Ultimately, 46 community stakeholders agreed to participate, yielding a 45-percent response rate.

For the focus groups, we recruited 95 English- or Spanish-speaking community members from nine target communities, which included those with the most calls for service in each of the four patrol divisions. The communities are as follows and are depicted in Figure A.1:

- North stations: Lancaster and Palmdale
- Central stations: Century, East Los Angeles, and Compton

- South stations: Lakewood and Norwalk
- East stations: Industry and Temple.

Figure A.1. LASD Station Areas and Community Focus Group Focal Areas



Recruitment

Community Leaders

In November 2019, RAND researchers emailed captains of all stations across the four patrol divisions to request referrals for key community leaders who were actively engaged and appeared to be knowledgeable about community views and experiences with LASD. At the same time, we solicited recommendations from community groups (e.g., the Civilian Oversight Commission, Board of Supervisors Justice Deputies). We also supplemented the list by

conducting web searches to identify critical community stakeholders and recruit participants from a wide range of stakeholder groups (e.g., faith-based organizations, community based-organizations, grassroots organizations, civic leaders). The RAND team sent an email to all potential participants describing the project and inviting them to participate in a 30- to 45-minute in-person or phone interview with two researchers. Interviews were conducted between November 2019 and February 2020. Seven of these interviews were completed in person.

Community Members

In February 2020, RAND researchers began recruiting participants from the nine target communities. The recruitment approach for focus groups leveraged existing contacts while also broadening the pool of potential participants. First, we provided invitation flyers to identified community stakeholder groups in the target communities and asked them to distribute and post the flyers. In addition, pastors/clergy, neighborhood groups, and organizations such as the Civilian Oversight Commission were asked to announce the focus groups on their bulletin boards, social media, or other platforms. We also used Facebook pages, Facebook ads, and Eventbrite posts to get community members' attention and invite them to participate in the focus groups. We engaged in street canvassing and posted flyers as well. Finally, we contacted local print and broadcast media to invite community members to participate in the groups.

Interested community members were invited to call the RAND-hosted toll-free phone number listed on the flyer, post, or advertisement to determine their eligibility and register for the focus group. To be eligible, people needed to be at least 18 years old and live or work in the target communities. If prospective participants called when RAND staff were unavailable to respond to the call, they were asked to leave a message with their phone number on a password-protected voice mailbox. Calls were returned by the next business day. Voice messages with contact information were deleted upon retrieval, and the phone numbers were entered into a password-protected file.

Eligible participants were provided the date, time, and location of the applicable focus group. We requested first names and phone numbers from everyone who signed up for the focus groups to allow for reminder calls. These names and phone numbers were entered into a password-protected file. Each phone number was associated with the type, date, and time of the focus group. We conducted the focus groups in a closed room at a centrally located community site. Each focus group included up to 12 participants.

The focus groups were facilitated by one Ph.D.-level researcher, and two master's- or bachelor's-level research staff took typewritten notes during the groups. At least one staff member per focus group was available to provide Spanish-language translation. At the end of each focus group, participants received a \$30 gift card to thank them for participating.

On March 17, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom ordered a statewide Safer at Home policy in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, forcing the cancellation of the remaining scheduled in-person focus groups. All registered participants were

informed that we would contact them again with an alternative to in-person focus groups. We shifted to live, video-based focus groups starting in July 2020. Previously registered participants were contacted and invited to participate in the online groups, and we also attempted to recruit new participants using the same strategies discussed above. All participants received one-on-one training on the use of the online platform, Microsoft Teams, from a member of the research team in advance of the scheduled group. In addition, groups were extended from 90 minutes to two hours to allow time to address technical issues. Most groups included four to nine participants, but we also conducted additional interviews with one to three participants who were unable to join the virtual groups. Seven participants were interviewed in these smaller groups.

Data Analysis

Because of the sensitivity of the topics discussed in the interviews and focus groups, we chose not to record these sessions. To ensure that we completely captured participants' perspectives, we took detailed written notes as close to verbatim as possible. One person took notes during the interviews, and two members of the research team took notes during the focus groups. After each focus group, notetakers reconciled and combined the notes into a single document. Interview notes and reconciled focus group notes were reviewed for completeness and accuracy. All notes were uploaded to Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software that facilitates team-based coding (Dedoose, 2020).

We used a modified grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 2009) to analyze the responses across question domains, identifying where and how responses varied. *Grounded theory* is a qualitative research approach to systematically develop theory that is grounded in observation (Smith, 2003; Perry and Jensen, 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1997). It begins with identifying the core theoretical concepts and tentative linkages using the data and concludes with validating these relationships. The first step is data collection and coding—a process of categorizing the qualitative data elements—starting with “open coding,” where researchers develop initial categories, and moving to “selective coding” after researchers have carefully defined the core concepts. After several iterations of initial and selective coding, the theory is revised, and then the researchers identify and flesh out the details of the core themes and subthemes.

One Ph.D.-level researcher with expertise in the topic and methodology and experienced master's- and bachelor's-level researchers performed the data analysis of the community leader interviews and community member focus groups. The research team developed a codebook based on the questions in the interview protocol, key research questions, and central issues in the literature (Roberts, Dowell, and Nie, 2019). The codebook was later augmented to include emergent themes from a review of all interview and focus group notes. The codebook was

further refined based on simultaneous coding and reconciliation of six sets of interview notes.¹ Two junior research staff coded the remaining interviews and focus group notes independently; however, the senior researcher met weekly with the coders to discuss and reconcile any discrepancies with the coding.

LASD Interviews

Interview Instrument Development

The team collectively designed two comprehensive semistructured interview protocols, one for command-level staff and another for line-level staff. The protocols were based on the existing literature, key questions identified in the study aims, and context-specific factors (e.g., local media reactions to the topic of deputy subgroups).

Both protocols covered the following domains: organizational context, motivations to build a career in LASD, challenges facing LASD and the communities where it operates, awareness of deputy subgroups, impacts of deputy subgroups, and perspectives on how to address deputy subgroups. The command-level staff protocol further focused on management perspectives on staff-related issues, including deputy subgroups, as well as a historical perspective on subgroups in LASD. The line-level staff protocol elaborated on interactions with communities on patrol, workplace morale and incentives, and perspectives on training. The protocols were designed to be adaptable to a participant's experience, role, and any other additional factors a participant deemed salient to understanding deputy subgroups.

Recruitment

In October 2019, LASD sent out an email announcement giving personnel an overview of the various components of the project. LASD initially invited and scheduled interviews for LASD leadership, including assistant sheriffs, chiefs, and commanders, to participate in a one-time, hourlong, in-person interview with two members of the RAND team with an expertise in qualitative interviewing. Our goal was to recruit LASD leadership responsible for patrol and custody to participate in an interview.

From November 2019 to February 2020, we visited LASD patrol stations during regularly scheduled station briefings to introduce the study and invite staff (e.g., deputies, lieutenants, sergeants, detectives, field training officers) to participate in an interview. Line-level staff were given the option to meet at a location of their choice (e.g., RAND headquarters, local restaurants) or to conduct the interview by phone. During these brief presentations, we described the survey and responded to any questions about the purpose and overall procedures of the study. Because

¹ Inter-coder reliability was evaluated with a Pooled Cohen's Kappa coefficient and Cohen's Kappa for each of the codes. The coding team reached a Kappa >0.80 for the codes, which shows a high level of agreement in the application of codes (McHugh, 2012).

of the sensitive topic, we employed a convenience and referral (or “snowball”) sampling approach to recruit line-level staff. We completed 57 total interviews using these LASD interview protocols, which include a small subset (fewer than ten) of interviews with retired members of LASD and other county stakeholders who have direct knowledge of LASD. Ten of these interviews were completed over the phone.

Data Analysis

We chose not to record the interviews to respect the sensitivity of the topic. Instead, we took detailed written notes (verbatim when possible) during interviews, which the team members who were present in the interviews reviewed and confirmed for accuracy. We did not include any direct identifiers in our notes and reviewed them for personally identifiable information. Any direct identifiers were removed. We then uploaded these notes to a password-protected Dedoose database (Dedoose, 2020).

Three Ph.D.-level researchers with an expertise in the topic performed the data analysis of the LASD interviews. We first developed a codebook based on the questions in the interview protocol, key research questions, and central issues in the literature. The team then coded five interview notes in tandem, refined the codebook and exemplar applications of codes, and resolved any discrepancies.²

The identification of themes followed the approach of Butler-Kisber, 2010, which involves two core stages of analysis, beginning with a *coarse-grained phase* to broadly classify emerging themes. We additionally identified themes through repetition and specificity (i.e., similarities and differences among and within case studies); metaphors and analogies used; and existing knowledge of issues related to LASD dynamics, perspectives on subgroup actions, and potential means of mitigating subgroup action (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). The second phase of this analysis—the *fine-grained phase*—included examining the pieces of data more closely and isolating specific words, phrases, and ideas that represented larger themes. In reporting our findings and using exemplary quotes, we were careful to include perspectives that reflected multiple interviewees and to provide the full range of perspectives, not just those of a few individuals.

LASD Survey

The anonymous survey was designed to gather information from all sworn officers currently employed by LASD on their perceptions and experiences regarding their workplace atmosphere and the existence of deputy subgroups in the department. The survey was intended to be a census

² To ensure rigor and transparency, inter-coder reliability was evaluated with a Pooled Cohen’s Kappa coefficient and Cohen’s Kappa for each of the codes and was >0.80, which shows a high level of agreement in the application of codes among the coding team (McHugh, 2012).

of the estimated 10,000 sworn personnel across all LASD divisions, stations, and units. The survey gathered information on the following topics:

- workplace atmosphere, including feedback on departmental leadership, training, discipline, handling of complaints, and promotion practices
- deputy subgroups in the work environment, including
 - whether a respondent had been invited to join a subgroup
 - criteria and requirements for being invited to join a subgroup
 - where subgroups are typically found within LASD
 - advantages of belonging to a subgroup
 - conduct, attitudes, and behavior of deputies who belong to a deputy subgroup
 - impact of subgroups on the workplace
 - supervisors' approach to subgroups
 - views regarding what LASD should do, if anything, about subgroups
- demographic background information
- an open-ended question asking the respondent for any comments or feedback they might have about the survey.

Survey Development and Topics

To develop the questionnaire, we began with the core set of research questions regarding the LASD workplace atmosphere overall and the role of deputy subgroups in the work environment, organized around several themes. Themes such as subgroup formation, purpose, and prevalence were of particular interest, along with more general topics, such as job satisfaction, perceptions of fairness around discipline and promotions, work-life balance, and training. The scope of work for this project also provided the following specific questions of interest regarding subgroups that were used to guide development of the questionnaire:

- Why do they exist, and what is their purpose?
- What is the process for joining, including initiation activities?
- How are they viewed inside the department?
- How, if at all, should they be managed?
- What policies or practices currently exist in the department, and what others might be relevant?
- What types of conduct toward other LASD employees do their members engage in?
- How are they viewed outside the department?
- What types of conduct toward members of the community do their members engage in?

A literature search was conducted to identify surveys of law enforcement professionals focused on relevant research topics and themes. We first identified two sets of search terms that were used in conjunction to identify relevant studies. The first set described relevant populations studied (e.g., “law enforcement,” “police,” “officer,” “deputy”). The second set of terms specified relevant content within the surveys (e.g., “subgroups,” “cliques,” “gangs,” “training,” “promotion,” “leadership,” “supervision”).

The surveys we found did not include questions specifically about law enforcement-based subgroups, gangs, or cliques. However, many surveys focused on topics about the law enforcement work environment more generally, such as job satisfaction, organizational justice, and workplace perceptions. The relevant questions from these surveys were extracted and entered into a database, where they were categorized into groups of similar topics.

In addition to the questions set forth in the scope of work, the compiled items were used to guide and inform the development of the 26-question survey fielded to LASD sworn personnel. We also used common themes or questions from our interview findings to develop questions specifically related to subgroups or cliques and their activities. This helped the project team identify topics and compare the perspectives of interviewees with those of others in the department. This process also helped with refining the survey. The final questionnaire focused primarily on questions pertaining to deputy subgroups, with approximately 90 percent of the questions designed to elicit information regarding their activities, prevalence, and impact at the station, department, and community levels.

Pretesting the LASD Survey

To pretest the survey, we recruited 12 law enforcement personnel of varying ranks to participate in cognitive interviews. Cognitive interviewing, which involves administering a survey while asking a respondent to elaborate on the clarity and appropriateness of the questions and response options, is a method for empirically studying the ways in which individuals mentally process and respond to survey questionnaires. The goal of the cognitive interviews was to pretest the survey questions to determine how well they were understood, reveal any ambiguity in interpretation of the questions or response options, and assess how they should be modified before the survey is fielded to make them more understandable or easier to answer. The project leader reached out to the 12 personnel via individual emails to invite them to participate in a telephone interview to provide feedback on the LASD survey.

The pretest was conducted from the last week of June 2020 through July 17, 2020. We initially sent an email request to each individual asking them to participate in the cognitive interviews and to review the draft survey. We emailed them a hard copy of the draft survey questionnaire and asked them not to review it until the time of the interview. We asked that they instead complete the survey while on our conference call and stated that we would be asking them questions along the way to help us understand why they answered a survey question the way they did and their understanding of certain terms, phrases, or questions. We asked them to answer the survey from the perspective of their own experiences in LASD. Before we began the interview, we reminded them that their participation in the cognitive interview was completely voluntary and that they could stop the interview at any time. They also could refuse to answer any question at any time. Their decision to do this interview would not be shared or reported to anyone outside the study, nor would we disclose their participation or any information they provided to anyone outside this study, including anyone at LASD. The interviews took about 90

minutes on average. To thank them for completing the survey and participating in the cognitive interview, we mailed a \$30 gift card to those who accepted the gift card when it was offered.

To conduct the cognitive interviews, we used an interview protocol that solicited participants' overall feedback on the survey and detailed input on each section of the survey questionnaire (see Appendix B). At least two evaluation team members conducted the cognitive interview by phone, with one individual leading the discussion and the other taking notes to capture the feedback from the interviewee. Based on the results of the cognitive interviews, we identified questions and response options that were confusing or ambiguous, along with options that were missing from the questionnaire; these were used to inform our revision process.

We also received feedback and comments on the draft survey from LASD's Audit and Accountability Bureau and County Counsel. For these stakeholders, we solicited feedback on the survey and conducted follow-up meetings to discuss the survey in detail and respond to their comments. Additionally, we asked other stakeholders to review, including the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS) and Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association, as well as the Civilian Oversight Commission, but we did not engage in detailed responses to their comments. These reviews did not result in substantive changes to the survey instrument. All stakeholders were provided a one-page explanation document discussing the key sections of the survey, the purpose of their review, and how RAND researchers would respond to the review. Throughout, we noted that the RAND team would determine the final version of the survey. The RAND project team made the final decision as to the content of the questionnaire and wording of items.

Based on feedback from the pilot test and from other stakeholders who reviewed the survey, the RAND team revised and refined the individual items and response categories of the LASD questionnaire to minimize measurement error. The final questionnaire contained the following sections (see Appendix B):

- Workplace Atmosphere
- Deputy Subgroups
- Background Information.

Fielding the LASD Survey

Initially we considered fielding a web survey with a paper survey option. However, feedback from LASD, County Counsel, and others indicated that sworn personnel might be concerned about the confidentiality of a web survey and the ability to track their responses. As a result, we decided to field a paper survey only. Because we did not have access to the individual email addresses of LASD's 10,000 sworn personnel, we used the following approach to field the survey.

Table A.1 summarizes the survey fielding timeline. Between August 20, 2020, and August 24, 2020, the RAND project team reached out to the station captains and arranged a time for the project team and the RAND Survey Research Group (SRG) to deliver the packets of surveys to

each location. As a reminder about the project and LASD’s commitment, the Undersheriff sent an email to captains notifying them that RAND personnel would be contacting them to plan and schedule for survey distribution at their unit. The survey packets included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey; the questionnaire itself; a document that provided responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs); and a stamped, self-addressed, business-sized reply envelope that respondents could use to send the survey directly back to RAND. An 800 number also was provided in case they had questions and to give them the option of completing the survey by telephone. We estimated that completing the survey would take approximately 20 minutes.

Table A.1. Survey Development and Fielding Schedule

Survey Activity	Start Date	End Date
Pilot of the draft survey questionnaire	06/29/2020	07/17/2020
Initial contact with station/unit captains to introduce the survey	08/20/2020	08/24/2020
Unions send out advance letter of support of the survey		08/26/2020
LASD Sheriff sends out survey invitation email		08/31/2020
1st distribution of survey packets to stations/units	08/31/2020	09/09/2020
LASD sends out survey reminder email #1		09/09/2020
RAND team calls captains to discuss strategy for distributing the 2nd delivery of survey packets to patrol station personnel	09/28/2020	10/02/2020
2nd distribution of survey packets to stations/units	09/28/2020	10/01/2020
LASD sends out survey reminder email #2		09/28/2020
Sheriff’s deputy union sends out reminder email #2		09/28/2020
LASD sends out 3rd and last survey email reminder		10/05/2020
Survey fielding period ends		10/23/2020

Prior to fielding the survey, Sheriff Alex Villanueva sent an initial email on August 31, 2020, to the entire department explaining the purpose of the survey and encouraging sworn personnel to participate. ALADS also sent an initial email encouraging the union’s members to take part in the survey. The first distribution of survey packets to patrol stations and other LASD units and departments occurred between August 31 and September 9, 2020. During the last week of September 2020, the project leader and SRG leads called each captain to discuss their approach and to suggest ways to encourage participation in the survey based on feedback received from other captains at units with higher response rates. In addition, LASD leadership (e.g., Assistant Sheriff Bruce Chase in the custody division) reinforced to those officers in their chain of

command the importance of participation in the survey. The follow-up distribution of survey packets occurred between September 28 and October 1, 2020.

The survey fielding period began August 31, 2020, and continued through October 23, 2020. Table A.2 summarizes the overall response rate and the response rate by different major groupings within LASD. The final overall response rate was 16.8 percent.

Table A.2. Survey Response Rate, Overall and by Major LASD Unit Groupings

Organizational Unit Type	Total Number of Survey Packets Delivered	Responses	Response Rate
Patrol	3,202	529	16.5%
Custody	3,043	393	12.9%
Other county (courts, Special Enforcement Bureau)	2,170	310	14.3%
Investigative	749	217	29.0%
Administrative	432	165	38.2%
Overall	9,596	1,614 ¹	16.8%

¹ Six surveys were returned with completely blank or only “don’t know” responses. The usable total is 1,608.

We included a cover letter with an informed consent statement, the survey itself, and the FAQs. The FAQs explained that the survey was anonymous and that participation in the survey was completely voluntary, so recipients could choose not to participate or could decline to answer any questions. The consent statement also stated that RAND was not conducting an investigation, was not working with any entities investigating LASD, and would not provide confidential information to any outside entity, including the county. Information gathered as part of the survey would only be used for research purposes and would not be shared with anyone outside of the RAND research team, including LASD, County Counsel, labor unions, or any other entity. The surveys would not be linked to individuals. RAND reports and presentations of the survey results would present summary results and would not include names or any information that could be used to identify any of the study participants either directly or indirectly. The research team would not share people’s responses with anyone outside of the research project and would not include any personally identifiable information in the study report (e.g., if a respondent wrote a name on the survey).

Survey Challenges

As noted above, because of the sensitive nature of the survey, we were advised—by LASD and union representatives as well as other researchers with data collection experience with LASD—that our target respondents were likely to be especially concerned about maintaining

their privacy and confidentiality and about how the survey data would be safeguarded. Ultimately, we decided to field a paper survey only instead of a web survey to make it completely anonymous, as RAND was not provided with anyone's personal information. We would have preferred to provide multiple options for completing the survey, but we decided to offer only the paper survey and provide an 800 number in case an individual had questions or would prefer to respond to the survey over the telephone. We explored various options for distributing the surveys in person to all sworn personnel or to administer the survey in a group setting. The latter option proved infeasible because of space limitations in many of the stations, units, or departments included in the survey; we would not have been able to guarantee the privacy of participants completing the survey in close quarters, and it would have been difficult to reach all sworn deputies in a group setting. As such, we cannot ensure that deputies completed their surveys alone. We were also discouraged from delivering the survey directly to sworn personnel because of COVID-19 restrictions, as well as challenges in reaching all sworn personnel in one visit.

LASD was unable to provide us with contact information for the sworn deputies and command staff to be surveyed, but the department agreed to send out email notifications and reminders, using text that we provided, to request that sworn personnel complete the survey. LASD encouraged us to deliver the survey packets to each station or unit captain and instructed the selected captains to ensure the timely distribution of the survey packets to all sworn personnel at their station, unit, or department. Because the survey was completely anonymous, this meant that RAND's SRG was unable to follow up directly with nonrespondents to encourage their participation. Therefore, we were limited only to making multiple distributions of the survey packets to stations and units.

During this fielding period, a number of unforeseen events occurred that potentially impacted the response rate. The novel coronavirus pandemic occurred during this period, which meant that some deputies were out sick (e.g., at one point during the fielding period, one station captain reported 50 deputies being out because of COVID-19). Our data collection approach included sending trained members of RAND's SRG to patrol stations and other LASD units to hand-deliver the survey packets and to provide explanations and answer questions about the survey distribution method. Their ability to do so was limited by the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. The original survey timeline estimated distribution and fielding of the survey occurring at the beginning of June. This was revised to fielding the survey in August.

In addition to COVID-19, the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and the subsequent unrest in various parts of Los Angeles County meant that LASD was focused on responding to and providing security for a series of protests and related unrest throughout the summer and into the fall. Southern California also experienced large wildfires lasting several months that taxed LASD personnel and resources. We decided to delay fielding the survey until August because we felt that the department would be consumed by these events. We also wanted to let some time pass from the period of peak civil unrest so that the protests did not unduly influence responses

regarding the workplace atmosphere; that said, there is no way to tell whether we would have gotten different responses if the survey had been fielded prior to any these events.

Combined with the impact of COVID-19 and responding to the wildfires and local protests, we heard anecdotally that a number of deputies were working overtime or irregular shifts. This meant that the completion of the survey would in some cases be a low priority. These challenges, the mode of administration, the large sample size, and the sensitive subject of the survey all might have impacted response rates (Nix et al., 2017).

Methods for Analyzing the LASD Survey

The descriptive analysis of the LASD survey enabled us to summarize (1) perceptions of departmental leadership; (2) perceptions about the workplace, including supervision, discipline, and promotion practices; (3) perspectives on subgroup membership and characteristics of subgroups; and (4) perspectives on responding to or managing subgroups. We also asked whether respondents would recommend to their friends or relatives to work in law enforcement or to work for LASD.

Our descriptive analyses consisted of tabulations (or charts) of the survey responses, with results presented for all sworn personnel and then for units or groups classified as follows:

- by patrol stations versus other units
- by length of time in custody or patrol
- by rank or number of years with LASD
- by whether they had been invited to participate in a subgroup or not
- by gender and by race/ethnicity.

Because this was not a census of all 10,000 sworn personnel within the LASD, we did not calculate inferential statistics. We did not present findings for cells with fewer than ten responses so that individuals could not be identified by inference.

Respondents sometimes added information to the “other” category that could be coded as a previously listed response. In these cases, we recoded responses for consistency. For a few items where respondents could select responses along a range, we collapsed response categories at the upper end of the scale (e.g., “somewhat agree” and “strongly agree”) or the lower end of the scale to present the results. In addition, for various questions, respondents were asked to provide comments to explain their selection of the “other” response option (e.g., other criteria for being invited to join a deputy subgroup, other advantages of belonging to a deputy subgroup) or to provide additional comments or feedback on the survey or on topics not covered in the survey. We include some representative comments in the main report.

Technical Details for Analysis of Systematic Bias in LASD Survey Results

We conducted the following analyses to examine potential sources of systematic bias in the survey results. This was intended to explore whether there were unit-level indicators of bias that

would need to be explored further. This process began with a benchmarking analysis to examine reported levels of being invited to join a subgroup and comparing respondents with external information provided by our interviews. Next, we examined the extent to which unit responses were in agreement across two sets of questions regarding subgroup features and potential responses to subgroups. Finally, we examined the demographic distribution of survey respondents relative to LASD overall. After reweighting to ensure that all demographic types were equally represented, we found a slight upward bias in our sample, but the confidence intervals were overlapping, suggesting that this bias was not substantial.

Benchmarking for Subgroup Activity

Following a similar approach to those used by Ridgeway and MacDonald, 2009, Ridgeway and MacDonald, 2014, and Ridgeway et al., 2019, we applied benchmarking to find the difference between the reported incidence of individuals invited to join subgroups versus what we would expect given the demographics of a unit and the overall incidence pattern reported across LASD. The purpose of benchmarking was to identify units or sites that had more or less reported activity than we might expect given their demographic makeup. It is possible that individual sites had biased results because of nonresponse patterns at the site or individuals not answering truthfully about being invited to subgroups. Assuming that the overall survey across LASD was not biased this way, we can reasonably assume the estimated benchmarks to be unbiased.

For each unit that had at least ten respondents, we weighted the respondents *from all other units* using inverse propensity score weights to have comparable demographic distributions to the respondents at the given unit. The demographic variables used for the propensity score models are given in Table A.3. Propensity scores were estimated with Gradient Boosted Models using the Twang package in R.

Table A.3. Variables Used in Benchmarking Analysis

Demographic Variable	Levels
Years with LASD	0–3, 4–7, 8–11, 12–20, 21+
Current rank ¹	Deputy, mid-level, or command staff
Current assignment ²	Patrol, custody, detective, other
Years spent on patrol	0–5, 6–10, 11–20
Years spent on custody	0–5, 6–10, 11–20
Age ³	18–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55+
Gender ⁴	Male, other
Race/ethnicity ⁵	White, Hispanic, other
Highest degree obtained	High school or General Educational Development (GED), associate degree, bachelor’s degree, graduate or professional degree

¹ Mid-level management and command staff were combined because of small sample sizes.

² All other than patrol, custody, and detective operations were combined because of small sample sizes.

³ The 18–24 and 25–34 age groups were combined and the 55–64 and 65+ age groups were combined because of small sample sizes.

⁴ Responses of female, transgender, nonbinary, and other were combined because of small sample sizes.

⁵ Responses other than White only or Hispanic only were combined because of small sample sizes.

After estimating the weights, we computed the observed incidence of subgroup invites for each unit and the weighted incidence for all other units, which we refer to as the benchmark for a site. We ran weighted t-tests to determine which units significantly differed from their benchmarks. Finally, we used the Benjamini-Hochberg False Discovery Rate method to control for potential spurious findings and flag only the most significant differences.

We found ten sites that differed significantly from their benchmark, with eight falling below the benchmark (less reported activity than expected) and two exceeding the benchmark (more reported activity than expected). Using external information,³ we know that seven of the sites that fell below their benchmark were not expected to have much activity and both of the two sites that exceeded expectation were assumed to have a lot of activity, so all of these were confirmed by the benchmarking. We found one site for which the benchmarking contradicted our expectation based on external information. In this case, we expected the site to have significant activity, but the reported activity was below the benchmark. This suggests either that those invited to subgroups disproportionately did not respond to the survey, that individuals did not accurately report being invited, or that the external information overestimated the likelihood of subgroups at that location (e.g., because it was outdated information). Given that we only found one site that did not meet our expectations, this suggests that the overall integrity of the survey was reasonable.

³ This information came from our interview findings regarding where subgroups have been reported to exist within LASD.

Agreement of Answers Within Units

To assess the level of agreement within units on attitudes toward subgroups, we estimated the intraclass correlation (ICC) from Shrout and Fleiss, 1979, for two sets of questions. The ICC measures agreement between a set of individuals on a collection of questions for which they offer ratings. It ranges from 0 for no agreement to 1 for absolute agreement. While there is no universal standard for value thresholds, we categorize units by intervals of 0.2.

First, we consider agreement on questions 12 and 13. These concern opinions of the impact of subgroups on individuals and LASD as a whole. Unit agreement would indicate that those who responded from the unit generally share similar opinions concerning how subgroups impact them personally and LASD as a whole. Table A.4 shows the level of agreement by categories of levels of subgroup activity. For most units we see either good or very good agreement, while we only see low agreement for a handful of units. Most of the disagreement comes from units with lower levels of activity, which suggests that individuals responding there might have less perspective on subgroups and might be more prone to speculation. These patterns were similar when compared with levels of expected subgroup activity from interviews.

Table A.4. Unit Agreement for Survey Questions 12 and 13 by Levels of Reported Subgroup Activity

Level of Agreement	30%+	20–30%	10–20%	5–10%	0–5%	All
Very good (0.8–1)	9	6	4	4	3	26
Good (0.6–0.8)	1	2	5	7	5	20
Average (0.4–0.6)	1	2	2	0	1	6
Low (0.2–0.4)	0	1	2	1	1	5
Very low (0–0.2)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Not enough data for reliable estimate	2	2	2	1	0	7

Next, we consider agreement on questions 14 and 15. These questions concern what leadership does or should do about subgroups. As with the previous table, unit agreement would indicate that those who responded from the unit generally share similar opinions concerning how subgroups should be handled. Table A.5 shows the level of agreement by levels of subgroup activity. Again, we see high levels of agreement among most units, and we do not see any units with low levels of agreement. In this case, though, there are more units that did not have enough data to produce reliable estimates, particularly for the units with lower levels of subgroup activity, suggesting that individuals at those units were more likely to skip the question or answer that they did not know.⁴

⁴ “Don’t know” was recoded as missing for the purpose of the ICC estimation.

Table A.5. Unit Agreement for Survey Questions 14 and 15 by Levels of Reported Subgroup Activity

Level of Agreement	30%+	20–30%	10–20%	5–10%	0–5%	All
Very good (0.8–1)	4	4	8	8	7	31
Good (0.6–0.8)	2	1	4	0	2	9
Average (0.4–0.6)	2	1	1	3	0	7
Low (0.2–0.4)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Very low (0–0.2)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not enough data for reliable estimate	5	6	2	2	1	16

Overall, we found that individuals at most units generally agreed on the topics of how subgroups affect them and LASD and what leadership should do about subgroups. There were a few units with lower levels of agreement or not enough responses to be able to estimate, but those were mostly at units where we did not expect to see much subgroup activity.

Demographic Response Rates

The tables below give the demographic response rates based on the current number of sworn status individuals in LASD. Combinations of ranks and races were made to align with the questions in the survey, as shown in Tables A.6 and A.7. Although we found differing levels of response, we did not estimate that it substantially biased the amount of reported subgroup activity. Assuming that demographics were related to being invited to join a subgroup, we reweighted the estimated subgroup activity based on the response rates, such that all demographic types were equally represented. We found that the overall reported incidence of being invited to a subgroup went from 16.3 percent [14.5 percent, 18.0 percent]⁵ to 15.1 percent [13.3 percent, 17.0 percent]. This shows evidence of a small upward bias because of differential response among demographics, but, given the confidence intervals, we did not find this to be a substantial difference.

⁵ 95-percent confidence interval.

Table A.6. Demographic Response Patterns for Gender by Rank

Gender	Rank	Response Percentage	Population Total
Female	Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	22.6	279
Female	Deputy	16.7	1,446
Male	Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	25.5	1,337
Male	Deputy	12.4	6,546

Table A.7. Demographic Response Patterns for Race/Ethnicity by Rank

Race/Ethnicity	Rank	Response Percentage	Population Total
White	Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	25.9	752
White	Deputy	14.2	2,452
Black	Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	17.6	176
Black	Deputy	12.0	584
Hispanic	Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	22.7	563
Hispanic	Deputy	11.6	4,291
Other	Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	40.0	120
Other	Deputy	20.2	665

Comparison of Themes Across Community Interviews and Focus Groups, LASD Interviews, and LASD Survey

To understand similarities across our various data sources, we compared the overlap in themes across community interviews and focus groups, LASD interviews, and the LASD survey. Table A.8 shows the multiple theme categories and the types of subthemes that are included within each category. Themes reflecting the internal and external environment focus on the organizational context of LASD; these themes include perceptions of key organizational processes, perceptions of supervision and leadership, and discussions of historical examples of misconduct that have impacted the department. Relatedly, community members' perceptions of LASD are included here, along with their perceptions of the culture of LASD, perceived changes

over time, and awareness of prior scandals. The next several theme categories reflect knowledge of subgroups, their actions, and what might be done about them.

Table A.8. Theme Overlap Across Data Sources

Theme Category	LASD Interviews	LASD Survey	Community Interviews and Focus Groups
Internal and external environment	Organizational justice, morale, job stress, loyalty, department processes	Perceptions of training, promotions, discipline, loyalty	—
	Supervision, leadership	Perceptions of leadership, perceptions of supervisors, supervisor awareness of subgroups	Overall perception of the department; changes in interactions, behavior, or culture over time
	Historical examples of misconduct	—	Overall perception of the department, negative perception (interactions, behavior, culture), types of interactions
Subgroup actions	Awareness of subgroups, subgroup formation, characteristics of deputies in subgroups, reasons for joining, identity	Characteristics of deputies who get invited, reasons for joining, where subgroups form, restricting membership based on race/ethnicity/gender	Rationalization/justification for groups, nonjustifying reasons for groups
	Subgroup actions and expectations (tattoos, treatment of others), interactions with other deputies	Perceptions of tattoos and their role, attitudes and behavior of subgroup members	Group behavior, differential treatment of community (not subgroup specific), recommendations to improve interactions with community, recommendations (subgroups)

Theme Category	LASD Interviews	LASD Survey	Community Interviews and Focus Groups
Perspectives on group engagement/ consequences	Perceived differences across groups, media coverage, public perceptions, divergent values from LASD, main concerns (hazing, retaliation, harassment, misconduct, safety, workplace incivility)	Impact of subgroups on community perceptions and experiences, impact of not belonging, impact on the workplace, attitudes and behavior of subgroup members	Culture, community impact of groups, general awareness of groups (in own area versus other areas), how participants learned of groups, group behavior
Responses to subgroups	Leadership, hesitation, preventing escalation, training, mentorship	Impact of subgroups on community perceptions, preference for various organizational responses to subgroups (discouragement, prohibition, rotation policy, supervisor training)	Recommendations, current or past reform efforts, recommendations to improve interactions

Lexical Analysis of *Los Angeles Times* Articles

To understand the *Los Angeles Times* articles on this subject over time, we conducted a ProQuest database search and performed descriptive text analytics to identify common phrases from these articles. The compiled articles were published between 1986 and May 2020. Included articles were found through a database search using the terms “sheriff” or “deputy” and “clique,” “subgroup,” or “society.” The database search identified 138 articles, which were compiled and prepared for processing. Twenty-six duplicate articles were removed, and special characters were removed from the text files. The resulting article set included a total of 112 articles for analysis. We performed several analyses in RAND-Lex.⁶ Initial word counts and exploratory sentiment analysis provided a general sense of the content. The topic modeling procedure used Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to detect topics that were present across the articles. This approach provides empirical groupings of the actual topics that are present in a collection of texts. LDA uses a “bag of words” approach to generate a probabilistic model from a *corpus* (set of documents) where topics are modeled as a probability distribution of terms and documents are modeled as a probability distribution of topics. The topics generated are based on word probabilities. The process for selecting a model involved the evaluation of 13 separate models to identify the best fit. Thirteen model solutions were examined by varying the number of topics (3,

⁶ RAND-Lex is a computer program developed at RAND that allows researchers to efficiently analyze large amounts of text data through a built-in suite of tools.

5, 10, 13, 15, 20, 25, or 30) and the number of iterations and examining the model results for whether the word groupings reflected coherent topics and whether they were too broad or redundant (i.e., unique themes). Ultimately, a 15-topic model provided minimal overlap. The category labels that we assigned to the topics and descriptions of the topic-relevant terms are shown in Table A.9.

Table A.9. Topics Identified Through Topic Modeling

Label	Subgroup Relevance
1. Station tattoos	Station tattoos and links to subgroup activity
2. Sheriff Lee Baca and Undersheriff Paul Tanaka	Former sheriff and undersheriff ties to subgroups
3. Custody subgroups	Subgroup impact on the county jails and related complaints
4. Sheriff Jim McDonnell	Former sheriff's approach to subgroups
5. Subgroup tattoos	Discussions of subgroup member tattoos
6. Civilian Oversight Commission	County-level investigations and oversight of LASD
7. Lynwood and Century stations	Subgroup activity in the Lynwood and Century stations
8. Federal investigations	Federal investigations into deputy subgroups
9. Excessive force complaints	Excessive force in the context of subgroups
10. Discrimination	Instances of discrimination related to subgroups
11. Jail oversight commission	Response to allegations of jail violence relating to subgroups
12. Sheriff Sherman Block	Former sheriff's approach to subgroups—specifically the Vikings
13. Inspector general investigations	Investigation of corruption by inspector general
14. Banditos	Allegations of lawsuits associated with the Banditos subgroup
15. Subgroup shootings	Subgroup involvement in shootings

Words in Context

We also examined several key words for surrounding context. This process is a word search that extracts the search term along with a specified number of trailing and following words. It is useful for visualizing and identifying patterns of the context in which words are used across the document set. The words in context analysis was also used for reference when categorizing the

word groupings in the topic modeling. Seven key words and their corresponding phrase counts in the news articles are listed in Table A.10. Phrases were examined in the context of the preceding and following four words and scanned for patterns.

The words “gang,”⁷ “clique,” and “society” appeared 526 times in *Los Angeles Times* articles and were used most often to refer to the deputy subgroups. Several phrases referenced specific subgroups (e.g., the “3000 clique”), while others referenced various concerns and allegations of subgroup-affiliated deputy behavior. A number of phrases also suggest dismissiveness about deputy subgroups (e.g., “not a rogue clique,” “no racist deputy gangs or cliques”). The following are samples (note that punctuation is not included):

Table A.10. Words in Context by Count

Word	Count
tattoo(s)	275
gang(s)	245
force	241
clique(s)	226
communit(y ies)	122
oversight	108
societ(y ies)	55

- “not a rogue clique in the department”
- “new deputies about destructive cliques and rotating jail assignments”
- “racist deputy gangs or cliques within the organization”
- “are no racist deputy gangs or cliques”
- “3000 clique that used gang-like three-finger hand”
- “accused of breeding a gang-like mentality”
- “allegations of a secret society of deputies”
- “member of a secret society of deputies”
- “expressed concerns over secret societies of inked deputies.”

Tattoos were commonly cited (275 times) as a reason to question the image of deputy subgroups. Many phrases focus on the relevance of specific tattoos to subgroups, including their prevalence within specific stations, placement, and imagery:

- “known to have matching tattoos”
- “members with matching skull tattoos the revelation this week”
- “who have matching skull tattoos at the Compton station”
- “adorned with matching skull tattoos one deputy acknowledged”
- “branded themselves with matching tattoos a federal judge called”
- “brand themselves with matching tattoos of a skeleton”
- “deputies to reveal their tattoos”

⁷ We excluded mentions that directly referred to criminal street gangs. This comprises the colloquial use of the word as it is used in relation to deputy groups.

- “deputies with coordinated skull tattoos have nonetheless resurfaced.”

The following phrases are the most common phrases containing “force” (241 mentions) and “excessive force,” which was linked to deputy subgroups. The phrases refer to use of force in the jails and on patrol and the connection between excessive force and deputy subgroups:

- “groups to promote excessive force in the county jails”
- “cliques contributed to excessive force in the jails”
- “groups to use excessive force against people.”

References to “community” and “oversight” were found in 230 phrases. Oversight was generally used to describe the activities of oversight commissions surrounding deputy subgroup concerns. Community references were generally citing specific concerns and interaction between the community and LASD subgroups:

- “resident told the oversight commission at a public”
- “look for in successful community policing he said noting”
- “of the sheriff civilian oversight commission said previous investigations”
- “said he expects the oversight group will look into”
- “sits on the civilian oversight commission said the use”
- “take action officials and community members have long expressed”
- “and the sheriff civilian oversight commission in a task”
- “and violence against the communities they serve.”

Los Angeles County Sheriff's
Department Survey
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Introduction

RAND is conducting an anonymous survey of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD). The purpose of the survey is to request candid and honest feedback about the workplace atmosphere within the department, and to request your input on the role of deputy subgroups (sometimes referred to as "cliques") within the work environment. In recent years, there has been media attention on the existence of these deputy subgroups or cliques. This is an opportunity to share your opinion and to provide feedback. Please do not write your name on the survey or write any directly identifiable information in the open text responses. We need your anonymous contribution to provide a balanced perspective on this issue and LASD in general.

Please fill out the survey individually without consulting anyone and please use a blue or black ink pen.

I. Workplace Atmosphere

The following questions are about the workplace atmosphere of your current assignment. We are interested in your perspective on different topics including departmental leadership, training, discipline, handling of complaints, and promotion practices.

1. The following statements describe your work currently. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. I have been adequately trained to do my job well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Performance evaluations accurately reflect employees' work quality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. In general, promotions are handled fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. In general, formal investigations into deputy misconduct follow a consistent procedure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. In general, formal disciplinary actions are consistently applied.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. In general, sworn personnel are held accountable for their behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. The next questions are about your current supervisors. As you answer these questions, please think about your immediate supervisors, that is, the supervisors who have the most influence on your work activities. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. I trust my supervisors' judgement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. My supervisors communicate my job responsibilities to me clearly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. My supervisors do not tolerate improper or unethical behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. As long as employees are doing their job, my supervisors will look the other way when employees break the rules or engage in improper behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Supervisors often make personnel decisions based on favoritism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Please describe how well the following statements describe LASD overall.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Executive leadership within LASD represents high ethical standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Sworn personnel protect their own interests above LASD's interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Deputies typically feel more loyal to the station/unit where they trained than to LASD overall.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Deputies typically feel more loyal to their current assignment than to LASD overall.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

II. Deputy Subgroups

The following questions ask about deputy subgroups within LASD. These groups are sometimes referred to as “cliques.” We are interested in your perceptions about and experiences with these groups. These subgroups or cliques typically have a name or symbol that is known to group members, but they are not officially recognized by LASD. Deputies typically join the group by invitation only and there may be certain requirements for joining the group (for example, getting the subgroup’s tattoo). Examples of these types of subgroups include (but are not limited to) the Spartans, 3000 Boys, Banditos, Executioners, etc.

4. Have you ever been invited to join a deputy subgroup or clique?

Yes

No Go to Question 6

5. In the last five years, have you been invited to join a deputy subgroup or clique?

Yes

No

6. As far as you know, at what stage in their career are most deputies first invited to join a deputy subgroup or clique? (*Mark one*)

When they are in a custody assignment

During the first two years assigned to a patrol station

After the first two years at a patrol station

Other (please specify): _____

Don’t know

7. In your view, what are the criteria for being invited to join these deputy subgroups or cliques?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Being known as a hard worker (e.g., responding to a lot of calls, making arrests).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Helping other deputies with their work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Willingness to work challenging assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Engaging in social activities with other subgroup members outside of work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Willingness to engage in specific behaviors <u>at work</u> (e.g., being aggressive about making arrests).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Willingness to engage in specific behaviors <u>outside of work</u> (e.g., paying for things of value to the subgroup or clique).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Willingness to engage in behavior that violates current LASD policy and practices (e.g., use of excessive force, stopping individuals without probable cause).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Willingness to look the other way when others engage in improper or unethical behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Other (please specify:)	<input type="text"/>		

8. The following statements are about where in LASD these deputy subgroups or cliques are typically found. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Deputy subgroups or cliques...	<i>Neither</i>					
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. ...exist in some but not all LASD stations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. ...exist in all LASD stations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ...are more common at LASD stations in high-crime areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. ...exist in some but not all LASD custody facilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. ...exist in all LASD custody facilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. ...are common in work assignments other than patrol and custody.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The following statements describe the possible advantages of belonging to a deputy subgroup or clique. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Neither</i>					
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Deputies join these subgroups or cliques to get respect among their peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Deputies join these subgroups or cliques to be mentored by more senior deputies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Members of these deputy subgroups or cliques get special privileges at work (e.g., choice of assignments, choice of shifts, time off, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Deputies join these subgroups or cliques to "fit in" at their work assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Deputy subgroups or cliques provide a sense of camaraderie or fraternity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Other (please specify): _____						

10. The following statements are about tattoos. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	<i>Neither</i>					
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. In order to be a member of a subgroup or clique, a deputy must get that group's tattoo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Having a tattoo is an acceptable way to show pride in a subgroup or clique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Subgroup or clique tattoos are perceived as offensive or intimidating to other deputies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. The following statements are about the conduct, attitudes, and behavior of deputies who belong to a deputy subgroup or clique. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Subgroups or cliques have their own code of conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Subgroups or cliques encourage members to be proactive at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Subgroups or cliques encourage members to work outside the chain of command in situations that normally require supervisor involvement (e.g., incident involving use of force).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Subgroups or cliques restrict membership based on race/ethnicity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Subgroups or cliques restrict membership based on gender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Subgroups or cliques look down on non-group members (e.g., ignore them, speak ill of them).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Subgroups or cliques bully or harass non-members (e.g., humiliate, set unreasonable expectations, give unwanted tasks, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Subgroups or cliques engage in behavior that may endanger other deputies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Subgroups or cliques engage in behavior that may offend, intimidate, or endanger community members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. The following statements describe the impact that NOT belonging to a deputy subgroup or clique can have on an individual. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Not belonging to a subgroup or clique can:	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Neither</i> <i>Agree nor</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Don't</i>
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Know</i>
a. ...limit a deputy's training opportunities.						
b. ...negatively affect a deputy's work assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ...limit a deputy's opportunities for career advancement or promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Other (please specify): _____						

13. The following statements describe the impact that deputy subgroups or cliques have on the workplace and LASD as a whole. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Deputy subgroups or cliques have no effect on the daily operations of my station/unit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. If a station/unit has a deputy subgroup or clique, most deputies know who is in the subgroup and who is not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Deputy subgroups or cliques motivate others within the station/unit (e.g., make more arrests, maintain better order of custody inmates).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The presence of deputy subgroups or cliques hurts morale within the station/unit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The presence of deputy subgroups or cliques makes non-members want to leave or avoid certain stations/units.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Deputy subgroups' or cliques' behavior has negatively impacted community perceptions of LASD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Deputy subgroups or cliques are not as harmful as the media makes them out to be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Now we want to ask you specifically about supervisors' (Lieutenants or Sergeants) approach to deputy subgroups or cliques. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Supervisors are aware of subgroups' or cliques' conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Supervisors formally discipline improper or unethical behavior by subgroup or clique members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Supervisors do not consider deputy subgroups or cliques to be problematic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Supervisors are too lenient when deputy subgroup or clique members violate LASD policies or procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Supervisors discourage deputies from joining subgroups or cliques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. The following statements describe what LASD should do, if anything, about deputy subgroups or cliques. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. LASD shouldn't do anything about deputy subgroups or cliques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. LASD should discourage deputies from joining subgroups or cliques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. LASD should break up problematic deputy subgroups or cliques by moving members to different stations or units.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. LASD should prohibit deputy subgroups or cliques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. A mandatory station/unit rotation policy could limit the influence of subgroups or cliques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. LASD needs to provide training and support to supervisors on how to address any improper or unethical behavior by deputy subgroups or cliques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify):

16. Would you recommend working in law enforcement to your friends and relatives?

- Definitely not
- Probably not
- Probably yes
- Definitely yes

17. Would you recommend working at LASD to your friends and relatives?

- Definitely not
- Probably not
- Probably yes
- Definitely yes

III. Background Information

This last set of questions is about your background.

18. How many years have you been with LASD? *(Mark One)*

- 0–3 years
- 4–7 years
- 8–11 years
- 12–20 years
- 21+ years

19. What is your current rank? *(Mark One)*

- Deputy (Deputy, Bonus Deputy I, Bonus Deputy II)
- Mid-Level Management (Sergeant, Lieutenant)
- Command Staff/Executive Staff (Captain, Commander, Chief, Assistant Sheriff, Undersheriff, Sheriff)

20. Which best describes your current assignment? *(Mark One)*

- Patrol Operations
- Custody Operations
- Detective Division
- Countywide Services
- Court Services
- Technology & Support Division
- Special Operations Division
- Professional Standards Division
- Personnel Command
- Administrative Services or Executive Office
- Other (please specify): _____

21. How many years have you spent in the following assignments?

<i>0–5 years</i>	<i>6–10 years</i>	<i>11–20 years</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
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a. Custody

b. Patrol

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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22. Please provide your age range. *(Mark One)*

- 18–24 years
- 25–34 years
- 35–44 years
- 45–54 years
- 55–64 years
- 65+ years

23. What is your gender? *(Mark One)*

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Nonbinary
- Other

24. Would you describe yourself as... *(Mark All That Apply)*

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify): _____

25. What is your highest degree obtained? *(Mark One)*

- High School graduate or GED
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree (e.g., Graduate certificate, Master's, Doctorate, Law)

26. Please share any additional comments or feedback on the survey or on topics not covered in the survey below. Please do not share any identifiable information like your name or someone else's name.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Please place your completed survey in the enclosed self-addressed, postage-paid envelope and return it to:

RAND Corporation
P.O. Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90401-2138
Attention: Ryan McKay

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or would like to share additional information, please contact the Principal Researcher, Dr. Sam Peterson via email at speterso@rand.org or by phone at 310-393-0411, ext. 6366.

Appendix C. LASD Interview Protocol

Command Staff Interview Protocol

Informed consent text:

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to discuss anything that you do not feel comfortable discussing with me. You can stop the conversation at any time or skip any questions. RAND will use the information you provide during this interview for research purposes only. Our project team will keep your identity and all information you provide during the discussion strictly confidential. We will not ask you about your specific experiences nor will we ask you about anecdotes or stories about specific individuals. We will also take all necessary precautions to keep your personal information confidential (e.g., emails to schedule this interview). We will not share your responses with anyone else outside of the research project. Personal information and communications for the purposes of scheduling this interview will only be shared within the RAND team. Interview notes will be transcribed and personally identifying information will be removed from the notes within 24 hours of the completion of the interview. While we will go to great lengths to ensure confidentiality, it is possible that someone with specific knowledge may learn that you have talked with us or be able to identify you by the information provided. However, this will be limited since the information you provide will be combined with that collected from other interviews. We will present only aggregate findings in the report that will be available free of charge. We also have contractual protections that prevent any county entity from accessing our confidential project information.

Introduction

1. I'd like to start by asking about your background.
 - a. What drew you to LASD?
 - i. How long have you been with LASD?
 - b. How long have you been a [RANK]?
 - c. What do you find most rewarding about being a [RANK] in LASD?
 - d. What are some changes you have noticed in how the department is organized or in the department's workplace culture in the last 10 years?
2. Could you tell us more about the [name of station/your position]? [If not station command, skip to 2h]
 - a. What are the characteristics of the population that your station serves?

- b. What, if any, makes your station unique in terms of the population it serves or types of crimes encountered? (e.g., large homeless population, high concentration of gangs, increase in drug-related crime)
- c. What are some positive aspects of working at [name of station]?
- d. What might be some of the drawbacks of working at [name of station]?
 - i. What issues, if any, do you think might be particularly challenging for deputies working at this station?
- e. How would you describe the relationship between this station and the community?
 - i. Has this relationship changed over the past five years? If so, how?
- f. What are some things you do to engage the station personnel?
- g. What are some things you do or your station does to engage the community (e.g., community advisory committees, youth outreach programs, block watch program)?

- h. [skip if station command]
 - i. How would you characterize your role in the department?
 - ii. What are some of the typical day-to-day decisions you make?
- i. Are there unique challenges to working in your position compared to other leadership positions?
- j. Is there anything you wish you had the authority to do that you don't currently?
- k. Could you tell us more about the [division]? (e.g., personnel, areas served)
 - i. What are some of your goals for the division?

Understanding the groups and their impact

3. The topic of deputy subgroups in LASD has surfaced at various points over the past 30 years, particularly over the last few years. We would be interested in your thoughts about this topic.
 - a. How would you characterize the subgroups that you are aware of or have been aware of in the past? (e.g., informal friend groups, like-minded deputies, hard chargers)
 - b. Is there a term other than subgroups that you would prefer to use?

4. Are you aware of any such subgroups at your station/in your area of supervision?
 - a. Are you aware of any deputy groups that have shared behaviors or activities, names, symbols, and rules for joining the groups?

5. To your knowledge, why and how do deputy subgroups develop? How do deputies find out about them?

6. How would you describe the groups that you're aware of? (Prompt: groups mentioned in the media—Vikings, Banditos, etc.)

- a. Do they have distinct names and/or symbols?
 - b. How does a deputy join a group?
 - c. What types of activities do they engage in on the job or off the job?
 - d. Are certain types of deputies more likely to join than others?
 - i. Prompts: Men or women? Race differences? Length of time with LASD? Special assignments? Other?
 - e. There is talk of there being a spectrum of these groups being totally harmless to harmful. What's your perception?
7. What do you think motivates deputies to develop or join these subgroups?
- a. In your view, does joining a subgroup grant certain on the job or career privileges or risks (e.g., promotion, protection)?
 - b. Do you think the subgroups might help people overcome any challenges or unmet needs (e.g., training, sense of belonging, issues with disciplinary styles, tensions at the station)? If so, how?
 - c. Do you think the need to destress or unwind, develop a sense of belonging or camaraderie contributes to deputies forming or joining these groups?
 - d. What do you think are some of the benefits of forming or joining groups?
 - e. What might be some of the drawbacks of forming or joining these groups?
8. Does the presence of such subgroups affect employees who aren't members?
- a. Does it affect morale? If so, how?
 - b. Have you received complaints or heard negative comments from non-members about these groups? Vice versa?
9. Have you heard the community talk about or express concern about these subgroups?
- a. If so, what feedback have you received from the community about them?
 - b. In your view, does the existence of the subgroups affect public trust? If so, in what ways?
 - c. In your view, how might the existence of the subgroups impact public safety?
10. There has been a lot of speculation and press about the subgroups. What impact, if any, has the media coverage had on awareness of the existence of subgroups? Do you think this affects the perceptions of general public? Do you think there is anything the Department could do to improve its response to this media coverage?
- a. What, if anything, do you wish the public knew about the subgroups?

Department efforts to manage groups

11. What challenges, if any, does the presence of these deputy subgroups pose to you as a supervisor? What are some of your main concerns?

Note: Below are some possible prompts.

- i. Officer safety? For instance, are you concerned that group members might give less support to non-group members in the field? Whether slow response to shared calls or hanging back during an incident?
- ii. Hazing? For instance, are you concerned that groups might require members or even nonmembers to be exposed to activity that is cruel, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful? This can be physical, verbal, or psychological.
- iii. Retaliation? For instance, are you concerned that groups might react negatively to members or non-members who do things that violate group rules/norms?
- iv. Harassment? For instance, are you concerned that groups or group members engage in conduct that is unwanted and is aggressive, offensive, belittling, or demeaning?
- v. Misconduct? For instance, are you concerned that groups might support or require misconduct such as failing to file a report or more extreme behaviors, either informally or formally?
- vi. Workplace incivility? Are you concerned about discourteous, rude, or behaviors that violate workplace norms of mutual respect? Incivility tends to be ambiguous in its intent to harm or not clearly deliberate, but causes harm such as stress and negative emotions.

12. Do you think it is necessary to regulate deputy subgroups?

- a. What policies and practices has the department implemented to manage these deputy subgroups or to mitigate any potential harms associated with such groups? What are the goals of those efforts?
- b. In your view, how effective have these strategies been?
- c. What other strategies might help to manage these deputy subgroups?
 - i. What would you need to try to implement these strategies? (e.g., resources, training, etc.)
- d. What role, if any, do the unions have on managing the subgroups?
- e. What impact could county administration have on managing the groups?

Understanding the department

Lastly, I'd like to ask you some general questions about the department workplace.

13. What are some common practices of effective commanders? What about ineffective commanders?

- a. What do you know about how other command staff supervise their employees?
- b. What type of variation in leadership styles is there in the department?
- c. What types of things could help command staff with the responsibilities they face?

14. What kinds of personnel challenges, if any, is the department facing? (e.g., vacancies, morale, other prompts?)
 - a. What approaches does the department take to address officer wellness generally or specifically in resilience, posttraumatic stress, substance use, or family life?
 - i. Are there formal or informal efforts to help deputies facing these issues?
 - b. What approaches does the department take to address any of the following personnel topics:
 - i. Staffing, scheduling, CARP [Cadre of Administrative Reserve Personnel] assignments? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - ii. Hiring? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - iii. Training? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - iv. Promotion policies? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - v. Management and disciplinary practices? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?

Closing

15. Is there anything that we did not cover today that you think would be helpful to understand?

If not, this will conclude our interview. We appreciate your time and assistance in helping us understand this important topic. Please feel free to call us if you think of something else you would like us to know.

Note: If the interviewee asks about next steps with the work, the interviewer should inquire about the best way of administering the survey.

Deputy Interview Protocol

Introduction

1. I'd like to start by asking about your background.
 - a. What drew you to LASD?
 - i. How long have you been with LASD?
 - b. What do you find most rewarding about being a deputy in LASD?

2. What was attractive about working at [station]?
 - a. “Fast” station? High volume? Location? Friends/Custody colleagues? Commute? Familiarity with the area? Community relationship?
3. What are the things you look up to in a fellow deputy? Is there a term you use to describe deputies who fit these criteria?
 - a. What types of metrics or criteria are used to evaluate your performance? Are the expectations clear?
4. What are some ways deputies cope with the stress of the job?
 - a. Does the department provide resources or training to help you cope with stress?

Understanding the groups and their impact

5. The topic of deputy subgroups in LASD has surfaced at various points over the past 30 years, particularly over the last few years. We would be interested in your thoughts about this topic.
 - a. How would you characterize the subgroups that you are aware of or have been aware of in the past? (e.g., informal friend groups, like-minded deputies, hard chargers)
6. Are you aware of any such subgroups at your station?
 - a. Are you aware of any deputy groups that have shared behaviors or activities, names, symbols, and rules for joining the groups?
7. How would you describe the groups that you’re aware of? (Prompt: groups mentioned in the media—Vikings, Banditos, etc.)
 - a. Do they have distinct names and/or symbols?
 - b. How does a deputy join a group?
 - c. What types of activities do they engage in on the job or off the job?
 - d. Are certain types of deputies more likely to join than others?
 - i. Prompts: Men or women? Race differences? Length of time with LASD? Special assignments? Other?
 - e. There is talk of there being a spectrum of these groups being totally harmless to harmful. What’s your perception?
8. What do you think motivates deputies to develop or join these subgroups?
 - a. In your view, does joining a subgroup grant certain on the job or career privileges or risks (e.g., promotion, protection)?
 - b. Do you think the subgroups might help people overcome any challenges or unmet needs (e.g., training, sense of belonging, issues with disciplinary styles, tensions at the station)? If so, how?

- c. Do you think the need to destress or unwind, develop a sense of belonging or camaraderie contributes to deputies forming or joining these groups?
 - d. What do you think are some of the benefits of forming or joining groups?
 - e. What might be some of the drawbacks of forming or joining these groups?
 - f. Why might a deputy decline to join a group?
9. How does the presence of such subgroups affect employees who aren't members?
- a. Does it affect morale? If so, how?
 - b. Have you heard negative comments from nonmembers about these groups? Vice versa?
 - c. Does group membership affect the level of respect an individual receives from peers?
10. How common are station tattoos?
- a. What is the importance of a tattoo as compared to some other form of group representation such as t-shirts, hats, etc.?
 - b. What is the difference between a tattoo that represents a station as compared to one that represents a non-station group?
 - c. How are deputies invited to get tattoos?
 - d. We have heard that it used to be a thing to go get a tattoo with others, almost like a ritual or rite of passage. What's it like today?
 - e. Some say that tattoos might be a liability for the department in general even if the actions of the deputies that have them are harmless. What do you think?
11. There has been a lot of speculation and press about the subgroups. What impact, if any, has the media coverage had on awareness of the existence of subgroups? Do you think this affects the perceptions of general public? Do you think there is anything the department could do to improve its response to this media coverage?
- a. What, if anything, do you wish the public knew about the subgroups?

Department efforts to manage groups

12. What challenges, if any, does the presence of these deputy subgroups pose? What are some of your main concerns?

Note: Below are some possible prompts.

- i. Officer safety? For instance, are you concerned that group members might give less support to non-group members in the field? Whether slow response to shared calls or hanging back during an incident?
- ii. Hazing? For instance, are you concerned that groups might require members or even nonmembers to be exposed to activity that is cruel, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful? This can be physical, verbal, or psychological.

- iii. Retaliation? For instance, are you concerned that groups might react negatively to members or nonmembers who do things that violate group rules/norms?
- iv. Harassment? For instance, are you concerned that groups or group members engage in conduct that is unwanted and is aggressive, offensive, belittling, or demeaning?
- v. Misconduct? For instance, are you concerned that groups might support or require misconduct such as failing to file a report or more extreme behaviors, either informally or formally?
- vi. Workplace incivility? Are you concerned about discourteous, rude, or behaviors that violate workplace norms of mutual respect? Incivility tends to be ambiguous in its intent to harm or not clearly deliberate, but causes harm such as stress and negative emotions.

13. Do you think it is necessary to manage deputy subgroups?

- a. What policies and practices has the department implemented to manage these deputy subgroups or to mitigate any potential harms associated with such groups? What are the goals of those efforts?
- b. In your view, how effective have these strategies been?
- c. What other strategies might help to manage these deputy subgroups?
 - i. What would you need to try to implement these strategies? (e.g., resources, training, etc.)
- d. What role, if any, do the unions have on managing the subgroups?
- e. What impact could county administration have on managing the groups?

Understanding the department

Lastly, I'd like to ask you some general questions about the department workplace.

14. What are some common practices of effective sergeants? Lieutenants? Senior management? What about ineffective supervisors?

- a. How do you deal with different leadership styles in the department?
- b. Is it likely that supervisors are aware of the social dynamics within the station?

15. Do you think the academy training matches the reality of being in patrol?

- a. What helped the most from your academy training?
- b. How could it have been better?
- c. What has been the most surprising thing for you on patrol?
- d. Or the thing that you were least expecting or felt least prepared for?

16. How long were you in custody?
 - a. What did you think of working there?
 - b. What did you learn that was helpful?

17. How would you describe your experience being in patrol training?
 - i. What were some of the more valuable things you learned from the FTOs [field training officers]?
 - ii. What could have been better?
 - iii. How would you describe your treatment as a trainee?

18. What kind of supervision do you currently receive?
 - a. How often do you talk with a supervisor?

19. Do you think that the department treats deputies fairly?
 - a. How about at your station?
 - b. How could deputies be treated better?

20. What kinds of personnel challenges, if any, is the department facing? (e.g., vacancies, morale, other prompts?)
 - a. What approaches does the department take to address officer wellness generally or specifically in resilience, post-traumatic stress, substance use, or family life?
 - i. Are there formal or informal efforts to help deputies facing these issues?
 - b. What approaches does the department take to address any of the following personnel topics:
 - i. Staffing, scheduling, CARP assignments? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - ii. Training? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - iii. Promotion policies? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?
 - iv. Management and disciplinary practices? If so, how does this affect deputies and how is the department responding to this issue?

Closing

21. Is there anything that we did not cover today that you think would be helpful to understand?

If not, this will conclude our interview. We appreciate your time and assistance in helping us understand this important topic. Please feel free to call us if you think of something else you would like us to know.

Note: If the interviewee asks about next steps with the work, the interviewer should inquire about the best way of administering the survey.

Appendix D. Community Interview Protocol and Focus Group Guide

Interview Protocol

Verbal Consent

INSERT VERBAL CONSENT LANGUAGE

Introduction [8 minutes]

1. I'd like to start by learning a bit more about your background.
 - a. How long you have lived or worked in [NAME OF CITY]?
 - b. What is your primary role in the community?
 - c. How long have you served in this role?
 - d. What other activities have you been involved with in the community?
 - e. How long have you been actively involved in community activities?
 - f. What do you like most about your community?
 - g. What do you like least about your community?
 - i. How can this or these issues be improved?

Overall Relationship with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) [15 minutes]

2. What is the name of the station that services your community?
3. How would you describe the overall culture—attitudes, values, customs—of this station?
 - a. How has this changed over time, if at all?
4. Please describe any ways in which you partner or collaborate with [NAME OF STATION]?
 - a. [*If actively partnering with LASD*] How did you become involved in these activities?
 - b. What do you like most about being involved in these activities?
 - c. What do you like least about being involved in these activities?
 - i. How can this or these issues be improved?

5. To what extent do you feel LASD engages or partners with the community? Please provide detailed examples of engagement.
 - a. What do you think is working well with community engagement?
 - b. What do you think is not working well with community engagement?
 - i. How can community engagement be improved?
6. What do you think LASD's role and responsibilities should be in the community?
 - a. To what extent do you feel LASD meets these expectations?

Understanding Interactions Between the Community and LASD Deputies [20 minutes]

7. How would you describe the type and quality of interactions community members have with LASD deputies? **Probes:** positive attribute, negative attributes.
 - a. What is the basis of your assessment? **Probes:** personal experience or based on other's experiences.
 - b. How has this changed over time, if at all?
 - i. [*If changes*] Why do you think the quality of interactions has changed?
 - c. [*If positive attributes mentioned*] What do you think contributes to the positive interactions? **Probes:** respectfulness, fairness, trustworthiness, responsiveness, empathy
 - d. [*If negative attributes mentioned*] What do you think contributes to the negative interactions? **Probes:** resistance/noncompliance, biases, level of force
 - i. What do you think should be done to improve the quality of these interactions?
8. The topic of deputy subgroups (sometimes referred to deputy cliques or gangs) in LASD has come up at different points over the past 40–50 years.
 - a. Have you heard anything about this?
 - b. What is your perspective on this topic?
 - c. Do you believe that these groups exist?
 - i. If so, how would you describe them? How would you refer to them? In other words, what terms would you use to describe them? [*Is there a term other than subgroups that you use?*]
 - d. [*If respondent believes these groups exist*] Are you aware of any such groups in the station that serves your community?
 - i. If so, what are the names of these groups?
 - e. How did you become aware of these groups? **Probes:** personal experience, based on others' experiences, or from the media.
 - f. What is your understanding of the purpose of these groups?

- g. Are you aware of any shared behavior or activities, symbols or rules for joining these groups? If so, please describe.
- h. How have these groups impacted the community, if at all? **Probes:** perception of groups, concerns about groups—promoted fear, diminished trust, no issues with groups.
 - i. How has this changed over time, if at all?
 - ii. Is this based on experience or is it based on things you have heard?
 - iii. Where does this rank compared to other possible community concerns?
- i. Do you feel like any issues with deputy subgroups in LASD have been or are being addressed? If so, in what ways?
- j. What, if anything, do you think should be done to address any issues of deputy subgroups in LASD? **Probes:** efforts to rebuild trust, improve engagement, reduce fear

Closing [2 minutes]

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

<<Pause>>

If not, this will conclude our interview. We appreciate your time and assistance in helping us understand this important topic. Please feel free to call us if you think of something else you would like us to know.

Facilitator Guide

Verbal Consent

INSERT VERBAL CONSENT LANGUAGE

Observer/recorder will note the sex, race and approximate age of each participant, documented by first name/pseudonym and focus group number and seat number.

MODERATOR:

The following items will be flagged as cause for redirecting the discussion: (a) Information about personal illicit behavior and (b) naming others who engage in other illicit behaviors.

If a participant starts to provide names of others or damaging information about himself or herself, please say THE FOLLOWING:

“I just want to remind you that anything you say in this group might be repeated by others after the leave the group, so please do not provide information that could be damaging to yourself or others.”

Before we begin, I'd like to talk about a few ground rules.

- 1) I am going to ask you several questions and I'd like to give everyone a chance to give their opinions. We do not have to go in any particular order but we do want everyone to take part in the discussion. We ask that only one person speak at a time.
- 2) We're interested in your opinions and whatever you have to say is fine with us. There are no right or wrong answers. We are just asking for your opinions based on your own personal experience. We are here to learn from you.
- 3) Don't worry about having a different opinion than someone else, but please do respect each other's answers or opinions.
- 4) If there is a particular question you don't want to answer, you don't have to.

Any questions before we get started?

Focus Group Questions

Start with an ice-breaker. Go around the room and ask everyone to say his or her first name or the name they want to go by during this focus group, how long they've lived in the community, and one positive thing about their community.

“As you know, we'd like to learn more about the relationship between the community and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Specifically, I'd like to ask you questions about how you interact with LASD deputies, what are your thoughts and feelings about these interactions, and your thoughts and experiences with deputy subgroups. Let's start with your relationship with the department.”

1) OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE [NAME OF STATION] [20 minutes]

a) Please describe any ways that you partner or work with [NAME OF STATION]?

*i) [If actively partnering with the station] How did you become involved in these activities? **Probe:** community initiated or LASD initiated*

ii) *Do you think these partnerships are working well? Why or why not?*

iii) *How can these partnerships be improved?*

b) *To what extent do you feel [NAME OF STATION] reaches out to partner or work with the community? Please provide detailed examples of outreach and engagement (e.g., neighborhood safety meetings, youth or community social groups).*

i) *What do you think is working well or not working well with community outreach and engagement?*

ii) *How can community outreach and engagement be improved?*

c) *What do you think the LASD's role and responsibilities should be in the community?*

i) *To what extent do you feel command staff and deputies at [NAME OF STATION] meets these expectations?*

d) *How would you describe the overall culture—attitudes, values, customs—of the [NAME OF STATION]?*

i) *How has this changed over time, if at all? **Probe:** Has this changed in the past few months in response to the increased attention to social and racial justice issues?*

ii) *If it hasn't changed, how would you like it to change?*

1) INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND [NAME OF STATION] DEPUTIES [20 minutes]

a) *How would you describe interactions between community members and LASD deputies at [NAME OF STATION]? Probes: positive attributes, negative attributes.*

i) *Are your thoughts about these interactions based on personal experience or based on other people's experiences?*

ii) *How has this changed over time, if at all?*

(1) *[If changes] Why do you think the quality of interactions has changed?*

- iii) *[If positive attributes mentioned] What do you think contributes to the positive interactions? **Probes:** respectfulness, fairness, trustworthiness, responsiveness, empathy*
- iv) *[If negative attributes mentioned] What do you think contributes to the negative interactions? **Probes:** resistance/noncompliance, biases, level of force*
- v) *What do you think should be done to improve these interactions?*

2) PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH DEPUTY SUBGROUPS [40 minutes]

- a) ***The topic of deputy subgroups (sometimes referred to deputy cliques or gangs) in LASD has come up at different points over the past 40–50 years. Have you heard anything about this?***
 - i) *What is your perspective on this topic?*
 - ii) *Do you believe that these groups exist at the [NAME OF STATION]?*
 - (1) *If so, how would you describe them? How would you refer to them? In other words, what terms would you use to describe them? [Is there a term other than subgroups that you use?]*
 - (2) *[If respondent believes these groups exist] Are you aware of any such groups in the station that serves your community?*
 - (a) *If so, what are the names of these groups?*
 - iii) *How did you learn about these groups or their names? **Probes:** personal experience, based on other’s experiences, or from the media.*
 - iv) *What do you think is the purpose of these groups?*
 - v) *Are you aware of any shared behavior or activities, symbols or rules for joining these groups? If so, please describe.*
 - vi) *How have these groups impacted the community, if at all? **Probes:** perception of groups, concerns about groups—promoted fear, diminished trust, no issues with groups.*
 - (1) *How has this changed over time, if at all?*
 - (2) *Is this based on experience or is it based on things you have heard?*

(3) Where does this rank compared to other possible community concerns?

vii) Do you feel like any issues with deputy subgroups in [NAME OF STATION] have been or are being addressed? If so, in what ways?

*viii) What, if anything, do you think should be done to address any issues of deputy subgroups in [NAME OF STATION]? **Probes:** efforts to rebuild trust, improve engagement, reduce fear.*

We appreciate your time and assistance in helping us understand this important topic. Thank you!

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