Criminality of Police Officers

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The Literature: What is known about police criminality?

• Independent Commission Reports:
  – Knapp Commission (1972)
  – Mollen Commission (1994)

• Newspaper Investigative Reporting:
  – New York Times (1970s)
  – Boston Globe (1980s)
  – Philadelphia Inquirer (1990s and 2006)

• Research in Criminology / Social Sciences:
  – Fallen Blue Knights: Controlling Police Corruption (Ivkovic, 2005)
  – Bad Cops: A Study of Career-Ending Misconduct Among New NYPD Officers (Fyfe and Kane, 2006)
Methodology

• Content analysis of newspaper articles about sworn law enforcement officers in the US arrested during the 18 month period from January 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006.
• Convenience sampling primarily using Google News search engine automated daily searches of newspapers published on the Internet.
• Articles were cataloged, coded, and entered into SPSS.
• Coded variables included gender, age, years of service, duty status at time of offense, state, department type and size, victim demographic information, and 64 offense categories (mostly NIBRS categories).
• SPSS runs for frequencies and correlations.
Google News Search Engine
Automated Daily Search Terms

- “deputy was arrested”
- “deputy was charged”
- “deputy was convicted”
- “deputy was indicted”
- “detective was …”
- “detectives were …”
- “officer …”
- “officer was …”
- “police chief was …”
- “police officers were …”
- sheriff “was …”
- “trooper was …”
- police “caption was …”
- police “lieutenant was …”
- police “officer is …”
- police “officer was …”
- police “sergeant was”
Sample

- 695 arrests of 657 individual sworn law enforcement officers (38 of the cases represent officers who were arrested more than once).
- Each one of the 695 arrests is treated as a case.
- These officers were/are employed by 449 agencies (primary state, sheriff, county police, municipal police, special police, and tribal police agencies) in 49 states and DC. Wyoming is not represented in the sample.
- All of the officers were employed as sworn law enforcement officers at the time of commission of the offense for which they were arrested.
## Descriptive Statistics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min/Max</th>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>36.43</td>
<td>8.084</td>
<td>20-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yrs Service</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>7.434</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>663 (95.4)</td>
<td>32 (4.6)</td>
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### Frequency of Criminal Offenses for Sworn Officers Arrested

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<th>Offense</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>all other offenses (unclassified)</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>16.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>driving under the influence</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>13.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>simple assault</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>8.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>forcible fondling</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>forcible rape</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>drug / narcotic violation</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>weapons law violation</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intimidation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all other larceny</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquor law violation</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statutory rape</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>false report / statement</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pornography / obscene material</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>other sex crime</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>forcible sodomy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murder &amp; non-negligent manslaughter</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>extortion / blackmail</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>indecent exposure</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
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<td>evidence: destroying / tampering</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<td>sexual assault with an object</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
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<td>gambling: operating / promoting</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impersonation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theft from building</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>restraining order violation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>drunkenness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>embezzlement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.9</td>
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<td>prostitution</td>
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<td>.9</td>
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<td>arson</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>negligent manslaughter</td>
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<td>.7</td>
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<td>counterfeiting / forgery</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>shoplifting</td>
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<td>stolen property offenses</td>
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<td>.6</td>
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<td>trespass of real property</td>
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<td>drug equipment violation</td>
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<td>credit card / atm fraud</td>
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<td>family offense, non-violent</td>
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<tr>
<td>incest</td>
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<td>.3</td>
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<td>liquor low violation</td>
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<td>motor vehicle theft</td>
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<td>theft from motor vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>theft of motor vehicle parts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>wire fraud</td>
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<td>.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>wiretapping, illegal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Years of Service at Arrest: Intimidation, Assault & Murder

Intimidation (n = 19)
Simple Assault (n = 31)
Aggravated Assault (n = 33)
Murder & Non-Negligent Manslaughter (n = 15)
Years of Service at Arrest:
Forcible Rape, Sodomy & Fondling

Years of Service at Arrest

Percentage

0-2 yrs  3-5 yrs  6-8 yrs  9-11 yrs  12-14 yrs  15-17 yrs  18-20 yrs  21-23 yrs  24-26 yrs  27+ yrs

Forcible Rape (n = 27)
Forcible Sodomy (n = 19)
Forcible Fondling (n = 48)
Years of Service at Arrest: DUI and Drug Offenses

[Bar chart showing years of service at arrest for DUI and drug offenses, with bars for different ranges of years and different colors for DUI/DWI (56 cases) and Drug/Narcotic Offenses (28 cases).]

- 0-2 years: 15% (DUI/DWI), 10% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 3-5 years: 20% (DUI/DWI), 15% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 6-8 years: 10% (DUI/DWI), 5% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 9-11 years: 30% (DUI/DWI), 40% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 12-14 years: 10% (DUI/DWI), 10% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 15-17 years: 5% (DUI/DWI), 5% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 18-20 years: 0% (DUI/DWI), 0% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 21-23 years: 0% (DUI/DWI), 0% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 24-26 years: 0% (DUI/DWI), 0% (Drug/Narcotic)
- 27+ years: 0% (DUI/DWI), 0% (Drug/Narcotic)
Years of Service at Arrest: Disorderly Conduct, Vandalism & Weapons Law Violations

- Disorderly Conduct (n = 8)
- Vandalism / Destruction of Property (n = 7)
- Weapons Law Violations (n = 21)
Age of Officer at Arrest: Extortion, Bribery & Embezzlement

- Extortion, Bribery & Embezzlement
  - Extortion / Blackmail (n = 16)
  - Bribery (n = 16)
  - Embezzlement (n = 5)
Age of Officer at Arrest:
False Reports, Obstructing Justice & Destroying/Tampering with Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Arrest</th>
<th>False Report / Statement (n = 19)</th>
<th>Obstructing Justice (n = 22)</th>
<th>Destroying / Tampering Evidence (n = 9)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ages 20-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 24-27</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 28-31</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 32-35</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 36-39</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 40-43</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 44-47</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 48-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ages 52-55</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ages 56+</td>
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</table>
Gender:
Officers charged with Aggravated Assault

Aggravated Assault (n = 61)

- Female Officers: 8%
- Male Officers: 92%
Gender: Officers charged with Burglary

Burglary / Breaking & Enter (n = 10)

- Female Officers: 20%
- Male Officers: 80%
Gender:
Officers charged with Shoplifting

Shoplifting (n = 4)

Female Officers: 50%
Male Officers: 50%
On-Duty Crimes:
Gambling: Operating / Promoting

Gambling: Operating / Promotion (n = 8)

- On-Duty: 62%
- Off-Duty: 38%
On-Duty Crimes:
Drug / Narcotic Offenses

Drug / Narcotic Violations (n = 32)

On-Duty

Off-Duty

56%
44%
On-Duty Crimes: Forcible Rape

Forcible Rape (n = 39)

- 56% Off-Duty
- 44% On-Duty
On-Duty Crimes: Driving Under the Influence

DUI / DWI (n = 94)

9% On-Duty
91% Off-Duty
Agency Type: Driving Under the Influence

DUI / DWI (n = 95)

- Primary State Police Agencies: 76%
- Sheriff's Departments: 3%
- County Police Departments: 1%
- Municipal Police Departments: 1%
- Special Police Departments: 1%
- Tribal Police Departments: 3%
Agency Type: Kidnapping / Abduction

Kidnapping / Abduction (n = 18)

- 89%
- 11%

Primary State Police Agencies
Sheriff's Departments
County Police Departments
Municipal Police Departments
Special Police Departments
Tribal Police Departments
Agency Type: Arson

Arson (n = 5)

Primary State Police Agencies: 80%
Sheriff's Departments: 20%
County Police Departments
Municipal Police Departments
Special Police Departments
Tribal Police Departments
Agency Type: Extortion / Blackmail

Extortion / Blackmail (n = 21)

- 61%
- 14%
- 10%
- 5%
- 10%

Primary State Police Agencies
Sheriff's Departments
County Police Departments
Municipal Police Departments
Special Police Departments
Tribal Police Departments
# of Sworn Personnel in Agency:
Intimidation & Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Sworn Personnel in Agency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Sworn</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4 Sworn</td>
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<td>5-9 Sworn</td>
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<td>10-24 Sworn</td>
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<td>25-49 Sworn</td>
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<td>50-99 Sworn</td>
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<td>100-249 Sworn</td>
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<td>250-499 Sworn</td>
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<tr>
<td>500-999 Sworn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000+ Sworn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Intimidation (n = 30)
- Simple Assault (n = 73)
- Aggravated Assault (n = 58)
# of Sworn Personnel in Agency: Federal Civil Rights Violations

![Bar chart showing the number of sworn personnel in agencies and the percentage of Federal Civil Rights Violations (n = 11). The chart indicates a significant number of violations in agencies with 500-999 sworn personnel.]
Sworn Officers Arrested for Federal Civil Rights Violations

n = 11

45.5%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Driving Under the Influence

n = 95
Sworn Officers Arrested for Drug / Narcotic Offenses

n = 38

2.6% 2.6% 13.2% 5.3% 18.4% 23.7% 15.8% 15.8% 2.6%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Forcible Fondling

n = 59

32.2%

3.4%

5.1%

3.4%

11.9%

25.4%

15.3%

3.4%

25.4%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Statutory Rape

n = 33

6.1%

15.2%

33.3%

30.3%

6.1%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Extortion / Blackmail

n = 21

9.5%  
4.8%  
61.9%  
14.3%  
9.5%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Burglary / Breaking & Entering

n = 10

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

30%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Kidnapping / Abduction

n = 18

- 50%
- 5.6%
- 5.6%
- 11.1%
- 22.2%
- 5.6%

Map showing the distribution of sworn officers arrested for kidnapping/abduction across different regions in the United States.
Sworn Officers Arrested for Robbery

n = 11

36.4%

9.1%
Sworn Officers Arrested for Murder & Non-Negligent Manslaughter

n = 22

22.7%

31.8%

9.1%

4.5%

13.6%

9.1%

9.1%

9.1%
Recommendations for Future Research

• Continue data collection for an additional 18 months
  – January, 2005 – December, 2007 (36 months total)
  – Will the patterns hold with more cases?
  – Analyze data on victims

• Gather available data for use as dependent variables in logistic regression analyses
  – CALEA accreditation status
  – Agencies’ hiring, minimum education, and training requirements

• Generate a random sample from the population of cases for in-depth research
  – Qualitative analysis?
  – Review of court case files to develop more data (especially interested in patterns in case dispositions (e.g., convictions, plea bargains, acquittals, dismissals)
  – Are officers keeping their jobs after being arrested?