Police Crime Across the Life Course: An Exploratory Study of Arrested Officers Who Reoffend

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Methods

The purpose of this study is to improve policing and inform the public about police crime. The data for this project were collected as part of a larger research project on police crime. The data were compiled from multiple news sources and court documents from the years 2005-2014. The news sources used for this project were primarily discovered through Google News™ search engine and Google Alerts™ email update service. For this project, we narrowed the data from nonfederal sworn law enforcement officers charged with any crime to solely sworn law enforcement officers who were arrested multiple times while employed by a state or local law enforcement agency.

Results

• An officer’s first arrest occurred, on average, slightly above age 37. An officer’s last arrest occurred, on average, slightly above age 38 (Table 1).
• An officer’s first and last arrest most often occurred within the same year (Table 2).
• An officer’s first arrest occurred, on average, with slightly above 10 years of service (Table 3).
• The most serious offenses charged for officers who reoffend is most frequently simple assault, DUI, or aggravated assault (Table 4).
• Of the 505 officers who reoffended, 162 (14.6%) were not convicted of a crime (Figure 9).
• Of the 505 officers who reoffended, 261 (51.7%) were charged with 2 separate violence-related crimes (Figure 6).
• Of the 505 officers who reoffended, 340 (67.3%) were charged with at least one crime that was committed in their official capacity (Figure 3).

Directions for Future Research

• Binary logistic regression and CART decision tree models will be utilized to predict job loss and criminal conviction for officers who reoffend. Felony arrests and other variables of interest will be examined in this future research.
• We will examine the differences in types of crimes for each officer’s first arrest compared to subsequent arrests. We will also focus on various types of police violence, e.g., family violence, police sexual violence, and bizarre gun violence.
• There are 14 officers with arrest cases on 4 or more dates. A qualitative study will explore persistent offending patterns of these officers and their arrest cases.

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