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

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to improve policing and inform the public about police crime and patterns of repeat or habitual police crime offenders. The study identified 10,287 arrest cases involving 8,495 individual nonfederal sworn law enforcement officers, each of whom were arrested during the decade 2005-2014. Of these, 505 officers (5.94%) were arrested more than once in the study years and account for 1,343 (13.06%) of the arrest cases in our database. This poster presents data on the criminal arrest cases and the officers who have been arrested multiple times while employed by a state or local law enforcement agency within the United States. Cases were identified using 48 automated Google Alerts that constantly crawl the Google News search engine. Data sources were triangulated and court records obtained when available. Exploratory analysis discovers patterns of arrested officer and victims demographics, details of the crimes, final adverse employment outcomes, and criminal case dispositions. Additionally, the relationships between criminal case disposition and other variables of interest are explored.

We identified 505 officers who were each arrested multiple times during the study years, 2005-2014. Figures 1-6 display how many unique arrest cases each officer has for each type of police crime. The blue bar in each figure (below) indicates the number of officers in this study who were *not* arrested for each specific type of police crime.

Figure 1 Drug-Related Arrest Cases per Arrested Officer (N=505)

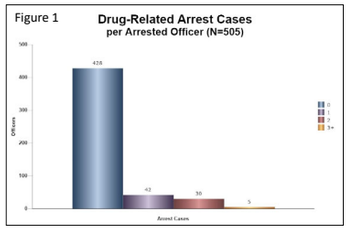


Figure 2 Sex-Related Arrest Cases per Arrested Officer (N=505)

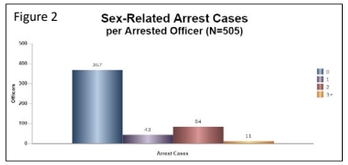


Figure 3 Official Capacity Arrest Cases per Arrested Officer (N=505)

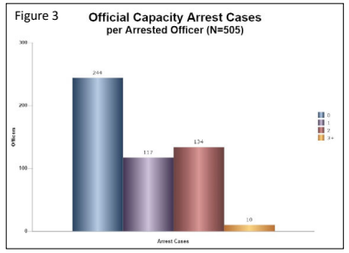


Figure 4 Alcohol-Related Arrest Cases per Arrested Officer (N=505)

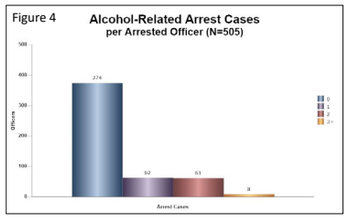
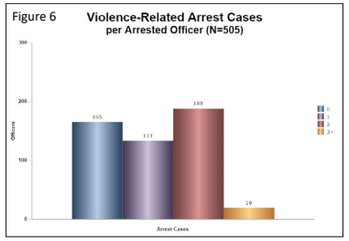


Figure 5 Profit-Motivated Arrest Cases per Arrested Officer (N=505)

Figure 6 Violence-Related Arrest Cases per Arrested Officer (N=505)



Arrested Officers Who Reoffended, 2005-2014 (N=505)

Figure 7

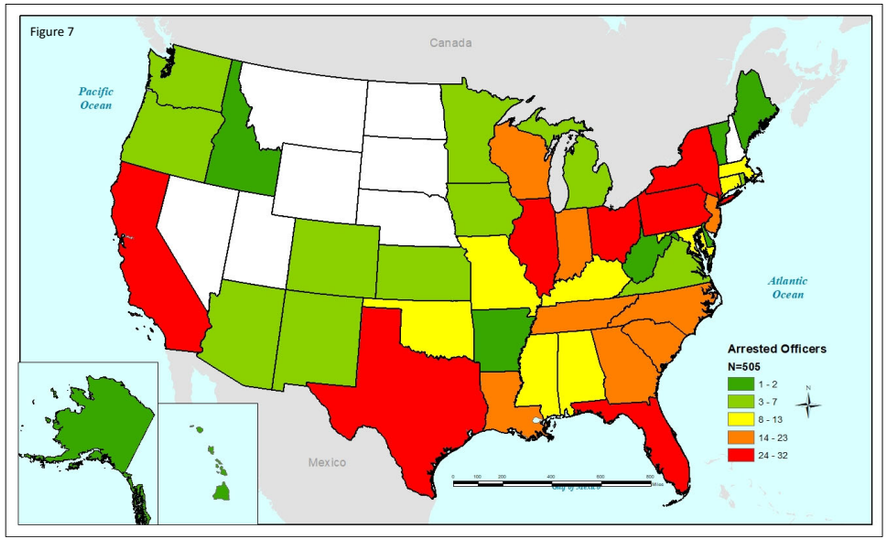


Table 1. Age (N=480)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
First Arrest	37.32	8.228
Last Arrest	38.31	8.170

Table 2. Age Difference (N=505)

Age at Last Arrest - Age at First Arrest	*n*	(%)
0	259	(51.3)
1	108	(21.4)
2	48	(9.5)
3	19	(3.8)
4	18	(3.6)
5	11	(2.2)
6	10	(2.0)
7	5	(1.0)
8	1	(0.2)
9	1	(0.2)
Missing	25	(5.0)

Table 3. Years of Service (N=404)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
First Arrest	10.32	7.610
Last Arrest	11.18	7.840

Figure 8

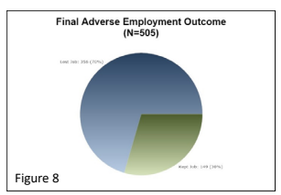


Figure 9

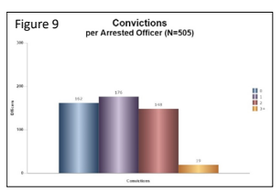


Table 4. Most Serious Offense Charged (N=1,343)

	n	(%)
Simple Assault	183	(13.6)
DUI	120	(8.9)
Aggravated Assault	108	(8.0)
Forcible Fondling	96	(7.1)
Forcible Rape	79	(5.9)
Burglary	55	(4.1)
Intimidation	54	(4.0)
All Other Offenses	42	(3.1)
Drug Violations	39	(2.9)
Weapons Law Violations	37	(2.8)
False Report	31	(2.3)
All Other Larceny	29	(2.2)
Protection Order Violations	29	(2.2)
Forcible Sodomy	28	(2.1)
Statutory Rape	27	(2.0)
Other Sex Crime	26	(1.9)

Methods

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 all 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. An officer's last arrest occurred, on average, with slightly above 11 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, 356 (70.5%) have lost their job (Figure 8).
- Of the 505 officers who reoffended, 162 (14.6%) were not convicted of a crime (Figure 9).
- Most of the arrested officers were *not* charged with any alcohol-related, drug-related, sex-related, or profit-motivated police crimes (Figures 1-6).
- Of the 505 officers who reoffended, 340 (67.3%) were charged with at least one violence-related crime (Figure 6).
- Most commonly, officers who reoffended were charged with 2 separate violence-related crimes (n=188, 37.2%) (Figure 6).
- Of the 505 officers who reoffended, 261 (51.7%) 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.

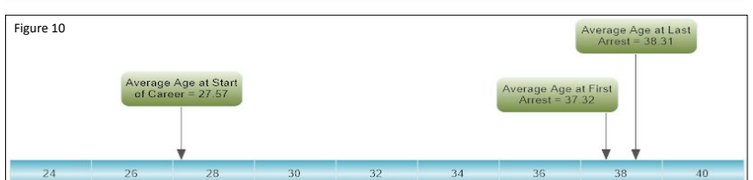



Figure 10