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Crime by Policewomen in the United States, 2005-2014

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Abstract

This study is a replication and extension of Stinson, Todak, and Dodge's (2015) study of crime by policewomen across the United States in years 2005-2007. The sample for the current study includes 597 arrest cases involving 555 female police officers, each of whom were arrested during the decade 2005-2014. The arrested female officers were employed by 353 state and local law enforcement agencies located in 273 counties and independent cities within 44 states and the District of Columbia. Findings indicate that crimes committed by policewomen are most often violence-related, alcohol-related, and/or profit-motivated offenses. Descriptive and bivariate statistics are reported on variables of interest. Additional findings report differences between crimes committed by policemen and policewomen.

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 policewomen.

Disclaimer

The sex of the police officer for this study is assumed by physical markers such as appearance, as well as, assumed by traditional masculine or feminine names. When available, an officer's sex is confirmed by official court records. Due to the anonymity of this research, we assume binary sex categories although officers may not identify as such.

Arrested Policewomen, 2005-2014

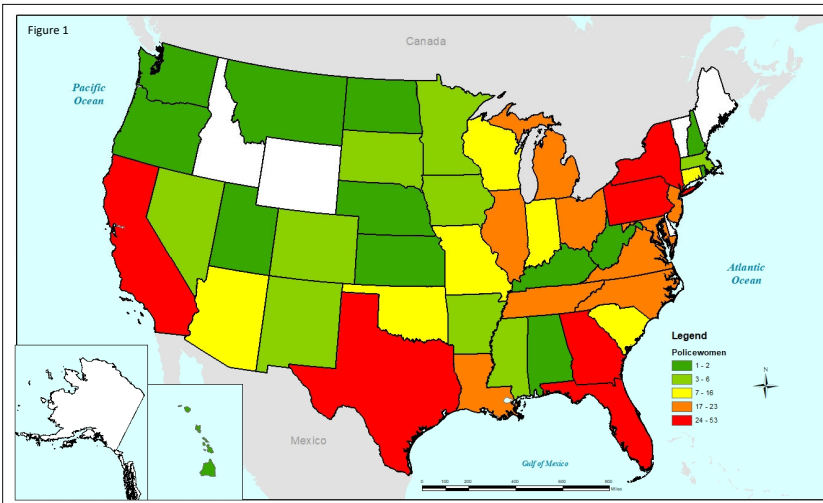


Table 1. Most Serious Offense (N=597)

	<i>n</i>	(%)		<i>n</i>	(%)
DUI	121	(20.3)	Shoplifting	17	(2.8)
Simple Assault	71	(11.9)	Burglary	15	(2.5)
Aggravated Assault	66	(11.1)	Weapons Law Violation	15	(2.5)
Drug Violation	33	(5.5)	Counterfeiting	14	(2.3)
All Other Offenses	29	(4.9)	Official Misconduct	13	(2.2)
All Other Larceny	25	(4.2)	Theft from Building	13	(2.2)
False Pretenses/Swindle	23	(3.9)	Vandalism	12	(2.0)
False Report/Statement	20	(3.4)	Embezzlement	11	(1.8)
Obstructing Justice	17	(2.8)	Intimidation	10	(1.7)

Table 2. Bivariate Associations of Duty Status and Types of Police Crime

Type of Crime	On-Duty		Off-Duty		χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)				
Drug-Related	27	(4.5)	35	(5.9)	8.976	1	0.003	0.123
Alcohol-Related	6	(1.0)	159	(2.7)	65.013	1	<0.001	0.330
Sex-Related	10	(1.7)	4	(0.7)	13.904	1	<0.001	0.153
Violence-Related	37	(6.2)	180	(30.2)	18.578	1	<0.001	0.176
Profit-Motivated	82	(13.7)	83	(13.9)	56.536	1	<0.001	0.308

Table 3. Bivariate Associations of Officer, Offense, and Victim Characteristics

	Policewomen		Policemen		χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)				
Sex of Arrested Officer	597	(5.8)	9690	(94.2)				
Type of Crime								
Alcohol-Related	165	(1.6)	1977	(19.2)	17.858	1	<0.001	0.042
Sex-Related	14	(0.1)	2208	(21.5)	138.757	1	<0.001	0.116
Violence-Related	217	(2.1)	4803	(46.7)	39.354	1	<0.001	0.062
Profit-Motivated	165	(1.6)	2226	(21.6)	6.863	1	0.009	0.026
On-Duty Offenses	164	(1.6)	3892	(37.8)	37.945	1	<0.001	0.061
Police Sexual Violence	8	(0.1)	879	(8.5)	42.661	1	<0.001	0.064
Victim Characteristics								
Female Victim	86	(0.8)	3289	(32.0)	42.434	1	<0.001	0.088
Children Victim	25	(0.2)	1404	(13.6)	23.252	1	<0.001	0.063
Victim is Police Officer	41	(0.4)	300	(2.9)	63.320	1	<0.001	0.103

Figure 2. Age at Time of Arrest

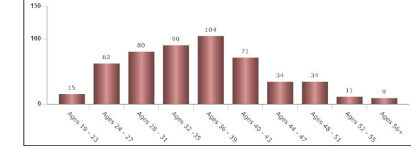


Figure 3. Years of Service

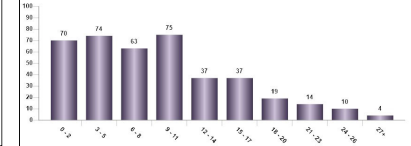


Figure 4. Duty Status

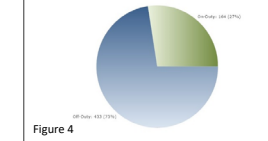


Figure 5. Criminal Case Disposition

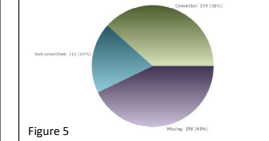
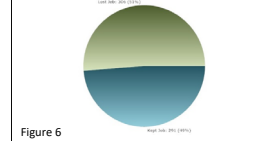


Figure 6. Final Adverse Employment Outcome



Results

- The majority ($n=433$, 72.5%) of the arrest cases are for crimes that were committed by policewomen while off-duty (Figure 4).
- The arrested policewomen are, on average, slightly above age 36, with 9 years of service as a sworn law enforcement officer (Figure 2-3).
- The most common offense for which policewomen are arrested is DUI (Table 1).
- Crimes for which policewomen are arrested are most commonly violence-related, alcohol-related, and/or profit-motivated (Table 2).
- Arrest cases of policewomen make up 5.8% of the cases in our data set of officers arrested nationwide in years 2005-2014 (Table 3).
- Policewomen are less likely to be arrested for sex-related offenses compared to policemen (Table 3).
- Victims of police crime arrest cases are less frequently female and/or children when the crime is committed by policewomen, compared to policemen (Table 3).
- Fellow police officers are more frequently the victim of crimes committed by policewomen, compared to committed by policemen (Table 3).
- Policewomen are convicted in 67.1% of the arrest cases where the criminal case disposition is known (Figure 5).
- Policewomen who have been arrested lose their job 51% of the time (Figure 6).

Discussion and Direction for Future Research

- Females account for only 5.8% of police crime although they make up about 12% of the entire police force in state and local law enforcement agencies nationwide.
- The patterns of criminal behaviors committed by policemen and policewomen are inherently different. Policewomen are often arrested for committing violence-related, alcohol-related, and/or profit-motivated crimes. Whereas, policemen who are arrested are much more likely to have committed a sex-related crime.
- Policemen who have been arrested lose their jobs 62.3% of the time, compared to the 51.3% of policewomen who lost their job. Future research should examine the difference by sex in agency reactions to officers who have been arrested.