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Police Crime and Offense Outcomes: Examining the Effect of Officer Rank, Sex, and Criminal Offense Type on Offense Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Individual- and agency-level variables have emerged as salient factors for understanding police misconduct. Officer rank and sex are two such factors associated with differences in police crime. One area that has received less attention in the literature is the link between individual characteristics, criminal offense type, and case outcomes including case disposition, conviction, and employment. This study uses data from the Henry A. Wallace Police Crime Database (scan QR Code above) to examine the association between officer rank, sex, and criminal offense type in relation to case disposition, conviction, and employment outcomes.

METHOD

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 2005-2018. The news sources used for this project were primarily discovered through Google News™ search engine and Google Alerts™ email update service. For more information, scan the QR code above.
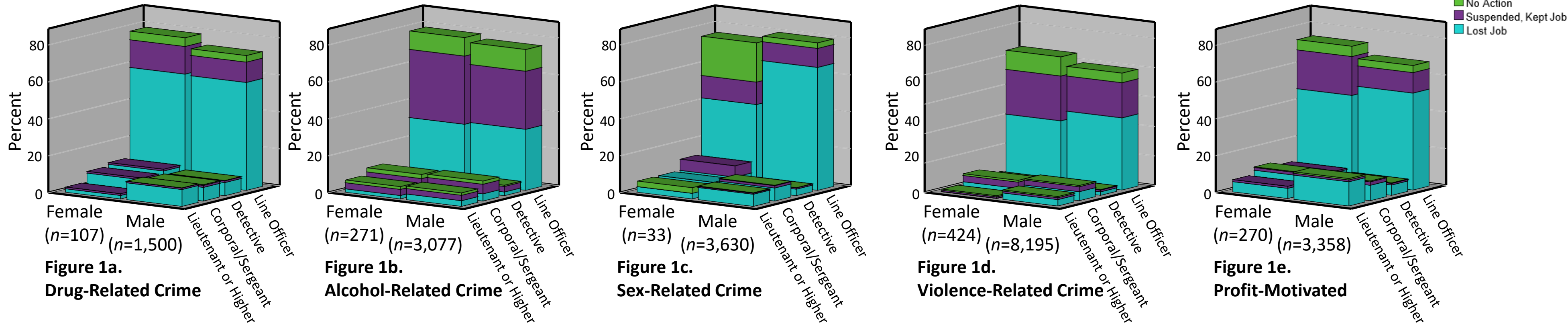
Table 1. Officer Demographics for Criminal Arrest Cases from 2005-2018 (N = 16,563)

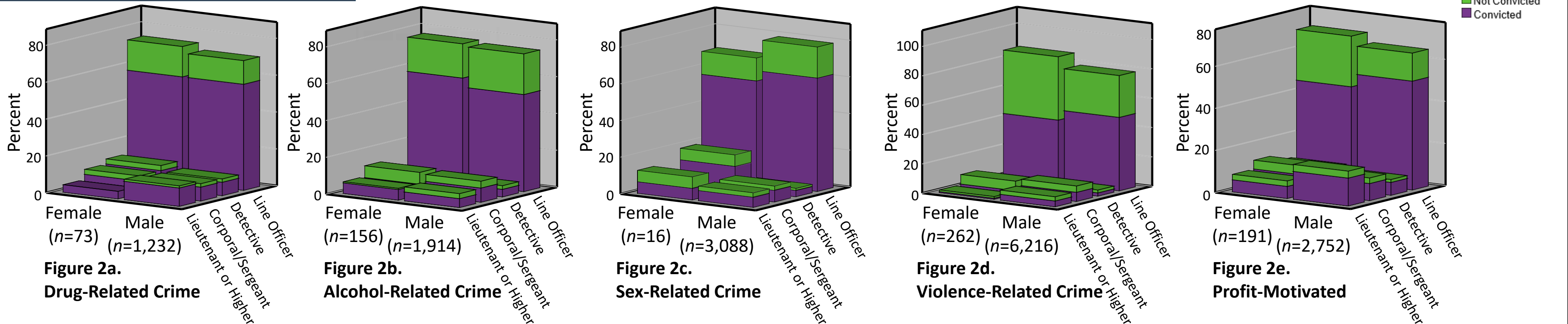|	n (%)		n (%)
Sex		**Final Employment Outcome**	
Male	15,511 (93.6)	No Action	1,533 (9.3)
Female	1,052 (6.4)	Suspended, Kept Job	4,693 (28.3)
Rank		Lost Job	10,337 (62.4)
Line Officer	12,508 (75.5)	**Case Disposition**	
Detective	846 (5.1)	Not Convicted	3,982 (24.0)
Corporal/Sergeant	1,713 (10.3)	Convicted	8,257 (49.9)
Lieutenant or Higher	1,496 (9.0)	Unknown	4,324 (26.1)
Crime Type		**Type of Conviction**	
Drug-Related	1,607 (9.7)	Jury Trial	1,430 (8.6)
Alcohol-Related	3,348 (20.2)	Bench Trial	420 (2.5)
Sex-Related	3,663 (22.1)	Guilty Plea	6,287 (38.0)
Violence-Related	8,619 (52.0)	Unknown	8,424 (50.8)
Profit-Motivated	3,628 (21.9)	—	—

DISCUSSION

- Employment outcomes, case disposition, and type of conviction appear to be similar for male and female officers.
- **Employment outcomes**
  - A higher percentage of males lost their job while a higher percentage of females had no action taken for sex-related crimes.
- **Case disposition**
  - A higher percentage of females were not convicted for violence-related and profit-motived crimes compared to males.
- **Types of convictions** were similar for males and females.
- Overall, line officers make up most cases. Females and males appear to be equal in relation to employment outcomes, case disposition, and type of conviction.

Figures 1a-1e. Final Employment Outcome

Legend: No Action, Suspended, Kept Job, Lost Job

Figure 1a. Drug-Related Crime — Female (n=107), Male (n=1,500)
Figure 1b. Alcohol-Related Crime — Female (n=271), Male (n=3,077)
Figure 1c. Sex-Related Crime — Female (n=33), Male (n=3,630)
Figure 1d. Violence-Related Crime — Female (n=424), Male (n=8,195)
Figure 1e. Profit-Motivated — Female (n=270), Male (n=3,358)

Figures 2a-2e. Case Disposition

Legend: Not Convicted, Convicted

Figure 2a. Drug-Related Crime — Female (n=73), Male (n=1,232)
Figure 2b. Alcohol-Related Crime — Female (n=156), Male (n=1,914)
Figure 2c. Sex-Related Crime — Female (n=16), Male (n=3,088)
Figure 2d. Violence-Related Crime — Female (n=262), Male (n=6,216)
Figure 2e. Profit-Motivated — Female (n=191), Male (n=2,752)

Figures 3a-3e. Type of Conviction

Legend: Jury Trial, Bench Trial, Guilty Plea (including any plea of Nolo Contendere)

Figure 3a. Drug-Related Crime — Female (n=55), Male (n=1,004)
Figure 3b. Alcohol-Related Crime — Female (n=110), Male (n=1,282)
Figure 3c. Sex-Related Crime — Female (n=12), Male (n=2,357)
Figure 3d. Violence-Related Crime — Female (n=124), Male (n=3,838)
Figure 3e. Profit-Motivated — Female (n=126), Male (n=2,161)