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Police Criminality and Neutralization: An Empirical Study of Court Cases

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Abstract

The prevalence of police deviance is a much-debated statistic and one that is often rife with problems. Based on 61 convicted police officers in Norway, court cases are analyzed in this paper to identify relationships between imprisonment days for convicted police officers and motive and brutality as determinants of each sentence. While there is a positive correlation found between severity of sentence and the extent of personal motive, there is a negative correlation between severity of sentence and the extent of brutality applied in policing. This is explained by neutralization theory in the paper.

Keywords: police oversight, police crime, survey, crime motive, crime damage.

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INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of police deviance is a much-debated statistic and one that is often rife with problems, according to Porter and Warrender (2009). While some researchers that they quote suggest that corruption is endemic to police culture across the globe, others argue that incidents are rare. Despite such statistical problems, incidents of police deviance do surface from time to time all over the world. Some examples in the UK involve suppression of evidence, beating of suspects, tampering with confidential evidence and perjury. Because of such incidents, police integrity and accountability is a concern in most regions and countries (OPI, 2007; Prenzler and Lewis, 2005; UNODC, 2006).

Denial of police misconduct and crime can be explained by neutralization theory (Heath, 2008; Siponen and Vance, 2010). Neutralization includes denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of condemners, and appeal to higher loyalty. Individuals as well as organizations such as law enforcement agencies apply different forms of neutralization for a self-serving purpose as they detach themselves from the criminality of the behavior (Higgins et al., 2008; D'Ovidio et al., 2009).

In Norway, from 2005 to 2010, 61 police officers were convicted in court cases involving criminality. These court cases represent the empirical basis for the current research. The following research questions are raised: Will a non-physical crime lead to longer jail sentence than physical crime? Will a profit-oriented motive lead to a longer jail sentence than a profession-oriented motive? Furthermore, we asked the question: Do the powers given to

police forces cause neutralization of criminality committed by police officers? In order to provide insights into these questions, we sought carefully to examine the dimensions of the sample of police criminality cases related to severity of sentences.

This research is important to the community of readers of *Police Practice & Research* because reflection on internal matters will affect external police image and thus external acceptance of police behavior. In the end, perceptions of police results are dependent on perceptions of police practice. PPR has a community of readers consisting of police researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and students of international policing. Both practitioners and scholars can benefit from the empirical study presented in this paper, as court decisions represent how society judges police behavior.

POLICE CRIMINALITY

Police integrity and accountability has been a concern in most regions and countries, for example in Australia (OPI, 2007; Prenzler and Lewis, 2005) and in Norway, as presented in this article. According to the United Nations (UNODC, 2006), the great majority of individuals involved in policing are committed to honorable and competent public service and consistently demonstrate high standards of personal and procedural integrity in performing their duties. More officers would perform in this manner if appropriate training were given. However, in every policing agency there probably exists an element of dishonesty, lack of professionalism and criminal behavior.

Policing is about people and places. At its most general level, police work is the application of a set of legally sanctioned practices designed to maintain public order by imposing the rule of law on people who live in or travel through a given place which is internationally

recognized as a geographically defined territory under the control of a particular national state (Sheptycki, 2007).

But who guards the guardians? And how do they do it? This is one of the key topics in police oversight. While the police are guardians of citizens, oversight agencies are guardians of the police. Oversight agencies such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) in the UK have the powers to investigate and prosecute police misconduct and police crime (Smith, 2009).

Typical categories of misconduct issues are discussed by UNODC (2006):

- a) ***Physical Abuse***. Indiscriminate and careless uses of powers delegated to police officers are major factors in alienating the public. When and where police apply their powers is usually a matter of individual discretion. Because officers often are required to make people do something, or refrain from doing something, police action may be met with resistance, conflict, or confrontation. Under such circumstances, members of the public may wish to complain. The validity of such complaints will depend on the context and will be judged against standards of police conduct enshrined in law or regulation.
- b) ***Prisoner Mistreatment***. Persons are sometimes held in police custody. Experience has shown that the conditions under which suspects make confessions or admissions can be related to their treatment in custody before the confession or admission has been made. This may be because of the threat or direct use of violence (i.e. torture), because of other indirect intimidation or menacing behavior on the part of the interviewers or because the experience is otherwise physically and mentally distressing.

- c) ***Evidence Manipulation.*** There can be at least two motives driving the falsification or destruction of evidence. Firstly, an officer may wish to make the case against a suspect stronger than it already is. For example, the officer has forgotten to do something or has failed to find sufficient evidence to prove an important element of a case, or may be hiding something that appears to show the suspect is not guilty. Secondly, an officer may have been paid by a suspect to ensure that the evidence is lost or tampered with in order to sabotage the prosecution case.
- d) ***Corruption.*** Personal gain is a primary motivation for much criminal behavior. Because of the special trust and responsibilities placed in police officers, the opportunities for them to abuse that trust to obtain money or advantage are considerable. At the same time, because police officers have inside information, understanding and influence over the criminal justice system, they are also often in a position to shield themselves from detection.
- e) ***Unauthorized Disclosure of Information.*** Police organizations collect, hold, or have access to a significant amount of information, some of it of a private nature about victims, witnesses, crimes, and suspects, and much of it is confidential. That same information will have a market value for criminals, journalists and private investigators that can be realized by unscrupulous police staff with access to it.
- f) ***Extortion.*** A common abuse of integrity in some countries relates to the enforcement of road traffic regulations (or other minor infractions) where informal on-the-spot fines (or bribes) are negotiated with the alleged offender, rather than pursuing a formal prosecution or other legal process. In extreme circumstances, some regard this as the normal way of doing business. Assessors may experience this first hand.

g) ***Sexual Misconduct***. Sexual misconduct of law enforcement personnel with witnesses, suspects or informants has also been known to lead to corruption or other integrity failure. For example, an officer may ignore a sexual partner's criminal activity, alter evidence that implicates him or her, or even provide that partner with confidential information. Such misconduct also leaves the officer open to extortion.

The set of policing practices cover core issues like law enforcement through crime investigation and crime prevention; security issues involving mainly surveillance and counter-terrorism on a population; and jurisdictional issues in relation to having the legal authority to act in a particular place and under what legal framework and conditions. The police are given the power to use force legitimately in the course of fulfillment of their tasks (Ivkovic, 2009).

NEUTRALIZATION THEORY

Potential criminals apply five techniques of neutralization: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. This is the original formulation of neutralization theory. Later, the metaphor of the ledger and the technique of necessary defense were added. The metaphor of the ledger uses the idea of compensating bad acts with good acts (Siponen and Vance, 2010).

Techniques of neutralization are a theoretical series of methods by which those who commit illegitimate acts temporarily neutralize certain values within themselves which would normally prohibit them from carrying out such acts, such as morality, obligation to abide by the law. It is psychological methods for people to turn off inner protests when they do, or are about to do something wrong. The idea of such techniques was first postulated by David Matza and Gresham Sykes and later published in a book by Matza (1964).

According to Heath (2008), criminals tend to apply techniques of neutralization used by offenders to deny the criminality of their actions. Examples of neutralization techniques are (a) denial of responsibility, (b) denial of injury, (c) denial of the victim, (d) condemnation of the condemners, (e) appeal to higher loyalties, (f) everyone else is doing it, and (g) claim to entitlement. The offender may claim an entitlement to act as he did, either because he was subject to a moral obligation, or because of some misdeed perpetrated by the victim. These excuses are applied both for occupational crime and for corporate crime at both the rotten apple level and the rotten barrel level.

Siponen and Vance (2010) describe the five basic techniques as follows:

1. *Denial of responsibility* implies that a person committing a deviant act defines himself as lacking responsibility for his actions. The person rationalizes that the action in question is beyond his control. The deviant views himself as a ball helplessly kicked through different situations.
2. *Denial of injury* implies that the person is justifying an action by minimizing the harm it causes. Individuals who perpetrate computer crime may deny injury to victimized parties by claiming that attacking a computer does not do any harm to people.
3. *Defense of necessity* implies that rule breaking is viewed as necessary, and thus one should not feel guilty when committing the action. In this way, the offender can put aside feelings of guilt by believing that an act was necessary and there was no other choice. In computer crime, employees may claim that they do not have time to comply with the policies owing to tight deadlines.
4. *Condemnation of the condemners* implies that neutralization is achieved by blaming those who are the target of the action. For example, one may break the law because the law is unreasonable, or one may break information systems security policies that

are unreasonable. Offenders engaged in computer crime can claim that the law is unjust.

5. *Appeal to higher loyalties* implies a dilemma that must be resolved at the cost of violating a law or policy. In an organizational context, an employee may appeal to organizational values or hierarchies. For example, an employee might argue that he must violate a policy in order to get his work done.

Police crime protection is challenged by neutralization theory. There is a need for techniques that can inhibit neutralization. Siponen and Vance (2010) suggest that adequate explanation to justify the organizational policy through seminars, victim-offender mediation, and persuasive discussion can be useful means to change behavior. With respect to denial of injury, victim-offender mediations or persuasive discussion make offenders realize that there is an injury. With respect to denial of responsibility, supervisors in one-on-one interactions and speakers in company seminars need to stress that there is no excuse for crime. Regarding the defense of necessity, police leaders should emphasize to employees that even when they are under the pressure of a tight deadline or threat there is no excuse to use a criminal shortcut. With respect to the appeal to higher loyalties, executive managers at police organizations need to ensure that team leaders and line managers do not support their subordinates in violating policing policies in order to get their job done.

In a study by Moore and McMullan (2009), five more neutralization techniques were added:

6. *Ledger technique* is used when an individual argues that his or her inappropriate behavior is at times acceptable because the person has spent most of his or her time doing good and legal deeds. The person develops a reserve of good deeds that overshadow the one bad deed.

7. *Denial of necessity of law* argues that the law was the result of the larger society's attempts to regulate behavior that had nothing to do with the greater good of people. As a result, the law was deemed inappropriate and not worth obedience.
8. *Everybody else is doing it*, which implies that the individual feels that there is so much disrespect for a law that the general consensus is such that the law is nullified or deemed to be unimportant.
9. *Entitlement technique* is used by individuals who feel that they are entitled to engage in an activity because of some consideration in their life.
10. *Defense of necessity* is used when the individual finds the act necessary in order to prevent an even greater delinquent act from taking place.

An individual applies techniques of neutralization when there is doubt that there is something wrong with his or her behavior. If there is no guilt to neutralize then it stands to reason that there is no need for neutralization techniques (Moore and McMullan, 2009).

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, we used data from court cases in Norway. The Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs prosecutes police officers in court. The Norwegian Bureau is similar to police oversight agencies found in other countries, such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission in the UK, the Police Department for Internal Investigations in Germany, the Inspectorate General of the Internal Administration in Portugal, the Standing Police Monitoring Committee in Belgium, the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in Ireland, Federal Bureau for Internal Affairs in Austria, and the Ministry of the Interior, Police and Security Directorate in Slovenia (Prenzler and Lewis, 2005).

Since 1988, Norway has a separate system to handle allegations against police officers for misconduct. The system was frequently accused of not being independent of regular police organizations (Thomassen, 2002). In 2003, the Norwegian Parliament decided to establish a separate body to investigate and prosecute cases where employees in the police service or the prosecuting authority are suspected of having committed criminal acts in the police service.

The Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs has been operational since January 2005. The Bureau is mandated to investigate and prosecute cases where employees in the police service or the prosecuting authority are accused of having committed criminal acts in the service. The Norwegian Bureau has both investigating and prosecuting powers and in that way it differs from some comparable European bodies. The Norwegian Bureau does not handle complaints from the public concerning allegations of rude or bad behavior that does not amount to a criminal offence (Prethus, 2009).

Since the operations started at the Norwegian Bureau in January 2005 and until July 2010, a total of 61 police officers were on trial in Norwegian courts. This was the sample for our study. There were 3 prosecuted officers in 2005, 13 in 2006, 16 in 2007, 16 in 2008, 9 in 2009, and 4 so far in 2010. All court cases were obtained from then Norwegian Bureau for this study.

The unit of analysis applied in this study is the individual, rather than the court case. An individual police officer may appeal his or her case to a higher court. Therefore, there were more court cases than individuals on trial. There were a total of 83 court cases for the 61 prosecuted individuals since 15 cases were prosecuted in courts of appeal and 3 cases were prosecuted in the supreme court as well.

RESEARCH MEASURES

Each court case ended in a sentence. A sentence may consist of the following elements: (i) days in prison, (ii) denied the right to continue in the police force, (iii), fine to be paid to the state, (iv) case costs, (v) temporary jail served, and (vi) fine to be paid to victim(s).

Distinctions between types of crime commonly rely on legal offence categories, although these may be grouped pragmatically, for example, in comparing property offences with those against the person. Types of crime are also distinguished in terms of seriousness. This is often judged from the harm implied by a particular offence category. Psychometric scaling of offence seriousness was initiated by Thurstone (1927), and developed by Sellin and Wolfgang (1964). The latter found both judges and police were able to rate the seriousness of offences using ratio scale. Official statistics published annually by most western governments distinguish normally between violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, burglary, theft, fraud and forgery, criminal damage, and others. Offences against the person normally range from homicide to assault. However, legal categories are no more than crude approximations to behavioral categories, and have only limited relevance in this research where we seek to explore the “brutality” in the Norwegian police force. Furthermore, we are interested in the correlation between brutality (damage, harm) and the subsequent jail sentence. In this study, we decided to organize the independent variable "damage" along a scale or axis from 1 to 5, starting at no other person involved, to harm that necessitates medical treatment to another person:

1. *No other person involved.* To use a commonly applied category in criminology, most of these cases will be types of white-collar crime. White-collar crime is crime against property for personal or organizational gain, which is committed by non-physical means and by concealment or deception. It is deceitful, it is intentional, it breaches trust, and it involves losses (Henning, 2009).

2. *Other person involved.* This category will for the most part be property crime. This involves the unlawful conversion of property belonging to another to one's own personal use and benefit. For example, it might be fraudulent appropriation to personal use or benefit of property or money entrusted by another, where the actor first comes into possession of the property with the permission of the owner (Williams, 2006). Property crime involves no damage or loss, and no physical threat or harm to a victim or victims (Reiner, 1997).
3. *Dangerous act.* Violation of traffic regulations is a typical example here, where patrol car behavior can represent a dangerous act. There are limits to what police officers are permitted do when driving a car. Even in cases of emergency, police cars are not allowed to create dangerous situations. Whether the car is a uniformed police car, a non-uniformed police car or a private car, other cars should be informed about the police driving by light and/or sound signal. If there is no emergency, the police have to follow speed limits and other traffic regulations (Klockars et al., 2006).
4. *Physical abuse.* Physical abuse includes both physical and psychological misconduct such as prisoner mistreatment or sexual misconduct and where no medical treatment is requested. This may also be the use of threats or indirect intimidation or menacing behavior on the part of police interviewers or because the experience is otherwise physically and mentally distressing. People in police interviews are often anxious and find themselves in an unequal dynamic situation, which favors the interviewer(s). There seems to be ample evidence to show that certain people are predisposed to answering police questions in any way that will help to shorten the interview and, as a result, they will wrongly confess to offences they did not commit. In some countries,

the risk of a false confession is perceived as so great that confessions of guilt made solely to a police officer are not admissible in court (UNODC, 2006).

5. *Acts that require medical treatment to the offender.* Indiscriminate and careless use of powers delegated to police officers is a major factor in alienating the public. When and where police apply their powers is usually a matter of individual discretion. Because officers often are required to make people do something, or refrain from doing something, police action may be met with resistance, conflict, or confrontation. Under such circumstances, members of the public may wish to complain. The validity of such complaints will depend on the context and will be judged against standards of police conduct enshrined in law or regulation. This is what Prenzler (2009) calls excessive force or brutality, a definition that covers the wide range of forms of unjustified force. This can be anything from rough handling - such as excessive frisking - through to serious assault, torture, and even murder. Use of excessive force is an abuse of police power. However, as argued by Johnson (2005), appropriate use of force can, in many cases, be very difficult to discern, especially since the line that separates brave from brutal is thin.

What is the motivation for crime? Reiner (1997) suggests that a crime will not occur unless there is someone who is tempted, driven, or otherwise motivated to carry out the labeled act. The independent variable "motive for crime" by police employees was organized on a four-point scale ranging from professional concern to personal gain:

1. *Professional Concern.* Within the professional model of policing, officers deliver service objectively through a standard of service and a presence in the community (Dukes et al., 2009). The police are given the power to use force legitimately in the

course of fulfillment of their tasks (Ivkovic, 2009). The powers given by the state to the police to use force has always caused concern (Klockars et al., 2004).

2. *Efficient Police Service*. Policing is about people and places. The set of policing practices cover core issues like law enforcement through crime investigation and crime prevention, security issues involving mainly surveillance and counter-terrorism on a population, and jurisdictional issues in relation to having the legal authority to act in a particular place and under what legal framework and conditions (Sheptycki, 2007). The police are given the power to use force legitimately in the course of fulfillment of their tasks (Ivkovic, 2009).
3. *Negative Reaction*. In their daily work, police employees may have negative reaction to individuals in the public in general and to specific policing cases occurring in the public. The existence of a legislative structure for complaints is an important step towards police integrity and accountability, but that system must be more than a legislative expression of intent. Any system must be readily accessible to members of the public and user friendly. It must protect complainants against negative consequences and offer a responsible, professional and timely resolution. Without such qualities, the public will soon label the complaints system as a waste of time and will not support it (UNODC, 2006).
4. *Personal Gain*. Typical examples are taking a bribe or stealing from a crime scene for personal gain. Johnson (2005) argues that personal gain is a primary motivation for almost all kinds of criminal behavior.

In addition to crime and motive, the following elements were recorded for each prosecuted police employee from court documents: age, gender, case source, investigation duration,

position, plan or acute action, number of courts, and culture. Case source was either internal whistle blowing or external complaint.

Culture was measured in terms of rotten apple, rotten barrel or rotten garden. There is a debate in the research literature whether to view police misconduct and crime as acts of individuals perceived as 'rotten apples' or as an indication of systems failure in the police force (Perry, 2001; Johnson, 2003; Punch, 2003; Tiffen, 2004; O'Connor, 2005; Porter and Warrender, 2009). Some researchers are favoring the individualistic model of police deviance, which is a human failure model of misconduct and crime. This rotten apple view of police crime is a comfortable perspective to adopt for police organizations as it allows them to look no further than suspect individuals. It is only when other forms of group (O'Connor, 2005) and/or systemic (Punch, 2003) corruption and other kinds of crime erupt upon a police service that a more critical look is taken of police criminality. When serious misconduct occurs and is repeated, there seems to be a tendency to consider police crime as a result of bad practice, lack of resources or mismanagement, rather than acts of criminals.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Jail sentence ranged from 0 days to 1642 days among the 61 prosecuted police employees in court. A substantial fraction of the court cases (31%) resulted in 0-day imprisonment, where each case either was dismissed or it ended with a fine to the state. While the average court sentence was 92 days, the median is only 11 days. A low median implies that most of the cases have a short jail sentence, while a few have a very long jail sentence. The frequency is reduced to five groups in Table 1. The first group is the zero-day group with 19 cases, while the last group represents more than 2 years imprisonment with 4 cases.

#	Group of cases	Days in prison	Number of group cases	Cumulative percent
1	No jail sentence	0	19	31%
2	Less than 2 weeks	1 - 13	13	53%
3	Less than 2 months	14 - 59	15	77%
4	Less than 2 years	60 - 729	10	94%
5	More than 2 years	730 -	4	100%
	<i>Average / Total</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 1. Groups of cases based on jail sentence days imprisonment

There were 52 men and 9 women among the prosecuted police employees. While most police officers are men, most police lawyers and police civilians are women. Out of 13.000 police employees in Norway, there are almost as many women as men. Average age of prosecuted persons was 41 years, ranging from 19 to 64 years. Retirement age for officers is 57 years and for lawyers and civilians 67 years.

Verdicts are reasoned in courts in Norway, as they are in some other European countries. Therefore, information on both damage and motive is available from court documents ranging from two to twenty pages for each sentence.

Our research questions concerned with crime and sentence was empirically tested by correlation analysis and regression analysis. First, correlation between damage and sentence was computed, where damage ranges from no other person involved (1) to acts that require medical treatment (5), and sentence was measured in terms of days in prison. The correlation coefficient for correlation between damage and sentence was $-.592^{**}$, which means that there is indeed a significant negative correlation at the significance level of $<.01$, where more brutality leads to a shorter sentence. Similarly, the correlation between motive and sentence was computed, where motive ranges from professional police work (1) to personal benefit

(5). The correlation coefficient between motive and sentence was .351**, which means that there is indeed a significant positive correlation at the significance level of $<.01$, where more personal benefit leads to a longer jail sentence.

DISCUSSION

Several of the 31% dismissed cases were involving violence and brutality in police service that lead to dismissal of the case from court with no jail sentence and thus a zero for sentence in our statistical calculation. Specifically, out of 19 dismissed cases, 8 cases were concerned with police violence, and 4 cases were concerned with dangerous driving. Those brutality cases that lead to conviction, typically caused a short jail sentence.

This result can be explained by neutralization theory. Thus, our operationalization of neutralization techniques is represented in the following statements, where we apply each technique to provide a possible explanation why brutality is inversely related to severity of sentence:

1. Denial of responsibility implies that a police employee committing a deviant act defines himself as lacking responsibility for his actions since the act is carried out as part of his duty.
2. Denial of injury implies that a police employee is justifying an action by minimizing the harm it causes.
3. Defense of necessity implies that rule breaking is viewed as necessary in police service.
4. Condemnation of the condemners is achieved by blaming the behavior of arrested persons or victims of traffic accidents.

5. Appeal to higher loyalties occurs when police employees identify themselves as representatives of the government.
6. Ledger technique is used when a police employee argues that his or her inappropriate behavior is at times acceptable because the person has spent most of his or her time doing police service characterized by integrity and accountability.
7. Denial of necessity of law places the police employee above the law when there is doubt what is right and what is wrong.
8. Everybody else is doing it, which is in support of the rotten barrel and rotten garden theory.
9. Entitlement technique is often used by police employees as they are entitled to engage in violent and dangerous activity when considered necessary to prevent crime and to investigate crime.
10. Defense of necessity is used when the police employee finds the act necessary in order to prevent an even greater crime from taking place.

Since the empirical data applied in the analyses were collected from court cases, it might be interpreted as judges' application of neutralization techniques when dismissing cases of violence and dangerous driving.

Police criminality is caused by lack of integrity and accountability in policing. Therefore, police management has an important role in improving both integrity and accountability among police officers as well as among managers themselves. Integrity in public office demands open and transparent decision-making and clarity about the primacy of a public official's duty to serve the public interest above all else. Conflict between this duty and a person's individual interests cannot always be avoided but must always be identified, declared

and managed in a way that stands up to scrutiny. This particularly applies to police officers who are sworn to uphold the law (OPI, 2007).

Integrity is sometimes defined as the absence of misconduct, where misconduct is generally understood as being an attempt to deceive others by making false statements or omitting important information concerning the work performed, in the results obtained by or the sources of the ideas or words used in a work process. According to Cossette (2004), the intention to deceive, even if difficult to determine, is a key element in this conception of misconduct.

Accountability refers to situations in which someone is required or expected to justify actions or decisions. It also refers to situations where an officer bears the responsibility to someone or for some activity. Accountability has been called "the mother of caution", and as such it has a prophylactic and deterrent effect (UNODC, 2006). Accountability is a feature of systems, social institutions as well as individuals. It means that mechanisms are in place to determine who took responsible action and who is responsible. Systems and institutions in which it is impossible to find out who took what action are inherently incapable of ethical analysis or ethical action.

CONCLUSION

In this empirical research, we found that a non-physical police crime lead to longer jail sentence than a physical police crime. We also found that a profit-oriented motive leads to a longer sentence than a profession-oriented motive. Statistical analysis of court cases revealed that brutality was inversely related to severity of sentence. This latter result is explained by neutralization techniques applied both by prosecuted police officers and by judges in Norwegian courts.

It may seem surprising that increasing brutality is linked to shorter rather than longer jail sentence. A potential explanation is that brutality is exposed in acute situations, where there is no time for consideration of alternative actions. An acute action of violence in critical situations is accepted as part of the duty of a police officer with wide margins for brutality to solve the problem. This is in line with neutralization theory.

It is indeed an interesting finding that brutality tends to carry a shorter sentence than other offences not involving violence. This tolerance of violence is fascinating, since the conventional definition of the police is that they are 'monopolists of force', and this involves the imposition of police upon the public. Why the public seems to tolerate police violence, especially when they are increasingly worried about criminal violence, can have several reasons. Acceptance of police violence when criminal violence increases, might be one explanation. Another explanation may be acceptance of violent yet protective measures by servants of society.

When police officers are brought to trial in front of the court, the court will base its verdict on a number of parameters. In this study, we found that courts tend to convict officers to longer jail sentences when the motive is personal gain rather than professional concern, and when no other person is involved. The latter result is surprising, since medical treatment as a consequence of police brutality seems to have no effect on the judge in terms imprisonment days. Rather opposite, jail sentence becomes milder when brutality is evident.

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