Predictors of Police Crime Sentence

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Police crime is defined as crime committed by police employees on duty. Policing police crime is defined as enforcing law on potential and actual criminal employees in the police organization. Based on an empirical study of 57 court cases in Norway, potential predictors of police crime sentence are presented in this paper. Two of the potential predictors are statistically significant predictors of days of imprisonment for police crime. First, internal whistleblowing rather than external complaint, as a source of information for the court case, tends to cause a longer jail sentence. Next, a personal motive rather than a professional motive for the crime tends to cause a longer jail sentence.

1. Introduction

Integrity and accountability of police officers is essential to public confidence in law enforcement. According to the United Nations,¹ the great majority of individuals involved in policing are committed to honourable and competent public service and are consistently demonstrating high standards of personal and procedural integrity in performing their duties in important areas such as organized crime.² ³ However, in every policing agency there exists an element of dishonesty, lack of professionalism and criminal behaviour.

Police crime is defined as crime committed by police officers on duty. Policing police crime is defined as enforcing law on potential and actual criminal employees in the police organization. There seems to be a traditional tendency to consider police crime as a result of bad practice, rather than acts of criminals. Bad practice is police practice based on low performance standards causing unintended harm to individuals, organizations or society. However, examples illustrate that criminal acts are sometimes intentionally carried out by police officers on duty.

This research is concerned with factors that influence the extent to which police employees have to serve time in prison because of crime committed while on duty. Specifically, the research question is as follows: What predicts the extent of police crime sentence?

A total of 57 police employees have been on trial in Norwegian courts since 2005. All these court cases were made available from the Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs for this empirical research.

2. Literature Review

The typical example of police crime is police corruption, which has been studied by a number of scholars. Examples include studies by Bowles and Garoupa, Chang et al., Davis, Haberfeld et al., Hunt, Ivkovic and Shelley, Maljevic et al., Porter

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