Monitoring the Police: An Empirical Study on the Factors Affecting the Conclusion of Investigation Processes by an Internal Affairs Division [1]

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Abstract

In the organizational structure of the police, the internal affairs division has the role of investigating professional misconduct attributed to police officers. When an improper conduct is detected, an investigation process is triggered. At the end of the investigation process, the complaint can be sustained or not. If the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to prove the accusation, the officer should suffer reprimand, suspension, termination of employment and criminal prosecution. There is room, however, for concerns regarding whether the process will be impartial, given that police officers may attempt at influencing decisions for their own benefit or, at least, try to postpone the conclusion of the investigation. In our paper, we analyze a sample of 143 investigation processes against police officers in the Internal Affairs Division of the Civil Police of the State of Bahia, Brazil. We seek to identify the factors that contribute to the investigation process are concluded or not. Our econometric results show that the position that the police officer has in the organization and his tenure on the job (which should be correlated with the extent of informal relationships developed within the organization) do influence the probability of the investigation will concluded or not. From the point of view of the individuals who are under investigation, the strategy of postponing the process is rational because once the process is concluded there is a high probability that the complaint will be sustained. Thus, results indicate that police officers seem to use formal and informal channels of influence to mitigate the threat of punishment—a conduct that is, therefore, misaligned with the public interest.

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1. Introduction

In the last decades, we have observed several efforts to reform public bureaucracies, in order to efficiently delimit the scope of their services and foster transparency. In large part, this logic has been oriented towards what Kliksberg (1994) calls a reexamination of the functions of the State in the pursuit of enhanced service quality and efficiency. Nevertheless, public bureaucracies are still plagued with instances of corruption and cronyism (e.g. ROSE-ACKERMAN, 1999)—which has amplified calls for an organizational rearranging of the public sector. In the case of police services, these concerns are particularly magnified. Considered by some as a typical State-led activity (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 1998), those services have been subject to criticisms related to the need of improved organization and accountability (e.g. DILULIO, 1996; FLYNN, 2007; TROSA, 2001; WALKER, 2006).

It is not surprising that police structures in several countries exhibit *public affairs divisions* aimed at inhibiting misconduct by policemen and fostering proper punishments whenever necessary. The threat of punishment towards "bad policemen" would, theoretically, guarantee improved accountability and incentive alignment in the execution of police services. Thus, a policeman engaged in corruption schemes or felony should, in principle, be severely punished and even, in extreme cases, relieved from duty; anticipating this threat, the policeman may refrain from engaging in any type of misconduct.

Public affair divisions, however, are faced with key challenges to detect and punish deviations (LEMGRUBER, MUSUMECI and CANO, 2003). In our view, these difficulties occur essentially due to a problem of inefficient design. The society basically delegates the execution of police services to a group of agents (policemen) who can, as predicted by standard principal-agent models, defect (e.g., accept a bribe or be involved in criminal schemes). To avoid defection, society would need to create proper incentives; in this case, effective punishment for those who engage in deviations. Although public affairs divisions

are crafted precisely to execute this task, the problem is that in several cases they are directly or indirectly handled by the very policemen who are supposed to be monitored. Namely, deviant officials can use various channels of influence to inhibit or postpone the conclusion of internal processes that would otherwise lead to punishment. The classic dilemma outlined by Alchian and Demsetz (1972, p. 781-782) applies here: "who will monitor the monitor?" (see also CAPELETTI, 1983; LEMGRUBER et al., 2003).

To examine this issue, we propose a theoretical framework describing how agents can act upon both the formal and informal organization of the police so as to adopt myriad tactics to negatively affect the probability that a certain internal process will be concluded. We then test our framework using a unique database of 143 cases in the internal affairs division of the "civil police" of the State of Bahia, Brazil, in 2005-2006. Despite the fact that cases were supposed to be concluded in 120 days, in the temporal window of our sample only 27% of these cases were concluded, where 71% of those concluded cases eventually resulted in conviction. Therefore, it seems that the critical bottleneck in our context is the expressive delay in the conclusion of processes, which calls for an examination of whether this results from deliberate action or not. We thus assess whether key variables affecting agents' ability to influence the conclusion of internal processes do in fact predict the observed delays. We complement our quantitative analysis with qualitative information resulting from personal interviews with police agents.

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we describe our theoretical framework in detail. We then turn to a description of our empirical context (police services in the State of Bahia, Brazil). Our data and methods are described next. We finally discuss our results and present concluding remarks.

2. Theoretical Framework: Delegation of Authority and Monitoring Mechanisms in Police Services

Most societies delegate police services to specialized public agents who are supposed to efficiently enforce the law. Standard principal-agent logic (JENSEN and MECKLING, 1976; ROSS, 1973), however, suggests that a fundamental misalignment of interests will emerge. Namely, the principal (society or, more specifically, the government in place) will have to make sure that police agents will engage in behaviors that are aligned with the objectives of efficiency and service quality. Two types of opportunistic behavior may be observed in this context. First, police officers may exert suboptimal effort in the investigation of cases (e.g. they may try to work less hours per day or avoid engaging in direct conflict with existing criminal organizations), even when these officers themselves are not involved in any criminal or illegal activity. Second, police agents may themselves get involved in deviant acts (e.g. accepting bribes from criminal organizations, organizing schemes to sell illegal products etc.).

To mitigate these deviations, especially of the latter kind, governments usually craft organizational units designated to monitor the actions of policemen and execute punitive acts: *internal affairs divisions*. When an improper conduct is detected, an investigation process is triggered. At the end of the investigation process, the complaint can be sustained or not. If the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to prove the accusation, the officer should suffer reprimand, suspension, termination of employment and criminal prosecution. There is room, however, for concerns regarding whether the process will be impartial, given that police officers may attempt at influencing decisions for their own benefit or, at least, try to postpone the conclusion of the investigation. Fundamentally, this problem results from the fact that internal affairs divisions tend to be managed by individuals who are themselves part of the police force. Given that there is no clear separation of roles between who is responsible for

monitoring and who is responsible for judging and punishing policemen, Alchian e Demsetz's (1972, p. 781-782) classic question emerges in this context: "who will monitor the monitor?"; or, using Capeletti's (1983) and Lemgruber's et al. (2003) words: "who watches the watchmen?".

To derive some predictions regarding the mechanisms through which policemen attempt to influence the conclusion of processes in internal affairs divisions, we draw elements from the organizational politics literature (VREDENBURGH and MAURER, 1984; PFEFFER, 1992; MILGROM and ROBERTS, 1990). Since Barnard's (1983) seminal contribution, scholars have analyzed mechanisms of the *formal* organization—hierarchies, patterns of functional specialization etc.—as well as of the *informal* organization—social relations and coalitions that evolve through time (see also ZENGER, LAZZARINI and POPPO, 2002). Through formal or informal mechanisms, individuals can build channels to influence decisions in their own benefit.

In the formal organization, the most natural source of influence the *position in the hierarchy*. Individuals in top positions have, naturally, formal authority to decide and control internal processes (JONES, 2001). In our context, policemen in distinctive positions and especially positions appointed by other eminent individuals in the force have superior ability to influence bureaucrats involved in the analysis of internal cases and subordinates in order to thwart the attainment of evidence that would otherwise result in conviction. Notice, also, that any conviction against a particular policeman in a top job might also implicate other top officers who appointed him or her; thus, the incentives to use the authority granted by the formal position in the hierarchy for influence purposes tend to be very salient (MILGROM and ROBERTS, 1990).

In the same vein, the literature has also discussed how *functional attributes*—namely, what is the task and specialization of agents—can affect their ability to exert influence. An

individual's pattern of specialization affects the degree of knowledge and control of activities within the organization (FRENCH and RAVEN, 1960). Thus, policemen involved in functions where the cost to obtain evidence against deviations is high (e.g. agents working on the streets) or in tasks granting more direct involvement in the process of evidence collection tend to have distinctive capacity to retard the investigation process.

With respect to the informal organization, in turn, there is a large discussion in the literature regarding how individuals may create influence channels through *internal interpersonal relationships* (KRACKHARDT and HANSON, 1993). These relationships can represent a source of power beyond what is defined solely by the attributes of the function or by the agent's position of the individual in the hierarchy (PFEFFER, 1992). Specifically, individuals with more extensive internal contacts—personal relations to exchange information, friendship ties etc.—should have superior ability to access and control the flow of information within the organization (KRACKHARDT, 1990). In our case, relationships built through time can represent a mechanism through which police officers can be updated about the ongoing evolution of internal processes in order to craft defense strategies and even articulate internal contacts to obstruct and retard investigations.

By adopting such influence tactics through the formal and informal organization, police officers can therefore neutralize the threat of punishment and severely affect the efficacy of internal administrative processes. Eventually, the presence of a specialized monitoring unit (the internal affairs division) may become innocuous: police services may remain plagued with an incentive misalignment problem that should magnify the incidence of deviations within the police force. Thus, it becomes crucial to understand in detail the functioning of internal affairs divisions and how policemen are able to influence investigation processes. In the next section, we describe our empirical setting—the internal affairs division in the civil police of the State of Bahia, Brazil—so as to provide a richer context for our

subsequent quantitative analysis examining, in light of the theoretical framework presented above, factors that might affect policemen's ability to retard the conclusion of internal investigation processes.

3. The Internal Affairs Division in the Civil Police of the State of Bahia, Brazil

According to the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, police services represent a key public activity involving myriad bureaus: the federal police, the civil police, the military police, and so on. Subordinated to the States of the Federation, civil police bodies in Brazil execute the investigation and definition of proper punishment against crimes and all sorts of illegal activity (BRASIL, 1988). In this context, internal affairs divisions emerge as specialized units to investigate claims of improper conduct within the police itself; therefore, they can be conceptualized as "the police of the police."

The autonomy granted by the Brazilian Federal system yields different organizational patterns for the various internal affair divisions in the police force. Thus, although some Brazilian States such as Ceará exhibit an unified internal affairs structure (GOMES FILHO et al., 2006), in most cases we observe specialized divisions. In the State of Bahia, in particular, we observe four internal affairs structures, one for each specialized unit of the police force: the civil police, the military police, the technical police and another structure called "General Internal Affairs Division," which is subordinated to the Secretary of Police of the State and oversees all specialized divisions in the police.

The path leading to final conviction is long. Initially, after an accusation is received, an initial assessment of the facts is performed. If the body of evidence associated with the accusation is scant or weak, then the process is finalized; otherwise, a commission is formed so as to listen to the defendant. This phase should last at most 60 days (ARAUJO and TOURINHO, 2008). If the punishment recommended by the commission involves

suspension from duty for more than 30 days, termination of employment and even criminal prosecution, then it is necessary to set up a formal disciplinary administrative process (PAD) to be conducted by the General Internal Affairs Division. Although the commissions associated with the General Internal Affairs Division are not subordinated to any specific unit of the police, the components of teams responsible for investigation and recommendation are police officers. This reinforces the notion that there is no clear separation, in our context, between those who should monitor and those who should be monitored.

The final recommendation of the General Internal Affairs Division should then be subject to the final evaluation by the Chief of the Division and by the Secretary of Policy, who have discretionary power to sanction or not the recommendation. If the final decision involves termination of employment, then the State Attorney should also analyze the case before the final punishment is sanctioned by the State Governor. Given all these various phases and requirements, it is not surprising that processes are usually not concluded within the 120 days established by State law.

4. Data and Methods

4.1. Data

Our data refer to 143 disciplinary administrative processes (PADs) examined by the General Internal Affairs Division of the civil police of the State of Bahia, Brazil. These processes were submitted to the appreciation of the Division during 2005 and 2006. The data were compiled by the staff of the Division between October and December 2007.

A general overview of our data reveals that, in fact, the main source of concern is the delay in the conclusion of processes. Only 39 of the 143 cases in our sample were concluded; that is, about 73% of processes were still under examination, despite the fact that they were supposed to be concluded in no later than 120 days. On the other hand, 29 cases (or 71% of

the cases that were concluded) resulted in conviction. Given that the conclusion of processes is apparently the most critical bottleneck in our context, we focus our analysis on the factors that affect the likelihood that a given process will be concluded or not.

We complement our quantitative analysis with semi-structured interviews with members of internal affairs divisions and police officers in order to provide more substantive context for our findings and help us in the interpretation of results (YIN, 1994; GODOY, BANDEIRA-DE-MELLO and SILVA 2006). In order to guarantee confidentiality and increase the availability of potential respondents, our interviews were carried out informally and were neither taped nor recorded (SROUR, 2005; GIL, 1995).

4.2. Variables

Our unit of analysis is the internal administrative process against a police officer. Our analytical strategy is then to take an observable outcome—namely, whether if a given process against a policeman was concluded or not—and then relate this outcome to possible factors associated with the policeman's ability to influence the execution of the process. We outline a set of explanatory variables derived from our theoretical discussion (section 2) and a group of control variables, described next.

Dependent variable

We employ as our dependent variable the dummy variable *Conclusion*. This dummy is equal to 1 if the process against the policeman was concluded until December 2007 and 0 otherwise. In this sense, we expect that the higher the ability of a police officer to influence the examination process, the lower the probability that the case will be concluded.

Explanatory (hypothesized) variables

Aligned with our theoretical framework (section 2), we consider three sets of variables related to distinct ways in which police officers could retard the conclusion of processes: functional attributes, position in hierarchy, and relationships developed through time.

We employ the following measures related to *functional attributes*:

a) *Detective* and *Chief*. These are dummy variables coding the function of the individual in the police force, taking the value of 1 if the officer acts as a detective and chief respectively, and 0 otherwise. Our baseline category here is whether the individual holds a clerical job in a given police station. Thus, the dummy variables *Detective* and *Chief* allow us to assess to what extent the fact that the officer is a detective or chief affects the probability that the case will be concluded beyond the baseline probability verified in the case of officers with clerical tasks. We expect, in particular, that the effect of *Detective* on the probability of conclusion will be negative. Compared to individuals working in police stations, it is more difficult and costly to collect evidence against detectives. Working on the streets, in several cases alone and without much interaction with other officers, detectives' actions tend to be less observable and verifiable. As for the variable *Chief*, we also expect its coefficient to be negative. Although chiefs work in great part within police stations, the nature of the task allows for improved control of information flows—including information that would help to elucidate a given case.

b) *Non-managerial*. This is another dummy taking value of 1 if the police officer is involved in non-managerial activities related to investigation, diligence and execution of judicial duties. We expect the effect of this variable to be positive. Police officers working in non-managerial functions—compared to officers working in administrative tasks—have relatively less access and control of information that would affect the conclusion of processes, precisely because they tend to be more involved in external activities instead of internal duties more related to the administrative processes under analysis. So, we expect that police officers involved in non-managerial activities, compared to other agents in the police, will have less ability to negatively affect the conclusion of a given process.

c) *Specialized unit.* This variable is equal to 1 if the policeman works in a specialized unit of the police force—for instance, units dedicated to specific areas such as narcotraffic or theft. We expect that the effect of this variable on the probability of conclusion should be negative, given that individuals in specialized tasks tend to be more knowledgeable of the idiosyncratic ramifications of certain types of deviations in their specific field, thereby positively affecting their ability to influence the collection of evidence and the judgment process.

Regarding the effect of *position in the formal hierarchy*, we employ the variable *Commissioned job*, which is a dummy assuming value of 1 if the police officer holds distinguished positions in the organization, and 0 otherwise. In the Brazilian bureaucracy, a commissioned job is usually considered a "position of trust" ("*cargo de confiança*") because it usually involves critical functions and the individual assuming this position is normally appointed by other top officers. Given these features, individuals holding commissioned jobs tend to have marked influence ability. Furthermore, in case conviction, other top bureaucrats who appointed them might also be implicated, thereby creating incentives for those top bureaucrats to also actively act as a way to postpone or thwart the conclusion of the process. Thus, we predict that the effect of *Commissioned job* on the probability of conclusion will be negative.

Finally, regarding the role of *relationships developed through time*, we first attempted to collect data on individual relationships between officers in the police force. However, due to the archival and confidential nature of our empirical data, we were unable to individually contact the police officers in our database to measure and map internal connections (as, for instance, in KRACKHARDT's (1990) study). The sociological literature, however, suggests that the development of relationships is largely a function of an individual's history in a given social context (GRANOVETTER, 1985; SEABRIGHT, LEVINTHAL and FICHMAN,

1992). Thus, it is reasonable to suppose that police officers with longer tenure will have deeper and more extensive relationships with other individuals in the force. In this sense, to measure the effect of relationships developed through time, we employ the variable *Tenure*, which measures the number of years in which the individuals has worked in the police. We also add the squared value of this variable—$Tenure^2$—so as to capture nonlinear effects. To avoid a potential problem of multicollinearity, given that the value of any given variable and its squared value tend to be highly correlated, we employ the technique proposed by Aiken and West (1991) whereby we subtract the mean of the variable before computing its squared value. We expect that individuals with longer tenure will be able to develop deeper and more extensive relationships which will negatively effect the conclusion of the process. This prediction could be supported in two ways: a negative sign for the coefficient of *Tenure* and an insignificant effect for its squared value; or a non-negative (positive or null) sign of *Tenure* and a negative effect of is squared value (indicating that the effect occurs especially in the case of police officers with very long tenure).

Controls

Several other factors can affect the likelihood that a given process will be concluded. Failing to accommodate those factors can induce omission bias and cause spurious inference regarding the hypothesized variables. Thus, we add in our model a set of control variables, described next.

a) *Type of deviation*. We add two variables coding the type of deviation with which the police officer was involved. Some acts, for instance, can be seen as more violent or salient, thereby facilitating the process of evidence collection. Thus, *Violent act* is a dummy variable assuming value of 1 if the act was associated with violence or excessive use of force. Variable *Felony subject to prosecution*, in turn, takes value of 1 if the deviation involved

salient transgressions that are explicitly recognized by the penal code, such as extortion, drug traffic, corruption or homicide.

b) *Person-specific characteristics*. Dummy variables *Sex* and *Marital status* are equal to 1 if the officer is male and married respectively. *Age* measures the officer's age (in years). As in the case of *Tenure*, we also add the squared value of age (Age^2), computed after we subtract the mean of the original measure.

c) *Historical records.* The conclusion of the process can also be affected by the historical records of the police officer in the organization. For instance, policemen with previous instances of deviation can receive more attention in the analysis of a given case. In this sense, we add the dummy variable *Recidivism*, which takes value of 1 if the officer already had a previous administrative process against him or her, and 0 otherwise.

4.3. Method

Our method involves event history analysis (BLOSSFELD and ROHWER, 2002). As indicated by Allison (1984), one of the possible methods to analyze event data like ours involves the use of discrete choice regression models, such as Probit regression (JOHNSTON and DINARDO, 1997). If we denote each observation (internal process against a police officer) as i, then we have the following Probit model:

$$Prob(Conclusion_i = 1) = \Phi(\boldsymbol{X_i\beta}),$$

where Φ is the cumulative standardized normal distribution, $\boldsymbol{X_i}$ is the set of explanatory and control variables, and $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ is the vector of coefficients to be estimated. We fit the model to our data using maximum likelihood estimation. To control for potential heteroscedasticity, the standard errors of our coefficients are computed using the Huber-White robust estimator (WOOLDRIDGE, 2001).

It is worth noticing that we initially tried to fit a two-stage model (ANGRIST and IMBENS, 1995) assessing not only the factors that affect whether a process is concluded or

not, but also factor that influence the likelihood that a police officer will be convicted (conditional on the fact that the process was concluded). However, given that in our sample the number of processes that were concluded is relatively low (39), we would not have sufficient degrees of freedom to perform conditional analyses. For this reason, we opt to focus our analysis only on the likelihood that a given process will be concluded or not.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables used in our study. Apparently, there is no relevant problem of multicollinearity except in the case of variables *Tenure* and *Age* and their squared values—which is expected, given that they are functionally related to one another—and variables *Detective* and *Chief*. The negative correlation between these two variables is explained because the baseline category (police officers who hold clerical jobs) has a low frequency in our sample. Thus, a process against a detective is very likely not a process against a chief. Despite their substantial correlation, we opt to keep these variables in our models, because in our context we find that nonlinear effects are relevant in our context and because we wish to capture differential effects depending on the functional involvement of the individual in the police.

<<Table 1 around here>>

Table 2 presents regression results. Three control variables are significant: *Age, Age*^{2} and *Recidivism*. Results indicate that, controlling for other factors, the probability that a given case will be concluded is highest up to a certain age, the decreasing for older police officers ($p < 0.05$). Also, counterintuitively, we find a negative effect for variable *Recidivism* ($p < 0,05$). Apparently, police officers who already suffered previous accusations have higher ability to postpone the conclusion of the process because they have accumulated experience about the mechanics in internal affairs divisions and have higher incentives to avoid by any

means a harsher punishment given that they were already caught in previous deviations. As reported by one of our interviewed officers:

> "… an individual who already suffered an administrative process knows the tactics to retard the activities of the [investigation] commission, for instance by making up illness and then not attending certain hearing sessions etc."

<< Table 2 around here>>

It is worth noticing that model 1, which includes control variables only, is not statistically significant as a whole. A Wald test based on the null hypothesis that all coefficients are equal to zero does not allow us to reject this hypothesis at usual levels (χ^2 = 11.4, p = 0.12). Therefore, control variables, alone, cannot satisfactorily explain the conclusion of processes in our sample.

Model 2 (Table 2) adds the explanatory (hypothesized) variables. The inclusion of these variables significantly increases the overall significance of the regression. We reject the null hypotheses that the coefficients of the new added set of variables are collectively equal to zero (χ^2 = 28.7, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the Wald test applied to the overall regression now allows us to reject the null hypothesis that all coefficients are equal to zero (χ^2 = 34.4, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, we have evidence that our hypothesized variables are crucial to explain our phenomenon. With the inclusion of the new variables, inference about the controls remained the same except for *Felony subject to prosecution*: according to model 2, processes involving penal deviations have higher likelihood of conclusion ($p < 0.05$), possibly because of the higher salience and external impact associated with deviations of that kind.

Now we turn to the analysis of hypothesized effects. As for the variables related to functional attributes, the coefficient of *Detective* is, as expected, significantly negative ($p < 0.05$). Comparatively to officers involved in clerical tasks, processes against detectives have a lower probability of conclusion. As we discussed earlier, a possible explanation for this

results is that detectives spend a great deal of time on the streets, thereby making it difficult to collect evidence against them. Also in line with our expectations, we find that processes against individuals holding non-managerial tasks have a higher likelihood of conclusion, as shown by the significantly positive coefficient of *Non-managerial* ($p < 0.05$). Possibly, officers with non-managerial functions have less control over the flow of information in the police force, compared to officers who are more involved in the bureaucracy. Our data, however, fail to support our prediction that processes against chiefs and officers working in specialized units would have lower probability of conclusion, given the insignificant coefficients of *Chief* and *Specialized unit*.

Our prediction that formal position in the hierarchy would affect the conclusion of processes is also supported, as evidenced by the significantly negative coefficient of *Commissioned job* ($p < 0.01$). Thus, police officers in distinguished positions are apparently able to exert superior influence in order to retard the conclusion of processes against them. In these cases, there may also be intervention from top officers who appointed the policeman for the distinguished position. As one interviewed officer told us:

> "An accusation against a policeman in a commissioned position can also spill over to the person who appointed him/her to the job."

Finally, we find a positive (yet marginally significant) effect of *Tenure* ($p < 0.10$) and a significantly negative effect of its squared value, $Tenure^2$ ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate that the likelihood that a given process will be concluded is particularly prominent in the case of police officers with very long tenure. These individuals likely developed valuable relationships over time, which helped create superior ability to influence internal processes. Notice that, given that we control for the age of policemen, this effect does not strictly derive from their seniority, but from their cumulative interactions in the police force. In our qualitative interviews, we indeed detect the impact of potential reciprocity in investigation

processes. One interviewed officer observed that "… in the police we never know what will happen tomorrow" because an officer who is investigating a given colleague in a certain moment may actually be investigation by that same colleague in future events. Notice, however, that our measure is only indirect; we do not have precise data about the actual social ties between officers in our sample.

Collectively, these results are consistent with our proposed theoretical framework, suggesting three sets of factors—functional attributes of the job, position in the formal hierarchy and relationships developed through time—as key elements affecting the degree to which policemen are able to influence processes in internal affairs divisions. An actual event helps illustrate the importance of our findings. In April 2008, the Secretary of Police of the State of Bahia authorized the seniority-based promotion of at least seven police officers who were either convicted or implicated in criminal acts such as violence, drug traffic and theft (MARTINEZ, 2008). The delay in the conclusion of administrative processes is certainly an aspect that helped induce such an inefficient outcome. Were the processes concluded in due time, those police officers would have been terminated from employment and their promotion could never have occurred.

6. Concluding Remarks

Our results indicate a potential design flaw in public bureaucracies, especially those related to the investigation of criminal activities: that the same agents that may be engaged in deviations may also be those who are responsible for the very monitoring of misconduct. Although the organizational structure of the police included a specialized unit designed precisely to investigate and punish deviant acts, it may be ineffective in the end because policemen can exert formal and informal means of influence so as to avoid or postpone sanctions. Thus, the low probability of actual punishment (BECKER, 1969) creates an environment where police officers have scant incentives to comply with appropriate codes of

behavior. Besides being inconsistent with the necessary probity in the public sector (WILLIAMSON, 1999), this fact magnifies concerns about whether public services such as those executed by the police are really consistent with societal goals. At least with respect to the police force studied in our context, the outcome is far from what is suggested by the tenets of the "modern" public sector management (BARZELAY, 2001; HOOD, 1991; OSBORNE e GAEBLER, 1994).

There are several avenues for future theoretical development and empirical analysis. Future studies could, for instance, pursue a higher number of cases (observations) so as to examine not only factors that may affect the probability that a given process will be concluded, but also the likelihood that the implicated individuals will be eventually convicted. Furthermore, future research could try to directly measure relationship networks created by police officers and how those networks affect their influence in the outcomes of investigation processes. Finally, scholars could replicate or augment our results in other countries and even other units in the public sector. Presumably, the dysfunctional effects discussed here can also be found in other contexts where government agents, by being their own monitors, try to insulate themselves from sanctions that are contrary to the their own self-interest, but critical to guarantee efficiency and quality in public services.

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Table 1 – Descriptive statistics ($N = 143$)

Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
1. Conclusion (1 = yes)	1.00														
2. Detective	0.03	1.00													
3. Chief	0.12	0.86	1.00												
4. Non-managerial	0.05	0.55	0.44	1.00											
5. Specialized unit	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.04	1.00										
6. Commissioned job	0.26	0.42	0.50	0.13	0.01	1.00									
7. Tenure	0.14	0.07	0.10	0.10	0.14	0.14	1.00								
8. Tenure^2	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.11	0.02	0.10	0.75	1.00							
9. Felony	0.14	0.24	0.19	0.10	0.21	0.11	-0.07	-0.09	1.00						
10. Violent act	0.03	0.23	0.22	0.14	0.01	0.18	-0.06	-0.15	0.50	1.00					
11. Marital status	0.04	0.10	0.06	0.01	0.10	0.11	0.07	0.03	0.24	-0.23	1.00				
12. Sex	0.05	0.22	0.26	0.32	0.09	0.11	-0.11	-0.11	0.18	0.16	0.01	1.00			
13. Age	0.14	0.12	0.14	0.28	0.02	0.03	0.71	0.54	0.05	-0.04	0.13	-0.10	1.00		
14. Age^2	0.08	0.18	0.23	0.26	0.03	0.02	0.38	0.50	0.00	-0.04	0.01	-0.01	0.53	1.00	
15. Recidivism	0.15	0.28	0.24	0.17	0.03	0.21	0.20	0.13	0.11	0.09	-0.07	0.10	-0.02	-0.03	1.00
Mean	0.27	0.77	0.18	0.70	0.17	0.26	11.89	60.96	0.72	0.39	0.52	0.96	42.3	65.1	0.41
Standard deviation	0.44	0.42	0.38	0.46	0.37	0.44	7.84	95.15	0.45	0.49	0.50	0.20	8.09	95.6	0.49

Table 2 – Factors affecting the likelihood that a given internal process will be concluded[a]

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Functional attributes		
Detective		-1.234 *
		(0.610)
Chief		-0.553
		(0.661)
Non-managerial		0.711 *
		(0.374)
Specialized unit		0.219
		(0.323)
Position in hierarchy		
Commissioned job		-1.551 **
		(0.395)
Relationships		
Tenure		0.045 †
		(0.032)
Tenure^2		-0.005 *
		(0.003)
Controls		
Felony subject to prosecution	0.515	0.786 *
	(0.329)	(0.394)
Violent act	-0.101	-0.420
	(0.258)	(0.274)
Marital status (1 = married)	-0.208	-0.232
	(0.243)	(0.264)
Sex (1 = male)	0.599	-0.001
	(0.565)	(0.751)
Age	0.052 **	0.060 *
	(0.019)	(0.028)
Age^2	-0.004 *	-0.003 †
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Recidivism	-0.483 *	-0.731 *
	(0.252)	(0.305)
Constant	-3.228 **	-2.462 *
	(1.038)	(1.222)
N	143	143
χ2 (Wald)	11.5	34.4 **

[a] Maximum likelihood Probit estimates. Robust standard errors (Huber-White) in parenthesis.

** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$ † $p < 0.10$. One-tailed test for hypothesized effects.