Police discretion

Name

Institution

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Discretion is referred to as the authority afforded to police officers regarding professional context- specific decision making for example, deciding whether police must pursue further procedure in response to any disorder or let it go simply after warning (Louis, 2011). A bulk of literature is evident that police discretion authority welcomes various critical appraisals based on its potential shortcomings. After contemplating through the lens of on-the-field experiences, it can be inferred that police discretion offers numerous pros and cons that will be discussed in the next section.

Police discretion is a policy and a law hence its pros are certain. Police discretion allows police officers to observe the situation contemplatively and make rational and context-specific decision based on the theoretical knowledge and personal standards of right and wrong. This notion suggests that police officers are not robots; they are humans and that real- life calls must provide a sound basis to judgment calls (McGregor, 1996). For example, a police officer comes to know that a bike driver struck the car subtly because he was trying to save another pedestrian hence he might let him go despite breaking traffic rules. Hence, police discretion might offer a *chance* to correct the mistake next time.

Let’s have a look at the other side of the picture that is perhaps more jaundiced. Police officers utilize their discretion authority based on their personal will; the psychological perspective of decision making suggests that every human being is different from others because his life experiences, interactions with others and nature of the relationships are different from them (Louis, 2011). He might have different outlooks, orientations and attitudes towards certain objects, persons and phenomenon which strongly affect his decision making. For example, racism—an unconscious motive—may affect decision making of the US police officers regarding black or Indian persons. Hence, his belief system affects his decision making gravely.

References

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