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# THE EFFECT OF CLIENTS' ATTRIBUTES ON STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATIC OUTCOME

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Interactions between street-level bureaucrats and clients constitute a neglected field within research into public administration. Consequently, we do not know much about the significance of the character of these interactions in relation to street-level decision-making. This paper investigates whether clients' demeanour and characteristics affect street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practice. The effect of clients' demeanour and characteristics is studied based on a stated preference method, a quantitative technique allowing for an elicitation of discretionary preferences. The paper draws on nationally representative survey data from prisons, mobile police squads and drop-in centres in Denmark (N =402, 56.0% response rate). The findings confirm that clients' demeanour and characteristics do affect bureaucratic decision-making practice – regardless of type of organisation, but that it is not all clients' attributes that have an effect. The analyses also show that client demeanour and characteristics, when compared to legislative provisions, play a minor role in relation to overall decisions in client cases.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Public administration is not solely about administering laws and rules to ensure that political decisions are implemented with the greatest possible precision and effect. It is also an interpersonal and subjective process where people meet and act in relation to one another (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Guy, Meredith & Mastracci 2008; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2000, 2003; Meyers & Nielsen 2012; Stivers 2005). However, the bureaucratic norm dictates an impartial and emotionally neutral way of approaching clients (Katz & Danet 1973; Foster & Jones 1978; Weber 1946). Street-level bureaucrats are expected to handle their emotions as a

part of their job (Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler 2010; Zapf 2002) and make decisions on the basis of professional expertise and legislative rules and procedures only (Bartels 2013). These norms feed expectations of bureaucrats acting consistently from case to case and time to time regarding the same types of cases (Meier 2000). However, street-level bureaucrats are not simply representatives of a bureaucratic organisation, but people with feelings and opinions about who is entitled to be helped and who should be sanctioned (Keiser 2003; Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2000, 2003; Scott 1997), which makes clients' demeanour and characteristics become central to street-level decision making.

Scholars have pointed to the fact that the relational part of the encounter between street-level bureaucrats and clients constitutes a neglected theme within research into public administration (Bartels 2013; Nielsen 2015<sub>b</sub>, 127; Jakobsen et al. 2016). This is true despite the fact that, implicitly, there is broad agreement that interaction and its character are important to the behaviour of bureaucrats (Keiser 2010; Nielsen 2015<sub>a</sub>; Scholz 1991). The studies that exist relating to how street-level bureaucrats react to clients' demeanour and characteristics have often been based on qualitative interviews and observational studies where the focus has been on identifying patterns (Evans 2013; Fineman 1991; Goodsell 1981<sub>a</sub>; Križa & Skivenes 2012; Lorber 1975; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2003; Prottas 1979; Tripi 1984). Even though these studies have generated several interesting hypotheses about how street-level bureaucrats are influenced by clients' behaviour and characteristics, these have rarely been tested by means of large quantitative surveys that make it possible to examine causal effects. The few quantitative studies that do exist and that examine the significance of clients' demeanour and characteristics have also often focused on other parameters than actual decision-making practice. Even though it

is thus interesting that submissive clients have a greater chance of obtaining the information that they seek (Weimann 1982) and that talented (Baviskar 2013) and hardworking (Jilke & Tummers 2018) pupils receive more attention and help from their teachers this does not tell us anything about whether clients' demeanour and characteristics influence actually decision-making practice.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to filling this gap in public administration literature – by asking: *Do clients' demeanour and characteristics affect street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice?* The paper examines; a. Which client attributes may affect street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice? And b. How significant these attributes may be in comparison with other attributes of importance to discretionary decision-making practice in client cases? The impact of clients' demeanour and characteristics on bureaucratic decision-making practice is tested with a stated preference method called a “discrete choice experiment” (DCE). The DCE method is a quantitative survey technique, an approach highly suitable for examining discretionary decision-making (Louviere, Hensher & Swait 2004; Train 2003). The paper draws on nationally representative survey data from prisons, mobile police squads and drop-in centres in Denmark (N =402, 56.0% response rate), which makes it possible to examine whether the effect of clients' demeanour and characteristics varies across types of organisations.

The contribution of this paper is to consider empirical evidence about the nature and impact of clients' demeanour and characteristics on bureaucratic decision-making practice. We still do not

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<sup>1</sup> See Keiser 2003; Kroeger 1975; Scott 1997; Worden & Shepard 1996 for exceptions.

know much about this question within research into public administration (Keiser 2010). After providing an overview of why clients' demeanour and characteristics may potentially influence street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making, the author examines ways in which prior studies have analysed the influence of clients' demeanour and characteristics and then reports findings from a study that examined the significance of several client attributes in relation to bureaucratic decision-making practice. The paper concludes with a discussion on the results and limitations and provides an overview of theoretical contributions.

### **WHY SHOULD CLIENTS' ATTRIBUTES MATTER TO BUREAUCRATIC DECISION-MAKING PRACTICE?**

Street-level bureaucrats are characterised by having a significant degree of freedom in terms of how they execute their job (Evens & Harris 2004; Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981; Hupe & Hill 2007; Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Prottas 1979; Tummers & Bekkers 2014; Walker 1993). Bureaucrats' power lies in their right of definition to determine which clients are entitled to which benefits – and when. (Hasenfeld 1992; Prottas 1979). Decisions relating to the way in which welfare benefits and sanctions are doled out are rarely explicit (Hasenfeld 1992 & Lipsky 2010 [1980]), which is why there is often a need for individual discretion by individual street-level bureaucrats. Management will therefore often have only a limited knowledge of or control of what transpires when street-level bureaucrats and clients interact with one another (Brehm & Gates 1997; Evans & Harris 2004; Preston-Shoot 2001; Riccucci 2005; Winter 2002, 2003). The bureaucrats' knowledge, interests and views may therefore potentially affect the way in which they execute their job and transform policy into practice in their meetings with clients (Brehm & Gates 1997; Hupe & Buffat 2014; Keiser 1999; Keiser & Soss 1998; May & Winter 2000, 2009; Maynard-

Moody & Musheno 2000, 2003; Nielsen 2015<sub>b</sub>; Sandfort 2000; Winter 2002, 2003). It is these discretionary decisions relating to clients' cases that are referred to as bureaucratic decision-making practice in this paper. *Street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice*, defined as decisions relating to the way in which welfare benefits and sanctions are awarded to clients, constitutes the dependent variable in this paper.

Implicit in the structure of bureaucratic organisations is a set of norms supposedly governing the interpersonal relationships between an organisation and its clientele (Katz and Danet 1973; Kroeger 1975). The norms of bureaucracy call for a specific and affectively neutral relationship between street-level bureaucrat and client (Weber 1946; Katz and Danet 1973; Meier 2000). The ability to establish and maintain an emotional distance (Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler 2010; Zapf 2002) and avoid that personal opinions influence the exercise of authority is considered to be good professional practice (Anleu & Mack 2005; Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Tracy & Tracy 1998). However, the formal rules do not allow for human emotions and variations (Hasenfeldt 1992; Prottas 1979; Weimann 1982), and what makes sense in relation to organisational rules and procedures does not necessarily make sense in relation to clients' needs and clients' situations (Tummers et. al.2012). Street-level bureaucrats work with people as their raw material and people are not objects, but players who can function as co-players as well as opponents in connection with their cases (Goodsell 1981<sub>b</sub>; Goffman 1961; Hasenfeldt 1992; Prottas 1979, 103). Even though bureaucrats should thus treat all cases equally and focus only on the relevant client characteristics laid down by the organisation (Katz & Danet 1973; Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Prottas 1979; Smith 1988), this may seem difficult – even unethical (Ricucci 2007) when clients are fundamentally different and are not in the same situation (Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Stone 1981). In

other words, a dilemma may emerge when the ideal about impartial interest regulation crashes with the particularism that can be difficult to be avoided when it concerns working with people. It is therefore not inconceivable that clients' characteristics and clients' demeanour may potentially influence bureaucratic decision-making practice. *Clients' characteristics* and *Clients' demeanour* will constitute the explanatory variables in this paper. The explanatory variables are defined as, respectively, the characteristics or individual circumstances that characterise a client's situation or character (for instance that the client has psychological problems, is unemployed or has an alcohol problem) – and clients' conduct, attitude or deportment in encounters with street-level bureaucrats (for instance that they act humbly or provocatively).

## **HOW SHOULD CLIENTS' ATTRIBUTES MATTER TO BUREAUCRATIC DECISION-MAKING PRACTICE?**

This section examines ways in which prior studies have analysed the influence of clients' demeanour and characteristics<sup>2</sup>, and, on the basis of this, a range of expectations of how client's demeanour and characteristics will influence street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practice will be inferred.

### ***The effect of clients' demeanour***

Scholars generally agree that street-level bureaucrats establish expectations concerning appropriate client demeanour (Fineman 1991; Hagen & Owens-Manley 2002; Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981; Keiser 2003; Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Lorber 1975; Maynard-Moody & Musheno

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<sup>2</sup> It must be emphasised that scholars generally find that most clients fall into a middle range; neither deeply distrusted and disliked nor particularly protected and helped (Prottas 1979).



2000, 2003; Worden & Shepard 1996). According to the literature on client demeanour, bureaucrats generally wish to keep the terms of the interaction socially correct to avoid unnecessary conflict and tension (Fineman 1991; Prottas 1979). Consequently, clients must cooperate for bureaucrats to be able to function smoothly (Crewe 2011; Lipsky 2010 [1980]). Those who adapt to the system's customs and routines are therefore considered to be good clients while those who break the rules and protest are considered to be intractable and bothersome (Fineman 1991). Studies have thus shown that bureaucrats prefer humble, pitiable, and submissive clients who are easy to handle (Brown 1981; Goffman 1961; Goodsell 1981<sub>a</sub>; Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981; Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Lorber 1975; Oorschot 2005; Roth 1972), whereas clients with the inclination or tools to resist street-level bureaucrats' domination are naturally disliked (Brown 198; Crewe 2011; Goodsell 1981<sub>a</sub>; Grandey, Dickter & Sin 2004; Kolind 2015; Prottas 1979; Zapf 2002).

However, one thing is to study street-level bureaucrats' preferences, another thing is to examine the consequences of these in relation to bureaucratic behaviour. Several qualitative observational studies show that clients who are able to show humility and a readiness to cooperate can expect to receive good and qualified processing by street-level bureaucrats. On the basis of observations from several different organisations, Lipsky describes that favouritism of street-level bureaucrats occurs when bureaucrats provide clients who behave well with privileged information, permitting them to manipulate the system better than others (2010 [1980]). In the same way and on the basis of observations from a welfare department, Prottas describes (1979) how clients who accept the bureaucrat's help as a gift and not consider it to be something that the bureaucrat is obliged to provide will generally receive more guidance when they apply for benefits (p.39-40). Finally, on the basis of observations from a prison, Crewe (2011) shows that prison guards prefer

cooperative inmates and that a willingness to cooperate can influence how often an inmate is drug-tested or subjected to cell searches (p. 462).

Conversely, studies show that aggressive, self-assertive clients receive less information and attention from street-level bureaucrats (Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981; Keiser 2003). By means of an observational study at a hospital, Lorber (1975) shows, for instance, how the medical staff spent less time on the patients that they felt were uncooperative (p. 222). In the same way Prottas (1979) found that testy clients did not generally receive much assistance from the bureaucrats (p. 41) and that they were sometimes treated rudely, given inadequate information about special programmes and denied the benefit of doubt in questionable circumstances (p. 109). Studies also show that even the most pro-client bureaucrat will take a punitive attitude toward clients who have tricked him or her (Prottas 1979). For, instance, Keiser (2003) found in a survey about service given to clients in a social disability programme that bureaucrats who felt that clients were dishonest (about pain) were less likely to have higher allowance rates. Sometimes clients were even punished for their non-compliance (Kinnunen 2003). On the basis of a review of several field studies of police work, Miller found (2004) that contempt of a cop may result in overly harsh treatment, especially if the citizen is a suspect in other crimes. Through observations and interviews with staff at a multiservice health care and social service agency, Fineman (1991) also shows how clients whom the staff found unwilling were given limited services or perhaps no service at all and were even forced to leave the agency and seek services elsewhere (p. 363). Also Goffman (1961) found in an observational study of patients at a psychiatric hospital that noisy or uncooperative behaviour may result in patients not being given the opportunity to take part in social activities (p. 240), or that they are given the job of cleaning

toilets (p. 52). Through observational studies at a hospital, Lorber (1975) also found that patients with deviant attitudes risked being sent home before time and also risked being given less attention from staff (p. 222). Roth (1972) finds the same pattern in an observational study of a hospital emergency service where the staff feels justified in refusing service to those who complain or resist treatment; refuse to follow procedures or who make trouble in any other way (p. 842). Based on data from 900 patrol observations, Worden & Shepard (1996) also finds that the likelihood of arrest by police increases when suspects display a disrespectful or hostile demeanour toward the police.

However, misbehaviour has also been shown to increase the probability of bureaucratic cooperation, even though street-level bureaucrats dislike such clients (Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981). For instance, Prottas (1979), through an observational study from a welfare department, found that aggressive or unpleasant clients sometimes receive faster attention, simply to make them shut up (p. 109). In a study from two public assistance agencies Kroeger (1975) found that clients who acted most were also those who received the most benefits (but only from caseworkers who were prone to support the interests of the clients). However, strategies based on demanding or testy behaviour are thought to work only in specific situations where, for instance, caseworkers lose their grip (Tripi 1984), are soft (Kroeger 1975) or are too busy to enter into a conflict (Prottas 1979). Furthermore, these strategies are thought to work for only a relatively short period of time until the street-level bureaucrat have regained control of the situation (Fineman 1991; Goffman 196; Lipsky 2010 [1980]). On the basis of the studies above, I put forward the following hypothesis about how clients' demeanour influences street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practices.

*Hypothesis 1: Clients who behave in a compliant way receive a more lenient decision in connection with their cases than do clients who behave in a non-compliant way in their interaction with street-level bureaucrats.*

*Hypothesis 2: Clients who admit their wrongdoing receive a more lenient decision in connection with their cases than do clients who do not admit their wrongdoing in their interaction with street-level bureaucrats.*

### ***The effect of clients' characteristics***

When it comes to the effect of clients' characteristics, the literature shows that, as a client, one can attempt to win the compassion and sympathy of a street-level bureaucrat by, for instance, displaying the signs that are appropriate and generally accepted in our culture for somebody who needs help (Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Prottas 1979; Oorschot 2005). This may express itself, for instance, if a client is in a particularly difficult life situation or is tormented by personal problems that can appeal directly to street-level bureaucrats' compassion, even though these characteristics should formally not be a part of decisions (Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981). Studies have indicated, for instance, that vulnerable clients are often well liked by street-level bureaucrats (Goodsell 1981<sub>a</sub>; Lipsky 2010 [1980]; McDonald & Marston 2006). In other words, street-level bureaucrats have opinions about who is entitled and worthy receivers of help (Lipsky 2010 [1980]; Roth 1972; Scott 1997).

However, only a few studies have taken an interest in the consequences of street-level bureaucrats' preferences for vulnerable clients. The knowledge that has been generated in this field stems from the studies about the effect of clients' demeanour from observational studies and interviews with employees. For instance, a study by Goodsel (1981), based on observations and interviews with staff at a county welfare department, showed that several bureaucrats admit that individual characteristics of clients were factors in determining their affective response (p. 774). Particularly elderly citizens, helpless destinies, large families with many or neglected children and refugees were seen as people worthy of help. According to the study, these citizens can expect that street-level bureaucrats take extra time and adopt a more open manner in the face-to-face encounter with them (p. 772). Other observations and interview studies show that street-level bureaucrats are willing to favour clients with whom they sympathise. For instance, a study by Kolind (2015) shows that prison guards sometimes avoid executing narcotics control in relation to inmates who are heavy drug abusers and who find it hard to abstain from their abuse (p. 804). The same can be said of police officers who indicate in an observational study that they believe it would be a shame to sanction the most vulnerable drug addicts in the streets (Kinnunen 2003, 65). Also Maynard-Moody & Musheno (2002) describe how cops are willing to ignore an offense committed by someone they see as a good person - for instance minor drug dealing by a poor immigrant – while they treat harshly the trivial offenses of someone they see as a threat to society (p.350).

The fact that clients whom street-level bureaucrats feel sorry for are treated better is also indicated in other studies. For instance, Danet (1973) found in a content analysis of appeal letters addressed to the customs authorities in Israel that there was latent positive discrimination in favour of persons who needed a boost to establish themselves in Israeli society. This group was

less likely to be refused regardless of the seriousness of the condition missing in the case (p. 335). Finally, Scott (1997) shows, based on data from a laboratory experiment that simulated a training session for case workers in a public assistance agency, that the bureaucrats consistently recommended more in the way of benefits and service for clients who evoked feelings of compassion than they did for clients for whom they felt less compassion.

On the basis of the theory above, I put forward the following hypotheses about how clients' characteristics influence street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making:

*Hypothesis 3: clients with serious social problems receive more lenient decisions in connection with their cases than do clients who do not have social problems.*

*Hypothesis 4: clients who are seriously addicted to drugs receive more lenient decisions in connection with their cases than do clients who are not seriously addicted to drugs.*

## **WHEN SHOULD CLIENTS' ATTRIBUTES MATTER TO BUREAUCRATIC DECISION-MAKING PRACTICE?**

The above studies of the effect of clients' demeanour and characteristics leave the impression that these attributes may have significance in terms of street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practice across many types of organisations. However, it is not certain that the likelihood that these attributes influence bureaucratic decision-making practice is equally significant in all types of organisations. However, the significance of differences in types of organisations is not something we know much about within street-level bureaucracy research (Gofen, Sella & Gassner 2018).

Street-level bureaucrats perform very different jobs and represent different professions that make demands on their abilities and behaviour (Hupe & Hill 2007, 283; Meier 2000; Walker & Niner 2005) – including the way in which they interact with clients. Even though bureaucrats may thus have specific preferences in relation to their clients, it is not certain that they have the opportunity to act accordingly (Kelly 1994; Meier & Bohte 2001; Nielsen 2015; Scott 1997; Tummers et. al.2015). Different types of organisations may have different expectations and ethical codes in terms of interaction between field worker and client, and these expectations may potentially influence field workers’ opportunities for discretion in relation to their clients.

In order to create variation in type of organisation the paper is based on a dataset on nationally representative survey data collected from three Danish institutions: Danish drop-in centers for active substance abusers, Danish prisons and Danish police narcotics units. These particular units were chosen, as different norms and values are expected to influence the interaction between the bureaucrat and client, depending on whether the organisational task is to exercise regulation or to perform service activities (Stone 1981; Jensen 2015). This assumption is based on the notion that different policy areas target somewhat different clusters of problems that require different skills and approaches (Meier 2000; Walker and Niner 2005).

In service-producing organisations street-level bureaucrats are primarily employed to serve or help work mandated to respond to human needs. The encounter is usually initiated by clients, and bureaucrat–client relations will often be extensive and personal, and characterised by a high degree of mutual trust (Goodsell 1981<sub>a</sub>). Employees will be highly committed to the client and the service will be tailored to the specific attributes and needs of the individual in question

(Hasenfeld 2000). Service-producing tasks are thus related to norms involving help, aid, and the support of those who experience problems in living (Reamer 2006; Staniforth et al. 2011).

In regulatory organisations the overall purpose is to maintain the public order by restricting, regulating, or prohibiting citizen behaviour that does not comply with the applicable societal rules and norms (Meier 2000). Consequently, the encounter between clients and bureaucrats is often involuntary (Nielsen 2015<sub>b</sub>), and the source of initiative will probably make a considerable difference in the attitude and behaviour of both parties in the encounter (Goodsell 1981<sub>a</sub>; Meier 2000). Thus, client–bureaucrat relations are often limited, impersonal, and based on routine (Hasenfeld 2000). Consequently, it is expected that the effect of clients’ demeanour and characteristics on bureaucratic decision-making practice increases if the bureaucrat is performing a service task.

*Hypothesis 5: the effect of clients’ demeanour and characteristics on bureaucratic decision-making practice is expected to be more significant in service-producing organisations compared to regulatory organisations.*

The variation in organisational task is obtained by focusing on drug legislation in Denmark, which is applied within various organisations; each with their own functions, thus rendering it possible to generate maximum variation in terms of the core task that is performed. *The Danish police narcotics units* work with trafficking in illegal substances and with maintaining order in situations where drug dealing becomes a nuisance to the general public (Grytnes 2003). The officers thus work with control of human behaviour and handling of situations that are often conflict-ridden, uncontrollable and potentially dangerous (Kinnunen 2003; Lie 2003; Miller 2004). Because of the character of the job the idea exists that there is a special esprit de corps or



culture among police officers about protecting each other in dangerous situations (Miller 2004; Waddington 1999). The latent danger in the job is thus reflected in the officers' behaviour in relation to citizens, which is often formal (Lie 2003), tough or 'educative' (Kinnunen 2003; Lie 2003). The narcotics units primarily work with regulation in this manner.

*Danish prison employees* must decide whether to report an inmate if he or she is caught in possession of drugs while serving their sentence (Danish Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health 2003, 2010). Many of the daily routines in prisons are thus planned in relation to narcotics control (Kolind et. al.2013) and hence the execution of control (Crawley 2004; Crewe 2011). However, prison employees' job is not only about regulating the behaviour of inmates. According to legislation, personnel must also help and support the inmates in having a life without crime after they have completed their sentences (Heltberg 2007). The balance between service and control thus creates a double role in relation to the personnel, who are having to transform the institutional objectives into practice (Kolind 2015; Kolind et. al.2015). Such prison employees work in organisations that are involved in both service and regulation.

Finally, the study includes action taken toward substance abuse in *Danish drop-in centres* for active substance abusers. Drop-in centres for active drug abusers are an option for people who may like to go there as they are without having to be registered and without anything significant being demanded of them in terms of their behaviour (Grytnes 2004). However, the drop-in centres do demand a few things from users for them to be allowed to use these places, including a ban on taking and selling drugs (Grytnes 2004; Grytnes, Villumsen & Pedersen 2002; Larsen & Schultz 2001). If somebody breaks the rules, the consequence is a quarantine or in the worst case expulsion for the rest of that person's life (Borgen-Nielsen 2000). However, the execution of narcotics control in drop-in centres is often pragmatic and based on individual discretion

(Borgen-Nielsen 2000; Grytnes, Villumsen & Pedersen 2002), in that the objective of the drop-in centres is primarily to provide care and function on the users' terms (Ibid.). In this manner, the drop-in centres primarily work in organisations producing service.

Narcotics legislation has been selected as a case because it is a relatively restrictive and rule-governed policy area in Denmark with zero tolerance of drug possession, consumption, and sale (Houborg 2010; Kolind 2015). This makes it possible to use the narcotics legislation as a critical case (Flyvbjerg 1996). If street-level bureaucrats under these regulated work conditions are influenced by clients' behaviour and characteristics when they make discretionary decisions, then it can be expected that also bureaucrats who work within less regulated policy areas will act in the same way.

### **HOW SHOULD WE STUDY THE IMPACT OF CLIENT ATTRIBUTES?**

The purpose of this paper is to understand whether clients' demeanour and characteristics affect street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practice. However, it is not easy to study the preferences that lie behind street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice (Stone 1981). Firstly, this is about illegitimate decisions if bureaucrats let themselves be influenced by clients' demeanour and characteristics, which is why reasons such as these are rarely explicit (Lipsky 2010; Winter 2002). Secondly, street-level bureaucrats' assessment of what is important when they make decisions is not something we can immediately study because these are individual and often situational questions that are answered by individual bureaucrats (Baviskar & Winter 2017; Stone 1981). A method is thus required that makes it possible to obtain an insight into street-level bureaucrats' hidden preferences. This paper proposes to use here a discrete choice experiment (DCE), which is considered to be a special and useful method

in cases where it is complicated to observe and obtain an insight into the reasons behind the way in which people make decisions (Aguinis & Bradlet 2014).

DCE is a quantitative technique allowing for an elicitation of preferences by asking respondents to state their choices between various experimental scenarios (Louviere et al. 2004; Train 2003). Each scenario contains alternatives that consist of characteristics (attributes) with carefully systematically varied levels (levels) (Bateman et. al.2002; Lancsar & Louviere 2008). When individuals choose between alternatives, the basic assumption is that people are utility maximisers, for which reason their preferences will be revealed through their choices. The pair-wise comparisons of alternatives thus allow an estimate of the importance (utility) that the respondent attaches to the included attributes (levels) independently (Train 2003). The DCE framework allows researchers to vary and control the included characteristics systematically, thereby simultaneously enhancing both internal and external validity (Aguinis and Bradley 2014). The hypothetical scenarios thus provide excellent opportunity to assess real-time decision-making processes (Bateman et.al 2002; Hainmueller et. al. 2015).

## **DATA AND PROCEDURES**

The data for this study are taken from a discrete choice experiment that simulated a hypothetical watch in which the respondents (prison guards, police officers and employees in drop-in centres in Denmark) were asked to imagine that they discovered two citizens in the act of using drugs.

The two alternative scenarios were displayed to the respondents as vignettes in an online survey.<sup>3</sup> The respondents were asked to decide whether or not to impose sanctions on (one or both of) the incidents and which incident they found most important to sanction if forced to choose. The latter represents the operationalisation of the dependent variable in the paper: bureaucrats' decision-making practice (Appendix A shows an example of a choice set as presented to the respondents). Each respondent were introduced to a total of six choice sets, consisting of two alternative scenarios displayed as vignettes (see Appendix B for information concerning the experimental design). Since the DCE scenarios are hypothetical situations, it is essential for the ecological validity of the study that the attributes and attribute levels constituting the DCE scenarios are determined carefully so that they imitate respondents' real interests in the choice situation and seem understandable and meaningful to respondents (Kløjgaard et al. 2012; Lancsar and Louviere 2008). In order to create an scenario that is as realistic as possible in relation to narcotics offences, the choice scenarios do not just include attributes relating to clients' demeanour and characteristics; they also include attributes that street-level bureaucrats, according to the law, should attach importance to when they impose sanctions in connection with drug offences. In this way the discrete choice experiment makes it possible to paint a more real picture of the effect of clients' demeanour and characteristics in relation to street-level bureaucrats' decisions in that the effect of the client-related attributes is compared to the significance of legislative provisions that field workers must also consider when they make discretionary decisions in relation to drug offences.

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<sup>3</sup> The survey consisted of questions regarding the respondent's attitude and typical behavioral responses to recognizable work scenarios. The DCEs were then introduced, and finally the respondents were asked about socioeconomic characteristics.

## **Measurement of attributes**

The selected attributes and attribute levels in this study express, respectively, the two explanatory variables client demeanour and client characteristics, which may potentially have an influence on street-level bureaucrats' decision practice as well as a range of legislative concerns that street-level bureaucrats should attach importance to when they impose sanctions in drug offence cases. The attribute and attribute levels are selected on the basis of both theory and a month-long field study along with employee interviews in all three case organisations. Both approaches are used, as theory (Atzmüller and Steiner 2010; Priem and Harrison 1994), and respondent feedback (Kløjgaard et al. 2012; Wason et al. 2002) are said to play crucial roles in choosing the attributes and attribute levels that are relevant to the study. Moreover, the choice sets were pilot-tested on 10 employees from each organisation to elicit possible problems with the survey.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Operationalising Client Demeanour***

The following two attributes - *the clients' attitude* and *whether or not the client admits their crime* - are used in the DCE design as an expression of "client demeanour." These attributes are chosen as they (cf. the theoretical framework section) are expected to affect street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice. *The clients' attitude* was defined by compliant and non-compliant attitudes, respectively. A compliant attitude was operationalised in terms of a repentant and tearful client, whereas a non-compliant attitude was operationalised by a client who was described as being upset and testy. The selection of the operationalisation in

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<sup>4</sup> Respondents completed the form and shared feedback about ambiguities, if any, about lack of relevance and about objectionable elements. The pilot test led to minor adjustments.

question builds on the existing operationalisations that are to be found in the literature and on the information that respondents have contributed through interviews about their experience of and understanding of compliant and non-compliant client behaviour in connection with policing the area of narcotics<sup>5</sup>. According to Fineman (1991) compliant and non-compliant client behaviour are social constructs that are subjectively defined and interpreted, which is why it has been necessary to have a context-sensitive way of measuring the constructs in the paper (Adcock & Collier 2001). Finally, the attribute of *admitting/not admitting* was included in the design, partly based on the theoretical expectation that clients who do not admit wrongdoing receive tougher treatment (Brown 1981; Keiser 2003; Kolind 2015) and partly because the interviews supported this expectation. This attribute was operationalised as admitting versus not admitting.

### ***Operationalising Client Characteristics***

“Client characteristics” are operationalised as: *social problems/no social problems* and *the severity of drug use*. *Social problems/no social problems* are operationalised as substantial social problems versus no substantial social problems. Here, “substantial social problems” refers to a person who has neither social networks nor economic means, whereas “no social problems” applies to those with a social network and economic means. *Severity of drug use* is operationalised as recreational versus dependent. “Social problems/no social problems” and the “severity of drug abuse” are included in the design based on the theoretical expectation that these attributes may potentially have significance to street-level bureaucrats’ sympathies in relation to clients (Keene 1997; Kolind 2015; Ritter, Broers & Elger 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> In the literature an abundance of definitions of the terms compliance/non-compliance exists (mainly identified through qualitative field work), but no unequivocal and generally accepted definition of terms exists.

### ***Operationalising Legislative Provisions***

The following four attributes—*drug type*, *quantity*, *past misconducts*, and *sales versus own consumption*—will be used in this paper as an expression of “legislative concerns.” *Drug type* is operationalised as hashish, amphetamines, and heroin, respectively. These types of drugs were chosen based on respondents’ views on hard and soft drugs (see also Keene 1997; Kolind 2015; Ritter et al. 2013), and the general scientific rank of drugs in terms of overall harm (Nutt et al. 2010). *Quantities* were operationalised as a difference between small and large amounts. Small quantities are defined as follows: hashish = 2.0g, amphetamine = 0.2g, heroin = 0.1g, whereas large quantities are defined as: hashish = 20.0g; amphetamine = 3.0g; heroin = 1.0g. The quantities were chosen based on respondents’ recommendations. *Misconduct in the past* was designed so that changes in the number of misconducts increased gradually: first, second, third, and fifth time apprehended. *Sale versus own consumption* was operationalised in terms of hashish or substance in one lump/package versus hashish or substance in several lumps/packages. In the course of the interviews, the respondents mentioned that hashish in several lumps and drugs in small bags led to suspicion of sale. It is also expected that possession with intention of sale will be sanctioned harder than possession for your own consumption. All of the expectations reflect narcotics legislation in Denmark.

The attributes and attribute levels used in the DCE scenarios are shown in table 1 below.

<Table 1 here>

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis is carried out so that first, and by means of an overall random parameter mixed logit model, hypotheses 1-4 are tested for each of the three organisations.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, hypothesis 5 is tested by comparing the significance of the client attributes on bureaucratic outcome across the three organisations.

### **Data Collection and Sampling**

Data collected in the paper has been brought about by using a national questionnaire answered by employees in the three organisations (police, prison<sup>7</sup>, drop-in centre) in Denmark. The survey was conducted from May to June 2013, inclusive. A link to an internet-based questionnaire was distributed to all of the respondents. Out of 723 distributed e-mails, 402<sup>8</sup> employees responded (partially or fully) to the questionnaire, resulting in a 56.0% respond rate. The representativeness of the sample was tested on the variables age and gender to the extent that this was possible<sup>9</sup>, and the sample was found to be representative in relation to these variables. Age and gender have been selected because these socio-economic characteristics have proven to have great

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<sup>6</sup> The mixed logit models were estimated in Stata 13 using the mixlogit command (Hole 2007). All of the parameters except for the alternative specific constant are assumed to follow normal distributions, hereby allowing for preference heterogeneity.

<sup>7</sup> Three penal institutions were deselected in the study: one because of rebuilding, two due to the particular type of inmates (detained asylum seekers and prisoners with psychiatric disorders).

<sup>8</sup> The questionnaire was sent to half of all of the prison employees in the included institutions. The second half received a different questionnaire.

<sup>9</sup> It has not been possible to obtain aggregated data on gender and age among members of the narcotics patrols because this is classified information that is not accessible to the public. It has only been possible to obtain aggregated data relating to gender from the drop-in centres.



significance to bureaucrats' opinions and decision-making practice (Andersen & Salomonsen 2010; Blomberg et. al.2013; Nielsen 2015<sub>b</sub>). All of the responses were given anonymously. Two reminders were sent out during the data collection process in order to increase the response rate (Monroe and Adams 2012).<sup>10</sup>

<Table 2 here>

## **FINDINGS**

The results from the overall mixed logit models examining the research question regarding whether *clients' demeanour and characteristics affect street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice* are presented in table 3, 4 and 5. The theoretical expectations were that (H1) compliant clients would receive a more lenient decision in connection with their cases than would clients who were non-compliant in their interaction with street-level bureaucrats, and that the (H2) clients who admitted their wrongdoing would also receive a more lenient decision than would clients who did not admit their wrongdoing in their interaction with bureaucrats. It is also expected theoretically (H3) that clients who have severe social problems – and where these characteristics are formally irrelevant to a client's case – receive a more lenient decision than do clients who do not have social problems. Finally, it is expected that (H4) clients who are seriously addicted to drugs will receive a more lenient decision in connection with their cases than will clients who are not seriously addicted to drugs. The goodness-of-fit statistics show that

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<sup>10</sup> Ethical approval for the study was given by the Danish Data Protection Agency (ref number 2012-54-0084) and the public authority: Danish National Police and Danish Prison and Probation Service. According to Danish law, no further ethical approval was required.

the models for prisons and for police are extremely good at predicting which concerns that street-level bureaucrats emphasise with a pseudo  $R^2$  of  $\approx .374$  (police) and  $0.254$  (prison), while the model for the drop-in centres is good, but less strong (compared to the other models) in predicting bureaucrats' preferences (Louviere et al. 2004, 54).<sup>11</sup>

When it comes to the question of the significance of the client's attitude (H1), all mixed logit models from the three organisations show that it has significance to street-level bureaucrats' decision practice if a client is upset and testy or repentant and tearful during the interaction. The analysis confirms, in keeping with the hypothetical expectation that clients who are repentant and tearful are less likely to be sanctioned than are clients who are upset and testy. Contrary to the theoretical expectations, however, the results show that the hypothesis that the question of whether a client admits an offence or not (H2) does not have an effect on bureaucrats' decision practice in any of the three organisations. Clients who admit possession of drugs are thus not less likely to be sanctioned than are clients who do not admit to their offence.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of the question of the significance of the client's characteristics the mixed logit models show that it has significance to street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practice if the client has serious social problems or not (H3). The analyses confirm the theoretical expectation that clients who have serious social problems are less likely to be sanctioned than are clients without serious social problems. Contrary to the theoretical expectations, however, the analyses show that the client's addiction to drugs (H4) has no significance to street-level bureaucrats' decisions in any

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<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the theoretical validity of the model is confirmed by the expected signs of coefficients according to the hypotheses which form the basis for the Bayesian efficient main effects design (see Appendix B).

<sup>12</sup> Among police officers and drop-in center employees there are however existence of preference heterogeneity in relation to clients admitting drug possession or not.

of the three organisations. It has thus no significance to the likelihood of a client being sanctioned if that person is very dependant on drugs or only consumes drugs recreationally.

Overall, the results from the three models show that the clients' demeanour and characteristics have significance to street-level bureaucrats' decision-making practice, but that it is only certain specific attributes that influence bureaucrats' discretionary decisions and thereby the likelihood of whether a client is subjected to a sanction or not. Clients who are repentant and tearful and clients with significant social problems thus have a smaller likelihood of being sanctioned than do clients who are upset and testy or are not characterised by having significant social problems. However, the question of the extent of the client's use of drugs and the question of whether the client admits to the offence or not has, contrary to the theoretical expectation, no significance in relation to bureaucrats' decisions about whether they are going to sanction an offence or not. When it comes to the significance of the client's attitude and social problems the analysis shows that the client's attitude means more to street-level bureaucrats' deliberations about whether they should impose a sanction or not – in all organisations – than does the question of whether the client has social problems or not.

Even though the analyses show that the client's attitude and the presence of social problems has significance to street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making and increase the likelihood of a more lenient sanction, the analyses also indicate that these attributes do not constitute the most important considerations when bureaucrats make decisions about whether to impose a sanction or not. Not surprisingly, the legislative attributes have a greater influence on bureaucrats' decision-making than do the client-related attributes. Contrary to expectation, a comparison of the models (across the three organisations) does not confirm (H5) that the effect

of clients' demeanour and characteristics on bureaucratic decision-making practice is expected to be more significant in service-producing organisations compared to regulatory organisations.

By comparing which preferences that belong to the three organisations the models show that the degree to which importance is attached to the significance of the various attributes is the same across the organisations. The question of whether there are repetitions - particularly the fifth time a client is found to have committed an offence - weighs most heavily in terms of the likelihood of a sanction. The second most important attribute is the question of which kind of drug is in question where it weighs more heavily if the client is caught in possession of heroin and amphetamine compared to hashish. Then third follows the question of the amount of drugs where it has a positive influence on the likelihood of a sanction if the client is caught in possession of only a small amount of drugs. Finally, the question of whether the drugs are for your own consumption or intended for sale shows that clients who are only in possession of drugs for their own consumption are less likely to be subjected to sanctions than are clients who intend to sell drugs to other people. Note, however, that the issue of sales versus own consumption is of lesser importance to employees at the police and the drop-in centres than the client-related attributes.

Across the three organizations, tests of hypothesis H5 however show that respondents mainly attach importance to the law when they make decisions about drug offence.

Moreover, it is worth noting that – in the form of statistically significant standard deviations – when it comes to all of the significant client-related attributes, there is heterogeneity in terms of how much importance street-level bureaucrats attach to these conditions when they make decisions about drug offences. This means that within each of the three organisations there are employees who place more emphasis on these considerations than others.

## **CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

This paper has been intended to throw light on whether clients' demeanour and characteristics affect street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice? The paper shows that clients' demeanour and characteristics have significance to street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making. However, the analyses show that legislative considerations, not surprisingly, weigh more heavily than do client-related factors when bureaucrats make decisions in individual clients' cases. The analyses also show that it is not all characteristics and all demeanour traits of the client that have significance to bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making. Analyses show here that neither bureaucrats from the drop-in centres or prisons nor the police let themselves be influenced by whether a client admits his offence or not or whether the client is significantly addicted to drugs or is only a recreational user. However, in all three organisations it has significance to street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making whether a client is upset and testy or are repentant and tearful during the interaction and if the client has significant social problems or not.

### **Limitations**

The paper is challenged by the fact that no clear and unequivocal definition exists in the literature of, respectively, compliant and non-compliant client behaviour or of when a client has social problems or not. And no standardised measuring unit exists when it comes to measuring the terms in question, which is why it has been necessary to operationalise the terms in the paper. It cannot be ruled out that the results could have been different if the terms had been operationalised and measured in a different way. The paper attempts, on the basis of the literature and on the basis of discussions with the respondents to create an operationalisation of

the terms that works in the theoretical sense, but that is also meaningful and recognisable to the respondents; in this way the ecological validity is strengthened and the content validity of items is also strengthened. However, the fact that the terms are made context-specific limits the potential for generalisation and thereby also the external validity and the reliability.

Another challenge in the paper is the question of the ecological validity, which is especially important in relation to the trustworthiness of data from the discrete choice experiments, which, because of their hypothetical nature, can be very sensitive to hypothetical bias where respondents answer questions in a different way from that of a real choice situation because the hypothetical scenarios do not seem real or relevant (Hughes & Huby 2002; Munck & Verkuilen 2005). This challenge has been met in the paper by selecting meaningful attributes and levels (Aguinis & Bradley 2014). The survey has been to send to the respondents at their place of work, which, according to the literature, contributes to increasing realism of choice scenarios and items (Aguinis & Bradley 2014). By looking at respondents' actual work life it is also ensured that the respondents are not asked questions about things about which they do not naturally have an opinion.

A last challenge to this paper is the external validity - ie. the question of whether it is possible to use the results from police, prisons and drop-in centres to say something about how street-level bureaucrats' decision-making behaviour is influenced by clients' demeanour and characteristics in general. Even though it is of course necessary for future studies to test the results' wider applicability in relation to other countries and kinds of professions and organisational types than those that have been used here, the paper has attempted to strengthen the external validity through a range of measures. Firstly, the questionnaire has been sent to all of the drop-in centres, prisons and police narcotics units in Denmark. And the high response rate and tests of the

representativeness supports the suggestion that the sample is representative for the entire population, which increases expectations that the results can be applied to bureaucrats in similar positions. Secondly, the law on narcotics has been selected for the empirical test because the field, with its relatively high restrictively and regularity, can be used as a critical case (Flyvbjerg 1996). If bureaucrats under these regulated work conditions are influenced by clients' demeanour and characteristics in their discretionary decision-making, then it is to be expected that that also street-level bureaucrats who deal with less regulated core job functions will act in the same way. However, future studies should examine if the significance of the interaction between bureaucrats and clients is different in organisations that solely supply service instead of regulation and control. This includes, for instance, whether clients behave or present themselves in other ways and if these strategies are received in another way when the products is service instead of control. However, the generalisation potential of the paper's results increases in that the discrete choice experiments show that the reaction to client attributes is the same in all three organisations. Thirdly, the variation between core job tasks, which are mainly service-producing versus regulation-oriented, is expected to apply not only in a Danish context, but also to be able to be applied to industries in other countries because the critical content of various job types is also expected to be different depending on to what degree it is service or regulation, which helps strengthen the generalisation potential.

### **Contribution**

The results from this paper contribute to public administration research literature by showing which attributes relating to clients' demeanour and characteristics that influence bureaucrats' decision making practice. Moreover the paper shows the significance that these attributes have

compared to legislative considerations. In this way the paper contributes with knowledge of which attributes bureaucrats prioritise in their work and feel most responsible for (Hupe & Hill 2007). This knowledge constitutes a significant contribution to public administration literature in that we still lack knowledge of the significance of various client attributes and of how bureaucrats weigh various considerations when they make decisions in relation to clients (Brehm & Gates 1997; Evans 2013; Nalbandian & Edwards 1983; Scott 1997). Understanding which client attributes that have significance to street-level bureaucrats discretionary decision-making also provides an insight into which clients whom bureaucrats believe are worthy or unworthy receivers of their help. Here the results show, in accordance with earlier studies, that the worthy clients are those who bureaucrats believe have significant social problems and therefore are in need of bureaucrats' help (Fineman 1991; Kroeger 1975; Lipsky 201 [1980]; Oorschot, 2005). The unworthy clients are those who do not have any serious problems and who do not behave humbly or take on the role as miserable or vulnerable ones (Goodsell 1981a; Hasenfeld & Steinmetz 1981). An insight into which factors that, respectively, increase or limit the opportunity for differential treatment also contributes with knowledge of clients' options for how they can act in relation to the public system, which also makes up a neglected field within research into public administration (Scott 1997, 54).

Even though the results thus show that clients' demeanour and characteristics do affect street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making practice, the paper also shows that the street-level bureaucrats still attaches most importance to legislative provisions over client related concerns. In this way the results support earlier research, which shows that bureaucrats' autonomy mainly has to do with minor visible everyday conditions that are hard to monitor by management (Winter 2002, 2003; Preston-Shoot 2001; Evans & Harris 2004). Overall, the paper



shows that clients' behaviour and characteristics have significance to street-level bureaucrats' discretionary decision-making and that the character of the interaction between bureaucrat and client is crucial to the outcome of this relation.

### Appendix A: Example of a Discrete Choice Question

The figure shows an example of a discrete choice question presented to prison employees.

*Imagine that on a hypothetical watch you discover two inmates in the act of using drugs.*

*Which incident do you find it most important to sanction?*

	<b>Inmate A</b>	<b>Inmate B</b>
	An inmate is caught in the act of using drugs. He is found in possession of a small amount of hashish, in the form of a single lump. The inmate has no significant social problems. It is the third time that he has been apprehended in connection with drugs. He does not admit the offence. He explains that he is using drugs recreationally. The inmate is upset and testy during the interaction.	An inmate is caught in the act of using drugs. He is found in possession of a large amount of heroin, distributed in several packages. The inmate has substantial social problems. It is the second time that he has been apprehended in connection with drugs. He admits the offence. He explains that he is dependent on drugs. The inmate is repentant and tearful during the interaction.
<i>I choose:</i>	Incident A <input type="checkbox"/>	Incident B <input type="checkbox"/>

### Appendix B: The Design Development Phase

During a design development phase, a Bayesian efficient main effects design was created by means of the software Ngene provided by ChoiceMetrics (ChoiceMetrics 2014). Twelve choice sets were created, ensuring sufficient degrees of freedom, and the design was blocked into two (with six choice sets in each) by minimizing the average correlation between the blocking column and the attribute columns. Employees in each organization were randomly allocated to the two blocks, and the success of randomization was tested on the variables age and gender using Pearson's chi-squared tests.

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**Table 1**  
Attributes and Attribute levels

	Attributes	Attribute levels
Client- demeanour	Inmate's attitude	Repentant and tearful Upset and testy (reference level)
	Admitting/not admitting	Admitting (reference level) Not admitting
Client- characteristics	Severity of drug use	Recreational Dependent (reference level)
	Social problems/no social problems	Substantial social problems (reference level) No significant social problems
Legislative provisions	Drug type	Hashish (reference level) Amphetamine Heroin
	Quantity	Small amount <sup>a</sup> Large amount (reference level) <sup>b</sup>
	Past misconducts	First time (reference level) Second time Third time Fifth time
	Sales/own consumption <sup>c</sup>	One lump/package More lumps/packages (reference level)
<p>a Hashish = 2.0g; amphetamine = 0.2g; heroin = 0.1g.  b Hashish = 20.0g; amphetamine = 3.0g; heroin = 1.0g.  c A lump/package indicates that substance is possessed with the purpose of own consumption whereas more lumps/packages indicates that the substance is held for sale.</p>		

Table1: The table shows the attributes and attributes levels of the choice sets.

**Table 2**  
Subject Characteristics

		<i>Prisons (N = 216)</i>		<i>Police (N = 92)</i>		<i>Drop-in centres (N = 94)</i>	
Gender	Female	78	36.1%	3	3.3%	69	73.4%
	Male	138	63.9%	89	96.7%	25	26.6%
Age	< 30 years	16	7.4%	9	9.8%	3	3.3%
	30-39 years	75	34.7%	62	67.4%	19	20.2%
	40-49 years	68	31.5%	13	14.1%	34	37.0%
	50-59 years	45	20.8%	7	7.6%	26	28.3%
	≥ 60 years	12	5.6%	1	1.1%	12	12.8%

Table 2: The table shows the characteristics of the 402 participants in the study in relation to their sex and age.

**Table 3**

## Test of Preferences: Prisons

	Variable	Variable level	Mean (SE)	Standard deviation (SE)
Legislative provisions	Drug type (reference: hashish)	Amphetamine	1.1 (0.28)***	0.24 (0.40)
		Heroin	1.5 (0.28)***	-0.24 (0.32)
	Quantity (reference: larger amount)	Minor amount	-0.84 (0.22)***	0.76 (0.24)***
	Past misconducts (reference: first time)	Second time	0.68 (0.37)*	0.17 (0.30)
		Third time	1.20 (0.36)***	0.79 (0.35)**
		Fifth time	1.63 (0.38)***	1.30 (0.30)***
	Sales/own consumption (reference: more lumps/packages)	A lump/package	-0.74 (0.22)***	-0.77 (0.22)***
Client-related concerns	Severity of drug use (reference: dependent)	Recreational	-0.03 (0.19)	0.34 (0.23)
	Social problems/no social problems (reference: substantial social problems)	No significant social problems	0.35 (0.20)*	0.64 (0.30)**
Client-demeanour	The inmates' attitude (reference: upset and testy)	Repentant and tearful	-0.58 (0.19)***	-0.80 (0.25)***
	Admitting/not admitting (reference: admitting)	Not admitting	-0.07 (0.21)	0.06 (0.30)
	Asc_a <sup>a</sup> (mean)		0.21 (0.11)**	
	Model fit	LL (0)	-894.56	
		LL (model)	-667.23	
		Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.254	
		n (observations)	2,590	
		N (respondents)	216	
***p < .01; **p < .05; *p<0.1				
a = the estimated alternative-specific constant				
N.B. Attribute levels with a positive sign indicate that the respondent wants to punish these concerns harder relative to the reference, whereas a negative sign indicates that the respondent wants to punish the concern less hard relative to the reference. Note also that a numerically high parameter means that these attributes are credited great importance, while a numerically low parameter means that they are of less importance to the respondent.				

**Table 4**

## Test of Preferences: Mobile police squads

	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Variable level</b>	<b>Mean (SE)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (SE)</b>
Legislative provisions	Drug type (reference: hashish)	Amphetamine	0.70 (0.69)***	1.58 (0.65)*
		Heroin	1.23 (0.28)***	0.97 (0.77)
	Quantity (reference: larger amount)	Minor amount	-1.17 (0.22)**	-0.90 (0.60)
	Past misconducts (reference: first time)	Second time	0.38 (0.82)*	0.37 (0.61)
		Third time	0.93 (0.79)**	0.36 (0.55)**
		Fifth time	1.60 (0.94)***	1.40 (0.98)***
	Sales/own consumption (reference: more lumps/packages)	A lump/package	-0.95 (0.62)**	-0.65 (0.261)***
Client-related concerns	Severity of drug use (reference: dependent)	Recreational	0.22 (0.40)	0.53 (0.54)
	Social problems/no social problems (reference: substantial social problems)	No significant social problems	1.07 (0.50)*	0.13 (0.78)**
Client-demeanour	The inmates' attitude (reference: upset and testy)	Repentant and tearful	-1.17 (0.51)**	-0.97 (0.58)*
	Admitting/not admitting (reference: admitting)	Not admitting	0.42 (0.21)	0.87 (0.42)*
	Asc_a <sup>a</sup> (mean)		0.70 (0.27)**	
	Model fit	LL (0)	-377.64	
		LL (model)	-236.23	
		Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.374	
		n (observations)	1,104	
		N (respondents)	92	
***p < .01; **p < .05; *p<0.1				
a = the estimated alternative-specific constant				
N.B. Attribute levels with a positive sign indicate that the respondent wants to punish these concerns harder relative to the reference, whereas a negative sign indicates that the respondent wants to punish the concern less hard relative to the reference. Note also that a numerically high parameter means that these attributes are credited great importance, while a numerically low parameter means that they are of less importance to the respondent.				

**Table 5**

## Test of Preferences: Drop-in centres

	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Variable level</b>	<b>Mean (SE)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (SE)</b>
Legislative provisions	Drug type (reference: hashish)	Amphetamine	2.06 (0.80)***	1.71 (0.79)*
		Heroin	2.47 (0.70)***	1.38 (0.61)
	Quantity (reference: larger amount)	Minor amount	-1.00 (0.22)**	1.94 (0.63)***
	Past misconducts (reference: first time)	Second time	1.00 (0.84)	0.10 (1.15)
		Third time	2.00 (0.86)*	1.78 (0.81)*
Fifth time		3.40 (1.17)**	3.26 (0.78)***	
Sales/own consumption (reference: more lumps/packages)	A lump/package	-0.23 (0.67)***	1.85 (0.70)**	
Client-related concerns	Severity of drug use (reference: dependent)	Recreational	0.13 (0.41)	-0.66 (0.34)
	Social problems/no social problems (reference: substantial social problems)	No significant social problems	1.29 (0.50)*	1.30 (0.67)*
Client-demeanour	The inmates' attitude (reference: upset and testy)	Repentant and tearful	-1.79 (0.56)**	-1.35(0.52)*
	Admitting/not admitting (reference: admitting)	Not admitting	0.76 (0.47)	1.07 (0.51)*
	Asc_a <sup>a</sup> (mean)		0.68 (0.32)*	
	Model fit	LL (0)	-384.51	
		LL (model)	-308.65	
		Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.197	
		n (observations)	1,126	
		N (respondents)	94	

\*\*\*p < .01; \*\*p < .05; \*p<0.1  
a = the estimated alternative-specific constant  
N.B. Attribute levels with a positive sign indicate that the respondent wants to punish these concerns harder relative to the reference, whereas a negative sign indicates that the respondent wants to punish the concern less hard relative to the reference. Note also that a numerically high parameter means that these attributes are credited great importance, while a numerically low parameter means that they are of less importance to the respondent.