

DIFFERENCES IN ARREST PATERNS BASED ON OFFICER ORIENTATION  
PREFERENCE

By

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School  
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This study attempts to shed light on the argument which exists in previous literature questioning whether the community policing orientation leads officers to be guided more by extralegal factors with regard to arrest decisions. Officers who hold positive attitudes toward community policing were found to arrest citizens less frequently than officers not favoring the approach. Furthermore, the arrest decisions of officers favoring community policing were found to not be predicted using extralegal factors such as race, gender, apparent age, or apparent socioeconomic status of the suspect. For officers holding negative opinions toward community policing, race and apparent socioeconomic status of the citizen were significant predictors of a decision to arrest. Limitations and implications are discussed

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to illustrate whether or not differences exist in the arrest patterns of police officers who favor a “community policing” orientation from those who do not. The focus of the research is on police officer demeanor and the unit of study is officer arrests. The question at hand has to deal with predicting which type of officer (officers who favor community policing vs. those who do not) is likely to have more arrests in a given time, and then to look at whether or not certain citizen-level characteristics are more prevalent among those individuals arrested by one type of officer or the other. Since all officers in the sample work in a community policing environment, this study will not compare traditional officers with community policing officers. It will, however, look at the effects of officer attitudes and values on behavior, comparing those officers who favor community policing with those who do not, even though all officers work for the same department which, at the time of data collection, had implemented the community policing approach.

This project is important because it may help to show if officers favoring community policing are more, or less, likely to arrest certain types of individuals (based on basic demographic characteristics). This research will not attempt to illustrate a cause/effect relationship between officer orientation preference and arrest patterns, only to show whether or not the two are related. If the relationship is shown to be strong, then perhaps it would lead to policy consideration for re-evaluating the type of orientation philosophy which police departments prescribe to.

This study will look at the demographic characteristics of those arrested and try to determine if certain of those characteristics are more predictable in the arrests of one type of officer orientation preference or the other. Demographic characteristics will include factors such as age, gender, apparent socio-economic status (SES), and most importantly, race. The study will attempt to show whether or not officers who favor a certain orientation are more likely to arrest, and then whether or not certain types of individuals (based on demographic characteristics) are the target of those arrests.

This research is designed to examine police officer arrest patterns at the local level. The project will use data collected from the Richmond Study (collected by Mastrofski et al., 1995), and will continue to explore issues related to a police officer's decision to arrest in an encounter. Much of the prior demeanor research (see Klinger, 1994; Lundman, 1994; Worden and Shepard, 1996) has been focused on suspect demeanor without taking into consideration the role of officer demeanor or the organizational philosophy of the police department. This analysis will examine the extent to which suspect race remains a significant predictor of arrest and whether this phenomena occurs more often with respect to a certain officer orientation preference.

Most previous research has treated police officer behavior as the dependent variable; this study will instead examine the influence of the police officers' values on their behavior. The dependent variable will be whether or not an arrest was made. Independent variables will include demographic characteristics of the suspect, seriousness of the crime, as well as whether or not the officer favored a community policing orientation or not.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research with respect to attitudes and demeanor in the realm of police-citizen encounters has focused primarily on the suspect. Other research has developed to include the importance of considering the demeanor and status of the victim or complainant in regard to arrest decisions. While research on the relationship between suspect demeanor and arrest has been extensive, there has been limited research conducted on the effect that police officer orientation has on arrest patterns. It has been noted that the number of studies that stress individual officer characteristics has decreased since the 1980's, and that the effects of officer gender, years of experience, and officer attitudes remain unresolved (Riksheim and Chermak, 1993). Mastrofski and colleagues point out that the accumulated evidence on the correlation between officers' traits and their behavior is rather small (Mastrofski et al., 1996). These researchers further state that "officers who have the will and skill to do community policing will behave differently and will outperform those who do not, especially in matters requiring the cooperation and compliance of the public" (Mastrofski et al., 1996:280). These statements are supported by several other researchers as well (Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, 1991; Lurigio and Rosenbaum, 1994; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993; Sparrow, Moore, and Kennedy, 1990; Wycoff and Skogan, 1994).

### **Orientation Studies**

There are two main orientations that have been examined in previous research. The first is the traditional officer orientation and the other is that of community policing.

Traditional policing is a strategic focus on the “control of crime and the suppression of serious crimes or the zero tolerance perspective that focuses on reducing social disorder to reduce crime” (Ford et al., 2003:160). According to Ford and colleagues, “community policing is the delivery of police services through a customer-focused approach, using partnerships to maximize community resources in a problem-solving format to prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime, apprehend those involved in criminal activity” as well as improve the quality of life in that community (Ford et al., 2003:160). William Pelfrey, Jr. argued that community policing is more of a set of distinct initiatives and implementations rather than a shift in philosophy (Pelfrey, 2003: 3; Moore, 1992). Pelfrey has argued that the community policing orientation has been the first significant role shift in the past 60 years for American policing. Community policing involves a more proactive style of policing rather than the traditional reactive mode. He found that community policing officers operate in many of the same situations as traditional officers so the expansion of their role to include community policing functions has resulted in some role conflict for these officers.

Pelfrey defined the major premise of community policing to be assigning officers “to positions where they can exercise autonomy and creativity in resolving problems, their job satisfaction increases, and performance increases occur” (Pelfrey, 2003:7). Ford and colleagues state that “at the individual officer level, the move to community policing has implications for officers’ greater autonomy in decision making, increasing feedback on community issues, and greater task identity” (Ford et al., 2003:160). These officers are encouraged to engage in proactive approaches to problem solving and to foster community relations. Community policing officers, in addition to answering calls, work

closer with the public to identify crime and public order problems, and to develop specific initiatives to resolve those problems. This approach is intended to foster relations between the public and the police.

Pelfrey examined whether or not differences in style, tactics, and performance existed between officers in community policing roles and those in reactive traditional policing assignments (Pelfrey, 2003). He found that higher levels of job satisfaction relate to officers' engaging in a variety of task and endorsing innovative styles of policing. The results showed that those officers assigned to community policing roles utilized more problem solving and felt a greater positive impact on their beat and the community. Motorized patrol officers were found to be more likely to engage in reactive patrol. Pelfrey found that motorized traditional patrol officers endorsed community policing concepts at significantly lower levels, which he argued suggested disapproval or resistance rather than an ambivalent status (Pelfrey, 2003).

Pelfrey points out that "it now appears that a set of foundational beliefs exist regarding traditional policing and are shared regardless of assignment", and that community policing "simply adds a layer of beliefs, perceptions, and activities on top of the officers' standard set of ideas and functions" (Pelfrey, 2003:29). Study results showed that assignment to community policing roles was related to higher levels of job satisfaction than those reported by traditional officers. Pelfrey concluded that officers assigned to community policing positions are increasingly likely to be more satisfied, motivated, and productive, and thus more efficient.

Community policing involves seeking alternatives to arrest and formal sanctions when they are thought to be more effective in solving situations, which is believed to

create a more effective type of crime control (Mastrofski et al., 1996). Mastrofski and his colleagues state that “officers embracing community policing are assumed to be more familiar with the people they police, sensitive in diagnosing situations, and skillful in selecting the best approach” (Mastrofski et al., 1996:280). In one study looking at compliance of citizens to officer requests and demands, Mastrofski and his colleagues found that the officer’s favoring the community policing orientation would more likely use a friendly, nonthreatening approach which was found significantly more likely to elicit a compliant response. In an earlier study, Mastrofski argued that community policing sets the stage for officers to become more selective in making arrests and that arrest decisions will be influenced more by extralegal considerations and less by legal ones (Mastrofski, Worden, and Snipes, 1995). The philosophy of community policing, according to these researchers, stresses the building of the community, especially with regard to strengthening the mutual trust and support between police and citizens, and the officer following the preferences of the community in regard to how to handle situations.

Critics of this orientation have pointed out that officers paying more attention to extralegal factors could create a situation where the officers’ own biases will be more evident in their behavior. The weakening of the influence of legal factors, coupled with the increased attention to extralegal ones, may mean that officer discretion is governed more by that officer’s own particular values and beliefs, which may be manifested in biases against those citizens in lower status groups (Mastrofski et al., 1995; Manning, 1988; Mastrofski, 1988). However, another extralegal consideration may be the officers’ attitude towards the philosophy of community policing and its objectives (Mastrofski et al., 1995). In a jurisdiction where the police department favors a community building or

problem solving approach, officers should be less inclined to arrest than in a department that favors an aggressive order where arrests indicate that all offenses be taken seriously and treated formally (Mastrofski et al., 1995). This hypothesis was supported in a study by Mastrofski and colleagues (1995) when they found that the more positive an officer was to a community policing orientation, the less likely is an arrest. Another study concluded that the morality of the situation, and the officers' desire to respond to that, dictate the actions officers take when ending an encounter (Bayley, 1986). Prior research has also found that police officers "show more attitude-behavior consistency in their orientation to the use of force (passion) than philosophical perspective" (Snipes and Mastrofski, 1990:289). This goes against earlier research that found police officer attitudes to be a poor or weak predictor of behavior (Walker, 1993; Worden, 1989; Smith and Klein, 1983).

### **Commitment Studies**

Another study focused on the differences between being committed to the police organization as a whole and being committed to a strategic approach to policing (using community police as the approach). This study looked at the impact of these two various types of commitment and the impact each had on job behaviors as well as job satisfaction. The researchers argued that the attitudes and behaviors of the officers reflect how committed the officers were to the police agency as a whole (Ford et al., 2003). They sought to distinguish between level of commitment to the organization and level of commitment to the new strategic approach of the agency (community policing). The results of the study did show that the two types of commitment are indeed distinct. The researchers found that "when job behavior was the dependent variable, strategy commitment had a significant effect on behavior ... but organizational commitment did

not” and that “when satisfaction was regressed onto strategy commitment and organizational commitment, strategy commitment had a nonsignificant effect on job satisfaction ... while organizational commitment had a significant effect” (Ford et al., 2003:173).

Therefore, it appears from this study that job satisfaction is more related to commitment to the agency itself, while job behavior is related to commitment to the approach being examined (community policing in this case). This study shows that an officer’s commitment to the organization does not necessarily equate to that officer following the behaviors dictated by a new strategic approach, such as community policing. In order for the behaviors of the officers to follow a new strategic approach, they must also be committed to that approach, not just to the organization itself.

### **Contextual Studies**

Douglas Smith (1986) conducted research on whether or not the context of the encounter had an effect on officer decisions and behaviors. This study specifically looked at the context of 60 neighborhoods and wanted to investigate if police responded differently to similar situations in different types of neighborhoods, and to find if arrest decisions are influenced by certain neighborhood factors after controlling for characteristics of specific individual police-citizen encounters. Smith found that the racial composition of the neighborhood did influence certain police actions. The bivariate results indicate that “police are more apt to initiate investigative actions, such as suspicious person stops, in racially heterogeneous neighborhoods and that police are more likely to offer assistance to residents in neighborhoods with a larger share of elderly residents” (Smith, 1986:324).

The results also suggested that the lower the socioeconomic status of a neighborhood, the greater the probability of an encounter culminating in an arrest. The results indicated that socioeconomic status of the community was the strongest factor affecting the probability of arrest across the 60 neighborhoods. Smith found that as the status of the neighborhood increases, the probability of arrest decreases, independent of offense type, characteristics of the suspect, and demeanor of the complainants (Smith, 1986). Smith noted that this finding was difficult to interpret since it may be the case that police act in a more legalistic fashion in lower-status neighborhoods, or that more offenses that are likely to result in arrest occur in those neighborhoods. Smith reported that no other neighborhood characteristic had a significant effect on arrest decisions in the study.

Racial heterogeneity was found to influence the use of coercive authority by the officers in that police use more force in higher-crime areas and in lower-status neighborhoods (Smith, 1986). The same increased likelihood for the use or threat of force was evidenced in primarily black or racially mixed neighborhoods. Contrary to other existing research (see Rubenstein, 1973) that police act more aggressively toward blacks encountered in white neighborhoods, Smith's analysis found that police are more likely to exercise force toward black offenders in primarily black neighborhoods.

The probability that an officer filed an official report after an encounter did not however correlate strongly at the neighborhood level with any of the measured characteristics, according to Smith. The study concluded that police do act differently in different neighborhoods, depending on certain characteristics of each context. Smith noted that "police assessments of individual offenders may reflect the officer's

perceptions of the ‘kind of people’ who live in a particular neighborhood” (Smith, 1986:338).

### **Situational and Attitudinal Studies**

Worden (1989) examined the extent to which both situational and attitudinal variables impact police behavior. He stated that “attitudinal explanations hold that officers develop distinctive ‘styles’ of performing their duties, and that the development of their behavioral styles is shaped by their attitudes and values” (Worden, 1989:668). The findings of this study indicated that attitudinal variables did not account for much of the variation in officers’ behavior, which Worden points out is consistent with a large amount of social-psychological research on the relation of attitudes to behavior. Worden explains the continued interest in attitudinal explanations arguing that attitudinal explanations seem commonsensical even in the absence of strong empirical evidence, due to the intuitive link between attitudes and behavior. Worden argues that the theoretical problem lies in identifying officers’ decision premises since different officers can subscribe to different meanings of the same event. Worden stresses that each officer “extracts some meaning” from a limited number of cues, “but the particular cues from which officers focus and the meanings that they derive from them vary from officer to officer with...little or no correspondence to their attitudes (except perhaps with respect to the arrest decision)” (Worden, 1989:673-4).

Worden examined six attitudes that could be expected to influence the behavior of an officer and found weak effects of most of the six, some having no effect at all, and only two with significant effects which were small in magnitude (Worden, 1989). Overall, Worden found that less than 10 percent of the variation in traffic stops can be accounted for using situational and attitudinal variables. Worden also reported that

attitudes had little influence on aggressiveness, the number of suspicion stops made, end result of the action made using license violations as a baseline, and little impact on officer behavior in disputes. Worden concluded that even though “officers might individually adopt distinctive styles of performing their jobs that manifest themselves in behavioral patterns across similar sorts of situations, these styles bear little relationship to their occupational attitudes,” and that the “failure of attitudinal variables to account for a significant proportion of the variation in officer’ behavior is striking” (Worden, 1989:701-2).

One study (Friedrich, 1980) examining police attitudes and excessive force found that job satisfaction had no influence on use of force, but the officers’ racial attitudes did have an effect. In addition, Friedrich found that the more prejudiced a white officer, the more force that officer used against African Americans. A summary of the literature on the effects of suspect demographic characteristics will not be undertaken here (see Riksheim and Chermak, 1993 for review); the Friedrich study remains one of the only tests of police attitudes as they interact with suspect race.

### **Organizational Studies**

There has been another group of studies looking at the discretionary responses of police officers with respect to citizen encounters. This research was conducted mainly by Douglas Smith. Unlike other research examined, Smith found that police responsiveness was more related to the victim of the crime rather than the offender (Smith, Visher and Davidson, 1984). These scholars looked at several aspects not examined in detail before. They argued that no consensus existed among scholars as to why blacks are more likely to be arrested than whites (Smith et al., 1984). One variable added in this study was the degree of bureaucratization of the police agencies themselves. This was included based

on earlier findings by Hepburn who argued that many cases in a major mid-western city in 1974 were not being prosecuted, indicating that harassment may have been the purpose of the arrests, rather than law enforcement (Smith et al., 1984). These earlier studies also found that racial bias was inversely related to offense severity, independent of both sex and age.

Early studies by Wilson argued that police agencies differed in that in some agencies distributive justice occurs, while others apply the law more uniformly (Wilson, 1968). Douglas Smith focused on the organizational context of arrest decisions, anticipating that based on the type of police agency which handles the problem; certain encounter level characteristics may have different affects on arrest decisions (Smith, 1984). Smith identified four types of police agencies according to levels of bureaucracy and professionalism, looking at 21 individual departments in this study. He labeled nonprofessional agencies with low bureaucracies as fraternal and nonprofessional highly bureaucratic agencies as militaristic (Smith, 1984). The other two types of agencies were service agencies and legalistic agencies which were professional agencies that varied in levels of bureaucratization.

Smith found that administrators of different departments do differ in their ideas about what the department should be doing. Smith's data show that professional, nonbureaucratic agencies are predominately concerned with service to the community, while bureaucratic, non-professional agencies emphasize law enforcement (Smith, 1984). Smith concluded from this data that different mixes of professionalism and levels of bureaucratization can be a major indicator of different operational styles utilized by a department (Smith, 1984). Ford and colleagues found that the more upper management

was seen as committed to the community-policing philosophy, the more committed the officers were to the strategy. This apparent commitment by top management increased the likelihood the officers would behave in ways consistent to community policing goals (Ford et al., 2003).

Smith analyzed whether or not similar or different criteria were used in arrest decisions by officers in departments which ascribed to different police role orientations (Smith, 1984). If officers in departments with different orientations do indeed base arrest decisions on different factors, then, Smith points out, “no single model of arrest decisions is generalizable to arrest practices in all police departments” and “would imply that models of arrest decisions are conditional on the organizational context in which police-suspect encounters occur” (Smith, 1984:27).

The analysis did show differences between the four types of departments as Smith had classified them. He found that in legalistic departments, infractions of youth offenders are treated more formally, whereas similar infractions were handled without resorting to the legal system in other types of departments. In fraternal, service, and legalistic agencies, the probability of arrest increases with antagonistic suspects, while this type of suspect is not significantly more likely to be arrested in militaristic agencies. In fraternal and service oriented agencies, arrests are more likely to occur if complainants wanted an arrest made, but the complainants’ requests were not as likely to be followed if the request was to not arrest (Smith, 1984).

The most important finding, according to Smith, was “the discovery that arrest decisions in different types of police agencies are explained by different constellations of variables” and that “different styles of control reflect the collective attitudes of

organizational members toward the administration of justice” (Smith, 1984:33). Smith concluded that the way in which control was exercised by members of an agency reflects the dominant values within the police organization.

In another study, Smith and colleagues used the idea of differing police agencies, now hypothesizing that structural characteristics of the organization (bureaucratization and professionalism) may indicate the operational philosophy which will guide the discretionary decision-making of the agency (Smith, Visher, and Davidson, 1984:237). They argue that increased bureaucratization should result in more even and equal application of the law toward all citizens. They further argued that most previous research had been conducted examining large urban police departments, which they presumed to be more bureaucratized than ones existing in small-town rural areas. This would mean that previous research actually underestimated the nation-wide amount of racial discrimination occurring in police discretionary encounters. They found in this study, however, that when poverty level of the neighborhood and bureaucratization of the police agency are included in analysis, the race effect is no longer significant. In this model, bureaucratization did not affect arrest decisions, and as the poverty level of the neighborhood increases, police are more likely to arrest (Smith et al., 1984). They concluded that different styles of policing are more related to the socio-economic contexts where the encounters occur. These findings were for encounters between officer and citizen, without a complainant. However, in encounters with both complainants and suspects, suspect race had no effect on the probability of arrest, but victim race was significant. Police were more likely to arrest the suspect when there was a white victim. These scholars concluded that “the systematic denial of legal protection to black victims

appears to be a more likely form of racially motivated police discrimination than more frequent arrests of black offenders” (Smith et al., 1984:249).

Further research by Smith and Klein examined once more neighborhood context and organizational characteristics of police agencies. Once again operating from the Wilson (1968) argument that officers in more professional, more bureaucratic police agencies take a legalistic view of their role and officers in a less professional, less bureaucratic agencies operate a more “conciliatory posture” toward the public, Smith and Klein hypothesized that the more bureaucratic *and* more professional a police department becomes, the greater the probability of arrest in individual police-citizen encounters (Smith and Klein, 1984). These researchers found that there was an interaction effect and that neither of these (professionalism nor bureaucratization) independently influenced the likelihood of arrest. They concluded that decisions to arrest were influenced by situational factors, poverty levels of the neighborhoods, and properties of police agencies.

### **Style of Control Studies**

Smith has cautioned that the orientations police officers bring to encounters and disputes should not be overlooked and that the discretion officers exercise is in part structured by those officers’ beliefs and values. Smith and Klein argue that police officers enter situations with certain predispositions which influence their style of control in these encounters. The authors propose that officers perceive some citizens as more credible than others and regard certain types of encounters as best resolved by a particular style of control. In a later study on police response to violent disputes, Smith wrote that police response to many problems “is not, nor can be, strictly mandated by law, but reflects the officer’s assessment of what the situation deserves” and that in the “minds of police some offenders deserve legal sanction, others do not” (Smith, 1987: 768). Smith concluded that

with regard to decisions to arrest, law alone is often a poor predictor of police behavior. Officers face conflicting demands to which they must be sensitive towards, such as the organizations to which they belong, the communities in which they operate, and the individuals which they encounter, and these demands influence the officers' discretionary decision-making (Smith, 1987).

In this study, Smith outlined three styles of response used by officers. Penal style includes arrest and is based on assessing legal blame, operating under the assumption that offenders deserve punishment. Conciliatory style sees conflicts as temporary problems in a social relationship and considers the relationship between the disputing parties, with the goal to reestablish harmony and to mediate the situation, rather than making an arrest. The third style, avoidance, is used when police simply separate the parties involved. This style utilizes the least involvement by police since they neither arrest nor mediate. Smith hypothesized that nonpenal response probability varies inversely with the seriousness of the problem the officer is facing, and that a penal response may be utilized more often against black citizens and those living in poor neighborhoods because these individuals may hold greater hostility toward the police, so will less likely be handled in a conciliatory style.

He found police to be equally likely to utilize mediation in conflicts between whites and non-whites, but that the race of the suspect does influence the use of separation or arrest as strategies. If the two combatants are white, police are much more likely to arrest than in encounters where the combatants are nonwhite. Violence between nonwhite combatants is more likely to be handled by simply separating the disputants.

Also influencing style decision was whether or not police have had previous contact with the combatants. Smith found that when officers have had previous contact with the citizens, the officer was half as likely to mediate the conflict and twice as likely to make an arrest as in encounters which no prior contact had been made (Smith, 1987). Smith thus concluded that police adopt a more conciliatory style when they have had no previous contact and a more penal style when they have had previous contact with the combatants. The relationship between the disputants did not influence decision-making in the encounters in this study. This study was an advance from previous work in that it looked at police encounters of violent disputes and included three styles of control (rather than arrest and non-arrest outcomes) and found that several extralegal variables do indeed influence officer decision-making in these types of encounters.

## CHAPTER 3 CURRENT FOCUS

Past research has been limited in its focus on the attitudes and orientations of the individual officer (as opposed to the suspect) as well as limited in its focus on the influence of the orientation fostered by the police agency to which the officer belongs. Previous studies have been mixed on whether or not officer demeanor, attitudes, and orientation to policing have an influence on behavior or arrest patterns. One study, conducted by Friedrich (1980), is the only empirical test of the interaction of police attitudes as they interact with the race of the suspect. Past research has also differed on the issue of the community policing approach to law enforcement and its effects on officer decision to arrest. Some research, as stated above, has found that this orientation fosters alternative methods of control which lead to less arrests or formal sanctions. Other researchers feel as though a community policing approach will give more discretion to officers, leading to more arrests based on the officers' attitudes, beliefs, and biases. Some scholars raise concern over the "degree to which attitudes, values, and beliefs of individual officers structure their discretionary choices" (Smith and Klein, 1984: 480).

This study examines if individuals arrested by officers favoring one type of orientation (community policing) differ significantly (based on demographic characteristics) from individuals arrested by officers not favoring this approach. Demographic characteristics (such as apparent age, race, and apparent income level) are used because these factors are quickly observed and may prompt existing stereotypes held by individual officers. This data may help to show whether or not the added

discretion afforded by the community policing approach leads to more arrests based on officers' negative biases, or to less arrests by these officers giving alternative sanctions to the community members they supposedly have become more familiar with.

Douglas Smith has stated that "increasing bureaucratization of social control agencies results in greater distance between police and the policed" and that "this social separation may be most acute between the police and marginal groups (e.g., blacks and the poor), possibly introducing biases in the social control process toward minorities and the disadvantaged" (Smith, 1984:34). Pelfrey argued for conducting research which contrasts community policing officers with motorized patrol officers in order to raise significant issues of organizational culture and job attachment as a function of the work environment (Pelfrey, 2003). Worden has concluded that expectations of superiors and of the work group place situational pressures on officers that may weaken attitude-behavior relationships (Worden, 1989). Worden further argued for the incorporation of organizational forces and their impact on officers' decisions in any theory of police behavior.

This study will further develop the extent to which officers' individual attitudes and values do indeed affect the discretionary choices those officers make in police-citizen encounters. It will tap into the effect of the influence of the police agency's orientation on arrest patterns, examining whether or not results found by Smith and Pelfrey hold for this sample. This study will build on the previous research conducted by Smith and Mastrofski by illuminating any differences which may exist between groups of individuals that are being arrested more frequently from those who are not

## CHAPTER 4 HYPOTHESES

Mastrofski has found that officers favoring a community policing approach arrest less often than those officers who do not ascribe to the orientation (Mastrofski et al., 1992). This study explores Mastrofski's finding with an added emphasis on both suspect gender and race. Mastrofski's finding that officers favoring community policing arrest less often will be expanded to look at whether or not all groups of individuals are afforded that luxury. Particular interest will be paid to minority citizens as well as an added emphasis on gender and age differences between suspects arrested by officers favoring the community policing orientation and suspects arrested by officers who do not. This research hypothesizes that those officers favoring a community policing approach arrest individuals with certain demographic characteristics (particularly minority suspects) less often than officers who have a negative view of the community policing orientation. It is expected that community policing advocates will not have as high a percentage of minority citizen arrests as other officers. It is believed that the community policing approach will enable officers to familiarize themselves with the community and therefore be less likely to give formal sanctions and be less likely to arrest minority members or citizens appearing to be of low socioeconomic status (SES). Community policing should foster a more mediating, conciliatory style of policing (if operating from Smith's 1987 three styles of control perspective) when compared to traditional officers.

It is hypothesized that favoring:

- Community policing -> less likely to arrest
- Community policing -> less likely to arrest minority individuals
- Community policing -> less likely to arrest citizens appearing to be of low SES
- Community policing -> less likely to arrest juvenile citizens
- Community policing -> less likely to arrest female citizens
- All officers -> more likely to arrest serious offenses than non-serious

## CHAPTER 5 DATA SAMPLE

The data were taken from the Impact of Community Policing at the Street Level: An Observational Study in Richmond Virginia conducted by Mastrofski et al. in 1992 (from ICPSR 2612 computer file released in 2002). The data were collected by a team of eight researchers observing police officers in the patrol division during the spring and summer of 1992 in Richmond Virginia. The police department was at that time in its third year of a five-year plan to officially implement a community policing orientation. The researchers observed a total of 120 officers during 125 observation sessions. All of the officers observed worked in the community policing environment implemented by the Richmond department; however, they differed in their support for that orientation.

Part 1 of the collection is essential because it provides the primary officer's and secondary officer's sex, race, years of experience, hours of community policing training, and general orientation to community policing. The data of Part 3 of this collection, Encounter Data, describe 1,098 encounters with citizens during ridealongs. An encounter was officially defined as a communication between the officer and citizens over a minute long, involving more than three verbal exchanges, or involving significant physical contact between the officer and a citizen. Part 4, Citizen Data, provides demographic characteristics and other data relevant to each citizen engaged by the officers, including appearance of low income, or drug/alcohol abuse.

This project will be using Mastrofski's Part 5, Arrest Data, which provides information on encounters that occurred in which a citizen was suspected of some crime

(n= 451) and combines Parts 1, 3, and 4. Important variables from Part 5 include the extent to which each officer is in favor of the community policing orientation as well as suspect race, gender, and age. Other variables include whether or not other officers or bystanders were present, if the officer filed/intended to file a report, if the officer engaged in problem solving, and factors that influenced the officer's actions. Variables in Part 5 "record the officer's orientation toward community policing; if the suspect was arrested or cited; if the offense was serious or drug-related; amount of evidence; if the victim requested that the suspect be arrested" as well as demographic characteristics of the victim and the suspect, and whether or not the officer knew the suspect "adversarially" (ICPSR 2612).

## CHAPTER 6 VARIABLES

This project will examine how officer orientation toward community policing (cporient), suspect race (susrace), suspect gender (susgender), seriousness of the offense (serious), apparent age of the suspect (juvenile), and apparent income level of the suspect (suspoor) predict the dependent variable of whether or not the officer arrests the suspect (arrest). Frequencies of these variables are shown in Table 1.

Independent Variables: The first independent variable measures officer regard for community policing. This variable is measured on a scale ranging from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive) with 3 indicating a neutral stance and 2 and 4 indicating somewhat negative and somewhat positive. It is hypothesized that the more positive an officer is toward the community policing orientation, the less likely that officer will make an arrest. The second independent variable is race of suspect. It is measured as 0 (white) and 1 (minority). Officers who favor community policing are hypothesized to arrest minorities with a lower frequency than officers favoring a traditional approach. Thirdly, suspect gender is coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female). It is expected that being female will also decrease arrest probability. The fourth independent variable measures the seriousness of the offense in question. It is coded as 0 (no) and 1 (yes), with the prediction that more serious offenses will more likely lead to arrest. In order to stay consistent with the Richmond study by Mastrofski, offenses will be classified as serious if they involve violence against persons or various forms of theft, such as burglary and car theft. Next, the age of the suspect is examined using a variable indicating whether or not the suspect

is a juvenile or not. It is coded as 0 (no) and 1 (yes). This study predicts that this variable will decrease arrest, with juvenile suspects (defined by Mastrofski as being under 19) being arrested less often. The last independent variable indicates the officer's assessment of the suspect's apparent income. This variable is coded as 0 (no), indicating that the officer believes the suspect is not of low income, and 1 (yes), indicating that the officer perceives the suspect to be poor. It is expected that this variable will increase arrest for officers favoring a traditional approach, meaning that apparently poor suspects will more likely be arrested. Officers favoring community policing are expected to be less likely to arrest apparently poor suspects.

Table 6-1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Did Officer Arrest Suspect	451	0	1	.10	.303
Officer Orientation Toward Community Policing	451	1	5	3.50	1.248
Race of Suspect	451	0	1	.82	.382
Suspect Gender	451	0	1	.25	.435
Seriousness of Offense	451	0	1	.21	.405
Is Suspect Juvenile	451	0	1	.18	.388
Is Suspect Apparently Low Income	451	0	1	.55	.498
Valid N (listwise)	451				

## CHAPTER 7 ANALYSIS

This study will utilize logistic regression to examine the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable of arrest. This method will be used because of the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable. It will also serve to illustrate the relative effect each variable has on the dependent variable, as well as direction and strength of each effect. Logistic regression will show the directional effect of each independent variable, indicating whether or not each one increases or decreases arrest. First a full sample model will show the predictive power of each independent variable on the dependent variable of arrest.

Interaction effects will then be analyzed by splitting the full sample into two groups. One group will consist of officers who favor community policing, and the other group will be constructed of officers who do not. The new orientation variable includes officers who were classified as somewhat positive and very positive toward community policing in the “favor community policing” category. Officers who were classified as very negative, somewhat negative, and neutral are grouped into the “negative towards community policing category”. The split results in 192 negative towards community policing (42.6%), and 259 positive toward this approach (57.4%). The effects of the other independent variables on the dependent for each of the split groups will then be analyzed.

## CHAPTER 8 RESULTS

First, logistic regression was run on the full sample model. The results of the full sample model show the covariates of officer orientation to community policing, seriousness of the offense and apparent income level of the suspect are significant predictors ( $p < .05$  level) of the dependent variable. Results for the full model can be seen in Table 2. Race, gender and apparent age of the suspect are not significant predictors in this model. This step in the analysis helps to confirm the hypothesis that officer preference for an orientation toward policing is a significant predictor of officer action to arrest, and thus warrants further attention. The analysis shows a negative relationship indicating that for officers who do not favor community policing, arrest is more likely. Consistent with much previous research, the seriousness of the offense is also significant with regard to decision to arrest. Also, consistent with previous suspect demeanor research (see Klinger, 1994; Lundman, 1994; Worden and Shepard, 1996) whether or not the suspect appears to be of low SES is significant (apparently poor more likely to be arrested).

Next, the split model was analyzed. Crosstabs of the breakdown of officers into the two groups with the dependent arrest variable are shown in Table 3 (Chi-square is significant at .000). The breakdown shows that officers who have a negative attitude toward the community policing orientation do indeed arrest at a higher rate than officers who favor the approach, consistent with hypothesis 1. This finding warrants the further

investigation into the differences between officers who favor one orientation from those who do not.

Table 8-1 Dependent Variable=Arrest  
Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp (B)
Orientation	-.453	.129	12.321	1	.000	.636
Seriousness	1.734	.364	22.715	1	.000	5.662
Suspect gender	-.641	.416	2.381	1	.123	.527
Suspect race	-.576	.394	2.142	1	.143	.562
Suspect poor	.854	.365	5.469	1	.019	2.348
Suspect juvenile	.347	.429	.654	1	.419	1.415
constant	-1.198	.570	4.427	1	.035	.302

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: CPORIENT, SERIOUS, SUSSEX, SUSRACE, SUSPOOR, JUVENILE.

Table 8-2 Did officer arrest or cite suspect\* officer favors community policing  
crosstabulation

Count

		officer favors community policing		Total
		negative	positive	
DID OFFICER ARREST OR CITE SUSPECT	No	159	246	405
	Yes	33	13	46
Total		192	259	451

First the group of officers who favor the community orientation approach were analyzed. The independent variables of seriousness of the offense, suspect race, gender, apparent income level, and apparent age were included, once again, and were regressed on the dependent variable of arrest. The results of this analysis indicate that none of these predictors are significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The finding that seriousness of the offense is not significant in this model goes against what the author would predict, as well as much of the previous literature in this area. Seriousness of offense is a legal factor which usually has been found to predict whether or not an arrest is made and was not

hypothesized to be irrelevant for officers favoring community policing. These officers were predicted to differ from officers favoring a traditional approach according to extralegal factors. The regression results for this group can be seen in Table 4.

Table 8-3: Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp (B)
Seriousness	.808	.667	1.464	1	.226	2.242
Suspect gender	-1.484	1.066	1.941	1	.164	.227
Suspect race	.143	.823	.030	1	.862	1.153
Suspect poor	.175	.627	.078	1	.780	1.191
Suspect juvenile	-.301	.809	.138	1	.710	.740
Constant	-3.097	.839	13.636	1	.000	.045

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: SERIOUS, SUSSEX, SUSRACE, SUSPOOR, JUVENILE.

The next step in the analysis was to examine the effects of the independent variables on arrest for the group of officers labeled as negative toward the community policing approach. The results of this step show that seriousness of the offense, suspect race, and apparent income level of the suspect are all significant at the  $p < .05$  level. These results are shown in Table 5. Consistent with previous research, seriousness of the offense is a significant predictor of arrest, with more serious offenses being more likely to lead to an arrest being made. The extralegal factors of suspect race and apparent income level are significant in this model but were not in the model for officers favoring community policing. The analysis shows that suspects who appear to the officers to be of low socioeconomic status are more likely to be arrested by these officers. The initial hypothesis was that officers who favor community policing would be less likely to arrest apparently poor suspects. The result that arrests made by officers holding negative attitudes toward that approach can be predicted by apparently low SES yields partial support for the hypothesis. Contradictory to the hypotheses, the significance of the suspect race variable is in the opposite direction as predicted. The analysis shows that

white suspects are more likely to be arrested than minority suspects by officers who do not hold positive attitudes toward community policing. The direction of this variable may in fact be due to collinearity issues with the apparent income level variable.

Table 8-4: Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Seriousness	2.382	.502	22.517	1	.000	10.824
Suspect gender	-.309	.493	.392	1	.531	.734
Suspect race	-1.072	.523	4.205	1	.040	.342
Suspect poor	1.207	.487	6.138	1	.013	3.342
Suspect juvenile	.568	.538	1.115	1	.291	1.765
constant	-2.192	.588	13.884	1	.000	.112

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: SERIOUS, SUSSEX, SUSRACE, SUSPOOR, JUVENILE.

Multicollinearity was checked utilizing a simple correlation analysis between the race of the suspect variable and the apparent income variable yielding a Pearson correlation of  $-.117$ , indicating that the two variables are not measuring the same concept. Therefore, the regression analysis does show that both variables are significant with white suspects and suspects of apparently low income being more likely to be arrested by officers who do not favor community policing

## CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION

This study attempted to shift the focus of research on arrest patterns from the demeanor of the suspect to the attitudes of the officers. All of the officers in this sample worked for a department that had instituted a community policing approach. Therefore, the goal of this study was not to compare traditional officers with community policing officers, but rather to look at the effects of variation in officer attitudes on arrest decisions. The intent was to investigate whether or not differences exist in the prediction of officer decision to arrest based on officer attitudes toward a specific policing orientation.

The first significant result was that the attitude the officers in this sample had towards the community policing approach could indeed be used as a predictor of an arrest being made. Officers who favor community policing have different arrest patterns than officers who hold a negative view of that orientation, for this sample. Officers who do not have positive attitudes toward the community policing approach were found to arrest at a higher rate than officers favoring the approach. This goes against previous research conducted by Worden (1989) who found that officer attitudes were a weak predictor of behavior.

This study also deviates from Worden's findings in the realm of organizational influences. The sample utilized in this research was constituted of officers all working for a department that had instituted a community policing approach. Therefore, the pressure from the top of the agency was to adopt and institute the policies of that orientation. The

finding that the officers who did not have positive attitudes about the new approach do have different arrest patterns than those who favor it, goes against Worden's research that found organizational influences to eliminate or weaken the effect of officer attitudes.

Smith (1984) also argued that the organizational philosophy of a police department influences the practices of the officers in that department. The dominant values of the department, Smith found, dictated the way in which control was exercised by the officers of that department. The results reported above in this current study, however, show that officers may still act according to their own beliefs toward an orientation regardless of the actual philosophy expressed and instituted by an organization. One limitation to this finding is that no measure was utilized to assess the strength of the desire for implementation of community policing for the Richmond police department, or the extent to which the upper-management of that agency promoted the goals or supposed effectiveness of the orientation. This limitation is expressed in regard to the finding of Ford et al. (2003) that the apparent commitment of top-management toward community policing enhances the behavior consistency of the officers toward the goals of that philosophy.

The results of this study expand on those found by Smith (1986) regarding the importance of socioeconomic status. Smith found that the SES of the neighborhood was a significant predictor of officer decision to arrest. Smith hypothesized that this result may be due to the lower credibility of the suspects in those areas. The results reported in this study show that officers who do not favor community policing also take apparent income level into account when deciding to arrest. This study however includes SES at the

individual level rather than at the neighborhood level, and the credibility hypothesis proposed by Smith seems to remain valid.

## CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

The argument has been made that the community policing orientation may lead to the increasing use of extralegal factors with respect for arrest decisions made by officers espousing that philosophy. Scholars have expressed concern that officers' negative biases will be a more instrumental aspect in those decisions to arrest. This study has attempted to show that the negative biases officers may have do not expose themselves as predictors of arrest for officers in this sample. In fact, for this group of officers, the arrest decisions of those officers who self-proclaim to not hold a positive attitude toward community policing have been shown to be significantly predicted by extralegal factors (namely suspect race and apparent income level of the suspect). Officers favoring community policing have been shown in this study to *not* be guided by extralegal considerations in their arrest decisions.

This study does however have its limitations, which should not be overlooked. The sample utilized for this project is not necessarily representative of police officers today, nor can it be generalized to police officers operating in other agencies than the Richmond Police department. The analysis was also conducted using 451 encounters, only 46 of which culminated in an arrest being made. Furthermore, there may be a deployment effect in that the police chief could have known which officers favored community policing and sent those officers to areas with low crime and sent officers not partial to this approach to higher crime areas. Deployment strategies could be partially responsible for the effects observed in the split-sample regressions.

Future research should attempt to replicate these findings using a larger sample composed of officers from various sized departments from a variety of geographic locations with a measure included to assess the level of commitment of each agency to the orientation which they promote. The findings of this project do however justify the continued research of the effect of officer attitudes on decision to arrest as well as the potential predictive differences in the outcome of arrest between officers favoring one orientation versus another

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael Baglivio was born in Gainesville, Florida, in 1975. Michael graduated high school in Amelia Island, Florida, in 1993, after which he returned to Gainesville to attend the University of Florida. Michael received a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology in 1999 from the University of Florida. In 2000 he received a Master of Health Science degree in rehabilitation counseling and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Michael is currently pursuing a PhD. in sociology, interested in crime and criminological theory