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School Resource Officers and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: A Mixed Methods Application of the Behavior of Law in Schools

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SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AND THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE:
A MIXED METHODS APPLICATION OF THE BEHAVIOR OF LAW IN SCHOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AND THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: A MIXED-METHODS APPLICATION OF THE BEHAVIOR OF LAW IN SCHOOLS

Caitlin Grace Lynch
Old Dominion University, 2017
Director: Dr. Allison T. Chappell

The implementation of school resource officer programs has been a popular response to school-based violence in the United States. Parents, school officials, and policy makers believe that police presence makes students and staff feel safer on campus, deters school-based crime and violence, and creates positive relationships between youth and the police. However, there is a growing concern that school resource officers hypercriminalize trivial student misbehavior, contribute to a culture of youth punishment and control, and are instrumental in facilitating a link between schools and the juvenile justice system. Despite the rapid rate at which school resource officer programs have expanded over the last two decades and the significant amount of federal and state funds that have been allocated for their implementation, very little is known about how school resource officers operate in schools across the United States. The current work aims to gain a better understanding of how school resource officers spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Since school resource officers are likely to remain a permanent fixture in schools across the country, it is necessary to better understand their role within the school setting. Utilizing data from the Department of Education's School Survey on Crime and Safety (2015), supplemented with qualitative interviews from a sample (n=20) of school resource officers, the current research aims to fill this

gap in the literature by applying Donald Black's (1976) *Behavior of Law* as a theoretical framework. Some findings were consistent with the notion that school resource officers engage in behaviors that may contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, but other findings suggested that many school resource officers are willing to seek alternative social control measures in an effort to keep students out of the juvenile justice system. This highlights the importance of selecting officers for this assignment who are oriented toward working with youth and are committed to using alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions, while only referring students to the juvenile justice system as a last resort. Additionally, these findings suggest that although schools are considered to be a microcosm of society, the law oftentimes manifests itself differently within schools relative to the rest of society due to the intimate nature of the school setting. Further, it is important that police departments and school districts maintain a shared understanding of the roles of school resource officers and that schools should not be policed in the same way in which streets are policed. Finally, school resource officers should be expected to take advantage of the readily available alternative social control measures that are unique to the school setting so as not to perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

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My interest in Criminology was initially sparked by a Juvenile Justice class I took from Dr. Victor Rios in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara in the summer of 2007. His commitment to empowering “at-risk youth” in the United States was what motivated me to pursue a career as a police officer and eventually a school resource officer. During the time in which I was a police officer I was fortunate enough to have had supportive faculty in the Department of Criminology at California State University, Fresno, who oftentimes allowed me to take classes on independent study so that I could continue my career in law enforcement while pursuing my master’s degree. Additionally, I was lucky to have supervisors within the McFarland Police Department who understood the importance of obtaining my master’s degree and were flexible with my scheduling so that I could continue my education. I would not be in the position to write this dissertation if it were not for the mutual support and understanding of these two institutions, and I am particular thankful to Dr. Yoshiko Takahashi and Corporal Steve Chisholm.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the wake of infamous cases of school violence, such as the shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 and Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, schools across the United States have attempted to make schools safer through partnerships between school districts and police departments, the enactment of zero-tolerance policies, and the implementation of criminal justice tools, such as metal detectors and security cameras on school campuses. Perhaps the most prominent of these safety measures has been the dramatic increase in the presence of school-based law enforcement officers, more commonly referred to as school resource officers (SROs). SROs are sworn law enforcement officers assigned to work in collaboration with schools to fight school crime and disorder, educate students on safety and crime prevention, and reduce crime in and around the school campus.

SROs are a popular solution to the cries of concerned parents, teachers, and policymakers for safer schools. Many teachers and school administrators believe SROs play an integral role in their school site's safety plan and help reduce school-related crime and misconduct. Their presence on school campuses may also provide parents with peace of mind, as many claim that SROs make students feel safer at school. Furthermore, it is suggested by some that SROs help bridge the gap between the police and the community, as well as improve and repair possibly strained relationships between youth and the police.

While many teachers, policy makers, and other stakeholders believe SROs are an asset to schools and the community, numerous scholars, policy makers, and youth justice advocates believe this increased police presence in schools causes irreparable harm that is

disproportionately felt by the country's most vulnerable youth populations (Rios, 2011; Shedd, 2015). As SROs are becoming increasingly involved with the disciplinary process and resorting to more punitive measures to control youth, more students are being removed from the classroom and referred to the juvenile justice system. This blending of the school system with the juvenile justice system is particularly problematic in inner-city and low socioeconomic schools where classroom settings increasingly resemble the carceral setting. This may send the message to marginalized youth that they are unworthy of an education and instead are being prepared for prison. Claims about SROs contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline are particularly troubling when considering the rapid rate at which SRO programs are expanding, with little research on the potential impact their actions are having on youth.

Throughout the past two decades, federal and state grant programs during the highest-funded fiscal years have allocated up to \$180 million for the hiring of SROs (James & McCallion, 2013), and the number of school resource officers in the United States has tripled (Robers et al., 2013). However, despite the exorbitant amount of money allotted for these programs and the rapid rate at which they are expanding, very little is known about how SROs behave in schools. Since SROs will likely remain a permanent fixture in K-12 schools across the United States for years to come, it is necessary to better understand how they spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Without this understanding, SROs are likely to continue to be deployed in schools with little or no evidence-based direction or oversight. This, in turn, could have consequences that extend far beyond the loss of already limited education funds that could perhaps be spent on more effective school

safety measures. If SROs contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline through hypercriminalizing trivial offenses and disproportionately targeting poor, urban, students of Color, these behaviors are likely to continue to go unchecked and further marginalize already disadvantaged youth.

The Current Research

Using a mixed-methods approach, the current research improves our understanding of how school resource officers spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. With quantitative data from the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSCS) (2015), this research addresses the following research questions: 1) To what extent do school characteristics predict school resource officers' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring? 2) To what extent do school characteristics predict school resource officers' involvement in school discipline? 3) To what extent do school characteristics predict the quantity of law administered by school resource officers? With qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with a sample (n=20) of school resource officers in a southeastern municipal police department, this research addresses the following research questions: 4) What are the experiences of school resource officers in one police department implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring? 5) What factors influence school resource officers' involvement in school discipline? and 6) What factors influence school resource officers' willingness to implement alternative social control measures?

According to Black's (1976) *The Behavior of Law*, everything in social life behaves, including law. Law is a form of governmental social control that varies based upon several

variable aspects of social life, including stratification, morphology, culture, organization, and social control. These variable aspects of social life can be used to predict and explain both the style and quantity of law. According to Black, the style of law corresponds with the style of social control found in social life, and the style of law can be either accusatory or remedial. Black further argues that law is a quantitative variable that increases and decreases and varies in time and space, as well as across societies, regions, communities, neighborhoods, and relationships.

Within the school setting the style and quantity of law can be conceptualized by examining school resource officers' style of policing and the amount of law administered by SROs, respectively. The style of school policing can be examined by analyzing SROs' implementation of accusatory styles of law, such as law enforcement behaviors, as well as their implementation of remedial styles of law such as teaching, mentorship, and reliance upon alternative social control measures. Additionally, the quantity of law in schools can be understood by examining the number of school-based arrests made by SROs. Furthermore, this theoretical framework helps better understand how school characteristics consistent with the variable aspects of social life, including stratification, morphology, culture, and social control within and across schools, can predict the style of school policing and quantity of law administered by SROs.

This study makes an important contribution to the literature, as it is necessary to better understand how certain behaviors of SROs may be contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. The use of mixed methods in this study provides a unique and critical understanding of how SROs are operating in schools across the United States. The quantitative data provide information about how school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement,

teaching, mentorship, and school discipline, as well as the extent to which these school characteristics predict the quantity of law administered by SROs. Additionally, the qualitative data shed light on the experiences of SROs implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring, as well as the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline and their willingness to implement alternative social control measures. Finally, this study aims to provide specific recommendations for public policy concerning the selection, training, and deployment of SROs in order to ensure that the appropriate officers are selected for this assignment, trained accordingly, and facilitate safe school sites without further marginalizing already disadvantaged youth.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

Introduction

SROs as we know them today have been in place in some schools since the 1950s (Weiler & Cray, 2011), yet only within the past few decades have they played such an integral role in school safety plans across the United States. This was largely prompted by the rising violent crime rate in the United States that increased 80% from 1975 to 1989 (Price, 2009). In response to fear of violent crime seeping into public schools came the enactment of zero-tolerance policies and the need for school resource officers to ensure their enforcement.

The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) of 1994, and the Community-Oriented Policing in Schools (CIS) Program, enacted in response to the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, were the two major federal grant programs behind the hiring and placement of police officers in schools across the United States. During the highest-funded years, \$180 million were allocated annually to the hiring of school resource officers (James & McCallion, 2013). It has been estimated that during this time, the number of SROs in the United States tripled (Roberts et al., 2013). Although funding for these programs ended in 2005 and 2009, respectively, police departments are still allowed to hire SROs under the COPS Hiring Program (CHP). Today, there are estimated to be approximately 43,000 SROs serving approximately 84,000 K-12 schools across the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program (42 U.S.C. §3796dd-8) defines a SRO as

a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community oriented policing, assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration

with schools and community organizations to: (A) address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around an elementary or secondary school; (B) develop or expand crime prevention efforts for students; (C) educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety; (D) develop or expand community justice initiatives for students; (E) train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime awareness; (F) assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may reduce crime in and around the school; and (G) assist in developing school policy that addresses crime and recommended procedural changes.

However, aside from this broad definition, there are no national standards or federal guidelines dictating how school resource officers should operate in schools. The roles and expectations of school resource officers vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction depending upon precedents set by various state supreme courts, school policies, and police department policies, allowing for school resource officers to operate with much autonomy (Price, 2009).

While there are no formal guidelines for how school resource officers should operate, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), a non-profit organization that provides training and resources for SROs, recommends the implementation of the “triad” model. According to the triad model, SROs’ responsibilities are divided into three areas: educator, mentor/informal counselor, and law enforcement officer (NASRO, 2012). According to NASRO, this model of school policing is ideal for fostering a safe environment conducive to learning, boasting that the triad model allows for SROs to “protect and educate”.

The Triad Model

NASRO’s triad model is the most documented and accepted implementation model for SROs (McKenna et al., 2014). While NASRO’s conceptualization of the school resource officer as educator, informal counselor/mentor, and law enforcement officer seems positive in theory, the empirical research concerning the actual implementation of the triad model has been limited.

Furthermore, the studies that have examined the extent to which SROs are implementing the triad model have yielded mixed support.

May et al. (2004) found that despite the fact that SRO programs were founded on the tenets of community oriented policing and are encouraged to endorse the triad model of school policing, SROs are oftentimes falling short of these expectations. Using self-report data from a sample (n=117) SROs in Kentucky, the authors found that just less than a third (31.7%) of SROs indicated that their role was best defined by the triad model. When asked how much time SROs spend as a law enforcement officer, teacher, and counselor with responses needing to total 100%, the authors found that 39.6% indicated that 70-90% of their time is spent conducting law enforcement duties, while 7.2% indicated they spent 100% of their time conducting law enforcement duties. Additionally, 21.6% of SROs indicated they spent half their time doing law enforcement duties and the other half of the time as a teacher and counselor, while 13.5% of SROs spent 51-69% of the time doing law enforcement duties. The remaining 18% of SROs did more counseling and teaching than law enforcement. The authors' findings highlight the fact that the majority of the SROs in their study emphasize the law enforcement role and oftentimes neglect teaching and mentorship.

These findings were consistent with Finn and McDevitt's (2005) National Survey of School Resource Officer Programs and Affiliated Schools, which was one of the five components of their National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs Final Project Report funded by the Department of Justice. Using the 1999 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) database and the list of COPS Office 1999 grantees, the authors sent surveys to a random sample (n=454) of law enforcement agencies with SRO programs, stratified by department size and age. The authors found that the majority of SROs

(>75%) reported engaging in up to 10 kinds of law enforcement activities; over half reported advising faculty, students, staff, and community members on legal issues; and over half reported formally teaching students about drug awareness and prevention. The authors found that, on average, SROs spent 20 hours per week on law enforcement issues, 10 hours on advising and mentoring, five hours teaching students, and the remaining hours on other activities, with results varying from program to program. These findings indicate that not all SRO programs are implementing all three components of the triad model, and instead are oftentimes neglecting teaching and mentoring.

These findings were somewhat consistent with those of Coon and Travis (2012). Using survey data from a sample (n=1080) of SROs, the authors found that 92% of SROs patrol school facilities, 91% respond to reports of crime and disorder, 70% make arrests, and 67% issue citations. With regard to mentoring/counseling, 73% of SROs mentored individual students, 77% worked with parents to help children, and 76% referred students to other sources of help. With regard to teaching, 44% of SROs taught law-related classes, 46% taught crime awareness or prevention, and 34% taught career training classes. While these findings suggest that many SROs take time to engage in non-law enforcement tasks, law enforcement duties are still prioritized above all other responsibilities.

Qualitative data obtained from McKenna and Pollock (2014) shed light on perhaps why SROs prioritize law enforcement over teaching and mentoring/counseling. Using data obtained from qualitative interviews with a sample (n=26) of SROs from 11 school districts across the state of Texas, the authors found that the majority (69%) of SROs emphasized law enforcement because of the wide range of functions that they believed encompass the duties associated with law enforcement. Many of the school resource officers believed that law enforcement included

enforcing law violations on campus (i.e. issuing citations, making arrest, and investigating criminal activity), truancy violations, and ensuring the safety and security of student and the campus. Some school resource officers even included coordinating emergency drills, developing safety plans for their district, and calling attention to broken light fixtures that they believed posed a potential safety hazard.

Schlosser (2014) had similar findings to several other studies that indicated that SROs overemphasize their law enforcement duties over teaching and counseling. In a case study examining the roles and responsibilities of one school resource officer in a Midwestern school, the author found that the school resource officer in his case study spent 70% of his time completing law enforcement tasks, 14% of his time counseling, and 16% of his time teaching. The author found several cases in which these expected roles conflicted with one another, as the school resource officer would often neglect opportunities for teaching and counseling to fulfill law enforcement duties. Additionally, in this case study, the attitudes of both the principal at the school site to which the SRO was assigned and deputy chief of the police department for which the SRO works emphasized the importance of the school resource officer prioritizing law enforcement above all else.

While many studies suggest that SROs spend the majority of their time engaging in law enforcement, Kelly and Swezey (2015) found the opposite, as the majority of SROs in their study emphasized mentoring/counseling. Drawing from survey data from a sample (n=55) of SROs in three cities, the authors found that 51% of SROs believed that mentoring/counseling took up the majority of their time. These SROs also reported having the highest job satisfaction and believed that mentoring was the most important aspect of school policing. However, 63% of SROs surveyed reported teaching less than ten hours per week, with nearly 10% claiming they

did no teaching at all. The authors also found that female SROs spent more time engaging in mentoring/counseling and less time in law enforcement areas compared to male SROs. These findings offer some insight into the factors influencing SROs' behavior, as the study suggested that SROs who are more satisfied with their jobs are more likely to defer to mentoring/counseling rather than law enforcement.

Although the triad model is a widely acknowledged implementation model for school resource officers, McKenna and Pollock (2014) argued that the processes of police socialization and training to enforce the law are at odds with school resource officers' duties to mentor and nurture students. The authors suggested that SROs and school administrators first acknowledge the unique ethical challenges that face SROs and address how school resource officers can keep students safe without hindering their academic success and social development, as these two objectives may at times be competing interests. The authors noted that SROs are likely to face challenges and scenarios that they have not seen prior to working in the school environment, and providing school resource officers with training in a classroom setting with teachers and administrators present may enable them to be better prepared for handling situations unique to the school environment. This is perhaps why it is so difficult for SROs to implement teaching and mentoring/counseling, as they have been socialized and trained to defer to law enforcement behaviors.

Brown (2006) argued that it is naïve to assume that a single person can successfully implement the vast array of expectations that have been set for SROs, including providing a visible police presence, conducting traffic, gathering intelligence on delinquent activities, and teaching students and staff about crime and security-related issues. Since a SRO has so many responsibilities, perhaps when confronted with time restraints, they are likely to neglect teaching

and mentoring/counseling in favor of their law enforcement duties, as these are the skillsets that they have been trained to emphasize. While it is understandable that SROs may feel inclined to defer to law enforcement strategies over teaching and mentoring/counseling, it is this overemphasis on law enforcement by SROs that many critics believe is responsible for facilitating the school-to-prison pipeline.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

Perhaps the biggest criticism surrounding the expansion of SRO programs in the United States is the shared belief by many scholars, policy makers, and youth justice advocates that school resource officers are the driving force behind the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline refers to the policies and practices that remove youth, particularly at-risk youth, from the classroom and into the juvenile justice system through zero-tolerance policies and other harsh disciplinary measures (ACLU, 2015). The school-to-prison pipeline arose as a result of the enactment of zero tolerance policies that began to take form as early as 1989 (Price 2009). The need for punitive measures in schools was further reinforced by the juvenile “superpredator” myth of the 1990s (Equal Justice Initiative 2014). The term “superpredator” was coined by John DiIulio, a professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton University, in an effort to call public attention to what he believed was a “new breed of offenders” (Howell 2009). According to DiIulio and his co-authors, these “superpredators” were “radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters, including ever more teenage boys who murder, assault, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs, and create serious disorders” (Bennett, DiIulio, & Walters, 1996; 27). Despite the fact that this wave of juvenile superpredators of the

1990s never materialized, moral panic set in about the plight of youth in the United States and public policy implications soon followed (Howell 2009).

The “superpredator” scare prompted government to enact additional zero-tolerance policies, including the Gun-Free Schools Act in 1994, mandating that schools expel any student for at least one year who brought a weapon to school, regardless of surrounding circumstances (Kang-Brown et al., 2014). To ensure the implementation of these policies, federal and state governments increased funding for SROs starting in 1996 (Robers et al., 2013). By 1997, 94% of all schools had zero-tolerance policies for firearms and other weapons possession, 87% for alcohol possession, and 79% for tobacco possession (Price 2009) despite the fact that alcohol and tobacco passion does not usually promote violent crime.

The shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 expanded zero tolerance policies even further to encompass a wide range of student misconduct that was significantly less harmful than bringing a weapon to school (Skiba, 2000). Although these policies were initially created with the intent to respond to students who brought a weapon to school, only five percent of serious disciplinary actions in recent years involved possession of an actual weapon (Robers et al., 2013). This has caused many to believe that these policies are misguided, contribute to a culture of punishment in schools across the United States, and shifted schools’ primary focus from educating children to controlling youth who are viewed as dangerous (Price, 2009).

SROs and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

SROs are criticized for contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline because of the belief that they have become overly involved with the school discipline process and often hypercriminalize trivial student misbehavior that would otherwise be handled administratively

through the school. Additionally, zero tolerance policies created in the name of school safety have restricted students' already limited civil rights by allowing for school officials to conduct searches that would otherwise be without probable cause. Students who are subjected to these harsh disciplinary measures are oftentimes removed from the school setting through suspension, expulsion, and juvenile court petitions, and deprived of their right to an education. Research has shown that this trend has disproportionately affected students of Color in already disadvantaged schools across the United States (Hirschfield, 2008).

Beger (2002) suggested that recent high-profile campus shootings have legitimized police expansion in schools and diminished the Fourth Amendment rights of public school children, citing that the search efforts of SROs oftentimes mirror those of prison guards, conducting random preemptive searches of lockers and personal property, utilizing drug-sniffing canines, and even resorting to undercover sting operations. These aggressive search tactics, oftentimes absent reasonable suspicion, only increase mistrust for the police among youth and violate students' Fourth Amendment rights. Price (2009) claimed that these vanishing rights of students are largely attributed to the fact that the roles of SROs vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction dependent upon precedents set by various state supreme courts, school policies, and police department policies. He noted the presence of police officers on school campuses is particularly problematic because their role as either school employees or police department employees is ambiguous. This role ambiguity is particularly troubling with regard to the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. While the police are required to have probable cause before conducting a search, school officials need only reasonable suspicion, a lower standard of proof (*New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 1985). Therefore, if SROs are operating as school officials, they are allowed to conduct searches without probable cause. This, in turn, could lead

to students being subjected to searches and seizures that would otherwise be unlawful were it not for the role ambiguity of school resource officers.

Kupchik and Monahan (2006) claimed that SROs have facilitated a link between schools and the juvenile justice system because they enhance punishments for school-based offenses that otherwise would have been handled by school administrators with less punitive measures.

Additionally, Price (2009) claimed that the implementation of SROs, coupled with zero tolerance policies have taken the use of discretion out of the hands of teachers and school administrators and have resulted in extreme punishments for oftentimes non-criminal misbehavior. These enhanced punishments are problematic because when students are suspended or expelled they are three times more likely to come into contact with the juvenile justice system within the next year, providing them with opportunities to get into trouble in places in which they normally would not be (Council of State Governments Justice Center and Public Policy Research Institute 2011).

Furthermore, youth who are suspended or expelled tend to be left unsupervised and fall behind in their coursework, leading to an increased likelihood of disengagement or dropping-out, which also increases their chances of involvement in the juvenile court system (ACLU, 2015).

Hirschfield (2008) claimed that the criminalization of school discipline is particularly harsh for low-income, urban, and minority students, and less intense in middle-class schools. He claims that hierarchizing of students through disciplinary measures is the result of a troubled domestic economy, the mass unemployment and incarceration of disadvantaged minorities, and the fiscal crises in urban public education. He contends that these social conditions make it easier for schools to promote greater levels of punishment on poor students of Color who are considered to already be on a criminal justice “track”. He noted that school punishment has become more formal, mirroring that of the juvenile justice system and that criminal justice tools

and personnel are playing an increasingly important role in school discipline. In what Rios (2011) described as a “youth control complex”, this culture of punishment has become an overbearing part of the everyday lives of marginalized youth who are caught in a cycle of hypercriminalization and punishment at school, at home, and on the streets. This, in turn, causes marginalized youth to understand their social world as an environment that perceives them as criminals.

Jackson (2002) claimed that the fusion of a closed, local government institution such as the police, with an open, complex system of organizations, such as a school presents several cultural, administrative, and organizational problems for teachers and administrators. This is largely because police officers will oftentimes implement authoritative practices into a school that typically operates as a free and fluid environment. He claims that while teachers and administrators may gain some peace of mind by having a school resource officer on campus, the presence of a SRO may have adverse psychological effects on students who are likely to view the police presence as threatening.

Despite the many theoretical propositions that SROs are responsible for facilitating a link between school and the juvenile justice system, the few empirical studies that have investigated this claim found mixed support for the notion that SROs are perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline. Theriot (2009) examined the impact of school resource officers on school-based arrest rates by comparing the arrest rates at 13 schools with a school resource officer with 15 schools without a SRO. The author found support for the argument that the presence of SROs criminalizes student behavior. While there was empirical support for the hypothesis that the presence of school resource officers increased arrests for disorderly conduct, having a SRO did not predict more total arrests, and schools that had a SRO had fewer arrests for assault and

weapons charges. The author, however, found a significant positive relationship between economic disadvantage and the number of total arrests, as well as arrests for assault, weapons possession, disorderly conduct, and other charges.

Using the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSCS) (2006), Na and Gottfredson (2013) examined how the addition of SRO was associated with changes in school crime and schools' responses to crime. The authors found that as schools increase their use of school resource officers, the percentage of non-serious violent offenses reported to the police increased. However, there was no evidence to suggest that increased use of SROs affects the use of harsh discipline, that SROs unjustly deprive students of their right to a public education through increased use of suspension or expulsion, nor do they have a disproportionate impact on students of racial minorities or students who utilize special education services.

Using the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSCS) (2006), Lynch et al. (2017) utilized structural equation modeling to examine the extent to which social and education disadvantage in schools affected the roles and functions of school resource officers. The authors found that SROs assigned to schools with greater levels of social and educational disadvantage performed more law enforcement-related functions, while SROs assigned to schools with less social and education disadvantage performed more education-related functions. The authors note that while it is promising that SROs are able to implement both law enforcement and education-related functions, the increased use of law enforcement functions in disadvantaged schools gives rise to the notion that SROs may be responsible for facilitating the school to prison pipeline by being more punitive in disadvantaged schools.

Using three years of youth court data from a southeastern state to examine the extent to which court referrals originated from SROs, May et al. (2016) found that SROs were responsible

for only 3% of all referrals over a three-year period, with only 5.8% of those offenses considered minor offenses. Furthermore, SROs were significantly less likely than non-school based law enforcement officers to refer juveniles for minor offense. The authors note that the school-to-prison pipeline issue is perhaps more of a school issue than a SRO issue, as, excluding status offenses, schools refer more than four times as many youths to the system as SROs.

Need for Additional Research

Much of the extant literature concerning SROs provides valuable information on how they spend their time, as well as why they may feel inclined to neglect teaching and counseling duties in favor of law enforcement, despite the expectation to implement all three equally. Additionally, much of the extant literature on the school-to-prison pipeline offers insight into how certain behaviors of SROs may be contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. However, much of the literature on SROs' direct contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline is theoretical and the empirical studies that test this hypothesis have largely been met with mixed results. While these studies contribute to a better understanding of how certain school resource officer behaviors may be harmful to youth, there is a gap in the literature addressing the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in these behaviors, the factors influencing school resource officers' involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. It is necessary to address these gaps in the literature because if SROs are responsible for facilitating a link between schools and the juvenile justice system by overemphasizing law enforcement functions, neglecting teaching and counseling/mentorship, and hypercriminalizing school discipline, they may

continue to implement punitive practices in schools that are already disproportionately disadvantaged.

CHAPTER III

THE BEHAVIOR OF LAW IN SCHOOLS

Introduction

The theoretical framework outlined in Donald Black's (1976) *The Behavior of Law* can be applied to the school setting to examine how SROs spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. According to Black, everything in social life behaves, including law (Black, 1976; 1). Law is a form of governmental social control that varies based upon several variable aspects of social life, including stratification, morphology, culture, organization, and social control. These variable aspects of social life can be used to predict and explain both the style and quantity of law (Black, 1976; 2).

Within the school setting, the style and quantity of law can be conceptualized by examining SROs' style of policing and the amount of law administered by SROs, respectively. This includes SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, as well as the extent to which school resource officers rely upon governmental social control measures such as school-based arrests and juvenile court petitions. Additionally, school characteristics consistent with the variable aspects of social life, including stratification, morphology, culture, and social control that exist within the school setting can be used to predict the style of school policing and quantity of law administered by SROs.

The Behavior of Law

According to Black, behavior is the variable aspect of reality and everything in social life behaves (Black, 1976; 1). Social life is comprised of five variable aspects, including stratification, morphology, culture, organization, and social control. Stratification refers to the unequal distribution of conditions of existence, morphology refers to the distribution of people in relation to one another, culture refers the symbolic aspect, organization refers to the capacity for collective action, and social control refers to the normative aspect of social life. These variable aspects can predict the behavior of law (Black, 1976; 1).

While there are many forms of social control that exist within social life as a means to define and respond to deviant behavior, Black defines law as governmental social control that defines the normative life of a state and its citizens. Therefore, Black's theory posits that there is more law where there is less social control.

For instance, it predicts, all else constant, more law in societies where other social control is comparatively weak...and the same proposition predicts that parties to a dispute are more likely to go to law if they have no other means of settlement. It predicts that a policeman is more likely to arrest an offender who is subject to no other authority. It predicts that a citizen is more likely to call the police if he has no one else to help him...It predicts more juvenile law in societies with comparatively weak parental authority. At the same time, it predicts that a family with less social control of its own is more likely to call upon law to settle its affairs (Black, 1976; 6).

According to Black, law is a quantitative variable that increases and decreases across time and space. "More generally, the quantity of law is known by the number and scope of prohibitions, obligations, and other standards to which people are subject, and by the rate of legislation, litigation, and adjudication. As a quantitative variable, law is all of this and more" (Black, 1976; 3). Like the quantity of law, the style of law varies across time and space. The style of law can be penal, compensatory, therapeutic, and conciliatory. Penal law prohibits specific conduct and enforces it through punishment, while compensatory law demands payment

for wrongdoing against the alleged offender. Both penal law and compensatory law are accusatory styles of law, as both styles of law facilitate a contest in which there is a winner and a loser. Conversely, both therapeutic and conciliatory are remedial styles of law, as they are both used as methods of social repair. Therapeutic law aims to restore normality, while conciliatory law seeks social harmony (Black, 1976; 4-5). Both the quantity and style of law can be predicted by stratification, morphology, culture, organization, and social control that exist within social life.

Black defines stratification as the vertical aspect of social life, or the uneven distribution of the material conditions of existence, including food, shelter, raw materials, and luxuries (Black, 1976; 1). According to Black, the degree of stratification or inequality explains many kinds of behavior, including the style and quantity of law, and the universal spirit of the law favors the strong over the weak and assists those who have possessions against those with none (Black, 1976; 12). The quantity of law varies directly with stratification, as there is more law where there is more inequality. An increase in inequality leads to an increase in policing, litigation, and punishment, while less law exists among neighbors, colleagues, friends, and wherever else people are more equal (Black, 1976; 13). The law also varies directly with rank or vertical location, as people with less wealth have less law and are less likely to call upon the law in their dealings with one another, while people who have more wealth are more likely to call upon the law to handle their concerns (Black, 1976; 17). Additionally, the quantity of law varies with vertical location and direction, as the seriousness of the offense is dependent upon the rank of the victim in relation to the offender (Black, 1976; 21). Stratification also predicts and explains the style of law. Downward law is more penal than upward law, as offenders who rank below their victims are more likely to be punished for a crime. Upward law is more therapeutic than

downward law, as offenders who rank above their victims are more likely to be viewed as ill and in need of help. Additionally, conciliatory law varies inversely with stratification, as equals are more likely to work out a compromise than people of difference ranks (Black, 1976; 29).

Black states that morphology, the distribution of people in relation to one another, varies across both social settings and time, and explains many of the patterns of social life, including the quantity and style of law (Black, 1976; 37). Black finds that the law increases with the distance between people, as law is inactive among intimates and reaches its highest level among strangers (Black, 1976; 40). Black also claims that population predicts the rate at which people go to the law for assistance, as well as what will result from that interaction with the law. People are more likely to call upon the law in more densely populated communities, and the law may be more severe as well. Black argues that as people's relational distance expands and contracts, the law follows suit (Black, 1976; 46). Accusatory law varies directly with relational distance, while remedial law varies inversely with relational distance. Therefore, strangers are more likely to be adversarial toward one another, while intimates are more inclined to help one another (Black, 1976; 47). Black claims that every kind of social life has a center, a periphery, and rings of participation, and that every person or group has a location in relation to the center, a concept he refers to as radial location (Black, 1976; 48). This radial location of a person or group implies either status or disadvantage, depending upon how close or removed one is from the center. Those who are considered to be loners or outcasts are more vulnerable to the law, as Black claims that social withdrawal of every kind is vulnerable to law. According to Black, those with origins in the center of social life are subject to less law. Black claims that the closer someone is to the center, the more likely law is to be invoked on his or her behalf, police will be quicker to

respond, more extensive investigations will be conducted, and a speedier trial is likely to ensue (Black, 1976; 49).

Black claims that culture appears in every social setting and represents the symbolic aspect of social life, including conceptions of right and wrong (Black, 1976; 61). Culture varies in quantity and the law varies directly with the amount of culture in a society. According to Black, the more culture society has, the more law society has (Black, 1976; 63). Cultural differences explain the quantity of law, as the law varies inversely with the culture of the offender. An offense by someone with less culture against someone with more culture is considered to be more severe, while an offense by someone with more culture against someone with less culture is considered less severe (Black, 1976; 65). Black claims that conventionality defines cultural status, as law increases as it nears the mainstream of culture (Black, 1976; 68). Some societies may have the same culture distributed throughout, while others have several subcultures that may be viewed as deviant by the mainstream. The law increases as it nears the mainstream of culture, as people who are closer to the center of mainstream culture are more likely to call upon the law and have the law respond accordingly (Black, 1976; 68). Conversely, there is less law among subcultures, as the law is less likely to be used among those deemed less conventional. Offenses by those who are less conventional are considered more severe and the unconventional are more vulnerable to law (Black, 1976; 69). Black claims that the relationship between law and culture is curvilinear, as there is less law among those with cultural similarities, more law as the cultural differences increase, and then again less law among individuals whose cultural differences are so extreme that they are unlikely to come into contact with one another (Black, 1976; 74). Cultural distance can also explain and predict the style of law. Penal law increases with cultural distance, as those who are culturally different are more likely to resort to

penal law while those who are culturally similar are more likely to resort to conciliatory law (Black, 1976; 78).

Black claims that social control represents the normative aspect of social life and defines what constitutes deviant behavior and how society responds to it (Black, 1976; 105). While the law represents governmental social control, informal social control mechanisms exist in the form of etiquette, customs, and ethics. Social control exists wherever people hold one another to certain standards, such as within families, neighborhoods, churches, and workplaces, both explicitly and implicitly (Black, 1976; 105). The use of social control divides people into those who are deemed respectable and those who are unrespectable, as an absence of social control explains what constitutes deviant behavior. However, a person may be deviant in some circles but respectable in others (Black, 1976; 112). According to Black, the law varies inversely with social control, as with increased implementation of informal social control measures comes less of a need for formal social control, such as involvement of the criminal justice system. For example, Black notes that the family has more social control of its own than any other group, and therefore, families rarely take one another to court. Furthermore, in groups in which members closely watch one another's behavior and criticize and punish behavior, there is less of a need for law (Black, 1976; 108). In instances in which an individual is not subject to informal social control measures, he or she is more vulnerable to law (Black, 1976; 111). Black claims that the quantity of social control varies from one social setting to another, as private settings have more informal social control measures than public settings (Black, 1976; 110). Black also claims that the law varies with location in normative space. The law is greater in the direction toward less respectability, as those with a criminal record are more vulnerable to the law (Black, 1976; 112).

The theory has been widely tested to examine both the style and quantity of law within and across various settings, and has been met with mixed results. The style and quantity of law have previously been measured by examining victim reporting (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979), perceptions of seriousness of acts (Hembroff, 1987), partisanship of evidence (Cooney, 1994), conflict among elites (Cooney, 1997), degrees of punishment (Borg, 1998), court dispositions (Chappell & Maggard, 2007), and rape reporting (Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009), among others.

Due to the breadth of the theory, the variable aspects of social life have been conceptualized in several different ways. Previous tests of Black's theory have largely measured stratification by analyzing income (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Cooney, 1997; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011) and type of legal counsel sought by a defendant (Chappell & Maggard, 2007). In studies that compare the horizontal distance between parties, extant literature has examined the difference in income between victim and offender (Myers 1980; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009), as well as their respective types of employment (Hembroff, 1987). Age has also previously been used to measure stratification (Myers, 1980; Chappell & Maggard, 2007; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011), as it is hypothesized that younger people are more vulnerable to law, and that older victims are more likely than younger victims to call upon the law (Avakame et al., 1999; Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Felson & Pare, 2005). Race has also previously been used to measure stratification, hypothesizing that the law favors whites over non-whites (Myers, 1980; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009).

Black's theory has been tested by measuring morphology through social intimacy between victim and offender (Borg, 1998; Myers 1990; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard,

2009) and population density (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979). Previous studies have also measured morphology by examining radial location, or how well the involved parties are integrated into society. Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard (2009) claim the relational distance hypothesis is the most widely supported measure when testing morphology. The relational distance hypothesis has been previously tested by examining whether someone is a loner or part of a family (Hembroff, 1987), marital status (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Myers, 1980; Avakame et al., 1999; Copes et al., 2001; Kuo et al., 2011; see Zhang et al., 2007), and employment status (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Myers, 1980; Avakame et al., 1999; Copes et al., 2001). The marital and employment status variables are widely used because it is assumed that someone who is married and/or employed is more socially integrated than someone who is not.

The most commonly tested aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory is conventionality, which has been measured with race (Borg, 1998; Chappell & Maggard, 2007), religion (Borg, 1998), and gender (Chappell & Maggard, 2007). Additional studies have also measured the quantity of culture by examining level of education (Braithwait & Biles, 1980; Myers, 1980; Doyle & Luckenbill, 1991; Avakame et al., 1999; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011).

Social control has been measured by examining the time and place in which the crime in question occurred (Myers, 1980; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011), as it is hypothesized that social control measures relax both in private and at night. One tenet of social control that has been widely measured is respectability. Respectability has previously been measured by analyzing an individual's number of prior arrests (Myers, 1980; Chappell & Maggard, 2007), as well as youth's demeanor and gang affiliation (Schulenberg, 2010).

Support for Black's theory has been met with mixed results. In one of the most thorough empirical tests of Black's theory, Gottfredson and Hindelang (1979) used National Crime Survey data on victims' decision to report crimes to police using several components of each tenet of Black's theory. With regard to stratification, the authors found no support for the claims that reporting to the police varied with victim's rank or areal income. However, the authors did find support for greater reporting to the police for victimizations between strangers than nonstrangers. With regard to the relational distance aspect of morphology, the authors found no support for the notion of increased reporting in larger communities versus smaller communities or for more densely populated areas versus less densely populated areas. With regard to the integration component of morphology, the authors found no support for the claim that employment increased one's likelihood of reporting; however, married people had a higher rate of reporting than single people. The authors tested culture by examining education level and found no support for the hypothesis that education level predicts reporting to the police. The authors tested social control by examining urbanization, time of occurrence, and place of occurrence. The authors found limited support for the time of occurrence for victimization to be somewhat consistent with the social control tenet of Black's theory.

Hembroff (1987) examined judgments about the seriousness of acts and found general support for Black's theory. He found that acts committed by those who were more socially integrated were considered to be less serious than those who were marginalized, a finding consistent with the morphology tenet of Black's theory. Hembroff also found that acts committed by those who were deemed more conventional were considered to be less serious than those committed by less conventional offenders, a finding consistent with what Black posits regarding culture. Hembroff found partial support for the respectability component of the social control

tenet of Black's theory, as acts committed by those who were more respectable were considered less severe than those who were less respectable. Hembroff found no support for the stratification tenet of Black's theory.

Cooney (1994) examined the social origins of evidence, as the amount and quality of evidence helps determine whether or not someone will be charged, whether or not their case will go to trial, their likelihood of a conviction, and the length of their sentence. Cooney found that the quantity of investigative effort put forth by legal officials, the willingness of people to testify on someone's behalf, and the supportiveness of witness testimony all correlated with one's social status, as well as the with one's number of social ties. Cooney noted that the quality or credibility of evidence is dependent upon the social source of the evidence, as high-status and relationally distant witnesses provide more credibility than witnesses with the opposite characteristics. Additionally, Cooney found that the quality of the investigation conducted by the police is dependent upon the level of intimacy between the involved party and the police. Cooney also found that the willingness of witnesses to testify was dependent upon the status of the litigant. These findings are consistent with what Black posits about stratification, morphology, and culture.

Copes et al. (2001) found partial support for Black's theory when examining the reporting behavior of fraud victims. When the variables were tested separately, the authors only found support for education (culture) as a predictor of reporting fraud or attempted fraud, as those with the highest level of education were approximately 1.5 times more likely to report fraud than those with a bachelor's degree. However, they were not more likely to report a fraud or attempted fraud than those with an associate's degree or a high school diploma. In the full model, the authors found support for respondent's relationship to the offender as a predictor of

reporting, a finding consistent with the morphology tenet of Black's theory. The authors found that when examining only the cases in which a fraud attempt had been successful, age, which the authors used to measure stratification, and marital status, which the authors used to measure morphology, were significant predictors of reporting fraud, along with education.

Borg and Parker (2001) examined homicide clearance rates as a measure of law, as the likelihood of the police clearing a specific crime is largely attributed to the criminal justice resources allotted for that investigation. Using data from the 1990 Uniform Crime Report and 1990 census, the authors found that cities with greater levels of inequality had higher clearance rates, a finding consistent with Black's hypothesis that greater inequality leads to more law. The authors also found support for more arrests made in homicide cases in cities with more stable populations, a finding consistent with the morphology tenet of Black's theory. Residential mobility was the only significant measure of morphology, as levels of divorce and unemployment were insignificant. Finally, the authors found support for a direct relationship between homicide clearance rates and level of education, a finding consistent with Black's claim that the mobilization of law increases as culture increases.

Chappell and Maggard (2007) examined discrepancies in crack and cocaine dispositions using arrest data from the New York City Police Department. The authors found that Blacks and Hispanics were significantly more likely to receive a prison sentence or felony charge than be released compared to their White counterparts, a finding consistent with the conventionality aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory. The authors also found that individuals with more prior arrests were more likely to be sent to prison than be released but were less likely to be charged with a felony compared to being released, a finding that offers mixed support for the respectability aspect of the social control tenet of Black's theory.

In perhaps the most relevant testing of Black's theory to the current research, Schulenberg (2010) examined patterns in police decision-making with regard to youth in Canada. Qualitative data were obtained from 200 semi-structured interviews with over 350 police officers across Canada. These data were then supplemented with statistical data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey on the proportion of apprehended youth charged. The author found that in metropolitan areas, police officers were more concerned with the characteristics of the offense, rather than the characteristics of the victim or the youth offender. However, in rural small towns, officers were more likely to consider the relationship between the victim and offender. The author also found that police officers applied a higher quantity of law and a more penal style of law when other mechanisms for informal social control were either weak or not present, including little parental involvement, poor parental attitudes, and no accountability at home.

While Black's theory has been widely supported, it has also been heavily criticized, oftentimes for its inability to be accurately measured and tested. Braithwaite and Biles (1980) argued that Black compromised the value of his own theory in his 1979 comment in *American Sociological Review* in which he criticized Gottfredson and Hindelang's (1979) testing of his theory through the use of victim survey data. According to Black (1979), his theory cannot explain increments in the quantity of law from one stage of the legal process to another. Braithwaite and Biles claimed, "Through his *ASR* comment Black has transformed what was a testable general theory about increments in the quantity of law into an untestable collection of ideas" (1979; 334).

Greenberg (1983) claimed that the theory is incoherent and empirically inadequate, as Black fails to meet the three criteria necessary for a theory, including 1) logically connected

propositions linking law to other variables, 2) measurable variables, and 3) a discussion of what evidence is admissible for testing the theories validity. Instead, Greenberg found that Black only accounts for a relationship between two variables but avoids formulating a causal relationship between any two variables. He further argued that the theory is formulated only at the the social level and does not account for individual motivation, the way in which people experience reality, or conflict and cooperation within society. Additionally, Greenberg found Black's definition of law to be problematic, as it excludes some aspects of law, such as constitutional provisions, but includes other types of legislation. Furthermore, Greenberg contended that people are likely to act based upon their own definition of the law rather than that of a sociologist, yet the theory only accounts for Black's conceptualization of law. Finally, Greenberg found that much of the evidence that Black brings forth to support of his theory is contradictory, and Black's exclusion of statistical modeling to test his own theory makes it difficult for future researchers to operationalize the theory and test its validity.

While Black's theory has been widely tested over the last few decades, there is a lack of research applying Black's theory to the school setting. The application of Black's theory to the school setting can provide a better understanding of how the law manifests itself within the schools, and how SROs' style and quantity of law within and across schools can be predicted by the variable aspects of social life that exist within the school setting.

Application to the School Setting

Black's theory of law can be applied as a theoretical framework to better understand how SROs spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior

is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Since schools are a microcosm of society and contain the variable aspects of social life, including stratification, morphology, culture, and social control¹, these variable aspects of social life within schools can be used to examine the style of school policing and the quantity of law administered by SROs. Although school discipline is not considered governmental social control, the application of SROs within the school setting and their potential involvement in school discipline is governmental social control because they are sworn police officers tasked with enforcing laws on behalf of the state.

Stratification can be conceptualized in the school setting by examining the socioeconomic status of school. Since several previous tests of Black's theory have measured stratification by analyzing income (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Cooney, 1997; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011), the socioeconomic status of schools can be understood by examining the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch, as this is oftentimes a direct reflection of students' household income. Black claims that, "Stratification also explains law, its quantity as well as its style. It has long been recognized, for example, that wealthier people have a legal advantage" (Black, 1976; 12). Using this framework, it can be hypothesized that SROs at schools with a higher percentage of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch implement more accusatory styles of policing, such as law enforcement and involvement in school discipline, and neglect remedial styles of policing such as teaching and mentorship. Additionally, SROs implement higher quantities of law as schools' socioeconomic status decreases.

¹ Organization was excluded from this study because there is no relevant measure for it within the school setting.

The application of the stratification tenet of Black's theory to the school setting helps to address the gap in the literature regarding the effects of schools' socioeconomic status on the style of school policing and the quantity of law administered by SROs. Since much of the literature claims that SROs are overly punitive in socioeconomically disadvantaged schools, this theoretical framework provides a better understanding of the extent to which socioeconomic status predicts how school resource officers operate in schools. Without identifying the extent to which schools' socioeconomic status predicts their involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, SROs may continue to marginalize already disadvantaged youth through overly punitive practices.

Morphology can be conceptualized in the school setting by examining schools' population density. Since previous tests of Black's theory have measured morphology by examining population density (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979), the population density of the school setting can be understood by examining schools' total enrollment. Black claims that, "Population also predicts the rate at which people go to law for help, and what happens when they do. Thus, up to a point, the larger a community or other setting, the higher is its rate of litigation... Where people are more numerous and concentrated, law is, to a point, more severe as well" (Black, 1976; 46). Using this theoretical framework, it can be hypothesized that SROs at more populated schools will implement higher quantities of law and respond to situations with accusatory styles of policing, as opposed to remedial styles of policing such as teaching and mentorship. Many schools across the United States are overcrowded, particularly those in inner cities, and students at these overcrowded schools may have fewer advantages than schools with fewer students (Miguel & Gargano, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the extent to which schools' population density predicts the style of policing and quantity of law administered

by SROs to better understand the extent to which school resource officers may be implementing more punitive practices at schools that may be already struggling due to overcrowding.

Culture can be conceptualized within the school setting by analyzing conventionality, which has previously been measured by examining race (Borg, 1998) and gender (Chappell & Maggard, 2007). According to Black, “Law is great in a direction toward less conventionality than toward more conventionality” (Black, 1976; 69). Within schools, conventionality can be measured by examining racial composition and gender composition. Previous tests of Black’s theory have also measured culture by examining education (Myers, 1980; Doyle & Luckenbill, 1991; Avakame et al., 1999; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011), as Black claims, “the more educated an offender, the less serious is his offense” (Black, 1976; 66). Therefore, within the school setting, culture can also be measured by examining the percentage of students likely to go to college. Using this framework, it can be hypothesized that SROs at schools with a higher percentage of white students, male students, and students likely to attend college implement more accusatory styles of policing, such as law enforcement and involvement in school discipline, and neglect remedial styles of policing such as teaching and mentorship. Additionally, SROs implement higher quantities of law as schools’ conventionality and educational achievement decreases. The application of culture tenet of Black’s theory to the school setting helps to address the gap in the literature regarding the effects of schools’ race, gender, and education on the style of school policing and the quantity of law administered by SROs. Since much of the literature claims that school resource officers are overly punitive toward students of Color disadvantaged schools, this theoretical framework provides a better understanding of the extent to which race and other measures of culture predicts how SROs operate in schools.

Social control can be conceptualized within the school setting by examining the extent to which students are subjected to school-based mechanisms to control their movement and behavior, such as various school rules, security cameras, and behavioral modification programs. According to Black, “Law itself is social control, but many other kinds of social control also appear in social life, in families, friendships, neighborhoods, villages, tribes, occupations, organizations, and groups of all kinds. Thus, the proposition states that the quantity of law increases as the quantity of social control of these other kinds decreases, and vice versa” (Black, 1976; 6). Using this framework, it can be hypothesized that SROs at schools with informal social control implement more remedial styles of policing, such as teaching and mentorship, rather than law enforcement and involvement in school discipline. Additionally, SROs implement lower quantities of law as schools’ social control increases. The application of this tenet of the theory to the school setting addresses the gap in the literature regarding the extent to which the presence and availability of schools’ informal social control measures influence the style of policing and quantity of law administered by SROs. It is necessary to better understand the effects of informal social control on the implementation of SROs because schools’ reliance upon these informal social control measures in lieu of juvenile justice sanctions may allow for SROs to reduce the amount of punitive behaviors that may be instrumental in contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Quantitative Hypotheses

Stratification

- **H1a:** SROs' accusatory styles of policing, including involvement in law enforcement and school discipline, decrease as schools' socioeconomic status increases.
- **H1b:** SROs' remedial styles of policing, including teaching and mentorship, increase as schools' socioeconomic status increases.
- **H1c:** SROs' implement lower quantities of law as schools' socioeconomic status increases.

Morphology

- **H2a:** SROs' accusatory styles of policing, including involvement in law enforcement and school discipline, increase as schools' total enrollment increases.
- **H2b:** SROs' remedial styles of policing, including teaching and mentorship, decrease as schools' total enrollment increases.
- **H2c:** SROs' implement higher quantities of law as schools' total enrollment increases.

Culture

- **H3a:** SROs' accusatory styles of policing, including involvement in law enforcement and school discipline, decrease as schools' conventionality increases.
- **H3b:** SROs' remedial styles of policing, including teaching and mentorship, increase as schools' conventionality increases.
- **H3c:** SROs' implement lower quantities of law as schools' conventionality increases.

Social Control

- **H4a:** SROs' accusatory styles of policing, including involvement in law enforcement and school discipline, decrease as schools' social control increases.
- **H4b:** SROs' remedial styles of policing, including teaching and mentorship, increase as schools' social control increases.
- **H4c:** SROs' implement lower quantities of law as schools' social control increases.

Qualitative Hypotheses

Stratification

- SROs will be more likely to make an arrest or file a court petition, and be more involved in the school discipline process in cases involving students of lower socioeconomic status compared to cases involving students of higher socioeconomic status.
- SROs will be more likely to respond with teaching and mentoring in cases involving students of higher socioeconomic status compared to cases involving students of lower socioeconomic status.

Morphology

- SROs will be more likely to make an arrest or file a court petition, and be more involved in the school discipline process in cases involving students who are more removed from their school's social center compared to cases involving students who are closer to their school's social center.

- SROs will be more likely to respond with teaching and mentoring in cases involving students who are closer to their school's social center compared to cases involving students who are more removed from their school's social center.

Culture

- SROs will be more likely make an arrest or file a court petition, and be more involved in the school discipline process in cases involving students who are less respectable compared to cases involving students who are more respectable.
- SROs will be more likely to respond with teaching and mentoring in cases involving students who are more respectable compared to cases involving students who are less respectable.

Social Control

- SROs will be more likely to make an arrest or file a court petition, and be more involved in the school discipline process in cases involving students who are subjected to less informal social control compared to cases involving students who are subjected to more informal social control.
- SROs will be more likely to implement teaching and mentoring in cases involving students who are subjected to more informal social control compared to cases involving students who are subjected to less informal social control.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The current research examines how SROs spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Using quantitative data from the SSCS, a series of regression models were run to answer the following research questions: 1) To what extent do school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring? 2) To what extent do school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in school discipline? 3) To what extent do school characteristics effect the quantity of law administered by SROs?

The quantitative data were supplemented with qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with a sample (n=20) of SROs to provide a richer understanding of individual SROs' perceptions of how they spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. The qualitative data obtained from these semi-structured interviews were used to address the following research questions: 4) What are the experiences of SROs in one police department implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring? 5) What factors influence SROs' involvement in school discipline? and 6) What factors influence SROs' willingness to implement alternative social control measures?

Quantitative Analysis

Data

Quantitative data from the SSCS were used to better understand the extent to which school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, as well as their effects on the quantity of law administered by SROs. Data from the SSCS were obtained through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and serve as the primary source of school-level data on crime and safety for the United States Department of Education. The SSCS is a nationally representative cross-sectional survey that was administered at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year to a sample of approximately 3,500 public elementary and secondary schools with a 77.3% response rate (n=2,648). However, this study only analyzed data from middle schools and high schools (n=1,857), as the majority of elementary schools in the United States do not have full-time SROs assigned to their school sites on a full-time basis. Since one of the variables of interest² was not included in the public-use data set, a license for restricted-use data was obtained from the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (License #16010016).

The SSCS is administered to school principals in the spring of even-numbered school years. The survey accounts for a number of factors, including level of instruction, student enrollment size, and urbanicity, and is large enough to provide estimates of all public schools in the United States (NCES, 2015). The purpose of the SSCS is to ascertain information on a variety of topics related to crime and safety on school campuses, including school practices and programs, school security, staff training, limitations on crime prevention, frequency of crime and

² The restricted variable of interest tapped into the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch.

violence at school, frequency of incidents reported to law enforcement, disciplinary problems and actions, and other school characteristics related to school crime (Chaney, 2015).

Dependent Variables

The quantitative analysis of this study examined the style of school policing, as well as the amount of law administered by SROs as dependent variables. To better understand the style of policing implemented by SROs, this study examined the extent to which SROs are involved in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline. To assess the extent to which SROs are involved with law enforcement, a law enforcement index variable was created by adding the responses of the following three questions in the SSCS: 1) Does your SRO conduct security enforcement and patrol? 2) Does your SRO coordinate with local police? and 3) Does your SRO identify problems and seeking solutions? These responses were all coded 1=yes, 0=no. To assess the extent to which SROs are involved with teaching, a teacher index variable was created by adding the responses of the following two questions in the SSCS: 1) Does your SRO train teachers in school safety? and 2) Does your SRO teach or train students? These responses were both coded 1=yes, 0=no. To assess the extent to which SROs are involved with mentoring, responses from the SSCS question inquiring about whether or not SROs were involved with mentorship were examined. To assess the extent to which school resource officers are involved with school discipline, responses from the SSCS question that inquire about whether or not SROs were involved with school discipline were examined. These questions were both coded 1=yes, 0=no.

The variables tapping into SROs' involvement with law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring were selected as measures of styles of school policing because they are consistent

with NASRO's recommended triad model for the implementation of SROs. Additionally, the extent to which SROs are involved in law enforcement serves as a measure for SROs' implementation of accusatory styles of law, while the extent to which SROs are involved in teaching and mentoring serves as a measure for SROs' implementation of remedial styles of law. This study examined the extent to which SROs are involved in school discipline because of the widespread belief that SROs' involvement in school discipline is instrumental in contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

To better understand the quantity of law administered by SROs, this study examined the total number of school-related incidents reported to the police, as well as the overall total usage of SROs. To assess the total number of school-related incidents reported to the police in schools, an incident rate variable was calculated by dividing the logged *total number of students* variable by the number of school-related incidents reported to the police variable. This variable was included as a measure of the quantity of law in schools because Black argues that the frequency in which people call upon the police for assistance is a measurement of the quantity of law within a society. To assess the overall total usage of school resource officers, a *SRO total* index variable was created by calculating the extent to which SROs are involved in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline. The *SRO total* variable was used to measure the quantity of law administered in the school setting because according to Black's theory, police presence is a measure of the quantity of law.

Independent Variables

The quantitative analysis of this study utilized several independent measures to tap into school-level characteristics to examine the extent to which they predict SROs' involvement in

law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, as well as the quantity of law administered by SROs. The independent measures included both theoretical measures and control measures. The theoretical independent measures analyzed the variable aspects of social life outlined in Black's theory, including stratification, morphology, culture, and social control. The control measures tapped into additional school characteristics, including the number of classroom changes, the level of crime where the school is located (low, medium, high), urbanicity, and geographic region.

Theoretical Measures.

The quantitative analysis of this study included several theoretical independent measures that tap into the variable aspects of social life outlined in Black's theory, including stratification, morphology, culture, and social control. Stratification in schools was measured by examining the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This variable was selected because it taps into the distribution of material conditions within schools and was the only variable available within the SSCS that provides a measure of schools' socioeconomic status. Morphology in schools was measured by examining the school's total enrollment. Due to the skewness of the distribution, the natural log of the *total enrollment* variable was utilized. This variable was selected because it provided an understanding of population density within the school setting. Culture in schools was measured by examining the variables *percentage of white students*, *percentage of male students*, and *percentage of students likely to go to college* within each school. These variables were utilized because race, gender, and education are often used to measure the conventionality tenet of culture. Social control in schools was measured by creating a social control index of alternative social control measures in place on school campuses. The

social control index included the variables *practice closed campus for lunch*, *enforce strict dress code*, *security cameras in place*, and *behavioral modification programs for students*. These variables were selected because they are representative of informal social control measures that exist within the school setting.

Control Measures.

In addition to the theoretical independent measures, several control variables were included in this analysis that did not fall into any of the categories that tap into the variable aspects of social life. These control measures tapped into additional school characteristics, including the level of crime where the school is located (low, medium, high)³, the number of classroom changes, urbanicity (city, suburb, town, rural)⁴, and geographic region (South, Northeast, Midwest, West)⁵. The level of crime where the school is located was included as a control measure because the level of crime in schools' surrounding areas may impact the style of school policing, the amount of law administered by SROs, and the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. The number of classroom changes was included as a control measure because students may be more likely to victimize or be victimized during time periods in which they operate with more autonomy and are not under the control of a classroom teacher, which may influence the the style of school policing, the amount of law administered by SROs, and the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Urbanicity was included as a control variable because social control measures of the variance in informal social control mechanisms in suburbs, towns, and rural areas compared to cities, which in turn,

³ A dummy variable was created using low crime as the reference category.

⁴ A dummy variable was created using city as the reference category.

⁵ A dummy variable was created using South as the reference category.

may affect the style of school policing, the amount of law administered by SROs, and the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Geographic region was included as a control variable because the cultural climate of both schools and police departments may vary in different areas of the country, which may impact the style of school policing, the amount of law administered by SROs, and the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures.

Analytic Plan

A series of regression models were run in order to examine the extent to which school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, and the extent to which these school characteristics affect the implementation of law in schools. Model 1 regressed the *law enforcer index* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. Model 2 added the control measures to the measures included in Model 1. Model 3 regressed the *teacher index* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. Model 4 added the control measures to the measures included in Model 3. Model 5 regressed the theoretical independent measures on the *mentorship* dependent variable. Model 6 added the control measures to the measures included in Model 5. Models 1-6 aimed to fill the gap in the literature regarding how school characteristics predict the extent to which SROs engage in the triad model functions recommended by NASRO, as well as how the behavior of SROs is shaped by these variable aspects of social life within the school setting.

Model 7 regressed the *school discipline* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. Model 8 added the control measures to the measures included in Model 7. Models 7 and 8 aimed to fill a gap in the literature regarding the extent to which school

characteristics influence SROs' involvement in school discipline. Additionally, Models 7 and 8 aimed to create a better understanding of the extent to which SROs may be contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline through their involvement in the school discipline process.

Model 9 regressed the *SRO total* dependent measures on the theoretical independent measures. Model 10 added the control measures to the measures included in Model 9. Model 11 regressed the *total number of incidents reported to police* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. Model 12 added the control measures to the measures included in Model 11. Models 9-12 aimed to better understand how school characteristics predict the quantity of law administered by SROs.

Qualitative Analysis

Data

While the quantitative data provide some information about how SROs are implemented in schools across the United States, the quantitative data do not provide an understanding of individual SROs' perceptions of how they spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. Therefore, the quantitative data in this study were supplemented with qualitative semi-structured interviews with a sample (n=20) of SROs in a municipal police department in a southeastern city. Prior to conducting these interviews, approval to work with human subjects was granted by Old Dominion University's College of Arts and Letters' Human Subjects Review Committee (Case #855766-1). Additionally, authorization to conduct these interviews was obtained from the Chief of Police and the

Superintendent of Schools. The SROs were informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of this study and were provided with the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. The SROs interviewed were all sworn police officers employed by the same municipal police department. This police department is contracted with the city's school district to provide full-time law enforcement services five days a week, eight hours each day to each of the 15 public middle school and 12 public high school campus, as well responsible for overseeing the safety and security of a few neighboring elementary schools.

Analytic Plan

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted during May and June of 2016 and took place at the individual SRO's assigned precinct. These interviews took place in a private space to allow for the SROs to speak candidly, free from interruption or influence by police personnel. The use of a semi-structured interview schedule was selected to allow for the SROs to openly discuss how they spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain their behavior, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of their schools' informal social control measures. Since all of the SROs were on-duty at the time of these interviews, the number of questions included in the interview schedule was limited at the request of the police department. These interviews ranged in length from 7 minutes and 15 seconds to 41 minutes and 23 seconds, were recorded using a LiveScribe digital recording device, downloaded onto a computer, and transcribed by the author.

Once these interviews were transcribed, they were then analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. The data were coded by reading and re-reading

transcripts for the purpose of identifying initial themes. Next, a more focused coding was conducted for the purposes of identifying broader themes. These themes were formulated based on recurrent responses provided by the SROs, and carefully reviewed to ensure that they appropriately represented the qualitative data obtained during the interview process. Finally, these themes were analyzed within the context of Black's theoretical framework to better understand the extent to which stratification, morphology, culture, and social control impact how individual SROs spend their time, the variation in their behaviors, their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped their schools' informal social control measures.

Interview Questions

Qualitative interviews were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of how SROs spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics influence their behavior, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of their schools' informal social control measures. Interview questions inquired specifically about their motivation for becoming a SRO, the pros and cons of the position, the type of training involved with becoming a SRO, how they spend their time, and what they wish they could do on campus but are unable to do due to time or other restraints. They were also asked about their involvement in school discipline, the extent to which they engage in law enforcement, teaching, and mentorship, and what factors influence their decision to engage in these behaviors.

Additional interview questions inquired about how the variable aspects of social life within the school setting influence SROs' behavior. Broadly, SROs were asked what individual characteristics they believed influence students' behavior and how that affected their response to

student misbehavior. Follow-up questions were then asked if their responses aligned with the stratification, morphology, culture, or social control tenets of Black's theory. SROs were also asked more direct questions related to the tenets of Black's theory. Regarding the relational distance aspect of morphology, school resource officers were asked about the extent to which they thought involvement in extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, clubs etc.) influenced students' misbehavior and their response to it. Regarding the conventionality aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory, SROs were asked about the extent to which they thought that academic achievement influenced students' misbehavior and their response to it. Regarding the respectability tenet of Black's theory, SROs were asked about the extent to which they thought that students' prior disciplinary behavior affected students' behavior and their response to it. The interviews concluded with questions about the individual SROs' demographics, including age, gender, years of law enforcement experience, years of school resource officer experience, and level of education.⁶ A complete list of interview questions appears in Appendix I.

⁶ A question inquiring about students' socioeconomic status was originally included in the interview schedule in an effort to measure the stratification tent of Black's theory, as well as a question about race to additionally measure the conventionality aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory. However, the school district requested that these questions be removed from the interview schedule and these questions were not asked.

CHAPTER V

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Introduction

A series of regression models were run to answer the following research questions: 1) To what extent do school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring? 2) To what extent do school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in school discipline? 3) To what extent do school characteristics affect the quantity of law administered by SROs? The dependent variables tapped into the style of school policing, as well as the amount of law administered by SROs. This included the extent to which SROs engage in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, as well as the total number of school-related incidents reported to the police and the overall total usage of SROs. The independent measures tapped into the variable aspects of social life that are present in the school setting, including stratification, morphology, culture, and social control, as well as relevant control measures, including level of crime where the school is located, the number of classroom changes, urbanicity, and geographic region.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables appear in Table 1. Of the 1857 middle schools and high schools surveyed, 1430 (77%) reported having a SRO. Of the middle and high school campuses surveyed, 71.5% reported having a SRO who engages in security enforcement and patrol, 70.8% reported having a SRO who coordinates with local police, 68.7% reported having a SRO who identifies problems and seeks solutions, 24.6% of schools reported that their SRO did not engage in any of these behaviors or that they did not have a SRO, and 63.2% of

schools reported having a SRO who performed all three law enforcer behaviors. Of the middle and high school campuses surveyed, 45.2% of schools reported having a SRO who trains teachers in school safety, 31.8% of schools reported having a SRO who teaches or trains student, 48.6% of schools reported not having a SRO who teaches at all or not having a SRO altogether, and 25.6% of schools reported having a SRO who teaches and/or trains both teachers and students. Of the middle and high schools surveyed, 56.2% of schools reported having a SRO who mentors students. Of the middle and high schools surveyed, 61.8% of schools reported having a SRO who maintains school discipline. The majority of schools (76.1%) reported having a SRO who performs one or more of these functions (mean = 5.27, standard deviation = 1.56). The total number of incidents reported to law enforcement ranged from 0 to 1240 (mean = 26.1, standard deviation = 47.47).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Measures (n=1857)

Dependent Variable	Yes	%	Min	Max	Mean
SRO Law Enforcer Index	1401	75.4	0	3	2.74
<i>Security Enforcement</i>	1327	71.5	--	--	--
<i>Coordinate with Police</i>	1315	70.8	--	--	--
<i>Identify Problems</i>	1275	68.7	--	--	--
SRO Teacher Index	955	51.4	0	2	1.0
<i>Train Teachers</i>	839	45.2	--	--	--
<i>Teach Students</i>	591	31.8	--	--	--
<i>Mentor Students</i>	1044	56.2	--	--	--
<i>School Discipline</i>	1147	61.8	--	--	--
Total SRO functions	1414	76.1	0	7	5.27
Incidents Reported to Police	--	--	0	1240	26.1

Descriptive statistics for the independent measures appear in Table 2. The percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch ranged from zero to 100 percent (mean = 44.27, standard

deviation = 26.08). The total enrollment ranged from 12 students to 4,348 students (mean = 979.1, standard deviation = 644.03). The percent white enrollment ranged from 1 percent to 100 percent (mean = 62.12, standard deviation = 31.78). The total male enrollment ranged from 0 to 100 percent (mean = 48.8, standard deviation = 10.29). The percentage of students likely to go to college ranged from 0 to 100 percent (mean = 62.6, standard deviation = 23.74). The majority of schools implement informal social control measures, as 75.7% practice closed campus for lunch, 67.1% enforce a strict dress code, 80.9% utilize security cameras, and 89.9% of schools offer behavioral modification programs. Only .4% of schools do not use any of these social control measures, 3.6% of schools utilize just one, 17.2% of schools utilize two, 39.6% of schools utilize three, and 39.2% of schools utilize all four social control measures. Very few of the middle and high school campuses described their school site as located in an area with a high level of crime (5.4%), another 18.8% of schools reported being located in an area with a moderate level of crime, and 75.8% of schools reported being located in an area with a low level of crime. The percentage of daily attendance averaged 93.3% and ranged from 3 to 100%. The average number of typical number of classroom changes was 6.6 and ranged from 0 to 18. With regard to urbanicity, 25.9% of schools described their school location as a city, 34.3% of schools described their school location as a suburb, 15.9% of schools described their school location as a town, and 23.9% of schools described their school location as rural. Schools were well dispersed across the country with 17% of schools located in the northeast, 24.6% of schools located in the Midwest, 36.6% of schools located in the south, and 21.9% of schools located in the west.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Independent Measures (n = 1857)

Independent Variable	%	Min	Max	Mean
High Crime School Location	5.4	--	--	--
Moderate Crime School Location	18.8	--	--	--
Low Crime School Location	75.8	--	--	--
Average Percentage of Daily Attendance	--	3	100	93.3
Number of Classroom Changes	--	0	18	6.6
Urbanicity: City	25.9	--	--	--
Urbanicity: Suburb	34.3	--	--	--
Urbanicity: Town	15.9	--	--	--
Urbanicity: Rural	23.9	--	--	--
Census Region: Northeast	17.0	--	--	--
Census Region: Midwest	24.6	--	--	--
Census Region: South	36.6	--	--	--
Census Region: West	21.9	--	--	--
Percent students Free/Reduced Lunch	--	0	100	44.27
Total Enrollment	--	12	4348	979.1
Percent White Enrollment	--	0	100	62.12
Percentage of Male Students	--	0	100	48.8
Percent Likely to go to College	--	0	100	62.6
Social Control Index	99.6	0	4	3.14
Closed Campus for Lunch	75.7	--	--	--
Enforce Strict Dress Code	67.1	--	--	--
Security Cameras	80.9	--	--	--
Behavioral Modification Programs	89.9	--	--	--

Model 1

The *law enforcer index* dependent variable was regressed on the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p = .000$, $df = 6$). The *percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch* had a positive ($b=.017$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$) impact on the law enforcer index, indicating that schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch have SROs who engage in more law enforcement behaviors. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' law enforcement behaviors would increase as schools' socioeconomic status decreases because

the style of school policing is expected to be more punitive as socioeconomic status decreases. This finding is also consistent with the stratification tenet of Black's theory that suggests that the style of law is more accusatory as wealth decreases (Black, 1976; 29).

The *total students* variable was also positive ($b=1.171$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more students have SROs who engage in more law enforcement behaviors. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' law enforcement behaviors increase as total enrollment increases because SROs' style of school policing is more punitive as the population density of a school increases. This finding is also consistent with the morphology tenet of Black's theory that suggests that the style of law is more accusatory as population increases (Black, 1976; 47).

The *percentage of white students* variable was also positive ($b=.006$) and statistically significant ($p=.041$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of white students have SROs who engage in more law enforcement behaviors. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' style of policing would be more punitive as conventionalality decreases, as it would be expected that SROs would implement more remedial styles of law as the percentage of white students increases.

The *informal social control index* variable was also positive ($b=.263$) and statistically significant ($p=.001$), indicating that schools with more social control measures have SROs who engage in more law enforcement behaviors. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that the SROs' style of policing would be more remedial as social control measures increased, as Black claims that the law is more remedial as social control measures increase (Black 1976; 108). Although this finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis, perhaps schools feel compelled to implement more informal social control measures in schools in which there is a

need for a more punitive style of law and aim to control students through both informal and formal social control measures.

Neither the *percent male students* variable nor the *percent students likely to go to college* variable made a statistically significant contribution to the model. Although previous tests of Black's theory have utilized gender as a measure of conventionality (Chappell & Maggard, 2007), schools may oftentimes have the relatively the same amount of male students as female students, thus perhaps making gender a statistically insignificant predictor of conventionality in the school setting. Previous tests of Black's theory have utilized education as a measure for culture (Braithwait & Biles, 1980; Myers, 1980; Doyle & Luckenbill, 1991; Avakame et al., 1999; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Kuo et al., 2011). However, in the school setting all of the students have relatively the same amount of education, and although some may be more likely to go to college than others, students within the same school may not have much variance in their level of education.

Model 2

Model 2 added the control measures to the theoretical measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=15$). The theoretical variables remained robust to the introduction of the control variables. In terms of the control variables, the *moderate crime where school is located* variable was positive ($b=.463$) and statistically significant ($p=.043$). This indicates that schools located in areas with a moderate level of crime have SROs who engage in more law enforcement behaviors when compared to schools located in neighborhoods with low levels of crime. Both the *suburb* dummy variable ($b=-.648$, $p=.002$) and *rural* dummy variable ($b=-.538$, $p=.011$) were negative and statistically significant, indicating that schools in suburban

and rural areas have SROs who engage in less law enforcement behaviors compared to SROs assigned to schools located in cities. The *Midwest* dummy variable ($b=-.510, p=.015$) and the *West* dummy variable ($b=-.913, p=.000$) were both negative and statistically significant, indicating that schools located in the Midwest and West have SROs who engage in less law enforcement behaviors when compared to schools located in the south.

Table 3: Models 1 and 2

	Model 1	Model 2
Percent Students Free/Reduced Lunch	.017***	.011*
Total Enrollment	1.171***	1.212***
Percent White Enrollment	.006*	.009*
Percentage of Male Students	-.009	-0.007
Percent Likely to go to College	1.13E-05	.000
Social Control Index	.263***	.264***
High Crime School Location (dummy)	--	0.452
Moderate Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.463*
Typical Number of Classroom Changes	--	-.058
Urbanicity: Suburb (dummy)	--	-.648**
Urbanicity: Town (dummy)	--	-.076
Urbanicity: Rural (dummy)	--	-.538*
Census Region: Northeast (dummy)	--	-.343
Census Region: Midwest (dummy)	--	-.510*
Census Region: West (dummy)	--	-.913***

Model 3

Model 3 regressed the *teacher index* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000, df=6$). The *total number of students* was positive ($b=.310$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more students have SROs who engage in more teaching. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' teaching increases as schools' total enrollment decreases.

Although Black claims that the style of law is less remedial and more accusatory as the population increases (Black 1976; 47), perhaps schools are intimate social settings regardless of population density since the students within them spend so much time with one another and are likely to know one another more on a more personal basis. Therefore, SROs feel inclined to implement remedial styles of school policing. Although this finding is inconsistent with the population density tenet of morphology, this finding is consistent with the relational distance aspect of Black's theory that suggests that the law is more remedial among intimates (Black, 1976; 47).

The *percentage of white students* variable was also positive ($b=.010$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of white students have SROs who engage in more teaching behaviors. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' teacher behaviors increase as schools' conventionality increase. Since race is oftentimes a measure of conventionality when testing the culture tenet of Black's theory (Borg, 1998; Chappell & Maggard, 2007), this finding is consistent with the notion that the style of law is more remedial in the direction of conventionality, as the law favors those who are white over those who are not white.

The *percentage of male students* was negative ($b=-.013$) and statistically significant ($p=.009$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of male students have SROs who engage in fewer teaching behaviors. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' teacher behaviors increase as schools' conventionality increases. Although gender has previously been used to test the conventionality aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory, perhaps gender is an inaccurate measure of conventionality in the school setting because schools may oftentimes have an equal number of male and female students.

The *informal social control index* variable was positive (.222) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more social control measures have SROs who engage in more teaching behaviors. This finding is consistent the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' teacher behaviors increase as schools' social control increases. Black claims that the style of law is more remedial with an increase in informal social control measures (Black, 1976; 105). Therefore, SROs assigned to schools that utilize more informal social control measures may implement a less punitive style of school policing and engage in more remedial styles of school policing. The *percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch* variable and the *percentage of students likely to go to college* variable did not make a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Model 4

Model 4 added the control measures to the theoretical measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=15$). The theoretical variables remained robust to the introduction of the control variables. The *suburb* dummy variable was negative ($b=-.358$) and statistically significant ($p=.007$), indicating that school located in suburbs have SROs who engage in fewer teacher behaviors compared to schools located in cities. The *Northeast* dummy variable was also negative ($b=-.695$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools located in the Northeast have SROs who engage in fewer teacher behaviors compared to schools located in the South. None of the other control measures made a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Table 4: Models 3 and 4

	Model 3	Model 4
Percent students Free/Reduced Lunch	-.002	-.005
Total Enrollment	.310***	.309***
Percent White Enrollment	.010***	.011***
Percentage of Male Students	-.013**	-.013**
Percent Likely to go to College	-.001	.002
Social Control Index	.222***	.212***
High Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.100
Moderate Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.146
Typical Number of Classroom Changes	--	-.033
Urbanicity: Suburb (dummy)	--	-.358**
Urbanicity: Town (dummy)	--	-.037
Urbanicity: Rural (dummy)	--	-.187
Census Region: Northeast (dummy)	--	-.695***
Census Region: Midwest (dummy)	--	-.188
Census Region: West (dummy)	--	-.256

Model 5

Model 5 regressed the *mentor* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=1$). The *percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch* was positive ($b=.007$) and statistically significant ($p=.045$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch have SROs who engage in more mentor behaviors. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' mentor behaviors increase as schools' socioeconomic status increases. Although Black claims that the style of law is more accusatory in the direction of social disadvantage (Black, 1976; 29), perhaps SROs utilize more remedial styles of school policing such as mentoring youth because they view students within the same school as equals. According to Black, there is less law among neighbors, colleagues, friends, and wherever people are more equal (Black, 1976; 13). Although some students are more economically advantaged

than others, they are likely not directly responsible for their own accumulation of wealth, as they are under the guardianship of their parents or legal caretaker. It is also possible that school resource officers do not know students' socioeconomic status and just assume that since schools oftentimes draw from neighborhoods of similar socioeconomic status, that the students within the same school are all of similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

The *total number of students* was also positive ($b=.533$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more students have SROs who engage in more mentor behaviors. This finding is also inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' mentorship increases as schools' total enrollment decreases. According to Black the law is more accusatory as population size increases (Black 1976; 47); however, the law is more remedial in more intimate settings (Black 1976; 40). Although schools may have a large population of students they are also somewhat intimate settings, as students spend lots of time with one another and are likely to cross paths with many students throughout the day either in the classroom, during lunch and passing periods, and during afterschool activities. Perhaps the amount of students within a school is irrelevant when examining the extent to which morphology predicts the behavior of SROs. Rather, school resource officers may be more inclined to assess the intimate nature of the school setting and instead utilize more remedial styles of school policing, such as mentorship when dealing with youth in the school setting, regardless of the total number of students within the school.

The *percentage of white students* was also positive ($b=.007$) and statistically significant ($p=.008$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of white students have SROs who engage in more mentorship. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' mentorship increase as schools' conventionality increases. According to Black, the law is

more remedial in the direction of conventionality (Black 1976; 68), which is perhaps why SROs may be more inclined to engage in mentor behaviors in schools that have a higher percentage of white students, as this style of policing is more remedial.

The *informal social control index* was also positive ($b=.268$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more social control measures have SROs who engage in more mentorship. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' mentorship increase as schools' implementation of alternative social control measures increases. According to Black the law is more remedial where there is more alternative social control (Black 1976; 108). Therefore, it would be expected that the more a school implements alternative social control measures, the more likely a SRO is to engage in a remedial style of school policing.

Neither the *percentage of male students* nor the *percentage of students likely to go to college* variable made a statistically significant contribution to the model. Although previous tests of Black's theory have utilized gender as a measure of conventionality, schools oftentimes have the same amount of male students as female students, thus perhaps making gender a statistically insignificant predictor of conventionality in the school setting. Previous tests of Black's theory have also utilized education as a measure for conventionality. However, in the school setting all of the students have relatively the same amount of education, despite the fact that some may be more likely to go to college than others.

Model 6

Model 6 added the control measures to the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=1$). The *percentage of students eligible for free or*

reduced lunch was no longer statistically significant with the addition of the control measures; however, all of the other theoretical variables remained robust to the introduction of the control variables. The *Northeast* dummy variable was negative ($b=-.592$) and statistically significant ($p=.001$), indicating that schools located in the Northeast have SROs that engage in fewer mentoring behaviors compared to schools located in the South. None of the other control measures made a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Table 5: Models 5 and 6

	Model 5	Model 6
Percent Students Free/Reduced Lunch	.007*	.007
Total Enrollment	.533***	.533***
Percent White Enrollment	.007**	.006*
Percentage of Male Students	-.008	-.008
Percent Likely to go to College	.004	.004
Social Control Index	.268***	.257***
High Crime School Location (dummy)	--	-.243
Moderate Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.042
Typical Number of Classroom Changes	--	-.051
Urbanicity: Suburb (dummy)	--	-.118
Urbanicity: Town (dummy)	--	.336
Urbanicity: Rural (dummy)	--	.149
Census Region: Northeast (dummy)	--	-.592***
Census Region: Midwest (dummy)	--	-.023
Census Region: West (dummy)	--	.146

Model 7

Model 7 regressed the *school discipline* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=6$). The *percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch* was positive ($b=.011$) and statistically significant ($p=.014$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free

or reduced lunch have SROs who are more involved in school discipline. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' involvement in school discipline increases as schools' socioeconomic status decreases. According to Black, the style of law is more accusatory where there more disadvantage (Black 1976; 29). Although school discipline in and of itself is not a measure of law, SROs' involvement in school discipline potentially criminalizes a non-criminal process. Therefore, when SROs involve themselves in the school disciplinary process, they are engaging in an accusatory style of school policing.

The *total number of students* was also positive ($b=.761$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more students have SROs who are more involved in school discipline. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs' involvement with school discipline increases as schools' total enrollment increases, as involvement in school discipline is an accusatory style of school policing. According to the morphology tenet of Black's theory, the style of law is more accusatory as population increases (Black 1976; 46), which is consistent with SROs implementing accusatory styles of policing by involving themselves in the school discipline process.

Model 8

Model 8 added the control measures to the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=15$). The theoretical variables *percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch* and *total students* remained robust to the introduction of the control variables. None of the control variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model. Perhaps the reason why none of the control measures were statistically significant predictors of SROs' involvement in school discipline is because different schools may have a

variety of different reasons behind utilizing SROs in their schools' disciplinary process. Some schools may involve SROs as an alternative to formal juvenile justice sanctions and have the SRO present to provide students with additional guidance. However, others may involve SROs with more punitive intentions and use the school disciplinary process as a means to criminalize trivial misbehavior. Due to the variety of reasons for involving SROs in the school disciplinary process, it may be difficult to significantly predict which school-level characteristics predict whether or not school resource officers are involved with school discipline.

Table 6: Models 7 and 8

	Model 7	Model 8
Percent students Free/Reduced Lunch	.011*	.010*
Total Enrollment	.761***	.746***
Percent White Enrollment	-.005	-.001
Percentage of Male Students	.002	.002
Percent Likely to go to College	-.002	.000
Social Control Index	.120	.130
High Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.651
Moderate Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.434
Typical Number of Classroom Changes	--	-.073
Urbanicity: Suburb (dummy)	--	-.094
Urbanicity: Town (dummy)	--	-.061
Urbanicity: Rural (dummy)	--	.007
Census Region: Northeast (dummy)	--	-.055
Census Region: Midwest (dummy)	--	.050
Census Region: West (dummy)	--	.381

Model 9

Model 9 regressed SROs' combined involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline on the theoretical independent variables. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=6$). The *percentage of students eligible for free or*

reduced-price lunch was positive ($b=.006$) and statistically significant ($p=.020$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch have SROs who engage in more combined law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that there is more law administered by SROs where there is more socioeconomic disadvantage. This finding is also consistent with the stratification tenet of Black's theory that claims that there is a higher quantity of law where there is less wealth (Black, 1976; 21).

The *total number of students* variable was also positive ($b=.646$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more students have SROs who engage in more combined law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that there is a greater quantity of law administered by SROs as school population increases. This finding is also consistent with the morphology tenet of Black's theory that posits that there is a greater quantity of law as population increases (Black, 1976; 46).

The *percentage of white students* variable was also positive ($b=.007$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more white students have SROs who engage in more combined law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that schools with a higher percentage of white students would have SROs implement less law. This finding is also inconsistent with the conventionality aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory. Since Black claims that there is less law where there is less conventionality (Black, 1976; 69), it would be assumed that SROs would administer less law in schools that have a higher percentage of white students. However, the *percentage of male students* was negative ($b=.008$) and statistically significant ($p=.037$),

indicating that schools with a higher percentage of male students have SROs who engage in fewer overall behaviors. This finding was consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that schools with a higher percentage of male students would have SROs implement less law. This finding is also consistent with the conventionality aspect of the culture tenet of Black's theory that posits that as there is less law where there is more conventionality (Black, 1976; 69).

The *social control index* variable was also positive ($b=.238$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that SROs in schools with more informal social control measures engage in more combined law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline. This was inconsistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs implement less law in schools with more informal social control. Additionally, this finding is inconsistent with the social control tenet of Black's theory that claims that there is less law where there is more informal social control (Black, 1976; 111). However, just because SROs are performing more law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline in schools with more informal social control measures does not necessarily mean that they are implementing more formal social control measures. Rather, it could be that school resource officers themselves are implementing informal social control measures as opposed to relying on formal juvenile justice sanctions.

The *percentage of students likely to go to college* variable did not make a statistically significant contribution to the model. This is again perhaps because this measure is an inaccurate measure of respectability within schools. SROs may be unaware of which students are likely to go to college and which are not and instead rely on other factors to gauge conventionality, such as race and gender, as these were both statistically significant predictors of the overall amount of behaviors performed by SROs.

Model 10

Model 10 added the control measures to the theoretical measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=15$). The *percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch* was no longer statistically significant with the addition of the control measures; however, all other theoretical variables remained robust to the introduction of the control variables. The *suburb* dummy variable was negative ($b=-.292$) and statistically significant ($p=.006$), indicating that schools located in suburbs are less likely to have SROs who engage in more law enforcement, teaching, mentorship, and school discipline compared to schools located in cities. The *Northeast* dummy ($p=.000$, $b=-.454$) and the *West* dummy variable ($p=.044$, $b=-.217$) were both negative and statistically significant, indicating that schools located in the Northeast and West regions are less likely to have SROs who engage in more overall behaviors compared to schools located in the South. No other control measures made a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Table 7: Models 9 and 10

	Model 9	Model 10
Percent students Free/Reduced Lunch	.006*	.003
Total Enrollment	.646***	.644***
Percent White Enrollment	.007***	.007***
Percentage of Male Students	-.008*	-.008*
Percent Likely to go to College	-.001	.001
Social Control Index	.238***	.223***
High Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.162
Moderate Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.193
Typical Number of Classroom Changes	--	-.037
Urbanicity: Suburb (dummy)	--	-.292**
Urbanicity: Town (dummy)	--	.075
Urbanicity: Rural (dummy)	--	-.152
Census Region: Northeast (dummy)	--	-.454***
Census Region: Midwest (dummy)	--	-.154
Census Region: West (dummy)	--	-.217*

Model 11

Model 11 regressed the *total number of incidents reported to police* dependent variable on the theoretical independent measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=7$). The *percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch* was positive ($b=.007$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch have more school-related incidents reported to the police. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs implement less law as schools' socioeconomic status increases. According to the stratification tenet of Black's theory, there is less law where there is more socioeconomic advantage (Black, 1976; 13). Therefore, the fact that more incidents are reported to SROs in schools with a higher percentage of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch is consistent with the finding that there is a higher quantity of law administered by SROs in more disadvantaged schools.

The *total number of students* was also positive ($b=.220$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with more students have more incidents reported to the police. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that schools with fewer students have less law administered by SROs. According to the morphology tenet of Black's theory, there is less law where there is more intimacy (Black 1976; 40). Therefore, schools with a fewer amount of students may create a more intimate setting for both students and staff and are less inclined to call upon the law as opposed to more populated schools.

The *percentage of students likely to go to college* was negative ($b=-.006$) and statistically significant ($p=.000$), indicating that schools with a higher percentage of students likely to go to college have fewer incidents reported to the police. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that predicted that SROs administer less law as culture increases within schools. According to

Black, there is less law where there is more culture (Black 1976; 65). Therefore, in schools with a higher percentage of students likely to go to college, the law is called upon less frequently. The *percentage of white students*, *percentage of male students*, and *social control index* variables did not make a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Model 12

Model 12 added the control measures to the theoretical measures. The overall model was statistically significant ($p=.000$, $df=16$). The theoretical variables remained robust to the introduction of the control variables. The *West* dummy variable was positive ($b=.145$) and statistically significant ($p=.012$), indicating that schools located in the West geographic region have more incidents reported to the police when compared to schools in the South. This was the only control measure that made a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Table 8: Models 11 and 12

	Model 11	Model 12
Percent students Free/Reduced Lunch	.007***	.006***
Total Enrollment	.220***	.236***
Percent White Enrollment	.001	.001
Percentage of Male Students	-.001	-.001
Percent Likely to go to College	-.006***	-.005***
Social Control Index	-.012	-.010
Reported Incidents to Police	2.676***	2.643***
High Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.154
Moderate Crime School Location (dummy)	--	.065
Typical Number of Classroom Changes	--	-.014
Urbanicity: Suburb (dummy)	--	-.085
Urbanicity: Town (dummy)	--	.122
Urbanicity: Rural (dummy)	--	.023
Census Region: Northeast (dummy)	--	-.076
Census Region: Midwest (dummy)	--	.030
Census Region: West (dummy)	--	.145**

Summary of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings shed light on the extent to which school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, as well as their effects on the quantity of law administered by SROs. First, the descriptive statistics of the dependent variables indicate that SROs implement law enforcement behaviors more frequently than teaching and mentoring/counseling. These findings are consistent with much of the literature regarding school resource officers' implementation of the triad model (May et al., 2004; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Coon & Travis, 2012). Despite the fact that SROs are supposed to implement all three functions equally, 75% of the SROs perform one or more law enforcement functions, while only 51.4% of SROs perform one or more teacher functions, and only 56.2% engage in mentorship.

Findings also indicate that SROs implement more law enforcement behaviors, are more involved with school discipline, and implement higher quantities of law as schools' socioeconomic status decreases. These findings are all consistent with much of the literature that claims that SROs are overly punitive in schools marked by concentrated disadvantage (Hirschfield, 2008; Rios, 2011). Furthermore, SROs engage in both more teaching and mentorship as the percentage of white students increases, giving rise to the notion that SROs may be more punitive toward students of Color in comparison to white students. This claim is also consistent with literature that suggests that youth of Color experience a disproportionate amount of punishment at the hands of SROs (Rios, 2011; Shedd, 2015).

While much of the quantitative findings were consistent with the literature that suggests that SROs engage in behaviors that may be responsible for contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline, some of the quantitative findings suggest otherwise. Findings indicate that SROs

engage in more law enforcement behaviors as the percentage of white students increases. This finding is contrary to extent literature that suggests that SROs are more punitive toward students of Color. Additionally, SROs engage in more mentorship as the socioeconomic status of schools decreases. This finding is also inconsistent with literature that suggests that SROs neglect mentorship and other remedial styles of school policing, particularly in schools marked by concentrated disadvantaged.

CHAPTER VI

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Introduction

To supplement the quantitative data, qualitative data were drawn from semi-structured interviews with a sample (n=20) of SROs in a municipal police department in a southeastern city to better understand the experiences of SROs implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and their willingness to implement alternative social control measures. At the time of these interviews, all but one of the SROs were assigned on a full-time basis to either a middle school or high school campus, as well as responsible for overseeing the safety and security of a few neighboring elementary schools. The remaining officer interviewed had previously worked in the capacity of a SRO but at the time of the interview was working as an administrator in his precinct. All of the officers interviewed had previously worked in the capacity of a patrol officer for the police department prior to accepting the SRO assignment.

The majority of the SROs were male (n=16), 13 of the school resource officers were White, six were Black, and one was Asian. The SROs ranged from 27 to 61 years of age (mean = 40.75), had between four and 31 years of total law enforcement experience (mean = 14.45), and between one and 12 years of experience working in the capacity of a SRO (mean = 4.53). All of the SROs were required to complete a 40-hour SRO school offered by the state, a three-day regional school safety and security conference, and recurring, annual departmental training prior to the start of every academic year. Throughout the course of these various training programs, SROs learned how to interact with youth, understand the legal aspect of the school setting,

properly interview students, deal with the public, interact with school administrators, and prepare for active-shooter and other high-risk scenarios.

The qualitative data obtained from these semi-structured interviews were used to address the following research questions: 4) What are the experiences of SROs in one police department implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring? 5) What factors influence SROs' involvement in school discipline? and 6) What factors influence SROs' willingness to implement alternative social control measures? Analysis of the qualitative data yielded several emergent themes regarding the behavior of SROs, including 1) *oriented toward working with youth*, 2) *willingness to implement alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions*, 3) *the blurred lines between school discipline and crime*, 4) *"no quotas"*, and 5) *"we wear all the hats"*. Contrary to much of the extant literature regarding SROs and the school-to-prison pipeline, much of the qualitative findings obtained from these interview indicated that the vast majority of SROs in this study were willing to implement alternative social control measures whenever possible in lieu of formal juvenile justice sanctions due to the intimate nature of the school setting.

Oriented Toward Working with Youth

Nearly every SRO interviewed expressed that they enjoy working with youth, believed the assignment provided them with the opportunity to be a positive influence to students, and described the assignment as rewarding. Some of the officers said that they believed that working in the capacity of a SRO allowed for the students to view them as just another person, rather than a police officer. By being able to interact with students on a daily basis and in a different capacity than that of a patrol officer, many SROs believed that students were able to get to know

them and come to them for assistance or simply to have an adult with whom to positively interact.

So you go up to each class to show them hey I'm not just a police officer. You can come to me for help or just guidance, or just hey let's go outside and play ball. –Officer D

Several of the SROs claimed that not only does the position afford them the opportunity to interact with youth in a different capacity than a patrol officer but also allows for officers to intervene in at-risk youths' lives before they get involved with the criminal justice system.

Several of the officers expressed the belief that if students received positive intervention early enough in their lives, they would be less likely to commit serious crimes as adults.

I don't wanna see a lot of these young kids caught up in the criminal justice system. And the best way to do is try to get 'em while they're in middle school, high school, and just kinda get them on the straight and narrow. –Officer H

Several of the SROs stated that the ability to intervene in the lives of at-risk youth was their primary motivation for applying for and accepting the SRO position. Some stated that working as a patrol officer did not afford them with the opportunity to positively change peoples lives and they wanted to transition into an assignment that would allow for them to make a difference.

I became a resource officer because I started to get frustrated with the results that I was getting on the streets. I didn't see a reason as to why I do it. With arrests, all it was was just people getting released and rearrested. But I've always had an investment in children, and I felt that when you talk to them, when you teach them lessons before they get to the point of no return, they actually have an opportunity to correct things. -Officer G

Some of the SROs stated that in previous assignments they had within the police department, they came into contact with youth who had committed serious crimes and were saddened by the inability to make a difference in the lives of young people prior to tragic incidents taking place. Some of the SROs believed that accepting this position would allow for them to prevent young people from being involved with serious crimes and becoming enmeshed in the criminal justice system.

I spent 16 years as a detective and I've locked kids up as young as 14 years-old for murder and 16 years-old for life sentences and I was kind of done with it. I just wanted to see if maybe I could get to kids before they got to the point where they were getting dealt with for robbery or homicide. –Officer Q

Many of the SROs interviewed took great pride in the fact that what they did in their assignments allowed for positive changes in the lives of students with whom they had known throughout their time as a school resource officer. Many of the officers shared specific stories about instances in which they felt as though they were able to positively impact a youth's life and help put them on the path to be a successful adult.

What we do makes a difference in the kids lives. So I got a story where this one kid was a troublemaker, he was always getting into things at school, and every time I got a chance, I would talk to him. 'Hey man, hey Officer F, you're the only one that talks to me. My parents don't talk to me. You listen, this and this and that.' So long story short, he graduated high school. About two years later I was working part-time and I see this like brand new car pull up, right? And he gets out and says, 'Officer F, is that you?' I didn't even recognize him. He was in the military, had bought a brand new car, and came up personally to thank me for all the times that I talked to him, encouraged him. If that doesn't motivate you, I don't know what does. And I can tell you story after story like that, especially as long as I've been doing it. –Officer F

Several of the officers stated that they found that the students with whom they had interacted over the years were very appreciative of the efforts the school resource officers put into their jobs and the special attention paid to students. A few of the SROs stated that they found working patrol to be somewhat of a thankless job but found youth in the school setting to be much more appreciative than adults in the street.

I've always enjoyed kids. I thought it would be a good challenge, getting into the schools and trying to help them out...it's a very rewarding position if you're an officer, because kids are very appreciative of when you help them. Much more than an adult.
–Officer J

Although many of the SROs expressed that this assignment allowed for them to positively influence the lives of students, a few expressed that they were unable to intervene in as many cases as they hoped. However, despite the fact that a few of the SROs expressed

disappointment in not being able to reach all the students who could potentially benefit from positive intervention, they felt as though just being able to impact the lives of a few students was very meaningful to them.

Sometimes you can actually take the ones that are in trouble and you can kinda steer ‘em. And its not all of ‘em. I mean its maybe two or three if you’re lucky. You know, you can kinda get ‘em on the right track, keep ‘em from doing stupid stuff. –Officer N

A few of the officers expressed that because the position afforded them the opportunity to be a positive influence for youth, it was disheartening when youth engaged in criminal behavior, despite the extra attention the SRO and school staff paid particular students in an effort to set students up for success.

You develop a relationship, you know with these kids, so when you see that they’re making bad choices or doing something illegal, whether its getting into a fight, you know, you kind of counsel and mentor a set group of kids within your school and then those then make those bad decisions, you kind of...its more than just somebody you’re taking a report for an assault. You know, you have a relationship established with them. So there’s that kind of that connection and that almost level of disappointment because you grow to have expectations for these kids to make good choices, especially if you’re counseling them on making good choices and working with the teachers on doing that stuff. –Officer M

This theme is consistent with the morphology tenet of Black’s theory that claims that relational distance between people predicts and explains quantity of law, as law is inactive among intimates (Black 1976; 40). Additionally, this theme offers insight into why the quantitative findings in Model 5 and Model 6 suggested that SROs’ mentorship increases as schools’ socioeconomic status decreases and total enrollment increases. Students and school staff are likely to interact with one another frequently throughout the course of the day during classroom instruction, passing periods, lunch hours, and during after school sports and extracurricular activities, thus creating somewhat of an intimate setting. As such, SROs may have less punitive attitudes, feel inclined to utilize less law, and want to foster positive

relationships with youth because they are in a more intimate setting compared with what they would encounter while working in the capacity of a patrol officer.

This theme is also consistent with the social control tenet of Black's theory. According to Black, there is less law and a more remedial style of law as social control increases (Black 1976; 108). This theme also sheds light on the quantitative findings in Model 5 and Model 6 that found that SROs' mentorship increases as social control measures within schools increase. Although these SROs all represent governmental social control, as they are sworn police officers, their status as SROs affords them the opportunity to interact with youth in a different way in which they would if they were working in the capacity of patrol officers. Within the school setting, SROs are able to implement informal social control measures, such as mentorship, counseling, and other non-punitive forms of social control.

This theme is contradictory to much of the literature that suggests that SROs contribute to a culture of youth punishment, as the vast majority claimed that they accepted the SRO assignment because of their desire to better the lives of youth. Perhaps much of the theoretical literature that makes these claims assumes that SROs are operating in schools with the same mentality as patrol officers, rather than people who are motivated to accept the assignment because they are oriented toward working with youth and want to make a difference in the lives of students. This theme highlights the importance of police departments selecting officers for this assignment who have students' best interest in mind and understand that the school setting cannot be policed in the same manner as the streets.

Willingness to Implement Alternatives to Formal Juvenile Justice Sanctions

Nearly all of the SROs interviewed expressed the importance of exhausting all other alternative social control measures before implementing formal juvenile justice sanctions, particularly in cases that they believed to be minor offenses. Many observed that this was markedly different from the attitudes they had when previously working in the capacity of a patrol officer.

We're [the police] so used to just saying you did wrong, you go to jail. With kids its more, you know, walking through the steps, and talking to the parents, getting the right program, trying to figure out why you haven't...as opposed to the punitive part.
–Officer D

Many of the SROs noted that the school itself was a valuable resource for implementing alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions. Several SROs highlighted the importance of relying on the school administration to implement its own consequences for student misbehavior in lieu of formal charges, as well as allowing parents to discipline their children at home for an issue that took place in the school.

If I can deal with it without me getting involved that's always the best way. Because I don't want that negative reinforcement from a police officer. I would prefer to talk to their parents, have their parents deal with it. Because ultimately at the end of the day, we say it all the time, we want kids to run to us when they're scared; we don't want 'em to be scared of us. And if I'm being the disciplinarian that's not there, unfortunately they're not gonna want to deal with me. So I try to use the parents or the school whenever possible. –Officer R

Not only did many of the SROs discuss the importance of relying on alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions but also emphasized that they prided themselves exhausting all other measures before resorting to filing criminal charges against juveniles. While many of the SROs highlighted that there were some situations in which they were unable to utilize their own discretion due to the severity of the offense or parents' willingness to press charges against

another student, many of the SROs stated that they were oftentimes more satisfied with a situation if it was resolved through non-criminal means.

Well, the majority of the time, if I didn't have to arrest anybody, that's fine. Never wanted to arrest anybody. A lot of those factors are often out of our control though. We're not, obviously we're not getting called for the minor things, so its relatively significant when we're getting called. A fight for instance, if there's an assault that takes place, most of those decisions aren't within my realm of control. So we talk to the parents and we try to mediate the issue because it happened once, it could happen again. Let's make sure the issues resolved and it doesn't happen again. But if parents are adamant and want to press charges, we submit the paperwork and we go through with it. –Officer S

Some of the SROs emphasized not wanting students to be “hit twice” for an issue by being punished by both the school and the criminal justice system. Some of the SROs noted that in instances in which a student could face consequences from both the school and the criminal justice system it was better for the school to handle the situation, so long as it was not a serious criminal offense.

I try to give them like a perspective of hey if the school is bringing you something to your attention leave it as a school matter, the school is trying to investigate it. But if you don't, but if it steps to my needs you're then you're gonna look at personal charges from my perspective, from my end, then also disciplinary action from the school. So its kinda best if the school wants you to deal with the school, deal with the school, you don't wanna get hit twice you know on the same kinda thing. So you don't wanna get suspended and also get charged on the same kinda crime. –Officer B

Many of the SROs even expressed the preference for not only relying on the school to handle the issue administratively, but also for staying out of the school's disciplinary process altogether.

Several of the officers emphasized the importance of keeping school discipline and the juvenile justice process separate and only being present in school disciplinary proceedings when there was probable cause to believe that a crime had occurred and it was no longer appropriate to utilize the school's disciplinary process.

The only time that I got involved in the disciplinary process was when it looked like there was gonna be a criminal investigation. And that goes along with discussing what each others' roles are. So I wouldn't sit in on disciplinary matters. If a student didn't turn in an

assignment or was yelling at his teacher in class, no one ever called me for that, and they knew not to. If it involved an assault, a theft, something like that and it would turn into a criminal matter, often times I would sit in during that disciplinary process with the assistant principal and the student. I wouldn't say anything. And then when they concluded, then I'd take over if probable cause rose up so I could actually do something.
–Officer S

Some of the SROs stated that there were many occasions in which they felt as though criminal charges against a student were inappropriate or unnecessary if the school was taking disciplinary action but were required to file charges if the victim's parents wanted the student formally charged. However, oftentimes the SRO was able to change the minds of parents who were adamant about filing formal charges once the parents learned that the school would be implementing their own disciplinary measures.

A lot of times the parent will actually say as long as the school disciplines them, then I'm not interested in charging anything criminally. I can also tell you that sometimes I will consult the administrator. 'Well, what are you guys gonna do?' 'Well, he's gonna get kicked out for five days, or he's going to be sent to [alternative school].' Sometimes that will affect how I'm going forward with my charges. I may just do it for an information only action versus taking them to court. –Officer F

A few of the SROs expressed that they believed that these alternative disciplinary measures were more effective in deterring future problematic behavior because the school's response was more immediate than the juvenile justice system. However, these alternative sanctions still allowed for students to be held accountable for their actions without being consumed by the criminal justice system.

When it comes to what the school does, I let them do what they do. And I try my best to, I won't say minimize what happens with the kids, umm, I hold them accountable, but knowing the consequences, I try to walk them through it and you know, make this a learning experience without crossing the school. So if they decide for this fight, you know, we want to suspend them for 5 days, they get kicked off the basketball team. I think those immediate punishments and the things that come might be better than me hard pressing, to have you interviewed, and have you charged for assault on multiple students. But that'd be a conversation based on the parents' response, the school's response, how responsive the kid is to that behavior, and if I feel like they've gotten it or that you know it was something that the student is learning from, then I may only document it as being

something that would be a warn and release situation, as opposed to taking them through the criminal processes and having them, you know, tied up in the system. –Officer G

Many of the SROs noted that they were particularly in favor of implementing alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions if it was the student's first time committing a particular offense or if the offense was relatively minor. Several of the SROs were well informed of the variety of methods available to them as alternative options for formal sanctions, explaining how they were implemented, when they could be utilized, and the criteria used for determining who was eligible.

The good thing about the City of [Name of City], and I don't know if its state wide. I'd imagine it probably is. We, our intake, the department over at the courthouse, they have programs, diversion program... So if you get a kid that's messed up, done something stupid. Maybe he... maybe he brought marijuana to school, alright. Or maybe he had it in his car. It's a misdemeanor, but if they've never been in trouble before and you can verify that, then they're eligible for the diversion program, which is a way of keeping them out of the courts, keeping them, keeping something criminal off their record. That's what its designed to do. But you only get one bite at that apple, and I always tell them that. This is your one bite at the apple. After this, you have to go and see a judge. –Officer K

Some of the SROs claimed that this preference for utilizing alternatives to formal criminal justice sanctions in the school setting was largely attributed to the fact that they were dealing with juveniles rather than adults. Several of the SROs expressed that they were somewhat sympathetic to juveniles when they made bad decisions because they were still in the developmental stages of life.

Kids have bumps in the road, it's a learning experience. So when they break the law its like an educational thing, you know. If they get it right and then they correct the habit, then they...it's a learned behavior. So, I have more tolerance dealing with juveniles breaking the law just 'cause they don't know, its like the unknown, versus an adult, the same age as me, that knows right from wrong but chooses to stay in the wrong path. –Officer P

Many of the SROs expressed that when it came to serious situations it was believed to be absolutely necessary to file charges against students, not only because it was out of their

discretionary power but because students needed to be held accountable for their actions through formal juvenile justice sanctions.

Assuming that you're a reasonable officer, you take a look at the situation and you're the one that has to figure out what is best for that situation. And sometimes kids need to be charged, and you know, sometimes we don't have discretion and we have to do what we have to do. We have a job to do. But sometimes talkin' to them and figuring out what else is going on and you know, is just as important. –Officer M

A few of the SROs noted that although they were in favor of seeking alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions for minor offenses, they felt as though sometimes students were given more leeway than appropriate in instances in which serious offenses had taken place. Some of the officers expressed that informal social control measures were ineffective in deterring future delinquent behaviors if the offense was more serious in nature.

Well, sometimes, I can agree with the Mickey Mouse stuff with the leniency. Like disorderly conducts, the smoking, the curfews. You know what, give 'em a couple community service hours, call it a good day. Fully understand that. Sometimes its so minimal that it's a waste of time. But when it comes to the burglaries, the robberies, the assault by mobs, hammer them the first time so they realize there's nothing they can get away with. I've seen so many kids lately with the assault by mobs, the burglaries, where they get a slap on the wrist, they get probation for a year, and then they go out and do five more. –Officer E

Although the vast majority of the school resource officers expressed a preference for utilizing alternatives to the criminal justice system when working with juveniles, two of the officers interviewed believed that there was too much of an expectation to be lenient toward juveniles, particularly in recent years. These officers felt as though using the school's alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions were too heavily relied upon and that criminal charges should be utilized more frequently.

Today's society, they don't want us to charge the juveniles. They really don't. They want us to let the schools deal with it, you wanna say look a blind eye sometimes. I mean, the crime needs to be severe enough for them to want to put charges on them. I'm totally different. Everybody gets a fair shake; everybody gets a charge if they deserve a charge. I mean, yeah. I don't like the way the justice system here is in our area when it comes to

juveniles because they're like 'oh, they're fine. Give them probation for a year.' Well, they just robbed and killed somebody. They could've been in jail. And that's happened in this city. –Officer E

This theme is consistent with many aspects of what Black says about social control. First, Black claims that law varies inversely with other forms of social control, as there is less law where there is more social control (Black, 1976; 105). The school setting provides many unique forms of alternative social control, including school rules, individual classroom expectations, detention and Saturday school, and dress code enforcement, just to name a few. Schools are very structured with regard to which spaces students are allowed to occupy, when they are permitted and expected to occupy those spaces, and how to behave once in those spaces. Furthermore, the school has its own system for punishing and rewarding behavior and responds to such behavior through positive and negative sanctions for various actions. In addition to these school-specific alternative forms of social control, the school setting has the unique aspect of parental involvement and oversight due to the fact that schools are social institution that revolve around youth who require the guardianship of a parent. As such, the inclusion of parents in responding to deviance or delinquency within the school setting is in itself a form of alternative social control. Since SROs have so many alternative social control measures at their disposal within the school setting, perhaps they feel that they can utilize the law only as a law resort and instead exhaust all other alternative social control measures before resulting to the use of formal juvenile justice sanctions.

The qualitative data are contrary to much of what the quantitative data found concerning how the presence and availability of schools' social control measures impacts the behavior of SROs, as Model 1 and Model 2 indicated that school resource officers engage in more law enforcement behaviors as schools' social control increases. Additionally, Model 11 and Model

12 found that more school-based incidents are reported to the police as social control measures increase. The quantitative and qualitative findings may be contradictory to one another because the way in which social control within schools is measured in the quantitative data is more punitive than the social control discussed by the SROs in the qualitative data. While the quantitative data conceptualizes social control as closed campuses for lunch, strict dress codes, security cameras, and behavioral modification programs for students, the social control measures discussed by the SROs in the qualitative data are more consistent with remedial styles of law aimed at social repair within the school setting.

This theme is also consistent with Black's notion that the quantity of law varies across settings, as there is less law in more private settings than public settings (Black, 1976; 110). Although the SROs interviewed were all assigned to public schools, school sites in general are all somewhat private spaces in that only people affiliated with the school community are allowed to occupy school spaces and only at specified times. As such, schools maintain an expectation of privacy from outside world, as evidenced by school gates, security guards, hall monitors, and the implementation of sign in sheets and guest passes for visitors entering the school grounds. Since there is less law in more private settings than school settings, perhaps this is also why SROs are less inclined to implement formal juvenile justice sanctions and more inclined to implement alternative social control measures, such as the school's disciplinary system or parental involvement.

This theme highlights the importance of SROs knowing and understanding the alternative social control measures that are readily available within the school setting. Police officers are oftentimes relying heavily upon governmental social control measures, such as arrests and citations, and those who transfer into the SRO assignment may not be accustomed to utilizing

alternatives to these punitive sanctions. Therefore, it is necessary for SROs to not only understand the various social control measures that exist within their school setting and how to implement them, but also to assign officers to SRO positions who understand the value of exhausting all other options before referring students to the juvenile justice system.

The Blurred Lines Between School Discipline and Crime

While nearly all of the SROs interviewed expressed a preference for utilizing alternatives to formal juvenile justice sanctions when appropriate, several of the officers noted that it is oftentimes difficult to determine at what point an issue must transfer from the realm of school discipline and into the hands of law enforcement officers for a criminal investigation. Although many incidents can be resolved through the school site's disciplinary process, there are some issues that must be handled by school resource officers, including serious delinquent behavior or instances in which the victim or the victim's parents request that charges be filed. Despite the fact that there is a memorandum of understanding in place between the school district and the police department outlining which duties are those of school administration and which responsibilities are those of SROs, many of the SROs expressed frustration that school administration did not understand what SROs legally can and cannot do.

Sometimes I have to check them [school administrators] and say this isn't something you can press charges on. They're just like a lot of the general public. They watch TV, they think they know the law. And what they see on TV may not be what I'm able to do in the building itself. Even though I've been to a school before, not necessarily mine, but the principal wanted to press charges because he was the principal and this was an assault. 'You didn't see it. You weren't involved with it. It's up to the victim and the parents.' So little things like that. –Officer J

Some of the SROs felt as though school administrators attempted to utilize the officers as a scare tactic in order to gain compliance from students who violated school rules or were simply

misbehaving. Many of the SROs noted that school administration attempted to misuse the school resource officers as an extension of school discipline. In many cases, the SROs had to be frank with their school administrators and explain that a crime had not occurred and therefore the SRO could not involve themselves in the incident.

The actual disciplinary process when they give punishment we are not involved. When they want us to try and be a hall monitor, or they want us to be a lunch monitor. Stuff like that. Or if a kids acting up. 'Oh, he's trespassing. You need to take him away.' No, we're not...that's what they try to get us to do all the time. And we just try and say, 'yeah, we're not doing that. It doesn't warrant a criminal charge.' –Officer E

Some of the SROs remarked that they did not mind performing non-law enforcement-related tasks if it could potentially benefit a student in the long run but overall felt as though SROs should not be involved in disciplinary issues in which a crime did not occur.

The administrators expect you to get into a lot of stuff you shouldn't be getting into. In other words, sort of non-law enforcement-related type stuff. Now I don't have a problem with that if it's something that may help a kid out. But do not call me over and ask me to tell a kid to pull his pants up. Don't call me over and tell a kid, 'Officer F, he refuses to give me his cell phone and is breaking school policy.' And a lot of times I look at them and say I cannot help you. That is not a police matter. –Officer F

Some of the SROs believed that school administrators' inability to understand the difference between criminal activity and student misbehavior made the job of the SRO significantly more difficult. In some cases, SROs went so far as to say that school administrators infringed upon students' rights by attempting to make criminal issues out of non-criminal incidents. A few of the officers even noted that in instances in which they informed school administrators that SROs could not be involved because a crime had not taken place, the SRO was accused of not doing their job or simply being lazy.

Actually I had that the other day. I told 'em, 'why am I charging him for an incident you guys created?' And they looked at me like, 'what do you mean?' 'Well, you guys created this problem, you better deal with it. I alleviated the problem by getting him out of the area, which worked. Myself and my partner talked him out.' 'Well, you're not doing your

job. We're gonna call somebody else.' 'Said, go ahead. And then when we take this to court and you guys violated his rights...' 'oh wait I'm not doing it.' –Officer E

Many of the SROs indicated that having conversations with their administrators about what SROs legally can and cannot do was necessary in order to ensure that the school and the police department were on the same page with regard to who was responsible overseeing what aspect of the school site. Although there is a memorandum of understanding in place between the school district and the police department regarding which party is responsible for what role, several of the SROs found it helpful to continue to have these conversations with their administrators. Furthermore, conversations such as these were also deemed necessary to ensure that students' rights were not being inadvertently violated by the school or the SRO.

The majority of it is educating the educators. If they call us there for something, first and foremost we tell 'em, well obviously you know if it's a safety issue where they're lashing out and assaulting teachers, we've got our criminal offense and we can step in no problem. If it's just something where they're breaking an administrative rule we have to let 'em know that 'hey until you decide this kid isn't allowed to be here and they need to leave, there's only so much we can do.' We can ask 'em, we can ask to gain compliance, but until they've got the law violation there's nothing you know, really we can do other than be a voice of reason for 'em. –Officer R

While the majority of the officers expressed that they did not believe in directly administering disciplinary action when a non-criminal incident had occurred at the school, a few stated they viewed themselves as another adult in the building and did not see anything wrong with informing students that they were violating school rules and doing what they could to correct the behavior. The few officers who maintained this position admitted that they had been informed by their police department and in various SRO trainings not to get involved with school-related issues but believed that it was important for them to enforce school rules at their school site.

Since day one at my school and the SRO training they frowned on this, they were like, 'you know, don't let school tell you where to be, don't, you know, get involved with school issues.' I've always thought exactly the opposite. I spent a lot of time in the cafeteria. They tell you not to do that in the SRO training because they'll expect it of you.

When I see a kid running in the hallway I tell him to slow down, you know. The SRO training I went through, their position was basically the kid could tell you to go screw yourself. And you know, there's nothing you can do because it's not a legal issue that you told him about. But my position is, I'm an adult in the building. If I'm gonna have the kids respect me on the big things, I'm gonna want to deal with some of the smaller stuff, the school's always backed me. I've write maybe three to five referrals a year on different issues, and the school's always handled it as if I were a teacher or an administrator and the school's always backed me a hundred percent. –Officer J

These blurred lines between school discipline and crime that were perceived by the majority of the SROs at their respective school sites seems indicative of the fact that oftentimes SROs' style of policing and the quantity of law that school resource officers deem necessary are at odd with school administrators' preconceived notions about policing schools. Many of the SROs claimed that they were expected to administer a higher quantity of law, as well as more accusatory styles of law by their school administration during situations that the SRO felt were unnecessary or inappropriate. This finding was consistent with May et al. (2016) who found that schools refer more youths to the juvenile justice system than the police. This theme highlights the importance of both schools and police departments having a shared understanding that schools should not be policed in the same manner in which streets are policed and that SROs should not involve themselves in non-criminal school discipline incidents.

These qualitative findings offer insight into perhaps why the quantitative findings in Model 7 and Model 8 indicated that SROs' involvement in school discipline increases as schools' socioeconomic status decreases and as schools' total enrollment increases. Despite the National Association of School Resource Officers' firm position on SROs abstaining from involvement in the discipline process (NASRO, 2015), many school districts may not have clear guidelines regarding SROs' involvement in school discipline. Instead, SROs may feel inclined to involve themselves in school discipline or school administrators may be unaware of the harms associated with the criminalization of school discipline at the hands of SROs.

“No Quotas”

Several of the SROs noted that the success of a school resource officer was not measured by statistics, unlike that of a patrol officer. Many of the SROs remarked that their roles and responsibilities at their school site are not quantifiable.

There are a lot of things that we do that you can't quantify with numbers like the street cop. You can go out there and you can quantify your existence with with statistics by writing tickets, by doing, you know, taking reports, by doing the little field interview cards or writing parking tickets or answering calls for service. So you can quantify an officer when you go back and look at their evaluations. You can quantify what they're doing by their numbers. If you've got an officer that's writing two tickets a month out on the street, and you've got an officer writing 25 tickets a month, well why is one writing 25, one's writing two. And our job you can't put numbers. You can't quantify it that way because there's so many things that we do, so many different hats that we wear in the building, and its stuff that you you can't put a number to it. If they wanted me to jot down a slash mark for every time I've dealt with a social media issue or some girl drama or some boy drama or boyfriend/girlfriend drama or whatever it may be umm I would have a boat load of statistics. But we don't keep statistics like that you know. –Officer K

Some of the SROs noted that because the job of a SRO is not quantified, the job is perceived by those outside the position as an easy assignment, particularly by patrol officers who have never worked in the school setting.

A lot of the street guys think you know the SROs, they don't do shit, they don't do anything, you know. That's a slack job. They just don't want to work the street. And that's the furthest from the truth because we do a lot of work that you just don't hear about it or see about it or see it you know, because you're out there working your zone, you don't know what we do in the school. But if you ask any of 'em, 'well if you don't think we have to do anything, why don't you put in for it? And come on over, man. It's a gravy job.' 'Well I don't wanna deal with kids, I don't wanna do that. Are you crazy?' 'We don't do anything, why not? That's what you think.' –Officer K

Many of the SROs went so far to say that if SROs were concerned with obtaining statistics, such as juvenile arrests, citations, and police reports, it would be unfair to the students. In fact, many of the SROs prided themselves in not being concerned with obtaining statistics and ignoring “quotas” that are oftentimes important to the success of patrol officers.

Charges are the last resort. If I didn't have to, I certainly wouldn't. We're not stat driven, you know, there's no quotas because if there was, I would be out of a job a long time ago.
-Officer S

This theme seems indicative of the notion that unlike patrol officers, SROs are expected to refer fewer people to the criminal justice system. Unlike patrol officers whose success is oftentimes measured by the quantity of law they administered, the SROs in this study noted the importance of administering as little amount of law as possible. These SROs also highlighted the importance of relying upon remedial styles of law that are atypical of the accusatory styles of law typically administered by a patrol officer. These theme again supports the idea that perhaps SROs view the school setting as a space that is to be policed with less quantity of law and more remedial styles of law than other spaces in which police officers typically administer law.

This theme is also somewhat consistent with the morphology tenet of Black's theory that claims that the law is less active among intimates. Since schools are somewhat of an intimate setting, as the students in staff within the school setting come into contact with one another on a consistent basis, SROs may feel as though obtaining a quota is unnecessary in being an effective SRO. Although SROs are employed by their police department and not the school district, many of them expressed that they felt as though they were members of the school community, and therefore members of this intimate group within the school setting.

The notion of SROs not concerning themselves with quotas is contrary to the quantitative findings in Model 11 and Model 12 that indicated that more incidents were reported to the police as schools' socioeconomic status decreased and total enrollment increased. However, the findings in Model 3 and Model 4 that indicated that SROs are more involved in teaching as total enrollment increases. Additionally, the findings in Model 5 and Model 6 that indicated that SROs are more involved in mentorship as schools' socioeconomic status decreased and total enrollment

increased. This suggests that SROs are interested in seeking alternatives to formal governmental social control, rather than simply just making arrests and boosting their own statistics.

This theme highlights the importance of schools and police departments maintaining a shared understanding that SROs are expected to operate differently than patrol officers. Many police departments measure the success of police officers by the number of arrests, citations, and cases that they work. However, if SROs are held to these standards within their law enforcement agencies, they are likely to arrest students for trivial offenses in order to boost their own statistics. Therefore, the success of a SRO should be measured not by the amount of arrests that they obtain but rather by the extent to which they are involved in other triad model functions such as teaching and mentorship.

“We Wear All the Hats”

Many of the SROs noted that it was difficult to quantify their job and that their position was oftentimes disregarded because those who are unfamiliar with the position do not realize that SROs are expected to perform several functions that are typically not done by patrol officers. Several of the SROs described the ability to perform a multitude of tasks as “wearing all the hats”. Many of the SROs said that they “wear all the hats” because they view themselves as simply are another adult in the building who is there to serve the students and school community.

When you’re in a school setting, you wear all the hats. I mean, I can be up front with all the ladies [office staff] taking care of something completely different; if someone walks up to the front desk and has a question, I end up handling it. Whether it be a kid trying to find a teacher, I mean, I just...you know, I just, you just end up...because you’re an adult in the building, and you’re dealing with kids. –Officer P

Many of the SROs believed that it took a particular mindset to be a SRO because of all of the expectations that need to be met by so many different people in the school community. Some of

the SROs likened their role of assigned SROs to that of a mayor in charge of their own small city because they were responsible for their own unique community within the school setting.

It does take a different, a person with a different mindset, the ability to kind of wrap your head around a different aspect of policing to do school resource job. And you have, I mean, I don't know if it was the same way when you did it, but people don't look at the school resource officer job as [sighs], I guess as something that requires a lot of effort and attention and they don't, you don't realize until you get in the job how many different facets and hats that you have to wear. I constantly get phone calls from the school or from the admin or emails this is going on, this person, deal with this, so its almost like you're the mayor of your own little 2400-student population, and you're trying to take care of everything. –Officer L

When questioned about how SROs spend the majority of their time at their school sites, many of the officers remarked about the amount of time that they spent counseling students. Although the school sites all offer guidance counselors who are available to students to discuss their various concerns, many of the SROs believed that it was their responsibility to provide counseling to students who approached them with some sort of concern or students who the SRO could benefit from a positive interaction with another adult.

There's been plenty of times when kids haven't wanted to talk to their counselor and come to me instead about bullying issues and stuff like that, and you know, 'can I come to your office? Can we talk you know, during lunch or something like that?' I'm like, 'yeah that's fine.' You know, because I kinda wanna be there and help guide 'em through. And I'm obviously no certified counselor or anything like that. I'm like, 'you should probably talk to your guidance counselor if its an ongoing issue. This is just my perspective of where I've been in life with this or that.' I'm like, 'I've been in your shoes at some point so I can give you some perspective, but they're trained in you know, stuff like that.' –Officer T

Some of the SROs stated that they went out of their way to be as visible as possible to students in ways such as requesting offices that were visible to students, keeping their office doors open so students know they are available, going out into the hallways during passing periods, in the cafeteria during lunch hours, and in front of the school as students were arriving and departing campus for the day. Some stated that in their school resource officers training they were

discouraged from serving as a “hall monitor” or “cafeteria monitor” but did so anyway so that students knew who they were and that they were available to students if needed.

I’m in the cafeteria probably at least five of the six lunch bells. And my view is, there’s 250 to 300 kids in there at a time. If a kid needs to talk to me about anything, they see me in there. And that’s, I think, important for them, because I do. They’ll come up to me and say, ‘Officer J can I talk to you?’ And I’ll take ‘em in my office and we’ll sit down and talk about...whether it's a parent issue, whether it's a school issue. You know, this year for the first time, you know, thinking about the Orlando shooting, I had a kid come to me and tell me, ‘I’m gay and I’m having problems you know, with a little bit of bullying’, and we addressed it. We were able to help him. You know, if he didn’t feel like he could approach me, you know, it may have been an issue for him. You don’t wanna think that they would hurt themselves or something, but you just never know. –Officer J

In addition to viewing themselves as counselors, some of the SROs viewed themselves as somewhat of a surrogate parent to some students, particularly to those who did not have a good relationship with one or both parents, were involved in the foster care system, or did not have a mother or father. This was a particularly dominant theme among male SROs when dealing with male students who did not have fathers in the home. Some of the officers remarked that prior to accepting this assignment they did not feel as though they would be expected to work in this capacity of a parental figure as a school resource officer but believed it to be an important aspect of the assignment.

That’s one thing I realized when I left patrol is once you go into that aspect of law enforcement [school resource officer] you’re not just a police officer. You’re a dad to some of...like some of these kids that don’t have dad’s, you’re everything. It’s completely true. You know, sometimes a kid will just come up to you and they want to talk to you, you pretty much just go, ‘alright.’ –Officer N

In addition to performing the supplemental roles of counselors and surrogate parents, the SROs interviewed noted that they did a significant amount of classroom teaching as well. All of the SROs within the agency are expected to teach a course mandated by the state’s Attorney General’s Office aimed to educate teens on their rights and responsibilities when interacting with law enforcement. The SROs are expected to teach this course once a semester for approximately

three weeks as part of the graduation requirements for students. Many of the SROs enjoyed being able to teach this course and stated that it allowed for them to get to know some of the students with whom they may not otherwise come into contact, and allowed for students to ask SROs questions about the law and other legal matters.

We teach the state course. I love to teach. Why I didn't become a teacher, I don't know. Mentorship, just like I said, people cuss us out one year, then the next year they're hangin' out wanting to be our buddies. That's the positive mentorship I see. –Officer E

Some of the SROs mentioned that they enjoyed teaching so much that they volunteered to teach additional units in other classes that may pertain to law enforcement-related issues.

Sometimes teachers will ask me to come in and speak to their health classes when they're going through risky behaviors. Drivers ed. classes will sometimes ask me to come in, you know, when they're doing their stuff on DUIs or driving under the influence. PE classes will do the same. They usually have the unit on impaired driving for PE and I'll take the drunk goggles down, you know, make them walk the line with the goggles on. You know, spend ten or 15 minutes with each of those classes while they're doing that.”
–Officer K

The SROs who volunteered to teach additional courses at the request of teachers oftentimes had supplemental training or experiences that they felt would benefit students in a particular class, such as health, drivers' education, physical education, or health.

I've done a lot of stuff as a detective so I tell all the government teachers, hey when you're doing constitutional amendment, 4th and 5th, I can come in and talk to you because I've got cases that have been through the court of appeals and everything from when I was in homicide and robbery, so I get to interact with kids a lot during those things and talk about those kind of issues. –Officer Q

This theme offers insight into why much of the quantitative data indicated that the style of policing manifests itself differently within the school setting compared to the rest of society. Model 3 and Model 4 of the quantitative data indicated that SROs are more involved in teaching as schools' total enrollment increases. Additionally, Model 5 and Model 6 indicated that SROs are more involved in mentorship as schools' socioeconomic status decreases and total enrollment

increases. This is perhaps because SROs view themselves as responsible for “wearing all the hats” and not just responsible for law enforcement. As a result, SROs may feel more inclined to implement strategies such as teaching and mentorship in addition to law enforcement, as opposed to their patrol officer counterparts.

This theme is contrary to much of the literature that suggests that SROs often neglect teaching and counseling in favor of law enforcement, as much of the SROs interviewed stressed the importance of teaching and mentorship. Although it is assumed that schools are a microcosm of society, perhaps it is inaccurate to assume that the style and quantity of law manifests itself within the school setting in the same way in which it does across society as a whole, as the style of policing and the quantity of law administered by SROs should not be similar to that of a patrol officer due to the intimate nature of the school setting and the alternative social control measures that are available to SROs.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data drawn from these interviews aimed to better understand the experiences of SROs implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and their willingness to implement alternative social control measures. These findings indicated that the vast majority of the SROs were oriented toward working with youth, as most of these officers expressed a desire to be a positive influence in the lives of students and attempt to keep them out of the juvenile justice system. Additionally, these findings indicated that many of the SROs not only knew about all of the alternative social control measures readily available to them within the school setting but also the value of implementing them in lieu of formal juvenile justice sanctions. Several of the SROs

interviewed also expressed the importance of abstaining from school discipline and even went so far as to express frustration over school administrators who either inadvertently or intentionally attempted to infringe upon students' civil rights. Many of the SROs also indicated that they did not believe that their effectiveness as a school resource officer was attributed to obtaining statistics for arrests and citations but rather that their success was attributed to trying to better the lives of the students at their respective school sites. Finally, many of the SROs took pride in their ability to perform a multitude of roles outside of a typical police officer, highlighting the importance of knowing how to be available to students in several different capacities.

It seems as though these five emergent themes are consistent with the relational distance aspect of morphology and the social control tenet of Black's theory. Since Black posits that there is less law and a more remedial style of law among intimates, perhaps SROs view themselves as members of their intimate school community and feel more inclined to implement less law and engage in a more remedial style of policing. Furthermore, since Black claims that there is less law where there is more social control, perhaps SROs implement less law and engage in a more remedial style of policing because they are aware and take advantage of the informal social control measures that exist within the school setting.

These qualitative findings are inconsistent with much of the theoretical literature that suggests that SROs are instrumental in contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline by involving themselves in the school disciplinary process and hypercriminalizing school-based offenses. The findings obtained from these interviews offer valuable insight on the importance of schools and police departments selecting and training officers for the SROs assignment who are oriented toward working with youth. Additionally, both institutions need to maintain a shared understanding that schools are not to be policed in the same manner as the streets, due to the

intimate nature of the school setting. Finally, these findings highlight the necessity of SROs exhausting all other informal social control measures within the school setting before relying upon governmental social control measures so as not to contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of how SROs spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures. While there were many findings consistent with the notion that SROs may be engaging in behaviors that are instrumental in facilitating the school-to-prison pipeline, there were also findings that suggested otherwise. Indeed, this research suggests that SROs are involved with teaching and mentoring in addition to law enforcement, attempt to minimize their involvement in school discipline, and take advantage of the informal social control measures that exist within the school setting in lieu of juvenile justice sanctions.

Perhaps the biggest criticism of SRO programs across the United States is the belief that SROs are engaging in behaviors that may contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline (Beger, 2002; Kupchik & Monahan, 2006; Price, 2009), and many of the quantitative findings were consistent with this claim. The quantitative data indicated that SROs engage in more law enforcement behaviors and are more involved in school discipline as schools' socioeconomic status decreases. In addition to an increase in punitive styles of policing in schools marked by socioeconomic disadvantage, there is also a higher quantity of law administered by SROs, as quantitative findings suggest that both the total amount of SRO behaviors and the number of incidents reported to SROs increase as schools' socioeconomic status decreases.

Additionally, SROs assigned to schools in both suburban and rural areas engage in fewer law enforcement behaviors than SROs assigned to schools in cities, and SROs assigned to schools in suburbs perform more teacher behaviors compared to SROs assigned to schools in cities. Furthermore, SROs engage in more teacher behaviors and more mentor behaviors as the percentage of white students within a school increases and schools with higher percentage of students likely to go to college have fewer incidents reported to the police. These findings are all consistent with literature that suggests that the criminalization of school discipline in the United States has been particularly harsh for low-income, urban, and minority students (Hirschfield, 2008). This also supports the belief about a culture of punishment that disproportionately impacts marginalized youth across the United States who become caught in a cycle of hypercriminalization and punishment at school, at home, and on the streets (Rios, 2011).

While some findings seem consistent with the notion that SROs may be perpetuating social inequality by performing more punitive behaviors at disadvantaged schools and more remedial behaviors at advantaged schools, there were some findings that contradicted this claim. The quantitative data indicate that SROs perform more law enforcement behaviors as the percentage of white students within a school increases, a finding inconsistent with the belief that SROs disproportionately hypercriminalize the behavior of students of Color. Quantitative findings also show that SROs perform more mentorship as schools' socioeconomic status decreases, a finding that also refutes the claim that SROs are overly punitive in schools marked by concentrated disadvantage.

In addition to the quantitative data that contradicted the claim that SROs are instrumental in facilitating a link between schools and the juvenile justice system, much of the qualitative data suggests that SROs are opposed to engaging in punitive behaviors unless all other solutions have

been exhausted. One of the themes that emerged from the qualitative data was the finding that SROs view themselves differently than patrol officers and choose to engage in behaviors that allow for them to make a positive impact in the lives of youth. Nearly all of the SROs indicated that they went out of their way to ensure that all other informal social control measures had been explored before formally implementing juvenile justice sanctions. Many of the SROs went so far as to suggest that it was school administrators who pushed for punitive solutions, a finding consistent with those of May et al. (2016). Although schools across the United States have taken a punitive turn that has disproportionately impacted low-income students of Color, perhaps SROs are not entirely responsible for facilitating this link between schools and the juvenile justice system. Rather, SROs may be simply taking the brunt of the blame simply because the very idea of having police officers deployed in schools seems consistent with punitiveness.

Recommendations for Public Policy

Selection of School Resource Officers

This study highlights the importance of selecting officers for the SRO assignment who are oriented toward working with youth, willing to implement alternative solutions to formal juvenile justice sanctions, and understand that the style of policing implemented in the school setting must differ significantly from the streets. While the qualitative data seems to suggest that the officers interviewed in this study were selected for the school resource officer assignment because they exhibit willingness to implement these behaviors, the quantitative data suggests that police departments are selecting officers who are not appropriate for the SRO assignment. In the aftermath of several high-profile school shootings, it is possible that police departments across the United States have faced increased pressure to implement SRO programs for the purposes of

thwarting school-based gun violence. With the rapid rate at which SRO programs have expanded over the last two decades, it is likely that many police departments across the country have not taken the time to select the appropriate officer for the SRO assignment. As a result, officers are being assigned to schools whose attitudes and behaviors are counter to those necessary for the SRO assignment. Rather than being quick to assign any officer to the SRO assignment, police departments should be mindful about which officers they select to fill this position.

Police departments and school districts should also be mindful of the selection process surrounding SROs. Police departments should provide consistent descriptions of the characteristics necessary for a law enforcement officer to be a SRO, such as oriented toward working with youth, authoritative but not authoritarian, able to understand key aspects of adolescent behavior, and flexible and agile in approach (Thureau & Wald, 2009). Selecting SROs who are happy and comfortable working in a school environment is of utmost importance because the fusion of a closed, local government institution such as the police, with an open, complex system of organizations, such as a school presents several cultural, administrative, and organizational problems for teachers and administrators. Police officers will oftentimes implement authoritative practices into a school that typically operates as a free and fluid environment (Jackson, 2002). Therefore, police departments should only select officers who are oriented toward working with youth, willing to implement alternative solutions to formal juvenile justice sanctions, and understand that the style of policing implemented in the school setting must differ significantly from the streets. Police departments should also question the motives of officers who volunteer for this assignment, as the SRO schedule that affords officers weekends, holidays, and evening off work may attract officers to the assignment whose motivation for obtaining that assignment are not in the best interest of the youth they will be

serving. In the event that police departments are unable to select an officer in their department who is capable of performing the SRO assignment effectively, agencies should go out of their way to hire specifically for the SRO assignment. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings illustrate that not just any officer will do and that the right person needs to be selected for the SRO assignment.

Training of School Resource Officers

This study also highlights the importance of training SROs appropriately. In addition to being oriented toward working with youth, willing to implement alternative solutions to formal juvenile justice sanctions, and understanding of the fact that schools need to be policed differently than streets, the SROs in this qualitative portion of this study all received extensive SRO-specific training. All of the SROs interviewed had completed a 40-hour SRO school offered by the state, attended the annual three-day regional school safety and security conference, and participated in recurring, annual departmental training prior to the start of every academic year. During these training programs, SROs learned how to interact with youth, understand the legal aspect of the school setting, properly interview students, deal with the public, interact with school administrators, and prepare for active-shooter and other high-risk scenarios. This extensive training that the SROs in the qualitative portion of this study received is perhaps why these positive themes emerged.

Unfortunately, it seems as though training this extensive is a rarity among SRO programs in the United States. Many SRO programs have come under scrutiny for their lack of SRO-specific training, including how to effectively interact with youth, implement de-escalation strategies, and conduct search and seizure guidelines unique to the school setting. For example,

the Chicago Police Department came under fire after it was revealed that of the 250 SROs assigned to Chicago public schools, two have killed teenagers, one was sued for beating a juvenile, and 33 have received nine or more misconduct reports. Additionally, the SRO program is the only auxiliary assignment in the Chicago Police Department in which officers do not receive additional, specialized training specifically for that assignment (Kunichoff & City Bureau, 2017).

In response to concerns regarding the lack of training SROs across the country receive, Don Bridges, President of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) spoke out and said, “We have to make sure that our officers understand that the way our schoolhouse is policed is far different from the strategies that you use on the street.” Bridges highlighted the importance of SRO-specific training programs that teach officers how to operate within the school setting (MacFarlane et al., 2017). Although NASRO offers SRO training programs and additional opportunities for profession development, these training programs are not mandatory. Police departments must recognize that schools require a different style of policing and provide SROs with specialized training designed specifically for working with youth in the school setting.

Mutual Understanding Between Police Departments and School Administrators

In addition to highlighting the importance of selecting the appropriate officers for SRO assignments and training them accordingly, findings also demonstrate the importance of having positive relationships between school administrators and police departments. Despite having a memorandum of understanding in place between the school district and the police department that outlined the roles and responsibilities of the SRO, several of the SROs in this study

expressed that their school administration did not understand where their job started and where the SRO's began. Many of the SROs remarked that the tension between themselves and their school administration was one of the most difficult aspects of their job.

Several of the SROs remarked that they believed their school administration wanted them to overstep their legal boundaries by getting involved in an incident in which a crime had not occurred or being used as a scare tactic to try to gain compliance from students for trivial misbehavior. Some of the SROs claimed that when they informed school administration that they could and would not legally get involved with non-criminal incidents their school administration accused them of being lazy or unwilling to do their job. Thureau and Wald (2009) note the importance of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between school districts and police departments that specifically outline the roles of SROs and the role of school administration.

Additionally, some of the SROs in this study expressed frustration that their school administrators kept criminal incidents a secret from them because they did not want their school site to receive negative publicity for a crime that occurred on their campus, or because they did not want to lose control of the incident by handing it over to law enforcement. Several of the SROs found this troubling because school administrators were willing to jeopardize the safety of their students and school sites for the purpose of maintaining absolute power and control over any and all incidents that occurred on campus, regardless of whether or not it was criminal. This further reinforces the need for a positive working relationship between SROs and administrators, as both parties should feel as though they are working together with the goal of a safe school site. This also highlights the need for transparency between both schools and police departments so that both parties are aware of the issues that are occurring on campus. Both school administrators and SROs potentially provide a unique and critical problem-solving approach to various school-

related issues and without a mutual understanding and open lines of communication, school administrators and SROs jeopardize the security of their school sites and the safety of the students they are responsible for protecting.

For the SROs who had positive relationships with their administration, they claimed that they maintained open lines of communication with their administrators about what one party expected of the other in the event of various school-related incidents. These SROs stated that having to read through a long, dense document like the school and police department's joint memorandum of understanding was tedious and that it was more efficient for both parties to sit down and talk about what one expected of the other to ensure that they agreed. The SROs who had positive relationships with their school administrators noted that this made their job significantly easier and that having school administration that they trusted made their school sites operate much more smoothly.

This mutual understanding between SROs and school administration is key for understanding what SROs are legally capable of doing to ensure that neither party oversteps their legal boundaries. Without conversations that outline where school discipline ends and criminal investigation begin, students may continue to fall victim to the school-to-prison pipeline. Furthermore, these open lines of communication allow for SROs to better understand the school setting and what alternative social control mechanisms are in place that can be used in lieu of form juvenile justice sanctions. Both schools and police departments can benefit from gaining a better understanding of who is responsible for what within the school setting or else run the risk of infringing upon students' civil rights or jeopardizing the safety of the campus.

Theoretical Lessons

Mixed support for Black's theory was evidenced in both the quantitative and qualitative findings. In the quantitative findings, the stratification tenet of Black's theory was somewhat supported in the school setting, as the quantitative data indicated that SROs implement more accusatory styles of law and higher quantities of law as schools' socioeconomic status decreases. This finding is consistent with Black's claim that the style of law is more accusatory and the quantity of law is greater in the direction of disadvantage. The morphology tenet of Black's theory also yielded mixed supported, as SROs implemented more accusatory styles of law and a higher quantity of law as the total enrollment of schools increased. This finding is consistent with the population density aspect of the morphology tenet of Black's theory that the style of law is more accusatory and the quantity of law is greater in the direction of disadvantage as population increases. There was also mixed support for the culture tenet of Black's theory, as SROs implemented more remedial styles of law as the conventionality of schools increased. This finding is consistent with Black's claim that the style of law is more remedial in the direction of conventionality.

Support for the morphology and social control tenets of Black's theory was evidenced consistently in the qualitative data. Although the population density aspect of the morphology tenet of Black's theory was not evidenced in the qualitative data, there was a significant amount of support for the relational distance component of Black's theory. According to Black, the law is inactive among intimates and reaches its highest level among strangers (Black 1976; 40). Several of the SROs alluded to the intimate nature of the school setting, and how the SRO assignment provided them with the opportunity to get to know students on a personal basis and use this to their advantage when attempting to be a positive influence in the lives of youth.

Although the school setting has varying degrees of intimacy, with regard to both population density and relational distance to the social center, schools themselves are far more intimate than the outside world. Schools are physically structured in such a way to be conducive to intimacy, including gates, walls, and doors that keep people both in and out of the campus. Furthermore, the school day is structured in such a way that students are compelled to occupy spaces and come into contact with one another at the same time. Schools also have a variety of extracurricular activities, various mandated and optional school-related function, and the idea of school pride and school spirit aimed at making the school feel more intimate. This is perhaps why the relational distance aspect of morphology was evidenced in the qualitative data, rather than the population density aspect of morphology.

In addition to the relational distance aspect of the morphology tenet of Black's theory, the qualitative data also yielded support for Black's claim that the style of law is more remedial and the quantity of law is lower as social control increases. Several of the SROs remarked that the school setting had a variety of informal social control measures that the SROs preferred to use rather than refer youth to the juvenile justice system. Many of the SROs remarked that there were a variety of measures in place that were better solutions to problematic behavior exhibited by youth, including involvement of parents, teachers, and coaches, or having the school handle the issue entirely.

What was particularly interesting about the qualitative findings with regard to Black's theory was that the morphology and social control tenets of the theory and how they manifested themselves within the school setting seemed to be interconnected. The notion of intimacy and its effects on how SROs operate in schools as evidenced by the qualitative data offers insight into why SROs are more willing to implement alternative social control measures. Due to the

intimate nature of the school setting, many of the SROs felt inclined to implement alternatives to juvenile justice sanctions. Since informal social control is relied upon more heavily in intimate settings, it has more of a place in the school setting compared to outside the school setting. These constructions of intimacy within the school setting are perhaps why the style of policing and quantity of law administered by SROs manifests itself differently in the school setting.

These theoretical findings, particularly those evidenced in the qualitative data, further demonstrate the importance of SROs policing schools differently than the streets. SROs need to understand the intimate nature of the school setting and utilize the alternative social control measures that are able to take place within schools because of the intimacy the school setting provides. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the intimacy the school setting provides makes the criminalization of misbehavior at school even more detrimental to youth whose only feelings of safety, security, and stability occur when they are at school. The quantitative findings showed support for Black's theory with regard to SROs implementing an accusatory style of policing and quantities of law is greater in the direction of school disadvantage. As such, it seems that many SROs across the United States are not accounting for the intimate nature of the school setting nor are they taking advantage of schools' readily available alternative social control measures.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the SSCS provides several survey items pertaining to the behavior of SROs, the survey was completed by a school administrator who was reporting his or her perceptions of the SRO. This may present certain inaccuracies in the quantitative findings, as the school administrator may not be aware of how the SRO is spending his or her time. Furthermore, a

school administrator may feel inclined to report that their SRO is doing their job more effectively than they actually are in order to ensure that potential funding for a SRO continues to be allotted to their school site. The statistical significance of the *percentage of white students* variable for every SRO question is a potential indicator that schools may be simply checking “yes” for SROs involvement in various behaviors in order to make it appear as though their SRO is doing their job adequately.

Additionally, the SSCS does not control for several variables that may have a significant impact on how SROs operate in schools. While the SSCS controls for school type, such as public school, charter school, and magnet school, the SSCS does not control for alternative schools. This is a particularly important variable when examining the behavior of SROs, as school sites with students who have oftentimes already been involved with the juvenile justice system may have a significant impact on how SROs operate. Additionally, some of the schools in the SSCS reported having a very small amount of students and a large number of classroom changes, which may be an indicator that these schools are being included with regular public schools, which in turn may skew the data. Furthermore, while the SSCS inquired about the number of SROs at each school site the SSCS does not indicate if they are all at the school site at the same time or if the SROs assigned to their respective school sites work different shifts. This is another important variable, as the amount of SROs on a school site at one time may impact how they are operating. Furthermore, when examining the quantity of law in schools the number of SROs operating on a single school campus is an important variable, as it is a measure of the amount of law that exists within a school. Finally, while the SSCS provides important information on SROs, the absence of these key variables highlights the need for a national data base for SROs in

order to gain a better understanding of how they are operating in schools across the United States.

While the SSCS is supposed to be a generalizable sample, the SROs interviewed in the qualitative portion of this study were not stationed in schools represented in the SSCS. There is a large discrepancy between the number of cases represented in the quantitative portion of this study and the number of cases in the qualitative portion of this study. Furthermore, the quantitative data obtained from the SSCS was from school principals about their attitudes toward the behavior of law administered by SROs, while the qualitative data was obtained directly from the SROs.

It should also be noted that all of the SROs interviewed in this study are from the same law enforcement agency. Therefore, they may be trained to respond to various situations similarly, leaving little room for variation in the style and quantity of law they apply to different situations. Furthermore, all of the SROs are contracted with the same school district and may be directed to respond to situations a particular way, therefore again leaving little room for variation in the style and quantity of law they apply to different situations.

Future research should be conducted with other SROs in police departments across the United States that do not provide as much SRO-specific training. It is likely that perhaps the reason why many of these themes emerged that seemed to shed favorable light on school resource officers is because the school resource officers all received specific training. Therefore, additional research should be conducted with other police departments across the country to understand the effects of SRO training and socialization on the behavior of police in schools. Comparative studies such as these could potentially provide important information on what works for SRO programs and what does not work. Additionally future research should be

conducted comparing rural versus non-rural schools to better understand how the style of policing and quantity of law administered by SROs manifests itself differently depending on rurality.

Contributions of This Study

As one of the very few studies that utilizes a mixed methods approach to better understand the status of SROs in schools across the United States, this study makes an important contribution to the literature on how certain behaviors of SROs may be contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. This study provides a unique and critical understanding of how SROs spend their time, the extent to which school characteristics explain the variation in their behaviors, the factors influencing their involvement in school discipline, and how their behavior is shaped by the presence and availability of schools' informal social control measures.

The quantitative data offer insight into the extent to which school characteristics predict SROs' involvement in law enforcement, teaching, mentoring, and school discipline, and the extent to which school characteristics predict the quantity of law administered by SROs. The qualitative data supplement these quantitative data by examining the experiences of SROs in one police department implementing law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring, the factors influence their involvement in school discipline, and the factors influencing their willingness to implement alternative social control measures.

Additionally, as one of the only studies that applies Black's theory of law to the school setting, this study provides a unique understanding of how the law manifests itself differently within schools. Due to the intimate nature of the school setting in relation to the rest of society, as well as the readily available alternative social control measures, the school setting facilitates

an environment in which the style of policing administered by SROs can be more remedial rather than accusatory and implement fewer formal juvenile justice sanctions. This, in turn, allows for SROs to create a safe environment for students and limit their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- Why did you become a school resource officer?
- What are the pros and cons of your position as a school resource officer?
- Describe the training you received as a school resource officer (type, amount, NASRO, etc.).
- Described what types of things you would like to be doing on campus but are not able to do due to time or other restraints.
- How involved are you in your school site's disciplinary process?
- What factors influence your involvement in your school's disciplinary process?
- What factors influence your decision to engage in teaching, counseling, or law enforcement behaviors?
- What individual characteristics do you believe influence students behavior?
- How does students' involvement in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.) affect their behavior? Your response to their behavior?
- How does students' academic achievement affect their behavior? Your response to their behavior?
- How do students' prior disciplinary records affect your response to their behavior?

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age
- Gender
- Years of law enforcement experience
- Years as a school resource officer
- Level of education

VITA

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Peer-Reviewed Publications

Lynch, Caitlin G., Gainey, Randy R., and Chappell, Allison, T. (2016). The effects of social and educational disadvantage on the roles and functions of school resource officers. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 39(3), 521-535.

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Manuscripts Under Review

Lynch, Caitlin G. Don’t let them kill you on some dirty roadway: Survival, entitled violence, and the culture of modern American policing. Revise and Resubmit to *Contemporary Justice Review*.

Selected Scholarly Presentations

Lynch, Caitlin G. (2017). The blurred lines between Hollywood and reality in police practice and socialization. Presented at the Critical Intersections of Crime and Social Justice Conference, Norfolk, VA.

Lynch, Caitlin G. (2016). You have the right to remain violent: Police academy curricula and the facilitation of police overreach. Presented at the 72nd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, New Orleans, LA.

Lynch, Caitlin G. (2016). Don’t let them kill you on some dirty roadway: Survival, aggression, and the culture of modern American policing. Presented at the New Directions in Critical Criminology Conference, Knoxville, TN.