12-2020

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Diversifying Police Departments Through Community-Oriented Based Policing

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SOC685 Masters Research Practicum

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December 11, 2020

Abstract

The racial and ethnic diversity of a police department is a crucial component to improving police relationships with communities. Diversity efforts by American police departments have been complicated by small applicant pools for the last several years, particularly among qualified female and minority applicants. One way for police departments to attract more racial and ethnic minority applicants to improve community relations is to use community-oriented policing. However, like anything related to policing, community-oriented policing tends to bring about political divide. This study analyzed (a) if the use of community-oriented policing tactics by police departments increase a police department's racial and ethnic diversity, and (b) if police departments located in Democrat states are more likely to use community-oriented based policing. The data used for this study came from the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS), 2016 survey based on a nationally representative sample of state, county, and local law enforcement agencies in the United States. The overall results lend support for community-oriented policing as a way to increase racial/ethnic minorities' interest in the work of policing. These findings may have implications for standardizing the use of community-oriented policing tactics by all members of a law enforcement agency as a strategy to recruit and hire racial minority police officers. This institutional change in policing not only procures a more culturally diverse police force, but it also helps improve and repair the relationship between the community and the police.

Keywords: racial and ethnic minority police officers, American police departments, LEMAS 2016 survey, community-oriented policing

INTRODUCTION

The racial and ethnic diversity of a police department is a crucial component to improving police relationships with communities. A community can have greater confidence that police officers understand their problems and concerns if the personnel of the police department are representative of the community. In addition, police departments that are representative of the community they serve are more likely to understand the culture and views of the community, and are more likely to be tolerant of those views (Wilson et al., 2013).

Diversity efforts by American police departments have been complicated by small applicant pools for the last several years, particularly among qualified female and minority applicants (White et al., 2010). An earlier study done by Perrot (1999) showed that racial prejudice and discrimination or the perception thereof is the most significant obstacle to minority recruitment. Hurst et al. (2000) found that African Americans are more likely than Whites to view the police as unfair, corrupt, and harsh, leaving them less satisfied with police services and more critical in their evaluations of police performance. Kaminski (1993) says this negative attitude towards police has persisted for decades which has prevented African Americans from even considering a career in law enforcement.

Wilson et al. (2016) conducted a study that examined the recruitment efforts of a Rhode Island police department. They found that the Rhode Island police department had low levels of recruitment information distributed to, and contact with, core constituencies in communities of color, and low levels of minority applicants and hires. Due to these findings, one of the recommendations the researchers suggested was the utilization of community-oriented policing as a strategy to recruit racial/ethnic minorities.

Wilson et al. (2016) argue that community-oriented policing is a creative approach to minority recruitment and that all members of a police agency are considered part of the recruiting campaign, as opposed to only those specifically assigned to manage it. They suggest officers use community-oriented policing to engage community partners and organizations who can help distribute recruitment information. They also suggest that officers seek positive interactions with racial/ethnic minorities to help build trust and legitimacy and thus increase racial/ethnic minorities' interest in the work of policing.

In order for police departments to attract more racial and ethnic minority applicants, police departments need to improve community relations through the use of tactics like community-oriented policing. The U.S. Department of Justice defines community-oriented policing as a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014). The current study theorizes that the use of community-oriented policing can increase the racial and ethnic diversity of a police department.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Police Legitimacy Crisis

Community relations with police in the U.S. are increasingly troubled and strained. The recent police killings of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, and Breonna Taylor has sparked nationwide protests against racism and police brutality. According to Simmons (2014), police departments in the U.S. have historically been made up of mostly white males from working-class backgrounds. This lack of diversity in police departments has contributed to the many tensions that exist between police officers and racial and ethnic minorities.

A study done by White and Escobar (2008), linked the lack of diversity in police departments to persistent poor relations with communities and even police misconduct. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) poll taken in June 2020, found that 4 in 10 Black Americans say they have been stopped or detained by police because of their race, and 1 in 5 Black adults (21%), including 3 in 10 Black men, say they have been a victim of police violence. Only a third as many Hispanics (8%) and relatively few Whites (3%) reported such negative interactions with police in their lifetimes (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2020).

The disproportionate impact of police violence against Black Americans has created tension surrounding American policing and has led to more lobbying for police reform and equal rights for Black Americans. Some are calling for police reform by demanding policy changes while others are seeking to defund or abolish the police (Vermeer et al., 2020). Defunding or abolishing the police is the wrong approach to addressing these issues. If police departments are defunded, officers will not get the important training and ongoing development needed to address bad policing tactics. Instead, the country needs to have serious conversations that will lead to real reform to stop those that are abusing police power.

Community Policing

According to Simmons (2014, p. 8) community-oriented policing is "democracy in action" because of its importance on community participation. Community-oriented policing is different than traditional policing in that it changes the nature of the relationship between the police and the community to one of mutual respect and trust. Officers get to know the community they serve by exercising empathy and compassion and working as a team to solve community problems. Traditional policing requires relying on rapid response which makes it impossible for the police to avoid being strangers to the community. It also demonizes everyone

who lives in high-crime neighborhoods. Community-oriented policing rests on the organizational strategy of assigning line officers to permanent geographical areas. This strategy of policing provides officers the opportunity to interact with the same people on a face-to-face basis each day where they can problem-solve and build positive relationships. It also gives average citizens formal and informal input and the chance to help set local police priorities and develop creative solutions to community problems (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1991).

Institutional Reform

Community-oriented policing can encourage the institutional reform of police agencies. Simmons (2014) argues that increased police legitimacy and the possibility of increasing racial diversity are not only important factors for changing the organizational and institutional culture of police departments, but they are also consistent with the goals of community-oriented policing. In order for institutional reform, police agencies must pay close attention to the type of officer they hire, and Simmons recommends that agencies involve the community in the selection of their officers to ensure they are hiring officers that have the qualities, characteristics, and values needed to successfully implement community-oriented policing (Simmons, 2014).

Wilson et al. (2016) state that it is important that all members of an agency embrace diversity as a core value for their work as police officers. They recommend that agencies train and select officers who have sufficient skills in personal interaction, conflict management, understanding, and acceptance of the dynamics of diverse cultures. In addition, Wilson et al. (2016) recommend that agencies identify and exclude those applicants who exhibit behavioral patterns related to racial profiling, police abuse, and misconduct.

The federal government provides incentives for police departments to use the values and principles of community-oriented policing. Federal grant programs such as the Community

Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program and the Hiring in the Spirit of Service (HSS)

program encourage community involvement in the hiring and selection of police officers by the

development of innovative officer recruitment programs that use community-oriented policing

values and expectations directly into the recruitment and selection process. The COPS and HSS

programs recognize that there are several core competencies police officers need to effectively

do their jobs. These core competencies include the ability to use good judgment and to problem-

solve, the capacity for empathy and compassion, the capacity to engage in teamwork and the

ability to collaborate, the capacity to multi-task, and the possession and demonstration of

integrity (Simmons, 2014).

According to White and Escobar (2008), the community-oriented policing training,

usually offered in the police academy, is too short, conveying the perception that it is

unimportant. During this short training, they argue, officers cannot develop the skills needed to

be able to utilize community-oriented policing tactics and the understanding of the cultural

norms of the community they work in.

White and Escobar (2008), argue that many police departments have not fully adopted the

philosophy of community-oriented policing. Community policing represents a department-wide

shift in its way of policing, but oftentimes, the adoption of community-oriented policing

translates into a small number of officers assigned to a specialized unit responsible for

community policing. As Wilson et al. (2016) point out, it takes the effort of the entire

department, and not a small number of officers, to increase racial and ethnic minorities' interest

in police work. Each member of the agency has a direct impact on those who will apply.

Recruitment

Police departments that use community-oriented policing can make the job of policing more attractive to citizens who might normally be hesitant to engage with the police. As noted earlier, it is important for police departments to understand that all members of the agency are responsible for recruiting candidates, as opposed to only those specifically assigned to manage it (Wilson et al., 2016).

Ginwright (2007) argues that police can help young people in a community build the critical social capital (shared norms and values) needed to care about making a difference in their community and spark interest in the job of policing. Police can reframe the discourse and negative perceptions of Black youth as civic problems and instead view them as important civic problem solvers and allow Black youth the opportunity to voice their ideas and opinions about issues that matter to them or their communities. Police can also help create cultural pride and a strong racial identity for those who have "turf-based identities" (2007, p. 416) that are antagonistic with others in the neighborhood. Police can encourage Black youth to make social connections based on the premise that all people of African descent experienced and continue to experience racial oppression (Ginwright, 2007).

Wilson et al. (2016) argue that police can build positive relationships with Black organizations and institutions within the community through community-oriented policing. They say these organizations and institutions can serve as linkages that can provide points of close contact with potential police applicants. Besides family, the most important and influential institution to the Black community is the church. Other settings that serve as linkages where officers on patrol can engage and distribute recruitment information to potential police candidates are hair salons and shopping malls. Hair salons hold special meaning to Black women

and serve as a source of informal and formal information and shopping malls are social and recreational meeting places that attract both the young and old (Wilson et al., 2013).

Police departments can also partner with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and various Black fraternal and professional organizations to help distribute recruitment information and to participate in the selection of police officers. These organizations serve as key points of rallying within the community for social advocacy, education, civic and social engagement, and communication and have been considered among the most important institutions for Black communities. (Wilson et al., 2013).

Political Climate

The use of community-oriented policing by a police department may be dependent on the political climate of where a police department is located. According to a study conducted by Kearns (2017), officers may be less likely to utilize community-oriented policing tactics in areas or regions that are either less diverse or where minority-police relations are more strained. Kearns argues that police officers in these areas or regions may have a greater perceived social distance between them and the community, which can decrease their support for the use of community-oriented policing. Conversely, in areas like Washington DC where the population is more diverse, community-oriented policing tactics are more likely to be used by police officers. Kearns argues that police officers in these areas or regions are generally more supportive of community-oriented policing and perceive less social distance from racial groups. Kearns also points out that more research on this topic is needed because there are over 18,000 police agencies in the U.S. and it is not safe to assume that what explains officer-level views in one jurisdiction will apply to another department (Kearns, 2017).

Kearns argues that police departments should focus on efforts to increase officer buy-in for the use of community-oriented policing by rewarding officers who engage in community-oriented policing practices and demonstrate the benefits of community-oriented policing to all officers. Kearns specifically suggests that departments give incentives to officers to engage in community-oriented policing by integrating these efforts into performance reviews, as recommended by President's Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (Kearns, 2017).

Kearns also recommends training to increase awareness of implicit bias against racial and ethnic minorities which can help mitigate racial prejudice and increase support for community-oriented policing across racial groups. Most importantly, Kearns says events and interactions (e.g., law enforcement educational programs, shared problem-solving projects) that bring officers and the public together in a positive way through community-oriented policing can help counter narratives about tensions between police and communities by humanizing each group (Kearns, 2017).

Current focus

In light of recent events such as the police killings of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, and Breonna Taylor, it is important to repair the relationship between racial and ethnic minorities and the police. Hiring more racial and ethnic minority officers is one of the ways to help repair this relationship and improve police legitimacy. The use of community-oriented policing tactics by police departments can increase racial minorities' interests in police work, which can increase the racial diversity of police departments over time. Based on this discussion, I derive the following hypothesis (H1): The use of community-oriented based policing tactics increases a police department's racial and ethnic diversity.

The use of community-oriented policing by a police department might be dependent on the political climate of where a police department is located. A police department located in a less diverse area or region (conservative or republican) might be less likely to utilize community-oriented policing. Conversely, a police department located in a more diverse area or region (liberal or democrat) might be more likely to utilize community-oriented policing. Based on this discussion, I derive the following hypothesis (H2): Police Departments located in Democrat states are more likely to use community-oriented based policing than those located in Republican states.

In sum, I expect that the diversity of a police department is impacted by two factors: the utilization of community-oriented policing by a police department and the political climate of where a police department is located.

METHOD

Data

The data to test the hypotheses came from the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS), 2016 survey. The 2016 LEMAS survey collected data from a nationally representative sample of state, county, and local law enforcement agencies in the U.S. The purpose of the survey was to obtain data on agency responsibilities, operating expenditures, job functions of sworn and civilian employees, officer salaries and special pay, demographic characteristics of officers, weapons and armor policies, education and training requirements, computers and information systems, vehicles, special units, and community policing activities.

Sample

The sample used for the 2016 LEMAS survey was obtained from the 2016 Law Enforcement Agency Roster (LEAR) database. The LEAR database includes the 2008 and 2014 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies (CSLLEA) and the 2013 LEMAS Survey, and contains 15,810 general purpose law enforcement agencies. General purpose law enforcement agencies are municipal, county, and regional police departments, sheriff offices, and state highway patrol agencies that employ sworn police officers responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law, and preventing, detecting, and investigating criminal activities (Police Foundation and Policy Studies Institute, 1996). The sample includes 12,695 local and county police departments, 3,066 sheriffs' officers, and 49 primary state police departments. The LEAR database excluded agencies that did not have sworn staffing. After those removals, the LEAR database consisted of 15,477 departments (12,416 local and county police departments, 3,012 sheriffs' offices, and 49 primary state police departments).

The original 2016 LEMAS survey sample included a total of 3,499 local, county, and state law enforcement agencies. The law enforcement agencies were separated into two groups: self-representing (SR) and non-self-representing (NSR). SR agencies are law enforcement agencies employing 100 or more full-time sworn officers, and NSR agencies are the agencies employing fewer than 100 full-time sworn officers. The NSR agencies were selected using a stratified random sampling method that involved the division of the remaining departments into smaller sub-groups based on the number of sworn personnel and agency type. A total of 28 agencies serving special jurisdictions (e.g., schools, airports, parks), or with special enforcement responsibilities (e.g., conservation laws or alcohol laws), were considered out of scope for the LEMAS and, therefore, excluded from the sample. After removing out of scope cases, the 51-

item survey questionnaire was mailed out to 3,471 law enforcement agencies which included 1,045 SR agencies (638 local police departments, 358 county sheriffs' office, and 49 state police departments) and 2,426 NSR agencies (1,974 local police, 452 county sheriff).

A total of 2,779 agencies (879 SR and 1,900 NSR) completed the 2016 LEMAS survey for an over-all response rate of 80.1% (2,135 local police departments (81.7%), 600 sheriffs' offices (74.1%), and 44 state agencies (89.8%). The total number of cases in the final dataset is 2,784, which includes partial data for 5 state police agencies (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016).

Present Study

The 2016 LEMAS dataset contains empirically validated measures that focus on policing at the department level. The primary benefit of using the 2016 LEMAS survey for the present study is that it specifically asked questions about the racial and ethnic make-up of a police department and the number of sworn officers that are trained in community policing, assigned to community policing units, and/or engage in specific community policing activities (e.g., foot patrol, problem-solving projects, and community partnerships programs).

Measurement

Dependent variable: Racial/ethnic diversity in police departments is the dependent variable. I used the 2016 LEMAS dataset to calculate the percentage of non-white full-time sworn police officers for each police department. To do this, I calculated the total number of sworn officers for each department by adding the number of sworn male officers and female officers. Next, I calculated the total number of white officers in each department by adding the number of sworn white male officers and the number of sworn white female officers. I then calculated the total number of sworn minority officers for each department by subtracting the total number of sworn officers from the total number of sworn white officers. Lastly, I created

the variable measuring the *percentage of sworn racial/ethnic minority officers* by dividing the total number of sworn minority officers by the total number of sworn officers then multiplying it by 100. There were 166 (6%) missing cases for this variable, and these cases were excluded from this analysis.

Independent variable: The variable measuring *community policing activity* was created using four questions. All four questions were asked, "Of the total number of actual full-time sworn personnel with general arrest powers…, enter the number of each of the following":

1) "Community policing or relations officers, or other sworn personnel specifically designated to engage in community policing activities,"

2) "School resource officers, school liaison officers, or other general sworn personnel whose primary duties are related to school safety (exclude crossing guards),"

3) "Full-time sworn personnel with primary responsibility for patrol/field duties were encouraged to engage in SARA-type problem solving projects," and

4) "Full-time sworn personnel with primary responsibility for patrol/field duties were assigned to specific geographic areas/beats."

To measure the amount of community policing activity by the number of sworn officers in a department, each of the four questions were re-coded by dividing the answer to the question by the total number of sworn officers and multiplying it by 100 to get the percentage. A scale was created for community policing activity by adding all the answers together and dividing it by four. The value for this scale ranged from 0 to 100. There were 537 (19%) missing cases for this scale which were excluded from this analysis.

Controlled variables: Four variables related to screening techniques used by police departments when hiring new recruits were included in the analysis as controlled variables.

These variables are included to test if screening techniques are related to the dependent variable - racial/ethnic diversity of police departments.

The variable measuring *credit check* was created using the following question "Which of the following screening techniques are used by your agency in selecting new officer recruits: credit history check?" The question had the following answer choices: "yes" or "no." I recoded the question so that "yes" was coded one, and "no" was coded zero. There were 37 (1.3%) missing cases. Missing cases were excluded from this analysis.

The variable measuring *background* was created using the following question "Which of the following screening techniques are used by your agency in selecting new officer recruits: background investigation?" The question had the following answer choices: "yes" or "no." I recoded the question so that "yes" was coded one, and "no" was coded zero. There were seven (0.3%) missing cases. Missing cases were excluded from this analysis.

The variable measuring *driving record* was created using the following question "Which of the following screening techniques are used by your agency in selecting new officer recruits: driving record?" The question had the following answer choices: "yes" or "no." I recoded the question so that "yes" was coded one, and "no" was coded zero. There were ten (0.4%) missing cases. Missing cases were excluded from this analysis.

The variable measuring *criminal history* was created using the following question "Which of the following screening techniques are used by your agency in selecting new officer recruits: criminal history check?" The question had the following answer choices: "yes" or "no." I recoded the question so that "yes" was coded one, and "no" was coded zero. There were eight (0.3%) missing cases. Missing cases were excluded from this analysis.

The variable measuring *percentage of racial/ethnic diversity by state* was created using data from the U.S. Census Bureau (United States Census Bureau, 2017). I added the percentage of non-Hispanic whites by state into the data set.

The variable measuring *political climate* was created using the 2016 presidential election results (Federal Election Commission, 2016). States that voted for President Trump were considered as Republican states and given the value of zero and states that voted for Hillary Clinton were considered as Democrat states and given the value of one.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS), and the antecedent variable and spurious relationship statistical modeling were used to test the two hypotheses. All multivariate models are assessed for assumptions and statistical significance at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

First, I tested <u>Hypothesis 1:</u> the use of community policing tactics increases a police department's racial and ethnic diversity, by conducting Pearson bivariate correlation and multiple linear regression. The bivariate correlation (see Table 2) results showed that community policing has a weak positive relationship with racial/ethnic diversity of police departments ($r = .062$, $p < .001$), and credit check ($r = .077$, $p < .001$), and no relationship with driving record, criminal history, and background check. This means that as the percentage of officers who are involved in community policing activity in a police department increases, the racial/ethnic diversity increases. In addition, as police departments increase the utilization of credit check as a screening technique, the racial/ethnic diversity increases.

I then examined if the use of community policing tactics by police departments is a predictor of the racial/ethnic diversity of police departments by regressing racial/ethnic diversity of police departments on community policing, controlling for driving record, criminal history,

credit history, background check, and racial/ethnic diversity of state. The results (see Table 3) of the regression indicated that the model explained 24.3% of the variance and that the model was significant ($F_{(6, 2203)}$ = 117.79, p < .001). While the use of community policing tactics by police departments (B = .050, p = .046), driving record (B = -.21.93, p < .001), and racial/ethnic diversity of state (B = -.719, p < .001) contributed significantly to the model, criminal history (B = 17.48, p = .071), credit check (B = -.283, p = .755), and background check (B = 10.82, p = .139) did not. The final predictive statistical model was: Racial/ethnic diversity of police departments = 56.21 + (.050 community policing) + (-.21.93 driving record) + (17.48 criminal history) + (-.283 credit check) + (10.82 background check) + (-.719 racial/ethnic diversity of state)

According to the above predictive model, as the percentage of total sworn officers who participate in community policing activities in police departments (community policing) increases, the percentage of non-white full-time sworn police officers (the racial/ethnic diversity of police departments) increases by .050 points when controlling for driving record, criminal history, credit check, background check, and racial/ethnic diversity of state.

Second, I tested <u>Hypothesis 2:</u> police departments located in democrat states are more likely to use community policing tactics, by conducting Pearson bivariate correlation and multiple linear regressions. The bivariate correlation (see Table 2) results showed that political climate has a weak positive relationship with community policing (r = .059, p < .001), racial/ethnic diversity of police departments (r = .066, p < .001), credit check (r = .213, p < .001), and background check (r = .038, p < .005), a weak negative relationship with racial/ethnic diversity by state (r = -.272, p < .001), and no relationship with driving record and criminal history. This means that as the percentage of officers who are involved in community policing

activity in a police department located in a democrat state increases, the racial/ethnic diversity increases. Second, as police departments located in democrat states increase the utilization of credit check and background check as screening techniques, the racial/ethnic diversity increases. Lastly, as the racial/ethnic diversity by state decreases, so does the community policing activity by police officers.

I then examined if the political climate of the state where the police department is located is a predictor of both the use of community policing tactics by the police departments and racial/ethnic diversity of a police department, by regressing (1) community policing on political climate and (2) racial ethnic diversity of police departments on political climate, controlling for driving record, criminal history, credit check, background check, and racial/ethnic diversity of state. The results of the first regression (see Table 4) indicated that the model explained 1% of the variance and that the model was significant (F (6, 2223) = 3.9, p = .001). While credit check (B = 2.46, p = .002) contributed significantly to the model, political climate (B = 1.3, p = .084), driving record (B = -5.95, p = .21), criminal history (B = 3.78, p = .65), background check (B = 2.02, p = .75), and racial/ethnic diversity of state (B = -.042, p = .09) did not. The final predictive statistical model was: Community policing tactics by police departments = 19.09 + (1.3 political climate) + (-5.95 driving record) + (3.78 criminal history) + (2.46 credit check) + (2.02 background check) + (-.042 racial/ethnic diversity of state)

According to the above predictive model, states that voted democrat during the last presidential election had a significantly higher percentage of total sworn officers who participate in community policing activities in police departments (community policing) than states that voted republican, when controlling for driving record, criminal history, credit check, background check, and racial/ethnic diversity of state.

The results of the second regression (see Table 5), indicated that the model explained 23.8% of the variance and that the model was significant (F (6, 2581) = 134.69, p < .001). While political climate (B = -2.89, p < .001), driving record (B = -17, p = .001), background check (B = 9.76, p = .047), and racial/ethnic diversity of state (B = -.73, p < .001) contributed significantly to the model, criminal history (B = 15.02, p = .084), and credit check (B = .65, p = .429) did not. The final predictive statistical model was: Racial/ethnic diversity of police departments = 56.38 + (-2.89 political climate) + (-17 driving record) + (15.02 criminal history) + (.65 credit check) + (9.76 background check) + (-.73 racial/ethnic diversity by state)

According to the above predictive model, states that voted democrat during the last presidential election had a significantly lower percentage of total sworn officers who participate in community policing activities in police departments, when controlling for driving record, criminal history, credit check, background check, and racial/ethnic diversity of state.

Lastly, I examined if the use of community policing tactics by police departments is a predictor of the racial/ethnic diversity in police departments after controlling for the political climate of the states, by conducting Pearson bivariate correlation and multiple linear regression. The bivariate correlation (see Table 2) results showed the use of community policing tactics by police departments has a weak positive relationship with political climate (r = .059, p < .001), credit check (r = .077, p < .001), and racial/ethnic diversity of police departments (r = .062, p < .001), a weak negative relationship with racial/ethnic diversity by state (r = -.051, p < .005), and no relationship with background, driving record, and criminal history. This means that as the percentage of officers who are involved in community policing activity in a police department increases, the racial/ethnic diversity increases. Second, as police departments located in democrat states increases, the racial/ethnic diversity increases. Third, as police departments increase the

utilization of credit check as a screening technique, the racial/ethnic diversity increases. Lastly, as the racial/ethnic diversity by state decreases, so does the community policing activity by police officers.

I then regressed racial/ethnic diversity in police departments on community policing, controlling for driving record, criminal history, credit history, background check, racial/ethnic diversity of state, and political climate. The results of the regression (see Table 6) indicated that the model explained 24.7% of the variance and that the model was significant ($F_{(7, 2202)}$ = 102.92, $p < .001$). While community policing (B = .05, p = .03), political climate (B = -2.88, p = .001), driving record (B = -21.64, $p < .001$) and racial/ethnic diversity by state (B = -.74, $p < .001$) contributed significantly to the model, criminal history (B = 16.78, p = .08), credit check (B = .22, p = .81), and background check (B = 11.10, p = .13) did not. The final predictive statistical model was: Racial/ethnic diversity of police departments = 58.44 + (.05 community policing) + (-2.88 political climate) + (-21.64 driving record) + (16.78 criminal history) + (.22 credit check) + (11.10 background check) + (-.74 racial/ethnic diversity by state)

According to the above predictive model, as the percentage of total sworn officers who participate in community policing activities in police departments (community policing) increases, the percentage of non-white full-time sworn police officers (the racial/ethnic diversity of police departments) increases by .050 points when controlling for driving record, criminal history, credit check, background check, racial/ethnic diversity of state, and political climate.

CONCLUSION

The results of this analysis lend support to Hypothesis 1 and partial support for Hypothesis 2. The first test, related to Hypothesis 1, showed that police departments that utilize community-oriented policing tactics have a higher percentage of non-white full-time sworn

police officers in their departments. The second test, related to Hypothesis 2, showed that police departments located in states that voted democrat are more than likely to utilize community-oriented policing tactics. The third test, also related to Hypothesis 2, conflicted with the first and second test, and showed a lower percentage of non-white full time sworn police officers in police departments located in states that voted democrat. Future research is needed to explore the implication of these findings and whether political climate has a true effect on the racial diversity of a police department. The fourth and final test, related to both Hypotheses, considered the political climate of where a police department was located, and showed that police departments that utilize community policing tactics have a higher percentage of non-white full time sworn officers in their police department.

Even considering the limitations, the overall results of this study, as well as preceding studies, lend support for community-oriented policing as a strategy to increase racial/ethnic minority interest in the work of policing. However, the use of community-oriented policing is not a standardized practice in U.S. police departments. Police chiefs and community leaders must first understand and recognize that the manner in which a police officer is perceived by the public, particularly by Black Americans, is the first step in not only improving police and community relations, but in increasing the racial/ethnic diversity of a police department. It is important that police chiefs embrace and adopt the philosophies of community-oriented policing so that its training and practices are adopted throughout the culture and organizational structure of their police departments. In addition, police chiefs must ensure that all members of the department are practicing community-oriented policing every day. A police organization cannot affect change by only assigning a couple of officers to a community-oriented policing unit. It takes the efforts of all police officers to affect change. If every police officer puts forth the effort

to understand the different cultures in the U.S. and is more of a problem-solver and community partner, instead of just a law enforcer, then maybe more racial minorities will begin to trust the police and therefore want to be part of the police family. Finally, if these ideas continue to be statistically supported, then maybe the use of community-oriented policing will become a standardized practice across all police departments in the U.S. This institutional change in policing will not only improve the relationship between the community and the police, but it will also procure a more culturally diverse police force.

Limitations

Although the 2016 LEMAS survey was the best fit for this study, due to the specific questions asked concerning community-oriented policing, there are still limitations that hindered the results. First, not all police departments in the U.S. were considered in this study. The study included only 2,784 out of the 18,000 police departments (federal, state, county, and local agencies) in the U.S. Because community-oriented policing is not a standardized practice among all law enforcement agencies, there is no telling whether or not the police departments chosen for this particular study are representative of all police departments. In addition, each police department varied in size ranging from single-officer police departments to those with more than 30,000 officers (Banks et al., 2016). This range skewed the percentage of community policing activity practiced by department in some cases. For instance, a smaller police department that assigned one or two officers to a community-oriented policing unit would show an overall higher percentage of community policing activity than a larger police department that assigned the same number of officers.

Future Studies

To further support the idea that community-oriented policing increases the racial/ethnic diversity of police departments, future research is needed to include a nationally representative sample of all police departments in the U.S. including the size of the city where a police department is located to control for the difference in the size of the police departments. In addition, the different kinds of community policing activities will need to be examined to discover the kinds of activities that have a true effect on a police department's racial/ethnic diversity.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for all Variables

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	
Percentage of full-time officers who are minorities	2,618	15.2	21.45	On average, minority officers made up 15% of full time sworn officers in police departments
Community policing activity	2,253	18.4	16.15	On average 18% of police departments engaged in community policing activity
Percentage of non-Hispanic whites by state (2017)	2,784	66.3	14.35	On average there are 66% non-Hispanic whites in states where the police departments in the data set were located
Credit check screening technique	2,747	0.68	0.47	On average 68% of police departments utilized credit history as a screening tactic for hiring
Driving record screening technique	2,774	0.99	0.85	On average 99% of police departments utilized driving record as a screening tactic for hiring
Background investigation screening technique	2,777	0.99	0.08	On average 99% of police departments utilized background history as a screening tactic for hiring
Criminal History screening technique	2,776	100	0.05	On average 100% of police departments utilized criminal history as a screening tactic for hiring

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations for all Variables		CP	Political Climate	Race State	Credit Check	Back-ground	Driving Record	Criminal History	% FT Minority
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Community policing (CP) activity	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.059**	-.051*	.077**	.013	-.018	.008	.062**
	p-value		.055	.016	.000	.543	.398	.701	.003
(2) Political climate	Correlation Coefficient		1.00	-.272**	.213**	.038*	.006	-.017	.066**
	p-value			.000	.000	0.047	.768	.379	.001
(3) Racial/Ethnic Diversity by State	Correlation Coefficient			1.00	-.125**	-.015	.003	.001	-.478**
	p-value				.000	.440	.877	.942	.000
(4) Credit check	Correlation Coefficient				1.00	.108**	.114**	.034	.061**
	p-value					.000	.000	.073	.002
(5) Background investigation	Correlation Coefficient					1.00	.205**	.190**	.035
	p-value						.000	.000	.075
(6) Driving Record check	Correlation Coefficient						1.00	.271**	-.046*
	p-value							.000	.018
(7) Criminal history check	Correlation Coefficient							1.00	.028
	p-value								.148
(8) Percentage of Full-Time (FT) Sworn Minority Officers	Correlation Coefficient								1.00
(n=2,784)									
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).									
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).									

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analyses1 with Percentage of Full Time Officers Who are Minorities as a Dependent Variable

Variables	b	B	p
Intercept	56.21		0.000
Community policing activity	0.050	0.037	0.046
Driving record new hire	-21.93	-0.071	0.000
Criminal history new hire	17.48	0.034	0.071
Credit check new hire	-0.283	-0.006	0.755
Background investigation new hire	10.82	0.028	0.139
Percentage of non-Hispanic whites in the states 2017	-0.719	-0.482	0.000
Adjusted R square	0.241		

Model controls for *driving record, criminal history, credit check, background investigation*, and *percentage of non-Hispanic whites in states 2017*.
Ordinary Least Squares recession analysis was used. All significant tails are two-tailed.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analyses2 with Community Policing Activity as a Dependent Variable

	b	B	p
Variables			
Intercept	19.09		0.055
Driving record new hire	-5.95	-0.027	0.209
Criminal history new hire	3.78	0.010	0.647
Credit check new hire	2.46	0.069	0.002
Background investigation new hire	2.02	0.007	0.745
Percentage of non-Hispanic whites in the states 2017	-0.042	-0.038	0.085
Political climate - presidential election results in 2016	1.3	0.038	0.084
Adjusted R square	0.008		

Model controls for *driving record, criminal history, credit check, background investigation*, and *percentage of non-Hispanic whites in states 2017*.
Ordinary Least Squares recession analysis was used. All significant tails are two-tailed.

Table 5. Multiple Regression Analyses3 with Percentage of Full Time Officers Who are Minorities as a Dependent Variable

	b	B	p
Variables			
Intercept	56.38		0.000
Driving record new hire	-17	-0.06	0.001
Criminal history new hire	15.02	0.031	0.084
Credit check new hire	0.65	0.014	0.429
Background investigation new hire	9.76	0.036	0.047
Percentage of non-Hispanic whites in the states 2017	-0.73	-0.494	0.000
Political climate - presidential election results in 2016	-2.89	-0.064	0.000
Adjusted R square	0.237		

Model controls for *driving record, criminal history, credit check, background investigation*, and *percentage of non-Hispanic whites in states 2017*.

Ordinary Least Squares recession analysis was used. All significant tails are two-tailed.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analyses4 with Percentage of Full Time Officers Who are Minorities as a Dependent Variable

Variables	b	B	p
Intercept	58.44		0.000
Community policing activity	0.05	0.04	0.034
Driving record new hire	-21.64	-0.070	0.000
Criminal history new hire	16.78	0.033	0.082
Credit check new hire	0.22	0.916	0.81
Background investigation new hire	11.10	0.029	0.128
Percentage of non-Hispanic whites in the states 2017	-0.74	-0.498	0.000
Political climate - presidential election results in 2016	-2.88	-0.063	0.001
Adjusted R square	0.244		

Model controls for *driving record, criminal history, credit check, background investigation,* and *percentage of non-Hispanic whites in states 2017,* and *political climate.*
Ordinary Least Squares recession analysis was used. All significant tails are two-tailed.