De-Escalation in Police-Citizen Encounters:

A Mixed Methods Study of a Misunderstood Policing Strategy

by

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ABSTRACT

There is demand for police reform in the United States to reduce use of force and bias, and to improve police-citizen relationships. Many believe de-escalation should be a more central feature of police training and practice. It is suggested that improving officers' communication and conflict resolution skills will temper police-citizen interactions and reduce police use of force, and that such a change will improve citizen trust in the police. To date, however, de-escalation training has not spread widely across agencies, and de-escalation as a strategy has not been studied. Without an evidence-based understanding of these concepts, de-escalation training will proceed blindly, if at all. Accordingly, this dissertation represents one of the first empirical studies of de-escalation in police work. The author completed this study as an embedded researcher in the Spokane (WA) Police Department, and it proceeds in two parts. Part 1 was exploratory and qualitative, consisting of in-depth interviews (N=8) and a focus group (N=1) with eight highly skilled police de-escalators. These officers were nominated by peers as the best among them at de-escalating difficult encounters with citizens. The results in Part 1 explore officers' perceptions of de-escalation and offer a definition of de-escalation as well as a description of de-escalation tactics. In Part 2, the author systematically observed the concepts developed in part 1 during 35 ride-alongs with 29 police officers, including the peer nominated officers (N=131 police-citizen encounters). This phase of the research investigated whether characteristics of officers, citizens, and situations are associated with de-escalation use, and de-escalation effectiveness. Implications from these findings are drawn for police practice, theory, and research methods. This dissertation is a launching point for empirical research on de-escalation in police work.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUTION

> "Although force is the core of the police role,
> the skill of policing consists of finding ways to avoid its use."
> (Bittner, 1974, p. 40)

Background

American police have historically struggled to establish trust and legitimacy with the public, particularly in poor and minority communities. These problems have become pronounced recently, following several high profile deaths of unarmed black citizens by police. In particular, the two years following the fatal 2014 shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson, Missouri police officer have been called "the most widespread period of unrest since the 1960s" (Terrill, 2016, p. 491). A 2015 Gallup poll found that support for police fell as low as the rates seen in 1993 following the state trials of the officers who beat Rodney King. The poll found only 52% of American people have confidence in the police (Jones, 2015). Though by some measures these attitudes have improved, only 29% of black Americans currently report a great deal of confidence in the police (Newport, 2016). According to James et al. (2016), "the police have gone from being the 'good guys' to being the 'bad guys'… every use of deadly force (particularly against minority subjects) seems to be presumed unreasonable until proven otherwise" (pg. 49). There is a clear crisis of police-citizen relations in American society, and much of this problem is defined along racial lines.

Michael Brown's death had a uniquely poignant impact on the American public for several reasons (Pyrooz, Decker, Wolfe, & Shjarback, 2016). First, the event occurred in an era where the Internet and social media in particular permeate most areas of human

life. The circumstances surrounding Brown's death spread like contagion online, causing the effects to be felt by people across the country instantaneously. Second, Brown's death is a tangible representation of Americans' natural aversion to heavy governmental intervention and control, especially in the use of coercive control (Walker, 1980).

Finally, tension between police and minority citizens is not a new problem. According to Skolnick (2007), when one considers the historical context, the current atmosphere should come as little shock. The death of a black male at the hand of a white police officer is a proverbial "drop in the bucket" in racial tensions in American policing (Alexander, 2010; Dunham & Petersen, 2017; Skolnick, 2007; White & Fradella, 2016). Following the deaths of Trayvon Martin (by a white civilian) in 2012 and Michael Brown in 2014, riots began nation wide and #BlackLivesMatter grew into a national movement, mobilized by the belief that the police (and society in general) devalue black lives relative to white lives. Historically, similar riots have erupted following controversial cases of police force, notably across the country in the 1960s, in Los Angeles in the 1990s following the Rodney King incident, and in Miami (1980), St. Petersburg (1996), and Cincinnati (2001; White, 2014). Empirically, non-white citizens, especially African Americans, have reported more negative attitudes towards police than whites for as long as data are available (Decker, 1981; Newport, 2014, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2016; D. Smith, Graham, & Adams, 1991). Moreover, minority citizens' attitudes are more adversely affected by instances of police brutality and for longer periods of time (Lasley, 1994; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997). Current events are, therefore, a continuation in the pattern of public outrage over systemic racial problems in American policing and criminal justice.

Officers acknowledge that increased anti-police sentiment and negative publicity adversely affects their jobs (Morin, Parker, Stepler, & Mercer, 2017; T. Williams, 2015b). Others have linked the events in Ferguson and aftermath to rise in crime (Christine, 2014; Mac Donald, 2016; Schmidt & Apuzzo, 2015; Rosenfeld, 2016). In extreme cases, the current climate has motivated executions of police officers. For example, in December 2014, two police officers in Brooklyn, New York were shot and killed "execution-style" as they sat in their patrol car (Mueller & Baker, 2014). Prior to the shooting, the assailant announced via social media that his anger over the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner motivated him to kill police officers. In August 2015, a Houston police deputy was ambushed and fatally shot 15 times as he was pumping gas in his police uniform (The Associated Press, 2015). The only motive for the killing identified by investigators was that the deputy was wearing a law enforcement uniform. In July 2016, five Dallas officers were killed by a lone sniper immediately following the in-custody deaths of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, both African Americans (Karimi, Shoichet, & Ellis, 2016). In the wake of these tragedies, police officers express concerns for their safety and many believe "it's a different world" for law enforcement today (Morin et al., 2017; Rubin, Hennessy-Fiske, & Winton, 2015).

The everyday operations of the police have also been transformed by a growing culture of recording the police. For example, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2017) has a virtual Community Action Manual for combating police abuse of human rights. Similarly Cop Block (www.copblock.org) is dedicated to capturing and evaluating the actions of the police in the interest of uncovering misconduct. In combination with this culture of scrutiny, the pervasiveness of cell phone video cameras and police officer

body-worn cameras have placed U.S. police under a magnifying glass. As a result, findings from one simulation-based study suggests concerns about the aftermath of officer-involved shootings may be impacting officers' in-the-moment decision-making, perhaps by causing officers to hesitate before shooting black suspects (James, James, & Vila, 2016). Another study found some officers are less motivated to work as a result of the increased scrutiny (i.e. depolicing; Nix & Wolfe, 2017). A third found that Missouri police officers in the "post-Ferguson" era are engaging in less proactive policing in predominantly African American municipalities (Shjarback, Pyrooz, Wolfe, & Decker, in press).

Understanding the relationship between race and police use of force has been challenging. One major explanation is a lack of data. While homicides committed by civilians in the United States are well documented, as are police line of duty deaths (Borrego, 2011; Krieger, Chen, Waterman, Kiang, & Feldman, 2015), there is still no reliable data documenting how often U.S. police use force (Fyfe, 2002; Geller & Scott, 1992; Klinger, Rosenfeld, Isom, & Deckard, 2016; White, 2016). White (2016) outlines several plausible reasons why this data is not collected: 1) the existence of other (albeit insufficient) efforts to collect this data, 2) the infrequency of police use of force, 3) the difficulty in compiling nationally representative data, 4) police culture's adherence to secrecy and solidarity, 5) the "split second syndrome" (whereby the value of post hoc critiques of police actions is downplayed), and 6) the critical argument that efforts to document police use of force would threaten the dominant status of the racial and social majority and contradict the argument that criminal actions are perpetrated more often by minority groups. As such, we have no systematically collected data indicating how often

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police use non-deadly force, how often citizens die at the hands of the police, how many of these deaths occurred for reasons other than police intervention (e.g. drug intoxication, suicide), and how many of these deaths were unnecessary or preventable. We do not know who is most often subjected to force. We do not even know if use of force is increasing or decreasing.

Some efforts are underway to rectify this problem. In October 2016, the Justice Department announced a comprehensive plan to develop a national database on police use of force (U.S. Attorney General, 2016). Several recent media-driven efforts have also been undertaken to collect these data. For example, the Washington Post compiled a data set of individuals shot and killed by police in the United States annually (Kindy & Elliott, 2015; Kindy, Fisher, Tate, & Jenkins, 2015). These data indicate that American police shot and killed 990 people in 2015, of whom 291 were black (Nix, Campbell, Byers, & Alpert, 2017). Similarly, The Guardian's (2017) project "The Counted" aims to "count the number of people killed by police…monitor their demographics and…tell the stories of how they died." These media based data are limited, however, to only citizens who are fatally shot by police (Klinger & Slocum, 2017).

Another challenge hindering our understanding of the relationship between race and police force is methodological. It is exceedingly difficult to isolate the specific factors that influence officers' in-the-moment decision making. Laboratory based experiments of police use of force shed light on this issue (James, James, et al., 2016; James, Klinger, & Vila, 2014), though are limited in their generalizability to the real world environment (Terrill, 2016). A third challenge relates to the precarious position held by police in American society (Bittner, 1970). Our society calls upon the police to

perform difficult, sometimes violent actions, and frequently on a moment's notice with inadequate or inaccurate information. These circumstances can lead to the use of tactical methods that may appear crude to the outside observer, especially in the light of next day review with the benefit of more scrupulous and dissociated consideration. Officers are asked to enforce the law against those who break it – "given the choice, very few of the clients arrested or brought to book by the police would consent to this" (Fyfe, 1986, p. 213). Naturally, this role places the police in an opposing, confrontational position. Since disorder and crime are more concentrated in certain populations and social spaces, the nature of police enforcement and surveillance is inherently disproportionate and stirs animosity among those most targeted by police attention (Bittner, 1970). As a result, disentangling the relationships between criminal involvement, race, and the policing of minority citizens is challenging.

Though research has highlighted the persisting damaged relationship between police and minorities for decades, it is possible the intense climate has finally brought us to a tipping point. For example, by December 2014, demands for law enforcement reform became so mainstream that President Barack Obama ordered a Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Policing to conduct nationwide inquiries into American policing (The Executive Office of the President, 2014). The Task Force produced a final report in May 2015 with more than 60 recommendations to the President for improving police-community relations (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). These recommendations focused on improving the quality of police-citizen interactions, increasing transparency and accountability, enhancing community involvement in crime control, identifying alternatives to arrest, increasing diversity in police personnel, and

improving use of force and decision making training. One suggestion in particular was to make de-escalation a core philosophy of police training and practice. Agencies, politicians, and researchers have jumped on a number of the report's recommendations (for example, body-worn cameras). Others, like de-escalation, have not yet been examined in empirical research. The current study addresses this research gap.

Research Problem

The first problem addressed in the current dissertation is the lack of existing research on police de-escalation. The use of de-escalation has received nationwide attention and support from a number of sources, particularly among federal government and policing research organizations. Among the many recommendations put forth by President's Task Force's was that "law enforcement agency policies for training on use of force should emphasize de-escalation and alternatives to arrest or summons in situations where appropriate." The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) has made similar recommendations over the past several years – "We sometimes find that while the shooting may be legally justified, there were missed opportunities to ratchet down the encounter, to slow things down, to call in additional resources, in the minutes before the shooting occurred." A recently issued National Consensus Policy on Use of Force (2017), developed in a collaboration between eleven national police organizations, also incorporated de-escalation: "An officer shall use de-escalation techniques and other alternatives to higher levels of force" whenever possible before resorting to physical force (pg. 3). Despite these recommendations, however, de-escalation has not generated

much empirical attention. In fact, research on the nature and effectiveness of de-escalation tactics, training, and policies is virtually nonexistent (Terrill, 2016).

It is generally argued that de-escalation will reduce the rate at which police use force by improving officers' skills for resolving conflict without getting physical, particularly in highly combative or tense situations (Oliva, Morgan, & Compton, 2010). These skills are just as important as police training in physical force and defensive tactics, since the majority of police activity involves problem solving, helping, and order maintenance tasks rather than crime fighting (Walker & Katz, 2013). Further, since interacting with individuals who present special problems (such as mentally ill persons, juveniles, or groups who are especially hostile towards the police) are an engrained part of police work, developing skills and tactics for peacefully and effectively communicating with unique and difficult populations is crucial. These types of calls for service can be especially challenging and stressful for responding officers, and also tend to incite the most public outrage in the aftermath of a tragedy since such populations are viewed as vulnerable and needing protection (PERF, 2012, 2016).

Even the concept of "de-escalation" itself (in reference to the policing strategy) is not well-defined or universally understood. Many police, for example, believe the strategy to be nothing more than "a rose by any other name" or a buzz word. For example, some claim it is another way of describing the "verbal judo" tactic espoused by Thompson in the 1980s (Dart, 2016). Flosi (2016) noted that most officers have for decades received some form of de-escalation training, including effective communications, verbal persuasion, using distance, cover, and time when appropriate, and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. Further, officers say they develop and hone

de-escalation skills themselves in the field, over thousands of public interactions that had

the potential to become violent. More generally, many U.S. police have been vocal in

their beliefs that recommendations put forth by the Task Force (2015) and others (PERF,

2016) were based on misinformed realities of police work and de-escalation (Flosi, 2016;

Force Science, 2016; Jackman, 2016; Martinelli, 2016; T. Williams, 2015a). They argue

that "outsiders" tend to overestimate the potential for de-escalation to successfully

resolve tense encounters, given the uncertainty and danger officers face on a daily basis.

Most ardently, officers argue that increased pressure on police to de-escalate will put

them in danger because they will attempt to use verbal tactics when it is unsafe to do so.

  PERF (2012) has characterized de-escalation as any alternative to use of force and

lists a wide array of tactics for accomplishing this goal, including slowing situations

down, CIT skills, and identifying and making considerations for special consumers of

police services such as veterans and the mentally ill. The National Consensus Policy on

Use of Force (2017) defined de-escalation as follows.

> "Taking an action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential
> force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy
> of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to
> resolve the situation without the use of force or with a reduction in the force
> necessary. De-escalation may include the use of such techniques as command
> presence, advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion and tactical repositioning"
> (pg. 2).

Generally, these organizations and others have argued that police use of force will

decrease in frequency if police training more comprehensively covers and emphasizes de-

escalation tactics. Furthermore, in contrast with officers' claims, they argue that de-

escalation skills will *increase* officer safety since it will provide officers with a more

comprehensive skill set for addressing problematic situations and will decrease the

overall chances that violence will occur. However, as these examples demonstrate, exactly what these tactics or techniques are is not very clear. While there seems to be a consensus that de-escalation is "not force," a specified definition of what de-escalation *is* and a standardized set of tactics do not exist.

As a consequence of this conceptual ambiguity, an empirical analysis of de-escalation is first needed to identify a concrete definition of its purpose, goals, and tactics to assist in the development of future research and ultimately so standardized policies and training can be created and properly evaluated. Such a conceptual analysis should collect data from officers, citizens, experts, and other relevant stakeholders. In particular, research on officer perceptions is needed to identify how the strategy is currently being used and to understand what types of calls officers typically respond to in which de-escalation tactics are less effective or unsafe. Research should also investigate the extent to which officers believe training is lacking in teaching this strategy. Because many of the current controversies in policing stem from citizen disenchantment with current police practices, investigations into citizen perceptions of de-escalation are also imperative so de-escalation training can be developed and implemented with legitimacy in mind. Finally, an analysis of police-citizen encounters is needed, which examines how officer, citizen, and situational characteristics influence the effectiveness of these tactics. Ultimately, this form of conceptual and practical research analysis will be mutually beneficial to both police, who will be best equipped to safely neutralize potentially violent situations, and the public, who have the collective right to expect that police authority is used legitimately, competently, fairly, and in good faith (Reiman, 1985).

The second problem addressed in the current dissertation is a lack of research on good police work more generally (Fyfe, 1986, 1993; Klockars, 1996). Over the past half century or so, research has considerably advanced our knowledge of the causes and consequences of "police malpractice" in important ways (Kane & White, 2013, p. 165). Studies have extensively investigated officer misconduct (Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1998), including career ending misconduct (Gaub, 2015; Kane & White, 2013), crimes (Stinson, 2015), corruption (Punch, 2009; Sherman, 1978), and excessive force (Geller & Toch, 1959). Studies have also examined "rotten" departments, organizational settings in which police deviance is tolerated or even encouraged, as well as the influence of the larger police culture on individual officer behavior (Punch, 2003; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). Generally speaking, we have a large body of literature on "bad" policing and the best practices for minimizing these behaviors and their consequences. These facts led Kane and White (2013) to argue policing research should transition to a discourse on "good policing," a term coined by Fyfe (1993). Fyfe was noted for his approach to the study of police accountability not in terms of minimizing abuse as much as in producing good police work (Kane & White, 2013). He argued these two concepts are conceptually different and must be approached separately (see also White, 2010). In the context of police use of force, Fyfe (1986) argued there is a conceptual difference between extralegal (e.g. clearly excessive, brutal, abusive) forms of police violence, and legal yet *unnecessary* violence. It is easy for outsiders to conclude that a use of force is excessive, or motivated by the officer's racial prejudice or emphatic aggressiveness. However, egregious forms of police violence occur far less frequently, and inflict less collective harm, than unnecessary police violence. Unnecessary violence occurs when well-

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meaning officers are incapable of handling a particular situation without hastily resorting to physical means of solving the problem. This form of violence occurs due to incompetence and inadequate training. Excessive force and other forms of misconduct that stem from officers' unconscious or implicit biases may also contribute to unnecessary police violence (Fridell, 2013; James, Fridell, & Straub, 2016). Accordingly, Fyfe (1986) called for research examining how good policing is performed, not only to reduce extralegal forms of police abuse of force but also to minimize the use of unnecessary force, which is a more common problem. Research investigating the nature and impact of de-escalation strategies in policing would certainly take a step towards fulfilling these authors' recommendations and move towards an empirical understanding of "good" policing.

In summary, the preceding sections demonstrate there is a history of animosity and tension between the police and many segments of the population they serve, especially minority communities. According to the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, "since the 1990s, policing has become more effective, better equipped, and better organized to tackle crime. Despite this… the public's confidence in police work has remained flat, and among some populations of color, confidence has declined" (pg. 9). The tension has intensified considerably since the death of Michael Brown brought the police-citizen relationship to the very forefront of American dialogue. Use of force by police lies at the center of this controversy, as many people believe the police abuse their authority to use physical and deadly force. Unfortunately, our ability to fully understand this problem has been thus far obstructed by a lack of national data on one hand, and a near exclusive focus among policing researchers on "bad" policing on the

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other. Progress towards repairing the relationship between the police and the American public will require policing scholars to initiate a dialogue on what constitutes "good" policing. Such a dialogue will range from inquiries into proper and fair use of force, to the intricacies of everyday verbal communications between officers and community residents.

Dissertation Overview

The current study is one of the first to investigate the topic of de-escalation since the strategy was cited as a critical mechanism for achieving police legitimacy by the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing in 2015, and was incorporated into the National Consensus Policy on Use of Force (2017). The study proceeds in two parts. The first part is a qualitative exploration of the concept of police de-escalation from the perspective of highly skilled police de-escalators. This part of the project asks: What are highly skilled officers' perceptions of de-escalation? The second part of the project employs a quantitative inquiry into the use of de-escalation by officers in the field, using the Systematic Social Observation method on police ride alongs, and answers the question: What characteristics of officers, situations, and citizens are associated with police use of de-escalation, and de-escalation effectiveness?

This dissertation is organized as follows. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides an empirical foundation for research on de-escalation in police work. This chapter begins with historical and contemporary knowledge concerning the role of race in police history, as well as the mission of the police, placing research on de-escalation and violence reduction into historical and sociological context. Chapter 2 then

synthesizes current empirical knowledge on use of force, police-citizen transactions, and good police work. In Chapter 3, the methodology used in the current study is described, covering the methods for gaining access to the research setting, the sampling frame, data collection, the research purpose and questions, and analytic strategies. Chapter 4 presents the results from Part 1, the qualitative portion of this study. Chapter 5 presents Part 2, the quantitative results. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the implications of the findings for research, theory, and police practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Police-citizen relationships and racialized tension in American policing are some of the most pressing social problems of our time. A benefit of the recent crisis is it has generated momentum for reform. Many suggest de-escalation may be a solution to problems in policing because it trains officers to defuse conflict and handle potentially violent situations without using force. De-escalation has received a lot of attention but remains unstudied. The conceptual and theoretical foundations of de-escalation are consequently undefined and lack a clear direction moving forward. Accordingly, this chapter provides the historical, theoretical, and empirical foundations for research on police de-escalation. The chapter first reviews the historical evolution of American policing and de-escalation is discussed as a potential mechanism for addressing historical and contemporary problems. Next, this chapter considers the complex issue of the police role in society. Saving lives, enforcing the law, keeping the peace, and maintaining public trust have each been suggested as a fundamental role of the police. De-escalation is offered as a means for pursuing all of these roles. Finally, this chapter reviews evidence on use of force, police-citizen transactions, and good police work. In doing so, the review provides an empirical foundation for de-escalation research moving forward.

Historical Context

American Police Beginnings

The origins of American policing, including its community-based patrol system and focus on crime prevention, stem from its English heritage (Uchida, 2015). In colonial

America, the design and intentions of police work were not specific. County sheriffs, constables, and various forms of night watchmen comprised the law enforcement system and were responsible for a wide range of tasks including enforcement of the law and maintaining community order, as well as tax collection and street lamp maintenance. Officers were responsible for maintaining their own neighborhoods and responded reactively to the diverse requests of local residents. American law enforcement was unique for this small and localized form of law enforcement. This model was desirable to Americans, according to Walker (1992b), because they were averse to big government authority – a response to the oppression experienced under previous British control. Most Americans felt police officers should have minimal control and a civilian orientation, in contrast to the militarized forces of Italy, Spain, and Germany, and the centrally controlled model of England (Fogelson, 1977). This form of policing was sufficient to handle crime and disorder in the small, homogeneous, and stable early American cities (Walker, 1980).

As America expanded through immigration and over the course of the Industrial Revolution in the 1700s, large urban city centers developed and American society diversified (Dunham & Alpert, 2015; Fogelson, 1977; Uchida, 2015; Walker, 1980). With diversification came new viewpoints regarding acceptable moral values and formal laws. Crime and rioting became more common. Communities struggled to maintain stability and conformity through informal social control and the small, decentralized law enforcement system. With population growth it also became increasingly difficult for civilians and criminals to recognize police officers without official uniforms. As a result, the organization, strategies, and mission of the police necessarily evolved and grew more

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complex. Larger, organized police forces were formed in many of the major American cities from the 1860s through the 1890s, based on the London Metropolitan Police model developed by Sir Robert Peel, Britain's Home Secretary (Reisig, 2010; Uchida, 2015). The London model was established in 1829 and is considered the first modern police department, with its primary function to reduce crime and maintain public safety. Styling after this model, officers in America were given uniforms and weapons and received professional training, seeking to increase the legitimacy of the profession by replicating the appearances and practices of the military (Fogelson, 1977). They also built station houses to make officers more readily available in case of emergency. Many American citizens still held reservations about a large, uniformed police patrol force "occupying" their neighborhoods, as would an army. Nevertheless, once the largest U.S. cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cincinnati created modern police forces, the new model diffused rapidly.

American police agencies did not adopt Peel's London model wholesale (Miller, 1977). Both the London and American systems were grounded in a preventive patrol strategy according to the deterrence model, which believed a prominent, moving, well-marked patrol force would deter criminal activity. However, England's police system was highly centralized, while America's was decentralized. Police forces in England were organized as extensions of the national government and were completely removed from the influence of public opinion (Uchida, 2015). American departments maintained their local affiliations and were effectively extensions of municipal political factions. Officers were selected for their positions by local politicians. For this reason, they were largely left to their own guises and primarily responded to specific requests from community

members (Fogelson, 1977). London's "bobbies" (a name derived from their developer Sir Robert Peel) were heavily constrained by legal and institutional influence (Uchida, 2015). Fogelson (1977) identifies the close relationships between American police and the political machines in this era as the defining characteristic setting American police apart from all other European models.

Peel's London model remains the dominant organizing prototype of American law enforcement agencies today. However, within this model, the strategies used by police departments have evolved alongside societal shifts and technological advances. In one commonly cited framework, three eras of American policing are identified, each reflecting a distinct professional ethos of the police (Fogelson, 1977; Kelling & Moore, 1988): the political era (1840s to early 1900s), the reform era (1920s to 1970s) and the community problem solving era (into the 21st century). Kelling and Moore's model defines each era along seven organizational dimensions: legitimacy, function, organizational design, external relationships, demand management, strategies and technology, and outcomes. There are scholarly criticisms of this model, namely that it neglects the fundamental role of minority citizens in shaping American police history (H. Williams & Murphy, 1988). Below, a critical model is incorporated into Kelling and Moore's framework to provide a more complete picture of American police history. White and Fradella's (2016) identification of a new era of 21st century policing is also discussed.

Traditional and Critical Models of Police History

Kelling and Moore (1988) define the political era of the police beginning in the

1840s and ending in the early 1900s. As the name suggests, officers earned or bought

their positions from local political leaders. They were held to no standards, selection

criteria, or testing requirements, and officers received almost no training (see also

Fogelson, 1977; White & Fradella, 2016). Police legitimacy was derived from political

support. Officers served a variety of functions, including crime control and order

maintenance, and also provided an array of services to their local communities including

helping neighbors find work and volunteering at the soup kitchen (Kelling & Moore,

1988). The primary law enforcement strategy was random foot patrol, and officers paid

special attention to the requests of citizens, since their sponsoring politicians encouraged

them to keep constituents happy. In addition to a decentralized organizational structure,

limits in communication technology rendered officers largely independent from the

demands of supervisors.

This independence, close relationships between policing and politics, and

inadequate selection and training standards bred rampant corruption in the political era.

On one hand, officers tended to be well regarded by neighborhood residents because

random foot patrol practices encouraged daily interactions and familiarity. On the other

hand, a strong sense of community, a loose command structure, and encouragement from

politicians also fostered strong distrust of outsiders, particularly immigrants. Fogelson

(1977) described policing in the political era as law enforcement on an ethnic basis.

Kelling and Moore (1988) acknowledge that discrimination and abuse were common –

"Ruling their beats with the 'ends of their nightsticks,' police regularly targeted outsiders and strangers for rousting and "curbstone justice" (pg. 4).

In addition, though studies of police were rare until the 1950s, scholars have documented the persistent oppression of African Americans among police throughout this era. Blackmon (2009)'s analysis of historical documents from the American South since the end of the Civil War uncovered a pattern and practice of convict leasing, during which police selectively arrested African American freedmen for arbitrary offenses, who were subsequently traded by the courts to work camps to pay off fines, many until their death. In this way, official laws, police policies, and courtroom practices were used to maintain a steady source of free black slave labor even after slavery was outlawed. These practices persisted until World War II, when the "leader of the free world" grew increasingly embarrassed about inconsistencies between its condemnation of German concentrations camps and its own system of neoslavery (Alexander, 2010). Sociologists have also documented how actions of police in response to race riots during the political era through the Civil Rights era highlight an ideological disregard for the lives of black rioters. Grimshaw's (1963) depiction of police response to the 1917 race riots in East St. Louis, Illinois shows officers allowing white mobs to take their weapons and use them against blacks. The commanding officer in charge was ultimately indicted for failing to quell the increasingly violent crowd and instead watching as mobs murdered minorities in the street.

Critical scholars attribute these problems to the origin of American policing as a sanctioned institution for controlling the powerless and the "outsider," with a particular emphasis on the subjugation of blacks. They point out that officers in the pre-Civil War

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South conducted slave patrols to ensure slavery and segregation rules were enforced, limit resistance, authorize acts of discrimination against blacks, and generally keep "the Negro in his place" (Skolnick, 2007, p. 65; see also, Alexander, 2010; H. Williams & Murphy, 1988; Walker, 1977; The Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977). Many view the function of contemporary law enforcement as an extension of these racist institutions. In its report "The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove" the Center for Research on Criminal Justice (1977) defined the role of modern police as enforcing class, race, sex, and culture oppression, and protecting the power and property of the rich from the less fortunate. Rather than fundamental to the functioning and safety of a modern society, these authors perceived the police as a means to control and exploit minorities.

Concerns about corruption, structural disorganization, and political interference prompted demands for police reform (Kelling and Moore, 1988), and the concept of professionalism took hold of American policing in the early 20th century (Walker, 1977, 1984). Proponents of reform believed the criminal laws should be the sole source of police legitimacy, and that officers should not be expected to accommodate a citizen's every request. O.W. Wilson emphasized the law enforcement mission of the police and the need for improved efficiency to achieve this mission. Professionalism was also famously touted by August Vollmer, a vocal police reformer and later Police Chief of Berkeley, California. Kelling and Moore (1988) propose that American policing entered a reform era beginning in the 1920s and extended through the 1970s.

These changes in police management ideals reflected broader developments in organizational philosophy at the time. Classical organization theory dictates that organizations be rational, standardized, and efficient (Reisig, 2010; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang,

2011). It calls for heavy centralized control, strict guidelines for employee behavior, specialization, and limited discretion. The model further emphasizes numeric indicators of performance. According to these bureaucratic principles, police departments in the reform era disassociated themselves from political influence, adopted a centralized internal command structure, and implemented a hierarchical promotion structure based on the military model (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Hiring standards were implemented and in more standardized and regimented training, new officers were taught they were professional crime fighters, to make decisions with strict adherence to criminal statutes, and to regard citizens only as sources of information (reflecting the rational and impersonal principles of classical theory). Departments also began to report arrest and crime rates as indicators that they were doing something to reduce crime. Finally, with the invention of the automobile, the telephone, and two-way radios, the 9-1-1 emergency system was implemented in 1968. Officers were encouraged to respond as quickly as possible to these calls to demonstrate efficiency and professionalism.

There was great enthusiasm for efficiency and innovation in American policing during this time (H. Goldstein, 1990). In addition, the reforms of the era appeared to curb much of the corruption caused by political interference and lack of oversight. American citizens had also come to expect a higher quality of life, and considered it the duty of police to respond to their requests as quickly as possible (Walker, 1984). Because of these positive changes, Goldstein (1990) argued that the problems with the professional model went largely unnoticed or ignored for many decades. Police-citizen relationships had deteriorated. A strict adherence by police agencies to classical theory and bureaucratic principles partially explains these problems. Negative customer relationships

have been identified as an adverse consequence of bureaucracy generally (Angell, 1971).

In the interest of efficiency, officer discretion was heavily constrained in the reform era

(Kelling & Moore, 1988). Standardized solutions to problems were developed and

officers were expected to employ these indiscriminately. Another problem was fast

response times to calls for service were demanded above all other metrics of success. In

an effort to handle all of their calls in a timely manner, officers rushed through the job,

often failing to address actual problems and leaving citizens unsatisfied. As Angell

(1971) argued, this method of law enforcement is not only ineffective, it can be

inherently discriminatory against the disadvantaged. Additionally, random vehicle patrol

replaced foot patrol as the primary strategy (though Walker (1984) observed that eastern

U.S. cities still made heavy use of foot patrol during this time). While patrol vehicles

made officers more efficient, they created an impersonal, reserved, and distant

relationship with the public, which made citizens feel at best estranged from officers and

at worst heavily surveilled (J. Q. Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Finally, the homogeneous

makeup of police forces, which tended to be exclusively conservative, white, and middle

class men increasingly alienated more and more of the American population as it

diversified and expanded (Kappeler et al., 1998; Kerner Commission, 1968).

Not until the unrest of the 1960s, and the civil rights and antiwar movements in

particular, were the flaws of the professional police model confronted (H. Goldstein,

1990). Despite efforts to improve police tactics, refine personnel selection processes, and

reduce corruption, police legitimacy had taken a significant downturn, even among the

majority population (H. Goldstein, 1990; Kelling & Moore, 1988; Reisig, 2010).

Certainly, minority communities had come to view the police as bulwarks against society,

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and they feared and hated police (Fogelson, 1977). In the broader context, crime rates doubled between 1960 and 1970 (Uchida, 2015) – and Martinson's (1974) adage that "nothing works" became the predominant criminological thinking of the era. A presidential commission created to study the crime issue submitted a final report with a telling title: "The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society" (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967). Some members of the public became increasingly aware of discrepancies between the treatment of white and minority citizens in the criminal justice system, and "the police became the symbol of a society that denied blacks equal justice under the law" (Uchida, 2015, p. 24). Others, as Alexander (2010) notes, reluctantly adjusted their rhetoric as "the rules of acceptable discourse changed" during the Civil Rights era and it became less socially acceptable to espouse white supremacist ideas (pg. 43). The issue of race and policing could not, however, be ignored. Most of the riots between the 1960s and 70s stemmed from a routine police incident, and especially a police shooting of a black citizen.

Faced with widespread citizen disenchantment with police, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission, 1968). Previous research had uncovered extreme or considerable prejudice against blacks among U.S. police officers (Skolnick, 1969). Westley's (1951; 1953) classic observational studies of police documented a defining ritual of police culture was to ridicule blacks, and a pervasive belief that illegitimate violence against blacks was justified because "certain groups will respond only to fear and rough treatment" (1953, pg. 40). In its investigation, the Kerner Commission (1968) identified institutional racism as an underlying source of the tensions between the police and citizens. The report

highlighted the especially strained relationship between cops and people of color, harassment and abuse of minorities, and racial bias in law enforcement and use of force. One recommendation from the report was that police departments should hire more minorities, since agencies cannot be legitimate unless they represent and understand the communities they serve (Alex, 1969). A second recommendation was for the development of programs to promote police-community partnerships in crime control. Additionally, reflecting perceptions that police were ineffective at controlling crime and only served to *increase* fear of victimization, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) was created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Diegelman, 1982; The Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977). LEAA was the first significant effort in this country's history to legitimize federal influence in local law enforcement. Its mission was to encourage state controlled structure, provide technical and financial assistance, conduct research, and develop and issue new crime control methods. The creation of LEAA highlights there was a high level of bipartisan support for increasing resources to the criminal justice system to increase its ability to affect crime.

In response to public demands for police reform, heated and violent memories of the Civil Rights Movement, and the Kerner Commission's (1968) recommendations, police departments strove to show that they were rededicating themselves to the community they had alienated. This shift was also prompted by a growing body of research on policing and the causes of crime, which resulted in an "enormous expansion of our knowledge about all aspects of policing" (Walker, 1984, p. 79). This growth in research encouraged departments to seek strategies that "worked" and to leave behind

those that did not. Kelling and Moore (1988) accordingly identify the years following the 1970s as the community problem solving era.

Efforts by police during this time were dedicated to improving public perceptions of police as public servants, rather than occupying armies. Kelling and Moore (1988) note that legitimacy during the community problem solving era was derived from both the law and the quality of an agency's relationship with its community. Accordingly, foot patrol returned as a predominant strategy, based on the assumption that a visible police presence would reduce fear of crime and increase informal, positive police contacts with the community (Kelling & Moore, 1988). The community problem solving era was also characterized by numerous innovations in police strategies. Crime prevention became a new focus, in stark contrast to the exclusive emphasis on rapid response to calls and arrests rates of previous decades. Crime prevention was theorized as a product of strong community-police partnerships, localized problem solving (e.g. problem oriented policing; H. Goldstein, 1979), and order maintenance. A major influence was the publication of Wilson and Kelling's (1982) broken windows theory, which fostered great enthusiasm for order maintenance policing (and in some cases, zero tolerance policing). The broken windows theory hypothesized that if police address minor disorder problems it would not only reduce fear of crime but would actually have a preventative effect on more serious crime, since orderly neighborhoods signal to criminals that the area is not a good environment for offending. A prominent order maintenance strategy was the "Terry stop," or the "stop, question, and frisk." The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the authority of police to conduct Terry stops (*Terry v. Ohio*, 392 U.S. 1 1968), ruling that police could temporarily detain a person "reasonably" suspected of a crime, and could conduct a

limited search of a person if they "reasonably" believed the person might have a weapon (White & Fradella, 2016).

Place based policing also emerged as a dominant strategy, following evidence that random patrol did not affect crime (Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, & Brown, 1974). In one of the first empirical studies to make use of spatial crime data, Sherman, Gartin, and Buerger (1989) examined the spatial arrangement of 323,979 calls for service in the city of Minneapolis. The authors discovered that over half of calls for service to police in the city over one year originated from only 3.3% of the locations. Adopting a medical analogy, the authors termed these small locations "hot spots," a reference to areas in which cancer mortality is high. In what would prove to be a classic finding, Sherman et al. (1989) concluded that location was the *single* most important factor in determining whether a crime would occur. As such, policing "hot spots," in contrast to random assignment, became a widely used strategy that persists today (Weisburd, 2015). These innovations demonstrate increasing enthusiasm for evidence-based police strategies during this time.

Noting that Kelling and Moore published their framework of police history in 1988, White and Fradella (2016) extended their model into the 21st century policing era. These scholars argue that the police function today remains exceedingly broad. Various crime control, public safety, and order maintenance services are still provided, and strategies advanced in the community problem solving era, such as problem and community oriented policing, are still emphasized. There have also been major changes. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, most big city police departments have expanded to include specialized units dedicated to counter-terrorism. Crime control

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in the 21st century is also much more data-driven, and evidence based practices have infiltrated department operations nationwide. Departments are also increasingly entering into collaborations with governing agencies, researchers, and evaluators, representing a shift from the notoriously closed off and secretive nature of police agencies (Braga, 2013). Technology also plays a fundamental role in 21st century policing. GIS crime mapping software and other advanced crime analysis techniques, CompStat, DNA and forensics, digital license plate readers, pepper and OC spray, TASERs and other less lethal weapons, drug and alcohol field testing, body-worn cameras, and gunshot detection systems are some of the technologies used in 21st century policing (White & Fradella, 2016). New technologies continue to be developed as well, such as the StarChase pursuit management prototype that allows police to "shoot" vehicles with a GPS tracker and then follow safely from a distance (www.starchase.com).

American policing is more evidence based, innovative, and safe than ever before (White & Fradella, 2016). However, a defining problem still persists. There is overwhelming evidence that the issue of race continues to plague policing into the 21st century. Over the past fifty years, examples abound where police officers engaged in excessive force, or unnecessarily used deadly force against unarmed black citizens, and were subsequently cleared of wrongdoing, often by mostly white, suburbanite juries (Skolnick, 2007; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). Still today, cases where police officers are arrested and charged for excessive force are extremely rare, in part due to a general belief that police work is dangerous and a police officer's decisions in the heat of the moment are difficult to second guess. This belief extends to juries, who are hesitant to convict without conclusive evidence of the officer's ill intentions, even in many cases when

provided with video footage of the incident (Ali & Sherman, 2016). The NYPD officer who choked Eric Garner to death on video in 2014 was recently cleared of a crime by a State Island grand jury, as was the Ferguson officer who fatally shot Michael Brown the same year. Similarly, University of Cincinnati officer Ray Tensing who shot Samuel Dubose in the head during a traffic stop, and North Charleston Officer Michael Slager who shot Walter Scott from behind as he fled, both captured on video in 2015, were both cleared at trials following jury deadlock. Most recently, the female Tulsa officer who shot and killed Terence Crutcher was cleared of all charges in 2017 after arguing that she feared for her life because Crutcher would not lie down on the ground on the side of the roadway. These cases demonstrate both increasing public demand for the criminal prosecution of police officers involved in highly publicized, controversial, and racially charged deadly force encounters, as well as the difficulty in securing a conviction (Ali & Sherman, 2016).

There are other examples of the persistent role of race in policing and criminal justice in the 21st century. Alexander (2010) described the War on Drugs as a sanctioned effort to regain the control over blacks lost during the Civil Rights Movement. She calls the decades long pattern of mass incarceration of black men for minor drug crimes "the New Jim Crow." Other studies highlight how the pervasive use of stop, question, and frisk tactics disproportionately targets and negatively affects the lives of young, minority, men (Fradella, Morrow, & White, 2016; W. Morrow, 2015; W. J. Morrow, White, & Fradella, in press; White & Fradella, 2016). Because the tactic as used in practice disproportionately affected certain groups more than others and demonstrated very little

crime control benefits, a New York federal judge ruled that the New York Police

Department's use of stop, question, and frisk was unconstitutional.

De-Escalation in Historical Context

This history detailed the birth of American policing from a desire to maximize

public safety and protections of individual civil liberties, particularly in a developing and

diversifying society. In many ways, this history clarifies the goals of 21st century

policing: to maximize professionalism while maintaining positive relationships between

police and all members of the public, to reduce the use of unnecessary and extralegal

force, as well as disproportionality in law enforcement, and to employ evidence-based

and innovative strategies and technologies for effectively reducing or preventing crime.

Moreover, the criminal justice system as a whole is faced with the goal of properly

evaluating police behavior and rooting out misconduct in fair and just ways. One

development in this area has been our increased understanding of unconscious biases,

which psychological science suggests most adult Americans have, and the creation of

police trainings designed to reduce the influence of unconscious bias on police behaviors

(Fridell, 2016; James & James, 2016).

However, police in the 21st century are also presented with old and new

challenges, including the number of problematic and potentially violent encounters with

members of the public who suffer from mental illness or substance addictions, as well as

persons who are inherently distrusting of police. Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) further argued

that there exist two Americas. "One is urban, cosmopolitan, and multicultural. It suffers

disproportionately from crime, gang violence, poverty, and homelessness. The other is

suburban, relatively safe, relatively prosperous, and – most important – unicultural.

Like…the [Rodney] King trial jury, it is predominantly white and middle class" (pg. *xi*).

If a shift toward de-escalation in American police work is to help police achieve the goals

of the 21st century and put an end to centuries-long racial tensions in sustainable ways,

such a shift must be grounded in an evidence-based understanding of these two Americas,

of problematic citizen encounters and their correlates, and of strategies that encourage

mutual trust and respect between officers and members of the public who are not the

intended targets of police attention but often get caught up in this net for reasons deeply

seeded in America's troubling social and political history.

The following section demonstrates the police are also challenged by a second

problem. They operate under the direction of an unclear mission and they pursue an

"impossible mandate." Different theories of the police mission and the complexities of

this impossible mandate are presented below, and de-escalation is situated in this debate.

The Role of the Police

For decades, the role of police in American society has been debated (Bittner,

1970; Fogelson, 1977; H. Goldstein, 1977; Skolnick, 1966; J. Q. Wilson, 1968). Are

police crime fighters mindlessly enforcing laws, or should they be peacekeepers going

'above and beyond the call of duty' to help citizens in any way they can? Should officers

be focused only on neutralizing safety threats, or should they endeavor to save the lives

of all people, including violent criminals? How should effective policing be measured?

According to Rumbaut and Bittner (1979), "The problems of police…are problems of

ends, of competing social values, interests and priorities, the resolution of which raise

fundamental moral and political issues to be decided by an informed citizenry." In other

words, the goals of police are not universally defined. In a heterogeneous society such as the United States the role of the police may be inevitably defined on an individual basis according to each person's experiences, worldviews, and priorities. Many members of the public emphasize the service and order maintenance roles of police – they call on police for minor issues. Some residents of urban neighborhoods may wish police to be harder on violent criminals, while others view officers as the enemy oppressing their rights and freedoms. Officers, on the other hand, typically recognize their law enforcement mandate.

These differences have numerous and significant consequences (Brown, 1988; Manning, 1978; Paoline, 2003; Rumbaut & Bittner, 1979; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; J. Q. Wilson, 1968). Manning (1977) said conflicting role expectations mean officers are tasked with the impossible mandate of controlling crime while at the same time using minimal force and maintaining positive relationships with the public, and they must publicly demonstrate all these achievements using observable metrics. Because they know they cannot achieve this mandate, the police have resorted to a "numbers game" relying heavily on quantitative measures of performance designed "to make it look as though they are doing well when they are not" (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993, p. 126). Manning (1978) also acknowledged that police retain a legal monopoly of violence in society. As a result, the ramifications for malpractice in the profession are incomparably high. Identifying a specific definition of the police role in society is imperative to resolve potential crises in police-citizen relations, particularly following a deadly force incident. Furthermore, an emphasis on their law enforcement mandate encourages officers to view perpetrators of crimes as their only clientele, and to write off crime victims and general

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members of the public as the domain of other professions (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). From

an administrative standpoint, this means that officer performance is measured based on

arrests, and not on problem solving or persons helped. Just as problematic, the lack of a

clear definition of the police mandate means we have little knowledge of when police are

getting it right (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). The main tenants of this issue are outlined below

and each is linked to the topic of de-escalation in police work.

Law Enforcement as the Role of the Police

Particularly during the "reform" era, when significant changes were made to

professionalize and standardize the police institution, police "staked out the mandate that

claims to include the efficient, apolitical, and professional enforcement of the law"

(Manning, 1978, p. 8). Still today, police continue to assert their primary duty is to

enforce laws and control crime. This cultural tenet developed as a mechanism to reduce

internal conflict over contradictory duties (Paoline, 2003). However, Manning (1978)

deemed crime fighting an "impossible mandate" for police, since crime is largely fostered

and controlled through factors outside of their locus of control. At the same time, the

police have fought a losing battle in staking out this claim with the public. While officers

believe their primary duty is to enforce the law, and indeed have trained nearly

exclusively in pursuit of this mission, the public continues to request their help in a wide

range of non-legal matters (Bittner, 1967; Mastrofski, 1983; Reiss, 1971). Others, in

contrast, are resentful to police when they pursue their crime control duties, perhaps

particularly so when they are the subjects of the enforcement. Each of these creates role

conflict for officers and negatively affects the relationships between cops and citizens.

Peace Keeping as the Role of the Police

In practice, the police role is exceptionally broad and much of a police officer's time is spent on non-enforcement activities (Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1967; Cain, 1973; Manning, 1978; Mastrofski, 1983; Scott, 1981; White, 2010; J. Q. Wilson, 1969). Officers, unlike the courts and corrections branches of the criminal justice system, frequently come into contact with people who have committed no crimes at all (Fyfe, 1986). About 50% of calls to police involve a request for officer support in handling an interpersonal problem (Cumming, Cumming, & Edell, 1965). Police are asked to intercede in disputes, calm emotions, provide help both formally and informally, provide information, give directions, give advice, serve as a comforting or helpful presence, return lost items, children, or pets, provide emergency aid, substitute as ambulance drivers, and the list goes on (Manning, 1978). As August Vollmer famously described, a police officer must:

> "…have the wisdom of Solomon, the courage of David, the patience of Job and leadership of Moses, the kindness of the Good Samaritan, the strategy of Alexander, the faith of Daniel, the diplomacy of Lincoln, the tolerance of the Carpenter of Nazareth, and finally, an intimate knowledge of every branch of the nature, biological and social sciences" (Quoted in Leonard & More, 1971, p. 128).

Bittner (1974) similarly said "no human problem exists, or is imaginable, about which it could be said with finality that this certainly could not become the proper business of the police" (pg. 244). We, in effect, expect police to fix all our problems. For this reason, many experts acknowledge that "peacekeeping is a central and critical function of policing" (White, 2010, p. 884). Scholars have laid out several reasons for society's boundless expectations of police. First, police retain the exclusive authority to use coercive force, and therefore citizens expect police to arrive at their request and

quickly put an end to their problems by forcing someone to do something (Bittner, 1970).

Second, many citizens view police as interconnected members of their community and

maintenance of established social norms as their responsibility (Banton, 1964). Wilson

(1968), Cain (1973), and others have argued that citizens are more likely to expect this

form of police service in homogenous and stable areas.

The discrepancies between how officers view their role and the realities of their

work present a few problems. The maintenance of public peace is not clearly defined by

laws, and police training focuses primarily on use of force and law enforcement

procedure, rather than on procedures for maintaining public order (Banton, 1964; Bittner,

1967; Manning, 1978; J. Q. Wilson, 1969). Further, while many issues the police

encounter qualify as law violations, officers often use their discretion to not invoke the

legal process (Black, 1980; Fyfe, 1986; J. Goldstein, 1960; LaFave, 1965). As a result,

most of an officer's daily work is guided by nothing more than his or her own common

sense and police culture (Bittner, 1967; Hunt, 1983). Such a high level of independence

leaves much room for malpractice and disproportionality in police treatment.

Force as the Role of the Police

Bittner (1970) defined the role of police in terms of their official authority to use

force. He argues, for three reasons, "it makes much more sense to say that the police are

nothing else than a mechanism for the distribution of situationally justified force in

society" (pg. 36). First, the demands placed on the police are most often requests for

coercion. People call the police when they need them to use their authority to overpower

resistance. Second, officers are deployed to areas based on the need to implement

forceful actions –that is, more officers are assigned to areas where more force is needed. On the other hand, only 1/3 of the police at any given time are attending to crime related matters. For this reason, Bittner argues that crime control cannot be the core function of the police (see also Manning, 1978). Finally, the use of force or the threat to use force unites all forms of police activity. Officers use force through physical presence, verbal direction, or by using physical strength and training (Terrill, 2001). For example, when a citizen calls on the police because the front door of her house is open, she is asking the police to check her house for intruders. This is asked not for the sake of information but because the police can, if they find an intruder, force them to leave. Likewise, officers are often asked to stand post in locations where citizens are frequently victimized, because they are able to force offenders to stop.

Relatedly, some scholars believe the role of the police is to increase the overall safety of the American public through coercive force. There exists a social contract between police and citizens such that citizens give up a certain amount of civil freedoms to ensure a net increase in that freedom through police protection (Dunham & Alpert, 2015; Reiman, 1985). Citizens surrender a large part of the right to use physical force, so they can devote more time to work and family activities. Without a police force, we would devote much more of this time and energy to protecting our personal safety and property. In turn, we give the police the right to protect us, and to use all means necessary, including deadly force, to do so. For its part, the police promise to use this authority fairly and in the interest of the greater good. Within this context we see the current crisis of police-citizen relations as a re-evaluation of the social contract. For the social contract to remain valid, the public must view the harm they are subjected to *by*

police as less than the harm that would be inflicted upon them by *others* if police did not exist (or no longer retained the authority to utilize coercive force). Members of the public become outraged when they view officer use of force as unfairly distributed or overly excessive (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; Walker, 1980, 1984), which may be what we are seeing today with the high levels of citizen discontent with police. However, the public still appears to view the police as beneficial in terms of net benefit – much of the suggestions for police reform are focused on ways to improve officer use of force, while very few recommend an overall elimination of the institution.

Defending Human Life as the Role of the Police

In their study of excessive police force, Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) philosophized that the mission of police is to protect life. They argued that this definition provides police with a clear benchmark for evaluating actions (were the most lives saved?) and for developing best policies (will the most lives be saved?). As numerous scholars conveyed in a tribute to Dr. Fyfe (McCoy, 2010) much of his research was conducted in pursuit of this mission. The defense of life philosophy is also evident in a wave of recent changes to police policies and practices, including those limiting vehicle pursuits, narrowing use of nonlethal force, and clarifying officer response to crimes of domestic violence (Walker, 2010). The creation of hostage negotiations specialty units is another example of a successful change in police practices with the goal of protecting human life (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). Prior to the 1970s, police approached hostage situations with the mindset that hostage lives were already lost; this typically meant police were quick to use force

and the events usually resulted in bloodshed. Nowadays, significant time and effort is expended to ensure hostages are saved, with great success.

In another example, until *Tennessee v. Garner* (471 U.S. 1 1985) police in the United States retained the authority to shoot at fleeing, unarmed suspects on the theory that this prevented them from committing future crimes (Fyfe, 1979). Experimenting with a change in policy, the NYPD issued Temporary Order of Policy 237 – the "defense of life" policy – which removed an officer's authority to shoot at certain fleeing felons who did not present an imminent threat to the public. The agency enlisted Fyfe's services in evaluating whether constraining deadly force authority in this context carried any unforeseen consequences, such as increased crime rates or compromised officer safety. In an evaluation of the policy's impact, Fyfe (1979) demonstrated that firearms discharges by NYPD officers declined by 30% per week, and this decline came at no cost to officer safety or crime control. This research was cited as a justification for the Supreme Court's decision to remove the fleeing felon rule in Tennessee v. Garner.

Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) talked about a case in which one of them was involved as an expert witness. A black doctor was stopped by police for driving 10 miles over the speed limit. After telling the officers that he could not be stopped because he was rushing to the emergency room to save a man's life, the officers pulled the man from the car and choked him unconscious. On the witness stand, one of the authors argued for a defense of life philosophy in evaluating the case, which would dictate that the officers should have assisted the doctor in getting to the emergency room to save the patient (given the minor infraction that prompted the original stop). Consistent with this philosophy, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommended a clearly stated "sanctity

of life" philosophy be on the forefront of every officer's mind, and at the core of all departments' missions (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015, p. 19). Likewise, a document offering "30 Guiding Principles on Use of Force" published by PERF (2016) incorporates tales from agencies across the United States of successful efforts to minimize harm to citizens while also protecting officer safety. The National Consensus Policy on Use of Force (2017) was the first of its kind to identify de-escalation and force avoidance as a responsibility of the police.

Legitimacy as the Role of the Police

Police face immense and persistent problems in managing positive relations with the public. After decades of recurring waves of scandal and reform have deteriorated many citizen's perceptions of the police, there is a growing body of research, practitioner, and government interest in police legitimacy as a core function of American law enforcement. In its final report, the Task Force highlighted as *the top priority* in American policing to "build trust and legitimacy" with the public (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015, p. 1). There are many indications that legitimacy can serve as a guiding role of the police without sacrificing other core missions. Most importantly, legitimacy is intimately connected with the ability of the police to protect and serve their assigned communities, and to reduce crime and disorder. Criminal justice agencies enjoy legitimacy when people feel the institution, agency, and individual actors deserve to be respected and obeyed. Police in particular have legitimacy when the public accepts and respects the authority of the police, regard the police positively, and feel that officers treat people fairly and with respect (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Research has

demonstrated perceptions of police legitimacy are strongly related to compliance with the law and cooperation with authority figures (Mastrofski, Snipes, & Supina, 1996; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Moreover, the most important factor influencing whether someone cooperates with police is their evaluation of the fairness of the processes used by police in the exercise of their authority – procedural justice (Reisig, Bratton, & Gertz, 2007; Reisig, Tankebe, & Mesko, 2012; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990, 2003, 2004; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Procedural justice is based on a citizen's evaluation of four criteria during an interaction with a police officer: fairness, respect, trustworthiness, and whether they were given a voice in the decision-making process (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013; Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

According to Walker (1992b), being treated fairly and respectfully by police is especially important for residents of poor, inner-city communities, who are more likely to perceive police are overly-aggressive in their tactics, but unresponsive to crime and deviance in their neighborhoods. Research suggests the value of procedural justice is equally important to individuals across racial, ethnic, gender, income, age, education, ideology, and political affiliation (Tyler, 1994; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Nevertheless, there are established differences in baseline attitudes towards the police among members of different ethnic and racial groups, with nonwhite groups reporting significantly lower attitudes (Decker, 1981; Huang & Vaughn, 1996; Lasley, 1994; D. Smith et al., 1991; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997). Furthermore, whether individuals perceive they were treated fairly is an indicator of whether they believe they were racially profiled during an interaction with police (Tyler & Wakslak, 2004).

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In a famous example, Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) argue that following the widely disseminated video taped beating of Rodney King, there was a palpable change in the attitudes of African American jurors who virtually wrote off the value of officer testimony as viable evidence.

> After all, who, especially in urban America, will believe a cop on the witness stand when cops have a reputation for beating people up, or ridiculing them, or taking bribes – and then covering up the misdeeds? The King videotape enhanced the plausibility of any allegation against police everywhere in America…the King videotape and the verdict will make it harder for cops everywhere to do their job, which is to be *officers of the law*…Any sensible and reflective police officer will understand that when a cop reaches above the law to use more force or coercion than is necessary to subdue a suspect, he or she undermines the very source of police authority (pg. *xvi*).

When police authority is undermined by the actions of one or a few, officers as a whole lose their influence over law enforcement and criminal justice even when they are acting in good faith and within the boundaries of the law. As such, pursuing public trust and legitimacy as a core mission will assist the police in the pursuit of their other roles – crime control, peacekeeping, and defense of human life.

De-Escalation and the Roles of Police

Law enforcement, peace keeping, use of force, defense of life, and legitimacy have each been presented as a role of police. Scholars have debated for decades over which role is the police's *primary* function. This dissertation cannot settle this debate. This is unfortunate, because as Manning (1978) argued a mistake in police work puts human life at risk, so identifiable benchmarks for successful policing are critical for preventing unnecessary deaths. Moreover, when citizens view police use of force as

unfair, excessive, or overly frequent, this stirs contention among citizens, and has historically prompted violent riots and demands for investigations (Crank & Langworthy, 1992; Walker, 1980, 1984). As such, it is problematic if officers and citizens hold different views of what constitutes good policing.

Potentially, more frequent and successful use of de-escalation tactics can potentially assist police in pursuing *each* of these roles. When officers adopt skills to interact more positively with citizens and de-escalate critical encounters, this is directly related to less use of force and greater citizen perceptions of the police, since citizens walk away from encounters with better evaluations of police interactions. Each of these outcomes leads to higher police legitimacy. In turn, police are more effective at law enforcement, since citizens are more apt to obey the law and the police when they perceive the police as legitimate. In addition, since most calls for police service involve interpersonal disputes, de-escalation is best suited to aid police in resolving these types of conflicts as its core premise is communication and conflict resolution. Theoretically, then, successful de-escalation should resolve the tension and conflict that exists between officers and citizens because it encourages mutual respect between these historically opposing social groups. Of course, without empirical research to back these claims, they remain only possibilities. The following section reviews existing research relevant to the topic of de-escalation and situates the police strategy within the most up to date knowledge about police use of force, police-citizen transactions, and good policing.

Foundations for Research on De-Escalation

Police Use of Force

Frequency. A volume of research has studied the frequency and predictors of police use of force. In terms of statistical frequency, research shows use of force is rare and most often low in severity (Alpert & Dunham, 2000; Bayley & Garofalo, 1989; Eith & Durose, 2011; Garner & Maxwell, 2002; Garner, Maxwell, & Heraux, 2002; Garner, Schade, & Hepburn, 1996; Hickman, Piquero, & Garner, 2008; Terrill, 2005). Bayley and Garofalo (1989) found officers were involved in physical confrontations in only 8% of encounters. The authors calculated police use force about once in every eight and one-third working days, and typically this behavior is on the lower end of the use of force continuum.[1] Most often force observed in the study involved "hands on" tactics such as grabbing or restraining, and the authors never witnessed an officer use a firearm. However, given that approximately 40 million police-citizen encounters occur annually, approximately 560,000 use of force encounters occur each year (Shjarback and White, 2016). As such, while force may be statistically rare, it occurs at a frequency of 1,500 times per day in the United States.

Hickman et al. (2008) showed that police use of force is also much more common in arrest situations. They argued that use of force rates are typically underestimated because most studies exclude prisoners, who are more likely to have been in confrontations with police. To address these limitations the authors drew on data from the

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[1] The use of force continuum is a training tool used by police departments to provide officers with guidance on incremental levels of suspect resistance and appropriate responses to these behaviors (Alpert & Dunham, 1997; Garner, Schade, Hepburn, & Buchanan, 1995; Terrill, 2003). The concept allows for an analysis of the interplay between suspect behavior and police use of force, as well as the appropriateness of officers' responses in given situations (Terrill, 2005).

Police-Public Contact Survey and the Survey of Inmates in Local Jails. Similar to previous research, they confirmed that use of nonlethal force is rare – officers either threatened to use or used force in 1.7% of all contacts – and most uses of force were low on the force continuum. They also confirmed that police use of force was more common among the arrestee sample. One-fifth of encounters resulting in an arrest involved force. In terms of lethal force, scholars have similarly argued that since there exists no national database on police use of deadly force, the numbers typically reported may be underestimated by as much as 50% (Sherman & Langworthy, 1979).

Individual level factors. Studies have tested the impact of officer, suspect, situational, organizational, and community-level factors on police use of nonlethal and deadly force. Many studies find that suspect behavior is a predictor of police use of force, and some further find that extralegal suspect characteristics are predictive as well. Findings from an analysis of 3,116 police-citizen encounters showed officers respond to legally-relevant factors when deciding to use force, especially the level of suspect resistance – " the decision to use force has a great deal to do with what the suspect does" – and the level of threat posed (Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002, p. 243). Terrill and Mastrofski (2002) also found extralegal suspect characteristics predicted use of force. Young, poor, male, and minority suspects were subjected to more frequent and higher levels of physical force. They did not, however, find that suspects who were more disrespectful to the officer's authority were subjected to more force, contrary to other available research evidence (e.g. Van Maanen, 1978). Similarly, Hickman et al. (2008) found force was most commonly used against young, male, and minority suspects, and those who were resisting police. On the other hand, James, James, and Vila (in press) found officers in

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controlled laboratory experiments responded only to suspect demeanor, not demographics or attire, in their decisions to use force. These findings suggest officers rely on both legally-relevant characteristics and extralegal characteristics in making decisions to use force.

Cohen and Chaiken (1972) theorized that more experienced officers should use force more reasonably and less frequently. Much research has supported this theory. McElvain and Kposowa (2008) found officers with the fewest years of experience were more likely to be investigated for use of force, and Paoline and Terrill (2007) found officers who had more experience used less verbal and physical force. Terrill and Mastrofski (2002) found youth and lack of experience were significantly related to more frequent use of force. Garner et al. (2002) found male and younger officers, and those who had been previously treated for an on-the-job injury tended to use more force. Testing the impact of other officer characteristics, Friedrich (1980) found officers who most strongly liked and those who most strongly disliked their jobs were more likely to use force. He surmised this was because officers who disliked their jobs took out their frustrations on citizens, while those who liked their jobs were more enthusiastic and active. Paoline and Terrill (2007) found more educated officers used less force. The impact of officer race appears more complex, as it tends to interact with suspect characteristics. Paoline, Gau, and Terrill (2016) found white officers tended to use more coercive force with black suspects, and female officers may be less likely to use force (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Studies testing the impact of rigorous hiring standards are mixed, though Kane and White (2009) demonstrated that officers who were fired for misconduct most often had produced "red flags" to which the department was previously

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unresponsive during the hiring process. Research testing the impact of department

professionalism on use of force rates is similarly inconclusive, though Shjarback and

White (2016) found departments more committed to educational standards – e.g. those

that required an associates degree or higher for hiring – experienced less citizen

complaints for use of force.

Situation level factors. The nature of the situation largely influences whether

force is used. Officers who fire their weapons are more likely to do so against citizens

who present an imminent danger to officers (Fyfe, 1980; 1981; Klinger, 2004). Bayley

and Garofalo (1989) observed that when overt conflict was in progress between citizens

at the time police arrived on scene, officers were more likely to use force. Fridell and

Binder (1992) compared deadly force encounters to incidents where a police-involved

shooting had the potential to occur but did not. The authors found the deadly force

incidents were more often characterized by "ambiguity and surprise," where officers had

inadequate information about the suspects they would be dealing with and did not

preconceive the situation as a potential deadly force encounter. In his Metro-Dade

Police/Citizen Violence Reduction study, Fyfe (1987) found that violence typically

occurred in four contexts: routine traffic stops, high risk traffic stops, crimes in progress,

and interpersonal disputes. A study of predictors of police use of force in six jurisdictions

identified that force was more likely on multiple police response calls and during calls for

service involving a violence offense (Garner et al., 1996).

Agency level factors. Organizational factors also shape officer use of force.

Agencies with more restrictive policies (Fyfe, 1979), and more administrative oversight

following a use of force (Alpert & MacDonald, 2001), demonstrate lower overall force

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rates. For example, more restrictive policies on officer use of firearms, if properly enforced, can reduce the number of officer involved shootings (Fyfe, 1979; Geller & Scott, 1992). Alternatively, more permissive shooting policies are significantly related to more shootings (White, 2001). Other studies show administrative policy is effective at reducing other forms of police coercion, including less lethal force, vehicle pursuits, and K9 deployments (Riksheim & Chermak, 1993; White, 2007). Training can effectively reduce officer use of force rates. Klinger (2010) analyzed the effects of receiving violence reduction training on officers handling of disputes, specifically in their use of force. Consistent with existing research, he found most (60%) disputes were handled without any force. Moreover, regression analyses demonstrated a statistically significant drop in the use and severity of force by treatment (trained) officers when handling disputes – officers used one-quarter of a level of less force than they did prior to receiving the training and compared to control officers who did not receive the trianing. He concluded that officers can be taught to use less force through training. Finally, research testing the impact of organizational size on police use of force is inconclusive (Mastrofski, 1981; Ostrom, Parks, & Whitaker, 1978).

Ecological factors. Other research investigating the impact of community-level factors has found that the surrounding environment plays a significant role in shaping police use of force. For example, Jacobs and O'Brien (1998) tested the minority threat theory for explaining use of force. Threat explanations suggest that police employ violent tactics more often in minority communities or against minority citizens to maintain control over minority social groups. In an examination of police killings in 170 cities, racial inequality (i.e. current black population and recent increases in the black

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population), as well as the rate of violence in the area predicted police killing rates. Similarly, Terrill and Reisig (2003) found officers were more likely to use force in disadvantaged neighborhoods and areas with higher homicide rates, controlling for situational and officer-based factors. The authors also observed the influence of suspect race was mediated by the context of the surrounding environment. Research testing the impact of state statutes and court rulings has not found that these are significant in predicting officer use of firearms (White, 2003).

Professional factors. Researchers have theorized there are dynamics unique to policing that make violence more likely than in other professional or everyday social functions. Fyfe (1986) notes there is an ethos among police officers that every call (especially "hot" calls) is urgent. The public likewise expects officers to respond to and fix their various life problems as quickly as possible. Bittner (1974) says citizens expect officers to respond to "*something-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and- about-which-someone-had-better-do-something-now!*" (pg. 31). Police are therefore trained to deal with a range of social problems fast and then move on to the next call. There is also a worldview among police that police-citizen encounters are unpredictable. No two cases are alike and only those who have worked patrol can understand "what it's really like" in the heat of the moment. The belief that all cases are unpredictable leads to a perception that the same training tactics or principles cannot be standardly applied across similar cases. The combined senses of urgency and unpredictability render many police tactics "quick and dirty," misdiagnosis likely, and violence more probable (Fyfe, 1986). Skolnick (1966) also noted that officers are responsible for finding and arresting dangerous suspects. The officer adopts a perceptual shorthand for seeking out the

"symbolic assailant" in a crowd of innocent people. They use individual cues and characteristics that make a stranger stand out as more likely guilty of a crime– any "vague indication of danger suggested by appearance." Over time the seasoned officer develops a practice of automatically separating worldly elements into those that are potentially dangerous and those that are not. As such, the officer is always on alert and prepared to defend against attack. The perceived need of officers to sense out danger before it strikes makes police use of force more likely than in other professional and social encounters.

Citizen Violence against Police

Frequency. Because police work involves responding to emergency situations, criminal activity, and violence, police officers have a higher risk for being intentionally injured compared to other professionals (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012; Caplan, Marotta, Piza, & Kennedy, 2014). Injury and mortality rates of police officers are five times higher than the general population (Kercher, Swedler, Pollack, & Webster, 2013). A homicide rate of 5.6/100,000 employees makes policing the second deadliest profession (behind taxi drivers and gas station/liquor store employees; Swedler, Kercher, Simmons, & Pollack, 2014). Police also have the highest rate of violent victimization of all occupations (Fridell, Faggiani, Taylor, Brito, & Kubu, 2009).

In statistical terms, citizen violence against police is rare relative to the frequency of police-citizen encounters. In 2011, police made an estimated 12,408,899 arrests (FBI, 2011). In the same year, the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted Program (LEOKA, 2011) reported 54,774 officers were assaulted in the course of their duties,

indicating that officers are assaulted once in every 0.44% of arrests. Further, most assaults against officers produce minor or no injuries (Bierie, in press). 26.6% of officers assaulted in 2011 sustained injuries (LEOKA, 2011), which amounts to one injury in 0.12% of arrests. Despite statistical rarity, however, the high volume of annual police-citizen contacts translates to daily assaults on officers at a rate of 160 per day in the United States (LEOKA, 2011). According to Bierie (in press), this means about 10% of all police officers are assaulted every year, suggesting that in practical terms policing is still a high-risk career.

In cases where officer are intentionally injured or killed on the job, firearms play a prominent role (L. A. Wilson & Meyer, 1991). Over 90% of citizen homicides of law enforcement officers are committed with a firearm, most (67%) with a short-barrel firearm, and 10% with their own service weapon (Swedler et al., 2014). Swedler et al. (2015) examined the relationship between state firearm ownership and killings of police officers. Offering further evidence of the profound role of guns in officer fatalities, the authors found line of duty homicides were three times more likely in states with high firearms ownership compared to states with low firearm ownership. Moreover, a 10% increase in firearms ownership was associated with 10 additional line-of-duty deaths between 1996 and 2010.

Individual level factors. Researchers have studied correlates of citizen violence against police extensively. This literature highlights the impact of community, situational, and individual level factors on citizen assaults of police officers. Female citizens are more likely to resist police compared to male citizens (Covington, Huff-Corzine, & Corzine, 2014). While research has found a citizen's race/ethnicity is unrelated to

whether he or she assaults a police officer, black citizens are overrepresented among

those who kill police officers – LEOKA (2015) compiled a list of 37 assailants identified

in connection with 2015 murders of police officers, of which at least 17 were black.

Citizens who kill police are also more likely to be under the influence of a substance

compared to those who commit less serious assaults on police officers (Covington et al.,

2014). Kachurik et al. (2013) found police officers with greater social bonds, such as

those who were married and had children, were less likely to be killed on duty than single

officers. This finding was replicated in a longitudinal analysis of Baltimore Police

Department officer death rates (Gibbs, Ruiz, & Klepper-Lehman, 2014). Findings with

regard to officer experience and the risk for being killed in the line of duty are

inconsistent. While one study (Kachurik et al., 2013) found officers with more years on

the job were more likely to be killed on duty, another produced opposite findings (Gibbs

et al., 2014).

> ***Situation level factors.*** The type of call an officer responds to tends to influence

his or her likelihood of being assaulted. Officers have a higher likelihood of being

victimized when responding to domestic violence calls (Stanford & Mowry, 1990) and

weapon crimes (Margarita, 1980). Caplan et al. (2014) found that elements of physical

places put officers at greater risk for being assaulted. Problem buildings, bars, gang

territories, liquor stores, and other locations all showed a higher likelihood of police

victimization. Covington et al. (2014) further found one officer response calls are less

likely than multiple officer response calls to end in an officer being assaulted.

> ***Agency level factors.*** At the agency level, there is some evidence that departments

that send officers out on patrol in one-person vehicles have a higher risk of victimization

compared to those sending officers out in two-person vehicles (Fridell & Pate, 1997).

Fridell and Pate (1997) showed that training hours are unrelated to officer assaults. In an

analysis of the effects of soft body armor, the FBI (1994) concluded that police who are

not equipped with body armor are 14 times more likely to be killed. Willits (2014)

examined the effects of organization structure variables on officer assaults. Higher levels

of organizational complexity, such as unit specialization and the presence of substations,

were associated with lower rates of officer assaults. Agencies that exhibit a "culture of

aggressiveness" through training and policy are also shown to "produce" higher levels of

violence against police (Fridell et al., 2009, p. 550).

   Ecological factors. In addition to gun ownership rates, research has found officers

are at a higher risk for victimization in southern regions of the country (Kaminski,

Jefferis, & Chanhatasilpa, 2000). Officers who work in communities with higher rates of

violent crime are more likely to be assaulted (Fridell & Pate, 1997). In fact, Fridell and

Pate (1997) identified community violence rates as the most important predictor of

officer assaults. Areas with larger populations of black citizens (Kaminski, Jefferis, &

Gu, 2003; Kaminski & Stucky, 2009), and higher levels of social disorganization (Batton

& Wilson, 2006) also represent an increased safety threat to officers. Kent (2010) found a

significant relationship between the number of officer involved fatal shootings and

homicides against police officers.

   Some have argued that following the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson (MO)

in the summer of 2014, increased public scrutiny and criticism has fostered a "War on

Cops" environment (Mac Donald, 2016). Former FBI Director James Comey (2105) has

publicly claimed on numerous occasions that police officers in the "post-Ferguson" era

are in fear of being assaulted and killed on the job, and are engaging in less proactive policing and are less engaged with the community as a result. Mac Donald (2016) suggests this de-policing effect has produced massive increases in violent crime since criminals are less concerned about being apprehended and punished for misbehavior (aka, the "Ferguson effect"). Some researchers have tested these claims with mixed results. Maguire, Nix, and Campbell (2016) found no evidence that the events in Ferguson led to an increase in felonious killings of police officers. Similarly, Campbell and colleagues (2017) reported non-significant results with respect to the number of citizens shot by police. Pyrooz, Decker, Wolfe, and Shjarback (2016) found no evidence of a systematic Ferguson effect on violent crime, though homicide rates did increase "post-Ferguson" in cities with historically high violence rates, larger black populations, and higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage. Towers and White (2017) found no evidence of a Ferguson effect on crime in Chicago, identifying the proliferation of firearms as a more likely explanation for rises in violence. Testing for a post-Ferguson "de-policing" effect in St. Louis (MO), Shjarback, Pyrooz, Wolfe, and Decker (in press) found that officers were engaging in less proactive policing only in municipalities with larger compositions of black residents.

Police-Citizen Transactions

The previous sections examined research on officer use of force and citizen force against police. A major limitation of these bodies of research is that the events are treated as separate phenomena (White, 2016). Toch (1969) proposed, rather, that violence is a "two person game":

> Even where the victim does no more than appear at the wrong time and place, his or her contribution is essential for the consummation of his or her destruction. And usually more than mere physical presence is involved. Common sense and law are attracted to the image of passive victims mauled by spontaneously malevolent aggressors…to understand violence it is necessary to focus on the chain of interactions between aggressor and victim, on the sequence that begins when two people encounter each other. (p. 7-8).

While cautioning against blaming the victim, Toch (1969) encouraged scholars to consider the victim's role in motivating the offender to better understand the crime itself. In the same way, our analyses of police use of force cannot focus solely on the actions of the citizen, or solely on the actions of the officer. Much like a chess match, to understand the actions of one you must understand the totality of the behaviors and the order in which they took place (White, 2016).

Unfortunately, use of force in reality tends to be afflicted by a "split second syndrome" whereby the specific actions taken by the citizen which prompted the officer's force in the final moments of the event are almost always used as a legal basis to support the officer's decision (Fyfe, 1986). To illustrate, many officers involved in questionable shootings in the past year have claimed that, *in the moment*, they felt they had no choice but to use deadly force to protect themselves and others from the citizen's violent behavior (Terrill, 2016). A prominent example of the split second syndrome is the current Supreme Court standard for evaluating use of force (argued in *Graham v. Connor, 1989;* 490 U.S. 386 1989) which states that police tactics must be "objectively reasonable," determined based on an evaluation of the situation as it would have been experienced by the officer *in the moment they made the decision*. "Objectively reasonable," in this sense, dictates there must have been an imminent threat of danger *or the perception of such* to

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the officer or others. Terrill (2016) notes that this definition "inherently requires a subjective interpretation" (pg. 491). Fyfe (1986) argued that the split second syndrome (with the assistance of existing legal standards) fosters a belief that all police-citizen encounters are unpredictable, provides after-the-fact justification for a majority of officer decisions, and inhibits proper diagnosis and improvement in police training, policies, and practices. "Instead of asking whether an officer ultimately had to fight or shoot his way out of perilous circumstances, we are better advised to ask whether it was not possible for him to have approached the situation in a way that reduced the risk of bloodshed and increased the chances of a successful and nonviolent conclusion" (Fyfe, 1989, p. 446). Bittner (1967) also notes that, more broadly, the philosophical foundations of police coercion also support a split second syndrome approach to evaluating police behavior. Police are granted the authority to use force only in situations involving imminent danger. They are not held responsible, nor are they offered directions for, using methods in preventing their own use of force, only in responding to the dangerous actions of others.

Some scholars address these issues by taking an interactionist approach to studying police-citizen encounters. They recognize these events as transactional processes, rather than split second decision points (Bayley, 1986; Binder & Scharf, 1980; Reiss, 1980; Scharf & Binder, 1983; Terrill, 2005; Toch, 1969). The interplay between citizen actions and police reactions are highlighted, and it is recognized that actions taking place from the very beginning of the interaction carry consequences for the final outcome. From this perspective, violent police-citizen encounters, including police use of force, are the result of the totality of the circumstances, rather a final second decision necessarily taken by the officer in response to a citizen's specific movement.

The death of Michael Brown provides a relevant recent example of these concepts. After the shooting, questions were immediately raised asking whether the officer could have taken steps to avoid the fatal ending. Policing expert Sam Walker (2014) called Brown's death a "needless tragedy." Officer Wilson approached Brown in his vehicle as Brown was traveling on foot down the middle of the street. According to Wilson's testimony, Brown came at him aggressively, pinned him in his patrol car, punched him, and attempted to grab his firearm (Schwirtz & Oppel Jr., 2014). Officer Wilson says these aggressive actions caused him to fear for his life and he had no choice but to shoot Brown. Walker (2014) and others (Schwirtz & Oppel Jr., 2014) have argued that Wilson did have another choice – drive further down the street once he saw that the man was agitated or aggressive, regroup, wait for back-up, and develop a plan of approach. These experts argue this alternative decision taken by the officer at the onset of the encounter would have de-escalated the situation and avoided the death of Michael Brown.

Goffman (1956) theorized interactions between persons as series of exchange rituals. It is generally expected that each person will be respectful to the other when interacting in social settings, and that each is treated as an equal player. Expanding Goffman to a policing context, Sykes and Clark's (1975) theory of deference exchange hypothesized that the typical social expectations are suspended in police-citizen encounters because these events are tainted by a power differential – the citizen is expected to show a deference that is not expected to be returned by the officer. Returning to the chess match analogy, a police-citizen encounter is much like a game of chess, only one player is highly trained and knowledgable of the rules, while the other is not. The

latter player must honor the former's skill and authority as the expert in the game, and in most cases must let the opponent with the game. The game, in other words, offers one player an unfair advantage. In police-citizen encounters, Sykes and Clarke (1975) argued that officers make deliberate efforts to maintain their unfair advantage in order to stay in control of the encounter.

Consistent with this theory, numerous studies have found that a citizen's demeanor is an important predictor of police actions, regardless of whether the citizen was involved in any rulebreaking behaviors (Black, 1971; Brown, 1988; James, James, & Vila, in press; Lundman, 1979; Mastrofski, Reisig, & McCluskey, 2002; Van Maanen, 1978). Sykes and Brent (1980) found officers typically reassert their control using verbal force. Van Maanen (1978) theorized that officers ratchet up their response if someone is acting like "an asshole" by disrespecting the officer's authority. Other scholars have taken Sykes and Clarke's (1975) theory one step further (Alpert & Dunham, 2004; Terrill, 2001). In use of force encounters, Alpert and Dunham (2004) confirmed that officers make multiple efforts to reassert control of a spiraling situation. In response, the authors identified that citizens usually react negatively to these efforts by increasingly their levels of resistance to the police. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of the interplay among behaviors in determining the outcome, rather than any single word or action. It does not make sense, then, to continue the study of police-citizen violence by separating police force and citizen assaults against police into two categories.

In a classic transactional study, Binder and Scharf (1980) analyzed the relative importance of events occuring at the beginning, middle, and end of police-citizen transactions. They proposed a four phase model for evaluating and understanding

outcomes. The first is the *phase of anticipation,* or the moment when the officer becomes aware of the problem. This is typically initiated by either a dispatch from the radio, the officer's own observation of a problem, or upon receiving information from any source. The authors note that the nature of the problem and indicators of its seriousness can heavily influence officers' responses. The second is the *phase of entry*, during which the officer arrives on the scene and makes an initial assessment of the situation. The officer also uses the entry phase to establish police authority, establish the tone of the police response, and clarify expectations to citizens. The third is the *phase of information exchange*, where officers gather facts from suspects, victims, and witnesses. Binder and Scharf (1980) note this phase can last anywhere from one second (Police! Don't move!) to hours or weeks of negotiation. Finally, the *phase of final decision* occurs when the officer diagnoses the problem and employs a solution. This phase includes the officer's decision of whether or not to use force. Each of these phases, and especially the actions taken by all actors within each phase, is influential in producing the final outcome. In a separate analysis, Fridell and Binder (1992) found that the information exchange phase most significantly impacted whether a potentially violent situation ended in deadly force. The findings suggest the importance of communication between officers and citizens in producing the final outcome, and highlights that officers have the ability to take steps at the onset of an encounter to positively affect the outcome, and are not constrained to simply reacting in the final moment to a suspect's threatening behavior.

Police De-Escalation and Good Policing

Cultural and practical barriers. Many have recently argued that de-escalation

should become a central philosophy in American policing (President's Task Force on

21st Century Policing, 2015). For reasons associated with police work and culture, this

shift will be difficult to realize. Most importantly, police culture dictates above all else

that the work is dangerous and can be deadly, and therefore it is the highest priority of the

officer to make it home safely (Paoline, 2003; PERF, 2015; Wexler & Thomson, 2016).

Stories like that of Ashley Guindon, a Prince William County police officer who was

fatally shot in February 2016 on her first day on the job (Ellis, Karimi, & Sutton, 2016)

are widely publicized by the media and reinforce the idea that the police officer is in

constant mortal danger. Officers stay abreast of line of duty deaths and join together in

solidarity to show support for families of fallen officers (Crank, 2004). As a result, police

culture (and general wisdom) tends to overestimate the actual chances of being injured or

killed on duty. "This sense of ever-present danger has shaped police training, tactics and

culture in ways that can lead to responses that are neither proportional nor necessary in

situations that *don't* involve guns" (Wexler & Thomson, 2016). The desire to stay alive

lends to a shared practice of staying *one step ahead* of an assailant's behavior (action, not

reaction). This is seen in the force standard established in Graham v. Connor (490 U.S.

386 1989), which states that an officer's actions must be considered in light of the

circumstances, acknowledging that officers are sometimes faced with complex, dynamic,

and rapidly evolving situations with little room to make well-processed decisions. This

means that the proverbial tie goes to the officer; that officer safety is the top priority.

They are trained to be one step ahead. Therefore, we should expect an officer's actions to

be disproportionally more severe than the suspect's. To the officer, then, de-escalation may seem antithetical to the job, and especially to officer safety, because it teaches officers to be patient, stand back, to take in the totality of the circumstances before taking any actions, and to use the least amount of force possible.

Police culture has also historically supported noble-cause corruption (Caldero & Crank, 2004). Klockars (1980) called this the Dirty Harry problem, named for Clint Eastwood's character in the 1971 movie. Officers face numerous ethical dilemmas stemming from their work and the larger bureacracy of the criminal justice system. Following the Rodney King beating, LAPD Assistant Chief Dotson attempted to explain the officers' decisions – "we expect [patrol officers] to go out and aggressively identify people, and investigate them, and that puts these police officers in the middle between what we evaluate them on and what they are able to do legally" (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993, p. 13). While the "right thing to do" may sometimes be clear, at times officers are tasked with deciding between protecting public safety and acting within their legal and organizational constraints. Sometimes, officers have opted for nobel cause corruption – corruption viewed as justified if the means achieve just ends. This can be planting evidence or lying to make a charge stick, roughing up a person who the officer believes escaped retribution ("street justice"), or threatening to harm a suspect who the officer thinks may commit a crime in the future. De-escalation is in some ways the exact opposite of noble cause corruption, because it dictates that an officer treat any person with dignity and respect regardless of their actions, intentions, or words in order to resolve a situation legitimately, peacefully, and without physical force. In sum, a shift towards de-escalation in police work may be challenging because 1) officers are taught

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"officer safety first," and 2) employing de-escalation with persons whom officers feel are unworthy of respect may feel unnatural or contrary to their mission.

De-escalation training programs. Nationally, most agencies do not offer or require de-escalation training to their officers either because of budgetary or human resource constraints, or because the department perceives that the training is not necessary (Gilbert, 2017; PERF, 2015). Just twelve U.S. states require agencies to offer de-escalation training. Among the 34 states that do not require training, 24 have police training standards boards that could require the training to agencies but choose to not do so. Accordingly, the average police officer in 2015 received 58 hours of firearms instruction, 49 hours of defense tactics, and only 8 hours of de-escalation training (PERF, 2015). At the national level, Attorney General Jeff Sessions has made clear that he does not support the efforts of the previous administration to promote police reform, including de-escalation (Zapotosky, 2017). If de-escalation training is to diffuse in the near future, it will need to do so in spite of an unsupportive political and professional atmosphere.

Gilbert (2017) suggests that a lack of de-escalation training for officers could have dire consequences. Officers are traditionally trained to respond to problems in terms of force – how much force is adequate given the circumstances, and what is the best way to use that force? They are not trained in methods for avoiding force. As such, they cannot be expected to employ avoidance or conflict resolution tactics when they could be effective at solving a conflict, nor can they be held accountable in cases where they fail to de-escalate. Whether or not an officer *could have* avoided force does not matter, because using force is exactly what they are trained to do. Without de-escalation training, unnecessary uses of coercive and deadly force will continue, and it will continue to be

ruled that the officers were justified in their decisions. Aside from the impact on use of force rates, some believe that simply opting against de-escalation training can have direct negative consequences on a department's legitimacy. To some citizens, departments that refuse to implement de-escalation training despite national recommendations and calls from citizens seem to send the message that citizens' lives are secondary to officers' lives. Departments that send these messages will see citizen trust in the police erode as a result.

Some large cities in the United States have implemented forms of de-escalation training (Griffith, 2016). A few departments implemented training or policy changes following the death of Michael Brown and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, in efforts to demonstrate change. For example, the NYPD was among the first to begin training all its officers in various methods to slow down a potentially violent encounter. The Seattle Police Department altered its policy manual to include an officer's responsibility to try to de-escalate "when safe." Dallas Police Department has publicly reported a number of positive outcomes following the implementation of new de-escalation training. Their training is largely based on reality scenarios. The department has since reported a 91% drop in citizen complaints between 2009 and 2015, although some have countered that these drops were also concordant with the agency's deployment of body cameras. A few departments, such as Ferguson (MO), implemented the training in response to a consent decree order.

There are some concerns about new de-escalation policies and trainings. For example, critics claim the Albuquerque Police Department altered its policies to incorporate de-escalation but did not offer new training with respect to these policy

changes. This caused many to question whether officers will start to employ these tactics in unsafe ways. A separate problem is, among agencies that do offer de-escalation training, the content of the curriculum and the number of required hours varies dramatically. There are no standards governing how to implement the training and no empirical research guiding development. Gilbert (2017) argued that the current lack of training and training standards fosters injustice in American policing. A vulnerable, mentally ill person who poses no immediate threat to officers could have a higher chance of being killed by police simply by crossing city lines. Without empirical research, the truth behind this suggestion is unknown.

While de-escalation has not received specific empirical attention, similar strategies have been well studied. The best example is Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), which teams police with mental health professionals, advocates, and academics to develop comprehensive plans for addressing problems involving mentally ill community members ("CIT International," 2016; Dupont, Cochran, & Pillsbury, 2007; PERF, 2012). Police frequently come into contact with mentally ill persons, who present special problems that can sometimes lead to confusion, conflict, and violent confrontation (Augustin & Fagan, 2011). CIT training teaches police officers communication and resolution skills to help them successfully interact with mentally ill individuals in ways that reduce tension, achieve mutual understanding, and reduce negative outcomes (Sanow, 2006). Research suggests this form of training is successful in reducing use of force (Compton et al., 2011), putting individuals with mental illness at ease, reducing risk of injury, and reducing unpredictability (Hanafi, Bahora, Demir, & Compton, 2008). CIT is also associated with decreased arrest rates and increased referrals (Steadman, Deane, &

Borum, 2000). Young and Brumley (2009) found officers who received CIT training were more satisfied with their perceived ability to manage crisis situations. Teller and colleagues (2006) found CIT training significantly increases the chances that a police-involved person with mental illness will gain access to treatment. The training is also associated with an increase in the number of calls stating the citizen may have a mental illness and an increase in the number of transports of mentally ill persons to an emergency treatment facility.

   Good police behaviors. Like de-escalation, the research literature on good policing is scant. What is available generally describes the behaviors of good or effective police officers, often when dealing with those extralegal informal encounters that encompass a majority of an officer's workday. Also like de-escalation, good or effective policing is not well defined. Furthermore, due to its infrequency, effective police responses during potentially violent situations are less well documented and the existing literature is largely theoretical (and dated). The remainder of this literature review aims to describe good policing in the eyes of classic policing scholars and to situate de-escalation within this body of work. A close reading of this scholarship offers some insight for our still developing understanding of violence de-escalation in police work. In addition, many scholars note that police have their own conceptions of what makes a good police officer, based on their perceptions of the police mission and self-imposed standards (as opposed to department policy definitions, academy training, legal standards, or citizen perceptions; Bittner, 1967; Hunt, 1985). To understand these concepts, scholars recommend we use a peer nomination sampling method to identify and study officers

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whom others regard as the best among them. Research using peer nominations in policing

research is also discussed below.

Researchers have long acknowledged that the majority of an officer's daily

activities involve extralegal peacekeeping tasks (Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1967; Wilson,

1968). White (2010) noted the peacekeeping responsibility of police stems from their

amorphous mandate. As Bitter (1967) points out, citizens often request police service for

a multitude of noncriminal matters, such as interpersonal disputes or disorderly persons.

Peacekeeping may be better understood as a "craft" as described by Willis (2013), since

these behaviors are largely developed through experience and constrained only by the

officer's own common sense and police cultural customs that dictate what behaviors are

normal and appropriate (Bittner, 1967). Bittner (1967) studied skid row because he

argued the setting provides an optimal and unique opportunity for officers practicing the

peacekeeping craft. Because the inhabitants of skid row lead "abnormal" lives, law

enforcement activities in this setting are largely guided by the officer's professional

knowledge of local customs and the goals of peacekeeping, rather than the teachings of

the police academy or the rules of law. Therefore, patrol officers assigned to skid row

endeavor to develop a rich local knowledge of the area, the persons, and the unique social

norms that guide behaviors.

To many officers assigned to skid row (an area of Los Angeles with one of the

largest populations of homeless persons), their work is perceived as the policing of the

inherently offensive persons (Bittner, 1967). The lifestyle and scrupulousness of skid row

residents are regarded as a personal choice and they are viewed as responsible for their

own victimization as a result. Officers on skid row are constantly aware that victimization

and violence can erupt at any moment. For these reasons, the mission of police on skid row is not to enforce the black letter of the law, but to prevent the worst occurrences from happening to its residents. Officers accordingly develop and hone the peacekeeping craft with a keen awareness to the ad hoc asocial nature of the setting.

Bittner (1967) identifies the first task for effective peacekeeping on skid row as developing a rich understanding of the beat and its inhabitants. Making casual rounds officers get to know the places, ask questions of residents, and become aware of present and past events. Local knowledge of the area informs the officer of the potential for problems, aids in decision-making, and offers familiarity between officers and citizens, which can reduce conflict and hostility in future encounters. The second goal of peacekeeping is solving immediate problems, rather than systematically enforcing the law. Most commonly, officers employ extralegal alternative methods for problem solving, such as making suggestions, giving warnings, or issuing instructions. Familiarity between patrol officers and citizens increases the chances that residents will respond to these informal methods of control. Arrest is used only as a resource to solve an immediately pressing problem. "The problem patrolmen confront is not which drunks, beggars, or disturbers of the peace should be arrested…rather, the problem is whether, when someone 'needs' to be arrested, he should be charged with drunkenness, begging, or disturbing the peace" (p. 710). Finally, peacekeeping on skid row dictates that decisions to arrest are made for two reasons, both concerned with the reduction of risk: 1) to protect persons from harming themselves and 2) to prevent persons from being victimized. Otherwise, as one officer put it, "the best among us can usually keep the upper hand in such situations without making arrests" (p. 711).

Muir (1977) likened the police officer's task to extortion – boiled down, the officer's job is to induce compliance by threatening a person with the loss of property or freedom. Citizens, Muir (1977) notes, are agents in this game too. For example, when citizens are "truly dispossessed" they are less vulnerable to the extortion tactics of the officer, since they have very little to lose (p. 39). In these cases the citizens tend to have the upper hand. Similarly, persons who are emotionally detached from worldly belongings, social relationships, or their own mortality will not be affected by the threat of police presence, arrest, or deadly force. The officer is force to either muscle his or her way through the encounter or seek out alternative means. Furthermore, the irrationality of one's opponent tends to skew the traditional rules of play, since someone who is irrational is unpredictable and might do quite literally anything. Officers faced with "irrational" citizens are aware that their usual tactics will be less effective and perhaps less safe.

Acknowledging these challenges, Muir (1977) sought to understand how good police officers respond to them in ways that "level the playing field" and ultimately achieve compliance (Waddington, 2015, p. 682). Officers who do this well enjoy the confidence of their community, foster a sense of security among residents on their beat, and have higher levels of job satisfaction. Echoing Bittner (1967), Muir (1997) notes the most effective police officers talk to and get to know persons on their beat. They do not do this because they are friendly people, but because this practice gives them inside knowledge to regain the upper hand should they enter into an enforcement situation in which they need to "extort" compliance. Talking with residents helps the officer identify what matters to them, including those who are seemingly unattached, which can then be

used as leverage in moments of crisis. Effective officers also make use of other innovative methods for "extorting" persons who are not affected by the threat of police authority. When arrest did nothing to deter a man's drunk and disorderly behavior, Muir (1997) describes how a police officer convinced local liquor store owners to refuse sale to the person. An additional trait of a good police officer is what Muir called "passion" – the reconciliation of one's life saving responsibilities with the duty to use coercive force. Good officers do not resort to force unless necessary, but when the time requires they are not hesitant to take physical action. Good police officers also have empathy or "perspective" for the various forms of the human condition, including those who lead atypical lifestyles.

In his classic study, Muir (1977) also documented the behaviors of unprofessional police officers. He noted that some officers adopt a cynical approach to the job and an "us vs. them" mentality regarding citizens. These "enforcers," have high passion but low perspective and are quick to use force. They fail to recognize there are alternative, innovative methods for gaining compliance that do not involve physical means or arrest. As a consequence, enforcers tend to alienate themselves from their constituents and find that their interactions escalate more quickly and are more difficult to handle. Avoiders, on the other hand, lack both passion and perspective. These officers avoid problem situations and conflict at all costs, especially when it could potentially affect their job. These officers rarely use force and attempt to use all other means to solve problems. Muir (1977) notes the primary consequence of the avoider strategy is that criminals learn the area is ripe for offending activity, since the officer will likely do nothing in response. According to Bittner (1967) and Muir (1977), officers who have both passion and

perspective, who gain specific knowledge about their beat, and who see their job as problem solving rather than law enforcement tend to be most effective at policing skid row.

Defining and measuring good police behaviors. Scholars lament that the police institution is designed in such a way that successful policing is hard to identify, credit, and measure (Bittner, 1967; Fyfe, 1993; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). For this reason, some officers may perceive little incentive to engage in effective policing, as described by Bittner (1967) and Muir (1977), because they get little to no recognition for their efforts. They may, in fact, be punished for some forms of good police behavior if they fail to produce hard evidence of their daily activities. For example, officers instructed to meet traffic ticket quotas are not rewarded for the number of accidents they prevent (perhaps through the use of warnings and "teachable moments") but only for the number of drivers to whom they issue a ticket.

Good police practices are difficult to identify for several reasons. First, there is no universally accepted definition of good or effective policing. As such, it is difficult for agencies to structure organizations in ways that give credit to or incentivize these behaviors. Second, traditional indicators of good police work – arrests, citations, investigative stops – tend to mask the efforts of more effective officers who take innovative steps to avoid official action or physical force. Some scholars have recommended alternative measures of effectiveness that promote good policing. Klockars (1996), as well as Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) have suggested that tactics which save the most lives, or which use the least amount of force possible to solve a problem, should be

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considered as metrics for evaluating good work, because these promote the life saving mission of the police.

Willis' (2013) discussion of policing as a craft speaks to the importance of officer experience in developing an evidence base on good policing. It is a common assumption among scholars that good police officers are those who are aware of the evidence base and who put these ideas into practice. However, Willis (2013) regards this in some ways as backwards thinking. He suggests rather that successful ideas in evidence based policing are those that take into account the views of police practitioners, and particularly the views of officers who have significant work experience (Bayley & Bittner, 1984; Willis, 2013). The police craft is an accumulation of context specific skills for addressing individual problems. These skills include things not covered in the police academy, such as the ability to remain calm, to communicate in effective ways with different groups of people, to rationalize through sets of facts to come to the best decision, and even to avoid burnout and cynicism. These context specific skills are more important in more ambiguous situations – such as interpersonal disputes – where a specific approach forward is not clear. Furthermore, what works well for one officer with a particular skill set may not be as effective for another who has different skills. Officers tend to be aware of whom among them is best suited to respond to a particular problem, be it a group of rowdy teens or a suicidal male whose wife has recently left him. Willis (2013) argues that the skilled craftsman or woman makes decisions that both their fellow officers and citizens believe are "wise, compassionate, and fair" (pg. 4). Effective evidence based policing research should focus on understanding how and why these officers arrive at these decisions.

Traits of skilled police officers. In addition to good police behaviors, some researchers have looked at the personality traits of good officers. Lawrence and colleagues (2017) point out that agencies typically conduct psychological testing on potential candidates to screen certain persons *out* of law enforcement careers. Agencies have used the screen out method since the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice in 1967 recommended that police officers possess certain psychological traits – including coping skills and the ability to take direction. This practice became even more popular since the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals Report provided national standards for police psychological exams in 1972.

Agencies do not, however, usually rely on personality traits to screen good candidates *in*. In the same fashion, most research has examined the impact of officer personality traits on negative outcomes such as use of force, complaints, suspensions, and terminations. Few studies examine the impact of positive personality effects on good policing outcomes (Lawrence et al., 2017). Over twenty years ago, Fyfe (1993) argued that researchers should begin to develop a body of research evidence regarding best practices for *producing* good police work. To achieve this goal it would be vitally important scholars to investigate the impact of officer personality traits on those daily police behaviors that are colloquially valued but less well understood – such as discretionary decision-making, information gathering, quality interactions with citizens, and verbal de-escalation.

Lawrence and colleagues (2017) employed data from the National Police Research Platform's recruit study, which surveyed new recruits on their first week at the

police academy on traditional and contemporary dimensions of policing, including communication style and personality traits. Once the officers graduated and were working in a patrol function, the recruit study contacted citizens with whom the officers had an encounter and interviewed them regarding the interaction. In particular, citizens were asked to rate their quality of treatment and quality of decision-making, components of procedural justice. The authors found that officers who scored higher in empathy and lower in neuroticism on the original survey were rated higher by citizens in procedural justice. Officers who had higher emotional control also rated significantly higher in quality of treatment. The study findings strongly suggest the potential for screening in methods for selecting candidates in ways the promote good policing as requested by Fyfe (1993).

Applying these principles to violence de-escalation. In Bittner's (1967) depiction of skid row policing, officers regarded skid row inhabitants as offensive, and largely responsible for their lifestyle and the victimization they experienced. Some officers, nevertheless, approached their work with the mindset of risk reduction – asking what actions can be taken in order to prevent *all* residents from being harmed or, importantly, from harming themselves? They did not seek to punish individuals who may have chosen to engage in binge drinking or to live on the streets without employment. They sought to work within these boundaries to make the lives of skid row residents marginally safer. Muir (1977) likewise described the professional officer as one with perspective – who treats everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their lifestyle choices. It has been previously argued in this dissertation that a transition to an emphasis on de-escalation in policing today would seem unnatural to some police officers. When faced with a hostile,

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threatening, violent, or offensive person, the response by many would be to seek justice

for their crimes, to punish them for their distain of police authority or the law, to

disregard their circumstances as products of their personal choices, or at the very least to

quickly and physically restrain their violent actions. Alternatively, the ideals of de-

escalation would dictate that officers converse with citizens compassionately and

empathetically, in spite of their antagonism, to make an effort to understand their

perspective, and to stand back and consider the situation before taking any immediate

physical actions. The underlying motive of these tactics is to exact the individual's

compliance in order to safely arrest them or prevent them from doing harm to officers,

citizens, or themselves. Principles of d-escalation would further dictate that officers do so

in ways that minimize the use of force involved.

These studies also highlight the importance of local knowledge for an officer's

ability to achieve citizen compliance on their beat. Officers in Bittner and Muir's field

studies spent most of their time patrolling the town, talking to residents, soaking up

current events, and largely gathering a background to inform their later decisions on the

job. These officers also sought out innovative, alternative methods for solving problems

that did not involve use of force or arrest making – efforts made easier if the officer knew

the person's background and attachments. Though more difficult to gain detailed local

knowledge today, particularly in larger and more complex urban cities, de-escalation

would certainly involve such concepts as procedural justice, quality treatment, citizen

trust in law enforcement, and would be seemingly more effective if officers gathered

knowledge on persons with heavy involvement in law enforcement. A police officer

would be significantly less anxious and heavy handed when responding to a suspicious

persons call if they had previous contacts with the individual and knew he or she was noncombative. Background knowledge would also be particularly useful for officers assigned to special areas such as high traffic shopping strips, downtown corridors, or small university campuses.

A key concept in Muir's study was the identification of citizens who present special problems to police officers and who generally respond less well to traditional compliance-gaining tactics. Individuals who have little earthly belongings, or who are detached from society, have less to "lose" from a police encounter and may not be easily persuaded by threats to their freedom or use of force. Other special persons include those who are irrational in the moment and cannot hold a productive conversation or who may act out in unpredictable ways. These citizens and situations, which may include the homeless, the depressed or mentally ill, and those who are under the influence or who have serious addictions need to be better studied and understood so police officers can be guided in better methods for handling interactions safely. Alternatively, as suggested by Willis (2013) it may behoove scholars to explore officers' perceptions and experiences in dealing with these persons in order to identify tactics that were effective at de-escalation the conflict. The following section offers one method for conducting this form of research.

Peer nominations for studying good policing.[2] Similar to Willis (2013), many scholars believe the answer to problems plaguing the police institution in America can be better understood by talking to highly skilled officers. Klockars (1996) believed the skills to improve police response to potentially violent encounters already exist and are

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[2] This topic is also covered in Chapter 3: Methods in a discussion of this study's sampling frame.

currently being used. He asks how else would we find variance in the levels of force used by skilled and average police officers? His suggestion is to ask highly skilled police officers about how they would solve the problem, and to propose force-minimizing solutions that can used at the agency level.[3] His article further sought to define excessive force according to a highly skilled officer standard – excessive force is that which a highly skilled officer would not have found necessary. Klockars criticized citizen review boards on the grounds that lay persons do not have the knowledge necessary to properly evaluate police work, including an understanding of the options and alternatives available, to know when more could have been done to avoid the use of force.

In 1969, Toch, Grant, and Galvin asked Oakland Police Department supervisors to identify officers who were especially good at their jobs (Toch, 1980; Toch & Grant, 1991; Toch, Grant, & Galvin, 1975). To gauge both sides, they also identified "problem" officers who had the highest rates of force in the department. They asked both groups officers to define the problem of police violence and identify solutions. The discussion led to the creation of a violence prevention specialized unit in OPD, whose task was to identify officers with propensities for violence and to nonpunitively investigate and remedy the issue. Also following participation in the study, the officers identified as violence prone reduced their use of force rates by half add citation

The Metro-Dade Police/Citizen Violence Reduction Project was rooted in the research by Toch and colleagues. The project was a collaboration between the Police Foundation and the Metro-Dade Police Department (MDPD; Miami, FL; Fyfe, 1987).

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[3] However, Bayley and Garofalo (1989) found that those officers whom peers nominated as the best at handling potentially violent situations actually used more force and were generally more active. The authors said they could conclude these officers did something differently but could not say with certainty whether they were better police officers.

The goal was to help MDPD develop training for officers on de-escalating potentially violent encounters with citizens, with a premise that officers can take steps to avoid physical confrontation by structuring interactions in strategically inoffensive ways, most importantly by being sensitive and polite, but also by using strategy, reading body language, and listening. Fyfe (1987) argued that officers could reduce the chances of using force in several ways: Using down time to become familiar with residents, using the time on the drive to a call for service to consider the facts and prepare, and by structuring the initial contact and resolutions to avoid negative outcomes.

Officers were recruited to a focus group to read official police reports and identify situations and behaviors that escalate or de-escalate confrontation. Collectively, the group found that violence typically occurred in four contexts: routine traffic stops, high risk traffic stops, crimes in progress, and interpersonal disputes. Ultimately, Fyfe worked with MDPD training instructors to construct an effective role play-based training course on de-escalation tactics, based on the information generated during the focus group. This information was used to develop MDPD's new de-escalation training. Klinger (2010), testing the effectiveness of this violence reduction training, found that officers who received the training indeed used less force.

Summary of Literature Review

The main takeaway from this section is that research on de-escalation is scant. However, this review also suggests that de-escalation could in theory address some of the long standing social issues plaguing the police profession. American policing has long faced serious challenges in developing trust and legitimacy with citizens and in particular

with minority and poor communities The current issues, stemming from high profile

encounters involving the deaths of unarmed black men in custody, represent a

continuation of these historical challenges and the outrage expressed by some members

of the community for the perceived discrimination and abuse in police practices. This

literature review, I argue, strongly suggests that the recommendations to increase the use

and sophistication of de-escalation tactics in policing could make strides towards

addressing these problems.

Research on CIT training (Compton et al., 2011) and violence reduction training

generally (Klinger, 2010) highlights that these can be effective at reducing adverse

police-citizen outcomes, including use of force. De-escalation training could

systematically teach officers to avoid or reduce conflict with citizens with whom they

typically have greater challenges: the criminally violent, the mentally ill, intoxicated

persons, and people who hold negative attitudes towards police and are hostile or disobey

the police. Such training should be guided by classic (Bittner, 1967; Muir, 1977)

discussions of effective, professional police work, as well as much needed future research

seeking to identify pathways towards promoting good policing (Fyfe, 1993; Lawrence et

al, 2017).

Additionally, although there is no consensus on the primary role of police in

American society, it is clear that de-escalation (if implemented as intended) could help

the police to pursue each of their important roles. These include law enforcement,

protecting public safety, keeping public peace, the legitimate use of coercive force, and

maintaining their legitimacy. Most importantly, the enhanced use of de-escalation could

assist the police in saving more lives during potentially violent encounters and improving their legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

Finally, the fact that police force is exceedingly rare and low in severity indicates that the vast majority of encounters can be de-escalated. There are numerous opportunities for officers to actionably reduce the chances that a situation will escalate, particularly from the very beginning of a citizen contact. Police research and training will need to pursue a transactional approach to police-citizen encounters moving forward.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This dissertation uses a mixed methods approach to the study of de-escalation in police-citizen encounters. The project was conducted in collaboration with the Spokane Police Department in Spokane, Washington, and was carried out in two parts over the course of one year. Given the lack of conceptual clarity and research on this topic, Part 1 was exploratory and qualitative, consisting of in-depth interviews (N=8 officers) and a focus group (N=1 focus group) with eight peer nominated officers. The purpose of studying this small group of officers was to better understand the concept of de-escalation by seeking the perspective of those who perform it well. Part 2 is a quantitative test of the concepts explored in Part 1, examining the use of de-escalation in actual police-citizen encounters. This phase of the study employed Systematic Social Observations on 35 ride-alongs (N=131 police-citizen encounters). This section examines the situations in which officers tend to use de-escalation as well as situations in which these tactics are more effective at de-escalating conflict.

Research Setting

This section provides a description of the setting of the research – the Spokane

Police Department – as well as the ecological setting – Spokane, Washington. Two

current issues in Spokane are worth mentioning in the context of this study. A sentinel

event from 2006, which had a poignant impact on the relationship between the Spokane

Police Department and the community, is examined. The Collaborative Reform Initiative

that was underway at the time of data collection is also discussed.

Spokane Police Department

The research setting is the Spokane Police Department (SPD), a medium-sized

agency in the Northwestern United States. As of October 2016, the department employed

225 sworn patrol officers, including 171 Officers, 16 Corporals, and 38 Sergeants

(approximately 1 sworn officer per 1,000 residents). The average age is 34.[4] The

departments is not exceedingly diverse. Diversity in the department is lower than the

national averages for gender, race, and ethnicity. Twenty (8.9%) of the 225 patrol officers

are female, 3 (1.3%) are Black, 9 (4%) are Hispanic; 1 (0.4%) is Asian, 2 (0.8%) are

Native American, and 4 (1.7%) are Multi-Racial. The department's jurisdiction spans 76

square miles, and beats are divided into the "North side" and the "South side" of the

Spokane River. There are four major patrol shifts: Day (6am-4:40pm), Swing (10am-

8:40pm), Power (4pm-2:40am), and Graveyard (8pm-6:40am). There are four teams

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[4] Demographics were provided via personal communications with agency staff. The average age was
calculated for 2015 patrol officers, corporals, and sergeants. Remaining statistics reflect the 2016 profile of
the agency.

assigned to each shift – two North side and two South side – for a total of 16 patrol teams.

Spokane, Washington

The city of Spokane, Washington is located on the far Eastern end of the state near the border of Idaho. The city is medium sized, with a population of 209,525, making it the second most populous city in the state of Washington and the largest city between Seattle and Minneapolis. Its median age is 35 years, median household income is $43,694, and unemployment in 2013 was reported at 7%.[5] Much like the police department, the city of Spokane is predominantly white, with just under 87% white residents. Almost 6% of the population is Hispanic, and under 3% is black. Spokane is well known for its close proximity to hundreds of miles of coniferous forestry and lakes, attracting visitors and residents who enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, skiing, rafting, and fishing (SpokaneCity.org, 2015). It is a major hub for service industries. Further, the city ranks 4th among United States metropolitan areas in the health care industry, and its largest employer is Fairchild Air Force Base.

In-Custody Death of Otto Zehm

As I quickly learned while working in Spokane, one does not spend much time in the city before hearing the story of Otto Zehm. This death shapes much of the relationship between the police and the public in Spokane. On March 18, 2006, SPD was

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[5] City of Spokane census data were drawn from
http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

involved in an encounter with Zehm, a 36-year-old man who suffered from mental illness ("Otto Zehm: Summary," 2012). The call originated when two women became concerned that Zehm used the ATM machine immediately after they did. The women called police claiming he might be robbing them. When officers responded, Zehm was inside the nearby Zip Trip convenience store shopping for soda. It is possible the information received from dispatch was inadequate and confusing, leading officers to suspect Zehm was robbing the store. A physical confrontation with Zehm ensued and officers deployed several force techniques, including a baton and a TASER, before hog-tying and spit-guarding[6] Zehm on the ground. Zehm died two days later. The medical examiner identified the cause of death as lack of oxygen to the brain, likely due to the spit guard.

According to statements from responding officers, Zehm was aggressive and had threatened them with a 2-liter Pepsi bottle, which prompted their use of force. Witness accounts and video footage from store security cameras, however, disputed these claims, suggesting Zehm was holding the Pepsi and, because he suffered from mental illness, did not understand the officers' commands and became confused.

Spokane County prosecutors originally decided against prosecuting the case, clearing officers of wrongdoing (Hill, 2014). However, in May 2012 the city reached an excessive force settlement with the Zehm family for $1.67 million, after which a federal investigation was opened by the FBI. A subsequent civil rights trial resulted in a guilty verdict against one of the officers, who was sentenced to 51 months in prison on November 21, 2011.

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[6] A spit guard is a hood placed over a person's head to prevent them from spitting or biting officers.

The death of Otto Zehm sparked outcry from the Spokane community – the public

believed police had used excessive force and needlessly caused the death of an innocent

and mentally ill man. Later in the investigation, residents believe the police failed to

investigate the death and attempted to cover up details (Shors & Clouse, 2006). Public

disapproval over the case prompted the creation of an Ombudsman's civilian review

office. In addition, the mayor established a use of force commission to audit use of force

by the SPD. The commission issued a final report in February 2013 detailing 26

recommendations for improving the police department. Six and 12 months later, SPD

issued progress reports detailing its attempts to address the use of force commission's

recommendations. Eleven years later, however, many in the Spokane community remain

upset by the incident. It is inevitably brought up in the context of reasons why the police

department needs reform. An anniversary article is published in the local newspaper each

year, while a statue commemorating Zehm's life (and also serving as a physical

monument of protest against police brutality) currently resides in one of Spokane's public

parks.

Collaborative Reform

Also in 2012, Frank Straub was named the police chief. One of Chief Straub's

first actions was to contact The Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance,

established through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), to

comprehensively investigate SPD. The broad goal of Collaborative Reform is to work

with law enforcement agencies to address specific issues involving the agency's

relationship with its community. The specific goal is to identify and implement long term solutions.

According to the official report, SPD was experiencing an increase in use of force and a fractured relationship with the community (King, Saloom, & McClelland, 2014). Specifically, the community was unhappy with the way the department had investigated Otto Zehm's death. As such, the goals of the collaborative reform were to

1) examine Spokane's force policies,

2) improve Spokane's use of force investigations,

3) examine the role of an ombudsman as a potential option for improvement, and

4) improve the department's culture, as it relates to force.

For 11 months, the COPS office examined a wealth of data, including Spokane's use of force policies, training, investigation and documentation practices, civilian oversight, and community outreach activities. Investigators interviewed police officers and citizens of Spokane, observed training and deadly force review meetings, participated in ride alongs, reviewed use of force files, policies, and national standards, and provided technical assistance.

The final report concluded that, while the department fell within the spectrum of good policing, there were 42 areas where improvement could be made. Key concerns were deficiencies in Spokane's use of force reporting documents, promotion processes, the flawed early intervention system, and inadequate documentation of training. They also found use of deadly force is rarely disciplined or corrected, and the Office of the Police Ombudsman lacked formal and clear responsibilities. Since the issuing of this report, department administration has focused considerable effort towards addressing the

42 areas of improvement and reporting these changes to the public. More recent data from 2015 and 2016 has found that use of force and citizen complaints are quite rare in SPD. A study found that, among 149 study officers, about one use of force report was generated per month per 1,000 calls for service, while citizen complaints arose even less frequently (White, Gaub, & Todak, in press).

Access to the Research Setting

Some of the first challenges encountered by a field worker are "getting in" and "getting along." Getting in reflects how the researcher obtains access to conduct research in a setting. The difficulty of gaining access depends on the extent to which the setting is public or private (Lofland, 2005). Getting along reflects the researcher's task, once granted access, of navigating a relationship with participants in the setting over an extended period of time (Lofland, 2005). The scope of potential problems faced by ethnographers in the field is infinite: "The researcher must gain access to the field, establish rapport with the research participants, understand hidden codes, and balance the roles of insider and outsider to get interesting data and be able to write about them" (Sandberg & Copes, 2012, p. 180). Success in "getting along" can ebb and flow without warning.

I was initially granted access to conduct research in SPD in January 2015, when I was hired as a graduate student on a project studying body-worn cameras (BWCs).[7] The

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[7] "Assessing the Impact and Consequences of Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras: A Multi-Site Randomized Controlled Trial." Funded to the Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety, Arizona State University (Principal Investigator Dr. Michael D. White), by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation in the amount of $497,575.

Principal Investigator on the project, Dr. Michael White, had worked with the agency's administrative staff to devise a two-year randomized controlled trial experiment. During the first eight months, I worked on this larger project. Between January and September 2015, I traveled to the location four times, each for one week. My primary task was to attend roll call briefings to administer surveys to officers. These visits were also used to establish a rapport with the officers and become a familiar face. For this reason, I also did a number of ride alongs. By September 2015, I had done 14 of these preparatory ride alongs, totaling 85 hours in a Spokane police car, for the purpose of getting to know the officers, the agency, and the city of Spokane. I also attended two 8-hour BWC training classes in Fall 2015, during which I observed training and interacted with instructors and officers.

By June 2015, I was a known presence at SPD and had developed a positive working relationship with many of its members. At this point, the idea to conduct my dissertation research in this setting was developed. Lofland (2005, pg. 9) calls this method of selecting a research setting "starting where you are." He argued it is the easiest path for obtaining access to a setting and members that might otherwise be off limits. I would probably not have been able to conduct research with this police department had it not been for my initial appointment on the larger BWC project. Lofland also notes that "starting where you are" increases the chances a project will be taken to completion since the ethnographer has multiple reasons to be present in the location.

In November 2015, I moved from Phoenix to Spokane to conduct my dissertation. This decision allowed me to develop a rapport with the participants and other members of

the setting, to develop a better familiarity with the agency, and to get a feel for the city as a member of the community. Moving also facilitated the extensive ride along portion of the data collection for the current project, which I would not have been able to do had I been traveling back and forth. Ultimately, moving to Spokane made much of this research possible.

The decision to move, however, came with as many challenges as it did benefits. I no longer lived close to my academic department so I could not benefit from face-to-face interactions with my peers or dissertation committee members on a daily basis. Virtually all communications with my committee took place either by email or phone. I also gave up my access to the office infrastructure (e.g. desks, supplies, printers) and missed every single event (and therefore learning opportunity) held by my School during those years. I was disappointed that I did not get to attend the dissertation defenses of my colleagues. My decision to move was accompanied by a number of additional personal challenges, compromises, and sacrifices. These challenges are not unheard of in the academic field, particularly for those who conduct qualitative fieldwork. However, to other Ph.D. students I would advise to consider the impact of the move on one's dissertation, productivity, academic socialization, personal well-being, and social/family life.

In terms of gaining access to a research setting, the extent to which a setting is private or public also dictates the ease with which the researcher can gain access (Lofland, 2005). A police department is highly private and secured. The doors are always locked and the premises are off-limits to everyone except members. Members are granted access only after extensive background checks, fingerprinting, and interviews. Non-members may be granted temporary access, but require escorts and are watched carefully

during their time on the premises. Police departments therefore fall on the extremely private end of the public-private spectrum. Accordingly, researchers must be granted special access, often from the higher echelons of administration and only after investigation into their background. Largely due to Dr. White's credentials and renown as a policing scholar, I was ultimately granted full access to department facilities and given an ID pass, after completing an online security and information protection course, and providing fingerprints and physical descriptions of all my tattoos.

By November 2015, I had also identified a number of "gatekeepers" or "informants" in SPD (Lofland, 2005, p. 40). Gatekeepers are members of the research setting that connect the researcher to other members and opportunities. A classic example of this practice in qualitative research can be found in Wright and Decker's (1996, 1997) studies of active offenders (see also, Decker & Smith, 2015). 'Street Daddy,' a college student whom both professors had taught in their classes, agreed to help the authors recruit active offenders from his neighborhood. Ultimately, Street Daddy connected these scholars with a large number of active offenders in St. Louis, Missouri, due to his reputation in the streets of St. Louis and his past criminal history. By the time I began research on the current project, I had identified a handful of officers and staff members whom I could contact directly for information, advice, permissions, and introductions to other members of the organization. These connections, and my close proximity to the location, have helped both the current project and the larger BWC project.

According to Lofland (2005, p. 67), the goal of "getting in" is to gain access to the population you are interested in, while the goal of "getting along" is to acquire the data. Fostering an identity in the setting is an important task involved in both processes.

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My goal upon entering the police department was to be regarded by members of the setting as a professional researcher, since I had up to that point in my career been "acting" the part of the graduate student. I emphasized my professional identity by introducing myself as a researcher from Arizona State University, taking notes, and asking questions. I wore professional or semi-casual clothing depending on the occasion (on ten hour ride alongs I wear jeans and sneakers, as recommended by the officers). I also sometimes stressed my ignorance on policing-related topics, to emphasize that I am a "learner" in the setting and to glean as much information as I could (Lofland, 2005; Mastrofski et al., 1998). Spano (2007), however, notes this can produce showing off behavior on the part of officers, particularly when they are in the presence of female observers. I also found that I took special pains to establish myself as an *unbiased* researcher, hoping to assuage officers' concerns that I might "jam them up" for something they do or say. My perception was that officers were concerned about researchers who may be unsympathetic to the officers' situation and who may write something negative about them. Accordingly, I made an effort to explain to anyone with questions about the research purpose or how the data would be used.

It is important to note that people do not have complete control over the identity ascribed to them by others. While a researcher may take pains to present herself in a certain light, research participants may "reject these presentations in favor of their own" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 12). For example, despite the fact that Snow and Anderson (1993) told their homeless research participants they were professional researchers, participants continued to convey surprise when the researchers told them they were not spending the night outside but in their own homes. Depending on the situation, participants' own

attributions of the researcher's identity may either facilitate or hinder access. An example from my own experiences illustrates how participants' attributions helped facilitate my access. My professor and I attended a roll call briefing at the police department to meet the patrol teams and do ride alongs. While we had received approval to conduct our study from the administration, my professor knew from experience that it is difficult to study police officers without gaining their cooperation as well. We were escorted by a supervisor who would assign us to officers for our ride along. This process is informal, and usually involves someone asking the room if anyone wants a "rider." In this case, my professor and I planned to ride with officers wearing body cameras and, at that time, there were only a few. Therefore, the supervisor approached a specific officer and asked if he had room for a rider. The officer looked at my (male) professor and said 'No, I have a partner today,' meaning there would be no room in the passenger seat because another officer would be sitting there. Understanding the officer's underlying motive, the supervisor said 'you'll be with her,' and pointed to me. The officer immediately said "okay," openly revealing that he did not have a partner, rather that he simply preferred to have the female rider. The rest of the briefing room, understanding, laughed loudly at this exchange.

The supervisor had introduced my professor and I both as *researchers*. We both "looked the part" and we both spoke during a brief presentation on body worn cameras. However, the patrol officer prioritized our gender identities, not our professional identities, in forming his decision on whether he would agree to participate in a ride along that day. This attribution is certainly sexist. However, as noted previously, the goal of the research is to collect the data and my ability to gain access to do a ride along with a

camera wearing officer that day was facilitated by the officer's attribution of me as a woman (and therefore for a straight male I was presumably more exciting or less mundane to have in the car). We have since told this story to a number of fellow researchers who study police departments, and have heard similar stories of professors having better "success" at gaining access to this male dominated research setting by employing female graduate students.

On one hand, I want to be regarded by the police officers as a professional researcher. This is a particular motivator for me since I tend to look younger and may not always be taken seriously in this profession. However, at the same time I know we are in the business of asking for voluntary and sometimes uncompensated participation from participants. Researchers have for decades recruited participants without deeply analyzing the individuals' underlying motives for their participation. Often it is money. For cops, who usually cannot be monetarily compensated for research, the reward might be 10 hours and 40 minutes in a car with someone they would rather be sitting next to. Certainly this is not always the case – I have met plenty of officers who are motivated to participate in research as a means of sharing their own perspective and to contribute to the collection of knowledge on evidence-based policing. Nevertheless, in my experience studying police officers my gender has often facilitated my access to this setting and data.

Difficulty gaining access to police departments, or difficulty gaining full participation from officers, is a common issue in policing research. It is widely acknowledged that police officers distrust outsiders (Crank, 2004; Sherman, 1982; Skolnick, 2004; Van Maanen, 1974). This opposition stems from the perception that the public does not like them and will "screw them over" if given the chance, lending to the

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adoption of a code of secrecy (Crank, 2004) and of a working personality in which they close themselves off from the general public (Skolnick, 2004). Officer distrust of civilians may be especially poignant for researchers because officers may perceive that researchers want to tell them how to do their jobs, and police culture dictates that no one can understand what police work is like unless he or she spends several years working patrol, especially on a more dangerous beat. There were days during this project when this issue caused me a great deal of stress and anxiety. One officer said he did not understand why someone would study policing just to study it some more – the only real reason someone would study policing is to become a cop. Another officer mockingly asked how one could possibly study the police profession without actually having been a police officer. A third asked me if I have ever held a "real" job before or do I just make a living by bothering others who work. Sometimes these statements left me feeling dejected about my work.

Goffman (1959) famously argued that all people have a front stage and backstage area of their social lives. In the backstage, they shed their costumes and cease playing their social roles, at least to some extent. He notes that when audience members (outsiders) accidentally enter the backstage area and witness members without their masks, it can disrupt the social norms and create uncomfortable feelings, such as embarrassment. Many police officers work to foster a persona of impartial professionalism, or compassion and humanity when appropriate in front of civilians. The reserved persona is, in part, fostered because officers believe they will be ridiculed for acting "human," telling jokes, or talking about non-work activities when they are on the job. This is especially true when they are at the scene of a traumatic incident, when some

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officers profess they often *need* to discuss other things to distract them from the horrific scene in front of them. Out of fear they will be ridiculed or punished for expressing these human behaviors and emotions, officers do not act like their 'normal' selves, express concerns, share thoughts, or even feel comfortable in front of outsiders. Researchers who study the police know well that officers are almost always initially hesitant in their presence, until they can be sure that the outsider means to do them no harm.

One problem I (and my team) faced in terms of access was that SPD suffered from recurring administrative turnover during our time conducting research with the agency. The department initially agreed to participate in research with us in November 2014. In September 2015, just as I embarked on my dissertation data collection, Chief Straub was pressured to resign and replaced with an Interim Chief. My faculty advisor and I met with the Interim Chief in November 2015 to go over the previous agreement and ask for his approval, which was granted. However, in February 2016, the Interim Chief announced his resignation. This activated an 8-month search period during which the department had no Chief. At the same time, the civilian director who had been our direct contact in the agency quit his administrative position and entered the police academy as a recruit. During this time, I continued to collect data and reported to various people for questions and permissions. Though at times it was difficult to determine whom to report to, the staff were gracious and cooperative with both my dissertation research and the larger BWC project. In October 2016, a new chief was hired, and my research team and I met for a third time to brief the project and seek approval to continue the study. In this sense, I had to negotiate access to the setting on three separate occasions.

In summary, policing researchers face the task of gaining access to a highly privatized location. Once in, they must also develop trust with the officers themselves, before they can hope to collect meaningful data. Over the course of two years I maintained access largely because I had the backing of a very well-known and respected policing researcher, and a willing police department looking to collaborate with researchers in order to improve and foster better relationships with its citizenry.

Human Research Subjects Protection

The study was approved by the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board (IRB; STUDY00002197) in Spring 2015 to ensure the protection of all human research participants. The data collection for this project was included in a larger application entitled "Assessing the Impact and Consequences of Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras: A Multi-Site Randomized Controlled Trial" (Principal Investigator: Michael D. White, Arizona State University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and The Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety). The larger study focused on the impact and consequences of police officer body worn cameras. The current study was part of this larger study, with the purpose of studying de-escalation using body worn camera video footage as a novel data source. All participants who provided interviews, attended the focus group, and allowed me to ride along were read an approved consent form (see Appendices A and B). Participants in the focus group provided written consent, and all others provided verbal consent, according to university policy. In addition to obtaining participants' consent, agency administrators approved all phases of the research.

Part 1: Qualitative Analysis

Sampling

Many scholars have argued that a best practice for studying good police work is to study highly skilled officers (Bayley & Garofalo, 1989; Kane & White, 2013; Klockars, 1996; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; J. Q. Wilson, 1963). However, there is little consensus on what makes an officer highly skilled and how to identify these officers. It has been suggested that a good starting place is to ask their peers.

> Nobody who spends day after day in the tight and closed societies that are police work groups needs to measure "activity" to know who the *good cops* are. When this is done, the assessments obtained often have little or nothing to do with numbers…Good cops, according to street officers, are level-headed and never get their colleagues into "trouble." Good cops always seem able to identify the causes of problems and to come up with the least troublesome ways of solving them. Good cops think ahead and always leave a way out of any tough situation. Good cops rarely have to resort to the law to solve minor order maintenance problems like drunks or noisy kids on the street. Good cops spend their time finding out about the people and places on their beats instead of lurking at speed traps or near badly marked street signs…As a consequence, the officers known to their colleagues as good cops may be virtually invisible beyond their immediate work groups. (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993, p. 127)

> Police would seem to be reliable observers of qualitative differences in street performance of other officers. They discriminate fairly accurately among colleagues on the basis of what they do. (Bayley & Garofalo, 1989)

To my knowledge only one study has used peer nomination to identify and study highly skilled officers. Bayley and Garofalo (1989) asked all patrol officers from one police department to nominate peers who they felt were "particularly skilled at handling conflict situations." They found that officers who received the most nominations were actually more active and used more force. They concluded that peers are able to identify

officers who police differently, but whether or not they were more highly skilled

remained an unanswered question.

This study used peer nomination to sample a small group of highly skilled de-

escalators. On September 21 and September 25, 2015, I attended all roll call briefings and

one training, and asked officers and supervisors to complete a nomination sheet, which

read:

> *"Please write the first and last names of three of your colleagues, other
> than yourself, who you consider the most highly skilled at de-escalating
> difficult, potentially violent citizen encounters. Officers of all rank are
> eligible for nomination, but they must be currently employed by the
> Spokane PD. Your nominations will be kept strictly confidential and will be
> used for research purposes only. Completing this form is voluntary, and
> you will only be asked to fill out this sheet once."* (see Appendix C for the
> full document)

An ascribed definition of de-escalation was deliberately left out, allowing officers

to define the concept of a "good de-escalator" in their own way. One hundred and

seventeen nomination sheets were distributed and 89 were returned with at least one

legitimate[8] nomination (242 total nominations; response rate = 76%). Based on the

distribution, it was clear[9] that eight officers had received the majority of the votes, and

were selected for inclusion. A civilian director in the police department emailed the eight

officers saying they had been nominated as the most highly skilled de-escalators, and that

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[8] Some sheets were filled out illegitimately or facetiously, such as those nominating employees from the
Records department or others who had never worked patrol. If the sheet provided no sworn officers it was
not included in the final count of submitted forms.

[9] The top three officers received 16, 13, and 11 nominations. Three officers received 8 nominations, one 7,
and one 6. These numbers are consistent with those in Bayley and Garofalo's (1989) study. In addition, four
officers tied for 9th place with 5 votes each. These four officers were classified as a "back-up" sample, in
case any of the top nominated officers declined to participate. Within one week of contacting participants,
seven of the eight top nominated officers responded to my email requesting participation. One did not
respond and was replaced with a randomly selected back-up officer.

I would be contacting them to request participation in a study. I then emailed the officers to set up a meeting or ride along to talk further and request their participation.

Participants

Table 3.1 presents sample characteristics for the peer nominated officers. To protect confidentiality, race, gender, age, and shift assignment are excluded from the table. One participant was female. Six identified as white, one Hawaiian, and one Hispanic. Two were not assigned to patrol. Two were assigned to the Day patrol shift (starting at 6am), two were assigned to the Power shift (starting at 4pm), and two were assigned to the Graves shift (starting at 8pm). Three held the rank of Patrol Officer and the rest were supervisors. The least experienced officer had 14 years of service, suggesting that officers are more likely to nominate peers who are more tenured, experienced, and perhaps well-known to others. The sample was assigned to a variety of specialty units in addition to their full time assignments, though one half of the sample was on the department's Crisis Negotiation team.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Pseudonym	Votes[a]	Years of Service[b]	Primary Assignment	Special Unit Assignments
Officer Marshall	16	19	Patrol	Neighborhood Conditions, Dignitary Protection, Hostage Negotiation
Officer Prince	13	25	Patrol	Hostage Negotiation, Peer Support
Corporal French	11	18	Patrol	-
Sergeant Cross	8	21	Patrol	Tactical Crowd Control
Sergeant York	8	18	Patrol	Community Outreach
Sergeant Shaw	7	20	Internal Affairs	Peer Support, Community Outreach
Sergeant Hunter	6	22.5	Academy	Hostage Negotiation
Officer Stamper	5	14	Patrol	Anti-Crime, SWAT

Data Collection

Interviews. I conducted a one-on-one interview with each officer to discover his

or her views on de-escalation. Interview data was collected only after each participant

was read and verbally agreed to an approved verbal consent form (Appendix A).

Interviews took place in Fall 2015 in a location of the participant's choice – two at public

coffee shops, one at the academy, two at a precinct, and three in a patrol car during a ride

along. A semi-structured protocol was used as a guide (see Appendix D), covering

officers' demographic information and police experience, perceptions of de-escalation,

and anecdotes from the field. Interviews lasted between one and two hours.[10]

Focus group. In Part 1 I also conducted one focus group[11] with seven[12] of the

eight participants, and myself as moderator. A focus group is a group interview in which

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[10] Interviews that took place during ride alongs lasted the longest, likely because the officer had less incentive to end the interview. That is, we were going to be together in the car for several hours either way.

[11] Participants worked across three patrol shifts that begin at 6am, 4pm, and 8pm. Further, two participants did not work patrol and worked a 9am-5pm shift. Accordingly, the officers worked, lived, and slept on very different schedules. For this reason, scheduling was difficult. To solve this problem, administration approved overtime pay for the focus group so each had an incentive to attend even on days off. Department administration also handled the scheduling of the focus group as they had direct access to each officer's work schedule.

qualitative data is generated through communication among research participants, rather than between a researcher and participant (Kitzinger, 1995). The first purpose of the focus group was to generate a deeper discussion of the research topic through back and forth conversation among the participants. The second purpose was to facilitate a "sentinel event review" using body worn camera footage. This phase of the project replicated other studies (Fyfe, 1987; Toch, 1980; Toch & Grant, 1991; Toch et al., 1975) that have used focus groups to study violence reduction in police-citizen encounters. However, rather than using written police reports as Fyfe did in the Metro-Dade project, officers in the current study were asked to bring in their own body camera videos depicting scenarios in which de-escalation tactics were evident.[13] To supplement these video data, I also selected additional videos recorded by other officers[14] in the department that well represented the ideas discussed in the interviews.[15] In total, six videos were shown in the focus group, three from sample officers and three from other officers (see Table 3.2). Two videos involved use of force, and were selected because they represented situations in which de-escalation tactics were not used or were unsuccessful. The remaining four videos did not involve force, depicting scenarios when de-escalation was successful in achieving the citizen's compliance verbally.

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[12] One officer had an emergency on the day of the focus group and could not attend.

[13] During the one-on-one interviews, I asked officers to think of body camera videos they had recorded which might illustrate the points we covered.

[14] Written permission was granted from administration and recording officers to use these videos in the focus group.

[15] I was granted temporary access to the department's Evidence.com body camera video storage system. I asked numerous officers to recommend possible videos and reviewed each video before selecting three additional videos for the focus group.

Prior to the start of the focus group, all officers were read and asked to sign an approved consent form (see Appendix A). The focus group was guided by a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix E). After an initial discussion of de-escalation, the group watched each video from start to finish on a large television screen. Following each video, I asked the group to discuss the nature of the call, the tactics used by officers to address the problem, and whether the tactics were effective. The focus group took place in the department's main precinct and lasted one hour and 40 minutes.

Research Questions and Analytic Strategy

Part 1 asked the research question: What are highly skilled officers' perceptions of de-escalation? Interviews and the focus group were transcribed by Barrett Honors students from the Arizona State University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice[16], and qualitatively coded by the author in QSR NVivo 11 for Mac (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia). Interviews were coded for the following themes –definitions of de-escalation, tactics, barriers to effective de-escalation, de-escalation training, characteristics of highly skilled de-escalators, and public perceptions of de-escalation.

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[16] Barrett Honors students receive course credit for participation in research.

Table 2. Focus Group Body Camera Video Descriptions

Sequence[a]	Sample Officer Video	Call Description	Force Used	Scenario
1	Yes	Agency Assist	No	A man is approached by mental health professionals because he was making suicidal comments. They believe he is a threat to himself and want to admit him to the hospital. Police are called to assist. He is openly hostile about being contacted by professionals. He refuses to cooperate. The officer talks to the man for several minutes about his problem. The man visibly calms down and agrees to be admitted to the hospital.
2	Yes	Suspicious Person	No	An officer approaches a man who is sitting at a park bench near a playground. He is eating lunch. She asks him how he is doing, then recognizes him as a man who is usually intoxicated. She commends him for being sober and getting something to eat and tells him to have a nice day.
3	No	Person with Weapon	No	A man is standing on the sidewalk with a gun and threatening to use the gun. The officer, standing behind his vehicle door, talks to the man for a few minutes. The man agrees to put down the weapon, puts his hands up, and walks slowly over to the officers. The officer talks to the man about his problem and the man apologizes for threatening the officers.
4	Yes	Domestic Violence	No	A man is suffering an emotional crisis in relation to a fight with his wife, and has been standing on a roof for several hours. The SWAT team, supervisors, and a number of patrol officers are on the scene. The officer spends several minutes borrowing a ladder from the neighbors, and a pack of cigarettes. The officer then spends 9 minutes talking to the man about his problem. He offers the man advice. The man thanks the officer for listening and "being real" with him. He agrees to climb down the ladder if he can have a cigarette.
5	No	Suicidal Person	Yes	Officers approach a teenage boy at a bus stop. His mother called to say he was making suicidal comments. The boy says he does not want to talk to police officers out on the open street, and requests a cigarette and to talk to his mother. The officers deny his requests. They attempt to handcuff the boy and he starts to fight. After a brief scuffle, the officers put the boy on the ground and handcuff him.
6	No	Person with Weapon	Yes	A man in a crowded downtown area is waving an axe. The officer instructs the man to put down the axe. The man begins to run away. Officers chase after him and one officer deploys a Taser, which connects and deploys a charge. The man falls to the ground and is handcuffed.

[a]In order viewed during the focus group.

For Part 2, data was collected using the Systematic Social Observation (SSO) method on 35 police ride alongs. The purpose was to analyze de-escalation in actual police-citizen interactions.

Sampling

Thirteen ride alongs were conducted with the expert sample officers: Marshall (3), Prince (3), French (2), Stamper (2), Hunter (1), Cross (1), and York (1). Shaw was not assigned to patrol and therefore could not provide a ride along. Hunter was temporarily assigned to patrol during the data collection period and was able to offer one ride along. I over-sampled ride alongs with Marshall, Prince, Stamper, and French because these officers were not sergeants and generated more citizen contacts. In total, I observed 45 police-citizen encounters with the expert sample.

To compare nominated officers to those who did not receive the most nominations, 22 ride alongs were conducted with 22 non-sample officers. A snowball sampling method[17] was used. Administration facilitated this process by sending an email to patrol sergeants announcing that I would be doing ride alongs over the course of a few months. I then contacted sergeants and requested to accompany his or her patrol team for an entire work week, riding with a different officer each day. I also recruited additional participants by talking to officers while out on other ride alongs and asking them to

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[17] I initially planned to use a random sampling method to select officers who differed by rank, shift, demographics, and experience level. However, agency administrators requested that I levy my department contacts to sample officers on my own, so as to not use department resources.

connect me with others. In total, I observed 86 police-citizen interactions with the non-expert sample, for a total sample of 131 interactions.

Data Collection

       Ride alongs. Most police departments offer a civilian ride along program, though the existence of these programs and the rules governing them vary depending on policy. On a ride along, a civilian is granted permission to accompany a police officer or other worker for a few hours to observe the work first hand, ask questions directly proximate to specific situations, and (if approved) systematically record activities. In Spokane, the ride along policy restricts civilians to one ride along per year (SpokaneCity.org, 2016), but this rule was relaxed for the current study.

       Ride alongs are an established data collection technique with a long history in policing research. Ride alongs were the principal method for the seminal American Bar Foundation (ABF) Survey of the Administration of Criminal Justice in the 1950s, which undertook the first systematic field observation study of day-to-day activities in America's criminal justice agencies (Walker, 1992a; see also, Westley's [1951] classic study of police culture). This study is considered a classic because it discovered the pervasive use of discretion by police. The ride along method was continually used in much of the research on the police through the 1960s, 70s, and 80s (Bayley, 1986; Bayley & Garofalo, 1989; Black & Reiss, 1970; Caldwell, 1978; Muir, 1977; Reiss, 1967, 1968; J. Q. Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Worden, 1989).

       Many experts believe observational data is superior to other forms of data depicting police officer behaviors. Compared to, for example, official use of force and

arrest data, observations can offer more detailed and nuanced information on police

decisions and the specific processes by which ends are reached. Mastrofski and Parks

(1990) argued that surveys generally tap into officers' perceptions globally, but do not

always match how officers behave on a case by case basis. Officers have an exceedingly

wide range of options available to them when they are faced with a problem (Mastrofski

& Parks, 1990) and field observation enables the researcher to gauge options as they are

employed in the moment, rather than limiting to concrete options included in survey item

responses. Perkins (2017) argued that even body worn camera videos do not replace the

rich data gleaned by observational researchers who are fully immersed in the officer's

world while out on a ride along. Ride alongs allow researchers to observe actions and tap

into officers' perceptions as they problem solve in the moment. Observers can grow

familiar with officers' individual differences, and are also privy to the before and after

commentary between officers about particular calls. They also may be better able to

contextualize statistical findings by drawing on anecdotal evidence from their field

observations.

   Systematic social observation. SSO was first employed as a technique for

sociologists by Reiss (1968, 1975) and is commonly used for researching the police

today. Mastrofski and colleagues (2010) define SSO as the study of human behaviors in

their natural setting. Like many, Reiss (1968) believed observation is a key component of

any scientific research, but for observation to be truly scientific there must be precise

rules and protocols for recording and measuring so that it could be replicated by others.

SSO is especially useful for research teams conducting observations because it requires

specific operationalized definitions and coding protocols, which reduce inter-rater variability in an otherwise subjective activity (Mastrofski et al., 1998).

In practice, researchers code variables while observing in the field and later sit down to write up more detailed field notes (Mastrofski et al., 1998). Reiss (1968) recommended the best approach was to combine observation with survey methods – the researcher holds a survey during the ride along and "checks off" items to systematically guide coding and note taking. The SSO method has been used in policing research for decades, notably in the Project on Policing Neighborhoods (POPN; Parks, Mastrofski, Dejong, & Gray, 1999; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010; Sun & Payne, 2004; Terrill, 2001; Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002) and other classic and recent studies of the police (Bayley & Garofalo, 1989; Friedrich, 1980; Fyfe, 1987; Liederbach & Frank, 2003; B. W. Smith, Novak, & Frank, 2001; Terrill, Rossler, & Paoline, 2014; Worden, 1995).

Procedures. In the current study SSO was guided by a predetermined set of rules and structured protocol (see Appendix F). Prior to collecting data, I spoke with one of my committee members (Terrill) on how to properly employ the SSO method. I brought my laptop on each ride along and coded variables directly into IBM SPSS Statistics Version 23 for Mac. In the patrol briefing prior to each ride along, I coded variables related to the ride along, including the date, time, weather conditions, and whether the ride fell on a holiday or special event. Once in the patrol car, I read each officer an approved verbal consent form (see Appendix B) and collected the officer's personal demographics, police experience, and variables related to work day, prior days off, subjective mood, and fatigue. Once the officer was out on the job responding to calls for service, I coded *every interaction that generated an official police response or in which the officer contacted a*

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citizen for more than two minutes. When the officer interacted with multiple citizens at one call, *I focused coding on the one citizen who could be best labeled as the "suspect" or who appeared to be the most escalated in behavior* (examples of a suspect are if the citizen was observed committing a crime, or if he or she was the subject of the call for service). *If no citizens fit these criteria, I coded the citizen with whom the officer had the longest interaction*.

For each encounter I coded 90 unique variables, including 10 qualitative descriptor variables. Ensuring that all of these codes were complete and accurate required effort. I tried to code variables immediately after observing each encounter. However, in many cases we jumped from one call to the next very quickly. In these cases I took notes to remember each encounter and finished coding when the officer took a break to complete paperwork or eat. If I did not have a good view or had been unable to listen to the officer's conversation with the citizen I would review the body camera video on the officer's phone during a moment of down time before coding. On night shifts I also sometimes waited until the next day to finish coding because I was tired and less comprehensive in my writing. If necessary I had access to all body camera videos recorded by the police department on Evidence.com and reviewed footage to refresh my memory to ensure that coding was as accurate as possible.

Social reactivity. One limitation to observational research is the potential for reactivity – the theory that the presence of an observer may artificially influence the behaviors of those under study (Mastrofski & Parks, 1990). To avoid reactivity, observers are trained to minimize their participation in the activities they are observing, limit conversation, and attempt to "fit in" to the scenes as best as possible to minimize their

impact on the social situation (Caldwell, 1978; Mastrofski & Parks, 1990). It was

sometimes unfeasible in the current study to limit conversation, because I captured

variables that are not ascertainable to the eye (e.g. what the officer was thinking about the

call, or why the officer decided to use particular tactics). For these unobservable

variables, I had to ask the officer (Mastrofski et al., 2010). Eventually, most officers

became accustomed to the information I was coding and some reported the information

out loud as they worked. This would go something like:

> Okay, we received a call of a tripped alarm at 3:33pm, and we are
> officially on the call. Tripped alarm calls always carry a potential for
> danger because we don't know whether it was an accident or whether the
> employees are in real danger. So, I'm driving there fairly quickly and there
> are two other officers en route with us (hypothetical quote).

I made every effort to minimize my influence on officer behavior. During my first

year in Spokane, I conducted 35 preliminary ride alongs during which I did not collect

any data but simply got to know the officers and talked to them about the research. On

the SSO ride alongs, I kept my questions about the codes short and general to avoid

infusing bias. My general perception was that the officers knew me well, were familiar

with what I was studying, and went about their business as usual. In fact, one officer was

reprimanded for behavior he engaged in while I was present on a ride along (he yelled at

an arrestee, which was later observed on his body camera video). Since the behavior was

considered by many to be egregious, the body camera video was featured on the local

news. It should also be noted that all but one officer in the data set wore a body camera

and 93% (122 of 131) of the encounters in the data set were recorded. These officers

were accustomed to having their behaviors and decisions recorded and scrutinized. It is

their "new normal," and I was simply an additional observer, rather than a conspicuous one.

Coding protocol and study variables. Similar to other recent projects employing SSO, the protocol was designed based on the POPN study (Liederbach & Frank, 2003; B. W. Smith et al., 2001; Terrill et al., 2014). This study elucidated a full range of factors important to the observational study of police behavior. The current protocol was condensed for a more focused study of de-escalation. In total, 41 variables were coded pertaining to the ride along, and 90 variables were coded for each interaction.[18] Variables are categorized into characteristics of the ride along, officer, citizen, and situation. Situational variables are further categorized into Binder and Scharf's (1980) four phases of police-citizen encounters.

Research Questions and Analytic Strategy

This phase of the study answers two research questions: 1) What characteristics of officers, citizens, and situations are associated with officer use of de-escalation? and 2) What characteristics of officers, citizens, and situations are associated with effective de-escalation?

To measure use of de-escalation, officer tactics were first coded into five separate variables indicating whether or not the officer used one of five de-escalation tactics (an overview of these tactics is included in Chapter 4 Qualitative Results, and Chapter 5 Quantitative Results). These five variables were recoded into a single binary variable

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[18] An analysis of every variable is outside the scope of the dissertation. A rationale for including each variable in analytic models is reported in the quantitative results section (Chapter 5).

"use" indicating whether the officer used any one of the five tactics. To measure effective de-escalation, a binary indicator "success" signifies whether the citizen was calm or agitated at the end of the encounter.

Officer-level independent variables indicate whether the officer was a peer nominated officer or a crisis negotiator, as well as the officer's sex, age, years of service, and fatigue level. Variables also reflect whether the officers developed an entry plan or waited for back up before making entry, whether a citation was issued, and whether an arrest was made. Citizen-level independent variables reflect the person's role in the incident, age, sex, income level, whether the person demonstrated signs of mental illness or substance abuse, whether he or she disobeyed police, and whether he or she vocalized anti-police attitudes. Situation level variables indicate the urgency of the call, whether it was a call for domestic violence or an investigative stop of a suspicious person, the number of responding officers, and whether the call was self-initiated.

In Chapter 5: Quantitative Results, descriptive statistics first provide insight into the general nature the 131 observed police-citizen interactions. Binary logistic regression models are then estimated to answer the research questions, testing the impact of officer characteristics, citizen characteristics, and situation characteristics on the outcome variables.

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

This chapter reviews results from Part 1, a qualitative investigation of peer nominated officer perceptions of de-escalation. This chapter summarizes the following themes:

1) Definitions of de-escalation;

2) Traits of a skilled de-escalator;

3) De-escalation tactics;

4) Public perceptions of de-escalation;

5) Situational barriers to effective de-escalation; and

6) De-escalation training.

Definitions of De-Escalation

During each interview I asked sample officers to define de-escalation. A thematic analysis of responses to this question revealed that their definition had three components. Officers' defined de-escalation as bringing a situation or citizen in crisis back to an objective or calm state. All eight officers included this component in their definition. Most also identified an outcome goal of de-escalation – to gain a citizen's willing cooperation with officer's instructions. Finally, they identified a process goal of de-escalation, to use the least amount of force possible.

An important point to note is that most of the sample officers had to think hard before offering a definition, and some struggled with the task. Many answers included a qualifier such as "to me, the definition of de-escalation is…" Sometimes when we were deeper into the middle interview, officers would suddenly think of a good definition, after

considerable deliberation and back and forth discussion about the topic. That they

struggled with the task signals that de-escalation is not a concept engrained in officers

during official training at this department or clarified in official policy. If asked about the

definition of deadly force, the same officers would most certainly recite a definition

conceptualized in their department policy. However, all officers arrived at similar

definitions suggesting that they share similar ideas about the concept and discuss it

amongst themselves.

Calming a Crisis

If a citizen is suffering an emotional or mental crisis, officers said they use de-

escalation to calm them back to an objective or rational mindset. The goal of de-

escalation in this case is to talk to the person in ways that calm them so they can think

and communicate logically.

> De-escalation, to me, is taking a person that is extremely agitated, in
> crisis…getting them to get back to a part of their brain where they can be
> rational and think, and listen and respond, and…get them to a point of
> cooperation just using words. (Marshall)

> Taking a subject who is…maybe angry, volatile, intense, and bringing
> them to a resolution where they get to have a say in it…to where they
> actually become in control. And really, they come back to the frontal part
> of their brain…so instead of that "fight or flight" behavior, they come
> back to the logical part of their brain… (Prince)

> Bring them out of that crisis and engage them to where they're making
> decisions based off fact, not off emotion. (Hunter)

These assertions are consistent with Muir's (1977) discussion of effective

policing. He argued that officers are largely tasked with "extorting" compliance, and

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often from individuals who may be temporarily irrational. The task is to use methods, and perhaps some innovation, to resolve the issue in the best way possible.

Though the term de-escalation implies that there is a conflict ongoing, study officers said this strategy could also be used preventatively. When they suspect a citizen might become unwilling to cooperate, for example, officers said they can use verbal de-escalation tactics to lay groundwork, build rapport, and avoid conflict. In the following examples, officers discuss using preventative de-escalation when they know they will be taking someone into custody or to a hospital.

> Shaw: At any minute we know, we all know, that can go bad. And it's the difference between wrestling with them when the ambulance pulls around the corner and not… it's preventing that…setting the groundwork for when he does [become escalated].
> Marshall: Setting the scene for when the ambulance shows up and then he starts potentially spiking like "I ain't fucking going to the hospital!"

> We, as police officers, show up to situations and our ultimate goal is cooperation from the person that we're either arresting or…de-escalation is getting someone to do something that they don't want to do. Which is be placed in to custody and taken to jail and their freedom taken away from them, even if it's for a short amount of time. So…getting cooperation from someone in a not-so-ideal situation is basically de-escalation…I think it's just a safe conclusion to an incident that had the ability to become a violent confrontation. (Stamper)

The idea that de-escalation tactics can be preventative has a long and storied tradition in classic policing scholarship. Both Muir (1977) and Bittner (1967) argued that professional police officers on skid row make a significant effort to gather information and develop a rapport with citizens in order to decrease the chances they will be hostile or confrontational during officer encounters with police.

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Gaining Cooperation

According to study officers, the outcome goal of de-escalation is persuading a person to cooperate with officers' commands– "getting cooperation from someone in a not-so-ideal situation is basically de-escalation" (Stamper). In many situations, the problem may be solvable using an informal agreement or compromise between the officers and citizens. According to officers, a compromise is a feasible option when the citizen is being respectful and cooperative with officers, and when the problem involves minor or no criminal activity. When the situation does not involve a crime, officers said even walking away can be the best option to avoid aggravating the problem further.

However, in police work the solution is sometimes proscribed by training or law. For example, if the person has an arrest warrant the officer is legally required to make an arrest. Another example is a person threatening to harm themselves or others with a weapon. In such cases, officers are responsible for ensuring that they follow the law and/or neutralize any threat before leaving the scene. There are no other solutions to the problem; there is no compromise available. The officer must get the person to cooperate with the one and only solution – to be arrested, or relinquish the weapon. To summarize, the interviews revealed that an indicator of successful de-escalation is a citizen willingly cooperates with police. However, officers said they must force the person's compliance if they refuse to cooperate in certain situations.

Using the Lowest Level of Force Possible

The process goal of de-escalation is to solve the problem using the least amount of force possible. According to officers, the most typical forms of de-escalation tactics

involve communication, including verbal, eye contact, and body language. However,

officers said that sometimes physical force is needed -- "there are gonna be times where

you have to use force and you're never gonna get away from that" (Hunter). Many said

use of force, when used properly and legitimately, can still be considered de-escalation

because it brings the problem to a safe conclusion and avoids the need for more serious

force.

> One was a young girl. She was sitting on the edge[19], you know, hands like this as if she was gonna get ready to just jump off, you know. Feet dangling. [Another officer gets there], he's on the Hostage Negotiation team, he talks with people, he's good at talking with people… He starts talking with her. And so I stop talking. And I slowly climb over the sidewalk partition so that I'm right there and he had already been on the other side. He jumped over and was talking to her, just continued talking to her and then I just grabbed her and pulled her off the bridge… if you have that window to end the situation, sometimes it's by rescuing the hostages… Sometimes it's that window of opportunity where you have to shoot that bad guy. (Stamper)

In summary, a second indicator of successful de-escalation is when the solution is

achieved verbally. However, since sometimes police work proscribes the use of physical

force, using the least amount of physical force possible to save the most people can still

be considered de-escalation. Ultimately, de-escalation constitutes a "risk reduction"

strategy, much like that described in Bittner's (1967) study of policing on skid row.

Traits of a Highly Skilled De-Escalator

After defining de-escalation, each officer was asked why they thought their peers

had nominated them as a highly skilled de-escalator. They were also asked to list

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[19] Spokane has a number of bridges that extend high over the Spokane River, which runs through the city. The department gets numerous calls to these bridges each week for suicidal persons. The department faced so many problems associated with these suicides that it now has video cameras recording each bridge at all times.

qualities that make an officer an especially effective de-escalator. They described a number of traits that improve de-escalation skills. Most common was being a good communicator or having the "gift of gab" as York put it. Officers said they voted for peers who they had *seen* talk in the field in ways that got through to citizens and produced positive results: "I thought about people that I had consistently seen calming situations down" (Stamper). Others voted for well-known crisis negotiators or academy instructors. By repeatedly demonstrating their skills to others, they earned reputations as de-escalators. Officers also listed being empathetic as a trait of a good de-escalator.

> When I'm dealing with a person either in crisis or a criminal issue, I try to put myself in their shoes…and say if this were me, or if this was somebody that was close to me, would I want them to be getting a fair deal? Would I want the person investigating it to try and understand where they're coming from and realize why they got there and to treat them with some dignity and respect, still hold them accountable and try to find resolution? I would. (Marshall)

> We're in this together. If you're in crisis, you and I are in this together…I shouldn't be demeaning or belittling. Which you'll see [other officers do]. (Shaw).

This ideal is directly parallel to Muir's (1977) discussion of "perspective" as a trait of a professional police officer. Although officers may frequently encounter persons who are seemingly "offensive" or who may be directly disrespecting the officer's authority or even their personal safety, the professional police officer must have perspective for their life circumstances and approach the problem with that perspective in mind. More generally, the professional police officer has respect for the humanity of all persons they are responsible for protecting or arresting.

Officers also said one personality type is not always successful with everybody or in every situation, and there may not be a "rhyme or reason" to when you connect with

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someone and when you don't. For example, while having a dry sense of humor may help

an officer connect with many, other times it might cause anger. In cases where an officer

is not establishing a good connection with a citizen, officers said they would let another

officer step in to see if they could change things around.

> Stamper: My personality might go great with someone to de-escalate
> them, and then the next day my personality's not the right one for the
> situation.
> Prince: Bingo.
> NT: And then what do you do when it's not working?
> Stamper: Switch.

The conversation highlights a point made by Willis (2013) that officers tend to

develop and hone their own strengths through years on the job. Officers are also aware of

who among them is more highly skilled at a particular tactic or dealing with a particular

problem. The best tactic to de-escalation in such a scenario is to have the best person for

the job step forward. The sample also said someone who can maintain their calm and

control their own emotions in the face of a crisis – someone who can "stay cool" – will be

more effective at de-escalation.

> I think that I'm fairly calm on calls, especially patrol calls, different
> situations where it may be dangerous or…quickly evolving and I've
> luckily been able to…keep a calm demeanor and think through, whether
> it's tactics or talking to people. (Stamper)

> I think a lot of my success is just being calm and…lack of affect
> sometimes…for me it's a calm demeanor. (Shaw)

Staying calm has the dual benefit of helping the officer think clearly about a plan

of action and demonstrate they are capable of handling the problem. In summary, there

may be traits held by officers to enhance their ability to connect with citizens and de-

escalate them in crisis. Research such as that conducted by Lawrence and colleagues

(2017), in which the authors connected personality traits and worldviews with more procedurally just policing, should be conducted to identify traits that enhance an officer's ability to de-escalate.

<div align="center">**Verbal De-Escalation Tactics**</div>

Officers were asked how de-escalation is performed. In general, they described communication tactics that prevented the need to use physical force. French said as a police officer "you can force someone all day long." However, de-escalation requires special effort to achieve the same goal without going hands on. His statement reflects Bittner's (1967) discussion of effective skid row officers, who often employed innovative methods of informal social control and enforcement of the law that did not always invoke the legal system. This section outlines five tactics for de-escalating a police-citizen encounter using innovative verbal methods, as opposed to physical methods.

Tactic 1: Humanity

One effective way to de-escalate is to emphasize one's human qualities over one's authority. Recall that Muir (1977) similarly described officers with "perspective" who respected the humanity of the persons from all life conditions and handled these calls with empathy and not heavy handedness. The humanity tactic also strongly resembles components of procedural justice including quality of treatment and respect for persons (Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Furthermore, Sykes and Clark (1975) argued that the traditional social norms and expectations of social interactions do

not apply in a police-citizen interaction since the dynamic is tainted by a power

differential. Tension occurs because the citizen is expected to show a deference that is not

expected to be returned by the officer. Using the humanity tactic, the officer attempts to

reduce the power differential and emphasize the conversation is happening between two

equals.

The humanity tactic, according to sample officers, involves showing the citizen

emotion, treating citizens with dignity and respect, minimizing authoritativeness,

condescension, and "cop talk," and talking to citizens "like people." These tactics can

temper the tone of the interaction.

> For me, if you can kinda talk to them like you'd be talking to a normal
> person, to try and take away the law enforcement portion of it, it seems to
> work. So many of these people – they're very standoffish to police
> anyway. They don't like the authority telling them what to do. So if you
> take that element out and just talk to them, sometimes that includes humor
> or a little empathy, I don't know, it seems to work for me…It's just talking
> to them as a person. (Marshall)

Marshall said the humanity tactic is particularly useful when handling low-level

calls that are not emergencies or cases involving serious criminal activity. "Low stakes"

calls can be thought of as opportunities for the officer to show compassion without

compromising the goals of public safety. They can also be opportunities to build a

foundation between the officer and the citizen, which will reduce the chances that future

interactions will become volatile.

> I think if you can build a small bit of rapport with the guy, and a little bit
> of trust, and not make a mountain out of a molehill. For me a lot of times,
> it gets them to be compliant. Like the guy this morning…he knew he had a
> warrant, one for child support. He knew he was going to go to jail. Is it
> that really big of a deal to blow that small thing into a mountain?
> (Marshall)

Prince, a veteran negotiator, said a key part of this tactic is matching your emotion and body language to the citizen's. "You have to show as much passion about the problem as they do. With the same intensity. So I try to…kinda go in deep, kinda grab their heart, trying to get them to tell me about it. Right away I try to grab that pain." Stamper described how he had been video taped in verbal tactics training and watched the videos to practice matching his words to his body language.

> If I'm talking to somebody on the street and I'm saying everything's gonna be okay. I wanna get through this. I wanna get through this so that nobody gets hurt. If my eyes aren't conveying that and I'm looking at somebody with cop's eyes… I'm not going to be believable.

After watching a video in the focus group, Prince commended French for successfully de-escalating a situation by showing passion (Table 2, Video 4): "That's the piece that was gold was that you gave it the same intensity that he did. That was huge. You gave as much power to him as he had. You gave him all the juice. You were just as passionate as he was."

Finally, officers said humor establishes an overall positive tone in an interaction. Marshall said even something as simple as using a curse word can reduce the glare of authority and bring regularity in an otherwise official situation: "To administration that might be oh you can't swear, you're on body cam. But you know what? The guy might think that's funnier than hell and it breaks the ice." However, as previously noted, sometimes humor can backfire and further anger the person. Prince said a failed attempt at humor can be an opportunity to apologize and re-emphasize one's humanity.

Tactic 2: Listen

Most officers said listening to a person can go a long way towards de-escalating a heated conflict. The idea is similar to the officers in classic studies, who spent time gathering information about the people on their beat, making rounds, and asking questions. First, the listening tactic helps the officer find out the source of the problem.

> I think mainly for me it's gaining control…and in order to do that I'm going to have to find what, what's that one thing that they need…What do they need in order to become compliant? (Prince)

> Ask them questions that elicit an explanation or a reasoning why they're doing it, because you might get to the root problem of something that's not even why you're called there, and then you can really bring resolution to the problem. (Marshall)

Listening also gives the officer ammunition for achieving calm and compliance by identifying the citizen's interests. The officer can pay attention to details and work towards a topic of conversation that may calm the person down or change their mind. In the following Marshall describes how he grabbed onto a commonality to convince a suicidal man to step away from the ledge of a bridge.

> I found out, you know, this guy was Irish. I'm Irish. And I thought you know what? Hey I get where you're coming from. We're stubborn. We can't help it. It's our nature. Trying to use a little bit of humor mixed in with some sincerity. Like, I get it, man. You can't psychoanalyze us. We're Irish! We don't want to be like that. We're just that way. And it really started to bring him down.

In the same way, French used one man's veteran service to talk him out of fighting with the police.

> At one point he said that he was a veteran… So I asked him, ok so you don't think that anyone in your life cares about you or appreciates that? Do the kids in the neighborhood know you? And he said yeah they do. And I said ok you don't think they know you as the Marine veteran…and to that

little kid who plays GI Joe, that's not important to him? I guarantee that you have somebody, don't you? And then he actually started listening.

Finally, listening can help the officer "legitimize the person's concerns" (Hunter). In the focus group, the officers commended French for using listening to his advantage in a crisis. In the video (Table 2, Video 4), French listened to a man's problems and then paraphrased his concerns back to him to show he was giving them his full attention. He then listed the steps he would take to help the man if he agreed to come off the roof of his house. Other officers debriefed the video:

> Shaw: That was one of the great things that you did with him and I think it showed him the empathy is you bullet-pointed everything he said. You know, rather than occasionally going "So it's really hard for you"…You were like "This is how I'm gonna do it." Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. And then, what'd he do? He came down [off the roof]…
> Marshall: When I heard you list off all those bullet points to him, in my mind it…gave him credibility that you were really interested in what he was going through. So then when you presented the two steps, "We're gonna do this, and then I'm gonna put the ladder up, let you come down, have a smoke, pat you down," I think that totally bought him credibility and trust in you because you had all that prior active listening and you knew- I mean you weren't bullshitting. You did listen to him.

While simple, officers said listening to the person speak and legitimizing their feelings and problems can achieve multiple goals and ultimately provide the ammunition needed to achieve calm and compliance.

Tactic 3: Compromise

On the job, officers said they will compromise with a citizen and "reward good behavior" in situations where it is possible, legal, and does not risk safety or the goals of

law enforcement. In Bittner's (1967) study, officers would similarly make small concessions and decision to not invoke the law, which assisted them in developing trust with residents and generally improving the safety on their beat. Interestingly, this idea is the direct opposite of recent propositions from Attorney General Jeff Sessions that the American criminal justice system return to a tough on crime approach and push for stricter sentences for low level crimes (Jarrett & Scott, 2017).

According to study officers, often a small compromise can make the difference between a short conversation and a full-blown use of force. Below, the officers debrief Video 5 (Table 2), in which police contacted a boy who was making suicidal statements. The boy stated that he was stressed but if officers gave him a cigarette he would cooperate. The officers in the video declined the request and went in to handcuff the boy, who began to struggle.

> NT: If this was your call, what would you have tried?
> York: I would have smoked a cigarette with him.
> Stamper: Yeah, we can totally smoke a cigarette. I mean how, how hard is that? You know what, I'll go buy us a pack.
> Cross: And he already told you that he's gonna cooperate.
> York: Yeah, he said I'll cooperate if I get a cigarette. So he already said the magic word and as a supervisor, that right there, I now just went from a quick write up there to a Blue Team and a bunch of other wordy reports, for…
> Prince: For a smoke. Five minutes.
> York: Yeah. What does it cost you? Five more minutes of your time.
> Marshall: Five minutes of your day, and you're paying it forward, actually, because the next time he has contact with the police he's hopefully gonna remember that.
> Stamper: Yeah, and your report is gonna be two pages…
> All: Shorter.

Officers said when using the "compromise" tactic, you must clearly outline what you will

need in return for what you are offering.

> Prince: It comes down to…But here's the deal, if I'm gonna do that,
> there's some rules that you have to follow. You have to sit down, you have
> to be, you know, you have to be polite. You have to be respectful.
> Cross: Never just give him something.
> Prince: Yeah, yeah. You have to get something from him. He has to
> behave in a certain way. And they will…for a cigarette.

For calls involving suicidal persons, Prince uses a very specific "compromise" tactic that

has been successful in two decades of negotiating.

> Prince: For me on the bridge, something that I use a lot that has worked
> and it kinda gets me rolling… because it's awkward walking
> up…especially on Monroe Street Bridge where you have very little time to
> capture someone's attention before they jump. So for me, I say listen to
> me. Listen to me for five minutes, and if you don't like anything that I
> have to say, then you can make a different decision based on that. But give
> me five minutes of your time. So, what that does is it buys me some time,
> and they think five minutes isn't very long. So, so that's one of my huge
> sales pitches. Trying to grab them.
> NT: And that works?
> Prince: All the time. Almost always. I've never had anyone jump off a
> bridge doing this. Every single time, it has worked for me. That's why I
> keep using it.

Hunter said he has compromised with countless citizens over his 23-year career.

In the following example, a man was angry with police for sending his son back to jail

because he believed the jail did not have the resources to properly care for his son's

mental illness.

> He was adamant that his son not go back to jail, when we can't do that.
> But there was a little bit of wiggle room in the felony assault, because it
> wasn't a domestic violence assault and he was a psychiatric patient... But
> he had a couple domestic violence arrest warrants so we had to arrest him
> and book him. So we kinda made a compromise with him that he would be

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booked [only] on his…warrants... I thought that was a good balance because justice was still being served but, you know, we weren't just summarily imposing our will on somebody… his last request was to give his son a hug and a kiss. And a lot of cops…are very hesitant to allow a family member to give a prisoner a hug and we thought it would be all right, and he did that, and he was very happy, shook my hand, called me by my first name.

Hunter points out that by minimizing the charges, he is not compromising the goal of law enforcement – "justice was still being served" because the man was still going to be arrested, but not for all the offenses they could have charged him with. By throwing out the current offense, the officer was able to de-escalate the man's father who had initially reacted with intense hostility towards the police officers. Eventually, the man left with a positive attitude towards the officer– "[he] called me by my first name" – because the officer had made a decision that would have a positive impact on the family's situation.

Tactic 4: Honesty

According to officers, the value of being honest with a citizen cannot be overestimated in police work. By outlining the situation, the outcome goal, and the laws or policies governing officers' decisions, an officer can build trust and ultimately gain the citizen's cooperation.

> You have to be very clear in what your, your outcome or goal is...they may not like it, but you have to be able to articulate how this is the only thing that we have to do and, you know, we want your cooperation in doing it. (Hunter)

> If you said to the guy, you know, there's some things I have to do… you're going to go up [to jail]. It's gonna be a very quick process because you're being so cooperative. Lead him down that path. (Marshall)

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French described how a domestic violence victim was upset and did not want him

to take photographs of her injuries. He explains how "being straight" with the woman and

clearly outlining the situation helped him gain her understanding and compliance.

> If I explain that...pictures are pictures. They don't have an opinion. They don't make things look worse or look better. They simply are what they are. You know, how big was the person who was taken to jail? Are they bigger than you? Yeah…it's my husband and he's way bigger than me. Could he kick the living shit out of you? Yeah he could. Did he? No he just hit me…Let's show that to a judge. So he could have done all this stuff? Let's take a picture that isn't going to do anything other than show that there's this little tiny mark, that's it. He could have beat the living piss out of you but he didn't. And then you end up getting them to go, oh ok yeah I guess that makes sense. (French)

Tactic 5. Empower

A fifth tactic for de-escalation is making the citizen feel that they are taking part

in the decision making process, and giving them information and advice to avoid having

the same problem in the future. The tactic reflects a key principle of procedural justice,

which is to give a citizen "voice" in the decision-making process (see, e.g., Mazerolle, et

al., 2013). Empowerment is particularly effective for people in crisis, who often feel out

of control of things in their lives. As such, de-escalation involves "putting the power back

on that person" to engage in the conversation, to ultimately to feel that they have some

control over the final decision (Prince).

> Usually people that are escalated are in a state where they really feel like they don't have any control. And in reality, when we are there, they – they are going to have very little control on the outcome. With de-escalation techniques I think you can kinda make it appear that they are making some…choices. And really they are… if they choose to calm down or, you know, do things that we're asking them then…it's going to be a different outcome. (Stamper)

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> If you get them to buy in at least a little bit of ownership into it, you know it may not be where they wanted to go to begin with… you're helping them buy into it at least a little bit. Some facet of it. Some part of it. So they're kind of grasping on to the idea not that you're convincing them to just do it, but you're also making it beneficial to them on some level or making them see the benefit in it. (French)

Empowering citizens in the decision making process may also assist officers to assuage citizens' concerns about unfair treatment and lack of identification with communities. Empowering can be accomplished in many ways. Officers described that they will engage the citizen in a discussion of possible solutions, explain in detail the benefits of complying with officers' requests, and identify specifically how the solution will benefit them. Officers will also talk at length with the person about ways to improve their life situation. For example, on domestic dispute calls I often observed officers talk to one or both persons about whether or not to continue in the harmful relationship. Similarly, Officer Marshall carries ("waterproof, tear proof!") pamphlets with him on duty to hand out to persons seeking mental health help, housing, food, or other services.

Public Perceptions of Force and De-Escalation

Officers said citizens and cops have vastly different ideas of what de-escalation is and, most importantly, how often it can be done. The disconnect occurs because citizens have a limited understanding of the types of situations and problems officers face on the job. Willis' (2013) argument that research should take officers' experience and perspective more fully into account, therefore, was widely echoed by officers in the current study.

Officers felt that many citizens think all situations can be de-escalated verbally, when in reality officers sometimes face danger that requires more than communication to resolve. Sometimes the police face real violence and need to respond with violence in order to protect the public's safety.

> We're not gonna be hugging, you know, or coming to an end that the citizens would expect. There might be times we're gonna have to use force to resolve or to de-escalate this incident… I mean, it's not like *Leave It To Beaver* you know, all nice, roses and everything's gonna be hunky-dory and great family life. From our side it's more reality. (Cross)

> I'm not sure that the public has really seen what goes on every single day out in the field. I don't think they really recognize an individual who's in crisis and how volatile and dangerous they can become. And that fight or flight instinct. Sometimes when [a citizen's behavior is] totally run by drugs, you may not be able to talk them out of that. (Prince)

> The moment that a researcher or a cop comes up with that Vulcan mind…that Jedi Mind Trick shit, then okay yeah, then we can go ahead and have a peaceful resolution to everything. But at the end of the day, someone could be going along right with what you want them to do. Right until the point that they don't. The public don't understand that we're reactionary a lot of times to what someone is doing. And if someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or mentally ill, and they're going to put themselves in peril, or put somebody else, then we have to act, and the de-escalation might be physical de-escalation at this point, you know. We have to get them under control before we can do anything else. It's not like engineering. It's not like building a bridge. (Hunter)

According to Muir (1977), the professional police officer does not resort to force as a first resort. However, it is equally important that police officers come to terms with the need to use force when it is necessary to solve a problem. Officers who fail to use force when needed ("avoiders") can do serious damage to their communities by failing to address problems with crime and violence. These officers can also put their own safety in jeopardy.

Study officers further said the public sometimes thinks they enjoy using force. However, they said that they largely make an effort to use verbal communication and other de-escalation techniques that preclude the use of force on every call. The catch, however, is that they must first ensure the safety of themselves and others. In all other cases, officers said they try to avoid getting in a fight because, put simply, they do not enjoy it. Using force is dangerous, hurts people, makes their job more complicated, and requires a lot more paperwork and subsequent effort to resolve after the fact. The sample said that after all the years they have spent on the job, they have learned and adopted countless methods for avoiding physical confrontations because it produces the best possible outcomes for everyone involved.

Additionally, officers said they get immense satisfaction from a successful de-escalation, because helping people is the reason they signed up for the job. Marshall, who I observed save a child from committing suicide, described de-escalation as a contributor to his job satisfaction.

> It is kind of fun though, when a person is just out of control, screaming, to come in and catch them off guard and totally break that manic craziness they're on. And if you can get it from there to halfway down to normal in one sentence or a couple words, it's like – wow. It's kinda cool. (Marshall)

Generally, officers were concerned about the vast perceptual differences between their own ideas of de-escalation and the public's. They are concerned because they know they are held to the public's standard when it comes to the ways in which they handle a particular call. Further, they said the public fails to acknowledge the amount of times in a given work day that the police successfully handle a problem without using force, because they are only aware of the situations that go wrong. Although officers felt this

was unreasonable and unfair, they said it was a reality of the job. Below, the officers

debrief Video 5 (see Table 3.2). They are animated when discussing that, even though the

officers in the video were justified in using force, the public would view the same video

with a vastly different lens.

> York: It looks…
> Prince: Terrible.
> York: Even though they're within their grounds of doing it, you get all
> these passers driving by and all they say is "Fuckin' SPD."
> Shaw: "There's a lot of people on top of that little kid."
> York: Yeah and you got World Crossfit guy over there.
> Shaw: And you got a mom who doesn't wanna call you again the next
> time he needs help.
> Marshall: And you hear this kid screaming "Mom! Mom!" Yeah,
> everybody hears that.
> Stamper: He is probably 25 years old, but [everyone else is] thinking he's
> a juvenile that we're beating on, you know.
> York: And all the media ever plays is that little 25 second clip so that
> mental clip that people get as they're driving by. They see that. They don't
> see everything that happened up to it, talking to him. All they see is three
> big, beefy dudes on top of Malachai and they're putting the squish to him.
>
> When situations end in a deadly confrontation such as a police shooting,
> the public thinks that we should have done something different. We, we
> didn't do everything that we, we could have to have prevented that death.
> The, the person who caused that is the person who is usually shot, not the
> police officer. Sometimes police are shot and killed, too, but that is also
> the action and decision made by that person who's, who's being violent,
> either to the community or to the police. We, we respond to situations.
> (Stamper)

This section highlights the concerns officers have about the perceptual disconnect

between their own experiences and citizens perceptions of police work. They believe that

citizens view de-escalation as always possible, and that any use of force is considered a

failure to de-escalate. They said, in reality, there are situations when use of force is a

better option to protect the public and stay safe.

Barriers to Effective De-Escalation

To illustrate the contrast between officer and citizen perceptions of de-escalation, officers said there are particular encounters they face on the job where de-escalation tactics are more difficult. They felt that the police are often criticized for failing to use tactics that were in reality unsafe or ineffective.

> I think the public forgets that people still have free will. That they're still able to do what they wanna do. And we have a little bit of ability to try and manage that free will and get them to do what we want them to do, but at the end of the day, I don't care how much talking, how much de-escalation training, negotiation training. If someone is committed to doing something, you know, they're gonna do it because they still have that free will...I think the public feels that we can control every outcome, which we can't. (Hunter)

Below, four types of situations are described. In these situations, officers said de-escalation is less effective due to either the imminent priorities of the officer at the time or the mental state of the citizen with whom they are interacting.

The Imminent Threat

It was invariably argued that officers cannot always use verbal de-escalation because the first goal of police work is to protect life. As such, their priority when there is an immediate threat is to neutralize the threat by removing a person's weapon and/or getting a physically combative or suicidal person contained. Officers said they are trained in the use of force tactics for exactly these scenarios. Hunter frequently qualified in his interview that the need to de-escalate should always come second:

> The only time that we don't do verbal de-escalation – if our safety's in jeopardy. If someone's attacking us. But the moment that we stop whatever is going on that caused that, then we still treat people with

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dignity and respect…Which is all part of verbal de-escalation…We're always trying to do it, but at times it gets put on hold because we have different priorities.

Virtually every other officer in the sample agreed that they are always first and foremost concerned with protecting lives, protecting themselves, and rendering first aid, and that they would use force if it was necessary.

The Dynamic Situation

Officers said the amount of time they had to deal with a situation dictates how long they would spend trying to achieve voluntary cooperation through de-escalation. In a static or contained situation, officers are afforded more time to try different options. In dynamic situations where more factors are unknown, however, they would be concerned with assessing the problem and achieving stability. Below, the officers discuss Video 6 (Table 2), in which police deployed a TASER to stop a man who was running downtown, waving an axe, and damaging car windows.

> NT: What elements of this call make de-escalation more challenging?
> York: Being in a heavily populated area with all the businesses at the downtown core.
> Prince: And the fact that he's already done damage, at least to cars. That he's showed a willingness to destroy property and…
> Prince: Propensity for violence.
> Stamper: Armed with a dangerous weapon and he's not engaging with any kind of conversation at all. I mean…you can't de-escalate a whole lot with someone who's…
> Prince: Not talking.
> Stamper: Not communicating. Fighting, running.
> Stamper: It goes from, yeah, just fleeing, turning to fight, back to fleeing, armed the whole time.
> NT: So, [using a TASER is] exactly what you would have done in the same situation?
> Prince: Yeah.

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> Cross: Especially if you can't get him contained. You gotta stop this right away.

In this example, though the man had not yet physically harmed a person, the officers listed a number of reasons why they felt based on their experience the situation was potentially fatal. These reasons included the man's unwillingness to even talk to officers, his willingness to cause damage, and the number of potential victims in the crowded downtown area. As such, all agreed that given the same situation they would have used less lethal force to contain the person immediately.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Mental Illness

As discussed, the first purpose of de-escalation is to calm the citizen to a more objective mind state, to the point where you can hold a conversation. Officers overwhelmingly argued that this goal is difficult with a person who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from a mental illness, because they are in a less rational state of mind and are less able to think or communicate rationally. Similarly, Muir (1977) said the "extortion" tactics officers use to induce compliance are significantly less effective when one's "opponent" is irrational in their decision-making.

> When you're under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol and both, your reality is changed. You're operating solely on emotion. At that point, it's very hard to lead your cognitive part of your brain. So, if they have something stuck in their head, it's hard to get it out…the same goes with mental illness…and more often than not, you see people that are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and are mentally ill. So then you have the trifecta of fun…it's very hard to communicate with them. I'm not saying you can't, but that's where you're constantly weighing, you know, how long are we gonna talk? (Hunter)

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A few participants told me that drunken citizens specifically were the most difficult people to de-escalate, the most confrontational, and least cooperative.

> I have had enormous difficulty with people that are really drunk. [To de-escalate] you really have to get a hold of something that…It's something that they latch on to. And then you're able to break through and communicate. And with intoxicated people, I've noticed, it's really easy to see if you're not gonna be the one who's gonna be able to talk to them. And sometimes it's just…Hey man, turn around, you're under arrest. I would rather try to communicate with someone having a mental episode than someone who's extremely intoxicated. (Stamper)

Prince likewise said, in her experience, the possibility of de-escalating persons under the influence of alcohol is about equal to chance.

The "Committed" Person

A common theme in many of the interviews was the difficulty in talking to the "committed" person. Officers told stories about people who, despite ample efforts to de-escalate, still failed to comply with officers' requests because they were already committed to a decision. This is also directed related to assertions from Muir (1977), who argued that certain persons who come into contact with police may be less attached or have less possessions and are therefore less persuaded by threats to loss of freedom or life.

In the current study, the most common story was the "committed" suicidal person, who appeared to have already "made up their mind" about taking their own life.

> We got a call of a guy who… I don't even remember how the call came, somebody thought he was acting strange on the bridge and so we show up. I'm the first one there, and he's walking down the sidewalk and I see he's got headphones in. And so now I'm speaking louder, he's completely ignoring me, so on an escalation scale, this one's much more intense…He's on a mission…And so then I have maybe thirty seconds

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where I say sir, hey please, step down from there and talk with me. I really want to. And then he just swan dives. Headfirst, arms out, into the river. He had headphones in, and I don't think he heard a word I said. I think he was listening to his favorite music…and dove off the bridge. (Stamper)

Cross: It was very tense because he came out screaming and had a handgun in his hand. We just tried but, you know, he just ended up shooting himself.
NT: In hindsight is there anything else you could have tried?
Cross: No, I think he was already committed to harming himself and I believe there's nothing that we could have said or done that would have stopped him from shooting himself.

Officers also talked of citizens who are "committed" to fighting with police or committing suicide by cop, despite efforts to talk them out of it. In many cases, the people in these stories held preexisting negative attitudes towards the police either because they adhere to the values of "street culture" or because they have had negative interactions with police in the past.

After the [use of force], now he's handcuffed and it's roll him onto his side, get medics in here, and I'm going are you breathing? And he goes yeah. And I'm like man why did you not just listen? And he goes I don't know man! It turns out that he had told the wife before she left the house that when the police show up I'm going to fight them. So it was in his mind anyway. (French)

His voice is raising. And he starts making statements that we killed his brother and in fact we had. His brother had tried to kill one of our officers…And so he harbored a lot of resentment to us. So, when it came time to tell him he was under arrest for – and it was just some misdemeanor stuff – he you know wouldn't get out of the car, gripped the steering wheel, and when [my partner] went to grab him I can remember him saying don't you fucking manhandle me. You killed my brother. And it just kinda deteriorated. (Hunter)

In summary, while officers described several de-escalation tactics they found effective in their careers, they identified four scenarios in which these tactics are less

effective, or are unsafe given the safety threat. They said the public holds them

accountable for using de-escalation in cases when it is not possible.

De-Escalation Training

Finally, I asked officers about the training they received over their careers that

helped develop their de-escalation skills. I also asked whether they felt de-escalation and

communication were covered adequately in their department, and for any suggestions for

improving this training. All of the officers in the current study were veterans with over 15

years of police service. The most common response was that verbal tactics and de-

escalation are covered much more commonly in police training these days, compared to

when they first entered the profession.

> I don't think when I started 20 years ago that there was enough attention
> put on [communication], but I think now it definitely is. I mean, mental
> health is such a huge topic across the country and I think it's gotten
> worse…they've sent every member of our department through at least
> basic crisis intervention training, so to develop some exposure to a person
> in crisis – let's think of some ways to talk to them and give it that amount
> of time which is needed. Going back [to when I first became a cop] where
> like after five minutes – If this guy isn't outta that front door and in
> handcuffs, we're gonna do it for him. Especially now, I think we're doing
> a better job of…making sure that all of our officers are trained in how to
> deal with – especially the mental health side of the equation. And you
> know, the number of calls that we get for suicidals and stuff nowadays, I
> mean [communicating is] very important. (Marshall)

> I'm sure it's changed since I went and I know the academy has gotten
> longer since I went. It used to be short and sweet and not a lot of it had to
> do with cultural diversity and communication. There wasn't a mental
> health aspect to the academy that I'm sure they have now. So it might be
> better covered since I went through. (French)

As a craft described by Willis (2013), officers had to learn these skills on the

street, because the alternative was a confrontation or fight: "I think for my generation of

police officers, it's something that you learned on the job, because you learned how to talk to people so that you could get that compliance" (Hunter). Though officers said these skills may be more commonly taught in academies today, they still felt the majority of their communication "training" came from the streets.

> [In the classroom, officers] get a basis, but out on the streets they're getting to watch other cops talk to people. Our newer cops out on the street, a lot of them have gone to college, [they] come straight from home. They have no experience being up at 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning dealing with people who have no business being out at that time…They're really getting a lot of their experience from watching other cops. (Prince)

Three officers said they worked in small, rural departments previously, before transferring to the larger city agency. Their experiences working in a smaller agency were effective at teaching them to de-escalate potential conflict, because they knew that back up was rarely available to come help them. As such, these officers frequently had an incentive to avoid getting into a fight because they were outnumbered.

> One thing about working for a smaller department is, there were lots of times when I would work a shift, a graveyard shift, and I would be the only officer on. We relied on the county…for backup, but they can be 30 minutes away, they can be unavailable, and so I think at least speaking with people in a way to avoid physical confrontations became a habit…I think that that…affected how I communicate as a police officer. I was also by myself on calls where I had to physically fight people or I was attacked all by myself, and I think that most officers that are killed in the line of duty, I mean you see them, they're on traffic stops all by themselves…so, even though I communicated in a way that I thought I'd be able to de-escalate, I wasn't always able to. (Stamper)

These three officers also said, once they moved to a bigger city with more calls for service and more officers on duty, they began to work with officers who had not had the same experiences they had in a smaller agency. These officers were less skilled at and less motivated to use de-escalation because they always have back up support and do not

have as much of an incentive to de-escalate: "Some people were very short with people and more apt to communicate in a way that if you were by yourself, it'd be dangerous" (Stamper). These findings are exceedingly optimistic for scholars and practitioners hoping to design effective de-escalation training as they suggest the ability of police officers to affect the outcomes of encounters in ways that reduce violence.

A couple officers described other training they received that improved their de-escalation skills. French said he received training on cooperating with coworkers and effective leadership. He noted that this training not only helped him interact with other officers, it also helped with citizens because both scenarios involve engaging with someone in a way that achieves cooperation. Additionally, Stamper said he had been videotaped in tactical social interaction training. He felt it gave him insight on himself that he later put into practice. For example, he was able to see whether his facial expressions and body language were consistent with the words he was saying.

On the other hand, while officers said they receive some training on communication – particularly in a mental health context more recently – they felt that no matter how innovative the training, it was not always 100% effective in practice. This is because the police deal with a human population in social situations; thus, no strategies work all of the time.

> I do think the enhanced crisis training was helpful. I don't think it is – well I don't think any of this stuff that the public thinks is a 100% cure-all – it doesn't work every time. But even if some of it works some of the time, that's a success… it doesn't work all the time and it's not the end-all be-all, but it was very helpful. (Marshall)

I asked officers for their suggestions for de-escalation training. Some of them said that the drive to de-escalate was not completely engrained in them – when they receive a

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call they do not always automatically run through de-escalation options in their head as they do with safety and use of force fundamentals. As such, a few officers said they would like to receive training that would get them in the habit of considering alternative force options before they even arrived on a scene.

> It would be a good thing to get in practice of, to have that reminder that before you get there, what can I do – what can I potentially do to deescalate it? It usually doesn't happen until I get there, and then you can see the whole totality of what's going on. (Marshall)

The principles set forth by Binder and Scharf (1980), as well as the notion of the split second syndrome described by Fyfe (1986) would be helpful in the initial designing of such a training. These scholars argued that officers can take step at the beginning of a call, even before arriving on scene, to develop a plan of attack and get into the right mindset (e.g. staying calm) so they can effectively handle the call in ways that minimize conflict and the need to use force.

Interestingly, virtually every officer in the current study said it was difficult for a police officer to remember the times when de-escalation efforts worked, because in successful cases they tend to leave and move onto the next scene. Only when something goes wrong is an officer forced to sit down, file a report, and seriously consider why the scenario unfolded the way it did.

> A shooting or a use of force; you remember the ones that didn't work out because they didn't and it ended up in a fight or some kind of violent encounter. The ones that do end up de-escalating, they kinda just are out of your mind and then you move on to the next call. I think that's why the training is, it's so important, because it also forces people to think about what they did in those situations and what worked. But when it does work, sometimes it's just like oh, okay, I'm done. What's the next thing I need to go do? Not everybody has self-awareness and looks back at how they've done the job. (Stamper)

The implication here is that police training should incorporate reviews of scenarios in which de-escalation efforts were successful, in the same way that sentinel events involving a tragic outcome are reviewed. The body camera video footage from successful cases could be reviewed weekly at roll call briefings, and lessons learned from these cases could be compiled to inform training. It may also be worthwhile to have officers complete a "successful de-escalation report" that is similar to a use of force report, at least initially while they hone their skills to encourage them to process those cases in which they successfully calm down an escalated situation, and otherwise would forget the case and move on to the next one.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

This section provides descriptive statistics for 131 police-citizen encounters, observed during 35 ride alongs with 29 officers. Descriptive statistics are categorized into officer, citizen, and situation level variables. To paint a more detailed picture of the data set, more variables are included in this section than are presented in regression models. An average of 3.72 (SD=2.3) interactions were observed per ride along.

Officer Level Descriptive Statistics

Just over 32% (43) of cases involved one of the 8 peer nominated officers and 21.4% (28) involved a crisis negotiator. 34.4% (45) of calls involved a swing shift officer, 32.1% (42) a day shift officer, 24.4% (32) a power shift officer, and 9.2% (12) a graveyard shift officer. In terms of rank, over 90% (118) of the interactions occurred with a Police Officer, 6.1% (8) involved a Corporal, and 3.8% (5) a Sergeant. Sample officers were a homogenous group in terms of demographics, mirroring the makeup of the department as a whole. 88.5% (116) of calls involved a male officer, and 90.8% (119) involved a white officer. The average age was 39.4 (SD=9.1), the average years of service was 13.3 (SD=7.5), and the average number of days an officer had been on duty prior to the ride along was 2.6 (SD=1.4). Officers did not largely report issues with fatigue. Most of the interactions involved an officer who reported little or no fatigue. In 14.5% (19) of cases the officer reported moderate to high fatigue.

Citizen Level Descriptive Statistics

Over half of citizens were offenders, while 12.2% (16) were persons needing assistance, and 12.2% (16) were victims. 8.4% (11) were complainants or witnesses, 3.1% (4) were suspicious persons.. 83.2% (109) of citizens were white, and 9.9% (13) were black. 65.6% (86) were male. The average citizen age was 38.7 (SD=14.4). Most of the citizens in the sample were from low socioeconomic backgrounds.[20] 36.6% (48) showed evidence of chronic poverty or homelessness and 35.9% (47) showed evidence of being low income.

Situation Level Descriptive Statistics

Situation variables are categorized into Binder and Scharf's (1980) four phases of police-citizen encounters – anticipation, entry, information gathering, and final decision. Table 5.1 lists descriptive statistics for situation variables, broken out into these four phases.

Anticipation phase variables measure how the call was initially received and processed by the officer. In part, these variables gauge the potential for violence that would have been assessed by the officer on the way to the call. Numerous scholars have noted that the officer's anticipation levels can affect how he or she responds upon arrival at the scene. 70.2% (92) of interactions were initiated by a call for service or citizen request, and 19.1% (25) were self-initiated by the officer. To assess the level of crime activity in the area, I asked the officer to estimate the number of calls for service the area

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[20] Variables that were more difficult to ascertain were coded based on an "evidence present" rule of thumb. If I observed or was informed about any single piece of evidence that indicated the presence of that variable (e.g. homelessness, mental illness, intoxication) then that variables was coded as "1."

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics by Phase of the Encounter (N=131)

Anticipation Phase Variables	Frequency %(#)
Rationale for Potential Violence	
Violence in Progress	9.9 (13)
Person Threatening Violence	4.6 (6)
Person with History of Violence	4.6 (6)
Officer Intuition	2.3 (3)
No Potential Violence Indicators	78.6 (103)
Call Initiation Method	
Call for Service	70.2 (92)
Officer Self-Initiated	19.1 (25)
Other	10.7 (14)
Manner of Travel to Scene	
Speed	9.9 (13)
Speed, Lights, and Sirens	5.3 (7)
No Urgency	84.7 (111)
Weapon in Call Description	10.7 (14)
Officer told Researcher to Wait in Car	9.2 (12)
Neighborhood Crime Activity	
Police "often" called	55.0 (72)
Police "sometimes" called	28.2 (37)
Police "rarely" called	14.5 (19)
Police "never" called	2.3 (3)

Information Gathering Phase Variables	Frequency %(#)
Officer used Authoritative Tone	13 (17)
Officer Used Any De-Escalation ("use"=1)	88.6 (116)
Humanity Tactic	78.6 (103)
Empower Tactic	29.8 (39)
Compromise Tactic	28.2 (37)
Honesty Tactic	63.4 (83)
Listening Tactic	47.3 (62)
Officer thought Citizen Lied	30.5 (40)
Citizen was Intoxicated	22.9 (30)
Citizen was Hostile Towards Police	15.3 (20)
Citizen Cried during Encounter	14.5 (19)
Citizen Signs of Mental Illness	22.9 (30)
Citizen Threatened Suicide	6.1 (8)
Citizen Injured	9.2 (12)
Citizen had Weapon in Possession	3.1 (4)
Citizen fled from Police	3.8 (5)
Citizen disobeyed Police	9.2 (12)
Citizen made Anti-Police Statement	9.9 (13)

Final Decision Phase Variables	Frequency %(#)
Highest Level of Force	
Contact by Police	22.1 (29)
Interrogate	46.6 (61)
Issue Verbal Commands	8.4 (11)
Handcuff	22.9 (30)
Citizen Arrested	18.3 (24)
Citizen Issued Citation	18.3 (24)
Citizen Demeanor at End of Encounter	
Calm and Compliant ("success" =1)	77.9 (102)
Agitated or In Crisis	22.1 (29)

Entry Phase Variables	Frequency %(#)
Officer Role during Interaction	
Lead Decision Maker	67.9 (89)
Back Up	22.1 (29)
Supervisor	3.1 (4)
Other	6.9 (9)
Situation In Progress	59.5 (78)
Call Type	
Domestic Violence	15.3 (20)
Investigative Stop	5.3 (7)
Traffic Stop	6.9 (9)
Fight/Assault	6.9 (9)
Other	65.7 (86)
Officer Developed Entry Plan	12.2 (16)
Officer Forced Entry	1.5 (2)
Officer Waited for Back Up	16.8 (22)

typically generated. Most often the officer said that police are "often" called to that area, indicating that police are often called back to the same areas. As seen in the table, most cases did not start with obvious indicators that the call could become violent. There were indicators of potential violence about one fifth of the time. Digging deeper, we see that this is because 9.9% (13) of calls involved ongoing violence, 4.6% (6) involved a person threatening violence, 4.6% (6) involved a person with a history of violence. In three additional cases the officer believed the call could become violent based on their personal experience with similar calls. In 10.7% (14) of calls, a weapon was included in the call description.[21] In 84.7% (111) of cases the officer traveled to the scene with no urgency, while in 9.9% (13) they traveled with speed, and in 5.3% (7) they turned on lights and sirens to get to the scene as quickly as possible. In 9.2% (12) of cases I was asked by the officer to remain in the car, indicating that they did not think it was safe for me to accompany them.

The next set of variables capture the entry phase – or the manner in which the officer entered the scene, how he or she established contact with citizens, and the officer's mindset during this phase of the encounter. Most often the officer was the lead decision maker or the back up officer. A majority of situations were in progress upon the officer's arrival. In the remaining cases, the officer arrived on scene after it had been stabilized, to take a report, or to collect evidence after the fact. 15.3% (20) of calls involved a domestic disturbance or intimate partner violence, 6.9% (9) of calls involved a fight or assault that was not between domestic partners, 5.3% (7) of cases were

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[21] This variable was coded separately from the violence potential variables, because it reflects the complainant's estimation of whether the call involved a weapon, and not the officer's. Citizens may sometimes misperceive a weapon or may hint at the presence of a weapon to prompt quicker police response. Officers are often savvy to the difference.

investigative stops of suspicious persons, and 6.9% (9) of calls involved traffic stops. In 16.8% (22) of cases officers waited for back up before making contact with citizens, and in 12.2% (16) they developed a strategy or game plan before making entry.

The information gathering phase involves the interactions that occurred between the officer and citizen while police are on scene. Fridell and Binder (1992)'s study indicated that officers focus most on the events that occur during this phase when reflecting on why they used deadly force. Note that the behaviors of officers and citizens during this phase are not mutually exclusive. Officers in the current study used at least one de-escalation tactic in a majority (88.6%) of cases. It is evident that citizens in the sample often presented special problems to the police during this phase. The most common was drug or alcohol intoxication – 22.9% (30) of citizens appeared either drunk or chemically impaired. 15.3% (20) expressed hostility towards the officer during the encounter, 22.9% (30) exhibited signs of mental illness, 6.1% (8) threatened to commit suicide, 9.2% (12) were suffering from an injury when officers arrived, 3.1% (4) had a weapon in their possession when officers arrived, 3.8% (5) attempted to flee from police, 9.2% (12) failed to comply with officers commands, and 9.9% (13) made an anti-police statement, including those who expressed general dislike towards the police and those who expressed a belief that they had been unfairly discriminated against.

Several variables were collected to measure the final decision made by the officer. The highest level of force observed was handcuffing. Due to lack of variability, force was not included as an outcome variable to assess the impact of de-escalation on use of force, or the relationship between force and successful outcome. In 22.9% (30) of cases the citizen was placed in handcuffs. In 18.3% (24) the citizen was arrested and taken to jail.

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In 18.3% (24) the citizen was issued a citation. In 76 cases, the citizen was in crisis or

agitated at some time. In 35.9% (47) of cases an escalated citizen was successfully de-

escalated, while in 22.1% the agitated person was not successfully de-escalated. The

remaining 42% (55) of the time the citizen never became agitated. For inferential

statistics, this variable was recoded into a dummy variable[22] "success" in which cases

where de-escalation was successful or where the citizen never became agitated were

coded as 1, because these cases had a desirable outcome. Cases where the citizen was still

agitated or in crisis at the end were coded as 0. Descriptives for the outcome variable

"success" are 102 (77.9%) successful incidents and 29 (22.1%) unsuccessful incidents.

Correlates of Police Use of De-Escalation

Sample officers stated that police use de-escalation frequently on the job, and

significantly more often than is assumed by the general public. As such, the current study

first sought to quantify how often officers in the sample used de-escalation and estimate

correlates of de-escalation tactics. This analysis estimates statistical relationships between

officer, citizen, and situation level variables, and officer use of de-escalation during the

encounter. Table 5.2 shows coding descriptions for all study variables included in

regression models.

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[22] Recoding this variable into a binary indicator is not ideal, since situations where citizens never become agitated are inherently different from those when a citizen is in crisis and officers are able to successfully de-escalate. Given the small sample size of interactions in the data set, it was determined that the best estimates would be generated through a simple binary logistic regression model compared to a multinomial logistic regression. This is a limitation of the current study and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 Discussion. Moving forward beyond this dissertation, the author will conduct content and thematic analyses to examine each of these three categories of interactions as they relate to effective de-escalation.

Pearson's correlation coefficients were estimated to assess the direction and strength of associations between all variables (not shown in tables). For sets of variables with high levels of collinearity (that exceeded $r=0.80$ or were less than $r= -0.80$) only one was included in the model. For example, potentially violent call, weapon call, and officer traveled to scene with urgency each had high Pearson's correlation coefficients with each other, since each is a measure of situational risk. Traveling to scene with urgency was selected as the best measure of the officer's assessment of risk. Among those variables included in the models, a few were closely correlated but did not exceed plus or minus $r=0.8$. Officer years of service was closely related to whether an officer was nominated as an expert de-escalator ($r=0.71$) and whether the officer was a crisis negotiator ($r=0.62$). Being a negotiator and a peer nominated expert were correlated at $r=0.66$. Issuing a citation was correlated with making an arrest ($r=0.64$), and developing an entry plan before making contact was correlated with waiting for back up ($r=0.66$).

Three binary logistic regression models estimate correlates of officer use of de-escalation tactics. Given the small sample size of the data set, inferential statistics models were estimated separately. Table 5.3 displays the results from the first set of regression models.

Results indicate that few factors predict whether an officer uses de-escalation. The finding suggests that officers in this police department are not consistent in using de-escalation when faced with particular problems, most likely because de-escalation tactics are not trained in the academy. Indeed, all eight study officers said they largely developed these skills on their own while out on the job. White officers were significantly more likely than nonwhite officers to use de-escalation ($b=1.91$; p<.05). Further, when officers

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Table 4. Regression Variable Code Descriptions

Variable	Definition
Dependent Variable	
Use	1=officer used at least one of the five de-escalation tactics; 0=officer used no de-escalation tactics
Success	1=citizen was not in crisis at end of incident; 0=citizen in crisis at end of incident
Independent Variables	
Officer	
Expert	1=peer nominated officer; 0=all other
Negotiator	1=crisis negotiator; 0=all other
Years of service	Years worked as a sworn officer
Gender	1=male; 0=female
Race	1=white; 0=all other
Fatigue	0=no fatigue; 1=some fatigue; 2=moderate to high fatigue
Citizen	
Role	1=offender; 0=all other
Age	Citizen's age in years
Gender	1=male; 0=female
Race	1=black; 0=all other
Low SES	1=no evidence of poverty; 2=low income; 3=homelessness/chronic poverty
Disobey	1=citizen disobeyed police during interaction; 0=all other
Mental Health	1=citizen suffered mental health problems; 0=all other
Suicidal	1=citizen made suicidal statements; 0=all other
Anti-police	1=citizen made anti-police statements; 0=all other
Situation	
Urgent	1=officer traveled to scene with urgency; 0=all other
Domestic violence	1=domestic violence call 0=all other
Investigative stop	1= investigative stop of a suspicious person; 0=all other
Number of officers	Total number of responding officers on scene
Initiated	1=call initiated by call for service; 2=officer self-initiated contact; 3=all other
Tactics	
Entry plan	1=officers developed entry plan before making contact; 0=all other
Back up	1=officer waited for back up before making contact; 2=officer was back up; 0=all other
Citation	1=officer issued citizen citation; 0=all other
Arrest	1=officer arrests citizen; 0=all other
Compromise	1=officer used compromise tactic; 0=all other
Honesty	1=officer used honesty tactic; 0=all other
Listen	1=officer used listening tactic; 0=all other
Humanity	1=officer used humanity tactic; 0=all other
Empower	1=officer used empower tactic; 0=all other

developed an entry plan before making contact with a citizen they were less likely to use de-escalation ($b= -1.20$; p<.05). This finding makes intuitive sense. When officers take the time to develop a plan, they are more prepared to take a specific tactical action to solve the problem. Making an entry plan is also indicative that the situation is potentially violent, so officers are more likely to call in additional resources and talk through the situation. De-escalation, in this department, seems to be more defensive, used when officers make immediate entry and perhaps must then "talk themselves out" of the problem.

Correlates of Effective De-Escalation

Four binary logistic regression models were next estimated to examine factors related to the state of the citizen at the end of the encounter (a measure of successful de-escalation). The models include officer level independent variables, citizen level independent variables, situation level independent variables, and officer tactics, respectively

Table 5.4 displays results from the four regression models predicting de-escalation effectiveness. The correlations indicate that the situation outcome is significantly related to officer, citizen, and situation level factors, as well as the de-escalation tactics used by officers. For example, when an officer is a member of the crisis negotiations unit, the incident has a significantly lower likelihood of a successful outcome ($b= -1.66$; p<.05). It is doubtful this implies that negotiators are less skilled de-escalators, but rather suggests a selection effect where negotiators respond more often to more difficult calls. At the citizen level, disobeying police orders ($b= -1.63$; p<.05) and

Table 5. Binary Logistic Regressions predicting Officer Use of De-escalation (N=131)

Independent Variable	*b* (SE)
Officer Characteristics	
Expert	-0.66 (0.82)
Negotiator	1.00 (0.99)
Years of service	-0.08 (0.06)
Male	0.14 (1.09)
White	1.91 (0.94)*
Fatigue[a]	
Some fatigue	0.84 (0.81)
Mod/high fatigue	0.35 (0.85)
Citizen Characteristics	
Offender	0.64 (0.65)
Age	0.003 (0.02)
Black	0.58 (1.17)
Income[b]	
Low income	-0.05 (0.71)
Homeless	0.11 (.84)
Disobey	0.46 (1.14)
Mental health	-0.20 (0.79)
Suicidal	0.20 (1.15)
Anti-police	-0.56 (0.95)
Situation Characteristics	
Citizen Agitated or In Crisis	-0.80 (0.64)
Urgent	1.28 (1.14)
Domestic violence	-0.66 (0.69)
Number of officers	-0.004 (0.18)
Initiate[c]	
Self-initiate	1.31 (1.09)
Other	-0.20 (0.86)
Officer Tactics	
Entry plan	-1.20 (0.52)*
Back up[d]	
Officer waited for back up	0.47 (0.96)
Officer was back up	0.93 (.10)
Citation	-0.77 (0.92)
Arrest	-0.66 (1.90)
Use of Force[e]	
Interrogate	-1.52 (0.95)
Issue Verbal Commands	-2.22 (1.24)
Handcuff	0.73 (1.93)

[a]Reference category is no fatigue.
[b]Reference category is no evidence of low income.
[c]Reference category is call for service.
[d]Reference category is officer did not wait for back up.
[e]Reference category is police contact only.
*p<.05

making anti-police statements (b= -1.52; p<.05) were negatively associated with a successful outcome. The findings suggest that citizen disrespect for police is more influential in determining the outcome than citizen demographics. Domestic violence calls (b= -1.25; p<.05) and self-initiated contacts (b= -1.11; p<.05) were less likely to have successful outcomes.

Finally, using the humanity tactic (b=1.23; p<.05) was significantly related to a successful outcome. The table also shows that some de-escalation tactics are negatively related to the outcome variable, though not significantly. The humanity tactic (which includes talking to the person with respect) may be the most simple and "go to" option for officers when they are faced with a potential conflict. Other tactics, including honesty, listening, and empowerment may be the second choice options officers use when the first tactic is unsuccessful. The negative correlations may reflect that officers dig deeper into their de-escalation toolkits when faced with more difficult citizens or situations.

Table 6. Correlates of Effective De-Escalation

Independent Variable	b (SE)
Officer Characteristics	
Expert	0.63 (0.79)
Negotiator	-1.78 (0.85)*
Years of service	-0.00 (0.05)
Male	-1.28 (0.90)
White	0.14 (0.76)
Fatigue[a]	
Some fatigue	-0.51 (0.58)
Mod/high fatigue	-0.10 (0.77)
Citizen Characteristics	
Offender	-0.10 (0.55)
Age	-0.02 (0.02)
Black	-0.91 (0.74)
Income[b]	
Low income	-0.65 (0.64)
Homeless	0.03 (0.75)
Disobey	-1.81 (0.75)*
Mental health	-0.49 (0.63)
Suicidal	-0.01 (0.95)
Anti-police	-1.54 (0.72)*
Situation Characteristics	
Urgent	0.68 (0.71)
Domestic violence	-1.26 (0.57)*
Investigative stop	0.59 (1.16)
Number of officers	-0.23 (0.12)
Initiate[c]	
Self-initiate	-1.11 (0.56)[e]
Other	2.19 (0.46)
Officer Tactics	
Entry plan	0.43 (0.42)
Back up[d]	
Officer waited for back up	-0.67 (0.66)
Officer was back up	-0.66 (0.73)
Citation	0.24 (0.77)
Arrest	-0.55 (0.76)
Compromise	0.52 (0.55)
Honesty	-0.51 (0.56)
Listen	-0.25 (0.51)
Humanity	1.23 (0.54)*
Empower	-0.10 (0.58)

[a]Reference category is no fatigue.
[b]Reference category is no evidence of low income.
[c]Reference category is call for service.
[d]Reference category is officer did not wait for back up.
*$p<.05$; [e]$p=.05$.

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CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the study's qualitative and quantitative findings and discusses how they contribute to police research, theory, and practice. Following this discussion, limitations and suggestions for future research are offered. The discussion chapter should be used to guide and inform future research on this highly relevant and understudied topic.

Key Qualitative Findings

Definitions of De-Escalation

The first goal of the current study was to identify a definition of de-escalation and a description of its tactics from the police officer's point of view. Thus far empirical research had not identified a universally accepted definition of this policing strategy and therefore could not operationalize it for empirical analysis. In this study, participating officers defined de-escalation as *bringing a situation or person in crisis back to an objective/calm state*. The outcome goal of the strategy is to gain the person's willing cooperation, or at least non-violent compliance, and the process goal is to do so using primarily verbal tactics. If communication tactics are not feasible, officers said de-escalation can involve using the least amount of force possible. In other words, sometimes less lethal force can be used in ways that avoid more serious forms of force or citizen violence. Further, officers said the intended purpose of de-escalation is to calm a citizen who is already escalated, but the strategy could be used preventatively – the same

tactics can be used to build a rapport with a citizen and prevent them from becoming

escalated.

De-Escalation Tactics

To accomplish these goals, participants described five tactics that have effectively

de-escalated situations or citizens in their own experiences on the job.

- Humanity: Emphasize one's humanity over one's police authority. Using this tactic the officer avoids condescending to the citizen and instead emphasizes that the conversation is occurring between two equal persons. This tactic should reduce the tension that occurs as a result of the power differential in police-citizen encounters and ultimately foster mutual understanding between the officer and the citizen.

- Listening: Listening to the citizen's concerns and point of view legitimizes the citizen's perspective and gives them voice in the decision-making process. Listening also helps the officer understand the root of the citizen's problem and identify a solution.

- Compromise: If possible, lessening the disciplinary actions taken against the citizen can significantly de-escalate an upset individual. This tactic is directly opposed to a "tough on crime" approach which directs the police to charge suspects with the most severe offense they can prove. In the current study, officers said they often drop a few of the charges, but keep others, to achieve the person's compliance yet still ensure that justice is served.

- Honesty: Using the honesty tactic, officers explain the legal and policy guidelines guiding the officer's decision making to the person. The tactic helps the citizen understand where the officer is coming from and why the decisions they are making are necessary. Officers said often citizens are sometimes not aware of these constraints, and after receiving information they often become more empathetic to the officer's constraints and subsequently are more cooperative.

- Empower: The empower tactic engages the citizen in the decision making process. Officers in the study also said they will try to assist citizens with ways to avoid the same problem in the future. These tactics help the citizen to feel as though they are more in control of the situation, have a voice in the outcome, and have the ability to avoid getting into the same situation in the future.

Situational Contingencies

Officers said they had much success in using these five de-escalation tactics over their careers. However, they emphatically qualified that the police face certain situations where de-escalation is less effective or unsafe. In life threatening situations, officers were adamant that the safety of officers and bystanders becomes the priority. Specifically, in situations that are evolving, or where there is an imminent threat, officers said they would be immediately concerned with achieving stability, understanding the problem, and neutralizing the threat.

Officers said they also frequently interact with persons who are less receptive to verbal de-escalation tactics, such as persons who are under the influence or mentally ill. Here, the goal of gaining calm compliance is exponentially more challenging because citizens are more difficult to communicate and reason with. These challenges have been echoed by PERF (2012, p. iii): "Situations often are complicated when, because of their conditions, persons cannot communicate effectively with police officers. In some cases, they may appear to be threatening or uncooperative, when in fact they are unable to understand an officer's questions or orders."

Finally and perhaps most complicated, officers in the current study said they experienced interactions with people who are simply so "committed" to disobeying police, harming themselves, or harming others that de-escalation techniques designed to persuade or rationalize with them are ineffective. These stories especially referenced persons who were committed to killing themselves and individuals who were determined to engage in a physical confrontation with police.

Some of these findings may seem disconcerting. Even after decades of work experience, participants still felt the likelihood of de-escalating an extremely intoxicated person to be equivalent to a 50-50 chance. What is more, officers felt there were situations in which they thought they could do nothing to convince a person against harming him/herself or others. In the case of a suicidal person, this means the loss of a human life – and a violent death that responding officers must traumatically witness firsthand. For example, in Chapter 4 Stamper revealed the story of the man who jumped off the bridge in front of his eyes despite his multiple attempts to initiate a conversation with the man. As another example, when responding to a combative individual who intentionally initiates a physical fight with police, a failure to de-escalate can mean a use of force, injuries to citizens and officers, and even death. As such, it is vitally important for researchers to analyze these types of situations in depth and identify ways to improve officer's responses.

Citizen Perceptions

The purpose of the qualitative interviews was to understand officers' perceptions of de-escalation. For the officers, much of these issues were complicated by broader social issues – specifically, how citizens perceive their work, use of force, and de-escalation. During the interviews officers would often answer a question by offering their own perspective, and then contrasting that perspective with how a citizen might respond to the same question. This theme reflects the officers' reactions to the increasingly critical atmosphere surrounding American policing today. They believed society increasingly

tends to judge police actions and decisions based on the citizen's point of view, rather than based on the officer's understanding of the realities of their work.

Key Quantitative Findings

Data Overview

Binary logistic regressions estimated correlates of police use of de-escalation tactics and de-escalation effectiveness. Findings from first set of regression models (depicted in Table 5.3) indicate that few variables predict whether officers in Spokane use de-escalation tactics. This most certainly reflects the fact that officers in this agency do not receive systematic de-escalation training, and instead employ tactics they have honed themselves in an ad hoc fashion on the job. The first models indicate that officers who were white were more likely to use de-escalation tactics, while officers who took time to develop an entry plan before making citizen contact were less likely to use de-escalation. Perhaps in situations where officers develop entry plans, the situations are more serious and potentially violent. Officers on these calls may seek to make contact and employ the plan quickly without the use of verbal de-escalation tactics that take longer. Peer nominated officers and trained crisis negotiators did not appear to significantly use de-escalation more often or more effectively.

The findings from the second set of regression models (Table 5.4) highlight that identifiable factors of police-citizen interactions and citizens significantly predict whether de-escalation will be effective. When interacting with citizens who disobey police orders, and those who express anti-police attitudes, officers were less effective at de-escalating.

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Domestic violence encounters were also less likely to end successfully. Officer use of the humanity tactic was significantly related to more successful de-escalation, while crisis negotiators were significantly less likely to de-escalate. I argue that the first finding suggests officers tend to use the humanity tactic most often compared to other tactics, especially in low level situations. The latter finding suggests crisis negotiators may be called to or sign on for more difficult situations involving citizens in crisis since they have specialized training for handling these calls.

Empirical Contributions

Operationalizing Variables for De-Escalation Research

A first empirical contribution from the current study is that it operationalized de-escalation. De-escalation has been widely suggested as a mechanism for reducing violence between officers and citizens, but the concept up until now had not been well defined. Many police, for example, believe the strategy is just a rose by any other name (Flosi, 2016). They say they have been learning to de-escalate on the street for their entire careers because to do otherwise would mean getting into a use of force incident on a daily basis. A majority of police officers, they said, do not enjoy getting into fights or using deadly force. Leading police research groups and the federal government have alternatively suggested that de-escalation is a crucial missing piece from police training and practices, a sentiment that many members of the general public share (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; PERF, 2015). While there seems to be a consensus that de-escalating implies using less force, a specified definition of what de-

escalation *is*, and an understanding of its purpose and a standardized set of tactics up until now did not exist.

The qualitative portion of this study sought to fill this gap in the literature by asking officers for their perspective. This perspective is arguably the most important to take into account when building an evidence base on de-escalation, since police are the primary source for this information, the professionals with subject matter expertise (Willis, 2013). By identifying a concrete definition, as well as process and outcome goals of de-escalation tactics, the findings from the qualitative analysis offer clear guidance for future research seeking to test the nature and effectiveness of de-escalation. Researchers can use these findings to measure each of the five de-escalation tactics while observing either first hand in the field or second hand via body camera video footage. Researchers can also use these operationalized definitions to test whether the tactics lead to the identified outcome goals: reductions in use of force and calming of citizens in crisis.

Guiding Future De-Escalation Research Using a Transactional Approach

The second empirical contribution from the current study pertains to the transactional nature of police-citizen encounters. According to Fyfe (1986), police use of force is almost exclusively evaluated based on what the citizen was doing in the immediate moments prior to the use of force. Supporting his claim, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Graham v. Connor (490 U.S. 386 1989) held that police actions should be measured based on the facts of the *situation as experienced by the officer in the moment* they made the decision. Fyfe (1986) labeled this problem the "split second syndrome" and argued it gives rise to numerous negative consequences. Terrill (2016)

likewise argued this standard opens evaluations up to considerable subjectivity on the part of the viewer. Consequently, police behaviors are most often justified, because evaluators find it difficult to prove the officer *did not perceive* a threat in the final moments, as the standard requires. Additionally, the split second syndrome prevents researchers and practitioners from learning from mistakes and identifying methods for reducing unnecessary, yet legally justified, force (Fyfe, 1996).

Some have alternatively argued that police-citizen encounters are transactional. They point to the ability of police officers to take initial steps at the beginning of the encounter to prevent or de-escalate a conflict (and ultimately a use of force). The split second syndrome dictates, however, that missed opportunities are not a quintessential component for evaluating a use of force.

Officers in the current study showed symptoms of the split second syndrome. They were adamant that citizens' actions dictate the direction of encounters, and that they, the police, are reactionary in critical situations to what the citizen does. This argument was contextualized specifically in use of force encounters. Officers said they only use force when the citizen's actions absolutely necessitate a physical response. Reflecting on instances when they had used force, officers did not see their decisions as failures to de-escalate but as what was necessary in the moment when the citizen took the final action.

On the other hand, officers' discussions of de-escalation emphasized the ability of police to use communication tactics to redirect situations towards more positive outcomes. They acknowledged the decisions they make and the verbal tactics they use at the very beginning of an encounter can prevent a situation from escalating to a conflict.

Those three officers who had previously worked in smaller rural agencies also said they had been forced through situational contingencies to develop these de-escalation tactics because they did not want to get caught in a desolate area on their own in a violent situation. As a result, they found they were highly skilled at conversing with subjects in ways that reduced conflict. Many officers also felt the training they receive on de-escalation could be improved or at least standardized.

As noted by Fyfe (1996), it is exceedingly difficult to identify and hold officers accountable for unnecessary force, because these situations *end* in ways that justify the officer's physical response. However, there are great opportunities for researchers to assist police in developing de-escalation tactics for handling future encounters. First, the findings clearly indicate a need for research to evaluate police-citizen encounters taking a transactional approach, particularly those that have a higher potential for violence. These studies should seek to identify those situations in which officers have opportunities to de-escalate but tend to miss these opportunities and end up using unnecessary, but legally justified, force. It is vitally important for research to understand the nuanced and socially grounded reasons why these situations tend to end badly. Within these situations, scholars should evaluate the relative effectiveness of different police de-escalation tactics. Furthermore, the analysis should identify the specific phases of the encounter, using Binder and Scharf's (1980) model, during which officers can employ various de-escalation tactics most effectively.

This study took a first step towards fulfilling this research agenda. Drawing on qualitative interviews the study identified four types of police-citizen encounters during which officers feel they are least effective using de-escalation. They said they might use

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force more often when dealing with threatening suspects, in dynamic and complicated situations, with intoxicated or mentally ill individuals, and with persons who are committed to hurting themselves or responding police officers. These findings are reflective of Muir's (1977) earlier study in which he identified citizens who tend to have an "upper hand" when dealing with the police. These include persons who have little to lose, those who are detached from their mortality and are less threatened by the prospect of deadly force, and individuals who are irrational and therefore less predictable. It is vitally important for researchers to study these types of police encounters so that we may assist officers in identifying solutions that reduce the need to use physical force.

Scholars have long argued that these solutions may involve "up front" tactics employed by officers prior to arriving on scene and making contact with the persons involved. The officers in the current study did not identify any specific tactics that might assist them in dealing with a situation prior to arriving on scene. However, some did note that police training teaches them to consider the tactical dynamics of a situation on the way to the call. They argued this same practice might also be helpful for de-escalation. Officers could mentally run through different tactics they could use to calm the situation on the way to the call. Additionally, in their stories officers in the current study mentioned that having prior knowledge of a person helps to make better decisions when interacting with them in an official police situation. For example, Prince had previous knowledge of the citizen depicted in Video 2 (Table 3.2) because the man was well known for being frequently and severely intoxicated. The officer said a decision was made to leave the man alone because he was uncharacteristically sober and eating a

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lunch. The officer did not want to engage with the man because it may cause more harm than good.

Broadly, findings from the current study suggest there are tactics available, and which could be more systematically researched and trained, for reducing the use of unnecessary force in policing. It is important that researchers continue to investigate these possibilities and eventually assist with the creation of evidence-based de-escalation training for officers.

<div align="center">

Methodological Contributions

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Peer Nomination Sampling

This dissertation provides important insight into a rarely used sampling procedure – peer nominations. While this method has been long proposed as a way to study good policing, Kane and White (2013) lamented that it is rarely used in practice. In one exception, Bayley and Garofalo (1989) used peer nominations to identify a small sample of officers who peers felt were the best at handling potentially violent calls. The authors found that peer nominated officers indeed patrolled differently – they were more active, but they also tended to use more force than average officers from the same department. The authors concluded that while the peer nominated officers were in practice different in their official police behaviors, using their methodology they could not assess with certainty whether these officers were *more skilled* officers.

The current study sought to address this research gap using peer nominations to sample expert de-escalators. The sampling method produced a list of 12 officers in a 200-

officer department who received the vast majority of the votes. This indicates that the agency as a whole collectively shared a common idea of the officers who excel at de-escalating conflict. The top 8 officers were selected for closer study, based on Bayley and Garofalo's (1989) example. Systematic social observations of these officers indicated that, using the current operationalized definitions of de-escalation, being a peer nominated officer was not significantly related to use of these tactics or achieving a successful outcome.

Future research will need to further investigate this still open question using a larger, more representative data set that incorporates additional outcome measures, most importantly the use of force. It is possible that since de-escalation is not systematically trained, these highly skilled officers employ different tactics they have personally honed in the field. It is also possible that the data set masks any expertise these officers have in avoiding use of force, which was not captured in the current study. In addition to collecting further observational data, researchers should also conduct qualitative inquiries with police officers to gauge their reasons for nominating a peer officer as highly skilled. It may be that officers' definitions of highly skilled peers are unique and not adequately captured using current definitions (Bittner, 1967; Hunt, 1985). Ultimately, research examining good policing is still in its infancy and more work needs to be done to refine and add to this body of literature.

Officer Participation in Research During a Legitimacy Crisis

A second methodological contribution pertains to gaining access to police research subjects in the current, highly critical social climate surrounding policing today.

Recent research studies suggest many police officers perceive there is a "war on cops" (Nix, Wolfe, & Campbell, in press) in the post-Ferguson era and officers may be engaging in less proactive policing as a result (Shjarback et al., in press). Shjarback and colleagues (in press) suggest this may be a protective response to the possibility that a police officer who makes a wrong move will be prosecuted for criminal behavior, subjected to agency backlash including termination of employment, or even injured or killed in the line of duty.

In the current study, officers said citizens tend to believe de-escalation is always effective and that officers should learn to do this, or should be doing this more often. In cases of highly publicized uses of force that make the news, citizens often assume the officer failed to properly de-escalate the situation. As a result, many of the officers told me they were happy I was investigating the topic. Most importantly, they were pleased I was spending so much time riding in police cars because it showed I was dedicated to understanding the problem from the officer's point of view and with a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the job. For these reasons they also said that they were happy to have ride alongs accompany them and were open to telling their stories. To often, they said people outside the profession are offering opinions and making judgments without taking the time to understand.

This finding is optimistic. Negative public opinion of the police has historically caused officers to retreat defensively and foster an "us vs. them" mentality (Skolnick, 1966). However, in the current climate, and in an era of pervasive social media and public criticism of the police, I found that officers are determined to share their sides of the story and get citizens to understand the full context behind those short,

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unrepresentative videos they are accustomed to seeing online and in the news. My own experiences in collecting this data reveal that officers today may be more willing to participate in research than ever before.

Theoretical Contributions

The Role of the Police

One of the greatest challenges affecting police officers is that they serve an uncertain and sometimes conflicting role in society. Culture scholars have described in detail how this conflicting role identity fosters a tendency for police officers to emphasize one role – crime fighting – above all others (Paoline, 2003). The conflict stems from the fact that as officers emphasize their law enforcement function, they are requested on a daily basis to serve a wide range of additional functions. Saving lives, keeping peace, and maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of the public have also been offered as central features of police duty. At the same time, Reiman's (1985) social contract theorizes that the police were initially established as a means to increase overall public safety and ensure proper protections of property. While the current study cannot solve this debate, the findings are optimistic in reference to this role conflict. Namely, the qualitative data suggest that by placing a greater emphasis on de-escalation, police can pursue each of these roles simultaneously. Officers discussed how use of de-escalation can reduce physical violence between cops and citizens, which further the goals of the social contract and protecting human life. De-escalation skills also assist the police in enforcing the law and keeping the peace by gaining compliance more easily.

The data also spoke to the potential for de-escalation to increase police legitimacy in the eyes of the public. A key predecessor to legitimacy is procedural justice – if a citizen perceives that the processes by which police exercise their authority are fair, and that they were treated with respect, they are more likely to see the police as legitimate (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Each of the de-escalation tactics articulated by study officers overlapped considerably with the components of procedural justice. For example, the notion that citizens want to be treated by police with dignity and respect is echoed in officers' discussions of talking to citizens as people, while minimizing the use of authoritative voice and "cop talk" in the conversation. Officers said showing compassion and using humor can also establish a positive tone in the interaction that can serve to de-escalate conflict. Dignity and respect for citizens and their rights can also be shown, when possible, through compromise. As Hunter noted in his interview, sometimes a small adjustment to charges can significantly improve a person's situation while still achieving justice. Marshall likewise noted that he tries to avoid making "mountains out of molehills," recognizing a low-level offense or misdemeanor warrant as something to not make a huge deal out of. The fairness and neutrality components of procedural justice can be achieved using the honesty tactic. By providing a clear legal explanation for the decisions being made, officers demonstrate to citizens that they are applying the law consistently and fairly. Finally, the listening and empowerment tactics legitimize citizens' concerns and engage them as partners in the decision making process. These tactics achieve the procedural justice in decision-making by making citizens to feel they have a voice in the process and were able to fully explain their case to the police. If police departments publically encourage de-escalation through their department philosophies

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and in official officer training, and when these tactics are employed more systematically on the street, they will publically demonstrate to citizens a dedication to improving legitimacy and protecting all human life.

This study also offered the officer perspective on de-escalation, including their own experiences regarding when the strategy is and is not feasible. When de-escalation is unfeasible in a particular situation, officers felt it is important for members of the public to understand that officers retain not only the authority but the responsibility to keep citizens safe and to use force when it is necessary to do so. By articulating the types of encounters in which de-escalation is and is not feasible – both from the officers' point of view and using systematic social observation and validated statistical methods – I have provided empirical evidence of the context within which many of the viral police use of force videos are situated. My hope is to publically report this information in ways that provide better, empirically grounded information to the general public so that they may understand the constraints within which officers operate and ultimately to increase their perceptions and trust in the police. On the other hand, when officers do engage in misconduct including excessive force or discrimination, citizens will be better informed and able to identify these cases as well.

Good Policing

Policing scholars have for decades argued that the best officers are the ones who use less force, and who find ways to steer potential conflict into more peaceful solutions. As the quote at the beginning of this dissertation reads, "Although force is the core of the police role, the skill of policing consists of finding ways to avoid its use" (Bittner, 1974,

p. 40; see also, Fyfe, 1996; Klockars, 1996). However, forty years after Bittner's words were put to paper, still little attention has been paid to the comprehensive study of how good police officers do the job (Kane & White, 2013). While the police research literature has considerably advanced our knowledge of police misconduct, more is needed on the production of good police work (Fyfe, 1993). In identifying and better understanding de-escalation tactics for reducing the risk of force and violence in police work, the current study definitely took a step towards fulfilling this research mandate. Similar research should be conducted to supplement our existing theoretical understanding of good policing, to identify metrics for measuring and incentivizing these behaviors, and ultimately for producing good police work.

Practical Contributions

Police-Citizen Relations

This study represents an unprecedented empirical exploration into an immediately pressing issue that is causing debate, tension, and in some cases violent rioting and backlash against police officers. Many citizen groups have adamantly expressed a belief that police abuse their authority to use force and often exert their authority in discriminatory ways that devalue the lives of minority citizens. Police in turn fear citizen backlash and may be less proactive in their policing as a result, a prospect that carries significant negative implications for crime and safety in U.S. cities. Officer believe that most police are genuine in their decisions to use force only when necessary to protect

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public safety. In practical terms, studying the topic of de-escalation is vital for the future of police-citizen relations and for race relations in particular.

The current study offers a systematic look at the officer's perspective as it relates to these highly contentious social issues. The officers detailed stories of difficult and sometimes traumatic incidents when they tried to use de-escalation but were unsuccessful. Officers also talked about situations in which the police made every effort to solve a situation peacefully and yet were still ridiculed for using force or failing to save the life of the person. Many officers resent accusations of racial bias, particularly when they feel they dedicate their own lives to saving others. Documenting these stories takes a step towards bridging the gap between officer's realities on the job and citizen's perceptions of what police officer do and/or should do in difficult situations.

De-escalation Training to Reduce Officer Use of Force and Police-Citizen Violence

Officers' perceptions of de-escalation suggest that continued improvements in the effective use of the strategy will lead to a reduction in violence between officers and citizens. By and large, officers agreed that the goal of de-escalation tactics and training is to avoid the need to use force by employing innovative communication tactics to gain compliance. To achieve these reductions, scholars should first seek to understand the skills used by highly skilled and experienced police de-escalators. Furthermore, research should investigate the reasons why certain calls for service, such as domestic violence calls, tend to end more often unsuccessfully. Finally, incidents during which officers successfully used de-escalation tactics should be studied comprehensively. These concepts should then be standardized and thoroughly trained to entire agencies.

Incorporating de-escalation as a central feature in police training could be mutually beneficial to both police, who will be best equipped to safely neutralize potentially violent situations, and the public, who have the collective right to expect that police authority is use legitimately, competently, and in good faith.

The quantitative findings from the current study suggest there is currently "no rhyme or reason" to when officers in the study agency employ various tactics for de-escalation. Additionally, officers struggled to identify a concrete definition of de-escalation, and many could not remember incidents in which they had successfully de-escalated a conflict. This is because officers are trained to reflect hard on the "bad" situations, or the ones in which they are forced to use force. As Stamper pointed out, when things go right, the officer must close the call and move on quickly to the next. This practice leaves little time for reflect and results in a police force that is trained in recapping the reasons why they used force but not trained in identifying methods for avoiding force. Training should therefore incorporate reviews of situations in which officers were successful at talking someone down from a suicide attempt or convincing a person to put down a weapon.

Effective police training programs should also focus on skills for handling situations during which officers typically feel they have less influence over the outcome. For example, effective training will emphasize that officers' actions from the *very outset* of the encounter carry consequences for the citizen's behavior, and ultimately for the final outcome. Study officers noted that they often work to establish a rapport with a citizen early on in situations where there is a likelihood the citizen will not be willing to comply – for example, in situations where he or she will be cited, involuntarily admitted

to a hospital, or arrested and booked into jail. As such, training should not only teach officers to de-escalate ongoing conflict, but also to prepare for the possibility of a conflict and take early steps to avoid it.

De-escalation training must also significantly consider officer safety. This is a primary and very real concern for officers. For example, Dr. Stephen Bishopp of the Dallas Police Department recently proposed to me the question of whether certain de-escalation tactics, such as standing closer to someone or relaxing one's hands, could actually put police officers at risk because they are antithetical to "smart tactics" (Personal Communications). Other reports suggest that agencies feel pressure to incorporate de-escalation into their official policies but are not adequately training officers in how to do this safely and effectively. (Griffith, 2016). Significant effort will need to be invested to consolidate the ideals of de-escalation with long standing notions of safe and smart police tactics to ensure the new principles of de-escalation do not put officers at higher risk of being injured or killed on the job.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The current study has a number of limitations and findings should be considered in light of these limits. The qualitative portion of the study examined a small sample of interviews and one focus group. This design was deliberate however, because the author sought to understand the concept of de-escalation from highly skilled officers who were well regarded by peers as expert de-escalators. Certainly, a larger scale and more generalizable sample of officer perceptions of de-escalation is warranted. The topic

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should be studied from the perspective of other stakeholders as well, including citizens, experts, and local workers who have frequent contact with officers in encounters.

In the quantitative portion of the study, while the structure of the data (officers within interactions) required a hierarchical modeling technique, there were an insufficient number of observations to perform these analyses. The author attempted to use hierarchical modeling and the models failed to load in both SPSS and Stata. Regression findings should be interpreted as correlates rather than predictive coefficients. Larger data sets that incorporate a sufficient number of observations per officer to legitimate use of hierarchical modeling would be preferable to answer these important questions.

The current study is also limited more generally by the small sample of observations (N=131) recorded on ride alongs, which captured no use of physical force beyond handcuffing. Obtaining a sufficient number of observed cases has historically been a problem for police researchers given the rarity of force and violence in policing relative to the number of face-to-face encounters officers have with citizens. Observation is a frequently used method for scholars of police behavior, and researchers often take on the task by assigning teams of graduate students to record these observations. A study similar to my own was undertaken by Bayley and Garofalo (1989), during which the authors trained and employed a group of 6 students who collectively coded 467 systematic observations over 350 ride alongs – approximately 77 observations per observer. The authors concluded: "the rareness of violence in patrol encounters limits our ability to determine whether particular tactics used by patrol officers raise or lower the likelihood of physical conflict." As another comparison, the Project on Policing Neighborhoods (POPN) project is the largest known study using social systematic

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observation of police-citizen encounters and has uncovered much of what we know about police use of force (Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Terrill, 2003; Terrill, Paoline, & Manning, 2003; Terrill & Reisig, 2003). About 20 research assistants collected 240 hours of observations in 24 beats across two cities, for a total of 2,472 observed encounters – about 123 observations per observer. The current study is limited in that I was ultimately unable to analyze the effect of de-escalation on use of force (which is the main hypothesis supporting use of the tactic) because I witnessed no instances of force across the 131 encounters.

To answer this question moving forward, a larger sample of potentially violent cases and cases involving police force is needed. One option is to employ body worn cameras to sample and observe a larger number of incidents via video footage. The proliferation of body worn cameras among U.S. police agencies will significantly aid in research on police behavior and police-citizen interactions because researchers are no longer constrained to multi-million dollar projects that train and deploy large teams of observers (see, e.g., Willits & Makin, in press). Researchers can oversample videos depicting potentially violent encounters, as well as use of force and study those particularly complex scenarios in depth. However, as Perkins (2017) argued, data generated from body worn camera footage comes with its own set of limitations. While video footage offers part of the how, it does not give us all of how, and very little of the why. Numerous details pertaining to the social interaction, background including the officer's previous knowledge of the citizen or the type of call, the officer's fatigue levels and previous work shifts and stressors, as well as the aftermath of the interaction are

substantially clouded in a body camera video. Footage reveals the front stage, not the back stage, to use Goffman's (1959) analogy.

An example from my dataset illustrates the limitations of body camera video data. Prince and I arrived on scene to a suicide call where Marshall was already deep in conversation with a young boy who wanted to commit suicide. The call lasted several hours, and was so intense that the two crisis negotiators employed all five de-escalation tactics numerous times and switched back and forth among the two of them to ensure they did not lose steam. Both officers appeared desperate, and there was a palpable a fear that the boy would go through with his plan to kill himself. The situation was the most tense I had ever experienced in my life, as I viewed the scene from the ground three stories below where the boy was standing. Hundreds of grocery store shoppers watched from across the street as they entered and exited the nearby store. Family members, teachers, and friends cried and physically fought with officers nearby as they attempted to process the situation and get close enough to communicate with the boy. After several long and very traumatic hours and heroic efforts on the part of the officers, the boy finally stepped away from the ledge. I stood in my spot for several minutes after the rest of the scene cleared and cried. Officers offering consolation told me numerous stories of similar calls that had significantly affected them throughout their years on the job. This had been the first call of the day for both Prince and myself, though neither of us wanted to return to the patrol car and resume the workday. I went straight home, and the officer also called off for the rest of the shift. The body camera video footage recorded that day would definitely offer insight into the tactics used by the officers, the response from the boy (though from a distance), and some of the officers' tone of voice and desperation.

However, little of the emotion or tension experienced by the officers, the impact of the surrounding environment and crowd of bystanders, nor the long lasting trauma of those involved would be captured on the video. In addition to body camera video, researchers may also partner with agencies for help in compiling sufficient data for understanding the impact of de-escalation in potentially violent encounters. Officers may be incentivized to write up narratives and submit body camera videos depicting calls in which de-escalation efforts were successful at avoiding force, which could subsequently be analyzed.

A final limitation in the study is the predominantly white makeup of both the police department and city from which the data were drawn. The issue of race, and in particularly the racialized dynamics of police-citizen interactions, is one of the most critical in contemporary policing. Ultimately, the racialized implications of the findings cannot be inferred given the homogenous nature of the data set. Sample demographics also limit generalizability of the study's findings to more diverse cities. Additional research is warranted to investigate the role of race and how it affects the effectiveness of de-escalation tactics.

Conclusion

The current study is the first to tackle the topic of police de-escalation and increases our understanding in numerous ways. Quantitative analyses of 131 police-citizen encounters reveal that officers in the current study largely used ad hoc de-escalation tactics in the field. They did not receive systematic training, but they have personally developed and honed tactics on their own. As such virtually no factors in the regression models consistently predicted whether officers in the agency used de-

escalation. Furthermore, since they are not required to systematically analyze situations in which they are successful at de-escalation, officers tend to be more highly trained in evaluating those encounters in which things went badly (because they are required to complete an thorough use of force report). Since use of force reports are more likely to be used in a court scenario, it is likely that these exercises largely train officers to justify their use of force rather than to critique it. On the bright side, most often in the 131 observed encounters the police were successful at calming the situation. Interviews also revealed that, while officers strongly believe there are situations in which de-escalation cannot be used, there are numerous opportunities for police to de-escalate. Most acknowledged that these tactics could be better trained and systematized in their agency. Ultimately, this dissertation should be viewed as a launching point for empirical research on de-escalation in police work. The findings should be taken optimistically that opportunities abound for police to hone their skills, improve their responses in ways that reduce violence, and address some of the long-standing criticisms directed at American policing.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

You are receiving this form because you have been voted by your co-workers as one of the most highly skilled officers at de-escalating potentially violent interactions with citizens. This form describes my research study and requests your participation.

Introduction: My name is Natalie Todak. I am a fourth year doctoral student in the Arizona State University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. I am conducting this research for my dissertation. The faculty advisor on this project is Dr. Michael D. White, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University.

Purpose: I am studying de-escalation in police-citizen encounters. There is virtually no research on this subject, so you will be among the first police officers to be surveyed on this topic, and your participation will dictate the direction of this area of research. The purpose of this study is to understand your perceptions about de-escalation and to observe your behaviors on the job, as exemplars of excellent policing. While there are no direct benefits to you, I believe this research has important implications for policing, especially in the context of the current national climate involving police-community relations and police use of force.

Procedure and time limit: If you choose to participate, you will take part in three research activities. These activities will be spread out over the course of one year. I anticipate that 8 police officers will participate in this project.

1) One focus group with other study participants. This focus group will last approximately one hour, and will involve watching body camera footage of incidents where force is used by police, and discussing it amongst the group.
2) Two or three formal, audio-recorded interviews on the subject of de-escalation in police work.
3) Three to five ride alongs, totaling approximately 25 hours. During these ride alongs, I will observe your work activity, ask questions, and take notes.

In addition to these three activities, I will also ask about your background, training, and prior experiences on the job. As part of that I would like to explore your prior work history at the Spokane Police Department, which will include a review of your handling of potentially violent encounters. I will ask you to recall such incidents and describe how you handled them. I am also interested in encounters that resulted in use of force and citizen complaints against you, and I would like your permission to review that information from the department (past five years only). Since you have been identified as a top de-escalator, I am also interested in how you and other top de-escalators stand out from your peers. In order to investigate this question, I will compare your background, experiences, and work history with other officers. A review of this official data will help answer questions about the techniques you use to manage difficult, potentially violent encounters. Finally, I would like your permission to view your body camera video footage.

Your rights: Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. You may refuse to answer any question in any phase of the study, and still move on to the next one. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your employment with the Spokane Police Department in any way, and I will not communicate to department supervisors about the nature of your participation, except to gain permission to conduct the study. My main priority is protecting the rights of the study participants. I intend only to produce findings to be used for research purposes only. You have a right to ask me any question and to have your questions answered. You may also request a copy of this form, or any other documents associated with the research findings, including my field notes. All participants will receive copies of all final reports.

Identity protection: All answers you give me will be kept confidential. While I know your identity, this will not be shared with anybody else. You will receive (or choose) a fake name, by which you will be referred in all notes reports. Some of your direct quotations may be included in the final report, but this will not be connected to your identity. Some data will be audio recorded, but this will be saved on a secure computer, not on a public network.

Risks: I do not foresee any physical or psychological harm that may result from your participation, other than what you experience as a police officer in everyday life. Remember, you may refuse to participate in any facet of the project, and may terminate your participation at any time.

If you have questions or concerns, you may contact me at Natalie.Todak@asu.edu, or at (805) 908-1211. You may also speak with the Principal Investigator, Michael White, at Michael.D.White.1@asu.edu or by calling (602) 496-2351.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Arizona State University Social Behavioral IRB. You may talk to them at (480) 965-6788 or by email at research.integrity@asu.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Your signature below indicates you have read the above information, have had all of your relevant questions answered, and agree to participate in the study.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Your signature below indicates your consent to be audio recorded.

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

RIDE ALONG CONSENT FORM

Introduction: My name is Natalie Todak, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the ASU CCJ department. The faculty advisor is Michael White, a professor at ASU.

If you have questions or concerns, you may contact me at Natalie.Todak@asu.edu, or at (805) 908-1211. You may also speak with Michael White, and I can give you a copy of his contact information. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Behavioral IRB. You may talk to them at (480) 965-6788 or by email at research.integrity@asu.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
  - You cannot reach the research team.
  - You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
  - You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
  - You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Purpose: I am conducting this research project for my dissertation. I am studying de-escalation in policing. You were selected because you are a Spokane patrol officer. You are not receiving any benefits for participating in this ride along.

Procedure and time limit: If you choose to participate, you will take part in one ride along with me. I will ask you questions throughout the ride along and I will typing your responses. I expect approximately 50 other officers to participate in the study.

Your rights: Your participation is voluntary. You can decide you don't want to participate and drop me off at any time. You may refuse to answer any question and still move on to the next one. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your standing at the Spokane Police Department in any way. You have a right to ask me any question related to the study and to have your question answered. You may also request a copy of this form, or any other documents associated with the study.

Identity protection: All answers you give me will be kept confidential. While I know your identity, this will not be shared with anybody else. Data will be recorded, but this will be saved on a secure data storage system, not on a public network.

Risks: I do not foresee any physical or psychological harm that may result from your participation, other than what you experience in everyday life as a police officer.

With that being said, would you like to participate in this study?

APPENDIX C

PEER NOMINATION SHEET

Policing frequently involves dealing with citizens who are angry, emotional, and who often show no respect for your authority. Resolving encounters peacefully with such citizens can be very difficult, and in some cases, impossible. Given the focus nationally on violence between police and citizens, there is much interest in highlighting the work of officers who excel in de-escalating difficult, potentially violent encounters with citizens.

We would like to identify a group of Spokane police officers who are especially skilled at de-escalation, or employing tactics that **reduce the likelihood that citizens will act violently**. Please <u>write the first and last names of three of your colleagues, other than yourself, who you consider the most highly skilled at de-escalating difficult, potentially violent citizen encounters.</u> Officers of all rank are eligible for nomination, but they must be currently employed by the Spokane PD. Your nominations will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Completing this form is voluntary, and you will only be asked to fill out this sheet once.

1.

_____

2.

_____

3.

_____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is your current position? How many years have you been a police officer? Have they all been at Spokane PD? Where else have you worked?

2. What specialty units are you a member of? Do you think you were selected as a hostage negotiator because you have good communication skills, or vice versa?

3. Why do you think your peers voted you as a top de-escalator? Do you think of yourself as a good de-escalator?

4. What is de-escalation? Do you think your definition is different from the public's definition? How does an officer de-escalate a situation? What are the most important skills an officer needs to do this? Does having backup help or hinder this process?

5. What types of formal training have you had on communication or de-escalation? Do you think the ability to de-escalate difficult encounters is covered effectively in your department? How frequently do you use these skills in the field? Do you think this type of training is important in police work?

6. Can you describe a call in which you sensed the situation might escalate and you were able to stop that from happening? Can you describe a call in which you employed tactics to de-escalate a situation, but they didn't work? In hindsight, what else would you have done?

7. Are there situations in which de-escalation is more difficult? What elements make de-escalation more difficult?

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

After watching each video:

1. What was the call here?
2. Once on scene, what was the problem?
3. What other elements of this situation would you be concerned about?
4. Is this the type of situation that you would walk into with the goal of de-escalating?
5. Why?
6. What elements of this situation make de-escalation more challenging?
7. How did the officer in the video try to de-escalate the situation?
8. Did it work?
9. Was there anything else the officer could have tried?
10. Did the other officers in the video play a role in the efforts to de-escalate?

APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Michael White
Criminology and Criminal Justice, School of
602/496-2351
Michael.D.White.1@asu.edu

Dear Michael White:

On 2/6/2015 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Assessing the Impact and Consequences of Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras: A Multi-Site Randomized Controlled Trial
Investigator:	Michael White
IRB ID:	STUDY00002197
Category of review:	(7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	Name: Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Grant Office ID: FP00002230
Grant Title:	FP00002230;
Grant ID:	FP00002230;
Documents Reviewed:	• Interview Protocol and Consent, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Draft agreement from Arnold Foundation.docx, Category: Sponsor Attachment; • Tempe Officer Survey Protocol, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • IRB Application, Category: IRB Protocol; • Citizen Telephone Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Spokane Officer Survey Protocol, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions

	/interview guides/focus group questions); • Focus Group Protocol and Consent, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Police Department Letters of Support, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc);

The IRB approved the protocol from 2/6/2015 to 2/5/2016 inclusive. Three weeks before 2/5/2016 you are to submit a completed "FORM: Continuing Review (HRP-212)" and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 2/5/2016 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the "Documents" tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Natalie Todak
        Natalie Todak
        Janne Gaub

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Natalie Todak is a Ph.D. candidate at the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University. She received her B.A. in psychology from the University of California, San Diego and her M.S. in criminal justice from Bowling Green State University. Natalie studies violence reduction in policing, with a focus on the transactional nature of police-citizen encounters and qualitative research methods. Her dissertation is a field study of de-escalation tactics in collaboration with the Spokane Police Department. She is also currently assisting on randomized controlled trial experiments of officer body-worn cameras in two police agencies. Natalie will graduate this June and join the University of Alabama, Birmingham Department of Criminal Justice faculty in the fall.