The Influence of Community Characteristics on Police Officers' Approaches to Patrolling Latinos in Three Towns

Paul Reck[1]

Abstract

Race and policing research has identified both macro-level structural factors and micro-level racial meanings that contribute to racial disparities in policing outcomes. However, prior research has not examined how the various features of communal contexts shape officers' construction of racial meanings. The current study, which is based on ethnographic ride-along interviews with and observations of 52 officers in three suburban communities of varying racial, ethnic, and class diversity in a northeastern state, weds symbolic interactionist and macro-level studies by examining how communal contexts shape both the meanings that police officers attach to Latinos in relation to other pan-ethnic groups and officers' patrolling of Latinos. The author finds that communal features and processes condition officers' racial schemas and patrolling practices in significant, variable ways across the three communities. How officers perceived and approached Latinos not only varied across the three towns but differed from that of other pan-ethnic groups. Variability in the communal features and processes influencing officers' racial schemas and patrolling of racial minorities across these towns suggests the need for a theoretical approach that treats officers' racial meanings and patrolling approaches as communally situated.

Keywords

minority group threat, criminological theories, racial profiling, race and policing, community policing, Latino/Hispanic Americans, race/ethnicity, African/Black Americans

[1] School of Social Science and Human Services, Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ, USA

Corresponding Author:
Paul Reck, School of Social Science and Human Services, Ramapo College, 505 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430, USA.
Email: preck@ramapo.edu

Introduction

A majority of studies examining policing and race over the past two decades have found racial disparities in police interventions such as stops and arrests. While some researchers have argued that these disparities are driven by officers' subconscious racial biases (see, e.g., Correll & Keesee, 2009; Fridell, 2008), an increasing number of researchers have examined how ecological contexts contribute to such disparities (Weitzer, 2010). Macro-level, conflict theory–based studies have identified some larger, structural features of ecological contexts that contribute to racial disparities in policing outcomes, but these studies have not examined how these contexts shape officers' racial meanings. Symbolic interactionist studies, which have examined micro-level ecological contexts, have identified meanings that officers attach to people, objects, and spaces, but have not explored the larger communal context that shape such meanings (see, e.g., Anderson, 1990; Werthman & Piliavin, 1967). The current study, which is based on ethnographic ride-along interviews with and observations of 52 officers in three suburban communities of varying racial, ethnic, and class diversity in a northeastern state, weds symbolic interactionist and macro-level studies by examining how communal contexts shape both the meanings that police officers attach to racial groups and officers' patrolling of such groups. In particular, this article focuses on how such communal contexts condition officers' views of and approach toward Latinos, a pan-ethnic group to which researchers have paid relatively little attention.[1] This article challenges the premise that similar ecological contexts yield similar racial meanings and policing outcomes across and within communities.

Literature Review

Review of Prior Studies on Race and Policing

In an effort to move beyond individualistic, psychological-based approaches that attribute racial disparities in policing outcomes to subconscious biases (see, e.g., Correll & Keesee, 2009; Fridell, 2008), many researchers have sought to identify how contexts contribute to such outcomes. Macro-level, quantitative, conflict theory–based approaches have examined how structural, ecological characteristics of neighborhoods, communities, cities, and metropolitan areas explain differences in the policing of racial groups across such areas (see, e.g., Alpert & Dunham, 1988; Fagan & Davies, 2000; Smith, 1986). While these macro-level studies have provided insights into how racial and/or class composition, inequality, segregation, population density, neighborhood type, and other structural characteristics contribute to racial differences in policing, these studies generally have lacked comprehensive neighborhood-level ecological data addressing communal-level processes (Parker, MacDonald, Alpert, Smith, & Piquero, 2004). Although some macro-level studies have presented more comprehensive neighborhood-level ecological data that flesh out factors such as "concentrated disadvantage" and "residential stability" (see, e.g., Fagan & Davies, 2000; Parker, Lane, & Alpert, 2010; Petrocelli, Piquero, & Smith, 2003), even these studies have provided a very limited portrait of "community" influence on policing. These

latter studies identify some of the communal contextual mechanisms that contribute to racially disparate policing outcomes, but do not address how such mechanisms shape the racial meanings that officers assign to people and places.

By not addressing the nexus between context and racial meanings, macro-level studies theoretically imply that every communal context with the same configuration of structural, ecological features will have the same racial meanings and lead to the same policing of particular racial groups. The assumption of such static racial meanings across contexts is problematic because it ignores the historical and geographic variability of meanings associated with behaviors, objects, persons, and places (Cresswell, 1996). A phenomenon (e.g., ''demeanor,'' ''Latino,'' ''poverty,'' etc.) may be defined differently in different places and at different times.

Unlike macro-level approaches, symbolic interactionist approaches examine the meanings officers attach to people, behaviors, objects, and spaces through repeated symbolic exchanges in police–citizen encounters (see, e.g., Anderson, 1990; Black, 1980; Piliavin & Briar, 1964; Werthman & Piliavin, 1967). Symbolic interactionist approaches do not assume that meaning production occurs in a vacuum, but rather suggest that social actors bring various social group stereotypes derived from the larger society into small group settings. Repeated interactions between officers and citizens then either confirm or disconfirm officers' internalized, preexisting group stereotypes. While symbolic interactionist studies have disproportionately focused on behavioral characteristics such as demeanor, dress, hair style, grooming, carrying of items, and pace or style of walk, as factors that either strengthen or counter officers' internalized, negative racial stereotypes in police–civilian encounters, some symbolic interactionist studies have identified meanings that officers attach to features of the ecological landscape. For instance, Werthman and Piliavin (1967) note that officers learn to identify ''safe spots'' and ''danger spots'' within communities they patrol, and Anderson (1990) documents how officers attach racialized, criminal meanings to parts of the public environment. While these latter studies provide some documentation of the meanings officers assign to particular ecological features of communities, these studies do not address the larger communal contextual forces that shape officers' acquisition of knowledge and construction of meanings. Without exploring the larger communal contexts that help to explain *why* officers attach particular meanings to particular people or places, these symbolic interactionist studies implicitly suggest that people or places that are marked in a particular way will be policed in the same way in every community. For instance, these studies imply that spaces identified as ''Latino'' or as ''dangerous'' will be similarly policed within and across communities.

In an effort to bridge the gap between macro-level and symbolic interactionist studies, research focusing on the nexus between race, space, and policing has provided a broader structural analysis of the racialized meanings that officers attach to different spaces and how such meanings contribute to intracommunal variation in the policing of racial minorities (see, e.g., Bates & Fasenfest, 2005; Meehan & Ponder, 2002). This latter research has yielded conflicting findings. Some research such as Bates and Fasenfest (2005) and Meehan and Ponder (2002) has found that policing of racial minorities is more aggressive in ''White'' areas in which police see minorities as ''out

of place,'' whereas other studies suggest harsher patrolling of Latinos and Blacks within spaces that officers mark as ''Latino'' or ''Black'' (see, e.g., Bass, 2001; Bornstein, Charles, Domingo, & Solis, 2011; Goldsmith, Romero, Rubio-Goldsmith, Escobedo, & Khoury, 2009; Herbert, 1997; Portillos, 2004; Romero, 2006; Solis, Portillos, & Brunson, 2009; Vera Sanchez & Adams, 2011). Still other research such as Duran (2009) suggests both aggressive ''in-place'' and "out-of-place" patrolling of minorities. Notwithstanding these contradictory findings, this spatial research, like both macro-level and symbolic interactionist studies, implies that policing outcomes will be similar across similar racially marked communal spaces. Racial minorities will be policed more harshly either when they are ''in-place'' in ''minority'' spaces or when they are "out-of-place" in "White" spaces.

We should expect to see some cross-communal variation in the meanings that officers attach to social groups and the behaviors of these groups' members within officers' communities of patrol due to the influence such communities exert over officers (Sheehan & Cordner, 1989). As Sullivan (1989) suggests, the community acts as a filter or mediator of meanings between the larger society and the individual, such that the values, cognitions, and choices of the larger society are conditioned by experiences of the inhabitants of a local community and how they define such values, cognitions, and choices. Such communal conditioning should be particularly pronounced in smaller, suburban, and rural jurisdictions (Crank, 1990; Liederbach & Frank, 2003) where officers are influenced by ''the unique social and demographic climate'' (Liederbach & Frank, 2003, p. 68) because they are ''an integral part of [these communities'] tight-knit network of citizens, and . . . are often thought of as more than simply police officers in [these] communities'' (Liederbach, 2007, p. 69).[2] The influence of communal environmental factors on police officers' cognitive processing is reflected by numerous studies' finding that police officers' attitudes and prejudices reflect those of the community in which officers patrol (Brown, 1981; Mattson & Duncombe, 1992). Prior research also shows that police orient toward ''place'' in ways that are shared by the community (Alpert & Dunham, 1988; Brown, 1981; Meehan & Ponder, 2002), and that decisions to arrest are often influenced by ''police perception of community standards and attitudes'' (Mann, 1993, p. 138).

As Meehan and Ponder (2002) note, this consonance between officers' attitudes and prejudices and the law-abiding citizens of the communities in which they patrol stems from the fact that these citizens represent the political constituency of the police. Officers are not only mindful of how community officials interpret officers' actions, but also are concerned about how various segments of these communities may interpret and respond to such actions (Duffee, 1980).[3] Officers working in smaller, suburban police departments are particularly attuned to community members' needs, demands, interests, and assessments of police actions due to the control that community representatives exercise over the financial resources for police operations (Duffee, 1980). In contrast to officers in larger, urban police departments, it is difficult for officers in smaller, suburban, and rural jurisdictions to remain part of an insular organization that is detached from the local community.

A Cognitive Mapping Model for Assessing Communal Influence on Officers' Views and Approaches

In order to assess the influence that communities exert upon patrol officers' racial meanings and patrolling practices, it is necessary to examine how police officers gather, develop, and use knowledge relating to their communities of employment. Prior research shows that officers develop and use an intricate knowledge of place (Meehan & Ponder, 2002) or what is referred to as ''area knowledge'' (Bittner, 1970) or ''territorial knowledge'' (Brown, 1981; Rubinstein, 1985). An important part of the ''commonsense geography'' that officers acquire in the contexts of their towns of employment relates to information about race and class (Meehan & Ponder, 2002). ''Officers know which communities are whiter, blacker (or more minority), or some combination of the two and where in their own community racial, ethnic, and class composition differ'' (Meehan & Ponder, 2002, p. 402). Officers also construct meanings of the places they patrol by developing ''typifications'' of vehicles, persons, and spaces on the basis of their experience (Meehan & Ponder, 2002; Van Maanen, 1978). However, while prior research identifies some of the types of communal knowledge that officers develop, such research generally does not specify the processes and mechanisms by which officers gather such knowledge.

The theoretical concept of cognitive mapping provides a useful way to understand how officers go about gathering and organizing knowledge of the people whom they encounter in their towns of employment. Cognitive mapping refers to the process by which people acquire information about phenomena within their spatial environments and then organize and encode such information in an arrangement of shorthand symbolic representations (Downs & Stea, 1973; Kitchin & Blades, 2002). People similarly acquire, process, and employ knowledge of their social landscapes in order to navigate such landscapes. Goffman (1974) argues that knowledge of social landscapes is symbolically encoded in a cognitive schema. Schemas of social landscapes enable officers to address challenges they face while patrolling. For instance, schemas help identify on whom officers must focus (Rubinstein, 1985). The cognitive mapping model employed here to understand how officers construct schemas for Latinos in relation to other groups within their towns of employment recognizes that officers do not begin working in a particular community with blank slates, but rather bring with them a schema derived from experiences in other contexts (Goffman, 1974; Kitchin & Blades, 2002). In particular, widely disseminated societal racial stereotypes linking crime, especially violent crime and gang- and drug-related crime, with Blacks (Loury, 2002; Russell, 1998), as well as Latinos (Portillos, 2002; Rodriguez, 2002), shape such schemata in prejudicial ways (Downs & Stea, 1973). While officers' schemata with respect to racial groups are clearly shaped by sources beyond officers' towns of employment, this study challenges the idea that officers' ideas about racial groups are fully determined *prior to* working in a particular community. Much of the prior work on race and policing implies that overarching racial stereotypes pervade all social contexts and influence officers in similar, static ways across similarly structured contexts. Rather than assuming that such stereotypes pervade communal contexts in unfiltered

ways, this study examines how specific communal contexts condition schemas in which racial stereotypes are embedded.

Communal information pertaining to demographics, power, and culture should be salient in constituting and conditioning officers' schemas. Demographic information should be salient because it provides a sense of who is and is not "in place" (Cresswell, 1996), and assists officers in determining "the 'normal' character of behavior" in the various parts of their jurisdiction (Rubinstein, 1985, p. 25). Information relating to the balance of power[4] among racial and ethnic groups should play a significant role in conditioning officers' schemata due to officers' heightened sensitivity to both powerful and relatively powerless groups (Chambliss & Seidman, 1971; Quinney, 1975). Officers should be particularly attuned to the interests of powerful groups because these groups possess the resources and influence to challenge officers and jeopardize officers' careers, whereas officers are likely to pay attention to powerless groups because these groups threaten powerful groups' interests (Chambliss & Seidman, 1971). Cultural information should be salient to officers because it can signify order. Patrol officers are foremost concerned with maintaining order (Wilson, 1968), and we should expect officers to be attuned to cultural information pertaining to practices such as property maintenance and parental discipline that symbolically convey a sense of orderliness or lack thereof (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967).[5]

Prior Research and Theorizing on Latinos

Research on race and policing has historically focused on identifying and documenting differential patrolling of Blacks and Whites (Martinez, 2007). In an effort to address the omission of Latinos from such research, a growing body of literature has examined the policing of Latinos (see, e.g., Bornstein et al., 2011; Duran, 2009; Goldsmith et al., 2009; Portillos, 2004; Roh & Robinson, 2009; Romero, 2006; Solis et al., 2009; Velez, 2006; Vera Sanchez & Adams, 2011; Warner, 2005–2006; Weitzer & Tuch, 2006). Consistent with this expanding body of research on the policing of Latinos, the extant study recognizes that it is important to investigate whether conventional understandings of race and policing are applicable to Latinos.

Focusing on patrol officers' understandings of and approaches toward Latinos also is important because of the so-called in-between status of Latinos in the United States (Bobo, 1999; Marger, 2009), and how such apparent status reconciles with two competing theoretical models addressing the policing of racial minorities. As Marger (2009) notes, scholars tend to locate Latinos in a position somewhere between Whites and Blacks in the U.S. racial hierarchy. Consistent with this "in-between" view of Latinos, the racial hierarchy perspective (Weitzer, 2010) and comparative conflict perspective (Shedd & Hagan, 2006) both similarly argue that Latinos should experience less coercive justice system control than that of Blacks due to Latinos' greater life opportunities, but experience more coercive control than that of more privileged Whites. Several studies provide support for this racial hierarchy/comparative conflict perspective (see, e.g., Kane, 2002;

Weitzer & Tuch, 2006). For instance, Velez's (2006) finding of a greater level of trust of the police in "Latino" neighborhoods suggests that residents of these neighborhoods are more likely than those of "Black" neighborhoods to experience respectful policing.

Challenging the notion that Latinos occupy a more advantageous hierarchical position than that of Blacks, the conflict theory–based racial threat thesis argues that criminal justice authorities exercise coercive control over *all* racial minorities to neutralize any perceived threats to dominant White group interests (Weitzer & Tuch, 2006). This thesis suggests that police are assigned in higher numbers to certain areas of a community where minority residence is higher (Roh & Robinson, 2009). An increasing body of research has found support for the racial threat thesis (see, e.g., Bornstein et al., 2011; Duran, 2009; Goldsmith et al., 2009; Herbert, 1997; Portillos, 2004; Roh & Robinson, 2009; Romero, 2006; Skogan, 2006; Solis et al., 2009; Vera Sanchez & Adams, 2011). These studies have demonstrated that police patrol Latinos in aggressive and indiscriminate ways that parallel patrolling of Blacks and dramatically differ from patrolling of Whites. Moreover, these latter studies suggest that the relatively monolithic, harsh patrolling of Latinos is particularly likely where officers' patrolling is guided by a significant, racialized patrolling imperative, such as immigration enforcement (Goldsmith et al., 2009; Romero, 2006; Solis et al., 2009), gentrification (Romero, 2006; Vera Sanchez & Adams, 2011), gang enforcement (Duran, 2009), or general crime control (Solis et al., 2009; Vera Sanchez & Adams, 2011).

Notwithstanding a general finding that Latinos are policed aggressively and indiscriminately, some studies such as Goldsmith, Romero, Rubio-Goldsmith, Escobedo, and Khoury (2009), Romero (2006), Vera Sanchez and Adams (2011), and Warner (2005–2006) suggest that there is some variability in the patrolling of Latinos. For instance, Goldsmith et al. (2009) and Warner (2005–2006) found some variability in the patrolling of Latinos based on perceived degree of "Mexicanness." Vera Sanchez and Adams's (2011, p. 335) finding that police ignored undocumented Latino immigrant vendors but aggressively stopped Latino youth in one Mexican neighborhood implies that status and activities may contribute to variable policing. Finally, Goldsmith et al.'s (2009) and Romero's (2006) findings implicitly suggest that Latinos are policed more harshly in towns that are either closer to the Mexican border or that attract larger percentages of Latino migrants.

The variable patrolling of Latinos suggested by these latter studies, coupled with the conflicting findings of studies examining the policing of Latinos in relation to that of Blacks and Whites, suggest that neither the racial threat thesis nor the racial hierarchy perspective fully capture the dynamics that underlie the policing of Latinos. In addressing how communal factors condition officers' racial group schemata, and in turn affect their approaches to patrolling Latinos and other racial groups, the current study provides an opportunity to assess the relative merits of these theoretical perspectives and potentially identify other, more nuanced mechanisms that affect how officers patrol Latinos in relation to other racial groups.

Data and Methods

The data upon which this article is based were principally gathered through a series of ethnographic interviews and observations that I conducted during the course of 52, approximately 4-hr ride alongs with patrol officers during varied shifts, days, and patrol districts in three suburban municipalities (Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro)[6] in a northeastern state between July 2006 and December 2006. Eighteen of the ride alongs totaling 73 hr were in Coretown, 18 of the ride alongs totaling 72 hr were in Longwood, and 16 of the ride alongs totaling 66 hr were in Middleboro. Each ride along was with a different officer. In addition to the 52 interviews that I conducted during the ride alongs, I carried out a shorter, 30- to 45-min follow-up interview with each of the 52 officers in a private room at their respective police stations. The officers interviewed in the three towns were representative of the three towns' disproportionately White and male officer corps.[7] Sixteen of the 18 officers interviewed in Coretown were White, and all were male. Sixteen of the 18 officers interviewed in Longwood were White, and 17 were male. Thirteen of the 16 officers interviewed in Middleboro were White, and 15 were male.

Unlike quantitative methodologies, ethnographic studies help "to answer the questions of why and how" (Markowitz, 2001, p. 12) and provide a means of determining how social actors make sense of, organize, and attach meanings to people and places within their social worlds (Orbuch, 1997). By examining the meanings that actors assign to phenomena within their specific, work-related cultural and social milieux (Spradley, 1979), ethnographic methods allow for the discovery of how officers cognitively develop understandings of the various people whom they serve and organize such understandings into social group schemata. Conducting interviews during the course of 4-hr ride alongs afforded ample opportunity to establish rapport with officers and provided a secure, comfortable environment in which officers were more likely to provide candid responses. The setting of the ride along allowed for a firsthand assessment of both how officers schematically interpreted and classified people in the field, and how such accounts compared with actual patrolling practices.

Research Site Selections: Choosing the Towns and Police Departments

In order to discern whether or not there is any between-town variation in officers' racial schemata, it is imperative to study patrol officers in at least two towns as part of a comparative ethnography (Sullivan, 1989). By assessing the presence or absence of variation in officers' schemata across communities, comparative ethnography allows for an examination of the extent to which the schemata officers theoretically develop and internalize prior to their work as patrol officers is modified in any way by the particular communal context in which they work. Focusing on three towns provides an even greater opportunity for assessing both within- and between-town variation in officers' schemata with respect to Latinos and other socially identified groups.

I selected Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro as research sites for several reasons. First, they were among the 5 towns among 50 randomly selected suburban

towns within a 50-mile radius of my home that granted ride-along interviews with officers. Second, Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro offered an opportunity to compare three towns within an 11-mile radius that differed in terms of their racial, ethnic, and class composition. Most pertinently, they afforded an opportunity to compare a town with a discernible residential Latino population (Longwood) with towns with negligible Latino populations (Coretown and Middleboro).

Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro also were chosen because of their police departments' organizational similarity, which fostered similar channels of community influence. The three departments had basically the same set of bureaus and divisions, rank structure, and size and number of patrol districts. Patrol practices, including shifts, patrol assignments and rotations, and officers' tasks, responsibilities, and discretion, were also strikingly similar. Officers patrolled alone in each town, which allowed for unfiltered interactions with the community. Each department's funding and contracts were authorized by a town council, suggesting that citizens in all three towns had similar avenues of influence over the police department. Finally, the three departments apparently shared a service orientation by which the police sought to identify and satisfy the demands of the community (Wilson, 1968). Such shared organizational features made it more likely that any differences in officers' schemata would be a product of communal, rather than organizational, variation.

Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro also were selected as research sites because of the similar backgrounds of their police officers, which makes communal influences more salient. The majority of officers were not only similar in terms of race (White) and gender (male), but also in terms of social class (lower middle class), childhood residence (grew up in same region), educational background (approximately two thirds were college graduates), and professional socialization (all graduated from the same police academy). Officers' socialization within the same geographic region minimized the possibility that regional differences might affect how officers' understood and approached policing. It was likely that the officers in the three departments largely had internalized similar ideas about race, ethnicity, class, and criminality while growing up and that these officers brought a similar social group schema with them when they began working. In sum, the selection of three structurally and culturally similar departments afforded an opportunity to assess how environmental features of the towns, rather than background and organizational factors, conditioned officers' racial schemata.

Descriptions of Three Research Sites: Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro

Of the three research sites, Coretown is the smallest (approximately 23,000 residents), most racially homogeneous, and has the highest median income and lowest rate of poverty (see Table 1). The majority of Coretown residents are White and middle class, and Whites exclusively control the local government. Blacks constitute the largest group of residents of color (4.5%) and are clustered in the northwestern and southeastern corners of town. Latinos and Asians each make up less than 1% of Coretown's population, but a disproportionate percentage of the workers in the town's large,

Table 1. Select Race and Class Features of Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro.

Town	Racial makeup (%)		Median income	Percentage below poverty level
Coretown	White	94		
	Black	4.5	$76,300	2.5
	Latino	0.9		
Longwood	White	66		
	Black	23	$46,300	6.4
	Latino	15		
Middleboro	White	59.8		
	Black	33	$74,900	5.6
	Latino	3		

Source: Bureau of the Census (2002).

central commercial district are Latino nonresidents. Coretown is home to a large county college, Orion County College (OCC), and an alternative high school (AHS). The majority of students at both institutions are nonresident racial minorities.

Longwood, which is located adjacent to Coretown, is larger (approximately 40,000 residents) than Coretown, more racially and ethnically diverse, and less affluent. Whites, who are largely lower middle class, constitute approximately two thirds of the town's population and disproportionately control the town's local government (e.g., all but 1 of the 10 town council members is White). Whites are clustered in the northwestern part of town, which is the town's largest and most heavily populated residential area. Blacks constitute approximately one quarter of the town's population and are substantially more likely than Whites to be poor or working class. Blacks are clustered in the northeastern part of Longwood. Approximately 15% of the town's population is Latino. Latino residents, who cover a diverse range of ethnicities, including Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Mexicans, and Cubans, disproportionately live in the southern and north central parts of Longwood. Longwood also has a fairly large Portuguese population that officers view as quasi-"Latino."

Middleboro is similar to Longwood in terms of size and racial diversity, but is closer to Coretown in terms of social class. Middleboro is a racially diverse, largely middle- to upper middle-class town of approximately 39,000 residents that is slightly over 10 miles from both Coretown and Longwood. Whites constitute the majority of Middleboro's residents (approximately 60%), followed by Blacks (33%). The Black population is starkly divided between the middle- and upper middle-class Blacks who live in racially integrated neighborhoods, and working-class and poor Blacks who live in the highly segregated southeastern part of town. Whites are largely middle- to upper middle class, and disproportionately live in racially integrated neighborhoods. Middleboro has a small percentage of Latino residents (3%), but a disproportionate percentage of the workers in a large commercial district are Latino. In contrast to both Coretown and Longwood, Middleboro has a reputation for being a politically liberal and tolerant community, and Blacks and Whites share control over local government.

Table 2. Officers' Perceptions of Latinos and Patrolling Approach.

	Coretown	Longwood	Middleboro
View as monolithic group	Yes	No	Yes
High degree of familiarity	No	Yes	No
View as threat	Yes	No	No
Aggressively patrol	Yes	No	No

Findings

Coretown Officers' Schematic Representations of Latinos

Coretown officers' schemas appeared to be encoded with many of the Latino stereotypes suggested by Portillos (2002) and Rodriguez (2002). In stark contrast to Longwood and Middleboro officers, Coretown officers held highly negative views and engaged in aggressive policing of those whom they identified as "Latino." Citing the virtual absence of Latino residents in Coretown, Coretown officers emphasized a lack of familiarity with Latinos and described them as "outsiders." Consistent with the racial threat thesis, 17 of the 18 Coretown officers described Latinos as posing a criminal threat to the town's White residents, whom officers generally perceived as law abiding (see Table 2). For instance, a White Coretown officer stated the following while discussing Latinos:

> This has always been a good place to raise a family. Not a place where you worry about your kids playing outside and getting shot. But we're seeing more and more of these, hombres, coming into town and thinking they can gangbang and deal drugs.

Coretown, like Middleboro officers and unlike Longwood officers, described Latinos in monolithic terms. While Longwood officers saw "Latino" as a pan-ethnic category made up of diverse ethnic groups, all 18 Coretown officers employed the terms "Mexican" and "Hispanic" interchangeably, suggesting that they viewed all "Latinos" as "Mexicans." In some spaces, Coretown officers also referred to Latinos and Blacks together, suggesting that the two groups had the same characteristics and behaviors, whereas in other spaces, officers clearly distinguished Latinos from Blacks.

Coretown officers' descriptions of Latinos were replete with a wide range of stereotypes. Thirteen of the 18 Coretown officers' descriptions of Latinos included a range of derogatory noncriminal stereotypes, including those pertaining to reproductive behaviors (e.g., "[T]hey have nothing else to do besides having babies"), and residential practices (e.g., "It's easy to find 'em 'cause they all live in the same house down by the railroad tracks"). Consistent with Portillos (2002) and Rodriguez (2002), 17 of the 18 Coretown officers evoked crime-related stereotypes, although crime-tinged stereotypical descriptions, unlike the noncriminal ones, targeted only Latino males. These officers routinely described Latino males as "gang members" and "drug dealers." All of the Coretown officers' gang- and drug-related descriptions of Latino males were based in part on and bolstered by narratives shared among the officers. The

most prominent shared narrative linking Latino males to gangs and illegal drug activity involved an incident that had occurred several months earlier involving a Latino man who was arrested at approximately 2 a.m. while riding his bicycle on Newman Avenue after a shift at a local restaurant. One of the arresting officers described the incident as follows:

> We were driving down [Newman] and it's about two in the morning and it's raining out; I mean you can't see a goddamned thing. And then we spot this guy on his bike, and I'm like, "What the fuck is this guy doing? It's raining out for Christ's sake! Who the hell would be out riding their bike?" So we pull up to this guy, roll down the window, and ask him his name, where he's going and whatnot. The guy starts mumbling something in Spanish, but I've got no idea what he saying. And he's real nervous; like deer in the headlights. We get out of the car, it's pouring out mind you, and we just tell him to take it easy. The guy keeps yelling something in Spanish and starts pedaling again. [My partner] grabs him off the bike and puts him against the side of the car. We keep telling the guy to shut up, but he keeps yelling and flailing his arms. I pin him to the car and [my partner] frisks him. We find a bag of marijuana in one of his pockets and we take him down to the station . . . . When we get down to the station, the guy takes off his jacket and we see that our *amigo* has a bunch of MS-13 tattoos, like the ones MS-13 has, all over his arms.

Coretown officers invariably referenced this particular narrative whenever they discussed Latino males, implying that all Latino males were drug dealers and gang members. Due in seemingly large part to the sharing and recycling of this "MS-13 cyclist" narrative, Coretown officers appeared to be particularly suspicious of Latino males who worked at the restaurants in the downtown area in the center of Coretown. In virtually all of their comments about Latino males in the downtown area, Coretown officers questioned these males' "real" purpose for being in town. For instance, one White Coretown officer remarked: "A lot of those guys working downtown, it's just a front. They're probably in MS-13 or some other gang, and they're running drugs between [towns]." Any ostensibly legitimizing information (e.g., evidence of employment) regarding Latino males' presence in Coretown appeared to be eclipsed by a master narrative of Latino criminality.

Officers' heightened suspicion of Latinos appeared to be fueled by an absence of Hispanic residents coupled with officers' highly disparaging views of "Hispanic" towns in the vicinity of Coretown. While Coretown officers distinguished "good" Black residents from "bad" Black nonresidents, the absence of a discernible Latino residential population precluded Coretown officers from making a similar distinction between Latino residents and nonresidents. Without a core of Latino residents, Coretown officers had no basis upon which to become familiar and comfortable with Latinos' presence. In the words of one White officer, Coretown officers were "not sure what [they] [we]re getting" when they interacted with Latinos. As a result, Coretown officers saw all Latinos as foreign and potentially threatening. With no familiar residential population upon which to base their views of Latinos, Coretown officers' schemas with respect to Latinos were shaped by secondhand, societal

Table 3. The Saliency of Key Communal Features/Processes Affecting Officers' Racial Schemas and Patrolling of Latinos.

	Coretown	Longwood	Middleboro
Resident status	Salient	Salient	Not salient
Cultural information	Not salient	Salient	Not salient
Constituency power	Not salient	Not salient	Salient
Interracial comparison	Salient	Salient	Not salient
Racially segregated spaces	Salient	Salient	Not salient
Racially segregated spaces	Not salient	Not salient	Salient
Resident vs. visitor spaces	Salient	Not salient	Salient

stereotypes and bolstered by a few incidents and narratives that seemed to confirm such stereotypes.

Officers' suspicion of Latinos was further augmented by officers' extremely negative characterizations of "Latino" towns in the area surrounding Coretown. All 18 officers described towns with sizable Latino populations as being plagued by crime and other pathologies, and suggested that any Latinos from such places carried those pathologies with them. Officers' numerous references to these towns and cities functioned as shorthand for Latino crime.

While Coretown officers generally made disparaging comments about nonresident Latinos, such comments were amplified by these nonresidents' connections to certain spaces within Coretown (see Table 3). Coretown officers' highly negative descriptions of nonresident Latinos were most apparent when the officers discussed students who attended either the Alternative High School (AHS), which serves nearly 200 youths from around Orion County who are unable to function in traditional classrooms, or Orion County College (OCC), which is a year-round community college that serves 9,000 students, most of whom hail from other towns in Orion County. Officers repeatedly described AHS, whose student population was 19% Latino and 37% Black in 2006, and OCC, whose student population was 22% Latino and 22% Black in 2006, as "Latino" and "Black" spaces ensconced within "White" residential areas. Over one half of Coretown officers' statements regarding both Latinos and Blacks referenced AHS or OCC, indicating the centrality of these spaces to officers' schemas with respect to these groups. These spaces, unlike other spaces in town, appeared to blur any distinctions officers made between Latinos and Blacks. Officers routinely made joint references to Latinos and Blacks when discussing both AHS and OCC, suggesting that officers viewed these groups as an amorphous mass in these spaces.

For Coretown officers, AHS and OCC served as a triggering mechanism for the pathologies officers associated with criminogenic, lower income "Latino" and "Black" towns in the surrounding area. The presence of Latinos and Blacks at or near AHS and OCC activated officers' thoughts of these problematic "Latino" and "Black" communities. All 18 Coretown officers' discussions of AHS students invariably included some reference to drug- and gang-related problems in "Latino" and "Black" towns such as Piedmont and Elmwood. For instance, when discussing a minor "shoving match" that had occurred among several AHS students, a White Coretown officer

stated: "Who knows what the hell they were fighting over. Probably somebody stole somebody else's dope. They bring that shit in from [Piedmont] and [Elmwood] and try to deal it over here." Officers' discussions of OCC students also referenced the same crime-plagued "Latino" and "Black" Orion County towns, but such discussions also prominently included references to criminogenic "Black" and "Latino" towns such as Norville and Edgarville in neighboring Edward County. Coretown officers repeatedly stressed their belief that Edward County students were not coming to OCC for academic purposes, but rather to commit crimes. Officers' descriptions of students from Edward County were replete with references to "drug dealers," "car thieves," "gangsters," and "thugs." These highly negative characterizations were largely fueled by officers' awareness of an alternative to incarceration program that allowed some Edward County students to attend OCC, as well as a few incidents in which Edward County nonstudents had been arrested for selling drugs on campus.

Although officers expressed concern about nonresident Latinos and Blacks committing crimes at or in the vicinity of AHS and OCC, these officers appeared to be most worried about the possibility that these nonresidents would "corrupt" other students (meaning White students), and would possibly cause trouble and corrupt youth in the "White" residential areas in which AHS and OCC were ensconced. All 18 Coretown officers not only used the word "corrupt" when discussing Latino and Black students at AHS and OCC but also repeatedly referenced several "corruption" narratives. The most prominent "corruption" narrative regarding AHS students featured a White male AHS student from Coretown who claimed to be a member of the "Crips" gang. A White Coretown officer presented this narrative as follows:

> There were several kids from the alternative school who got into a big fight . . . . One of the ones we arrested was this 16-year-old [Coretown] kid. I started asking him what happened, and then, I'll never forget this, he tells me that he's a Crip. I'm like, "A Crip . . . ." Apparently he'd been hanging around with some kids from Piedmont over at the alternative school who got him into that Crips thing . . . . I . . . told him, "You're going down the wrong path . . . . These kids you've been hanging with are no good." He's not a bad kid, he just tends to follow the crowd he's with.

Like other Coretown officers, this officer was suggesting that this youth's alleged Crip affiliation was a direct result of the youth's interactions with Latino and Black AHS students. Through this oft-recounted, shared "Crip" narrative, officers expressed their belief that Latino and Black nonresident AHS students were influencing vulnerable, generally "good" White Coretown youth to join gangs.

Coretown officers' "corruption" narratives relating to OCC focused on illegal drug distribution rather than gang activity. In particular, 16 of the 18 officers referenced a narrative describing an illegal drug distribution ring in a lounge in one of the OCC's main buildings. According to this narrative, the lounge area had become a "networking" site for Latino and Black "drug dealers" from Edward County prior to a major "drug bust" a year ago. Officers emphasized that they were most concerned that these dealers were preying upon White Coretown youths who were coming to the lounge to buy drugs.

In sum, officers' lumping of problematic nonresident Blacks with nonresident Latinos at AHS and OCC served to magnify the foreign "Latino" threat. Through this lumping, officers saw Latinos as a part of a much larger, interconnected, coordinated group of criminal outsiders.

While Coretown officers described Latinos and Blacks in the same threatening, disparaging light when discussing the spaces in the vicinity of AHS and OCC, officers' description of Latinos was radically different than that of Blacks when discussing other prominent spaces within the town, particularly the central commercial district, and Newman and Summer Avenues (both of which cut through this district). Officers were highly suspicious of Latinos, but not Blacks, in these latter spaces. Strikingly, while officers made multiple references to criminal activities and crimogenic "Latino" towns when discussing the presence of Latinos in these spaces, not a single officer made reference to either criminal activities or problematic "Black" towns when discussing the presence of Blacks. Coretown officers viewed Latinos, unlike Blacks, with heightened suspicion in seemingly all spaces.

The distinction that Coretown officers made between Latinos and Blacks on Newman and Summer Avenues and within the commercial district appears to be due to assumptions about the utilization of space and concerns about possibly upsetting White business and civic leaders. The degree to which officers exhibited concern about Latinos and Blacks in various spaces foremost seemed to hinge on whether officers perceived these respective groups as spending considerable amounts of time in these spaces. Officers assumed that Latinos traveling on Newman and Summer Avenues either worked or loitered for extended periods of time in the commercial district and that both Latinos and Blacks at and in the vicinity of AHS and OCC spent extended periods of time at these respective spaces. In contrast, 16 of the 18 officers described Blacks traveling on Newman and Summer Avenues as "passing through" Coretown, and indicated that not only did few Blacks shop or conduct business within the downtown commercial district, but those that did "[took] care of their business and went on their way."

In addition, Coretown officers' favorable view of Latinos along Newman and Summer Avenues and within the commercial district seemed to be fueled by an interest in accommodating the town's White business and civic leaders. Officers described how the town's leaders had raised a significant amount of money through several bond issues to improve the town's commercial district, which was part of a larger effort to upgrade the town's regional status. Sixteen of the 18 officers noted that Latinos who congregated for hours in the commercial district were stymieing this effort. As one officer put it, the Latinos standing on the sidewalks in this district were an "eyesore" and a "nuisance." These officers appeared to suggest that the town's leaders approved of patrolling efforts to rid the commercial district of Latino loiterers.

In contrast, 16 of the 18 officers expressed concern about how town leaders might react to similarly aggressive policing of Blacks in these spaces. In particular, these officers discussed how potential accusations of targeting Blacks in this commercial district might tarnish the town's reputation, and in turn, upset the town's leaders. Officers' concerns about pleasing town leaders, coupled with assumptions about the

utilization of space, contributed to an overall less favorable, varied, and nuanced view of Latinos relative to that of Blacks.

Coretown Officers' Approach to Patrolling Latinos

Coretown officers' approach to patrolling Latinos, especially Latino males, was consonant with their schematic representations. Consistent with their characterization of Latinos as threatening, Coretown officers engaged in aggressive patrolling of Latino pedestrians and motorists in all town spaces. Based on observations, Coretown officers confronted those whom they identified as ''Latino'' more often than those belonging to other racial categories in the commercial district, particularly day laborers who congregated in the vicinity of the train station. Officers typically either questioned Latinos who appeared to be loitering or motioned these pedestrians to move. Similarly, Coretown officers patrolling the vicinity of AHS and OCC aggressively surveilled and routinely confronted Latinos and Blacks, particularly if Latinos or Blacks appeared to be loitering. Such direct confrontation stood in marked contrast to the officers' nonconfrontational approach toward White ''burnouts'' smoking and loitering near Coretown High School.

Coretown officers' aggressive approach to patrolling Latinos was even more pronounced by the officers' patrolling of Latino motorists on certain roads. Of the observed motorists stopped and ticketed on Newman and Summer Avenues, on which the bulk of traffic enforcement took place, 43.6% of those stopped (34 of the 78) and 78.4% of those ticketed (29 of the 37) were Latino. In contrast, only 5.1% of those stopped (4 of the 78) and 2.7% of those ticketed (1 of the 37) on these roads were Black. Officers estimated that Whites constituted between 75% and 90% of those traveling on Newman and Summer Avenues. Accordingly, Latinos' stop and ticketing rates appeared to be exceedingly disproportionate.

Coretown officers stopped and ticketed both Latino and Black motorists at disproportionate rates on Concord Avenue, the north–south road leading to and from AHS, and Sawyer and Kingston Avenues, the north–south roads leading to and from OCC, suggesting a uniform, aggressive approach toward Latinos and Blacks on these roads. Of the 41 observed stops of motorists on these roads, 14 involved Latinos and 16 involved Blacks. Of the 23 tickets issued in conjunction with these stops, 8 went to Latinos and 11 went to Blacks. Officers regularly monitored, and sometimes followed, vehicles with occupants who appeared be Black or Latino on these roads, whereas officers generally ignored vehicles whose occupants appeared to be White on these and other roads. Despite similar patrolling of Latinos and Blacks on Concord, Sawyer, and Kingston Avenues, officers' overall approach toward Latinos was more aggressive than that of any other pan-ethnic groups.

Longwood Officers' Schematic Representations of Latinos

Longwood officers' communally and collectively shaped schemas stood in marked contrast to those of their fellow officers in neighboring Coretown. Unlike Coretown

officers, Longwood officers stressed their familiarity with the town's Latino residents, generally viewed Latinos in a benign, nonthreatening light, and exhibited a laissez-faire patrolling approach (see Table 2). In contrast to Coretown officers, Longwood officers recognized ethnic distinctions among Latinos. Utilizing a variety of cultural and spatial information, Longwood officers developed an overall favorable view of all Latino ethnic groups through interethnic comparisons with ''model'' Latino ethnic groups and interracial contrasts with Black residents, whom officers viewed as a major threat to order (see Table 3).

In contrast to Coretown officers' monolithic view of ''Latinos,'' Longwood officers' view of ''Latinos'' was intricate and nuanced. Although Longwood officers often employed the term ''Hispanic,'' they were more likely to identify ''Latinos'' by specific ethnic group terms such as ''Mexican'' and ''Puerto Rican.'' Based on information gathered from the community and fellow officers, Longwood officers mentally constructed a three-tier ethnic hierarchy for those whom they identified as ''Hispanic.'' Officers placed Portuguese at the top of this hierarchy, Mexicans in the middle, and Puerto Ricans and Dominicans at the bottom. In cognitively assembling this Latino hierarchy, Longwood officers principally used cultural information pertaining to parenting, education, work, and property maintenance.

A key to Longwood officers' overall positive assessment of Latinos was the officers' laudatory view of the ''model'' Portuguese residents at the top of the ''Latino'' hierarchy. Longwood officers disproportionately extolled the virtues of the town's Portuguese residents, whom officers described as ''sort of Hispanic.'' All 18 officers viewed these residents as paragons of hard work, discipline, order, neatness, and respectfulness. Officers had an especially laudatory view of Portuguese residents' parenting and property maintenance practices, routinely referencing parents who strictly supervised and disciplined youths, and homeowners who maintained ''immaculate'' homes and lawns, ''sparkling'' counters, and ''spotless'' floors. For Longwood officers, such parenting symbolized informal social control, whereas such property upkeep symbolized respect for social order.

Although Longwood officers' highly favorable view of Portuguese residents was similar to that of White residents, officers cognitively lumped Portuguese residents together with other ''Latino'' residents, at least in part due to the spatial clustering of the Portuguese and other ''Latino'' ethnic groups in the southern and north central parts of Longwood. Consequently, these latter Latino ethnic groups benefited from this cognitive association with the Portuguese.

In contrast to their unambiguously laudatory view of Portuguese residents, Longwood officers had a slightly more complicated view of Mexican residents. Like Coretown officers, Longwood officers made disparaging stereotypical comments regarding Mexicans' reproductive habits (e.g., ''Every time you see them walking down the street, they've got a cake in the oven'') and dwelling habits (e.g., ''[Y]ou've got three or four families living under one roof, and grandma and cousin Jose''). However, unlike Coretown officers, Longwood officers generally held favorable views of Mexicans.

Most significantly, in contrast to Coretown officers, Longwood officers did not view Mexicans as a criminal threat. Unlike Coretown officers, Longwood officers

neither expressed criminal stereotypes regarding Latinos nor generalized criminal incidents to all Latinos. For instance, in discussing a fight at a ''Mexican'' bar that led to a fatal stabbing of a patron, Longwood officers avoided treating the three Mexican men arrested in connection with the crime as representative of other Mexicans. In recounting this incident, 14 of the 18 officers also emphasized that anyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, was capable of engaging in such behavior if they "ha[d] too much to drink,'' and dismissed the stabbing as an anomalous crime committed by "bad apples.'' In a comment that was typical of those made by 16 of the 18 officers, a White Longwood officer stated:

> We don't have too many problems with Hispanics. Every now and again you get some fight at a bar—the Mexicans, Hispanics, they like to drink—but it's usually no big deal. You do have a few bad apples every now and again, like we did have that stabbing at [Julio's] Bar, but you usually don't see that kind of stuff here; not with Hispanics .... Hispanics usually don't give us any problems. They just keep to themselves .... The Mexicans, they're alright.

Unlike Coretown officers' ''MS-13 cyclist'' narrative, Longwood officers' ''bar stabbing'' narrative did not contribute to a stigmatized view of all Latinos.

Longwood officers' general view of Mexicans as law-abiding appears to be strongly connected to the officers' familiarity with and laudatory view of these residents' cultural practices. In particular, Longwood officers praised Mexicans' ''work ethic'' and their quiet, respectful demeanor in the presence of authority figures. In addition, Longwood officers held favorable views of Mexicans' parenting practices, noting how Mexicans routinely took their children to the library and "ke[pt] their children in line.'' For Longwood officers, Mexicans appeared to be nonthreatening due to a combination of conventional, family-oriented practices signifying normality, and disciplinary practices signifying informal social control.

While Longwood officers generally had favorable views of Mexican residents, whom officers described as "newer" residents, officers' views of ''older'' Puerto Rican and Dominican residents were more ambivalent. Although 16 of the 18 Longwood officers saw Puerto Ricans and Dominicans as generally cooperative and respectful when confronted by uniformed, on-duty officers, 7 of the 18 officers described Puerto Rican and Dominican neighbors in Longwood as being "pains in the ass" when dealing with these neighbors in off-duty interactions. These seven officers also appeared to blame Puerto Ricans and Dominicans for the decline of neighborhoods in the formerly ''White'' southern part of Longwood, attributing Puerto Ricans' and Dominicans' alleged illegal subdivisions of homes to overcrowding in these neighborhoods. In addition, these seven officers saw Puerto Ricans and Dominicans as turning the once orderly, tranquil neighborhoods in the southern part of town into messy, chaotic ones through a wide range of neglectful property-related behaviors, including not mowing lawns, leaving cars in disrepair on the street, and not cleaning up litter.

Notwithstanding these negative assessments of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, Longwood officers nevertheless saw these two ethnic groups as being similar to other

''Latino'' groups on a number of important cultural dimensions. Sixteen of the 18 officers generally suggested that Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, like other ''Latino'' groups, were ''respectful,'' ''stay[ed] out of trouble,'' ''worked hard,'' and ''value[d] education.'' Consequently, these cultural similarities between Puerto Ricans and Dominicans and other ''Latino'' groups appeared to serve as a basis for cognitively lumping together all of these groups together.

As noted previously, spatial location also appears to have contributed to Longwood officers' lumping of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans with other ''Latinos.'' In part due to the spatial clustering of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans with other ''Latino'' groups in the southern and north central part of Longwood, all 18 Longwood officers came to view residents in these sections as ''Latino.'' The spatial separation of ''Latino'' groups from Blacks also appears to have played a significant role in this lumping process. Unlike Coretown officers, who lumped Blacks and Latinos together at AHS and OCC in Coretown, Longwood officers saw Blacks and Latinos as distinct groups that occupied distinct spaces. Longwood officers made reference to ''Latino'' neighborhoods, which officers saw as being clearly separate from ''Black'' neighborhoods.

Longwood officers' spatial distinction between Latinos and Blacks was amplified by the officers' perception of stark cultural differences between all Latino ethnic groups and Blacks. Officers stressed differences between Latinos and Blacks in terms of several social control–related practices, especially those relating to parenting, demeanor, and property maintenance. In arguing that Latinos' parenting/disciplinary practices were the antithesis of Blacks' practices, 14 of the officers recounted a narrative involving several different Black male teen arrestees who, after being released to the custody of their parents, were back on the street in an hour or two. In comparing the demeanor of the two pan-ethnic groups, officers noted how Latinos, unlike Blacks, were respectful and did not try to ''give [the officers] attitude'' or ''stare [them] down.'' Sixteen officers also contrasted the neat and well-maintained properties of all Latino groups except for Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, with the run-down, uncared for properties of Blacks. Although Longwood officers, unlike both Coretown and Middleboro officers, recognized ethnic distinctions among Latinos, the officers' intergroup cultural comparisons helped to unify ''Latinos'' in a coherent category whose meanings clearly set them apart from those in the ''Black'' category.

Longwood Officers' Approach to Patrolling Latinos

Longwood officers' approach to patrolling Latinos mirrored their schematic representations. Consistent with their characterization of Latinos as nonthreatening, Longwood officers engaged in laissez-faire patrolling of Latinos in all town spaces. While Longwood officers spent a disproportionate amount of their patrolling time surveilling the town's Black residents, particularly when Blacks walked in groups outside of the town's ''Black'' northeastern section, officers virtually ignored Latinos. Longwood officers only stopped, spoke to, or motioned to Latino pedestrians on a couple of occasions when these pedestrians were in the presence

of two or more Black students walking from Longwood High School through a pre-dominantly ''White'' section of town.

Likewise, Longwood officers appeared to take no interest in Latino motorists. Indeed, Longwood officers stopped no Latino motorists during the course of my observations. Although the latter finding is somewhat tempered by the fact that Longwood officers engaged in very little traffic enforcement overall, particularly in comparison to that of Coretown officers, it is striking considering some of the very same Latino motorists whom Coretown officers were disproportionately stopping and ticketing were likely traveling unimpededly in Longwood.

Middleboro Officers' Schematic Representations of Latinos

While Latinos occupied a significant, salient part of officers' racial schemas in Coretown and Longwood, Latinos occupied a marginal place in Middleboro officers' schemas. Middleboro officers described Middleboro as a ''Black and White'' town and had very little to say about ''Latinos.'' Similar to Coretown officers, Middleboro officers viewed Latinos as a monolithic group, and cited a lack of familiarity with Latinos due to a dearth of Latino residents (see Table 2). Similar to Longwood officers and in marked contrast to Coretown officers, Middleboro officers exhibited a laissez-faire approach toward Latinos in all spaces. However, unlike Longwood officers' approach, Middleboro officers' approach was driven by a concern of incurring the wrath of powerful residents.

Like Coretown officers and unlike Longwood officers, Middleboro officers did not view ''Latino'' as a pan-ethnic category made up of diverse ethnic groups. Similar to Coretown officers, Middleboro officers occasionally used the term ''Mexican'' interchangeably with ''Hispanic,'' suggesting that Middleboro officers viewed all ''Latinos'' as ''Mexicans.'' Even the only ''Latino'' Middleboro officer in the sample used pan-ethnic terms (''Hispanic'' and ''Latino'') rather than specific Latino ethnic group terms.

While Middleboro and Coretown officers shared a monolithic view of Latinos, the two sets of officers' respective descriptions and views of Latinos otherwise differed dramatically. Although both Middleboro and Coretown had negligible Latino residential populations, the absence of a significant residential population in Middleboro, unlike that in Coretown, did not correlate with officers' reliance on Latino stereotypes. None of the Middleboro officers used derogatory stereotypes—criminal or otherwise—to describe Latinos. Middleboro officers' nondescript accounts of Latinos starkly differed from the officers' highly negative, stereotypical accounts of Blacks living in Middleboro's southeastern section. Middleboro officers suggested that these Blacks were involved in a wide range of criminal activity. Similar to Coretown officers, Middleboro officers also saw Black nonresidents as a threat, because officers believed these nonresidents brought illegal drug- and gang activity into Middleboro, and corrupted Middleboro youth, particularly in the southeastern part of town. In contrast, Middleboro officers gave no indication that Latinos posed any threat.

Middleboro officers generally were indifferent when discussing Latinos, implying that Latinos were innocuous and of no concern.

Middleboro officers' apparently neutral view of Latinos was consistent with the officers' expressly noted emphasis on uniformly patrolling all racial groups in a cautious manner. This cautious approach appeared to be linked to the "in place" legitimacy that most spaces conferred to all racial groups. One of the communal-based factors that contributed to Middleboro officers' perceptions that all racial groups were legitimately present in most spaces was the town's racially integrated residential and school-related spaces (see Table 3). In contrast to Longwood, Middleboro was characterized by a high degree of racial integration in many of its residential neighborhoods. Moreover, unlike Longwood's process of assigning students to elementary and middle schools based on geographic proximity, Middleboro's assignment process for students in kindergarten through eighth grade was done through a random selection process, meaning that children of all races had an equal chance of attending a school anywhere in Middleboro. Fifteen of the 16 Middleboro officers indicated that this assignment process essentially legitimized the presence of anyone throughout most of the town, as officers expected children and adults to forge ties regardless of where they lived. Accordingly, unlike both Coretown and Longwood officers, it did not strike Middleboro officers as odd to see people of different races interacting in any residential neighborhood.

Besides spatial arrangements, powerful constituency groups appeared to significantly contribute to the conditioning of Middleboro officers' racial schemata. Middleboro officers talked at length about a highly organized and vocal coalition of "liberal" Black and White middle- to upper middle-class residents. Middleboro officers indicated that these powerful Black and White residents vigilantly monitored the police, particularly in terms of how the police handled racial minorities. Officers seemed especially concerned that these residents could organize rallies protesting police practices or complain about the police to various media, such as the local newspaper or the town's unofficial website, or to rights-based organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Officers' narratives regarding their concerns about incurring the wrath of this powerful Black/White coalition disproportionately focused on White residents who intervened on behalf of Blacks. For instance, all Middleboro officers recounted an incident in which a White female resident got into a heated verbal exchange with officers in the middle of street over the officers' handling of some Black youths who allegedly possessed a gun.

Although Middleboro officers' accounts regarding the town's Black/White coalition centered how it responded to policing that appeared to unfairly target Blacks, 14 of the 16 officers expressly indicated that they had to be careful in how they approached Latinos due to this coalition's "liberal" leanings. One White Middleboro officer remarked:

> There's not that many Hispanics around here like in other places, but that doesn't matter. The people here are so liberal, they're like, "He's my brother." They'd have a shitfit if

we even went near any [Hispanics] hanging out on the corner. Yeah, this is like the liberal capital of the world.

Middleboro officers' perception of the majority of residents' support for Latinos was particularly evident when the officers discussed the issue of Latino day laborers. Twelve Middleboro officers suggested that the dominant Black/White coalition supported the rights of Latino laborers under a rubric of promoting and safeguarding diversity. For instance, a White Middleboro officer remarked:

> In most places … the people are up in arms about these guys hanging out on the corners looking for work. Not here; they love diversity here …. So yeah, even if these guys were standing on the street corners, they wouldn't mind. They wouldn't want us going near them. If we tried chasing 'em out, the next thing you'd know they'd be callin' the ACLU or organizing some kind of rally …. It's all about rights and diversity.

As this Middleboro officer's comments suggest, the majority of Middleboro officers felt that they had to cautiously approach Latinos, as well as other racial minorities, due to pressures from the majority of residents to maintain a diverse community in which everyone's rights were respected and protected. This cautious approach was glaringly different than the aggressive, confrontational approach that Coretown officers routinely exhibited in their encounters with Latino laborers.

Middleboro Officers' Approach to Patrolling Latinos

Middleboro officers' approach to patrolling Latinos matched their schematic representations. Consistent with their characterization of Latinos as nonthreatening, Middleboro officers engaged in laissez-faire patrolling of Latino pedestrians and motorists in all town spaces. While Middleboro officers also generally engaged in laissez-faire patrolling of Blacks in most spaces in town, officers routinely surveilled and confronted some seemingly lower class Blacks in the vicinity of an upscale shopping area along Belton Avenue. In contrast, officers routinely ignored those who appeared to be Latino who were either within or near this shopping area. Fourteen of the 16 officers expressly noted that there were a lot of Latinos who worked in the restaurants in this shopping area, which for the officers, appeared to confer a legitimacy to Latinos' presence in this commercial space that was lacking for seemingly lower class Blacks. Thus, unlike Latinos in Coretown, Latinos in Middleboro were perceived by officers as nonthreatening based on their work-related ties to commercial space.

Discussion

Consistent with the findings of Goldsmith et al. (2009), Romero (2006), Vera Sanchez and Adams (2011), and Warner (2005–2006), the findings from Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro reveal variability in the policing of Latinos. However, unlike these prior studies, the extant study identifies some of the specific communal features and processes that condition officers' schemas with respect to Latinos (and

other groups) in significant, variable ways across communities. This differential conditioning stems in part from variation across towns with respect to the type of communal features/processes that are most salient to officers (see Table 3). For instance, cultural information was most salient to Longwood officers, whereas constituency-related information was most salient to Middleboro officers. More-over, even when particular communal structural features were similarly present in two or all three communities, such features did not necessarily have the same effect on officers' schemata. Both Coretown and Middleboro were characterized by an absence of Latino residents and a presence of Latino nonresident workers, yet Core-town officers demonized Latinos as "criminals" and aggressively patrolled Latinos, whereas Middleboro officers were largely indifferent to Latinos and engaged in laissez-faire patrolling of them. This shows that the meanings that officers attach to a particular communal feature depend on the overall context of the community and how those fea-tures relate to other communal structures/processes. Moreover, the variability of how officers' perceived and patrolled Latinos across these three communities suggests that policing research that treats "Latino" as a category with fixed meanings across contexts may miss important local, communal differences in policing.

While the findings from these three towns suggest that ascertaining how members of a pan-ethnic group will be policed in a *particular* community requires an in-depth, holistic assessment of the specific configuration of communal factors within that com-munity, these findings provide some insights about communal features/processes that may assist in theorizing how officers view and patrol racial minority groups in other communities. Two communal structural features that appear to contribute to a more favorable view of and approach toward a minority group are the presence of a discern-ible residential population of that group coupled with favorable cultural information. This combination of demographic and cultural information is key because it is tied to officers' sense of familiarity with the group. Such familiarity helps to neutralize any threat-based stereotypes that officers may have internalized from sources beyond the community. While the relative absence of a residential population of a group is not dis-positive (e.g., there were few Latino residents in Middleboro, yet officers did not see Latinos as a threat), the presence of a discernible residential population of a particular racial group provides officers with a population from which to base perceptions rather than relying on secondhand stereotypes. Cultural information about that population, par-ticularly cultural information that signifies informal social control and orderliness (e.g., parenting and property maintenance information), is likely to lead to a benign view of that group and laissez-faire patrolling akin to that of Latinos in Longwood.

Another communal feature that potentially contributes to a more favorable view of and approach toward a racial minority group is the presence of "model" ethnic groups within the racial group. The findings from Longwood suggest that officers make intraracial comparisons of ethnic groups when such information is available. Long-wood officers' overall positive view of Latinos was shaped in part by officers' lumping of all "Latino" ethnic groups with the model Portuguese residential group. Such lumping appears to be more likely when such ethnic groups are spatially clus-tered together.

In a related vein, officers' favorable assessment of a particular racial group also seems more likely when there exists another racial minority group that officers view in highly negative terms and see as distinct from the former group. In Longwood, officers' positive view of Latinos was bolstered by the presence of a disfavored Black residential population that officers saw as both culturally and spatially distinct from Latinos. For Longwood officers, Latinos were nonthreatening in part because they were different and spatially segregated from "threatening" Blacks. In contrast, Coretown officers' negative assessment of Latinos was in part amplified by officers' association of Latinos with "threatening" nonresident Blacks in certain spaces. Such interracial comparisons appear to play a significant role in shaping officers racial schemas within a particular community.

The findings from the three towns suggest that spatial information not only helps officers to distinguish or lump racial groups but also triggers particular racial meanings. Consistent with Rubinstein (1985), certain spaces at certain times activated meanings associated with Latinos and other racial groups. Officers' spatially based assessments of racial meaning appeared foremost to be tied to what officers perceived members of particular racial groups were doing in certain spaces. For instance, Coretown officers' laissez-faire approach to Black, but not Latino, motorists on Coretown's through streets appeared to be largely based on the officers' assumptions that Black motorists traveling on east–west through streets were simply passing through town, whereas Latino motorists were possibly stopping in the downtown area to engage in illegal drug or other criminal activities. Likewise, Middleboro officers' favorable assessments of seemingly lower class Latinos, but not Blacks, in the vicinity of the upscale shopping area along Belton Avenue seemed to hinge on officers' assumption that Latinos, unlike Blacks, worked at establishments in this area. Consistent with prior symbolic interactionist studies that have noted how various symbolic objects (e.g., an identification card) can legitimize the presence of the possessor of such objects (see, e.g., Anderson, 1990), the findings from Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro highlight how racial minority groups' activities associated with particular spaces at particular times can potentially confer "in place" legitimacy (Cresswell, 1996). We should thus expect officers to have a more favorable view of and approach toward a racial minority group in communal spaces where officers perceive members of that group as engaging in innocuous, legitimate activities.

In addition to the communal information that officers gather about a particular minority group, information pertaining to the power and interests of the dominant constituency group/groups can play an important role in conditioning officers' racial schemata and patrolling practices. We should expect officers to engage in a more restrained, laissez-faire type of patrolling with respect to a racial minority group, regardless of the officers' views of that group, where officers perceive that the community's dominant constituency group/groups is/are opposed in some way to targeting of that group. Notwithstanding negative views of some Blacks, officers in both Middleboro and Coretown showed restraint in patrolling such Blacks in certain spaces. In Middleboro, officers' restraint was due in large part to concerns about angering the town's powerful liberal Black/White constituency, and in Coretown,

officers' restraint was based in part on upsetting the town's powerful White business and civic leaders.

While officers' apparent attentiveness to the concerns of dominant constituency groups is consistent with conflict theory (Chambliss & Seidman, 1971), officers' sometimes lenient approach toward some racial minority groups contravenes the theory's racial group threat thesis. The findings also do not present a cross-communal pattern that supports the racial hierarchy perspective's premise that the police patrol Blacks more harshly than Latinos. Coretown officers' aggressive policing of Latinos in all spaces, but laissez-faire approach toward Blacks traveling on through streets, runs counter to the racial hierarchy perspective's assumption that Latinos occupy a higher position than Blacks in the social order. Likewise, with the exception of their patrolling of the upscale shopping center along Belton Avenue, Middleboro officers' similar approaches toward Latinos and Blacks is inconsistent with the racial hierarchy perspective. Although the overall body of research on the policing of Latinos lends support to the racial threat perspective (see, e.g., Bornstein et al., 2011; Duran, 2009; Goldsmith et al., 2009; Herbert, 1997; Portillos, 2004; Roh & Robinson, 2009; Romero, 2006; Skogan, 2006; Solis et al., 2009; Vera Sanchez & Adams, 2011), the findings from Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro suggest the need for a more nuanced theoretical approach that treats officers' racial meanings and patrolling approaches as communally situated.

The findings herein provide an initial step toward developing a theoretical model regarding the communal conditioning of officers' racial schemata and patrolling of racial minorities. In order to further develop this model, future studies should examine communities with a diverse range of features. With a more refined model, we will be better able to predict the types of communal features and processes that lead to either more or less equitable policing outcomes for members of different pan-ethnic groups.

Notes

1. Consistent with De Genova and Ramos-Zayas (2003), I treat "Latinos" as a "race group." Officers discussed "Latinos" as a racial grouping distinct from that of Blacks and Whites. Although officers typically employed the term "Hispanic," I use the term "Latino" to describe this pan-ethnic group.
2. The greater influence that local communities exert upon officers is implicitly suggested by Warren, Tomaskovic-Devey, Smith, Zingraff, and Mason's (2010) finding showing that local police were more likely than state highway patrol to stop people based on race.

3. While neither macro-level studies nor symbolic interactionist studies have addressed the influence that various community constituencies potentially exert upon officers working within a given community, a handful of studies examining community policing (see, e.g., Herbert, 2006; Skogan, 2006) have examined such influence. However, "community influence" in these community policing studies is generally limited to the direct, formal input of community constituencies that police departments actively solicit. What is lacking is a consideration of the ways in which community constituencies and other features of community *informally* and *subtly* influence officers' cognition with respect to different racial groups, even when officers are not directly soliciting input from the community.

4. Power here refers to the ability to affect outcomes (Weber, 1947).

5. Officers' concerns about disorder may act as a cue to police independent of, or with little connection to, the actual presence of crime in an area (Parker et al., 2004).

6. Coretown, Longwood, and Middleboro are pseudonyms. Pseudonyms are also used for all references to places within these communities.

7. The majority of officers in each town were White (92% in Coretown, 91% in Longwood, and 84% in Middleboro) and male (96% in Coretown, 98% in Longwood, and 92% in Middleboro).

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Author Biography

Paul Reck is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Ramapo College. Dr. Reck received a Ph.D. in Sociology from Rutgers University in 2010, and a J.D. from City University of New York in 1992. Dr. Reck's research focuses on how constructions of race and class contribute to variable outcomes within criminal justice contexts.