



# The myth(?) of the police sub-culture

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**Abstract** *This study examines empirically the extent to which there is evidence of an endemic sub-culture of policing among a sample of sheriffs' deputies. While failing to observe widespread adherence to the sub-cultural norms and values suggested in the literature, such adherence is observed among a subset of our sample. Advanced statistical techniques (i.e. cluster analysis and discriminant function analysis) are then used to create, replicate, and validate a numerical taxonomy of policing. The taxonomy reveals three types of law enforcement orientations: "Sub-Cultural Adherents," "COP Cops," who represent a nouveau sub-culture strongly committed to public service, and "Normals," who, on average, are quite average and are not especially committed to either sub-cultural form.*

Both those working in the sociology of work and occupations and those in industrial/occupational psychology acknowledge that employees tend to adopt job-specific sub-cultural responses (i.e. shared beliefs, attitudes, values, and norms) to the contingencies they experience in their organizational and occupational environments (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Manning, 1995; Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985; Ritti, 1994; Sackmann, 1991; Schein, 1985). Criminologists working within these perspectives have consistently noted the unique sub-cultural responses of criminal justice practitioners, especially law enforcement and correctional officers, given the particular characteristics of these fields (Bayley and Bitner, 1984; Bitner, 1974; Black, 1980; Brown, 1981; Chan, 1997; Crank, 1998; Drummond, 1976; Farkas and Manning, 1997; Fielding, 1988; Kappeler *et al.*, 1994; McNamara, 1967; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1985; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1974; Westley, 1970). That is, the occupational environment of criminal justice includes exposure to human misery, exposure to great situational uncertainty, and exposure to intrinsic danger, all coupled with high levels of coercive authority and "invisible discretion" granted to these officers which enable them to carry out their mandates. Moreover, most criminal justice employees work in unique organizational environments which expose them to rigid, militaristic authority structures with fixed lines of command and communication that are coupled with often vague and conflicting



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guidelines for policies and procedures (Bitner, 1974; Lundman, 1980; Neiderhoffer, 1967). As a result, these employees are faced with tremendous job-related stressors. In an effort to cope with these working conditions, these employees are said to adopt a unique sub-cultural response.

For the police and other law enforcement officers, this sub-cultural response, the police sub-culture, is presumed to be made manifest in the manner by which officers perceive their role as police and the scope of this role; their beliefs regarding how their role should and should not be performed; and their attitudes toward the criminal law, criminal procedures including departmental policies, the police and other criminal justice practitioners, criminal offenders, victims, and witnesses, even citizens as a whole[1].

More specifically, adherence to this police sub-culture includes:

- negative attitudes toward the various legal restrictions placed upon their efforts to effectively fight crime – “handcuffing the police;”
- negative, skeptical attitudes toward legal institutions and other elements of the criminal justice system – “the courts are too lenient;”
- negative and suspicious attitudes toward police administration and the police bureaucracy – “departmental policies and procedures are too burdensome and ineffective;” and
- negative, cynical attitudes toward the citizenry – “they are all a bunch of liars and crooks.”

This culture idealizes aggressive and authoritative/take-charge approaches to policing such that crime fighting is accorded very high priority and the order maintenance and service elements of the police role are devalued and are seen as “baby-sitting” and/or “social work.”

This strong orientation toward crime-fighting and the accompanying negative attitudes toward due process limitations placed on the police by the appellate courts give rise to additional elements of the police sub-culture. These outlooks, for instance, can lead to abuses of police authority (Chevigny, 1969, 1995; Kappeler *et al.*, 1994; Shearing, 1981; Skolnick, 1966; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993; Westley, 1970). The sub-culture of policing stresses the individual autonomy of police officers, especially their need to take the initiative on the streets and during police-citizen encounters in order to effectively control crime (Manning, 1995; Sykes and Brent, 1980). These outlooks are also the basis for the sub-cultural preference among many police officers for selective enforcement of the law in which the focus is on the more serious violations of the law (Brown, 1981). Selective enforcement and the use of illegitimate tactics as a means of fighting crime can, in turn, give rise to tensions within the community and to citizen complaints against these officers (Brown, 1981; Westley, 1970).

The uncertainty and danger associated with policing have also contributed to this sub-culture. It is argued that the police respond to these work conditions by being highly suspicious; every situation is read in terms of its potential for danger and every person is viewed as a liar and a crook (Van Maanen, 1974).

Such an outlook leads sub-cultural adherents to “maintain an edge” while on the street (Van Maanen, 1974, p. 118). Their world becomes an insular dualism of “us versus them” (Rubenstein, 1973; Sparrow *et al.*, 1990; Tauber, 1970). They come to see themselves as the “thin blue line” that prevents society from slipping permanently into moral decay and unrest. In essence, a primary element of the police sub-culture is a great level of cynicism and suspicion which is carried by them into their encounters with the citizens they have been hired to serve and protect. This, in turn, only adds to the tensions between the police and their community.

Finally, the police sub-culture stresses an orientation which simultaneously grants autonomy to each officer yet demands from them unyielding loyalty to the group (Broderick, 1977; Brown, 1981; Manning, 1995; Muir, 1977; White, 1972). These strong norms of group loyalty are said to produce a “code of silence” among fellow officers under which they are not to “snitch” on one another (Bitner, 1967; Brown, 1981; Chevigny, 1995; Reiner, 1985; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Rubenstein, 1973; Shearing, 1981; Westley, 1970). The code of silence impedes efforts to detect and investigate corruption and other forms of police deviance/misconduct. Hence, not only are sub-cultural adherents suspicious and cynical in their orientations toward the citizenry, they are also suspicious and distrusting of the police bureaucracy, especially upper administration. These officers tend to view the police bureaucracy as too politically motivated, as ineffective and burdensome, and as punitive; they see police officials as more inclined to punish them for their procedural errors (Walker, 1977) than to reward them for the substantive successes produced from these “shortcuts” (i.e. arrests, confessions, evidence, tips, etc.). Thus, sub-cultural adherents are encouraged by their group to “lie low” and “fly under the radar” (Paoline *et al.*, 2000, p. 578); that is, to remain, as much as possible, invisible to upper administration. They are expected to adopt a “cover your ass” attitude, which also covers their partners’ and other officers’ (Chevigny, 1995; Westley, 1970). These attitudes may also lead police officers to confront and negate any reform efforts, especially community-oriented policing, through group resistance (Greene *et al.*, 1994; Lurigio and Skogan, 1994; Sadd and Grinc, 1993).

No doubt there are additional elements of this police sub-culture which we have neglected to include in our brief description. Nevertheless, our account is fairly complete and representative, and is consistent with other efforts at detailing it (Britz, 1997; Crank, 1998; Drummond, 1976; Farkas and Manning, 1997; Fielding, 1988; Herbert, 1998; Muir, 1977; Paoline *et al.*, 2000; Reuss-Ianni, 1983). More to the point, our review of the research literature reveals several interesting contradictions regarding the police sub-culture. First, most of the research on the police sub-culture has been exploratory and descriptive in nature. These studies appear to have accepted the existence of this sub-culture without question and, thus, have sought to describe its characteristics. A key element of these descriptive efforts has been the oft-repeated claim that the sub-culture is endemic to policing and that adherence to it is widespread. However, a few studies have been more explanatory in

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nature and question whether or not such a sub-culture exists and, if found to be present, address the issue of how prevalent or widespread its adoption is among law enforcement officers (Haarr, 1997; Herbert, 1998; Jermier *et al.*, 1991; Manning, 1995; Paoline *et al.*, 2000; see also Worden (1995)). Most of these studies either fail to verify the existence of this sub-culture or observe that its prevalence is not widespread but is present among only a small segment of the police ranks (Jermier *et al.*, 1991; Paoline *et al.*, 2000). Studies which have observed its presence among some but not most officers typically proceed by developing a typology of officers based, at least in part, on the degree of sub-cultural adherence (Brown, 1981; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1978; Wilson, 1968). Rarely, however, are these typologies the product of analytic/statistical procedures designed for their construction (e.g. cluster analysis), nor are these typologies subsequently tested for their empirical validity (Bailey, 1994 – see Jermier *et al.* (1991) for an exception). This brings us to the threefold purpose of the present study:

- (1) to examine the degree of adherence to the police sub-culture in terms of the deputies' work/role orientations toward their crime control and service functions, their level of cynicism, traditionalism, and receptivity to change;
- (2) to attempt to construct a taxonomy (i.e. an empirically derived typology; see Bailey (1994) of police officers by making better use of advanced statistical procedures for doing so, specifically cluster analysis; and
- (3) to validate the taxonomy by examining the extent to which significant mean differences exist between these types across an array of socio-demographic and work experience indicators through the use of discriminant function analysis.

### **Data and methods**

The data for this study were obtained from self-administered questionnaires distributed to patrol deputies and other sworn employees in Districts I and II of the Hillsborough County, FL Sheriff's Office (HCSO). Districts I and II are two of four decentralized, semi-autonomous operational units within the HCSO. The HCSO is a full service sheriff's office, which includes law enforcement, jail operations, and bailiff and other court-related functions. At the time of the administration of the data instrument (Summer, 1997 and Spring, 1999), the HCSO comprised 2,561 personnel, consisting of 970 law enforcement deputies, 768 jail deputies, and 849 civilian employees, the rest being administrative lines and court personnel, making it one of the largest sheriff's offices in the country (Reaves, 1992).

The HCSO provides law enforcement services to the residents of the unincorporated portions of Hillsborough County, Florida. Hillsborough County is located in west central Florida and has a total population of approximately 900,000. The county seat is Tampa, with a population of nearly 300,000. The unincorporated area of the county is about 100 sq. miles in size, has a population

of approximately 500,000 and comprises diverse communities including several high-crime/low-income public housing areas, migrant-worker and rural-agricultural communities, upper-middle class “bedroom” communities, and a number of working- and middle-class areas. These areas also include several large shopping malls, many smaller retail and service-oriented enterprises, a university, hospitals and other health-care facilities, several parks and recreational areas, and a wide range of commercial and industrial facilities.

The two HSCO Districts we examined were purposively selected because their operational areas are most similar to those typical of metropolitan/municipal police departments (see Weisheit *et al.*, 1995; Christensen and Crank, 2001)[2]. Again, both districts are semi-autonomous, multi-faceted, operational units within which the SO’s effort to integrate community-oriented-agency groups wide had been well established since 1994. District I, which serves northern Hillsborough county, an area of about 79 sq. miles with a population of approximately 50,000, comprises 137 sworn employees, of whom six were in upper-administrative positions, 24 in mid-level management (i.e. sergeants and corporals), six were detectives, and 101 were patrol deputies. These personnel are 84 percent male, 80 percent white, 13 percent black, and 7 percent Hispanic. District I is dominated by the presence of a large and unstable public housing area which almost entirely comprises poor, black households and is plagued with a significant crime problem.

District II serves northeastern Hillsborough County, a much larger land mass (259 sq. miles) and larger population (approximately 155,000) than that of District I. District II comprises 193 sworn personnel, of whom five hold upper-administrative positions, 24 are in mid-level management, 14 are detectives, and 150 are patrol deputies. The demographic profile of these sworn personnel in District II very closely resembles that of District I: 84 percent male and 78 percent white. However, District II has a higher percentage of Hispanic officers (11 percent) and a lower percentage of black officers (9 percent). This variation in the racial/ethnic composition of District II personnel may have been purposeful/strategic in that this District contains a large rural-agricultural community with a significant number of low-wage and migrant laborers who are disproportionately of Hispanic background. Importantly, no District II personnel had ever worked in District I and, likewise, no District I personnel had ever worked in District II.

After the purpose of the study and the questionnaire were discussed and approved by the top command of both the HCSO and each District, a 149-item questionnaire was distributed and completed during roll call for each of the five shifts during consecutive days in August 1997 at District I and in March 1999 at District II[3]. Respondents were assured that the information they provided us would be kept confidential, that they would remain anonymous, and that their participation was voluntary. Approximately one-third (38 percent from District I and 33 percent from District II) of the sworn employees were unavailable for participation on the days of the survey administration due to court, training, illness, military duty, day-off or other personal leave. This

attrition reduced the total number of eligible respondents from both Districts to 218, of whom only four declined to participate, giving us a response rate of 98 percent[4]. However, several respondents chose not to answer every question; typically these were the socio-demographic and other "identifier" items such as age, race/ethnicity, gender, rank, shift, and assignment. The questionnaire took approximately 35-40 minutes to complete.

### *Measures of adherence to the police sub-culture*

Respondents' degree of adherence to the sub-culture of policing is measured by five distinct work/role orientation scales: crime control, service, cynicism, traditionalism, and receptivity to change. The first of these, crime control orientation, measures the importance deputies place on the law enforcement and crime control functions of their jobs. The 13-item additive scale assesses the degree to which these deputies agree or disagree (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) with a series of Likert-type statements such as: "All laws should be fully enforced at all times; otherwise people lose respect for the law;" "Law enforcement officers should not forget that enforcing the laws is by far their most important responsibility;" "Most law enforcement officers have to spend too much of their time handling unimportant, non-crime calls for service;" and "If law enforcement officers act in a service capacity, it detracts from their ability to fight crime." Item wording and frequency distributions for these 13 items are presented in the Appendix.

Several of the 13 items which comprise this scale were reverse-coded before they were entered into a principal components factor analysis from which four factors yielded eigenvalues greater than 1.00; however, the scree discontinuity test suggests that a single factor solution best represents these data. Loadings on this first factor ranged from 0.38 to 0.75 (with three items loading at 0.16, 0.19, and 0.27). Despite these three weak loadings, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the additive was 0.76 and does not improve appreciably if any or all of these three items are deleted. High values on this scale indicate a strong preference among these respondents for the crime-fighting aspects of their roles as law enforcement officers.

Respondents' work orientation toward service-related activities, an indicator of disagreement with the police sub-culture, is measured by a 14-item additive scale which was designed to assess the extent to which these deputies agree and disagree (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with a series of Likert-type statements such as: "Law enforcement officers should ask citizens what types of services they want;" "Assisting citizens is just as important as enforcing the law;" "Law enforcement should be seen primarily as a service-oriented profession rather than a crime control profession;" and "Crimes are only one of several problems about which law enforcement officers should be concerned." Item wording and frequency distributions for these 14 items are also presented in the Appendix.

Again, several of these 14 service orientation items required reverse coding before they were entered into a principal components factor analysis. This

factor analysis produced five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00; however, the scree discontinuity tests suggest that a single factor solution best represents these data. Loadings on this first factor ranged from 0.36 to 0.63 (with two items loading at only 0.20 and 0.28). The Cronbach's Alpha reliability for the additive scale produced from all 14 items was 0.74 and does not increase appreciably if either or both of the poorly loading items is/are removed. High values on this scale are indicative of a strong pro-service work orientation commensurate with the ideals of community-oriented policing and antagonistic to the police sub-culture.

Cynicism is a nine-item additive scale which measures the extent to which these deputies agree or disagree (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) with another series of Likert-type statement, such as: "Most people are untrustworthy and dishonest;" "Law enforcement officers will never trust citizens enough to work together effectively;" "Citizens will not trust law enforcement officers enough to work together effectively;" and "Most people lack the proper level of respect for law enforcement officers." Item wording and frequency distributions for these nine items are also presented in the Appendix.

As with the other scales, several of the items comprising this cynicism scale required reverse coding, so that high values on it demonstrate a cynical perception of the public and their effectiveness in contributing to the objectives of law enforcement and community-oriented policing. Prior to scaling, these items were also entered into a principal components factor analysis. This factor analysis produced a single factor solution with loadings ranging from 0.49 to 0.73; the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for this nine-item additive scale was 0.83.

Traditionalism is a six-item additive scale which measures the extent to which officers participating in this study agree or disagree (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) with a short series of Likert-type statements, such as: "In an efficient organization, power is distributed at the top;" "Participatory management schemes really do not work within law enforcement agencies;" "The quasi-military structure is the most effective organizational type for law enforcement agencies;" and "Communication works best when it follows clear, established channels from the top down." Item wording and frequency distributions for these six items are also presented in the Appendix.

Once again several items required reverse coding, so that high values on this additive scale are indicative of a traditionalist/authoritarian orientation toward the organizational hierarchy and distribution of power within a law enforcement agency and is counter-intuitive to the ideals of decentralization and officer-empowerment under community-oriented policing. Prior to scaling, these six items were entered into a principal components factor analysis from which a two-factor solution was produced; however, the scree discontinuity test suggests that a single factor solution best fit these data. Loadings on this first factor ranged from 0.35 to 0.64. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for this additive traditionalism scale was only 0.54.

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Lastly, receptivity or openness to organizational change is an additive scale comprising the following four Likert-type statement, to which respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree): “Most changes at work are problematic and ineffective” – this item was reversed-coded; “I often suggest new approaches for doing my job;” “Most changes make my work more efficient (i.e. saves time, effort, money);” and “Most changes make my work more effective (more arrests, faster response times, crime reduction).” Item wording and frequency distributions for these four items are also presented in the Appendix.

These four items measuring respondents’ receptivity to organizational change were entered into a principal components factor analysis prior to scale construction. The results suggested that a single factor solution best represented the data (i.e. only the first factor yielded an eigenvalue greater than 1.00). Loadings on this single factor ranged from 0.46 to 0.89. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for the additive scale was 0.72. High values on this scale indicate a high level of receptivity to modern organizational changes occurring within law enforcement which are antagonistic to the police sub-culture.

The existence of the traditional police sub-culture would be established by at least a sub-set of deputies with high scores on the crime control, cynicism, and traditionalism scales and low scores on the service and receptivity to change scales. Furthermore, based upon arguments raised by Paoline *et al.* (2000), we contend that female and minority officers, since they are relatively new to the ranks of law enforcement and thus constitute a form of demographic change to the composition of personnel in law enforcement agencies, should at least adhere to the police sub-culture. We also contend that adherence to the police sub-culture, for the same reasons expressed above, will be negatively associated with deputies’ level of educational experience, and rank (as coded here), but positively associated with their age and level of experience.

These demographic/work experience variables are measured as follows: respondents’ age (in years); gender (0 = female, 1 = male); race/ethnicity (0 = minority, 1 = white); level of educational attainment (a seven-point ordinal scale ranging from 1 = high school graduate/GED to 7 = advanced/graduate degree); rank (0 = corporal or higher, 1 = deputy); work experience with the HCSO (measured in months employed) and operational district (0 = District II, 1 = District I).

### *Analytic strategy and techniques*

Given the threefold purpose of this study, our analytic strategy and the statistical techniques we employ need to be carefully described. Our primary purpose is to determine whether or not there is evidence of the traditional, monolithic police sub-culture among the sheriffs’ deputies who participated in our survey and, if so, the extent of adherence to it. As such this study attempts, in part, to replicate and corroborate similar research conducted by Paoline *et al.* (2000). That is, we examine the frequency distributions and other univariate statistics for each of the five scales constructed to operationalize key components of the police sub-culture and for several of the representative



single-items measures which comprise these scales. In addition, we examine the conditional distributions of these five scales across several important socio-demographic and work-experience characteristics of these sheriffs' deputies to assess the level of consensus for the police sub-culture.

The second purpose of this study, presuming we find variation in deputies' adherence to this sub-culture, is to construct and replicate a taxonomy of police officers by making better use of advanced statistical procedures for doing so, specifically cluster analysis. The third and final purpose is to validate this taxonomy by examining the extent to which significant differences exist between types across an array of socio-demographic and work experience indicators. In addition, we attempt to validate the taxonomy with a discriminant function analysis in which the taxonomy is employed as a nominal scale dependent variable and is modeled by these socio-demographic and work experience characteristics of these deputies.

To accomplish taxonomy construction and replication we first parse our data according to the operational districts from which the deputies are employed. District I data are used for taxonomy construction, while District II data are used for replicating the taxonomy. Those unfamiliar with the multivariate statistical techniques we employ, namely cluster analysis for taxonomy construction and replication and discriminant function analysis for taxonomic validation, will find very helpful descriptions by Bailey (1994) and Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1984) regarding cluster analysis and by Klecka (1980) on discriminant function analysis.

*Cluster analysis for taxonomy construction.* Cluster analysis is a multi-dimensional statistical method of synchronic (cross-sectional) empirical classification of observations into a numerical taxonomy of polythetic classes/types. We derive our dimensions (independent variables) theoretically from the police sub-culture literature. Because these dimensions are based on five additive scales, the cluster analysis groups observations into classes that are empirically similar, but not identical, in their characteristics on these five equally weighted dimensions. Hence, our analyses yield mutually exclusive classes which are exhaustive of the observations in our data. In the current analysis we employ an agglomerative, hierarchical clustering technique. Specifically, we employ Ward's (1963) hierarchical clustering method.

Hierarchical clustering models involve sequential, iterative clustering and re-clustering of the data until all observations/clusters are clustered into a single cluster. Thus, agglomerative cluster analysis produces between one and  $N$  clusters. Various diagnostic information is then utilized to determine the "best" number of "true" clusters. In sum, we employ SAHN clustering methods (Sneath and Sokol, 1973); SAHN stands for sequential, agglomerative, hierarchical, and non-overlapping.

Cluster analysis produces one or more "valid" clusters with the raw data, but it does not assist the researcher with interpretation (Bailey, 1994, pp. 61-3). It is up to the researcher to give interpretive meaning to the observed clusters. This is done by examining the "profile" of each cluster and determining the

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underlying character of the type produced. The profile of a cluster refers to the within-cluster univariate statistics (means, standard deviations, etc.) for each of the dimensions/variables used in its construction. From these values the clusters are “interpreted.” In the present case, we are employing cluster analysis in a confirmatory manner. That is, we are examining these data for evidence of the police sub-culture. Should an endemic police sub-culture be present, then a single cluster solution will be produced and the profile of this cluster will closely resemble the characteristics of the police sub-culture. Should only a subset of these sheriffs’ deputies adhere to the police sub-culture, then cluster analysis will produce a multi-cluster solution and the profile of one of these clusters will closely resemble the characteristics of the police sub-culture. The presence of a police sub-culture is, thus, revealed in a single cluster that is characterized by high mean values on the crime-control, traditionalism, and cynicism scales and, conversely, low mean values on the service and receptivity to change scales. In addition, this profile should also reveal limited variation around these means in the form of small standard deviations. The profiles of any other clusters are of secondary importance to our purposes and their interpretations will be more challenging for us but we proceed in a similar manner of identifying the characteristic or dimensional profile of each.

Once a clustering solution has been identified, it is necessary to validate it (Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1984). We do so through two separate processes: replication and association with external variables (predictive validity). With regard to replication, we apply cluster-analytic methods first to the data derived from our sample of sheriffs’ deputies in District I. We then apply these same techniques to the data derived from the sample in District II and examine the degree to which the same method applied to different samples produced the same clustering solution. We also attempt to validate our clustering solution by examining the predictive validity of the resultant classes. We accomplish this task by two different statistical techniques. First, we test for significant differences between the resultant classes across an array of external variables (variables not used as dimensions in the original construction of the clusters) measuring deputies’ socio-demographic and work experience characteristics. Second, we test the degree to which these socio-demographic and work experience characteristics accurately predict deputies’ classification. Because a classification scheme is a nominal level dependent variable, the method of analysis used is discriminant function analysis.

*Discriminant function analysis.* Discriminant function analysis is a statistical technique for examining differences between two or more groups of observations with respect to several exogenous variables (Klecka, 1980, p. 7). It can be used to test the effects of exogenous/discriminating variables on a nominal dependent variable, such as a typology, and/or to classify observations into the typology based upon their values on the exogenous or discriminating variables. For the purposes of the current study, we make use of both of these functions of discriminant function analysis. That is, we hope to validate the taxonomy of sheriffs’ deputies produced during the cluster

analysis. Thus, our exogenous variables (i.e. deputies' socio-demographic and work experience characteristics) should effectively discriminate between classes on the typology. In addition, the discriminant function analysis validates the taxonomy, if it can successfully classify the same observations into these classes based upon first, the same dimensions used in the cluster analysis (i.e. indicators of adherence to the police sub-culture) and/or second, other discriminating external variables (i.e. deputies' socio-demographic and work experience characteristics). In doing so, discriminant function analysis provides evidence on whether or not each of these "discriminating" variables "discriminates" and, if so, how well they "discriminate."

Observations, once classified by discriminant function analysis, can be compared with their "true" group classification and measures of classification accuracy generated. In this way, we can validate the classificatory efficacy of the original dimensions (measures of deputies' adherence to the police sub-culture) used in the cluster analyses. If our taxonomy of sheriffs' deputies is valid, then other indicators of these deputies' characteristics should also effectively discriminate between these groups; thus, establishing the predictive validity of the taxonomy. Specifically, we anticipate that age, gender, race/ethnicity, level of educational attainment, rank, amount of experience, and operational district should each discriminate sub-cultural adherents, if any, from the rest of the officers. We anticipate that younger deputies, females, minorities, those with higher levels of education, those with lower rank, and fewer years of service will not be substantially represented in the group of sub-cultural adherents.

### **Results I: evidence of a police sub-culture**

Our first research question asks whether or not there is any evidence of deputies' adherence to the police sub-culture. To answer this question we compare the observed distributions on the five scales measuring sub-cultural adherence with their hypothetical or "expected" distribution which is assumed to be a perfect normal distribution with no skewness or kurtosis. These distributions are presented in Table I. If sub-cultural adherence is widespread, then we would expect the observed means to be significantly different from the expected means for each scale; moreover, we would also expect the observed distributions to be leptokurtic (i.e. highly peaked or narrowly packed around the mean). Evidence of a significant minority of deputies who adhere to this police sub-culture, but no evidence of widespread adherence, would also be revealed by observed means that are significantly different from the expected means on these scales. The existence of this sub-set of sub-cultural adherents would also be revealed in observed distributions that are highly skewed.

The values presented in Table I suggest that, while there is some evidence of sub-cultural adherence among these sheriffs' deputies, this adherence is by no means widespread. For instance, the observed mean for the crime-control scale (31.9) is slightly below the "expected" mean for this scale (39) and the observed range of values on this scale is much more narrow than expected (13 to 50 versus 13 to 65). While the observed distribution is mesokurtic, it is also very slightly

	Expected	Observed
<i>13-Item crime-control scale</i>		
Range	13-65	13-50
Mean/median	39/39	31.9/32
Std. dev.	8.67	6.14
Percent < Mean + 1 std. dev.	84	85.5
Percent < Mean + 2 std. dev.	97.7	96.7
Skewness	0.0	0.29
Kurtosis	0.0	-0.01
<i>14-item service orientation scale</i>		
Range	14-70	31-69
Mean/median	42/42	48.7/49
Std. dev.	9.33	6.04
Percent < Mean + 1 std. dev.	84	86.5
Percent < Mean + 2 std. dev.	97.7	97.2
Skewness	0.0	-0.02
Kurtosis	0.0	0.57
<i>Nine-item cynicism scale</i>		
Range	9-45	9-43
Mean/median	27/27	24.24
Std. dev.	6.00	5.52
Percent < Mean + 1 std. dev.	84	88.5
Percent < Mean + 2 std. dev.	97.7	97.2
Skewness	0.0	0.18
Kurtosis	0.0	1.02
<i>Six-item traditionalism scale</i>		
Range	6-30	9-28
Mean/median	18/18	18.18
Std. dev.	4.00	2.95
Percent < Mean + 1 std. dev.	84	91.6
Percent < Mean + 2 std. dev.	97.7	98.1
Skewness	0.0	0.02
Kurtosis	0.0	0.87
<i>Five-item receptivity to change scale</i>		
Range	5-25	5-23
Mean/median	12/12	15.7/16
Std. dev.	4.33	2.74
Percent < Mean + 1 std. dev.	84	85.4
Percent < Mean + 2 std. dev.	97.7	98.6
Skewness	0.0	-0.19
Kurtosis	0.0	0.55

**Table I.**  
Univariate statistics on  
measures of adherence  
to police sub-culture

positively skewed, suggestive, perhaps, of a small group of sub-cultural crime-fighters. Overall, these deputies do seem to value the crime-fighting aspects of their role, but not singularly; they also value the service, order maintenance, peacekeeping, and other non-crime control aspects of policing.

This is also evident in the observed frequency distributions of the 13 items which comprise this scale. For instance, only 2.8 percent of these deputies feel that “an aggressive, tough bearing is more useful ... than is a friendly,

courteous manner” and only 4.7 percent agree or strongly agree that “problem solving should not be a part of an officer’s responsibility.” On the other hand, 64.2 percent feel that “enforcing the law is by far their most important responsibility” and 60 percent agree or strongly agree that “many of the decisions by the courts interfere with [their] ability . . . to fight crime.” Finally, 47.6 percent feel that they “spend too much of their time handling unimportant, non-crime calls for service.”

The strong service orientation of these deputies, an orientation counter to the police sub-culture, is also evident in the data provided in Table I. While the “expected” range of this 14-item additive scale is 14 to 70, the observed range is much narrower, 31 to 69. In addition, the observed mean (48.7) is above the “expected” mean for this scale (42) and the observed distribution is somewhat peaked or leptokurtic. Thus, rather than suggesting widespread adherence to the police sub-culture, these univariate statistics suggest the contrary; that is, these values are suggestive of widespread adherence to a strongly service-oriented *nouveau* police sub-culture. Evidence of this *nouveau* police sub-culture is also found in the frequency distributions for the 14 items which comprise the service orientation scale (see Appendix). For almost all of these items less than 30 percent of the deputies oppose (disagree or strongly disagree with) the service aspects of the police role. However, 56.3 percent disagree or strongly disagree that “law enforcement should be seen primarily as a service-oriented profession rather than a crime control profession.”

While these data are not very supportive of the crime-fighter elements of the police sub-culture, other data in Table I do support other aspects of this sub-culture. For instance, these deputies, or at least a subset of them, are rather cynical. The distribution on this nine-item cynicism scale is both leptokurtic or peaked and slightly positively skewed. The frequency distributions for the nine items which comprise this scale (see Appendix) are also indicative of a somewhat jaded and cynical view of the public. A substantial proportion of these deputies believe that “most people lie” (43.9); a small majority see the public as uncaring (i.e. 52.8 percent disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, “Most people do not hesitate to go out of their way to help someone in trouble”); 27 percent feel that “most people would steal if they knew they wouldn’t get caught;” and 37.1 percent feel that “most people lack the proper level of respect for law enforcement officers.”

Similarly, the data in Table I and the Appendix also suggest a degree of sub-cultural adherence with regard to deputies’ support for the traditional, hierarchical organizational structure of the sheriff’s office. For instance, the data in Table I reveal a non-skewed, leptokurtic distribution around an observed mean equal to the expected mean value for this traditionalism scale. In fact, 67.9 percent of the deputies sampled believe that “an organization should have clearly defined positions of power/authority among its members/employees.” Likewise, 72.4 percent support a chain of command and communication that “follows clear, established channels from the top down” and 54.6 percent feel that the “quasi-military structure is the most effective organizational type for law enforcement agencies.” However, less than 15 percent of these deputies feel that “subordinates

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should not be involved in either the setting or enforcing of policies and procedures” or agree with the statement, “participatory management schemes really do not work within law enforcement agencies.”

Lastly, data in Table I and the Appendix suggest mixed levels of adherence to the police sub-culture with regard to deputies’ receptivity to organizational change. For this scale we observe a leptokurtic distribution surrounding an observed mean greater than that expected for this scale, suggesting that, overall, these deputies are quite receptive to organizational change; however, this distribution is also somewhat negatively skewed, suggesting the presence of a sub-group of deputies who are not open to such changes and, thus, may constitute a group of sub-cultural adherents. The frequency distributions for the five items which comprise this scale (see Appendix) reveal a similarly mixed level of support for the police sub-culture on this dimension. While the vast majority of deputies report being slightly open or at worst neutral to the issue of organizational change, many of them are skeptical regarding the efficacy of such changes. That is approximately 35 percent of these deputies doubt that organizational changes make their work more efficient or more effective.

In sum, we find very mixed evidence of adherence to a police sub-culture among these deputies; at best, there may be a small minority of these deputies who represent this sub-culture. On the whole, our respondents are both crime-control- and community-service oriented, though they give primacy to the crime-control aspects of their work. While they are open to organizational change, they are also skeptical of such changes; likewise they tend to be somewhat cynical. They tend to support the traditional, quasi-militaristic, hierarchical structure of police agencies, but they also support a structure which provides for their input and participation in decision making. Thus, as observed in each of the small number of the previous empirical attempts to establish the existence of the police sub-culture (Haarr, 1997; Herbert, 1998; Jermier *et al.*, 1991; Manning, 1995; Paoline *et al.*, 2000; see also Worden (1995), we also find that, at best, it is present in only a small sub-set of deputies. Before we close this portion of our study, we attempt to identify the socio-demographic and work experience characteristics of those deputies who most closely adhere to these sub-cultural positions; we do so by simply examining the bivariate correlations between these characteristics and five scales of sub-cultural adherence. These correlations inform us as to whether or not the conditional distributions of these scales vary significantly across values of deputies’ socio-demographic and work experience characteristics. Table II presents Pearson’s zero-order correlations coefficients across these two sets of variables.

As is evident in Table II, only deputies’ age and rank are significantly associated with any of the five measures of sub-cultural adherence, suggesting that, but for these exceptions, the conditional distributions for the sub-cultural adherence scales do not vary across the socio-demographic or work experience characteristics of these deputies. That is, there appears to be considerable consensus across these characteristics with regard to the extent of sub-cultural

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adherence, which we noted above was, at best, rather limited. But there is evidence of variation in the conditional distributions of sub-cultural adherence with regard to deputies' age and rank. Older deputies are less cynical ( $r = -0.23$ ), less crime-control-oriented ( $r = -0.17$ ) and more service-oriented ( $r = 0.17$ ) than are younger deputies; we anticipated findings opposite to these and suggesting that sub-cultural adherence is stronger among older deputies. Similarly, those holding a rank of corporal or higher are less cynical than those at the entry-level rank of deputy ( $r = 0.13$ ). Thus, it is those with less experience (based on their age and rank) who are most likely to adhere to elements of the police sub-culture. Perhaps these younger and lower-ranking officers perceive greater pressure to express their sub-cultural allegiance than do those with more experience. Because we have observed only partial evidence of sub-cultural adherence, typically by only some of our subjects, we move now toward the construction of a taxonomy of sheriffs' deputies on the basis of variation in their degree of adherence to the five dimensions of the police sub-culture.

**Results II: an empirical taxonomy**

Table III presents findings from an agglomerative hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward's Method) based on the five sub-cultural adherence scales for those deputies deployed at one of the two operational districts sampled (District I) and a replication of this analysis for those deployed in the other operational district (District II). These findings are indicative of both a three- and a two-cluster structure to these data, though, as we will defend below, we believe that a three-cluster structure "best" fits these data. Moreover, both the original (District I) cluster analysis and its replication (District II) produced strikingly similar findings, indicating that we were able to successfully replicate the cluster structure in these data.

The cluster profiles for the three-cluster solutions from both the original analysis (District I) and its replication (District II) are reported in Table IV. For both analyses, slightly over half of the deputies form one cluster (53 percent in

**Table II.**  
Zero-order correlations for deputies' socio-demographic and work experience characteristics and the five sub-cultural adherence scales

	Measures of sub-cultural adherence				
	Crime control	Service	Cynicism	Traditionalism	Receptivity to change
<i>Socio-demographics</i>					
Age	-0.17*	0.17*	-0.23*	-0.10	0.06
Race (non-white = 0)	0.07	-0.06	-0.07	0.00	-0.03
Gender (female = 0)	0.00	0.09	0.02	0.10	-0.04
Education	-0.01	0.02	0.01	-0.11	-0.02
<i>Work experience</i>					
Rank (Corporal + = 0)	-0.05	-0.06	0.13*	0.02	0.02
Experience	-0.08	0.08	-0.10	-0.10	0.07
District (District II = 0)	-0.11	-0.03	0.11	0.05	0.01

**Note** \*  $p < 0.05$  (one-tailed  $t$ -test)

Number of clusters	RMS STD	District I: Original			District II: Replication			
		Semi- partial <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Approx. expected <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	RMS STD	Semi- partial <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Approx. expected <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
10	2.97	0.016	0.751	0.768	3.76	0.015	0.721	0.776
09	2.61	0.018	0.733	0.751	3.22	0.024	0.698	0.762
08	2.91	0.023	0.701	0.732	3.71	0.026	0.672	0.745
07	3.04	0.027	0.683	0.708	2.94	0.026	0.646	0.726
06	3.11	0.044	0.639	0.680	3.21	0.035	0.611	0.702
05	3.46	0.069	0.570	0.644	3.97	0.036	0.576	0.671
04	3.99	0.071	0.499	0.596	3.21	0.046	0.530	0.628
03	3.65	0.072	0.427	0.521	3.63	0.065	0.465	0.565
02	4.31	0.147	0.280	0.376	4.28	0.161	0.304	0.441
01	4.93	0.280	0.000	0.000	4.91	0.304	0.000	0.000

**Note:** Italicised values indicate locations for “best” number of clusters within these data

**Table III.**  
Cluster analysis and  
replication –  
diagnostics for the  
number of clusters

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
<i>District I (original cluster analysis)</i>			
CRIMCONT	32.42	40.62	26.64
SERVICE	46.06	45.49	54.91
CYNICISM	24.36	32.37	21.94
TRADITIONALISM	17.72	19.03	17.82
RECEPTIVITY TO CHANGE	15.51	13.97	16.98
LABEL	Normals	Sub-cultural adherents	COP Cops
FREQUENCY	45 (53%)	14 (16%)	26 (31%)
<i>District II (cluster analysis replication)</i>			
CRIMCONT	32.74	41.00	25.68
SERVICE	46.07	47.84	55.38
CYNICISM	23.99	31.00	20.50
TRADITIONALISM	17.67	18.96	17.35
RECEPTIVITY TO CHANGE	15.23	14.32	17.65
LABEL	Normals	Sub-cultural Adherents	COP Cops
FREQUENCY	70 (54%)	25 (19%)	34 (26%)

**Table IV.**  
Cluster profiles for  
District I (original  
cluster analysis) and  
District II (cluster  
analysis replication)

the original cluster analysis and 54 percent in the replication). The profile for this cluster, in both analyses, reveals a group of deputies whose scores on the sub-cultural adherence scales are, on average, very average. That is, these deputies report an average orientation toward crime control (District I: 32.42 and District II: 32.74 compared with the total sample average of 31.9 on this scale). Likewise, these deputies report an average orientation toward service (District I: 46.06 and



District II: 46.07 compared with an overall average of 48.7). Again this cluster of deputies reports an average level of cynicism (District I: 24.36, District II: 23.99, overall average 24.9), an average level of traditionalism (District I: 17.72, District II: 17.67, overall average: 18.0), and an average level of receptivity toward change (District I: 15.51, District II: 15.23, overall average: 15.7). Thus, the first cluster, in both analyses, is composed of deputies who, on average, are average with regard to their level of adherence to the police sub-culture and, therefore cannot be considered as adherents to this police sub-culture. Accordingly, we label this first type in our taxonomy the “Normals;” this type is represented by slightly over half of the deputies in this agency and closely resembles the “peace-keeping moral entrepreneurs” observed by Jermier *et al.* (1991).

The second cluster identified in both analyses is composed of less than one-fifth of the deputies (16 percent of the District I deputies and 19 percent of the District II deputies). The profile for this cluster suggests a group of deputies with a stronger than average crime-control orientation (District I: 40.62 and District II: 41.00 compared with an overall average of 31.9). This group is also characterized by a marginally lower than average service orientation (District I: 45.49 and District II: 47.84 compared with a total sample mean of 48.7), and a higher than average level of cynicism (District I: 32.37 and District II: 31.00 versus a sample average of 24.9). Finally, this cluster is nominally less receptive to organizational change and slightly more traditionalistic. Given its strong crime-control orientation, above average cynicism, marginally above average traditionalism, and slightly below average receptivity to change and pro-service orientation, this cluster comes closest to the ideal of adherents to the police sub-culture, though it is by no means ideally or strongly sub-cultural; nevertheless, we label this type the “Sub-cultural adherents.” The profile of this cluster closely resembles Brown’s (1981) “Old-style crime-fighter” and the “crime-fighting street professionals” observed by Jermier *et al.* (1991).

The last cluster in both the original and replication cluster analyses (31 percent of those in District I and 26 percent of those in District II) appears to be the opposite of the Sub-cultural adherent. The profile for this cluster reveals a below average crime control orientation (District I: 26.64 and District II: 25.68 versus a sample mean of 31.9), a strong service orientation (District I: 54.91, District II: 55.38 versus a sample mean of 48.7 on this scale), below average level of cynicism (District I: 21.94, District II: 20.50 versus a sample mean of 24.9), a near average level of traditionalism (District I: 17.82, District II: 17.35 versus a sample mean of 18.0), and a slightly elevated receptivity to organizational change (District I: 16.98, District II: 17.65 compared with a sample mean of 15.7). Based on this profile, we label this cluster the “COP cops,” the community-oriented policing cops, though they could also be tagged as the “service providers” because its profile closely resembles Brown’s (1981) “service” style and Jermier *et al.*’s (1991) “anti-military social workers.” Either way, this cluster appears to constitute, once again, a *nouveau* police sub-culture.

In sum, both the original cluster analysis performed on data from the District I deputies and the replication analysis conducted on the District II deputies produce evidence of two or three unique clusters of deputies. The profiles for these clusters suggests a large group of typical sheriffs' deputies who, on average, are quite average and are by no means strong adherents to a police sub-culture; we have labeled this group the "Normals." The remaining two clusters constitute sub-cultural opposites in which one-sixth of the deputies may be categorized as "Sub-cultural adherents", while the remaining one-fourth to one-third of the deputies appear to be sub-cultural rejectors, whom we have labeled "COP cops." As with the findings reported in Tables I and II, the cluster analysis and its replication both falsify the existence of widespread adherence to the police sub-culture but, at the same time, these analyses cannot rule out its adherence by at least a small component of the force. It is important to note that, when a two-cluster structure is imposed on these data, in both the original analysis and the replication analysis the first and third clusters are combined, joining the "COP cops" with the "Normals" against the "Sub-cultural adherents." This is relevant to our purposes because it, again, indicates the existence of a small group of adherents to the police sub-culture, though admittedly this adherence is not ideal.

Given the three-group taxonomy suggested by the cluster analysis, we now attempt to validate this taxonomy by examining the extent to which significant mean differences, if any, can be observed across these three types on a variety of socio-demographic and work experience variables. In addition, we employ the taxonomy as a nominal-level dependent variable in a discriminant function analysis modeled by these same socio-demographic and work experience variables.

### **Results III: validation**

Our initial efforts at validating this numerical taxonomy of law enforcement officers involves examining mean and proportional differences between types on a number of socio-demographic and work experience variables which were external to the construction of this taxonomy but for which the research literature suggests we should anticipate observing significant differences. These between-type differences on these external variables are reported in Table V. In addition, Table V reports the mean differences between type on the five sub-cultural adherence scales from which the taxonomy was produced. The differences reported in Table V produce two very clear sets of findings. First, as we would expect, the three types are significantly different across the dimensions of sub-cultural adherence from which the taxonomy was constructed. "Sub-cultural adherents", as expected, show a significantly stronger crime control orientation than the other two types; they are also more cynical and less receptive to organizational changes. Conversely, the "COP cops" have a significantly stronger service orientation than the other two types; they also have a significantly weaker crime control orientation, are less cynical, and are more receptive to change than the other two types. While these findings confirm the basis upon which these types are constructed, these significant

**Table V.**  
Mean/proportional  
differences between  
types on internal and  
external variables

	“Sub-cultural adherents” vs “Normals”	“Sub-cultural adherents” vs “COP cops”	“COP cops” vs “Normals”
<i>Mean differences</i>			
Crime control	8.51*	13.98*	-5.47*
Service	-0.26	-9.42*	9.17*
Cynicism	7.95*	10.43*	-2.48*
Traditionalism	1.26	1.21	0.05
Receptivity to change	-1.48*	-3.01*	1.54*
Age	-0.14	-3.10	2.96
Education	0.07	-0.11	0.18
Work experience	-0.43	-16.44	16.02
<i>Proportional differences</i>			
Female	0.007	-0.012	0.018
Minority	0.096	-0.032	0.129
Deputy	-0.016	0.028	-0.044
District I	-0.025	-0.068	0.043

**Note** \*  $p < 0.05$

differences do nothing to aid in validating the taxonomy, which is the primary purpose of this component of the study.

Unfortunately, the taxonomy cannot be statistically validated through the external variables (the second clear finding reported in Table V). That is, while the research literature led us to anticipate observing significant differences between these types on the external variables, we failed to observe any statistically significant mean or proportional differences. That is, the gender, racial, age, educational, and work experience composition of these three types of sheriffs’ deputies are not significantly different from one another. There are, however, several differences which, while not statistically significant, may have some substantive significance that merits further discussion. For instance, the “COP cops” tend to be both older (by approximately three years) and to have more experience in law enforcement (by approximately 16 months) than the other two types. It was our belief that sub-cultural adherence would be most manifest among the older and more experienced officers and that the younger and less experienced officers would be more inclined to express work-related values and orientations consistent with the recent organizational shifts toward community-oriented and problem-oriented policing, but this is not what we have observed in these data. Equally unexpected are the differences in the racial composition of these types. The composition of both the “COP cops” and the “Sub-cultural adherents” is slightly more minority than the “Normals” (by about 10-13 percent). We anticipated lower minority representation among sub-cultural adherents. Perhaps some of the minority officers perceive greater pressure to express such values and orientations in order to fit into an occupational realm that has historically denied them an entrance.

The lack of any statistically significant mean or proportional differences between the three types across the various “external” socio-demographic and work experience variables, as reported in Table V, replicated in our final effort to validate the taxonomy via discriminant function analysis (see Models 1 and 2 of Table VI). None of these external variables significantly assists in discriminating between the three groups. Moreover, as reported in Model 1, these external variables cannot effectively classify the observations into the taxonomy. The overall classification error rate is about 41 percent, though approximately 82 percent of the “Normals” can be correctly classified. On the other hand, only 17 percent of the “Sub-cultural adherents” can be correctly classified and only 42 percent of the “COP cops” are correctly classified. The poor performance of these “external” variables suggests that our taxonomy (and, perhaps, other police typologies available in the literature) lack predictive validity.

On the other hand, with the inclusion of the “internal” variables used to construct our taxonomy, we are able to effectively discriminate among these three types (see Model 2 of Table VI). The overall classification error rate for this model is only approximately 7 percent and between 90 percent and 95 percent of the observations within each type are correctly classified, once the internal variables are included in the model. Of the 12 “discriminating” variables employed in Model 2, only three effectively discriminate between the

	MODEL 1 (External vars. only)			MODEL 2 (with internal vars.)		
	Partial $R^2$	Wilks' Lambda	Avg. squared canonical correlation	Partial $R^2$	Wilks' Lambda	Avg. squared canonical correlation
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Age	2.28	0.98	0.011	2.16	0.23*	0.480*
Gender (female = 0)	0.32	0.96	0.023	0.88	0.22*	0.488*
Race (minority = 0)	1.47	0.96	0.019	0.40	0.22*	0.492*
Level of education	0.02	0.95	0.027	0.67	0.22*	0.491*
Rank (non-deputy = 0)	0.29	0.95	0.024	1.65	0.22*	0.486*
Level of experience	0.47	0.96	0.021	0.24	0.22*	0.493*
District (DII = 0)	0.57	0.95	0.027	2.51	0.23*	0.483*
Crime-control Service				50.70*	0.49*	0.253*
Cynicism				37.58*	0.31*	0.404*
Traditionalism				22.99*	0.24*	0.474*
Receptivity to change				0.63	0.22*	0.490*
				0.20	0.22*	0.493*
Percent correctly classified						
“Sub-cultural adherents”	16.67				90.00	
“Normals”	81.55				95.05	
“COP cops”	41.67				91.53	
Classification error rate	40.93				6.84	

**Table VI.**  
Validation of taxonomy  
– discriminant function  
analyses

three types of deputies. These are the crime-control orientation, service orientation, and cynicism scales; again, each is internal to the construction of the taxonomy. While such findings should be of no surprise, they do “validate” our taxonomy to the degree that we are able to replicate the classification scheme using an alternative statistical procedure.

### Conclusion

In our review of the extant literature regarding the police sub-culture we noted two key observations. First, most of the research on the police sub-culture has been exploratory and descriptive in nature and they appear to have uncritically accepted the existence of this sub-culture. A key element of these descriptive efforts has been the oft-repeated claim that the sub-culture is endemic to policing and that adherence to it is widespread. However, a few studies have questioned whether or not such a sub-culture exists and, if found to be present, address the issue of how prevalent or widespread its adoption is among law enforcement officers (Haarr, 1997; Herbert, 1998; Jermier *et al.*, 1991; Manning, 1995; Paoline *et al.*, 2000; see also, Worden (1995)). Most of these studies either fail to verify the existence of this sub-culture or observe that its prevalence is not widespread but is present among only a small segment of the police ranks. Second, studies which have observed its presence among some but not most officers typically proceed by developing a typology of officers based, at least in part, on the degree of sub-cultural adherence (Brown, 1981; Jermier *et al.*, 1991; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1978; Wilson, 1968); rarely, however, are these typologies the product of analytic/statistical procedures designed for their construction (e.g. cluster analysis), nor are these typologies subsequently tested for their empirical validity (Bailey, 1994 – for an exception see Jermier *et al.* (1991)).

These observations brought us to the threefold purpose of the present study:

- (1) to examine the degree of adherence to the police sub-culture;
- (2) to attempt to construct a taxonomy (i.e. an empirically derived typology; see Bailey (1994)) of police officers by making better use of advanced statistical procedures for doing so, specifically cluster analysis; and
- (3) to validate the taxonomy by examining the extent to which significant mean differences exist between these types across an array of socio-demographic and work experience indicators through the use of discriminant function analysis.

Based upon our analysis of survey data from a sample of sheriffs’ deputies, we failed to find any evidence suggestive of a police sub-culture that is endemic and widespread. However, we did find evidence of sub-cultural adherence by a segment of the deputies studied. In addition, we found evidence of a potentially *nouveau* police sub-culture that is strongly oriented toward community-service. Furthermore, we were able to produce and replicate an empirical taxonomy of sheriffs’ deputies based on their degree of sub-cultural adherence. This taxonomy suggests the existence of three types

of sheriffs' deputies: "Sub-cultural adherents," "Normals," and "COP cops." The Sub-cultural adherents come closest in their profile to the ideal of the police sub-culture but comprise only one-sixth of the sample. We, again, note the presence of what may prove to be a *nouveau* police sub-culture, the "COP cops," which places strong emphasis on the importance on the community service roles associated with policing; this sub-culture is composed of approximately 25-30 percent of the deputies sampled. About half of the subjects studied make up the primary "type" of deputies who, on average, are very average – the "Normals." Finally, we were able to partially validate this taxonomy through an alternative statistical classification process (discriminant function analysis), but the taxonomy fails to have any predictive validity in that "external" socio-demographic and work experience variables do not effectively "discriminate" between the types.

A note of caution regarding this study is necessary. Our conclusions may be premature for a number of reasons. At a minimum, these include issues of sampling and measurement. First, our study is based upon a sample of sheriffs' deputies and, thus, our findings may not generalize to other law enforcement personnel. Because sheriffs are elected officials and are thus directly answerable to the public, it is likely that they are more inclined than police chiefs to adopt an attitude to policing that is strongly service-oriented (Falcone and Wells, 1995; Bromley and Cochran, 1999). If such is the case, then this pro-service orientation is likely also to find expression in the occupational and organizational culture of a sheriff's agency. Second, our data are based upon a sample of deputy sheriffs who are employed in an agency which has adopted community-oriented policing agency-wide. This too may account for the stronger than anticipated service orientation and receptivity to organizational change observed in these data. Finally, our data were not originally collected with this study in mind; hence, with regard to this study, these data constitute secondary data and are subject to all of the measurement issues common to secondary data. Key among these may be limitations in the validity of our five measures of sub-cultural adherence. Do these scales actually measure elements of the police sub-culture? Clearly, additional research needs to be conducted in this area of inquiry before we can be confident that our findings are generalizable.

Nevertheless, since ours is one of only two or three studies which, we are aware have attempted to create, replicate, and validate an empirical taxonomy of law enforcement officers (as opposed to the subjective creation of conceptual typologies which have dominated this area of police scholarship), we are concerned about both the validity of these other typologies and the lack of scholarship critically assessing them (see Langworthy and Travis, 1998, p. 253). Importantly, however, we note the similarities of our "Sub-cultural adherents" and "COP Cops" to Brown's (1981) "Old-style crime-fighters" and "Service" styles respectively and to Jermier *et al.*'s (1991) "crime-fighting street professionals and "anti-military social workers" respectively. In our view, we are currently at a critical period

of scholarship on this subject and a considerable amount of research is now very badly needed. No longer can we blindly accept the notion of an endemic, widespread police sub-culture. In fact, we may find that there are multiple police sub-cultures in existence. In addition, we can no longer permit the construction of mere conceptual typologies when the technologies necessary for the construction of empirical taxonomies are so freely available. Lastly, we can no longer continue to presume the validity of these typologies/taxonomies when their validity can be tested empirically. It is for these reasons that we find ourselves at the dawn of scholarship regarding the study of sub-cultural responses by law enforcement officers to the unique occupational and organizational contingencies of police work and the police role.

Because of the need for more research in this area, we are discomfited by the notion of offering any policy recommendations from our work. Clearly, this research needs to be replicated and its findings corroborated before any policies should be offered. Moreover, it is clear that research is needed not only on the existence of police sub-cultures but also on their consequences for law enforcement (desirable and/or undesirable) and their origins (importation vs socialization). If police sub-cultures are found to be the product of the values, beliefs, and orientations that recruits bring with them when they enter the force, then the policy implications of this body of research should be directed at recruitment and training processes. If these sub-cultures are the product of professional socialization processes, then policies may need to be directed at academy and field training procedures and the personnel selected to offer this training. On the other hand, if these sub-cultures are found to be a consequence of the unique dangers and stresses of police work, then policy directives should focus on danger- and stress-reduction technologies and programs. To the degree that multiple sub-cultures exist, as is suggested from this study, and to the degree that they lead to both desirable and undesirable consequences, then the policies implicated would correspond to issues of officer assignment and deployment. For instance, those strongly oriented toward the service-related aspects of police work should be selected for community- or problem-oriented policing units, juvenile, public relations, etc. Conversely, those antagonistic toward service roles but strongly oriented toward crime-fighting should be deployed accordingly to high crime areas and/or special tactical or street crime units.

#### Notes

1. For an excellent discussion of the police sub-culture, readers are encouraged to examine the work of Paoline *et al.* (2000).
2. Weisheit *et al.* (1995), in a very complete examination of the conceptual and empirical issues of crime and policing in rural and small-town USA, have built an effective case for a multi-dimensional conceptualization of "rural." Based upon this multi-dimensional conceptualization, we are very confident that the unique crime and justice issues which confront rural communities and rural law enforcement, relative to those of metropolitan communities, are not characteristic of the communities served by the two operational

districts examined in this study. With regard to the “demographic” dimension of “rural” communities, both Districts I and II are densely populated, serve over 50,000 and 150,000 residents respectively, and are socially and economically tied to the greater Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area. “Economically”, these districts are not even secondarily agricultural, but, instead, are characterized by a complex division of labor which is heavily service-sector and industrial in nature. Finally, along the dimensions of “social structure” and “culture”, these districts do not resemble Weisheit *et al.*'s (1995) description of rural communities; life in these districts is heavily influenced by secondary-group interactions and is very heterogeneous. That is, these two operational districts, though located with unincorporated areas, are best characterized as “suburban” or “metropolitan fringe” and thus address a work environment similar to that of most municipal and metropolitan police departments. Thus, our examination of the extent, if any, to which these sheriffs’ deputies possess work orientations consistent with the traditional police sub-culture is not likely to be biased by our sample. For a more complete description of these districts and their communities see Bromley and Cochran (1999), Cochran *et al.* (1999) and Halsted *et al.* (2000).

3. The two-year delay between survey administrations was an accident of our research success. That is, originally we had planned only to assess District I. However, our successes there, combined with an NIJ COPS grant involving District II, allowed us to re-employ our questionnaire to these additional personnel. To our knowledge, no significant organizational changes took place in the interim, though readers should be cautious regarding any District I vs District II differences observed herein.
4. Comparisons of the socio-demographic profiles within each district of the personnel sampled with those unavailable for participation produced no statistically significant differences.

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	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>Crime control items</i>					
1. An aggressive, tough bearing is more useful to a law enforcement officer than a friendly, courteous manner	0.5	2.3	17.7	57.2	22.3
2. If law enforcement officers act in a service capacity, it detracts from their ability to fight crime	4.2	25.2	22.4	44.9	3.3
3. Law enforcement officers should not become personally familiar with the residents of the area they patrol	2.3	1.4	6.1	61.2	29.0
4. All laws should be fully enforced at all times; otherwise people lose respect for the law	10.3	20.6	27.1	38.3	3.7
5. Problem solving should not be part of an officer's responsibility	1.4	3.3	7.5	65.9	22.0
6. Good law enforcement requires that officers concern themselves with the consequences of crime and not with its root causes	0.9	14.0	16.8	51.4	16.8
7. Law enforcement officers should not forget that enforcing the law is by far their most important responsibility	11.2	53.0	22.3	12.6	0.9
8. Most law enforcement officers have to spend too much of their time handling unimportant, non-crime calls for service	15.4	32.2	24.8	26.2	1.4
9. Law enforcement officers should not have to handle calls that involve social or personal problems where no crime is involved	6.1	23.4	27.6	42.5	0.5
10. Many of the decisions made by the courts interfere with the ability of law enforcement officers to fight crime	19.5	40.5	20.5	16.7	2.8
11. If law enforcement officers in high crime areas had fewer restrictions on their use of force, many of the serious crime problems in these areas would be significantly reduced	5.6	18.1	24.7	43.3	8.4

**Table AI.**  
Frequency distributions on items measuring police sub-cultural adherence (percentages – values in italics represent sub-cultural adherence)

(continued)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12. Law enforcement officers would be more effective if they did not have to worry about "probable cause" requirements for searches as mandated by the courts	6.5	17.7	12.6	47.4	15.8
13. Law enforcement officers would be more effective if they did not have to worry about a suspect's rights during interrogations	6.5	9.3	12.6	55.3	16.3
<i>Service items</i>					
1. Law enforcement officers should be sincerely concerned about the wellbeing of the citizens in the neighborhoods they patrol	24.8	65.9	6.5	1.9	0.9
2. Law enforcement officers should make frequent informal contacts with the people in the area they patrol	17.8	69.2	10.7	1.9	0.5
3. Law enforcement officers should try to work with neighborhood residents, civic groups and the local business community to solve crime problems on their beat	19.7	69.5	8.9	1.4	0.5
4. Law enforcement officers should try to solve the non-crime problems identified by citizens on their beat	2.8	35.8	36.4	21.0	4.7
5. Law enforcement officers should ask citizens what types of services they want	6.5	44.2	28.8	19.5	0.9
6. Crimes are only one of several problems about which law enforcement officers should be concerned	4.7	65.9	18.7	9.3	1.4
7. Assisting citizens in need is just as important as enforcing the law	14.4	66.5	13.0	6.0	0.0
8. Lowering citizens' fear of crime should be just as high a priority for the HCSO as cutting the crime rate	10.3	59.8	20.6	7.9	1.4
9. Community crime problems can be solved by cooperation between law enforcement and local non-criminal justice agencies	10.2	62.8	20.7	6.5	0.5

(continued)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10. Law enforcement officers should be required to help settle family/ domestic disputes	4.2	43.5	29.4	18.2	4.7
11. Law enforcement officers should be required to handle public nuisance problems	3.8	50.7	25.4	16.0	4.2
12. Law enforcement officers should be required to attend to the sick or injured	2.8	37.7	26.9	25.0	7.5
13. Law enforcement officers should be required to assist citizens who are having problems with their cars (locked out, dead battery, out of gas, etc.)	2.3	40.2	28.5	23.8	5.1
14. Law enforcement should be seen primarily as a service-oriented profession rather than a crime control profession	2.8	20.2	20.7	44.1	12.2
<i>Cynicism items</i>					
1. Most people lie when answering questions posed by law enforcement officers	7.9	36.0	30.4	25.2	0.5
2. Most people do not hesitate to go out of their way to help someone in trouble	0.5	25.7	21.0	45.8	7.0
3. Most people are untrustworthy and dishonest	0.5	8.9	28.2	59.2	0.5
4. Most people would steal if they knew they would not get caught	1.9	25.4	26.3	43.2	3.3
5. Most people respect the authority of law enforcement officers	0.0	47.2	23.8	22.0	7.0
6. Most people lack the proper level of respect for law enforcement officers	5.2	31.9	25.4	35.7	1.9
7. Law enforcement officers will never trust citizens enough to work together effectively	0.5	8.8	21.2	60.8	8.8
8. Most citizens are open to the opinions and suggestions of law enforcement officers	0.5	54.8	25.3	18.0	1.4
9. Citizens will not trust law enforcement officers enough to work together effectively	0.5	12.4	28.6	56.7	1.8

Table AI.

(continued)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>Traditionalism items</i>					
1. To be effective an organization should have clearly defined positions of power/ authority among its members/ employees	7.9	60.0	24.7	7.4	0.0
2. In law enforcement organizations power should be evenly distributed among its personnel	4.6	44.9	22.0	26.9	0.9
3. Communication works best when it follows clear, established channels from the top down	13.1	59.3	11.7	13.1	2.8
4. Participatory management schemes really do not work within law enforcement agencies	1.4	11.7	32.9	44.6	9.4
5. The quasi-military structure is the most effective organizational type for law enforcement agencies	7.9	46.7	25.2	14.5	5.6
6. Subordinates should not be involved in either the setting or the enforcing of policies and procedures within law enforcement agencies	2.8	28.0	18.3	59.2	16.9
<i>Receptivity to change items</i>					
1. Most changes at work are problematic and ineffective	0.9	15.0	37.6	43.7	2.8
2. I can usually find some way to get around changes at work	0.5	16.4	36.9	42.5	3.7
3. I often suggest new approaches for doing things at my job	2.3	44.9	39.7	11.7	1.4
4. Most changes make my work more efficient (i.e. saves time, effort, money)	1.4	26.2	37.4	30.4	4.7
5. Most changes make my job more effective (i.e. more arrests, faster response times, crime reduction)	1.4	20.1	41.1	31.3	6.1

Table AI.