



PATTERNS OF ARREST IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ENCOUNTERS: IDENTIFYING A POLICE DECISION-MAKING MODEL

ROBERT J. KANE

Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122

ABSTRACT

Arrest patterns of police officers in domestic violence events were explored for a stratified random sample of domestic violence incidents (from police reports) in two police districts in Boston for the calendar year 1993. The initial analytic strategy used was the chi-square automatic interaction detector, which conducts segmentation modeling useful for identifying interaction effects among a predefined set of variables. The interaction effects were then entered into several logistic regression models to generate odds ratios in the predictions of arrest. Results showed that risk to the victim is the most important decision-making criterion for officers, and that officers use variable pieces of information in deciding when to make arrests in domestic violence events based on the different levels of risk. © 1999 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that historically, more than half of all American couples have experienced *minor* incidents of domestic violence (Straus and Gelles, 1990), and further, that acts of *serious* violence have been frequently committed between domestic partners. As reported by Straus and Gelles (1990), findings from the National Family Violence Survey revealed that over one-third of all violence committed against wives was serious and involved punching, kicking, biting, beating, and attacks with guns and knives. Finally, it has been shown that domestic violence is not limited to any particular (or predictable) social class. Most criminal justice in-

terventions have involved members of low socioeconomic status, though several researchers have found that domestic violence transcends SES stratification (Bassett, 1980; Coates and Leong, 1980; *Final Report*, 1984; Hart et al., 1984).

Evolving Police Response to Domestic Violence

Even in the presence of strong evidence indicating the seriousness and prevalence of domestic violence, the police response to these events has been historically restrained. In large measure, this was a function of the normative police culture, which has de-emphasized arresting domestic violence offenders even when probable

cause would allow for such an intervention (Bard and Zacker, 1974; Klinger, 1995; Manning, 1978). Rothman (1980) cites "family privacy" as the main reason why police administrators and officers have traditionally been adverse to making arrests in domestic violence situations.

Beginning in the early 1970s, the American public began to focus on domestic violence as a serious social issue (Buzawa and Buzawa, 1996; Zora, 1992). As psychologists encouraged police to assume a therapeutic role when responding to situations of domestic violence (Sherman and Berk, 1984), feminist groups publicly criticized the police for concentrating more on the ". . . social work aspect and not enough on the criminal . . ." aspect of violence against women (Langley and Levy, 1977:218). Class action lawsuits were filed in both New York City and Oakland, California in which it was argued that the arrest-avoidance approach practiced by the police departments in those cities had denied women equal protection by failing to protect battered wives (Goldstein, 1979). Walker (1993) indicated that the settlements in these lawsuits resulted in a complete restructuring of domestic-violence-response policies in both New York and Oakland, which included explicit pro-arrest approaches.

It is recognized that the results of the lawsuits represent the most influential catalysts of change in policing's collective approach to domestic violence enforcement, although scholarly research has played a role as well. It has been suggested that the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (MDVE) conducted by Sherman and Berk from March 1981 to August 1982 (Sherman and Berk, 1984) was the most important early effort by criminologists to attempt to alter police behavior related to spousal assault interventions (Garner, Fagan, and Maxwell, 1995; and Sherman and Cohn, 1989). Sherman and Berk (1984) found that subsequent offending, including domestic assault and property damage, was reduced by almost half when the (male) suspect was arrested and initially incarcerated. The MDVE led to a replication program funded by the National Institute of Justice in which six additional cities were selected as research sites to test whether the re-

sults of the MDVE could be replicated. The replication program produced conflicting results, which are summarized by Sherman (1992).

Regardless of the effects arrests have had on future incidents of domestic violence, it is clear—since at least the mid-1980s—that the police have been expected to forego the traditional arrest-avoidance posture in favor of an arrest-preferred or arrest-mandated approach to the handling of domestic violence events. In an environment where many states have passed enabling legislation allowing (and in some cases mandating) police officers to make warrantless arrests for misdemeanor domestic violence *not* committed in their presence (Zora, 1992), and where many (if not most) police departments have adopted arrest-preferred policies in response to violence between significant others (Buzawa and Buzawa, 1996), a parallel body of research has developed that examines the conditions under which police arrest alleged offenders for domestic violence.

Research on Correlates of Arrest for Domestic Violence

A substantial literature has accumulated on the correlates of arrest in domestic violence situations (Buzawa and Austin, 1993; Buzawa and Buzawa, 1996; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Hirschel, Hutchison, and Dean, 1992; Klinger, 1995; Saunders, 1995; Sherman, 1992; Zora, 1992). Though the methods of analysis have varied—as well as the results—there has emerged a threefold conceptual framework that drives the modes of inquiry. The first is the *situational context* of the domestic violence event. Studies organized around this construct generally find that the decision to arrest is based on the environmental conditions under which the violence occurs, rather than on the relationship of those involved in the incident (Sanders, 1988). Research that has measured the correlates of arrest based on situational factors have found that the use of weapons (Loving, 1980), victim/offender relational distance (Berk, Fenstermaker, and Newton, 1988; Erez, 1986), violation of restraining orders (Isaac, 1994), and the presence of children at the incidents (Buzawa and Austin,

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات