THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

Cody W. Telep
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Arizona State University
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Introduction

- “Police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best”
  - Sherman (1998: 2) on evidence-based policing

- To date that focus has typically been on what works best to reduce crime

- Crime isn’t the only (or even primary) outcome of interest currently in American policing

- Expanding the scope of evidence-based policing needed to build evidence in new areas (Telep, 2016)
  - Also need to increase officer receptivity to evidence-based policing
Outline

I. Evidence-based policing to date
   ▪ What have we learned about reducing crime?

II. What matters today in American policing?
   ▪ President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing

III. Expanding the scope of evidence-based policing
   ▪ Focus on enhancing police legitimacy

IV. Examining police officer receptivity to evidence-based policing
   ▪ Ensuring the expanding evidence base is utilized
Evidence-based policing to date

- Primarily focused on reducing crime
  - Welsh (2006: 309): “While it is acknowledged that evidence-based policing can serve other useful purposes…the main outcome of interest or ‘bottom line’ is crime prevention”

- Successful in changing the “nothing works” mindset (e.g. Bayley, 1994; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990)
What have we learned from evaluation studies?
(Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011; online at www.policingmatrix.org)
## What have we learned from systematic reviews?

(Telep & Weisburd, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
<th>Lower limit</th>
<th>Upper limit</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused Deterrence</td>
<td>DMI</td>
<td>3.317</td>
<td>1.555</td>
<td>7.072</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused Deterrence</td>
<td>Gang/Group</td>
<td>4.042</td>
<td>2.573</td>
<td>6.348</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused Deterrence</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>1.401</td>
<td>1.144</td>
<td>1.716</td>
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<td>Focused Deterrence</td>
<td>Mean Effect</td>
<td>2.991</td>
<td>1.884</td>
<td>4.748</td>
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<td>Policing Disorder</td>
<td>Mean Effect</td>
<td>1.464</td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td>1.693</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing Disorder</td>
<td>Order Maintenance</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>0.927</td>
<td>1.332</td>
<td>0.255</td>
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<td>Policing Disorder</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>1.635</td>
<td>1.359</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Spots Policing</td>
<td>Increasing Police</td>
<td>1.227</td>
<td>1.088</td>
<td>1.385</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Spots Policing</td>
<td>Mean Effect</td>
<td>1.396</td>
<td>1.233</td>
<td>1.581</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Spots Policing</td>
<td>POP</td>
<td>1.523</td>
<td>1.280</td>
<td>1.813</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Oriented Policing</td>
<td>Largest Effect</td>
<td>1.711</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>1.951</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem-Oriented Policing</td>
<td>Mean Effect</td>
<td>1.257</td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td>1.485</td>
<td>0.007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street-Level Drug Enforcement</td>
<td>Drug Calls for Service</td>
<td>1.330</td>
<td>1.071</td>
<td>1.652</td>
<td>0.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street-Level Drug Enforcement</td>
<td>Drug Offenses</td>
<td>1.530</td>
<td>0.749</td>
<td>3.126</td>
<td>0.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street-Level Drug Enforcement</td>
<td>Total Calls for Service</td>
<td>1.180</td>
<td>1.075</td>
<td>1.296</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street-Level Drug Enforcement</td>
<td>Total Offenses</td>
<td>1.090</td>
<td>0.968</td>
<td>1.227</td>
<td>0.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Policing</td>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td>1.053</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>1.133</td>
<td>0.169</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Policing</td>
<td>Violent Crime</td>
<td>1.098</td>
<td>1.015</td>
<td>1.188</td>
<td>0.020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Responders</td>
<td>Reports on Survey</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.745</td>
<td>1.243</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Responders</td>
<td>Reports to Police</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.631</td>
<td>1.180</td>
<td>0.357</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Graph

- **Crime Increase**
- **Crime Decline**
What matters in American policing?

- We now have a great deal of evidence on what works in reducing crime, but what else matters?
  - Legitimacy
  - Use of force
  - Transparency/accountability...

- “We will need to examine not just how we recruit, but who we recruit. We will need to consider the issues related to the concept of ‘police legitimacy’ and identify the best approaches to put this concept into practice. We need to fully embrace evidence-based policing and best practices. I also believe we must focus on the role of technology in policing...Finally, I believe that we must take the lead in addressing the number of sexual assault kits that are languishing in police evidence holding facilities and labs.”

- Terrance Cunningham, President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police on his priorities for 2016
U.S. Google News searches:
“police” vs. “crime” 2008-2015

Week of

Police
Crime
President’s Task Force on 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Policing

- **Building Trust & Legitimacy**: Promoting trust and ensuring legitimacy through procedural justice, transparency, accountability and honest recognition of past and present obstacles.
- **Policy & Oversight**: Developing comprehensive and responsive policies on key topics while also implementing formal checks/balances and data collection/analysis.
- **Technology & Social Media**: Balancing embrace of technology and digital communications with local needs, privacy, assessments and monitoring.
- **Community Policing & Crime Reduction**: Encouraging the implementation of policies that support community-based partnerships in the reduction of crime.
- **Training & Education**: Emphasizing the importance of high quality and effective training and education through partnerships with local and national training facilities.
- **Officer Wellness & Safety**: Endorsing practices that support officer wellness and safety through the re-evaluation of officer shift hours and data collection/analysis to help prevent officer injuries.

From: [http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/policingtaskforce](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/policingtaskforce)
Moving forward with evidence-based policing

- Need to think more broadly about building the evidence base for a variety of outcomes/questions
  - How can we increase citizen perceptions of police legitimacy?
  - How can we reduce officer use of force while maintaining officer safety?
  - How can body cameras and other technologies increase transparency and improve accountability?

- Building evidence can be more challenging here
  - How do you measure desired outcomes?
  - How do you design rigorous studies?
Enhancing police legitimacy

“Police and sheriffs’ departments should adopt procedural justice as the guiding principle for internal and external policies and practices to guide their interactions with the citizens they serve”

President’s Task Force (2015: 11)

What is procedural justice? (Tyler, 2004)

- Participation
- Neutrality
- Dignity and respect
- Trustworthy motives

Research (largely survey-based) suggests links between procedural justice, legitimacy perceptions, and compliance with the law (Tyler et al., 2015)
Can we enhance legitimacy in practice?
(Nagin & Telep, in progress)

- **Training for officers**
  - “We know virtually nothing about the short- or long-term effects associated with police training of any type.” (Skogan et al., 2015: 320)
  - Training evaluations to date seem to affect attitudes, but little impact on citizen perceptions (Wheller et al., 2013) and no careful examination of officer behavior.

- **Scripts for officers**
  - Conflicting results for a procedural justice script in Australia (Mazerolle et al., 2013) vs. Scotland (MacQueen & Bradford, 2015).
Evidence-based legitimacy policing?

- Evidence that procedural justice linked to legitimacy in citizen surveys, but translating this into policy is complicated and evidence is limited and mixed
  - Need more research for police to be evidence-based

- One issue: officer actual behavior only weakly linked to citizen perceptions about officer behavior in a New York study (Worden & McLean, 2014)
  - Procedural injustice had greater negative impact than procedural justice had positive impact
Need to move quickly!

- For these other outcomes of interest, policing practice moving faster than research
  - e.g. Effort to expand “effective” principled policing training in California statewide

- Exciting developments:
  - Bureau of Justice Assistance Smart Policing Initiative body camera projects
  - National Institute of Justice funding of research based on President’s Task Force recommendations
  - Arnold Foundation commitment to criminal justice research
Building receptivity to research
(Telep & Winegar, in press; Telep & Lum, 2014)

- Once we do have an evidence base, need to make police aware of and open to using it.

- With the crime control evidence base, surveys suggest officers know what works, but also often think ineffective strategies reduce crime.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Very Effective %</th>
<th>Effective %</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective %</th>
<th>Not Effective %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>Chiefs</td>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>Chiefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot spots policing</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random preventive patrol</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Officers n = 1,107 ; Chiefs n = 45
Are police familiar with “evidence-based policing?”
(Telep & Somers, in progress)

- Have you ever heard of the term “evidence-based policing”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers (4 agencies, n = 1094)</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors/managers (Oregon, n = 163)</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiefs/executives (Oregon, n=104)</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key words in police officer definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Word</th>
<th>Percentage Of Definitions That Included…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics/data</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective/what works</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/empirical</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation/analysis</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific places/people</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/scientific</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention/proactive</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forensics/case evidence</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How “correct” are police definitions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>No match %</th>
<th>Partial match %</th>
<th>Total match %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers (n = 250)</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors/managers (n = 106)</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiefs/executives (n=72)</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moving forward with receptivity

- Making research accessible and digestible
  - Officer education
  - Practitioner-friendly reports
  - Translation tools

- Making evidence-based policing a reality
  - Definitions matter - building a common language between police and researchers
  - Balancing research evidence and officer experience (Willis & Mastrofski, 2014, 2016)
  - Providing evidence on questions that matter to police
Conclusions

- Efforts to make policing more evidence-based have produced important lessons on how police can effectively reduce crime.

- Need to think more broadly about building the evidence base on other current outcomes of interest.

- Evidence-based policing requires not only generating and synthesizing the evidence, but getting police to utilize it.
Thank you

Cody W. Telep
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Arizona State University
Email: cody.telep@asu.edu