



Research Evidence on the Effects of Policing on Violence

Ed Maguire

Tempe, AZ

April 11, 2018



Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analyses

- Systematic Review: “A review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review.”
- Meta-Analysis: “The use of statistical techniques in a systematic review to integrate the results of included studies.”



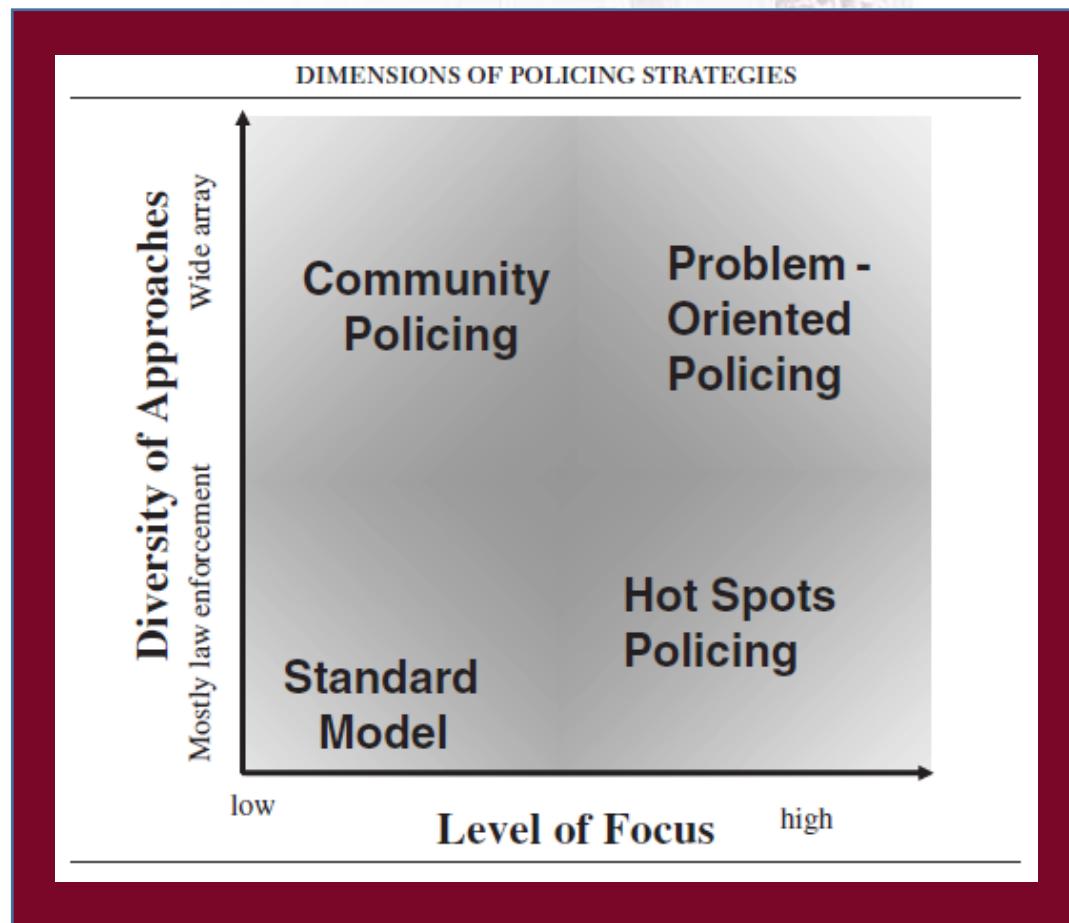
Evidence Aggregators

- CrimeSolutions.gov
- OJJDP Model Programs Guide
- Campbell Collaboration
- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development
- Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy



A Framework for Thinking About Police Strategies

Source: Weisburd, D., and Eck, J.E. (2004). What can Police do to Reduce Crime, Disorder, and Fear? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 593(1): 42-65.





Community Policing

A meta-analysis containing 37 separate estimates of the effects of community policing found that it has “positive effects on citizen satisfaction, perceptions of disorder, and police legitimacy, but limited effects on crime and fear of crime.”

Source: Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C.W., Vitter, Z. & Bennett, T. (2014). Community-oriented policing to reduce crime, disorder and fear and increase satisfaction and legitimacy among citizens: A systematic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 10(4).

Hot Spots Policing

- A meta-analysis of 16 studies found that “hot spots policing generates small but noteworthy crime reductions, and these crime control benefits diffuse into areas immediately surrounding targeted crime hot spots.”
- The meta-analysis also found that “problem-oriented policing interventions generate larger mean effect sizes when compared to interventions that simply increase levels of traditional police actions in crime hot spots.”

Source: Braga, A.A., Papachristos, A.V., & Hureau, D.M. (2014). The Effects of Hot Spots Policing on Crime: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Justice Quarterly*, 31(4): 633-663.



Problem-Oriented Policing

- A meta-analysis of ten methodologically rigorous evaluations of problem-oriented policing “found an overall modest but statistically significant impact of POP on crime and disorder.”
- The study concludes that “we should not necessarily expect large crime and disorder control benefits from this approach.... funders and the police need to invest much greater effort and resources to identify the specific approaches and tactics that work best in combating specific types of crime problems.



Focused Deterrence

- A review of 10 quasi-experiments and 1 randomized trial found that “focused deterrence strategies are associated with an overall statistically significant, medium-sized crime reduction effect.”
- “...the strongest program effect sizes were generated by evaluations that used the weakest research designs.”

Source: Braga, A., & Weisburd, D.L. (2012). The Effects of Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Evidence. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 49(3): 323-358.



Philadelphia's Offender-Focused Policing

- Using a randomized controlled trial, the evaluators found that “when police focused on offenders causing problems in hot spots, they reduced violent crime by 42% and violent felonies by 50% compared with controls.”
- The evaluators concluded that focusing police attention on “the problem people associated with the problem places” can reduce crime and minimize community concerns with trust and legitimacy.

Source: Groff, E.R., Ratcliffe, J.H., Haberman, C.P., Sorg, E.T., Joyce, N.M., and Taylor, R.B. (2015). Does What Police Do at Hot Spots Matter? The Philadelphia Policing Tactics Experiment. *Criminology*, 53(1): 23-53.



Themes

1. For many interventions, we don't know if they are effective because they have not been properly evaluated.
2. Evaluating the effectiveness of interventions using experimental or quasi-experimental designs helps to build a knowledge base about what works and what doesn't work.
3. Focused interventions are more effective than generic interventions.
4. Interventions that rely on a diversity of tactics are more effective than interventions that rely on a single tactic like arrest.