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Evaluation News provides information on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, promotes the exchange of information on evaluation and performance measurement, and publicizes criminal justice research and evaluation

Special Issue: Law Enforcement

Coming Soon: Program Areas on Policing

The BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement is currently developing program areas on Offender-based Policing and Place-based Policing. Please check the website or Evaluation News for upcoming announcements about these new program areas.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/index.html>

Law Enforcement Research Resources

BJA Smart Policing Initiative (SPI)

The goal of the Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) is to develop tactics and strategies that are effective, efficient, and economical—as measured by reduced crime and higher case closure rates. To accomplish this, the SPI seeks either to build on the concepts of offender-based and place-based ("hotspot") policing by replicating evidence-based practices or to encourage exploration of new, unique solutions to public safety problems and criminogenic circumstances. For more information on BJA's Smart Policing Initiative, see: <http://www.smartpolicinginitiative.com/>

Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (CEBCP)

CEBCP seeks to make scientific research a key component in decisions about crime and justice policies by advancing rigorous studies in criminal justice and criminology through research-practice collaborations, and proactively serving as an informational link to practitioners and the policy community. CEBCP is located in George Mason University's Department of Criminology, Law and Society and it has extensive resources on evidence-based policing. For more information on CEBCP, see: <http://gunston.gmu.edu/cebcp/>

Place-based Policing

Berk and MacDonald evaluated the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI), which is a widely publicized place-based policing initiative implemented in Los Angeles's "skid row." The goal of this initiative was to reduce the crime and disorder associated with homeless encampments. This was accomplished by reducing the density of homeless encampments through fines, citations and crackdowns on crimes like public intoxication, drug use, and prostitution. To assess the impact of the program, the authors analyzed crime in Los Angeles's skid row. Specifically, they conducted a time-series analysis that examined the impact of SCI on nuisance, property, and violent crimes in five of the Central Bureau's Police Divisions. The Central division contains the city's skid row and it served as the experimental unit, while the other four divisions served as the comparison. The comparison divisions are adjacent to the Central division and are similar on most spatial and demographic characteristics. The data utilized in this study were from

Useful resources for criminal justice program evaluation and performance measurement are available at the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation>.

January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2007. Findings indicate that: 1) the intervention was associated with reductions in nuisance, property, and violent crimes; 2) there was no evidence that crime was displaced to the control police divisions; and 3) there was some evidence of a spillover effect, meaning that reductions for all three crimes were observed in the control divisions, which had no concerted police effort. The study, *Policing the homeless: An evaluation of efforts to reduce homeless-related crime*, was published in the November 2010 issue of *Criminology & Public Policy*. It is available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2010.00673.x/abstract>

Problem-Oriented Policing

Weisburd, Telep, Hinkle, and Eck detailed the findings from their Campbell Collaborative systematic review of Problem Oriented Policing (POP). This process involved locating and reviewing all studies that have been completed on POP. A total of 5,500 studies were identified, but only high-quality POP studies were included in the systematic review. Generally, POP was defined as use of the basic tenets of the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) on problem places or problem people. The authors completed a meta-analysis of the studies. Despite the small number of eligible studies, the POP process was found to have a significant but modest positive impact on crime and disorder. The most successful studies in this review covered problems including parolee recidivism, violence in hot spots, and drug markets. The authors stated that the main finding of this review is that POP has significant promise to ameliorate crime and disorder problems broadly defined, but that large crime and disorder control benefits should not be expected from this approach. The article, *Is problem-oriented policing effective in reducing crime and disorder?*, was published in the January 2010 issue of *Criminology and Public Policy*. It is available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2010.00617.x/abstract>

Compstat – Broken Windows Policing

Jang, Hoover, and Joo examined the effectiveness of Compstat in the Fort Worth, Texas Police Department (FWPD). The term Compstat has become the shorthand descriptor of a broad management strategy involving the entire police agency's operation. It often involves the use of accurate and timely intelligence, increased command accountability, and strict enforcement against disorderly conduct and public nuisances crimes (broken windows policing). In this study, the authors sought to answer two questions. First, did the Compstat strategy produce a significant increase in "broken windows" arrests (minor nuisance offenses)? Second, what was the role of the Compstat strategy in explaining changes in violent, property, and total index crimes? To answer the first question the authors utilized a time series analysis and to answer the second, they utilized a multivariate time series regression analysis. The results of these analyses indicated that there was a significant increase in the enforcement of broken windows offenses in the FWPD following the implementation of Compstat. However, this increase was not uniform: while arrests for drunkenness increased by 69%, arrests for prostitution, vandalism, and vagrancy all declined. Analyses of the impact of Compstat on crime revealed mixed results. It was associated with significant decreases in property and total index crime rates, (after controlling for factors not associated with Compstat), but it was not associated with a significant change in violent crime. The entire study, *An Evaluation of Compstat's Effect on Crime: The Fort Worth Experience*, was published in the December 2010 issue of *Police Quarterly* and it is available at: <http://pqx.sagepub.com/content/13/4/387>

Other Policing Reports

As part of its Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety, the Harvard Kennedy School of Government released the January 2011 issue of *New Perspectives in Policing*. In this issue, *Police Science: Toward a New Paradigm*, David Weisburd and Peter Neyroud discuss what they believe will be necessary for policing to become an evidenced-based profession. They outline a proposal for a new paradigm that changes the relationship between science and policing. This paradigm demands that the police adopt and advance evidence-based policies and that universities become active participants in the everyday world of police practice. By shifting ownership of police science from the universities to police agencies, this paradigm would: facilitate the implementation of evidence-based practices and policies in policing, change the fundamental relationship between research and practice, increase the prestige and credibility of police science in the universities, improve policing, and ensure its survival in a competitive world of provision of public services. The paper is available at:

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/228922.pdf>

As part of its Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety, the Harvard Kennedy School of Government released the December 2010 issue of *New Perspectives in Policing*. In this issue, *Making Policing More Affordable: Managing Costs and Measuring Value in Policing*, George Gascón and Todd Foglesong discuss the challenges of paying for policing. In it, they attempt to answer several questions including: what is driving up police expenditures and what have cities and their residents received in return for their investment in policing? The authors attempt to answer these questions by examining on the costs of policing in Mesa, Arizona by comparing spending in Mesa over the last decade with the spending of neighboring cities and 10 similarly sized jurisdictions. They also examine the impact of spending, using such conventional measures of police value as the amount of recorded crime, citizens' sense of safety and call response times. Finally, they consider a series of tactics for managing the rising costs of policing, including efforts to cut spending, raise productivity and re-engineer operations. The paper is available at: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/231096.pdf>

Tip of the Month

Can the results be attributed to the intervention?

A common challenge associated with the evaluation of law enforcement interventions is establishing causality. This is sometimes due to the fact that it may not be feasible or practical to use random assignment to treatment. While the use of experimental designs has increased, it is still more common for researchers to employ a quasi-experimental design when evaluating law enforcement interventions. However, the use of a quasi-experimental design involves a tradeoff. While its use may make it possible to conduct the evaluation, it also hinders the evaluator's ability to rule out alternative explanation. As a result, it is more difficult to establish a causal link between the law enforcement intervention and any observed results. When reviewing or utilizing evaluations of law enforcement interventions it is important to consider that many factors can influence crime and that these factors may pose plausible alternate explanations for the observed results. For this reason, it is important to assess the degree to which evaluators identified and controlled for the influence of these outside factors.

California State University Long Beach - PPA 696 Research Methods

<http://www.csulb.edu/~msaintg/ppa696/696quasi.htm>

Social Research Methods

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/desexper.php>

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