Reinventing American Policing: A Seven-Point Blueprint for the 21st Century

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A Core Question for Policing in Democratic Society

How can police effectively prevent crime and keep citizens safe, while at the same time, maintain their trust, confidence, and satisfaction?
Two Principles

- **Principle 1: Crime prevention—not arrests—is paramount.** Crimes averted, not arrests made, should be the primary metric for judging police success in meeting their objective of securing public safety.

- **Principle 2: Citizen reaction matters.** Citizen response to the police and their tactics for preventing crime and improving public order matter independent of police effectiveness in these functions.
Outline for Our Talk

- **Bringing the Perpetrators of Serious Crime to Justice**
- **The Role of Police in Preventing Crime and Disorder**
  - Broken Windows Policing
  - Cost of Arrest for Minor Crimes or Legal Infractions
- **Maintaining Citizen Trust and Confidence**
- **Race and Policing**
- **Seven-Point Blueprint**
Bringing the Perpetrators of Serious Crime to Justice

- Less than 20% of arrests are for felonies
- Clearance rates for Part I index crimes have been generally stable for four decades (Braga, Flynn, Kelling, & Cole (2011))
- Opportunities for major innovations in police effectiveness in bringing the perpetrators of serious crime to justice are limited
- Focus of blueprint is on advancing Principles 1 & 2
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Revised Certainty Principle

▪ The certainty of apprehension, not the severity of the ensuing consequences, is the most effective deterrent

▪ Policy Implications
  ◦ Harsh punishments are not effective deterrents
  ◦ Puts police, not prisons, center stage in preventing crime
Police as Apprehension Agents
Police as Sentinels
Preventing Crime and Disorder

- Evidence that police can prevent crime and disorder is overwhelming **BUT:**
- Effects are heterogeneous—sentinel-like policing most effective
- What works best?—Proactive tactics that target places and people that are “hot” with crime
What Constitutes Proactive Policing?

- **Opportunity Mitigation**
  - Problem solving
  - Changes in the physical environment
  - Regulatory authority

- **Increased Police Presence**
  - Visibility without an arrest focus
  - Zero-tolerance aka broken windows policing tactics
The Impact of Broken Windows Policing—The Growing Share of Arrests for Less Serious Crimes (Part II Index)

**Adjusted Part II Arrests per Part I Arrest**

![Graph showing the trend of Adjusted Part II Arrests per Part I Arrest from 1980 to 2010.](image)
More on the Growing Prominence of Part II Arrests Since 1980

- Drug possession—102%
- Simple Assault—77.6%
- “All other offenses”—40.7%
What Do Know About the Effectiveness of “Broken Windows” Policing?

- **NOT MUCH**

- Does disorder breed serious crime?
  
  “I still to this day do not know if improving order will or will not reduce crime. People have not understood that this was a speculation” James Q. Wilson in Hurley (2004)

- Are misdemeanor oriented arrest tactics effective in preventing crime?
  - Don’t know because no studies account for the effectiveness of other police tactics that don’t emphasize arrest that routinely accompany the arrest-based tactics

- Why are these uncertainties so important?
  - Because arrests for minor crimes are costly
Costs of Misdemeanor Arrest

- Police time—at least 2 to 4 hours per arrest for minor crimes
- Jail population growth
- Cost to arrestees themselves
  - Bail/Pretrial detention
  - Time in hearings
  - Lost public benefits
  - Stigma
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What Does the Public Think of the Police?

- Nothing too surprising here
- Large racial divide on overall assessment
  - 59% of whites had a great deal of confidences and only 12% very little
  - For Blacks the respective figures are 37% and 25% (Gallup)
- Reactions to street stops—37.7% of blacks versus 77.6% of whites believe that police behaved properly
- Both races agree that blacks are treated less fairly by the police than whites
- Note Hispanic views are between the white/black views
Can Police Affect Citizen Perceptions?

- Maybe
- “Procedural Justice” literature concludes that how police treats citizens matters
- Mixed results from the community policing literature
- More research is necessary
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Returning to our two principles

Principle 1: Crime prevention—not arrests—is paramount. Crimes averted, not arrests made, should be the primary metric for judging police success in meeting their objective of securing public safety.

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Translating and Institutionalizing Research into Practice

1. **Professional development**: Academy, field training, in-service
2. **Deployment**: Patrol, specialized units, investigations
3. **Accountability systems**: Records mgmt., performance metrics, rewards
4. **Managerial**: Supervisory, leadership
5. **Technology**: Choice of, consequences for principles
6. **Strategic**: Planning, research and crime analysis
7. **Cultural**: Values, rhetoric, rewards
Seven-Point Blueprint

1. *Prioritize crime prevention over arrest*
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2. Create and install systems that monitor citizen reactions to the police and routinely report results back to the public and also managing and line officers
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6. Incorporate the analysis of crime and citizen reaction into managerial practice
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4. **Recalibrate organizational incentives**
5. **Strengthen Accountability with More Transparency**
6. **Incorporate the analysis of crime and citizen reaction into managerial practice**
7. **Strengthening national level research and evaluation**