

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

*Effects on crime and disorder,
legitimacy, and citizen satisfaction*

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OVERVIEW

- **Need for a systematic review**
- **Clarifying the mechanisms and purpose of COP**
- **Systematic review methodology**
- **Descriptive findings and exploratory meta-analysis**
- **Conclusions and implications for research/practice**

BROAD PHILOSOPHY OF COP

- Philosophy of law enforcement focused on community involvement
- Police are not limited to traditional law enforcement – should draw on community resources to define, control, and prevent crime
- Encompasses community policing, neighborhood policing, reassurance policing, problem solving
- “Co-production of public safety” to improve legitimacy, effectiveness

INFLUENCE OF COP

- **Creation of U.S. Department of Justice COPS Office in 1994**
- **By late 1990s, all major police departments used COP and 85% of all police departments used/planned to use**
- **In early 2000s 90% of large urban police departments employed fully trained officers**

WHY IS A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF COP NEEDED?

- No systematic study, despite popularity and investment
- Narrative reviews suggest effectiveness but variability of programs has led to loss of momentum
- Economic constraints highlight importance of effective programs
- Numerous approaches and strategies need to be pulled together
 - Clarify definition, purpose, theoretical processes

CHALLENGES FOR A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

- How do we define COP? Which strategies should be included or excluded?
- What is the purpose of COP? What are the key outcome measures?
- What is the quality of the research on COP? Does it allow us to draw valid conclusions about the outcomes?

KEY ELEMENTS OF COP (COPS/SKOGAN)

- **Community involvement in “co-production” of public safety**
 - What constitutes community involvement? How active does it have to be?
- **Problem solving**
 - Engaging community in identifying, prioritizing, and responding to problems
- **Decentralization/Organizational Transformation**
 - Delegation of decision-making to frontline officers
 - Proactivity, specificity

MECHANISMS OF EFFECTIVENESS

- COP was not primarily intended to prevent crime
- Key goal of COP: improve relationship with citizens
- Is there an indirect effect on crime control and prevention through improved legitimacy/procedural justice?
- Satisfied, engaged citizens more likely to cooperate with law enforcement and obey the law
- Focus here: crime/disorder, satisfaction and legitimacy

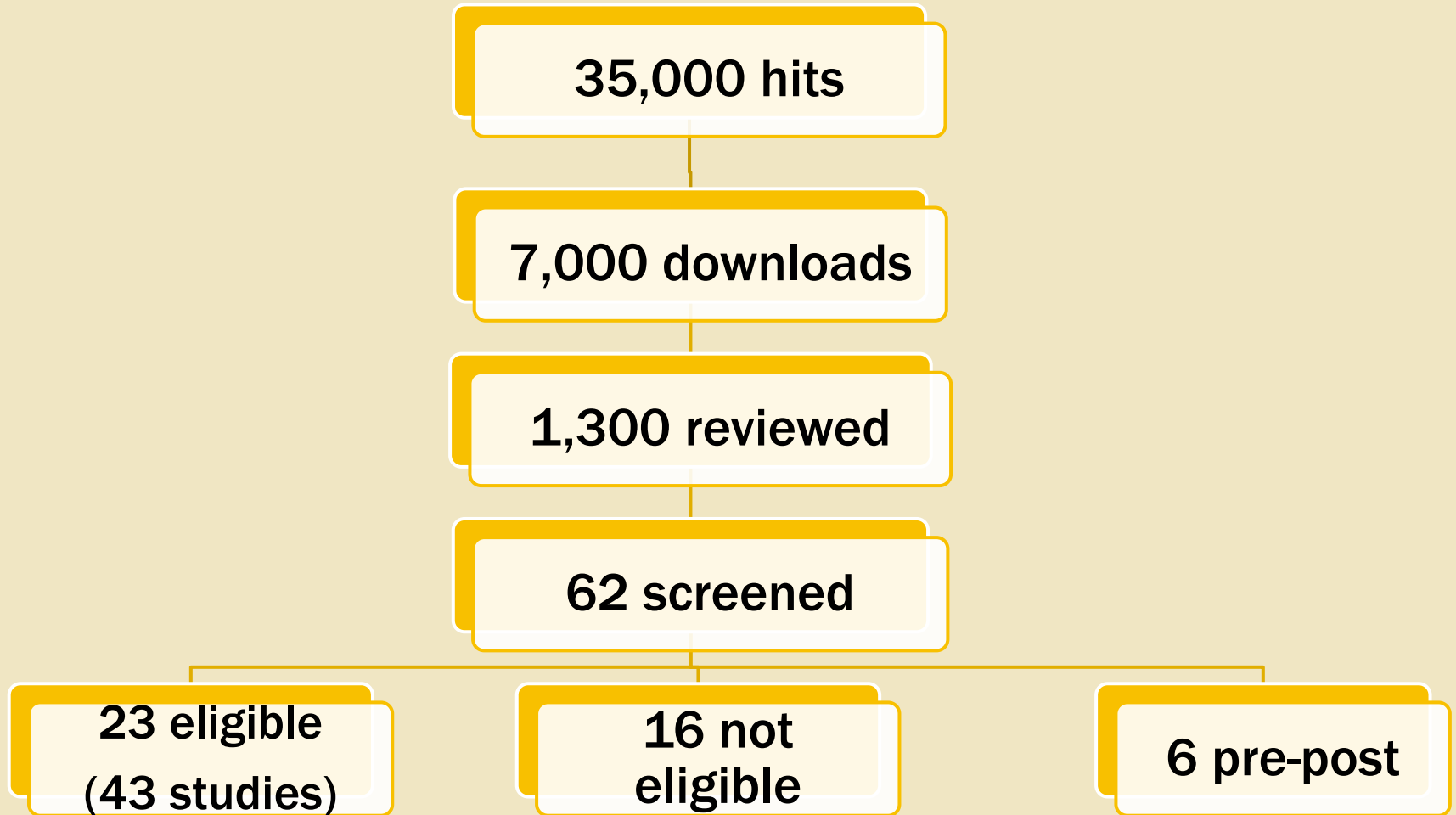
SEARCH STRATEGY

- **Keyword searches of online abstract databases**
- **Searches of research and police organization websites**
- **Review bibliographies of past reviews**
- **Forward searches of studies that cite seminal community policing studies**
- **Hand searches of key journals**
- **Contact scholars in the field**

STUDIES WE REVIEWED

- Policing intervention involving a **consultation or collaboration between police and local citizens** for defining and/or dealing with crime
- Randomized or quasi-experiments with pre-post designs; time series
- Targeted at geographic places and the residents living within them
- At least one **crime/disorder/citizen satisfaction/legitimacy outcome**

SEARCH RESULTS



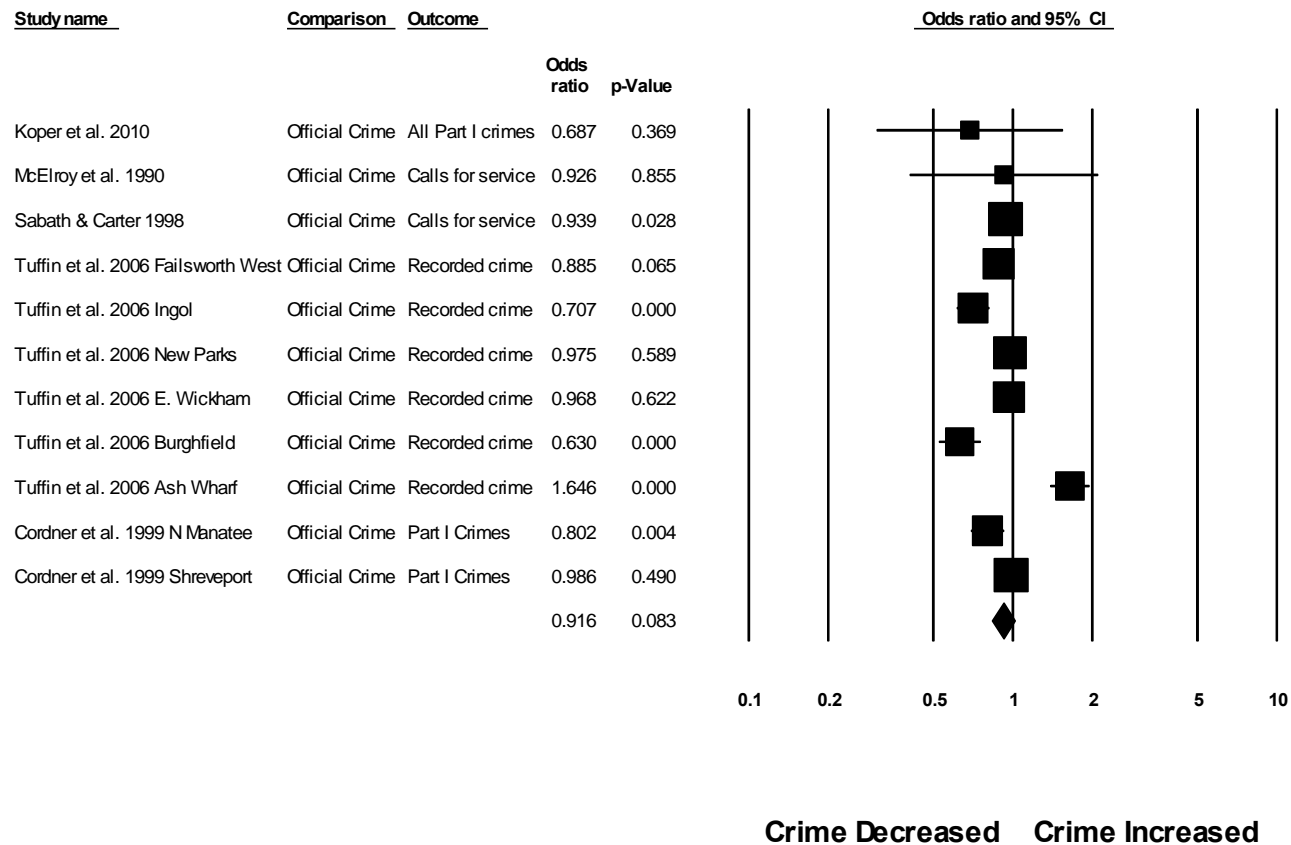
HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH DESIGNS

Research Design	Number of Studies
Randomized controlled trial	1
Quasi-experiment	11
Multiple time series	14
Total N for current analysis	26

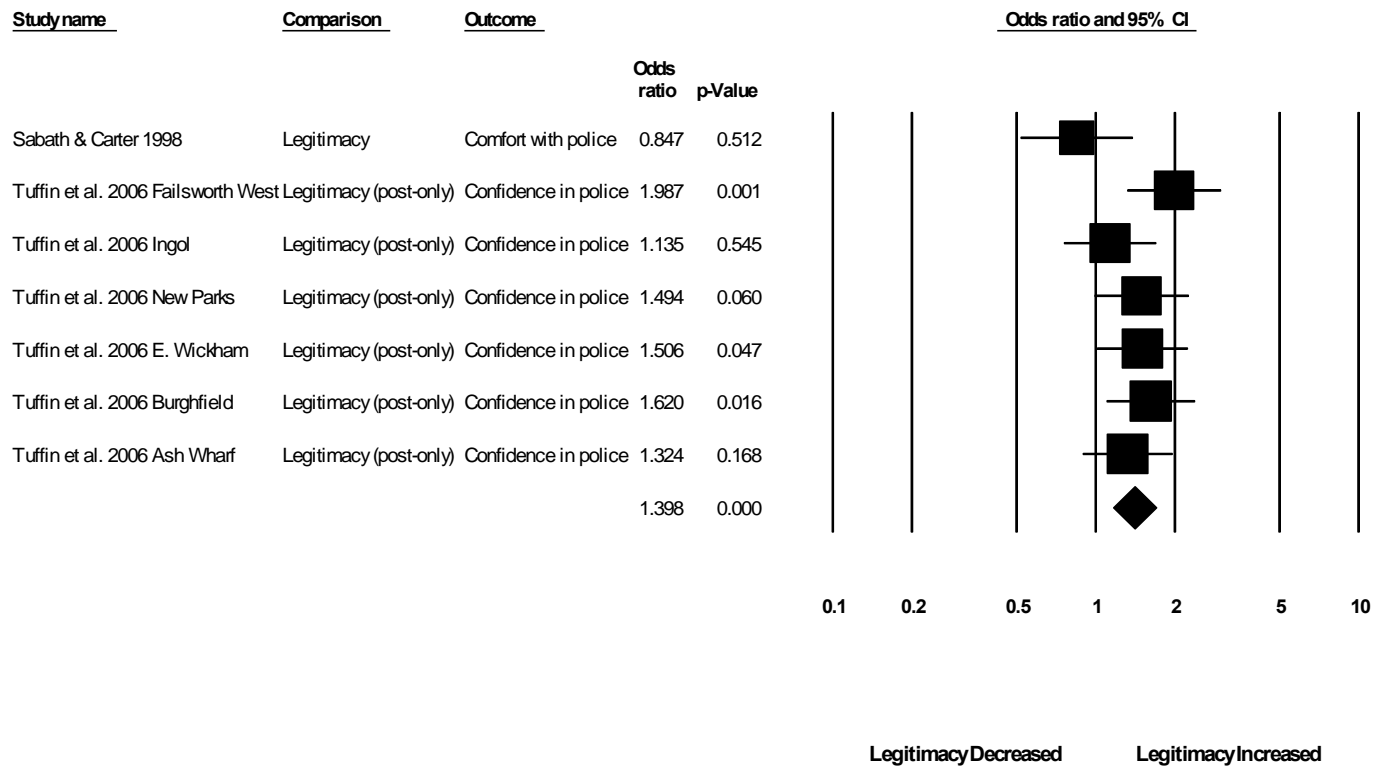
EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- Community beat meetings
- Online surveys
- Door to door contacts
- Problem identification by community members
- Multi-agency partnerships...
 - ...targeting crime/disorder and citizen concerns (e.g. fear)

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON CRIME...

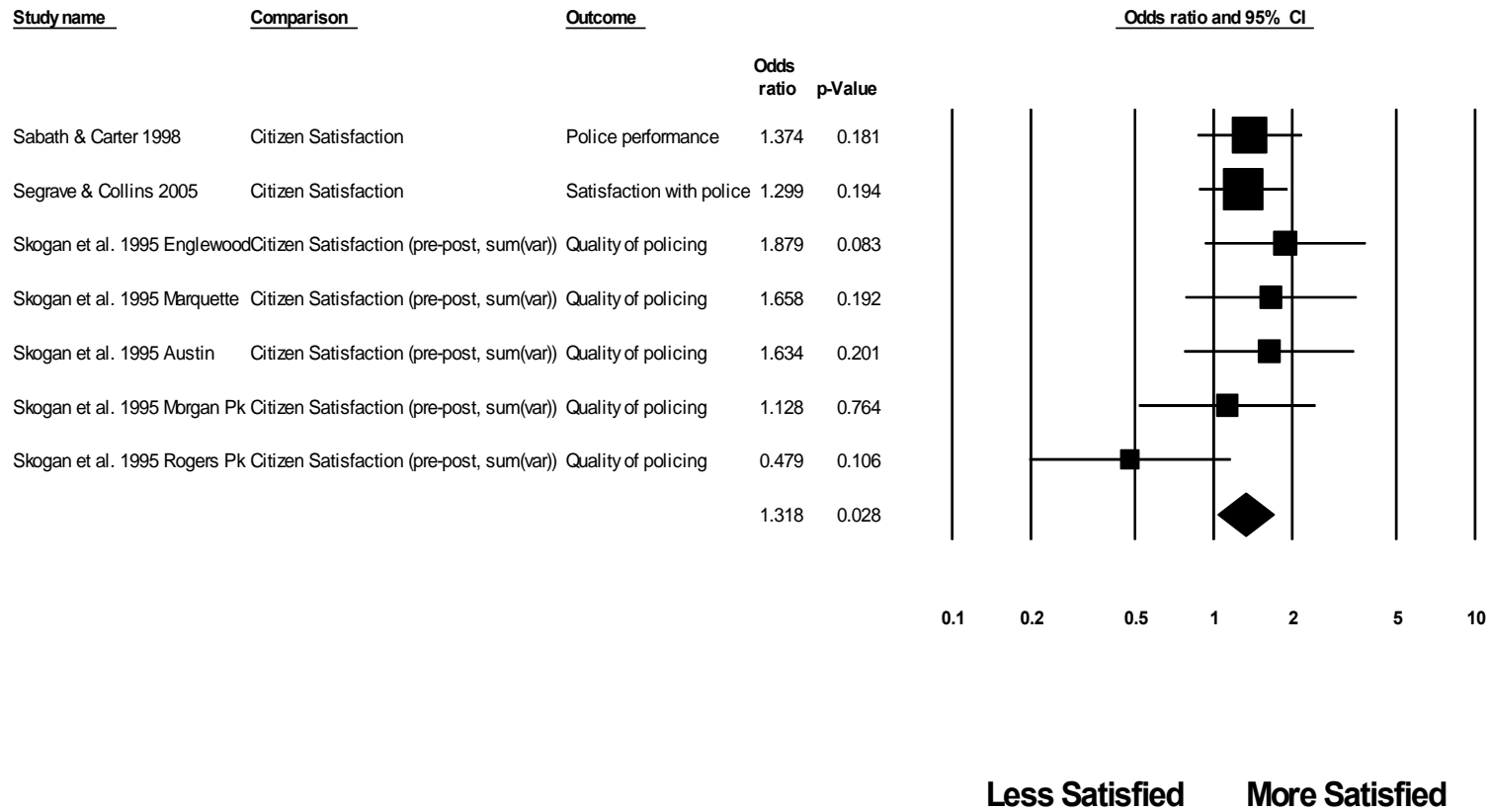


...BUT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN LEGITIMACY

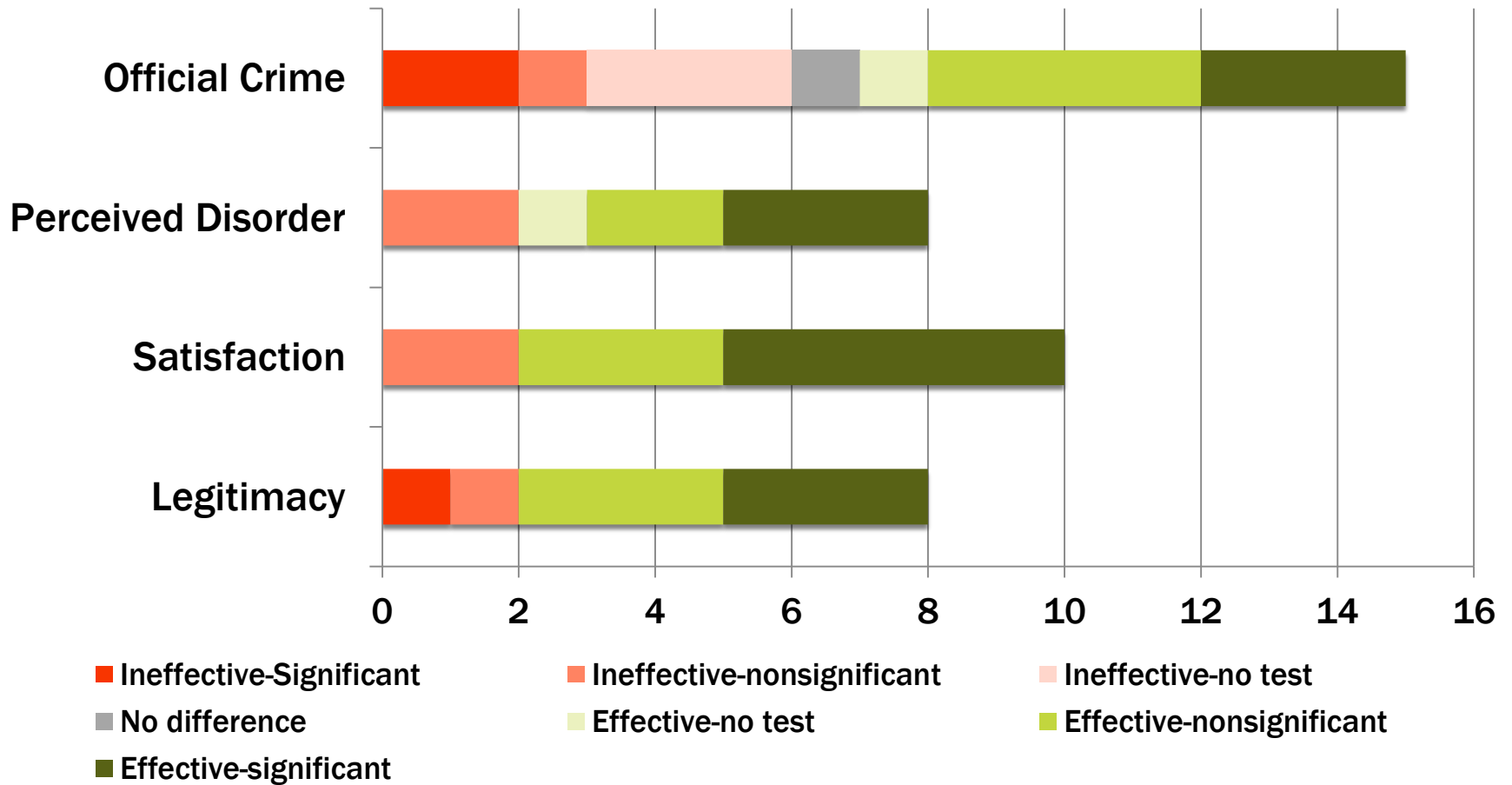


Random Effects Model

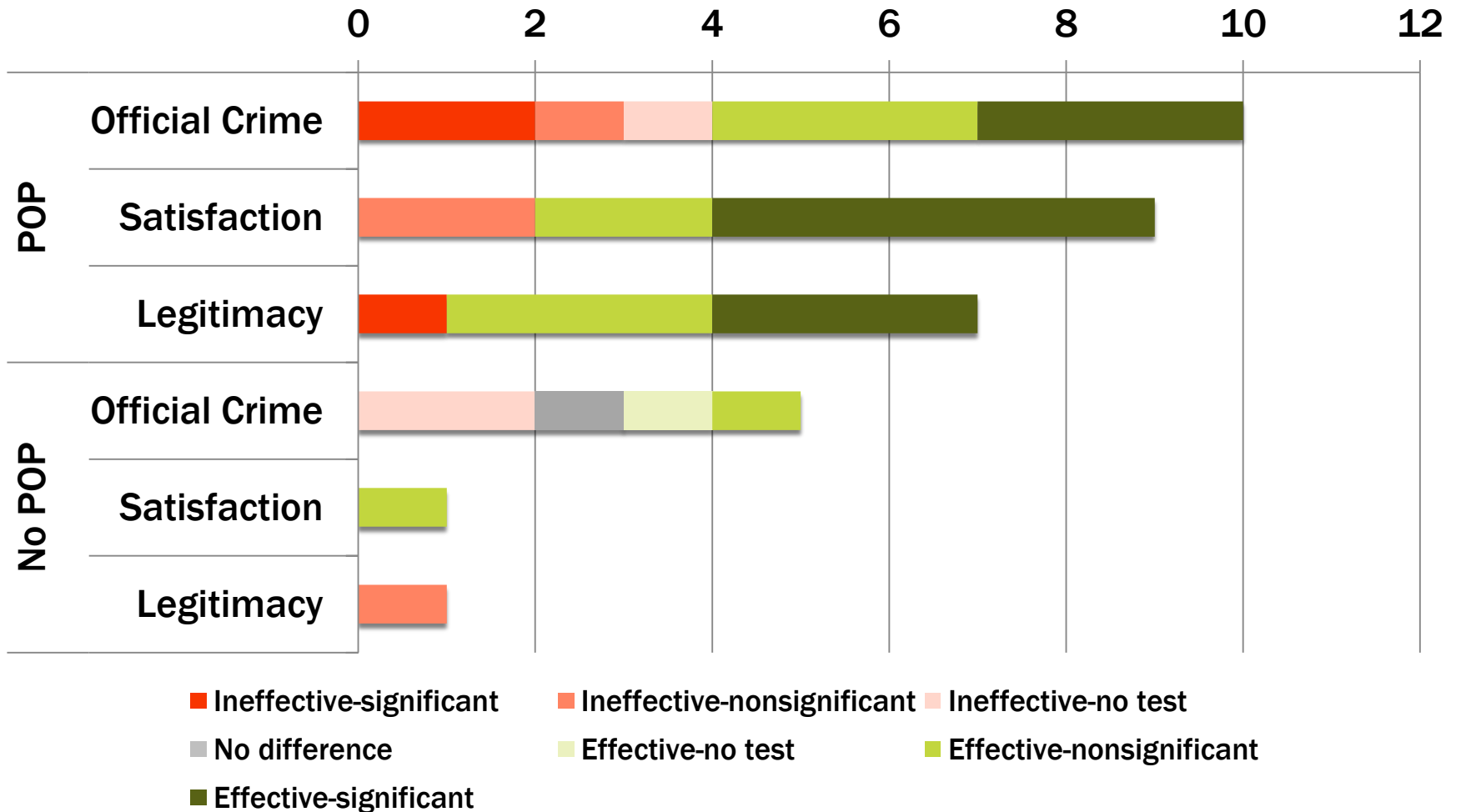
SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN CITIZEN SATISFACTION



STUDY CONCLUSIONS ARE PROMISING



COP AND PROBLEM SOLVING



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- COP has little direct effect on crime reduction, BUT
- Strong benefits to perceptions of legitimacy, citizen satisfaction
- Implications for research and practice: going beyond classic “what works”

LEGITIMACY, SATISFACTION, & CRIME CONTROL

- No direct effect on crime, but legitimacy and satisfaction may facilitate crime control
- Reporting “error” – greater satisfaction/legitimacy may lead to more reporting of crime
- Benefits beyond crime control – legitimacy as foundation of police functions

CHALLENGES

- **Definitional issues, diversity of strategies – COP as ‘buzzword’**
- **Important to understand what’s going on at ground level – implementation**
- **Fidelity – what happened after researchers left?**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clarification of/adherence to definition
- Training, documenting local practices
- Longer term studies charting evolution of COPS in real agencies
- Mixed methods to bring context to findings
- Do significant benefits to legitimacy translate into long-term crime control?

THANK YOU

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