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Promoting knowledge exchange to shape criminal justice research, practice, and policy.

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FROM THE DIRECTORS

Welcome to the spring issue of Translational Criminology in the new decade! For those who might be keeping track, this is our 18th issue of TC since it first transformed from our center’s newsletter to the magazine it is today. Thanks to those who contributed articles to the magazine over the years, and to those who have helped to financially support the magazine so that we can continue to provide it free to the public. If you have enjoyed receiving the magazine and would like to help keep it going for the next 10 years, please consider contributing to its publication at cebcp.org/contributing.

One important piece of news for our community that developed just before TC went to print is that we had to cancel the 2020 CEBCP Symposium due to growing concerns over the coronavirus (COVID-19). We look forward to picking up on our planned theme, “The Value of Partnerships to Criminal Justice Policy,” at the next annual symposium in 2021.

In this issue, we highlight a number of research-practitioner partnerships and examples of research evidence being used in practice. David Weisburd and Charlotte Gill write about their work in community crime prevention and suggest—provocatively—that perhaps community policing has had a stronger impact than previous reviews have concluded. Our colleagues at WestEd, led by Staci Wendt, describe a program they have been tracking and evaluating to improve juvenile health and outcomes in juvenile correctional systems. Cynthia Lum, Christopher Koper, and their students present findings from their recent systematic observations of public safety communications dispatchers—an often overlooked group in policing studies, but one essential to police deployment. Michael Pfeiffer and Geoff Alpert showcase the work that the New Orleans Police Department is doing to bring the science of police pursuits to the forefront and use that knowledge to improve accountability for such pursuits in police agencies. And our colleague John Rosiak discusses the differences between mobile and assigned school resource officers. We also highlight recent CEBCP researchers Sujinj Pun, Amber Scherer, and Xiaoyun Wu, who have graduated with their doctorates and use that knowledge to improve accountability for such pursuits in police agencies. And our colleague John Rosiak discusses the differences between mobile and assigned school resource officers. We also highlight recent CEBCP researchers Sujinj Pun, Amber Scherer, and Xiaoyun Wu, who have graduated with their doctorates and who have helped us with many of our research partnerships. We hope you will enjoy reading about them and the future of our field!

One special partnership highlighted in this issue was our efforts to work with Dan Ngin at Carnegie Mellon University to bring to light the need for more research and data collection in the arena of mass violence. This past year, the CEBCP intentionally invested our efforts in this area, under the leadership of Professor Christopher Koper, principal fellow of the CEBCP. With support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), we were able to bring together the nation's top experts to convene an NSF workshop to produce 16 papers in the American Society of Criminology's flagship policy journal, Criminality & Public Policy (whose editorial leadership is now housed at the CEBCP). These papers appeared in the first issue of CPP this year and can be accessed freely at bit.ly/NSFPapers. Additionally, with support from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, we also convened a CEBCP Congressional Briefing on this topic, which attracted almost 300 registrants, many from inside Congress. We view this past year's work as a start to our commitment to this issue, and we will be pursuing research funding and further activities in this area. This is one of the most concerning public policy issues that we face in the United States: it with science—not fear and speculation—will be important as we try to mitigate this problem in the future.

Finally, John Eck and Michael Scott write a moving tribute to Professor Herman Goldstein, whom we lost in January. Professor Goldstein was the 2015 recipient of the CEBCP's Distinguished Achievement Award in Evidence-Based Crime Policy. He embodied all that we aspire to think about and be here at the center, and was at the forefront of developing a more scientific approach to criminal justice policy. Rest in peace, Professor Goldstein.

Cynthia Lum
Director and Editor of Translational Criminology
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CEBCP Mission Statement
The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (CEBCP), housed within the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University, 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 information link to practitioners and the policy community. Translational Criminology advances this mission by illustrating examples of how research is converted into criminal justice practice.

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The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy
Since 2008, the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, housed within Mason’s Department of Criminology, Law and Society, has been committed to providing its university, local, regional, state, national, and international communities with rigorous research and innovative research translation tools to shape criminal justice policy.

CEBCP graduate research assistants conduct hands-on research in the field, through collaborations with justice agencies and world-renowned criminologists who specialize in crime prevention, policing, communities, technology, firearms violence, criminal justice policy, the courts, school-based prevention, translational criminology, program evaluation, and experimental criminology.

To learn more about our research programs, projects, annual symposia, congressional briefings, and the more than two dozen faculty and students who collaborate in the CEBCP, go to cebcp.org.

Since 2008 the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy has been committed to providing its university, local, regional, state, national, and international communities with high-quality research and research translation tools.

We need your help to continue our efforts for the next 10 years.

If you have attended our symposia, congressional briefings, or training workshops; read Translational Criminology magazine or our handy research summaries, used the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix, video knowledge library, or our other translation tools, then you know the value that CEBCP brings to the field.

With your help, we hope to raise more than $100,000 to support the next 10 years of the center’s innovations, research, and future leaders of evidence-based crime policy.

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Rethinking the Conclusion that Community Policing Does Not Reduce Crime: Experimental Evidence of Crime Reporting Inflation

BY DAVID WEISBURD AND CHARLOTTE GILL

David Weisburd is executive director of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy and Distinguished Professor of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University. He also holds a part-time joint appointment as the Walter E. Meyer Professor of Law and Criminal Justice in the Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Charlotte Gill is deputy director of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, and associate professor of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University.

In evidence-based policy there are no more important organizations than the Campbell Collaboration and the National Academies of Sciences. Campbell emphasizes systematic review and meta-analyses, taking a rigorous approach to identifying, coding, and analyzing prior studies. The National Academies take a narrative approach to review, relying on experts to assess existing evidence, and providing a general interpretation.

Both of these organizations have reviewed the evidence on the crime control effectiveness of community policing, and both have concluded that it is not an evidence-based strategy to reduce crime. Gill-Weisburd, Telig, Vines, and Bonnet (2014), in a Campbell systematic review that covered studies until 2012 and included 37 studies in a meta-analysis, noted that “We do not find evidence that COP reduces crime” (p. 423). In a more recent review, the National Academies of Sciences Committee on Proactive Policing (Weisburd and Majmundar, 2018), concluded that “existing studies do not identify a consistent crime prevention benefit for community-oriented policing programs” (p. 176).

These reviews have had a major impact on how we view the crime prevention benefits of community policing programs. In sum, they have led to the prevailing assumption that science does not support a strong focus on community collaboration—a key component of community policing—as a way to advance crime control. It should be noted that evidence suggests that community policing programs are likely impacted not only by whether crime is reduced, but also by the fact that community policing is likely to increase collaboration of the public with the police—indeed, that is one of the expressed goals of community policing programs.

Recently, we completed an experiment in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota (see Weisburd, Gill, Wooditch, Barritt, and Murphy, 2020), that led us to rethink the strong conclusions existing reviews have reached regarding the failure of community policing to show strong crime prevention benefits. The Brooklyn Park experiment was not specifically designed as a study to advance community policing, but it had a strong focus on community collaboration—a key component of community policing—as a way to advance crime control. It sought to use unallocated police patrol time to increase collective action and community collaboration in solving problems at crime hot spots.

The program was called Assets Coming Together to Take Action (ACT). ACT was intended to work through officers encouraging three key mechanisms at the hot spots:

1. establishing proximal relationships with and between residents;
2. increasing working trust between the police and community members; and
3. developing shared expectations that empower residents to take action against problems and then leveraging these mechanisms to develop successful collaborative problem-solving strategies.

While ACT shares many similarities with established community and problem-oriented policing strategies, the overall goal of the approach was to create a “culture of responsibility” within the community by connecting police interventions with the development of informal social controls (Weisburd et al., 2020).

In some sense ACT provided an optimal test of the idea of community collaboration. The intervention involved the entire patrol force in Brooklyn Park, a city with more than 100 sworn officers. Accordingly, it had a very high level of dosage at each of the 21 treatment hot spots, with more than 1,000 activities documented during the experimental period. Perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of community collaboration, the officers identified 405 “assets” at the 21 hot spots, with a median of 18 assets at each hot spot. Assets were key stakeholders and resources that officers identified during their time spent at the hot spots who were willing and interested in working with police officers to address problems.

Our experimental analyses show that the police did succeed at increasing community collaboration and collective action in doing something about problems. When we asked a random sample of citizens at the hot spots whether they had participated in problem-solving efforts during the experimental period, a significantly larger number of respondents in the treatment hot spots said that they had. And when we asked whether they had spoken to a police officer about a problem, again a significantly larger number of residents of the treatment hot spots responded affirmatively. These results suggest that ACT was successful in increasing community collaboration.

But when we looked at the crime outcomes of the program, we did not find evidence of crime prevention. Like community policing programs that also seek to influence community collaboration, there did not appear to be crime prevention benefits from ACT. Indeed, the treatment and control hot spots had about the same changes in crime incidents (i.e., Part I and Part II crimes for which a police crime report is written) from the pretreatment to treatment periods.

What Happened?

Because of the valuable participation of Lieutenant William Barritt, who was the departmental coordinator of the experiment in Brooklyn Park, and Judy Murphy, the head of crime analysis in the Brooklyn Park Police Department (BPPD), we were able to get additional insight into what had happened. We noticed at the start of the experiment that the number of emergency calls for police service had increased a good deal in the treatment hot spots. We did not think that there was a reason why crime should have increased. This was a randomized experiment, and though that could happen just by chance, another explanation was that the experimental intervention was increasing the reporting of crime to the police. The strong effort to identify assets and increase community collaboration more generally provided a plausible causal chain that would lead the experiment to increase crime reporting.

Barritt and Murphy noted that they could look at this directly by examining the call behavior of assets in the experiment. While this was a difficult task that had to be done by hand, they went back and looked at the number of times that assets called the police during the experimental period, and the number of times they had called before the experimental period. The results are reported by hot spot in the table below. What is apparent is that assets called the police more than 700 times during the experimental period. On average across the treatment sites, more than a third of the assets who called the police had never called before.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th># of assets</th>
<th>% of assets who called police during period</th>
<th>Number of calls to BPPD members during that period</th>
<th>% of assets who called BPPD during period that had never called BPPD before</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
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These findings suggested that we had good evidence that the community collaboration component of the program had increased crime reporting of citizens in the treatment hot spots. But could we create a measure that would reflect the extent of this increase? One simple way to do this was to compare the number of citizen-initiated calls for service (CFS) to crime incidents before the experiment and during the experiment. We call this “crime reporting inflation,” which is represented by the following equation:

Assets Who Called the Police in 2015 and through October 31, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Num of # of assets who called police during period</th>
<th>% of assets who called BPPD during period that had never called BPPD before</th>
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If the experimental intervention was not having an influence on crime reporting, we would expect the treatment and control hot spots to have about the same score on this measure. That is, in a world in which we did not intervene, the randomly allocated hot spots would be expected to behave similarly in both groups in the pre-experimental and experimental periods. If the experimental period was 16 months and the pre-experimental period was 12 months, we might expect the outcome of our measure to be 1. However, the experimental period was 16 months and the pre-experimental period was only 12 months; hence, we would expect the crime reporting inflation statistic to equal 1.33 (16/12), accounting for the fact that the gap between calls and incidents is being counted for an additional four months during the experimental period.

For the untreated control hot spots, the crime reporting statistic equals 1.27, about what we expected. However, for the experimental hot spots that received ACT, the inflation statistic was 1.67. This reflects a strong degree of crime inflation for the treatment condition, and the difference between the groups is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This is the first experimental evidence of the reactivity of crime outcomes to interventions that emphasize community collaboration that we are aware of. Combined with our survey results regarding community collaboration and the analyses of the behavior of assets, our findings provide strong evidence that an intervention that encourages community collaboration is likely to strongly influence reporting behavior.

What could be the cause of this crime inflation? Of course, one explanation could be that crime increased in the treatment condition and therefore citizens called the police more. While this could be an explanation, we have no reason to believe that the ACT intervention would increase crime. Moreover, we are not measuring here whether calls increased, but whether the relationship between calls and crime incidents changed. Why would the gap be so much larger in the treatment condition than the control condition? And why would the measure of crime reporting inflation in the control condition remain relatively stable between the pre-experimental and experimental periods and the treatment condition increase to a large degree? If the treatment was having no impact we would expect the two groups to be similar in a randomized experiment.

We think that the condition represents a “normal condition” for the relationship between crime calls and crime incidents. In general, that relationship would be expected to be positive on our measure because, in normal circumstances, a number of the calls that citizens make to the police are not founded once police come to investigate. What our experimental intervention did was to increase the number of calls beyond the “normal condition,” creating an upward bias in assessing crime in the treatment hot spots. This upward bias may be obscuring real crime changes.

But what does this mean in terms of the program’s impacts on crime? Would our conclusions regarding the crime prevention impacts of ACT change if we could adjust the crime counts for crime inflation? We tried to do this by adjusting the crime incident outcomes in the experimental condition by the overall crime inflation ratio for the two groups (1.27/1.67). When we do this, our findings regarding crime are quite different. The difference between the groups is now statistically significant at the 0.10 level (p=0.055), the threshold we set at the outset of the experiment.

While we think these findings are important for assessing ACT, they are even more important for their implications more generally for studies where community collaboration is an important element. Our findings suggest that using raw uncorrected official crime data to assess crime outcomes of community programs likely leads to large underestimates of crime prevention outcomes.

And what does this mean for the evidence-based conclusions of the Campbell Collaboration and the National Academies? Our work suggests that it is time to reconsider that literature in light of the Brooklyn Park findings. Assessment of the crime prevention impacts of community policing must be carried out with the aim of correcting for crime reporting inflation.

References

1 Another approach would be to adjust outcomes not by a global measure but by the specific outcomes for each hot spot. The problem of doing this is that the crime outcomes are part of the crime inflation measure. For this reason, we choose to use the overall global estimate in our analyses. Our colleague Cynthia Lam raised the question of whether this measure also affects by actual reductions in crime. In this context, if crime is reduced the gap between calls and crimes would grow even larger. But in this context, we might also expect the number of calls to decline as crime problems decline. These complexities suggest the importance of exploring and refining this measure in future studies.
In-person communication. Building relationships between partners easily on through face-to-face meetings at each step of the project was paramount to successful implementation. For example, during the first month of the project, the partnership hosted an in-person meeting for the team to get to know each other, to begin learning communication styles, and to build trust. The relationships formed during this meeting paved foundational for open communication and collaboration throughout the project period. During that kickoff meeting, the team co-conceived a project timeline. Next, OYA hosted the partnership at its largest facility (serving approximately 270 youths). The team participated in a youth-led tour and spent the day with a group of young residents discussing sexual health and healthy relationship. Efficacity collected youth feedback on videos and activities that would eventually become part of Healthy U. Working with Efficacity, youths developed a storyboard based on their own experiences, which was later turned into one of the dramatic videos on the app.

CDC’s National Health Education Standards and permits flexible implementation. Healthy U includes dramatic videos, interactive games, and learning challenges to cover pregnancy, birth control, puberty, STDs, HIV, condom negotiation, and healthy relationships.2

Secrets to Successful Partnerships

There have been a number of positive findings and lessons learned so far in developing the crossagency partnership, including obtaining youth and staff feedback in the development of the app, and successfully implementing a multisite cluster-randomized control trial (findings forthcoming) to examine the impact of Healthy U on decreasing unplanned teen fatherhood and increasing healthy relationships.3

The development of the wave-cohort design eased implementation and allowed each facility to make some slight variations to implementation. For example, some facilities preferred to provide Healthy U to youths in the treatment condition every Sunday for a few hours. Other facilities preferred to provide Healthy U to one or two youths at a time. The flexibility in implementation was key in gaining buy-in from facility staff. At one facility, implementation was difficult due to lack of engagement from staff. When this issue was identified, the OYA Research Unit and WestEd team met with the staff at this facility to discuss the reasons for their resistance in an attempt to increase their engagement. When staff overload was identified as the critical reason, the OYA Research Unit and WestEd team adapted implementation so that the OYA Research Unit and members of the WestEd team would be onsite to implement Healthy U and nearly eliminate burden on local facility staff.

Piloting. Prior to full-scale implementation, we conducted a two-month pilot. The purpose of the pilot was to test a preliminary version of Healthy U, the research design implementation, and obtain relevant youth and staff feedback. This provided an opportunity to learn what the challenges were going to be. For example, Healthy U was originally designed to be utilized with Wi-Fi so that youths’ progress was uploaded to an external server; this would allow multiple youths to use the same tablet. However, Wi-Fi access was significantly restricted in OYA facilities to limit the youths’ access to the Internet. To access Wi-Fi, the youths needed to be relocated to a building with such access, resulting in major disruptions in daily schedules. To address this challenge, Efficacity changed Healthy U so that youth progress was stored on the tablet device rather than automatically uploaded via Wi-Fi. This meant, however, that each youth needed an individual tablet. The OYA Information Services team set up a secure, staff-only Wi-Fi specifically for Healthy U within each living unit. At the end of each Healthy U session, unit staff would use this Wi-Fi to upload youth progress to the external server. Although there was an increase in costs associated with providing a tablet for each youth, this was mitigated by the wave design, which allowed for the tablets to be rotated from one facility to another.

The pilot also provided the opportunity to hear youths’ reactions to using Healthy U. Youths shared their experiences with their unit staff, WestEd, and Efficacity directly and through anonymous surveys. The feedback was incorporated into the app’s final version. Youths also provided feedback on the incentive amount that would secure their participation and the appropriateness of pre- and post-test survey questions.
Training. Before each study wave, Efficacy, WestEd, and the OYA Research Unit visited each facility for two days to meet staff, provide a demonstration of Healthy U, train unit staff on implementing the app, and assist with identifying and enrolling eligible participants. Prior to each in-person training, WestEd held a phone call with facility staff to discuss the training agenda and logistics. These meetings provided an opportunity to hear any concerns prior to training and to adjust schedules if necessary. During the training, Efficacy facilitated an immersive training of the tablets and Healthy U. Staff were able to interact with the program and pose questions directly to the developer. Staff were also given an implementation manual with easy-to-understand, step-by-step instructions. One of the biggest sources of buy-in was seeing Healthy U in action. Staff identified a need for a curriculum like Healthy U and liked the experience of the tech-based approach. The second day was spent assuring unit staff with enrolling youths. During this process, staff were able to see how engaged youths were in Healthy U, further enhancing staff buy-in. Additional trainings (on site or via phone calls) occurred at the beginning of each wave.

Conclusions

Although complex field trials in juvenile correctional facilities are not easy to implement, the partnership and strategies we undertook facilitated a successful implementation of a randomized controlled trial involving more than 300 OYA youths. Good communication helped secure the support of nearly all staff. During the three-month breaks in action, Healthy U was used by 96% of the sampled inmates, and 70% engaged in Healthy U. Return to their facility. This was because Healthy U provided an opportunity to hear any concerns prior to training and to adjust schedules if necessary. Their efforts culminated in 16 papers, published in a very special issue of Criminology & Public Policy, connecting its outgoing (Nagin) and incoming (Lum and Koper) editorial teams. To view and freely access the entire special issue, go to bit.ly/CPPSpecial, or see the sidebar for a list of all titles and authors.

The papers show that there are many important areas of research and policy development under way on this topic that can inform both future research and current policy and practice. Of course, much more information is needed, but these efforts reflect an important start to tackling this difficult issue. In the introduction to the special issue, we discuss five recommendations that are supported by the research evidence presented and that are feasible to achieve with sufficient political will. These are:

1. Staunching the growth of high-capacity firearms: While there are rational public safety grounds for restricting firearms with a variety of military-style features, we believe the most important components of assault weapon laws are restrictions on high-capacity ammunition magazines that enable shooters to discharge large numbers of rounds very rapidly and thereby kill or injure many in minutes or less. To staunch this growth, we recommend for new sales to limit magazine capacity to 10 rounds and to prohibit weapon accessories that increase the discharge rate of semiautomatic weapons.

2. Curtailing access to firearms for individuals who are a danger to others or themselves: To do this, universal background checks should be initiated for all firearm purchases including private sales. This is most effective when done through licensing and permit systems for firearms owners. Extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) should be adopted to disarm high-risk

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M as shootings involving the indiscriminate slaughter of multiple victims, usually perpetrated by a lone individual with a firearm and often in a public place, are distressingly frequent. During the last decade alone, thousands have been killed or injured in such acts, and the toll on victims is markedly increasing as these acts become more severe. The workshop brought together diverse experts from a variety of fields (e.g., criminology, psychology, statistics, economics) and sectors (i.e., academic, government, and nonprofit) to present and discuss papers written by participants on the various aspects of this vexing public policy problem. The workshop’s aim was to develop a policy and research agenda for curtailing mass shootings. Toward this aim, papers were commissioned that 1) reviewed research that has been conducted on mass violence; 2) determined points of consensus in the available research; 3) identified gaps in research knowledge and points of substantial disagreement; 4) laid out policy implications of established research knowledge; and 5) developed research recommendations to address knowledge gaps and controversies in the field.

The workshop explored six areas, including patterns of mass violence; data sources, methods, and challenges in measuring mass violence; causes of mass violence; settings of mass violence, weaponry access; and other methods and technologies for identifying and intervening with potential perpetrators. For two days, the mix of researchers and practitioners discussed, debated, and shared knowledge about
individuals. Firearm restrictions should be strengthened for convicted domestic violence offenders and others who are subject to domestic violence restraining orders. Finally, monitoring systems are needed to detect individuals making large and/or frequent purchases of firearms and ammunition with referrals of such individuals to law enforcement risk assessment teams.

3. Improving threat detection systems: Threats can be “leaked” by would-be offenders during a planning stage of an attack in conversation, on social media, or through other observable actions. Threat detection systems need to be improved to detect and respond to leakage. Other more diffuse threats may be harder to detect. Finding the most effective approaches to respond to such threats also requires more evaluation research.

4. Reducing fatalities at mass shooting events: When mass shootings can’t be prevented, the harm caused by them can be reduced. Speedy medical treatment by both medical and non-medical personnel can make the difference in a life saved. This requires drills and preparation by not only medical staff, but school staff, law enforcement, and many other guardians and members of the public. Resources to support such activities should be increased.

5. Formally tracking mass violence: Despite the seriousness of mass shootings in the United States, there is no official national data system that tracks either the occurrence of mass casualty events or the response to them. The Bureau of Justice Statistics or the Federal Bureau of Investigations may be in the best position to collect detailed data on victims, offenders, weapons used, situational characteristics, and public safety responses.

In addition to publication in *Criminology & Public Policy*, the results from the project were extensively disseminated and translated to practitioners and policy makers alike, first at the 2019 CEBCP Symposium, and then at the CEBCP’s annual Congressional Briefing organized at the U.S. Capitol in September 2019 with funding from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Eight of the researchers from the special issue gave briefs to a full house of congressional staff members, practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and members of the public and the media on what we know from research about mass shootings. Almost 300 people registered for this congressional briefing, emphasizing its significance. Chief Dan Oates, former police chief during the Aurora, Colorado, movie theater shooting, provided a powerful introduction of the real effects of mass violence. The entire briefing, as with all of CEBCP’s briefings, was filmed and can be viewed at bit.ly/CEBCPBriefing.

Mass shootings have become one of the most alarming and defining crime issues of the 21st century in the United States. Because of the frightening nature of these events, assumptions and assertions are often made about perpetrators and victims that are not supported by evidence. More knowledge is needed about the prevalence and etiology of mass shootings and how society can best prevent and respond to these acts. The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy is proud to be a part of advancing awareness of the science around this important concern.

**Criminology & Public Policy February 2020 Issue Titles**

2. Patterns and prevalence of lethal mass violence. Grant Duane.
3. Why have public mass shootings become more deadly?: Assessing how perpetrators’ motives and methods have changed over time. Adam Lankford and James Silver.
5. What role does serious mental illness play in mass shootings, and how should we address it? Jennifer Steyn and Edward Malvey.
8. Assessing the potential to reduce deaths and injuries from mass shootings through restrictions on assault weapons and other high-capacity semiautomatic firearms. Christopher S. Koper.
10. Algorithmic approach to forecasting rare violent events: An illustration based in intimate partner violence perpetration. Richard A. Berk and Susan B. Sorenson.
12. Space between concern and crime: Two recommendations for promoting the adoption of the threat assessment model and encouraging bystander reporting. James Silver.
13. Investigating the applicability of situational crime prevention to the public mass violence context. Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, and Brent R. Klein.
15. The devil’s in the details: Measuring mass violence. Les Hautf-Corayne and Jay Corzine.
16. Responses to mass shooting events: The interplay between the media and the public. Ava Crosier, Sara Kien, Ben Malchove, Jacob Radishinski, Andrew Crooks, Bae Schubard, Tatiana Begey, Ashley Lee, Alex Betinis, and Anthony Stefanidis.
Public safety communications specialists are rarely studied in comparison to their police counterparts (well-known exceptions include Chakian and Larson, 1972; Manning, 1988; Wouden, 1993; Mazerolle et al., 2002; McEwen, 2002). Yet, the calltakers and dispatchers that manage our 911 and none-mergency calls and their responses in computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems formed patrol officers, these calls determine many of the activities. To put this into perspective, research studies reviewed by Neusaeve et al. (2019) find this equates to about one to two emergency and nonemergency calls from Fairfax County—more than 1 million calls per year. These calls come to the DPSC’s attention not only through 911 lines but also from all emergency and nonemergency telephone numbers in the county, including any public safety-related phone line. If police officers need to be dispatched, calltakers then transfer calls to police dispatchers within the same call center.

Over the course of three months, the research team conducted almost 150 hours of systematic observation of both calltakers and dispatchers in two-hour data collection periods. These observations were spread out across seven days of the week and between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. During each two-hour observation period, every call that a calltaker received or that a dispatcher assigned to an officer was listened to and recorded, along with the decisions of calltakers and dispatchers. In total, 511 calls received by calltakers and 597 calls dispatched to patrol officers were systematically observed and recorded using structured instruments. Each calltaker and dispatcher was also interviewed about their work.

Calltakers as Gatekeepers to Public Safety Resources

The public safety communications professionals at the DPSC in Fairfax County handle a large range of both emergency and nonemergency calls for service. Indeed, about 50 percent of calls that calltakers manage come from nonemergency lines (like “3-1-1”) still routed through public safety communications departments, but we found that a significant portion of nonemergency line calls (about 32 percent) still require a police officer to be dispatched. Further, some calls cannot be easily resolved by calltakers. Some have suggested, for example, that mental health specialists might work with calltakers to mitigate police officer response to mental health calls. But it was clear from our observations that rarely are these calls able to be easily resolved on the phone. Further, while such diversion and management strategies may preserve law enforcement deployment resources, they may add to the need and demands of public safety communications departments. Like officers, calltakers may need more training and specialized skills if they are expected to contribute to the strategic diversion of public safety resources. Our sense, given our observations, is that calltakers are more than capable of accomplishing these tasks, but this would require new training, resources, compensation, and authority in these roles.

From our observations, we discovered that calltakers are the gatekeepers to public safety resources. Specifically, they resolved about half of the observed calls that came into the call center without forwarding the call to a dispatcher, potentially presenting substantial public safety resource savings. They are the first point of contact between the criminal justice system and citizens, and with their discretion and problem-solving capa-

Public safety communications departments, therefore, have a large foot-print in the criminal justice system, and their efforts and decision making matter in terms of how police resources are deployed. Understanding what people call the police for and how calltakers and dispatchers manage those calls are an important part of understanding what patrol officers and investig-

Call and dispatch main floor of the Fairfax County Department of Public Safety Communications (photo courtesy of same)
situation, and how long officers are spending on particular events. Through their oversight, decision making, and management of both citizen calls for service as well as officer self-initiated activities, dispatchers supervise and manage the personnel resources expended in patrol. Given their roles, dispatchers serve as gatekeepers of both officers and public safety. They help to manage officer risk by providing important information to officers en route to a scene, ensuring that back-up officers respond, and keeping track of where officers are and what they are doing. They can order officers away from calls and toward other events based on the nature of those events. Interestingly, dispatchers also serve as managers of patrol officers. First-line patrol supervisors might oversee the deployment of their squads, the substantive approaches to officer call response, or what officers are doing when not answering calls. These decisions depend on the movement and timing of officer work, which dispatchers manage. Thus, we hypothesize that dispatchers could play an important role in strategic crime prevention because of this management role. Additionally, dispatchers and patrol officers both have a good knowledge of the history of the places where crime concentrates. Combined with analysis of CAD and records management data, environmental information, and situational factors, such knowledge can potentially be a powerful tool in problem-solving to prevent future crime at those places. However, such an approach to strategic and holistic patrol deployment would require collaboration between public safety communications departments and police agencies to carry out successfully. From our observations more generally, this would be a somewhat unusual idea in many jurisdictions.

Implications for Public Safety Work

How patrol officers spend their day (and the outcomes of that time spent) is the direct result of not only the occurrence of crimes and disorders, but a combination of those concerns, citizen expectations, and call patterns. The outcomes are problematic; the situation taken by calltakers and dispatchers, how officers respond to these calls; and what officers are doing when they are not responding to calls for service. All of these elements go into the equation of public safety resource expenditure, effectiveness, and the legitimacy of the system.

Taking such a holistic perspective makes us rethink quick solutions to public safety resource management. For example, recent discussions about whether some calls that come into 911 call centers can be diverted away from police response to save officer time should carefully consider all ramifications when doing so. First, we know that calltakers already divert and resolve a great number of these calls (although the overall effect of this activity remains unknown). While not responding to minor calls might indeed “reduce the footprint” of the criminal justice system in people’s lives, it could also evoke citizen perceptions of the police, given that people most often call the police for their minor issues and often expect a response when they call. Additionally, if calltakers are expected to effectively divert or resolve certain types of calls, help people who are in mental distress, or exhibit advanced forms of procedural justice as some have suggested, then they should be adequately trained and compensated for doing so, and those strategies should be tested for effectiveness.

We now know from a great deal of research that officers can prevent calls for service from happening in the first place through proactive strategies, problem-solving, and effective resolution of calls that do occur. Call occurrence (and therefore time spent on calls) is dependent on how officers spend their noncommitted time problem-solving the underlying issues that will inevitably create future calls. Reducing the criminal justice footprint in the long run, therefore, is achieved not only through diversion but also through the prevention of calls in the first place. Of course, how officers carry out their proactive activities also matter to their effectiveness and legitimacy.

Can calltakers or dispatchers assist in strategically dealing with certain types of issues, either reactively or proactively, to improve these public safety outcomes? Is a more coordinated strategy of dispatching possible where links calltakers, dispatchers, patrol officers, and supervisors? Such questions require a more holistic, evidence-based, and outcome-oriented perspective to this operational area. We hope our exploratory research sparks these discussions.

References


Quattrinetham, M., Moran, T., & Tylers, T. (2018). Principle of procedurally just policing: The Justicewhether the police officers did what the courts were deciding cases that went against the police (Alpert and Lum, 2014). Many agencies began reviewing their vehicular pursuit policies and elected to restrict pursuits to only those fleeing for violent crimes (Alpert, 1997; Reeves, 2017). As a consequence, agencies with more restrictive policies began experiencing reductions (sometimes 80 to 90 percent) in the number of reported vehicular pursuits, related injuries, and financial judgments (Alpert, 1997)...

Pursuit driving remains one of the most controversial and dangerous police activities. It is an adrenaline-driven, physical activity that can stimulate risk-taking while meeting the natural desire for police officers to catch fleeing suspects. It is difficult for an officer to sit idle by when any suspect attempts to avoid apprehension. Since suspects started running from the police, officers have been chasing after them. One of the earliest legal cases analyzing a vehicle pursuit is from the 1940s, Chambers et al. v. Ideal Pure Milk Company et al. and Chambers v. Elmore et al., 245 S.W. 2d 589 (1952). In 1950, Milton Elmore was driving a horse-drawn milk wagon in Owosso, Michigan.Moments earlier, police officers Roberts Chambers and Jack Long observed a parked car on a cross street, occupied by Wren Shearer, a person whom "had reputation had become known to them" (Chambers et al.). Shearer sped off to avoid investigation by the police and, while fleeing at approximately 75 miles per hour, struck Elmore, seriously injuring him. Both Elmore and the Ideal Pure Milk Company sued Officers Chambers and Long, and at a trial in October 1949, the jury rendered a verdict in favor of Elmore and the milk company. The officers challenged the verdict and, on appeal to the Kentucky Supreme Court, the trial court’s decision was reversed. The court noted:

Chambers decided that the actions of the officers caused the offender to flee. However, it also noted that the officers should not be held legally responsible for the fleeing suspect’s actions or the resulting injuries to an innocent bystander. During the 1970s through the 1970s, this thinking permitted the police to adopt an attitude of “chase until the wheels come off,” often resulting in people regularly getting injured and killed from those pursuits. Regardless, the balancing test from Chambers et al. remained. Officers were expected to weigh the need to immediately apprehend a fleeing suspect based on available information against the inherent safety risks to the public. Although these views may be perceived as conflicting, officers continued to pursue suspects for the “greater good” of enforcing the law and apprehending suspects.

There continued to be no real policy reforms to pursue driving until the police and research community started collecting data on police vehicle pursuits and their consequences in the 1980s (Alpert, 1988). Research began to show that police pursuits were often the result of minor traffic, property, or misdemeanor offenses, but often resulted in serious consequences and harm to officers and citizens alike. In fact, the courts were deciding cases that went against the police (Alpert and Lum, 2014). Many agencies began reviewing their vehicular pursuit policies and elected to restrict pursuits to only those fleeing for violent crimes (Alpert, 1997; Reeves, 2017). As a consequence, agencies with more restrictive policies began experiencing reductions (sometimes 80 to 90 percent) in the number of reported vehicular pursuits, related injuries, and financial judgments (Alpert, 1997)...

Known as “ghosted pursuits,” this practice of pursuing
vehicles without reporting the pursuit has been difficult to quantify, and correct or discipline.

- The NOPD procedure is an important example of evidence-based policing. Research may discover trends in practices like pursuits and analyze negative consequences or violations. But evidence-based approaches also require agencies to find ways to implement strategies to strengthen the adherence to evidence-based policies and practices, ultimately to increase both officer and citizen safety and security.

**References**


“Mobile” or “Assigned”? Pros and Cons of Two Different Models of Deploying SROs

BY JOHN ROSIAK

John Rosiak is the founder of Prevention Partnerships (preventionpartnerships.com), which provides training and technical assistance in support of safer and healthier communities.

Clearly, the field of criminology needs more and better data on the effectiveness and impact of school-based law enforcement. As a recent Congressional Research Service report stated, “There is a limited body of research available regarding the effect School Resource Officers (SROs) have on school safety.”

If schools choose to use SROs, one of the practical areas where we need to learn more is regarding how law enforcement agencies should deploy officers in schools. There are different ways law enforcement agencies can deploy officers to work in schools. This article explores some of the current practices, contrasting the “mobile” (or “rotating”) model with the model of assigning an officer to a particular school or schools. A better understanding of these models of implementation will provide clearer direction for research that can yield results to better guide the field.

Little research exists on the relative merits of the mobile versus assigned models of deploying officers in schools. To help us better determine the best way for a community to deploy its SROs, we turn to the wisdom of the by-the-practice at the front line. Their insights were generated by a project that examined the pros and cons of how a large urban community distributed its officers in schools. Such insights can inform school-law enforcement partnerships considering or weighing the different models of deploying officers in schools. There are different ways law enforcement agencies can deploy officers to work in schools. This article explores some of the current practices, contrasting the “mobile” (or “rotating”) model with the model of assigning an officer to a particular school or schools. A better understanding of these models of implementation will provide clearer direction for research that can yield results to better guide the field.

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Congratulations to Our Graduates!

The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (CEBCP), housed in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University, serves to provide graduate research assistantships and advanced training in evidence-based crime policy to the next generation of criminologists. This past academic year, three CEBCP research assistants received their doctorates. Congratulations to Sangjun Park, J. Amber Scherer, and Xiaoyun Wu!

The CEBCP is seeking top doctoral students to join our team (see cebcp.org/team). Applications for the PhD in Criminology, Law and Society Program are due December 1. For more information, visit cls.gmu.edu/programs/la-phd-cls.

SANGJUN PARK

Sangjun is currently an assistant professor of criminal justice at Southern Utah University. His dissertation, “Examining the ‘Law of Crime Concentrations’ across Multiple Jurisdictions,” examined the salience of Weisburd’s law of crime concentration across 42 police jurisdictions in England and Wales. His analysis generally confirms that crime concentrates in a small proportion of street segments across all jurisdictions of a country, but also finds that the level of crime concentration can vary across different types of places and crime types, potentially challenging the law. This study expands the debate about the law of crime concentrations and suggests that the law may be best conceptualized as an equation explained by the varied nature of human activity.

“It was a great choice to join the Criminology, Law and Society Program at George Mason University. I received top-notch training in scientific research methods, participated in exciting research projects, and interacted with brilliant professors. I especially appreciate my professors who seamlessly supported expanding my knowledge. With this knowledge, I was able to successfully find an academic job and teach what I have learned from Mason. I often share my academic experience with my own students and highly recommend Mason’s graduate programs for their future academic success.”

J. AMBER SCHERER

Amber is currently a program coordinator for the Washington/Baltimore High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program and is detailed to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Her dissertation, “Identifying Effective Strategies for Robbery Investigations: An Examination of Organizational, Procedural, and Individual Characteristics,” surveys a national sample of more than 700 law enforcement agencies, clustered by their 30-year robbery clearance rate patterns, regarding their techniques for investigating robberies. Agencies with long-term high, low, and average clearance rate trajectories are examined to see whether any organizational-, procedural-, and investigator-specific characteristics can predict their long-term clearance rate patterns.

“As I look back, there are countless reasons why this was the perfect program for me. Not only did I receive a stellar education in multiple facets of the criminal justice system, I also made lasting relationships with the faculty, staff, and fellow students. What I learned goes far beyond the classroom, and I will utilize those lessons throughout my career. Working in the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy gave me opportunities to expand my research interests, develop leadership skills, and feel like part of a supportive team. Having world-renowned professors is important, but perhaps more crucial is finding and working with the correct mentor. I cannot say enough about mine, Dr. Cynthia Lum. Professor Lum takes pride in her students by personally investing in their success and making them see their own individual potential.”

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XIAOYUN WU

Xiaoyun is currently a research associate and postdoctoral fellow at CEBCP and serves as managing editor of Criminology & Public Policy. Her dissertation, “Understanding Everyday Police Proactivity and its Relationship with Crime,” examines daily patterns of police proactivity and how those patterns respond to changes in crime at micro-geographic-temporal levels. Using calls for service and police location data generated by automated vehicle locator devices, she also evaluates how changes in proactive patrol then affect crime at those places, and more specifically, how the deterrent effect of proactivity is conditioned by the characteristics and the measurement of proactive patrol activities.

“I received both my master’s and PhD from the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University. My time at Mason has been a constant learning and growing experience that has shaped my academic interests and my approach to research. I took classes from top-notch scholars who are knowledgeable and passionate about their area of interest, and I worked and continue to work with wonderful people who showed me the way to conduct empirical and cutting-edge research with high methodological rigor. The department has a collaborative atmosphere and the professors try to ensure that we have the resources and connections to succeed and thrive. Mason has been a wonderful starting point for my research career, and I highly recommend the criminology program to prospective students who are hoping to impact the field.”

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Police officers today live in the age of Herman Goldstein. Goldstein ranks with Sir Robert Peel in his influence on policing in western democracies. Before Peel spread the modern police force, private filter had not matured into a modern force controlled by a public body. As Peel was to police, police were to police.

Goldstein was among the first to urge that policing practices be tested for evidence quality was smaller. The market for evidence of effectiveness was small, and the market for quality evidence was smaller. Now the demand for quality evidence is much greater rejecting its critics. Goldstein explicitly developed the evidence-based movement to enhance Goldstein's policing framework.

Goldstein's observations sparked the most ambitious and detailed application of what we now call translational criminology. Beginning in 2000, the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing developed scores of guides for police on numerous problems. These guides synthesized research and practice to encourage the nuanced application of that knowledge to local variants of problems.

We are now accustomed to seeking opportunities for police and academics to collaborate on useful projects. Before Goldstein, this was rare. We readers of Translational Criminology are Goldstein's debt and commitment to the public welfare. His example of the world the police encounter. Goldstein's problembased policing pointed police and academics to numerous topics for which their research skills could be usefully applied.

We mourn the death of Herman Goldstein. He had deep empathy for the public and a passion for justice. He was always on the lookout for the many confusions facing police on streets and neighborhoods, for problem-oriented policing. He set a higher bar for policing, and many police officers and researchers rose to that challenge. He drew his two words. His vision was enlarged and made these ideas into practice.

Herman Goldstein succeeded at improving the police beyond anything anyone might have expected when he first set out to do so. There remains a long way to go in shifting policing to Goldstein's ideals, but we have made a strong start. So, while we measure our past, we can take great joy in the fact that Herman Goldstein's ideas are as vibrant and relevant today as when he first articulated them.

Professor Herman Goldstein was a recipient of the CEBCP's Distinguished Achievement Award in Evidence-Based Crime Policy. Read his 2015 acceptance speech at bit.ly/Goldstein2015.