Police Process

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Lecture 10
The Police and Crime

Outline for the lecture

- Discuss the elements involved in reporting crime
- Comprehend the process and factors affecting CI
- Explain success and failures in solving crimes
- Understand police strategies to address specific crimes

The Police and Crime

- Crime Control
  - One of the major responsibilities of the police

  Crime Control Activities

  Preventing Crime
  Responding to Incidents
  Conducting Investigations
  Arresting Offenders

The Police and Crime (cont.)

- Crime Control Strategies (L.W. Sherman)
  - Proactive vs. Reactive
  - General vs. Specific
  - Particular crimes (e.g., drug crackdowns)
  - Specific places (i.e., Hot spots)
  - Specific offenders (i.e., career criminals)
  - Specific victims (e.g., mandatory arrest policies)

- Crime Control Assumptions
  - Police and citizens: citizens are co-producers of police services (including crime-fighting activities)

The Police and Crime (cont.)

- Crime Control Assumptions (cont.)
  - Police and other social inst.s: seven inst.s that play a role in preventing crime (communities, families, schools, labor markets, places, the police and other CJ programs)
    a. Police are only one of several inst.s with some impact on crime (e.g., Boston Gun Project’s Operation Ceasefire)
    b. Interdependence of the different inst.s
  - Measuring effectiveness (ME)
    - ME requires meaningful definitions of what is to be measured and reliable data on expected outcomes

Preventing Crime

- Routine Patrol
  - The primary crime prevention activity
  - Has only limited effect of Crime (e.g., KC, Newark)
  - Many PDs maintained formal crime prevention programs (i.e., specialized crime prevention unit, only 3% PDs assigned)

- Crime prevention Revolution (since 1980s)
  - Now seen as “central police activity”
  - Basic element of CP and POP
  - Community-based crime prevention programs (e.g., build neighborhood organizations, fix broken windows, eliminate drug activity, etc.)
  - Police act as problem-solvers and community organizers
Apprehending Criminals

- Citizen Reporting of Crime
  - Police learn about crimes through reactive response and proactive response
  - Police learn of most crimes through citizen reports (gatekeepers of CJ system?)
  - Police rarely discover crimes in progress
  - Victims do not report a crime
    a. NCVS, only 39% of victims reported crimes to police

Factors affect reporting
- Citizens are more likely to report serious, violent crimes, crimes where there is personal injury and involving a high dollar loss (i.e., insurance type crimes)
- A. As and those with lower incomes are more likely to report, females are about 10% more likely to report a VCs

Factors for NOT reporting
- Crime is not important, private matter (e.g., DV), nothing can be done, and perception of police (ineffective, biased..)

Apprehending Criminals (cont.)

- Reporting and Unfound Crimes
  - Even when a crime is reported, PO does not necessarily result in a crime report: “unfounding” a crime (e.g., Chicago, 58% reported by citizens – 17% recorded by POs)
  - No penalty for not completing a crime report

- Unfounding Reasons
  - Legit Reasons: no evidence of a crime (e.g., missing person), issue of false reporting (e.g., burglary, theft)
  - Illegit Reasons: bias (i.e., race, sexual orientation, victim blaming) and lower crime rate

- Altering Crime Reports: changed less criminal offense

Criminal Investigation

- Myths about Detective Work
  - Exciting and dangerous
  - Posses great courage and extraordinary skill
  - “Can solve any crime”
  - Harmful effects of myths: unreasonable public expectations, Devalue patrol work

The Org. of Detective Work
- Located in a separate unit of PDs (15% of SO assigned)
- Detective positions: high status assignment (e.g., much discretion, civilian clothes, higher pay, separate rank.. etc.)
- Clearly defined measure of success (e.g., # of arrest)

Investigation Process

- The Preliminary Investigation
  - Conducted by PO (5 steps)
    1. ID suspect/make arrest
    2. First aid/med
    3. Secure scene
    4. Collect physical evidence
    5. File report (issue of unfounding)
  - PO make about 80% of all arrests (vs. 20% for detectives), but these are generally “easy” arrests (i.e., suspect is on or nearby the scene)

- Arrest Discretion (Chapter 11)

Investigation Process (cont.)

- Follow-Up (Secondary) Investigation
  - Conducted by detectives (3 categories)
    a. Routine activities: interviewing victims, checking the crime scene (90% of all bur.s and rob.s)
    b. Secondary activities: canvassing for witnesses, discussing the case with supervisors, collecting evidence
    c. Tertiary activities: discussing with POs involved/other detectives, interviewing suspects/informants, checking records (NCIC), conducting stakeouts
Investigation Process (cont.)

- The Reality of Detective Work
  - Rand Corp. Study (1970s)
    a. Det. Work to be superficial, routine, nonproductive
    b. Many crimes receive only “superficial” attention, some are not investigated at all (e.g., 30% R. burg.s, 18% lar.)
    c. Most det. work involves paperwork (i.e., investigating one day or less)
- Case Screening
  - Screening methods are used to determine how much effort to put into different cases, decisions based on crime seriousness, evidence

Measuring the Effectiveness of CI

- The Clearance Rate (CR)
  - FBI, crimes are cleared when police have identified the offender, sufficient evidence to charge and take him into custody or in exceptional in stances, when some element beyond police control precludes taking the offender into custody
  - CR is the percentage of crimes reported that have been cleared
    a. (# of crimes cleared/ # of crimes reported)*100
    b. In 1999, 1,200 homicides cleared and 2,006 homicides reported: CR = (1200/2006)*100 = 59.8%

- National average of CR = 20% (64% murder, 45% rape, ... 14% auto theft)
- Unreliable performance measure
  a. Based on reported crimes (only 36% reported)
  b. No standard criteria for clearing crimes
  c. Data can be manipulated
  d. No control/audit UCR system and arrest data

Success and Failure in Solving Crimes

- Case Solvability Factors
  - Successful in solving some crimes than others
- Three factors influence on investigative effect
  - Case structural factors: related to the crime that is being investigated (i.e., screening process)
  - Org. factors: changes in police policies or efforts (technologies?) including # of dect.s, trainings, etc.
  - Environmental factors: community characteristics (i.e., size, type, SES)

- More detectives, increase CR and decrease crime rate (?)
Eyewitness, Criminalistics, DNA

- **Eyewitness**
  - Very popular, but problematic (incomplete information, exaggerate certain features, or stereotype)

- **Criminalistics**
  - Tech. Specialists from the crime lab may be used in some investigation to process scenes
  - Fingerprint: difficult to obtain useful print (e.g., NYPD 10% obtained, only 3% lead to arrest)

DNA

- A genetic fingerprint: sunlight, mold, bacteria destroy DNA
- FBI's National DNA Indexing System (NDIS)
  a. Forensic Index: DNA profiles from genetic evidences
  b. Convicted offender Index: from convicted offenders

- **Officer productivity**
  - Quality of arrest vs. Number of arrest
  - Passive vs. Active type

Eyewitness, Criminalistics, DNA (cont.)

Improving Criminal Investigations

- **Structural Changes**
  - SC: decentralizing det.s and reassigning
  - PC: abolished a separate unit, created a general unit

- **Procedural Changes**
  - FC: making det.s responsible for problem solving

Special Investigative Techniques

- **Undercover Police Work**
  - Problems: deliberate deception by the officers, associates officers with criminals attempting to socialize, and less supervision with greater potential for corruption

- **Informants**
  - Inf.s have knowledge because they are usually criminals themselves or associate with criminals
  - Problems: based on "exchange relationship" between PO and Inf., provide questionable information

Policing Hate Crime

- **Definitions**
  - A criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by the offender's bias against race, gender, national origin, etc.

- **The Scope of Hate Crime**
  - In 1999, 7,876 hate crimes (motivated by racial bias, 55%)
  - About 70% of racial bias crimes against A.As
  - In 2004, 660 hate crimes offenses, 757 hate crimes victims in State of Michigan (UCR)

Policing Hate Crime (cont.)

- **The Nature of Hate Crime**
  - A higher level of assaults, generally more violent
  - Preceded by a series of confrontations of incidents that escalate in severity
  - A more likely to be committed by groups of perpetrators, strangers

- **Police Response**
  - PDs created a bias crime unit (e.g., NY Bias Crime Incident Investigation Unit)
  - This has created a sense throughout the whole dept. that hate crimes have to be taken seriously
Policing School Crime

- School Crime
  - School shootings in several cities (e.g., Santee, CA)
  - Children are much more likely to be victim of a serious violent crime when they are away from school compare to when they are in school (e.g., in 2000, about 14 of every 1,000 students were victims of VC away from school vs. 5 for in school) → Multiple Victims
  - Response: COPS provided $420 Mil. to local PDs to hire 3,800 school resource officers (SROs) to teach criminal law, to provide a visible and positive image of the police, to counsel with students, and to provide a safe learning environment for students

Policing Computer Crime

- The Nature of Computer Crime
  - The highly technical nature and innovative style
  - The crime crosses many jurisdictional lines, even countries
  - The evidence is neither physical nor human
  - Business and financial agencies comprise 46% of targets followed by individuals (28%), and schools (13%) → FBI, sex crime offenders (28%) are the most frequent computer crime offenders followed by insider (19%), criminal offender (18%)

- The Type of Computer Crime
  - Insiders: most common, is a current or former employee who has info. which allows them to steal data from the company
  - Hackers: cracks into the network for the thrill of the experience or for the purpose of making an illegal transaction

- Police Response
  - National Infrastructure Protection and Com. Intrusion Program (NIPCP) to develop a comprehensive national strategy to response computer crime.

- Police Response (cont.)
  - Most PDs are not prepared to respond to computer-related crimes (no personnel, equipment, expertise to be able to investigate c.crimes) because PDs (69%) view c.crime as a low priority.