21st Century Justice: Current Research on Policing, Criminals, Prisons, and Guns

"Impediments to Police Reform"

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Post-1950 Strategic Innovations

Operational innovations
- community policing
- problem-oriented policing (POP)
- disorder policing (broken windows)
- hot spots policing
- spouse-assault mandatory arrest

Accountability innovations
- internal discipline
- external accountability

Managerial innovations
- outcomes management (COMPSTAT)
- personnel diversity-hiring and advancement

Technological Innovations? Coming up soon!
Sources of Strategic Innovation

1. Change driven from the outside
   8/9 innovations (exception outcomes management & maybe hotspots)

2. Important role played by courts and legal system
   gender and racial diversity
   internal and external accountability

3. Significant role played by the “policy community”
   federal and state funders and policymakers
   private foundations and think-tanks
   consultants and planners
   policy intellectuals
   engaged researchers (university and think-tank)
   developers and vendors

4. Decisive role played by politics and society, sometimes by crises
   internal discipline helps chiefs keep their jobs
   community policing vastly popular with the public
   mandatory arrest policies imposed by state legislatures
Internal Sources of Resistance to Change

Policing locally controlled and funded
Resistance by mid-level and top managers
Resistance by front-line supervisors
Resistance by rank-and-file officers
contrary to cultural narratives defining 'real police work'
Resistance by special units
Resistance by police unions
Competing demands and expectations
Inability to measure what matters, and no tradition of internal evaluation
Failure of interagency cooperation
Nasty misconduct diverts public and leadership attention
Reforms often so not survive leadership transition
Rapid turnover in leadership
Insulation provided by law-and-order politics

(Skogan, 2008)

Not always clear that change is a Good Thing
mandatory arrest research deeply flawed
problem oriented policing proved impossible to implement
disorder oriented policing frequently loses sight of its actual goal
What About Technology?  Post 1950, probably none has been of strategic significance

Some provide improvements in the normal business model
   DNA winnows out who didn’t dunnit; does not generate apprehensions
   data terminals in cars

Some stoutly resisted by the rank-and-file- subvert and sabotage
   in-car cameras
   vehicle locating technologies

Some stoutly ignored by the rank-and-file
   crime mapping and systematic crime analysis

Some stoutly resisted by (command-and-control oriented) executives
   cellphones, voice mail providing direct public contact with officers
Case Study: The Adoption of IT Innovation in Cook County

- 60,400 hits
- 1,423,000 total

- Data warehouse use per month
- Cumulative system use

- Use per month
- Cumulative use

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Adoption factors
- cosmo. networks
- database experience
- computer savvy
- human capital

Utilization factors
- resources & staffing
- experience
- crime rate
- have detectives

IT Diffusion Cook County

Cumulative Percent of Agencies Using the Data Warehouse

90 percent in 18 months

delta t

[time from 10% to 90%]
Why was adoption so rapid (‘delta t’ = 17 months)?

Did not call for any difficult or risky organizational change

Quickly embraced by detectives, who enjoy a privileged place in policing

Focused resources and energy on the most traditional goal of police organizations

Works through the traditional command-and-control hierarchy

Helps preserve a traditional model of policing under attack by many reformers

In broad strokes these also describe the only clearly internally generated strategic innovation in policing -outcomes management. Nationally, it also diffused very broadly and rapidly. It is also the most important obstacle to any (other) reform in contemporary policing.