Integrating crime analysis into patrol work: A COPS Office Grant

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Background

➢ Although research has been done on what types of products are provided by crime analysis, little is known about the use of crime analysis by patrol officers.

➢ Also, little is known about how data are produced by or for patrol officers for analysis purposes.
Prior research has found difficulties in:
• Proactive implementation of crime analysis within LEA
• Getting patrol officers to conduct crime analysis or
• Getting patrol officers to use the results of crime analysis (O’Shea & Nicholls, 2003; Cordner and Biebel, 2005; Cope, 2004).

Examining issues from the patrol officers’ perspective:
• Data/analysis needs of CP patrol officers
• Types of analyses officers believe would be useful (especially for facilitating CP) and best practices for officer data collection
• We do not limit our work to “crime analysts,” because we think this limits the scope of how analysis is required and produced in a police agency.
• However, we will also collect data from crime analysts and police managers.
Focus of this Study (cont’d)

- Seek out examples of best practices for how analysis capabilities are disseminated to patrol (roll call, IT).

- Examine whether the CAD/RMS data are collected in a way that best suits analysis and patrol needs

Research Design: Multi-methods

- Quantitative methods
  - National survey - Extent to which agencies in the U.S. have been able to integrate crime analysis into regular patrol work within a CP framework, including assessing their needs and promising practices

- Qualitative methods
  - Focus groups
  - Working groups
  - Case studies

- All of this work would be tied together in a final report and guidebook
Focus Groups

- Verify qualitatively the needs of patrol officers and how LEAs have been able to do integration work
- Based on the project survey, we will identify 6-10 LEAs that have integrated crime analysis into patrol work to be in focus groups
- Focus groups will be held with:
  - Experienced crime analysts
  - Patrol officers
  - First line supervisors
  - Police executives

Focus Groups (cont’d)

- Best practices would be identified that other agencies could learn from, as well as identify gaps in the integration process that need further development.
- The focus groups will be convened to:
  - Define information requirements for patrol
  - Assess the capabilities of crime analysis generally to produce the outputs needed
  - Define the executive responses required to fill the gaps in capability and strategy
Working Groups

- Based on the project survey/focus groups, we will identify working group experts representing
  - Patrol function
  - The crime analysis function
  - Executive leadership function

- **Purpose:**
  - Assess and guide the future of crime analysis in LEAs
  - Assessing the analysis needs of patrol officers and data needs for that analysis
  - Identifying key gaps not being addressed
  - Developing recommendations for practice

Case Studies

- Case studies with two LEAs, identified by working groups, that have been successful at data collection and crime analysis integration into patrol work
- Go beyond isolated examples of successful crime analysis
- Examine organizationally how integration of crime analysis was achieved.
- Ground work in realities of everyday patrol work
- Increase our knowledge of the implementation process for successful integration work
2008 sample of ~ 1,000 local LEAs (sheriffs/PDs)
- Stratified/random sample of LEAs across U.S.
  - Population divided into strata based upon agency size, agency type, and geography
- Builds on an earlier PERF survey with crime analysts, and national surveys (e.g., NIJ crime maps survey & LEMAS)
- Survey included items on the extent to which LEAs have integrated crime analysis with patrol work (within a CP framework), including: promising practices, barriers to overcome, and issues that still need to be resolved
- Two versions of the survey
  - Analyst survey
  - Patrol survey

Using a proven survey distribution plan - multiple waves of surveys, reminder letters, faxed survey/phone reminders
- To date, three waves of surveys and two reminder letters have been disseminated
- Data presentation based on first 390 completed surveys (we now have 562 completed surveys from both analysts and patrol commanders)
Descriptive Data on Agencies

- **Agency size**
  - 1000+ officers: 15%
  - 500-999 officers: 12%
  - 1-25 officers: 9%
  - 26-49 officers: 15%
  - 50-99 officers: 22%
  - 100-499 officers: 27%

- Median (typical) responding agency: 119 sworn officers, 47 civilian personnel, 60,000 dispatched calls for service, 25,186 officer initiated citizen contacts

What % of LEAs have crime analysts?

- 57% of LEAs in our sample have crime analysts
  - These agencies have on average 5 analysts (range 1-76)
- 55% of LEAs have people other than dedicated crime analysts conducting crime analysis
  - Most of these staff are:
    - Management personnel (48%) ➔ Supervisory patrol personnel (29%)
    - Patrol officers (24%) ➔ Planning and research staff (24%)
- 11% of the agencies have no crime analysis staff
What do crime analysts primarily do?

- Completing UCR monthly and annual reports: 53%
- Assisting patrol officers with crime analysis needs: 56%
- Conducting crime mapping analysis: 57%
- Assisting first-line supervisors with crime analysis needs: 60%
- Working directly with detectives: 61%
- Identifying crime patterns: 65%

Who determines what crime analysis is done in the LEA?

The types of crime analyses that are produced are usually determined by:

- Commanders (48%)
- Crime analysts (17%)
- Crime analyst supervisors (10%)
Who uses the results of crime analysis in an LEA?

The following agency personnel make the greatest use of crime analysis:

- Chiefs/deputy chiefs (35%)
- District/area commanders (22%)

How does crime analysis fit with the LEAs goals/objectives?

- 38% of the LEAs say it is “critical”
- 40% say it is “fairly well aligned”
- 19% say it is “neutral” to achieving goals/objectives
- 3% say it is “poorly aligned”
For citizens engaged in a partnership with the LEA, were the following provided to citizens?

- 86% of agencies provided General Part I UCR statistics to citizens
- ...86% calls for service data
- ...82% short-term crime patterns
- ...77% long-term crime trends
- ...76% stats by police service area
- ...70% stats divided by neighborhood

Operational problem solving

- 87% of respondents indicated that crime analysis is used for at least one short-term crime issue (crime activity occurring for no more than 4-6 months)
- 83% use it for at least one mid-term crime issue (more than six months)
- 72% use it for at least one long-term crime issue (several years or more)
Organizational issues

Crime analysis is most frequently used to:

- Hold management accountable for crime reduction and prevention: 51%
- Determine future personnel needs: 51%
- Determine short-term deployment (e.g., patrol scheduling): 55%
- Determine whether LEAs are effective in reducing crime/disorder: 61%

Suitability of RMS for Crime Analysis

- Most LEAs indicated that their agency’s RMS systems include information on:
  - Location type (98%)
  - Disposition of the crime (94%)
  - Weapon type (92%)
  - Method of entry (83%)
  - Point of entry (82%)
Most LEAs indicated that their agency’s CAD systems include information on:

- Disposition of the call (90%)
- Priority of the call (83%)
- Location type (80%)
- Distinction between officer- and citizen-generated calls (73%)
How do crime analysts attempt to understand the analytic needs of patrol?

- Informal gatherings with patrol personnel: 50%
- Periodic formal meetings: 25%
- Roll call/briefings: 24%
- Ride-alongs: 20%
- Surveys/interviews with officers: 16%

Other communication issues/problems for conducting crime analysis:

- Most agencies (51%) have no feedback mechanism that informs those who conduct crime analysis of the impact of their efforts.
- While 41.4% of respondents indicated that officers have direct contact with crime analysis personnel, 25.8% indicated that there is little to no communication between the two.
- Only 16% of respondents indicated that patrol makes the greatest use of crime analysis. Most LEAs (59%) indicated that there were not enough personnel to complete the necessary crime analysis work.
- Many LEAs (42%) indicated that there was insufficient funding to adequately support crime analysis.
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