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Intelligence-Led Policing

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ABSTRACT

Modern law enforcement agencies are tasked with reducing crime and the fear of crime. Law enforcement agencies have utilized several policing strategies over the years, such as a community and problem oriented policing, to reduce crime. These strategies are still being utilized today, but there has been a shift in policing strategies that includes intelligence-led policing, which is a management model and philosophy that affords police administrators the opportunity to utilize intelligence information to guide police resource deployments with a goal of being more efficient.

Law enforcement should utilize intelligence-led policing because it has the responsibility of controlling crime by priority setting and strategic planning. The objective of this research is to explore the intelligence-led policing strategy and methods to assist the decision making of police leaders involved in controlling crime. This paper explores the use of intelligence-led policing as a strategic planning tool in the fight against organized crime that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. It argues that through the implementation of an intelligence-led policing model, law enforcement agencies can fully take advantage of the availability of tools, such as crime mapping resources. To do this, crimes analysts map and analyze crime incident patterns to identify crime hot spots, along with other trends and patterns, so police administrators can make informed decisions when deploying resources and disrupt criminal activities. The intelligence-led policing strategy also encourages targeting offenders, utilizing informants, and sharing of criminal intelligence amongst law enforcement agencies of partner agencies through email investigator groups and monthly meetings, which will have a significant impact on crime reductions.

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INTRODUCTION

Police departments have the responsibility of partnering with the community to reduce crime and the fear of crime. Police leaders have to manage their resources wisely, and intelligence-led policing can assist police leaders in the deploying of police resources more effectively and efficiently. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, it became evident that law enforcement needed to improve criminal intelligence sharing. After the 9/11 attacks, the U. S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation created a nationwide suspicious activity report (SAR), which is currently being utilized by federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to ensure possible terrorist activity is being reported, analyzed, and disseminated appropriately to prevent a repeat of the 9/11 terrorist attack. In addition to law enforcement agencies utilizing SAR reports, police agencies are sharing criminal intelligence with front line officers in their respective agencies as well as other agencies in their region as a part of the intelligence-led policing (ILP) strategy.

Intelligence-led policing is a common term in law enforcement practices. According to Ratcliffe (2008), "It is a business model and managerial philosophy where data analysis and crime intelligence are pivotal to an objective, decision-making framework that target prolific and serious offenders" (p. 89). United Kingdom police forces began utilizing the intelligence-led policing strategy in the early nineties, when it was discovered that police spent more time responding to crime than targeting criminals. United States police forces began using similar intelligence-led policing strategies with the introduction of the Compstat (Computer Statistics) process at the

New York Police Department in 1994. The Compstat system is a program combining crime analysis and strategic management of police resources and tactics. The Compstat system includes four crime principles in crime reduction: “timely and accurate intelligence, effective tactics, rapid deployment, and relentless follow-up and assessment” (Ratcliffe, 2008, p. 76). Police agencies receive intelligence information from various sources, including regional and state fusion centers. The fusion centers assist law enforcement by receiving, analyzing, and sharing criminal intelligence information.

Many police departments take advantage of criminal intelligence sharing by utilizing the same records management systems (RMS). With modern technology, police agencies utilizing the same RMS can access data from other police departments on the same system. With the new technology, officers can obtain more information about a suspect than a criminal history report. To assist with gathering criminal intelligence, police officers and investigators can perform prisoner debriefs on arrested suspects with a goal of obtaining information about criminal activity they may have knowledge of. In 2002, over 120 criminal intelligence experts met at an International Association of Chiefs of Police and worked together to promote a national policing plan to promote ILP (IACP, 2002).

This ILP concept is still in evolution and a supplement to the already known community policing and problem oriented policing concepts, which aim at bringing policing closer to the community. Involving internal and external partners in a shared responsibility for more safety and security is a key aspect of the ILP approach (Ratcliffe, 2008). Law enforcement should utilize the ILP strategy in conjunction with other

strategies, such as community and problem oriented policing, to ensure their agency is working at optimal efficiency.

POSITION

Law enforcement should utilize intelligence-led policing because it has the responsibility of controlling crime by priority setting and strategic planning. The objective of this research is to explore intelligence-led policing strategy and methods to assist the decision making of police leaders involved in controlling crime. Like community and problem oriented policing, intelligence led policing is a paradigm shift from traditional policing comprised of random patrols, reactive response, follow up investigations, and adjudication through the legal system with a goal of reducing crime (Weisburd & Eck, 2004).

Growing national and international criminal enterprises involved in many illegal activities, like organized violent robberies, international drug smuggling, human trafficking, money laundering and terrorism, which are supported by the strands of globalization, are new challenges for police organizations (Ratcliffe, 2008). Criminals commit offenses across jurisdictional boundaries which highlights the need for police agencies to share information and devise strategies to disrupt organized crime. Research also suggested that approximately 6% of the population is responsible for 60% of the crime in the United States, which demonstrates the need for police to disrupt criminal activities of prolific and serious offenders (Ratcliffe, 2008). Intelligence-led policing works by having a police analyst interpret the criminal environment and then produce intelligence that is disseminated to law enforcement decision makers. The decision makers use the intelligence to develop tactical responses that impact the

criminal environment. After a tactical operation has been completed, it is evaluated for effectiveness.

Police agencies should budget for crime analysts dedicated to preparing real time intelligence information to assist with intelligence-led policing efforts. Many police agencies subscribe to online mapping software to assist with crime statistics and deployment of resources. The online line mapping services allows patrol supervisors to obtain crime stats and determine where resources need to be deployed. Police agencies utilizing the crime mapping software have the ability to allow patrol officers to track crime from their mobile data terminals in their patrol cars and provide them direction on where they should be patrolling.

When the intelligence-led policing strategy has been implemented, there needs to be an evaluation process. The evaluations can be done internally at monthly Compstat meetings or by an outside professional. Ratcliffe (2008) provided a list of the top ten intelligence-led policing standards used to assess the development and growth of intelligence-led policing environments. Characteristics demonstrated by intelligence-led police agencies are very different than those demonstrated by investigation-led agencies in that they have helpful command staff and the strategy is the heart of an organization-wide approach. These police agencies should apply integrated crime and criminal analysis, focusing on serious offenders, and routine investigation should be screened out. Intelligence-led police agencies typically provide analytical training and meetings. Data stewardship and governance is key in this environment and should be provided to police leaders to assist with deployment of resources. Management should ensure intelligence is actionable (Ratcliffe, 2008).

One proven method of gathering criminal intelligence is through the use of criminal informants. If managed properly, informants can provide police investigators with valuable intelligence information to assist with police enforcement strategies. In April 2011, police managers attending the FBI's National Academy (NA) in Quantico, Virginia participated in an intelligence-led policing and crime analysis study. Survey questions were based on general strategic and intelligence-led policing implementation research. In this analysis, the respondents' attitudes toward intelligence-led policing were encouraging. When programs and strategies are being developed, mid-level supervisors are a very important link between police administration and front line officers. Front line officers understanding managements' views is very important because it sets the tone of the program. Surveys conducted reveal that a large percentage of police administrators, managers, and front line officers recognize the importance of crime analysis information (Phillips, 2012).

An advantage of utilizing the intelligence-led policing strategy is that the police agency may be eligible for federal grant funding such as the smart policing initiative (SPI) grant programs (Smart Policing Initiative, 2012). There are many successful outcomes of the utilization of the intelligence-led policing strategy. One notable success is the New Jersey State Police Operation Nine Connect in July 2006 that involved numerous gangs who were threatening public safety. Police leadership did not have the resources to address all of the threats, so they focused on the gangs that were the most violent and pervasive groups. Intelligence analysts drew on a variety of data sources, and the intelligence revealed that the Bloods street gang was the primary threat. More importantly, a subset of the Bloods, called the Nine Trey Gangsters was identified as

the emerging threat. A police operation, with the goal of disrupting gang activity through enforcement action, led to the arrest of approximately 90 gang members (NJSP, 2006).

Another example of a successful outcome involved a large metropolitan area with more than 30 local law enforcement jurisdictions that were experiencing a high amount of armed robberies. Initially, the agencies were working the robbery cases independent of each other and had no physical evidence to make an identity. Through the use of intelligence analysis, a patterned was discerned that highlighted a connection between the cases. Crime analysis produced an identified pattern that helped investigative personnel implement surveillance in specific targeted areas. This strategy led to the apprehension of six suspects and recovery of weapons and currency related to the robberies (USDOJ, 2009). A final example of an intelligence-led policing success story related to the Citrus County Sheriff's Office in Florida that was experiencing recurring burglaries. Using the ILP model, the sheriff's office used a variety of data sources, including tips from Crime Stoppers, to identify suspects in what was known as Operation Spring Cleaning. The arrest of 17 suspects resulted in the recovery of stolen property for some of the victims (Douglas, 2012).

Another intelligence-led policing strategy that many departments have been utilizing recently is data-driven approaches to crime and traffic safety (DDACTS) where crime and traffic data is analyzed to assist police administrators with deployment of resources. In addition to the crime reduction goal, DDACTS has goals of reducing traffic collisions and violations. Schenectady, New York, Harlingen, Texas, and Meridian, Idaho all have seen reductions in their respective crime rates as a result of the DDACTS strategy (Harvey, 2015).

Law enforcement should consider intelligence-led policing being included in basic police officer training curriculums since technology has evolved to where information is readily available to police officers via mobile data terminals. If the intelligence-led policing training is included in the basic police officer training, the officers would be exposed to accessing a crime mapping software, shown how to utilize the map, and determine where the crime spots are in a specific area. If the training is included, the officers will have the ability to be more effective and efficient when patrolling their respective beats.

COUNTER POSITION

The intent of the intelligence-led policing strategy is to improve policing and control crime; however, some researchers believe the new movement in the direction of intelligence-led policing faces challenges due to the lack of training of officers in the proper use of new technologies, under-utilized data, and perceived infringement on the public's civil liberties. Police agencies can overcome the lack of training issue by requiring their staff to receive intelligence-led policing training and following through strategies learned in their training. In September 2012, the Evans County Sheriff's Office partnered with the Claxton and Hagan police departments to start an intelligence-led policing initiative that was funded by the Justice Assistance Smart Policing Grant. The three partnering agencies developed an intelligence-led policing policy that included guidelines for the initiative that included mandated training of officers in the intelligence-led policing function (Smart Policing Initiative, 2012).

Another challenge to intelligence-led policing is a strong tendency in the police culture to gather data only to under-analyze it, leaving the law enforcement community

under informed about crime dynamics and the causes of crime (Johnson, 2010). For progress to occur more rapidly in this area, police must become more efficient in the four principal stages of the intelligence system, namely, targeting, gathering, analysis, and dissemination (Johnson, 2010). There is also the concern with regard to information hoarding and silo-thinking; threats to community safety often remain known to some but are not shared with those who could take appropriate preventative action (Johnson, 2010). Many police agencies have begun hosting regular regional meetings to share intelligence and devise strategies to combat crime trends. It has become common for several police agencies in Fort Bend County, Texas meet on a monthly basis and rotate the meeting locations throughout the county. Police agencies also improve intelligence sharing with the use of internet-based intelligence groups.

Another challenge to intelligence-led policing is the real or perceived violation of individuals' privacy and constitutional rights. Information gathering activities associated with intelligence-led policing may infringe on the privacy and civil liberties when more instructive procedures are used such as informants, undercover operations, electronic surveillance, and other sophisticated intelligence analysis. As with other discretionary decisions in policing, intelligence policies and training that address the protection of privacy and civil liberties should be employed by agencies to eliminate the unnecessary discretion, guide the necessary discretion, and audit the process to ensure conformance with the policy goals (Ratcliffe, 2008). A number of intelligence policies, laws, and regulations, for example, Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit File Guidelines; Executive Order 28 CFR Part 23, known as the Criminal Intelligence Systems Operating Policies; and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, apply this framework. This

helps police organizations give protection of privacy and civil liberties the highest priority in order to build and maintain the public's trust (Ratcliffe, 2008).

RECOMMENDATION

Intelligence-led policing is a proven philosophy that should be utilized by law enforcement in concert with other proven strategies to ensure the agency is working at the highest efficiency levels. This philosophy has the potential to be the most important law enforcement development tool of the century to assist with decision-making in controlling crime. If law enforcement personnel are to use knowledge to drive action, then intelligence must influence decision-makers in a meaningful fashion.

Collaboration between agencies is an integral step in the intelligence-led policing strategy to gain the big picture view of organized crime in order to combat it effectively. Police agencies should budget for crime analysts dedicated to preparing real time intelligence information. The analyst's role in the identification of patterns is essential to proactive police work geared towards crime prevention. Likewise, the necessity of timely and reliable information is crucial for the decision-making process. Police agencies should strongly consider subscribing to online mapping software to assist with crime analysis and mapping. When implementing intelligence-led policing strategy, an evaluation process must be performed to assess the development and growth of policing environments.

The challenges with intelligence-led policing strategies today include a lack of training of officers in the use of the technologies available to them, as well as the under-utilization of data and perceived infringement of the public's civil liberties. However, these challenges can be overcome with the use of clearly defined policies and mandated

training, a demand for greater internal accountability, sharing of information across jurisdictions, and building trust with other law enforcement agencies. Data governance and stewardship is key in the management of what can sometimes be very sensitive information. The increasing demand for law enforcement to share intelligence has been a catalyst for change and has resulted in fusion centers that now serve as a repository for intelligence data. With budget constraints and the need to do more with less, ILP allows for redeployment of resource time in a more efficient way. Intelligence analysts can draw on a variety of data sources to highlight patterns of current criminal activity that can be an indicator of future criminal activity.

A law enforcement agency can implement intelligence-led policing by first allocating resources to focus on management of integrated data and production of quality information that can be used to influence decision-making. Staff and executives should be trained in intelligence-led policing strategy to ensure an organization-wide approach. Regular meetings covering strategic and tactical topics should serve as the backbone for collaborative discussions between agencies. These meetings are essential in allowing decision-makers to draw in a wide range of opinions and devise strategic plans. There are many methods of implementing intelligence-led policing. The size of the organization and amount of resources will determine how intelligence-led policing will look within each organization (USDOJ, 2009).

Modern police departments have a goal of reducing crime and the fear of crime in their respective jurisdictions. Intelligence-led policing is not intended to take the place of traditional policing procedures; however, it is a tool that can enhance existing policing strategies by targeting specific criminals, use of informants, and analyzing crime data to

guide the deployment of police resources, thereby creating a more efficient and effective organization. The philosophy can be developed for use by any size agency and is not restricted by the lack of mapping and analytical software. Moreover, the amassed information benefits the community it serves by reducing crime and providing an enhanced level of service by the organization.

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