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On Good Authority is a periodic briefing on trends and issues in criminal justice program evaluation. This report was written by staff Research Analyst Karen S. Levy McCanna. It is a summary of an evaluation of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy. The evaluation was conducted by Wesley Skogan, Ph.D., of the Chicago Community Policing Consortium, coordinated by the Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University. Copies of the evaluation are available from the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

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Community mobilization fuels Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)

A recent research report shows that the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) has made great strides in program implementation, community mobilization, and public confidence levels since its inception. These findings were included in the latest evaluation report on CAPS covering the period of April 1999 to August 2000. The evaluation was conducted by Northwestern University researchers.

Citizen involvement in beat meetings

Beat meetings provide a forum to facilitate information exchange between community residents and police. Evaluators analyzed three aspects of beat meeting quality: 1) whether beat meeting participants reflect the demographic composition of the beat; 2) whether the possible disproportionate representation of homeowners, or other residents with a greater stake in the community, that emerges in the meetings affects the accuracy of representation of beat problems at the meetings; and 3) whether beat meeting participant priorities address the problems facing the beat, including the quality of police service. Data were collected from evaluator beat meeting observations, questionnaires completed by beat meeting participants, and answers to a citywide survey.

The Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium concluded its final evaluation of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy in August 2000. This *On Good Authority* summarizes the evaluation of the seventh year of the strategy. The evaluation was funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, using federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act funds, the National Institute of Justice, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Do beat meeting participants reflect the demographic composition of the beat?

Seventy percent of beat meeting participants citywide were homeowners, while an average of 40 percent of all beat residents owned their home. Within beats, certain demographic groups of residents were overrepresented at meetings. Almost 75 percent of participants had a college education, compared to 30 percent of all residents. In addition, while about 12 percent of all residents were over age 65, 25 percent of meeting participants were over age 65.

Do beat meeting participants' priorities represent the problems facing the beat, and residents' views of the quality of police service?

Overall, data indicated that beat meeting participants were more concerned about problems than other residents. Ratings of neighborhood problems were compared between survey respondents and meeting participants in 195 beats. The data indicated an overrepresentation of gang, drug, and physical decay problems presented at the meetings. Street drug sales were rated as a big problem by 32 percent of residents but by more than 50 percent of meeting participants. Participants expressed views closer to beat residents on property and street crime problems, and assessments of the quality of police service.

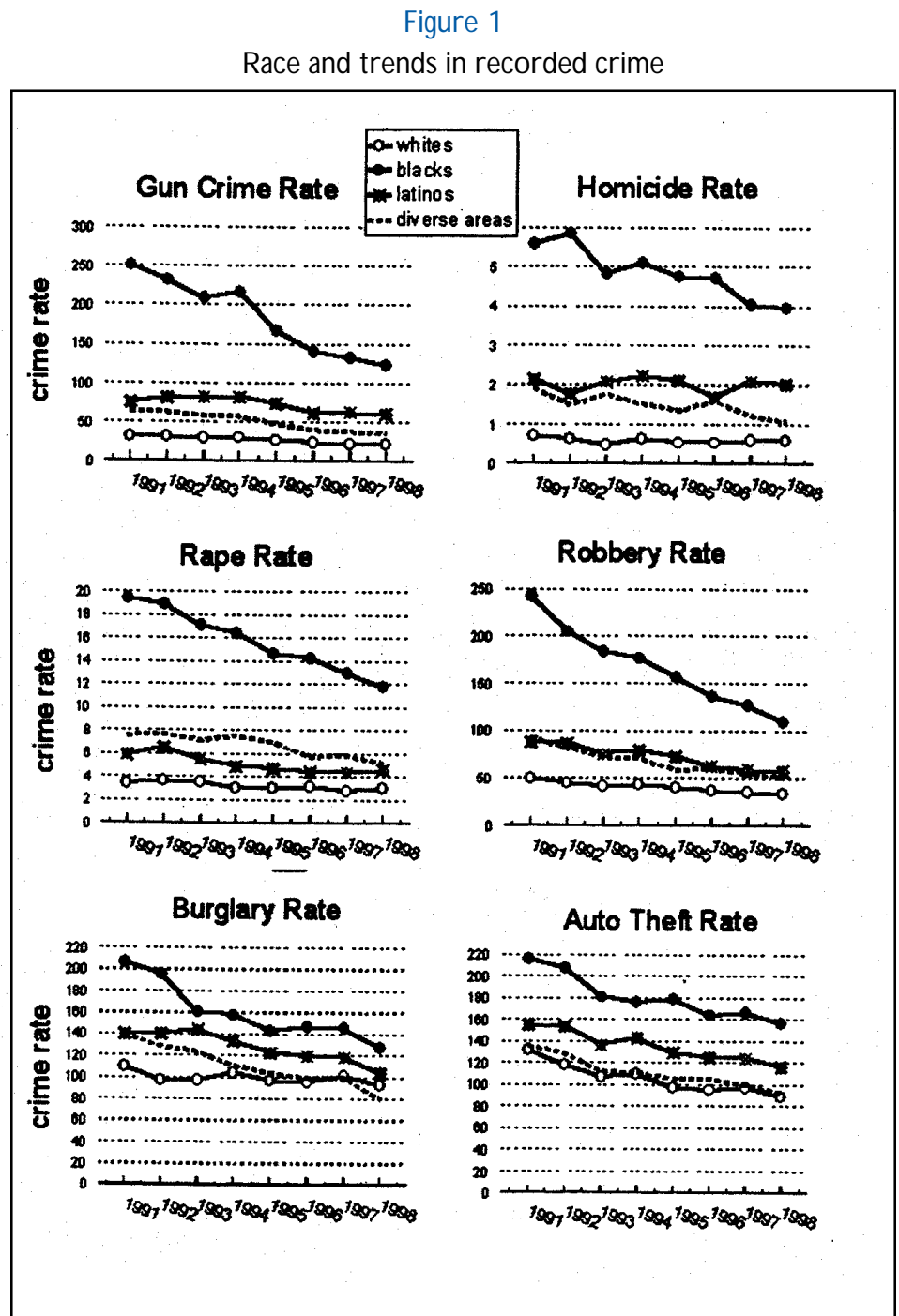
Does the pattern of "middle class bias" that emerges in the meetings affect the accuracy of representation of beat problems, and criticisms of police at the meetings?

To explore this question evaluators compared the views of meeting participants and their neighbors. Where homeowners made up the majority of meeting participants there was an overrepresentation of concern about physical decay in the neighborhood, and older participants were less likely to express concern about street crime and burglary.

Regarding police service, meeting participants rated higher the quality of police service than did residents in general. This trend held true for whites, African-Americans, and Latinos.

Trends in public confidence

The citywide survey of residents was conducted annually through most of the 1990s. Respondents were asked to rate the quality of neighborhood police service in terms of their demeanor, police responsiveness, and performance. Police demeanor was rated based on how well law enforcement officers treated people living in the community. Police responsiveness was measured with questions about their responsiveness to community concerns. Police performance was measured using



questions about effectiveness of law enforcement activities in the community.

Citywide, ratings of police services became more positive between 1993 and 1999. Police demeanor reached a 75 percent favorable rating by 1999. For the same period police responsiveness rose from 37 to 57 percent and police performance ratings rose from 36 to 50 percent favorable. Evaluators also examined these measures by race. Police demeanor was rated similarly by African-Americans and

Latinos, rising then falling between 1993 and 1995, and ending at 65 percent favorable in 1999. Police responsiveness and police performance were rated more favorably by Latinos than African-Americans between 1993 and 1999. The white population consistently rated all three measures most favorably, and also increased their favorable ratings over the seven-year period. The largest overall increase in favorable ratings for police services (demeanor, responsiveness, and

performance) was shown among African-Americans.

Recorded crime trends

Evaluators utilized recorded crime events from Chicago Police Department (CPD) databases to examine crime trends in Chicago from 1991 through 1998. Chicago has paralleled the national trend of declining crime. The largest drop was in the category of robbery (47 percent), followed by all gun-related offenses (44 percent). Sexual assault and auto theft declined by 33 percent, homicide dropped 24 percent, and burglary decreased by 31 percent. The smallest decline was in the category of aggravated assault, which declined by 13 percent. Figure 1 illustrates the crime rate (per 100,000) analysis conducted on 1991 through 1998 offense data by racial categories.

Role of district advisory committees

District advisory committees are comprised of community members who meet regularly with police to assist commanders in establishing district priorities. The committees develop strategies to address the priorities, and identify the underlying causes of the most chronic problems. Each committee forms a court advocacy and seniors subcommittee along with other subcommittees that reflect the needs of the neighborhood. The subcommittees are charged with implementing the strategies developed by district advisory committees. Evaluators utilized observations, archival data, interviews, and a membership survey to examine the effectiveness of district advisory committees. Additionally, nine committees were selected for intense study.

Evaluators measured data in five areas to gauge the viability of the advisory committees: district mobilization; court advocacy; subcommittees; resource allocation; and collaboration/partnerships. District mobilization was measured by the committee's ability to jointly recognize a problem, find resources to address it, and then organize a solution. Overall, confusion existed about the mission of the district advisory committees.

Virtually every district advisory committee had sponsored or co-sponsored at least one informational workshop, seminar, or training event for the public. Topics included safety, identity theft prevention, Y2K preparedness, recognizing telephone scams, and health issues. Most district advisory committees targeted their efforts with the CAPS Implementation Office by serving needy families or seniors living within the district. Many committee chairpersons considered public education as the main form of community outreach. Most often, mobilization activities included marches or rallies, informational forums, charity drives, youth activities, and social events.

Court advocates volunteered in each district and tracked the progress of selected court cases and hearings. The CAPS Implementation Office provided training, advice on the legal system, transportation assistance, and materials such as recruitment brochures and identification badges for volunteers. Advocates worked with the Community Prosecutions Division of the State's Attorney's Office to track felony and housing cases from start to finish. Advocates also attended hearings to share with prosecutors and judges their desired outcomes of the cases and concerns they had about a particular crime's impact on their neighborhood.

Nine of the city's 25 district advisory councils were chosen for intense study. Three councils showed highly functioning subcommittees, while two were considered to have average efficiency, and four were struggling. Well-functioning subcommittees conducted regular meetings, tackled projects related to their mission, and reported on progress at district advisory committee meetings.

Community mobilization for community policing

Since 1998, the CAPS Implementation Office has grown within the Chicago Police Department to employ 88 individuals who work directly with community residents, schools, police, and community leaders to motivate, mobilize, and energize residents and stakeholders to action. The Implementation Office contracts with local nonprofit community organizations to

provide on-site organizers who work with 30 other organizers employed through the office. The Implementation Office director provides the overall guiding philosophy for the community mobilization effort.

Duties of the Implementation Office go beyond mobilization. The office coordinates the CAPS marketing campaign and co-directs with other CPD departments the city-sponsored cable program "Crimewatch." In addition, youth services coordinators work with schools to develop safety initiatives, community service representatives and police officers submit service requests and monitor the delivery of services by city agencies, and building services coordinators identify problem buildings and work with owners to improve the property.

Evaluation of the CAPS Implementation Office was based on observations of community organizers, monthly CAPS staff meetings and training sessions, interviews, walk-throughs of program and non-program areas, and community organization literature. Additionally, evaluators selected four African-American beats for a more in-depth study from April 1999 through September 1999. The full report illustrates the activities, challenges, and success of Implementation Office initiatives. Evaluators also documented changes in community characteristics via special neighborhood surveys conducted in 1998 and 1999. Neighborhoods with a strong infrastructure of individual initiative and organizational talent tended to have a higher rate of participation in the CAPS program.

Community prosecution and community policing

CAPS participants often work cooperatively with other city sponsored programs; Community Prosecution and the Drug and Gang Housing Enforcement Section are two examples. The focus of community-oriented prosecutors rests on people, problems, and relationships. Community prosecution measures success by reducing the severity of the problem and improving the quality of community life. In addition to traditional prosecutorial tools, community prosecutors also utilize mobilization, training, and civil remedies. Chicago's community

prosecution effort includes the Drug and Gang Housing Enforcement Section of the Chicago Department of Law and the Community Prosecutions Division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

Managing program implementation

The Chicago Police Department took steps to address deficiencies identified during the May 1999 CAPS evaluation prior to the release of this report. The CAPS Project Office was established in March 1999 to assess the efficacy of problem-solving strategies and procedures that comprise Chicago's community policing program, and to gauge the true level of CAPS implementation in the districts. After several months the police superintendent was presented with a report containing 40 recommendations to improve the problem-solving component of CAPS. The recommendations included modifications that impacted the

roles of lieutenants and watch commanders, beat planning tools, and meetings and activities.

The second initiative undertaken in support of CAPS is the Office of Management Accountability. Established in February 2000, the Office of Management Accountability ensures the department remains focused on its core missions, particularly when it comes to mobilizing the resources required to address chronic crime and disorder problems. The plan is for district and area managers to be held accountable for reducing crime and disorder, identifying and responding effectively to crime patterns and trends, responding to community concerns in concert with residents, and efficiently using resources. The office gathers and analyzes data on crime and disorder, and identify emerging crime trends, management bottlenecks, and community concerns,

as well as monitor area-level planning and resource allocation.

Conclusion

CAPS has evolved from an experiment in five districts to a strategy for addressing chronic crime and disorder. Significant structural changes have taken place within the CPD, including a strategy that allows lower-level managers, staff, and officers to allocate necessary resources. Program-enhancement measures took place during the last year of evaluation to support a systemic problem-solving approach. Evaluators have documented the obstacles and successes of the multifaceted community policing project. ♦

