REPEAT VICTIMIZATION: LESSONS FOR IMPLEMENTING PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

by

Gloria Laycock

Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science
University College, London

and

Graham Farrell

University of Cincinnati and Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science

Abstract: This paper discusses some of the difficulties encountered in attempting to introduce ideas derived from research on repeat victimization to the police services of the United Kingdom. Repeat victimization is the phenomenon in which particular individuals or other targets are repeatedly attacked or subjected to other forms of victimization, including the loss of property. It is argued that repeat victimization is a good example of the kind of problem solving envisaged by Goldstein and discussed in his original conception of problem-oriented policing.

The paper first briefly describes the U.K. research program on repeat victimization and a chronology of the action taken to implant the ideas into the routine of policing. It then pinpoints some of the structural features of policing in England and Wales which facilitated the process described. These features are missing in many other jurisdictions, which have a fundamentally different policing structure and call for a different approach in introducing research-based evi-

dence to tackle problems. The implications for repeat victimization in particular, and problem-oriented policing in general, are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Herman Goldstein's (1990) original conception of problem-oriented policing (POP) was that it would involve a fairly high-level analysis and response to a persistent problem. Identified problems would be sufficiently significant as to require the attention and support of senior police officers in dealing with them. There are relatively few examples of what Goldstein had in mind as high-level problems, but arguably repeat victimization is one. In the U.K. Home Office, repeat victimization was seen as an example of the kind of higher-order problem that Goldstein promotes. Research in a number of countries and in different policing contexts has consistently shown the presence of repeat victimization in relation to a range of offences. Developing ways of successfully reducing the incidence of repeat victimization is a major challenge for police agencies — it is, in other words, a significant problem in Goldstein's sense.

For example, at its highest level we might consider a group of individuals who are "repeat victims." They may suffer from burglary, car theft and street robbery. They may live in a high-crime area; they would be part of the group identified within the British Crime Survey as the 4% of people who suffer from about 44% of crime. In adopting a problem-solving approach, we may need to address their routine activities and try to determine what is was about their lifestyle that made them so particularly vulnerable. This is not the normal offence centred approach, but it is, we feel, a "problem-solving approach." In contrast, and at a lower level, a more detailed analysis of particular types of repeat victim might lead to the usual crime-focussed problem solving — burglary, car theft, domestic violence and so on. We might, for example, wish to address repeat commercial burglary, and find that this breaks down into burglaries involving stores, which require one type of response, and those involving small factories in a defined area, which suggest a completely different approach. Thus it could be argued that repeat victimization is the kind of higher-level problem that POP should be focussed upon, but whether or not that is accepted, the attempt to persuade the U.K. police to focus on repeat victimization as an operational strategy holds lessons for future attempts to bring POP into the policing mainstream. The U.K. experience in doing this is described in this chapter.

The British Home Office first began supporting research in this area in the early 1980s and has continued ever since. In the first part of the paper the research program is briefly described. It became

clear during the course of this work that the publication of quality research was, of itself, having relatively little effect on the delivery of policing, despite some striking examples of its power as a focus for prevention. Consequently, a series of further initiatives were then taken by the Home Office to promote the implementation of the work across the U.K. police forces.[1] These are described in the second section of the paper. The implementation program was facilitated by the structural arrangements in England and Wales for the delivery of local policing, and these are discussed in the third section. They were seen as significant in assisting the introduction of research-based evidence to the police (Laycock and Clarke, 2001), although questions remain as to the depth of real understanding. These issues are considered in the fourth section. The concluding section examines the implications for future efforts to infiltrate problem-oriented approaches into police delivery mechanisms.

THE RESEARCH

Laycock (2001) describes both the program of Home Office research on repeat victimization, and the measures taken to introduce it to the U.K. police. Farrell et al. (2001) provided an estimation of the extent and nature of the implementation of repeat victimization policies by U.K. police forces by the year 2000.

The program of research on repeat victimization began with a project designed to reduce burglary on a particularly high-crime housing area in the North of England known as the Kirkholt Estate (Forrester et al., 1988). A detailed analysis of the burglary problem, as would be required for any problem-oriented approach, showed that individual premises were more likely to be burgled if they had already been burgled. In other words, there was a concentration of victimization. The problem then became reformulated as one of reducing repeat victimization, and this proved to be a particular challenge for the police and other agencies in the area. The approach taken was to protect victims by whatever means necessary to ensure that they were not revictimized. In practice, this involved a range of measures, which proved highly effective in reducing repeat victimization to zero in seven months, and reducing burglary over the whole estate by almost 75% over the following three years (Forrester et al., 1988; Pease, 1998).

The Kirkholt project marked the beginning of a substantial program of work looking at the extent to which repeat victimization featured in a range of other offences. Farrell and Pease (1993) listed a number of the key characteristics of repeat victimization that made it an attractive general crime prevention strategy. A synthesis of that

work with more recent research and practice resulted in 17 reasons why the prevention of repeat victimization is an attractive strategy for policing (Table 1).

Table 1: Seventeen Reasons for Policing To Prevent Repeat Victimization

(1) Preventing repeat victimization is a crime prevention activity and hence pursuant to the most fundamental of police mandates (as defined since Robert Peel's original list of principles).

(2) Targeting repeat victimization is an efficient means of allocating, in time and space, scarce police resources to crime problems.

(3) Preventing repeat victimization is an approach that is relevant to all crimes with a target. It has been shown to be a feature of crimes including hate crimes, domestic and commercial burglary, school crime (burglary and vandalism), bullying, sexual assault, car crime, neighbor disputes, credit card fraud and other retail sector crime, domestic violence and child abuse. Even murder can be the repeat of attempted murder.

(4) Police managers can use repeat victimization as a performance indicator (Tilley, 1995). These can range from the national to the local level.

(5) Preventing repeat victimization naturally allocates resources to high crime areas, crime hot spots, and the most victimized targets (Bennett, 1995, Townsley et al., 2000).

(6) Preventing repeat victimization may inform the allocation of crime prevention to nearby targets (near-repeats) and targets with similar characteristics (virtual repeats; Pease, 1998).

(7) Preventing repeat victimization is a form of "drip feeding" of prevention resources (Pease, 1992). Since all crime does not occur at once, police resources need only be allocated as victimizations occur from day to day.

(8) Preventing repeat victimization is even less likely to result in displacement than unfocused crime prevention efforts (Bouloukos and Farrell, 1997).

(9) Preventing repeat victimization may be even more likely to result in a diffusion of crime control benefits (Clarke and Weisburd, 1994) than more general crime prevention. Offenders will be made uncertain and more generally deterred by changed circumstances at the most attractive and vulnerable targets.

(10) Preventing repeat victimization can generate common goals and positive work between police and other agencies (such as housing, social services, and victim organizations), which may in turn facilitate broader co-operation.

(11) Focusing on repeat victimization empowers police officers to do something tangible and constructive to help crime victims and for policing to become more generally oriented towards victims, who are arguably its core consumers (Farrell, 2001).

(12) Efforts to prevent repeat victimization can lead to positive feedback from victims. This is still a relatively rare reward for police in the community. It may promote good community relations.

(13) Preventing repeat victimization is triggered by a crime being reported. Since victims can be asked about prior victimizations, a response does not necessarily require data analysis.

(14) Preventing repeat victimization can sometimes — but not always — use off-the-shelf prevention tactics rather than requiring inventive problem solving.

(15) Preventing repeat victimization can be used to enhance the detection of serious and prolific offenders. Police officers like detecting offenders.

(16) Preventing repeat victimization presents possibilities for preventing and detecting organized crime and terrorism that focuses on vulnerable and, for offenders, lucrative victims and targets — including protection rackets, forced prostitution, loan-sharking, repeat trafficking via certain low-risk locations, art and other high-value thefts and robberies. (The 1993 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre was a precursor of the 2001 attack.)

(17) Targeting repeat victimization can inform thinking on repeat crimes typically perceived as "victimless," where the repeatedly victimized target is the state or nation.

By way of illustration, Table 2 is taken from a report on commercial burglary (Webb, 1994). It shows the way in which, as the number of repeatedly burgled premises falls, the probability of repeat victimization increases. It demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of concentrating effort on the decreasing population of repeatedly targeted premises. The data illustrate the potential role of detection in the prevention of crime and open up a whole range of possibilities for the enthusiastic detective. For example, if the 27 places burgled four times could be effectively protected, perhaps by a set of judiciously placed silent alarms linked to the nearest police station, then for this sample there is a 63% probability of a further offence being prevented and perhaps an offender being captured. But it took a fair amount of professional research effort to extract the data in this form. It is not something that police data systems can routinely do, although they do not necessarily need to if the police routinely ask victims about recent prior victimizations. Other research has shown that of the or-

der of 80% of repeat burglary victims are likely to have been re-victimised by the same offender (Pease, 1998). Concentrating effort on repeat burglary victims has the effect, therefore, of concentrating effort on repeat offenders.

Table 2: Probabilities of Repeat Commercial Burglary

Number of potential victims	Number who report at least:				
	One burglary	Two burglaries	Three burglaries	Four burglaries	Five burglaries
1,125	250	97	47	27	17
	22% (of 1,125)	39% (of 250)	48% (of 97)	57% (of 47)	63% (of 27)

Source: Table taken from Webb, 1994, data from Tilley, 1993a.

The studies described by Farrell and Pease (1993) appeared to have identified a powerful means of controlling crime, but they also highlighted some serious problems in the provision of services to victims. For example, prior to these results being published the victim support literature was reassuring victims that lightning did not strike twice; if they had been burgled once then it was unlikely to happen again, and they did not really need to take any additional precautions. This literature had to be rewritten to make it clear that although the probability of being revictimized remained low, it was higher than it otherwise would have been. Similarly the way in which the British Crime Survey results were presented was misleading in saying that people might expect to be burgled once every 40 years. In fact, most people will not be burgled at all. We now appreciate from the British Crime Survey that in any one year 95% of people are not burgled, but of those who are, 12% are burgled twice and 6% three or more times. Over all 18% of burglary victims suffer 35% of all domestic burglaries. As so often when measuring repeat victimization, due to aspects of the survey method these are conservative estimates of the extent of repeat burglary.

On the positive side, the research showed that by concentrating effort on victims, crime could be reduced. This was made easier by the observation that there was a period of heightened risk after the last offence, and the more times the person or place had been victimised, the shorter that time would be. Relatively expensive options

for detection, such as mobile alarms or closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, thus became viable.

It is worth describing the burglary strand of the research in a little more detail, since it is of significance to the program on implementation that followed. The success of the Kirkholt project was widely reported at a time when the U.K. Government launched the Safer Cities Program (Ekblom, 1992). In its first round, this program involved supporting 20 cities around the U.K. with extra resources to develop crime prevention locally. Crime prevention co-ordinators in a number of the cities noticed the Kirkholt outcome and decided to replicate the project. Their attempts are described by Tilley (1993b), who reported mixed success largely because, he argued, the replications had misunderstood the mechanism that had made the Kirkholt project the success it was.

On the basis of Tilley's report, and other contemporaneous observations that moving from a localised but successful small project to a larger scale was not common, the Home Office funded another burglary project that used the Kirkholt approach more systematically. Ken Pease, who had been so influential in the original project, directed it. The success of Kirkholt hinged, as Pease (1998) later described it, upon protecting victims by the most appropriate means. There was, in other words, no off-the-shelf package to be applied to all the burglary victims, but a range of possible options needed to be systematically appraised. These ideas were taken and developed in the next project, which was based in West Yorkshire Constabulary and covered the whole of a police division — Huddersfield. The task was to reduce burglary (and car crime, although this part of the project is not discussed here), across the whole Division by concentrating on reducing repeat victimization. The Home Office published two reports on the work. The first (Anderson et al., 1995) described the research phase of the project, and the second (Chenery et al., 1997) outlined the results, which showed a 30% reduction in domestic burglary. The research team, of which some police officers were an integral part, adopted a phased response to burglary victims. An early iteration of this approach is set out in Table 3, but the report stresses that the responses remained flexible and changed as the police learned which were the more effective or practical. This general approach came to be known as the Olympic Model because of the bronze, silver and gold phases to prevention that it advocated.

Table 3: Measures Taken To Protect Domestic Burglary Victims

Bronze response (After first burglary)	Silver response (After second burglary)	Gold response (After third or subsequent burglary)
Victim letter with postcode pen for property marking	Further victim letter	Further victim letter
Informant checks	Search warrant	Priority on police fingerprint search
Early check of known outlets for stolen goods	Insurance incentives	Home Office portable alarm installed
Target offenders	Crime Prevention Officer visit	Police Watch (minimum daily)[b]
Crime prevention advice	Police Watch (minimum twice per week)	
Rapid repair service	"Police Aware" stickers	
Security upgrade	Mock occupancy devices	
Victim support	Audible or dummy alarm	
Cocoon Watch[a]	Improved lighting	

Adapted from Chenery et al., 1997.

a) Cocoon Watch was developed in the Kirkholt project and involved close protection of victims of burglary by their immediate neighbours, subject to agreement. It is akin to a "mini" neighbourhood watch.

b) Police Watch is a form of focused patrolling at regular and specified intervals during the six weeks after an offence during the time interval when the original offence occurred. For example, if the original offence occurred around 3pm, then that is the approximate time that the Police Watch would be carried out.

The publication of the Farrell and Pease (1993) report, and in particular the broader discussion of the significance of repeat victimization as a means of preventing crime, begged the question of how these research results could be integrated into the routine activity of the relevant agencies. What was the most effective means of disseminating the results of the work and to whom?

It was decided to focus on the police as the most appropriate agency to develop and deliver a strategy to protect victims. This was because they had the data with which to identify victims, and also had the authority to engage other agencies in the task. This was fa-

cilitated in the U.K. by pressure from central government over a number of years for a "partnership approach" to crime prevention, which culminated in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). Under the Act, the police and local authority are required to carry out a local crime audit, prepare a crime strategy in response, and obtain agreement to the plan from the local community. This can be compared with the approach taken in the U.S.A. where there is enthusiasm for partnership between the police and "community."

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM: ENGAGING POLICE PRACTITIONERS

A number of measures were taken by the U.K. central government to raise the profile of repeat victimization as an approach to crime prevention and detection. These included:

(1) Six "roadshows" on repeat victimization, which were held across the country, and drew the research and its implications to the attention of relevant agencies, including the police. The extent to which tackling repeat victimization offered a cost-effective strategy in dealing with crime was emphasised to the senior staff invited to attend. As an aside it is worth mentioning that attending these events was cost-free to the delegates. The roadshows were fully funded by central government. In hindsight this was a mistake, as a number of invitees did not attend. If such an exercise were to be repeated, we would recommend at least a small charge as a means of ensuring that people come!

(2) A "task force" on repeat victimization was established within the central government research agency. This grand title amounted to a task force head and a seconded police officer. The head of the task force was a specialist in organisational development and had some marketing expertise. These skills proved crucial to the subsequent success of the task force, which despite modest resources was able to make a significant impact (Laycock, 2001; Laycock and Clarke, 2001).

(3) A police officer was designated as repeat victimization liaison officer in each of the 43 forces in England and Wales, whose task it was to ensure that the research was properly disseminated — in effect a local champion. It may be assumed that the police would be fully familiar with the notion that some victims are particularly vulnerable, but this was not so; nor had the implications of this for the prevention of crime registered. Indeed, in some cases the more a victim complained

about being victimised, the less inclined were some police officers to respond, a classic example being domestic assaults.

(4) Following the example of Pease in encouraging police officers to work on the projects directly and to co-author reports, the police were encouraged to present reports on their work at both practitioner and academic conferences. The police generally appear more accepting of advice from their colleagues than they are from academics, whom they may see as remote or unrealistic in their expectations of what can be delivered.

(5) Continued investment was obtained in a research program designed to demonstrate that reducing repeat victimization could reduce crime.

(6) Reducing repeat victimization was included as one of the Home Secretary's performance indicators for the police. This followed an important report by Tilley (1995) that discussed the potential performance indicators for crime prevention. Tilley argued that success in crime prevention is particularly difficult to measure because you are trying to measure non-events. He suggested that although not ideal for many offences, reducing repeat victimization was a useful first step in measuring the performance of the police in this area. Acknowledging that the police were poorly placed to even measure repeat victimization in the U.K., let alone reduce it, a staged process was adopted to develop performance measurement in this area, as set out in Table 4.

In the event, the performance regime as set out operated until 1997/98. By the end of 1998, the research department, which had been driving the crime prevention performance agenda, lost control of it and the pressure on the police to maintain their efforts in this area was reduced.

The report by Farrell et al. (2001) showed that by 1999 all forces *claimed* to have a system in place to identify repeats. It was not possible in their brief review to determine the extent to which the identification of repeats by forces was accurate or properly carried out. The requirement for the period 1996/97 was that forces should have developed a strategy to tackle repeat victimization, and most chose to concentrate upon residential and other forms of burglary. This was probably because most of the published research had been centred on domestic burglary reduction, and reducing burglary was, by then, one of the central government priorities.

Table 4: Police Performance Regime — Reducing Repeat Victimization

Year	Performance requirement	Commentary
1995 - 1996	Demonstrate capability of identifying repeat victims.	This performance indicator (PI) was chosen because in the mid-1990s most forces did not have the technical capability of measuring repeat victimization in relation to any specified offence, but many were in the process of upgrading their computer systems. This PI helped to ensure that the ability to measure repeat victimization was taken into account.
1996 - 1997	Develop a strategy to reduce repeat victimization for any locally relevant offence.	We were concerned not to specify an offence centrally. These PIs are assumed to operate at the basic command level in forces where local concerns are more relevant than central prescription. In some areas domestic violence might be a major issue, in others domestic burglary might feature. An important consequence of this approach is that it precludes the creation of simplistic lists comparing the performance of one police area with another.
1997 - 1998	Implement the strategy.	This was intended to reinforce the point that strategies need to be delivered. This is an obvious point but one often ignored by managers, whose interest stops with the articulation of a strategy.
1998 - 1999	Set targets for reduction?	It was intended that targets should be set locally as part of the strategic development.

Taken from Laycock, 2001.

The national picture showed great variation in the progress being made. The stages of policy implementation were always intended to be gradual and to allow for individual variation between forces, but the discrepancies were quite wide, with some forces appearing to do far more than others. Significantly, however, most forces (37 of 43, or 86%) reported that they had developed some form of graded response to burglary. This is the response based on the Huddersfield model

described above, where crime prevention resources are allocated according to risk as determined by the number of prior victimizations (Anderson et al., 1995). For example, a victim who reports his or her third burglary within a year is likely to receive a higher-level response, perhaps including the more costly elements of detection and security hardware, than a first-time victim. This is on the assumption that such a household remains at greater risk of a further crime in the near future. In Table 5, the grade of response ranges from A (the least resource-intensive) to D (the most resource-intensive). The naming of specific graded response systems varied between forces, so that some called it "gold, silver, bronze," others "red, amber, green," others "A, B, C" etc. (This re-labelling of what are essentially the same responses, reflects the U.K. police's disinclination to adopt an approach that was not invented in their force — commonly called the "not invented here" syndrome.)

Table 5: Number of Forces Adopting Graded and Other Responses

Tactic	% of Forces (N=43)
Graded Response:	
Graded response/activity after 1st crime (Level A).	77%
Preventive activity after 2nd crime (Level B).	84%
Preventive activity after 3rd crime (Level C).	70%
Preventive activity after 4+ (Level D).	2%
Other Responses:	
Linking repeat victimization prevention to detection activity.	40%
Linking repeat victimization prevention to problem solving.	33%

Adapted from Farrell et al., 2001, page 10.[2]

The Forces could also report more than one level of graded response, so Table 5 contains double counting of forces. Of the 43 forces, 29 reported having a specific response to each of a first, a second and a third victimization. Three forces reported a response to only a first or second victimization (unfortunately the survey did not ask why), five reported a response to a combination of both of a sec-

ond or third burglary, and six forces reported not having a graded response. The graded responses were sometimes integrated with other efforts as part of an overall repeat victimization strategy. Seventeen forces (40%) reported combining offender detection efforts with the prevention of repeat victimization, since repeat victimization can predict where prolific offenders are likely to be. Fourteen forces (33%) reported combining the prevention of repeat victimization with a problem-solving approach. Problem solving is a methodology that can usefully complement other efforts to prevent repeat victimization (Farrell and Sousa, 2001; Bullock and Tilley, this volume).

The penetration of these ideas into forces seems substantial, but it is worth questioning the depth of understanding underpinning the responses. Although it was not specifically addressed by the questionnaire, the interest in the Huddersfield project was expressed not by an increasing demand for the research report, but by a stream of police officers visiting the Division to hear for themselves what was done. There were also a number of conference presentations on the research, which were popular with the police and their partners. The U.K. police, in common with many of their colleagues in other places, have a reputation as a "can do" organisation. One consequence of this is that they prefer the spoken word to the written word as a means of communication. Reading slows them down, and they would rather spend their time visiting a project or program to reading about it. In addition, the "Olympic Model" was "catchy" — it was memorable, and made intuitive sense. Although perhaps more by good fortune than design, the representation of the initiative was marketable.

Farrell et al. (2001) conceded that on the basis of their survey they could not determine to what extent the strategies which forces claimed to have in place had actually been implemented as planned. Furthermore, although forces claimed to have launched a wide range of tactics as part of their repeat victimization strategies, some of the tactics looked suspiciously like the run-of-the-mill force crime prevention activity that had been going on for some time. Neighbourhood Watch (NW) is a good example. There was no sense from the responses from forces that NW had in any way been modified to make it more relevant to the needs of existing victims.

It seemed clear from the review that forces were trying to respond to the requirement that they address repeat victimization. Unfortunately, it also seemed likely that the tactics were not obviously targeted to the protection of victims, and many had a weak preventive mechanism (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Tilley and Laycock, 2002). It is largely assumed that police officers know — either from training, experience or from research literature such as the Home Office publications — of the full and wide range of prevention possibilities and

the mechanisms that underlie them. This assumption may well be wrong. Indeed the review by Pease (1998) was addressed to the many police officers with whom he had discussed repeat victimization over the bulk of the last decade, but who were not familiar with the research. As Pease (1998, Executive Summary, page v) says:

> Many believed they knew about the available research, but were familiar with only a small proportion of it. Neither had they encountered anything which sought to locate recent repeat victimization research in thinking about crime prevention more generally.

The success with which the ideas associated with repeat victimization, as a crime reduction strategy, have penetrated the routine of U.K. police thinking is therefore debatable. Nevertheless, when compared with other jurisdictions, the U.K. police appear to be well ahead of the game. This has been facilitated by the committed and well-informed central government research agency that managed the process of research and dissemination, and also by the controls over policing which are available from the centre, as discussed in the next section.

RELEVANT U.K. POLICING STRUCTURES

There are 43 police forces covering England and Wales, all of which are overseen by the Home Office at central government level. The Home Secretary, the most senior member of the Government in the Home Office, is responsible to Parliament for the efficient and effective delivery of policing in England and Wales. This responsibility is shared with the locally accountable "police authority" and the force's Chief Constable, whose operational independence is strictly guarded. This tripartite structure gives the police a significant degree of independence from central control. In this respect the U.K. forces (the same system essentially operates in Northern Ireland and Scotland), are very different from the police agencies of continental Europe, where generally a more centralised and militaristic approach is taken.

It would, however, be a mistake to characterise the 43 forces as totally independent of the centre. Quite apart from the Home Secretary's powers to set a performance regime for forces, there are a number of other levers over which the Home Office has control and which they can and do use to influence policing. These are set out in Table 6.

Table 6: Centrally Available "Levers" over Policing in England and Wales

Category	Lever	Commentary
Financial	General police funding	The Home Office provides 51% of the funding for the 43 police forces.
	Project money	The Crime Reduction Program (Tilley et al., 1999) has provided a major injection of funds in the crime reduction field, which are being used to influence the delivery of policing.
Legal	Police Inspectorate	There is a high profile central Police Inspectorate in the U.K., which regularly inspects forces and reports publicly on performance. It has completed two recent inspections on crime reduction.
	Legislation	The Crime and Disorder Act requires the police to work with local government and develop a strategy to tackle local crime and disorder based on a crime audit and consultation with the community.
Managerial	Training	There is considerable central influence over police training in the U.K. Crime prevention training through a specially designated college, for example, is under direct Home Office control.
	Audit Commission	The Audit Commission has a statutory responsibility to report on the extent to which the police are carrying out their responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. It carries out regular inspections of forces on various themes and publishes its reports.
	Performance regime	Police performance against a range of criteria is assessed on an annual cycle. The Home Secretary sets some of the targets for crime reduction.
Intellectual	Research results	The free availability and wide dissemination of Home Office research papers has had increasing influence over U.K. policing since the early 1990s.
	Persuasion	Advice and guidance is provided to police forces on a regular basis from central government. Although much of this has no statutory force, it is often seen to be setting out good practice.

Although the police and their local authorities regard the central power of the Home Office as a potential threat to independence

(which it is), it does offer some advantages in disseminating research and encouraging the spread of good practice, which a totally localised system would not enjoy. Because there are only 43 forces, it is feasible to circulate research reports to them all, hold meetings with all forces represented and inspect them on a regular basis.

To take the United States of America as an extreme example, there are relatively few levers available to the federal government other than money and perhaps those in Table 4 under the "intellectual" heading. And the fragmentary nature of U.S. policing means that such levers as there are, are fairly indirect. It is true that the majority of U.S. police agencies now claim to be community-oriented (U.Sv Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1997), and many are trying to "solve problems," but there is still very little hard evidence that what they are doing under these headings is having any real effect or that the claims to problem solving are any more than rhetorical (Goldstein, this volume; Scott, 2000). The resistance of the police on the front line to problem solving is considerable, as U.K. research has shown (Leigh et al., 1998).

INTRODUCING RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE INTO POLICING

Problem-oriented policing, like the work on repeat victimization, which is a particular and common problem facing police agencies, stemmed from an academic base. Goldstein's original ideas were set out in a book (Goldstein, 1990), in various academic papers and during numerous presentations to police audiences over the years. There is no denying that the ideas have penetrated police thinking. The annual Problem-Oriented Policing Conference held in the United States each year, and its more recently established equivalent in the U.K., are both well attended by serving police officers. There are also some outstanding examples of work being done by front-line officers, and interest in the annual Goldstein Award for problem-oriented policing excellence remains high. The equivalent in the U.K., the Tilley Award, is also fairly well subscribed with about 70 applications each year.

Placing this in perspective, however, leads to a more pessimistic view. Although over 1,000 delegates typically attend the annual U.S. conference in San Diego, there are currently about 17,000 police agencies in the U.S.A. with almost 1 million sworn and civilian full-time staff (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). As a proportion of the whole, the attendance at the POP Conference is not quite so impressive. Furthermore the quality of some of the presentations is

variable. Many of the projects presented lack rigorous analysis and there remains an emphasis on enforcement as the response of choice. Attendance at some of the sessions can also be variable — San Diego has a number of attractive distractions!

The argument in the remainder of this paper is that the assumptions made by those academics, keen to encourage this approach over so many years, were wrong. The assumptions, essentially, revolved around the belief that problem-oriented policing was offering a more rational approach to policing, with a multitude of advantages to victims, the general public and the police themselves. Goldstein has made the case most eloquently for many years and continues to do so. His chapter in this volume is a good example. It is difficult for a rational reader to disagree with the case he makes.

This argument in support of problem-oriented policing was strengthened by the belief that the present system of policing does not work well. Reactive policing can be seen as inefficient and ineffective. On these grounds, combined with the obvious logic of the case in favour of problem-oriented policing, it was assumed that the police, including senior managers, would embrace it and change the fundamental nature of policing, away from reaction and toward a more data-driven empirical approach. In essence, it was assumed that "problem-oriented policing will sell itself."

This has not happened. Despite continued research in the area, along with innumerable books, research papers and conferences, the police remain doggedly wedded to their more traditional ways of doing business. Why has it proved so difficult to change these organisations? It may be easier to address the question of why should the police change rather than why have they not.

Apart from an ongoing wish to continually improve service delivery, which it has to be assumed would be at the margins of what is generally being done, there is no sensible reason for any organisation to radically change its approach. The introduction of repeat victimization into U.K. policing did not challenge anything fundamental about the routine of police service delivery. On the contrary, it called for an improvement in what they claimed to be doing anyway — protecting victims, preventing crime and catching offenders. This has not been the case with attempts to introduce problem-oriented policing into policing. Those wishing to promote problem-oriented policing have criticised the way in which policing is currently delivered: in particular there has been a criticism of incident-driven policing — in effect a fundamental criticism of the *status quo.*

We should however concede that 78% of people in the 2000 BCS said that their local police did a very or fairly good job, and that levels of confidence in the police remained virtually unchanged

throughout the 1990s (although these have decreased slightly since the 1998 BCS) (Sims and Myhill, 2001). There is simply no criticism of incident-driven policing by the public. On the contrary the police are, not unreasonably, expected to respond to calls-for-service as quickly and efficiently as possible. Although this expectation is seen to stem from the public, it is reinforced through the democratically elected agencies that pay for the police, monitor their performance or report on their activities. It includes the media. Indeed, not only is incident-driven policing expected, it is applauded. Many police agencies are measured against their ability to answer the emergency calls quickly, and get to the location of the problem rapidly. (There the interest ends. There is little discussion or criticism of what happens when the call is responded to, other, perhaps, than the failure of the police to arrest someone.) So criticising incident-driven policing, and using it as an argument for change, is not likely to win the day.

The argument from the supporters of problem-oriented policing, of course, is not that responsive policing is unacceptable in the sense of responding to urgent calls-for-service, but that the continued response to calls-for-service to the same location, or in response to the same persistent problem, is not the best way of doing business. The evidence for the inefficiency of the approach, which might lead to criticism of police performance, is buried within the police data systems. It is difficult to access this evidence without considerable interrogation of data that were collected for other purposes (largely to count incidents).

Interestingly, the *experience* of the public in higher-crime areas is perhaps more sensitive to this lack of police efficiency. Repeated calls-for-service from the same people to the same place arguably do not lead those individuals to a positive view of policing. But because high-crime areas are relatively rare, and are populated by people with less capacity to challenge policing delivery, there remains no fundamental criticism of revisiting the same place and essentially doing nothing to solve the problems. A report by Bradley (1998) provides some support for this view. His research involved a series of focus group discussions with members of the public living in different areas and from different socio-economic groups. He concluded (Bradley, 1998:11):

> ...people who are the most exposed to crime problems and to their perpetrators are far more inclined to prioritise police resources toward direct/proactive/targeted actions. In contrast members of the public who are far less directly exposed to, or more geographically distant from, crime problems are inclined to seek reassurance through visible patrol....

The emphasis by those "in the know" on "direct/pro-active/ targeted actions" probably meant that the police should make more effort to arrest known offenders. We might hope this was being prioritised not because of a fundamental wish on the part of the individuals involved to encourage the use of the criminal justice system but because of their deeply held view that this was how to deal with offenders. They saw no alternative. The problem-oriented policing approach would be to deal with the problem as efficiently and fairly as possible, ideally without recourse to the criminal justice system. At its most charitable, we might argue that those vulnerable people on the high-crime estates were actually asking that the problems be solved. Arrest was the only way they knew how.

Further support for this view comes from the British Crime Survey (Sims and Myhill, 2001), which shows that satisfaction levels appear to be directly influenced by the practical outcomes of police investigations. Seventy-seven percent of victims were very or fairly satisfied with police handling of the case if charges were brought, compared with 39% if the police knew who the offender was but brought no charges.

There is, therefore, no substantial criticism of present policing *style.* When the police are criticised, it is usually because there has been a major ethical disaster, because they are not seen to be responding quickly enough to calls-for-service, not arresting enough people, and not getting them through the criminal justice system and into prison. Despite these particular criticisms, police performance in most advanced Western democracies is consistently judged to be good. Failing to solve problems in a more fundamental sense is, for most members of the public, the police themselves, and politicians, simply not an issue.

Furthermore, the fact that the present system does not work is somewhat difficult to justify in the context of persistently falling crime rates across the advanced western democracies over at least the past decade. Of course, we can all argue that these falls are attributable to a whole range of factors, only one of which is police performance (Blumstein and Wallman, 2000), but the fact that they have fallen does not play to a significant reform agenda for policing. Nor, as we noted above, is there a head of steam from the public to see radical police reform on the scale suggested by problem-oriented policing advocates.

Finally, the argument for the advancement of problem-oriented policing, either along-side current policing styles or more typically as a radical alternative to them, has not been based on a powerful or clear-cut demonstration of the efficacy of the approach. Despite the fact that problem-oriented policing has been around in some form for

decades, there are still relatively few large-scale examples of its having "worked." Attempts to demonstrate to the police through research that there are other, more efficient ways of doing business have not been sufficiently attended to by academics (a point made by Goldstein in this volume). Partly as a consequence of this, there have simply not been a large or dramatic enough set of well conducted demonstration projects showing that the approach works. The work on reducing repeat victimization provides one solid and persistent example of the efficacy of the approach, but it has not been "packaged" as a problem-oriented policing initiative.

One reason for the scarcity of good problem-solving examples is that there are relatively few police agencies with the skills to develop the projects or programs. In order to carry out the problem-oriented policing process as envisaged by Goldstein and others, existing crime data have to be collected, analysed and interpreted, and there may be a need for additional information. Some sort of response then has to be developed and the solutions implemented. The specific skills to carry out these tasks, particularly if this involves thinking beyond the usual arrest and prosecution options, are not well developed in police departments.

CONCLUSIONS

The case for the police adopting a problem-oriented approach remains strong. Nobody has yet challenged the logic of the argument. But we may need to aim lower than radical reform of the whole police delivery mechanism. There is no reason why problem-oriented policing cannot live alongside other policing styles. Indeed there are good reasons to suggest that it should. Incident-driven policing cannot and should not go away, and it is obvious that the police will retain their enforcement role. The issue is rather one of balance. How much resource should be devoted to responding to calls, and to supporting the criminal justice system, and how much should be diverted to problem-oriented policing and a much broader set of crime and disorder control options?

At this stage in the development of problem-oriented policing it is not possible to answer that question. But it is fairly clear that the current balance is not correct. There are far too many cases where persistent problems are ignored and where, even when the police do think about solving a problem, they fall back on the standard approach of arrest and prosecution. They do not naturally consider alternatives.

Even if only modest progress is to be made in introducing problem-oriented policing, then we need to look more systematically at

the range of levers that are available to change the police way of working. The recent massive investment in the U.S.A. through the 1994 Crime Act will take some time to "bite," but the extent of the investment was such as to potentially make a difference (Roth et al., 2000). And for the first time research publications of relevance, which might actually be read and used, are coming from the COPS Office (the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police).*

In parallel, there have been major developments in the style of police management at basic command level. The most well known is the Compstat process introduced in New York City and widely copied elsewhere in the United States and in other countries. At its worst, Compstat is an excuse for bullying management and staff harassment. At its best, however, it draws the local command team's attention to the incidence of crime and disorder in their areas and raises expectations that something will be done about reducing the extent of the problems that are illustrated by the data. This process is beginning to create a policing context within which police commanders will be looking for creative solutions to persistent problems. Better understanding of data and its interpretation, and a more sophisticated menu of potential responses to problems, should develop as a consequence.

This process can be facilitated by improvements in the training of problem analysts, or the development of the role of crime analysts, so that they are not only able to collect and analyse data on presenting problems, but can go beyond that and provide a reasoned justification for a range of potential solutions.

Specific Conclusions from the Repeat Victimization Story

The U.K. repeat victimization story holds several key lessons for problem-oriented policing generally.

- It should not be assumed that any change in policing style will sell itself.

- The success of the approach needs to be demonstrated through a robust research program. The work on repeat victimization from the U.K. has been described as "hypothesis based" (Laycock, 2001), and as such contributed to the development of a significant body of knowledge on the repeat victimization phenomenon.

- Any proposed change will be resisted if the *status quo* is seen as enjoying wide support.

- A proactive approach to marketing change needs to be developed and levers need to be identified.

- The more direct the leverage, the more likely that changes will be made.

- Reducing repeat victimization could be used as a spearhead for changing policing style toward problem-oriented policing. The 17 reasons for policing repeat victimization (Table 1) give hope to the possibility that policing will become more conducive to broader victim-oriented, and through that problem-oriented efforts. Reducing repeat victimization in general, or in its more specific manifestation as it relates to particular offences, plays to the existing police agenda of reducing crime, catching offenders and protecting victims. It can be specifically sold as such. It does, therefore, offer the possibility of introducing problem solving through the back door as it were. In order to reduce repeat victimization the police would, necessarily, solve problems.

To end on an optimistic note, the final lesson is that, although much still remains to be done in the U.K., policing can be significantly shifted towards a problem-oriented agenda, and that a hypothesis-based research and evidence-driven agenda can be systematically introduced.

◆

Address correspondence to: Professor Gloria Laycock, Director, Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, University College London, 3rd Floor, 1 Old Street, London EC1V 9HL. E-mail: <g.laycock@ucl.ac.uk>.

REFERENCES

Anderson, D., S. Chenery, and K. Pease (1995). *Biting Back: Tackling Repeat Burglary and Car Crime.* (Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 58.) London, UK: Home Office.

Bennett, T. (1995). "Identifying, Explaining and Targeting Burglary 'Hot Spots.'" *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 3:113-123.

Blumstein, A. and J. Wallman (eds.), (2000). *The Crime Drop in America.* (Cambridge Studies in Criminology.) Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bouloukos, A.C. and G. Farrell (1997). "On the Displacement of Repeat Victimization." In: G. Newman, R.V. Clarke and S.G. Shoham (eds.), *Rational Choice and Situational Crime Prevention.* Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Press.

Bradley, R. (1998). *Public Expectations and Perceptions of Policing.* (Police Research Series Paper 96.) London, UK: Home Office.

Chenery, S., J. Holt and K. Pease (1997). *Biting Back II: Reducing Repeat Victimization in Huddersfield.* (Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 82.) London, UK: Home Office.

Clarke, R.V. and D. Weisburd (1994). "Diffusion of Crime Control Benefits: Observations on the Reverse of Displacement." *Crime Prevention Studies* 2:165-184.

"Crime and Disorder Act" (c.37) (1998). London, UK: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Ekblom, P. (1992). "The Safer Cities Program Impact Evaluation: Problems and Progress." *Studies on Crime and Crime Prevention* 1:35-51.

Farrell, G. (2001). "How Victim-oriented is Policing?" In: A. Gaudreault and I. Waller (eds.), *Xth International Symposium on Victimology: Selected Symposium Proceedings.* Montreal, CAN: International Symposium on Victimology.

——and W. Sousa (2001). "Repeat Victimization and Hot Spots: The Overlap and its Implications for Problem-oriented Policing." In: G. Farrell and K. Pease (eds.), *Repeat Victimization.* (Crime Prevention Studies, vol. 12.) Monsey, NY: CriminalJustice Press.

——A. Edmunds, L. Hobbs and G. Laycock (2000). *RV Snapshot: UK Policing and Repeat Victimization.* (Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 5.) London, UK: Home Office.

——and K. Pease (1993). *Once Bitten, Twice Bitten: Repeat Victimization and its Implications for Crime Prevention.* (Crime Prevention Unit Paper 46.) London, UK: Home Office.

Forrester, D., S. Frenz M. O'Connell and K. Pease (1990). *The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project: Phase II.* (Crime Prevention Unit Paper 23.) London, UK: Home Office.

——M. Chatterton and K. Pease with the assistance of R. Brown (1988). *The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project, Rochdale.* (Crime Prevention Unit Paper 13.) London, UK: Home Office.

Goldstein, H. (1990). *Problem-Oriented Policing.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Laycock, G. (2001). "Hypothesis Based Research: The Repeat Victimization Story." *Criminal Justice: The International Journal of Policy and Practice* 1(1):59-82.

———and R.V. Clarke (2001). "Crime Prevention Policy and Government Research: A Comparison of the United States and the United Kingdom." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* XLII(1-2):235-755. (Special issue: "Varieties of Comparative Criminology," edited by Gregory Howard and Graeme Newman.)

Leigh, A., T. Read and N. Tilley (1998). *Brit Pop II: Problem-oriented Policing in Practice.* (Crime Detection and Prevention Series No. 93.) London, UK: Home Office.

Pawson, R. and N. Tilley (1997). *Realistic Evaluation.* London, UK: Sage.

Pease, K. (1998). *Repeat Victimization: Taking Stock.* (Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 90.) London, UK: Home Office.

———(1992). "The Kirkholt Project: Preventing Burglary on a British Public Housing Estate." *Security Journal* 2(2):73-77.

Problem-Oriented Guides for Police. Series is available from: www.cops. usdoj.gov.

Roth, J.A., J.F. Ryan, S.J. Gaffigan, C.S. Koper, M.H. Moore, J.A. Roehl, C.C. Johnson, G.E. Moore, R.M. White, M.E. Buerger, E.A. Langston and D. Thatcher (2000). *National Evaluation of the COPS Program — Title I of the 1994 Crime Act.* (National Criminal Justice Report 183643.) Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Scott, M. (2000). *Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the First 20 Years.* (Final Report to the Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services.) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Sims, L. and A. Myhill (2001). *Policing and the Public: Findings from the 2000 British Crime Survey* (Research Findings No 136.) Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, London, UK: Home Office.

Tilley, N (1995). *Thinking About Crime Prevention Performance Indicators.* (Police Research Group Paper 57.) London, UK: Home Office.

———(1993a). *The Prevention of Crime Against Small Businesses: The Safer Cities Experience.* (Crime Prevention Unit Paper 45.) London, UK: Home Office.

———(1993b). *After Kirkholt: Theory, Methods and Results of Replication Evaluations.* (Crime Prevention Unit Paper 47.) London, UK: Home Office.

———and G. Laycock (2002). *Working Out What To Do: Evidence-based Crime Reduction.* (Crime Reduction Series Paper 11.) London, UK: Home Office.

——K. Pease, M. Hough, and R. Brown (1999). *Burglary Prevention: Early Lessons from the Crime Reduction Program.* (Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 1.) London, UK: Home Office.

Townsley, M., R. Homel and J. Chaseling (2000). "Repeat Burglary Victimisation: Spatial and Temporal Patterns." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 33(1):37-63.

U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance (1997). *Crime Prevention and Community Policing: A Vital Partnership.* (NCJ Monograph 166819.) Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001). *Local Police Departments, 1999.* Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Webb, B. (1994). "Tackling Repeat Victimization: Getting it Right." Paper presented at the National Board for Crime Prevention regional Conferences, May, 1994.

NOTES

1. This paper refers to the "U.K. police" although most of the initiatives were taken in relation to the 43 police forces of England and Wales, which have a particular relationship with the Home Office. The work was, nevertheless, also relevant to the police in Scotland, Northern Ireland, The Channel Isles and the Isle of Man, and research reports were also circulated routinely to them.

2. Aspects of this table were revised from the original and it includes new analysis for the present study.