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Acknowledgements

Are Evidence Based Policing Initiatives transferable? A review of common factors and barriers faced in Hotspot policing.

Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters Degree in Police Leadership and Management

<u>Abstract</u>

This study is designed to assess the transferability of Evidence Based Policing initiatives. Through a review of the literature connected with Hotspot policing, key factors and potential barriers faced on implementation and transfer have been identified. A survey was conducted with police practitioners experienced in Evidence Based Policing to test hypotheses on the areas identified and highlight practitioner's perspectives and a qualitative descriptive review was conducted on the gathered data. The data tends to support the hypothesis that Evidence Based Policing initiatives can be transferred, if appropriate factors are taken into consideration. The literature review and data has facilitated the creation of a summary of these common themes and barriers for practitioners to take into consideration on implementation and transfer.

Author's declaration

Declaration

I have read an understood the rules on cheating, plagiarism and appropriate referencing as outlined in my handbook an I declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own, unless otherwise acknowledged. No substantial part of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for this or previous degree courses, and I acknowledge that if this had been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

Signed Candidate………… J Arundale

Date: 31st Dec 2016.

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<u>Definitions</u>

NTE – Night Time Economy

EBP – Evidence Based Policing

SEBP – Society of Evidenced Based Policing

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INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt of the emerging success of Evidence Based Policing (EBP) initiatives, and that the trials "have been shown to reduce crime" (Sweeten, 2015. p. 71). The debate surrounding Evidence Based Policing (EBP), pitches the view:

"Sceptics might argue that the social world is simply too complicated for police science to make reliable predictions about the outcomes of a given intervention" (Willis and Mastrotski, 2014. p. 327).

against:

"Science can be the watchdog of the overvaluing of common sense, good judgement, hunches, experience, feelings or emotions" (Lum and Kennedy, 2012. p. 321).

It would be reasonable to expect that given the current challenges facing policing, there would be more examples of EBP initiatives as people strive to produce proactive outcomes to problems. There is however a distinct lack of examples, either through lack of knowledge or the apparent inaccessibility of EBP. Those practitioners that do engage in EBP initiatives face a dilemma, as they strive to effectively balance the draw of demand and the need to follow the principles of evidence based policy and research design. Police practitioners utilising the principles of EBP, work to understand these conflicting aspects and find models that are successful for their area of the Criminal Justice System.

When approaching EBP initiatives, it is understandable that practitioners look to examples to inform their approach and it is human nature to turn to what's easy and what works or what feels supportive (Asscher, et al. 2007). Some practitioners may decide to take 'successful' EBP initiatives as an example of 'what works' without amendment. However, there are distinct dangers in practitioners adopting an 'off the shelf approach'. As stressed by Pfeffer and Sutton (2006), "It is important to remember that if we only copy what other people or companies do. The best you can be is a perfect imitation" (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006. p. 66). There is an equal and similar danger in practitioners ignoring the lessons that EBP initiatives may offer, particularly if they place professional judgement above all else, resulting in poor planning and the disregard of research principles.

Sweeten (2015), offers a rationalisation for these approaches; "The idea that we can boil down all programs into those that "work" or are "promising" suggests that there is a single metric of success. Given the complexity of individuals, neighbourhoods and cities that receive these treatments, it

would be wise to consider more than one type of outcome" (Sweeten, 2015. p.71). To deal with this level of complexity, there is professional caution being exercised around adopting EBP examples and adapting them to other areas. This caution seems appropriate, but the question remains as to what the 'middle ground' would look like and what factors should be considered when approaching projects.

This paper will seek explore these factors by initially looking to the raft of EBP examples and assess if there are any transferable themes or issues, asking the question, what are the key concepts that are relevant when approaching initiatives in general? This is a notion set out by Sherman in his 2014 paper who sought to, "build a translational theory of application in to a formal theory form the outset" (Sherman et al. 2014. p. 97). Looking at themes across multiple Criminal Justice areas would be unmanageable in this context, Hotspot policing, described as a centrepiece in EBP has been chosen for the wealth of trials available for comparison (Drawve, 2016). For the purpose of this paper, Hotspot policing will be defined as, "small areas where the crime frequency is high, allowing for greater predictability of crime location" (Drawve, 2016. p. 370). The appropriate and structured allocation of resources is then applied in a defined manner in an attempt to reduce crime.

The numerous trials and wealth of associated literature allows for a comprehensive literature review to identify the relevant themes. This paper then tests the relevant hypotheses developed through a survey, targeting EBP practitioners. This is followed by an explanation of the relevant methodology and a summary and analysis of the survey conducted. In the review, relevant key concepts that exist will be highlighted as barriers and common factors (Sherman et al. 2014). Conclusions will be drawn that seek to bridge the gap between hotspot analysis and the wider EBP movement to provide relevant recommendations as to how further research may inform the transfer and planning of future EBP initiatives and also how they may be made more accessible.

HYPOTHESES

Null Hypothesis

Evidence based policing initiatives are unique to time and location and are not transferable.

Working Hypothesis

Evidence based policing initiatives can be transferred anywhere.

The following section will review the relevant literature associated with approaches to Hotspot policing, before moving to the methodology surrounding the practitioner survey. It will then review the data gathered and provide an analysis of the results. These aspects will be compared against the available hypotheses to reach a conclusion and recommend further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The effectiveness of hotspot policing is not in doubt as a wealth of literature supports this. Whilst, "the existing literature does shed some light on what police should be doing to most effectively address crime hot spots" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 203), of interest in this paper are the common factors and barriers faced (Weisburd and Telep, 2014). This review specifically looks at themes relating to barriers and factors to consider on implementation and transfer. The policing of Hotspots and the associated planning has been chosen as, "There is a wide body of literature that discusses the effectiveness of varying police strategies on targeted hot spots" (Drawve, 2016. p.388). Examples of Hotspot research are commonplace and the standard of research is high as described by Weisburd and Telep, (2014); "Hot spots policing research has been seen as the area of policing studies with the strongest evidence base, and it has generated the largest number of rigorous studies we are aware of in policing (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 214). Hotspots are one of few EBP initiatives to be part of everyday policing language, it is anecdotally the flagship of EBP in terms of 'what works' in policing. The volume of research available affords the opportunity to draw out the relevant themes for testing. Accepting that all topics will have their attributes, picking one was necessary in this case.

It is clear from the literature that similar research questions have been asked before. For example, Farringdon (2003) describes the purpose of their review was to gain, "Simplicity of communication of findings to scholars and policy makers" (Farringdon, 2003. p.59). Similarly, Sweeten (2015) talks of the benefits that EBP provides practically; "an attractive framework for accumulating scientific knowledge and translating it into practice" (Sweeten, 2015. p. 68). The notion of common themes and concepts has also been explored by Sherman et al (2014) who explores the notion of 'key concepts' in hotspot policing; "Key concepts will ideally become a standard vocabulary for the highly precise "rocket science" – not just vague principles of hot spots patrols" (Sherman et al. 2014. p.). They refer to these key concepts as including themes such as; dosage, frequency, engagement and legitimacy (Sherman et al, 2014). A selection of these and other common themes will be drawn out in the following section.

Legal and Ethical factors

Legal and ethical challenges are evident throughout the relevant literature. Encountering legal and ethical issues may seem an obvious aspect to EBP initiatives as ethical issues are often raised when approaching a research process. As stated by Asscher (2007), "we believe that the problems

we encountered are relevant for many researchers who plan to carry out randomised experiments in criminal justice settings" (Asscher, et al. 2007. p. 114).

There were several trial reviews in the literature that generated ethical debate connected to themes of dosage and legitimacy. Boruch, Victor & Cecil (2000), put this in context by stating that; "In any randomized trial, it is possible to generate peculiar and awkward random configurations by chance" (Boruch, Victor & Cecil, 2000. p.339). This refers to the tactical decision that may be made around area or deployment of staff at the expense of another area or project and the legitimacy and issues this may create. Whilst, "The specific character of an ethical or legal problem varies from experiment to experiment of course" (Boruch, Victor & Cecil, 2000. p.350), the existence of evidential trials in a criminal justice settings produce their own bespoke challenges and are often linked to research and programme design.

Despite the assertion that all initiatives are different, EBP programmes face specific challenges linked to the fact that such trials are delivered in a criminal justice setting. The Criminal Justice system can neither deliver nor trial something that is unethical. As stated by Sweeten (2015), "Policies that are universally acceptable or universally condemned are trivial cases in this exercise. The former are the meat and potatoes of evidence-based policy. The latter are not viable policy options" (Sweeten, 2015. p. 69).

Sweeten (2015) puts forward a view that there is a lack of interest in ethics when police approach projects stating: "with its laser like focus on effectiveness, there is little consideration in the evidence-based movements for moral or ethical concerns" (Sweeten 2015. p. 68). The influence of performance and police culture will be explored in a later section. Overall, however there is a sense that with increased reliance on the Police Code of Ethics and more professionalised approaches to EBP, Sweeten's (2015) comments may not be now as accurate as they once may have been.

Looking at whether these concerns translate to EBP initiatives in general, Asscher (2007) reassures us that, "we would like to stress that many of these problems might occur in other designs" (Asscher, et al. 2007. p. 122). There is also the link to the wider ethical question for EBP, as described by Sweeten (2015), that just because you can, doesn't mean you should; "if study showed that public whippings effectively deterred crime, would we reinstate such punishments" (Sweeten, 2015. p. 68).

Dosage

In a hotspots context, dosage refers to the staff and time committed to patrolling an area. The dosages of staff and time being delivered like a prescription measure based on the needs and demands presented by a location. This can be summarised as the "principles of proportionality" and is linked directly to existing concerns surrounding ethics (Asscher, 2007). In a hotspots context, the dosage can be referred to as a "Dosage-response curve" (Sherman, 2014. p. 102). The curve, "shows the benefits of increased officer time spent in the hot spot until a plateau point is reached" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014, p. 204). This curve represents the investment relative to the outcome achieved or the cost to benefit ratio. What is clear is that "Approaches can range dramatically across interventions" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p.201). Projects vary across, "concepts of dosage, frequency, intermittency and uncertainty" (Sherman et al. 2014. p. 102). These principles add to the complexity of projects and put further pressure on the ability of projects to be relevant in different areas.

Moving projects or making a project bigger is described as 'scaling-up' in the literature (Sherman, et al. 2014). This often presents its own challenges and is effectively described by Sherman, et al. (2014) who demonstrate the difference between small and large-scale initiatives and it is not as simple as just transferring or increasing a 'dose; in a particular area. Scaling up requires "an integrated plan of action for creating and maintaining infrastructure, accountability, and delivery of more patrol and less crime, under transformational leadership at all levels" (Sherman et al. 2014. p.109).

Geographical Transferability.

This primarily refers to the urban/rural divide that is a common theme in the literature and has been a conversation in policing for some time. As Braga, et al. (2014) suggest, officers, "have long recognised the importance of place in crime problems" (Braga, et al. 2014. p. 635). It was clear from the literature that, "nearly all of the experimental and quasi-experimental studies of hotspots policing have been conducted in large cities" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 208). A view echoed by Koper (2014) who states that his sampling was "predominantly large municipal police agencies" (Koper, 2014. p. 123).

As it seems common that Hotspot initiatives are often adopted by those serving, "Large jurisdictions" (Koper, 2014. p.125), it could be asked if this is indicative of them only working in large urban areas? This is a question also posed by Weisburd and Telep (2014) who ask; "how applicable existing hot spots tactics, and the evidence supporting them, are to smaller, less densely populated

cities" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 208). It could also be argued that hotspots are an urban concept and were never intended to be transferred. Especially as effective data gathering, crime distribution and the clustering of social and economic factors seem to lend itself to easier application in such areas (Drawve, 2016). On the opposite end and, as a result of the lack of examples; "We know little about whether hot spots policing will be effective in smaller cities and rural areas" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 201). This balance is demonstrated in the literature, "just 1 of nearly 120 rigorous policing crime control interventions included as part of the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix took place in a rural area" (Weisburd an Telep, 2014. p. 208).

The literature demonstrates that there are extreme ranges of demographic information used for projects and suggests the approach to hotpots is a complex and varying issue, with "strong street by street variability" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 211) and even, "that different hot spot techniques performed better in different cities" (Drawve, 2016. p. 388). This supports the idea that every area and project is unique and that on transferring a project, adjustments would have to be made. This also raises the question for practitioners of how to calculate the right information effectively and stresses that they must have appropriate parameters to deliver a project successfully.

Police Culture

Police culture is the most commonplace theme in the literature and comes across as a significant barrier to the delivery of EBP initiatives. There are a number of inhibiting factors presented by Police behaviour both at an organisational and personal level. It is clear that observers place a high level of importance on the police culture debate. Asscher et al, (2007) focuses heavily on the importance of organisational structure being connected to the success of initiatives; "the cooperation of agencies during the implementation and running of the experiment is of pivotal importance" (Asscher, et al. 2007. p. 121).

Organisational structure and tradition, as well as strong police norms, can be obstacles to the effective delivery of projects. Police may use their professional knowledge and experience as described by Pfeffer and Sutton (2006); "Seasoned practitioners sometimes neglect to seek out new evidence because they trust their own clinical experience more than they trust research" (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006. p, 64). Sweeten (2015), suggests that there could be many reasons for this behaviour where, "scientific evidence is regularly ignored by policy makers who enact policy for ideological or other reason" (Sweeten, 2015. p. 68). Strong personal views about what works best can lead to conflicting views, as suggested by Koper (2014); "There was wide variation in their views of the most effective strategies for different types of hot spots" (Koper, 2014. p. 123). The

necessity for EBP projects to be viable pieces of research often means that they may be the reserve of the developing elite or self-motivated individuals and not an accessible tool available to all.

These 'other' reasons include a degree of scepticism directed toward academic influence in policing, highlighted by Sherman, et al. (2014); "until police see evidence that offenders are not going from areas targeted by extra patrols to areas of less patrol, they may remain unconvinced that a hot spots strategy can reduce total crime in a jurisdiction or even a police district" (Sherman, et al. 2014. p.96). Scepticism is not necessarily overt refusal to engage in initiatives, Asscher (2007) describes the reluctance to be connected to a lack of understanding around the structure of research projects (Asscher, 2007). This culture is similar to what has been noted in the medical profession and the similarity is often drawn in the literature as demonstrated by Asscher (2007); "the resistance of clinical staff is a problem encountered in any field evaluation study, regardless of its design, as agency personnel may be suspicious of the researchers intent" (Asscher et al. 2007. p. 121).

Some of the literature refers to aspects of personal behaviour that act as a barrier. For example, being overly optimistic about results, being too keen to see a project succeed or even being manipulative with the results. Whatever the motivations or the awareness of individuals involved, organisational pressures play their part in such behaviour. The influence of police performance culture may be most significant as officers seek to achieve a target rather than what is in the best interest of the public. As described by Koper, (2014), "Results suggest that police tend to put more emphasis on traditional measures emphasizing patrol, enforcement, and targeting offenders" (Koper, 2014. p. 138).

Aspects of Police culture that sit at the highest organisational levels were raised as a barrier. One of these was EBP sitting in ethical conflict with policing, particularly in relation to randomisation processes setting themselves against the police conscience, pitching itself against the principle of equal treatment that dominates the ethics of police culture. As Asscher, et al. (2007) point out; "A randomization procedure tends to do the opposite" (Asscher, et al. 2007. p. 120). Asscher, et al (2007) make a further valuable point, that Criminal Justice problems may be too complex to manage through randomisation and add to how unpalatable they feel. The move towards the use of experimental principles indicates a change of approach outside of cultural norms of policing, "from being reactive to proactive. Being a proactive approach, predictive policing is a data-driven process and the reliability of the data can affect the result" (Drawve, 2016. p.372).

A reliance on data alone may sit uncomfortably with Police practitioners and may generate further resistance. Obstructions to adopting evidential design principles may account for why; "Evaluations

so far have been short term, in part because of the difficulties of applying experimental studies in the field for long periods" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 211). A general lack of interest in academic theory in the Criminal Justice system was a common theme in the literature. As stressed by Boruch (2015), "Further policy makers are not always attentive to the need to replicate a study that happened to yield a "Statistically significant" result that accorded nicely with the police makers preference" (Boruch, 2007. p.12"). This is a warning reiterated by Sherman (2015); "Nothing could be more important than for the police culture to learn this lesson: in science, we must let chips fall where they lay" (Sherman, 2015. p.16).

There was a divergence in the literature relating to how far the Police had come in this area and their level of current sophistication. Sherman, et al. (2014) describes the level of EBP sophistication as, "not a highly developed art" (Sherman et al. 2014. P.114). This is echoed by Braga, et al (2014) who connects an element of laziness to weak design and dubious positive outcomes (Braga et al. 2014). On the positive side, there were some supporters of police behaviour. For example, Koper (2014) states, "Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of police interventions" (Koper, 2014. p. 125).

The importance of tackling Police culture is stressed as important in achieving success in EBP initiatives. Asscher et al (2007) provides advice on, "dealing with overcoming the resistance of institutions involved, maintaining the cooperation of both institution and the sample" (Asscher, et al. 2007. p. 113). An interesting observation from Asscher, et al. 2007, is that the lack of research in Europe is due to, "the anticipation of the difficulties the researchers are likely to encounter when implementing such a design in the criminal justice setting, which may lead to the conclusion that it is not worth the trouble" (Asscher, et al. 2007. p. 114).

Leadership

The issues of transferability, dosage and police culture all link to the need for effective leadership to drive the principles of Hotspot policing and to navigate through the potential barriers. Concern is voiced around the current 'leaders' in an EBP context, as suggested by Neyround and Weisburd (2014); "The police currently remain generally unable and unprepared for a leadership role in police science" (Neyroud and Weisburd, 2014. p. 289).

In order to cut through the complex cultural issues, Sherman et al. (2014) suggest that a focus on a return to the core (traditional) principles of policing would work: "The key concept for the successful delivery of more effective hot spots patrol is inspiring those who do the patrols to do them for an emotionally compelling reason" (Sherman et al. 2014. p.109). It is also suggested that leaders

reflect on their personal style, adopting a less 'selfish' approach and look to make the larger purpose more important than themselves (Sherman, 2014). A requirement to also look to being more collaborative and ensure that others, notably communities are taken on the journey is suggested by Weisburd and Telep (2014), "The police need the support and cooperation of the public to effectively combat crime" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 207). Overall, these elements combine to recommend that leaders look to abandon 'command' styles of leadership and adopt, "Transformational Leadership" styles (Sherman et al. 2014. p. 109). In relation to elevating EBP initiatives to a larger scale, (Sherman, et al (2014) make an interesting point that the reality of police delivery would have to change and in doing so, leaders, managers and staff adapt accordingly, stating that; "large –scale implementation must rely on more typical conditions, including indifferent staff and less focused management and leadership" (Sherman et al. 2014. p. 105).

Design of experiments

Even on the initial approach, there are challenges in designing experiments to review in this area. The literature relating to hotspots does not provide a single definition, as stated by Koper (2014); "there is no universally accepted definition of the term 'hot spot'. (Koper, 2014. p. 128). This causes accessibility and understanding issues for practitioners and the results of research vary dramatically. It is a factor that police adopt a more casual approach to definitions and, "tend to use the term hotspot more broadly than do researchers" (Koper, 2014. p. 128). As these issues overlap, the ability to sift through findings and recommendations with consistency is compromised. This is because of the overlapping differences in, "sample, sized, risk periods, definitions of violence, outcomes sources, and so forth" (Dunford, 2000. p. 427). This reality sits in contrast to the recommendations of Farringdon (2003) who stresses the importance of; "to develop methodological quality standards for evaluation research that can be used by systematic reviewers, scholars, policy makers, the mass media, and the general public in assessing the validity of conclusions about the effectiveness of interventions in reducing crime" (Farringdon, 2003. p.67). In the absence of a base line for assessment, it is reasonable to ask how experiments can be effective judges (Dunford, 2000).

The more relaxed approach to definitions is reflected in the prioritisation and analysis of results; "One problem in conducting meta-analyses in crime and justice is that investigations often did not prioritize outcomes examined" (Braga, Papachristus, Hureau, 2012. p.16). This may reflect the aspects of Police Leadership culture already discussed in which performance is a priority over experimental design. A further barrier to effective deign is Police reluctance to engage in randomisation; "Randomization provides a partial guarantee of unbiased estimates" (Boruch, 2017. p.207). However, randomisation factors are often complex with weighted ethical considerations and

are not often used in policing. Therefore; "While randomized experiments in principle have the highest internal validity, in practice, they are relatively uncommon in criminology and often have implementation problems" (Farringdon, 2003. p. 59).

However, randomisation is not the only option to deliver good quality evidence as suggested by Boruch (2007); "Generating a legitimate statistical statement of confidence of one's confidence in an experiments results can be done in many ways" (Boruch, 2007. p.3). Weisburd and Telep (2014) draw comparisons in the result of hot spots experiments and provide an example of alternative methods being successful. They suggest that: "problem orientated approaches to dealing with crime hot spots may be more effective than simply increasing patrols in high-crime areas" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p.205). This may be indicative of the incremental development in police research that is moving beyond the initial expectations of researchers. The aspiration in this literature is for this to develop to a stage where; "Effective programs are promoted, promising programs are re-evaluated and ineffective programs are discouraged" (Sweeten, 2015. p. 68).

METHODOLOGY

Survey and Question Design.

In order to test the relevant hypotheses, an online survey was conducted and a descriptive quantitative analysis of the information undertaken. A scaled model survey approach was chosen utilising the Likert scale. This method was chosen to provide an accessible format, as open qualitative returns are difficult to quantify, compare and evaluate with as much certainty and with the brevity required for this paper. The scaled approach will also allow a more accurate analysis of the survey.

The survey questions have been formed in line with principles of the Likert scale. The scale offers flexibility and practicality and, "are a common ratings format for surveys" (Allen and Seaman, 2007. p.64). The questions reflect the style suggested by Bryman and Bell (2003), in which people are asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a relevant statement (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The advice of Allen and Seaman (2007), in which they recommend the use of five categories as a minimum, has been adhered to. The questions reflect the range of strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree. This design provides benefits for both ease of use and evaluation purposes. The general level of familiarity with the scale makes them particularly accessible and may add to the level of responses gained (Allen and Seaman, 2007). Similarly, for comparability, "Closed questions enhanced comparability of answers, making it easier to show the relationship between variables and to make comparisons between respondents" (Bryman and Bell, 2003. p. 158).

The content of the question and statement design as listed in Appendix A, was designed with two principles in mind:

- To test the hypotheses by testing the themes identified through the literature review.
- To elevate the concepts to a more general level away from the specifics of hotpots policing and test associated Transferability, Leadership, Demographics and Police Culture.

This method utilises the theory of Sherman, et al (2014) that, "These sources help provide a glossary of key concepts, which can then be integrated in to a formal theory of how to cause an area-level strategy of hot spots patrols" (Sherman et al. 2014. p. 104). Hence, the seven questions designed reflect the key concepts identified in the literature review: transferable nature of EBP initiatives, Leadership, Police Culture, urban/rural divide, design approaches and dosage. The

number of questions has been kept to this minimal number to ensure responses and avoid "'respondent fatigue'" often seen when using long surveys (Bryman and Bell, 2003. p. 143).

The construction of my survey follows the advice from Drawve (2016) that, "With any of these techniques, there are parameters that must be defined before completing the analysis" (Drawve, 2016. p. 374). The parameters for those targeted for completing and conducting the survey were set as; 'those who have training and/or experience in constructing and approaching EBP initiatives or trials'. Given that those within the required parameters were spread out nationally, the survey method has been designed so that they can be easily reached. As the question construction had been elevated to higher themes not exclusive to hotspot policing, there was a mix of practitioners targeted.

Other methods were considered in the research design, but discounted. I have followed the advice of Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor (2003), who stress that flexibility and the ability to use a tool is key. Interviews would have collected more detailed data however, interviews would have not easily met my established the criteria. It would have been difficult to construct an interview method that would have so easily tested hypothesis across a number of main themes. It would also have been impractical to complete interviews as the respondents with the necessary skill were spread over a large geographical area. The online method provided the ability to reach a fragmented audience, as well as provide ease of use and effective interaction. The online method was also cost-effective, requiring no travel or postal costs as supported by Bryman and Bell (2003), "The cheapness of the self-completion questionnaire is especially advantageous if you have a sample that is geographically widespread" (Bryman and Bell, 2003. p. 142).

Advantages and Limitations

Koper (2014) warns that reports from the police on hotspots should, "be interpreted with some caution because they may sometimes reflect more traditional forms of policing" (Koper, 2014. p.135). It could therefore be stated that the small parameters for respondents may limit quality of the data. The survey seeks a response rate of approximately 20 surveys. The surveys were targeted through the network of Society of Evidence Based Policing (SEBP) and the College of Policing, in order to question individuals who would have the necessary skill set to complete the surveys. Whilst the number of respondents seems small in comparison to similar surveys, it should be noted that the group have a well developed level of knowledge. This area is unique in that only a certain number of people have the expertise or experience to complete such a questionnaire. Therefore, the value of their responses could arguably be more significant as 100% of the respondents have a contribution to make, addressing the view of Leis and Ritchie (2003), who state: "whether the

findings from a study based on a sample can be said to be of relevance beyond the sample and context of the research itself – is an important one" (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003. p. 263).

A further limitation that may be suggested in that the subject area in the literature review is restricted to hotspot analysis only. A focus on Hotspot analysis was necessary in the literature review to control volume and effectively draw out the themes. In the survey, it is of benefit to have a wider cohort of responders with differing experiences of EBP. If this cohort were restricted to those with Hotspot experience only, it would have been very difficult to secure sufficient responses. There was therefore an inevitable mix, the results of which are explored in more detail in the analysis section.

The process was subject to ongoing review, causing an early stage amendment to the survey. On receiving the initial responses, the limitations surrounding the answers became clear. As supported by Bryman and Bell (2003), "It is difficult to make forced-choice answers exhaustive" (Bryman and Bell, 2003. p.159). The initial data was not very comparable as it did not give "opportunity to probe respondents to elaborate an answer" (Bryman and Bell, 2003. p. 143). This was partly addressed after returns from a number of initial respondents by editing a question to include a 'free text' element, which remained live for the remainder of the surveys completed. This was designed to improve the quality of the data analysed and ensure that any themes not picked up in the hotspot literature review would be captured. The analysis of this is explored further in the next section. Should the survey be completed again, this optional element per question would add significant benefit to the analysis. Also, in keeping the survey succinct, some elements of the key factors have not been explored and they would warrant inclusion.

RESULTS and ANALYSIS

Analysis approach

The analysis that follows is comparative and descriptive. This is designed to overcome some of the limitations associated with the survey design, as stressed by Allen and Seaman (2007), "If data were analysed using means, with a scale of 1 to 5 from inferior to superior, this separation would be lost" (Allen and Seaman, 2007. p. 65). In order to prevent this loss, a manageable comparative approach has therefore been adopted (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2003).

In this approach, the advice of Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor (2003) has been utilised; that, "The researcher may follow common sense assumptions when attempting to explain patterns within the data" (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor. 2003. p. 229). An intuitive path has been adopted based on the position of ordinal data and correlating percentage rating (Allen and Seaman, 2007). Percentage comparisons are used to prompt debate and conclusions, making sense of the data through description (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor. 2003). The data is tackled question by question in order to cover the themes evenly.

Appendix B and the section associated with Question 3 refer to the 'free text question data'. This is sorted into "recurring themes of ideas" (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor, 2003. p.221) in order to facilitate comparison. These themes are "then sorted and grouped under a smaller number of broader higher order categories or 'main themes' and placed within an overall framework" (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor. 2003. p. 221). This area is set in isolation of the others as described in the methodology.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

There were 25 respondents in all, Appendix A is a summary of all questions asked. Question 1 assesses which subject area respondents had experience of. It would have been extremely difficult to get experienced respondents just in the field of hotspot policing. Whilst it could be argued that a distribution of experience dilutes the validity of the results, it is equally viable that the spread of experience adds to the question overall, particularly for factors that effect issues across EBP. Given the range of options in the Criminal Justice System, there is an understandable spread of subject areas in which people have experience. The largest represented area is Drugs and Alcohol at 20% and 16% representing hotspot policing. The rest of the representation is spread across criminal justice subject areas. The spread of respondents across areas will be significant when assumptions are made about how transferable the factors are.
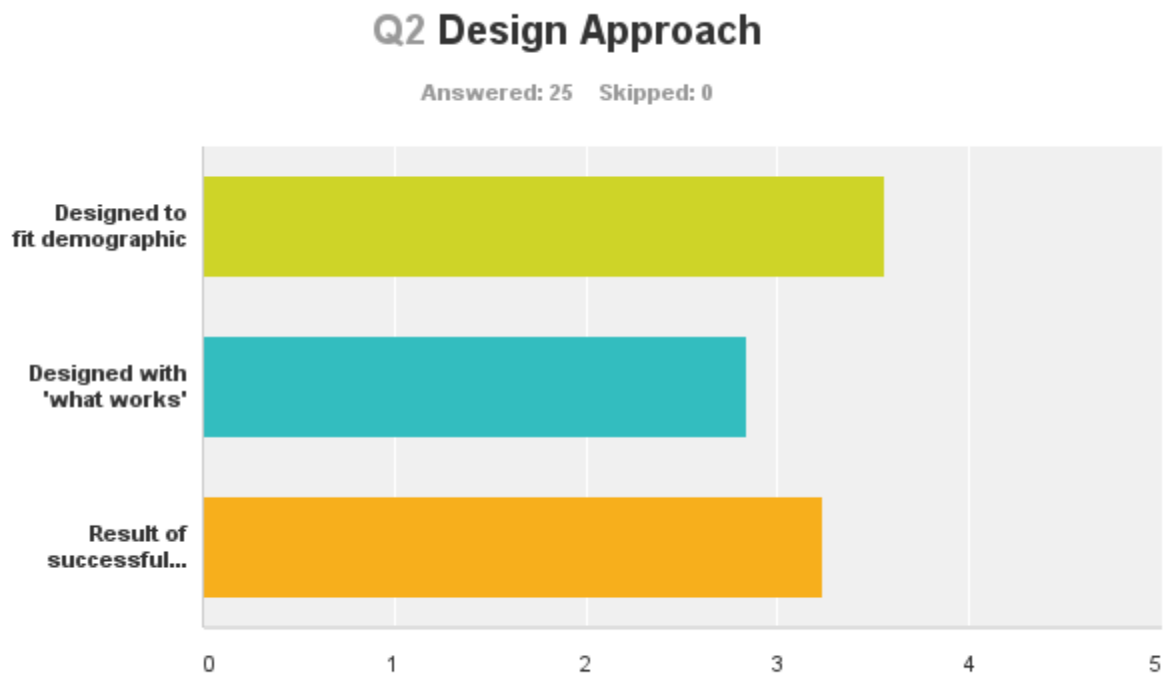

Figure 1 – Graph of Design Approach Results

The grading of the statements in question 2 are represented in Figure 1, they give an overall indication of approach to design. It also represents what weighting individuals have given previous initiatives and experiments when planning their initiative. It is of interest that while 56% of respondents stated that initiatives should be designed with the results and successful projects in mind, 72% planned their approach based on demographics and the challenges of a particular area.

It could be argued therefore that practitioners will lean towards the influence of place and circumstance rather than the results and previous projects seen in that area. There is a reasonably even split here (52% in the disagree/strongly disagree and 44% agree/strongly agree). This more evenly disrupted result, is representative of the balance that practitioners attempt to secure between and approach. This balance was seen heavily in the review of literature, which describes this journey for the police and is typical of evidence based approaches.

Question 3 lists statements testing how 'transferable' initiatives are. Whilst 80% of respondents believe the project is transferable to another area, 68% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that EBP Projects are transferable to anywhere without amendments. So there remains the element of professional caution and a view that on transference there must be a number of aspects considered. This is tested in a further statement, where 66% state they agree or strongly agree that projects are transferable with amendments.

The question that offers the most promising information is the area in which respondents have been asked to list the factors to consider on transfer. This is the only 'free text' element in the survey and addresses the specific factors that responders thought necessary to tackle in order to make transference possible. The responses have been themed into a table listed in Appendix B. This table correlates the responses with thematic headings taken from the literature review of Transferability, Leadership, Demographics and Police Culture. This allows for the replies to be categorised and isolates anything raised not so far covered. It is an opportunity to see if there were any themes raised by respondents that were missed in the literature review. There were 17 out of 25 respondents that provided an example. 12 of the respondents comments broadly fell into a category already classified through the literature review. 5 respondents didn't fall into any obvious category. The comments were;

- "Suit the needs of both policing and the communities, which we serve".
- "The area and the persons who we are providing the service".
- "Research for similar project assists in decision-making but each project would need to be assessed on its own merits".
- "Total population, population density of area(s). local customs around drinking, level of cooperation form stakeholders, levels and variability of NTE – related violence"
- "Context of the issue"

One response relates directly to the responders subject areas of NTE and two are general comments around approach. Of particular value is to group the two similar comments together. These two comments make reference to the provision of police service, and the level of service

provided to communities. This was not raised in the literature review, but it is not surprising to see it here. It would be of concern for a group of police practitioners not take into account the value of the service they are providing to communities. Community value and service provision are however, not a common factor of EBP initiatives. For example, the primary driver of a hotspot initiative is to eliminate crime in an area. EBP can be very transactional, with a design and an assessed outcome in isolation of influencing factors. The brief glimpse in to the reality for practitioners is that their motivations are more community driven and complex.

In Question 4, the statements explored the incremental benefits seen in conducting research and how unique research projects are. In retrospect, asking these questions of EBP Practitioners may be a little counterproductive as having conducted reviews themselves, there would be an obvious positive weighting placed on the processes. Nonetheless the responses reinforce the value placed in such projects. With for example, 88 % of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that each piece of EBP work adds to the last, building on the evidence.

Question 5 is of significance in the research, particularly when considered with aspects laid out in the literature review around design and police culture. This question asks if a review was conducted on the EBP project undertaken. 32% of respondents did not conduct a review of their initiative. This poses a question as to how well the full academic process of design and evaluation is adopted in policing. Whilst EBP appears to be embraced and implemented, the level of ongoing interest for post implementation review is much less. It could be argued that if EBP initiatives are not reviewed how can recommendations be made on their basis of their results. In turn, what validity do such projects have to serve as an example to others to utilise in their own areas or responsibilities.

The Statements in question 6 test how poor experimental results would affect the take up of EBP. 76% of respondents stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that risks would prevent them from implementing a project, with 76% also either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that barriers to implementation would prevent them from implementing a project. Overall, it seems that the lack of success elsewhere would not prevent practitioners from using that example as a model. The fact that the respondents have experience in EBP is a further factor here as it could be argued that they have already been tenacious and enterprising in taking on an EBP challenge. That they are already committed to the principles of what works and understand that a projects success is something to be learned from and not a necessity.

Q7 Geography, Culture and Leadership
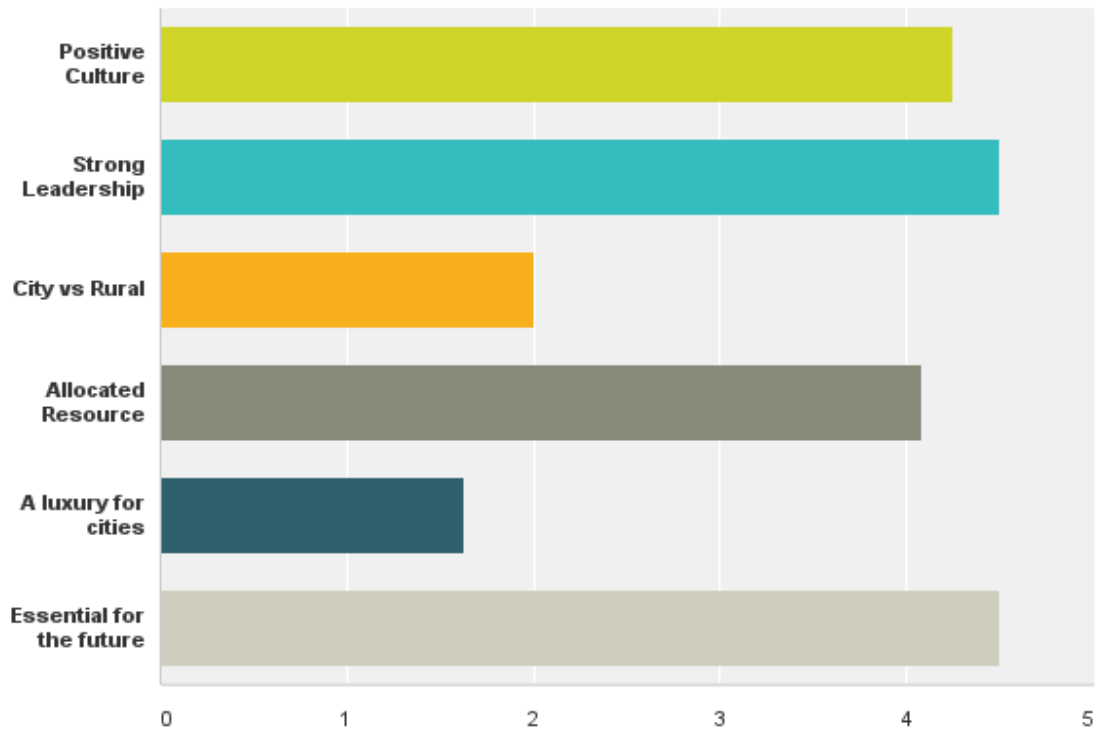
Answered: 24   Skipped: 1

Figure 2 – Graph of Geography, Culture and Leadership Results

The statements in Question 7 (shown in Figure 2), cover themes of geography, police culture and leadership. In relation to geographical factors, respondents dismiss almost totally that work is not transferable between urban and rural area. 95% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that EBP institutive are a luxury for city environments, supported by 87% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that what works in city would not work in a rural area.

In relation to Culture, responses were weighted heavily in favour of the positive role that Leadership takes in EBP initiatives. 91% agreed or strongly agreed that strong leadership is essential to deliver successful projects. With 86% also agreeing or strongly agreeing that a positive organisational culture means more successful EBP projects. This echoes the comments made in the literature review. It also lends itself to ask some questions. With such a focus on leadership, are current initiatives inflated by the support of bespoke resource? If this is the case, how relevant and sustainable is EBP in the context of the challenges faced by modern policing?

The factors and barriers identified in the literature have been tested to understand the position of EBP practitioners. The results have shown us a number of things; that practitioners will lean to the influence of place and circumstance rather than previous results. They strongly believe that EBP initiatives are transferable in design and across urban and rural areas, but that amendments have to be made. They have echoed the literature barriers highlighted and added additional challenges in the form of the relevant policing purpose and community impact. It has been measured that the level of post implementation interest is low for police practitioners and there remains a healthy degree of professional caution in EBP approaches. Overwhelmingly, 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that EBP was essential to the future of policing.

Thematically, the data has allowed for the creation of a summary of the common considerations to take into consideration on implementation; transferability, police culture, leadership, demographics, geography and community perceptions. The practitioner responses have shown that whilst there are these core principles, each project must be adapted depending on its own attributes and field. The responses demonstrated are similar across respondents with multiple specialism, it can be suggested therefore that there are common factors and barriers to consider in transference across criminal justice areas.

The evidence therefore does not support the null hypothesis that EBP initiatives are unique to time and location and are not transferable. The evidence of core principles, common barriers and heavily weighted practitioner support for transference has demonstrated that projects will in the main transfer. The evidence lends itself to partially support the working hypothesis that EBP initiatives can be transferred anywhere, with the appropriate caveat the consideration is given to the themes covered.

CONCLUSION

This paper began with the assumption that there were common elements evident throughout EBP practices and that these can be utilised, to a reasonable extent to make EBP initiatives transferable. The methodology used has tested the hypothesis that: Evidence based policing initiatives can be transferred anywhere.

A review has been conducted of hotspot literature to identify a list of enabling factors and potential barriers to consider. It has been proven that the concept is not new and many have, "tried to understand whether one can get beyond results of a single trial and its analysis, so as to uncover and take into account trials that can be constructed as replications" (Boruch, 2007. p.12). Hot spot policing provides a wealth of available review and research. It is clear on reviewing the material that, "there is not one way to implement hot spots policing" (Weisburd and Telep, 2014. p. 201). Whilst this has raised a number of factors to consider and barriers to be aware of, the review lends itself to support the hypothesis that EBP initiatives are transferable.

On the basis of the research, a survey was developed to test some of the themes that emerged. The experience of EBP practitioners was utilised to test the hypotheses that EBP initiatives would be transferable based on their stance on the factors that may act as barriers. The data has shown that the themes of transferability, leadership, demographics, Police Culture and research design are common factors to police practitioners. The responses have described a middle ground, reflecting the reality of policing, "Policing is complex and police executives consider actors other than academic research when making operational decisions. In short, police commanders make decisions in a politically conscious, media-scrutinised, resource deprived, dynamic environment" (Haberman, et al. 2016. p.527). The reality for practitioners is to balance all these aspects.

There is no doubt that, "Criminal justice policy should be based on the best possible evidence" (Farringdon, 2003. p. 67). However, the 'off the shelf' replica is not viable (Brouch, 2007). The future is not about taking an item off the shelf to use in policing, it's in the development of policing and academia working together as stated by Shermer (2006); "replicating results means testing hypothesis – not merely duplicating methodologies – and this central tenet of science can only flourish in an atmosphere of open peer review" (Shermer, 2006).

Concentrating on the structure of approaches will secure a future for EBP and provide support for practitioners. This will prevent them from being isolated or lacking direction, they, "can use precise information to see exactly where more managerial time should be targeted" (Sherman et al. 2014. p.114). What is clear is that as the EBP movement gains in popularity, "there is a moral imperative

for randomised experiments in crime and justice because of our professional obligation to provide valid answers to questions about the effectiveness of interventions" (Farrington & Welsh, 2005. p.31). The only way for police professionals to achieve this is to work collaboratively across professions to produce the best possible result, an approach that understands the, "need for the new police professionalism to achieve a balance that recognises both science and craft" (Neyroud and Weisburd, 2014. p. 290).

FURTHER RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be inappropriate for me to recommend further research for each of the Criminal Justice Subject areas, which are the subject of EBP initiatives. What can be done is to look to general recommendations for the direction of research, that focuses on the aspects of transferability and guidance for practitioners.

- Further research is needed to assess how things transfer from an urban to a rural geography, through focussing on delivering trails in more demographically challenging and rural areas so that the comparative benefits and challenges can be accessed (Koper, 2014).

- The increased use of meta-analysis and inter meta-analysis comparison as they help us understand how well results effect each other (Boruch, 1997. p. 218). Approaches utilising a multi faceted thematic study, identifying commonality of factors across EBP type will require a collaborative approach but will yield great benefits (Boruch, 2007), Encouragingly, organisations like the Campbell Collaboration have started to set this direction through their review work, bringing together police and researchers to develop policing (Neyroud and Weisburd, 2014).

- Testing and testing again, "What this means for evidence-based policing is an extremely important caveat: new policies based on small-scale tests should probably be tested again under large-scale conditions, in order to generate more realistic estimates of cost-benefit rations" (Sherman et al. 2014. p. 105). "The future lies also in learning how to reframe or create different kinds of hypotheses that are testable and produce informative characterizations of evidence" (Boruch, 200. p. 18).

- Provide a 'guidance product' in relevant formats for the Criminal Justice System making EBP initiatives more accessible to practitioners. In order to encourage officers to use it will be necessary to translate what's been learned and tested into simple language. Stating clearly as Farringdon (2003) suggests; a 'check sheet' of "what works what doesn't work, what's promising, and what's unknown (Farringdon, 2003. P. 59). This should be targeted in a number of ways, ranging from the basics of police training, police leaders and senior strategic leaders including PCC'S. EBP needs to become a new 'golden thread', cost effectively targeting resources to deliver sustainable solutions to genuine community concerns, developing good citizens and educating policing activity, oversight and evaluation.

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Appendix A – Summary of Survey Questions

1. In what area did your Evidence Based Policing Initiative take place?	Option plus 'Other
2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	The Evidence Based Policing project I was involved with was designed to fit the demographic and challenges of a particular area
	The Evidence Based Policing Project I was involved with was designed on the principles of 'what works' only
	The Evidence Based Policing Project was designed using the result and successes of previous initiatives
3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	Evidence Based Policing Projects are transferable if the following factor(s) are considered: (Plus Options)
	The Evidence Based Policing Project is transferable to another area, but changes need to be made to make it fit the population
	The Evidence Based Policing Project is transferable to anywhere without any amendments
	The Evidence Based Policing project I was involved in is transferable to another area.
4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	Each piece of Evidence Based Research is unique
	Each piece of Evidence Based Policing work adds to the last, building on the evidence
	When planning an Evidence Based Policing project, relevant previous studies must be used
	The basic principles of planning an Evidence Based Policing initiative are the same, wherever the project is
5. A review was conducted of the Evidence Based Policing Project I was involved in	Yes/No
6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	The risks experienced during the project would prevent me from implementing it elsewhere
	The lack of the projects success would prevent me from implementing it elsewhere
	The barriers to implementation experienced would prevent me from implementing it elsewhere
	Demographic variance would prevent me from implementing this project elsewhere
7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	A positive organizational culture means more successful Evidence Based Policing Projects
	Strong Leadership is essential to deliver successful Evidence Based Policing Projects
	What works in a city would never work in a rural area
	Evidence Based Policing Projects need an allocated resource to drive it
	Evidence Based Policing initiatives are a luxury for city environments
	Evidence Based Policing initiatives are essential for the future of policing

APPENDIX B - Question 3 Summary of Themes

Urban/Rural dynamic	Transferability
Context re-evaluation. You should never say 'will' work, only that there is an improved probability of working	Transferability
Total population, population density of area(s). local customs around drinking, level of cooperation form stakeholders, levels and variability of NTE – related violence	
The police area and who leads it	Leadership
Context of the issue	
Scale of the project, if its manageable	Leadership
Demographics and geographical areas	Transferability and Demographics
The area and the persons who we are providing the service	
Geography, environment and demographic	Demographics
Suit the needs of both policing and the communities which we serve	
Constituency	Demographics
Proper consultation and understanding of problem profile. Understanding demographic and limitations	Demographics
Willing to accept change as part of Culture	Police Culture
Demographics, local issues, leadership	Demographic
Research for similar project assists in decision making but each project would need to be assessed on its own merits	
Demographics, crime types, desired outcomes	Demographics
Culture, demographics, policing approach	Police Culture, Demographics