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Centre of Criminology
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5S 3H1



Telephone: 416/978-6438 x230
Fax: 416/978-4195
Electronic Mail: anthony.doob@utoronto.ca
Courier address: 130 St. George Street, Room 8001

Criminological Highlights
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Criminological Highlights is produced approximately six times a year by the Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto and is designed to provide an accessible look at some of the more interesting criminological research that is currently being published. Copies of the original articles can be obtained (at cost) from the Centre of Criminology Information Service and Library. Please contact Tom Finlay or Andrea Shier.

This issue of *Criminological Highlights* will address the following questions:

- 1) How is it that the criminal courts in New York City were able to function so effectively after the events of September 11?
- 2) Do criminal court judges always oppose sentencing guidelines?
- 3) Do police crackdowns on street drug sales work?
- 4) Do aggressive crackdowns by the police on those who cause minor disorder on the streets reduce crime?
- 5) What can school administrators do to address school disorder?
- 6) What kinds of police officers are most likely to use force with civilians?
- 7) Do protective or restraining orders protect women from revictimization in domestic assaults?
- 8) Is Canada alone in the way in which trends in youth crime have been misrepresented?

Contents: Three pages containing "headlines and conclusions" for each of the eight articles.
One page summaries of each of the eight articles (Item 1 has a 2-page summary)

This issue of *Criminological Highlights* was prepared by Anthony Doob, Tom Finlay, Cheryl Webster, John Beattie, Carla Cesaroni, Rosemary Gartner, Elizabeth Griffiths, Voula Marinos, Andrea Shier, Jane Sprott, Kimberly Varma, and Carolyn Yule. The production of *Criminological Highlights* is assisted by contributions from the Department of Justice, Canada, and the Correctional Service of Canada. Comments or suggestions should be addressed to Anthony N. Doob or Tom Finlay at the Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto

The courts in New York City were able to re-open shortly after September 11 largely because judges took control of the judicial system and challenged the views of other criminal justice officials who argued that the courts would have to remain shut. Judges succeeded in demonstrating that justice was not to be another victim of terrorism.

Leadership, in this case from the judges, was crucial. The initial decision by the Chief Judge to have “justice as usual” was also critical. Equally important was the “local leadership [that] emerged among both the local administrative judges and senior prosecutors” (p. 24). Similarly, the firm resolve manifested throughout the system to plan for “business as usual” was fundamental. For example, one of the difficult matters to resolve was that of communication (e.g., of the location of court hearings) which would reach all of those involved. In this case, some creativity (e.g., posted information) and hard work were helpful as were many firm decisions simply to do things, leaving the details to be worked out as they went along. [Item 1]

One of the primary reasons for judicial opposition to legislated sentencing guidance is a broad based concern about judges’ loss of discretionary power. Furthermore, those judges who oppose legislative guidance are likely to overestimate the amount of judicial opposition to sentencing reform.

It is normally assumed that judges will react negatively to anything that restricts their discretion. Data from this study suggest that the restrictions on judicial discretion need not lead to negative views by the majority of judges. Although judges in several jurisdictions fairly consistently oppose mandatory determinate sentences, they do not favour a return to the indeterminacy of the past. Therefore, it may be that much of the judicial opposition to structured guidance in sentencing simply comes from the fact that it involves a change in sentencing practice. Experience with structured discretion may be responsible for the overall favourable views held by the majority of judges surveyed for this study. [Item 2]

A police crackdown on drug dealers in London, England which was designed to “stifle the availability of illegal drugs on our streets” (p. 738) was described by the police as a “spectacular success” (p. 738). However, information obtained from drug users and drug dealers in this city suggests that it had no impact on drug availability or prices.

The findings “offer no support for the suggestion that the markets for heroin, crack and cannabis are sensitive to increased police activity, at least not in the short term, even when such activity is associated with a number of significant drug seizures and with the removal of a large number of dealers from the street” (p. 744). These results support the assertion that “supply reduction endeavours are not strongly linked to illicit drug market forces” (p. 744). [Item 3]

A policy of ‘cleaning up the streets’ and getting rid of those who make people feel uncomfortable may make good politics, but it does not appear to have much of an impact on crime.

Quality of life policing “had a far less substantial effect on serious crime than on disorder-related crimes and violations. In other words, the benefits were restricted primarily to problems on which the project focused specifically.... It may be that “crime” and “grime” are two separate problems, and it is easier for the police to reduce disorder [than to reduce crime]” (p. 89). This paper supports the conclusion that “[q]uality of life initiatives are often employed without the benefit of careful problem identification or analysis, without any effort to identify underlying conditions and causes, and without careful consideration of a wide range of possible alternatives” (p. 880). [Item 4]

School disorder – minor and major – can be best understood by examining two sets of explanatory variables: characteristics of the youths in the school and characteristics of the school itself. School variables (e.g., school ‘climate’) are important, in large part, because they may be more amenable to change than are characteristics of the youths in the school.

Rather than focusing solely on bad youths as an explanation for school disorder, this study suggests that it may be more useful to realize that “[s]chool disorder can be reduced by conscious efforts on the part of school administrators, teachers, parents, students and community groups.... Individual schools should carefully assess their own climate to determine which factors may be contributing to disorder” (p. 943). One of the most optimistic findings from this research is its suggestion that schools and school boards can reduce problems of disorder within their institutions not only by choosing ‘good’ youths, but also by creating effective schools. The environment in which school age children spend their time is clearly important. Focusing on identifying difficult youths (and, in many jurisdictions, excluding them from school) may not be as effective as concentrating on what could be done to improve the school. Most of the school climate variables reflect characteristics that have value without reference to disorder. However, by creating a fair environment in which youths want to work hard and, in general, feel attached to school values, one not only gets better schools, but one also gets schools that are relatively free of disorder. [Item 5]

Police officers who use force in their professional interactions with citizens are more likely to suffer from occupational stress and ‘burnout’ than those who do not use, or value the use of force against citizens. “Depersonalization, a cynical attitude toward work and civilians, appears to be the key variable related to [police use of force with civilians]” (p.649).

Obviously, police occasionally use force in their daily work. Such use of force can, of course, be legitimate and easily attributed to the situation. In this study, however, “all observed force was conducted by officers scoring high on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization... Officers who are cynical and detached were more readily inclined to use force against civilians. This suggests a typical negative interaction pattern, whereby the depersonalized officers behave more forcefully toward civilians, who will, in response, react in an unfriendly and less cooperative manner; such responses will reinforce the negative attitudes the officer had about civilians” (p. 648). [Item 6]

Three legal responses to domestic violence – arrest, a protective (or restraining) order (e.g., a court imposed prohibition on contacting the victim or going near the victim’s home/place of employment), or a combination of both of these interventions – have been found to have no differential impact on the likelihood of revictimization of the spouse.

Legal remedies – protective orders or arrests – do not appear to be useful in addressing a complex problem such as wife assault. Presumably, it is not the *legal* intervention *per se* that would be likely to make any difference. Rather, only something that has a life above and beyond its existence on a piece of paper is likely to reduce this kind of revictimization. [Item 7]

Uncanny parallels exist between the way in which juvenile crime in Sweden and Canada has been described. Although certain selective comparisons based on Swedish data would suggest that youth violence has increased and/or become more brutal, overall trends show no important changes in youth violence in the past decade.

“Over the last 10 years, the theme of ‘rising juvenile violence’ has become widely pervasive in the general social discourse around Europe.... The greater focus in the public in general is perceived as a reflection of the real underlying trend... In this way the (more or less erroneous) portrayal of juvenile crime as continually on the increase in fact comes to be seen as reflecting reality” (p. 652). Without doubt, the result is that policies which pander to this (nonexistent) increase receive public support. [Item 8]

The courts in New York City were able to re-open shortly after September 11 largely because judges took control of the judicial system and challenged the views of other criminal justice officials who argued that the courts would have to remain shut. Judges succeeded in demonstrating that justice was not to be another victim of terrorism.

Background. The court system in New York City was severely threatened by the events of September 11. Many of Manhattan's principal courthouses are located near the World Trade Centre. Criminal courts depend on police as witnesses. Witnesses, jurors, lawyers, and others need to get to court. The judicial response came from New York's Chief Judge, Judith S. Kaye who has administrative responsibility for all courts in the state. Her decision, announced mid-morning on September 11, was simple: The attack had been an assault on America's values (including justice) and the court system had an obligation to open as soon as possible. That statement set the tone for what happened in the next few weeks. The situation was helped by a dramatic decrease (40%-64% across the 5 boroughs of NYC) in arrests in the month following September 11 as compared to the previous year.

Re-opening the courts. Individual judges and court administrators did not have to make any decisions about when to re-open: the "unambiguous imperative to open as soon as practicable" (p. 5) from Judge Kaye meant that individual "administrative judges did not have to weigh arguments about whether to open the courts and could instead focus on how to accomplish that goal" (p. 5). Initially, the courts were told that *no* police would be available in court for a month. However, this total ban was lifted several days later. Given that police were involved in rescue efforts, and because of the difficulty in getting cases organized, prosecutors asked for blanket delays. Following Judge Kaye's statement, judges decided on September 12 that *justice* required that cases be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator was based at the Mayor's Emergency Command Centre - the result of a prior decision made in anticipation of Y2K computer problems. In this way, a mechanism existed to communicate the importance of police appearances in court for more pressing cases. The number of police officers who would be authorized to appear in court was determined by this office in consultation with the chief administrative judge.

Some of the work of the criminal courts in Manhattan was moved to other locations. Much of this redistribution was made possible as a result of the leadership of the supervising judge who, along with several prosecutors, had remained in the court during the night of September 11. Defendants who were in pretrial custody on September 11 were scheduled to be heard within days. Decisions on whether to proceed with a hearing were made on a case-by-case basis. In this way, delays were allowed only if the prosecutor clearly had tried but could not proceed. "What was unacceptable to the judges, however, was the blanket adjournment of all cases of jailed defendants without an individualized determination of the inability of the district attorney to move *that* case forward" (p. 15). Prosecutors asked the governor to suspend the requirement that cases of detained accused be dealt with within strict statutory limits. The governor declined, leaving the judges in charge.

On September 19, the administrative judge for the Manhattan courts had a court list of over 300 cases, 245 of which were jail-related. An assistant district attorney asked for a blanket extension of the statutory limits on dealing with these cases, noting that her office had no telephones, fax or computer communications. She noted that many police officers were not available. Judge Martin Murphy, who had slept in the courthouse on the night of September 11 in order to be open the next day, denied the request. He noted that "I think we owe it to everyone to do each case [individually], as laborious as it may be... I think that at some point we have to realize that people have to move forward.... This is a very important institution in the City...." (p. 15). The

court completed all cases at 9:30pm that evening, hearing every case. None of the release applications were granted over the objection of the prosecutor, but 15 of them were, in fact, conceded (with consent). An additional 29 cases were resolved by a guilty plea. As a result of this judicial decision to show leadership in providing “justice as usual”, 90% of the cases had been dealt with in their entirety by the date that the prosecutor had suggested for the blanket extension. A senior prosecutor and the Criminal Justice Coordinator indicated that “no major injustices had been done” (p. 16).

Conclusion. Leadership, in this case from the judges, was crucial. The initial decision by the Chief Judge to have “justice as usual” was also critical. Equally important was the “local leadership [that] emerged among both the local administrative judges and senior prosecutors” (p. 24). Similarly, the firm resolve manifested throughout the system to plan for “business as usual” was fundamental. For example, one of the difficult matters to resolve was that of communication (e.g., of the location of court hearings) which would reach all of those involved. In this case, some creativity (e.g., posted information) and hard work were helpful as were many firm decisions simply to do things, leaving the details to be worked out as they went along.

Reference: Root, Oren. 2002. *The Administration of Justice under Emergency Conditions: Lessons Following the Attack on the World Trade Center*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice, Inc.

One of the primary reasons for judicial opposition to legislated sentencing guidance is a broad based concern about judges' loss of discretionary power. Furthermore, those judges who oppose legislative guidance are likely to overestimate the amount of judicial opposition to sentencing reform.

Background. In 1996, the state of Ohio introduced guidelines with rebuttable presumptions in favour of prison sentences for the most serious offences and community sanctions for those of a less serious nature. Its overall goal was to provide clear guidance on those cases which should result in prison sentences while simultaneously leaving judges broad latitude with regard to the length of the sentence as well as the ability to depart from the guidelines. Its explicit aim was to leave significantly more discretion with judges than exists with the U.S. federal guidelines, but provide a clear policy and expectation of what would happen.

This study reports a survey of the views of almost two thirds of Ohio's judges after 2 years of experience with the reform. A slim majority (55%) of this judicial sample favoured the guidelines. Those who opposed them believed that their authority had been diminished, that they had not been sufficiently listened to during the guideline development process, and that departures from the guidelines were often necessary.

Judges who opposed the guidelines were significantly more likely to believe that most other judges and prosecutors also opposed them. In other words, even though the data suggest that more than half of the judges held favourable views of the guidelines, those opposed to them thought that they were in a majority.

Much of the opposition appears to relate to three distinct beliefs: 1) violent or dangerous offenders as well as others who should be incarcerated would not be; 2) prison sentences would not be long enough, and 3) correctional resources would not be allocated effectively. However, some evidence exists that those sentenced to prison were, after the reform was introduced, more likely to be violent and serious offenders. Thus, much of the opposition to the guidelines comes from explicit disagreement with the premise under which they were introduced in Ohio: to restrict the use of prison for offenders convicted of low-end offences.

Conclusion. It is normally assumed that judges will react negatively to anything that restricts their discretion. Data from this study suggest that the restrictions on judicial discretion need not lead to negative views by the majority of judges. Although judges in several jurisdictions fairly consistently oppose mandatory determinate sentences, they do not favour a return to the indeterminacy of the past. Therefore, it may be that much of the judicial opposition to structured guidance in sentencing simply comes from the fact that it involves a change in sentencing practice. Experience with structured discretion may be responsible for the overall favourable views held by the majority of judges surveyed for this study.

Reference: Griffin, Timothy and John Wooldredge. 2001. Judges' Reactions to Sentencing Reform in Ohio. *Crime and Delinquency*, 47: 491-512.

A police crackdown on drug dealers in London, England which was designed to “stifle the availability of illegal drugs on our streets” (p. 738) was described by the police as a “spectacular success” (p. 738). However, information obtained from drug users and drug dealers in this city suggests that it had no impact on drug availability or prices.

Background. Supply reduction is one of the most common anti-drug interventions in many cities. The theory is simple: interrupting the supply chain will make it difficult (or expensive) to obtain drugs and, consequently, drug availability and use will decrease. However, systematic studies of frequent drug users suggest that this population has multiple sources for its drugs (on average, they know more than a dozen dealers).

This study reports on the impact of a November 2000 blitz by the Metropolitan (London, England) police. In the first two weeks of this well publicized crackdown, more than 240 people were arrested for selling drugs. After these initial 14 days, drug users were interviewed.

The findings question whether the drug crackdown was having its intended impact.

- Only 31% of the drug users were even aware that the police were doing anything special. For those who did notice the change, they did not attribute much significance to it. One person who had purchased crack every day during the crackdown reported having noticed more police activity, but saw it as simply an “occupational hazard” (p. 741).
- Of the 174 people interviewed (over 100 of whom had recently purchased heroin, crack, and cannabis), only seven reported an increase in drug prices during the two weeks of the crackdown. Most (over 80%) reported that no change had occurred. The rest reported a decrease in prices.
- Over 80% of those interviewed indicated that there had been no change (or an increase) in the purity and availability of the three drugs (heroin, crack, cannabis).

However, it should be noted that the possibility exists (though not tested in this paper) that increased police activity may deter irregular users. Nevertheless, this hypothesis seems relatively unlikely given that price and availability to frequent users did not appear to be affected.

Conclusion. The findings “offer no support for the suggestion that the markets for heroin, crack and cannabis are sensitive to increased police activity, at least not in the short term, even when such activity is associated with a number of significant drug seizures and with the removal of a large number of dealers from the street” (p. 744). These results support the assertion that “supply reduction endeavours are not strongly linked to illicit drug market forces” (p. 744).

Reference: Best, David; John Strong; Tracy Beswick and Michael Gossop. 2001. Assessment of a Concentrated, High-Profile Police Operation. *British Journal of Criminology* 41: 738-745.

A policy of ‘cleaning up the streets’ and getting rid of those who make people feel uncomfortable may make good politics, but it does not appear to have much of an impact on crime.

Background: Based, in part, on the unsupported “broken-windows” theory of community order, the aggressive enforcement of “disorder offences” has become popular in many cities. Although there are data to suggest that people who live in socially and physically disordered communities experience more fear, the relationship between disorder and actual crime does not appear to exist.

This study examines the impact of “quality of life” policing. The theory is that such police tactics will send a signal to potential offenders that crime will not be tolerated. Police in Chandler, Arizona (an area just outside of Phoenix) imposed “quality of life” policing on an economically depressed area of the city. The targeted location was one in which residents complained about street level illegal drug and alcohol sales, prostitution, and general disrepair of the neighbourhoods. In November 1995, the police began an aggressive policy of enforcement of all municipal codes and county laws, making traffic stops as well as stopping and interviewing residents. Inspections were increased and people who did not comply with orders were charged. Marked and unmarked cars as well as bicycles were used to increase police presence.

The findings were mixed. The area was divided into four main “zones”. There was some decline in the number of calls to the police concerning public morals matters in three of the four zones. These decreases lasted beyond the aggressive enforcement period in only two of the four targeted locations. For physical disorder, calls to the police *increased* during the aggressive policing period but subsequently reverted back to normal levels in three of the four zones, presumably because the police were responding to these matters. However, the effect on “real crime” was less positive. In some instances, *increases* rather than decreases occurred in reports of certain crimes in some zones. Thus, although the aggressive policing strategy may have reduced calls to the police for public morals, there appeared to be some displacement of certain types of offending (e.g., drugs) to adjoining areas.

From the perspective of residents, those surveyed were more likely to think that the crime problem had increased (26%) than decreased (19%). However, they were also more likely to think that the appearance of the neighbourhood had improved (36%) than deteriorated further (10%).

Conclusion. “The program had a far less substantial effect on serious crime than on disorder-related crimes and violations. In other words, the benefits were restricted primarily to problems on which the project focused specifically.... It may be that “crime” and “grime” are two separate problems, and it is easier for the police to reduce disorder [than to reduce crime]” (p. 89). This paper supports the conclusion that “[q]uality of life initiatives are often employed without the benefit of careful problem identification or analysis, without any effort to identify underlying conditions and causes, and without careful consideration of a wide range of possible alternatives” (p. 880).

Reference: Katz, Charles; Vincent J. Webb and David R. Schaefer. 2001. An Assessment of Quality-of-Life Policing on Crime and Disorder. *Justice Quarterly* 18: 825-865.

School disorder – minor and major – can be best understood by examining two sets of explanatory variables: characteristics of the youths in the school and characteristics of the school itself. School variables (e.g., school ‘climate’) are important, in large part, because they may be more amenable to change than are characteristics of the youths in the school.

Background. School disorder has been conceptualized in a variety of different ways (e.g., victimizations, perceptions, incidents of disorder, suspensions, and self-reported offending). Student victimizations and fear of being victimized appear to have decreased slightly in U.S. schools in 1999 as compared to 1995. Previous research has demonstrated that “[i]n schools with the worst discipline problems, rules were typically unclear, unfair, or inconsistently enforced, schools made ambiguous or indirect responses to students’ behavior (e.g., lowered grades in response to misconduct); teachers and administrators did not know the rules or disagreed on appropriate responses to students’ misconduct, and students did not believe in the legitimacy of the rules” (p. 920). Community and individual level factors have also been found to be important.

This study examined the impact of student and school characteristics on a variety of measures of school disorder. It found that the various measures of “disorder” listed above are related but measure quite distinct constructs. However, “school climate variables significantly predicted all five measures of disorder ... although the pattern and magnitude of effects differed somewhat for each measure.... For example, two school climate variables, Respect for Students and Fairness of Rules, were strong predictors of both Offending and Misconduct” (p. 938). “Dimensions of school bonding are related to school disorder in general... The strongest predictor of Offending was Positive Peer Associations, but Belief in Rules and School Effort [commitment to school] also predicted Misconduct negatively” (p. 939).

Conclusion. Rather than focusing solely on bad youths as an explanation for school disorder, this study suggests that it may be more useful to realize that “[s]chool disorder can be reduced by conscious efforts on the part of school administrators, teachers, parents, students and community groups.... Individual schools should carefully assess their own climate to determine which factors may be contributing to disorder” (p. 943). One of the most optimistic findings from this research is its suggestion that schools and school boards can reduce problems of disorder within their institutions not only by choosing ‘good’ youths, but also by creating effective schools. The environment in which school age children spend their time is clearly important. Focusing on identifying difficult youths (and, in many jurisdictions, excluding them from school) may not be as effective as concentrating on what could be done to improve the school. Most of the school climate variables reflect characteristics that have value without reference to disorder. However, by creating a fair environment in which youths want to work hard and, in general, feel attached to school values, one not only gets better schools, but one also gets schools that are relatively free of disorder.

Reference: Welsh, Wayne N. 2001. Effects of Student and School Factors on Five Measures of School Disorder. *Justice Quarterly* 18: 911-947.

Police officers who use force in their professional interactions with citizens are more likely to suffer from occupational stress and ‘burnout’ than those who do not use, or value the use of force against citizens. “Depersonalization, a cynical attitude toward work and civilians, appears to be the key variable related to [police use of force with civilians]” (p.649).

Background. Stress in police officers appears to relate, to some extent, to the inherent nature of police work (e.g., physical threat, facing the unknown, shift work). However, the most salient factors causing stress in police officers were organizational variables such as a lack of confidence in management, lack of internal communication, and continuous organizational changes. Occupational burnout in general is seen as having at least three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (*i.e.*, a callous and cynical attitude toward the people with whom one deals), and a decrease in personal accomplishments. With the police, some evidence exists that burnout is associated most strongly with depersonalization.

This study examined police burnout in the Netherlands. Police officers were observed in their everyday work as well as asked to complete a questionnaire. Job burnout was captured by a 20-question measurement instrument inquiring about matters of emotional exhaustion (e.g., “I feel emotionally drained by my work”), depersonalization (e.g., “I don’t really care what happens to citizens”), and personal accomplishment (e.g., “I deal effectively with the problems of citizens”) (p. 637). Data on the use of force were obtained through independent observations, attitudes concerning its legitimacy, and self-reported use of force by police.

Police officers most often mentioned organizational factors (rather than characteristics of the job) as sources of stress. Self-reported use of force and observed use of force were correlated. Both measures related to feelings of “depersonalization” – the callous and cynical view of citizens. Burnout scores -- in particular, depersonalization – were higher for officers who used physical or verbal force with citizens.

Conclusion. Obviously, police occasionally use force in their daily work. Such use of force can, of course, be legitimate and easily attributed to the situation. In this study, however, “all observed force was conducted by officers scoring high on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization... Officers who are cynical and detached were more readily inclined to use force against civilians. This suggests a typical negative interaction pattern, whereby the depersonalized officers behave more forcefully toward civilians, who will, in response, react in an unfriendly and less cooperative manner; such responses will reinforce the negative attitudes the officer had about civilians” (p. 648).

Reference: Kop, Nicolien and Martin C. Euwema. 2001. Occupational Stress and the Use of Force by Dutch Police Officers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 28: 631-652.

Three legal responses to domestic violence – arrest, a protective (or restraining) order (e.g., a court imposed prohibition on contacting the victim or going near the victim’s home/place of employment), or a combination of both of these interventions – have been found to have no differential impact on the likelihood of revictimization of the spouse.

Background. Because it is now fairly well established that mandatory arrest policies in domestic violence cases do not, by themselves, act to protect women from being revictimized, attention has turned toward other interventions that can be imposed by the justice system. Protective orders (similar to Canada’s “peace bonds” under S. 810 of the Criminal Code) have been, in the past few decades, a popular approach. This type of legal response is based on the theory that women might be more willing to seek them than criminal justice intervention and men would be less likely to retaliate. In 1976, only two states had implemented “protective orders” as a possible strategy against wife assault. By 1994, all 50 states had adopted them.

This study examined the revictimization of 336 women in Texas who were originally assaulted by their spouses. These men were subsequently either arrested, issued a protective order, or both. A two-year follow-up permitted the authors to determine whether the offender revictimized the woman, and if so, the length of time between the original offence and the subsequent assault.

The results show no differences among the three groups (arrest, protective order, arrest and protective order). Race and income were associated with revictimization (blacks and the poor were more likely to be revictimized). An attempt was made to discover whether particular sub-groups of women would benefit from certain interventions. None of the combinations of variables led to a decrease in the likelihood of revictimization.

Conclusion. Legal remedies – protective orders or arrests – do not appear to be useful in addressing a complex problem such as wife assault. Presumably, it is not the *legal* intervention *per se* that would be likely to make any difference. Rather, only something that has a life above and beyond its existence on a piece of paper is likely to reduce this kind of revictimization.

Reference: Mears, Daniel P.; Matthew J. Carlson; George W. Holden and Susan D. Harris. 2001. Reducing Domestic Violence Revictimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 16: 1260-1283.

Uncanny parallels exist between the way in which juvenile crime in Sweden and Canada has been described. Although certain selective comparisons based on Swedish data would suggest that youth violence has increased and/or become more brutal, overall trends show no important changes in youth violence in the past decade.

Background. Europe has sometimes been included with the United States as jurisdictions showing an increase in youth violence. As one influential paper suggests, “an increase in youth violence has been apparent in the United States and in ten European countries [including Sweden]” (Pfeiffer, 1998. *Crime and Justice: A review of research*, p. 255).

This paper, in contrast, demonstrates that the belief that Swedish youth violence has increased reflects a somewhat selective view of the facts. Looking at a range of different indicators of youth violence, it finds that there are, certainly, large fluctuations over time. However, increases can only be demonstrated by choosing very special data to compare. For instance, “[f]or 15-19 year olds, admissions [to public hospitals] during the 1990s lie at exactly the same level as they did during the second half of the 1970s” (p. 644). However, if 1986 and 1995 are compared (as was done in the paper referred to above), it would appear that a large increase had occurred.

School violence follows a similar pattern to that which we have seen in North America. Estrada’s description of the situation in Sweden could well be applied to Canada or the U.S.: “There is evidence of a change in the way acts of violence in schools are viewed and in attitudes toward the kind of responses such acts should be met with. During the first half of the 1980s, a fairly clear line is drawn between more and less serious forms of physical violence. Less serious incidents would in general not be reported to the police, but would rather be dealt with internally by the school. During the second half of the decade, on the other hand, there is already evidence of a tendency to advocate contacting the police even in the event of less serious forms of disorder. During the 1990s, this tendency becomes more pronounced” (p. 649). Not surprisingly, in Stockholm between the early 1980s and the late 1990s, the school moved from being the source of only 29% of the reported assaults to that of 60% of the cases. School violence cases “accounted for more than 80% of the increase in recorded cases [of violence]” (p. 650). Victimization data of youths aged 16-24 show no clear consistent linear increases in the levels of violence requiring medical attention or bodily injury.

An examination of media stories about youth crime shows quite a different pattern. In 1986, “a new image is presented of the young perpetrator. He is portrayed as polite, emotionally cold and unpredictable. He assaults others for kicks. The social factors are pushed into the background.... The image of the juvenile offender [that has been established by 1987] is that of a calculating ‘super-predator’, a hardened young delinquent whom society needs to protect itself against” (p. 648).

Conclusion: “Over the last 10 years, the theme of ‘rising juvenile violence’ has become widely pervasive in the general social discourse around Europe.... The greater focus in the public in general is perceived as a reflection of the real underlying trend... In this way the (more or less erroneous) portrayal of juvenile crime as continually on the increase in fact comes to be seen as reflecting reality” (p. 652). Without doubt, the result is that policies which pander to this (nonexistent) increase receive public support.

Reference: Estrada, Felipe. Juvenile Violence as a Social Problem: Trends, Media Attention and Societal Response. 2001. *British Journal of Criminology* 41: 639-655.