Reinventing American Policing: A Seven-Point Blueprint or the 21st Century

CYNTHIA LUM

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

&

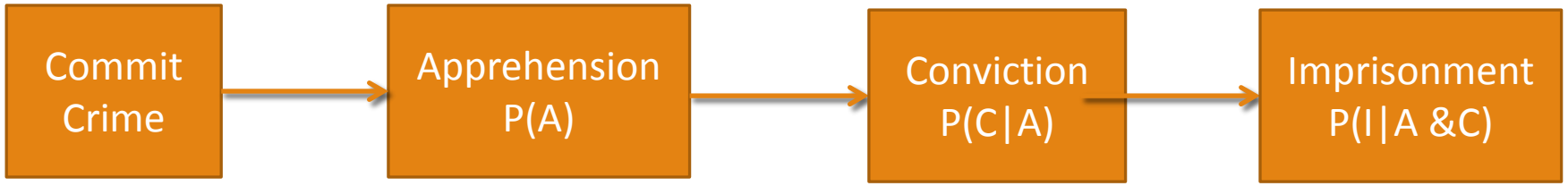
DANIEL S. NAGIN

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

A Core Question for Policing in Democratic Society

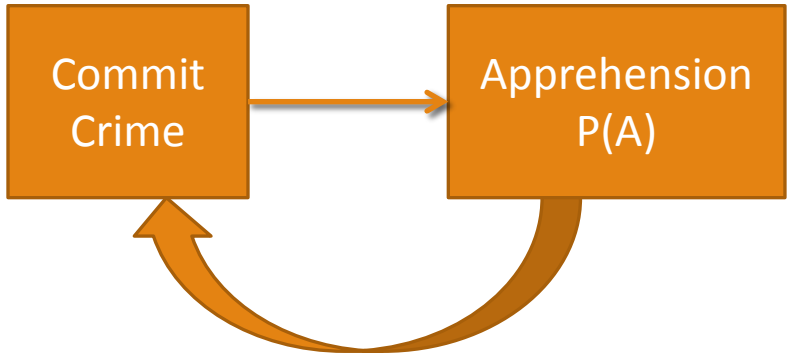
How can police effectively prevent crime and keep citizens safe, while at the same time, maintain their trust, confidence, and satisfaction?

Certainty of Punishment & Deterrence



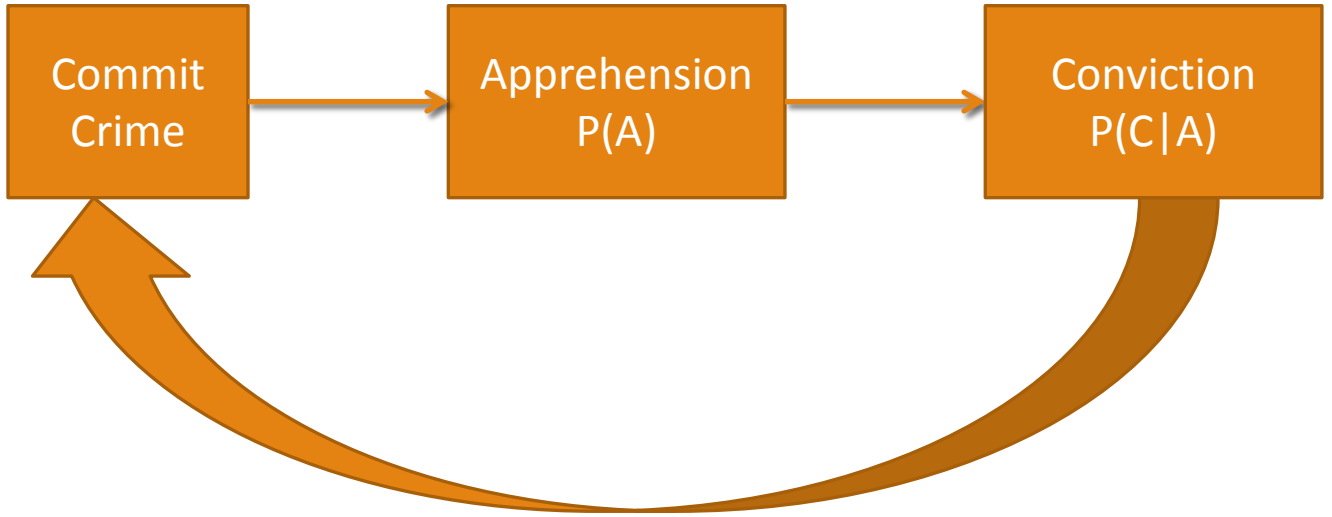
$$Certainty = P(A)P(C|A)P(I|A\ \&C)$$

Risk of Apprehension & Deterrence



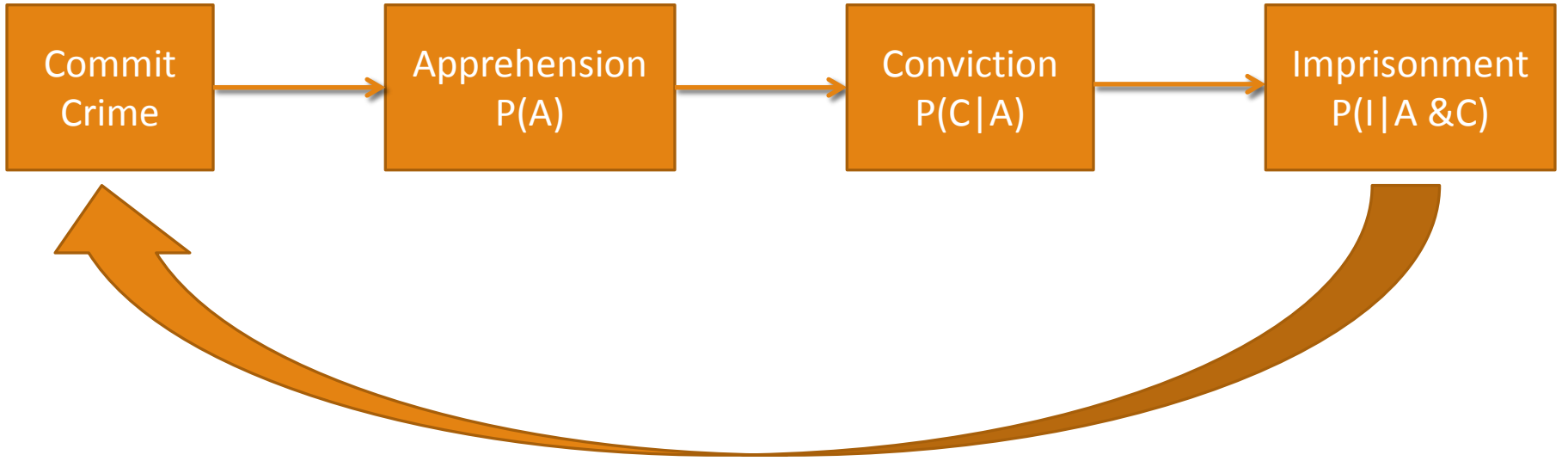
Good evidence
of a deterrent effect

Risk of Conviction & Deterrence



No evidence on whether there is a deterrent effect

Risk of Imprisonment & Deterrence



Evidence does not support
a deterrent effect

Revised Certainty Principle

- **The certainty of apprehension, not the severity of the ensuing consequences, is the most effective deterrent**
- **Policy Implications**
  - **Harsh punishments are not effective deterrent**
  - **Places police center stage in preventing**

Police as Apprehension Agents

Police as Sentinels

“It is better to prevent crimes than punish them”
--Cesare Beccaria 1764

Two Principle

- **Principle 1: Crime prevention—not arrests—is paramount.** Crimes averted, not arrests made, should be the primary metric for judging police success in meeting their objective to prevent crime and disorder.
- **Principle 2: Citizen reaction matters.** Citizen response to the police and their tactics for preventing crime and improving public order matter independent of police effectiveness in these functions.

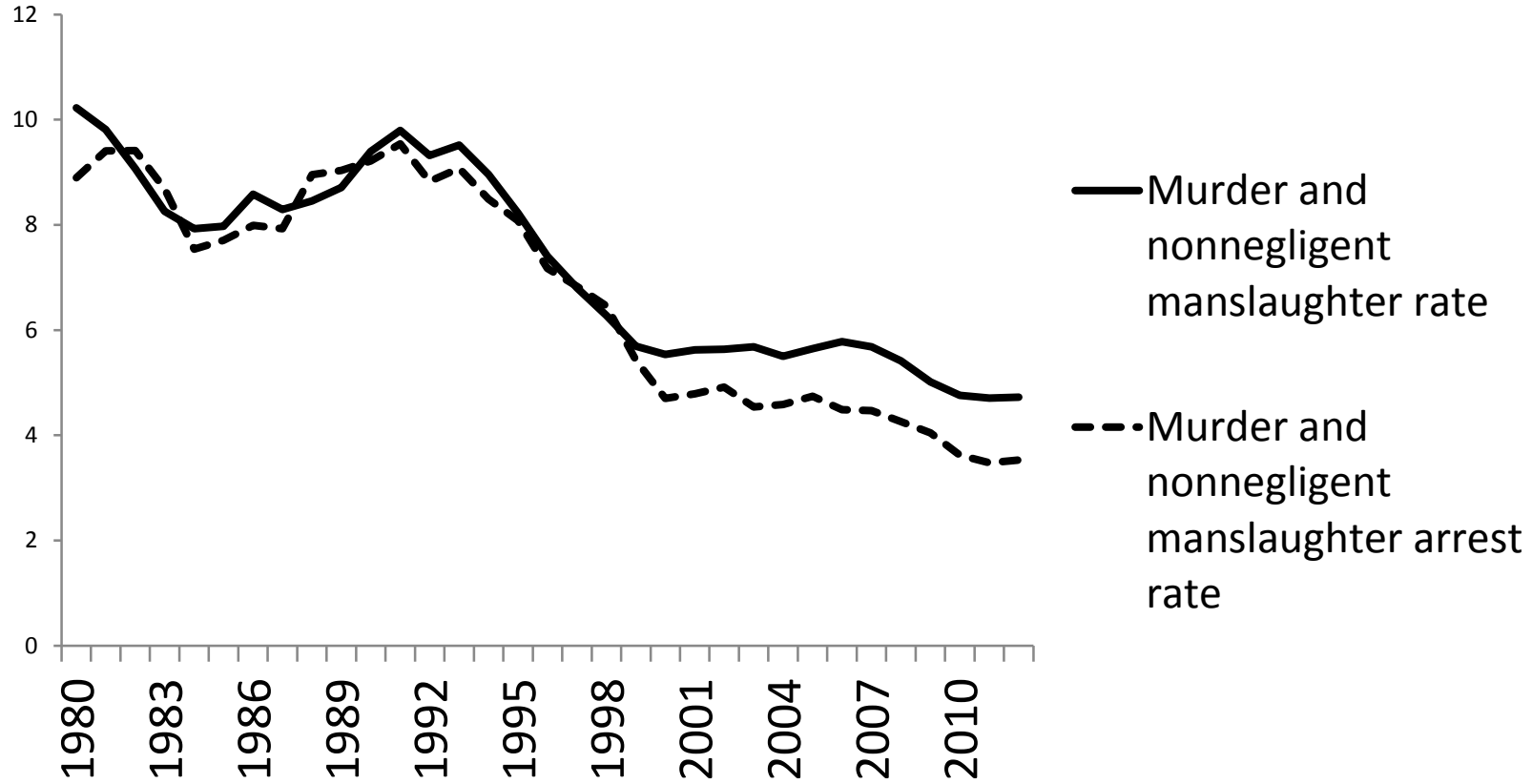
Outline for Remainder of My Remarks

- **Bringing the Perpetrators of Serious Crime to Justice**
- The Role of Police in Preventing Crime and Disorder
  - Broken Windows Policing
  - Cost of Arrest for Minor Crimes or Legal Infractions
- Maintaining Citizen Trust and Confidence
- Race and Policing
- Seven-Point Blueprint

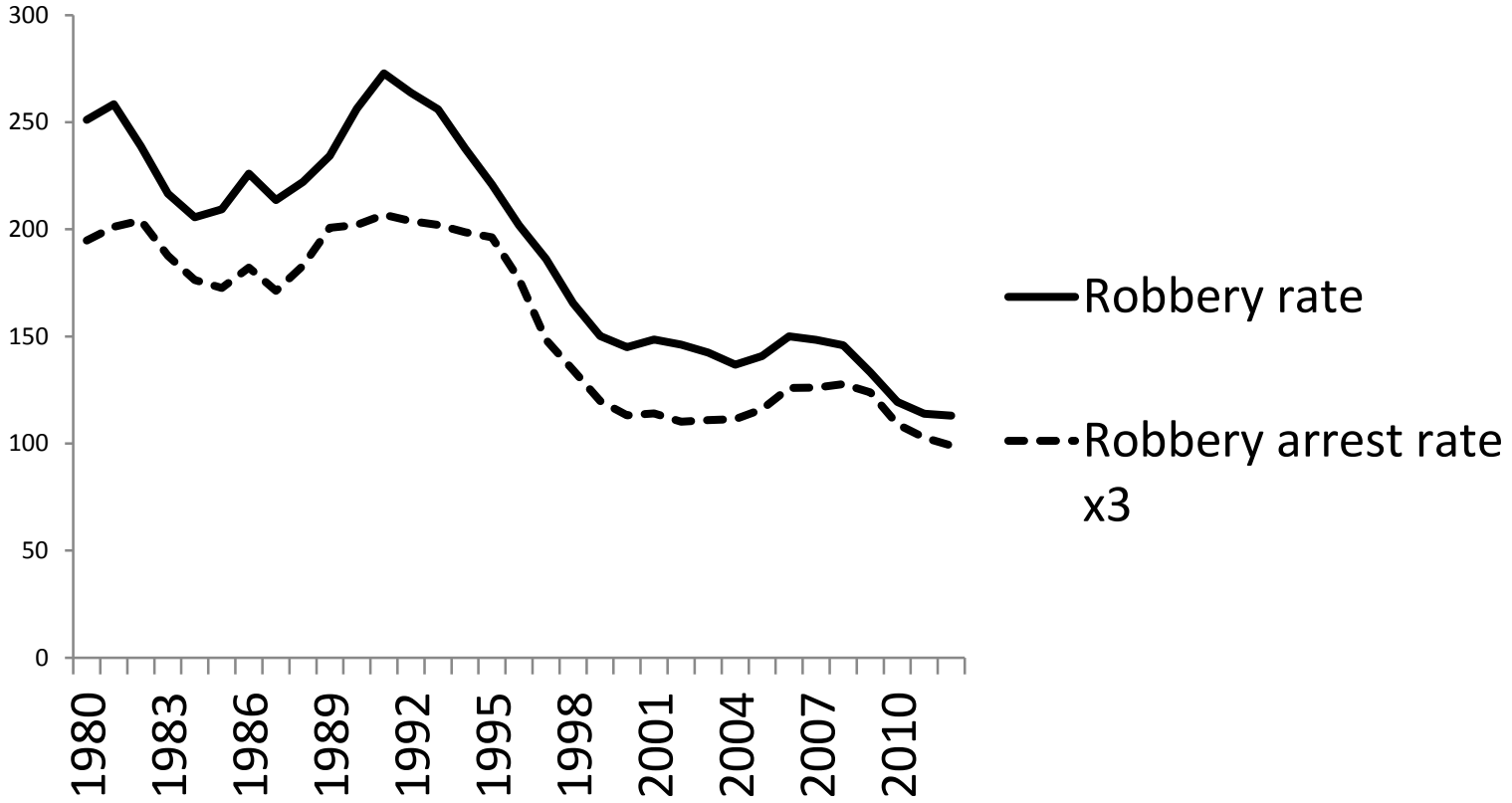
Bringing the Perpetrators of Serious Crime to Justice

- Less than 20% of arrests are for felonies
- Clearance rates for Part I index crimes have been stable for four decades (Braga, Flynn, Kelling, & Cole (2011)

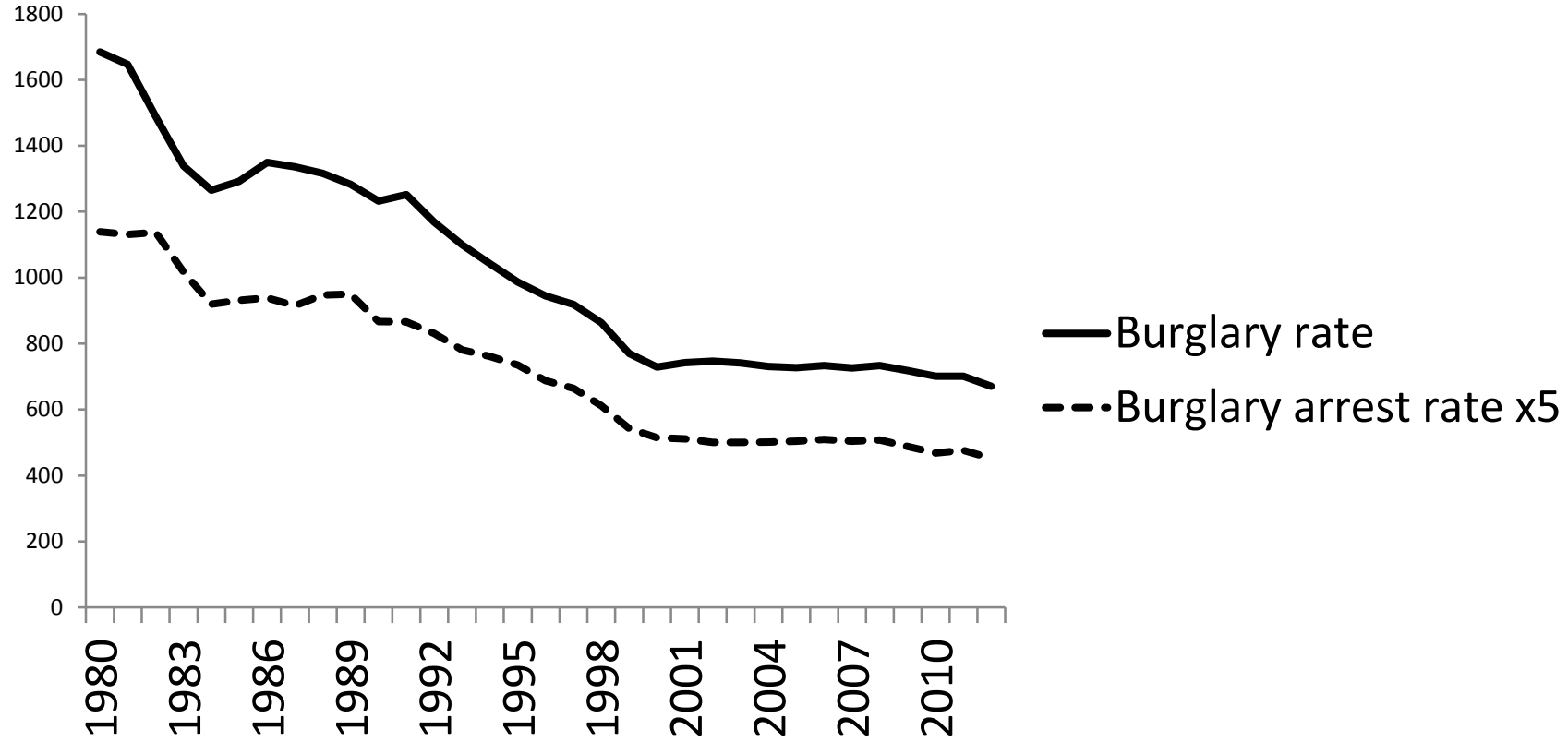
Trends in Homicides and Homicide Arrests



Trends in Robbery and Robbery Arrests



Trends in Burglaries and Burglary Arrests



Implication

- Opportunities for major innovations in police effectiveness in bringing the the perpetrators of serious crime to justice are limited
- Focus of blueprint is on advancing Principles 1 & 2

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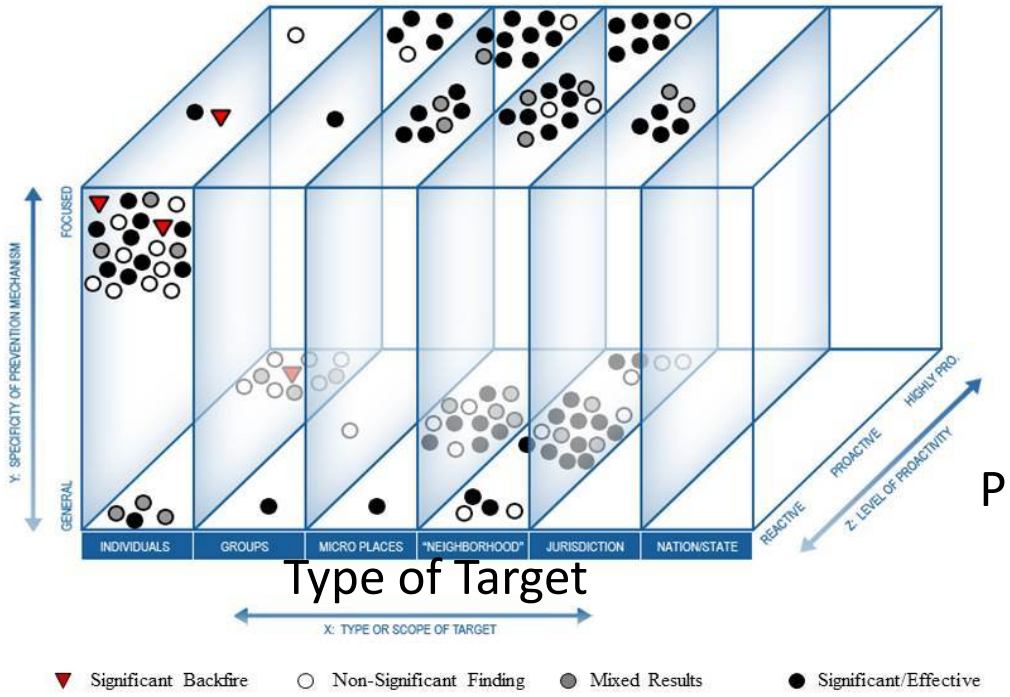
Preventing Crime and Disorder

- Evidence that police can prevent crime and disorder is overwhelming **BUT:**
- Effects are heterogeneous
- Citizen reactions are sometimes decidedly negative

What Works?
Proactive Targeting of "Hot" Places or People
(Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011)

Targeted



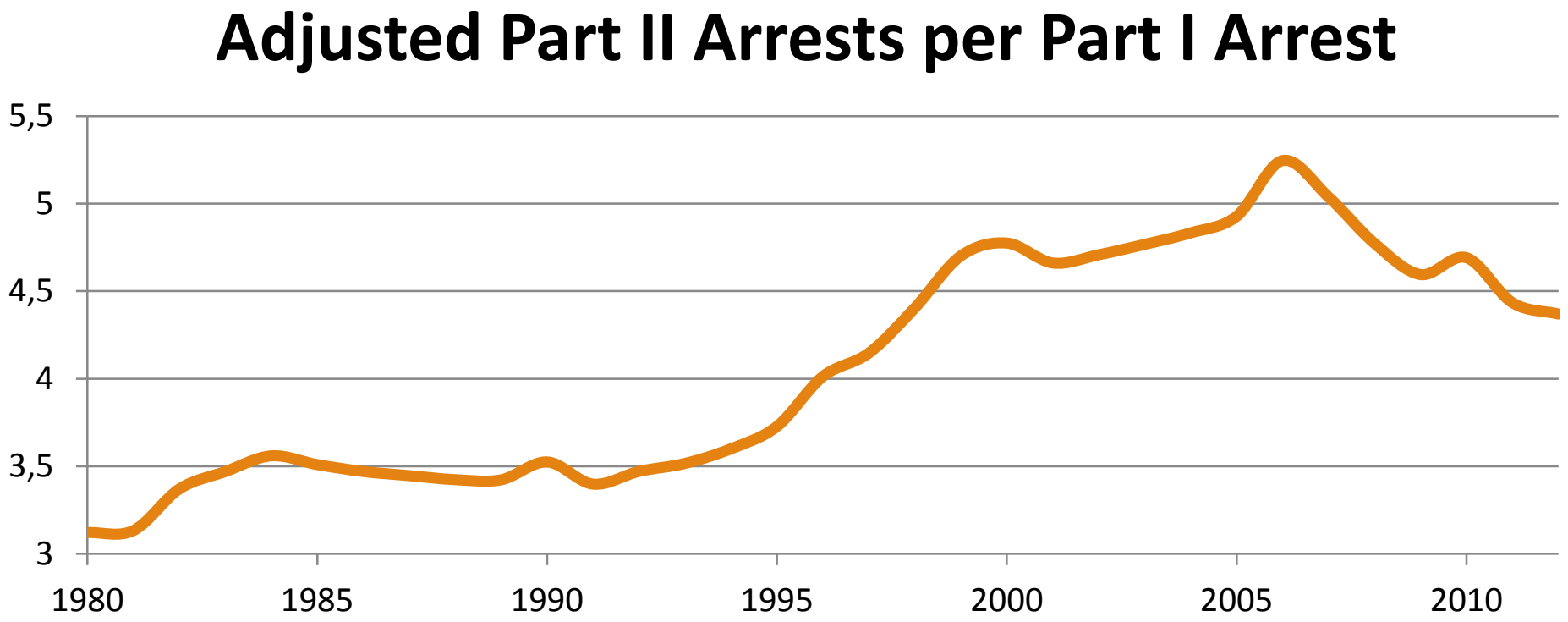
Type of Target

Proactivity

What Constitutes Proactive Policing?

- Opportunity Mitigation
  - Changes in the physical environment
  - Regulatory authority
- Increased Police Presence
  - Visibility without an arrest focus
  - Zero-tolerance aka broken windows policing tactics

The Growing Share of Arrests for Less Serious Crimes (Part II Index)—1980 to 2012



More on the Growing Prominence of Part II Arrests Since 1980

- Drug possession--102%
- Simple Assault—77.6%
- “All other offenses”—40.7%

What Do Know About the Effectiveness of "Broken Windows" Policing?

- NOT MUCH
- Does disorder breed serious crime?

"Attacking public order through tough police tactics may thus be politically popular but perhaps analytically weak strategy to reduce crime" (Sampson and Raudenbush (1999)

"I still to this day do not know if improving order will or will not reduce crime. People have not understood that this was a speculation" James Q. Wilson in Hurley (2004)

- Are misdemeanor oriented arrest tactics effective in preventing crime?
  - Don't know because no studies account for the effectiveness of other police tactics that don't emphasize arrest that routinely accompany the arrest-based tactics
- Why are these uncertainties so important?
  - Because arrests for minor crimes are costly

Costs of Misdemeanor Arrest

- Police time—equivalent of 2% of the sworn police force in 2013
- Jail population growth
- Cost to arrestees themselves
  - Bail/Pretrial detention
  - Time in hearings
  - Lost public benefits
  - Stigma

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What Does the Public Think of the Police?

- Nothing too surprising here
- Large racial divide on overall assessment
  - 59% of whites had a great deal of confidences and only 12% very little
  - For Blacks the respective figures are 37% and 25% (Gallup)
- Reactions to street stops—37.7% of blacks versus 77.6% of whites believe that police behaved properly
- Both races agree that blacks are treated less fairly by the police than whites
- Note Hispanic views are between the white/black views

Can Police Affect Citizen Perceptions?

- Maybe
- “Procedural Justice” literature concludes that how police treats citizens matters
- Mixed results from the community policing literature
- More research is necessary

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7. ***Strengthening national level research and evaluation***