



Papers From the Harvard Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety (2008-2015)

Crime and Policing Revisited

By Anthony Braga, September 2015

The author examines the growing body of research indicating that policing can reduce crime when it engages the community and focuses on recurring crime problems.

Childhood Trauma and Its Effects: Implications for Police

By Richard G. Dudley, Jr., July 2015

The author argues that while children from any neighborhood can be exposed to trauma, children from poor communities of color are particularly at risk.

Toward a Profession of Police Leadership

By Edward A. Flynn and Victoria Herrington, June 2015

The authors examine what it means to be a leader within the policing field, and advocate for reframing leadership through the adoption of “learning organizations.”

Race and Policing: An Agenda for Action

By David H. Bayley, Michael A. Davis and Ronald L. Davis, June 2015

The authors present the ideas for what police executives might do to alleviate the problems of race in contemporary policing.

The Police and Public Discourse on “Black-on-Black” Violence

By Anthony A. Braga and Rod K. Brunson, May 2015

The authors examine the term “black-on-black” violence, a simplistic and emotionally charged definition of urban violence that can be problematic when used by political commentators, politicians and police executives.

From Warriors to Guardians: Recommitting American Police Culture to Democratic Ideals

By Sue Rahr and Stephen K. Rice, April 2015

The authors advocate for democratic ideals within law enforcement to combat the mindset that law enforcement officers are at war with the people they serve.

Measuring Performance in a Modern Police Organization

By Malcolm K. Sparrow, March 2015

The author describes strategies police organizations could employ to more effectively measure their performance.

Rightful Policing

By Tracey Meares With Peter Neyroud, February 2015

The authors describe “rightful policing,” which looks at elements of procedural justice in police encounters with the public as a way to organize police work.

Managing the Boundary Between Public and Private Policing

By Malcolm K. Sparrow, September 2014

This paper provides a framework to examine police executives’ interactions with private policing to determine how to maximize the benefits to society while minimizing risk.

Harvard’s Executive Sessions are a convening of individuals of independent standing who take joint responsibility for rethinking and improving society’s responses to an issue. Members are selected based on their experiences, their reputation for thoughtfulness, and their potential for helping to disseminate the work of the Session.

Learn more about the Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety at NIJ.gov, keyword: “Harvard Executive Session”



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Policing and Wrongful Convictions

By Anthony Batts, Maddy deLone and Darrel Stephens,
August 2014

The authors present recommendations related to wrongful convictions, including a system-wide approach to learning from wrongful convictions to improve the system.

The Challenge of Policing in a Democratic Society: A Personal Journey Toward Understanding

By Charles H. Ramsey, June 2014

The author evaluates “zero tolerance” for crime and uses the lessons of the Holocaust to help the police protect the rights of all citizens.

Social Media and Police Leadership

By Edward F. Davis III, Alejandro A. Alves and David Alan Sklansky, March 2014

This paper discusses lessons from the Boston Police Department’s social media use during the investigation of the Boston Marathon attacks.

Police Leadership Challenges in a Changing World

By Anthony W. Batts, Sean Michael Smoot and Ellen Scrivner, July 2012

This paper examines the challenges and opportunities for police leadership as they interact with a new generation of police recruits whose habits and expertise sometimes clash with traditional police culture.

Exploring the Role of Police in Prison Reentry

By Jeremy Travis, Ronald Davis and Sarah Lawrence,
July 2012

The authors evaluate recidivism rates among returning offenders and the role urban police departments have to play in prisoner reentry.

Police Discipline: A Case for Change

By Darrel W. Stephens, June 2011

This paper describes the challenges law enforcement agencies face with current disciplinary procedures, offering alternate approaches to improve morale and community relationships.

The Persistent Pull of Police Professionalism

By David Alan Sklansky, March 2011

Resisting models of “professionalism” for the police, the author offers a model of “advanced” community policing that addresses unanswered specifics found in earlier notions of community policing.

Moving the Work of Criminal Investigators Towards Crime Control

By Anthony A. Braga, Edward A. Flynn,
George L. Kelling and Christine M. Cole, March 2011

This paper identifies the challenges criminal investigators face in moving towards a more active role in crime control and suggests ways to allocate work among criminal investigators and patrol officers.

Toward a New Professionalism in Policing

By Christopher Stone and Jeremy Travis, March 2011

The authors argue for a new policing model for the 21st century focused on accountability, legitimacy, innovation and national coherence.

Governing Science

By Malcolm K. Sparrow, January 2011

This paper argues that using social science methods to establish evidence-based practices for policing limits and distracts from a range of contributions to be had using a wider array of scientific methods.

Police Science: Toward a New Paradigm

By David Weisburd and Peter Neyroud, January 2011

The authors urge police to take ownership, make use of science in policing and lay out a proposal for a science-based policing paradigm.

Making Policing More Affordable: Managing Costs and Measuring Value in Policing

By George Gascón and Todd Foglesong,
December 2010

This paper examines the rising costs of policing in medium-size cities and asks what drives up policing costs and what return cities receive on that investment.

The Changing Environment for Policing, 1985-2008

By David H. Bayley and Christine Nixon,
September 2010

This paper asserts that police can reduce crime by focusing operations on problems or places and supplementing law enforcement with other regulatory and abatement activities.

One Week in Heron City: A Case Study

By Malcolm K. Sparrow, September 2009

The paper describes police work in a fictional city to show how data, analysis and problem-solving are effective strategies for police executives and their agencies.