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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 being published.

Contents

- The first three pages contain "headline" that summarizes the important points of the article. This is followed by a single paragraph "conclusion" on what one might learn from the paper. **We suggest that the busy user of this service should begin by reading the headlines** and any of the "conclusions" that seem interesting.
- Next comes an 8-page section -- the core of this document -- where we have provided one-page summaries of each paper.

This issue of *Criminological Highlights* was prepared by Anthony Doob, Tom Finlay, Carla Cesaroni, Myrna Dawson, Rosemary Gartner, Voula Marinos, Renisa Mawani, Andrea Shier, Greg Smith, Jane Sprott, Cheryl Webster, Kimberly Varma and Jennifer Wood.

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Imprisonment may act to disrupt informal social controls within communities. Hence a high level of imprisonment may, itself, be a cause of crime because of the disruptive impact it has on communal life.

“An overreliance on formal controls may increase disorganization by impeding other forms of control.... Concentrated within certain communities, high levels of incarceration undermine social, political, and economic systems already weakened by low levels of human and social capital produced under conditions such as high rates of poverty, unemployment, and crime” (p.467). “A crime control strategy that looks only to coerce compliance from members of communities and that ignores the ways in which it can strengthen the neighbourhood’s internal mechanism of social control is worse than neutral. It is self-defeating” (p.468). **(Item 1)**

Curfew laws for juveniles have little, if any, impact on juvenile crime. This is not surprising: they attempt to control youth during hours when they do not generally commit crimes.

An examination of the effects of curfew laws produces a simple conclusion: They do not reduce juvenile crime (or serious victimizations of youth). As the authors of this paper state, “Our results do not encourage the idea that curfews help to prevent juvenile crime. Any impacts of the laws were small, and they applied only to a few offences. If curfew statutes do reduce juvenile offending and victimization rates, their influence may not be as large as policy makers have hoped.” This conclusion is not surprising given that curfews do not typically relate to what is known about offending. **(Item 2)**

American politicians are jumping on the “get tough” bandwagon in juvenile justice by increasingly treating youth as adults. At the same time, residents of one of the country’s more conservative states favour putting more emphasis on rehabilitation in juvenile corrections. Are the politicians listening?

The finding from this survey -- that people prefer to have a justice system which favours prevention and which combines rehabilitation with holding young offenders accountable for their actions -- is not unique to the U.S. Similar results have been reported in Canadian surveys. It would seem that people are interested in reducing youth crime and, when given choices about how to respond to crime, they choose prevention over vengeance. **(Item 3)**

Offenders see electronic monitoring as preferable to prison, though some aspects of the restrictions enforced with this technology are certainly seen as punitive. However, Canadian experience with the technology would suggest that, like most technological solutions to social problems, electronic monitoring will not, by itself, reduce crime.

Electronic monitoring is simply a tool to determine an offender's whereabouts. There is variation in the sophistication of the technology and huge variation in how it is used (and at what stage of the proceedings it is applied). Effectiveness, in terms of reduced recidivism, is much more likely to be determined by the nature of the program which an offender is in than on whether a probation officer can easily determine where the offender is. As the authors of the Canadian study pointed out, "Can EM make a difference? The answer depends partly on the outcome desired." EM can be a useful surveillance tool. That does not mean that it is good at changing behaviour in the long run. **(Item 4)**

It may be politically attractive to try to abolish parole, but parole supervision and support *can* be an effective way of integrating offenders back into society. The choice is whether one is looking for effective policies or quick political gain.

The United States currently has about 2 million people in jails and prisons, 90% of whom will be released from prison at some point. Half will be back on the streets within two years. If parole supervision (or any form of post-release supervision) is to be used to support reintegration, programs known to be effective need to be funded. "Given the increasing human and financial costs associated with prison, investing in effective reentry programs may well be one of the best investments we make" (p. 522). **(Item 5)**

Working women whose spouses also work have a relatively low risk of spousal abuse, but working women who are living with a man who does not work have an increased likelihood of being victimized by him.

The impact of a woman's employment on her likelihood of being a victim of spousal violence appears to be explained better by looking at the dynamics of the relationship that she is in rather than explaining it simply in terms of financial income. "The effect of one partner's employment is conditioned by the employment status of the other partner. Women's labour force participation thus lowers risks of spousal abuse when their male partners are also employed but substantially increases risks when their male partners are not employed" (p. 957). **(Item 6)**

What is the best way to predict whether a man who has assaulted his spouse will re-offend? Ask the spouse. Her prediction is better than fancy statistical “risk” models.

How is the justice system to respond to a woman who says that she knows best whether her assaulting spouse will re-offend? It would seem that the system should listen to her. Women who are victims of domestic assault can reasonably accurately predict whether their spouses will assault them again. Statistical predictions, based on past history, his drinking, etc., may be useful, but it seems that the women themselves are able to predict better than any outsider can. Hence, those who deal with victims of domestic assault should listen carefully to the predictions these women make. When she predicts that he will, or will not, be violent in the future and requests criminal justice actions based on these predictions, the data suggest that her prediction is quite likely to be correct. **(Item 7)**

Why criminalize domestic assault? The typical justification is to protect the victim from further assaults through arrest and prosecution. However, the women who are the victims of domestic assault often do not want their spouses prosecuted. The alternative approach is a victim empowered approach which might be used to bring “a full range of social and legal forces to bear on domestic violence problems” (p.33).

Given that women do not invariably prefer pro-arrest and pro-prosecution policies, and given that these policies have not been demonstrated to protect women, policy makers should re-think the value of these policies. Another *model* suggests that women’s preferences and choices in these situations be seen as rational choices, given the circumstances that they face. Since women are reasonably good at predicting the re-occurrence of domestic assault, one might suggest that their wishes be given greater weight. A pro-arrest (but not a pro-prosecution) policy, then, might be used “as a way of bringing a full range of social and legal forces to bear on domestic violence problems” (p.33). **(Item 8)**

Imprisonment may act to disrupt informal social controls within communities. Hence a high level of imprisonment may, itself, be a cause of crime because of the disruptive impact it has on communal life.

Background. It is generally agreed that people's behaviour is, to some extent, controlled by family and neighbourhood factors. The difficulty is that state controls (e.g., incarceration of offenders) can harm family and neighbourhood structures, thus interfering with the ability of the family or the neighbourhood to control crime. Hence, "the side effects of policies intended to fight crime by controlling individual criminals may exacerbate problems that lead to crime in the first place" (p.441). More specifically, disrupted neighbourhood organizational structures create communities "that are unable to effectively self-regulate" (p.443). Indeed, "an overreliance on public controls may diminish the capacity of private and parochial controls as communities learn to rely on outsiders" (p.446).

Evidence. Research has shown that "in very disadvantaged neighbourhoods, decreases in... informal social controls and social cohesion... result in a significant decrease in residential stability, which in turn increases the poverty of those neighbourhoods" (p.449). The problem is that there may be a reciprocal feedback mechanism. Crime may lead to more controls (e.g., incarceration) which interferes, obviously, with familial controls, and can lead to mobility out of the neighbourhood. In addition, those returning from prison (to such neighbourhoods) are not reintegrated into the neighbourhood, leading to more social disorganization. While offenders are typically seen as a liability to the area in which they live, they do contribute (money, etc.) to the communities in which they reside. "It is simplistic to view offenders as solely illegally employed... Removing many individuals may devastate the local economy" (p.460). All contributions that offenders make to communities cease when the offender is removed from the community and is imprisoned. As prisoners, they become a "resource" (and source of jobs, etc.) in communities (typically not their own) where prisons are located.

Communities that produce many prisoners also, typically, show other sources of disruption. It seems likely that they are reciprocally related: disruptive forces in the community are simultaneously causes and effects of the decision to remove people from the community. Removal of a criminally active father from a family (and community) may create disruptive forces for the family and the community (e.g., in the family's ability to control children). However, high levels of incarceration may have other impacts: crime and prison may be seen as normative. "Once experienced, prison, no matter how harsh, is transformed from an awful mystery to a real-life ordeal that has been suffered and survived.... Fear of prison... may be most potent when it is an unacquainted fear" (p.465).

Conclusion. "An overreliance on formal controls may increase disorganization by impeding other forms of control.... Concentrated within certain communities, high levels of incarceration undermine social, political, and economic systems already weakened by low levels of human and social capital produced under conditions such as high rates of poverty, unemployment, and crime" (p.467). "A crime control strategy that looks only to coerce compliance from members of communities and that ignores the ways in which it can strengthen the neighbourhood's internal mechanism of social control is worse than neutral. It is self-defeating" (p.468).

Reference: Rose, Dina R. and Todd R. Clear. Incarceration, social capital, and crime: Implications for social disorganization theory. *Criminology*, 1998, 36, 441-479.

Curfew laws for juveniles have little, if any, impact on juvenile crime. This is not surprising: they attempt to control youth during hours when they do not generally commit crimes.

Background. If youth crime could be curbed by the passing of simplistic laws, there would be no youth crime left against which to legislate. In the U.S. during the 1990s, juvenile curfew laws have reappeared as popular ways of dealing with troublesome youth. By 1995, three quarters of the 200 largest U.S. cities had curfew laws in place.

The theory behind juvenile curfew laws is simple: control the hours during which youths can be in public; keep youths from getting together in groups; and give parents additional powers to control their kids. There are two general problems with this logic. First, the laws depend on enforcement for their effectiveness. Second, and most importantly, while curfews generally attempt to control behaviour from late evening to early the next morning, youth crime generally peaks in the afternoon immediately after school finishes and then decreases thereafter. Curfews, therefore, tend to prohibit juvenile mobility at times when youth are least likely to be committing crimes.

This study looked at juvenile arrest data for those aged 17 and younger from 1985-96 in the 57 largest US cities. While arrests are not a perfect measure of youth involvement in crime, claims of effectiveness of simple solutions to youth crime often use these types of criminal justice process measures. In order to look at serious juvenile victimization, homicides involving juveniles as victims were also examined. These crime measures were examined as a function of the presence or absence of new curfew laws. In addition, some jurisdictions modified their laws, providing an opportunity to examine the effect of the change, as well as the publicity that probably accompanied the change. Because laws and data are typically kept for counties, this became the unit of analysis. However, some cities were, in fact, counties; hence those could be examined separately. The analyses controlled for a number of different factors: total population size, per capita income and a correlate of poverty level (infant mortality rate).

The results are simple to describe. Ten different offence (arrest) rates were examined -- ranging in seriousness from homicide and rape to theft and vandalism. In *no* case did the passing of new curfew laws create a significant drop in any of these crimes at the county level. The examination of city data supports the same conclusion: curfews are ineffective. There were occasional effects of "revised" curfew laws and a finding that for cities (but not counties) new curfew laws were associated with *increased* homicide rates. These findings are so inconsistent that they are most likely due to other factors. When enforcement activities (curfew arrests) were examined, they, too, appeared unrelated to arrests for other crimes. Curfews were also unrelated to juvenile homicide victimizations.

Conclusion. An examination of the effects of curfew laws produces a simple conclusion: They do not reduce juvenile crime (or serious victimizations of youth). As the authors of this paper state, "Our results do not encourage the idea that curfews help to prevent juvenile crime. Any impacts of the laws were small, and they applied only to a few offences. If curfew statutes do reduce juvenile offending and victimization rates, their influence may not be as large as policy makers have hoped." This conclusion is not surprising given that curfews do not typically relate to what is known about offending.

Reference: McDowell, David, Colin Loftin, and Brian Wiersema. The impact of youth curfew laws on juvenile crime rates. *Crime and Delinquency*, 2000, 46 (1), 76-91.

American politicians are jumping on the “get tough” bandwagon in juvenile justice by increasingly treating youth as adults. At the same time, residents of one of the country’s more conservative states favour putting more emphasis on rehabilitation in juvenile corrections. Are the politicians listening?

Background. Confidence in the juvenile justice system in the U.S. has, apparently, been declining and, perhaps as a result, there has been a widespread erosion of the differences between the juvenile and adult justice systems. At the same time, some national polls have suggested that “the public continues to support the correctional treatment of juveniles... [but] is less willing to support rehabilitation when this option is portrayed as a lenient response to crime or when it is suggested that an emphasis on rehabilitation will lessen the punishment given to youths” (p.43).

This study examined residents of Tennessee. The respondents were primarily white and politically conservative. Respondents overwhelmingly favoured a *rehabilitative* approach over a simple punishment or “public protection” model of juvenile corrections. When asked what the main emphasis in juvenile prisons should be, 63% said it should be rehabilitation compared to 19% who favoured punishment and 11% who favoured “protecting society from future crime [the youth] might commit.” At the same time, most respondents (92%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that “young offenders deserve to be punished because they have harmed society” (p. 48). When asked “whether the main priority... should be to build more prisons... to lock up as many offenders as possible or to invest in ways to prevent kids from committing crimes...” most respondents (94%) chose to invest in preventive measures.

Conclusion. The finding from this survey -- that people prefer to have a justice system which favours prevention and which combines rehabilitation with holding young offenders accountable for their actions -- is not unique to the U.S. Similar results have been reported in Canadian surveys (Sprott: *Crime and Delinquency*, 1998; Doob, Sprott, Marinos, and Varma, 1998; Centre of Criminology). It would seem that people are interested in reducing youth crime and, when given choices about how to respond to crime, they choose prevention over vengeance.

Reference: Moon, Melissa M., Jody L. Sundt, Francis T. Cullen, and John Paul Wright. Is child saving dead? Public support for juvenile rehabilitation. *Crime and Delinquency*, 2000, 46 (1), 38-60.

Offenders see electronic monitoring as preferable to prison, though some aspects of the restrictions enforced with this technology are certainly seen as punitive. However, Canadian experience with the technology would suggest that, like most technological solutions to social problems, electronic monitoring will not, by itself, reduce crime.

Background. As a technique for knowing someone's whereabouts, electronic monitoring (EM) has been around since the mid-1980s, apparently having been "inspired" originally by a Spiderman cartoon. It has been used for those awaiting trial, those on probation, and those on some form of release from prison. Its purpose is simple: it allows state authorities to monitor someone's whereabouts. To the extent that people receive various court orders restricting their movement, EM allows state authorities to know whether such an order is being followed. It is not a "correctional program" *per se*; therefore, it is not surprising that "if the desired outcome is reduced recidivism, EM has questionable merit" (Bonta, p. 73). Nobody would think that better prison bars or better shackles would be rehabilitative, though obviously bars and shackles have their functions.

These studies examine two aspects of EM. First, it is clear that EM, as a means of enforcing court orders, is seen by those subject to it, as being better than prison, but a punishment nevertheless. From the perspective of the electronically monitored offender, "the greatest pain was associated with the restrictive conditions that the program entails.... Shaming effects were also experienced by some offenders" (p.93).

In Canada, EM appears to be a tool that is applied to quite different populations of people in different provinces. The Bonta *et al.* study examined the programs in B.C., Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland. The three programs varied dramatically in terms of the number of days that sentenced offenders were on EM. However, any apparent reduction in recidivism (in comparison with those simply on probation) "could be explained by differences in risk levels among the groups" (p.70). The value of EM can also be questioned from another perspective: it is not clear that its availability has consistently reduced the level of our reliance on prisons.

Conclusion. Electronic monitoring is simply a tool to determine an offender's whereabouts. There is variation in the sophistication of the technology and huge variation in how it is used (and at what stage of the proceedings it is applied). Effectiveness, in terms of reduced recidivism, is much more likely to be determined by the nature of the program which an offender is in than on whether a probation officer can easily determine where the offender is. As the authors of the Canadian study pointed out, "Can EM make a difference? The answer depends partly on the outcome desired." EM can be a useful surveillance tool. That does not mean that it is good at changing behaviour in the long run.

References: Gainey, Randy R. and Brian K. Payne. Understanding the experience of house arrest with electronic monitoring: An analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 2000, 44, 84-96. Bonta, James, Suzanne Wallace-Capretta, and Jennifer Rooney. Can electronic monitoring make a difference? An evaluation of three Canadian programs. *Crime and delinquency*, 2000, 46, 61-75.

It may be politically attractive to try to abolish parole, but parole supervision and support can be an effective way of integrating offenders back into society. The choice is whether one is looking for effective policies or quick political gain.

Background. With thousands of people on parole, it is inevitable that some will commit serious offences. When this happens, there are calls to abolish parole. "But correctional experts argue that, while abolishing parole may make good politics, it contributes to bad correctional practices - - and ultimately, less public safety" (p.480). The difficulty in abolishing conditional release is that parole supervision and support may go with it. For example, when offenders leave prison in Maine and Virginia, "they have no strings at all" (p.481). The origins of parole are seen as being associated with offender rehabilitation rather than increased punitiveness or surveillance. In the U.S., it would seem that those who have been speaking loudest for the simple abolition of parole are now becoming worried because "failure on parole is creating severe fiscal pressures on state prisons' budgets" (p. 481). As one politician put it, "Lock 'em up and throw away the key attitudes are coming back to haunt state legislators across the nation" (p.483). One problem is that the public has always had mixed attitudes about parole. Over sixty years ago (in 1934) a U.S. Gallup poll found that 82% of adults "believed that parole was not strict enough and should not be as frequently granted" (p.490).

Data related to parole. Research would suggest that although parolees want a relatively modest, stable, conventional life after prison, most do not expect to succeed (p. 501). At the same time, services for parolees have been generally reduced, leaving parole officers focusing almost entirely on control oriented activities (p. 502). In California, for instance, "At least 1200 inmates every year go from... an isolation unit, designed to hold the most violent and dangerous inmates in the system, right onto the street" (p. 503). Not surprisingly, there is an increased number of special parole conditions placed on parolees, and "parole supervision has been transformed ideologically from a social service to a law enforcement system" (p.508), often with officers authorized to carry and use firearms, and to carry out searches, etc. (p.504).

Since 1995, the proportion of unsuccessful completions of parole in the U.S. has risen from about 25% to 54%. At the moment about 34% of prisoners admitted to state institutions are parole violators. Part of this increase may be due to the reduced availability of effective programs. There are known programs that reduce the rearrest rate of parolees including drug and alcohol dependency programs, employment and job training, and multi-service centres that, for example, might place an emphasis on practical living skills and job training. "No one program -- surveillance or rehabilitation alone --... can reduce crime, or fear of crime on their own" (p.522).

Conclusion. The United States currently has about 2 million people in jails and prisons, 90% of whom will be released from prison at some point. Half will be back on the streets within two years. If parole supervision (or any form of post-release supervision) is to be used to support reintegration, programs known to be effective need to be funded. "Given the increasing human and financial costs associated with prison, investing in effective reentry programs may well be one of the best investments we make" (p. 522).

Reference: Petersilia, Joan. Parole and prisoner reentry in the United States. In Michael Tonry (ed.) *Prisons. Crime and Justice: A review of research* (Volume 26). University of Chicago Press: 1999.

Working women whose spouses also work have a relatively low risk of spousal abuse, but working women who are living with a man who does not work have an increased likelihood of being victimized by him.

Background. One of the most dramatic changes in the structure of North American society since the end of World War II has been the participation of women in the work force. Interestingly, however, the evidence on the impact of this phenomenon on women's likelihood of being the victim of spousal violence has been unclear. Typically women's employment has been conceptualized as simply a source of income. If this were true, it would have little impact on victimization rates above and beyond family income. However, it may well be more than that. Women's participation in the labour force could create independence for a woman (and hence it might reduce spousal violence). Alternatively, the employment of a woman in a relationship with a man who is unemployed could be seen by him as a challenge to his traditional masculine role and, therefore, increase the victimization of the female partner.

This study used data from 8461 women in the 1993 Statistics Canada "Violence against women" survey who were married or living in a common-law relationship with a man. Looking first at the violence that the women experienced, a statistical technique determined that there are qualitatively different types of violence that women experience. These might be termed interpersonal conflict (e.g., pushing or threatening), nonsystematic abuse (e.g., the previous type plus kicking, hitting, choking), and systematic abuse (e.g., the previous two types of violence plus beating, using or threatening with a weapon, forced sex).

The results indicate that men who were unemployed were more likely to abuse their spouses. The impact of the woman's employment depended on whether her spouse was employed or not. "Employment *increases* a woman's odds of nonsystematic abuse by 160%... when she is married to an unemployed partner yet *decreases* her risk by 43%... when her partner is employed." Similar results were found for systematic abuse: employment of the woman increased her risk if her partner was unemployed and decreased her risk if he was employed.

Further analyses suggest that the effects just described relate to the use of coercive control by the husband. Coercive control was measured by the woman's response to questions such as "tries to limit your contact with family or friends" or "prevents you from knowing about or having access to the family income, even if you ask." "The symbolic threat of unemployment for men married to employed women may manifest itself in increased efforts to control them, including physical abuse" (p. 956).

Conclusion. The impact of a woman's employment on her likelihood of being a victim of spousal violence appears to be explained better by looking at the dynamics of the relationship that she is in rather than explaining it simply in terms of financial income. "The effect of one partner's employment is conditioned by the employment status of the other partner. Women's labour force participation thus lowers risks of spousal abuse when their male partners are also employed but substantially increases risks when their male partners are not employed" (p. 957).

Reference: Macmillan, Ross and Rosemary Gartner. When she brings home the bacon: Labour-Force participation and the risk of spousal violence against women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1999, 61, 947-958.

What is the best way to predict whether a man who has assaulted his spouse will re-offend? Ask the spouse. Her prediction is better than fancy statistical “risk” models.

Background. How is the justice system to respond to a woman who says that she knows best whether her assaulting spouse will re-offend? It would seem that the system should listen to her. Practitioners and researchers have developed statistical tools for predicting the re-occurrence of wife assault. Generally speaking, men who show aggressive behaviour in and outside of the home, men who abuse alcohol, and men whose parents were violent are likely to be violent in the home.

This study asked an obvious question: how accurate are women themselves in predicting and does their ability to predict add to the accuracy of statistical models based on "objective" factors about the male offender, his behaviour in the past, and other readily available data.

Data for this study came from couples in which the man had been found guilty of a misdemeanor assault. The victims were interviewed shortly after the guilty finding and four months later. At the initial interview, women were asked how likely it was that their partner would be violent with them in the next year. The outcome measure (severe violence) was derived from questions such as whether the spouse reported that he had threatened to kill her, had threatened her with a weapon, had kicked, beaten, or hit her, etc.

The results are quite simple. Women are quite accurate in their predictions of whether their spouse will re-offend against them. In fact, the women's own predictions are the best single predictor of subsequent violence. The best statistical combination of factors available to the researchers at the first interview showed only a modest relationship to subsequent serious violence. Adding in the woman's own prediction of the likelihood of him becoming violent with her during a dispute increased considerably the accuracy of the overall prediction.

Conclusion. Women who are victims of domestic assault can reasonably accurately predict whether their spouses will assault them again. Statistical predictions, based on past history, his drinking, etc., may be useful, but it seems that the women themselves are able to predict better than any outsider can. Hence, those who deal with victims of domestic assault should listen carefully to the predictions these women make. When she predicts that he will, or will not, be violent in the future and requests criminal justice actions based on these predictions, the data suggest that her prediction is quite likely to be correct.

Reference: Weisz, Arlene N, Richard M. Tolman, and Daniel G. Saunders. Assessing the risk of severe domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2000, 15, 75-90.

Why criminalize domestic assault? The typical justification is to protect the victim from further assaults through arrest and prosecution. However, the women who are the victims of domestic assault often do not want their spouses prosecuted. The alternative approach is a victim empowered approach which might be used to bring “a full range of social and legal forces to bear on domestic violence problems” (p.33).

Background. The standard reasons given for criminalizing (charging and prosecuting) domestic assault include denunciation, general deterrence, and individual deterrence. These are the “standard” reasons given for criminalizing most crimes, but, for most crimes, there is not a risk that the situation of the victim will be worsened by prosecution.

This study examined carefully the experiences of 65 female victims of domestic assault who came to the attention of the police in England. The police force in question, like many police forces in Canada, had pro-arrest policies in place, notwithstanding the fact that no compelling data exist to suggest that such policies serve as an individual or general deterrent to domestic violence.

The preferences of the women in this study did not fit the “pro-prosecution” model very well. Only 31 of the 65 women had wanted “their” offender to be prosecuted, but even of those who did want their spouse arrested, the majority “did not want him to be prosecuted. They wanted an arrest without any further criminal justice intervention to ‘teach him a lesson’ or to resolve the immediate situation temporarily” (p.22). Women wanted the police to calm the perpetrator (7 of the women) or to warn him (4 of the women). Two main reasons were given for not wanting prosecution: the arrest accomplished what the victim wanted, and the perceived “costs” outweighed the possible benefits. These costs included, not surprisingly, fear of retaliation. As one woman put it, she felt she was in a “no win” situation where prosecution would put her at additional risk. The difficulty, of course, is that many of the women were not ready to end the relationship they were in; hence, they were making a calculated choice. There are indications that “arrest and prosecution *can* give victims the confidence to ‘do something’ about violence, in particular to end the relationship, but it may have little or no effect unless it is coupled with further, more supportive action” (p. 27). Arrest alone had little impact, or where there was an impact, its effect was just as likely to be seen as negative as positive.

Conclusion. Given that women do not invariably prefer pro-arrest and pro-prosecution policies, and given that these policies have not been demonstrated to protect women, policy makers should re-think the value of these policies. Another *model* suggests that women’s preferences and choices in these situations be seen as rational choices, given the circumstances that they face. Since women are reasonably good at predicting the re-occurrence of domestic assault (See Weisz *et al*, this issue of *Highlights*), one might suggest that their wishes be given greater weight. A pro-arrest (but not a pro-prosecution) policy, then, might be used “as a way of bringing a full range of social and legal forces to bear on domestic violence problems” (p.33).

Reference: Hoyle, Carolyn and Andrew Sanders. Police response to domestic violence. *British Journal of Criminology*, 2000, 40, 14-36.