Addressing the paradox of policing research…

Professor Nick Fyfe
SIPR Director
&
Professor Jenny Fleming
University of Southampton

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Paradoxes, paradigms and pluralism: reflections on future directions for police science in Europe (CEPOL 2012)

- **Paradoxes** – police science as a 'successful failure'
- **Paradigms** – reconnecting science and policing
- **Pluralism** – police science must maintain a diversity of interests and approaches

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Addressing the paradox of policing research

- **Four Questions and a Framework… to help understand the challenges of evidence-based practice in policing**

- **Questions of…**
- **Types of knowledge;**
- **Research utilisation;**
- **Models of implementation;**
- **Conceptual perspectives;**

- **A framework for evidence-based practice**

I Types of knowledge about policing (or 'what counts as evidence?')

Evidence-Based Policing

IDEAS IN AMERICAN POLICING

Evidence-Based Policing

"Police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best."

Lawrence Sherman, 1998

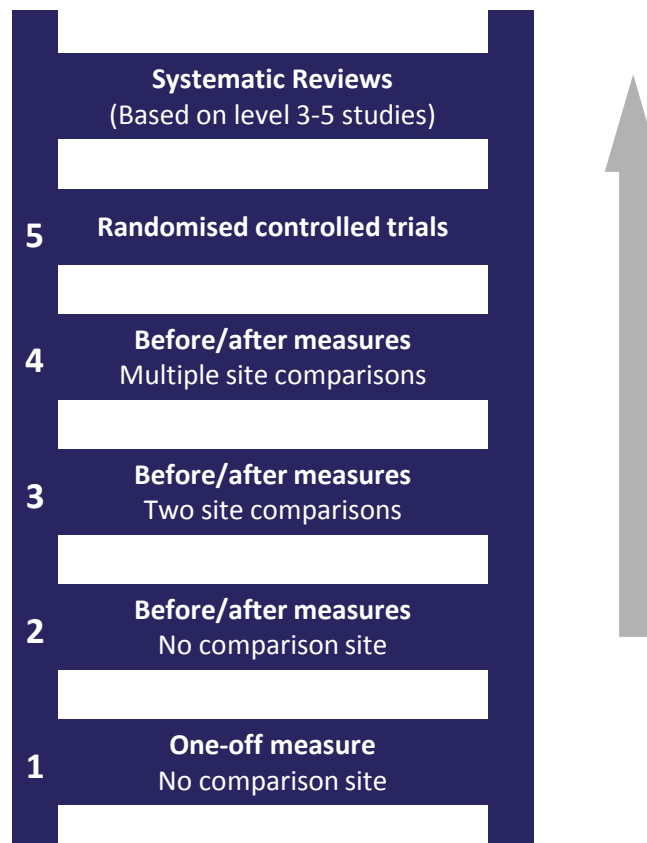# Different types of knowledge needed for evidence-based practice…

- Know **what** works – what interventions are effective
- Know **about** problems – why they occur, who is most at risk of harm?
- Know **how** to put into practice – what are the risks of implementation failure?
- Know **who** to involve – what can partners contribute?
- Know **why** action is required – are the drivers social, political, economic?

Tacit versus Explicit Knowledge

- 'Evidence-based practice is more than a matter of simply accessing, critically appraising, and implementing research findings. **It also involves integrating knowledge with professional judgment and expertise**' (Davies, 1999)

- 'Research alone cannot tell us what [the police] should do –**we need the experience of practitioners as well as the experiments of science**' (Moore, 2010).

Hierarchies of evidence

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Systematic Reviews
(Based on level 3-5 studies)

5 — Randomised controlled trials

4 — Before/after measures
Multiple site comparisons

3 — Before/after measures
Two site comparisons

2 — Before/after measures
No comparison site

1 — One-off measure
No comparison site

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Box 4: A matrix of evidence to address various aspects of 'does this work?'

Research question	Qualitative research	Survey	Case-control studies	Cohort studies	RCTs	Quasi-experimental studies	Non-experimental studies	Systematic reviews
Does doing this work better than doing that?				+	++	+		+++
How does it work?	++	+					+	+++
Does it matter?	++	++						+++
Will it do more good than harm?	+		+	+	++	+	+	+++
Will service users be willing to or want to take up the service offered?	++	+			+	+	+	+++
Is it worth buying this service?					++			+++
Is it the right service for these people?	++	++						++
Are users, providers, and other stakeholders satisfied with the service?	++	++	+	+				+

Question I

- **What should count as 'good enough' evidence for evidence-based practice in policing?**

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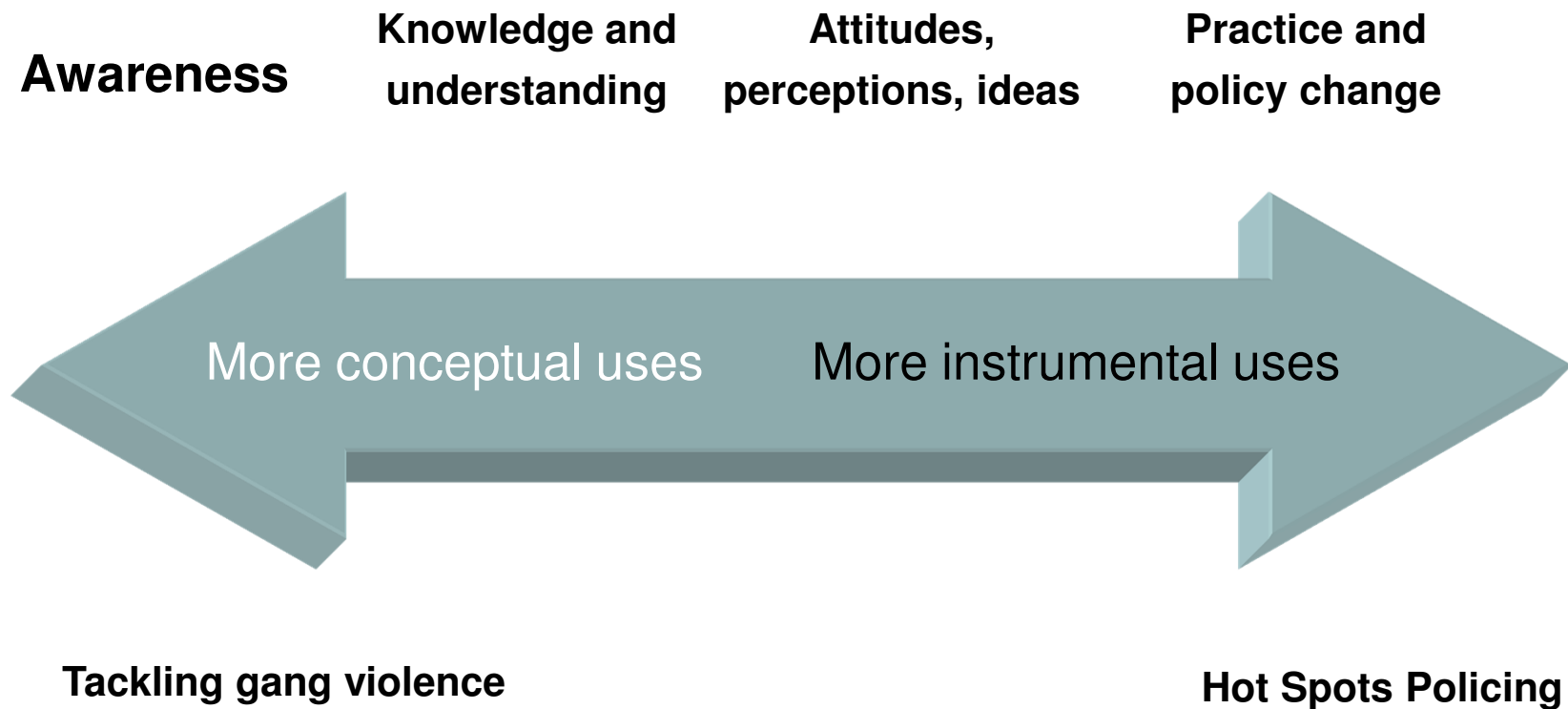
Research as an instrument of persuasion?

BBC NEWS SCOTLAND

Stop and searches 'four times more common in Scotland'

17 January 2014 Last updated at 10:05

The figures found that young people aged between 15 and 20 were three times more likely to be stopped and searched

Police in Scotland carry out four times more stop and searches than their colleagues in England and Wales, according to a new report.

Scottish police consider ending consensual stop-and-search

5 February 2015 | Scotland

BBC Scotland revealed figures for stop-and-searches earlier this week

Question II

- **To what extent should we be concerned with the enlightenment as well as the instrumental uses of research in evidence-based policing?**

III Processes of implementation

Research into practice

(evidence is external to world of practitioners)

vs

Research in practice

(evidence generation and professional practice inter-twined)

I FIND THIS GIVES MY RESEARCH GREATER IMPACT!...

Research into practice: framing the knowledge exchange challenge as 'two communities'

- **Divergent**
  - interests, priorities, incentives, language, dynamics
  - conceptions of knowledge and time-scales
  - status and power

- **Leading to**
  - communication difficulties
  - mismatch between supply and demand
  - rejection and implementation failure

(from Nutley, 2013)

Research into practice

$SI = f(E, C, F)$

SI = Successful Implementation

E= Evidence (research findings, professional experience, citizen preferences);

C= Context (culture, leadership, monitoring systems);

F= Facilitation (characteristics of facilitator, including skills, knowledge, approach)

Research in practice

- **Challenges dualism of research and practice;**
- **Focus on co-production and locally situated practices;**
- **Engaging practitioners in change programmes.**

Question III

- **How can we move beyond linear models of research use and engage more closely with the complexities of evidence based practice?**

IV Different perspectives that can inform evidence-based policing….

- **Individual Learning** – how do police officers learn?

- **Organisational Learning** – how do police organisations build up and use knowledge?

- **Change Management** – how do individual officers, groups and organisations hinder/facilitate change?

- **Institutional Theory** – what impact does the wider social and political environment have on use of knowledge in police organisations?

Question IV

- **Which perspectives will help us develop a better understanding of the challenges around evidence-based practice in policing?**

## V	A framework for thinking about different forms of evidence-based practice

- **Type of evidence**: evidence from research versus evidence from routine data;
- **Focus of attention** – individual practitioners vs. broader organisation/system
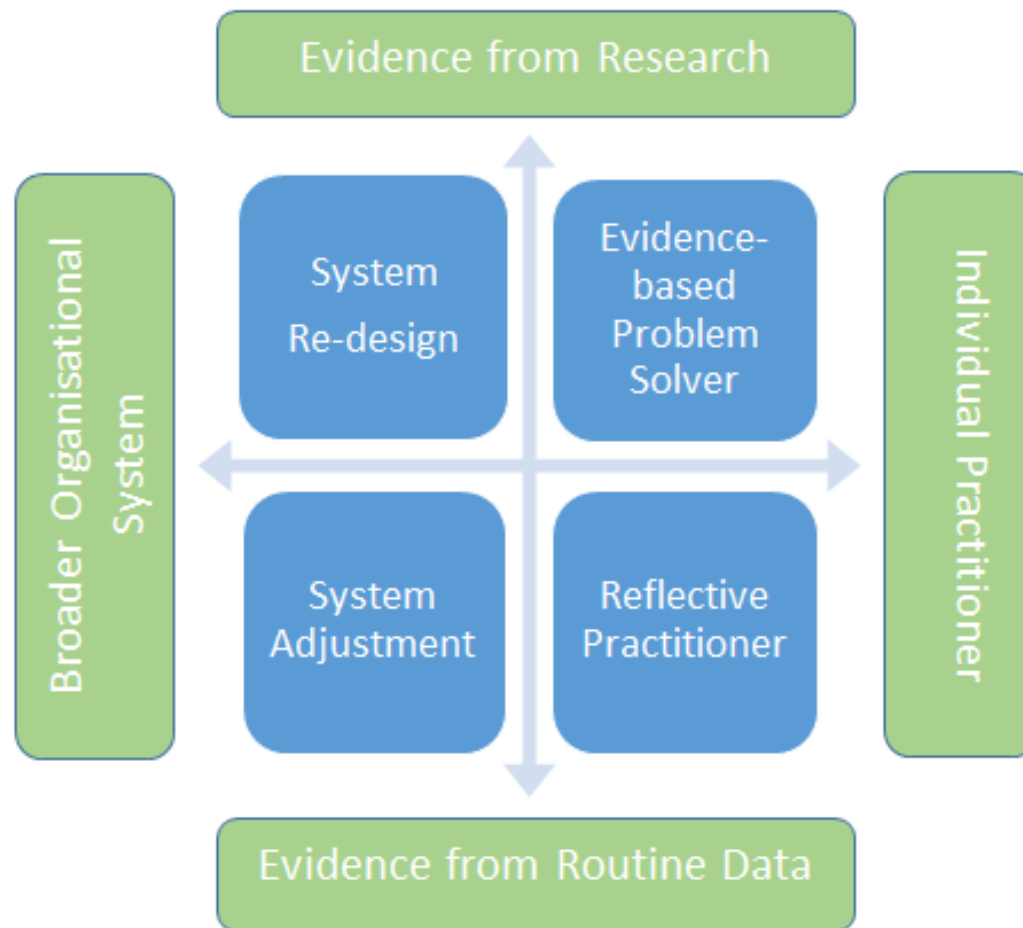
Concluding thoughts…

The challenge for all of us in the knowledge business…

"Yes, it's quite a noise – but are we having any impact?"

Where does research really feature in policy makers hierarchy of evidence?

Box 6: One insider's view of policymakers' hierarchy of evidence

1. Expert evidence (including consultants and think tanks).

2. Opinion-based evidence (including lobbyists/pressure groups).

3. Ideological evidence (party think tanks, manifestos).

4. Media evidence.

5. Internet evidence.

6. Lay evidence (constituents' or citizens' experiences).

7. Street evidence (urban myths, conventional wisdom).

8. Cabbies' evidence.

9. Research evidence.

Source: Phil Davies, former Deputy Chief Social Researcher, 2007.

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Thank You

Website: www.sipr.ac.uk

Contact details: n.r.fyfe@dundee.ac.uk