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Serving the Nation through the Height of a Pandemic: An In-Depth Look at Five Large U.S. Cities' Budgets and Crime Incidents Over the Course of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Serving the Nation through the Height of a Pandemic

An In-Depth Look at Five Large U.S.
Cities' Budgets and Crime Incidents
Over the Course of the COVID-19
Pandemic



Daniel Cooper
UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report and subsequent analysis is to showcase the data and potential variables concerning index crimes within Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Houston from 2019 to 2020. These five cities were chosen due to their differences in police resources, police staffing levels, geographic areas, and 2021 police budget in comparison to the previous year's budget. Additionally, the budgets for the police departments serving these cities will be looked at to determine where and how much money is spent in different items within the budget. The SARA model, which is a problem-solving technique that consists of four elements - scanning, analysis, response, and assessment-, will be employed to determine different variables relating to the crime issue and formulating an appropriate response to the problem.⁵ With increases in homicides, motor vehicle thefts and aggravated assaults and decreases in rape and robbery across each jurisdiction, different factors or underlying issues will be brought up to understand the reason for these changes in index crimes.

Over the past decade, policing has been affected by two issues and challenges: de-policing and the recruitment and retention of qualified applicants. De-policing, which occurs when police back off from activities requiring discretion and law enforcement, has been found to influence increased patterns of homicides and shootings.⁶ In order to stop officers from engaging in de-policing, police leaders and managers should engage in organizational justice practices because officers who feel they are being treated fairly will be less likely to engage in misconduct and negative behaviors.¹⁹ Police recruitment and retention has been an issue faced by departments for years and high turnovers rates influences crime rates and budget issues.^{1,6} Following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, there was an significant loss in staffing levels as a wave of officers retired or resigned from their respective departments.¹ To recruit

qualified applicants and retain them, police departments can increase compensation or incentives, like tuition reimbursement, and change recruitment campaigns to show realistic job expectations. Overall, these are just two of the underlying factors in policing that played a role in the changes in index crimes in 2020 compared to the previous year.

Scanning

In the scanning phase, the recurring problems and their consequences, specifically on the community and the police, are identified and confirmed, the prioritized problems are further examined, and general goals are established for the issue.⁵ In the United States, a similar trend arose in comparison to the five cities selected for further examination with regards to the index crimes of homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft in 2020 when analyzed and compared to 2019.¹⁰ Across the nation, the homicide rate rose by 27.5 percent, the assault rate increased by 11.7 percent, and the motor vehicle theft rate rose by 11.4 percent in 2020 compared to the previous year.¹⁰ Additionally, in the United States, the rape crime rate dropped by 11.9 percent, the robbery rate decreased by 9.7 percent, the burglary rate declined by 7.7 percent, and the larceny-theft rate decreased by 10.9 percent in the year 2020 when compared to 2019.¹⁰ As for the overall rates, the national total violent crime rate increased by 4.6 percent in 2020 in comparison to the previous year, while the total property crime rate dropped by 8.1 percent.¹⁰ As noted, these trends with the individual index crimes were also apparent within the five cities examined as the underlying issues such as the pandemic, depolicing, and recruitment and retention issues, to name a few, affected cities across the nation.

The primary goal of the report is to determine the different factors and underlying issues that contributed to changes in the crime rates for 2020 when compared to 2019, examine each underlying issue or factor, and provide suggestions for an appropriate solution to these issues or

factors. First, the overall effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global society will be discussed to examine its role in increase in certain crimes and decreases in others. Next, the specific index crime data for each five cities will be examined and analyzed along with the differences between the five departments that serve their respective city. Third, the issues surrounding de-policing and its effect on the individual officer and the city will be discussed to determine the role it may play in increased crime rates. Finally, the challenges of recruiting qualified candidates and retaining them over an extended period of time will be discussed in further detail to understand the effect it has on the department, individual officers, and the risk of crime. Following the analysis, there will be a discussion of potential responses to implement in order to appropriately address each underlying factor or issue.

Analysis

During the analysis step of the SARA model, the relevant variables, factors, and events that contribute to the issue will be identified and examined further, research on these factors and variables will be discussed, and a hypothesis will be established to determine and explain the source of the problem.¹ The index crimes listed above for the five cities and the nation were collected and analyzed for 2019 and 2020. In Excel, the data was tabulated and broken into sections pertaining to the type of crime, the year, and the percent change between the two years. Additionally, information pertaining to each department's staffing levels, cost per resident, employees per resident, and total operating budget were collected and tabulated pertaining to each section. Concerning the index crimes examined, there are similarities with regards to the trends experienced, however, the trend is not consistent for each city when looking at the total number of index crimes. In the field of law enforcement, the issue of de-policing and the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified officers that have affected agencies for years

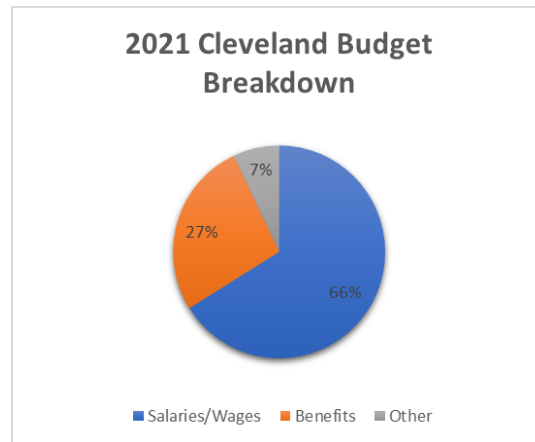
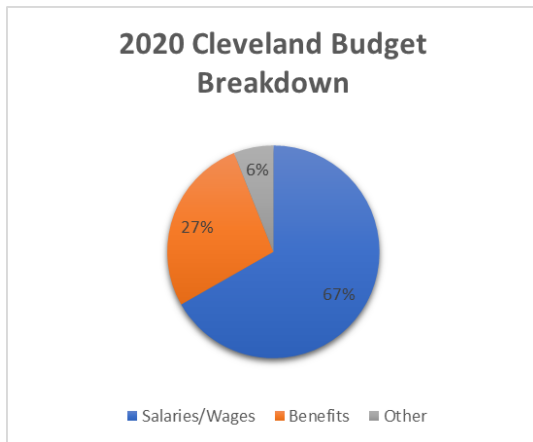
coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic played a role in an increased crime rate for specific offenses, but the initial restrictions of the pandemic reduced opportunities for certain interpersonal and property crimes.

Defunding the Police

Within the cities selected for further examination, New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago vowed to cut the budgets of their police departments, while Cleveland and Houston refused. While Chicago's mayor, Lori Lightfoot, overtly objected demands to defund the city's police department, the budget she proposed for 2021 was going to effectively cut 59 million dollars from the police department's budget, which eliminates already-empty positions within the department.¹¹ It is estimated that around 400 positions within the department were cut by the budget cut, but the city has seen increases in its security detail budget to "guard 'unmanned city officials'" with a 700,000 dollar increase over five years, which peaked in 2020 at 3.4 million dollars.¹² Lightfoot defended her stance by arguing that approximately 90 percent of the budget goes to personnel and a budget cut would force the department to layoff the younger, more diverse and well-trained officers.¹¹ The 2021 budget did include a 9 million dollar provision to invest in violence prevention efforts within the city.¹¹ In New York City, the new budget for 2021 proposed a staggering 1 billion dollar cut from the city's police department with the city cancelling a planned hiring of approximately 1,160 new officers.¹³ Interestingly, other city agencies are also experiencing hiring freezes as the entire city budget was cut by 9 billion dollars for 2021 from the economic downturn of the pandemic.¹³ From the police department's budget cut, approximately 354 million dollars was reallocated to mental health, homelessness and education services within the 2021 budget.¹² However, the cuts to the police department's budget have not come to fruition yet.¹² Similar to Chicago, Mayor de Blasio's NYPD security detail that

followed him around for his 2020 presidential campaign cost the city 358,000 dollars.¹² For the city of Los Angeles in July of 2020, the police department's budget was cut by 150 million dollars with around 89 million being reinvesting into anti-gang initiatives, universal income programs, homeless services, education and job initiatives and others programs.¹⁴ Around 60 million dollars from the police department's budget cut was initially used to balance the city's budget before allocating the rest to the services listed above.¹⁴ In May of 2021, a unanimous vote by the city's council members increased the LAPD's budget by 3 percent in the upcoming fiscal year that started in July.¹⁴ Interestingly, many criminal justice experts believe that increasing budgets for police departments would result in a decrease in crime.⁶ In contrast to the three previous cities, Cleveland's mayor, Frank Jackson, stated the city will not defund the police department and will focus on following the federal consent decree that the city signed on to following a U. S. Department of Justice investigation in 2014 that revealed evidence of chronic patterns of unconstitutional practices by officers.¹⁵ In recent years, the city has increased its police budget in an effort to hire more officers and increase its staffing levels to 1,600 officers.¹⁵ Specifically, the Cleveland Division of Police budget saw a 3.6 percent increase from around 210.7 million dollars in 2020 to 218.3 million in 2021.¹⁶ Within the budget, just about every item in the budget besides contractual services, which saw a 12.5 decrease in spending, saw an increase in spending.¹⁶

Cleveland Budget	2020 Budget (Dollars in Millions)	2021 Budget (Dollars in Millions)	% Change
Salaries/Wages	\$ 140.70	\$ 144.30	2.6%
Benefits	\$ 57.30	\$ 58.60	2.3%
Other Training & Professional	\$ 0.03	\$ 0.05	76.4%
Utilities	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.80	20.0%
Contractual Services	\$ 1.60	\$ 1.40	-12.5%
Materials and Supplies	\$ 0.81	\$ 0.97	20.0%
Maintenance	\$ 1.20	\$ 1.60	33.3%
Claims, Refunds, & maintenance	\$ 0.21	\$ 0.25	21.6%
Interdepartmental Charges	\$ 7.40	\$ 9.30	25.7%
Total	\$ 210.74	\$ 218.26	3.6%



In Houston, a unanimous vote by the city council approved the 2021 city budget, which included a 20 million dollar increase for the city's police department putting its operating budget at 964 million.¹⁷ An important note to budget cuts and restraints is that the pandemic's economic crisis affected municipal budgets, which in turn affects police departments.¹⁸ Therefore, while it may seem that cities are cutting budgets in accordance with protests to defund the police, police departments are facing budget cuts as a result of a lowered city budget, not from the transferring of responsibilities and duties away from police to other service providers.¹⁸ Importantly, the pandemic has affected the other two parts of the criminal justice system: the courts and correctional system.¹⁸ Regarding the correctional system, some local jails prohibited the intake of new prisoners, which greatly restricted the number of options police had for responding to crime.¹⁸ Concerning court closures during the pandemic, police officers were worried about the implications of arresting an individual as the individual may have to sit in jail for a long time before their day in court.¹⁸ In summary, the budget cuts affected communities across the country due to reductions in municipal budgets overall with some cutting the police's budget in response to protests while others had no choice to reduce the budget of each public agency.

COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, social interactions became increasingly limited as a result of lockdowns and the economy became significantly impacted.⁷ Importantly, the impact the pandemic has had on crime can be approached two ways: in the short term and in the long term.⁷ Concerning the short time impact, the lockdowns immediately following the outbreak of the pandemic resulting in restrictions on social interactions that reduced opportunities for street crimes and burglaries of residential homes.⁷ Additionally, the restrictions regarding social-distancing impacted interpersonal violence significantly as public gatherings were limited and popular hangout places, like bars, had to close.⁷ Furthermore, crimes such as shoplifting, theft, and robbery were less likely to occur as a result of a decrease in opportunities as a result of social-distancing restrictions.⁷ The short term issues can be further examined in terms of opportunity theory, which postulates that there will be a reduction in opportunities for criminal offenses to occur as a result of the lockdowns because these restrictions limit mobility of the population and social interactions among members.⁷ Regarding the long term impact on crime, the economic downturn as businesses closed and unemployment rates rose can encourage “profit-oriented crime” due to a loss of income for some people, especially if economic and social welfare programs are insufficient in helping to secure livelihoods during the economic crisis.⁷ In communities where the economic crisis had a large impact and the members feel discontent with the government’s response to the issues, the risk of looting and rioting is increased within these communities in comparison to communities that are better off and feel supported by the government.⁷ These long term issues can viewed with regards to strain theory, which holds that the socioeconomic strains from the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns affected a large portion of the population, specifically those considered

most vulnerable.⁷ Due to the added strains and pressures, strain theory argues that the pandemic potentially played a role in creating the circumstances and conditions that pushed individuals to commit crime.⁷ The long term issues as a result of the pandemic and economic crisis will most likely extend beyond the lifting of restrictions.⁷ Importantly, the recession faced as a result of the pandemic will drive the poor, unemployed, homeless, and others to commit criminal offenses to survive as these groups will be disproportionately affected by the economic and social consequences of the pandemic.⁷ Overall, the pandemic and the economic crisis that followed will have long lasting negative effects on crime and the population, despite the lack of opportunities for interpersonal crimes as a result of the initial lockdowns and restrictions on social interactions.

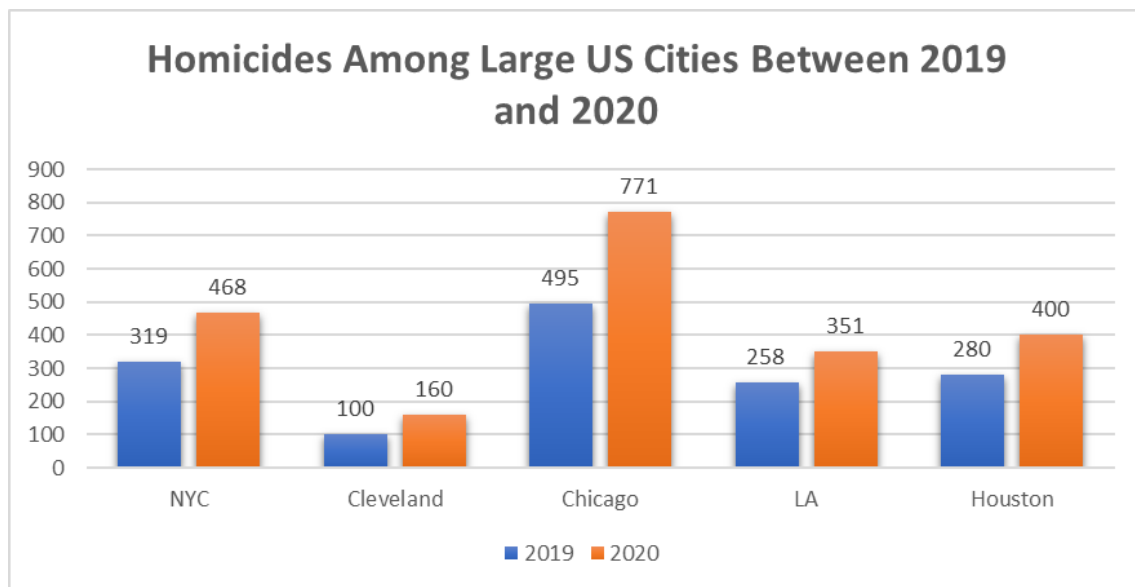
In addition to the issues with crime, the COVID-19 pandemic also made police departments consider ways to ensure the safety and wellness of their officers.¹⁸ While certain police services require little to no social interaction with the public, a majority of the duties and responsibilities of an officer will require them to engage with the public.¹⁸ The pandemic greatly affected some agencies with some smaller departments experiencing positive cases throughout its workforce, which required other agencies to help supplement them while the smaller department quarantined.¹⁸ Therefore, the pandemic forced departments to adapt as the job of an officer puts them in contact with the public on a steady basis.¹⁸

Index Crime Rates

Within each city examined, a trend appeared as to which index crimes increased and decreased in 2020 in comparison to 2019.¹⁰ As noted above, the resulting lockdowns and restrictions from the pandemic decreased opportunities for specific crimes like theft, robbery, and burglary.⁷ Importantly, the index crime data collected from the FBI's UCR program for cities of New York City, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Houston support this notion.

From the data collected for all five cities, each city had experienced an increase in the number of homicides, assaults, and motor vehicle thefts in 2020 compared to the previous year.¹⁰ Every city besides New York City also saw a decrease in the number of burglaries during the year 2020 in comparison to 2019.¹⁰ Interestingly, New York City saw a significant increase in burglaries in 2020 compared to 2019.¹⁰ On the other hand, in 2020, each city experienced a decrease in the number of rapes, robberies, and thefts in comparison to the previous year.¹⁰ New York City was the only location to experience a notable increase in the total index crimes in 2020 compared to 2019 with a 4.2 percent increase.¹⁰ Houston saw no significant change with a 0.1 percent increase in index crimes in 2020 compared to the year prior.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the other three cities all saw decreases in the total number of index crimes in their respective cities in 2020 when analyzed against 2019.¹⁰ Chicago experienced the highest decrease with a 19.2 decrease, while Cleveland saw the smallest decrease at 5.4 percent and Los Angeles had an 8.2 percent decrease.¹⁰ Concerning only New York City, in June of 2020, the city saw a 30 percent increase in homicides, a 118.2 percent increase in burglaries, and a 50.6 percent increase in motor vehicle thefts, and a 130.3 increase in shooting incidents in comparison to June of the previous year.⁹ Importantly, according to the NYPD's crime statistics for June of 2020, "the number of parolees that were involved in shooting incidents or homicides was at a 15 year high."⁹ The number of assaults in the city remained about the same with a 0.3 percent decrease in 2020. On the other hand, the community of New York City experienced a 21 percent decrease in rapes, a 17.8 percent decrease in robberies, a 38.1 percent decrease in larceny/theft, and a 5.5 percent decrease in total index crime in June of 2020 compared to the same month in 2019.⁹ Overall, a similar crime trend was seen across each of the five cities examined as the pandemic affected the

opportunities for interpersonal crimes and drove people to commit crimes following the long-term effects of the economic downturn.



	% Change in Index Crimes from 2019 to 2020					
	NYC	Cleveland	Chicago	LA	Houston	US
Homicide	46.7%	60.0%	55.8%	36.0%	42.9%	27.5%
Rape	-18.7%	-21.1%	-24.6%	-12.8%	-14.8%	-11.9%
Robbery	-1.6%	-15.9%	-1.5%	-17.0%	-4.4%	-9.7%
Assault	2.3%	24.8%	8.6%	7.7%	31.1%	11.7%
Burglary	41.2%	-14.6%	-10.1%	-0.3%	-7.5%	-7.7%
Larceny-theft	-0.7%	-12.4%	-34.5%	-23.0%	-6.0%	-10.9%
Motor Vehicle Theft	67.7%	5.4%	10.6%	35.3%	12.6%	11.4%
Total	4.2%	-5.4%	-19.2%	-8.2%	0.1%	N/A

Department Composition

With regards to the differences between each department, the New York Police Department has the least number of residents per 1 employee (159), the highest number of employees (52,696), the highest cost per resident at approximately 668 dollars, and the highest operating budget at 5.6 billion dollars in comparison to the other four cities examined.⁸ The Houston Police Department had the highest number of residents per 1 employee at 372, the

lowest cost per resident at 397 dollars, and the second lowest budget at approximately 934 million dollars.⁸ The Cleveland Division of Police had the lowest budget overall at approximately 218.2 million dollars and the lowest number of employees at 1,785.⁸ The Los Angeles Police Department had the third highest budget at 1.73 billion dollars, which was only 50 million under Chicago's budget, the second highest number of residents per 1 employee at 310, and the second lowest cost per resident at 431 dollars.⁸ Finally, the Chicago Police Department has the second lowest number of residents per 1 employee at 193, the second highest number of employees (14,015), the second highest cost per resident at 658 dollars, and the second highest operating budget at 1.78 billion dollars.⁸ Overall, every police department is different in their ability to serve their residents based on their differences between staffing levels, operating budgets, and proportion of officers to the city's population.

Department	Residents/1 Employee	Employees	\$/Resident	Operating Budget (in billions of \$)
NYPD	159	52696	\$ 668.33	5.6
LAPD	310	12954	\$ 430.83	1.73
Chicago PD	193	14015	\$ 657.54	1.78
Houston PD	372	6337	\$ 396.50	0.934
Cleveland DoP*	214	1785	\$ 571.46	0.2182

De-Policing

Since 2014, issues of increased police scrutiny following the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri has led to police to engage in de-policing, which occurs when police officers are "hesitant to enforce the law" and withdraw themselves from discretionary activity.⁶ As a result of use of force videos by the public going viral, officers withdraw from discretionary activity and cities experience a decline in stops and arrests while murders and shootings increase.⁶ Importantly, these viral videos and the increased scrutiny that follow will continue to occur as the use of smart phones and body cameras continues to increase across the nation.⁶ Unfortunately, incidents involving legitimate and justified use of force have also gone viral

because they look bad to the untrained citizen, which can lead to protests and complaints.⁶ At the individual level, officers are policing less by only responding to calls and incidents called to their attention by the public, which are nondiscretionary acts.⁶ In national surveys across the country, officers have reported that they engage in less proactive approaches to policing following highly publicized incidents.⁶ Due to Black Lives Matter protests, police shootings reduced, but the clearance rate for property crimes decreased, there was less reporting of property crimes to the police, and murders saw an increase, which had exceeded the reduction of police shootings.⁶ While this pattern of increased crime following viral incidents may be due to other sources like increased tensions, de-policing has been found to play a role.⁶ Following investigations into patterns of civil rights violations in Chicago and St. Louis, the divisions within these departments that exhibited the largest enforcement withdrawal and step back by officers also experienced the largest increases in crime.⁶ Interestingly, when there was not an investigation, crime and policing practices were less affected after a viral incident.⁶ Overall, de-policing has become a significant issue within the past decade that has led to multiple consequences, especially when officers feel under fire from investigations.

Recruitment and Retention

During the year 2020, police departments experienced an unprecedented amount of retirements and resignations following the death of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin, a former Minneapolis police officer, and the increased public scrutiny on the police after this event.¹ In comparison to 2019, the Chicago Police Department experienced a 15 percent increase in retirements in 2020.¹ For the New York City Police Department, the monthly loss of officers in 2020 was about double the amount in comparison to 2019.¹ Specifically, around 2,600 New York officers retired in 2020 in comparison to the 1,509 retirements in 2019.² This trend was

seen in other cities as well such as Seattle, Washington where resignations jumped to 123 and retirements to 96 in 2020 in comparison to 34 resignations and 43 retirements the year prior.² As a result, Seattle police statistics have shown that barely more than half of the highest-priority 911 calls have received responses by law enforcement within the seven minute target set by the department.² In St. Paul, Minnesota, officers that were part of a specialized unit had to be put back on patrol after the department dropped down to 580 officers, 40 officers below its authorized staffing level.² The remaining officers are then expected to deal with a wider range of issues outside of crime such as mental health issues, addiction, and homelessness.² Some of these issues like mental health could have specialized units to address these issues, but without proper staffing levels, the department had to move officers out of these units reducing their available services.² Accordingly, departments across the U. S. face staffing shortages from increased rates of resignation and retirement in comparison to previous years.

While police turnover did spike after the death of Floyd and the civil unrest that followed, the field of law enforcement has been facing a recruitment crisis for around a decade.¹ A recruitment study done by the International Association of Chiefs of Police found that the challenges of recruitment affects law enforcement agencies of all sizes, jurisdictions, and locations.³ For local law enforcement agencies, they are face three challenges regarding recruitment and retention of qualified officers: lower staffing levels from budget issues and retirements, an evolving generational culture and higher skill requirements, and an expansion of job duties and expectations for officers requiring them to possess a larger skillset.⁴ Furthermore, the study found that difficulty in maintaining staffing levels had caused around a quarter of the respondent agencies to reduce or eliminate certain services, units, or positions.³ Additionally, law enforcement agencies that operate below their authorized staffing levels have lower officer

morale and job satisfaction.³ Furthermore, the loss of officers along with difficulty in hiring replacement officers can increase strain on both the organization and the officers as they are overworked and become burnt out.³ Concerning officer's wellness, burnout and increased strain can cause health concerns, such as higher chances of chronic health issues and substance abuse, and organizational concerns, like leavism and higher job dissatisfaction among officers.¹ With a police suicide epidemic highlighting the importance of officer mental health, officer retention and deliberate changes to hiring practices that will raise recruitment without lowering standards have become increasingly important.³ In Dallas, Texas, pay and pensions issues and the hostile political environment against law enforcement only added to the challenges of recruitment. Overall, the challenges concerning recruitment and retention affect all law enforcement agencies, and overworking officers because of hiring issues only makes the matter worse.

Concerning crime rates, "fewer officers per capita is correlated with higher crimes rates, specifically higher rates of voluntary police turnover is associated with increased rates of violent and property crimes."¹ Furthermore, it has been found that for every 10 police officers hired about one homicide is prevented.⁶ Police turnover doesn't only affect crimes rates, it also impacts a department's budget. The estimated cost required to hire new officers in place of the veteran officers who left can cost a department anywhere from 1 to 5 times the salary of the officer that left.¹ In order to hire new officers, departments have to pay for background checks, psychological assessments, medical assessments, and training expenses. In addition, departments lose their return on investment when employees leave because the employee received training and education at the expense of the department.¹ Besides higher crime rates and the expenses of hiring replacements, high police turnover can negatively affect the organization and the community it serves. When a large quantity of veteran officers leaves the organization, it can

lead to decreased quality of service and productivity as the agency loses institutional and professional knowledge and skills that take years of experience to acquire and accumulate.¹ With high rates of turnover, a law enforcement agency can experience difficulty in engaging in proactive problem solving strategies and responding to calls for service.¹ As a result, the public's trust in police may wear away further and the city may see increased crime rates following high rates of turnover.¹ Overall, high police turnover negatively affects police-citizen relationships and the police department itself, which loses its investment on training officers and loses the experience and knowledge of veteran officers.

Response

Pandemic Proof Solutions

In order to limit officer contact with the public and reduce risk of infection, police departments made systematic changes with regards to how individuals would be dealt with in the criminal justice system.¹⁸ To limit the circulation of people into the criminal justice system, some police departments chose to use nonarrest approaches by issuing citations for a greater number of issues, while other departments deferred arrest until the pandemic winds down and courts are able to open.¹⁸ While the pandemic greatly impacted community policing initiatives as they rely on interactions with the public, some departments began to use virtual platforms like Facebook Live and found success with this form of communication.¹⁸ These virtual platforms supported leadership and community situational awareness as they allowed communication between the public, command staff, and city officials to continue without meeting in person.¹⁸ To limit contact with the public, departments materialized and expanded the use of virtual service delivery, which some departments already began implementing prior to the pandemic.¹⁸ Additionally, these virtual service delivery systems have been found to be cost-effective

measures, especially considering budget constraints after the pandemic's economic crisis.¹⁸ In order to prevent mass infections within agencies, a change in shift scheduling and procedures, which requires the use of personal protective equipment like masks, can reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 between officers.¹⁸ Concerning court backlogs, the use of virtual court appearances has been found to reduce costs for everyone involved, which is critical considering the economic impact after the outbreak of COVID-19.¹⁸ Beyond the pandemic, several of these solutions can be continued such as keeping virtual access to courts available, continuing shift flexibility for officers, using virtual calls for service, and continuing to use virtual platforms as a part of leadership and community situational awareness initiatives.¹⁸

De-Policing Solutions

First, the police departments can administer a survey to their line-level officers to determine their attitudes and feelings towards their organization and determine if the officers feel they are being treated fairly by their superiors. An important factor in officers exhibiting de-policing practices is the fear that they may become the next media sensation or viral incident.⁶ Furthermore, officers experience pressure and tension from within their department or city officials, and feel they cannot trust their leaders to stick up for them in these situations.⁶ The cuts in their agency's budget following cries to defund the police make them feel like the work they do is not valued.⁶ To resolve the issue of de-policing and its consequences, the line-level officers out on the street need assurance they will be treated fairly.⁶ If they feel they will be treated fairly following incidents involving use of force, they are more willing to engage in proactive practices and interact with their community.⁶ When officers believe they are treated fairly by their supervisors according to organizational justice, they are less likely to feel cynical towards their job or the public, more likely to feel more connected to their agency, and more likely to be

committed to their agency's goals than officers who feel they are not treated fairly and perceive less organizational justice.¹⁹ Additionally, officers will be more likely to behave in ways that benefit their department like covering a shift for their coworker, volunteering for additional work when requested, or promote a workplace atmosphere that increases officer morale.¹⁹

Additionally, officers are more likely to "support democratic styles of policing" like engaging in procedural justice tactics during encounters with the public and restraining themselves from using force or arrest to settle incidents.¹⁹ Concerning attitudes towards the agency, organizational justice is negatively associated with engaging in misconduct and positively associated with behaviors that follow departmental rules.¹⁹ Importantly, organizational justice has four dimensions: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational.¹⁹ Regarding distributive justice, supervisors and police managers can work to make the ratio of inputs by officers, like seniority or education, and the received outputs, such as pay or fringe benefits, to be equal for all officers.¹⁹ When officers feel their input-output ratio is lower in comparison to a coworker with comparable inputs, they recognize the inequity and their attitude, behaviors, and orientations can be negatively altered.¹⁹ Following distributive justice, procedural justice can be increased by police executives when they allow officers to have a voice during the decision-making process, which promotes the belief in individual officers that the process was fair.¹⁹ To foster interpersonal justice, supervisors should treat their subordinates with respect and propriety.¹⁹ To increase informational justice, explanations concerning agency information, like changes in policies and procedures, that come from supervisors are honest and justified.¹⁹ Overall, police supervisors and executives can engage in organizational justice practices to improve line level officer attitudes and behaviors that will benefit the organization and the public.

Recruitment and Retention Solutions

Innovations in recruitment strategies and campaigns along with amendments to policies that entice veteran officers to stay with the organization can help to combat the challenges departments face in recruiting and retaining quality officers. To fix compensation issues like those faced in Dallas, departments can utilize state funds to offer tuition reimbursement programs.³ Additionally, departments can partner with local colleges or universities to allow their officers to get college credits for their training hours.³ Programs like these that professionally develop younger officers or potential applicants can help retain them by encouraging them to have a career in law enforcement.³ Besides educational programs, departments can incentivize candidates to apply through sign-on bonuses or increased pay grades following academy and years of service.³ To increase recruitment of female candidates, departments can offer part-time positions with part-time academy training to allow working mothers the flexibility they need to balance work and family obligations.³ To adapt with the evolving generational culture, department can revise older recruitment policies, such as allowing visible tattoos, but they should be careful as changing certain recruitment standards poses risk.³ Regarding the issue of retention, departments can offer opportunities for interested applicants to gain experience and foster a more realistic expectation of the job through ride-alongs and outreach, which have been shown to increase retention.³ Another way to recruit candidates that will stay on the job is to change recruitment campaigns from the traditional SWAT images and police standoffs with shooters to realistic day-to-day aspects of the job like responding to calls regarding mental illness, substance abuse, and homeless individuals.³ Overall, innovations in police recruitment and retention policies and incentives can help to keep veteran officers, entice younger officers to make a career out of policing, and attract a diverse candidate pool.

Assessment

In the assessment phase of the SARA model, an evaluation of the implemented response is conducted by collecting data before and after its implementation and determining if the goals were achieved.⁵ To determine if the solutions increased recruitment of qualified candidates and maximized retention, a process evaluation in conjunction with an impact evaluation will be conducted. A process evaluation determines whether the designated response was implemented as planned or as closely to the plan as possible.²⁰ An impact evaluation involves collecting data on the problem being examined and “systematically comparing changes in measures” in order to determine if the response had an effect on the problem.²⁰ Regarding the evaluation design for the de-policing solutions, the pre-post design will be used because it allows for the use of surveys, which can measure the attitudes of officers regarding if they feel they are treated fairly within their organization and determine if the organizational justice solutions had any effect.²⁰ The pre-post design evaluation will compare the attitudes of the officers before and following the organizational justice response to determine if the changes resulted in more positive attitudes and if they were appropriate.²⁰ To account for changes in attitudes as a result of seasonal fluctuations, multiple measures will be taken following the response to determine whether an increase in feelings of fairness and organizational justice was due to the implemented response.²⁰ For the survey given to the department’s officer during the beginning of the response phase, it will be conducted again following the organizational justice changes to determine if the officers feel they are being treated more fairly. Regarding the solutions aimed at increasing recruitment and retention, the interrupted time series design, which involves collecting data multiple times prior to and following the response, will be used to compare the specific index crime rates listed above

in order to establish whether the response was appropriate.²⁰ Importantly, the strengths of using an interrupted time series design is its ability to “rule out preexisting trends and many other alternative explanations.”²⁰ Concerning the solutions during the pandemic and the ones that can extend beyond, an interrupted time series design will be used to compare the amount of index crimes, the amount of arrests, and the number of individuals being circulated through the justice system to determine if the responses are appropriate and contributed to an overall effect.²⁰ From here, new strategies and solutions to the response plan can be identified and added into the plan, which will then be assessed through continued data collection and analysis.²⁰ In conclusion, the overall effectiveness of the response plan can be determined through the series of evaluation designs for each part of the plan to determine if the responses were appropriate and if any changes need to be made in order to increase the effectiveness.

Survey

This police department is administering a survey for the purpose of identifying and determining the attitudes and feelings of officers in relation to organizational justice and its four dimensions.

As noted above, officers that feel they are being treated more fairly by their department are more likely to engage in proactive policing practices and interact with the community.⁶ Also, they are less likely to feel cynical towards their job or the public, more likely to feel more connected to their agency, and more likely to be committed to their agency's goals.¹⁹ Data on the attitudes and feelings of officers will be collected with regards to which changes need to be made first in order for officers to feel they are being treated more fairly by their superiors. The information collected within this survey is confidential and will be utilized by analysts for the sole purpose of developing a response plan to effectively implement efforts to increase perception of fairness and equity within the organization with regards to the line-level officers. The following survey includes survey questions and statements from the Fairfax County Police Department Officer Survey from the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy and the Lexington Police Department Police Employee Survey from the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: ²¹	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Based upon my work-related experience and qualifications, my salary is comparable to others with similar experience and qualifications within the department ²¹					
I have equal opportunity for advancement and promotion ²¹					
I am satisfied with the benefits I receive ²¹					
I have equal opportunity for training and developmental assignments to learn new skills ²¹					
Command staff is open to officers' ideas and suggestions ²¹					

Command staff responds to employee ideas and suggestions ²²					
When command staff implements a change, I trust they have a good reason for making that change ²¹					
When command staff implements a change, I feel that the explanations from supervisors are justified and honest ¹⁹					
Command staff effectively balances officer welfare with community needs ²¹					
My department cares about its sworn officers ²¹					
My department cares about its civilian employees ²¹					
My local government and its officials care about the sworn and civilian employees in my department ²¹					
I have access to the information, tools, and resources I need to perform my job effectively ²¹					
The department treats its employees fairly and consistently ²²					
The department communicates important information through the appropriate channels ²²					
The department recognizes and praises employees for work well done ²²					
Supervisors provide constructive criticism for work not done so well ²²					
Supervisors provide informative and helpful work evaluations ²²					
The department involves employees in decisions that impact them ²²					
The department involves employees in research and planning ²²					
The department recognizes the need to improve working conditions ²²					

Please rate your agency's performance on: ²¹	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Below Average	Poor
Maintaining officers' job satisfaction ²¹					
Maintaining regionally competitive officer compensation ²¹					
Ensuring officer well-being and safety ²¹					

Maintaining trust with community members ²¹					
Preventing crime ²¹					
Solving serious crimes ²¹					

Suppose the department received an increase in its operating budget. Of the following choices, please prioritize them from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important) concerning how the department should use the money.²¹

	Preference
Salary increases for current officers ²¹	
Hiring additional officers ²¹	
Hiring additional civilian employees ²¹	
Training and education ²¹	
Technology and equipment ²¹	

Please rate the following statements with regards to your department: ²²	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The current level of accountability that everyone is held to within the department is acceptable ²²					
If we are asked to address more “quality of life” issues, it will detract from our ability to fight serious crime ²²					
An officer assigned to a fixed area with discretion and ability for crime prevention and problem solving is advantageous ²²					
Communications between officers on different shifts and support services is adequate ²²					
Police employees consistently provide quality service and product to the community ²²					
Officers should be expected to initiate activity during shifts rather than await assignments and calls ²²					
Officers are more effective if they “look beyond the call” to get to the root of the problem					

Conclusion

Across the United States, a similar trend was present with regards to homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Concerning homicide, assault, and motor vehicle theft, New York City, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and the United States overall experienced increases in these crimes in 2020 compared to the previous year.¹⁰ With regards to the crimes of rape, burglary, robbery, and larceny-theft, each geographic area, except New York City in regards to burglary, saw a decrease in the number of incidents during 2020 in comparison to 2019.¹⁰ Regarding police budgets, the cities of Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles decreased their department's operating budget for 2021.^{11,13,14} Meanwhile, Cleveland and Houston both increased the operating budget for their police department.^{16,17} Importantly, some cities were forced to make cuts to their police budgets due to a lower municipal budget following the economic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic regardless of the defund the police protests.¹⁸ One of the underlying factors resulting in the index crime changes was the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the initial lockdowns and restrictions on social interaction, opportunities to commit shoplifting, theft, robbery, burglary, and interpersonal violence decreased.⁷ Concerning the long-term impact of the pandemic, the risk of "profit-oriented crime," such as looting and rioting, increased as the economic downturn continued.⁷ With regards to the impact on the criminal justice system, some departments experienced a loss in workforce as a majority of their officers had to quarantine from either being exposed to or testing positive from the virus.¹⁸ Also, the pandemic created a backlog in the court system as in-person court was shutdown.¹⁸ Additionally, viral incidents, such as the death of George Floyd, have played a role in increased patterns of homicide and shootings from de-policing from officers.⁶ Finally, recruitment and retention challenges, which plagued police departments for the past

decade, spiked in 2020 following the death of George Floyd as departments across the nation saw a massive surge of retirements and resignations.¹ High turnover negatively affects the officers and the department as a whole from increased strain.³ Additionally, fewer officers from voluntary police turnover has been correlated with higher rates of crime.¹ In summary, multiple underlying issues played a role in increased rates for specific index crimes, while pandemic restrictions played a role in decreased rates for specific index crimes.

To alleviate the underlying issues, police departments and their respective cities can implement some of the promising pandemic solutions, organizational justice practices, and revise their recruitment strategies to hire candidates that will want to stay on the job. Concerning the pandemic, some solutions can be promising outside the pandemic like holding virtual court hearings, expanding the use of virtual calls for service, providing shift flexibility for officers, and using virtual platforms as a form of communication.¹⁸ To limit officers engaging in de-policing, police managers should utilize organizational justice practices to ensure officers they will be treated fairly, which will promote public interaction and democratic styles of policing.¹⁹ To improve recruitment of qualified and interested candidates, departments can revise their recruitment campaigns to include realistic images of the job, offer part-time positions with part-time academy training for working mothers, and revise older recruitment policies to evolve with the current generational culture.³ To improve retention, departments can both monetary and non-monetary incentives and allow interested candidates to get experience through ride-alongs or outreach, which provide realistic expectations of the job.³ To conclude, these solutions provide a starting point to begin alleviating the issues defined above and should be evaluated over time to indicate if the response needs to be revised to increase its effectiveness.

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