



The Rise, Fall, and Reimagining of Predictive Policing

Professor Andrew Guthrie Ferguson

Place-Based Predictive Policing

Theory

- Use Past Crime Data
- Identify Precise Locations of Heightened Risk

Remedy

- Deterrence
- Foot patrols, direct patrols, saturation patrols
- Environmental alterations

Companies

Geolitica (formerly Predpol), Shotspotter Missions (formerly Hunchlab), Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM)

Concerns

Bias, Error, Power, Effectiveness, De-skilling



Predictive policing strategies like PredPol = future-oriented deterrence-based policing.

Person-Based Predictive Policing



Application:

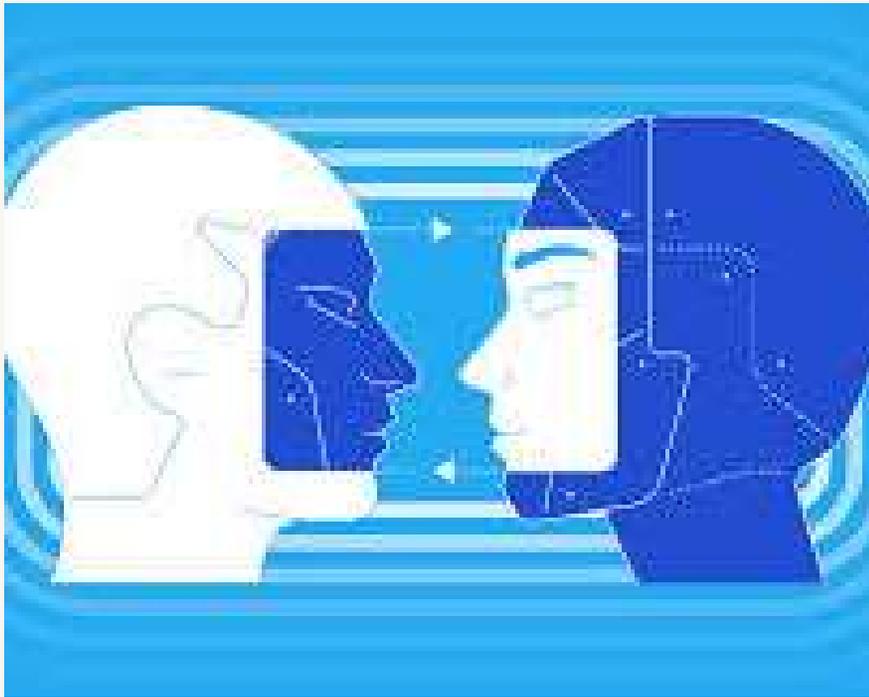
- Risk scores/"Heat lists"
- Intervention (services/surveillance)
- Contacts with police

Concerns:

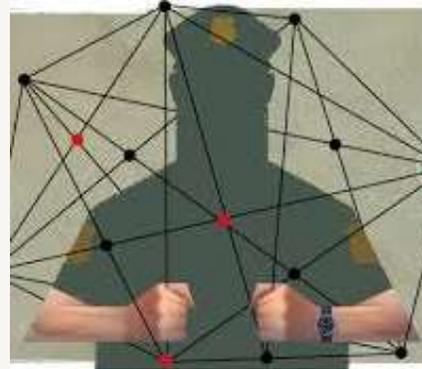
- Bias/Race
- Error/Never has worked
- Enhanced Police Power

Examples: LAPD LASER (chronic offender program)/ Chicago's Strategic Subjects List

The Lure of “Objectivity,” “Efficiency” and Data



Budget cuts, political pressure, technological relevance, “innovation” have all pushed technology into policing.

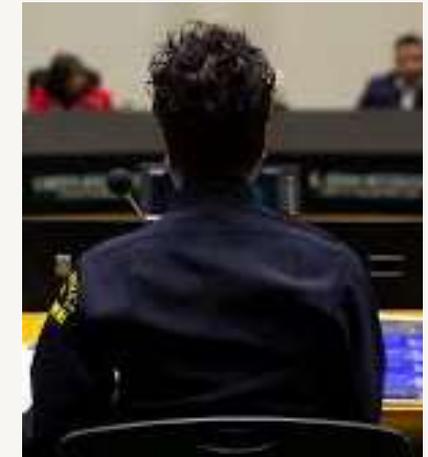


The Rise and Fall of Predictive Policing (2011-2021)

Police Department
City of New York

CompStat
Report Covering the Week 3/23/2015 Through 3/29/2015
Crime Complaints

Week to Date	30 Day			Year to Date*				
2015	2014	% Chg	2015	2014	% Chg	2015	2014	% C
4	8	-50.0	22	22	0.0	75	87	-11
21	23	-34.8	104	91	14.3	308	295	4
NS	323	-18.0	1,042	1,109	-6.0	3,540	3,888	-14
07	396	-25.0	1,315	1,467	-10.4	3,926	4,496	-12
15	282	-20.2	929	1,160	-19.9	3,144	3,908	-19
NS	773	-1.0	2,861	3,163	-8.5	9,006	9,715	-7
14	110	3.6	472	488	-2.7	1,467	1,552	-5
01	1,815	-11.17	6,765	7,497	-10.03	21,466	23,881	-10



NYPD

LAPD

Chicago

Dallas?

Unaccountable: problems with a trust lens



Pre-Constitutional



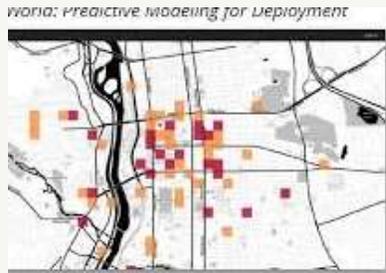
Few Evidentiary Issues



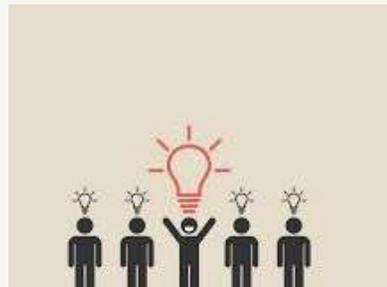
Localized Fragmentation



Newness Trap



Proprietary Tech



Expertise Gap



Tactical Secrecy

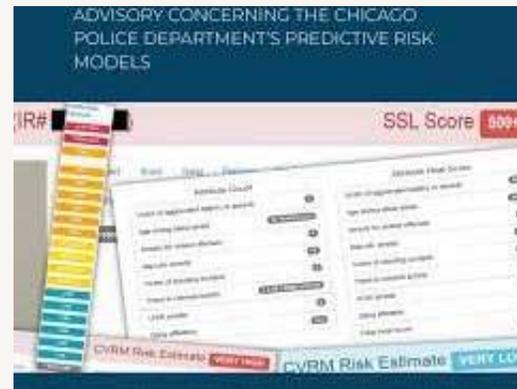


Cultural Barriers

Cost of Trust Lens



Predpol shut down in LA



Heat List shut down in Chicago



LASER shut down in LA



LASER

(Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration)

Laser was in 16 of 23 LAPD geographic areas

5 primary goals

1. Extract offenders from specific neighborhoods.
2. Restore peace to neighborhoods.
3. Remove the anonymity of gun offenders.
4. Remove the anonymity of gang members.
5. Reduce gun/gang-related crime.

“The basic premise is to target with laser-like precision the violent repeat offenders and gang members who commit crimes in the specific target areas. The program is analogous to laser surgery, where a trained medical doctor uses modern technology to remove tumors or improve eyesight.”

LASER – Chronic Offenders

Chronic Offender Points:

- 5 points = gang member.
- 5 points = on parole or probation.
- 5 points = any prior arrests with a handgun.
- 5 points = any violent crimes
- 1 point = every “quality police contact” in the last two years.

In 2017, two criteria in the point system above were modified to include the following considerations:

- # of violent crime arrests over the last two years. + 5 points for each violent crime arrest.
- While armed. + 5 points for each gun incident over the last two years.

Chronic Offender: Strategy

Once identified, actions included:

1. sending a letter to the offender;
2. conducting warrant checks;
3. conducting parole/probation compliance checks; and
4. conducting door knocks and advising the offender of available programs and services designed to reduce the risk of recidivism.

Status update to Commanding Officer every two weeks regarding what actions have been taken with that offender.

Information entered into a database.

Problems

Focus on violent crime was imprecise.

- Some people had **no points**, relying on informal referrals. 37 people listed as “Active,” as well as 75 people listed as “Inactive,” were added to the database with a total of zero points.
- Points were random. **Assigned points per offender ranged from zero to 101.** The majority of people in the database – about 59 percent – had **25 points** or less.
- Arrest numbers were inconsistent. **Nearly half of Chronic Offenders** – 44 percent – of those with detailed point calculations were listed as having either **zero or one such arrest.**
- While about half of Chronic Offenders were listed as having one or more reported arrests for gun-related crimes, about **half were listed as having no such arrests.**
- Nearly 10 percent of the Chronic Offenders in the database **did not have any “quality police contacts”** recorded, and the majority had less than five such contacts.
- Alternatively, several Chronic Offenders were listed as having been contacted by the police anywhere from 20 to 45 times.

Error/Civil Rights Costs

Bulletins encouraged unconstitutional stops –

- Language was in the materials suggesting that officers who see designated Chronic Offenders “may stop them, do a field interview, and let them go, if appropriate,” the document also states that “[i]n many situations, however, as with all stops, [the stops] should be constitutional and legal.”

Enacted without rules –

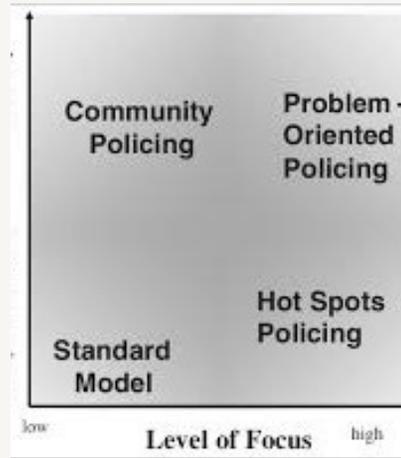
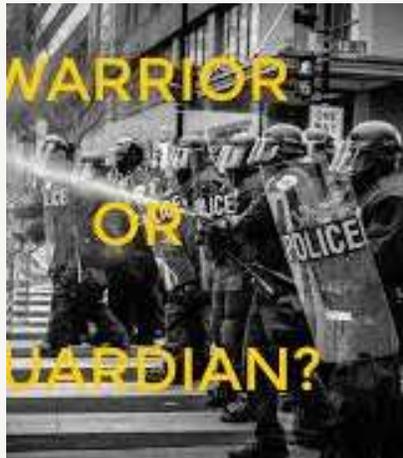
No formal rules. No Special Orders, Department Notices/Correspondence, or Manuals – relating to Operation LASER

Operated without training protocols – Only informal trainings

Not Updated –

- The database included people who were in custody,
- 30 percent of the people in the database had no updates listed; an additional 18 percent having just one such entry.
- In contrast, about eight percent of Chronic Offenders in the database had more than 10 update entries, with a small number of people (14) having between 20 and 34 such entries.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS: THE UNDERLYING DEBATE ABOUT POLICE POWER



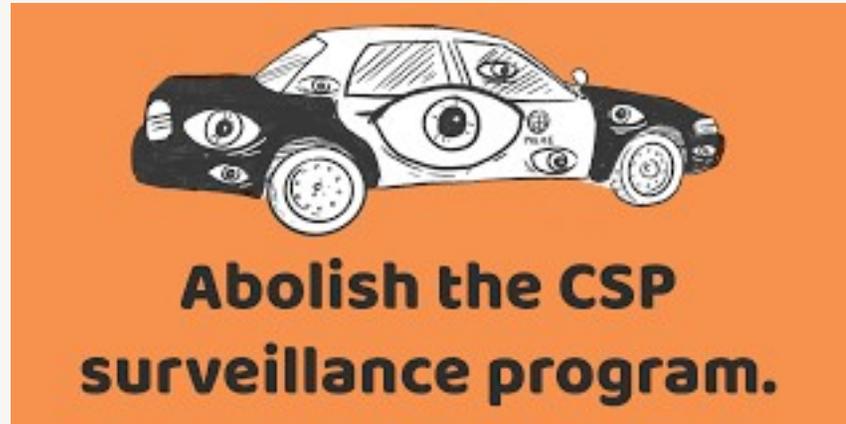
POLICE ROLE

POLICING RESPONSE

SOCIAL CONTROL

POLICING DIFFERENCE

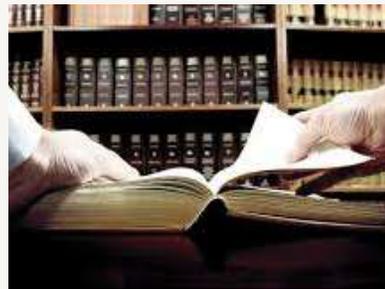
ABOLISH POLICE SURVEILLANCE?



Technocratic Fixes: Enough? Too Limited?



Pre-4th A. ► Regulatory



Non-Evidence ► Regulatory



Algorithms are systems



Newness is an Opportunity



Companies can do it



Encourages Expertise



Data = transparency



Exposes Inputs to Policing

Reimagining Questions



In focusing on tech investments in policing, what costs are you ignoring?

Opportunity costs, community investment costs?



Start with the assumption that technology will be misused by a metaphorical tyrant.

How do you tyrant proof police surveillance?



Restricting governmental power:

All of the above approach?

Thank you

ANDREW GUTHRIE FERGUSON

THE RISE OF

BIG DATA

POLICING

SURVEILLANCE, RACE, AND
THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT