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Hong Kong Citizens' Attitude Toward Hot Spot Policing

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Master in Criminology at the University of Macau

Jun 1st 2011

Abstract

In the past few years, criminal justice practitioners and criminologists pointed out the potential benefits of focusing crime prevention on certain places. As many studies argued that crimes do not occur evenly across the country or city, police department's focus on hot spot policing to slash down crime rates in these particular areas is quite smart. However, some issues may arise along with hot spot policing, such as local citizens' satisfaction, crime displacement as well as the effectiveness of hot spot policing. And unfortunately, disproportionately less attention has been drawn to the citizens' general attitude toward hot spot policing and their reasons for holding such attitudes.

Before considering the value of preventing crimes of policing programs, we should comprehend community reaction to the hot spot policing implementation. Citizens are the indirect participants in hot spot policing, who may be satisfied with these programs or feel uncomfortable in those processes. However, police departments pay little attention to collecting those complaints and suggestions in order to improve their practices.

The present study uses a focus group of 10 volunteers, and then collects survey responses of 156 residents in two streets of Hong Kong to obtain the information regarding both their general and specific attitudes toward hot spot

policing so as to dig out underlying issues existing in hot spot policing. The findings suggest that Hong Kong citizens, who focus more on the aspects of crime rate, neighborhood safety and response rate, are generally satisfied with hot spot policing, in spite that some citizens have no opinion about this policing strategy. And their satisfaction levels are highly influenced by the outcome of hot spot policing, namely the crime rate.

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