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January 2009

**A NATURAL EXPERIMENT SUGGESTS THAT MANDATORY ARREST POLICIES MAY DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD.**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla—In a series of studies published in the new issue of *Criminology & Public Policy* (CPP), researchers found that mandatory prosecution in intimate partner violence cases had little to no effect on re-arrest rates six months later. Also, findings suggested that mandatory arrest policies negatively affected victims' feelings of empowerment.

Robert C. Davis, a senior research analyst at the RAND Corporation, Chris O'Sullivan, a research consultant in New York City, and Donald J. Farole, Jr., and Michael Rempel, both at the Center for Court Innovation, took advantage of a naturally-occurring situation in which two New York City boroughs operated under two different prosecution policies—Brooklyn followed a mandatory arrest policy; the Bronx allowed victims to decide whether to proceed. Comparison of the two policies suggested that mandatory arrest policies have very little effect on recidivism, yet used too many resources and angered victims.

Jo Dixon at the New York University School of Law and Professor Candace Kruttschnitt at the University of Toronto argue that the issue of intimate partner violence is a multi-faceted problem that cannot be addressed solely by one policy or even by one agency. Instead, they suggest that to be truly effective, domestic violence courts should be closely coupled with social welfare policies that provide assistance to socially marginal populations.

Eve S. Buzawa of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, and Aaron D. Buzawa, an attorney with the United States Department of Justice argue that victim empowerment is a worthy goal, in and of itself, thereby suggesting that, in the absence of clear evidence that mandatory prosecution policies reduce recidivism, they should not be implemented. They also noted the important objective of effective

resource allocation. Instead of wasting resources that go against the victims' wishes, we should use those resources for victim assistance.

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