

The Militarization of Police: Evidence of Increased Citizen Conflict

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INTRODUCTION

- The Department of Defense through the 1033 Program sells excess military equipment to state police at extremely reduced costs.
- The policy requires police to use this equipment at least once within the year or it must be sent back to the Department of Defense.
- This program has increased the militarization of police, with 90% of cities over 50,000 citizens having a dedicated SWAT team, and deployment increasing by 2,000% between 1987 and 1996 (Balko, 2006).
- Police are trained with army members and are told to view their job as a war zone (Kappeler & Kraska, 2013).
- With trust of police at ten year low in 2014 (53% compared to 64% in 2004) (Gallup, 2015), it could be that this increased militarization is causing individuals to feel more like suspected criminals, feeling distrustful of the community.

Research Questions:

- Is there an association between militarized purchases and assaults against officers?
- Is this association found if we account for the continued stockpile of purchases against officers?
- Is there a turning point in the amount of stockpiled weapons to cause an increase in assaults against officers?

METHODS

Sample

- 9,726 state-month observations across 47 states.
- Defense Logistics Agency, 1992-2015.
 - 192,311 purchases for 4,282 state-month observations.
- LEOKA Dataset, 1998-2014.
 - 11,016 state-month observations.

Measures

Assaults with Injury Against Police Officers

- M=25.66, SD=36.75

Material Militarization

Overt, visible qualities of warfare – weapons, armor, and military garb (Kraska, 2007)

- Military Clothing:** (M=4.16, SD=62.26) ; **Stockpiled:** (M=24.20, SD=204.69)
- Military Armor:** (M=1.10, SD=26.71) **Stockpiled:** (M=10.19, SD= 95.15)
- Military Weapons:** (M= 16.05, SD=111.53) **Stockpiled:** (M=711.45, SD=1526.98)

Operational Militarization

patterns of activity modeled after the military such as in the areas of intelligence, supervision, handling high-risk situations, or war-making/restoration" (Kraska, 2007, p.3)

- Operational:** (M=6.52, SD=99.42) **Stockpiled:** (M=171.07, SD=782.09)

Covariates

- Month level Covariates: Officers Per 1,000 Citizens, Unemployment Rate
- Year level Covariates: Population, percent of state Black, median household income.
- Exposure Variable: Crime Rate Per Month

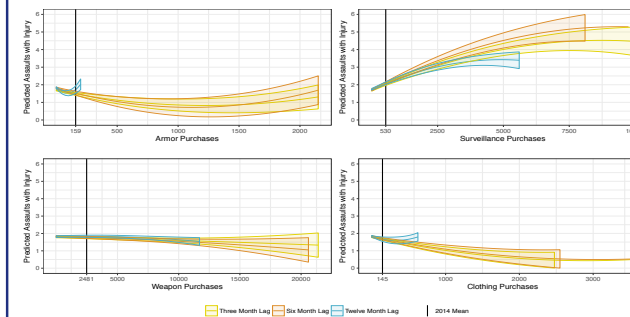
ANALYTIC PLAN

Multivariate negative binomial models with state and month fixed effects were run, regressing assaults against police officers outcomes on six month lagged purchases and all controls. Sensitivity analysis was checked at 3 and 12 month lagged purchases.

$$\text{Assaults on Officers}_{it} = \ln(\text{Violent Crime Rate})_{it} + \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Clothing Stockpile}_{it-6} + \beta_2 \text{Clothing Stockpile}^2_{it-6} + \beta_3 \text{Armor Stockpile}_{it-6} + \beta_4 \text{Armor Stockpile}^2_{it-6} + \beta_5 \text{Weapons Stockpile}_{it-6} + \beta_6 \text{Weapons Stockpile}^2_{it-6} + \beta_7 \text{Operational Stockpile}_{it-6} + \beta_8 \text{Operational Stockpile}^2_{it-6} + \beta_{9-14}(\text{Covariates})_{it} + \text{State Fixed Effects} + \text{Month Fixed Effects} + \epsilon_{it}$$

RESULTS

Militarization Purchases And Effects On Assaults Against Police



Research Question 1: Association between six month prior purchases and contemporary assaults on police officers

- No significant effects of prior purchases on assaults against police.

Research Question 2: Association between six month prior stockpile of purchases and contemporary assaults on police officers

- Material militarization stockpiles significantly reduced assaults against police officers.
- Every additional 100 purchases of operational militarization equipment is expected to increase assaults against police by 4.6% per crime rate.

Research Question 3: Association of level of stockpile of purchases and contemporary assaults on police officers

- Material militarization reduces assaults – body armor reduces assaults by 18.1%, military clothing by 8.3%, but weapons have no effect.
- Armor has a significant turning point, such that after 1,225 purchases, any additional purchases increases the risk of assaults per crime rate.
 - The average state in 2014 owned 159 pieces of armor.
- Operational militarization increases assaults at decreasing rates, with the first 100 purchases increasing assaults by 8.0%. Comparing the marginal means of assaults at 0 operational purchases (1.69 assaults) increases to 2.03 assaults at the 2014 average of 530 pieces of militarized equipment.

Table 1: State and Month Fixed Effects Negative Binomial Regression Predicting Assaults Against Police Officers

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	IRR	SE	IRR	SE	IRR	SE
Clothing _(t-6)	0.975	0.229				
Clothing Stockpile _(t-6)			0.947	0.006***	0.917	0.013***
Clothing Stockpile ² _(t-6)					1.001	0.001***
Armor _(t-6)	0.960	0.021*				
Armor Stockpile _(t-6)			0.924	0.007***	0.819	0.027***
Armor Stockpile ² _(t-6)					1.009	0.001***
Weapons _(t-6)	0.998	0.006				
Weapons Stockpile _(t-6)			0.997	0.001***	0.998	0.001
Weapons Stockpile ² _(t-6)					0.999	0.001
Operational _(t-6)	1.025	0.015*				
Operational Stockpile _(t-6)			1.046	0.003***	1.080	0.006***
Operational Stockpile ² _(t-6)					0.999	0.001***

Log Likelihood -41958.22 -30600.013 -30560.902

Wald chi² 983.46 1144.64 1171.11

Likelihood-Ratio Test LR chi²(4) = 78.22***

Note. *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.001. Acquisitions are in terms of hundreds of purchases.

Data drawn from Defense Logistic Agency, FBI, Census, and Department of Labor

DISCUSSION

- Clothing and armor's reductions in assaults may suggest that it is not necessarily what the purchase is, but the symbol the purchase gives off, that reduces assaults.
- Purchase of guns has no effect on assault rate, suggesting they are not a large factor in whether or not a citizen strikes against the police.
 - This corroborates other analyses on the 1033 Program which showed no effect of weapon purchases on crime rate (Bove & Gavriola, 2015).
- Those purchases that are more covert, supervisory operations are increasing assaults.

Limitations

- Both purchases and assaults are reported at the county level. Scaling these purchases up to a state-level may be confounding across high assaults / low purchase counties.
- Theoretically unclear if we can translate assaults on police to discontent of citizens.

Policy Implications

- The 1033 Program seems to decrease assaults when officers don a militarized 'look'.
- Yet, they increase assaults when police use equipment that could infringe on human rights.
- Future use of these purchases should be considered in light of public's opinion.

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