

Police Body Worn Cameras as Surveillance Tool: What Philadelphia has learned about body worn cameras in police work

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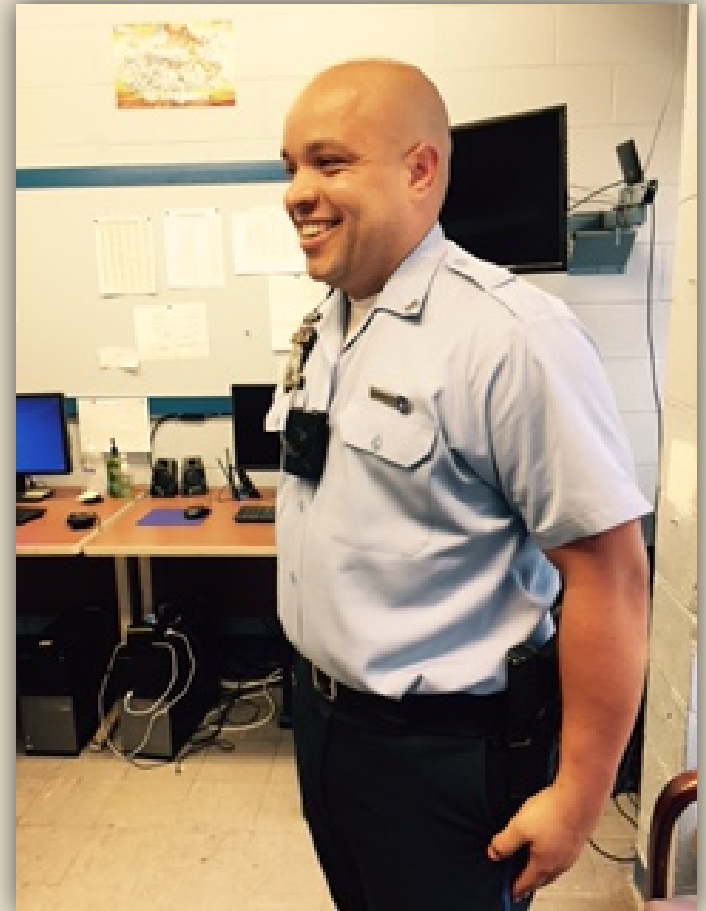
Body worn cameras in policing

- Rapid and widespread adoption
- Expectation: Cameras will positively change officer behavior
 - Increase transparency and police accountability
 - Increase citizen's perception of police legitimacy
- Existing studies focus on:
 - Officer attitudes toward cameras
 - Changes in numbers of use of force and citizen complaints
- Our interest -- how cameras change officer behavior



Cameras as surveillance tool

- How do cameras change officer's approach to policing?
- How do cameras change police-citizen interactions?



Philadelphia context

- 6th largest city
- 4th largest police department serving ~1.5 residents
- Roughly equal proportion of African American & white residents
- PPD active in national conversation on the future of policing
- Measured approach to BWC implementation



Phased approach

- Formed BWC working group
- 22nd district pilot: 41 volunteers Dec. 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015
- 22nd district: all patrol equipped by April 1, 2016



Study design and data

| Qualitative data | Quantitative data |
|--|--|
| <p>2 Pre-pilot focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish general issues related to usability & acceptance• Refine questions & measures on surveys <p>3 Post-pilot focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiences of wearing cameras• Perceptions of effects on the nature of police work <p>1 Post-1 year focus group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiences and effects on officer behavior | <p>Survey instrument:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-deployment survey of officer attitudes & perceptions (n= 84, 58%)• Post-deployment survey of officer attitudes & perceptions (n= 107, 74%) |

QUAL → QUAN → QUAL



Findings

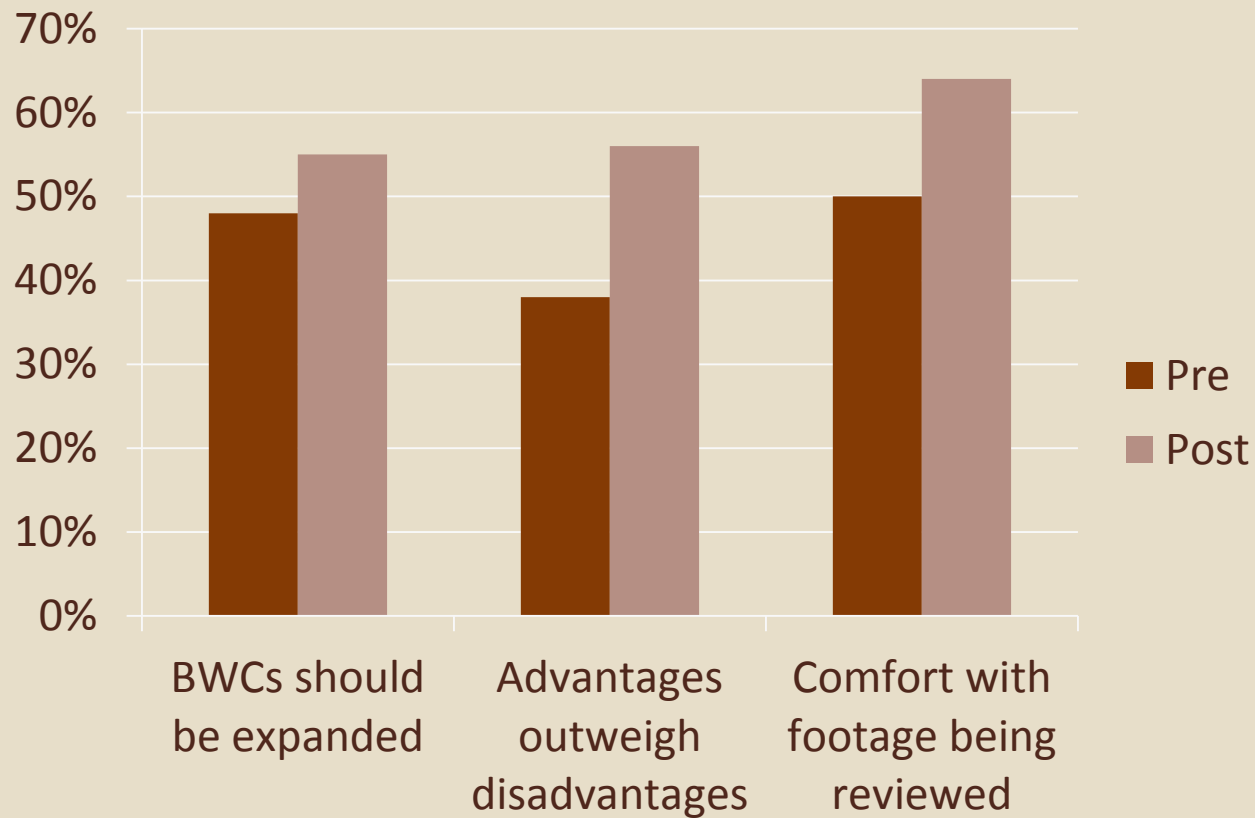


Major findings that emerged

- Greater acceptance of cameras once experienced
- Capacity to document police work
- Changes in police officer behavior on the street
- Not a panacea for community relations



Rise in acceptance



Significantly more nonwhite officers support cameras



Greater capacity to document police work: From 'monitor' to 'tool'

- Cameras as protective of officers
 - In cases of false or exaggerated complaints
 - Concerns with increased IAB investigations allayed
- Create documentaries of arrests
- Gather video and photographic evidence at crime scenes
- Capture conduct of unlawful protesters
- Record standard-setting with citizens
- Enhance quality of written reports



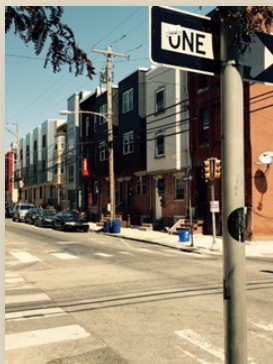
Officers' behavior and discretion

- Large percentage were more cautious in making decisions (65% agreed)
- Perceived impact on professionalism varied by race
 - Significant reduction in the proportion of all respondents who agreed 'An officer acts more professionally'
 - About 40% agreed (down from 58%)
 - Significantly more nonwhites (50%) agreed with this statement than whites (27%)
- Almost a third of all respondents (32%) thought officers were 'less likely to give warnings'



Potential effects on police-community relations

- Chilling effects of less discretion
 - Take more formal vs. informal interventions
 - Prevent second-guessing
 - Avoid interactions with citizens
 - Might uncover drugs or minor criminal behavior requiring an arrest



Not a panacea for police-community relations

- Potential influence on citizen & police behavior during particular encounters
 - Affect on citizen behavior varies based on circumstances
 - To some extent the community is used to surveillance
- However, police-community relations run deep



Limitations



- Findings may not be generalizable to other cities or to other police departments with different:
 - BWC policies for when camera must be turned on – Philly does not use continuous recording
 - Levels of follow-up on footage and tagging
- Our focus groups were assembled from convenience samples
- Our response rate was lower than other surveys done in Mesa (96.5 to 100%) and Orlando (96%)



Implications



Implications for practice

- Widen scope and formalization of camera training
 - Not just technical but also technique
 - Proactive uses
- Control the narrative about cameras
 - Tell stories about benefits and accountability
- Improve monitoring and provide feedback
 - Put systems into place to insure compliance (no 'cherry-picking')
 - Videos become part of feedback loop to improve police practice



Implications for research

- Use videos as data source to document police-citizen interactions
- Develop more nuanced survey questions to measure police discretion
- Explore new technology for automated processing of video
- Measure district variation in BWCs' effects on police-community relations



For further inquiries...

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