

Nudging down crime. How to avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater

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What a failure!



1. How failure is usually due to implementation and not the idea itself.
2. How common interpretations EBP may be failing to encourage good new ideas.



Implementation failure

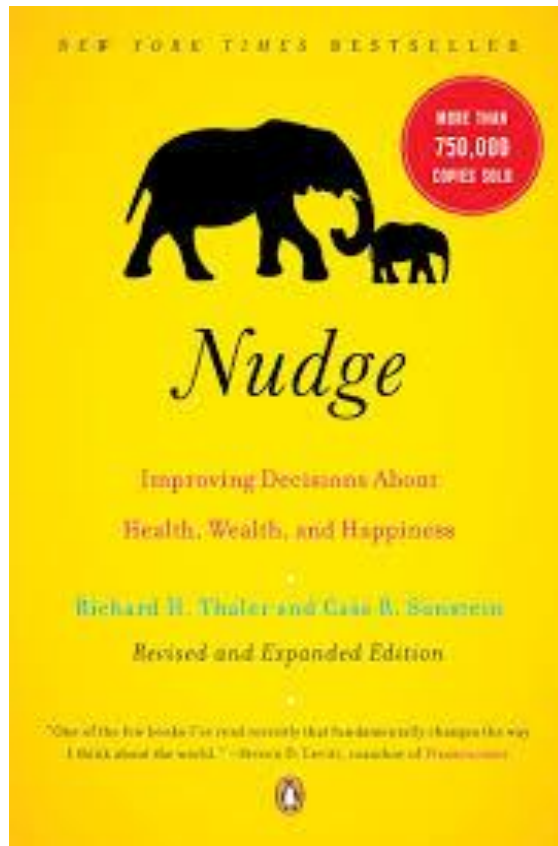
OR

How perceived '*failure*' is usually due to implementation and not to the idea itself.

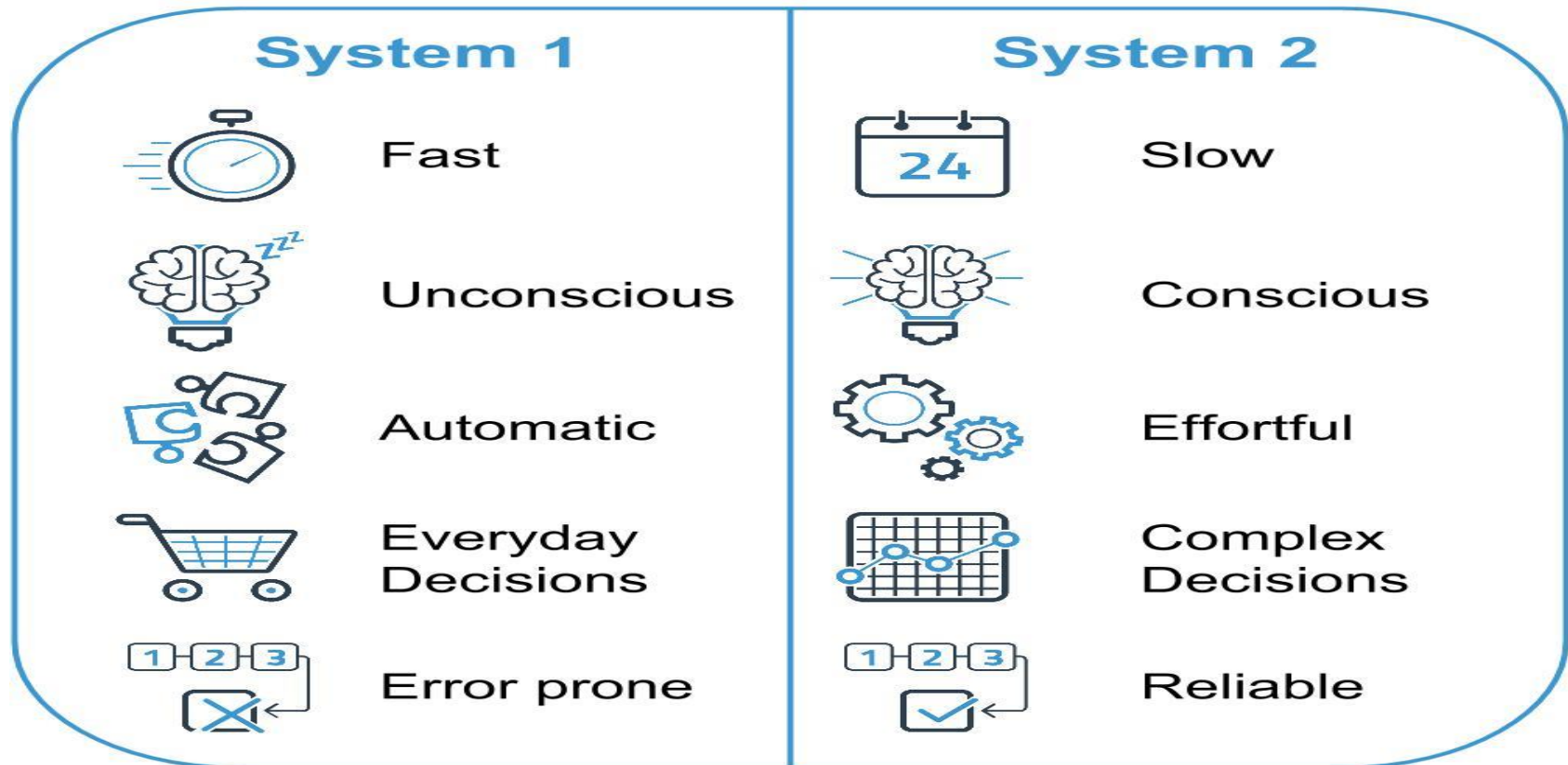


And you won't feel a thing

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Kahneman and Tversky



Influencing the decision making of others (‘Nudging’)

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- **Messenger**
- **Incentives**
- **Norms**
- **Defaults**
- **Saliency**
- **Commitments**
- **Affect**
- **Priming**
- **Ego**



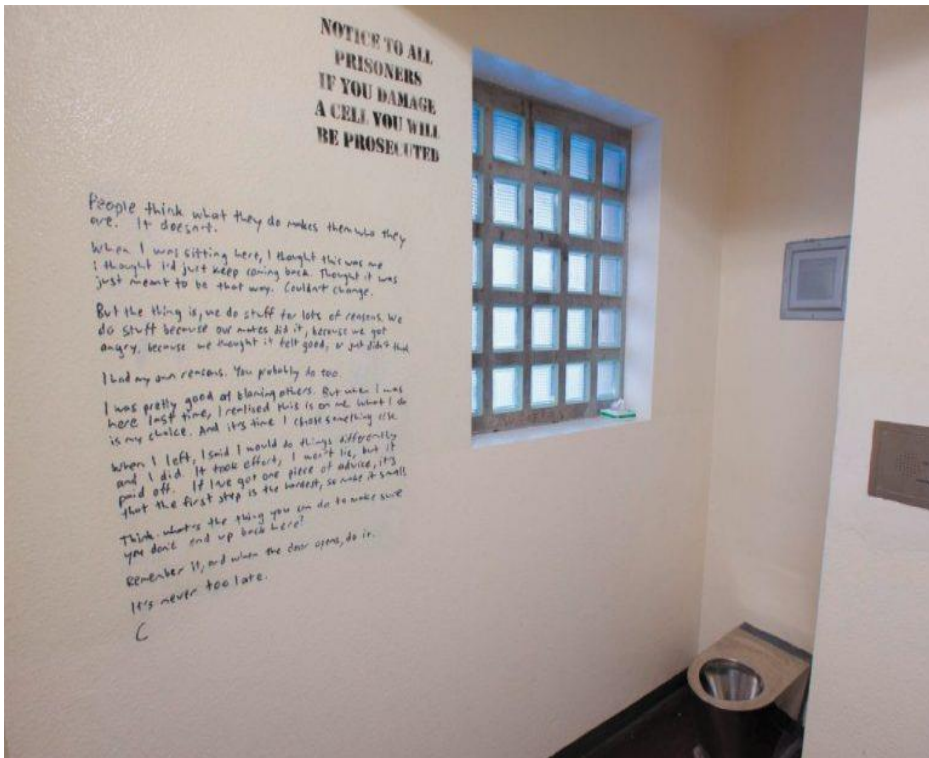
NUDGE_IT (Roach and Pease in press)

1. **Nuanced** – Nudges must be subtle and with testable hypotheses
2. **Unconscious** –Nudges tap into existing bias and default decision making
3. **Discerning** – Nudges should target those on the cusp of choosing the prosocial option
4. **Give people a choice** – Nudges provide choice but encourage uptake of one in particular.
5. **Easy** – Nudges must be easy to explain and implement.
6. **Inexpensive** – Nudges should be cheap to develop, implement and modify.
7. **Testable** –Nudges require a robust evaluation framework to test their effectiveness.



1. Measuring success or failure? (and be careful who you share your ideas with)

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- BIT 'Writing is on the wall' study.
- Prose by an ex-crim.
- Large dataset produced a statistically non-significant result.
- Behaviour change was the only unit of measurement used not modest changes in thinking!
- Research on attitudes and behaviour says they are often different.
- Conclusion – must be a rubbish idea!



Meanwhile back in the real world...

- Current study-revised hypotheses and predictions (not about re-offending per se). Remember we can only nudge those potentially nudgeable.
- Smaller scale trial (one police station)
- Took a step back (wall-gazing not behaviour change)
- DV messages in 4/14 cells
- Simple question at interview –'was there anything memorable about your cell?
- Will revise hypoth's and prior probabilities before step 2 (influencing thinking and behaviour)



Use this as an opportunity to think...
'Why am I here?'
'Am I likely to be here again?'
'Who will be upset by me being here?'
'How can I change for me and for those who love me?'

Change can start
Don't be afraid to



Success (of sorts)

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Perry barr police station

Overall

★★★★★

3/5

Firstly I would just like to mention how disappointed I was to find out Sutton Coldfield ~~now~~ longer has a police station. After multiple visits there I had come a custom to the layout + friendly staff. Times change however and it was time to try something new. On arrival at Perry barr I was impressed by how modern and clean the building looks. I was dealt with promptly by the custody officer and taken to my cell. Arresting officers were complaining about holding cell procedures, said it could be improved. Once in my cell I was again pleasantly surprised by the cleanliness and decor, I mean it was neatly decorated to please all parties but done to a high standard. I did however find a public hair near the toilet, on closer inspection the ginger hint of colour and ~~long~~ length would probably suggest it was mine. sorry P.T.O. →



Daring to fail?

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Durham Constabulary Altogether Better Policing



Thefts from all motor vehicles and the percentage from insecure motor vehicles for the period 01/09/2012 to 31/08/2015, for the four nudge pilot areas

LSOA NAME	All TFMV	Insecure TFMV	Insecure Index	% Tot TFMV
Durham TREATMENT	43	18	337	41.9%
Chester-le-Street CONTROL	45	27	506	60.0%
Wear Valley TREATMENT	87	28	524	32.2%
Wear Valley CONTROL	26	18	337	69.2%



Nudging down TfMV in Durham

(Roach et al., 2016)

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More than a 1/3 of thefts from vehicles in your area involve unlocked cars. **WHY?** Because it's...

EASY to forget to lock your car and close the windows at night.

EASY to assume that because it's parked on your driveway or outside your house that it's somehow 'safer'.

EASY to leave your valuable possessions highly visible.

EASY to forget to register or securely mark the mobile phones, laptops, tablets and kid's games that you leave on the back seat.

EASY to forget to take your sat nav out of your car and remove the holder from the windscreen.

EASY for insurance companies to refuse to pay out when the car was unlocked, leaving you to foot the bill.

EASY for the thieves, as stealing from an unlocked car means that they are less likely to be seen and so more likely get away with it.

EASY

Thieves don't mind if it's your things they take so why make it **EASY** for them? **KEEP YOUR THINGS!**



Altogether Better Policing



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Thefts from all motor vehicles and the percentage from insecure motor vehicles for the pilot period 01/10/2015 to 31/01/2016

LSOA NAME	All TFMV	Insecure TFMV	Insecure Index	% Tot TFMV
Durham TREATMENT	3	1	36	33.0%
Chester-le-Street CONTROL	19	8	286	42.0%
Wear Valley TREATMENT	16	4	143	25.0%
Wear Valley CONTROL	13	9	321	69.0%



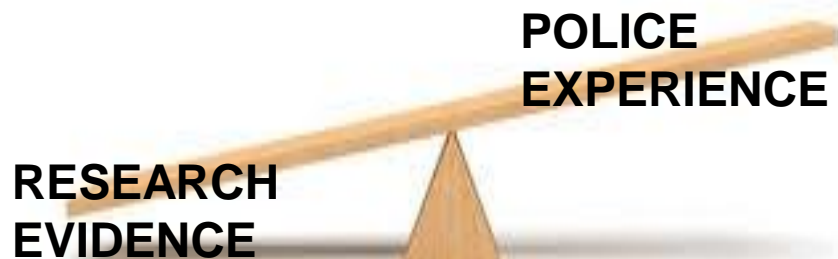
How common perceptions and interpretations of EBP might be failing to encourage good new ideas.



How do academics and police see EBP?

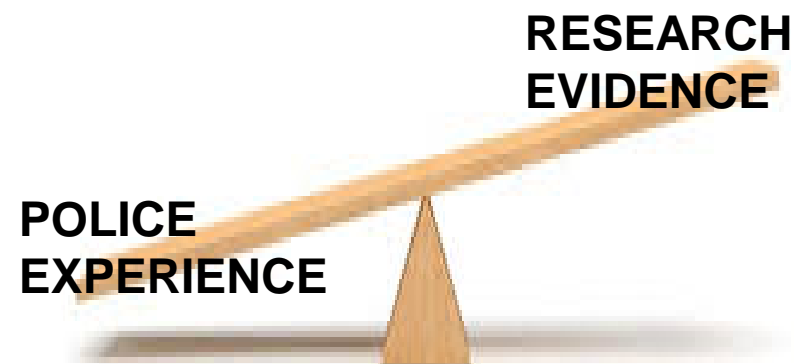
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Academics



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Police



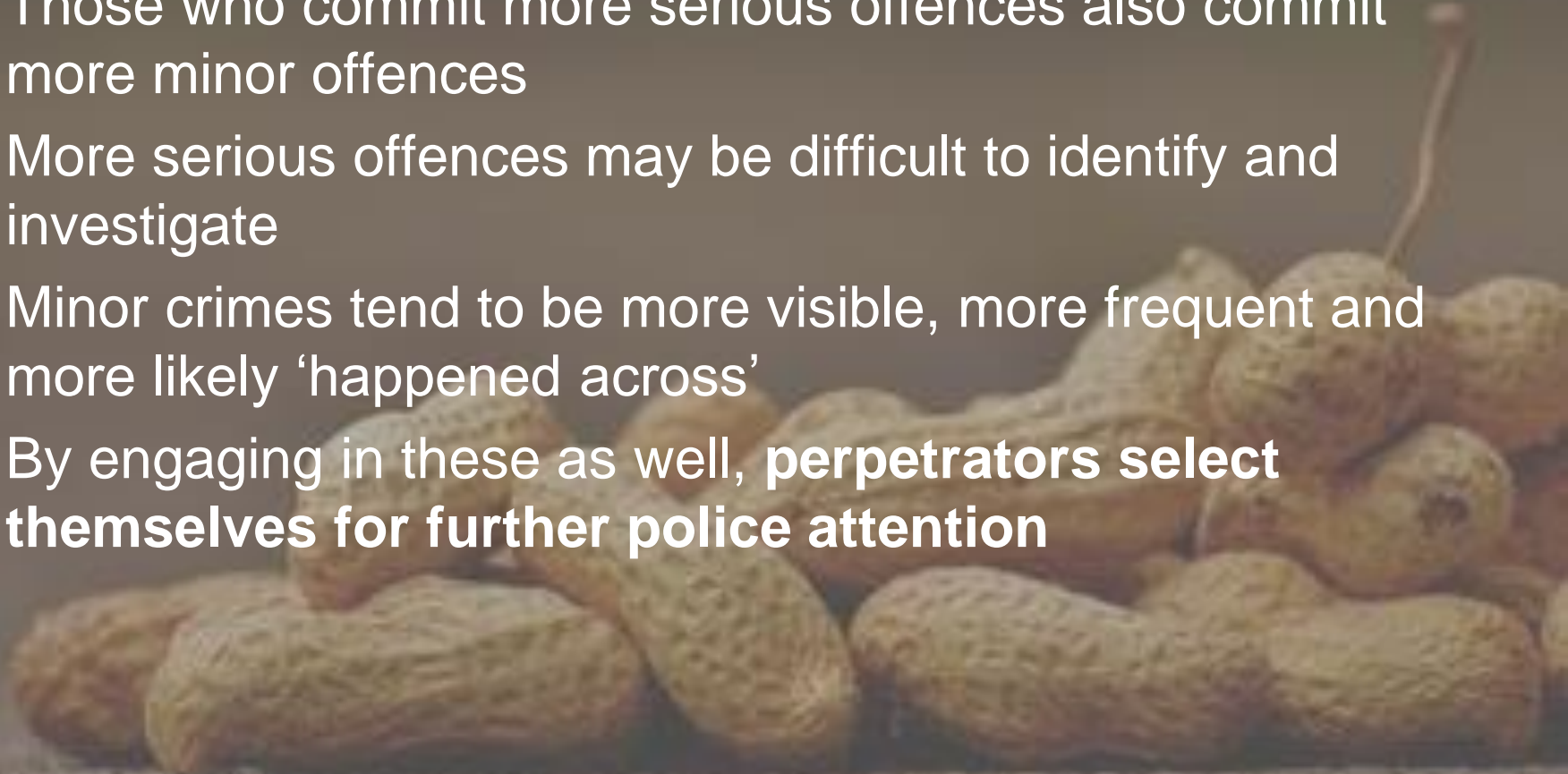
EBP according to Sparrow (2016)

- EBP process is too slow to inform operational police decision-making.
- EBP mounts evaluations of extant strategies and so does not extend or narrow the police repertoire
- EBP concentrates on large aggregated data sets, so neglects important micro-level choices pivotal for success
- EBP emphasises large data and complex designs and so the rate of experimentation is reduced.
- EBP perpetuates traditional mind-sets by privileging approaches which attract senior-level support.



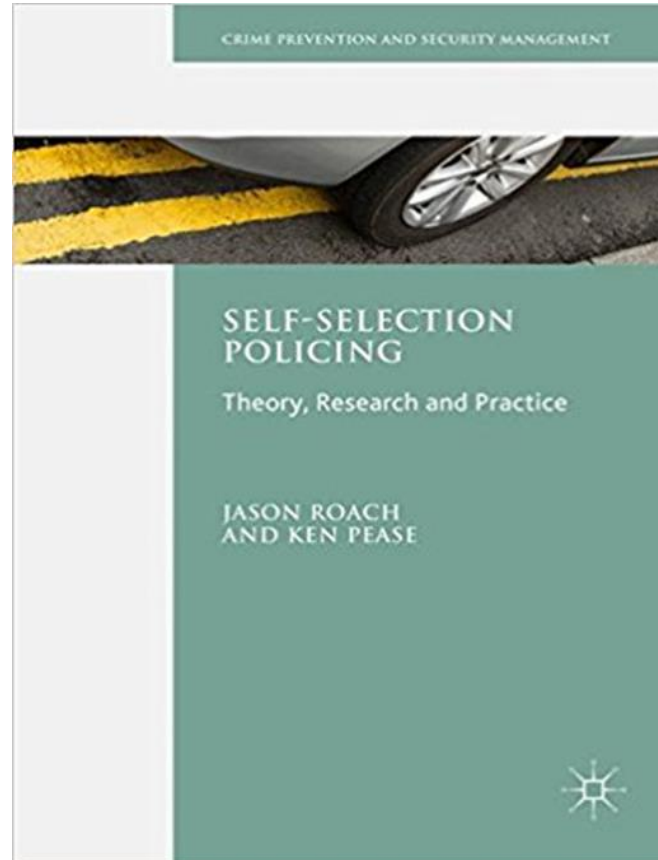
SSP in a nutshell (Roach & Pease, 2016)

- 'Those who do big bad things also do little bad things' or Those who commit more serious offences also commit more minor offences
- More serious offences may be difficult to identify and investigate
- Minor crimes tend to be more visible, more frequent and more likely 'happened across'
- By engaging in these as well, **perpetrators select themselves for further police attention**



Show them that you love them this Christmas.

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Tacit knowledge and the genius of police.

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EBP as a discourager of ideas?



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- My idea might be considered stupid!
- What if it fails? Career over?
- I will need a massive dataset.
- It will take too much time and resources.
- **It will need an RCT and I don't know what one is or how to do one.**



Is EBP evidence all about Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs)?

My RCiTis

There are other ways of collecting and evaluating EBP (horses for courses).



<https://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Research-Map/Pages/Research-Map.aspx>



I'm not the poster-boy for anti-EBP

- My concern is that EBP has too narrow a view of failure (i.e. p values). Failure is not actually failure of an idea but of implementation,
- It only focuses on behaviour not on changing minds (the former does not always immediately follow the latter).
- Common perceptions/misperceptions of EBP are scaring or putting police with good ideas off.
- Good ideas are being prematurely binned and abandoned.





**Let's not throw the baby out
with the bath water.**



End of semi-rant

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Thank you for your attention

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