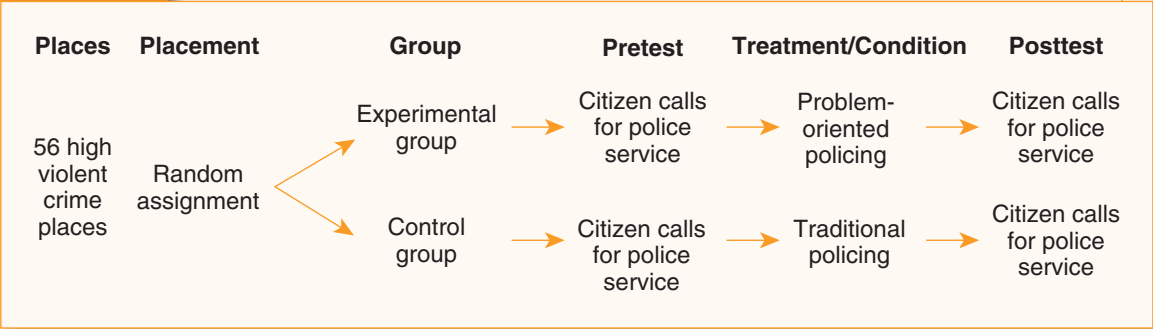


Exhibit 10.4

Randomized Experimental Design Used to Evaluate Problem-Oriented Policing Strategies



Source: Braga, A. A., Weisburd, D. L., Waring, E. J., Mazerolle, L. G., Spelman, W., & Gajewski, F. (1999). Problem-oriented policing in violent crime places: A randomized controlled experiment. *Criminology*, 37(4), 541–580. Reprinted with permission.

To determine which places would receive the problem-oriented strategies and which places would not, 56 neighborhoods were matched into 28 pairs with equal levels of crime, which were then randomly assigned to receive the problem-oriented policing treatment (experimental places). Remember that a key feature of true experimental designs is this **random assignment**. The places that were not selected from the flip in each pair did not receive the new policing strategies (control places). The design of this experimental evaluation is illustrated in Exhibit 10.4.

In each of the experimental places, police officers from the Violent Crime Unit (VCU) of the Jersey City Police Department established networks consistent with problem-oriented policing. For example, community members were used as information sources to discuss the nature of the problems the community faced, the possible effectiveness of proposed responses, and the assessment of implemented responses. In most places, the VCU officers believed that the violence that distinguished these places from other areas of the city was closely related to the disorder of the place. Although specific tactics varied from place to place, most attempts to control violence in these places were actually targeted at the social disorder problems. For example, some tactics included cleaning up the environment of the place through aggressive order maintenance and making physical improvements such as securing vacant lots or removing trash from the street. The independent variable or treatment, then, was the use of problem-oriented policing, which comprised a number of specific tactics implemented by police officers to control the physical and social disorder at experimental violent places. In contrast, control places did not receive these problem-solving efforts; they received traditional policing strategies such as arbitrary patrol interventions and routine follow-up investigations by detectives. No problem-oriented strategies were employed.

Braga et al. (1999) examined the efficacy of these problem-oriented policing strategies by using three separate dependent variables: incident report data, citizen emergency calls for service within each place, and physical observation of each place during the pretest and posttest periods. This variable was used to indicate changes in both physical incivilities at places, such as vacant lots, trash, graffiti, or broken windows, and social incivilities such as drinking in public and loitering. These variables were measured for six-month pre-intervention and post-intervention periods. If the problem-oriented policing approach was effective, then Braga and colleagues should have seen a decrease in incidents and emergency calls for service in the experimental areas in the posttest compared with the control areas. They also should have seen decreased signs of physical and social incivilities in the experimental areas compared with the control areas. Results indicated that the problem-oriented policing strategies examined in this evaluation research appear to have had a great deal of success in controlling and preventing crime.

Random assignment A procedure by which each experimental and control group subject is placed in a group randomly