Promising Strategies to Reduce Gun Violence

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Homicide victimization, 1950-2005
Rate per 100,000 population
Four measures of serious violent crime

Offenses in millions

Total violent crime

Victimizations reported to police

Crimes recorded by police

Arrests for violent crime

Role of Police & CJS


“The police do not prevent crime. This is one of the best kept secrets of modern life.” (Bayley, 1994)
National Academy of Sciences

“There is strong research evidence that the more focused and specific the strategies of the police, the more they are tailored to the problems they seek to address, the more effective the police will be in controlling crime and disorder.”

Problem Analysis

Analysis allows for the focus of limited resources on those people, places, and contexts generating violent crime.
Approximately 80% of homicides occur in an area where fewer than 60,000 people, or 27% of the City’s population, live.
Homicide Rates for Specific Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Rate</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 15-29</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Monroe</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Rochester</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in High Crime Area</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each bar is a subset of the one above it. Monroe/Rochester data are based on an average of 50 homicides per year.

Young Black men living in Rochester’s High Crime Crescent have a homicide rate that is about 65 times that of the nation as a whole.
Promising Gun Violence Reduction Interventions

• Series of studies suggestive of interventions that may reduce gun violence
• Look at common elements
  – Focused deterrence
  – Strategic problem solving
• Put in context Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)
• Raise set research questions that emerge from these interventions
PSN Builds Upon

- Directed Patrol Focused Gun Crime
- Project Exile (Richmond)
- Boston Gun Project (Ceasefire)
- Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI)
Directed Police Patrol

Targeted patrols in high violent crime areas with a focus on illegal gun possession

- Kansas City (Sherman & Rogan, 1995; 1996)
- Indianapolis (McGarrell et al., 2001)
- Pittsburgh (Cohen & Ludwig, 2003)
Key Findings

• Significant reductions in gun crime

• Positive community reaction
Key Questions

• What is causing impact?

• Can the results be sustained?

• What are the key leadership, managerial, and officer behavior components that secured community support?
Focused Interventions

“There is strong research evidence that the more focused and specific the strategies of the police, the more they are tailored to the problems they seek to address, the more effective the police will be in controlling crime and disorder.”

Project Exile

• Increased federal prosecution for gun crimes

• Media campaign to communicate deterrence message

• Evidence of reduced gun crime (Rosenfeld et al. 2005)
Boston Gun Project

- Multi-agency team
- Problem analysis
- Focused intervention
- Lever-pulling strategy
- Threat federal prosecution
- Linkage to opportunities
- Evidence of reduced gun crime (Kennedy, Braga, et al.)
SACSI

- 10 City initiative
- Multi-agency team
- Problem analysis
- Focused intervention
- Lever-pulling strategy
- Threat federal prosecution
- Linkage to opportunities
- Evidence of reduced gun crime – e.g., Indianapolis (McGarrell et al., 2006)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intervention Components</th>
<th>Directed Police Patrol</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific focus on gun crime</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis local gun crime</td>
<td>Geographic patterns</td>
<td>Individual criminal histories</td>
<td>Robust problem analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deterrence focus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street-level contact</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-level deterrence messages</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct communication – lever pulling meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support &amp; link to opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Police driven</td>
<td>U.S. Attorney driven</td>
<td>Multi-agency collaboration</td>
</tr>
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</table>
PSN
National Strategy to Reduce Gun Crime
• Strategic problem solving
• Collaborative partnerships
• Focused interventions
• Federal & local coordinated prosecution
• Increased federal prosecution
• Communication strategy
• Prevention and intervention
Strategic Problem Solving to Focus Interventions

“There is strong research evidence that the more focused and specific the strategies of the police, the more they are tailored to the problems they seek to address, the more effective the police will be in controlling crime and disorder.”

PSN Implementation

- Study of initial implementation of PSN suggests that task forces fall into 3 general categories (based on extent of partnerships, federal prosecution, data driven decision making)

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PSN Impact on Gun Crime?

- As first step, series of case studies of impact at local level
PSN Case Study Evaluation Challenges

- National, “full coverage,” program
- Uneven implementation
- Larger cities offer treatment and comparison sites but may have both citywide and targeted program components
- Smaller and medium cities – may be no logical comparison site
- Variation in data availability (e.g., NIBRS vs. non-NIBRS; outputs/dosage measures)
PSN Comprehensive Case Studies

Criteria for selection:

• PSN strategy implemented in a “meaningful fashion”
  – Evidence of implementation of PSN strategies
  – Evidence of new & enhanced partnerships
  – Integration of research partners & research-based strategies
  – Strategies in operation long enough to have potentially affected gun crime
  – Sufficient base rates of gun crime to allow assessment of impact
  – Regional & demographic variation
PSN Comprehensive Case Studies

Essentially asking – is gun crime being addressed in new ways and is there evidence of impact on levels of gun crime?
Initial PSN Case Studies

• Middle District Alabama (Montgomery) – Project Exile
• Southern District Alabama (Mobile) – Project Exile
• District Massachusetts (Lowell) – Strategic Problem Solving
• Eastern District Missouri (St. Louis) - Strategic Problem Solving
• District Nebraska (Omaha) – Strategic Problem Solving
Project Exile Model

• “Smart prosecution” (coordinated federal-local gun crime prosecution screening)
• Large increase federal prosecution of gun crime
• Significant media campaign
PSN Case Studies – Initial Results

Project Exile Model – MD AL (Montgomery)

- Montgomery witnessed significant decline homicide and gun assaults at a time property crime remained stable (time series)
PSN Case Studies – Initial Results
Project Exile Model – SD AL (Mobile)
• Mobile witnessed significant decline total gun crime & violent crime with a gun at a time property crime increased (time series)
• No change homicide
• Gunshot wound admissions to trauma center declined significantly
Strategic Problem Solving Model

• Multi-agency team
• Strategic problem solving (integration of research)
• Increase federal prosecution or threat of federal prosecution
• Multiple strategies (examples)
  – Smart prosecution
  – Incident reviews
  – Chronic violent offender programs
  – Offender notification meetings
  – Police-probation-parole home visits
PSN Case Studies – Initial Results

Strategic Problem Solving Model – ED MO (St. Louis)

- Violent gun crime and homicide declined in target areas but also declined in contiguous and control areas
- Decline may be due to program impact that generalized beyond target area
- Decline may have been due to some other factor affecting treatment, control and contiguous areas
PSN Case Studies – Initial Results

Strategic Problem Solving Model – D MA (Lowell)

- Gang focused lever pulling
- 28% reduction in gun assaults
- Statistically significant reduction and greater than that observed in other MA communities
PSN Case Studies – Initial Results

Strategic Problem Solving Model – D NE (Omaha)

- Monthly firearms offenses declined 20% after implementation PSN (time series)
- Property crime stable during same period
Summary - PSN Case Studies

To date,

• All five sites experienced a statistically significant decline in gun crime following implementation of PSN

• In four of the five sites, the decline in gun crime was greater than the comparison (either other neighborhoods, cities or with trend in property crime)
Additional Suggestive Evidence

- Strategic Problem Solving Model – MD NC (Durham, Greensboro, High Point, Salisbury, Winston-Salem)
- High Point separate target specific impact analysis
- Salisbury small N, low statistical power
- Three tests (Durham, Greensboro, Winston-Salem)
PSN Case Studies – Initial Results

Strategic Problem Solving Model – MD NC

- Durham – total firearms offenses decline from 76.7 per month to 68.9 per month but not statistically significant
- Greensboro – statistically significant decline in total firearms offenses
- Winston-Salem - statistically significant decline in total firearms offenses
Additional Suggestive Evidence

• Chicago (Papachristos, Meares and Fagan)

• Stockton (Braga)

• Thus, no claim PSN has reduced gun crime in all jurisdictions, but suggestive evidence that PSN interventions can have an impact on gun crime
Drug Market Interventions

- Arise out of problem analyses that link gun violence to drug markets and gang involvement
- Take a focused deterrence approach
- Include multiple strategies for communicating to high-risk populations
- Attempt to link to services & opportunities
Drug Market Intervention

- High Point, NC
- Winston-Salem, NC
- Raleigh, NC
- Providence, RI
- Rockford, IL
- Nassau County, NY
## Promising Practices

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<td>Indianapolis</td>
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<td>Greensboro</td>
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Promising Practices

- Some combination of focused deterrence, communication, data-driven problem solving, & linkage to opportunities, appears promising in reducing gun crime
Lingering Research Questions

• What is happening in the remaining PSN districts and other cities where PSN has been implemented?
  – “Compstat” and “Broken Windows” Issue

• Is the impact short-term or sustained?
Lingering Research Questions

• What is the impact on individual offenders in contrast to neighborhood/community effects?
  – Indianapolis SACSI Intervention
  – Indianapolis Lever Pulling Experiment
  – Kansas City PSN Intervention
  Vs.
  – Chicago PSN (Impact on Gun Re-offending)
  – High Point PSN (Reduced re-offending among meeting attendees)
Lingering Research Questions

• Which program components are producing the impact?

• Can we increase the scientific rigor of the tests of these “promising practices?”
Summary

Strategic Components

• Focus on people, networks, places, contexts driving violence
• Credible & focused deterrence
• Communication
• Credible link to social support
PSN Implementation

- What distinguished symbolic, narrow, and strategic implementation?

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- Credible & focused deterrence
- Communication
- Credible link to social support

Organizational Foundations

- Leadership & Commitment
- Organizational & Inter-organizational Relationships
- Data-driven
Citations

- Boston (Braga et al., 2001a,b)
- Indianapolis (McGarrell et al., 2006)
- Omaha (Hipple et al., forthcoming)
- Lowell (McDevitt et al., 2007)
- Chicago (Papachristos et al., 2006)
- High Point (Lang et al., 2007)
- Greensboro (Hipple et al., forthcoming)
- Winston-Salem (Hipple et al., forthcoming)
- Stockton (Braga, 2007)
- Richmond (Rosenfeld et al., 2005)
- Montgomery (McGarrell et al., 2007)
- Mobile (Hipple et al., forthcoming)
- St. Louis (Decker et al., 2007)
- Indianapolis (Chermak, 2008)
- Kansas City (WDMO PSN Task Force, personal communication)