

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Federal Initiatives to Reduce Gun, Gang and Drug Market Violence Edmund F. McGarrell

Background: Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) was initiated by the US Department of Justice in 2001 as a comprehensive national program to reduce gun violence. In an effort to take a similar approach to address gang-related violence, the Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative (CAGI) was launched by DOJ in 2007. Also in 2007, DOJ supported the development of a training and technical assistance program to assist local communities implement the Drug Market Intervention initiative known as DMI.

PSN, CAGI and DMI share a common approach that builds upon several promising initiatives that employ a focused deterrence model. This model seeks to focus enforcement resources on the people, places and groups believed to be at highest risk for involvement in gun, gang, and drug market violence. It relies on partnerships among local, state and federal law enforcement, other criminal justice agencies, social services, and community groups and it employs data-driven problem solving processes. PSN and CAGI are coordinated by the U.S. Attorney's Offices whereas DMI has typically been coordinated by a local law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office.

Data and Methods: The primary method of evaluation involved comparison of violent crime trends in the PSN and CAGI cities with trends in other U.S. cities. For PSN, all U.S. cities with a population over 100,000 were included. Thus, 82 PSN treatment cities were compared with 170 comparison cities. The CAGI evaluation compared all 18 CAGI cities with the trend in crime in 249 comparable U.S. cities. Both studies controlled for city characteristics known to influence levels of violent crime. To date, DMI has been evaluated by single-city studies in High Point, NC; Nashville, TN; and Rockford, IL. The RAND Corporation is currently conducting a multi-site evaluation of DMI through an award by the National Institute of Justice.

Findings: PSN cities experienced a greater reduction in violent crime when compared to non-PSN cities. The findings were most pronounced when considering the level of implementation dosage. For example, PSN target cities in high federal gun prosecution districts experienced an approximate 13 percent decline in violent crime whereas non-PSN cities in low federal gun prosecution districts experienced an 8 percent increase in violent crime. The CAGI results were similar although the only statistically significant decline was observed for CAGI cities with high levels of enforcement. These cities experienced an approximate 15 percent decline in violent crime that was significant when contrasted with other cities. The DMI single city evaluations showed evidence of significant declines although there were inconsistencies across the cities in terms of the impact on violent, property, and drug crimes.

Implications for Evidenced Based Policy: These findings are consistent with prior research that suggests that highly focused and targeted enforcement strategies, when effectively implemented, can result in lower levels of violent crime. Additionally, future federal violence reduction strategies may benefit from assessment of the local capacity for implementation. Lower capacity sites would benefit from a planning period for capacity building to enhance the likelihood of successful implementation. This type of capacity assessment could also assist with implementing high quality, rigorous evaluations.



School of Criminal Justice

College of Social Science

Michigan State University
560 Baker Hall
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1118

Phone: 517/ 355-2197
Fax: 517/ 432-1787
Web: www.cj.msu.edu

Federal Initiatives to Reduce Gun, Gang, and Drug Market Violence

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Edmund F. McGarrell
Director and Professor
School of Criminal Justice

Three Major DOJ Initiatives

- Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)
- Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative (CAGI)
- Drug Market Intervention (DMI)

PSN

- National DOJ program to reduce firearms crime
- Launched 2001; still operational at much lower level of funding
- PSN task forces in all 94 U.S. Attorney's Offices

CAGI

- Launched from 2007-2009
- 12 U.S. Attorney's Offices
- 18 cities

DMI

- Initially developed in High Point, NC
- Additional communities implemented
- DOJ launched training and technical assistance program in 2007
- Over 30 cities participating

Focused Deterrence

- Focus on specific crime problem (guns, gangs, drug markets)
- Change the perceived risk of arrest and sanctions for these behaviors
- Expand enforcement resources through local, state, federal partnerships
- Increase risk of federal prosecution for gun crime

PSN Impact

- Assess impact of PSN in all U.S. cities with populations of 100,000+
- Trend in violent crime 2000-01 compared to 2002-06
- Compare PSN target cities with non-target cities
- Compare cities by level of PSN implementation dosage (range 3-9)

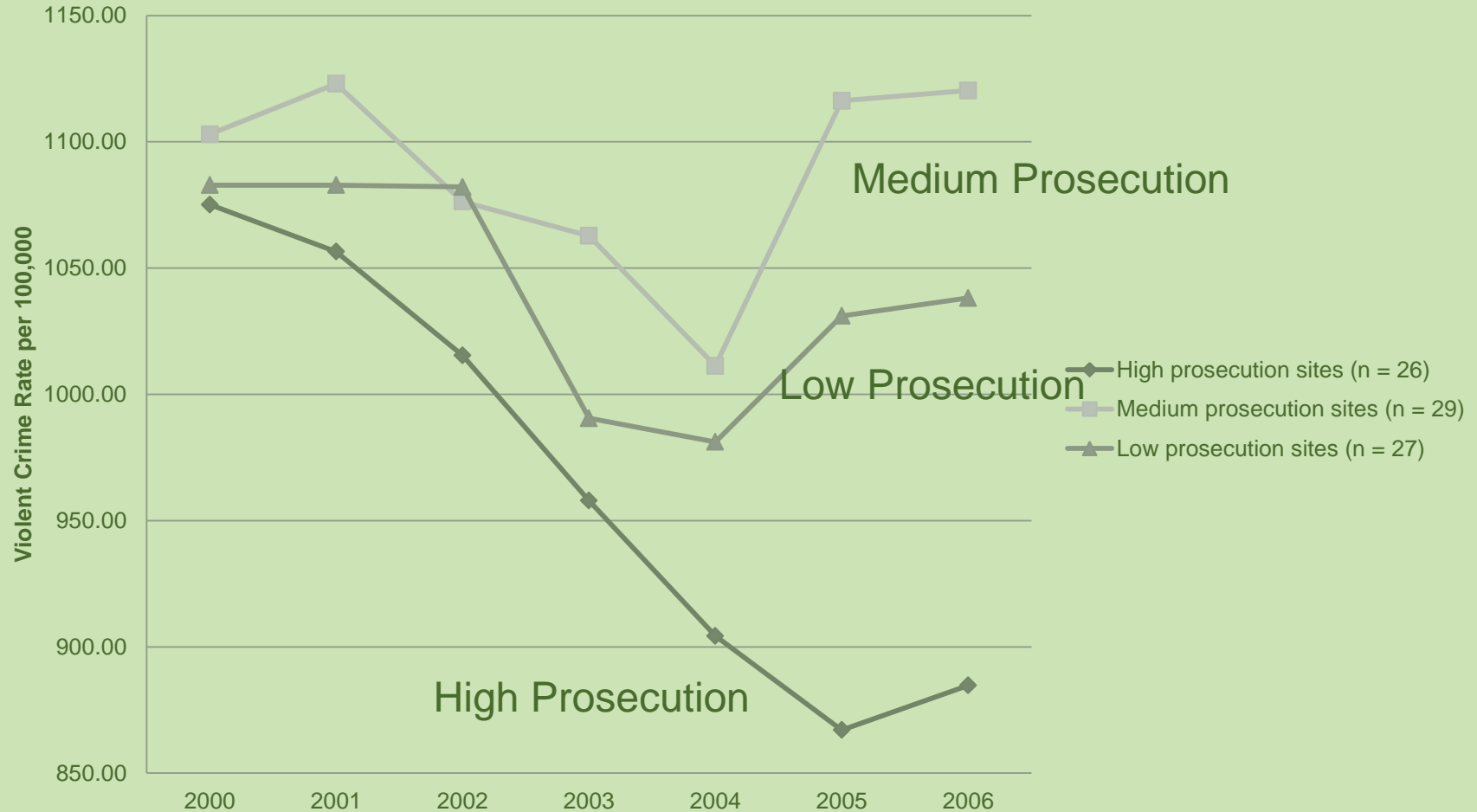
Step One

- PSN target cities had significantly larger declines in violent crime than non-target cities

Step Two – Assess by Level of Implementation

- Target cities in high implementation districts (-13% violent crime)
- Non-target cities in low implementation districts (+8% violent crime)

Violent Crime Trends in PSN Target Cities by Level Federal Prosecution



CAGI Evaluation

- 18 CAGI cities compared to 249 similar cities
- 18 CAGI cities compared to sample of 34 cities based on propensity matching

CAGI Evaluation

- Overall CAGI cities had lower level of violent crime but the difference was not statistically significant
- When controlling for level of implementation of enforcement, high enforcement CAGI cities had 15 percent decline (statistically significant)

Drug Market Intervention (DMI)

- Same principles & strategies applied to open, overt drug markets
- Goals
 - Eliminate the drug market
 - Reduce crime & disorder
 - Restore community

DMI Evaluation

Three case studies (High Point, NC;
Nashville, TN; Rockford, IL)

- Declines of 10-50%
- Inconsistent findings by specific crime type
- National evaluation now underway by RAND Corp.

Conclusions

- Highly focused and targeted enforcement can result in significant declines in violent crime
- Implementation is critical
- Assessment of capacity for implementation would increase likelihood of impact of federal funding
 - Low capacity sites would benefit from planning process
- Capacity building also critical for high quality evaluations