Reducing Gun Crimes: Actionable Policies for Police Organizations

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Abstract: Over ninety-nine percent of gun-related homicides in the U.S. involved a routinely occurring gun incident. More resources should be dedicated to addressing gun crimes by police organizations, especially those at the local level. Local police bear the brunt of most gun crimes and bulk of their investigations; a strong need thus exists for understanding related policy recommendations. Various policies and recommendations against gun crimes have been put forward resulting from related studies and evaluations. What they are and whether or how they should be adopted are not always clearly understood, however. This article provides a review of various gun-crime policies and programs to provide both a conceptual understanding of different approaches to gun crimes and specific choices of actionable gun crime policies. The results include a categorization of policy recommendations and a discussion of whether particular or more types of policies should be pursued and conditions under which these recommendations can be implemented successfully.

Keywords: Police programs, gun crimes, policy recommendations.

Introduction

Rates of firearm deaths are increasing. The data from 2019 indicates, for instance, that there were 14,414 gun-related homicides (CDC.gov, 2021). Over ninety-nine percent of gun-related homicides involved a routinely occurring individual gun incident, during which American citizens are at a high risk of being killed. More resources should be dedicated to addressing gun crimes at the local level as l ocal law enforcement agencies usually are the first line of defense in dealing with gun crimes. A strong need thus exists for understanding related policy recommendations for local police departments.

Various policy recommendations on firearm-related crimes have emerged out of research studies and program evaluations. Given the breadth of options available, guidance may be needed to help choose the right fit for a given agency and/or community. This

article provides a comprehensive review of current firearm crime policies and programs, and offers guidance to help law enforcement agencies determine how to approach actionable recommendations. To do so, several policy recommendations based on the review are presented. Although some reviews of police gun crime programs were conducted previously, they tended to be focused on limited types and/or numbers of interventions. This paper covers four types of policy recommendations to provide law enforcement agencies specific choices of actionable gun crime policies.

Gun crimes addressed in this article range from illegal possession, unlawfully receiving or transferring a firearm, to violent crimes such as robberies and homicides. Within these types of gun crimes, literature suggests three types of publications: (1) those aimed at understanding causes and characteristics of gun crimes, (2) those examining efficacy of gun-related legislations, and (3) those evaluating effectiveness of police strategies that address gun crimes. This paper is a review of policy recommendations resulting from studies of police interventions against various gun crimes stated above with the goal of reducing individual gun incidents that cause the overwhelming majority of firearm-involved crimes. The four types of policy recommendations are suggested for police organizations to consider, including problem-oriented policing, comprehensive approach, situational/routine activities, and professional law enforcement.

Methodology of Review

This review is based on published journal articles and other research-based publications that address policy recommendations on daily gun crimes. A comprehensive search based on a series of keywords was conducted across nine electronic academic databases, i.e., Criminal Justice Abstract, Criminal Justice Database, Social Science Database, Sociological Abstracts, Sociology Database, Medline, Legal Information Reference Center, Policy File Index, and Public Health Database, with different combinations of the following search terms: "police," "law enforcement," "gun," "firearm," "gun crime," "gun violence," and "risk." Also, the reference lists from previous reviews were used to identify studies that were missed in the electronic database search. These search activities initially led to a list of 101 relevant publications. These were then screened to determine whether they were consistent with this review's guiding question: What police policies/programs should be adopted for reducing gun crimes? Upon closer examination, many of these publications do not address specific police policies on gun crimes and eventually fifty-one articles were found appropriate and selected for review.

Since the purpose is to include as many studies as possible with the goal of developing a comprehensive understanding of police policies related to gun crimes, all studies found addressing police policies and providing recommendations to police on gun crime strategies were included. If not, they were excluded. The selected 51 studies were categorized according to types of interventions or strategies and ultimately reviewed in terms of whether the

interventions were recommended as viable policies or programs. This article is thus informed by evaluations reported and related contexts and issues addressed within these articles.

Review Results

Policies and Programs Implemented

Police policies and programs designed to address gun crimes have been implemented in various locations, with some gaining high levels of name recognition, such as Operation Ceasefire, Project Exile, Project Safe Neighborhoods, Project Felon, and Project Triggerlock (Carter, 2006). Table 1 provides an overview of these programs and the locations where evaluative studies have been conducted. While most programs were based on the problem-oriented policing concept, some took an approach consistent with concepts seen in community policing strategies. Additionally, there were programs focusing on tackling situationally-driven instances of gun crime, and others that continued to follow a more traditional professional approach to law enforcement.

Table 1: Police Policies/Programs on Gun Crimes

Policies/Programs	*Locations*
Problem-oriented Policing	
Directed patrol/Weed and Seed	Indianapolis (IN)
Hot-spot and predictive policing	Chicago (IL)
Offense Type-related	Richmond (VA)
Place-oriented/Targeted	New York (NY)
Project Exile	Richmond (VA), Southeastern Virginia
Project Safe Neighborhoods	Southern District of Alabama
Regional crime gun processing protocols	Regional (US)
Seizures/Possession arrests	Houston (TX)
Suppression/Focused deterrence	Los Angeles (CA)
Suppression/Gang-related	Baltimore (MD)
Suppression/Gang-related	Minneapolis (MN), Stockton (CA)
Suppression/Pulling levers/Focused deterrence	Boston (MA)
Suppression/Seizure	St. Louis (MO)
Suppression patrol	Pittsburgh (PA)
Targeted uniformed patrol	Kansas City (MO)
Weed and Seed/Abatement	Buffalo (NY)
Comprehensive Approach	
Balanced/Integrated	Various cities such as Baltimore (MD), Baton Rouge (LA), Boston (MA), Buffalo

	(NY), Indianapolis (IN), Minneapolis and St. Paul (MN), Richmond (CA), etc. (US)
Community policing	Richmond (VA), Milwaukee (WI), and Stockton (CA); St. Louis (MO)
Community policing/Abatement	Oakland (CA)
Situational/Routine Activities	
Contextual/Routine Activities	Eastern City (Anonymous)
Firearm removal	Philadelphia (PA)
Risk Terrain Modeling	Atlantic City (NJ), Little Rock (AR)
Undercover stings	Chicago (IL), Detroit (MI), Gary (IN)
Professional Law Enforcement	
Ballistics analysis	Boston (MA)
Gun crime prosecutions	Federal (US)
Gun tracing	Virginia Beach (VA)
Policing firearms purchase violations	Federal (US)
Police responsiveness	Philadelphia (PA)

Most studies in this review offered policy recommendations to police organizations. These recommendations can be classified into eight categories (See Table 2): 1) Directed, enhanced, or hot spot uniformed patrol; 2) Focused deterrence or targeted interventions; 3) Balanced or integrated methods; 4) Understanding perceptions; 5) Situational interventions as risk terrain modeling and routine patrol activities; 6) Situational interventions in forms of firearm removal/risk assessment, differences in licensing, and sting operations; 7) Rapid response and vigorous prosecution; and 8) Gun tracing/ballistics evidence and related operations. These categories are organized into four orientations here in terms of their policy recommendations, i.e., problem-oriented policing (1 and 2), comprehensive approach (3 and 4), situational/routine activity interventions (5 and 6), and professional law enforcement (7 and 8).

Problem-oriented Policing and Recommendations

Problem -oriented policing strategies include place-oriented strategies, directed/targeted patrol, hot-spot policing, gun suppression, and gang- or offender-based suppression . Problem-oriented policing emerged in the 1980's as an alternative approach to dealing with crime problems by addressing the root causes of crimes and disorders through analyses and evaluations (Goldstein, 1990). Buffalo (NY)'s gun abatement program and New York City's Street Crime Unit, for example, targeted drug and weapons dealers and other sources of illegal firearms and firearm-related violence hot spots (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999). The Kansas City Gun Project (Sherman and Rogan, 1995)

involved proactive patrols focused on firearms seizures in gun-crime hot spots. Indianapolis and Pittsburgh's directed patrol programs focused on suspicious activities and locations and suppressing illegal guns on city streets (Cohen and Ludwig, 2003 and McGarrell, Chermak, Weiss, and Wilson, 2001). St. Louis's Firearm Suppression Program sought parental consent to search for and seize guns of juveniles (Rosenfeld and Decker, 1996). Boston's Operation Ceasefire and subsequent interventions in Minneapolis (MN), Baltimore (MD), Los Angeles (CA), Stockton (CA), and Indianapolis (IN) were aimed at reducing youth firearm-related violence by isolating a small number of chronically offending gang members responsible for much of the youth gun violence (Allis, 1997; Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Piehl, 2001; Braga et al., 2002; Kennedy, Braga, Piehl, and Waring, 2001; Tita, Riley, Ridgeway, and Greenwood, 2005). Other initiatives, such as Richmond, Virginia's Project Exile and the Southern District of Alabama's Project Safe Neighborhoods, were focused on specific types of gun crimes and cases such as robbery, homicide, and drug (O'Shea, 2007; Payne and Gainey, 2008; Raphael and Ludwig, 2003; and Scales and Baker, 2000).

Of the seven studies of directed, enhanced, or hot-spot uniformed patrols (See Table 2), six of these recommended that directed or enhanced patrols of high gun crime locations be organized to reduce gun crime (Cohen and Ludwig, 2003; Koper and Mayo-Wilson, 2006; McGarrell, Chermak, Weiss, and Wilson, 2001; Sherman, 2001; Sherman, Shaw, and Rogan, 1995; and Wells, Zhang, and Zhao, 2012). The Kansas City Gun Project and its subsequent replications in Indianapolis and Pittsburgh (McGarrell, Chermak, Weiss, and Wilson, 2001 and Sherman and Rogan, 1995), for example, produced findings that support the policy recommendation for proactive patrols focused on firearms seizures in gun-crime hot spots. Reviews by Sherman (2001), the National Research Council (2005), and Koper and Mayo-Wilson (2006) also suggest that directed uniformed patrols in gun crime hot spots be used in reducing gun crimes. One hotspot simulation study recommended hotspot and predictive policing for purpose of cost-effectiveness in crime reduction only (Mohler, 2014).

Of the eleven studies of focused deterrence and targeted interventions (See Table 2), ten recommended similar programs for reducing gun violence (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Piehl, 2001; Braga and Weisburd, 2015; Kennedy, 1997; Kennedy, Braga, Piehl, and Waring, 2001; Kennedy, Piehl, and Braga, 1996; Koper, Woods, and Kubu, 2013; National Research Council, 2005; Reichert, Smith, Adams, Gleicher, Hill, and Escamilla, 2018; Sierra-Arévalo, 2013; and Tita, Riley, Ridgeway, and Greenwood, 2005). A national survey of police agencies serving cities of over 100,000 people recommended more focused, intensive gun-related enforcement and prevention consistent with the problem-oriented policing principles (Koper, Woods, and Kubu, 2013).

Comprehensive Approach and Recommendations

The comprehensive approach embodies key elements in both community-oriented policing and traditional law enforcement strategies, which may include problem-oriented policing

principles, with a vision for long-term sustainable impacts. The gun abatement strategy used in East Bay Corridor in Oakland (CA) and Indianapolis (IN), for example, involved community policing, domestic violence protocol, hotline, gun buy-back, and monetary reward for guns seized, in addition to interrupting sources of illegal guns, deterring illegal gun possession and carrying, judicial response, and education programs (OJJDP, 1999). Other policies or ideas based on the comprehensive approach include using community policing in various cities such as Richmond (VA), Milwaukee (WI), Stockton (CA), and St. Louis (MO) in the US and contemplating generalist and specialist orientations to address gun violence in London (UK) (Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2004; Fagan, 2002; Koper, Woods, and Isom, 2016; and Makarios and Pratt, 2012; OJJDP, 1999; Police Executive Research Forum, 2019; Redding and Shalf, 2001; Roberts and Innes, 2009).

Balanced or integrated methods were recommended in all nine studies focusing on them, even though no formal evaluations were conducted in four of them, and only limited effectiveness was found in two (See Table 2). This approach generally includes both community crime prevention and law enforcement activities (Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2004; Fagan, 2002; Koper, Woods, and Isom, 2016; and Makarios and Pratt, 2012; OJJDP, 1999; Police Executive Research Forum, 2019; Redding and Shalf, 2001; and Roberts and Innes, 2009). In addition, this approach may involve addressing access to, possession of, and use of firearms (OJJDP, 1999), balancing specialization and generalization of police functions (Roberts and Innes, 2009), mitigating implicit biases and promoting procedural justice and accountability (Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016), firearms tracing and analysis (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2004), and inter-agency law enforcement cooperation and school policies (Redding and Shalf, 2001).

Police perceptions of gun violence may have policy implications as part of the comprehensive approach. Although there were no strategies and evaluations, three such studies are included here because they addressed policy ideas based on better understanding of police perceptions (See Table 2). It was recommended that suppressive police action be tempered with concern for civil rights (Ezeonu, 2010) and the role of police chiefs and sheriffs be considered in shaping gun policies (Thompson, Price, Dake, and Tatchell, 2006 and Thompson, Price, Khubchandani, and Dowling, 2011).

Situational/Routine Activities and Recommendations

Situational and routine activity concepts are aimed at reducing gun crimes by targeting specific risk elements and thereby making crime locations less attractive to offenders. This approach includes the Risk Terrain Modeling, which involves deploying police officers in areas prone to gun crimes, and situational crime prevention, which focuses on disrupting the opportunities for crime to occur. The risk terrain modelling (RTM) used in Little Rock

(AR) and Atlantic City (NJ), for example, incorporated measures of social and physical environmental factors that may increase the likelihood of gun crimes occurring in one area over another (Drawve, Moak, and Berthelot, 2014). Another study in the same conceptual realm conducted in Eastern City (Anonymous) paid attention to other environmental and operational variables, such as characteristics of various police districts and types of investigative and patrol activities. Undercover stings, seen in Chicago (IL), Detroit (MI), and Gary (IN), firearm removal in Philadelphia (PA), and differential licensing strategies in a variety of jurisdictions also utilized situational interventions (Allred and Denney, 2007; Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016; Goralski, 2013; Johnson, 2017; Small, Sorenson, and Berk, 2019; Sorenson and Schut, 2018; and Webster, Bulzacchelli, and Zeoli, 2006).

Of the four studies of situational interventions as risk terrain modeling (RTM) and routine patrol activities, such programs/policies were recommended in all four (See Table 2). Investments in RTM and similar data modeling techniques for gun crime were recommended for improving cost effectiveness (Dahmm, 2019) and predicting and preventing gun crime (Drawve, Moak, and Berthelot, 2014). One study suggested that routine patrol activities, such as traffic and pedestrian stops, were effective in the seizure of illegal firearms through charges associated with a city ordinance that addressed unlawful use of a weapon (Burruss and Decker, 2002). Another study indicated the importance of routine patrol officer visibility in certain police districts in raising the level of security (Jiao, 2014).

Situational interventions in forms of firearm removal/risk assessment, differential licensing, and sting operations were examined in seven studies and recommended in six (See Table 2), particularly in domestic or intimate partner violence and abuse situations (Allred and Denney, 2007; Goralski, 2013; and Sorenson and Schut, 2018) and in policing gun dealerships (Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016; Webster, Bulzacchelli, and Zeoli, 2006). Different training from police was recommended for private gun carriers (Johnson, 2017). Removal of a firearm at the scene of intimate partner violence (IPV) alone, however, was not recommended in one study (Small, Sorenson, and Berk, 2019).

Professional Law Enforcement and Recommendations

Professional law enforcement approach is focused on rapid response to gun related calls, scientific investigation of gun crimes, and vigorous prosecution of gun law violators. Studies have shown that these efforts may improve gun crime arrests and clearance and have a deterrence and incapacitation effect on individuals who intend to violate or have violated firearms regulations. These activities are on-going in most law enforcement organizations in the U.S., including rapid response to gun calls in Philadelphia (PA), ballistics analysis in Boston (MA), and prosecution of firearm-related crimes and violations at the federal level (Braga and Pierce, 2011; Kessler, Harrington, and Hill, 2003; O'Shea, 2007; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018; and Wyant, 2014).

Professional law enforcement activities such as rapid response to gun crimes and vigorous prosecution of gun law violators were recommended in six of the seven studies (See Table 2). The recommendations include more vigorous enforcement of gun laws (Kessler, Harrington, and Hill, 2003), mandatory prison sentences (U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, 1999), more efficient policing of gun-purchase denials (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018), and using investigation and prosecution activities to achieve deterrence and incapacitation (O'Shea, 2007; Payne and Gainey, 2008; and Raphael and Ludwig, 2003).

Gun tracing and ballistics evidence and related operations were recommended in all five such studies (Braga and Pierce, 2011; Gagliardi, 2009; Patterson, 2010; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2011; and Police Executive Research Forum, 2019) (See Table 2) although a systematic evaluation was not conducted in three of them (Gagliardi, 2009; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2011; and Police Executive Research Forum, 2019). It was recommended that gun tracing and an integrated ballistics identification system (IBIS) be combined with compatible organizational management practices (Braga and Pierce, 2011), a gun trace unit be created as a viable alternative to the ATF task force model (Patterson, 2010), a regional crime gun processing protocol on ballistics be established as a multi-jurisdictional policy (Gagliardi, 2009), and a gun-purchase tracking program be implemented in collaboration with gun stores (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2011).

Table 2: Gun Crime Policies/Programs and Recommendations

Policies/Programs & # of Studies	Recommended	Not Recommended or Not in A Position to Recommend
Problem-oriented Policing: 1. Directed, enhanced, or hot-spot uniformed patrols; 7 Studies	7 (Cohen and Ludwig, 2003; Koper and Mayo-Wilson, 2006; McGarrell, Chermak, Weiss, and Wilson, 2001; Mohler, 2014; Sherman, 2001; Sherman, Shaw, and Rogan, 1995; Wells, Zhang, and Zhao, 2012)	0
Problem-oriented Policing: 2. Focused deterrence and targeted interventions; 11 Studies	10 (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Piehl, 2001; Braga and Weisburd, 2015; Kennedy, 1997; Kennedy, Braga, Piehl, and Waring, 2001; Kennedy, Piehl, and Braga, 1996; Koper, Woods, and Kubu, 2013; National Research Council, 2005; Reichert, Smith, Adams, Gleicher, Hill, and Escamilla, 2018; Sierra-Arévalo, 2013; and Tita, Riley, Ridgeway, and Greenwood, 2005)	1 (Rosenfeld and Decker, 1996)

Policies/Programs & # of Studies	Recommended	Not Recommended or Not in A Position to Recommend
Comprehensive Approach: 3. Balanced/integrated methods; 7 Studies	9 (Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016; Fagan, 2002; Koper, Woods, and Isom, 2016; and Makarios and Pratt, 2012; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999; Police Executive Research Forum, 2019; Redding and Shalf, 2001)	0
Comprehensive Approach: 4. Understanding police perceptions; 3 Studies	3 (Ezeonu, 2010; Thompson, Price, Dake, and Tatchell, 2006; Thompson, Price, Khubchandani, and Dowling, 2011)	0
Situational/Routine Activity Interventions: 5. Risk terrain modeling and routine patrol activities; 4 studies	4 (Burruss and Decker, 2002; Dahmm, 2019; Drawve, Moak, and Berthelot, 2014; Jiao, 2014)	0
Situational/Routine Activity Interventions: 6. Firearm removal/risk assessment, differential licensing, and sting operations; 7 Studies	Recommended: 6 (Allred and Denney, 2007; Bieler, Kijakazi, La Vigne, Vinik, and Overton, 2016; Goralski, 2013; Johnson, 2017; Sorenson and Schut, 2018; Webster, Bulzacchelli, and Zeoli, 2006)	1 (Small, Sorenson, and Berk, 2019)
Professional Law Enforcement: 7. Rapid response to and investigation and prosecution of gun crimes; 7 Studies	6 (Kessler, Harrington, and Hill, 2003; O'Shea, 2007; Payne and Gainey, 2008; Raphael and Ludwig, 2003; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018; and U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, 1999)	1 (Wyant, 2014)
Professional Law Enforcement: 8. Gun tracing and ballistics evidence and related operations; 5 Studies	5 (Braga and Pierce, 2011; Gagliardi, 2009; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2011; Patterson, 2010; Police Executive Research Forum, 2019)	0

Discussion

This review has led to identification of several actionable policy recommendations for law enforcement organizations that, when properly implemented, may help reduce gun

violence or bring about other positive changes in gun crimes. Takeaways under four different orientations are listed below for reducing gun crime, improving public safety, and enhancing law enforcement operations.

First, problem-oriented policing, as demonstrated by directed or enhanced uniformed patrols of high gun crime locations and focused deterrence and targeted interventions, has a significant effect in reducing gun crime.

Second, comprehensive approach, as demonstrated by balanced or integrated methods, which embodies community policing, traditional law enforcement, and sometimes other crime prevention strategies, has limited immediate effect on gun crimes but can produce sustainable impacts on gun crimes and police-community relationship and thereby enhance public safety on the long run. It is for these impacts this approach was recommended by most studies. Very few systematic studies on this approach have been conducted, however, due to difficulties in evaluating complex social dynamics and long-term impacts of multiple initiatives.

Third, situational and routine activity interventions, as demonstrated by risk terrain modeling and routine patrol activities improve cost effectiveness, increase illegal gun seizures, prevent recurring gun incidents, and raise level of public security in affected communities. Situational interventions in the forms of firearm removal/risk assessment, differential licensing, and sting operations have an effect on gun incidents in responding to domestic violence situations, in issuing gun licenses, and in policing gun dealerships. Removal of a firearm at the scene of domestic violence should be combined with or followed up with social, educational, and counseling programs.

Fourth, professional law enforcement, as demonstrated by rapid response to gun calls, detailed gun tracing and ballistics analysis, and vigorous prosecution of gun law violators can enhance gun crime investigation, increase gun crime clearance, and have a deterrent effect on gun crimes.

Recommendations based on these four approaches suggest that multiple programs may help police reduce gun crime and improve related operations, and a range or mixture of policies is available for law enforcement agencies to choose from. Adoption and implementation of these recommendations are not straight-forward processes, however, as they depend on a variety of factors – some of which may be beyond police control. Thus, sufficient resources must be dedicated to tackling impediments in order for policy recommendations to have a genuine and sustained impact on gun crime.

Law enforcement agencies may pursue the implementation of recommendations involving one or more of these approaches to reduce gun crime, whether they are place-oriented, target-oriented, offender-oriented, behavior-oriented, community-oriented, situation-oriented, or rooted in professional policing activities. This conclusion departs from previous reviews that seem to suggest only directed and focused interventions work (Koper, Woods, and Kubu, 2013 and National Research Council, 2005). This difference may be manifested more in form than substance because previous reviews were focused

mainly on one type of police interventions and this study looked at a variety of evaluations of police policies and programs. Regardless of this difference in conclusions, successful implementation of any recommendation requires organizational commitment and operational integrity .

Most of the policy recommendations, while based on evidence and data, should be approached with caution, as in all research, there are complications in reaching conclusions and interpreting results. This is due in large part to three issues: (1) pre-existing flaws in the data on which recommendations were based upon, (2) organizational and operational constraints, and (3) complexity in contextual and environmental conditions.

Flaws in the data on which recommendations were based mean that evidence and/or data in the studies leading to the recommendations are often weak or inadequate (Caplan, Kennedy, and Drawve, 2018 ; Dahmm, 2019; Deeks et al., 2003; Drawve, Moak, and Berthelot, 2014; Jiao, 2014; Koper and Mayo-Wilson, 2006; Koper, Woods, and Kubu, 2013; National Research Council, 2005; Patterson, 2010; and Weisburd et al., 2001), making them less compelling or generalizable. Even if these policies were carried out and led to a reduction in gun crime, it is questionable as to whether the positive results are sustainable over the long term (Fagan, 2002; Koper and Mayo-Wilson, 2006).

Organizational and operational constraints refer to difficulties in adequate planning, determinations of program elements, efforts to gain officer support, the resolution of managerial conflicts, and addressing limited budgets and/or resources (Dahmm, 2019; Reichert, Smith, Adams, Gleicher, Hill, and Escamilla, 2018; and Roberts and Innes, 2009). The ballistics evidence analysis, for example, is only one program element and needs to be combined with further investigation to lead to identification of perpetrators (Braga and Pierce, 2011). As various police activities or forms of mobilizations influence gun crimes (Burruss and Decker, 2002 and Wells, Zhang, and Zhao, 2012), gaining officer support for one particular program and resolving related managerial conflicts may prove challenging. Some law enforcement policies were recommended but would be impractical to put into operation because of limited resources (Kessler, Harrington, and Hill, 2003 and U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018).

Complexity in contextual and environmental conditions requires that critical conditions that fit the policy recommendations be established before they are carried out. Policy recommendations may be straightforward from a law enforcement standpoint, but their implementation is often constrained by legal, social, and cultural barriers that affect the problem of gun violence and limit the law enforcement role of police . Some policy recommendations may be controversial or unpopular in certain communities. Firearm removal initiatives, for example, as some contended, violate the Second Amendment's right to bear firearms and domestic violence offender firearms prohibition laws have been challenged in courts (Goralski, 2013). There has been ongoing concern in some communities about predictive policing because of perceived police biases in these policies and lack of consultations with the community (Dahmm, 2019). Policy recommendations

will not achieve a sustainable effect without the support of the community (Dahmm, 2019; Reichert, Smith, Adams, Gleicher, Hill, and Escamilla, 2018; and Roberts and Innes, 2009). Police resources and interventions must be tailored to local needs (Redding and Shalf, 2001) and be focused on particular risk factors in each local jurisdiction (Sherman, 2001). Each community should first identify their respective risk factors and vulnerabilities (barriers to implementation) before moving forward with implementing any or all strategies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no shortage of policy recommendations. As a variety of police interventions have been studied, the policy recommendations are just as varied and diverse. This finding suggests that there may not be a singular best policy or program that must be pursued and a combination of initiatives may be preferred for gun crime reduction purposes. Varied and diverse as they seem, however, all policies and programs require proactive and dedicated organizational efforts, be it targeted patrols, focused deterrence, integrated and balanced methods, risk terrain modeling, situational and routine activities, or professional law enforcement activities such as rapid response, gun tracing, and ballistics analysis. The reality of police organizations today remains that most agencies make limited use of proactive programs to reduce gun crimes, and there are substantial gaps in the enforcement of many gun laws.

The question therefore is not whether a police department can find good policy recommendations. Rather, it is whether the police would take them on and how they will put them into practice. To be successful, the police need to confront both internal and external challenges. Internally they need to resolve the issues of limited budgetary resources and entrenched police culture and conflicting managerial priorities. Externally the problem of gun crimes is complex, influenced by both immediate situational and environmental factors and deep-rooted social, cultural, and economic conditions. The process of carrying out gun crime policies should be equally multifaceted, with a long-term vision for a safer society and a strong commitment to developing the organization and cultivating public support.

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