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TECHNICAL REPORT

Violent crime

Risk models, effective interventions and risk management

Jennifer Rubin, Federico Gallo, Adam Coutts

Prepared for the National Audit Office

RAND EUROPE

The research described in this report was prepared for the National Audit Office.

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Published 2008 by the RAND Corporation
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Preface

This report was commissioned by the UK National Audit Office (NAO). Following RAND Europe's report for the NAO on *Interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime*, the NAO was interested in addressing similar, and similarly pressing, questions about violent crime.

Violent crime is costly for individuals, governments and other public bodies and agencies involved in the prevention, prosecution and treatment of offending. And yet, as this report indicates, there is evidence that it is a tractable problem. This report is aimed at all those who have an interest in understanding and intervening to reduce violent crime, and should be of interest to researchers, policy makers and others seeking examples of good and promising practice.

RAND Europe is an independent, not-for-profit, policy-research organisation whose mission is to help improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. This report has been peer reviewed in accordance with RAND's quality assurance standards.

The views expressed in this report are the authors' alone and not those of the NAO.

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Executive Summary

Violent crime is costly but not intractable

The cost of violent crime to victims and the criminal justice system is significantly higher than other crime. The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit in the UK has estimated the cost of reoffending alone at £11 billion annually, and relative to non-violent crime, violent crimes are disproportionately costly both to public services and to victims. At the same time, violent offenders are less resistant to change than some other types of offenders such as some sexual offenders or property offenders. Thus, learning from and implementing effective interventions from other countries to reduce violent crime could yield significant reductions in rates of violent crime and in fear of crime, improving quality of life, reducing costs and thereby representing an efficient allocation of public funds. This review identifies a range of types and examples of factors and interventions for reducing violent crime, highlighting some of the key issues that emerge across this range.

There is scope for improving risk assessment tools

These improvements could be achieved in part by incorporating more of what is known about triggers and contexts associated with violent crime into the offender-focused tools currently in use. This would lead to a more contextualised understanding of the situations in which individuals identified as being at risk of future serious offending are most likely to commit violent offences, allowing a more focused allocation of resources to effectively target not only offenders for intervention, but situations and communities as well.

Effective interventions for offenders are tailored and rehabilitative rather than punitive

Punitive interventions, and especially incarceration, have been widely and consistently shown to be costly and ineffective means of reducing offending. Cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT) and multi-systemic therapies (MSTs) work with individual offenders to change their cognitive styles, improve empathy, understand the underlying reasons for their behaviour and change the everyday practices and interactions that are associated with their offending. They have been shown to reduce subsequent rates of offending by 20–30 per cent. MST incorporates CBT practices into a programme tailored to the individual offender that carries on beyond the individual therapeutic context to also work with those in the individual's wider social environment of family, school and peers to encourage and facilitate change in the individual and their social world. While there are ongoing questions and debates about the findings of the more positive MST evaluations, MST is considered by many to be one of the most effective non-punitive interventions for young offenders.

Careful piloting and evaluation in the UK will help clarify whether and how MST works to reduce subsequent offending.

Effective interventions in communities are multifaceted and have wide reach

Effective interventions to reduce violent crime in areas where violence is a problem acknowledge the multifaceted nature of crime. Such interventions involve police, community residents and other agencies to take account of local goals and needs as well as gaps in community capacity that may act as obstacles to offenders' desistance from crime. Working to overcome these barriers entails facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into communities that provide better opportunities for employment, social support, community involvement and participation in shared moral codes. These interventions may focus on individual offenders and work their way out to the wider context, for example with post-release programmes. Or such interventions may start with a focus on communities with high rates of violent crime and seek to integrate stakeholders across the community in a coordinated effort to reduce violence.

Risk assessment, management and effective interventions could inform each other

There could be a constructive feedback loop in which risk management practices integrate lessons from effective interventions and from assessment tools that have been shown to have relatively good predictive validity for violent offenders such as the Violence Recidivism Appraisal Guide (VRAG). We found little evidence of coordination of information about what works for individual offenders or offender management with information about what works in communities or neighbourhoods with high rates of violent crime.

There is an evaluation deficit for many interventions and risk management practices

There are evidence-based interventions such as Resolve to Stop the Violence Project (RSVP) that have been evaluated and show promising initial results. However, caution should be taken over drawing firm conclusions from single studies and from the often disparate literature on reducing specifically violent offending. There are relatively few meta-analyses in this area, and relevant research from across the psychiatric, sociological, social psychological, economic and criminological literatures differs in approach and criteria for measuring success. Further, in many cases the transportability of effective interventions elsewhere to the UK context remains to be tested. However, initial evaluations of primarily US interventions and some programmes in other countries are informative, pointing to good practice and potentially useful lessons for UK programme development as well as for further evaluation.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank colleagues in RAND Europe for ongoing discussions in the course of surveying the literature and considering the complex issues surrounding effective interventions to reduce violent crime. Jonathan Grant, Stijn Hoorens, Eddy Nason, Lila Rabinovich and Kai Wegrich all provided helpful input or feedback at various points in the project. We would also like to thank Jeremy Wilson from RAND Corporation Safety and Justice in the US for helpful early advice. The QA reviewers Andrew Morral, Head of RAND Safety and Justice, and Richard Warnes provided constructive comments at key points in the project.

The project benefited significantly from a strong collaborative working relationship with the National Audit Office (NAO) project team. Helen Hawkins and Matthew Wilkins provided clear yet flexible guidelines for the research, remaining responsive to emergent lines of inquiry as the review progressed. Their flexibility and clarity made it possible to attend to their priorities while focusing on available information and evidence.

Finally, practitioners and others in the policy community including Femke Hofhauser and David Halpern shared useful insights and findings that helped to steer a course through a vast literature on violent crime and interventions.

Introduction

In the context of overcrowded prisons that have been shown to be ineffective at reducing reoffending,[1] policy makers and practitioners face increasingly pressing questions about what works in reducing offending. In the case of violent crime, answers to this question have significant and immediate implications for individuals who may experience violence or reduced quality of life due to fear of crime, as well as for communities and societies for whom all crime is costly and damaging. The core concern of the National Audit Office (NAO) in commissioning this review was to find examples of risk management practices and interventions to prevent violence such as through better tracking of violent offenders and reducing violent reoffending. The effectiveness and cost-benefit of early interventions for preventing crime have been emphasised in a previous RAND Europe report commissioned by the NAO.[2] Those findings hold true for violent crime as well. This review moves on to focus primarily on what works in reducing reoffending and preventing crime in areas affected by high rates of violence.

Violent crime

There are ongoing debates about how best to conceptualise and measure violent crime. In the UK context, Police Recorded Crime Statistics at times tell a different story from the data provided by the British Crime Survey. In the international context, there are also many possible data sources for analysing cross-national rates of violence, and homicide in particular.[3]

Some argue that measurement of violent crime should include sexual offences. However, in the context of the present report's focus on interventions, others convincingly argue that sexual violence should be considered separately, reflecting both its apparently distinctive aetiology as compared with other violence, and serious sexual offenders' relative resistance to treatment. According to Lievore "a somewhat different set of processes contributes to sexual and violent recidivism … the two categories should not be conflated" (2003a, 8). The focus of this report is therefore on interventions to reduce violent nonsexual assault

[1] See for most recent discussion N. Pearce, *Crime and Punishment: A New Home Office Agenda* (IPPR Report, 2007).

[2] Rubin et al, *Interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime. A review of effectiveness and costs*, RAND Technical Report, 2006.

[3] Though many have now converged on use of World Health Organization (WHO) data as the most reliable for comparative homicide statistics (Lafree and Tseloni, 2006).

and homicide, except where measures of violence do not separate out violent sexual offending.[4]

When measuring violent crime and comparing levels of violence across nations and over time, homicide is often used as an indicator for overall violence. This tendency is not without empirical basis as some studies have shown that motives for homicide and for violent assault are frequently the same (Brookman and Maguire, 2005). Analysis of violent incidents on a case-by-case basis shows that the "difference between homicide and assault may simply be the intervention of a bystander, the accuracy of a gun, the weight of a frying pan, the speed of an ambulance or the availability of a trauma centre" (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990, 34).

For the purposes of this report, the primary definitional parameter is pragmatic. In measures of recorded crime the Home Office considers violent crime to be violence against the person, including homicide and wounding – both serious and "other" wounding but not including sexual offences (Dubourg and Hamed, 2005).

The cost of violent crime

Homicide and serious assault make up a relatively small proportion of all crime, yet they account for a disproportionate amount of the total social, psychological and financial costs of crime. For example, in the UK violent crime accounts for approximately 10 per cent of crime, but accounts for nearly one-third of the costs.[5] This high cost is mainly attributable to the more serious consequences of violent crime for victims and the longer prison sentences entailed by violent crime as compared with other types of crime. The average cost of a car theft is less than £5000, while serious wounding costs on average £21,422. According to Atkinson et al (2005: 568) "the cost – in terms of its effect on the wellbeing of the average victim – of an incident entailing serious injury is nearly seven times that prevailing in the case of an incident involving no injury".

Even within the spectrum of crimes that are included in the category "violent crime", costs vary widely. For example, while (non-serious) wounding costs on average just over £8000, the cost of a single homicide is nearly £1.5 million. As these figures show, violent crime is a costly problem. It is also a problem that shows no signs of going away. Although recorded crime and homicide have been on the decline recently in the UK, violent street crime in England and Wales, as in many other European countries, may be on the increase (Barclay et al, 2003).[6]

Hosking and Walsh (2005, 33) discuss the ratio of government expenditure on violence in the US, UK and Canada. They show that expenditure in the US ranges from £90–330 billion in the US depending on what costs are included, £23 billion in Canada and

[4] Where necessary this will be noted in the text.

[5] Home Office. 'The economic and social costs of crime against households 2003/2004'. 2005. Available from http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/rdsolr3005.pdf. It is worth noting here that sexual offences are also disproportionately costly and make up approximately one-quarter of the costs of all crime in the UK.

[6] Significantly, mugging and violence against strangers accounts for much of this rise and together represent a rise from 35 per cent of all violent crime in 1995/6 to over 50 per cent in 2005/6 (Eades, 2006,11).

between £10 and 25 billion in the UK.[7] Thus, because of its salience for the public and the high costs involved, intervening to reduce crime is a central area of public policy concern in the UK and abroad.

The process of intervening

There is no single intervention or practice that will solve the problem of violent crime. As the following discussion highlights, violence is influenced by individual, familial, peer, institutional, local community, societal, cultural and systemic factors. These various factors need to be taken into account when designing interventions to prevent crime or reduce recidivism. This review focuses on three main facets in the process of intervening to reduce violent crime:

1) the risk assessment process on which prisoners or offenders (and even in some cases potential offenders) are assessed and categorised as high-risk violent offenders

2) the interventions and programmes, whether early/preventive, incapacitative, rehabilitative or surveillance and monitoring, to which offenders are allocated to reduce the likelihood of their reoffending

3) management of violence and violent offenders in the community including management and coordination of relevant background information or individual case files, information about available resources and programmes, effective tracking and prevention of reoffending.

These three aspects of the process of reducing and managing violent crime are represented below, in Figure 1.

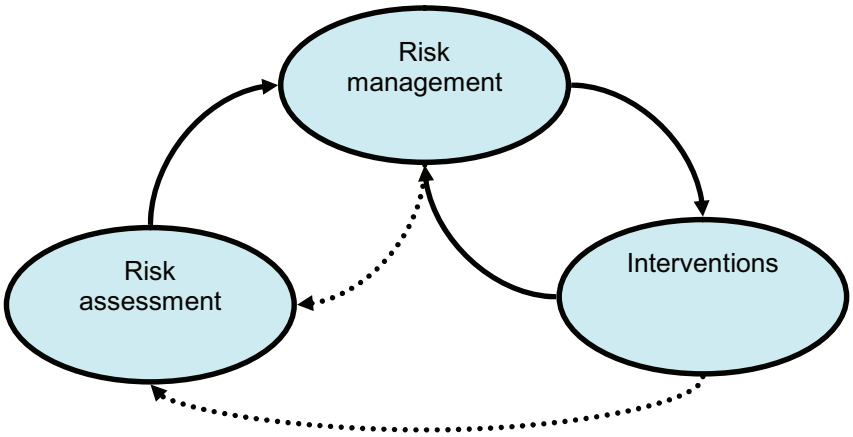

Figure 1: The intervention process

In practice these three facets can overlap significantly. Indeed, in cases of good practice, it could be expected that they would overlap to a large extent, and contain feedback loops such that learning about effective interventions feeds into assessment of risk and subsequent management of offenders. The dotted lines in Figure 1 show spaces where

[7] Values vary depending on whether they are measured including costs to criminal justice system, repairing damage, treatment by health services, psychological costs, lost work days, etc.

feedback is not evident but could be useful. For example, the risk assessment process requires information on previous offences and programmes from the various relevant police, corrections and other agencies to factor into the analysis. Coordinating information about individuals and deciding how best to reduce the likelihood of reoffending in some cases looks very much like an intervention itself, and can grow out of interventions, as in the case of violence reduction initiatives of the type discussed in Chapter 3. Effective interventions may benefit from tackling many of the tasks that risk management coordination would seek to accomplish, as can be seen in Chapter 3 in the case of Operation Ceasefire.

This review approaches the question of what works in reducing serious violent crime by providing a brief overview of examples of effective or good practice from other countries in these three main steps in the process – risk assessment, risk management and interventions.

CHAPTER 1 Contexts and factors associated with serious violent crime

1.1 Background

This chapter provides a brief overview of current thinking about underlying factors associated with violent crime. This background knowledge is useful for several reasons. First, it helps in understanding why and how risk assessment, interventions and risk management practices have developed in recent years. Second, an understanding of the current state of knowledge about factors associated with rates of violent crime is also relevant for contextualising the examples of interventions and risk management practices to reduce violent crime described in subsequent chapters. Third, the more that is known about the context in which crimes are committed and in which interventions or programmes are implemented, the easier it is to understand how interventions relate to contexts, and therefore how transferable interventions in one context are likely to be to another.

In terms of implementing interventions to reduce violent crime, there are important differences between local contexts within the UK, as well as between the UK and other countries discussed in this report. These differences lie in the organisation and functioning of the areas' criminal justice systems, the implementation of legal frameworks, and other aspects of national and local contexts that influence violent crime and punishment. Nonetheless, the aim of this report is not to systematically review or compare criminal justice systems, broad trends, costs or punishment of violent crime in the UK and violent crime in other countries that come into the discussion. Instead, the aim as defined by the National Audit Office (NAO) is to draw examples of interventions to reduce violent crime that may hold transferable lessons for the UK. Testing or reporting on the transferability of the interventions and risk management practices described in this report is also beyond the scope of the current project. This chapter draws out common threads in underlying factors associated with violent crime. The following chapters then discuss effective risk assessment, interventions and risk management practices that show promise in illustrating what others have identified as good practice in violent crime reduction. A systematic or comprehensive review of existing research on and interventions aiming to reduce violent crime is beyond the scope of this project. Instead, this review identifies a range of types of factors and interventions that has been considered, highlighting some of the key issues that emerge across this range.

This review searched English, Spanish, French, Italian, German and Dutch language literatures on risk management interventions to reduce violent crime to find relevant interventions from which the UK may draw lessons. Given the paucity of evaluations in other countries, the majority of examples have been drawn from the US, with a few notable examples in Canada. There is some indication that the Netherlands, Australia and Germany are in the process of implementing relevant multifaceted interventions and practices, and these merit further research and evaluation in order to understand the relative strengths of emergent approaches.

1.2 Multi-level analysis: the offender in context

Rates of violent crime are influenced by individual, local contextual and wider environmental factors. The focus in the psychological and psychiatric literature has traditionally been on individual level factors associated with violent crime and criminality. The emphasis there has tended to be on finding out what was different about offenders when compared with law-abiding citizens. However, as evidence has emerged about how rates of crime and violence vary cross-nationally, over time, seasonally, and between neighbourhoods, it has become increasingly clear that while some people may have greater propensity to commit crime, other factors also significantly influence the incidence of crime and violence.

Acknowledgment of these other important factors has moved the study of criminology and the practice of interventions to reduce crime away from focusing primarily or too exclusively on the individual.[8] In the search to understand whether severe violent abuses on the scale of the Holocaust could occur in otherwise stable, democratic countries like the US, psychologists have investigated how contexts, relationships and institutions influence behaviour. Classic studies by Milgram and Zimbardo in the 1960s highlighted the conditions under which otherwise normal "good" people commit violent or abusive acts. This research has widened out the focus from a narrow concern with the "bad apple" to a broader attempt to also understand the "bad barrel" (Zimbardo 2007). This focus in social psychology and criminology has meshed with cross-national studies and trend data from sociology to improve our understanding of the broader contextual factors associated with violent crime.

However, there is still useful information that can be gleaned by finding out about offenders who commit violent crime. Some of the individual level factors may tell the researcher about criminal propensity such as levels of aggression.[9] Other individual level factors are an indication that the individual's family and peer interactions shape personality and characteristics in ways that increase the likelihood of offending such as poor parenting. However, much of the individual level information we obtain about offenders, and the

[8] In Canada, incapacitative interventions, including in some cases youth incapacitation, are advocated within the psychiatric community based on predicted violence. See Hare (1999) and Le Blanc (1999).

[9] One study showed that levels of violence were associated with physical aggression in individuals in higher socio-economic neighbourhoods, but not in less well-off neighbourhoods (Beyers et al, 2001).

interventions focused on those individuals, can be best understood in the context of the individual's interactions with others, in specific situations and their broader local context.

Individuals: offenders and victims

A well-established literature has documented individual level factors associated with likelihood of offending. The most striking characteristics of violent offenders are that they tend to be young and male (Eisner, 2003). It has been well-documented in crime statistics that people "age out of crime" (Soothill et al, 2002; Brookman and Maguire, 2005). In line with this finding, around 85–90 per cent of violent offenders are male[10] and between the ages of 16 and 29.[11] These offenders also tend to have experienced poor parenting, lack of discipline or arbitrary and inconsistent discipline, and low parental supervision. These risk factors are associated with other significant predictive personality factors such as high impulsivity, aggression, low autonomy, unstable self-esteem, dependency on recognition by others and lack of guilt that are linked to likelihood of offending[12] as well as attitudinal factors such as "positive attitudes to problem behaviour" (Beyers et al, 2001: 379), associating with delinquent peers and having previously offended.[13]

As for individual likelihood of victimisation, many of the same risk factors apply as those identified for offenders. Some have argued that there is a significant risk of homicide in childhood (Alder and Polk, 2001). For example, Alder and Polk note that 10–20 per cent of homicide victims per year in the US, UK and Australia are children under the age of 18. However, it is more useful in understanding risk of victimisation to express this figure as a risk ratio. Given that in Europe 16 per cent of the population is under 18, this 10–20 per cent does not then represent a disproportionate risk. Nonetheless, as with offending behaviour, victims of violence are most likely to be young men of working age. Further, victims also tend to have experienced many of the same familial problems as offenders such as problematic or abusive parenting. Personality characteristics associated with victimisation include many similar to those of offenders as well. For example, low self-control, disputatiousness, aggressiveness, strain and risky behaviour have all been identified

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[10] For further discussion of age, gender and homicide see Alder, C. and K. Polk, Child Victims of Homicide, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001 and Brookman, F. and M. Maguire, 'Reducing homicide: a review of the possibilities', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 42 (2005): 325–403.

[11] Women also feature when talking about child homicide (Alder and Polk, 2001: 3).

[12] See for more detailed discussions D. Farrington and I. Coid, eds, *Early Prevention of Adult Anti-social Behaviour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003, Hosking and Walsh, *Violence and What to Do about It*, WAVE Report (Surrey, UK: The WAVE Trust), Eisner (2003) and others.

[13] The relationship between mental illness and violent offending has been a subject of ongoing debate. According to Wallace et al (2004: 716) "[t]he relationship between having a major mental illness and behaving in a violent or otherwise criminal manner continues to be actively debated. A consensus emerged in the 1980s and 1990s that embraced an association between mental illness and offending and in particular between schizophrenia and violent behaviour. This consensus is, however, now under challenge. A view is gaining ground that the excess violence found in association with schizophrenic disorders is not a result of the illness per se but of factors such as substance abuse, the patient's premorbid personality, and social disadvantage. It is even being argued that schizophrenia may be irrelevant to or even protective against the risk of violence." See also Brookman and Maguire (2005) on mental health and violence, including a brief discussion on the need for inter-agency coordination.

within the criminological literature as areas of victim-offender overlap in violent crime (Broidy et al, 2006).

Certain types of occupations appear to be disproportionately at risk of homicide victimisation. Brookman and Maguire (2005) highlight what they have identified as "high-risk occupations" – first pointing out that it is the unemployed[14] who are most at risk of being victims of homicide. After that, however, security staff, medical staff, prostitutes and social workers are the most likely victims according to UK data (ibid: 381). Marital status also affects the likelihood of victimisation, with data showing that single people are twice as likely as married people to be victims of homicide (Kposawa et al, 1994).

Substances: drugs, weapons, alcohol

Drugs, weapons and alcohol are key factors associated with the incidence of violent criminal offences (Prideman, 2002; Halpern, 2005; Brookman and Maguire, 2005; D'Amico et al, forthcoming). In the UK, knife crime is of growing concern[15] and drugs are also considered "dangerous substances" because of the observed or perceived relationship between drug use, trafficking and violent crime (Hosking and Walsh, 2005, 31). However, Stevens et al (2005) review the international evidence on the relationship between drugs and violence, concluding that the relationship between them has generally been overstated.[16] This is because while many criminals also engage in illegal drug use, and drug use may amplify criminality, both drug use and criminality are strongly associated with other, potentially more significant, underlying factors such as poverty and inequality.[17]

Many violent incidents are also alcohol-related. Violent criminal offenders and victims in many cases have been drinking alcohol, often to excess (Prideman, 2002; Brookman, 2005); and many instances of homicide and violence occur near drinking establishments (Brookman and Maguire, 2005: 360; Hosking and Walsh, 2005). However, as with drugs and weapons, it is possible that alcohol may partly be a symptom as well as cause. Binge-drinking related violence may occur because of underlying factors making individuals more likely to engage in binge-drinking instead of, or as well as, engaging in violent behaviour. As with drugs and weapons, the substance is likely to amplify the severity of incidents, yet underlying drivers of the substance use may be significant, and the specific interactions and context in which the violence occurs are also important. For example, the highest proportion of violent crime occurs on routes between drinking establishments and public

[14] Or those who report themselves to be unemployed, which could also indicate involvement in work that is not legitimate or is itself criminal such as drug trafficking.

[15] Although it is impossible to accurately assess actual levels of knife carrying and use in violence (Eades, 2006).

[16] This finding is supported by other research on the relationship between substance use and violence or delinquency, for example as concluded by D'Amico et al (forthcoming).

[17] However, while drugs may not be primary drivers in themselves (over and above poverty and inequality, for example) in the context of understanding possible foci for intervention, that drug-related activity may nonetheless exacerbate the problem of violent crime in a given area. Gaviria (1998, 24) shows that drug-related crime in Colombia represented a small proportion of the over-all crime rate, it played a key part in rapidly escalating crime rates in large part because it indirectly generated violence through externalities including "congestion in law enforcement, spillovers of knowledge, supply of weapons, and the creation of a culture that favors easy money and violent resolution of conflict over more traditional values".

transport (Halpern, 2005). In such cases it is not necessarily the drinking per se that causes the violence, but the interactions such as "masculine honour contests" that may arise along these routes, plus a lack of public transport or disorganised queuing at taxi ranks, combined with alcohol's disinhibiting effects (Gilligan, 1996; Brookman and Maguire, 2005).

Interactions

The significance of marital status has already been mentioned above in the section on individual factors associated with the likelihood of being a victim. It appears that being embedded in relationships with others at work, in marriages and with neighbours has an impact on the likelihood of committing violence as well. As will be seen in subsequent section, interactions can provide the provocation to violence, the protection against the development of violent behaviour, and the aid to desistance from crime.

Honour contests

The suggestion that relationships and interactions impact on individuals' likelihood of committing violence fits with the conclusions of several researchers who have analysed interactions around violent incidents. Gilligan (1996: 110) was a prison psychiatrist over many years who studied the interactions that occurred around violent incidents, concluding that in each case the violence was "provoked by the experience of feeling shamed and humiliated, disrespected and ridiculed, and ... represented the attempt to prevent or undo this 'loss of face' – no matter how severe the punishment". The relationship between homicide and masculine honour contests has been explored in some detail by Eisner (2003). He shows that cross-national long-term declines in homicide rates correspond with a reduction in the perceived need and legal acceptability of defending reputation and honour with violence. However, much of the reduction in lethal violence may be situated in the lower rates of homicide committed by the better-off in society, as the law no longer meted out only minor punishment for lethal violence that was termed "honourable manslaughter" when it was deemed to be justified on grounds of personal insult. Thus, it is possible that "[t]he transition to overall lower levels of interpersonal criminal violence … was accompanied by an overproportional withdrawal of the elite from use of physical aggression to seize and defend their interests (ibid, 118)."

Other research also cites evidence for the significance of "saving face", especially in instances in which the insulted party has low or unstable self-esteem: "microanalyses of homicides have indicated that such crimes are most often the results of 'transactions' in which the perpetrator resorted to lethal violence to resolve an argument involving emotional injury to the offender" (DeFronzo, 1997: 397; Eisner, 2003). David Luckenbill (1977) reported "that such crimes are most often the outcome of a 'character contest' in which one of the participants attacks the other's sense of value, worth, competency, or reputation" (in DeFronzo, 1997).

Peer interactions

Peer interactions are an important part of the process of shaping individuals' adherence to moral codes and perceptions of acceptable behaviour. It has already been noted that those more likely to offend do not adhere to dominant moral codes of acceptable behaviour. In some cases groups may organise around a shared set of other beliefs or to create a group

context that offers some support or protection. These groups, of which gangs are a key example, may use violence as a means of resolving disputes and gaining recognition or status in an area (Tolan and Guerra, 1994). Thus, gangs are an interesting example of an ongoing peer interaction that is often related to violence.

A review examining street-gang violence in Europe and the US (Klein et al, 2006) showed that street gangs exist in Europe, but that "the level, severity and lethality of youth violence are ... lower in European countries". However, reports of inter-gang fighting in Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere suggest that they are nonetheless associated with violence in Europe as in the US. Further, Bennet and Holloway (2004) state that "[g]ang programmes have already been introduced in Manchester, including 'Operation Chrome', which applies a problem-oriented policing approach to controlling gun use and violence by gangs" (Bullock and Tilley, 2002, in Bennet and Holloway, 2004). Thus, not only are there some significant similarities in the manifestation of problems such as gangs and associated violent and gun crime, the authors argue that "[t]here are early signs that we are about to enter a new phase in the evolution and character of street crime in the United Kingdom. It is important, therefore, to monitor and understand this development" (Bennet and Holloway, 2004).

So far this chapter has explored the significance of characteristics of individual offenders and victims, substances and interactions. However, it is clear that many of the characteristics or risk factors in individuals, interactions and the use of substances must be situated in a broader community, regional or national context. The rest of this chapter turns to these community-, neighbourhood- and broader-level factors that seem to be associated with high rates of violent crime.

Contexts

Researchers interested in the incidence of violent crime as well as other social problems have considered relevant "neighbourhood mechanisms" since the Chicago School of sociology in the 1920s (Sampson, 2006). It has been noted that poverty, inequality, teen births, violence, and drug and alcohol problems tend to co-occur, though this does not prove a causal relationship. However, more recent research has moved on to attempt to empirically describe and measure underlying processes that contribute to or cause problems in at-risk neighbourhoods.

Poverty and inequality

It has long been noted by sociologists that poverty is strongly positively associated with rates of violent crime (Braithwaite, 1979; Eisner, 2001 and 2003). However, it is argued that in countries where there is not only significant poverty, but a wide gap between the wealthy and the poor, rates of crime are elevated further (Hsieh and Pugh, 1992; Pickett et al, 2005). The gap between rich and poor is described in much of the social science literature as "relative deprivation". This term does not describe absolute poverty, but poverty relative to others. In investigating the relationship between inequality, poverty and violent crime or homicide, inequality has been found to have demonstrable effects on violent crime rates. Following work in a similar vein by Manuel Eisner (2001), Pablo Fajnzylber et al (2002) have undertaken a study of national changes over time and differences across countries in inequality (measured as Gini coefficient) and rates of violent

crime (measured especially by rates of homicide). They found that over time when inequality went up, so did rates of violent crime.

A strong effect was also found in the cross-national comparison in which countries with higher rates of inequality were found to have higher rates of violent crime. Given the concern that unobserved factors might be simultaneously driving the two measures, Fajnzylber et al (2002) controlled for other factors such as levels of education and levels of urbanisation in order to rule out some of these other potential driving forces. However, they found that the results were robust when they controlled for other crime-associated factors. They concluded that "[i]ncome inequality, measured by the Gini index, has a significant and positive effect on the incidence of (violent) crime" (Fajnzylber et al, 2002: 25).[18] Further, when inequality decreases, rates of violent crime go down.

Interestingly, the authors found that there is a cumulative effect such that when income inequality and poverty are both alleviated, the reduction in crime rates is accelerated. This finding is in accord with Eisner's (2001) discussion of the work of Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) and Esping-Anderson (1990) which suggests that "social welfare expenditures are negatively related to homicide rates in a comparative analysis of forty-five countries" (ibid, 217). DeFronzo (1997: 396) also concludes from a review of the international evidence that increasing welfare reduces rates of homicide and that "government assistance to the poor can limit homicide".[19] However, it is important to interpret this finding with care as it is not necessarily clear why "government assistance" may reduce violent crime. The fact that authorities show concern for a deprived community might be enough to have an impact in itself, irrespective of the exact nature of the intervention. Or the type of assistance implemented may reduce other factors that are driving homicide and crime rates, rather than directly reducing violent crime. Further evaluation of such interventions is necessary to understand why they are effective and what aspects of them are most effective.

Other research has shown that in addition to disadvantage *per se*, the spatial concentration of disadvantage is also related to homicide rates. Parker (2004: 625) disaggregated the data on homicide, looking at the impact of industrial restructuring in US cities, including a move away from manufacturing to service industry, growing urbanisation and concentrated disadvantage, and found that these changes differentially affect black men and women as compared with their white counterparts. Increasing disadvantage led to rising homicide rates for black men and women, while decreasing racial segregation, and thus decreasing concentrated black disadvantage, led to a decrease in homicide among black men and women. The study concludes that "spatial concentration of disadvantage in urban areas" was significantly associated with homicide offending by ethnic minorities in

[18] Although it is worth noting that Kelly (2000) did not find inequality to be positively correlated with violent crime in the US, by contrast with Fajnzylber et al's (2002) finding that this was the case in their study that ranged across 39 countries.

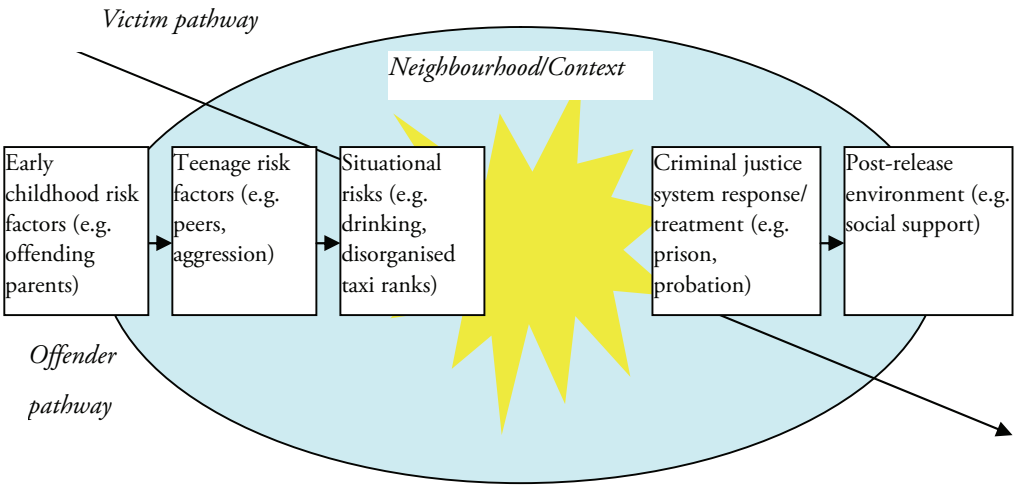
[19] Neumayer (2003) argues that while low average income levels do affect rates of homicide, inequality does not; he further suggests that some of the links found in the research cited above may therefore be spurious, and policies aimed at reducing inequality do not necessarily reduce crime rates. The analysis he presents is not on its own strong enough to countermand the findings of multiple studies that argue to the contrary. However, further research is recommended to unpick the relative significance of the different factors cited in Neumayer's and others' research exploring the relationship between poverty, inequality, welfare provision and violent crime.

the affected communities (ibid: 634), and that reducing the concentration of disadvantage reduced rates of offending by ethnic minorities.

Collective efficacy

Sampson (2006) has gone some way to investigate why deprived neighbourhoods tend to have a higher incidence of crime and violence. He characterises affected neighbourhoods by features they have in common. The highest crime neighbourhoods may be described as having high residential instability, concentrated disadvantage, racially or ethnically heterogeneous populations, a number of social problems clustered together such as infant mortality and low birth weight, and high rates of attrition from school, among others. He posits that the reason there is high crime in such areas is the lack of social cohesion and social support. That is, in such diverse and transient populations there is a lack of shared understanding of social mores or shared expectations for action (caused and/or exacerbated by high residential turnover, family breakdown and heterogeneous population).

Social support and social cohesion, an emphasis on a community's shared belief in its ability to act to achieve shared goals or bring about change, have been termed "collective efficacy" (Sampson, 2006). According to Sampson, and supported by Pratt and Cullen (2005) in a review of 200 empirical studies, high collective efficacy is significantly associated with lower rates of crime. On the other hand, in neighbourhoods where people are not bound together by these shared norms and understandings, and do not experience strong social support, there are negative implications not only for the incidence of crime, but also for people's fear of crime.[20] "Feeling unsafe to walk alone is two thirds higher in neighbourhoods where people are described as 'going their own way', and feeling unsafe at home is doubled" (Halpern, 2005).



[20] Sampson's argument is lent further power by the modelling of changes over time in addition to the cross-sectional data discussed.

Figure 2: Trajectory diagram: offender pathway

Figure 2 provides examples of risk factors (and thus potential points of intervention) at several stages in the offender pathway. Subsequent chapters provide examples of effective risk assessment for violent crime as well as interventions relevant at the various stages.

1.3 Factors associated with violent crime

This chapter has outlined some of the key factors associated with violent crime. These factors relate to individuals, substances, situations, interactions, neighbourhoods and broader social contexts. The presence of some or many of these factors is associated with incidence of violent crime. Additionally, there are thought to be ecological effects in violent crime. That is, the spread of violence tends to be non-linear. Wallace and Wallace (1993) modelled how violent crime spreads like a disease out of hotspots and along major transport routes. If this is right, then it suggests not only that it is important to intervene, but that efforts to reduce crime will also have this non-linearity. In highly unequal societies and neighbourhoods with high anonymity and lack of shared values, individuals with high aggression and low self-esteem may come together in contexts in which they are in competition for space, transport, respect, control of drug trade, etc. In such interactions, and with the presence of triggers such as alcohol, the settling of disputes through violence becomes more likely. Further, it has been suggested that high rates of crime may trigger other effects which in turn exacerbate the problem. For example, rising crime rates may increase the prevalence of weapons associated with violence, increase the likelihood of criminal justice system overload and blockage, erode social capital and moral values while increasing the visibility and even acceptability of a culture of crime.[21] It is useful to bear in mind this additive effect when considering violent crime as a process. It is also worth considering when attempting to tackle violent crime. That so many of the factors associated with violent crime co-occur suggests that it may be important to tackle violence along several dimensions at once in order to have a lasting impact. Individual level interventions may be useful, but if the barrel remains bad, other would-be offenders may soon fill the space left open by a rehabilitated offender. Similarly, situations and substances may increase the likelihood of violent incidents, but if individuals without shared norms and values and with low self-esteem interact in wider social contexts where there is high inequality and low social support, removing individual substances and triggers or attempting to "design out" crime (Cozens et al, 2005) is likely to have only partial success.

1.4 Risk assessment, interventions and management

The remainder of the report outlines the findings from a search for examples of effective practice in the three main steps in the process of intervening to reduce violent crime discussed earlier. Chapter 2 discusses risk assessment: the models of individuals' risks of offending or reoffending. Chapter 3 describes well-evaluated interventions to reduce

[21] A. Gaviria *Increasing Returns and the Evolution of Violent Crime: The Case of Colombia*, Discussion Paper (San Diego, CA: Department of Economics, University of California, 1998).

violent crime at individual, situational and neighbourhood or contextual levels. Chapter 4 then provides a selected overview of good practice examples of risk management, both as the application of risk assessment tools, and more commonly as examples of coordinating the range of information, bodies or agencies and interventions that make up effective violent crime reduction.

CHAPTER 2 Risk assessment

2.1 The context of risk assessment

In recent decades there has been growing public awareness of serious violent crime and the offenders who perpetrate such crimes. As prisons in the UK and US become increasingly overcrowded and the prison population continues to grow,[22] the effectiveness of prisons as rehabilitative institutions is increasingly called into question and the cost of building new prisons is increasingly difficult to justify. Instead, attention has turned towards offender management as prisoners are released back into communities. For all crime, but especially for violent crime, correctional and probation services must take decisions about which offenders to imprison, which prisoners to release, and who is most at risk of dangerous reoffending. In the UK, US, Australia and Canada, as well as elsewhere, there has been a noticeable shift in approach, with a view to imposing rigour on the process of "identify(ing) and respond[ing] to dangerous offenders" (Bonta and Yassine, 2005: 4).

Meanwhile, as early as the 1980s probation services were dissatisfied with the social work focus of penology which was thought to be ineffective at dealing with dangerous offenders. Probation officials began to increasingly formalise risk assessments in a bid to demonstrate the usefulness of the probation service in identifying risk posed by offenders.

> Formal risk assessments began to become standard practice, both in terms of pre-sentence reports and in advance of the supervision of prisoners released on licence. Probation services also began to engage in much closer liaison and information-sharing, initially with prisons, but increasingly with the police and social services (Kemshall and Maguire, 2001: 241).

2.2 Modelling the risk of violent crime

Soothill et al (2002) cite early explicit attempts to model risk, starting with Burgess in the 1920s in Chicago. At the time, the attempt was driven by the desire to identify who would be most appropriate for parole. In the late 1990s The UK Home Office developed a revised Offender Group Reconviction Score that was "a statistical risk score which provides

[22] For example, the prison population is growing in Australia at four times the rate of the rest of the population.

an estimate of the probability that a convicted offender will be re-convicted within two years of release from custody or from the start of a community sentence" (Soothill et al, 2002, 39).[23]

Although the argument in favour of the development of risk assessment models is strong, rigorous research has gone into this area only in recent decades. Becker's (1968) groundbreaking work, for example, was the first attempt to apply microeconomic theory to the study of crime. Before 1966 relatively little attention was paid to how well clinicians assessed risk (Dolan and Doyle, 2000). The Baxstrom versus Herald (1966) ruling in the US (which resulted in the release or transfer from maximum security hospitals of 966 patients to the community or to lower security) was a notable landmark in risk assessment history. Steadman and Cocozza (1974) reported on the four-year outcomes of this cohort and found that only 20 per cent had been reconvicted, the majority for non-violent offences. Throughout the 1970s several other studies reported in the literature fuelled the notion that clinicians had little expertise in predicting violent outcomes (e.g. Cocozza and Steadman, 1976; Thornberry and Jacoby, 1979).

Clinical versus research perspectives

Traditionally, the risk of violent behaviour has been assessed from at least two distinct research perspectives:

1) clinical
2) non-clinical.

Clinicians have traditionally assessed violence risk on an individual basis, using a case formulation approach, i.e. "unaided clinical judgment". On the other hand, until recently, research tended to focus on the accuracy of risk prediction variables in large, often heterogeneous, populations using statistical or actuarial models.

These divergent approaches have resulted in a debate over the merits of clinical versus actuarial approaches and their relevance to risk prediction for groups versus individuals. The clinical versus actuarial debate has also led to the development of violence risk prediction instruments that adopt a combined approach and recognise the importance of both static actuarial variables and the clinical/risk management items that clinicians normally take into account in risk assessments of individuals. The latter approach appears to be a first step in bridging the gap between clinical and actuarial measures, and between group and individual risk assessment approaches.

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[23] According to Soothill et al, "The Offender Assessment System, a new national system for assessing the risk and needs of an offender, represents the most recent development in this area" (2002, 39). The authors acknowledge the shortcomings of using conviction data as a proxy measure for offending, but argue that nonetheless, by working backwards from conviction to other offences, it is possible to come up with a relative risk of committing homicide (ibid, 39–40). The authors also point out the need to have baseline data for the population in order to know how many did *not* go on to commit other offences. Further, the paper highlights the fact that having been involved in the more common criminal activities such as shoplifting reduces the likelihood that a criminal will be involved in one of the more serious types of homicide or serious sexual offences (SSA), whereas involvement in unusual types of offence such as kidnapping and manslaughter significantly increases the likelihood of being convicted of homicide or SSA (ibid, p.40).

In the unaided clinical approach the clinician assesses the risk of violent behaviour of a specific individual. The assessment of dangerousness or violence in an individual is usually based solely on unaided clinical judgment. This approach to risk assessment has been criticised on a number of grounds, including low inter-rater reliability, low validity and a failure to specify the decision-making process (Monahan and Steadman, 1994; Webster et al, 1997a), and inferior predictive validity compared to actuarial predictions (Meehl, 1954; Lidz et al, 1993; Mossman, 1994). Others, however, consider that clinical approaches offer the advantages of flexibility and an emphasis on violence prevention (Snowden, 1997; Hart, 1998). Buchanan (1999) also suggests that clinical approaches, if they focus on mechanisms through which violence occurs, may enhance the validity of risk assessment.

Actuarial/Statistical models

In some respects, actuarial (or statistical) models may be seen to represent the opposite of the unaided clinical approach. "Actuarial methods" are "the mathematical calculation of levels of risk and a consequent focus upon aggregate risk groups" (Kemshall and Maguire, 2001: 244). Actuarial methods allow assessors to make decisions based on data that can be coded in a predetermined manner (Meehl, 1954). Decisions are made according to rules, and focus on relatively small numbers of risk factors that are known, or are thought, to predict violence across settings and individuals. For diverse samples and contexts, these factors tend to be static (e.g. demographic variables). Actuarial approaches undoubtedly improve the consistency of risk assessment, but Hart (1998) argues that they tend to ignore individual variations in risk, over-focus on relatively static variables, fail to prioritise clinically relevant variables and minimise the role of professional judgment.

Structured clinical models

Structured clinical models combine the main characteristics of actuarial models and unaided clinical judgment. These are used by trained clinicians in assessing specific individuals. Hart (1998) suggests that structured clinical instruments promote systematic data collection based on sound scientific knowledge, yet allow flexibility in the assessment process. He also argues that, unlike strict actuarial measures, they encourage clinicians to use professional discretion.

Several instruments have been developed along these lines to assess risk of violence in clinical contexts. These include the Historical/Clinical/Risk Management 20-item (HCR-20) scale (Webster et al, 1997b) the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment guide (Kropp et al, 1995) and the Sexual Violence Risk (SVR-20) scale (Boer et al, 1997) (see Douglas and Cox (1999) for an in-depth review of these instruments).[24]

[24] Further, there is a range of mathematical models that attempt to understand the underlying causes of violent crime. These tend to be more theoretical in nature, and are usually developed in academic environments. They may apply the assumptions of well-established theoretical frameworks such as game theory or microeconomic theory. One of the main advantages of these models is that, based on simplifying assumptions, they may derive causal relationships between socio-economic variables and violent crime. Moreover, they may unearth some long-term dynamic behaviour that may not be detectable with the more empirical statistical methods that rely heavily on data, which often tends to be constrained in space and time. A major disadvantage of these models is that they tend to be too idealised and therefore lack predictive power in quantitative terms. For example, they may predict that violent crime rates will increase, but they cannot predict what will be the exact crime rate in one year's time. However, the main strength of these models is that they provide insight and new

Examples

Structured clinical judgment

The following list includes a brief summary of the violence risk assessment instruments currently available.

The **Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG)** is the most widely used actuarial tool for predicting violent offence recidivism (Quinsey et al, 1998). It was developed in Canada, based upon patients detained in secure hospitals between 1965 and 1980, and has been the subject of extensive evaluation that has confirmed its predictive utility. The VRAG contains 12 items, with weighted factors used to assign individuals to one of nine risk categories. The limitations of the VRAG include its inability to predict the nature, severity, imminence and frequency of future violence, and its tendency to encourage those who use it to ignore other risk factors that might be strongly associated with violence. VRAG also does not provide a basis upon which risk management plans can be developed, although as a predictive tool for use in clinical settings it has been shown to be the most effective. It appears to predict a relatively high proportion of subsequent violent offending, with its receiver operating characteristics (ROC) having an area under the curve (AUC) score of .73–.75 (Grann et al, 2000).

The **HCR-20** is a systematic model for assessing the risk of violence (Webster et al, 1997). The assessment combines historical factors that have a track record in predicting risk with clinical variables such as respondent insight, attitude, motivation to change and for treatment, stability and general symptomology. In addition, the assessment tool has the "value-added" component of structuring the assessor's attention towards case management plans, motivation to change and individual coping mechanisms. The HCR-20 is divided into three sub-scales: a historical scale, a clinical scale and a risk management scale. While initially formulated as an "aide memoire" in order to make decisions transparent, the predictive validity of the HCR-20 has been evaluated and the AUC of its ROC has been found to be .80 (Grann et al, 2000).

The **Psychopathy Check List-Revised (PCL-R)** and its derivatives (the PCL-YV [youth version] for adolescents and the PCL-SV "Screening Version") is a clinical construct rating scale used in semi-structured interview (Hare, 1991). It involves rating 20 items on a three-point scale divided into three broad categories: interpersonal/affective, social deviance and "additional items". As Kemshall (2002) observes, while initially developed from research on male forensic patients and offenders, various studies have confirmed the applicability of the PCL-R to other offender and patient populations. It has also been shown to be a highly reliable tool when used by well-trained assessors. Although not designed as a measurement of violence risk, it may measure the most important factor in the risk of predatory violence, that is, psychopathy.

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understanding. For instance, theoretical results may suggest that the individual's reaction to crime may affect crime rates. This variable may then be included into a statistical model to estimate the impact it has on crime rates.

The **Psychopathy Check List-Screening Version (PCL-SV)** is a 12-item abbreviated tool designed to screen for the possible presence of psychopathy. Based on a subset of the original 12 PCL-R items, it is particularly well suited for community samples. Hare et al assessed the effectiveness of the PCL-R across several countries and samples and found that the predictive validity of the PCL-R, when applied to offenders who scored as high risk, was 77 per cent, with an ROC curve of .75 (Hare et al, 2000).

2.3 Variables used

Individual level variables used in four risk assessment tools are presented in Figure 3.

PCL-SV	HCR-20	PCL-R	VRAG
•Superficial	•Previous violence	•Glibness/superficial charm	•PCL-SV score
•Grandiose	•Young age at first violent incident	•Grandiose sense of self-worth	•Elementary school maladjustment
•Manipulative	•Relationship instability	•Need for stimulation/proneness to boredom	•DSM-III diagnosis of personality disorder
•Lacks remorse	•Employment problems	•Pathological lying	•Age at index offence
•Lacks empathy	•Substance misuse problems	•Conning/manipulative	•Lived with both parents to age 16
•Does not accept responsibility	•Major mental illness	•Lack of remorse or guilt	•Failure on prior conditional release
•Impulsive	•Psychopathy (PCL-R/PCL-SV)	•Shallow affect	•Non-violent offence score
•Poor behaviour controls	•Early maladjustment	•Callous/lack of sympathy	•Marital status
•Lacks (goals)	•Personality disorder	•Parasitic lifestyle	•DSM-III diagnosis of schizophrenia
•Irresponsible	•Prior supervision failure	•Poor behavioural controls	•Victim injury (index offence)
•Adolescent antisocial behaviour	•Lack of insight	•Promiscuous sexual behaviour	•History of alcohol misuse
•Adult antisocial behaviour	•Negative attitudes	•Early behavioural problems	•Female victim (index offence)
	•Active symptoms of major mental illness	•Lack of realistic long-term goals	
	•Impulsivity	•Impulsivity	
	•Unresponsive to treatment	•...	
	•Plans lack feasibility		
	•...		

Figure 3: Individual level factors included in various risk assessment tools

Douglas and Webster (1999) discuss several risk assessment models including the HCR-20 model and the Hare PCL-R. They comment that the predictive validity of the various potential instruments requires further research. For example, "the two devices commonly used in the Canadian correctional system, the G-SIR and the LSI-R" have both been shown to predict general offending reasonably well, but not necessarily violent offending (especially when excluding violent sex offending), whereas the VRAG has been shown to "have strong predictive validity in the samples of violent, disturbed male persons in which it has been studied" (Douglas and Webster, 1999: 16). In Washington, The Department of Corrections (DOC) supervises convicted offenders after release from prison. The Offender Accountability Act (OAA) was passed in 1999 to reduce the risk of reoffending.

The DOC had been using the LSI-R but commissioned research that showed ways in which its predictive accuracy could be improved by integrating more risk factors.[25] They found that the model had moderate predictive accuracy, and that it could be generalised to future cohorts with the same rate of accuracy. However, its predictive accuracy for violent offenders other than violent sex offenders was relatively weak (WSIPP, 2007: 5).[26]

Research conducted by the German Federal Policy Office[27] has developed a "cumulative risk model" related to the causes of aggressive and delinquent behaviour of adolescents. This risk model claims that the probability of aggressive or delinquent behaviour increases (exponentially) with existence of more risk factors. Those factors relate to:

1) family structure

2) social competence and psychological characteristics

3) (acquired) cognitive maps

4) progression at school

5) peer pressure

6) leisure time activities

7) media consumption and substance abuse.[28]

While there are as yet no known evaluations of this model of cumulative risk, such a model holds promise as a means of integrating the factors identified as relevant to the incidence of violent crime at the individual and broader contextual levels.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a brief review of the models available to assess and predict the risk of violent behaviour. A vast number of papers has been published on the topic. All these approaches have clear advantages and disadvantages. For example, some models can obtain general causal links between socio-economic variables and crime rates, but they tend to be too idealised; by contrast, others are more realistic but are only applicable to a specific point in space and time.

Some attempts are being made to combine different approaches. The most notable example is perhaps the development of structured clinical assessment models: these combine the flexibility of expert clinical judgment and the more rigorous predictive power

[25] The Washington State Institute for Public Policy evaluated the instrument's effectiveness. In order to do so the risk factors were divided into two main categories: static (those factors that will not change, for example having a criminal record) and dynamic (those that may change such as drug dependency). For more detailed discussion of the amendments to the "risk for reoffence" instrument, see WSIPP, 2007.

[26] Although this may be primarily a function of the relative consistency of the behaviour of sexual offenders.

[27] Note that policing is mainly under the responsibility of the Länder (states) in Germany; the Federal Police has mainly coordination and information-gathering functions.

[28] F. Lösel and T. Bliesener: *Aggression und Delinquenz unter Jugendlichen. Untersuchungen von kognitiven und sozialen Bedingungen* (Luchterhand: BKA (Bundeskriminalamt), 2003).

of actuarial models. However, in general there is little coordination among the various methodologies at this stage.

All the models reviewed provide a partial understanding of the phenomenon of crime; this depends on the specific focus of the research method. Since they all provide a partial understanding, the approaches should be seen as complementary rather than competing with each other. In particular, models using individual and wider contextual variables should be used in conjunction with one another, as all these variables act simultaneously in the real world. Ideally, researchers should coordinate their efforts to produce a common framework or, more ambitiously, a meta-model capable of taking into account the micro/individual and macro/socio-economic characteristics of people and the particular context or neighbourhood in which they live. Indeed, Kemshall and Maguire (2001: 249) conclude from an empirical study of established and ad hoc public protection panels that "this is happening to a certain extent, and with promising results. That is, actuarial methods are not replacing expert judgement in any simple way. Instead there is an interaction between the two such that expert judgement is able to inform the actuarial decisions early on".[29]

A key question that emerges in consideration of the predictive validity of risk assessment tools is that of how low the threshold for "risk" should be set. Setting it very low would mean many potential offenders could be unnecessarily incarcerated, but there would be a greater likelihood of ensuring that the dangerous would-be offenders were incapacitated, thereby effectively preventing violent offending. Whereas if the threshold for risk is set higher, fewer "false positives" (those deemed at risk of future offending but who would not in fact have gone on to offend) would be imprisoned, but at the same time the risk would then be higher and some of the more dangerous offenders might go free. In this discussion a key issue is the ratio of false positives to false negatives, classically shown in an "ROC" curve. The moral issues are highlighted when attempting to identify offenders before they have ever committed a crime, and especially very early.[30] These are issues that remain to be fully determined but will be increasingly salient as these tools come into wider use.

[29] It is worth noting that the Detective Inspectors interviewed by Kemshall and Maguire (2001) expressed the emergence of some problematic incentives – for example they felt that when offences were committed by those who had not been deemed potentially dangerous offenders, the Detective Inspectors tended to be blamed, meaning that they were encouraged to "play safe" by classifying offenders as more risky than they might actually be (ibid, 249).

[30] For example, see the accusation levelled at the UK government of attempting to implement foetal ASBOs when attempting to target the highest risk groups at or before birth.

CHAPTER 3 Effective interventions to reduce serious violent crime

This chapter focuses on effective interventions to reduce serious violent offending such as homicide and serious assault. There are still relatively few studies or reviews of interventions showing what works in reducing violent offending specifically. As Polaschek et al (2005: 1624) comment, "with so few outcome studies yet published on programs for these challenging offenders, further evaluation is an urgent research priority". This review focuses primarily on well-evaluated interventions,[31] pointing to promising initial results for a few others that merit further investigation.

Interventions can have direct, often relatively easily quantifiable, impacts as well as indirect, and often more difficult to quantify, impacts. They can also have an impact in the short term that may not be sustained, with implications for the robustness of findings in the longer term, as well as with implications for the cost-benefit of implementing interventions with short- versus longer-term outcomes.[32] However, even when attempting to compare only well-evaluated studies with quantifiable impacts, it is difficult to compare across studies because of the different criteria and measures used.[33] Meta-analyses provide the most informative means of comparing the findings of disparate studies as they take account of the differences in criteria and measures to provide a more standardised outcome of the effectiveness of programmes and interventions. Where possible this report draws on meta-analyses for relevant interventions. It is also crucial when attempting to consider transferable lessons from one context to another that any attempt to implement a programme in a given context involves careful analysis of the particular needs of that context (Karoly et al, 2005; MacDonald et al, 2005).[34]

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[31] For a brief, relevant discussion of intervention evaluation, see Rubin et al (2006).

[32] Rubin et al (2006).

[33] For example, outcome measures such as rearrest are measured in some studies at two years and some may not be measured until five years after release. Also whether talking about reducing the rate, preventing, cost-effectiveness, high cost-benefit.

[34] For example, in seeking lessons for the UK context initiatives that set out to reduce gun crime may not seem directly applicable. However, given the fact that many incidents of lethal violence have similar motivations to non-lethal violence and occur in similar contexts, there is likely to be significant overlap in what the gun crime intervention needed to achieve in order to be effective, and what is needed in violence-pone areas in the UK. For example, as will be seen below, such interventions may need to tackle destructive peer relations and gang membership, inter-racial or ethnic tensions, drug trafficking, etc.

3.1 Effective interventions to reduce violent crime

A wealth of evidence shows that incarceration does not reduce offending, and may increase the likelihood and severity of post-release offending. It has been argued elsewhere that prison's negative effect on offenders is in part because prior incarceration reduces offenders' chances in several key areas that may be viewed as "protective" against further offending. Taking part in community, employment and shared social values have been shown to reduce the likelihood of offending (Byrne and Kelly, 1989; Sampson and Laub, 1992; Steffensmeier and Haring, 1993; Gilligan and Lee, 2005; Visher et al, 2006). This section provides examples of interventions that have been evaluated and, unlike prison, have been shown to be effective at reducing violent recidivism.[35]

Individuals

Early interventions

The effectiveness and cost-benefit of early diversionary or preventive interventions has been covered in some detail in Loeber and Farrington (2000), Farrington (2006) and Hosking and Walsh (2005). Karoly et al (2005) provide an excellent discussion of the high cost-benefit ratios achieved by investment in effective early interventions such as Nurse-family partnerships and parenting support to reduce the likelihood of future offending in at-risk groups, especially those at highest risk of offending.[36] The Elmira Prenatal/Early Childhood project is an example of nurse home visiting premised on the fact that nurses are well placed to observe, identify and intervene to address any health or child maltreatment issues, and family and contextual factors interfering with maternal mental state or ability to provide care. The intervention was implemented in New York with an evaluation built in that included randomisation and "variable dose" of prenatal home visitation on its own or with postnatal visitation, as well with four separate intervention groups all of whom were tracked through to follow-up at age 15. The results of the programme evaluation showed that prenatal visits alone were not associated with postnatal maternal adjustment benefits. However, postnatal maternal benefits were observed among mothers visited both in pregnancy and infancy. Further, the follow-up showed that "both prenatal and extended nurse home visits were effective in preventing criminal behaviour among children born to unmarried and low ses [socio-economic status]women" (Tremblay and Japel, 2003, 225).

The most effective of the early childhood programmes evaluated by Tremblay and Japel (2003, 235), in terms of reducing criminal behaviour, were those that included intensive day-care and/or parent training. These findings remain valid and significant in the context of attempting to reduce violent crime as well as other types of crime. There is strong

[35] There is research on reducing crime through design and situational interventions, such as improved street lighting, CCTV, improved availability of public transport, better visibility of crime-prone areas. This report focuses on other types of interventions as the National Audit Office (NAO) project team were focusing on the UK context and specifically including situational interventions in their own research.

[36] For a summary discussion of early interventions and the cost-benefit of intervening early to prevent crime see Rubin et al (2006).

evidence from the studies and reviews listed above and elsewhere of the well-established and longitudinally tested effectiveness of early interventions[37] and of the disproportionate savings achieved by averting a single violent incident. While violent crime is much less frequent, the cost of each individual incident is so high to victims, the criminal justice and health systems, and to the offender's future outcomes. Because it is possible to identify those at risk of future violence and criminal offending with some accuracy, early interventions can achieve not only important social and psychological gains for a society, but are also a highly effective way to target expenditure. The remainder of this section focuses on a selection of other effective interventions for reducing violent crime.

School-based interventions

As noted above, many agree that early interventions (before age five or even "true" early, meaning before age three) are the most effective at preventing violent and criminal behaviour. However, there are evidence-based and evaluated interventions during the school years that have also been shown to be effective. Some of these have been specifically aimed at violence prevention or reduction. For example, the Second Step curriculum was implemented with a randomised control trial in which primary school students were taught anger management, empathy and impulse control. Participants included in the intervention showed less physical aggression at school, higher levels of empathy, interpersonal problem solving and social skills in addition to increased anger management (Hawkins and Herrenkohl, 2003: 279). These effects were shown to persist at a six-month post-treatment follow-up.

Another school-based programme that has been shown to be effective is the Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies (PATHS) programme. The PATHS curriculum promotes emotional and social competencies and reduces aggression and behaviour problems in primary school-aged children. It is a programme that works through education in the classroom. The curriculum is designed to be used by educators and counsellors in a multi-year, universal prevention model. Although primarily focused on the school and classroom settings, information and activities are also included for use with parents. PATHS has been researched with children in regular education classroom settings, as well as with a variety of special needs students (deaf, hearing-impaired, with learning disabilities, emotionally disturbed, mildly mentally delayed, and gifted). Ideally it should start at the school entry and continue through to age ten. The programme curriculum is taught three times per week for a minimum of 20–30 minutes per day, providing teachers with lessons and materials for teaching students "emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and interpersonal problem-solving skills" (Blueprints website, accessed May 2007).[38] "The PATHS Curriculum has been shown to improve protective factors and reduce behavioral risk factors. Evaluations have demonstrated significant improvements for program youth (regular education, special needs, and deaf) compared to control youth in the following areas: improved self-control, improved understanding and recognition of emotions, increased ability to tolerate frustration, use of more effective conflict-resolution

[37] Karoly et al (2005) followed treatment groups through to adulthood, with some followed up into their 40s.

[38] http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/programs/PATHS.html.

strategies, improved thinking and planning skills, decreased anxiety/depressive symptoms (teacher report of special needs students), decreased conduct problems (teacher report of special needs students), decreased symptoms of sadness and depression (child report – special needs), and decreased report of conduct problems, including aggression (child report)" (Blueprints website, accessed May 2007). Program costs for a three-year period range from £7 per student per annum to £20 per student per annum.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

CBT programmes are interventions designed to treat offenders' "dysfunctional and criminogenic thinking patterns" (Lipsey and Landenberger, 2006: 2). CBT focuses on helping individuals to develop ways of recognising their own dysfunctional thought patterns and intervening to alter these in situations that may be related to their criminal behaviour. The methods include one-to-one sessions involving role-play, practising restructuring thought processes in "risky" situations, goal-setting, life skill development and de-escalation strategies when interactions or situations may be leading to offending behaviour (Lipsey, 2006).

Many CBT interventions have been well evaluated, and the findings of several meta-analyses and reviews of these evaluations are informative. As an intervention for individual violent and high-risk offenders, CBT has relatively consistently been shown to be associated with reducing recidivism for ex-offenders (Redondo et al, 1997; Kunz et al, 2004[39]; Polaschek et al, 2005). Lipsey (2006) surveyed the literature on CBT and found that meta-analysis of 20 CBT interventions concluded that CBT was effective at reducing offending in general (though not differentiating violent from non-violent recidivism), and that "representative CBT programmes were found to reduce recidivism rates by 20–30 per cent". (Pearson et al (2002) In Lipsey and Landenberger, 2006, 4) found that "cognitive behavioural programs were more effective in reducing recidivism than behavioural ones, with a mean recidivism reduction for treated groups of about 30 per cent". Dowden's and Andrews' (2000) meta-analysis of 35 programmes with outcome data specifically on violent reoffending found that cognitive behavioural programmes had the largest effects.[40] They note that "when these [programmes] included management of anger and other negative affect, and taught relapse prevention skills, they had a significantly larger effect on subsequent recidivism" (ibid: 1613).[41]

[39] Note that Kunz et al describe a CBT intervention that successfully reduces reoffending and rearrest rates of high-risk psychiatric patients, whereas the other studies listed are based on violent offenders not identified as psychiatric cases.

[40] They also discuss several other studies finding positive effects including cognitive skills training (Robinson, 1995) and Vermont Department of Corrections Cognitive Self Change (CSC) targeted at male and female violent offenders (Bush, 1995a).

[41] Dowden's and Andrews' (2000) remark on the significant caveats required with any interpretation of findings from such studies. First, care must be taken in understanding the status of dropouts – if they are not counted in the outcome data, yet are not matched to the treated group who continue with the programme, this may skew the results.

Multimodal interventions

Multi-systemic therapy (MST)

Following from the last point about addressing more criminogenic factors to improve effectiveness of individual therapeutic interventions, multi-systemic therapy (MST) is a therapeutic intervention developed in the US by Henggeler (Borduin et al, 1995). It addresses offending behaviour and thought processes of offenders and those in the offender's familial and peer/social contexts with whom the offender lives and interacts in day-to-day life. By helping individuals understand what aspects of their relationships and context enhance the likelihood of offending, and assigning a counsellor or case worker to be available at any time to intervene or help avert negative behaviours and effect change in the offenders' daily lives, MST interventions may assist offenders in changing the practices associated with their offending.

There is conflicting evidence on the effectiveness of MST. Its detractors argue that the majority of evaluations of MST interventions that show significant effects have been conducted by the programme developers or those directly trained by them. A meta-analysis (Littell et al, 2006) concluded that independent MST evaluations do not produce better results than "treatment-as-usual". However, despite the fact that it is generally preferable to have independent evaluations of such interventions, the evaluations of MST conducted by programme developers or those trained by them show strong enough positive effects on reducing recidivism, in the US and in other countries,[42] that some argue programme fidelity (the skill and accuracy with which the treatment is implemented) may have been compromised in the less positive studies. Further independent evaluations that can demonstrate strong programme fidelity are needed to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of MST. Nevertheless, in spite of these reservations, experts in the field of interventions to reduce crime and delinquency (Farrington, 2006) agree that MST is one of the only known interventions to show promise with an otherwise intractable age group (from age 10 or 12 to 18).

Changing peer culture

It is well established that peers exert a significant influence on adolescent behaviour. Accordingly, some interventions have been aimed at shifting peer group norms away from pressure towards delinquency and towards pro-social attitudes (Tolan and Guerra, 1994). While efforts to reduce gang membership have often found little success, efforts to introduce pro-social norms have been found more effective. For example, Feldman (1992) evaluated the St Louis Experiment that mixed pro-social and at-risk youth. This intervention was primarily a group behavioural modification programme fostering positive peer influence. The evaluation included a control group and found that the intervention group had significantly better outcomes. In fact, 91.3 per cent of the antisocial boys in the intervention group showed decreased antisocial behaviour, by contrast with only 50.9 per cent of those in the control group.

[42] Schoenwald et al (2003) discuss the transportability of MST and the effectiveness demonstrated in an intervention in Norway which suggests that MST has similarly significant effects on the treated group in the study they describe as in earlier MST evaluations in the US.

Communities and neighbourhoods

This section focuses on a selection of police-driven interventions in communities. There are no meta-analyses of this type of intervention that would assist in drawing firm conclusions about effectiveness. However, individual evaluations have indicated that many such interventions are associated with a reduction in violent crime. This does not imply that the intervention *caused* the reduction as that conclusion remains untested with such interventions and poses significant methodological barriers. This is because when violent crime drops in a given area at the same time that an intervention comes into effect, there may be numerous other factors contributing to the decline. For example, demographic variables such as an ageing population can lead to lower rates of violent crime.

The best information on effectiveness of such complex interventions is provided by controlled studies in which an intervention is implemented in one neighbourhood or community while "business-as-usual" continues in another community matched as well as possible for significant demographic, social and economic variables, including crime rates, poverty and so forth.

Nonetheless, interventions frequently either get rolled out too broadly for control comparisons to exist, or control measures are not taken in a "matched" community even when available. Even if control studies are put in place, in real communities other social dynamics carry on that could impede effectiveness (such as an increase in ethnic tensions), or which could facilitate a reduction in crime (such as a community event that improved social cohesion). The best information we can hope for with current data is an indication of whether the communities in which certain types of interventions take place experience a reduction in crime while other communities where these interventions do not take place experience no such decrease or experience a less significant reduction in violent crime.

Problem-oriented policing (POP)[43]

Criminologists and practitioners alike have tended in the past to believe that homicide rates were so inextricably linked to broader social and demographic factors that there was little police could do to reduce homicide. However, there has been a range of individual police interventions in the US in communities affected by high rates of homicide and violent crime that has been associated with significant positive results. Many of these come under the umbrella term "problem-oriented policing", or POP.

POP is a term used to describe changes in policing philosophy and practice exemplified by a number of initiatives that have been implemented in North America (and increasingly elsewhere) since the 1990s. The key underlying change in perspective of POP is the acceptance that police have a role to play in the reduction of homicide and violent crime, and that homicide reduction can incorporate a strong preventive component and include wider citizen involvement. POP interventions are many, varied, and generally not rigorously evaluated, with a paucity of meta-analyses allowing comparison across interventions. Weisburd and Eck (2004) review the problem-solving evaluation literature and find that POP appears to be the most effective means of reducing violence in a

[43] POP is to a certain extent an overarching category that can be seen as encompassing the others, as well as in some cases being classed as a risk management practice (see Chapter 4).

community. They also found that there appeared to be "no significant displacement after place-focused interventions", suggesting that the crime that was averted was not merely diverted or moved to other nearby communities or other types of offences (in Nunn et al, 2006: 75).

Included in the broad range of such interventions are those that focus on the role of the police,[44] as well as those in which non-criminal justice agencies play a significant role in driving or operationalising the aims of the initiative. This section briefly describes three interventions that centre on criminal justice practices that focus on community-level strategies for reducing violent crime. Those interventions that are also considered POP but include a primary or significant emphasis on community involvement and inter-agency coordination are discussed in the following chapter.

Crackdowns

Crackdowns are highly visible operations, aimed at specific criminal activities in a specific geographic area (Nunn et al, 2006: 74). They usually involve greater numbers of police enforcing certain existing laws more forcefully. Crackdowns seek to send a clear message to criminals that they will get caught if they conduct certain activities in the designated area of the crackdown. The highly visible nature of crackdowns makes them effective strategies for demonstrating that something is being done about a problem. Because of this message and the attendant reduction in fear of crime, crackdowns are often popular with the public, police and policy makers. However, while it is good for public support (which itself can have a beneficial impact on policing), popularity is not tantamount to effectiveness in directly reducing crime.

The effectiveness of crackdowns at reducing crime has been reviewed by Scott (2003) and others.[45] The consistent finding from these reviews is that crackdowns tend to have short-term impacts, often without displacement and at times with diffusion of benefits beyond the specific problem targeted by the crackdown. Nevertheless, the findings also suggest that when crackdowns end, or not long after, there tends to be a longer-term regression to pre-intervention levels, or "decay effects" (Nunn et al, 2006: 75).

In light of the above discussion, crackdowns and prohibitions on dangerous substances may not be the most effective means of reducing violence.[46] First, they may represent a "sticking plasters" approach in which symptoms are dealt with instead of underlying causes. If this is the case then the initial expenditure and short-term gain by preventing individual incidents may represent a false economy if further expenditure is later needed to tackle more persistent underlying causes that will nonetheless drive others to drink, take drugs and carry weapons. Second, crackdowns on individual substances require a relatively

[44] Albeit with consultation and some involvement of community members.

[45] For a fuller discussion, see Braga et al, "Problem-Oriented Policing in Violent Crime Places: A Randomized Controlled Experiment", *Criminology* 37 (1999): 541-580; Weisburd, D. and J. Eck. "What can police do to reduce crime, disorder and fear?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 593 (42) (2004); Brookman and Maguire (2005); Nunn, S., K. Quinet, K. Rowe and D. Christ. "Interdiction day: Covert surveillance operations, drugs, and serious crime in an inner city neighborhood." *Police Quarterly* 9 (1) (2006): 73–99.

[46] Crackdowns are discussed further in Chapter 4.

large investment of police time, and may be a relatively blunt instrument given the difficulty of effectively targeting stop and search interventions. For example, a crackdown in which 6800 people were stopped and searched in 1998/1999 and only 249 (or approximately 4 per cent) were found to be carrying concealed weapons (Wilkins and Addicott, 2000).

Echoing the conclusions of several researchers commenting on other interventions, Scott (2003, 13) suggests that "crackdowns appear to be most effective when used with other responses that address the underlying causes of the particular problem".

Covert surveillance

An alternative for targeted policing that appears to go some way towards remedying the short-lived effects of crackdowns is the interdiction. Unlike a crackdown in which the police are likely to become strict or more severe in a highly visible sense, "they deliberately and secretly investigated the suspected dealers and their property, compiled sufficient evidence to show probable cause ... then arrested the perpetrators (Nunn et al, 80)", interdictions are covert or invisible police operations to reduce crime in a particular area. While it should be noted that such secrecy undermines the covert operation's ability to improve public confidence and support (community policing as good public relations), other gains may be achieved that merit further investigation. Nunn et al (2006) describe a well-evaluated study[47] to reduce drug trafficking and the associated violence in the Brightwood neighbourhood of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Nunn et al (2006) note that while drug activity was not reduced, there was a very significant reduction in overall levels of crime and violence that persisted into the second year post-interdiction. There was a particularly striking reduction in the presence of guns, down 24 per cent and then 10 per cent in the control area in the first and second years post-interdiction respectively (2000/2001). However, in Brightwood the reduction in guns was 34 per cent then 45.8 per cent in those same two years. Personal violence in the second year post-interdiction was down 6.1 per cent in the control area (perhaps representing a year in which violence was going down generally), whereas in Brightwood it was down 9.1 per cent. The authors suggest that one possible explanation for the disproportionate reduction in crime is that "covert surveillance creates an air of uncertainty among criminals operating within the neighbourhood ... [and] therefore could have been influenced to reduce illegal acts because of this ongoing uncertainty" (ibid: 95). Further, this particular interdiction appears to have increased people's willingness to report crime, perhaps because the more penetrating nature of the investigation meant that it went beyond the local petty dealers to their sources, meaning that the arrested were less likely to have strong local ties. Alternatively, they may have been more willing to report crime after the interdiction because when the interdiction became public it ultimately increased people's confidence that something would be done about reported criminals.

[47] The evaluation included a control "area" and before and after measures of effects (see Nunn et al, 2006: 83).

Post-release

It appears that not only do neighbourhood effects have a significant impact on offending; they are also significantly associated with likelihood of violent criminal reoffending post-release. This effect may be in part accounted for by the general difficulty offenders have in reintegrating across a range of areas such as finding employment, getting control of substance abuse problems and remedying educational deficits. With this in mind, post-release programmes to reduce substance dependence, improve employment opportunities or help ex-offenders with other basic needs have been implemented.

Visher et al (2006, 22) contend that "stable employment is a critical predictor of post-release success for individuals released from prison". They continue to suggest that "steady, satisfying employment can provide a way in to new social networks and a conventional lifestyle and thus be a critical component in the desistance process". However, the breadth of factors in addition to recent imprisonment that reduce the likelihood of finding such steady and satisfying employment may need to be addressed. Improving outcomes in any one of these areas may be inadequate if other problems are left unresolved. Visher et al's (ibid, 13) review of eight post-release employment programmes in the US found that they had "little or only modest effects ... for reducing the recidivism of ex-offenders". In other words, employment assistance may need to be one part of a post-release reintegrative process that also attends to the many and varied other needs of offenders.

Interestingly, Kubrin and Stewart (2006) conducted a study of prisoners released into more affluent neighbourhoods with better options for employment and social support compared to others who were released into more disadvantaged communities. The researchers calculated the recidivism rates for the two groups, controlling for individual level risk factors for reoffending, and found that those who went into better-off neighbourhoods had significantly better outcomes and lower rates of recidivism compared with the control group (Ludwig et al, 2001; Kubrin and Stewart, 2006). Specifically, 60 per cent of those in the disadvantaged communities reoffended, while only 42 per cent did so in the more affluent neighbourhoods. While outcomes from single or relatively few studies require further validation (and some caution in interpretation given the voluntary nature of assignment), such findings merit further investigation to discover which aspects of a change in neighbourhood may have the most significant effects on rates of recidivism. In any case, the process and location of reintegration are important factors to bear in mind when attempting to reduce violent criminal recidivism and the rates of violence in prone communities. Kazemian (2007: 22) contends that "there is a genuine need to invest in offender reintegration and to provide individuals with tools that will allow them to maintain desistance efforts and resist temptations to engage in criminal behaviour". The next section notes an intervention that seeks to address many of the violence reduction and offender needs described in the preceding sections.

The offender in context: cognition, interactions and contexts

A range of individual therapeutic, problem-oriented and neighbourhood interventions has been described here. Effective interventions range from early interventions that focus on

parenting, families, educational opportunities and the influence of peer values and moral codes, to individual interventions that work to establish and routinise change in offenders' thinking in many relevant areas of their lives. Significant features of effective interventions appear to include context-sensitivity and working to resolve developmental, cognitive and behavioural problems for offenders at many levels.

Nonetheless, the question of what to do with violent offenders remains, and will remain for the foreseeable future, answered at least partly with incarceration.[48] Given that this is the case, one especially relevant and promising intervention pulls together many of the lessons from other effective interventions, with a focus on making prison a more effective rehabilitative, rather than primarily punitive or incapacitative, environment.[49] This intervention is briefly described here as a promising practice meriting further investigation.

Resolve to Stop the Violence Project (RSVP)

The RSVP is a promising intervention that has been subject to preliminary evaluation with striking results. The San Francisco County Sheriff's Department established the project in 1997 (Gilligan and Lee, 2005). At that time, rising prison populations and the high costs of crime led to calls for a change in policy and practice in dealing with violent offenders. The aim of the RSVP intervention was to move away from prison as punishment and retribution, towards using prison time as rehabilitative and facilitative of reintegration into a community post-release in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. The programme consisted of three main components:

- Offender accountability in which the offender is helped to move away from seeing himself as a victim of the criminal justice system and towards experiencing empathy, guilt, remorse and ultimately a more positive sense of self. This phase involves the offender in a "12 hours a day, six days a week program consisting of workshops, academic classes, theatrical enactments, counselling sessions and communicating with victims of violence" (Gilligan and Lee, 2005: 144).
- Victim restoration involves victims in workshops, seminars, the arts and support groups, at times with offenders as well.
- Community restoration in which offenders and the criminal justice system work with local public and private agencies to engage in a range of activities, meetings, workshops, arts and theatre, and the opportunity to speak publicly and engage in public education campaigns, generally taking on a "restorative role" once back in the community post-release.

[48] It is worth noting that while the US has the highest proportion of the population in prison in the world, 686 per 100,000 of the population, the UK has the highest in Europe with 139 per 100,000 (Muncie, 2005).

[49] Howells et al (2004) provide an overview of "good practice" in offender rehabilitation programmes operating throughout Australia, drawing on findings of international literature on "what works". However, they do not cite evaluations that would provide evidence of their effectiveness. More research is needed to provide an overview of the effectiveness of the range of interesting programmes they describe.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the programme over 100 offenders' reoffending and rearrest rates were compared to a randomly chosen matched control group. The reduction in overall criminal recidivism for participants was 48.3 per cent compared with 34.7 per cent for the control group. Interestingly, the reduction in specifically violent recidivism was more dramatic, at 66.7 per cent for the programme participants versus 41.0 per cent for the control group.

Not only was the programme associated with reduced non-violent and violent recidivism, but the longer participants were in the programme, the stronger the effect on reducing violent reoffending. Thus, those who participated in the programme for eight weeks experienced a 46.3 per cent reduction in recidivism, while those participating for 16 weeks or more experienced a reduction in recidivism of 82.6 per cent.[50] Further, for those who were eventually recidivists, programme participation was associated with longer time in the community before rearrest, less violent offences and reduced time in custody on subsequent offences.

The researchers added the savings from reduced offending, including reduced time in prison, lower legal costs and lower health and welfare support for offenders and victims and reduced costs of property damage. When these savings were subtracted from the costs of implementing the programme it was found that the RSVP project produced a saving of $4 for every $1 spent on the intervention. This represents a significant financial saving, and becomes even more significant when considered alongside the wider gains for individuals and communities accrued by such a significant reduction in violent offending. The researchers correctly note the need for further research and longitudinal studies that can improve confidence that the results achieved by RSVP are replicable in other contexts and with other offenders. However, such striking results certainly call out for further research to do so.

The growing public and policy interest in prisons has tended to focus on whether or not prisons are effective at reducing offending, and on whether or not more prison places are needed. Nonetheless, as the RSVP demonstrates, another useful set of questions should focus on what sorts of prison interventions improve the effectiveness of prisons at reducing reoffending. It would be useful for further research to place the apparent success of the RSVP intervention in the context of the range of other types of prison-based programmes that also take account of the importance of reintegration for ex-offenders. For example, there are programmes that focus on maintaining contact between prisoners and families, and literacy and skill-based programmes. A prisons review conducted recently concluded that such programmes typically reduce reoffending by 5–10 per cent.[51] Thus, these programmes also appear to produce some positive effects on reducing recidivism and it would be useful to compare their cost-benefits with more multifaceted and intensive programmes such as RSVP. On existing evidence it appears likely that the more aspects of individuals' problems and needs are attended to by an intervention, and the more attention is also paid to offenders' return environments, the more effective the programme is likely

[50] Though given how many had been released as part of earlier cohorts, the latter was a relatively small sample.

[51] Halpern (2007), *personal communication*.

to be.[52] This is supported by the findings of a systematic review of incarceration-based drug treatments that concluded:

> Policy makers seeking effective interventions for incarcerated drug users are most likely to find success with programs that intensively focus on the multiple problems of substance abusers. Policy makers should expect smaller effect sizes for less intensive programs (Mitchell et al, 2006, 18).

[52] Mitchell et al note in their conclusions that "treatment programs that mandated aftercare after release from incarceration produced larger effects than those that did not" (2006, 18).

CHAPTER 4

Risk management, prevention and inter-agency coordination for reducing violent crime

Context

As discussed in previous chapters, violence is a complex problem associated with many other significant social problems. Given this complexity, an exclusive focus on a criminal justice approach to resolving the problem cannot be expected to be as effective as an approach that works to address the problem at many levels. It has also become increasingly clear that prevention is better than cure, and that prevention requires an understanding of the problem and an integrated effort that combines insights, input and commitment from beyond criminal justice to agencies, bodies and residents in communities experiencing or at risk of violent crime.[53] This focus on underlying causes to inform a cost-effective strategy of prevention instead of relying only on expensive post-hoc treatment has been called by some a public health model for crime.

This chapter describes a selection of practices involving inter-agency cooperation between various criminal justice agencies, local community groups, and health and social services to reduce or prevent violent crime. While this type of coordination was impelled early on primarily by probation services in a drive for a more effective means of managing offenders on their release from prison, it has been increasingly accepted as a necessary *modus operandi* for all concerned with violence reduction. Some instances of inter-agency cooperation and related risk management practices thus focus on individual offenders. These include bodies responsible for making decisions about parole, probation and surveillance based on assessments of individual and behavioural criteria.[54]

When starting from the perspective of offender management, "systematic risk management strategies are evident in various guises in many currently popular crime control approaches in the UK, including profiling, targeted policing and incapacitative sentencing … [A] basic aim of all these approaches is the management of crime opportunities … there is a marked

[53] Of course "cure", or reducing recidivism for previous offenders, can also be effective and is worth pursuing, but rehabilitation and reintegration show more promise for achieving this than traditional punitive approaches.

[54] For example, as described in the Canadian Women's Prison example below. In the UK, relevant similar bodies include MAPPA and NOMS.

move away from traditional disciplinary practices to an 'informative system', in which the production and exchange of risk knowledge becomes the key mechanism" (Kemshall and Maguire, 2005: 244).[55] Such risk management practices draw on risk assessment tools to evaluate individual cases and establish their level of risk to the community and the level of post-release or community surveillance required. Whether or not risk management and crime reduction panels are effective long term at reducing the incidence of violent crime remains to be seen. Some argue they tend to get swamped by the sheer volume of routine cases, and that there is a need to focus on only the most serious and high-risk offenders (Bryan and Doyel, 2003; Brookman and Maguire, 2005). While there is a lack of systematic evaluation to allow firm conclusions, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that "where panels focus their attention on specific individual cases with a clear and immediate risk, there can be a positive response from the offender" (Brookman and Maguire, 2005: 380).

In contrast to this offender-focused perspective, some interventions involving inter-agency coordination to reduce violent crime are broader, community-oriented prevention approaches that integrate input from multiple stakeholders, building on evidence from many sources (individual, academic, family, peer, community, school, health, etc.) to design and implement interventions at multiple levels.

Whether coordinating criminal justice information to target high-risk individual offenders or focusing on community-focused prevention, information coordination and strong inter-organisational networks are necessary to deal with such a complex phenomenon as violent crime. However, it has been argued that such "networks are unusual because criminal justice agencies generally work largely independently of each other, often at cross-purposes, often without coordination, and often in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and dislike" (Braga and Winship, 2005, 4).

Williams et al (1997, 25) describe a "risk-focused approach" built on a public health preventive framework, with operational guidelines specifically for violence prevention. These guidelines emphasise "community-based organization and the infusion of theory and research to inform decision-making". The core elements include:

- public health surveillance: analysis seeking to understand the nature and extent of the problem
- risk and protective factor identification: determined by empirical analysis for individuals and communities
- prevention or intervention design: according to a "comprehensive plan"
- implementation: operationalisation – strategic choice of settings and target population

[55] Research and practice in the UK focuses on the work of Public Protection Panels, NOMS and MAPPA. Panels that collate information, assess risk, track and monitor identified offenders. Need more qual and quant research to check this

- evaluation: monitoring of implementation and (short- and long-term outcomes) for future interventions in same sites as well as transferable learning for other sites
- dissemination: getting the goals of interventions and the learning from evaluations out to the public, researchers and policy community to inform decisions and state of knowledge in the field.

It is argued that "[t]he use of this framework has advanced the science and practice of violence prevention. It explicitly emphasizes the importance of empirical findings for prevention planning and thus conducting research for policy formation and program development" (Williams et al, 1997, 26).

Two of the interventions described in this chapter are offender-management programmes in Canada, where Federal and regional-level action has been underway. There appears to be less evident Federal-level information about offender management in the US, but the US provides some very informative examples of effective community-level programmes. The National Audit Office (NAO) is focusing its research on the UK context, and the wider context of Europe and Australia appear to have some interesting developments; these are not yet available in evaluations or reviews of the literature. These offender-management and community-based prevention initiatives share the integration of some or all of the core elements described above as fitting into this public health framework.[56] It should be noted that no systematic reviews or meta-analyses of these inter-agency collaborations were found. There are inherent difficulties in evaluating such efforts caused by the complexity of the structure, aims and range of practices involved, rendering the definition, never mind the measurement, or outcomes of a project worthy of a study on their own. However, individual "good practice" examples have been identified in the literature on reducing violent crime. These are unfortunately at times described or evaluated as "single-study" examples. They are described here as examples that pull together many of the lessons and practices from previous chapters, drawing on information about offenders and violent crime from a range of sources, and involving multiple agencies in interventions that seek to address the problem of violent crime from multiple angles. They are therefore pointed to as informative programmes of a range of types that merit further investigation.

Offender management

National Flagging System (NFS)

The NFS in Canada was set up in 1995 by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Task Force on High-Risk Offenders "to better protect children and other vulnerable people

[56] However, it is worth noting that Williams et al (1997) flag aspects of the application of this framework to violence prevention that are as yet unknown/untested. For example, public health approaches usually assume some knowledge of side-effects, whereas we frequently do not have information about the potential side-effects of programme implementation for social interventions. For instance, we do not necessarily know what happens if we effectively reduce gang membership – we may reduce gang-related violence, but then do those ex- or would-be gang members become even more disaffected and marginalised through losing a source of affiliation and association? There are many similar worthwhile questions that are worth exploring when designing and evaluating violence prevention and reduction interventions.

from acts of violence and sexual abuse" (Bonta and Yassine, 2005, 5). The intent was to help the criminal justice system to be more effective at the time of prosecution in dealing with these high-risk, persistent offenders. Canada is a large country with a significant number of offenders, and they can move across provinces relatively easily. The system was devised to ensure the flow of necessary information about previous convictions and "high and continuing risk of future violent conduct" (ibid, 5). With this information prosecutors can know whether or not an offender was already considered high risk and apply for a Dangerous Offender (DO) or Long-term Offender (LTO) order where appropriate. Offenders are placed on the NFS if it is deemed that they are eligible for a DO or LTO order on their next offence.

Each province is assigned an NFS coordinator. Offender referrals to this coordinator can be made by local police, Crown attorneys and other correctional agencies. It is up to the coordinator to gather, collate and review information on each referral and make the decision as to whether or not to place the offender on the NFS. They must then liaise with the local police, corrections and prosecutors as well as with other provincial NFS coordinators by communicating the decision. In this way, flagged offenders are placed on the national police identification system (NPIS) as a "person of special interest" (Bonta and Yassine, 2005, 6). Criteria for inclusion on the NFS and for DO and LTO orders are similar and are related either to the offender, the offence or both. Examples that may incur inclusion on the DFS are offenders who have been the subject of previously unsuccessful DO order applications. Situations in which serious concerns were raised by the circumstances of the crime or offender behaviour may also precipitate inclusion. The NFS coordinator also maintains a file on flagged offenders including: criminal record; psychiatric, probation, pre-sentence, and or correctional reports; court transcripts; names and addresses of victims; and names of police officers and prosecutors who have experience of or previous contact with the offender (ibid, 6).

The aim of Bonta's and Yassine's research was to "empirically investigat[e] the effectiveness of the NFS in identifying and tracking high-risk, persistent offenders" and to find out whether it could "facilitate the early identification and the proper management of those offenders assessed at high-risk to reoffend either violently or sexually" (Bonta and Yassine, 2005, 3). The authors found that the system was effective at the stage of collating the information and communicating it, or flagging relevant offenders; it was less effective at following through to the stage of assigning a DO or LTO order that represents the next level of surveillance.

Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Plan (SHOCAP)

The Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Plan, or SHOCAP, is an initiative implemented in Alberta, Canada in April 1997. The Serious & Violent Crime Strategy was devised in April 2006 by Alberta Justice and Alberta police to deal with offenders that it was determined posed the most serious risk to the community. The following year, Alberta Justice, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Municipal and First Nations Police Services introduced SHOCAP on the basis that a relatively small number of offenders commit the most violent offences. The aim was to operationalise an integrated approach to early identification, investigation, prosecution, incarceration and intensive community supervision of targeted offenders (sometimes referred to as end-to-end policing). In this

programme, police SHOCAP investigators monitor, apprehend and prosecute serious habitual offenders (SHOs). The offenders are identified to the criminal justice system at all levels – local, regional and Federal, and logged in the relevant information systems, including the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), Alberta Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) (used by Crown prosecutors); Alberta Correctional Offender Management Information System (COMIS) used by Alberta corrections authorities; and Offender Management System (OMS) used by Corrections Canada authorities. This is an interesting initiative that has put in place some good practice of information-sharing and coordination. However, there are no known evaluations of it as yet so it requires further investigation to understand whether and how it is effective.

Community interventions

In the US, responsibility for most crime intervention tends to be devolved to the state and local level. Many local areas have begun to implement what have been termed "collaborative community partnerships" (Macdonald et al, 2005) whose aim is to reduce violent crime, homicide and gun violence.[57] Collaborative community partnerships focus specifically on the reduction of violence. They tend to emphasise a combination of preventing, intervening and suppressing violence through engaging a combination of law enforcement/criminal justice, social services and education.

Compstat

Compstat was an initiative that aimed to reduce violent crime in New York City (NYC) in the 1990s when homicide and violence had reached epidemic proportions. Its primary aims were restoring order on the city's streets and improving accountability in the NYC police. The restoration of order was informed by state-of-the-art statistical crime data

[57] These violence-focused programmes are related to a longer-standing and broader set of community-focused initiatives called Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs). The CCIs' aims went beyond crime to improvement of an area and alleviating disadvantage broadly. These aims centred around three main goals: improving poor areas and opportunities for families and individuals; improving collaboration between the community and support services (health, social aid and employment); and encouraging local changes supported by internal and external resources and knowledge; (Macdonald et al 2005 p.11) Attempting to discern the effectiveness of CCIs has raised many significant methodological questions about evaluation of such broad-reaching and multifaceted programmes. Included in the overall programme would be an approach to crime reduction and prevention but with "broader community approaches to intervention (that) do not yield to standard methods (which do not) lend themselves to integrated, multi-factor and multi-sector evaluations" (Barchechat and Sansfacon, 2003, 2). The attempt to evaluate operates as a microcosm of the initiative itself: in order to evaluate there must be an agreed set of criteria and measures for success or failure of the programme. Deciding on these requires arrival at a shared set of goals. This part of the process is part of the difficulty/challenge in setting up such initiatives and governance mechanisms in the first place – they require cooperation and consensus between individuals and bodies with different interests and views. Traditionally in the evaluation literature creating partnerships to exchange information and implement interventions is seen as part of the process not as an outcome. However, if we know that this is what is necessary for tackling such a multifaceted problem as violence, then it should perhaps instead be evaluated as an outcome, and its achievement as a sign of success (Barchechat and Sansfacon, 2003, 47). In practice, evaluations of CCIs have found them to have had some success, yet rarely describe specific outcome measures (Stagner and Duran, 1997).

identifying local police problems rapidly, for example the fact that fare-dodgers were responsible for the majority of violent crime on the subways (White et al, 2003). Relevant local "commanders" were then provided with specialist support units, for example narcotics teams. These commanders were then held responsible for responding to the local problems identified. Tactics included a range of measures to deal with all types of crime, from the most minor offences that it was believed discouraged law-abiding residents from being out on the streets, to crackdowns on more serious offences such as possessing illegal firearms and seizing stolen goods. The initiative was devised and operationalised vigorously, enforced by an elite Street Crime Unit made up of three times as many officers as there had been prior to the intervention, crucially tasked with aggressive order maintenance policing (Rosenfeld et al, 2005: 423).

The conclusions from evaluations of Compstat are varied. Rosenfeld et al (2005) analysed time-series data for before, during and after the intervention, showing that violence in NYC was dramatically reduced during the period in which the intervention was in effect, and that when other factors are controlled for, the findings are consistent with Compstat having caused this reduction. However, they review the literature on Compstat, including citing advocates who argue that the intervention was responsible for a significant proportion of the reduction of crime in NYC during that period as well as those who find the outcomes more ambiguous. Some of the strongest advocates of Compstat's effectiveness do not control for significant "root cause" factors associated with violent crime such as poverty and unemployment (Kelling and Sousa, 2001). Others suggest that although the reduction in violent crime in NYC was mirrored in many other cities, in NYC it was more precisely aligned in time with the intervention, and therefore probably at least in part attributable to the intervention. On balance it seems likely that Compstat had some effect, although the extent of its effectiveness remains contested.[58]

California Wellness Foundation Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI)

Greenwood et al (2001) describe an evaluation of the first five years (1993–1998) of a VPI in California. The intervention was built on a public health preventive model at a time when youth violence in California had reached especially serious levels. Focus groups as well as research commissioned by the Wellness Foundation showed that violence was consistently considered a priority problem. The advisory committee convened for the project included members of the policy community, clergy, professionals involved in health care, activists from the community including youth workers, and researchers. The public health model involved defining and assessing the problem, outlining the causes and risk factors, and developing, evaluating and implementing effective interventions at multiple levels including criminal justice practices.

Implementation included community programmes and participation, research and research training to promote learning about the evaluation of violence prevention initiatives, academic fellowships, leadership training, education of policy makers, public education, and prevention of gun access. Evaluation of the programme was planned as an integral

[58] Berk (2005) argues that evaluation methods and the subject knowledge available for modelling complex, community-level changes in crime are not up to the statistical methods for doing so and that until they are we will not be able to make any strong claims about the effect of such interventions.

component early on, intended to assess direct outcomes of the intervention as well as other factors that changed during the project which were expected to indirectly affect levels of violence such as media. The evaluation examines many aspects of the programme including leadership development, the media, and education of policy makers. However, evaluation of more direct measures of violence reduction outcomes included analysis of reported crime trend data from the police and a survey of local residents. The authors found that while violence was reduced in the VPI sites, it also went down elsewhere in Los Angeles. The faster rate of violence reduction in VPI sites was only statistically significant in five of the 15 funded and 14 evaluated sites. From the evaluation the authors conclude that the "level of youth violence, and homicide in particular, have been declining in most areas since VPI launched, (however) available data do not permit strong conclusions regarding the Initiative's contribution to this drop" (Greenwood et al, 2001, 25). The difficulties in interpreting this finding are many, including the fact that the intervention focused on youth violence and available figures for violence reduction were aggregate figures including the majority of violence that was not youth-related. In line with many researchers attempting to understand the effectiveness of inter-agency coordination in community violence reduction, Greenwood et al (ibid, 33) conclude that lessons for future initiatives include "giv[ing] evaluation a high priority in designing elements of an initiative".

Operation Ceasefire

Operation Ceasefire was implemented in Boston starting in mid-1996 based on two main foundations:

1) building a "network of capacity" that forged relationships between previously relatively unconnected groups and agencies to work together to reduce crime

2) an improvement of police accountability to reduce the mistrust and hostility borne of years of perceived police racism.

As in the VPI described above, youth violence had reached crisis levels in Boston at that time. This crisis led to individual agencies acknowledging that they could not effectively intervene on their own. Officers and detectives from the Boston police department's Youth Violence Strike Force (YVSF) and other criminal justice agencies collaborated on multi-pronged intervention including:

- Safe Neighbourhoods Initiatives – a community prosecution programme that was rooted in a partnership between the local council, the police department, and community members in the hotspot neighbourhoods

- partnership between the police department, the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the US Attorney's Office to identify and apprehend the illegal gun traffickers who were arming violent gangs

- Summer of Opportunity Program: YVSF collaborated with social service agencies, providing opportunity through leadership and job training transferable to home, school or work for at-risk and disadvantaged youths

- YVSF were drawing on input from youth workers when assessing individuals for detention or intervention programmes; they were also encouraging at-risk youth to participate in programmes and supported ongoing community and youth-work programmes in the area.

The evaluation concluded, "The Gun Project and Operation Ceasefire capitalized on these ... relationships by focusing the network on the problem of youth violence and giving the group a wide range of levers that it could pull in its efforts to address that problem ... By including social service agencies and other community groups Operation Ceasefire also provided much-needed carrots to balance the law enforcement sticks … and the legitimacy that [community leaders] conferred on Operation Ceasefire greatly facilitated its success" (Braga and Winship, 2005, 5).

Inter-agency relationships combined with improved inter-racial community relations were facilitated by a group of black ministers who were already engaged with helping to divert youth from joining gangs and other involvement in violence. These ministers and some police began by considering which youths would be better served by intervention and prevention than detention and removal. There was also an effort to achieve a general improvement in perceived police racism. The police included the ministers with others in the community in the Ceasefire working group as partners or "co-producers" of public safety thereby "developing a mechanism for transparency and accountability" (Braga and Winship, 2005, 7). Braga and Winship (2005) argue that:

> Operation Ceasefire was a relationship-intensive intervention based on trust and the ability of a diverse set of individuals to work together towards a common goal … Trust and accountability are essential in launching a meaningful collaborative response to complex youth violence (Braga and Winship, 2005, 7).

Evaluation by the Department of Justice showed that the time at which Operation Ceasefire was in effect was associated with a 40 per cent reduction in violent crime and a 60 per cent reduction specifically in homicide (cited in Evans, 2005). Arguably, the reduction in violence and homicide could be at least partially attributed to other factors such as demographic change, an easing of the crack epidemic, the achievement of monopoly by drug lords who no longer needed to kill off competitors, the presence of more police, and the incapacitation of many of those responsible for the violence. However, the extent of reduction in homicide and violence in Boston appears to have been greater than in many other cities around the US, and it is therefore likely that a significant proportion of that reduction in youth homicide was attributable to Operation Ceasefire.[59]

[59] There are several other worthwhile projects with significant results described in the US literature. For example, Project Exile was an intervention implemented in Richmond, Virginia to reduce homicide "using criminal justice enforcement and community-based education strategies" (White et al, 2003, cited in MacDonald et al, 2005, 3). As such it is viewed as a good practice example of "inter-agency collaboration between local, state, and federal law enforcement officials to target individuals involved in guns, drugs and violence" (ibid, 3). The community educational aspect of the programme included community meetings to discuss violence reduction and devise strategies, and the dissemination of published materials to provide advice

RAND Corporation conducted an evaluation of a gun crime and violence reduction initiative that sought to replicate some of the successes of Boston's Operation Ceasefire in the Los Angeles Hollenbeck area. The intervention was designed for evaluation including a control area in Los Angeles. The intervention also included both a broad lever that consisted of putting out the message that the intervention was coming into effect, and more specific policing strategies along the lines of Operation Ceasefire, in concert with local community support. The evaluation research showed that while the "message" component of the intervention did not have a strong effect on gun crime and violence, the law enforcement component of the intervention did show "reductions of crime in the targeted areas" (Tita et al, 2003, 46). Further, the evaluation concluded that:

> Perhaps the most important success of the program was the success of the working group – using data analysis and with collaboration from many different agencies – in achieving a well designed intervention … Through the working group process, individual organizations were able to design a collaborative intervention and contribute resources sufficient for the initiative … Each organization had unique resources that, when pooled ..., made it more effective in curbing violence than it could have been alone (Tita et al, 2003, 48).[60]

Conclusions

Results from evaluation of Operation Ceasefire suggest that "problem-oriented partnerships that focus on identifying and targeting individuals and groups who have a high risk of involvement in violence can be effective in reducing homicide" (MacDonald et al, 2005, 3). White et al (2003) reached a similar conclusion from their evaluation of Project Exile, and Macdonald et al (2003, 3) conclude from a discussion of selected cases of these problem-oriented, inter-agency collaborations that "local collaborations between law enforcement and community agencies can be effective in reducing homicide. Importantly, these programs appear to be effective because they involve intervention strategies guided by a thorough assessment of the characteristics of local homicides". Williams et al (2003) argue strongly for a thorough understanding of local contexts when attempting to assess the problem, design interventions, and operationalise violence reduction plans, as youth and other social services will vary by area, as will the "epidemiology" of violence. They suggest that any application of such a model should be

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and information for residents about reducing drug-dealing in their neighbourhoods. There was an attempt to "target youth at risk for violence, improved criminal investigations, youth outreach, and a variety of other localized community efforts" (ibid, 3). The evaluation conducted by White et al (2003) concluded that it was effective at reducing homicide.

[60] The discussion in Tita et al (2003) contains a very useful explanation of the evaluation process including the statistical methods used in the analysis. The report also includes an informative discussion of what did not work as well as it perhaps could have if the intervention had been differently implemented. For example, there were problems with staff turnover, with the working group not taking adequate ownership of the project, changes in political leadership, and the lack of allocation of personnel exclusively to the intervention was viewed as problematic for the outcomes of the programme.

built on "rich, in-depth knowledge ... to customise the application of the ecological model to the local conditions and culture" (Williams et al, 2003, 52). Macdonald et al (2003) go on to note that:

> The analysis of homicide files provides a first step for assessing violence in a community and developing a data-driven intervention. Engaging criminal justice officials and community members to construct violence-reduction strategies is the next step in the process. Once mutually agreeable strategies have been adopted outcome evaluations can be designed that assess their effectiveness at reducing homicide in each targeted area and identify any potential elements for modification or improvement (Macdonald et al, 2005, 13).

In order to understand effective risk management, as the literature on interventions in practice and criminology indicates, it is necessary to move beyond a narrow focus on the offender, the offence or the situation to understand the context in which crime is committed and into which violent offenders are released after incarceration. Doing so provides insights into risk factors beyond the individual that may be viewed as criminogenic. In this way, risk management moves beyond offender management to context management,[61] including community-level changes and even regional or national interventions to reduce violent crime and the attendant high financial and psychological costs.

[61] This is currently often discussed in terms of "designing out" crime. The trend for focusing on design, situations and substances provides some useful targets for interventions. However, without addressing the underlying factors associated with violence these interventions are unlikely to provide the same traction as wider, multi-level interventions that include rehabilitation and addressing deficits in community capacity and opportunities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Methodology

RAND Europe was commissioned by the National Audit Office (NAO) to conduct a selective review of risk assessment, effective interventions and risk management for reducing violent crime.

The research team's members were selected on the basis of their familiarity with the relevant area, and their experience in analysing and synthesising large bodies of information. The team defined the focus of the project in cooperation with the NAO in the early stages of the project, and agreed with the NAO project team an outline for the final report. The cooperative definition of focus and the agreed outline for the final report ensured best use of the project team, reduced the potential doubling of effort between the NAO and RAND project teams[62] and tailored the review to the specific needs of the NAO in the context of its study.

Having defined the focus of the work, the project team drew upon input and expertise from RAND Safety and Justice. The research team then undertook desk-based research, collecting relevant literature. Research consisted primarily of reviewing articles, research reports and books, drawing on relevant databases such as JSTOR and significant journals in the area, for example the *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*. Research reports and other relevant literature published by organisations such as the Institute of Psychiatry, the Campbell Collaboration, The Canadian National Advisory on Prevention of Crime, and the RAND Corporation itself all informed the research. These documents were then used to identify additional literature ("snowballing").

Capitalising on the language skills of its international staff, RAND Europe was able to consult relevant literature in English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish, although there were few well-evaluated programmes reviewed outside of the US and UK.

The research team summarised the progress of the research and presented a series of emergent headlines from the literature in an interim presentation to the NAO in advance of the submission of the final report. The headlines were discussed with the NAO, leading to clearer understanding of key issues and a discussion of some of the conclusions that could be drawn from the findings.

Following this presentation, the RAND research team completed the final report, highlighting the key findings in an executive summary.

[62] For example, the NAO project team had easy access to and intended to focus on Home Office research on Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and crime.

Appendix B: Additional relevant examples

US

Project Safe Neighborhoods

Drawing on the success of Operation Ceasefire and Project Exile, the US Department of Justice launched Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). This is an initiative that has been implemented in response to violence in urban areas, recognising that "violence prevention has to be geared to the local community" (MacDonald et al, 2005, 4). The aim of the initiative is to "develop, implement, and evaluate data-driven violence reduction strategies at the local community level, and improve the long term ability of federal, state and local partners to work together to prevent firearm related crime in their jurisdictions" (ibid, 4). The aim for each PSN location, "like the Boston Gun Project, was to focus on developing a collaborative multi-agency partnership guided by a thorough understanding of the nature of violence in their respective communities to develop appropriate violence prevention strategies" (ibid, 41).[63]

RAND researchers in the US (Wilson et al, 2005) were commissioned to analyse violent crime information in PSN working groups in the San Francisco Bay, Los Angeles and San Diego areas before the introduction of PSN. They recommended several key areas for intervention on the basis of their analysis of homicide data in the area. They emphasised that the whole process of research, intervention design and evaluation is likely to be iterative and require revisions and repeat attempts. They emphasised that where there is mistrust between police and the community, the process of building that trust by police gaining community acceptance of interventions will be a key part of the process. Although there is little information to date about its impact, PSN has been rolled out since 2002 in all US Federal districts to reduce violent crime using outcomes to measure success and promising accountability. This is a programme about which it may be useful to obtain further information and evaluation outcomes that may allow comparison across sites. The cost of the programme for the first two years is $558 million.

Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders

Other evidence-based programmes that merit further attention include a strategy developed in 1993 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

[63] The report of this evaluation thus provides a useful example of the utilisation of research on violence and homicide and how it can inform the development of violence prevention strategies and policy in a range of local communities.

entitled the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. After developing and testing both the prevention and graduated sanctions components of the programme over the next two years, OJJDP launched a national training and technical assistance initiative in 1995 with the publication of a guide for implementing the Comprehensive Strategy. The guide provides a framework for developing and implementing the programme, and is based on the creation of a continuum of juvenile delinquency prevention, early intervention and graduated sanctions strategies. The continuum starts with prenatal prevention and includes community-based prevention services based on risk and resource assessment, immediate interventions, and a range of graduated sanctions that include institutional care and aftercare services. These strategies are "key points along the continuum and are designed to reduce the risk factors that contribute to delinquent behaviors" (Macdonald et al, 2005).

Canada

Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women

This was a task force set up to investigate the situation of and options for federally sentenced women prisoners in Canada who had been concentrated in one central prison (Hannah-Moffat, 1999). The task force ended up recommending opening five regionally-based prisons for women and Corrections Canada has since implemented significant changes including in the definitions, assessment and management of women's risks and needs in the new regional prisons (ibid: 73) and the need for a separate risk analysis for women offenders. The three main categories for risk assessment are institutional adjustment, escape risk, and public safety (ibid: 76). Most relevant to this discussion is public safety, which is further divided into four sections: violent incidents (involvement in the community, triggers for these, degree of violence, harm caused and offender's role); programme participation (level and benefit derived from programme involvement and likely effect of programme on recidivism); mental illness or disorder (psychological and psychiatric assessments and compliance with therapeutic interventions, e.g. medications); and other public safety concerns (third-party information about whether a prisoner will reoffend and the level of need in "primary need areas" including employment, family, social integration, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, attitude or personal emotional stability, notoriety – likely to evoke a negative public image, victim or police reaction) (ibid: 78).

"Within each of these categories it is necessary to evaluate the seriousness, frequency and recency of each factor as well as any progress the prisoner may have made to mitigate the concerns identified. Once this evaluation has occurred a cumulative rating for each of the three areas is given: high, medium or low" (Hannah-Moffat, 1999: 78). The effectiveness of risk assessment in this case is in question because "the risk classification scheme is unable to differentiate between different types of risk and the severity of risk. The cumulative risk scores (management level) are based on the sum of several independent assessments (including behaviour in prison which is not considered to be an accurate predictor of behaviour outside of prison) ... the management level assigned to an inmate is therefore meaningless and the generic management of risk is not particularly useful or efficient as an actuarial technique" (ibid: 80).

Germany

In the German context, targeted approaches to crime prevention have also been adopted on a broader scale since the early 1990s, with most activities focusing on the local level. To some extent, this shift was a reversal of the centralisation of police force organisation in regional directorates and the limited resources for policing in general.[64] The shift has been regarded as a fundamental one in terms of the strategy of police work, but the evidence concerning the effect on objective as well as subjective security is mixed or sketchy.[65]

In the German context, community policing is mostly about linking police work to the activities of various civil society groups but also to other local government agencies, which is basically in line with the concept of community policing developed in the US. The practical implementation of this idea is, to some extent, also nothing exceptional, for example when a certain number of police officers are assigned as "Community-Policing-Officers" (82 out of 2038 in Düsseldorf). What could be regarded as specific, and arguably rather successful, in the German context is the emphasis on establishing institutional relations between police forces, civil society organisations and government agencies. This typically includes round-table forums designed to facilitate information exchange. The Working Group on Prevention and Security of Düsseldorf is one of the prime and often cited examples, not least since it has commissioned a meta-evaluation on crime prevention studies that is widely regarded as a landmark study in Germany in this context.[66] Information exchange is also established between police forces and private security companies. While "hard evidence" concerning the effectiveness of this approach is not available, there is a general sense that those strategies do make a difference.[67]

[64] Kolbe, P. (2005). "Staatlichkeit im Wandel am Beispiel der Kriminalprävention" ("Changing statehood, the example of crime prevention."). *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 46 (200) (2005).

[65] Feltes, T. "Gemeinschaftliche statt Kommunale Kommunalprävention: Ein neuer Weg" ("Community instead of local government crime prevention: A new way.") *Die Kriminalprävention* 1 (2004).

[66] Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf, ed."Düsseldorfer Gutachten: Empirisch gesicherte Erkenntnisse über kriminalpräventive Wirkungen." 2002. Available from www.duesseldorf.de/download/dg.pdf.

[67] Kolbe (2005).