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The John F. Finn Institute
for Public Safety, Inc.

Offender-Focused Policing in Syracuse: A Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Chronic Offender Recognition and Enforcement (CORE) Strategy

Final Report Smart Policing Initiative

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September, 2021

The John F. Finn Institute for Public Safety, Inc., is an independent, not-for-profit and non-partisan corporation, whose work is dedicated to the development of criminal justice strategies, programs, and practices that are effective, lawful, and procedurally fair, through the application of social science findings and methods. The Institute conducts social research on matters of public safety and security – crime, public disorder, and the management of criminal justice agencies and partnerships – in collaboration with municipal, county, state, and federal criminal justice agencies, and for their direct benefit. The findings of the Institute’s research are also disseminated through other media to criminal justice professionals, academicians, elected public officials, and other interested parties, so that those findings may contribute to a broader body of knowledge about criminal justice and to the practical application of those findings in other settings.

The Finn Institute was established in 2007, building on a set of collaborative projects and relationships with criminal justice agencies dating to 1998. The first of those projects, for which we partnered with the Albany Police Department (APD), was initiated by John Finn, who was at that time the sergeant who commanded the APD’s Juvenile Unit. Later promoted to lieutenant and assigned to the department’s Administrative Services Bureau, he spearheaded efforts to implement problem-oriented policing, and to develop an institutional capability for analysis that would support problem-solving. The APD’s capacity for applying social science methods and results thereupon expanded exponentially, based on Lt. Finn’s appreciation for the value of research, his keen aptitude for analysis, and his vision of policing, which entailed the formulation of proactive, data-driven, and – as needed – unconventional strategies to address problems of public safety. Lt. Finn was fatally shot in the line of duty in 2003. The Institute that bears his name honors his life and career by fostering the more effective use of research and analysis within criminal justice agencies, just as Lt. Finn did in the APD.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, through a subaward of Award Number 2017-WY-BX-0007 to the City of Syracuse, the support of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, and the cooperation of the Syracuse Police Department, Onondaga County District Attorney’s Office, Onondaga County Probation Department, and the Central New York Crime Analysis Center. We also thank Scott Decker, of CNA, for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this report, and absolve him of any responsibility for errors that remain. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Syracuse Police Department, the Onondaga County District Attorney’s Office, or the Onondaga County Probation Department.

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Introduction

The Chronic Offender Recognition and Enforcement (CORE) strategy is one of several strategies that law enforcement partners in Syracuse and Onondaga County have adopted to address gun violence in the City of Syracuse. Following the lead of other cities in formulating initiatives to address chronic violent offenders, CORE was designed as a proactive approach to identifying and concentrating enforcement efforts on the most violent and active offenders.¹ Offenders are assessed for their risk of gun violence, and those at the highest assessed risk are placed on the CORE list. The CORE strategy was launched in 2008 and, in 2017, revised to build further on a model of offender-focused policing and other best practices.² We refer to the current strategy as CORE 2.0.

With support through the Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) program of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and through the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) initiative of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), the Finn Institute served as the research partner for the CORE strategy. In that capacity, we conducted process and outcome evaluations of CORE 2.0. The process evaluation assessed the implementation of the components of the CORE strategy from its initiation in July of 2017 through December, 2020, and the outcome evaluation estimated its crime reduction impacts. This report summarizes the findings of the evaluations.

We first describe the design of the strategy and the evolving context in which it was implemented, and then explain the design of our process and outcome evaluation. A multi-dimensional view of CORE offenders follows: the factors that earn CORE offenders their places on the CORE list, their patterns of offending and victimization, their gang affiliations, age, places of residence, supervision status, and social networks. We thereupon present measures of implementation – custom notifications of CORE offenders and enforcement activity – and discuss the mechanism established with CORE 2.0 to promote inter-agency coordination and accountability. With the benefit of the process evaluation findings, we explain the details of the outcome evaluation and its results. We then examine the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on violent crime and enforcement in Syracuse in 2020, and consider the prospects for sharpening and sustaining the CORE strategy in the contemporary context.

¹ See Tim Bynum and Scott H. Decker, *Chronic Violent Offenders Lists: Case Study 4, Project Safe Neighborhoods: Strategic Interventions* (Washington: United States Department of Justice, 2006).

² Elizabeth R. Groff, Jerry H. Ratcliffe, Cory P. Haberman, Evan T. Sorg, Nola M. Joyce, and Ralph B. Taylor, "Does What Police Do at Hot Spots Matter? The Philadelphia Policing Tactics Experiment," *Criminology* 53 (2015): 23-53.

Strategy Design

With a residential population of 144,027, Syracuse is not a big city, but it has big-city violence. In 2018, for example, the violent crime rate in Syracuse was 703 per 100,000 population, 55 percent higher than the rate for cities of comparable size (453 per 100,000), and more nearly comparable to that of the largest cities (696 per 100,000), with populations over 1 million.³ Gun violence has been a particular problem in Syracuse, and one that has intensified in the last several years. Between 2011 and 2014, Syracuse saw 83 fatal and nonfatal shooting incidents annually, on average, with 97 victims of gun violence, including 11 fatalities. From 2015 through 2019, the annual average numbers had increased to 110 incidents and 129 victims, 16 of them fatal. In 2020, the counts reached 148 incidents and 176 victims, including 25 fatalities.⁴ In 2019, 585 confirmed shots-fired incidents were recorded, 425 through an activation of ShotSpotter; in 2020, 849 confirmed shots-fired incidents were recorded, 616 through an activation of ShotSpotter.

The violence in Syracuse is driven to a significant degree by gangs and other violent groups. As in other cities, the 20-25 identified gangs in Syracuse are concentrated disproportionately in the same socially disorganized, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in which firearms violence is concentrated, with 11 gangs claiming territory on the City's Southside. In 2014-2016, the three years preceding CORE 2.0, 63 percent of shootings in the Southside were gang-related. Not all of the gangs or gang members are equally violence-prone, however, and while law enforcement had in 2016 documented the gang involvement of 1,554 individuals (less than 1 percent of the residential population), intelligence suggests that the most violent comprise a small subset.

The partnership in Syracuse and Onondaga County has adopted and implemented a number of evidence- or research-based strategies to address gun violence. From 2004 through 2014, the Syracuse Police Department (SPD), in conjunction with the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office and the New York State Police, conducted gun patrols – Highway Gun Interdiction (HGI) – in gun violence hotspots. In 2013, Syracuse Truce was developed as a focused deterrence strategy that conformed very closely with the group violence intervention promulgated by the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC). The next year, 2014, saw an extension of the partnership to include Syracuse Save Our Youth, an initiative that conformed to the comprehensive gang model of OJJDP, and Cure Violence. Gun violence in Syracuse spiked in mid-2014, as it did in a number of U.S. cities, and with declining numbers of sworn personnel in SPD, the effective execution of Syracuse Truce was undercut. In order to better address

³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2018* (Washington: Author, 2019).

⁴ New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, *Violent Crime Involving a Firearm and Shooting Activity Report* (Albany: Author, 2021), p. 38.

the on-going and accelerated gun violence in the city, an intensified, coordinated focus on gun offenders was increasingly seen as an attractive option.

CORE was refashioned in 2017 to adapt to the Syracuse setting a strategy of offender-focused policing that was successful in Philadelphia. CORE 2.0 also incorporated components of other best practices. The goal of the revised strategy remains to address gun violence through an intensified focus on the offenders driving the violence in the city. High-risk offenders are identified and enforcement attention and resources are concentrated on them in order to deter them or, failing deterrence, incapacitate them. CORE has also incorporated features of focused deterrence, notifying the offenders that they have been designated for priority enforcement, and that if they wish to desist from violence, assistance is available in the form of services. To better ensure that CORE offenders get the attention warranted by their risk for violence, the partners are held accountable to one another in "PerpStat" meetings, which resemble (non-punitive) Compstat meetings.

The CORE 2.0 strategy and PerpStat meetings involve several partner agencies in addition to SPD: the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office (OCDA); the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office (OCSO); the Onondaga County Probation Department; the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (parole); and Federal Probation. Each agency has different enforcement authorities, which complement one another, and the strategy requires all involved agencies to utilize their enforcement abilities to decrease gun violence.

CORE 2.0 begins with the formation of the CORE list, a process that is described below. The size of the CORE list was reduced in 2017, such that only 30-35 offenders are included. Each CORE offender is assigned to one (or two) of the partner agencies, which assumes primary – but not exclusive – responsibility for gathering intelligence on and making contact with the offender. Agencies are paired with offenders on the basis of several factors, including supervision status, their place of residence, the location of their crimes, legal vulnerabilities, and the agency's familiarity with the offender. This pairing of agencies and offenders is intended to ensure that each offender receives the enhanced attention that their high risk of violence warrants.

By design, CORE 2.0 provides for a "custom notification," which is a feature borrowed from focused deterrence initiatives. Custom notifications have been used in Syracuse since 2015, introduced as part of Syracuse Truce. For a custom notification, the Salvation Army's project coordinator is accompanied to the homes of recipients by SPD personnel and/or county probation officers, where they are advised that they have been identified as high-risk and will be subject to intensified enforcement; they are also advised that services are available to them.

The deterrence message of the custom notification must be made credible through enforcement actions. CORE 2.0 provides for a variety of enforcement tactics, tailored to offenders' vulnerabilities. Officers from SPD document encounters with CORE

offenders in the field, gathering intelligence that can be analyzed. OCSO correctional staff gather intelligence on incarcerated CORE defendants, and deputies conduct enforcement against CORE offenders who reside outside of the City of Syracuse in Onondaga County. SPD officers and OCSO deputies are tasked with proactive street enforcement against CORE individuals, including vehicle and pedestrian stops. Stops that lead to arrests create cases to be prosecuted; the OCDA is responsible for the prosecution component of the strategy, and the goal is to make CORE cases priority cases. The OCDA seeks to build sound cases against CORE defendants, working with the police department to build the best case so that the CORE offender will be appropriately prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. A number of CORE offenders are under community supervision by probation or parole agencies, which provide for several forms of enhanced supervision. Increased home visits, drug tests, and home searches are utilized, and violations of conditions may be sanctioned. Violation petitions may be used to detain CORE defendants with pending criminal charges. Supervision agencies also provide detailed offender information to local law enforcement.

PerpStat meetings are designed to facilitate communication among the partners about individuals on the CORE list. Meetings are held periodically to ensure the agency partners are delivering on their operational promises. During the meetings, a slideshow containing all of the individual CORE offenders is presented to the group. Each offender's slide contains the individual's criminal history, gang or group affiliation, supervising agency, known associates, and all contacts with law enforcement during their time on the list. The status of each individual, along with the actions taken against them since the last meeting, are the focus of the discussions. Agency representatives come to the meetings with information on contacts with all CORE offenders since the previous meeting. Agencies are specifically responsible for a select group of individuals on the CORE list, and the expectation is for them to have information on those individuals to bring to every meeting. The information shared includes crime activities, contacts, addresses, and other updates that serve to enhance the focus given to these individuals.

Over the course of the first 3½ years of CORE implementation, several features of the context changed. First, the sworn strength of the Syracuse police declined. According to NYS records, SPD's count of full-time sworn personnel was 420 on October 31, 2017, and had dropped to 403 two years later. For reference, the number was 451 in 2014, and 494 in 2011. In August of 2019, SPD disbanded its Crime Reduction Team (CRT), a proactive unit that played a significant role in CORE enforcement, as we discuss below. The number of sworn personnel rebounded to 422 by October 31, 2020, but CRT has not been resuscitated.

Second, New York State's Raise the Age (RTA) law, passed in April of 2017, raised the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 years of age. Prior to its passage, New

York State was one of only two states in the country that treated all 16 and 17 year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system without consideration of the crime committed. RTA legislation provided for a two-year phase-in, with the age of criminal responsibility becoming 17 on October 1, 2018, and 18 on October 1, 2019. As a result, by July of 2020, a separate juvenile CORE list was established, and the CORE strategy was confined to offenders who were at least 18 years old.

Third, New York State enacted reforms to bail and discovery as parts of criminal justice reform, which became effective January 1, 2020. The legislation, passed in April of 2019, restricted the range of offenses for which bail could be set, limiting the possibility of bail mainly to violent felonies. Amendments to the legislation, passed in April of 2020, expanded the list of bail-eligible offenses somewhat, and also provided for more judicial options for setting non-monetary release conditions.⁵ Changes to discovery included establishing “automatic” discovery, such that defense counsel need not file written demands for evidence, and a “presumption of openness” in the application of the law by judges. The law specified 21 kinds of materials that prosecutors must disclose to the defense, and set time frames within which they must be turned over. Notably, the discoverable materials include “names and adequate contact information for *any* person who has relevant information regarding the case, with the exception of confidential informants.”⁶ We might expect that these reforms would vitiate the deterrent and incapacitative effects of CORE enforcement.

Finally, the coronavirus pandemic and pandemic-mitigation procedures had sweeping effects on economic activity, social interaction, and personal mobility. In New York State, executive orders issued in March of 2020 limited occupancy in many “non-essential” business establishments, and educational institutions abruptly transitioned to remote instruction. With the immediate and (in many cases) temporary closure of many commercial businesses, unemployment rose precipitously, and many workers who remained employed worked remotely. In mid-May, a phased reopening of the state’s economy began.

The pervasive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic extended to enforcement and crime levels. Mitigation efforts affected enforcement practices, and though the nature of the pandemic’s impact on violent crime remains unclear, aggravated assaults rose abruptly in many U.S. cities in the spring of 2020.⁷ The pandemic inhibited close face-to-face contacts, and also created an additional workload for Syracuse police in assisting

⁵ See Michael Rempel and Krystal Rodriguez, *Bail Reform Revisited: The Impact of New York’s Amended Bail Law on Pretrial Detention* (New York: Center for Court Innovation, 2020).

⁶ Krystal Rodriguez, *Discovery Reform in New York: Major Legislative Provisions* (New York: Center for Court Innovation, 2020), p. 2 (emphasis in original).

⁷ Richard Rosenfeld, Thomas Abt and Ernesto Lopez, *Pandemic, Social Unrest, and Crime in U.S. Cities: 2020 Year-End Update* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Criminal Justice, 2021).

the Onondaga County Health Department (e.g., in delivering quarantine letters). Proactive policing ebbed, and by May, shootings spiked.

Evaluation Design

Our evaluation of CORE is based on multiple sources of data. First, data from the Central New York Crime Analysis Center (CNYCAC) come to us in several forms. CNYCAC analysts compile an Excel spreadsheet, tracking enforcement actions and intelligence on all CORE offenders. This spreadsheet is updated by the analysts prior to PerpStat meetings. This tracking sheet is used to develop the slides for the PerpStat meetings, and is one way enforcement actions are tracked. The CNYCAC also exports data on arrests, stops, and calls for service from the RMS, which are sent directly to Finn Institute researchers. The Onondaga County Probation Department and the OCDA also share data with the researchers. The probation data includes numbers of home visits, office visits, drug tests, and violations of probation. The OCDA provides information on CORE cases, and the results of prosecutions, including indictments, convictions, and sentences.

Process

To assess the intensity of enforcement against CORE offenders, we compare the documented enforcement actions against CORE offenders, assessed against two baselines. Insofar as CORE 2.0 is successfully implemented, enforcement levels increase substantially with CORE status. A longitudinal, pre-/post-CORE 2.0 comparison is, for the initial three CORE lists, supplemented with a contemporaneous comparison of enforcement against CORE offenders with that against a “next level” list of individuals with similar criminal histories, who are not the focus of law enforcement attention. This next level list is about the same size as the CORE list, and contains individuals with CORE scores slightly lower than the CORE list individuals. This group is not a focus of the strategy, and they are not exposed to increased attention from the partner agencies (until and unless they are placed on the CORE list). The next level group is used for comparison, to determine the extent to which the partners directed elevated levels of attention to the CORE individuals.

In 2018, we conducted semi-structured interviews in-person and by telephone with individuals integral to CORE 2.0 strategy implementation. These interviews gathered stakeholders’ perspectives on different aspects of the strategy, including its strengths and challenges. Recommendations for improvement were also solicited. In late-2019, we administered a web-based survey to representatives of the partnership agencies. These sources of information about stakeholders’ perceptions are supplemented by our own direct observations in attending Syracuse’s PerpStat

meetings and other informal discussions with law enforcement personnel. Finn staff have attended many PerpStat meetings in-person and others (especially post-pandemic) by phone, enabling us to observe the way the meetings function and how the partners interact.⁸

Outcomes

We adopt several analytic approaches to estimating the impacts of the CORE strategy. The most direct approach – estimating the effect of CORE enforcement on CORE offenders’ criminality – does not form a strong basis for inferences about impacts. Our only measure of offending is based on arrests, and arrests are a strategic output. CORE enforcement is designed and expected to increase the likelihood that CORE offenders are apprehended for their crimes, so changes in this indicator are liable to reflect changes in enforcement in addition to changes in offending. Other approaches to detecting and estimating CORE impacts are therefore necessary.

One approach provides for a spatial analysis, examining changes in levels of violent crime in selected high-crime areas over time, pre-CORE to post-CORE. In some of the identified areas, CORE offenders were active, while in others they were not active or much less active. Since CORE enforcement was applied only to CORE offenders, we refer to the former as “treatment” areas and the latter as control areas. We analyzed violent crime levels in these areas pre-/post-CORE on the premise that a decrease in offending by CORE offenders would be manifested in a decrease in violent crime in the treatment areas, relative to the control areas.

The second approach turned on the established association between violent offending and violent victimization: research has shown that people who engage in violence are at higher risk of becoming victims of violent crime. If deterrence produced by CORE extends to changes in behaviors or lifestyles that are associated with violence, then we might expect to see decreases in the prevalence or frequency with which CORE offenders are victimized. Records of their victimization, unlike the detection of their offending, are not strategic outputs, so we can analyze them as strategic outcomes, in which trace effects of deterrence might appear.⁹

The third approach is based on the premise that CORE offenders drive violence not only by perpetrating it themselves but also by inspiring others in their social networks to engage in violence. Thus we tested the hypothesis that the effects of CORE

⁸ Our work on the process evaluation for much of CORE’s initial year was supported mainly by a grant from DCJS to the Onondaga County District Attorney’s office. The Institute’s subcontract with the City of Syracuse was not executed until December of 2018, and though it was retroactive to October of 2017, it accounted for only 6 percent of the funds expended through September of 2018.

⁹ This assumes that their status as CORE offenders does not affect the likelihood that their victimizations are reported and recorded.

would manifest themselves in reduced levels of violence by CORE offenders' associates – i.e., their first-degree social connections.

CORE Offenders

CORE List Formation

Designation as a CORE offender has followed a two-stage process, which changed somewhat in 2018. The process begins when CNYCAC analysts generate CORE scores for known offenders using a scoring algorithm. CORE scores are based on several factors, including arrests, supervision status, and intelligence. The number of arrests for gun offenses in connection with shots fired incidents, the number of arrests for criminal possession of a weapon offenses (CPW) involving a firearm, the number of arrests for Part I violent offenses involving a firearm, and the number of arrests for other Part I violent offenses are included in the algorithm. Three binary characteristics are also included in the algorithm: whether or not the individual is the subject of gun intelligence, whether or not the individual is the subject of felony-level drug intelligence, and whether or not the individual is under correctional supervision. These factors are summed to form a CORE score. The numerical scores are then blended with field intelligence, in a second stage of the process. If there are valid indications that the individual is involved in gun activity, or there is information indicating gun possession, that individual will be considered higher risk. This is also true for drug intelligence. Only offenders who are actively involved in violent offending are included on the list. Offenders who have not had police contact in the previous six months are treated as inactive and excluded from the CORE list. Those who qualify but are expected to be incarcerated for most or all of the next six months are excluded. Individuals with the highest CORE scores and recent police contacts or intelligence are placed on the list.

A new CORE list is formed every six months, and it contains approximately 30-35 offenders. The original plan was to update the CORE list only at six-month intervals. However, early in the strategy, the partnership recognized the need to update the list more frequently, to add active offenders and remove inactive or incarcerated offenders. The first update to the list occurred in September 2017, about two months into implementation. The CNYCAC analysts waited until as many as three to five offenders could be removed from the list, for either long-term incarceration or lack of activity, before adding new offenders to replace them. Long-term incarceration was defined as a sentence of six months or more. Table 1 summarizes the number of offenders placed on

each CORE list, as updated. The frequent updates to the list were made until the middle of 2019, when updating reverted to six-month intervals.¹⁰

Table 1. Numbers of Offenders on CORE Lists

	List 1 Jul-Dec 2017	List 2 Jan-Jun 2018	List 3 Jul-Dec 2018	List 4 Jan-Jun 2019	List 5 Jul-Dec 2019	List 6 Jan-Jun 2020	List 7 Jul-Dec 2020	Total # CORE Offenders
Number of Offenders on CORE List	36	38	42	33	30	30	26	106

The size of the CORE list remained fairly consistent for lists one through six, with between thirty and thirty-five offenders on the list at a given point in time. The seventh CORE list, spanning July through December 2020, had only twenty-six offenders on the list. The third CORE list, which encompassed the time period of July through December 2018, included a total of forty-two offenders, though fewer than thirty-five were on at any one time. The turnover in this list was the highest, as more offenders on that list than other lists were incapacitated and replaced. After list four, there were no updates to the list during the six month periods. Lists five through seven had fewer total offenders on the list throughout the six month periods than the first four lists due to the lack of list updates.

For lists one through seven, eighty-four CORE offenders were removed from the list at least once (some were removed and placed back on). A majority of the list removals (73 percent) were for incarceration, as a result of a local sentence, federal sentence, or a violation of supervision. CPW involving a firearm was the most common charge that led to long-term sentences, and was the leading reason CORE offenders were removed from the list through December 2020. Less than twenty percent of the CORE offenders removed from the list were taken off for lack of activity or because they were doing well under community supervision. Two offenders relocated, and were taken off the list, and two offenders were killed. The list with the most removals was list three (July through December 2018). This list had the highest number removed for long-term incarceration compared to other lists, and was also the list with the most removed for supervision violations that led to incarceration.

Though there were 235 placements on the CORE lists through list seven, only 106 individual offenders were identified as CORE offenders across the three and one-half years. Forty percent of the 106 CORE offenders appeared on only one of the seven lists. Forty-seven percent of CORE offenders appeared on two or three of the seven lists, and

¹⁰ This was prompted by the observation that some individuals who had been removed due to their incarceration had been released.

thirteen percent appeared on four or more lists. Two offenders appeared on all seven CORE lists. See Table 2. The average time offenders were on the CORE list was 366 days, out of a total of 1279 days during the 3.5 year time period. Forty-three percent of the 106 CORE offenders were on the list for 183 days or less.

The average CORE score for offenders across the seven lists was 3.47. All lists had an average CORE score between 3.25 and 3.62, with list one having the lowest average CORE score, and lists three and four having the highest average CORE scores compared to the other lists.

Table 2. Numbers of CORE List Placements

Number of List Placements	Number of Offenders	Mean Days On List	Mean Days on List at Risk
1	42	149.79	137.14
2	27	315.15	291.81
3	23	491.61	438.00
4	7	705.86	596.86
5	2	861.00	859.50
6	3	1060.33	994.00
7	2	1273.00	1126.50
Total	106		

Offending

CORE offenders' placement on the CORE list owes to their risk of gun violence, but their offending is not limited to gun violence. The frequency and range of their offending makes them especially vulnerable to enforcement.

Arrests surely understate levels of offending, but they represent the only source of data with which to form a measure of offending. With the caveat that our estimates are systematically undercounts, we summarize the type and incidence of arrests of CORE offenders in the two years prior to their initial designation as a CORE offender. We count individual arrest "events" based on the top charge, with a hierarchy of charge categories defined thusly:

1. Part I violence with a gun (nondomestic)
2. Other Part I violence (nondomestic)
3. Any other offense with a gun, including CPW (nondomestic)
4. Simple assault (nondomestic)
5. Domestic violence
6. Part I property
7. Drug offenses
8. All other Part II offenses
9. Local offenses

We note that this is a conservative count of arrests, since any arrest for multiple offenses appears only once; the categories are mutually exclusive. Table 3 displays the mean annual rates of offending, by offense category, for all 106 individual offenders in the two years preceding their respective placements on the CORE list.

The typical CORE offender was arrested twice each year in the two years prior to his placement on the CORE list. The modal offense was a drug offense. Many were arrested for other Part II offenses and for local offenses (such as violations of the noise ordinance), and a number were arrested for domestic violence. CORE offenders' criminality exposes them to enforcement on which the CORE strategy capitalizes, though we caution that, given the nature of the offenses, many of them would lead in the short-term to only an appearance ticket in the wake of bail reform.

We cannot be precise in extrapolating from counts of arrests to estimates of offending frequency, but previous research on criminal careers forms a basis for setting some lower and upper bounds on offending frequencies. Analyzing self-reports of offending and arrests by prison and jail inmates in three states, Blumstein, et al. estimated that mean individual arrest rates for assaults ranged from 0.16 for those who committed few (1 to 3) assaults annually, to 0.03 for those who committed more than 101. The range of arrest probabilities was comparable for robbery. We can, therefore, cautiously estimate that the true numbers of such offenses are from 6 to 30 times higher than the numbers of arrests.¹¹

Table 3. Pre-CORE Mean Annual Arrest Rates

Top Charge Category	Pre-CORE Mean
Part I violent with a gun	.0849
Part I violent no gun	.0425
Other offense with a gun	.2594
Simple assault	.0755
Domestic violence	.1132
Part I property	.0943
Drug offense	.9670
Other Part II	.1887
Local offense	.2075
All 9 charge categories	2.0330

¹¹ Alfred Blumstein, Jacqueline Cohen, Alex R. Piquero, and Christy A. Visher, "Linking the Crime and Arrest Processes to Measure Variations in Individual Arrest Risk per Crime (Q)," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 26 (2010): 533–548.

Victimization

As Lauritsen and Laub observe, “research ... has consistently found that one of the strongest correlates of victimization is involvement in deviant or criminal behavior and, alternatively, that victimization is one of the strongest correlates of offending.”¹² Violent offending invites retaliation. Associating with people who are involved in gang activity increases the risk of gunshot victimization.¹³ More generally, “... offense activity ... directly increases the risk of personal victimization. ... the data seem to support ... [the] basic hypothesis that general deviance and violent offense activity may be considered a type of lifestyle that increases victimization risk.¹⁴ In disadvantaged U.S. neighborhoods, where a “code of the street” is found, people who embrace the street code and “living the lifestyle it advocates directly increase victimization risk.”¹⁵

In 2017, the rate of violent victimization for the U.S. was 20.6 victimizations per 1,000 population, and the prevalence of violent victimization – the proportion of the population that had suffered one or more victimizations – was 1.14 percent, slightly higher among Blacks (1.19) than Whites (1.17), higher among males (1.17) than females (1.11), and higher among those ages 18 to 24 (1.66) than those who were older.¹⁶ The national figures are estimates based on the National Crime Victimization Survey, which counts offenses whether or not they are reported to police. In the two years preceding their initial placement on a CORE list, 69 of the 106 CORE offenders had been the (reported) victims of violent crime at least once. The (two-year) prevalence was thus 65.1 percent. The annual rate of violent victimization for CORE offenders was 518.9 per 1,000, as 29 were victims twice and 6 were victimized on three occasions. Just as arrests likely undercount offenses, reported victimizations likely undercount CORE offenders’ victimizations, some fraction of which go unreported. It appears safe to say that CORE offenders are at dramatically higher risk of violent victimization.

¹² Janet L. Lauritsen, and John H. Laub, “Understanding the Link Between Victimization and Offending: New Reflections on an Old Idea,” *Crime Prevention Studies* 22 (2007): 55-75, p. 56.

¹³ Andrew V. Papachristos, Anthony A. Braga, and David M. Hureau, “Social Networks and the Risk of Gunshot Injury,” *Journal of Urban Health* 89 (2012): 992–1003; Andrew V. Papachristos, Anthony A. Braga, Eric Piza, and Leigh S. Grossman, “The Company You Keep? The Spillover Effects of Gang Membership on Individual Gunshot Victimization in a Co-Offending Network,” *Criminology* 53 (2015): 624–649.

¹⁴ Robert J. Sampson, and Janet L. Lauritsen, “Deviant Lifestyles, Proximity to Crime, and the Offender-Victim Link in Personal Violence,” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 27 (1990): 110-139, pp. 131-132.

¹⁵ Eric A. Stewart, Christopher J. Schreck, Ronald L. Simons, “‘I Ain’t Gonna Let No One Disrespect Me’: Does the Code of the Street Reduce or Increase Violent Victimization among African American Adolescents?” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43 (2006): 427-458, p. 446.

¹⁶ Rachel E. Morgan and Jennifer L. Truman, *Criminal Victimization, 2017* (Washington: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018).

Gang Affiliations

As originally planned, the strategy was to focus on offenders affiliated with Southside gangs. Upon implementation, however, offenders with any gang affiliation were included, based on their CORE scores. Even so, all seven lists were primarily comprised of offenders affiliated with Southside gangs and groups, especially the Bricktown gang – of whose members 29 appeared on a CORE list – followed by offenders in the 110 gang. The first CORE list had the lowest percentage of Southside affiliated offenders (80%) compared to the succeeding lists. See Table 4.

Table 4. CORE Offender Gang Affiliation

Gang/Group	Count CORE Offenders Lists 1-7
Southside	
Bricktown	29
110	19
South	2
PH	9
1500	7
Brighton Brigade	5
O-Block	3
Bootcamp	3
Furman Fast Cash	1
Other	
Uptown	12
LAMA	2
Cash Money Project	1
Highland Street	1
Richmond Ave	1
West	10
No gang/group affiliation	1
Total	106

A focus on gang members only will overlook some individuals who are chronic violent offenders at a high risk for gun violence. Many of the offenders who engaged in gun crime in 2017 were neither members nor associates of gangs. In 2018, an analysis of the risk of gun offending among more than 40,000 offenders in Syracuse showed that, although people who are not gang affiliated are at much lower risk overall, some of

them are high risk.¹⁷ Subsequently, the formation of the CORE list was not restricted to offenders with a gang or group affiliation. Those with the highest numerical scores and current intelligence were included on the list, regardless of gang or group affiliation. This led to expanding the focus to all offenders at a high risk of gun crime, regardless of gang or group membership or affiliation. Gang membership was still considered when examining recent violent disputes between gangs that were expected to continue or escalate, which is a component of intelligence. Although affiliation with a gang is not a requirement for CORE, only one offender on lists one through seven was not a known affiliate of a gang or group.

Age

All of the CORE offenders on the lists from July, 2017 through December, 2020, were male. CORE offenders' average age was 21-22. The ages of the offenders on the first CORE list varied more than subsequent lists, with a standard deviation of 5.0; see Table 5. The percentage of offenders under the age of eighteen has fluctuated by list, from 15% (on list four) to over 20% (on lists one and three). Lists five through seven included no offenders under the age of sixteen, while lists one and three included three and four offenders under sixteen, respectively.

With the legislative change to the age of criminal responsibility, applied in 2018-2019, the partnership established a separate CORE list in 2020 for high-risk juvenile offenders, i.e., those under the age of 18. The (adult) CORE list thereafter excluded juvenile offenders.

Table 5. CORE Offender Age by List

	LIST 1 Jul – Dec 2017	LIST 2 Jan – Jun 2018	LIST 3 Jul – Dec 2018	LIST 4 Jan – Jun 2019	LIST 5 Jul – Dec 2019	LIST 6 Jan – Jun 2020	LIST 7 Jul – Dec 2020
Mean Age (years)	21.67	21.37	20.64	21.18	20.80	22.90	23.77
Standard Deviation	5.014	3.962	3.837	3.557	4.038	4.678	3.777
Range	12 - 36	16 - 36	15 - 31	15 - 30	16 - 30	16 - 35	18 - 32

¹⁷ Robert E. Worden, Kenan M. Worden, Sarah J. McLean, and Madison A. Bryant, *Risk Assessment for Offender-Focused Enforcement: Phase I Analysis*, Report to the Syracuse Police Department (Albany, NY: John F. Finn Institute for Public Safety, Inc., 2018).

Place of Residence

Though all of the CORE offenders are involved in violence in the City of Syracuse, not all of them resided in the City during their time on the CORE list. The seven lists included between two and six offenders with addresses outside of the City of Syracuse, in Onondaga County. Thirteen percent of the 106 CORE offenders on the list between July, 2017 and December, 2020 had a residence outside the City at some point during their time on the list. These individuals offend in the City of Syracuse, but their address outside the City impacts the enforcement actions of the partnership, including contacts and surveillance. The partnership with OCSO is especially important for information gathering and enforcement against these individuals, and individuals who have associates and commit offenses outside of the City.

Supervision Status

The number of CORE offenders on probation or parole supervision has varied by list, from a low of 13 (fewer than half) to 20; nearly two-thirds of the offenders on list five were under supervision of various kinds. See Table 6. The number of offenders on YO probation increased from lists one through five. Juvenile CORE began in the second

Table 6. CORE Offender Supervision by List

Supervision Type	LIST 1 Jul – Dec 2017	LIST 2 Jan – Jun 2018	LIST 3 Jul – Dec 2018	LIST 4 Jan – Jun 2019	LIST 5 Jul – Dec 2019	LIST 6 Jan – Jun 2020	LIST 7 Jul – Dec 2020
Criminal Probation	8	11	4	8	8	6	5
Federal Probation	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interim Probation	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Family Court Probation	3	1	2	0	3	1	0
YO Probation	0	1	2	3	4	3	0
Parole	2	7	10	3	3	3	1
Total # on Supervision	15	20	18	15	19	13	6
Percentage of List on Supervision	41.7 %	52.6 %	42.9 %	45.5 %	63.3 %	43.3 %	23.1 %

half of 2020, so all offenders under age 18 that would qualify for the CORE list were placed on the Juvenile CORE List. The number of offenders under parole supervision has fluctuated from ten offenders on list three, to one offender on list seven. The percentage of the list on a form of supervision impacts the enforcement capacity of the partnership, as offenders on supervision are subject to more conditions and sanctions, increasing the risk they face. This also varies by the type of supervision, as Youthful Offender (YO) and Family Court probation has different capabilities than criminal probation.

Social Networks

Using social network analysis (SNA), we identify individuals with whom those on the CORE list associate. We begin with the 40 offenders included on CORE lists 6 and 7 and define a CORE list “associate” as any individual arrested for the same offense as one of the 40 CORE offenders in the two years preceding list 6. Using SNA, we describe the connections among CORE offenders and others with whom they co-offend and the structural position of CORE offenders in the networks. We include attributes that enabled us to examine features of the networks, including, for example, ties among adult CORE and juvenile CORE offenders, the prevalence of juvenile CORE offenders served by the Trinity program, and gang affiliations.

The 40 CORE offenders (shown in pink below) had first-degree co-offending connections to 259 individuals (shown in blue below). Three CORE offenders were isolates; they had no documented co-offenders in the two years preceding their placement on list 6. The connections of the remaining 37 CORE offenders produced 16 unique networks, displayed in Figure 1 below. The smallest networks included connections between 2 individuals, and the largest two networks formed one group of 85 individuals and another of 129 individuals.

A simple visual inspection of Figure 1 suggests the important roles CORE offenders take in the networks. One way to examine a node or individual’s position in a network is to look at the number of ties an individual has to others in the network, which could speak to their exposure to others and their actual or potential influence. We examine the structural position of CORE offenders in the largest network of 129 co-offenders to explain this point. There are 13 CORE offenders in the 129 person network (shown in pink); the larger the symbol, the greater the number of direct ties (i.e., degree centrality) the individual has in the network. The individuals with the greatest number of direct ties are CORE offenders. Specifically, the most direct links any individual in the network has are 43, followed by 31, 30, and 25; each of these four is a CORE offender. Two juvenile CORE/Trinity clients are among those in the 129 person network. Refer to Figure 2.

Figure 1. CORE Offenders' Co-Offenders

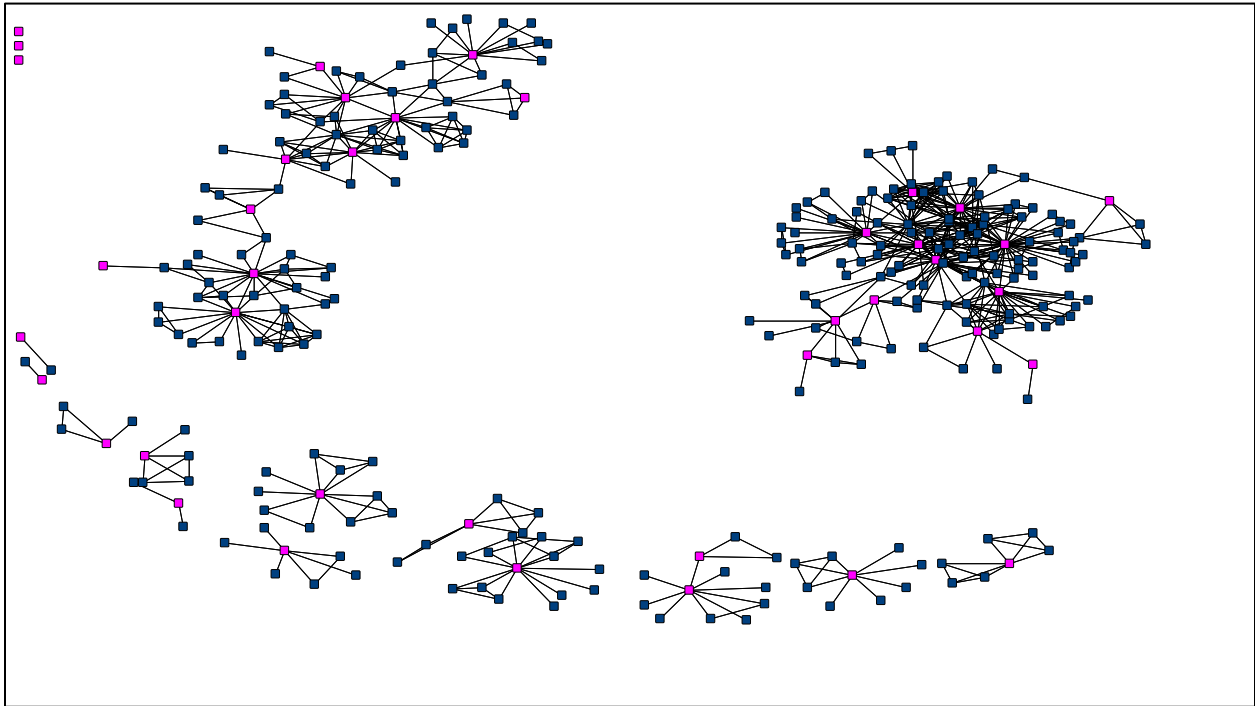
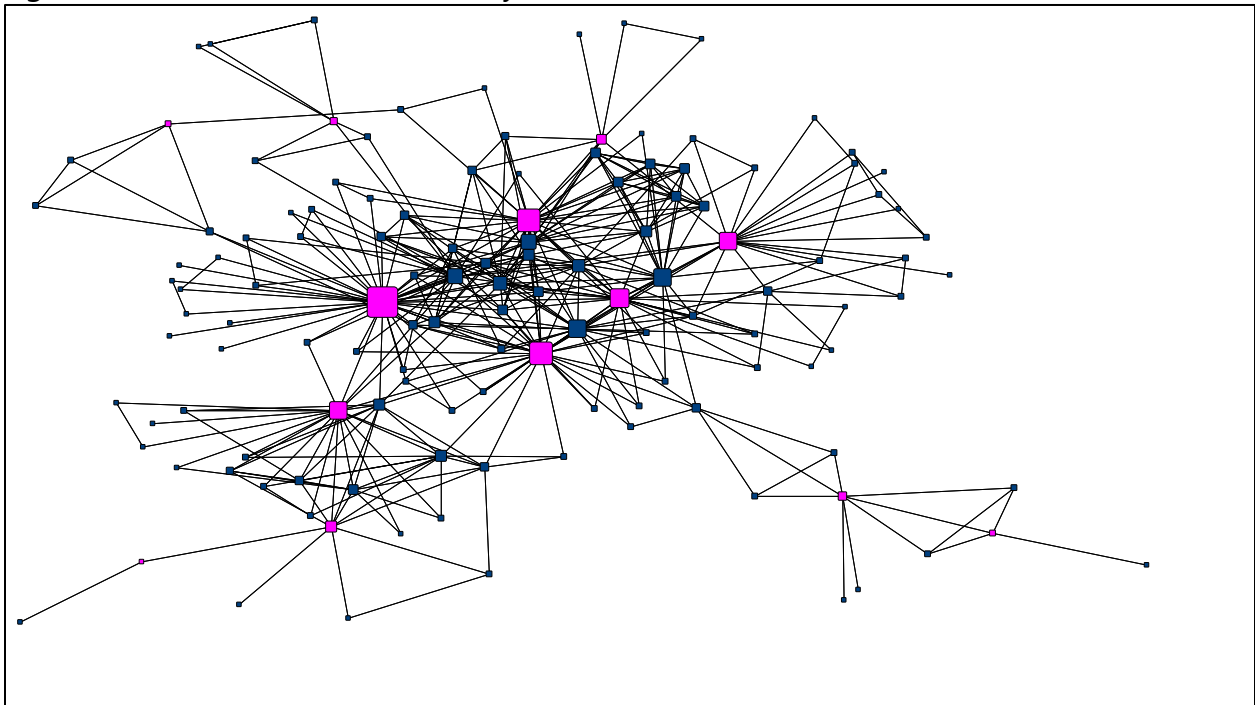
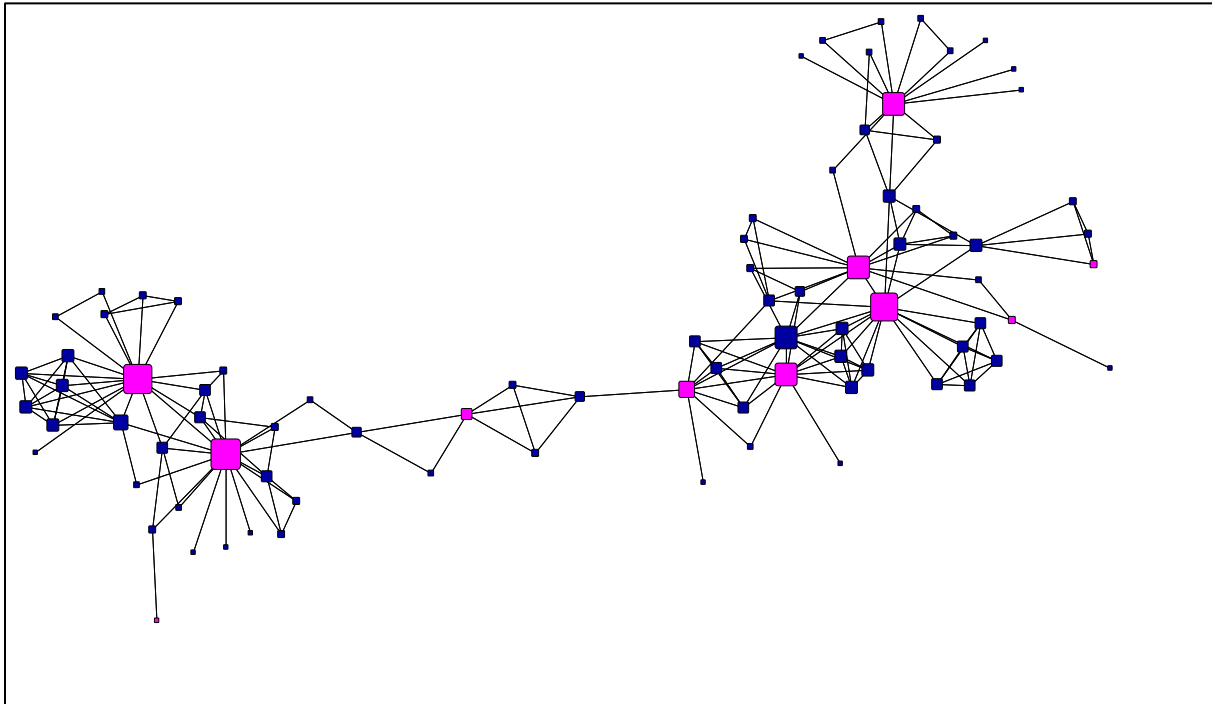


Figure 2. CORE Offenders' Centrality in 129-Person Network



We analyzed the same network position feature for the 85 person network. Eleven of the 85 individuals in this network are CORE offenders. The highest degree centrality measures are 18, 17, 16, and 13, and each of those individuals is a CORE offender. Refer to Figure 3.

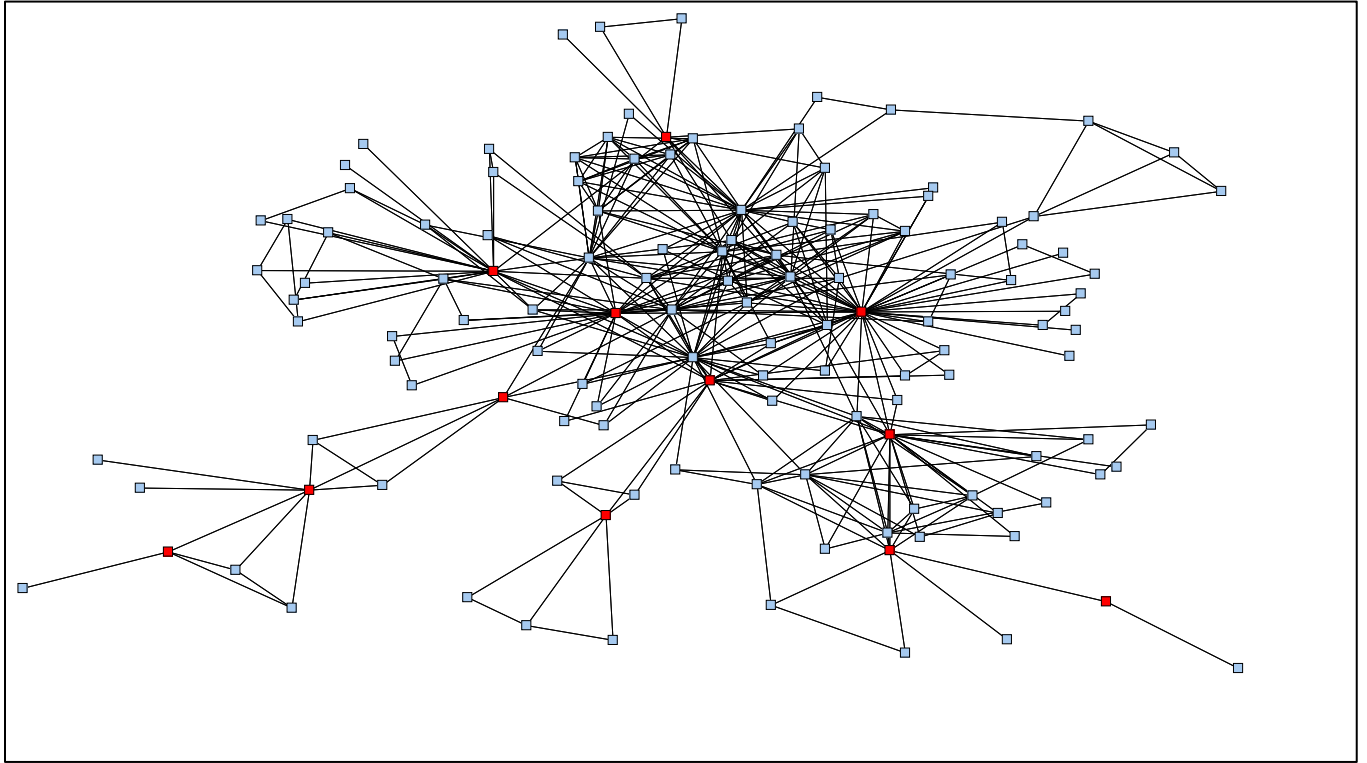
Figure 3. CORE Offenders' Centrality in 85-Person Network



Within many real-world networks, some people are centrally positioned while others are more peripheral. This pattern holds true in the co-offending networks of CORE offenders. We examined CORE offenders' placement in terms of their position as bridges to others. Where bridges exist, the network is expanded, and the removal of bridges introduces a structural hole in the network. In the case of SPI, the individuals who serve as cut-points within the network can spread information about the extra attention law enforcement is bringing to bear upon CORE offenders and, by this, also to those with whom they offend and interact.

We examined the 129 person network formed by the 13 CORE offenders. Ten of the thirteen are the only individuals who connect one clique or component of the entire network to another clique. Thus, removing the CORE offenders who hold important brokerage positions can disrupt the flow of information or resources through the network; conversely, information can be diffused through the network more readily capitalizing on the brokers' positions. These cut-point positions are shown in red in Figure 4 below.

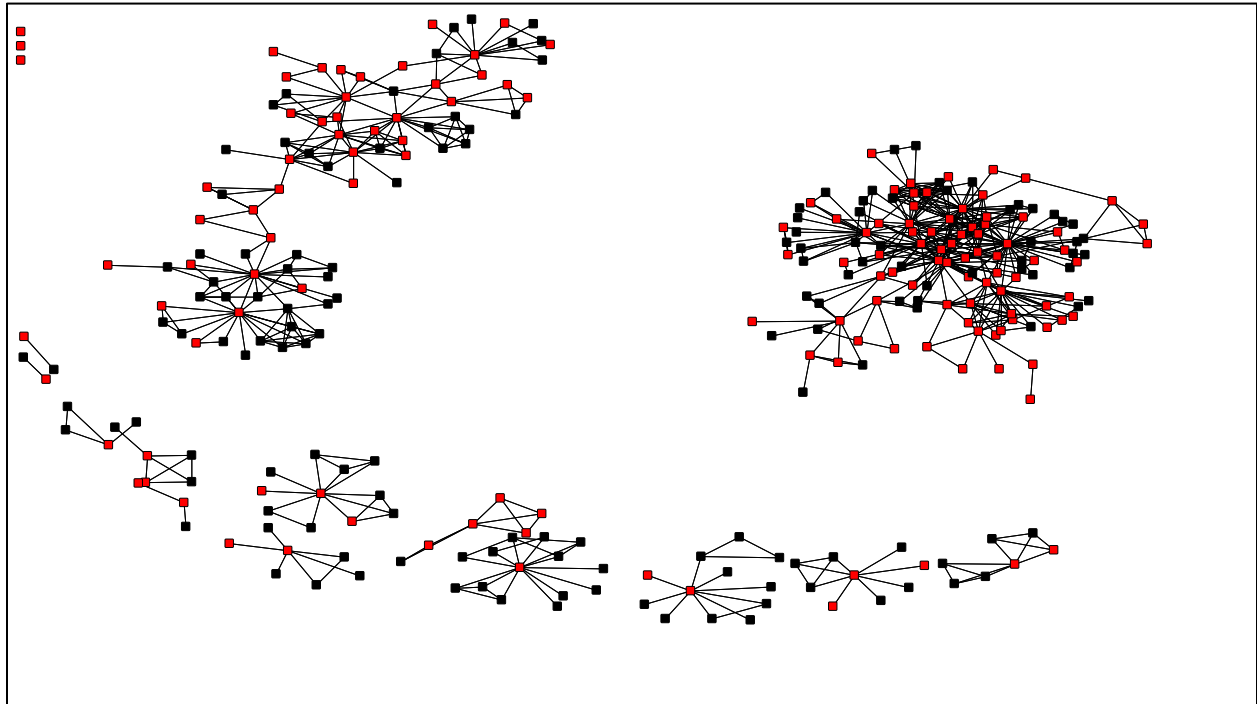
Figure 4. CORE Offenders as Cut-Points in 129-Person Network



We examined the gang involvement of individuals in CORE offenders' co-offending networks. Gang members are indicated in red and non-gang-affiliated individuals in black. The offending networks formed by the ties among CORE individuals and those with whom they offend are relatively heterogeneous in terms of gang status. Every one of the sixteen unique networks formed includes gang and non-gang members, including the very smallest networks, ranging in size from two to fourteen individuals. Refer to Figure 5 below.

Examination of the ties among CORE offenders reveals that the 40 current CORE offenders connect to many others. In the two years preceding placement on a CORE list, all but three of the CORE offenders were connected with at least one other individual. A handful of CORE offenders have enough ties by virtue of co-offending to form two fairly large networks. We can see that their positions within the networks make them well-suited to spreading the message that law enforcement is paying particular attention to them, perhaps deterring others from maintaining active associations with them. In addition, the removal of CORE offenders has the potential to disrupt reasonably large groups of criminally connected individuals.

Figure 5. Gang Affiliation in CORE Offenders' Co-Offending Networks



Stakeholders' Perceptions: CORE Offenders

Members of the partnership identified the CORE list formation as one of the strongest features of the CORE 2.0 strategy. An overwhelming majority of partners believed that the offenders on the CORE list are the correct people, that is, the individuals who are the most violent and gun-involved. Although there was consensus among the interviewees (in 2018) and survey respondents (in 2019) regarding their satisfaction with the composition of the lists, it was evident that not all members of the partnership had a thorough understanding of the CORE selection process. The analysts at the CNYCAC perform the scoring algorithm and selection procedure, and a better understanding among the group about that process could be beneficial to the partnership. Discussions surrounding the legal vulnerabilities of offenders and the current intelligence on offenders help to guide the enforcement actions of the strategy.

Over 90 percent of 2019 survey respondents believed that the CORE list is the correct *size*, between thirty and thirty-five individuals. During the first months of implementation, it was recommended that the composition of the CORE list should be more fluid. As noted above, CNYCAC analysts were updating the CORE list more frequently than originally intended at the start of the strategy. This allowed for more consideration of current intelligence and activity of offenders, and this was supported by the partnership. The updating slowed during lists four and five, and for lists six and seven, no updates were made. The partnership was removing offenders from the list for

incarceration, but then they were being released on bail. In order to prevent offenders from being removed prematurely, the partnership decided not to keep the list fluid.

A few members of the partnership suggested that supervision agencies should play a role in the formation of the CORE list. With changes in the NYS criminal justice system, and low staffing levels at SPD, a few members of the partnership were concerned about the level of enforcement and accountability that CORE 2.0 could achieve. Given the additional leverage that supervision status affords, greater pressure can be exerted on probationers and parolees. However, at that time, the partnership decided to retain the current algorithm and list formation procedure, as the group did not want to restrict the strategy to supervised offenders. The percentage of the list on supervision fluctuated between 40 and 65 percent of the list.

Summary

The composition of each CORE list has an impact on the enforcement aspect of the strategy. The gang affiliation, age, supervision status, and address of the CORE offenders who comprise the CORE list has varied from list to list, and influences how the partnership can deal with the CORE offenders. The frequent updates to the list allowed for greater consideration of current intelligence and maintained, as much as possible, the “dosage” of enforcement against thirty to thirty-five offenders at one time, so that the resources of the partnership were not stretched too thin. The list needs to include enough offenders to make an impact on gun violence in the City, but not so many as to overwhelm the available resources. We return to this issue in our conclusions.

Custom Notifications

Once an offender is placed on the CORE list, they are to be given advance notice of their high-priority designation through a custom notification. Custom notifications advise offenders that they have been identified as high-risk and will be subject to intensified enforcement, and informs them of their legal vulnerabilities to future prosecution. This is done with the intention of deterring future offending. The custom notification also includes information about services available to the offenders, should they choose to desist from violence.

Generally, custom notifications have been delivered to about 90 percent of the offenders on CORE lists; see Table 7. To some extent, the high rate of delivery stems from the fact that some offenders have appeared on multiple lists, such that even if they did not receive a custom notification during the period of one list, they received a custom notification at an earlier or later time. Offenders on the first CORE list were most likely to have received a notification during that period, as there were more offenders who needed to be notified. In succeeding lists, substantial fractions of offenders on the

list had already been notified, prior to the start of the time period. Of the offenders who did not receive a custom notification before or during their time on the list, most were on only one CORE list. None of the non-notified offenders were on more than three CORE lists. The time an offender is on the CORE lists has the most impact on successful custom notification deliveries.

Table 7. Custom Notifications by List

	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7
Total # of offenders	36	38	42	33	30	30	26
Total # of offenders notified	32	36	38	30	25	24	18
Percentage of offenders notified	88.9%	94.7%	90.5%	90.9%	83.3%	80.0%	69.2%
# notified during list period	19	10	12	16	6	12	6
# notified directly during list period	10	6	6	7	2	7	3

For some offenders, multiple attempts are made before the custom notification letter is delivered. Not all letters are delivered directly to the offender, and family members must sometimes relay the message of the notification to the offender. About 50 percent of notifications made were to family members of the offender. This is not ideal, as the goal is to speak to the CORE offender directly, ensuring that the message is delivered correctly.

We estimated the effects of CORE offenders' characteristics and other factors on the delivery of custom notifications: whether a custom notification (CN) was delivered during the time period of the list on which the offender had been placed; whether a CN was delivered during or prior to the list period; whether the CN was delivered directly; and the total number of CNs delivered up to and including a list placement. See Table 8. Other than variation by list period, the only factor that appears to have a significant effect on custom notification delivery is juvenile status, which reduces the likelihood of notification. Members of the Bricktown and 110 gangs accumulated more custom notifications, mainly because they appeared on numerous lists. The risk level, or CORE score, of the offenders is not associated with custom notification delivery.

Table 8. Custom Notification Delivery as a Function of Offender Characteristics

Risk Factors	Model I: CN during list		Model II: CN before or during list		Model III: Direct CNs		Model IV: Total CNs	
	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p	Incidence-Rate Ratios	p
Intercept	1.45	.556	4.5	.197	0.56	.534	0.79	.119
CORE Score	0.87	.361	1.28	.476	0.86	.447	0.97	.432
Juvenile	0.65	.289	0.2	.03*	0.68	.575	0.63	.027*
On supervision	0.88	.658	1.16	.794	1.34	.438	1.03	.721
Place of residence (city/outside city)	1.65	.087	1.35	.681	1.36	.679	1.15	.215
List								
2	0.34	.031*	5.02	.091	1.63	.144	1.14	.117
3	0.34	.031*	1.12	.868	1.01	.986	1.19	.097
4	0.81	.673	0.79	.757	1.1	.826	1.46	.001**
5	0.22	.014*	0.44	.244	0.69	.461	1.41	.003**
6	0.5	.156	0.28	.066	0.77	.629	1.23	.161
7	0.2	.006**	0.09	.002**	1.43	.483	1.15	.44
Bricktown affiliation	1.22	.553	3.32	.114	1.33	.636	1.45	.021*
110 affiliation	0.65	.301	0.88	.882	2.61	.146	1.58	.04*
Pioneer Homes (P.H.) affiliation	0.77	.607	0.39	.373	1.44	.695	1.08	.767
Other Southside gang affiliation	1.16	.673	1.55	.597	0.91	.886	1.11	.572
N	235		235		235		235	

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Notes:

Standard errors adjusted for clustering on CORE ID

Models I-III estimated using logistic regression with clustered standard errors

Model IV estimated using poisson regression with clustered standard errors

Stakeholders' Perceptions: Custom Notifications

It was evident through interviews with partners early on in implementation, and survey responses from partners two years into implementation, that the custom notification component of the strategy is not fully understood by the partnership. When asked about the success of notification implementation, over half of respondents did not know whether or not they have been successfully implemented.

A concern brought up by partners who actively participate in the custom notification process was that notifications are not always delivered to the CORE offender. The goal is to notify the offender directly, but after numerous attempts, this is

not always possible. In those situations, the notification letter is given to a family member of the offender, with the direction to pass the message on to the CORE offender. In these instances, the partnership does not know how the message is being relayed to the offender, or if it is relayed at all. For every list period, less than sixty percent of the custom notifications made were delivered directly to the offender.

Summary

Focused deterrence strategies rely heavily on direct communication with the offender, and communication of the increased risks and costs associated with their involvement in criminal behavior. Informing offenders of the increased certainty, severity, and swiftness of the sanctions they will face if they continue to offend while on the CORE list has the goal of deterring the individual from engaging in violence. The deterrent effect of the CORE 2.0 strategy turns on the partnership's perceived credibility to the targeted offenders. In order to change behavior, the offenders must be aware of the elevated risk of punishment for which the CORE strategy provides, and they must perceive an increase in the risks they face – i.e., increased enforcement directed toward them. The offenders placed on the CORE lists are chronic, violent offenders, who are highly vulnerable to criminal justice sanctions. Communicating the message to them directly has the potential to prompt them to desist from – or at least reduce – their offending, as long as the notification is backed up by increased attention, to which we now turn.

Enforcement against CORE Offenders

Each partner agency has different enforcement authority at their disposal. CORE 2.0 provides for a variety of enforcement tactics, tailored to offender's vulnerabilities: surveillance; targeted traffic enforcement; drug/weapon enforcement; proactive investigations of open cases; increased home visits, office visits, and GPS monitoring of CORE offenders under probation or parole supervision.

To assess the intensity of enforcement against CORE individuals from strategy initiation in July, 2017, through December, 2020, we established eight time periods. The year immediately preceding CORE 2.0, from July 2016 to June 2017, is the pre-CORE period, during which enforcement against the 36 offenders on the first CORE list is taken as a baseline. The six-month periods marked by the formation of new CORE lists constitute seven post-CORE periods: July 2017 through December 2017, is the first CORE 2.0 period; January 2018 through June 2018, is the second CORE 2.0 period; each successive six-month period (July through December or January through June) marks a subsequent CORE 2.0 time period. We compare the enforcement actions against CORE offenders across these time periods, with the expectation that successful

implementation of CORE 2.0 would be associated with an increase in enforcement from the pre-CORE 2.0 period to the CORE 2.0 periods.

Arrests and Stops

To analyze the enforcement actions against CORE offenders, we compiled and analyzed records on arrests and stops. Arrests are separated by charge category, including (Part I) violent arrests, weapon arrests, and drug arrests. Stops include vehicle and pedestrian stops whether or not they lead to an arrest, but we also provide a separate tally of stops ending in arrest. Six-month *rates* of enforcement are calculated in order to standardize the time spans, allowing for simple comparisons of enforcement activities across the pre- and post-CORE time periods. See Table 9.

Table 9. CORE 2.0 Enforcement Outputs by List

	Pre-CORE	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7
	7/2016 – 6/2017	7/2017 – 12/2017	1/2018 – 6/2018	7/2018 – 12/2018	1/2019 – 6/2019	7/2019 – 12/2019	1/2020 – 6/2020	7/2020 – 12/2020
# Individuals on List	36	36	38	42	33	30	30	26
<i>Arrests</i>	44.5*	62	61	32	32	23	18	24
Violent offenses	1.5*	3	5	2	2	3	2	2
Weapons offenses	3.5*	8	2	5	2	4	2	5
Drug offenses	19.5*	29	32	12	16	5	10	9
<i>Stops</i>	89*	98	171	65	73	67	30	32
Proactive arrests	28*	32	36	15	18	7	10	10

In addition, so that the comparisons take account of the time that CORE offenders are removed from the street by incarceration and thus unavailable for enforcement, we compute rates of enforcement per 10,000 days at risk – i.e., not incarcerated. “Time at risk” is the number of days during the six month list period that an offender was not incarcerated (and excludes days during which an offender was not on the list). We obtained from CNYCAC data on local incarceration for CORE offenders, which we supplemented with look-ups in the DOCCs inmate locator and Federal Bureau of Prisons, from which we calculated the number of days each offender was incarcerated during each list period. The aggregate time at risk is calculated by summing the total number of days individual offenders were on the list, and subtracting from that the total

number of days of offenders' incarceration. Table 10 shows the rates of enforcement per 10,000 days at risk.

Offenders are subject to arrest only when they violate the law, of course, and they are subject to being stopped only when they are not incarcerated *and* "available" in public spaces, and when their behavior gives rise to at least reasonable suspicion by law enforcement personnel. Changes over time in enforcement outputs, from pre-CORE to post-CORE and from one CORE list period to another, thus reflect not only the extent to which CORE partner agencies are directing enforcement attention to CORE offenders, but also the behavior of offenders. The meaning of increases and decreases in outputs are thus somewhat difficult to interpret. A decrease, for example, could stem from reduced enforcement effort or from behavioral adjustments by CORE offenders to the heightened risk of detection and apprehension (or both).

Table 10. CORE 2.0 Enforcement Outputs by List: Rate per Time at Risk

Rate (10,000 days)	Pre-CORE	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7
	7/2016 – 6/2017	7/2017 – 12/2017	1/2018 – 6/2018	7/2018 – 12/2018	1/2019 – 6/2019	7/2019 – 12/2019	1/2020 – 6/2020	7/2020 – 12/2020
# Individuals on List	36	36	38	42	33	30	30	26
Time on list at risk (days)	12160	6031	5669	6306	4395	4281	4113	4050
<i>Arrests</i>	73.2	102.8	107.6	50.7	72.8	53.7	43.8	59.3
Violent offenses	2.5	5.0	8.8	3.2	4.6	7.0	4.9	4.9
Weapons offenses	5.8	13.3	3.5	7.9	4.6	9.3	4.9	12.3
Drug offenses	32.1	48.1	56.4	19.0	36.4	11.7	24.3	22.2
<i>Stops</i>	146.4	162.5	301.6	103.1	166.1	156.6	72.9	79.0
Proactive arrests	46.1	53.1	63.5	23.8	41.0	16.4	24.3	24.7

Treating the year preceding the implementation of CORE 2.0 as the baseline for comparison, enforcement attention directed toward the CORE offenders on list one demonstrably increased. Stops increased by slightly more than 10 percent, and stops leading to arrest increased by 15 percent. Arrests for weapons offenses more than doubled, and arrests for drug offenses increased by about 50 percent. Enforcement during the list two period increased further, with a steep rise in the number and rate (per days at risk) of stops, an increase in stops ending in arrest, and an increase in drug arrests. This was largely driven by enforcement by CRT. To a large extent, the increase in enforcement against CORE offenders at the outset of the strategy stemmed from a redirection of officer-initiated contacts toward CORE offenders: the overall number of

stops performed by SPD did not increase overall during the first two list periods, while stops of CORE offenders rose.

Arrests and stops of CORE offenders decreased in the list three period, however, and remained below the levels reached during list two in subsequent list periods. Enforcement levels rebounded somewhat in the first half of 2019 (list four), but still fell well short of the levels of enforcement during list two. CORE enforcement was lower still in 2020, during the periods of lists six and seven. As measured by rate of arrests, enforcement against CORE offenders in the periods of lists three, five, six, and seven, was less intense than it was during the pre-CORE period.

An additional angle from which to assess the implementation of CORE enforcement is afforded by a comparison with “next-level” offenders. The “next-level” list is around the same size as the CORE list, and contains individuals with CORE scores slightly lower than the CORE list individuals, and similar criminal histories and offending behavior. This “next-level” group can be used for comparison, to determine the extent to which CORE enforcement efforts were intensified, with a (very) rough control for offender behavior. Our data on next-level offenders are limited to the initial three CORE lists, however.

During lists one and two, CORE individuals were stopped and arrested only marginally more than “next-level” offenders (“NL” in Table 11), adjusting for time at risk. (Next-level offenders, as a group, had less time at risk than the CORE offenders on corresponding lists; some of them may not have appeared on the CORE list due to their incarceration.) These marginal differences reversed in the list three period, as next-level

Table 11. Enforcement Against CORE Offenders Compared to Next-Level Offenders

	7/2016 – 6/2017	7/2017 – 12/2017		1/2018 – 6/2018		7/2018 – 12/2018	
	PRE-CORE	CORE LIST 1	NL LIST 1	CORE LIST 2	NL LIST 2	CORE LIST 3	NL LIST 3
# Individuals on List	36	36	34	38	31	42	31
Time at risk (days)	12160	6031	5120	5669	2867	6306	4654
Arrests	73.2	102.8	97.7	107.6	108.1	50.7	77.4
Violent offenses	2.5	5.0	3.9	8.8	17.4	3.2	4.3
Weapons offenses	5.8	13.3	7.8	3.5	14.0	7.9	6.4
Drug offenses	32.1	48.1	70.3	56.4	52.3	19.0	40.8
Stops	146.4	162.5	156.3	301.6	226.7	103.1	107.4
Stops resulting in arrest	46.1	53.1	70.3	63.5	59.3	23.8	34.4

offenders were arrested at higher rates, stopped equally (or slightly more) often, and more likely to be arrested based on a stop than CORE offenders were. Thus, while enforcement against CORE offenders clearly increased during the periods of lists one and two, it is not clear how much that increase is attributable to deliberate efforts to focus on CORE offenders, and how much is due to the behavior of CORE offenders, which was likely comparable to that of next-level offenders.

The declines in both counts and rates of CORE arrests after list two are particularly pronounced for drug arrests. While UPM charges were among the most common charges across all seven lists, higher numbers and percentages of UPM charges for CORE offenders were generated during lists one and two compared to lists three through seven.¹⁸ After list two, the drug arrests decreased, as did the total number of stops and arrests. Part of the explanation for this pattern could lie in the lower prevalence of drug involvement among the offenders on lists four through seven. Intelligence and criminal histories gathered by the CNYCAC analysts supports this interpretation, showing a slight decrease in the number of CORE offenders with “drug involvement” in lists four through seven (57 percent) compared to lists one through three (60.3 percent). However, the decrease in drug-related arrests cannot be fully explained by the number of drug-involved offenders on the lists. List five had the lowest rate of drug arrests, but that list did not have the lowest number of drug involved offenders.

Within SPD, the Crime Reduction Team (CRT) played a key role in CORE 2.0, until its disbandment in August of 2019. The CRT was a proactive unit that focused on gang activity and gun crime, concentrating its efforts in high-risk areas of the city and focusing on high-risk offenders, with whom CRT officers initiated many contacts. At the outset of CORE 2.0, the CRT was a prominent enforcement component; CRT’s mission was a natural fit with the strategy. As noted above, each CORE offender is assigned to a partner agency, and over time, the CRT increasingly assumed primary responsibility for CORE offenders; twice the number of CORE offenders on lists three and four were assigned to CRT, compared with lists one and two. Though proactive enforcement by CRT fluctuated somewhat – stops of CORE offenders by CRT dropped after August of 2018, rising in May and June of 2018 – almost 70 percent of all stops of CORE offenders from July 2017 through December 2019 were made by CRT.¹⁹ Most CRT stops were pedestrian stops. CRT accounted for over 60 percent of all pedestrian stops during the first five CORE lists.

¹⁸ We note that New York State legalized the recreational use of marijuana in March, 2021, after the time frame of our process evaluation.

¹⁹ CRT activity was highest during list two, with 108 CORE stops in that six-month time period. CRT stops decreased along with stops overall during the list three period, and continued to decrease through list five. Even so, CRT still accounted for over 70 percent of all stops made for each of the first four lists.

Staffing shortfalls led to the disbandment of the CRT in 2019, about one-quarter of the way through the period of list five. At that time, nearly half of the CORE offenders were assigned to the CRT, and its elimination clearly threatened to compromise the intensity of enforcement directed toward CORE offenders. To take up the enforcement slack, these offenders were reassigned to other units: the Gang Violence Task Force (GVTF); the Intelligence Section, and uniformed patrol. All of those units had played a part in CORE 2.0 previously, but following the disbandment of the CRT, more was expected of them.

During the list five period, for much of which the CRT no longer operated, arrests (and especially arrests on drug-related charges) dropped again. SPD patrol units increased the number of CORE stops during list five, and stops remained fairly steady with the preceding period, but stops leading to arrest fell sharply, suggesting that the nature and/or investigative dynamics of the stops changed. Pedestrian stops of CORE offenders decreased substantially during list five and remained at a lower level, as most of the patrol stops on CORE offenders were vehicle stops, and the levels of stops did not approach those during the period of the second CORE list.²⁰

CORE enforcement confronted a further challenge in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of 2020, as the spread of the coronavirus and its consequences for public health were recognized, private and public business abruptly contracted by executive order. Social distancing was mandated. Officer-initiated contacts with the public inevitably declined, and the effects on CORE enforcement are as unmistakable as they were predictable. The rate of stops (per days at risk) dropped by more than 50 percent from that of the list five period (July-December, 2019).

The average level of enforcement against CORE offenders conceals variation in the “dosage” of enforcement applied to individual offenders. For lists one through seven, sixteen CORE offenders were arrested five or more times during the six-month list period. These sixteen offenders – fifteen percent of all CORE offenders – accounted for 54.4 percent of all CORE arrests from July 2017 through December 2020. The five offenders with the most stops on the first five CORE lists accounted for 35.1 percent of all stops of CORE offenders during the first five lists.²¹ Offenders who were drug-

²⁰ Of all the stops of offenders during the first two and a half years of CORE 2.0 implementation, 60 percent were vehicle stops, and 40 percent were pedestrian stops. Some offenders on the CORE list had police contact only through pedestrian stops. Overall, only 19 percent of the CORE offenders on lists one through seven had a valid license for at least one of the lists on which they appeared. The offenders with a valid license had more stops compared to offenders without a valid license. More of the offenders on the first two CORE lists had a valid driver license, which could partially account for the decrease in vehicle stops on the later lists compared to the first lists.

²¹ To some extent, these skewed distributions owe to the length of time offenders appeared on CORE lists. For all 106 CORE offenders on lists one through seven, the offenders appeared on a mean of 2.23 lists. The sixteen offenders with five or more arrests appeared on a mean of 3.69 lists. The five offenders with the most stops on the first five CORE lists were on an average of 3.4 of the five lists.

involved, not supervised, and living in the City of Syracuse had a higher rate of stops throughout the lists than other CORE offenders.

The heterogeneity of enforcement dosage varied across list periods (see Table 12). Among the offenders on list one, for example, 25 percent had three or more arrests during the six-month period. Of the offenders on list two, 29 percent were arrested three or more times. After the list two period, the percentage of offenders with three or more arrests decreased, and the percentage of offenders with no arrests increased in four of the five subsequent list periods. With the exception of list one, over 40 percent of offenders on each list were not arrested during the six-month list period.

The number of offenders who were not stopped during the list period was lowest in lists four and five; with fewer updates to lists four and five, there were fewer offenders to stop during that year-long period. During list six, 63 percent of the CORE offenders had no stops during the list period. Over half of the offenders during the sixth CORE list did not have any contacts, stops or arrests, during that six-month time period. The seventh list saw a lower percentage of offenders with no contacts compared to list six, but the stop and arrest rates for the seventh list were still lower than the first two CORE lists, and lower than the pre-CORE stop and arrest rates.

For all lists, a majority of the arrests and stops were of Southside gang members. Offenders affiliated with Southside gangs comprised a majority of the list for each time period. All offenders with five or more arrests on one list were Southside gang members, which contributed to the higher percentage of Southside gang member contacts, especially on list one and list two.

Of the CORE arrests during lists one through seven, offenders associated with the 110 gang had the most arrests. About 31 percent of the total CORE offender arrests on the list were of 110 members. This was disproportionate to their representation among CORE offenders, as just under 18 percent of the CORE list offenders were 110 members. Bricktown offenders, who had the highest representation on the CORE list over the three and a half year period, accounted for just over 15 percent of the CORE arrests. Pioneer Homes (PH) members accounted for 12 percent of arrests, but less than 9 percent of the list. These three gangs, 110, Bricktown, and PH are all Southside gangs in the City. For all CORE lists, these gangs were the most represented among CORE offender arrests.

Compared to lists one and two, lists three through seven had fewer 110 and PH gang-affiliated offender arrests. PH, whose members accounted for 25 of the arrests on the first two lists, accounted for only five arrests during the entire time period of lists three through seven. The arrests of offenders affiliated with other gangs in the city did not substantially decrease. The percentage of the offenders affiliated with Southside gangs varied by list, but the variation does not explain the decrease in arrests and stops during the later list time periods.

Table 12. Enforcement Dosage Across Individual CORE Offenders

	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7
	7/2017 – 12/2017	1/2018 – 6/2018	7/2018 – 12/2018	1/2019 – 6/2019	7/2019 – 12/2019	1/2020 – 6/2020	7/2020 – 12/2020
# Individuals on list	36	38	42	33	30	30	26
Total # arrests	62	61	32	32	23	18	24
Arrests mean	1.72	1.61	0.76	0.97	0.77	0.60	0.92
Arrests range	9	9	3	5	7	4	4
# offenders with 0 arrests	11 (30.6%)	17 (44.7%)	22 (52.4%)	15 (44.5%)	19 (63.3%)	20 (66.7%)	13 (50.0%)
# offenders with 3 or more arrests	9 (25.0%)	11 (28.9%)	3 (7.1%)	4 (12.1%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (7.7%)
Total # proactive arrests	32	36	15	18	7	10	10
Proactive arrests mean	0.92	0.92	0.38	0.52	0.23	0.33	0.38
Proactive arrests range	5	6	2	3	3	3	2
Total # stops	98	171	65	72	67	30	32
Stops mean	2.75	4.47	1.57	2.18	2.23	1.0	1.23
Stops range	14	36	9	8	14	5	11
# offenders with 0 stops	7 (19.4%)	12 (31.6%)	18 (42.9%)	8 (24.2%)	12 (40.0%)	19 (63.3%)	11 (42.3%)
# offenders with 10 or more stops	1	3	0	0	1	0	1
Total # contacts	128	196	82	87	83	38	46
Contacts mean	3.56	5.16	1.95	2.64	2.77	1.27	1.77
Contacts range	18	40	9	20	14	5	14
# offenders with 0 contacts	6 (16.7%)	10 (26.3%)	16 (38.1%)	6 (18.2%)	9 (30.0%)	16 (53.3%)	8 (30.8%)
% of offenders that are Southside	75.0%	76.3%	81.0%	69.7%	80.0%	73.3%	76.9%
% of arrests that were Southside gang members	75.8%	82.0%	81.3%	68.8%	91.3%	55.6%	79.2%
% of stops that were Southside gang members	78.8%	94.1%	86.4%	73.6%	85.1%	63.3%	84.4%
% of contacts that were Southside gang members	78.9%	89.8%	86.6%	72.4%	85.5%	60.5%	84.8%

To better describe the contours of enforcement, we regressed counts of arrests and stops during each CORE list period on individual offenders' characteristics. See Tables 13 and 14, which summarize the estimated parameters of several models. Models I and IV include more information about the offenders (e.g., supervision status, driver license status, gang affiliations), but only for CORE offenders and only for CORE list periods. Model I represents the CORE intervention as it was designed – placement on a list that stands for a six-month period – while model IV represents CORE as a status that endures (ever after), once conferred by placement on a CORE list. Model III includes, in addition, next-level offenders and the two six-month periods that preceded CORE (July, 2016 – June, 2017), but less information about the offenders, which was not available for next-level offenders; model II is limited to CORE offenders but otherwise the same as model III. We consider and discuss the two sets of results together, recognizing that stops (based on the availability of an offender and reasonable suspicion for a police-initiated contact) are more within the control of police than arrests (based on the commission of an offense and probable cause for an arrest). All of the models include a control for days at risk.

First, CORE list placement matters, in the sense that CORE offenders are more frequently be arrested and more frequently stopped, when those outcomes are assessed against the baselines of the pre-CORE period and next-level offenders (though differences in arrests are statistically significant at only the .10 level). CORE status is not associated with higher levels of arrests or stops when the analysis is confined to these high-risk offenders and to the post-CORE period, other things being equal. At the same time, however, that CORE in its "ever after" form is associated with fewer arrests, is consistent with the proposition that enforcement attention was greater when offenders were actively on the CORE list.

Second, CORE offenders on probation or parole were arrested and stopped less frequently. It might be that, due to their susceptibility to supervision, probationers and parolees refrained somewhat from behaviors that would attract additional enforcement action. It might be, in addition or instead, that police tended to concentrate their scarce resources on offenders who were not subject to surveillance by other agencies.

Third, other traits of offenders affected these outcomes. Older offenders were less frequently arrested or stopped. Offenders who were drug-involved, and thus vulnerable in that respect to enforcement, were arrested and stopped more frequently. Offenders with a valid driver license were stopped more frequently, presumably because they more often drove vehicles. Affiliation with the 110 gang was associated with more frequent stops, relative to membership in a non-Southside gang (or no gang at all).

Finally, arrests and stops varied by list period, corroborating the findings reported above for CORE offenders on each list as a group.

Table 13. Arrests as a Function of Offenders' Characteristics

Risk Factors	Model I		Model II		Model III		Model IV	
	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.49	.079	0.31	.001**	0.34	<.001***	0.53	.104
CORE status	0.84	.624	1.26	.069	1.25	.071		
CORE ever after							0.57	.002**
Days at risk	1.01	<.001***	1.01	<.001***	1.01	<.001***	1.01	<.001***
Age	0.97	.042*	1	.902	1	.773	0.97	.078
Supervision status (Probation/Parole = 1)	0.57	.001***					0.58	.002**
Place of residence (city = 1)	1.48	.25					1.7	.007**
Drug involvement	1.49	.026*					1.55	.01*
License status (valid = 1)	1.11	.728					1.14	.655
List								
2	1.11	.467	1.16	.268	0.97	.831	1.16	.323
3	0.77	.102	0.79	.145	0.71	.008**	0.85	.325
4	0.72	.025*	0.7	.015*	0.61	<.001***	0.84	.279
5	0.53	.004**	0.52	.003**	0.46	<.001***	0.64	.048*
6	0.6	.017*	0.6	.022*	0.53	.003**	0.77	.249
7	0.6	.015*	0.61	.018*	0.54	.002**	0.81	.383
Bricktown affiliation	0.82	.267					0.84	.31
110 Affiliation	1.22	.271					1.29	.151
Pioneer Homes (P.H.) affiliation	1	.976					1.17	.406
Other Southside gang affiliation	1.32	.109					1.29	.116
<i>N</i>	740		952		1,282		740	
<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - *<i>p</i><.05, **<i>p</i><.01, ***<i>p</i><.001 - Model I & IV: CORE offenders only, one record for each list period - Model II: CORE offenders only, one record for each list period including pre-CORE - Model III: CORE and next-level offenders, one record for each list period including pre-CORE - Models are estimated using Poisson regression with robust standard errors using the Huber/White/sandwich estimator of variance and an AR1 within-group correlation structure. Incidence-rate ratios reported. 								

Table 14. Stops as a Function of Offenders' Characteristics

Risk Factors	Model I		Model II		Model III		Model IV	
	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>	Incidence-Rate Ratios	<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.5	.123	0.32	.002**	0.23	<.001***	0.5	.119
CORE status	0.93	.857	1.39	.001**	1.39	.001**		
CORE ever after							0.83	.319
Days at risk	1.01	<.001***	1.01	<.001***	1.01	<.001***	1.01	<.001***
Age	0.95	.004**	0.99	.463	1	.965	0.96	.007**
Supervision status (Probation/Parole = 1)	0.63	.004**					0.63	.004**
Place of residence (city = 1)	1.66	.198					1.72	.005**
Drug involvement	1.39	.06					1.41	.031*
License status (valid = 1)	1.48	.028*					1.47	.024*
List								
2	1.74	<.001***	1.8	<.001***	1.61	<.001***	1.76	<.001***
3	0.87	.321	0.89	.403	0.83	.094	0.9	.426
4	1.28	.091	1.24	.226	1.18	.218	1.34	.055
5	0.86	.418	0.86	.475	0.81	.248	0.91	.604
6	0.45	<.001***	0.48	.002**	0.44	<.001***	0.49	.001**
7	0.58	.011*	0.6	.027*	0.55	.004**	0.64	.043*
Bricktown affiliation	0.84	.373					0.85	.393
110 Affiliation	1.93	.011*					1.96	.008**
Pioneer Homes (P.H.) affiliation	1.14	.619					1.19	.526
Other Southside gang affiliation	1.09	.684					1.09	.691
<i>N</i>	740		952		1,282		740	
<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - *<i>p</i><.05, **<i>p</i><.01, ***<i>p</i><.001 - Model I & IV: CORE offenders only, one record for each list period - Model II: CORE offenders only, one record for each list period including pre-CORE - Model III: CORE and next-level offenders, one record for each list period including pre-CORE - Models are estimated using poisson regression with robust standard errors using the Huber/White/sandwich estimator of variance and an AR1 within-group correlation structure. Incidence-rate ratios reported. 								

Supervision

The number of individuals under supervision by probation or parole varies by list, and has a substantial impact on the level of enforcement against CORE offenders. The lists with larger numbers of probationers and parolees would of course be expected to have achieved higher levels of supervision enforcement, in the form of home visits, office contacts, drug screens, and home searches.

Probation enforcement levels varied across the CORE lists; unfortunately, we do not have pre-CORE baselines for probation supervision. Comparisons across the list periods are facilitated by taking account of the CORE probationers’ collective days at risk; see Table 15. Rates of office visits were largely stable until 2020, when supervision adapted to the pandemic. Home visits rose over time, peaking during list four before dipping from that level in list five; home visits remained high during the pandemic.

Drug screens and home searches heighten the risk of violations for CORE offenders. Home searches on CORE probationers increased in lists two through four before dropping to zero or near zero. Drug screens also increased through list five.

Table 15. CORE County Probation Outputs by List: Rate per 1,000 days at Risk

	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7
	7/2017 – 12/2017	1/2018 – 6/2018	7/2018 – 12/2018	1/2019 – 6/2019	7/2019 – 12/2019	1/2020 – 6/2020	7/2020 – 12/2020
# CORE probationers	11	13	8	12	18	10	5
Time at risk (not incarcerated)- days	2013	1957	1464	1746	2423	1247	911
Positive Contacts (Home and Office visits)	120.7	120.6	107.9	146.0	117.2	94.6	97.7
Positive home visit	49.2	42.4	43.0	71.0	48.7	73.8	64.8
Negative home visit	20.4	41.9	30.1	50.4	58.2	41.7	63.7
Office contact	71.5	78.2	64.9	75.0	68.5	20.9	32.9
Drug screen	7.9	11.2	11.6	9.2	10.7	3.2	2.2
Home search	0	1.5	1.4	5.7	0	0.8	0

Note: Table includes criminal probation, family court probation, interim probation, and YO; federal probation is not included.

One challenge faced by supervision agencies throughout the strategy was judges’ discretion with respect to probation violations. The increase in home searches and drug screens increased the likelihood that violations are detected and can thus serve as the basis for violations of probation on noncompliant probationers. However, technical

violations went unpunished by some judges. Offenders with violations of probation appeared in front of judges, but most of them were not removed from probation or incarcerated. The probationers on the CORE list are some of the most violent offenders, many with repeat offenses, and the probation department did not feel the appropriate penalties were being imposed by the judges.

Parole had the most CORE contacts in list three, with the most home visits and office visits occurring during this six month period; see Table 16. This list had the largest number of parolees on the list, with ten total offenders under parole supervision at some point during the six months. When time at risk is accounted for, the second list had the highest levels of parole enforcement. List two had seven parolees, which was the second highest number of all the lists.

Table 16. CORE Parole Outputs by List: Rate per 1,000 days at Risk

	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7
	7/2017 – 12/2017	1/2018 – 6/2018	7/2018 – 12/2018	1/2019 – 6/2019	7/2019 – 12/2019	1/2020 – 6/2020	7/2020 – 12/2020
# CORE parolees	2	7	10	3	3	3	1
Time at risk (not incarcerated)- days	304	819	1502	225	248	463	65
Positive Contacts (Home and Office visits)	49.3	103.8	79.9	40.0	100.8	38.9	46.2
Positive home visit	23.0	41.5	31.3	26.7	36.3	28.1	15.4
Negative home visit	0	3.7	2.0	0	0	0	15.4
Office contact	26.3	62.3	48.6	13.3	64.5	10.8	30.8
Drug screen	6.6	11.0	4.0	0	0	0	0
Home search	0	1.2	1.3	0	0	0	0

To better describe the contours of community supervision associated with CORE, we regressed counts of home visits and drug screens during each CORE list period on individual offenders’ characteristics. See Table 17, which summarizes the estimated parameters of models of three forms of supervision: drug screens, home visits, and positive home visits (positive in the sense that contact was made with the probationer/parolee). The results show that CORE status mattered for all three outputs, such that although probationers and parolees were less frequently arrested and stopped, they were nevertheless subject to heightened enforcement through community supervision.

Other characteristics of offenders did not substantially affect the frequency of any of the enforcement actions, other than a marginally greater number of drug screens for offenders who were drug-involved. Drug screens dropped with the commencement of pandemic mitigation measures during list 6. Home visits varied some across lists; positive home visits varied less across lists.

Table 17. Drug Screens and Home Visits as a Function of Offenders' Characteristics

<i>Risk Factors</i>	Model I: Drug Screens		Model II: Total Home Visits		Model III: Positive Home Visits	
	<i>Incidence- Rate Ratios</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Incidence- Rate Ratios</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Incidence- Rate Ratios</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.09	.017*	0.73	.596	1.11	.861
CORE status	1.69	.038*	1.35	.04*	1.33	.046*
Days at risk	1.01	.001**	1.02	<.001***	1.01	<.001***
Age	0.98	.663	0.97	.121	0.98	.307
Place of residence (city/outside city)	1.48	.228	1.1	.584	0.9	.553
Drug involvement	1.63	.089	1.23	.126	1.01	.947
License status	1.32	.61	1.15	.409	0.96	.864
List	1.28	.424	1.09	.745	0.89	.642
2	0.66	.197	0.67	.075	0.69	.108
3	0.75	.473	1.79	.007**	1.56	.056
4	0.9	.771	1.66	.004**	1.08	.701
5	0.24	.035*	1.53	.087	1.4	.169
6	0.15	.01*	1.64	.028*	1.21	.379
Bricktown affiliation	1.46	.351	1.01	.964	0.88	.538
110 affiliation	1.77	.204	1.02	.897	0.85	.432
Pioneer Homes (P.H.) affiliation	0.79	.591	0.99	.965	0.92	.758
Other Southside gang affiliation	1.83	.191	1.44	.089	1.04	.851
<i>N</i>	108		108		108	
Notes:						
- *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001						
- Standard errors adjusted for clustering on Offender ID						
- Model I-III estimated using Poisson regression with clustered standard errors						

Prosecution

Prosecution of CORE offenders is an important element of deterrence through CORE enforcement, of course, but also a key to incapacitative effects. Ideally, just as CORE offenders are subject to extraordinary efforts to detect their offending and apprehend them, they are also subject to extraordinary efforts to secure convictions on the most serious charges that the law allows, thus resulting in the most severe sanctions that can be imposed, including terms of incarceration.

By themselves, the prosecutorial outcomes of CORE arrests do not enable us to assess the extent to which the outcomes reflect extraordinary case handling that befits their high risk of violence. Thus, we compare the outcomes of CORE arrests with those of next-level offenders. Our comparison is limited to CORE and next-level offenders on, and arrests made during, lists one through three; see Table 18.²²

Convictions were secured at higher rates for CORE offenders than for next-level offenders, with a particularly pronounced difference for felony arrests. Almost two-thirds of CORE felony arrests resulted in a conviction, compared to just over one-third of next level felony arrests. Furthermore, CORE offenders' arrests tended to result in more severe sanctions, with sentences of incarceration more common than among next-level offenders' convictions. CORE offenders received prison sentences in over half of the felony arrest convictions, compared to twenty percent of next-level felony convictions.

These comparisons may be compromised somewhat by missing data; the outcomes of arrests for which data on prosecution were missing are shown as unknown in Table 18.²³ Almost 19 percent of CORE cases were not found in the prosecution data, and just over 19 percent of next level cases were missing. If all of the next-level felony cases whose outcomes are unknown were in fact convictions, and both of the CORE felony arrests for which prosecution data are missing were in fact not convictions, then the difference in conviction rates between CORE and next-level cases would be quite small. If the missing cases followed the same trend as the cases for which outcomes are known, then the comparison above remains valid. Similar caveats can be attached to differences in incarceration.

²² We include here only arrests on original charges, excluding arrests based on bench warrants. The next-level offenders are limited to those who were exclusively next-level, and did not appear on any of the first three CORE lists.

²³ Information on cases sealed by the court was inaccessible, and outcomes especially for low-level charges could not be located.

Table 18. Prosecutorial Outcomes of CORE Offenders' and Next-Level Offenders' Arrests

	Felony arrest		Misdemeanor arrest		Other arrest		Total	
	CORE	Next Level	CORE	Next Level	CORE	Next Level	CORE	Next Level
Arrests	30	14	36	15	82	57	148	86
Convictions	19 (63.3%)	5 (35.7%)	9 (25.0%)	3 (20.0%)	12 (14.6%)	11 (19.3%)	40 (27.0%)	19 (22.1%)
Convictions	19	5	9	3	12	11	40	19
Prison sentences	10 (52.6%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (25.0%)	1 (5.3%)
Jail sentences	4 (21.1%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (17.4%)	2 (10.5%)
Probation sentences	2 (10.5%)	1 (20.0%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (12.5%)	1 (5.3%)
Conditional discharges	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (25.0%)	2 (10.5%)
Other sentences	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (33.3%)	4 (33.3%)	7 (63.6%)	6 (15.0%)	8 (42.1%)
Unknown-sentence missing	1 (5.3%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	4 (36.4%)	2 (5.0%)	5 (26.3%)
Still open	1	0	0	0	5	0	6	0
Satisfied by conviction on unrelated case	4	2	12	6	33	30	49	38
Dismissed (including ACOD)	4	4	3	2	16	6	25	12
Unknown- not in data	2	3	12	4	14	10	28	17

Stakeholders' Perceptions: Enforcement

CORE partners perceived a judicial leniency toward CORE offenders early in the strategy. This was especially true with respect to supervision agencies, who reportedly struggled to get judges to approve the violations of CORE offenders. When county probation petitioned to violate probationers on the CORE list, those violations were not being approved by judges, and the offenders were going unpunished for their noncompliance. Probation officers exercised care in seeking probation revocations, lest judicial leniency undercut their credibility and authority with the supervised offender.

Other partner agencies expressed concern about the failure to violate supervised offenders; they felt that the probation department should be using violations as enforcement actions whenever possible. This led to a perception of supervision leniency among the partnership, with some partners believing probation had different objectives and goals than the rest of the group.

Probation faced another challenge with judicial resistance in setting the conditions of probation for CORE offenders. When CORE 2.0 was first implemented, judges were reportedly eliminating the GPS condition for many CORE probationers. The partnership addressed this issue through better communication and coordination. Probation, CNYCAC, and the OCDA communicated more about CORE probationers, and developed a better understanding of how to justify the condition and what information to provide to judges. These efforts began in 2018, and by the beginning of 2019, probation reported greater success in judicial approval of the GPS condition.

A better understanding among the partnership agencies about what each agency can and cannot contribute to the strategy is an important foundation for collaboration. For the original CORE (1.0) strategy, a written MOU was prepared and signed by agency executives; the MOU spelled out the expectations of each agency. Agencies have different resources, capacities, and objectives, even though they all share the goal of public safety, and understanding what each agency can do as part of CORE 2.0 was necessary to facilitate the discussions and enforcement actions that need to be performed. Communication among partners regarding challenges and issues they are facing can reduce resentment or misunderstanding regarding decision-making.

In the survey completed by the partners in late-2019, more than two years into implementation, just over half of respondents indicated that all partners have an understanding of the strategy and their role in it. There was then a need for better education and communication about the strategy and all of its components, in order to keep the strategy on track. This appeared increasingly important as New York State criminal justice reforms took effect in January, 2020.

In that survey, we found a consensus that the CORE 2.0 strategy increased the intensity of enforcement applied to CORE offenders. The partnership overwhelmingly identified law enforcement efforts as driving this increased intensity. However, a majority of the partners surveyed felt that enforcement should be more than what had been achieved at that point. Respondents highlighted the impact that the elimination of the CRT was expected to have, and how the proactive policing capacity of SPD had been curtailed. Over the course of the strategy, the partners felt that the resources devoted to CORE 2.0 have decreased, and they were not able to devote as many resources to CORE offenders.

Interviewees and survey respondents were asked about other types of enforcement that could be utilized to increase the effectiveness of CORE 2.0. Implementing targeted traffic safety checkpoints, more aggressive prosecution of CORE

offenders, and gaining cooperation from the courts were all discussed by partners as ways to strengthen the enforcement feature of the strategy.

Summary

In order to achieve the goals of focused deterrence, the CORE 2.0 partnership must carry out street-level enforcement, prosecution, and community supervision for offenders who refuse to desist from offending. The deterrent efficacy of CORE 2.0 depends on an increase in the perceived risks and costs of involvement with criminal behavior for the targeted offenders. In order for deterrence to be effective, the risks faced by targeted offenders must be increased relative to the status quo ante. Custom notifications communicate this risk to the offender, but the enforcement efforts and contacts have to be seen by the offenders for them to perceive an increased risk, and possibly choose to stop or curtail their violent behavior.

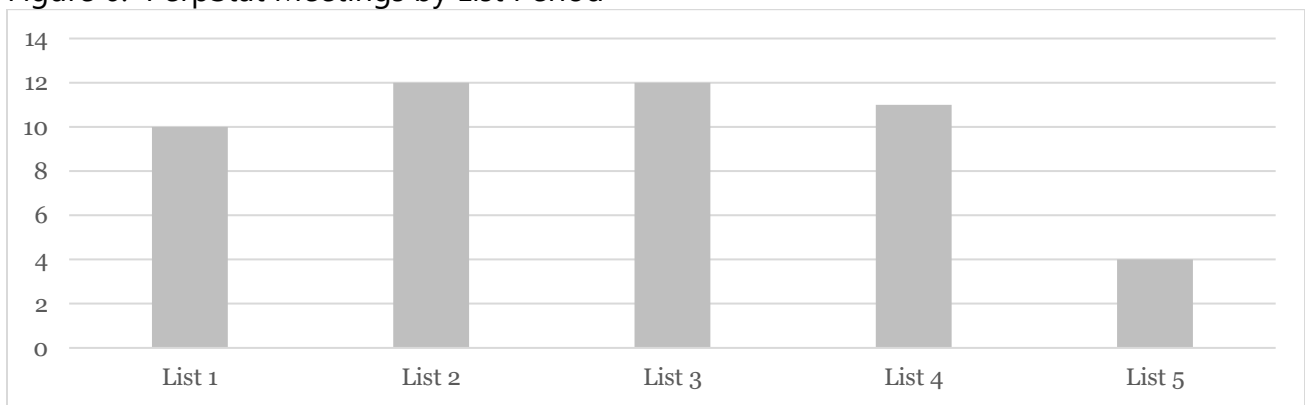
We analyzed enforcement outputs over time and by comparing enforcement against CORE offenders to that against next-level offenders, and on balance, it appears that CORE enforcement achieved higher levels of intensity, especially during the initial year of implementation. CORE offenders were more likely to be stopped by police, and stops that resulted in drug, weapon, and warrant arrests led to a decrease in the number of days offenders on the list were on the streets, though levels of proactive enforcement fell after the second list period. CORE probationers and parolees were subject to more home visits and drug screens. CORE offenders arrested for felony offenses appear to have been more likely to be convicted (relative to next-level offenders) and more likely to be incarcerated as a result. Our measures of enforcement outputs contain considerable ambiguity, however, reflecting both enforcement effort and offender behavior. Thus our conclusions about the magnitude and duration of the increase in enforcement are subject to caveats and thus tentative.

PerpStat Meetings

The partnership convenes accountability sessions – “PerpStat” meetings – which resemble non-punitive CompStat meetings. PerpStat provides a mechanism to hold partners accountable for delivering on their operational promises. It also facilitates the dissemination of intelligence and inter-agency communication. The PerpStat meetings are co-chaired by representatives of the OCDA and SPD. Each agency involved in the strategy is expected to have at least one representative attend the meeting. During the meetings, each CORE offender is discussed individually, focusing on their status and the actions taken against them since the last meeting. Discussions include their criminal activity, contacts, addresses, associates, and other updates. Operational strategies are also explored and discussed by the partnership at PerpStat.

For each of the first through fourth CORE lists' periods, ten to twelve PerpStat meetings were held (see Figure 6). Generally, meetings were held bi-weekly. In July, 2019, with the formation of the fifth CORE list, the partnership decided to meet less frequently – monthly rather than bi-weekly. This switch, along with external factors and other commitments, led to a drop in the number of PerpStat meetings in lists five through seven compared to lists one through four. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the cancellation of meetings during the first half of 2020, and only two PerpStat meetings took place during list six. Meetings picked back up during the second half of 2020, virtually, and list seven had a total of five meetings take place.

Figure 6. PerpStat Meetings by List Period



One purpose of PerpStat meetings is to provide a forum for information sharing and intelligence across the partnership. The information discussed in meetings should provide actionable intelligence to guide enforcement actions on the street. Early meetings left unrealized potential to go into more depth on individual offenders during the meetings, but by mid-2018, CNYCAC analysts assumed a more active role in the discussions of individual offenders at the meetings. Crime analysts from the CNYCAC have attended PerpStat meetings since the start of the strategy. Analysts have intelligence on many of the CORE subjects, and their input on those offenders is beneficial to the group. It is important to verify the information being shared about the offenders on the list, and the analysts are able to do this and provide the most current information and activities of the CORE offenders.

A majority of the partners who responded to the 2019 survey were satisfied with the communication between agencies involved in CORE 2.0. Collaboration between agencies was also seen as a strength by most respondents, though there were some partners who felt collaboration could be improved.

Accountability

One goal of the PerpStat meetings has always been to increase communication and accountability among the partnership agencies. In order to achieve accountability, the meetings have to go beyond routinely reporting out, which was a challenge in the beginning of the strategy.

When the meetings were held biweekly, the partners were expected to deliver on their objectives, as well as share them on a regular basis with the group. When we interviewed partner agency representatives early on in the strategy, many revealed that they felt CORE 2.0 had more accountability than previous strategies, largely due to the frequency of PerpStat meetings. With the switch to monthly PerpStat meetings, perceived accountability declined, as individual agencies had to report on enforcement activities less frequently. Respondents to the late-2019 survey were less satisfied with the level of accountability achieved by the partnership. Over 60 percent of respondents felt there was room for improvement in the level of accountability at that time. Forty-five percent of partners who completed the survey did not believe that individual partners were being held accountable for the role they play in fulfilling the goals of the strategy.

Challenges with accountability can arise due to instability in agency representation, which has been an issue in the CORE strategy. In order to address accountability concerns, there must be commitment from different levels of leadership within partner agencies. The decision-makers, at the top-levels of agencies, have to commit to the strategy, and the frontline personnel must be responsible for fulfilling enforcement promises. Administration changes threaten to undermine agencies' fulfillment of their CORE obligations, as turnover in key positions *can* erode the comprehension and commitment to the strategy. SPD experienced both agency-level and unit-level leadership transitions through the course of the CORE strategy. SPD co-chairs the PerpStat meetings, and in early 2018, a new deputy chief was appointed. In late-2018, a new police chief was appointed. The new administration implemented changes in the department, most notably a redistricting and reorganization of the department, and changes in command staff. In summer, 2019, the SPD captain primarily responsible for implementing and organizing CORE 2.0 was promoted to deputy chief of patrol, which removed him from his role in the strategy. Remarkably, these changes appear not to have had detrimental effects on SPD's commitment to and follow through on CORE. Some other agencies' representatives attending PerpStat meetings have changed over the course of CORE to date, unless executives make it clear that a smooth hand-off needs to be made, the instability can have negative repercussions.

Stakeholders' Perceptions: PerpStat Meetings

Throughout strategy implementation, a majority of partners have been satisfied with the communication and collaboration among partner agencies. A strength of the strategy, identified by interviewees and survey respondents, is the regular meetings of various agencies. Most of the partners feel there is a culture of participation and collaboration among members of the partnership, which would not be possible to achieve without the PerpStat meetings. All partners feel the frequency of PerpStat meetings is appropriate, even after switching from biweekly to monthly meetings.

Partners identified a few perceived areas for improvement with the current partnership and accountability. A majority of the partnership felt that their agencies' efforts are supported by the other partners involved in the strategy, but there are some who did not. Although most partners felt that the agencies involved in the strategy share a set of goals and objectives, some partners did not feel there was agreement among the partnership regarding goals and the mission of the strategy. Just over half of the 2019 survey respondents felt that the partnership had an understanding of their role in the CORE 2.0 strategy. Understanding what each agency can (and cannot) do in executing the strategy is beneficial for collaboration and good will. Early in CORE 2.0, some law enforcement partners were frustrated regarding the actions taken and not taken by supervision agencies.

The accountability of the partnership was also a concern reflected in the responses in the 2019 survey. Almost half of the partners who responded to the survey disagreed that all partners involved in the strategy are held accountable. An even larger proportion believed there was room for improvement in the level of accountability, on both the agency and individual levels. These issues likely remain unresolved, given the dislocations ensuing from the pandemic.

Summary

Accountability within the strategy has been a challenge, as this is a multi-agency collaboration. With no hierarchical authority structure, traditional models of accountability are inapplicable to the cross-agency collaboration of CORE 2.0. In a multi-agency strategy, it is difficult to delegate responsibilities and achieve accountability. PerpStat meetings are a partial antidote, but not a permanent cure.

PerpStat meetings have served effectively as a mechanism for inter-agency communication and the dissemination of intelligence. A lot of credit goes to the CNYCAC analysts, who process and organize the intelligence, as well as tracking enforcement in granular detail.

CORE Impacts

In order to estimate the impact of the CORE 2.0 strategy, we adopted three analytical approaches, in lieu of relying on analyses of CORE offenders' violent offending. As noted above, our only measure of offending is based on arrests, and arrests are a strategic output: by design, CORE enforcement increases the likelihood that CORE offenders' crimes are detected and attributed to them, such that the meaning of increases or decreases are ambiguous. Changes over time in arrests reflect to some unknown degree changes in enforcement and changes in offending.

Other analytic strategies are needed to further examine CORE impacts. First, we adopted a spatial approach to assessing changes in violent crime levels, identifying as treatment areas places of small geographic dimensions in which CORE offenders' criminal activity was concentrated pre-CORE, and control areas with comparably high levels of violence but with low levels of offending by CORE offenders. Second, we adopted an individual-level approach that focused on CORE offenders, treating their victimization as an indicator of their level of involvement in a violent lifestyle, hypothesizing that insofar as CORE enforcement was an effective deterrent, CORE offenders would be at lower risk of victimization. Third, we adopted an individual-level approach that focused on CORE offenders' associates, particularly their first-degree social connections, hypothesizing that insofar as CORE offenders curtailed the extent to which they drive violence, we would observe lower levels of offending by their associates.

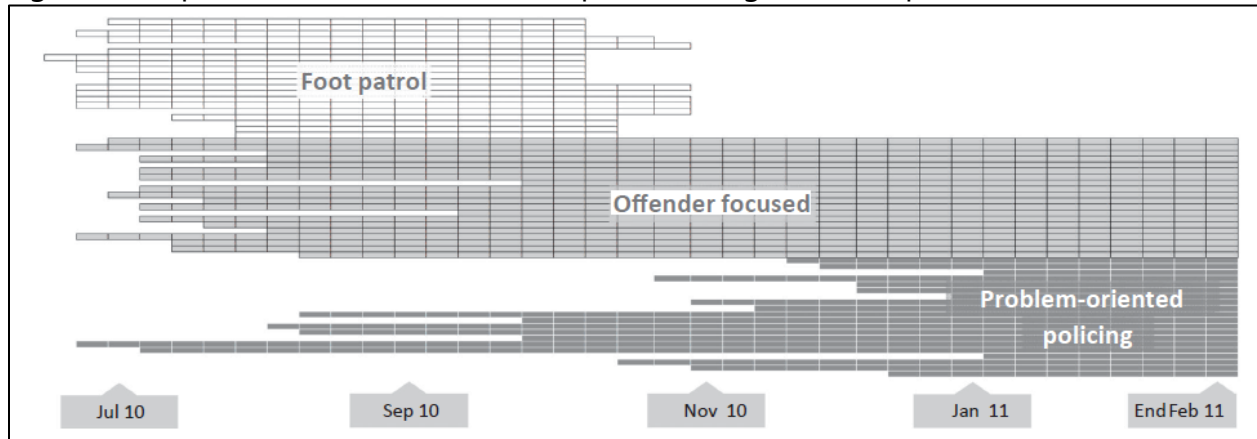
Treatment and Control Areas

First, we compare pre- and post-CORE trends in violent crime in selected geographic areas to the same trends in comparison areas. An evaluation of Philadelphia's offender-focused (OF) policing tactic produced evidence that OF policing could have substantial effects on violent crime in the places in which it was concentrated. The Philadelphia Policing Tactics Experiment evaluated three forms of policing – OF policing, foot patrol, and problem-oriented policing – each of which was applied in 20 hotspots of violent crime, and assessed against 7 corresponding control hotspots. Potential hotspots were initially identified on the basis of a spatial analysis of violent crime, with 81 deployment areas – 27 for each tactic – derived therefrom by police commanders. As Groff, et al. explain:

the deployment area boundaries were revised to balance police operations with research priorities (i.e., achieving geographic separation of the target areas to examine spatial displacement and diffusion effects). The final 81 hot spots contained an average of 3 miles of streets, .044 square miles, and 23.5 intersections (p. 28)

OF policing “consisted of identifying repeat violent offenders who either lived in or were suspected of being involved in violent crimes in the target areas and focusing extra attention on them. Offenders qualified for the initiative if they had a history of violent offenses and criminal intelligence suggested they were involved in a criminal lifestyle” (p. 33). OF policing was applied for 22 to a maximum of 24 weeks (see Figure 7). In each treatment area, police focused on 5 to 10 offenders.²⁴

Figure 7. Implementation of the Philadelphia Policing Tactics Experiment



Groff et al analyzed

... two separate violent crime outcome measures: 1) all violent crime and 2) violent street felonies. The all violent crime outcome includes homicides, robberies, aggravated assaults, and simple (nonfelony) assaults. The violent street felonies outcome excludes simple assaults. The outcomes are biweekly counts for each experimental and control area. The analysis period began June 7, 2010, and it ended February 27, 2011, for a total of 19 biweekly observation periods.

CORE 2.0 is not a place-based initiative, but an assessment of its impacts can treat places as the locus of its effects and the units of analysis. The original plan was to analyze crime in ten Southside hotspots as CORE treatment areas, and five to six hotspots in other areas of the city, as control areas. Hotspots would be formed based on the density of gun crime. Because the strategy as implemented included on CORE lists individuals not associated with Southside gangs or groups, the original plan had to be modified. The modified plan is based on dividing the city into 256 places, each of them a square with sides of 0.35 miles, forming a “grid” over the city. In many of the places, violent crime is rare. Other areas represent or overlap with hotspots of violent crime, especially gun violence. We geocoded violent crimes, attributing each of them to one of the 256 places, and formed quarterly counts of crime in each place, from July, 2014, through June, 2019. Thus the pre-CORE period encompasses 12 quarters as the

²⁴ Jerry Ratcliffe, personal correspondence with Worden, May 30, 2019.

baseline for the outcome evaluation. Violent offenses include Part I violent offenses, plus simple assault and any offense committed with a firearm, but excluding domestic offenses and harassment. Violent crime levels vary widely across these places. In the three years preceding the initiation of CORE 2.0, the mean number of violent crimes in the 256 places was 16.5, ranging from zero to 143 with a standard deviation of 26.1. Setting aside the 67 places in which no violent crimes occurred, the mean number of violent crimes was 22.3. Violent crime and selected subsets of specific types of violent crime (e.g., gun violence, or shootings) are outcomes, as baseline levels permit.

To select places as treatment or control areas, we formed two bi-monthly violent crime counts for each place and each CORE list, based on (1) violent offenses in the three years immediately preceding the beginning of the CORE list period (e.g., July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2017, for the first CORE list), and (2) violent offenses attributable to CORE offenders – as arrestees or suspects – in the preceding three years. Then we examined the thirty areas with the highest counts of violent offenses, along with the areas with the highest number of offenses involving CORE offenders. The areas chosen as treatment areas should have high violent crime levels, as well as high CORE offense counts. Areas with high levels of violence and low numbers of CORE offenses are appropriate to treat as control areas. For the two and a half years corresponding to the first five CORE lists (July 2017 – December 2019), the treatment and control areas remained the same.

The analysis consists of a pooled cross-sectional time series analysis – that is, a panel model. The model includes statistical adjustments for temporal patterns, such as seasonality and other trends:

$$\begin{aligned} \log(E[Gun\ offenses_{h,q}]) \\ &= \beta_0 + \beta_1(Post - intervention_{h,q}) + \beta_2(Treatment) \\ &+ \beta_3(Treatment \times Post - intervention_{h,q}) + X\beta \end{aligned}$$

where

$Gun\ offenses_{h,q}$ = the number of violent offenses committed in place h in time period q ;
 $Post - intervention_{h,q}$ = 1 if the time period q was later than June 30, 2017, 0 otherwise, in every place h ;

$Treatment_{h,q}$ = 1 if place h was a treatment area, 0 otherwise, for every time period q ;

β_0 is the intercept, and $X\beta$ generically represents all other control variables in the model – here, bi-monthly binary variables to account for seasonality (with January-February omitted to prevent perfect multi-collinearity), and terms for serial correlation as necessary.

The key is the multiplicative term, Treatment X Post-intervention, and the coefficient (β_3) associated with that variable, as it represents the “difference in difference”: the

magnitude of the difference between the pre-/post-CORE change in violent crime in the treatment places and the pre-/post-CORE change in violent crime in the control places.

Table 19 displays the results of the analysis. The column labeled IRR (incident rate ratio) indicates that

- treatment areas had counts of violent crime pre-CORE that were nearly the same (94% as high) as control areas
- control areas had counts of violent crime post-CORE that were nearly the same (91% as high) as they did pre-CORE; and
- the difference in difference was positive, meaning that violent crime increased in the treatment areas while violent crime in control areas was stable or decreased.

Table 19. Difference-in-Difference Results for Treatment and Control Areas

July 2014 – June 2018	IRR	95% confidence interval	p
Constant	5.17	4.70 ~ 5.68	0.00
Treatment area	0.94	0.82 ~ 1.08	0.37
Post-CORE	0.84	0.69 ~ 1.02	0.08
Treatment X Post-CORE	1.27	0.97 ~ 1.67	0.08
July 2014 – June 2019			
Constant	5.20	4.71 ~ 5.74	0.00
Treatment area	0.87	0.77 ~ 1.00	0.05
Post-CORE	0.90	0.77 ~ 1.06	0.20
Treatment X Post-CORE	1.16	0.94 ~ 1.42	0.17
July 2014 – December 2019			
Constant	5.21	4.71 ~ 5.76	0.00
Treatment area	0.87	0.76 ~ 1.00	0.05
Post-CORE	0.91	0.79 ~ 1.06	0.24
Treatment X Post-CORE	1.16	0.95 ~ 1.42	0.14

The difference in difference is not statistically significant, however, so we could not confidently infer that violence increased in the treatment areas relative to the control areas. In any case, the results do not support the hypothesized effect of CORE on violent crime, however.

CORE Offenders' Victimization

We estimate the effects of CORE by estimating the parameters of a panel model, which imposes statistical controls for potentially confounding factors, such as days at risk, and for broader temporal patterns, such as seasonality and other trends. The estimation is based on data covering each of 10 six-month time periods, from January 1,

2016, through December 31, 2020, for each of the 106 CORE offenders.²⁵ The model can be represented mathematically as:

$$\begin{aligned} \log(E[Violent\ victimizations_{h,q}]) \\ = \beta_o + \beta_1(CORE_{h,q}) + \beta_2(Days\ at\ risk_{h,q}) + \beta_3(Juvenile_h) + \beta_4(Age_h) \\ + \beta_5(CN - direct_{h,q}) + \beta_6(CN - indirect_{h,q}) + \beta_7(Race_h) + X\beta \end{aligned}$$

where

$Violent\ victimizations_{h,q}$ = the number of violent victimizations sustained by offender h in time period q;

$CORE_{h,q}$ = 1 if offender h appeared on the CORE list in time period q, 0 otherwise;

$Days\ at\ risk_{h,q}$ = number of days in time period q that offender h was not incarcerated;

$Juvenile_h$ = 1 if offender h was under 16 years of age on July 1, 2014;

Age_h = age in years for offender h (as of July 1, 2017);

$CN-direct_{h,q}$ = 1 if a custom notification was delivered directly to offender h in time period q;

$CN-indirect_{h,q}$ = 1 if a custom notification was delivered indirectly (through a family member) to offender h in time period q;

$Race_h$ = 1 if offender h is Black;

β_o is the intercept, and $X\beta$ generically represents all other control variables in the model – here, quarterly binary variables to account for seasonality (with January omitted to prevent perfect multi-collinearity), binary variables for individual years, and terms for serial correlation as necessary.

We also estimated the parameters of a second, similar model, substituting $CORE_ever_after_h$ for $CORE_{h,q}$, where $CORE_ever_after_{h,q}$ = 1 if offender h appeared on the CORE list in time period q *and* in every subsequent time period q+n, 0 otherwise. That is, we treated an offender as subject to CORE once he appeared on a CORE list, whether or not he appeared on a later CORE list. The rationale for the substitution is that when CORE offenders are either dropped from a CORE list or not retained when a new list is formed, they are not notified of their removal. Insofar as deterrence turns on offenders' perceptions, the intervention has not been withdrawn until and unless offenders are apprised of that fact or infer it from their experience with enforcement.

The estimated parameters of the models are shown in Table 20, expressed as incidence rate ratios (IRRs); the two figures in brackets are the lower and upper bounds of 95 percent confidence intervals.²⁶ An IRR greater than 1.0 indicates that increases in

²⁵ We limit the analysis to the 10 time periods for which we had data on offenders' time at risk.

²⁶ We excluded domestic victimizations from these analyses on the premise that they would not be affected by CORE. When they are included in the analyses, the results are very similar, but with CORE effects of slightly lower magnitude.

the predictor are associated with increases in victimization, while an IRR less than 1.0 indicates that increases in the predictor are associated with decreases in victimization.²⁷

Table 20. Estimated Effects of CORE on CORE Offenders' Violent Victimization

	I	II
CORE	0.916 [0.542, 1.551]	--
CORE ever after	--	0.468* [0.259, 0.846]
Days at risk	1.011* [1.007, 1.016]	1.011* [1.007, 1.015]
Custom notification – direct	1.525 [0.783, 2.970]	1.864* [1.002, 3.467]
Custom notification – indirect	1.001 [0.331, 3.024]	1.236 [0.399, 3.827]
Age	0.964 [0.907, 1.024]	0.968 [0.911, 1.028]
Race	0.936 [0.491, 1.784]	0.851 [0.447, 1.620]
Juvenile	0.758 [0.446, 1.290]	0.788 [0.457, 1.357]
Constant	0.053* [0.009, 0.322]	0.037* [0.005, 0.246]

* p<.05; ** p<.10

Note: Domestic victimizations excluded

The results of the two versions of the model are largely parallel, but for one major difference: the representation of the CORE intervention. In model I, CORE is limited to the periods of time during which a CORE offender appears on the CORE list. As noted above, a CORE offender might appear once and only once, or two or more times consecutively or non-consecutively. This operationalization of the CORE treatment estimates the effect of the enforcement that stems from placement on the CORE list. Our analysis finds only a very small and statistically insignificant effect.

In model II, however, the CORE “treatment” extends beyond an offender’s initial placement on the list. Our underlying premise is that, though CORE enforcement is not applied (over and above ordinary enforcement activity) to offenders who are not on the

²⁷ An incidence rate is the number of events divided by the person-time at risk. An incidence rate ratio is calculated as the incidence rate in the exposed portion of the population divided by the incidence rate in the unexposed portion of the population. For example, if the IRR for “days_at_risk” is 1.01, one can expect the number of victimizations to increase by a factor of 1.01 for each additional day at risk.

list at that time, offenders might well perceive that they remain at an elevated risk of detection and apprehension, since no steps are taken to inform them that they are no longer the subject of special enforcement attention. In this form, CORE reduces offenders' violent victimizations by an estimated 45 percent, and the estimate is statistically significant at the conventional .05 level.

This finding is open to several interpretations. One is that the effect of CORE enforcement is cumulative, in a sense, and may have residual effects even after it is withdrawn insofar as offenders perceive that they remain subject to CORE enforcement. The proposition that CORE enforcement would have residual effects is a specific instance of a more general proposition that Sherman formulated many years ago, when he described the residual deterrence that could be expected during the "back-off" period following a crackdown.²⁸ The crackdowns in this instance are individually focused, but well-advertised (at least by design).

Another interpretation of this finding is that it is an artifact, with the effect confined to offenders who, e.g., relocated outside of the Syracuse metro area or who passed away. We tested the sensitivity of the finding to the exclusion of these offenders, and we can reject these alternatives. Only two offenders relocated, and two others died. The exclusion of these offenders from the analysis leaves the finding intact; see Table 21.

Table 21 also displays the key model parameters when they are re-estimated based on other subsets of offenders. We estimated the effects of CORE by excluding not only offenders who relocated or died, but also those who were at some point removed from a CORE list due to inactivity or success on supervision. If the effect of CORE were confined to the 15 offenders who were removed from a list due to inactivity or success on supervision, the credit for their improvement may go partly or wholly to CORE. As Table 21 shows, the estimated effect of CORE is not limited to those offenders, however.

Table 21. Sensitivity Analysis of CORE Effects on CORE Offenders' Violent Victimization

	CORE	CORE ever after
Original models	0.916	0.468*
Excluding offenders who relocated (N=104)	0.958	0.507*
Excluding offenders who relocated or died (N=102)	0.902	0.492*
Excluding offenders who relocated, died, or were removed due to inactivity (N=87)	0.893	0.536**

* p<.05; ** p<.10

²⁸ Lawrence W. Sherman, "Police Crackdowns: Initial and Residual Deterrence," in Michael Tonry and Norval Morris (eds.), *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, Volume 12 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Finally, we estimated the effects of CORE on violent victimization allowing for different effects among offenders who were under community supervision than among those who were not. First we estimated the parameters of a “difference-in-difference” model, which shows the extent to which CORE effects on probationers and parolees are different in magnitude (or direction) than those on other offenders; see Models III and IV in Table 22. We also estimated models (V and VI) for only offenders who were under supervision. Model III indicates that the difference in CORE effects for the two groups is

Table 22. Estimates of Contingent Effects of CORE on CORE Offenders’ Violent Victimization

	Difference-in-Difference		Under Supervision Only (N=52)	
	III	IV	V	VI
CORE	1.556 [0.883, 2.742]	--	0.552 [0.223, 1.365]	--
CORE ever after	--	0.603 [0.305, 1.190]	--	0.383* [0.149, 0.985]
Under supervision	1.066 [0.721, 1.577]	1.070 [0.723, 1.584]	--	--
CORE X under supervision	0.336* [0.143, 0.793]		--	--
CORE ever after X under supervision	--	0.613 [0.301, 1.250]	--	--
Days at risk	1.011* [1.007, 1.016]	1.011* [1.007, 1.015]	1.014* [1.007, 1.021]	1.013* [1.006, 1.020]
Custom notification – direct	1.608 [0.831, 3.110]	1.900* [1.017, 3.543]	1.565 [0.552, 4.439]	1.548 [0.594, 4.034]
Custom notification – indirect	0.929 [0.317, 2.724]	1.193 [0.392, 3.636]	0.416 [0.057, 3.037]	0.370 [0.047, 2.901]
Age	0.962 [0.905, 1.024]	0.966 [0.908, 1.028]	0.961 [0.886, 1.043]	0.965 [0.893, 1.042]
Race	0.867 [0.456, 1.647]	0.818 [0.429, 1.562]	--	--
Juvenile	0.768 [0.453, 1.304]	0.798 [0.462, 1.377]	0.443* [0.197, 0.997]	0.444* [0.189, 1.039]
Constant	0.058* [0.009, 0.360]	0.037* [0.005, 0.270]	0.091* [0.010, 0.871]	0.026* [0.002, 0.317]

* p<.05; ** p<.10

Note: Domestic victimizations excluded

statistically significant; however, the short-term effect of CORE on victimization was only borderline statistically significant for those under supervision (Model V). The point estimates of CORE's longer-term effects indicate that victimization was reduced among both subsets of offenders (Model IV), but it reached statistical significance only among those under supervision (Model VI). It appears that in terms of this outcome, CORE had beneficial effects, but primarily on probationers and parolees.

One alternative explanation for the estimated CORE effects, which we cannot rule out, is maturation: that over time, (some) offenders either aged out of crime or at least reduced their offending, and would have even without the CORE treatment. Though we control statistically for the effects of age, we do not and cannot control for the effects of aging, since we have no comparison group. Regression toward the mean – i.e., that as a matter of ordinary fluctuations in offending over time, CORE offenders' criminal behavior ebbed following the peak that led to their identification as CORE offenders – could not be eliminated as an alternative explanation for short-term effects, if there were any, but is less plausible as an alternative to the longer-term impact of CORE.

CORE Associates' Offending

We analyze the offending patterns of CORE offenders' associates, i.e., first-degree social connections, on the premise that the public safety threat that CORE offenders represent stems not only from their direct involvement in violence but also from the violence that they incite among their associates. To the extent that CORE deters CORE offenders from (direct or indirect) involvement in the perpetration of violence, then we would expect to see evidence of the indirect effects in the offending of their associates. We define associates conservatively to include the individual(s) with whom a CORE offender previously committed criminal offenses, i.e., co-offenders; people whose documentable connections to a CORE offender took other forms (such as being stopped by police in the company of the CORE offender), or whose connections are through others (i.e., second- and nth-degree connections), would presumptively be affected less.

Like the model of CORE offenders' victimizations, this model is also a panel model, estimated with data on 13 six-month time periods (beginning in July, 2014) for each of 457 associates of CORE offenders. Some associates were themselves CORE offenders at times, so we control statistically for that status. The model also includes statistical adjustments for temporal patterns, such as seasonality and other trends.²⁹ The mathematical representation is:

²⁹ We do not have data on days at risk for offenders who were not on the CORE list, so we are unable to control for days at risk in this analysis.

$$\begin{aligned} \log(E[Violent\ offenses_{h,q}]) \\ = \beta_0 + \beta_1(CORE\ connections_{h,q}) + \beta_2(CORE_{h,q}) + \beta_3(Juvenile_h) \\ + \beta_4(Age_h) + \beta_5(Race_h) + X\beta \end{aligned}$$

where

Violent offenses_{h,q} = the number of violent victimizations sustained by offender h in time period q;

Count of CORE connections_{h,q} = the number of offenders on the CORE list in period q of whom offender h was an associate;

CORE_{h,q} = 1 if offender h appeared on the CORE list in time period q, 0 otherwise;

Juvenile_h = 1 if offender h was under 16 years of age on July 1, 2014;

Age_h = age in years for offender h (as of July 1, 2017);

Race_h = 1 if offender h is Black;

β_0 is the intercept, and $X\beta$ generically represents all other control variables in the model – here, quarterly binary variables to account for seasonality (with January omitted to prevent perfect multi-collinearity), binary variables for individual years, and terms for serial correlation as necessary.

We also estimated the parameters of a second, similar model, substituting *CORE connections_{h,q}* for *Count of CORE connections_{h,q}*, where *CORE connections_{h,q}* = 1 if offender h was an associate of one or more CORE offenders in time period q, 0 otherwise. We reasoned that CORE effects could be found among those with *any* connection to a CORE offender, and that the number of such connections would not necessarily amplify the effect.

The results of these analyses are shown in Table 23, below. We examined as outcomes gun offenses and the broader category of Part I violent offenses. In neither do we find any evidence that CORE had impacts on the offending of CORE offenders' associates.

Summary

We estimated the impacts of CORE through three analytic strategies: a spatial analysis of small hot spots; an individual-level analysis of CORE offenders' victimizations; and an individual-level analysis of CORE associates' offending. Given the number of CORE offenders and their geographic dispersion across the city, the spatial approach is the weakest approach for the detection of CORE effects. The strategy most likely to detect effects may be the analysis of CORE offenders' victimization, and in those results we find evidence of beneficial impacts, which may be seen to corroborate the only tentative inference that can be drawn from an analysis of CORE offenders' arrests.

We find that the estimated impacts of CORE are more pronounced among, or confined to, offenders who are under correctional supervision in the community. These

offenders are, of course, susceptible to forms of enforcement pressure to which other offenders are immune.

Table 23. Estimated Effects of CORE on CORE Associates' Offending

	Gun offenses		Part I violent offenses	
	I	II	I	II
Count of CORE connections	1.010 [0.831, 1.226]	--	1.080 [0.888, 1.312]	--
CORE connection	--	1.023 [0.757, 1.383]	--	1.189 [0.853, 1.654]
CORE	1.247 [0.690, 2.251]	1.243 [0.688, 2.244]	1.901* [1.052, 3.434]	1.863* [1.028, 3.378]
Age	0.958* [0.925, 0.992]	0.958* [0.925, 0.992]	0.966 [0.933, 1.001]	0.966 [0.933, 1.000]
Race	0.858 [0.601, 1.225]	0.858 [0.601, 1.225]	0.709 [0.496, 1.014]	0.709 [0.496, 1.014]
Juvenile	1.252 [0.849, 1.846]	1.251 [0.849, 1.846]	1.391 [0.928, 2.086]	1.389 [0.926, 2.084]
Constant	0.078* [0.021, 0.297]	0.078* [0.021, 0.298]	0.105* [0.027, 0.404]	0.106* [0.027, 0.408]

Enforcement, Violent Crime, and the Pandemic

2020 was a year like no other for American law enforcement. As noted above, criminal justice reforms enacted by New York State in 2019, including changes in bail-setting and discovery, became effective January 1. However, the year was marked by several other developments of truly historical proportions.

In January, the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services declared that the coronavirus pandemic was a public health emergency, and as cases proliferated, it prompted many states and localities to adopt mitigation measures that upended life as it had been known. In New York State, in mid- to late-March, gubernatorial mandates reduced occupancy to zero in non-essential businesses, closing retail businesses, prohibiting on-premises consumption in bars and restaurants, and first limiting and then banning non-essential gatherings. Widespread job losses quickly ensued. Educational institutions transitioned to remote instruction. Office-based work transitioned to work-from-home.

The immediate effects of the pandemic on police included changes in the demands for police service and changes in police practices.³⁰ Calls for service, overall, declined in most cities, though calls for some types of problems (such as dead bodies) increased. Domestic violence calls and calls relating to mental disorder were up in many cities, but not everywhere.

Police departments adopted procedures to protect officers' health while maintaining service to the public. In many agencies:

- in-service training was suspended;
- roll call briefings were suspended or modified;
- public access to police facilities was limited;
- procedures were adopted to minimize in-person handling of calls (e.g., online or phone reporting of less-serious offenses) or to limit contact in calls for which police were dispatched;
- arrests for low-level offenses were discouraged;
- in-person community engagement activities were suspended; and
- procedures to reduce the physical density of employees were adopted.

The pandemic also affected community supervision of offenders by probation and parole officers.³¹ Face-to-face supervision decreased, with fewer office visits (prioritizing high-risk offenders and new clients), more communication using various technologies (phone calls, video conferencing, texting), and field visits conducted without entering the home. Drug testing was curtailed or suspended. Constraints on court operations and efforts to minimize jail populations restricted the responses to violations.

In New York State counties (outside of New York City), court operations in each county were consolidated in a single court in March. Grand jury proceedings and jury

³⁰ See: Police Executive Research Forum, "How Agencies Are Responding," <https://www.policeforum.org/covid-19-response#agency>; Cynthia Lum, Carl Maupin, and Megan Stoltz, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Law Enforcement Agencies (Wave 2)* (International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, 2020); Matthew P.J. Ashby, "Changes in Police Calls for Service During the Early Months of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic," *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 14 (2020): 1054-1072; Jon Maskaly, Sanja Kutnjak Ivkovic, and Peter Neyroud, "Policing the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploratory Study of the Types of Organizational Changes and Police Activities Across the Globe," *International Criminal Justice Review* 31 (2021): 266-285.

³¹ See: Beth Schwartzapfel, "Probation and Parole Officers Are Rethinking Their Rules As Coronavirus Spreads," The Marshall Project, <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/04/03/probation-and-parole-officers-are-rethinking-their-rules-as-coronavirus-spreads>; Jill Viglione, Lucas M. Alward, Ashley Lockwood, and Sara Bryson, "Adaptations to COVID-19 in Community Corrections Agencies across the United States," *Victims & Offenders* (2020); Craig S. J. Schwalbe and Deborah Koetzle, "What the COVID-19 Pandemic Teaches About the Essential Practices of Community Corrections and Supervision," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 48 (2021): 1300-1316.

trials were suspended, as were time limits on legal actions. By early April, essential and emergency court operations were conducted virtually.³²

On May 25th, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer. Protests erupted in many cities as cell-phone video of the incident widely circulated. Calls for police reform – even to “defund” the police – were nearly ubiquitous, and the climate of public opinion about the police – particularly that of Blacks – turned still more negative than it was in the aftermath of the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson in 2014.³³ In New York State, in June of 2020, the governor issued Executive Order (EO) 203, mandating that every local government with a police agency consult with stakeholders to conduct a “comprehensive review” of police “deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices.”³⁴ Further, localities were to develop a plan for improvements that would “foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and ... address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.”

Violence increased in many cities in 2020. Rosenfeld and his colleagues analyzed crime rates in 34 U.S. cities in 2020, finding that homicide rates increased 30 percent over 2019, with a “structural break” in June – i.e., a statistically significant increase over the rate predicted based on longer-terms trends and seasonal fluctuation.³⁵ Gun assaults rose by 8 percent; aggravated assaults increased by 6 percent, with a structural break in July. Property crime, excepting motor vehicle theft, decreased.

In New York State, across all of the state’s GIVE jurisdictions, shooting incidents involving injury rose 43.8 percent from April to May, and 68.5 percent from May to June, with a 74.5 percent increase in all of 2020 over 2019.³⁶ Shootings rose in most cities, but the increases varied in magnitude, and came later in some places than others. In Albany, where shootings were up 110.4 percent in 2020 over 2019, June shootings (25) were more than 6 times the April count (4). In Buffalo, the June count was triple that of April, and the annual count was 96.1 percent higher than that of 2019.³⁷ In Schenectady, the increase came a bit later in the year, and the annual increase was 85.7 percent. In Newburgh, however, shootings rose hardly at all in the spring and were up only 11.8

³² See <https://www.nycourts.gov/covid-archive.shtml>.

³³ Jeffrey M. Jones, “Black, White Adults’ Confidence Diverges Most on Police” (August 12, 2020), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/317114/black-white-adults-confidence-diverges-police.aspx>. Also see Tyler T. Reny and Benjamin J. Newman, “The Opinion-Mobilizing Effect of Social Protest against Police Violence: Evidence from the 2020 George Floyd Protests,” *American Political Science Review* (2021).

³⁴ State of New York, *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative*, Executive Order No. 203 (Albany, NY: Executive Chamber, 2020).

³⁵ Richard Rosenfeld, Thomas Abt, and Ernesto Lopez, *Pandemic, Social Unrest, and Crime in U.S. Cities: 2020 Year-End Update* (Washington: Council on Criminal Justice, 2021).

³⁶ New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, *Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative: Violent Crime Involving a Firearm and Shooting Activity Report* (Albany, NY: Author, 2021).

³⁷ One analysis of shootings in Buffalo concluded that the pandemic had led to a long-term increase in all non-fatal shootings. Dae-Young Kim and Scott W. Phillips, “When COVID-19 and Guns Meet: A Rise in Shootings,” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 73 (2021): 101783.

percent for year over 2019, and in Binghamton, shootings decreased to 4 from 7 for the year. The trends in Syracuse more nearly mirrored the state as a whole: shootings jumped from 7 in April to 17 in May, 22 in June, and 26 in July, before falling to 7 to 13 in later months; the annual count in 2020 was 72.1 percent higher than that in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the operations of all of the criminal justice agencies in Syracuse and Onondaga County, altering the ways that Syracuse is policed, cases are processed by the courts, inmates are handled, and community supervision is performed. In May, in order to contain the spread of the virus, SPD ceased to respond in-person to non-emergency complaints. Public access to the public safety building was limited, and community policing activities were curtailed at that time, which reduces officers' knowledge of criminal activity and other neighborhood developments. In-service training was reduced. Enforcement declined, in the form of citizen contacts and arrests. Figures 8 and 9 show the monthly counts of stops (without arrests) and arrests, from 2016 through May of 2021. Stops dropped precipitously from February to April and, after a small uptick in May, dropped to under 100 in July. Arrests likewise dropped between February and April, and slowly rebounded through July. By August, both stops and arrests appear to have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

As noted above, in-person proceedings in courts were suspended during the virus shutdown, with neither grand jury proceedings nor jury trials conducted. A large backlog accumulated as a result. Felony trials resumed in September 2020, but on a different schedule, with only one felony trial taking place at a time, and two weeks reserved for each trial. Since three to four felony trials are conducted each week under ordinary circumstances, these constraints on trials promised to exacerbate the backlog.

Figure 8. Stops without Arrests, January, 2016 through May, 2021

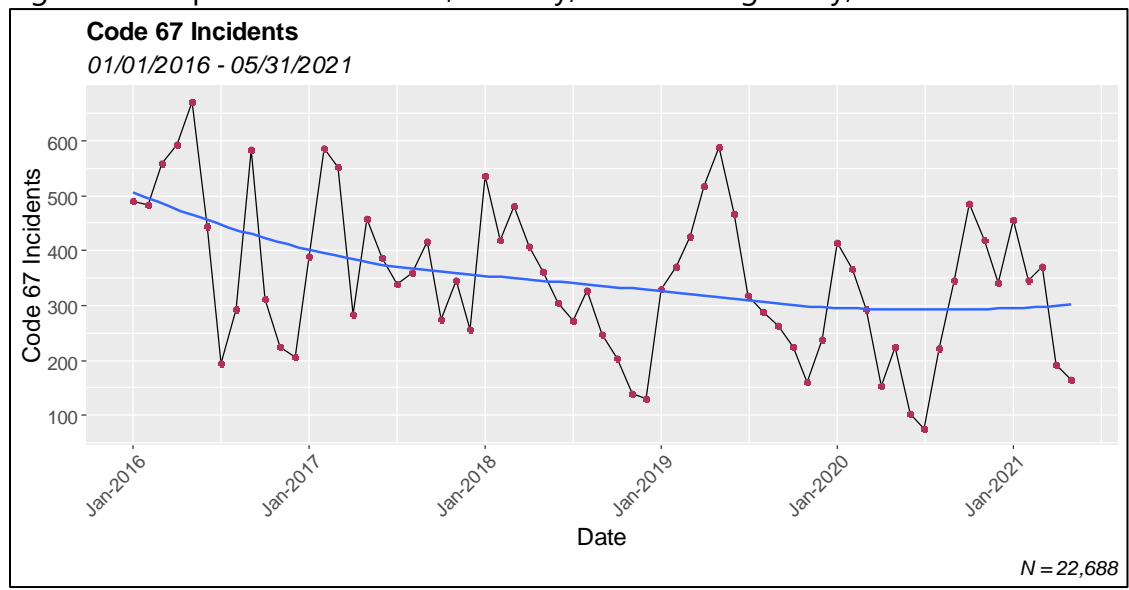
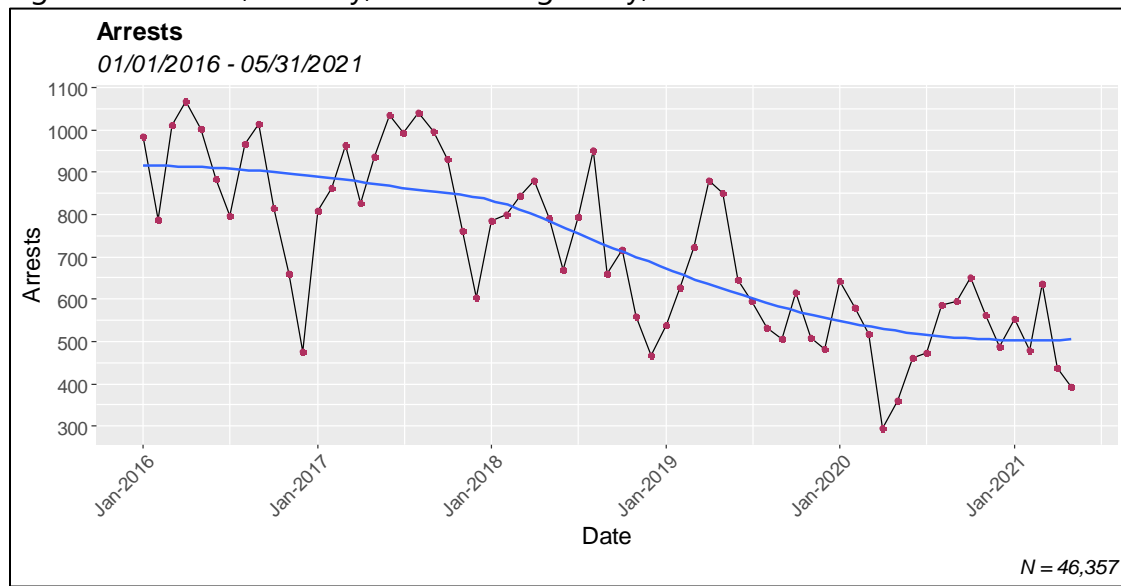


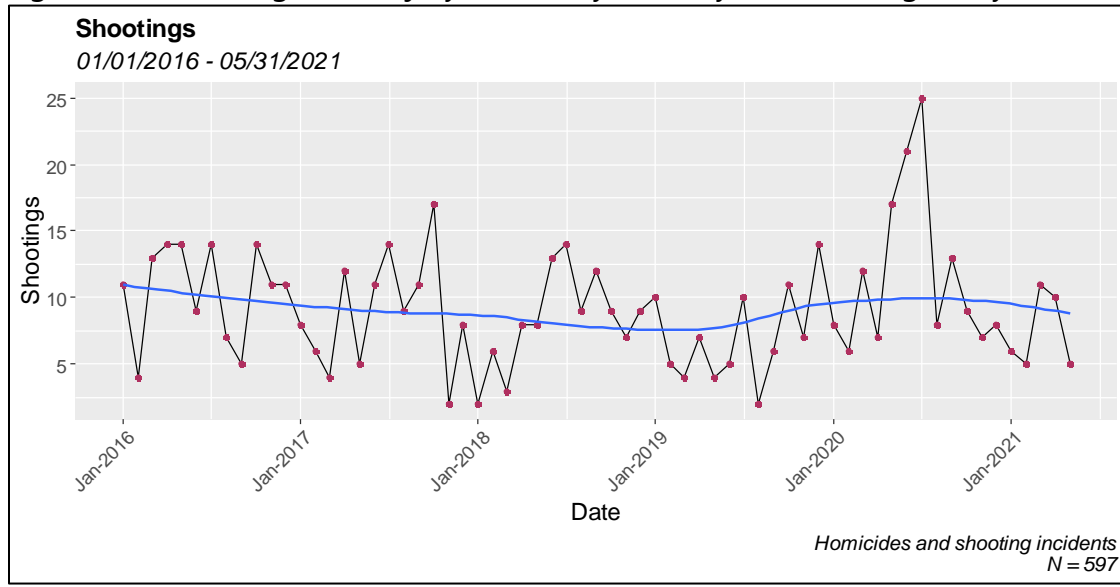
Figure 9. Arrests, January, 2016 through May, 2021



Probation and parole agencies primarily worked remotely due to the pandemic. In-person check-ins, drug testing, and home visits of probationers and parolees were reduced. Technical violations were consequently less likely to be detected. Violations that were detected were not processed as they normally would be, as one means of keeping the jail population down, thus lowering exposure to the virus. There were no parole GPS details during the months of April through August, and parole officers worked no overtime. Parole limited the warrants and arrests, in order to keep the jail population down. Parole officers were not in the field during the protests, resuming working in the field in June 2020. Only two people were on Onondaga County Probation GPS bracelets in August 2020, which is significantly lower than the usual number.

As briefly indicated above, shootings increased to levels previously unseen in Syracuse in 2020. A particularly pronounced spike occurred from May through July. See Figure 10. By August, it appears that shootings had receded to their pre-pandemic levels (unlike the trend in Buffalo).

Figure 10. Shootings with Injury or Fatality, January, 2016 through May, 2021



Gun offenses more generally followed a largely similar trajectory, increasing after February and peaking in June, dropping to more ordinary pre-pandemic levels by August (see Figure 11). Non-gun violence also increased (see Figure 12).

Figure 11. Gun Assaults, January, 2016 through May, 2021

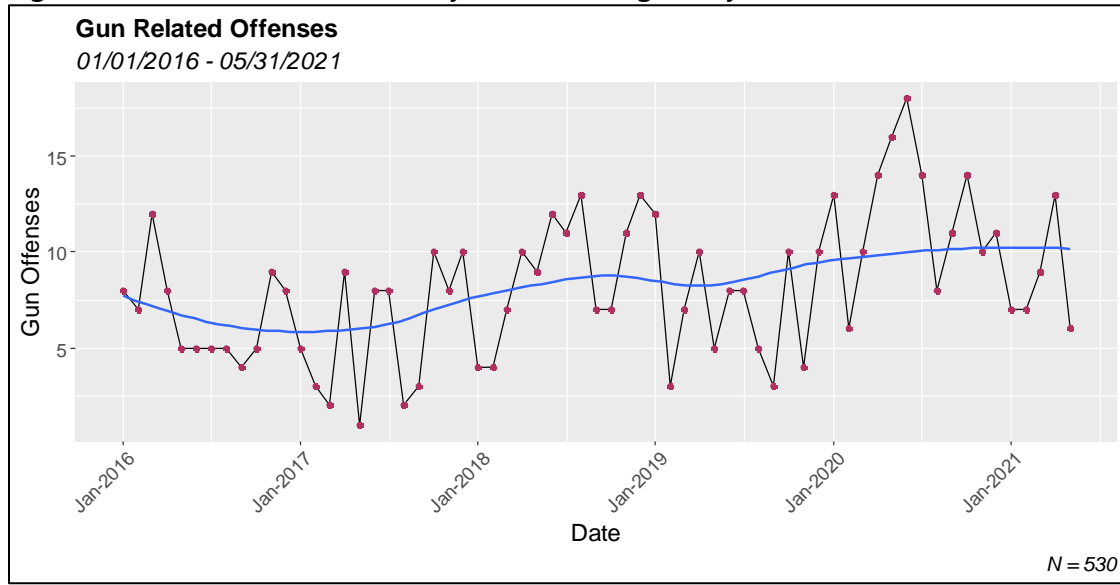
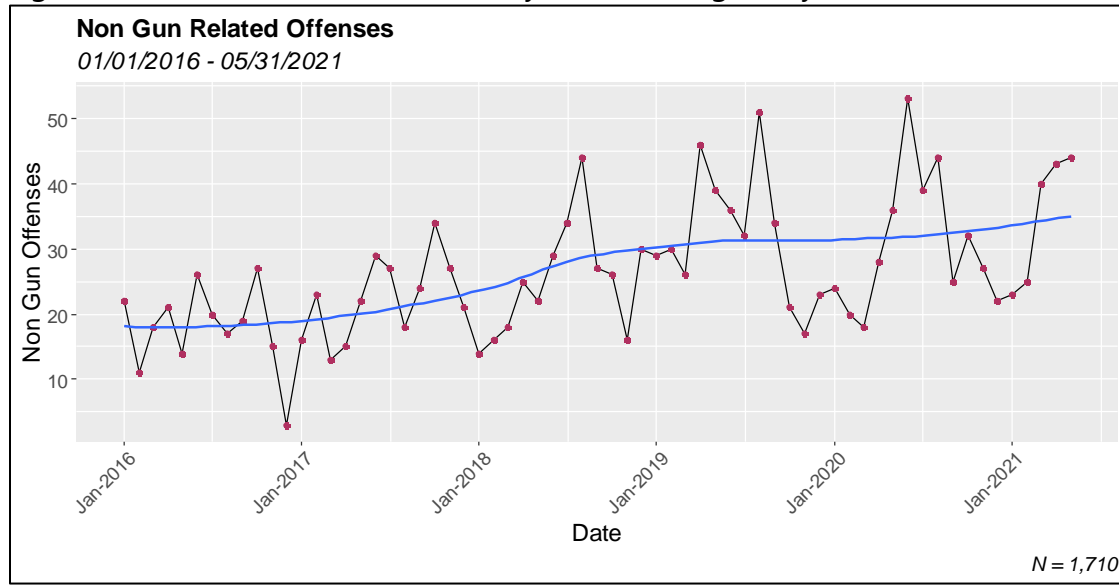


Figure 12. Non-Gun Assaults, January, 2016 through May, 2021



That shootings abruptly increased shortly after enforcement levels dropped is unmistakable; whether the latter contributed to the former is plausible, but these data do not support a firm conclusion. Conventional police wisdom holds that proactive policing is an effective crime control tactic, and the findings of social research have, for the most part, supported this proposition. Studies using different methodologies with different strengths and weaknesses have found that the incidence of some types of crime declines, or is lower than one would otherwise predict, when and where the police frequently make traffic stops or investigatory (“Terry”) stops of vehicles and/or pedestrians.³⁸ The effects on gun crime are particularly notable.³⁹

³⁸ See: John E. Boydston, *San Diego Field Interrogation: Final Report* (Washington: Police Foundation, 1975); James Q. Wilson and Barbara Boland, “The Effect of the Police on Crime,” *Law & Society Review* 12 (1978): 367-390; Gordon P. Whitaker, Charles David Phillips, Peter J. Haas, and Robert E. Worden, “Aggressive Policing and the Deterrence of Crime,” *Law and Policy* 7 (1985): 395-416; Robert J. Sampson and Jacqueline Cohen, “Deterrent Effects of the Police on Crime: A Replication and Theoretical Extension,” *Law & Society Review* 22 (1988): 163-189; Charis E. Kubrin, Steven F. Messner, Glenn Deane, Kelly McGeever, and Thomas D. Stucky, “Proactive Policing and Robbery Rates Across U.S. Cities,” *Criminology* 48 (2010): 57-97; David Weisburd, Alese Wooditch, Sarit Weisburd, and Sue-Ming Yang, “Do Stop, Question, and Frisk Practices Deter Crime? Evidence at Micro-Units of Space and Time,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 15 (2015): 31-56; Elizabeth R. Groff, Jerry H. Ratcliffe, Cory P. Haberman, Evan T. Sorg, Nola M. Joyce, and Ralph B. Taylor, “Does What Police Do at Hot Spots Matter? The Philadelphia Policing Tactics Experiment,” *Criminology* 53 (2015): 23-53.

³⁹ On effects on gun crime, see: Lawrence W. Sherman and Dennis Rogan, “Effect of Gun Seizures on Gun Violence: ‘Hot Spots’ Patrol in Kansas City,” *Justice Quarterly* 12 (1995): 625-648; Richard Rosenfeld, Michael J. Deckard, and Emily Blackburn, “The Effects of Directed Patrol and Self-Initiated Enforcement on Firearm Violence: A Randomized Controlled Study of Hot Spot Policing,” *Criminology* 52 (2014): 428-449;

Withdrawals by police from proactive enforcement, or de-policing, have been hypothesized to contribute to increases in violence. De-policing consists of a reluctance by officers to initiate enforcement for fear of legal or administrative sanctions or negative publicity in conventional or social media. In the aftermath of the unrest associated with the fatal shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, de-policing was linked to crime increases as the “Ferguson effect,” though empirical tests of Ferguson effects have produced mixed findings. Shjarback et al. found post-Ferguson decreases in enforcement among Missouri police departments, but no effects on crime.⁴⁰ Pyrooz et al. analyzed crime in 81 large U.S. cities, finding that evidence of a Ferguson effect was confined to “a small number of cities, particularly cities with historically high homicide rates.”⁴¹

Cassell and Fowles found evidence supporting their hypothesis of a comparable effect in Chicago, traced to litigation against the police there.⁴² In his later analysis of homicide and other gun violence in Chicago and several other large cities in the weeks following the death of George Floyd, Cassell attributed the sharp increases in to abrupt and steep declines in proactive enforcement, amounting to a “Minneapolis effect.”⁴³ The “Minneapolis effect,” we would note, consists not only of de-policing by individual officers but also reductions in enforcement levels due to (1) redeployments of personnel to the sites of protests from the higher-crime areas to which they would normally be assigned, and (2) low staffing levels that ensued from waves of retirements and other resignations.

Other explanations for the increases in gun violence include the accumulating strain of restrictions on mobility and unemployment, which placed “at-risk individuals under additional physical, mental, emotional, and financial stress” and “strained the institutions charged with responding to violent offenses ... that productively engage at-risk individuals.”⁴⁴ Following Floyd’s death, the loss of police legitimacy could have

Edmund F. McGarrell, Steven Chermak, Alexander Weiss, and Jeremy Wilson, “Reducing Firearms Violence Through Directed Police Patrol,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 1 (2001): 119-148.

⁴⁰ John A. Shjarback, David C. Pyrooz, Scott E. Wolfe, and Scott H. Decker, “De-policing and crime in the wake of Ferguson: Racialized changes in the quantity and quality of policing among Missouri police departments,” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 50 (2017): 42–52.

⁴¹ David C. Pyrooz, Scott H. Decker, Scott E. Wolfe, and John A. Shjarback, “Was there a Ferguson Effect on crime rates in large U.S. cities?” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 46 (2016): 1–8, p. 4

⁴² Paul G. Cassell and Richard Fowles, “What Caused the 2016 Chicago Homicide Spike? An Empirical Examination of the ‘ACLU Effect’ and the Role of Stop and Frisks in Preventing Gun Violence,” 2018 *University of Illinois Law Review* (2018): 1581-1686. Also see Lan Shi, “The Limit of Oversight in Policing: Evidence from the 2001 Cincinnati Riot,” *Journal of Public Economics* 93 (2009): 99-113.

⁴³ Paul G. Cassell, “Explaining the Recent Homicide Spikes in US Cities: The ‘Minneapolis Effect’ and the Decline in Proactive Policing,” *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 33 (2020): 83-127.

⁴⁴ Rosenfeld, Abt, and Lopez, *Pandemic, Social Unrest, and Crime in U.S. Cities*, p. 20. Also see Kim and Phillips, “When COVID-19 and Guns Meet.”

amplified violence, as “disadvantaged communities drew away from police due to breached trust and lost confidence. Reduced reliance on the police impedes crime investigations and increases ‘street justice’ to resolve disputes, resulting in more violence.”⁴⁵ Still other explanations are plausible, and they are not mutually exclusive: (1) the proliferation of firearms due to increased sales at beginning of pandemic; and (2) the release of jail inmates and, in some jurisdictions – including New York State – bail reforms. Rosenfeld and his colleagues also note that homicides were rising in January and February, prior to the pandemic.

We see no evidence of de-policing arising from either officers’ concern about adverse consequences of self-initiated enforcement activity or demoralization, since stops rebounded after July. We do, however, see a pattern that resembles a Minneapolis effect on proactive enforcement, with declines in stops in June and July even below pandemic levels. A modest drop in shootings in April was followed by a large spike from May through July. The timing is consistent with an increase in gun carrying undeterred by the threat of detection. Other explanations cannot be eliminated, but the increase in shootings is unlikely to have stemmed from a single cause anyway.

Conclusions and Future Prospects

As a focused deterrence strategy, CORE turns on communication with identified high-risk offenders about the extraordinary enforcement attention that their involvement in gun violence has earned, and on the implementation of an enforcement regime that is commensurate with the notice that offenders are given. As a multi-agency strategy, CORE requires a high level of inter-agency cooperation and coordination across a number of functions. Intelligence must be collected, analyzed, and disseminated. Enforcement must be applied to an offender population that is dispersed to some degree across the metropolitan area, spanning jurisdictional boundaries. Some but not all of the offenders are subject to supervision by probation or parole authorities. Though the offenders are sufficiently active as to be vulnerable to a range of legal threats, their vulnerabilities vary. PerpStat meetings were designed with a view toward realizing such multi-agency activity.

The collection and analysis of intelligence can be counted as a success. CORE offenders are at demonstrably high risk. Their placement on CORE lists is based on a sound set of predictors and procedures. We found wide agreement among the partners that those on the CORE lists are suitable subjects for strategic enforcement.

PerpStat meetings are, by design, both a venue for inter-agency communication and a mechanism for holding partners accountable for fulfilling their operational commitments. Intelligence is shared, and the actions taken against offenders are

⁴⁵ Ibid.

reviewed. PerpStat can also serve as a forum in which the partnership (re)develops operational plans. The partners have generally regarded as a strength the collaboration and communication that PerpStat facilitates. Early on, many partners saw a lot of virtue in the accountability achieved through PerpStat, and with the shift from bi-weekly to monthly meetings, many believed that a measure of accountability was sacrificed. Furthermore, both collaboration and accountability are compromised when partner agency representatives are not mainly stable over time; new people at the PerpStat table lack background on the strategy and may not feel the same sense of commitment as someone who has been and expects to continue interacting with the other partners on CORE functioning. On the whole, PerpStat has served its purposes and meetings continue to be held.

Communication with this population of offenders cannot rely on call-ins, since no more than half of the offenders are under correctional supervision. Custom notifications are therefore the communication mechanism of choice, but in practice, they are a potentially weak link in the focused deterrence chain, because in a large fraction of cases the notification is indirect, delivered through a third party.⁴⁶ The actual content of the message may be softened or garbled in transmission, or it may not be relayed at all. The third party is often a family member, but family members are not always among those who can exercise influence on the offender, or if they are, they may have negative attitudes toward law enforcement.

According to the National Network for Safe Communities, third parties who might serve as “influentials” in delivering a custom notification could be recruited from among:

- coaches, barbers, school resource officers;
- street outreach workers;
- members of anti-violence or ex-offender organizations;
- community leaders with ties to the streets, including pastors and members of faith-based organizations.

They recommend tapping community knowledge to identify those who are in a position to influence an individual offender, and working through faith-based or other grassroots organizations to recruit individuals who would have credibility with offenders.⁴⁷

Our process evaluation testifies to the challenge of sustaining a high level of strategically focused enforcement during times of strained resources. SPD staffing at the outset of CORE 2.0 in July of 2017 was lower than it had been several years earlier: down 7 percent from 2014, and 15 percent from 2011. Personnel resources declined further over the next two years, resulting in the disbandment of the specialized proactive unit

⁴⁶ Though we have no evidence that custom notifications are more effective when delivered directly.

⁴⁷ David M. Kennedy and Michael A. Friedrich, *Custom Notifications: Individualized Communication in the Group Violence Intervention* (Washington: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), pp. 14-16.

that had assumed a large share of the CORE burden for street enforcement. SPD improvised to sustain as high a level of street enforcement as resources allowed, though the character of the enforcement – more vehicle stops, fewer pedestrian stops, and fewer stops ending in arrest – changed.

Other challenges arose. Though a number of CORE subjects appeared to be precocious offenders, the statutory increases in the age of criminal responsibility rendered those defined as juveniles unsuitable for CORE, despite the risk of gun violence that they posed. A separate CORE list of juveniles was formed, with plans to immerse them in services in the hope that their behavioral trajectory could be altered. Whatever the merits of bail reform in advancing justice for accused persons of modest or no means, it promised to compromise the deterrent and incapacitative effects of enforcement. Much of the enforcement leverage on CORE offenders stems from the lower-level offenses that are more numerous, but which are not bail-eligible. The effects of bail reform might not have been readily perceived in the context of the pandemic that enveloped the state less than three months after bail reform was put into full effect. COVID-19 inhibited enforcement and roughly coincided with a sharp increase in gun violence, as in other cities. Enforcement recovered as COVID-19 case rates declined and then surged in the latter half of 2020. It remains to be seen whether enforcement action can be an effective deterrent for this offender population in a system that prescribes appearance tickets for most misdemeanor offenses.

Our analysis of stops and arrests shows that enforcement against CORE offenders reached elevated levels in the first year of the strategy, relative to the previous year's levels against the 36 offenders who constituted the initial CORE list. Levels of enforcement during the periods of subsequent lists never reached the level achieved during the list two period, however. Moreover, even in the first year, levels of enforcement against CORE offenders were not appreciably higher than those against next-level offenders, when time at risk was controlled. This raises a question about the extent to which the increased enforcement was a product of strategic enforcement, and how much was due to changes in the frequency (or visibility) of offenders' criminal behavior.

Be all that as it may, our analysis of CORE offenders' victimization yielded evidence of deterrence, which was not confined to (or for the most part, detectable) during the time periods when offenders were the active subjects of CORE enforcement, but rather extended into subsequent periods. These results are consistent with patterns of documented offending; though arrests are better treated as an output than an outcome, given the ambiguity surrounding the interpretation of changes over time, the estimated effect on victimization parallels the lower mean arrests post-CORE, especially for "new" CORE members. These effects, however, appear to hold mainly (or only) among CORE offenders who are under probation or parole supervision.

Strategic Alterations for Consideration

One of the changes to CORE that the partnership wrought in 2017 was a reduction in the number of offenders on whom enforcement was focused. A CORE list of 30-35 was about half the size of previous CORE lists. It may be that the currently available enforcement resources are not sufficient to follow through on enforcement threats credibly even for the smaller list – that stretched across 30-35 offenders, enforcement is too thin. Until and unless the CRT can be resurrected or a comparably proactive unit created, with a dedicated focus on CORE, a strategic refinement may be advisable.

If so, then one option might be to add a geographic focus, and concentrate on a smaller number of offenders (say, 15) at a time. Indeed, when CORE 2.0 was first planned, its scope was limited to Southside offenders. A CORE list of about half its current proportions may be more nearly commensurate with the enforcement resources at the disposal of the partnership, and a narrower geographic focus might produce detectable changes in aggregate rates of violence – changes the likes of which our analysis of treatment and control areas did not find.

Still another option would be to focus all of the CORE resources on high-risk offenders on probation or parole, supplementing and amplifying the enforcement pressure that correctional supervision can apply. The analysis of CORE offenders' victimization indicates that CORE may have been most effective in altering the behavior of offenders who were under supervision. If being strategic involves allocating enforcement resources so as to maximize the crime reduction return, then a CORE list comprised of only offenders on whom the added leverage of supervision can be applied may be strategically well-advised.

Sustainability

The partners are committed to maintaining CORE, which has been to some extent institutionalized. CORE operations have not rested exclusively on external grant support; partner agencies have to a significant extent incorporated their roles in CORE into their day-to-day practice. Insofar as CORE operations require resources beyond those in agencies' base budgets, added support for CORE can be anticipated to continue from New York State through the GIVE initiative, which has partially funded CORE implementation since July of 2017.

We note, in general, several external threats for the maintenance of the CORE 2.0 strategy: executive turnover; conflict among partner agencies; reduced personnel; and legal reforms. In order to implement the strategy effectively, those barriers have to be identified and worked through. Instability in the representation of partner agencies has to some extent detracted from the functioning of the working group. As representatives

at the PerpStat meetings change, the need increases to discuss the strategy and goals of the partnership, as well as the roles of each of the partners. All partners must have a sense of joint ownership of the strategy in order to keep the strategy on track. In order to increase sustainability, issues that threaten long-term success must be addressed. To some extent, the strategy and individual agencies' roles have been institutionalized, but institutionalization is an on-going process in any multi-agency collaborations.