

6-1992

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

Research in Brief

Charles B. DeWitt, Director

June 1992

Controlling Street-level Drug Trafficking: Evidence From Oakland and Birmingham

By Craig D. Uchida, Brian Forst, and Sampson O. Annan

Two large U.S. cities—Oakland, California, and Birmingham, Alabama—served as testing grounds for the effectiveness of several different policing models for controlling the problem of street-level drug trafficking. The National Institute of Justice subsequently tested and assessed the models to determine their effectiveness.

The study examined the models' impact on the reduction of reported crimes as well as citizens' perceptions of their own safety and the extent of crime in their neighborhoods.

Police departments in the two cities used special task forces and also "community policing" techniques to identify and arrest drug traffickers. Generally, both methods left citizens believing that police were more effective than prior to the experiments. Furthermore, crime rates in the experimen-

tal neighborhoods decreased, particularly for violent crimes.

This *Research in Brief* highlights the study's findings with an in-depth look at how two large police departments are dealing with drug trafficking and drug-related crime.

Background

In 1987, Oakland and Birmingham received funds from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) for support in controlling drug trafficking. Soon afterward, NIJ awarded funds to the Police Foundation to evaluate the programs in both cities.

Oakland's Drug Problem. As in other cities, drug trafficking has been a serious problem in Oakland for more than a decade. Drug-related homicides have created

an aura of fear in some neighborhoods. About 27 percent of the homicides committed in Oakland in 1984 were believed to have been drug related. In 1987, nearly 50 percent of the 114 homicides were drug related.

Crack cocaine emerged during this time, with sellers and buyers openly dealing crack in residential neighborhoods across the city. Controlling street-level drug trafficking became much harder for the Oakland Police Department. The widespread drug trade compounded existing enforcement problems for the understaffed department. Compared to cities of similar size, Oakland ranked among the top five in reported homicides, robberies, and burglaries per police officer.

To combat the street-level drug traffickers, the Oakland Police Department put to-

From the Director

Throughout the United States, a major priority of police departments is the control of street drug trafficking. Drug markets are always accompanied by an atmosphere of crime—including robbery, murder, and random violence—that creates an atmosphere of fear within the community. Law enforcement officials know that flagrant drug markets on our cities' streets openly challenge their authority and diminish the public's sense of security and confidence in police.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is engaged in comprehensive research to learn which enforcement strategies and tactics have an impact on street drug traf-

ficking and on the fear residents feel when neighborhood streets are taken over by drug dealers. In the mid-1980's, NIJ sponsored some of the first research on "community policing," which can be generally defined as a method of policing that increases the police officer's involvement in, and cooperation with, the neighborhood and its citizens.

This *Research In Brief* describes the way two large police departments have dealt with the problems of drug trafficking and drug-related crime. Police in Oakland, California, and Birmingham, Alabama, employed special task forces for identifying and arresting drug traffickers. They also incorporated, to a limited extent, some of

the techniques of community policing. The findings highlight the potential of police-citizen contacts both in stemming crime and encouraging positive attitudes toward police.

The findings of this study add to our understanding of drug traffic control as well as community policing. They show that special enforcement strategies can be used in combination with community policing techniques to reduce some types of reported crime, reduce citizen fear of crime, and enhance the public's perception of police services.

Charles B. DeWitt
Director
National Institute of Justice

gether "Special Duty Unit 3" (SDU-3), a corps of hand-picked, specially trained patrol officers who engaged in undercover buy-and-bust operations, aggressive patrol, and motor vehicle stops. As part of the BJA-funded program, the department also agreed to try a community policing approach, enlisting residents to join the police in controlling the retail trade of illegal drugs on the street.

Birmingham's Drug Problem. Illicit street-level drug trafficking emerged as a serious problem in Birmingham around 1985. Birmingham drug traffickers sold powder cocaine and Dilaudid, a heroin substitute. Street-level trafficking was prevalent in public housing areas, but not throughout residential neighborhoods as in Oakland. Also, drug enforcement in Birmingham was the responsibility of vice/narcotics detectives, with as few as a dozen narcotics officers responsible for controlling the entire city's drug problem.

In 1988, the Birmingham Police Department (BPD) embarked on a multiphased program known as Operation 'Caine Break, aimed at street-level drug traffickers. The narcotics division targeted buyers and sellers through buy-busts and sting operations. One precinct captain in the study devoted a group of patrol officers to a community-oriented approach.

Drug Control Through Community Policing

To deal with the street-level drug problem, both police departments expressed a desire to use components of community policing. Community policing, in this instance, was limited to a few specific techniques, rather than a philosophical change by the police agencies. Certain elements of community-oriented policing were not adopted by the police in either city.¹

¹ Members of the police agencies did not fully embrace the fundamental aspects of community policing, but expressed a desire to explore its possibilities. Their efforts are more fully described in Craig D. Uchida, Brian Forst, and Sampson Annan, *Modern Policing and the Control of Illegal Drugs: Testing New Strategies in Two American Cities*, NIJ, 1992.

In Oakland and Birmingham, the community-oriented approach to drug enforcement involved the use of directed police-to-citizen contacts. Both departments chose this strategy because of its success in the Newark and Houston police departments' fear reduction efforts,² sponsored by the National Institute of Justice.

The police wanted to establish contact with residents through door-to-door interviews to inform them that the department would intensify patrols in drug-trafficking areas. In addition, the police hoped to alert citizens to the signs of drug trafficking, and instruct them not to attempt to intervene personally when they observed drug dealing.

Evaluation Efforts

At both sites, the evaluation used a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. The Oakland program included SDU-3 and door-to-door interviews, structured so that each aspect could be evaluated within a 6-month field experiment in 4 of the city's 35 beats.³ In Birmingham, three beats were selected to evaluate Operation 'Caine Break and the door-to-door contacts by police.

The Oakland Design. In Oakland, four treatment and control sites were chosen at random. Beginning on May 1, 1988, and ending October 31, 1988, Beats 7, 25, and 34 received treatments while Beat 11 served as the control site. In Beat 34, both the door-to-door approach and the special duty unit activities were applied. In Beat 25, officers applied the special duty unit activities and conventional strategies. In Beat 7, the door-to-door campaign combined with conventional strategies. In Beat 11, existing police operations were maintained at their preexperimental levels and strategies. After 6 months, the different strategies rotated among the beats, making Beat 25 the control area.

² See Antony Pate et al., *Reducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark*, Washington D.C., The Police Foundation, 1986.

³ At both sites, beats were matched and selected based on census data, crime data, drug arrests, and police officer input. For more details on target selection, see Uchida et al., cited in note 1 above.

The Birmingham Design. To evaluate the Birmingham Police programs, two police beats were selected to receive treatment and one to serve as the control area. Two were in the South Precinct (Beats 61 and 62) and the third in the East Precinct (Beat 84). A survey of residents gathered baseline perceptions of the neighborhoods' crime problems prior to implementation of the program. Beats 61 (Goldwire) and 84 (Gate City) received treatment, with Beat 62 (Kingston) serving as the control. Operation 'Caine Break was measured in Goldwire. In Gate City, the door-to-door approach was measured. In Kingston, current police operations were maintained at their preevaluation levels and strategies. After this period, a second survey was conducted to find the effects of the program.

Data. The researchers used observational and official data to ensure that officers implemented the programs and followed experimental conditions.⁴ To evaluate the programs and determine their impact, the research team relied on both survey data and reported crime data. At both sites, a survey panel of residents in each beat was selected and interviewed at two different times.⁵ Research staff collected reported crime data for each beat and for each city as a whole to find whether the experimental treatments changed patterns of crime.

Besides these data sources, the research team collected and analyzed newspaper articles from the *Oakland Tribune* and from the *Birmingham Post-Herald*.

⁴ In Oakland, a trained observer using a structured observation form rode with the narcotics officers on a weekly basis for a year. In Birmingham, a trained observer rode with detectives for 6 months on a bimonthly schedule. At both sites, arrest data (including all narcotics arrests), crimes reported to police, and drug hotline calls (in Oakland only), were collected for the analysis.

⁵ A systematic random sample of residents in each beat in both cities provided information about residents' perceptions of drug trafficking, quality of life, property and personal crime, police services, and safety. Two waves of interviews were conducted by survey researchers. In Oakland, the overall response rate for Wave 1 was 57.6 percent and for Wave 2 was 75 percent. In Birmingham, the overall response rate for Wave 1 was 84 percent and for Wave 2 was 77 percent. See Uchida et al., note 1 above, for details.

Police Techniques in Oakland and Birmingham

Oakland's Special Duty Unit. Special Duty Unit 3 (SDU-3) consisted of six patrol officers and one sergeant. These officers performed many activities in uniform and undercover. To follow the Unit's activities and ensure adherence to the experiment, a trained observer rode with the officers on a weekly basis for one year, taking detailed notes of police-citizen encounters.

The majority of the time, officers made traffic stops of motor vehicles and bicycle riders; questioned groups or individuals who appeared to be engaging in drug activity; talked with residents about problems; and engaged in stops and frisks where they suspected violations were present.

During these high visibility patrols, two-officer teams patrolled target beats and used their discretion in making stops or conducting surveillance. Arrests were not stressed, but nonetheless could occur. The officers spent the remainder of their time in buy-busts and raids on crack houses.

Buy Busts. Buy-busts have been used in Oakland to control drug trafficking since 1986. The typical buy-bust operation followed this sequence of events:

At the evening shift roll call, the sergeant designated the areas for enforcement within the target beats and assigned individual tasks. Anonymous tips, patrol officer observations, and SDU-3 surveillance helped determine target beats.

Two officers, dressed in undercover clothing, made up the "buy" team. With marked bills, these officers made undercover buys of crack cocaine from dealers in residential areas. The rest of the officers were members of the arrest team. They wore bullet-resistant vests and windbreakers bearing police identification, and drove "semi-marked" police vehicles.⁶ The arrest team usually situated itself just four or five blocks away from the sellers, maintaining constant radio contact with the buy team.

While the vehicles were not clearly marked patrol cars, they were recognizable by most suspects and citizens because of their color and style—usually a gray or maroon Dodge Diplomat with special antennas.

The buy team located dealers, informed the backup team of their location, and then made a deal with the drug seller. Because drug trafficking was so rampant in the early days of the experiment, it was easy to find willing sellers. When the buy team was successful, it immediately notified the backup team via hand-held radios. The arresting officers then moved in as quickly as possible. Their speed usually took the seller by complete surprise. Officers also arrested any buyers in the vicinity. The entire operation lasted 5 to 10 minutes and was visible to the citizens in the area. Once SDU-3 collected all the evidence, the officers moved on to a new target. A typical evening in May 1988, the first month of operation, netted about 12 arrests.

During the summer months in 1988, SDU-3 arrests increased dramatically. The traffickers began to change their location by moving a few blocks away, or they hid the drugs in nearby hideouts (such as under the steps of a porch, in a brown paper bag, or in a cup) rather than on themselves. More importantly, the dealers began to recognize the officers by sight and by name, causing safety problems for undercover officers. By mid-August the undercover officers complained that Beat 25 had "dried up." Efforts then shifted to Beat 34 where traffickers were more abundant.

In response to the change in tactics by the dealers and their increased familiarity with SDU-3, different officers rotated into the unit as "buy" officers and used several vehicles in the operations. Other changes in tactics included the increased use of paid informants. Officers questioned suspects to obtain information about new drug locations and traffickers.

During this period, the unit arrested several major drug traffickers. By the end of the summer, the observer reported visible signs of improvement in Beats 25 and 34.

Community Policing. In Oakland, six police service technicians (PST's) were assigned to conduct interviews and distribute pamphlets about drug trafficking in two beats (7 and 34).⁷ In Birmingham, six police officers volunteered to conduct interviews and distribute pamphlets about crime prevention to the residents of Gate City, a public housing development. Questionnaires asked citizens about problems in their neighborhood (particularly drug

trafficking), about the whereabouts of drug trafficking, the relative condition of their neighborhood, and what they felt should be done about the problems. In addition, Oakland Police distributed a pamphlet describing the signs of drug trafficking and promoting their drug hotline.

In Oakland, initial contacts began on May 1, 1988, and continued until October 31, 1988. During the 6-month period, officers completed 1,829 interviews out of 3,177 occupied households (57.6 percent).⁸ These figures are comparable to those in the Newark study, where interviews were completed in 52 percent of the occupied units.⁹

In both Oakland beats, "drugs" were mentioned as an important problem more than 50 percent of the time. Residents also mentioned concern about other problems associated with the drug trade: traffic, speeding cars, noise, shootings and violence, burglaries and thefts.

Complaints of drug trafficking at specific locations by residents were noted and passed on to the SDU-3 sergeant. The unit often used the buy-bust tactic at these locations. However, completion of interviews did not mean that the "community-oriented" approach was fully implemented. The police rarely had the resources to follow up on the problems identified in the surveys. The sergeant in SDU-3 did use the questionnaires when selecting enforcement areas for the officers, but systematic problem-solving and followup with the residents did not occur. Because of the problems associated with the Oakland Police Department's implementation of the door-to-door component, one would not expect this approach to be highly effective in controlling drug trafficking.

⁷ Use of nonsworn officers rather than beat officers to make door-to-door contacts runs counter to standard community policing techniques in other cities.

⁸ Using 1980 Census figures. Adjusting for police observations of vacant households, 65 percent of occupied households were contacted.

⁹ Antony Pate and Wes Skogan, *Fear Reduction in Newark*, Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1985: 27.

Birmingham

Operation 'Caine Break. In March of 1988, narcotics detectives began "Operation 'Caine Break" in selected areas in the city. The operation was divided into two phases: (1) the "straight-buy" approach targeted at sellers and (2) a sting operation aimed at buyers. The narcotics detectives carried out these strategies in areas where street-level drug trafficking was highly concentrated. They agreed to stay out of the control area, Beat 62, Kingston, and the door-to-door only area, Beat 84, Gate City, for a 9-month period.

During Phase I, undercover officers used unmarked vehicles equipped with video and audio recording devices, and bought drugs from dealers. Each transaction was recorded surreptitiously, with arrests occurring only after several completed transactions with each seller.

The standard buy-bust operation here consisted of this sequence of events. Two undercover officers constituted the "buy" team. They used marked bills to make buys—typically Dilaudid or powder cocaine. The officers drove a van with video equipment hidden on the dashboard and in the back of the vehicle. They bought drugs from dealers on street corners or in front of homes. The rest of the officers were members of the backup team that monitored the buy team through radio contact. These officers situated themselves four or five blocks away, well within striking distance if any problems arose.

The officers conducted this operation from March 22 to July 29, 1988. The operation culminated November 15–17, 1988, when arrest warrants for the sellers were served en masse.¹⁰

Phase II: Sting Operations. The second phase of the project involved use of a new piece of legislation enacted in Alabama in 1988. Prior to 1988, soliciting for the purpose of purchasing drugs was a misdemeanor. The Alabama Legislature, with the assistance of the Jefferson County District Attorney's office and the Birmingham Police Department, elevated the status

of the crime to a felony. Drug soliciting is now subject to the same penalty as if the act of exchanging drugs actually took place.

Narcotics detectives set up a sting operation, called "Operation 'Caine Break, Phase II." During the operation, undercover officers posed as street-corner drug dealers, waiting for customers to drive up to them and ask to buy drugs. A video and audio taping machine set up in a "boom box"—a large, portable stereo cassette player—documented the transaction. One undercover officer held the machine on his shoulder, acting as if he were listening to music through stereo headsets. Inside the machine, a video camera recorded what went on. The headsets were connected to a radio transmitter that allowed the officer to listen to instructions from the surveillance team parked two blocks away in an undercover van. The other officer, wired with a microphone, spoke to the potential offenders.

A surveillance van was always within sight of the undercover officers, and two marked police cars were nearby. A total of 12 narcotics and patrol officers participated in the operation. In addition, a deputy district attorney often rode in the surveillance van.

Narcotics detectives were extremely concerned about the safety of the undercover officers and the legality of the sting operation. Extensive training took place before implementation of the program. Patrol officers and narcotics detectives were taught procedures to ensure their safety, and were required to wear body armor. A deputy district attorney presented the legal aspects of the operation. Officers participated in role playing and a series of trial runs to learn the proper procedures.

Ordinarily, a customer would drive up to the undercover officers who stood on a street corner where drug trafficking was active. The officers would ask the person what he wanted. When he named a particular drug, the undercover officers would ask to see his money. Once he *showed* money, it satisfied the Alabama State law governing drug solicitation: the deal was consummated. Drugs and money were not usually exchanged. The undercover officer would divert the buyer, suggesting that police were in the area. This forced the buyer to drive off.

When the driver left the scene of the drug solicitation, uniformed officers in a marked vehicle stopped the car. At times, suspects got traffic tickets for violations such as driving with a suspended license, but no arrests were made regarding drug activity. The suspects were told that the police were making routine stops because the area was known for drug activity and that the area was dangerous. A videocamera strategically located in the patrol car recorded this sequence of events. When the patrol officers asked suspects to get out of the car, they placed them in front of the patrol car facing the camera. This ensured clear pictures of the individual suspects.

Eighty-three arrest warrants were served in December, charging 80 people with soliciting for the purpose of obtaining narcotics. BPD officers were also able to seize 32 vehicles because the deals were conducted while the buyers were in their cars. The police then began civil forfeiture procedures to gain ownership of the vehicles.

In both phases, the BPD conducted large-scale "bust-outs." This served to maximize exposure by the media and to inform the public and offenders of the police program. The police hoped to send a powerful message to the community that drug traffickers were being dealt with, and that both dealers and buyers were being held accountable for their actions.

During each arrest phase, members of the department held a press conference. Newspaper reporters and television crews accompanied the officers to the homes of suspects and recorded the arrests. The *Birmingham Post-Herald* and the *Birmingham News* gave extensive coverage to the bust-outs.

These bust-outs served other purposes as well. By delaying arrests, the police protected identities of the undercover officers from the dealers and buyers. This strategy enabled the police to build strong cases against both parties. Videotaping several straight buys with each seller minimized identification and evidentiary problems. So too for the reverse buys. During Phase II officers were particularly concerned about testing the new State law and problems of entrapment. To alleviate these concerns, a deputy district attorney rode with the surveillance team and viewed all videotapes before filing charges.

¹⁰The time lag from buys to busts was due to the paperwork and identification of the sellers by patrol and narcotics officers.

Community Policing. In Birmingham, police selected a public housing development for the directed police-citizen contacts, or door-to-door interviews. During the five-month period officers completed 344 interviews out of 598 dwelling units (57.5 percent).¹¹

In discussing neighborhood problems, a plurality of residents mentioned drugs (44 percent). In addition, residents frequently mentioned other crimes associated with drugs—such as shootings and violence, burglaries, or robberies.

The door-to-door interviews were completed as quickly and as thoroughly as possible, but the followup plan to conduct problem-solving was curtailed and eventually abandoned, due to changes in the police organization.

Unanticipated Change: The Police Substation. During a 14-day period in August 1988, 11 people were shot at in Kingston, the study's control beat. One person was killed and 10 were wounded in 8 separate incidents, most of them drug related. In the aftermath, the residents, the public housing authority, and the police made changes that affected the evaluation.

After the violence began, the Birmingham Housing Authority made immediate wholesale changes—repairing street lights, beginning a cleanup campaign, and transferring additional security officers to the housing development, Morton Simpson Village. In addition, the police increased their patrols of the neighborhoods. Citizens also held anti-drug rallies in August and October to demonstrate their solidarity with the police and the public housing authority.

With the assistance of the Housing Authority, the police opened a substation in Morton Simpson Village—an apartment within the development, fortified by heavy wire mesh and iron bars on the front door. Four patrol units (eight officers) staffed the station 24 hours a day. This provided constant police presence and visibility.

The substation opened at the same time the enforcement and community-oriented programs were implemented. Thus, the second wave of interviews could still be used to measure the effect of the substation. New questions were added, incorporating the changes. Since the control group no longer existed, the analysis became a comparison of traditional drug enforcement versus the new community policing efforts.

Impact of the Strategies in Oakland and Birmingham

The police and the research team were interested in the effect these programs had on community perceptions of drug trafficking, quality of life, satisfaction with police services, fear of crime, and victimization. To examine these effects, the researchers used measures from the citizen survey. Citizens responded to a series of questions about drugs, police, and their neighborhoods, both before and after the imposed treatments. Attitudes of the citizen panel in each beat helped define the effectiveness of the programs.

Citizen Perceptions

Drug Trafficking. In Oakland, SDU-3 and the door-to-door contacts had favorable effects on citizen perception of drug trafficking. Drug trafficking as a problem decreased because of the treatments associated with the special enforcement unit and in the combination area. In addition, citizens in Beat 25 credited police with doing a better job of controlling street-level sales and use of illegal drugs.

In Birmingham, the treatments prompted few changes in citizen perceptions of drug trafficking. Kingston residents perceived that police had improved their ability to control street-level drug trafficking as a result of the substation. No changes occurred in the other areas.

Quality of Life. The treatments in Oakland had no perceived impact on residents' quality of life. In Birmingham, residents in Kingston perceived that their neighborhood had improved significantly because of the police substation. In the other two Birmingham beats, attitudes of residents regarding quality of life did not change.

Property and Personal Crime. Oakland residents perceived that vandalism of cars decreased in the combination beat and the SDU-3 beat. The other three perceptions remained the same. Residents believed that sexual assault incidents increased in the beat that included the door-to-door component.

In Birmingham, changes in attitude about property crime were significant, though in a negative way. Surveys conducted before and after the intervention showed that residents in Gate City perceived that an increase in break-ins, stolen cars, and thefts occurred. Conversely, in Kingston, residents perceived that the number of cars being stolen decreased. These findings suggest that the door-to-door campaign might have increased the awareness and perception of citizens regarding property crime. Because the residents were more aware of the problems, they believed that property crime had increased as a problem at the time of the second survey. This coincides with the increase in reported property crime within Gate City.

Residents' perceptions regarding violent crime did not change in any of the Birmingham beats.

Police Services. In Oakland, citizens were more satisfied with the police response to community problems in the area that received the door-to-door treatment only.

In Birmingham, residents in Kingston perceived that the police were more responsive to their concerns, helped more victims, worked with residents to solve problems, spent more time in the neighborhood, and kept order. These findings are not surprising given the active police presence and visibility created by the new substation.

Residents who participated in the door-to-door treatment in Gate City believed the police were more responsive to their concerns and that the police were spending more time on important problems in their neighborhood.

Safety. In Oakland, perceptions of safety increased because of the treatments in all three areas. In Birmingham, perceptions of safety did not change. The relatively short time the treatments were in effect might have been the reason.

¹¹ As with Oakland, this is a conservative figure. Vacancies increased the proportion of occupied household interviewed to 60 percent.

Additional Resident Perceptions in Birmingham

During Wave 2, Birmingham residents were asked additional questions about police performance.

Residents of Gate City, Kingston, and Goldwire answered questions about the impact of the police substation. All the respondents in Kingston had heard about it, plus 83 percent of those in Gate City and 74 percent in Goldwire. In all three beats, over 72 percent of the residents believed that the substation was either somewhat effective or very effective in reducing drug-related crime.

Crime Data: Oakland

To measure the impact of the programs on reported crime, the researchers analyzed data received from Oakland police over a 28-month period. Citywide and Beat data for Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) Part I offenses were provided for the 16-month period prior to program implementation and the 12-month period of the programs.

Citywide Crime Patterns. The number of robberies reported to the police throughout the city stayed about the same during the entire 28-month study. Burglaries increased from a mean of 1,675 to 1,861 per month, about 11 percent, and violent crimes declined from 265 to 204, a drop of about 23 percent.¹²

Of particular interest are the numbers for violent crimes. They show that homicides, rapes, and felonious assaults decreased during a period when other cities saw rapid increases in drug-related violence. While the research found no empirical evidence to show that drug enforcement efforts throughout the city resulted in this decrease, one cannot ignore the possibility that the efforts of the Oakland Police Department and the community made a difference in the level of violence.

Beat 7. During the period that Beat 7 received the door-to-door treatment, a 25 percent decrease in violent crimes occurred, but slight increases took place in

robberies (+7.8 percent) and burglaries (+8.6 percent). Addition of SDU-3 enforcement to the door-to-door component during the next phase of the evaluation coincided with a marked decrease in both robberies (-41.2 percent) and violent crimes (-19.5 percent).

Beat 11. Beat 11 served as the control area during the first phase of the evaluation and then received the police-citizen contacts during the second phase. All crime categories show a *decrease* when this area served as the control. When the door-to-door component was added, no change occurred in robberies.

Substantial increases in burglaries took place during the door-to-door campaign (40.4 percent). This increase in reported burglaries may be attributable to the door-to-door contacts and may be an unintended consequence of these interviews. Residents may have felt more comfortable in talking with the police and thus reported occurrences more often.

This beat is an anomaly, because it does not follow the crime trends that occurred citywide. The research team expected to find crime patterns that were similar to citywide data across all crime types; that was not so. The Oakland Police Department could not provide any compelling explanations for the fluctuations.

Beat 25. Beat 25 received SDU-3 enforcement during Phase I and became the control beat 6 months later. A decrease in violent crimes took place when this beat received the special enforcement, while robberies and burglaries increased by almost 20 percent. Without SDU-3 enforcement, robberies continued their upward trend, though the numbers appeared to fluctuate considerably.

These data suggest that SDU-3 enforcement alone had little impact on the traditional drug-related crimes of burglary and robbery, but seemed to have an effect on violent crimes. The increase in violent crime when the special enforcement team was taken out of the area confirms this theory. Increases in burglary and robbery may have been the result of drug dealers turning to these activities because their income from drug dealing had decreased.

Beat 34. The combination of SDU-3 and the door-to-door police-citizen contacts reduced the mean number of violent crimes and robberies in Beat 34. Burglaries increased marginally. Without the door-to-door component, the number of robberies and violent crimes increased to their pre-experimental levels. Burglaries decreased by 9.6 percent.

Crime Data: Birmingham

To measure the impact of the programs on reported crime in Birmingham, the research team analyzed data received from the Birmingham Police over a 33-month period (January 1, 1987 to September 30, 1989).

Citywide Crime Patterns. The number of property crimes (burglaries, thefts, and auto thefts) reported to the police throughout the city remained stable during the entire 33-month study. Violent crimes (homicides, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults) increased during the study period.

The pattern of violent crime is similar to that in other cities that have seen rapid increases in violence, particularly those that are drug related.

Gate City. During the door-to-door contacts, violent crime dropped to about 10 per month but property crime increased to 69 per month. This represents a decrease in violent crimes of about 16 percent and an increase of 9 percent in property crimes. When the door-to-door interviews ceased, the trend continued: Violent crimes decreased and property crimes increased slightly.

Goldwire. Residents in Goldwire were subjected to almost 18 violent crimes and 70 property crimes per month before implementation of Operation 'Caine Break. Once the beat received the buy-bust and sting operations, the incidence of property crime decreased about 5 percent, while violent crimes increased almost 4.5 percent. When the area reverted to its pre-experimental stage, the number of violent crimes decreased while property crimes remained stable. In contrast, the data for the entire city during the post-experimental stage show that violent crimes jumped by 58 percent and property crimes increased by almost 17 percent.

¹² These citywide data exclude the figures for the target beats.

These data suggest that the enforcement efforts of Operation 'Caine Break may have had a lag effect on the reporting of property and violent crimes. Without such efforts by detectives, the crime pattern in Goldwire may have matched those citywide.

Kingston. Kingston received the police substation. Violent crimes increased by 15 percent during implementation, while violent crimes throughout the city increased by 23 percent. Reported property crime remained somewhat stable in Kingston, but increased slightly in the rest of the city. These findings suggest that the police substation had little effect on actual reporting of crimes to the police.

Summary

Oakland

In Oakland, the treatments affected citizen perceptions of drug trafficking, property crime, satisfaction with police services, and neighborhood safety. In addition, crimes reported to the police declined substantially in one treatment area.

Residents perceived that drug trafficking declined. Visible police presence improved residents' perception of the ability of the police to handle drug problems in their neighborhoods. The door-to-door contact with police improved residents' satisfaction with the way police handled neighborhood problems. Despite the fluctuations in crime statistics in the different beats, residents in all three treatment areas believed that they felt safer than before the treatments were applied.

The perception that sexual assault incidents increased runs counter to our hypothesis; the researchers had expected that perceptions of violent crimes would diminish in the treatment beats.

Birmingham

The Birmingham Police received a tremendous amount of positive press coverage for their activities in Operation 'Caine Break. The two large-scale sweeps of suspects or "bust-outs" were successful because of the press reports and because the police were able to apprehend a high percentage (over 90 percent) of the suspects they sought. The narcotics detectives also believed that

they had sent a message to drug traffickers: That police fully intended to apprehend, charge, and convict both the dealers and the buyers in the drug trade.

In both phases of the operation under NIJ study, the narcotics detectives were well-trained, organized, and thorough in their work. Their concerns for safety impressed the research staff, given the dangers inherent in drug enforcement activities. Equally impressive was the concern to follow proper legal procedures. Issues of entrapment, search and seizure, stop and frisk, proper field interrogations, and probable cause were discussed and emphasized throughout the project.

Because of the nature of narcotics work, the researchers did not anticipate significant changes in the attitudes of the residents in the area that received the 'Caine Break treatment. Narcotics officers relied on a low-key approach to their undercover operations of stings and the videotaped buys. Residents would not see arrests regularly, so the impact on community attitudes was limited.

Instead, the research team relied on reported crime as an indicator of success or failure of the operation. Team members believe that a reduction in crime took place after a lag of 3 months in the area that received the buy-busts and sting operation.

The patterns that emerge in the crime data discussed earlier suggest that the door-to-door component had a beneficial effect on the control of violent criminal acts. The presence and visibility of officers in the neighborhood may have reduced some violent behavior. Although residents in two of the three experimental beats also perceived less property crime, reported property crimes actually increased slightly in the three beats as a group. This may be a useful consequence of the door-to-door interviews. Officers encouraged residents to call the police when they witnessed suspicious activities. In Goldwire, the findings show that the treatment was effective after a 3-month lag.

Although the researchers had hoped for a more intensive use of the police-citizen contacts, the results were nonetheless very positive. Though the police substation was an unanticipated event, the demands from the community and officials of the public housing authority could not be ignored.

Clearly, it affected the residents in the Morton Simpson Village, as shown by the results of our citizen survey.

The findings from this study show that these treatments had dramatic effects on citizen perceptions of quality of life, property crime, and satisfaction with police services. In addition, violent crimes reported to the police declined substantially in Gate City, where the police-citizen contacts occurred.

Craig D. Uchida, Ph.D., is director of the Evaluation Division of the National Institute of Justice. Brian Forst is an assistant professor at George Washington University. Sampson O. Annan is deputy director of research at the Police Foundation.

This study was supported under awards number 87-IJ-CX-0058 and 88-IJ-CX-0015 from the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, to the Police Foundation. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Institute of Justice, the Police Foundation, the Oakland Police Department, or the Birmingham Police Department.

The full report of this study, *Modern Policing and the Control of Illegal Drugs, Testing New Strategies in Two American Cities* (NCJ 133785), is available from the National Institute of Justice. To obtain this document, write National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, or call 800-851-3420.

The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, establishes the policies and priorities, and manages and coordinates the activities of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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