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Police Innovation Contrasting Perspectives

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 CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Partnership, accountability, and innovation: clarifying Boston's experience with pulling levers

Anthony A. Braga and Christopher Winship

The pulling levers focused deterrence strategy has been embraced by the US Department of Justice as an effective approach to crime prevention. In his address to the American Society of Criminology, former National Institute of Justice Director Jeremy Travis (1998) announced "[the] pulling levers hypothesis has made enormous theoretical and practical contributions to our thinking about deterrence and the role of the criminal justice system in producing safety." Pioneered in Boston to halt youth violence, the pulling levers framework has been applied in many American cities through federally sponsored violence prevention programs such as the Strategic Alternatives to Community Safety Initiative and Project Safe Neighborhoods (Dalton 2002). In its simplest form, the approach consists of selecting a particular crime problem, such as youth homicide; convening an interagency working group of law enforcement practitioners; conducting research to identify key offenders, groups, and behavior patterns; framing a response to offenders and groups of offenders that uses a varied menu of sanctions ("pulling levers") to stop them from continuing their violent behavior; focusing social services and community resources on targeted offenders and groups to match law enforcement prevention efforts; and directly and repeatedly communicating with offenders to make them understand why they are receiving this special attention (Kennedy 1997; Kennedy in this volume).

Despite the enthusiasm for the approach, there is relatively little rigorous scientific evidence that pulling levers deterrence strategies have been useful in preventing violence beyond the Boston experience (Wellford, Pepper, and Petrie 2005). Even in Boston, the exact contribution of pulling levers to the reduction of youth violence remains unclear (Wellford *et al.* 2005). Moreover, high-profile replications of the Boston approach have been difficult to implement and sustain. In Baltimore, local political problems undermined the implementation process (Braga, Kennedy, and Tita 2002). In Minneapolis, the strategy was abandoned as

the participating agencies returned to their traditional methods of dealing with violence (Kennedy and Braga 1998).

We believe that the difficulties experienced by other jurisdictions stem from a limited understanding of the larger Boston story. Boston's success in reducing youth violence has been attributed to a wide variety of programs and strategies: public health interventions, police-probation partnerships, enhanced federal prosecutions, police-black minister partnerships, and the pulling levers focused deterrence strategy known as Operation Ceasefire. Many observers have suggested that these are isolated and competing explanations. For example, in his discussion of Operation Ceasefire and the Boston Police Department's collaboration with activist black ministers, Fagan (2002) describes these as "two distinct and contrasting narratives [that] comprise the Boston story" (136).

In reality, the Boston story consists of multiple interconnected layers. As we discuss below, the implementation of Ceasefire was possible because of newly formed relationships among the police and other law enforcement and social service agencies and between the police and the community, with the latter creating important mechanisms for police accountability. Thus, although available quantitative evidence suggests that Operation Ceasefire was the key initiative associated with a significant reduction in youth violence, a fuller and more nuanced description of the Boston experience is needed. A narrow and inappropriate interpretation of Boston's success as simply being due to Operation Ceasefire creates the danger of unrealistic expectations of success, serious implementation problems in replicating the Ceasefire program, and an inability to sustain implemented violence prevention programs.

In order to understand the innovations that took place in Boston's policing strategies during the 1990s it is necessary to examine the importance of two key elements that created the foundation that made change possible. First, in order for the Boston Police to develop an innovative program involving a variety of partners, it was essential to have established a "network of capacity" consisting of dense and productive relationships from which partners could be drawn. Second, because of the long history of perceived racism by the Boston Police, a new mechanism of police accountability was necessary in order to create trust that new programs would be beneficial to the community. This trust was essential for establishing needed community and political support for innovative efforts by the Boston Police. Operation Ceasefire simply could not have been launched without either a network of partners who were a central component of its design or the trust that derived from accountability.

This chapter begins by briefly describing the key elements of Ceasefire. It then examines the available evidence on Ceasefire's effect on

serious violence in Boston and elsewhere. It subsequently discusses the implementation of Ceasefire within the changing political context of police-community relationships and evolving police partnerships with other agencies. Finally, it analyses the implications of the fuller Boston story for replicating and sustaining the Boston approach in other jurisdictions.

The Boston Gun Project and Operation Ceasefire

Like many American cities during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Boston suffered an epidemic of youth violence that had its roots in the rapid spread of street-level crack-cocaine markets (Kennedy, Piehl, and Braga 1996). The Boston Gun Project was a problem-oriented policing project aimed at preventing and controlling serious youth violence. The problem analysis phase of the Project began in early 1995 and the Operation Ceasefire strategy was implemented in mid 1996. The trajectory of the Project and of Ceasefire has been extensively documented (see e.g., Kennedy *et al.* 1996; Kennedy, Braga, and Piehl 2001; Kennedy in this volume). Briefly, a problem-solving working group of law enforcement personnel, youth workers, and researchers diagnosed the youth violence problem in Boston as one of patterned, largely vendetta-like hostility amongst a small population of highly active criminal offenders, and particularly amongst those involved in some sixty loose, informal, mostly neighborhood-based gangs. Based on the problem-analysis findings, the Boston Gun Project working group crafted the Operation Ceasefire initiative that was tightly focused on disrupting ongoing conflicts among youth gangs.

The Boston Police Department's Youth Violence Strike Force (YVSF), an elite unit of some forty officers and detectives, coordinated the actions of Operation Ceasefire. An interagency working group, composed of law enforcement personnel, youth workers, and members of Boston's Ten Point Coalition of activist black clergy, was convened on a biweekly basis to address outbreaks of serious gang violence. Operation Ceasefire's pulling levers strategy was designed to deter gang violence by reaching out directly to gangs, saying explicitly that violence would no longer be tolerated, and backing up that message by "pulling every lever" legally available when violence occurred (Kennedy 1997). These law enforcement levers included disrupting street-level drug markets, serving warrants, mounting federal prosecutions, and changing the conditions of community supervision for probationers and parolees in the targeted group. Simultaneously, youth workers, probation and parole officers, and clergy offered gang members services and other kinds of help. If gang members wanted to step away from a violent lifestyle, the

Ceasefire working group focused on providing them with the services and opportunities necessary to make the transition.

The Ceasefire Working Group delivered their anti-violence message in formal meetings with gang members; through individual police and probation contacts with gang members; through meetings with inmates of secure juvenile facilities in the city; and through gang outreach workers (Kennedy *et al.* 2001). The deterrence message was not a deal with gang members to stop violence. Rather, it was a promise to gang members that violent behavior would evoke an immediate and intense response. If gangs committed other crimes but refrained from violence, the normal workings of police, prosecutors, and the rest of the criminal justice system dealt with these matters. But if gang members hurt people, the Working Group focused its enforcement actions on them.

A large reduction in the yearly number of Boston youth homicides followed immediately after Operation Ceasefire was implemented in mid-1996. This reduction was sustained for the next five years (see Figure 9.1). The Ceasefire program, as designed, was in place until 2000. During the early years of the new millennium, the Boston Police experimented with a broader approach to violence prevention by expanding certain Ceasefire tactics to a broader range of problems such as serious repeat violent gun offenders, the re-entry of incarcerated violent offenders back into high-risk Boston neighborhoods, and criminogenic families in hot spot areas. These new approaches, known broadly as Boston Strategy II, seemed to diffuse the ability of Boston to respond to ongoing conflicts among gangs. Homicide, most of which is gang related, has returned as a serious problem for the City of Boston. Homicide has been rising since 2001 with the sharpest increase among victims aged 25 and older (Figure 9.1). In Fall 2004, the Boston Police implemented a new violence prevention campaign, which borrows heavily from Ceasefire's tight focus on disrupting cycles of violent gang retribution (Winship forthcoming).

Evidence on the impact of Ceasefire on serious violence

A US Department of Justice (DOJ)-sponsored evaluation of Operation Ceasefire used a non-randomized control group design to analyze trends in serious violence between 1991 and 1998. The evaluation reported that the intervention was associated with a 63 percent decrease in the monthly number of Boston youth homicides, a 32 percent decrease in the monthly number of shots-fired calls, a 25 percent decrease in the monthly number of gun assaults, and, in one high-risk police district given special attention in the evaluation, a 44 percent decrease in the monthly number of youth gun assault incidents (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Piehl 2001). The

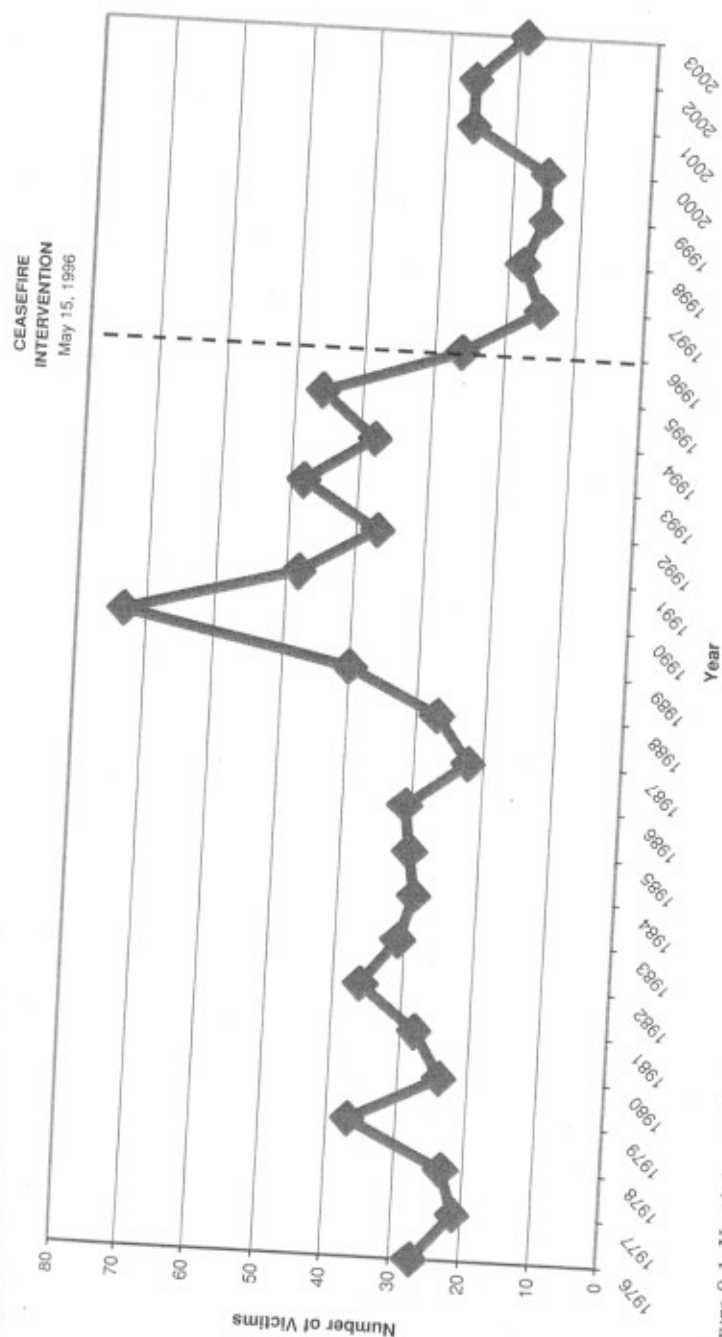


Figure 9.1 Youth homicide in Boston, 1976–2003, victims ages 24 and under

evaluation also suggested that Boston's significant youth homicide reduction associated with Operation Ceasefire was distinct when compared to youth homicide trends in most major US and New England cities.

Other researchers, however, have observed that some of the decrease in homicide may have occurred without the Ceasefire intervention in place as violence was decreasing in most major US cities. Fagan's (2002) cursory review of gun homicide in Boston and in other Massachusetts cities suggests a general downward trend in gun violence that existed before Operation Ceasefire was implemented. Levitt (2004) analyzed homicide trends over the course of the 1990s and concluded that the impact of innovative policing strategies, such as Operation Ceasefire in Boston and broken windows policing and Compstat in New York, on homicide was limited. Other factors, such as increases in the number of police, the rising prison population, the waning crack-cocaine epidemic, and the legalization of abortion, can account for nearly all of the national decline in homicide, violent crime, and property crime in the 1990s.

The National Academies' Panel on Improving Information and Data on Firearms (Wellford *et al.* 2005) concluded that the Ceasefire evaluation was compelling in associating the intervention with the subsequent decline in youth homicide. However, the Panel also suggested that many complex factors affect youth homicide trends and it was difficult to specify the exact relationship between the Ceasefire intervention and subsequent changes in youth offending behaviors. While the DOJ-sponsored evaluation controlled for existing violence trends and certain rival causal factors such as changes in the youth population, drug markets, and employment in Boston, there could be complex interaction effects among these factors not measured by the evaluation that could account for some meaningful portion of the decrease. The evaluation was not a randomized, controlled experiment. Therefore, the non-randomized control group research design cannot rule out these internal threats to the conclusion that Ceasefire was the key factor in the youth homicide decline.

Like the Panel, we believe that Ceasefire was responsible for a meaningful proportion of the youth homicide decline. However, it is difficult to determine the exact contribution of Ceasefire to the decline. Clearly, other factors were responsible for some of the decline. As Figure 9.2 reveals, there was a parallel decrease of approximately equal magnitude in adult homicide that can only be partly explained by Ceasefire's potential effect on the behavior of adults participating in violent gang dynamics. Figure 9.1 also presents a long-term picture of youth homicide that suggests some of the decline may result from a "regression to the mean" phenomenon. Youth homicides dramatically increase in 1989 and remain historically high through 1995. While post-Ceasefire youth homicide

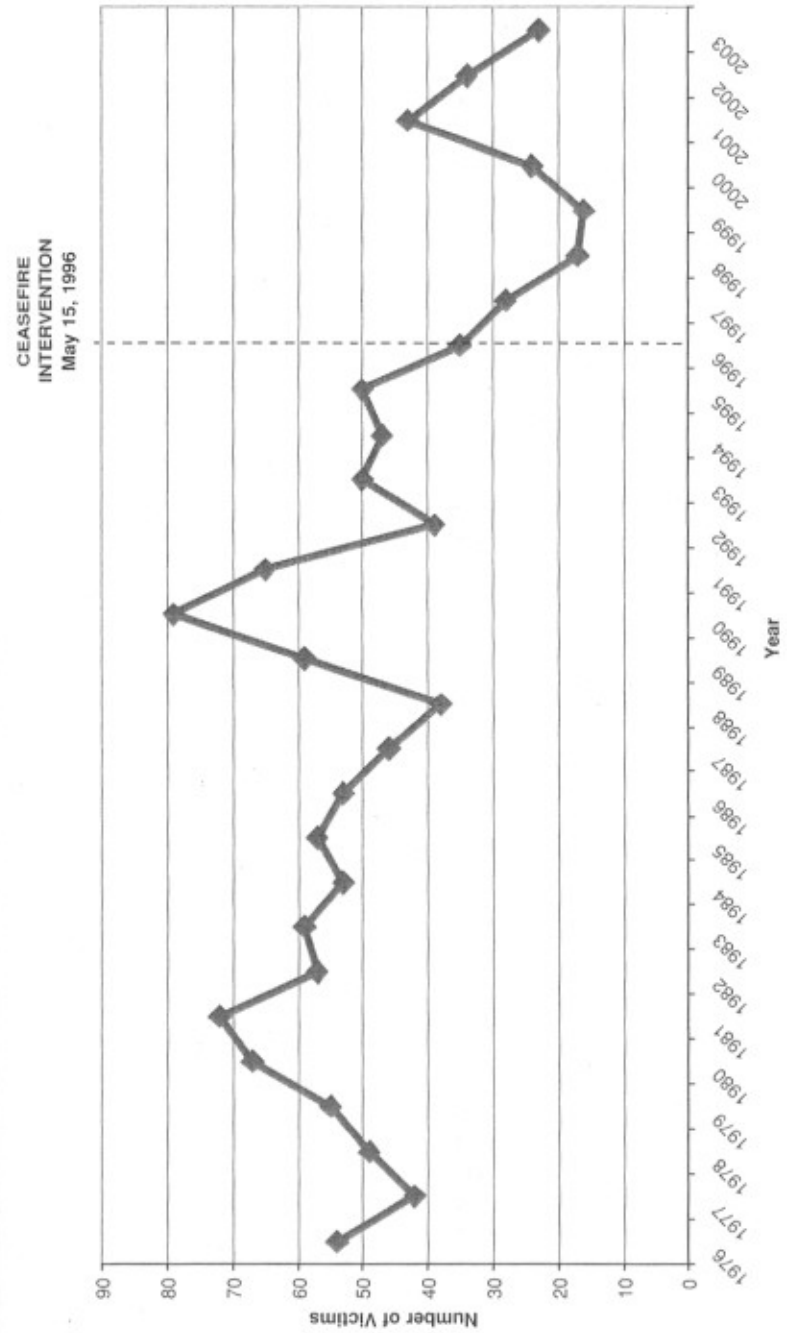


Figure 9.2 Adult homicide in Boston, 1976-2003, victims ages 25 and older

counts are lower than counts during the 1976–88 period, it seems plausible that some portion of the decline was part of a natural return to an average count of youth homicide. This certainly raises questions about the effectiveness of Ceasefire. Experimental research is necessary to uncover the true crime prevention benefits of engaging a pulling levers strategy.

The National Academies' Panel also found that the evidence on the effectiveness of the pulling levers focused deterrence strategy is quite limited (Wellford *et al.* 2005). The available evidence on the effects of pulling levers programs in other jurisdictions is scientifically weak. Assessments of these programs in other jurisdictions did not use control groups and usually consisted of simple pre-post measurements of trends in violence (see, e.g., Braga *et al.* 2002; McGarrell and Chermak 2003). In Baltimore and Minneapolis, two well-known replications of the Boston experience, violence prevention initiatives rapidly unraveled and were abandoned (Kennedy and Braga 1998; Kennedy in this volume). As discussed further below, we believe that the difficulty other jurisdictions have had in replicating and sustaining a pulling levers focused deterrence strategy may, in part, stem from a weak understanding of the context in which the Boston intervention was implemented.

The larger Boston story I: The development of a "network of capacity"

Missing from the account of Operation Ceasefire reported in most law enforcement circles is the larger story of an evolving collaboration that spanned the boundaries that divide criminal justice agencies from one another, criminal justice agencies from human service agencies, and criminal justice agencies from the community. Such collaborations are necessary to legitimize, fund, equip, and operate complex strategies that are most likely to succeed in both controlling and preventing youth violence (Moore 2002). The solid working relationships that were at the heart of the interagency working group process were developed long before the Boston Gun Project commenced in 1995. In essence, Boston created a very powerful "network of capacity" to prevent youth violence (Moore 2002). This network was well positioned to launch an effective response to youth violence because criminal justice agencies, community groups, and social service agencies coordinated and combined their efforts in ways that could magnify their separate effects. Ceasefire capitalized on these existing relationships by focusing the network on the problem of serious gang violence.

Criminal justice agencies work largely independent of each other, often at cross-purposes, often without coordination, and often in an

atmosphere of distrust and dislike (Kennedy 2002). Until the height of the youth violence epidemic, this observation was certainly true in Boston. It was painfully apparent that no one agency could mount a meaningful response to the gang violence that was spiraling out of control in the city. The crisis forced Boston criminal justice agencies to work together and develop new approaches to deal with the violence problem. YVSF officers and detectives and line-level workers from other criminal justice agencies collaborated on a variety of innovative programs, including: Operation Night Flight – a police-probation partnership to ensure at-risk youth were abiding by the conditions of their release into the community (Corbett, Fitzgerald, and Jordan 1998); Safe Neighborhoods Initiatives – a community prosecution program that was rooted in a partnership between the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the Boston Police, and community members in hot spot neighborhoods (Coles and Kelling 1999); and a partnership between the Boston Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), and the US Attorney's Office to identify and apprehend illegal gun traffickers who were providing guns to violent gangs (Kennedy *et al.* 1996).

The YVSF also formed working relationships with social service and opportunity provision agencies. For certain prevention initiatives, the YVSF was the lead agency involved in the program such as the Summer of Opportunity program that provides at-risk youth with job training and leadership skills that could be transferred to workplace, school, or home settings. More often, however, the police supported the activities of youth social service providers from community-based organizations such as the Boston Community Centers' streetworker program and the Dorchester Youth Collaborative. YVSF officers and detectives would encourage at-risk youth to take advantage of these resources and also consider the input of youth workers in determining whether certain gang-involved youth would be better served by prevention and intervention actions rather than enforcement actions.

When the Boston Gun Project was initiated, the YVSF had already developed a network of working relationships that could be powerfully channeled by a more focused initiative like Operation Ceasefire. Criminal justice agency partnerships provided a varied menu of enforcement options that could be tailored to particular gangs. Without these partnerships, the available "levers" that could be pulled by the working group would have been limited. Social service and opportunity provision agencies were also integrated into Ceasefire interventions to provide a much-needed "carrot" to balance the law enforcement "stick." The inclusion of prevention and intervention programs in the Ceasefire intervention was vitally important in securing community support and involvement in the

program. We believe that the legitimacy conferred upon the Ceasefire initiative by key community members was an equally important condition that facilitated the successful implementation of this innovative program.

The larger Boston story II: Accountability and police-community relations

There was a radical change in the relationship between the Boston Police and Boston's minority communities that pre-dated Ceasefire and had a profound influence on the trajectory of the Ceasefire intervention. This collaborative relationship, led by Ten Point Coalition activist black ministers, developed in the context of a high level of community dissatisfaction with policing strategies and tactics engaged by the Boston Police (Winship and Berrien 1999). When the violence epidemic started in the late 1980s, the Boston Police were ill equipped to deal with the sudden increase in serious youth violence. The Boston Police relied upon highly aggressive and reportedly indiscriminate policing tactics to deal with street gang violence (Winship and Berrien 1999; Berrien and Winship 2002; 2003). A series of well-publicized scandals emanating from an indiscriminate policy of stopping and frisking all black males in high-crime areas outraged Boston's black community. Perhaps the most important was the 1989 murder of Carol Stuart, a pregnant white woman on her way home from Boston City Hospital. Initially, Charles Stuart, the victim's husband who was the actual murderer, led Boston Police investigators to believe that the murderer was a black male. The police responded by blanketing the Mission Hill housing projects for a suspect. Abusive police conduct was reported to be widespread as coerced statements led to the wrongful arrest of a black male. The black community and the local media were outraged and condemned the discriminatory actions of the investigating officers. The Carol Stuart case and other scandals led to the establishment of the St. Clair Commission, an independent committee appointed to investigate the policies and practices of the Boston Police. In 1992 it released its report, which cited extensive corruption and incompetent management, and called for extensive reform including the replacement of top personnel.

In response, the Boston Police overhauled its organization, mission, and tactics during the early 1990s. The existing command staff, including the commissioner, were replaced with new officers who were known to be innovative and hardworking; investments were made to improve the department's technology to understand crime problems; a neighborhood policing plan was implemented; and beat-level officers were trained in the methods of community and problem-oriented policing. In 1991,

the Anti-Gang Violence Unit (AGVU) was created and charged with disrupting ongoing gang conflicts rather than mounting an aggressive campaign to arrest as many offenders as possible. By 1994, the AGVU evolved into the YVSF and its mandate was broadened beyond controlling outbreaks of gang violence to more general youth violence prevention. While these changes were important in creating an environment where the police could collaborate with the community, residents of Boston's poor minority neighborhoods remained wary of and dissatisfied with a police department that had a long history of abusive and unfair treatment.

In 1992, a loosely allied group of activist black clergy formed the Ten Point Coalition after a gang invasion of the Morningstar Baptist Church. During a memorial for a slain rival gang member, mourners were attacked with knives and guns (Winship and Berrien 1999; Kennedy *et al.* 2001; Berrien and Winship 2002; 2003). In the wake of that outrage, the Ten Point Coalition ministers decided they should attempt to prevent the youth in their community from joining gangs, and also that they needed to send an anti-violence message to all youth, whether gang-involved or not.

Initially, the ministers assumed an adversarial role to the Boston Police and were highly critical in the public media of police efforts to prevent youth violence. However, as the ministers worked the streets, they started to form effective relationships with particular YVSF officers and developed a shared understanding of the nature of youth violence in Boston: only a small number of youths in the neighborhoods were involved in violence, many of these gang-involved youth were better served by intervention and prevention strategies, and only a small number of these gang-involved youths needed to be removed from the streets through arrest and prosecution strategies.

The Ten Point ministers also sheltered the police from broad public criticism while the police were engaged in activities the ministers deemed to be of interest to the community and its youth. In 1995, Paul McLaughlin, a local gang prosecutor who was white, was murdered on his way home from work. The initial description of the assailant ("young black male wearing a hooded sweatshirt and baggy pants") was vague enough to cause concern to many in the black community that an "open season on young black males" similar to that during the Carol Stuart investigation would occur (Grunwald and Anand 1995). Fortunately, these initial fears were unfounded as the black ministers and the Boston Police supported each other in the handling of the media and the ensuing investigation. The black ministers publicly praised the police for showing restraint in their conduct and the police praised the ministers for their

willingness to provide help and keep the community calm (Berrien and Winship 2002; 2003).

Prior to Ceasefire, the Ten Point ministers also helped the Boston Police manage negative publicity by the local media after several potentially explosive events ranging from the beating of a black undercover officer by uniformed police officers (Chacon 1995) to the accidental death of 75-year-old retired minister who suffered a fatal heart attack after a botched drug raid (Mallia and Mulvihill 1994). In these cases, the ministers took two positions. First, they demanded that the police department take responsibility for its actions – investigate incidents thoroughly and hold those involved accountable. Second, after it was clear that the Boston Police was accepting responsibility, the ministers communicated to the community that the police were in fact reacting appropriately. This, in turn, prevented these situations from becoming racially explosive and provided the police with the continued political support they needed in order to undertake policy innovations, such as Ceasefire. In more recent years, the ministers have continued to play this dual role with regards to fatal police shootings, eight of which occurred over a 22-month period between 2000 and 2002 (Tench 2002; Winship forthcoming).

While the Ten Point ministers were not involved in the design of the Ceasefire intervention, they were influential as an informal “litmus test” of the types of enforcement actions that would and would not be tolerated by the community. The youth workers participating in the design of Ceasefire would voice their concerns about community reaction to any proposed enforcement tactics that could be viewed as overly aggressive. However, what usually ended discussions was the recognition of the political vulnerability of the Boston Police to the consequences of the Ten Point ministers potentially reporting any questionable practices to local media and, more importantly, exerting pressure on the Mayor’s Office to deal with perceived inappropriate actions by the Department. For example, while discussing plausible interventions, the working group considered the notable gun violence reduction results of the Kansas City Gun Experiment, which involved intensive enforcement of laws against illegally carrying concealed firearms via safety frisks during traffic stops, plain view, and searches incident to arrest in gun violence hot spot areas (Sherman and Rogan 1995). After some discussion, the working group rejected the idea of engaging a hot spots policing strategy as the Boston Police did not want to adopt an enforcement program that could be viewed by the Ten Point ministers as a return to the indiscriminate “stop and frisk” policies of the past.

When Ceasefire was ready to be implemented, the commander of the YVSF presented the program to key black ministers to obtain their

approval of and involvement in the initiative. The Boston Police knew that they would need the political support of the Ten Point Coalition to pursue aggressive enforcement actions against hardcore gang members who were central to violent conflicts. While the Ceasefire initiative was a violence prevention campaign, given the Carol Stuart case and other incidents, the community and local media could have easily misunderstood the enforcement tactics as simply another law enforcement initiative designed to arrest large numbers of young black men. The ministers recognized the value of the Ceasefire approach to violence prevention as it was carefully focused only on violent gang-involved youth and provided social services and opportunities to gang youth who desired them. After Ceasefire was implemented, Ten Point Coalition ministers became regular members of the working group. Ministers played key roles in working with the police to identify dangerous gang-involved youth, communicating the anti-violence deterrence message to all youth and, with the help of social service providers, offering assistance to gang youth who wanted to step away from their violent lifestyles.

By including the ministers in the Ceasefire working group, the Boston Police developed a mechanism for transparency and accountability that was very desirable to Boston’s minority community. Through their involvement in Ceasefire, the ministers became part of the process of determining which gang interventions would be done and when. In addition, they, along with others, gave gang members the message that they had a choice: stop the violence and they would be helped – with school, a job, family; continue and the full weight of the law (and the community) would come down on them, with every possible lever being used to see that they were incarcerated. At a more general level, a shared understanding of the reality of youth violence and the actions that were necessary to prevent and control that violence emerged (Berrien and Winship 2002; 2003). The transparency and involvement in the enforcement process built trust and further solidified a functional working relationship between the community and the Boston Police. In turn, by engaging in a process through which they were meaningfully and appropriately accountable to the community, the Boston Police created the political support, or “umbrella of legitimacy,” that they needed to pursue more focused and perhaps more aggressive intervention than would have been possible otherwise (Berrien and Winship 2002).

Implications of the larger story for other jurisdictions

Operation Ceasefire became a nationally recognized model for youth violence reduction programs and many jurisdictions quickly started to

experiment with the approach (Kennedy in this volume). Unfortunately, despite some initially promising results, many of these replications were never fully implemented or were eventually abandoned. Braga has been involved in replication efforts in a number of cities, including Baltimore, Minneapolis, and San Francisco, and these jurisdictions simply did not have an adequate network of capacity in place before adopting a Ceasefire-like approach to youth violence. Operation Ceasefire was a "relationship intensive" intervention based on trust and the ability of a diverse set of individuals to work together toward a common goal. The narrow description of Ceasefire that currently circulates in criminal justice circles is, in many ways, a recipe for frustration and eventual failure as it simplifies the trajectory of the Boston experience.

Effective collaborations and the trust and accountability that they entail are essential in launching a meaningful response to complex youth violence problems. However, the fact that such collaborations are needed does not guarantee that they inevitably arise or, once developed, that they are sustained. There are many significant obstacles to their development and maintenance such as giving up control over scarce resources that could compromise agencies' traditional missions, aligning agencies' individual work efforts into a functional enterprise, and developing a collective leadership among a group of individuals aligned with the needs of their individual organizations (Bardach 1998).

A central problem in creating and managing effective capacity-building collaborations is overcoming the problem of distrust (Bardach 1998). Distrust corrodes the creative process that criminal justice agencies and community-based organizations are necessarily engaged in. Like most cities, distrust characterized the relationship among criminal justice agencies and between criminal justice agencies and the inner city community in Boston. Practitioners and community members in Boston were able to overcome their historical distrust and form productive working relationships. These relationships existed before Ceasefire and were the foundation upon which it was built. Of course, working groups can be forced together and, sometimes, can implement short-term programs that have promising initial results. However, if the initiative is not based on a shared understanding of the problem and cemented through functional partnerships, the initiative will fall apart. These are key issues for other jurisdictions to consider in replicating Operation Ceasefire and in sustaining the collaborative effort once it has been launched.

In many community and problem-oriented policing projects, community members serve as informants who report to the police on unacceptable community conditions and the particulars of crime problems (Skogan and Hartnett 1997; Braga 2002). They are rarely engaged as

"partners" or "co-producers" of public safety. Police officers remain the "experts" on crime who are primarily responsible for developing and managing interventions to address crime problems. Through their collaboration with Ten Point ministers, the Boston Police discovered a system whereby they were accountable to the community. This accountability to the community became a great asset to the police. By engaging the ministers in their violence prevention efforts and creating a sense of joint ownership of the youth violence problem, the Boston Police created the political support necessary for both innovation and more focused and aggressive intervention. With the Ten Point's approval of and involvement in Operation Ceasefire, the community supported the approach as a legitimate violence prevention campaign. Police strategies can acquire true legitimacy within the inner city only if the community partner supports police tactics when they are appropriate as well as publicly criticizes activities that are not (Berrien and Winship 2002; 2003; Winship forthcoming). Given the potentially harsh law enforcement levers that can be pulled as part of a Ceasefire-like program, we feel that community involvement is critical in replicating and sustaining such intensive violence prevention initiatives. Without the political support of the community, the police cannot pursue an innovative enforcement strategy that targets truly dangerous youth at the heart of urban youth violence problems.

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