



Safety and Justice

A RAND INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Operation Ceasefire ***Reducing Gun Violence in East Los Angeles***

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Overview

- **RAND public safety research**
- **Violence in East Los Angeles**
- **Data-driven approach to gun violence**
- **Sources of illegal guns in Los Angeles**

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Data-driven approaches to crime and violence can result in innovative strategies

What Is RAND?

- **RAND is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan research institution**
 - **Mission: to help improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis**
 - **Core values: quality and objectivity**
- **RAND's Safety and Justice Research Program organizes RAND's research on**
 - **Policing**
 - **Courts and Corrections**
 - **Community-level Interventions**

RAND Has Studied Many Sides of the Public Safety System



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- Training
- Recruitment
- Civil rights
- Community policing
- Performance metrics
- Strategic planning

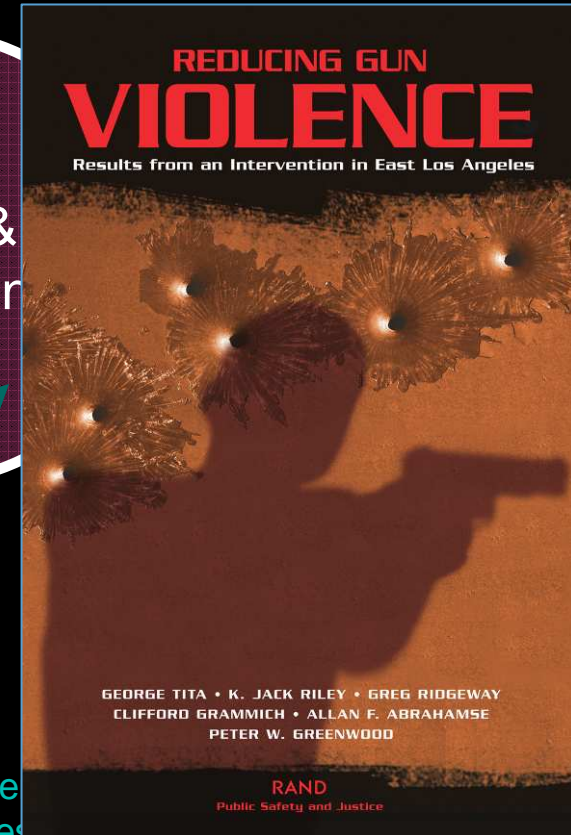
Policing

Courts & Correction

Community Interventions

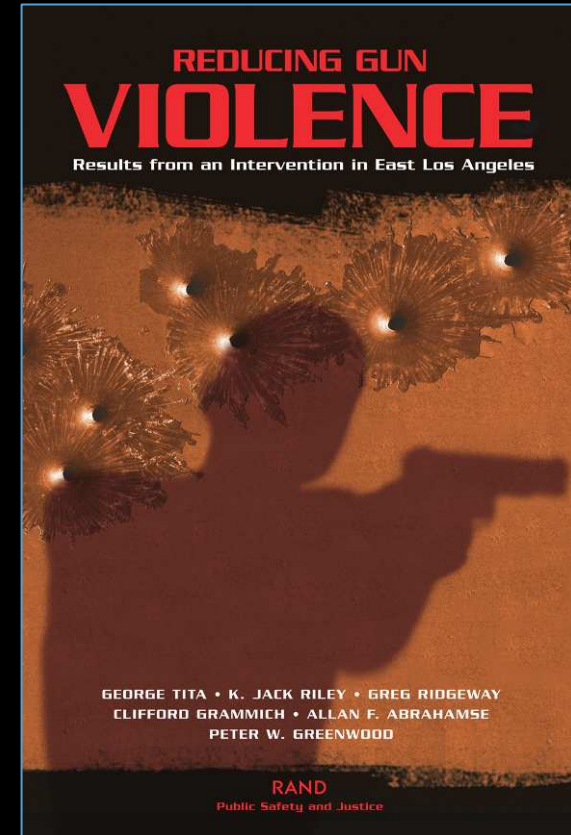
- Gangs
- Illegal gun markets
- Violence reduction

- Children
- Business improvement districts
- Domestic violence



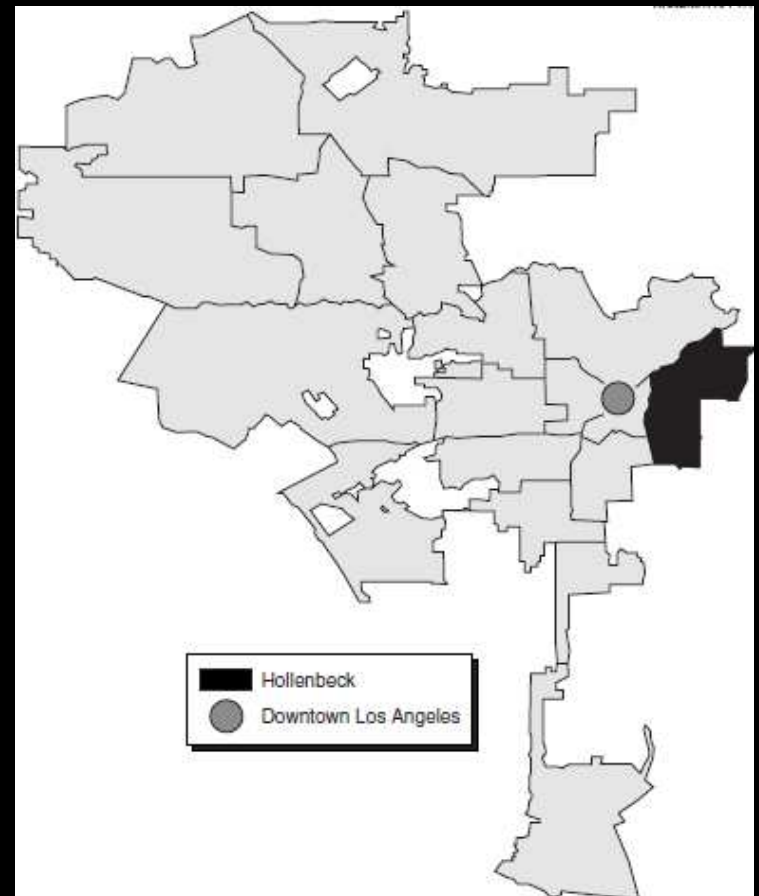
Success in Boston Created Interest for a New Strategy in Los Angeles

- Core strategy: form coalition to design, implement, and monitor an initiative to reduce gang and gun violence
- RAND aimed to replicate this strategy in Los Angeles



Background on the Hollenbeck Neighborhood

- 15-square-mile area east of downtown Los Angeles
- 200,000 residents
- Hollenbeck is 81 percent Latino, primarily persons of Mexican heritage
- Homicide rate: 25 per 100,000



Violence Reduction in East Los Angeles Blended Three Ingredients of Success

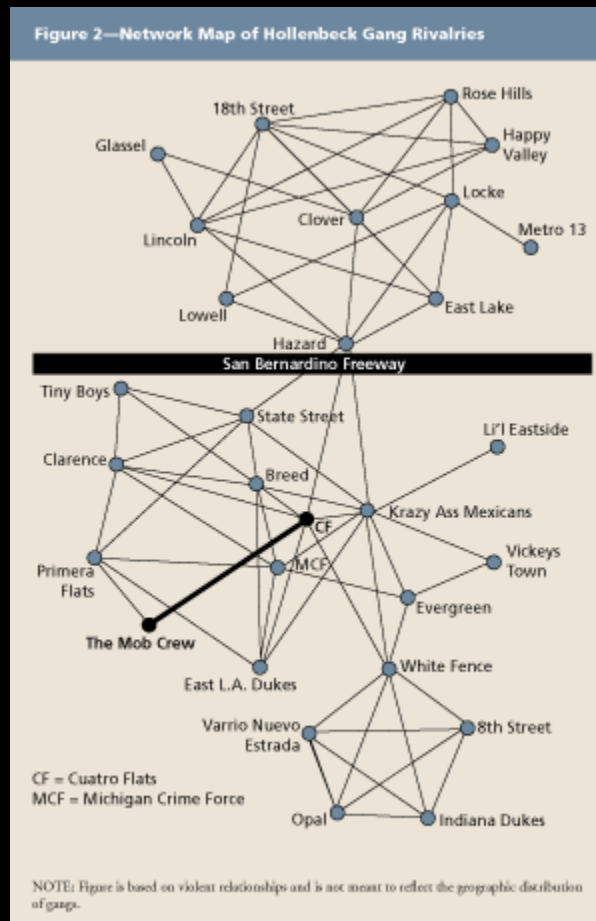
- **Developed a coalition of community leaders**
 - criminal justice professionals, clergy, and researchers on the project's design, implementation, and evaluation
- **Offered youth offenders both “carrots” and “sticks”**
 - social services: job training and substance abuse treatment
 - tough punitive measures: strict enforcement of parole and probation regulations
- **Allowed the project to be dynamic**
 - coalition members adjusted the balance of carrots and sticks as conditions warranted

Data Countered the Conventional Wisdom

- 1. Not all gang problems are equal**
- 2. Drugs were not the primary cause of violence**
- 3. Gang leaders and suspected shooters were difficult to target**

Not All Gang Problems Are Equal

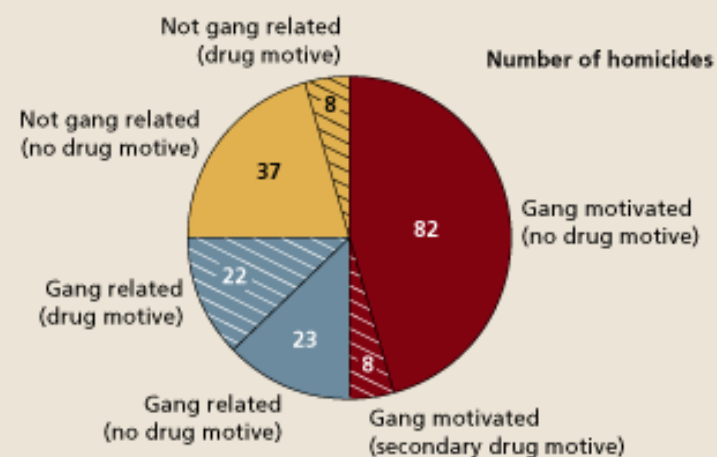
- All knew that gangs were central to violence in Hollenbeck
- Gangs concentrated within own turf and violence was typically *premeditated* attacks against members of other gangs in their rivals' territories
- The rivalry between The Mob Crew and Cuatro Flats was growing particularly violent



Drugs Were Not the Primary Cause of Violence

- Analysis of homicides indicated that “respect” was driving the violence
- Few drug-involved homicides concerned drug territory disputes
- Required substantial effort to convince local police

Figure 1—Most Hollenbeck Homicides Do Not Involve a Drug Motive

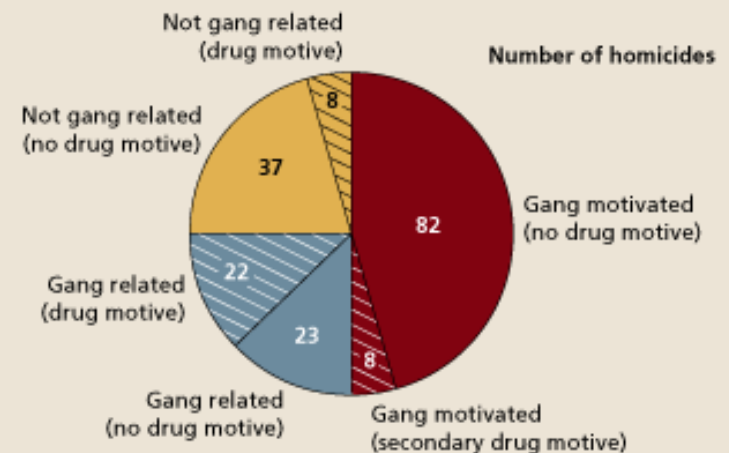


SOURCE: "From Boston to Boyle Heights," 2003.

Gang Leaders and Suspected Shooters Were Difficult to Target

- Only 25% of the leaders had outstanding warrants
- Shooters were young
 - No extensive criminal records
 - less vulnerable to strict enforcement
- Every gang had other members with leverage points

Figure 1—Most Hollenbeck Homicides Do Not Involve a Drug Motive



SOURCE: "From Boston to Boyle Heights," 2003.

A Strategy of “Collective Accountability” Took Advantage of the Gang Structure

- In the wake of any “triggering event” that might lead one gang to retaliate against another:
 - Increase LAPD patrols
 - Deploy officers from specialized units to the neighborhood
 - Create additional patrols in public parks
 - Enforce public housing eligibility rules prohibiting possession of drugs, firearms, and other contraband
 - Enforce parole and probation conditions
 - Serve all outstanding warrants on gang members
 - Collect child support
 - Referral gun violations to federal prosecutors
- These intervention elements would be rapidly implemented after each violent incident to ensure that all understood there were consequences for violent behavior

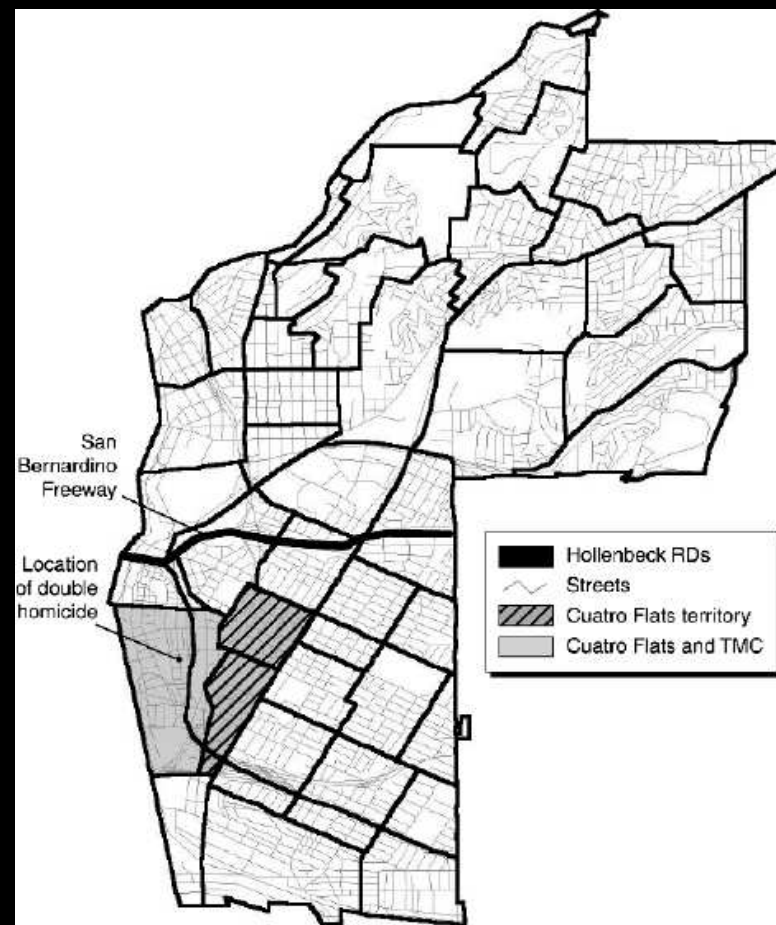
Services Would Balance Law Enforcement

“Nothing stops a bullet like a job”

- **Homeboys Industries offered referral services and tattoo removal**
- **Parole officers and city agencies planned to offer job-training opportunities**
- **Probation officers were planning to offer substance abuse treatment.**

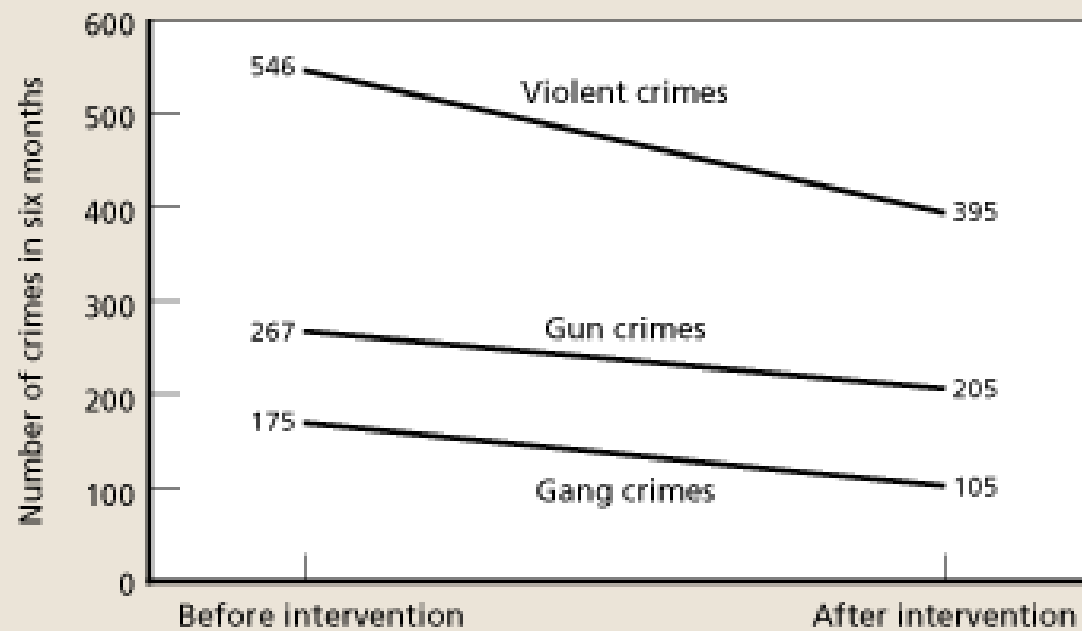
What Happened?

- In October 2000, five Cuatro Flats members killed a 19-year-old TMC member and a 10-year-old girl
- Coalition became solely focused on the Cuatro Flats-TMC violence
- Communicated to Cuatro Flats and TMC that the enforcement was in response to the shooting



Crime Fell By 30% in TMC-Cuatro Flats Territory

Figure 3—Crime in Boyle Heights Fell Sharply Within Six Months of Operation Ceasefire



SOURCE: *Reducing Gun Violence*, 2003.

What Worked?

- **The working group, combining data analysis with multi-agency collaboration, crafted a well-designed intervention**
- **When working together, diverse criminal justice agencies are more effective than when acting alone**
- **Tailoring the intervention against an activity, such as gun violence, rather than an affiliation, such as gang membership, helped to garner community support**
 - **Community support resulted in a dedicated prosecutor and a community organizer to the project**

What Could Have Worked Better?

- **The working group members never truly assumed ownership of the project critical to sustain the effort**
 - **Staff rotation caused instability (e.g. six LAPD captains in 18 months)**
 - **LAPD's gang unit was disbanded after the Rampart scandal**
 - **Participants were never given credit by their agencies for their performance in this effort**
 - **Crime rates returned to their pre-intervention rate**
- **Social services will almost always lag behind those for law enforcement**

Supply-side Strategies Offer a Complementary Strategy

- **Follow the ammunition**
 - 3% of purchases were by individuals prohibited from owning guns and ammunition
 - LAPD uses the ammunition logs as a key intelligence tool, running checks, acquiring search warrants, and recovering illegal guns
- **Trace recovered guns**
 - A substantial amount of illegal firearms appear to come from small scale diversion
- **Deter the transfer of legally owned guns into the illegal market**
 - Reinforce to legal gun owners the risks of improperly transfer guns

Closing Comments

- **Mexico is not Los Angeles**
 - **In Los Angeles we faced the same critique (“LA is not Boston!”) but core principles do transfer**
 - **Differ in laws, sources of violence, criminal justice organization**
- **Data-driven approaches can identify points of leverage to solve key public safety problems**



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