They Can't Quit Recidivism

A New Vision for Evaluating Community Safety Work

Author

Suzanne Boswell
ACLS Leading Edge Fellow
American Council of Learned Societies

Acknowledgements

For More Information
Email info@courtinnovation.org

Center for Court Innovation
520 8th Avenue
New York, NY 10018
p. 646.386.3100
f. 212.397.0985
courtinnovation.org

September 2022

Introduction

In 2012, community organizers working through the recently-created Brownsville Community Justice Center began a series of interventions with the goal of strengthening community safety and reducing gun violence.[1] Collectively known as the Brownsville Anti-Violence Project, these interventions included a public education campaign promoting nonviolence, a range of community engagement projects—such as revitalizing business districts, public street festivals, and placemaking activities—and forums to support people recently returned from prison judged at high-risk of future criminal activity.[3] The project was the subject of three evaluations,[4] all of which focused primarily on the effects of the forums[5] and found similar results: no significant increase in crime deterrence. Given this represented the Justice Center's first significant foray into community safety programming, these evaluations did not augur well for the success of its future efforts.[6]

Crucially, all of these 2012 evaluations, like most evaluations to this day, relied almost exclusively on standard criminal justice data points (arrests, crime rates, recidivism). This was understandable: such measurements are usually the easiest to quantify, analyze, and explain to funders and the public. Yet it is telling that none of the three evaluations attempted to evaluate the Justice Center's work at the community level—its public engagement work—instead concentrating on an intervention that tried to change the behavior of *individuals* (the forums with high-risk people on parole).

Concentrating on standard criminal justice data points led to these evaluations missing what would become the signature impacts of the Justice Center. A decade after those evaluations, the Justice Center has become a major force for community safety in Brownsville.[7] In 2020 alone, it helped six new businesses launch, invested nearly a million dollars into local Black-owned businesses, provided more than 350 people with civil legal services, and distributed more than 1,750 boxes of COVID-19 supplies to residents.[8] The Justice Center uses education, employment, and economic development as crime prevention strategies; hundreds of justice-involved, disconnected (out-of-school or out-of-work)

or otherwise at-risk young people have completed entrepreneurship, job training, diversion, and other programming designed to provide them with pathways to a better future.[9] The Justice Center neighborhood initiatives, such as the Belmont Revitalization Project and the Marcus Garvey Clubhouse, have transformed neglected, unsafe areas into vibrant community spaces.[10] Through its community-led work, the Justice Center has increased resident-led neighborhood revitalization, driving improvements in community safety.[11]

Yet standard criminal justice data often serves as a poor lens on work that seeks to build community safety outside of the criminal legal system. For community members, safety is multidimensional: it includes well-paying work, strong community connections, safe and affordable housing, functional infrastructure, accessible green spaces, and access to thriving businesses, alongside freedom from violence, including police violence. Traditional crime data can't do it justice.

Why is it so hard to evaluate the impact of community safety interventions, and how do we change the landscape of research to better detect this evidence?

Many community safety programs seek to impact entire communities rather than create change at the individual level; others favor approaches separate from the police and the criminal justice system. These interventions range from working to change community norms around gun violence, providing seed money and training to local entrepreneurs to promote opportunities for social mobility, transforming crime hot spots into community spaces, and developing healing practices to help neighborhoods recover from the co-occurring traumas of crime, violence, historic disinvestment, and systemic racism. This issue brief considers the challenge of evaluating community safety work by examining:

- why the research landscape makes evaluating community safety programs difficult;
- how the current metrics inadequately measure those programs' impact; and
- what alternatives exist to mainstream research methodologies.

Current Research Findings

1. The Criminal Legal System

Despite the multidimensional nature of community safety, much current research focuses on just one aspect of it: the risks and consequences of criminal behavior, one individual at a time.[12] In the first years of the Brownsville Anti-Violence Project, evaluations concentrated on an individual-level intervention rooted in the numbers and priorities of the criminal legal system. As noted, since the criminal legal system already collects a mass of information—from convictions to recidivism to crime rates—programs operating in tandem with the criminal legal system tend to be rich in data that a researcher can access and track.[13]

2. Individual-Level Interventions

We might assume research focuses on work targeting change at the individual level because working with individuals is more effective at reducing crime and violence, but it isn't that simple. Researchers favor individual-level interventions because it is easier to quantify their effects. Individual-level programs more easily generate a large sample size, increasing the researcher's ability to detect statistically-significant effects.[14] The opposite is true for community-level interventions, in part because it is magnitudes more expensive to implement a treatment in multiple neighborhoods than for multiple people.

It is also simpler to detect changes in individuals as opposed to communities. A researcher can track whether an individual in a given program has avoided recidivism; it is more difficult to identify what might have caused changes in an entire community's recidivism rate. And because the effects of community-level change are harder to discern, the research validating the work is often less rigorous and prominent, a problem exacerbated by the preference of funders, governments, and research organizations for individual-level programs.[15] The field then tends to confuse the prominence of

individual-level research with proof of its superiority. Thus potentially effective strategies of crime and violence prevention are often overlooked by researchers, funders, and the public alike.

3. Time Frame Concerns

Funding for research generally comes with deadlines, but many violence prevention methods take years to achieve peak results. In general, it takes less time to create change in a single person (or a small group of people) than it does in a social network, neighborhood, or city. The methods to detect community-level change are also longer, more difficult, and often more expensive.

The speed of an intervention's effects does not inherently make it a better intervention, or make the effect more long-lasting. Few researchers have the funding to wait to learn the long-term effects of the programs they study.[16] Even individual-level studies are stymied by arbitrary timelines—a mentorship program for young men who committed intimate partner violence might show a drop-off in new offenses at the four-month mark, but without a longer-term follow-up, researchers will not know whether those effects were sustained.[17]

4. The Dominance of Randomized Controlled Trials

The dominance of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) also creates problems for evaluating community-level interventions. In an RCT, evaluators randomly assign trial participants to either a treatment group or a control group: the treatment group receives the intervention, the control group does not. As this randomization purportedly eliminates any research bias, many researchers, policymakers, and even the lay public consider RCTs more rigorous and objective than other methodologies. RCTs are marketed as the "gold standard," a method exempt from the bias and confusion characterizing other evaluation techniques.[18] Several evidence-grading schemes and federal grant-funding bodies give RCTs

their highest marks for reliability, urging policy-makers and funders to prioritize interventions that employ them.[19]

But neighborhood-level community safety interventions are rarely amenable to RCTs.[20] It is difficult to "randomly" assign neighborhoods to a control or treatment group: if a research study randomized six neighborhoods to receive a gun buyback program, and six others as the control, the study could not stop one of the "control" neighborhoods from instituting its own gun buyback a year into the study.[21]

RCTs also do not work when the sample size is small, and comparative studies of community-level interventions are usually much smaller than individual-level ones—comparing a handful of neighborhoods as opposed to individual-level comparisons of several hundred to several thousand people. This creates a catch-22 scenario for some interventions: an RCT may not be feasible, but other types of evaluation aren't considered "rigorous" or "objective" enough by policymakers or funders.[22]

Yet as critics have pointed out, the promise of RCTs may be overblown.[23] An RCT can tell us whether an intervention had an effect and the size of that effect, but the conclusions only apply to the study itself.[24] What an RCT cannot say is whether that same intervention will work in another setting.[25] In one RCT run in Minneapolis, researchers found that arrests of domestic violence suspects led to a significant drop in rearrests compared to counseling or to separating domestic partners. But five replication studies over the next ten years found widely different impacts: studies in Omaha, Charlotte, and Milwaukee discovered that arrests increased incidents of domestic violence rather than deterring them.[26] In this example, what the Minneapolis RCT could not do was prove that arrests would work as a deterrent anywhere other than during the time-frame of a particular study in Minneapolis.[27]

Rather than treating RCTs as the "gold standard," we should approach them with a balance of credit and skepticism, redirecting some of our attention to other promising methodologies. Instead of putting community safety research on the backburner because it cannot be conducted via RCTs, recognizing the limitations of RCTs would allow researchers to use other methodologies without fearing that their work will be discounted as less rigorous.

The Indicators of Evaluation

1. The Trouble with Crime Rates

Researchers often treat standard criminal justice data points—crimes, arrests, recidivism—as stand-ins for a broad swath of community safety issues. In reality, they are a poor measure of most community safety problems. First, when it comes to traditional crimes such as robberies and assault, police data is inherently skewed. Even with violent crimes, more than half of offenses are never reported to police.[28] Some categories of crimes are even more under-reported: somewhere between 70 to 80 percent of sexual assaults go unreported.[29] At the same time, the justice system's over-policing of poor communities of color creates a distorted image of community crimes.[30]

Recidivism is a particularly troublesome indicator.[31] We judge many public safety interventions via recidivism rates; if an intervention works, it proves that by deterring individuals from committing more crimes. This kind of analysis is rife with pitfalls. If a police department adopts a more lenient approach, for example, recidivism rates may plummet even though individual activities are the same.[32] Similarly, in a scenario where policymakers repeal specific drug laws, entire crime categories may no longer exist: the recidivism rates in a state that prosecutes marjiuana possession may look different from those in a state where marijuana possession is no longer a crime.

On the other hand, since law enforcement generally surveils poor communities and communities of color more heavily, individuals in those communities are more likely to be arrested—and rearrested. Ultimately, while recidivism as a metric purports to capture individual actions—whether someone was arrested, prosecuted, etc.—in reality it is primarily

a measurement of institutional decisions: police deployment and arrest policies, data collection, prosecutorial discretion, city-wide crime policies, and so on.

Depending on the goals of a given intervention, tracking crime may make sense. A neighborhood gun buyback program may want to track whether there is a drop in community gun crimes. However, when crime rates are treated as the sole indicator for community safety interventions, evaluations may miss those programs' full impact. A program focused on revitalizing vacant lots in high-violence neighborhoods might be required to report on local arrest rates. But arrest rates would only scratch the surface of the potential benefits of revitalization: residents feeling safer, workers taking different paths to work, children playing in an area they once avoided, or businesses opening on a once-undesirable street. Without indicators to track those outcomes, the program's actual impact goes undetected.

Conversely, relying solely on criminal justice metrics can make a program's impact look larger than it actually is. An intervention could reduce neighborhood crime rates, even as residents continue to feel unsafe because they have little access to steady work, suffer from food insecurity, or fear being evicted. Through an outsider's lens, the drop in crime rates means the intervention succeeded, yet the program failed to impact residents' primary safety needs. Traditional crime indicators can't do the community justice.

New Approaches

So if crime levels and individual-level changes are not the best outcomes to measure, and RCTs are not the most feasible or ethical methodology, what should researchers consider instead? It is outside the scope of this brief to propose a comprehensive set of indicators and methodologies to supplement or replace current research models, but many alternatives already exist or are being developed.[33]

1. Community-Level Metrics

Community safety programs should supplement individual-level measurements with community-level measurements. There are a variety of promising community-level measurements, including:

- Social connectedness measurements: these interventions work to impact a community's resiliency and connectedness.
- Community-level indicators could include community engagement measurements (attendance at community meetings and events like block parties, voting rates, volunteering rates) and measurements for social cohesion (how residents think and feel about a neighborhood) and collective efficacy (how willing residents are to improve their neighborhood)[34]
- Community norm-change measurements: Some interventions seek to impact norms around a safety issue (e.g., gun violence, interpersonal violence). Community-level indicators could include participation in programming, referrals from outside groups to the intervention or organization itself, number of people trained on an issue, transformations in media representations of community issues,[35] and calls to a hotline or 311.

There are many other impacts that programs seek to make, and each of these interventions will require its own set of community-level indicators. Some of the data sets necessary to evaluate interventions already exist, but many are waiting to be created.

2. New Forms of Data Collection

As researchers move towards community-level measurements, they will also need to consider different ways of collecting data and information, including methods that allow for more input and guidance from the people impacted by the interventions under study. In participatory research, for example, researchers work with residents or participants from the planning and design phase of the intervention onwards to come up with indicators, gather data, and evaluate the results. This allows community

members to be active stakeholders in the research process, helping to produce and influence insights about their community[36]

Another potential research avenue is contribution analysis, an impact evaluation methodology adapted to the particular demands of advocacy work. First introduced in 2001 by Dr. John Mayne, a Canadian public sector evaluator, contribution analysis uses a theory of change approach, seeking to show how a given intervention will make a difference or create a transformation.[37] Contribution analysis then systematically verifies this theory of change, testing it against evidence, context, and rival explanations to build a compelling case for the intervention's contribution (or lack thereof).[38] This analysis is particularly useful in situations like community-based interventions, where there are multiple actors and influences, and where experimental and quasi-experimental research designs are not possible.[39] While contribution analysis has not traditionally been used, it is promising for research methodologies, like process tracing or outcome harvesting, that may be better adapted to the challenges of community-based interventions.

Researchers can also lean more on ethnographic research, a qualitative methodology in which researchers observe and interact with communities in their real-life environments. Ethnographic research is interested in how systems, people, and communities work as a whole. Ethnographers conduct interviews and focus groups, read written documents (media), and observe physical spaces to analyze the culture of people, communities, and larger phenomena.

3. What's Needed

To promote new approaches in community safety research, stakeholders must first be willing to accept new research and evaluation approaches to community safety. No matter how inventive researchers become, their innovations matter little if funders and policymakers will only accept RCTs, or are only interested in recidivism. We are so accustomed to a specific story about the relationship among crime,

violence, and policing that other narratives about community safety can ring false, even when backed up by data. Researchers and community safety programs must find ways to tell new stories about community safety, even as they work to change the standards of evaluation so that stakeholders—the public, fundraisers, and policymakers—understand why these new research approaches are preferable.

Second, funding bodies must be willing to fund longer and more open-ended evaluations. As discussed above, community-level interventions are sometimes met with skepticism from funders because of the time frame needed before researchers can detect results. But a growing body of research shows that community-level interventions lead to durable, scalable effects in reducing violence, increasing feelings of community safety, and building neighborhood resiliency. From greening vacant lots,[40] to strengthening youth relationships,[41] to preventing financial instability through economic opportunity,[42] there is now reliable evidence that community-level interventions positively impact community safety. To take advantage of these interventions, funders need to expand the scope of acceptable indicators and broaden the timeframe of evaluation.

Conclusion

In a moment of rising violent crime nationwide, policymakers and community members are scrambling for solutions. We are also living in a moment of unprecedented awareness about the limitations of the criminal legal system. For researchers, this moment can be an opportunity. To meet the challenge of building safer communities, we need innovative research and evaluation strategies. Rather than relying on the techniques of the past, we need to develop new program designs, theories of change, and metrics of success. Some of these are outlined above, more will be developed later by researchers and community members. Finally, we need to learn to tell new, more nuanced stories about the data we collect, stories that are not just about addressing crime, but that are rooted in broader narratives of community empowerment and community transformation.

Endnotes

1. The Brownsville Community Justice Center was founded in 2011.

2. Placemaking refers to activities that seek to transform public areas into vibrant spaces centered around community needs.

3. Jensen, E., Swaner, R., Picard-Fritsche, S. & Hynynen Lambson, S. (2016). *The Brownsville Anti-Violence Project: Evaluations and Findings.* New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation. Available at: www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Brownsville%20Anti-Violence%20Project_Evaluation%20Report.pdf.

4. The three evaluations are Patrick Sharkey's 2013-2014 evaluation, the Center for Court Innovation's 2016 evaluation, and the UChicago Crime Lab's 2021 evaluation. While the evaluations were conducted at different dates, all use data from 2013-2015. See Jensen, E. (2016). *Brownsville Anti-Violence Project* and Aboaba, D., LaForest, M., Sibella, M., & Parker, L. (2021). *Evaluation of the Gun Violence Reduction Project Notification Forums.* Chicago: University of Chicago Crime Lab. Sharkey's evaluation is not yet published, but key details are available in Jensen, E. (2016) *Brownville Anti-Violence Project*, 17-19, and Aboaba, D.(2021). *Evaluation of the Gun Violence Reduction Project Notification Forums.*

5. Parolees were invited to what were termed "offender notification forums." These forums included representatives from law enforcement and social service agencies. The goal was to deter future criminal behavior and provide community support. See: Jensen, E. (2016). *Brownsville Anti-Violence Project.*

6. Patrick Sharkey, in a year-long evaluation (2013-2014), found no reduction in the overall amount of arrests for forum participants, and no reduction in violence for the neighborhood overall. The UChicago Crime Lab, building off of Dr. Sharkey's evaluation and studying two years of participant data (2014-2016), found that participation in offender renotification forums had no significant impact on future arrests. Finally, the Center for Court Innovation's evaluation surveyed residents around Brownsville considered at high risk for violence before and after the implementation of the forums (2012 and 2015).

7. Brownsville Community Justice Center (2020). *One Pager.* New York, NY: Unpublished Internal Company Document: 3.

8. Brownsville Community Justice Center (2020). *One Pager.* 3.

9. Typically, between 25%-80% of youth involved in Justice Center programming are justice-involved. The other youth are generally disconnected or otherwise at risk. "At risk" young people are identified as young people with intense quality of life barriers. Disconnected or opportunity youth are youth who are out of school or out of work. Out of school can mean truant, aged out, or dropped out.

10. For evaluations of the Justice Center's community work, see Treskon, M. & Esthappan, S. (2018). *Empowering Young People to Make their Place: A Case Study of the Marcus Garvey Youth Clubhouse in Brownsville, Brooklyn.* Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute. Available at: www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99034/brownsville_marcus_garvey_clubhouse.pdf. See also: Treskon, M., Esthappan, S., Okeke, C., & Vásquez-Noriega, C. (2018). Creative Placemaking and Community Safety: Synthesizing Cross-Cutting Themes. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute. Available at: www.urban.org/research/publication/creative-placemaking-and-community-safety-synthesizing-cross-cutting-themes

11. Brownsville Community Justice Center (2020). *One Pager.*

12. John Jay Research Center and Evaluation (2020). *Reducing Violence Without Police: A Review of Research Evidence.* New York, NY: John Jay Research Center. Available at: https://johnjayrec.nyc/2020/11/09/av2020/

13. For the criminal legal system's collection of data, see: Butts, J. & Schiraldi V. (2018). *Recidivism Reconsidered: Preserving the Community Justice Mission*

of *Community Corrections.* Harvard Kennedy School: Papers from the Executive Session on Community Corrections. Available at: www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pcj/files/recidivism_reconsidered.pdf; Lamdan, S. (June 23, 2020). "Defund the Police, and Defund Big Data Policing, Too."*Jurist.* Available at: www.jurist.org/commentary/2020/06/sarah-lamdan-data-policing/; John Jay Research Center. 2020. Reducing Violence. 1-2.

14. Burmeister, E. & Aitken, L.M. (2012). "Sample Size: How Many Is Enough?" *Australian Critical Care* 25 (4), 271−74. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aucc.2012.07.002. John Jay Research Center. (2020). Reducing Violence.

15. John Jay Research Center. (2020). *Reducing Violence.*

16. Carleton-Hug, A. & William Hug, J. (2010). "Challenges and Opportunities for Evaluating Environmental Education Programs." *Evaluation and Program Planning* 33 (2): 159−64. Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0149718909000706

17. For discussion of the short horizon of followup research on individual recidivism and reoffense, see: Brame, R., Mulvey P.E., Schubert A.C, & Piquero R. A. (2018). "Recidivism in a Sample of Serious Adolescent Offenders." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 34 (1): 167−87. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10940-016-9329-2

18. For discussion of RCTs as the "gold standard" of evidence gathering, see: John Jay Research Center. (2020). Reducing Violence; Deaton, A. & Cartwright N. (2018)."Understanding and Misunderstanding Randomized Controlled Trials." Social Science and Medicine 210: 2. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953617307359/. Cartwright, N. & Hardie J. (2012). Evidence-Based Policy: A Practical Guide to Doing It Better. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

19. Cartwright N. (2012) Evidence-Based Policy.

20. John Jay Research Center. (2020). *Reducing Violenc*e; Butts, J. & Roman J.K. (2018). "Good

Questions: Building Evaluation Evidence in a Competitive Policy Environment." *Justice Evaluation Journal* 1 (1): 15−31. Available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/24751979.2018.1478237.

21. Similarly, researchers can struggle to separate "control" and "treatment" groups in community-level interventions. If an intervention involves giving talks about domestic abuse to a "treatment" group of young people in a neighborhood, there is no guarantee that the "control" group in the same neighborhood would avoid hearing about those talks. In this hypothetical, because the control group might have also received the effects of the treatment - the domestic violence talk - the study's ability to prove that the intervention is responsible for the outcome is compromised. In the field of evaluation, this is called a threat to internal validity - when it is difficult to prove whether the intervention is responsible for the documented impact.

22. For critiques of the deployment of rigor and objectivity in research, see Strega, S. (2005). "The View from the Poststructural Margins: Epistemology and Methodology reconsidered." pp. 199-236. In *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches.* edited by S. Strega & L. Brown, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.; Dunbar, C. Jr., 2008. "Critical Race Theory and Indigenous Methodologies." In *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies.* edited by Smith, L.T., Denzin, N.M., & Lincoln, Y.S., New York: Sage Publications.

23. For critiques of Randomized Controlled Trials, see Deaton A. (2018)."Understanding and Misunderstanding Randomized Controlled Trials."; Cartwright N. (2012). *Evidence-Based Policy*; Sampson, R.J. (2018). "After the Experimental Turn: A Commentary on Deaton and Cartwright." *Social Science & Medicine: Randomized Controlled Trials and Evidence-based Policy: A Multidisciplinary Dialogue* 210. Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277953618301783?via%3Dihub. Kabeer, N. (2020). "'Misbehaving' RCTs: The Confounding

Problem of Human Agency." World Development 127. Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305750X19304589; Butts J. (2018). "Building Evaluation Evidence," 15–31.

24. In other words, while RCTs have high internal validity, they have low external validity: when evaluating an RCT, we can be confident that the cause and effect relationship established in the study cannot be explained by other factors (internal validity), but we have very low confidence that we can generalize the results of that study to other people or situations (external validity).

25. Deaton A. (2018). "Understanding and Misunderstanding Randomized Controlled Trials," 2-3. For a particularly striking example of an RCT in criminal legal policy whose conclusions did not replicate outside the study, see: Sherman, Lawrence W. & Berk, R. A. (1984). "The Specific Deterrent Effects of Arrest for Domestic Assault." *American Sociological Review* 49, no. 2: 261–72. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2095575; Sherman, L., Smith, D.A., Schmidt, J.A. & Rogan, D.P. (1992). "Crime, Punishment, and Stake in Conformity: Legal and Informal Control of Domestic Violence." American Sociological Review 57 (5): 680–90. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2095921; Sampson, R.J. (2018). "After the Experimental Turn: A Commentary on Deaton and Cartwright."

26. Sherman, L. (1992). "Crime, Punishment, and Stake in Conformity." 680–90.

27. The Minneapolis RCT is also a good example of the timeframe problem, because a 24-year follow-up of the Milwaukee replication by researchers found that victims of domestic violence were more than 60 percent more likely to have died 24 years later if their partners were arrested and jailed than if partners were warned (among other findings). These findings did not emerge in the initial, time-limited replication study. See: Sherman, L. W. & Harris H.W. (2015). "Increased Death Rates of Domestic Violence Victims from Arresting vs. Warning Suspects in the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment (MilDVE)." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 11 (1): 1–20. Available

at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11292-014-9203-x.

28. See Butts J. (2018). Recidivism Reconsidered; Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2019). *Criminal Victimization*, 2018. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Justice. Available at: https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv18.pdf.

29. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2019). "Criminal Victimization, 2018."

30. John Jay Research Center. (2020). *Reducing Violence.*

31. Butts, J.A. and Schiraldi V. (March 14, 2018). "The Recidivism Trap." *The Marshall Project*. Available at: www.themarshallproject.org/2018/03/14/the-recidivism-trap.

32. Butts J. (2018). Recidivism Reconsidered; Greene, J.A. & Schiraldi V. 2016. "Better by Half." *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 29 (1) 34-38. Available at: www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pcj/files/fsr2901_04_greeneschiraldi.pdf.

33. For a comprehensive list of alternative approaches to measuring community-level transformation, see: Buxton, M., Fradkin, A. & Wallace a. (2021). *Measuring Community Safety* in NYC. National Innovation Services. Available at: www.safetymetrics.nis.us/download-full-report; New York City Community Health Profiles (2018). "Community Health Profiles." Retrieved June 3 2022. (https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/data/data-publications/profiles.page#bk); John Jay Research Center. (2020). *Reducing Violence.*

34. These measurements could include the neighborhood cohesion scale, Robert Sampson's Scale, and the De Jong-GierJong-Gierveld Loneliness scale Jong-Gierveld Loneliness scale. See: Buckner, J. (1988). "The Development Of An Instrument To Measure Neighborhood Cohesion." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 16: 771–91. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00930892; Sampson, R. (1997). "Collective Efficacy Scale." Stanford SPARQTools,. Available at: http://sparqtools.org/mobility-measure/collective-efficacy-scale/; Gierveld, J. & Van Tilburg, T.

(2006). "A 6-Item Scale for Overall, Emotional, and Social Loneliness: Confirmatory Tests on Survey Data." *Research on Aging* 28, no. 5 : 582–98. Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0164027506289723. Jong-Gierveld Loneliness scale. See: Buckner, J. (1988). "The Development Of An Instrument To Measure Neighborhood Cohesion." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 16: 771–91. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00930892; Sampson, R. (1997)."Collective Efficacy Scale." Stanford SPARQTools,. Available at: http://sparqtools.org/mobility-measure/collective-efficacy-scale/; Gierveld, J. & Van Tilburg, T. (2006). "A 6-Item Scale for Overall, Emotional, and Social Loneliness: Confirmatory Tests on Survey Data." *Research on Aging* 28, no. 5 : 582–98. Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0164027506289723.

35. Here, researchers would choose keywords around the intervention (say "gun violence") and monitor community media or social media for a certain number of years prior to the start of the program's intervention through five years after to assess how perceptions of an issue change over time. Researchers would use quantitative content analysis and discourse analysis to see how an issue is portrayed through discourse over time.

36. For an example of participatory research, see Swaner, R., White, E., Martinez, A., Camacho, A., Spate, B., Alexander, J., Webb, L., & Evans, K. (2020). *Gotta Make Your Own Heaven: Guns, Safety, and the Edge of Adulthood in New York City.* New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation. Available at: www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2020/Report_GunControlStudy_08052020.pdf. See also the companion podcast, which gets into the design of the study and its methodological challenges: Watkins, M. (November 30, 2020). "Guns, Young People, Hidden Networks." *New Thinking*. Available at: www.courtinnovation.org/publications/guns-nyc-hidden-networks.

37. Kane, R., Levine C., Orions C. & Reinelt, C. (2017). Contributing Analysis in Policy Work: Assessing Advocacy's Influence. Washington,

D.C: Center for Evaluation Innovation. Available at: www.evaluationinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CONT_ANAL_PAGES_081221.pdf.

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