Roundtable on Measuring Gun Violence

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Why Examine Topics on Gun Violence?

**IL Illegal Gun Possession Study**
- Enforcement often focuses on possession, a felony with negative impacts
- Our research questions
  - Were arrests increasing?
  - Are there demographic differences?
  - What are motivations for gun carrying?

**IL Firearm Victim-Offender Overlap Study**
- Given what we know about victim-offender overlap, led to our research questions
  - To what extent is there a *firearm homicide victim*-offender overlap?
  - Are there demographic differences?
Guns are not assembly-line cases, and they shouldn’t be treated as such. I’m scared for my life – and I gotta go to prison because I fear for my life, for my family’s safety? Because we are not fortunate enough to live someplace else?”

Chris, age 31, Chicago resident previously incarcerated for illegal gun possession
Methods: What Did We Do?

• Illegal Gun Carrying Study
  • Examined IL arrest data over 10 years
  • Based on statute, coded as possession,” “discharge,” or “violent”

• Victim-Offender Overlap Study
  • Matched 2015-2016 IVDRS data with prior IL arrest and prison records \((n = 1,331)\)
What Did We Learn?

- Gun carrying arrests dramatically increased, while overall arrests decreased
- Young black males in Chicago had most illegal gun-related arrests
- Most with gun-related arrests had prior criminal records
- Most firearm homicide victims had a prior arrest
- About one-third had prior incarceration
What Can Be Done?

• Consider state and police policies that may lead to:
  • Excessive stops and searches
  • Disproportionate targeting of Black youth in urban areas
  • Harshly penalties for those who possess, but not use guns, leading to mass incarceration

• Invest in
  • resources at the individual, community, and societal level
  • gun violence prevention and diversion programs
  • Treatment in the system that addresses trauma
References

