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THE INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA  
COVERAGE ON PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

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**THE INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA COVERAGE ON PROJECT  
SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS**

**By**

**Nayatt Ayub**

**A THESIS**

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## ABSTRACT

### THE INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA COVERAGE ON PROECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

By

Nayatt Ayub

Project Safe Neighborhoods has been one of the most promising initiatives by the Department of Justice to combat gun violence, yet research on the implementation of the initiative and the influence the media has on it has been limited. This study evaluates media coverage of the initiative and how it influences its implementation in the different U.S. jurisdictions. The evaluation adopted several strategies and methodologies including content analysis to determine the amount of coverage per jurisdiction, the type of sources most commonly used, and the type of information covered. Case studies of two jurisdictions that showed media success was conducted to allow for a more in depth study of the subject. This study had several important findings and concluded that there is minimum coverage of the PSN initiative across the jurisdictions and that most of the coverage is incident related. Additionally, the study found that those jurisdictions that received higher coverage were jurisdictions that aggressively actively implemented the initiative through aggressive prosecutions.

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## DEDICATION

To my mom and dad for all their love, support, guidance, and most of all for always believing in me, without them the completion of this work would have not been possible.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This exploratory study will examine the amount and type of media coverage of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). PSN is a collaborative initiative between state and local officials coordinated by the Department of Justice (USDOJ) and overseen by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices intended to reduce gun violence in the United States.

Communication is an essential component of PSN, however, some PSN jurisdictions have been more successful in receiving media attention and coverage than others.

Although communication is a critical component of PSN, there has been no research that has examined how jurisdictions have attempted to use the news media to accomplish the goals of the program.

There are two objectives of this study. First, this study will describe how PSN has been presented in the news. Issues that will be examined include the amount of coverage received, the type of coverage (positive, negative, solely informational, etc), and the type of sources cited in PSN articles. Second, this study will explore the strategies used by successful jurisdictions to achieve significantly more coverage about their PSN initiative. The methodology includes evaluating and analyzing newspaper articles from different cities, and conducting interviews with members of PSN task forces in successful "media" jurisdictions to identify the different media strategies utilized. This approach will also allow identification of potential benefits of media exposure on the program as well as identify other ways (e.g., other than seeking attention in the news media) that some PSN jurisdictions have attempted to communicate with the public or offending population about the goals of the program. One might expect that the most successful PSN jurisdictions also receive significantly more news coverage. In short,



there should be a connection between the implementation of the program and media coverage. This project provides a first step in exploring the connection between implementation and news coverage.

### **The Costs of Gun Violence**

The real cost of gun violence, we have argued, comes from the devastating emotional costs experienced by relatives and friends of gunshot victims, and the fear and general reduction in quality of life that the threat of gun violence imposes on everyone in America, including people who are not victimized.

(Cook & Ludwig, 2000, p.113)

Studying the implementation and success of programs such as PSN is important since gun crime is very dangerous and quite prevalent in the United States, especially in urban areas. Although violent crime rates steadily decreased between 1995 and 2004, they began to again increase in 2005 with gun violence continuing to be a considerable problem (Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS], 2006). Each year, approximately 30,000 people die of injuries caused by firearms (Miniño, Arias, Kochanek, Murphy, & Smith, 2002)- rates similar to those of automobile accidents and exceeding the death toll from AIDS and liver disease (Cook & Ludwig, 2000). Crime reports established that 72.6 percent of homicides in 2005 involved a firearm (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2006). Gun violence is also widespread among the nation's youth. It has been estimated that since 1979 more youths have died from shootings than military personnel in Vietnam (The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, n.d). The rates of gun violence in the United States are above those of all the other industrialized nations including the United Kingdom and Japan (Cook & Ludwig, 2000).

*Impact on victims, their families, and the community*

It is estimated that each homicide victim is survived by an average of three loved ones for whom the violent death produces a painful and traumatic grief.  
(as cited in Bonderman, 2001, p.3).

The toll gun violence takes on victims and their families is outrageous. Victims may suffer both physical and psychological damages in addition to lost productivity due to hospitalization time and court proceedings. If the victim dies, the family faces much pain, grief, family disruption, and in some instances economic hardship. Gun violence also affects these families in terms of the future since teenagers are more likely to die from gun shot wounds than any other cause, and this is especially true for African Americans (USDOJ, 2001).

Gun violence does not only impact the victim and their families, but also communities and the nation as a whole, especially in the economic sector. The amount of resources spent on addressing gun violence is quite high and takes away funds that could be used to address other social problems- education, poverty, drug abuse, and mental health (Cook & Ludwig, 2000). In 1990 it was estimated that the nation spent \$20.4 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity related to gun violence (Max & Rice, 1993). Cook, Lawrence, Ludwig & Miller (1999) analyzed data from hospitals in New York, Maryland, and South Carolina and concluded that of all hospitalized gunshot cases 40 to 50 percent were paid for by the government. Their study also looked at lifetime costs of treating gunshot injuries and estimated it at \$2.3 billion from which \$ 1.1 billion was paid by the government (i.e., the taxpayers) (Cook, Lawrence, Ludwig, & Miller, 1999). Overall, the cost of gun violence in the U.S. has been estimated to be around \$100

billion per year which impacts all Americans, including those who are not victimized (Cook & Ludwig, 2000).

Gun crime has a deep impact on all communities, especially those with higher concentrations of minority groups and on the lower socioeconomic bracket (Cook & Ludwig, 2000). Studies on gun homicide have concluded that Hispanic and African American males are more likely than White males to be homicide victims involving firearms (seven and 25 times more likely respectively), the same has been concluded for African American and Hispanic women but at lower rates (Cook & Ludwig, 2000; Bonderman, 2001). Additionally, the high rates of violence creates psychological trauma since it increases the level of fear in citizens leading to a decrease in communal life because people are not willing to leave their homes and socialize with their neighbors. This fear also leads to a decrease in tourism (Cook & Ludwig, 2000; USDOJ, 2001).

#### *Responding to Gun Violence*

The criminal justice system has made several efforts to reduce gun violence, especially in youth by adopting “get tough” policies such as increased sentencing time and trying juveniles in adult criminal courts (Feld, 1998), as well as adopting tougher gun control measures that deal with acquisition, carrying, and use of firearms. Other responses by the criminal justice system include programs or strategies that attempt to deter illegal possession and use of firearms, interrupt illegal gun markets, and respond to illegal gun use (Sheppard, 1999). Specific initiatives include providing a limited number of licenses to sell firearms, weapons hotlines, and gun buyback programs. For example, to interrupt sources of illegal firearms, the ATF has implemented gun tracing programs

and ballistic identification systems, in addition to the inspection of federal firearm licensees and educational programs for at-risk youths (OJJDP, n.d.; Sheppard, 1999).

The efforts to address and reduce gun violence are not limited to the criminal justice system. Schools have tried to minimize gun violence by adopting zero tolerance policies and increasing security measures through the implementation of ID badges, security guards, and metal detectors. It is estimated that Chicago Public schools, for example, spend approximately \$41 million a year in security personnel in addition to the purchasing and maintenance costs of metal detectors. Furthermore, other preventative interventions, such as community reconstruction, try to reduce the risk of violence exposure while protecting a community (Howell & Hawkins, 1998).

The medical field, being deeply affected by gun violence, has also adopted hospital based programs to aid victims of gun violence; these programs include comprehensive counseling, intervention, and treatment in order to minimize the emotional impact of the wound and prevent future involvement with firearms (Bonderman, 2001). Furthermore, some of these programs, such as Caught in the Crossfire (CC) in Oakland, CA, have a hotline that medical staff can call to report intakes of juveniles with gunshot wounds so that CC intervention specialists can come to assess the situation and provide support for the victims (Bonderman, 2001).

One comprehensive and recent initiative implemented is PSN. The program will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but it is critical to note that the purpose is to reduce gun violence. The strategy involves implementing tougher sentences and prosecution of offenders at the federal level. There are several elements to this initiative,

and communication is a key component. Although very important, there has not been much research in the area of communication and PSN.

### **Media and Criminal Justice**

Another aspect that makes this study important is the role of the media in the lives of citizens. The media in the United States may influence citizens' perceptions on crime and crime fighting/prevention methods by police departments since the media are a major source of information for most people. Often, people are not aware of situations, programs, and efforts by governmental units until they are exposed to them by the media. The different entities in the criminal justice system realize that they must rely on the exposure that media is able to provide and thus are more willing to collaborate with the media, print and television in particular, to gain recognition and support. Although much attention is given to crime, there has not been much media coverage of criminal justice programs implemented to address crime. Media coverage of such programs is rare due to the lack of newsworthy characteristics - as explained by a reporter "death, blood, and bodies" (Chermak, 1995, p.15). As mentioned before, the purpose of this paper is to identify effective implementation of PSN in different jurisdictions as it relates to media coverage; hence, the lack of coverage of programs is important to note to successfully study this question.

After review of the literature on crime, criminal justice and media coverage, it is clear that, although much media coverage is given to crime, little is given to programs and policies developed to prevent and minimize it. Much research has been conducted on how media portrayal of crime influences society; however, there is a gap in research when it comes to understanding how criminal justice initiatives, like Project Safe

Neighborhoods, are presented in the news. Moreover, although there has been considerable work that examines the types of strategies criminal justice organizations use to interact with the media, no research has considered such strategies related to accomplishing the goals of Project Safe Neighborhoods. This study seeks to fill these research gaps and identify whether or not coverage of such programs and policies- focusing on Project Safe Neighborhoods- can be linked to success.

The next chapter in this proposal, Chapter 2, states the problem of gun violence and reviews the literature available on PSN, the role of the media in the construction of news and how it influences society, and the amount of coverage given to criminal justice programs in comparison to that given to crime. Chapter 3 demonstrates the research context--this chapter includes the research design and methodology that will be used to determine the relationship between media coverage and program implementation. Chapter 4 provides a summary of the statistical results for the content analysis and explanation of the tables. Chapter 5 includes two case studies conducted on jurisdictions that were considered high coverage in order to gain better understanding of the media strategies utilized to promote PSN. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusions gathered from the analysis and mentions the policy implications of this research as well as limitations and future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND LITERATURE**

### **REVIEW**

The implementation and study of police programs focused on gun crime is very important since gun crime is very dangerous and prevalent in the United States. The common occurrence of violent crime involving firearms has created a series of programs, and the most recent national effort is the Project Safe Neighborhood Initiative. It has been well documented that this program has evolved from other successful initiatives, such as COMPSTAT in New York, Project Exile in Richmond, Operation Ceasefire in Boston, and a ten-city program called Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI). Before discussing the communication elements of PSN, the programs that led to it are briefly reviewed below.

#### *COMPSTAT*

COMPSTAT (“Compare Statistics”), a crime analysis and managerial accountability program, was developed in New York City in the early 1990s to address high crime and disorder rates. Part of the logic behind COMPSTAT comes from Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) Broken Windows theory of crime which states that insignificant offenses and disorder leads to more crime and community breakdowns; thus this program focuses on maintaining order through aggressive policing. The program required the police command staff, area commanders, special units and prosecutors to attend regular meetings to address the crime trends in the different areas. Part of the intention of this program was to hold the different police managers accountable for the crime rates in their area (Silverman, 1999; McGarrell, 2005).

Since its implementation in NYC in 1994 the crime rates have dramatically decreased. Murder rates declined from approximately 1500 in 1994 to 320 in the beginning of September, 2007; plummeting NYC to 163<sup>rd</sup> from 114 on the list of 200 most violent cities in the U.S. (Silverman, 1999; NYPD CompStat Unit, 2007). Research also indicates that COMPSTAT has been widely institutionalized across the U.S. Studies conducted on the implementation of COMPSTAT determined that large police departments in the southern and western states were more likely to adopt the program and that this adoption was strongly linked to the “desire to reduce serious crime and increase management control over field operations” (Weisburd, Mastrofski, Greenspan, & Willis, 2004, p.15). However, it is important to mention that there has been great debate among researchers in the field about whether or not the decline in violent crime can really be attributed to COMPSTAT since it is difficult to evaluate the individual components of the program (Rosenfeld, Fornango & Baumer, 2005).

### *Ceasefire*

Operation Ceasefire or the Boston Gun Project was implemented in Boston as a tactical problem-solving plan focused on youth gun violence, especially youth involved in gang activity since they were responsible for approximately 60 percent of the crime (McGarrell, Chermak, Wilson, and Corsaro, 2006; USDOJ, 2001). The project utilized a deterrence-based model and it involved multiple agencies at both local and federal levels as well as academics who conducted research on the nature of the violence problem (McGarrell, 2005). Some of the methods used in ceasefire included crackdowns on violent groups and meetings with youth involved in community corrections (probation and parole) to inform them that action for violent crime would be taken. These meetings



were referred to as “offender notification meetings” or “Lever-Pulling” meetings (McGarrell, Chermak, Wilson, and Corsaro, 2006). The program also exposed its purposes by taking the message directly into the community and ensuring that gang members understood the repercussions of their involvement in gun crime (USDOJ, 2001).

Research conducted by the Harvard team involved with ceasefire compared the rates in Boston to those in other U.S. cities and concluded that the program was linked to a significant reduction in gun violence including youth homicide victimization, gun assaults, and calls for service for shots fired, with an approximate 68 percent decrease for youthful offenders on the first year and an overall decline of 70 percent (Braga, Kennedy, Waring, and Piehl, 2001; Rosenfeld, Fornango, and Baumer, 2005; McGarrell, 2005; USDOJ, 2001).

#### *SACSI*

The creation of SACSI by the Department of Justice in the late 1990s was based on the success of the programs mentioned previously, especially CeaseFire (McGarrell, Freilich & Chermak, 2007). The initiative was implemented in ten cities across the U.S. and involved multiple agencies working together. SACSI utilized strategic problem solving and tested approaches used in Boston’s ceasefire (Roehl, Rosenbaum, Costello, Coldren, Schuck, Kunard, & Forde, 2006). The program also included offender notification meetings and communication efforts like those implemented in Richmond-billboards, posters, and buses. An important strategy of SACSI was “smart prosecution,” here prosecutors at both the state and federal levels as well as ATF agents and local

police reviewed cases in a systematic way to determine whether federal or local prosecution for gun crime would be more effective (Roehl et al., 2006; McGarrell, 2005).

Research reports on the SACSI initiative provided numerous promising results. The reports showed that the decline of gun violence in Indianapolis resembled that of Boston. Additionally, Winston-Salem and Portland experienced reduction in youth gun violence, recidivism, and drive-by shootings respectively (Roehl et al., 2006; McGarrell, 2005). In general, comparisons of crime trends of SACSI sites to equivalent non -SACSI sites showed that the declines of violent crime were more visible in those sites implementing SACSI (Roehl et al., 2006; McGarrell, 2005).

As mentioned previously, SACSI utilized several methods used in previous programs and in a way paved the way for the implementation of PSN.

### *Project Exile*

Project Exile was introduced in Richmond, Virginia as a response to the high levels of homicide and assault involving firearms. In the late 1990s, it was concluded that the levels of violence being experienced in Richmond were unacceptable and that action against violent drug crimes involving firearms would be taken at the federal level since harsher penalties would be attained (McGarrell, 2005; Rosenfeld, Fornango, and Baumer, 2005). The main focus of this program was to deter people from carrying and using firearms for criminal purposes (Rosenfeld, Fornango, and Baumer, 2005). The implementation of Project Exile in Richmond led to a decline in the city's homicide levels and the removal of large number of violent criminals from the streets (McGarrell, 2005; Rosenfeld, Fornango, and Baumer, 2005; Comey & Miller, 2002).

Participants in the program reported that part of the reason for Exile's success was the communication/outreach component. However, there is no research that clarifies whether or not this outreach was a cause of success. The program promoted deterrence by relying on the use of free media and commercial advertisement (Comey & Miller, 2002). Additionally, citizens who wanted to get involved formed the Citizen Support Foundation which handled all media contracts and conducted fundraisers. Project Exile was advertised in billboards, painted buses that operated through the whole city, TV commercials, and supermarket bags (Comey & Miller, 2002; USDOJ, 2001). Additionally, the message was delivered through the slogan "an illegal gun gets you five years in federal prison" and the community was involved by being encouraged to report guns to a CrimeStoppers telephone number (Comey & Miller, 2002). The initiative changed the attitudes of people in the Richmond area and illegal gun possession, once seen as a minor offense, was seen as a serious offense. Review of cases in Richmond have shown that offenders steered away from possessing or utilizing firearms in their criminal activities because of the five- year sentence advertised (Comey & Miller, 2002).

The program proved to be very successful the first year it was implemented with a 40 percent decrease in homicides and 30 percent drop in armed robberies and five hundred convictions, additional research conducted after the first year of implementation also showed Exile to be successful in reducing firearm violence in Richmond (USDOJ, 2001; Rosenfeld, Fornango & Baumer, 2005).

### **Overview of Project Safe Neighborhood**

Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN) is an initiative to reduce gun violence in the United States. The billion dollar comprehensive program was created in January of 2001

by President George W. Bush in order to address and combat gun violence. PSN, overseen by the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office, combines the efforts of law enforcement, prosecutors, and community leaders to deter and punish gun crime at the federal, state and local levels (USDOJ, 2004). That same year, federal funds were assigned to the initiative in order to employ more prosecutors, provide more training for people involved in the program, and to support outreach efforts (Zimmerman, 2006).

PSN has five core elements: partnerships, strategic planning, training, outreach, and accountability (USDOJ, 2001, 2004; McGarrell, 2005). These elements are briefly reviewed below.

#### *Partnerships*

PSN is a collaborative program. In order for it to succeed multi-agency cooperation is essential. The multiple agencies involve law enforcement and correctional agents and prosecutors at the local, state, and federal levels. In addition, the participation of groups from the private sector is extremely important to the success of the program as well as a media consultants and research partners (Zimmerman, 2006). Partnerships of this nature have been effectively adopted by different initiatives such as Community Policing (CP), where the media plays a very important role.

#### *Strategic Planning*

Strategic planning refers to the strategies used to address the crime problems in the specific jurisdictions. This planning must be tailored since every jurisdiction faces different challenges. Part of strategic planning is the decision whether to prosecute under federal or state law, crime mapping, and utilizing ballistic technology. The approach

taken to reduce gun violence will vary across locality, however, the initiative requests every U.S. attorney to include three priorities in their plan. These include:

- Increased prosecution of violent organizations by utilizing conspiracy laws, or 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) which provides guidelines for the prosecution of armed drug dealers and carries a mandatory sentence of five, seven or ten years in prison
  - Increased enforcement of federal laws against illegal gun traffickers and suppliers
  - Strongly enforce firearm laws regarding felons and prohibited persons
- (Comey & Miller, 2002; Zimmerman, 2006).

### *Training*

The members of the task forces must be properly trained in different areas relating to illegal guns and gun crime. Training may include firearm identification, safety, trafficking issues, and the different state and federal laws and statutes. The training is conducted on a regional basis and in some instances in a joint environment between the several agencies involved to promote effective partnerships. As of 2005, an approximate 18,000 people have attended PSN-related training (McDevitt, Decker, Kroovand Hipple, McGarrell, 2006).

### *Outreach*

The outreach component is extremely important to the success of PSN since it informs the communities about the initiative and gets them involved. The developers of PSN understand the importance of communicating the message to potential offenders and the community; thus, they supported any advancement of prevention and intervention components (Decker & McDevitt, 2006). The messages conveyed through the media seek

to inform the citizens about the program and increase support for more aggressive prosecution of gun offenders (Zimmerman, 2006).

The use of media is strongly encouraged and to some extent required, in fact, the initial funding given to each jurisdiction included approximately \$ 170, 000 over a two year period to support the outreach component. The use of this funds and the outreach conducted were left to the discretion of each jurisdiction (USDOJ, 2004). Although these funds were given, the outreach campaign may prove to be very expensive and additional funds are not readily available, thus the jurisdictions must rely on charity. However, the U.S. Attorneys are forbidden from forming any foundations to gain funds for the cause. As a result, other task force members have taken the initiative to create charitable organizations to ensure funding for the outreach component (USDOJ, 2001, Zimmerman, 2006).

#### *Accountability*

Each of the 94 districts must account for their activities. They must provide reports twice a year that address their activities, crime rates and gun violence. The formal reports are submitted January 31 and July 31 of every year and must follow a format that includes the nature of partnerships with the different sectors, how the problem of gun crime is being addressed, the media component of the strategy and the training conducted and/or attended (Zimmerman, 2006).

#### **Variation in PSN Success**

Although not much research has been conducted on the success and variation of PSN implementation, those studies that have been conducted are promising. The commitment to implement federal prosecution has been widely accepted. During FY

2005 over 13,000 people were charged with federal gun crimes, making it the highest number of prosecutions recorded by DOJ. In addition, since PSN was adopted, the number of federal prosecutions involving firearm crimes has increased 73 percent (McDevitt, Decker, Kroovand Hipple & McGarrell, 2006).

Currently, there is not much research available on the success and failures of PSN, but there have been several case studies on some of the strategies used by PSN that have shown promising results. For example, studies on gun prosecution case screening have shown some success in the areas of information sharing, increases in federal prosecutions, and public safety. The program has also faced many challenges especially in the area of timing. The case study concluded that in order for case screening to be truly effective other strategies must be implemented simultaneously (i.e. offender notification and violent offender lists) (Decker & McDevitt, 2006).

The review of offender notification meetings, which seek to deter offenders by sending the message that gun violence will not be accepted, showed some success in Boston and Indianapolis. In Boston, the meetings led to a significant reduction in youth homicides and assaults. In Indianapolis, the evaluation focused on the offenders and found that those who had attended the meetings felt that they were more at risk of being sanctioned and had lower rates of re-offending (McDevitt, Decker, Kroovand Hipple & McGarrell, 2006). Other case studies that have shown promising results are those regarding offender lists. These case studies look at the effectiveness of implementing chronic violent offenders lists focusing on program WOW in St. Louis, VIPER in Indianapolis, Impact Players in Boston, and ELIMICON in Georgia (Bynum & Decker, 2006).

A recent study by Papachristos, Meares & Fagan (2007) evaluated the impact of several intervention strategies, including increased federal action for convicts involved with guns, longer sentences linked with federal prosecution, supply-side firearm policing related to higher rates of firearm seizures, and the advertising of deterrence messages through offender notification meetings. All of these strategies were implemented in Chicago as part of the PSN initiative. The results from their study were promising- the researchers noted a 37 percent decrease in quarterly homicide rates and concluded that several of the interventions were associated with this decrease, especially those interventions involving offender notification meetings (Papachristos, Meares & Fagan, 2007). Evaluations of intervention strategies such as the offender notification meetings implemented in the City of Lowell, Massachusetts concluded that after the strategy was implemented the city saw reduction in firearm violence. However, the researchers cannot conclude whether or not the results are short or long term (McDevitt, Braga & Cronin, 2007).

Even though the case studies conducted have been promising, much needs to be done in the area of evaluating the program, its implementation, and successes but this evaluation may prove difficult since much of the information comes from formal reports that are slightly skewed (Zimmerman, 2006). Assessments by Ludwig concluded that all of the districts experienced an increase in cooperation between the different agencies (as cited in Zimmerman, 2006), however, Zimmerman's work (2006) calls into question the assessment by showing that PSN research partners question the validity of such reports.

In terms of implementation, a study by Zimmerman (2006) looked at variation in program and policy implementations across the nation focusing on PSN. She describes



that, in theory, the implementation of such programs and policies are effective in reducing risks to the communities but in practice, but that implementation have shown limited success. Specifically, adoption of policies and programs has varied widely across the 94 jurisdictions and the elements that work for one may not work for another. There are several obstacles that must be taken into account especially in the criminal justice field where many of the agencies are decentralized and autonomous (Zimmerman, 2006).

Zimmerman's study concluded that implementation of PSN was more likely to happen in areas that had better information technology infrastructures and had previous experience with similar programs such as ceasefire and SACSI. The research also found that some areas the implementation of the program was symbolic in nature and although a task force was created for formal purposes it did not meet and that all work was done by the U.S. Attorney's office staff (Zimmerman, 2006).

A significant way to monitor implementation trends is to look at news media and the coverage it gives the policy/program at hand. The type of coverage given heavily influences the perception citizens have of criminal justice policies and risk of crime which is very important since public support is needed to implement any type of crime control strategy (Zimmerman, 2006). The following section reviews the important role media has on society as a whole and the criminal justice system.

### **The Importance of Media in Society and the Criminal Justice System**

The media in the United States play a very important role in the every day life of citizens and their views of the world surrounding them. Daily, we find ourselves surrounded by it. The U.S. Census Bureau (2007a) reported that in 2002, 99 percent of US households owned a radio system and 98.2 percent owned a television set, an average

of 5.6 radios and 2.4 televisions per household. Although print media circulation has dropped since the 1970s, probably due to the invention of the internet, as of 2002, 52.2 million households still received daily newspapers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007a). Fifty six percent of Americans identified television as being the principal source for news, both national and international (Lipschultz and Hilt, 2002). On average, Americans spend 1,546 hours watching television and 188 hours reading the newspaper per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007b).

The extensive reliance on media and the lack of experience the general public has with crime plays a very important role in the perception of crime and the criminal justice system as a whole since, for many Americans, media are the main source for crime news. Crime coverage also influences people's perceptions of crime and increases their fear of it; the relationship between the media and the fear of crime is dependant on the characteristics of both the message and the audience (Chiricos, Eschholz & Gertz, 1997). People who have been victims of crime or who share characteristics to those shown as victims and heavy media consumers are more likely to be afraid (Croteau & Hoynes, 1997). Additionally, the medium in which the news is presented, either newspaper or television, also influences fear of crime. Crime stories, especially those in newspapers, have a stronger influence on whites, the elderly, and women- all of which are least likely to be victimized when compared to minority young males (Chiricos, Eschholz & Gertz, 1997).

The limited experiences with crime and the distorted image of crime presented by media in both fictional and non fictional shows have potential negative effects on law enforcement and prosecuting agencies. One example is the much discussed "CSI effect."

This phenomenon increases the public's expectations on crime solving techniques and makes the public place put more pressure on criminal justice professionals. The emergence of this effect has affected the outcome of criminal cases throughout the United States. A 2005 survey given to prosecutors (n=102) in Maricopa County, AZ revealed that 38 percent of them had cases that resulted in either hung juries or acquittals due to lack of forensic evidence to compliment sufficient testimony (Thomas, 2006).

These results show how the amount and type of coverage crime receives has a deep effect in societal perception since it leads to, what sociologists term, a social construction of reality (Surette, 1995; Croteau & Hoynes, 1997; Lipschultz & Hilt, 2002). This occurrence allows people to build an image of the world based on the information they have gathered from the media, their preexisting understanding of crime, and the cultural context in which they are in, leading them to behave according to that perception (Croteau & Hoynes, 1997; Lipschultz & Hilt, 2002; Doyle, 2003).

### **Presentation of Crime and Criminal Justice in the Media**

The media shows most crimes as being violent, when in reality crime statistics prove the opposite (Sacco, 1995). For instances, studies of media in Louisiana in the late 1970s showed that although robberies and murders comprised 12.4 percent of the city's crime they made up about 80 percent of crime in the news (Sheley & Ashkins, 1981). A large amount of the crimes presented in the news have a high level of violence. Studies of KABC-TV, Los Angeles, in the early 1990s found that an average of three crime stories per day were presented and that most crime in the news were sporadic and characterized by acts of violence. In Los Angeles, violent crime accounted for approximately 30 percent of total amount of crime but represented 78 percent of crime news reported by

KABC (Lipschultz & Hilt, 2002). Similar studies have shown that personal, violent crime, such as rape and murder is overrepresented in the news and covered more often than burglaries and thefts (Surette, 1998). Although homicide, in comparison to other crime, is disproportionately covered, less serious crimes are presented when they are surrounded by special circumstances or when they have the potential to create emotional responses (Chermak, 1995).

There are several other general findings about media coverage of crime. First, studies conducted by Graber concluded that although different media outlets report crime in their own way, the attention to individual crime remained constant throughout the different media studied (as cited in Sacco, 1995). Second, the image we get on offenders is also distorted by the media. The majority of offenders fall under the youth category, yet the media presents both the offenders and victims as being older (Sacco, 1995). Third, the crime stories presented also vary by cities since the crimes experienced by a city vary according to its size. Fourth, the characteristics of the victim influence the newsworthiness of the story. Although murder is generally the crime of choice for media, if the victim is part of a special population- such as the elderly or children- less serious crimes (i.e. burglary) may be given more attention (Chermak, 1995). Finally, the attention given to these special populations may result in media's false creation of "crime waves" which in turn may lead to an increase fear of being victimized. Fishman (1978) analyzed crime waves related to attacks on elderly people and found that, although the reporting on these types of crimes had increased, the attacks on the elderly did not. This study found that, as a result of the extensive coverage, more resources were given to police departments and tougher policies were implemented to fight crime against the

elderly. These results expose the important effects news media has on society (Surette, 1998; Doyle, 2003).

Most research conducted in the area of criminal justice and the media focus on the images of crime instead of the image of the criminal justice system and the programs utilized to prevent or react to crime. Programs and police initiatives do not receive much coverage due to their lack of immediacy and “human drama” contained in crime stories and, in some instances, the failure of police departments to take full advantage of the accessibility to media outlets in addition to budget constraints. Furthermore, stories exploring and evaluating programs are far more difficult to produce than those involving criminal events since they require more work on the part of the reporter (Chermak & Weiss, 2003). However, there are some exceptions discussed below.

### **The Case of Crime Stoppers**

Crime stoppers began in 1976 as an effort to assist law enforcement officials in solving crime. The program requires a partnership between the community, law enforcement, and the media. Law enforcement selects a story that becomes the “crime of the week”, the stories are chosen based on the emotional power they have and the potential to incite moral outrage. Studies have shown that most stories - 81 percent- selected for the crime stoppers program contained violence (Snider, 1990). The stories are then produced and publicized by the media (newspapers, radio, and television). As part of the program, consumers are encouraged to call a “hot line” with any information regarding the crime, the caller is assigned a number to provide anonymity, and if the information leads to solving the crime the caller receives a reward. The provision of anonymity and the reward are components of the program that promote community

involvement while combating three issues- fear of reprisal, apathy, and unwillingness of getting involved- often faced by law enforcement during an investigation (Crime Stoppers USA, 2000). The involvement of the general public is extremely significant since a large percentage of arrests can be credited to citizen initiated contact instead of police (Rosenbaum, Lurigio & Lavrakas, 1989).

Since its creation, crime stoppers has gone international and there are over one thousand programs in areas of North America, Western Europe, Australia, Africa, and the Caribbean. As of 2007, the program has aided in the clearance of 1,081,337 cases and has led to 670,572 arrests (Crime Stoppers International, 2007).

Rosenbaum and colleagues (1989) was funded by the National Institute of Justice and evaluated the program at the national level. The study had several important findings: 1). The program is more effective in areas with a medium size population and low crime rates; 2). Contrary to popular belief, the study found that the reward size did not influence the participation of informants and their satisfaction with the program; and 3). Regarding media relations, the researchers found that those communities which received special coverage or had a more cooperative relation with the media had a higher success rate than those that did not (Rosenbaum, Lurigio & Lavrakas, 1989).

### **Community Policing in the News**

Community policing is a good example of a program that has received media coverage. Although the coverage of the program is not as frequent as that of crime stories in the newspapers, when it is presented it receives more space – 519 words vs. 193 on average- and the stories are generally favorable (Chermak & Weiss, 2006). However, receiving the necessary attention to promote such programs proves difficult for police

departments since the programs do not contain the characteristics that are needed to make headlines. Additionally, the public information officers (PIOs), who are often in charge of communicating with the media, spend most of their time- an approximate 44 percent- dealing with inquiries about crime in comparison to the time spent advertising police initiatives (15 percent) (Chermak & Weiss, 2006).

Studies by Chermak & Weiss (2006) looked at the content of community policing stories and concluded that out of all the stories, only 65 percent of them mentioned the goal of community policing and that the history and philosophy of community policing were seldom discussed. This led them to conclude that the stories regarding community policing, and police programs in general, were very limited in context and only mentioned community policing as an overall strategy instead of breaking it up into its components.

Part of the reason the police initiatives do not get as much media coverage is due to the difficulty in creating such stories since they require more resources including community members and a significant amount of time. Furthermore, the media feels that they are not kept informed about these initiatives by police departments (Chermak & Weiss, 2006).

### **Constructing Crime News: Explaining Successes and Failures**

The presentation of crime in the news also tends to be distorted since story selection is left up to the discretion of the reporters and based on a set of organizational values which include, but are not limited to, ethnocentrism, responsible capitalism, national leadership, and individualism (Lipschultz & Hilt, 2007). Scholars have identified the

process that is used to create the social construction of crime which then leads to crime news. They identify 3 stages:

1. Crime is selected from a pool of various social issues such as poverty and education. It is then identified as a problem requiring policy considerations.
2. The crime problem is then narrowed down to include street crime
3. Crime is then defined as a criminal justice problem (Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1998)

Although crime is an important topic, not all crimes are presented in the news. In fact, the vast majority of crimes are never presented at all. Previous research indicates that several characteristics increase the likelihood that a crime event will be presented: seriousness of the offense, the characteristics of the victims and offenders, the beliefs of the reporter, the uniqueness of the crime, and its prominence (Chermak, 1995).

The main source for news crime stories are state managers (political leaders and law enforcement personnel), and these stories are not objective since state managers often attempt to present a particularly ideological definition of crime; thus they are able to sort what definitions of crime are presented to the general public demonstrating some threats but not others (Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1998) consequently, manipulating the public's perception of crime in their communities.

The relationship between the media and the criminal justice system sources is symbiotic. The media needs the police for stories- an approximate 73 percent of information gathered by media is given out by law enforcement personnel (Chermak & Weiss, 2006). On the other hand, the police rely on the media for publicity, identification of community problems, and communication of police efforts and initiatives such as



community policing and PSN. Additionally, the police use the media to encourage citizen participation in community programs (Chermak & Weiss, 2006).

The police departments understand the importance of media relations and have introduced Public information Officers (PIO) (also referred to as Press Officers in the UK) to their staff. This officer may be a sworn officer or a civilian who is responsible of preserving the department's image and providing the media with information (Chermak & Weiss, 2006; Mawby, 2002). Failure to cooperate with the media may prove detrimental to police departments since the media will resort to other sources that may express different points of view than those held by the departments and as a result damage departmental image and manipulate public opinion (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989). Police departments also recognize the importance of collaborating with the media since, that way, they can control what is published or presented (Chermak, 1995).

The use and availability of sources vary within the criminal justice system. Police are open to media relations and have added public relation specialist to their staff. Sources on courts and corrections, however, are more difficult to access- corrections being the most difficult- and the relationships that exist between reporters and these sources are distant in comparison to the police (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989). It will thus be interesting to examine whether PSN has impacted the role of prosecutors in local news creation.

As part of this study, I seek to identify those sources that are more commonly cited in PSN stories (i.e. police officials, personnel from the U.S Attorney Office, regular citizens, etc.) and the type of information they provide such as solely informational or promotional. Establishing good relations with sources is extremely important for the

news media since they control the information available and citing sources in the articles provides more credibility, especially when the source is an authority in the subject (Chermak, 1995). At the same time, sources should also seek to create good relations with the media in order to promote specific initiatives like PSN.

### **CHAPTER THREE: DATA AND METHODS**

The primary focus of this study is to identify the representation of PSN in the news media and to conduct a preliminary exploration of the different strategies utilized by specific jurisdictions to achieve media success.

In order to investigate this question a bilateral approach will be used. First, a content analysis of print news media will be conducted to examine the amount and type of coverage given to PSN. Second, two case studies from successful districts will be conducted to identify what media strategies aided in the success of achieving media coverage of PSN in those areas.

#### **Content Analysis**

To examine the information on PSN available to the public, content analysis of print media was selected as a main method for this study for several reasons. First, it aids in the lessening of the entire content of a communication to a set of categories that symbolize the characteristics of the investigatory interest (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Second, it provides the opportunity to conduct the study in both a qualitative and quantitative manner (Content analysis, n.d.; Qualitative social science, n.d.). Third, utilizing this method also provides the researcher with an opportunity to codify and record the variables in a code book that will ensure intercoder reliability in case of replications (Qualitative social science, n.d.). The use of content analysis is widespread in the fields of criminal justice and media studies. Several successful studies (Sheley & Ashkins, 1981, Chermak, 1995; Chermak, 1997; Chermak & Weiss, 2006) have used this methodology to explore various types of research questions.

Content data for this analysis were gathered from a pool of newspaper articles (n=689) from the different states in which the PSN initiative has been implemented, the Washington DC area, and Guam. The newspaper articles were collected during the time period from 2001 to 2005 from several sources including, but not limited to weekly searches in the Lexis-Nexis database, articles from USDOJ offices, articles from the PSN office, and press releases from the various US attorney offices. These data were gathered by researchers at American University as part of their role in coordinating PSN technical assistance for the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The media data were provided to the Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice research team due to its role as a national PSN research partner for the Department of Justice.

This data set was supplemented by conducting a Lexis-Nexis search of all PSN stories in newspapers published between the years 2006 and 2007, with set word restrictions including searches of the terms "Project Safe Neighborhoods," "US Attorney," and "gun violence" within the stories. Stories were searched within the entire publications since crime stories are not limited to one section of the publication (Chermak, 1995). It is important to note that the articles were collected from two different processes and that the sample of articles collected from 2001-2005 include more sources than the supplementary sample collected from 2006-2007. After the collection of the 2006-2007 articles a total sample of 1271 articles was composed. Out of this sample 381 articles were evaluated. A secondary analysis was conducted by time period to determine whether there were significant differences between the samples. The results concluded that although there would be a slight difference in how the jurisdictions were

categorized, there were no significant differences in the variables evaluated. The results of this analysis, due to its insignificant results, are not presented in this paper.

Due to time constraints and the small number of researchers for this project, a sampling procedure was used for the analysis of newspaper articles. Although the sampling strategy selected depended on the number of articles distributed across PSN jurisdictions, a reasonable procedure was the following: Articles were separated into three strata including low coverage jurisdictions, medium coverage jurisdictions, and high coverage jurisdictions. A random sample of articles was taken from each stratum. This method ensured that those jurisdictions with the least coverage will be properly represented in the sample population (Singleton & Straits, 2005).

The articles were separated by state and PSN jurisdiction, and then identified as a high, medium, or low coverage jurisdiction depending on the number of articles within them. Jurisdictions with more than 31 articles were placed in the high coverage area, those with a range of 17 to 30 were placed in the medium, and those with no articles to a maximum of 16 fell under the low category. Population for all the jurisdictions were also collected to see if there was a correlation between the number of people the jurisdiction had and the articles produced by that jurisdiction, hence to see if the population affected the jurisdiction's category. The results of this showed that there is no correlation between the two and those articles with the highest coverage were not necessarily the ones with the most people. The articles were then coded using a codebook provided in Appendix B. Several variables were emphasized in the codebook and divided into different categories. The first category is assessment, divided into subcategories following the categorization scheme provided by Chermak (1995). The assessment variable separates them into

“incident stories”, “policy or program stories”, “legislative action,” and “implementation of initiatives,” and “statistical stories”. Additionally, “promotional stories” and “other stories” are included in the coding scheme. Media partners and overall satisfaction with them by the U.S. attorneys were also evaluated, as well as if media partners played an important role in how the jurisdictions were categorized.

One of the main purposes of this study is to evaluate the amount and type of coverage PSN receives. In order to do so, the evaluation of the articles included the type of PSN preventative programs covered in the news, such as gun buy back programs and after school activities for at risk youths and those programs that are strategically designed to reduce gun violence such as notification and lever-pulling strategies. These variables were first coded as string variables in order to capture the best information available and then recoded into numeric variables for easier analysis. Additionally, the type of gun violence discussions will also be evaluated to determine what characteristics make the news –offender characteristics, specific cases, and responses by the criminal justice system among others. Offender characteristics include demographics and previous convictions, specific cases refer to those cases that are used in the articles since they possess some sort of sensationalized characteristic such as the involvement of a prominent figure, crimes that are extremely violent and gruesome, or crimes that were in concurrence with other crimes, especially drug offenses and gang involvement. The response by the criminal justice system refers to any action taken by law enforcement officers, such as arrests or raids, and court actions such as the type of prosecution and sentence imposed.

Another set of variables are strategy focus, and are divided into the subcategories including “Prosecutorial,” “Law Enforcement,” “Corrections,” “Communication,” and “General Gun Strategy.” Many strategies, especially those that fall under the PSN umbrella, have multiple agencies involved and thus it may be difficult to code into a single category. Here, I will first try to code what is emphasized primarily in the stories (Strategy Focus1), and then also code other aspects of the strategy (Strategy Focus2; Strategy Focus3).

In addition several variables related to the sources cited in PSN stories were created. First, the total number of sources will be determined. Second, the “type of source” will include the organization represented by the individual cited in a news story. Both official (police chief, U.S. Attorney, state attorney, etc.) and unofficial people (victims, citizens) will be noted. Third, their position in the organization, when applicable and available, will be coded. For example, whether a police source is the chief executive officer, a detective, or a line officer will be noted. Fourth, I will code whether the source is used to discuss a specific PSN program, a successful PSN investigation, an element of the PSN strategy, gun violence concerns in general, or some other topic. Finally, an attempt to capture an evaluative aspect of their statement by noting whether what they said was factual, explanatory, evaluative, recommendatory, predicting, or reacting to PSN will be made. These codes were borrowed from Chermak (1995).

In the case of media coverage, whether or not the several components of PSN are mentioned in the articles and determine which of the components receives more coverage was explored. Furthermore, the media related variables also looked at whether or not the articles discuss the goals, philosophy, funding, and history of PSN.

The role of the media was explored by coding how crime is presented and the type of mention PSN receives and whether it is favorable or not. By favorable it is meant that PSN is being portrayed as a positive program that is indeed attempting to reduce gun violence. Not favorable, on the other hand, will include the articles that criticize the initiative and the way it is being implemented. The neutral category includes those articles that fail to provide any opinion on the initiative and are solely informational. Variables that evaluate the discussion of gun violence and whether it is increasing or decreasing according to the media, and whether there is a mention of how PSN may aid in crime reduction were included in order to determine the portrayal of the program by the media.

A small analysis was also conducted to see if the implementation of a media partner and the type of partner affected the type of coverage received by the jurisdictions and if the type of media partner had any influence in how the jurisdictions were categorized. Additionally a dataset that contained information on mass media campaigns per jurisdiction was also evaluated to supplement the findings of the content analysis done on the articles. This dataset were collected by the MSU's School of Criminal Justice PSN research team.

In addition to the variables mentioned above, coding of all articles will include the state, year of publication, U.S. jurisdictions, and length of the article.

### *Analysis*

These data were input into two SPSS data files for analysis (a general file that includes information on most PSN related information and a source data file). Both data



sets were cleaned and prepared for analysis. The analysis of data that was performed for this study was very basic and consisted of mostly descriptive statistics and frequencies.

### **Case Studies**

Once the content analysis was completed, case studies of two jurisdictions that demonstrated media success were conducted in order to better understand issues related to media coverage of PSN. For purposes of this study, media success refers to the amount of coverage by print media received by the different jurisdictions. Whereas the purpose of the content analysis is to estimate the amount and determine the type of coverage PSN receives, the case studies will expose in detail the type of media strategies being used in jurisdictions with significant amounts of media coverage. Although it would have been beneficial to randomly select jurisdictions, or conduct case studies from jurisdictions with different amounts of coverage, such an approach was beyond the scope of the current project. A focus on two jurisdictions will provide depth of understanding regarding the successful strategies used to promote PSN in the media.

The jurisdiction selection for this portion of the study was based on the information gathered during the content analysis stage. This was done by categorizing the media coverage in the different areas into low, medium, and high. Two jurisdictions were chosen from the high coverage category. All media articles related to these jurisdictions were a source of information to formulate the case study. Lexis-Nexis searches which attempt to capture other sources of information about the US attorney's office in that jurisdiction gave additional contextual information. Other open source documents were examined, including websites, congressional hearings, and other relevant legislative initiatives. Finally, convenience interviews with members of the PSN task forces in the

selected jurisdictions were conducted to complement the content analysis and case study.

The interviews were conducted by telephone and via e-mail

Case studies were selected since, as mentioned above, they provide a more in depth approach to studying issues like media coverage and PSN. Additionally, case studies examine the phenomenon in a real- life context (Yin, 1981). Several case studies have been conducted on the subject of PSN and some of its strategies (Bynum & Decker, 2006; McDevitt & Decker, 2006; Decker & McDevitt, 2006) which have been very enlightening; however, not many have been done in the area of media and outreach. It is the purpose of this exploratory research to supplement existing case studies and provide new areas for future study when we study initiatives like PSN.

Another aspect of case studies that makes it an attractive research method is the fact that they allow for the use of both qualitative and quantitative data that can be gathered from various sources such as field work and archival records (Yin, 1981). For this particular project, case studies are an attractive method since they allow the researcher to collect the greatest amount of information in a limited amount of time and provide an in depth analysis of the topic studied.

Recognizable traits of the interviewees will not be presented in the report in order to guarantee confidentiality.

On the other hand, the researcher is fully aware of some of the limitations that case studies have, especially when it comes to generalizing findings and conclusions to other areas that were not included in the study; Studies by Duncombe and Straussman (1994) show that solely relying on case studies may lead to inaccurate results since they may not include comparisons between jurisdictions and lack control groups. In some instances,

but not applicable to this particular project, case studies may not be cost effective, could be time consuming , and may breach the privacy of individuals and organizations studied (Stake, 1985).

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **MEDIA COVERAGE OF PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS**

#### **Overview of Sample**

There were 1,271 articles published about Project Safe Neighborhoods between 2001 and 2007. It is interesting that 54 percent of the stories were published between 2006 and 2007, but many focused on brief stories on prosecutorial action for a specific case. Most of these stories made mention of prosecuting at the federal level under the PSN guidelines instead of focusing on implementation of the initiative. The parameters of the sample are discussed below, but it is important to note that there is a general lack of coverage of Project Safe Neighborhoods in the news. The fact that only 1271 articles were collected over a period of six years (2190 days) across all PSN jurisdictions, and that most of these articles were short press releases that only mentioned PSN in a cursory manner, highlights the minimum coverage of this initiative. Also consider that for a majority of jurisdictions, less than six articles were written about PSN during this time frame. This finding, however, confirms existing research that news media coverage focuses on crime incidents and do not give much space to initiatives like PSN.

The articles that were published were divided into three jurisdiction categories—high, medium, and low coverage. Those jurisdictions included in the high coverage category had more than 31 articles; the medium was made up by jurisdictions that had anywhere between 17 to 30 articles and the low category consisted of jurisdictions that had up to 16 articles. Table 1 presents the districts selected for each area of coverage. Approximately 30 percent of articles were chosen for detailed content coding for each category, and thus the content analysis focuses on 381 articles. As one can observe from

Table 1, the vast majority of jurisdictions were considered low coverage jurisdictions. Moreover, there were twenty jurisdictions that did not receive any news coverage for its PSN initiative. Conversely, only six jurisdictions were considered high jurisdictions, with the number of articles published in these jurisdictions ranging from 32 to 294. There were eleven jurisdictions that were considered medium jurisdictions with the number of articles published in these jurisdictions ranging from 17 to 31. The low jurisdictions had articles published ranging from 0 to 16. Secondary analysis showed that the type of media partner the jurisdiction had did not influence the categorization since there was no consistency in the type of media partner.

#### **Amount of coverage**

It is not surprising considering the sampling strategy that the amount of coverage given to PSN varied significantly when comparing the three categories. Table 2 presents the rate of articles and average number of words per article. The articles evaluated averaged 499.51 words in length; there was not much variation in the number of words between the high and low coverage jurisdictions in that both of these jurisdictions averaged less than 500 words per article (496.79 for the high and 467.18 for the low) however, the articles in the medium coverage jurisdiction were longer than those in the previously mentioned jurisdictions with an average of 561.22 words, which is interesting since this area had significantly fewer articles than the other two jurisdictions.

Although there was not much difference in the average size of articles published in the different coverage areas, there were significant variations in the total number of articles. The rate of the articles did show variation across jurisdictions--high coverage

jurisdictions had an average of 31 stories compared to 6.27 in the medium and 1.8 in the low.

In general, the jurisdictions that received higher coverage are jurisdictions that are actively implementing the initiative by enforcing federal prosecution on gun cases. The typical story in each jurisdiction was approximately 272 words (mode) and was of an informational nature and included information on particular incidents and the prosecutorial action that would be taken.. For the medium and low coverage jurisdictions, the typical stories were in reference to project ChildSafe and informing the communities where free gun locks were being distributed. However, there were some jurisdictions that had very long stories; these long stories included transcripts of speeches by government officials and articles that listed upcoming prosecutorial actions. As part of the methodology, one article that had over 11,000 words was excluded from the sample to reduce the presence of outliers that may skew the results.

### **Type of Coverage**

Table 3 presents the results for two related variables. First, it presents the assessment results. This variable attempts to capture the general focus of the story related to PSN. This variable was duplicated from the Chermak and Weiss (2006) study. Second, the strategy variable was originally crafted to capture the stage of the criminal justice process that was emphasized in the story. However, since it was often difficult to determine a specific stage, several additional items had to be added to the coding scheme.

The assessment results reveal that there is very little general coverage of the PSN initiative and its goals. Instead, PSN jurisdictions attempt to promote the initiative through specific criminal incidents. Nearly 62 percent of the stories in the sample were

classified as incident stories. That is, if an arrest is made, or a conviction occurs, these results are used as an opportunity to also discuss the effort as resulting from the collaboration of partners involved in the PSN initiative. For example, the District of Connecticut issues a press release for every gun related offense that is indicted and prosecuted at the federal level, such press releases include the description of the offense and the offender and how the prosecutions were possible due to the work of task forces that involve members of both state and federal agencies. In addition, these press releases inform and educate the public on what the PSN initiative entails and promote the measures taken to accomplish the goal of reducing gun violence. It is important to note that the focus of these stories is on describing the who, what, and when of the incident, and that the PSN initiative tends to be emphasized as an afterthought.

Approximately 19 percent of the stories discussed the implementation of the initiative and another 8 percent discussed the creation of the program. As mentioned in previous sections of this study and other studies conducted in the field (Chermak & Weiss, 2006), rarely are creation and implementation stories presented in the news. There are two reasons for this lack of coverage: first, they are much harder and time-consuming to create, and second, news organizations do not deem them to be highly newsworthy. In general, news media recognize that they are promotional stories, and are only willing to provide occasional coverage to such initiatives. Thus, it is not surprising that most stories evaluated in the sample referred to particular incidents. Such incidents are much more consistent with the typical expectations of newsworthiness: high profile gun arrests or convictions, usually of a significant offender. The emphasis of these stories is on describing the significance of the crimes committed by the offender, but it

also appears that these articles are a good way for prosecutors to promote PSN in the high coverage jurisdictions.

Other results for this variable include evaluation (5.5 percent), informational (2.1 percent) and those that refer to award ceremonies (1.3 percent). Stories regarding legislative action and promotional attempts were rarely presented in the news, only making up for .5 percent and .8 percent of the total number of stories.

Columns 2-4 present the assessment results for the high, medium, and low categories. The results show news media in the high coverage jurisdictions, presented in column 2 of the table, focused primarily on incident stories. Nearly 90 percent of the high jurisdiction stories were incident stories. It is interesting to see how these jurisdictions focused on crime incidents and presented them to the public as crime fighting victories in order to promote the initiative. Many of the incident stories in this category are based on press releases from the U.S. Attorneys' Office in which the incident, prosecutorial action, the efforts of the crime fighting units in that jurisdiction, are described in detail. Other incident related stories included stories based on press results that included comments by the U.S. Attorney promoting the partnerships involved in the initiative that resulted in an arrest or conviction, and how the collaboration is critical in the fight against gun violence.

The other category of the assessment variable that showed great variation across the jurisdictions was the implementation of initiative. Interestingly, the high coverage jurisdiction only made mention of such implementation in 2.7 percent of the stories compared to 38.9 percent in the low and 29 percent in the medium coverage categories. From these results, it can be concluded that those jurisdictions in the high coverage area



became high coverage due to successful prosecutions and arrests, but the medium and low coverage jurisdictions focused more specifically on promoting the initiative. For example, articles in the low coverage jurisdiction, presented in column 4, were more likely to inform the public about PSN programs, such as Project ChildSafe, than those in the other jurisdictions. These stories tend to describe the program and make mention of the program being part of PSN, however, other aspects of the PSN initiatives were not given very much attention.

Table 3 also includes the results for the strategy variable. Since the PSN initiative is driven by offices of the US Attorney, it is not surprising that there is an emphasis on the prosecutorial stage of the criminal justice process. All coverage areas do not emphasize this stage. For example, over 87 percent of the high incident coverage stories, but only 36 percent of the medium and 24 percent of the low emphasized the prosecution stage. The high coverage jurisdictions emphasized prosecutorial actions, especially in relation to a specific incident, whereas the majority of stories from the low coverage jurisdictions, and to a lesser extent in the medium coverage jurisdictions, referred to a general gun strategies being implemented in the area. Stories regarding general gun strategies represented the second highest category making up for 23.9 percent of the stories; these types of stories include information on particular programs being implemented in the different jurisdictions and the ways they are being implemented.

Although law enforcement stories were the next highest category, surprisingly they were not as represented as expected and made up only 5 percent of the sample (similar to the other story categories). Stories mentioning the allocation of funds were also evaluated and constitute 3.9 percent of the stories closely followed by stories

covering information and conferences at 3.4 percent. The last category of PSN story evaluated was that referring to awards given out by the DOJ to the different jurisdiction for their efforts and implementation of the initiative. This category makes up 1.8 percent of the sample.

Table 4 presents the results for the analysis on the variables that discuss whether or not the media articles included information on the goals, history and philosophy of PSN. The majority of the articles, 76.7 percent, made at least some reference to the goals of PSN, and as anticipated, the goals of PSN were much more likely to be provided in stories from the high category compared to the medium and low jurisdictions. The typical goal that is emphasized in these stories was that the effort focuses on reducing gun crime, and in general, there was not much more specific information related to goals provided. A more general discussion of the philosophy of PSN as well as the history of the initiative were much less likely to be presented in the news. The philosophy and history were only mentioned in 36.7 percent and 16 percent of the stories and these results are fairly consistent across the high, medium, and low categories. It is relatively straightforward to discuss the goals, but much more difficult, and requires more space, to attempt to develop an understanding of the philosophy of initiative and its history.

Also in Table 4 are the results of the variable regarding the discussion of community group involvement. This is an important variable because collaborations with community groups are such an important part of the initiative. The involvement of community groups was mentioned in 33.1 percent of the stories, but the stories presented in the high coverage jurisdictions made significantly more mention of these groups (53.8 percent of the stories) than the medium and low jurisdictions. In most stories, it should be

noted, that a reporter would simply name a group but provide little detail about their role in the implementation of the initiative.

Table 5 examines the presentation of the specific components of PSN. Overall, some component was mentioned in 71.4 percent of the stories with the main emphasis being on partnerships (43.5 percent), followed by strategic planning (12 percent), and outreach (7.1 percent). Training was mentioned in less than 1 percent of all stories. These components were discussed in several ways. In some articles, a component was mentioned as part of larger discussion of a specific strategy occurring in that jurisdiction. For example, the mention of partnerships usually included a description of the agencies that are working together to target a specific offender or reduce gun violence by actively conducting neighborhood sweeps (i.e. collaboration between ATF and a local police department). Education is another component that had several strategies mentioned such as school and after school programs and youth camps. When discussing the components, some of the articles mentioned how the components were implemented and the success rate of some of them. For example, one of the articles evaluated referred to an after school basketball clinic that included high profile figures from the community, such as coaches and players, and highlighted their goal to keep children occupied during the after school hours while educating the kids on gun violence and the penalties under federal law and to deter these kids from committing firearm offenses.

In general, several of the components are mentioned similarly across the high, medium, and low jurisdictions. It is interesting, however, that components are significantly less likely to be presented in the medium and low jurisdictions compared to the high jurisdictions. Moreover, the articles presented in the high jurisdiction were

much more likely to mention several components in a story as well as discuss the various partners involved in the initiative.

Table 6 provides the results for specific and general programs related to the PSN initiative. These programs were infrequently presented in the news. Only 28.3 percent and 22.3 percent respectively mentioned a specific or general type of program. Project ChildSafe, a program that focuses on distributing free gun locks to prevent accidental shootings, was the program that was most frequently presented in the news. Nearly 39 percent of the stories that mentioned a specific program highlight ChildSafe. Project Exile was mentioned in nearly 17 percent of the program stories and general gun efforts, which refer to the implementation of non specific programs and policies, such as increasing patrol in an area, also accounted for 17 percent of the total. Project Ceasefire was mentioned in about 13 percent of the stories. Education programs and anti-gang initiatives were mentioned less frequently in the news.

When examining the more general categories related to programs, violent offender teams were most frequently presented in the news accounting for over 35 percent of the stories. Typically, these stories discussed how groups composed of members from different local and federal agencies were working together to track down violent offenders and aggressively investigate crimes. Task force efforts were noted in over 30 percent of the general gun program stories. General gun stories accounted for 14 percent and anti-gang unit stories accounted for 6 percent of the total.

There is a heavy emphasis on the violent offender teams in the high jurisdiction stories. Over 50 percent of the high jurisdiction stories discussed the efforts and successes of these teams. Many of the results are fairly consistent across the low and

medium jurisdictions for the specific programs, whereas the high jurisdictions focus more on general gun strategies. This is somewhat surprising because the results in Table 3 indicated that only a few stories mentioned general gun strategies in the high coverage areas. This difference in results here can be attributed to the fact that the specific programs mentioned in the high coverage areas did not fit into any of the other categories for this particular variable, and so had to be categorized as a general gun initiative.

Table 7 shows the results of variables related to indicators related to the evaluation of various outcomes related to PSN, such as the decrease of gun violence, crime, and specific case victories. Again, it is not surprising that a large percent of the stories mentioned specific cases. Only four percent of the stories mentioned if gangs were involved and 23 percent of the stories mentioned if drugs were specifically involved. However, stories rarely emphasized the impact on gun violence, responses to crime, and reductions of crime. Only 12.9 percent of the stories mentioned reductions in gun violence, 17.6 percent of the stories emphasize reductions in crime, and 15.5 percent discuss responses to crimes. The results of this particular analysis show little variation across the jurisdictions with the exception of the high category making significantly less mention of the discussion about gun violence, only 3.8 percent of stories, and more discussion of specific cases. In fact, 88.7 percent of the stories in the high coverage jurisdiction mentioned specific cases. These results may be attributed to the fact that most of the stories in the high coverage area, as mentioned in previous sections, were press releases by the US attorney's office informing the public about their action. These cases, however, are not apparently used to highlight how the PSN initiative might be impacting the gun violence or crime in that jurisdiction.

## **Sources Cited in News Stories**

An important area that was examined for this study was the sources included in PSN stories. The mean number of sources cited in these stories was 6.24. For the purposes of this study both direct (people) and indirect (documents, websites, etc) sources were coded. Any factual piece of information that was specifically attributed to a direct or indirect source was coded.

Table 8 presents the results for the specific sources cited in PSN stories. The result of the content analysis indicated that U.S. Attorneys and those working for the U.S. Attorney's Office played a very important role as information providers for the media. The overall results presented in column 1 show that prosecutors accounted for 43.3 percent of the sources cited. In addition to U.S. Attorneys and members of their office, this category includes releases by the U.S. Department of Justice as well as state attorneys; however, most of the sources were in fact the U.S. Attorney in charge of an office. Most previous research highlights the importance of police sources within crime stories, but it is clear that this initiative has provided opportunities for prosecutors to develop their relationship with reporters and achieve coverage for this initiative. These results are also not surprising since it is the attorney's office that is responsible for the implementation of the initiative. The findings were consistent across the jurisdictions with all of them showing prosecutors as the largest group of sources.

Law enforcement sources were the second highest cited group—this category includes chiefs of police and sheriffs, PIOs, federal agents, and other police sources. It is important to note that when all law enforcement sources are combined, they account for about 25 percent of sources cited, which is a significant amount. Police Chiefs and

Sheriffs accounted for 7 percent of the sources cited in PSN stories. The results across coverage jurisdictions were very consistent when comparing the medium and high coverage jurisdictions. On the other hand, the low coverage jurisdiction shows a slight increase in the times that police sources are cited. The types of stories in which they are cited vary somewhat, but they were often cited in stories regarding Project Childsafe and the distribution of gun locks. The number of PIOs cited was small, cited in only 3.3 percent of the stories. This finding is surprising as previous research has concluded that most police departments' primary communication with news reporters is through public information officers (Chermak and Weiss 2006). The medium and low jurisdictions were very consistent in the use of PIOs, citing them in approximately 7 percent of the stories, but they were cited in less than one percent of the stories in the high jurisdictions. This variation may be attributed to the fact that high coverage jurisdictions covered more prosecutorial actions than actual program implementation and specific program stories.

Other police sources were also cited, including detectives and patrol officers. These sources were cited as 6.4 percent of the total number of sources cited, and there was little variation between the high and medium coverage jurisdictions, but the low coverage jurisdictions cited these sources more often. Just like PIOs, this variation may be attributed to the fact that low coverage jurisdictions focused more on implementation of the initiative and general programs and these type of police sources might have been easier to access by the media during promotional events. Federal officers accounted for a similar percentage of the sources (compared to other police sources) cited. Overall, they accounted for 7.5 percent of the sources cited. This is actually larger than one would have anticipated because federal law enforcement officials are rarely presented in local

news stories (Chermak 1995). The results were consistent across jurisdictions. Federal officers make up an important part of the implementation of PSN since they are part of highly involved organizations such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the office of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), therefore this explains why they are cited more often than some other sources.

The overall results for police sources were of much interest since they differ somewhat from what other research in the field has found. In studies evaluated for the literature review (Chermak, 1995; Chermak & Weiss, 2006) the results were always consistent in that police sources made up the largest percentage of sources utilized by the media, accounting for between 60 and 80 percent of the information provided in most crime stories. It is clear that although police sources are not ignored, they play a secondary role in these stories compared to the use of prosecutorial sources.

Table 8 also indicates that sources other than law enforcement and prosecutors were cited in the stories, including indirect sources. When examining these other sources, politicians were the most prevalent with them being cited in 6.7 percent of the stories. There were some inconsistencies across the jurisdictions, and surprisingly, those articles from the medium coverage jurisdiction cited politicians in 11.7 percent of the cases. Considering the amount of coverage in the high coverage jurisdictions, it is somewhat surprising that politicians were not cited as much as the other jurisdictions because it was expected that politicians would take advantage of the extensive media coverage. Unexpectedly, community members were only mentioned in 3.2 percent of the overall cases, and that the high coverage jurisdictions, which mentioned community groups the most, had the least amount of community members cited as news sources. This could be



credited to the fact that the majority of articles from the high coverage jurisdictions were based on official documents released by the U.S. Attorney's Office, or were incident specific articles and the fact that community partnerships were only mentioned in a perfunctory way.

The results for documents and general offices and departments were not very high, which was expected. Out of these, documents were cited the most and made for 8.9 percent of the overall articles. However, there was a great deal of variation across the jurisdictions and, as expected, only the high coverage jurisdictions presented these sources.

### **Overall Media and Source impression of PSN**

Table 9 presents the results related to the media and sources impressions of PSN. The results show that both the media's overall perspective and the sources view of PSN was overwhelmingly neutral. In this case, stories were categorized as neutral when the story made neither positive or negative comments about the initiative and focused solely on providing factual information. For purposes of the content analysis, the variable had a very restrictive definition and only those articles that made a dramatic comment, either positive or negative, were coded other than neutral. Although it can be argued that solely promotional stories and discussion of specific PSN programs can be considered positive there was resistance in coding them in this way for this variable because this was an attempt to capture more evaluative-related comments about the initiative, which ended up appearing rarely in the news.

Out of all 381 articles only 10.5 percent were favorable and 1.8 percent were critical of the initiative. The results were consistent across all jurisdictions with all of

them showing high numbers in the neutral category. Those in the low category, however, had a slight increase in the not favorable category, with 3.2 percent showing a negative impression and the medium coverage jurisdictions had a significantly higher percentage of stories, 20.3 percent, showing favorable media impressions.

The results for the individual source analysis also showed a higher percentage of neutral responses in comparison to favorable and not favorable responses. However, 20.7 percent of them did show favorable impressions of the initiative and it is not surprising that prosecutors were the most likely source to provide a favorable impression of the initiative. The results for this analysis were also consistent across jurisdictions. Very few of the sources, 2.6 percent, had given a negative comment. Those sources pertaining to the articles in the medium coverage category presented higher percentages in both the favorable and not favorable categories compared to those results in the high and low categories. In these jurisdictions, 33 percent of sources showed to have a favorable impression and 4.9 percents showed a negative impression of the initiative in contrast to 14 percent and 29.3 percent of favorable impressions and 1.5 percent and 3.9 percent of not favorable responses in the high and low jurisdictions.

### **Media Partners and Strategies**

As part of the outreach component of PSN, the jurisdictions would develop partnerships with institutions that would be responsible for leading outreach efforts. There were few restrictions on who could be a media partner, and thus jurisdictions used a wide variety of partners. For example, 33.3 percent used some sort of community group as a media partner, 24.6 percent used criminal justice organizations not including police departments, 10.1 percent used universities, 11.6 percent used politicians' offices,

14.5 percent used crime stoppers or some sort of program office, and police departments accounted for 5.8 percent of the media partners used. Fortunately, these data were provided and it presented an opportunity to examine whether the type of media partner influenced the coverage of PSN in the news media. It was expected to see dramatic differences across media partners, however, the data shows that such differences did not exist and thus can be concluded that media partners, in general, play an insignificant role in publicizing the initiative through the print media and that their main focus is to produce different types of media coverage. These results probably reflect that the primary role of media partners was working on other types of outreach, perhaps specific advertising campaigns like billboards, but perhaps not focusing on using the news media as an opportunity to promote the initiative.

Tables 10 and 11 present the results of the analysis regarding media partners for the jurisdictions. Table 10 provides information about the size of the article, as well as the assessment and strategy variables by media partner. Table 11 provides information about whether specific aspects of PSN were presented in the news. The results presented in these tables show the overall results. The average number of words of the articles was fairly consistent across the media partners at approximately 468 words, but jurisdictions that used other cj organizations or political officials as media partners resulted in somewhat larger articles, with an average of 580 words.

Although overall the results are pretty similar by media partner, there are a couple of important differences that need to be discussed. First, the results for the police departments as media partners were very interesting. This type of partner was used mostly in the low coverage jurisdictions and the focus of the stories was on promoting

specific programs (41.2 percent). As mentioned previously, the articles for these jurisdictions presented news and information about Project Childsafe and the distribution of gun locks. Additionally, these partners had no promotional stories and focused on general gun strategies (52 percent) and made little mention of law enforcement strategies (5.9 percent).

Second, other CJ organizations did focus on incident related stories in at least 45.5 percent of the cases and made little mention of programs. They also focused on prosecutorial strategies in 40.9 percent of the stories. Community groups, universities, and politician's offices also mentioned incident related stories in over 50 percent of the cases. Of these stories, over half focused on prosecutorial action.

The overall results for universities were somewhat surprising, since they were higher than the results of the other media partners in several of the variables evaluated. These media partners were more predominant in the high coverage jurisdictions, which may explain the high numbers, and 84 percent of their stories were incident related stories with an equal 84 percent focusing on prosecutorial actions, such as indictments and sentencing. However, there is no evidence that this particular media partners was actively involved in promoting the initiative in the news and the results could be attributed to the fact that the higher coverage jurisdictions, which had more articles, were covered by these types of media partners.

Table 11 includes the variables regarding impressions of PSN, goals, philosophy, history and components, it also looks at those variables that determine whether or not there is a mention of decrease in gun violence, the efforts in responding to crime by the

CJ system, whether or not the initiative can reduce crime, and if there is a mention of funding.

The variable that showed the least variation across all media partners was that evaluating the media's overall impression of PSN. Over 70 percent of articles evaluated in each media partner showed the overall impression of PSN to be neutral. However, police departments and program offices had a somewhat higher percentage of not favorable articles in comparison to the other media partners, both at 5.9 percent. Similarly, over half of the articles across all media partners made no mention of PSN history and philosophy, yet out of all of the media partners, community groups made mention of history in 25.4 percent of the stories and mentioned philosophy in 46.6 percent of these stories. Both of these numbers were higher than any of the other media partners. The reason behind this could be that these types of media partners seek to inform the community about the initiative in a way that the general public can understand. Additionally, they may focus on the philosophy and history to explain to the community why the initiatives are important and what the benefits of it could be.

Over 70 percent of the articles, by media partner, made no mention on how the initiative has impacted the crime rates in the jurisdictions, other CJ organizations made more mention of this in their stories than the other partners but it was only mentioned in 27.3 percent of the stories. Furthermore over half of the stories across the media partners did not discuss how the criminal justice system is responding to crime, how the initiative may reduce crime, and funding for the initiative. Police departments were more likely to mention these responses to crime (29.4 percent) and funding (35.3 percent) than the other

media partners, however, program offices were more likely to mention how PSN reduces crime making a mention of it in 35.3 percent of the cases.

University media partners made mention of PSN goals and components in an overwhelming majority of the stories, 92.4 percent and 91.6 percent respectively. Yet they only mentioned history in five percent of the cases and philosophy in less than half of the cases. These media partners were the least likely to mention rates of gun violence, responses to crime, how the initiative may reduce crime, and funding. It is important to mention, once again, that the majority of articles evaluated for this media partner were from high coverage jurisdictions and thus the results may be skewed since there were more articles evaluated in these strata than the other two coverage areas.

A second dataset, provided by the MSU research team, was evaluated to determine whether or not the jurisdictions across the U.S. had implemented some sort of media campaign. These data were combined with the content analysis data to explore additional media variables and the possible impact on the presentation of PSN in the news.

Table 12 presents the results of this analysis. The overall results for this analysis showed that 97.3 percent of the articles came from jurisdictions that had some sort of mass media campaign in place to promote PSN, the majority of these media campaigns involved the use of billboards and advertisement for the initiative and target current and potential offenders. The results for the different coverage areas are very consistent, the results for the high coverage jurisdiction show that all of the articles came from a jurisdiction that has implemented a mass media campaign, and on the medium and low

only 10.1 percent and 2.6 percent of the articles respectively came from jurisdictions that did not have a media campaign in action.

Although the results for media campaigns are very promising, only 53.9 percent of the sample is measuring the impact of such campaigns on their implementation of PSN in any way, such as examining the number of public service announcements and conducting interviews to measure the public awareness of the program. For example, as of the time the data were collected, 38.9 percent of the jurisdictions have not been able to determine whether or not the impact has been positive and 59.7 percent have seen positive results. Some of the results being measured include the increase awareness of federal prosecution by criminals and community awareness that gun crimes will be prosecuted at federal levels. These results were also very consistent across the jurisdictions, with all of them seeing positive results in over 50 percent of the cases.

The implementation of media campaigns in the jurisdictions has been possible due to the partnership with the media partners--these partnerships have been funded by the PSN task forces in 90.8 percent of the cases, in the other cases, it is assumed that funding for those partnerships and media campaigns were gathered through fundraisers, taken from the initial budget, and a partner might have volunteered their time. In some instances the research partners and other organizations involved with the PSN jurisdictions have attempted fundraising activities, such as asking for donations and organizing golf scrambles. The results for this particular variable were also very consistent across the jurisdictions. Over 85 percent of the articles evaluated for all three areas showed that the PSN task force was responsible for funding the media campaigns.

As part of the analysis, the differences between those areas which had implemented mass media campaigns, had measured the results, and funded the campaign through a task force was evaluated. In order to do so the same variables used for tables 10 and 11 were used. Tables 13 and 14 show the results for the variables and how they vary depending on whether or not there was a campaign in place, it was measured, and was funded by the task force. The analysis was conducted by selecting cases by the 'yes' and 'no' answers of the three questions mentioned above and running the frequencies for the variables mentioned above.

Out of all of the articles sampled 51.5 percent of them were from a high coverage jurisdiction in comparison to 17.2 in the medium and 31.1 percent in the low. These results show that all of the articles representing the high coverage jurisdictions came from an area that had a mass media campaign in place, however, less than half of them were measuring the impact of such campaign. For the medium and low coverage jurisdictions less than 30 percent were measuring such impacts. In terms of funding, those in the high coverage jurisdiction were the most likely to be funded by a task force in comparison to only 18.1 percent in the medium and 30.3 percent in the low.

For all three questions the results were fairly consistent in terms of the type of story presented. Over 60 percent of the stories presented referred to incident related stories, followed by the implementation of the initiative in over 16 percent of the cases. Interestingly, program related stories were more common in those jurisdictions that did not have a media campaign in place, were not measuring the impact, or where funding was not provided by a task force.



Consistent with all the previous results of this chapter, the PSN related stories most presented were those of a prosecutorial nature, presented in over 50 percent of the cases, followed by those referring to general gun strategies. General gun strategy stories were also mentioned the most, over 25 percent of the cases, in those areas that did not have mass media campaigns, were not measuring the impact, or had a task force funding the campaigns.

The analysis showed there was little variation across all three questions when it came to the media's overall impression of PSN. Over 80 percent of articles evaluated in each question showed the overall impression of PSN to be neutral. However, jurisdictions that had a mass media campaign in place showed a higher percentage of favorable articles in comparison to the other two questions evaluated. Similarly, over half of the articles across all questions made no mention of PSN history and philosophy, yet out of all of the responses, those areas in which a task force did not fund a media campaign made mention of history in 23.5 percent of the stories and mentioned philosophy in 44.1 percent of these stories. Both of these numbers were higher than any of the other questions evaluated. The reason behind this could be that these jurisdictions that do not fund a media partner seek to inform the community about the initiative as a way to raise funds for the outreach component of the initiative. However, this is only an assumption and cannot be proven that this is the reason for the higher representation..

Over 85 percent of the articles made no mention on how the initiative has impacted the crime rates in the jurisdictions, areas not measuring the impact of the media campaign made more mention of this in their stories than the other areas but it was only mentioned in 15.8 percent of the stories. Furthermore over 80 percent of the stories

across the questions evaluated did not discuss how the criminal justice system is responding to crime and how the initiative may reduce crime. Those areas that funded the media campaign were more likely to mention the response to crime (16.6 percent) and those areas that were not measuring the campaign made more mention of crime reduction (21.1 percent).

Funding was mentioned the most in those jurisdictions that did not have a media campaign, were not measuring impacts, and did not have a task force funding the campaign; however it was only mentioned in less than 21 percent of the case. Most of the articles made no mention of funding. These results were very consistent across the coding areas.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDIES**

As part of this study, two jurisdictions from the high coverage strata were selected as case studies. The purpose of conducting the case studies was to determine and evaluate the type of successful media strategies being used by such jurisdictions to achieve coverage. Among all U.S. jurisdictions, Connecticut and Massachusetts had the highest number of articles published during the study period, but the dominant type of article in both of these jurisdictions were announcements and press releases informing the public about prosecutorial actions in specific cases instead of coverage of PSN. Since the type of coverage was quite similar in these two jurisdictions, only one was selected for analysis (Connecticut) since, in addition to press releases it showed more variety of coverage from print media. In addition, a second case study was conducted (Eastern Pennsylvania) because in addition to press releases, this office demonstrated a consistent ability to achieve news coverage with lengthier and more detailed articles about the initiative. The selection of cases studies in these two jurisdictions is valuable for another reason. Connecticut has a clearly established relationship with a media partner, and Eastern Pennsylvania did not use one. It is interesting that Eastern Pennsylvania received substantial coverage of its initiative without having a media partner.

The methodology for the case studies was as follows. First, all publications related to the activities of the U.S. Attorney's Office in these two jurisdictions were gathered and evaluated. Second, the entire sample of newspaper articles in each jurisdiction was read and analyzed. Third, other open source materials, such as websites and google searches related to the activities of the office were conducted. Finally, interviews were conducted with key informants in each office. Although several attempts

were made to contact people the response was not as high as expected, but their names and positions will remain anonymous in order to protect their privacy.

### **District of Connecticut**

PSN in the District of Connecticut began on January of 2002--the initiative was implemented in five major cities (Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Stamford). Since the program began, the jurisdiction has seen significant increases in federal prosecutions of gun offenses and reduction of gun crime--the District of Connecticut has recovered over 4,500 illegal guns and has charged 14,279 gun related offenses in state courts, as well as 302 indictments in federal court (DOJ, 2007). The city of Waterbury, in particular, has had several operations involving joint task forces that have received media attention; the police chief of that city has embraced PSN and has done a good job in the partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office. The Waterbury police department alone experienced a 132 percent increase in the recuperation of firearms between 2002 and 2006 (DOJ, 2007). Many of the prosecutions that have taken place in this jurisdiction as part as PSN have also been related to disrupting drug possession and distribution networks.

### *Programs and Strategies*

The district of Connecticut, under the direction and leadership of the U.S. Attorney's Office (current U.S. Attorney Kevin J. O'Connor) has been very successful in creating partnerships among agencies, implementing the initiative and educating the community about the initiative. This jurisdiction has allocated PSN funds to provide overtime pay and equipment for the major police departments in the largest municipalities that make up the district in order to support investigation of firearm

violations. Additionally, the initiative supports programs in the community to assist individuals that have been released from prison and at-risk youths by providing education, job training, substance abuse and family counseling as well as spiritual guidance (DOJ, 2007). The implementation of offender notification meetings have also proven to be a successful strategy for the district; approximately 8,000 felons that were convicted of violent offenses have attended the meetings which are a mandatory condition of probation or parole (DOJ, 2007.). The USAO of the district has created videos both in English and Spanish that are shown to offenders before they are released from custody, the videos provide information about PSN and the consequences individual would face if they are involved in a crime involving the use of a firearm. It does not appear that the media partner was involved in any way in producing these videos (DOJ, n.d.)

As part of PSN, the district has also implemented an initiative targeting youth. This initiative, called Project Sentry, educates at-risk youth by presenting information in schools, youth camps and churches, among other venues and by involving the community as well as organizing lectures by ex-offenders and gang members who have been victims of gun violence. A major component of this program is the creation of mock trials at juvenile detention facilities in order to educate and sensitize the offenders to the perspectives of those victimized. Furthermore, these mock trials are used as an opportunity to discuss future goals, particularly career goals, once an offender is released (DOJ, 2007 ; DOJ, n.d.). In addition, the jurisdiction has been promoting the program by sponsoring contests and activities in conjunction with the media; some of these include auditions for American Idol- co-sponsored by the local Fox affiliate, rap and poetry

contests co-sponsored by local radio stations and bands (Jagged Edge and WZMX-HOT 93.7), and a “pennies for peace” campaign (DOJ, 2007). These campaigns were made possible by the involvement of the media partner since this agency was responsible for handling community outreach and sponsorships.

### *Media Partners*

Since 2002, this district has partnered with a specific media partner called The Justice Education Center which provides educational materials about the judicial system for high school teachers. This center is part of the Connecticut Consortium for Law and Citizen Education Ins., however, much information on the center and its involvement with PSN could not be found and attempts to contact members of the center failed. In addition, the USAO has attempted to partner with specific media organizations, including the local FOX affiliate and Connecticut Radio Network, to handle media distribution. Both organizations have donated air time, more than doubling the initial amount of time initially used by PSN, to programs and advertisements that promote the initiative (DOJ, 2007). Programs such as “America’s Most Wanted” have included Connecticut’s most wanted, which features fugitives that have committed violent crimes involving a firearm, in their segments. According to reports by the Department of Justice (2007; n.d.) these segments have resulted in the capture of four of the nine fugitives presented in the 2005/2006 season and 50 percent of all of those presented since the show started.

### *Media Relations*

All media relations in the District of Connecticut, including those related to PSN, are handled by a public information officer and in recent years most of the information has been communicated through an aggressive press release policy to inform the media

and the community about the efforts being taken by the office to reduce gun violence. After any case is selected for federal prosecution, a press statement is released to inform the public about all actions taken in a gun case (indictment, pleas, sentencing, etc.). These statements also include the characteristics of the offender, the crime committed, and the assistant U.S. Attorney in charge of prosecution. Each press release includes at least a cursory statement that the action was taken as part of PSN, thus promoting the initiative and informing the public what it entails and where more information can be obtained. For example, in a press release that covered a plea agreement by one of Connecticut's largest gun dealers, the following statement was provided about PSN:

The Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is aimed at reducing gun violence, deterring illegal possession of guns, and improving the safety of residents in Connecticut's cities. Participants in the initiative include community members and organizations as well as federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

The articles published in newspapers usually made some mention of the initiative but the coverage was only cursory. For example, an article published in the *New Britain Herald* about the sentence received by a felon in possession made a small note on how the prosecution of this case was part of PSN and how this initiative "seeks to reduce gun violence to deter the illegal possession of firearms and improve the safety of residents statewide" (Clair, 2003).

In these press releases, the U.S. Attorneys' Office has tried to utilize common language to increase awareness of federal penalties among offenders and the community and to increase interest in these stories. This district has been very successful in utilizing specific incidents as promotional tools since they gather information on high profile cases and disperse the information throughout the community that as part of PSN the slightest

firearm offense will not be tolerated. Many of these cases involve felons in possession and some cases dealing with the possession of ammunition only, however, it sends the message that something as small as possessing ammo could land a person in federal prison. Interviewees referred to this aggressive press release policy as the “drum beat” to get media attention and believe that if there is an increase in media coverage it is because of this policy and the fact that PSN is more established in the jurisdiction now than it was when it was first implemented.

Since the implementation in 2002 and up to 2005, however, the majority of articles evaluated for this jurisdiction were from news media organizations and not press releases. Nevertheless, some of these articles mention elements of a case and sentencing and mentions PSN very briefly. It is assumed that the coverage by newspapers in the first few years studied were a result of the initiative being so new in the jurisdictions, but clearly their media policy became significantly more aggressive after 2005. Most of the articles presented factual information and some gave praise to the initiative and informed the community of the efforts and how they were working. This coverage (2002-2005), in contrast to the coverage received in 2006-2007, allows for the assumption that the efforts to communicate and reach out to the media were more prevalent in the first year of the initiative since it was in the early years that newspaper articles were released as opposed to only press releases put out by the USAO. Additionally, it can be assumed that the news about PSN just “got old” and therefore the media lost interest since there were no efforts by the USAO to publicize the initiative in a way that renewed interest.

The coverage on programs, strategies, and community outreach were not extensive. Out of all of the articles only one of them made mention of the outreach efforts



by the USAO and mentioned the partnership with the minor league baseball team.

Although the media partner played a great role in implementing the community outreach programs it appears that they did not spend the time or made the effort to promote the initiative to the print news media.

### *Outreach*

Community outreach is the responsibility of the U.S. Attorney's Office and all partners involved in PSN, and really the only role that the media partner in this district has played in the initiative. The type of community outreach they do varies, but as mentioned before, sponsorship of contests and community activities were a way for the community to become aware of the initiative. In addition, the previously mentioned meetings are a component of outreach since they involve community groups that are willing to help out recently released offenders. Clearly, there seems to be a detachment between the USAO and the media partner since it is apparent that the U.S. Attorney seeks the news coverage by utilizing specific incidents, but do not pay as much attention to programs in the community. On the other hand, the media partner does outreach activities, but does not work to get coverage about it.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has done some specific outreach activities, including developing media campaigns targeting individuals, referred to as "straw purchasers," who buy weapons for those who are not supposed to have them- particularly convicted felons. The campaign utilized radio advertisement and billboards throughout busy avenues in the city of Stamford transmitting the message of "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" (DOJ, 2007). It is one interviewee's belief that these individuals are responsible for making legal guns illegal and contribute to the rates of gun violence and thus should face

consequences for their actions. For these reasons, the source believes that media campaigns targeting these individuals are extremely important since it is his belief that citizens do not really comprehend the idea behind the laws preventing convicted felons from carrying firearms. This particular campaign informs the citizens that lying on firearm applications is a federal offense that is punishable up to ten years in prison. Additionally, the advertisement encourages gun owners to report missing or stolen firearms as soon as they become aware that they are missing (DOJ, n.d).

#### *Impression and Evaluation of Media Relations*

Although some of the campaigns executed showed some success in getting the community informed and involved, the media coverage of the specific campaigns was not overwhelming which is surprising for a jurisdiction from the high coverage strata. Since the implementation of the initiative until now, the efforts to put more of these campaigns into action have diminished and the media partner is far less aggressive to promote the initiative through outreach. One of the interviewees revealed that the efforts by the media partner to develop such campaigns have decreased. The source was not sure as to what the reasons for the diminished media partner's efforts were and is unaware whether or not it could be attributed to funding. Regardless of whether funding has been depleted or not, some of the opinions gathered were that since the implementation of the initiative it has been difficult to see the outcomes of all the funding that went into the media partner. The impression gathered from the interviews was that there was little satisfaction with the performance of the media partner. Interviewees also highlighted that it would be nice to have an advertisement agencies as media partners, since it is believed that more outreach could get accomplished with this type of partner.

In addition, members of this jurisdiction expressed frustration towards the media due to the type of stories that the agencies find newsworthy. Information about inner city individuals committing crime with firearms does not catch the attention of the media since it is already expected to happen and it is believed that citizens do not really care about these types of news stories since they lack the “WOW” factor. Sources also believed that this lack of newsworthiness could also in part be attributed to a race and ethnic bias when it comes to the presentation of news and that most media agencies give more attention to white collar crime in well-to-do areas than gun crimes committed by minorities in inner cities since this is more common and not as surprising to the constituents.

The source also mentioned that the reception by the media varies depending on the media format. Electronic media, for example, does not cover PSN stories as much as paper media. However, he did not provide an explanation as to why this may be the case. It could be assumed, however, that electronic media is harder to contact and there may be some difficulty in obtaining radio and television airtime without paying for it.

#### *Effects of Media Coverage on PSN Implementation*

Interviewees for this district said that they were not aware of how the media coverage has affected the implementation of the initiative and that they really are not reacting to the effects. One of the sources stated “ we are doing what we are doing and not really reacting to the effects” which gave the impression that the district is not very concerned with the results that media coverage may have on the implementation of the initiative and is not as willing to spend the time and make the effort to reach out to the media to improve coverage. Although the sources mentioned that the jurisdiction is

constantly looking for ways to improve communication, they find it frustrating to find one strategy that truly works. One of the sources also believed that the media's view of the USAO is that they are not concerned with community outreach since that is more of a social service than a law enforcement activity, which is the main concern of the office.

### **Eastern District of Pennsylvania**

The Eastern District of Pennsylvania, which includes Philadelphia, is one of the largest districts in the United States. This jurisdiction faces a serious gun, drug, and violent crime problem which is exacerbated by its closeness to New York City (Price-McGinnis & Switala, n.d.). PSN was implemented in 2002 as an expansion of the already in place Project Cease Fire. The main focus for this jurisdiction has been to target violent gangs and drug traffickers. As part of the program, the U.S. Attorney's Office has established joint task forces that include members from both federal and state agencies. The idea behind these task forces is that cooperation between the sectors will help decrease the rates of firearms related violence. The task force for Lancaster County, for example, has been very successful in implementing the initiative. This area's task force has been responsible for the indictment of the "Fifty Million Soldiers" gang which was responsible for the crack cocaine market in the city of Lancaster and its surroundings. The intelligence sharing between the different agencies in the task force made the indictments possible. Additionally, the efforts of this task force have led to charging of 74 individuals for federal offenses. Thanks to the aggressive implementation of the initiative in the area there has been an 88 percent decrease in homicides and an approximate 40 percent decline in armed robberies (DOJ, n.d.). The success of this task force been used as a model for other cities in the jurisdiction.

### *Programs and Strategies*

This jurisdiction has focused on prosecution under federal firearm laws, but has attempted to enhance the effectiveness by targeting specific types of offenders. For example, the jurisdiction has implemented a State Alternative Program (SAP) that provides defendants an opportunity to plead guilty in state courts to higher sentences than those required in state guidelines but lower than those carried out in the federal system—thus the offender essentially gets to choose between the stiff federal sentence or a significant state sentence. One of the benefits for this program is that it allows the federal government to focus on the most violent offenders and save the resources for those cases (Settani, Richmond, Cheney & Grossman, 2005).

The jurisdiction has also taken advantage of new technology and implemented a district- wide mapping and analysis program (PSN MAP) that helps the nine county task forces in the district gather, store, and share information about firearm violence. The main idea behind the program is crime analysis and it allows the USAO to collect PSN data and evaluate the criminal patterns across the jurisdiction (Price-McGinnis & Switala, n.d.). The strategy is that the results of any crime analysis that becomes the basis of strategic response. The program also facilitates cooperation among the different task forces and law enforcement agencies in the jurisdiction as well as those in the neighboring areas.

This particular program has received much of the media coverage since it is such an innovative strategy (Settani, Richmond, Cheney & Grossman, 2005). However, most of this coverage is published in topic specific publications instead of newspapers. Articles about PSN MAP have been published in Directions magazine, Federal GIS Connections,

and in Geo Decision's publications which is the company manufacturing PSN MAP. The articles also discuss how the program operates instead of mentioning specific cases that it has helped solve.

The Eastern district of Pennsylvania places great importance on cooperation and has several prosecution-based programs that utilize task forces that target gun offenses and straw purchasers. Similar to Connecticut, the Eastern district of Pennsylvania has also implemented Project Sentry to educate youth and deal with juvenile offenders that violate federal gun laws (Settani, Richmond, Cheney & Grossman, 2005).

In 2006, the Eastern district of Pennsylvania implemented the 222 corridor anti-gang initiative which targets gang violence and drug and firearm trafficking along Pennsylvania's route 222 and interstate-78 and covers seven cities of the Eastern district, including Easton, Bethlehem, Allentown, Reading, Lancaster, York, and Harrisburg. This initiative was implemented in response to several issues. First, drug and violent activity is significant along this corridor. Second, because of gun laws in Pennsylvania, the area has become popular for straw purchasers who then take the weapons back to neighboring states such as New York and New Jersey who sell them to be used in crimes. Representatives from the Easton office were contacted for interviews to see what media strategies are used to promote the program.

This 222 corridor initiative is the primary program operating out of the US Attorney's Office, and this particular initiative still falls under the umbrella of PSN and utilizes the components of PSN, especially outreach and partnerships between the USAO and local and federal agencies as well as members from the USAO from different jurisdictions. In terms of outreach, the 222 corridor initiative involves representatives

from the faith community, non-profits, education, concerned citizens, businesses, government, social services and community organizations as well as government agencies in their task forces (Miller, 2007). The initiative also includes a reentry program that focuses on inmates released from the prisons in the focus areas (About the 222 Corridor Anti-Gang Initiative, 2007). The results of the interviews showed that although the 222 Corridor initiative is part of PSN it really has not focused on PSN as a whole but on the work done on the individual sites and the USAO. According to sources, PSN did not provide advice on how to promote the initiative or what messages were to be conveyed, thus PSN is not being recognized as part of this program. One of the key contacts mentioned that this lack of PSN coverage could be improved if PSN were to create communication templates that include how to craft key messages, develop talking points, and strategies and tactics as well as appointing a media liaison within the jurisdiction.

The 222 corridor program has received excellent press coverage which has focused on the efforts to reduce gang related criminal activity especially in the Lancaster area since the district attorney and the police chief for that area are very supportive of PSN and praise the partnership with the USAO as well as their efforts. The idea is to educate the media and in turn educate the community, some of the coverage has included press releases by the Department of Justice and the different task forces involved in the program and focus on sentences given to offenders. Coverage that has been considered good is that focusing on redemption. According to sources, PSN and the 222 corridor are redemptive works with an altruistic core, everyone has a story and the more successful it is the more people want to be a part of it. Reporters like to report these types of stories

because they feel like they are a part of it. Thus one of the strategies is utilizing individuals that have turned their life around as part of PSN or the 222 and tell their story to the community.

Members in charge of the 222 corridor program had worked to identify key journalists in order to brainstorm ideas that could become stories about the program. An interactive website has also been created and it includes a news module and pressroom.

#### *Media Partner*

Contrary to the district of Connecticut, and most other jurisdictions, this district does not have a media partner and all media relations and efforts are done in house and there is not one particular person in charge. Even though the office has a media contact that handles most media issues, the PSN coordinator and other assistant US attorneys' (AUSA), as well as state attorneys, are also involved in providing information to the media. In the case of the 222 Corridor, a media consultant working pro bono is often relied on for information and direction. One strategy to emphasize the importance of PSN is to have individual press conferences with each AUSA in charge of the different counties as well as state attorneys. Strategies have also included the promotion of key messages through the media to raise media interest as well as community interest. One of the interviewees stated that the primary message was designed to shift from a historical focus of prevention from a law enforcement response to one of community response. This message, according to the source, were crafted around strategies that were based on a public health and safety model instead of solely relying on law enforcement, and these strategies have been used to promote the 222 Corridor initiative and have gotten the attention of the media organizations as well as educators, agencies, and stakeholders.



Other strategies to generate publicity include releasing information about the convictions and sentences of firearm cases prosecuted at the federal level to media personnel who then write the story of the case and include a small paragraph describing the initiative, its philosophy, and goals. In a story released in the Lancaster New Era, the writer describes PSN as a:

...cooperative effort between federal and local officials that allows serious cases involving violent offenders to be prosecuted in federal court where prison sentences are typically longer than in county court. The goal is to deter violent criminals by obtaining longer sentences in prisons farther from home (Kelley, 2005).

The U.S. Attorney's Office also relies on its partnership with the state attorneys office and other agencies, particularly the ATF, to promote the initiative and inform the community about developments in federal cases. In every press release informing about a particular indictment or sentence there is a standard paragraph that addresses and explains PSN, its goals, and its components.

### *Media Relations*

While the Eastern district of Pennsylvania does have a public information office, most of the information about PSN focuses on information given out by prosecutors in the cases and those directly connected with PSN such as coordinators. According to sources, the media relations between the USAO of the district and the media organizations in the area are very good. Both the media and the members of the USAO do not hesitate in contacting the other party when information needs to be gathered or dispersed. The relationship between the media and the program coordinators has to be one of trust, if the media trusts their sources they will be more likely to publish their work.

### *Outreach*

As part of a community outreach campaign the U.S. Attorney's Office of this district has established community-based programs, including communication efforts by assistant U.S. Attorneys and state attorneys. These attorneys inform and educate inmates, youth offenders, and students about federal firearm laws and sentences in order to deter them from committing such offences. Additionally, the district has produced videotapes that portray the consequences of gun violence and they show them to current offenders and those individuals at risk. These videos have also been aired on cable television to capture the attention of constituents and have been shown in community meetings and educational settings. Furthermore, public service announcements and flyers have been disseminated to inform the community about the PSN initiative and the action that the USAO is taking to implement it. These PSA's also educate the community about federal firearm laws.

### *Impression and evaluation of media relations*

Sources for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania are very satisfied with the relationship they have with the media. They believe that the media organizations in the area have been very receptive to publicizing the initiative and will present information about PSN whenever a firearm incident is presented in the news. For example, when there is a firearm related offense presented in the news, a reporter will also discuss whether the offense is taken to the federal level as part of PSN, provide background information on the program, and how the penalties differ from the state level. The article may also include information on previous cases that have been successfully prosecuted under the initiative. The interviewees were also satisfied that the types of articles being

published about the initiative because they tended to be lengthy and covered not only PSN but other federal efforts and that the coverage has remained consistent throughout the whole time PSN has been in place.

Given the high crime rates in Philadelphia and the surrounding areas, the media are very receptive to any positive news regarding violent crime that they can deliver to the constituents. A particular example that was given to demonstrate the satisfaction with the media was when a candidate in a mayoral election mentioned that there was a federal initiative to combat gun crime but that it was not being used. Shortly after that statement, the newspapers published a story explaining PSN, the efforts by the different agencies in the partnership, and some of the results it has yielded.

Members of the jurisdiction attribute the media success to good relations with the media and good public relations staff that are aggressive in contacting the media organizations whenever necessary. Additionally, the way the information is packaged has played a big role since it needs to be viewed as newsworthy, in order to do so, the jurisdiction does not talk about PSN as a new program but focuses on the impact that it has had in the jurisdiction in relation to crime and deterrent effect the initiative has had. For instance, press conferences or other media activities will be set up to discuss how the implementation of the program has helped decrease the rates of gang, drug, and firearm offenses in the area.

#### *Effects of Media Coverage on PSN Implementation*

Although the members of this USAO cannot pinpoint a particular way that the coverage has affected the implementation of the initiative, or a case that publicized the initiative, they stated that the media has been very helpful in the efforts to inform the

community about it. One of the interviewees stated that when PSN is mentioned most of the residents in the area are aware of it and know what it entails. Additionally, interviewees stated that they cannot recall any instances when the USAO was criticized over the implementation of the initiative and that all media coverage has been positive.

However, there is criticism by the media when there is no public response to negative incidents. One of the interviewees recalls a newspaper in Easton criticizing the lack of information provided by the USAO after a triple homicide. Although members of the USAO met with public officials and members of local law enforcement to discuss the homicides the meeting was never publicized and thus the media was kept in the dark.

In the case of the 222 Corridor, media coverage has had a large and positive effect on the implementation of the program. According to interviewees

media coverage has led to the agencies and the public understanding the need for this issue to be addressed as a community and in the context of prevention and intervention. In addition, the steady stream of requests for information, training and workshops continues to flow from our region and other parts of the state and country as well.

#### *Future of Media Relations in the Area*

Although the USAO in this district has been less involved with outreach over time, it has attempted to reach out to the media in major cases in order to publicize its efforts. Sources believe that if there were more funds for the outreach components and, if more people could be hired, there could be much more done to promote the initiative. Currently, PSN coordinators are working on a newsletter on the subject of PSN and it will include information about the initiative and what it has been done in the jurisdiction. The hope of this office is to be able to make this newsletter public.

The belief in this USAO is that continuing the good communication with the media and the aggressive efforts of the law enforcement partners in all nine counties that make up the jurisdiction will continue to produce newsworthy material that can be transmitted to the community. The idea behind it is that people in the community will say “gee that’s great” instead of being surprised when a firearm case goes to federal prosecution.

### **Comparison of Jurisdictions**

Both of the jurisdictions in this chapter provide a good example of USAO’s utilizing incidents as a way to promote the initiative. These jurisdictions also show strategies, although very different in each jurisdiction, that have been successful in involving the media in informing the community about the efforts being made by the federal government to reduce gun violence in their areas. The jurisdictions selected for this case study are very different from each other since they vary greatly in size, demographics, and crime rates. Although it is difficult to compare a city like Philadelphia in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, which is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the nation to the cities in the district of Connecticut, the comparison provides a good way of evaluating how strategies, both similar and different, affect the implementation of a nationwide initiative.

Based on these case studies, there appears to be several common sense strategies that have been effective to achieve newspaper coverage about a PSN initiative. First, aggressive press release policies have been put into place to inform the media and the community of the efforts of the USAO to prosecute individuals at the federal level. Second, good communication and building relationships with the media is crucial to the

dissemination of information. It is important to remember that most crime news is produced about the police stages of the criminal justice process, and reporters have strong, continuing relationships with police officials and some prosecutors, but rarely do local reporters have consistent contact with federal officials, especially representatives from the US Attorney's Office. Thus, a key element of a successful strategy is taking the time to meet with reporters to build that trust as well as educate about the initiative. For example, although both jurisdictions have been successful at achieving coverage, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania had more consistent and direct connections with media personnel, which perhaps explain why the coverage was more informative about PSN.

Third, the length of the initiative has also impacted coverage, as it is no longer a new initiative, and thus jurisdictions have had to work to be creative to continue to get coverage. The difference in media coverage received by each of the jurisdictions could be a result of the efforts of such jurisdictions to continue to achieve coverage. It seems that Connecticut was heavily involved in promoting the initiative when it was first implemented and then moved to solely press releases that provided information about cases, however, they are not really informing the community of newer and improved components and programs within the initiative. On the other hand, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania takes advantage of any opportunity to promote the new efforts and the results that the implementation has yielded. In other words, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania tries to maintain constant coverage to remind the citizens of the initiative.

When comparing the two jurisdictions, it is apparent that the involvement of a media partner does, in fact, help with the outreach component of PSN but does not really influence the coverage of PSN in the media. The jurisdiction with the media partner had

more activities to involve community members instead of just dealing with media personnel. Such activities not only make the community aware but it sparks interest of the initiative to its members and provides them with the opportunity of first hand involvement.

The implementation of PSN in both of the jurisdictions has shown to be successful and has resulted in the decline of firearm and violent offenses. Members of both jurisdictions have received awards by the Department of Justice and the Attorney General commending them in their efforts to implement the initiative. Both jurisdictions demonstrated an ability to get news coverage of the initiative overall, but the results of the case studies also reveal that news coverage is not a high priority even for these high producing jurisdictions.

## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to explore the amount and type of coverage received by Project Safe Neighborhoods. There were two objectives to this study: first, to describe how PSN is presented in the news; and second, to explore the strategies used by successful jurisdictions to achieve significantly more coverage about their PSN initiative. This study used two methodologies to achieve these objectives. First, a content analysis of newspaper articles was conducted to evaluate the type of information about PSN that was presented in the news and the sources used. Second, a case study of two jurisdictions that achieved significant coverage was conducted to evaluate the media strategies used by these jurisdictions.

This study is important since it is an exploratory study of an area of research that has been very limited. Although much has been done in the area of media and crime not much has been done to study the coverage that government initiatives receive and there has been no research that examines how jurisdictions attempt to use the news media to accomplish the goals of the initiative. Importantly, there has yet to be a research study that has examined news media issues as they pertain to Project Safe Neighborhoods. Although communication to the offending population and the general public are important elements of this initiative, there is a limited understanding of whether jurisdictions have been able to receive news coverage of this initiative.

The final chapter of this thesis provides a brief overview of the findings, discusses the policy implications of the study, and highlights the limitations of the study and future directions.



## **Overview of the Findings**

The findings of the content analysis suggest that there has been minimal coverage of the initiative across the jurisdictions in the print media and that the media favors stories related to specific incidents rather than those focusing on PSN in general. Considering the general expectations regarding what is newsworthy, it was not surprising to see that the majority of the stories were incidents and of a prosecutorial nature, particularly in the high coverage jurisdictions. News organizations, in general, rarely present long descriptive stories because of the amount of time it takes to produce such stories and readers generally prefer information about serious incidents. When program elements of PSN were discussed, these newspaper stories focused on the implementation of task forces and violent impact teams than any other aspects of the initiative such as goals, history, or philosophy.

The content analysis was also conducted in terms of coverage jurisdiction (high, medium, low) and media partners. The results showed that those jurisdictions receiving higher coverage were actively implementing the initiative through aggressive prosecutorial actions. For example, the District of Connecticut issued press releases every time that an offender was prosecuted, indicted, or charged and the Eastern District of Pennsylvania contacted the media whenever a high profile case was brought to the federal system. The interesting finding is that although the volume of coverage varied substantially, the type of coverage, including the elements emphasized and discussed, was not very different. In all coverage areas, the results showed that there was not much coverage of PSN, its goals, and its components, instead, the articles focused on specific incidents. The low and medium coverage areas, however, showed greater coverage of the

implementation of programs and the initiative as a whole instead of incidents in comparison to the high coverage areas. The most popular program mentioned was ChildSafe which distributes free locks for guns and gun cabinets to prevent accidental shooting.

There were some significant differences across the jurisdictions in terms of PSN component coverage. Although the overall results were consistent and showed that partnerships were mentioned more than any of the other components, the high coverage jurisdictions mentioned the other components at higher rates than the other two coverage areas.

In terms of programs implemented, the results for discussing violent crime impact teams and other task forces were prevalent in the high coverage jurisdictions. Interestingly, these jurisdictions also paid more attention to general gun strategies than specific programs mentioned in the medium and low coverage areas. However, it is important to mention that the reason for such findings could be that the high coverage areas discussed programs that did not fit into any other category and thus had to be placed as general strategies.

The results for sources utilized was surprising since police sources, although they represented about 25 percent of the sources cited, were not the main source of information. This is of interest since other studies in the area have shown that police are usually the source of choice for crime related news articles. Many media studies highlight the importance of examining the types of sources presented in the news. The assumption is that acting as a source provides an opportunity to influence how key stakeholders and the public think about a variety of issues, including crime. There were five interesting

findings regarding the presentation of sources in the news. First, prosecutors from the USAO, instead of police officials, were the most commonly cited sources. Second, medium and low coverage jurisdictions were more likely to use public information officers as sources compared to high coverage areas. Third, low coverage areas were more likely to use law enforcement personnel, both local and federal, as sources. Fourth, the use of politicians as sources was very low across the jurisdictions, which was surprising especially for the high coverage areas. It was expected that these individuals would take advantage of the extensive media coverage to promote the initiative and their efforts. Fifth, high coverage areas were more likely to utilize indirect sources, such as documents, than the other two coverage areas.

Results about the impression of the initiative both overall and by sources were overwhelmingly neutral; meaning that there were few instances when a source stated something negative about the initiative or something blatantly positive.

The results for media partners showed little variation about the type of information provided and the amount of coverage received. The majority of jurisdictions had some sort of community group as a media partner; however for the high coverage jurisdictions universities or educational centers were more prevalent. It was interesting that those jurisdiction that had a CJ organization or a politician's office as a media partner had lengthier articles. Overall results, however, showed that there was little variation in the variables evaluated specially when evaluating PSN impression. The results suggest that the type of media partners play an insignificant role in publicizing the initiative in the news and that perhaps the main role of the media partner was to implement community outreach programs, however, based on the information it was

difficult to determine exactly how much the media partner was involved in such outreach efforts.

The implementation of media campaigns was also evaluated. The results showed that the majority of jurisdictions had some sort of media campaign in place; a low percentage of them were actually measuring the results of such campaigns. The results of the variables evaluated, however were fairly consistent across the coverage areas. Most of the stories presented referred to incidents. Yet, jurisdictions that did not have a media campaign in place, were not measuring the impact, or where funding was not provided by a task force made had more stories regarding program implementation.

The results for the case studies suggested that those jurisdictions that received high coverage had either aggressive press release policies in place or were very aggressive at contacting the media. The interviews suggested that in order for the initiative to receive good coverage the USAO and its partners had to make the efforts of involving the media instead of the media seeking the information. This means that on top of all of the responsibilities that the assistant U.S. Attorneys have they need to be active and remember to contact the media anytime that a newsworthy case comes up or anytime that a new program is implemented.

It was in fact surprising that so few jurisdictions aggressively pursued media coverage. There are several potential reasons for why there was such little coverage. First, U.S. Attorneys may not want to play the role of media liaison since, as stated in one of the interviews, this task may be seen as more of a social service task. Second, federal agencies are less likely to establish relationships with the local media and particular reporters than their local counterparts. Third, there seems to be a lack of

communication between the USAO and the media partner. For example, when discussing the media partner efforts in the District of Connecticut it was clear that the members of the USAO had no ideas about what the media partner was doing, if anything, and they were unsure as to why the participation of the media partner had diminished. Finally, the news media are simply not interested in stories that lack the newsworthy characteristics that catch the people's attention such as violent crime or sensationalized stories.

Although the cases related to PSN involve firearms, they often lack the sensationalized element of violence and thus do not receive media attention.

It is important to emphasize that the focus of this study was on news coverage, print media in particular, and that other methods of communicating the initiative such as billboards and community outreach projects were not evaluated. Additionally, the fact that not every jurisdiction refers to the initiative as PSN should be taken into consideration since it may have affected the data collection for the content analysis.

### **Policy Implications**

This research increases the understanding of the relationship between jurisdictions, media coverage and the implementation of government initiatives, in particular Project Safe Neighborhoods. This research also increases awareness of the different types of media strategies used by the different U.S. jurisdictions when trying to promote the initiative, particularly for those jurisdictions that were considered high in coverage. The results highlight some important policy issues and areas of research that need further study.

First, the U.S. Jurisdictions and media partners need to develop and apply more diverse media strategies to promote the initiative and increase public awareness and

involvement. The strategies should be created in conjunction with several media agencies. One of the case studies demonstrates that the USAO office in the District of Connecticut had not only media partners generally, but worked specifically with television media outlets to promote the initiative and solve cases. The focus should be on providing more timely information to the public through the media. In turn, if the media feels that they have a stake in the initiative; news organizations would be more likely to consider PSN related news more newsworthy than before.

Second, interjurisdictional meetings should be held in order for the different jurisdictions to be able to share the media strategies that have been working for them. The initiative is a nationwide effort, and thus it would be very beneficial if there was communication among the jurisdictions especially in terms of promoting the initiative. The interviews showed that members of the different jurisdictions were curious as to what other jurisdictions were doing in terms of media relations and coverage, and thought that discussing these issues with others would improve the quality of media coverage about this initiative.

Third, the focus of study was only on news coverage and not other elements of outreach. It is important to remember that news coverage is only one of the elements of outreach and therefore conclusions about all outreach cannot be made based on these results. However, it can be argued that news coverage is of great importance and that it is underutilized in the efforts to promote the initiative. The involvement of media can be seen as free advertisement for the initiative and that would be beneficial since the jurisdictions face tight budgets for the implementation and outreach efforts. The jurisdictions need to work at developing relationships with the media organizations in

order to effectively promote the initiative and its goals. The activities in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the implementation of Connecticut's Most Wanted seem like good practices that could be implemented across the jurisdictions to achieve greater coverage.

Fourth, better coordination is needed between the various PSN partners. It seems that, although some of the partners mention the initiative in interviews and press conferences, they are not actively seeking to get media coverage and the responsibility is primarily the duty of U.S. Attorneys. Since the USAO, as part of the PSN initiative, already has a working relationship with local agencies, like local police departments and probation, it would make sense to seek help and advise, especially for a police department's PIO, and involve them in the promotion of the initiative.

### **Limitations**

It is important to note that there are several weaknesses to this study. First, it was difficult to interview individuals about the initiative for the case studies. One concern was simply locating and getting responses back from key informants, but another issue was that there was only a limited amount of time available for me to pursue these interviews. Thus, the number of people contacted for interviews was very small and were limited to members of the USAO. In order to gather better information it would be good to conduct interviews with people from the media partners and members of the media organizations to gather their view of the type of coverage and why the coverage is being accomplished or not as well as their role in promoting the initiative. Although the contacts I made were extremely helpful and were certainly the key informants in each jurisdiction, it would have been valuable to interview more sources. Second, in many

ways this is an exploratory study since none like it on this issue has yet to be completed. Although the comparisons across jurisdiction were interesting and valuable, there clearly seems to be something else going on in terms of achieving quality newspaper coverage. That is, it is clear that just getting a lot of stories written about the initiative may or may not result in the public, and perhaps, offenders being aware of the initiative. Third, the statistical analysis utilized was very basic. Fourth, a better study of full outreach efforts should be conducted instead of solely focusing on media organizations. This should include studying other efforts done by the USAO to promote and communicate information about the initiative.

### **Future Research**

It is the hope that this research will act as a stepping stone for further research in the area since research in this topic may influence the ways that government initiatives are implemented and the type of relations that those in charge of the initiatives will have with the media. Additionally, it would be of great interest to see what aspects of the initiatives receive coverage and whether or not that coverage affects the program in the different areas.



## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX A

### Tables

**Table 1. Jurisdictions in Coverage Areas**

High Coverage	Medium Coverage	Low Coverage
District of Connecticut Middle District of Florida	Central District of California Eastern District of California	Middle District of Alabama Northern District of Alabama
District of Massachusetts District of New Hampshire Eastern District of Pennsylvania Southern District of Texas	District of Columbia Northern District of Illinois Eastern District of Louisiana Western District of Louisiana Eastern District of Michigan Western District of Missouri District of Rhode Island District of South Carolina District of Utah	Southern District of Alabama District of Alaska District of Arizona Eastern District of Arkansas Northern District of California Southern District of California District of Colorado District of Delaware Northern District of Florida Southern District of Florida Middle District of Georgia Southern District of Georgia Northern District of Georgia District of Guam District of Hawaii District of Idaho Southern District of Illinois Central District of Illinois Northern District of Indiana Southern District of Indiana Northern District of Iowa Southern District of Iowa District of Kansas Eastern District of Kentucky Western District of Kentucky Middle District of Louisiana District of Maine District of Maryland Western District of Michigan District of Minnesota Northern District Mississippi Southern District Mississippi Eastern District of Missouri District of Montana District of Nebraska District of Nevada

**Table 1. Cont.**

District of New Jersey
District of New Mexico
Eastern District of New York
Western District of New York
Northern District of New York
Southern District of New York
Eastern District of North Carolina
Middle District of North Carolina
Western District of North Carolina
North Dakota
Northern District of Ohio
Southern District of Ohio
Eastern District of Oklahoma
Western District of Oklahoma
Northern District of Oklahoma
District of Oregon
Middle District of Pennsylvania
Western District of Pennsylvania
Eastern District of Tennessee
Western District of Tennessee
Middle District of Tennessee
Eastern District of Texas
Northern District of Texas
Western District of Texas
Eastern District of Virginia
Western District of Virginia
Eastern District of Washington
Western District of Washington
Southern District of West Virginia
Eastern District of Wisconsin
Western District of Wisconsin
District of Wyoming

**Table 2. Average Number of PSN Stories (Average Length of Articles)**

Jurisdiction	Number of Stories
High	31.0 (496.79)
Medium	6.27 (561.22)
Low	1.8 (467.18)
All	5.29 (499.51)

**Table 3. Type of Story (in percentages)**

	All	High	Medium	Low
<b>Assessment</b>				
Incident	61.9	89.8	40.6	32.5
Program	8.4	2.2	13.0	15.1
Legislative	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.6
Action				
Implementation of initiative	19.4	2.7	29.0	38.9
Promotional	0.8	0.0	1.4	1.6
Informational	2.1	1.6	1.4	3.2
Award	1.3	0.5	1.4	2.4
Other	5.5	3.2	13.0	4.8
<b>Strategy</b>				
Prosecutorial	57.0	87.1	36.2	23.8
Law	5.0	3.8	5.8	6.3
Enforcement				
General GS	23.9	3.2	33.3	49.2
Allocation of funds	3.9	1.1	5.8	7.1
Award	1.8	0.5	4.3	2.4
Informational/Conference	3.4	1.6	5.8	4.8
Other	5.0	2.7	8.6	6.3

**Table 4. Discussion of Broad PSN Issues**

	All	High	Medium	Low
<b>Goals</b>				
Yes	76.7	91.9	65.7	60.3
No	23.3	8.1	34.3	39.7
<b>Overall Philosophy</b>				
Yes	36.9	44.6	45.7	20.6
No	63.1	55.4	54.3	79.4
<b>History</b>				
Yes	16.0	15.6	24.3	11.9
No	84.0	84.4	75.7	88.1
<b>Components</b>				
Yes	71.2	89.2	60.0	50.8
No	28.8	10.8	40.0	49.2
<b>Community Group Involvement</b>				
Yes	33.0	53.8	17.1	11.1
No	67.0	46.2	82.9	88.9

**Table 5. Components Discussed**

	All	High	Medium	Low
Partnership	43.6	57.5	37.7	26.2
Strategic Planning	12.1	16.1	14.5	4.8
Training	0.8	0.5	2.9	0.0
Outreach	7.1	0.5	7.1	16.7
None	28.3	10.8	37.7	48.4
Various	8.4	14.5	0.0	4.0

**Table 6. Specific and General Programs (in percentages)**

	All	High	Medium	Low
<b>Specific Programs</b>				
Exile	16.7	6.7	16.0	19.0
Antigang	2.8	0.0	4.0	2.9
Ceasefire	13	20	28	5.9
General Gun Strategy	16.7	33.3	4.0	17.6
ChildSafe	38.9	20	44	41.2
Education	6.5	0.0	0.0	10.3
Other	5.6	20	4.0	2.9
<b>General Programs</b>				
Antigang Unit	5.9	2.0	0.0	16.7
Task Forces	30.6	31.4	30	29.2
General Gun Strategy	14.1	7.8	30	20.8
Violent Offenders Team	35.3	51.0	0.0	16.7
Other	14.1	7.8	40	16.7

**Table 7. Discussion of PSN**

	All	High	Medium	Low
<b>Gun Violence</b>				
Yes	12.9	3.8	21.7	21.4
No	87.1	96.2	78.3	78.6
<b>Mentions Cases</b>				
Yes	63.3	88.7	46.4	34.9
No	36.7	11.3	53.6	65.1
<b>Drug Case</b>				
Yes	23.1	26.9	21.7	18.3
No	76.9	73.1	78.3	81.7
<b>Gang Case</b>				
Yes	4.2	2.7	4.3	6.3
No	95.8	97.3	95.7	93.7
<b>Response to Crime</b>				
Yes	15.5	10.2	11.6	25.4
No	84.5	89.8	88.4	74.6
<b>Reduction of Crime</b>				
Yes	17.6	9.1	21.7	27.8
No	82.4	90.9	78.3	72.2

**Table 8. Sources Cited in PSN Stories**

	All	High	Medium	Low
Chief/ Sheriff	7.0	6.1	6.8	9.0
PIO	3.3	0.8	6.8	6.9
Federal Officers	7.5	8	8.7	6.0
Other Police	6.4	4.8	5.8	9.9
<b>Sources</b>				
Prosecutors	43.3	51.5	40.8	27.9
Scholars	1.8	0.6	2.9	3.9
Politicians	6.7	4.2	11.7	9.4
Community group member	3.2	1.1	4.9	6.9
General officers/agencies	2.7	4.2	1.9	0.0
Documents	8.9	15.1	0.0	0.0
Other	9.1	3.6	9.7	20.2

**Table 9. Overall and Source Impressions of PSN**

	All	High	Medium	Low
<b>Overall PSN</b>				
<b>Impression</b>				
Favorable	10.5	5.4	20.3	12.7
Not Favorable	1.5	0.5	2.9	3.2
Neutral	87.7	94.1	76.8	84.1
<b>Source</b>				
<b>Impression</b>				
Favorable	20.8	14	33.0	29.2
Not Favorable	2.6	1.5	4.9	3.9
Neutral	76.7	84.5	62.1	67.0

**Table 10. Overall Results by Media Partners**

	Police Department	Other CJ Organizations	Community Groups	Universities	Politicians Office	Program Office
<b>Jurisdiction</b>						
<b>Coverage</b>						
High	0.0	21.2	51.7	83.2	46.2	0.0
Medium	41.2	47.0	17.8	4.2	0.0	14.7
Low	58.8	31.8	30.5	12.6	53.8	85.3
<b>Average Size</b>	453.65	590.48	493.88	456.46	575.77	464.90
<b>Assessment</b>						
Incident	29.4	45.5	63.6	84.0	69.2	23.5
Program	41.2	6.1	10.2	2.5	11.5	8.8
Legislative	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0
Action						
Implementation	11.8	31.8	12.7	11.8	11.5	52.9
of initiative						
Promotional	0.0	1.5	0.8	0.0	0.0	2.9
Informational	5.9	0.0	4.2	0.8	0.0	2.9
Award	5.9	1.5	0.8	0.0	3.8	2.9
Other	5.9	12.1	7.6	0.8	0.0	5.9
<b>Strategy</b>						
Prosecutorial	23.5	40.9	55.9	84.0	53.8	17.6
Law	5.9	9.1	5.9	0.0	7.7	8.8
Enforcement						
General GS	52.9	31.8	21.2	11.8	19.2	47.1
Allocation of	0.0	1.5	4.2	2.5	3.8	14.7
funds						
Award	5.9	3.0	1.7	0.0	3.8	2.9
Informational/	0.0	7.6	3.4	0.8	7.7	2.9
Conference						
Other	11.8	6.1	7.6	0.8	3.8	5.9

**Table 11 Overall results by Media Partner 2**

	Police Department	Other CJ Organizations	Community Groups	Universities	Politicians Office	Program Office
Overall PSN						
Impression						
Favorable	23.5	18.2	11.0	4.2	0.0	17.6
Not Favorable	5.9	3.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	5.9
Neutral	70.6	78.8	87.3	95.8	100.0	76.5
Goals						
Yes	52.9	66.7	73.7	92.4	84.6	55.9
No	47.1	33.3	26.3	7.6	15.4	44.1
Overall						
Philosophy						
Yes	41.2	28.8	46.6	37.8	30.8	17.6
No	58.8	71.2	53.4	62.2	69.2	82.4
History						
Yes	5.9	18.2	25.4	5.0	15.4	23.5
No	94.1	81.8	74.6	95.0	84.6	76.5
Components						
Yes	35.3	62.1	68.6	91.6	69.2	50.0
No	64.7	37.9	31.4	8.4	30.8	50.0
Gun Violence						
Yes	29.4	27.3	11.9	2.5	3.8	23.5
No	70.6	72.7	88.1	97.5	96.2	76.5
Response to						
Crime						
Yes	29.4	13.6	16.9	9.2	19.2	26.5
No	70.6	86.4	83.1	90.8	80.8	73.5
Reduction of						
Crime						
Yes	29.4	22.7	20.3	6.7	11.5	35.3
No	70.6	77.3	79.7	93.3	88.5	64.7
Funding						
Yes	35.3	34.8	16.9	9.2	34.6	44.1
No	64.7	65.2	83.1	90.8	65.4	55.9



**Table 12. Media Campaign Analysis**

	All	High	Medium	Low
<b>Mass Media Campaign</b>				
Yes	97.3	100.0	89.9	97.4
No	2.7	0.0	10.1	2.6
<b>Measure of Impact</b>				
Yes	53.9	53.2	63.8	49.1
No	46.1	46.8	36.2	50.9
<b>Positive Results</b>				
Yes	59.7	60.2	67.7	54.2
No	1.4	0.0	0.0	4.7
CND	38.9	39.8	32.3	41.1
<b>Task Force funding campaign</b>				
Yes	90.8	93.5	88.4	87.9
No	9.2	6.5	11.6	12.1

**Table 13. Results by Mass Media Campaign, Measures, and Funding**

	Mass Media Campaign		Measure Campaign		Task Force Funds	
	Yes (N=361)	No (N=10)	Yes (N=200)	No (N=171)	Yes (N=337)	No (N=34)
<b>Jurisdiction Coverage</b>						
High	51.5	0.0	49.5	50.9	51.6	35.3
Medium	17.2	70.0	22.0	14.6	18.1	23.5
Low	31.3	30.0	28.5	34.5	30.3	41.2
<b>Assessment</b>						
Incident	64.0	20.0	71.0	53.2	63.8	52.9
Program	7.5	20.0	5.0	11.1	7.4	11.8
Legislative	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.0
Action						
Implementation of initiative	18.3	50.0	16.0	22.8	18.1	29.4
Promotional	0.3	10.0	0.0	1.2	0.3	2.9
Informational	2.2	0.0	1.5	2.9	2.4	0.0
Award	1.4	0.0	0.5	2.3	1.5	0.0
Other	5.8	0.0	5.5	5.8	5.9	2.9
<b>Strategy</b>						
Prosecutorial	59.0	10.0	67.0	46.8	59.1	44.1
Law	4.4	20.0	3.0	7.0	4.2	11.8
Enforcement						
General GS	23.0	30.0	18.5	28.7	21.7	38.2
Allocation of funds	3.3	30.0	3.0	5.3	4.2	2.9
Award	1.9	0.0	1.5	2.3	2.1	0.0
Informational/Conference	3.6	0.0	4.0	2.9	3.9	0.0
Other	4.7	10.0	3.0	7.0	5.0	2.9

**Table 14. Results by Mass Media Campaign, Measures, and Funding 2**

	<b>Mass Media Campaign</b>		<b>Measure Campaign</b>		<b>Task Force Funds</b>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
	(N=361)	(N=10)	(N=200)	(N=171)	(N=337)	(N=34)
<b>Overall PSN Impression</b>						
Favorable	11.1	0.0	8.5	13.5	11.0	8.8
Not Favorable	1.7	10.0	0.0	4.1	1.2	8.8
Neutral	87.3	90.0	91.5	82.5	87.8	82.4
<b>Goals</b>						
Yes	78.7	40.0	82.0	72.5	78.0	73.5
No	21.3	60.0	18.0	27.5	22.0	26.5
<b>Overall Philosophy</b>						
Yes	37.7	40.0	35.0	40.9	37.1	44.1
No	62.3	60.0	65.0	59.1	62.9	55.9
<b>History</b>						
Yes	15.8	10.0	8.5	24.0	14.8	23.5
No	84.2	90.0	91.5	76.0	85.2	76.5
<b>Components</b>						
Yes	72.9	50.0	80.5	62.6	73.3	61.8
No	27.1	50.0	19.5	37.4	26.7	38.2
<b>Gun Violence</b>						
Yes	12.7	30.0	11.0	15.8	13.4	11.8
No	87.3	70.0	89.0	84.2	86.6	88.2
<b>Response to Crime</b>						
Yes	16.1	10.0	16.0	15.8	16.6	8.8
No	83.9	90.0	84.0	84.2	83.4	91.2
<b>Reduction of Crime</b>						
Yes	18.0	10.0	15.0	21.1	18.4	11.8
No	82.0	90.0	85.0	78.9	81.6	88.2
<b>Funding</b>						
Yes	20.8	50.0	20.5	22.8	20.8	29.4
No	79.2	50.0	79.5	77.2	79.2	70.6

## APPENDIX B

### Content Codebook

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Variable description</b>	<b>Coding Scheme</b>
Case Number	Case number	#
Article	Article Number	#
State	State of origin	1-50= alphabetical order. 51= DC; 52= Guam
hmlow	Jurisdiction Coverage	1= High 2= Medium 3= Low
Jurisdiction	U.S Jurisdiction	String
Massmedia	mass media campaign in place?	String
Measure	is campaign being measured?	String
TFfund	task force funding campaign	String
Year	Year of publication	1= 2001-2003 2= 2004-2005 3= 2006-2007
Size	# of Words	#
assessment	Type of article	1= Incident related 2= program/policy 3=Legislative action 4=implementation of initiative 5= Statistical 6= Promotional 7= other 8= Informational 9= Award

strategy	Type of PSN Story	1= prosecutorial 2=law enforcement 3= communication 4= general gun strategy 5= corrections 6= allocation of funds 7= Award 8= info/conference 9= editorial 10= Other
prevprog	Preventive Program	String
Reducprog	Reduction Program	String
prosec	type of prosecution	1=none 2= state 3= federal
sentence	sentence imposed	String
Sources	sources	1=chief/ Sheriff 2=other CJ personnel 3= PIO 4= Federal Agents 5= Prosecutor 6= Scholar 7= Politician 8= Community gp Member 9= Other 10= No Source 11= US Department 12= General officials/ authorities 13= Documents
numsourc	# of sources cited	#
numpol	# of Police sources cited	#
numusat	# of US attorney sources cited	#
numstat	# State attorney sources cited	#

numcorr	# Correction sources cited	#
numclergy	# Clergy sources cited	#
numcommgp	# of com. Grp sources cited	#
numcit	# of citizen sources cited	#
numoth	# of other sources cited	#
whatsay	Type of info provided	1=factual/informational 2= explanatory 3= evaluation 4= recommendation 5= prediction 6= reactions
Overpsnfavor	media impression of PS	1=favorable 2= not favorable 3= neutral
goals	Discuss PSN goals	1=yes; 2=no
psnphil	Discuss PSN philosophy	1=yes; 2=no
psnhist	Discuss PSN history	1=yes; 2=no
psncomp	Discuss PSN components	1= yes; 2= no
comp	Which Component is discussed	1= Partnership 2= Strategic Planning 3= Training 4= outreach 5= accountability 6= none 7= Various
psngps	Disc.involvement of com. gps	1=yes; 2=no
gv	discuss gun violence(inc/dec)	1=yes; 2=no
gvcase	Specific cases mentioned	1=yes; 2=no

Drug	Drug cases	1=yes; 2=no
Gang	Gang involvement	1= yes; 2=no
gvresearch	Studies mentioned	1=yes; 2=no
gvresp	how is CJ going to respond	1=yes; 2=no
offender	mentions offender/characteristics of	1=yes; 2=no
excon	was the offender previously convicted	1=yes; 2=no
crime	mentions how PSN can reduce Crime	1=yes; 2=no
Fund	mentions funding for PSN	1=yes; 2=no
Mediapart	Media Partner	1= Police Dept. 2= Other CJ Org 3= Comm. Gp. 4= University 5= Politicians Office 6= Crime Stoppers/ program
Prevprogl	prevention program numeric	1= Exile 2= Antigang 3= Ceasefire 4= general Prevention Strat. 5= Childsafe 6= education 7= other 99= Missing
Reduprog1	Reduction Program Numeric	1= Antigang 2= Task Force 3= general reduction strat. 4= VCIT 5= Other 99= Missing

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