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12 The use of task forces internationally: Mitigating socio-political risks for law enforcement agencies

12.1 Introduction

The ability that leaders have to collaborate, innovate, and adapt their responses to events (active shooters, hostile and violent acts and perpetrators) will be critical in a world where surprise and uncertainty are becoming all too common characteristics of public safety. (Straub et al., 2017).

Task force participation increased significantly after the September 11th, 2001, attacks (DOJ, 2011). Collaborative efforts in a post 9/11 era have formed between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies have been created in order to coalesce practitioners and specialists in sub areas of the criminal justice system. These initiatives are designed to target specific criminal activity, usually in correlation with a particular geographical area. By combining communal resources, intelligence sharing mechanisms, and varied skill sets of multiple law enforcement agencies to focus on targeted crimes/criminal patterns, task forces create a formidable crime control paradigm and effective way to combat crime. Fusion Centers have been constructed to promote ongoing information sharing primarily coordinated at the federal level. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Justice will partner with state, local and tribal police agencies to further specific criminal control activities (Goldstein, 2020). These centers may be affiliated with emergency management agencies in case of a natural disaster and assist with relief efforts. Since 2018, the United States Department of Homeland Security has documented 79 fusion centers, resulting in The National Network of Fusion Centers (DHS, 2019; Lambert, 2010). Fusion Centers are decentralized, self-organizing and respond with their respective partners to address specific areas of criminal and/or terrorist activities (Lambert, 2010). They rely on intelligence gathering and through diversifying information sharing protocols, they provide specific attention to problematic areas and obtain accurate information regarding criminal activity and organizations.

12.2 Advantages to task forces and impact on criminal investigations

In the United States, there has been tremendous collaboration and growth within the task force community since 9/11 (DOJ, 2011). The focus of task forces ranges

from drug trafficking organizations (DTO), human trafficking, domestic (United States) and transnational organized crime syndicates as well as specific offense targets like anti-terrorism, crimes against children, opioid abuse, fugitive task forces, etc. (O'Brien, 2011). By combining resources, Task Forces create collaborative relationships expanding the traditional boundaries of law enforcement agencies and can include community-based corrections, victim assistance providers, reentry organizations and other significant stakeholders. Effective task forces can leverage their resources whereby developing more effective and efficient responses for criminal justice related agencies (McGivern, 2021).

Task Forces can provide a unified front over specific offense targets and supplement those involved with joint training opportunities and hone skill sets which are applicable to other areas. "The task force concept increases the effectiveness and productivity of limited personnel and logistical resources, avoids duplication of investigations and consequent wasteful expenditure of resources in matters of concurrent jurisdiction, and expands the cooperation and communication among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies" (Ashley, 2003, 2). Goals for Task Forces participants include lowering crime rates and suppressing recidivism, tuning in, and adopting "best practices" techniques from information sharing and collaborative efforts. This is achieved by coordinating community outreach and partnerships, fostering support to deter crime and strengthening relations between the community and law enforcement agencies (Ashley, 2003).

12.3 Steps to creating a successful task force and assessing risk

When constructing a task force, there are several important issues to keep in mind. First and more importantly, what is the "buy-in" from participating leadership and their respective agencies? Successful task force initiatives need ongoing support from Chiefs and Commissioners of participating units. There needs to be unanimous agreement that efforts will be targeted to specific goals and that the groups involved are at a strong level of readiness for information sharing and can measure and assess data collection (Walker, 1996). Senior leadership must be able to accurately assess the individual team members abilities to collaborate and help develop team strategies. Law enforcement members must have the ability to continuously learn, adapt and work cooperatively in a team management style.

Task forces need to have the encouragement and motivation of all participants. This will engage team members to identify the applicable criminogenic factors that need to be addressed in targeted populations. Good examples of successful task force participation include *The Safe Streets Initiative* (1992) and *Operation Ceasefire* (1996). *The Safe Streets Initiative* spearheaded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation was

designed so that the Special Agents in Charge (SAC) of each FBI field division could initiate efforts to partner with local and state law enforcement partners to launch long-term, proactive investigations focused specifically on gangs, violent crime, and aide in the apprehension of fugitives of violent crimes (Rachlin, 1993). This collaborative effort also incorporated state and federal prosecutors together with law enforcement to execute in a comprehensive crime control strategy to reduce violent crime (Rachlin, 1993). *Operation Ceasefire* (also referred to the *Boston Gun Project*) is a problem-oriented policing initiative first implemented in 1996 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. The program was specifically aimed at youth gun violence as a large-scale problem. The project assembled an interagency group of criminal justice practitioners and law enforcement. Research included assessment that applied various techniques to create an understanding of what was driving youth and gun violence. Once factors were determined, intervention strategies were applied and managed. Ongoing evaluations of the project were conducted to assess success (Kennedy, Braga & Piehl, 2001).

Task force integration begins with a policy that identifies strict procedures related to chain of command. There needs to be direct and continuous interagency communication with a designated point of contact. Regardless of the origin of the task force, a memorandum or memorialized agreement needs to be officiated and agreed upon by all participating agencies. This contract will assist in mitigating specific risks that can develop and arise from multi-agency/jurisdictional investigations and operations. A *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) helps manage the accountability of all participants and establishes points of responsibility and tracking procedures (SAFECOM, 2004). The MOU is a document that designates the broad guidelines of the agreement between all participating agencies. Its primary purpose is to communicate the expectations and what has been negotiated and agreed upon on prior to the partnership. Examples include, “How investigations are handled?” “Is there a lead agency?” “What protections exist for officers involved if something goes wrong?” “What is the official chain of command?” “Who does the task force report to?” These procedures need to be mutually agreed upon and accepted by the leadership of all involved as well as those directly responsible for oversight of the task force and their operations (SAFECOM, 2004).

Risk management is necessary when conducting all law enforcement operations. Most organizational functions include some type of risk – personal, integrated within individual roles, hazard of the position, or not anticipated. All agencies are at risk for potential lawsuits and officers can face civil and criminal prosecutions which impact their reputations, positions, and assets. Examining risks at all levels is critical for any agency. Strategies needed to mitigate these risks should be designed at both the organizational as well as personal level. However, when dealing with multi-agency action plans, it is crucial that social and political risks are recognized and moderated during the organization and execution of all operations. (Scism, 2017) “While some risk management programs focus largely on internal personnel liability concerns, such as

early warning systems, other programs appear to encompass not only personnel liability, but organizational liability from a more global perspective.” (Scism, 2017).

When assembling a task force, organizers must consider all conditions of risk that threaten the viability and potential success of the group. One important factor that should be closely examined is the political environment in play, not just inter-agency, but intra-agency. Another factor is the current climate of the community which will be affected and its relationship with law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal levels. Stakeholders must investigate and analyze crime rates and specific criminogenic incidents within the targeted community that the task force will be operating in. (Copple & Copple, 2018) By developing a comprehensive risk management program, it is easier to identify the sociopolitical risks and establish policies and procedures that are necessary for better collaboration to reach established goals. It is critical that all participating law enforcement agencies be on the same page. Law enforcement is by nature and design process-oriented and bureaucratically structured. Thus, when constructing a task force, even when respective officials agree on the constructs, there needs to be a positive buy-in that must be encouraged and secured by leadership. This leadership cadre must have a unified philosophical approach that is comprehensive, goal oriented and supported on all levels. (Copple & Copple, 2018).

Social and political risks must be prioritized and managed during the length of time the task force is in existence. Solid leadership and continual, open lines of communication with all members is imperative. Risks must be assessed at the macro and micro levels. Sociopolitical risks impact the agencies involved and effect the organizational structure and management of the task force on a (macro-level) and microlevel. Examples include negative media press on one of the participating agencies, a team member violating ethics or the code of conduct, an officer involved shooting, (OIS) etc. (Copple & Copple, 2018). Once risks are identified and the potential consequences calculated, mitigation procedures can be enacted to minimize the damage. This enables on-going monitoring and critical assessment by agency leadership to potential evolving risks.

There has been minimal research conducted in the United States as well as globally focusing on partnerships and collaboration in the law enforcement community. In particular, integrating traditional policing agencies with other groups including corrections and/or probation/parole agencies (Jannetta & Lachman, 2011). With a critical eye on law enforcement agencies around the world and the criminal justice system as a whole, innovative “modus operandi” systems within the community setting creates an intersection where knowledge, resources, and dialogue foster essential changes within the field.

Partnerships within task forces normally result in an expansion of roles and on-going rotating responsibilities for participating officers. This movement is known in organizational and military studies as *mission creep* (Murphy & Worrall, 2007; Corbett, 1998). *Mission creep* (1993) is when there is a spreading out, an expansion

of a particular project or undertaking which demonstrates a positive growth effect (Corbett, 1998). Each success will build to a more ambitious initiative and will continue until a failure results and will inevitably discontinue the project. Mission creep was first identified in 1993 in a *New York Times* article discussing the Somali Civil War and UN Peacekeeping intervention. It has also been detected with Fusion Centers. Earlier goals to relay intelligence gathering have been targeted for doing more than that and violating civil rights of United States' citizens (Monahan & Palmer, 2009).

For task force operations to be successful, leadership becomes a key component (Northouse, 2003). In order to maintain accountability of all participants and confirm that interagency boundaries are maintained, effective and strategic leadership must exist. The most common definition of leadership is, "*a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal*" (Northouse, 2003). Leadership is not seen as an individual personality trait, but a continuous interaction between people. This continual interactional flow fosters a process to achieve the primary goals of the mission statement. There are basic ethical problems inherent in cultivating a strong leadership style with task forces. The managerial position(s) within the task force can be an issue. However, since policing is inherently paramilitary in structure, academy and field training programs teach and train law enforcement officers to respect the chain-of-command (Coppie & Coppie, 2018). Another ethical dilemma is how leadership responds to bad or misguided behavior that results in problems or scandals for their agencies. The American Society for Public Administration believes that responsibility and responsiveness are more important than accountability of leaders (Gawthrop, 2005).

There are several leadership modalities and how it fits within the task force is dependent on the person and style they utilize. Examples of applicable leadership styles include the *Trait Theory*, which highlights that leaders are born not made; *Situational Theory* in which the leader in charge analyzes the work environment to decide the most effective form of leading based on assessing the commitment of workers, competencies, and maturity; and *Transformative Theory* of leadership which is done when an organization is posing for change and examines psychodynamics and leadership, team leadership initiatives and servant leadership (Lewis, 2003). It is extremely important to determine how leadership roles are delegated within the task force. This leadership issue continues to be an ongoing problem in criminal justice agencies. According to Kuykendall and Usinger (1982) there is not enough delegation that occurs, specifically in criminal justice agencies. Effective leadership delegation has been replaced by "micromanaging," which is a significant political risk for any criminal justice agency but specifically, the task force community. Those who hold leadership positions "*like to have their hands in the pot*" but are not necessarily "*watching it cook*." Strong leadership encourages morale growth and creates a pathway for effective communication. Poor delegation creates an environment where task force members begin to question their competency or commitment to the cause. For

organizational success, positive growth and achievement of established task force goals, leadership must facilitate the encouragement of employees, professional development, and strong morale (Scism, 2017).

12.4 Leadership, understanding existing biases and effects on increasing risks

There are potential biases that can impact a task force success. Selection of team members, establishing the hierarchal/command and control protocols, and setting targets/goals of the task force can have a detrimental effect on the short and long success of the task force. Herbert Simon introduces the concept of heuristic biases defined as mental short cuts that permits individuals to make judgements and solve problems efficiently and swiftly (Cherry, 2019). In the world of law enforcement, practitioners are normally limited with time and decision-making choices that are based on the intelligence gathering mechanisms and the accuracy of that information. Tversky & Kahneman (1974), presented their research on using heuristics and the connection with cognitive biases. Because law enforcement often involves fluid, quickly evolving situations requiring split-second decision-making processes, the ability to develop short cuts in judgement, can lead to biases that can have a negative impact on the group and obstruct the team from making positive decisions and reach their goals. One example is *anchoring bias* (Marewski & Gigerenzer, 2012). This occurs when a person (or team) is influenced by the initial notification of information, which in the world of investigations, can originate from confidential informants, law enforcement observations and information provided by the public. If the group relies too heavily on the initial information, this could potentially hinder how they process that information and can make it more difficult to consider other factors which may be just as important before planning the actions needed.

The *Dunning-Kruger* effect (1999) is another type of cognitive bias (Cherry, 2019). Essentially this is when people believe themselves to be more intelligent and skilled than they really are. It is a combination of low self-awareness and not having the capacity to understand where they overcompensate their abilities. Dunning and Kruger (1999) believe this occurrence leads to individuals failing to comprehend their shortcomings, overestimate their skill levels and are unable to see their own mistakes. Having a little knowledge leads to overconfidence and potentially disastrous mistakes (Cherry, 2019). This is detrimental to those who hold leadership positions, especially in law enforcement. Strong leaders, who oversee task forces and other complicated operations, recognize their shortcomings, are open to and listen to constructive criticism and are not insulted by recommendations to improve results.

In a task force environment, the issue of *Groupthink* can play heavily into the decision-making processes. Groupthink happens when a group of individuals' wish to maintain group loyalty and cohesiveness, and this becomes more important than making the best choices to fulfill the mission and goals of the group. There is a lack of critical thinking and acting independently from the group when considering the outcome of a situation. According to Janis (1982), groupthink is "a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment that results from in-group pressures" (Janis, 1982, 9).

It is crucial for strong leaders to use methods to mitigate groupthink in order to reduce risk not only to the task force but to the respective agencies involved. Examples include having the group leader be open to individual/group objections, refrain from giving their personal opinions so that the group won't automatically defer to their viewpoints and opinions and establishing subgroups to examine the goals or objectives to determine multiple solutions to the same issues (Janis, 1982). According to Inspector General Mark Spencer of Prince George's County Sheriff's Department, "the law enforcement leader – his or her vision for constitutional policing, the standards are set, the political support for that vision, and the way they infuse that vision and philosophy – is the foundation" (Scism, 2017). Positive police culture begins with "visionary humane police leadership." It is understood that negative cultural factors for task forces include, use of force protocols, officer involved shootings and community complaints. However, a strong task force leader can mitigate these issues by encouraging problem solving, collaboration, communication, and awareness of officer wellness (Copple & Copple, 2018).

12.5 Criminal justice reform on a national level

Over the past four decades, the incarceration rate has more than quadrupled and is now unprecedented in world history. Approximately 2.2 million people are incarcerated in the United States and has the world's largest prison population. There are approximately 7 million people under the supervision of the corrections system, either locked up or probation or parole. Historical analysis demonstrates that crime control strategies such as the "Broken Windows Theory" that perpetuated programs such as *Stop, Question and Frisk*, *Tactical Narcotic Teams (TNT)/Street Narcotics Units (SNU)* and the FBI's *Safe Streets Gang Unit* were created to identify and mitigate violent crime (FBI, 2011). However, despite the significant reduction across most major crime indexes (including the Bureau of Justice Statistics), these aggressive and proactive strategies had the adverse effect of driving incarceration rates up to unprecedented levels. In response to the government's crackdown on crime and subsequent punitive sanctions, communities, advocate groups and politicians identified the aforementioned crime control strategies as driving forces behind

custodial sentences. Criminal justice reform started to gain traction over the last several years.

The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (FSA), enacted August 3, 2010, reduced the statutory penalties for crack cocaine offenses. The FSA eliminated the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine and increased statutory fines. It also directed the United States Sentencing Commission to amend the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines to account for specified aggravating and mitigating circumstances in drug trafficking offenses involving any drug type. (USSC, 2015). *The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986* implemented the initial disparity, reflecting Congress's view that crack cocaine was a more dangerous and harmful drug than powder cocaine. This was subsequently identified as untrue and rooted in racial disparity that unfairly targeted minorities. Over the next decade, high profile cases including the Freddie Gray, Michael Brown and Eric Garner further eroded the relationship between minority communities and law enforcement. This came to a head in May 2020 when George Floyd died while in the custody of the Minneapolis Police (Balsamo, 2020). This event further fueled the fire of the Defund the Police movement, bail reform and decriminalization of many low-level quality of life crimes (Balsamo, 2020). Despite the well-intended goal of reducing mass incarceration and creating a more equitable criminal justice system, crime rates have spiked across the country. According to *The Guardian* (2021), the U.S. has experienced its largest-ever recorded annual increase in murders, according to new statistics from the FBI, with the national murder rate rising nearly 30% in 2020 – the biggest jump in six decades. Murder increased in every geographic region, including small towns, suburban areas, and large cities. At least 77% of the murders were committed with firearms” (Beckett, 2021). The Task Forces and fusion centers previously referenced were created to target crimes and groups engaged in the violence and related activities. However, the geographical areas that are targeted for enforcement operations are often low income, high minority-based that create a strategic paradox. Programs such as the NYPD’s COMPSTAT have been the “backbone” of crime control strategies in New York City since the early 1980’s and is credited with reducing crime in the city to historic lows. This is done by using computational or computerized statistics (COMPSTAT) to identify criminal patterns and “hotspots” as well as holding precinct commanders accountable for the crime reduction strategies in each geographical area of responsibility (Bass, 2012). However, the program is not without critics. In June of 2020, the NYPD Captain’s Endowment Association petitioned the Mayor and Police Commissioner to end the COMPSTAT program saying [it] “pressures precinct commanders for crime reduction by artificially forcing bosses to harass communities of color.” (Brown & Tracey, 2020) Critics point out that the NYPD weaponized COMPSTAT by wielding it as a tool of punishment, embarrassment, and coercion (O’Neill & Shea, 2017).

Law enforcement Task Forces serve additional purposes other than just collaborating on crime control interdiction strategies. Law enforcement task forces are created to help work with community partners to improve relationships between the

police and citizens. In Chicago, the City recognized the disconnect and frayed relationship between the police department and the communities they serve. In order to bridge this gap, Chicago created the *Police Accountability Task Force* with the primary mission of “laying the foundation to rejuvenate the trust between the police and the communities they serve by facing hard truths and creating a roadmap for real last transparency, respectful engagement accountability and change” (Aune, 2016). In July 2020, the city of Los Angeles, California, announced the establishment of the Community Safety Partnership Bureau within the LAPD “placing a nationally recognized model for community policing at the heart of the City’s public safety efforts.” (LA Mayors Office, 2020.) Police enforcement actions inevitably put law enforcement at odds and create friction in police-community relations. However, based on many of the criminal justice reform programs and structures being redesigned to fit the current societal processes, the collaborative efforts of all parties with the emphasis of training and education can only advance the relationship in the right direction.

12.6 Body worn cameras: Their use and impact on collaborative task forces

According to the *National Institute of Justice* (2018) the use of body worn cameras (BCW) have several positive applications for law enforcement personnel. The potential benefits of BCW’s may also assist task forces, although there are risks posed to agencies that need to be considered before full implementation. Benefits include assisting task forces with transparency of investigations, executing arrest and search warrants and providing legal protections to all parties. BWC footage can be used to support corroborating evidence in existing cases. There is also evidence to support that BWC’s can enhance what’s known as the “civility effect” whereby citizens are more compliant with law enforcement officers and officers conduct themselves in a supportive format to enhance community relationships (Chapman, 2018). The expectation is that the use of BWC’s “level the playing field” and protect law enforcement personnel as well as civilians.

12.7 Project of Government Oversight (2016)

However, there are concerns and risks with implementing BWC policies and guidelines. Privacy and constitutional issues, oversight mechanisms, and judicial methodologies involving the use of BWC evidence in court proceedings create potential problems. According to *The Project of Government Oversight* in 2016:

Body-worn cameras are not a panacea. Implementation without proper policies in place can result in significant detriments to law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Among these concerns is the potential impact on a broad range of constitutional rights and values. Accordingly, agencies must weigh the benefits and detriments of body cameras when deciding whether and how to implement them (POGO, 2016).

Because collaboration between agencies is necessary for successful task force applications, these and other factors need to be assessed for risks for officers and the communities they serve. Consideration should include but not limited to implementation and recording procedures, “tagging” technologies, data mining, management and maintenance, rules in conjunction with state and federal funding, on-going policy changes and alerts, and public access to the data (POGO, 2016). These issues need to be addressed with the understanding that this is developing technology and additional focus is needed to examine the policies as they directly relate to task forces and accountability of officers.

12.8 International task force participation

Task Forces are created to combine resources, facilitate information gathering and sharing protocols and work toward a stated mission goal. However, the concept of task forces can permeate almost any level of private or public sector work. Task forces can also have a global outreach that brings together not just multiple agencies from different levels of government but ones that cross international borders. Whether it's joint military operations, allocating law enforcement resources to investigate the exploitation/human trafficking of children or the common mission of creating equality in the teaching/education profession around the world, the task force paradigm can provide the blueprint for successes on every level.

The Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) is a multinational task group composed of warships from numerous Coalition nations with the primary mission of patrolling the Indian Ocean as part of the global war on terrorism. The ships of CTF-150 operate throughout this area to prevent terrorism and the illegal trade of drugs and weapons which funds and supports international terrorist organizations. CTF-150 was established near the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom and is made up of warships from the UK, France, Canada, Germany, Pakistan, Australia, Denmark and the United States (Channon, 2019).

The Violent Crimes Against Children International Task Force (VCACITF) created in 2004 and is considered the largest task forces in the world and includes members from 40 different countries. Working side-by-side with the FBI, Task Force members are a “select cadre of international law enforcement experts working together to formulate and deliver a dynamic global response to crimes against children through the establishment and furtherance of strategic partnership, the aggressive engagement of

relevant law enforcement, and the extensive use of liaison, operational support and coordination.” (Lambert, 2010)

The International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, also known as the Teacher Task Force (TTF) is a partnership that was created in 2008 to advocate for teachers and for the teaching profession around the world. This group advocates for the profession, raising awareness, expanding knowledge, and supporting countries toward achieving targeted goals.” There are over 150 members including national governments, international organizations, NGO’s and CSO’s. (TeacherTaskForce.org, 2021).

Many of the challenges of international task forces mirror those of the local groups. Among the primary issues are limited resources (staff and time); conflict or general difficulty with other members; fear of unfavorable reputation; competing priorities (leadership may prioritize addressing other crimes); prioritization of one case/crime over another; concern that participation on a task force may conflict with their primary mission. Additional difficulties may include language barriers, social distance, and political/social discourse (OVC, 2021). Open lines of communication, establishment of guideline and protocols and strict adherence to same as well holding everyone [equally] accountable can minimize these challenges and establish a solid blueprint for success (Lunenberg, 2010).

12.9 The pandemic and gun violence and rising violent crime rates in the U.S

In March 2020, the world faced a global pandemic due to COVID-19. The onset of the pandemic had a massive impact on crime in the U.S. Not surprising, with national lockdowns and mandated curfews implemented by states to reduce the spread of COVID-19, crime rates plummeted 23% in the first months of the pandemic. However, two crimes that have not dropped are shootings and homicides. (Klein, 2021). The FBI released the 2020 Uniformed Crime Report (UCR) indicated a 6% drop in overall crime in the U.S. **but a 5% increase in violent crime and 30% increase in homicides.** The overall drop in crime corresponds with a decrease in population mobility during the pandemic. Stay-at-home orders and business closures prevented people from driving, shopping, and walking around in general.

According to the NYPD crime statistics, gun arrests have increased 37% in the first 8 months of 2021. (NYPD, 2021). In response to the uptick in gun violence in the city, the NYPD created a working task force called the Gun Violence Strategies Partnership (GVSP) through the Office of Crime Control Strategies, Joint Criminal Investigations Section. The mantra for this unit states, “timely and accurate intel, rapid deployment, effective tactics and relentless follow-up” (BJS, 2013, 2). To this end, GVSP implemented a 90-day initiative partnering with the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives that brought together an unprecedented group of law enforcement

agencies that meets 5 days a week to breakdown all daily gun arrests, daily shooting arrests, individuals involved (indirectly) in shootings, daily arrests with open gun arrests, and daily shots fired arrests. Along with multiple NYPD units, the initiative brings together members from New York State Parole, New York City/State Department of Corrections, New York Sheriff's Office, United States Probation Offices in the Southern and Eastern District Districts of New York, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, Home Security Investigations, New York State Police, and investigative analysts for High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). The key component to this Task Force is the presence and active participation of the five New York City District Attorney Offices. With the challenges of bail reform and the difficulty of obtaining reasonable bail for violent offenders, the information sharing and collaborative efforts on the part of the participating law enforcement partners allows Assistant District Attorneys to obtain real-time data/information that help them to prepare and submit strong bail packages increasing the likelihood of detention.

These collaborative efforts between the prosecutors and law enforcement also helps to build solid cases allowing for more robust plea-bargaining and when necessary, trial preparation. This initiative is a dynamic partnership, and the administrators are constantly asking questions including, "how can we do better" and "what other resource can we provide our partners to assist the process." To this end, it was determined that because of the volume of data and information that is collected on daily basis and shared during the daily briefings, additional resources in the form of investigative analysts were added to the collective efforts to process, collate and refine the data points from the law enforcement sources and provide assessment portfolios that assist in the investigation and prosecution of the identified targets. As of the writing of this chapter, the 90-day initiative is coming to end. However, all participants appear to be in agreement that there have been tremendous strides made toward closing the information and intelligence gaps that have existed for a long time. The successes that have been identified since the inception of the program should allow the initiative to be extended to allow additional time to continue the positive gains and results from these collaborative efforts.

12.10 Community corrections and task forces

"The ability that leaders have to collaborate, innovate, and adapt their responses to events (active shooters, hostile and violent acts, and perpetrators) will be critical in a world where surprise and uncertainty is becoming all-too-common characteristics of public safety" (Straub, Cowell, et. al, 2017). The correctional field has long been a passive participant in the task force community. Whether it's philosophical differences among agencies, judicial preferences, or lack of adequate training of officers, probation and parole agencies have remained on the sidelines when he

came to active Task Force participation. This started to change after 9/11 and there has been a slow migration by community correctional agencies toward becoming equal partners by providing vital intelligence required by law enforcement to conduct comprehensive investigations and be proactive in developing crime control strategies. A large body of research suggests that “criminogenic risk factors” (i.e., major changeable risk factors for criminal behavior that do not include symptoms of mental illnesses) (Monahan & Skeem, 2014) robustly predict various measures of recidivism and are useful targets for intervention to reduce rearrest among people under correctional supervision (Monahan & Skeem, 2014; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011).

A major factor that is predictive of future recidivism is the [offenders] prior criminal history and the types of crime that he/she previously engaged in at some point in their lives. According to the FBI, there are approximately 33,000 violent street gangs criminally active in the U.S. These groups are sophisticated, well organized and they use violence and intimidation to control neighborhoods and boost illegal money-making activities. (FBI.gov, 2011) The majority of these gang members are under some type of community supervision. Although probation and parole agencies are focused on rehabilitative efforts and reintegration back into the community, one of the primary functions of community corrections is the protection of the community. To this end, probation and parole officers must employ a variety of techniques and mechanisms to achieve the goal of community protection. Effective supervision of violent gang members and organized crimes figures entail collaborative efforts with law enforcement. In the natural progression of fulfilling the mantra of community protection, community correctional officers embedded in law enforcement Task Forces brings the totality of job responsibilities full circle. The intelligence sharing allows law enforcement to receive actionable intelligence on the individuals and groups that are most likely to engage in the criminal activity most investigated by Task Forces. The U.S. Probation Office in the Southern District of New York are active Task Force participants with Joint Firearms Task Force (ATF/NYPD), the Safe Street Task Force (FBI/NYPD) and are currently onboarding officers with El Dorado Task Force (Homeland Security Investigations/NYPD.) These collaborations should continue to create strong working relationships among the partners and identify the individuals who perpetrate the majority of violent crimes in the New York City.

12.11 Conclusions and projections

The collaboration between local, state and federal law enforcement partners has seen tremendous success over the last several years. In order for Task Forces to operate at an optimal level, participating partners must work to manage the political and social

risks associated with each agencies participation. This can be done by creating an environment where all involved agencies learn the roles and capacities of other agencies, create strategic, coordinated, and collaborative relationships, extend outreach to community-based corrections, identify victim service providers, expand and support access to resources that creates a more effective & efficient response, generate a greater buy-in and support from all partners that promotes a unified front and provide joint training opportunities for all involved.

An important and integral component of any task force is the ability and willingness of senior management to make a fair and honest assessment of the group identifying the strengths and weaknesses and providing constructive criticisms where required. This assessment should be based on the proper engagement & identification of applicable issues facing the group, utilizing Probation & Parole assets who have the information, motivation, and means to help design an effective intervention strategies, adhering to strong chain of command directives and encouraging inter-agency communication by assigning a point of contact, trusting the command and control authority of the Task Force, memorializing the agreements (MOUs) to avoid conflict of interests and finally, be open to new ideas, advocate for learning, trusting the process, and working together to achieve the mission statement.

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