

Re-Centering the Community in Violence Intervention: Reclaiming Legacies of Street Outreach in the Provision of Public Safety

David M. Hureau¹ and Andrew V. Papachristos²

¹ School of Criminal Justice, Rockefeller College, University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, New York, USA; email: dhureau@albany.edu

² Institute for Policy Research, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA; email: avp@northwestern.edu

ANNUAL
REVIEWS **CONNECT**

www.annualreviews.org

- Download figures
- Navigate cited references
- Keyword search
- Explore related articles
- Share via email or social media

Annu. Rev. Criminol. 2025. 8:431–58

First published as a Review in Advance on
September 17, 2024

The *Annual Review of Criminology* is online at
criminol.annualreviews.org

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-030920-085949>

Copyright © 2025 by the author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See credit lines of images or other third-party material in this article for license information.



Keywords

community violence intervention, street outreach work, streetwork, violence, street gangs

Abstract

Cities across the country have increasingly turned toward community violence interventions (CVI) to address community safety without relying on criminal legal strategies. This article inspects beneath the veneer of present-day CVI approaches to examine how their work is dedicated as much to neighborhood social organization as it is to responding to gun violence. Underneath contemporary definitions of outreach workers as mediators of violence, earlier sociologists and criminologists conceived of these workers as frontline builders of community charged with mending breaks in the social fabric. Acknowledging this past is important because it re-centers criminology's contributions to the practice of street outreach and provides insights that help to comprehend the challenging present moment in American public safety. We offer directions for a reinvigorated social science of street outreach that re-centers community processes, structures, and institutions and, in so doing, might better inform contemporary practice and policy.