



**National Network
For Safe Communities
at JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

Group Violence Problem Analysis

Fact Sheet

INTRODUCTION

For over a decade, the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) has partnered with public safety stakeholders in cities across the United States and abroad to implement proven strategic interventions to reduce violence and improve public safety.

Before the implementation of these interventions, NNSC works with frontline practitioners to produce a picture of violence in a city or jurisdiction. This process is known as the problem analysis. The problem analysis creates new facts on the ground that provide stakeholders with a shared understanding of what violence in that location looks like.

The two primary components of NNSC's problem analysis includes the group audit and incident review. The group audit is a review of all active groups in a city or jurisdiction involved in serious violence. The incident review is an unpacking of

each homicide and nonfatal shooting over a specified period.

Over the years, these problem analysis exercises have provided cities with valuable insight into local violence dynamics. Each problem analysis has also provided NNSC a better grasp of broader violence patterns.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to highlight the broader violence patterns that NNSC has learned over a decade of problem analysis exercises.

Data Note and Limitations

Over the last decade, NNSC's methods have seen minor shifts that make direct comparisons difficult. Therefore, each section presents data from problem analyses where direct comparisons were possible.

The data and quality of each problem analysis relies on the expertise of practitioners and the systems available to them. It is likely that some jurisdictions were better able to provide the

information requested during the problem analyses better than others did. It is also important to note that information coming from law enforcement and other public safety stakeholders can be inaccurate. Information, such as victim and suspect data, was also susceptible to the same issues; therefore, the information presented here is limited to the information that was available during the time of the problem analysis. It is likely that ongoing investigations have revealed information that was unknown during the problem analysis.

Finally, the data in this sheet comes from locations that have sought to work with NNSC on violence issues. Therefore, the patterns revealed here might be limited to jurisdictions that are experiencing a group violence problem. Despite these limitations, NNSC believes that the patterns shared in this sheet represent the best collection of information available on this type of violence.

Groups

Key Questions:

1. How many groups are typically identified?

2. How many members do groups typically have?

Data From: 50 sites¹

NNSC defines groups as two or more people who engage in violence together who may or may not meet the statutory definition of a gang. **Across 50 sites, practitioners identified an average of 20 groups, consisting of an average of 522 members.** However, there was great variation in the number of groups identified, as they ranged from as low as two in one site to as many as 51 in another. Group member estimates also ranged considerably from as few as 65 in one site to as many as 1,797 members in another. Practitioners typically described these groups as loose associations with constantly changing affiliations and relationships between individuals.

Group Member Involvement

Key Questions:

1. What percentage of homicides are group members involved in?
2. What percentage of nonfatal shootings are group members involved in?

Data From: 50 sites² for homicides and 45 sites³ for nonfatal shootings

¹ This includes 41 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties and 2 U.S. territories.

² This includes 41 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties and 2 U.S. territories.

³ This includes 36 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

Group member involvement (GMI) refers to whether a homicide or nonfatal shooting incident involved a group member as either a victim, suspect, or both. Across 50 sites, NNSC has reviewed 3,938 homicides with practitioners. **In these problem analyses, 42% of homicides involved a group member** (Table 1). An additional 8% of homicides had a likely connection to groups. These are instances when practitioners believed there was a group connection in the incident but could not confirm it. Approximately 32% of homicides in the problem analyses had no group member involvement. Lastly, in 18% of homicides, NNSC could not make a determination of whether there was group involvement or not. Group member involvement in homicide varied significantly, from a low of 20% in one site to as high as 70% in another. However, the GMI homicide percentage of most sites (68%) fell between 28% and 55%.

Table 1. GMI homicide percentages

GMI	Homicides
Yes	42%
Likely	8%
Unknown	18%
No	32%
Total	100% (3,938)

In 45 sites, NNSC was also able to review a total of 5,065 nonfatal shootings, or shootings where

an individual was struck, but survived. Similar to homicides, **41% of nonfatal shootings involved a group member** (Table 2). An additional 10% of nonfatal shootings had a likely connection to groups. Approximately 16% of nonfatal shootings had no connection to groups. Unknown GMI, or those incidents where it was not possible to determine group involvement, accounted for 33% of nonfatal shootings. GMI in nonfatal shootings also ranged significantly, from a low of 6% in one site to a high of 77% in another site. The GMI percentage for nonfatal shootings for most sites (68%) fell between 22% and 60%.

Table 2. GMI nonfatal shooting percentages

GMI	Nonfatal Shootings
Yes	41%
Likely	10%
Unknown	33%
No	16%
Total	100% (5,065)

GMI Concentration

Key Questions:

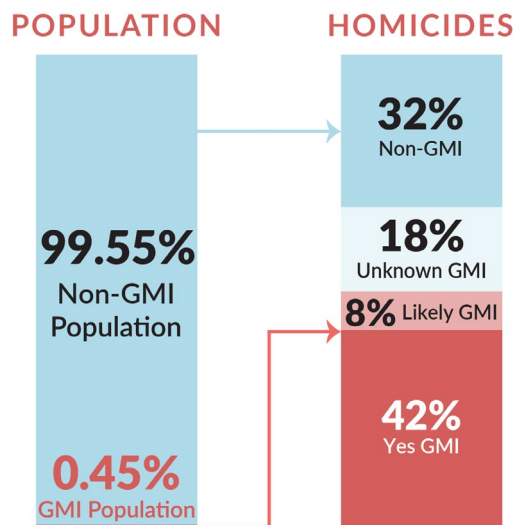
1. How concentrated is GMI homicide?
2. How concentrated is GMI nonfatal shootings?

Data From: 50 sites⁴ for homicides and 45 sites⁵ for nonfatal shootings

By comparing the estimated group member population for each site with the overall population of each, NNSC was able to determine the disproportionate involvement of group members in homicides and nonfatal shootings.

Across 50 sites, individuals in groups that represented 0.45% of the average overall population were involved in at least 42% of homicides (Figure 1). The level of concentration ranged from a low of 0.05% in one site to a high of 1.6% in another.

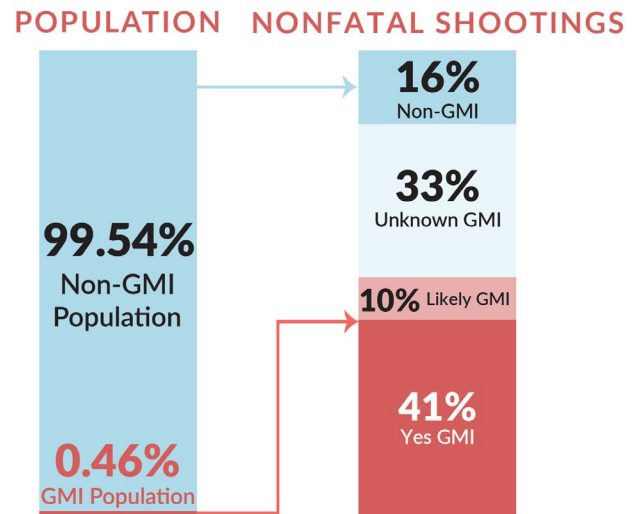
Figure 1. GMI homicide concentration



Across 45 sites, individuals in groups that represented 0.46% of the average overall

population were involved in at least 41% of nonfatal shootings (Figure 2). The level of concentration for sites with nonfatal shootings data had the same range as those with homicide data.

Figure 2. GMI nonfatal shooting concentration



Ages of Individuals Involved in Violence

Key Questions:

1. What do the ages of victims typically look like?
2. What do the ages of suspects typically look like?
3. What do the ages of individuals involved in non-GMI incidents typically look like?

⁴ This includes 41 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties and 2 U.S. territories.

⁵ This includes 36 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

4. What do the ages of individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents typically look like?

Data From: 45 sites⁶

The ages of individuals involved in homicides and nonfatal shootings as victims and suspects was available from 45 sites. This corresponds to a total of 8,801 victims and 4,375 suspects. Suspects were limited to those who practitioners identified at the time of the problem analysis. This included a combination of official suspects and persons of interest who practitioners felt comfortable sharing.

Table 3. Victim and suspect ages across 45 sites

Ages	Victims	Suspects
0 to 17	11%	12%
18 to 24	32%	42%
25 to 34	30%	28%
35 to 44	15%	11%
45 to 54	7%	5%
55 & Up	5%	2%
Average	29	27

The average age of victims was slightly older (29) compared to suspects (27) at the time of the

incident (Table 3). The most significant difference between the ages of victims and suspects was between the ages of 18 to 24, which comprised 42% of suspects and 32% of victims.

Table 4. Victim and suspect ages in non-GMI and yes and likely GMI incidents across 45 sites

Ages	Non GMI	Yes and Likely GMI
0 to 17	7%	15%
18 to 24	22%	44%
25 to 34	29%	27%
35 to 44	20%	9%
45 to 54	13%	3%
55 & Up	9%	2%
Average	34	25

NNSC also examined the breakdown of ages of individuals involved in non-group (3,296) to those involved in yes and likely GMI incidents (6,841) across 45 sites (Table 4). The average age of individuals involved in non-GMI incidents was significantly older than the average age of individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents (34 compared to 25). The percentages of individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents at the age categories of 0-17 and 18-

⁶ This includes 36 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

24 were double those of non-GMI incidents. Non-GMI incidents also involved higher percentages of individuals aged 35-44, 45-54, and 55 & Up.

Sex of Individuals Involved in Violence

Key Questions:

1. What does the sex of victims typically look like?
2. What does the sex of suspects typically look like?
3. What does the sex of individuals involved in non-GMI incidents typically look like?
4. What does the sex of individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents typically look like?

Data From: 49 sites⁷ for victims and suspects and 45 sites⁸ for individuals involved in non-GMI and yes and likely GMI incidents

The sex of individuals involved in incidents across 49 sites includes 9,571 victims and 5,492 suspects (Figure 3). **The vast majority of victims and suspects involved in the incidents reviewed were male (86% of victims and 92% of suspects).**

Figure 4 compares the sex for individuals involved in non-GMI and yes and likely GMI incidents. This includes 3,387 individuals

involved in non-GMI incidents and 7,297 individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents. **Yes and likely GMI incidents involved more victims and suspects who were male compared to non-GMI incidents (91% vs. 80%).**

Figure 3. Victim and suspect sex across 49 sites

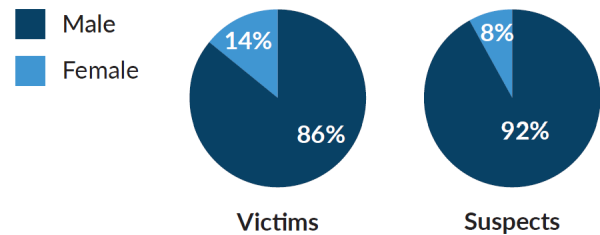
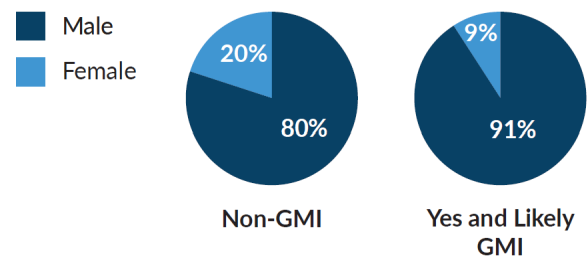


Figure 4. Sex of individuals involved in non-GMI incidents compared to yes and likely GMI incidents across 45 sites



Race or Ethnicity of Individuals Involved in Violence

Key Questions:

1. What does the race or ethnicity of victims typically look like?
2. What does the race or ethnicity of suspects typically look like?

⁷ This includes 40 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

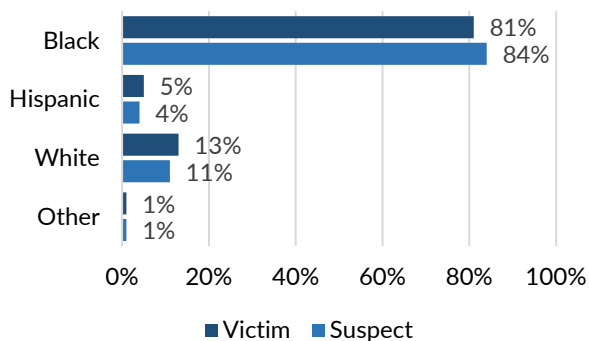
⁸ This includes 36 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

3. What does the race or ethnicity of individuals involved in non-GMI incidents typically look like?
4. What does the race or ethnicity of individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents typically look like?

Data From: 48 sites⁹ for race or ethnicity of victims and suspects and 44 sites¹⁰ for race or ethnicity of individuals involved in non-GMI incidents and yes and likely GMI incidents

The data on the race or ethnicity of victims and suspects from 48 sites includes 9,180 victims and 4,961 suspects. Victims and suspects were very similar across the different categories (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Victim and suspect race or ethnicity in 48 sites

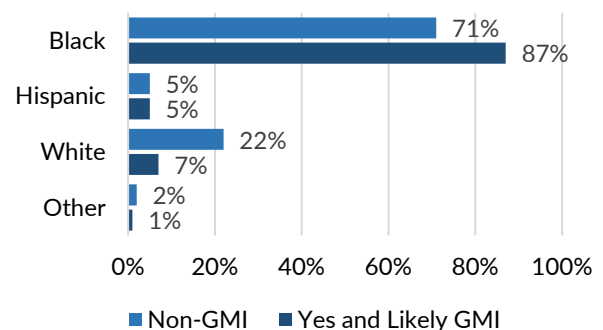


Black individuals comprised 81% of victims and 84% of suspects. Hispanic individuals comprised 5% of victims and 4% of suspects. White individuals represented 13% of victims and 11%

of suspects. The remaining 1% of both victims and suspects fell outside of the previous categories.

For 44 sites, NNSC compared the breakdowns race or ethnicity of individuals involved in non-GMI to those involved in yes and likely GMI incidents (Figure 6). This included 3,203 individuals involved in non-GMI incidents and 6,663 individuals involved in yes and likely GMI incidents. **Black individuals comprised a higher percentage of those involved in yes and likely GMI incidents compared to non-GMI incidents (87% vs. 71%). White individuals comprised a higher percentage of those involved in non-GMI incidents compared to yes and likely GMI incidents (22% vs. 7%).** The differences for the remaining categories were minimal if any.

Figure 6. Victim and suspect race/ethnicity



⁹ This includes 39 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

¹⁰ This includes 35 cities, 4 city segments, 3 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

Incident Characteristics

Key Questions:

1. What do incident characteristics look like across all incidents?
2. What do incident characteristics look like for non-GMI incidents?
3. What do incident characteristics look like for yes and likely GMI incidents?

Data From: 24 sites¹¹

NNSC has identified a set of characteristics that have emerged during the incident review across problem analyses. **Suspect identified** refers to whether practitioners at the time of the review identified a suspect. **Victim and suspect knew each other** refers to whether at least one victim and suspect pair in the incident knew each other prior to the incident. **Personal disputes** are disputes between individuals that are not related to drugs, robbery, IPV, or family violence. A **drug related** incident involves a dispute over the sale or use of drugs between individuals. **IPV and related spillover** not only includes a dispute between intimate partners, but also extends to a third party to the intimate couple. **Robbery** incidents include a theft, home invasion, or carjacking. **Juvenile involved** incidents are those that involve at least one individual under the age of 18. Incidents that involve **family violence** refer

to those that between family members outside of intimate partners. Lastly, **group disputes** refer to incidents that involve a feud or a back and forth between groups.

Due to changes in methods, the incident characteristics displayed in Table 5 and Table 6 are limited to 24 sites. These characteristics are non-mutually exclusive, as one incident can involve several different characteristics.

Table 5. Characteristics across incidents in 24 sites

Characteristics	All Incidents
Suspect identified	54%
Victim and suspect know each other	45%
Personal dispute	23%
Drug related	11%
IPV and related spillover	10%
Robbery	13%
Juvenile involved	15%
Family violence	3%
Group dispute	10%
Total incidents	3,472

Across 24 sites, 54% of incidents included an identified suspect (Table 5). At least one victim

¹¹ This includes 20 cities, 2 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

and suspect pair knew each other prior to the incident in 45% of incidents. Personal disputes were involved in 23% of incidents. Drug related incidents were present in 11% of incidents. IPV and related spillover along with family violence accounted for 10% and 3% of all incidents respectively. Robberies were present in 13% of all incidents. At least one juvenile was involved in 15% of all incidents. Lastly, group feuds accounted for 10% of all incidents.

Table 6. Characteristics of non-GMI and yes and likely GMI incidents across 24 sites

Characteristics	Non-GMI	Yes and Likely GMI
Suspect identified	93%	52%
Victim and suspect know each other	69%	52%
Personal dispute	45%	19%
Drug related	8%	14%
IPV-related	28%	5%
Robbery	7%	15%
Juvenile involved	10%	22%
Family violence	10%	1%
Group dispute	0%	22%
Total incidents	903	1,763

Table 6 compares these characteristics across non-GMI and yes and likely GMI incidents in 24 sites. Highlighting the most striking differences, suspects were identified in 93% of non GMI incidents compared to only 52% of GMI incidents. Personal disputes were involved in 45% of non-GMI incidents compared to 19% of GMI incidents. IPV and related spillover was present in 28% of non-GMI incidents compared to only 5% of GMI incidents. Similarly, family violence was much more prevalent in non-GMI incidents compared to GMI incidents (10% vs. 1%). At least one juvenile was involved in 22% of GMI incidents compared to 10% of non-GMI incidents. Lastly, group disputes or feuds accounted for 22% of GMI incidents.

Intimate Partner Violence

Key Questions:

1. What percentage of all incidents are IPV-related?
2. What percentage of non-GMI incidents are IPV-related
3. What percentage of yes and likely GMI incidents are IPV-related?
4. Of IPV-related incidents, what percentage involve group members?

Data From: 42 sites¹²

¹² This includes 34 cities, 4 city segments, 2 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

An important type of incident that merits a deeper look is IPV related violence. For simplicity, IPV-related incidents include both IPV and related spillover incidents. Across 42 sites, there were 399 IPV-related homicide incidents and 223 IPV-related nonfatal shootings. **IPV-related incidents comprised an average of 9% of all incidents in the 42 sites.** These percentages ranged from a low of 2% to as high as 26%. While comprising 9% of all incidents, **IPV-related incidents comprised an average of 25% of all non-GMI incidents in the 42 sites.** In some locations, this ranged from as low as 0% to as high as 65% of non-GMI incidents.

This sample of data also revealed important insight into the overlap between IPV and group violence. **IPV-related incidents accounted for an average of 5% of yes and likely GMI incidents.** In other words, 5% of yes and likely GMI incidents had an element of IPV present in the incident. This ranged anywhere from a low of 0% to a high of 21%. However, looking at the involvement of group members in IPV related incidents reveals another aspect of overlap. **Group members were involved in an average of 25% of IPV-related incidents across 42 sites.**

Juvenile Involvement

Key Questions:

1. What percentage of all incidents involve a juvenile?
2. How do juveniles present in incidents (as victims, as suspects, or both)?
3. What percentage of incidents only involve juveniles?
4. What percentage of yes and likely GMI incidents involve a juvenile?
5. What percentage of incidents that involve a juvenile are group-related?

Data From: 43 sites¹³

Another important characteristic that emerged is the involvement of juveniles, or those 17 and under, in violence. Across 43 sites, juveniles have been involved in at least 949 incidents. **Incidents involving a juvenile account for 14% of all incidents in 43 sites.** This ranged from a low of 3% to a high of 29% of incidents involving a juvenile. Within the 14% of incidents that involve a juvenile, **they appeared as victims in 64% of incidents, as suspects in 22% of incidents, and as both victims and suspects in 14% of incidents.** Staying in the same 14% of incidents, **an average of 43% of these incidents involved only**

¹³ This includes 36 cities, 3 city segments, 2 counties, and 2 U.S. territories.

juveniles, with no adults listed as either victims or suspects.

There was also a significant amount of overlap between incidents involving juveniles and group violence. **An average of 32% of yes and likely GMI incidents involved a juvenile.** This ranged from as low as 7% to as high as 74% of yes and likely GMI incidents. On the other hand, **67% of incidents involving a juvenile were group related.**

CONCLUSION

For over a decade, the National Network for Safe Communities has worked with public safety practitioners in jurisdictions to uncover local violence dynamics instrumental for the implementation of strategic interventions. Through each subsequent problem analysis, NNSC has been able to uncover broader violence patterns. These patterns do not exist in isolation, but are instead a consequence of a plethora of local and national factors.

Among the most significant patterns is the concentration of violence in small number of individuals. Across the sites presented in this piece, groups that represent less than half of 1% a site's population were involved in 42% of homicides and 41% of nonfatal shootings. These findings also suggest that group involved individuals are primarily young and male. The ages were most concentrated from 18-24; however they also included significant numbers of younger and older individuals. Group violence and non-group violence is disproportionately affecting Black communities across the country. However, the harm is not limited to these communities, but is instead concentrated in the most marginalized communities, depending on the local context.

As calls for reimagining public safety continue, practitioners, both in formal systems and in the community, will have to construct interventions that address the patterns highlighted in this piece.

The **National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College** supports cities to implement and advance proven strategies to reduce violence and improve public safety, minimize arrest and incarceration, strengthen communities, and improve relationships between law enforcement and communities.

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