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RURAL POLICING AND THE DRUG PROBLEM: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS ON DRUG OFFENDING IN SURROUNDING RURAL COMMUNITIES

The purpose of this study is to examine criminal activity in rural America, particularly drug-related activity, by analysing trends in offending for four rural communities of the mid-west. The present study has three main objectives. First, discover how many offences in these rural areas are drug-related offences. Second, discover differential offending, with an emphasis on drug offending, based on location of each area of study.¹ Third, uncover overall trends of offending in each of the rural communities examined.

For the last approximately ten years rural offending has become a major concern for many criminal justice practitioners in 'small town America'. While drug offending is a major concern nationally, predominantly due to all of the media exposure related to the urban problem, it is growing as a concern of rural Americans. Much research focuses on the urban problem, but only a few researchers have concerned themselves with the rural issue (Maguire *et al.*, 1991; Weisheit *et al.*, 1996; Donnermyer, 1994; Weisheit *et al.*, 1996; Weisheit, 1993; Hafley & Tewksbury, 1995; McDermott & Garafalo, 1996; Clayton, 1995).

It is for this reason we find this topic to be of major importance. While the major metropolitan areas of our nation constitute much of the nation's population, the rural areas also represent a significant number of citizens that are becoming increasingly concerned with crime, especially drug-related activity.

Review of Literature

When examining rural/urban differences in offending it is important to address/acknowledge some factors of great importance. The difference in controlling factors between different types of cultures (rural v urban) (Donnermyer, 1994) affect how crime is perceived and controlled. In many rural areas criminal activity is handled informally. Societal/family disapproval guides behaviour. Informal sanctions are often employed, and this can affect the official projection of rural offending. When officers contact parents and/or other family members regarding, for example, a drug offence as opposed to pursuing a formal sanction, the official record of offending is distorted. Nonetheless, the rationale for such behaviour is obvious.

There is little anonymity in the rural community (Anderson *et al.*, 1995). No matter who is arrested for what, the community will know the story. This can cause many social problems that are problematic for both the potential defendant and the arresting officer. Public ridicule of an officer doing his job is always a possibility. But in such close-knit communities this problem can be very exaggerated and concentrated (Anderson *et al.*, 1995). Simply put, it is often easier to take the 'good ole boy' informal approach. This definitely can benefit the offender as well as the officer. By using an informal approach the perpetrator can be spared from stigma from which he or she might otherwise never fully recover (Braithwaite, 1989).

Second, the rural agency is not as well equipped as the urban one. The urban department is a huge, organised structure with many special divisions prepared to contend with specific aspects of offending (Peak, 1998). This is not at all typical of the rural department, which is for the most part a group of generalists that must struggle to obtain funding for the most basic of needs, excluding any special-tactics gear or training. The rural agency must address the same problems as those faced by the urban one but absent sophisticated technology and organisation.

While rural communities and agencies have become increasingly concerned with the rural crime problem, there has been a special concern with drug offending. One aspect of urban crime that has been repeatedly documented in rural areas is the production, utilisation and distribution of illegal drugs (Weisheit *et al.*, 1996; Weisheit, 1993; Hafley & Tewksbury, 1995; McDermott & Garafalo, 1996; Clayton, 1995). Some even indicate that the rate of drug offending from urban to rural region is proportional, although type of substance may vary by region (Donnermyer, 1992; General Accounting Office, 1990).

Historically, marijuana has been the substance of major concern for rural areas; however, the production and/or use of other controlled substances, especially methamphetamines, have become more prevalent (Barker *et al.*, 1989; Weingarten, 1989; Weingarten & Coats, 1989; Potter & Gaines, 1990, 1995). During the past approximately ten years, methamphetamine labs have become a common feature of the rural Midwest, which has produced a lot of anxiety in rural America.

Present Study

Our previous research on this topic provided findings in support of our belief that there are differential rates of rural drug offending based in part on differential access to major metropolitan areas for particular rural communities. In our study, 43% of total offences for the rural area near Kansas City, MO were drug-related for 1997 as opposed to only 8% for the isolated area in central Kansas. While we are aware that this finding is relevant to only our areas of study, we feel further exploration is worthwhile, if not necessary.

The rationale for the comparison of the four mid-western communities selected for this study is similar to our previous project (Brock *et al.*, 2001).² This will allow one to detect different patterns of availability and use of drugs by individuals of the different rural communities, to be determined from reports of arrests. Several questions provide the focal points of our study. To begin, how many offences are drug-related offences? Second, what is the difference in rate of drug offending between each of the communities, isolated or near metro? Third, what are the overall trends of offending in each of the rural communities? Are there intercommunity differences in offending between the two isolated areas and between the two near metro areas?

It is proposed that the rural communities located very close to the metropolitan areas (Denver and Kansas City) will reveal a higher proportion of drug-related arrests due to the proximity to these large cities. Individuals affiliated with such activities (distributors and users), being closer to a natural collection area of drugs, are projected to have greater/easier access to illicit drugs than individuals dealing/using in the isolated areas, the result being a higher rate of drug-related offending in the near metro areas.

It is our intention to test the hypothesis that there are differences in rural drug offending depending on area location and that with respect to drug offences in general; parts of rural

America are 'catching up' with the urban segments of our society.

Methods

Our study includes the population of offences from the reporting agencies from the selected communities from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1998. These communities were chosen because they are appropriate representations of two different variations of rural communities (near metro and isolated), two from each area of interest. The data source is local newspaper archives of each community. These records will provide the rates of offending by type of crime for each location. The records derived from the archives of each community will be used to indicate the prevalence of detected criminal activities for each area as well as differences of such from the 'isolated Midwest' to the 'near metro Midwest'.

The definition of drugs is limited to those substances that are illegal for the adult population (e.g. marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine), but excluding those that are illegal only if used by minors, such as alcohol and tobacco.³ Due to the descriptive nature of this project, analysis consists of standardised rates of offending per 100,000 population and frequencies of all offending behaviour. Such analysis will provide insight as to problem areas of concern for the departments of each area studied, and possibly rural departments in general.

One primary concern involves the reliability and validity of the data. Such data do not permit one to completely assess actual rates of offending. While self-report data and/or victimisation surveys would provide a more accurate representation of offending, it would also be much more costly and time-consuming than content analysis. Also, in rural communities wherein anonymity is scarce, such methods would likely be ineffective due to a perception of disclosure by those surveyed.⁴

Findings

Table 1 indicates that for the four-year period of study 43% of the offences reported in near urban 2 were drug-related charges as opposed to 4% in near urban 1 (both communities 2 and 1 represent the near metro areas). This finding is completely the opposite of what we anticipated. The isolated rural communities, 3 and 4, exhibited higher rates of drug offending (9% and 21% respectively) than near urban 1. With the exception of near urban 2, each community's percentage of drug offending increases

Table 1 Type of offending by location and year

Local	Offence	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
NU 1											
	Drugs	3	25	3	24	3	23	7	54	4	126
	Violence	30	241	30	245	27	233	32	243	30	962
	DUI	5	41	10	83	8	69	6	45	7	238
	Fraud	4	31	4	32	5	44	4	32	4	139
	Theft	28	220	25	206	19	167	22	163	23	756
IR 3											
	Drugs	4	13	7	21	7	17	14	83	9	134
	Violence	11	34	15	43	23	56	12	68	14	201
	DUI	9	28	6	16	9	23	16	93	11	160
	Fraud	11	34	15	43	19	45	6	36	11	158
	Theft	29	91	25	73	3	7	22	130	21	301
IR 4											
	Drugs	10	23	17	53	24	64	36	65	21	205
	Violence	16	37	19	61	20	53	19	34	19	185
	DUI	21	48	23	72	28	75	28	49	25	244
	Fraud	3	7	3	8	1	3	1	2	2	20
	Theft	40	93	25	81	9	25	2	4	20	203

each year, exhibiting an overall increase in this type of offending.

As for violent offences from 1995–98, near urban 1 almost doubles the other three communities combined in actual offences: 962 to 491. Most of the offences are for domestic violence ($N = 602$) and assaults ($N = 269$). While isolated rural 3 is second in violent offending, neither it nor any other region comes close to near urban. For the remaining offences, we find very little difference between communities for theft with the exception of near urban 2 (4% of total offending for 1995–98 while the remaining three communities had approximately 20% of total offending devoted to theft). Driving under the influence (DUI) constitutes one quarter of A's total offending but only 7%–11% of the other three.

In Table 2, the results on types of drug offending are presented. As mentioned before, near urban 2 is the region of concern exhibiting much drug offending. As for type of offending, in manufacturing and distribution which are two dominant areas of concern, near urban 2 far exceeds all others. Eleven per

Table 2 Type of drug offending by location and year

Local Offence	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
NU 1										
Possess	3	25	3	20	2	21	7	49	4	115
Manufac	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0
Distrib	–	0	0.12	1	–	0	0.10	1	0.06	2
Paraph	–	0	0.25	2	0.23	2	0.50	4	0.20	8
IR 3										
Possess	1	4	3	10	5	11	7	40	5	65
Manufac	–	0	–	0	–	0	0.5	3	0.2	3
Distrib	–	0	1	4	0.8	2	4	23	2	29
Paraph	3	9	2	7	1.6	4	3	17	3	37
IR 4										
Possess	4	10	9	28	13	36	20	36	11	110
Manufac	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0	–	0
Distrib	–	0	3	1	0.4	1	1	2	0.4	4
Paraph	6	13	8	24	10	27	15	27	9	91
NU2										
Possess	23	88	25	82	25	119	25	184	25	473
Manufac	5	19	4	12	6	31	6	41	5	103
Distrib	6	23	4	14	7	34	7	49	6	120
Paraph	7	26	6	19	5	24	11	77	8	146

cent of their total offending is for the offences of distribution and manufacturing combined, while 25% are for possession offences. None of the other areas exceeded 3% combined for distribution/manufacture.

In the final analysis (Table 3), the standardised rates of offending/100,000 population are presented for drug and violent offending. When comparing communities and examining trends there are interesting findings. Near urban 2's rate of drug offending, 7,020:100,000, is dramatically higher than all others (1,766 isolated rural 3, 998, near urban 1, and 691 isolated rural 4).

For all communities except isolated rural 4, 1998 represents a huge increase in drug offending from the previous year. For the most part, with few years representing exceptions (1996 near urban 2, 1997 isolated rural 3, and 1996 and 1997 near urban 1), the trend in drug offending is escalation. As for violent offending, near urban 1's rate (4,489:100,000) clearly exceeds the

Table 3 Rate of drug/violent offending per 100,000 population by location and year

Local	Offence	1995	1996	1997	1998
NU 1	Drugs	461.85	443.37	424.90	997.59
	Violence	4452.24	4526.14	4304.14	4489.19
IR 3	Drugs	276.59	446.80	361.70	1765.95
	Violence	723.40	914.89	1191.48	1446.80
IR 4	Drugs	244.68	563.82	680.85	691.48
	Violence	393.61	648.93	563.82	361.70
NU 2	Drugs	3120	2540	4160	7020
	Violence	380	500	520	600

Note: Violent offences include murder, attempted murder, rape, child molestation, sexual assault, robbery, assault and domestic violence.

others (1,447 isolated rural, 3, 600 near urban 2, and 362 isolated rural 4).

One thing that is clear from this analysis is that there is differential offending by type of offence for some of the areas of study. A concern might be why some of these larger discrepancies exist. For a small rural region such as near urban 2 the drug offending figures should be a concern. Within a four-year period the residents of this community have experienced 103 offences for manufacturing and 120 for distribution of which they are aware. More than likely the actual numbers exceed those presented. An interview with the chief suggested that this problem is a major concern. The exposure of youth to illegal substances is a constant concern of the voters/taxpayers, of which the chief is constantly reminded. There is a lack of funds available to aid in addressing the problem of drugs in a rural community (Donnermyer, 1994) from a strictly law enforcement point of view.

So, if a community perceives that there is a major drug problem absent necessary funding to help solve the problem, other resources might be utilised. Anti-drug and/or drug education programmes might improve the situation.⁵ Another possible, partial solution is the development and implementation of a neighbourhood watch scheme.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this analysis, as in the previous one, we find further evidence to support others' contentions (Weisheit *et al.*, 1996; Hafley & Tewksbury, 1995; McDermott & Garafalo, 1996; Clayton, 1995) that the use, manufacture and distribution of illicit drugs have become a reality in rural America. On the other hand, it would appear, at least from this analysis, that the location of rural communities has no affect on drug-related offending. The extent to which they are exposed to controlled substances may be greater in near metro areas, but it does not always generate a higher rate of offending. In the present study we find far more drug offending in near urban 2 than in near urban 1, even though both are located very close to the metro areas of Kansas City and Denver respectively.

An important question is, 'Why the difference?' Maybe the near urban 2 agency has become more aware of the growing rural drug problem than the near urban 1 agency has and has initiated a programme, or taken other measures, designed to expose more of the illegal substance use, distribution and manufacturing. Alternatively, there might be more drugs concentrated in Kansas City as opposed to Denver.

Another area of concern is the high rate of violent offending in near urban 1 as opposed to the other communities. What possible characteristics of this community might account for this observation? One question we might ask is whether or not reporting variations are responsible. Is near urban 1 much more violent, and near urban 2 much more prone to drug offending and/or infected with illegal drugs, or are the reporting practices of these areas different in relation to these two types of activities for some unknown reason? These are important concerns that must be addressed.

Studies of this type are important because little has been done in the area of rural policing and crime when compared to the urban picture. Data collection in this area will facilitate the development of a knowledge base of rural crime with a special focus on drug offending. In the future such information could provide administrators of certain rural agencies with a rationale for adjusting their resource expenditures to address such problems associated with these findings. In addition, the findings might be promoted as a justification for future resource allocations.

As for future research concerns, we are convinced that a triangulated approach will prove more advantageous. Even though the authors are concerned about the problem associated with extensive use of surveys and interviews and how well these

may not be received, we feel there is a need for additional information if possible. Large-scale, in-depth interviews of officers and chiefs (Bond-Maupin & Maupin, 1998; Weisheit *et al.*, 1994) about agency concerns might provide insight as to what problems these professionals are experiencing and may anticipate future problems. Access to agency records would also help.⁶ Another approach would be to survey a sample of the population of a region of study to determine community concerns and fears related to types of offending (McDermott & Garafalo, 1996).

One last concern related to the findings is whether or not there is a noteworthy difference in drug offending between the cities of Kansas City and Denver. If Denver's rate is much less than that for Kansas City, that might explain our unanticipated findings. Maybe our assumption is dependent on the degree of drug concentration of the urban metro area near our region of study. It is for this reason that future research of this type must take account of such information.

The possible policy implications involve the community, various social institutions that serve it, and the potential influence that the former might exert on the latter. Agencies may want to adopt a problem-oriented and/or community policing format to facilitate the management of this problem (Goldstein, 1990; Eck & Spelman, 1987; Cordner, 1995). This may be accepted or rejected depending on community temperament. Some communities receive community in the form of neighbourhood programmes and foot patrol while others do not. Some departments may be sceptical of community-oriented policing while the community may desire such and apply political pressure in order to achieve such. On the other hand, some departments may wish to limit their response to something as simple as acquiring a sniffer dog or designing a simple public education programme. It is hard to predict how any given community or agency will react.

On the larger scale legalisation is an option, but only a minute segment of society supports such a remedy. And, among this minority there is little agreement as to the extent of legalisation (Walker, 1998). It is almost certain that law enforcement, courts and all aspects of sentencing will continue to be the primary response to the nation's drug problem, but to what extent?

Recent reports indicate an evolving shift in attitude (Johnson, 2001). New York, New Mexico, Massachusetts and Michigan have been reported as proposing changes to current drug legislation. The justification for these proposals include rising prison

populations, minimal if any positive effects of stiff drug sentencing laws, and a desire to increase space for the 'violent predators' as opposed to the 'non-violent drug offenders'. It would appear that some states are recognising a logical conclusion to an impractical, unproductive solution to a very serious problem: it does not work.

Appendix: Offences by Location and Year
Table A1

Local	Offence	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
NU 1	Possess	3	23	3	20	2	21	7	49	4	115
	Manufac	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Distrib	-	0	0.12	1	-	0	0.10	1	0.06	2
	Paraph	-	0	0.25	2	0.23	2	0.50	4	0.20	8
	MIP	0.51	4	2	13	7	60	2	15	3	92
	DomViol	16	129	19	150	18	157	22	166	19	602
	Robbery	0.13	1	0.5	4	-	0	0.27	2	0.20	7
	Assault	10	87	7	61	7	65	7	56	8	269
	SexAss	1.3	10	2	14	0.69	6	1	8	1	38
	Battery	0.25	2	0.25	2	-	0	0.10	1	0.20	5
	ChldAbu	1.5	12	1	11	0.57	5	1	10	1	38
	Theft	28	220	25	206	19	167	22	163	23	756
	Burglary	6	48	5	41	9	81	6	42	7	212
	DUI	5.2	41	10	83	8	69	6	45	7	238
	Fraud	3.9	31	4	32	5	44	4	32	4	139
	Harrass	15	118	12	96	12	107	11	81	12	402
	Hit/Run	5	40	6	47	6	53	7	55	6	195
	Disorder	1	8	2	15	2	18	1	11	2	52
	CrimDang	-	0	-	0	-	0	0.10	1	0.03	1
	OpenCont	-	0	0.12	1	-	0	-	0	0.03	1
	Other	1.9	15	1	10	2	15	1	8	1	48
	Total		791		809		870		750		3220

Table A2

Local	Offence	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
IR 3	Possess	1	4	3	10	5	11	7	40	5	65
	Manufac	-	0	-	0	-	0	0.5	3	0.2	3
	Distrib	-	0	1	4	0.8	2	4	23	2	29
	Paraph	3	9	2	7	1.6	4	3	17	3	37
	MIP	1	4	1	4	-	0	6	33	3	41
	DomViol	3	9	3	8	9	23	4	23	4	63
	Robbery	-	0	0.3	1	-	0	-	0	0.07	1
	Assault	1	4	1	3	14	33	3	16	4	56
	SexAss	-	0	-	0	-	0	0.30	2	0.10	2
	Battery	7	21	11	31	-	0	5	27	6	79
	ChldAbu	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Theft	29	91	26	73	3	7	22	130	21	301
	Burglary	9	28	7	19	2	5	6	38	6	90
	DUI	9	28	6	16	9	23	16	93	11	160
	Fraud	11	34	15	43	19	45	6	36	11	158
	Harrass	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Hit/Run	1	4	1	4	-	0	0.5	3	0.8	11
	Disorder	3	8	0.7	2	2	5	4	24	3	39
	CrimDang	17	53	17	50	-	0	8	48	11	151
	OpenCont	6	18	3	8	-	0	4	26	4	52
	Other	-	0	1	3	35	85	2	9	7	97
	Total		315		286		243		591		1435

Table A3

Local	Offence	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
IR 4	Possess	4	10	9	28	13	36	20	36	11	110
	Manufac	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Distrib	-	0	3	1	0.4	1	1	2	0.4	4
	Paraph	6	13	8	24	10	27	15	27	9	91
	MIP	4	9	6	19	4	10	1	2	4	40
	DomViol	14	32	18	56	11	29	13	23	14	140
	Robbery	0.4	1	-	0	-	0	-	0	0.1	1
	Assault	2	4	2	5	3	7	1	2	2	18
	SexAss	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Battery	-	0	-	0	6	17	5	9	3	26
	ChldAbu	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Theft	40	93	26	81	9	25	2	4	20	203
	Burglary	3	6	3	11	4	11	6	10	4	38
	DUI	21	48	23	72	28	75	28	49	25	244
	Harrass	0.9	2	0.6	2	-	0	-	0	0.4	4
	Hit/Run	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Disorder	2	5	3	10	1	3	-	0	2	18
	CrimDamg	-	0	-	0	1	4	-	0	0.4	4
	OpenCont	-	0	-	0	8	21	5	9	3	30
	Other	-	0	-	0	-	0	0.6	1	0.1	1
	Total		230		317		269		176		992

Table A4

Local	Offence	1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
NU 2	Possess	23	88	25	82	25	119	25	184	25	473
	Manufac	5	19	4	12	6	31	6	41	5	103
	Distrib	6	23	4	14	7	34	7	49	6	120
	Paraph	7	26	6	19	5	24	11	77	8	146
	MIP	0.8	3	3	10	2	10	3	21	2	44
	DomViol	0.3	1	-	0	0.8	4	-	0	0.3	5
	Robbery	0.3	1	0.6	2	0.2	1	-	0	0.2	4
	Assault	3	10	5	16	4	17	4	27	4	70
	SexAss	1	5	1	4	0.8	4	0.4	3	0.8	16
	Battery	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	ChldAbu	0.5	2	0.9	3	1	5	-	0	0.5	10
	Theft	3	13	6	19	4	20	3	20	4	72
	Burglary	4	14	2	8	3	15	2	14	3	51
	DUI	11	41	9	28	11	52	12	87	11	208
	Fraud	16	60	15	50	12	59	13	94	14	263
	Harrass	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Hit/Run	-	0	0.6	2	-	0	-	0	0.1	2
	Disorder	-	0	0.6	2	-	0	0.7	5	0.4	7
	CrimDang	2	6	0.3	1	-	0	0.8	6	0.7	13
	OpenCont	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	Other	18	68	17	56	18	86	14	103	16	313
	Total		380		328		481		731		1920

Notes

1. The near metro communities, to be referred to as near urban areas 1 and 2 for the sake of community anonymity, are less than approximately one-hour/50 miles from the major metro areas of Denver, CO and Kansas City, MO respectively. The isolated communities, to be referred to as isolated rural areas 3 and 4, are approximately five hours/300 miles away from any major metropolitan area. It is important to note that the records taken from each community's local newspaper archives represent the major criminal activities of each area that are reported by law enforcement personnel. The populations of the communities are as follows: near urban 1, 5,413, near urban 2, 5,000, isolated rural 3, 4,700, and isolated urban 4, 9,400.
2. Results from the examination and analysis of records of arrest for the year of 1997 for our communities of study indicated that the location of rural communities may affect the extent to which they are exposed to controlled substances and the types of substances to which they are exposed. In this study there was far more drug offending in near metro community 2 than in the isolated rural community 3.
3. Due to reporting differences between different communities we refer to drugs as controlled substances absent specific types such as hallucinogens or marijuana. The rationale for this approach is multiple: (1) our main concern in this study is to examine the extent of illegal drug burden on the criminal justice system regardless of type of drug; (2) official records for rural agencies have been difficult to obtain in the past; (3) content analysis can provide a means of overcoming this problem even though the records are not as specific in relation to type of drug offending; and (4) we are more concerned with community differences of offending than with substance differences.
4. Another problem is the lack of urban community data collection for comparison purposes in the present study. Any post-study differences proposed between rural and urban offending will be based on past empirical studies of urban crime. Even so, we defend this strategy for three reasons: (1) much data exist related to urban offending, thus creating the popular perception of urban crime; (2) the main concern of our study is to examine rural offending of communities as it is related to proximity of the community to metropolitan areas; and (3) we realise that official departmental records might provide a more accurate account of offending, but for this project we find this method of analysis sufficient. From the outset of this project the researches experienced reluctance/refusal on the part of some agencies to allow access to arrest records. It is for this reason we have relied on content analysis.
5. McDermott's (1997) study of drug programmes in small towns provides valuable insight. Of the 157 small communities in the study, 96% indicated the presence of one or more anti-drug

programmes. The bulk of these were not law enforcement-oriented, but rather education- and prevention-oriented (McDermott, 1997).

6. The authors are aware of this. From the beginning this was the plan. We have attempted to obtain records from certain jurisdictions but were denied. City councils voted against the project of a rural Missouri community. The city administrator of a rural Texas region denied access. One rural Texas region police chief granted us access but when going through these records it was discovered that all records from 1980 (year of the town's official beginning) to 1995 were missing. The records from 1995–8 had no record of drug offending at all. It was at this point that the researchers decided that this type of data analysis might prove more beneficial than many would at first believe.

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