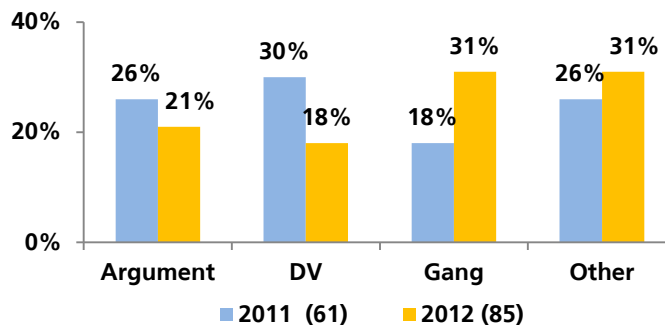


Gang Activity Identified Most Often as Homicide Motive in 2012; Up From 2011

Serving as the Regional Clearinghouse for crime data, SANDAG’s Criminal Justice Research Division tracks seven major violent and property crimes on annual and mid-year basis. As reported in the March CJ Fax (“Regional Crime Bulletin Preview: Violent and Property Crime Rates Up in 2012, But Still Among Lowest in Past 30 Years”), all four Part I violent crimes rose compared to 2011, with the greatest increase seen in homicides. Specifically, 107 murders were reported in 2012 compared to 82 in 2011, an increase of 30 percent, but still considerably lower than the peak of 278 in 1991 (not shown).

As Figure 1 shows, three motives accounted for most homicides for which motive could be determined in both 2011 (61) and 2012 (85): arguments (26% vs. 21%), domestic violence (30% vs. 18%), and gang activity (18% vs. 31%), the most common homicide motive in 2012.¹ Being the largest metropolitan police department in the County, it is not surprising that the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) experienced the greatest number of gang-related murders in 2012 (18), up two-fold from 2011 (9). These 18 gang-related homicides represented half (50%) of the 36 murders for which motive could be determined by the SDPD, and were attributed, at least in part, to new members forced to commit homicide to be initiated into the gang; ongoing feuds between existing gangs; and victims being targeted by their own gang for violating gang rules.² Other agencies that identified gang activity more often as a homicide motive in 2012 compared to 2011 were Chula Vista (4 vs. 0), Oceanside (2 vs. 0), and Sheriff (2 vs. 1). The majority of all gang-related murders in the region involved a firearm (72%) and were perpetrated in a public area (76%), illustrating how gang activity can pose a serious risk to the general public (not shown).

Figure 1
GANG-RELATED HOMICIDES NEARLY DOUBLED OVER PAST YEAR



NOTE: Cases with missing information are not included.

While law enforcement has observed these increases may not be continuing in early 2013, these annual numbers show that it is still important for community members and stakeholders to work together to prevent gang involvement and intervene in the lives already involved. To learn more about the region’s 2012 crime rates, go to www.sandag.org/cjc to access the March CJ Fax and the recently released bulletin, “Thirty Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1983 through 2012”.

¹ The “other” category includes child abuse, robbery, drugs, lovers’ triangle, silencing a witness, money/financial, depression, and sexual bondage.

² San Diego Police Department. Personal communication, April 17, 2013.