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DECEMBER 16, 2014

What will stop the gunfire in Chicago?

 October 23, 2014 by [stevenyoder](#)

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City of Chicago-2013 Photo credit: [Nate Merrill / Foter / CC BY-SA](#)

It's probably a mistake to compare Chicago's violence to that in a war zone like

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Afghanistan, as some reporters [have](#).

But to *Chicago Tribune* overnight crime reporter Peter Nickeas, the July 4th weekend—when there were 82 shootings in 84 hours—didn't feel like the city he knows. "It didn't feel real.... There's guys running around in coveralls with rifles, people screaming in the radio that there's still shooting. And while there's 150 cops... around, somebody shot up a house a couple of blocks south, so all the cops go running south—that huge presence, an escalation of force from like basic patrol to something more like infantry tactics," Nickeas told WNYC after the bloody weekend.

Children at risk

In some Chicago neighborhoods, even staying indoors isn't enough to protect kids. On July 18, 11-year-old Shamiya Adams was shot and killed while attending a slumber party as she sat on the first floor of a friend's house when someone fired a gun outside, according to a Reuters report.

The Chicago police don't report statistics on the number of bystanders or children killed or wounded in the city's gun violence. But stories of children gunned down in cross-fires happen regularly—the previous July, a four-year-old girl was shot while riding her scooter near Marquette Park. Earlier that month, it was a seven-year-old boy shot in the neck in Cole Park in the Chatham neighborhood—he was attending a Fourth of July picnic with his family. A 2012 analysis of data by the Children's Defense Fund found that of 23 high-income nations, 87 percent of children under age 15 killed in gun violence lived in the United States.

Poverty and unemployment continue to contribute to the Chicago's rising gun-related deaths and injuries, say experts. But the city's police officials say those aren't the biggest factors—easy access to guns continues to make parts of the city among the most dangerous places in the country.

Violent crime actually has fallen dramatically in Chicago, as in other major cities.

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Commentary: For Hunger Games – Mockingjay, teens are doing the marketing

December 4, 2014

By Joan Oleck – The Hunger Games:



Mockingjay—Part 1 is, for its teen fan base, a powerful lesson in marketing manipulation. For anyone not living in a cave, this third film in the series of four is based on

Homicides fell to 298 through the first nine months of this year—the lowest level since 1965, according to the Chicago police department. But while overall violent crime has dropped, the number of shootings has risen—it's up 6 percent from 2013.

The factors in play in Chicago create a lethal witches brew, say experts. Start with educational opportunity, poverty, and unemployment. Shootings are concentrated in south and west-side neighborhoods that have lost jobs and seen school and factory closings. An incredible 92 percent of Chicago's black teens ages 16 to 19 were unemployed in 2012. The city's extreme poverty rate—meaning families of three with earnings of less than \$10,000—runs near 10 percent. And the high school graduation rate for the city's black men stands at 39 percent, according to a report this spring from Amnesty International.

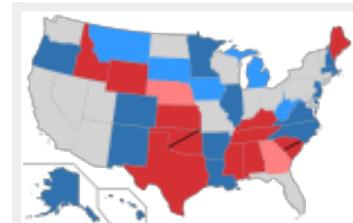
The concentration of poverty also appears to concentrate risk. A [study](#) in last November's *American Journal of Public Health* concluded that in one area of the city with some of the highest murder rates, 6 percent of the population was involved in 70 percent of the murders. Nearly all of those 6 percent had previous contact with the criminal justice or public health systems. A 2012 Chicago Police Department audit reported that at least 59 gangs with a combined 70,000 members are active in the city.

Illegal guns

But a [report](#) in May by the city's police department and the University of Chicago crime lab identified what they called the biggest driver of homicides—illegal guns. They noted that the city recovers seven times as many illegal guns through searches and gun turn-in events as New York City and twice as many as Los Angeles. And it's telling, the researchers note, that Chicago's non-gun homicide rate is comparable to the rates in both of those cities, but its gun-related homicide rate is three times larger than New York's and twice that of Los Angeles'. "This report shows the extent to which illegal guns are the leading factor in driving violence..." said Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

the uber-successful book series by Suzanne Collins and weaves a compelling tale of teen survival in [...]

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November 11, 2014

Commentary: The 2014 US Midterms – The democratic election that wasn't American democracy is predicated on two critical pillars. The selection of political representatives by the majority via the ballot box, and the availability of timely and accurate information that is vital for voters in their assessment of candidates and policies consistent with their self-interest. [...]

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October 31, 2014

As Myanmar, a country with an

The city has hit on some of the traditional approaches to containing violence, like putting more cops in the hardest hit neighborhoods. Starting last summer, 200 officers have gone out on foot patrols in 20 high-crime areas, and several hundred more police were added in that role this year. But even Emanuel says that simply adding more police can't solve the problem.

The city also is focusing effort on keeping kids from gangs. In followup to the *American Journal of Public Health* study, a police department commander and the head of a community anti-violence program visited all of those identified in the study as highest risk to explain the risks they face. And a DePaul University program works with Chicago ninth-graders who are exposed to gangs and violent crime on managing their stress—program directors told the *Los Angeles Times* earlier this year that such coping mechanisms are essential to keeping chronic violence from becoming the norm for these teens.

Still, it may be hard to convince at-risk youth to disarm and stay out of gangs for protection since they're frequent targets of violence—a [study](#) in the August 2013 issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, for example, showed high rates of gun possession among youth in the Michigan city of Flint who go to emergency rooms after being injured in an assault. The top reason youth in the study gave for carrying guns was self-protection, an approach that underlies much of the country's gun legislation.

That ethic of meeting gun violence with like force may have been behind one incident last fall. Last September 20, 21-year-old Bryon Champ was shot at by rival gang members, who grazed his leg with a bullet. That night, Champ and three allies allegedly went to the other gang's neighborhood and used an assault rifle to open fire on a crowd that they believed included rival gang members. Thirteen people were wounded, including a 3-year-old boy.

Perhaps most important, Chicago is struggling to restrict the flow of guns into the city. Two key court losses have made that a tough task. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme

incipient democracy and alarming human rights record, prepares to host a prestigious regional issues summit in coming weeks, the Southeast Asian nation's galling treatment of its ethnic minority populations is receiving renewed attention. It's an inopportune time for the country's president, Thein Sein, for these issues to be resurfacing in [...]

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Court ruled unconstitutional the city's handgun ban and other regulations on rifles and shotguns. And this January, a U.S. District Court judge forced Chicago to end its ban on gun sales in the city.

But the city council has fought back, passing an ordinance in June that among other provisions requires gun stores to video-record all sales, sell only one gun a month per buyer, and require a 72-hour waiting period to buy handguns.

Similar measures appear to have helped in New York. When New York City sued gun dealers caught making illegal sales, the dealers signed agreements to implement safe sales practices like using security cameras in sales, keeping electronic records for inventory and sales, and keeping computer records to flag gun purchasers who previously bought guns that were later used in crimes. A Johns Hopkins University [study](#) last year found an 82-percent reduction after those agreements in the probability that the guns those dealers sold were later recovered from criminals in New York.

Time will tell whether those measures will be enough for the city's poorest and hardest-hit neighborhoods. People living in those areas aren't likely to pay much attention to pronouncements about falling crime rates. They have good reason—according to a [report](#) this spring, though the city's homicide rate today is half of what it was in the early 1990s, the most dangerous third of the city has between 12 and 16 times more homicides than the safest third—that's up from six times more homicides than the safest third in the early 1990s.

Protecting every American

Activists question why Chicago, and the country, continue to allow killing fields to persist in mostly poor, black neighborhoods at a time when polls show support for the Obama administration's bombing campaign in Iraq after the brutal deaths of two white journalists in Syria.

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Book recommendation: Political Order and Political Decay



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"We as a country tolerate violence when it is in low-income black communities," Zeke Cohen, executive director of The Intersection, a Baltimore youth advocacy group, told News21, a news program headquartered at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. Protecting all American lives, he says, should be a priority: "Because we've come to accept that the acceptable face of gun deaths is black, we allow it to continue to happen."

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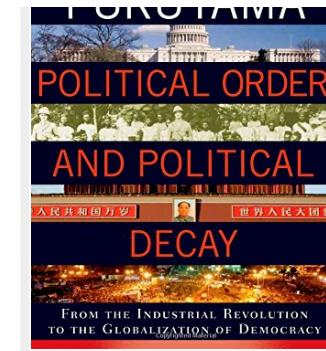
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