DUKE CENTER FOR FIREARMS LAW

Illegal Firearm Possession: A Reflection on Policies and Practices that May Miss the Mark and Exacerbate Racial Disparity in the Justice System

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Introduction

Justifiably, there has been considerable attention and focus by the public, scholars, policy makers, and criminal justice and public health practitioners on violent crimes involving firearms. However, much less attention has been paid to the crime of illegal *possession* of firearms. Part of this reflects dramatically different definitions of this behavior across the states given the variation in the requirements for concealed carry of a handgun, and thus what constitutes legal versus illegal possession or carrying. And while clearly the commission of a violent crime with a firearm versus the possession of a firearm by someone not licensed/permitted to do so are substantively different

behaviors, often the term “gun crimes” conflates the two criminal offenses. This essay examines the issue of how illegal possession of a firearm is responded to by the justice system, with a focus on Illinois to illustrate some of these issues and how arrests and convictions for these offenses disproportionately impact Black men.

Violent Crime Committed with a Firearm (The Real Problem)

In 2019, it is estimated that there were more than 480,000 violent crimes committed with a firearm in the United States,[1] representing a 68% decrease when compared to 1993.[2] However, despite this dramatic decrease in the number of violent crimes committed with a firearm, the rate at which Blacks experience fatal and non-fatal firearm violence victimization remains significantly higher than that experienced by whites. In 2019, for example, the rate of non-fatal firearm violence victimization (i.e., robbery, assault/battery, rape) among Blacks was 287 per 100,000 population, more than double the rate of 134 per 100,000 among whites and similar to the 251 per 100,000 rate among Hispanics.[3] The racial disparity in firearm *homicide* victimization rates is even more pronounced nationally, with the 2019 rate for Blacks at 19.6 per 100,000, or 12-times higher than the rate of 1.6 per 100,000 population for whites and six-times higher than the rate of 3.8 per 100,000 among Hispanics.[4]

However, we also know that these rates vary considerably across individual states and communities within states. In, Illinois, for example, in 2019 the rate of firearm homicides among Blacks was 32.7 per 100,000, compared to 1.1 per 100,000 for whites and 4.3 per 100,000 among Hispanics.[5] Even more specifically, the rate of firearm homicides among Blacks in Cook County, Illinois (which includes Chicago) was 37.9 per 100,000 in 2019, 1.2 per 100,000 among whites, and 5.9 per 100,000 among Hispanics.[6] However, in 10 of Chicago’s 77 “community areas,”[7] the overall homicide rate in 2019 was over 50 per 100,000, and is even higher among Black men.[8] Thus, when it comes to the highly publicized instances of firearm homicides, as well as the less publicized, but much more prevalent, non-fatal firearm victimizations, Blacks, and particularly young Black men, experience the highest rates of firearm violence, particularly in specific communities within large, urban areas.

Despite the seriousness of these violent crimes committed with a firearm, not only are a substantial portion not reported to the police, but of those that are reported to the police, most do not result in an arrest. For example, of the non-fatal violent crimes committed with a firearm in 2019 in the United States, 60% were reported to the police.[9] However, even when these crimes are reported to the police, in most instances they do not result in arrests. The Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that in 2019 less than one-third of all aggravated assaults and robberies with a firearm in the United States were cleared by an arrest.[10] For the most serious form of gun violence—homicide—clearance rates tend to be higher than non-lethal violent firearm offenses, but are still low given the seriousness of the offense and relative to historic levels (i.e., clearance rates in 2020 were 54%, but exceeded 65% prior to 2000).[11]

Further, when it comes to responses by the justice system to gun violence, much of the focus has been on the sanctions that can be imposed on violent crimes committed with firearms. Examples of the more punitive sentences that can be imposed on violent crimes committed with a firearm include mandatory minimum prison sentences, sentencing enhancements when violent crimes are committed with a firearm (e.g., additional years added to a sentence when armed with a firearm or when a firearm is discharged during the commission of a crime), violent crimes committed with a firearm being subject to truth-in-sentencing, or three-strike/habitual offender laws, all of which are intended to increase the certainty and severity of punishment. Much of the response by legislatures, prosecutors and judges to violent crimes committed with a gun has been based on the understandable recognition that these violent crimes pose a significant danger to the public, and that those individuals who commit these offenses need to be incapacitated, punished, and not released until they no longer pose such a significant risk to public safety.

A Focus on Illegally Possessing Firearms

Given the limited degree to which the criminal justice system is able to apprehend and sanction those who commit violent crimes with a firearm, due to not all crimes being reported to the police and low clearance rates, the logical alternative is to find those who may be illegally possessing firearms under the view that *some* of them may be driving the gun violence problem. We saw similar thinking during the late 1980s and the war on drugs—those possessing drugs illegally *may* be drug dealers or *may* be driving violence, and thus, penalties associated with the illegal possession of

drugs like cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine were increased. However, the justice system's response to the illegal possession of a firearm, often lumped into the broad category of "gun crime," is less well understood empirically. Further, while possession of a firearm is necessary to commit a violent crime with a gun, not all of those who possess a gun (either legally or illegally) intend to use it that way. While there has been a lot of research that has used gun confiscations (i.e., arresting people who illegally possess firearms) as an outcome measure in, for example, evaluations of hot-spot policing or assessment of the efficacy of stop-and-frisk practices, there is little research that has examined the characteristics of those arrested for illegal firearm possession, the sentences imposed on those convicted of these offenses, and subsequent recidivism patterns of those convicted.

Frequently these crimes are referred to as "unlawful use of a weapon," or UUW, however, to many (particularly the general public) this terminology conflates possession with actually using a weapon to commit a violent crime. And while it is recognized that not all UUW offenses involve the illegal possession of a firearm, in many jurisdictions most crimes that fall into this category are in fact firearm possession crimes. In 2019, there were more than 153,000 arrests by state and local police departments in the United States for weapon offenses (i.e., UUW), 9% more than in 2014;**[12]** arrests by federal law enforcement agencies for weapon offenses, albeit much fewer, increased 67% between 2014 and 2019, reaching almost 12,000.**[13]** For context, while arrests by state and local police departments in the United States for UUW *increased* 9% between 2014 and 2019, arrests for all crimes combined *fell* 10% and arrests specifically for violent crimes remained essentially unchanged (falling 0.5%).**[14]** It is important for scholars to determine if this increase in arrests for weapon offenses reflects an increased focus by police on these types of crimes, an increased prevalence of the behavior (i.e., more illegal carrying of weapons), or a combination of both.

In addition to an increase in arrests, arrests for UUW are also much more likely to involve Black individuals than are arrests for other crimes; in 2019, 42% of all people arrested for weapon offenses in the United States were Black, while Blacks accounted for 37% of all arrests for serious violent crimes and 26% of arrests for all other offenses.**[15]** Again, trends in arrests for illegal possession of a firearm offenses likely differ from state to state, and community to community, as does the degree to which Blacks are overrepresented among those arrested. Research in Illinois found that while total statewide arrests for illegal firearm possession increased 70% between 2014 and 2019, specifically in Chicago (and Cook County) arrests for these offenses increased 85%, with

much larger (and smaller) percent changes seen across other large jurisdictions in the state.[16] Throughout this period of increased arrests for illegal firearm possession were announcements by Chicago's Mayor and Superintendent of Police regarding "crack downs" on illegal gun possession, suggesting the increase in arrests in Chicago were, at least partly, attributed to a greater *focus* by police on proactively looking for these crimes (i.e., through traffic stops and other on-view enforcement activity). In terms of the race of those arrested in Illinois, 79% of those arrested in Chicago (Cook County) were Black, compared to 54% of those arrested in the rest of Illinois for this offense being Black.[17] An even finer point, to illustrate the specific population most impacted by arrests for illegal firearm possession in Chicago (Cook County): 79% were Black, 92% were male, and 52% were between the ages of 18 and 24 (i.e., young, Black men).

Importantly, and as mentioned above, the legal criteria for what constitutes the offense of illegal possession of a firearm varies from state to state, depending on their laws regarding licensing of gun owners or licensing requirements for carrying a concealed handgun. In a state without licensing requirements for concealed carry of a handgun (i.e., permitless carry), what constitutes illegal possession is much narrower and more limited than a state that requires a permit in order to carry a concealed handgun. Thus, in a state like Illinois, where concealed carry requires both a Firearm Owners Identification (FOID) card (permit to purchase/own) *and* a concealed carry license (which requires training classes, registration, and fees) the opportunities to be found illegally possessing a firearm are greater than in states that do not require a permit to carry a concealed handgun. Currently, 21 states have no permit requirement,[18] and it is likely that, as a result, there is a lower rate of arrests for illegal possession of a firearm in these states. Thus, the degree to which individuals are arrested, convicted and sentenced for the illegal possession of a firearm will vary considerably from state to state given the differences in what is legal versus illegal from state to state.

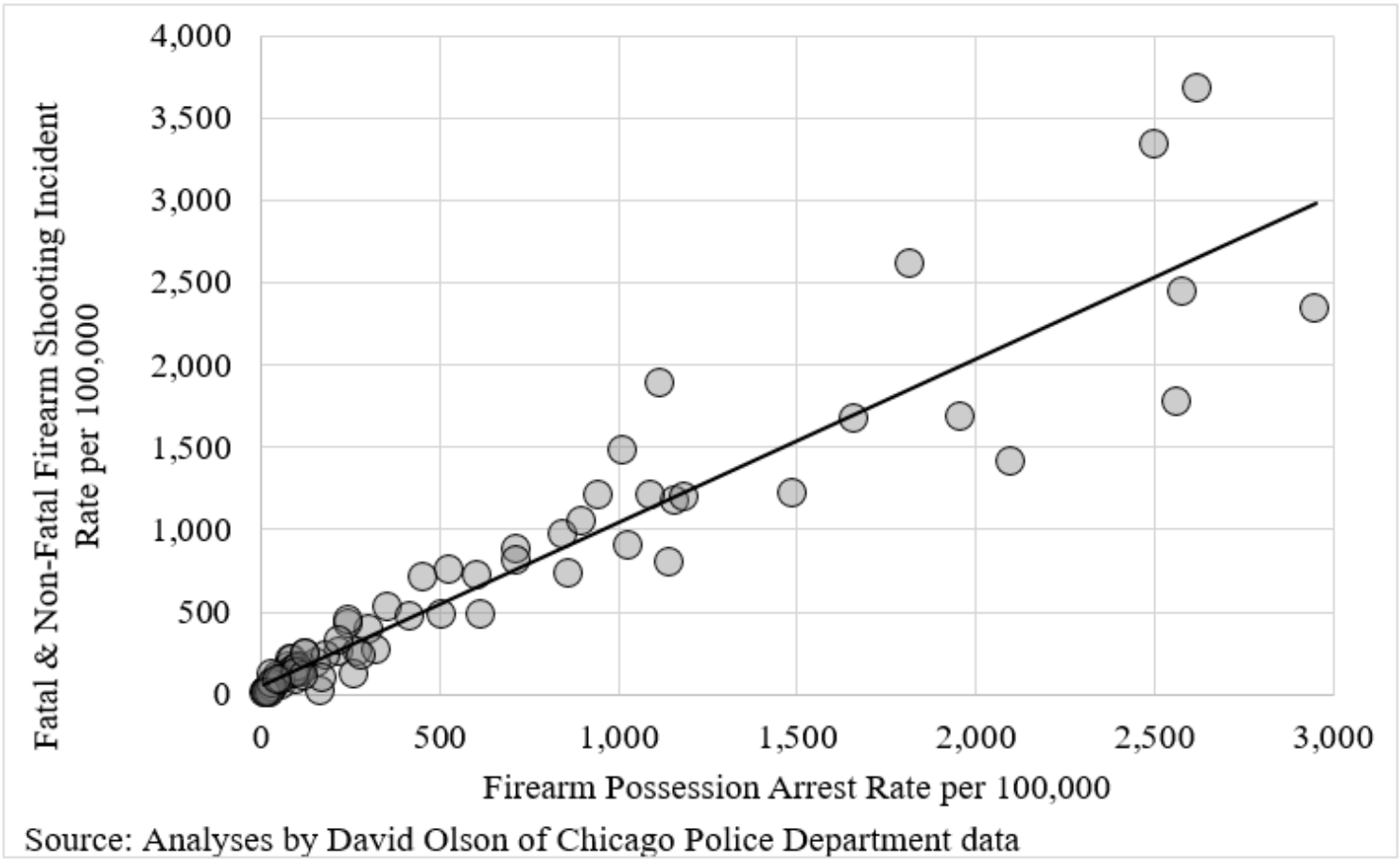
In addition, the *consequences* of arrests for illegal possession of a firearm depend on state law, and are also influenced by local practices. How this behavior is legally classified in states ranges from misdemeanor-level to non-probationable felony crimes. In states where this crime is a felony, a conviction potentially has life-long consequences given the implications of having a felony conviction, including restrictions or limitations on an individual's employment opportunities, voting rights, access to housing, and firearm ownership. In addition, whether or not a conviction for a

felony firearm possession offense results in a sentence to prison will also vary from state to state, and county to county (or prosecutor's office to prosecutor's office). Indeed, even the degree to which the illegal possession of a firearm is viewed as a "crime of violence" varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and practitioner to practitioner, but has obvious implications for how these offenses are viewed by practitioners as they make decisions regarding pre-trial release, charging, plea-bargaining and sentencing.

Illegal Firearm Possession as a(n imprecise) Proxy for Firearm Violence

Given the pressure for police to address gun violence in the communities most impacted, it is understandable that if police are unable to identify those committing fatal and non-fatal shootings, they would seek at least identify *potential* shooters by arresting those illegally possessing firearms. And if the police are going to focus on illegal firearm possession to address firearm violence, they will likely concentrate their efforts in the specific communities with the highest rates of gun violence. Illustrative of the impact of this pattern and approach, in Chicago there is a near perfect correlation between arrest rates for illegal firearm possession and rates of non-fatal violent crimes committed with a firearm across the 77 community areas in the city (Figure 1).**[19]** In other words, the communities with the highest rates of gun violence, which are also the communities where police and Black residents are most highly concentrated, experience the highest rates of arrests for illegal firearm possession. However, the analyses presented in Figure 1 also illustrates how in some communities the rate of arrests for illegal firearm possession actually *exceeds* the rate of fatal and non-fatal firearm shootings (i.e., the data points, which represent each of the 77 Chicago community areas, below the line are communities that had firearm possession arrest rates that were higher than the rate of fatal and non-fatal firearm shootings).

Figure 1: Rates of Fatal and Non-Fatal Firearm Shootings versus Rates of Arrests for Illegal Firearm Possession, by Chicago Community Areas, 2017-2019 Combined



Source: Analyses by David Olson of Chicago Police Department data

Still, clearance rates for the actual violent crimes committed with a firearm remain low: in 2019, less than 10% of aggravated batteries and robberies with a firearm resulted in an arrest.[20] In addition, the means by which the police identify people illegally possessing firearms often rely on approaches—hot-spot policing, aggressive enforcement of traffic laws, and stop-and-frisk practices in communities with high rates of gun violence and large concentrations of Black residents—that have the potential of exacerbating distrust between police and minority communities. Further, in carrying out operations to increase arrests for illegal firearm possession, it is likely that police are casting a wide net—not all of those in a community who illegally possess firearms are doing so with the intent of committing violent crimes with a firearm. Indeed, given the high rates of violence, particularly gun violence, in these communities, it is understandable why those with the highest risk of *victimization* (young Black men) would *perceive* a benefit to carrying a firearm for self-protection. Research has consistently found that most people who own, and carry, firearms do so for personal protection, including those that have concealed carry licenses as well as those who may be prohibited from/not licensed to legally carry a concealed handgun. In many states, to obtain a concealed carry permit, and to therefore be legally compliant, involves a process (costs and submission of information to law enforcement) that many may not be an able to afford, or, more importantly, may not trust. For

example, a survey by the Urban Institute of young people (aged 18 to 26) living in Chicago neighborhoods most impacted by violence, and almost all of whom were Black, found that while one-third (32%) of the entire sample had carried a firearm illegally at some point in their lives, the prevalence was higher (50%) among males, and even higher among those who had been previously victimized. Almost all of those who reported having carried a firearm reported that self-protection or to protect friends/family members was the reason for gun carrying. Among those respondents who reported carrying a firearm, the vast majority did not have strong perceptions of police legitimacy and did not perceive the police as effective at reducing crime.**[21]** Of all those arrested in Illinois for illegal possession of a firearm offenses between 2008 and 2019, it is estimated that just over one-third (35%) were older than 20 and had no prior conviction for a felony or a domestic violence offense (i.e., they did not have a disqualifier to applying for and obtain a concealed carry license in Illinois) and most were Black.**[22]**

Sentencing Those Convicted of Illegal Firearm Possession

Thus, we see nationally, and specifically in Illinois and Chicago, an increase in arrests for the illegal possession of firearm (i.e., UUW) in recent years that disproportionately impact individuals that are Black, and, as illustrated in Chicago, young Black men from specific neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence. How these arrests are responded to by prosecutors and the courts, however, is less well known. Nationally, the availability of data on sentencing those convicted of illegal possession of a firearm offenses is limited, and quite dated. The most recent nationally representative sample of sentencing outcomes for those convicted of a felony-level weapon offense (i.e., UUW) is 2006, and found that 45% of those convicted of a felony weapon offense were sentenced to prison.**[23]** A slightly more recent assessment of felony sentences imposed in large, urban counties in the United States found that in 2009, 53% of those convicted of a felony weapon offense were sentenced to prison.**[24]** However, as noted above, given the wide variation across states in what constitutes illegal firearm possession (i.e., differences in concealed carry requirements), and the degree to which those offenses are felony or misdemeanor crimes, understanding sentencing outcomes of these arrests requires a state by state examination to fully determine the influence of defendant, case, offense, and jurisdictional characteristics influence sentencing decisions.

Research performed in Illinois, and separately for Cook County (Chicago), found that changes to how the offense of illegal possession of a firearm is classified in state statute over time resulted in a dramatic increase in the likelihood of a prison sentence. Importantly, since 2011, almost all instances where a loaded handgun is carried, or accessible in a vehicle, without a concealed carry permit by someone without any prior convictions is a non-probationable felony (with a sentence of 1 to 3 years). When this law was signed into effect, Richard M. Daley, the Mayor of Chicago at the time and an advocate for the new legislation said "This legislation will reduce the threat of gun violence by sending a clear message that *serious offenders* will be held accountable and will not be let off scot-free as many of them have been in the past" (emphasis added).**[25]** Even more to the point, and illustrating the conflating of illegal firearm possession with the commission of violent crimes with a firearm, Ronald Holt, from the Chicago Police Department but also the parent of a son killed by gunfire stated "(This bill) sends a clear message to *violent offenders* that they will be dealt with to the fullest letter of this law, as punishment will be swift, severe and fair" (emphasis added).**[26]** Again, the law required a prison sentence for illegal gun possession by people without any prior convictions, and had nothing to do with violent crimes committed with a firearm, which already require prison sentences with potentially long sentences given the firearm sentencing enhancements in place.

However, despite these *state* laws, the application of the law appears to have primarily occurred in Chicago (Cook County). When the law requiring a prison sentence for those without a felony conviction, but illegally carrying a handgun, went into effect in 2011, sentencing patterns changed dramatically in Cook County (Chicago), but *did not* change at all outside of Cook County. In Cook County, the proportion of those convicted of this offense being sentenced to prison went from 30% in 2010 to 80% by 2013; outside of Cook County, the proportion of those convicted of this offense sentenced to prison remained at 30%. And although race did not influence whether or not those convicted of these offenses went to prison after controlling for other characteristics, such as age, gender, and prior arrests, the vast majority of those arrested, convicted and sentenced to prison were Black men.

In addition to mandatory prison sentences for those illegally possessing a handgun among those without prior felony convictions, over the past two decades in Illinois the sentencing for those with prior felony convictions that illegally possess firearms has also shifted to mandatory prison

sentences (with longer maximums than other crimes in the same felony class). Since 2006, someone with a prior felony conviction for specific violent offenses, firearm possession offenses or specific drug-law violations who are subsequently in possession of a firearm are guilty of a non-probationable felony (with a sentence of 3 to 14 years), and since 2012 someone possessing a firearm with *any* prior felony conviction is also guilty of a non-probationable felony (with a sentence of 2 to 10 years). This change in 2012 was made despite the fact that most of those convicted of this offense were already being sentenced to prison, but this change resulted in all being sentenced to prison. Again, the vast majority of those convicted of the offense of a felon in possession of a firearm in Illinois were Black men in Chicago, and disproportionately from 11 specific neighborhood in the city.

In other words, as a result of these legislative changes, *everyone* who is arrested and convicted of illegally *carrying* a handgun in Illinois—primarily young, Black men in Chicago—is viewed as so dangerous that prison is seen as the *only* appropriate sentencing response. For those with felony convictions, it does not matter what the prior felony was for, how long ago the felony conviction occurred, or if the prior felony conviction indicated any propensity for violence. Among those convicted as a felon in possession of a firearm, the majority—74%—did not have any prior conviction for a violent felony offense. Rather, most were "felons" as a result of a prior conviction for drug-law violations, property crimes, or a prior illegal firearm possession offense.

Although there is limited, current national data on the sentencing of those convicted of illegal firearm possession offenses in the United States, it is possible to examine the number, trends and characteristics of those *admitted to prison* for these offenses (i.e., the illegal possession of, primarily, firearms, not the use of firearms in the commission of violent crimes). When looking at national trends, admissions to prison for these weapon offenses *increased* 9% between 2014 and 2019, while admissions for all non-weapon offenses *fell* 21% during that same time period.**[27]** These differential trends, for the most part, reflect trends seen in arrests, and are also consistent with the pattern in Illinois: more prison admissions for firearm possession offenses, but decreased admissions for all other crimes. Further, nationally, prison admissions for weapon offenses reflect an even higher degree of racial disparity than seen among arrests: Black individuals accounted for the *majority* (55%) of those admitted to prison for weapon offenses in 2019, but Blacks accounted for only 32% of prison admissions for all other offenses.**[28]**

Again, as a result of differences in state laws, policies and practices, the degree to which prison admissions are accounted for by weapon offenses varies. Illustrative of this variation, in 2019, weapon offenses (primarily illegal firearm possession) accounted for 5% of all prison admissions in the United States, however in states like California, New York and Illinois, 10% or more of the prison admissions were for these offenses. Even more specifically, a much larger share of prison admissions from large, urban counties are for weapon offenses. For example, in the 2018-2019 period, 21% of all prison admissions from Cook County (Chicago) were for weapon offenses, 17% of all prison admissions from Wayne County (Detroit) were for weapon offenses, and 13% of all prison admissions from Los Angeles County were for these crimes.**[29]** In fact, one out of every 10 (11%) prison admissions in the *entire United States* for weapon offenses in 2018-2019 were from just two counties, Cook and Los Angeles County, combined. Overall, the three states of California, Illinois and New York accounted for almost one-third (32%) of all prison admissions for weapon offenses in the United States in 2018-2019, but only 22% of the total U.S. population.**[30]**

Conclusions

There are a number of implications from the patterns and issues raised in this essay. First, there is little empirical research that has examined the extent and nature of arrests, convictions and the sentences imposed on individuals who illegally possess firearms. Determining the degree to which states with more restrictive policies regarding firearm ownership and possession/carrying are potentially exacerbating racial disparity among those on probation, parole or in prison, as well as the disparity with respect to felony records, is critical research needed to expand our understanding. Although Illinois, and Cook County (Chicago) is discussed in detail, the implications of the research findings from Illinois apply to any state where a first-time conviction for the crime of illegal possession of a firearm can result in a felony conviction, or requires the imposition of a mandatory prison sentence. Allowing for discretion, and basing this sentencing decision on more objective risk factors, would ensure that unnecessary incarceration of young Black men is avoided. Not classifying this behavior as a felony, which carries significant, long-term consequences would not only limit the use of incarceration (i.e., a jail sentence could still be imposed), but would also prevent a life-long felony record for behavior that may be motivated by fear of victimization and also disproportionately impacts Black men.

Indeed, even when mandatory prison sentences are in place for someone who possesses a firearm and has a prior felony conviction, it must be recognized that the offenses that constitute a felony vary from state to state, have changed significantly over time, and, as a result of the war on drugs and other factors, disproportionately impacts Black men. For example, during the 1960s when the federal Gun Control Act of 1968 was passed, it was estimated that roughly 10% of Blacks had a felony record, compared to roughly 2% of non-Blacks; by 2010, 23% of Blacks, 33% of Black men versus 6% of non-Blacks had a felony record.**[31]** Again, allowing discretion to determine who poses a risk to public safety, rather than solely being determined by a prior conviction that may have nothing to do with a propensity to commit violence, would avoid unnecessary incarceration that primarily impacts Black men. Ideally, any alternative to incarceration would involve services and programming that addresses risk of victimization, trauma resulting from experiencing or witnessing violent crime victimization, to reduce the need to illegally possess a firearm for self-protection.

Finally, it is important to use language and terminology that more accurately reflects the behavior of illegally *possessing* a firearm (i.e., unlawful *use* of a weapon), when the firearm is not actually *used* in the commission of a crime of violence. In Illinois, for example, the crime of carrying a concealed handgun without a license is referred to as "Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapon," and as described earlier, is a felony that carries a mandatory 1-3 year prison sentence. Rhetoric used by practitioners and policy makers that conflates illegal firearm possession with "gun crime" or "violent gun crime" further contributes to the public misunderstanding of what illegal possession of a firearm implies, and what might be the most appropriate legal responses. This conflation results in the view that increased enforcement of firearm possession in high crime communities is actually identifying those who are driving the gun violence in the community, as opposed to a wide net being cast that ends up including a mix of people who may *potentially* be committing gun violence but also potential *victims* seeking a means for self-protection.

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[Ed. note: This essay is part of a collection of writings from the Center's 2021 roundtable on *Race and Guns in America*.]

Notes

[1] Morgan, R. E. and Thompson, A. (2020): *Criminal Victimization, 2020*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/cv20.pdf

[2] Data generated from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993-2019. https://ncvs.bjs.ojp.gov/year-to-year-comparison/characteristic

[3] Author's computations using data generated from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Dashboard (**https://ncvs.bjs.ojp.gov/Home#hometopHome**) and race-specific population figures from Morgan and Thompson (2020).

[4] Data generated from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) at **https://wisqars.cdc.gov/fatal-reports**. Rates are for non-Hispanic Blacks and whites.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Author's analyses of Cook County Medical Examiner's Office data. See https://datacatalog.cookcountyil.gov/d/cjeq-bs86/visualization

[7] Community area's in Chicago were "mapped out by two University of Chicago sociologists, Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess, in the late 1920s, grouping together neighborhood and surrounding areas. Except for the addition of O'Hare in 1965 and Edgewater in 1980, the boundaries of these

regions have been kept unchanged." These 77 community areas consist of hundreds of individual neighborhoods. Description from the Chicago Studies College of the University of Chicago, retrieved from **https://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/neighborhoods**. These community areas are still used today as a way of presenting information about the city, including crime rates.

[8] Data generated from the City of Chicago Violence Reduction Dashboard. See https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/vrd/home.html

[9] Morgan and Thompson (2020).

[10] Federal Bureau of Investigation (2020): *Crime in the United States, 2019*. U.S. Department of Justice retrieved from **https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/tables/table-27**

[11] See Murder Accountability Project web-site at https://www.murderdata.org

[12] Author's analyses of arrest estimates produced annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and published in their annual Crime in the United States series.

[13] Author's analyses of arrest figures published through the Federal Justice Statistics Program: see **https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/federal-justice-statistics-program-fjsp#publications** .

[14] Author's analyses of arrest estimates produced annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and published in their annual Crime in the United States series.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Olson, D.E., Stemen, D., Foust, K., Guzman, C., Jacobs, L., Juarez, S., Michalak, H., Pankratz, A., Ward, A. (2021). *Sentences Imposed on Those Convicted of Felony Illegal Possession of a Firearm in Illinois: Examining the Characteristics and Trends in Sentences for Illegal Possession of a Firearm*. Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice, Loyola University Chicago. See https://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/ccj/pdfs/IllinoisGunPosessionArrestBulletinjuly2020[9718].pdf

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[18] Vasilogambros, M. (2021): *No Permit, No Problem: More States Allow Residents to Carry a Hidden Gun*. December 6, 2021. Pew Stateline. https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2021/12/06/no-permit-no-problem-more-states-allow-residents-to-carry-a-hidden-gun

[19] Illustrative of the near perfect correlation is a Pearson's r statistic of .94 based on the author's analyses of these data.

[20] Author's analysis of Chicago Police Department data available through Chicago's on-line data portal at https://data.cityofchicago.org/Public-Safety/Crimes-2021/dwme-t96c

[21] Fontaine, J., La Vigne, N., Leitson, D., Erondu, N., Okeke, C., and Dwivedi, A. (2018): *We Carry Guns to Stay Safe: Perspectives on Guns and Gun Violence from Young Adults Living in Chicago's West and South Sides*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99091/we_carry_guns_to_stay_safe_1.pdf

[22] Author's analyses of data obtained for Loyola's study of those arrested for gun crimes in Illinois; Olson, D.E., Stemen, D., Michalak, H., Juarez, S., Ward, A., and Jacobs, L. (2020). *Arrests in Illinois for Illegal Possession of a Firearm: Examining the Characteristics and Trends in Arrests for Illegal Possession of a Firearm within the Context of Crimes Involving Guns. Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice*. Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice, Loyola University Chicago. See https://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/ccj/pdfs/IllinoisGunPosessionArrestBulletinjuly2020[9718].pdf

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[25] *Governor Quinn Signs Legislation to Reduce Gun Violence*, Press Release, July 19, 2010. Retrieved from https://www.illinois.gov/news/press-release.8651.html

[26] Ibid.

[27] Author's analyses of data obtained through the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP): United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *National Corrections Reporting Program, 2000-2019*. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2021-07-15. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR38047.v1

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Shannon, S.K.S., Uggen, C., Schnittker, J., Thompson, M., Wakefield, S., and Massoglia, M. (2017): *The Growth, Scope, and Spatial Distribution of People with Felony Records in the United States, 1948-2010*. Demography, 54: 1795-1818.