COVID-19, Firearm Crime, and Firearm Availability

Michael Sierra-Arévalo University of Texas at Austin

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COVID, Crime, & Firearm Availability

1. Patterns in Firearm Availability

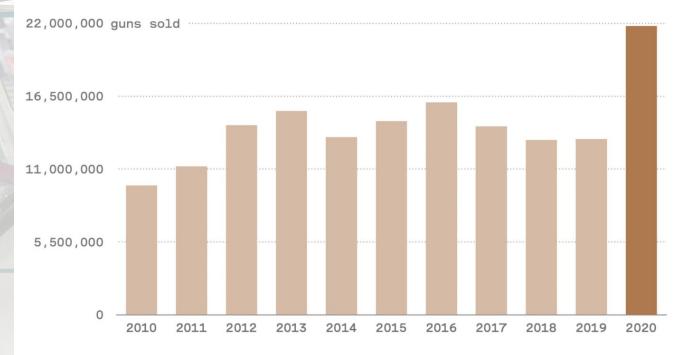
2. Firearm Availability → Firearm Crime?





2020 shattered gun sales records

Estimated number of guns sold in the United States per year, 2010-2020

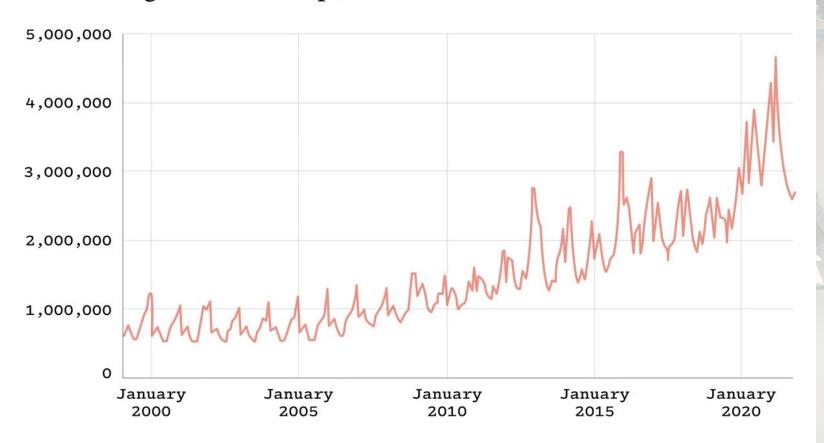


The Trace's firearms sales estimates are derived from data from the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and only include checks for handgun and long gun transfers. Background checks do not correspond one-to-one with sales.



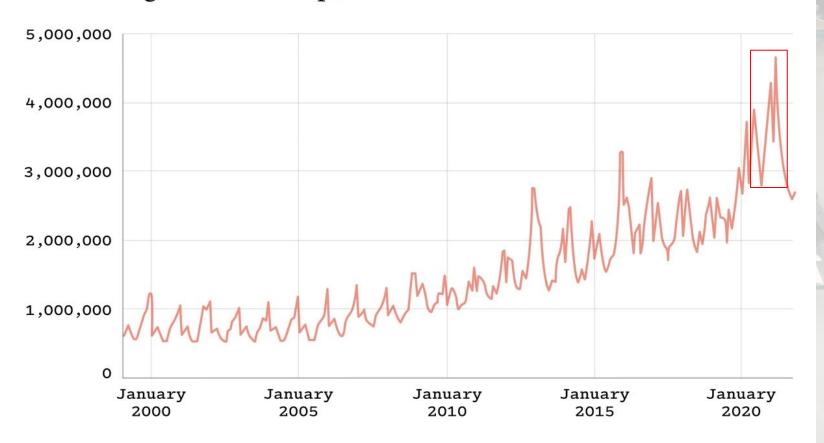
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

FBI Background Checks per Month



Source: FBI

FBI Background Checks per Month



Asher and Arthur (2021)

Source: FBI



Table 2. Estimated Proportion and Number of U.S. Adults Who Purchased Firearms, 2019-2021

Characteristic	Unweighted Number of U.S. Adults	Weighted Percentage of U.S. Adults (95% CI)	Estimated Number of U.S. Adults (95% CI), <i>millions</i>
Purchased a firearm			
2019	934	5.3 (4.9-5.8)	13.8 (12.7-14.9)
2020	1086	6.5 (6.0-6.9)	16.6 (15.5-17.9)
2021	523	3.3 (2.9-3.6)	8.4 (7.5-9.4)
From 1 January 2019-26 April 2021	1809	10.5 (10.0–11.1)	27.2 (25.7-28.8)
Became a new gun owner			
2019*	143	0.9 (0.8-1.2)	2.4 (2.0-3.0)
2020†	231	1.5 (1.3-1.7)	3.8 (3.2-4.5)
2021‡	73	0.5 (0.4-0.7)	1.3 (1.0-1.8)
From 1 January 2019-26 April 2021	447	2.9 (2.6-3.3)	7.5 (6.7-8.5)
Newly exposed a household to firearms			
2019	90	0.6 (0.4-0.7)	1.4 (1.1-1.9)
2020	189	1.2 (1.0-1.4)	3.0 (2.5-3.6)
2021	62	0.4 (0.3-0.6)	1.0 (0.7-1.4)
From 1 January 2019-26 April 2021	341	2.1 (1.8-2.4)	5.4 (4.8-6.2)

^{* 17.7% (}CI, 14.7%-21.1%) of 2019 purchasers became new gun owners in 2019.

Miller et. al. (2022) - National survey (n=19,049), April 2021

^{† 22.9% (}CI, 19.7%-26.4%) of 2020 purchasers became new gun owners in 2020.

^{‡ 15.8% (}CI, 12.0%-20.6%) of 2021 purchasers became new gun owners in 2021.



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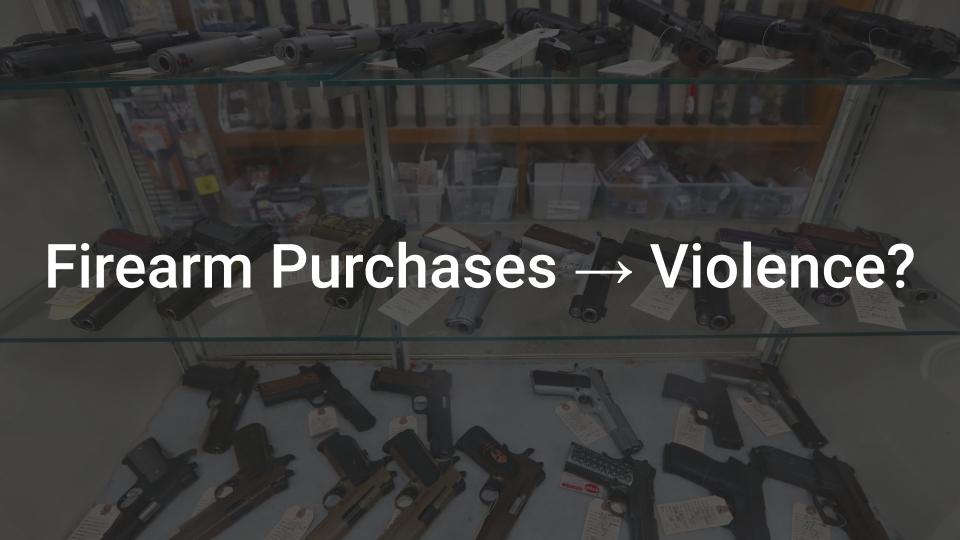


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Characteristic **Unweighted Number Estimated Number of U.S. Weighted Percentage** millions Assuming 5-year, 2.4% theft rate (Azrael et al., **Purchas** 2019 2020 2015) and 1 stolen firearm per owner ... 2021 Became 2019 Theft from only COVID-era new owners will 2020 2021 From plausibly add ~122,400 firearms to the black Newly 2019 market by 2025. 2020 2021

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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Open Access

Firearm purchasing and firearm violence during the coronavirus pandemic in the United States: a cross-sectional study



Julia P. Schleimer^{1,2*}, Christopher D. McCort^{1,2}, Aaron B. Shev^{1,2}, Veronica A. Pear^{1,2}, Elizabeth Tomsich^{1,2}, Alaina De Biasi^{1,2}, Shani Buggs^{1,2}, Hannah S. Laqueur^{1,2} and Garen J. Wintemute^{1,2}

Results: We estimated that there were 4.3 million excess firearm purchases nationally from March through July 2020 and a total of 4075 more firearm injuries than expected from April through July. We found no relationship between state-level excess purchasing and non-domestic firearm violence, e.g., each excess purchase per 100 population was associated with a rate ratio (RR) of firearm injury from non-domestic violence of 0.76 (95% CI: 0.50–1.02) in April; 0.99 (95% CI: 0.72–1.25) in May; 1.10 (95% CI: 0.93–1.32) in June; and 0.98 (95% CI: 0.85–1.12) in July.

No direct link between firearm sales and firearm violence <u>during peak of</u> du <u>COVID-era firearm purchasing spike.</u>

ess



Effects of purchasing on violence after this period untested.

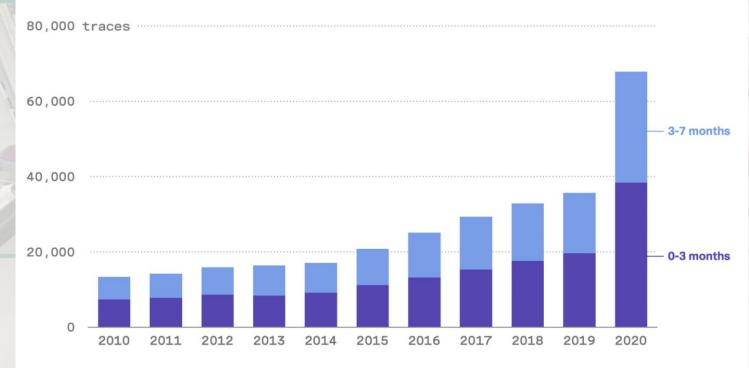
United States: a cross-sectional study

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Guns sold in 2020 quickly turned up at crime scenes

Number of guns recovered and traced within seven months of purchase date by length of time since purchase, 2010-2020

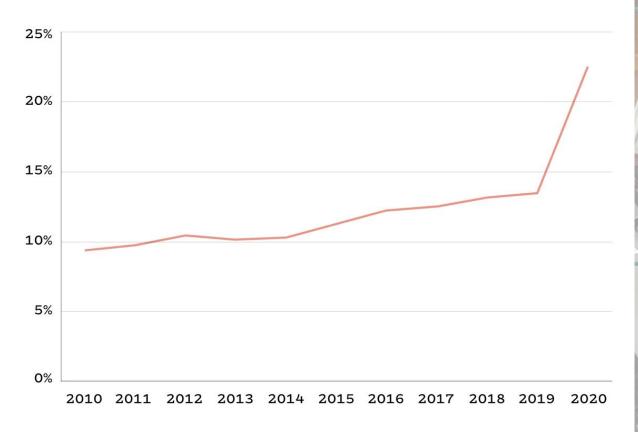




Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives



Share of Guns Traced by the ATF Recovered Six Months or Less Since Purchase





Share of Guns Traced by the ATF Recovered Six Months or Less Since Purchase

From '19-'20, % of traced firearms with "time-to-crime" ≤6 months: +90%.

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

In 2020, new firearms more common among traced firearms than in the past.

Limitations:

Traces != total recoveries.

Data not disaggregated by crime type.

Limited to FFL purchases.





Rise in gun carrying

Gun carrying in 2020 was 108% higher than in 2019.

Share of CPD stops that resulted in a gun confiscation, 2014-2020

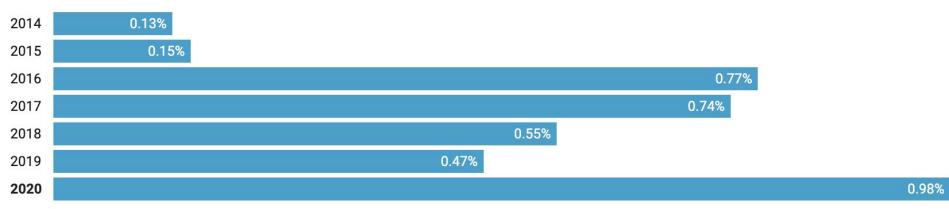


Chart: Jemal R. Brinson • Source: UChicago Crime Lab analysis of Chicago Police Department data • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Impact of COVID-19

An early effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was a surge in gun carrying across the city of Chicago.

Share of CPD stops that resulted in gun recovery by month, 2019-2020

Month	2019	2020	Percentage point change
Jan	0.50%	0.35%	-0.15
Feb	0.40%	0.50%	0.10
Mar	0.51%	0.55%	0.04
Apr	0.45%	2.18%	1.73
May	0.51%	1.92%	1.40
Jun	0.46%	2.94%	2.48
Jul	0.53%	1.49%	0.96
Aug	0.46%	1.68%	1.21
Sep	0.40%	1.02%	0.62
Oct	0.50%	0.96%	0.45
Nov	0.40%	1.15%	0.75
Dec	0.54%	0.87%	0.33

Table: Jemal R. Brinson • Source: UChicago Crime Lab analysis of Chicago Police Department data • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Decline in street stops, rise in guns recovered

Street and traffic stops plummeted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, down 85% between January and April 2020. At the same time, there were more guns recovered.

CPD stops and guns confiscated during CPD stops by month, 2020

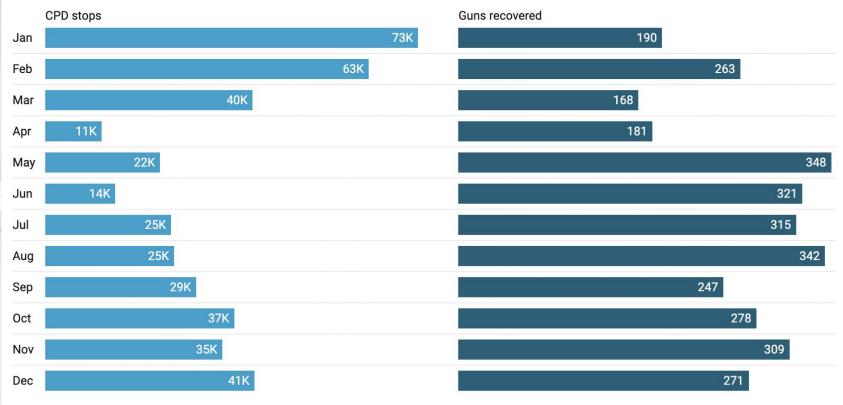
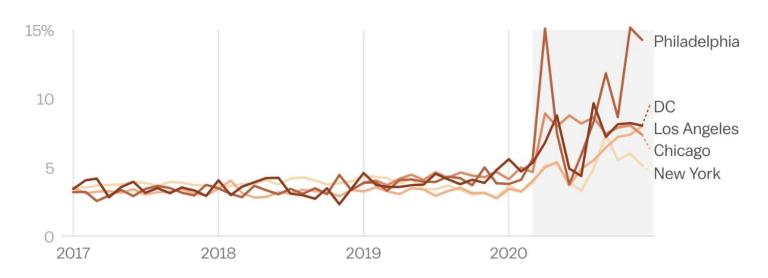


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The share of arrests finding weapons jumped as the pandemic began

The increase suggests there were more guns on the streets in 2020.



No Chicago data is available prior to 2019.

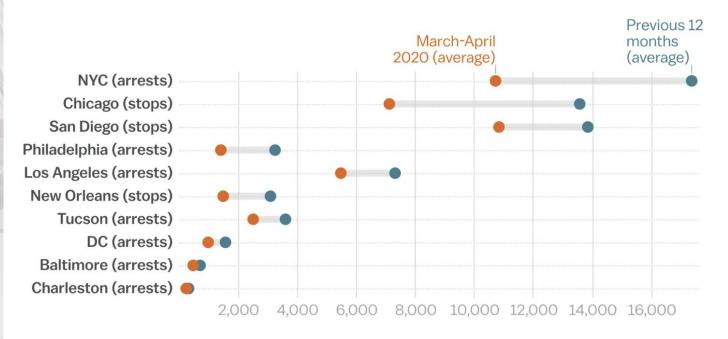
Source: City police data



Data analysis by Jeff Asher and Rob Arthur

Police activity dropped in March 2020

Compared to monthly averages from the previous year, arrests and stops fell as the pandemic began.



Source: City police data



The share of arrests finding weapons jumped as the pandemic began

The increase suggests there were more guns on the streets in 2020.

Fewer stops, more seized firearms.

Limitations:

Data only for select cities.

2017 2018 2019 2020

No Chicago data is available prior to 2019.

Source: City police data



New Right-to-Carry (RTC) States

2018: Arkansas

2019: Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Dakota

2021: Iowa, Tennessee, Texas, Montana, Utah,

Wyoming

2022: Ohio, Indiana, Georgia

2023: Alabama

Permitless carry → increased firearm assault and homicide (Doucette et. al. 2022, Fridell 2021, Donohue et al. 2017)

More Guns, More Unintended Consequences: The Effects of Right-to-Carry on Criminal Behavior and Policing in US Cities

John J. Donohue, Samuel V. Cai, Matthew V. Bondy & Philip J. Cook

RTC → + firearm homicides, shootings, & robberies.

RTC → + firearm theft & - decreased clearance rate for violent crimes.

More Guns, More Unintended Consequences:

More RTC + more purchasing likely implicated in increased firearm carrying.

BUT: Cities with increased firearm recovery often not in states with RTC.

Still unclear what % of crime guns are legally purchased/carried or stolen.

No <u>COVID-era or post-COVID</u> analysis of RTC / firearm carrying and firearm violence.

