



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 28, 2022

## Guns, Morality, or Policy? In Two U.S. Zip Codes, Young Men Are More Likely to Be Shot Dead Than Were Soldiers in Afghanistan

It's a seemingly staggering statistic: Young men in two U.S. cities' most violent zip codes are more likely to be shot to death there than were soldiers in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. It raises a question, too:

What differentiates the two metropolises in question, Chicago and Philadelphia, from places such as New York City and Los Angeles, where murder rates are notably lower?

The *Washington Times* [reports](#) on the story, writing that a "study led by Brown University researchers found that young men between the ages of 18 and 29 living in Chicago's most violent ZIP code (2,585 men) were more than three times as likely [3.23 times] to be the victim of a gun-related homicide than soldiers serving in Afghanistan would [sic] suffer a 'combat death.'"

"In Philadelphia, young men in the city's ZIP code with the highest amount of gun violence (2,448 men) were nearly twice as likely [1.9 times] to be killed by a gun than soldiers in Afghanistan."

The *Times* continues:

When comparing the two most violent ZIP codes with how soldiers fared in Iraq, the study found that the threat of gun-related homicide was still noticeably higher in Chicago than combat in Iraq, but the rate in Philadelphia was comparable.

The young men affected by gun violence were overwhelmingly Black and Hispanic (96%) across all four cities in the study, which also included New York and Los Angeles.

... However, researchers found that the most violent ZIP codes in both Los Angeles and New York were safer than Afghanistan or Iraq.

Study co-author Dr. Brandon del Pozo, an assistant professor at Brown's Warren Alpert Medical School, "recently released a book called 'The Police and the State: Security, Social Cooperation, and the Public Good' based on his academic research, as well as his 23 years of experience as a police officer in New York City and as chief of police of Burlington, Vermont," [writes](#) *The Independent*, adding to the story. The paper also informs that aside from examining geography- and demography-based homicide patterns, del Pozo stated that at the same time,



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he and the other study authors were responding to oft-repeated inflammatory claims about gun violence in American cities.

Dr del Pozo said: “We often hear opposing claims about gun violence that fall along partisan lines.

“One is that big cities are war zones that require a severe crackdown on crime, and the other is that our fears about homicides are greatly exaggerated and don’t require drastic action.

“We wanted to use data to explore these claims, and it turns out both are wrong. While most city residents are relatively safe from gun violence, the risks are more severe than war for some demographics.”

Of course, that homicides aren’t evenly distributed throughout America isn’t news. For example, a [2017 study](#) (based on 2014 data) informed that 68 percent of our murders occur in just small parts of five percent of our counties. Moreover, 54 percent of counties had *zero homicides*.

So del Pozo’s refutative claim itself is suspect: *Parts* of our big cities *are* in fact “war zones” requiring a severe crime crackdown. Yet as my above paragraph illustrates, “our fears about homicides are greatly exaggerated” insofar as many people, deceived by mainstream media, believe the entire country is a war zone.

Adding yet more perspective, however, one could wonder: Why did del Pozo study only “gun violence,” which actually is “people violence” with guns used as tools? Don’t these war-zone areas also have greater “knife violence,” “fist violence,” and “foot violence”? As to the last two, note that more Americans are killed with “personal weapons” (hands, fists, and feet) than with rifles of any kind, according to the FBI.

Yet the professor isn’t alone. Just today, MSN.com disseminated a [story](#) claiming that “2022 was another record setting year with regards to kids being killed by guns.” First, kids aren’t killed “by” guns, not any more than those beaten to death are killed “by” fists; the term “by” implies agency. Kids are killed *with* guns, *by* people.

Furthermore, the MSN-featured story claimed, “Guns are now the leading cause of premature death for children.” Yet it counts as “children” anyone under 18. Don’t be surprised: Some [studies count](#) those between “1 and 19” (and sometimes even older) as “children.” For the more you extend “childhood,” the worse the kids-killed-with-guns problem appears.

In reality, the two leading causes of death for actual children, ages 1-14, are motor vehicle crashes and drowning, [according to the CDC](#). Increasing the “childhood” age limit skews such statistics by including violent gang-bangers in them.

As for the Brown University study, here’s more food for thought:

- Wartime Afghanistan was rife with guns and violence, and Chicago and Philadelphia have essentially the same gun-control laws Los Angeles and NYC do. So why do the latter two metropolises have far lower murder rates? Left-wing policy comes to mind.
- Related to the above, the Independent Sentinel [reported last year](#) that all “16 cities with record high homicides in 2021 have Democrat mayors.”
- While that correlation does exist, one between more gun ownership and higher murder rates



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doesn't. For example, rural areas have far more guns per capita than urban centers, but also lower murder rates; whites have more firearms than blacks do, but lower murder rates as well. How to you explain these differences? As Professor Thomas Sowell [put it in 2012](#), "It's people, not guns."

And just a bit more perspective: *The* most dangerous place for very, very young men (and women) in the U.S., with a [murder rate of 20.3 percent](#), is inside the womb.



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