Capitalizing on Crisis: Chicago Policy Responses to Homicide Waves 1920-2020*

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Abstract

This article investigates Chicago city government policy responses to the four largest homicide waves in its history: 1920-1925, 1966-1970, 1987-1992, and 2016. Through a combination of spatial and historical methods, we discovered that homicide was more than a social problem, it was a tool for advancing a diverse set of policy agendas. Specifically, city policy responses were the outcome of struggles between government and non-government actors over the definition of homicide and its causes. The struggles produced a repetitive cycle of city responses that included efforts to 1) delegitimize Black social movements, 2) expand policing, 3) frame homicide as an individual rather than systemic problem, and 4) exclusively credit police for homicide decreases. These findings suggest that efforts to improve violence prevention policy in Chicago require not only a science of prevention and community flourishing, but also efforts to democratize how the city defines its social problems.

Chicagoans are all too familiar with the following scene. The mayor or police chief at a press conference behind a podium, surrounded by clergyman or community members, and answering questions in response to yet another homicide wave. These moments create a heightened urgency for action, and while volumes of studies have been conducted on homicide, scholars have yet to investigate city responses during the peak of homicide waves.¹ This is important because scholars

¹The literature is far too large to adequately summarize in this paper, but for useful reviews, please see Laurence

tend to be agnostic or optimistic that local government officials will prudently apply the knowledge from their studies when, in fact, research strongly suggests otherwise. For example, historians have shown that even the most liberal policy research on violence prevention has been used to implement racialized criminal justice policies such as stop and frisk, hotspot policing, or mandatory minimum sentences.² Shining a light on how city government responds to homicide waves extends the scholarly gaze beyond homicide perpetrators and victims to the institutions devising policy responses.

In this article, we combine spatial and historical methods to identify the four largest homicide waves in Chicago history, then, uncover the policy responses during each wave. Findings revealed that city policy responses were the outcome of struggle between government and non-government actors to define the meaning, cause, and remedy for homicide. These struggles were influenced by the unique political, economic, and racial conditions in Chicago at each time period, which resulted in four types of policy responses, some of which were repeated over history.

The first, in the 1920s, saw Mayor William E. Dever capitalize on Chicago's violence in his racialized reelection campaign.³ At a time when infamous mafia figures operated alcohol bootlegging operations, the Dever administration took a law and order approach that included targeting police raids on Black owned bars in Chicago's south side black belt. During the second wave in the 1960s, Mayor Richard J. Daley leveraged fear of civil rights protests into advocacy for an expanded police force. In the third wave during the 1980s, Mayor Richard M. Daley responded like his predecessors did by expanding the size and scope of the police department. Daley pinned the causes of homicide on drugs, guns, gangs, the lack of federal assistance, and the culture of Black criminals. Finally, in 2016, Mayor Rahm Emanuel responded by asserting the Black communities wanted more police, while his Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson held the Black Lives Matter movement responsible for low police morale and emboldened criminals. Mayor Emanuel also expanded policing by hiring more officers and expanding surveillance technologies, but he differed from his predecessors by

Ralph, *Renegade Dreams: Living Through Injury in Gangland Chicago*. University of Chicago Press (2014); Irving Spergel, *Reducing Youth Gang Violence; The Little Village Gang Project in Chicago*. Altamira Press (2007); Papachristos (2013); Andrew Papachristos, "Two Decades of G.R.E.A.T.: Considering the History and Evaluation of One of the Longest-Running Gang Prevention Programs." *Criminology and Public Policy*. 2013.

²Burgess, E. W., and Charles Shelton Newcomb, *Census Data of the City of Chicago, 1920*, University of Chicago Press(1931).

³See Thomas Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*, Oxford Press 98(2004).

relying on privately funded summer job programs and mentoring interventions. The budgets for job and mentoring programs, however, paled in comparison to the city’s budget for CPD.

These findings hold many implications for efforts to address homicide in Chicago. Over the past hundred years, Chicago’s history of policy responses reveals what we call a “narrative infrastructure”, that is a network of actors from multiple institutions (like the police department, the Mayor’s office, universities, or private corporations) whose interactions define the homicide problem and produce the city’s policy response. When homicide waves erupt in Chicago, they produce “unsettled times” - time periods when the meaning of homicide and its causes are up for redefinition. During each wave, Chicago’s narrative infrastructure quickly went to work by reproducing similar individual-based understandings of homicide, while dismissing or ignoring systemic or institutional based understandings. This narrative justified increased spending on policing and surveillance. Knowledge of this history suggests that any effort to produce innovative approaches to public safety requires, first, grappling with the city’s narrative infrastructure which works intensively to keep debates over violence prevention policy fixated on individuals and on police as the only solution.

1 Methods

We analyzed homicide rates per thousand people by community area during time periods when Chicago experienced the steepest homicide increases from 1890 to the present. We chose community areas as the geographic unit of analysis because they were the only geographic scale consistent across each time period. Community areas also had the advantage of having population counts across each of these time periods, which we gathered from local community fact books, city planning reports, and the Chicago data portal. We used linear interpolation to fill in data for years between decennial censuses.

To produce community area homicide rates at each period, we leveraged multiple data sources. For homicides between 1920-1925, we aggregated geocoded homicide data from Northwestern University’s “Chicago Historical Homicide Project.”⁴ For the 1966-1970 and 1987-1992 waves, we used

⁴Beinen, Leigh B., Juana Haskin, Dennis Glenn, and Mark Swindle. Homicide in Chicago, 1870-1930. Evanston, IL: Chicago Historical Homicide Project at Northwestern University. <https://homicide.northwestern.edu/>

Block and Block’s (2005) “Homicides in Chicago, 1965-1995.”⁵ Finally, for 2016, we used data from the City of Chicago Data Portal.⁶ All datasets are publicly available. Our code and data are available here. We analyzed community area level homicide rates by grouping them into deciles for each year of each homicide wave.

Archival research for the 1920’s period relied primarily on Jstor’s historical newspaper archive as well as historical books and academic articles on the period. We used keyword Boolean searches involving terms such as “police, crime, bootlegging, race, black belt” to identify relevant sources. For historical figures like William Dever or Bill Thompson, we identified biographical pieces and articles devoted specifically to their tenures as mayor. Historical newspapers provided additional insight into less prominent actors who were important voices in shaping homicide narratives that dominated each period. We also used academic articles and books on crime in Chicago as supplementary material. Because of widespread historical interest in Al Capone and bootlegging, the scholarly literature on crime during this period is much larger than the corresponding literature on political actors.

Archival research for the 1960s relied primarily on ProQuest’s newspaper database of the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Defender, as well as existing secondary histories on Mayor Daley and the civil rights movement in this time period. For the newspaper database Boolean searches for terms such as “police, Mayor Daley, Wilson, homicide, murder, crime” were used. Archival research for the 1980s relied primarily on ProQuest’s newspaper database of the Chicago Tribune, along with Access World News’ database of the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Metro News. Similar search terms to the 1960s were used, with “Wilson” being changed to “Martin.”

We identified archival material about the 2010s using a very similar process of leveraging books, newspaper articles, academic articles and media coverage such as press conferences, recorded news segments about crime, and television interviews with city leaders about homicide. An especially useful resource for understanding the city’s response to 2016 was the annual police reports from the Chicago police department, which detail personnel changes, new programming, and responses to crime.

⁵Block, Carolyn Rebecca, Richard L.Block, and Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Homicides in Chicago, 1965-1995. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2005-07-06. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR06399.v5>

⁶City of Chicago Police Department. “Crimes - 2016.” *Chicago Data Portal*, City of Chicago, <https://data.cityofchicago.org/Public-Safety/Crimes-2016/kf95-mnd6>.

2 Findings

The time series graph of Chicago's homicide rate from 1890 to the present, shown in figure 1, illuminates four distinct waves that occurred between 1920-1925, 1966-1971, 1987-1992; and the year 2016. We define a homicide spike as a time period when homicide rates increase in successive years, then end when the homicide rate declines. The magnitude of each homicide wave increased over time, with a 0.534 jump in Wave 1, a 0.624 jump in Wave 2, and a 0.868 jump in Wave 3, and a massive 10.444 jump Wave 4.

Figure 1: Time Series Graph of Chicago Homicide Rate Since 1890

The highest homicide rates have been consistently concentrated in the South Side, with the exception of downtown during Wave 1 and 2. The communities most affected during each homicide wave have been predominantly Black low-income areas.

Figure 2: Community Area Homicide Rate by Decile, 1920-1925

2.1 Violent Suppression and Racializing Crime: 1920-1925

Figure 2 reveals that the loop and near south side bore the brunt of Chicago’s 1920-1925 homicide wave. These community areas maintained the highest homicide rates throughout the five-year wave, which peaked in 1924 and 1925. Bootlegging and control over alcohol, due to prohibition, was so intense that it accounted for 40% of all reported homicides between 1919 and 1933.⁷

During this time period, the Loop was a predominantly white area undergoing new building construction and improved services.⁸ The Near South Side was similarly characterized by development, with major infrastructure on the lakeshore and the construction of several public buildings, including the Field Museum, Soldier Field, Adler Planetarium, and Shedd Aquarium. Meanwhile, Douglas, known as the Black Metropolis, was home to the “center for African-American business

⁷Binder, John and Eghigan, Mars, *Gangland Killings in Chicago, 1919-1933*, 29 *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 2, (2013).

⁸Glen E. Holt and Dominic A. Pacyga. *Chicago: A Historical Guide to the Neighborhoods: The Loop and South Side*, Chicago Historical Society (1st ed 1979).

and political power nationally.”⁹ Armour Square was also majority Black, with over a quarter of its population arriving as a result of the Great Migration. The area was also beginning to see an influx of Chinese residents as well.¹⁰

The first three years of the homicide wave occurred under the leadership of Mayor William Thompson, often referred to as the most corrupt mayor in Chicago history due to his ties to organized crime and his police chief’s blind eye to illegal gambling and alcohol rackets.¹¹ During this time, partnerships between law enforcement, politicians, and gangs throughout the city were strong and not especially secretive.¹² Close ties with the mayor generally ensured that law enforcement would not interfere or at least arrest an individual for criminal activity.¹³ Newspaper archives from 1920-1922 seldom mention any increase in violence, crime, or homicide. We found no evidence that Mayor Thompson even acknowledged homicide as a problem.

Corruption under Mayor Thompson reached a boiling point when his chief of police was indicted and a notebook belonging to a police lieutenant was found that differentiated between hotels and gambling houses that could or could not be raided.¹⁴ Perhaps the most sobering instance of corruption occurred with the murder of a district attorney who was in the company of individuals he had previously failed to convict.¹⁵ These events ignited an unprecedented movement for political reform; Thompson lost his 1923 bid for reelection to William Dever, a reformer who promised to vigorously enforce prohibition.¹⁶

Once in office, Mayor Dever kept his promise to enforce prohibition, even threatening law enforcement officers with suspension if they did not enforce it.¹⁷ Dever ramped up patrols, arrests, and license revocations against crime organizations throughout the city, and even issued a “kill at sight edict” that enabled police officers to “shoot to kill any gangster resisting arrest or questioning.”¹⁸ Dever also shut down bootleggers and organized crime entities out of their transactions with

⁹Chicago Fact Book Consortium, *Local Community Fact Book: Chicago Metropolitan Area 1990*, Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago 119 (1995).

¹⁰*Id.* at 122

¹¹Haller, Mark, *Roots of Police Behavior: Chicago 1890-1925*, 10 Law & Soc. Rev.2, 303, 306-310 (1976).

¹²*Id.*; See also Joseph Spillane, The making of an underground market: drug selling in Chicago, 1900-1940, 32 Journal of Social History 27, 37(1998).

¹³*Id.*

¹⁴Haller, Mark, *Police Reform in Chicago*, 13 American Behavioral Scientist 5, 649, 654 (1970).

¹⁵*Id.*

¹⁶*Supra* note 16.

¹⁷*Id.* at 315

¹⁸James L. Merriner. *Grafters and Goo Goos, Corruption and Reform in Chicago*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 111, (2004). NA. “RIDE CITY OF GUNMEN! —DEVER” Chicago Tribune. November 14, 1924.

city hall, politicians, and law enforcement.¹⁹

Despite these efforts, homicide in Chicago only worsened under the Dever administration. Before Dever took office in 1923 there were a combined 9 related homicides due to bootlegging and 20 related homicides due to organized crime between the years of 1919-1922.²⁰ By comparison, 145 homicides related to organized crime occurred during Dever's tenure as Mayor between 1923 and 1927.²¹ William McSwiggin, a prominent prosecutor, was slain in the presence of mobsters he had failed to convict.²² Dever's tough-on-crime approach made him unpopular with organized crime figures like Al Capone. This set the stage for a hard fought 1927 mayoral election; with the support of organized crime and corrupt city officials, ex-mayor William Thompson sought to reclaim his office.²³

As the 1927 election approached, Dever started transforming his response to homicide into a racialized reelection campaign. In addition to referring to Black saloons as magnets for crime, Dever despised the racial mixing that occurred in southside saloons, and even went so far as to claim that the existence of such saloons were responsible for the 1919 race riots.²⁴ In his speeches and correspondence throughout these years, Dever began to invoke "Black criminality" as justification for demanding more resources for law enforcement. For example, despite the presence of alcohol sales and consumption throughout Chicago as well as the high prevalence of homicide in the predominantly white Loop, seven of the eight wards Dever targeted for increased enforcement and arrests were in the Black belt.²⁵

In a strategy memo, the campaign planned for Dever to "appear in the role of a Knight Errant who will save [white] citizens from a very real peril that even the most illiterate can understand."²⁶ The memo went on to further state that democrats should capitalize on fear that blacks are going to invade white neighborhoods and cause property to depreciate.²⁷ In stoking white fear, the Dever campaign posited the mayoral race as a choice between Thompson who supported Blacks and Dever

¹⁹NA. "Mayor Closes 35 Saloons and Brewery "Mint"." Chicago Tribune. September 30, 1923.

²⁰*Supra* note 10 at 222

²¹*Id.*

²²*Supra* note 23 at 115

²³*Id.* at 117

²⁴*Id.*

²⁵Joseph Spillane, *The making of an underground market: Drug selling in Chicago* at 40.

²⁶*Id.*

²⁷*Id.*

who supported Whites.²⁸ One Dever campaign slogan read: “Negroes First - William Thompson for Mayor”. Other racist campaign tactics included: 1) distributing pamphlets that had handbills of White and Black children kissing with the “Negroes first” slogan written on them, 2) posters stating “is the negro or white man to rule Chicago?”, 3) vehicles playing “bye bye blackbird” on endless loops in the Loop, and 4) staging a fake Thompson rally in the predominantly white loop where Blacks were invited to simulate a Black invasion.²⁹

In March 1927, Dever ordered police to raid the Black belt, shutting down Black businesses and making a new wave of arrests stating that it was needed to curb crime.³⁰ In public, police chief Morgan Collins cited black criminality to explain the raids. “White people did not dare stand a chance on sidewalks fearing that they would be elbowed off the sidewalk,” he continued, “An orgy of lawlessness has been promoted in colored-wards.”³¹ Dever’s chief also claimed that it was imperative to raid the Black belt because Black men were taking white girls to the South Side and engaging in racial mixing.³² As the campaign waned on, Dever and his chief would justify continued raids by calling the Black belt “a disgrace to civilization” that required constant police activity as Blacks were prone to crime.³³ In the end, Dever’s racist campaign failed. Thompson won the election of 1927 with the help of Black voters and Chicago returned to its old ways.³⁴

A rubric for understanding the city’s response to homicides wave begins to emerge here. Racist housing policies created the Black belt on Chicago’s near southside, and the city’s white leaders allowed informal bootlegging to thrive not just in the Black belt but throughout the city. When a reformer was elected to clean this up, law enforcement activity ramped up, but when election time came, the Black Belt bore the brunt of law enforcement raids.

2.2 Leveraging Civil Rights for Police Expansion: 1966-1970

Figure 3 shows community area homicide rate deciles during the 1966-1970 wave. Homicide spiked in the downtown, south side, and west side areas of Chicago. The magnitude of the 1966-1970

²⁸*Id.*

²⁹*Id.* at 99-101.

³⁰NA. “Black Belt Raids Are Storm Center: Dever Defends, Thompson Men Assail Police.” Chicago Tribune. March 10th, 1927.

³¹*Id.*

³²*Id.*

³³*Id.*

³⁴Robert Lombardo, *The Black Mafia: African-American organized crime in Chicago 1890?1960*, 38 Law and Social Change 1, 33, 40(2003); see also *supra* note 23 at 115-117

Figure 3: Community area homicide rate deciles for each year of the 1966-1970 homicide wave

waves was almost doubled compared to the 1920-1925 Wave. In the first two years, Fuller Park was the community area in the top percentile of homicide rates, while the last three years of the wave saw the Loop with the highest homicide rates.

The 1966-1970 homicide wave coincided with another period of upheaval in Chicago as economic conditions, especially in Chicago's black neighborhoods, deteriorated precipitously.³⁵ Although the CPD published data showing homicide was increasing as early as 1964, the homicide increase was not framed as a problem until late in the summer of 1966. Then, CPD leadership and Mayor Richard J. Daley began framing homicide as a problem of youth gangs, easy access to handguns, and the perceived disorder stemming from civil rights demonstrations.³⁶ The mayor, working closely with the CPD, believed that the proper policy response was a return to "law and order" through more

³⁵Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power*, Justice, Power, and Politics, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 175-6 (2019).

³⁶Chicago Daily Defender, *O. W. Fearful Of Record In Homicide*, Chicago Daily Defender, Jun. 1st 1967; The Chicago Tribune, *DALEY MAKES PLEA TO CITY: 'Must Protect Rights of Everyone'*, The Chicago Tribune, Aug. 20, 1966; The Chicago Tribune, *CRIME RATES UP AGAIN*, Chicago Tribune Sept. 22, 1966; The Chicago Tribune, *Chicago Crime Statistics: Wilson Cites Gains in Homicides, Crime*, Chicago Tribune, April 5, 1967.

investments in policing and punitive measures.³⁷

The City's initial response to the wave in 1966 and 1967 was not new, but rather a doubling down of existing practices of aggressive policing and surveillance of Black communities, advocating for stricter gun control laws, and seeking expanded police powers.³⁸ As the homicide wave persisted, Daley, flanked by top CPD brass and Cook County State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan, pushed for even more punitive measures to wage war on "gang structures."³⁹ This punitive push became increasingly focused on gang activity in Black neighborhoods, led by the scandal-plagued and violent Gang Intelligence Unit (GIU).⁴⁰ This response was driven by ever increasing funding, manpower, and general powers for the CPD, as its total personnel grew from around 13,000 to almost 16,000, and its budget more than doubled from \$90 million to \$190 million from 1965 to 1970.⁴¹

In contrast to the 1920-1925 homicide wave, community groups like The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) and the Coalition for United Community Action (CUCA) sought to address the homicide wave through community organizing for anti-racism and job programs. Daley, however, had no interest in such community organizing, especially when gang members and gangs participated. Instead, the city responded by forming the GIU in 1967, whose then leader (Officer Edward Buckney) bluntly admitted: "We're not concerned with sociological approaches." In fact, GIU officers often intentionally enflamed conflicts between gangs and actively disrupted gang-affiliated efforts to bring job placement and training to their neighborhoods.⁴² While City Hall was at least nominally willing to support jobs programs for young people, provided they were strictly under control of City Hall, they vehemently resisted attempts to work with gangs, and instead viewed gang-related homicides as a criminal problem which could only be solved with more punitive policies.⁴³

³⁷John Elmer, *Daley Rips Critics of Rights Gains*, Chicago Tribune, Mar. 21, 1967.

³⁸*Supra* note 43 at 154-64.; 175-9; *Wilson Seeks Tax Bill to Assist Police*, The Chicago Tribune, Feb. 3, 1967; *Try Again for State Law to Register All Guns: Bill Presented to House by Chicagoan*, The Chicago Tribune, Feb. Daley Asks Gun Law Support, The Chicago Tribune, Mar. 7, 1967; *RISE IN CRIME DUE TO DROUTH, WILSON SAYS: Calls Rain Insurance Against Felons*, The Chicago Tribune, June 1, 1967; *Police Report Rise in Chicago Murders*, The Chicago Tribune, Jun. 28, 1967.

³⁹Betty Reed, *GANGS AND FAIR HOUSING*, The Chicago Tribune, May. 29, 1969; Donald Mosby, *Metcalfe Backs War on Gangs: Metcalfe Urges Support for Fight Against Gangs*, Chicago Daily Defender; Jan. 5, 1969. Pierre Guilmant, *See Hanrahan A Political Liability: News Analysis*, Chicago Daily Defender, Dec. 8, 1969; *MAYOR CALLS PARLEY TODAY ON VIOLENCE: Proposals Due from Top Officials*, Chicago Tribune, May, 26, 1969.

⁴⁰*Supra* note 43 at 200-4

⁴¹*Id.* at 163-5

⁴²*Id.* at 175-9, 201-4

⁴³Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*, 1st ed. New York: A.A. Knopf, 244 -253 (1991). It is important to note the considerable policy and scholarly debate over defining a "gang." Gangs in Chicago date back as early as the 1920s (Thrasher 1936). While some define gangs by their criminal behavior, the term has been applied in broad and often discriminatory ways. For example, many youth gangs on the West and South side emerged in late 50s as social movements, and were deemed gangs more for

Unlike the 1920-1925 homicide wave, the CPD had more standardized and comprehensive data on homicides that it used to justify funding requests. Although the department had been plagued by past scandals surrounding underreporting and generally inaccurate reporting of all crimes, homicide included, as recently as 1958, it still attempted to maintain comprehensive crime records.⁴⁴ After being appointed by Daley in 1960, Police Superintendent O.W. Wilson led a particularly concerted effort to incorporate data in informing department policy decisions.⁴⁵ Prior to becoming police superintendent, Wilson had been Dean of the Berkeley School of Criminology as well as a president of the American Society of Criminology.⁴⁶

Beginning in 1963, the CPD began tracking crime annually over thirteen four-week periods instead of monthly, and started consistently releasing and publicizing statistics on major crimes for each period, along with giving comments to the press. The department defined major crimes to be homicide, rape, serious assault, robbery, burglary, theft over \$50, and car theft and frequently referred to them all together as the crime index.⁴⁷ These periodic department reports were always well covered in the press, with the statistic tables themselves comparing this year's period and last year's generally being published as well. It is crucial to note the comparisons between years were generally for the total number of crimes, not the crime rate.⁴⁸

Interestingly, these data tools were not enough for CPD to publicly identify and respond when homicide began trending upward in 1965. Throughout 1966, the almost consistent increase in homicides during each four-week period compared to the previous year was given little direct attention from CPD officials or the press. Instead, city officials focused on the fact that major crimes were

their political stances than criminal behavior. More recently, journalists and researchers have found the Chicago Police Department's "gang database" to include many non-gang members. See: John Hagedorn et al. "The Fracturing of Gangs and Violence in Chicago: A Research Based Reorientation of Violence Prevention and Intervention Policy." UIC Great Cities Institute, 2019. For more see: Balto, *Occupied Territory* 176-8; Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908-1969*, Berkeley: University of California Press, American Crossroads. 27 (2009).

⁴⁴ACLU Special Collection, *Fake Records Hamper Police Expansion, Crime Expert Says*, Box 523 Folder 3; ACLU Special Collections "How Homicide Figure is Distorted" Box 523 Folder 3; ACLU Special Collections "Findings Surprise Daley, O'Connor, Box 523 Folder 3.

⁴⁵*Supra* note 43 at 162-4.

⁴⁶William J. Bopp. *O.W. Wilson and the Search for a Police Profession*. Associated Faculty Press. 1977.

⁴⁷POLICE TELL OF INCREASE IN MAJOR CRIMES: 53 Per Cent Rise in Rapes Recorded, Chicago Tribune, May, 16, 1964.

⁴⁸A complete list of reporting on crime reports would be too long. For some examples see: *CRIME DOWN 13.1 PER CENT, WILSON SAYS: Preventive Patrols Are Given Credit*, Chicago Tribune, Nov. 18, 1964; *City Crime Statistics*, Chicago Tribune, May, 7, 1965; *Chicago's Crime Rate Down 12% Wilson Reports*, Chicago Daily Defender, Jan. 13, 1966; *Crime in City Rises 30 Pct. in Last Month*, Chicago Tribune, Dec. 13, 1967; *Major Crime Totals Rose in May: Conlisk*, Chicago Tribune, Jun. 14, 1969. NAL Tribune. Generally, these reports can be found every four weeks, along with annual reports at the start of the new year.

trending downward overall.⁴⁹ When interviewed by the Chicago Tribune in February 1965, Wilson was asked if he had any plans to address an uptick in “street crimes” like the recent murder of a 66 year-old man by three teenagers. He said there would be no new response, just further reliance on his strategy of “preventative patrol.”⁵⁰ It bears mentioning Wilson’s strategy of “aggressive preventative patrol,” predicated on the idea of increased police presence in “high crime” crime areas, only resulted in increased policing of non-white areas and more arrests for non-serious offences in those areas.⁵¹

Still, as homicides continued to increase in 1965, the blame was often placed on extreme weather and portrayed as outside of the police’s power to prevent. Later in the spring of 1965, Wilson told the press “this is the sixth successive police period in which crime has been lower than the corresponding period in 1964,” despite the fact homicides were up in that year to date.⁵² In late July and early August, when homicides for one four-week period increased from 23 people in 1964 to 50 people in 1965, Wilson blamed it on “hot weather, and a lot of people getting mad at each other.”⁵³ At the end of the year, Wilson praised the CPD for driving the overall crime down, while dismissing the homicide increase because he claimed, along with rape, it was the hardest crime to control with patrolling.⁵⁴

In 1966, Wilson and other CPD brass continued to treat the homicide increase as largely outside of their control, instead lumping it in with other major crimes and offering little explanation besides the weather.⁵⁵ This was coupled by similar silence from City Hall, as Daley had little specific to say about homicides. During the summer of 1966 when homicides spiked again, including an increase from 50 in the summer of 1965 to 72 in summer of 1966, the CPD again blamed it on the summer heat. Homicide Division Commander Francis Flanagan proffered the notion that “people become irritable, more easily aggravated in hot weather” as a reason.⁵⁶ The one exception was gang-related

⁴⁹ *SERIOUS CRIME DROPS 20 PCT., POLICE REPORT: Only Homicides Go Up in 28 Days*, Chicago Tribune, Dec. 16, 1964; *Wilson Reports Another Drop in City’s Crime*, Chicago Tribune, Sept. 28, 1964.

⁵⁰ Clay Gworan, *Wilson Tells Views on Crime: Won’t Add Cops on Beats; Hits Vigilantes*, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 6, 1965.

⁵¹ *Supra* note 43 at 157.

⁵² *MAJOR CRIMES DECLINE HERE; REVERSE TREND: Only Rapes Increase in 28-Day Period*, Chicago Tribune, Jun. 3, 1965.

⁵³ *Homicides Up, O. W. Blames It On Heat*, Chicago Daily Defender, Aug. 28, 1965.

⁵⁴ *Chicago’s Crime Rate Down 12% Wilson Reports*, Chicago Daily Defender, Jan. 13, 1966; “WILSON TELLS OF DECLINE IN CITY’S CRIMES”, Chicago Tribune, Jan 12, 1966.

⁵⁵ *Mild March Sparks Crime Upsurge Here: Rapes Increase; Robbery and Thefts Gain* Chicago Tribune, Apr. 6, 1966; “Homicides, Rapes Increase in City”, Chicago Tribune, May 4, 1966; *Reports Rise in Major Chicago Crimes: Robbery, Assault Increases Are Noted*, Chicago Tribune, Jun, 19, 1966.

⁵⁶ *JULY A MONTH OF MURDERS —72 IN CHICAGO: Exceeds Old Record by 22 Deaths*, Chicago Tribune, Aug.

violence on the South and West sides. After an uptick in gang-related homicides that summer, the CPD helped to engineer a truce between two gangs and increased the patrols and surveillance.⁵⁷ In these early years of the wave, CPD and Daley centered their narrative about the homicide increase on meteorology.

Things changed abruptly at the end of summer 1966 when Daley and Wilson began laying blame for the homicide increase on civil rights protests. Although the struggle for racial justice in Chicago did not just begin then, that summer Chicago was in the national headlines for civil rights protests led by Martin Luther King Jr. King, and others organizing the demonstrations threatened more marches and acts of civil disobedience if the Daley administration did not move faster on issues of racial justice in the City. Earlier in the summer, the marches had trapped Daley in a very awkward position. Large swaths of Daley's white supporters vehemently, and violently, opposed the movement and its demands, but Daley could not afford to publicly denounce the movement because of its importance to the national Democratic Party. Wilson also frequently complained that the movement's marches into white neighborhoods would "trigger a race riot," since white residents would regularly riot and attack the marchers, often aided by police indifference.⁵⁸

So when the crime statistics for mid-August showed a 25 percent increase in crime totals from the previous year's period, Wilson and Daley shifted their narrative about homicide beyond meteorology. Wilson blamed the marches for an increase in all crimes, claiming they were diverting police officers from their normal duties, thus letting crime skyrocket.⁵⁹ Three days later the city government quickly obtained an injunction in court to block future demonstrations on the grounds of Wilson's assertion about crime.⁶⁰ That same day, Daley gave a televised address warning that further protests would result in the "collapse of law and order."⁶¹ As the marches died down by November, Wilson was crediting the decrease in major crime to the absence of the marches, even

2, 1966.

⁵⁷ "cops Will Get Longer Hours to Curb Teen" Chicago Tribune, Aug, 6, 1966.

⁵⁸ Donald Mosby and Arnold Rosenzweig, *O. W. Warns Demonstrators in White Areas: Ogilvie Seeks Anti-March Injunction*, Chicago Daily Defender, Aug. 10, 1966.

⁵⁹ *Rights Pickets Have a Frustrating Day: Crime Rises 25 Pct. Marches Divert Cops; Crime Rate Up 25 Pct.*, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 17, 1966; *O. W. Tells Why Crime Is Up 25%*, Chicago Daily Defender, Aug, 24, 1966; *MARCHES HURT CRIME FIGHT, SAYS WILSON: Cites Rise in Serious Offenses*, Chicago Tribune, Aug, 24, 1966; *CRIME RATES UP AGAIN*, Chicago Tribune, Sept. 22, 1966.

⁶⁰ *DEMANDS ORDER; TELLS WHY HE ASKED TO ENJOIN MARCHERS: Judge Restricts Number, Hours of Protests CURB MARCHES BY INJUNCTION, LIMIT IS 500 Restrict Protests to Non-Rush Hours*, Chicago Tribune, Aug, 20, 1966.

⁶¹ *DALEY MAKES PLEA TO CITY: 'Must Protect Rights of Everyone'*, Chicago Tribune, Aug, 20, 1966.

though homicide were still up 69%.⁶² By late November, Wilson appeared confident about the situation, testifying before the City Council that his department was forecasting a reduction in crime next year.⁶³

In January of 1967 when the annual crime statistics report showed homicides increased by more than one hundred from 1965, Wilson again blamed the high numbers on the summer, stating “I can only conclude that these disturbances engender an attitude that is in some way conducive to criminal behavior and that this attitude persists for some time after the disturbances have ended.”⁶⁴ As the year wore on, Wilson and Daley began to more firmly frame the homicide wave as being driven by factors like easy access to firearms and gang violence. Daley and Wilson had framed access to firearms as problems before. In 1965, Daley had pushed, with mixed success, for the Illinois State Legislature to pass a slate of crime bills increasing punishments for a variety of offences, expanding police wiretapping powers, and requiring new licensing and registration requirements to own a firearm.⁶⁵

Back then, however, Wilson justified the push for gun control and expanded police power as necessary for combatting all crimes committed with firearms.⁶⁶ In 1967, Wilson and Daley began framing gun control measures as needed to specifically address the homicide wave. They showed the state legislature data indicating 257 of the 512 murders in 1966 were committed with firearms, a drastic increase from the previous year.⁶⁷ Wilson continually emphasized that murders committed by young people under 21 had doubled from 1965 to 1966 and specifically laid the blame on places like “the 3rd district, Grand Crossing —The Mecca of the Blackstone Rangers,” which showed dramatic increases in homicides committed with firearms.⁶⁸ They also lobbied for stop-and-frisk legislation to expand the police’s power to seize guns from those deemed unfit to possess them. Stop-and-frisk was also not a new policy; Wilson had been advocating for it since nearly the beginning

⁶² *Major Crimes Decline in City: Wilson to Leave for Lecture Tour*, Chicago Tribune, Nov. 16, 1966

⁶³ Edward Schreiber, *Wilson Urges Wire Tapping: Appears Before Council Union Budget*, Chicago Tribune, Nov. 23, 1966.

⁶⁴ *City Crime Up 4.8 Pct. in '66, Says Wilson*, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 11, 1967.

⁶⁵ George Tagge, *Illinois Legislature Pushes Flurry of Anti-Crime Bills: Only Wire Tap, Gun Licensing in Trouble*, Chicago Tribune, Apr. 4, 1965; Robert Howard G. O. P. *BEGINS REMAP FIGHT: HOLDS UP VITAL BILLS IN BID FOR FAIR LAW Mayor's Plan to Curb Crime Is Rejected*, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 18, 1965.

⁶⁶ Clay Gworan, *Wilson Tells Views on Crime: Won't Add Cops on Beats; Hits Vigilantes*, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 6, 1965.

⁶⁷ *Try Again for State Law to Register All Guns: Bill Presented to House by Chicagoan*, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 23, 1967.

⁶⁸ Daley Asks Gun Law Support, Chicago Tribune, Mar. 7, 1967.

of his tenure in 1960.⁶⁹ Indeed, all the policies Wilson and Daley advocated for were not new, but rather old reframed policy agendas.

As Wilson and Daley lobbied Springfield, some community organizations sought non-punitive ways to stop the violence. They organized to try to secure jobs and job training for neighborhood residents, including gang members. There was ample reason to support this effort, as the late sixties marked beginning of a twenty-year period in which Chicago lost over 60% of its manufacturing jobs, the same type of jobs many Black men in the City relied upon.⁷⁰ However, Daley and his administration had no appetite for this.

In general, Daley's administration was incredibly hostile towards any community organizing groups which sought to work outside of City Hall. In 1967 one official from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) complained that Daley did not "permit any type of community organization" and there was a "general hostility" to programs involving community organization or social action." This hostility was only further heightened when programs involved gang-members. For example, in 1967 when the TWO received a \$927,000 grant to run a job training program in coordination with the Blackstone Rangers and the Disciples, two local gangs, Daley was furious. Although he could not block the grant, he constantly worked to ensure that any federal or local investments in community organizing would be administered by his office in City Hall.⁷¹

As homicides continued to increase in the summer of 1967, Wilson abruptly resigned from his position, and Daley appointed James B. Conlisk in his place.⁷² Under Conlisk's leadership, the CPD's punitive approach only grew as the GIU was rapidly scaled up and surveillance of Black neighborhoods skyrocketed. Daley and Conlisk now began attributing the growing homicide rate to gang violence.⁷³ While Daley continued his vows to return law and order to the City, Conlisk oversaw the rapid growth of the GIU from 38 officers in 1967 to 200 in 1968.⁷⁴ The GIU quickly gained a reputation for brutal and violent tactics, with numerous allegations that they tortured or threatened Black youth with being dropped off in hostile gang territory if they refused

⁶⁹*Supra* note 43 at 158-60.

⁷⁰*Id.* 175-8

⁷¹*Supra* note 51 at 244-9.

⁷²*Supra* note 51 at 187, 195-6.

⁷³*Id.* at 194-204.

⁷⁴Donald Mosby, *NAME 9TH BLACK POLICE CAPTAIN: Ed Buckney To Beef Up Gang Unit*, Chicago Daily Defender, Nov. 9, 1968.

to cooperate.⁷⁵

The police presence and surveillance of black communities surged as the police's powers and numbers grew. Wilson and Daley's earlier lobbying were now successful. The state of Illinois passed a stop-and-frisk law, giving officers legal cover to stop and search anyone they deemed "suspicious." This, predictably, only further drove a massive disparity in black arrests versus white arrests. By 1968 the total number of black arrests outnumbered white arrests by 30 percent and the gap only continued to grow. For many young black men, being stopped and harassed by the police was a constant fixture of everyday life.⁷⁶

Despite the proliferation of the GIU and ever expansive and aggressive police presence in black communities, little evidence suggests that this stopped the homicide wave. Daley and Conlisk continued to blame gangs and access to firearms, and in 1969 they formally declared a "war on gangs" in conjunction with local States Attorney Ed Hanrahan.⁷⁷ Hanrahan and Conlisk quickly worked to scale up the GIU's powers even more, leading Atlantic writer James Alan McPherson to describe it as a "para-political force" due to the power and connections wielded by the officers with the local jail, court, and state attorney's office. The GIU used these powers to step up surveillance, harassment, and arrests of anyone they suspected of being involved with gang-activity, including the Black Panthers and other radical Black groups.

Like the city's response to the 1920-1925 homicide wave, the response of the Daley administration relied on racialized framing of the homicide problem to advance previously existing agendas. They consistently called for more policing and never acknowledged the economic transformations contributing to the impoverished conditions where the violence was most concentrated. These priorities were also made painfully clear by the City's budget. Even as City Hall failed to make the necessary investments in education and other vital social services, they were always ready to invest more in the police, and by the mid 1970s the police represented about a quarter of Chicago's annual budget.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Elizabeth Dale, *Robert Nixon and Police Torture in Chicago, 1871-1971*, DeKalb, IL: NIU Press, (2016), 117-20. Laurence Ralph. *The Torture Letters: Reckoning with Police Violence*. The University of Chicago Press. 2020.

⁷⁶*Supra* note 43 at 194-204.

⁷⁷*MAYOR CALLS PARLEY TODAY ON VIOLENCE: Proposals Due from Top Officials*, Chicago Tribune, May, 26, 1969; *STREET GANGS ARE BECOMING A POWER BLOC: Unlimited Funds Available*, Chicago Tribune, Jun. 16, 1969; *Supra* note 43 at 203.

⁷⁸*Id.* at 246

Figure 4: Choropleth maps of Chicago in each year of the 1987-1992 wave illustrating the percentile range of homicide rates in each community area.

2.3 Guns, Gangs, the Feds, and More Police: 1987-1992

The 1988-1992 homicide wave struck the community areas of Grand Boulevard, Near South Side, and Washington Park, all on Chicago's South Side, and all predominantly Black. Grand Boulevard was 99% Black, with 64% of the population living below the poverty level.⁷⁹ The Near South Side was 94% Black with 61% below poverty and a quarter of its labor force unemployed.⁸⁰ Washington Park was 99% Black with 57% below poverty.⁸¹ These areas were known for deteriorating housing with no new private construction, vacant lots, and abandoned buildings.

Although homicides started increasing in 1987, the city did not begin treating it as a crisis until 1990. In 1988 and 1989, City officials were actually praising the homicide totals for being low relative to the last twenty years.⁸² Homicides were still acknowledged as an issue, but they were

⁷⁹ *Supra* note 12 at 130

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 119

⁸¹ *Id.* at 135

⁸² "Murder rate lowest in 20 years", Chicago Tribune, Aug. 14, 1989.; Robert Blau and William Recktenwald

usually framed as being a specific problem related to gangs and public housing, or as a problem for only a few, select neighborhoods.⁸³ Before the homicide wave, the City had experimented with non-punitive violence prevention strategies to stem gang-related homicides. Under Mayor Harold Washington, Chicago's first Black Mayor, the City had launched the Chicago Intervention Network (CIN) to reduce gang violence. After the widely publicized death of high school basketball star Ben Wilson in 1984, the CIN was created to "keep track of street gang trouble, mediate disputes, and steer youngsters from gangs."⁸⁴ Initially seeded with \$750,000 in funding from the City in 1985, the program included a mental health emergency hotline and nine field officers who worked with former gang members to prevent homicides. While the CIN did not strictly rely on punitive measures to combat homicides, it did not avoid them either. The program's work was still deeply embedded within the criminal justice system apparatus. Representatives from the CPD, probation agencies, Cook County State's Attorney's office, and the Department of Children and Family Services sat on a law enforcement committee which worked with the program.⁸⁵

Initially, City Hall praised the program as a success, touting a decrease in gang-related homicides and the youth murder rate declining 38% from 1984 to 1985 as evidence.⁸⁶ Washington touted it as fighting crime and in 1986 the City's budget allocated \$4.8 million to Human Services, which administered the CIN, an almost two million dollar increase from 1985.⁸⁷ The program soon came

⁸³"Chicago bucking the trend in big-city slayings" Chicago Tribune, Jan. 8, 1989.

⁸³For some examples see: William Recktenwald and Nathaniel Sheppard, "New upsurge in street gangs: Crime, violent activity increase in city and suburbs," Chicago Tribune, Aug. 8, 1984.; William Recktenwald and Nathaniel Sheppard, "Spread of gangs defies police efforts," Chicago Tribune, Jan. 11, 1984.; William Recktenwald and Nathaniel Sheppard "Two cops, looking for trouble: Gang Crimes Unit keeps close watch on neighborhoods", Chicago Tribune, Jan. 11, 1984; George E Curry and Jerry Thornto "Trapped in CHA projects: tenants fearful, frustrated", Chicago Tribune, Jan. 15, 1984 ; Marianne Taylor, "City/suburbs: Street patrols proposed to fight gang violence", Chicago Tribune, Mar. 5, 1984.; Patrick Reardon, "Suburb crime dips for 3d year in row: From Page 1 Crime", Chicago Tribune, Jun. 3, 1984.; William Recktenwald and Manuel Galvan, "Near Northwest Side slayings soar: Killings", Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1984; Laura Kavesh , *Tempo: Gang tactics U. of C. ambassadors cruise streets for peace Tempo Streewise recruits cruise for peace in gang territory*, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 9, 1984; "El Rukn Leader Sought in Murder of 3 Gang Violence Flares over Control of Dope", Chicago Metro News, May 4, 1985.; Laurie Abraham, "Study links gangs, killings of Hispanics", Chicago Sun Times, July 28, 1986.; William Mullen, "THE ROAD TO HELL: For Cabrini-Green, it was paved with good intentions, Chicago Tribune, Mar. 31, 1985.; Lynn Emmerman, "Playing with murder" "CITY'S MEAN STREETS GROW MEANER FOR DEALERS HONOR AMONG TRAFFICKERS DIES AS STAKES SKYROCKET, COPS FIND:", Chicago Tribune, May 17, 1985.; Clarence Page, "Why we're losing war on gangs", Chicago Tribune, Aug. 17, 1986; Patrick Reardon "CHA violent crime up 9% for year", Chicago Tribune, Jun. 22, 1988.

⁸⁴William Recktenwald and Hanke Gratteau, *MAYOR AIMS MORE CASH AT FIGHT AGAINST GANGS*" Chicago Tribune, Mar. 8, 1985.

⁸⁵*APPROVE ANTI-GANG PROGRAM*, Chicago Tribune, Apr. 16, 1985; Tim Padgett, "Anti-gang law - how much is it helping?", Chicago Sun Times, Mar. 16, 1987.

⁸⁶*WINNING THE WAR ON GANGS*, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 6, 1985.

⁸⁷Clarence Page, "Why we're losing war on gangs", Chicago Tribune, Aug. 17, 1986.; Harry Golden Jr. "Anti-gang push works, says mayor", Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 21, 1986; "Mayor says gang crimes down", Chicago Metro News, Jan. 25, 1986; Chicago City Budget, Summary D, at 4 (1986); Chicago City Budget, Summary D, at 4 (1985)

under flak in 1986 and 1987, especially during the 1987 City elections, for being insufficient to stop an increase in gang-related homicides.⁸⁸ Still, Washington vowed to press on and invest more in the program in 1987 to hire more workers, declaring that “after one year... we are on the right track.”⁸⁹ However, in terms of pure financial investment, the budget for the CIN and Human Services consistently paled in comparison to the CPD, whose annual appropriations were always in the hundreds of millions.⁹⁰

When the homicide wave began in 1987, the CPD was lauding its homicide reduction strategies of seizing guns and conducting more arrests. At the end of 1987, top CPD officials credited the seizure of guns for limiting homicides that year.⁹¹ In the summer of 1988, the Chief of Detectives credited the police “attack[ing] gangs... and narcotics” for bringing “some semblance of order to the homicide rate.”⁹² CPD Superintendent LeRoy Martin especially touted the homicide totals for 1988 as being lower than the previous twenty year low of 1968 (ignoring the fact that Chicago had 500,000 more residents in 1968). Martin credited the relatively low total that year to increased gun seizures by the CPD, especially an “accelerated program of gun seizures” after a federal court ordered the release of thousands of prisoners from Cook County Jail that summer because of squalid conditions.⁹³ In January of 1989 Martin said his main concern going forward was thefts, making no mention of homicides.⁹⁴

That year also brought a change in the Mayoral administration. After Harold Washington’s sudden passing in November of 1987, Eugene Sawyer had led as interim mayor. Sawyer led the City until April 1989 when Richard M. Daley (son of former mayor Richard J. Daley) began the first year of his 22-year stint in the Mayor’s office. Daley had formerly served as the Cook County State’s Attorney where he supported the same punitive policies to fight homicides which he would support as Mayor.⁹⁵ For example, even before serving as mayor, he had railed against the federal

⁸⁸Ray Hanania, “*Mayoralty dominates ward races*”, Chicago Sun Times, Feb. 12, 1987.

⁸⁹Jerry Thornton and Anne Keegan, *GANG PLAN DEFENDED BY MAYOR*, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 1, 1986.

⁹⁰Chicago City Budget, Summary D at 4 (1987).; Chicago City Budget, Summary D at 4 (1987); Chicago City Budget, Summary D, at 4(1988); Chicago City Budget, Summary D, at 4 (1989);

⁹¹William Recktenwald, “*CITY HOMICIDES DROP IN '87 GUN DEATHS ARE LOWEST IN 19 YEARS*”, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 12, 1988.

⁹²Robert Blau, “*Homicides with guns drop to a 20-year low*”, Chicago Tribune, July, 14, 1988.

⁹³Jan. 8, 1969 “*Chicago bucking the trend in big-city slayings*,” Robert Blau, and William Recktenwald Chicago Tribune; Ron Grossman “*Cook County Jail’s sordid history*,” Chicago Tribune, Sept. 21, 1983; Tom Brunejim and Casey, “*Safety first: Chicagoans’ No. 1 problem - Series: - THE CHICAGO AGENDA - BLUEPRINT FOR THE '90S*”, Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 29, 1989.

⁹⁴Jim Casey, “*Crime surge prompts cop district shakeups*” Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 17, 1989.

⁹⁵“*Daley backs bill to compensate crime victims*”, Chicago Metro News, May, 7, 1983; Richard M. Daley, “*Cook*

government for failing to stop the flow of drugs like crack cocaine into the country, and frequently called for life in prison without parole for individuals caught smuggling more than 5 pounds of drugs or laundering over \$100,000.⁹⁶ As Mayor, Daley declined to make any new investments in even the moderate non-punitive strategies of Washington's administration. Instead, he returned to the playbook from the 60s, calling for more funding for the police and working in lockstep with the new State's Attorney, US Attorney, and the CPD to push punitive policies in response to the increasing homicide rate.

Later in 1989, the CPD acknowledged a dramatic increase in drug-related homicides and an increase in homicides overall, but when pushed on the totals in July, Police Superintendent Martin argued that a lot of them were "not homicides we could have prevented," because they stemmed from domestic disputes or drugs.⁹⁷ In October of that year, Daley promised to expand the focus of the CIN to 30 high schools in the City to promote anti-gang and anti-drug initiatives.⁹⁸ Yet, as the homicide wave continued to grow, Daley failed to make new investments in the CIN, letting his budget stagnate.⁹⁹ At the end of the year, when reflecting on the higher homicide total, the Chief of Detectives blamed it on access to guns and advocated for tougher gun control legislation.¹⁰⁰

In 1990 the homicide total continued to grow until it spiraled into a full on crisis for the City.¹⁰¹ The City initially responded by stepping up patrols and policing in "gang-infested" areas to seize more guns and make more arrests, and by lobbying the state government for more punitive laws.¹⁰² Still, the homicides continued to increase, and in June a member of the Chicago Crime Commission called for the City Council to hold a summit on the violence.¹⁰³ At the "murder summit" hearings

County prosecutors deserve pay raise" Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 31, 1986; *"Daley lectures lawmen on drugs"*, Chicago Sun Times, Mar. 8, 1986.

⁹⁶John Kass, *U.S. lost drug war, Daley says in urging military role*, Chicago Tribune, Apr. 20, 1991; Ray Hanania, *"Daley rallies kids vs. drugs - Grade-schoolers laud get-tough stance"* Chicago Sun Times, Oct. 25, 1989.

⁹⁷Robert Blau *"Drug-related slayings on the rise in city, police records show"*, Chicago Tribune, Apr. 3, 1989; Flynn McRoberts *"Homicides in Chicago jump 31"*, Chicago Tribune, July, 14, 1989.

⁹⁸Ray Hanania *"Daley rallies kids vs. drugs - Grade-schoolers laud get-tough stance"* Chicago Sun Times, Oct. 25, 1989.

⁹⁹For budget compare: Chicago City Budget at 140 (1990). With Chicago City Budget at 134(1989).

¹⁰⁰William Recktenwald and Robert Blau, *"Chicago killings up 12% in '89"*, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 2, 1990. ; Philip J. O'Connor, *"City homicides up 12% in '89"*, Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 3, 1990; William Recktenwald and Robert Blau, *Youth homicides up 22% in city: Gangs and drugs blamed for rise in murder rate*, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 27, 1990. Robert Blau and William Recktenwald *"Child homicides soar in city and suburbs"*, Chicago Tribune, May, 20, 1990; Philip J. O'Connor, *"Murder report: Guns, kids are a deadly mix"*, Chicago Sun Times, May, 23, 1990.

¹⁰¹Philip J. O'Connor and Jim Casey, *"Increase in slayings brings call for summit on crime"* Chicago Sun Times, Jun. 18, 1990.

¹⁰²William Recktenwald, *"3 die despite police push against gangs"*, Chicago Tribune, Jun. 11, 1990. ; *"Police arrest 125 in crackdown in area ripped by gang violence"* Chicago Tribune, Jun. 12, 1990.; Fran Spielman *"Tough crime bill signed - wave of killings here cited"*, Chicago Sun Times, Sept. 11, 1990.

¹⁰³Philip J. O'Connor and Jim Casey, *"Increase in slayings brings call for summit on crime"* Chicago Sun Times,

held by the City Council in September, Daley vowed to hire more police officers to address the crisis. When Alderman Timothy Evans, a black alderman representing the 4th Ward asked Daley about creating more jobs programs for “underprivileged youth,” Daley demurred and instead pitched his plan for a third airport to be built in the City.¹⁰⁴

This comment was quite representative of Daley’s approach to non-punitive violence prevention strategies. Daley spoke about how important he thought local involvement and opportunities for underprivileged youth were, and yet, these ideas never materialized in his budget during the homicide wave. For example, the City’s investment in the CIN remained flat, and it was eventually defunded entirely in 1993.¹⁰⁵ Further, Irving Spergel (a University of Chicago Professor of Social Work) had been designing, implementing, and evaluating several privately-funded community-based violence prevention strategies throughout the 80s and 90s.¹⁰⁶ Despite promising results, the Daley administration never invested in Spergel’s community interventions. When the media pressed Daley on the ever-increasing homicides in the runup to the 1991 mayoral election, he doubled down on his prior strategies. Like his father before him, Daley emphasized a law and order approach and pledged to hire more police officers.¹⁰⁷ After the 1992 election, community policing entered the policy agenda, with Daley and Martin expressing interest in testing it. However, by the end of 1992, the City only had an experimental pilot program and further expansions of community policing occurred long after the homicide wave ended.¹⁰⁸

As the homicide wave worsened, Daley grew increasingly frustrated with the situation and media coverage of his administration’s failed policies. At one point he exclaimed the City was “becoming like Colombia,” and blamed the federal government for “losing the drug war.”¹⁰⁹ Daley also placed cultural blame on the communities suffering from the violence, arguing that the “permissive society

Jun. 18, 1990.

¹⁰⁴Robert Davis, *Crossfire of words rakes crime talks*, Chicago Tribune, Sept. 27, 1990.

¹⁰⁵Fran Spielman, “*City Budget Cuts Safety, Anti-Gang Programs*”, Chicago Sun Times Nov. 18, 1992; 1990 Chicago Budget at page 140; Chicago City Budget at page 145 (1991); Chicago City Budget at 135 ((1992).

¹⁰⁶Laura Kavesh, “*Tempo: Gang tactics U. of C. ambassadors cruise streets for peace Tempo Streewise recruits cruise for peace in gang territory*”, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 9, 1984. Irving Spergel, *Reducing Youth Gang Violence: The Little Village Gang Project in Chicago*. Altamira Press (2007).

¹⁰⁷John Kass “*time to smell roses, Gottlieb chides Daley: Candidate puts campaign in flower*,” Chicago Tribune, Mar. 15, 1991; John Kass and Teresa Wiltz, “*Hispanic leaders ask Daley: Where are the 600 cops?*” Chicago Tribune, Aug. 1, 1991.

¹⁰⁸William Recktenwald, “*Groups aim for changes in policing*”, Chicago Tribune; July, 8, 1991; Charles Nicodemu, “*Martin, mayor back ‘community policing’*”, Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 30, 1992; Don Hayner “*‘Community policing’ scores points - Chicagoans see gains in N.Y., Seattle*”, Chicago Sun Times, Apr. 2, 1992; Philip J. O’Connor, “*33-year veteran says time is right for change*” Chicago Sun Times, Apr. 14, 1992

¹⁰⁹John Kass, *Daley revises city, Bogota comparison: Mayor says he meant U.S., Colombia*, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 31, 1991; John Kass *U.S. lost drug war, Daley says in urging military role*, Chicago Tribune, Apr. 20, 1991.

of 20 years ago” created the perpetrators of the present. At one press conference, Daley remarked, “remember the stories about the social workers complaining, ”you’re picking on the poor kids?” Now what, they are, they’re 40-year-old gang-bangers running narcotics and they’re not afraid of me or anyone else.”¹¹⁰ With these veiled references to the civil rights movement and war on poverty, Daley also blamed the homicide wave on communities not being tough enough on poor kids, who he believed turned into gang leaders driving the homicide wave.

Police superintendent Martin echoed Daley’s responses to the media. After a visit to China in 1991, Martin declared, “We need to take a look at [the Constitution] and maybe from time to time we should curtail some of those rights,” praising China for executing drug dealers by firing squad, in contrast to Chicago where, “We give drug dealers I-bonds here, and what do they do? They go back out and sell more drugs.”¹¹¹ As Officer Buckney said in the 60s, the city still was “not concerned with sociological approaches.”

2.4 Mentoring and, yet again, Expanding Police: 2016

The 2016 homicide wave saw the highest homicide rate increase of any year in Chicago history, with a total of 762 murders in the city, a 60% increase from 2015 and the most homicides in Chicago in 19 years. The Fuller Park and Englewood community areas bore the brunt of this homicide spike. Fuller Park’s homicide rate peaked to 2.050, and Englewood was close behind at 1.914. Fuller Park and Englewood, both adjacent South Side neighborhoods, shared similar characteristics. Englewood was 95% Black with 60% making less than \$25,000, and 34% unemployed.¹¹² In comparison, 89% of Fuller Park’s residents were Black, with 54% making less than \$25,000, and 30% were unemployed.¹¹³

Like previous homicide waves, Chicago in 2016 was enmeshed in deep social and political upheaval. The 2014 killing of Black teenager Laquan McDonald sparked citywide protests and brought renewed scrutiny on law enforcement and city management.¹¹⁴ The killing also propelled CPD

¹¹⁰ “William Recktenwald and John Kass *Daley: City ’becoming like Colombia’*, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 30, 1991.

¹¹¹ Robert Blau, and William Recktenwald, *Let’s fight crime as Chinese do, Martin says*, Chicago Tribune, July, 12, 1991.

¹¹² Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, “Community Data Snapshots,” (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning), [www.cmap.illinois.gov/data/community-snapshots\(2020\)](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/data/community-snapshots(2020)).

¹¹³ *Id.*

¹¹⁴ 115, 114 seems to be missing from doc, Husain, Nausheen, *Laquan McDonald Timeline: The Shooting, the video, the verdict and the sentencing*, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/laquan-mcdonald/ct-graphics-laquan-mcdonald-officers-fired-timeline-htmlstory.html>

Figure 5: Choropleth map of Chicago in 2016 illustrating the percentile range of homicide rates in each community area.

into the national spotlight, resulting in the Department of Justice launching a Civil Rights investigation where they found that CPD engaged in a “pattern of civil rights violations.”¹¹⁵ These events strained police-community relations, which Mayor Rahm Emanuel acknowledged by stating: “Fighting Crime requires a partnership between the police and the community. And we all know this partnership has been tested in Chicago. It is a problem that has festered in the city for decades. The Shooting of Laquan McDonald brought it to a breaking point.”¹¹⁶

At the early onset of 2016, both the mayor and law enforcement attributed the surge in homicides to increased police scrutiny from the Laquan McDonald shooting and Civil Rights investigation.¹¹⁷ The fear of ending up on a viral video allegedly contributed to a decline in proactive policing and a simultaneous emboldening of individuals to commit more violence.¹¹⁸ The Emanuel administration

(2019).

¹¹⁵United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and United States Attorney’s Office Norther District of Illinois, *Investigation of the Chicago Police Department*, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/laquan-mcdonald/ct-graphics-laquan-mcdonald-officers-fired-timeline-htlmstory.html> Chicago Tribune. Online (2017).

¹¹⁶*Id.*

¹¹⁷Spielman, Frank, *Emanuel call soaring homicides “totally unacceptable”*, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2016/3/2/18326680/emanuel-calls-soaring-homicides-totally-unacceptable>, , Chicago Sun*Times. Online (2016).

¹¹⁸*Id.*

leveraged the anger from movements like Black Lives Matter to suggest that protest made police work more difficult. This was highlighted in Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson's comments during a news conference where he was quoted in the New York Times as stating: "Chicago was among many American Cities where violence [had] surged, including attacks on police officers. Anger at the police has left criminals emboldened to commit crimes."¹¹⁹ In a March 2016 speech, Mayor Emanuel ignored the message of protestors seeking justice for Laquan McDonald when he stated "Members of the community want more officers in their lives —Not less. They want to know the name of the officer and the officer should know the name of the community members or the business owners. That is what we're trying to establish."¹²⁰

In summer of 2016, the Emanuel administration deployed four strategies to try and stem the homicide spike. The first was to hire 619 more officers.¹²¹ The second strategy was an expansion of a \$50 million mentoring program started by Mayor Emanuel in 2013 called "Get In Chicago."¹²² Funded by multiple private companies, "Get In Chicago" was a mentoring program based on former Illinois Governor Pat Quinn's "Neighborhood Recovery Initiative." Mayor Emanuel hired the former director of the "Neighborhood Recovery Initiative,"¹²³ Toni Irving, to supervise "Get In Chicago."¹²⁴ Mayor Emanuel's mentoring program was similar to social interventions of the 1960s, but differed because the 2016 jobs program came from private donations to Mayor Emanuel's organization, whereas (in the 1960s) the federal government allocated grants for jobs directly to community based organizations. "Get In Chicago" was also not a public charity with tax exempt status. Rather, it is a "donor-advised fund" housed at the Chicago Community Trust, which means it can operate like its own private foundation.¹²⁵

Mayor Emanuel's appointment of Toni Irving drew media scrutiny because, in 2014, the Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez called for a criminal investigation into the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative over alleged financial wrongdoing.¹²⁶ Investigative reports found that the men-

¹¹⁹Associated Press, *Chicago Ends Year With 762 Killings, the Most in 2 Decades*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/01/us/chicago-2016-killings.html>, New York Times. Online. (2017).

¹²⁰*Supra* note 138.

¹²¹Chicago Police Department, *Annual Report 2017*, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Chicago-Police-Department-Annual-Report-2017.pdf> (2018).

¹²²Lisa Bertagnoli. "Why did the mayor abandon get in Chicago?" Crain's Chicago Business.(2017).

¹²³Tony Arnold. "Manager of trouble Illinois anti-violence program now running similar agency." WBEZ Chicago. (2014).

¹²⁴*Supra* note 149.

¹²⁵*Supra* note 122.

¹²⁶NBC 5 Chicago. "How Quinn's Anti-Violence Program Spiraled Out of Control."

toring programs consisted of paying youth \$8.75 an hour to distribute flyers with violence prevention messages, as well as march with Governor Quinn at the Bud Biliken day parade during his re-election campaign.¹²⁷ When journalists questioned Mayor Emanuel’s hiring of Toni Irving, who directed the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative, the mayor dismissed such questions as needless political “cynicism.”¹²⁸

Like city responses to wave in the 1960s and 1980s, Mayor Emanuel responded to the homicide wave by expanding violence prevention strategies that were already in place prior to the 2016 wave. Mayor Emanuel, however, differed from Daley as he rebranded the mentoring program in 2016 spike as “Mayor Emanuel’s Mentoring Initiative,” which was framed as a universal mentoring program for Chicago youth in the city’s 22 most impoverished and violence-stricken neighborhoods.¹²⁹ The Mayor’s “new” initiative was to span 3 years and include funding from public and private sources such as Exelon, Uber, and People’s gas.¹³⁰ Citing research conducted by the University of Chicago Crime lab, the Mayor’s office stated in a press release: “Mentorship has been proven to be an effective strategy for increasing high school graduation rates and reducing violence. In two randomized controlled trials, the Crime Lab found that it’s Becoming a Man program cut violent-crime arrests among youth in half, and boosts the high school graduation rates of participants by nearly 20 percent.”¹³¹ While Mayor Emanuel deserves credit for being the first mayor to pursue non-punitive responses during a homicide wave, the enormous funding difference between his mentoring initiative (\$36 million over three years) and the CPD budget (\$4 billion over three year) reveal that punitive responses were still the highest priority. The last strategy deployed by law enforcement in 2016 was an “Advancing Community Policing Initiative.”¹³² In conjunction with the mayor, law enforcement created the Community Policing Advisory Board (CPAP) consisting of law enforcement experts, law enforcement, and community leaders.¹³³ The board’s tasks were to gather input from a vari-

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/pat-quinn-illinois-governor-anti-violence-program-controversy/1993681/> Online. (2014).

¹²⁷Scott Zamost, Drew Griffin, and Elizabeth Nunez, “*Questions surround \$55 million program to cut violence in Chicago.*” CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2012/12/01/justice/chicago-crime-program-criticized/index.html> Online. (2012).

¹²⁸*Supra* note 149.

¹²⁹Mayor’s Press Office. “Mayor Emanuel’s Mentoring Initiative.” (2016)

¹³⁰*Id.*

¹³¹Mayor’s Press Office. “Mayor Emanuel’s Final Budget to Expand, Enhance Youth Mentoring.” October 2nd, 2018.

¹³²Chicago Police Department, *Annual Report 2017*, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Chicago-Police-Department-Annual-Report-2017.pdf> (2018).

¹³³*Id.*

ety of stakeholders both locally and nationwide to help put together policy recommendations for law enforcement in a year-end report to law enforcement.¹³⁴ It is unclear how law enforcement implemented these recommendations, but its creation was another example of the city continuing pre-existing violence prevention strategies since community policing was first undertaken by Daley in the early 1990s.

The city's responses to homicide did not stop in 2016. In February of 2017, the CPD created Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs) throughout the city.¹³⁵ SDSCs are technology centers equipped with shotspotter equipment, live street camera feed, predictive policing technology program named Hunchlab, and lab analysts.¹³⁶ The centers are staffed by law enforcement officials and analysts in partnership with University of Chicago's Crime Lab.¹³⁷ The shift to high tech surveillance labs marked an effort to integrate predictive policing technology as a mainstay in Chicago policing following in the footsteps of the New York and Los Angeles police departments.¹³⁸ Initially, the SDSCs were located in the Englewood and Harrison neighborhoods, the two community areas with rates of shootings.¹³⁹ According to the Chicago Tribune, the strategic decision support centers cost \$1.5 million to be maintained annually, but these centers were funded through a combination of public and private sources.¹⁴⁰ Studies conducted by RAND corporation suggest that the centers contribute to reductions in crime, but it remains unclear what brought the 2016 homicide wave to a halt.¹⁴¹

When you place the strategic decision support centers in historical context, it becomes clear that these centers continue a pattern of increased surveillance of Black communities after homicide waves. In Englewood and Harrison, this meant installing cameras that would show officers live feeds of the community and the installation of shot spotter sensors which alert officers to a precise location of a

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ Mahtani, Shibani, *Chicago Tries High-Tech Approach to Curb Violence*, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chicago-tries-high-tech-approach-to-curb-violence-1494581403> The Wall-Street Journal. Online. (2017).

¹³⁶ Gunter, Joel, *Chicago goes high-tech in search of answers to gun crime surge*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40293666>, BBC America. Online. (2017).

¹³⁷ *Id.*

¹³⁸ *Id.*

¹³⁹ *Id.*

¹⁴⁰ Stacy St. Clair. "CPD to launch new support centers to analyze district level shootings." Chicago Tribune. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-met-chicago-police-strategic-support-center-20171001-story.html>. Online (2017).

¹⁴¹ John S. Hollywood, Kenneth N. McKay, Dulani Woods, and Denis Agniel. "Real-Time Centers in Chicago: Evaluation of the Chicago Police Department's Strategic Decision Support Centers." Rand Corporation. 2019.

gunshot. While under the guise of crime prevention, other behavior now can be surveilled such as protest activity and illegal fireworks. In addition to gunshot sensors and cameras, the centers bought two expensive predictive policing programs named hunchlab, a software program that deploys risk-terrain modeling.¹⁴² This modeling triangulates locations of places like liquor stores with previous police calls, transit routes and crime data to predict where crimes might occur.¹⁴³

Like the 1960s and 1980s, CPD in 2016 continued to emphasize the need for more gun control laws and tougher sentences for criminals.¹⁴⁴ Superintendent Eddie Johnson relayed this in an interview with PBS stating that “In Chicago we have a gun problem. We have a really bad gun issue.”¹⁴⁵ He continued, “the violence in this city is more about what the bad guys are doing and not so much about what the police are or are not doing.”¹⁴⁶ 2017 also saw another 1,125 officers hired, almost doubling the amount of officers hired the year before.¹⁴⁷ Per the Chicago Sun-Times, this translated into more than 500 new patrol officers, 90 field training officers, 100 plus sergeants, 200 detectives, and more than 40 sergeants.¹⁴⁸

3 Discussion

It would be wrong to conclude that one or two actors were solely responsible for Chicago’s responses to each homicide wave. Rather, these histories point to what we call a narrative infrastructure, or network of actors from multiple institutions (like the police department, the Mayor’s office, universities, community areas, or private corporations) whose interactions to each homicide wave produced policy responses. In the middle of a homicide wave, city leaders must decide whose ideas become policy responses. The history of Chicago suggests that its narrative infrastructure has consistently prioritized police heavy responses.

¹⁴² *Id.*

¹⁴³ *Id.*

¹⁴⁴ PBS, *Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson on City’s Violent 2016*, <https://www.pbs.org/video/chicagos-top-cop-eddie-johnson-smollett-lightfoot-bomjyf/> (2017).

¹⁴⁵ *Id.*

¹⁴⁶ *Id.*

¹⁴⁷ Spielman, Frank and Main, Frank, *CPD to Hire Nearly 1,000 Cops to Combat Surge in Chicago Violence*, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2016/9/21/18365029/cpd-to-hire-nearly-1-000-cops-to-combat-surge-in-chicago-violence>, Chicago-Sun-Times. Online (2016)

¹⁴⁸ Spielman, Frank and Main, Frank, *CPD to Hire Nearly 1,000 Cops to Combat Surge in Chicago Violence*, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2016/9/21/18365029/cpd-to-hire-nearly-1-000-cops-to-combat-surge-in-chicago-violence>, Chicago-Sun-Times. Online (2016)

At the core of Chicago's narrative infrastructure is an epistemology that describes homicide and its causes as rooted in individual behavior or individual communities. The individualized understanding of homicide is crucial because it limits policy debates to interventions focusing on individual behavior or communities instead of organizations, systems, or processes like governance, resource allocation, state budget cuts, institutional racism, or economic exploitation. The city's individualized understanding of homicide evolved from Black bootleggers in the 1920s, to civil rights agitators in the 1960s, to gangs in the 1980s, and unemployed mentor-less Black youth in 2016.

The focus on individual behavior persists even amidst rhetoric on root causes of violence put forth by Chicago Mayors or police superintendents who name structural problems like poverty, despair, the lack of federal funding, or federal gun control legislation. Take, for example, President Barack Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" program, or his vocal support of the "Becoming a Man" cognitive behavioral therapy intervention.¹⁴⁹ President Obama's or Mayor Emanuel's support of these programs carries on the historical pattern of understanding homicide requiring intervention at the individual-level, while simultaneously rendering systematic change in Chicago's political, economic, or health care institutions as unfeasible.

The history of responses to homicide waves also show universities and private philanthropy taking a stronger role in reproducing individual-level interventions through science and technology. Starting in the 1960s, the Chicago Police Department used crime statistics as a means of bounding debates over homicide to individual behavior rather than systemic forces. Even more troubling, the Chicago Police Department has relied on crime statistics to define metrics of success or failure on terms favorable to their self-interest. Activists, community organizers, or academics seeking to contest the city's narratives or crime statistics have been largely ignored, dismissed, or excluded through the police department's unwillingness to share data. The exceptions are instances when journalists succeeded in acquiring data through Freedom of Information Act requests or whistleblowers to reveal police wrongdoing or misconduct.¹⁵⁰

Another critical implication of these histories is the discovery that Chicago emerged out of each homicide wave with 1) more police officers, 2) more police department funding from the public

¹⁴⁹Courtney Corbisero. "President Obama Meets with Students in the "Becoming a Man" Program." 2013.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/06/14/president-obama-meets-students-becoming-man-program>

¹⁵⁰The Chicago Reporter. "Settling for Misconduct." 2017. <https://projects.chicagoreporter.com/settlements>. Monica Davey and Mitch Smith. "Video of Chicago Police Shooting a Teenager Is Ordered Released." New York Times. 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/20/us/laquan-mcdonald-chicago-police-shooting.html>

or private sector, and 3) more technologies for surveilling the same handful of low-income Black communities. By monopolizing crime statistics and deflecting responsibility for homicide onto external forces like Black social movements, guns, or the federal government, the Chicago Police Department has justified significant growth in its budget after each wave.

The Chicago Police Department achieved these expansions, in part, through a narrative strategy relying on the strategic interpretation of crime statistics to avoid responsibility for homicide increases while taking exclusive credit for when homicide decreases. This strategy not only keeps the police positioned as the primary institutional response to homicide, it also prevents nonprofit or community led violence prevention efforts from the possibility of receiving credit for reducing homicide. The debates over who deserves credit for homicide declines is equally important as the debates over what causes homicide waves. The city's narrative infrastructure has contributed to the Chicago Police Department consistently winning both debates.

These histories can help Chicagoans looking to change the city's response to homicide waves by identifying the terrain in which the city's modern narrative infrastructure operates. The most important but difficult task is for groups to build alternative narrative infrastructure to advance structural definitions of homicide, such that structural interventions can gain greater attention in the public discourse and, in turn, greater investment from government and philanthropy. This involves building alternative networks across institutions like government, media, philanthropy, and universities to unfurl the monopoly that the Mayor's office and Chicago Police Department has had over defining the homicide problem, the causes of homicide increases, and the causes of homicide declines.

The case of Ceasefire Chicago (now known as Cure Violence) serves as a powerful case study of difficult it can be to produce an alternative narrative infrastructure. Cure violence, a violence intervention program that employs interrupters to prevent interpersonal violence, sought to redefine homicide as "a disease." This narrative received considerable public attention, especially through a documentary film directed by Steve James titled "The Interrupters." Conceptualizing homicide, or violence, as a disease helped open people's imaginations to interventions beyond the criminal justice system, but the disease metaphor still located the source of the homicide problem within people's bodies as opposed to systems or organizations. The notion of violence as a "disease" continued the hyper focus on individual behavior that has been central to Chicago policy responses since the

1920s, and did little to change the city's institutions.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it's important to acknowledge that some may read the histories described in this article as evidence of policy success, which raises the valid question of what constitutes success or failure in homicide policy responses. Here is where value-orientations matter because the answer to this question depends heavily on one's identity and position in society. If viewed from the perspective of a Chicagoan who believes government ought to provide safety to citizens, then the findings might show evidence of cyclical failures. If viewed from the perspective of a person who believes government ought to be primarily responsible for protecting private property, then the findings might suggest that city responses have been successful. After all, the implicitly racist tough-on-crime pillars of political campaigns continue to resonate with large swaths of voters in Chicago and beyond. Social science and evidence alone cannot define success or failure.

Nevertheless, we hope this article advances efforts to improve homicide interventions. In addition to focusing on homicide perpetrators and victims, we urge Chicagoans to: who defines success or failure when it comes to homicide in Chicago? Reflecting on this question reveals that tackling Chicago's homicide problem requires not only devising interventions, but also democratizing the process whereby the city defines its social problems. Without democratization, the institutions with the most to lose from social change, will continue to have a monopoly over the public's imagination for improving public safety.