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New York City Violent Gun Crime Strategic Study

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on behalf of the ATF, New York Field Division,
Crime Gun Intelligence Center



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Executive Summary

The New York City Violent Gun Crime Strategic Study is an informational product prepared for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), New York Field Division, Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC). This comprehensive analytical report examines patterns and trends in violent gun crime and crime gun recovery across the five boroughs of New York City during the first three years of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is of importance to the ATF because New York City is still experiencing residual effects of the nationwide surge in gun violence that took place between 2020 and 2022. Despite a decline in the number of shooting incidents after 2022, violent gun crime in NYC remains elevated compared to pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore, there are still many crime guns at-large within the five boroughs of the city.

As the leading federal law enforcement agency that protects the community from violent criminals, criminal organizations, and the illegal use and trafficking of firearms; pinpointing the boroughs where gun violence is the most prevalent and honing in on where in the life cycle of violent gun crime there are gaps or disparities will allow the ATF to effectively leverage its resources and partnerships to target violent criminals and recover crime guns in New York City.

This strategic study of New York City's pandemic gun crime serves three purposes. First, this report evaluates the full life cycle of violent gun crime in NYC, starting with initial shooting incidents and arrests, and ending with disposition and sentencing outcomes. The crimes examined in this report are murder, aggravated assault, robbery, and criminal possession of a weapon. Because it was not possible to link all 5,675 pandemic shooting incidents to specific violent crimes or arrests, this analysis discusses violent crime outcomes in the aggregate.

Second, this report identifies the boroughs and neighborhoods most in need of the Crime Gun Intelligence Center's investigative efforts, resources, and inter-agency collaborations. Though violent crime increased across all five boroughs during the pandemic, there were certain boroughs where the increase in shooting incidents, violent crimes, and violent crime arrests was more pronounced. The Bronx and Brooklyn consistently stood out as the boroughs most in need of gun violence intervention, reduction, and prevention. Furthermore, Precinct 75 in Brooklyn; Precincts 40, 44, 46, and 48 in the Bronx; and Precinct 25 in Manhattan were identified as hotspots of gun violence that need attention from city leaders and law enforcement officials.

Third, this report provides a six-month strategic outlook for New York City. By looking at New York City's seasonal patterns in shooting incidents, as well as past and present trends in shootings within the five boroughs, it is likely that there will be an increase in shooting incidents in the second half of 2023 (July 1 to December 31). However, in the absence of any unexpected social, political, economic, or environmental events, the total number of shootings in 2023 will most likely be lower compared to the three pandemic years, but higher compared to 2019.

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Key Findings

**5,675
shootings**

The NYPD documented 5,675 shooting incidents between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022. Twenty percent (20%; 1,132) of these shootings were flagged as murders.

Consistent with the nationwide trend in gun violence, 2021 was New York City's deadliest year, with 2,011 documented shooting incidents and 428 murder flags.

**1,132
murder
flags**

Brooklyn and the Bronx were the leading boroughs for New York City's shooting incidents, violent crimes, and adult felony arrests.

**13,129
firearms
recovered**

During the pandemic, New York City's law enforcement agencies recovered thousands of crime guns, including low time-to-crime guns and ghost guns.

At the end of 2022, overall violent crime in New York City was on the rise. However, while robbery and assault numbers were climbing, the total number of murders was falling.

There were 15,328 arrests for assault; 3,787 arrests for murder; 2,019 arrests for robbery; and 1,215 arrests for criminal possession of a weapon.

**22,349
violent
crime
arrests**

Most of New York City's adult felony cases were dismissed during the pandemic. However, 32% of the cases that were prosecuted ended in a conviction, with imprisonment being the leading outcome at sentencing.

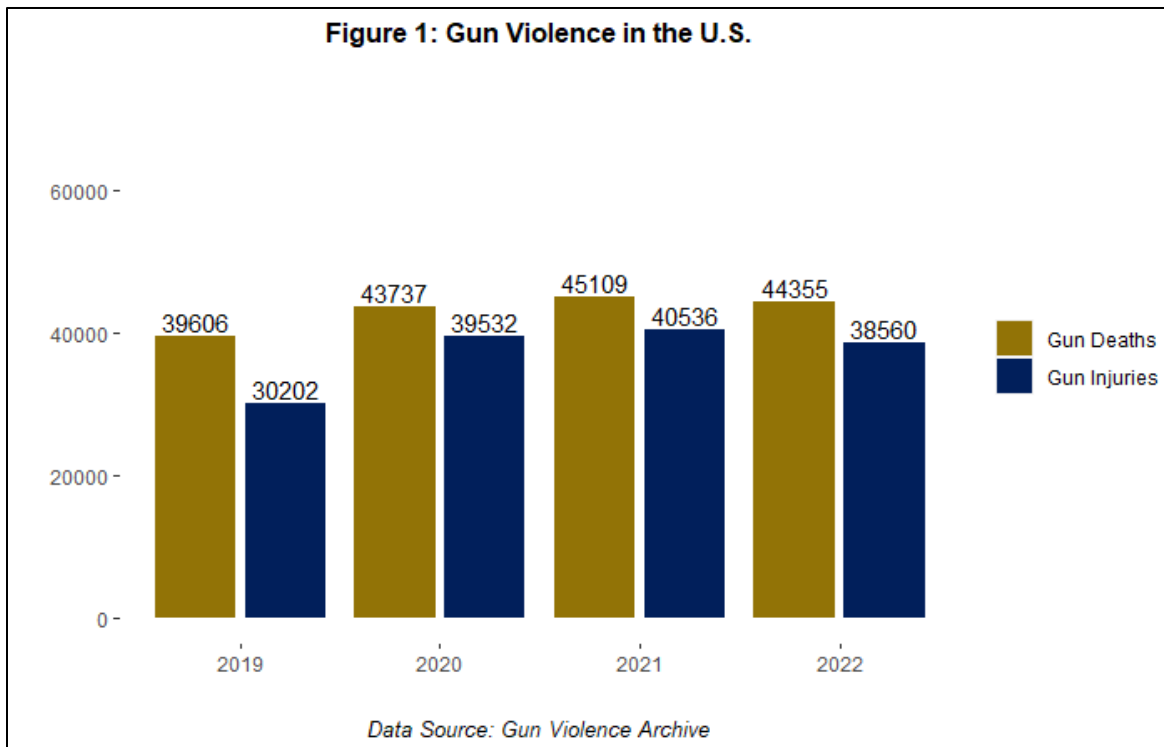
The COVID Pandemic and the Proliferation of Gun Violence

The emergence of the novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”) in early 2020 prompted an international public health emergency that evolved into a three-year global pandemic. (Wolff et al., 2022, p. 2; McPhillips, 2022; Katella, 2023). Between 2020 and 2022, over a million people in the United States died after contracting COVID-19. (McPhillips, 2022; Katella, 2023). In early 2020, New York City emerged as the U.S. epicenter for COVID-19 after accounting for approximately 25% of coronavirus-related deaths. (Liveris et al., 2021, p. 247; Wolff, 2022, p. 2; *NBC New York*, 2020; Chappell, 2021). By May of 2022, more than 40,000 New Yorkers had died from COVID-19-related complications. (Wolff, 2022, p. 2).

To slow the spread of COVID-19, city and state leaders implemented lockdown orders that dramatically changed the norms of everyday life. (pp. 1-2). In March of 2020, New York State imposed a stringent stay-at-home order which mandated social distancing and masking; closure of schools and non-essential businesses; and restrictions on travel. (Wolff, 2022, pp. 1-2; Koppel et al., 2023, p. 382; Liveris, 2021, p. 247). Though the stay-at-home order was not intended to last very long, the order was extended several months to bring down the number of COVID-19 infections. (Wolff, p. 1). Consequently, New Yorkers experienced significant changes to daily routines; had fewer interpersonal interactions; and faced unexpected socioeconomic challenges. (p. 1). Though some restrictions were lifted as early as June 8, 2020, New York City did not fully reopen until July 1, 2021. (Wolff, 2022, p. 2; Chappell, 2021). The federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency did not officially end until May 11, 2023. (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 2023; *Pfizer*, 2023).

Yet, the coronavirus was not the only public health crisis to afflict the United States during this period. (Davis et al., 2022, p. 4; Davis et al., 2023, p. 4). **Amidst the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation’s ongoing epidemic of gun violence intensified.** (Davis, 2022, p. 4).

The data from the Gun Violence Archive presented in Figure 1 below indicates that there was a 31% increase in gun-related injuries and a 10% increase in gun-related deaths from 2019 to 2020. However, **according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there was a 14% increase in the number of U.S. gun deaths between 2019 and 2020.** (Gramlich, 2022; Davis, 2022, p. 4).

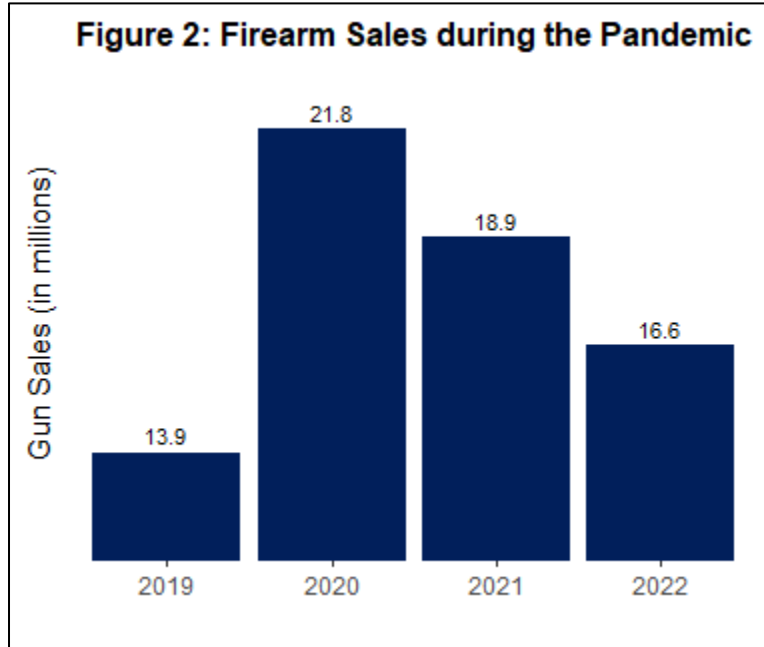


Following a record-high number of gun deaths in 2020, **the number of gun deaths in the U.S. reached the highest number ever recorded in 2021**, before declining in 2022. (Davis, 2022, p. 4; Davis, 2023, p. 4; *Gun Violence Archive*; Sykes, 2022). Furthermore, **the 45% increase in gun homicides from 2019 to 2021 was the largest two-year increase ever recorded**. (Davis, 2023, p. 7). There were nearly 5,000 additional gun homicides in 2020 compared to 2019. (Davis, 2022, p. 4). Gun homicides then rose nearly 8% between 2020 and 2021. (Davis, 2023, p. 5). Whereas 79% (19,384) of all homicides in the U.S. were by firearm in 2020, **81% (20,958) of homicides were by firearm in 2021 – the highest proportion of homicides by firearm in history**. (pp. 9, 11).

Interestingly, the State of New York had one of the lowest gun death rates during the pandemic. (Davis, 2022, p. 23; Davis, 2023, p. 22). The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions noted that New York’s strong gun laws – which include permit-to-purchase requirements and Extreme Risk Protection Orders – likely contributed to the state’s overall low ranking. (Davis, 2023, p. 21).

Nevertheless, **even with strong state gun laws, New York City experienced an increase in gun violence and gun crime during the pandemic** that was likely driven by multiple external factors, such as increased gun purchases, changes in daily routines, gang-related activities, racial justice protests, and seasonal temperatures. (Wolff, 2022, p. 2; Koppel, 2023, p. 378; Davis, 2023, p. 4; Rosenfeld et al., 2022).

INCREASED GUN PURCHASES



Nearly 60 million firearms were purchased during the pandemic. (Savidge & Cartaya; de Visé, 2023). As evidenced by Figure 2, most of these firearms were purchased in 2020. (Barton, 2021; de Visé, 2023; Sykes, 2022; Savidge & Cartaya, 2021; Berman et al., 2022).

Thousands of these guns showed up at crime scenes across the country. (Barton, 2021; Davis, 2022, p. 4). Between 2019 and 2020, the number of guns that were used to commit crimes within one year of gun purchase (i.e., low time-to-crime guns) nearly doubled. (Barton, 2021). **Some newly-purchased guns were used in criminal acts within just one day of the purchase.** (Barton, 2021).

STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS AND ROUTINE CHANGES

Research from the University of California, Davis suggested that “unemployment, economic disparity and physical distancing exacerbated by the pandemic were potent predictors of increased violence.” (Barton, 2021). Since New York City’s COVID-19 stay-at-home order was one of the strictest lockdown orders in the United States, sudden changes to public-facing routine activities may have been a contributing factor to the pandemic violent crime increase. (Koppel, 2023, p. 382).

Compliance with stay-at-home (SAH) restrictions resulted in fewer people in public spaces, and the sudden transition of activities previously done outside of the home into the home. (p. 369).

Similar changes in social routines have been shown to prompt changes in the distribution of crime based on type – i.e., interpersonal crimes vs. property crimes – and location – i.e., in public settings vs. private residences. (p. 369).

However, researchers who looked at violent crime numbers in NYC both before and after the SAH order was imposed found that, while the number of robberies and aggravated assaults in public spaces decreased after the SAH was imposed, there was no change in the distribution of murders or shootings in NYC after the SAH was imposed (pp. 369, 378-79, 390). This finding therefore suggests that the SAH only curbed certain criminal activities.

GANG ACTIVITY

In New York City, there was heavy media focus on gang-related shootings, arrests, and prosecutions during the pandemic years. (Swaner, 2022; Schnitzer & McCarthy, 2023). Murders and shootings are often connected to gang-related activities, which may have remained stable in NYC throughout the pandemic. (Koppel, 2023, p. 391; Brantingham et al., 2021, p. 425). Since gang members have unique motives compared to “average” criminal offenders (i.e., maintaining or building a reputation; retaliating against rival gangs or “snitches”), gang-related routine activities are harder to shut down. (Brantingham, 2021, p. 425). Furthermore, gang members presumably would have been less compliant with lockdown orders. (p. 425).

RACIAL JUSTICE PROTESTS

George Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020 ignited protests across the United States – including in New York City. (Wolff, 2023, p. 2). The racial justice protests coincided with "a precipitous rise in homicide and gun assault." (Rosenfeld, 2022). Rises in violent crimes – particularly aggravated assaults, robberies, shootings, and murders – in the wake of racial justice protests is sometimes referred to as the “Ferguson Effect,” because after Michael Brown was shot dead by police in Ferguson, MO, there was a dramatic increase in homicides. (Rosenfeld, 2022; Wolff, 2022, p. 2; Koppel, 2023, p. 375).

Rosenfeld et al. (2022) suggest that such rises in violence following protests police brutality could be driven by community distrust of police or the pullback of law enforcement. In the aftermath of the George Floyd protests in NYC, for instance, there was a “sharp and sustained pullback in policing for the remainder of 2020, as measured by the frequency of Terry stops and arrests.” (Koppel, 2023 p. 378).

DAILY TEMPERATURES

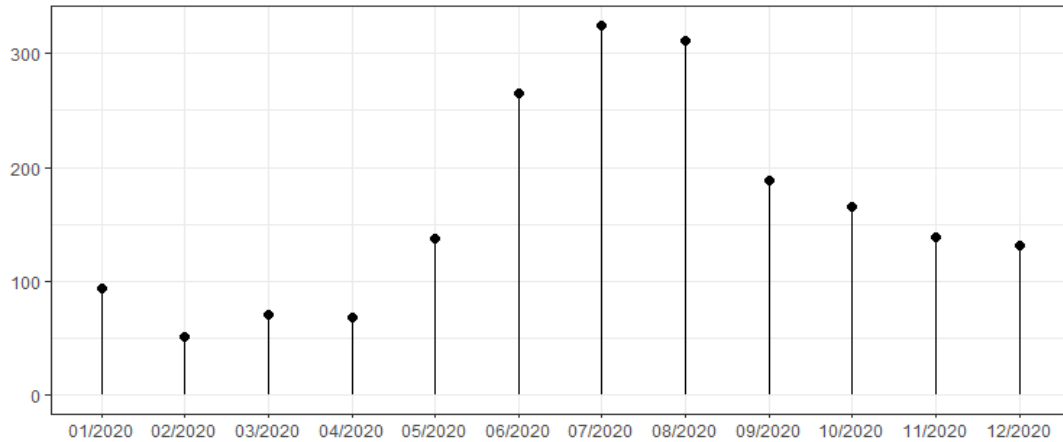
Researchers across an array of disciplines have studied the impact of daily and seasonal temperatures on violent crime. (Wolff, 2022, p. 4; Anderson, 1987; Field, 1992; Tiihonen et al., 2017). However, while some studies suggest that temperature has a substantial effect on conflict and violence, others have found little-to-no support for a "temperature-aggression hypothesis." (Tiihonen, 2017, p.1).

In 1987, Anderson found quarter of the year to be "a highly significant predictor," as violent crime across several U.S. cities was considerably higher in the third quarter of the year – July through September – compared to other quarters of the year. (p. 1163). The second quarter – April through June – and the third quarter – July through September – tend to have hotter days, and are linked to seasonal events like summer vacation, the end of the school year, and increased alcohol consumption. (p. 1162). People also tend to spend more time outside during the warmer months. (Field, p. 340).

In 2017, Tiihonen et al. offered a neurobiological explanation for the relationship between ambient temperatures and violent crime after examining the effect of seasonal variations on the serotonin levels. (p. 1). The researchers explained that seasonal "bad" weather like low temperatures and little sun raises serotonin levels, which in turn lowers impulsivity and the likelihood of taking risks. (p. 5). Bad weather also makes people less likely to leave home. (p. 5). Contrarily, "good" weather – sunshine and warmth – may lower serotonin levels, and thus make people behave more impulsively and engage in aggressive – and potentially criminal – activity. (p. 5).

Figure 3 shows that in 2020, NYC's shootings were fewer in January, February, and March; then increased dramatically from April to June. Shooting incident numbers then remained heightened in July and August, and fell in September. The decrease continued in the final months of the year.

Figure 3: Monthly Shooting Incidents, 2020



Data Source: NYPD, Citywide Crime Statistics, Historic Incident Level Shooting Data

While the height of the racial justice protests could explain the increase in May and June, temperatures in NYC could also explain the number of shootings observed in May, June, July, and August. Furthermore, the relaxing of the statewide stay-at-home order in June and July could explain why most NYC shootings took place in June, July, and August: people were allowed to leave home. The abrupt drop in September could likely be linked to back-to-school time for adolescents, teens, and many young adults.

Thus, there are many factors – social, political, economic, environmental, and physiological – that could have contributed to the gun violence increase in New York City during the pandemic.

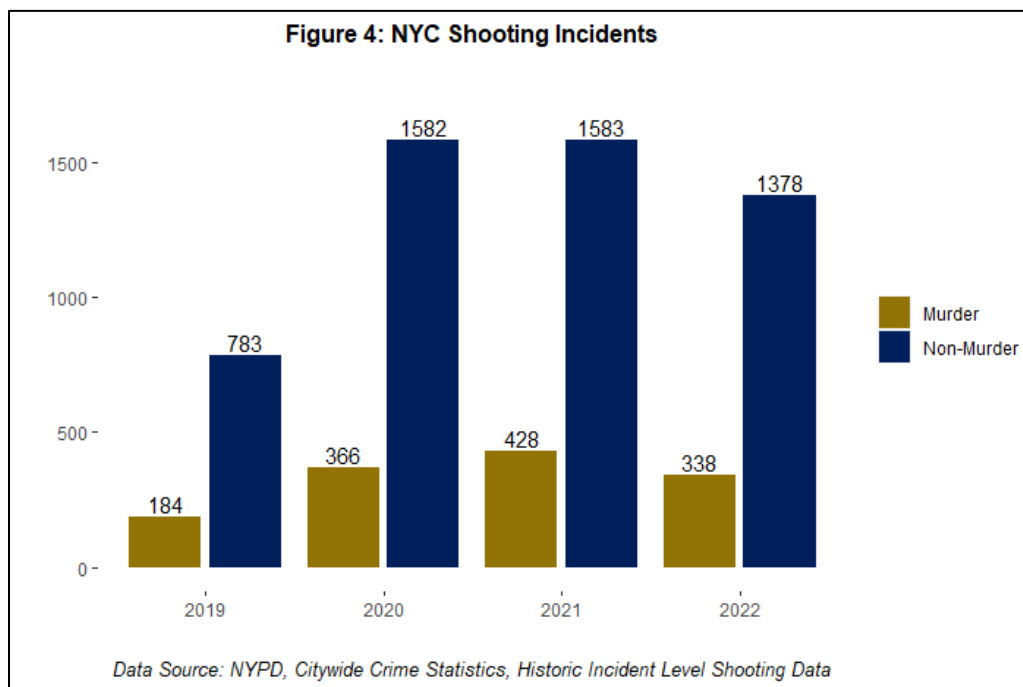
Shootings

Between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022, the NYPD documented 5,675 shooting incidents across the five boroughs. Twenty percent (20%; 1,132) of these shootings were flagged as gun murders.

In 2020 the total number of shootings in New York City doubled from the prior year's 967 to 1,948. Shooting incidents then increased 3% (63 additional shootings) between 2020 and 2021.

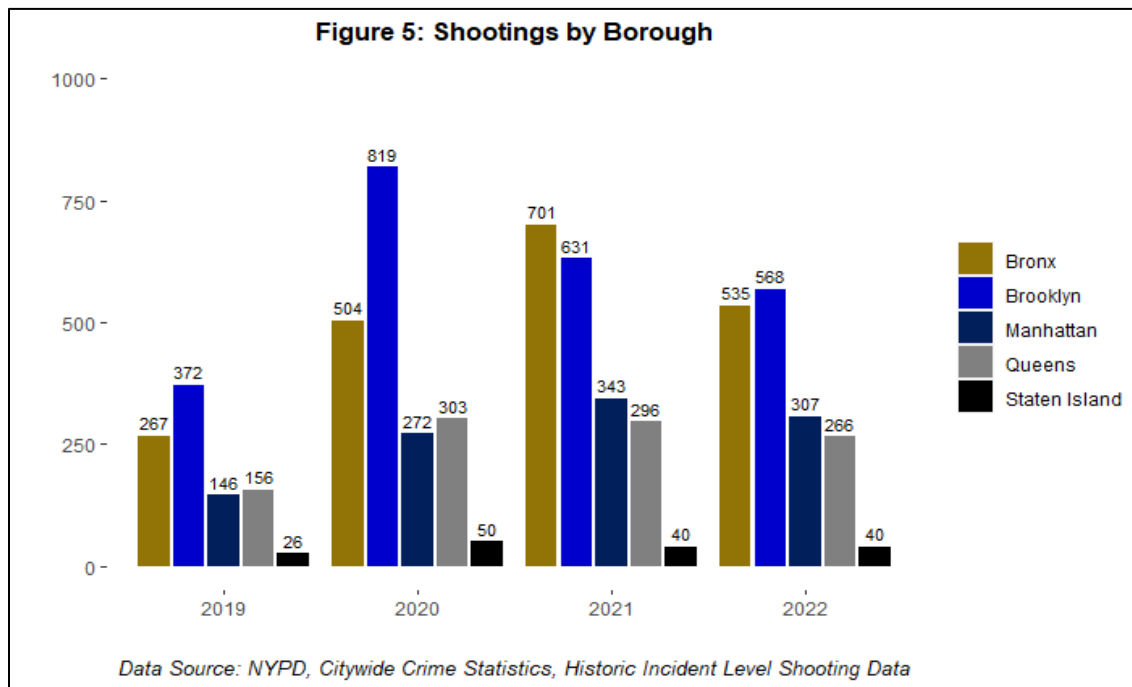
In 2021, NYC shootings accounted for 58% (2,011) of the estimated 3,500 shootings in New York State. (Braganza et al., 2023, p. 10). Consistent with the nationwide trend in gun violence, 2021 was NYC's most violent year.

After 2021, the total number of shootings fell by 15% (295 fewer shootings) in 2022 – from 2,011 to 1,716.



While all five boroughs of NYC were impacted by the uptick in shootings after 2019, Brooklyn saw the most dramatic increase in gun violence in 2020. **Most of NYC’s pandemic shootings took place in Brooklyn (2,018) and the Bronx (1,740).** Together, these two boroughs accounted for 68% of shootings in 2020; 66% of shootings in 2021; and 64% of shootings in 2022.

Staten Island had the fewest pandemic shooting incidents (130), followed by Queens (865) and then Manhattan (922).



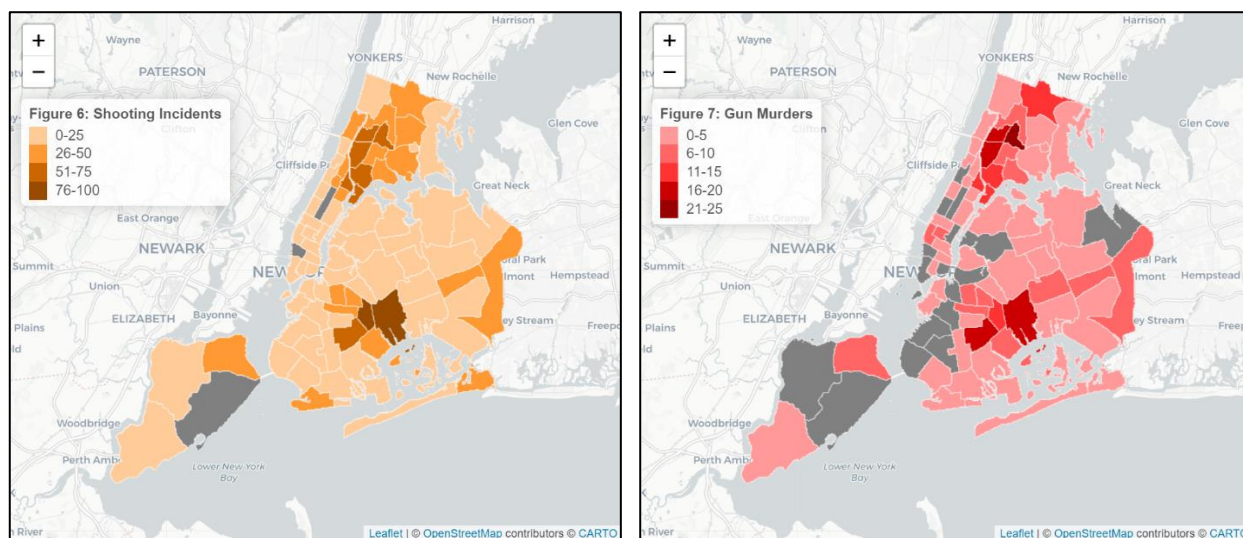
As illustrated in Figure 5 above, gun violence did not follow the same pattern in each borough. After 2020, the number of shooting incidents gradually decreased in Brooklyn and Queens. Meanwhile, shootings in the Bronx and Manhattan spiked in 2021 before dropping in 2022. In Staten Island, the number of shootings remained about the same following the initial increase after 2019. See Appendix 1 for borough-specific shooting and gun murder patterns.

HOTSPOTS

According to New York City’s Office to Prevent Gun Violence (OPGV), gun violence is heavily concentrated in small pockets within neighborhoods around the city. To pinpoint these “pockets” of gun violence, the total number of shootings in 2022 was stratified by borough and police precinct. New York City has 77 NYPD precincts that encompass one or more the city’s 59 neighborhoods. (*NYU Furman Center, 2023*). Identifying the precincts with the most shooting incidents may allow for more-targeted gun violence intervention and law enforcement efforts. While OPGV already has programs and initiatives in many neighborhoods across the city, there could possibly be areas that are being overlooked.

The two maps below color-categorize each NYC precinct based on total number of shootings and total number of gun murders, respectively. Figure 6 looks at all shooting incidents documented by the NYPD, while Figure 7 looks only at the shootings flagged as gun murders. Several of the identified shooting hotspots were also murder hotspots.

Many of these hotspots are in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities of color located in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan. Furthermore, many of the neighborhoods identified as pockets of gun violence are already focal points for OPGV’s efforts to reduce and prevent gun violence. See Appendix 2 for the complete table of precinct-level shootings and gun murders.



In Brooklyn, Precincts 75 (East New York and Starrett City) and 73 (Brownsville) had the most shootings out of all the NYPD precincts in the city. Precinct 75 had 87 shootings and Precinct 73 had 80. Precinct 75 also had the most gun murders (20) in Brooklyn, while Precinct 73 had 13 murders. Precinct 67 (East Flatbush) was another pocket for gun violence, with 56 total shootings and 17 shooting murders in 2022. **These three precincts were responsible for nearly 40% (226) of Brooklyn’s 568 shootings in 2022.**

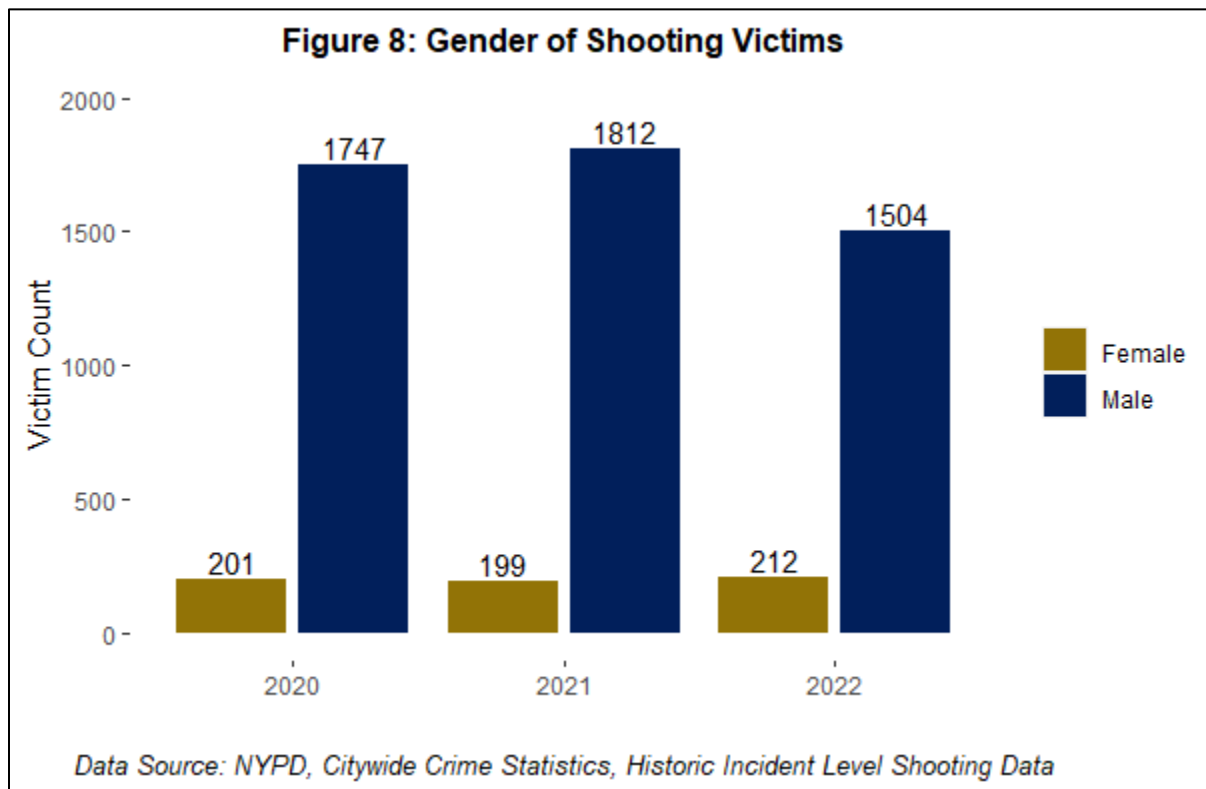
In the Bronx, four precincts accounted for more than half (51%; 273) of its 535 shootings, and 58% of its 125 murders. Precincts 40 (Mott Haven and Melrose), 44 (Highbridge and Concourse), 46 (Fordham and University Heights), and 48 (Belmont and East Tremont) had 71, 71, 59, and 72 shooting incidents, respectively. **In addition to accounting for both the most shootings and the most shooting murders in the Bronx, Precinct 48 had the most shooting murders (21) out of all NYPD precincts in 2022.**

In Manhattan, Precincts 25 (East Harlem) and 32 (Central Harlem) accounted for 34% of its 307 shootings. **Precinct 25 had both the most shootings (61) and the most murders (14) in 2022.** Precinct 32 had 44 shootings but only 4 homicides. Other Manhattan shooting hotspots included Precincts 23 (East Harlem), 28 (Central Harlem), and 34 (Washington Heights and Inwood), where 29, 28, and 27 shootings occurred, respectively.

In Queens, Precinct 103 (Hillcrest and Fresh Meadows) had the most shooting incidents (33), followed by Precinct 105 (Queens Village), which had 28. In Staten Island, 28 of the borough’s 40 shootings took place in Precinct 120 (St. George and Stapleton)

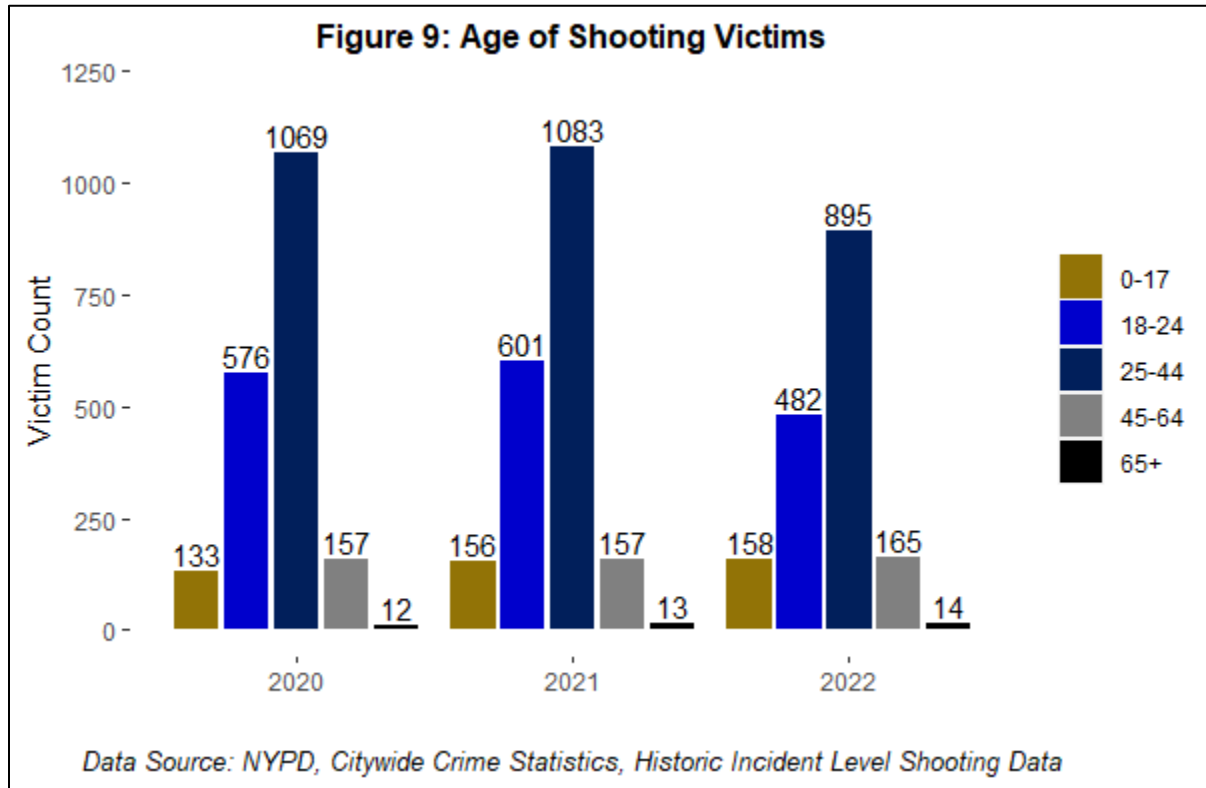
SHOOTING VICTIMS

Eighty-nine percent (89%; 5,063) of New York City’s pandemic shooting victims were male; 54% (3,047) were between the ages of 25 and 44; and 70% (3,950) were Black. Furthermore, eighty-nine percent (89%; 1,011) of NYC’s pandemic gun murder victims were male; 57% (635) were between the ages of 25 and 44; and 69% (786) were Black. The three figures below examine shooting victimization in NYC based on gender, age, and race/ethnicity.

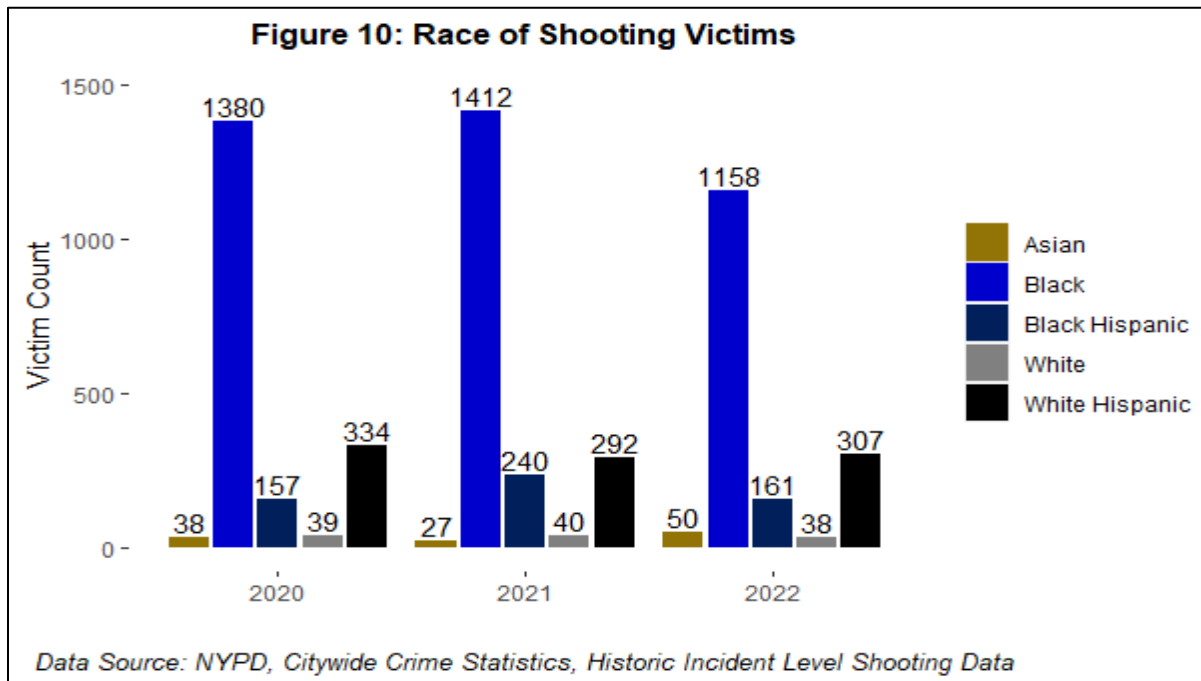


Though fewer women were shooting victims during the pandemic, Johns Hopkins noted that women were more likely to experience domestic violence – threats and coercion – with firearms during the pandemic. (Davis et al., 2023, p. 16).

Figure 9 below makes clear that individuals under 45 years of age most frequently fell victim to gun violence during the pandemic.



Furthermore, as illustrated by Figure 10, White Hispanics and Black Hispanics were also disproportionately victimized compared to Whites and Asians.



The five boroughs experience gun violence and violence crime differently because “the boroughs vary across social, economic, and ecological factors. For example, Manhattan is characterized by the highest population density, whereas the Bronx has more than twice the poverty rate and half the median income of Staten Island or Queens. Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan are also more ethnically diverse than Staten Island and the Bronx.” (Wolff, 2022, p. 3). See Appendix 3 for a table highlighting the demographic differences between the five boroughs.

FIREARM RECOVERY

When shootings and other gun-related violent crimes occur, firearm recovery becomes a priority for law enforcement officials. Even though New York’s gun laws have curbed access to handguns – the gun most often used to commit violent crimes – the ready availability of these guns in states with less stringent gun laws thwarts the state’s efforts to keep New Yorkers safe from violence. (Suplina et al., 2016; Zawitz, 1995). Between 2010 and 2015, seventy-four percent (74%; 34,344) of the 46,514 guns recovered with a known source state originated from outside of New York. (Suplina, 2016). Most of the outside guns supplied to New York City during that time originated from the states along the I-95 corridor (Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida) and from Ohio. (Suplina, 2016; *Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives*, 2020).

During the pandemic years, ghost guns – unregulated firearms that can be bought and built without a background check, and which do not comply with federal and state firearm transaction requirements – were frequently linked to violent gun crimes in New York City. (*Brady United Against Gun Violence*, 2020; Klein & Marino, 2022). In 2021, forty-five (45) weapons and an assortment of other prohibited gun paraphernalia were recovered in the Bronx after Bronx DA Detective Investigators partnered with the New York State Police and other law enforcement agencies to intercept, investigate, and arrest purchasers of ghost guns who were entering from other states. (*Office of the Bronx County District Attorney*, 2021, p. 26).

Ghost guns comprised 12% (131) of all guns recovered by law enforcement between January 2022 and early April 2022. (Klein & Marino, 2022). Queens in 2022 recovered a total of 173 ghost guns, a 101% increase from the previous year's recovery of 86 ghost guns. (*Brave Justice Annual Report*, 2022, p. 9). Investigations resulted in the arrest of 22 alleged ghost gun manufacturers and the recovery of 205 total firearms and 92,000 rounds of ammunition. (p. 9).

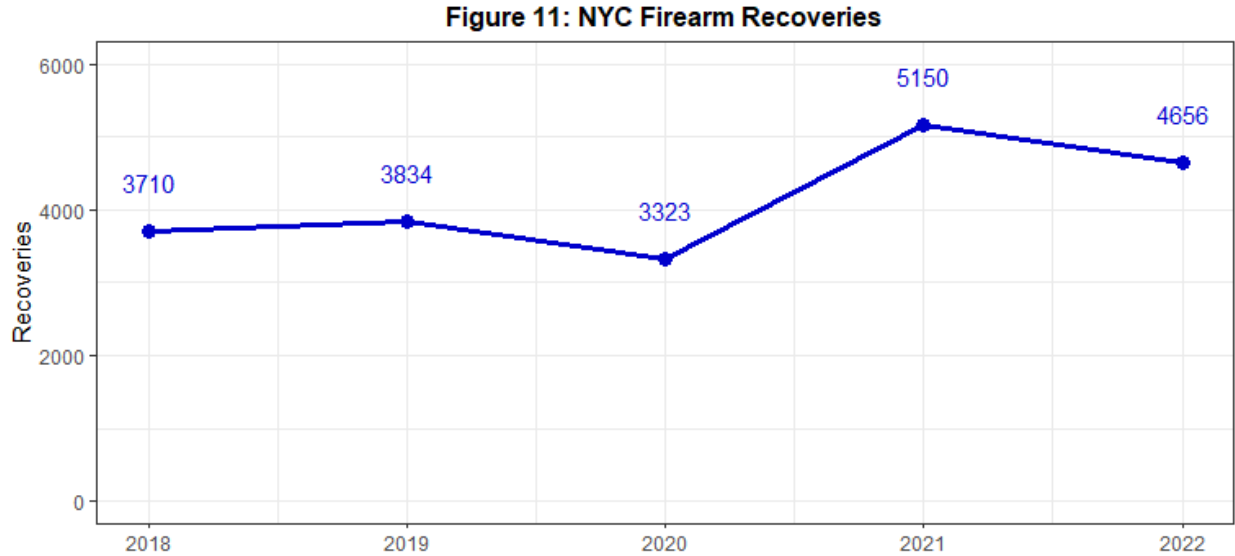
ATF FIREARM RECOVERIES

Every year the ATF collects and reports the data on firearm recoveries and firearm traces. The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) serves at the ATF’s investigative tool to link ballistic evidence to crime guns and violent criminals. (*Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives*, 2020).

According to the ATF’s New York Field Division, there were 4,967 firearms traced and recovered in NYC in 2021. Furthermore, there were 5,290 fired cartridge casings and 5,074 test fire cartridge casings acquired that year. These traces and recoveries led to 2,577 NIBIN leads.

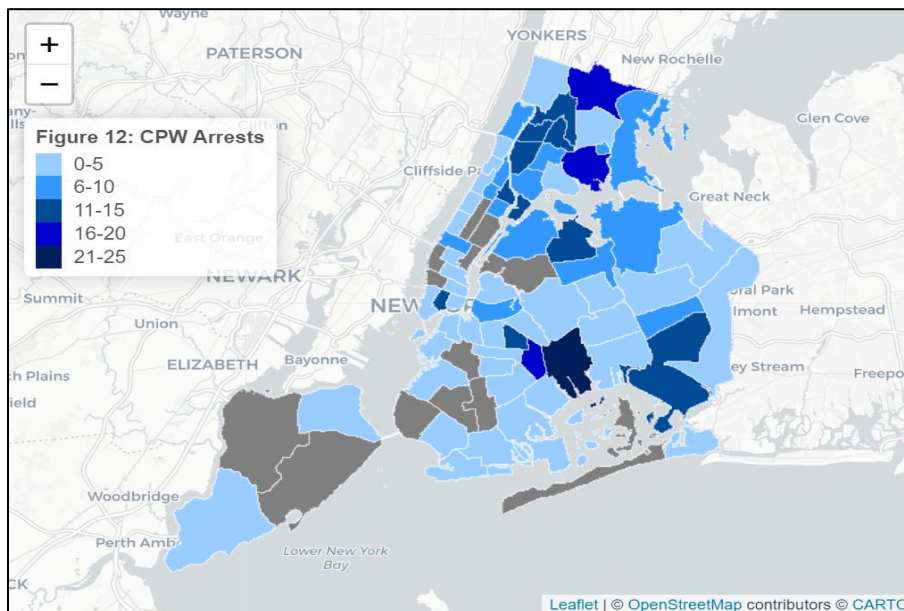
In 2022, there were about 300 fewer firearms traced and recovered (4,656) and about 1,000 fewer fired cartridge casing acquisitions (4,111). However, there were about 20 more test fire cartridge casing acquisitions (5,093). There were also about 200 additional NIBIN leads (2,754) in 2022.

Figure 11 below illustrates the 5-year trend in firearm recoveries in New York City based on the ATF's Firearms Trace Data. Law enforcement collected 13,129 firearms in NYC during the pandemic years. Between 2020 and 2021, there was a notable 55% increase in firearm recoveries.



Data Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Firearms Trace Data

Since the ATF's firearm recovery data is not stratified by borough or precinct, identifying where the city's law enforcement officials are recovering these firearms is challenging. However, by looking at arrests for Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree ("CPW 2"), an inference can be made about where NYC crime gun recoveries are concentrated. Figure 12 below maps all 390 CPW 2 arrests in the five boroughs in 2022. The Bronx had the most arrests (135), followed by Brooklyn (91), Queens (81), Manhattan (78), and Staten Island (5).



Precinct 75 in Brooklyn (East New York and Starrett City) had the most arrests for CPW 2 in New York City (21). Furthermore, Precinct 73 (Brownsville) had 19 arrests while Precinct 81 (Bedford-Stuyvesant) had 14. Together, these three precincts accounted for 59% of arrests for CPW 2 in Brooklyn.

In the Bronx, Precincts 48, 46, 44, and 40 (Belmont and East Tremont; Fordham and University Heights; Highbridge and Concourse; and Mott Haven and Melrose) accounted for 39% of its arrests for CPW 2, with 15, 15, 14, and 8 arrests, respectively. However, Precincts 47 (Williamsbridge and Baychester) and 43 (Parkchester and Soundview) had the most arrests for CPW 2, with 19 and 20 arrests, respectively.

In Manhattan, Precinct 5 (Lower East Side and Chinatown) had the most CPW 2 arrests (13), followed by Precinct 25 (East Harlem) which had 11.

In Queens, Precincts 113 (Jamaica and Hollis) and 115 (Jackson Heights) had the most arrests for CPW 2. Precinct 113 had 14 arrests and Precinct 115 had 13.

Staten Island had only 5 arrests for CPW 2 in 2022. Three were in Precinct 120 (St. George and Stapleton) and the other two were in Precinct 123 (Tottenville and Great Kills).

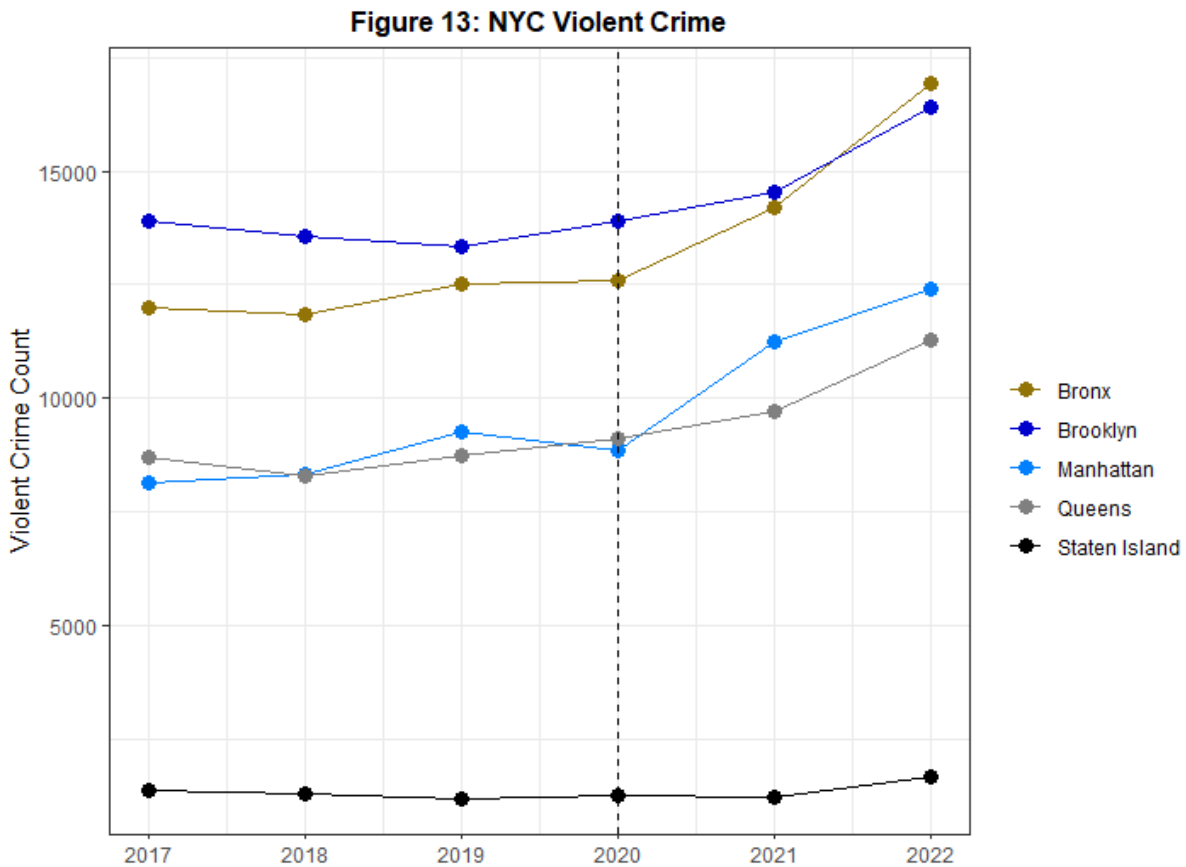
Based on the weapons possession arrest data, it is likely that many – if not most – of the firearms recovered in New York City were recovered in Brooklyn and the Bronx. However, further information is needed to determine if there are other identifiable firearm recovery hotspots.

Assessing Violent Gun Crime

The State of New York classifies murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as violent crimes. (*New York State Crime Report, 2021, p. 1*). Firearms are often involved in the commission of these crimes; most likely for the purposes of threatening, injuring, or killing. In 2020, firearms were involved in 6,442 of New York City’s violent crimes. (*New York State Crime Report, 2021, p. 4*). Five percent (5%; 299) of these firearm-related crimes were murders; 32% (2,070) were robberies; and 63% (4,051) were aggravated assaults. (p. 8). Firearms were involved in less than 1% (22) of rapes. (p. 8).

The following year, firearms were involved in 7,870 NYC violent crimes. (*Violent Crime Involving a Firearm Report, 2022, p. 25*). Though the 2021 report did not disaggregate firearm involvement by each violent crime type, the fact that the number of murders by firearms reached a record-breaking high in 2021 makes it highly likely that there was an increase in the number of robberies and aggravated assaults by firearms as well.

Figure 13 presents the five-year trend in total violent crime the five boroughs. Examining these trends provides some insight into how the number of violent crimes involving firearms may have risen and fallen in New York City during the pandemic.



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

Violent crime increased in each of the five boroughs during the pandemic. However, violent crime had already been on the rise in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens prior to 2020.

From 2019 to 2022, total violent crime in Brooklyn rose 21% (from 14,194 to 17,123). There was a notable 12% rise in Brooklyn's total violent crime between 2021 and 2022.

In the Bronx – where violent crime had been on the rise since 2018 – total violent crime increased 34% between 2020 and 2022 (from 13,129 to 17,592).

Violent crime in Queens had been on the rise since 2018 as well; between 2020 and 2022, violent crime rose 23%, with a 15% increase taking place between 2021 and 2022 (from 10,262 to 11,847).

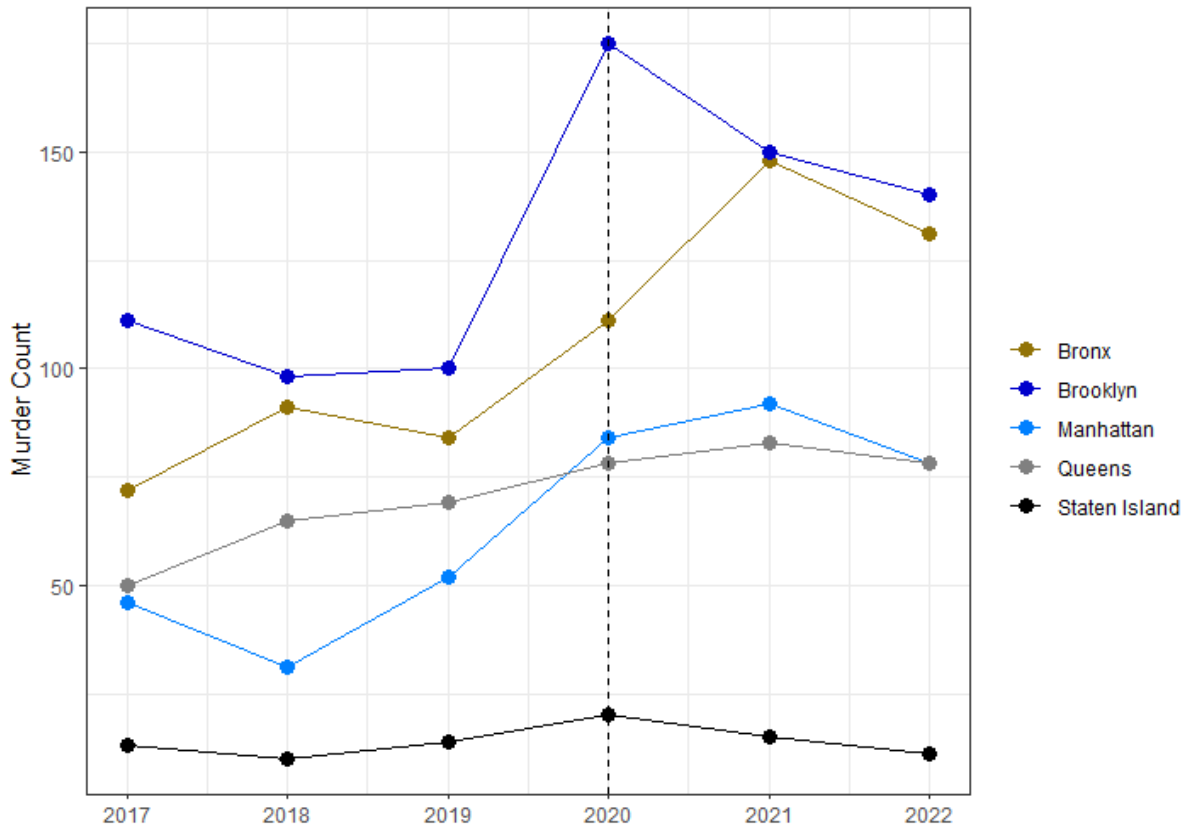
Meanwhile, Manhattan experienced a 5% decline in violent crime from 2019 to 2020. Then, between 2020 and 2022, total violent crime rose 40% (from 9,264 to 12,985).

Staten Island experienced fluctuations in total violent crime throughout the pandemic. Following a 10% decline in violent crime from 2017 to 2019, total violent crime rose 4% in 2020 and fell 3% in 2021. Then, between 2021 and 2022, total violent crime rose 33% (from 1,313 to 1,746).

Figure 10 thus illustrates that **by the end of 2022, overall violent crime was trending upwards across the five boroughs.** To determine which crimes are driving this upward trend, the following three figures examine the five-year trends for murder, assault, and robbery in each borough. Since 1,132 (20%) of the 5,675 shooting incidents documented in New York City during the pandemic were flagged as murders, the remaining 4,543 shootings (80%) were likely connected to some of these other violent crimes.

MURDER

Figure 14: Murder in NYC



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

Murder increased across all five boroughs between 2019 and 2020, with Brooklyn experiencing the most dramatic increase (75%). After 2021, however, murder decreased in every borough – consistent with the overall trend in gun murders in New York City.

Brooklyn experienced a 20% two-year decrease in murders (from 175 to 140) between 2020 and 2022, while Staten Island simultaneously experienced a 45% decrease (from 20 to 11).

In the Bronx, the number of murders increased 32% (from 84 to 111) between 2019 and 2020, and 33% between 2020 and 2021 (from 111 to 148). However, there were 17 fewer murders (a 12% decrease) in the Bronx in 2022.

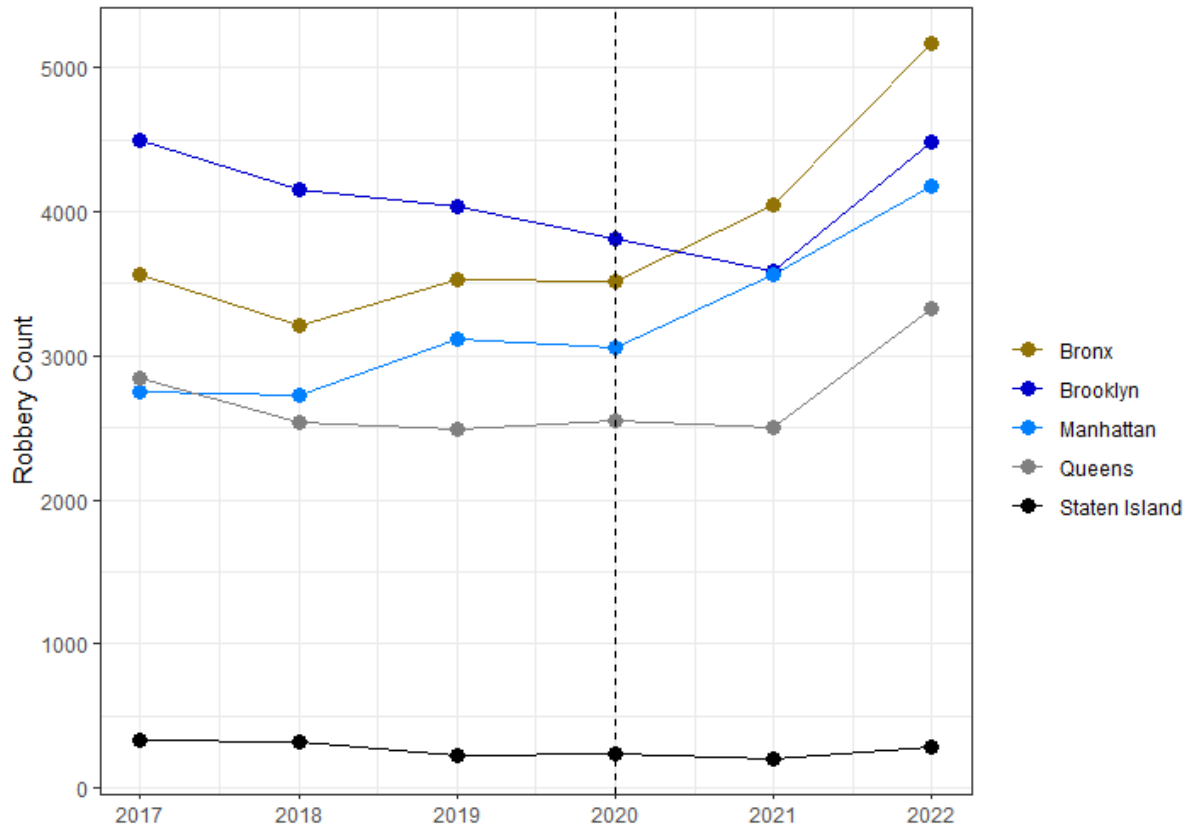
Murder in Manhattan had been on the rise since 2018, but began falling in 2021. Following a 10% increase (from 84 to 92) between 2020 and 2021, murder numbers fell 15% (from 92 to 78) between 2021 and 2022.

Murder had also been on the rise in Queens before the pandemic. Between 2017 and 2020, Queens experienced an 56% increase in murder numbers (from 50 to 78). During the pandemic,

murder numbers increased by 6% (5 additional murders) between 2020 and 2021, and then fell by 6% (5 fewer murders) between 2021 and 2022.

ROBBERY

Figure 15: Robbery in NYC



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

Between 2017 and 2020, most New York City robberies took place in Brooklyn. However, robbery numbers in Brooklyn were trending downward during that period, while robbery numbers in the Bronx and Manhattan were trending upward. In 2021, the total number of robberies increased across all five boroughs.

During the pandemic, the Bronx became the leading borough for robbery after experiencing a 47% two-year increase. There were 3,519 robberies in 2020; 4,048 robberies in 2021; and 5,166 in 2022.

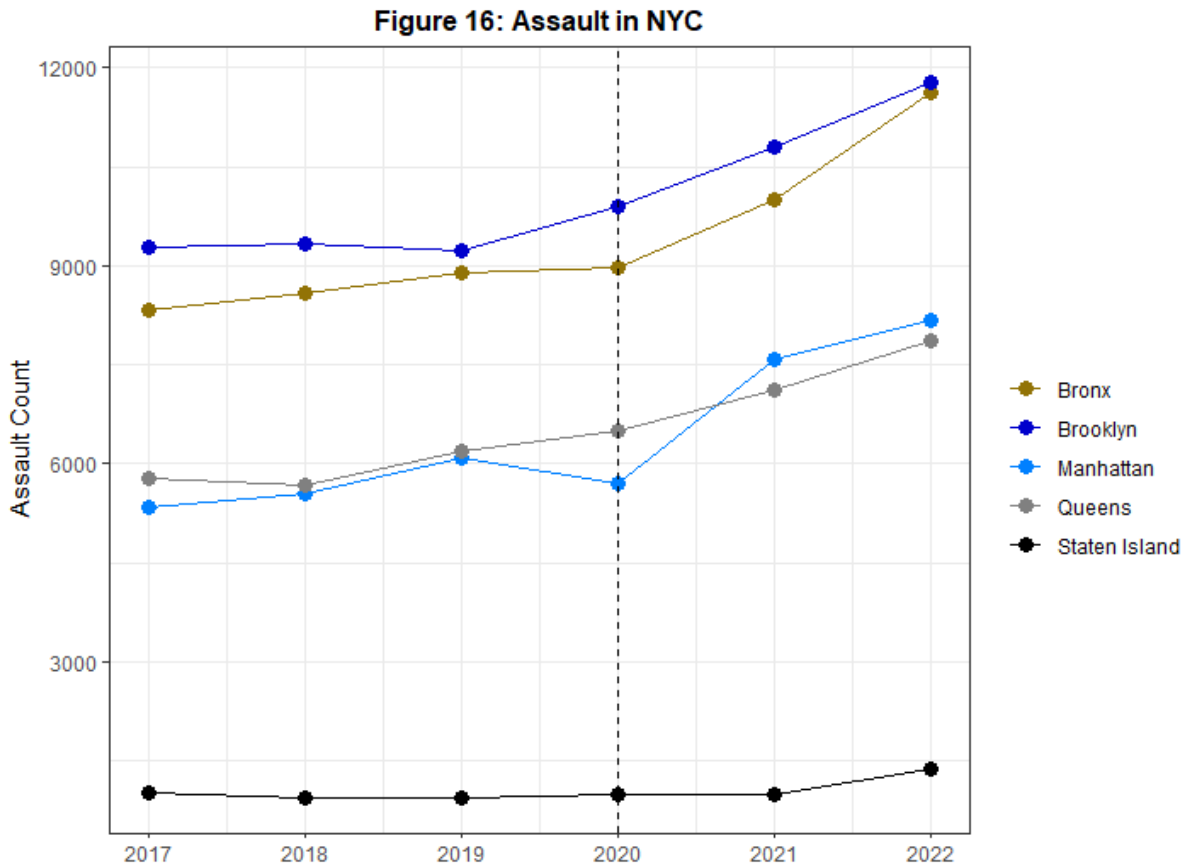
Robberies in Brooklyn rose 25% (from 3,590 to 4,479) between 2021 and 2022. This increase interrupted a 20% three-year decline.

Manhattan experienced a 37% two-year increase in robberies during the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2022, the total number of robberies in Manhattan increased from 3,053 to 4,176.

Queens saw 47 fewer robberies in 2021 (2,502) than 2020 (2,549). Total robberies then increased 33% in 2022 – from 2,502 to 3,323.

Staten Island had 38 fewer robberies in 2021 (207) than 2020 (245). In 2022, there were 82 additional robberies (289).

ASSAULT



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

During the pandemic, the total number of assaults in NYC increased in all five boroughs. Brooklyn was the leading borough for assaults. Between 2020 and 2022, the total number of assaults in Brooklyn increased by 19% (from 9,898 to 11,775).

The Bronx – the second leading borough for assaults – experienced a 30% increase in assaults between 2020 and 2022 (from 8,976 to 11,629). Assaults had already been on the rise in the Bronx before the pandemic began.

The total number of assaults in Manhattan declined between 2019 and 2020, before increasing by 43% between 2020 and 2022 (from 5,697 to 8,164).

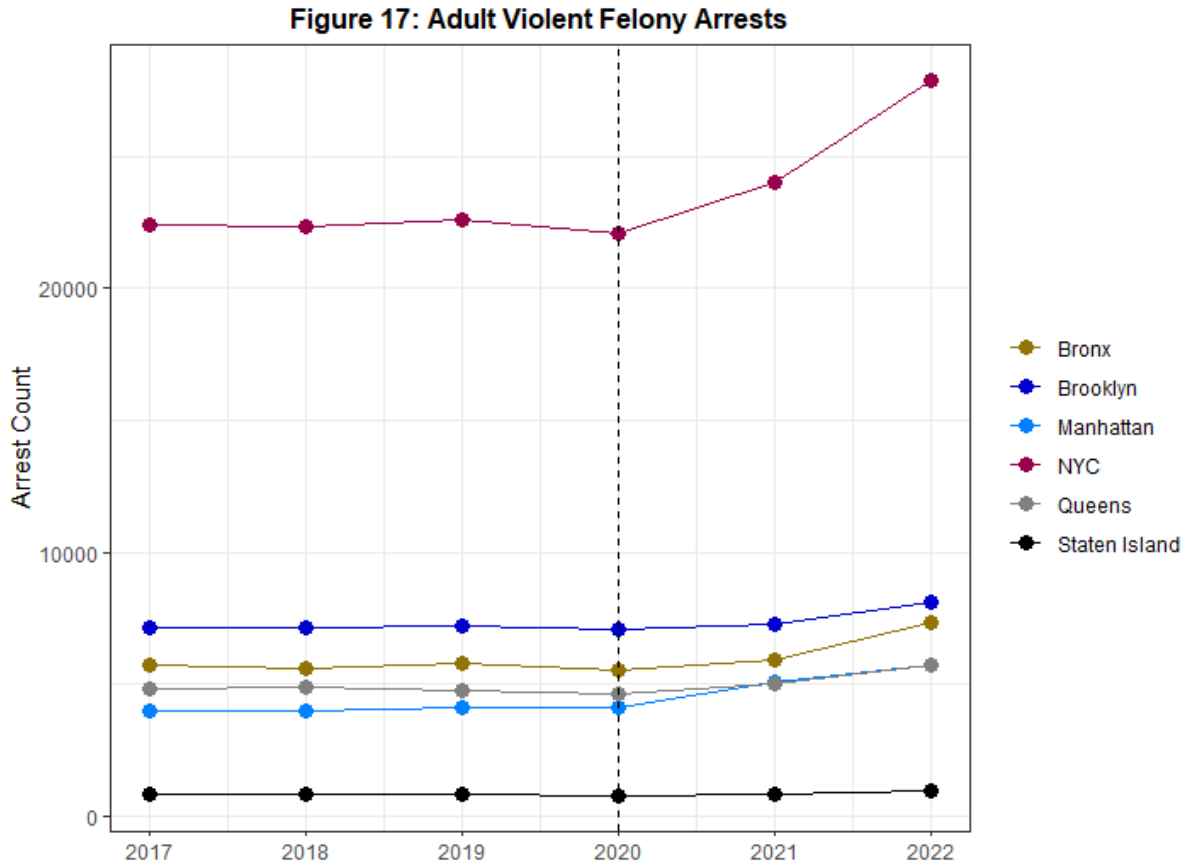
In Queens, assaults had been on the rise since 2018. During the pandemic, the total number of assaults in Queens increased by 21% (from 6,487 in 2020 to 7,870 in 2022).

Staten Island experienced a 37% increase in assaults between 2020 and 2022 (from 998 to 1,365).

Figures 14, 15, and 16 thus illustrate that at the end of 2022, murders in New York City were on the decline while robberies and assaults were both on the rise. Unfortunately, there is no available data on firearm involvement in these crimes, but an inference can be made that the usage of firearms rises and falls as the overall number of violent crimes rise and fall.

ARRESTS

Once a violent crime is committed in New York City, the criminal justice process begins. Figure 17 examines the five-year trend in adult violent felony arrests. Following a 2% decline in citywide violent felony arrests between 2019 and 2020, the number of violent felony arrests increased 26% (from 22,116 to 27,882) between 2020 and 2022. **Among the five boroughs, Manhattan saw the largest two-year increase in arrests (40%),** followed by the Bronx (32%), Staten Island (25%), Queens (24%), and Brooklyn (14%).



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

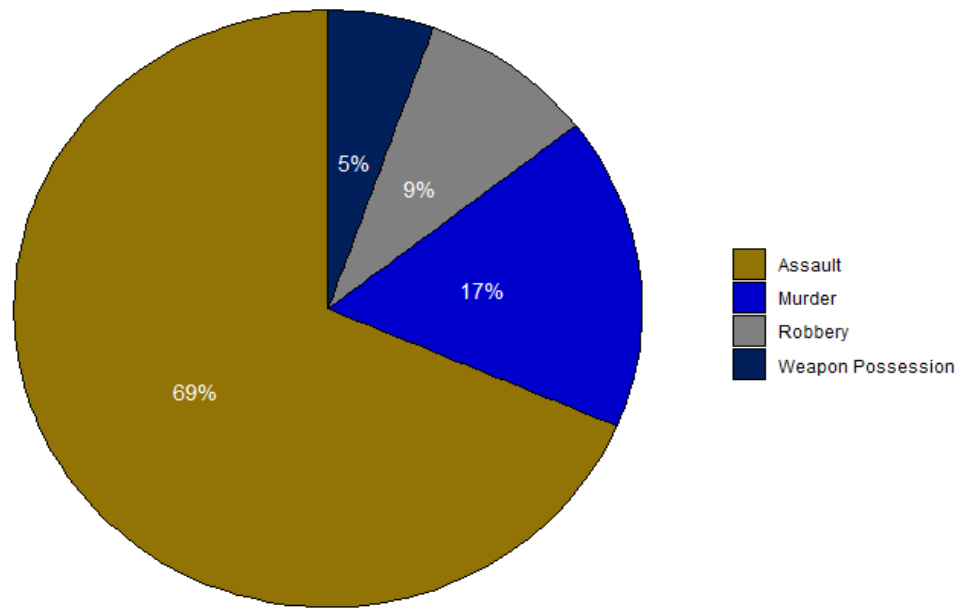
The NYPD’s historic arrest data was used to ascertain the number of arrests for murder, assault, robbery, and unlawful weapon possession. The crimes examined include:

- Murder in the Second Degree (“Murder 2”);
- Assault in the First Degree (“Assault 1”);
- Assault in the Second Degree (“Assault 2”);
- Robbery in the First Degree (“Robbery 1”);
- Robbery in the Second Degree (“Robbery 2”); and
- Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree (“CPW 2”).

These six crimes were selected for analysis because “use of a firearm” or “use of a dangerous weapon” is a material element of the crime under New York’s penal code. The penal code definition for each offense can be found in Appendix 4. Initially, including the number of arrests for Manslaughter in the First Degree and Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree was considered; however, these crimes were excluded because neither accounted for more than 1% of New York City’s pandemic arrests.

Together, arrests for these six crimes accounted for 22,349 pandemic arrests. As illustrated by Figure 18, **most pandemic arrests in NYC were for assault.**

Figure 18: Pandemic Arrests



Data Source: NYPD, Citywide Crime Statistics, Historic Incident Level Arrest Data

ASSAULT ARRESTS

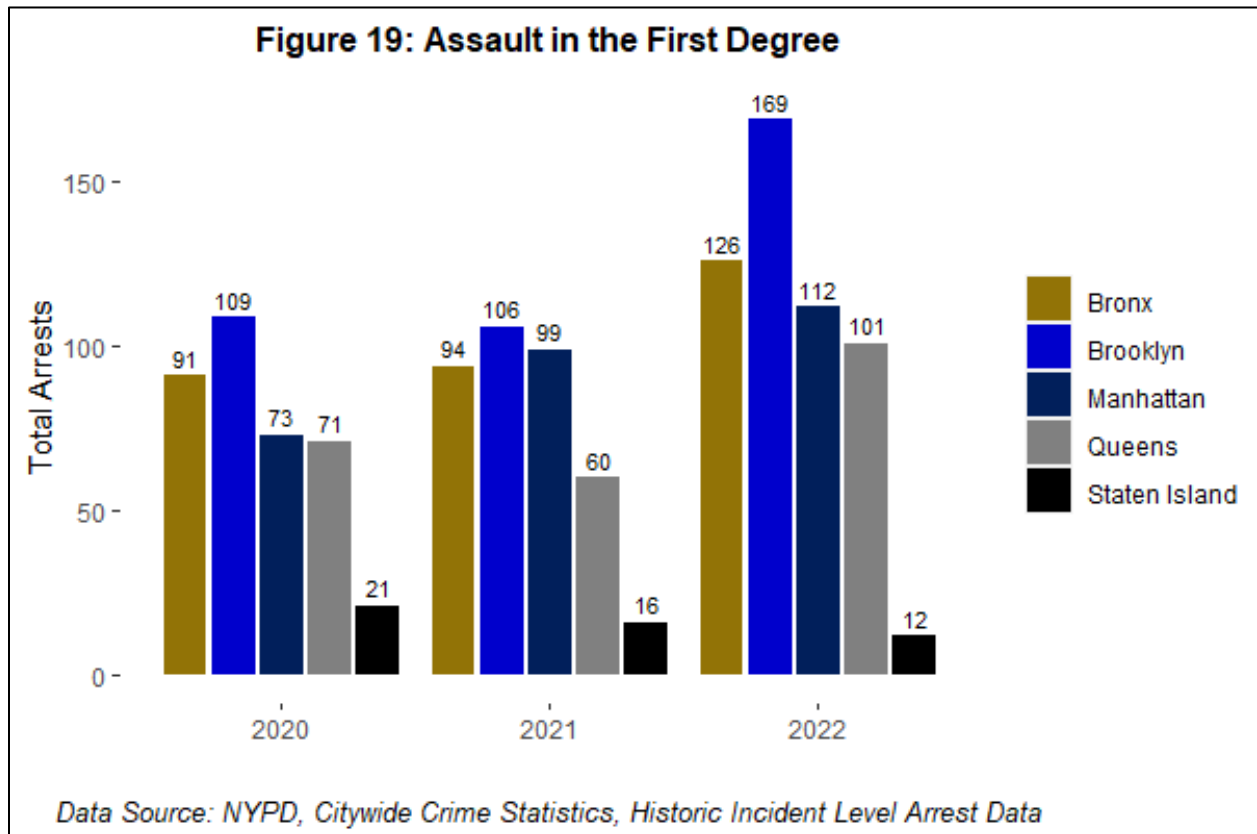
There were 15,328 arrests for assault during the pandemic. Assault 1 accounted for 8% (1,260) of these arrests, while Assault 2 accounted for 92% (14,068). The difference between these assault offenses is the intended extent of injury: Assault 1 requires intent to inflict *serious* physical injury, whereas Assault 2 only requires intent to inflict physical injury.

Figures 16 and 17 present the number of Assault 1 and Assault 2 arrests across the five boroughs. Between 2020 and 2022, Assault 1 arrests rose 42% while Assault 2 arrests rose 44%.

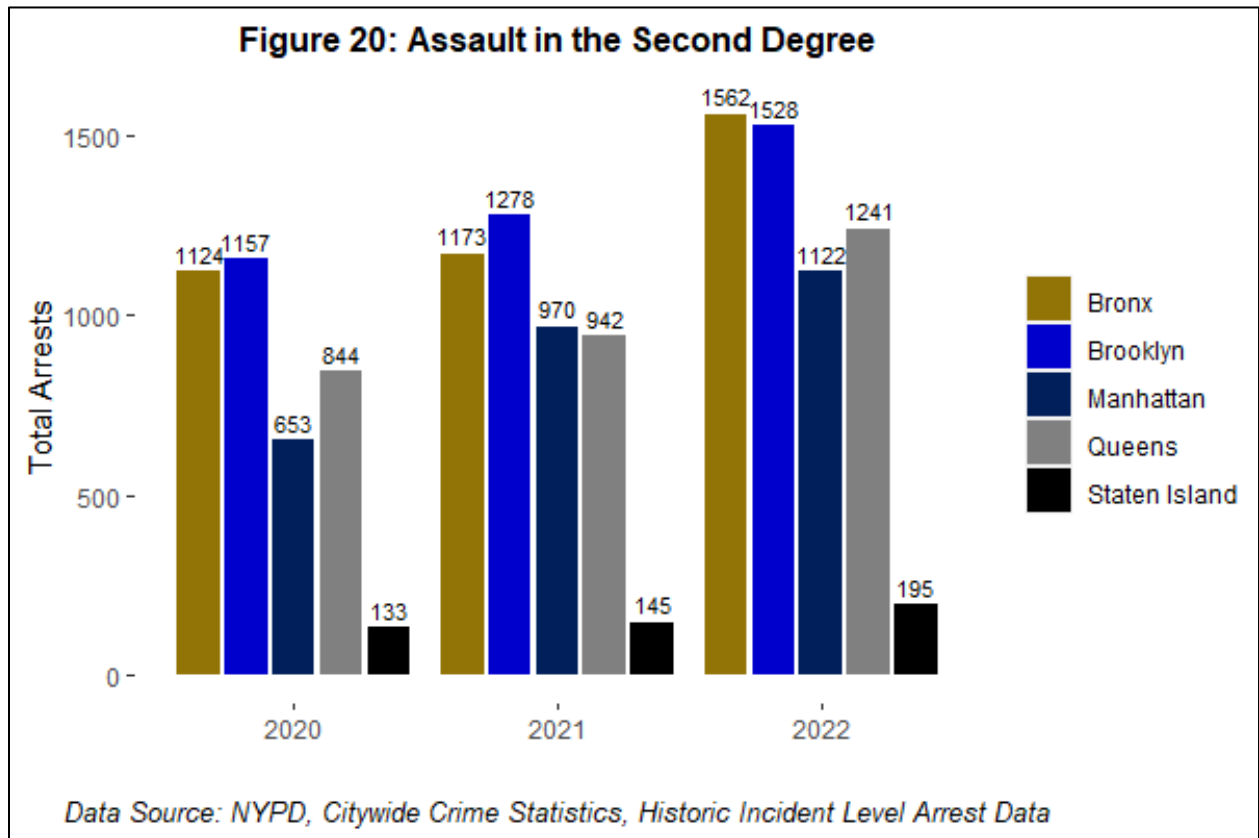
Throughout the pandemic, the number of arrests for Assault 1 increased in both the Bronx and Manhattan, while in Staten Island the number of arrests for Assault 1 decreased each year.

Meanwhile, **Brooklyn was the leading borough for Assault 1 arrests**. Despite seeing three fewer arrests for Assault 1 in 2021, the number of Assault 1 arrests went up 59% in 2022 (63 additional arrests).

Queens similarly saw a drop in Assault 1 arrests in 2021. However, in 2022, the number of arrests rose 68% (41 additional arrests).



Meanwhile, **arrests for Assault 2 climbed in each borough during the pandemic.** Brooklyn was the leading borough for Assault 2 arrests in 2020 and 2021; however, the Bronx took the lead over the Brooklyn in 2022 after experiencing a 33% increase in arrests.

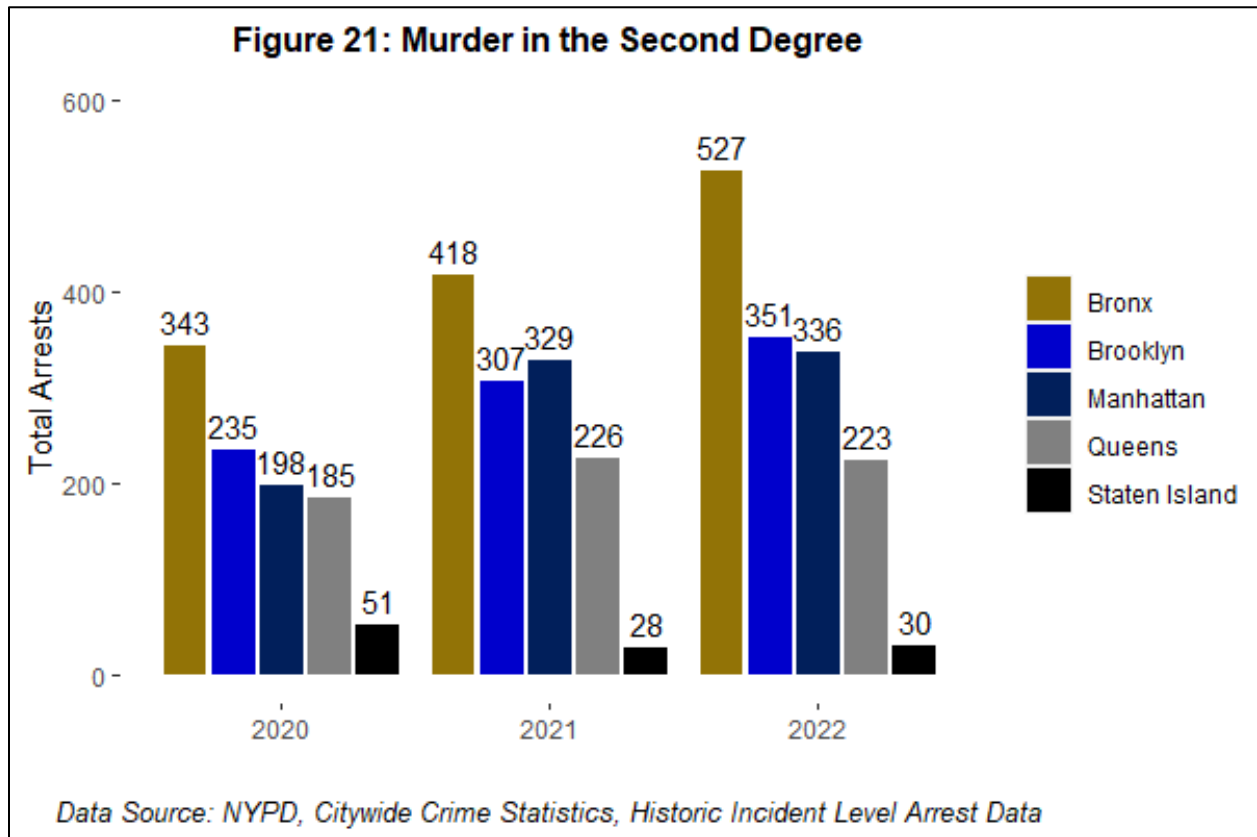


MURDER ARRESTS

There were 3,787 arrests for Murder 2 between 2020 and 2022. Figure 18 shows that **the Bronx was the leading borough for Murder 2 arrests during this period**. The number of Murder 2 arrests rose every year in the Bronx – culminating in a 54% two-year increase.

Brooklyn and Manhattan also saw Murder 2 arrests rise each year. Murder arrests went up 49% in Brooklyn and 70% in Manhattan between 2020 and 2022.

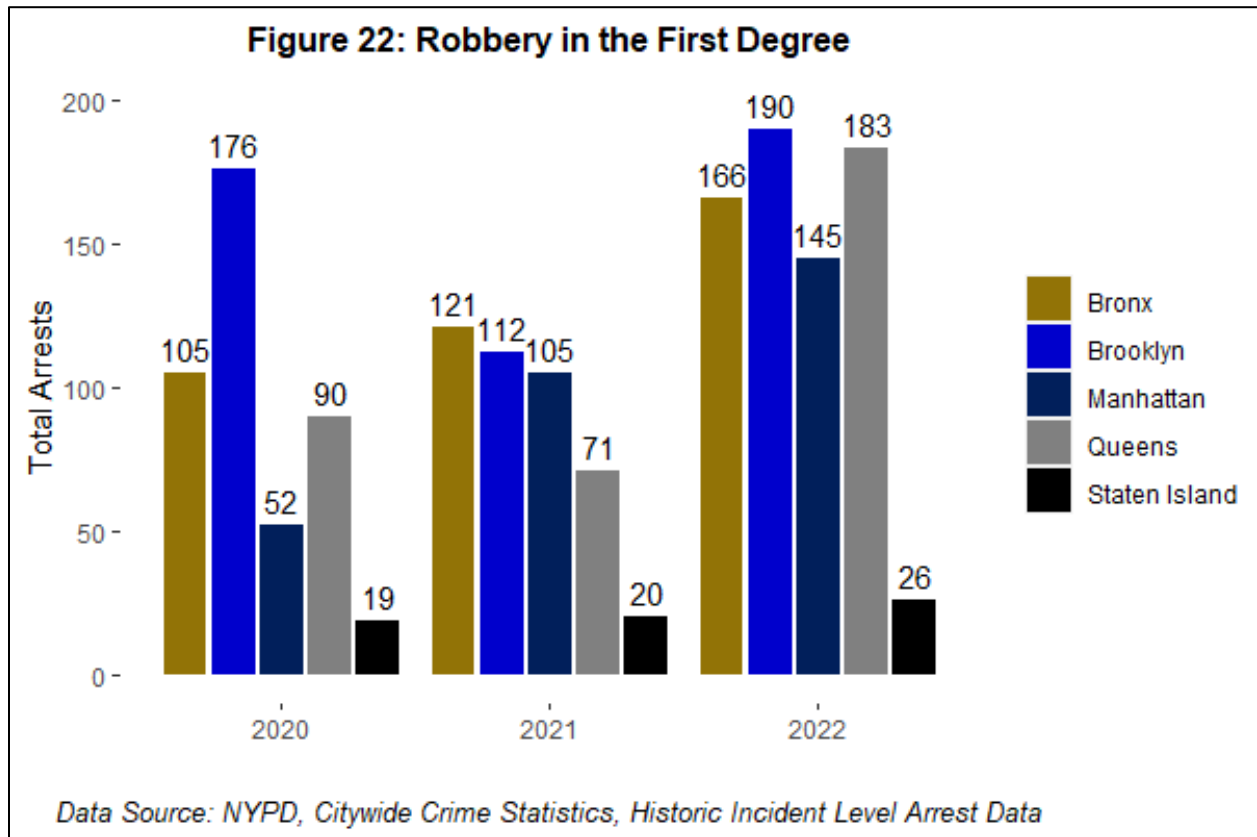
Queens saw a 22% increase in Murder 2 arrests between 2020 and 2021. However, there were 3 fewer arrests in 2022. Meanwhile, in Staten Island there was a 45% decline in Murder 2 arrests between 2020 and 2021. However, in 2022, there were 2 additional arrests for Murder 2.



ROBBERY ARRESTS

There were 2,019 robbery arrests in NYC during the pandemic. Robbery 1 accounted for 78% (1,581) of these arrests and Robbery 2 accounted for 22% (438). Figures 19 and 20 present the number of arrests per borough for Robbery 1 and Robbery 2, respectively.

Robbery 1 “involves serious physical injury to a victim or the use of a dangerous instrument or deadly weapon.” (BarketEpstein, 2019). Robbery 2 “occurs when a perpetrator is aided by another person in the theft, a victim is physically injured, a weapon is displayed, or a vehicle is stolen.” (BarketEpstein, 2019).



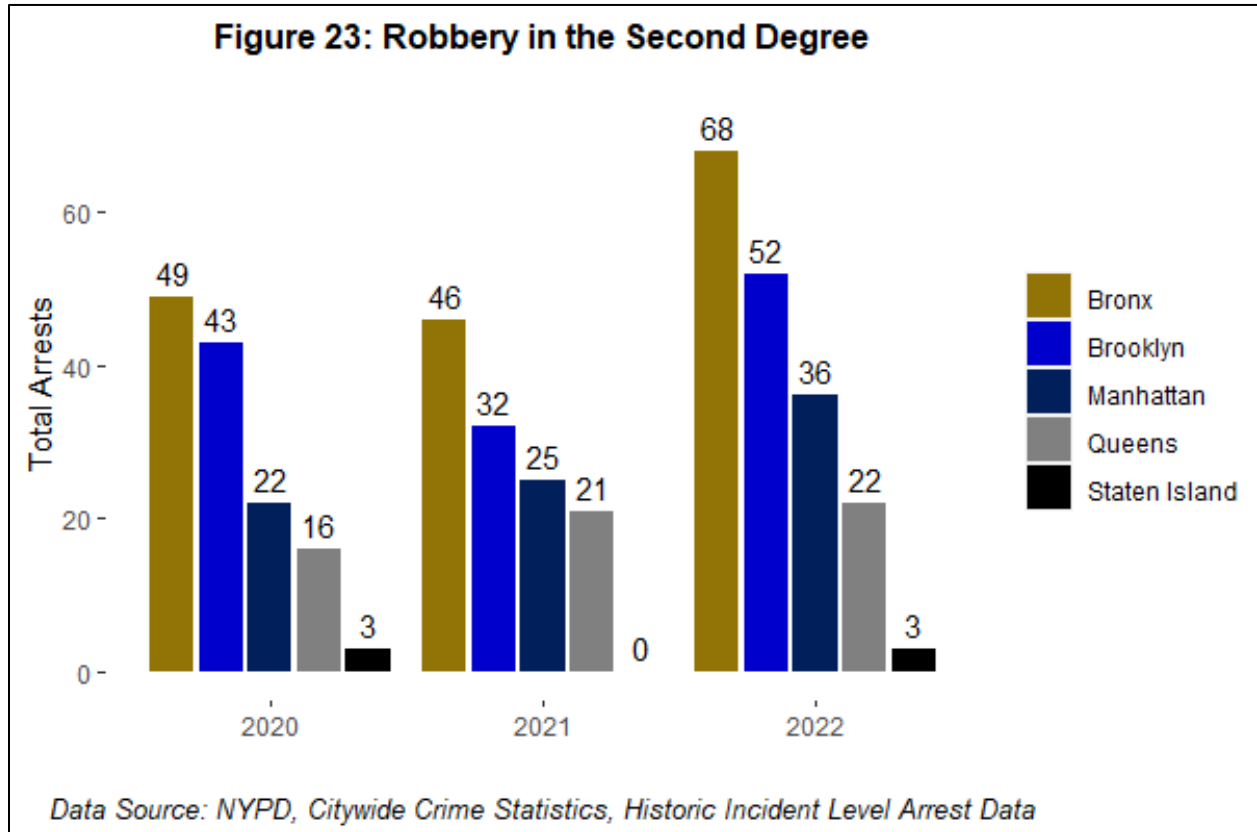
Brooklyn was the leading borough for Robbery 1 arrests in 2020 and 2022. However, the Bronx took the lead in 2021 after Brooklyn experienced a 36% decline in Robbery 1 arrests.

In Manhattan and Staten Island, the number of Robbery 1 arrests increased every year. Manhattan saw a dramatic 178% increase in Robbery 1 arrests between 2020 and 2022, while Staten Island experienced a 37% two-year increase.

Queens saw 19 fewer arrests for Robbery 1 in 2021; however, in 2022, the number of arrests for Robbery 2 more than doubled – surpassing the number of Robbery 1 arrests in both Manhattan and the Bronx.

Robbery 2 arrests were less common in New York City during the pandemic. **The Bronx was the leading borough for Robbery 2 arrests**, followed by Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. Staten Island had only 6 arrests for Robbery 2 during the pandemic.

Both the Bronx and Brooklyn experienced a decline in Robbery 2 arrests in 2021, before seeing 22 and 20 additional arrests in 2022, respectively. Meanwhile, in Manhattan and Queens, the number of Robbery 2 arrests increased each year.

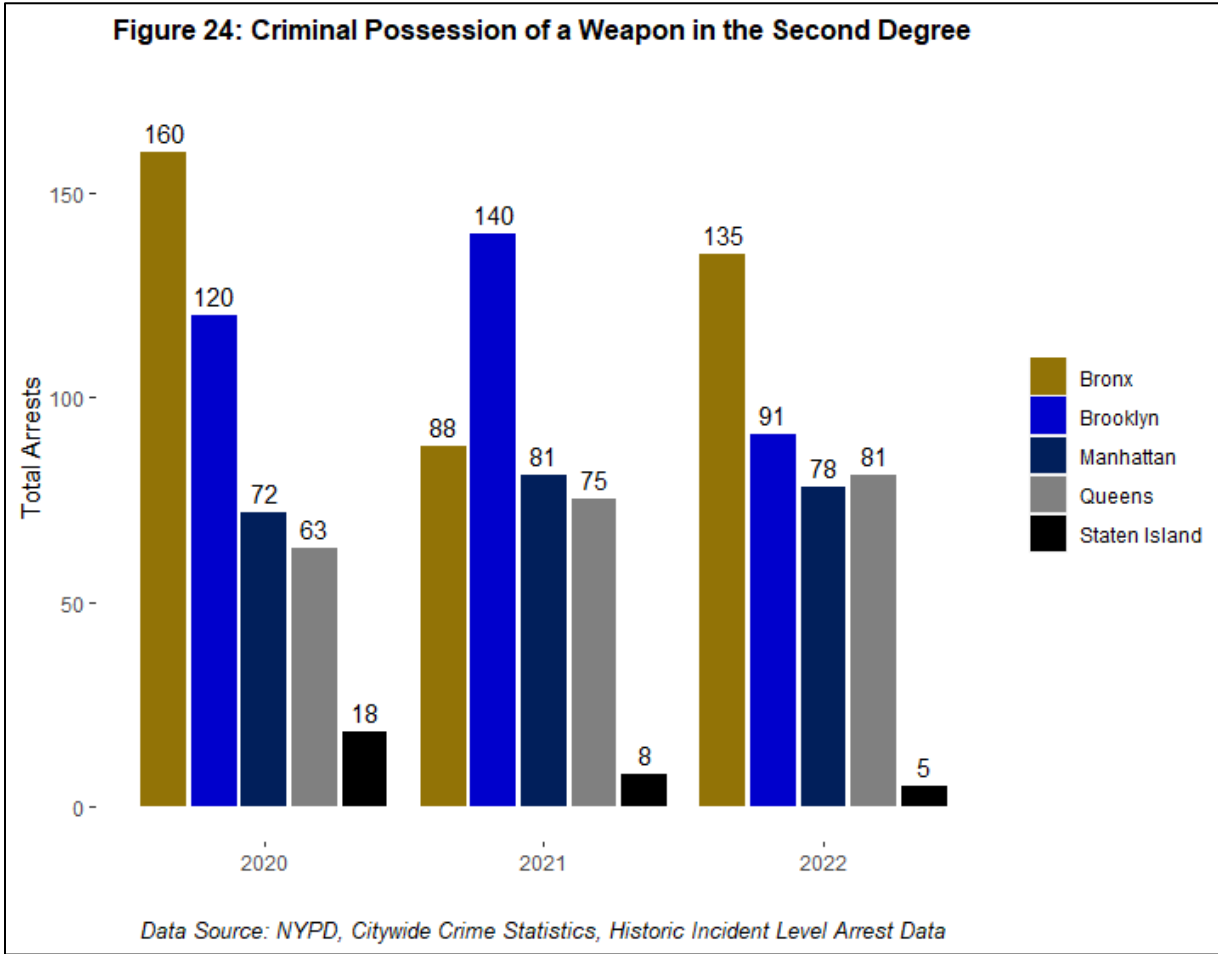


WEAPON POSSESSION ARRESTS

Lastly, there were 1,215 arrests for CPW 2 during the pandemic. As Figure 21 shows, **the Bronx was the leading borough for CPW 2 arrests in 2020 and 2022; however, when Bronx CPW 2 arrests dropped 45% in 2021, Brooklyn took the lead.**

CPW 2 arrests rose in Brooklyn between 2020 and 2021; however, between 2021 and 2022, the number of arrests declined by 35% (49 fewer arrests). In Manhattan, the number of CPW 2 arrests remained about the same, with 9 additional arrests in 2021 and 3 fewer arrests in 2022.

Meanwhile, in Queens, arrests for CPW 2 climbed during the pandemic. In Staten Island, CPW 2 arrests fell during the pandemic.



Overall, arrests for violent felony crimes in New York City were on the rise at the end of 2022. The arrest data indicates that the Bronx and Brooklyn – the boroughs responsible for most pandemic shootings – had the most arrests for these violent felony crimes during the pandemic. Furthermore, the data reveals most arrests in NYC during the pandemic were for Assault in the Second Degree and the fewest were for Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree.

Prosecutions & Dispositions

In 2020, New York City's five District Attorney's Offices faced two unprecedented challenges: COVID-19 and increasing gun violence. Consequently, the DA's Offices had to navigate holding violent perpetrators accountable whilst complying with a statewide lockdown. Furthermore, prosecutors had to navigate slowed court processes and backed-up judicial caseloads. (Wolff, 2023, p. 3). In their annual reports for 2020, both the Bronx and Queens District Attorneys expressed that promptly adapting to the remote work environment allowed their offices to keep up with the rise in violent crime. (*Office of the Bronx County District Attorney, 2020, p. 1; Brave Justice Annual Report, 2020, p .5*).

In the Bronx, the DA's Office virtually “arraign[ed] thousands of defendants without delay” and “conduct[ed] preliminary hearings and other proceedings.” (*Office of the Bronx County District Attorney, 2020, p. 1*). Furthermore, the trial division indicted several perpetrators of violent gun crime for second-degree murder; first-degree manslaughter; second-degree Criminal Possession of a Weapon; and first- and second-degree attempted murder. (pp. 5-6).

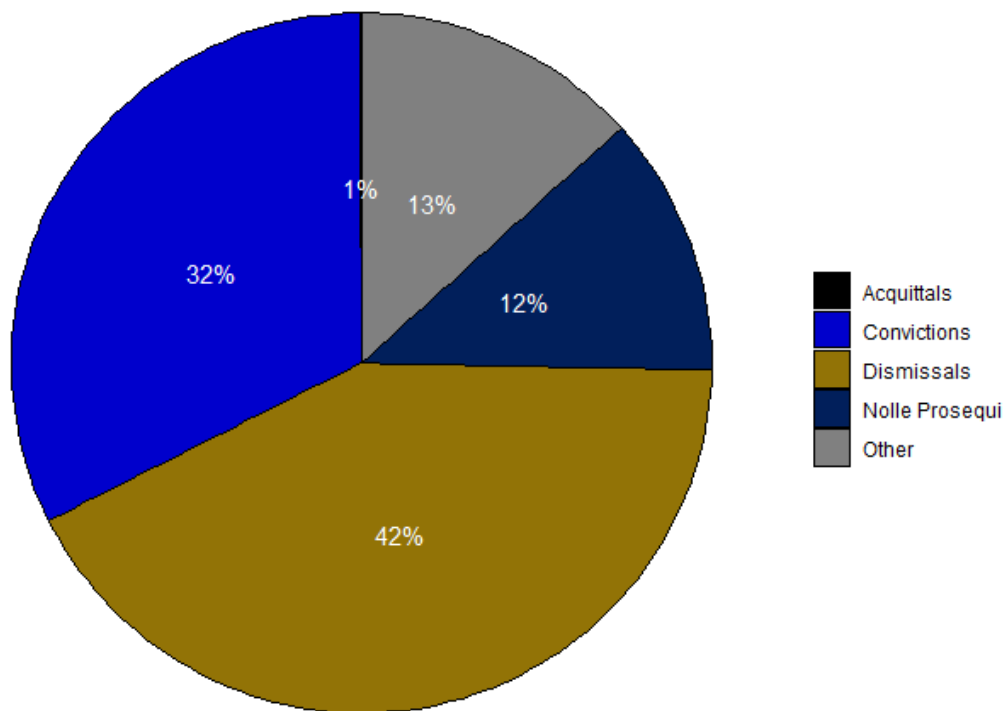
In Queens, the DA's Office “processed more violent crime related arrests than the previous year, particularly for cases involving loaded firearms and shooting incidents.” (*Brave Justice Annual Report, 2020, p. 5*). Furthermore, the Queens DA's Office secured 39 homicide related indictments; conducted 17 trials; disposed of 18,109 cases; and moved 920 felony matters to sentence. (p. 18).

Nonetheless, there were many challenges to prosecuting during the pandemic, which affected the disposition of several pending cases. The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 created an unavoidable backlog of cases pending disposition. (p. 5). By 2021, this unprecedented backlog coupled with increased caseloads led the speedy trial clock to toll on some of these pending cases. (*Brave Justice Annual Report, 2021, p. 22*). Despite focusing time and resources “on those cases that put the community most at risk,” many of these cases were “unavoidably dismissed in 2021, in large part based on speedy trial grounds and the inability to comply with shortened disclosure time frames.” (p. 22).

Between 2020 and 2022, there were 170,676 total adult felony case dispositions across the five boroughs. Twelve percent (12%; 20,504) of these cases were not prosecuted (“*nolle prosequi*”) and 42% (72,147) were dismissed. Thirty-two percent (32%; 55,186) of these cases ended with a conviction while less than 1% (147) resulted in an acquittal. The remaining 13% of cases were adjourned in contemplation of dismissal; diverted and then dismissed; covered by another case; or disposed in a favorable manner.

See Appendix 5 for borough-specific shooting disposition patterns.

Figure 25: Pandemic Dispositions



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

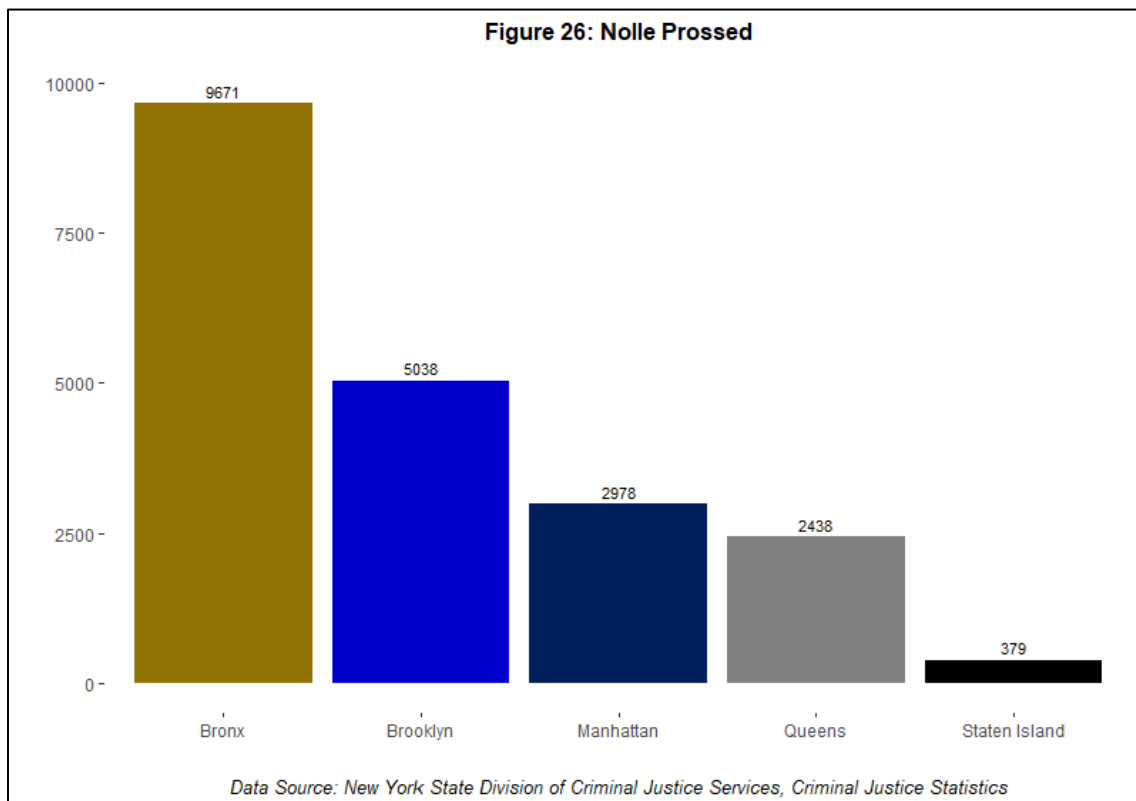
DECLINED TO PROSECUTE (NOLLE PROSSED)

There are several reasons why a District Attorney's Office might decline to prosecute a case, such as the need for further investigation; insufficient corroboration; failure to prove an element of the crime; or a lack of prosecutorial merit. (*Manhattan District Attorney's Office Data Dashboard*).

The Bronx DA's Office *nolle prossed* the most felony cases during the pandemic.

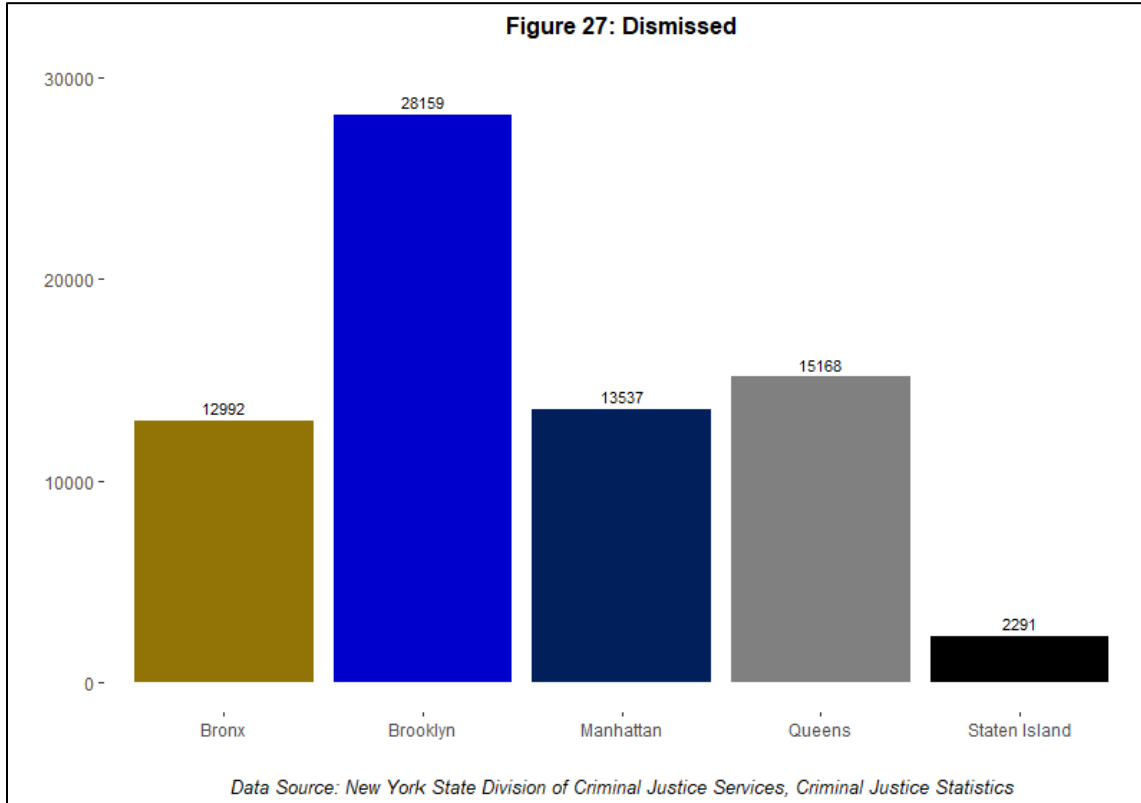
Furthermore, the number of cases *nolle prossed* in the Bronx increased each year, resulting in a 63% two-year increase (from 2,506 to 4,073). The number of *nolle prossed* cases in Manhattan followed a similar trend, but only had a 19% two-year increase (from 933 to 1,107).

Meanwhile, Queens saw a 3% decrease in *nolle prossed* cases in both 2021 and 2022. The number of cases *nolle prossed* in both Brooklyn and Staten Island decreased in 2021 before increasing in 2022.



DISMISSALS

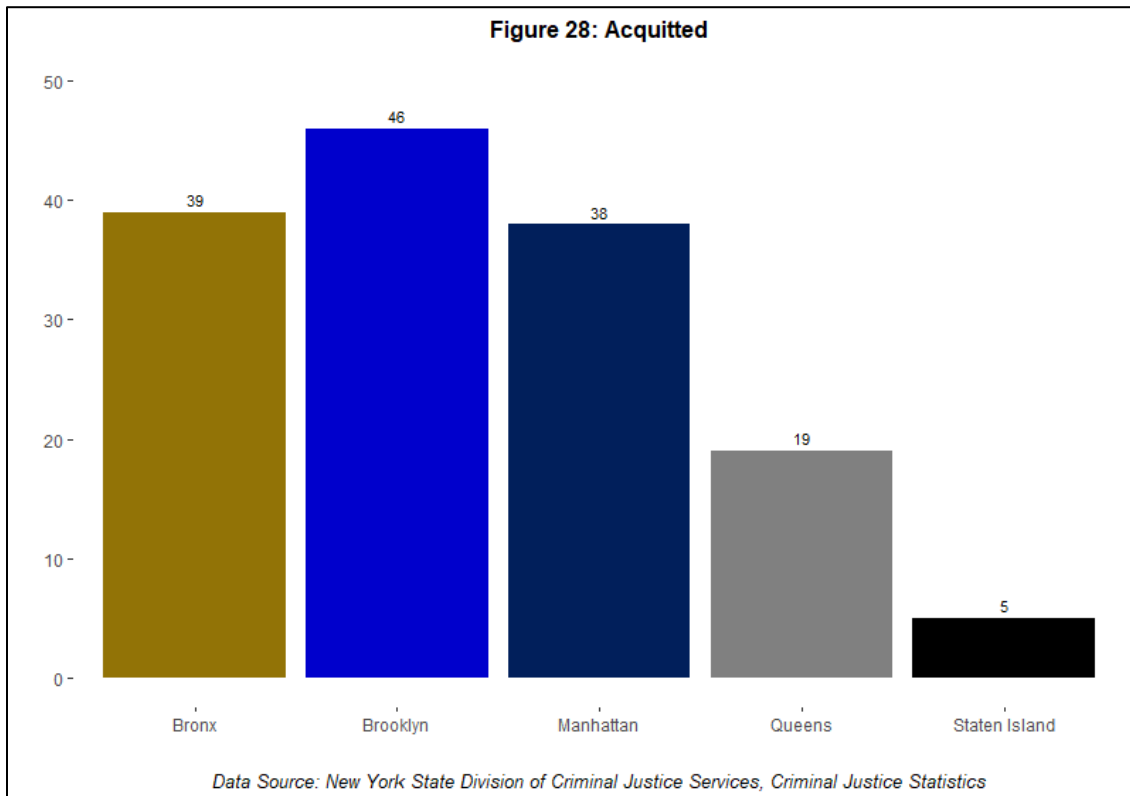
The Brooklyn DA's Office dismissed the most felony cases during the pandemic. Queens, which had the second highest number of dismissals, saw the total number dismissals nearly quadruple between 2020 to 2021 (from 1,966 to 7,239). In the Bronx, dismissals more than doubled between 2020 and 2021 (from 2,359 to 5,424) before dropping 4% in 2022 (about 215 fewer dismissals). In Manhattan, dismissals also more than doubled between 2020 and 2021 (from 2,196 to 5,529).



ACQUITTALS

Across all five boroughs, acquittals were extremely rare. **Brooklyn had the most acquittals** while Staten Island had the fewest acquittals. In the Bronx, the number of acquittals quadrupled between 2020 to 2021 (from 3 to 12), and doubled from 2021 to 2022 (from 12 to 24). In Manhattan, there were 3 fewer acquittals in 2021 (from 10 to 7); but in 2022, the number of acquittals tripled to 21.

Meanwhile, Queens saw the number of acquittals increase each year. Queens had 1 acquittal in 2020; 5 acquittals in 2021; and 13 in 2022.

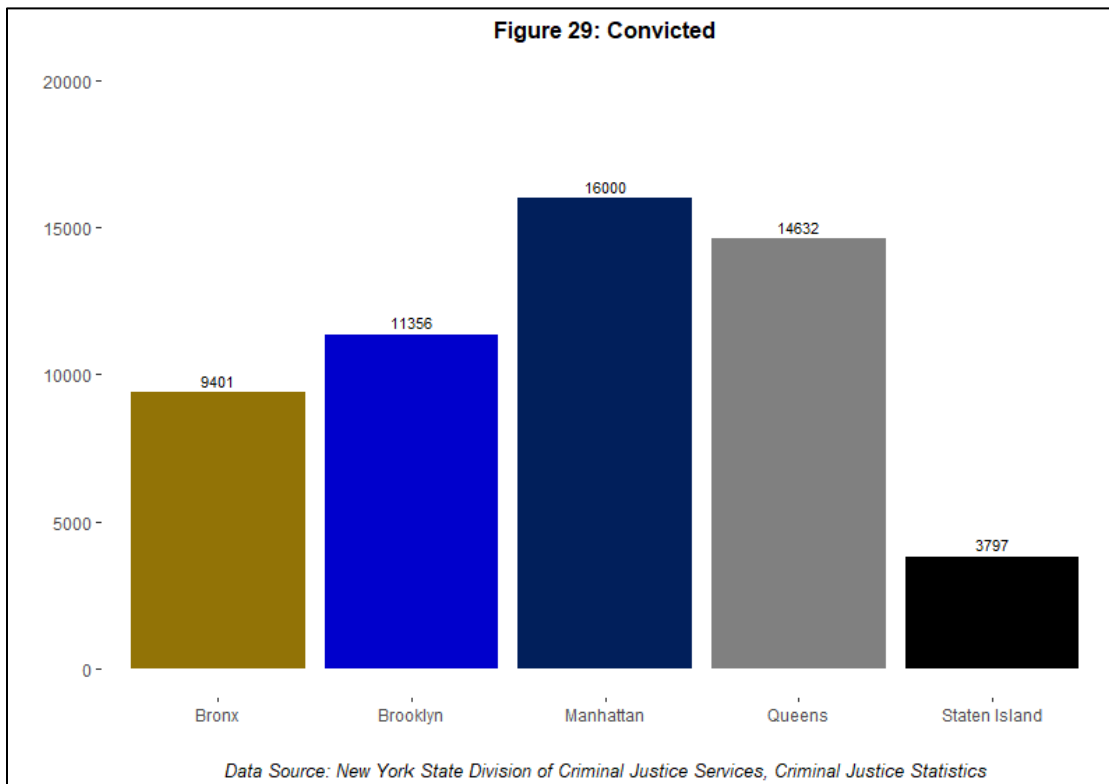


CONVICTIONS

There were 13,331 convictions for adult felonies during the pandemic. **Each DA's Office saw the total number of convictions increase every year.** However, the Division of Criminal Justice Services did not reveal how many convictions were secured via guilty pleas versus jury verdicts.

Manhattan had the most convictions during the pandemic. Convictions in Manhattan increased 94% from 2020 to 2022 (from 3,317 to 6,426). Meanwhile, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Staten Island all experienced a 76% increase in convictions between 2020 and 2022.

Queens saw a 39% two-year increase in the total number of convictions during the pandemic; however, the smaller increase is due in large part to the fact that **the Queens DA's Office convicted more cases than any other borough in 2020** (4,027), and saw smaller percent increases each year compared to the other four boroughs.



One of the potential consequences of the high numbers of *nolle prossed* and dismissed adult felony cases in NYC during the pandemic is that some violent criminal offenders may have slipped through the cracks. As the Queens DA's Office noted, some high-risk cases were inevitably dismissed due to speedy trial concerns. (*Brave Justice Annual Report, 2021, p. 22*). The return of high-risk individuals to a community heightens the likelihood of retaliatory gun violence – by or against the reentering individual – and presents new opportunities for reoffending.

Nevertheless, the number of convictions for violent felony offenses during the pandemic demonstrates that the five DA's Offices remained committed to holding perpetrators of gun violence accountable. In Queens and the Bronx – and likely in the other boroughs as well – trying the individuals charged with violent crimes was a priority. (*Brave Justice Annual Report, 2021, p. 22; Office of the Bronx County District Attorney, 2021, p. 1*). Even though the pandemic slowed down court processes and backed up judicial caseloads, many violent criminal offenders were arraigned, indicted, prosecuted, and sentenced. Incapacitation plays an integral role in the prevention and reduction of gun violence.

Sentencing

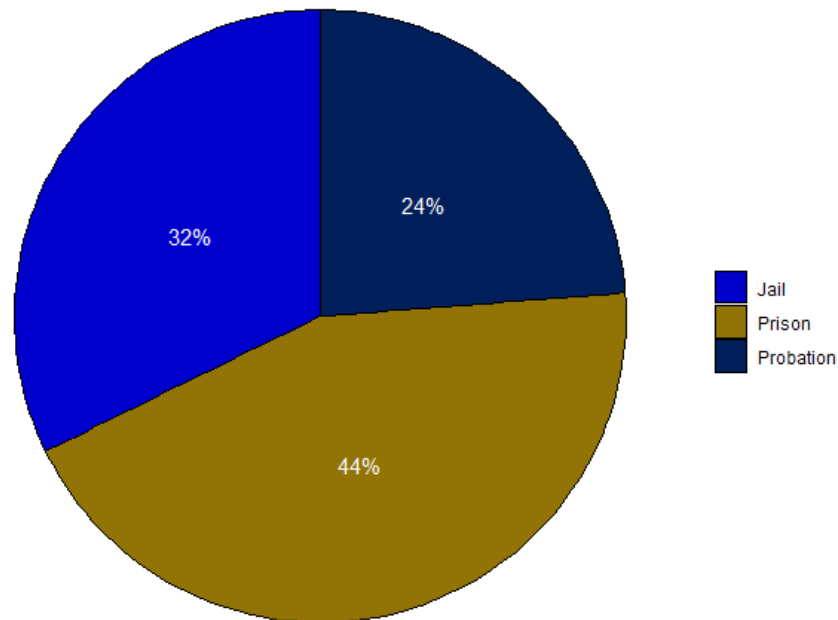
During the pandemic, jails and prisons were particularly susceptible to the spread of COVID-19. To prevent the spread of the coronavirus among the incarcerated population, some criminal justice policies were implemented to prompt the early release of incarcerated persons, and others were implemented to slow the influx of new inmates into jails and prisons. (Wolff et al., 2022, p. 3). Policies like these may have impacted the drop in the number of adult criminal offenders sentenced to jail, prison, and probation in New York City during the pandemic. **Between 2019 and 2020, the number of jail sentences declined 70% (from 4,817 to 1,468), and the number of prison sentences declined 71% (from 4,992 to 1,449).**

Interestingly, the number of sentences to probation more than halved (55% decrease) between 2019 and 2020 (from 2,232 to 998). Given the concerns about the spread of COVID-19 among the incarcerated population, one may have expected an increase in the number probation sentences, rather than a decrease.

Sentencings to jail, prison, and probation subsequently increased between 2020 and 2022; however, the total number of sentencings each year did not return to pre-pandemic levels.

In total, there were 17,463 sentences to jail, prison, and probation during the pandemic. As illustrated by Figure 27, **most adult criminal offenders sentenced during the pandemic received a prison sentence.**

Figure 30: Pandemic Sentencing



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

Among the five boroughs, Manhattan had the most sentences to jail, prison, and probation. Staten Island had the fewest.

See Appendix 6 for borough-specific sentencing patterns.

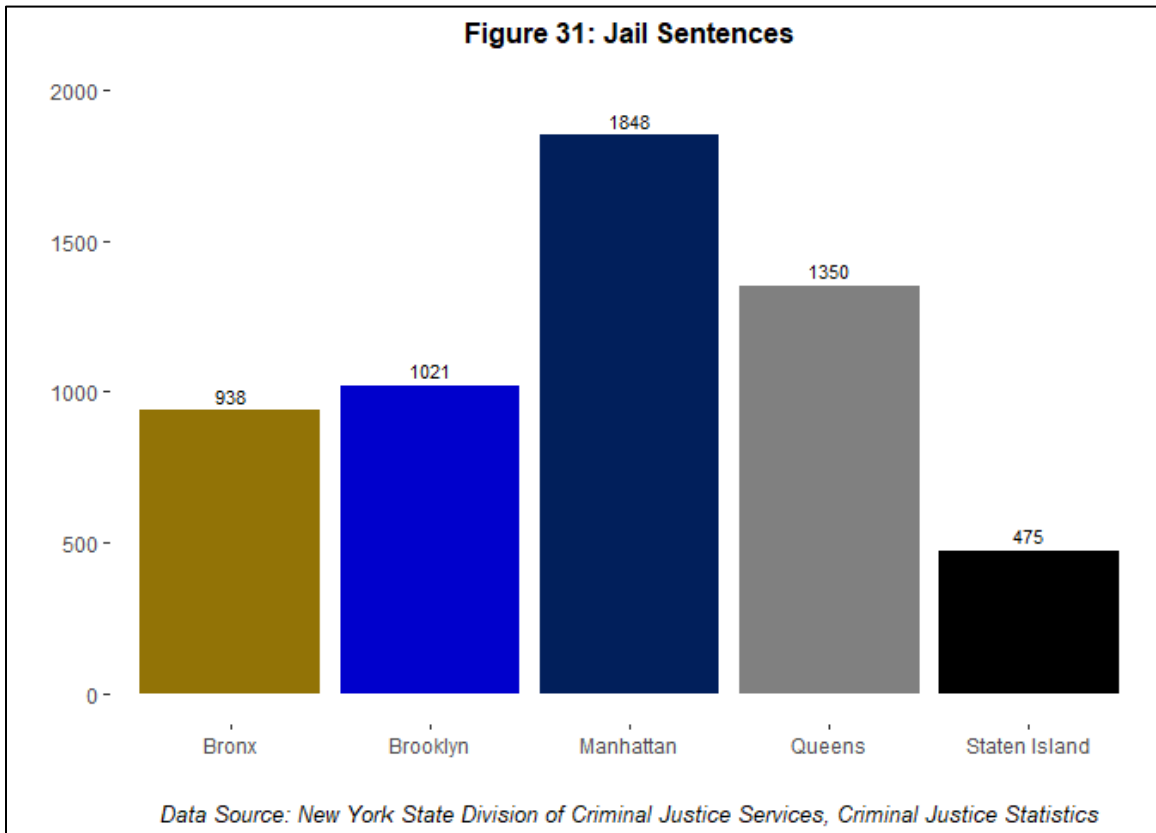
JAIL

During the pandemic, there were 5,637 jail sentences in New York City. The number of sentences to jail went up 25% (from 1,468 to 1,834) between 2020 and 2021, and 27% (from 1,834 to 2,335) between 2021 and 2022.

In the Bronx, the number of jail sentences remained about the same between 2020 and 2021, before nearly doubling (from 239 to 458) in 2022. Meanwhile, Brooklyn’s jail sentences dropped 14% between 2020 and 2021 (from 305 to 261) before rising 74% in 2022 (to 455).

Manhattan saw a 75% increase in jail sentences between 2020 and 2021 (from 412 to 722). However, in 2022, there were 8 fewer sentences.

In Queens and Staten Island, the number of jail sentences increased each year.



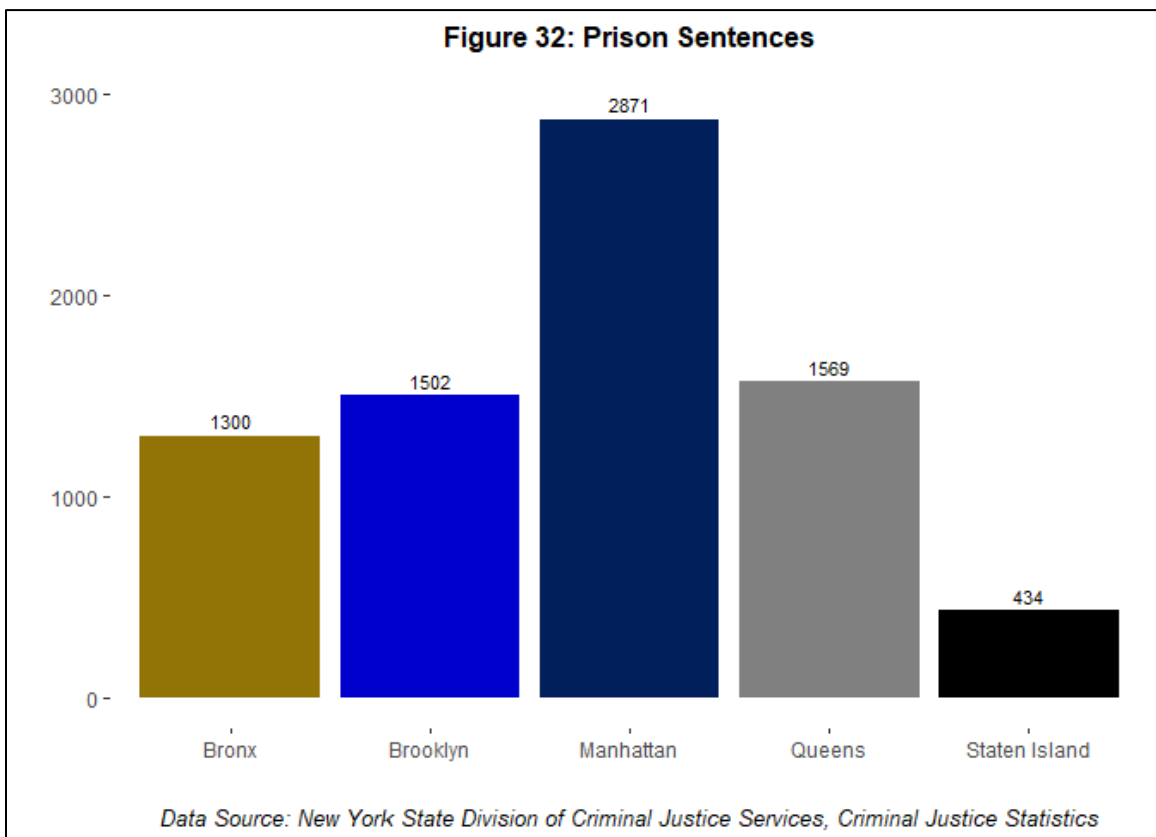
PRISON

There were 7,676 prison sentences handed down during the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2022, the total number of prison sentences in NYC nearly tripled (from 1,449 to 4,111). Following a 46% increase between 2020 and 2021 (from 1,449 to 2,116), the number of prison sentences nearly doubled in 2022 (from 2,116 to 4,111).

The number of prison sentences across the five boroughs increased each year, with the largest percent increases occurring between 2021 and 2022. The Bronx experienced 257% two-year increase in prison sentences (from 210 to 749) while Brooklyn saw a 278% two-year increase (from 232 to 876).

Manhattan had a 142% two-year increase in prison sentences while Queens had a 165% two-year increase. In Manhattan, there were 589 sentences in 2020 and 1,425 in 2022. In Queens, there were 332 sentences in 2020 and 833 in 2022.

In Staten Island, the number of sentences to prison almost tripled between 2020 and 2022 (a 165% increase). There were 86 prison sentences in 2020; by 2022, there were 228.



PROBATION

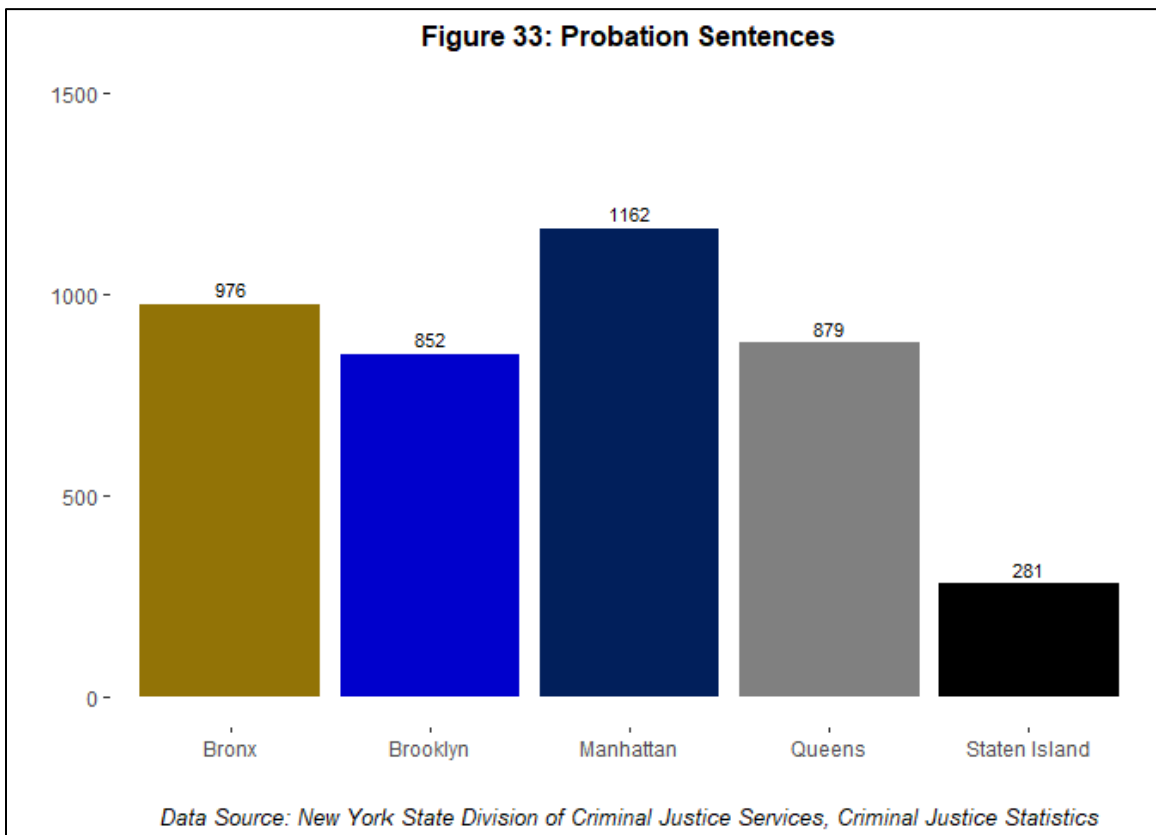
There were 2,232 sentences to probation during the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2022, there was an 85% increase in the number of sentences to a term of a probation. In 2020, there were 998 probation sentences; by 2022, there were 1,850.

The number of probation sentences in the Bronx nearly doubled between 2020 and 2022 (from 230 to 500). Meanwhile, in Brooklyn the number of probation sentences more than doubled between 2020 and 2022 (from 170 to 441).

In Manhattan, the number of probation sentences rose from 254 to 430 (a 69% increase) between 2020 and 2021. In 2022, there were 48 additional probation sentences (an 11% increase from 2021).

Queens saw the smallest increase (23%) in probation sentences during the pandemic. There were 24 more sentences to probation in 2021 (283) compared to 2020 (267), and 46 more sentences to probation in 2022 (329) compared to 2021.

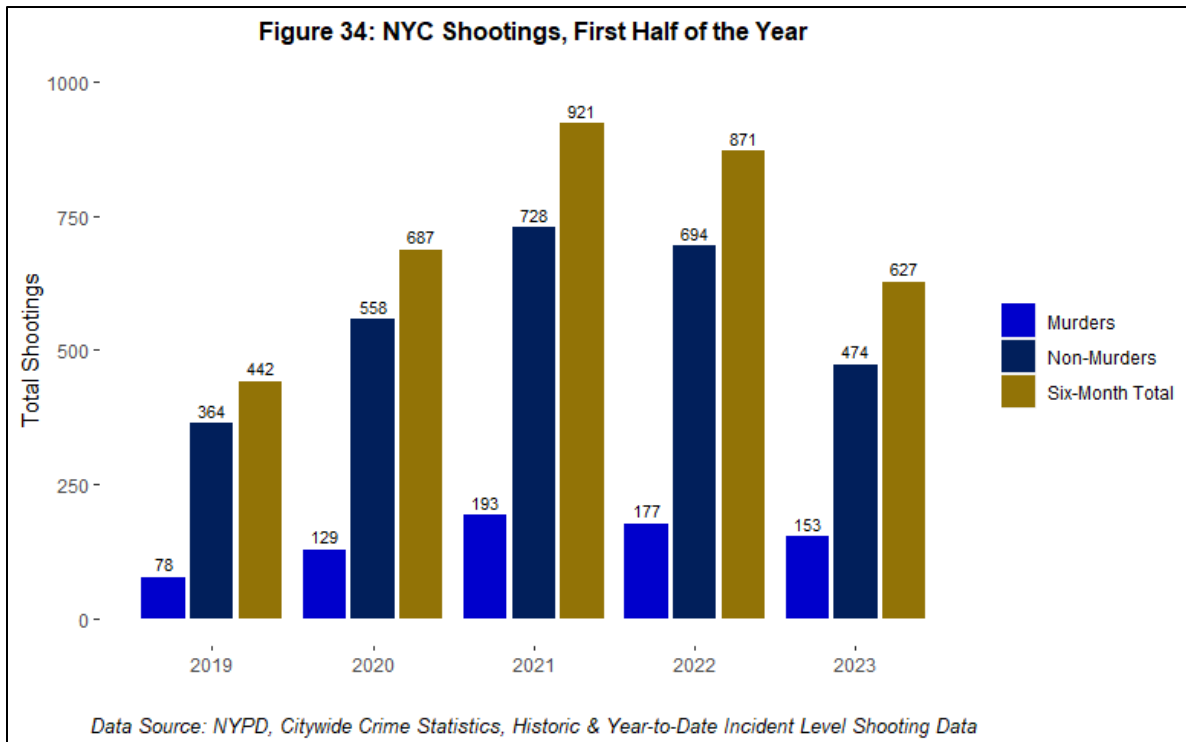
Staten Island saw a 33% increase in sentences to probation between 2020 and 2021 (from 77 to 102). In 2022, the number of sentences to probation remained the same (102).



These sentencing outcomes indicate that although the pandemic prompted a decrease in the overall number of sentencings, imprisonment remained the most common punishment for adults convicted for felonies in New York City.

Violent Gun Crime Forecast

The federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ended in May 2023. As of June 30, 2023, the NYPD has documented 627 shooting incidents in New York City. Twenty-four percent (24%; 153) of these shootings were flagged as murders. Forty percent (40%; 61) of these flags were linked to shootings in the Bronx, and 33% (50) were linked to shootings in Brooklyn. Compared to the six-month marks of the four previous years, the total number of shootings in NYC thus far is still higher than pre-pandemic levels (up 42% from 2019) but lower than all three pandemic years. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 34, the number of murders flagged thus far in 2023 is higher compared to both 2019 and 2020, but lower compared to 2021 and 2022.

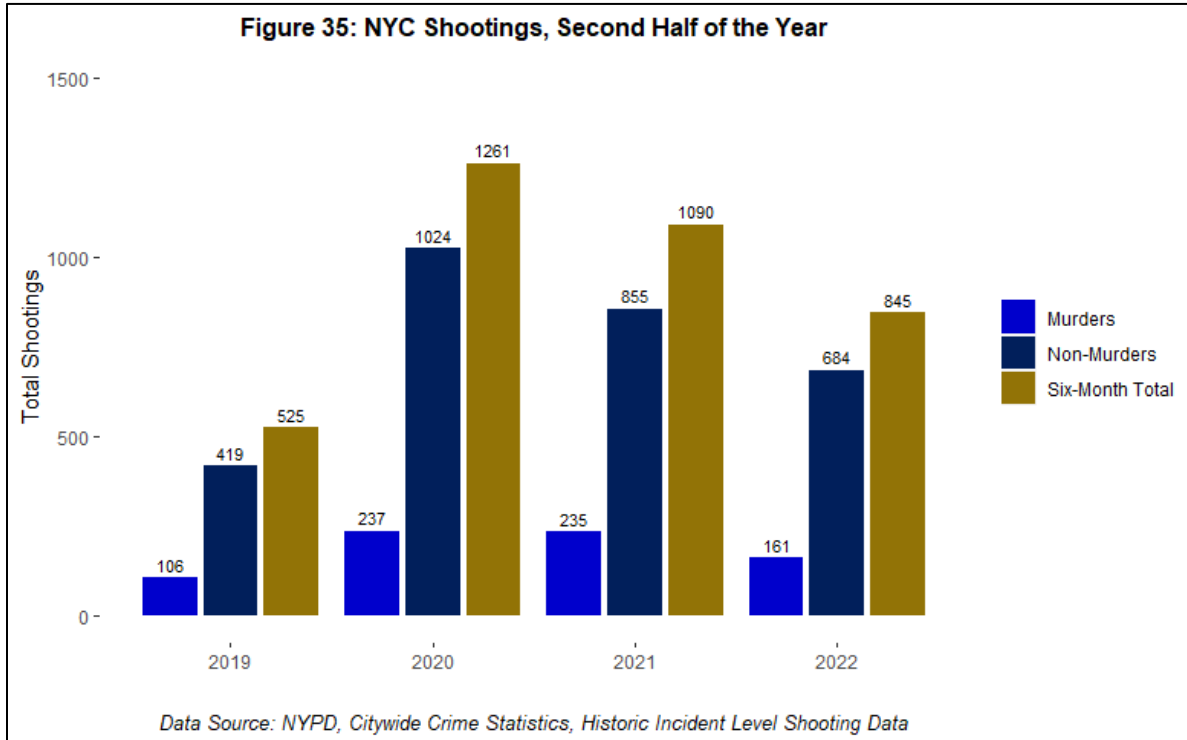


The total number of NYC shootings in the first half of 2023 indicates that there likely will be fewer shootings in 2023 compared to the previous three years – so long as there are no large-scale and unexpected social, economic, political, or environmental crises.

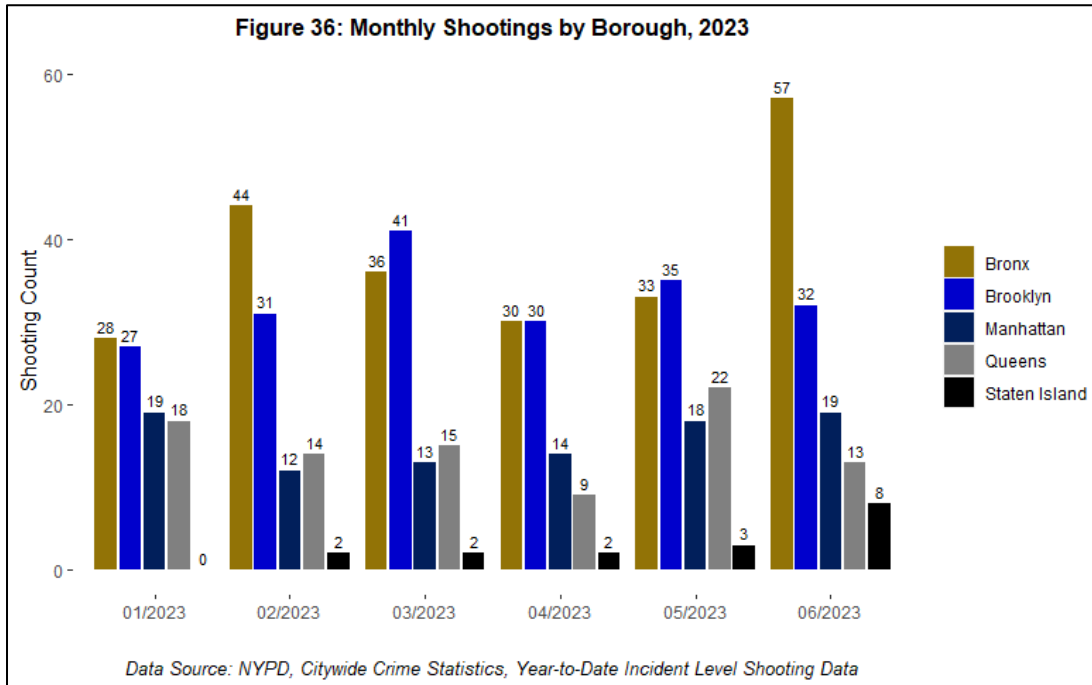
However, the NYPD’s historic shooting data shows that in the previous four years, the total number of shootings in NYC increased in the second half of the year. Furthermore, as presented in Figure 35, the total number of shootings flagged as murders also increased in the second half of the previous four years.

Based on these findings, New York City will likely experience a rise in shooting incidents between July 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

The rise in shootings observed the second half of each year could be attributed to seasonal patterns in crimes, as violent crime tends to spike in the warmer months. (Anderson, 1987, pp. 1162-63). In the four previous years, the number of monthly shootings in NYC tended to rise beginning in March and April, and fall after August and September. However, there were several colder months during which the number of monthly shooting incidents in NYC was high.



In both the present year and the previous four years, most of NYC’s monthly shooting incidents have taken place in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Staten Island sees the fewest monthly shootings.



Thus, in looking forward to the end of 2023, an increase in monthly shooting incidents will likely take place between July 1 and August 31. Then, in September or October, the number of monthly shooting incidents in NYC will likely begin to descend.

Overall, the total number of shooting incidents in NYC will likely be less than 2022’s total (1,716), but greater than 2019’s total (967). Assuming that there are 100-to-150 additional shootings in the second half of 2023 compared to the first half, **the total number of shootings in NYC in 2023 could fall somewhere between 1,354 and 1,404.**

Limitations

This strategic crime study relied on NYPD and New York State crime data that is continuously being updated and amended. Furthermore, multiple datasets and data sources were used to construct the figures presented in this report. Consequently, there may be some inconsistencies between the shooting, arrest, disposition, and sentencing numbers provided in this report and the numbers provided by other data sources or reports.

Additionally, the use of aggregate crime data to analyze trends and patterns of violent crime did not always allow for borough-specific and crime-specific analyses. It was not possible, for example, to identify only those murders, assaults, and robberies that involved firearms. Furthermore, data was not available on firearm recoveries in each of the five boroughs.

There was also limited crime data available for 2022, given that law enforcement annual reports are often published the following year. For example: at the time of this report, the ATF had not yet published its annual firearm trace data for 2022.

Another limitation was is that information sources and reports do not always follow the same format year-to-year, and may not include the same details each year. For example: the ATF's firearm trace data for 2019 noted the number and type of firearms recovered in New York City, as well as the crimes these NYC firearms were connected to. This information was not included in the trace data for 2020 and 2021. Thus, it was not possible to examine any trends or changes in the types of firearms recovered during the pandemic, or in the involvement of firearms in NYC's pandemic violent crime.

Lastly, the lack of uniformity in data collection and data transparency among New York City's five District Attorney's Offices did not allow for extensive analysis of crime-specific dispositions and sentencing. The Manhattan District Attorney's Office maintains an online data dashboard that provided extensive information about crime-specific arrest, prosecutions, and sentencing outcomes. Manhattan's dashboard even included stats on the reasons for case dismissals and the number years individuals were sentenced to. None of the other boroughs had publicly accessible databases or data reports on their websites.

Furthermore, the Richmond County District Attorney's Office (Staten Island) was the only DA's office that responded to a Freedom of Information request for crime-specific prosecution data.

Uniform data reporting and transparency among these offices would have been a valuable for this analysis. Manhattan's data dashboard can serve as a model for the other four offices.

Recommendations

As an interagency collaboration that takes a preventative approach to violent crime by targeting and prosecuting the sources of crime guns, the ATF, New York Field Division, Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) can play an integral role in combating gun violence in New York City in the post-pandemic years by leading targeted investigative and preventative efforts in New York City's shooting hotspots and interrupting the markets that supply the crime guns that wind up in New York City. (*Crime Gun Intelligence Centers*, 2020). These aims can be achieved by the CGIC leveraging its investigative and prosecutorial resources, and working with its local, state, and federal partners to develop strategic approaches to gun violence that are stringent, but not inadvertently harmful to communities that are already marginalized and vulnerable.

Targeted Investigative and Preventative Efforts

By leading targeted investigative and preventative efforts within the city's known gun violence hotspots, the CGIC may be able to identify, arrest, and prosecute the individuals and criminal organizations that perpetrate gun violence in high-risk neighborhoods. However, the approach to these targeted efforts must be carefully considered, as many of the pockets of violence pinpointed in this report are in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities of color located in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan.

While there is undoubtedly a need to keep both crime guns and violent criminals out of New York City's neighborhoods, over-policing these communities is not a best practice. (Stolper, 2019). People of color living in heavily-policed communities often feel less safe with increased police presence and surveillance due to negative encounters with law enforcement. (Stolper, 2019; Beck et al., 2022, p. 488). Furthermore, neighborhood policing in New York City has not been shown to prompt a reduction in violent crime. (Beck et al., 2022, p. 488).

At the same time, law enforcement presence is a necessity within these pockets of violent crime because “the police measure that most consistently reduces crime is the arrest rate.” (Francis, 2003). For example: during the 1990s, when the arrest rate for robbers increased by 10%, the number of robberies in New York City subsequently decreased. (Francis, 2003).

Partnering with New York's City Office to Prevent Gun Violence (OPGV) could allow the CGIC to develop a targeted approach that does not involve over-policing these vulnerable communities. The OPGV utilizes community-based and community-led approaches to public safety, and one of its programs – Public Safety Coalitions (PSCs) – stands out as a valuable means of information sharing about violent crime and known violent criminals in NYC's high-risk neighborhoods. (*Office to Prevent Gun Violence*). The PSCs in the East Flatbush and Bushwick neighborhoods in Brooklyn, for example, have served as liaisons between the police department and community residents; encouraging shared responsibility for public safety among law enforcement, community leaders, social service agencies and violence interrupter organizations. (*Office to Prevent Gun Violence*).

Crime Gun Market Disruption

To combat crime guns, CGIC resources and partnerships must disrupt the market for firearms – particularly by targeting the supply side of that market. (*Brady United Against Gun Violence*, 2020).

During the pandemic years, two firearms markets were operating simultaneously: the legal firearms markets and the illegal firearms market. The pandemic prompted an increase in demand for firearms, which in turn contributed to the number of crime guns in New York City. According to Johns Hopkins, many of the guns purchased during the first two years of the pandemic were purchased by first-time gun purchasers comprised of men and women of all races and ethnicities. (Davis et al., 2022, p. 4). This buying behavior may have been influenced by gun industry marketing and/or perceptions about personal safety. (Davis et al., 2022, p. 4; De Visé, 2023). The sociopolitical unrest that followed the racial justice protests in 2020 and the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol in 2021 also prompted spikes in firearms purchases during the pandemic. (Berman et al., 2022).

While demand for firearms fell in 2022, the supply of firearms -- and thus the increased accessibility to firearms -- remains problematic. (Sykes, 2022). Consequently, the tasks of tracing and recovering firearms, and cracking down on traffickers, straw purchasers, and ghost guns, have become heftier for the ATF and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. However, the implementation and enforcement of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) of 2022 is likely the key to combatting the markets for crime guns. (*U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs*, 2023).

The BSCA has “established new criminal offenses that specifically address straw purchasing and firearms trafficking.” (*ATF*, 2023). The Act also has “increased the maximum terms of imprisonment for the unlawful transfer and possession of firearms from 10-15 years,” and provides that “if a straw-purchased firearm is intended to be used to commit a federal or state felony,” the maximum term of imprisonment is up to 25 years of imprisonment. (*ATF*, 2023). Additionally, New York Governor Kathy Hochul has signed legislation “to crack down on ghost guns in New York, including making it illegal to possess an unfinished gun frame or receiver by anyone other than a licensed gunsmith or dealer.” (Klein & Marino, 2022).

It is too early to ascertain the effectiveness of these laws as a deterrent, as both have been implemented recently. It is also possible that the deterrent effect of these laws will not deter all violent offenders (i.e., gang members) to the same extent. However, these laws do empower the ATF's federal and state prosecutorial partners in NYC to take a no-tolerance stand against firearms trafficking, straw purchasing, ghost guns, and unlawful possession, as well as the perpetration of assaults, murders, and robberies using firearms.

Together, these recommended approaches may have some impact on NYC's violent crime. However, these approaches are not offered as cures to the problem, because ending epidemic of gun violence is an ongoing challenge that implicates social, economic, environmental, and political factors beyond the scope of law enforcement agencies. However, these strategies are offered as potential mechanisms through which law enforcement agencies like the ATF and the NYPD can reduce the spread of violence in the communities most at risk.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected international public health emergency. This crisis – as well as the social, political, and economic events that occurred concurrently – contributed to a record-breaking rise in gun violence that swept across the nation. Despite the State of New York’s strict stay-at-home orders and stringent gun laws, gun violence spiked in New York City – driven upwards by a variety of interconnected external social, economic, political, and environmental factors. Shooting incidents and gun murders increased dramatically after 2019, with the total number of shootings and the total number of gun murders peaking in 2021. By the end of 2022, these numbers had fallen. Presently, the numbers are still trending downward.

However, the post-pandemic shooting and gun murder numbers are still significantly elevated compared to pre-pandemic numbers. Furthermore, crime guns – which in NYC are comprised of a combination of legally-purchased firearms; legally-purchased but illegally trafficked or transferred firearms; and ghost guns – remain a threat to the public's health and safety.

This comprehensive report provides the ATF, New York Division, Crime Gun Intelligence Center with an in-depth overview of the patterns and trends in gun violence that took place in NYC during the pandemic, and offers insight on where New York City’s five boroughs may be heading in the next six months. This data and the accompanying research can hopefully inform the CGICs future collaborations, enforcement efforts, and policy initiatives that are aimed at curbing the epidemic of gun violence in NYC.



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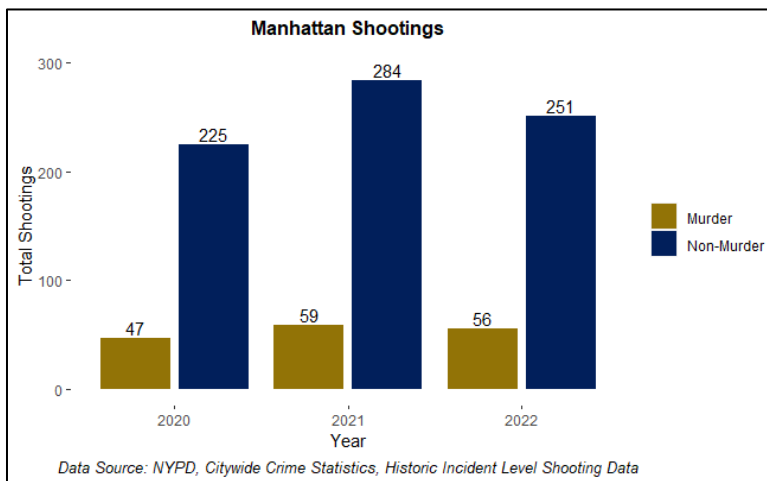
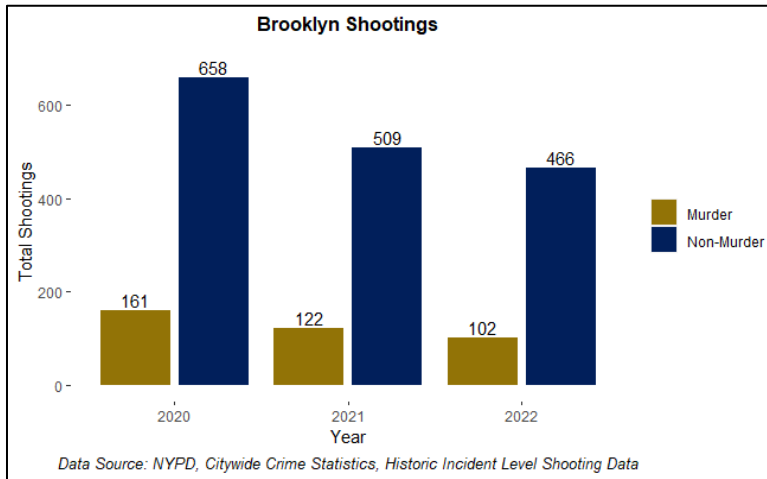
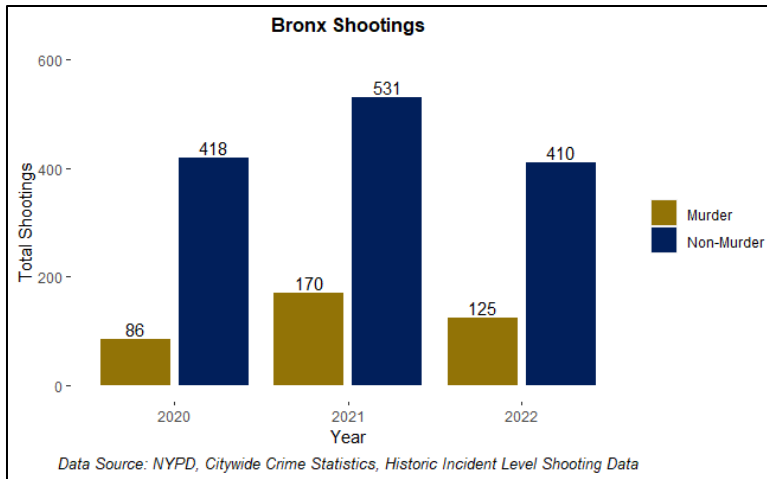
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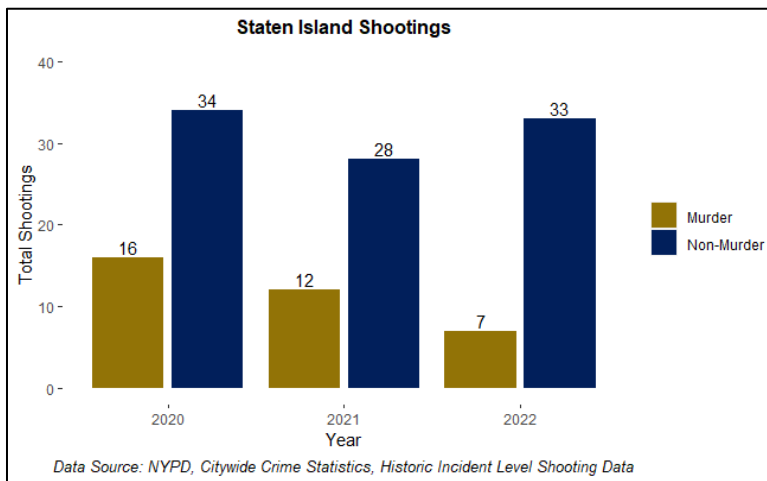
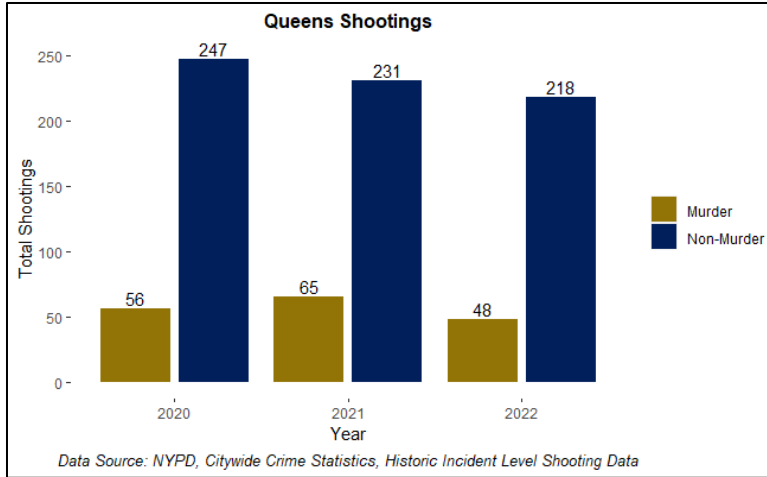
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Appendix 1: Borough Shooting Data





Appendix 2: Precinct Level Shooting Data

Precinct	Borough	Total Shootings	Total Murder Flags	CPW 2 Arrests
1	MANHATTAN	3	0	1
5	MANHATTAN	8	3	13
6	MANHATTAN	0	0	0
7	MANHATTAN	13	0	1
9	MANHATTAN	9	5	1
10	MANHATTAN	12	6	0
13	MANHATTAN	4	1	1
14	MANHATTAN	8	6	3
17	MANHATTAN	3	0	0
18	MANHATTAN	7	1	6
19	MANHATTAN	2	1	0
20	MANHATTAN	5	0	2
22	MANHATTAN	0	0	0
23	MANHATTAN	29	3	6
24	MANHATTAN	5	1	4
25	MANHATTAN	61	14	11
26	MANHATTAN	7	0	1
28	MANHATTAN	28	3	6
30	MANHATTAN	21	2	4
32	MANHATTAN	44	4	7
33	MANHATTAN	11	1	3
34	MANHATTAN	27	5	8
40	BRONX	71	15	8
41	BRONX	29	8	4
42	BRONX	42	9	9
43	BRONX	40	2	20
44	BRONX	71	18	14
45	BRONX	14	2	10
46	BRONX	59	19	15
47	BRONX	50	14	19
48	BRONX	72	21	15
49	BRONX	33	5	5
50	BRONX	15	2	5
52	BRONX	39	10	11
60	BROOKLYN	31	5	4
61	BROOKLYN	20	5	2
62	BROOKLYN	5	2	1
63	BROOKLYN	13	1	2
66	BROOKLYN	4	0	0
67	BROOKLYN	56	17	5
68	BROOKLYN	4	0	0

69	BROOKLYN	27	6	2
70	BROOKLYN	15	2	0
71	BROOKLYN	23	5	4
72	BROOKLYN	11	0	1
73	BROOKLYN	80	13	19
75	BROOKLYN	87	20	21
76	BROOKLYN	6	1	2
77	BROOKLYN	45	9	1
78	BROOKLYN	5	0	0
79	BROOKLYN	30	6	1
81	BROOKLYN	42	6	14
83	BROOKLYN	19	2	3
84	BROOKLYN	12	1	1
88	BROOKLYN	11	0	1
90	BROOKLYN	11	0	6
94	BROOKLYN	11	1	1
100	QUEENS	11	2	0
101	QUEENS	26	4	4
102	QUEENS	25	6	1
103	QUEENS	33	6	9
104	QUEENS	14	4	2
105	QUEENS	28	7	3
106	QUEENS	18	5	5
107	QUEENS	15	1	2
108	QUEENS	6	0	0
109	QUEENS	8	3	9
110	QUEENS	13	2	6
111	QUEENS	3	0	4
112	QUEENS	3	1	1
113	QUEENS	20	4	14
114	QUEENS	20	1	8
115	QUEENS	13	2	13
120	STATEN ISLAND	28	6	3
121	STATEN ISLAND	9	0	0
122	STATEN ISLAND	0	0	0
123	STATEN ISLAND	3	1	2

Data Source: NYPD, Citywide Crime Statistics, Historic Incident Level Shooting Data

Appendix 3: Borough Indicators

Borough	Median Income (2018)	Poverty Rate (2018)	Unemployment Rate (2018)	Serious Crime Rate per 1000 residents (2019)
The Bronx	\$39,100	27.40%	10.10%	13.80%
Brooklyn	\$62,230	19.00%	4.90%	10.60%
Manhattan	\$86,470	15.50%	4.90%	16.70%
Queens	\$70,470	11.50%	5.20%	8.20%
Staten Island	\$83,520	11.40%	4.10%	4.90%

Data Source: NYU Furman Center

Appendix 4: Penal Code Definitions

NY Penal Code § 125.25: Murder in the Second Degree is a Class A1 Felony. A person is guilty of murder in the second degree when with intent to cause the death of another person, he causes the death of such person or of a third person.

NY Penal Code § 265.03(1)-(3): Criminal Possession of Weapon in the Second Degree is a Class C Felony. A person is guilty of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree when: (1) with intent to use the same unlawfully against another, such person: (a) possesses a machine-gun; or (b) possesses a loaded firearm; or (c) possesses a disguised gun; or (2) such person possesses five or more firearms; or (3) such person possesses any loaded firearm.

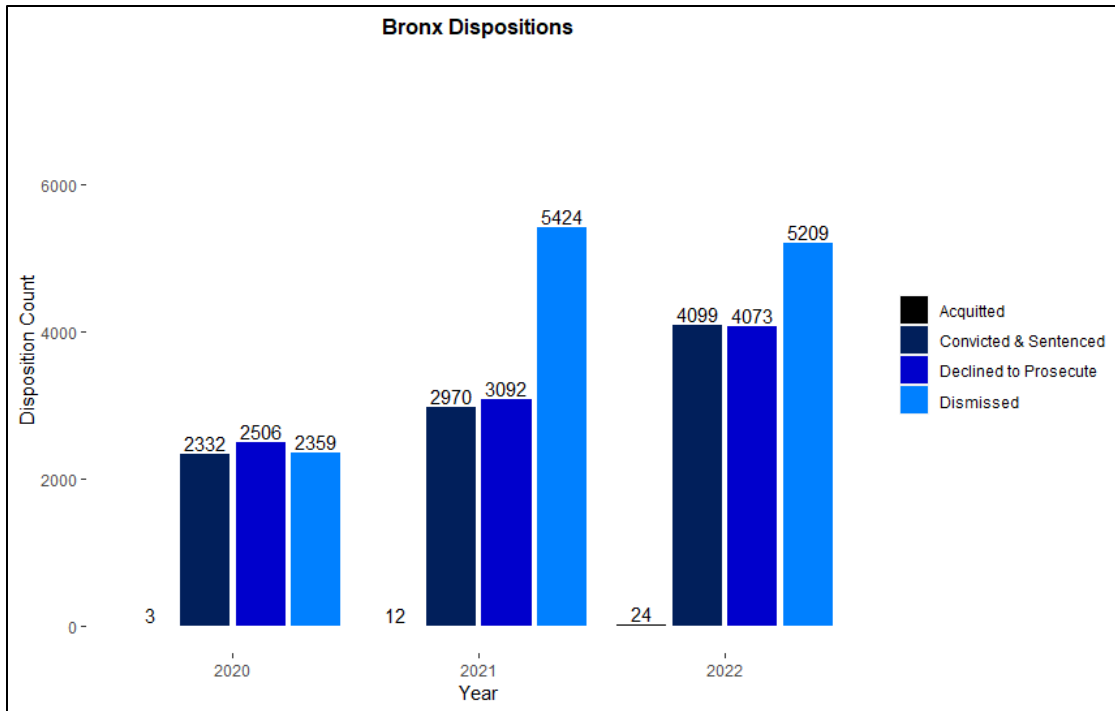
NY Penal Code § 160.10(2)(b): Robbery in the Second Degree is a Class C Felony. A person is guilty of robbery in the second degree when he forcibly steals property and when, during the commission of the crime or of immediate flight therefrom, he or another participant in the crime: displays what appears to be a pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, or other type of firearm.

NY Penal Code § 160.15(1)-(4): Robbery in the First Degree is a Class B Felony. A person is guilty of robbery in the first degree when he forcibly steals property and when, during the commission of the crime or of immediate flight therefrom, he or another participant in the crime (1) causes serious physical injury to any person who is not a participant in the crime; or (2) is armed with a deadly weapon; or (3) uses or threatens the immediate use of a dangerous instrument; or (4) displays what appears to be a pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, or other firearm.

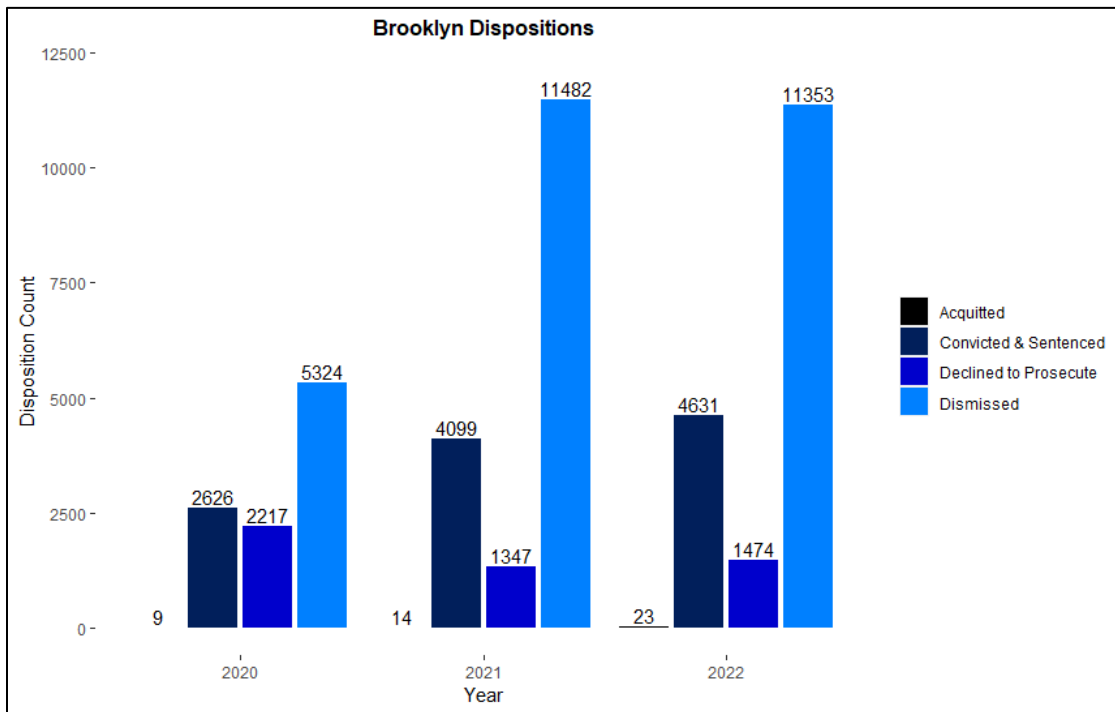
NY Penal Code § 120.05(2): Assault in the Second Degree is a Class D Felony. A person is guilty of assault in the second degree when with intent to cause physical injury to another person, he causes such injury to such person or to a third person by means of a deadly weapon or a dangerous instrument.

NY Penal Code § 120.10(1): Assault in the First Degree is a Class B Felony. A person is guilty of assault in the first degree when with intent to cause serious physical injury to another person, he causes such injury to such person or to a third person by means of a deadly weapon or a dangerous instrument.

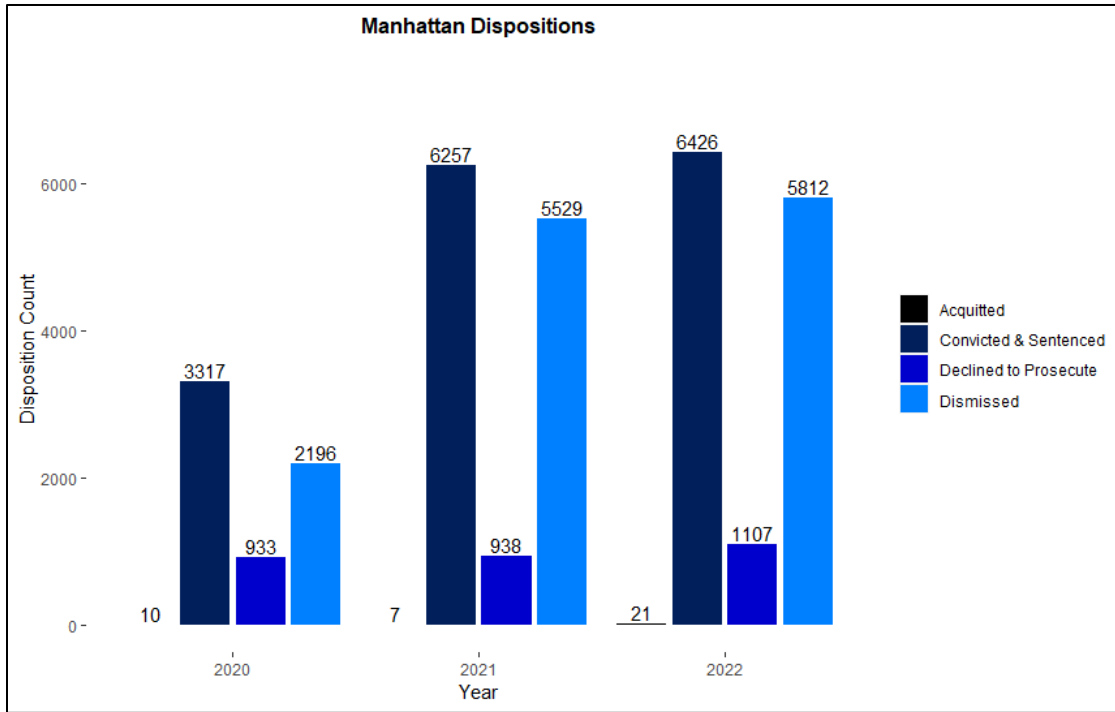
Appendix 5: Borough Disposition Data



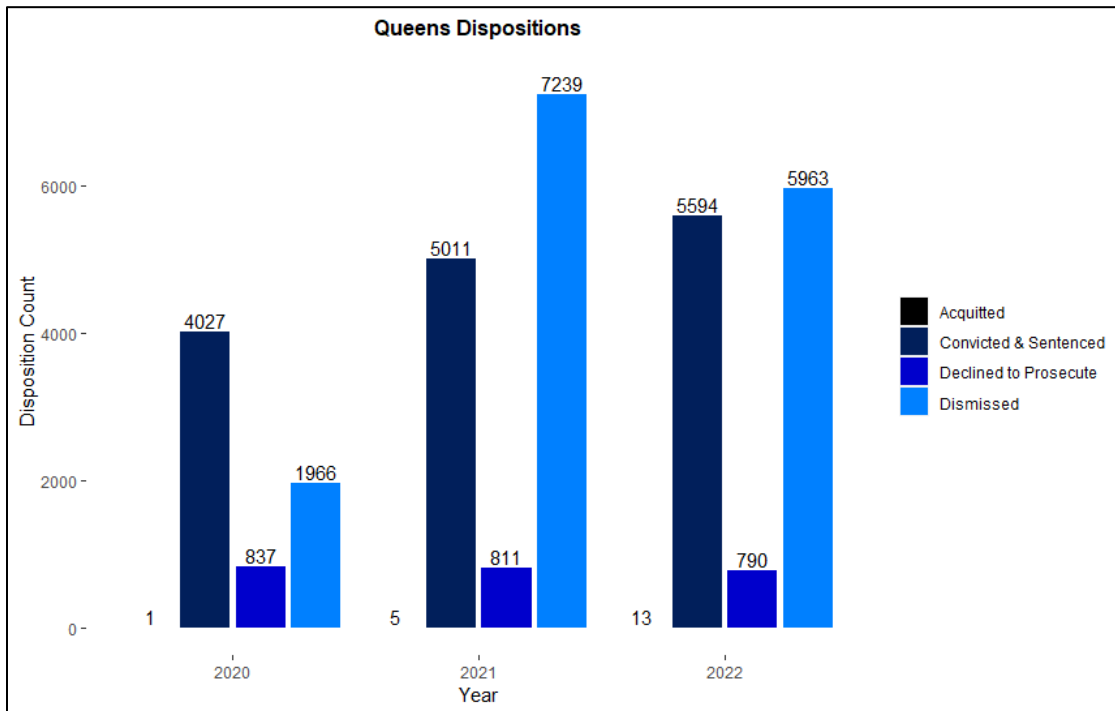
Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics



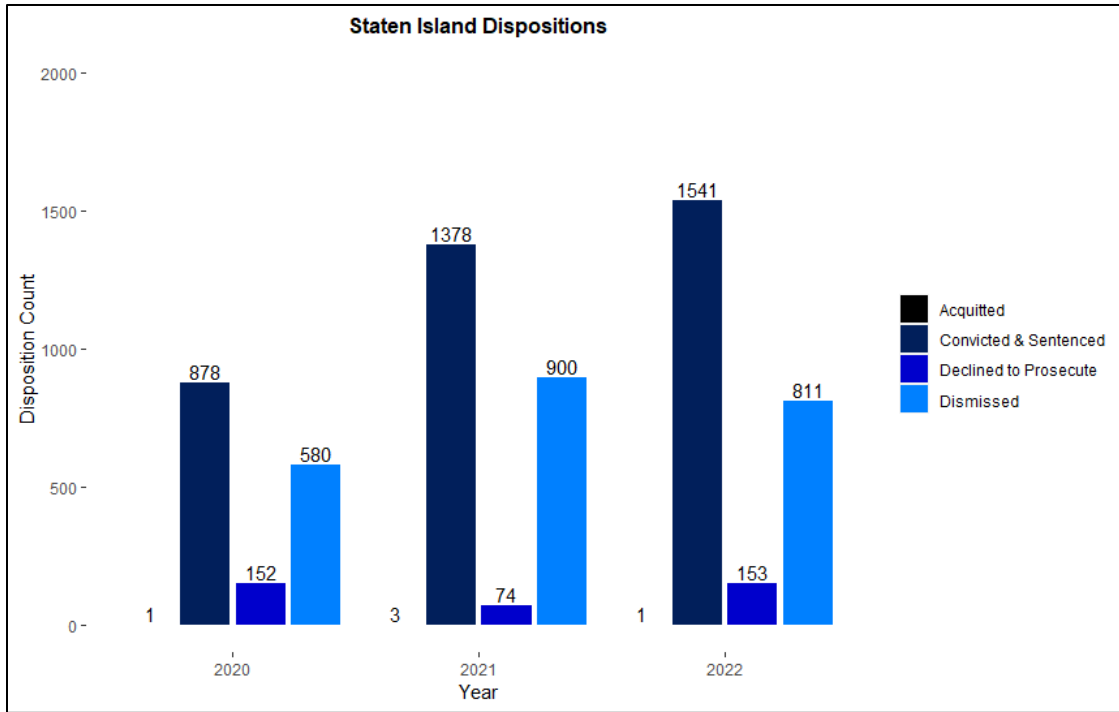
Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

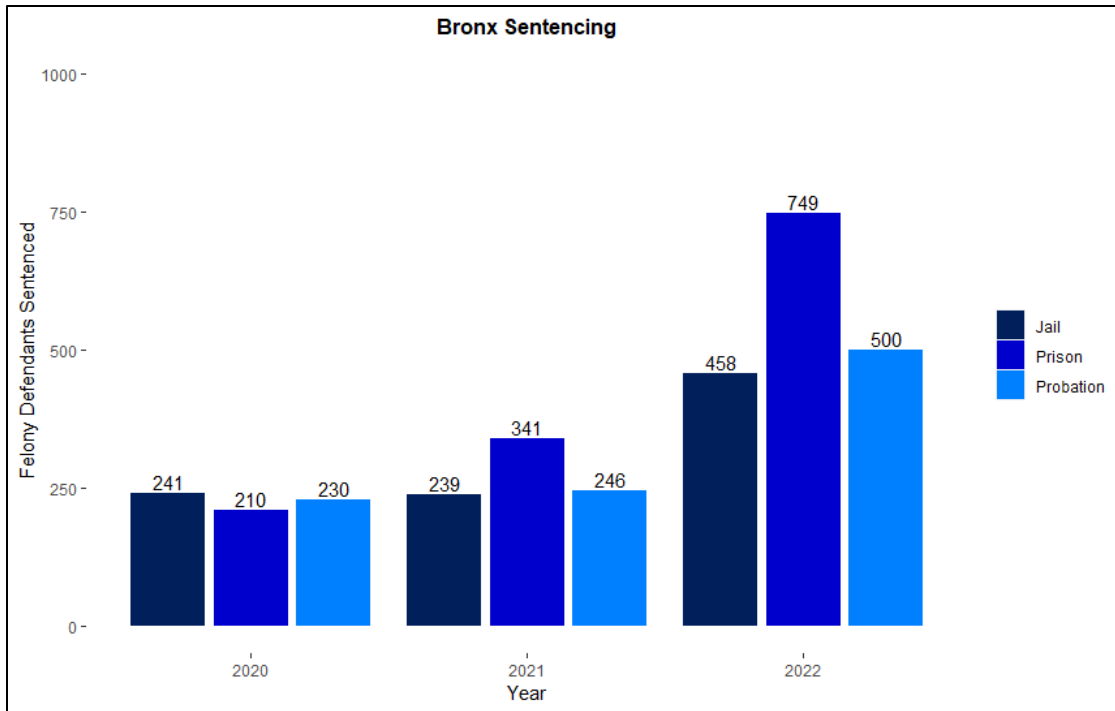


Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

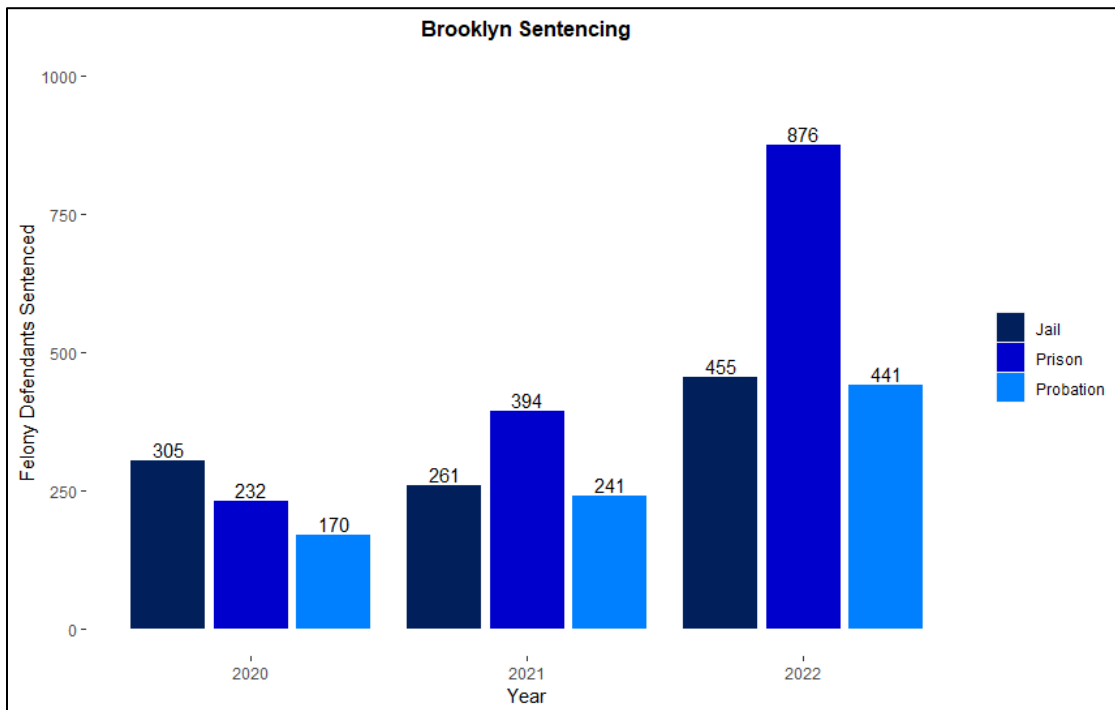


Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

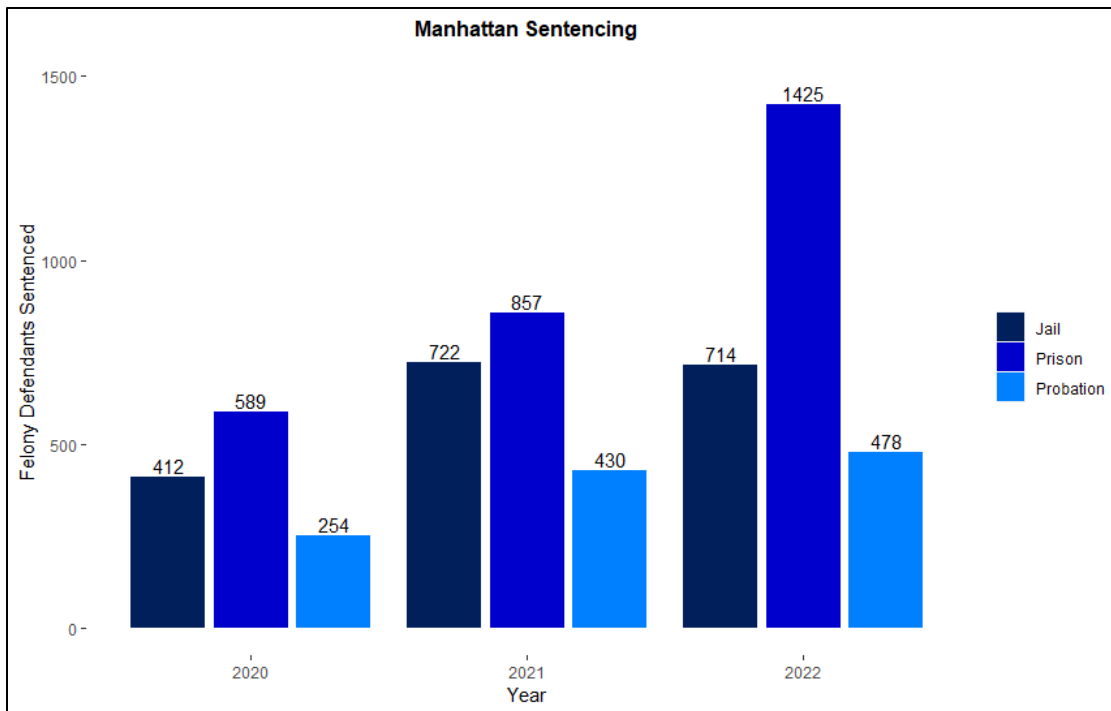
Appendix 6: Borough Sentencing Data



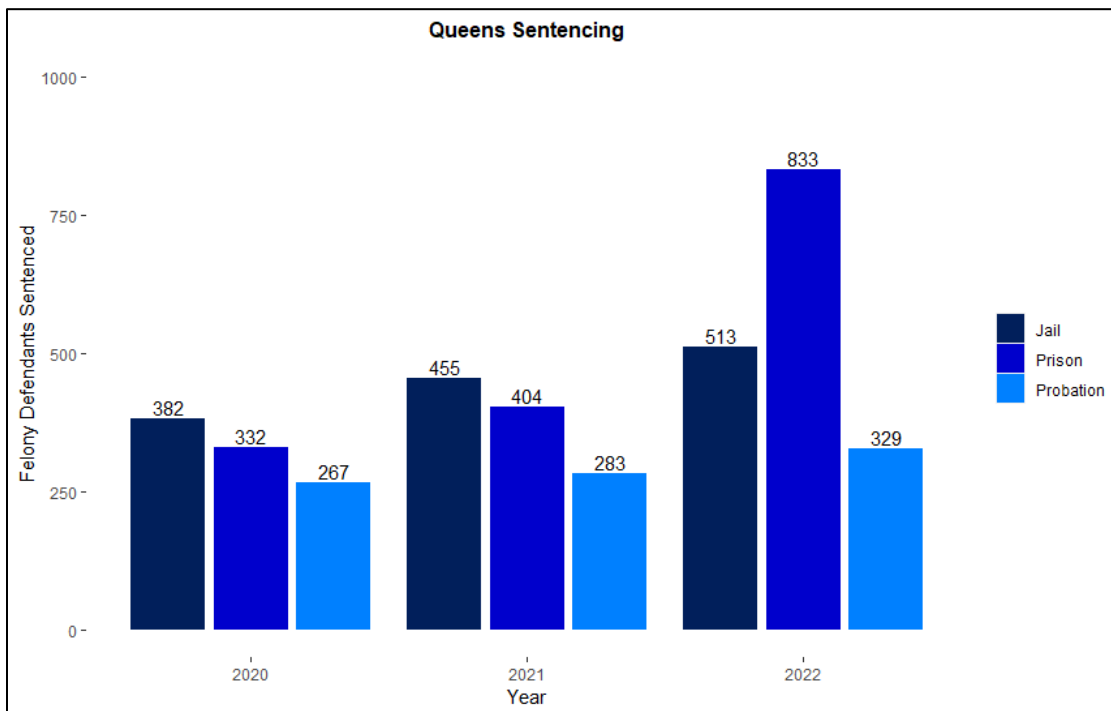
Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics



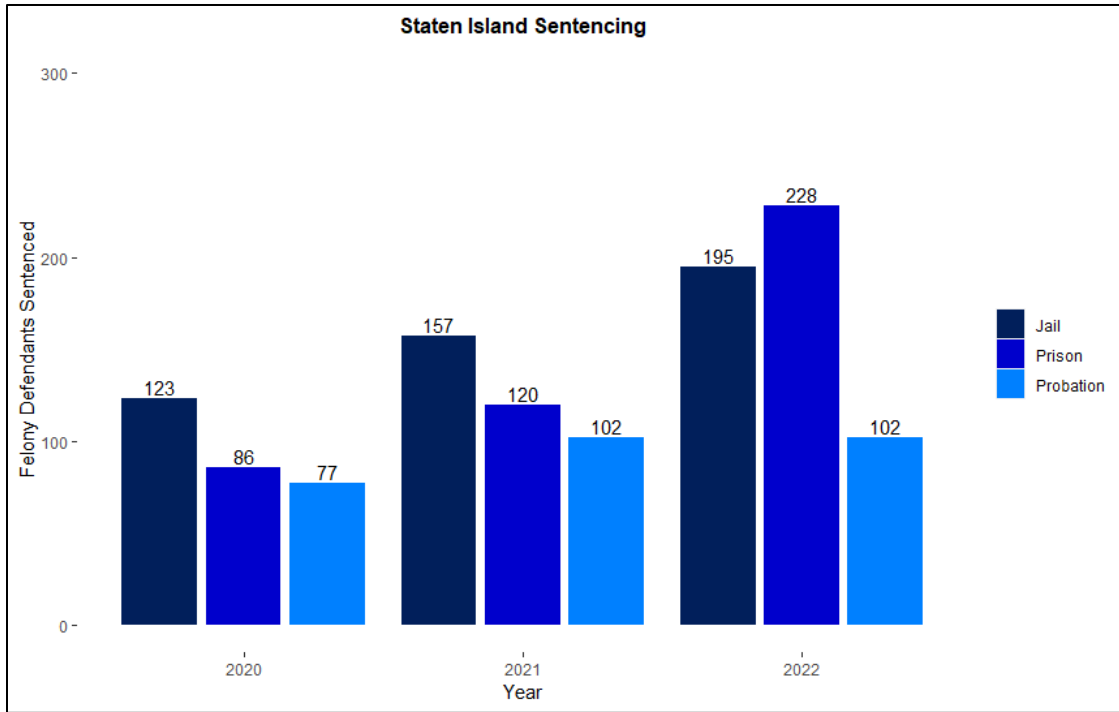
Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics



Data Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistics

