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Shooting Trends Vary Across Areas of New York City

by Jeffrey A. Butts and Richard Espinobarros

Reports from [May](#) and [August](#) 2021 pointed to slight reductions in New York City’s recent surge of “shooting incidents” (see the definition below). The number of shooting incidents (referred to here simply as shootings) was higher in 2020 and 2021 than in 2019, but the rate of increase appeared to be slowing. The degree of change varied across areas of the city.

New data released by the New York City Police Department measure all shootings through September 2021, allowing researchers to examine shootings by calendar quarter. Crime data fluctuate considerably, making interpretation of weekly or monthly trends challenging. Shootings also follow a clear seasonal pattern (increasing in Spring and Summer before falling through Winter). Analyzing data by quarter is preferable.

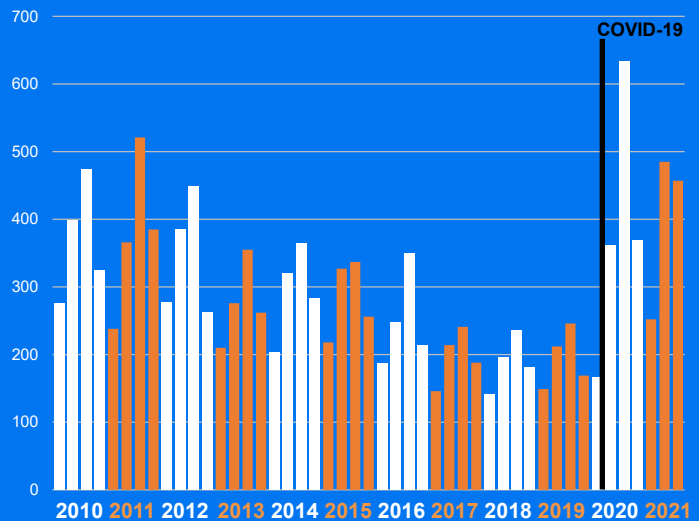
The analysis demonstrates that shootings fell considerably from 2013 through 2019, perhaps aided by City investments in violence prevention efforts. A sharp increase in shootings appeared in the second quarter of 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in the United States and elsewhere.

An accurate year-to-year comparison before and after 2020 would focus on the second and third quarters alone (April-September), excluding the pre-pandemic first quarter of 2020 (January-March). In the second and third quarters of 2020, citywide shootings were more than double the number of shootings in 2019 (995 versus 458, or 117% higher). In 2021, shootings were still twice as high as 2019 citywide (942 versus 458, or 106% higher), only slightly better than in 2020.

Some area trends were more encouraging. The surge in shootings seemed to be declining in Brooklyn and Staten Island. Shootings were more common in the second and third quarters of 2021 than in the same period of 2019, but the degree of difference was smaller than in 2020. The relative increase over 2019 fell between 2020 and 2021 in Brooklyn (from 164% to 83%) and Staten Island (from 100% to 62%).

In the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens the shooting surge appeared to be continuing. In those boroughs, the number of shootings in the second and third quarters of 2021 exceeded the same two quarters in 2020. Shootings in 2021 outnumbered those in 2019 by 142% in the Bronx and 108% in Manhattan, and were unchanged in Queens.

Number of Shootings Across All Areas of New York City by Calendar Quarter: January 2010 to September 2021



Shooting Incidents in Second and Third Calendar Quarters Only (April–September): 2019, 2020, and 2021

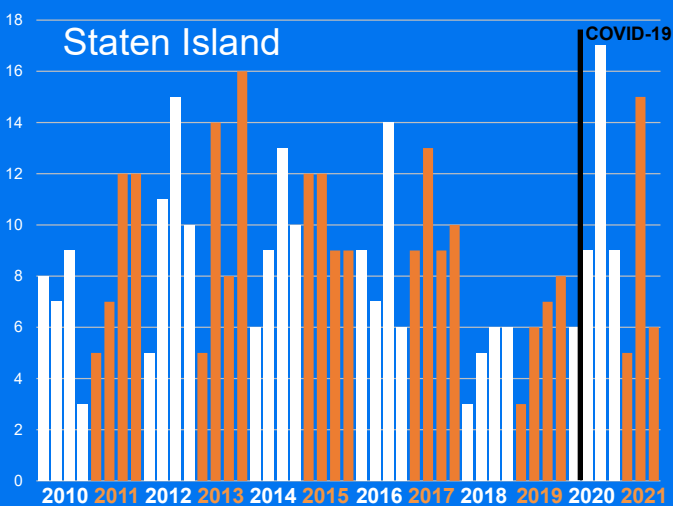
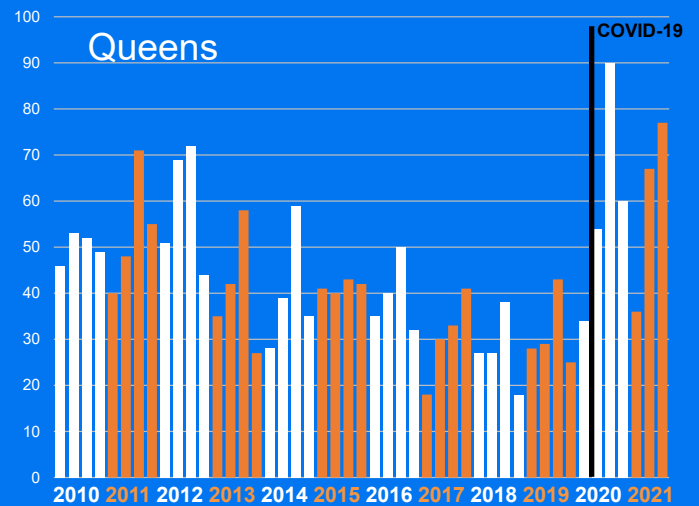
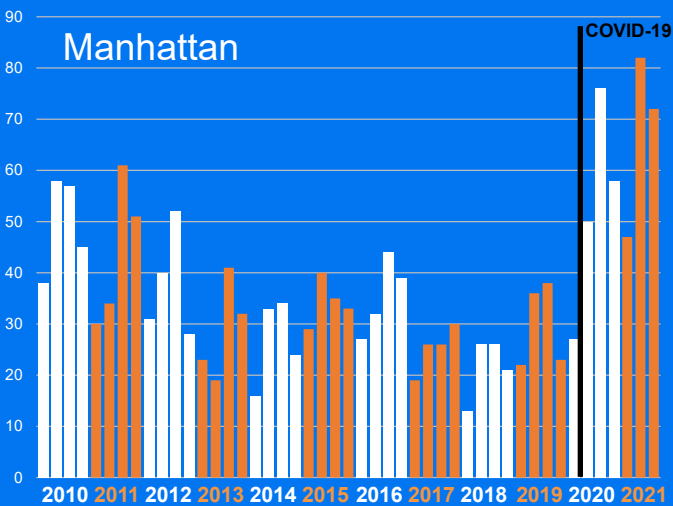
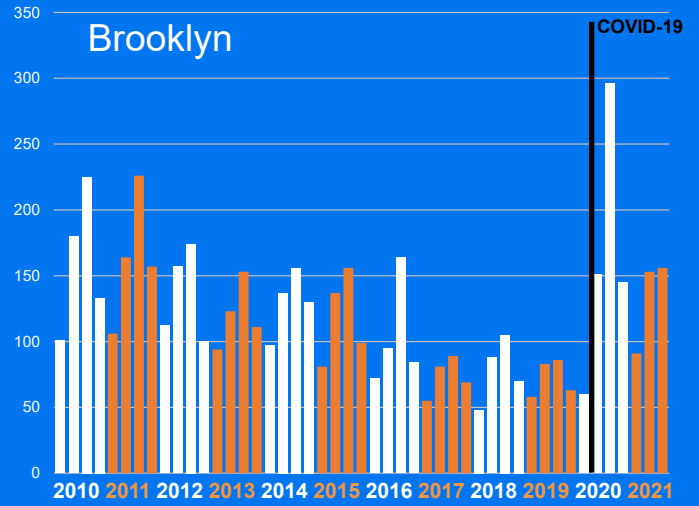
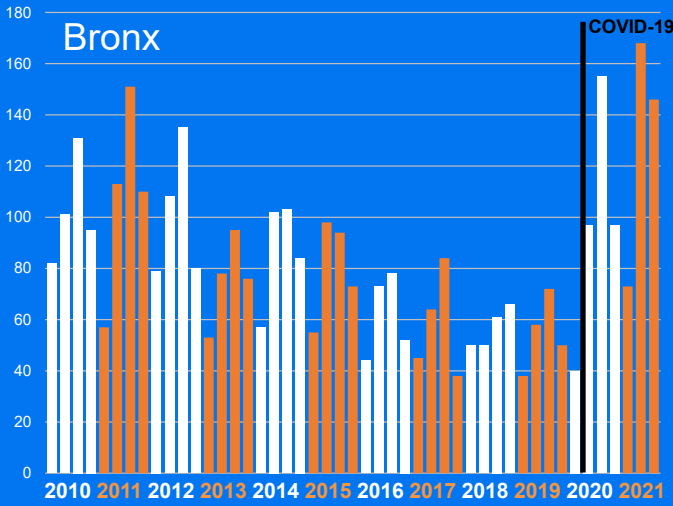
	Shooting Incidents: Second and Third Quarters Only			Percent Change Relative to 2019	
	2019	2020	2021	2020	2021
Bronx	130	252	314	94%	142%
Brooklyn	169	447	309	164%	83%
Manhattan	74	126	154	70%	108%
Queens	72	144	144	100%	100%
Staten Island	13	26	21	100%	62%
Citywide	458	995	942	117%	106%

Notes: The New York City Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) provided funding support for this analysis, but all conclusions are those of the authors. Funders and partners of the Research and Evaluation Center are not responsible for any findings presented in Center publications.

Data Source: Shooting incident data were provided by the New York City Police Department and analyzed by the John Jay College Research and Evaluation Center. Shooting incident data measure separate incidents in which one or more persons were hit by gunfire in New York City regardless of how many victims were involved in each incident. Data measuring the number of individual shooting victims across all incidents are available from NYPD but not used in this analysis. To aggregate shooting data by borough, researchers used boundaries provided by the NYPD Office of Crime Control Strategies.

* Figures slightly revised in December 2021 based on additional NYPD information.

Number of Shooting Incidents in Five NYC Boroughs by Calendar Quarter (2010 Quarter 1 through 2021 Quarter 3)



Total Annual Shooting Incidents in New York City: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and estimated 2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Bronx	231	227	218	389	501
Brooklyn	294	311	290	652	501
Manhattan	101	86	119	211	269
Queens	122	110	125	238	236
Staten Island	41	20	24	41	35
Citywide	789	754	776	1,531	1,545

* Annual totals for 2021 are estimated with actual data for Quarters 1-3 and a projected amount for Quarter 4 calculated using the average proportion of annual totals represented by each fourth quarter between 2015 and 2019.