



EXPANSIVE AND FOCUSED SURVEILLANCE

NEW FINDINGS ON CHICAGO'S GANG DATABASE

JUNE 2018

A REPORT PREPARED BY THE UIC POLICING IN CHICAGO RESEARCH GROUP, IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE CHICAGO COALITION TO EXPAND SANCTUARY AND THE CAMPAIGN TO ERASE THE GANG DATABASE

INTRODUCTION

In April 2018, ProPublica Illinois reporter Mick Dumke released two spreadsheets containing redacted versions of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) gang database. Building on our previous research into the CPD's gang database, the University of Illinois at Chicago Policing in Chicago Research Group (PCRGR) analyzed the new statistics.

The findings presented below focus on three issues:

- 1) the rapid expansion of the database,
- 2) data on the ages of people in the database, and
- 3) evidence of racial discrimination.

We conclude with an attempt to estimate the overall size of the CPD's gang database. Overall, we find that the CPD gang database is extremely **expansive**, meaning that the database is growing quickly and includes large numbers of minors and elders, while also being highly **focused**, meaning that it disproportionately targets communities of color in Chicago.

We carried out this analysis in response to concerns raised by the Chicago Coalition to Expand Sanctuary, whose members and constituents have been placed in the gang database by the Chicago Police Department.

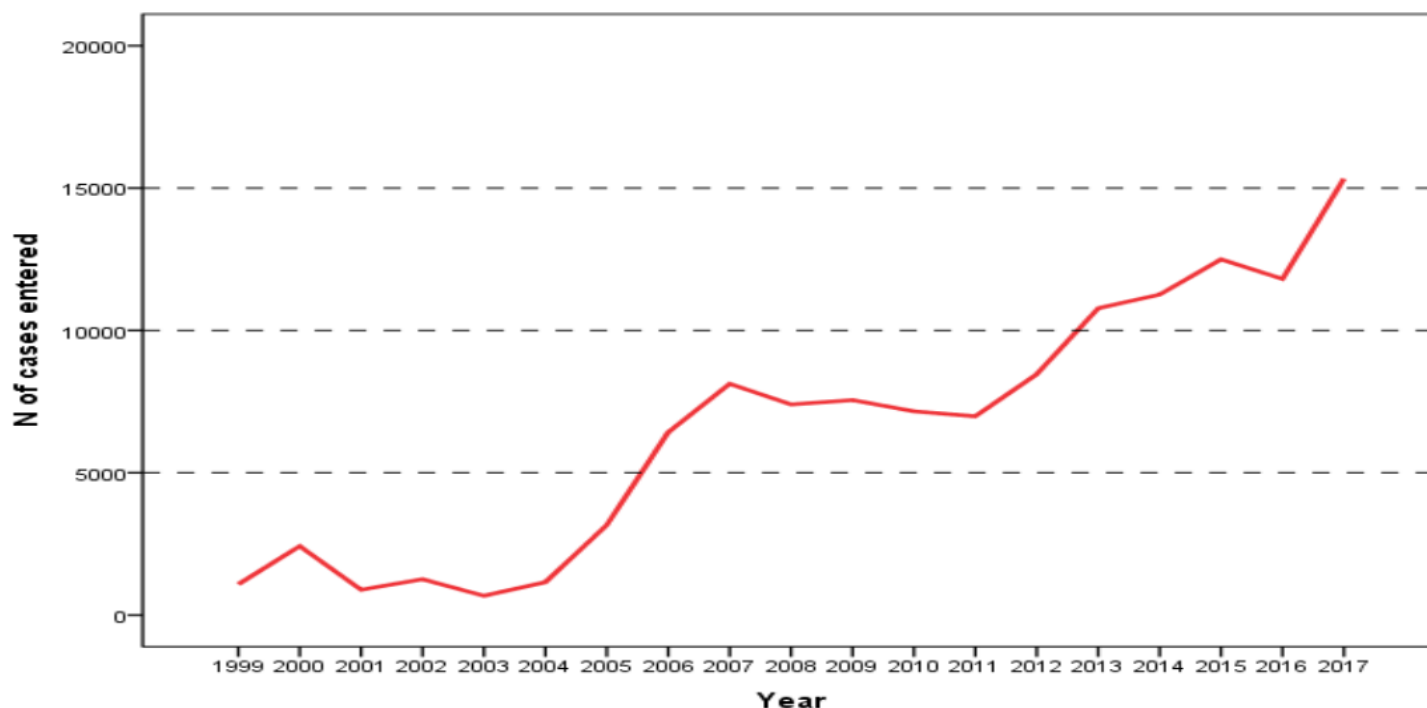
Overview: Key Findings

- The CPD Gang Database contains the names of more than 128,000 adults. We estimate that it also includes between 28,000 and 68,000 minors, with an overall total of between 155,000 and 195,000 people.
- Nearly 75,000 names have been added to the gang database since 2012, with more than 15,000 adults added in 2017 alone.
- More than 2,800 people on the database are over 60 years old and more than 14,800 people are over 50.
- More than 7,700 people who are currently adults were added to the gang database before they turned 18, including 52 who were only 11 or 12 at the time.
- 70% of people on the gang database are black, 25% are Latinx, and less than 5% are white.
- 95.3% of people added to the gang database before they turned 18 are black or Latinx.
- In six predominantly black neighborhoods, more than 10% of the total population appears on the Chicago Gang Database
- Black and Latinx people are more likely than white people to end up on the gang database when they are stopped by police.
- Less than 1,100 people are listed as members of historically white gangs. And many of the people listed as members of these gangs are people of color.

THE RAPID EXPANSION OF THE DATABASE

Our initial report in February 2018 indicated that there were more than 128,000 people in the database. We were unaware at that time, however, that data on minors (people under 18) had been redacted for privacy reasons. **This means that there are more than 128,000 adults in Chicago's gang database, but the overall gang database is actually much larger.** See below for an attempt to estimate the overall numbers.

While the size of the database raises concerns about the extent of police surveillance, even more troubling is the alarming rate at which CPD is adding names to the list. As the graph below demonstrates, the database grew quickly from 2005-2007 and again from 2012 to the present. Nearly 75,000 names have been added to the gang database since 2012, with more than 15,000 adults added in 2017 alone – or more than 40 new adults every day. This points to the growing police reliance on the construction of massive databases for tracking and targeting residents of Chicago.



VAST TRACKING OF MINORS AND ELDERS

Data about the ages of people listed in the gang database raises several major concerns. First, the new data raises questions about the labelling and tracking of thousands of older residents. Reporting on the release of the new CPD data, Mick Dumke noted that 163 people on the database are currently in their 70s and 80s. Continuing this line of analysis, we can add that more than 2800 people are over 60 years old and more than 14,800 people are over 50. What benefit does the CPD gain from maintaining such a list? And why does the CPD see gang membership as a lifelong affiliation?

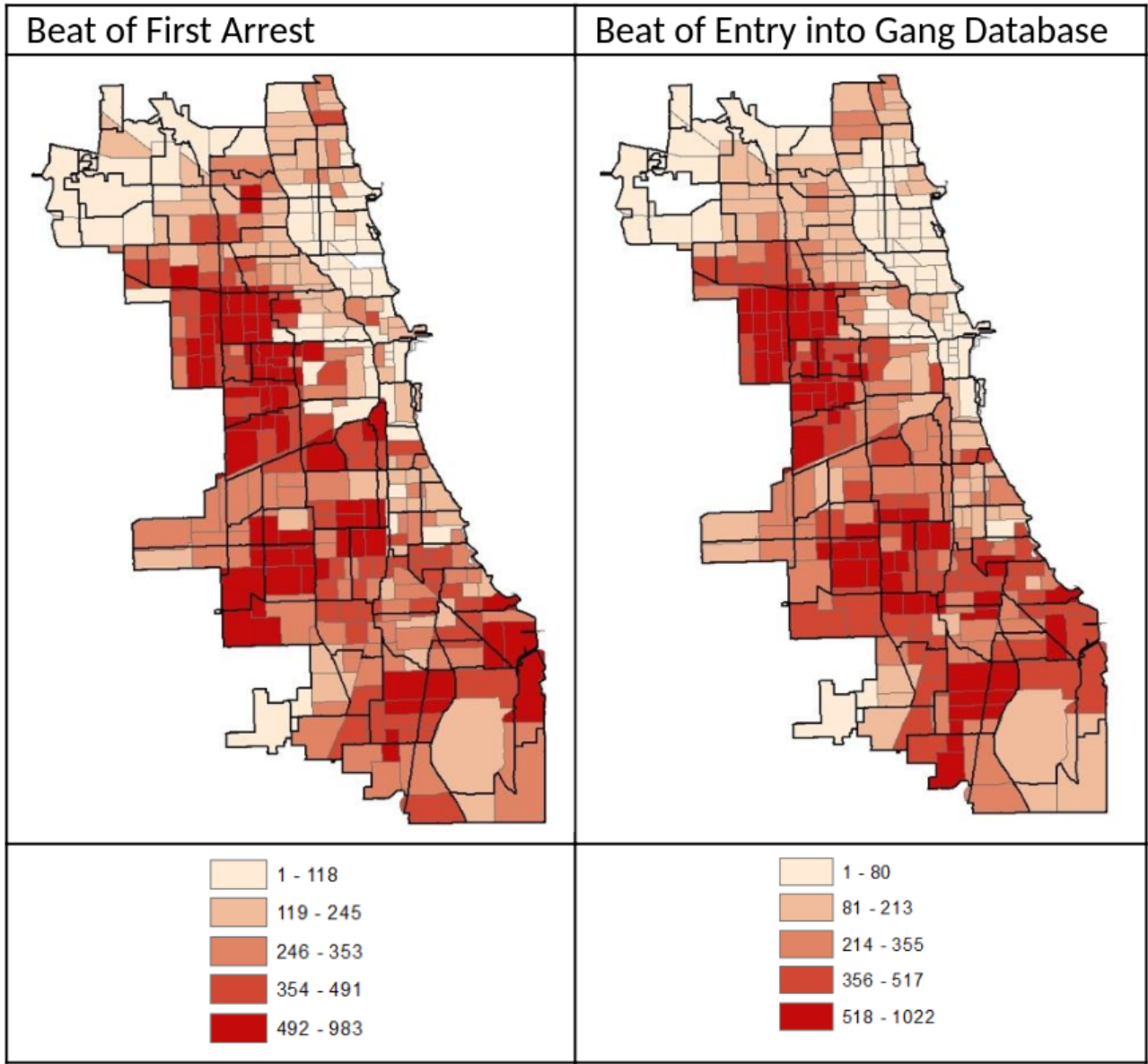
Second, the new data provides disturbing insights into the police targeting of young people in Chicago. Although the spreadsheets do not include information about people who are currently under 18, the 2018 spreadsheet includes the date when over 103,500 adults were added to the list. Using that information along with the individual's current age, we were able to calculate how old each individual was when their name was entered into the gang database. **This analysis reveals that over 7,700 people who are currently adults were added to the gang database before they turned 18, including more than 1,900 who were added to the database before they turned 16. 95.3% of people added to the database before they turned 18 are black or Latinx. Moreover, 52 people who are currently adults were added to the gang database when they were only 11 or 12. All but one are black or Latinx.** In addition, the 2017 spreadsheet includes the date of the person's first arrest. Using this information, we were able to calculate that 33.4% of adults on the database were arrested before they turned 16 and 81.1% were arrested before they turned 20.

Third, the new statistics further confirm that the database contains numerous errors and inaccuracies. As Mick Dumke noted, two people are listed as 132 years old and another 13 are supposedly 118 years old. These entries are obviously errors: all of those people were added to the database after 2006. Dumke concluded that the Chicago gang database is "riddled with dubious entries, discrepancies, and outright errors."

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN GANG TRACKING

As previous reports have noted, 70% of the adults on the gang database are black, 25% are Latinx, and less than 5% are white. Along with these statistics, the new CPD data provides additional compelling evidence that the gang database disproportionately targets black and Latinx communities in Chicago.

The new data contains information about (a) the police beat where individuals on the database were first arrested and (b) the beat where CPD officers were working when they added the individuals to the database. As the maps below demonstrate, these locations are highly concentrated on the South and West sides of Chicago.



RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN GANG TRACKING (CONTINUED)

In several predominantly black neighborhoods, more than 10% of the total population appears on the gang database: North Lawndale, Englewood, West Englewood, East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, and Pullman. At the same time, less than 0.2% of the population in wealthy white neighborhoods such as Lincoln Park and Lakeview are on the gang database.

In Mount Greenwood, where 86% of the population is white and a large number of residents work for the CPD, only 0.17% of the population is on the database. These numbers demonstrate the disproportionately aggressive targeting of black and Latinx neighborhoods in Chicago.

Moreover, an examination of the gangs included in the database reveals a striking absence of white gangs. Less than 1,100 people are listed as members of historically white gangs such as the Gaylords, the Insane Popes, the Simon City Royals, the C-Notes, and the 12th Street Players. These gangs are no longer exclusively white – and many of the people listed as members are people of color. Yet the Chicago Outfit and biker gangs such as the Outlaws are entirely absent from the list. And only 23 people are listed as members of white supremacist organizations. In short, the new data suggests that the CPD has difficulty seeing a gang member without the presence of a black or brown body.

Finally, we compared the racial demographics of people who were **stopped by police (issued contact cards)** and people who were **entered into the gang database** from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015. Overall, black and Latinx people were entered into the database at higher rates than they were stopped (Black: 76% vs 71.9%; Latinx: 21.3% vs 16.9%) while white people were entered into the database at lower rates than they were stopped (2.4% vs 9.9%). This means that black and Latinx people were more likely than white people to end up on the gang database when they were stopped by police. Data from specific neighborhoods highlights these disturbing patterns. In Edgewater, for instance, white people received 33.6% of contact cards, but made up only 7.6% of people entered into the database. In the same neighborhood, black people received 41% of contact cards but made up 61.6% of people added to the database while Latinx people received 18.6% of contact cards but made up 29.3% of people added to the database. In West Ridge, more white people (31.2%) received contact cards than black people (27.5%) or Latinx people (27.6%). But only 13.6% of the people added to the gang database were white, whereas 44.5% were black and 37.4% were Latinx. Throughout the city, black and Latinx people had a greater chance of ending up on the gang database when they were stopped by police.

ESTIMATING THE OVERALL SIZE OF THE DATABASE

Recognizing that the CPD targets so many young people for inclusion in the gang database, we attempted to estimate the overall size of the database by calculating the number minors (people under 18 years old) whose information was excluded from the 2017 and 2018 CPD spreadsheets. We used three different methods to calculate these estimates and expect that the truth lies somewhere between our second and third estimates.

Estimate based on 2018 CPD spreadsheet focusing on individuals added as minors

Our first estimate is our most conservative. According to the 2018 spreadsheet, 7.3% of adults on the list were added when they were under 18. If we assume that a similar proportion (7.3%) of people on the overall database are currently under 18, we would estimate that the database includes roughly 10,150 minors and an overall total of around 138,950 people as of March 2018. These numbers are almost certainly underestimates.

Estimate based on comparison between 2017 CPD spreadsheet and 2016 SSL under 20

Our second estimate is based on comparing the 2017 CPD gang database spreadsheet with the 2016 CPD Strategic Subject List (SSL), which we discussed in our initial report. According to the SSL, 18.6% of people identified as "gang affiliated" are under 20. If we assume that a similar percentage (18.6%) of people on the gang database are currently under 20, then we would estimate that the gang database includes about 27,830 minors, which would make the overall total for the database around 154,900 people in November 2017.

Estimate based on 2016 SSL data on "gang affiliated" individuals in their 30s and 40s

Our largest estimate is based on a critical analysis of the SSL data. Unlike the gang database, the SSL algorithm takes into account a person's history of arrests. Because younger people are less likely to have an extensive arrest record, we might expect to see a smaller percentage of minors on the SSL than on the gang database. On the other hand, the proportion of people in their 30s or 40s might not be much different on the gang database and the SSL. 34.2% of the people identified as "gang affiliated" on the SSL are in their 30s and 40s. If we assume that 34.2% of people on the gang database are in their 30s and 40s, we would estimate that the gang database includes an overall total of about 196,600 people including roughly 68,600 minors as of November 2017. These numbers are almost certainly overestimates.

Based on (a) the rapid expansion of the gang database and (b) our assumption that the gang database includes a higher percentage of minors than the SSL, **we expect that the CPD gang database currently includes between 28,000 and 68,000 minors and an overall total of between 155,000 and 195,000 people.**

ADVOCACY AGAINST THE GANG DATABASE

Since we released our initial report on Chicago's Gang Database in February 2018, the organizations that make up the Coalition to Expand Sanctuary have continued grassroots efforts to raise awareness about the gang database and build a movement against repressive policing and surveillance in black and brown communities. In March, the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced the launch of investigations into the CPD's gang database and Strategic Subject List (SSL), responding to concerns raised by the campaign and outlined in our report. Throughout the spring, the Coalition to Expand Sanctuary has organized teach-ins on the gang database in schools and in partnership with other community and religious organizations. The Coalition has also met with elected officials, called on the Chicago City Council to address the issue, and continued working with community members who have been directly impacted by the gang database to demand an end to racist policing and the use of the database as a tool for racial profiling of communities of color in Chicago.

ABOUT THE POLICING IN CHICAGO RESEARCH GROUP

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Policing in Chicago Research Group is a research workshop that brings faculty and students at UIC into conversation with community organizations in Chicago. Coordinated by Dr. Andy Clarno, the group is studying the ways that advanced data analysis and coordination between local and federal law enforcement agencies have transformed policing in Chicago.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN TO ERASE THE GANG DATABASE

The Coalition to Expand Sanctuary in Chicago seeks to improve Chicago's municipal policies regarding immigration enforcement and policing, particularly as they impact communities of color. One of the group's main campaigns is to 'erase' the gang database, a tool for policing that can increase an individual's chances of being targeted by immigration enforcement, create new barriers for employment, and increase levels of criminalization. Find out more about the campaign at www.erasethedatabase.com.

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE CHICAGO GANG DATABASE:

First UIC policing in Chicago report

Mijente infographic

Read the lawsuit