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ENOUGH: ANTHROPOLOGISTS TAKE ON GUN VIOLENCE

The Editors' Note: Enough: Anthropologists Take on Gun Violence

[Sallie Han](#), Department of Anthropology, SUNY Oneonta

[Jason Antrosio](#), Department of Anthropology, Hartwick College

What does it mean to say “enough”?

In the present conversation on gun violence in the United States, it is not about what satisfies or suffices. Instead, it is about having both surpassed the limits of our acceptance and fallen woefully short of our expectation. It is about the surfeit of thoughts and prayers and the deficit of change and action. “Enough” is simultaneously more than enough and not enough at all.

We take up the cry and challenge of “enough” in this issue of *Open Anthropology*. As anthropologists, we have committed ourselves to an understanding of human experiences in all of their complexity and diversity. We do so through thoughtful, reasoned, and careful research and scholarship involving a range of methods; diverse kinds and forms of knowledge, information, and data; and various modes of analysis and interpretation. We can make sense of what has frequently been called “senseless” gun violence.

There are more than enough questions and not enough answers, as has been noted time and again. In February 2018, in the aftermath of the murders of 17 students and teachers at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the American Anthropological Association reiterated the urgent need for a [comprehensive evidence-based approach to prevent gun violence](#). Yet, despite the lack of sustained and systematic support for studies on guns, anthropologists and other concerned researchers and scholars have persisted in their investigations. As OA co-editor Jason Antrosio notes in his recent post on the blog *Living Anthropologically*, [“there is quite enough research already available to take legislative action.”](#)

“Guns don’t kill people, people kill people” is the oft-quoted claim of the National Rifle Association. People, of course, are the central concern of anthropology. In this issue, our focus is on people and the ways that we live and die, with and by guns. Featured in this collection are

fourteen articles and one book review culled from the publications of the American Anthropological Association. The cultivation of fear—and of particular fears about particular groups of people—is a recurring theme across the selections here, especially as it contributes to the market (and marketing) of small arms and to the rendering of U.S. schools as places now requiring heightened surveillance and militarized policing. Some of the works precede what is remembered today as the Columbine High School massacre on April 20, 1999. Other pieces respond directly to the murders at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012 and at the Pulse nightclub in June 2016. They comment on the litany of so-called mass shootings and the mass of shootings that have resulted in [more than 35,000 gun-deaths in the U.S. each year between 2012 and 2016](#). We also include selections that consider gun violence from a comparative and global perspective, with ethnographic accounts from outside the U.S.

“As we see it now, Manifest Destiny needed guns.” These words belong to William Ruger, the founder and CEO of the small arms manufacturer Sturm, Ruger & Company, speaking at the June 1990 dedication ceremony of the Cody Firearms Museum in Cody, Wyoming. In the 1993 *Museum Anthropology* piece, “A Walk through the Shooting Gallery,” [John Dorst](#) traces the history of the collection, noting that the Cody Firearms Museum “may now be the most comprehensive repository of American nonmilitary small arms. It is not surprising, then, that its dedication ceremony . . . should have proved to be an affirmation ritual for the ideology of private gun ownership” (7). However, once inside and beyond the dedication ceremony, Dorst argues that “the museum constructs the gun as an artifact of considerable cultural complexity” (8) in part because of a desire to reach a more diverse and gender-balanced audience (9). Nevertheless, in this array of guns as culturally complex, Dorst notes “perhaps most conspicuous by its absence is the construction of the gun as a device for penetrating flesh at a distance” (11). The museum exhibit re-situates the gun as object of consumer desire. In the end, if the exhibits of the Cody Firearms Museum studiously avoid depicting the concrete effects of guns, they also obscure the thorough corporateness of the institution. . . . The recreated environments take us from archaic gun production to early mechanized manufacture but this development finds its mythological completion in the leisure space of the hunting lodge, not in the contemporary boardrooms of the nested conglomerates that now control the manufacture, marketing, and distribution of small arms on an international scale. It is precisely the massive apparatus of corporate wealth, whose representatives were on hand at the dedication ceremony, that is least visible in the galleries of this museum, a museum heavily underwritten by corporate support. (13)

Dorst’s review helps encapsulate an important shift in the 1990s toward a consumer-oriented gun culture backed by a slick corporate order. Similarly, John Devine’s 1995 “Can Metal Detectors Replace the Panopticon?” in *Cultural Anthropology* explores a shift in surveillance, especially in urban schools. As Devine titled his 1996 book, the stated aim was [Maximum Security](#). “Students quite matter-of-factly associate schooling with security guards, police tactics, and high-tech weapons scanning devices” (171). Devine lamented how these developments were undertheorized, and it is notable that metal detectors are now being installed at Parkland’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and in other suburban schools. After describing the immense, and enormously expensive, policing apparatus in New York City’s poorest schools, Devine reflects on the issue of school violence:

Violence in the schools has, in fact, become a process of interaction between the school's ever more threatening and threatened client population and a pedagogical system that has delegated the responsibilities for confronting student antisocial behaviors to its lowest-priority component, the guards, now armed with sophisticated technological equipment, but expected to restrain only the most extreme, overt, aggressive, and outrageous conduct. The youth culture, for its part, interprets this unwillingness to confront unacceptable behaviors as reflecting a society totally without boundaries, one that is fearful of challenging adolescents. (178)

Given the pervasiveness of the issues evident in the 1990s, Devine then poses a blunt question: "Why, then, has school violence become such a taboo subject in educational anthropology?" (180). Devine reviews some of the classic studies on resistance-as-reproduction (e.g. Paul Willis's [Learning to Labor](#)), critiquing them as rarely considering the "agency of violence," while saying very little about security and policing.

Devine's answer to his provocative title question about the panopticon is a resounding "no": "The postmodern plethora of metal detectors and all of the other paraphernalia of security technology have not replaced the regime of discipline inaugurated by the symbol of the modernist panopticon. The technologized security apparatus, despite its best efforts to become the new panopticon, has not succeeded" (188). And, in a striking conclusion, Devine prophetically anticipates what would occur in the ensuing decades following his work: "As opposed to the destiny envisioned for Willis's (1977) lads, it is not the lowest levels of the capitalist enterprise and the workshop floor that awaits these students, but a space of violence entirely outside of—but intimately connected to—the mainstream culture" (189).

Devine's conclusion leads directly to the review of Katherine S. Newman's [Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings](#). The review is by [Lawrence A. Palinkas](#) in the 2005 *American Ethnologist*. Palinkas reviews the main findings but notes some of the difficulties in studying such events at the time: a small sample size, reluctance or refusal to be interviewed, and retrospective collection of data.

These limitations notwithstanding, Newman and her colleagues offer some valuable insights: that the causes of school shootings are multifactorial, with no single characteristic taking precedence in explaining why they occur; that blame for such events rests not solely with the boys who committed these acts of violence but also with the communities that have raised and educated them; and that prevention of such events lies in fostering a culture of recognition and response to behavior that signals a risk for violence to self or to others.

As in Devine's conclusion, Newman's work was a prescient warning.

Following the research threads on surveillance and militarism in urban schools leads to a pair of recent articles in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. The first is the 2013 "An Ecology of Fear: Examining the Contradictory Surveillance Terrain Navigated by Mexican Youth in a U.S. Middle School" by [Rachel Pinnow](#). Pinnow describes this contradictory surveillance terrain as a

tension between the principles guiding the use of law enforcement which has been instituted under the auspices of promoting school and student safety, and the reality of the manner in which these resources are used against particular youth, constructing them as criminals to be disciplined and punished and contributing significantly to lengthening the school-to-prison-pipeline. (253) Pinnow notes that there has been virtually no research on how Mexican youth navigate this surveillance, and this is where her article contributes. Like Devine, Pinnow draws upon the idea of a panopticon, which does here “produce an objectification of identity from a criminal perspective” (255). Pinnow therefore attempts to trace “how the establishment and circulation of criminal representations are affixed to particular youth and how the resulting objectification of identity informs classroom practices and interactions” (257).

Pinnow conducted research in the southeastern U.S., a place of increasing immigration at the time, and a place where local authorities became increasingly nervous about possible gang and school violence (259). And although there was a mandatory gang prevention program at the school, these efforts focused solely on Latino gangs. “Noticeably absent was any discussion of the proliferation of ideological gangs such as White Supremacist groups in the region” (261). Sure enough, over the course of the study the use of in-school suspension shifted from primarily white males to Mexican students (262). In sum “of primary concern is that one of the fundamental contradictions in the surveillance terrain at Rockville is that it has been instituted under the auspices of increasing student safety and security, yet it appears to be aimed at one particular group of students (i.e., Mexican students) potentially making their experience of school one that does not feel safe at all” (265).

Also in *Anthropology & Education* is the 2016 “Documenting Militarism: Challenges of Researching Highly Contested Practices within Urban Schools” by [Suzie Abajian](#). Abajian conducted “a year-long qualitative case study of militarism and military recruitment at . . . a school serving predominantly low-income Latin@ students in Southern California . . . to document and bring to light the effects of the expanding military presence, military funding, and militarized practices on the educational experiences of students in urban schools” (25). Like many of the articles collected in this issue of OA, Abajian notes a lack of research as well as research difficulties (26). Despite these obstacles, Abajian finds a “pedagogy of enforcement” and a “culture of militarism” which privilege “the promotion of the military over every other postsecondary path for students in this school” (28). These pedagogies were especially salient in police training classes, when the teachers were also on-duty police officers.

Moreover, given that there were undocumented students within the school, they were in an especially tenuous situation (real and perceived) because of policies such as the Secure Communities Act where a minor run-in with the law could *theoretically* lead to a deportation. Therefore, having fully armed police officers as teachers did not necessarily create an environment where students felt free to experiment, take risks, and not fear failure. (31-32) Additionally, as a Syrian immigrant to the United States, Abajian had to wrestle with a number of reflexive and representational issues (35). As Abajian concludes, in “the larger context of militarization and ‘imperative patriotism’ within the United States, it was difficult for me as well as my research participants to disclose our true feelings and perceptions regarding military service and law enforcement—hence limiting the knowledge that could have been gained” (38).

Given the shape of national discourse since November 2016, it seems plausible that each issue Abajian identified has only been exacerbated.

Since Sandy Hook, one of the pre-eminent themes in any discussion of school shootings has been that of mental illness. [Eileen Anderson-Fye](#) and [Jerry Floersch's](#) contribution in *Ethos* (2011) takes us into the issues of adolescence, mental health, and medications. In “‘I’m Not Your Typical ‘Homework Stresses Me out’ Kind of Girl’: Psychological Anthropology in Research on College Student Usage of Psychiatric Medications and Mental Health Services” Anderson-Fye and Floersch demonstrate how anthropological theory and method can influence policy and practice. Of direct relevance to many working in education, Anderson-Fye and Floersch describe how “adolescents ages 18–25 enter transitions to adulthood that unfold in a setting specific way in college, with the task of medication management important to their development particularly in relation to autonomy and identity” (506). Moreover, these issues must be considered in a wider context: “A global health and medical anthropology perspective reminds us that the issues and trends we see in the United States are not isolated but, rather, are part of worldwide flows of people, information, images, and products such as prescription drugs” (502).

Following an overview of the larger issues, Anderson-Fye and Floersch center in on a Transitions in Medication Experience (TIME) study carried out in a Midwestern US college (507). Their study discusses and provides direct student perspective on overwhelmed mental health services (508), stigma management (510), service options (512), and the general environment (514). They conclude with a call for similar integrative research: “Psychological anthropology is well suited to help integrate various levels and types of knowledge as well as apply a long tradition of understanding human development and well-being in cultural and institutional contexts to some of the most pressing contemporary concerns among adolescents and young adults both in the United States and increasingly, around the world” (516-17).

The next two articles return to *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. “High-Five Fridays: (Mis)Trust-Building in One White Liberal Community” by [Denise Ives](#) and [Camille Cammack](#) is the most recent publication we include in this volume and is therefore the only one to discuss some of the reaction since Donald Trump became the US president. Ives and Cammack tell “the story of an attempt to disrupt the normalization of white experience through resistance to a local community policing initiative in our liberal, Northeastern community” (403). Specifically, High-Five Fridays:

High-Five Friday, a program proposed by the local police department that brought police officers to the elementary schools on Fridays to give students high fives as they entered the building in the morning, was described as an easy, inexpensive community outreach. We argue that in the historical moment of Ferguson, the Dallas shooting of police, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Blue Lives Matter antimovement, even a seemingly benign program like High-Five Friday must be read as a political act: one that privileges police over the policed and white over the Other. (403)

Ives and Cammack discuss their unease with the program and how the concerns raised during the genesis of the program seemed to go unheeded (406). While these concerns led to suspending the

program, then the story of the suspension was decontextualized and “went viral” (406). As so often happens, the comments turned vitriolic and toxic. “A group of parents began a petition to bring High-Five Friday back. School committee members who had questioned the validity of High-Five Friday were trolled on twitter” (407). High-Five Fridays were expanded across the state of Massachusetts (408). Black parents who had spoken out against the program had their addresses published by bloggers and publicly threatened (409). Ultimately:

Our experience trying to disrupt High-Five Friday gave us a better understanding of the challenges before us. We learned that a Black Lives Matter banner on city hall or a rainbow crosswalk downtown might actually act as cover for resisting changes that make white liberals uncomfortable or require us to confront our own complicity in perpetuating systems of oppression. We learned how a well-meaning rationalization, a sort of “not in our town” idea, can act to silence voices of dissent—not unlike the way our belief in American exceptionalism has worked to silence dissent and excuse injustices of the state. Resisting the Trump regime will require us to work across difference and in coalitions. As we do so, we must be vigilant that we do not allow people of color and others who are targeted by this administration to shoulder the burden alone. We must have the courage to take up James Baldwin’s invitation to “look over the wall.” We must be willing to not only listen but also to believe the stories of people of color whose experiences with law enforcement have been, and continue to be, different than the experiences of the majority of white Americans. (409-10)

Part of the groundwork for the “avidly pro-police authoritarian” regime of Trump, as Ives and Cammack describe it (409) was put in place after September 2001 by the George W. Bush regime. [Anna Beresin](#) in “Children's Expressive Culture in Light of September 11, 2001” takes us to illustrate “a variety of play responses that emerged spontaneously” (331). “September 11 created a genre of folk games that have never been recorded before, and, unfortunately, new folk groups: September 11 victims, heroes, frightened travelers, those labeled ‘terrorists,’ panicked city dwellers, and children from closed schools” (332). Beresin and her co-researchers’ work amount to a kind of on-the-ground and in-the-moment reporting, which also had the advantage of context from repeated observations: “The course assignment that is the focus of this article is one I have given for 11 years. I have never encountered the kinds of episodes documented in the post-September 11 assignment” (332). Beresin concludes that if September 11 has taught us anything, it is that the boundary between the rational and irrational is finer than we often acknowledge, that violence has its rationale for those who perpetuate it, and that children's irrational play indeed makes a lot of sense. If we want to avoid what psychoanalysts call “trauma,” we must allow children the opportunity to turn painful images into playful and artistic symbols for their release. Some need to play the attacker, some the attacked, some the shocked, some the defiant. Some need to recreate symbols, others to begin search for new ones. The study of symbolism is, in its essence, cultural. It will be both sad and interesting to observe how and where these newly reinvented symbols evolve. (335)

Beresin would go on to author [Recess Battles: Playing, Fighting, and Storytelling](#) (2010), an ethnographic account of how children wrestle with culture through their games.

[Daniel Lende's](#) "The Newtown Massacre and Anthropology's Public Response" in *American Anthropologist* (2013) is the best summary available for what happened in anthropology shortly following the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre. As Lende writes "the response to the mass shooting in Newtown shows the growth of anthropology online and how this type of public anthropology is an increasingly important part of the discipline" (496). Lende identifies this as a critical moment when anthropology aimed at an online audience melded with traditional publications and anthropological institutions. But Lende also diagnoses a critical and ongoing issue: "In writing about issues that dominate the media, anthropologists need to wend a way between the banality of every other pundit and what makes our field unique. . . . Why turn to anthropology if mainstream media can hit the same points, and do it with more flash and better name recognition?" (496). Lende laments the lack of a coherent anthropological story and bluntly says: "We need a new story. . . . Messages need to be directed toward [the public] not just toward other anthropologists, who already 'get it.' An effective story takes people outside themselves—makes them engage with other people and other places—and also speaks to the reader's desire to feel, to understand, to become better" (497).

Looking back on Lende's review from 2018, just after the "March for Our Lives," the diagnosis seems mostly correct. If anything, the online activity by anthropologists after Newtown has somewhat abated. There have been very few anthropological responses on anthropology blogs after the Las Vegas massacre or Parktown. Rather than blogs, more anthropologists seem to be doing "micro-punditry" on Facebook or Twitter. Meanwhile, what Lende and perhaps many of the anthropologists who participated in the Newtown response could not have anticipated is that Sandy Hook conspiracy threads would slowly proliferate, so that with Parktown ideas of "false flags" and "crisis actors" were quickly mobilized. In short, anthropology did need a new and effective story as Lende claimed (497). Instead, we are often competing not with mainstream media pundits but with demonstrably false stories and claims.

We then feature two articles that appeared after the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Florida. "Guns Are Not an Equal Opportunity Destroyer" by [Roger Lancaster](#) is part of an *Anthropology News* special issue on [Mass Shootings](#) (2016). Lancaster's subheading describes his theme: "Firearms are a crucial link in the chain of violence, but they are also part of a bigger picture of social inequality in the US." Lancaster weaves together his personal account of growing up around farms and guns, but then also his experiences as a gay man in urban environments. Lancaster attempts to navigate between the rhetorical extremes and positions:

We thus seem caught in an American predicament, a vicious circle. The prevalence of guns, especially handguns, has less to do with bucolic solidarities than with a deep-seated culture of fear. Readily-available firearms ramp up muggings or squabbles into lethal events, splashing blood across front pages and social media feeds—which in turn convinces people that they need guns for self-protection.

Lancaster asks us to beware oversimplification and arguments based on correlation; to beware panaceas; and beware "the cognitive distortions provoked by horrifying spectacles of violence such as mass shootings." He asks us instead to take a harm-reduction or public health perspective, and to remember that most gun deaths are suicides. Lancaster's final analysis is

important: “America is a uniquely violent country owing to its uniquely harsh and unbuffered forms of social inequality. Guns are a crucial link in the chain of violence, but they are also part of this bigger picture.”

Also from 2016 is “The Pulse Nightclub Shooting: Connecting Militarism, Neoliberalism, and Multiculturalism to Understand Violence” by [Zachary Blair](#) in *North American Dialogue*. “As an undergraduate at the University of Central Florida, I discovered anthropology at around the same time that I discovered Pulse. When I moved back to Orlando more than a decade later to write my doctoral dissertation, Pulse was one of the few places that seemed virtually unchanged; a place where I found comfort in familiarity” (103). Blair takes this personally-connected account into an essay that is an attempt to locate the Pulse massacre within a larger structural and political economic context. In particular, I position the Pulse shooting as an event located within, and an outcome resulting from, a complex nexus of global processes and policies, including: (1) U.S. imperialism and militarism, (2) neocolonialism in the context of Puerto Rico, and (3) neoliberal multiculturalism in the space of the gay club. (103-104)

Blair proceeds in turn with each of these processes. He sees a “a constitutive and cyclical dynamic between capitalist imperialism in the Middle East and violence against LGBTQ+ people in the United States” (105). On Puerto Rico: “Compelled to leave Puerto Rico partly as a result of rampant homophobia and partly as a result of structural poverty exacerbated by neocolonialist policies, the presence of so many LGBTQ+ Puerto Ricans at Pulse was no accident” (108). And on neoliberal multiculturalism: “At Pulse, ‘upscale’ Latin Night was preceded by lesbian night, hip hop night, and college night—representing a weekly lineup of niche nights that divide LGBTQ+ people along the lines of race, gender, and class and ‘celebrate’ their diversity as a business strategy for the purpose of profit” (110). This analysis of connections enables understanding and new tactics:

Making connections not only enables a broader understanding of violence, it also empowers social and political action by situating violence within larger issues that can be addressed. . . . There are still opportunities for justice in ending the wars in the Middle East, Puerto Rican liberation, dismantling racism in gay space, and transforming modes of capitalist consumption. (112)

[Peter Benson’s](#) article in *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, “Corporate Paternalism and the Problem of Harmful Products” (2014) is also about tactics and capitalist consumption. Benson juxtaposes the tobacco industry and firearms.

Certain key industries have faced critique of one kind or another because their products hurt people in one way or another. What the anthropologist Aihwa Ong (2003:6) calls a “problem-space” takes shape around certain commodities and consumer behaviors, a process that might be described as “problematization,” to borrow a term from Michel Foucault (1985, 1997). . . . Shaping culture through public relations and publicity—spinning how problems are debated, discussed, conceptualized, and apprehended—is one key strategy that industries use to bend problematization to align with their economic interests. (219)

In some ways echoing themes from the *Museum Anthropology* analysis of “A Walk through the Shooting Gallery” (discussed above), Benson describes how both tobacco and firearms publicity

concentrate on consumer choice and a message of individual responsibility. In a somewhat strange turnabout, Phillip Morris has included a Youth Smoking Prevention department (223) as well as funding youth programs (224). Benson argues that “framing of the problem in terms of parenting about ‘risky behaviors’ downplays what is specific about tobacco-related health risks and addiction, including the role of industrial cigarette marketing, the specific power and will of an industry to shape culture and politics, and the (perhaps) limited resources and agency of families, smokers, young people, and communities” (225). Similarly, the gun lobby focuses on family, parenting, and protection. “The gun lobby frames guns as resources for protecting families and individuals, and it claims to operate in the best interests of families, children, and civil rights. But the result is to exploit these sentiments and ideologies in the service of selling harmful products” (227).

Our three final articles in this volume of *Open Anthropology* offer comparative ethnography from outside the United States. The two subsequent articles are each about places and people that are marked as culturally violent, and the ways in which race, ethnicity, and culture intertwine to produce a deterministic account in which violence is made to appear natural. [Bilinda Straight’s](#) “Making Sense of Violence in the ‘Badlands’ of Kenya” appeared in *Anthropology and Humanism* in 2009. Straight begins by arguing “specifically that ‘culture’ as a discursive category is implicated in multiple causes and contexts surrounding violence that are mutually productive of one another and that have disastrously productive effects” (21). In part because of quasi-ethnographic and colonial state-sanctioned accounts, a vision of the Samburu emerged, producing a facile, shorthand cultural explanation that conveniently fits increasingly globalized preconceptions of timeless “tribal” warfare. This “cultural” explanation is facile not because it is untrue, but because it is only one of several entangled causes that range from the colonial and independent Kenyan governments’ culpability in resource depletion through underdevelopment and reduction of land holdings (Lesorogol 1991, 2003), to local, regional, and national political realities. (24)

In contrast to the facile culturalist explanations that especially circulate in global media, Straight takes us into a much more circumscribed local political explanation. When violence occurs in the Samburu, it appears in global media as “tribal warfare.” Then in periods of peace, the Samburu disappear, even as they remain marginalized. It goes beyond merely robbing people of history (Wolf 1982); *it makes particularity beside the point*. Thus, anthropologists may attempt to particularize the marginalized; nevertheless, people “elsewhere,” especially people of color, and “exotics,” have a tenuous hold on particularity. Does anyone care about the Gabra, the Borana, the Pokot, or the Samburu? According to the rules of this game, even marginalized states like Kenya internally marginalize certain groups within their borders in an ironic move that has the texture of political and economic indirect rule. Thus, marginal ethnic groups are manipulated—and small wars funded—by political elites. (26)

Similar issues emerge in “The Violence after ‘La Violencia’ in the Ch'orti' Region of Eastern Guatemala” by [Brent Metz](#), [Lorenzo Mariano](#), and [Julián López García](#). Metz, Mariano, and López García’s article appeared in the 2010 *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*. Eastern Guatemala, or the Oriente “is depicted as a parched land of hot-tempered, gunslinging, lawless ladinos (non-indigenous Hispanics with various cultural and phenotypic

heritages)” (17). The authors note that there is statistical truth to regional homicides and violence, but they refuse the narrative that violence is simply because of primordially “violent people” (17). Metz, Mariano, and López García trace the history of the region and its construction as “lawless” dating from the colonial period. However, historical reasons are insufficient:

That the current violence cannot be reduced to a habitus, legacy, heritage, culture, ethos, residue, or spiral from the civil war is suggested by the 2007 homicide data, in which the areas most affected by the civil war—the west and north of the country—have lower homicide rates. Rather, reasons must be sought in the structural conditions that fanned the flames of civil war in the first place and have been exacerbated by neoliberal policies and globalization. (23)

Metz, Mariano, and López García seek to link the murders to conditions of structural violence (see the October 2017 volume of *Open Anthropology* on [Anthropology Matters](#)). One crucial link is in the local idea of a “loss of respect” (27). In sum:

The Oriente is now more violent than ever because the structures promoting violence remain in place, including failing subsistence agriculture, inadequate state services like education and law enforcement, lack of adequate market opportunities, and ongoing if less blatant racism and sexism. Like Bourgois’ (1995) marginalized crack smokers and dealers in East Harlem, Ch’orti’s’ tortured struggle for respect and self-recognition can lead to self-destructive behavior, including a hypersensitivity to perceived arrogance and insult, and the drive to vengeance. These slippery slopes of violence have been greased by consumerism, international migration, the glorification of mafias in film and music, and newspapers that regularly put bloody bodies on the front page. (34)

Our final article, by [Niklas Hultin](#) in *American Ethnologist* (2015), is about attempts to control small arms. “Leaky Humanitarianism: The Anthropology of Small Arms Control in the Gambia” considers how “the movement of small arms from conflict zone to conflict zone, from country to country, threatens not only human life but also the very foundation of the modern geopolitical order premised on sovereign states with full territorial control” (68). In a context in which governments and NGOs agree on the need for arms control, there are nevertheless groups and individuals who for a variety of reasons desire guns, as well as a “suspicion of the government’s motivations for pursuing small arms control” (70). “From this point of view, small arms control takes on a complex shading. Restrictions on gun ownership and manufacturing are transformed from benign acts intended to prevent crime and violence into just another tool in an overbearing state’s repertoire of instruments to maintain power” (72). Hultin portrays arms control as a “‘leaky’ form of humanitarianism that ultimately confirms and strengthens state power” (72). Hultin’s final message is of comparative relevance:

While the focus herein has been on the particularities of the Gambia, the conceptual thrust is thus broadly applicable: Small arms control invariably resonates against—and its success dependent upon—the political, cultural, and economic backdrop against which it is enacted and this backdrop is, at least in part, the outcome of the varied understandings of the appropriate distribution of injuring power. (78)

As a whole, these selections forcefully demonstrate, yet again, that anthropology matters. We offer this issue of OA as a resource to inform ourselves in order to better support our students and children and the youth who are taking on—and taking up—leadership on the issues surrounding guns. We find tremendous hope and inspiration in the raising and blending of voices from Parkland, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington DC, and other communities suffering the impacts of gun violence. We join them in amplifying the message: Enough.

Acknowledgments. We are so grateful to Chelsea Horton for her always excellent work on *Open Anthropology*. Our thanks to Ed Liebow for his encouragement and interest on this issue. Suggestions on additional readings in anthropology and gun violence can be found at [#MarchForOurLives – Anthropology for a Safer World](#).

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A Walk through the Shooting Gallery

John Dorst – *Museum Anthropology*. Vol 17, Issue 3:7-13 (1993)

[Read more about this article >](#)

Can Metal Detectors Replace the Panopticon?

John Devine – *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol 10, Issue 2:171-195 (1995)

[Read more about this article >](#)

Book Review of Katherine S. Newman's Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings

Lawrence A. Palinkas – *American Ethnologist*. Vol 32, Issue 3:3034-3035 (2005)

[Read more about this article >](#)

An Ecology of Fear: Examining the Contradictory Surveillance Terrain Navigated by Mexican Youth in a U.S. Middle School

Rachel J. Pinnow – *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. Vol 44, Issue 3:253-268 (2013)

[Read more about this article >](#)

Documenting Militarism: Challenges of Researching Highly Contested Practices within Urban Schools

Suzie M. Abajian – *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. Vol 47, Issue 1:25-41 (2016)

[Read more about this article >](#)

“I'm Not Your Typical ‘Homework Stresses Me out’ Kind of Girl”: Psychological Anthropology in Research on College Student Usage of Psychiatric Medications and Mental Health Services

Eileen P. Anderson-Fye and Jerry Floersch – *Ethos*. Vol 39, Issue 4:501-521 (2011)

[Read more about this article >](#)

High-Five Fridays: (Mis)Trust-Building in One White Liberal Community

Denise Ives and Camille Cammack – *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. Vol 48, Issue 4:403-410 (2017)

[Read more about this article >](#)

Children's Expressive Culture in Light of September 11, 2001

Anna Richman Beresin – *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. Vol 33, Issue 3:331-337 (2002)

[Read more about this article >](#)

The Newtown Massacre and Anthropology's Public Response

Daniel H. Lende – *American Anthropologist*. Vol 115, Issue 3:496-499 (2013)

[Read more about this article >](#)

Guns Are Not an Equal Opportunity Destroyer

Roger Lancaster – *Anthropology News*. Vol 57, Issue 11:e62-e67 (2016)

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