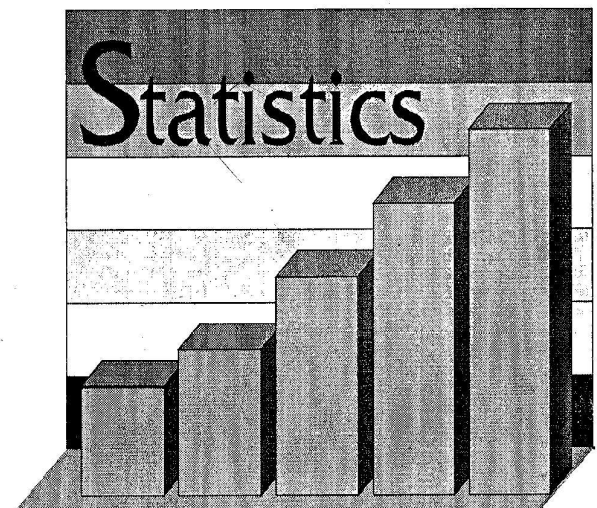




The Diversity of Homicide

*Proceedings of the 2000 Homicide
Research Working Group*

*Loyola University
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Proceedings of the 2000 Annual Meeting
of the Homicide Research Working Group

Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

Editors

Paul H. Blackman
National Rifle Association

Vanessa Levrier Leggett
University of Houston-Downtown

John P. Jarvis
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Findings, interpretations, and conclusions reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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FOREWORD

Official reported national statistics from the 1990s show crime rates to have fallen sharply in almost every category. However, there remains concern over the dissipation of these declines at the dawn of the 21st century. In fact, preliminary FBI crime figures for 2000 show a decrease of just 1.1% in reported murders and an increase of 0.1% in overall violent crimes compared to 1999. These figures fuel continuing debate among public officials, academics, and criminal justice practitioners as to the sources of these fluctuations in crime and violence. One organization that studies the composition of, and changes in, homicide and violent crimes is the Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG).

Dedicated to examining the causes, correlates, and promise for preventing both homicide and other violent behavior, the HRWG has met annually for over a decade and currently has 250 members worldwide that share in its mission. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, also sharing in the desire to prevent crime and violence, has participated in each of the HRWG meetings since its inception and hosted this annual event both in 1992 and again in 1999. Furthermore, many HRWG members have either participated in research or provided advice to those in the law enforcement community relative to the latest research findings that might assist in protecting and serving the public.

During 2000, the HRWG convened its annual meeting on the campus of Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois and the efforts and discussions of all in attendance merited compilation into a volume of proceedings as published herein. These proceedings are not only useful for documenting the advances in the study of homicide and violence but also provide an opportunity for law enforcement, criminal justice practitioners, the medical community, and others to use such publications in furtherance of both current practice and future research.

This publication serves to further share the scholarship and ideas of those devoted to studying homicide and other types of violence in hopes of contributing to the prevention of these incidents. It is through such efforts that a body of knowledge will continue to emerge that may inform new and existing enforcement and deterrence initiatives. Furthermore, this volume, while highlighting the recent work of the HRWG, also serves to underscore the continued commitment by researchers, government, the private sector, and practitioners to determining strategies for reducing crime and violence both in the United States and around the world. As such, the information contained herein, as in past HRWG proceedings volumes, will continue to guide both law enforcement proponents as well as individuals and organizations in addressing the challenges of homicide and violence now and in the future.

John P. Jarvis

PREFACE

The ninth annual workshop of the Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG) was sponsored by Loyola University in downtown Chicago, academic home to Richard Block, one of the founders of the HRWG. While previous sponsors often had facilities of interest to our members, in this case, the added draw was the opportunity to tour facilities in Chicago that would be of interest, particularly the county morgue and the nation's oldest trauma unit--facilities that attend to victims of lethal violence.

Until 1999, the Proceedings of the HRWG meetings, variously called workshops and symposia, were published by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) of the Department of Justice, which essentially sponsored the HRWG in its formative years. With the growth of the organization, to the point where Sage Publications published *Homicide Studies: An Interdisciplinary & International Journal*, it no longer seemed appropriate for the NIJ to continue to publish material not based on NIJ sponsorship. Fortunately, for the 1999 Proceedings, the FBI Academy decided to expand its role as host to assume the role of publisher for the Proceedings. For 2000, the FBI further supported both HRWG and the law enforcement community by also agreeing to publish the *2000 Proceedings*, which include: copies of papers delivered orally at the annual meeting, summaries of the discussions related to those presentations, and summaries of events without papers (the opening symposium sponsored by the Northwestern University School of Law, and the tours of the Cook County Trauma Unit and the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office).

It should be noted that there have been some substantive changes in content. Some of the authors of the various papers took advantage of the time between oral presentation and the deadlines for submission of the written versions to update and revise their papers. Some of the titles differ between these proceedings and the more tentative titles listed in the Agenda for the meeting (first appendix), and authorship has sometimes been expanded. Discussions for each panel are based on the notes taken by the various recorders during the sessions, but have been modified for uniformity. As there were no standard rules for how notes were to be recorded, there is a considerable variation as to what was deemed worthy of recording. Moreover, because there are two intermediate steps between participants' oral commentary during the discussions and our written summary of what was spoken, nothing reported here should be treated as a precise quotation, although we hope the gist of each statement is accurate.

While the editors should like to take responsibility for some of the failings in these *Proceedings*--including some inconsistency in graphics, and particularly in the long delay between the workshop and the publication of the *Proceedings*--we feel compelled to place some blame on computers, computerization, and the Internet. Others would probably note that the computers would be more tractable with competent handlers, which may be true. In addition to blaming the computers, the editors would like to thank various persons for their assistance in trying to tame those electronic

beasts, in particular Jeanne Levrier and Mark Overstreet. And we would like also to thank those who came to our aid, serving as intermediaries and researchers, when circumstances limited our use of computers and the Internet. And, finally, we wish to thank all of our participants, who, through their research and dedication, continue to further our worthy mission, which aims to understand the sources of lethal violence and, ultimately, how it might be reduced.

Paul H. Blackman
Vanessa Levrier Leggett

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	iii
Preface	iv
Table of Contents	vi
CHAPTER ONE: TRENDS OVER TIME IN HOMICIDES OF AND BY WOMEN	
The Impact of Decommodification on Violence Rates in the U.S. Candace Batton	3
Intimate Partner Homicide Trends in California, 1990 through 1998 Laura E. Lund	26
Discussion	32
CHAPTER TWO: JUVENILE HOMICIDE	
Prescription for Murder: Homicide and Suicide Among Psychopharmacologically Treated Juveniles Vanessa L. Leggett	37
Juvenile Homicide Offenders in Savannah: 1896-1903 & 1986-1993 Vance McLaughlin	45
Juvenile-Perpetrated Homicides in California, 1990-1998 Jason C. Van Court	66
Identifying Core Blocks of Gang Activity Using Geographic Analysis Richard L. Block and Edwina Jones	73
Discussion	77
CHAPTER THREE: HOMICIDE TYPOLOGIES	
Contracts to Kill as Scripted Behavior James A. Black and Nicole M. Cravens	83
Are There Types of Intimate Partner Homicide? Carolyn Rebecca Block, Christine Ovcharchyn Devitt, Edmund R. Donoghue, Roy J. Dames, and Richard L. Block	92

Attempted Homicide Victim and Proxy Reports of Intimate-Partner Homicide Risk Factors: Do They Agree? Jane Koziol-McLain, Daniel Webster, and Jacquelyn Campbell	111
Victim-Offender Relationships and the Situational Context of Homicide Thomas A. Petee, Greg S. Weaver, Jay Corzine, Lin Huff-Corzine, and Janice Wittekind	117
Discussion	128
 CHAPTER FOUR: CORRELATES OF HOMICIDE	
Local Capitalism and Violent Crime in U.S. Counties Matthew R. Lee and Graham C. Ousey	135
Homicidal Encounters: A Study of Homicide in Australia, 1989-1999 Jenny Mouzos	142
Discussion	164
 CHAPTER FIVE: MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND HOMICIDE	
The Medical Examiner System and Time of Death Edward R. Donoghue	167
Capital Punishment in Alabama J.C.U. Downs	170
Discussion	178
 CHAPTER SIX: REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRESENTATION OF HOMICIDE IN NIBRS, THE MEDIA, AND RESEARCH	
Domestic Violence and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS): 1997 Roland Chilton	183
Representation of Homicide in Criminal Justice Oriented Academic Journals Elizabeth Quinn DeValve	193
Patterns in Child Abduction/Murder: An Analysis of Age-Specified Patterns John P. Jarvis, Wayne D. Lord, and Monique C. Boudreaux	203
Discussion	208

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARIES OF ACTIVITIES WITHOUT PAPERS

Opening Reception:

Learning from the Past, Living in the Present: Patterns in Chicago Homicides, 1870-1930
Leigh B. Bienen 215

Tour of the Office of the Medical Examiner, Cook County 218

Tour of the Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit 220

APPENDICES

Agenda, Homicide Research Working Group, 2000 Annual Meeting 225

Participants 229

CHAPTER ONE

TRENDS OVER TIME IN HOMICIDES OF AND BY WOMEN

THE IMPACT OF DECOMMODIFICATION ON VIOLENCE RATES IN THE U.S.

Candice Batton, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska-Omaha
540 N. 16th Street, 100 NRC, Lincoln, NE 68588

Gary Jensen, Department of Sociology, Vanderbilt University
2102 25th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212

ABSTRACT

This study uses the theory of institutional anomie to examine the impact of decommodification on homicide rates in the United States. Decommodification refers to the implementation of social welfare policies and programs aimed at ameliorating the harsh effects of market fluctuations on the lives of individuals. The protection afforded to individuals and the assurance of a minimum living standard are expected to have a diminishing effect on homicide rates. Time series regression techniques are used to look at the relationship between decommodification and homicide rates in the 20th century. The results support the existence of a relationship, point to a temporal shift in the correlates of homicide rates, and have methodological implications for conducting time series analyses.

INTRODUCTION

One characteristic of contemporary U.S. society is heightened public concern regarding rising violence rates. However, historical studies indicate that incidents of violence and aggression in America have actually declined since the 1800s (Ferdinand, 1967; Gurr, 1989). Long-term declines in violence have largely been attributed to forces associated with industrialization and modernization that changed the structure and organization of major social institutions as well as the work and leisure activities of individuals (Chesnais, 1992; Lane, 1989, p. 59; Lane, 1999, p. 122). Among other things, these broad sweeping changes resulted in the development of more stringent social control mechanisms.

Related to the modernization process is the concept of decommodification. Decommodification refers to the stabilizing effects that social welfare policies and programs have on society and on the lives of individuals (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In an attempt to examine the impact of decommodification on crime and violence rates, Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) recently conducted a cross-national analysis of 45 nations from the perspective of institutional-anomie theory. Since social welfare programs are intended to ameliorate the oppressive effects of market fluctuations, decommodification should have a dampening effect on crime and violence rates. The policies and programs that constitute decommodification serve as a buffer--functioning to protect individuals and insure a minimum standard of living for all societal members. Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) found support for the theory of institutional anomie in that nations with higher levels of decommodification exhibited lower homicide rates.

This study uses the applications of Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) as the basis for further investigation of the relationship between decommodification and lethal violence rates in the United States. However, the present study is distinct in that it utilizes time series techniques to

more closely examine the relationship between levels of decommodification and violence rates in 20th-century America. While the level of decommodification may not change much over the course of a decade, it is likely that differences can be detected over the course of a century. If decommodification is related to the level of violence, then changes in a society's social welfare policies should correspond to shifts in its homicide rates over time. The importance of conducting a more in-depth investigation of decommodification in the United States is at least partially based on Messner and Rosenfeld's (1997) finding that the relationship between decommodification and homicide rates becomes non-significant when the U.S. is excluded from the analysis. Thus, this study involves a more probing examination of decommodification and the manner in which it has affected violence rates in the United States with the goal of extending our understanding of this relationship by looking at historical trends in levels of decommodification and lethal violence.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Concept of Decommodification

One of the best ways to approach the concept of decommodification is from a Marxist perspective, which asserts that the economy impacts the structure and organization of all other social institutions and relations (e.g., polity, family, educational system). The degree to which changes in the economy affect other social institutions and social relations is related to the level of control the state exercises over the economy and the extent to which it attempts to mediate the effects of economic fluctuations. In a capitalist society, market events and fluctuations are likely to have a greater impact on social institutions and social relations during periods when state regulation and control over the economy is minimal than times when the state takes a more active role in buffering the effects of economic swings.

Fluctuations in the economy also impact the lives of individuals as they rely on the market and their level of participation in it for sustenance and support. In a free-market society absent of social welfare policies, changes in the economy or a person's level of participation in the labor force are likely to have a direct and fairly immediate impact on that person's activities within other institutional realms. For example, both the loss and acquisition of a job are related to one's ability to be self-supporting and provide for a family. Job status and level of income proportionately determine one's ability to seek higher education opportunities or pursue leisure activities. Thus, in a free-market society, the economy impacts the structure and organization of individual lives.

Emancipation from the constraints of a market economy as a result of a balancing of power between the economy and the polity is known as decommodification. Decommodification refers to the totality of a variety of measures--such as the adoption and implementation of social welfare policies and programs--that has a stabilizing effect on market societies. These policies are intended to reduce the harsher consequences of market activity and economic fluctuations. According to Esping-Andersen (1990, p. 37), decommodification concerns "the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation." Messner and Rosenfeld (1997, p. 1394) expand on this idea stating that

“[d]ecommodified social policies permit actions and choices by citizens--to get married, have children, seek higher education, engage in political activity--that are, in principle, unconstrained by market considerations.” Decommodification involves more than expenditures on social welfare; it also has a quality aspect regarding social rights and entitlements. As Esping-Andersen (1990, p. 47) notes, decommodification pertains to the ease of access to entitlements, their income-replacement value, and the range of social statuses and conditions they cover.

Decommodification and the Theory of Institutional Anomie

Theory of Institutional Anomie

Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) suggest that the impact of decommodification on violence rates can be studied using institutional-anomie theory, which focuses on the interplay between culture and social structure and its impact on crime rates. According to this theory, crime rates are likely to be higher when cultural goals emphasize financial success and material wealth and simultaneously de-emphasize conduct norms prescribing institutionalized means of achieving those goals (Merton, 1968; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997). Such anomic pressures are “nourished and sustained” by the institutional arrangement where other social institutions are subservient to the economy. Economic dominance involves the (a) devaluation of non-economic institutional functions and roles, (b) accommodation of economic obligations and expectations by other institutions during times of role conflict, and (c) penetration of economic norms into other institutional domains, such as the practice of relying on extrinsic rewards in school, or reinforcing the idea that the government should be run more like a business.

The dominance of the economy promotes high crime rates because it (a) contributes to the development of a sense of anomie as other institutions become less capable of fulfilling their responsibility to establish and maintain a sense of respect for social norms, and (b) weakens the level of control exerted by non-economic roles, which become decreasingly attractive compared to economic roles.

Decommodification and Homicide Rates

From the perspective of institutional-anomie theory, decommodification is likely to have a dampening effect on homicide rates in society. First, it aids in reducing the dominance of the economic system and in restoring a sense of balance between societal institutions. Second, it works to de-emphasize concerns regarding financial loss and job-related problems because social welfare policies ease the urgency and degree of devastation associated with financial hardship. While several studies have examined the effects of economic deprivation on violence rates, only one has focused specifically on the issue of decommodification. In a comparative study of 45 nations, Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) found that countries with higher levels of decommodification exhibited lower rates of homicide.

Although Messner and Rosenfeld’s (1997) findings are consistent with the theory of institutional anomie, their results present some interesting issues. First, Messner and Rosenfeld (1997, p. 1404) note that the bivariate relationship between the decommodification index and homicide rates is statistically significant for advanced capitalist nations, but only when the

United States is included in the sample. When the U.S. is excluded, the relationship becomes statistically non-significant. Given the influence of the U.S. on these findings, a closer look at the relationship between decommodification and homicide rates in the U.S. is warranted.

Second, in their multivariate analysis, Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) examine regression models based on three different samples, one of which excludes Syria, an outlier in terms of homicide rates. When Syria is excluded, the model fit improves slightly as evidenced by a higher R^2 , but the impact of decommodification on homicide rates diminishes from -.209 to -.161. If the exclusion of Syria weakens the observed effect of decommodification, the question raised is whether the exclusion of the United States (which is also an outlier) would diminish the effect even more, perhaps to the point of non-significance. When the impact of the U.S. on the bivariate analyses is considered in conjunction with the notion that its extreme decommodification and homicide rate scores may be unduly influencing the results of the multivariate analyses, the importance of an in-depth look at decommodification and homicide in the United States becomes even more apparent.

Third, Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) conduct a cross-sectional analysis focusing on the mid-1980s. This approach provides a good sense of whether or not a relationship between decommodification and homicide rates exists at a particular point in time for selected nations. However, it does not provide much in-depth information about the nature of or longitudinal trends in the relationship. Although Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) note that the level of decommodification in a society is not likely to vary much in the short-run, observable differences should be detectable over longer periods of time.

In an attempt to more thoroughly investigate the impact of decommodification on violence rates in the U.S., this study uses time series techniques in an analysis of 20th-century homicide rates. From the perspective of institutional-anomie theory, a greater degree of decommodification in the United States should be associated with lower homicide rates. More specifically, decommodification shifts the institutional balance of power in society away from the economy by limiting the extent of control economic fluctuations have on individuals. This should result in a waning sense of anomie and the restoration of other social control mechanisms as institutions regain status and control relative to the economy. Thus, the impact on homicide rates is twofold. First, with decommodification, economic deprivation and market fluctuations are less likely to engender rash acts of aggression because, through social welfare benefits, individuals are protected from the devastation of abject poverty. Second, because decommodification contributes to the restoration of respect for non-economic roles, it indirectly functions to increase the web of social control mechanisms surrounding the individual that regulates desires to act aggressively toward others.

A substantial body of empirical research has documented a positive relationship between poor economic conditions and violent behavior, particularly homicide (Boggs, 1965; Humphries & Wallace, 1980; Quinney, 1966; Sampson, 1985; Schmid, 1960; Schuessler, 1961-1962; Schuessler & Slatin, 1964). As Loftin and Parker (1985) note, studies of police records indicate that the poorest segments of the population are disproportionately represented among homicide offenders (Mulvihill & Tumin, 1969; Wolfgang, 1958). Additionally, several studies have found

homicide rates are positively related to deprivation measures such as inferior education, substandard housing, infant mortality, and low income level (Loftin & Hill, 1974; Parker & Smith, 1979; Smith & Parker, 1980; U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, 1975). Researchers have also found support for the idea that income inequality, or relative deprivation, is related to violence levels (Blau & Blau, 1982; Hansmann & Quigley, 1982; Loftin & Hill, 1974; Sampson, 1986).

Decommodification in the United States

It is difficult to identify a specific date heralding the beginning of decommodification in the United States because a tradition of helping those in need reaches back to colonial times (Social Security Administration, 1997). However, the need for social welfare was becoming increasingly apparent in the early 1900s as urbanization and industrialization resulted in greater numbers of people living away from their families and being dependent upon the flow of money. Additionally, the use of vaccines and improvements in public health and sanitation contributed to rapid increases in population and a growing proportion of elderly persons in American society. For the most part, increasing demands for assistance were handled on an “as-needed” basis at the state and local levels by legislation aimed at meeting the needs of specific groups (e.g., mothers’ pensions, old-age assistance, aid for the blind).

It was not until the early 1930s, following the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression, that the federal government became integrally involved in the administration of social welfare programs. Prior to this time, a few provisions had been made at the federal level in terms of benefits for veterans and a retirement system for federal civil-service employees (Social Security Administration, 1997). However, by the early 1930s, the severity of the economic depression necessitated a greater degree of federal involvement. Beginning in 1933, the federal government initiated several anti-Depression measures including the Emergency Banking Relief Act, the Economy Act, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (Urdang, 1996). While grants and loans had been made to states prior to this time, 1935 marks the year that the federal government became officially involved in the development and dispensation of social welfare programs with the passage of the Social Security Act.

Social Insurance

Conceptually, social insurance refers to the principle that individuals are entitled to benefit eligibility as a matter of right rather than solely on the basis of need (Social Security Administration, 1997). Rooted in the concept of social insurance, Social Security was originally aimed at providing two types of coverage: dependency stemming from old age, and unemployment. This focus is not surprising since the Great Depression had destroyed the lifetime savings of many elderly Americans and greatly reduced employment opportunities (Social Security Administration, 1997). The Social Security Act provided old-age benefits and unemployment compensation as well as grants to states for programs geared toward the blind, public health services, and maternal and child health and welfare.

The old-age, survivors, and disability (OASDI) aspect of Social Security was originally

conceived to provide benefits to the aged whose eligibility stemmed from their former Social Security contributions and labor-force participation. Benefit payments were slated to begin in 1942, but began in 1940 due to a 1939 amendment. At this time, benefits were also extended to the dependents of retired and deceased workers, which represented a shift in focus from the protection of the individual worker to protection of the family. After having remained essentially unchanged during the 1940s, benefits were expanded again in the 1950s when provisions for disability insurance were added and coverage was extended to the dependents of disabled workers. By the mid-1960s, the OASDI program had largely been molded into the one that exists today with nearly universal coverage (Social Security Administration, 2000).

In 1935, unemployment insurance was initiated on a national basis through the provisions of the Social Security Act and by 1937 was instituted nationwide (Social Security Administration, 1997). The purpose of unemployment insurance is to provide partial income replacement to workers who become involuntarily unemployed. A related program, workers' compensation, provides benefits to workers who are unable to work due to injuries on the job. Although the first workers' compensation law was passed in 1908 to provide for federal civilian employees working in hazardous conditions, it was not until 1949 that all of the states had established provisions for injured workers (Social Security Administration, 1997). Benefits available to injured workers vary widely across states.

From the perspective of institutional-anomie theory, higher social welfare benefits in general should be associated with lower homicide rates. However, it is also likely that certain types of social welfare benefits have a greater impact on homicide rates than others. More specifically, benefits aimed at members of social groups who are most often involved in homicidal incidents are likely to have the greatest impact on homicide. In consideration of this, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation programs are likely to be inversely related to homicide rates because they provide benefits to, among others, young adult males who constitute a significant proportion of homicide victims and offenders. In contrast, social welfare programs that benefit the aged and disabled--such as old-age, survivors, and disability insurance programs--are likely to be less closely related to homicide rates since they primarily benefit populations not involved in homicides.

Veterans' Benefits

Social insurance for workers--whether aged, disabled, unemployed, or injured--and their dependents is only one of seven major categories of social welfare programming in the United States. Another major category is veterans' benefits, which date back to 1789 following the Revolutionary War. By the end of the 19th century, veterans' benefits included pensions for disabled veterans and dependents of men who died in service, and provisions for medical and hospital care. In 1917, following World War I (WWI), veterans' benefits were extended to include disability compensation, life insurance, and vocational rehabilitation (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2000). In 1944, following World War II (WWII), veterans' benefits were again expanded to include extensive educational benefits and a home-loan program. As might be expected, expenditures for veterans' benefits surged in the years following WWI (late-1910s), WWII (late-1940s), and the Vietnam War (early- to mid-1970s) (Social Security Administration,

1997).

Social welfare programs that provide benefits to veterans are particularly likely to impact homicide rates. Although a significant proportion of veterans' program expenditures benefits middle-aged to older adult males, another large percentage assists and improves the quality of life for young adult males who, as was already mentioned, are the primary actors in homicidal incidents. However, this is likely to change to an extent as females increasingly establish military service records.

Public Aid

In addition to benefits individuals or their dependents are entitled to--based on participation in the labor force or in the armed forces--there are also social welfare moneys distributed on the basis of need. In response to the severe economic depression of the 1930s, public-aid expenditures increased sharply during that decade and into the 1940s. However, since WWII, they have remained fairly stable, increasing at a slow and steady rate. Public-aid expenditures consist of a number of programs including the Food Stamp, Supplemental Security Income, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (formerly Aid to Families and Dependent Children) programs.

It is difficult to state in advance an expected relationship between public aid and homicide rates. In one sense, many public-aid expenditures are geared toward impoverished or needy groups who are not typically involved in homicides, including the elderly, disabled, blind, and children. However, the provision of assistance to members of these groups may indirectly benefit young and middle-aged adults who are responsible for supporting and providing care for these persons. Thus if public-aid expenditures are found to be negatively associated with homicide rates, the nature of that relationship may be either direct or indirect.

Health and Medical Services

Discussions over national health care have taken place since the early 1900s. However, it was not until 1965 that the first government health insurance programs were established under the names Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare is aimed primarily at disabled workers, the aged and their dependents, and includes provisions for inpatient hospital services, care in nursing facilities, home health services, hospice care, and physician services among other benefits. Medicaid is geared toward assisting low-income persons and families and includes provisions for physician and hospital services, prenatal and child health care, nursing facility services, and home health-care services.

An examination of trends in government expenditures for health and medical care indicates that, as a whole, expenditures of this nature have increased more rapidly than those for any other social welfare program (Social Security Administration, 1995). Further, some of the data appear misleading in that health and medical-related expenditures are often included as components of other programs. For example, Medicare is classified as a social insurance expenditure and Medicaid as a public-aid expenditure. Similarly, health and medical expenses for veterans are included in figures with other veterans' benefits. The provision of health and

medical services is generally expected to have a relatively weak relationship with homicide rates since the majority of these services benefit social groups who are unlikely to be involved in homicides.

Housing Assistance

Aimed at providing the needy with shelter, housing assistance includes moneys for public housing projects and rent subsidization. The first low-rent public housing programs in the United States were initiated in 1933 as part of the public-works programs set in motion during the Great Depression. Subsequent housing acts in 1949 and 1954 provided for the massive urban renewal programs of the 1950s. Expenditures in this category have historically been relatively low in comparison to expenditures for other social welfare programs.

Housing assistance programs are likely to be associated with homicide rates. On one hand, a negative relationship is expected in that housing assistance is intended to help in providing economic relief and meeting a basic subsistence need: shelter. As housing needs are met, some of the pressure of providing for a family is alleviated, allowing impoverished persons to turn their attention to addressing other needs that are perhaps less pressing. On the other hand, a significant amount of housing-assistance expenditures are used to build and subsidize housing projects in already impoverished and rundown neighborhoods. Ecological research indicates that all forms of victimization generally occur at higher rates in these areas. Thus, higher levels of spending on housing projects may--through indirect causal mechanisms--actually result in an increase in homicide rates.

Education and Other Social Welfare Programs

In addition to the aforementioned programs, social welfare expenditures include money for education and a number of miscellaneous social welfare programs intended to provide assistance to persons in need. For example, there are benefits available to assist with school lunch programs, help the poor with energy usage, provide aid for Native Americans, and pay for child placement and adoption services, among other provisions. Education is perhaps the only category of social welfare spending that provides benefits, albeit of an indirect nature, to individuals based on citizenship rather than on labor-force participation or need. The majority of expenditures in this area are for new school construction. However, a very small amount of funds is also directed toward adult vocational/educational services. In consideration of the indirect nature of their benefits, no relationship is expected between these programs and homicide rates.

Summary

The passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 generally hailed the beginning of decommodification in the United States although bits and pieces of legislation had been passed prior to this time to address various needs. However, it was probably not until after WWII that the liberating effects of decommodification were felt by individuals. Social welfare policies were not implemented until the late 1930s and early 1940s. Also, by this time, the effects of the war on society in general and the economy in particular had dissipated. If decommodification is

associated with homicide rates, then unemployment should have a positive impact on homicide rates prior to decommodification because of the absence of social welfare policies to buffer the impact of economic downturns. Conversely, following the implementation of decommodifying social policies, the positive relationship between unemployment and homicide rates should disappear as the impact of economic fluctuations on the individual diminish and are absorbed by social welfare programs.

In addition to the general effect decommodification is likely to have on homicide rates, it is also expected that particular social welfare programs will have a greater or lesser impact than others because of the groups that they tend to benefit. Specifically, those programs that provide benefits to young adults (particularly young adult males) are most likely to be related to homicide rates in that they affect the populations most often involved in homicidal incidents. In contrast, benefits intended to help the very old and the very young as well as other low-risk populations (for homicide) are less likely to have an impact on homicide rates in U.S. society.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data

In this study, time series techniques are used to examine the relationship between decommodification and homicide rates in the United States during the 20th century. The analyses are performed on data for the United States covering the period from 1900 to the present. The selection of the starting and ending dates has both historical and methodological rationales. First, until recently, national homicide data were only available for the U.S. from 1933 onward. However, through the use of econometric forecasting techniques, Eckberg (1995) was able to calculate estimates of homicide rates from 1900-1932. An analysis of these data will allow an assessment of whether or not early 20th-century violence rates are comparable to those of later periods. The examination of data spanning the entire 20th century is also justified in that it will enable an investigation of whether or not the factors that affect lethal violence rates in the United States are historically constant or, if instead, they are temporally variant across different time periods. Although it would be ideal to also study national data from the 1800s, it is often very difficult if not impossible to collect reliable historical data from that period.

Measures

Dependent Variable

A widely discussed methodological issue in historical studies of violent behavior concerns the availability, validity, and reliability of data. Compared to other types of violent crimes (i.e., assault, rape, robbery), homicide is advantageous as a historical indicator of levels of violence because it is less subject to definitional ambiguity, more likely to be reported to authorities, and an offense that indexes other forms of violent behavior (Gurr, 1981; Hansmann & Quigley, 1982). The primary sources of data for U.S. homicide rates are the Vital Statistics and the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), compiled from coroner/medical examiner reports and police agency reports, respectively.

Although neither source of data is without flaws, this study uses Vital Statistics data. First, comparisons of Vital Statistics and the UCR suggest the former is more accurate, especially prior to 1949, because there is less dependence on estimation procedures (Cantor & Cohen, 1980). Second, Eckberg (1995) recently used Vital Statistics data to calculate estimates of U.S. homicide rates for the period 1900-1932. In estimating national homicide rates, Eckberg (1995) takes into consideration the fact that the early death registration area largely excluded southern and western states, which tended to have higher homicide rates than their northern and eastern counterparts. Eckberg also makes adjustments for variations in the population distribution in that the states in the early death registration area consisted of a greater proportion of urban areas than the non-registration area states. Thus, Vital Statistics are the preferable source of data for this study.

Independent Variables

Decommodification

In their study, Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) construct a decommodification index based on the following: (a) social welfare expenditure levels as a percent of gross domestic product (GDP), (b) average annual per capita expenditures on social welfare, and (c) percent of social welfare expenditures allocated to employment injuries. While annual data for these indicators retrocede to the 1920s, an index of annual fluctuations in the level of decommodification may not be the best means of approaching temporal variations in decommodification. Numerous researchers have stressed the importance of properly conceptualizing time when conducting historical research (Aminzade, 1992; Griffin, 1992). In further explicating this idea, Isaac and Leicht (1997, p. 31) distinguish between temporally *extensive* and temporally *intensive* analytic regimes.

Temporally extensive time units are merely used to chronologically order observations and manipulate sample elements. This approach has been criticized for being ahistorical since models spanning long periods of time are presented as causally invariant, and theoretically and historically undifferentiated (Isaac & Leicht, 1997).

In contrast, temporally intensive regimes treat time as central and as something requiring theorization. Isaac and Leicht (1997) identify two temporally intensive analytic regimes: historical context and historical event-process. Of particular interest is the conceptualization of time as providing historical context. From this perspective, time is important in that different historical periods are presumed to be distinct in terms of their social structure and organization, which affects causal pathways. Historically differentiated periods are presumed to exhibit continuity within the period, but discontinuity between periods (Isaac & Leicht, 1997). Identifying the temporal bounds or transition points and determining the nature of causality within the different periods are central to the analysis.

Decommodification is a macro-level process that changes the structure and organization of society. More specifically, it produces a shift in the institutional balance of power as the state or the polity increasingly cushions changes in the economic realm. In consideration of the broad-

sweeping impact of decommodification, it is appropriate to conceptualize its impact on violence rates in terms of different historical periods. Although the decommodification process was generally initiated in the early 1930s, the implementation of policies and changes to the system was not complete until the late 1930s and early 1940s when the U.S. became involved in WWII. Because of the distinct impact of the war on society and the lives of individuals, the period following WWII is examined and compared to the pre-WWII period in order to assess the impact of decommodification on homicide rates.

Social welfare programs

Two indicators of benefit levels in each program are examined: (a) annual per capita expenditures in constant 1982-1984 dollars, and (b) proportion of the GDP comprising spending for the various programs. The data for these measures were gathered from Social Security Administration publications. Although national-level data on social welfare expenditures extend back to the period prior to decommodification, they do not reach to 1900, the beginning of the study period. Resources indicate that prior to the nationwide implementation of old-age and unemployment insurance in the 1930s, state and local programs were too inconsistent in terms of their nature and expenditure patterns to allow estimates of early 1900s social welfare spending. The only national-level data available prior to 1929 are for 1913 when the census made a specific attempt to compile national expenditure figures based on state and local figures (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1967).

Economic deprivation

Economic deprivation is gauged by unemployment rates--measured as the percent of the civilian labor force that is unemployed. Not surprisingly, unemployment was highest in the United States during the 1930s when it reached close to 25%. Prior to the Great Depression, the unemployment rate fluctuated between 2% and 12%. The post-Depression era was also characterized by fluctuations in unemployment although there was a general increase between the early-1940s and the early-1980s at which point it peaked around 10%. Finally, beginning in the 1980s and continuing into the 1990s, unemployment declined to between 4-5%.

Control Variables

Because of the findings of previous research, several variables are included as controls: levels of alcohol consumption based on cirrhosis death rates as a proxy, prohibitionist legislation, immigration rates, divorce rates, dummy variables tapping into war and post-war periods, percent of population in the armed forces, availability of medical assistance, and age composition of the population. Data for these variables were extracted from a variety of government documents including *Historical Statistics of the United States* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975) and the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

Time Series Trending

Two problems encountered in time series analyses are autocorrelation and nonstationarity, which are frequently dealt with by de-trending the data. While de-trending may

appear to be a simple solution, it can be problematic because it fundamentally changes the nature of the data being analyzed. (See Jensen, 2000, for details.) In this paper, an attempt is made to account for the effects of trends by confronting the issues at a theoretical level--modeling the effects of trends and eliminating autocorrelated error terms by including theoretically and historically relevant variables in the model. Jensen (2000) notes that important information about potential missing variables can often be discerned through an inspection of the residuals plot. With this information, it is possible to revisit the theory and further consider the historical climate in question in an attempt to identify missing variables and develop a better-fitting model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of Decommodification

Institutional-anomie theory suggests decommodification should be associated with lower homicide rates because it reduces the sociological impact of changes in market conditions. Additionally, decommodification shifts the institutional balance of power, which curtails anomic pressures and strengthens social control mechanisms. To analyze the impact of decommodification, the relationship between unemployment rates and homicide rates was examined prior to and following the implementation of decommodifying legislation. As was previously discussed, several variables were included as controls to construct the best-fitting model for each historical period. The variables are generally structural indicators that--based on previous empirical research or theoretical expectations--are expected to impact homicide rates.

Although the passage of decommodifying legislation began on a broad scale in the mid-1930s, most programs were not implemented until the late-1930s and early-1940s. In consideration of this, various years during this time were analyzed to determine the year that best represents a turning point. After careful analysis, the WWII era was included as part of the earlier period, resulting in two temporal periods: 1900-1945 and 1946-1997. From a theoretical and historical perspective, WWII fits conceptually as part of the earlier era as Americans became increasingly aware in the 1930s of escalating conflict in Europe and the risk of war. Additionally, WWII involvement has been credited with bringing the U.S. out of the severe 1930s economic depression. Empirically, these temporal bounds result in the best model fit for both periods, which is consistent with Brenner (1976), who found violent crimes to be more strongly related to economic growth and adversity since WWII. He also found the Great Depression affected the homicide rate differently than other crimes from 1920-1940 in that it increased as employment increased. However, since WWII, "the patterns for . . . homicidal and property crimes are identical; they increase sharply during periods of short-term reductions in employment and income" (Brenner, 1976, p. 37). This is consistent with Henry and Short (1954), who found both homicides and aggravated assaults decreased with declines in the economic cycle in the 1930s and 1940s.

It was hypothesized that unemployment would be positively associated with homicide rates prior to decommodification as the effects of economic deprivation were felt more severely. For example, in the event of a job loss, an individual would fully shoulder the responsibility of supporting him/herself and his/her family. Accomplishing this task would be dependent upon

obtaining another source of income and/or relying on friends/family members for assistance. However, with decommodification and the establishment of a minimum living wage, the loss of a job would not be as devastating since social welfare programs and policies would provide assistance in obtaining employment or some source of income, and in ensuring that basic subsistence needs were being met. The results in Column 1 of Table 1 indicate that, consistent with expectations, economic deprivation was in fact associated with increased homicide rates during the first half of the 20th century. More specifically, from 1900-1945, the impact of percent unemployed on homicide rates was .117 ($\alpha = .001$). However, the coefficient for unemployment in Column 2 indicates that, during the second half of the century (1946-1997), the link between unemployment and homicide was negative (-.094, $\alpha = .01$).

TABLE 1. GENERALIZED LEAST SQUARES MODELS PREDICTING 20th CENTURY RATES OF HOMICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES BASED ON LEVEL MEASURES.

	U.S. Homicide Rates	
	1900-1945	1946-1997
Intercept	23.891***	-1.491***
Percent Immigrants	117.132***	265.425***
Percent Unemployed	.117***	-.094**
Cirrhosis Death Rates	.619***	.198***
Prohibition States	.070***	–
Post War Periods (Dummy)	-.792*	–
% Population in Military	-18.748**	–
Divorce Rates	–	.489***
Mob Murders (Dummy)	1.129***	–
% Population 15-24	-134.722***	–
Homicide Rates (-1)	–	.639***
Adjusted R ²	.896	.979
Durbin-Watson <i>d</i>	2.386	–
Q-statistics	OK	OK
N	46	52

* Significant at $\alpha = .05$
** Significant at $\alpha = .01$
*** Significant at $\alpha = .001$

Although unemployment was expected to have either a weak positive or null effect on homicide rates during the second half of the 20th century, a negative relationship was unexpected. Further insight into this relationship can be gained when the nullifying effects of social welfare programs on unemployment are considered in conjunction with the demographic characteristics of homicide victims and offenders.

In recent decades, increasing numbers of young persons have become involved in violent crimes--although the mid- to late-1990s have witnessed a slight decline (Regoli & Hewitt, 2000, p. 329; Siegel & Senna, 2000, p. 42). Juveniles are less likely to feel the effects of unemployment than adults due to their minor status and the fact that most live at home and are financially supported by their parents or guardians. Because juveniles experience fluctuations in the economy less directly than adults, an increase in juvenile crime rates may nullify the effects of unemployment statistically on homicide rates as an increased proportion of victims and offenders are juveniles.

The increased involvement of juveniles in violent crime occurred at approximately the same time (1985-1986) that unemployment rates became negatively associated with homicide rates according to the recursive coefficients generated by E-views. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998) found that from 1987-1993, juvenile arrests for violent crime increased 79% and arrests for murder more than doubled. Since 1993, juvenile violent crime rates have receded, but not enough data are available to determine if this decline has had an impact on the unemployment-homicide relationship.

Another issue that may be relevant in explaining the negative relationship between unemployment and homicide rates consists of changes in the sexual composition of the labor force during the second half of the 20th century. Specifically, in the years following WWII, a greater proportion of females was unemployed than in prior decades. Considered in conjunction with the fact that homicides are predominantly committed by males, it is not surprising that unemployment had a neutral or negative effect on homicide rates in recent decades. To more adequately determine if a relationship exists between homicide and unemployment, it may be necessary to use sex-specific rates of unemployment in the analyses.

Impact of Social Welfare Programs

Proportion of GDP Comprising Social Welfare Spending

In an attempt to determine if particular types of social welfare programs impact violence rates, the proportion of the GDP comprising expenditures for the various types of programs was entered into the equations. The post-WWII era was targeted since, as was previously discussed, it was at this time that most of the programs (with the exception of veterans' benefits) could have been expected to have impacted the welfare of individuals. For 1945-1995, entered into the model previously constructed for homicide rates was the proportion of the GDP comprising each of the following types of social welfare expenditures: total social welfare, social insurance, public aid, housing, veterans' benefits, and health and medical expenditures. In order to control for changes in the health and well-being of the economy, the GDP--divided by the 1982-1984 Consumer Price Index (CPI) to account for inflation--was included in the model. The results are contained in Table 2.

TABLE 2. GENERALIZED LEAST SQUARES MODELS ASSESSING IMPACT OF SPECIFIC SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS IN TERMS OF PROPORTION OF GDP CONSTITUTED BY EXPENDITURES ON U.S. HOMICIDE RATES.

U.S. HOMICIDE RATES								
1946-1995								
Intercept	-1.39***	-1.89***	-1.31*	-.123**	-.150***	-.164**	-.140***	-2.15***
Percent Immigrants	253.21***	251.90***	258.80***	263.95***	269.02***	257.78***	258.35***	249.77***
Percent Unemp	-.08	-.04	-.11**	-.12**	-.10**	-.11***	-.12**	-.05
Cirrhosis Rates	.19***	.19***	.18***	.19***	.01**	.18***	.19***	.20***
Divorce Rates	.46**	.49***	.50***	.52***	.66***	.52***	.50***	.49***
Homicide Rates (-1)	.67***	.66***	.64***	.61***	.68***	.64***	.63***	.64***
GDP Constant \$.00	.00	.00	-.00	.00*	-.00	.00	.00
% GDP Total	-4.41	-	--	-	-	-	-	-
% GDP Soc Insur	-	-18.75	-	-	-	-	-	-
% GDP Vets	-	--	-.05	-	-	-	-	-
% GDP Public Aid	-	--	-	10.42	-	-	-	-
% GDP Housing	-	--	-	-	-484.16**	-	-	-
% GDP Hlth/Medic	-	--	-	-	-	52.91	-	-
% GDP Unemp ^a	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.34	-
% GDP OASDI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-25.72
Adjusted R ²	.981	.982	.981	.981	.984	.981	.981	.982
N	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50

^a Unemployment & workers compensation
* Significant at $\alpha = .05$
** Significant at $\alpha = .01$
*** Significant at $\alpha = .001$

The results in Table 2 provide partial support for the idea that certain types of social welfare programs have a greater impact on homicide rates than others. Before analyzing specific types of programs, the impact of total social welfare programming was examined. As is indicated, while the proportion of the GDP comprising total social welfare expenditures is not statistically significant itself, it does render the effect of unemployment on homicide rates non-significant ($b = -.08, \alpha = .300$). (See Column 1.) A similar effect was observed for the proportion of the GDP comprising expenditures for social insurance programs in that their inclusion rendered unemployment rates non-significant ($b = -.04, \alpha = .519$). (See Column 2.) A more direct relationship was observed for the impact of housing in that the proportion of the GDP comprising expenditures for housing assistance ($b = -484.16, \alpha = .01$) was negatively related to homicide rates. None of the other coefficients for general categories of social welfare programming had a significant impact on homicide rates.

As previously discussed, social insurance consists of different types of programs. To determine which aspect of social insurance affected the unemployment-homicide relationship, included in the model were indicators of the proportion of the GDP composed of the following types of programs: (a) unemployment insurance and workers' compensation, and (b) old-age,

survivors, and disability insurance. The results are shown in Columns 7 and 8 of Table 2. Contrary to expectations, the proportion comprising expenditures on unemployment insurance and workers' compensation ($b = 14.34$, $\alpha = .66$) was not statistically significant and had no impact on the effect of unemployment rates, which remained negative and statistically significant ($b = -.12$, $\alpha = .01$). (See Column 7.) Also contrary to expectations, the proportion of the GDP comprising expenditures on old-age, survivors, and disability insurance approached a significant relationship with homicide rates ($b = -25.72$, $\alpha = .11$) as shown in Column 8. Furthermore, it nullified the relationship between homicide and unemployment rates ($b = -.05$, $\alpha = .35$).

Per Capita Social Welfare Expenditures

In addition to examining social welfare program expenditures as a proportion of the GDP, the impact of per capita expenditures was also analyzed. To account for inflation, the per capita expenditures were divided by the 1982-1984 CPI. As before, the GDP was included in the model to account for changes in the relative health and well-being of the economy. The results are contained in Table 3 and are very similar to those for expenditures as a proportion of the GDP.

Per capita expenditures for two types of social welfare programs (social insurance and housing assistance) had a significant negative effect on homicide rates although the magnitude of their impact was fairly small. Per capita expenditures for social insurance programs had a direct inverse effect on homicide rates as indicated by the coefficient in Column 2, $b = -.003$ ($\alpha = .05$). Also, they had an indirect effect in that the impact of unemployment ($b = -.004$, $\alpha = .939$) was nullified. A significant impact was also observed for per capita expenditures on housing assistance. As indicated in Column 5, per capita expenditures on housing ($b = -.034$, $\alpha = .05$) were inversely related to homicide rates although the impact decreased the effect of cirrhosis death rates (an indicator of alcohol consumption) to non-significance ($b = .071$, $\alpha = .173$). However, an examination of the recursive coefficients indicates cirrhosis approaches significance for the entire study period. While none of the coefficients for any of the other specific types of social welfare programming was statistically significant, the findings regarding the impact of per capita expenditures for total social welfare programming are worth noting. As indicated in Column 1 of Table 3, the per capita for total social welfare expenditures reduces the impact of unemployment on homicide rates practically to non-significance ($b = -.10$, $\alpha = .0529$).

As before, an attempt was made to determine which aspect of social insurance programming had the greatest effect on homicide rates. And, as before, the results were contrary to expectations. Per capita expenditures on unemployment insurance and workers' compensation had no effect on homicide rates. (See Column 7.) However, per capita expenditures for old-age, survivors, and disability insurance had a direct effect on homicide rates ($-.003$, $\alpha = .05$) as well as an indirect effect by reducing the impact of unemployment ($b = -.04$, $\alpha = .392$) to non-significance. (See Column 8.)

TABLE 3. GENERALIZED LEAST SQUARES MODELS ASSESSING IMPACT OF SPECIFIC SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS IN TERMS OF PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES ON U.S. HOMICIDE RATES

	U.S. Homicide Rates 1946-1995							
Intercept	-1.38	-2.76***	-1.18**	-.120**	-.133***	-.139***	-.131***	-2.71***
Percent Immig	256.93***	237.25***	256.46***	-.266.78***	269.22***	257.18***	258.50***	232.15***
Percent Unemp	-.10 ^a	-.00	-.11**	-.11**	-.11***	-.11**	-.10*	-.04
Cirrhosis Rates	.18***	.11**	.18***	.20***	.07	.18***	.18***	.13***
Divorce Rates	.49***	.55***	.49***	.52***	.62***	.53***	.50***	.55***
Hom Rates (-1)	.65***	.73***	.66***	.60***	.69***	.63***	.65***	.70***
GDP Constant \$.00	.00*	-.00	-.00	.00*	-.00	.00	.00*
PC: Total	-.00	–	--	–	–	–	–	–
PC: Soc Ins	–	-.00*	–	–	–	–	–	–
PC: Vets	–	--	-.00	–	–	–	–	–
PC: Pub Aid	–	--	–	.00	–	–	–	–
PC: Housing	–	--	–	–	-.03*	–	–	–
PC: Hlth/Medic	–	--	–	–	–	.01	–	–
PC: Unemp ^b	–	–	–	–	–	–	-.00	–
PC: OASDI	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-.00*
Adjusted R ²	.981	.983	.981	.981	.984	.982	.981	.983
N	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50

^a Significant at $\alpha = .0529$

^b Unemployment & workers' compensation

* Significant at $\alpha = .05$

** Significant at $\alpha = .01$

***Significant at $\alpha = .001$

Summary

Findings of this study indicate decommodification has had an impact on lethal violence rates in the United States. In the early 1900s, unemployment rates were positively related to homicide rates, supporting the notion of a link between economic deprivation and violent behavior. Following the implementation of decommodifying legislation, the relationship between unemployment and homicide rates became negative, indicating a shift in the causal structures associated with homicide rates. In an attempt to scrutinize the impact of decommodification and determine if particular types of social welfare programs had a greater diminishing effect on homicide, data on proportion of the GDP comprising social welfare expenditures and per capita social welfare expenditures for various programs were examined for the period following WWII. The results indicate social welfare expenditures in general, and social insurance and housing expenditures in particular, have had an impact on homicide rates. Total social welfare expenditures as well as social insurance expenditures appear to have an indirect effect on

homicide rates in that they affect the unemployment-homicide relationship. Social welfare benefits in the form of housing assistance were also found to impact homicide rates, but in a more direct fashion.

In addition to per capita expenditures and proportion of the GDP consisting of social welfare expenditures, other measures of decommodification were examined. One avenue of investigation involved regressing various types of social welfare expenditures on GDP and then transforming the residuals into a new variable that measured periods when social welfare expenditures were lower than would have been expected given the state of the economy. In general, the residual variables improved the adjusted R^2 slightly and delayed the time at which unemployment became significant from the early- to late-1980s (according to the recursive coefficients) but were not statistically significant. In a similar vein, social welfare expenditures were regressed on unemployment rates to construct measures of periods during which social welfare expenditures were lower than would have been expected given unemployment rates. As before, the residual measures suppressed the effect of unemployment, but failed to achieve statistical significance and only slightly improved the model fit.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has focused on the impact of decommodification on lethal violence rates in the United States. The findings of this study provide empirical support for a relationship between decommodification and homicide rates. However, they indicate that the issue of temporality plays an important role in identifying that relationship. As was previously discussed, Isaac and Leicht (1997) note there are different means of conceptualizing time. In this study, decommodification was postulated as a macro-level process that would result in a shift in the balance of power between major social institutions. In consideration of the pervasive impact decommodification was expected to have on the structure and organization of society, it was conceptualized as a historically variant and contextual variable that influenced and shaped the broader social context of behavior. The contextual effect was captured by dividing the study into distinct analytic regimes and allowing their causal structures to vary. This is consistent with Isaac and Leicht (1997, p. 31) who note, “historically differentiated periods . . . [may be] grounded in particular institutional configurations.” The results of this study are consistent with the idea of historically distinct periods differentiated by decommodification in that the correlates of homicide exhibited continuity within each period, as indicated by good model fits, and discontinuity between periods, suggesting a turning point had been reached.

While the findings of this study are consistent with the theory of institutional anomie, when decommodification is conceptualized as a factor that shapes the larger social and cultural context in which behavior occurs, more intricate analyses proved less supportive of a relationship. An attempt was made during preliminary analyses to construct a time series version of Messner and Rosenfeld’s (1997) measure of decommodification. However, the index did not adequately reflect the essence of the concept in that while it captured expenditure levels, it did not account for changes in cultural values, behavioral norms, and social control mechanisms.

After the impact of decommodification was captured by dividing the study period, an

attempt was made to determine if particular types of social welfare programs impacted lethal violence rates. It was hypothesized that programs directed at young adults would exhibit the closest relationship with homicide rates because the demographic characteristics of these persons most closely resembled those of homicide victims and offenders. Although the results indicate certain types of programs have been more closely related to homicide-rate trends than others, the link did not correspond to the demographic characteristics of the recipients since housing assistance and social insurance programs (especially old-age, survivors, and disability insurance) were most closely related to homicide rates.

Another important finding of this study is the shift in homicide correlates during different historical periods. In the early 1900s, homicide rates were associated with alcohol consumption (i.e., cirrhosis death rates), prohibitionist legislation, immigration, mob violence, unemployment, post-war periods, and size of armed forces, and youth population. However, following WWII and the implementation of decommodifying social policies, several factors drop from the model including post-war periods and the size of both the armed forces and youth populations. Also absent are prohibitionist legislation and mob violence, which is not surprising since both were largely restricted to the early 20th century. While cirrhosis death rates and immigration continue as correlates of homicide, the effect of unemployment shifts and divorce rates enters the model as an indicator of levels of social integration.

As a final note, the findings of this study have implications for future research. While this study has only focused on homicide, an avenue of research recently revitalized by Unnithan, Huff-Corzine, Corzine, and Whitt (1994) suggests there may be a relationship between homicide and suicide. The integrated theory of homicide and suicide suggests they may be linked through two sets of causal mechanisms. While *forces of production* affect the total number of homicides and suicides in a society, *forces of direction* affect the manner in which lethal violence is expressed or the risk of homicide relative to suicide. Decommodification may function as a force of direction if it affects whether blame and responsibility for negative life events (e.g., loss of job) are attributed externally or internally. For example, in the early 1900s, blame for hardship may have been more likely attributed externally since economic downturns often had very real effects for individuals and their ability to support a family. However, following decommodification, blame and responsibility for privation may likely be attributed internally if an individual is unable to make ends meet even with the assistance of social welfare programs and government aid. If this is the case, decommodification may function as a force of direction that largely decreases homicide rates, but in some cases increases suicide rates.

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INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE TRENDS IN CALIFORNIA, 1990 THROUGH 1998

Laura E. Lund, California Department of Health Services
MS 39A, P.O. Box 942732, Sacramento, CA 94234

ABSTRACT

This population-based study had two objectives: (a) to describe the characteristics of intimate partner homicides in California, and (b) to ascertain whether trends in intimate partner homicide vary by the sex or race of the victims. Using data from Supplementary Homicide Reports and death records, I examined all intimate partner homicides in California for a 9-year period, 1990 through 1998. I used the criterion of non-overlapping confidence intervals to determine statistically significant differences in rates between and among groups, and time series regression to assess the size and significance of changes over time. The number of intimate partner homicides declined significantly during this time period, although the decline was not consistent in size or significance across all sex/race groups.

INTRODUCTION

Violence between intimate partners is a serious criminal justice and public health problem in the United States. Nationally, women and men reported being violently victimized by their intimate partners about a million times in 1998 (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). More than 20% of violent victimizations of women are perpetrated by intimate partners (Greenfeld et al., 1998). In 1994, more than 200,000 assault victims visited U.S. emergency departments for treatment of injuries inflicted by intimates (Rand, 1997). In 1998 in California alone, police and sheriff departments received nearly 200,000 calls to report domestic violence situations (State of California, n.d.), and made more than 56,000 arrests for domestic violence (State of California, 1999). The health consequences of physical and psychological violence between intimates can be significant and long-lasting (Coker et al., 2000).

Homicide is the most serious consequence of intimate partner violence, and is a significant cause of injury and death in women (Dannenberg, Baker, & Li, 1994). Women are disproportionately at risk for death at the hands of an intimate partner. In 1998 there were more than 1,800 intimate partner homicides, and about 30% of all female homicide victims were killed by an intimate partner (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). In local jurisdictions the proportion killed by intimates ranges from 15% to 40% (Kellermann & Mercy, 1992; Pratt & Deosaransingh, 1997; Wilt, Illman, & BrodyField, 1997). Nationally and locally, the number of intimate partner homicides has declined dramatically in the past decade (Fox & Zawitz, 2000; Frye, Wilt, & Schomburg, 2000), although it is still high.

Because of its size and population diversity, California provides a unique opportunity to examine the problem of intimate partner homicide (IPH). The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant trends in IPH in California over a nine-year period,

1990 through 1998. In this paper I present IPH trends for (a) Californians overall, (b) males and females, (c) four race groups, and (d) seven sex/race subgroups.

METHODS

Data

Data for this study came from a linked datafile created and maintained by the California Department of Health Services, which contains information from the California Department of Justice (DOJ) Homicide Data File (“homicide file”) and the California Department of Health Services death certificate records (“death records”). For all homicides in the state of California, DOJ’s homicide file contains information submitted by law enforcement agencies on Supplemental Homicide Report Forms (“forms”). DOJ maintains the homicide file as part of California’s participation in the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting System. As part of its vital records system, the California Department of Health Services maintains an electronic database of all deaths in the state. These two datasets were merged using a probabilistic algorithm to link cases, based on information such as Social Security number, date of death or injury, and name of the victim. The linked dataset was used to perform the analyses presented here.

Case Definition

This study used the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ definition of homicide: “the willful killing of one human being by another” (Fox & Zawitz, 2000). This definition excluded justifiable homicides and deaths due to negligence, as they do not involve willful assaultive conduct on the part of the perpetrator.

A case was eligible for inclusion in the study if: (a) the fatal attack took place between January 1, 1990, and December 31, 1998, (b) the victim and the suspected perpetrator were intimate partners (e.g., legal or common-law spouses or former spouses, dating partners, or same-sex lovers), and (c) the victim was aged 13 years or older. In cases with more than one victim or perpetrator, at least one victim and perpetrator had to be intimate partners, and only the intimate partner victims were included in this analysis. There were 2,110 cases meeting the inclusion criteria.

I used four categories for victim race: non-Hispanic White (“White”), Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black (“Black”), and a combined category for Asians and persons of all other races (“Other”). Because of the small number of cases in the Other category, it was not possible to examine race/ethnicity in finer detail. In a few cases the death record and homicide file were not in agreement as to the sex, race, or age of the victim. I chose to use the death record information in these cases, as it was often more complete and specific (e.g., providing birth date rather than age in years).

Analysis

I used time series regression (SAS release 8.0) to test for the statistical significance of trends over time. The research hypothesis guiding the analysis posited that between 1990 and 1998, a linear decline in IPH occurred across all sex and race groups. The regression equations used the number of homicides per six-month period as the dependent variable, beginning with the period January through June 1990, and ending with July through December 1998. Six-month time intervals were chosen to obtain sufficient data points in the time series to test the statistical significance of the trend models. Yearly homicide totals did not provide a sufficient number of time intervals, and monthly and quarterly totals yielded too few cases in most of the subgroups to be able to test trend hypotheses. The Durbin-Watson test was applied to all regression equations to test for serial correlation, with $\alpha=.05$. None of the models showed statistically significant serial correlations, so in all cases I performed the time series analysis using ordinary least squares regression with no autoregressive parameters. Trend lines were considered to be significantly different from each other if their 95% confidence intervals did not overlap.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays information on the number of homicides by sex and race, average change over time, and regression results. On average, there were about 117 homicides per six-month period from January 1990, through December 1998, with a high of 156 in January-June 1990, and a low of 77 in January-June 1998.

	Total Homicides	Six-Month Average	Percent Change Jan-Jun 1990- Jul-Dec 1998	Regression Results	
				b	95 % CI
All California	2110	117.2	-44.9	3.9 ¹	-4.8;-2.9
Sex					
Males	492	27.3	-57.5	-1.6 ¹	-2.1;-1.1
Females	1618	89.9	-40.5	-2.3 ¹	-3.1;-1.5
Race					
White	971	53.9	-53.7	-2.3 ¹	-3.0 ; -1.6
Hispanic	534	29.7	-3.3	-0.3	-0.7 ; 0.1
Black	450	25.0	-71.1	-1.1 ¹	-1.6 ; -0.7
Other	155	8.6	+33.3	-0.2	-0.4 ; 0.1
Sex/Race					
Males					
White	215	11.9	-66.7	-0.6 ¹	-0.9 ; -0.4
Hispanic	98	5.4	+66.7	-0.2 ²	-0.5; -0.0

Black	165	9.2	-83.3	-0.7 ¹	-1.0 ; -0.4
Other	14	0.8	--	--	--
Females					
White	756	42.0	-50.0	-1.6 ¹	-2.2 ; -1.1
Hispanic	436	24.2	-11.1	0.0	-0.4 ; 0.4
Black	285	15.8	-60.0	-0.4 ²	-0.8 ; -0.1
Other	141	7.8	0.0	-0.1	-0.4 ; 0.1

¹p<.001

²p<.05

From the first six months of 1990 through the last six months of 1998, IPH declined by about 45% overall, with the rate of decline varying considerably across subgroups. Although male-victim IPH appeared to show a proportionately greater decline (57.5%) than female-victim IPH (40.5%), the regression results suggest there was no significant difference in the rate of decline between these two groups. Significant differences in the rates of IPH decline were observed across the four race groups, with significant decreases in IPH taking place only among Whites and Blacks. The largest proportionate decrease (71.1%) occurred among Black victims, with no significant difference in the rates of decline for White and Black victims. No statistically significant trend was noted for Hispanic or Other victims.

Differences by race were similar for both males and females. Black male victims of IPH showed the largest proportionate drop--a decline of 83.3%--although there was no significant difference between White and Black males in the rate of decline estimated through regression. Interestingly, the number of IPH cases with Hispanic male victims showed a 66.7% increase between the first period in 1990, and the last period in 1998, although regression results indicated a small but statistically significant overall decline. There were too few male victims of Other race (n = 14) to calculate trend estimates.

Among females, White victim IPH declined at a significantly more rapid rate than any other group, although Black victim IPH had the largest proportionate decline (60%). A small first-to-last period decrease (11.1%) was observed for Hispanic female IPH victims, but the trend was not statistically significant. No change in IPH occurred for Other female victims.

DISCUSSION

The number of intimate partner homicides occurring in California dropped dramatically in the 1990s, declining by 42% between 1990 and 1998. Large and statistically significant declines occurred at about the same rate in both men and women. Significant declines were seen among Whites and Blacks, but not among Hispanics or Others. Notably, Black victim IPH showed the largest proportionate decline, although the rate of decline was the same among Whites and Blacks.

This study also found clear differences among sex/race subgroups. No significant trend in IPH occurred for Hispanic or Other females. However, significant declines occurred among Whites and Blacks of both sexes and among Hispanic males. White female IPH declined more rapidly than any other group. This finding deviates sharply from the trends observed nationally,

with White women in the U.S. showing a much slower IPH decline than White men or Black victims of both sexes (Fox & Zawitz, 2000).

The decade of the 1990s in California brought about many changes and improvements in the criminal justice, public health, and community responses to domestic violence. These changes focused on prevention of domestic violence and intervention to assist victims. For example, battered women's advocacy organizations such as the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the Los Angeles Coalition Against the Abuse of Women have raised awareness in communities through media campaigns and educational efforts. The California legislature acknowledged the extent of the problem and began providing funding for battered women's shelters throughout the state. Police and sheriff departments designed and implemented intensive line-officer training regarding appropriate responses to domestic violence situations, began aggressively enforcing domestic violence laws, and adopted mandatory arrest policies. Almost every county in the state began convening a Domestic Violence Coordinating Council to discuss collaborative community response to the problem, and many counties began implementing Domestic Violence Death Review Teams. It is possible that some or all of the many changes that have taken place have worked to make victims of intimate partner violence safer, and contributed to the decline in IPH.

It must be noted that during the 1990s, the decline in number of homicides was not limited to IPH. Homicide declined across all perpetrator types. More research is needed to better understand the IPH phenomenon. Specifically, the extent to which the decline in IPH is caused by the general factors driving the larger overall decrease in homicide and violent crime should be explored, as well as the extent to which factors unique to IPH contribute to IPH decline. Additionally, whether the decrease in the number of homicides of intimate partners reflects a reduction in intimate partner violence generally, or only a change in the likelihood of fatalities should also be examined. Finally, factors that contribute to the differential rate of decline across sex and race subgroups should be identified.

CONCLUSION

In summary, intimate partner violence is a highly prevalent problem affecting women, men, and families throughout the U.S. Although the number of homicides perpetrated by intimate partners has declined dramatically in the past decade, hundreds of thousands of men and women in California, and millions nationally, are victims of intimate partner violence every year. A public health approach to intimate partner violence assumes that such violence is preventable. Such an approach is essential to effect broad-based changes in societal norms and behaviors.

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DISCUSSION

Question: Candi, on what basis do they survive economic connection?

Candi Batton: With programs that provide money for amelioration of economic deprivation people are not subjected to the same anomic situation. If gone, homicide and economic deprivation don't have as strong a connection. In the early 20th century when unemployment increased, homicide increased.

Question: Have you any data on CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camps, and of the effect of putting young people to work detail?

Candi Batton: Yes, there is some quantitative data but not for one specific program. During that time more expenditures were made, . . . so yes and no. This is an example of how social welfare changes our GDP but not how it changes our whole economy.

Question: What about the illegal economy?

Candi Batton: No, we need a more qualitative basis; that's not available in data.

Question: Did you measure only Federal social expenditures?

Candi Batton: From 1929 on, we used data on total expenditures from federal, state and local. Pre-1930s virtually all expenditures were on the state/local levels. No data were available between 1910-1920s. States were used as units of analysis. Social welfare expenditures are diverse for groups not likely to contribute to homicide. For example, the elderly may not affect homicide rates, but will affect the granting of veteran's benefits. This is expected to perhaps address homicide rates.

Question: As benefits and social welfare policies increase, homicide should decrease. Don't we have more programs now, and hasn't homicide increased? Are you trying to account for peaks and valleys with time-series?

Candi Batton: Right. We should see a decline over time. The results are not what were expected. Looking at the periods, de-commodification is used as a background in each period.

Question: Do you mean different historical homicide periods?

Candi Batton: Sequential trends. For example, the introduction of crack is a historical period. We probably have to look at violence-specific periods. Historical analysis can integrate historical methods. Qualitative design offers integration of temporal data.

Roland Chilton: Laura, why weren't homicide rates used?

Laura Lund: There were too few cases for sub groups, not stable. Numbers are okay though because one can still see changes over time.

Question: How good is California at including ex-boy/girlfriend data?

Laura Lund: It varies by jurisdiction. The proportion is much greater for African Americans. It also depends on how recently the break-up occurred.

Question: With intimate partner, married, common law-- is there a sexual relationship? How is intimate defined?

Laura Lund: The implication is that at some point there was a sexual relationship, but we don't know the actual intimate relations. Far from being intimate partner, not all are sexual relationships but some type of romantic relationship is necessary.

Question: How have social service programs contributed to the decline? Otherwise, why are the numbers declining?

Laura Lund: We haven't had a chance to look at that yet.

Question: Hispanic homicides are not declining? Why? Are the female Hispanics increasing? It seems pretty stable. Why are the Hispanic numbers stable?

Laura Lund: Hispanic males decline but Hispanic females are stable. Maybe there are population reasons, but that is my number one question as well.

Question: Can you include population figures for each group that may account for the change?

Laura Lund: I might include that.

Comment: You might use time period moving averages. If you broke them up over 3-month time periods, you may find a reason for the decline, and for the stability.

Question: Are there services directed at women from other avenues? Are there maybe services for Whites, but not Blacks or others?

Laura Lund: I'm not sure.

Question: Can you track services in California for each racial group?

Laura Lund: There are some data but they are not good.

Becky Block: The study in Chicago looked at Intimate Partner homicide as well. Five-hundred

women were interviewed. Differences were noted in help seeking by racial/ethnic group. Latina/Hispanic did not try to get help even from friends, even when most exposed to violence. It's a cultural issue. This may account for the differences in California as well, stigmas in the community.

Comment: It's women going to seek help, but it's men that need the help. Get men help and that will make the difference.

Question: What about living arrangements? Rick Rosenfeld has suggested a decline in rates because of living arrangements.

Laura Lund: We can't do that with these data.

CHAPTER TWO

JUVENILE HOMICIDE

PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER?: HOMICIDE AND SUICIDE AMONG PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGICALLY TESTED JUVENILES

Vanessa Levrier Leggett, University of Houston-Downtown, Department of Criminal Justice,
Center for Training, One Main Street, Suite 112-N, Houston, TX 77002

ABSTRACT

A review of the budding literature on the theorized relationship between psychoactive medication and juvenile violence is presented. Currently, no conclusive scientific evidence exists to definitively support a link between psychopharmacological treatment and de novo or intensified suicidality and/or homicidal impulsivity. Meaningful analysis of the effects of psychostimulant and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressant medications on behavior has been thwarted by difficulties distinguishing reported side effects from underlying psychiatric disorders and preexisting conditions and deficiencies in public health, policy, and reporting practices. Despite these and other limitations, enough anecdotal evidence and a growing body of research strongly suggest a causal connection between psychoactive medication and violent ideation and/or behavior in adolescents. The paradoxical reaction caused by these drugs is that the boost in serotonin levels in the brain triggers an unintended compensatory drop in dopamine, which results in loss of involuntary motor control. There appears to be a dosage-related effect where initial side effects like akathisia (inner restlessness) and disinhibition create aggression and impulsivity--the precursors to violent behavior--before the therapeutic effects fully manifest.

INTRODUCTION

A spate of school shootings¹ in the late 1990s that left over two dozen dead and nearly 50 wounded and--at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado--culminated in the most violent school massacre in United States history, thrust the long-standing concern about adolescent access to firearms center stage as the nation struggled for an answer to the inexplicable tragic trend in juvenile violence. Not surprisingly, because in each incident guns were the efficient cause of the killings, children's access to firearms made an easy target for assessing blame. But as forensic findings in each case emerged, another alleged link surfaced: the teenage perpetrators in each

¹In 1997, Luke Woodham, 16, shot 9 people, killing 3 girls and wounding 7 others in Pearl, Mississippi. Published reports indicate Woodham was on Prozac. Also in 1997, Michael Carneal, 14, gunned down students, killing 3 and wounding 5 in West Paducah, Kentucky. Carneal was reportedly being treated with Ritalin. In 1998, Andrew Golden, 11, and Mitchell Johnson, 14, shot and killed 4 students and a teacher and wounded 10 others in Jonesboro, Arkansas. One report indicated the boys were taking Ritalin. Later that year, Kip Kinkel, 15, killed 2 students and wounded 22 others in Springfield, Oregon. Kinkel had been previously prescribed Prozac. In 1999, Shawn Cooper, 15, fired a shotgun at school, injuring 1 student and holding students hostage. Cooper was taking Ritalin at the time. Four days later, Eric Harris, 18, shot and killed 12 students and a teacher before killing himself in Littleton, Colorado. Harris was on the antidepressant Luvox.

incident¹ had received psychopharmacological treatment at some time prior to the event, or were taking psychoactive medication contemporaneously.

Since the late 1980s, when Prozac and other psychotropic drugs termed the “new antidepressants”² were touted as miracle drugs for treating adult depression, sporadic violent acts committed by adult patients have caught the attention of many experts who suspect a connection between antidepressant use and de novo or intensified suicidality and/or violent aggression. Myers and Vondruska (1998) observed that there is a dearth of conclusive scientific evidence that clearly confirms or negates the suspected relationship between antidepressant agents and violent behavior. The sheer number of alleged incidents led to the birth of the “Prozac defense” in litigated cases where pharmaceutical giants like Eli Lilly declared “preexisting psychosis” while survivors and murder defendants alike proclaimed “pharma culpa.” Even with increasing negative publicity highlighting the drugs’ suspected dangerous side effects, antidepressants like Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, and Luvox, and psychostimulants like Ritalin, continue to be prescribed frequently and perhaps too liberally.

The latest burgeoning market for these drugs is adolescents (Glenmullen, 2000). At least half a million children have been prescribed antidepressant medication (Glenmullen, 2000, p. 15), and it is estimated (“Ritalin in the News,” 1999) that as many as 5 million children take Ritalin, a psychostimulant. Research has shown that antidepressants are no more effective than placebos in children (Eisenberg, 1996; Fisher & Fisher, 1996; Glenmullen, 2000; Pellegrini, 1996). Despite these findings, the juvenile market for antidepressants continues to grow, and in fact surged during the same time period that the school shootings occurred (Glenmullen, 2000, p. 15). It is true that these incidents involve only a handful of juveniles among thousands taking the drugs without resorting to such extreme violence. But never before in United States history has such large-scale juvenile violence been witnessed. Because the United States is “the only country in the world where potent, synthetic drugs targeting the brain are routinely prescribed to children” (Glenmullen, 2000), and at least some of these children--albeit a small number--are committing heinous crimes while on these drugs, the hypothesized connection between treatment-emergent violence in psychoactively medicated juveniles merits investigation.

BACKGROUND

For years, children suffering from a wide range of psychopathology have received treatment with psychoactive medication. Children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have been treated with Ritalin, an amphetamine-like drug in the same category as morphine, opium, and cocaine. For depression, children are

¹At Columbine, only one of the offenders, Eric Harris, believed to have been the dominant personality, was undergoing psychopharmacological treatment with Luvox.

²Referred to as the “Prozac group,” as Prozac was the first drug in a line of others including Zoloft, Paxil, and Luvox, that are believed to alleviate depression by boosting levels of serotonin in the brain.

routinely prescribed serotonin-boosting antidepressants like Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, and Luvox--even though these drugs have not been fully tested in children or FDA-approved for treating pediatric depression (Glenmullen, 2000). The Prozac-group¹ drugs have, however, been approved for use in treating obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in children, so pediatric use of the drugs has been liberally exercised--to the point that physicians prescribe them to children as young as six or seven years old, whom they diagnose as “depressed” (Glenmullen, 2000, p. 128).

While Ritalin and these antidepressants are separate classes of drugs, both affect neurotransmission in the brain. In order to better understand how these drugs affect the brain’s chemical calculus, a brief background--borrowing from Glenmullen’s synopsis (2000)--follows. Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals. The three primary neurotransmitters that control mood are serotonin, adrenaline, and dopamine. The earliest drugs used to treat depression (e.g., cocaine and amphetamines) elevated all *three* neurotransmitters. Subsequent generations of antidepressants (e.g., tricyclics and others) could localize regulation of brain chemicals and thus regulate levels of neurotransmitters like adrenaline. The “new-antidepressants”--Prozac and its progeny--distinguish from earlier mood enhancers as able to selectively target only serotonin, the neurotransmitter associated with depression.² Hence these drugs are referred to as *selective* serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs).

Antidepressants and psychostimulants affect different neurotransmitters in the brain. Prozac, the brand name for the drug fluoxetine, was the first SSRI and remains the most widely prescribed antidepressant (Glenmullen, 2000). Patients suffering from depression have been found to have low levels of serotonin. SSRIs act to preserve and prolong serotonin levels in the brain. Unlike antidepressants, psychostimulants like Ritalin affect the neurotransmitter dopamine. In what is described as the “serotonin-dopamine connection,” the “relation between the serotonergic and dopaminergic system is an intimate one” (Glenmullen, 2000, p.49). When SSRIs boost levels of serotonin there is a compensatory drop in dopamine which has an adverse effect on the involuntary motor system. Researchers (Glenmullen, 2000; King et al., 1991) believe that SSRIs upset the balance of the brain’s neurotransmitter system:

Different neurotransmitters do not function independently of one another. Critical systems like serotonin, adrenaline, and dopamine are linked through complex circuitry. Dramatic changes in one, like boosting serotonin, can trigger compensatory changes in the others. . . . Drugs producing a drop in dopamine are well known to cause the dangerous side effects that are now appearing in Prozac and other drugs in its class (Glenmullen, 2000, pp. 19-20).

¹Although numerous fluoxetine-based drugs have succeeded Prozac, for purposes of this paper, “Prozac group” is limited its immediate family: Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, and Luvox.

²Since the 1960s, scientists have investigated the pathophysiology of depression, and serotonin soon “drew attention as an important neurotransmitter in both the pathogenesis and treatment of depression” (Golden et al., 1991).

The resulting paradox is that drugs purported to level chemical imbalances in the brain may actually be producing them (Glenmullen, 2000). Golden et al. (1991) call the paradoxical response of intensified suicidality in patients taking SSRIs a “serotonin syndrome.” Such a reaction has been described in children (Myers & Vondruska, 1998). But establishing a connection between psychopharmacological treatment and internal and/or external episodes of violence is challenging when many of these juveniles were suicidal and/or aggressive prior to being medicated.

PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGICAL TREATMENT AND AGGRESSION

A review of the case studies involving treatment-emergent suicidality or impulsive aggression shows that the initial effects of the drugs (within the first several weeks) are insomnia, agitation, nervousness, anxiety, and restlessness. Indeed, “neurologically driven agitation is one of serotonin boosters’ side effects” (Glenmullen, 2000). This inner restlessness or agitation is termed “akathisia.” Children and adolescents treated with Prozac exhibited akathisia as well as “increased restlessness, hyperkinetic behavior, insomnia, feelings of excitability, and subtle impulsiveness” (King et al., 1991, p. 179). It is easy to understand how such side effects could become problematic when children with histories of general, social, and/or separation anxiety are prescribed medication that produces anxiety (King et al., 1991).

In adults and adolescents treated with SSRIs, akathisia is most prominent when the patients first start taking the medication. The drugs’ therapeutic effects--its antidepressant, antiobsessional, and antipanic effects--may not manifest until several weeks into treatment. Thus, some patients may experience Prozac’s adverse side effects *before* its intended therapeutic effects become apparent (King et al., 1991). In cases where patients commit suicide, unfortunately, those therapeutic effects may never have a chance to manifest.

In still other cases, patients who do not kill themselves may murder others before the onset of the drugs’ therapeutic effects. Myers and Vondruska (1998) examined two case reports of adolescent murderers who attributed their violent acts to SSRI treatment. Both boys reported obsessive, sexually violent fantasies prior to the incidents.¹ Just before the violent act, one patient recalled feeling “wired and anxious”--a common report among adult and adolescent SSRI patients--following “escalating feelings of anger and confusion and [that he] felt *physically activated* [italics added]” (Myers & Vondruska, 1998).² Such aggressiveness spurred by akathisia is common, as is a sense of disinhibition, or emotional blunting (Healy, 2000). Of particular concern in this study is that “a *substantial* proportion of children receiving [Prozac] experience motor restlessness . . . social disinhibition, or an internal sense of excitation [italics added]” (King et al., 1991, p. 184). Several case reports demonstrated that SSRIs instigated or exacerbated aggressive behavior and researchers

¹SSRIs can significantly affect sexual functioning, and it has been shown that the drugs can alter the intensity and expression of the sexual drive (Myers & Vondruska, 1998).

²In another case, Koizumi (1991) reported that his 13-year-old patient who had become suicidal during treatment with fluoxetine started to display “‘hyperactivity’ with ‘full-of-energy’ and ‘clown-like’ behaviors.”

have “cautioned against the use of SSRIs strictly for the treatment of aggression in children and adolescents” (Myers & Vondruska, 1998).

Akathisia is so strongly tied to SSRI patients’ impulsive aggressive behavior that Hamilton and Opler (1992) concluded that the connection between serotonin boosters and suicidality is “a reaction to the side effect of akathisia and not true suicidal ideation as is typically described by depressed patients experiencing suicidal ideation.” In the wake of school shootings and other incidents of psychopharmacologically linked violence, the medical profession has been alerted to the dangers of prescribing anxious children drugs that foster anxiety or akathisia. But evidence suggestive of the risk existed long before the first schoolyard massacre of the late 1990s. Several years prior, a 12-year-old boy receiving Prozac for OCD had a graphically violent nightmare in which he killed his classmates until he himself was shot. This dream was preceded by others where he had parricidal and suicidal nightmares. The patient had been diagnosed with separation anxiety and over-anxious disorder. Although before treatment he was “depressed with occasional nonspecific suicidal thoughts” (King et al., 1991), “research has shown anxiety and agitation, not depression per se, correlate with suicide and violence” (Glenmullen, 2000, p. 159). Further, according to King’s group’s studies in children (1991, p. 184), “at least one form of anxiety disorder, panic disorder, is a potent risk factor for suicidality, even in the absence of substantial depression.”

PROBLEMS ESTABLISHING A CONCLUSIVE LINK

Underlying Psychiatric Disorders and Preexisting Conditions

Even though researchers early on found significant intercorrelations between various psychopathologic aspects thought to be connected to serotonin, such as violent aggression, impulsivity, suicide, anxiety, and depression, because patients who exhibit these behaviors often have an underlying psychiatric disorder, it is difficult to tease out whether a suspected serotonergic dysfunction is a product of the behavioral abnormality or the preexisting psychiatric illness (Golden et al., 1991).

There have, however, been some studies conducted on healthy adult patients with no history of mental illness, personality disorders, suicidal ideation or gestures, who were not undergoing any drug treatment (Healy, 2000; Masand, Gupta, & Dewan, 1991; Teicher, Glod, & Cole, 1990). In the first of these, Teicher, Glod, and Cole’s landmark study (1990), no patient was actively suicidal at the inception of treatment with Prozac. To the contrary, “all were helpful and optimistic.” But after weeks or months of treatment, “strong obsessive suicidal thoughts” emerged for the first time. In the next study, researchers found that “the temporal association of suicidal ideation with the initiation of fluoxetine and its rapid disappearance within a week of discontinuing treatment strongly suggest that fluoxetine can induce suicidal ideation in a very small minority of patients” (Masand, Gupta, & Dewan, 1991). In the third and most recent adult study by Healy (2000), two of their subjects exhibited strong suicidal ideation, and like other subjects in the group, they experienced emotional blunting or akathisia.

Skeptics of a casual connection between the Prozac-group antidepressants and violence still

argue that any link is difficult to establish because of the multi-factorial nature of aggression (Myers & Vondruska, 1998). It is postulated that “[p]erhaps neuropsychiatric vulnerabilities, subclinical brain injury, personality disturbance, psychiatric illness (i.e., depression, anxiety), obsessional violence thoughts, and preexisting antisocial tendencies must be present in certain combinations before murderous aggression will erupt in the susceptible patient taking an SSRI” (Myers & Vondruska, 1998). Of course, identifying what constitutes a “susceptible patient” may prove as difficult as determining which of the myriad potential combinations could prove fatal.

Policy and Reporting Deficiencies

Perhaps the most critical impediment to establishing a causal connection between psychopharmacologically treated patients and violent behavior is the lack of any public health policy for tracking the long-term side effects of pharmaceutical drugs. Moreover, the most serious, long-term side effects of drugs take years and, in some cases, decades to manifest themselves (Glenmullen, 2000). And because there is no official reporting system for drug side effects, no one knows how common the side effects are (Garnett, 2000; Glenmullen, 2000). Compounding reporting problems, scientists for the makers of Prozac for years coded suicide attempts as “overdose(s)” and suicidal ideation as “depression” (Garnett, 2000).

Dosage

Another obstacle in linking the drugs’ effects to suicidal or homicidal impulses relates to dosage. Prozac’s popularity among physicians was its standard one-dose-fits-everyone (adults and children alike) schedule: 20mg per day. Exposing patients to a comparatively high starting dose means they are “jump started too quickly . . . [and] [t]heir nervous systems are thrown into overdrive without adequate time to adjust” (Glenmullen, 2000). According to Glenmullen (2000), these are the patients who develop akathisia, which can push them toward psychosis or paranoia that may culminate in suicidality or violence.

Thus, determining any causal connection between psychostimulant and/or antidepressant medication and violent behavior is impaired from many directions, especially when large-scale studies are scant and the drugs’ use are relatively new, precluding any longitudinal studies. In the end, significant problems with drugs “tend to be slow, insidious, and difficult to see” (Glenmullen, 2000). A patient’s personal history, daily stresses, and reactions to drugs cannot ever realistically be separated. Introduction of the drug is “simply an addition to the mix. But for some patients, it is *the* dangerous addition to the mix, putting them over the edge” (Glenmullen, 2000, p. 184).

CONCLUSION

If there is no biological basis for determining whether chemical imbalances in the brain exist, it is puzzling that physicians continue to prescribe drugs to correct an imbalance they do not even know is there. Yet they do. And despite lawsuits and other reports of violence, in all likelihood, psychostimulant and antidepressant medications will continue to be prescribed in increasing numbers, even to juveniles. The drugs’ advocates cite the overwhelming majority of patients who

have benefitted from the pharmacological treatment. Although none of the Prozac-group drugs carries an official warning or indication about potentially lethal side effects, a recent newspaper article announced that, by Prozac manufacturer Eli Lilly's own figures, "[o]ne in 100 previously nonsuicidal patients who took the drug in early clinical trials developed a severe form of anxiety and agitation called akathisia, causing them to attempt or commit suicide during the studies" (Garnett, 2000). One in 100 may be small, but it is a statistic worth paying attention to, especially when that 1% could mean the difference between life and death.

Because of the aforementioned obstacles in establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between introduction of the drugs and violent behavior, answers can only "slowly come to light through random spontaneous reports in obscure medical journals. . . . This loose, word-of-mouth system takes years, often decades, to gain momentum around even common dangerous effects" (Glenmullen, 2000). It is hoped that this review of the current research in this area will promote further studies of the effects of psychostimulant and antidepressant drugs on juveniles.

As a final note, Glenmullen (2000, p. 140) observed that "[d]epression may be nature's way of protecting people from anger they do not yet understand." This observation has added significance when applied to adolescents, whose emotional development is most unstable and vulnerable in crossing the bridge from childhood into adulthood. Under these circumstances and in light of the finding of Fisher and Fisher (1996) that "anti-depressants are no more effective than placebos in children with symptoms of depression," until the long-term effects of these drugs have been discovered, medical practitioners should exercise caution before prescribing such medications to adolescents, particularly those suffering from anxiety disorders or exhibiting prior suicidal ideations or gestures.

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JUVENILE HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN SAVANNAH: 1896-1903 & 1986-1993

Vance McLaughlin, Savannah Police Department, Box 8032, Savannah, GA 31412

ABSTRACT

With national attention focused on youth as homicide perpetrators and victims in the 1990s, this paper looks at juvenile homicide in one city, Savannah, Georgia, during 2 8-year periods, 1896-1903 and 1986-1993. While the number of incidents is too small for statistical analysis, details of the offenses and the offenders point to clear changes over the course of nearly a century. The earlier era saw more mutual combat, even self-defense, killings, with a knife, and death occurring more by chance than from an intent to kill. The more recent period often involved predation related to robbery and/or drugs, intentional killings with a gun, by youths without remorse from dysfunctional families who had previous run-ins with law enforcement.

INTRODUCTION

A great deal of attention has been focused on violence involving youth as perpetrators and victims. This interest has been sparked by a measurable increase in violence that peaked in the early 1990s. This paper will examine juveniles (those under 17 years old) who have been charged with homicide in Savannah during the two eight-year eras. The first era, 1896 to 1903, had six youthful offenders charged with homicide out of 101 civilian murders. The second era, 1986 to 1993, had 20 youthful offenders charged with homicide, or related acts, out of 241 civilian murders. One of these offenders killed two victims during the same incident.

The small number of juvenile homicides does not lend the data to statistical analysis. But the type and amount of data available is vastly different between the two eras. Therefore, any conclusions must be based primarily on informed logic.

A synopsis of each incident will be provided followed by some concluding remarks for each era. These synopses have been done for two reasons. First, it gives the reader an opportunity to get a feel for the variations in homicides, and make some of their own inferences. Second, it allows the reader to develop a fuller understanding of the numbers in the tables. Although this paper deals only with juvenile homicide offenders, my research covered all homicides during the two eras, using the prefix A for the earlier era and B for the later one. These case numbers are not chronological. The homicides that occurred in the modern era will be presented in more detail because additional data were available.

DATA SOURCES

1896 to 1903

Municipal Report for Savannah

The idea for this research began when I came across arrest reports by the Savannah Police that had been submitted to the mayor to be included in his Municipal Report for Savannah. Eight Municipal Reports from 1896 to 1903 were found in various locations. Most were repositied with the Georgia Historical Society. One was found in a locked safe in City Hall. Homicide is historically the most highly reported crime. In addition to arrests for homicide, the Municipal Reports included arrests for assault and striking, assault and cutting, assault and shooting, and assaults with intent to murder, all of which were divided by race. The assault and shooting category only covered six of the eight years selected for this study. More detailed descriptions of the data collection and the problems found are in my previous work (McLaughlin, 2000).

Newspapers

Two newspapers were locally published. The *Savannah Morning News* was the White newspaper and the *Savannah Tribune* was the Black newspaper. But in the *Savannah Tribune*, there were only three homicide cases found on which commentary was given, and all involved Savannah Police Department (SPD) officers who killed black citizens.

A full set of the *Savannah Morning News* (SMN) was available from 1896-1903. I assumed that the commission of a homicide would have been newsworthy and some mention would be made in the newspaper. I also thought that the examination of each page of print for nine years (I included 1904 to cover the aftermath of anything occurring earlier), would be the most time-consuming part of the project, so I would finish it first. I also thought that I would be unlikely to miss a homicide, because a report on the commission, capture, grand jury proceedings, trial, and sentence would usually be reported on different days of publication. This supposition proved to be correct.

Health Officer's Report

After recording all the information gleaned from the SMN, I looked at the eight Municipal Reports. Health Officer's Reports were available for six of the eight years. The report omitted all homicides occurring in 1899 and the report was entirely left out in 1902. The yearly Health Officer's Report separated homicides by month, race of victim, and type of homicide.

Health Department Death Certificates/Registrations

The Chatham County Health Department would not let me view the death certificates or registrations, but did verify my information, or add information that they had of which I was unsure. The data provided were: proper name, date of death, instrument of death, race, and sex. In some cases the registration of death had been recorded, but without issuance of a death certificate.

1986 to 1993

Four different sources were used to identify homicides in the eight years from 1986 to 1993. These were the computer list generated by the SPD, homicide briefings, a computer list generated by the homicide investigation unit, and the homicide case files.

SPD Computer List

The SPD Computer List contained the case number, names, race, and sex of subject and offender, date of commission/discovery of homicide, and (room permitting) a basic classification (domestic, robbery, etc.); sometimes the disposition was also listed.

Homicide Briefings

I initially thought that the single-page homicide briefing was available for each homicide that occurred. This briefing consisted of the case number, date, names, race, sex, and age of subject and offender, and a synopsis of what happened. I learned that in two of the years examined, when the bodies began to stack up between the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons in 1990 and 1991, investigators did not write the single page homicide briefing.

Homicide Investigation Unit List

This was a list that was started in 1990 and included date, names, race, sex, and age of subject and offender, weapon used, a basic classification, but no case file number.

Homicide Case Files

The Savannah Police Repository moved its offices in 1995, and when I talked to the custodian officer, she informed me that everything was in boxes. I was assured that all the homicides were there, but they were not filed in a systematic manner.

The homicide case file was my main source of data for the 1986-1993 era. There is a 21-item checklist was used by investigators for the SPD. Not all of the items were completed in most homicides. The police are only going to spend their time on information that will point to the guilty person and help in his or her prosecution. The most helpful item was the Investigator's Supplementary Report. This included the relevant facts from the Case Incident Report, and then discussed the ongoing investigation. These two items were always available. There were other items that were found in the case files on a sporadic and random basis. Such things as jury lists, high school records, military records, psychological tests, and hearsay.

THE TWO ERAS' JUVENILE HOMICIDE CASES

The Era of 1896 to 1903

The following six cases represent 6% of the civilian homicides occurring in Savannah from 1896 to 1903. Descriptions of each incident were found in the local newspaper, *The Savannah Morning News (SMN)*. This information was verified through the reports of the Chief Medical Officer, death certificates, and registrations.

Case A94

A 13-year-old Black female, who lived above a “free and easy” (which would now be an establishment that provided liquor and dancing), got into a fight with the mistress of a 22-year-old Black male. After the teenager had gone up to her room on the second floor, the man tried to attack her. She pulled a small knife and stabbed him once right over the heart. The knife only went in two or three inches. The coroner’s jury ruled the killing justifiable (*SMN*, 3/17/96).

Case A4

According to the 15-year-old perpetrator, he had been verbally accosted by the victim, another 15-year-old Black male, two days before, for wearing a Liberal Club star representing certain political beliefs. After having words, they parted. On the night of the incident, the perpetrator was walking along the street and the victim and an accomplice ran up from behind, each striking him on the head. When the victim pulled a revolver on him, the perpetrator pulled a small knife and stabbed him in the shoulder in self-defense. The victim walked away, and the perpetrator did not think he was seriously hurt. Unfortunately, the single knife stab, though neither wide nor deep, severed the sub-clavicle artery, and the victim died at the hospital (*SMN*, 1/30/97).

At the trial, although two White males had confirmed the victim’s aggression, the perpetrator was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in the commission of an unlawful act, with mercy recommended to the court. He received a sentence of two years (*SMN*, 3/25/97).

Case A80

A number of boys of both races were near the city limits, shooting at targets. A 14-year-old Black male was walking down a railroad track, and a White boy fired at him and hit him in the abdomen. A Black male observed this and offered aid to the victim. He was able to identify the perpetrator. When the police arrived, the boys had dispersed (*SMN*, 9/25/99). The coroner’s jury was not able to reach a conclusion based on the evidence, and the suspect was released on his recognizance (*SMN*, 9/27/99).

Case A26

The perpetrator, “around 18 years old,” got into a physical confrontation with the son of a

36-year-old Black male, who separated them. When the perpetrator cursed him and threw rocks at him, the victim grabbed hold of him. The teenager broke away and drew a .32 caliber revolver. He shot twice, the second bullet hitting right above the heart. A group of people chased the perpetrator as he ran away. Once caught, the perpetrator said that someone else had verbally abused the man, but the victim thought it was him and hit him and tried to choke him, so he had shot in self-defense (*SMN*, 5/27/01).

Witnesses in court testified that the teenager had goaded the victim, verbally and with rocks, to come toward him. He then shot him. The perpetrator dressed as a young child for his court appearances, wearing short trousers and no shoes, hoping to be considered a juvenile rather than an adult--taking advantage of the fact that documentation of births, especially among the poor, was erratic in the Reconstruction South. The jury deliberated four hours and came in with a verdict of first-degree murder. The jury was divided initially. Two thirds of them felt he was guilty of murder, but did not want the death penalty imposed. The other third felt he was guilty of voluntary manslaughter. They compromised with a murder verdict but with a recommendation for mercy. The judge complied with this request and sentenced the perpetrator to “be put to work at hard labor in the penitentiary for his natural life” (*SMN*, 6/25/01).

Case A61

A 14-year-old White male challenged a 12-year-old Black to fight. After they used their fists and fell to the ground, the Black youth got up and began to walk away, but they both picked up bricks. The White youth threw first and missed, and the Black boy then threw his. It hit the White boy in the side of the head. He got up, but died later from a fractured skull. The coroner’s jury ruled the killing a justifiable homicide (*SMN*, 10/27/01).

Case A34

This was a case of fratricide between two Black males, 16 and 19. In a “free and easy,” the 19-year-old had been beating on his brother all day long. As they drank, the beatings became worse. The older brother finally grabbed a bottle and chased the other up the stairs with the intention of hitting him on the head. But the 16-year-old turned around and stabbed his older brother twice with his knife, once fatally (*SMN*, 6/17/02). The grand jury indicted him for murder, but, at trial, the jury came in with a verdict of justifiable homicide (*SMN*, 8/13/02).

The Era of 1986 to 1993

The 20 cases from the modern era represent 8% of the civilian homicides occurring in Savannah from 1986 to 1993. (In-depth information was not available on perpetrators born in 1973 or earlier.) Among the most telling facts are the dysfunctionality evidenced in most--although by no means all--of the families of the killers, and their fairly extensive, albeit youthful, experiences with the criminal justice system.

In this era, if a juvenile was adjudicated in juvenile court and found guilty, he received one

standard sentence. The usual charges were some degree of homicide, using a weapon during the commission of a crime, and carrying a pistol without a license. Conviction brought a sentence of five years, with 18 months to serve, followed by 12 months of intensive supervision.

Case B31

A 16-year-old Black male was exchanging punches with a 33-year-old Black male victim as they came out of the juvenile's residence in public housing. The juvenile said that the victim was bothering his mother because she would not go out with him. The juvenile picked up a metal pipe, and the victim told him "he had two swings" before he blew his brains out. The juvenile left, and obtained a .38 revolver from an acquaintance. He returned 30 minutes after the initial incident, and shot at the victim from the front three times, striking him with each shot. A face wound severed the spinal cord, causing death. The perpetrator was to be tried as an adult, but after some legal maneuvering, was found guilty as a juvenile.

Case B49

A group of Black youngsters were playing basketball on a court in public housing. Two of them--a 16-year-old and a 13-year-old--started to wrestle. The 13-year-old won and, as they stood up, the older boy threw a kick at his groin. The younger boy said the fight was over. The older boy suggested that he had a gun. The eventual victim said he was leaving because he did not want to get shot. The perpetrator then said he was just kidding and the victim could search him. As the victim started to do that, the perpetrator pulled out a RG 31 .32 caliber revolver and pointed it at the victim's head. The victim told him not to do that, and the suspect said it was loaded as he pulled the trigger. The victim was hit once in the right temple at close range causing massive brain damage. The perpetrator had bought the gun for \$22, and had an adult purchase ammunition for him. He was found guilty as a juvenile.

The killer came to the attention of the juvenile court when he was 14, and, before the murder, he had been to court three times for assault and auto theft. His mother, who never married, had five children by two men, starting at the age of 15. At the time of the homicide, he lived with his grandmother. When released from the juvenile facility after serving his 18 months, his aunt took custody of him, and he returned to a life of petty crime.

Case B53

A 16-year-old Black male killed a 38-year-old Black male, whom he claimed had ripped him off of some money he made selling drugs earlier, by hitting him and putting a .45 up to his head. The youngster retaliated with a .270 Remington pump rifle obtained from a friend. One of the three shots fired the victim in the abdomen, and the victim died from internal bleeding. The juvenile was tried as an adult and received a sentence of 20 years for voluntary manslaughter. He had first come to the attention of the juvenile court when he was 13, and had been a continuing problem.

Case B61

Two Black males, 16 and 17, retaliated against a 22-year-old Black male victim, who had ripped the two drug dealers off earlier that night. The victim had taken a \$20 piece of crack from the two dealers and given them a dollar for it. When they realized what had happened they said they would “burn the nigger.” When the 22-year-old came out of a crashed stolen car, the suspects came out of nearby bushes firing. The victim was shot a number of times with a sawed off .12 gauge pump shotgun and a .22 magnum revolver.

The younger killer first came to the attention of the court when he was 13, and continued to be a problem. He was going to be sent to a juvenile facility, but his mother said she was moving to Jacksonville and taking him out of state. He was not to come back to Savannah unless the court gave him permission. His mother had six children, the first when she was 16. None of the children had been enrolled in school for a year before the homicide. The father had constant trouble with the police and had a habit of giving false names. The perpetrator had lived at a different address from the mother and father.

Case B164

A 15-year-old Black male killed a 22-year-old White male. When the police arrived at the scene, they first thought it was a traffic accident. The victim was slumped forward on the steering wheel of his car. He had an unloaded .25 caliber Raven in his hand, and had been shot once, through the lung and heart, with a .38 revolver. The victim had told two friends, after they had been drinking at a club, that he was going to score some drugs. He had been asked to leave the club because he got into a fight. It seems that the victim tried to trade the gun for drugs. During the deal, he either tried to steal some drugs or the perpetrator tried to rip him off. The victim ran and was shot while running. He got into his car and drove a short way.

The killer had first come to the attention of the court when he was 13, when he fired a gun at a group of people, and had had a number of other charges against him. His single mother had two other children, with a different last name, that were older than the perpetrator. His father had been absent for seven years. He lived with his mother at the time of the homicide. A year and a half after being released from the juvenile facility for murder, he was convicted as an adult for aggravated assault and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Case B70

The police found a 27-year-old Black male lying on the walkway near the back steps of a house with a toy pistol cradled in his hand. The victim would not say who had shot him, but he had been shot at twice with a Colt .38 revolver and hit once in the abdomen. On the operating table, the hospital workers found two pieces of fake crack in a plastic bag in his shorts. It seems that a 14-year-old Black male was with two adults, his 17-year-old brother and a 19-year-old friend. He gave a confusing story of how the victim had robbed him the night before of money that he had been saving to buy a car. When they found the victim, he was going to shoot him in the leg to teach him a lesson.

He missed his target and hit him in the abdomen. As the victim ran, he shot at him again.

The killer had come to the attention of the court twice when he was 13. His father was unknown, but he lived with his mother, who was on public assistance, and five other children. In less than a year after being released for the homicide, he was charged with two counts of aggravated assault and using a weapon during the commission of a crime. He was tried as an adult, although still only 16.

Case B150

A 16-year-old Black male was with three other Black males in a car. They picked up a 34-year-old Black prostitute (whom the autopsy revealed to have had AIDS). When she was in the car, they told her they would give her \$20 to have sex with all of them. They tossed her clothes out of the window. She asked to get out of the car to relieve herself in the bushes. As she squatted down to urinate, the perpetrator shot at her twice with a .38 revolver, hitting her once in the chest, with the bullet penetrating the heart. The perpetrator told the other boys when he got back to the car, “one less bitch you got to worry about,” a lyric from the rap group NWA. The police learned who the suspect was two months after the incident when one of the boys in the car had been arrested for auto theft, and wanted to deal. It seems that they had picked up prostitutes twice before, used their services, and then dumped them out without compensating them. This was the first time one had been killed. The grand jury failed to return a true bill, so the killer was never prosecuted.

The suspected killer first came to the attention of the court when he was 14, and had been expelled from school because he brought a BB gun into the building. His parents had been married for 30 years, and they had five older children, the last being eight years older than the perpetrator. All of the other children were doing well in their lives. The mother said that “he gets in trouble because he spends time with older boys.”

Case B167

Two Black males, 14 and 16, killed a 37-year-old White male. The two juveniles had told friends that they were going to rob some “crackers” after they watched fireworks. The boys had robbed another man before they committed the homicide. When they confronted the second victim, he gave them a ring, two dollars, and a necklace. When he would not give them any more money, he was shot in the head with a .38 revolver.

The older boy had pulled the trigger and was tried as an adult. He received life. He had an extensive criminal record which started at 12. His mother and father have the same last name, three other children with that name; the perpetrator has a different last name, his mother having been impregnated by another man while separated from her husband. The mother’s husband always treated him differently from the other children, and said that “he is hard-headed and whatever happens to him serves him right.”

The 14-year-old was found guilty as an adult and given 20 years. He suffered from

narcolepsy. The only child of an unwed mother, he first came to the attention of the court when he was 11. His mother was on public assistance.

Cases B84 and B85

Two Black males, aged 21 and 30, had been dealing drugs all day. A 15-year-old Black youth had been seen in the back of their vehicle earlier that day. The older drug dealer was found on the ground outside the car. He had been shot once in the roof of the mouth. The 21-year-old was found slumped over the steering wheel of the car. A bullet had entered the right side of his head and exited the front. The 15-year-old made a deal with the prosecutor to give information implicating others in drug related homicides (which he never did) in exchange for a juvenile rather than adult adjudication of murder.

His extensive criminal record began at age 11. He lived with his unwed mother in public housing; she was on welfare and had one other young child.

Case B89

A 16-year-old Black male was selling crack on the street. According to him, another Black male, aged 27, stopped for a \$20 piece of crack. Instead of paying for it, he ran. The dealer pulled his .9mm automatic and shot at him five times, hitting him twice. The victim got into his car and crashed it. The victim had a large amount of cocaine in his blood. The perpetrator threw the gun in the river. He was charged as an adult and given life for murder plus five years for the possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime. He had no juvenile record in Georgia.

Case B93

A 45-year-old Black male and his girlfriend were driving around trying to buy crack. He stopped the car, and a number of dealers came over. He flashed a hundred-dollar bill in front of them. Two of them tried to rip him off, and a 16-year-old Black male shot him once with a .32 Smith and Wesson revolver. The bullet entered his chest and hit the heart. The victim crashed his car after being shot. The victim had a large amount of cocaine in his system. The youth was tried as an adult and received a total sentence of 25 years; 20 for voluntary manslaughter, and five for using a firearm in the commission of a crime.

The perpetrator was first brought to juvenile court at the age of 13, and had committed numerous offenses since, including shooting a 30-year-old Black male on a bus with a .32 revolver. He was adjudicated on this as a juvenile after he had committed the homicide, but before he was tried as an adult. His parents were divorced when he was eight years old, and his father moved to New Jersey with younger siblings. His mother was on public assistance, and he lived most of the time with his grandmother.

Case B169

Two Black males, 16 and 18 (and thus an adult), killed a 41-year-old White male. The victim worked at a bar and package shop. The perpetrators cased the building and waited for the victim to come out. The juvenile perpetrator engaged him in conversation and then pulled out a .25 Raven automatic and shot twice; the man died of internal trauma. Both suspects fled. Ten days later, the suspects robbed a sandwich shop in a nearby jurisdiction. A man was shot and killed with the same gun. The Savannah Police had just done a search warrant on the juvenile's residence and they found the newspaper article concerning the earlier homicide tacked to his bedroom wall. Both received life for felony murder in adult court.

The perpetrator was first involved in judicial proceedings when he was 14. His mother was separated from her husband and on public assistance, with two older children. The killer's real father was unknown, and his grandmother was his legal guardian.

Case B170

Two Black males, 15 and 18, killed a 48-year-old White male. The suspects met in a public housing project and decided to find someone to rob. The victim worked for a potato chip distributor and had just finished filling a rack in the store. He was carrying his empty boxes to the dumpster. The suspects approached him, and the juvenile told him to "give it up." The victim refused. The juvenile perpetrator pulled out a .38 Charter Arms revolver, and shot him once in the chest; he died of massive internal bleeding. The adult was sentenced to 10 years for aggravated assault, and the juvenile, tried in adult court, got life for murder.

The juvenile killer first came to the attention of the court when he was caught shoplifting; at 13, he was caught selling cocaine, and he continued to be involved with the system until the homicide. His parents were never married and his father gave no financial support to him, but would see him sporadically. He had five siblings, three with different last names, and the mother was now married to a man with an altogether new last name. The mother had her first child at 17, and worked as a licensed practical nurse. One of the killer's older siblings was incarcerated for auto theft.

Case B171

A 14-year-old Black male was walking down the street with some other Black males when they saw a 25-year-old White male who looked like a good target to rob. The 14-year-old left the group and tried to rob the victim. The victim said he had no money, and the perpetrator shot him once with a .25 Galesi automatic; he died of massive internal bleeding. The victim was positive for marijuana. The killer entered a guilty plea as an adult and got a sentence of 20 years for voluntary manslaughter and five years for using a gun; 15 of these years were probation.

The killer was first involved with the court system when he was 13, when he shot a Black male in the leg. His parents were not married, and he never knew his father. He lived with his mother, who was 17 when he was born, and her four younger children by her husband. She lived on

the social security that she received when her husband was murdered, two weeks before her son committed the homicide. They had been separated for five years. The killer was two grades below where he should have been in school.

Case B175

A 14-year-old Black male came to the attention of the police when he was threatening a customer at a gas station. He told the police that he had just killed someone. They followed him and found the victim, a 13-year-old White male, under a highway overpass. He had been hit twice in the head with a piece of concrete. Both boys had just escaped from Georgia Regional, a youth facility. The suspect told the police spontaneously that he “had killed the fucker.” He said, “I planned the shit, I told him if he continued to call me names I would kill him, so I did!” He then spat in the officer’s face. He was tried as an adult and given 15 years for voluntary manslaughter, with 10 to be served.

The only parent listed in any file was “the State of Georgia.” When he was in the second grade, he beat a first grader with a rock and continued throwing him into a ditch of water. When the victim’s mother talked to the perpetrator’s father, he said “boys will be boys.” The perpetrator later tried to drown another child. The parents gave him up to the state. The perpetrator first came to the attention of the juvenile court when he was nine. He was ungovernable, and would continually escape from any institution in which he was placed.

Case B121

Two Black males, aged 15 and 17, entered a gas station owned by a 58-year-old Black male. One boy told the owner’s wife, who was working there, that he wanted a soda from the machine, and handed her a \$1 bill. As she turned to make change, her husband walked in and saw that both boys had guns. Both shot at him as he ran. Only bullets fired by the 15-year-old from .22 revolver hit him, twice, with one round causing massive bleeding. Both boys had been smoking marijuana before the crime. The “adult” assailant received life plus five years, and the juvenile killer was tried as an adult. He got life for murder, 20 years for armed robbery, and five years for using a firearm.

The 15-year-old came to the attention of the court when he was 14, generally for stealing cars. His parents were married, and his father was employed as a machinist.

Case B159

A 16-year-old Black male raped and smothered his 44-year-old foster mother. (His foster father worked out of town during the week and came home on the weekends.) The youth then dragged her nude body behind a car and was trying to dig a grave. The suspect pled guilty in adult court and received 20 years for voluntary manslaughter.

He first came to the attention of the court when he was 12, when he and other boys cornered and fondled two girls. His parents had terminated their parental rights when he was eight; he had

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and he then went to the Department of Human Resources.

Case B127

A 16-year-old Black male drug dealer and some other Black males had entered the another drug dealer's apartment on an earlier occasion, putting a shotgun to the 13-year-old dealer's head. They had a long-standing history of violence toward each other. The boy said he would kill the older boy if he "messed with him" again. The 16-year-old and an accomplice later approached the 13-year-old on the street from different directions. According to the 13-year-old, the 16-year-old told him not to move and reached as if for a gun. The 13-year-old shot him once, fatally, with a stolen .38 Charter Arms revolver. He was tried as a juvenile and received the standard sentence.

He had frequently come to the attention of the court, starting when he was 11. His mother and father never married. His father was in prison, and his mother was on public assistance. His legal guardian was his grandmother with whom he lived.

Case B129

In an unreported incident, one 16-year-old Black male beat and cut another 16-year-old, who was still limping from the assault a month later. The injured boy and three other Black males saw the assailant walking in front of a high school. One said, "there goes that little pussy nigger right there." They chased him, and the injured boy pulled a .32 Harrington and Richards revolver, with its serial number removed, and shot him once in the chest. After the shooting, he told one of the boys with him, "if you do the crime, you got to do the time." He was tried as an adult and received life for felony murder.

He was first involved with the court system when he was 13. His parents had married, but were divorced by the time the killer was four. At 14, he tried to reside with his father in Florida, but his father sent him back. He was a "B" student until he dropped out in ninth grade. He was the only juvenile perpetrator in the eight-year period whom anyone could remember having shown remorse for killing another human being.

Case B132

According to a 21-year-old Black male, he and a 15-year-old were out trying to purchase marijuana. The juvenile kept patting his gun and saying he was going to get some money. They approached a 39-year-old Black male and the juvenile told him to "give it up." The victim reached for his wallet, containing \$220, and tried to reach for the gun at the same time. The perpetrator shot him twice with a .9mm Glock 17. Both perpetrators fled, but were captured. The adult received a sentence of five years to serve for armed robbery. The juvenile was tried as an adult and got a sentence of 17½ years to serve for voluntary manslaughter.

The juvenile first came to the attention of the court at the age of 14 for auto theft, followed by violent crime. His parents were divorced, and he lived in public housing with his mother and three

younger siblings.

SUMMARY

The juvenile homicides from the era of 1896-1903 are very different from those occurring in Savannah, and in the rest of the United States, during the current era. The six cases generally involve mutual combat rather than assaultive or felony-related killings. While the current era generally involve guns and a clear intention to kill, at the turn of the last century, the more common weapon was a knife, and death occurred more by chance than from any intent to kill.

In none of the six cases was more than one person charged for the crime. In only Case A4, a second person who was with the victim allegedly made contact with the suspect before the homicide. Of the six homicides, four of the perpetrators were Black male, one was a White male, and one was a Black female. Three of the homicides occurred with a knife, two with a gun, and one with a brick.

Three of the homicides were ruled justifiable, one of the perpetrators was never prosecuted, and two received sentences. One case (A80) was close to being an accident, and in two cases (A94 and A4), the resulting homicide had a “bad luck” aspect. The single knife wounds made with small weapons caused death because of their placement rather than design. In the one incident that culminated in a life sentence, a juvenile killed an adult after goading him into making an attack.

All 20 cases in the later era involved Black male juveniles. Thirteen were convicted as adults, six as juveniles, and in one case, the grand jury did not indict. In four of the cases, the juvenile had an adult accomplice. In one case, two juveniles were involved. Only in two cases examined from 1986 to 1993 did an adult have a juvenile accomplice. This means that if a juvenile and an adult committed a homicide together, the juvenile was twice as likely to pull the trigger. This may be because the juvenile had status “for carrying a gun, being tough enough to kill, etc.,” that an older man was attracted to him. It may also have been that the adult hoped that the shooter, if caught, might be tried as a juvenile.

None of the homicides was ruled justifiable. Drugs were involved directly in eight of the incidents. In three of the incidents, the victim was a drug dealer. In one incident, two victims were drug dealers. In one incident, both the perpetrator and the victim were drug dealers. In three of the incidents, the perpetrator was a drug dealer. One incident involved the killing of a man because he turned in a drug dealer. There is no way to know how many of the other killings may have been tangentially related to drugs.

Eighteen of the 21 homicides were caused by gunshots, and one each with a beer bottle, piece of concrete, and asphyxiation. One recurring theme that ran through the written records was that the female adult in the perpetrator’s life (mother, grandmother, aunt) was overly indulgent. Such comments as “overly protective, lies for the juvenile, doesn’t set limits,” were often found. No official record of any physical abuse was found. This does not mean it did not happen in some cases.

Those professionals that work with juveniles seemed to target the lack of “concern and/or control” of the chief adult caretaker. Many of these females had a large number of children early in life, few coping skills, little education, and no support (financial or psychological) from the father which created severe handicaps in raising a male child.

According to Bandura (1997, p. 174):

Children with a high sense of efficacy for aggressive means favor hostile goals expressed in retaliative actions, whereas those of high perceived efficacy for prosocial means pursue friendly goals aimed at resolving interpersonal problems amicably. This is another example where efficacy beliefs mediate the effects of attribution on behavior. Children with a high sense of efficacy for aggressive means are quick to use them without needing provocation.

It may be that most of these juveniles have been over-indulged in negative areas, but had seen or been victims of violence, learning that this is the way to accomplish their goals.

Table 1 includes information taken from the Georgia criminal histories of the juvenile perpetrators, which includes misdemeanor and felony charges. It also includes the type of adjudication, outcome, and if there was any record of the perpetrator committing crimes when he was released from custody.

Table 1

Georgia Criminal Histories of Juvenile Perpetrators of Homicide in Savannah from 1986 to 1993

Case #	misdemeanor before	felony before	lone perpetrator, killer, or accomplice	tried as a juvenile or an adult	outcome	misdemeanor after	felony after
B31	0	0	lone perpetrator	J	guilty	2	1
B49	3	2	lone perpetrator	J	guilty	7	2
B53	5	1	lone perpetrator	A	VM-20	NA	NA
B61	2	4	killer	A	VM-10	NA	2
B164	2	2	lone perpetrator	J	guilty	0	0
B70	3	4	lone perpetrator	J	guilty	0	0
B150	4	3	lone perpetrator	A	no bill	2	5
B167	3	15	killer	A	murder-life	NA	NA
B84/85	6	9	lone perpetrator	J	guilty	3	1
B89	0	0	lone perpetrator	A	murder-life	NA	NA

B93	4	4	lone perpetrator	A	VM-25	NA	NA
B169	4	5	killer	A	murder-life	NA	NA
B170	2	2	lone perpetrator	A	murder-life	NA	NA
B171	1	4	lone perpetrator	A	VM-20	NA	NA
B175	0	12	lone perpetrator	A	VM-15	NA	NA
B121	3	5	killer	A	murder-life	NA	NA
B159	2	2	lone perpetrator	A	VM-20	NA	NA
B127	4	1	lone perpetrator	J	guilty	0	0
B129	0	2	lone perpetrator	A	murder-life	NA	NA
B132	2	4	killer	A	VM-17 ½	NA	NA
total	50	81	15 lp, 5 k	14 A, 6 J			

Of the 20 juvenile perpetrators involved in homicides, there were a total of 50 misdemeanors and 81 felonies charged against them before the homicide was committed. This is an average of 2.5 misdemeanors and 4 felonies charged to each juvenile participant. These data is problematic, because it represents nebulous information gathered on juveniles. Many of the charges were dropped for lack of evidence. Alleged victims or witnesses failed to show up at hearings in many cases. On the other hand, some allegations that were proved ended up with probation, long after a pattern of law breaking had been established. Only two of the juveniles had no prior contact with the juvenile court, at least in Georgia. It is safe to say that there was something in most of these juveniles' behavior, life style, or geographical location that brought them to the attention of the police.

Comparisons Between the Two Eras

There are a number of comparisons that can be made between juvenile homicides in both eras. Table 2 contains data collected by the U.S. Census for the 1900 and 1990 count of population in Savannah. The age groups of 10-19 were utilized, because those numbers were available. It should also be noted that Savannah expanded its geographical limits beginning in 1902. This expansion came in the White section of the city where very few Blacks lived.

Table 2
**Population Characteristics by Race and Sex of 10 to 19 Year Olds
in Savannah and Ratio of Perpetrators to Population**

	Black male		Black female		White male		White female	
	1900	1990	1900	1990	1900	1990	1900	1990
10 to 19 year olds	2129	6161	2899	6116	2255	3566	2507	3467
Ratio of Perpetrators	1 in 532	1 in 324	1 in 2899	0	1 in 2255	0	0	0

Table 3 illustrates the race and sex of both victim and offender for both eras.

Table 3
**Juvenile Perpetrators and Their Victims by Race and Sex:
 1896 to 1903 and 1986 to 1993 in Savannah**

Perpetrators	Victims						total
	Black Male		White Male		Black Female		
	1896-1903	1986-1993	1896-1903	1986-1993	1896-1903	1986-1993	
BM	3	12	1	6	0	2	24
WM	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
BF	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
total	5	12	1	6	0	2	26

The most documented difference between the two eras is the context in which the homicides were committed. Of homicides committed by juveniles in the earlier era, only two resulted in a criminal conviction. In only one of those was a firearm used, with a clear understanding on the part of the shooter that death could result from his action.

In the modern era, 19 of the perpetrators were convicted of a crime, and one was no-billed. Eight of these homicides were drug-related (B-53, 61, 64, 70, 84/85, 89, 93, and 127). Of the six armed robberies (B-167, 169, 170, 171, 121, and 132), all involved Black male perpetrators, with five victims being White males. Fourteen of the 20 homicides had a motivation of drugs or money or both.

Five of the perpetrators lived in public housing at the time of the homicide. Three lived in Hitch Village (B-31, 70, and 84/85), one in Fred Wessels (B53), and one in Yamacraw (B132). Three of the mothers of perpetrators were on public assistance (B-167, 93, and 175) and one lived on social security (B171). One of the perpetrators lived in the county (B169), and one was a ward of the state, last residing at Georgia Regional Hospital(B175).

The mind-set of the modern juvenile murderers in the above instances was that they were willing to kill for commerce. Drugs represent money, and five victims died in robberies either when they had no money or would not give their money up. It is impossible to know how many of the perpetrators were involved in the drug culture. Only one of those involved in the robbery-murders had been adjudicated for possession with intent prior to the homicide.

CONCLUSION

Why has there been an increase in juvenile perpetrators in Savannah in the modern era? There were virtually no laws governing firearms in Georgia (except for carrying a concealed weapon) in the earlier era. In the modern era, no juvenile is allowed to possess any type of firearm on the streets of Savannah, or a handgun anywhere. In the earlier era, underage drinking at bars seemed not be a concern to the public, and drugs were legal. In the modern era, juveniles can not drink and certain categories of drugs are banned. Emergency medical care has been improved, with more wounded victims living, than in the past. It is widely accepted that 1896 to 1903 was a time of greater oppression of Blacks than in the years of 1986 to 1993 in the South. In the earlier era, Blacks could not serve on juries or work as police officers. Jim Crow laws had been passed that overtly reminded Blacks of their place in society. There were no government programs (AFDC, welfare, public housing) in the earlier era.

If, in the modern era, weapons have been legally restricted, alcohol and drugs banned, medical care improved, and financial aid given to the poor, what countervailing changes have taken place to exacerbate the environment for homicide, especially among Black male juveniles.

The illegal drug trade is the most likely catalyst to the type of murders that were committed by juveniles in Savannah from 1986 to 1993. In the earlier era, drugs were not illegal and their consumption was not associated with other crimes. In the modern era, a dealer in illicit drugs feels he needs a gun within easy reach and classifies this as a business necessity. Chaiken (2000) found in her study in the three most violent areas of Washington, D.C. that drug dealers carried weapons more frequently than other categories of offenders. Dealing drugs (primarily crack) is fraught with danger, the least of which is from the police. A drug dealer may have a potential customer rob him and take his drugs and/or money. He may have a customer take the drugs and run. He may have the customer claim that he was sold phoney crack (flake) and begin an argument. The drug dealer may have a rival dealer or someone to whom he owes money launch a lethal attack on him. It is safe to say that the average drug dealer in Savannah is much more at risk of being a victim of a lethal attack than a Savannah police officer. The gun can also serve as part of the persona. Just as a physician has a stethoscope, and an accountant a hand-held calculator, the purveyor of illicit substances has a "piece." Secondly, both seller and buyer may be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the transaction. When this is added to the paranoia surrounding drug deals (e.g., arrest by police, lack of trust, rip-off, getting robbed), it makes for hasty reactions. Thirdly, guns, money, and drugs are often kept in pockets which are inside a jacket, in the back of the pants, or around the belt. When someone reaches for something late at night in a drug transaction situation, a misinterpretation of cues can occur. According to Huesmann (1998, p. 101):

Evidence suggests that humans attend to environmental cues differentially and interpret the cues differently as a function of predisposing neurophysiological factors, their emotional arousal, the kinds of cognitive schemas they have acquired, and which schemas are activated. More aggressive individuals tend to focus on fewer cues that are more frequently symptomatic of hostility, tend to interpret ambiguous cues more readily as symptomatic of hostility, and tend to believe that the world is more hostile (p. 101).

When you add the lifestyle of most of our modern perpetrators to the drug trade, the lethality of interpersonal disputes increases. Most of the juveniles came from homes with no father and with mothers who were irresponsible in a myriad of ways. Several of these perpetrators did not even live with one of their parents. In a sense, they were “on their own” as juveniles. According to “Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America” (1999, p. 10):

Even in the face of concerted and persistent discrimination, including economic discrimination, and the harsh inequalities of Jim Crow, many Black families maintained two-parent households well into the 1960s, when rates of out-of-wedlock births began to escalate dramatically. In 1960, 22% of all Black babies were born to unmarried mothers. By 1996, that figure had jumped to 70%.

Of the earlier era, Perdue (1973, p. 94) said:

Although encouraged by missionaries and bureau agents to accept the responsibilities of family life, blacks found it difficult to break habits ingrained by years of slavery. Consequently, illegitimacy and desertion rates were high. In Savannah, women headed approximately one-fourth of the Negro families in both 1870 and 1880. About one-third of the families had only one parent present. The limited availability of housing in Savannah placed severe restrictions on the development of normal relationships. In 1870, there was an average of more than three non-family inhabitants per family dwelling. Despite these problems, the Negro family of Savannah had become more stable by 1890. The number of non-working wives and one-family dwellings had increased. There was also an increase in male heads of families.

It seems that family life for Blacks was more stable in the earlier era. This is one area of concern that it is difficult to measure specifically. It is ironic that, in the middle of the time between both these eras, Arado (1932, p. 469) wrote the following when talking about two Black male juveniles arrested for murder during a robbery:

The defendants were typically abandoned negro boys. They were probably forsaken in their early youth and made to shift for themselves, whither they might travel. Finding it difficult to secure work, or unwilling to do manual labor--all that they were capable of doing--their weak minds conceived the idea of obtaining easy money by means of robbery. With a dollar in sight they take desperate chances to obtain it. They carry guns as necessary means to accomplish their object. Young and impulsive, the situation arises during the commission of a hold-up when they discharge a fatal bullet. The sudden, unexpected approach of a stranger, unforeseen resistance, unconsciousness of impending capture, causes them to commit a killing they would never do if everything ran smoothly.

This was long before the drug epidemic that affected the modern era.

These modern juvenile killers had no money, status, or future--except as “pint-sized gangstas.” They basically were functioning sociopaths before they pulled the trigger. It would be difficult to think of any program that could have been devised for these juveniles better than their lives to create such pathology. One of the major drug dealers in Savannah wanted to recruit “young bloods” only if they had a body on them (killed someone). This showed that they had a proper orientation toward the drug trade, and the homicide could also be held over them if they ever wanted to change employment.

There is one other important point that must be explored. This is what I refer to as the “magic moment.” This is the point at which the perpetrator has a gun pointed at his victim and makes the decision to pull the trigger. The normal person, when put in this situation, might find it difficult to actually drop the hammer on another human being. Grossman (1995) reports that during the Second World War, 80% of American troops, when in combat, would not fire their rifles at the enemy. This was such a surprising and shocking bit of information that the military has continually changed its training to produce soldiers who will shoot at the enemy. By the time Vietnam occurred, 90 to 95% of our soldiers would shoot at the enemy. Kleck and Gertz (1995) report that approximately 2.5 million Americans confront potential targets every year and use firearms to have them desist from whatever wrong they are doing usually without firing a shot. Those of us who are involved in firearms training always wonder how many officers will actually be able to fire their weapons in situations where they should. In the United States, police officers may only use deadly force if their lives or someone else’s life is in jeopardy, or if the suspect has committed a violent crime and still has the means to commit further violence. Even under these strict shooting guidelines, it is felt that many officers will not shoot.

Most human beings seem to have some built-in mechanism that inhibits them from killing other human beings in combat situations and killers must be selected and trained. And yet, it would seem that many of these juvenile perpetrators of homicide have no inhibition toward killing unarmed victims offering no physical threat to them. They have reached this decision long before they have pulled the trigger. They seem to feel that it is inevitable that they will kill someone, because it is part of their “gangsta” lifestyle. Only one of the juvenile perpetrators showed any remorse to anyone over the homicide he committed. The others seemed to be human sharks, swimming through an ocean without light, ready to strike out at anything that got in the way. As discussed earlier, some combination of poverty, lack of parental control or concern, and the atmosphere of pervasive violence in which they were raised, has forged these juveniles into sociopaths at an early age.

Myers and Scott (1998) studied 18 male youths (14 to 17 years old) who had committed homicide in Florida. These homicides occurred either while involved in criminal activities or during interpersonal conflict. They said:

This study supports the position of juvenile homicide offenders having greater neuropsychiatric impairment, specifically episodic psychotic symptomatology, than violent conduct-disordered peers who have not killed others. A history of psychotic symptoms, in particular paranoid ideation, was found in the great majority of these young murderers, and was the most robust finding distinguishing them from the

inpatient sample (p. 170).

Unanswered questions are how much of their pathology is genetic, environmental, or situational, and what are the interaction among these pathologies?

Rose and McLain (1998) examined Black homicide in six large cities that had once been industrial meccas. They found a change in the type of homicide during this period of time. They found younger perpetrators and victims. They said:

Location is simply a surrogate for a stage in the economy's developmental sequence and the manner in which identifiable subpopulations adapt to changing sets of circumstances. Thus, we labeled the subculture that originated in the rural South, largely involving primary relationships, as a *subculture of defensive violence*. Yet, in the latter third of the 20th century, we find that young adult Blacks have been exposed to a different worldview. This alternative worldview, initially manifested in manufacturing-belt cities, has now begun to spread across the landscape at varying speeds. This different worldview has led to the evolution of another subculture in which the resort to violence is commonplace. We have labeled this the *subculture of materialist aggression*.

Savannah could never have been called a major industrial center, but it certainly has become more service oriented in the last 20 years. The difference in the type of homicides between the two eras seems to be consistent with the above findings. Brewer, Damphouse, and Adkinson (1998) studied juvenile homicide in Houston from 1990 to 1994. They found some change in juvenile homicide since the mid-1980s. Juveniles, compared to adult killers, were more likely to kill during a felony, especially robbery and their victims were more often of another race. This was true for Savannah in the latter era studied. They also found they were more likely to use long guns than adults, which was not true in Savannah.

In 1999, I talked with two of the top administrators for drug enforcement in Chatham County. I stated the premise that many of my juvenile offenders seemed to be involved in drug-related homicide. I wondered what effect the legalization of drugs would have. The one that answered said, "It wouldn't matter. These kids would then kill you over a game of marbles." This may not be total hyperbole.

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JUVENILE PERPETRATED HOMICIDES IN CALIFORNIA, 1990-98

Jason C. Van Court, California Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control (EPIC) Branch, Violent Injury Surveillance Program, 611 N. 7th St., MS 39A
P.O. Box 942732, Sacramento, CA 94234

ABSTRACT

To address the pervasive fear of juvenile crime in California we analyzed 30,300 supplemental homicide reports from 1990 to 1998 with complete information on 23,767 homicide suspects. We compared juvenile homicide suspects with adult suspects on the following attributes: sex, race, weapon choice, precipitating event, and victim/offender relationship. Juvenile suspects were significantly more likely than their adult counterparts to be male, Asian, use a gun, and be less familiar with the victim. Since it is illegal in California for a juvenile to own a handgun, firearm use among juveniles is especially significant and decision makers should carefully consider this and other characteristics of juvenile homicide in attempting to prevent future events.

INTRODUCTION

With the recognized gang activity in urban centers a decade ago and the resulting warnings from experts that U.S. inner cities were spawning a generation of “superpredators”, the public was in fear (Helmuth, 2000). Add to that the projections of more crime with the increasing juvenile population, the public is more in fear of juvenile perpetrated violent crime than ever despite evidence showing it is on the decline (Males & Macallair, 2000; Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 2000). Juvenile homicide arrests have declined 52% nationwide since 1993 (OJJDP). In California this fear is evidenced by the “three strikes and you’re out” initiative passed in 1994 and the “Gang Violence and Youth Crime Prevention Act”, Proposition 21, passed by voters in 2000. This act, part of a national movement toward integrating juvenile and adult courts, is the biggest overhaul of the juvenile court law in California since 1961 (National Council on Crime & Delinquency and Commonweal, 2000). Primarily, it gave prosecutors, rather than judges, the discretion of trying juveniles over 13 as adults for certain crimes. Although it will affect juvenile offenders of lesser crimes more than homicide offenders (most juvenile homicide offenders were tried as adults before its passage [Breed, Price & Boyle, 2000]), Proposition 21 was a reflection of public fear and an indication that the line between juveniles and adults is becoming blurred. Is this fear warranted? Are juveniles as dangerous as adults?

METHODS

We compared data on juvenile and adult suspects of the most serious crime, murder, using supplemental homicide reports from the California Department of Justice. We excluded cases of victims who died in custody, cases of justifiable homicide, and cases of negligent homicide. Of the 30,300 criminal homicides reported from 1990 to 1998, there were 18,612 (61.4%) with suspects, including 4,523 (14.9%) with two or more suspects, 1,396 (4.6%) with three or more suspects, and 564 (1.9%) with four or more suspects. Juveniles less than 18 years are listed least often as the first

suspect at 12.1% of all suspects. Juveniles account for 20.5% of the second listed suspects, 29.1% of the third suspects, and 33.5% of the fourth listed suspects. Since the suspect listed first is not necessarily the primary or most involved suspect, and since analyzing only the first suspect would exclude nearly 4 in 10 juvenile suspects, we chose to analyze data on all suspects with complete age data. Because Proposition 21 addressed youth 14 and older we excluded from analysis the 115 suspects younger than 14 years of age. This left us with 23,767 homicide suspects: 3,440 juveniles between the ages of 14 and 17 and 20,327 adults 18 years of age and older.

We compared juvenile and adult offenders on several characteristics including sex, race, weapon type/manner, precipitating event, and relationship to the victim. We collapsed race into four commonly accepted and well-represented categories: White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian. We excluded from the race analysis suspects whose race was unknown or that did not fall into one of the four categories. Weapon type/manner was collapsed into gun, knife, blunt object, beating with no weapon, and strangulation. Precipitating event was divided into a felony or non-felony. Precipitating event is coded as felony when the homicide is committed during the commission of another felony such as robbery or rape. Non-felony precipitating events include homicides resulting from arguments and other non-crime related altercations.

Since public fear, as reflected by the Gang Violence and Youth Crime Prevention Act, is generally directed toward violent gang members killing randomly with guns, we focused on certain “violent or criminal” characteristics in our comparisons. Given that juveniles are legally prohibited from purchasing a firearm and the use of a firearm carries enhanced penalties (California Penal Code Section 12022), we considered firearm use indicative of a more criminal homicide. We considered a homicide precipitated by a felony more criminal than one stemming from a non-felony event. We considered a homicide in which the victim was either a gang acquaintance or a stranger to the suspect as more violent.

To test our null hypothesis of no difference between the two age groups, we constructed confidence intervals at the 95% level around the percentage of juvenile and adult suspects falling into each “violent or criminal” category. If the confidence intervals did not overlap the difference was statistically significant at the 95% level.

For race differences, we took into account the differing population distributions. For instance, to account for the fact that the Hispanic population in California is much younger than the White population we compared the number of juvenile and adult suspects in each race group to their respective populations.

RESULTS

Of the 23,767 cases where the age of suspect is at least 14, 3,440 (14.5%) were younger than 18. Juveniles made up a significantly smaller percentage of suspects in more recent years (13.0% in 1996-98) than in earlier years (15.0% in 1990-95). Both juvenile and adult perpetrated homicides showed similar patterns sharply declining after 1993 (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Weapon type/Manner of juvenile and adult homicide suspects in California, 1990-98

Weapon type/ Manner	Juvenile		Adult	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Gun	80.4	79.0 – 81.7	68.1	67.5 - 68.8
Knife	11.3	10.3 – 12.4	15.4	14.9 - 15.9
Hands	3.3	2.7 - 3.9	6.3	6.0 - 6.6
Blunt Object	3.8	3.1 - 4.4	4.8	4.5 - 5.1
Strangulation	1.1	0.8 - 1.5	3.1	2.9 - 3.4

Juveniles were lone suspects significantly less often (37.5%) than their adult counterparts (60.9%). Juvenile suspects varied significantly from their adult counterparts in firearm use (Table 1) and relationship to the victim (Table 2) but not in precipitating event. A firearm was the weapon of choice for 80.4% of juvenile suspects and 68.1% of adult suspects. The homicide victim was a gang associate or stranger to 41.7% of adult suspects (95% CI=41.0-42.4) and 65.2% of juvenile suspects (95% CI=63.6-66.8). The same percentage of juvenile and adult suspects committed the homicide during the commission of another felony (22.9%).

Table 2 – Victim/Offender relationship of juvenile and adult homicide suspects in California, 1990-98

Victim/Offender Relationship	Juvenile		Adult	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Acquaintance	28.7	27.2 – 30.2	39.7	39.0 - 40.4
Stranger	37.4	35.8 – 39.1	30.5	29.8 - 31.1
Gang	27.8	26.3 – 29.3	11.2	10.8 - 11.7
Partner	1.1	0.7 - 1.4	10.2	9.8 - 10.6
Family	5.1	4.3 - 5.8	8.4	8.0 - 8.8

Sex

Of the 23,766 cases where sex of the suspect is known, 92.5% were male. A significantly higher percentage of juvenile suspects were male compared to adult suspects (Table 3).

Table 3 – Sex of juvenile and adult homicide suspects in California, 1990-98

Sex	Juvenile		Adult	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Male	95.9	95.3 – 96.6	91.9	91.5 - 92.3
Female	4.1	3.4 - 4.7	8.1	7.7 - 8.5

Males

Male juvenile suspects differed significantly from their adult counterparts in their use of a firearm and victim/offender relationship, but not in precipitating event. Juvenile male suspects used a firearm in 81.9% of cases (95% CI=80.6-83.2) compared to 70.2% for adult suspects (95% CI=69.5-70.9). The victim was a gang affiliate or stranger to 66.5% of juvenile male suspects (95% CI=64.9-68.2) compared to 44.1% of adult male suspects (95% CI=43.4-44.8). A felony situation precipitated 22.9% of homicides for male juvenile suspects, compared to 23.5% for adult males (95% CI=21.5-24.3, 22.9-24.1).

Females

Female juvenile suspects did not differ significantly from their adult counterparts in their use of a firearm or the precipitating event, but they did differ on victim/offender relationship. Juvenile females used a firearm in 43.2% of cases (95%CI=34.9-51.4) compared to 44.4% for adults (95% CI=42.0-46.8). A felony situation precipitated the homicide in 23.7% of the cases involving female juvenile suspects and 16.5% of cases involving adult females (95% CI=16.7-30.8, 14.7-18.3). The victim was a gang affiliate or stranger to 34.3% of juvenile female suspects compared to 14.8% of adult female suspects (95% CI=26.3-42.4, 13.1-16.6).

Race

Taking into account their respective population proportions, juvenile suspects were more likely than adult suspects to be Asian (JSR/ASR > 1) and less likely to be White, Black, or Hispanic (Table 4).

Table 4 – Race/Ethnicity of juvenile and adult homicide suspects relative to their respective populations in California, 1990-98

Race/ Ethnicity	Juvenile Suspect Percentage (JSP)/Juvenile Population Percentage (JPP)=Juvenile Suspect Ratio (JSR)	Adult Suspect Percentage (ASP)/Adult Population Percentage (APP)=Adult Suspect Ratio (ASR)	Ratio of JSR/ASR
White	10% / 45% = .22	22% / 59% = .38	.59
Asian	6% / 11% = .50	4% / 10% = .36	1.38
Hispanic	53% / 35% = 1.56	42% / 24% = 1.76	.89
Black	29% / 8% = 3.75	32% / 7% = 4.75	.79

Juveniles

To address the claim that minorities will be disproportionately affected by punitive juvenile crime measures such as Proposition 21 (Huffington, 2000), we compared juvenile suspects by race.

Relative to their population, White juveniles were the least likely to be homicide suspects (Table 5). Compared to White juveniles, Asians were 2.5 times as likely, Hispanics were almost 7 times as likely and Blacks were more than 16 times as likely to be a homicide suspect.

Table 5 – Race/Ethnicity of juvenile homicide suspects relative to the juvenile population in California, 1990-98

Race/Ethnicity	Juvenile Population Percentage (JPP)	Juvenile Suspect Percentage (JSP)	Ratio of JSP/JPP
White	45%	10%	.22
Asian	11%	6%	.54
Hispanic	35%	53%	1.51
Black	8%	29%	3.63
Total*	100%	100%	1.00

* May not add to 100% due to rounding

White juvenile suspects were significantly less likely (52.1%, 95% CI=46.8-57.4) than other races (83.5%, 95% CI=82.2-84.9) to use a firearm to commit homicide. Black juvenile suspects were significantly more likely (41.7%, 95% CI=38.6-44.7) than other races (15.2, 95% CI=13.8-16.7) to commit the homicide during the commission of another felony. White juvenile suspects were significantly less likely (40.4%, 95% CI=35.1-45.6) than other suspects (68.4%, 95% CI=66.7-70.1) to be accused of killing a gang affiliate or stranger.

DISCUSSION

Are juveniles as dangerous as adults? Should they be punished like adults? This study is designed to answer the first question, not the second. The Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Initiative changed how juveniles are punished for most crimes but not for homicide because most juvenile offenders were tried as adults before the initiative passed (Breed, Price, & Boyle, 2000). In assessing juvenile homicides these data may not be the best but they are useful. Because teenagers are more likely than adults to be arrested in groups, a better measure of juvenile crime is the count of cleared (closed) cases (Ziedenberg & Schiraldi, 1998). In the absence of this we must keep in mind that these numbers may be biased toward inappropriately implicating more juveniles than adults in perpetration of homicide.

If the use of a firearm to commit homicide indicates the offender is more violent, juveniles appear to be more violent than adults. If killing a stranger or someone with gang affiliation is more violent then juveniles appear to be more violent than adults. If perpetrating a homicide while committing another felony is considered more violent, juveniles appear to be *as* violent as adults. In general, it does appear that juvenile homicides are characterized more by “street crimes” involving more than one suspect, firearms, and gangs or strangers as opposed to the crimes of passion and family violence more pronounced in the adult-perpetrated homicides. Stratifying by sex shows that most of this difference can be attributed to males, although juvenile females are also more likely than adult females to be suspected of killing a gang affiliate or stranger.

This study joins others in challenging the public's perception that juvenile crime is increasingly common. Juvenile suspects decreased more than 50% from 1990-1998, similar to the pattern for adult suspects. Although these declines are comparable with the actual number of homicides during this time period, they could be exaggerated due to varying levels of completion of suspect information. For example, in 1990 69.3% of cases had suspect information recorded compared to 1998 with 62.5% complete so the number of suspects in 1990 may be artificially high from the better recording. If this small difference in recording of suspects did have an effect on the actual declines there is no reason to suspect that one age group was affected more than the other. Using two years with similar levels of completeness, 1991 and 1998, did not vary the declines for either juvenile suspects or adult suspects.

An issue this study raises is the need for enforcing gun laws in the juvenile population. California Penal Code Section 12101 states that "A minor shall not possess a pistol, revolver, or other firearm capable of being concealed upon the person." This obviously is not being enforced considering that juvenile suspects use a firearm more often than their adult counterparts and *at least* 85% of these firearms are handguns. The fact that juveniles are more likely to use firearms is directly related to who the usual victim is. Since 80% of strangers and gang affiliates are killed with a gun compared to 61% of intimate partners, family members, or acquaintances, we cannot determine the cause and effect of this relationship. Does the use of a gun cause the suspect to kill a less intimate victim (random gunfire or drive-by shootings) or does the choice of victim necessitate using a firearm? It is probably the precipitating event that most determines the weapon type the suspect uses. In fact, a significantly higher proportion of homicides with felony precipitating event rather than a non-felony event were carried out with a firearm.

In any case, it appears that all three factors (firearm use, victim/offender relationship, and precipitating event) are related, and decreasing one or more of the violent aspects may help prevent future violence. If we concentrate on removing the most lethal weapon available all homicides will be more difficult to commit. Improving the economy and our communities may make certain precipitating crimes like armed robbery less necessary to commit. It may also decrease family strife and the associated violence. With nine out of ten juvenile-perpetrated homicides in California committed by minority suspects from 1990 through 1998, communities heavily populated by minorities should be focussed on. Many prevention strategies can be employed in an attempt to continue the decrease in the number of homicides (both juvenile and adult) in California.

CONCLUSION

Proposition 21, the Gang Violence and Youth Crime Prevention Act, was marketed to protect Californians from violent criminals who have no respect for human life (Elvey, Trask, & Tefank, 1999). The proposition capitalized on the public's fear of juvenile crime passing despite a declining juvenile crime rate and even though most juvenile homicide offenders were already tried as adults before the proposition (Breed, Price, & Boyle, 1999). To assess whether juvenile homicide suspects are as violent as their adult counterparts we analyzed homicide data from 1990-98. The incidence of homicide has been decreasing throughout the nineties for both juvenile and adult offenders. The characteristics of juvenile perpetrated homicides are more "violent or criminal" than those of adult

perpetrated homicides in that they are more often committed by more than one minority male with a gun against a stranger or gang member. An area of this study that deserves special attention is firearm involvement as juveniles are prohibited from owning a handgun yet they are more likely than adults to use one when they murder.

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IDENTIFYING CORE BLOCKS OF GANG ACTIVITY USING GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Research in Progress

Richard L. Block and Edwina Jones, Department of Sociology, Loyola University
6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626

ABSTRACT

In this work in progress, the spatial distribution of police recorded gang motivated crime in Chicago from 1993-1996 was studied. Each of the city's 21,075 blocks was analyzed and designated by the number of years a specific gang is active in the block. Even major gangs such as the Black Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords, and Latin Kings were active in only a small percentage of blocks (1-2%) for all four years, but these blocks include nearly half of all the gang motivated crimes known to the police for each gang. Core blocks for one of the three major gangs rarely overlapped with those of another, but core areas of smaller gangs often overlapped with those of the larger gangs. This suggests that identification of these core areas, and intense police activity in them, might have a great impact of the level of gang activity in the city as a whole.

OBJECTIVES

There were five objectives of this research. First, to identify the core census blocks of gang activity in Chicago using police recorded incidents of gang motivated crime from 1993-1996 (N=73,244), and differentiate these blocks by offending gang. (See Maxson & Klein, 1996, for a discussion of gang membership versus motivation.) Second, to estimate the percentage of incidents that occur in core blocks and peripheral blocks of gang activity. Third, to identify differences in gang motivated incidents in core and peripheral blocks. Fourth, to compare the spatial distribution of gang-motivated crime with the overall distribution of similar crimes. And fifth, to develop a methodology for depicting crime distributions over large areas that accurately reflects the abrupt rises and falls in crime levels in nearby areas.

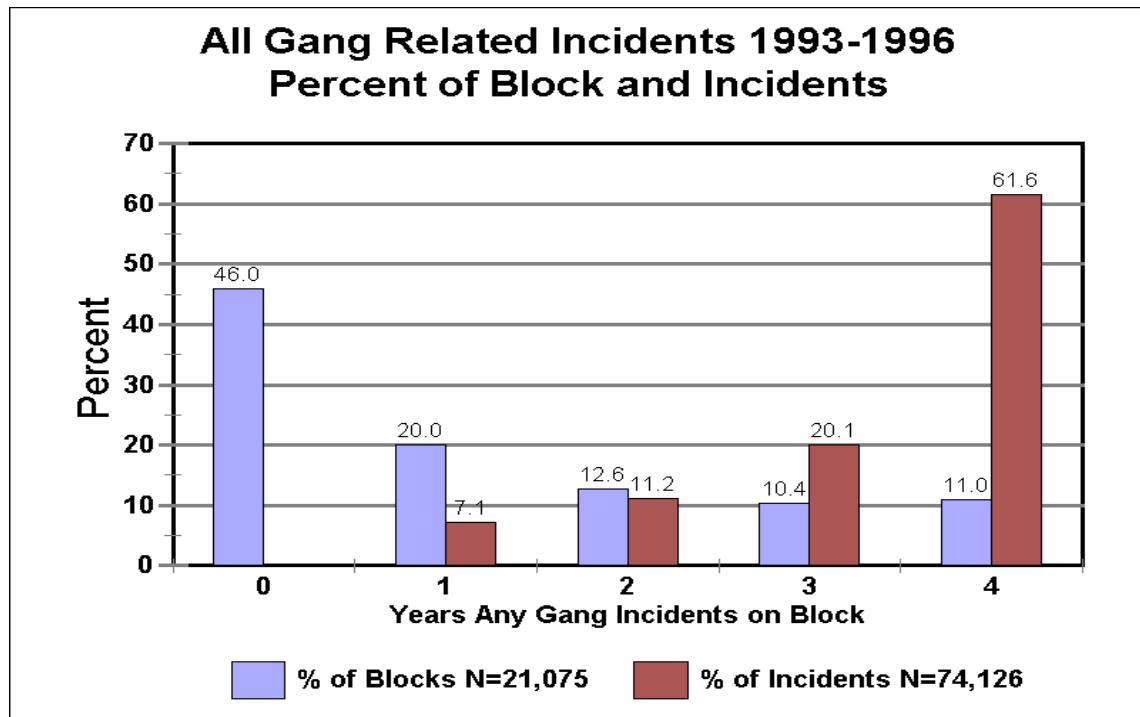
METHODOLOGY

Each census block of the city was analyzed (N=21,075). All "gang motivated incidents" were categorized by the offending gang and located in a block. For comparative purposes, the overall number of drug crimes and assaultive violence was also analyzed in each block. A census block is a closed polygon usually made up of four sides. Any block in which a gang was active in at least one year from 1993-1996 was considered part of its "activity space." A gang's activity space was made up of "core" and "peripheral" blocks. A census block was considered to be a core block of gang activity if at least one incident by the gang was recorded in each year from 1993-1996. A census blocks was considered to be a peripheral block of a gang's activity if at least one incident was recorded over the four-year period 1993-1996.

FINDINGS

A majority of blocks had at least one gang motivated incident from 1993-1996 (54%), but 61.6% of gang motivated incidents occurred in the 11% of blocks that had incidents in all four years (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Even the largest gangs were active in only a small percentage of the city. From 1993-1996, 74.6% of all blocks recorded no incidents attributed to the Black Gangster Disciples Nation (BGDN). A near majority, 48.8 %, of all BGDN incidents occurred in the 2.8% of blocks that had BGDN incidents in all four years (Figure 2). Similarly, 50.5% of Vice Lord Incidents occurred in the 1.9% of blocks that were there core activity areas (Figure 3). And 39.1% of all Latin Kings incidents occurred on the 0.8% of blocks in which incidents by the gang occurred in all four analyzed years (Figure 4). Only the BGDN (2.8%) and the Vice Lords (1.9%) had cores that exceeded 1% of the city's total number of blocks. Overall, gang activities for specific gangs were concentrated in a very small percentage of the total census blocks of the cities.

Core blocks represented 12% of the activity space of the BGDN and Vice Lords, and 3%-6% for the four other most active gangs. These core blocks, however, represented a majority or near majority of the incidents committed by each of the six gangs.

Figure 2

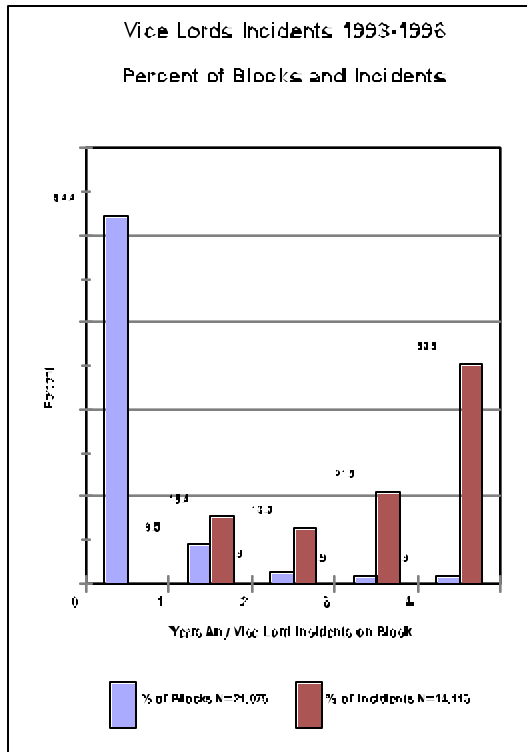


Figure 3

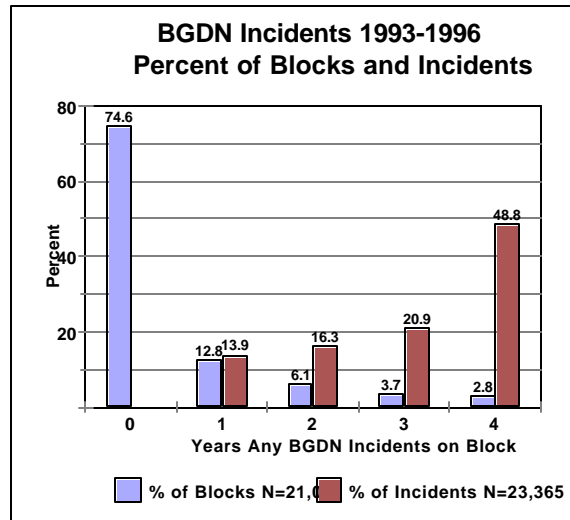
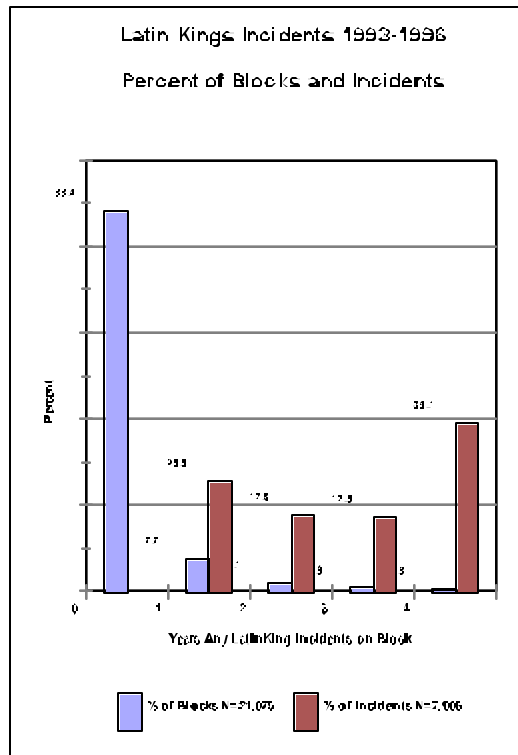


Figure 4



The core blocks of the three major gangs rarely overlapped. Each of these major gangs occupied a designated area of the city. Only one block, a high school, had gang activity by all three--the BGDN, Vice Lords, and Latin Kings--in all four years. Of the 21,075 blocks in the city, 43 were core blocks for two of the three gangs. Thirty-three of these are core blocks for both the Vice Lords and the BGDN. These represented 9.7% of the Vice Lords' core blocks and 5.7% of the BGDN's core blocks. The core blocks of the major gangs overlapped with those smaller gangs, and this overlap may represent a large percentage of the smaller gangs' cores. The Black Disciples recorded incidents in 47 core blocks. Of these blocks, 28 (59.6%) also recorded incidents attributed to the BGDN in all four years.

Incidents in gang core areas represented a large percentage of all drug-related gang-motivated incidents. For example, BGDN core areas for drug crimes represented 1.6% of the city's blocks, but 46.0% of all incidents. However, BGDN assaultive violence was *not* concentrated in core areas for the gangs' assaults. Nearly half (46.9%) of all the gang's assaultive violence occurred on blocks with BGDN assaults in only one year. Core areas included only 10.3% of all assaultive incidents committed by the BGDN.

Defining core blocks as those with a specific type of incident in all four years, gang-motivated and total, assaultive and drug-related incidents were much more likely to occur in areas with incidents in all four years than in areas with incidents in fewer years. However, assaultive violence was very frequent (n=546,111) and widely distributed throughout the city. Fifty-nine percent of Chicago's blocks had at least one assault or threat in each of the four years. Gang assaults occurred in fewer blocks than assaults in general. Both gang-motivated and total drug crimes were highly concentrated in core blocks. Overall, 16% of city blocks had at least one drug-related incident in all four years. These blocks accounted for 77% of all drug incidents. Similarly, 53% of gang-motivated drug incidents occurred in 5% of the city's blocks.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions of this research are limited by police decisions. First, the number of drug crimes is in part determined by the decision to enforce drug laws. Enforcement rather than crimes could be spatially concentrated. Second, gang motivation is often difficult to determine. The same person may participate in gang-motivated and non-gang-motivated incidents. In a period of heavy gang activity, only a very small percentage of the city had persistent activity by a specific gang. However, a near-majority of all incidents by the gang were in these core areas. Identification of these core areas, and intense police activity in them might have a great impact of the level of gang activity in the city as a whole. Because the number of crime incidents varied widely from block to block, depicting crime as if it were terrain elevations through interpolation may not be appropriate. A better depiction would recognize local variation and search for structural and social reasons behind block-to-block variation.

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DISCUSSION

Steve Roth: Vanessa, do you think that Prozac is 100% responsible for the violent act or are there are other precipitating factors? Is it dosage related?

Vanessa Leggett: Ritalin or Prozac is not necessarily the sole explanation for violent acts, there are other circumstances that can influence the onset of violent behavior. For example, some children are prescribed Ritalin who have a hyperactivity disorder, and then they are given other medication to combat the side effects of Ritalin. Known as “speed balling”.

Steve Roth: It seems that pharmacology and its effects differ from person to person. I had a student who was prescribed Zoloft because she had broken up with her boyfriend. She had taken the medication for a year and was prescribed a dosage that was more than she needed. The student came to me regarding the prescription, and I told her that she did not need it, and that she had been prescribed more than she required. Were the juveniles monitored as to whether they were taking accurate dosage levels? Was the medication warranted?

Kathleen Heide: Fascinating question. There has been a concern over clinical trials. Persons requiring Ritalin or Prozac constitute a low base rate phenomenon. In your study, you should include a comparison group. Examine those juveniles who did well on medication, and those who acted out violently. I haven’t had one case where there weren’t other factors involved. How do the juveniles behave in everyday activities? What were their conflict resolution skills? Some juveniles have violent thoughts, and a lot of energy is directed towards those thoughts. Sometimes, it seems as if some juveniles are simply acting out their violent thoughts.

I would also suggest it would be interesting to identify the characteristics and the high risk factors that distinguish between those juveniles that act out and those who do not. Also look at dosage, and the care taken by physician in administering correct dosage and the extent of monitoring by the physician. You need to determine what is the real picture, and the distinguishing characteristics.

Christine Rasche: You need to specify the hypothesis. Are kids who are given prescription drugs acting violent? Also, of kids who are given drugs, which ones act out?

Vanessa Leggett: I’ll be looking at all cases where there were violent acts and what dosage they were prescribed.

Christine Rasche: This leaves out a control group.

Laura Lund: How would you tease out the effect of the drug and the underlying condition? You can’t account for the fantasy factor or psychotic episodes. How will you determine whether this is “uncharacteristic” behavior? You can’t rely on personality factors.

Jack Ritter: Some problems with Prozac are that doctors too readily prescribe it. Persons will tend

to take too much. You need to distinguish between Ritalin and Prozac. Take into account half-life, how much a person will take, whether he will take too much.

Barrie Ritter: It seems that people tend to use whatever excuse is out there, particularly in trials.

Vanessa Leggett: That may be due to awareness, and the possible effects.

Everett Lee: I recently went to a meeting and, after the presenter finished talking, I asked him “what are you trying to tell us?” There is some conflict with drugs, and some pharmacologists are concerned about the overuse of drugs. They are tinkering with the mind.

Roland Chilton: Did the large-scale tests provide any information about the side effects of Ritalin or Prozac?

Kathleen Heide: Yes, they gave information as to the side effects, etc.

Allegra Kim: Vance, did you examine the availability of firearms between the two eras? What about the cost of firearms between the two eras?

Vance McLaughlin: They tended to be more available in the first era, where there were less restrictive laws. In the modern era, it is illegal for those under the age of 17 to possess handguns, alcohol, or drugs.

Alan DeLine: Was the definition of juvenile the same in both eras?

Vance McLaughlin: Yes.

Michael Maume: When was the juvenile court established in Savannah?

Vance McLaughlin: I don't really know.

Dick Block: It would be interesting to examine family vs. drug related instances of homicide between the two eras. What about the Southern culture of violence, and the prevalence of gangs, etc., between the two eras?

Jackie Campbell: Jason, what is the population doing during this time?

Jason Van Court: They follow similar distribution patterns as the juveniles.

Roland Chilton: Is it only the offender who is a gang member? And what is the relationship of the victim to the offender?

Jason Van Court: It is the relationship of the offender to the victim. It's only coded as gang if both victim and offender are gang members. It is problematic if the offender is a gang member and the victim is a gang member, but the homicide is not a result of gang activity.

Candi Batton: Who are the offenders in comparison to suspects? You need to examine clearance rates. And how many of those suspects are counted multiple times?

Laura Lund: It is based on suspect information only. That is, if police have enough information to issue a warrant for their arrest, but they are not yet arrested.

Linda Langford: Therefore there will be a different picture as to who is in the final pool.

Barrie Ritter: You need to make an assessment and be critical of the three strikes law.

Jenny Mouzos: Have you undertaken a comparative examination of multiple (group) offending amongst juvenile offenders and adult offenders? Australian research indicates that juveniles are more likely to engage in violent behavior in groups of two or more than when they are alone.

Jason Van Court: No, but I'll take it into account.

Alan DeLine: There are some problems with the New York State juvenile offender laws. What I found in New York City was that adults were getting 13-14 year olds to do a hits, or their dirty work, so if they get caught, they get dealt with as a juvenile in the court system.

Vance McLaughlin: I've found that adult drug dealers wanted to have a "body" over the juvenile (juvenile kills someone for the drug dealer), so they could hold it over them (the juvenile) if they got caught.

Steven Roth: Dick, are the Chicago incidents gang versus gang?

Dick Block: Not necessarily, there have been some intra-gang activity, with gang members of the same group engaging in violence against each other.

Linda Langford: What does the "offending gang" mean?

Dick Block: Offending gang indicates the gang that actually goes into another gang's area to kill.

Paul Blackman: Aside from the maps being smaller, is it the same for non-gang related homicides in terms of areas?

Dick Block: Yes.

Ronald Chilton: If you overlap the total gang incidents with the homicide maps, what do you see?

Dick Block: It seems that incidents occur in the same neighborhoods, but it seems that Latin gangs are active in other areas as well. There are differences. The concentration for Latin gang killings are different in comparison to the killing of other young men.

Susan Avila: What about drug related incidents, etc?

Dick Block: They seem to come from same areas such as “back of the yards.”

Jay Corzine: What percentage of Chicago’s three largest gangs are responsible for gang homicides?

Dick Block: Fifty-five per cent.

Vance McLaughlin: Why are Chicago Police doing away with their gang units?

Dick Block: Possible corruption, catching of so-called small fries and letting the big ones go.

Roland Chilton: What about the “gang activity reports”? So if the Chicago Police gang units are no longer active, will these reports decrease as well?

Dick Block: Yes, most likely. It’s generally based on the level of reporting.

Question: What about drug crime versus gang drug crime?

Dick Block: Sixty-five per cent of census blocks had no gang motivated drug incidents, however, only 39 per cent of the crime blocks had no instances of drug crimes at all.

Steve Roth: What are the implications for police policy? One thing is clear, recording of gang crime is concentrated. Is it a measure of enforcement activity or gang activity or both? And how do you measure dispersion? Crime is very concentrated. What would be the effect of government policy in pulling down the Projects?

Allegra Kim: In Baltimore, they de-concentrated poverty and the incidence of crime in specific areas, by giving incentives to low SES persons to live in other areas. There are some promising results.

CHAPTER THREE

HOMICIDE TYPOLOGIES

CONTRACTS TO KILL AS SCRIPTED BEHAVIOR

James A. Black and Nicole M. Cravens, Department of Sociology, 901 McClung Tower
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996

ABSTRACT

Examining homicide events from the standpoint of interaction patterns has provided valuable insights into our understanding of their developmental dynamics. This knowledge is crucial to the formulation of strategies aimed at intervening in and preventing the occurrence of violence. For the most part, the utility of studying scripts that lead to violence has been confined to examining events as “situated transactions.” In the present paper, we will demonstrate that the study of behavioral scripts can be effectively extended and utilized in the examination of murder-for-hire events, as well. We will also show that the scripts that develop in murder-for-hire homicides, because of their contractual nature, are distinctly different from the scripts that develop in event-based situated transactions. The contract to kill and the killing as the only plausible solutions to what is perceived of an unsolvable problem are emergent features of the behavioral scripts in murder for hire.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that a “general category of homicide should be disaggregated on the basis of those characteristics that best differentiate the interpersonal and situational contexts in which lethal incidents take place” (Williams & Flewelling, 1988, p. 424). Because one-on-one incidents of homicide occur with greater frequency than do those involving multiple offenders and/or victims, compose different offender/victim demographics and situational circumstances, and are more readily available for analysis in national data, they receive considerably more theoretical and empirical attention from homicide researchers (Williams & Flewelling, 1988, p. 425).

Unquestionably, these are important reasons for focusing on one-on-one homicides. However, an unfortunate by-product of singling out one-on-one homicides for empirical and theoretical scrutiny has been the relative neglect of multiple-offender and/or victim homicides by researchers. Differentiating between one-on-one homicides and multiple-offender homicides on the basis of their “expressive-instrumental” character, researchers routinely dismiss instrumental homicides, which include such multiple-offender offenses as contract killings, from empirical and theoretical analysis (e.g., Luckenbill, 1977; Block & Block, 1992; Felson & Steadman, 1983; Williams & Flewelling, 1988). As a result, contract-killing incidents, as well as other multiple-offender/victim homicides, have not received the attention needed to make generalizations about them, compare them with one-on-one homicide incidents, and develop theoretical explanations unique to the contexts within which these homicides occur. We concur with Williams and Flewelling (1988, p. 425) that “the structural and cultural dynamics producing such incidents differ from one-on-one homicides...[and] should be analyzed separately until the crucial points of similarity and difference are clearly identified.” These analyses must inevitably focus on a set of questions sensitive to the uniqueness of their structural and cultural dynamics.

In the present paper, we want to build on some previously reported exploratory findings about contract killings, a term which we use interchangeably with murder for hire, and examine how conceptual interests of script theory can be used to examine the sequential features and organizational properties specific to these events. By concentrating on this one type of multiple-offender homicide, we are seeking ways to refine the conceptual clarity with which its dynamics and characteristics can be understood and explained. In so doing, we will be able to grapple with theoretically relevant questions about solicitors, hit men, and their targets that are not addressed when dealing with incidents of one-on-one homicides.

SCRIPT THEORY: SOME GENERAL COMMENTS

Research into criminal violence has increasingly relied on script or script-related conceptual interests to understand interactions between offenders and victims (e.g., Cerulo, 1998; Felson & Steadman, 1983; Luckenbill, 1977; Newman, 1998; Oliver, 1994; Wilkinson & Fagan, 1996). Because they represent the sorts of interactions that call for the construction of cultural strategies for lethal action to resolve problems, contract killings are particularly suited to examination as scripted behavior. Such an approach provides a vehicle for meaningfully approaching to the organization of a large number of seemingly disparate and unrelated details about contract-killing events. In addition, it permits us to inquire about similarities and differences in the motives of solicitors and hit men. More generally, by subscribing to a script-based theory of understanding, strong claims can be made in relation to the nature of the understanding process (Shank & Abelson, 1977).

It is important to note the several ways “scripts” have been conceptualized. According to Abelson (1981), a script is a hypothesized cognitive structure that when activated organizes comprehension of event-based situations. Scripts involve structured expectations about the order and occurrence of events (Shank and Abelson, 1977). Cornish emphasizes “the step-by-step procedures of committing crime that are learned, stored in memory, and enacted when situational cues are present” (quoted in Wilkinson & Fagan, p. 64). Tedeschi and Felson use scripts to explain “behavior that is seemingly impulsive (nonrational) as habitual learned responses to situational cues, which involve a limited number of decisions over which script is most cost effective in a given situation” (1994, quoted in Wilkinson & Fagan, 1996, p. 64).

It is also important to recognize the relevance of script theory for broader cultural theories of the production of homicide. Of particular interest in this regard is Swidler’s notion of “culture as a tool kit” (Swidler, 1986). Cultural tool kits consist “of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems.” These tool kits offer different “ ‘strategies of action,’ persistent ways of ordering action through time.” From Swidler’s vantage point, culture provides “cultural components that are used to construct strategies of action” (Swidler, 1986, p. 273).

Identifying specific aspects of script theory in need of closer empirical scrutiny and linking its central tenants to those of other theories are, of course, significant concerns. As noteworthy as these considerations are, they must be put aside for future investigation. Our interest here is on the much narrower problem of how the conceptual components of script theory can be used to organize thinking about contract killings. To accomplish that, we turn to a brief overview of the data being

used as the backdrop in our analysis.

CONTRACT KILLINGS: SOME PREVIOUS FINDINGS

Our exploratory research on contract killings has been confined to those that (a) involve former or current intimates or acquaintances in some combination, as when someone relies on a friend or acquaintance or lover to kill a previous or current intimate, or on an acquaintance or lover to kill a relative, or (b) that are staged, such as those involving undercover law enforcement officials posing as hit men. Other types of contract killings, such as those involving independently hired assassins, and events in which murder for hire is part of an organization's internal control, such as mob-based contract killings, are excluded from the present research.

A study of 30 murder-for-hire events involving 60 participants (17 women and 43 men) has produced some empirical evidence about the lethally violent nature of these crimes, the circumstances surrounding their perpetration, and the characteristics of those who participate in them as solicitors, hit men, and targets (Cravens & Black, 2000). In our study, a murder-for-hire event is *a continuous sequence of interactions by one or more persons in which one person solicits another person to have a third person killed for gain, monetary or otherwise. An event begins with the initial exploration of the possibility of having someone killed, and terminates with a murder, attempted murder, or police intervention.* An in-depth examination of those convicted of solicitation and/or conspiracy to commit murder or murder/attempted murder with a murder-for-hire element to them who are currently incarcerated in the Tennessee adult prison system were identified for examination.

Our findings showed the solicitor was most frequently male, White, between the ages of 19 and 41, with a prior arrest record. The hit man was most frequently male, White, between the ages of 16 and 30, with an arrest record. The victim was most frequently male, white, and between the ages of 26 and 49. The most frequent circumstance for an event involved a shooting, between 2:00 a.m. and 7:59 a.m., at the victim's house, ending with a murder. The most interesting findings were that about as many women (47%) as men (53%) were involved in murder-for-hire events as solicitors, that nearly all participants were White (91%), and that events (65%) that did not involve an undercover agent resulted in a murder, attempted murder, or both.

The findings from the Tennessee project touched on two questions pertinent to those raised in other homicide and intimate-violence studies: (a) classifying events as contract killings; (b) assessing the underlying instrumental-expressive dimensions. In an attempt to answer these questions, events were classified on the basis of "explicit" (overtly specified monetary gains in exchange for killing) and "implicit" (mutually understood and anticipated but unspecified gains, monetary or otherwise) arrangements for killing (Rubin, 1996, p.6). In classifying events as explicit-implicit we explored the direct evidence of a specific sum of money being agreed upon between the solicitor and hit man, and the extent to which men and women solicitors varied. The findings indicated that female solicitors tend to be involved in implicit rather than explicit contracts to kill. Males were more likely to be engaged in explicit contracts to kill.

In assessing the instrumental and expressive dimensions of murder-for-hire participants, we utilized Block and Block's primary goal distinction "expressive motivations are aligned with

spontaneous and impulsive acts that are done in rage, anger, and with little thought of consequence...while instrumental motives reflect future goals or ends”(Block & Block, 1992, p. 39). Our findings (Black, 2000) indicated that participants’ relationships in contract killings reflected both instrumental and expressive aspects. When categorized along interpersonal lines, solicitor/hit man and solicitor/target relationships tended to conform to the qualities of expressive interpersonal relationships (e.g. involve primary, face-to-face, and emotional features) and hit man/target relationships tended to conform to patterns of instrumental interpersonal relationships (e.g., involve more secondary, formal features). Interpersonal relationships ranged from stranger, acquaintance and friend to paramour, kin, and spouse. Solicitor/hit man relationships were categorized as instrumental with 16 events coded as explicit and 4 events as implicit. Solicitor/target relationships were categorized as expressive with 16 events coded as explicit and 10 as implicit. Hit man/target relationships were categorized as instrumental with 7 events coded as explicit and 10 as implicit.

Neither the implicit-explicit nor the instrumental-expressive distinctions have been theoretically useful in understanding the dynamics and characteristic features of the contract-killing events revealed by our exploratory research. Given a number of questions left unanswered by these distinctions about incidents involving solicitors and hit men, the remainder of this paper will examine contract killings in the context of script theory.

CONTRACT KILLINGS AS SCRIPTS

As with all scripts, the contract-killing scripts we are examining have certain requirements: (a) a stable cognitive representation of the particular script; (b) an evoking context to present to others; and (c) action rules/policies for entering the script (Abelson, 1981). Within these broadly stated parameters, contract killing scripts are conceived, planned, and carried out. In contract killings, solicitors are initially responsible for cognitively concocting the killing script, and conceiving a personal problem as one that can only be resolved by having someone killed by someone other than himself or herself. Once they have come to that conclusion, solicitors must present their scheme to those they believe will help them out. That is, they must convince someone to be their hit man. They do this through some type of “evoking context.” It is in this context that a specific contract to kill is constructed between the solicitor and the hit man (from various cultural components available in the “cultural tool kits” of the solicitor and the hit man). Within this general set of requisites, script theory provides important conceptual distinctions that enable us to differentiate among specific types of contract killings, explicate the detailed nature of the scripting process as it proceeds from one stage to another, and illuminate the interactive dynamics between solicitors and hit men (Abelson, 1981).

Cognitive Representations: Solicitors’ Scripts

As a type of multiple-offender/victim homicide, contract killings have some unique and intriguing features that set them apart from other multiple-offender events and, therefore, raise questions that require special explanatory scrutiny. One of the most intriguing questions is: Why does someone decide to have someone else do the killing for him?

Contracts to kill almost invariably begin in the minds of solicitors, who each has what he perceives to be some type of insurmountable problem that can be best resolved by having someone

else kill the target of his problem. The time taken by solicitors to develop these scripts, that is, to arrive at a stable cognitive comprehension of the problem and its resolution through hiring a killer, can be from a few weeks to several months, even years. One thing that is clear is that they are not spur-of-the-moment decisions. While it might appear to others that they are rather impulsive, they are the product of considerable reflection. Far less clear are the processes by which solicitors come to view contract killing as the only strategy available to them. This decision-making process requires considerably more investigation. What influence the motives typically attributed to solicitors (greed, revenge, jealousy, sex, etc.) actually have on the development of their cognitive representations is more complex than our data enable us to address. Currently, we have to be content with picking up the actions of solicitors at the point where they approach others to enter their scripts.

Evoking Contexts: Tracks, Entry Paths and Priming Scripts

Once they have decided that having someone killed will resolve their problem, solicitors are then presented with the daunting task of eliciting the complicity of someone else. Eventually, a solicitor's cognitive representation of his problem must be transformed from a cognitive script to a participatory script to commit murder. The solicitor's problem must be presented to someone else in such a way that it evokes her or his participation. It is an especially crucial point in the transition from a simple cognitive idea about killing to a solicitation to commit murder. The question raised here is: How do solicitors select someone to do their killing?

Script theory uses the term *tracks* to differentiate between various "evoking contexts" of contract killings. It is an important and useful way to distinguish between those instances in which a solicitor is enlisting the help of a trusted intimate or an acquaintance to do his or her killing and those in which the help of an experienced stranger or presumed "professional" is being sought. In our exploratory work on the problem, we have found two prevalent contract-killing tracks. The first, which involves intimates, relatives, friends, and acquaintances as solicitors and hit men, we have dubbed the *intimate track*. The second involves solicitors seeking the help of experienced strangers, who turn out to be undercover law enforcement agents posing as hit men. We refer to this as the *staged track*.

Each track provides selected *paths* by which hit men enter the killing script. In the intimate track, the relative closeness of the existing interpersonal relationships between solicitors and hit men provide the underlying structure for the interactions that take place between them. This context shapes the nature of the *priming scripts* (such as offers of money, sex, continuing intimacy) that solicitors use to evoke the participation of others in their scripts. Priming scripts serve a persuasive/coercive purpose. Priming scripts do not always work. It is very common for a solicitor to approach several individuals in an effort to find a hit man. For one of any number of reasons ("you have got to be crazy," "you're joking of course," "I could never do anything like that," "I got a conscious [sic]," etc.), they are frequently rebuffed. Occasionally the priming is double-edged, as when solicitors ask someone if they will either do the killing themselves or find someone who will do it. Humor is also a frequent characteristic feature of priming scripts. It serves as a convenient way to back off from a solicitation if the individual being approached is not accepting it.

Coercion or manipulation by the solicitor either may or may not be manifested at this

juncture, depending on the script track. In the intimate track, there is usually evidence of some degree of coercion on the part of the solicitors to enjoin the hit man in the same strong script that motivates them. For one reason or another, usually specific to the context of the relationship between the two, solicitors are able to capitalize on weaknesses of hit men (fear of reprisal for not going along--Dammit, either you kill him or I'm going to kill you and then do it myself--offer to help them out of a financial bind, love--I'm her man. I'll do whatever she wants me to do--share insurance profits with them, etc.), coercing them into participation in the killing script. It is not always easy to distinguish between coercion and persuasion, but our evidence suggests that there is a strong element of coercion in these exchanges. Based on the exploratory evidence, priming scripts can contain any of a number of different characteristic features in various combinations (Abelson, 1981). A cautionary note is in order about entry paths and priming scripts in the intimate track, where such devices as tape recorders and camcorders are not available, as they are in the staged track, to document the exchanges taking place. Precisely when paths originate, that is, the circumstances that precipitate the initial conversations about killing between solicitors and hit men, are very elusive. It is important to recognize, as Abelson (1981) warns, that certain aspects of scripts are non-linear, making it occasionally difficult to classify them.

In the staged track, there is no evidence of the solicitors approaching several prospective hit men. Solicitors ask someone they believe to be more knowledgeable than they about these matters to help them locate a hit man. This person is almost never offered any particular remuneration for their services. An initial meeting between the solicitor and the staged hit man is arranged at which time the hit man is introduced to the solicitor as one who is especially experienced to help with the problem facing the solicitor. There is far less attention given to getting the hit man to enter the script. Conversations are much more protracted and more quickly focused on action rules in the staged track. Except for questions that inquire about the authenticity of the hit man, and his or her experience and credentials, entry is more or less a taken-for-granted feature of the hit man's participation in the staged track. Most of the interaction between the two revolves around strategies of carrying out the killing and negotiating a fee. Most of the priming that occurs is by the undercover agent posing as a hit man. Priming centers on making certain that the solicitor wants the killing done, providing some way for the solicitor to back out of the lethal plot, and arranging for an exchange of money or material possessions. In the staged track, then, priming scripts are most likely to comply with the requisite legal considerations needed to assure prosecution.

Action Rules/Policies: Contracting and Plotting

The transformation from a solicitor's cognitive script to a contract-killing script is complete when the hit man has entered the solicitor's killing script. Once this point has been reached, that is, once the solicitor and the hit man are working within the same script, concerns shift to *contracting*, that is, determining what is in it for the hit man, and *plotting* how the killing will be accomplished. A third question emerges: What is the nature and degree of specificity of contracting and plotting in contracts to kill?

In the intimate track, we have found that both the contract (i.e., the hit man's rewards), and the circumstances of the killing can be carefully articulated and agreed to, or be quite vague as far as specifics are concerned. In examining the contractual nature of killing scripts, we have, as noted

above, employed an implicit-explicit distinction. Beyond our findings that the female solicitors in our study were more likely than the male solicitors to be involved in implicit contracts to kill, and that implicit contracts are more characteristic of solicitors and hit men with closer interpersonal ties, there appear to be few discernible patterns to the degree of contract specificity in the intimate track. About the only persistent features of these negotiations are the methods of payment (money, continued intimacy, payoff of bills, etc.) and the schedule of when payments are to be made (e.g., how much before, after the killing takes place). We are unable to discern any particular order to these script elements or notice any pattern in their duration. Likewise, we can find no evidence that indicates how the rewards (i.e., the costs of having someone killed) are calculated. All of these matters appear to be dependent on the situations and circumstances specific to the particular events. However arrived at, at some point the solicitor and the hit man come to terms about the bone fide contractual nature of their killing relationship and turn to plotting the killing of the target.

The same looseness holds for the plotting of how the killing will be carried out that obtains for contracting. Decisions about weapons, time, location, strategies for making contact with each other, and the interactive process through which these elements unfold do not adhere to any particular pattern. In several of the events we examined, there was noticeable give and take between the solicitor and the hit man on these matters. Also, in some of the events, there was evidence that pressure was applied on the hit man by the solicitor if plans tended to get stalled or took too much time to complete. As with contracting, the degree of specificity and thoroughness of plotting actions and strategies tends to be event specific.

In the staged track the underlying legal requisites of the hit man's participation result in all contracts being explicit. Contract and plotting in this track are far more drawn out than in the intimate track, usually requiring no more than two or three meetings. There is little or no priming done by the solicitor; the contract to kill is forged (as opposed to being formed) quickly and moves to discussions of the staging of the killing circumstances. The contracting and plotting are phony actions because the undercover agent has no intention of carrying out the presumed agreement.

Exiting the Script: Outcomes

The outcome in the intimate track of contract killing is murder or attempted murder. Almost half of the targets of murder-for-hire schemes are killed. In the remaining events, an attempt of murder is made on the target's life. That the killing was a contract killing usually is found out during the investigation that takes place after the homicide has occurred. The intimate track, then, is highly lethal. It goes far beyond the legal crime of solicitation to commit murder.

The outcome in the staged track is police intervention, resulting with the apprehension of the solicitor. This track most clearly resembles the legal crime of solicitation to commit murder and has no direct lethal consequences.

DISCUSSION

A long-range goal of the Murder for Hire Project is to develop an empirical base from which generalizations about murder-for-hire events can be made. From the beginning, we have been

interested in formulating a richly detailed descriptive view of the event-based nature of murder-for-hire crimes. One difficulty has been developing a theoretically meaningful and illuminating conceptual framework within which to organize and order the data. Broad classificatory schemes drawing distinctions along instrumental-expressive dimensions and our own early effort to characterize contract-killing events in terms of their implicit-explicit dimensions have not been sufficiently sensitive to the complexities presented in the events.

Scripts are proving to be one powerful way to organize information in ways that link them to criminological theories emphasizing cultural influences and social learning theories of crimes. Social learning theory clarifies the progression by which people develop expectations and values, scripts, and coercive influence styles (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Tedeschi and Felson suggest the learning history of a person provides information allowing predictions about individual differences in coercive behavior. However, social theory does not offer much information about the situational factors that elicit coercion, with no reference to motives associated with justice and identity. Studying the sequencing of interactions between solicitors and hit men can yield valuable and largely overlooked evidence leading to refinements in social learning and other culture-based theories of homicide. Script theory enables us to draw important distinctions about contract-killing tracks, explore more carefully the dynamics of interaction sequences in the evoking contexts linking participants, and sort through the action rules and policies unique to this type of homicide offending. As we learn more of the scripting of contracts to kill, we can contribute to the broader base of knowledge about the importance of language, cognition, coercion, and interpersonal communication in the cultural production of criminal homicide.

Scripts do present problems for the researcher obtaining data from the kinds of sources we rely on in our project. They are the kinds of problems that plague all event-based homicide research at one time or another. Problems with obtaining evidence abound. Evidence is seldom directly obtained, for one thing. Evidence is often non-existent, for another. And evidence, finally, is in multiple locations. There are also problems of conceptual clarity. It is, for example, difficult to distinguish between coercion and persuasion, and how to classify certain script elements, such as those occurring during the evoking process and at various points in the contracting and plotting of contract killings.

Having demonstrated the utility of script theory as a conceptual basis for examining contract killings, our attention can now be turned to expanding the limited database of our initial explorations to other jurisdictions. Script theory will enable us to focus on more theoretically relevant issues while, at the same time, enriching our descriptive knowledge about this type of homicide.

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ARE THERE TYPES OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE?

Carolyn Rebecca Block, Christine Ovcharchyn Devitt, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 120 S. Riverside Plaza, Chicago, IL 60606

Edmund R. Donoghue, Roy J. Dames, Office of the Medical Examiner, County of Cook
2121 W. Harrison Street, Chicago, IL 60612

Richard L. Block, Department of Sociology, Loyola University
6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626

ABSTRACT

One criticism of the "Instrumental-Expressive" continuum has been that it does not apply to intimate partner homicide. Carolyn Block has recently suggested that the instrumental-expressive continuum would be improved by an added dimension, planned versus spontaneous. In combination, these two dimensions result in four "Ideal Types" of homicide: Planned Instrumental, Spontaneous Instrumental, Planned Expressive, and Spontaneous Expressive. Using the rich dataset collected by the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study (CWHRS), which includes all intimate partner homicides with a woman victim or offender in Chicago in 1995 and 1996, this paper looks at the degree to which the 87 intimate partner homicides fit the two dimensions, expressive-instrumental and planned-spontaneous.

INTRODUCTION

In 1973, R.L. Block and Zimring (1973) suggested that a useful categorization for homicides would differentiate between homicides beginning as "assaults" and homicides beginning as "robberies." They pointed out that homicides that began as an assault are more similar to assaults than they are to homicides that began as a robbery, and that homicides that began as a robbery are more similar to other robberies than they are to homicides that began as an assault. This idea was expanded and further defined by Richard Block and Carolyn Rebecca Block as a continuum between two poles of violence (instrumental and expressive), based on the immediate and primary motive of the offender (C.R. Block & Block, 1991; R.L. Block & Block, 1992). In violent incidents closer to the "instrumental" pole of the continuum, the violence begins as a predatory attack for gain. In violent incidents closer to the "expressive" pole of the continuum, the violence begins as interpersonal confrontation.

More recently, Carolyn Block (1999) has suggested that the continuum describing the offender's motive for the violence should be combined with a second continuum describing the degree to which the offender planned ahead to commit the violence. This "violent design continuum" indicates whether the offender planned either the homicide itself or the violence that led to the homicide, and has two poles, "spontaneous violence" and "planned violence." In violent incidents closer to the "planned" pole of the violent design continuum, the offender had prepared or arranged to commit violence, prior to the violent interaction. For example, the offender might have pursued or tracked down the victim, might have brought a weapon into the interaction, might have arranged for the victim to be unable to escape, or might have organized an alibi for the violence ahead of time.

In contrast, violent incidents closer to the “spontaneous” pole of the violent design continuum begin without the offender preparing to commit violence against the victim.

Violent situations representing the extreme poles of the violent design continuum (planned versus spontaneous) or the motive continuum (expressive versus instrumental) are "ideal types" that seldom occur in their pure form in common experience. Many real situations combine aspects of spontaneous and planned violence, just as many real situations combine aspects of expressive and instrumental violence. The acquisition of money or property may occur as an afterthought in expressive violence, or it may be used as an additional way of hurting the victim. Similarly, hurting the target may be a secondary goal of instrumental violence. When the victim resists, an attempted robbery might escalate to a "character contest" (Luckenbill, 1977) or a "confrontational competition" (Wilson & Daly, 1985).

The combination of the violent motive and the violent design “continuous dichotomies” produces a category system with four poles: Planned Instrumental, Spontaneous Instrumental, Planned Expressive, and Spontaneous Expressive. Most situations are closer to either the Planned Instrumental pole or the Spontaneous Expressive pole. Because people preparing for an act of instrumental violence usually attempt to optimize the chance of acquiring property or money (Cook, 1987, 1976), most instrumental violence is planned. Because many expressive violent acts begin as a fight, brawl or argument that “gets out of hand,” most expressive violence is spontaneous. However, instrumental acts of violence are not all planned, and expressive acts of violence are not all spontaneous. A person in desperate need of money for a fix may impulsively kill and rob someone who happens to be there, has money, and refuses to part with it. A person who stalks, pursues, or tracks down someone could not be said to be acting spontaneously, even though the immediate and primary goal is violence itself (Tjaden, 1997).

Even though “perfect” examples of any of the four types of violence (planned expressive, planned instrumental, spontaneous expressive or spontaneous instrumental) seldom occur in reality, the degree to which an act of violence approaches one of the four poles is fundamentally useful for theory and for practice. Empirical evidence strongly suggests that violent acts that are predominately expressive differ greatly from violent acts that are predominately instrumental, and that violent acts that are predominately planned differ greatly from violent acts that are predominately spontaneous. These four types, describing fundamentally different natures of violence motivation, follow different patterns over time, show different spatial patterns on a map, and differ from each other in individual and situational characteristics (C.R. Block, 1987). Because they are fundamentally different, prevention or intervention programs that are successful for one type may not work for another.

Therefore, it would be useful for both theory and for practice to clarify the conceptual and operational definitions of the two continuous dichotomies. What makes expressive violence different from instrumental violence in theory, and how can these poles be measured in practice? What makes planned violence different from spontaneous violence in theory, and how can these poles be measured in practice? In this paper, we attempt to do that, using fatal intimate partner homicide cases from the Chicago Women’s Health Risk Study (CWHRS) as examples (C.R. Block, 2000; C.R. Block, Engel, Naureckas, & Riordan, 1999a, 1999b; C.R. Block, McFarlane, Walker, & Devitt, 1999). The 87 intimate homicides in the CWHRS dataset provide a useful testing ground to examine

the expressive-instrumental and planned-spontaneous continua for several reasons. First, they represent a set of cases that are among the most difficult to categorize. Though intimate partner homicides are commonly considered to be unidimensional, contrary to this stereotype, we found that the CWHRS homicides were not all Spontaneous Expressive. Second, CWHRS is a rich data source, with great depth of information available on a fairly large number of cases.

The goal of the CWHRS was to identify factors indicating significant danger of life-threatening injury or death in situations in which an intimate partner is physically abusing a woman. The study compared longitudinal data on abused women with similar data on women who had been killed by or who killed their intimate partners. The homicide sample included all of the 87 intimate partner homicides with a woman victim or offender age 18 or older, that occurred in Chicago in 1995 or 1996. There were 57 homicides with a woman victim and a man offender, 28 with a man victim and a woman offender, and two with a woman victim and offender. We conducted detailed, face-to-face "proxy" interviews with friends, family, or others who knew about the relationship, and with the woman offender herself, using questionnaires that were the same as the questionnaires used with the clinic/hospital women (to the extent possible). In addition, we gathered information from the Chicago Homicide Dataset, Medical Examiner's Office records, court records, newspapers, and other sources.

In the following sections of this paper, we first define elements of the offender's motive continuum (expressive-instrumental), and then elements of the offender's design continuum (planned-spontaneous,) using offender motive and design information from the CWHRS homicides as examples. We then combine the two continuous dichotomies to form a four-fold table of ideal types, and present concrete examples from the CWHRS of each of the four. Finally, we summarize our findings to answer the question, "Are there types of intimate partner homicide?"

THE CONTINUUM OF EXPRESSIVE VERSUS INSTRUMENTAL VIOLENCE

Whether the outcome is lethal or not, expressive violence begins as an interpersonal confrontation, whereas instrumental violence begins as a predatory attack. In an expressive violent confrontation, violence or injury is the assailant's immediate and primary goal; other motives are secondary. The primary purpose of an act of instrumental violence is not to hurt the other person, but to gain something else from the violence, such as money or property. This distinction is similar to Berkowitz's (1993, 1962) "emotional aggression" versus "instrumental aggression." Though aggression in general is "a deliberate attempt to do serious physical injury" (Berkowitz, 1993, p. 11), in emotional aggression, the person is "unpleasantly aroused" and follows an "impulse to strike out" at another person without believing that there will be profit from the assault (Berkowitz, 1993, pp. 11-12). "The primary aim is the victim's injury or death" (Berkowitz, 1993, p. 22). This type of aggression also has been called "hostile" (Feshbach, 1964), "affective," or "angry." Richard Block's (1977) original designation was "impulsive violence." Berkowitz (1993, p. 22) defines instrumental aggression as "primarily an effort to achieve an objective other than the target's harm or destruction."

The characteristic of the offender's motive that most strongly defines it as expressive as opposed to instrumental is emotional investment in the violence. Offenders in expressive violence are often angry, upset, and have a desire to hurt their victims, though for some offenders, the

emotional “charge” is depression (for example, offenders who commit suicide, many offenders in infanticide). Some expressive homicides are characterized by extreme rage. Instrumental violence, in contrast, tends to be cooler, less emotional, and more calculated. Typically, the instrumental assailant demands “your money or your life!” and applies only the degree of violence necessary to get the goods.

The distinction between the offender’s expressive versus instrumental motive is also similar to Cooney and Phillips’s (1999) use of “moralistic” versus “predatory,” based on Donald Black’s (1998) theories. However, the emphasis on “conflict” in Cooney and Phillips’s definition of moralistic violence implies a violent interaction between victim and offender. While it is true that most acts of expressive violence do involve fights or brawls in which both parties participate, in a substantial minority the victim does not participate in any way (except, perhaps, to stubbornly continue to exist). For example, Luckinbill (1977), trying to describe all violence as a “transaction” between victim and offender, includes an example of a crying baby who is murdered to stop the crying. Luckinbill’s violent transactions, like moralistic “conflict,” risk blaming the victim. In contrast, the definition of expressive violence avoids this problem by focusing on the motive of the offender, not the participation of the victim.

Many acts of expressive violence begin as an argument in which both parties, and often bystanders as well, participate (R.L. Block, 1976, 1977; Skogan & Block, 1983). At the outset, it may be difficult to distinguish between the person who will later become the victim and the person who will become the offender. In other acts of expressive violence, like Luckinbill’s murdered baby or a person killed by a stalker, the victim does not participate in a violent interaction. Instead, the offender sets out to hurt the victim. In coding the Chicago Homicide Dataset (C.R. Block & Block, 1993), we distinguish (where possible) between two kinds of expressive violence: “fight or brawl,” in which the incident that led to the homicide involved mutual violence between the eventual homicide victim and offender, and “expressive violence to harm,” in which the incident did not involve violence until the offender instigated lethal or life-threatening violence against the victim.

Instrumental violence can also involve violent victim-offender interaction, but the interaction is calculated to achieve an end outside of the violence itself. If a robber’s threat of violence achieves the goal, the threat may never escalate to an actual attack (R.L. Block & Skogan, 1986). If the victim resists with force or threat, however, the assailant may initiate an attack that results in serious injury or death (Zimring & Zuehl, 1986).

In summary, the offender’s primary motive in expressive violence, whether the violence becomes lethal or not, is to physically harm another person. Expressive violence is often characterized by high emotional affect, often by extreme anger or rage. The offender’s primary motive in instrumental violence, lethal or not, is not to harm the target of the violence, but to gain something else, usually money or property. Instrumental violence is often characterized by a cool, deliberate affect, with a focus on obtaining a predatory goal.

The remainder of this section contains additional detail about the Expressive-Instrumental continuum, first the conceptual definition and then the operational definition. We first outline and discuss three conceptual issues, the role of “goals” in expressive versus instrumental violence, the

relationship between “relationship” and expressive-instrumental motive, and whether the determination of expressive versus instrumental homicide should always be based on the homicide offender’s motive. Second, we present three basic elements that can be used in practice to distinguish between expressive and instrumental violence in practical situations, and provide examples from the CWHRS to illustrate each element.

Definition Issues related to the Expressive-Instrumental Continuum

The theoretical concept of expressive versus instrumental offender motive has been plagued by confusion, most of it stemming from language and definitions. In this section, we try to clarify three of these issues. Social scientists coming from the perspective of different disciplines have learned to use the words “expressive” and “instrumental” in somewhat different ways than the meaning inherent in the expressive-instrumental continuum. In addition, it is common in expressive violence for there to be a history of similar violence against the same person, while the target of instrumental violence could be anyone who is vulnerable and possesses the object the offender wants. Because of this, there is a correlation between expressive or instrumental offender’s motive and the relationship between the victim and the offender. However, relationship is not motive. Finally, if the crux for defining the expressive-instrumental continuum is the primary and immediate motive of the offender, by definition not the victim, how does that concept correspond with homicides precipitated by the victim?

The Goals of Expressive and Instrumental Violence

The offender’s goals in expressive versus instrumental violence are a persistent source of confusion to social scientists. Some violence researchers, defining “instrumental” broadly as behavior to gain any objective, consider almost every act of violence to be instrumental. Even when an offender commits an act of violence to accomplish emotional or expressive goals such as saving face, maintaining one’s identity, or enhancing self-esteem, some (for example, Tedeschi & Felson, 1994; Luckenbill, 1977; Katz, 1988) would view the motive as “instrumental.” According to Berkowitz (1993, p. 429), they “look for a hidden purpose behind all aggressive behavior because they want to believe that humans are rational much of the time.” If we look hard enough, it would probably be possible to find some purpose, hidden or not, for every act of violence. Since this broad definition of instrumental violence includes virtually all acts of violence, it is not useful for theory or for practical application. That is not to say, however, that expressive violence has no goal or purpose. It does. The primary and immediate goal is to physically hurt the other person. As Berkowitz (1983, p. 179) argues: “Angry persons frequently strike out in rage without much thought (beyond some vague idea that they want to hurt). Theories that pay little attention to the role of emotions, particularly in aggression, rob humans of their full complexity.”

Other goals may exist as well in expressive violence, but they are secondary. Usually, the secondary goals are tied closely to the desire to hurt. For example, an offender may have internalized societal norms rewarding aggression, but even while living up to cultural expectations of aggressive behavior, the offender’s primary motive is still hurting the victim. An assailant who claims to love the victim may be enraged at the victim’s perceived denial of that love, or at the victim’s refusal to obey the assailant’s demands (R.E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). A parent may beat a “defiant” child,

and a husband may beat a “defiant” wife, supported in the knowledge that they have a moral obligation to do so (Wilson & Daly, 1993). In all of these situations, however, whatever the underlying reason for the rage, hurting the victim is still the uppermost thing in the offender’s mind at the time of the violence.

Cooney and Phillips (1999, p. 8) argue that Black’s “moralistic” violence is a form of social control based on conflict, “an attempt to get even, strike back, or react to behavior which the assailant finds offensive.” Some would say that violence done to achieve this kind of control is instrumental. However, we would consider such violence to be instrumental only if it were conducted in a cool and calculated way, and hurting the victim was not the immediate and primary motive.

Offenders who commit repeated acts of violence or threats of violence against their child, intimate partner, or a smaller kid at school may stand to gain something from this violence--a docile, dependent victim. If the offender’s primary goal was to obtain money or property, some of these cases would be considered instrumental, such as the extortion of lunch money from the kid at school, forcing a relative to sign over an inheritance, or forcing a woman to join the offender’s stable of prostitutes or sell drugs for the offender. However, when the offender’s emotional outbursts govern the act of violence, and any expectation of gain is secondary, the motive is closer to the expressive pole of the continuum.

Relationship and the Continuum of Expressive-Instrumental Violence

The offender’s target in expressive violence is more likely to be a family member or friend than a stranger, while the offender’s target in instrumental violence is more likely to be a stranger than a family member or friend. However, this is not always true (for examples and discussion, see C.R. Block, 1987). An offender may commit an act of expressive violence against a stranger briefly encountered on the street or at a bar, for example, if the offender perceives disrespect from the victim. Alternatively, an offender may commit robbery against a family member or friend, and the robbery may escalate into instrumental homicide. Even given an intimate partner relationship, instrumental violence can and does occur. Thus, even though the degree of intimacy in the relationship is associated with expressive versus instrumental violence, the association is not perfect. The two are separate characteristics, and relationship does not define offender’s motive. We have argued, in fact, that offender’s motive is the more fundamental characteristic (C.R. Block, 1987).

Cooney and Phillips (1999, pp. 4-5) point out a major weakness of relational approaches to violence categorization: relational categories are often used as proxies for motivation categories. In addition, the accuracy of relational data is suspect (Loftin, Kindley, Norris, & Wiersema, 1987), particularly with intimate partner violence (Langford, Isaac, & Kabat, 1998). The commonly-used marital status and living arrangement categories did not accurately represent the relationships of women in the CWHRS (C.R. Block, 2000). For example, the CWHRS sample included many women, about a quarter of the non-lethal sample, who were experiencing violence at the hands of an intimate partner, but who were not “married to” and had never “co-resided with” that partner. Thus, although many would categorize intimate partner homicides by the couple’s “relational distance” (married, commonlaw, boyfriend/girlfriend), or by their living arrangements (cohabitation,

separation), we have found that, for the CWHRS homicides, these categorizations were not meaningful. Instead, the offender's motive and the offender's design, taken together, were more useful in categorizing CWHRS homicides.

Relationship does not define motive. Nonetheless, the offender's target in acts of expressive violence is usually a specific person, though an offender may sometimes "displace" aggression (Fitz, 1976) or direct violence against a "surrogate" person (Wallace, 1986, pp. 140-141). In contrast, the target of instrumental violence is likely to be anyone who meets a set of conditions, such as possessing something the offender wants, being available and vulnerable, and lack of surveillance or protection. Though Cooney and Phillips (1999, p. 9) argue that the target of "predatory" violence is "random," random is a poor choice of words. A more accurate term is "not specific." The target of instrumental violence usually is not a specific person, but one of a class of people, any of whom could meet the offender's predatory goals. In some cases, however, the most available person meeting these conditions is an intimate partner or other relative.

One reason for the correlation between relationship and motive is that the rage characterizing the offender's motive in many acts of expressive violence may have built up over a number of previous incidents spanning a period of time. Similar incidents may have occurred between the same participants numerous times in the past, and the history of these events is a silent partner in the current incident. This sort of history is more likely to happen with a victim who is known to the offender. In contrast, instrumental violence does not usually involve a history of confrontation between the same participants, though a particular occupation, place of residence, type of possession, or pattern of daily activities may expose the same victim to being chosen repeatedly for instrumental violence by a variety of offenders (R.L. Block, Felson, & Block, 1985).

Empirical Elements of Expressive Violence and Instrumental Violence

How does the theoretical definition of the expressive-instrumental continuum translate into practice? In the real world, how can we distinguish between an act of violence in which the motive is predominately expressive and an act of violence in which the motive is predominately instrumental? Several key elements of the violent incident help differentiate between the offender's expressive or instrumental "immediate and primary" motive (Table 1). None of these elements is a "necessary" condition for defining an incident as expressive or instrumental. However, where the evidence indicates that the incident does include one or more of the elements in Table 1, a diagnosis can be made of whether the homicide is closer to the expressive or the instrumental extreme.

Table 1
ELEMENTS OF EXPRESSIVE VERSUS INSTRUMENTAL VIOLENCE

Element	Indicative of Expressive	Indicative of Instrumental
What was the immediate and primary motive of violence?	Violence itself	Means to another end (e.g.: obtaining money, eliminating a witness)
Did the offender or instigator stand to gain by the violence?	Nothing material to be gained.	Some material object to be gained.
Evidence of extreme anger or rage?	Self-reinforcing violence, extreme cruelty, multiple wounds or weapons, rape, attacks after death.	“Professional” killing (e.g.: one shot to the back of the head)

What was the immediate and primary motive of the violence? If there is evidence that the immediate and primary motive of the offender was to profit by the lethal or non-lethal violence against the victim, for example to acquire money or property, then the violence motive should be coded instrumental. In one of the “instrumental” CWHRS cases, the victim’s sister gave him money and food for the household. The victim gave the food to his intimate partner (the offender), but she wanted the money. When she started hitting him, he retreated to the back porch, but she followed him there with a knife and stabbed him. In another example, when the victim refused to get crack for the offender, the offender stabbed and robbed the victim, went to buy drugs with the money, returned to the apartment, and then called an ambulance.

In another type of instrumental motive, the offender wants to eliminate a potential witness (see Felson & Messner, 1996). In one of the CWHRS instrumental cases, the offender’s girlfriend was a witness to a previous homicide that the offender had committed. Although the woman was under a court protection system as a witness, the offender pursued her, found her on the street, pushed her into an alley, and shot her in the back of the head.

In contrast, when the goal of the offender’s violence is to hurt the victim, violence itself, the homicide should be coded expressive. In one CWHRS case, for example, the victim tried to tell her boyfriend to leave, to “put him out for good,” but he refused, shot her in the head, had sex with the corpse, and then killed himself. There were numerous cases in the CWHRS (one-fourth of the homicides where a man killed a woman) in which one partner was in the act of trying to leave or end the relationship during or just before the interaction that led to the death (C.R. Block, 2000). Many were characterized by a level of violence indicating extreme rage. Even if the offender had a secondary goal such as keeping the victim from leaving, the homicide was coded expressive when the immediate and primary goal of the offender was hurting the victim.

Did the offender stand to gain by the violence? Money, like sex, is a very common source of conflict. However, not every argument over money robbery, just as not every argument over sex is rape. Similarly, an argument may ensue when two friends or acquaintances lend money or property

to each other and the lender demands repayment, or when one person accuses another of taking money or property without permission. Such cases of fights over “alleged theft” are often difficult to distinguish from robbery violence.

Asking, “*Did the offender stand to gain by the violence?*” can help to decide whether the motive was an expressive “fight over money” or instrumental violence to gain money. In situations in which money was involved but the motive of robbery or theft is unclear, we have found the following rule of thumb to be useful. If the offender stood to gain from the violence (even if the offender never actually realized the gain), then the motive was probably closer to the instrumental end of the continuum. However, if the offender was angry about money or the victim’s perceived misuse of money or property, then the motive was probably closer to the expressive end of the continuum. Thus, if the offender knew that the money was gone already at the time of the violence, or if the drugs had already been used, then the violence was probably expressive.

Examples from the CWHRS illustrate this rule of thumb. In a homicide we coded “expressive violence over money,” the offender wanted money for drugs. The offender was a heavy drug user, and had been taking money and property from the victim for some time. One day, the victim had gone to the bank but had left her check book and money orders at her mother’s house, so did not have any money. The offender became furious and strangled her to death. In another case coded expressive, the offender noticed that money was missing from his wallet, became angry and beat the victim to death with a snow shovel.

In a homicide we coded instrumental, the instigator of the violence, who became the homicide victim, tried to take a gun from the pocket of her boyfriend in order to sell the gun for money to buy drugs.¹ The gun was not usually loaded, but that day it was, and it went off, killing her. In another case coded instrumental, the homicide victim refused to buy the offender some crack. The offender stabbed the victim, robbed him, went to buy drugs, and called an ambulance after she got back to the apartment.

Was there evidence of extreme rage? Perhaps the single most important indicator that the offender’s immediate and primary motive was expressive is the degree of rage shown by the offender. One indicator of extreme rage in homicide is that the offender used more violence than necessary to kill the victim. This is called “overkill.” The research on “overkill” indicates that it occurs more frequently when men kill women, and specifically in intimate partner homicides (Brown, Williams, & Dutton, 1999). Although we did not have complete forensic data on the

¹Our criteria for using the motive of the person who “instigated the lethal violence” instead of the motive of the homicide offender to define expressive versus instrumental motive are rather strict and limited to only a few cases. First, expressive violence coded as “expressive--fight or brawl” does not qualify, only violence coded as “instrumental or expressive--to harm.” Second, the instigator (eventual homicide victim) must not only “strike the first blow,” but must use potentially lethal violence. Third, in any ambiguous case, the assumption should be to code the motive of the homicide offender, not the homicide victim.

CWHRS homicides, it was apparent that many cases did involve overkill. One offender tracked a woman to her “safe place,” convinced the woman’s cousin to let him in, and waited until the woman returned. He then shot her twelve times before shooting himself. In another case, a woman had asked her husband for a divorce. He beat her with a hammer, strangled her until she passed out, then got a cord and strangled her again to ensure death. The children were there at the time. In addition to the use of multiple weapons or multiple means of killing, enraged offenders may hurt or torture the victim in other ways, for example, attacking their children. In addition, many of the CWHRS offenders raped the victims before killing them, and two had intercourse with the victims after they were dead.

As a general rule, when a CWHRS case involved both extreme violence and a possible instrumental motive, we tended to favor coding the case “expressive.” In one case, for example, a former boyfriend forced his way into a woman’s safe place by threatening her roommate, then beat and raped her when she returned, threatened to kill the roommate, and was starting to sexually assault her two-year-old when she stabbed him. He had arrived with his belongings, saying that he was going to move in because his mother had kicked him out. Obtaining a place to live is a material goal, and his former girlfriend, in asking him to leave the premises, was thwarting his attainment of that goal (though it is unclear whether he actually stood to gain that goal by the violence). However, the degree of violence, which was very severe, continued over several hours, and was directed against several persons, indicates that his predominant motive was expressive.

Another CWHRS case involved both expressive and instrumental motives, but the case was coded instrumental, partly because the violence was cool and calculated, with no evidence of extreme rage or overkill. In this case, mentioned above, a man killed a former girlfriend who was under police protection as a witness against him in a murder. He pushed his ex-girlfriend into an alley to kill her. The “professional” type of killing, a shot to the back of the head, was strongly indicative of an instrumental motive. An acquaintance who saw the offender leaving the alley, said that he had commented that his girlfriend had disrespected him. However, the calculated manner of killing, along with the fact that the girlfriend was a witness against him in another case, indicate that the motive was closer to the instrumental pole of the continuum, despite the statement about disrespect.

Aside from “overkill” or extreme cruelty or torture, another indication of the offender’s anger or rage is self-reinforcing violence. Berkowitz (1990, 1986, 1983, p. 177) defines this as “rapid escalation of violence that sometimes occurs when an angry person starts hitting,” and calls it, “impulsive violence.” This commonly happens in a fight or brawl that escalates to more serious violence and eventually to lethal violence. The initial acts of violence may lower the participants resistance to using violence, and the sight and sounds of aggression may stimulate their continued and heightened aggression. Most cases that are clearly a fight or brawl in which both parties participate, with perhaps some additional persons supporting the antagonists, are clear examples of self-reinforcing violence. Therefore, they should be coded expressive.

THE CONTINUUM OF PLANNED VERSUS SPONTANEOUS VIOLENCE

The violent design continuum is based on the degree to which the homicide offender (or the

instigator of the violence) planned, prepared for, orchestrated or arranged the lethal or non-lethal violence. Like the offender motive continuum, the violent design continuum is based upon the perspective of the homicide offender (or the instigating partner in the few extreme cases meeting those criteria). While the offender motive continuum describes the primary and immediate goal of the offender, the violent design continuum describes the degree to which the offender planned ahead to reach that goal. For instrumental violence, the issue is whether or not the offender planned, prepared, or arranged to commit violence as a means to another end. For expressive violence, the issue is whether or not the offender planned, prepared, or arranged to commit violence to hurt the other person.

It is important to distinguish between violence that the offender has planned and violence that the offender expects to happen (C.R. Block & Block, 1991, pp. 46-48). People who have experienced or been exposed to many acts of violence in a given situation may come to expect violence when they are in that situation. They are not surprised when it happens. A woman who has experienced repeated violence at the hands of her intimate partner, or a young person who experiences repeated violent threats from strangers while walking to the mass-transit stop in the morning, may have a fairly accurate idea of their statistical chances of being attacked on a given day. However, coming to expect violence is not the same thing as planning to commit violence.

In violent incidents closer to the “planned” pole of the violent design continuum, the offender had prepared or arranged to commit violence, prior to the violent interaction. For example, the offender might have pursued or tracked down the victim, might have brought a weapon into the interaction, might have arranged for the victim to be unable to escape, or might have organized an alibi ahead of time. Whether the violence turned out to be fatal or not is not at issue. The important consideration is whether the offender planned either the homicide itself or the violence that led to the homicide.

Circumstances Surrounding Planned versus Spontaneous Violence

Not all violence is planned; not all homicide is planned. Violent confrontations that become lethal can begin without any prior intention of serious violence on the part of the offender. Although the assailant may intend to kill at the moment of the event, and even have considered it consciously at some previous time, in a homicide closer to the “spontaneous” pole of the offender’s violent design, neither the actual murder nor the violence that preceded the murder was planned or arranged in advance. Expressive homicides that begin as a fight or brawl are usually spontaneous, escalating to a fatal outcome. However, an offender may commit an instrumental homicide on the “spur of the moment,” when presented with an enticing opportunity or a situation of desperate need for drugs or money, for example.

Patterns of escalation are more purposive in planned violence than in spontaneous violence. In spontaneous violence, the time of the incident, the place, the choice of weapon (if any), and even the participants tend to be those that happen to be present in the situation. In planned violence, these things are more likely to have been chosen or arranged by the offender. In planned instrumental violence, for example, the target is likely to be someone who can provide the goods being sought, and who is available and vulnerable. In planned expressive violence, the target tends to be a specific

person or class of persons against whom the offender feels intense anger or hate. (“Random” killings of a member of a hated group are often planned expressive homicides.) Other aspects of the violent act, such as the weapon, the time and the place, tend to be chosen rationally according to the offender’s perception of their utility for achieving the instrumental or expressive goal, their availability, and the costs involved.

Empirical Elements of Planned Violence and Spontaneous Violence

How does the theoretical definition of the offender’s violent design translate into practice? In the real world, how can we distinguish between an act of violence that was predominately planned and an act of violence that was predominately spontaneous? Cooney and Phillips (1999, p. 10), who refer to the offender’s planned violent design as “calculation,” point out that whether or not the violence is calculated is “a behavioral, not a subjective, matter.” In this section, we outline some of the behaviors that, when present, would indicate that the offender had planned the fatal violence or planned the violence that led to the death. Several elements of the offender’s behavior before, during, or after the violence are clues to whether the offender planned the violence or not (Table 2). None of these elements is a necessary condition for determining that the violence was closer to the planned or the spontaneous pole of the violent design continuum, but where the evidence indicates that one or more of these elements were present, a “diagnosis.”¹

Table 2
ELEMENTS OF PLANNED VERSUS SPONTANEOUS VIOLENCE

Element	Indicative of Planned Violence	Indicative of Spontaneous Violence
Did the offender or instigator try to bring about the fatal meeting?	Pursued, stalked or tracked the target.	No special attempt to meet with the target.
Did the offender or instigator invade the target’s safe place?	Forced self into target’s private place.	No indication of invasion.
Prior attempt to “stage” the violence?	Prior to violent inter-action, offender/instigator set up an alibi.	No indication of prior concern about possible criminal penalty.
Did the offender/instigator bring a weapon to the fatal meeting?	Introduced a weapon to the situation.	Used a weapon that happened to be in the situation.

Did the offender try to bring about or engineer the fatal meeting? Planning is indicated when

¹The offender planned the violence against the target. If the offender wrote a suicide note before the homicide, that would indicate that the homicide was planned. If, however, the suicide note was written after the homicide, the note would not be an indicator of planning.

a violent offender seeks out a victim, either an instrumental target or the specific person the offender wants to harm. The offender may stalk, pursue, or track down the intended victim, may arrange an encounter, or may entice the victim or transport the victim somewhere and then make escape from that place impossible. For example, in a CWHRs case, a man hid the keys to the deadbolt locks of his apartment, after his girlfriend had entered the apartment and before he attacked her with a box cutter. In another case, the offender and victim worked for the same company, and had a short intimate relationship that had recently ended. The offender did not show up for work on Thursday or Friday, then came in on Monday, grabbed his former girlfriend, took her into a vacant office, and shot her.

Did the offender invade the victim's safe place? When the offender does not have any right to be in the victim's place, but uses force or intimidation to enter that place, perhaps violating a protection order to do so, the violence is closer to the planned pole of the violent design continuum. For example, one woman hid indoors from her violent ex-boyfriend for some days, but one afternoon ran out to empty the kitty litter into the garbage. The instigator (who eventually became the homicide victim) had been waiting, grabbed her, took her in the house, and then beat and raped her for hours.

Did the offender attempt to "stage" the violence? If the violent offender arranged ahead of time to hide the assault or homicide, or to make it appear to be something else, such as an accident, self-defense, or a mercy killing, planning is indicated. In spontaneous violence, the offender may make some effort to avoid a criminal justice penalty, but not until after the incident is over. In one of the CWHRs murders, the offender killed his wife, claiming that it was a mercy killing. The wife did have a chronic illness, but the illness was not painful nor the condition permanent, and her doctor testified that she had not been suicidal. In the case of the former boyfriend who pushed his ex-girlfriend into an alley and shot her, the offender may have been trying to make the homicide appear to be robbery by a stranger.

Did the offender bring a weapon to the violent interaction? It indicates prior planning when the offender introduces a weapon that would not have been in the situation otherwise. The offender may go to get a weapon, bring a weapon to the scene, or otherwise make a special effort to ensure that there is a lethal weapon available for use in the violence. When the offender uses whatever comes to hand or is available in the situation, the violence is more likely to have been spontaneous. For example, a husband was infuriated with his wife because she had not bailed him out of jail. When someone else bailed him out, he first borrowed a gun from a friend, then returned home and shot his wife in the back, killing her. This case was coded "planned" because of the weapon use element, even though the offender had not tracked down the victim or invaded her safe place. (The husband had a right to be in his own home, and the wife had not asked him to leave or gotten an order of protection.) However, the offender's behavior in obtaining the gun indicates that he planned the violent encounter, if not the murder.

In an example of a homicide coded spontaneous largely because of the weapon, a man became angry when his former girlfriend took money from his wallet while he slept. The ex-girlfriend, who was homeless, was sleeping in her usual spot in the park with a group of others when he encountered her. A confrontation ensued, during which the offender grabbed a cane belonging to one of the other persons, and hit her with it. She died two weeks later of causes related

to the injury.

ARE THERE TYPES OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE?

Although “the empirical world is messy and perverse,” Polk (1991, p. 19) argues that any theoretical examination of violence must be rooted in empirical evidence. Too often, according to Polk, researchers approach the problem of homicide deductively, establish an idealized conception of “typical” homicide, and assemble the empirical facts in light of their theoretical ideal types. Instead, patterns should emerge from the examination of homicide events. In the Chicago Homicide Project, we have tried to do just that. The expressive-instrumental continuum was developed to reflect the varying nature of the homicides in the Chicago Homicide Dataset, and to provide a useful foundation for the development of prevention, intervention, and public policy approaches to reducing levels of homicide. However, nagged by persistent reminders that expressive violence is sometimes planned and that instrumental violence is sometimes spontaneous, and confronted by the more detailed information now available from the CWHRS, we came to realize that the empirical reality necessitates expanding the basic types of violence from two to four. When we had done this, using the rules of thumb described above, the 87 CWHRS intimate partner homicides fell into the four categories as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
THE COMBINED CONTINUOUS DICHOTOMIES, CWHRS HOMICIDES

Expressive -Instrumental Continuum	Planned -Spontaneous Continuum			Total
	Planned	Spontaneous	No design information	
Instrumental	2	5	0	7
Expressive	17	57	1	75
No motive information*	1	1	3	5
Total	20	63	4	87

*Includes cases in which neither the official records nor the interviews provided any information, or insufficient information, to code motive or planning.

The patterns typical of the CWHRS intimate partner homicides are probably not typical of homicides as a whole, or of any other selected group, such as robbery homicides or homicides with a young male offender. However, though many homicide researchers tend to assume that all intimate partner homicides are spontaneous and expressive, at least some CWHRS homicides fall into each of the four categories, not only Spontaneous Expressive, but also Spontaneous Instrumental, Planned Expressive, and even Planned Instrumental. While only seven of the 82 cases with information were instrumental (8.5%), this was a substantial proportion, considering the “common knowledge” that no intimate partner violence is instrumental. Thus, not even intimate partner homicides are one monolithic type.

The two homicides coded Planned Instrumental include the case in which the instigator (eventual homicide victim) was trying to force his former girlfriend to be a prostitute for him, stalked her, grabbed her, and held her hostage for hours, and the killing of the woman who was a witness against the offender in another murder. The five cases coded Spontaneous Instrumental include three discussed above, one in which the instigating partner took a gun out of her boyfriend's pocket, intending to sell it for drugs, one in which the offender killed her partner and robbed him to get money for drugs, and one in which the offender wanted money that the victim's sister had given him (the victim). The two additional homicides included one in which the victim caught the offender in the act of taking money from her (the victim's) purse, and the offender stabbed her to death, and a second in which the proxy respondent believes that the offender's motive had been to rob his girlfriend and there was evidence that she had been robbed.

The category closest to the conventional image of intimate partner homicide, Spontaneous Expressive, accounted for 57 of the 82 (69.5%) with information--the majority but certainly not all of them. By definition, the primary and immediate motive was to hurt the victim, and there was no evidence of prior planning to commit the violence. Half of the 57 (29) began as a fight or brawl and 28 began with the offender's attack to harm the victim (in two of the 28, the eventual homicide victim instigated the lethal violence). In a typical Spontaneous Expressive homicide, the victim and offender had gone to a concert, had been drinking and smoking cocaine all evening, and had been arguing for hours. The police were called, came, left, and the argument started again. After some time, the victim demanded sex, the offender refused, left to get a knife from the kitchen, returned to the bedroom, and stabbed the victim to death. In a second case, the victim and offender were arguing when the offender picked up a carving knife and told the victim that he would kill her if she called him another name. She called him a bitch and he stabbed her in the chest. In another case, the victim and offender had been drinking all day, when the victim accused the offender of having an affair with a neighbor and being homosexual. The offender then suffocated the victim with a pillow. In another example, the offender stabbed his girl-friend to death because she had decided not to divorce her husband, then committed suicide by cutting his wrists and putting his head in the oven. Though we cannot describe each of the 57 cases here, these are representative.

Planned Expressive homicides accounted for 17 (21%) of CWHRS homicide cases. None of these began as a fight or brawl, and in 3 of the 17 the eventual victim was the instigator of lethal violence. All 3 have been discussed above: one in which the eventual victim forced his way into the offender's apartment and attacked her, her roommate, and her young child; one in which the eventual victim forced his way into the home, violating a restraining order, and attacked the eventual offender; and one in which the eventual victim had hidden the key to the door before he threatened the offender with a box cutter. A typical example from the other 14 Planned Expressive homicides included a case in which the victim, who was six months pregnant, had left the offender 15 days previously because he had severely beaten her. The offender wrote a suicide note to his family, then went to the place where the victim was staying, convinced the victim's sister to let him enter, and shot her and then himself. Another victim had an order of protection against the offender. The offender found a letter to the victim from another man, went to her place, strangled her, and sexually assaulted her. In a third example, the offender was the former boyfriend of the victim. After telling a friend that if he could not have her, nobody could, he forced his way into a car where the woman was sitting with her new boyfriend, and shot them both in the back of the head.

We expected that intimate partner homicides falling into the four different cells of Table 3 would differ in their characteristics, and that expectation was confirmed. Some of the differences among homicides across the four categories provide evidence of the construct validity of the expressive-instrumental and planned-spontaneous dichotomies. For example, one of the elements suggesting that the homicide was planned was that the offender had invaded the woman's safe place. In the CWHRS, there was no difference between expressive and instrumental homicides in the percent in which the man was invading the woman's safe place, but there was a strong relationship (Chi square $p < .0001$; Gamma = .893, $p < .0001$) with planned versus spontaneous homicides. Of the 20 planned homicides, the man was invading the woman's safe place in 55%, compared to 6% of the 62 spontaneous homicides.

Similarly, we would expect that extreme jealousy would be more likely to be a factor in expressive than in instrumental homicide incidents, but that it would not be related to whether or not the homicide was planned. This was the case. The planned and spontaneous homicides did not differ in the percent in which jealousy was a factor in the fatal incident. However, jealousy was a factor in 37% of the 73 expressive incidents, but in none of the seven instrumental incidents (Chi square = .048; Gamma = 1.000, $p = .006$).

The murder weapon in the 20 planned homicides was significantly (Chi square $p = .026$; Gamma = .524, $p = .042$) more likely to be a firearm (50%) than in the 63 spontaneous homicides (24%). However, the difference between the 7 instrumental homicides (43%) and the 75 expressive homicides (29%) was not statistically significant. On the other hand, whether either of the partners was high or drunk during the incident was not significantly related to either continuum dichotomy.

There is evidence in the CWHRS data that the two dichotomies function independently of each other, and that the combination of the two is important (the four ideal types). For example, in 26 of the 78 CWHRS cases for which we have information (33%), an immediate precipitating factor of the homicide was that the woman was trying to leave or end the relationship. This was not significantly different for expressive versus instrumental homicides, but there was a large and significant (Chi square $p = .001$; Gamma = .698, $p = .003$) difference for planned (63% of 19) versus spontaneous (23% of 60) homicides. Looking at the combination, however, 69% of the 16 Planned Expressive homicides involved the woman leaving or trying to end the relationship during or just before the fatal incident, compared to only 24% of the 54 spontaneous expressive homicides.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence strongly suggests that expressive and instrumental violent confrontations, and planned and spontaneous violent confrontations, follow distinctive patterns. They vary differently over time and across space, and relate differently to the descriptive and explanatory variables usually found in studies of violence. We would expect that, taken in combination, homicides closer to each of the four poles of the expressive-instrumental and planned-spontaneous dichotomies would respond differently, perhaps in opposite directions, to changes in the social fabric. This initial analysis of homicide data from the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study indicates that intimate partner violence is no exception.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, intimate partner homicides are not a monolithic category. This has implications for the development of successful intervention and prevention strategies, as well as useful theoretical models. If the characteristics of intimate partner homicides that are predominately characterized by different offender motives and different offender violent design types differ, it would not be surprising that research studies that do not recognize this might fail to find significant explanatory patterns, or find conflicting patterns from study to study. We would expect the relative preponderance of the four types of intimate partner violence to vary across geographic areas, across time for the same area, and across vulnerable populations. Therefore, statistical anomalies in violence research may well be the result of comparing a sample, area, or time period that is high in instrumental violence to another that is not. By modeling instead the specific relationship between causal variables and each type of intimate partner violence, our explanatory success will be improved.

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ATTEMPTED HOMICIDE VICTIM AND PROXY REPORTS OF INTIMATE-PARTNER HOMICIDE RISK FACTORS: DO THEY AGREE?

Jane Koziol-McLain, Daniel Webster, Jacquelyn Campbell
Johns Hopkins University, 525 N. Wolf Street, Baltimore, MD 21205

ABSTRACT

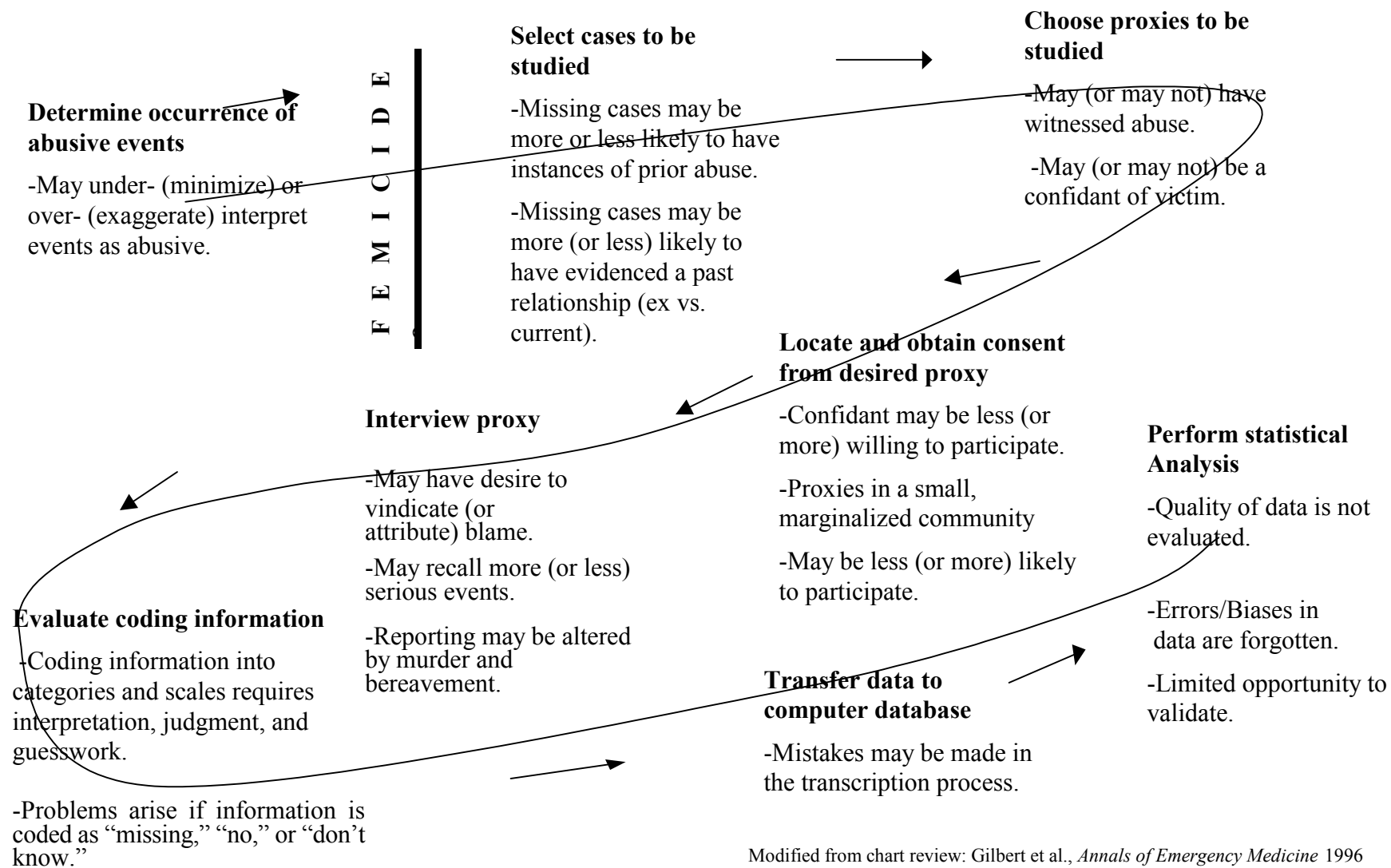
In examining risk factors for homicide, some have turned to friends, family members, and acquaintances of the deceased to construct a composite of the context (including relationship profile) that preceded the murder. We are using such a method of postmortem interviewing to examine risk factors for intimate-partner femicide. However, there is a threat of error in proxy responses, especially for detailed information about past abuse within the relationship. For example, bias may be introduced because abuse may be hidden from proxies, or proxies may consciously or unconsciously want to vindicate the victim or attribute blame. In this paper we critically evaluate the use of proxy information. We first describe potential errors introduced in transferring femicide proxy abuse risk-factor information to hard data. We then describe our preliminary attempt at estimating proxy risk-factor accuracy by comparing information between proxies and women who have *almost* been killed. The purposes of this paper are to (a) increase our understanding of the limitations of proxy risk information, and (b) provide information to guide future research efforts studying risk factors for intimate-partner femicide.

INTRODUCTION

Femicide risk-factor information collected from proxies of women who have been killed may not be suitable as a source of scientific data. Similar to other data collection methods--such as medical chart review (Gilbert et al., 1996) and police administrative records--the credibility of proxy data should be subjected to scrutiny. The accuracy of reported information could vary according to a host of conditions, including type of abuse, subjectivity of measure, and time since events. Unfortunately, the biases involved in collecting research data from proxies are inadequately addressed in the literature. The few healthcare research studies that examined proxy accuracy all called for caution on the part of the researcher. (Boyle & Brann, 1992; Dorman et al., 1997; Halabi et al., 1992; Higginson, Priest, & McCarthy, 1994; Macarthur, Dougherty, & Pless, 1997; Salter & Platt, 1990; Schnitzer et al., 1995)

There are numerous points at which error may be introduced--from the time the abusive event between an intimate couple occurs to when the research data are recorded. Our conceptualization of the potential errors in collecting femicide risk-factor information from proxies is shown in Figure 1. While some errors may occur across all items (e.g., proxy's desire to vindicate victim), others may be item specific (e.g., victim not confiding sensitive information to proxy, such as forced sex). Researchers using proxy data would do well to develop and implement methods to reduce proxy data error (Block et al., 1999) and control for it in analysis, when possible.

FIGURE 1. TRANSFER OF FEMICIDE PROXY ABUSE RISK INFORMATION TO "HARD DATA"



Modified from chart review: Gilbert et al., *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 1996

TESTING PROXY INFORMATION

Bias introduced in the transfer of risk-factor information from the time of the event to its inclusion in research data may be systematic or random. If there is evidence of systematic error it may be controlled for during data analyses. Therefore, we undertook a preliminary examination of the accuracy of proxy accounts, using women who have almost been killed as surrogates for femicide victims. Using attempted-femicide victims allowed us the opportunity to gather risk data from both the victim and a proxy and estimate inter-rater reliability.

Methods

A sample of women who were “almost killed” by an intimate partner were asked to identify a proxy--friend, family member, or acquaintance--who would be able to answer questions regarding the victim’s intimate-partner relationship. A structured survey was then administered to both the victim and proxy during either telephone or face-to-face interviews. Agreements between victim and proxy responses for Danger Assessment (Campbell, 1988) items, as well as total score, were analyzed. To complete the Danger Assessment, respondents are asked to recall risk factors in the year before the femicide (or attempted-femicide event in this administration). The Danger Assessment score may range from 0 to 15.

Preliminary Results

To date, 12 victim and proxy pairs have participated. Proxies included mothers ($n = 5$), female friends (3), sisters (3), and a female neighbor (1). Seven of the proxies provided “yes” or “no” responses to all Danger Assessment items; the other 5 proxies reported “don’t know” for two or three items. Individual Danger Assessment item-agreement varied (see Table 1), but was generally low, particularly for less observable events (e.g., forced sex). Agreement tended to be higher for behaviors that were more readily observable (perpetrator controlling behaviors). Kappa was calculated after setting proxy “don’t know” responses to “no.” In a summary question asking if a partner had been physically abusive during the relationship, there was 92% agreement ($K = .82$).

There was good agreement between victims’ (mean \pm SD = 6.25 ± 3.08) and proxies’ (mean \pm SD = 6.17 ± 3.24) summed Danger Assessment scores (mean difference = $.08$, 95% CI = $-1.14, 1.31$). There was a single outlier (out of 12) in which the difference between victim and proxy Danger Assessment scores was greater than ± 2 standard deviations (see Figure 2).

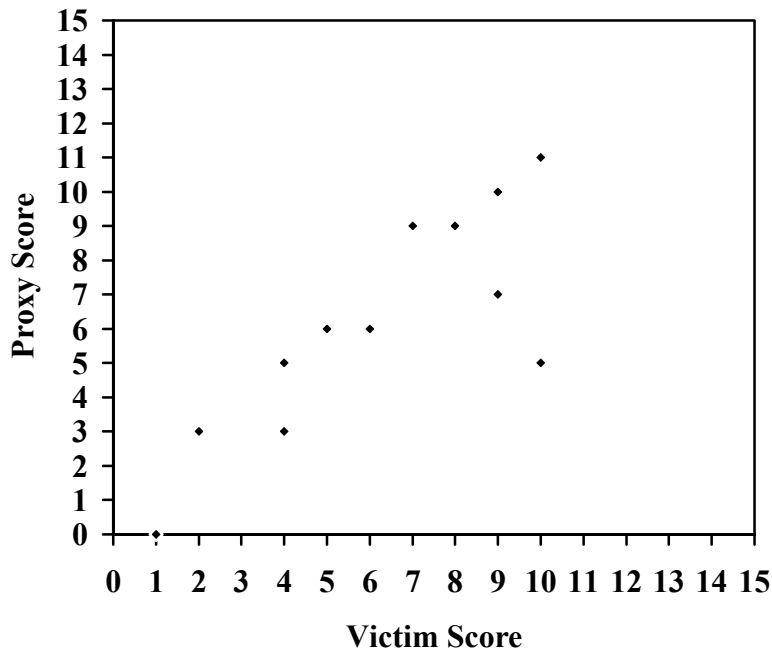
TABLE 1: DANGER ASSESSMENT INTER-RATER ITEM FREQUENCY AND AGREEMENT (VICTIM - PROXY)

	Proxy Under-estimate (false -)	Agreement	Proxy Over-estimate (false +)	Proxy DK		Kappa
				V+	V-	
Increase in frequency of abuse (Victim + 42%)	2	8	2	0		.31
Increase in severity of abuse or use/threat of using weapon (67%)	1	10	1	0		.63
Attempted to choke victim (50%)	0	7	3	2	0	.17
Possessed gun in home (58%)	3	6	1	1	1	.21
Forced sex (42%)	0	6	3	1	2	.35
Used drugs (33%)	0	6	3	0	3	.53*
Inebriated most days (25%)	2	9	0	0	1	.43
Controlled victim's daily activities (42%)	0	9	3	0		.53*
Beat victim while pregnant (33%)	3	7	2	0		0
Exhibited violent and constant jealousy (75%)	1	9	2	0		.25
Threatened to kill victim or believed was capable of killing victim (17%)	0	10	2	0		.57*
Victim threatened suicide (0%)	0	11	1	0		NA
Perpetrator threatened suicide (50%)	4	8	0	0		.33
Reported for child abuse (0%)	0	11	1	0		NA
Engaged in violence outside the home (25%)	1	10	0	0	1	.75*

Limitations

Our preliminary results of victim and proxy risk-factor agreement are based on a very small sample (12 pairs). In this analysis, attempted-femicide victims identified their proxies. This is in contrast to femicide cases, where proxies are typically identified through police records. In addition, risk-factor information may have been disclosed by the victim to the proxy after the attempted homicide event, resulting in greater agreement than would occur in the case of femicide. And finally, in our analyses, we considered victim responses as *true* (the gold standard against which proxy response was judged). However, victims may not always accurately report their risks.

FIGURE 1. DANGER ASSESSMENT



Conclusion

The findings from this exploratory methodological study suggest that there could be significant error in proxy respondents' reports about specific risk factors. However, overall risk assessment may not be greatly affected.

SUMMARY

Our examination of intimate-partner homicide risk-factor data collection may be useful in guiding researchers toward the use of attempted homicide victim interviews in place of homicide proxy interviews. If attempted homicide victims are similar to those who are killed, they serve as a source of more accurate and complete risk-factor information for scientific analysis. In cases where proxy information is used, it should not be the sole means of assessment and researchers must make an informed decision to determine whether proxy information is sufficiently unbiased to be useful.

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VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SITUATIONAL CONTEXT OF HOMICIDE

Thomas A. Petee, Greg S. Weaver, Department of Sociology, Auburn University
Auburn, AL 36849

Jay Corzine, Lin Huff-Corzine, Department of Sociology, University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816

Janice Wittekind, Department of Sociology, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849

ABSTRACT

According to the Uniform Crime Reports, from 1987 until 1992, the proportion of unknown homicides rose markedly, while the proportion of acquaintance homicides decreased. To date, little research has been done on the “unknown” victim-offender relationship category. While some researchers speculate that the “unknown” category is a function of police practices, and simply stranger homicides that were unsolved at the time of reporting (Riedel, 1987; Maxfield, 1989), others disagree, contending that “unknown” cases are distributed across different victim-offender relationships (Decker, 1993). The present study examines this issue by exploring trends in victim-offender relationships for homicide. Using the Supplemental Homicide Reports for the years 1987 to 1992, we explore the contingencies associated with the changing patterns in victim and offender relationships in an effort to better understand the shift that occurred in the relational categories.

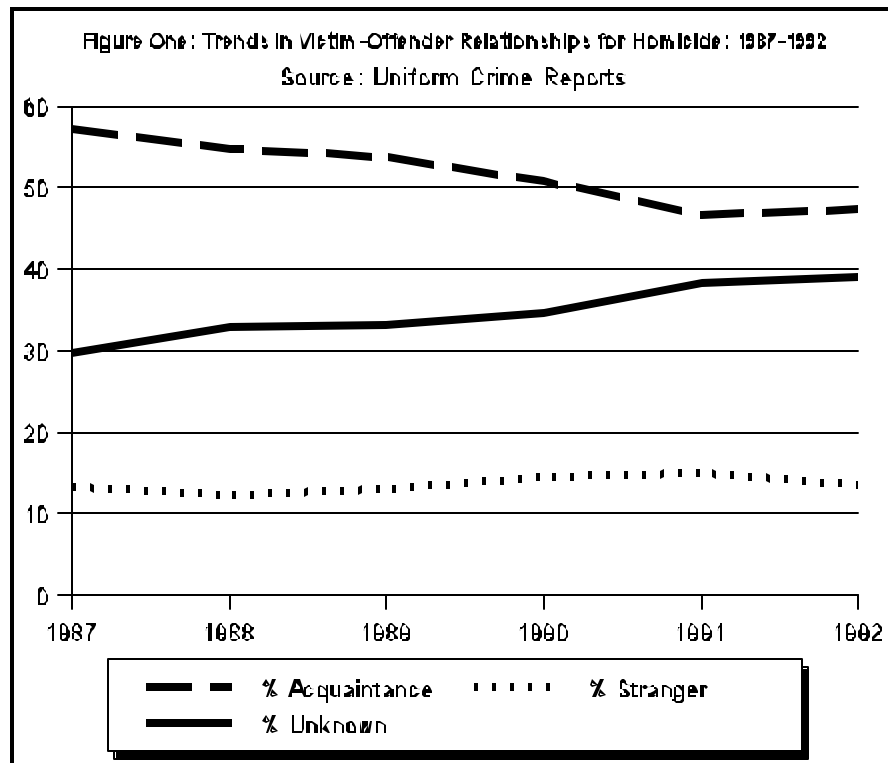
INTRODUCTION

In his definitive work on homicide, *Patterns of Criminal Homicide*, Marvin Wolfgang (1958) provided a detailed study of the circumstances and contingencies related to the incidence of murder and manslaughter in Philadelphia. Arguably one of the more critical aspects of homicide that Wolfgang investigated was the victim-offender relationship. According to Wolfgang, with homicide the relationship between the victim and the offender plays a more important role in explaining the reasons for the incident than for any other criminal offense. This was primarily due to the fact that historically in the United States, a person was more likely to be killed by a relative or friend than by anybody else. This trend held true even through the dramatic upsurge in the homicide rate that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s (Zahn & McCall, 1999).

However, beginning in the late 1980s, the percentage of acquaintance and family homicides began to decline dramatically. According to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), from 1987 until 1992, the proportion of homicides involving persons known to one another dropped by nearly 10%--from 57.2% in 1987 to 47.3% in 1992 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1988-1993). As it turns out, this decline cannot simply be attributed to a corresponding increase in stranger homicides. Although the proportion of cases categorized as stranger homicide did increase during this time period, they did so only gradually. Instead, most of this trend can be traced to a sharp increase in the percentage of homicide cases classified as an “unknown” victim-offender relationship (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1988-1993; see also, Lattimore, Trudeau, Riley, Leiter, & Edwards, 1997). Figure One

shows the trends of the different victim-offender relationship types for the designated time period. This figure clearly demonstrates the downward trend in acquaintance homicides and the corresponding upward trend in the unknown relationship category.

The implications of this trend are obvious. It is no coincidence that the clearance rate for homicide has been declining over time (Lattimore et al., 1997; Wellford and Cronin, 2000). Between 1987 and 1992, the clearance rate dropped more than percentage points (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1988-1993). There may be changes in the nature of homicide as well. Historically, homicides have predominately involved some form of interpersonal conflict, such as in a domestic violence situation, where one spouse kills the other, or where an argument between acquaintances escalates out of control (Browne, Williams, & Dutton, 1999; Zahn & McCall, 1999). However, the dynamics that typified homicide incidents prior to the late 1980s have seemingly changed. There has been some speculation that the increase in the proportion of unknown relationship homicides might be attributable to drugs and the illicit drug industry (Blumstein, 1995; Rojek, 1996; Lattimore et al., 1997). Nevertheless, questions remain as to the composition of the “unknown” victim-offender relationships. Because this category is a function of not being able to identify the relationship that existed between the offender and the victim, it would be desirable to determine if these cases are more congruent with acquaintance or with stranger homicides, and to ascertain if there are any unique qualities of the cases in this category that would account for their classification as “unknown” relationship.



The present study attempts to address these questions by examining the trends in victim-offender relationships for homicide. Using the Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR) for the years 1987 to 1992, we will explore the contingencies associated with the changing patterns in victim and offender relational categories in an effort to better understand the shift that occurred in the relational categories.

DEFINING THE VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP

Traditionally, the victim-offender relationship in homicide cases has been categorized according to the level of intimacy between the involved parties. Wolfgang (1958) identified 11 relational categories, giving great detail to the level of interpersonal relationship that existed between the offender and the victim. Primary group contacts represented the highest level of intimacy and involved such relationships as family members, close friends, or paramours, where the victim and the offender had personal, direct, and frequent interaction with each other. At the other end of the spectrum were relationships involving the most remote level of intimacy, most likely involving a situation where the victim and the offender did not have any prior contact with each other, such as innocent bystanders, police officers or, more commonly, strangers.

More recently, relationship classifications have tended to be more generalized.¹ For example, the classification found in official statistics usually identifies three categories for victim-offender relationships: acquaintance, stranger, and “unknown.” According to this categorization, an acquaintance homicide would involve any situation in which the victim and offender were known to each other. This would include not only family and friends, but also neighbors, co-workers, and other associates. By contrast, the stranger category would include homicides where it was believed that the victim and the offender did not have any prior relationship. The “unknown” relationship classification was used in cases where the reporting law enforcement agency was unable to determine what kind of relationship existed between the victim and the offender, most frequently in cases where the offender has not been identified. However, a number of studies examining the relationship between the victim and offender for homicides also make some kind of distinction between familial and acquaintance relationships (Daly & Wilson, 1982; Hewett, 1988; Maxfield, 1989; Messner & Tardiff, 1985; Miethe & McCorkle, 1998; Silverman & Kennedy, 1987; Williams & Flewelling, 1988; Zahn & Sagi, 1987), because homicides involving family members appear to have unique dynamics compared to other “known” relationships (see Decker, 1993).

Since the publication of Wolfgang’s *Patterns of Criminal Homicide* (1958), the relational context of murder has become a recurring theme in the homicide literature, with research exploring relevant issues such as the activity patterns of the victim relevant to the offender (Messner & Tardiff, 1985), the level of victim facilitation for the various relational categories (Sobol, 1997), and situationally specific victim-offender dynamics (Maxson, Gordon, & Klein, 1985; Riedel & Przybylski, 1993; Bailey & Unnithan, 1994).

¹Although more recent classifications of victim-offender relationships have not been as highly specific as Wolfgang, there is nonetheless a great deal of variation in the types of categories employed (see Decker, 1993).

However, if anything, the prospect of conducting research on the victim-offender relationship has become more convoluted. Riedel (1987), for example, points out some of the difficulties in defining the relationship between the victim and the offender. He contends that the classification of “stranger” is really a residual categorization because it covers all homicide cases that do not fit into categories of “previously known” relationships. As a consequence, the stranger category likely contains forms of behavior that are dissimilar from each another.

Moreover, Riedel concludes that the identification of cases as an “unknown” relationship may be a function of police reporting practices. Because stranger homicides may take longer to resolve, when official records are compiled and the victim-offender relationship is not yet available, these cases are more likely to be recorded as being of an unknown relationship (see also, Maxfield, 1989). However, an analysis conducted by Decker (1993) would seem to dispute this conclusion. In a study of homicides occurring in St. Louis, Decker found that cases classified as “unknown” in the UCR distributed themselves in a pattern very similar to the overall distribution of homicide, with stranger cases accounting for the smallest proportion of homicides that had been previously been identified as “unknown.”

There have been a number of studies which have examined the various contingencies associated with the three victim-offender relationship categories. Demographically, race and sex have frequently been found to be associated with victim-offender patterns for homicide (Zahn & Sagi, 1987; Rojek & Williams, 1993; Segall & Wilson, 1993; MacKeller & Yanagishita, 1995). In general, all race/sex combinations are more likely to be victimized in an acquaintance relationship. However, the discrepancy between relational categories seems to be greatest for black males (Zahn & Sagi, 1987).

Stranger and acquaintance homicides also differ in the circumstances surrounding the offense. With their Atlanta data, Rojek and Williams (1993) found that more than half of the stranger homicides were the result of a felony situation. By contrast, acquaintance homicides were more likely to involve argument-related or domestic circumstances. Williams and Flewelling (1987) reach similar conclusions in their analysis of SHR data. In a separate analysis, Rojek (1996) also suggests that “unknown” homicides are more likely to be associated with drug transactions (see also, Blumstein, 1995; Lattimore et al., 1997).

Other relational category differences have been noted for weapon choice. Riedel and Zahn (1985) found that firearms are used less frequently in “family” homicides as compared to other types of homicide. When familial relationships were excluded, Zahn and Sagi (1987) report virtually no difference between acquaintance and stranger homicides in terms of firearm use. However, they did note that stranger felony cases were less likely than stranger non-felony, acquaintance, and family homicides to involve a knife.

With the few exceptions noted above, relatively little research has been done on the “unknown” relational category. This is probably at least partially due to the ambiguous nature of this classification. Cases reported as an unknown victim-offender relationship are largely those in which the offender has not been identified, making it more difficult to assess the situational characteristics

of the offense (see Riedel, 1987). One of the few studies that has examined the “unknown” category in any detail was Wolfgang’s study of homicide in Philadelphia. Wolfgang (1958) found that a substantial percentage of the homicides in his data that were classified as an “unknown” victim-offender relationship could probably be characterized as a stranger homicide (see also, Williams & Flewelling, 1987). Nearly half (42%) of the “unknown” cases were believed to be the result of a robbery, and because robbery had a high percentage of unsolved cases, “it is probably safe to assume that most of their victims were strangers to their slayers” (Wolfgang, 1958, pp. 292-293).

METHODOLOGY

The present study makes use of data from the Supplementary Homicide Reports for the years 1987 through 1992. The specific years utilized were chosen because they represent the years at which the proportion of unknown relationship homicide cases accelerated and when that trend stabilized (see Figure One). Data in the SHR represent cases reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by participating law enforcement agencies through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. While the SHR data suffer from shortcomings such as underreporting and certain coding irregularities, they do provide fairly detailed information on homicide victims, offenders and incidents (Fox, 1996; see also, Riedel, 1987; Williams & Flewelling, 1987).

A total of 114,681 homicide incidents were analyzed for this study. For the purpose of the analysis, the relationship of the victim to the offender was recoded to fit the relationship categorization discussed earlier in this paper (i.e., family, acquaintance, stranger, unknown). The unknown relationship category was compared to the remaining victim-offender relationships using three variables: circumstances of the incident, weapon used, and select victim and offender characteristics.

In the SHR, the circumstances of the incident included various types of felony murder (e.g., robbery, rape, burglary, drugs), conflict situations (e.g., lovers’ triangles, arguments, brawls, juvenile gang killings), and miscellaneous other contexts (e.g., children killed by babysitters, gangland killings, sniper attacks). However, many of these circumstances occur infrequently. As a consequence, only three contexts were used in the present analysis: robbery, drugs, and arguments (which actually combined two separate argument codes).

The type of weapon used in the homicide had 17 different codes in the SHR. For the purpose of the present study, a more limited selection of weapons was utilized. Homicides involving the use of firearms were split into two categories: those in which a handgun was used; and those involving any other type of firearm (which collapsed four different codes into a single category). Additionally, those incidents in which a knife was used as the primary weapon were also analyzed.

Finally, selected victim and offender characteristics were also utilized in the comparison between victim-offender categories. Because the analysis of the unknown relationship category did not allow use to include any demographic information on the offender, only one offender characteristic was employed: whether or not the offense involved multiple offenders. Two victim characteristics were also examined: whether the victim was male, and whether the victim was Black.

Comparisons between the unknown relationship cases and other victim-offender categories were made using odds and log odds ratios. Odds-ratios (denoted by α), sometimes also referred to as cross-product ratios, provide a relatively straightforward mechanism for examining the relationship between variables (Reynolds, 1977). The odds-ratio can range from 0 to plus infinity, with a value of 1.0 indicating no difference between the categories compared. Values of less than 1.0 imply a negative relationship, or, in the case of the present analysis, that one group is less likely than the other to have the characteristic being examined. Values of greater than 1.0 indicate a positive relationship, or that one group is more likely to have the characteristic than the comparative group. Because this measure is not symmetrical, with the values on the negative side being truncated, the log odds, which can be calculated by taking the natural logarithm of the odds-ratio, are also provided. The log odds vary in value from negative to positive infinity, with a value of 0 indicating statistical independence (Reynolds, 1977).

FINDINGS

Table One presents the results of the comparison of the unknown relationship homicides to family homicides. In relation to the context of the offense, the unknown relationship homicides are clearly delineated from the family homicides. The unknown relationship cases were substantially more likely than the family homicides to involve robbery or drugs for the entire time period examined. Interestingly, the comparative odds of an unknown relationship homicide being drug-related increased markedly in 1990 and 1991, the years in which there was the greatest increase in the proportion of unknown relationship cases. At the same time, comparatively, unknown relationship homicides are less likely than family homicides to involve an argument.

TABLE ONE: Odds Ratios (Log Odds) Comparing Unknown Relationship Homicides to Family Homicides on Select Characteristics

	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Drug-Related</u>	<u>Argument</u>	<u>Handgun</u>	<u>Other Gun</u>	<u>Knife</u>	<u>Male Victim</u>	<u>Black Victim</u>	<u>Multiple Offenders</u>
1987	10.951 (1.039)	19.592 (1.292)	.078 (-1.109)	1.060 (.025)	.719 (-.143)	1.026 (.011)	2.982 (.475)	1.584 (.200)	1.675 (.224)
1988	7.343 (.866)	14.369 (1.157)	.056 (-1.252)	1.377 (.139)	.793 (-.101)	.845 (-.073)	3.858 (.586)	2.000 (.301)	2.019 (.305)
1989	6.464 (.810)	13.265 (1.123)	.080 (-1.252)	1.698 (.230)	.703 (-.153)	.691 (-.161)	3.443 (.537)	2.016 (.304)	1.908 (.281)
1990	10.463 (1.020)	19.869 (1.298)	.110 (-.959)	1.901 (.279)	.818 (-.087)	.650 (-.187)	4.459 (.649)	2.146 (.332)	2.059 (.314)
1991	8.581 (.934)	36.514 (1.562)	.124 (-.905)	2.158 (.334)	.835 (-.078)	.585 (-.233)	4.741 (.676)	1.899 (.278)	1.728 (.237)
1992	9.474 (.977)	12.199 (1.086)	.108 (-.967)	2.059 (.314)	.829 (-.081)	.490 (-.310)	4.664 (.660)	2.109 (.324)	1.870 (.272)

When it came to weapon use, the “unknown” cases were increasingly more likely to involve the use of a handgun, from virtually no difference in handgun use between the two relational categories in 1987 ($\alpha = 1.060$) to the unknown relationship cases being more than twice as likely to

involve a handgun by 1991 ($\alpha = 2.158$). At the same time, the “unknown” cases were increasingly less likely than family homicides to involve the use of a knife. The pattern for other types of firearms is less clear, although it appears as though the differences between the relational categories diminished over time, so that by 1991/1992, there was little difference in the use of other firearms between unknown relationship homicides and family homicides ($\alpha = 0.835$ for 1991, and $\alpha = 0.829$ for 1992).

Finally, unknown victim-offender relationship cases were more likely than family homicides to involve a male victim, a Black victim, and multiple offenders. In fact, there was a substantial increase over time in the comparative odds of a unknown relationship homicide involving a male victim. In 1987, “unknown” homicides were almost three times more likely to involve a male victim ($\alpha = 2.982$). By 1991, that likelihood had increased, with the unknown relationship homicides being nearly five times more likely to involve a male victim than family homicides ($\alpha = 4.741$).

Table Two presents the results of the comparison of the unknown relationship homicides to acquaintance homicides. As was the case in comparison to family homicides, unknown victim-offender relationship homicides were more likely than acquaintance homicides to involve robbery, and this difference increased over the time period examined. However, for the drug-related cases, the pattern was mixed, where the “unknown” cases were more likely than the acquaintance cases to involve drugs for only three of the years in the study ($\alpha = 1.312$ for 1989, $\alpha = 1.131$ for 1990, and $\alpha = 1.029$ for 1991), although substantively, there is not a great deal of difference overall between the two relational categories. Unknown victim-offender relationship cases were consistently less likely to involve an argument than acquaintance homicides.

TABLE TWO: Odds Ratios (Log Odds) Comparing Unknown Relationship Homicides to Acquaintance Homicides on Select Characteristics

	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Drug-Related</u>	<u>Argument</u>	<u>Handgun</u>	<u>Other Gun</u>	<u>Knife</u>	<u>Male Victim</u>	<u>Black Victim</u>	<u>Multiple Offenders</u>
1987	1.409 (.149)	.873 (-.059)	.068 (-1.168)	.910 (-.041)	.924 (-.034)	.706 (-.151)	.824 (-.084)	.935 (-.029)	.559 (-.252)
1988	1.226 (.088)	.847 (-.072)	.045 (-1.346)	1.082 (.034)	.937 (-.028)	.615 (-.211)	1.004 (.002)	1.119 (.049)	.508 (-.295)
1989	1.441 (.159)	1.312 (.118)	.065 (-1.184)	1.137 (.056)	.919 (-.037)	.581 (-.236)	.994 (-.002)	1.082 (.034)	.445 (-.352)
1990	1.754 (.244)	1.131 (.054)	.089 (-1.050)	1.220 (.086)	1.113 (.046)	.506 (-.296)	1.165 (.066)	1.023 (.010)	.489 (-.311)
1991	1.814 (.259)	1.029 (.013)	.110 (-.959)	1.257 (.099)	1.130 (.053)	.475 (-.323)	1.190 (.075)	.932 (-.031)	.427 (-.369)
1992	1.724 (.237)	.897 (-.047)	.112 (-.950)	1.164 (.066)	.974 (-.011)	.482 (-.317)	1.175 (.070)	1.155 (.063)	.461 (-.337)

For weapon use, some interesting patterns emerged. Those cases classified as unknown victim-offender relationship were generally more likely to involve the use of a handgun than acquaintance homicides. This likelihood increased over the time period examined, although overall the differences between the two categories were marginal. For other forms of firearms, the pattern

was mixed, and indeed, similar to the results found for drug-related cases. However, the “unknown” cases were increasingly less likely to involve the use of a knife over the time period explored for this study, and these differences were fairly substantial.

There were only minimal differences between the two relational categories when examining the likelihood that the victim was male or Black. Moreover the pattern fluctuated over time, with “unknown” cases being more likely to involve male victims or Black victims for some years, but not others. However, the unknown relationship cases were consistently less likely to involve multiple offenders than were acquaintance cases.

Table Three shows the results of the comparison of the unknown relationship homicides to stranger relationship homicides. For context of the offense, unknown victim-offender relationship homicides were much less likely to involve robbery than stranger homicides. This trend was fairly consistent throughout the time period examined in this study. However, “unknown” cases were more likely to be classified as drug-related. These odds generally increased over the time period investigated, peaking in 1990 ($\alpha = 1.854$), and then declining until 1992, when the difference was marginal ($\alpha = 1.070$). The “unknown” cases were also consistently less likely to involve an argument than stranger homicides.

TABLE THREE: Odds Ratios (Log Odds) Comparing Unknown Relationship Homicides to Stranger Homicides on Select Characteristics

	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Drug-Related</u>	<u>Argument</u>	<u>Handgun</u>	<u>Other Gun</u>	<u>Knife</u>	<u>Male Victim</u>	<u>Black Victim</u>	<u>Multiple Offenders</u>
1987	.223 (-.653)	1.148 (.060)	.245 (-.610)	.744 (-.128)	1.226 (.088)	.912 (-.040)	.656 (-.183)	1.620 (.209)	.290 (-.538)
1988	.162 (-.790)	1.558 (.192)	.179 (-.745)	.861 (-.065)	1.265 (.102)	.878 (-.057)	.279 (-.109)	2.101 (.322)	.229 (-.640)
1989	.202 (-.696)	1.597 (.203)	.272 (-.566)	.792 (-.101)	1.184 (.073)	.863 (-.064)	.682 (-.166)	1.912 (.281)	.177 (-.752)
1990	.250 (-.602)	1.854 (.268)	.302 (-.520)	.905 (-.043)	1.464 (.166)	.856 (-.067)	.779 (-.108)	2.079 (.318)	.191 (-.718)
1991	.311 (-.507)	1.364 (.135)	.383 (-.417)	.694 (-.158)	1.748 (.243)	.819 (-.087)	.763 (-.117)	1.379 (.139)	.188 (-.726)
1992	.258 (-.588)	1.070 (.029)	.318 (-.498)	.761 (-.118)	1.211 (.083)	.939 (-.027)	.757 (-.121)	1.653 (.218)	.217 (-.663)

Unknown victim-offender relationship homicides were consistently less likely to involve either a handgun or a knife than stranger homicides, although the differences were not substantial. By contrast, the “unknown” cases were more likely to involve the use of a firearm other than a handgun. This likelihood generally increased during the time period of the study, although it the difference decreased by 1992. However, as with the other weapon types, the odds were not substantially different overall.

Finally, unknown victim-offender relationship cases were less likely to involve a male victim

or multiple offenders. Both of these patterns were fairly stable over the time examined. “Unknown” cases were more likely to involve a Black victim, although this trend fluctuated over the years explored in this analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the use of various contingencies in the homicide incident, an attempt was made to compare cases classified as unable to determine victim-offender relationship with stranger, acquaintance, and family homicides in order to discover if these “unknown relationship” cases were more congruent with any of the remaining relational categories. The results of this comparison revealed that the “unknown” cases were most frequently consistent with stranger homicide. This is particularly the case with weapon choice and victim characteristics. The similarity of “unknown” homicides to other victim-offender relationship types is less consistent. However, for some situational characteristics, the unknown relationship homicides had a unique pattern, bearing a resemblance to neither the acquaintance nor the stranger cases.

More specifically, the unknown relationship cases had a comparatively higher probability of involving a drug transaction, or to involve a Black victim. As Block (1985), Zahn and Sagi (1987), and Rojek (1996) have all noted, homicide has become an increasingly complex phenomenon often involving other criminal acts. The upsurge in felony-related murder marked a shift in the locale of homicide--effectively moving it from the home to the streets (Rojek, 1996). Drug-related homicides are essentially street crimes, making them more anonymous and less likely to be cleared by an arrest.

The high proportion of Black victims among the unknown relationship cases might be explained by their lifestyle and the kinds of activities they engage in. As Sobol (1997) has suggested, racial minorities may be more likely to be engaged in risk-taking behavior outside of the home, making them more victimogenic. In this kind of a context, Black victims may be more prone to become victims of the kinds of homicide that are not as likely to result in an arrest.

Our analysis does provide some insight into the nature of the victim-offender relationships for homicide. While, as Riedel (1987) has suggested, “unknown” victim-offender relationship homicides are more consistent with stranger homicide, they do have other characteristics which are consistent with acquaintance homicide, perhaps making them even more difficult to solve in a timely manner.

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DISCUSSION

Vanessa Leggett: Jim, how do you define “script”?

Jim Black: Cognitive behavior. Shared understanding between two people about what will happen, much like the understanding shared between spouses.

Vance McLaughlin: I have an acquaintance who is a BATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms] special agent. Twice he was hired to kill sheriffs in Georgia. The U.S. Attorneys who handled these cases thoroughly prepped him with the proper questions to ask the “murder-for-hire” client. All of the questions and responses were recorded. When the case went to court, this dialogue was invaluable. They could change the prepared dialogue any way they wanted.

Chris Rasche: Becky, in a planned incident--as distinguished from a spontaneous one--where the offender invades a “safe place,” it seems there might be a problem coding such an offense, as, for example, a “safe place” may be merely a room within a home that the victim retreats to during a spontaneous offense.

Kathleen Heide: I think you would have to look at it from two different dimensions: first, whether the intent was to kill, making it a goal-directed activity; and second, whether the desire was to hurt the victim, which would be expressive.

Becky Block: We asked the proxy respondents questions in these areas.

Chris Rasche: You might need to develop different data sets.

Jenny Mouzos: What about weapon choice?

Becky Block: With the 87 homicides, we have that information.

Christine Devitt: Information about offenders is affected by variables--if they were arrested, length of sentence. It’s so much further down the road because it’s a matter of, in the criminal justice system, how much information they have.

Roland Chilton: What are the procedures that you’ve discovered to prevent intimate homicide?

Becky Block: I’ll just give you a generic answer. It seems to me that whatever your prevention mechanisms are going to be, they’re going to be different for different types of homicide. For example, in spontaneous situations, where someone fights and gets killed, you can look at one, or, if there are continuous fights and brawls, it’s cumulative. That’s a certain set of characteristics. Other characteristics are instrumental.

Dick Block: You realize that this is only part of a study. The other part of the study concerns nonlethal data.

Lin Huff-Corzine: Part of what I was looking at was instrumental versus expressive. Part of that leaves me to think about “planned expressive.” How planned ahead does it have to be to be called “planned”?

Becky Block: It’s a continuum. It’s a type. We’re trying to create some way to recognize the poles.

Question: Jane, how would the victim over-interpret an event as abusive?

Jane Koziol-McLain: In looking at the possibilities when someone could over- or under-interpret, typically, the intimate partner under-interprets. If there’s something to be gained, there may be a case when someone may exaggerate the level of the risk factor. So, generally, there is minimizing, but it could happen the other way.

Jackie Campbell: I’ve conducted longitudinal studies. A battered woman makes a different assessment of what happened to her when she looks back at behavior through the lens of having just been shot by her intimate partner. I’ll bet if you asked the woman the day before her partner shot her, she would have said something different. Police officers also have problems with proxies.

Alan DeLine: A researcher might use “roping.”

Jane Koziol-McLain: Are there any other questions?

Chris Rasche: It strikes me as a huge flaw that “almost victims” suggested their proxies. It seems to me you’d need to select the same proxies for surviving victims as you would for deceased victims.

Jane Koziol-McLain: In items, we didn’t find very good agreement. We went for trade-offs; we wanted the victim to be able to name someone.

Comment: There might be concern about the victim calling or influencing the proxy.

Linda Langford: The kappas were calculated after setting the proxy. Why?

Jane Koziol-McLain: We left them blank on items not known. Researchers made determinations regarding “don’t know” responses. There didn’t seem to be any systematic error that we could find.

Linda Langford: A “no” could really be definitive. It’s different than “I have no idea.”

Jane Koziol-McLain: But when you ask a question, you don’t dwell; you move on to the next question.

Becky Block: We ought to get together on this, and compare studies, data. Women would give us the proxy.

Allegra Kim: How are proxies usually chosen in investigations of homicide?

Jane Koziol-McLain: Our source in Baltimore is police records. There are lists of relatives and friends in police files.

Judy McFarlane: You begin with that, but it may take you to the other side of the country.

Jackie Campbell: It depends on the information that you want. You start with police work, and may ask that person who would know.

Judy McFarlane: With the exception of children, we did not have anyone from the police file.

John Jarvis: There's difficulty in determining a proxy from a police report.

Jackie Campbell: Whom did they notify?

Jane Koziol-McLain: The closest relative.

Jackie Campbell: Whoever claimed the body.

Alan DeLine: In talking to the proxies, you have to be very, very aware of the stages one goes through after a homicide. The proxies' reactions may be different depending upon what stages they're at when questioned.

Christine Lanier: Good observation. What do we do to solve the errors?

Judy McFarlane: Use more than one proxy.

Jane Koziol-McLain: Go to another proxy to get info about those other risk factors.

Jackie Campbell: You do have problems if, for instance, the proxies and the police report are different. There are problems determining which to accept as true.

Christine Devitt: It's also a matter of how you structure the questions. You need to look at information to reconcile the questionnaire as to how to phrase questions.

Jackie Campbell: Just as a final note: Many people criticize proxy studies as biased, saying you're better off going to the SHR [Supplementary Homicide Reports] and staying there. But we've also found that police have made errors. I think this just cautions us about errors in data sets. We should be careful that we don't forget all of that bias that's in there.

Roland Chilton: So you can't say much about what are the most--and least--important risk characteristics?

Jane Koziol-McLain: We've collected data from attempted femicide victims. Essentially, they're supplementing homicide victims.

Jackie Campbell: We have some preliminary data I'll show to you.

Roland Chilton: I'm just trying to come to *some* conclusions, which is hard here sometimes.

Question: Tom, what was the reason for separating out "family" in your study of victim-offender relationships?

Tom Petee: "Family" sometimes gets lumped together with "acquaintances" and a distinction must be made.

Jack Ritter: If you see a bunch of "ones," does that imply correlation?

Tom Petee: I would not interpret that as correlation, but as likelihood. Zero becomes the standardization point.

Matthew Lee: What was the purpose of the study?

Tom Petee: Our research was exploratory, to find out what's going on with the increase. Some cases get solved with time, but some do not.

Paul Blackman: There are categories I don't like in the SHR. For example, the meanings of "acquaintance" and "argument" are not clear.

Barrie Ritter: Robert Ressler's text on homicide showed that felony homicide stayed the same. Only stranger homicides had really increased. In the books that followed after that, from Douglas on, there was a clear distinction with murders being harder to solve, involving unknown motives and homicides committed by unknown persons. That's why FBI tried to figure out ways of solving homicides. At one point, there was every single kind of category except for "unknown" because, with all the categories--gangland, drug fights, brawls between people who knew each other, people who didn't--the FBI figured it was covered. But "unknown" is a pretty substantial area. Those cases weren't attributable to robbery.

Jenny Mouzos: Have you considered the possibility that an increase in "unknown" cases may reflect reporting prejudices?

Tom Petee: Very good point.

Question: What about weapon choice in homicide?

Tom Petee: As Paul [Blackman] points out, even with weapon choice, the handgun is going to be predominant.

John Jarvis: Trying to predict the typology, you look at attributes of the homicides you know something about to make imputations about homicides you don't know anything about. Paul mentioned he doesn't like the "acquaintance" category. I don't like the "stranger" one, because I don't know.

Chris Rasche: But that's only to you.

John Jarvis: I come to the crime scene and I don't know. What I'm saying is that "stranger" has a larger likelihood in showing up in the data.

Linda Langford and Chris Rasche: It's "unknown."

John Jarvis: That's right. I stand corrected.

Jay Corzine: What about the problems in recording?

John Jarvis: That goes back to Jenny [Mouzos]'s point about recording practices. Are reports filled out afterward or at the scene? NIBRS [National Incident-Based Reporting System] comes onto the scene and has changed the way we code things and identify things. We should be looking at the substantive issues, at people familiar to the victim. How we conduct the research determines how we sew these things together.

Linda Langford: In Massachusetts, 50% of homicides occur in Boston. They get lazier about the non-family incidents. When you have more than one category of reporting, it's hard to know what's being obscured.

Wendell Willacy: For initial reporting, when the first-responding officers come along, should the offense be classified as "unknown"?

Linda Langford: It's whatever their call is on it, who their suspect is when they fill the report out.

Paul Blackman: All of the SHR information is from the initial police investigative reports. The information isn't updated as it is in some countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

CORRELATES OF HOMICIDE

LOCAL CAPITALISM AND VIOLENT CRIME IN U.S. COUNTIES

Research In Progress

Matthew R. Lee, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
Mississippi State University, P.O. Box C, Mississippi State, MS 39762
Graham C. Ousey, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky
1515 Patterson Office Tower, Lexington KY 40506

ABSTRACT

Macro-level research linking labor market conditions to the prevalence of violent crime in the U.S. has limited its focus to variables such as unemployment or underemployment, and employment in primary versus secondary sectors. An emerging body of stratification research, however, asserts that the size of local manufacturing firms is an important element in building social capital in local communities. Specifically, this research suggests that small manufacturing establishments cultivate strong linkages within communities, potentially retarding violent crime. This analysis extends the research on local labor markets and violent crime by examining the association between both small and large manufacturing establishments and the prevalence of homicide in rural and urban counties in the U.S. for 1990. The data indicate that firm size is especially salient in rural counties, and that a strong presence of small manufacturing establishments is associated with a lower incidence of homicide.

BACKGROUND

One line of research in the macro social tradition has examined the links between characteristics of the local labor market and rates of serious crime. Included in this literature are studies emphasizing the consequences of unemployment, as well as job quality indicators (Allen & Steffensmeier, 1989; Crutchfield, 1989) for rates of crime. Of particular importance here is the emphasis on stable, well-paying jobs such as those found in the manufacturing sector (Shihadeh & Ousey, 1998). Scholars such as Crutchfield (1989) and Shihadeh and Ousey (1998) argue that widespread availability of well paying, core sector employment opportunities are vital to the socioeconomic health of communities and, hence, their ability to control serious crime. This research is compelling and suggests that deindustrialization, especially the loss of large manufacturing establishments, has a severely detrimental impact on urban communities, ultimately fostering the evolution of multiple social problems, including violent crime.

In response to the many problems associated with deindustrialization, stratification and development researchers have suggested an alternative model of enhancing socioeconomic welfare stressing the importance of small manufacturing firms (Lyson & Tolbert, 1996). Citing evidence from the era of deindustrialization implying that the reliance by communities on a few large manufacturing firms is detrimental to local socioeconomic welfare, these researchers argue that small manufacturing firms have substantial benefits for local economic conditions.

First, employment is considered one of the fundamental bonds attaching both individuals and groups to the broader normative order: hence, the significant body of research examining the unemployment and crime link. Conventional wisdom regarding job creation is that large firms offer more jobs, and therefore put more people to work. However, as Birch (1987) argues, there are two reasons why this is not necessarily the case. Small firms represent the large majority of all business enterprises (Birch, 1987, p. 9). Defining small firms as those having fewer than 20 employees, Birch finds that small enterprises account for over 80% of all establishments. At the community level, this translates into a large sheer number of establishments people may have contact with, and that may serve as potential employers. Also, small establishments steadily employ roughly 25% of the non-governmental workforce. This figure remains stable because, although large numbers of small enterprises shut down each year, large numbers are also started up each year, and so account for almost all job growth. Small firms are less costly to start up, less costly to shut down, and are more easily replaceable in local economies. Small firms therefore account for most job growth and new employment opportunities.

Second, small firms rest on a sociopolitical and economic milieu characterized by deeply embedded relationships (Harrison, 1992). That is, in order for small firms to be viable, by necessity they must cultivate strong relationships with other small firms, large firms, political actors, and community residents. These relationships involve contractual business relationships, as well as a form of competition characterized by cooperation and a sense of collective goals. This fostering of mutual interdependence has important implications for the community. Foremost, the interdependence bred by embeddedness generates a sense of community, where economic constituents must work together to ensure collective stability and success. This involves campaigning for the development of institutions, services, and infrastructure that all small firms can enjoy, and facilitates continued operation with other firms and within the community. These horizontal ties holding small firms to each other and to the community breed a sense of trust, and a vision of a local milieu built from the ground up by local community residents. Elevated trust within the community promotes a sense of collective values, norms, and beliefs, and conceptually should facilitate a strong presence of collective efficacy.

Third, small manufacturing firms are beneficial to community residents because they enhance the socioeconomic welfare and demographic stability of communities. In their study of U.S. counties, Lyson and Tolbert (1996) find that a strong small manufacturing presence is associated with lower levels of income inequality, higher median incomes, and lower poverty rates. In addition, small manufacturing firms have been found to anchor people to place, reducing outmigration (Irwin, Tolbert, & Lyson, 1999). Each of these factors is also considered critical to improving local social capital.

The benefits of small manufacturing outlined above are important in light of the dominant macro level theoretical views and empirical research in sociology linking local structural conditions to variation in crime rates. A broad body of research has been concerned with the unemployment and crime nexus (Cantor & Land, 1985), and small firms are associated job creation. Another small but growing body of research has been concerned with local social capital, taking the form of local social ties, community cohesion, and shared understandings regarding normative expectations (Sampson

& Groves, 1989; Chamlin & Cochran, 1998; Sampson, Raudenbusch, & Earls, 1997), and small manufacturing firms are argued to elevate community embeddedness and social capital. Finally, the social disorganization tradition has linked poor socioeconomic conditions and population turnover to rates of serious crime (see especially Shaw & McKay, 1929), and small manufacturing has been demonstrated to facilitate local economic prosperity and promote demographic stability. Given the state of extant research, and our understanding of the impact small manufacturing establishments have on local social and economic conditions, we expect a strong presence of small manufacturing firms to be inversely associated with rates of serious crime.

DATA SOURCES, VARIABLES, AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

The unit of analysis for this study is U.S. counties. Although they represent arbitrarily drawn geographic units, they are a standard unit of analysis for studying labor market processes, local economies, and community development. In addition, given our focus on the balance of the local manufacturing sector between small and large firms, counties ordinarily have a cohesive community and business development strategy organized by the local government designed to attract business and industries that will enhance the local socioeconomic atmosphere. The nature of our independent variables of interest then point to counties as an appropriate analytical unit.

The dependent variable for this study is homicide. Homicide data are drawn from the county level aggregations of UCR data compiled by the FBI and made publicly available through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at ICPSR. Convention in the macro level criminological literature is to construct an average homicide rate per 100,000 population for a multiyear period, usually the year before a decennial census, the census year, and then the year after. We depart from this standard practice in two ways. First, because we rely on counties as the unit of analysis and 1989 county definitions are based on 1980 census definition, we instead compute an average for the 1990-1992 period. Second, we do not construct homicide rates with our data but instead treat the data as average homicide counts. We pursue this strategy because many counties (especially rural ones) have a zero homicide rate, even for the averaged three-year period. This excess zeros problem leads to an extremely skewed distribution for the dependent variable. We address this problem by simply treating our dependent variables as actual averaged homicide counts, which exhibit a Poisson type of distribution. The analytical techniques, detailed below, take into account this circumstance in our data.

The primary independent variable of interest is the proportion of the local manufacturing economy that is composed of small manufacturing firms. The data used in the construction of this variable were secured from the 1990 County Business Patterns machine-readable data files. Commensurate with the stratification and local labor market literature discussed above, we define small manufacturing firms as those employing fewer than 20 workers. We then express this measure as the proportion of all manufacturing firms in the county. We expect this variable to exhibit an inverse association with the dependent variable. To supplement our analysis, however, we employ an alternative measure designed to tap the inverse of this concept. Specifically a measure of the proportion of the local manufacturing sector composed of large firms is also employed. Large firms are defined as those having 250 or more workers. We expect this variable to exhibit a positive

association with the dependent variable.

Aside from these measures, several control variables are accounted for, including the proportion of the county labor force employed in retail trade, the proportion employed in personal services, a deprivation index composed of several highly correlated variables (unemployment, family poverty, a measure of class based spatially concentrated poverty (P* index), the proportion of the county population over the age of 25 and lacking a high school degree, the proportion of families headed by a female, and the proportion of the population that is Black. Initial principal components analysis of these variables demonstrate that they cluster together, and so we derive our disadvantage index from the average standardized scores of these six variables. Prior research also indicates that controls for the demographic composition of the population, as well as its spatial configuration, are also warranted. Hence, control variables for the proportion between the ages of 15 and 24, population density, net migration, the proportion divorced, and indicator variables for counties in the South and West are included.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for all variables analyzed in the following models. Means and standard deviations for both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties are included separately. Substantial differences between the two samples are evident. First, both the average absolute number of homicides as well as the homicide rate (taking into account differences in population size) are substantially higher in metropolitan than non-metropolitan areas. However, the mean and, especially, the standard deviation for the nonmetropolitan sample indicate that rural homicide rates are not simply uniformly low, but in fact have a substantial degree of variation.

Turning next to the primary variables of interest--the proportion of the local manufacturing economy composed of small firms, and the proportion of the local manufacturing economy composed of large firms--there are several important points to note. First, small manufacturing firms account for around 65% of total manufacturing activity in metropolitan areas, and even more (roughly 72%) in rural counties. This suggests that small manufacturing firms comprise over two-thirds of manufacturing activity, a substantial proportion. In contrast, large manufacturing firms account for approximately 4.3% of the manufacturing sector in nonmetropolitan areas, and only slightly more in metropolitan areas. Second, the proportion of county manufacturing activity accounted for by small firms is higher in nonmetropolitan than metropolitan areas.

Several other features of this table deserve mention as well. Perhaps most important, with regard to labor force structure, for both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties, retail employment accounts for a larger share of the labor force than service employment. In addition, the value for the deprivation index is higher in metropolitan areas, as might be expected, as is population density. Divorce and population turnover are also slightly more prevalent in the metropolitan counties, and close to half of all counties are located in the Southern region.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Nonmetropolitan and Metropolitan Counties

	Nonmetropolitan		Metropolitan	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Dependent				
# of Homicides	1.11	1.71	24.92	96.30
Homicide Rate	2.29	3.30	6.47	6.71
Labor Force Structure				
Small Manufacturing	.72	.17	.65	.10
Large Manufacturing	.04	.06	.05	.04
% Services	.03	.02	.03	.01
% Retail	.16	.03	.17	.02
Controls				
Deprivation Index	-.02	.73	-.004	.75
Divorced	.07	.02	.08	.02
Population Turnover	.40	.08	.44	.08
Population Density	17.95	50.07	272.01	1049.95
Age 15-24	.13	.04	.15	.03
South	.45	.50	.48	.50
West	.15	.35	.11	.31

ANALYTICAL METHODS

To test our central hypothesis, that a manufacturing sector dominated by small firms will serve to drive down rates of serious crime, we employ analytical models designed to account for the unusual nature of our dependent variable. When using homicide counts, the data approximate a Poisson distribution, and, hence, models specific to Poisson type distributions are appropriate. Of the basic Poisson type models available, we employ the negative binomial variant because the mean and variance of the homicide count are not equal, resulting in a problem of overdispersion on the dependent variable, making the more straightforward Poisson estimator inappropriate.

For the negative binomial model, an extra error parameter is estimated essentially accounting for the presence of overdispersion. In addition, it is still appropriate to account for different population sizes across counties. To address this, we specify an offset variable as the natural log of the county population size, which essentially sets the county population to a constant, standardizing the parameter estimates.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the results for the first set of negative binomial models predicting the frequency of homicide across nonmetropolitan counties with our indicators of both large and small manufacturing, other labor force characteristics, and the relevant control variables. Three separate models are presented here. Column 1 presents the estimates and standard errors for the first model predicting homicide with all control variables and our indicator of small manufacturing. The estimate for the small manufacturing variable is negative and statistically significant, bearing out our

expectation that a strong presence of small manufacturing establishments is associated with lower rates of lethal violence.

The second model in this table presents the results of a model using our indicator of large manufacturing establishments. The logic of our argument leads us to believe that large manufacturing establishments will have a negative impact on local communities, or the inverse of the effects of small manufacturing establishments. Model 2 reveals that this appears to be the case, as the positive and significant relationship between large manufacturing and homicide rates. Finally, to test the simultaneous effects of both large and small manufacturing, we include both variables in the final model and find that the same substantive results hold. Small manufacturing is associated with low homicide rates, and large manufacturing with higher homicide rates.

Due to space limitations, analogous models for metropolitan counties are not presented in tabular form. However, these models (available from the authors) indicate that the size of manufacturing establishments did not have a statistically significant association with homicide in metropolitan counties.

Table 2: Negative Binomial Regression Models Predicting Homicide, 2161 Nonmetropolitan Counties

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Coef.	Coef.	Coef.
Small Manufacturing	-.552** (.175)	---	-.402* (.190)
Large Manufacturing	---	1.214*** (.382)	.875* (.416)
Service Employment	-.002 (.015)	.022 (.144)	.025 (.014)
Retail Employment	.024 (.008)	-.001 (.008)	.001 (.008)
Deprivation Index	.546*** (.034)	.561*** (.034)	.550*** (.034)
Population Density (ln)	.013 (.029)	.025 (.028)	.005 (.029)
Population age 15-24 (ln)	-.337** (.119)	-.344** (.119)	-.348** (.119)
Population Turnover	.599* (.307)	.633* (.306)	.619* (.307)
% Divorced	.068*** (.015)	.068*** (.015)	.068*** (.015)
South	.757*** (.065)	.726*** (.065)	.742*** (.065)
West	.406*** (.093)	.380*** (.093)	.392*** (.093)
Overdispersion Parameter	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Constant	-10.849*** (.359)	-11.314*** (.336)	-11.003*** (.367)
Log Likelihood	-2176.619	-2176.673	-2174.450
Pseudo R ²	.162	.162	.163

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HOMICIDAL ENCOUNTERS: A STUDY OF HOMICIDE IN AUSTRALIA 1989-1999

Jenny Mouzos, Australian Institute of Criminology
GPO Box 2944, Canberra, ACT, Australia 2601

ABSTRACT

Compared to other violent causes of death such as suicides and motor vehicle accidents, homicide is a relatively rare phenomenon in Australia. However, with the availability of homicide data collected as part of the National Homicide Monitoring Program, the possibility of examining and explaining such a phenomenon becomes a reality. This paper outlines some of the main findings of the Australian Institute of Criminology's publication *Homicidal Encounters--A Study of Homicide in Australia 1989-1999* (Mouzos, 2000). Some of the common circumstances and characteristics associated with the occurrence of homicide over a 10-year period in Australia are described, focusing specifically on the 4 essential components of homicide: incident, victim, offender, and the relationship between the victim and the offender.

INTRODUCTION

Through its National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP), the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has collected data on every homicide in Australia since 1989, including incident, victim, offender, and victim-offender characteristics. This unique data set makes it possible for the AIC to conduct in-depth analyses of various aspects of homicide.

This paper presents some of the main findings of an in-depth examination of a decade of homicide in Australia entitled *Homicidal Encounters: A Study of Homicide in Australia 1989-1999* (Mouzos, 2000). In summarizing some of the findings of the report, the aim of this paper is to provide a national statistical profile of homicide in Australia, by including a brief overview of the four essential components of homicide (incident, victim, offender, and victim-offender relationships). This paper will focus on emerging trends and patterns of homicide in Australia over time, emphasizing the importance of demographic differences, victim-offender relationships, and situational circumstances that contribute to violent fatalities. The characteristics of homicide in the course of other crimes, such as robbery and sexual assault, will also be discussed.

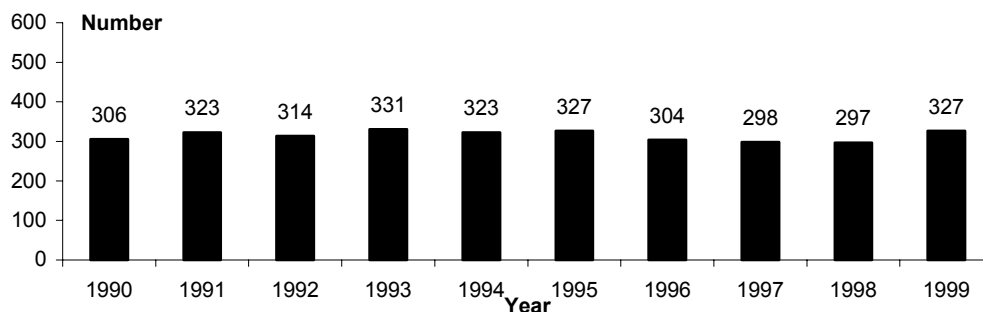
INCIDENT PROFILE

Incidence of Homicide

According to NHMP data, in Australia, during the period from July 1, 1989, to June 30, 1999, there were 3,150 homicide incidents. For the purposes of this paper, a homicide *incident* is defined as one single, distinct event, regardless of the number of victims and offenders. The incident count will therefore be lower than the victim and/or offender count due to incidents involving multiple victims and/or offenders. The latest financial year, 1998/99, recorded 327 homicide incidents, an increase of approximately 10% from the previous year. In contrast,

1997/98 recorded the lowest number of homicide incidents (n = 297) since the inception of the NHMP in 1989. Homicide in Australia is an infrequent offense that is subject to yearly fluctuations. Despite these year-to-year fluctuations, the incidence of homicide over a decade has remained relatively stable (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. AUSTRALIA, JULY 1, 1989 - JUNE 30, 1999: NUMBER OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS PER YEAR (N = 3,150)

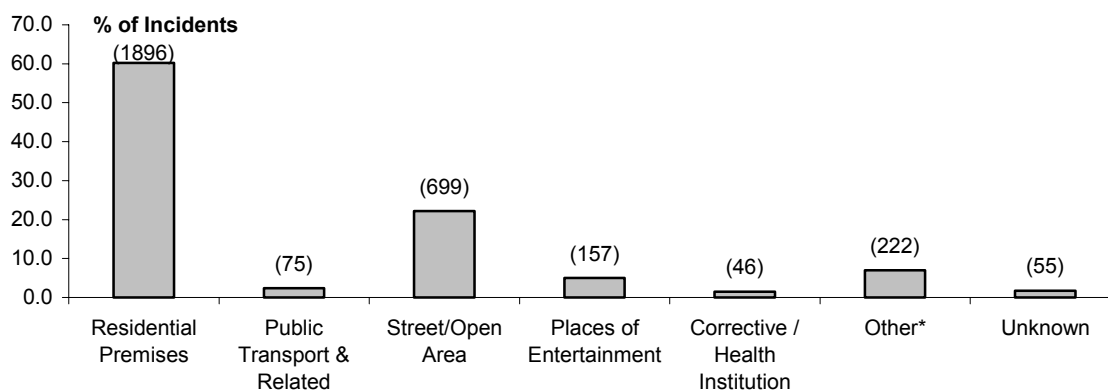


Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Location of Incident

Just under two-thirds of all homicide incidents (60.2%) in Australia between and 1989/90 and 1998/99 were committed in residential premises. Almost 80% of the incidents that occurred in residential premises occurred in the victim's home. Less than a quarter (22.2%) took place on the street/road/highway or other open areas such as parkland, bushland, or in or near a waterway. Approximately 5% of all homicide incidents occurred at some place of entertainment (pubs, discos, clubs, etc.). Only 2.4% of all homicide incidents took place in areas of public transport or related places such as railway stations and taxis (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. AUSTRALIA, JULY 1, 1989 - JUNE 30, 1999: PERCENTAGE OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS ACCORDING TO LOCATION (N = 3,150)



Number of incidents that occurred in each location are shown in brackets.

*Includes shops, shopping malls, banks/credit unions, post offices, car parks/public garages/service stations, workplace/schools, and other commercial premises.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Geographical Distribution

In Australia, approximately 86% of the population live in urban areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999).¹ Half the area of Australia contains only 0.3% of the population, and the most densely populated 1% of the continent contains 84% of the population. Moreover, there is a higher level of urbanization among the non-Indigenous population; Indigenous people are more likely than the rest of the population to live in very remote areas.

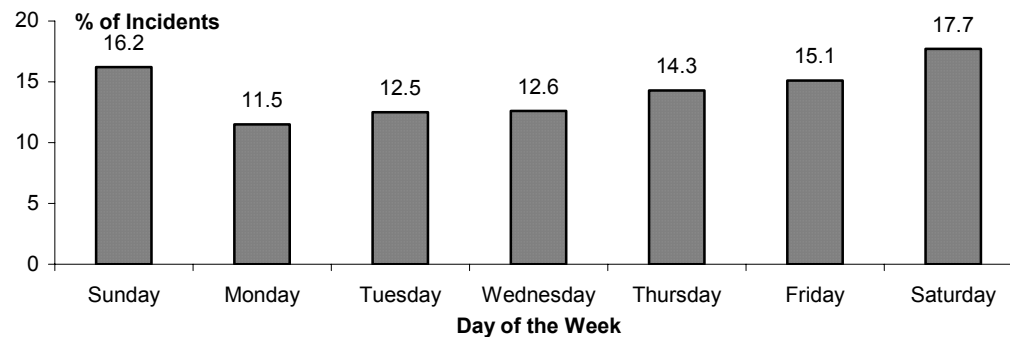
Analysis of the spatial distribution of homicide incidents in Australia indicates that although 85.7% of the homicide incidents occurred in densely populated areas, there was no significant difference between the geographical distribution of the Australian population and the geographical distribution of homicide incidents.

Temporal Setting

A number of differences emerged when the temporal setting (time, day, and month that the incident occurred) of Australian homicides was examined. When one takes into the account the routine activities of people--their social habits, the times that they are most likely to be at home, engage in social drinking--and when they are most likely to become irritable, the fact that 68% of all homicide incidents in Australia occurred between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. is not surprising. In contrast, only 12% of incidents occurred between 6 a.m. and noon.

In terms of when homicide incidents are most likely to occur in Australia, the data indicate that nearly half of all homicide incidents occurred during the weekend--Friday, Saturday, or Sunday (Figure 3). Similarly, a separate analysis examining day of the week and time of the incident revealed that apart from incidents on Sunday occurring during the early hours of the morning (midnight to before 6 a.m.), incidents that occurred on the other days were mostly committed during the evening (6 p.m. to midnight). Regardless of the day of the week, an incident was least likely to occur between 6 a.m. and noon.

FIGURE 3. AUSTRALIA, JULY 1, 1989 - JUNE 30, 1999: PERCENTAGE OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS ACCORDING TO DAY OF THE WEEK OF OCCURRENCE (N = 3,109)*



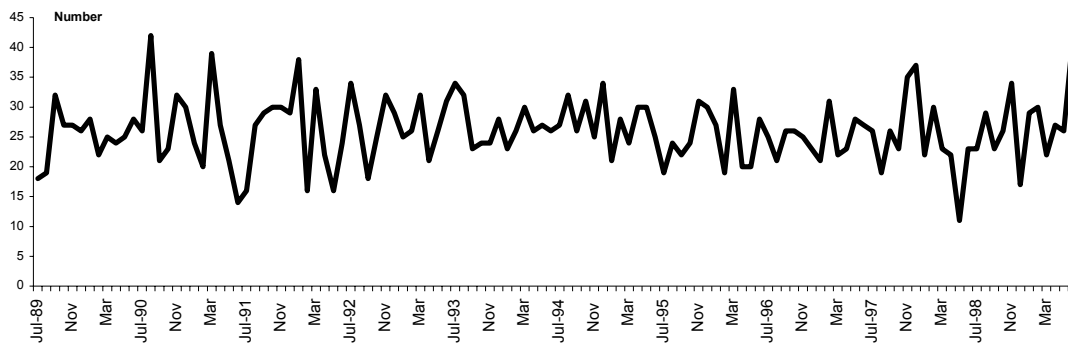
*Excludes 41 incidents where day of the week of occurrence was not known.

¹ Urban area is defined as those with populations of more than 1,000 people.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

The distribution of incidents by month of the year showed the least variation of the three temporal settings--time, day, month--although there were marked fluctuations on a month-to-month basis (Figure 4). Overall, there does not appear to be any seasonal pattern in the distribution of homicide incidents during the 10-year period in Australia.

FIGURE 4. AUSTRALIA, JULY 1, 1989 - JUNE 30, 1999: NUMBER OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS ACCORDING TO MONTH OF OCCURRENCE PER YEAR (N = 3,126)*



*Excludes 24 incidents where month of occurrence was not known.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Multiple Victim and Multiple Offender Incidents

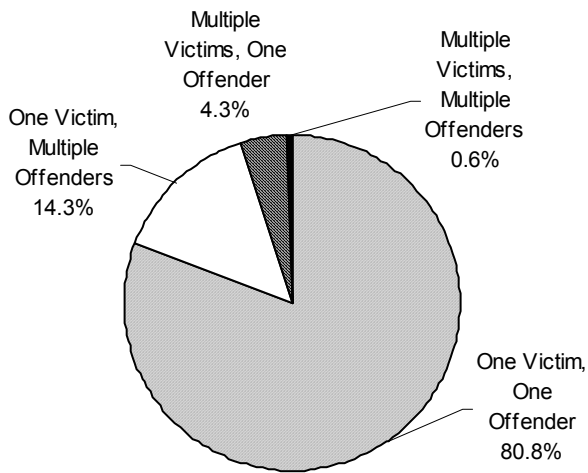
The majority of homicide incidents can be characterised as a “one-on-one” interaction between the victim and offender. In Australia, approximately 81% of all homicide incidents (where an offender has been identified) involve but one victim and one offender. In 4.3% of the incidents, there was more than one victim, but only one offender (for example, the Port Arthur incident where there was one offender and 35 victims), while in 14.3% of incidents there was more than one offender and only one victim.¹ Approximately 1% of homicide incidents involve multiple victims and multiple offenders (Figure 5).

An analysis of the yearly distribution of incidents involving multiple victims indicates that there is a slight declining trend in multiple victim homicide across the 10-year period under review, from 5.6% of homicide incidents to 4% of incidents.

In Australia, there were 150 recorded multiple killings over the 10-year period, resulting in 387 deaths. On average, there are 15 multiple fatality incidents per year, resulting in approximately 39 victims.

¹ In two separate incidents, the NHMP recorded one victim with eleven offenders each.

FIGURE 5. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: PERCENTAGE OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS (N = 2,803)*



*Excludes 347 incidents where there were an unknown number of offenders.
 Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

VICTIM PROFILE

Long-term Trends

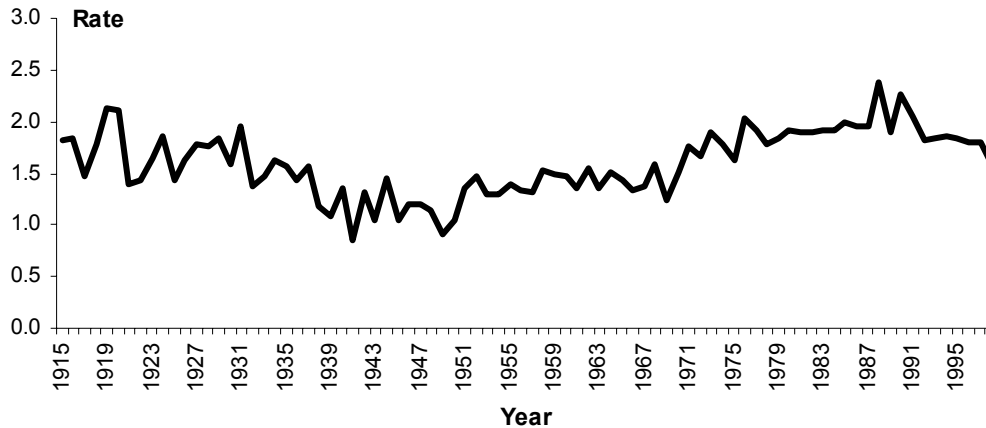
An examination of homicide victimization between 1915 and 1998 suggests that there have been significant changes in homicide rates in the course of Australian history, with available evidence indicating that the rate in the 19th century was much higher than today (Strang, 1993, p. 6). There was a long-term decline during the first half of the twentieth century, with the homicide rate in Australia being the lowest during the period of the World War II (1939-1945)¹ (Figure 6). The rate then increased substantially to a plateau of about 1.5 per 100,000 in the 1950s and 1960s. An upward trend occurred during the 1970s, reaching the level of around 2.0 at the end of that decade. Since then, the rate has remained relatively stable, except for two temporary fluctuations in the 1980s. One of those temporary fluctuations in the 1980s resulted in the highest homicide rate recorded in Australia: a rate of 2.4 in 1988, Australia's bicentennial year. This is more than double the rate observed in 1950. In 1998, the homicide rate was 1.7 per 100,000 Australian residents.

A visual interpretation of Figure 6 suggests that there were four distinct periods in the Australian homicide trend line since World War II: (a) the period during the late 1940s and early 1950s, where there was a dramatic increase in the homicide rate; (b) the period beginning in 1955, where the Australian homicide rate reached a plateau of 1.5 per 100,000 population; (c) the period beginning in 1970, where the homicide rate increased to about 2.0 per 100,000

¹ The year 1941 recorded the lowest homicide rate of 0.8 per 100,000 population in Australia.

population; and (d) the period since 1978, where the homicide rate has remained relatively stable.

FIGURE 6. AUSTRALIA, TRENDS IN HOMICIDE 1915-1998: RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION



Source: Adapted from *Causes of Death* data, ABS

Based on NHMP data, from July 1, 1989, to June 30, 1999, there were 3,386 victims of homicide in Australia. In the most recent year (1998/99), there were 341 homicide victims recorded in Australia--an increase of 30 victims from the previous year (1997/98). Across the 10-year period under review, rates of victimization have remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 1.7 and 2.0 per 100,000 population. In 1998/99, the NHMP recorded a homicide victimization rate of 1.8 per 100,000 population.

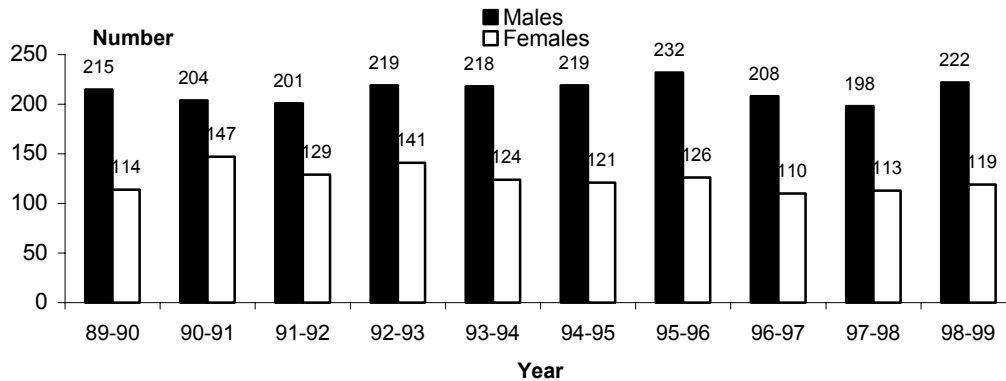
Sex and Age

Numerous studies have indicated that lethal violence is a distinctively masculine activity, with men the most common victims of homicides committed by both men and women (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Polk, 1994; Silverman & Kennedy, 1993; Wallace, 1986). Of the 3,386 victims where sex was identified,¹ 2,136 (63.2%) were male and 1,244 (36.8%) were female. On average, during the 10-year period, approximately 214 males and approximately 124 females were killed each year in Australia.

In terms of rates, females were killed at an average annual rate of 1.4 per 100,000 population. Males, on the other hand, were killed at an average annual rate of 2.4 per 100,000 population. Across the period under review, there has been a relatively stable pattern of sex differentiation over the years, with a ratio of three males killed for every two females (Figure 7).

¹ Excludes 6 victims where sex was not recorded.

FIGURE 7. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: DISTRIBUTION OF VICTIMS ACCORDING TO SEX (N = 3,380)*



*Excludes 6 victims where sex was not recorded.

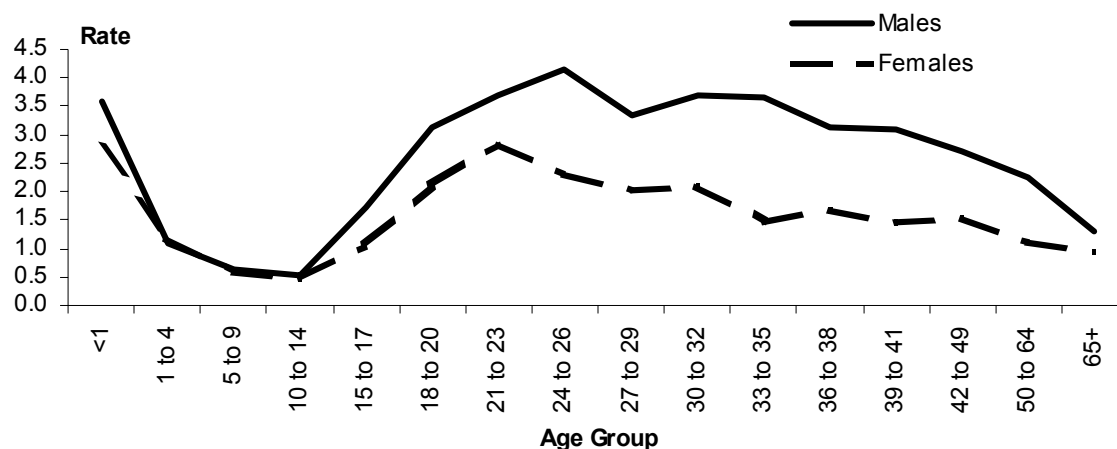
Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Despite these overall differences by sex, there are different stages during one's life cycle where the risk is relatively low and relatively high and where both males and females do not differ in their risk of homicide victimization.

An analysis of victimization rates based on both sex and age group reveals that both males and females under the age of one year are at a similar high risk of homicide victimization. The risk then decreases quite markedly for both males and females up to the age of 14, then increases dramatically between the ages of 15 to 23 years for females and 15 to 26 for males. The risk of victimization for both males and females then peaks again between the ages of 30 to 32. After these ages, the risk of victimization for males and females declines, although the decline is slower for females than males (Figure 8).

An interesting finding was that females under the age of one year suffered the highest risk of homicide victimization (average rate of 2.6 per 100,000 population)--although the rate for females between the ages of 21 to 23 years was also relatively high (average rate of 2.4). Risk of homicide victimization for males was highest between the ages of 24 to 26 years (average rate of 4.3). These findings are in accord with previous research that indicates that young adults are the most frequent victims (Foote, 1999). Many have suggested that this may be related to the overall high violence rate among younger people (Dietz, 1987; Felson, Ribner, & Siegel, 1984), and the fact that young people spend most of their time in contact with other young people (Foote, 1999; Massey & McKean, 1985). Overall, the median age for homicide victimization for females is 31 and males, 33.

FIGURE 8. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: HOMICIDE VICTIMIZATION RATES PER 100,000 RELEVANT POPULATION, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP



Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Racial Appearance

Indigenous persons make up about 2% of the total Australian population, but constitute approximately 13% of all homicide victims. On average, during the 10-year period, the homicide victimization rate for Indigenous¹ persons (where race was known) was 12.9 per 100,000 population, compared to an average rate of 1.6 per 100,000 population for non-Indigenous persons in Australia. This indicates that Indigenous persons were, on average, 8.1 times more likely to become victims of homicide than non-Indigenous persons. This over-representation of Indigenous persons has remained relatively consistent over the past decade.

¹ For the purposes of the NHMP, the categories used to delineate between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons is: Caucasian, Indigenous, Asian, and Other. It should be noted that these categories are not a perfect measure of ethnicity, or even race, as they are based on subjective assessments made by police and are, therefore, not immune from errors or inconsistencies. Also, as the determination of one's race is mainly based on the victim's external appearance, it is acknowledged that those who view themselves as Indigenous, even when their external appearance is that of a non-Indigenous person, may be, consequently, excluded from the Indigenous category and included in the Caucasian category.

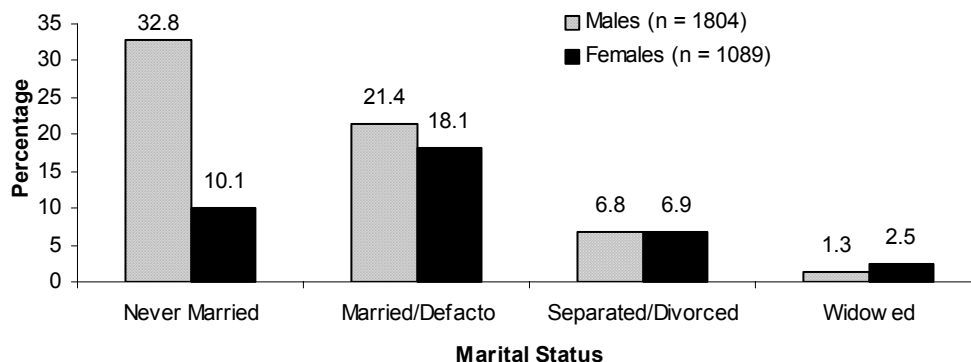
The vulnerability of Indigenous persons as victims of homicide was also assessed according to jurisdiction.¹ The greater proportion of Indigenous homicides occurred in the Northern Territory (68.6%), followed by Western Australia (28.4%), and Queensland (17.9%). Although this distribution pattern seems to follow the distribution of Indigenous persons in each respective state and territory, these findings suggest that Indigenous persons are over-represented as victims of homicide in each Australian state and territory, with the exception of Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

James and Carcach (1997) examined the possible contributing factors in the over-representation of Indigenous persons as victims of homicide, especially in the Northern Territory. They found that a high prevalence of alcohol consumption was the primary factor underlying the high victimization rates. (The Northern Territory had the largest percentage of victims who were under the influence of alcohol.)

Marital Status

Similar to other facets of homicide victimization, the distribution of homicide victims according to sex and marital status also shows marked differences. During the 10-year period, most victims who were male had never been married (32.8% of all victims), whereas most female victims were married or lived in a de facto relationship (18.1% of all victims). Of similar proportion were male and female victims who were recorded as being separated (married or de facto) or divorced at the time of the incident (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: DISTRIBUTION OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS ACCORDING TO SEX AND MARITAL STATUS (N = 2,893)*



*Excludes 493 victims where marital status was recorded as “unknown” or not stated.
Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

¹ In Australia, there are eight states and territories (jurisdictions): the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.

Employment Status

It was reported that of those victims where employment status was known, victims of homicide, irrespective of sex, were more likely to be not working² at the time of the incident. A slightly greater proportion of female victims (69.6%) were recorded as not being in the workforce at the time of the incident, in comparison to male victims (59.6%). These figures indicate that being out of the workforce may itself indicate enhanced risk of homicide victimization (Mouzos, 1999). Across the 10-year period, the proportion of victims of homicide who had not been working at the time of the incident has consistently exceeded the proportion of victims who had been engaged in some type of employment at the time of the incident.

Type of Weapon Used to Kill the Victim

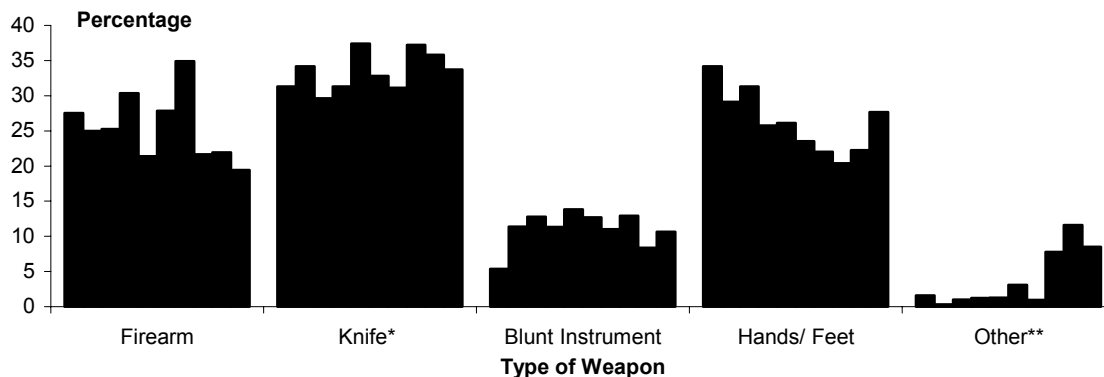
Over a 10-year period in Australia, more victims (both male and female) were killed with a knife or other sharp instrument than other types of weapons, a pattern that has remained consistent year after year (Figure 10). The second most common means of homicide was the use of assaultive force (hands and/or feet), with firearms the third most common. In the most recent year (1998/99), 32.6% (n = 111) of victims were killed with a knife or other sharp instrument. A further 26.7% (n = 91) of victims were killed with assaultive force (hands and/or feet), 18.8% (n = 64) were killed with a firearm, and 10.3% (n = 35) of homicide victims were killed with a blunt instrument.

The use of firearms to perpetrate homicide is not as prevalent in Australia as it is in the United States. Across the 10-year period, there were 808 victims of homicide who were killed with a firearm, with the average of 81 victims per year (the average rate of firearm homicide was 0.45 per 100,000 population). As homicide is an infrequent phenomenon, especially firearm-related homicide, any slight increase can have a dramatic effect on the firearm-homicide victimization rate for that particular year. For example, in 1992/93--mainly as a result of the Central Coast (NSW) Massacre, where six victims were killed--Australia recorded a firearm homicide victimization rate of 0.56 per 100 000 population. Likewise, in 1995/96, where 35 victims were killed at Port Arthur, the firearm homicide rate increased to 0.61 per 100,000 population, the highest recorded rate since the inception of the NHMP.

Overall, there appears to be a slight declining trend in the use of firearms to commit homicide in Australia (Figure 11).

² This analysis uses the categories “working” and “not working,” with the former including those victims who may have been either full-time or part-time, while the latter includes victims who were unemployed or not in the labor force (domestic duties, sole parent, disability/aged pensions).

FIGURE 10. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: YEARLY DISTRIBUTION OF VICTIMS BY TYPE OF WEAPON (N = 3,162)***



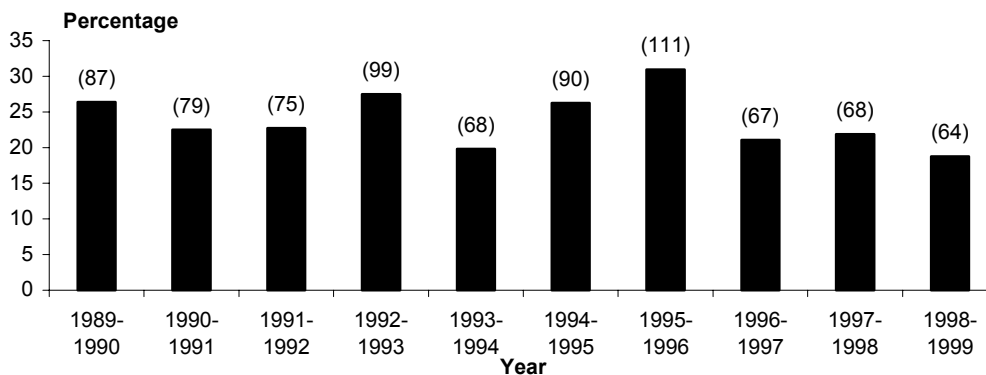
*Includes other sharp instrument.

**Includes fire, poison (including carbon monoxide poisoning), explosives, drugs, motor vehicle, ligature, and other weapons.

***Excludes 224 where type of weapon was unknown or not stated.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

FIGURE 11. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: HOMICIDE VICTIMS KILLED BY A FIREARM (N = 808), AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOMICIDES (N = 3,386)



Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Alleged Motive of the Killing

In addition to monitoring trends and patterns in the incidence of homicide, one of the main underlying aims of most homicide research is to determine and explain the reason for the act. However, this is a difficult task for a number of reasons. Most importantly, “the *causes* of

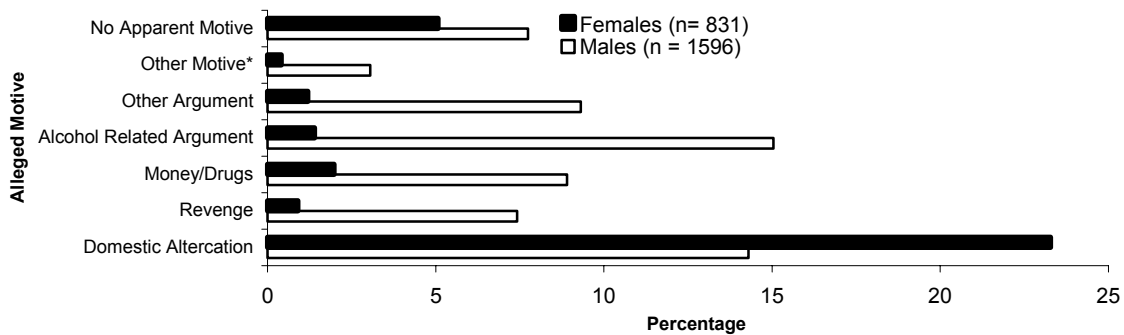
some human social events may not be the same as the *reasons* those humans acted in the first place” (Rasche, 1993, p. 77).

There are certain types of homicides where the motive for the act is not always apparent or is truly unknown. This is more characteristic of homicide incidents that have occurred simply because of some altercation over a trivial matter, or some homicides that involve children. It is difficult to determine the motive behind an offender who has delivered a fatal blow to a baby. In one particular incident where a young child died of a fatal blow to abdomen that caused internal bleeding, the offender’s alleged motive was documented as being “poor parenting skills, drug addict withdrawing and that the offender couldn’t stand the crying child” (327/99).

Nonetheless, it is still a useful exercise to examine the alleged motives of offenders and how they may differ according to the sex of the victim and whether there have been any changes over time.

It is widely accepted that there are distinct differences between the killing of men and women, and the motive is one aspect where sex differences are most apparent. Although males are more likely than females to be killed, the data suggest that when females are killed, they are most likely to be killed as a result of a domestic altercation.¹ On the other hand, when males are killed, they are most likely to be killed as a result of an alcohol-related argument (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: DISTRIBUTION OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS ACCORDING TO SEX AND ALLEGED MOTIVE (N = 2,427)**



*Includes racial/sexual vilification (hate crime), sexual gratification, envy, and other motives (deaths as a result of exorcisms).

**Excludes 959 victims where gender and alleged motive was unknown or not stated.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

¹ Domestic altercation includes jealousy, desertion or termination of a relationship, and other domestic related arguments.

OFFENDER PROFILE

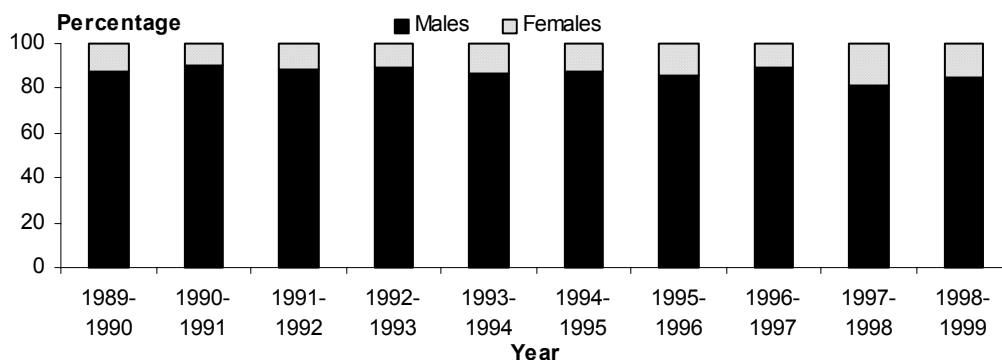
The act of homicide has been described as “a drama played out by at least two actors” (Foote, 1999). When we focus our attention on only one actor--the victim--we run the risk of failing to understand what the drama is about. The NHMP offender data set relates to persons charged with the offense of murder or manslaughter (excluding while driving). It must also be noted that a proportion of these offenders will never face trial due to insufficient evidence, and similarly, others have been or will be acquitted in the trial process.

Between July 1, 1989, and June 30, 1999, there were 3,481 offenders identified by the police in relation to the 3,150 homicide incidents. In approximately 11% of these incidents (n = 347) no offender was identified.

Sex and Age

Study after study has consistently found a dominance of male offending in homicide (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Wallace, 1986; Wolfgang, 1958; Silverman & Kennedy, 1993, only to name a few). In Australia, seven out of eight homicide offenders are male (Figure 13). During the 10-year period, 12.8% of homicide offenders (where sex was known) were female.

FIGURE 13. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: DISTRIBUTION OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS ACCORDING TO SEX (N = 3,404)*



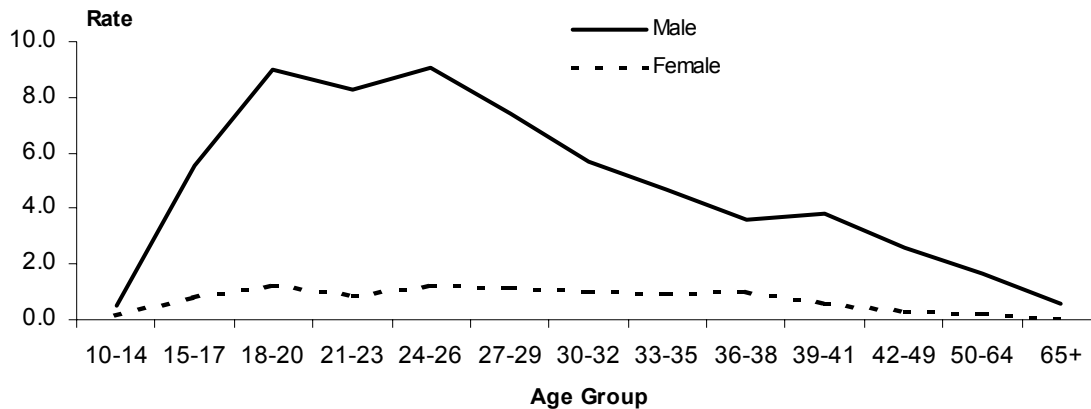
*Excludes 77 offenders where gender was unknown or not stated.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

In addition to sex differences in homicide offending, there are also a number of differences when the age of homicide offenders is examined (Figure 14). Between the ages of 18 and 26, the ratio of male and female offending rates is approximately 9:1. It appears that after the age of 26 years, the rate of males offending decreases more substantially than female rates, until the age of 36-38 years, when male offending rates increase again slightly, until the age of 41 years. In comparison, female offending rates begin to decrease until the age of 33-35 years,

but they increase again slightly between the ages of 36-38 years. After the age of 65, both male (rate of 0.59) and female (rate of 0.03) offending rates are relatively low.

FIGURE 14. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: HOMICIDE OFFENDING RATES PER 100,000 RELEVANT POPULATION, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP



Source. National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Marital Status

Given that most male victims of homicide were single, and that homicide occurs predominantly between male offenders and male victims (Daly & Wilson, 1988; James & Carcach, 1997; Polk, 1994), we would also expect that the majority of male offenders would be single. An analysis of the distribution of homicide offenders according to sex and marital status confirmed our expectations: approximately 51% of all homicide offenders were single males.

Based on what we already know about who are most likely to be victims of female homicide offenders--that is, current or former partners--it is not surprising that the majority of female offenders during the 10-year period under review were married or living in a de facto relationship.

Between July 1, 1989, and June 30, 1999, the proportion of homicide offenders who were single at the time of the incident has increased gradually (Figure 15). In 1989/90, approximately 49% of homicide offenders were reported to be single, whereas in 1998/99, approximately 63% of offenders were single. The proportion of homicide offenders who were married or were living in a de facto relationship has decreased from 35.6% in 1989/90 to 28.2% in 1998/99 (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: YEARLY DISTRIBUTION OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS (N = 3,139)*



Excludes 342 offenders where sex and marital status were unknown or not stated.
 Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Employment Status

Research suggests that homicide most often occurs among those who belong to what can be described as the under-class of Australian society (James & Carcach, 1997). The profile of homicide victims in Australia indicates that the majority of victims of homicide were not working at the time of the incident. An examination of the distribution of homicide offenders based on gender and employment status indicates that likewise the majority of homicide offenders were also not working at the time of the incident. During the period from July 1, 1989, to June 30, 1999, almost 75% of male offenders, and just under 9 out of 10 female offenders, were not working at the time of the incident.

VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP PROFILE

In recent years, there is a general consensus regarding writings on homicide: Regardless of the classification system followed, writers consistently consider the victim-offender relationship to be of paramount importance (Cooney, 1994; Decker, 1993; Palmer & Humphrey, 1980; Riedel & Zahn, 1985; Silverman & Kennedy, 1987; Wolfgang, 1958). In simple terms, homicide can be described as a lethal interaction between at least two persons--the victim and the offender. However, without actually considering the social relationship between the two “actors” we cannot begin to fully comprehend the dynamics that led to the homicide occurring, given that there are many different paths that lead to homicide victimization and offending.

Types of Victim-Offender Relationships

Research that has examined victim-offender relationships in homicide has characterized this relationship as a dichotomy--either as strangers or non-strangers (Messner & Tardiff, 1985; Sampson, 1987)--or as primary or secondary relationships (Parker & Smith, 1979; Smith & Parker, 1980). The latter classifies primary relationships as those between intimates (lovers,

relatives, and friends), and secondary relationships as those that involve persons with no prior relationship.

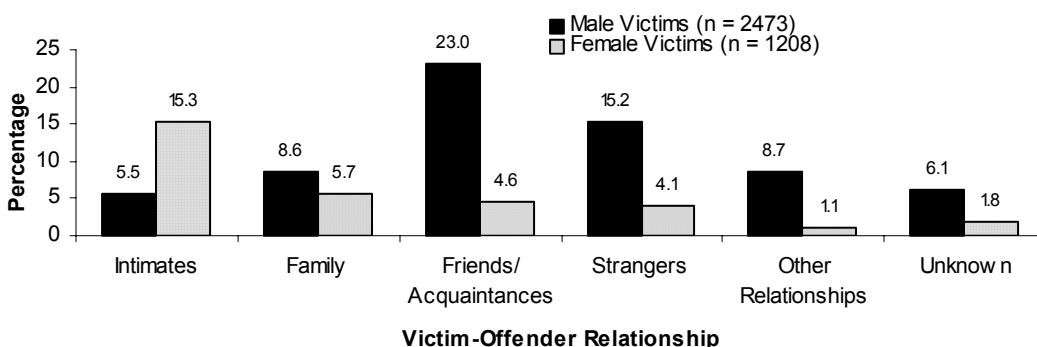
Others (Silverman & Kennedy, 1987; Smith & Stanko, 1998) conceptualize the social relationship between the victim and offender in terms of their social distance from one another by referring to victim-offender relationships as maps of “relational space,” wherein offenders and victims interact.

Acknowledging the limitations of a dichotomy classification scheme of victim-offender relationships, and considering that the NHMP data set includes information on some 26 different types of victim-offender relationships, the data were arranged and analyzed according to the following types of victim-offender relationships: (a) intimates (spouses, ex-spouses, persons in current or former de facto relationships, current or former boy/girlfriends, extra-marital lovers, or partners/former partners of same-sex relationships), (b) family (sons, daughters [including stepchildren], parents [including stepparents, custodial and non-custodial], grandparents, siblings [including stepsiblings] and other family relationships), (c) friends and acquaintances (close friends and acquaintances, including neighbors), (d) strangers (victim relatively unknown to the offender at the time of the incident), (e) other relationships (sex rivals, gang members, prostitute-client, fellow inmates in a correctional/mental healthcare facility, business relationships, and relationships where the victim and the offender are known to each other but the type of relationship is unknown), and (f) unknown (victim-offender relationship yet to be determined by police).

Despite media portrayals of homicide as predominantly stranger perpetrated, homicide in Australia is a crime that occurs in large part between persons who know each other. In Australia, during the period July 1, 1989, to June 30, 1999, female victims were most likely to be killed by an intimate partner (Figure 16). In contrast, male victims were more likely to be killed by a friend or an acquaintance. Similarly, male victims were more likely than female victims to be killed by a stranger (Figure 16). These findings confirm previous research which indicates that most people are killed by someone they know, either by an intimate partner or by a friend or acquaintance.

Of the homicide incidents that took place within the family, the majority occurred between custodial parent/child relationships (4.4%). A further 4.1% occurred between non-custodial parent/child or step-parent/child relationships. Approximately 2% of homicide incidents occurred between siblings or stepsiblings, and a further 3% took place within other family relationships.

FIGURE 16. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VICTIM AND THE OFFENDER (N = 3,681)*



*Excludes 4 cases where the gender of the victim was unknown.

Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Jurisdictional Comparisons

As far as jurisdictional differences were concerned, in all states except Tasmania and Western Australia, when a homicide occurred it was most likely to occur between friends and acquaintances. This was followed by intimate partner relationships, with the exception of New South Wales. In New South Wales, homicides between strangers were the second most common type of victim-offender interaction.

When a homicide occurred in Tasmania, it was most likely to have occurred between strangers. This, however, was most likely the result of the Port Arthur incident where the relationship between the offender and 33 of the 35 victims was classified as “strangers.” If the Port Arthur incident was excluded from analysis, then homicides in Tasmania were most likely to have occurred between family or friends/acquaintances (25.7%). Only 18.9% of homicides in Tasmania would have occurred between strangers.

On the other hand, when a homicide occurred in Western Australia, it was most likely to occur between intimate partners. In the Northern Territory, significantly fewer homicide incidents occurred between strangers, in comparison to the rest of Australia (11.2% and 19.3%, respectively). The greater proportion of homicides in the Northern Territory occurred either between intimate partners, family members, or friends and acquaintances (75.7%).

HOMICIDE IN THE COURSE OF OTHER CRIME

Homicide is arguably the most serious offense that can be committed against a person. However, on some rare occasions, the act of homicide is often a “side effect” or unintentional consequence of another criminal act (Maxfield, 1989). Homicides that occur during the commission of other crimes are commonly classified as “instrumental homicides” because the death of the victim is subsidiary to the primary goal: money, property, power, control (Miethe & Drass, 1999).

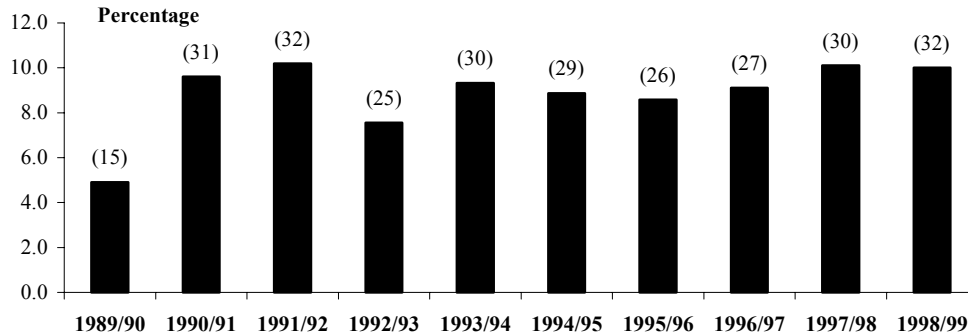
Over a 10-year period, the number of homicide incidents occurring in the course of other crimes has remained relatively stable. In total, approximately 13% of all homicide incidents occurred in the course of other crimes (n = 412), with the average for the 3 most recent years at 14.8%.

Homicide in the Course of Robbery

Robbery is both a property crime and a crime of violence (Cook, 1987; Indermaur, 1995). The definition of robbery delineates the relationship between these two dimensions: the offense of robbery involves the unlawful taking of property under confrontational circumstances from the immediate possession of a person (or an organization), accompanied by force, threat of force or violence, and/or causing the victim to be fearful (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Where the robbery is followed by homicide, then the force or violence employed by the offender has been of a lethal nature. The victim of the initial crime of robbery becomes the victim in the homicide as well. This is usually referred to as “double victimization” (Polk, 1994). Across the 10-year period under review, homicide during the course of robbery accounted for 67% of all homicide incidents that occurred during the course of other crimes.

Cook (1987) argues that the incidence of robbery and the incidence of robbery/homicide follow similar patterns. However, the following analysis does not offer support to this contention. It appears that although the incidence of robbery in Australia is increasing, the proportion of homicide incidents that have occurred in the commission of robbery has remained relatively stable over the years (Figure 17). During 1998/99, about one out of 10 homicide incidents occurred in the course of robbery/theft in Australia.

FIGURE 17. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: HOMICIDE INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED IN THE COMMISSION OF ROBBERY (N = 277) AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOMICIDE INCIDENTS (N =3,150)



Number of incidents that occurred in the commission of robbery per year shown in brackets.
 Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Homicide in the Course of Sexual Assault

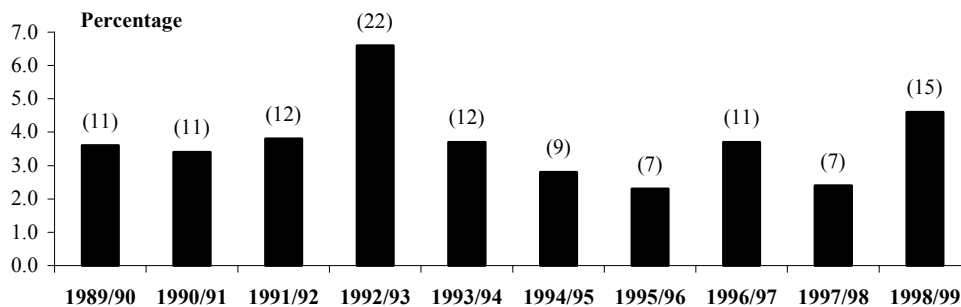
Sexual homicide has been defined as “the killing of a person in the context of power, sexuality, and brutality” (Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1988, p. 1). Previous research suggests that homicide incidents that occur in the course of sexual assault are characterized as being among the most violent of all killings in Australia (Wallace, 1986). Typically, there is no pre-existing relationship between the victim and offender (Wallace, 1986), and such crimes are also more likely to receive widespread publicity. Similarly, it is this type of homicide incident that would also create the greatest fear because of its apparent random nature (Ressler et al., 1988).

Based on NHMP data, approximately 3.7% of all homicide incidents (n = 117) between 1989 and 1999 occurred in the course of sexual assault. Despite yearly fluctuations due to the low number of incidents, homicide incidents occurring in the course of sexual assault have remained relatively stable over the years (Figure 18). As may be the case in some robbery-homicides, lack of cooperation or resistance from the victim may instigate the killing in some sexual homicides.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This paper has presented a statistical overview of each of the essential components of homicide: incident, victim, offender, and the relationship between the victim and the offender. As we have seen, there are a number of common factors associated with homicide victimization and offending in Australia. For example, single, unemployed males featured predominantly as both victims and offenders of homicide; a knife was the most common weapon used to kill victims, irrespective of their gender, and the incident was most likely to occur in a residential premise.

FIGURE 18. AUSTRALIA, July 1, 1989 - June 30, 1999: HOMICIDE INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED IN THE COMMISSION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT (N =117) AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOMICIDE INCIDENTS (N = 3,150)



Number of homicide incidents that occurred in the course of sexual assault per year shown in brackets.
 Source: National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Acknowledging that homicide is not one type of crime, but that it consists of a variety of subsets--dependent on the circumstances of the event, and the interaction between the victim and the offender--is an important step forward in being able to specifically tailor prevention measures to address the various facets of homicide in Australia.

It is obvious that homicide only represents the most extreme and the least common form of violence in Australian society. However, most acts of lethal violence begin as another kind of confrontation--an argument between spouses, family or friends, a robbery, a drunken fight between acquaintances, the abuse of a child or elderly person--that escalates to a fatal event. Preventing homicide requires focusing on the more common forms of violence in our society, and on reducing the risk of homicide victimization and offending where the risk is greatest (Mouzos, 1999).

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DISCUSSION

The nature of the discussion did not lend itself to individual questions/answers and comments. Responses from **Matthew Lee** indicated that: 1990-92 data were employed. The size of manufacturers was based on the number of firms in the county, not the number of jobs. The counties included were considered “non-metropolitan.” About 25% of the small counties do not report crime statistics to the FBI. And those counties with “zero” recorded for population cannot automatically be discarded. There are agencies that report homicides, but that do not report population figures.

The paper by **Jenny Mouzos** was based on her book by the same title. Questions primarily focused on trying to tease out causal relationships between homicide and predictor variables, and an expansion of the descriptive statistics. Responses noted that: The ratio of men to women killed is 3:2. Most victims are killed in their own homes, but only 21% are intimate homicides. There are eight states in Australia with one large city in each. There are a large number of indigenous persons in the north where homicide is eight times higher than in other parts of the country. Most femicides in that part of the country involve alcohol. Semi-automatic firearms were banned in 1997, so there has not been enough time yet to see what affect, if any, that will have on homicide rates. Knives were the weapon most often used in homicide.

CHAPTER FIVE

MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND HOMICIDE

THE MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM AND TIME OF DEATH

Edmund R. Donoghue, Office of the Medical Examiner, County of Cook
2121 W. Harrison Street, Chicago, IL 60612

INTRODUCTION

In Illinois, the official charged with death investigations and certifications is either a coroner, or a medical examiner. The coroner system, used in 101 counties, involves an elected coroner, with no necessary qualifications for the office. Cook County involved a medical examiner, appointed, and meeting specific qualifications, including that he be a physician licensed to practice medicine in the state, and certified in anatomic and forensic pathology. What is essential for a good medico-legal death investigation system is good people, with an adequate budget, enforcing good laws

MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES

Under the law, the medical examiner investigates deaths in following circumstances: (a) criminal violence; (b) suicide; © accident; (d) sudden death of someone in apparent good health; (e) deaths by persons unattended by a licensed physician; (f) deaths in suspicious or unusual circumstances; (g) criminal abortions; (h) deaths from poisoning or attributable to an adverse reaction to drugs or alcohol; (I) deaths from disease constituting a threat to public health; (j) deaths resulting from employment involving disease, injury, or a toxic agent; (k) deaths during medical diagnostic or therapeutic procedures; (l) deaths in any prison or penal institution; (m) deaths when a person is involuntarily confined in a jail, prison hospital, other institutions, or in police custody; (n) deaths when any human body is to be cremated, dissected, or buried at sea; (o) unclaimed bodies; and (p) when a body is brought into a new medico-legal jurisdiction without proper medical certification.

In the course of the investigation, some thought should be devoted to the degree of “proof” necessary to properly certify deaths which may be involved in litigation. The proof required in a criminal investigation is a higher degree than the proof required in civil litigation.

CAUSES OF DEATH

A cause of death is a disease, abnormality, injury, or poisoning that contributed directly or indirectly to death. The mode of dying (e.g., heart failure, respiratory failure) should not be stated at all, since it is no more than a symptom of the fact that death occurred; it provides no useful information. If trauma is either the underlying cause of death, or a contributing cause of death, the manner of the onset of the trauma must be indicated: (a) homicide, the killing of one person by another person; (b) suicide, the intentional taking of one’s own life by a person who is sane and has reached the age of discretion; © accident, a death occurring unexpectedly or unintentionally; (d) natural, a death occurring as the result of a natural disease process; or (e) undetermined, a violent death where it cannot be decided which term--homicide, accident, suicide--best describes the manner

of death.

The term “undetermined” is intended solely for cases in which it is impossible to establish the circumstances of death after a thorough investigation. A professionally competent, searching autopsy, and a toxicologic examination of the body fluids and organs, coupled with the best available bacteriologic, virologic, and immunologic studies, may fail to reveal the cause of death. The phrase “cause of death undetermined following autopsy, toxicologic, and histologic examination, etc.” indicates the extent of the investigation undertaken.

POSTMORTEM CHANGES AND TIME OF DEATH

The first thing to do is to determine the interval between death and postmortem investigation. Two obvious questions are: (a) when was the deceased last seen alive? And (b) when was the deceased found death? Postmortem changes may be of use in determining whether the time of death is closer to the time when the deceased as found death or to the time when the deceased was last seen alive. In general, associated evidence should be given more weight than postmortem changes in determining the time of death.

Rigor mortis

Rigor mortis is the stiffening of a dead body. It begins at the time of death, and becomes manifest two to four hours after death. Rigor mortis is generally complete about 12 hours after death. It then persists for a variable time and slowly disappears.

Livor mortis

Livor mortis is the discoloration of the skin the dependent parts of a dead body. It begins to form at the time of death, but may not be perceptible for as much as two hours after death. Livor mortis reaches maximum development between 8 and 12 hours after death, and becomes fixed. The color of livor mortis varies with some causes of death. The usual color is red-purple. Dark purple is associated with asphyxia, pink with cyanide, cherry red with carbon monoxide, and brown with nitrates.

Algor mortis

Algor mortis is the cooling of a dead body (and has nothing to do with an unsuccessful presidential campaign), and is affected by some chemical determinations.

Chemical decomposition

Putrefaction occurs during the wet decomposition of a body, and is due principally to bacteria contained within the body. Examples of its effects include skin slippage, particularly from the hands and feet; marbling; gas formation; and blistering.

Mummification occurs during dry decomposition of a body, and occurs in a place where the humidity is low. With mummification, the body may be preserved for long periods of time.

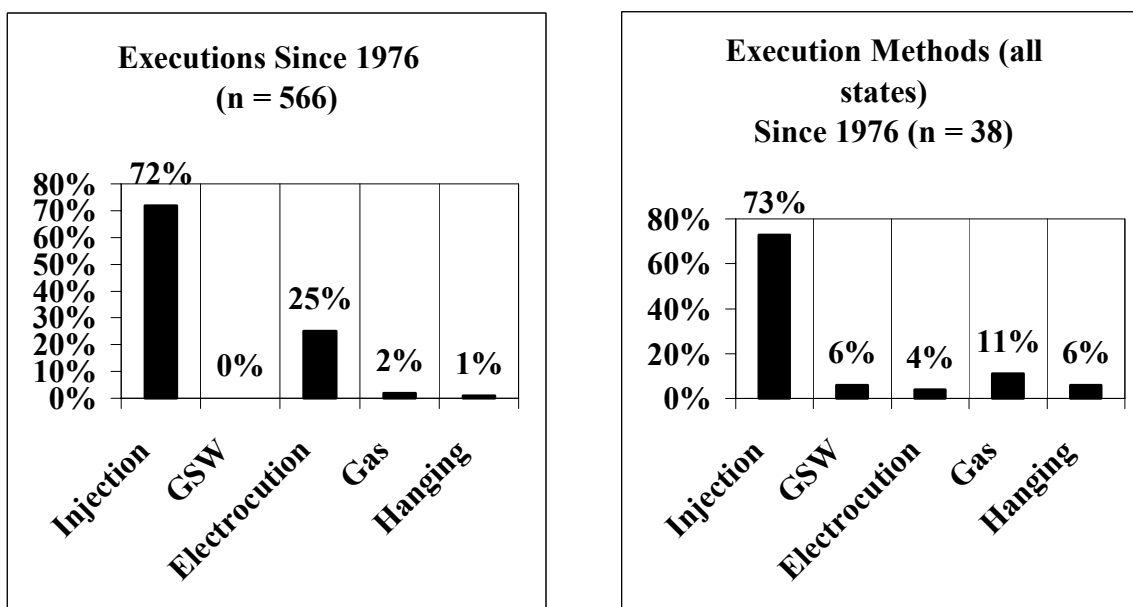
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN ALABAMA

J.C. Upshaw Downs, Department of Forensic Sciences
P.O. Box 3510, Auburn, AL 36831

ABSTRACT

As of January 2001, 38 states and the federal government practice capital punishment. Most (72%) of the executions since the United States reinstated the death penalty in 1976 have been by lethal injection (see Figure 1). Given that 73% of the states offer injection as the primary mode (see Figure 2), this percentage is not surprising.

FIGURES 1 AND 2. NUMBER AND METHODS OF EXECUTION SINCE 1976



As one of only two states to rely exclusively on electrocution as the means of judicial execution, Alabama has been challenged on this method as administering “cruel and unusual” punishment. The subject of state-sponsored and -run homicide is highly emotionally charged and contentious. As such, this report makes no attempt to enter into the pro or con debate; rather, it attempts to dispel common myths surrounding the process and results of electrocution. A brief overview of capital electrocution and the history of capital punishment in Alabama—including convict demographics and offenses—are provided. As controversy has arisen regarding the extent of what some maintain as suffering experienced by the condemned during execution, the mechanism of death in judicial electrocution is compared to that of other forms of execution (lethal injection, firing squad, gas inhalation, and hanging). Finally, an overview of the modern and historical demographics is presented.

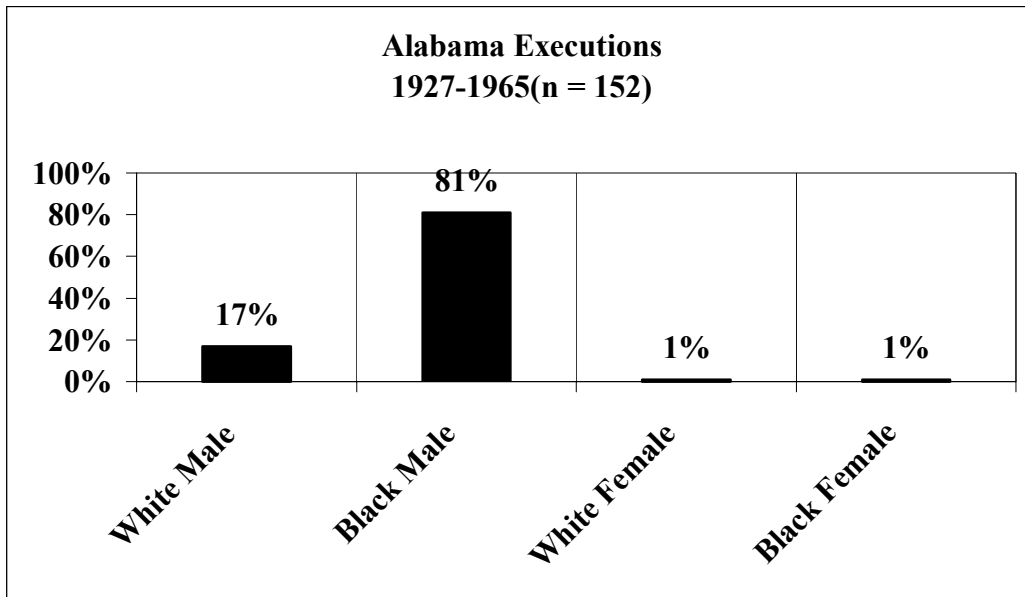
INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, much press has been given to the subject of the death penalty (Hallifax, 1999; “Recent editorials,” n.d.). With the recent increased recognition of the value of scientific evidence (DNA) to exonerate individuals, many states have decided to give the process of capital punishment a second look. Further, a recent study (“Death penalty appeals,” 2000) of 4,578 appeals in capital convictions has shown that 68% were reversed, of which 51% received a reduced sentence, and 5% were found not guilty at retrial. Only 12% of these retrials confirmed the death sentence. As of this writing, the American Medical Association is considering a call for a moratorium on the death penalty over concerns about DNA evidence, quality legal representation, and potential harm to the judicial system (“AMA asked,” 2000). Through 1995, Alabama ranks fifth in capital convictions with 308 (5,760 nationally). Alabama’s reported reversal rate is 77%, versus 68% nationally (“Death penalty appeals,” 2000). With so much at stake, the justice system is designed to err on the side of caution, which is likely the reason that no case of the capital execution of an exonerated inmate has been reported (Cassell, 2000; “Death penalty appeals,” 2000). Still, given the permanence and magnitude of execution, the obligation is on the state to ensure not only that the innocent are freed, but that if the guilty are to be killed, the method should be humane and without unusual pain and suffering.

BACKGROUND

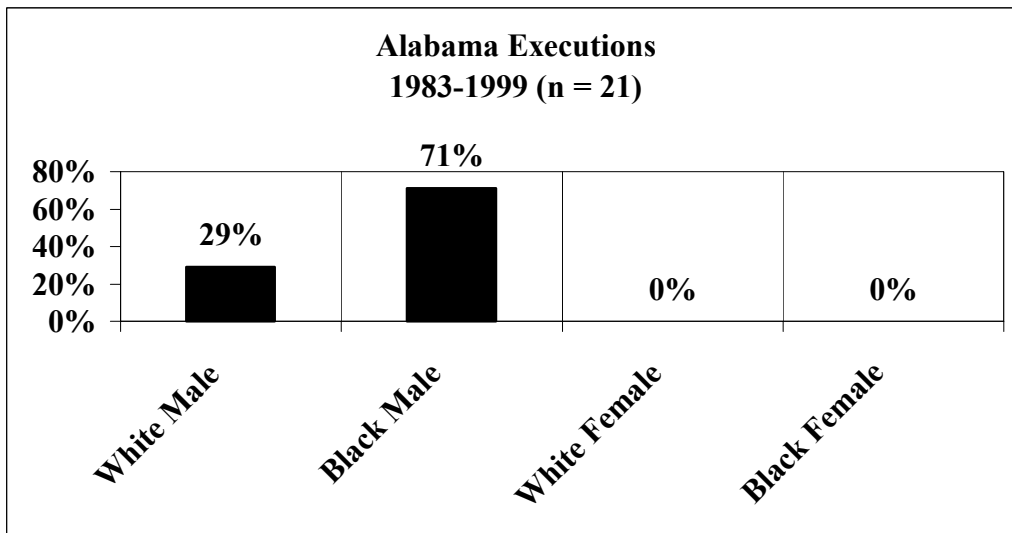
Until 1927, executions in Alabama were carried out by hanging and took place in jails or at the county courthouse. In 1927, the state began capital electrocution and the death chamber was moved to the state prison. From 1927 to 1965, 152 convicts were executed (see Figure 3). Charges included murder, rape, robbery, and burglary.

FIGURE 3. ALABAMA EXECUTIONS 1927-1965



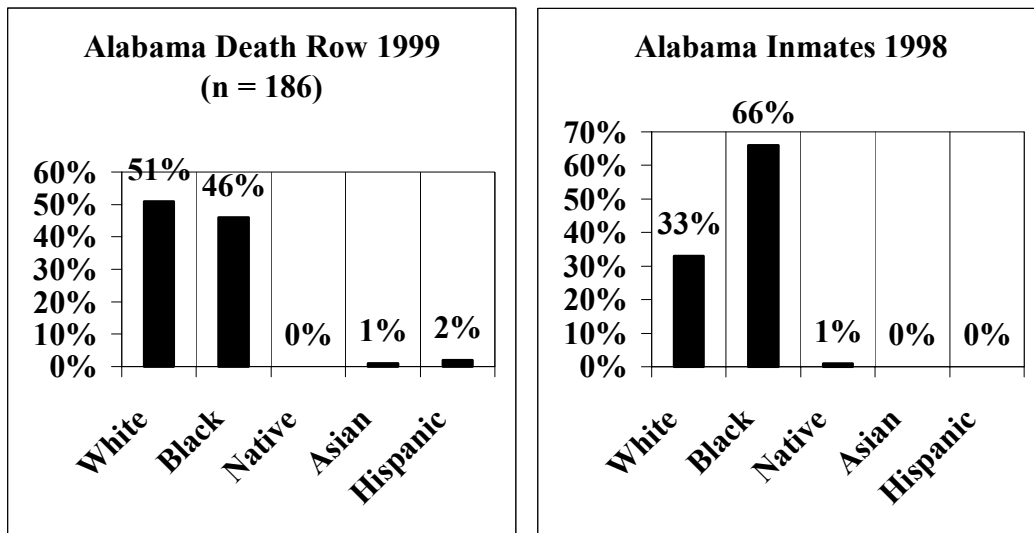
Over that 38-year period, questions of racial and sexual bias were raised (see Figure 3) when 26 White males, 123 Black males, 2 White females, and 1 Black female were executed. Since Alabama’s reinstatement of the death penalty in 1983, the executed population demographics (Snell & Downs, 2000) are: 6 White males and 15 Black males (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4. RACE AND SEX DEMOGRAPHICS OF ALABAMA EXECUTIONS 1983-1999



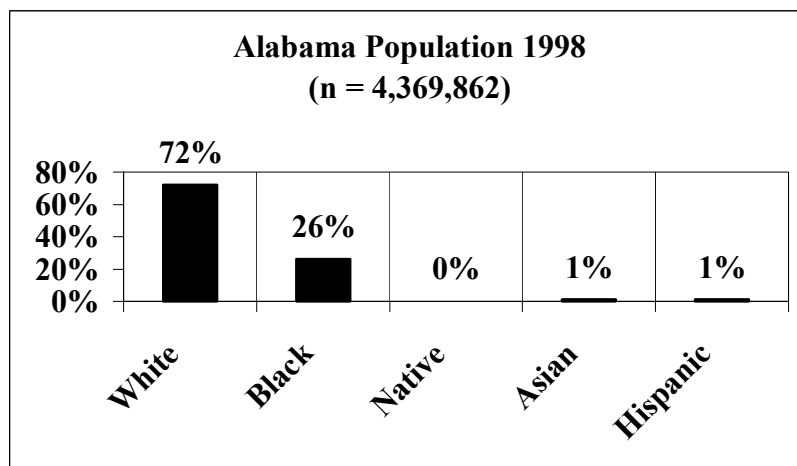
Alabama’s death row population as of October 1999 included: 97 White males, 86 Black males, 1 Asian male, 1 White female, and 1 Black female (“Alabama,” n.d.) (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. RACE DEMOGRAPHICS OF ALABAMA DEATH ROW AND INMATE POPULATIONS



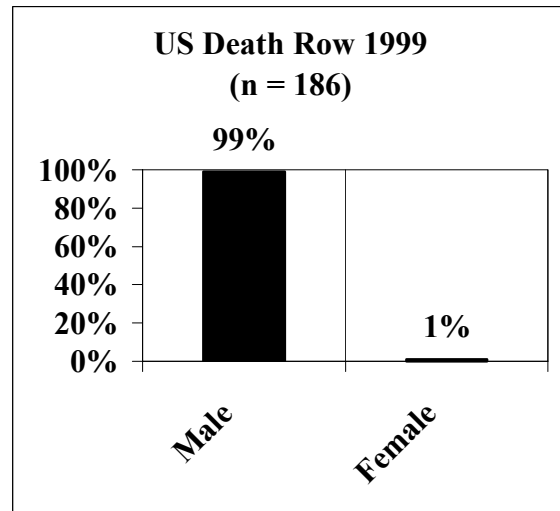
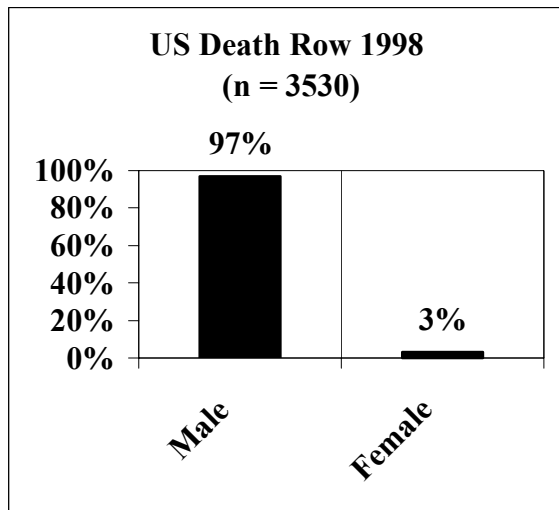
The average age of inmates was 36 years, with an average age of 28 years and 8 months on conviction, and an average death row incarceration period of 7 years and 3 months (longest 21 years, 5 months) (Alabama Department of Corrections, personal communication, June 2000). The state's Black to White ratio in the overall general population is approximately 1:3 (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. ALABAMA POPULATION, 1998



Nationally, the percentage of Blacks executed compared to Whites was 81% up to the year 1965, but has fallen to 71% since the reinstatement of capital punishment in 1976. The sexual discrepancy is also significant (see Figures 7 and 8) as the percentage of executions in Alabama is 97% male, and the state's death row population, 99% male.

FIGURES 7 AND 8. SEX DEMOGRAPHICS OF DEATH ROW, 1998 AND 1999



HISTORY OF ELECTROCUTION

In order to place modern execution by electrocution in context, it is necessary to understand the history of the process. The electric chair was invented as a direct result of problems with capital hangings in New York. In May 1887, then New York Governor Hill appointed a commission to devise a more humane manner of execution than hanging. Of 34 potential methods, only 4 were considered practicable: firing squad, hanging, garrote, and guillotine. All alternatives were deemed unacceptable based on their unreliability and/or potential to cause disfigurement or subject the condemned to cruelty. Thus, new methods had to be devised. Two were proposed: lethal injection and electrocution. The former was not in favor--it would require a licensed physician to violate the Hippocratic oath against administering poisons--and was therefore discarded. Thus, electrocution became the means of choice ("Electric chair timeline," n.d.; "Old Sparky," 1998).

At the time, a dentist member of the New York commission attempted to elicit the support of Thomas Edison, recognized as a world leader in the field of electricity. Edison declined to be involved due to his objection to capital punishment. Persistence and a desire to find a "more humane method than the rope" convinced Edison to assist. Edison's stated goal was to find a means "which will perform its work in the shortest space of time and inflict the least amount of suffering. . . ." Although for the most part only indirectly involved, Edison did facilitate the experimentation upon which the New York Medico-Legal Society based its unanimous recommendation of using alternating current (AC) versus direct current (DC) ("Electric chair timeline," n.d.; "Old Sparky," 1998). Although disputed at the time, AC has many times more potential lethality than does DC electricity (DiMaio & DiMaio, 1989). Critics questioned the original animal experiments in electrocution as not being directly translatable to humans due to a marked size disparity.

The first capital conviction to be carried out by electrocution was handed down on May 10,

1889. The sentence was appealed based on the constitutional question of cruel and unusual punishment. A stay was granted, pending a hearing. Edison reportedly opined “that the only possible objection that could be raised to legal electrocution was mutilation of the body.” The defense argued that the means was neither painless nor certain and produced survivors of lightning strikes and high-voltage electrical shock to make their point. The state countered with Edison, who maintained that AC electrocution would be instantaneous: “The passage of the current . . . produces instantaneous death.” The sentence was upheld and carried out on August 6, 1890, in Auburn Prison by means of head and spine electrodes with 700 volts for 17 seconds followed by 1030 volts for 72 seconds. Witnesses reported a charring smell near the end of the procedure (“Biology,” n.d.; “Old Sparky,” 1998).

DISCUSSION

With relatively minor modification, the same process is used today. Electrodes with underlying moist sponges are placed on the shaved head and left calf of the condemned. (Edison proposed a two-hand water electrode system, which had unsatisfactory results.) In Alabama, the system is run by the warden who throws a switch, starting a generator and sending electricity to a capacitor, which discharges at 1900 volts for a period of 20 seconds. The voltage is then reduced and the shock continued for 80 seconds (Alabama Department of Corrections, personal communication, June 2000).

The effects of judicial execution by electrocution on the human body are misunderstood by and/or misrepresented to the public (Bedau, n.d.; “Biology,” n.d.; Bobit, 1999; “Death penalty facts,” n.d.). Descriptions include eyes popping out of the sockets, blood coming from the eyes, bloody sweat, clouds of smoke billowing from the convict’s body, boiling blood, cooked organs, etc. In addition, the body is described as gasping for air, “proving” consciousness and thus suffering. Examples cited include inmates who were electrocuted, only to be examined and found to have a heartbeat, requiring a second (or third) round of electrocution (Radelet, n.d.). Experience with twenty-one postmortem examinations since the reinstatement of the death penalty (in 1983 in Alabama) indicates otherwise. None of the postmortem exams indicated eye avulsion, bloody skin or eye discharge, exceedingly hot body temperature, or gross organ coagulation. With the generation of heat, a small tuft of steam (from the sponge) does originate from the calf electrode. Coincident with the latter, second- and third-degree cutaneous burns do eventually form at the electrode contact points.

Preconceptions regarding electricity can be deceiving. For example, despite huge voltages, most lightning strikes are not associated with entry or exit burns. The degree of burning relates to the resistance--more burn means greater resistance. Heat generated by electricity corresponds to the square of the amperage times the resistance. The resistance of skin may range from 300 ohms/cm² for wet skin, to 500 ohms/cm² for moist skin, to 20,000 or 30,000 ohms/cm² for dry skin. The organs specifically may be palpably warm. However, gross coagulation (cooking) has not been observed to any significant degree. Specifically, despite claims to the contrary, the brain under the electrode has not been described as charred. No gross brain injury or hemorrhage has been found.

This latter point is of major significance because it addresses the concern of some critics that

due to the marked resistance of bone to electrical conduction, the applied lethal current skips around the brain, travelling along the skull surface. In this way, it is postulated, the convict is left to fully experience muscular paralysis and intense pain from electrical burns. This theory is based on the differential conductivity of tissues: nerve, vessels, and muscle conduct electricity well, while fat, tendon, and bone are poor conductors. This theory fails on two points. First, the fact is that diploic blood vessels perforate the skull abundantly, which would then allow a direct low-resistance path to the brain, another low resistance path. Second, if the current did arc through soft tissues around the skull, it would then converge at the base of the skull where the brainstem and vital structures are located. In either case, once the current reaches the central nervous system, there is little resistance to flow and the nervous tissues would massively depolarize, rendering the subject unconscious. Support for the latter point is the absence of muscular and soft tissue coagulation in the neck, as opposed to that seen at the calf. Further, cutaneous electrical arcing is conspicuously absent at the ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and breasts. The presence of such arcing at the external genitalia supports a central corporal route of current flow through the body and thence to the left leg.

As stated above, some argue that the process of electrocution paralyzes the inmate, who remains conscious while the muscles violently contract--to the point at which bone fractures are produced. None of the Alabama postmortem examinations thus far conducted has shown any such trauma. The process of electrocution does cause an involuntary muscular tetany (increasing contraction). When the current is released, this spasm is released, causing the body to visibly relax. With the end of forced muscular contraction, there is accompanying movement of the chest wall which may force air over the vocal cords, eventuating in a postmortem "groan" or "sigh."

CONCLUSION

In summation, although some might argue the need for capital punishment at all, postmortem examination of electrocuted inmates does not support the popular notion that the process is inherently flawed or particularly gruesome. Death by this means is no more cruel or unusual than the other forms of capital punishment described, and is, in fact, arguably the single method to avoid pain and suffering of the condemned.

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DISCUSSION

Paul Blackman: Ed, how do you handle issues like religious objections to autopsy?

Ed Donoghue: No law requires we abide by such objections. However, we do take them into consideration.

Jane Koziol-McLain: If people die and there isn't an attending physician, how is this handled?

Ed Donoghue: It depends on the circumstances.

Paul Blackman: With an external cause of suicide, would you ever list a motive?

Ed Donoghue: You could, but in many cases it would be difficult to identify a motive.

Kathleen Heide: How do you determine sanity?

Ed Donoghue: I'm not a psychiatrist, but if they had been hearing voices

Vanessa Leggett: But what would be the manner of death?

Ed Donoghue: It could be undetermined, it could be determined.

Chris Rasche: What about the case of homeless people, where you cannot find anybody to verify mental illness?

Ed Donoghue: We don't always need that type of verification. Sometimes the crime scene tells us a lot.

Jenny Mouzos: What proportion of suicides are carbon monoxide poisoning?

Ed Donoghue: I'm not sure.

Allegra Kim: If you look at the definition of homicide, what if it is unintentional?

Ed Donoghue: That is where it becomes complicated. Motor vehicle accidents where intentionality is not present would not be classified as homicides.

Roland Chilton: What percentage of cases are undetermined?

Ed Donoghue: Three to five percent.

Becky Block: Are these case kept open longer?

Ed Donoghue: Not always. If new evidence becomes available, we would be willing to change death certificates.

Elizabeth DeValve: What about prisoners executed on death row?

Ed Donoghue: Fortunately, there are no prisons in Cook County.

Chris Rasche: Jamie, you said in your presentation that occupational electrocutions have gone down. Have you any idea why?

Jamie Downs: OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Act/Administration].

Barrie Ritter: Why do they cover the inmates face in an electrocution?

Jamie Downs: I think it is down out of respect for the condemned, to respect his privacy.

Kathleen Heide: Does the American Medical Association have an official position on lethal injection?

Jamie Downs: I'm not a member of the AMA. Ed?

Ed Donoghue: It is considered unethical for physicians to participate in an execution.

Dallas Drake: After the switch is flipped in an electrocution, how long does it take until death?

Jamie Downs: In my opinion, death is instantaneous.

Dallas Drake: Then why do they continue to apply electricity?

Jamie Downs: To ensure that they stay dead.

Vanessa Leggett: How hot does the body get in an electrocution?

Jamie Downs: One-hundred thirty-eight degrees measured body temperature.

Roland Chilton: Why do you need to do an autopsy?

Jamie Downs: We autopsy all homicides. It is also done to demonstrate that there is no other inflicted injury.

CHAPTER SIX

**REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRESENTATION OF HOMICIDE
IN NIBRS, THE MEDIA, AND RESEARCH**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE NATIONAL INCIDENT-BASED REPORTING SYSTEM (NIBRS): 1997

Roland Chilton, Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA 01003

ABSTRACT

Violence by “intimates” is expanded to include violence inflicted on children by their parents or other family members. Using information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s new National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) we are able to look at the age, sex, and relationship of victims and offenders for murder, assault, robbery, and sexual assault. The 1997 NIBRS data indicate that women were involved in one third of the murders of family members and that this number increases to 45% when one of the offenders was a parent of the victim. Other NIBRS data suggest that thousands of women engaged in simple or aggravated assaults. In about 2,000 of these incidents the victim’s mother was the offender and the victim was under 18 years old. Expanding the limited focus on intimates beyond spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, and girlfriend classifications may be one of the major contributions NIBRS has made to enhance understanding of interpersonal and domestic violence.

VIOLENCE BY INTIMATES

In 1998 the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) published a fact book on violence by intimates (Greenfield et al., 1998). The authors defined intimates as those with whom the offender had a relationship as a current or former spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend. They did not discuss the reasons for their focus on these relationships. But since “intimates” implies some close, personal relationship, perhaps romantic or sexual, we can assume they were interested in the violence that sometimes occurs among people so related. However, we know that even the terms husband and wife do not always indicate a person’s current living arrangements let alone that person’s long-term commitments. We thus have to assume that interest in violence by intimates is typically related to issues of violence against women or domestic violence between cohabitating partners.

It would be logical and useful to extend the violence-by-intimate categorization to include violence against children by parents, guardians, or close relatives. Parent-child arrangements are usually close, personal relationships suggesting that those involved were or had been living together. For this reason, an expanded focus on domestic violence may have more utility than the typically narrow focus on violence by intimates. By limiting their analysis to violence by spouses, boyfriends and girlfriends, the authors of the BJS fact book underemphasized other family violence--especially violence by women and violence against children.

Because the availability of information on domestic-related assaults against children makes it possible to broaden the focus of such studies, this analysis gives special attention to incidents in which women are reported as offenders. Men, women, and children are sometimes the victims of violence inflicted by those they were living with at the time of the incidents or

those with whom they had lived at some prior time. In such circumstances, all of these victims can be considered intimates.

A letter in the *Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly* indicates why this expanded focus is important. The author of the letter was responding to a statement in an earlier issue of the *Quarterly* in which the writer had suggested that “men should apply their minds to the task of figuring out why some men do batter, because it is beyond most women. We can imagine being angry . . . [b]ut we cannot fathom hitting for no apparent reason” (Peterson, 1998). Peterson then points out that while few women assault their spouses, “there are all too many who abuse their children” (Peterson, 1998). Finally, she emphasizes the following observation:

[V]iolence against the weak and vulnerable is not the exclusive province of men. Violence is a human problem not merely a male problem; and women contribute nothing to the solution of that problem if they stand aside claiming to be too pure to think about why someone might cruelly abuse someone else.

It would have been difficult for the authors of the BJS report to broaden the study to include children because they were using Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) and victimization survey data. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) does not permit a useful examination of violence against children because it does not include information on assaults against children under 12. Collected and published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the SHR includes children as victims but are limited to homicide. Only the FBI’s new Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) program, called the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), permits such an extension of the term “intimates” because it presents information on victims of all ages and contains victim-offender relationship information for homicide and a broad set of violent offenses. With data available for homicide, robbery, and a variety of assaults and sexual assaults, NIBRS should greatly extend our knowledge of such relationships. Moreover, this information is available for specific, identifiable police agencies, and includes age, sex, and race information on thousands of victims and offenders.

With NIBRS we can determine how many women are reported as offenders, how many children are victims of assaults, and the relationships between victims and offenders. In an earlier analysis of domestic violence that used NIBRS data, I produced a report with some of the same limitations as the BJS report. Although the study used NIBRS data for 1993, it was limited to analyses of homicide data and ignored the age of victims and offenders (Chilton, 1997). The discussion presented below uses NIBRS data for 1997 to re-examine conclusions presented in the earlier report. In addition, this analysis uses 1997 NIBRS data to expand on conclusions reported in the BJS fact book.

DATA AND METHOD

The NIBRS information for this report came from police agencies in 12 U.S. states. Participating states included Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia. (The complete data file may be obtained from the UCR.) Although the 1997 NIBRS data are limited to submissions from police agencies in these 12 states, the file contains over 1.6 million *victim* records when records for

Austin, Texas, are included. With the Austin records, there are over 1.7 million *offender* records. In addition to the information on victims and offenders, participating agencies provide information on crime incidents, the offenses occurring in those incidents, any property involved, and arrestee information if applicable.

Since the focus in this discussion is on interpersonal violence and the relationships of victims and offenders, I have concentrated on the victim and offender segments of the file where the offenses reported included murder, simple assault, aggravated assault, robbery, rape, sexual assault with an object, forcible sodomy, and forcible fondling. The numbers of individuals *victimized* during one or more of these eight offenses are shown in the tables presented below. The numbers of *offenders* involved in these violent incidents are presented in the discussions of the tables. Both victim and offender records provide information on the age, sex, and race of the individuals involved. Both sets have state, agency, and incident numbers that allow us to link the victim records to the offender records. Linkage is important because only the victim records contain offense and relationship information.

For this analysis, I have ignored those incidents in which the victims were associated with business, government, or religious organizations. This is most important for the robbery analysis, because robberies that do not involve individual victims do not provide information on the characteristics of victims or offenders. Thus a failure to check for the type of robbery involved will greatly increase the number of victims for whom offender relationship information is missing. I have also excluded property crimes. In addition, I have omitted incidents where there is no identifiable victim; where “society” is listed as the victim in cases involving drug, gambling, prostitution, or gun-law violations. The analysis is focused on the eight violent offenses listed above. Since two of the offenses--simple assault and aggravated assault--are essentially assaults, and four other offenses are varieties of sexual assault, the analysis is limited to murder, assault, robbery, and sexual assault.

The victim-offender relationships are divided into five categories. The first category consists of those offenses where at least one offender was the spouse of the victim. The second category includes those incidents where at least one of the perpetrators was the boyfriend or girlfriend of the victim or where the connection was described as a homosexual relationship. A third category includes those situations where at least one of the offenders was a family member other than a spouse. In the tables presented below there are two lines under the Family heading. These subcategories identify those incidents where at least one of the offenders was either a parent of the victim or a child of the victim. The fourth category contains those incidents where the offender knew the victim but was not a family member. The final category includes those situations in which the offender was a stranger to the victim. The number of victims without any known relationship to the offenders involved is shown in a note at the bottom of each table.

FINDINGS

Table 1 provides the victim-offender relationships by the sex of the victims for murders reported in 12 states for 1997. The NIBRS reports present the victim’s relationship to the offender by indicating, for example, that the victim was the wife of the offender, a parent of the offender, or a stranger to the offender. Because there can be several offenders, when focus is on

victims, as in Table 1, the victims can be grouped to include those who were spouses or former spouses. The same victim may also be included in a group of victims to whom at least one of the offenders was a stranger. This double counting would occur, for example, when a woman and someone she knew killed her husband--but the husband did not know his wife's accomplice. Here, the *victim* would be counted in the spouse category and again in the stranger category.

For this reason the total counts at the bottom of each table are not the column totals. There were in fact 833 murder victims in the 1997 data set. The number 833 is *not* the total of the victims in each relationship category plus the number of victims for whom the relationship was missing. Additionally, as shown in Table 1, the sex of the victim was not reported for two of the 833 victims. Therefore, for this and other tables in this report, the total number of victims may be larger than the sum of the male and female victims.

TABLE 1. MURDER VICTIM'S RELATIONSHIP TO OFFENDER BY THE VICTIM'S SEX FOR 12 STATES IN 1997*

At least one offender was	Sex of Victim		Total
	Male	Female	
Spouse	19 (27)	52 (73)	71 (100)
Intimate	16 (27)	44 (73)	60 (100)
Family	53 (62)	32 (38)	85 (100)
Parent	17 (49)	18 (51)	35 (100)
Child	16 (67)	8 (33)	24 (100)
Known	263 (83)	52 (17)	315 (100)
Stranger	87 (81)	21 (19)	108 (100)
Total	579 (70)	252 (30)	833 (100)

*Sex missing for two victims. Relationship missing for 184 victims (22%). Numbers in Total row are not column totals.

Even with these irregularities in sum totals, the victim-based tables are less complicated than the offender-based tables. Selecting victims of at least one violent crime is relatively simple because each victim record may contain up to ten offenses committed against that victim. If at least one of these offenses is murder, we can classify the victim as a murder victim. However, 70 murder victims were also victims of robbery and 11 were victims of sexual assault. Because NIBRS collects and retains information on up to 10 offenses against a victim, a single victim may contribute to the counts for several offenses.

Offender-based tables are more complicated because the offender records must take the offense and relationship information from the victim records. It is possible to assign offenses to specific offenders. However, for this analysis I have assigned all offenses in an incident to all offenders. Still, this should not produce much distortion because most offenses involve a single victim and a single offender. In addition, in a homicide, rape, or robbery incident, all offenders involved are generally considered responsible for the act. Nevertheless, this procedure may produce some distortion; further analysis will be required to determine to what extent.

For murder, the patterns shown in Table 1 are very similar to the patterns shown for the 1993 NIBRS data (Chilton, 1997). The victim was much more likely to be a woman where at least one of the offenders was a spouse or intimate partner. (The category labeled “Intimate” refers to boyfriend, girlfriend, or someone with whom the victim had a homosexual relationship.) For those killed by other family members, the victim was more likely to be male. Where at least one of the offenders was a parent, about one-half of the victims were sons and one-half were daughters. Where one of the offenders was a child of the victim, two-thirds of the victims were fathers. The victim was much more likely to be male where at least one of the offenders was a friend, acquaintance, or complete stranger to the victim.

With the exception of the victims of spouses and possibly the victims of intimates, the table does not indicate the sex of the offenders. Moreover, we need to be mindful in describing offenders suspected of the murders shown in Table 1 because there may be several offenders as well as several victims in a single homicide incident. For these 833 murders, there were 1,128 persons reported as offenders. Perhaps they would better be described as suspects because the description of an offender does not imply that an arrest was made or that anyone was charged. Their “offender” status is based on the police investigation and statements of witnesses. When possible, police report the age, sex, and race of those considered as offenders.

With this in mind, we can count the sex of all but 169 (15%) of the *offenders* reported for the murders in Table 1. Of the 1,128 offenders reported, 878 (78%) were men and 126 (11%) were women. For those situations where at least one of the offenders was a spouse, 52 of the offenders were men and 19 were women. Thus, while 73% of the *offenders* in this category were men, 72% of the *victims* were women. The situation is less sharply defined for murders where the offender was a boyfriend or girlfriend (Intimate) because of the inclusion of homosexual relationships in this category. Still, in these situations, 76% of the *offenders* were male and 24% were female--almost the exact opposite of the percentages for victims.

The more interesting question concerns the characteristics of offenders where at least one of the offenders was a family member other than a husband or wife. In these family incidents 64 of the 97 offenders were male and 33 were female. This means that women committed or were involved in one-third of the murders of other family members. Moreover, where at least one of the offenders was a parent 45% of the offenders were mothers. It is these situations that are lost in the analyses of most other data sets. When we focus only on victims and ignore children and other relatives, we create a limited picture of domestic violence.

Compared to men, relatively few women attack their husbands (Peterson, 1998). However, in this data set, the number of women reported as offenders in the murders of their juvenile children (13) is close to the number of men who kill their juvenile children (15). In the murders of their adult children, 6 more men and 2 more women were reported as involved as offenders. But of the proportion of parents who kill their children, these deaths account for only about 4% of all murder victims and 3% of all murder offenders. People who kill their spouses make up 8% of all murder victims and 6% of all murder offenders. With little more than 1,000 murder suspects, examination of these relationships by age, sex, and race is limited. However, this is not the case for simple assaults.

As shown in Table 2, for 1997, NIBRS has information for 222,551 victims of simple assault--although offender relationship information is not available for 8% of these victims and even the sex of the victim is missing for 1,147 victims. Nevertheless, the file has age, sex, race, and relationship information for over 200,000 victims. In addition, the file has age, sex, and race information on the characteristics of 231,568 *offenders* involved in these assaults. Twenty percent of the victims in these assaults (45,574) were under 18 years of age. Fifty-five percent of these were male and 45% were female. Of the offenders involved in simple assaults 39,764 were juveniles. Thus, about one-half of the juvenile victims of simple assault were attacked by other juveniles. However, there were 8,267 offenders suspected of assaulting their own juvenile or adult children. Just over 5,000 (63%) of these offenders were men and just over 3,000 (37%) were women. For 5,298 offenders, the victim was described as a juvenile child of the offender. In 3,316 (63%) of these cases the offender was the victim's father. In 1,979 (37%) of these cases, where the victim was under 18 years old, the offender was the victim's mother.

TABLE 2. SIMPLE ASSAULT VICTIM'S RELATIONSHIP TO OFFENDER BY THE VICTIM'S SEX FOR 12 STATES IN 1997*

At least one offender was	Sex of Victim		Total
	Male	Female	
Spouse	8,437 (18)	37,971 (82)	46,438 (100)
Intimate	5,937 (15)	32,409 (84)	38,381 (100)
Family	11,900 (39)	18,344 (60)	30,323 (100)
Parent	3,925 (45)	4,801 (55)	8,753 (100)
Child	2,421 (30)	5,699 (70)	8,135 (100)
Known	37,509 (53)	33,547 (47)	71,426 (100)
Stranger	13,686 (69)	5,838 (30)	19,744 (100)
Total	87,305 (39)	134,099 (60)	222,551 (100)

Sex missing for 1,147 victims (0.5%). Relationship missing for 16,808 victims (8%). Numbers in the Total row are not column totals.

Clearly, violent conduct in the form of simple assault is not limited to men and boys. In this data set nearly one-fourth (23%) of all simple assault offenders were women or girls. When female offenders who assaulted other family members are combined with those who attacked intimate partners and spouses they total 25,000. Therefore, domestic violence is far from a male province. To be sure, male offenders constitute three-quarters of all simple assault offenders and account for 90,000 assaults of family members or intimates. But the number of women (22,993) who attack people they know is also very high. For this reason, focusing only on the violence of men who attack their partners will hinder attempts to understand interpersonal violence.

The results of a similar examination of incidents involving aggravated assault, robbery, and four types of sexual assault also tell us something about domestic violence. Basically, the simple assault results are similar to the aggravated assault results. They fall between those found for murder and those shown for simple assault. An examination of Table 3 indicates that more men than women are victims of aggravated assault: 59% to 41%. One-third of all aggravated assault victims were attacked by family members or intimates. Where an aggravated assault involved a spouse or intimate partner, women were more likely to be victims. But males and females were almost equally likely to be assaulted where the victim was a family member. When at least one of the offenders was a parent, one-third of the time the *offender* was a mother. In situations involving strangers or persons the victim knew, more men than women were victims of aggravated assault. Twenty percent of all aggravated assault *offenders* (15,688) were female. And 477 women were reported as having been involved in aggravated assaults on their own juvenile children. Of the 1,642 aggravated assault offenders who attacked their own juvenile or adult children, 60% were men and 40% were women.

TABLE 3. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT VICTIM'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE OFFENDER BY THE VICTIM'S SEX FOR 12 STATES IN 1997*

At least one offender was	Sex of Victim		Total
	Male	Female	
Spouse	2,174 (26)	6,095 (74)	8,276 (100)
Intimate	2,013 (26)	5,828 (74)	7,854 (100)
Family	4,288 (52)	3,905 (48)	8,204 (100)
Parent	1,045 (52)	978 (48)	2,028 (100)
Child	811 (43)	1,084 (57)	1,896 (100)
Known	18,474 (66)	9,366 (34)	27,877 (100)
Stranger	9,054 (78)	2,470 (21)	11,595 (100)
Total	42,823 (59)	30,062 (41)	73,152 (100)

*Sex missing for 267 victims. Relationship missing for 9,252 victims (13%). Numbers in Total row are not column totals.

For robbery, most victims were either strangers to the offender (53%) or acquaintances (15%)--with relationship information missing for 26% of the victims. This means that only 6% of the victims of robbery were spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, or family members. Nevertheless, a few hundred of the 17,000 robbery victims were family members or people the victims knew well. (See Table 4.) Moreover, 1,458 (6%) of all robbery *offenders* were women. While 2,677 of the robbery victims knew at least one of the offenders, most of the victims who could describe the offenders were strangers to at least one of them (9,176). Because of this, the numbers in Table 4 suggest that robbery is a very minor aspect of domestic violence.

TABLE 4. ROBBERY VICTIM'S RELATIONSHIP TO OFFENDER BY VICTIM'S SEX FOR 12 STATES IN 1997*

At least one offender was	Sex of Victim		Total
	Male	Female	
Spouse	3 (6)	49 (94)	52 (100)
Intimate	22 (12)	169 (88)	191 (100)
Family	65 (54)	56 (46)	121 (100)
Parent	5 (83)	1 (17)	6 (100)
Child	14 (42)	19 (58)	33 (100)
Known	2,004 (75)	669 (25)	2,677 (100)
Stranger	5,852 (64)	3,299 (36)	9,176 (100)
Total	11,364 (66)	5,881 (34)	17,302 (100)

*Sex missing for 57 victims. Relationship missing for 4,551 victims (26%). Numbers in Total row are not column totals.

Not surprisingly, 98% of rape victims were women. And only 155 (2%) of the rape *offenders* were women. Perhaps the most important facts suggested by tables showing victim data and an analysis of the corresponding offender data were the number of rape offenders who victimized their own children (399) and the percentage of rapes (74%) in which the victim knew the offender. This percentage includes spouses, intimates, and family members as well as acquaintances. Since the offenders were spouses, family members, boyfriends, or girlfriends in 25% of the cases, rape was a significant component of domestic violence in these 7,591 cases.

Sexual assault with an object is a relatively rare offense. There were only 1,164 victims and 1,180 offenders in these cases. As with rape, about 45% of the victims were acquainted with but not related to the offenders. Another one-fourth of the offenders were family members other than spouses. When spouses or intimates are combined with family members and others known to the victim, 78% of the victims knew their assailant. Forcible sodomy was also relatively rare.

But with 2,381 victims it was more likely to be reported than sexual assault with an object. Fifty-eight percent of the sodomy victims were male and 91% of the *offenders* were male. Again, only 10% of the victims were strangers to the offenders. And family members were frequently involved as offenders.

The NIBRS program collects reports of these three forms of sexual assault together with a fourth called “forcible fondling.” These offenses can be examined individually, as I have done, or they can be collectively referred to as “sexual assault.” Table 5 shows the counts produced when all four forms of sexual assault are combined. The results are similar to those produced for rape except that there are more male victims where one of the offenders is a family member or someone the victim knew--especially a parent. This is primarily the result of the inclusion in the table of forcible sodomy and forcible fondling.

TABLE 5. SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM’S RELATIONSHIP TO OFFENDER BY VICTIM’S SEX FOR 12 STATES IN 1997*

At least one offender was	Sex of Victim		Total
	Male	Female	
Spouse	0 (0)	427 (100)	427 (100)
Intimate	23 (2)	973 (98)	997 (100)
Family	883 (20)	3,611 (80)	4,503 (100)
Parent	344 (18)	1,605 (82)	1,953 (100)
Child	9 (8)	107 (91)	117 (100)
Known	1,679 (17)	8,463 (83)	10,163 (100)
Stranger	151 (8)	1,749 (92)	1,905 (100)
Total	3,084 (15)	17,360 (85)	20,500 (100)

* Sex missing for 56 victims. Relationship missing for 2,579 victims (13%). Numbers in Total row are not column totals.

The most surprising count to emerge in the analysis of the forcible fondling incidents was the number of male victims. Where one of the offenders was a family member, 19% of the victims were male. Where one of the offenders was a parent, 20% of the victims were male. For all victims, the results are very close to those reported for forcible sodomy. However, 89% of the *offenders* were male.

CONCLUSIONS

In this set of NIBRS data for 12 U.S. states, men and boys continue to be reported as violent offenders more frequently than women and girls. However, for murder, simple assault, and aggravated assault women are also part of the violence problem in these 12 states. Of particular importance is the frequency with which men and women use violence against their children. If violence against children increases the number of violent people in a society, a focus on the number of men and women who assault their children might contribute more to our understanding of the very high violence rates in the United States than the usual myopic focus--devoid of comparable analyses of violence by women--on violence against women (Straus, 1994). The analysis also suggests an unnecessarily limited focus on violence by intimates (spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends). The illumination of this overly narrow focus may be one of the unique contributions of NIBRS to our understanding of interpersonal violence. The NIBRS data allow an examination of violence against women, violence by women, and violence by men and women against children and young adults of both sexes.

As the number of participating states and agencies grows, NIBRS will become an increasingly important source of information on victim-offender relationships. Even at this stage of its development, the new program can be very useful as a supplement to SHR and NCVS data. For homicide, it clearly augments and supports the SHR program. And because it provides data for other violent offenses, it greatly expands the SHR and NCVS capabilities. To the extent that the results of annual examinations of the NIBRS data are stable even as additional states and agencies enter the program, we do not have to wait for full participation in the NIBRS program to carry out useful analyses of the data.

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REPRESENTATION OF HOMICIDE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ORIENTED ACADEMIC JOURNALS

Elizabeth Quinn DeValve, College of Criminal Justice, Sam Houston State University
P.O. Box 2296, Huntsville, TX 77341

ABSTRACT

Media portrayal of homicide unquestionably distorts the incidence of homicide and persons it affects. If one goal of research is to educate, it is important to investigate how homicide is represented in academic journals to explore academicians' fascination with the topic and to inquire as to how the actualities of homicide are researched and presented. In a study of crime-specific articles in criminal justice oriented academic journals it was found that homicide is the most prevalent crime researched. Whereas there may be different reasons as to why homicide is represented in such abundance among academics, it is important to focus on how the plethora of homicide research can be shared with practitioners as well as the media.

INTRODUCTION

It is often stated that news media over-report the amount of crime committed and distort the presentation of who commits crime, who is likely to be a victim of a criminal act, and what type of criminal act will most likely occur (Beckett & Sasson, 2000; Chermak, 1994; Marsh, 1989; Sherizen, 1978). In their book, *The Politics of Injustice*, Beckett and Sasson (2000) report that as crime rates declined in the 1990s, "television and newspaper coverage of crime increased by more than 400% [and homicide] news coverage increased by 336%" (p. 77). Similarly, violent crime is represented to a greater degree in the news media than is representative of crime in official crime statistics (Barlow, Barlow, & Chiricos, 1995; Chermak, 1994; Marsh, 1989; Sherizen, 1978; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). It has been shown that fear of victimization is "much more affected by homicide stories than any other kind of crime story" (Liska & Baccaglini, 1990). However, the irony is that homicide accounts for the fewest number of crimes nationally. Violent crime is reported in the media more often than property crime, though property crime is much more prevalent (Beckett & Sasson, 2000). This is particularly true for homicide, which, in one study, represented 25% of all crimes reported in the news media (Chermak, 1994).

This presents an interesting problem for academia. Because the media seem to selectively choose what they believe most appropriate and eye-catching for their audiences, the actual incidence of crimes and types of offenders and victims as researched by academics is kept from the public. Little is written on whether academia has tried to combat the distorted representation of crime that the press prefer to report. Similarly, little to nothing is written on how well academia represent the actualities of crime statistics in academic journals.

This paper explores how homicide is represented in criminology, criminal justice, victimology, and law enforcement journals by investigating the types and amounts of homicide articles presented in select journals. This paper also addresses the varieties of homicide represented in journals to investigate what types of homicide are not being included in current

research. Additionally, this study explores whether articles geared toward prevention of homicide and/or collaborations with other agencies are included in criminal justice oriented academic journals. Finally, potential explanations for academia's representation of homicide will be presented, as well as recommendations for future research.

One explanation for the over-representation of homicide in the news media is that it typically has been considered the most titillating type of news story, in that its gruesomeness seems to capture the attention of the public (Lane & Pearson, 1999; Chermak, 1994). Similarly, academics who study homicide continually note that homicide both fascinates and repulses us (Lane & Pearson, in introduction to Pearson, 1999). Chermak (1994) reports that the murders chosen will depend on the size of the city to which the newspaper caters. In larger cities, reporters have the luxury of choosing which murders they prefer to report simply because of the greater abundance of them. In smaller cities, where homicides do not occur as frequently, reporters must be more selective as to which homicides will retain the attention of the reader. The more sensational and unique the homicide, the more likely it is to be represented in the daily newspaper (Chermak, 1994).

In his discussion of homicide offenders' representation in newspapers, Rosher (1975) states that newspapers give a distorted impression of crime and criminals through their process of selection. Articles are often chosen on the basis of the characteristics of the offender, the victim, and the gruesomeness of the murder (Barlow et al., 1995; Johnston, Hawkins, & Michener, 1994). Similarly, Beckett and Sasson (2000) report that victims are not represented accurately and that White victims are grossly over-represented in newspaper coverage of crime, when in fact African Americans are disproportionately the victims of violent crimes across the board. Similarly, the types of crimes reported in newspapers are rarely those committed by the upper- or middle-class, unless they are sensationalized. White-collar crimes are regularly ignored by the news media, while crimes that are committed by lower-class offenders are more often represented.

METHODOLOGY

Data

The data for this study came from articles in criminology, criminal justice, victimology, and law enforcement journals for the period of 1995-1999. Specifically the journals used for this study were: *Criminology*, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency*, *Crime and Delinquency*, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Violence and Victims*, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, *Police Chief*, and *Police Journal*. These journals were chosen because it was thought they would have the largest representation of articles investigating index crimes. The addition of articles in sociology and psychology journals was considered, but the university at which the research was conducted lacks articles dealing with specific crimes--the absence of which renders any comparison inadequate. In order to maintain a consistent methodology, rather than performing both library and on-line research, sociology and psychology journals were excluded from analysis.

Of the eleven journals, three represented criminology (*Criminology*, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, and *Journal of Research and Delinquency*); three represented criminal justice (*Crime and Delinquency*, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, and *Journal of Criminal Justice*); two represented victimology (*Journal of Interpersonal Violence* and *Violence and Victims*); and three represented law enforcement (*FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, *Police Chief*, and *Police Journal*).

To assess the percentage of crime each index crime accounted for in a single year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report statistics were used to offer accurate rates for each of the eight index crimes.

Variables

Data were collected through the examination of each article in the subject journals from 1995 to 1999. Any article mentioning a specific index crime was included in the analysis. The following information was collected for each article: journal name, journal type, journal date, number and volume, crime type (homicide, rape, burglary, robbery, aggravated assault, larceny, arson, motor vehicle theft and combination), specific crime,¹ purpose of the article² (theory, descriptive, policy, law enforcement and other), method of analysis, data source, author title, funding source, and focus of article (victim, offender, circumstances/rates or trends, seasonal, motives, law enforcement, program evaluation and other).

Method of Analysis

A content analysis of articles in the journals was performed to determine the type and number of specific crime articles studied in academic journals during the years 1995-1999. Eligibility was determined on the basis of an article's inclusion of at least one of the eight index crimes and display of crime type in the title of the article. Acceptance of crime types was specified by adhering to definitions of the eight index crimes as illustrated in the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

From the UCR, rates of crime were gleaned for the years 1995-1999 to assess the percentage of crime accounted for per index crime in the aforementioned years. Percentages of index crimes were compared to the number of crime-specific articles per year in all journals, in order to assess parity of the two.

¹ Specific crime was separated into different types of homicide articles to assess what aspects of homicide were studied. Eighteen separate homicide-specific categories were created, and the remaining seven index crimes were individually distinguished.

² *Theory* included articles that focused on theory testing; *descriptive* refers to articles describing characteristics of victim, offender or public, or rates/trends; *policy* includes articles that deal with policy recommendations as the primary reason for the research; *law enforcement* refers to articles dealing with aids to law enforcement officers; and *other* includes any remaining articles not fitting in the previous categories.

RESULTS

Percentage of Representation in Articles

A total of 98 eligible articles were found in the eleven journals examined. Homicide articles accounted for 45.9% of all articles ($n = 45$) and rape accounted for 34.7% ($n = 34$). The remaining articles were represented as follows: robbery, 4.1% ($n = 4$); aggravated assault, 3.1% ($n = 3$); burglary, 3.1% ($n = 3$); larceny-theft, 1% ($n = 1$); homicide with another crime, 3.1% ($n = 3$); and other index crimes without homicide, 1% ($n = 1$).

Article Purpose

Descriptive articles were written for the sole purpose of describing characteristics of offenders and/or victims or some other aspect of the criminal event. Theoretical articles were those addressing why certain individuals commit crime, what conditions contribute to the likelihood of a crime being committed and so on. The majority of articles in all categories were written with a descriptive purpose (59.2%) followed by those written to address theories of crime (27.6%). The remaining articles were written for either the purpose of educating or aiding law enforcement, or other purposes outside the specified categories. In instances where there were multiple purposes for the article, 11 additional articles were written for descriptive purposes, 2 for theoretical purposes, 4 to encourage policy reforms, and the remaining 4 articles were written for assorted reasons, such as reviewing existing crime surveys.

In terms of homicide articles, both descriptive and theoretical purposes represented 20 articles each, with the remaining 5 articles describing law enforcement aids and other uncategorized purposes. There was a statistically significant difference in regard to article purpose between homicide and non-homicide articles ($p < .01$).

Focus of Article

The focus of the investigation for all articles most often centered on the victim (44.9%, $n = 44$), followed by offender (24.5%, $n = 24$), rates/trends (14.3%, $n = 14$ each), seasonal (1.0%, $n = 1$), law enforcement aid (8.2%, $n = 8$), program evaluation (3.1%, $n = 3$), and other (3.1%, $n = 3$). If the article had a second focus as well, it was most often the offender (18.4, $n = 18$), other (6.2%, $n = 6$), victim (3.1%, $n = 3$), and rates/trends and motive (1.0%, $n = 1$ each). Therefore, victims and offenders represented the foci of an article 48.0% and 42.9% of the time respectively.

Homicide articles alone had similar representation, with the victim being the main focus ($n = 17$), followed by a relatively equal representation of offender ($n = 12$) and rates/trends ($n = 11$), and finally law enforcement ($n = 4$) and other ($n = 1$). There was not a statistically significant difference between homicide and non-homicide articles.

Crime-Specific Representation in Academic Journals Over Five Years

Overall, criminology journals comprised the majority of articles (n = 39) followed closely by victimology journals (n = 33). Criminal justice journals (n = 15) and law enforcement journals (n = 11) represented a much smaller sample of crime-specific articles. This may seem intuitive because criminology and victimology journals are generally theoretically based and may advocate for crime-specific research. Criminal justice and law enforcement journals typically focus on practical aspects of the field of criminal justice, such as program evaluation.

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of articles in the four journal categories. Criminology journals had the largest representation of homicide articles (n = 26); criminal justice journals included articles on homicide and rape almost equally (n = 8, n = 7, respectively); victimology journals had the greatest number of rape articles (n = 22); and law enforcement journals had at least two articles each about homicide, rape, robbery, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

TABLE 1. SPECIFIC CRIME ARTICLE BY JOURNAL TYPE, 1995-1999

Journal Type											Total
	homicide	rape	robbery	assault	burglary	larceny-theft	motor vehicle theft	arson	homicide and other crime	other index crimes no homicide	
Criminology	26	3	2	1	2	1			3	1	39
Criminal Justice	8	7									15
Victimology	8	22		2	1						33
Law Enforcement	3	2	2				2	2			11
Total	45	34	4	3	3	1	2	2	3	1	98

While both criminology and law enforcement journals covered more crime areas than criminal justice and victimology journals, it should be noted that law enforcement journals tended not to focus heavily on one specific area, as opposed to criminology journals that focused on homicide.

Finally, there was a diverse assortment of homicide topics covered in the research. Table 2 illustrates the eighteen different subsets of homicide articles that were studied in the journals examined. Aside from the generic homicide category, which served as a miscellaneous category, it appears that race and homicide, sex and homicide, and gangs/juveniles and homicide were the topics most likely to be studied.

TABLE 2. FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIC CRIME TYPE IN ACADEMIC JOURNALS, 1995-1999

	Frequency	Percent
Homicide	45	45.9
Homicide – general	11	11.2
Race and homicide	5	5.1
Sex and homicide	5	5.1
Homicide/Suicide	4	4.1
Intimate/domestic homicide	4	4.1
Gangs/juveniles and homicide	4	4.1
Class/social structure and homicide	2	2.0
Economics and homicide	2	2.0
Temporal effects and homicide	2	2.0
Other family homicide	2	2.0
Victim precipitation and homicide	1	1.0
Homicide rates	1	1.0
Homicide and capital punishment	1	1.0
Drugs and homicide	1	1.0
Justifiable homicide	1	1.0
Spatial homicide	1	1.0
Workplace homicide	1	1.0
Rape	34	34.7
Robbery	5	5.1
Assault	2	2.0
Burglary	3	3.1
Larceny	1	1.0
Auto theft	2	2.0
Arson	2	2.0
Combination of crimes other than homicide	1	1.0
Total	98	100.0

Most of the subsets of homicide are covered in only one or two article submissions, indicating that academic and law enforcement researchers study a wide array of homicide topics.

Comparison of Index Crime Percentages and Crime-Specific Article Representation

Table 3 shows the percentage of homicide articles published in the years 1995-1999, as compared to the percentage of crime homicide represents in UCR Index Crime data for the same years.

TABLE 3. HOMICIDE ARTICLE REPRESENTATION AS COMPARED TO HOMICIDE REPRESENTATION STATISTICS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Homicide articles represented in journals*</i>	<i>Homicide representation within index crimes**</i>
1995	55.6%	>0.2%
1996	21.1%***	>0.1%
1997	66.7%	0.1%
1998	39.1%	0.1%
1999	50.0%	0.1%

* *Percentage of homicide articles within all articles by year.*

** *Statistics from FBI, UCR Crime Index Offenses by year.*

*** *Represents 4 of 5 homicide articles (one article did not fit in definition for homicide in the UCR).*

The data indicate that homicide is represented in academic journal articles to a much greater extent than among actual crimes. Moreover, as Table 1 illustrates, homicide represents the crime most researched in comparison to the other seven index crimes.

Table 4 shows the percent distribution for all index crimes per year as compared to their representation in academic journals for corresponding years. Again, the data indicate that there is a disproportionate representation for each index crime when comparing actual incidence to percentage studied.

TABLE 4. INDEX CRIME PERCENTAGE BY YEAR

<i>Index Crime %</i>											Total Journal Articles
<i>Journal Date</i>	1995	1995**	1996	1996**	1997	1997	1998	1998**	1999*	1999	
Homicide	>.2%	10	>.1%	5	.1%	8	.1%	9	.1%	13	45
Rape	.7%	4	.7%	6	.7%	4	.7%	8	.7%	12	34
Robbery	4.2%	1	4.0%	1	3.8%		3.6%	1	3.6%	1	4
Assault	7.9%	1	7.6%	1	7.8%		7.8%	1	7.8%		3
Burglary	18.7%		18.6%	2	18.7%		18.7%	1	18.7%		3
Larceny-Theft	57.7%		58.6%		58.6%		59.1%	1	59.1%		1
Motor Vehicle Theft	10.6%	1	10.4%	1	10.3%		9.9%		9.9%		2
Arson	N/A		N/A	1	N/A		N/A	1	N/A		2
TOTAL		18		19		12		23		26	98**

* *Because 1999 UCR data is not yet available, percentages from 1998 are confidently used, as the annual percentages have not changed drastically from year to year.*

** *Represents years in which at least one article had multiple index crimes included in the study (4 articles in total).*

DISCUSSION

Results of this study indicate that homicide is the prevailing focus of crime-specific articles among the eleven academic journals examined. Given that homicide accounted for 0.1%

- 0.2% of all crimes between the years 1995-1999 (FBI, UCR statistics, 1995-1999), the crime of homicide is strongly over-represented in relation to its annual percentage of all crimes committed nationally. Similarly, the types of homicide represented in the data do not closely represent the main types of homicide that were reported to the UCR between 1995-1999. A number of potential explanations for this anomaly are expressed in the following section.

Potential Explanations for Homicide Representation in Academic Journals

It is likely that academics choose to study homicide for a number of reasons. First, the data that exist on homicide are usually more accurate than other types of crimes for obvious reasons. Reporting is more accurate because only victims who are not found--a rare situation--go unreported. Also, police officers may work more diligently at clearing these cases than those involving less serious crimes. Additionally, the wealth of information in homicide data is appealing. Of course, homicide is a fascinating topic to all, as can well be seen by its appearance in movies, novels, newspaper accounts, television dramas, and other media sources. As this study indicates, though homicide represents the smallest percentage of crimes committed, academicians appear to study homicide more than any other specific crime. As such, it appears that the subject is provocative to academicians as well. Certainly, based upon its seriousness, this crime deserves study, in order to eradicate or decrease the presence of that crime in society.

Future Research

This analysis suggests the need for further research in several areas, starting with a more in-depth examination into the rationale for focusing a great deal of attention on homicide and rape as opposed to property and other violent crimes.

Future research should also target integrating research from academic and law enforcement journals. From this modest examination, it seems that members of academia and law enforcement are not working in the same areas, based on their unbalanced interests. Findings in this analysis thus suggest that both sectors--academic and law enforcement--would profit from a better understanding of their respective interests. Academia might benefit from studying law enforcement journals to understand the areas of crime and criminal behavior that concern law enforcement, based on their day-to-day experience. Such research would assist academics in focusing on the individuals most often involved in crime, whether through victimization or criminal behavior. Likewise, members of law enforcement might benefit from academic research that clinically and critically analyzes victim and offender populations and the etiology of criminality.

Pooling research from both areas raises the issue of whether theory should have policy implications. As shown in this review, however, the majority of academic articles were written in terms of descriptive characteristics of victims or offenders and not for testing theory.

Finally, further exploration of crime-specific--but especially homicide--articles in sociology, psychology, and public health oriented academic journals can add valuable information to the discussion on lethal violence as it is studied in academic journals.

CONCLUSION

It is thought that the types and abundance of homicide articles represented in these data may be due to researchers' attempts to make up for the media's tendency to misrepresent both homicide offenders and victims. As stated in the introduction, the media tend to over-report and/or sensationalize the rare types of homicide, which perpetuates an image of violence by young African-American males. Alternatively, the focus of academic journals on varied and sometimes rare homicide topics may be because of previous research neglect. Similarly, it may be the case that previous homicide research (prior to 1995, when this review of the literature begins) has already focused upon the most representative victim and offender categories to such a degree that additional information may be redundant. It may then be that academics are purposefully analyzing more statistically rare types of homicide to enhance the study of lethal violence. Further research of this issue is likely to be illuminating.

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**PATTERNS IN CHILD ABDUCTION/MURDER:
AN ANALYSIS OF AGE-LINKED CHARACTERISTICS
Research in Progress**

John P. Jarvis, Wayne D. Lord, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135
Monique C. Boudreaux, P.O. Box 643, Houma, LA 70361

ABSTRACT

Child abduction/murder cases, drawn from cases that were reported to the FBI, are examined to identify patterns in victimization, offense characteristics, and offender demographics. Interpretations of these patterns are offered relative to the routine activities perspective from the field of criminology. Implications for conceptualizing violence and homicidal behaviors from a “life course risk” of victimology perspective is offered for consideration.

INTRODUCTION

The following is a presentation of ideas gleaned from ongoing child abduction and child homicide research under way at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This should not be construed as a complete work, but represents a work in progress, which subsequent to the 2000 Homicide Research Working Group Meetings, was, in part, published in the January 2001 issue of *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*. Earlier research findings also appeared in the May 1999 issue of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*. The information herein reflects some of the emerging new ideas and information that formed the basis for these particular works.

DATA

These data were collected as a part of an ongoing research and investigative initiative of the FBI’s National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). Study collaborators include the Department of Psychology at the University of California Los Angeles, and the Department of Psychology at the University of Georgia. From the efforts of these entities, 550 cases representing cases from the years 1985-1995 were collected. The work offered here does not represent a new analysis, but rather reports the patterns that these data reflect and provides a theoretical, and perhaps practical, framework for considering these findings from a criminological perspective.

RESULTS

General overall patterns emerge from examining these data. These include the finding that child abduction/murders happen to all types of children, with both girls and boys are at risk; male victims, on average, were found to be younger than female victims; all types of people abduct children; both males and females abduct children; and different reasons motivate individuals to abduct children including, but not limited to: sex, profit, emotion, and maternal desire.

While these overarching patterns are suggestive of some generalized conceptions for investigating and identifying potential risks associated with such victimizations, clearly variations in these broad patterns can be seen when considering offender, offense, and victim attributes of individual cases. That is, when contrasting child abduction/murder of the very young with similar crimes experienced by older children the patterns may differ substantially. Herein we examine some of these differences.

Victim Patterns

Victim patterns revealed in the analyses of the data included a preponderance of Caucasian victims compared to other ethnic groups, a majority of females among Caucasian victims, and males and females being equally victimized among both African Americans and other minority groups.

In terms of age, male victims tended to be slightly younger than females. Overall, female victims tended to be Caucasian, averaging 11-12 years in age, abducted near their home, by strangers for sexual motives, and died by strangulation or stabbing. Males, in contrast, tended to be of all ethnic groups, averaging 6-7 years in age, abducted at or near their home, by family members and acquaintances for emotional, sexual, or profit motives, and suffered blunt force trauma or suffocation.

Offender Patterns

Offender patterns revealed in these data suggest that males are the predominant offenders engaging in these criminal behaviors. The ethnic composition of the offenders in these cases reflects the overall ethnic composition of the United States, suggesting little or no over representation of any ethnic group among these offenders. Similarly, the age of an offender seems invariant across by sex with both male and female offenders averaging about 27 years of age. Turning to apparent relationships between offenders and victims, family members (23%), acquaintances (37%), and strangers (40%) were found to have victimized children with motives ranging from sex (50%), profit (11%), emotion (31%), and maternal desire (11%).¹ However, considerable variation by age relative to this result was also found.

While these overall patterns are informative, upon closer examination some variance by gender emerges. In particular, male offenders were found to be acquaintances or strangers to the victim, averaged about 27-28 years in age, abducted females from the victim's neighborhood for sexual motives, and killed their victims within 24 hours by strangulation, stabbing, or gunshot. Female offenders, in contrast, were more likely to be family members or strangers to the victim, averaged 27-28 years in age, abducted either males or females from homes or hospitals for emotion-based and maternal motives, and killed the victim either immediately or not all, using blunt force

¹Definitions of motive are: sex: requiring physical evidence of a sex act (pathology, and/or serology); emotion: anger, rage, revenge, retribution, and child abuse fatalities (false allegations of abduction); profit: extortion, drug, robbery, gang-related cases; and maternal desire: abduction with intent of keeping the child.

trauma and/or suffocation. These contrasting pictures of male and female offenders are suggestive of important investigative and preventive measures that might be taken. However, additional specifications of these general observations are gained when varying ages of the victim are examined.

Age Specification of Patterns

While the physiological aging of a victim may be important for developmental and biological perspectives, the consequences of the aging process are central to an understanding of the relative risks and mechanisms of childhood victimization. That is, consideration of aging as a factor in risk of exposure to crime is not as interesting as considering the changes that accompany aging as the life course of the individual unfolds. In other words, the singular fact that an individual gets older year by year is not as informative as the fact that the routine activities in which individuals engage evolve as the individual develops from an infant, to a preschooler, to a teen, to a young adult. Accompanying these developmental stages are changes in the routine daily activities in which young people engage. From a routine activities perspective, victim age reflects changes in the availability of children as victims, changes in the stability and constancy of vigilant guardianship, and changes in the likelihood that children may encounter motivated offenders.

From this perspective the following patterns suggest that victim, offender, and offense characteristics change as victims age.

As children age, physical and emotional maturity occur. Such changes may have implications for the social control that is necessary to perpetrate crimes against children. However, the independence and mobility that accompany much of the maturity gained through the life course may have just as much, or more, importance for understanding avenues for protecting individuals from this kind of victimization. To inspect this conception further, the data were divided into seven categories of age: newborn (0-1 month), infants (1-12 months), toddlers (13-36 months), preschoolers (3-5 years), elementary schoolers (6-11 years), middle schoolers (12-14 years), and high schoolers (15-17 years). Having done this it is clear that abduction risks change as victims age. Evidence is found for this conclusion in that males and females have about equal risk of victimization until preschool. However, the risk for females dramatically increases during school years, whereas males are more prevalent in abductions of the very young (newborns, infants, and toddlers).

Offense motives were also found to change as victims age. That is, newborns and infants were most often victimized to satisfy maternal desires or emotion-based motivations, toddlers and preschoolers shared emotion-based motivations with their younger victims but also were victimized for sexual motives. Sexual motives, in fact, were almost exclusive to elementary and middle school victimizations, and high schoolers were found to be victimized both for sexual and profit motives.

Female offenders were also more likely to victimize newborns, infants, and toddlers, whereas males were found to be more likely to victimize older children (preschoolers and elementary to high schoolers).

Turning to age-specified relationships in the data, newborns were most likely to become victims at the hands of strangers, followed closely by family members. Infants and toddlers were more exclusively victimized by family members; preschoolers were victimized by both family members and acquaintances; and elementary to high school aged children were more often victimized by acquaintances or strangers.

Finally, looking at the characteristics of the offense, the location, cause of death, and body disposal were found to be specified by age. Youngest children were most often found to be victimized from inside or in the immediate vicinity of their homes; older children were victimized in their yards, streets, or surrounding neighborhoods. The oldest children in the data set were found to be involved in social events, employment, or recreation in areas furthest from their homes at the time of their victimization relative to younger children. It is clear from these data that as children age, they move further and further from home in their daily routines and social lives and therefore change the likelihood of victimization, and the opportunity for motivated offenders to target them as available victims.

Examining cause of death also reveals age specification. Strangulation was found to be the only cause of death evident among newborns; it was also a major cause of death among other groups. Stabbing was the second most common cause of death followed by gunshot wounds. However, the frequency of these latter causes of death increased as the cohorts of young children became school aged. Similar specification is found for body remains disposal as well. That is, newborns' bodies were discovered on the ground surface and uncovered. Other child categories were more varied in the means of disposing of the remains. However, moving from infant to high schooler showed a marked overall increase in the likelihood that the body would be found unburied but covered, and hence a decrease in the likelihood of the body being buried. The highest risk of burial of the victim appeared to be among infants and toddlers rather than younger or older categories of victims.

Summary

To review, consider these patterns that were found to be specified by age of the victim: As victims age: (a) females were found to be at greater risk, (b) abduction sites were found to become more remote, (c) offenders were more likely to be male, (d) acquaintances and strangers were more likely to be perpetrators (hence fewer family perpetrators), (e) sexual motivations were found to be more predominant, (f) more weapon use was found, and (g) remains of victims were found in more distant locations.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The summary findings noted above clearly indicate that these cases are specified by age of the victim. Considering this evidence and the applied theoretical orientation offered by routine activities theory suggests an important interpretation. Considering violence and homicidal behavior from a routine activities perspective suggests that such behaviors may result from a nexus of an available victim, a motivated offender, and a lack of vigilant guardianship. The availability of victims, the motivations of offenders, and the mechanisms of guardianship are not directly examined

here. However, conceptualizing age as a surrogate for the life course developmental stages of a victim and interpreting this development as having importance for the availability of the victim and the guardianship that individuals experience through the life course is informative.

Consider an infant in the complete guardianship of the family unit or a care giver. This infant is relatively unavailable as a victim to a potentially motivated offender outside the family unit. However, victimization at the hands of the guardian would certainly seem more possible than victimization at the hands of an acquaintance or stranger. This victimization becomes more probable when the infant lacks effective guardianship and is completely available to the motivated family offender, the guardian. This pattern was found in these data.

Consider older children. These individuals becomes less vulnerable to the family unit as they spend time outside the family unit and are more likely to have developed to the point that they can both resist efforts of motivated offenders and inform others of the victimizations. When offenders victimize these older individuals, not only have the motivations been shown to change, but the degree of violence and effort required to victimize these individuals also increases. These older children experience changes in their routine activities of daily life which result in variances in guardianship and availability. That is, as children age they become more mobile and are likely to become more available to motivated offenders, particularly strangers and acquaintances. As children age, they increase their physical mobility, and are also able to exert more social control to avert victimization.

If one considers age as not just a demographic variable, but instead as a heuristic variable reflecting variation in the life course development of an individual, then clearly variation in the risk of children to abduction/ homicide, as has been shown here, can be seen. As individuals age from children to youth, to young adults, to older adults, the triad of availability as a victim, availability of motivated offenders, and lack of guardianship varies accordingly. Hence, when life course risks are considered, different crime patterns are also likely to be observed. Considering these interpretations may have implications for societal, community, neighborhood, and family initiatives to curb these victimizations. Such initiatives may foster more capable guardianship to deter an offender, decrease the availability of potential victims, and dissuade motivated offenders from engaging in these behaviors.

DISCUSSION

Becky Block: Roland, what proportion of women offenders involves single offenders as compared to multiple offenders?

Roland Chilton: I'm not sure from my analysis, but the NIBRS data are the right kind of data to address this type of a question. One fourth of all offenders are women according to this data source.

Chris Rasche: NIBRS involves police data. Qualitative data suggests women have a much higher rate of hitting, but it doesn't get reported.

Roland Chilton: No question that there are limitations to any set of data. Whatever the limitations, it is still a rich data set, although not all police agencies participate at this point.

John Jarvis: When we dealt with hate crime, and published who participates and, by exclusion, who doesn't, it resulted in an increase in the participation rate.

Some discussion then occurred about adjustments for the "unknown" category for victim-offender relationships.

Linda Langford: When Williams and Flewelling's adjustment is used on smaller subpopulations, it doesn't work well.

Tom Petee: What happens when you have variation across states as to the definition of an offense--and maybe this should be addressed to John--as might be the case, for example, in Alabama, where rape can only involve a woman as a victim?

John Jarvis: There are actually two separate counts--one that meets the state definition, and one that meets the NIBRS definition, and they may not correspond.

Becky Block: In NIBRS, with unknown victim-offender relationships, how adaptable are the data to updating?

John Jarvis: NIBRS has edit checks to look for consistency with the NIBRS rules. There is a mechanism to request additional records and for revision of records. They also spot-check various places and edit the data as needed.

Vanessa Leggett: Elizabeth, what was your precise methodology?

Elizabeth DeValve: I went through three criminology journals in our library.

Candi Batton: You probably shouldn't limit yourself in terms of the journals used, and you could also likely use electronic journals and search abstracts.

Jack Ritter: You need to be careful of letting a computer program determine your research.

Vance McLaughlin: You might also want to look at representation during an early period and look at changes over time.

Linda Langford: You were talking about interest in prevention, do you mean violent crime prevention?

Elizabeth DeValve: Yes.

Linda Langford: You may also want to look at public health.

Chris Rasche: My sense is that you are probably right about collaboration between academics and practitioners.

Wendell Willacy: There may be a prestige issue as well; the statistical issues discussed by academics may numb practitioners.

Mike Maume: One problem with this is that we have practitioners who become academics, and vice versa.

Laura Lund: We have much less of a problem with this in public health because of heterogeneity.

Linda Langford: I work for an agency that tries to make this transition, and we may be overlooking a step; practitioners are often busy, and need assistance in using this information.

Jane Koziol-McLain: Another question is whether practitioners can inform the research.

Jane Koziol-McLain: John, how do you distinguish between emotion and maternal desire?

John Jarvis: I'm not sure.

Chris Rasche: It may be determined by the motive.

Jason Van Court: Does it make a difference, as far as this distinction is concerned, as to whether the child dies?

John Jarvis: Definitely.

Chris Rasche: Many families have fictive kin. How does this get coded?

John Jarvis: Probably as acquaintance, although classification error is possible.

Linda Langford: Does boyfriend or girlfriend refer to children?

John Jarvis: Yes.

Chris Rasche: The pattern you find in terms of abduction contradicts that found for male pedophiles.

John Jarvis: You have to remember that we are painting a picture of the data with broad strokes.

Becky Block: Are the data based on investigation?

John Jarvis: Yes.

Becky Block: Could your results on abduction patterns be the result of a selection bias?

John Jarvis: Maybe in a couple of ways: NCAVC might be contacted; these cases are essentially hard to solve cases.

Steve Roth: Are you able to tell the difference between males abducting females, and females abducting both males and females? How much involves abduction for sexual purposes?

John Jarvis: Most of it probably is.

Avianca Hansen: I am still confused about the difference between maternal and paternal desire.

John Jarvis: The investigators are placing paternal desire in the emotion category.

Steve Roth: The age factor works up to a point. They should reach a point in age where they are less susceptible.

John Jarvis: We actually see an escalation for risk for females up to the age of 17.

Vanessa Leggett: Is there a point where we can assume that an abduction is actually a homicide?

John Jarvis: I'm not sure you would want to.

Jack Ritter: Could the differences between boys and girls at risk be related to the fact that older boys are stronger and more capable of defending themselves?

John Jarvis: That also fits in with the idea of suitable targets in routine activities.

Chris Rasche: It would also be the case that females might be more willing to go with someone, as in a dating situation.

Linda Langford: And sometimes they might be dating older guys.

Chris Rasche: Your results on the cause of death of infants is not what I would have expected. I

would have thought it more likely to be suffocation.

Laura Lund: No, probably “shaken” babies.

Chris Rasche: Your finding suggests we should target harder for females, but what about males?

John Jarvis: I would argue that guardianship doesn’t have to focus on a particular victim, but rather on raising the level overall.

Dick Block: Sampson’s work on protected neighborhoods shows that there was much more surveillance, people looked out for each other without reference to race or income.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARIES OF ACTIVITIES WITHOUT PAPERS

**LEARNING FROM THE PAST, LIVING IN THE PRESENT:
PATTERNS IN CHICAGO HOMICIDES, 1870-1930
Interim Report**

Leigh Bienen, Northwestern University School of Law, 357 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

Since the award of an initial grant from the Joyce Foundation in late 1999, the following has been accomplished. The copying and transcribing of cases from microfilm is almost completed. The present estimate is that the entire database from 1870-1930 contains about 8,000 cases. The period 1920-1930 saw a very large increase due to the inclusion of manslaughter cases, primarily death by auto cases. At this point we are including these cases and coding basic data on them. For some subsequent analyses those cases, which will be easy to identify, may be dropped.

The preparation of a data collection instrument and a coding sheet have been completed. The type of program and manner of proceeding after data entry has been identified. Data cleaning programs will be developed. The data will be entered into Microsoft Access and then transferred to Microsoft Excel. In that program it should be accessible and easy to manipulate for all researchers. Each researcher working on the Project will receive a text copy of the case file and a copy of the coded data. All project participants have been asked to agree not to distribute or copy or publish the case summaries or the data, outside of the publications which are part of the project, for a limited, specific period of time. The entire data file, including the case summaries, will be archived and made available to all researchers after the initial set of publications by members of the Project.

We are now moving through the coding phase of the project. Several coders, primarily Northwestern University law students, are at work coding from the transcribed case summaries. The coding phase should be completed by June 2000. Data will be input in blocks of 1,000 cases. The first block of 1,000 cases will be sent for punching by the end of this month.

Several collaborators and researchers have agreed to participate in the project. In addition to the persons listed, other institutions and researchers have expressed interest in the Project and generously offered to cooperate, including the Clerk of the Cook County Court, which maintains archives containing many felony case records for this period, the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Historical Society, and many others.

Two initial public presentations of this phase of the research project have been scheduled. The first is this opening session of the annual meeting of the Homicide Research Working Group, at the Northwestern University School of Law on June 24, 2000, followed by a reception sponsored by the Northwestern University School of Law. It is expected that panel will include the Chicago researchers. Since only a small part of the data will be on-line and available in June, the expectation is that panelists will talk about what they intend to explore and write about, and their expected general approach to the data set. The comments and suggestions from the assembled group of professional homicide researchers will be especially valuable to the panelists and other participants at this preliminary stage of the research.

On November 17, 2000 the Project Conference, *Learning From the Past, Living in the Present: Patterns in Chicago Homicides, 1870-1930*, will be held at the Northwestern University School of Law. That Conference will consist of morning and afternoon panels and include presentations and papers from all participants on the Project. The data and the case summaries will have been available over the summer to the researchers. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, published at the Northwestern University School of Law, has committed to publishing the papers from the Conference in a special Symposium Issue. An academic publisher is being sought for a volume based upon additional analyses of the database by these and other researchers.

The following subjects, and others, will be addressed in the papers and on the panels: changes in the regulation and use of firearms and in legislation regarding firearms over the period; traditional analyses of the incidence and patterns of homicide, e.g., relationship between victim and defendant, race, sex, age of defendant and victim; sex and race distributions; abortion cases as a subset of the database; changes in the imposition of capital punishment over the period; changes in the ethnic character of defendants and victims of these homicides; changes in the kind of adjudication by the Coroner, the Grand Jury and the Courts; various aspects of police behavior and the distribution of homicides involving police as victims and defendants; a detailed analysis of the neighborhood and locations of the homicides; changes in the delivery of post-assault medical services and in the time between assault and death. Additional topics will develop from the interests and experience of researchers, and as collateral materials become available.

DISCUSSION

Roland Chilton asked how the data set looks when compared with the new UCR (that is, NIBRS)--specifically, if they would be able to handle multiple victims and multiple offenders. (As I recall,) Leigh said they can and that they plan to do so.

Roland also suggested to the reporter that he should be able to see which homicides and how many made the papers and which did not. It seemed that the reporter would be able to say what kinds of murders were likely to be publicized and what kind were likely to be ignored. (If I remember it correctly,) The reporter answered that that was the point of his analysis.

One participant asked the crime photographer on the panel why he was involved in the study. He replied that he got involved mainly as a result of a murder that occurred near his residence years ago, and from a photographer's perspective he became interested in how and whether homicide in Chicago had changed over the years.

Jenny Mouzos asked whether the panelists would be classifying the victim-offender relationship into further categories than the 6 listed on page 3, especially victim-offender relationships that do not occur within the family. The panel responded by saying that they would; however, there were some concerns with the victim-offender classification of 'friends and acquaintances' and the unknown category due to insufficient information.

Another participant suggested the category of saloon/ prohibition-related murders or consumer versus supplier as a victim-offender relationship.

It was remarked that there was apparently tremendous variation in the detail supplied in the police reports, with the response that there was more follow-up reporting in some of the earlier reports regarding what happened after the homicide, occasionally through the criminal justice process.

TOUR OF THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, COUNTY OF COOK

The office of the Medical Examiner (ME) is located in the Robert J. Stein Institute of Forensic Medicine, which was completed in 1983. Guided by Executive Director Roy J. Dames, the HRWG toured parts of the approximately 88,000 square-foot structure.

PARTS OF THE INSTITUTE

Pathology

The tour group had the option of viewing the autopsy of a victim whose manner of death was natural. The postmortem examination was performed by the ME in one of the two four-station autopsy rooms. In addition, there is a two-station autopsy room. There is also a two-station decomposed autopsy room. Autopsies are performed daily.

Investigations

The 28 investigators receive the first calls notifying the ME's office of a death. The supervising investigator assigns an investigator to go to the scene to interview witnesses, police, and family as to the circumstances of the death. The investigator then writes a narrative report for use by the forensic pathologist.

Police Room

There are detectives from the Chicago Police Department who act as liaisons with the ME's office. There are also evidence technicians from the Illinois State Police crime lab, who collect any evidence removed from a body during an autopsy, to keep the chain of custody short.

Intake Department

The department assigns the toe tags to each case coming into the Institute, makes a thorough search of the body, fills out an inventory sheet, shows bodies for identification purposes, and keeps track of case population in the coolers.

Medical Records Department

The medical records department contains a compact storage system holding 20 years worth of records, the ME computer center, and the property storage vault, where property is kept until release to an appropriate family member.

Viewing Room

This is the room where families are brought to make positive identifications. The ME's office uses a closed-circuit television system with a zoom pan and a tilt lens.

Photography

The ME's office has three full-time photographers who take in excess of 100,000 photographs per year. These pictures are often used as evidence in court proceedings.

X-Ray

The ME's office has two X-ray technicians who take about 4,000 X-rays per year. The X-rays assist the doctors in finding bullets, and are very important in vehicular-accident and child-abuse cases.

Body Storage Cooler

The cooler holds approximately 250 bodies.

Histology Laboratory

The lab prepares histologic slides for microscopic viewing by the pathologist. The lab prepares about 35,000 slides per year.

Toxicology Laboratory

In a well-secured area, the lab tests various specimens for foreign substances, such as cocaine, heroin, alcohol, poisons, and prescription drugs, through the use of gas chromatography, radio immunoassay, Co-Oximeter, and gas chromatograph/mass spectrometer.

CONCLUSION

The Institute of Forensic Medicine comprises several departments involved in postmortem investigations, which are conducted every day of the year. Divisions toured included Pathology, Investigations, Police Room, Intake Department, Medical Records Department, Viewing Room, Photography, X-Ray, Body Storage Cooler, Histology Laboratory, and Toxicology Laboratory. The tour was supplemented by a presentation at the symposium by the ME.

TOUR OF THE COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL TRAUMA UNIT

BACKGROUND

The Homicide Research Working Group visited one of the largest trauma units in the United States. The Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit was one of the first comprehensive trauma units in the U.S., and the brainchild of Drs. Robert Freeark and Robert Baker. It began in 1966 to provide a continuum of care for seriously injured trauma patients. The care included the following phases: prehospital-resuscitation, operative-postoperative care, and outpatient-rehabilitation. The original trauma unit was located in a room on the third floor of the hospital, which had previously been used as a dining room for the hospital's physicians. In June 1994, it was moved to the first floor and located next to the Cook County Hospital Emergency Department.

The current facility has 12 resuscitation beds, a shock room that serves as an operation room for extremely severe cases, and 16 intensive-care beds. For burn victims exclusively, 9 intensive-care beds, and 12 convalescent beds are provided.

The Department of Trauma has six full-time attending surgeons. It also has a full compliment of medical personnel, including: two full-time emergency physicians, a full-time physician who is a burn specialist, physicians who are specialists in clinical trauma and rehabilitation, a nurse-researcher, nurse-epidemiologist, and trauma-resources coordinator. There is also a surveillance team that carries out trauma registry functions.

DAILY OPERATION OF THE TRAUMA UNIT

The attendants on an advanced life-support ambulance make a determination as to where they will take the patient, and will call in a "Code 100" when headed directly to the trauma unit. The time it takes to transport a victim from the scene to the trauma unit averages 11 minutes. When patients arrive, time is critical, and is measured in seconds or minutes. The shock room comes into play for "relative triage" and "absolute triage" patients. Relative triage means that the patient is in immediate danger of dying, and absolute triage means that the patient is actually in the process of dying. Seven percent of trauma patients are critical.

Half of all trauma patients come in on weekends, mostly during the hours of darkness. Saturday nights are the busiest, with the summer months busier than winter months. Three-fourths of patients are victims of intentional violence. Any car accident victim who is ejected from a vehicle is an automatic level-one trauma patient. One-fourth of trauma patients are seen again within a two-year period. For this predominantly youth population, Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit provides counseling to curtail the rate of recidivism--which sometimes only terminates with the death of the patient.

Each patient is cared for by the same team of physicians from the initial encounter in the unit resuscitation area all the way through to discharge from the unit. In addition, the same trauma

nursing team works in both the resuscitation area and the trauma intensive-care area.

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS

The Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit provides all aspects of trauma care to patients in Cook County, regardless of their ability to pay for their care.

The trauma unit treats approximately 5,000 patients in any given year. By comparison, the emergency room handles approximately 200,000 patients annually.

According to Dr. John Barrett, who guided half of the HRWG attendees, there has been an alarming trend in regard to gunshot wounds. In the 1980s, they usually consisted of one low-caliber bullet wound. In the 1990s, 25% of the gunshot victims had multiple gunshot wounds, the majority of which were from 9mm rounds. He also said that gunshot victims have a 95% chance of survival if they make it to the trauma unit alive.

The possible choke point in the trauma unit is the intensive care area where patients need a doctor continually monitoring them.

Except for critical patients handled in the shock room, patients requiring surgery are taken by elevator to the third-floor operating rooms.

In January 1998, the Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit began conducting universal screening for intimate-partner abuse regarding all female trauma patients. Women who screened positive, by answering “yes” to at least one of three questions regarding intimate-partner abuse, were given the chance to receive domestic violence counseling. According to the Cook County Hospital’s Trauma Unit, domestic violence is the leading cause of injury for women.

CONCLUSION

The Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit is one of the first and largest trauma units in the United States. It is a fully-staffed facility, which annually treats some 5,000 trauma patients. Its operation consists of triaging patients during the critical period following their arrival at the unit and caring for them through their recovery. Until discharge, each victim is attended by the same physician. The unit is also involved in proactive counseling programs to reduce rates of return for victims suffering gunshot-wound injuries and incidents of domestic violence--two of the greatest threats to youth and women.

APPENDICES

AGENDA

**Homicide Research Working Group
2000 Annual Meeting
Center for the Advancement of Research, Training and Education
Loyola University**

Saturday, June 24:

**4:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m. Northwestern University Panel and Reception
“Learning from the Past, Living in the Present: Patterns in Chicago Homicides, 1870-1930”**

Location: Atrium of the Northwestern Law School
(Enter at 357 E. Chicago Ave. or 357 E. Superior St. and walk right into
lobby)

Chair: Leigh B. Bienen
Presenters: Leigh B. Bienen
 Richard Block
 Tom Gerahty
 Charles Madigan
(And other members of the Historical Chicago Homicide Project)
Recorder: Allegra Kim

**5:00 p.m. Opening Reception, sponsored by Northwestern University Law
School**

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Sunday, June 25:

Location: Lewis Tower, Loyola University Chicago, 820 North Michigan Avenue, 13th
floor

**8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
John Smarrelli, Dean of the College: Welcome to Loyola University**

8:30 a.m. — 9:45 a.m. Session #1: Trends Over Time in Homicides

Chair: Candace Batton
Presenters: Candace Batton. “Gender Differences in Historical Trends in
Homicide Rates in the United States.”

Laura E. Lund.

“Trends in Intimate Partner Homicides in California, 1990-1998.”

Recorder: Elizabeth DeValve

9:45 a.m. — 10:00 a.m. Break

10:00 a.m. — 12:30 a.m. Session #2: Juvenile Homicide

Chair: Allegra Kim

Presenters: Vanessa Leggett. “Prescription for Murder: Homicide and Suicide among Psychopharmacologically Treated Juveniles.”

Vance McLaughlin. “Juvenile Homicide Offenders in Savannah: 1896 to 1903 and 1986 to 1993.”

Jason Van Court “Juvenile Homicide in California in the 1990s”

Richard Block “Persistence and Density of Gang Violence in Chicago”

Recorder: Jenny Mouzos

12:30 p.m. — 1:45 p.m. Business Meeting #1 (over lunch)

1:45 p.m. — 2:00 p.m. Break

2:00 p.m. — 4:45 p.m. Session #3: Homicide Typologies

Chair: Thomas A. Petee

Presenters: James A. Black and Nicole M. Cravens “Contracts to Kill as Scripted Behavior”

Rebecca Block, Christine Devitt, Edmund Donoghue, Roy Dames, and Richard Block. “Are there Types of Intimate Partner Homicide?”

Jane Koziol-McLain and Jacquelyn Campbell. “Attempted Homicide Victim and Proxy Reports of Intimate Partner Homicide: Do They Agree?”

Thomas A. Petee, Greg S. Weaver, Jay Corzine, and “Victim-Offender Relationships and the Situational Context of Homicide.”

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SYMPOSIUM

Susan Avila
Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit
Chicago, IL 60612

Allen Barrett
Bear Research & Systems
Richmond, VA 23234-1640

Candace Batton
University of Nebraska
Firth, NE 68353

Leigh Bienen
Northwestern University Law School
Chicago, IL 60611-3069

James Black
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490

Paul H. Blackman
Institute for Legislative Action
National Rifle Association
Fairfax, VA 22030-7400

Carolyn Rebecca Block
Statistical Analysis Center
Illinois Criminal Justice Information
Authority
Chicago, IL 60608

Richard Block
Department of Sociology
Loyola University
Chicago, IL 60626

Karen Brock
Violence Policy Center
Washington, DC 20036

Jacquelyn Campbell
School of Nursing
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD 21205-2110

Jennifer Cartland
Child Health Data Lab
Children's Memorial Medical Center
Chicago, IL 60614

Roland Chilton
Department of Sociology
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003

Jay Corzine
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816-1360

Nicole Cravens
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490

Allen DeLine
Public Justice
SUNY at Oswego
Oswego, NY 13126

Elizabeth DeValve
College of Criminal Justice
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX 77341-2296

James C.U. Downs
Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences
Auburn, AL 36830

Edward Donoghue
Office of the Medical Examiner
County of Cook
Chicago, IL 60612

Dallas Drake
Minneapolis, MN 55048

Bill Edison
San Jacinto College North
Houston, TX 77049

Helene Felman
Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit
Chicago, IL 60612

Avianca Hansen
Safe Horizon
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Kathleen M. Heide
Department of Criminology
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33620-8100

Lin Huff-Corzine
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816-1360

Jenna Jackson
CBS
New York, NY 10019

John Jarvis
FBI Academy
Quantico, VA 22135

Jana Jasinski
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816-1360

Esther Jenkins
Community Mental Health Council
Chicago, IL 60617

Tara Katn
Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit
Chicago, IL 60612

Allegra Kim
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD 21205-2110

Jane Koziol-McLain
School of Nursing
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD 21205

Linda Langford
Educational Development Center
Arlington, MA 02176

Christine Lanier
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816-1360

Anne Lee
Athens, GA 30606

Everett Lee
Center for Gerontology
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Matthew Lee
Department of Sociology, Anthropology &
Social Work
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State University, MS 39762

Vanessa Levrier Leggett
University of Houston-Downtown
Department of Criminal Justice
Center for Training
Houston, TX 77002-1001

Laura Lund
Department of Health Services
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320

Judy McFarlane
Houston, TX 77006

Vance McLaughlin
Savannah Police Department
Savannah, GA 31412

Jenny Mouzos
National Homicide Monitoring Program
Canberra ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA

Thomas Petee
Department of Sociology
Auburn University
Auburn, AL 36849-5209

Nicholas Rafferty
Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit
Chicago, IL 60612

Christine Rasche
Department of Criminal Justice
University of North Florida
Jacksonville, FL 32224

Steve Roth
NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Stuyvesant Plaza
Albany, NY 12203-3702

Barrie Ritter
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Jack Ritter
Santa Clara, CA 95050

M. Dwayne Smith
Department of Criminology
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33620-8100

Alison Siwek
Cook County Hospital Trauma Unit
Chicago, IL 60612

Jason Van Court
Department of Health Services
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320

Greg Weaver
Department of Sociology
Auburn University
Auburn, AL 36849-5209

Wendell Willacy
ICPSR
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248