



Working Together:  
Partnerships to Investigate, Prevent,  
And Respond to Homicide and Violence

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The Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG) is an international and interdisciplinary organizing of volunteers dedicated to cooperation among researchers and practitioners who are trying to understand and limit lethal violence. The HRWG has the following goals:

- ❖ To forge links between research, epidemiology and practical programs to reduce levels of mortality from violence;
- ❖ To promote improved data quality and the linking of diverse homicide data sources;
- ❖ To foster collaborative, interdisciplinary research on lethal and non-lethal violence;
- ❖ To encourage more efficient sharing of technologies for measuring and analyzing homicide;
- ❖ To create and maintain a communication network among those collecting, maintaining, and analyzing homicide data sets; and
- ❖ To generate a stronger working relationship among homicide researchers.

More information about the HRWG, as well as publications from previous meetings can be found at the HRWG website: <http://homicideworkinggroup.cos.ucf.edu/index.php>

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## FOREWARD

The theme for the 2013 HRWG meeting – *Working Together: Partnerships to Investigate, Prevent, and Respond to Homicide and Violence* – came about following a series of conversations during the 2012 ASC Conference in Chicago. We thank the FBI and FLETC, co-sponsors, as well as those persons involved in organizing the meeting. As the slate of participants and submissions began to take shape, we both recognized that the program was moving away somewhat from what we envisioned. Admittedly, we were a bit concerned. Was it warranted? In a word: no. Everything far exceeded our expectations, not because we lowered them, but in large part due to something we all may take for granted: HRWG and its' members. That said, as opposed to identifying and commenting on specific papers or presentations, we would like to focus on the program as it relates to the organization and how it reflects many of our reasons for being involved with HRWG.

First, when we decided on the theme for the meeting, neither program co-chair or anyone involved in the previously mentioned discussions wanted to take credit for coming up with the idea, which is unsurprising and reflects the uniqueness of HRWG. Secondly, the overall theme for the meeting highlights that in varying degrees, many of the participants (and other HRWG members) are both practitioners and academics. Far too often communication and collaboration between the two groups is lacking and we are fortunate to have persons who are simultaneously in both camps. Thirdly, these Proceedings chronicle not only papers, posters, and other research presented at the meeting but also the discussions that accompany each section. It is a longstanding tradition of the organization that half of each session be devoted to discussion. During one of the discussions, HRWG member Alan Deline commented that during his career in law enforcement and public safety, the most difficult task he ever faced was telling the family members of firefighters killed in the line of duty during an active shooter incident that their loved ones were not coming home. At the risk of being cliché, one could hear a pin drop. For a short time, the discussion stopped. Everyone in the room witnessed an emotional reminder that homicide is not simply about theories, data, and offenders.

It is hoped that through gaining a better understanding of homicide, such tragedies can be prevented and that no one forget that its' impact is not limited to the victims, but also to the families and communities to which we belong.

Thank you for your interest.

Amber Scherer  
Greg Weaver

Program Co-chairs

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## CHAPTER 1

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY AND HOMICIDE SURVIVORS

Presenters:

Lin Huff-Corzine, University of Central Florida  
Greg Weaver, Auburn University

Recorder:

Melissa Tetzlaff-Bemiller, Lakeland College

#### Recorder Notes for Keynote Address

Q: Shawn- Was there a difference with PTSD if the survivor was present versus police notification?

A: Lin- We didn't find one, but there is not a lot out there.

Q: Chris R. - Very interesting. More data is better than less data. Are you finding out about survivors or victims?

A: Lin- Indirect victims themselves

Q: Chris R. - If indirect victims and services are fee based, are we calling for free?

A: Lin- First we need to figure out about them.

Q: Dallas- Are we trying to reduce harm for the second victim.

A: Lin- There are some services, but not too many.

Q: Deborah- How will this impact NCVS? Will it? Should it?

A: Greg-That is the inspiration for this panel. Prior research is scarce for 2 reasons. 1) Research is generally localized to certain locations and therefore not generalizable. 2) Much of the localized research focuses on short term consequences, ex.: after the funeral attention may be given to the homicide survivor but then it goes away.

Q: Illya- NCVS doesn't measure it because federal agencies do well. Do they (NCVS) want to expose themselves? NCVS would be horrible if they measured murder.

A: Lin- Feds don't measure indirect.

Q: Illya- But they (NCVS) won't be politically correct.

A: Greg- All of the data have problems. None of the sources provide information about indirect victims.

Q: John- There are politics in data, especially when comparing one data source to another. There are problems and it is difficult. If you want indirect victims, you could look at household samples from the NCVS. But, a problem might be the mechanics. The sample is small (N=1500/year). This is expensive. The most compelling thing is that of the cost of them not being addressed by other data. You need to make sure to pay attention to the pragmatic concerns.

Q: Lin- Any idea of a place to put it?

A: John- Health and Human Services. CDC. Journal of Criminology and Public Policy.

S: Dallas- Told a story about a man picking out a picture to show the feeling of helplessness and how that can be a risk factor.

S: Chris- Victim impact statements bring to mind that it isn't just immediately after the homicide. Courts take a long time and victim impact statements come later and allow things to fester. Also, NCVS is not the correct place, but have helped and may break the ice. Contact Christine Englebracht. Victim impact statements may get us further. The justice system should be concerned.

Q: Deborah-Anyone can look at story telling/content analysis/shared experience.

A: Lin- Yes, but we want a larger sample/study.

S: Candy- Women's Health Risk could provide methodology.

S: Kim V. – You could contact/look for survivor groups within cities.

S: Kim D- Parents of murdered children is another group.

S: Amanda F- When looking at indirect victims, you should look at if the homicide was solved or is unsolved. You could also look at the correlation between victim and offender and use prison groups.



## CHAPTER 2

### PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE LAW ENFORCEMENT PRACTICE

Presenters:

Amanda L. Farrell, Old Dominion University  
Sgt. Christopher Scallon, Norfolk Police Department

Dallas Drake, Center for Homicide Research

Kara Hannula, John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
C. Gabrielle Salfati, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

C. Gabrielle Salfati, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Chair:

Val Atkins, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

Recorder:

Amber Scherer, Federal Bureau of Investigation

## Partnerships, Policy and Practice: Working Together to Address Police Shootings in Norfolk, VA

Amanda L. Farrell, Old Dominion University  
Sgt. Christopher Scallon, Norfolk Police Department

According to McElvain and Kposowa (2008), officers that have been involved in a shooting are 50% more likely to be involved in another shooting incident. While chilling, this statistic becomes even more alarming when we consider that violent confrontations between police officers and citizens appear to be on the rise (NLEOMF 2010; NLEOMF 2011). Further, research indicates that 50 to 80% of officers that kill someone in the line of duty leave the force within five years (Kirschman, 2007) and that one in three officers involved in a shooting will leave the police department within a year (Stevens, 2005). It is also likely that most officers involved in a shooting incident will experience some form of psychological disturbance in the aftermath of the event (Best, Artwohl, and Kirschman, 2011; Jones, 1989; Klinger, 2004; Paton, 2005; Thomas, 2011).

While much of the literature notes that post-trauma reactions are individualized, it is important to note that the departmental response to the officer in the immediate aftermath of the shooting can impact his or her development of long term psychological symptoms (Jones 1989). Specifically, if the officer feels abandoned, isolated, emotionally neglected and treated like a criminal (IACP 2012; Jones 1989), then he or she is more likely to experience deep and lasting post trauma symptoms. Other research has suggested that the department can also utilize training preventatively; that educating officers as to what to expect, physiologically, psychologically, and cognitively, in the aftermath of a critical incident may have inoculative effects (Blau 1994; Hodgins, Creamer, and Bell 2001; Honig and Sultan 2004; Jones 1989; Stephens 2005), allowing the officer to mentally prepare and know that what they experience is a normal reaction to trauma.

In the current economic climate of budgetary cuts and a “do more with less” attitude, the research and statistics presented suggest that a cost effective approach to police shootings involves effective training and preparation, as well as swift intervention, to avoid officers developing long term symptoms of psychological trauma and possibly focusing on prevention of future shooting incidents. Within the given context, it is imperative that academics and practitioners work in conjunction to address these timely and critical issues facing modern police agencies.

At the heart of this partnership are the following questions: How can we best protect the officers? How can we both seek to inoculate them from trauma AND quickly and effectively address their physical, psychological and spiritual well-being following a shooting incident while still protecting the police department, as well as meet the expectations of the community being served? Can we achieve evidence-based policy or best practice in this area? This presentation seeks to share our partnership experience, as well as generate open discussion related to suggestions for future lines of inquiry and possible strategies.

## Recorder Notes for Partnership, Policy and Practice: Working Together to Address Police Shootings in Norfolk, VA

Jesse Holton: Right now I have 18 police officers who have been involved in officer involved shootings, what have you noticed for those who have been involved and as they go into the dark side?

Chris: Yeah, I try to address that in the academy. I tell them I do not wish that on my worst enemy. We had an officer who killed the bad guy and it went right to his head and as a result outside of work he went to a fundraiser at a local strip bar and was allegedly robbed and this individual thought he was invisible and he was eventually killed. That affected a lot of officers. The underlying issues are just not working.

Jesse: I've noticed that glorifying period is the same that they experience as when they are on drugs.

Chris: I know for me I self-medicated with alcohol. And then almost immediately I secluded myself and got away. But for the most part we have had a handful of shootings that have been challenged for questions.

Amanda: We have had so many getting seriously challenged and that is another load of challenges.

Jesse: Do you guys have a VA close by?

Amanda: Yes.

Deborah: Can you please tell me the level of support that an officer would receive and the likelihood that they are going to shoot again?

Chris: I can tell you from my experience and that we were involved in multiple shootings. The level of support is almost none.

Amanda: Consider going to other jurisdictions.

Deborah: Well, once they shoot, they shoot again.

Chris: Well, you test yourself. You also know that you hesitate and also that you are hypersensitive and know that you do something that you shouldn't. The lazy officer who doesn't do something so he doesn't get in trouble. This isn't going to happen to him. The command staff or executive staff shines a light on him and says hey you aren't doing something or doing it right.

James: So, that whole glory moment after the shooting, are we seeing some sort of challenge of that mentality or starting to see that?

Chris: Yea, that glory moment I think was maybe once. The majority of what we see is isolation and seclusion. I tell the new recruits before they graduate, I give a presentation. And then have an opportunity to drop.

## Public Policy Development & Practitioner Need: The Challenge of Switching from Macro-level Homicide Research

Dallas S. Drake  
Center for Homicide Research

*Researchers should be the grand interpreters. As public criminologists we should work to integrate what we know into the greater community to facilitate problem solving and to infuse public discourse with scientific facts. There is great difficulty in constructing research that is policy relevant however. In this session I will lay out a strategy for matching research with policy and discuss the pitfalls of interacting with the public. To do this, three case examples will be introduced: teachers with guns, female intimate body disposals, and homicide vigil shootings. The purpose is not to share results, but rather to investigate the process.*

Since 2004, Michael Burawoy has promoted the idea that sociology ought to leave the safety and confines of the ivory tower to bring the promise of sociology—its science and its findings—out into the public sphere. He calls this practice Public Sociology. He further outlines four types of sociology: professional, policy, public and critical sociology (Burawoy, 2009). Policy sociology is a term coined by Burawoy to describe a sociologist's role in developing a conversation with members of the public who might benefit from our ideas. I propose that homicide researchers engaged in this practice be termed *public criminologists*.

According to Burawoy (2009), the role of the public intellectual is to reach an audience—members of the public. This audience consists first and foremost of our students, but also of other members of the community that are active and involved in solving social problems. The goal as Burawoy proposes is to develop a conversation where two things happen: 1) we educate the public about what we know; and 2) we are educated by others about what they need. This supposes that we must actually mix with working practitioners.

One of the requirements in the development of policy-related research is that the information being developed must actually be relevant in a real world environment (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Robson, 1993). All too often sociologists have been charged with becoming irrelevant and “out of touch” (Venkatesh, 2012:1). Public sociology is one way to facilitate changing this, but it requires an organic process that is reflexive in nature; one informs the other.

When policy analysts speak of policy formulation, they are typically thinking of how to initiate and pass laws. “The primary process of policy making consists of two main ‘phases’: policy formulation and policy implementation” (Geurts, n.d.: 29). Some authors also mention “policy initiation” (Fischer, 2003: 6). These are all concepts on the grand stage of the policy arena to which most of us seldom, if ever, have access.

While much literature focuses on the introduction of policy within a macro social-structural level, not all policy need take place within that arena. Criminologists can advocate for change individually by interjecting into, or shaping norms, mores, understanding, parenting skills (Klevens & Cox, 2008), informal social controls (Peterson, 2008), or framing (MN Council of Nonprofits, 2013). Criminologists can also initiate change at the organizational level by helping shape how practitioner agencies might react and respond to prevent homicide. Noticeably absent from the research literature is the method by which changes in public policy are initiated or formulated once homicide prevention knowledge is produced.

According Nicholson-Crotty (2007), few organizations participate in advocating what they know (2007). Similarly, few journals in criminology focus on public policy, with the American Society of Criminology's *Criminology & Public Policy* and *Criminal Justice Policy Review* (published by Sage) being two notable exceptions (CJP, 2013). Government priorities have helped shape their content by advocating and promoting policy evaluation, demanding that there be proof that advocated proposals actually work (see NIJ grant-making pages; Walters, 2003). Clearly crime fighting policies become more quickly disseminated when accepted or promoted by federal agencies. Policies are also introduced and promoted through policy networks (Fischer, 2003). Together, these practices constrain the trial or implementation of any new homicide prevention technology.

The dominance of using the macro-level may be the result of Durkheim's concept of *social facts*, which subsequently leads to criminologists' identification of the patterning of criminal behavior. According to Messner and Rosenfeld (1999:38), "despite the limitations associated with the social-structural tradition in the study of homicide, this approach contains an important implication for efforts to deal with the problem of lethal violence." The macro level is excellent for developing understanding, but lacks specificity when formulating policy proposals. According to Kennedy and Braga (1998:267), "little of this research has been translated into practical strategies that criminal justice agencies can use to prevent homicide events from occurring." One exception of this dominance might be in the assessment of spatial distributions of site-specific crimes, often referred to as hot-spot technology (Groff, Weisburd, & Yang, 2010).

## **Policy Formulation**

Even with the use of terms like initiation and formulation, the policy literature really does not explain how policy ideas are generated. Politicians often turn to think-tanks for ideas. Researchers must turn to their own ideas based on a deep understanding of the problem at hand. Researchers should be the grand interpreters of the knowledge our work has created. While it is important to get the ideas out, to distribute the results of our analyses, we must realize that publishing is no longer enough. We must attempt to put our findings into terms that the lay public can understand and do it in a way that makes it most accessible and useable.

To assist in this goal, the Center for Homicide Research has outlined a process – a sequence of steps – outlining how this might take place. Developing public policy improvements from

the results of scientific research is one of interpreting social data, both macro and micro, and using it to problem-solve. The micro level however, often provides the best entrance into leveraging any solution.

Policy development involves linking what researchers know with how practitioners can put this knowledge to work. In a sense, the researcher serves as a translator for the purpose of problem-solving. The policy process must incorporate imagination and innovation.

The following steps in this process can be identified:

1. Noticing or detecting a problem or trouble
2. Selecting a policy intervention
3. Developing a rationale as to why this intervention is believed useful
4. Identifying the target audience
5. Testing the intervention with key stakeholders (reality check)
6. Modifying the proposed intervention
7. Communicating or reporting the resulting recommendation
8. Real-life testing of the proposed intervention

One assumption is that researchers can actually detect *serviceable* problems. To do this successfully, the researcher should be in touch with those practitioners closest to the problem. One should ask and listen to what the practitioner views as the current state of affairs, along with any political concerns. Care should be taken to listen to the meaning behind the words since lay people are not always effective communicators.

Ultimately, the usability of any proposed policy will depend on understanding the need and the process of how it might be used. A major component of policy formulation is identifying the overall process that requires modification. Within that process are one or more nodes that may require alteration via a particular policy intervention. The intervention then is matched with where the need occurs in that process. To work well, there must be specificity in the treatment and an identified point in the process where it should be applied. This may be similar to how fatality review teams are used to create changes in investigational or policing protocols.

For example, the major nodes of searching for missing females killed by their intimate partner are as follows:

1. Police enact procedures as to how to handle missing person cases
2. Person (and vehicle) goes missing
3. Family notices the person is missing
4. Family notifies police of the missing person
5. Police take a missing persons report
6. Police open an investigation
7. Police notify surrounding jurisdictions about the case
8. Police consult various databases

9. Police actively patrol-search for the missing person
10. Police investigator is notified
11. Police investigators construct a search plan
12. Police investigators organize a ground search for the victim
13. Police investigators organize divers or air search
14. Police investigators employ outside agencies for specialized search help
15. Family conducts ground searches to locate the victim
16. Police locate a victim's missing car
17. Police process vehicle for evidence
18. Police find the victim's remains
19. Victim's intimate partner is questioned
20. Offender is arrested

In the preceding example, the number of procedural steps are arbitrary and rather limitless depending on your familiarity and understanding of the overall process. This means that you actually need to know something about *how* your knowledge is being used before proposing changes to any process.

### **Policy Interventions**

Most researchers are not the “experts” commonly relied on to promote comprehensive solutions, but rather one of many contributing academics (Jones & Norton, 2010). Therefore, we need an opening in which to leverage our intervention. Once identified, practitioners should be given a plan of action rather than the data itself. The resulting plan should rest on the analysis and interpretation of the data.

This plan must rest on this change occurring at the individual level since a conception of the social structure exists at the level of imagination (Mills, 2000). Practitioners are made up of people and of individuals, and these people are engaged in a power structure to which we hope to change. Power is a “relation between individuals” (Foucault as cited in Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:256). In order for public policy to be implemented, power must be shared and the adoption of any policy proposal must be participatory. The relationship between individuals is shaped by ideologies held by each of the respective actors and their interest groups. These interest groups include key stakeholders and the police.<sup>1</sup>

Disempowered communities rebel against outsider do-gooders who seek to impose elitist, classist, and at times racist solutions to their problems (Rappaport, 1981). This can isolate research experts who are cast as *outsiders*. This is especially true in situations wherein academics rarely participate or interact with activists, or only intercede to tell others what to do or how to do it. Within key stakeholder groups, consisting primarily of minority anti-violence activists who seek community initiated solutions, one common intervention is to conduct a candlelight or prayer vigil near the kill site (Mitchell & Daniels, 1989). Researchers should attend these events and participate as fully as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Although not central to this discussion, it also includes the media, which fulfills an agenda-setting role.



Scientific experts tend to claim power (at times antagonistically) rather than to share it with practitioners (Gabriel, 2004; Carson, 2007). Activists do not appreciate intrusion from outsiders (Loury, 1984; Lasker & Weiss, 2003). Instead, they must be able to discover information for themselves. For this reason, information (findings) must be accessible so that they can be *discoverable*. In disempowered communities, personal discovery helps activists in construct status and develop a sense of power. Making information available at the lowest level possible allows practitioners to discover and own information, thereby making them more willing to embrace research. Wherever possible, stakeholders should have input into the research process, the conclusions, and any policy recommendations. Researchers should ask questions of practitioners and casually share what they know.

Researchers should also consider the ideology and beliefs of public religion (see Winship & Berrien, 1999; Swatos & Vellman, 1999). Homicide vigils (sometimes referred to as “prayer vigils” (Leonardi, 2013)) are strongly shaped by the moral beliefs of key stakeholders. They are public productions which are highly influenced by a rigid set of ideas regarding the cause and consequences of immoral behavior. The study of shootings at memorial services or vigils then must likewise consider or incorporate public religion and organic empowerment as components of any policy proposal. For these reasons, activists should not be expected for example to stop holding vigils, because they are intrinsic to a patterned and ideological response to the killings.

Police too are controlled by ideologies and beliefs about crime and homicide. One guiding idea is that, “only the police know” (Culver, 1978:504; Wilson, 2000). Another is that crimes are solved by a procedure of, “follow the evidence” (Savino & Turvey, 2005:178). The Center for Homicide Research devised a project constructing a probability profile of how husbands and boyfriends dispose of their female intimates’ bodies. While not technically prevention, finding deceased remains assists in successful prosecution of offenders. Profiles, however, are not considered evidence but rather an investigative tool. Therefore, when the Center attempted to contact police in one case to offer information, including access to the database, there was no response. In another instance, there was a “thanks,” but no further interaction apparent. Staff might have better results by training police through the use of ‘law enforcement only’ training bulletins or research briefs. Staff has also provided investigator training.

When working with police one should not give the police raw data or theoretical information, but rather give them the real-world application, an explicit plan of action, like the “lever-pulling strategies” (McGarrell, Chermak, Wilson, & Corsaro, 2006:1) proposed by Kennedy, Piehl, & Braga (1996). Because policing is punitive, it is often difficult to know how to implement strategies that are not based on sanctions.

*Teachers with Guns* is the Homicide Center’s research project to assess the proposal to arm primary education teachers with firearms as a way of deterring or stopping school shootings. In this case, ideology of stakeholders and their legislators plays a central role in whether the information will be used or not. Strong emotions and strong language exists on either side. While the results are not yet public, it seems the point of dispersal will have

significant importance. Where the information originates might strongly bias any intended recipient, yet is also time-sensitive.

This research project is an excellent example of an assessment of micro-level behaviors including how individual actors have used or misused their weapons. If teachers are to be armed – and some already are – then researchers would do well to have a base-rate of school teacher firearm use and misuse. These research results need to reach the school teachers and administrators quickly.

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## Recorder Notes for Public Policy Development & Practitioner Need: The Challenger of Switching from Macro-Level Research

Marc Riedel: Yeah, you are absolutely correct in what academic criminology. It becomes in some cases dangerous. In many years ago I was involved in looking at the death penalty, I was discussing what I was doing and started getting death threats and started telling a colleague and he laughed and pulled out a folder of them. You have to ask what is the university going to do to offer some sort of protection for you and your job, or whatever? As this thing becomes more popular?

Becky: Well briefly to respond to Marc, I think when you make the choice to become an academic, there are some tradeoffs and the wonderful thing about what Dallas done and the organization he has built and the contacts he has built is that he would have had a lot of trouble doing that in academia, and the other thing is that I just commend you for this. Every one of your points is really good advice from my experience. One thing: early one you mentioned.. the journal is *Criminology & Public Policy*, I agree with you in the past it has

been mostly dealing with public policy, it is open for peer review and to send papers in for evaluation, if we all want to change what is in Criminology and Public Policy, we can all send in papers on the topic of evaluation rather than policy.

Dick: I agree with Marc. I imagine if you raise your hand in this group who has received a death threat in this group, many would have in this business. There are different models out there and that is what I wanted to talk about, one model at Loyola is that the research question comes from the neighborhood itself and the researchers combine with the neighborhood to do the research and in the end the researchers learn from the neighborhood and the neighborhood learns how to do research. And that has been pretty successful. And the second thing is that public policy research has not always been appreciated by universities and the third is that you have to watch out for being co-opted especially for things like gun abuse...

Alan Deline: Has a knock out gotten into your area?

Dallas: No.

## The Path to Homicide: An Identification of Offending Trajectories Leading to Homicide and Implications for Offender Profiling

Kara Hannula & C. Gabrielle Salfati<sup>2</sup>  
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### **Introduction**

The most critical step of offender profiling, in terms of practically applying empirical research to aid in police investigations, is establishing a clear and consistent link between actions that may be observed at a crime scene and characteristics of the offender who left behavioral evidence at that crime scene (Canter, 2000). This relationship between actions and characteristics is known as the A to C equation (Canter & Youngs, 2003) and understanding the different elements of this equation, as they apply to various types of offences, has been the focus of many recent studies in the field of Investigative Psychology (IP) (e.g. Davies et al., 1997; Horning, Salfati, & Crawford, 2010; Mokros & Alison, 2002; Salfati, 2000; Trojan & Salfati, 2011a; Trojan & Salfati, 2011b). Establishing a clear link between A and C may be particularly beneficial for guiding homicide investigations in which witnesses are rarely available as sources of evidence, and the victims are often strangers to the offenders (Harbort & Mokros, 2001). Various methodologies have been employed in an attempt to establish this link in homicide cases, yet very few studies have been successful in this endeavor (Kocsis, Coksey, & Irwin, 2002).

This inability to establish a consistent link has inspired a debate in current literature concerning the feasibility of offender profiling. Profiling efforts have primarily relied on the assumption of behavioral consistency--an offender will behave similarly in both a crime scene and other aspects of his or her life (Canter, 2000). Several studies, however, have seriously challenged this assumption by demonstrating inconsistency in behavior from current crime scene to background offenses (Mokros & Alison, 2002; Trojan & Salfati, 2011b). Most authors agree that additional factors, which have not yet been thoroughly examined, may influence the effectiveness of profiling and need to be considered before disregarding offender profiling as impossible (Crabbé, Decoene, & Vertommen, 2008; Salfati, 2008; Goodwill & Alison, 2007). For example, Crabbé et al (2008) recently reviewed the current state of profiling and suggested a future profiling model that focuses on three important understandings: 1) homicide must be examined within context, with an awareness of situational influences, 2) homicide develops over time, with each phase influencing the next, and 3) underlying psychological processes that are influencing the offender at the time of offence must be considered. Furthermore, Canter and Youngs

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(2003) and Salfati (2008) suggest that the inconsistencies observed in behavior across multiple situations may be the result of learning, maturational, and developmental processes.

Although these processes have not been addressed within the profiling literature, they have been the focus of many studies within criminal career literature. There is a large and quickly growing body of research aimed at understanding offending trajectories, or how offenders change in their criminal patterns over time (Jennings & Reingle, 2012). These studies are frequently performed with the aim of identifying subgroups of offenders that differ in their developmental offending patterns within a specific population of offenders. Very few studies have focused specifically on violent offenders (Jennings & Ringle, 2012), and only one study was identified that focused on homicide offenders (see Nieuwbeerta, 2003).

Homicide profiling efforts may be improved by expanding the knowledge on offending trajectories of homicide offenders and integrating that knowledge into current models of offender profiling. Specifically, by identifying subgroups of homicide offenders who follow different offending trajectories, more insight may be gained into offender behaviors observed at a crime scene. As one example, it may be hypothesized that chronic offenders will demonstrate more planning and control at a homicide crime scene due to their experience with offending. The goal of this study is to take the preliminary steps necessary before determining whether a consistent link may be established between crime scene behaviors of homicide offenders and specific background offending trajectories.

## **Aims**

The first aim of this study is determine whether subgroups of homicide offenders exist based on offending patterns leading to the only homicide for single homicide offenders or the first homicide for serial homicide offenders. The second aim is to determine whether the groups identified in aim one are meaningful. Specifically, do the groups significantly differ in dimensions deemed important in criminal career research (average offending onset age, age at homicide, frequency of offending, and length of criminal career)? Additionally, do different types of homicide (sexual, stranger, domestic, serial) follow specific offending trajectories?

## **Methods**

The data for this research were taken from closed, fully adjudicated state and local cases that were contributed from law enforcement agencies from around the country for the purpose of research. All identifiers, including names of victims, suspects, offenders, officers, departments, correctional agencies, are removed. Only aggregate data are reported on. Data were collected and coded using the Homicide Profiling Index Version 4 and the Homicide and Rape Profiling Index (HPIv4©; Salfati, 2005; HPI-R©; Salfati, 2010). The HPI is a coding guideline developed specifically for examining homicide case files and includes instructions on coding a variety of variables describing both actions at homicide crime scenes and details relating to the backgrounds of the offender and victims involved

in the homicide. For each case, a criminal history timeline is also developed. The final sample used in this project included 140 single-victim homicide offenders with known criminal histories. These histories were re-coded to reflect offending patterns over the fifteen years leading up to the homicide. Group-based Trajectory Modeling (Nagin & Land, 1993) was used to identify subgroups of homicide offenders with different offending trajectories. A zero-inflated poisson model was used due to the nature of the data: criminal histories were recorded as frequency counts per year and there were more zeros than expected for a typical poisson model (Jones, Nagin, & Roeder, 2001). Posterior probabilities were used to classify cases into groups, and groups were compared for significant differences with Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests.

## Results

### Aim 1: Group Identification

A five-group trajectory model proved to be the best fit to describe the offending trajectories of this homicide sample. The first group was labeled *rare* and was the largest group, representing 39% of the sample. This group included offenders with no arrests prior to the homicide and offenders with only one or two arrests immediately preceding the homicide. The second group was labeled *chronic* and represented 19% of the sample. This group consisted of offenders who had arrests throughout the entire fifteen years prior to the homicide. The third group was labeled *prior peak* and represented 12% of the sample. This group consisted of offenders who were active early on in their offending careers, but were not arrested during at least the six years immediately before the homicide. The fourth and fifth groups were labeled *low escalate* and *high escalate*. They represented 24% and 7% of the sample, respectively. Both groups consisted of offenders who did not have arrests for the first several years of the fifteen year period prior to the homicide, but demonstrated increased levels of offending leading up to the homicide. The difference between these groups is that the low escalate began offending slightly later than the high escalate group and the offending level never became as high.

### Aim 2: Group Differences

Differences were observed between age at first arrest, age at homicide, criminal career length, and total number of arrests across the groups. Specifically, chronic offenders began their criminal careers the earliest and had the longest careers, but did not have the highest number of total arrests. The high escalate group had the highest number of total arrests. Average age at homicide was highest for the prior peak group and lowest for the low escalate group. Serial homicide cases were primarily classified in the rare and chronic groups. Domestic homicides were largely represented in the rare and prior peak groups. Sexual homicides were equally represented in chronic and prior peak groups, and present, but slightly less represented, in the other three groups. Finally, the high escalate group consisted of a high number of stranger homicide cases.



## Discussion

There are two major limitations that need to be addressed. First, it was impossible to control for exposure in offending trajectories. Information on time spent in prison or jail was missing from 51% of the cases. Second, juvenile records were not available for most offenders. Therefore, some individual trajectories reflect non-offending during the years prior to the offender's eighteenth birthday even though offending may have occurred during this period.

Despite these limitations, this study successfully provides the foundation for future attempts at linking criminal histories of homicide offenders to their crime scene behaviors. It remains to be determined whether these different developmental trajectories and criminal experiences influence behaviors at homicide crime scenes in predictable ways.

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### Recorder Notes for “The Path to Homicide: An Identification of Offending Trajectories Leading to Homicide and Implications for Offender Profiling”

Becky: A couple things, before you mentioned it, I was thinking juvenile records. In the data, I did, attempted to do, life scan analysis and I found, I was really sorry on my end we didn't have victimization data, and the other, when you are talking about exposure, are you talking about being imprisoned?

Kara: Yeah.

Becky: So all those things are good, and I also think that the rare group is absolutely fascinated, after all, it is the largest group and it's got the women in it, and the victimization is going to be pretty interesting. I know it is going to be a pretty small group, but separating it out by women. Is it survival you are using?

Kara: We are doing that now, separating by women.

Becky: How many in the group?

Kara: I only have 14 women.

Gaby: We have a lot of data, but a lot of it is currently being coded. We are currently switching over, so for reliability issues, we used what was already coded.

Val: Have you considered, had the opportunity to examine, maybe move patterns? Changes in schools, those types of things? Are those indicators?

Becky: I was really kind of bothered, that in your analysis, "known criminal histories"...I would like to hear your thoughts about that.

## Practice Informed Research and Research Based Practice: An Overview of Research on Linking Serial Homicide

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The literature on crime scene investigation and crime analysis has over the last 20 years stressed the need for the practice to move from a purely experiential practice to a practice informed by solid empirical research. This discussion has particularly centered on issues of deducing the characteristics of the offender from the crime scene (Canter, 2000) and the reliable linking of cases to one offender (Salfati & Bateman, 2005; Bateman & Salfati, 2007).

As highlighted by Alison, Bennell, Mokros, and Ormerod (2002), few studies or theoretical reviews early on had considered the process itself or the premises on which analysis are founded. Also in reviewing the validity of the assumptions integral to the process, they highlight that few studies or theoretical reviews demonstrated much of what was considered standard practice in the analysis of behavioral consistency as it pertains to criminal behavior, and many fell short of current understanding of key psychological processes and principles. Thus much of the work did not meet basic expert witness standards under Federal Rule of Evidence 702 or the Daubert criteria for admissible scientific evidence.

A number of other studies have been done to evaluate various aspects of profiling. One of these studies (Risinger & Loop, 2002) did a review of the history of crime analysis which highlighted that the analysis of criminal behavior has not very often been based on empirical and scientific evidence. Essentially what they found was that people were giving their opinions about what they thought an offender's behavior was an indication of, rather than using solidly founded scientific knowledge of human behavior. Meyer (2007) also did an evaluation of case law internationally and concluded that the analysis of criminal behavior methods was failing the legal tests for admissible expert evidence due to little valid empirical basis. Alison, Smith, Eastman, and Rainbow (2003) specifically examined the practical implications of these issues, including testing the reliability and validity of 21 actual investigative profiles provided by experts, which sought to provide the police with identifiable characteristics of suspects based on behavioral indices at the crime scene. Their study showed that of nearly 4,000 claims regarding the characteristics of offenders present in the 21 profiles, as much as 80% of the information provided was not supported by evidence. The authors concluded by providing guidelines that stressed the importance of backing up any claims about the characteristics of the offender and the importance of basing profiles on empirically validated research regarding the link between the actions of an offender at the crime scene and their corresponding characteristics.

Early, and continuing critiques, has stressed the need to move the field from an "art" towards an empirical science.

In 2005, the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) invited 135 serial murder subject matter experts to discuss the current state of the knowledge of the field since the original work that was done by the FBI in the 1970s. These experts came from 10 countries and 5 continents, and included law enforcement who had been involved in investigating cases of serial homicide, legal professionals including prosecutors and defense attorneys who had been part of the court process; members of the media and investigative journalists who had reported on these cases, clinicians who had been part of the assessment of serial offenders, and academics who had done research on the topic. The objective was to create a reference manual for investigators to aid in the investigation of serial murder cases, specifically with reference to the definition of these cases, offender characteristics, and the linking of series. The conclusions from this meeting (NCAVC, 2005) was that not much was known about the topic, and that there was a real lack of valid empirical research in the field that could be reliably used. Most of what was known to that point either came from investigative experience, or was based on case studies that were done by clinicians.

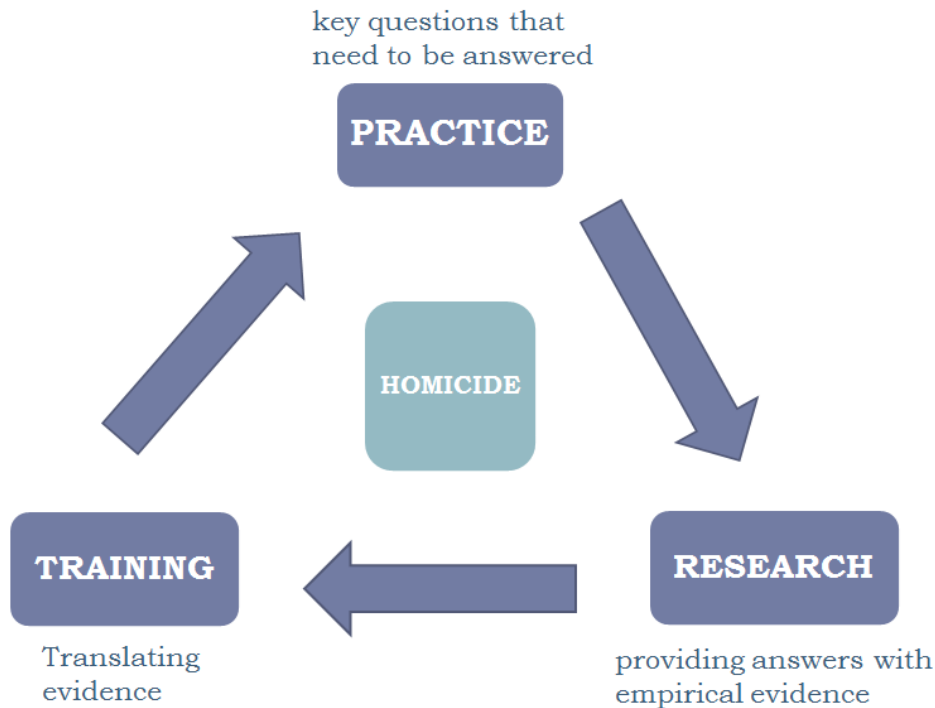
This talk will give an overview of research on linking serial homicides done to date within the Investigative Psychology Research Unit (IPRU) since this time, done in collaboration with police organizations internationally. The focus will be on three key areas.

The first aims to outline how practical needs as experienced by investigators and crime analysts relating to linking series has informed the focus of the research, as well as outlining key issues relating to the evidence from recent studies regarding the validity and reliability of current crime linkage practice.

This will be followed by a summary of some of the key trends in the research as it relates to patterns of consistency and inconsistency in victim targeting and other actions engaged in by offenders during their crimes.

Finally, the talk aims to discuss the implication of these results on how it may inform practice, specifically in terms of prioritizing the most salient features for linking, and understanding underlying psychological consistencies in seemingly inconsistent overt behavioral patterns.

The talk will finish by discussing key issues on how to translate academic research into training for practitioners, and



## Recorder Notes for Practice Informed Research and Research Based Practice: An Overview of Research on Linking Serial Homicide

Marc: One of the interesting things in serial homicide is the relationship to the media. The media pushes the LE people, including in some cases pushing fortune tellers and you know it's not the chief's idea. My question is since you are working with international groups, what role does the media play? Does it have any impact?

Gaby: This issue certainly came up at the FBI workshop. This is very different in every country. I get inquiries from the media all the time. I think the problem we are having is not just the media it is the people who are commenting to the media and giving information that just isn't true, the talking heads. They are the ones who will talk to the media and that is what is being used and unfortunately that is what the media is going to run with. I am very iffy about working with the media and I do not think it is for the public forum. It is a balance act, giving information vs not getting in the way.

Chris Rasche: I will just play devil's advocate with you about the media. Not theorizing about the crime but correcting misapprehensions that they come with. Very often I have gotten loaded inquiries that completely distort. So my job has been to say no. And they do not like that. So I think that is an important role that experts can play.

Gaby: That I completely agree with as an educator. And that I will do. To give an update on certain things. But they ask me about certain cases and I won't do that. But as an educator,

what Dallas was talking about. I work for a public university and as part of our mission bringing it back to the public.

Amanda: One of the things that its coming up when I working with a lot of practitioners from different agencies, is mutual exclusivity, so they disregard anything academic and so okay you guys are full of crap and that is not going to happen. How do you address that?

Gaby: It comes back to what Chris was saying, having the education. What we are seeing with all of the analysis is that is not the case, what we are see doesn't visually look the same. We cannot see inside the heads of the offender, so it is about having the theoretical background of an academic. Coming back to the academic and being able to understand. The inconsistencies in the consistency patterns. A key point is offenders who target prostitutes, half of those offenders who target prostitutes target other victims and they were not being linked. So I think it is an education issue about what can be linked.

## Recorder Notes for Panel

Academic mindset vs. law enforcement mindset

Mindy: Everything so far has been absolutely fantastic! First for Miss Kara, I am curious if you are able to include looking at criminogenic risk needs or life course events that play into some of those needs. Because I know you are looking into some of those trajectories.

Kara: Absolutely I want to, that is where I want to go. But I can't with some of those case files. So for this I can't do it all. That is part of why I had to do "known criminal histories", some did not include it or it might have said they had one.

Mindy: So you are just said whether or not they had one?

Kara: It is different all over the US, I had to determine what codes meant what

Gaby: These are specific cases for that homicide and we do not have prosecution files

Deborah: Do you plan to start your online certification nationally or internationally? And do you have a plan for overcoming barriers such as the speech you cannot get through online?

Gaby: The requests I am getting have to do with people not being about to travel to get classes and people not being able to come to John Jay to get it, specifically crime analysts, a professional development program. People can do it while having a full time job. There are all sorts of technological issues involved and to adult learners. I am on a committee to be able to get this knowledge across.

Deborah: But are you linking specifically to professional communities like police officers:

Gaby: I am leaning that way. Like students who come in are a very different type.

Deborah: That's what I'm saying

Gaby: This certificate program is specifically to target a practitioner audience looking to get an update from this field. A lot of people are using information that is simply not reliable.

Roland Chilton: Question for Dallas. I liked your final diagram, what kind of help are you getting from people in Minnesota?

Dallas: Not much collaboration

Tom McEwen: Comment to Dallas, literature known as action research, a lot of the ideas that you are developing. You might want to take a look at that, it goes to the same kind of thing, you shouldn't want to be doing the same thing once, we might want to do it a second time, and so forth. Second, the HITS database has been around for years and I don't know much about it, and the only thing I know is that it is very detailed. Is it publicly available?

Gaby: It was. If you used to have access you still will have it available, but if you are new, you cannot get access. It is not a research database. There is very little information on the reliability of the dataset. We have found a lot of inconsistency in the information in the dataset. Even in my dataset that has a very detailed definition in each one of the variables, before people even get trained we have a reliability of 35%. It may change, you never know.

Kaye: An early version of the HITS database is available, but I'm not sure which year.

Gaby: That may come up if we get the NIJ grant, that is something that they are probably going to ask and I think that would be great because we need other people using other methods using the same data and hopefully getting the same results.

Val: Have you used the same strategy for policy?

Dallas: When we are trying to implement public policy we try to create a tool that someone can use. I think we have been success at targeting police training. The first time we strategized at how to do this because police have a very specific way of learning. We chose a case study that was very far away from home to run a sample training because if it didn't go well no one would know who we were. It's a probability tool of where to find a body that was disposed and it's been very difficult, we reached out to several people. We reached out to law enforcement. We would send an email out to an agency and they would email back thanks, I don't know what they are doing with it. We reached out to people conducting searches on missing persons and after they would email back and say no we are going to do this. They are entrenched in a method they cannot let go of.

Alan Deline: Right now I am fire and police commissioner of Fulton, NY. In that position I have veto power of the Police chief and Fire chief. Have you seen that happen?



Chris: No we do not have a commissioner. Oddly enough even that position is in turmoil. It's all messed up from the top down. We wanted to put ourselves in a position that they cannot say no. bottom line these are people who are struggling.

Amanda: In addition to that, I had to a presentation by myself to senior staff and they grilled me. And I said that bottom line you are going to have to deal with these incidents sooner or later because it is a liability issue.

Chris: it takes someone getting hurt

John: For the whole panel. This whole panel has been talking about connecting research to practice or practice to research. What is the future of this? Will it get better or worse? Politically impacted? Is it just pragmatics? What are your viewpoints?

Dallas: I'd like to respond. We have been talking a lot about this back at the office. When a homicide occurs now, police are just one player. Homicide researchers are just one player. You can go to the internet now, sign on to a blog and make your comment and they really do not care who you are. They really are evaluating you based on your idea. I think that is the direction we are headed. You can get an education online without a university or with a university. People choosing bricks and mortar buildings is a thing of the past. Libraries are starting to digitize books. We are behind. We need to think about how to be part of this discussion.

Amanda: One of the biggest things is cultural competence. Agencies dealing with researchers and researchers with agencies. Both sides of the fence. Once you start opening those doors and start working with each other. I have a file at home that keeps growing of research ideas.

Chris: A lot of it, the dynamics of law enforcement. 50% of our PD is less than 5 years, never testified in front of a jury. I don't ask permission anymore, I stopped doing that, my command staff has allowed me. Amanda, let's go do this, we are going to talk to this individual.

Amanda: It is better to ask for forgiveness than permission, it has been a huge shift for us

Gaby: I think the moment is right for this. I used to train the homicide investigators of the NYPD, I took the course and these guys had worked on the force for 20 years and hearing these guys talk and they would say I wish they would stop giving us these stories and give us the numbers. Now we have this evidence based practice and is going to have huge impacts on the practice. I think that there is the possibility and that we need to move forward and it is going to happen on the macro level not the micro level. It has gone beyond the research. Up until now it has been practitioners giving academics data. A partnership is a discussion of mutual needs and needs to be a much deeper level and it needs time.

Amanda: Not only the funding of politics within organizations but also universities.

Gaby: Take away funding from public universities because there is nothing left

Val: It is clear that there is tremendous opportunity to advance your work into the law enforcement practice and one of those ways is by creating these partnerships. These have been key demonstrations on how this has been effective.

## CHAPTER 3

### EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT & THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Presenters:

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Chair:

Richard Hough, University of West Florida

## Effective Homicide Investigation Manual. Research Project

Dr Paweł Waszkiewicz, Ph.D., J.D.<sup>3</sup>  
University of Warsaw

### Objectives

The main objective of the Project is to identify factors which aggravate and facilitate successful homicide investigation. That includes both most effective investigative actions as well as the most frequently committed mistakes in the course of murder investigations. It will allow to develop an algorithm for effective actions of the law enforcement agencies applied to in cases when the suspicion of committing murder occur. Major innovations of the project are: the choice of the research field, interdisciplinary methodology and implementation of quasi-experiment scheme.

### Main research questions:

1. *What are the most effective law enforcement officers' actions that lead to solving homicide cases?*
2. *What are the ineffective and indifferent law enforcement officers' actions (not leading to solving homicide cases and hindering it)?*
3. *What kind of investigative activities increase the chance of successful prosecution of real perpetrators?*
4. *How the evidence based knowledge may be transferred into useful algorithm of investigative actions?*

### Abstract

Polish studies addressing the problem of the investigative actions in murders cases date back to the sixties and seventies (Horoszowski 1966; Hołyst 1970; Gurgul 1977). They were also limited in their scope – while addressing the law enforcement concerns, they were not based on the research results. More recent publications, where the well-established research methods were finally adopted, only partially covered the issue by focusing mainly on forensic techniques used at the crime scene (Całkiewicz 2010a) or on usage of the existing databases for linking crimes (Całkiewicz 2010b).

In the publicized research a lot of the attention is mostly on the individual perpetrator, his psyche and motives of action (Holmes, Holmes 2010). Despite the impression of wealth in this field in literature theme effectiveness of investigations is normally limited to the presentation of theoretical assumptions that are supported by examples of mistakes made in the course of specific investigations. This applies both to classic works (Geberth 2006; Walton 2006), but also to research approach studies delivered with the assistance of the leading police forces and think-tanks, such as Police Executive Research Forum or Federal

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Bureau of Investigation (ACPO 2006; Cronin 2008). In the published literature there is no comprehensive information on studies dealing with homicide investigation effectiveness. This leads to a situation, where most law enforcement agencies need to develop and implement their own approaches to handling the major cases investigations, which rely solely on their own work experience.

Some of the studies (Keel 2008; Maguire, King, Johnson, Katz 2010) focus on analyzing statistical data. The main findings so far, while still controversial, identify correlation between race and age of the victim and the solvability chance (Keel, Jarvis, Muirhead, 2009). However those are independent variables – detectives can only take them into assumption. The project is to change that situation by delivering scientifically-tested support for the investigators which will be obtained by: (i) using innovative methodology for data gathering in the area (Phase 2), (ii) using the data gathered to create evidence based manual (Phase 3), and (iii) testing the manual in quasi-experiment before finalizing it (Phase 4).

The law enforcement agencies investigative practices have rarely been subject of a scientific research. Empirical cognition of that subject, despite its great social importance is therefore relatively limited. In addition, the perception of the actually applied investigative methods is affected by how the popular culture presents them. Even the public statements made by representatives of the scientific community prove the existence of CSI syndrome (Lawson 2009), who often rely rather on hearsay information or beliefs rather than on the results of the (missing) scientific studies.

On the other hand, sharing of the expertise and know-how of the experienced practitioners from law enforcement agencies is often limited by a confidential nature of their work. Therefore, the Project will ensure anonymity of both to the participating officers (Phase 2) and to interviewed experts.

The individual experience of the practitioners is usually gathered randomly, since they focus on issues which they had personally faced in course of their own work. This means that the information possessed by them may not be sufficiently accurate to properly describe the particular phenomena. Another example of a discrepancy between theory and practice is the common misunderstanding of the basic terms, such as crime detection or crime clearance. Crime clearance, used in practice of many law enforcement agencies, sometimes indicates only that there is a suspect in a specific case. Such an approach does not require for this purpose to arrest the suspect or to charge him/her with a specific crime, not to mention sentencing by a court. Even in the same country different agencies define detection and crime clearance in their own specific way. The gap becomes even wider if one takes into account that there is also no universally recognized definition of 'detection' which would allow to appropriately compare work of law enforcement agencies in different countries. Confusion in the definitions will be addressed during Phase 1 of the Project by preparing definition proposals.

Decision to focus the study solely on homicide investigations – is related to the most serious character of that act. Killings, compared to other crimes, receive most of the

attention of the law enforcement authorities dealing with crime with the most experienced officers assigned to them. One of the expected outcomes of the Project study would be that the most effective investigative measures or procedures identified in course of the project could subsequently serve as "best practices" for other areas of criminal investigation. Such best practices manual could therefore be also helpful for less experienced officers dealing with less serious cases.

Limited research activities and empirical studies concerning the practices of the law enforcement agencies are also due to difficulties in conducting such studies. Law enforcement agencies are very closed institutions - reluctant (also for legitimate reasons) to share with outside people. This is true even in the countries with established transparency rules of public authorities' actions. Additional constraints arise in situations when the research is focused on identifying certain anomalies or failures. Unsolved or wrongfully solved cases are often labeled in such a way, which results in additional resistance to admit to the researchers.

The crime and fear of crime decrease the standard of living in the modern world (Newburn 2007). The killings are the most moving example of breaking generally accepted cultural and legal norms, regardless of the fact that the probability of becoming a victim of a homicide is statistically low and there is a declining trend in the number of offenses registered in the Polish police statistics (1048 in 1999, 662 in 2011). Worldwide average rate of intentional homicides was in 2011 6.6 per 100.000 inhabitants. That is 6 times higher than in Poland, but global trend seems to be decreasing – from 7.4 in 2004 (UNDOC 2012). The dark figure of murders includes such categories as: persons missing, or whose bodies were not found or properly identified, cases wrongly classified as, accidents, natural deaths or suicides. Repeated cases in which false qualifications death's causes is present suggest that there is a sphere of unknown number of cases where the perpetrators are not even sought. It could partially be caused by errors from the investigation phase.

Statistically high clearance rate of these crimes in Poland (94.7% in 2011) relates only to linking suspects to specific events, but not to indictments or convictions for those offenses. Next stages of criminal proceeding reduce significantly those rates, however that fact is not reflected by the police statistics. Such trend illustrated by an inverted pyramid is however present in most countries and refers to most crimes (Newburn 2007). One of the main reasons of this decline are errors committed in the course of the investigation. The chance to disclose forensic evidence and identify witnesses irreversibly declines with each day passing from the day of the crime committed. Crime scene investigation, despite a legal possibility of the repetition is virtually unrepeatable. After its completion, it is difficult to rely on the disclosure of new evidence. Actions undertaken at the early stages of homicide investigations result in the insufficient evidence in the light of the principles of law and the criminal process. That often is equal with a withdrawal from an indictment or in the case of a referral – acquittal. Many examples of media publicized acquittals of people who in the common perception were guilty decrease trust of the public in the law enforcement apparatus and criminal justice system. At the same time it increases a public fear of crime and sense of impunity among potential and actual perpetrators. As a total failure are considered law enforcement cases in which for a long time detectives have been failing to

collect evidence in the course of investigation that would allow to establish the truth during the trial (known as cold cases).

The main reason for high (statistically) detection in homicide cases in European countries is, unlike in North America, the existence of the bond linking the perpetrators to the victims. Murders are usually committed in the family or acquaintance circle, when under the significant impact of alcohol or other substances unresolved conflicts and unhealed injuries result in a violent quarrel, and later murder. The perpetrators of such acts to a large extent report themselves to law enforcement authorities, but even if they do not, solving such cases is unproblematic. Such cases are labelled as “killings” or “dunkers” what distinguish them from “murders” or “whodunits” when the ID of perpetrator is hard to determine (Simone 1993; Pucket, Lundman 2003). Existing research rises big concerns also on solving “dunkers”. Innocence project (Innocence Project 2012) gathers data on leading causes of wrongful convictions: eyewitness misidentifications testimonies, improper forensic science evidence (Garret, Neufeld 2009), and false confessions. There are indications that more than 3% convictions in serious cases are wrongful (Wrongfulconvictions 2012). The project aim is to deliver solution which will help to identify and prosecute real perpetrators – Effective homicide investigation manual.

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## Relationships between Forensic Evidence and Homicide Case Outcomes

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### **Introduction**

Recent research has shown that forensic evidence is beneficial in homicide investigations under two circumstances. The first is with hard-to-solve cases: cases that have been investigated for weeks or months, investigators have pursued all leads, and no arrests have been made. As time proceeds, suspects may be identified forensically because hits are made in fingerprint systems (e.g., AFIS) or DNA databases (e.g., CODIS). The second circumstance for utility of forensic analysis is confirmation that a suspect is, in fact, the likely perpetrator. Crime lab specialists may match a suspect's DNA or fingerprints with the crime scene (e.g., the DNA profile of a suspect matches blood found at the scene), although in some cases forensic results will exonerate because the comparison with the crime scene does not match the suspect—another benefit of forensic analysis.

While benefits of forensic analysis have been established for investigations, there is considerably less information about prosecution. In this paper, we present preliminary results on the possible role of forensic analysis in a prosecutor's decision to negotiate a plea with a defendant or pursue a trial. On the one hand, a prosecutor may want to negotiate a plea in order to adjudicate the case quickly and avoid the risk of an adverse decision in trial. On the other hand, forensic analysis may be sufficiently strong that a prosecutor sees no need to offer a plea and instead moves forward with trial.

Complicating the picture is the role of witnesses in homicide cases. While recent research has questioned the reliability of witnesses, investigators and prosecutors continue to rely heavily on information from witnesses in homicide cases. Thus, a prosecutor's decision on plea versus trial may depend as much (or more) on the strength of witnesses as on forensic analysis.

### **Data**

For this preliminary analysis, we selected a narrowly defined group of defendants from homicides in Cleveland. Namely, we identified 87 defendants who were charged with murder (including aggravated murder). In selecting these defendants, we omit defendants charged with less serious charges (e.g., reckless homicide, vehicular manslaughter, etc.). Of these 87 defendants, 60 pled guilty and 27 were found guilty at trial. It should be noted that the pleas could have been to the original charge of murder/aggravated murder or to a lesser offense. Similarly, defendants may have been found guilty at trial to a lesser offense.

Our objective was to select cases in which witnesses and forensic analysis were most likely to play a role in a prosecutor's decision.

## **Analysis**

Table 1 gives bivariate analysis for witnesses, DNA analysis, and ballistics analysis. In coding the homicides in Cleveland, we differentiated between eyewitnesses and hearing witnesses. Eyewitnesses tell investigators that they saw something. For example, a witness may have seen the defendant walking out of the bar with the victim or saw the defendant running to a vehicle. Table 1 shows that trials are more likely when the case has eyewitnesses than when investigators found no eyewitnesses.

Hearing witnesses did not see anything but were able to tell investigators that they heard something. For example, a hearing witness may have heard an argument in the apartment next door or may have heard shots fired outside. In Table 1, there is no significant relationship between hearing witnesses and whether defendants plea or go to trial.

When DNA matches occur, trials are more likely. Only 21.1 % of defendants without DNA matches went to trial compared to 38.8 % defendants with DNA evidence—a statistically significant result at the .10 level. The remainder of the variables—DNA exclusions, ballistics matches, and ballistics exclusions—generally show a tendency to go to trial when there are one or more occurrences, but none is statistically significant.

It should be noted that latent prints are not included in the table because only a few comparisons were found.

Table 2 gives the results of a logistic regression comparing pleas (coded as zeroes) versus guilty trials (coded as ones). In this regression, we included five control variables: victim's race, victim's sex, defendant's race, defendant's sex, and number of prior convictions for defendant. As seen in the table, none of the control variables is statistically significant in the regression. The three significant variables are presence of eyewitnesses, DNA matches, and ballistics matches. When these are present in a case, the odds increase that the defendant will go to trial.

These results are preliminary because we have not completed our data collection. More cases and defendants will be added in the coming months. Further, we intend to interview prosecutors to obtain their views on the roles of forensic analysis and witnesses in their decisions.

**Table 1: Bivariate Analysis**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Pled Guilty</u>	<u>Guilty By Trial</u>
<u>Eyewitnesses**</u>		
No eyewitnesses	21 (87.5 %)	3 (12.5 %)
1 or more eyewitnesses	39 (61.9 %)	24 (38.1 %)
<u>Hearing Witnesses</u>		
No hearing witnesses	34 (68.0 %)	16 (32.0 %)
1 or more hearing witnesses	26 (70.3 %)	11 (29.7 %)
<u>DNA Matches*</u>		
No DNA matches	30 (79.0 %)	8 (21.1 %)
1 or more DNA matches	30 (61.2 %)	19 (38.8 %)
<u>DNA Exclusions</u>		
No DNA exclusions	35 (76.1 %)	11 (23.9 %)
1 or more DNA exclusions	25 (61.0 %)	16 (39.0 %)
<u>Ballistics Matches</u>		
No ballistics matches	57 (71.3 %)	23 (28.8 %)
1 or more ballistics matches	3 (42.9 %)	4 (57.1 %)
<u>Ballistics Exclusions</u>		
No exclusions	58 (70.9 %)	25 (30.1 %)
1 or more exclusions	2 (50.0 %)	2 (50.0 %)

\* Significant at the .10 level

\*\* Significant at the .05 level

**Table 2: Logistic Regression: Pleas versus Trials**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>Sig.</u>	<u>Odds Ratio</u>
Male victim	1.32	1.02	.20	3.70
White victim	.15	.70	.82	1.17
Male defendant	.71	.96	.46	2.04
White defendant	-.22	.82	.79	.80
Prior convictions	.07	.09	.45	1.07
>=1 Hearing witnesses	-.72	.58	.21	.49
>=1 Eyewitnesses**	1.62	.84	.05	5.07
>=1 DNA matches*	1.03	.62	.09	2.81
>=1 DNA exclusions	.28	.60	.64	1.33
>=1 Ballistics matches**	2.19	1.09	.04	8.98
>=1 Ballistics exclusions	.22	1.46	.88	1.24
Constant	-3.61	1.44		

\* Significant at the .10 level

\*\* Significant at the .05 level

## Court assisting Risk Assessments on Life Time Prisoners: Offence Behaviour and Recidivism

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### **Introduction**

As in most countries, imprisonment for life is the most severe sentence an offender can receive in Sweden. However, this sentence does not mean that offenders necessarily will spend the rest of their lives in prison. In 2006, the preceding clemency practice in Sweden was modified with a new law establishing a complementary judicial process that would allow for offenders imprisoned for life to petition for release. An application to commute a life sentence may be submitted by the prisoners (or by the Prison and Probation Services if particular grounds exist) when they have served at least ten years of their sentence. The application will be considered by the Örebro District Court, which covers all of Sweden. Certain circumstances must be given special consideration when examining the application: the time the convicted person has served, the circumstances upon which determination of the penalty was based when life imprisonment was imposed, the risk of the convicted person relapsing into serious crime, whether the convicted person has disregarded the conditions for enforcement (e.g., as evidenced by institutional rule violations or misconduct), and whether the convicted person has actively engaged in the rehabilitation process by participating in treatment programs and establishing realistic post-release goals with regards to adjustment to society (e.g., establishing pro-social support networks).

Even though that the rate of homicide been stable, the total number of offenders imprisoned for life in Sweden has increased from 30 in 1990 to 159 in 2012 (Figure 1).

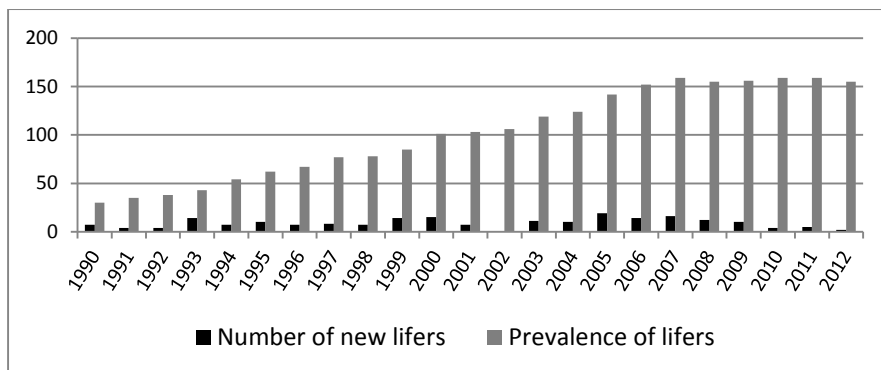
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## Aim

The study was set up to describe the group of life time prisoners that appealed to get their sentenced commuted to a time determined sentence and to examine the rate of recidivism among life time prisoners that has left prison.

Figure 1. Number of new, and point prevalence, of life time prisoners in the Swedish Prison and Probation Services between 1990 and 2012



## Method and Material

All offenders convicted to a life sentence that had appealed to commute their life sentence to a time determined sentence between 2006 and 2012 (n=98) were collected. Court verdicts from the index verdict that rendered in the verdict of imprisonment for life were collected and assessed using a code scheme on offence behaviour.

Risk data (PCL-R and HCR-20) were collected from the clinical risk assessment which is always conducted by the National Board of Forensic Medicine. Data on recidivism were collected from the national register of criminal convictions at the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

## Results and Discussion

There were 98 life time prisoners that had appealed to get their sentence time determined (94 males and four females). The mean age at the time for the index offence was 35 years (range 21 to 71). The female offenders were at mean younger than the male offenders (28 years versus 35). Seventeen of the offenders had killed two or more victims (range 2 to 7). Six of these cases (35%) were robbery related and five cases (29%) intimate partner violence (whereof almost all secondary victims were a rival). There were three cases of criminal homicides and two cases of mass shootings.



Table 1.

Type of homicide for 98 life time sentenced offenders (% and n)  
and the percent in overall types of lethal violence in Sweden

	% (n)	Lethal violence overall <sup>□</sup>
<b>Type of homicide</b>		
IPV and family related	28% (28)	35%
Altercations	26% (25)	33%
Robbery and burglary	22% (22)	6%
Criminal conflicts	8% (8)	8%
Sexual homicide	7% (7)	1%
Other or unknown	8% (8)	16%
<b>Type of violence</b>		
Blunt	8% (8)	21%
Sharp	46% (45)	42%
Gun	34% (33)	17%
Strangulation/suffocation	6% (6)	10%
Other	6% (6)	10%

<sup>□</sup> Data for 1990-1996 and 2002-2008 from the National Council for Crime Prevention (2011)

The 98 offenders had undergone a total of 145 risk assessments. The time from the index offence to the first risk assessment were 12 years (range 10 to 26 years). The prisoners scored relatively high on the PCL-R, however not as high as usually reported on long-term offenders in Sweden (Johansson, Dernevik & Johansson, 2010). Nine of the 98 offenders (9%) were assessed as having psychopathy, using a cut off score of 26 (the appropriate score in Sweden according the manual; Hare, 2003)

As seen in figure 2 below had the offenders who were convicted of a sexual homicide and a homicide in a criminal conflict higher scores on the PCL-R compared to the other types.

Seven offenders recidivated into crime whereof four offenders into violent crime. The violent crimes were: murder, rape of a child and two cases of assault.

Table 2.  
Mean PCL-R and HCR-20 scores for 98  
life time sentenced offenders in  
Sweden

Instrument	m (sd)
<b>PCL-R</b>	<b>14.6</b>
Factor 1	<b>(8.8)</b>
Facet 1	6.7
Facet 2	(3.9)
Factor 2	2.6
Facet 3	(2.2)
Facet 4	4.1
	(21)
	6.2
	(5.0)
	2.6
	(2.5)
	4.2
	(3.3)
<b>HCR-20</b>	<b>15.8</b>
H-scale	<b>(8.3)</b>
C-scale	9.5
R-scale	(4.7)
	2.4
	(2.2)
	3.9
	(2.9)

# Item 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 16

□ Item 1, 2, 4 and 5

‡ Item 6, 7, 8 and 16

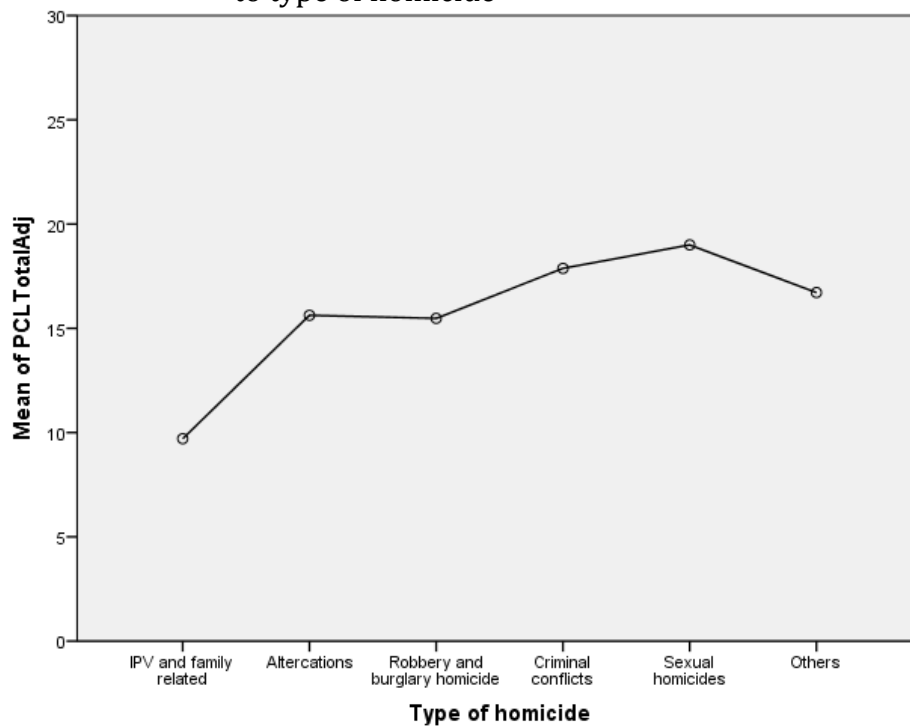
\* Item 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18 and 19

† Item 3, 9, 13, 14 and 15

¥ Item 10, 12, 18, 19 and 20

Figure 2.

Mean PCL-R scores for 98 life time sentenced offenders in Sweden according to type of homicide



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## CHAPTER 4

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATION: TEACHING HOMICIDE

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Kimberly Tatum, University of West Florida

Christine E. Rasche, University of North Florida

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Chair:

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## Take a Breath: A Pause to Prevent Escalation

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“To fight is a radical instinct; if men have nothing else to fight over they will fight over words, fancies, or women, or they will fight because they dislike each other's looks, or because they have met walking in opposite directions.”

George Santayana, Spanish born American Philosopher, Poet and Humanist. 1863-1952

“The night of the fight, you may feel a slight sting. That's pride f\*#!\*ng with you. F\*\*k pride. Pride only hurts, it never helps.”

Marsellus, *Pulp Fiction*

### Introduction

Perhaps the largest category of murder is that involving a conflict or confrontation between non-intimates. Almost half of homicides are preceded by a fight or argument. Male-on-male homicides arising from such friction is the most common homicide situation. The lethal event may result from a brief, albeit emotionally-charged, encounter or be a culmination of long-standing animosities. While not exclusively the province of men, confrontational homicide is overwhelmingly synonymous with men reacting to perceived slights, threats to honor, or encroachment on something that one or both view as theirs. The so-called contest of honor results in innumerable fights and significant numbers of homicide in the U.S. and in cultures around the world. This has been true throughout history.

Kenneth Polk (1997) is credited with applying the term confrontational homicide to these types of argument related killings. The FBI does not categorize confrontational homicide as such. We are left to make deductions as to the percentage of homicides this type of killing represents. We know that for *known* circumstances killings resulting from arguments tops the list. “Of the murders for which the circumstance surrounding the murder was known, 41.8 percent of victims were murdered during arguments (including romantic triangles) in 2010” (FBI). This is followed by felony related at 23.1%. For cases with unknown circumstances the percentage was 35.8. Evidence would also suggest that many of the “unknown” cause homicides resulted from circumstances that could be characterized as exhibiting confrontational dynamics. It is also likely that a number of the gang killing homicides would also fit under the rubric of confrontational homicide.

### Victim Precipitation

A touchstone of homicide research is Marvin Wolfgang's 1958 study of homicides in Philadelphia between 1948 and 1952. Wolfgang's resulting book, *Patterns in Criminal Homicide*, contains a chapter on victim-precipitated homicide. In a murder so labeled, the

victim contributes in some significant way to their eventual death. Wolfgang saw this element as the victim using the first physical violence. In his study, Wolfgang found that 26% of the 588 homicides he studied were victim precipitated. Wolfgang also found that victims had previous arrest records in 62% of the victim precipitated cases compared with 42% in cases he classified as non-victim precipitated. Also notable was that the offenders in victim precipitated cases were less likely to have previous arrests compared to non-victim precipitated. A portion of Wolfgang's observations about this category of homicide concerned the public's general sympathy toward a victim and fear of the offender. He points out that, given the study results, these feelings are perhaps often misplaced.

It is important not to read victim precipitation as "victim blaming" which occurs at times in the criminal justice system and its response. Provocation is generally considered in the legal sense involving a measure of culpability. Victim precipitation is a social science observation related to the cause of a violent interaction. This fact is further complicated from a research standpoint as well as an investigative one because we may not be able to accurately know the victim's words, actions, or mindset. The offender may assert that he feared for his life and a homicide may be placed into a category of self-defense which may effectively remove it from later research consideration as a criminal homicide. The offender's assertion may certainly be false and intended as manipulation by a psychopath (Porter & Woodworth, 2007), though the psychopath tends toward an instrumental use of violence.

Victim precipitation may have a further practical value in underscoring the efficacy of providing conflict resolution training to young people, batterer intervention courses for offenders in intimate partner violence situations, and anger management therapy for persons identified through multiple arrests for violent crimes. We believe that school- and community based social awareness training for young people regarding the dynamics of confrontational violence holds promise for averting or diffusing some escalating confrontations. Much as Glasser's (1965) "reality therapy" focused on the immediate behavior and what to do differently, we propose that such a training for adolescents and teens be based on brief, concrete steps they can take to move away from what could become a violent interaction. This is challenging given the rapid escalation so many such instances take. Nonetheless, if there is an awareness created in the mind of a young person that an incident can always go quickly out of control, some percentage may have enough presence of mind to summon a response that takes them away from the dynamic.

### **Description of the T.A.B. Program**

The project under development is called the Take A Breath, or T.A.B. program. The program is developing and implementing a training module for juveniles on violence prevention. The aim is to call sharp attention to the problem of confrontational violence among young people in American society. Notably, the issues arising from such confrontations have been discussed independently by each partner agency mentioned later in this abstract. The T.A.B. program will involve students in a *learning community* to cooperate in developing and then implementing an intensive and brief curriculum for presentation initially by School Resource Officers (SROs) in a southeastern county to

students in the K-12 setting. T.A.B. can be expanded to civic groups such as YMCA/YWCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, juvenile justice populations, and faith community groups. The central theme of the program will be to sensitize young people to the dynamics of confrontational violence and enhance their decision-making capability to react quickly and purposefully to disengage from such an incident.

Current conflict-resolution curriculum materials are typically in-depth and somewhat lengthy. T.A.B. follows more in the tradition of Glasser's **reality therapy**, now termed **choice theory**. This approach is more "in the moment" and encompasses an understanding of responsibility for one's actions and the unpredictability of the actions of others. Subject students will review examples of events considered confrontational. The students will review the branching outcomes that result from such confrontations. Dynamics introduced include the initial trivial nature of issues leading to such violence, "honor contests," victim-precipitation, saving face, the "working agreement" to fight, the presence and actions of audience, and the aftermath of the escalation to violence (Luckenbill, 1977).

We see a public health connection not only in the accepted issue of homicide as a potentially preventable mortality source, but increased awareness of physiological factors which contribute to confrontational events. Sheldon, Tracy, and Brown (2013) cite "...reactions to food deprivation, inadequate rest, and taking drugs" (p. 114). They note that such issues in conjunction with physically uncomfortable living environments can lead to being "tired and irritable."

Students across disciplines will benefit from involvement in this research-based but practical-application program. The authors teach several specific criminal justice courses that will be one source of potential students for an intensive directed study experience for 5-10 students. These courses include *Violence, Homicide, Cold Case Investigation, Criminology, and Race/Gender/Ethnicity and Crime*. It is envisioned that students in the education discipline will also be candidates for T.A.B. given their unique position to act as future facilitators of the curriculum, and based on their strong backgrounds in pedagogy. Social Work and Community Health Education majors may also be interested.

The T.A.B. program will be geared to upper division undergraduate students. Students will engage in student-faculty research to sharpen not only their research capabilities, but critical thinking skills by "*learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others...*" Workforce developmental skill sets such as the ability to collaborate with others and work in teams will also be created or enhanced. *Service learning* is a clear outcome from this experiential learning opportunity grounded in the community interest in reducing and preventing violence. Career-long tools are developed for the students in this program through utilizing the implementation technique of Scanning Analysis Response and Assessment (SARA). The SARA model is a familiar one in criminal justice and public policy creation and implementation. Such policy analysis insights are valuable for all university graduates, let alone those working in the public interest as most of our targeted graduates.

Partnership with several agencies is essential to the development and implementation of T.A.B program in any community. The T.A.B. curriculum in this project will be created in conjunction with the University Criminal Justice Program, as well as local law enforcement agencies, the state juvenile justice agency, and the local school district.

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## Teaching “Murder in America”

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One of the running jokes about American higher education is that some of the courses being taught today appear weird or stupid. Indeed, there is actually a course out there entitled “Stupidity” (Occidental College), along with courses on “Alien Sex” (University of Rochester), and the “Joy of Garbage” (UC Berkeley). To be fair, most of these course titles are not the result of slipping academic standards but of faculty efforts to capture the attention and interest of students. “Sexy” course titles can enhance enrollments.

These course titles get a lot of mileage on the late night talk shows and Internet list sites. One might anticipate that the courses on homicide or lethal violence some of us have taught could end up on such a list. I have taught a course entitled “Murder in America” for several decades, and I know of courses entitled “Serial Killers” or “Lethal Violence.” So far these have mercifully escaped Internet jabs and comedians’ jokes. Perhaps this is because everyday observers immediately grasp the academic value of learning about these topics, especially in criminology/criminal justice programs. Or perhaps the list-makers themselves would like to sign up for these courses.

It is true that at the University of North Florida (UNF) we entitled our most introductory criminology course “Crime in America” and have been able to draw more enrollments than the much drier-sounding “Introduction to Political Science.” But there can be a price for a sexy title, not the least of which is that students enroll with assumptions about the course which are not true. Our “Crime in America” course---which was a general education introduction to the law, criminal procedures, the CJ system, criminal offenses and offenders---was sometimes criticized by disappointed freshmen for not being more like the television program “CSI.” My upper-level “Murder in America” course has been criticized for not focusing on spectacular and gruesome case studies.

Such criticisms, of course, miss the point. While I cannot vouch for the academic rigor of courses involving alien sex or garbage, I know that my course on “Murder in America” grew out of both my interest in trying to understand homicide and, more importantly, a perception that this subject could help students learn more about crime and the CJ system. This presentation explores the purposes of such courses on homicide (or lethal violence) in higher education, describes one such course in some detail, and discusses some of the challenges and opportunities involved in teaching such “sexy” courses.

### Purpose and Scope of the Course

It is actually very important when teaching “sexy” courses to be clear about the purpose for teaching such a course. Admittedly, there have been times when just about any course proposal which might have attracted more enrollments would have received a favorable response from my department. But I do not think that attracting enrollments is a good

rationale in itself for offering courses on “sexy” topics. (Note: dressing up a normal course in a “sexy” new title is another thing altogether---I found that students coming into a course entitled “Explanations for Crime” were less apprehensive than those who had previously signed up for the same course when it was entitled “Criminological Theory.”) Creating a course merely to appeal to the prurient interests of teenagers in pursuit of enrollments might indeed be a form of academic pandering.

I would also argue that it is not ethical to offer a course solely because it is of interest to the professor. Many of us have research interests which we do not get to sufficiently share or explore in the normal criminal justice curriculum. Creating courses on esoteric topics to merely serve the interests of the faculty is hard to justify.

On the other hand, there are plenty of good reasons for offering courses about homicide and/or lethal violence. As mentioned above, I envisioned a course on “Murder in America” as a good vehicle for teaching criminology students about the true dimensions of a major social problem in our society. As the *Course Schedule* [handout] shows, the contents specifically include explorations of:

1. The media coverage (or not) of different kinds of murders;
2. The legal definition of the offense of murder vs. manslaughter;
3. the measurement of this crime, including trends and anomalies;
4. Underlying causes and proximal stimuli for murder;
5. how these causes and stimuli vary among the different forms of homicide (e.g., family murder, youth murder, school and rampage murders, hate murders, terrorist killings, cult murders, mass and serial murders, medical murders);
6. How homicide is officially determined by medical examiners/coroners;
7. How police respond to incidents which occur and the challenges of investigating such incidents and detecting their alleged perpetrators;
8. The challenges of prosecuting and defending alleged perpetrators;
9. The responses used in our society for dealing with those convicted of such offenses, including prison sentences, life without parole, the death penalty;
10. The implications for the future: can we prevent lethal violence?

As this listing demonstrates, the course is designed to lead students to in-depth learning about multiple components of the field of criminology/criminal justice. Clearly, any crime could be used as the focus for a course such as this---though exploring the role of the medical examiner would be unnecessary for any non-lethal offenses.

The importance of a course such as this in college programs in criminology or criminal justice is that it ties together issues and topics usually otherwise covered piecemeal. College criminology/criminal justice programs typically have *separate* courses on the criminal law, criminal procedure, media and crime, criminological theory, policing, courts, corrections, etc... Offering a course which pulls all these separate pieces together into the analysis of one crime can be a valuable experience for students.

“Murder in America” as Taught at the University of North Florida (UNF)

I have taught “Murder in America” every few years since the fall term of 1990. The course had a somewhat ominous debut. Just a few weeks after the semester began, a series of murders occurred in nearby Gainesville, Florida which turned out to be the serial killings by Danny Rolling. The class immediately lost a number of students as police officers who were in the class were sent down to Gainesville from our jurisdiction to supplement local authorities there. Because the investigation went on for weeks, those students never made it back into the course. But the facts and issues associated with that case were inevitably woven throughout the course for the rest of the semester. Students eagerly followed every tidbit of news about the case, perhaps more than might usually be expected because all the victims were college students at a nearby school.

Since that time, the coincidence of this class being offered just when a spectacular local murder is in the news has happened more than once. A few years ago, on August 29, 2009, the same week fall classes started, seven dead bodies were found in a trailer home at the New Hope Mobile Home Park right here in Glynn County, GA. The male relative who reported the crime was eventually arrested and charged with it, and the murders were in the news for months. We were able to weave elements of this case throughout the course. In fact, there never seems to be a shortage of real-life cases to bring into the classroom, thanks perhaps to the fact that Jacksonville has been the statistical “Murder Capital of Florida” for most of the last two decades.

A critical component of this course is bringing a variety of local professionals into the classroom to discuss their roles in such cases. The first week I have a local crime reporter come in to talk about the realities of which kinds of murders are covered by the media, and which ones get front page (or top of the news) coverage versus a mere mention on an inside page--or none at all. A local homicide detective, crime scene investigator, medical examiner, prosecutor, and public defender all come to the class to talk about their functions in a murder case and the most important legal and procedural issues from their viewpoints. The interweaving of real-world practitioners with scholarly assigned readings provides a kind of balance which I think is important in this kind of course.

It should be noted that the course has always had a strong list of assigned scholarly readings to supplement the textbooks and classroom speakers (see the Course Schedule). I think it is important to have a strong scholarly grounding especially when the course topic is potentially scintillating. I have also usually required a scientific research paper (emphasis on both scientific and research) with a mandated proposal and strict format. In recent years, the course has been offered one night per week in order to accommodate a number of graduate students. Of course, a parallel but separate syllabus must be constructed for such graduate-undergraduate “cross-listed” courses. But graduate students can definitely be “put to work” as special topic presenters (usually based on their research projects) and discussion group leaders. It is actually very important to include small group exercises, discussions or other break-out sessions when the course occurs in one single three-hour class session one night per week.

#### Challenges and Opportunities of This Course

It should be noted that, from that first offering in 1990, this course has included a number of practitioner students, mostly police officers but also others in a variety of criminal justice agency positions. Indeed, in that very first class in 1990, there were two homicide detectives and a federal magistrate!

A large number of in-service/practitioner students has been a feature of criminology classes at UNF from the inception of the program, which presents both teaching challenges and opportunities. The faculty is sensitive to the challenges of teaching classes which include both typical young not-very-knowledgeable pre-service students and non-traditional often-older in-service students. These challenges can include the younger students being intimidated by the practitioners, since the latter already *seem* to know so much, as well as the practitioners believing that they already know everything and being reluctant to consider ideas contrary to their existing views or experience.

On the other hand, the combination of both kinds of students can also offer real teaching assets, especially in a course focusing on a potentially emotional subject matter such as murder. The practitioners can be recruited to “assist” with the course, offered opportunities to share their experiences or make mini-presentations on components of the homicide investigation or prosecution with which they have personal experience. Younger, more naïve students can prompt jaded practitioners to see their jobs in a new light and can introduce older students to new ideas or technologies. I have found the combination to be more positive than negative, but it does have to be planned for and managed carefully.

Making use of experienced professionals, whether they are guest lecturers or the in-service students in the class, can also be a two-edged sword. Generally, students love hearing stories, especially if they know they are true. Stories about real-life murder cases always get rapt attention. It usually does not take much to prompt such story-telling from guest lecturers and students alike, but caution is advised. Unless the instructor knows the story about to be told, surprises can take place. Inappropriate information can be shared and the instructor has to be prepared to step in to curtail that. On the other hand, probably one of the most popular segments I have had in my class is when the chief investigator for the Medical Examiner’s Office can come and bring his slides of real local crime scenes. I usually have to warn students not to eat a robust dinner prior to this segment---some of the pictures are truly horrifyingly gruesome---but I also have requests from other students not in the class to sit in for this segment!

## **Conclusion**

I have found that teaching “Murder in America” is one of my favorites. There is an abundance of real-life cases from the local area to illustrate the key ideas and concepts in the course, and I have been blessed with a pool of excellent guest speakers from the local criminal justice system. Students consistently give the course high ratings, and many tell me that they appreciate being able to separate fact from fiction about this crime. Most come into the class with a lot of pre-conceived ideas derived from TV, movies, and popular culture, and they often confess at the end of the course that they can’t believe how wrong most of those depictions of homicide and murder really are.

*For a copy of the complete syllabus for this course, please contact the author at [crasche@unf.edu](mailto:crasche@unf.edu)*

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## Teaching Women who Murder using the ‘Hybrid’ Delivery Model

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Two years ago, I created a course entitled “The Social Side of Homicide”—one of the first courses of its kind to be offered at Niagara College (and in Ontario) that investigates the phenomenon of murder, with an emphasis on social/cultural explanations. Students are quite surprised however, when they get into the course and realize that “it’s not like Dexter.” The time spent on learning data analysis and collection, patterns and trends, theories, and homicide typologies makes for interesting learning, but the time goes by so much slower than it does on television! The course is designed specifically as an in-class course, scheduled in a three hour block with all activities taking place during scheduled class time. Having taught it for a while now, two major themes have emerged. First, students know relatively little about homicide when they come into the class. Most of what they know comes from watching television/movies and is grossly inaccurate. Secondly, students are genuinely interested in learning more about murder and indicate via course feedback that they would take an additional related course if it was offered.

Because I was tasked this past term to create a new general elective course<sup>5</sup> using the hybrid delivery model, (where a portion of the learning is done online) I decided to kill two birds with one stone. Keeping those two recurring themes in mind, I knew that another homicide-related course would be of interest to students and, for quite some time, I’ve wanted to create a course in the area of gender studies. Currently, we have no general electives in our pool that address gender-related issues. I see this as a major gap in our offerings, and the notion of drawing students in to learn about the social construction of gender using female killers seemed a logical idea, given the success of the homicide course. Students learn using non-traditional subject matter and using a non-traditional delivery model, but sometimes our most unique learning experiences are the ones we remember best.

In “The Simple Way of Poison,” a course I am currently planning about women who murder, the subject matter is divided into units that are designed to stand alone, though they emerge as naturally recurring themes throughout the course. Major units for inclusion are as follows:

**Build a Body?**—students explore social constructions of masculinity and femininity and look at what happens to women who step out of prescribed social roles. What happens to men? How do the agents of socialization (family or the absence of it; media; peers) affect this? What are students’ initial understanding/perception of women and murder in society? How do they explain it?

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<sup>5</sup> A course which is available for all college students to take—some programs have a mandated general elective, but students get to choose from a pool which course they take).

**EEK, a mouse—Kill it!**—looks at forms of violence and has students investigating domestic violence, male and female aggression (i.e. forms of bullying) as they compare US and Canadian statistics as an in-class lab activity—issues of class, race, poverty and male dominance become evident here. Do women kill in self-defense, or are women inherently evil? Why do we find the idea of an ‘evil’ woman so objectionable? How can we explain behaviour like infanticide?

**Back in the Day**—women during colonization and an examination of the crimes of heresy, bastardy (infanticide) and petit treason—students explore times and crimes of earlier centuries by focusing on key figures such as Anne Hutchinson, Alice Clifton, Bathsheba Spooner, Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne—continued examination of patriarchy and class differences.

**Poison and Profit**—a look at murder for profit and changes in how women were and are treated by juries (chivalry)—themes of sex, sexuality (including lesbianism) and class standing are raised here both in historical and contemporary times; Lucretia Chapman, Belle Gunness, Betty Lou Beets; Sante Kimes.

**Say What? Why?**—theoretical explanations (biological, psychological, various feminist) and typologies for females who commit murder—students examine various theories and models (Rasche, 1990; Bailey & Hale, 2004) and find case studies of women who fit the ‘models’ as assessments/assignments--what theories of their own can they come up with?

**Smile Pretty**—how are women who murder portrayed in all forms of the media—looking at the newsworthiness (McKnight, 2011) i.e. victim, offender, offence, sentence, and coverage of murders committed by women in popular newsprint—students also read/analyze narratives from incarcerated women—poetry from Erin George’s book *A Woman Doing Life* (George, 2010) and actual letters received from Sylvia Seegrift.

**Just Passin’ Time**—how/what do women offenders spend their time? Does it differ from how men are treated? What rehabilitation programs are offered? Do we design prisons especially for women? Should we?

Historically, the divide between in-class teaching and online teaching has been obvious. The role of educators was rigidly defined as the ‘sage on the stage’ (King, 1993) as they came to class prepared to ‘educate the masses’ with teacher as depositor and student as receptor (Friere, 1970). With the advent of technology in the classroom (i.e. Power Point), things changed, but what went on in the traditional class was still very different from what happened in classes that were supported by technology or those that were held strictly online. However, as the availability of information technology amplifies, so do student expectations for its use—especially in class activities (Rickman & Grudzinski, 2000). Students who increasingly rely on all forms of technology tire easily of outdated models of learning, and expect to see ‘bells and whistles’ in the classroom (Pletka, 2007). The change in both the availability of information technology as resources, and student expectations to use them, has brought about the need to revisit the traditional dichotomy that existed

between in-class and online teaching and learning. In many cases, this need is being filled by the creation of a hybrid delivery model—a teaching and learning setting that integrates technological resources in a variety of ways that meet the needs of instructors and students—both inside and outside the classroom setting, often focussing on learner-centered teaching.

With “The Simple Way of Poison,” the course must be delivered with a one hour online component of ‘self-study’ and an in class two hour block. The online content is completed using the Blackboard Learning Management System. In some cases, this may involve ‘flipping the classroom’ which allows the lecturer to post content material such as Power Points, lecture material, videos, readings, learning objects, quizzes, and other resources which students work through prior to coming to class. The key here is student preparation before coming to class. In-class time is then spent reviewing that material, doing activities, problem-solving or lab work (Contact North, 2013). Of major importance here is the communication of rules and guidelines for students and instructors. Key dates, deadlines and ‘netiquette’ ought to be spelled out at the onset of classes so that each party has a clear understanding of acceptable behaviours and expectations. This can be done through the posting of a class syllabus, or on a reinforcement basis through regular email contact. As a general rule, one third of the total grade is allotted to online activities. In this course, a female murderer will be featured as the “Killer of the Week”. Students will be expected to read all content material pertaining to the week’s activity, but will not know the identity of the killer until they get in class. Once the killer is revealed, they’ll work in groups, using Google Docs, to create a brief presentation of their results. The chosen criminal will pertain to the topic of the week, in such a way that students will be able to apply learned concepts as they work toward understanding more about the phenomenon of women and murder. Other in class activities can include, ‘put yourself in the shoes of a killer’ (role playing); class debates on topics such as the death penalty, real or perceived leniency in sentencing for women offenders, and gun laws. What is essential here is that students realize that the outcome of the learning experience, though defined by the instructor, is dependent upon their own efforts and willingness to engage. ‘Flipping’ a classroom can be used once or often during the course of a term.

Student centered learning can be fostered with both synchronous and asynchronous activity. With synchronous activity, the collegiality among students is obvious—they work in groups and participate together in endeavours that are best suited for quick responses, like brainstorming, games or labs. In-class lab activities, using Google Documents to create Power Point presentations and role playing games, all work to create interactive and reciprocal learning spaces. Even with asynchronous endeavours though, students must work together and cooperate, as in the case of on-line discussion forums, for example. Using a carefully designed rubric that details the evaluation, rules of engagement and expectations, discussion boards become a way for students to think about their answers before they post on controversial topics or specific women, such as Susan Smith, Andrea Yates, or Sonia Blanchette. Using a video clip in addition to a written question adds a new element to the discussion and gives the students more time to reflect on their answer before posting (Faculty Focus, 2013).



Using the hybrid delivery model to teach about women who murder involves some challenges that appear to be applicable to many hybrid delivery courses. The issue of copyright is a sticky one, since this topic relies on video clips (many of which come from YouTube). Additionally, finding suitable, readable articles has proven extremely difficult. I haven't yet found an appropriate text, and scholarly articles are above the comprehensive abilities of most students. Frontloading a hybrid delivery course is very time-consuming, as is the maintenance. Lastly, there's the learning curve with the technology itself. Instructors and students need to be quite computer literate and comfortable with technology in order to prepare and complete the required work.

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## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ONLINE AND IN THE MEDIA

Presenters:

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Amy Donley, University of Central Florida  
Rae Taylor, Loyola University, New Orleans

Roland Chilton, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Vance McLaughlin, Jacksonville State University

Chair:

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Recorder:

Amber Scherer, Federal Bureau of Investigation

## Headlines in White (Not Black): Examining Newsworthiness of Homicide in New Orleans, LA

Jaclyn Schildkraut, Texas State University  
Amy Donley, University of Central Florida  
Rae Taylor, Loyola University New Orleans

How the media present stories of crime is an important area of study given that up to 95% of the general public identifies the mass media as their main source of news (Surette, 1992). This need is further emphasized in that upwards of 50% of general news coverage is focused on stories of crime (Graber, 1980; Surette, 1992). The media often focus on the most sensational stories in order to capture and hold the audience's attention. As such, there is a greater emphasis of reporting stories of homicides than stories of other violent crime, or of property crime, which is far more common. The result of this disproportionality between coverage and occurrence leads to a number of outcomes, including (though certainly not limited to) public misinformation and increased fear of crime (Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998; Surette, 1992).

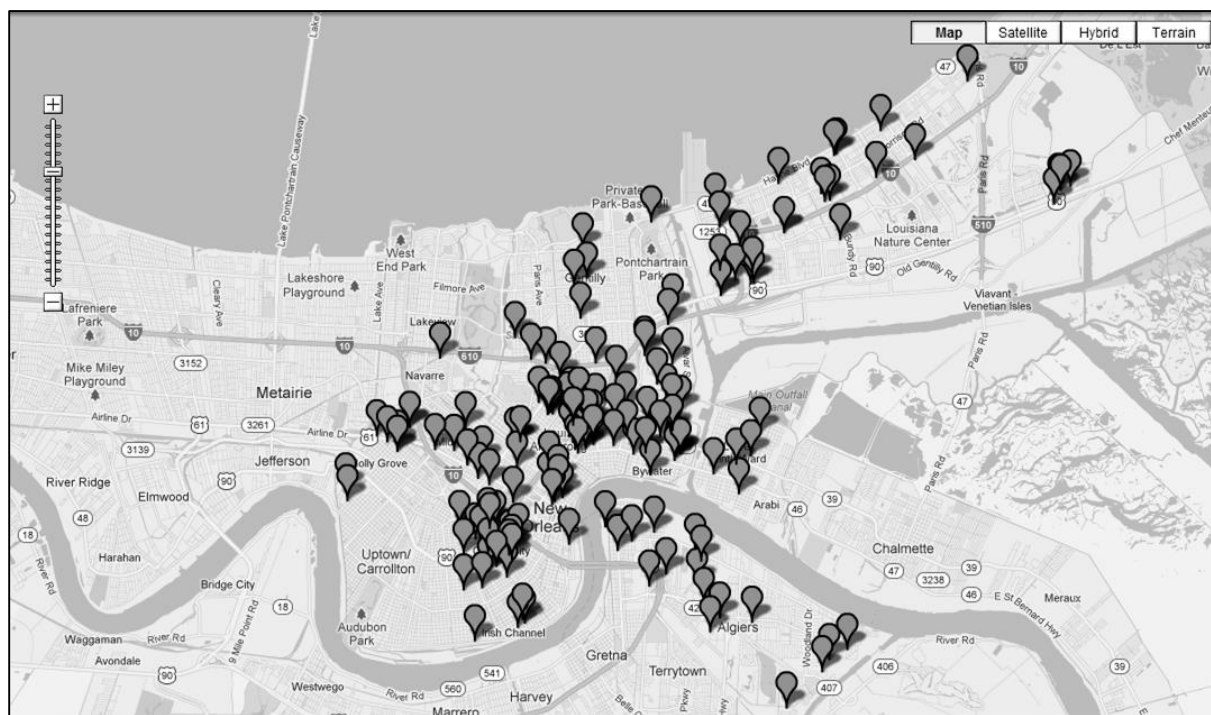
A number of studies (e.g., Gruenewald, Pizarro, & Chermak, 2009; Johnstone, Michener, & Hawkins, 1994; Paulsen, 2003; Sorenson et al., 1998; Wilbanks, 1984) have examined the portrayal of homicide victims in newspaper coverage in an effort to identify characteristics that lead to increased newsworthiness, and by extension, more coverage both in terms of quantity and prominence in placement. Though the locales of these studies differed, the general consensus was that victims who were the most newsworthy were those who were "White, in the youngest and oldest age groups, women, of high socioeconomic status, killed by strangers" (Sorenson et al., 1998, p. 1514). One important consideration in trying to generalize these findings to other cities is the demographic composition of the homicide victims. These groups of homicide victims were demographically heterogeneous; therefore, the researchers had a considerable amount of variation between the victims from which to discern what characteristics predicted newsworthiness.

A recent study by Schildkraut and Donley (2012) expanded this growing body of research by examining a more homogeneously composed victim group. Examining homicides in Baltimore, Maryland, the researchers found that in a group of homicide victims that was 91% black and 92% male, none of the predictors found to be significant for basic news coverage (whether or not the victims received any press attention) in previous studies were significant (Schildkraut & Donley, 2012). For measures of celebrated coverage, such as those victims whose stories were placed in the first three pages of the newspaper, the researchers actually found that females were *less* likely to receive celebrated coverage as opposed to their male counterparts (Schildkraut & Donley, 2012). Their findings suggested that in homogeneous groups of homicide victims, the media mantra "if it bleeds, it leads" was insufficient to garner coverage (Schildkraut & Donley, 2012).

The present study is a replication of Schildkraut and Donley's (2012) study to determine if their main findings – that there are no statistically significant predictors of coverage when

murder is “in black” – would be sustained in a similarly composed victim population. New Orleans, Louisiana was chosen for this examining because, while their homicide rate is higher and the number of homicides is lower, the frequencies within demographic categories mirror Baltimore almost identically (see Table 1). Specifically, 172 homicides were identified for the same study period (2010) as identified in Figure 1. The newspaper archives from the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* were searched and a dataset was compiled, recording the number of articles and total word count for each victim. An interesting addition to the present study is that data from the New Orleans Police Department was made available to the researchers providing additional case details. Therefore, the researchers also incorporate additional measures, including the time of day the shooting occurred, the motive for the shooting, and whether a suspect was apprehended to see if these bore any significant effect on the victims’ likelihood of coverage.

Figure 1. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* Interactive Homicide Map; 2010 Data Displayed.



Source: <http://media.nola.com/graphics/other/OrleansParishMurders2010.swf>.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics\*

	New Orleans		Baltimore	
	N	%	n	%
Victim Gender				
Male	154	89.5	204	91.5
Female	17	9.9	19	8.5
Victim Race				
Black	145	85.3	202	90.6
White	14	8.1	13	5.8
Other	11	6.4	8	3.6
Victim Age Groups				
Under 18	12	7.0	12	5.4
18 – 50	150	87.2	193	86.5
51 or Older	10	5.8	18	8.1

\* Category percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding or missing data.

### Findings

The results for the logistic regression models predicting basic news coverage are presented in Table 2. In the present study, those incidents which occurred during the nighttime hours (6pm to 6am) had nearly 295% greater odds of receiving any coverage as compared to those victims who were killed during the daytime hours (6am to 6pm). Notably, however, when considering the effect of demographics of the victim on the likelihood of their coverage, the results of the present study mirror that of Schildkraut and Donley (2012). Specifically, no demographic variable is a significant predictor of whether a victim receives *any* news coverage.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Results for Basic News Coverage

Variables	Victim Received Coverage in the <i>Times-Picayune</i>	Odds Ratio
Nighttime Shooting	1.081 (.497)	2.948

Note: Coverage results are reported as unstandardized coefficients with the standard errors in parentheses. Due to space constraints, only the significant variables ( $p < .05$ ) are presented.

Table 3. OLS Regression Results for Number of Articles per Homicide Incident

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></i>
			.598	.285
Female	3.117	.803		
Youth (Under 18)	3.286	.692		
Robbery Motive	1.785	.788		

Note: Due to space constraints, only the significant variables ( $p < .05$ ) are presented.

Tables 3 (number of articles) and 4 (word count) examine the effect of these predictors on the amount of coverage a victim receives. Several of these findings mirror previous research's (e.g., Sorenson et al., 1998) notion of the "worthy victim." Specifically, those victims who were female yielded an average of three more articles and nearly 2,200 words more than their male counterparts. Youth victims, also one of the newsworthy groups, were also more likely to receive increased coverage. Specifically, victims who were under 18 years of age received an average of three articles and 2,000 words more than those victims who were between the ages of 18 and 50. It is worth noting that these measures were not significant predictors of the number of articles or total word count in Schildkraut and Donley's (2012) study.

Consistent with previous research, those victims who were killed in incidents with other victims (multiple-victim attacks) also received elevated word counts – an average of 758 words more than those victims killed individually. One final explanatory measure, robbery motive, was also a significant predictor of both measures of coverage volume. Victims who were killed during a robbery received an average of almost two articles and 1,177 words more than victims who were killed and the motive was unknown. Retaliatory attacks, which are quite common in New Orleans, were not a significant predictor of any measure of coverage.

Table 4. OLS Regression Results for Total Word Count per Homicide Incident

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></i>
			.647	.352
Female	2198.106	484.104		
Youth (Under 18)	2005.547	417.781		
Robbery Motive	1176.882	478.120		
Multiple Victim Attack	758.608	310.764		

Note: Due to space constraints, only the significant variables ( $p < .05$ ) are presented.

## Conclusion

In sum, the findings of the present study provide support both for Schildkraut and Donley's (2012) study of homogeneous homicide victim populations, as well as for previous measures of newsworthiness. Specifically, no demographic measure was a significant predictor of whether or not a victim was covered (consistent with Schildkraut & Donley, 2012). Unlike the study for which the current paper is modeled, however, characteristics of newsworthiness – specifically gender (female), age (youth), and multiple victim killings – do predict increased news coverage. These results suggest, in part, that perhaps analysis of newspaper reporting cannot simply be reduced down to the characteristics of the victims, but must also consider the culture to which the city, and by extension the news organizations, subscribe. In order to offer support for such a claim and to further validate the findings of this study, future research should replicate this and other studies of newsworthiness to continue to understand how stories of homicide are constructed in the media.

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## Recorder Notes for Headlines in White (Not Black): Examining Newsworthiness of Homicide in New Orleans, LA

Deborah: How did you determine your definition of newsworthiness?

Jaclyn: Higher word count, placement

Deborah: Like Mcknight uses victim, offense, offender, and sentence. Like did you consider perhaps using other definitions?

Jaclyn: We followed the cases for 60 days?

Deborah: So could you get sentence in there?

Jaclyn: Nola police data was a fluke. New Orleans gave Rae the data and had a lot more information. Our goal here is to look at what is the media presenting? The literature says for newsmakers in order to tell the story you need to keep that relationship with LE. In terms of sentencing I know Amy and I had done a follow up to Baltimore and looked at criminal histories of victims and how that plays in. in Baltimore, they rarely solve them.

Dallas: If a house burns down, often times they will report how to prevent a housewife and if a car crashes they will say how to prevent. In those articles how often to do they report homicide prevention?

Jaclyn: That's a great idea... that would be more of a qualitative analysis. In the articles I looked at it was more a solicitation for information, like call crime stoppers.

Rae: I can add to that, this was 2010. And as of today in 2013 we have had 62 homicides. We have a new anti-violence initiative addressing all different types of violence – NOLA for life. Also in 2011, the federal government came in and took over NOPD and produced a report. They are being ran by the federal government. The Chief of Police, a lot of people love him, a lot of people hate him. What is happening now, almost every homicide will make the news. What do you have to say about this chief Surpass? It is a political issue. There is so much going on in terms of the culture of violence. That is going to make it difficult for us to carry it on into other years. But again it's not like this person dies, but more like another murder!

Dick: You can use any reasonably theory of what it should look like, and to the extent that it doesn't is a different culture

Chris: Newspapers like the Pecuyne are going or going a few times a week or only on weekends, much more of an online presence. Do you have any sense in terms of student awareness? Is the move away from the printed word to the online word? Do you have a sense of that at all in sense of what is covered?



Jackie: We are actually in the middle of a large project looking at moral panic. In our survey we asked a series of questions in terms of media consumption. In our survey we asked about media consumption, we were asking about school shooting. There is a connection in terms of fear of crime and how much media they are consuming. Just from the Texas State data, we have very few people actually reading the newspaper. In terms of the national newspaper, the NY Times is the paper favored by the under 30 generations. And the wall street journal for over 30, but we found at Texas State that the favored the WSJ.

Becky: In the neighborhood, newsletters, etc. I was just wondering if you had looked into that.

Jackie: No we looked into the major newspaper for the entire city.

## Changing Data Availability 1960-2010 and Its Importance for Homicide Research

Roland Chilton  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

### Brief History

About eighty years ago the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in cooperation with the Bureau of Investigation developed the Uniform Crime Reports program in an attempt to create a national standard and a common approach to crime reporting. About 30 years later the UCR Section of the FBI reorganized the program and changed the format of the volume *Crime in the United States*. Since 1960 there have been a number of minor changes in UCR but at least three major developments in U.S. crime reporting. One of the most important of these changes was the UCR Section's creation of the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) program. This step is more important than it seems because the SHR format is the precursor to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Both programs provide information on victims and offenders, something that can only be done in a program designed to collect information on all of those involved in a criminal incident. Such incident-based programs can go well beyond collecting basic demographic information such as age, race, and sex, but providing such information is one of the most useful things they do.

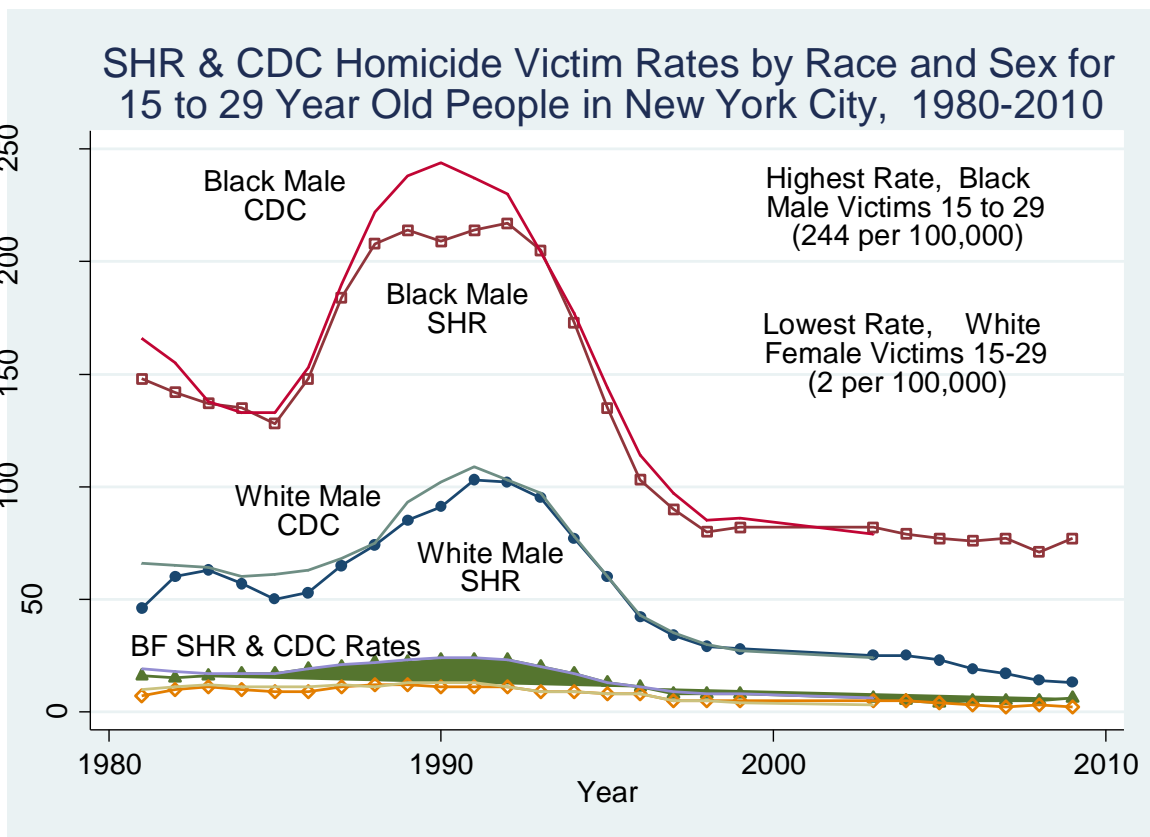
A second important development, and one that has not received sufficient attention, was the annual publication by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the number of homicides reported by medical examiners and coroners in the U.S. Until 2005, these counts were available to and used by homicide researchers for cities and counties with at least 100,000 residents, for states, and for the United States as whole. Although these victim counts tell us nothing about homicide offenders in any direct way, they are a valuable additional source of information about the age, race, and sex of homicide victims. In fact, the charts to be presented use these CDC numbers from 1980 to 2004 as a way to increase our confidence in the trends reported by police agencies participating in the SHR program.

A third turning point in the availability of dependable and roughly comparable information on crime in general and homicide in particular was creation by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) of well documented electronic files providing U.S. Census, UCR offending, UCR arrest, SHR, NIBRS, and CDC data to anyone seeking it. The UCR files at ICPSR go back into the 1960s and 70s, while the SHR data sets start in 1976. The NIBRS data sets start in about 1985, but the cause of death files (CDC) go back to 1979. All of this makes the period from 1980 through 2010 a useful time frame for the charts presented below.

## Important Points

The charts to be presented in the longer presentation will show why it is important to examine homicide trends by race, sex, and age simultaneously. I think some refer to this as the importance of “intersectionality,” but I may not fully understand what they are talking about. The terminology is not important. What is important is asking what we can learn by looking at homicide trends for black and white men in specific age categories in comparison with other race, sex, age categories. In addition, the longer presentation will underscore again the importance of rates as well as counts. And finally, the full discussion of SHR trends will indicate the potential of a greatly expanded NIBRS program. To emphasize these points I will compare total homicide victimizations reported in New York City’s SHR data with the total homicides for New York City reported by the National Center for Health Statistics (CDC). This comparison of trends suggested by these two programs, CDC and UCR, will include separate comparisons by the age, the race, and the sex of victims.

The chart below presents the results of a final step, an examination of homicide victimization rates for 15 to 29 year old black and white victims for the period from 1980 to 2010. The numbers at the left side of the graph are rates per 100,000 in each race-sex-age category. The 1991 white male rate for this age group was 100 per 100,000, over three times as high as the City’s overall homicide victim rate of 29. Moreover, in 1991 the black male CDC homicide rate for this age group was about 2.5 times as high as the white male rate and over eight times as high as the city’s overall homicide rate.

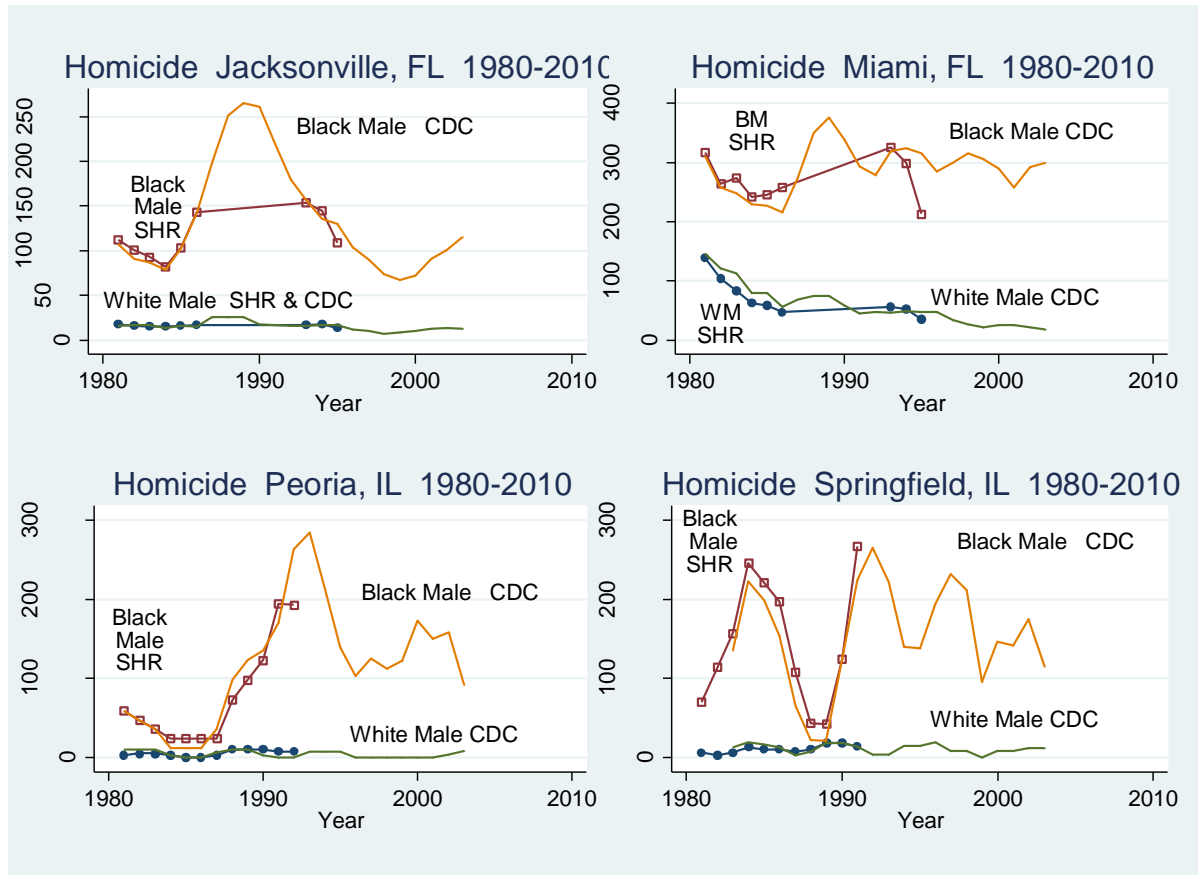


The results shown are limited to 15-29 year old homicide victims, and we can see that the highest black male rate approached 250 homicides per 100,000 men in this category. This was very different from the highest rate for black males under 15 and the highest rate for black men over 45. Moreover, the 1991 homicide victim rate for white women in this age category was 12 per 100,000. But the most striking aspect of the graph is the sharp increase in homicide rates for young black men from 1985 to 1990 and the equally sharp drop in this rate from 1990 to 1998. From 1985 to 1990 the number of murders of 15-29 year old black men increased from 310 to 598. This increase accounts for 42 percent of the total increase in homicides in the city for this period, when black men in this age category made up about 3.5 percent of the city's total population. From 1990 to 1998 murders of 15-29 year old black men decreased from 598 to 178, a decrease that accounts for 28 percent of the total drop in homicides for the same period. These increases and decreases in homicide rates for 15-29 year old black men in New York are impressive, but the pattern is not unique to New York. Similar increases and decreases occurred in Memphis, Saint Louis, and New Orleans. Whatever the reasons for these increases and decreases the important point is that it was this race-sex-age category that contributed disproportionately to the 1985-1990 increase in homicide and the much more widely discussed decrease in homicide from 1990 to 1998. More important, we know this because of the gains in crime reporting, SHR and CDC, made over the last fifty years.

### **Gains and Losses**

In addition to the gains described above there have been losses in recent years. The losses are far from catastrophic, but there is reason for concern. An important loss occurred when almost all large city police departments decided not to participate in NIBRS. This almost certainly reduced the amount of useful information that would have been available for analyses of the 1985 to 1998 increases and decreases. Another loss occurred when a few states created situations in which arrest and even SHR information is unavailable for some reasonably large cities. Illinois and Florida are the most salient examples of this retreat from uniform crime reporting. Fortunately, Chicago continued to send UCR data, including SHR reports, but the only other major city in Illinois that has SHR data in the ICPSR archive after 1991 was Rockford. The situation is worse in Florida because even Miami has disappeared from the list of agencies with archived SHR data after 1996. Examination of the next graph will indicate the impact of this step backward.

A more recent loss occurred when the CDC decided that various state laws prevented them from providing the geographic codes that make it possible for researchers to get homicide counts for cities with populations over 100,000. This is why the unmarked line in all of the graphs never extends beyond 2004. This is unfortunate because, as graphs in the full presentation will show, the CDC counts can be very useful in alerting us to the possible under reporting of homicides for short periods of time.



### Possible Impact

This changing availability of dependable information may be a major reason for the lack of consensus on explanations for the dramatic shift in homicide rates discussed above. If more states and additional city police departments go the way of Florida and Illinois the possibilities for useful analysis of homicide trends in the United States will be increasingly limited. The loss of additional SHR and CDC data, combined with the continued lack of participation in NIBRS, will make it more and more difficult to say with any confidence something that is true about the characteristics of homicide victims. This will make attempts to explain changes more speculative and attempts to reduce homicide harder.

## Recorder Notes for Changing Data Availability 1960-2010 and Its Importance for Homicide Research

Becky: I haven't been in state government for a while, is there anyone who can speak to the Illinois situation with SHR. I'm just thinking of the history of it.

John: Put it this way, they have been challenged with UCR and SHR for years. I don't know the basis of it, it is probably best described as a grudge of some sorts.

Roland: What could we do to get a uniformed crime reporting system?

Vance: I would suggest there are times in the criminal justice system that people do not want you to know things.

Roland: You could analyze the SHR and read them then you would stop reading them.

John Jarvis: The best vehicle is through the state and local police.

## Homicidresearch.com: A New Website

Vance McLaughlin

*The website, homicidresearch.com, was constructed in 2013. Its purpose is to disseminate data and research findings on homicide to anyone with internet access. Three documents have been posted at this point: the Atlanta Ripper, a 256 manuscript on Savannah homicides and a chart of 638 homicides that occurred in Buffalo from 1902 to 1936. The positive and negatives of using a website to complement traditional methods of publishing will be examined.*

### Introduction

At the end of 2012, after 30 years of work, I decided to stop consulting on police use of force cases. I closed my website and decided to construct a new one that dealt with homicide research. I came up with a spectacularly clever domain name: homicidresearch.com. On the home page, I have provided a direct link to the Homicide Research Working Group for those who might be interested in membership. I will provide a list of positives and negatives for utilizing a website for dissemination of homicide research.

### Positives

1. The reality that we live in a digital world cannot be ignored. The internet is often a person's only source of information. Many are conditioned that if information isn't at their fingertips immediately, it must not be worthy of their time. A website allows material to be posted, corrected, or added to quickly.
2. The first manuscript posted on my website was a 256 page document on Savannah homicides. I have presented excerpts of the book at different meetings of HRWG. When I finished the book in 2004, I found that publishers were only interested in a less lengthy tome. I wanted to make sure that all the data were available to those with different research interests. Some of the data would have been impossible for academic researchers to access. I decided to wait and publish this project, which took years to assemble, exactly the way I wanted.
3. One of the pages on the website will be devoted to serial murder. Two of the manuscripts involve a series of murders of African-Americans. Historically, these crimes have been under-reported by academics and under-investigated by law enforcement. Book publishers do not appreciate serial murders where a perpetrator has not been identified and prosecuted (except for Jack the Ripper).
4. Often, publishers of both journals and books want to limit illustrations, especially if they involve color. A web document, converted to pdf, offers unlimited use of color diagrams, maps, *ad infinitum*.
5. New input concerning the manuscripts can continually upgrade the material. As an example, I have a book published on serial murderer Harry Powers. Among his victims were Mrs. Eicher and her three children who lived in Park Ridge, Illinois. He

killed them in West Virginia in 1930. A person who read my book sent an e-mail and said that he was an amateur historian in Park Ridge and he had discovered in-depth information on the Eicher family. This contact occurred before I had decided to create a website but it would have been an opportunity to suggest that he write a short article. This procedure could then be available to someone who wanted more information on Harry Powers and, thereby, would give the author attribution.

6. Academics can use this material beyond their own research interests. In assisting students who are writing a thesis or dissertation, they could be directed to the Savannah Study and could critically examine it for weaknesses and strengths in methodology, analysis, etc.

### Negatives

1. Universities have different standards for the promotion and tenure of faculty. In the past, the more “prestigious” the university, the higher the requirements for publications in refereed journals, etc. The reason for this is to require at least a minimum of “quality assurance.” A refereed journal suggests that independent experts will review an article and approve it before publication. In addition, most academic journals are posted on-line. On much of the internet, there are no standards. Because of this lack of quality assurance, I would not suggest for someone without tenure or who has not been promoted to a level they wish to achieve, to post “publications” on-line. One method to overcome this negative is to establish rigor in reviewing material posted. In the manuscript on Savannah homicides, Eric Monkkonen was kind enough to review it and write the foreword.
2. Most websites have a comment section on the final page. This is positive because it provides feedback, both positive and negative. This feedback can thus become a catalyst for change. A negative occurs if comments are made that attack other research or researchers on a personal level that are removed by the webmaster. Critics will then suggest that comments are “cherry-picked” and only those leading to self-aggrandizement stay. My website is new and I have not had to face any of these challenges, but each person hosting a website must establish rules on commentary. These rules are currently being developed. In the first few months of hosting the website, the commentary section has been the target of spam. This could lead to the removal of the commentary section.

### Conclusion

There are a mixture of negatives and positives associated with posting unpublished manuscripts on a website. The next documents that will be posted will focus on mass legal executions. A short bibliography consisting of articles written, in conjunction with Paul Blackman, will be included. The website [homicideresearch.com](http://homicideresearch.com) is and will continue to be a work in progress.



## Recorder Notes for homicideresearch.com: a new website

Roland: So we can download any of these that you put there without permission, we can use them?

Vance: Yes, it's just available and I had so much data leftover from projects and I thought it would be best to put it all there so someone else could use it.

## Recorder Notes for Panel

Jesse: For Roland, more how we can fix obtaining NIBRS data, in Florida especially, the agencies have to either purchase or obtain their own database. In our agency we have tried to create our own. Other proprietary agencies charge per computer. So we do our best to do what NIBRS asks and give that to FDLE and if you to smaller agencies, they cannot afford it and they use smaller reporting.

John: You are right on target. That is exactly what happened. When we set up the NIBRS requirements in the late 80s and mid90s. All we had was the criteria, it didn't come with software. Howard Snyder under the direction of Jim Lynch at BJS, they are trying to enhance the participation in NIBRS by bringing on more agencies to develop a national sample to develop national estimates from NIBRS data. They are looking at that now, that effort is moving forward to create a triangulation opportunity. And as I understand that would come with software as well.

Roland: It isn't the small departments that are lacking it is the big cities that are lacking. BJS wants to participate by providing the software. Your agency should contact BJS and say they want to participate.

Jesse: Would it be easier to contact FDLE and say that the state should use the same and provide the software.

Roland: Yeah that would be great if someone in the state would say that we will provide the software. It is a great thing for cities, but it is so economical. Every city except Boston is a NIBRS city. I asked the Chief, what is the impediment for Philadelphia for going into NIBRS and he said to me, that would raise the crime rate and we don't want to do that. So there is a political problem as well as a financial problem. So I think if there is an agency willing to do it.

Dick: For Roland, Frank Zimring, my mentor, used to say that crime statistics like you were presenting were only useful for explanation if there was an explanation of it. And what was particularly important was if there was something to explain ups and downs. And believe it or not increase in late 60s in homicide was totally attributed to the baby boom. Those people were getting older and shooting and it was wrong. That is why he said what's important is the down. So not just the up, you have to explain both directions.

Roland: Nobody is interested in explaining the up

Dick: Now we know that, what I am saying is it is actually useful to look at age, race, sex, and gender as the independent variable.

Roland: People are always throwing them out in regression analysis. People are using the overall homicide rate as the dependent variable.

Becky: Okay, I beg to differ. You just don't go far enough. The first thing you should do or at least the second thing after age, race, and gender, is look at type of homicide because if I agree with Dallas, homicide is preventable, but if it is only preventable if you look at a specific type of homicide of say robberies at transit stations is a different thing from child abuse homicides in intimate partner violence. It seems to me that there are fewer people killed if they're women by various ages, but those are still deaths. If you can pull out that and look at the risk of death in intimate partner homicide and maybe prevent those deaths. At the same time you can look at what is going on with young black women, what is going on? And look at the type of homicide, is it gang related, is it drug related?

Roland: We are going to go back to what we've done since 1980, its guns, drugs, and gangs. It's something about young, black, men. We keep doing the same thing, why don't we try and seek out what is going on here? And women as offenders are very, very rare. If they are over 45 they almost never kill anyone, regardless of race.

Vance: When I did the Buffalo stuff, the main problem was Italians killing Italians. The police would have an Italian squad, that's problematic. It was interesting to look at the culture. Most of the Italians lived in Precinct one. And the Precincts were divided up villages. In one day, the police in one incident and another incident killed four Polish robbers. Machine guns.

Becky: You are right, you just don't go far enough. I would like to dig down to the point where you talk to David Kenney or the CeaseFire people in Chicago and figure out what works. Which they have to some extent.

Roland: I don't know how you can look at that Chicago Homicide dataset for the last ten years and say that CeaseFire works. Maybe they are cooling things off but they are not preventing homicide.

Becky: That is a perfect example of why time series lies. What Dick did with Wes Skogan, although there were limitations, you could look at trends over time in different neighborhoods. So that's what I mean, I am an old fan of time series and disaggregate stuff. You have to look at the question, I just want to go further.

Roland: You can go to SHR and they divide by time of crime and by victim-offender relationship. What are the most salient homicides? Number of victims? I'm willing to go as far as the data will go. But we are limited.

Alan: I've got a comment. Up in Western NY we had a guy who set fire to his house for the reason of drawing first responders and shot and killed firemen. One of the volunteer firemen was also a police officer with a long time on the force, the other volunteer fireman was a police dispatcher. As the Chief fire commissioner, I was the one who had to go to talk to family and when looking at the family in the eyes and trying to figure out what to say, you really get the impact of what homicide is.

## CHAPTER 6

### MASS VICTIMIZATION

Presenters:

James C. McCutcheon, University of Central Florida  
Melissa J. Tetzlaff-Bemiller, University of Central Florida  
Mindy Weller, University of Central Florida  
Lin Huff-Corzine, University of Central Florida  
Jay Corzine, University of Central Florida  
Matt Landon, University of Central Florida  
John P. Jarvis, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Ariana Roddini, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

Amber Scherer, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
John P. Jarvis, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Marina Bontkowski, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Chair:

John P. Jarvis, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Recorders:

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center Personnel

## One Event, at Least Four Dead: Extracting Mass Murder Data from NIBRS

James C. McCutcheon, Melissa J. Tetzlaff-Bemiller, Mindy Weller,  
Lin Huff-Corzine, Jay Corzine, Matt Landon  
University of Central Florida  
John Jarvis  
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Behavioral Science Unit

### *National Incident-Based Reporting System*

Scholars, law enforcement, and government officials use NIBRS as a reporting system for crimes reported to and recorded by police. Incidents that are reported into the system include but are not limited to offense, offender, and victim information. In 2008, approximately 18,000 agencies<sup>6</sup> reported their data to NIBRS. The program is an extension of the nationwide Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, which has been used to measure crime on a national-level since the 1930s (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008). Although it has been subject to change, NIBRS data contain six data segments. These include administrative, offense, victim, offender, property, and arrestee data. In total 57 data elements are captured in this process. Agencies collect data on each crime occurrence within 22 offense categories made up of 46 specific crimes called Group A offenses, and arrests from 11 Group B offense categories (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (2013), Group A offenses include: arson, assault, burglary, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, homicide offenses, kidnapping, motor vehicle theft, prostitution offenses, sex offenses, and weapon law violations; while Group B offenses include, but are not limited to disorderly conduct, drunkenness, voyeurism, runaway, trespassing, etc. Since NIBRS is a young program, there are many states that have not yet completed implementation. States that are fully compliant to NIBRS as of 2010 are Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010). Data from the administrative, incident, offender, and victim segments of the NIBRS were obtained from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Data is acquired separately by year from 2001 through 2010. NIBRS was used to gather information about the offense, victims, and offenders.

### *Media*

NIBRS is paired with information from media. Using general news reporting and other forms of media, we search for additional details using the data gathered from NIBRS. To identify cases in media databases; (1) the date of the offense, (2) the location, and (3) the number of victims are utilized. Using Lexis Nexis and other news archive sites, terms such as “multiple homicides,” “mass murder,” and “killing,” are examined. These terms are often used conjointly with the number of victims and date of the offense. After determining if the

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<sup>6</sup> These include college, state, county, federal and tribal agencies.

case aligns with the incident we link qualitative data to a separate Excel page. Extra information about the case includes qualitative data such as the name of offender, previous mental health concerns of the offender and other situational themes of the case.

## Data Mining

### *The Victims Segment*

Though there are several methods to mine mass murder data out of NIBRS, after trial and error we decided to utilize the following method. This way is time consuming and labor intensive, but we believe the method increases the validity of our database. Each segment of NIBRS can be downloaded individually or in a larger package. We begin in the victim segment. The FBI currently defines mass murder as having four or more homicide victims (FBI, 2008). Using SPSS we select homicide cases based on the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) offense codes which are listed in the NIBRS database. Three types of homicide are included in the offense codes; (1) Murder/Non-negligent Manslaughter, (2) Negligent Manslaughter, and (3) Justifiable Homicide. Justifiable homicide and negligent manslaughter are excluded from our selection. Once these cases have been selected and exported into a new database, the only UCR offense code will be the one for homicide. Thus, all incidents in the new database involve homicide victims.

After this process our initial plans were to utilize the victim sequence number variable, which is also listed in the NIBRS database, to determine the number of victims per homicide incident. However, we quickly realized that there are various types of victims for the same incident and not all of them are homicide victims. Since we have already selected lethal victimizations out of the larger database to create an exclusively homicide database, large gaps formed between the sequential counts of victims. Simply put, in mass murder events there are survivors that end up falling into the aggravated assault category as well as other categories. Since this was the case, we used a different procedure to identify homicide incidents with multiple victims. We first looked at the originating agency, ORI, and then incident number to identify multiple victims for the same incident. This allowed us to get a sequential count of victims per incident. This procedure must be completed with care because differing agencies can use the same, or very similar, incident numbers. Therefore, there are times when the same incident number will be present in two different incidents. This is why identifying multiple victims for the same incident involves looking at both the agency and the incident. It is also advised that the date of the incident be checked as well to ensure that the victims come from the same incident. This process gives a usable sequential number.

After sorting the sequential count of homicide victims, all incidents with four or more victims are pulled over into a new SPSS database. The incident is then searched for in the homicide victims database to collect other victims that were part of the incident. Again, there must be at least four homicide victims to be included in our final database. Within the homicide victim database information about the race, age, and sex of the victims are also obtained and added to the final Excel database, which we called Mass Murder Database. In addition, other variables found in the homicide victim database are obtained, such as other offenses in association with the primary offense and the circumstance of the homicide, and

added to the final database. Additionally, we create a count variable to indicate the number of victims associated with the mass murder incident by using the sequence number. This final database identifies all the victims of mass murder available through NIBRS for the given timeframe.

### *The Offender Segment*

The offender segment is obtained through the same procedure as the victim segment. Using the victim segment incident numbers, where there are four or more homicides per incident, the mass murderer(s) is/are identified through a basic search of the offender segment.<sup>7</sup> After it is certain that the data align by date, agency, and incident number, each offender is then coded into the new Mass Murder Database with their corresponding victims. Variable that are collected from the offender database include demographic information including race, age, and sex. We also create a count variable to indicate the number of offenders associated with the mass murder incident.

### *The Offense Segment*

We use the offense segment to gain more specifics about each event. Using the incident number through a basic search we are able to identify each case of interest. Again, it is necessary to double check that the incident found is the same one identified that contains four or more victims. This is done by checking the agency, incident number, and date. The variables which are utilized from this segment include weapon used during the offense (gun, knife-cutting instrument, etc.) and the location characteristics (alley, residence, etc.). Using these variables we are able to attain a better understanding of each incident.

### *The Administrative and Batch Headers Segments*

Using the administrative and batch header segments and searching for the agency and incident number we gather the state code, the FIPS codes, and the city where the homicide took place. These are added to the Mass Murder Database to conclude the data mining procedure.

### *Mass Murder Database*

The Mass Murder Database's unit of analysis is the incident. The database details demographic information regarding the offender(s) and victim(s), as well as location (state, county, and city), contextual, and situational variables. Within the database we split victim, offender, and contextual/situational variables into three sections using the incident number as the unit of analysis and primary key. We use count indicators for race, age, and sex. This count method is used for both the victim and offender sections of the database.

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<sup>7</sup> Merging the databases was seen as a viable option, but one that may increase error. Fortunately, conducting the search of offender by incident number did not require much time, there were not an over abundant number of mass murders per year. We averaged around 10 or less mass murders per year that fell within the scope of NIBRS.

*Mass Murder Database Variables*

A central variable to NIBRS is the 'Incident Number.' It is the identification number for a case within the agency. These are not necessarily reliable because a different agency may use the same 'Incident Number' for another criminal offense in their area. In other words, the 'Incident Number' should not be used as a unique identifier. The count of victims is operationalized as how many homicide victims there are per incident. For each incident, a count of victims is recorded. This provides a total count of how many individuals are victims of homicide in each incident. The count of homicide offenders is gathered in a similar way, as it is operationalized as the number of offenders per incident. If the offender does not have a UCR offense code of homicide, then that offender is not included. The outcome is a total count of offenders and victims involved in each incident.

Demographic variables are obtained from both the offender and victim segments. For each incident a count designated by race, ethnicity, sex, and age is created for both victims and offenders. NIBRS includes 'Race of Victim' and "Race of Offender," racial characteristics include, (1) White, (2) Black, (3) American Indian/Alaskan Native, (4) Asian/Pacific Islander, and (5) Unknown. We collapse these race characteristics into four categories, (1) White, (2) Black, (3) Other, and (4) Unknown as variables that we create a count for in each incident. This decision is based on current observations and is altered based on needs. 'Ethnicity of Victim' and 'Ethnicity of Offender' are also utilized from NIBRS and are coded as (1) Hispanic Origin and (2) Not of Hispanic Origin.

In NIBRS, 'Age of Victim' and 'Age of Offender' is operationalized as a continuous variable. Additionally, other categories exist, including (1) Under 24 Hours, (2) 1-6 Days Old, (3) 7-364 Days Old, (4) Unknown, and (5) Over 98 Years Old. We collapse all age values into categories for both the victims and offenders in ten year increments. The count gives the total number of victims and offenders in each category per incident. 'Sex of Victim' and 'Sex of Offender' are categorized in NIBRS as (1) Male, (2) Female, and (3) Unknown. We keep this categorization for both victims and offenders.

Location variables are obtained from NIBRS concerning details about where the incident happened. To gain the state, city name, and county information we use the Batch Header Segment 1 and 3.<sup>8</sup> NIBRS also details the incidents' 'Location Type,' which can be found in the Victim Segment. The categories for location consist of: air/bus/train terminal, bank/savings and Loan, Bar/Nightclub, Church/Synagogue/Temple, Commercial/Office Building, Construction Site, Convenience Store, Department/Discount Store, Drug Store/Doctor's Office/Hospital, Field/Woods, Government/Public Building, Grocery/Supermarket, Highway/Road/Alley, Hotel/Motel/Etc., Jail/Prison, Lake/Waterway, Liquor Store, Parking lot/Garage, Rental Storage Facility, Residence/Home, Restaurant, School/College, Service/Gas Station, Specialty Store (TV, Fur,

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted for non-demographic data we do not transform the categories into variables. We utilize the same procedure as NIBRS. It would be overly cumbersome to create variables for each state, city, and location type.



Etc.), and Other/Unknown. For each incident we input the location type following NIBRS' categorization strategy.

The 'Weapon Type' is located in the Offense Segment. The categories for weapon include: firearm (type not stated), firearm (type not stated) automatic, handgun, handgun automatic, rifle, rifle automatic, shotgun, shotgun automatic, other firearm, other firearm automatic, knife/cutting instrument (ice pick, screwdriver, ax, etc.), blunt object ( club, hammer, etc.), motor vehicle, personal weapon (hands, feet, teeth, etc.), poison, explosives, fire/incendiary device, drugs/narcotics/sleeping pills, asphyxiation (by drowning, strangulation, suffocation, gas, etc.), other, unknown, and none. Using this method, we create a count of weapons that are used in the commission of the offense. All weapons that are listed in NIBRS are coded into the Mass Murder Database.

'Homicide Circumstances' is taken from the Victim Segment to better understand the type of offense. The NIBRS categories include (1) Argument, (2) Assault on Law Enforcement Officer(s), (3) Drug Dealing, (4) Gangland, (5) Juvenile Gang, (6) Lovers Quarrel, (7) Mercy Killing, (8) Other Felony Involved, and (9) Other Circumstances. We use the NIBRS categories in our final database. Lastly, to gain further context we examine other charges associated with the incident. We utilize the secondary UCR codes to determine if there were any other types of offenses associated with the mass victimization.

An additional variable of interest in NIBRS is exceptionally cleared. Unfortunately there was one case documented as exceptionally cleared in mass murder related data; this field in NIBRS was most often left blank.

### References

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## Recorder Notes for Panel

Welcome by Deputy Director, Ken Keene

Panels for Discussion:

Measure and understand dynamics of mass casualty events.

Presenters of NIBRS known as the mass casualty database and how to use it and these instructors demonstrated statistics and how to enter filters to provide information.

As of January 2013, according to the FBI, mass victims are now defined as three (3) individuals in a specified incident and it does not specify if it includes the offender in the definition.

Question: What if people killed with different or more than one weapons?

Answer: The NIBRS illustration is with the older database, the newer database has been modified to input that information and can be filtered.

James McCutcheon mentioned that they need access to case files to better create the database for accuracy purposes. At this time, they are pulling information from online and media sources which may not reflect accurate information.

Question: Couple of problems with Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR).

Answer: There are issues with entering this information because of the hierarchy. For example, SHR illustrates it as Firearms – type not specified; handgun; rifle; or shotgun.

Answer: There is difficulty in filtering for type of weapons based on this hierarchy.

Answer: In NIBRS, they are tracked by incident numbers and gives more elaborate location information able to identify sequentially.

Comment: The NIBRS illustration was given in a small data set, if you have a larger data set it can be a time delay in extracting data as long as 15 to 20 minutes.

Comment: The purpose of these illustrations is to allow the participants to utilize the database that works best to suit their needs.

Question: Dallas Drake - Is there a model template for a closing report on a mass incident?

He repeated the question as: Is there a prescribed format/final report in the interest of conducting research?

Answer: Ariana Roddini responded that there is not one. In Carson City, NV there was funding available to assist them in interviewing the victims/witnesses and assisted in bringing it to closure and make the final report. In Oakridge this did not happen because of the lack of support and funding. The Governor of Newtown was bringing together a panel similar to the one at Virginia Tech.

Comment: Dallas Drake - What we need is a model to be established as a norm in order to accumulate this data.

Comment: John Jarvis (FBI) responded that Howard Schneider (FBI) is the collector of this information and that NIBRs captures some of these items.

Comment: Becky Block - Bringing up fatality reviews, it is not just law enforcement officers involved but also the community information that is collected that is just as important.

Question: Chris Rasche - Do you have a protocol for how these are being developed? A small or rural area cities are not equipped to handle.

Comment: John Jarvis (FBI) indicated that these are just case studies that need to be looked at and the accumulation of these incidents is now more often occurring.

Amber Scherer (FBI) gave her presentation on "Mass Victimization: Promising Avenues and Prevention".

FBI has been asked to train the employees of their agency on active shooter response.

Congressional definition of three (3) or more killed is how they are studying incidents. Also, John Jarvis mentioned that you cannot just look at the fact that it was a mass fatality, but the line graph showed (gang related and domestic disputes) and these are very different in nature.

Question: What do you do when the categories overlap? If the offender follows someone to a workplace, and commits the act?

Answer: Amber responded that it would be considered a work place incident.

Comment: The information is being entered by primary motivation and primary location. Mixed motivations often occur.

Comment: Once the database is together, the FBI wants to share the database without sensitive, classified information.

Question: Do you think we can prevent mass casualties?

Answer: There are things you can do to protect yourself in a building, such as, install bullet proof glass. Other physical things can be installed for protection.

Question: Where would it be most likely to have preventive effort?

Answer: Chris Scallon – I think possibly school, workplaces, and areas where there is gang activity. He mentioned the social media. The best prevention is on the front line as the 22 year old cop who is working that immediate area. Email and networking is another way to make the impact. Protection is at the lower level, bring data down, focus on front line supervisor. He brings things to his Sergeant so that it works up the chain.

John Jarvis (FBI) mentioned that if we rely on the police officers, themselves, to prevent this would be impossible, however, they need to be included in the model.

Amber mentioned threat model and would it be the same or different model or approach.

Comment: Jackie – one of the things that is mentioned in the clip is that we should have intervened on certain cases. Just like if someone has mental illness then they should not be able to purchase a gun. If they are unable to get it legally, they will just purchase it illegally. Information regarding someone's mental status is protected.

Comment: Is there anything we could have done if we knew he was schizophrenia and was not taking his medicine? If you don't know, then you cannot identify. She does not know how a person will be dealt with, if they are reported. If they are not acting normal where does that information go and how is it analyzed?

Question: Vance McClaughlin: At my University, one of the students wanted to kill one of the professors. They brought in someone to listen to the situation. He mentioned that he had to tell them to do something about it, and they took her off in cuffs. There was so much "push back" and everyone wants not to be involved. Sometimes, you have to sacrifice self for greater good.

Comment: John Jarvis (FBI) mentioned that you cannot stick your "head in the sand" and you have to do something to attempt to deal with the problem.

Comment: NIU case perspective, the NIU shooter was a sociology major. His undergraduate thesis was published. Schizophrenia usually shows up about the time you are attending college. A similar situation with Aurora, the shooter was an "academic superstar". He thinks that the killing is an after-thought and possibly not tied to the trajectory.

The Unabomber was also a college major.

Comment: Illya Lichtenburg - The line graph showed a huge spike in 2008. Maybe it should be looked at by the shooter perspective. It may be the shooter is actually committing suicide. Some are mentally ill, such as, the Aurora shooter. Illya thinks that there is a possibility the scenarios are being examined with the wrong factors.

Comment: One of the things that they found were report cards from 1<sup>st</sup> grade in this school from the Aurora shooter. Sometimes, they go back to a “happy” place.

Comment: Some of the perpetrators are family annihilators; or covering up a robbery; or other non-related incidents.

Comment: Well over half are domestic related.

Comment: Is there any ideas regarding if information can be collected from CDC to see if the suicide rate has an impact on mass fatalities.

About 65 – 75% survive a mass fatality incident.

Amanda Farrell – Issue on her campus was reported it only went so far up the chain and they were told they could be sued if they “called them out” as potential problems so we were told to “play nice”. They were advised to lock their doors when these people were around.

Comment: (Unknown) Not all Universities handle it this way and we have procedures at our college to ensure all are safe.

Comment: Ariana Roddini – there are robust models in Universities now where they are more aggressive with these types situations.

Comment: FBI respondent (Unknown) – you must have a chain that can react very quickly.

Comment: Dick Block – The graph shows meth gang killings are usually revenge related or irrational decision making. Domestic violence are usually irrational decision making too. There are models associated with domestic violence and they do not get the publicity as other mass incidents do.

Question: Richard Block – The threat assessment (is not big) and there is a lack of communication within the university. What do you do with arson? Arsons are incidents of mass killings and are quite different than other killings.

Answer: That is why the terminology changed to fatalities.

He indicated that the largest fatality rate was listed as arson in a nursing home which encompassed 29 victims.

Question: Kim Vogt - How do you get Universities and other public agencies to play along nicely? Her example was that they had a potential active shooter and could not get the gatekeepers of data (HIPPA; records registration; and other private information) need to understand they need to share under these circumstances. She is concerned about universities obtaining training in this manner.

John Jarvis (FBI) mentioned that in Summit I they learned: The HIPPA rules and other regulations do not apply when there is an exigent threat.

Comment: Candi Batton – No university wants to have this problem, the University in Nebraska is very “out front” and trying to prevent something like this from happening. One of the proactive measures is to work with the academic advisors and train them to be aware of what to look for as they are the front line people working directly with the students.

Comment: John Jarvis (FBI) - What is contextually appropriate and what to look for if it is abnormal?

Panel Discussion – Detective Angela Smith, Brunswick Police Department; David Haney, Glynn County Police Department; Dr. Ashley Calicutt; Tim Brown, Chaplain; Jerry Moore, Recreation Association (Glynn County); and Amber Beckham, J&M Pawn Shop;

Question: Ariana Roddini – How is social media impacting homicide investigations or people who pose a threat?

Answer: David Haney - GCPD – 90% of the communication is usually on the cell phone or Facebook and they can be conversing with a potential victim; or setting up their businesses; and communicating with family or co-conspirators after an incident. People use Facebook messenger because it is free. The suspect or co-conspirators do their drug business in that manner. The new “my space” is also used.

Answer: Angela Smith (BPD) mentioned that they find that friends of suspects are deleting information from their Facebook and reposting to others.

Answer: Dr. Ashley Calicutt – In particular young adults, twitter accounts it gives them a face to hide behind and most of the time they feel they have anonymity that they wouldn't usually have and they tend to be more vocal and they feel the social media is shielding them. How do those people who are targeted by others, such as, cyber bullying how do they report to law enforcement?

Comment: Angela Smith (BPD) mentioned that it is difficult to authenticate a page in your name.

Comment: Tim Brown is a pastor and he mentioned that it is not just the younger generation that he has to watch his congregation all the way up to his senior adults and they have become very savvy on their phones and computers.

Comment: Ashley Calicutt asked how many folks have a smart phone and if you feel shielded when you are getting on to a loved one with a text message.

Comment: Tim Brown mentioned that it could be because they didn't take time to filter it before they typed it or mentioned it.

Question: Dallas Drake – To what degree do you think that you are being overcautious?

Answer: David Haney (GCPD) – It depends on how close you are to the most recent tragedy or media release.

Question: Jackie Schildkraut – After the Boston bombing, people went on the cell phone to track his “twitter” messages and how do you authenticate that communication. David Haney replied that they send letters to the company to preserve the record so that it can be used as authenticated evidence. Anything that anyone re-tweets would be difficult to control.

Comment: (Unknown) You have some folks that are doing it in the form of sympathy perspective and others who may want to replicate the crime.

Angela Smith (BPD) responded that those types of situations would lend themselves to knocking on doors and following up, and the department would rather be proactive and not reactive to something happening in the community.

Question – Chris Rasche – Are any of these things preventable? Could there have been something preventable in these incidents and is there anything that can be done with the public? She sits on a board that reviews these types of cases and they have found that the family members feel guilty later because they did not intervene.

Comment: Angela Smith (BPD) responded that it goes back to “If you see something, say something!” She mentioned that she talks with the public and gains their trust and if they trust the community agencies then they will usually inform the police.

Comment: Jerry Moore (Glynn County Recreation Association) - has two (2) kids that he has contact with now that they are working with currently. Five years ago, a kid who was 15 years old came to play ball and was ejected from a game. Jerry Moore told his supervisor that he would kill someone before he was 22. Jerry mentioned that you can see rage in this kid’s eyes. That weekend, he killed someone. The typical family makeup is single parent and several kids in the family. He mentioned that he has mentors now that speak with the kids in their schools. He mentioned that the recreation association does not handle it, but they refer a person to the principal so that a counselor or mentor can be assigned.

Comment: Jerry Moore (Glynn County Recreation Association) mentioned that he felt guilty about the child who did kill someone.

Comment: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - said she wouldn’t want her name tied to anything like this in the local community, if she could do this anonymously then she wouldn’t mind reporting it.

Comment/Question: Tim Brown (Chaplain) - mentioned that he was on a panel that dealt with sexual abuse, family violence, and other problems and only teachers are trained to report these incidents. He indicated that there needs to be public training to report such incidents. Training is the key and train "out further". Participants indicated how do you train out further- publicly?

Comment: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) mentioned that she deals with "all walks in life" and all "financial standing" and she thinks she can stereotype to protect herself. At the same time, you cannot profile someone based on certain characteristics. You cannot falsely accuse because many times you do not know. For example, she was informed about some jewelry that was recently reported on a robbery. She stereotyped someone who came into her store with jewelry soon after. She reported to police and it turned out that he was legitimate and his wife had been given the jewelry.

Question: David Haney (GCPD) - Is law enforcement working with journalists and getting the message out to inform the public to go through silent witness numbers to give information? Also, he recommends that Law Enforcement should have a Facebook page and this is a method in which to receive critical information. Marketing is important and the reassurance of anonymity as they are giving you a "piece" of information that could be pertinent.

Comment: Dr. Ashley Calicutt - How do you educate people on how to report these incidents? She mentioned that you need to start with people when they are really young. She indicated "Teen Beat" magazine was one of the sources she read as a youth. She stated: cereal boxes, pop tart boxes, cartoon advertisements, but this is probably not available and considered "pie in the sky".

Question: Tom McEwen - What is the view on social media used for cases?

Comment: David Haney (GCPD) - As of January 1, 2013 the State of Georgia adopted new rules of evidence which allows the police departments to authenticate Facebook records to use and are admissible in court but you have to prove who originated the Facebook message.

Comment: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - mentioned that it would be cost effective to reach out to business owners with information. Business owners could receive this type of information by distributing to all local licensed business owners.

Comment: Chris Scallon - He mentioned "My PD" application is an ability to be anonymous on this site. You could speak more "freely" and since it is a new application it is a good tool. His department is beginning to test this application. He thinks it is a really good tool and it has been placed on all news channels. As a business owner, would you find it more advantageous to use the application?

Comment: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - If local Law Enforcement wanted business to use this and it was advantageous, then yes, Amber would use it.



Question: Kim Vogt: Do you ever run into situations where you feel like you could prevent something from happening with someone being insane and attempting to purchase a firearm? This question was directed to Amber Beckham.

Response: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - Sometimes she will take the extra step and incorporate the three day hold. If you have concealed weapon certificate, then you still have to have a background check. These are FL laws but they incorporate them at her store as a safety measure.

Comment: Dallas Drake – SWAT team is called out when there is a false positive. The Center for Homicide research gets calls that someone reported killing someone else, but why didn't they call 9-1-1 instead.

Comment: David Haney (GCPD) - mentioned that he never has had any proven false calls, but there have been suspicious incidents. He would get a call far out in the jurisdiction when a robbery was happening in town. He doesn't know how California laws deals with something like that he mentioned in GA if you did that here it is a misdemeanor and it would be punishable by seven (7) minutes of community service. He indicated that you can make examples of these types of situations.

Question: Roland Chilton – Would any of them be willing to comment on reducing massive fatalities by restricting gun laws?

Answer: Tim Brown (Chaplain) – he responded that it is a relief for him to know that he has a few people in his congregation that are “packing” and he feels safer. When something goes “South” he is not afraid to introduce them to Jesus (one way or other). He was in TX when they passed the concealed weapons law and the same day a couple of carjackers were shot. When a person tried to rob a Pizza Hut he was shot 6 times as was attempting to do it.

Comment: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - feels that guns in the right hands (police, military) are where they should be. Amber mentioned that women who come to her store want to carry guns for their protection and that is the majority of her sales.

Comment: Angela Smith (BPD) mentioned that they can increase the laws, but the criminals will still have access to guns.

Question: Debra Boutlier – Have you noticed any differences you get from tips from a person on the telephone and those from social media? Are calls or leads better from Facebook or more reliable on the phone?

Comment: David Haney (GCPD) – He mentioned that the tips from silent witness are very broad information. Facebook posting is used to identify people that they have posted. In this case, social media is a better lead of “do you know this person?” The community really attempts to help in this situation.

Question: Mindy Weller – She mentioned cyber bullying on social media, if these folks reach out for help what is there to help them? How much of this information can be used to build a case.

Answer: David Haney – (GCPD) – Many of those cases are definite pre-cursors and indicators usually this information is protected. They are referred to Magistrate Court Judge for a restraining order. Once this is in place, it is easier to build a case. Cyber bullying is not a crime within itself and you have to prove the suspect is the person on the computer at that particular time.

Comment: Jerry Moore (Glynn County Recreation Association) – he mentioned that bullying is usually happening at school and not on the Internet. He sees this face to face at the school. They try to let the parents handle it. Then the parent had a fight with his Recreation Association and the parent was removed. The kid stopped playing. Both kids are doing fine now. Jerry mentioned that he is not a big gun fan. He feels that kids have more access to guns.

Comment: Dr. Ashley Calicutt – She indicated that it all comes back to education. Parents are put under a lot of pressure. In the 1970's, it was ordinary for the mother to stay home and care for the kids. Now, you have two professional parents and children may be raised by other kids in the neighborhood or by another family member. You have to teach children that saying something mean is not a criminal offense, but you need to explain how it can hurt someone's feelings. Parents have to show the value of what you say and what you do to children. Teach kids the value of life. Television illustrates no values. All teenagers live for today and cannot see tomorrow. She feels like it starts at home with parents to show that life has a value.

Comment: Tim Brown (Chaplain) – “If I have parents come to me and mention that they have a child who is being bullied, then he tries to give them tips and refer to principal for help”.

Police Commissioner of a City in Upstate NY, Alan Deline – I found that the most information that comes in is from police officers who are resource officers in a school. Another good source of information is a reporter of a local television station. As part of her segment, she covers with the public things that they want to glean from the public. It is amazing how much information she gains because the kids come to her.

Jerry Moore (Glynn County Recreation Association) – He knows who is drinking, misbehaving, and the drug users in the school because the kids share the information with him. “They have people who go to them and talk with them”. If they are good athletes, they are monitored off the field and on the field by the coaches. These kids set an example for the rest of the school.

Comment: Angela Smith (BPD) – As a joint effort, we have a Glynn Brunswick Task Force and they write up information from the school system. This information gets distributed equally across the board.

Question: Jaelyn Schildkraut – How do you think it is best to promote prevention and disseminate this information?

David Haney (GCPD) – Silent witness is being marketed to help prevent cases from happening and this is how they receive tips for a given case. He mentioned that every opportunity for it to get out there -- it is put out there.

Angela Smith (BPD) mentioned that her task force goes out every month, they go door to door and they are looking for vacant houses and they are giving out business cards to give out the silent witness line.

Comment: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - mentioned that business owners have business licenses and this would be a good way to disseminate this information.

Comment: Dr. Ashley Calicutt - mentioned putting a “by line” on the bottom of a receipt; on the back of a bathroom door in a business; or other area in a business as a reminder.

Question: John Jarvis (FBI) – If you could identify one thing the government could do to decrease homicide or massive fatalities, what would that be?

Response: Dr. Ashley Calicutt – Put money behind it.

Response: Tim Brown (Chaplain) – The money put into the right place into programs not bureaucracy.

Response: David Haney (GCPD) – Making sure that people are aware that the information gets to Law Enforcement. If you are talking about children, it can be handled by school, recreation association, counselors, but eventually, it will have to be handled by Law Enforcement. It is important that the person feels comfortable going to Law Enforcement.

Response: Jerry Moore (Glynn County Recreation Association) – He mentioned recruiting coaches from FLETC has helped Glynn County. He said that this minimizes the problem. Glynn County does not have as many issues. Having the officers visible at school functions has been a deterrent.

Response: Angela Smith (BPD) – More community programs that starts at certain ages. Program called “Mission Brunswick” which will begin in fifth grade which seems to be the transitional age before middle school. Better programs for children as they are the next generation sitting before us. Teach them about the “Life” cycle and how precious life is.

Response: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - Mentioned that she agreed with all that the panel has said and that Law Enforcement is very important to her. She came from a community that had more things for students to do. Here they hang out in tattoo parlors, pawn shops, etc. No programs and they get bored. This town is missing programs that could help with this issue.

Question: Val Atkins (DAD) - If there is a homicide where the perpetrator is not arrested @ the scene, what is the most effective way of arresting the criminal? Where does Law Enforcement get the most information from? She addressed this question to non-law enforcement.

Response: Amber Beckham (J&M Pawn Shop) - Start gathering information by collecting information and talk to people around them.

Response: Jerry Moore (Glynn County Recreation Association) - Called the police after an incident with name and the GCPD went directly to the suspect's home.

Response: Dr. Ashley Calicutt – She responded that she didn't know. She thought that it was dependent on the crime and that the information you get is from various sources. She has someone close to her who knocks on doors to get answers.

Response: David Haney (GCPD) – Responded that the first and best lead would be Angela Smith (BPD) as she knows everyone.

Response: Angela Smith (BPD) – She gets out there and talks to people and gets to know people before it happens. If it has already happened, she looks at the scene, victimology, suspect's family; and alibi;

Response: Tim Brown (Chaplain) – He commented about Angela's ability to get information because she is respected and trusted by others in the community.

Question: Richard Hough- Stopping homicides from the LE perspective is almost impossible. The public gets its perceptions from television and media. Statute in FL of "Stand your Ground" has resulted in problems with people getting shot because they do not have an idea of "threat assessment". Inadvertent shootings by well-intentioned people, the perception of each panel armed citizenry as a goal to prevent homicide.

Response: David Haney (GCPD) – He knows nothing but being a cop since he turned eighteen (18). His entire adult life he has been hyper vigilant of his surroundings. He can go to a range and shoot a target, standing still. He mentioned that some folks may have good intentions to purchase a gun, get training daily, but that you cannot teach people that there is a situation that goes bad in a matter of seconds and what to do in this situation. Just because you can draw your gun, does not mean you should do it. You might need to be the best witness possible for the scene.

Response: Dr. Ashley Calicutt – Psychologically speaking, the very first thing that happens is your cognitive abilities are lessened very quickly and substantially. The ability to problem solve is lessened. She doesn't think that "John Q. Public" could be trained in this realm.

Eyewitnesses are usually not the best witnesses because our perceptions are not the same under pressure.

It takes years of practice to become that person, who doesn't freak out in a crisis. Most people are not capable of making sound decisions when in that situation and it requires training.

Comment: Tim Brown (Chaplain) – when he got his concealed weapon license he had to go through a 24 hour class in Arkansas. In Georgia, there is no such requirement.

Comment: Pawel Waszkiewicz - Fully agree with people regarding guns, people can shoot. Criminals will find a way to get guns. Most shootings are done by using legally purchased weapons. He is very confused as to what will decrease the number of shootings and the most obvious link to shootings and victims are the weapons. If you decrease the number of weapons it should decrease the number of victims. When his partners are listening to the news, people are asking why it happened. The gun store owner was surprised to see that they had purchased the gun from his store.

Comment: Vance McLaughlin - Even training for police officers are missing 5 – 7 shots that they shoot. Training does not necessarily make them better in real life. In reality, giving a citizen the same training as law enforcement is not helpful based on the results he is finding in the training realm for law enforcement. I'm 100% for training, but it is not working in the field.

Comment: David Haney (GCPD) - mentioned that the only way that an officer gets better training is to find outside training. Re-qualification training is not enough and agencies do not invest enough money in this area and the officer has to seek it on his/her own.

Comment: Dr. Ashley Calicutt – FLETC tries to make training as realistic as possible and this should help to prepare them in the field.

Comment: Tim Brown – One of his congregation members had been involved in something after he had just been in training at FLETC. A FLETC weapons clearing technique saved his life.

Comment: Becky Block – Is there a prevention measure used in Brunswick known as cocooning? For example, if there is a robbery they will go through the neighborhood and talk to each citizen and give advice, such as, cutting your shrubberies and discuss prevention.

Response: Angela Smith (BPD) – She confirmed that they do cocooning and that they bring in a Chaplain and try to plea with family members and allow the police department to do their jobs as a means to prevent another homicide from happening.

John Jarvis (FBI) – Wrapped up with closing comments. He was particularly interested in Angela's comment about: "Talk to people before something happens". This is something very important to share with others.

Ariana Roddini – If she could piggy-back on that comment regarding talk to people before something happens. When you talk to people, they trust you, and build a relationship.

CHAPTER 7

THINKING ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Presenters:

Wendy Regoeczi, Cleveland State University  
Tom McEwen, McEwen and Associates, LLC

Melissa Tetzlaff-Bemiller, Lakeland College

Chair:

Lin Huff-Corzine, University of Central Florida

## An Assessment of Stability and Change in Homicide in an Urban Community

Wendy Regoeczi  
Cleveland State University  
and  
Tom McEwen  
McEwen and Associates, LLC

Similar to many urban communities, Cleveland has undergone significant changes in the late 20th and early 21st centuries in the wake of the economic downturn and foreclosure crisis. We examine the impact of some of these changes on the neighborhood distribution of homicide incidents across two time periods: 1998-2002 and 2008-2011. For each time period, we collected detailed information on the victim, offender, and incident characteristics. Homicide incident addresses were geocoded and subsequently linked to 2000 and 2010 census data for each of the 34 neighborhoods within the city's boundaries. We compare the neighborhood distribution of homicide incidents across time periods and assess whether the same structural factors predict this distribution after these significant economic events have taken place.

### **Introduction**

Similar to other urban areas, Cleveland, Ohio experienced a decline in homicide rates in the late 1990s and into the 21st century. However, the numbers of homicides occurring within the city have recently begun creeping back up. By late October of 2012, the city had seen a 30 percent increase in homicides over the same time in 2011. The city finished that year up 32 percent in homicides. The greatest increases had occurred in the Collinwood and Glenville neighborhoods (Marshall, 2012). This raises a number of questions, including whether changes have occurred not just in the volume but also in the nature of the homicides, and whether any shifts have occurred in the neighborhood distribution of these incidents.

### **Methodology**

The data analyzed were collected as part of two different projects. Detail incident reports derived from the Homicide Unit of the Cleveland Police Department are the primary data used for both time periods in the current study. For the first time period, detailed information was coded for each homicide file between 1998 and 2002 (n=414).<sup>1</sup> A narrative for each homicide was also constructed describing the events leading up to the homicide, including any verbal exchanges between the victim and offender (if known). 534 homicide suspects killed these 414 victims, 360 of whom were arrested. This included 20 justifiable homicides committed by police and 16 cases committed by 23 suspects where the actual offense occurred prior to 1998; both of these groups of cases were eliminated for the purposes of the analyses described here.



The data for the more recent time period were collected as part of a grant from the National Institute of Justice to examine the use of forensic evidence in homicide investigations. Detailed information was coded from homicide files in the Cleveland Police Department between 2008 and 2011. The dataset contains information on 315 victims and 255 arrestees.

For both datasets, homicide incident addresses were geocoded and subsequently linked to 2000 and 2010 census data for each of the 34 neighborhoods within the city's boundaries.

### **Comparing the Nature of Homicide Across the Two Time Periods**

For information that was available in both datasets, we examined whether changes occurred in the nature of victim, incident, and arrestee characteristics. As is evidence from Table 1, some notable changes have occurred. Homicides in the more recent time period have been increasingly likely to involve male victims, Black victims, victims between the ages of 18 and 39 years, firearms, and to be felony-related. The clearance rate has also taken a hit, dropping to 61.3% from 75.9%. There has been a decrease in victims in the youngest (0-17 years) and oldest (60 years & over) age groups, white victims, female victims, homicides committed with other weapons, and those motivated by jealousy.

With respect to those arrested for homicide, there has been an increase in Black and Hispanics and a corresponding reduction in White arrestees (Table 2). Arrestees are also increasingly likely to have a prior criminal record for violent offenses. The city has seen a reduction in homicides involving intimate partners and other family members, while homicides involving friends and acquaintances and to a lesser extent strangers have increased. Little change has occurred with respect to the gender and age of arrestees; those arrested for homicide continue to be mostly males and individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 followed by 25 to 39 years.

Table 3 displays neighborhood characteristics derived from 2000 and 2010 Census data. Using our homicide data for the two time periods, we calculated the average homicide rate for the two time periods for each neighborhood. The overall average has increased from 1.84 to 2.15 per 10,000. However, examining the average masks some substantial increases in homicide rates that occurred in several Cleveland neighborhoods, most notably Broadway-Slavic Village, Clark-Fulton, Glenville, Lee-Harvard, St. Clair-Superior and Union-Miles. Most of these neighborhoods are on the east side of the city, which has generally been known to experience more crime problems.

The Census data in Table 3 also show the negative impact of the recent economic crisis experienced by many Cleveland residents. On average between 2000 and 2010 the city's 34 neighborhoods have seen increases in the percent of female-headed households with children (up nearly 10 percent), the poverty rate (up nearly 5%), the child poverty rate (up 8.74%), and unemployment (up 6.75%). In the meantime, while the overall population in the city declined, the median household income increased by less than \$2,000, the percent of owner occupied housing unit decreased by 4.62% and the percent of the population that is Black increased nearly five percent.

Figure 1 displays the distribution of homicides across the 34 neighborhoods for the earlier time period (1998-2002) while Figure 2 displays the location of homicides for the later time period (2008-2011).

### **Bayesian Analysis**

In this summary, we examine the correlates of the homicide rates at the neighborhood level with three variables from the two censuses: percent female-headed households with children, unemployment rates, and percent male population. These variables were selected for illustration purposes in order to demonstrate the principles of Bayesian modeling. The modeling starts by conducting a linear regression under Bayesian modeling on the first set of data from 1998 – 2002. Results from the regression become the prior information for a regression with the second set of data from 2008 – 2011.

The software program we used for performing the Bayesian modeling is called WinBUGS (Windows Bayesian inference Using Gibbs Sampling). WinBUGS has been developed over the last 15 years and can be downloaded free of charge.<sup>9</sup>

We start by conducting a linear regression with the homicide rates by neighborhood for 1998-2002. To conduct the Bayesian modeling, we need prior information on the coefficients for the three independent variables. Because we do not have census data at the neighborhood level prior to 2000, we made subjective judgments for the constant and the three coefficients. In short, we said that the coefficients could be located anywhere along the real line. This approach is standard with Bayesian modeling and comes under the heading of starting with an “uninformed prior.” Results from uninformed priors have been found to be robust.

Table 4 shows the results from the regression. The coefficients have means and standard deviations because they are random variables under Bayesian modeling. The credible interval differs in definition from a confidence interval in classical regressions. It is interpreted as saying there is a 95 % probability that the coefficient is between the two points defining the interval.

The next step is to repeat the regression with the second set of data from 2008-2011. In this step, the results from Table 1 serve as the prior distributions and the second set of data represents the new “evidence” we have about the dependent and independent variables.

Table 5 shows the results of the updated regression. These final results basically incorporate data from the two censuses along with the city’s experiences with homicides. The table indicates that all three independent variables are statistically significant. Interestingly, the coefficient for percent male is negative indicating that neighborhoods with high percentages of male population have lower homicide rates after taking the other two variables into account.

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk/bugs/winbugs/contents.shtml>.

Table 1  
Homicide Victim and Incident Characteristics Over Two Time Periods, Cleveland, Ohio

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>1998-2000 (N=388)</b>	<b>2008-2011 (N=315)</b>
<i>Number of Victims</i>		
1	95.6% (369)	93.3% (294)
2	4.1% (16)	3.2% (10)
3 or more	0.3% (1)	3.5% (11)
<i>Victim Gender</i>		
Male	74.6% (288)	83.5% (263)
Female	25.4% (98)	16.5% (52)
<i>Victim Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	25.4% (98)	15.2% (48)
Black	70.2% (271)	79.4% (250)
Hispanic	3.9% (15)	4.8% (15)
Other	0.5% (2)	0.6% (2)
<i>Victim Age</i>		
0-17 years	11.9% (46)	7.6% (24)
18-24 years	22.8% (88)	25.1% (79)
25-39 years	35.8% (138)	41.0% (129)
40-59 years	21.8% (84)	21.0% (66)
60 years & over	7.8% (30)	5.4% (17)
<i>Location</i>		
Residence	34.2% (131)	33.7% (106)
Other inside	8.4% (32)	7.6% (24)
Outside	57.4% (22)	58.7% (185)
<i>Weapon</i>		
Firearm	62.6% (243)	68.3% (215)
Knife	12.4% (48)	10.8% (34)
Blunt instrument	7.0% (27)	7.0% (22)
Strangulation	4.1% (16)	6.3% (20)
Other	18.3% (71)	12.1% (38)
Unknown	1.0% (4)	0.3% (1)
<i>Circumstances</i>		
Argument	32.5% (126)	34.0% (107)
Felony-related	21.7% (84)	30.5% (96)
Retaliation/Revenge	15.5% (60)	14.6% (46)
Self-defense	7.2% (28)	5.4% (17)
Jealousy	7.7% (30)	2.9% (9)
Child abuse/endorsement	3.4% (13)	3.5% (11)
Other	24.2% (94)	21.9% (69)
Unknown	15.7% (72)	16.2% (51)
<i>Case Status</i>		
Cleared	75.9% (293)	61.3% (193)
Uncleared	24.1% (93)	38.7% (122)

Table 2  
Homicide Arrestee Characteristics Over Two Time Periods, Cleveland Ohio

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>1998-2000 (N=388)</b>	<b>2008-2011 (N=315)</b>
<i>Arrestee Gender</i>		
Male	88.3% (318)	86.7% (221)
Female	11.7% (42)	13.3% (34)
<i>Arrestee Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	20.3% (73)	11.8% (30)
Black	75.3% (271)	80.4% (205)
Hispanic	4.2% (15)	7.8% (20)
Other	0.3% (1)	0.0% (0)
<i>Arrestee Age</i>		
0-17 years	9.2% (33)	11.4% (29)
18-24 years	41.9% (151)	39.2% (100)
25-39 years	33.1% (119)	36.9% (94)
40-59 years	13.9% (50)	11.8% (30)
60 years & over	1.9% (7)	0.8% (2)
<i>Arrest Prior Criminal Record</i>		
No prior record	36.9% (133)	28.0% (71)
Prior record for violent offenses	34.5% (135)	45.7% (116)
<i>Victim/Arrestee Relationship</i>		
Intimate Partner	17.7% (52)	9.6% (24)
Other Family	11.6% (34)	7.2% (18)
Friend/Acquaintance	45.1% (132)	56.6% (141)
Stranger	21.2% (62)	26.1% (65)
Unknown	4.4% (13)	0.4% (1)

Table 3  
Neighborhood Characteristics for Cleveland, Ohio, 2000 and 2010 (N=34)

<b>Neighborhood Characteristic</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>2010</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Homicide rate per 10,000	1.84	1.23	2.15	1.33
Population size	14,070	9,116	11,671	7,234
Percent female-headed households with children	50.68%	17.07%	59.60%	16.13%
Percent divorced	13.59%	2.05%	15.32%	2.47%
Median household income	\$25,616	\$8,425	\$27,499	\$9,402
Poverty rate	28.20%	12.57%	32.89%	12.17%
Child poverty rate	39.37%	16.60%	48.11%	16.04%
Unemployment rate	45.02%	20.22%	40.40%	17.74%
Percent black	50.34%	37.56%	55.20%	34.61%

Table 4  
Bayesian Regression for Homicide Rates, 1998-2002

Variable	Mean	SD	95 % Credible Interval	
			2.5 %	97.5 %
% Female head of household w/children	0.034	0.016	0.002	0.034
Unemployment rate	0.027	0.046	-0.065	0.027
Percent male	-0.061	0.027	-0.115	-0.061
Constant	2.646	1.404	-0.125	5.415

Table 5  
Updated Bayesian Regression for Homicide Rates, 2008-2011

Variable	Mean	SD	95 % Credible Interval	
			2.5 %	97.5 %
% Female head of household w/children	0.315	0.010	0.012	0.051
Unemployment rate	0.059	0.025	0.010	0.107
Percent male	-0.041	0.017	-0.075	-0.008
Constant	1.100	0.977	-0.791	3.027

### References

Marshall, Ken. 2012. Cleveland homicides up in 2012. *The Plain Dealer*. October 26.

Figure 1: Distribution of Homicides across Cleveland  
Neighborhoods 1998-2002

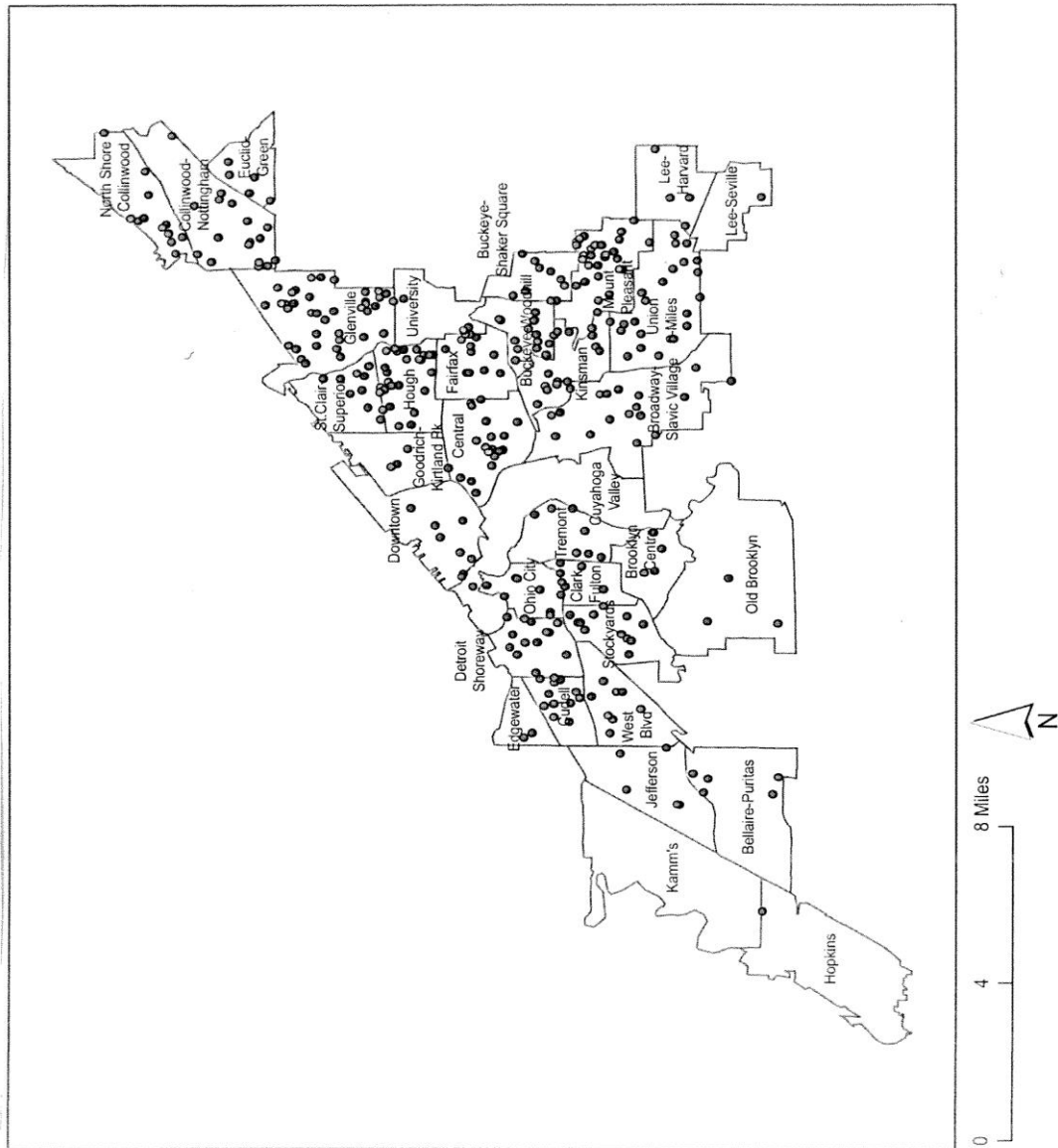


Figure 2: Distribution of Homicides across Cleveland Neighborhoods 2008-2011



## Child Murder: A Sociological Explanation?

Melissa Tetzlaff-Bemiller  
Lakeland College

Most studies of child murder are guided by a micro-level approach. While the individual characteristics are noteworthy, the macro-level characteristics may offer a more conservative statistical estimates of child murder. This study explores child murder guided by a macro-level approach using Durkheimian theory by testing the concept of solidarity using variables that measure both integration and regulation. Integration refers to the degree to which collective sentiments are shared, while regulation generally refers to the degree of external constraints on individuals through society's norms, rules, and values (Durkheim, 1951 [1897]). Therefore, social integration is the strength of social bonds between the individual and society, while social regulation is the strength of control of the individual by society. These two concepts are used to see if child murder can be explained by social conditions.

There are two general hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the more integrated a county is, the more child homicide there will be. This hypothesis was derived by using Durkheim's theory of homicide, which suggests "strong sentiments related to collective things are stimulants to murder and that can overwhelm feelings of pity and sympathy" (Durkheim, 1990 [1957], p.115 as cited in Dicristina, 2004). The second hypothesis is that the less regulated a county is, the more child homicide there will be. Again, this was derived from using Durkheim's theory of homicide, which suggests that this type of county would experience a greater amount of anomy<sup>10</sup> (Durkheim, 1951 [1897]).

### **Data**

Homicide data utilized in this study comes from National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which is compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the Uniform Crime Reports (U. S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010). NIBRS was designed to obtain incident-level crime data. NIBRS is an incident-based reporting system in which law enforcement agencies collect data on each single crime occurrence within 22 offense categories made up of 46 specific crimes called Group A offenses, and arrests from 11 Group B offense categories (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 1992). Homicide is one of the Group A offenses. Data from the victim segment of the NIBRS were obtained from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

County level socio-demographics were attained from the Census. Census data employed in this study were accessed from the American Community Survey five-year estimates and obtained through Social Explorer. The Census is a count and survey of a population recording details about individuals. Census data were used to obtain social economic status and demographic characteristics at the county-level from the years 2006-2010. Political

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<sup>10</sup> Anomy is spelled this way to be consistent with Durkheim's spelling of the word.



party affiliation (Republican or Democrat) comes from Politico. Politico is a website that shows election results of past elections. Politico data were used to obtain political party change characteristics at the county level for the 2004 to 2008 election. Religion data was collected by InfoGroup, organized into religious groups by the Association of Religion Data Archives, and obtained through Social Explorer. These data were aggregated to the county level and merged into a single file.

## **Sample**

The sample consists of county level aggregated child homicide counts for the years 2006-2010. The reasoning for including a range of years instead of looking at a single year is because it helps to eliminate potential problems that could be present if only using one year. First, it allows enough data to run appropriate analyses, and second, it helps to even out the picture, i.e., if only one year was used, potential patterns may be missed. In order for the county to be included in this study, its state<sup>11</sup> must be 100% compliant with NIBRS by 2006. This is important because it minimizes the risk of missing data.

## **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable is a count of child murder per county and comes from fully compliant NIBRS states for 2006-2010. To be included, the victim had to be between the ages of birth and five years old when murdered. The reason for stopping at age five is because usually children begin kindergarten at five years old. Since literature suggests that the offender is usually the child's parent(s), (Abel, 1986; Brewster, Jason, & Weniger, 1998; Crittenden & Craig, 1990) it would be expected that the chances of murder would decrease.

## **Independent Variables**

The independent variables are obtained through the American Community Survey, Politico, and the Association of Religion Data Archives. They are used as estimates of solidarity by considering both integration and regulation. Using variables suggested by Durkheim (1951[1897]), indicators centered on religion, family, political society, and occupational groups are included. All of the following variables are obtained from the American Community Survey five-year estimates, with the exception of political party change and the religion variables. Political party change comes from Politico, and Catholic comes from the Association of Religion Data Archives. Since all variables are county level, they are measured as a percentage.

### *Integration Variables*

*Religion.* The religion variable is operationalized as percent Catholic denomination per county. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) observed integration by examining religion. He found that

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<sup>11</sup> The states being used are: Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Catholics committed more homicide due to offenses being regarded as a violation against the collective and morality (Durkheim, 1951 [1897]).

*Family.* The family variable used for integration is family density. Family density is operationalized as percent of households containing children under the age of 18 living in the household. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) observed integration by examining the family and decided that the real insulating factor against suicide was the family itself, but this stimulates murder due to the strength of the integration.

*Political.* The political variable is operationalized as political party change from the 2004 presidential election to the 2008 presidential election. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) observed integration by examining the political crisis. He suggests that in times of crisis, integration strengthens. However, since political crisis is not measurable in our current country, a proxy variable measuring political party change for each county is used. The two political parties examined are Democrat and Republican. Any county where the votes were predominantly for one party over the other in the 2004 election, and then were the opposite in the 2008 election will be considered as having a political party change.

*Military.* The military variable is operationalized as percent of population employed in the armed forces. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) observed integration by examining the military. He mentions that suicide increases with length of time served, is higher among the higher ranked, and is stronger among volunteers and re-enlisted men. Although he didn't mention military when discussing homicide, he did discuss how in times of war, homicide increases (Durkheim, 1951 [1897]). Durkheim (1951 [1895]) continues by stating that "this increase [in homicide rates] will appear still more important if we reflect that the age in which most murders are committed is about thirty and that all young men were then with the colors" (p. 352). Therefore, a measure of military personnel is used.

#### *Regulation Variables*

*Family.* The family variable used for regulation is marital status. Marital status is operationalized as percent of divorced and separated per county. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) observed regulation by examining the family. He suggests that through divorce, suicide increases for men, but decreases for women (Durkheim, 1951 [1897]). Divorce would be considered a form of deregulation.

*Heterogeneity.* The heterogeneity variable is operationalized as the difference within the counties. Heterogeneity is tested for income and race. The Gini index is used to measure economic inequality. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) observed regulation by examining the economic crisis. He suggests that in times of crisis, regulation weakens. The Simpson Diversity Index is used for race/ethnicity. The measure was created for each county by using proportions of non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, non-Hispanic other, and Hispanic. The following equation was used to calculate the measure and shows how each proportion was squared, summed, and then subtracted from one to create a fraction which represents the heterogeneity of race/ethnicity in the county (Osgood & Chambers, 2000).

$$(1 - (\sum p_i^2)).$$

These measures will indicate further heterogeneity, which specifies weaker regulation.

*Population Change.* The population change variable is operationalized as the population change in the county from 2000 to 2010. Durkheim (1951 [1897]) discusses how division of labor can affect violence and in periods of rapid social change, deregulation exists. Population change is used to measure the amount of regulation.

### **Control Variables**

The study also contained control variables. The control variables were broken into two categories: the main control variables and the additional control variables. The main control variables include sex, age, region, and total population. These are measured as percent of the population at the county level. Sex is operationalized as percent of the county that is male. The age variable is operationalized as the percent of the population over 25 years old. Region is operationalized as the region of the United States in which each state falls. This variable created four dummy variables: Northeast, South, West, and Midwest. South is used as the comparison category. Total population is operationalized as the total population of the county in 2010. In addition to the above control variables, five additional control variables were used: urbanity, poverty, employment status, racial/ethnicity heterogeneity. Urbanity is operationalized as percent of population that is living in urban areas per county. Poverty is operationalized as percent of children under 18 living in poverty per county. Employment status is operationalized as percent of population 16 and older in the labor force that are unemployed in each county. Racial heterogeneity, operationalized as the racial/ethnic difference within the counties was taken from the regulation group, and religion, operationalized as percent of the county belonging to any religion, are used for the integration models. These variables were selected because of their suggested importance in past research dealing with homicide.

### **Data Analysis**

All data files were combined to form one database and STATA was used to complete the analyses. The unit of analysis for this study was the county. Descriptive statistics and appropriate bivariate analyses, dictated by the level of measurement, were conducted for both of the dependent variables and each of the independent and control variables.

Concerning multivariate analyses, since the dependent variable is a count, a count model, negative binomial regression, is used. According to Long and Freese (2006), linear regression models can result in inconsistent, inefficient, and biased estimates when applied to count outcomes. Therefore a count model is a better fit than a linear regression. Preliminary multivariate analyses indicated that the variance of the dependent variable was larger than the mean, indicating over-dispersion. This is a violation of the Poisson regression, which indicates that negative binomial regression is a better fit for the data. The consequences of selecting Poisson regression over negative binomial regression when over-dispersion exists include incorrect significance tests for the coefficients (Osgood,

2000). Therefore, negative binomial regression was chosen rather than Poisson regression in order to examine the relationships between the dependent, independent, and control variables. In addition, the Vuong test was used in STATA to determine if zero-inflated negative binomial regression was a better fit for the data. The results of the test implied that the zero-inflated model was a better fit. However, the zero-inflated model assumes that there are two latent groups, an always zero group and a not always zero group. The always zero group has an outcome of zero with a probability of one, and the not always zero group might have an outcome of zero, but has a nonzero probability of a positive outcome (Long & Freese, 2006). Concerning this study, every child has the probability of being murdered, but luckily most are not. Therefore, theoretically, it does not make sense to use a zero-inflated model for this study.

Nine multivariate models were estimated. There were three main groups with three models each. The main groups analyzed were: integration, regulation, and integration and regulation. One model for each group included the count of homicides per county and the independent variables; a second model for each group included the count of homicides per county, the independent variables and the main control variables; and the third model for each group included the count of homicides per county, the independent variables, the main control variables, and the additional control variables. This made a total of three groups and nine models. The final table which shows the results for Solidarity, integration and regulation, is included.

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Table 1  
*Negative Binomial Regression of Solidarity with Independent Variables and All Controls, 2006-2010*

	Coefficients	IRR (S.E.)
<b>Independent Variables</b>		
Percent Catholic	-.019	.981 (0.012)
Family Density	-.010	.990 (0.017)
Political Party Change	-.035	.966 (0.151)
Percent Military	.060	1.062 (0.025)*
Percent Divorced	.135	1.145 (0.043)***
Income Inequality	1.521	4.579 (11.779)
Racial/Ethnic Heterogeneity	.450	1.568 (0.669)
Population Change	-.003	.997 (0.007)
<b>Main Control Variables</b>		
Percent Male	-.008	.992 (0.043)
Percent 25yrs and Older	-.041	.960 (0.017)*
Northeast	-.548	.578 (0.178) <sup>a</sup>
West	.125	1.133 (0.269)
Midwest	-.105	.900 (0.171)
<b>Additional Control Variables</b>		
Religion	.002	1.002 (0.006)
Percent <18yrs in Poverty	-.001	.999 (0.014)
Percent Unemployed	-.020	.980 (0.028)
Urbanity	-.215	.807 (0.122)
Log of Total Population (exposure variable)	1	1
LR Chi <sup>2</sup>	58.35***	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.054	

Note. Sample size is 763 counties.

<sup>1</sup> Coefficient was -10.053 and IRR (S.E.) was 0.000043 (0.0001329)

<sup>a</sup>p<.1. \* p < .05. \*\* p < .01. \*\*\* p < .001.