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# National Institute of Justice

R e s e a r c h R e p o r t

## *Lethal Violence*

*Proceedings of the 1995  
Meeting of the Homicide  
Research Working Group*

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1995 Meeting of the Homicide  
Research Working Group*

*Ottawa, Canada*

*Editors*

*Marc Riedel*

*John Boulahanis*



## Introduction

These are the proceedings of the 1995 annual meeting of the Homicide Research Working Group. The meeting was held at the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa, Canada from June 11 to June 14, 1995. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, and the Program Chair, Orest Fedorowycz, did an outstanding job in hosting and organizing the meeting - one of the best meetings of the Homicide Research Working Group.

Among the members of the Homicide Research Working Group, special thanks go to Richard and Becky Block who continue to provide the oversight, encouragement, and commitment needed to sustain the activity of this group. Cheryl Maxson, as she has done for the past few years, continues to do an excellent job of keeping track of fees and registrations.

The first three sections of the proceedings contain papers, summaries, and works in progress made available to the Proceedings Editors. The final section - Sessions - contain available papers in sessions where recorder's notes were available. All presentations are listed in the opening page of the session even when it consisted of an oral report or was subsequently published elsewhere and not available. Recorder's notes and available papers are listed in the table of contents.

We would like to extend our appreciation to Linda Patrick and her staff of the Operations Support Center at Southern Illinois University. Linda has done an excellent job of turning a variety of different manuscripts into camera-ready copy.

I have included John Boulahanis, a graduate student in our Administration of Justice program, as co-editor. John has put in countless hours helping to prepare this volume; time that go far beyond those required for a graduate assistantship.

Marc Riedel  
John Boulahanis

Editors



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# **Section One: Youth Violence**



# Demography and Youth Homicide in California

ALLAN F. ABRAHAMSE  
Rand

## Introduction

Different population groups face different homicide risks. Homicide rates for African-Americans exceed those of most other ethnic groups. Rates for males exceed those of females. Rates for young adults exceed those for juveniles and for older people. When we see an increase in the overall homicide rate from one year to the next, we can offer two not necessarily mutually exclusive explanations:

1. Demography: the relative size of some high-risk demographic group has increased, and
2. Behavior: the risk faced by some demographic subgroup has increased.

This paper describes changes between 1982 and 1993 to California's demographic composition and changes over the same time period to the homicide risk faced by some demographic groups. Figure 1 suggests that the overall homicide rate has increased only slowly. However, we will see that the homicide rate among young persons has risen much more sharply, while among some older Californians it has actually fallen. Demographic changes in California's population accounts for some part of this change, but that is not the full story. We introduce a simple method for measuring the relative contribution of demography to the change in homicide rate. We conclude that the change in demography only accounts for about 30% of the change in the homicide rate.

Figure 1 – California Homicide Rate, 1982 - 1993

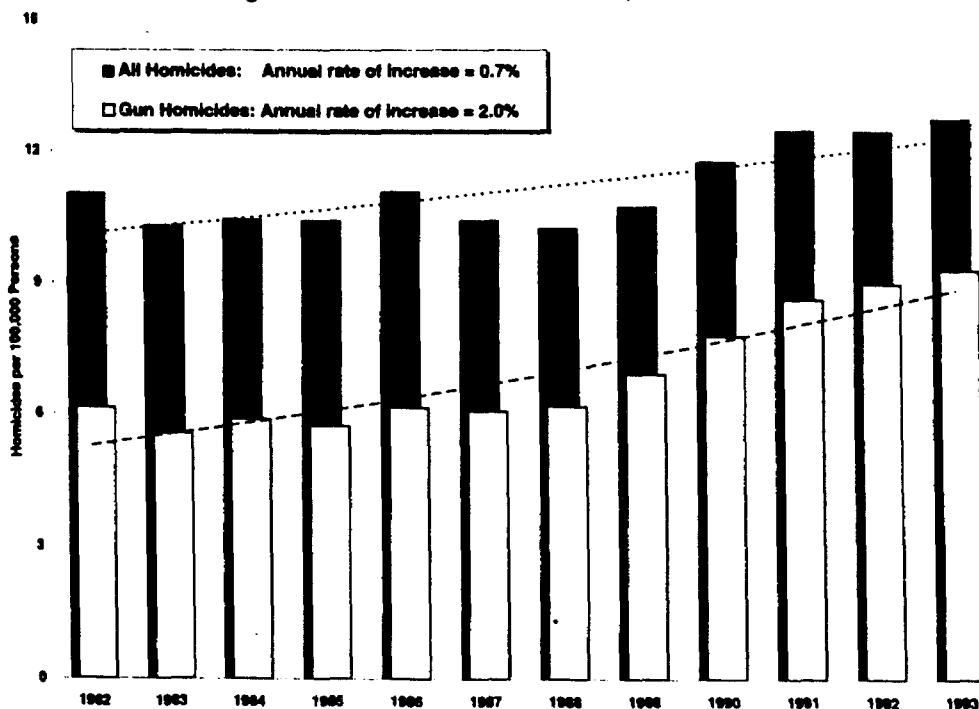


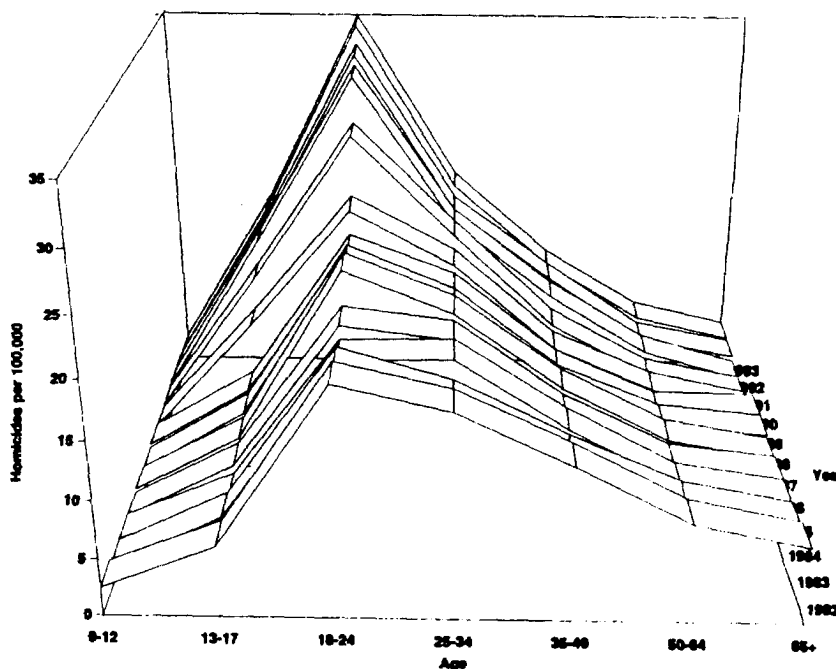
Figure 1 shows the California homicide rate, expressed as number of homicide victims per 100,000 persons, for each of the years 1982 through 1993. Since homicides in which the victim was killed by a gun have been receiving increased attention, Figure 1 also shows the gun homicide rate, again also in rates per 100,000 persons. To summarize changes in both these rates over the twelve-year time period, an annual rate of increase is displayed for each series. The dotted lines fit the observed values with these constant growth rates, and tend to show that in fact, homicide rates have *not* been increasing at a constant rate over the last twelve years. Figures like Figure 1 are displayed below for a number of demographic subclasses.

### Different Groups Face Different Homicide Risks

Demographic changes alone cannot account for changes in the homicide rate unless some demographic subgroups face substantially different homicide risks from others. This section documents the fact that different groups indeed face different risks.

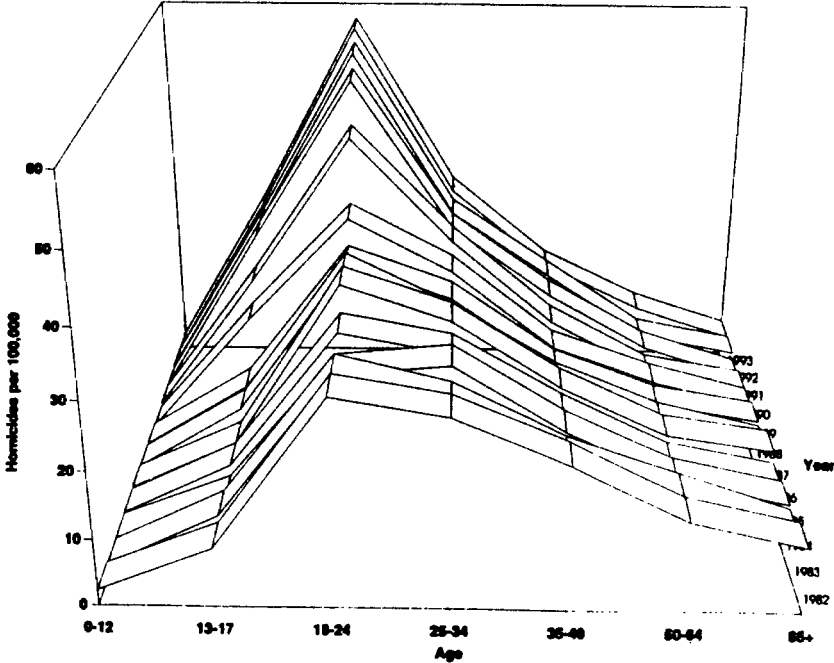
In general, young people face higher homicide rates than the rest of us, and over the past decade or so their rates have been rising faster. Figure 2 shows the homicide rate in California from 1982 through 1993 by age group. Persons age 18-24 faced the highest rates in every year. In the early 1980's, persons aged 25-34 faced high rates too, but these rates have remained fairly constant over the years. A sharp increase in the homicide rate among teen-agers in the late 1980s brought their rates up to levels faced by older cohorts.

**Figure 2 – Homicide Rate by Age, 1982 - 1993**

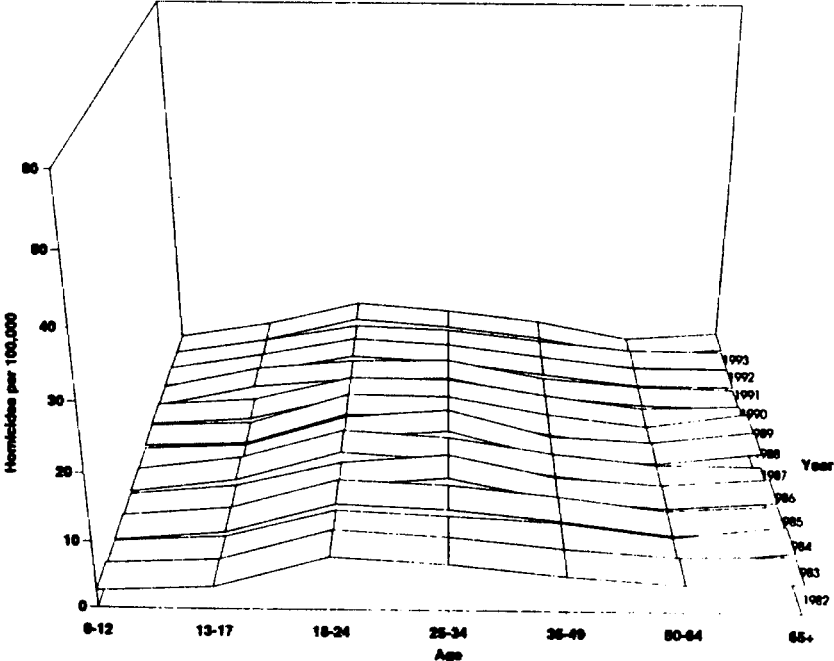


Homicide rates for males are substantially higher than for females, as Figures 3 and 4 show. In 1993, males aged 18-24 faced a homicide rate of about 60 per 100,000; for females the rate was nearly an order of magnitude lower. Since most homicide victims are male, the pattern over time and age class for males resembles matches that of the general population.

**Figure 3 – Male Homicide Rate by Age, 1982 - 1993**

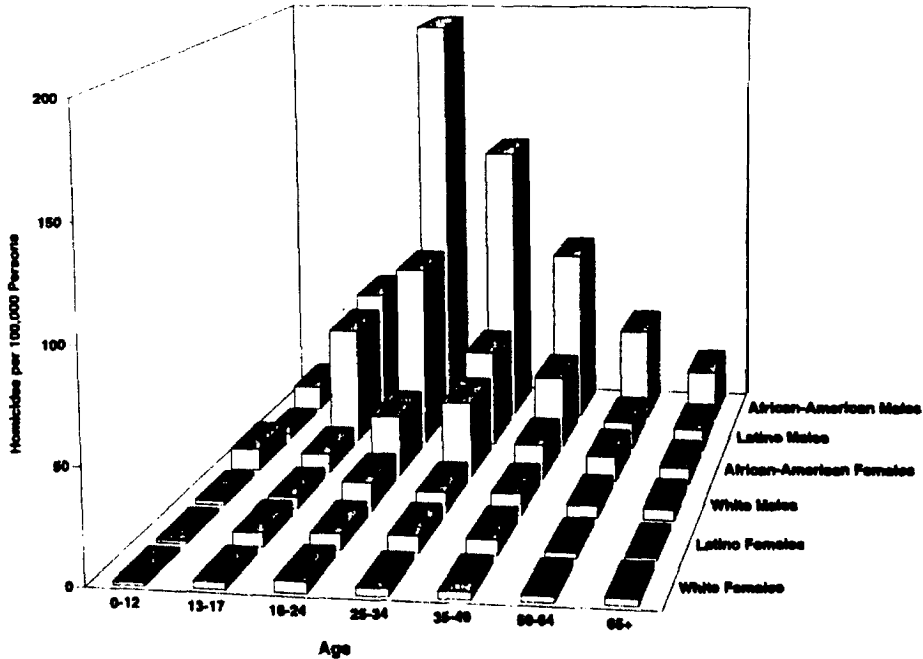


**Figure 4 – Female Homicide Rate by Age, 1982 - 1993**



Race/ethnicity also matters a great deal. Figure 5 shows the homicide rate in 1992 by age, gender and race/ethnicity. African-American males aged 18-24 face the highest rates, nearly 200 per 100,000. The rates for Latino males is about half that of the corresponding African-American age cohorts. African-American females face higher rates than white males, but their rates peak in an older age bracket, 25-34 years of age.

**Figure 5 – Homicide Rate by Age and Gender+Race/Ethnicity, 1992**



### Demographic Composition Has Changed

Because young African-American and Latino males face the highest homicide rates, changes in their relative numbers could have a large effect on the overall homicide rate. Here we examine changes in these two groups over the twelve year period.

African-American males aged 18-24 face the highest homicide rates of any gender/race/age class. Figure 6 shows that since 1982 California has seen a slow but steady drop in the fraction of its African-American male population aged 18-25. Therefore, if anything, this particular demographic change would lead to a decrease in the overall homicide rate.

From 1982 to about 1990, the fraction of the population composed of Latino males aged 18-24 rose, but it has been falling ever since. One could hypothesize that the drop was caused by the failure of the economy beginning around 1990 to provide jobs for immigrants. If this is so, economic recovery could reverse this downward trend, and lead to a rise in the homicide rate.



**Figure 6 – African-American and Latino Males Aged 18-24, Share of Population, 1982-1993**

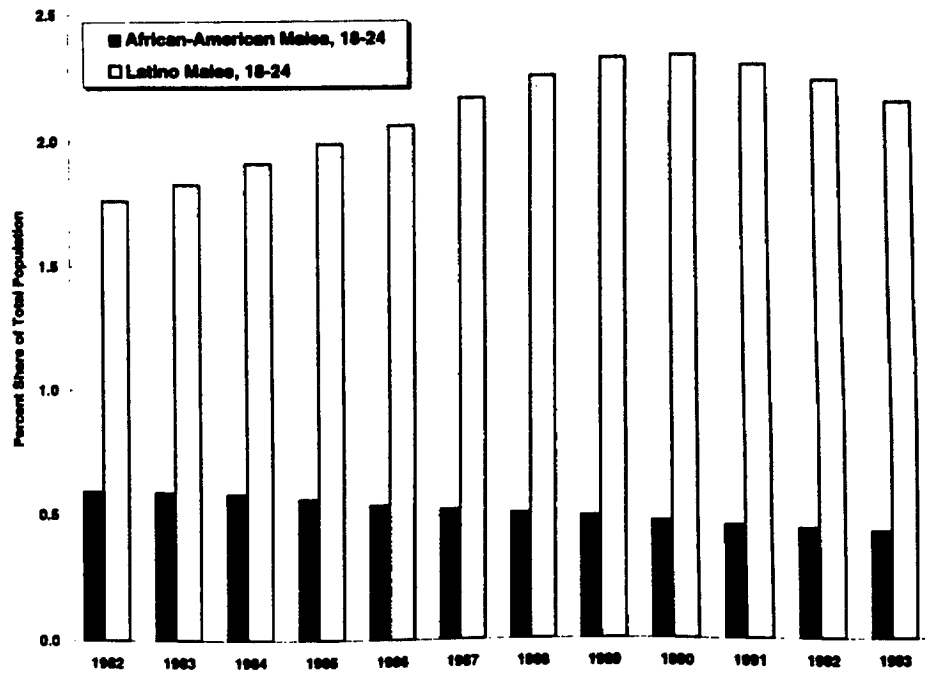
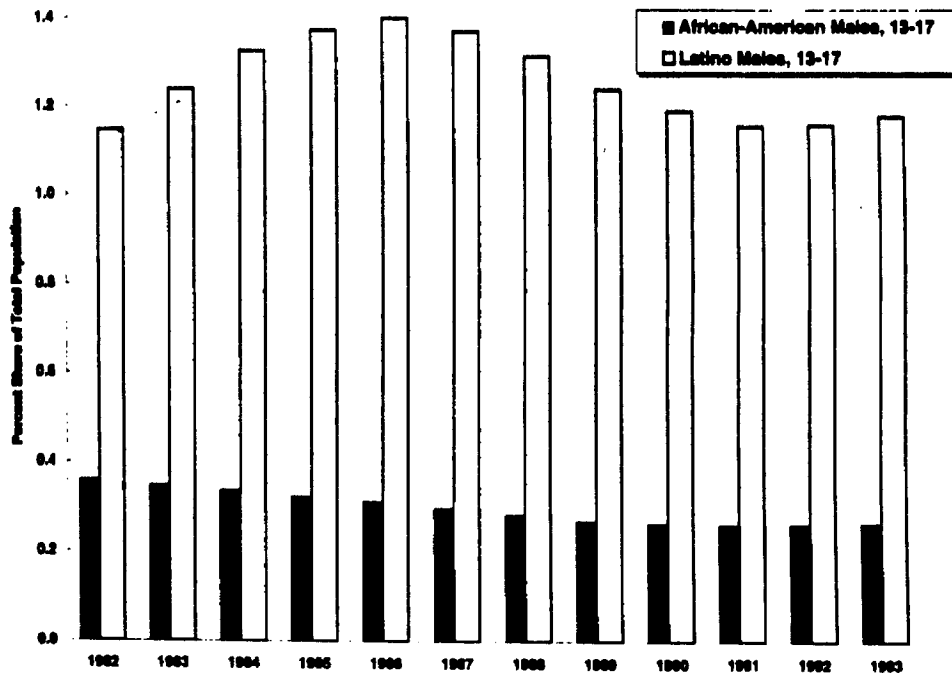


Figure 7 shows a pattern for African-American and Latino teen-age boys that is similar to that for the older age group, except it appears that in the early 1990's the relative share of population occupied by Latino teen-age boys began to rise, and the relative share for African-American teen-age boys leveled off.

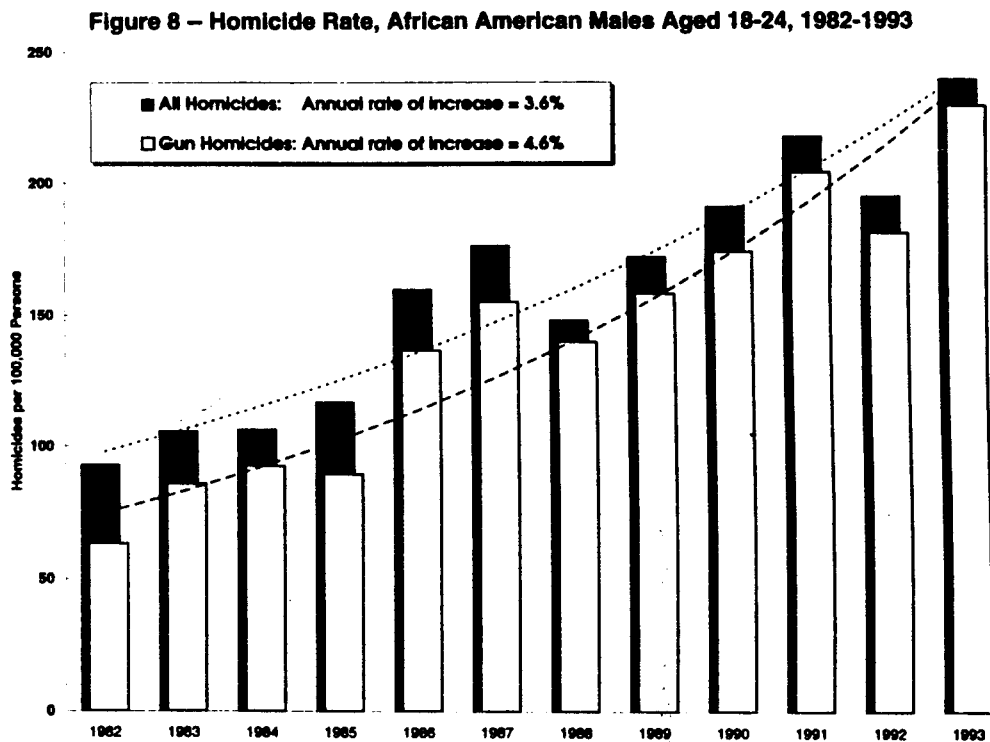
**Figure 7 – African-American and Latino Males Aged 13-17, Share of Population, 1982-1993**



## Risk of Homicide Within Groups Has Changed

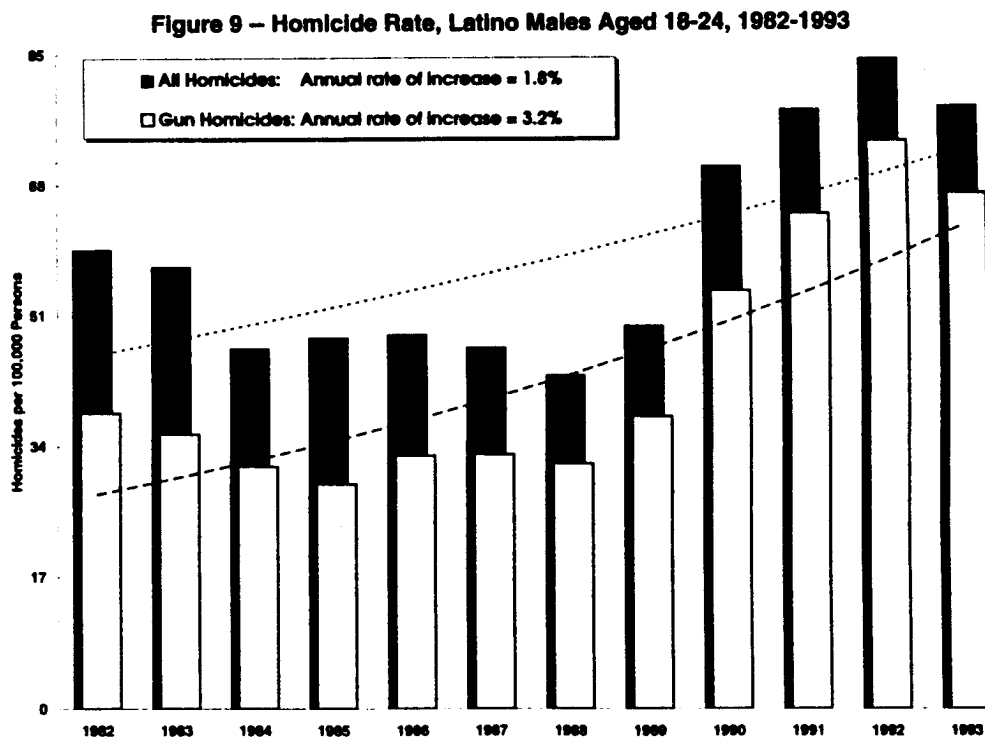
A “pure” demographic “cause” of change to the homicide rate requires that homicide rate remain constant for some demographic subgroup. We will show that there have been substantial changes in risk for certain high-risk cohorts.

As Figure 8 shows, any drop in the overall homicide rate that might be attributable to the drop in the relative number of African-American males age 18-25 has been overwhelmed by the spectacular rise in the homicide rate in this segment since 1982. The homicide rate rose at an average rate of about 3.6% per year, and it more than doubled between 1982 and 1993. Furthermore, firearm homicides have risen faster than homicides in general. The path upward has not been smooth. The two years 1986 and 1987 appear to have been particularly violent. The drop seen in 1992 has been attributed to gang truces following the 1992 riots in Los Angeles.

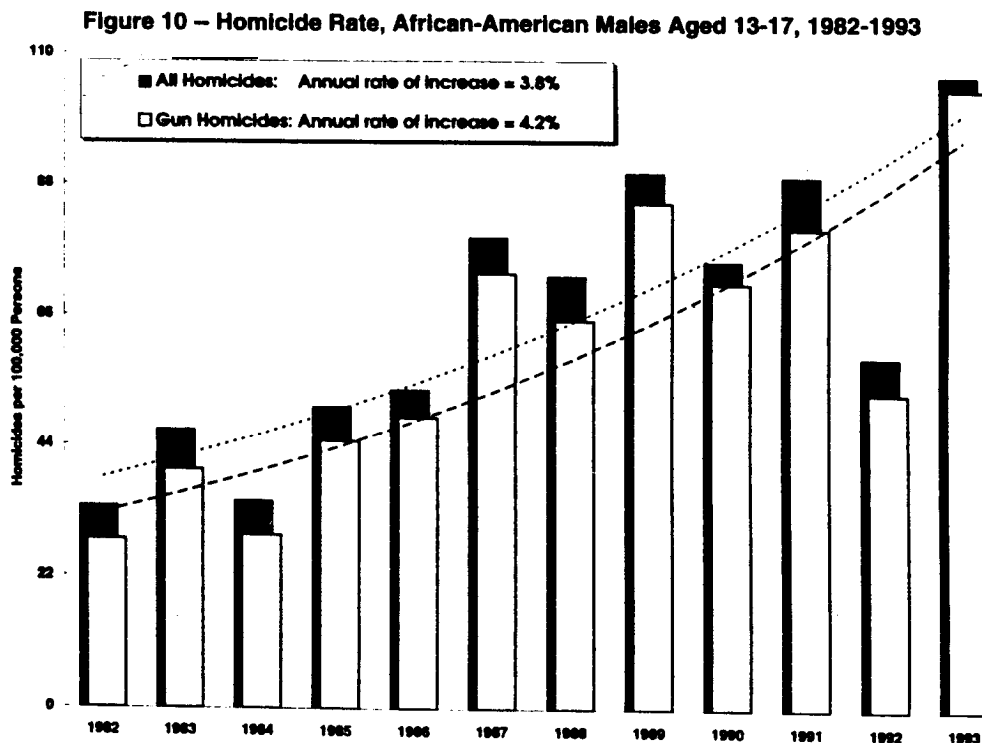


The course of homicide among Latino males age 18-25 seen in Figure 9 presents a more complicated picture than that of African-American males. Between 1982 and 1993 the rate rose at an average rate of 1.8%, but the rise was hardly a smooth one. In fact, the rate fell between 1982 and 1988, and then nearly doubled in four years, from 1989 to 1992. Unlike African-Americans, Latinos enjoyed no

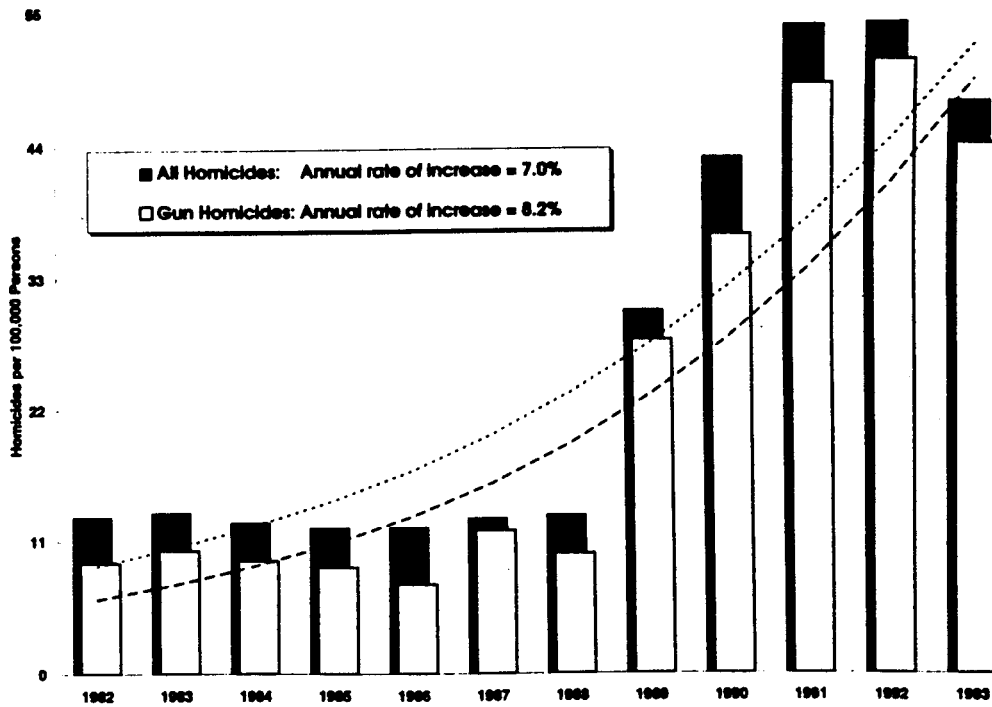
respite in 1992, but observed a substantial drop in 1993. Gun homicides have been rising faster than homicides in general, but comprise a smaller fraction of all homicides than they do for African-American males in this age-bracket.



Figures 10 and 11 show rates for African-American and Latino teenage boys that mirror those of their older brothers. Particularly dramatic (and puzzling) is the spectacular rise in homicide rates for Latino teen-age boys seen between 1988 and 1989.

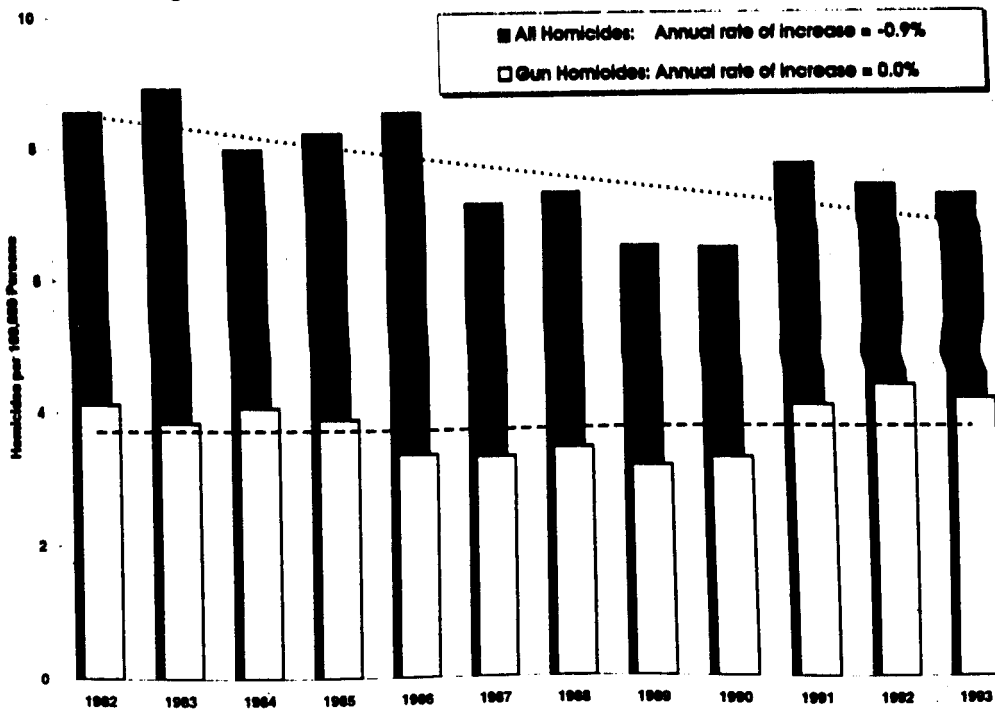


**Figure 11 – Homicide Rate, Latino Males Aged 13-17, 1982-1993**



Not every group fares worse in 1993 than it did in 1982. For example, Figure 12 shows that the rates for homicide among white males over the age of 35 have fallen by about 1% each year since 1982. It is true, however, that the gun homicide rate has remained nearly flat, and there has been a slight rise in the overall rate beginning in 1989, and an even faster rise in the gun homicide rate.

**Figure 12 – Homicide Rate, White Males Aged 35+, 1982-1993**



## Change Analysis

It should be clear from the forgoing that there is no simple explanation for the rise in homicide rates. The demographic composition of the population *has* changed, particularly for some high-risk groups, but the risks have changed even more.

We assert that since 1982, demographic changes account for about 30% of the change in homicide rates. Here is how we make this calculation.

Suppose we have N demographic classes, and that in year y, class n makes up the fraction  $f_{ny}$  of the total population. Suppose in year y,  $h_{ny}$  is the homicide rate in class n. The total homicide rate in year y, denoted  $h_y$ , can be expressed by the identity

$$h_y = \sum_{n=1}^N h_{ny} f_{ny}$$

where the sum ranges from  $n=1$  to  $n=N$ . The difference between the homicide rate in two successive years can be written:

$$h_2 - h_1 = \sum_{n=1}^N (f_{n2} - f_{n1}) h_{n2} + \sum_{n=1}^N f_{n2} (h_{n2} - h_{n1})$$

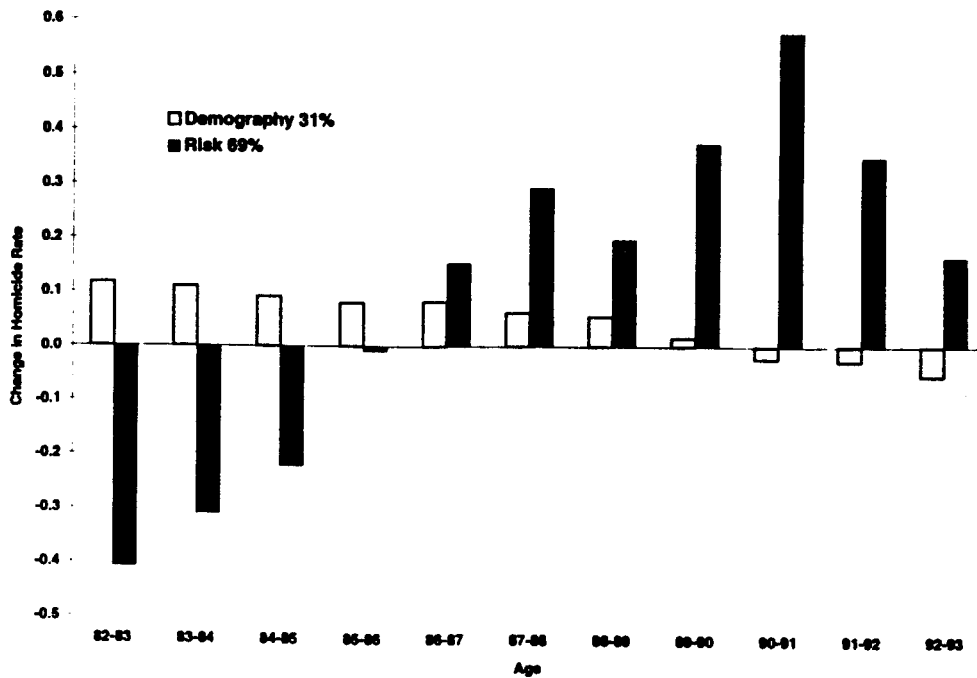
This expression is an exact mathematical identity; it is not a specification of some statistical model that poses a hypothetical relationship among its terms, and there is no error term.

The left-hand term to the right of the equals sign will be zero (if  $f_{n2}=f_{n1}$ ) for every n -- that is, if there is no change in the composition of the population. Therefore, we call the left hand term the *demographic change component* of the homicide rate.

The right-hand term will be zero (if  $h_{n2}=h_{n1}$ ) for every n -- that is, if there is no change in the homicide rate in any demographic class. We call the right hand term the *risk change component* of the homicide rate.

For our analysis, we classify the population by gender, four race/ethnicity groups (Latino, non-Latino black, white and other) and seven age groups (0-12, 13-17, 18-25, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64 and 65+). In Figure 13, we plot the demographic and risk change components year-by-year for the California homicide rate (for clarity, we have plotted moving averages of the risk component, because it is quite variable from one year to the next). It suggests that prior to 1990, demographic changes generally contributed to a small, but declining increase in the homicide rate, but since 1990 demographic changes have contributed to a drop. The mechanism for such a contribution may be illustrated by the rise and fall of the Latino male population shown above in Figure 3.

**Figure 13 – Demographic Change Analysis**



Risk changes generally account for a much larger share of the change in homicide rates. Around 1983, according to this point of view, homicide rates were dropping enough in some groups to offset the small increases attributable to demography. Later, around 1990, risk rates were rising (e.g., among Latino males age 18-25) to greatly offset the small changes due to demography.

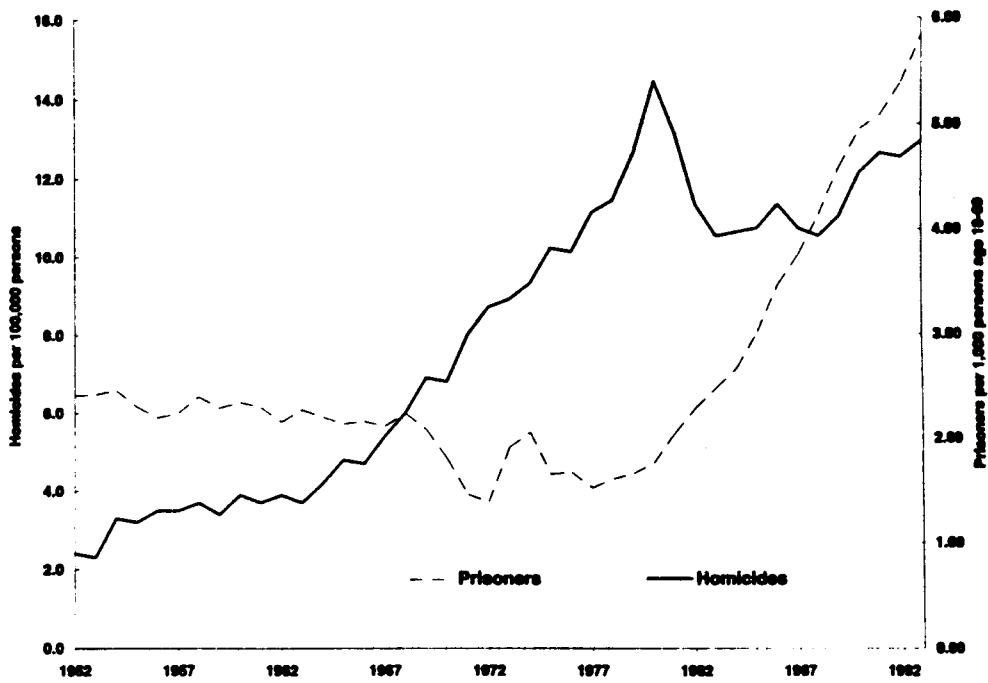
The average of the 11 demographic change components is about 0.046, while the corresponding average of the risk components is 0.105. Total average change is thus 0.151, of which, the demographic component is about 30%. This is the basis for our assertion that demography accounts for about 30% of the whole.

Some Possible Reasons for Change in Risk

If demography doesn't account for all the changes we have seen in homicide rates, what does?

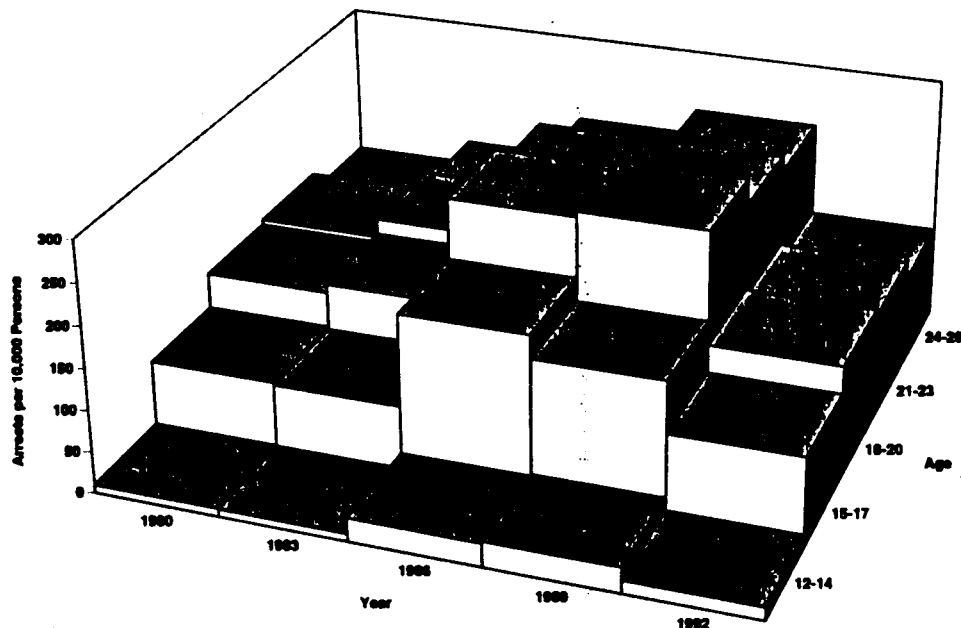
Proponents of interventions like "Three Strikes and You're Out" would like to believe that the homicide rate has decreased because more murderers are in prison. It is indeed true that since about 1980, the incarceration rate has increased in a spectacular fashion. Figure 14 plots both the homicide rate and incarceration rates since 1952; California saw a big drop in the homicide rate between 1980 and 1982, just as the big rise in California's prison population began. But the homicide rate then began to rise again, while the prison population continued to grow.

**Figure 14 – Homicide and Incarceration Rates, 1952-1992**



A more speculative reason homicide rates rise and fall for specific demographic groups, particularly young boys, involves the drug trade. When a drug dealer is arrested, his place of business becomes available for others, but perhaps that place must be won by violence. Figure 15 shows arrest rates for drugs in Los Angeles, by age, for the years 1980 through 1992 (every third year). Peak arrest rates occurred in the late 1980's, exactly when homicide rates were climbing; lately arrests rates are down, and so are homicide rates.

**Figure 15-- Arrest Rate for Drug Crimes in Los Angeles by Age, 1980-1992**



## Source of Data

This paper used two sources. Counts of homicides were obtained from a file provided by the State of California Justice Department describing every homicide victim known to the police in California between 1982 and 1993. While race/ethnicity of each victim is identified, we use the Bureau of Census Spanish Surname list to identify Latino victims. Population counts were obtained from a file produced by the Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance containing counts of population by single year of age, gender, and race/ethnicity for the years 1980 through 1990.



## Young Killers

ANNE S. LEE, EVERETT S. LEE, AND JIAFANG CHEN  
University of Georgia

One of the most disturbing things about the United States today is the violent behavior of our youth. More and more young people are arrested for homicide, aggravated assault and the use of weapons, and the age of which they commit considerable numbers of such crimes continues to move downward. Homicide among black males is such that we may expect about one in twenty to be a victim of homicide. And since like tends to kill like we may expect a large share of youthful victims to be killed by their peers. Does that mean one in ten black males will either be a perpetrator or a victim of homicide? Not necessarily. Black males kill mostly black males but they also account for the great majority of black female victims of homicide. Therefore it may well be that one in fifteen black male children will be either a victim of homicide, a perpetrator of homicide, or both. Similar but less startling statements can be made about white males.

Fortunately females are less violent. Since women are less likely than men to kill, they are also less likely to be killed. It is also true that older people, male or female, are less violent and therefore are also less likely to be killed. Indeed, we may have rates of homicide, both for victims and aggressors, soaring for late adolescents and young adults while those for older adults are nearly constant or even falling. This has important meanings. A primary indication is that perpetrators and victims of homicide will become more concentrated within a narrower age range with greater losses in terms of life expectation and working life. A second indication is the absolute increase and probably also the relative increase in rates of committing homicide will generally be greater for males and blacks.

Both the phrasing and answering of questions relating to this phenomena are difficult and will require much more data and understanding than we now have. For example, we believe that children are growing up much faster than ever before. The best indication we have of that is the decreasing age at menarche, now commonly occurring at age 11. Furthermore, vital statistics for 1990 show that 26 ten-year old children have become mothers. We have no such definitive information about the early maturation of boys but we do know that they are larger and stronger than before. We therefore assume that they too are earlier in reaching a stage when troubles are more likely. We accept the warning made by psychologists and educators that the earlier difficulties begin, the more rapidly they increase with age during adolescence and young adulthood.

One such problem is an extended period of intense sexuality and search for meaning of life and the possibility of a bright future. Much of the learning in this stage of life comes from the family and from peers and from constant experimentation. Unfortunately this is a time when high proportions of children are born to unmarried

mothers and there is no father in many other families. Discipline suffers and young children are doubtless more likely to cut school, try alcohol or drugs, accept the charisma of blatantly affluent drug dealers, follow their fellows into criminal behavior, and buy guns for safety.

All such tendencies are increased by the concentration of the poor. African-Americans are especially concentrated. For example, there are more African-Americans in New York City than there are in the State of Georgia and a high proportion of New York City black children are in a small section of the 22 square mile island of Manhattan. Assuming that only a small percentage of the children in any one group will ever be violent, and believing that such persons will most likely to be violent when they are in close contact with other violent persons, we should expect the high incidence of violence we find in crowded, segregated cities. This is shown by data from the Department of Justice that shows higher incidence of violence in the largest urban areas and successive declines as the size of place diminishes.

### Data

Most of the needed data for testing such suppositions comes from the annual crime surveys of the Department of Justice and is amplified by materials from U.S. Vital Statistics. For the period 1920-1990 we have compiled data on homicide, as attested by known victims, by race, sex, and age from the first day of life through old age. Finding that these data matched well with Department of Justice data beginning with 1966, we computed rates of arrest from that year through 1992 by single years of age from 15 through 24 and for five-year groups to 65 and older. The base for rates was the population covered by Department of Justice reports for those years. We assumed this data to be similar in sex and age distributions to those estimated for the total population by the Bureau of the Census. For 1966 through 1980 arrests were available for only the total population but for 1981-92 detailed age data were available by sex. We further estimated the male-female ratio of arrests for 1966-1980 using the 1981-1992 arrest data for single ages as a guide.

Taken together these two sources permit us to confidently assess the risk of becoming a homicide victim by sex, race, and detailed age. While it is certainly true that a portion of the deaths adjudged as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or accidents are in fact homicides, post mortem examinations and increasing focus upon such deaths by doctors continually lowers such misjudgments. Unfortunately, we cannot be so confident when we turn our attention to perpetrators of homicides. Partly because of the increasing number of homicides involving strangers and ethnic concentrations that do not relate to the police, the ratio of arrests to homicides has decreased in recent years. Not too many years ago, about three out of four homicides were considered solved by arrests. Now that proportion is about two of three.

Even so, a simple cross examination of the rates of homicide victims with those of persons arrested for homicide clearly indicates that a disproportionate number of the killers are late adolescents and young adults and that an increasing proportion of homicides can be attributed to persons below the age commonly attributed to the beginning of adulthood. It is also clear that youthful killers do not restrict their victims to their peers but spread them from the very youngest to the old. For example, if we superimpose a graph of arrest rates for homicide in 1992 over that for victims we see that the rate for victims falls from about 7 per 100,000 in the first year of life to near zero in early childhood, rises to a peak of slightly over 20 at age 23 and then gradually declines at later ages. For arrestees, however, the rate rises almost linearly from near zero at age 10 to 20 at age 15 and over 50 at age 18. It then descends sharply and from about age 30 on is less than the rate for victims. Note, however, that we are dealing with the arrestees for only two-thirds of the homicides recorded for victims. Clearly the perpetrators are highly concentrated within a few years of life and their victims are spread throughout life. Many babies that have been murdered and such deaths have been reported for centenarians.

Another graph contrasting arrest rates for homicide in 1992 with those for earlier years show that there has been an increasing concentration of arrestees within the ages of late adolescence and young adulthood. In earlier years the rate of killing rose more slowly, did not reach a peak until age 21 or later. As more detailed analysis of rates by age for a given year indicate, fairly stable rates for young people suddenly shot up, suggesting that events in a given year or in an otherwise short period of time may have great significance in the behavior of youngsters who reach a crucial stage of development at about that time.

### Period Comparisons

Results obtained from the Department of Justice data are startling. During the 18 years from 1966 to 1984 there was little if any increase in the rates of arrest for ages 15 through 19. For ages 20 to 24 there was a marked increase from 1966 into the years 1970-75, followed by a sharp fall until 1984. Afterwards there was a very sharp increase for each age from 15 through 19. In about 7 years these rates at least doubled. The greatest increase was for age 18 which almost tripled from 20 in 1984 to 57 in 1991.

From 1970 to 1975 the rates for ages 20-24 were usually higher than those for any age below 20, but after the 1984 turning point the rates for teenagers rose most rapidly. By 1992 the highest rate, 52, was for age 18 followed by those for age 19. At age 20 the rate was 41 per 100,000 but at each succeeding age it fell and by age 24 it was only 23, less than the rate for any age from 16 to 23.

Rates for females are low in comparison with those for males, only about a tenth as much. Indeed, except for what seems to be random fluctuation, the rates for females seem almost stagnant and highest for those aged 21-24. There is also no reason to

select 1984 as a year for change for females. Whatever the case, the greatest absolute increases or decreases for females were 2 or 3 per 100,000.

Obviously the rates for killers in the total population reflect those for males. It is for males that a marked upward trend occurs after 1984. For almost every age there was an increase in rate from 1984 until 1991 and this was followed by a minor decline to the second highest rate for each age in 1992. For 15 year olds the rate increased from 10 in 1984 to 38 in 1991, almost quadrupling. For age 16 the increase was from 18 to 58, for age 17 from 27 to 76, and for age 18 from 35 to 103. In 1984, 19 year olds had almost the same rate as did 18 year olds; their rate increased to only 88. Horrifying as a more than doubling increase in 7 years may seem, that was fairly modest as against the almost tripling increase of 68 points for their younger colleagues. At older ages the increases were more moderate and decreasing; at age 24 only 9 points from 35 to 44. In 1984, the rate for age 24 had been almost exactly the same for every age from age 19 to 23 and twice that for age 16. In 1991 it was 18 points lower than that for age 16 and only 4 points above that for age 15. In other words the increase in killing for those aged 20 and over was minor as compared with those aged 15 to 19.

These results are somewhat confusing. From vital statistics data on homicide victims we find that rates of homicide reached peaks during the Great Depression, began to fall during the late 1930s, plummeted during World War II, rose somewhat as the soldiers returned, but remained at relatively low levels until the early 1960s. From that time on the increase was notable but fluctuating with peaks about 1974 and 1984. Why then was it not until about 1984 that there was a marked rise in the rates of arrest of young people? Also why is it that the highest rates have come at younger ages and have begun to fall before the age of 20 is attained?

Also worth mentioning is the rapidly increasing percentage of total arrests that occur among juveniles and young adults. For males, in 1984, 17 percent of arrests occurred before age 18 and 30 percent before age 22. In 1992 these percentages had risen to 38 and 53.

Again females were quite different. In 1984, eight percent of female arrests for homicide had occurred before the age of 18, and 30 percent before the age of 22. By 1992 these percentages had increased only to 12 and 32.

### The Cohort Approach

Perhaps we can come to a somewhat better understanding if we move from period to cohort rates. Instead of comparing the rates of those at a given age with younger and older people we shall follow the same persons as they age year after year. The idea here is not only that persons are most affected by their companions of the same age but that social and economic stresses will mostly affect persons who have arrived at crucial ages, say 17 or 18 in the 1974 or 1984 recessions.

In dealing with cohorts we have separated males and females because it is here that we can more nearly distinguish different patterns of behavior. The earliest cohorts we deal with were born in 1951 to 1955. For males rates of arrest rose rapidly from 10 to 20 at age 15 and reached a peak of 50 to 60 at ages 19 to 22. In general the peak was reached during the depressed times around 1974 and remained at about the same level through age 24. The following cohort, born 1956-60, had peak rates of 40 to 60, the latter for those who were 18 in 1974. All were in their teens during that recession and their rates leveled out at about 40 and remained at about that level until they reached the age of 24.

Those born in 1961-1965 reached age 15 as the recession of the early 1970s was mitigating. After reaching a peak of about 40 to 50 at age 18 they more or less held that level until age 24. Those born in 1966-70 all experienced in their teens the major recession of the early 1980s. Within this group we see the greatest differentiation by age with those born most recently reaching and maintaining the highest rates for any cohort born between 1955 and 1970. Though the rate at age 15 was highest for those born in 1966 the peak rates were reached at ages 21 or 22. It is only for males born in 1972 or later that rates crested at 18 and turned down sharply at later years. For males born in 1976 the rate of arrest at age 15 was 39, the highest ever at that age and approximately twice the rate reached at any group born before 1972. It is those born in 1972 who had a rate of over 100 at age 18. Only the most recently born are witnessing sharp falls in cohort rates that are similar to rates after age 18.

The cohort patterns for females are quite different. For females born between 1951 and 1970 the increases are almost linear, increasing from 1 or 2 per 100,000 at age 15 to 5 or 6 at ages 22 to 24. It is only for persons born in 1973 or later that there is any evidence of a peak before the age of 22 and a possible turndown thereafter.

### Conclusion

What can we conclude from this scanty examination of easily available data? We believe that there are useful conclusions to draw from work of this nature. For one thing, we think that we have demonstrated the importance of the cohort approach. We agree that the period approach clearly indicated the increase in murderous behavior among youths; however, as any demographer would tell you, the usual life tables for 1900 do little to help us understand survival or the race-sex-age construction of populations as they passed through life. For that reason, cohort life tables were constructed by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company so that it could examine the longevity of presidents, president's wives, supreme court justices, and athletes. As an example of a surprising finding with this cohort approach, consider the comparison of life expectation for the earliest presidents whose average age of 57 at taking office with the latest president of the same age. The difference shown on the cohort tables was about two years. Rates of committing murder are not that different from rates of dying

from natural causes. Furthermore, they take into account age at a given time; for example, the influenza epidemic of 1918 bore most heavily on late adolescents or young adults. This could also be true in studies of homicide in which we could take into account the effect of the Great Depression or the stagflation of the 1980s.

Finally, we note what may have been our most important finding. That is if rates of homicide are high for very young males they are likely to rise more rapidly and reach higher levels than for cohorts with lower rates at the youngest ages. Here we think we could have improved our analysis if we had interpolated rates down to 12 or 13 instead of starting at 15. That is because we think that young people are most likely to be shaped for a criminal career if they are in broken homes, are poor, live in crowded neighborhoods, and lack a feeling for a productive future. Again, as psychologists and educators have warned us, attitudes are set and abilities are determined early in life, probably within the first few years of elementary schooling.

Research using the cohort method and dealing with available materials is not enough. Longitudinal research is needed that follows individuals through life. What is immediately possible, given computer records, is to proceed as far backward as we can with known offenders in examining their past criminal and correctional records on a year by year basis. That could probably be done in Chicago by the Blocks, considering the large number of records they have and we have begun a lesser but similar undertaking for Atlanta and Georgia.

In conclusion, the Department of Justice could begin a sampling system in which they would ask local officials to furnish as complete records as possible on the criminal, educational, and socioeconomic situations of randomly selected youngsters who would be followed over time.

## **Absolute And Relative Involvement in Offending: Contemporary Youth and the "Not-So-Bad-After-All" Baby Boomers**

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While the study of crime has produced a number of controversies, there is widespread agreement that criminal behavior peaks during adolescence and young adulthood, then diminishes with age (see Steffensmeier & Allen [1995] for a summary of this literature). In essence, it is acknowledged as fact that young persons, generally those in mid-adolescence through early adulthood, contribute disproportionately to the crime rate of the United States.

Concerns regarding the youth/crime relationship have been expressed throughout the post-World War II era, but received special attention as the "baby boom" birth cohorts moved into their peak years of criminality and were credited with escalating general rates of crime in the United States (Ferdinand, 1970; Wellford, 1973). However, recent reports allege that youths, especially those in the adolescent years, are engaging in violent criminal behavior at alarmingly higher rates than in the past. These reports have been widespread in the popular media, but have received support from empirical research that detects a downward trend in age among criminal offenders (e.g., Steffensmeier et al., 1989; Fox & Pierce, 1995).

This research examines these allegations of increased violence by determining whether the absolute and relative involvement of youths in homicide offending actually has changed during the past three decades and, if so, by ascertaining the dimensions of any changes that are detected. Absolute involvement is estimated through the calculation of rates of arrest for murder by 15-19 year-olds during the period 1958-1993. Relative involvement is operationalized as the ratio of arrest rates for 15-19 year-olds to arrest rates for the rest of the population. Both measures are examined for trends across the 35-year span of the data. To determine any differences or similarities, the arrest rates and ratios of recent youth cohorts are compared to those of the "baby boomers." Finally, the experiences of a contemporary baby-boom cohort are examined.

### Method

National and age-specific rates in offending were estimated through the use of arrests for "murder and non-negligent manslaughter" as reported in annual editions of the Uniform Crime Reports (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1959-94). The period

covered was 1958 (the year Wolfgang [1963] notes as beginning year-to-year reliability in UCR data) to 1993. Population data for computing age-specific arrest rates, expressed per 100,000, were taken from various publications of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and were adjusted to account for yearly fluctuations in the UCR's population coverage. Ratios of arrests were calculated by dividing the arrest rate of an age group by the rate for the remainder of the population. While acknowledging that using arrest statistics to proxy the incidence of homicide offending involves a number of risks in interpretation, it is the only data available by which longitudinal, national, age-specific estimates of offending can be generated. However, exercising appropriate caution, rates and ratios are referred to as representing measures of arrest, rather than "murder," among the age groups studied.

The focus of this report is on 15-19 year-olds, the youngest age group for which consistent arrest information was available across the years of the study. This age span includes youths at significantly different phases of the life cycle. However, trends in arrest rates for murder have been shown to be virtually identical for all single-age groups comprising the 15-19 year-old category, albeit for a shorter time span (Lee et al., 1995). Any trends shown, therefore, are unlikely to be unduly influenced by the experiences of a single-year age cohort. For purposes of comparison, arrest rates and ratios were also computed for 35-39 year-olds. This year was chosen because baby boomers began to enter this age range in 1981; further, by the 1990s, persons aged 35-39 were among the largest of the baby boom cohorts (birth years: 1954-1958), making them especially appropriate representatives of baby boomers' participation in crime.

## Results and Discussion

A graph displaying the trend in rates of murder arrests for 15-19 year-olds is shown in Figure 1. It can be seen that rates of arrest have always been higher for 15-19s than for the general population, but fluctuations in their rates have tended to track national patterns. However, a sharp departure from this tendency occurs in the mid-1980s, when the rates of 15-19s escalate rather dramatically while the rest of the population shows a stable to slightly downward trend. As earlier reports have suggested, the increase in youth homicide is found to be quite real, at least as represented in their arrests for murder.

The trend displayed in Figure 2 highlights a similar, but even more significant, shift by illustrating relative levels of homicide arrests for 15-19s. As shown, the ratios of homicide arrests were reasonably stable for roughly 30 years, averaging around two (per 100,000) arrests for every one in the remainder of the population. However, that ratio has increased substantially since the mid-1980s; by 1993, 15-19s had an arrest rate nearly six times (5.84:1) that of the rest of the population, a ratio that had increased over 100 percent in only eight years. To provide context, ratios were calculated for other age groups. Further examination of age-specific trends



Figure 1. Homicide Arrest Rates, 15-19 Year-Olds and Rest of Nation, 1958-1993

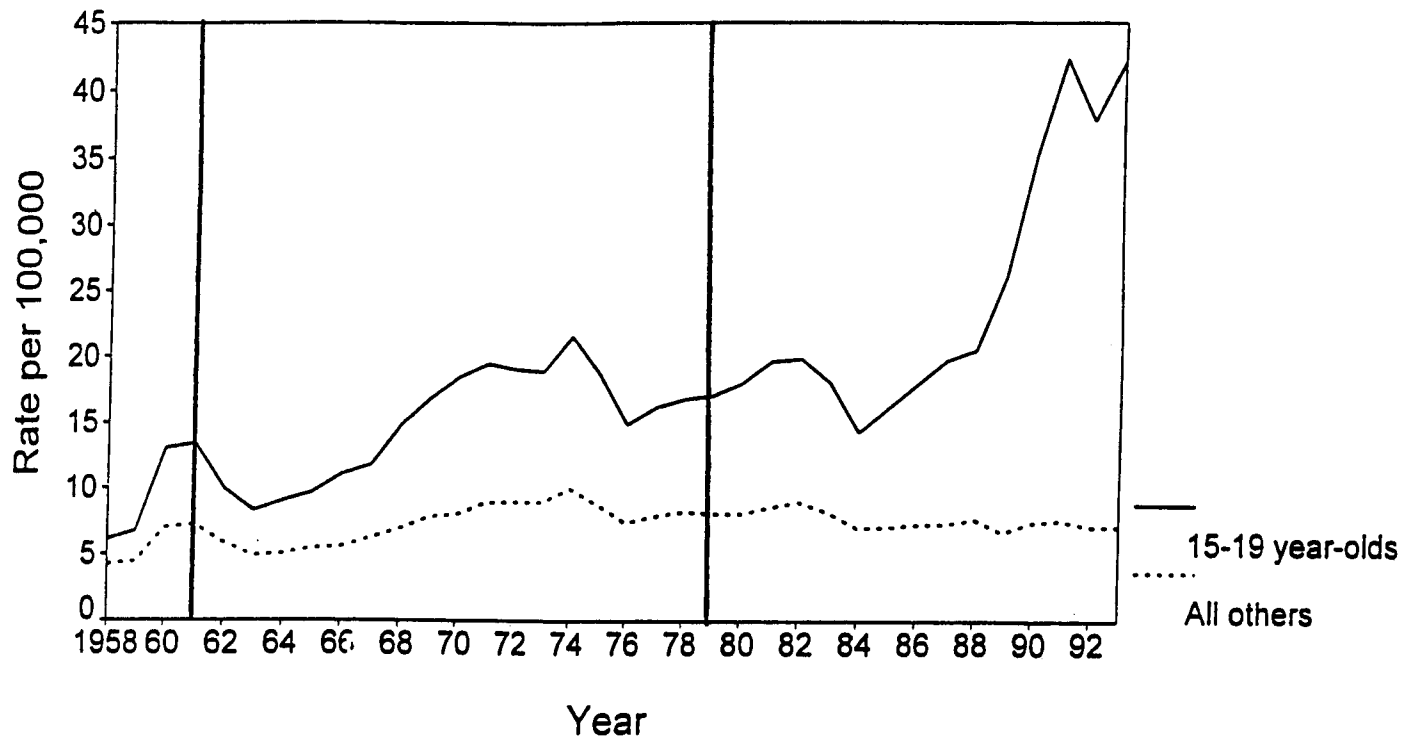
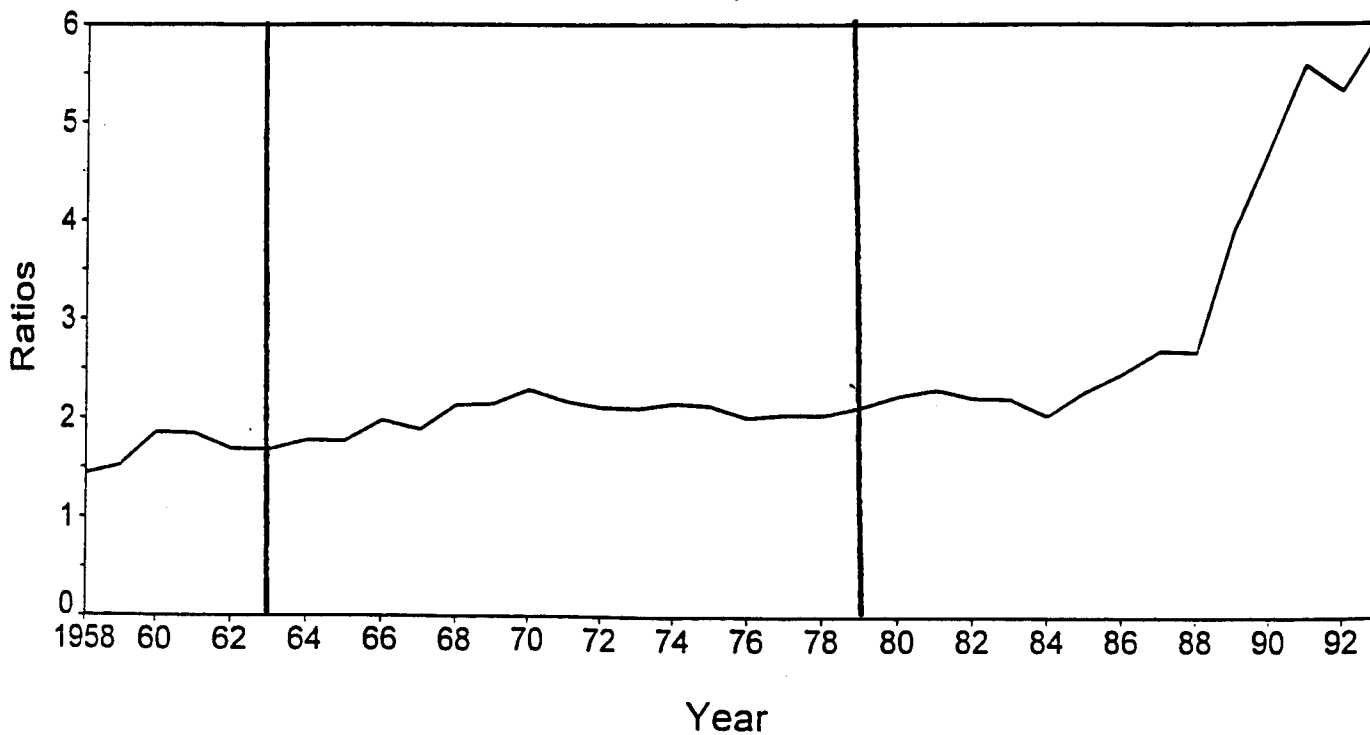


Figure 2. Arrest-Rate Ratios, 15-19 Year-Olds to Rest of Nation, 1958-1993



revealed that the 1993 ratio for 15-19s was the highest relative involvement in arrests for any age group during the years of this study (age-group ratios not shown: 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49).

As further context, the rates and ratios of contemporary youths were compared to those of their baby boom counterparts by examining in Figures 1 and 2 the years falling between the vertical lines denoting 1961-1979. This period represents the years when baby boom cohorts were 15-19 years old (birth years: 1946-1960). Two findings emerged from this comparison. First, as can be seen in Figure 1, the arrest rates of 15-19s showed a gradual increase through 1974, then turned generally downward through 1979, a pattern that continued past the baby boom cohorts into the early 1980s. Beginning in 1988, however, arrest rates for 15-19s escalated far beyond any generated by a baby boom cohort, and in 1993 were nearly double that of the highest baby boom rate recorded in 1974.

A second finding is even more revealing. As shown in Figure 2, relative levels of arrest rates showed a slight upward trend through the 1960s, then became strikingly stable from roughly 1970 through the mid-1980s. This suggests that while arrest rates for successive cohorts of 15-19 year-old baby boomers rose somewhat over time, so did those of the larger society, resulting in a fairly stable pattern of relative involvement in arrest rates. Overall, there was nothing in the baby boomers' pattern that even remotely resembles the dramatic upsurge shown by 15-19s in their relative involvement in arrests since the mid-1980s. For all of the attention accorded the baby boomers at one time, their involvement in arrests for murder pales in comparison to that of recent cohorts of youths.

Experiences of the baby boomers are further explored in Figures 3 and 4, where the broken line indicates the initial year (1981) when a full baby-boom cohort entered into the 35-39 year-old age range. As seen in Figure 3, arrest rates of 35-39s historically have tended to be higher than the rest of the population, though changing in concert with the nation as a whole. Importantly, though, the arrest rates of 35-39s exhibited a downward trend in rates from the early 1960s, a trend that continued as the baby boomers entered this age category in the 1980s. Generally, the baby boomers currently have arrest rates lower than did people their age when the boomers were in their crime-prone years. By 1990, 35-39s were being arrested at a rate even less than that of the rest of the population. These patterns of change are reflected in the relative involvement of 35-39s, the trend of which is presented in Figure 4. In essence, the ratio of arrests for 35-39s has dropped steadily since 1962. Due in large part to the high rate of arrests among youths, the relative involvement of 35-39s actually fell below parity (.82:1) with the rest of the nation by 1990.

Figure 3. Homicide Arrest Rates, 35-39 Year-Olds and Rest of Nation, 1958-1993

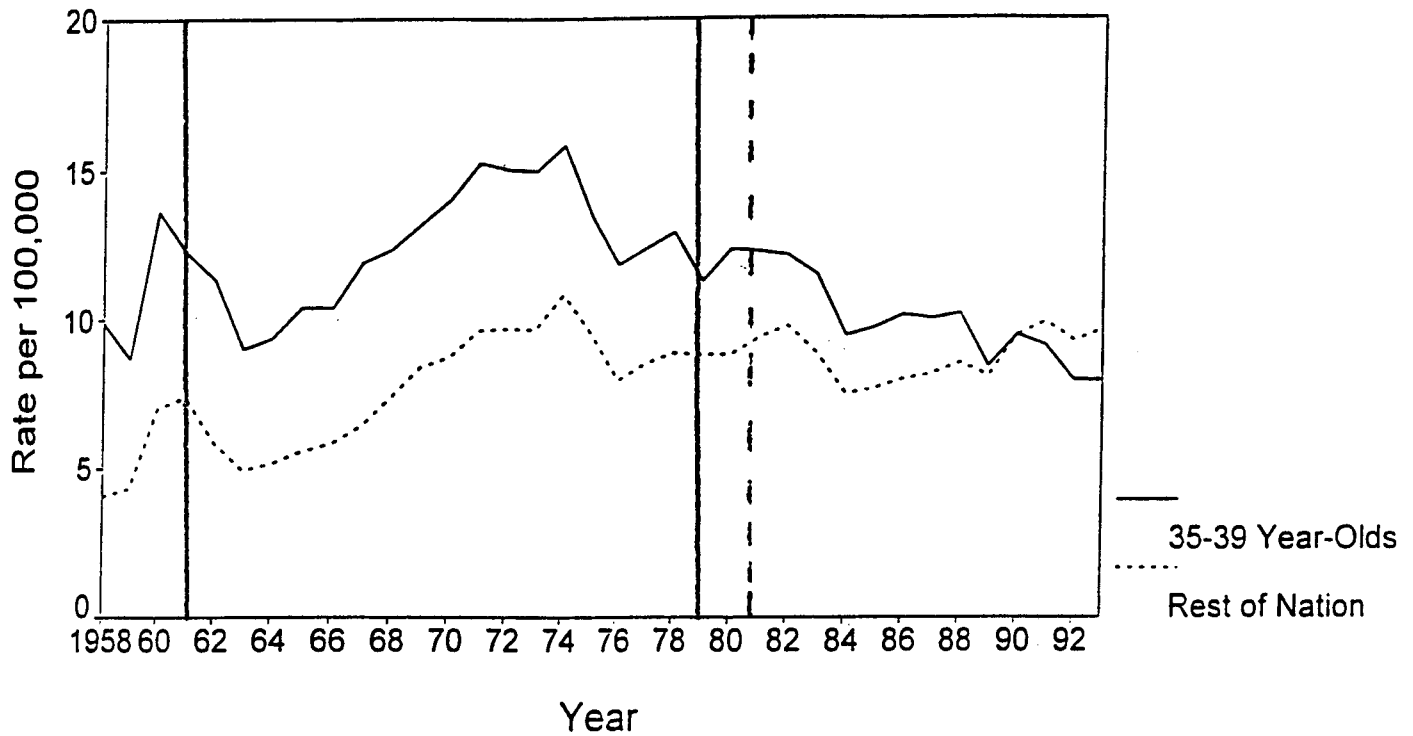
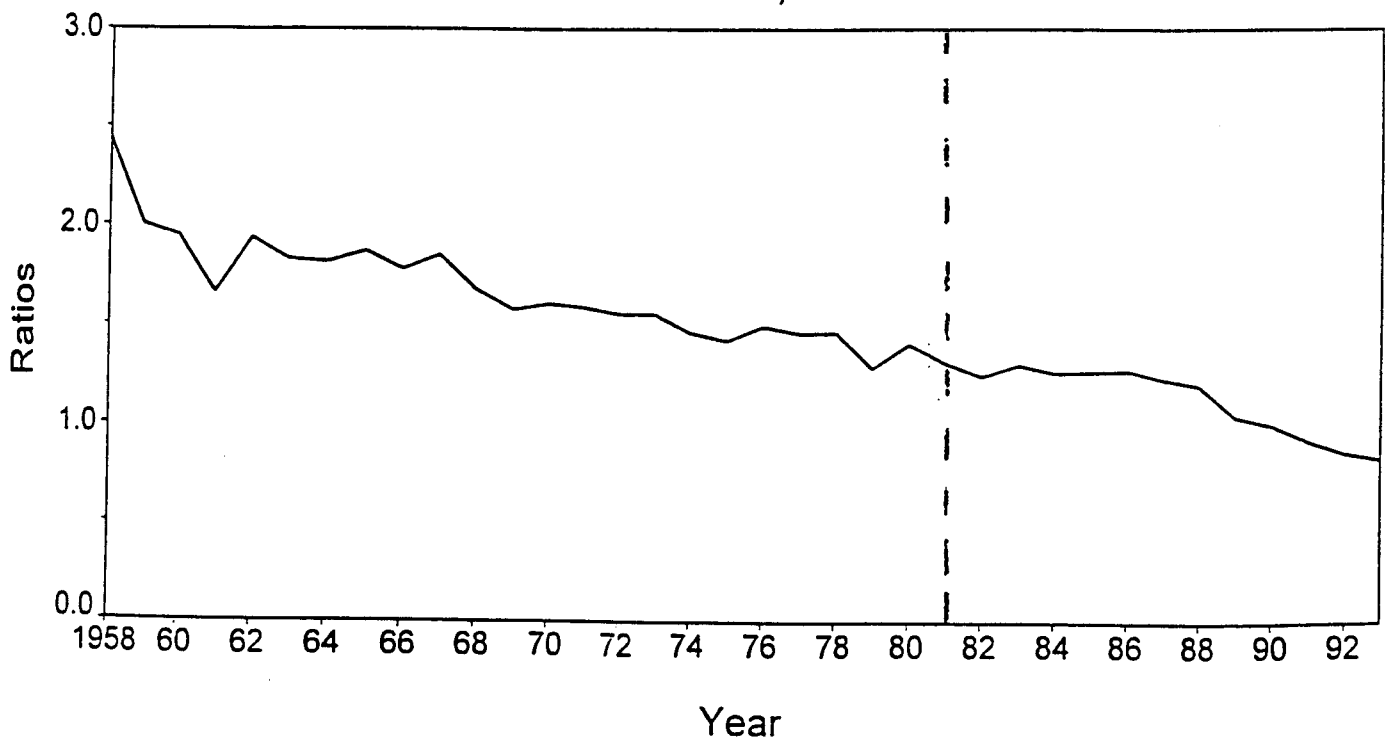


Figure 4. Arrest-Rate Ratios, 35-39 Year-Olds to Rest of Nation, 1958-1993



## Summary and Conclusions

In summary, recent cohorts of 15-19s were found to be characterized by arrest rates for murder that are substantially higher than their predecessors, both in absolute and relative terms. However, and in stark contrast, the rates and ratios of 35-39s are lower in recent years than in the past. In analyzing these trends, it becomes clear that the baby boomers who once caused such concern were, and indeed are, rather tame in comparison to the activities of their historical and contemporary counterparts. As examples, the 1993 cohort of 35-39s were ages 15-19 in 1973; referring to Figures 1 and 2, their arrest rate was less than half that of the 15-19s in 1993, while their ratio of arrests was nearly three times lower. Also, as 35-39 year-olds, baby boomers' absolute and relative involvement in arrests for murder is lower for that age group than at any other time during the era covered by this study.

Space considerations limit discussion of these findings, but the evidence presented here indicates that the rise in arrests (and by assumption, offending) for 15-19 year-olds represents a unique phenomenon during the period of this analysis. Speculation regarding reasons for this pronounced upward shift has included the increased employment of juveniles in "crack" cocaine trafficking initiated during the mid-1980s, an increase in the prevalence and lethality of firearms among youth, and cultural influences contributing to less restraint among young persons in their resort to violence (cf. Heide, 1986; Ewing, 1990; Blumstein, 1995; Smith & Sheley, 1995). However, remaining unsatisfactorily addressed is why other age groups once heavily involved in homicide arrests, exemplified by the 35-39s discussed here, have shown decreasing levels of involvement, particularly in absolute terms. Theoretical and/or pragmatic explanations of these phenomena will require a complex synthesis that takes into account age, cohort, and period factors, all in conjunction with sex, class, and race effects. This report is designed to both stimulate discussion and motivate research that addresses this challenge, one rife with public policy implications for the nation.

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## **Young Killers: The Challenge of Juvenile Homicide Work in Progress**

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For more than two decades, the print and electronic media have claimed that a new breed of juvenile delinquent may be prowling the streets (see, e.g., Morgan 1975; "The Youth Crime Plague," 1977; Taft 1983; "Children who Kill, 1986; Kantrowitz 1993; Harker 1994). Journalistic reports have portrayed today's young offenders as more dangerous to society than their predecessors. These accounts have suggested that society may have produced a new "genetic" strain of juvenile murderer -- a youth who kills intentionally, remorselessly, and even gleefully (Heide 1986).

The media depiction and public perception that society is being overrun by murderous youth raise two important questions. First, are juveniles committing more homicides today than in the past? Second, how accurate is the media characterization of today's young killers?

The first question, unlike the second, is easily answered. The number of murders committed by the youth of America has increased dramatically since the 1960s (Heide 1986; Cornell 1993). An alarming escalation in the number of homicides committed by youths has been observed since the mid 1980s (Ewing 1990; Heide 1993, 1996). The percentage of homicide arrestees who were juveniles more than doubled from 1984 to 1993 (Heide 1996). The second question is among the areas explored in the author's study of adolescent homicide offenders.

### Synopsis of the Author's Study

Despite the concern about juvenile homicide offenders in recent years, empirical studies have been few (see, e.g., Corder, Ball, Haizlip, Rollins, and Beaumont 1976; Cornell 1989; Cornell, Benedek, and Benedek 1989; Ewing 1990; Busch, Zagar, Hughes, Arbit, and Bussell 1990; Zagar, Arbit, Sylvies, Busch, and Hughes 1990). The author is presently engaged in a study of adolescent murderers, which represents one of the largest efforts conducted to date with respect to this population. The author conducted in-depth clinical interviews with a large number of adolescents committed to the adult Department of Corrections in Florida for murder or attempted murder during a 25 month period and collected extensive agency record data on the subjects interviewed.

This research is focusing close attention on the perceptions and characteristic behavioral response styles of sample subjects. It is utilizing psychological and sociological frameworks of explanation to achieve an understanding of adolescents who kill from both individual and group perspectives. Analysis is designed to explore the

motivational dynamics behind homicidal acts, to identify different types of adolescent murderers, and to determine to what extent youths who derive pleasure from intentional killing exist.

### Sample Subjects

Adolescents convicted of homicide in the first and second degrees or attempted murder in either degree in Florida were identified by computer runs furnished by the Florida Department of Corrections staff and selected in accordance with the following criteria: (1) male (due to their disproportionate representation in the population of murderers in Florida, as well as nationwide); (2) under 18 at the time of the commission of the crime; (3) processed through the adult criminal justice system; (4) committed to the adult correctional system between January 1982 and January 1984; (5) incarcerated in adult prison for less than one year at the time of the computer runs; and (6) age at the time of the interview was 19 or younger. In addition to murder one and two commitments, individuals committed for manslaughter who were initially charged with murder and who met the other screening criteria were given careful consideration for possible inclusion in this study.

In-depth psychological interviews were conducted with 56 of the 60 subjects committed for murder 1, murder 2, and attempted murder during the sampling frame. (Three subjects were unavailable due to transfer to outside court and one was a deaf mute.) Clinical interviews were also conducted with nine individuals who were initially charged with murder and subsequently convicted of manslaughter. In three of these manslaughter cases, both agency record and interview data confirmed that the original charge of murder 1 or murder 2 more accurately depicted the youths' involvement in the homicidal event than the manslaughter charge to which they subsequently pled. Consequently, three manslaughter cases were included in the study population, yielding a total sample size of 59 interviewed subjects. These 59 subjects represented approximately 94 percent of the population of adolescent murderers identified during the 25 month sampling period.

### Data Sources

Two types of data were used in this research. Information was obtained from clinical interviews and from agency records.

The author's clinical evaluations of these young killers typically ranged from three to four hours. The semi-structured interview provided the means necessary to assess the youth's level of personality growth. Its format also permitted the exploration of the youth's perceptions of the homicidal incident and the victim, his/her attitudes toward processing through the adult criminal justice system, and his/her reflections regarding "doing time." In addition, the interview examined other content areas relevant to the young killer's social history including family relationships, school, work, friends, drug and alcohol involvement, activities, music and movie preferences, physical and



mental health history, feelings and coping strategies, and prior delinquent activity and criminal history.

The responses given by youths during the interview enabled the author to achieve a fairly solid grasp of the way they perceived themselves and others and of their characteristic ways of responding to events. The extensiveness of each clinical assessment provided a solid foundation upon which to evaluate an adolescent's statements about the homicidal events, to understand the dynamics behind his killings, to assess his mental state at the time of the incident, and to examine dispositional factors. Case studies using this clinical interview format may be examined in Why kids kill parents: Child abuse and adolescent homicide (Heide 1992, 1995).

The clinical interviews of the subjects were tape-recorded and later transcribed. This procedure had a number of advantages. It allowed the author to stay focused on the youth and his responses, to keep the pace of the interview going, and to ask pertinent follow-up questions without delay. It provided a permanent record of the adolescent's communications, which allowed the author to go back over an assessment and to deliberate carefully with respect to its content.

In addition to conducting the interviews, the author examined court documents, probation department reports, police report data, and Department of Corrections assessment materials. Data collected on each of the subjects from these sources included demographics (age, race, education, etc.), family background, school and employment history, prior delinquency record, current commitment data, and information pertaining to processing through the criminal justice system for the commitment offense.

Follow-up data on this sample of adolescent homicide offenders was also obtained from the Florida Department of Corrections in June 1994 and will be analyzed shortly. Case studies, clinical conclusions and empirical findings will be presented in the forthcoming book entitled Young killers: The challenge of juvenile homicide to be published by Sage Publications in 1997.

### Significance of the Author's Research

Identification of specific types of violent juveniles can be expected to provide lawmakers and criminal justice decisionmakers with a more rational foundation on which to draft legislation, to build policy issues, to apportion punishment, and to decide on the appropriateness of treatment. The question of import is not should some juvenile offenders be removed from society for long periods of time. Rather the question of paramount concern is which juveniles should be restrained through the imposition of adult sanctions.

Delineation of types of violent offender also promises to be of significance to

criminal justice planners and practitioners. A number of studies have demonstrated that classification of juvenile offenders by their level of personality development increases the likelihood of appropriate intervention (see, e.g., Warren 1969, 1971, 1983; Harris 1988; Van Voorhis 1994). If types of violent juvenile offenders are identified, future research might focus on the types of intervention program best suited to affecting change among these groups.

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## **Section Two: Correlates of Homicide**



## **Drugs and Homicide: Consumption of Alcohol and Trafficking of Illicit Substances As Correlates of Homicide**

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University of Georgia

Alcohol has been often linked to homicide because either the victim, the offender or both were found to be involved in alcohol consumption prior to the homicide event (Welthe and Abel, 1989; Collins and Schlenger, 1988; Parker, 1995). Wolfgang's (1958) classic study of homicide in Philadelphia found alcohol to be present in 64 percent of the cases studied, including 44 percent of cases where both victim and offender had been drinking. Other homicide studies in the United States (Zahn, 1991), Finland (Virkkunen, 1989), and Sweden (Wikstrom, 1992) reported similar rates of alcohol involvement by offender, victim, or both. Research on violent offenders clearly indicated that they have higher rates of alcohol problems than the general population. Collins' (1986: 111) review of the literature on criminal careers and alcohol use concluded the "offenders with drinking problems are disproportionately to have official records for violent crime." The research on alcohol and aggression is voluminous but the causal relationship between drinking and violence is exceedingly complex (Fagin, 1993). However, it has been shown that alcohol has a disinhibiting affect on the user, thereby freeing the individual from normal social constraints and facilitating uncharacteristic behavioral responses. Alcohol is also known to impair judgment and the ability to engage in abstract thought. Pernanen (1981) suggested that consumers of alcohol are less able to interpret behavioral cues and often resort to violence because of cognitive impairment.

Similarly, there is considerable evidence to suggest that drug use in general, excluding the use of alcohol, has a possible link to homicide. However, the relationship between drug use and violent crime has not been well researched. There is considerable evidence to demonstrate that drug use is linked to criminal activity but the link to violent behavior is not particularly strong (Harrison, 1992). However, two drugs, heroin and cocaine, have been linked to violent episodes due to their pharmacological properties, compulsive patterns of use, and the nature of the drug distribution system (Goldstein, 1985). Cocaine use or trafficking in cocaine became increasingly popular in the mid 1980s with the advent of "crack." Cocaine appears to be the most common drug currently mentioned in homicide police reports (Belenko, Fagan and Chin, 1991), although in most instances it would appear that it is not the use of cocaine *per se* that links it to homicide but a drug transaction that has gone "sour." While the research on the cocaine-homicide nexus is not well developed, it would seem that the alcohol-homicide link is something of an expressive phenomenon, and the cocaine-homicide link is more of an instrumental phenomenon. That is, while cocaine users do manifest irritability, anxiety and an intense psychological dependence on the drug, what is significant about cocaine is the trafficking of the substance and the

street value of the drug. Cocaine dealing appears to be the preferred source of income for cocaine abusers because of the direct link to a drug supply and there is no need to dispose of stolen goods. Thus, whether homicide is the product of an instrumental or expressive act, alcohol and cocaine are invariably present in a high percentage of homicide cases.

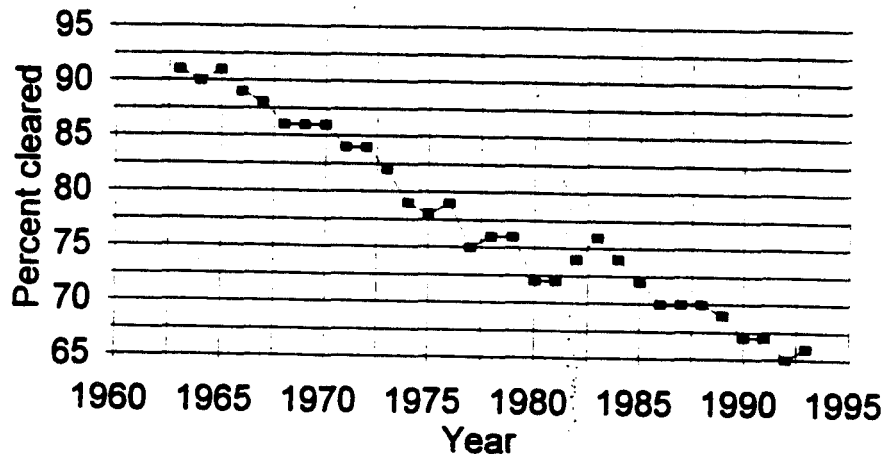
### Homicide Clearance Rates

Of all the index offenses, criminal homicide has traditionally manifested the highest clearance rates. For example, the 1993 Uniform Crime Reports indicates that while there was an overall clearance rate of 21 percent for index crimes, arrest followed by 56 percent of aggravated assault cases cleared 66 percent of homicide cases, 53 percent of rape cases, and 24 percent of robbery cases. Property offenses had significantly lower clearance rates, with only 13 percent of burglary, 20 percent of larceny-theft, and 14 percent of motor vehicle theft cases cleared by arrest. Face-to-face criminal offenses enhance the possibility of identifying the perpetrator, with 44 percent of violent crimes being cleared, but only 17 percent of property crimes were cleared.

Figure 1

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## Homicide Clearance Rates 1963-1993





What is particularly interesting in examining homicide clearance rates is that there has been a dramatic decline in clearance rates over the past thirty years. As shown in Figure 1, in the early 1960s the clearance rates for homicide were more than 90 percent but beginning in the middle of the 1960s the clearance rates began to fall and have continued to decline in the 1990s. This decline is intriguing because of the fact that this occurred only for homicide but not for other index crimes. Three decades ago, the clearance rates for rape, robbery and aggravated assault and the three property offenses remained virtually identical to what they are currently. The question that arises is what has caused this change in the clearance rates for homicide?

Figure 2

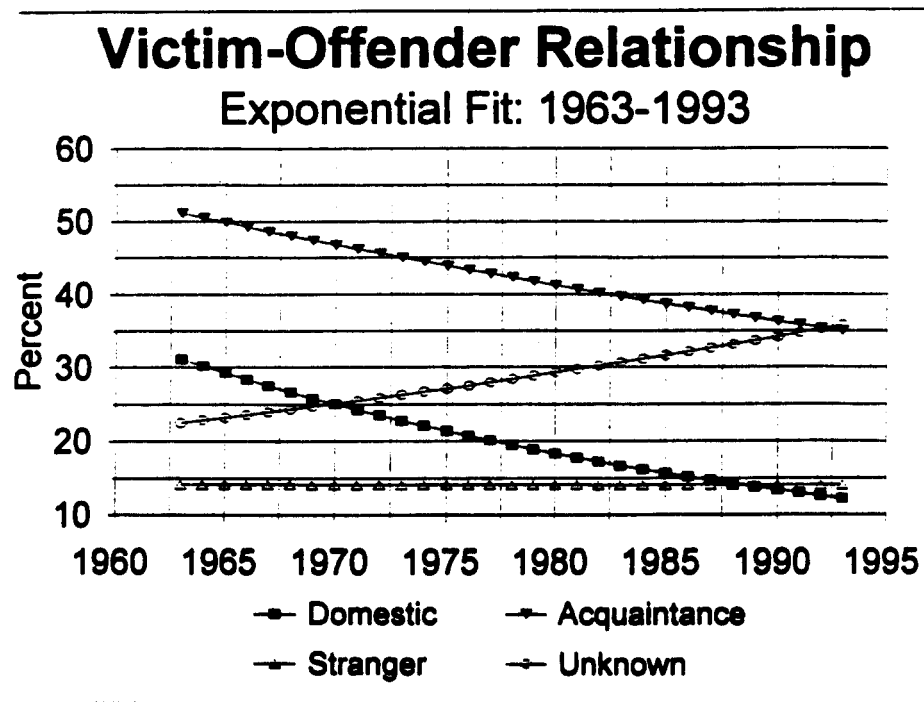


Figure 2 decomposes the victim-offender relationship for homicide cases from 1963 to 1993 into four types based on murder circumstances by relationship found in the Uniform Crime Reports. Domestic homicide includes victims who were husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters or what the FBI considers as “other family” of perpetrators. Acquaintance homicide includes victims who were the friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, neighbor or acquaintance of the perpetrator. Stranger homicides result when the victim and perpetrator are not related nor acquainted with each other. Finally, the category of “unknown” results when a homicide is not cleared and nothing is known about the perpetrator. As shown in Figure 2, over the past thirty years there has been a significant decline in acquaintance and domestic homicides but an increase in “unknown” homicides. Cases of stranger homicide have not changed in the past thirty years. In 1963

homicides were overwhelmingly either domestic or acquaintance homicide (the exponential fit of the data results in the percentages exceeding 100%), and a relatively small percentage of cases were either stranger or unknown cases. Stranger cases have remained around 10 percent of all homicide cases from 1963 to 1993, but the category of unknown relationship has risen steadily to where this accounts for nearly 40 percent of homicide cases. Something is occurring in the context of homicide events whereby it is no longer a romantic quarrel, a domestic argument or an altercation between acquaintances but a confrontation that seems to be taking place outside the home. Although this cannot be conclusively shown, it would appear that there is an increasing frequency that homicide victims are exhibiting a higher degree of social distance from the perpetrator. Obviously, because of the fact that the relationship is unknown it would be hazardous to state unequivocally that this is stranger homicide but the nature of the relationship is becoming more problematic than it was thirty years ago. Homicide victims are being increasingly found in abandoned buildings, vacant lots, alleys, automobiles and the streets but less likely in or near their homes.

All of the evidence seems to suggest that homicide is becoming more directly related to drug transactions, and the drug that has steadily risen in prominence is cocaine. The trafficking of cocaine is a high-risk enterprise because of the street value of the drug and the relative ease of concealment of the drug. Thus, an important factor in explaining the dramatic changes in Figure 2 seem to be related to the onset of cocaine and the likelihood that an “unknown” homicide is more likely to be drug “rip-off” where the victim and the offender have a casual acquaintance with each other.

#### Homicide Rates in Select Cities

Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the homicide rates per 100,000 population for the U.S., Atlanta, Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, and St. Louis. These cities were selected because they have been relatively high in homicide over the past two decades and have been suspected of being cities where drug dealing is prevalent. As seen in each of the three figures, the homicide rate for the United States has consistently hovered around 9 homicides per 100,000 people.

This rate has remained unchanged since 1972 but it does represent an increase from the decade of the 1960s when homicide was approximately 5 per 100,000 from 1960 to 1965 and then gradually increased the between 1966 and 1972. What is of interest in Figures 3, 4, and 5 is that these cities exhibit not only different homicide rates but also different trends in the past twenty years. Figure 3 shows that New York has a homicide rate that is more than double the national rate but the overall trend in New York shows a moderate increase in homicides. Atlanta had a homicide rate that was nearly four times greater than the U.S. in the early 1970s but currently it is five times the national rate. Washington, D.C. has seen its homicide rate escalate from “only” two and a half times the national average twenty years ago to a rate that is currently six and a half times greater than that national rate. It is ironical that the capital of the United

States holds the dubious distinction of having the highest homicide rate of any major U.S. city.

Figure 3

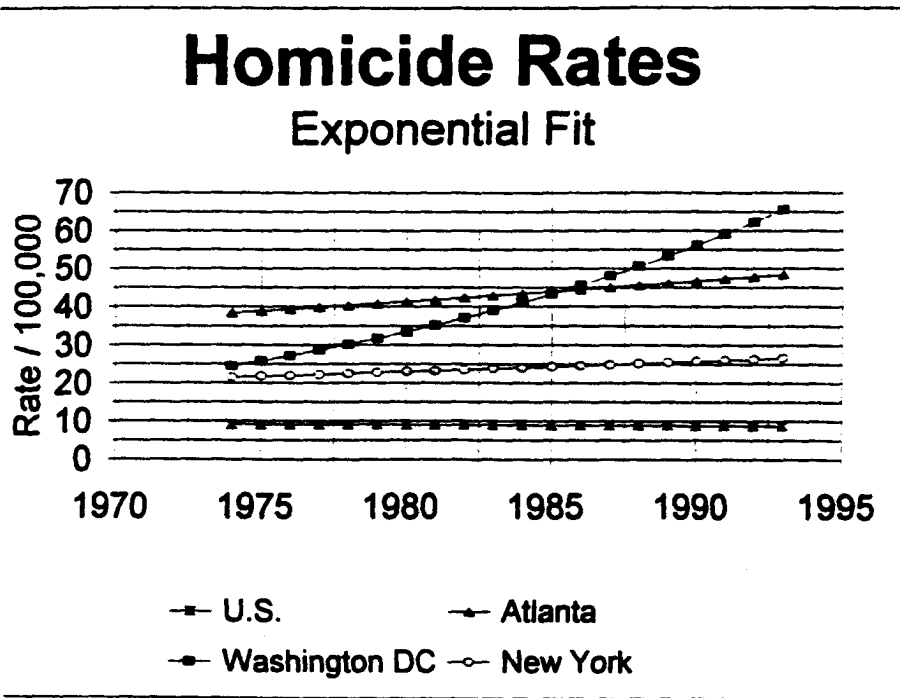
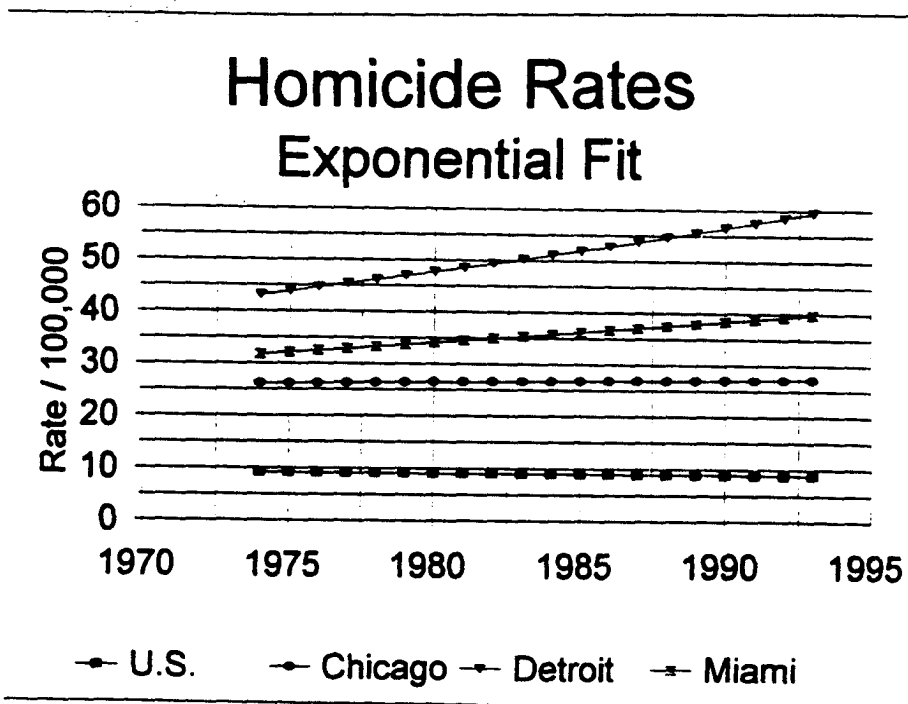


Figure 4 shows divergent homicide trends for Chicago, Detroit and Miami. Chicago had a homicide rate that was two and a half times greater than the national average in the early 1970s but that homicide rate has not increased significantly.

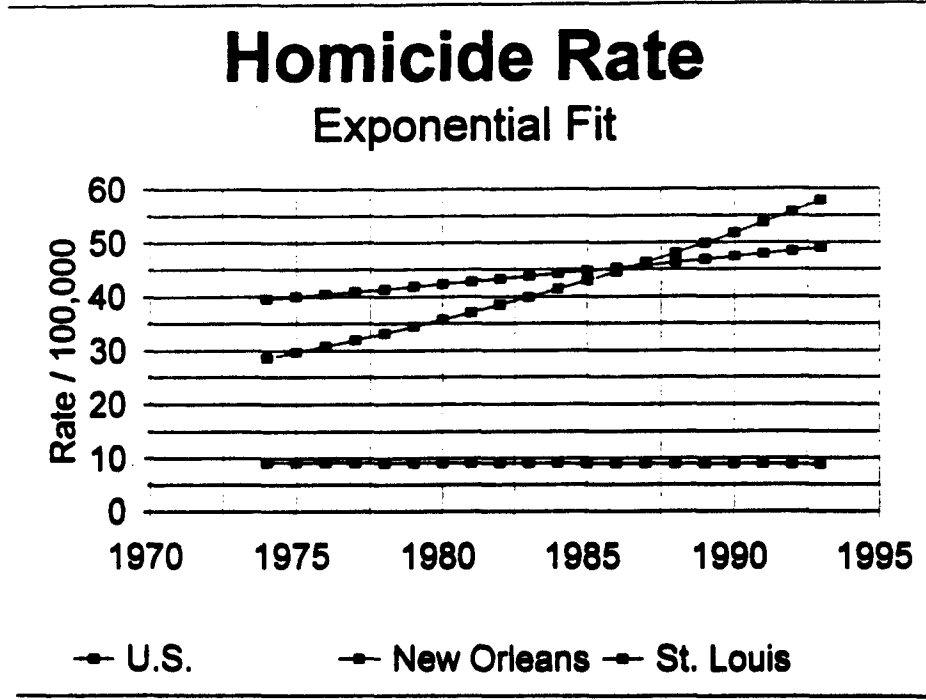
Figure 4



Miami, on the other hand, has experienced a somewhat higher rate than Chicago, while Detroit's homicide rate increased from four times the national rate to currently six times the U.S. rate.

Finally, Figure 5 shows the homicide trends for New Orleans and St. Louis. St. Louis had a homicide rate that was four times greater than the national rate and this has currently increased to nearly five times the U.S. rate. Similarly, New Orleans has shown a doubling of its homicide rate from three times the national rate twenty years ago to nearly six times at the present time. What Figures 3, 4, and 5 show is that while homicide has not change significantly for the U.S. as a whole, for certain cities, most notably Detroit, Atlanta, New Orleans, St. Louis, and most dramatically Washington, D. C., the homicide rates have sharply increased. What is of interest is why certain cities have homicide rates that diverge so sharply from the national rate, and why the homicide trend for some of these cities is increasing so rapidly.

Figure 5



#### Case Study: Homicide in Atlanta

Atlanta has acquired a high profile in crime over the past thirty years. It is an unusual southern city in that it shares certain characteristics of an old "rust belt" city. Its population has not grown despite the image of exploding southern urban centers. Atlanta has experienced a double out migration. In the 1960s and 1970s a high proportion of white residents moved from the city to the suburban fringe resulting in

a high black population currently hovering around 68 percent. In the 1970s and 1980s the middle class blacks moved from the city proper to the western fringe of the metropolitan area producing numerous census areas that are 95 percent or higher African-American but relatively affluent. The residual or the “people left behind” are lower social status African-Americans who live in areas of high crime, school dropout rates that are disturbingly high, the oldest public housing units in the United States dating from 1935, and high proportion of single mothers. The suburban fringe or the Atlanta metropolitan area is experiencing unprecedented growth but the city itself is experiencing pronounced urban decay. Atlanta’s current overall crime index stands at 17,353 per 100,000, more than three times the crime index for the United States. Further, Atlanta is not only high in violent crime (4,041 per 100,000 compared with 746 per 100,000 for the U.S.) but also very high in property offenses (13,313 offenses per 100,000 compared with 4,737 per 100,000 for the U.S.). Many southern cities rank high in the crime index because of property offenses but they do not rank high in violent offenses. Atlanta can claim the dubious distinction of being high in violent and property offenses.

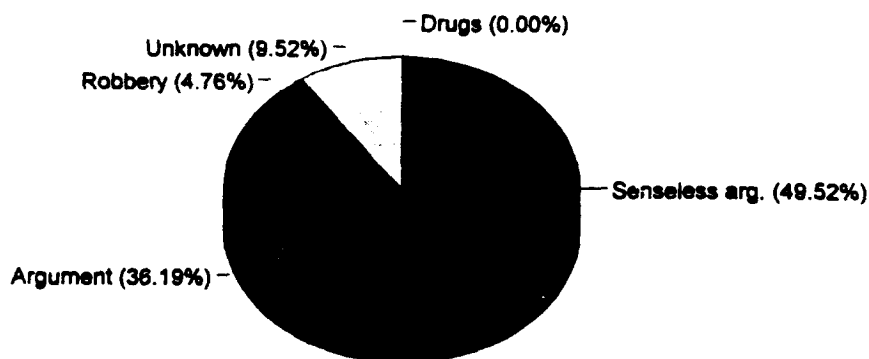
In examining specifically homicide, neither Uniform Crime Reports nor the Supplemental Homicide Reports give much detailed information regarding the changing nature of homicide over time. What needs to be done is an examination of homicide reports, autopsy reports and the records of victims and offenders to extract the changing characteristics of homicide over time for each specific city. The homicide cases for Atlanta were examined in 1966 and again in 1993. Figure 6 gives a breakdown of homicide motives in 1966 using the homicide log maintained by the Atlanta Police Department. As seen in Figure 6, nearly 50 percent of all 1966 homicides were the result of what the police determined to be “senseless arguments.”

Figure 6

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## 1966 Homicide Motives

### City of Atlanta



**Total - 745 homicides**

There were instances of almost no premeditation, senseless arguments, little or no rational explanation, and uncontrollable anger. Most of these occurred in or near the home and many of these were husbands and wives, lovers or cohabitators disputes that ended in homicide. Another 36 percent of the 1966 homicides were recorded as "arguments" that suggested some form of ongoing disputes that there were some rational basis for the dispute. Many of these homicides entailed romantic jealousies, spouse abuse or ongoing feuds between the victim and the perpetrator. Hence, 86 percent of homicides in 1966 were domestic or acquaintance in nature. Less than 5 percent of homicides in 1966 were the result of a robbery and 9.5 percent were unknown. Of the 145 homicides that occurred in Atlanta in 1966, not one police report indicated any presence of drugs other than alcohol and drug trafficking was never mentioned on a single homicide report.

In 1993, 225 homicides were recorded in Atlanta and the motives surrounding the crime had changed in significant ways. Senseless argument accounted for only 27 percent of the homicide motives and ongoing arguments accounted for 22 percent. Thus, the figure of 86 percent of 1966 homicides that were domestic or acquaintance arguments dropped to 49 percent in 1993. Robberies accounted for nearly 13 percent of homicides and some of these robberies were drug "rip-offs" or the circumstance of the robbery had a drug connection. The category of "unknown" doubled to 19 percent in 1993. Finally, 18.7 percent of homicides were directly attributable to drugs, most specifically cocaine. While this is taking liberties with police reports, the three categories of robbery, unknown and drugs were interrelated around a common theme of drug involvement suggesting that possibly as much as 50 percent of the 1993 homicides were in one manner or another related to drugs.

Figure 7

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## 1993 Homicide Motives City of Atlanta

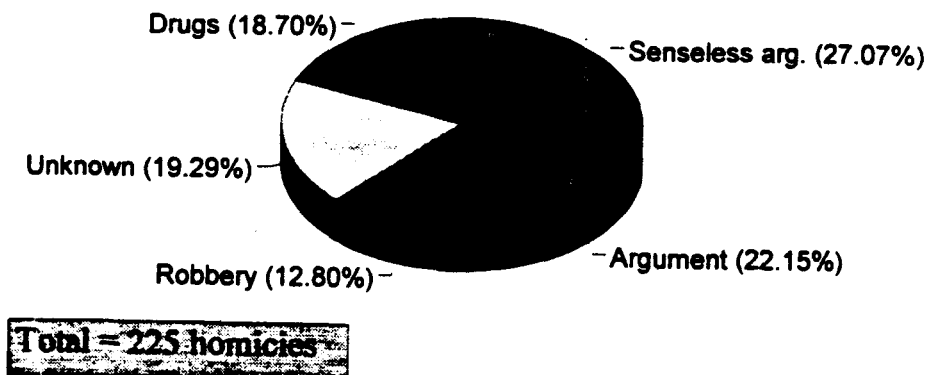
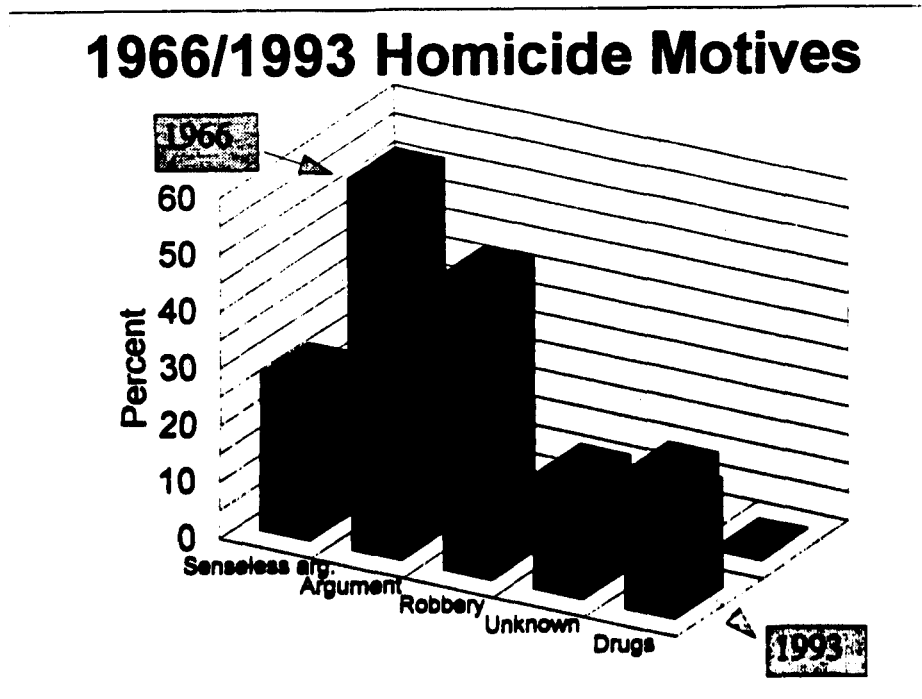


Figure 8 is an overlay of Figure 6 and 7 showing the change in homicide motives in 1966 and in 1993 as found in police reports. As seen in Figure 8, senseless arguments and arguments dominate the homicide motives for 1966. However, in 1993 the motives are relatively evenly distributed among the five categories. Homicide becomes less of a domestic issue and more a street phenomenon in 1993 than in 1966. While the coding of all of the police reports from 1966 to the present is being undertaken, a cursory examination of homicide motives reveals that the category of drugs, specifically cocaine, does not appear with any regularity until the mid 1980s and at least for the city of Atlanta it does not achieve notoriety until around the 1990s. Undoubtedly the cocaine-homicide relationship in Atlanta was more pronounced in the mid 1980s than is seen in police reports but the common characteristics of a cocaine related homicides were not that well ingrained in police reports until the 1990s.

Figure 8



#### Autopsy Reports

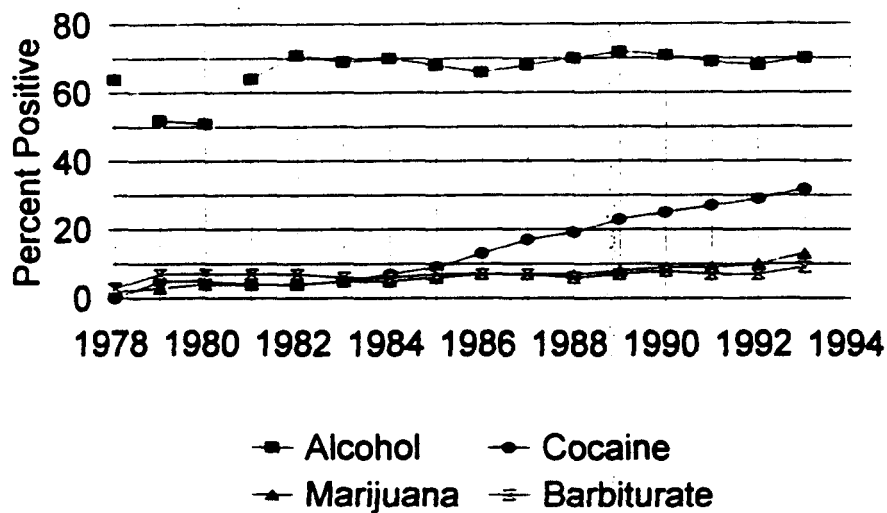
Every homicide results in an autopsy to determine the precise cause of death. Medical examiners carefully document a wealth of information about homicide victims in addition to the cause of death. For example the presence of cirrhosis of the liver,

the nature of scars or surgical incisions, cardiovascular disease, physical abnormalities and in some instances even the discovery of a bullet that had been in the victim had never removed. Of particular interest in homicide cases is the toxicology report on the presence of alcohol and other drugs added to the medical examiner's report. Typically alcohol is reported in terms of blood-alcohol level or BAL (grams per 100 milliliters) and other drugs are simply reported as present or absent. While every homicide victim will have an autopsy report, unless the investigating officer requests the autopsy report it will not be sent to the police. In those cases where the perpetrator confesses or is immediately apprehended, the investigating officer may not need the autopsy report and it remains in the medical examiner's office. However, the information provided by the medical examiner is of enormous importance in understanding the global context of homicide, particularly in dealing with the drug-homicide connection.

Figure 9 shows the percent of Atlanta homicide victims who tested positive for alcohol, cocaine, marijuana barbiturates from 1978 to 1993. As seen in Figure 9 the presence of alcohol is extraordinarily high in homicide victims. While there was some fluctuation in the percent testing positive for alcohol from 1978 to 1982, since then it has remained around 70 percent which is slightly higher than what Wolfgang reported nearly forty years ago. More importantly, the blood-alcohol levels (BAL) vary quite dramatically. For a 150-pound individual who had an intake one can of beer over one hour, the BAL would register .025. Of those 70 percent of homicide victims who tested positive for alcohol, only 9 percent registered at that low level. One in four homicide victims who tested positive for alcohol registered in the .05 to .10 BAL

Figure 9

## Atlanta Homicide Victims Percent Testing Positive for Drugs





suggesting they had between two to four cans of beer or alcohol equivalent in the hour prior to their death. Another 35 percent registered between .11 and .24 BAL suggesting the intake of five to ten cans of beer. Even more astonishing was the fact that 31 percent of the homicide victims who tested positive for alcohol registered a BAL of .25 or higher. This is equivalent to at least ten cans of beer or 8 ounces of distilled spirits. Twenty percent of these homicide victims had a BAL of .30 or higher. With a BAL in excess of .30 the subject begins to approach a 50 percent lethal dose indicating the high toxic level of alcohol. The age-old quip of being “dead drunk” may become a reality for some of these homicide victims except for action by the perpetrator.

The presence of cocaine in the blood stream of homicide victims has increased dramatically since 1985. The sharp increase in the presence of cocaine in homicide victims starting in 1986 may be partially explained by the lack of accurate and consistent tests for cocaine until the late 1980s. Tests for cocaine were not routinely conducted despite a high level of abuse because law enforcement was not ordering them. Conversely, some tests had been and continue to be routinely done for drugs that are rarely used but medical examiners continued this practice because they believe they are of some use to the law enforcement community. At times, there appears to be a problem with the over routinization of procedures in the medical examiner’s office because of a lack of communication with law enforcement.

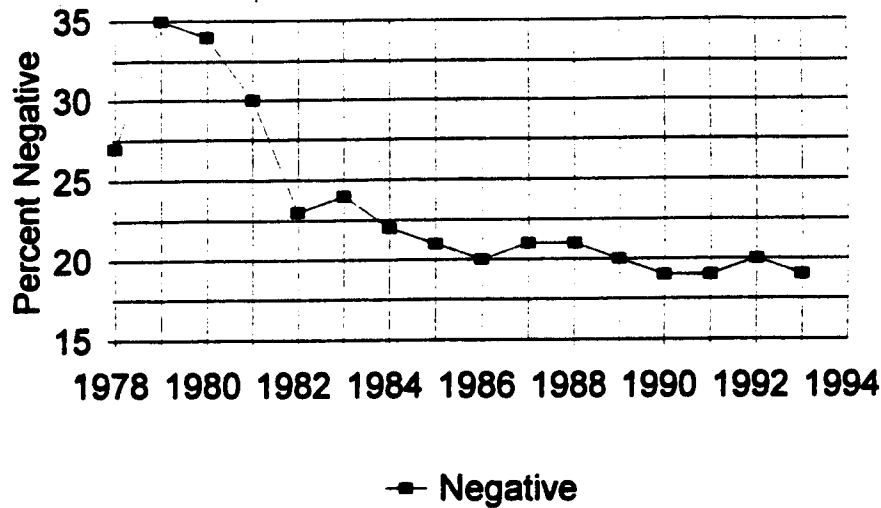
Figure 9 also shows that marijuana and barbiturates appear approximately in 10 percent of the cases where homicide victims test positive for drugs. Marijuana is problematic because it is not a water soluble substance, leaves the blood stream quickly, and attaches itself to fat cells. Chronic users of marijuana may test positive for marijuana as much as 30 days after using the substance. Because different drugs exit the blood stream at different rates, drug tests can be problematic.

Figure 10 shows the percent of homicide victims who test negative for alcohol or any drug from 1978 to 1993. There was an initial decline from 1979 to 1982 and currently the percent testing negative hovers around 18 percent. That is, more than 82 percent of homicide victims test positive for alcohol and other forms of drugs. While they only know how much concentration for alcohol, the frequency of drugs found in the blood stream of homicide victims is inordinately high. Figure 10 suggests that drug involvement for homicide victims is almost a constant and may play a critical role in understanding the causal forces leading up to a homicide event.

While little is known about the presence or absence of alcohol and other drugs in homicide perpetrators, the wealth of information that is available from the medical examiner on homicide victims indicates a strong connection between drugs and homicide. The inference from these drug results is that if homicide victims are high consumers of drugs then it is conceivable that homicide perpetrators may also be involved with drugs. The National Institute of Justice does in fact report on drug involvement of arrestees for all types of criminal offenses. This is reported in annual

Figure 10

## Atlanta Homicide Victims Testing Negative for Drugs



reports entitled "Drug Use Forecasting." The percentage of arrestees testing positive for any drug in twenty-four cities is staggering. For example, in the city of Atlanta, the Drug Use Forecasting report shows that 69 percent of male arrestees and 65 percent of female arrestees tested positive for drugs. Further, 58 percent of the Atlanta male and female arrestees tested positive for cocaine. Unfortunately, the Drug Use Forecasting program does not test for alcohol. While these percentages seem extraordinarily high there are comparable to the findings in the other twenty-three cities.

Homicide has been routinely seen as a crime of passion, where tempers "fly off the handle," and rage is uncontrollable. Police reports routinely contain phrases such as "senseless argument," "uncontrolled anger," and "fit of anger." If homicide is an irrational act, then alcohol and drug involvement may play a critical role in the onset of this antisocial behavior. Pharmacological substances such as alcohol and drugs such as cocaine may impact cognitive processes that lead to a disinhibition of normal social control mechanisms. Alcohol and drug-induced aggression may be a crucial link in explaining homicide. Research has shown that it is not chronic drug involvement, particularly for alcohol, as much as acute episodes that produces elevated risks of violence. Cocaine involvement appears to be more complex than alcohol because not only of the pharmacological nature of the drug but also because of the profitability of trafficking the substance. The evidence is becoming increasingly clear that there is a strong association between violence and certain forms of drug involvement, and to understand the causal mechanism leading up to homicide

understand the causal mechanism leading up to homicide examining those disinhibiting agents that attenuate formal is necessary and informal behavioral constraints.

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## **American and Canadian Firearms Laws: Comparisons and Contrasts in Cultures and Policy**

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### **OVERVIEW**

Sweeping national legislation has been introduced in Canada with the intent of reducing firearms crime. The United States has had its own experience with firearms laws and enforcement practices, and varies from Canada in diversity of gun laws among the states, and in its strong historical affiliation with firearms. Gun laws and policies may have unintended consequences and varying effects in different jurisdictions. In the United States, experience has shown that when one state or local jurisdiction imposes tougher firearms regulations, criminal activity shifts, or is displaced to other jurisdictions where the laws or enforcement policies are more favorable for criminals. In light of this, if Canada enacts stringent gun control laws, illegal trafficking from the massive supply of guns in the United States might increase, despite Canada's national law. To limit this phenomenon, cooperative law enforcement efforts between Canada, the United States, and states that adjoin Canada such as New York should be strengthened.

### **CURRENT CANADIAN GUN LAWS**

In Canada, firearms have been divided into two main categories -- unrestricted, and restricted -- with varying regulations. Unrestricted weapons include most common hunting and sporting rifles and shotguns. Prospective buyers must pay \$50 and submit an application for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC), which is examined by their local police department. They must also take a 12-hour firearms safety course, and pass a safety exam. Approval is not granted for at least 28 days in order to allow time for adequate investigation of the application and to prevent impulse buying. If approval is granted, the FAC is valid for five years.

Restricted firearms are mostly handguns, and some military style rifles. Ownership of these weapons is limited to collectors and members of shooting clubs. Exceptions for possession of restricted firearms are provided in rare instances where people can prove that their lives are in danger, and that the police cannot provide them adequate protection. For restricted weapons, in addition to obtaining a FAC, buyers must register their weapon with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The gun must be kept at the address on the registration and cannot be moved to a different location without approval, usually in the form of a carrying permit.

### **PROPOSED CANADIAN LAW (C-68)**

In most basic terms, Canadian Justice Minister Alan Rock's legislation (C-68)

would extend registration to unrestricted weapons (about six million of the seven million legally owned firearms in Canada), thereby applying registration to all firearms possessed in Canada. Registration would apply to both the person authorized to possess the weapon, and the weapon itself.

## PERSONAL LICENSING

Starting January 1, 1996, all individuals owning a gun would be required to obtain a license to possess firearms. The license would be similar to a driver's license, identifying the owner by name, date-of-birth and physical characteristics such as height. The fee for the license would be \$60 for five years, required by the year 2000 and renewed every five years. As an incentive for firearm owners to register early, the fee would range from zero to \$10 for the first year. This proposed requirement is anticipated to affect two million of Canada's approximately three million gun owners. (In the United States, there are estimated to be well over 200 million guns in civilian hands, approximately one-third of which are handguns. Based on survey data, about one-half of households in the United States possess some type of firearm.)

## FIREARM REGISTRATION

Under these provisions, the weapon itself must be registered by the gun owner. Registration would begin by January 1, 1998 and be completed by the end of 2000. Owners would be issued a registration certificate which would be valid as long as they own the weapon. Fees would be kept low to encourage registration. In addition, tougher criminal sanctions would apply for failure to register a firearm. Penalties would range from a fine for inadvertent violations to up to five years in prison for repeat offenses.

## OTHER PROVISIONS

New offenses of illegally importing and trafficking in firearms would be created, with prison sentences of up to 10 years. There would be a minimum sentence of four years incarceration for certain crimes committed with a firearm, including attempted murder and robbery. A scheme for prohibiting individuals from future possession of firearms as a result of criminal conduct is also included. A ban would be imposed on weapons considered unreasonable for hunting or other recreational activities -- mostly firearms designed for military purposes.

New purchases of handguns of lower calibers and shorter barrel lengths would be prohibited. The legislation also contains controls on the import and export of firearms and on the transport of restricted and prohibited weapons. Weapons and other objects that are not firearms, but pose safety concerns warranting restrictions (e.g. silencers, certain knives) would also be regulated. In addition, a new crime would be created for smuggling and trafficking firearms, and Customs agents would be

provided greater authority concerning the import and export of firearms.

## LEGISLATIVE STATUS

The Canadian House of Commons approved C-68 on June 13, 1995, and the Canadian Senate is currently holding public hearings on the bill. Many believe the legislation will ultimately be signed into law.

## UNITED STATES FIREARMS LAWS

### OVERVIEW

Section 922 of Title 18 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) specifies crimes relating to the manufacture, importation, shipment, transportation, receipt, dealing and use of firearms and ammunition. Section 923 of 18 U.S.C. stipulates the requirements pertaining to federal firearms licensees (who are authorized to engage in the business of importing, manufacturing and dealing in firearms, and importing and manufacturing of ammunition.) Section 924 provides penalties for federal firearms offenses, including authorization of enhanced penalties based on factors such as involvement of a firearm in a violent or drug trafficking crime, use of a semiautomatic assault weapon, machine gun or firearm silencer, and second or subsequent conviction of such offenses.

Other crimes include obliteration of firearm serial numbers and knowingly making a false entry on a federal firearms form (which must be completed by those purchasing from a federal firearms dealer.) There are also federal crimes for which possession, display or use of dangerous weapons or devices (including firearms) during the commission of an underlying crime yield enhanced sentences. An example would be 18 U.S.C. 2113 (robbery of a federally insured bank). Penalties include lengthy maximum prison sentences, stiff fines or both.

Some firearms crimes (connected with violence, drug trafficking, semiautomatic assault weapons, machine guns or silencers) prohibit probation, suspension of sentence, and concurrent sentencing for the firearms offense and underlying violent or drug trafficking crime. If an individual is convicted in federal court of carrying or using a firearm during a violent or drug trafficking crime, in addition to the punishment for the violent or drug trafficking crime, the defendant must be sentenced to five years imprisonment. If the firearm is a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun or assault weapon, the additional mandatory sentence is ten years, and if the firearm is a machine gun or equipped with a firearm silencer or muffler, an additional thirty-year prison sentence is stipulated.

In the case of a second or subsequent conviction, the perpetrator must be sentenced to an additional twenty years (beyond the sentence for the violent or drug trafficking crime), and if the firearm is a machine gun or equipped with a firearm silencer

or muffler, to life imprisonment without release. An enhanced penalty of five years incarceration is also provided for possession of armor piercing ammunition with a firearm which is involved in a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime. Penalties are also specified for possession of firearms on federal property.

Title 26 of the United States Code specifies unlawful actions pertaining to manufacturers, importers and dealers in firearms with regards to taxation and other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. Registration requirements of firearms by manufacturers, importers and makers of firearms are also detailed.

In 1994, significant statutory changes were made to the federal firearms laws as a result of enactment of "The Brady Law" and Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. They following details these changes.

### THE BRADY LAW

The Brady Law (Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act) was enacted on November 30, 1993 after seven years of congressional debate. The law was named after former White House Press Secretary James Brady who was shot in the head during the 1981 assassination attempt on former President Ronald Reagan. The law requires that all states perform criminal background checks prior to purchase of a handgun. The lack of uniformity concerning firearm laws among the states has been an impediment to effective enforcement of laws in the individuals states. For example, while New York State has among the toughest firearms statutes in the nation, these laws have been circumvented by individuals who purchase handguns in other states with minimal requirements, and traffic them to New York, where they are sold and often used in crimes. While the Brady Law will not eliminate gun violence, it is a step in the right direction.

The Brady Law requires a five business-day waiting period and background check by local police before a person can buy a handgun from a federal firearms licensee in states which do not have a handgun permit system or computerized point-of-sale background check. The law became effective on February 28, 1994 and ends five years later, and therefore is termed "temporary." It applies as a national minimum in states that do not require background checks, but states with longer waiting periods can retain them. States with a waiting period of less than five days can maintain their laws, but only if they require a background check. New York State is temporarily "exempt" from the Brady Law, as criminal and mental background checks are already required as criteria for handgun permits.

However, the waiting period of the Brady Law applies to handgun permits which are more than five years old, and former New York State Governor Mario Cuomo proposed legislation requiring statewide renewal of handgun licenses every three years, though the New York State Legislature did not approve this measure. Enactment of the legislation would exempt New York State from the waiting period requirement on these



grounds. Currently, the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has temporarily excused New York from the Brady Law, so long as name-based criminal record checks are performed through the National Crime Information Center for individuals whose licenses were issued more than five years prior.

The Brady Law requires local law enforcement to make a "reasonable effort" to research state, local and national records to check whether the would-be buyer is legally eligible to buy a handgun. Prohibited are indicted and convicted felons, fugitives, illegal drug users, those have been judged mentally defective or committed to a mental institution, illegal aliens, those dishonorably discharged from the armed forces and persons who have renounced United States citizenship. If local law enforcement detects any of these disqualifying criteria, they notify the federal firearms licensee from whom the prospective purchaser is attempting to buy, and the sale is terminated. Records released for background checks which do not show disqualifying information are destroyed after 20 days. In addition, the Brady Law authorized spending \$200 million to help states update or improve computerization of criminal records for use in a national instant background-check system.

Other elements of the Brady Law include the following: 1) requires local law enforcement agencies to provide within 20 days the reason why the prospective buyer's attempt to purchase a handgun was rejected, if asked by the would-be purchaser; 2) requires state and local police to be notified of multiple handgun sales by the same individual; 3) prohibits the labeling of packages in interstate commerce from indicating they contain firearms in order to deter thefts; 4) makes it a federal crime to steal firearms from licensed gun dealers, punishable by a fine of \$10,000 and 10 years in prison; and 5) increases fees for the initial three-year federal firearm license to \$200, and \$90 for renewal.

Following enactment of the Brady Law, several states which previously did not require a criminal background check have reported that many felons have been prevented from purchasing handguns. Of the eight categories of federal firearms licensees including manufacturers, importers and dealers, pawn brokers were detecting and denying handgun sales to the greatest number of felons. However, following pressure from the pro-gun lobby, Congress and the President amended the law to exclude pawnbrokers from the Brady Law's purview.

In addition, the Brady Law has certain "permanent provisions." Among these are that beginning on the date that is 30 days after the U.S. Attorney General notifies federal firearms licenses that the national (computerized) instant background check system is established -- as required by November 30, 1998 -- the licensees may not transfer firearms, including long guns (rifles and shotguns) unless:

- a) before completion of the transfer, the licensee contacts the national instant criminal background check system;

- b) the system provides the licensee with a unique identification number or 3 business days have elapsed since the licensee contacted the system, and the system has not notified the licensee that the receipt of a firearm by such other person would violate Section 922(g) or (n); and
- c) the transferor has verified the identity of the transferee by examining a valid identification document of the transferee containing a photograph of the transferee.

The above provisions will **not** apply to a firearm transfer between a federal firearms licensee and another person if:

- (A)(I) such other person has presented to the licensee a permit that:
  - (I) allows such other person to possess or acquire a firearm; and
  - (II) was issued not more than 5 years earlier by the state in which the transfer is to take place; and
    - (ii) the law of the state provides that such a permit is to be issued only after an authorized government official has verified that the information available to such official does not indicate that possession of a firearm by such other person would be in violation of law; the Secretary of the Treasury has approved the transfer under Section 5812 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; or on application of the transferor, the Secretary of the Treasury has certified that compliance with the national instant background check system is impracticable because of the remoteness of the location.

#### VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1994

Various changes in federal firearms statutes resulted from enactment of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, otherwise simply referred to the "Crime Law." They include provisions concerning assault weapons, possession of handguns by youth, domestic violence, firearm licensees and gun crime penalties.

#### Assault Weapons

The Crime Law banned public possession of "assault weapons." Included as "assault weapons" are: 1) 19 specifically named makes and models of military-style semiautomatic weapons and their copies; 2) semiautomatic rifles and pistols with detachable magazines and two or more military characteristics; and 3) large capacity ammunition feeding devices (magazines, feed strip or similar device) which can hold

more than 10 rounds of ammunition or be readily restored or converted to accept more than ten rounds. Over six hundred firearms typically used for hunting and target shooting are exempted by specific brand and model. However, there is a grandfather clause specifying that the regulations regarding assault weapons and their ammunition feeding devices do not apply to the possession or transfer of such items which were lawfully possessed before the law's enactment (November 1, 1994). The provisions concerning assault weapons sunset in 10 years.

The penalty for unauthorized possession of an assault weapon or large capacity ammunition feeding device is up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to \$5,000 fine. Assault weapons were distinguished from unspecified firearms regarding their use in drug trafficking or violent crimes -- doubling the mandatory 5 year prison sentence to 10 years incarceration.

### Youth Handgun Safety

The Violent Crime Control Act makes it a federal offense for a juvenile under 18 years old to knowingly possess a handgun or handgun ammunition. The Act also makes it unlawful to transfer a handgun or handgun ammunition to a person the transferor knows or has reasonable cause to believe is under 18. The new provision is subject to a number of exceptions, such as for the armed forces, ranching, farming, hunting, and other specified uses, some requiring the prior written consent of the juvenile's parent or guardian.

The penalty for possession of a handgun or handgun ammunition by a juvenile is probation if the juvenile has never been convicted of an offense or adjudicated a juvenile delinquent for an offense. Otherwise, the maximum penalty for a juvenile is up to one year incarceration, a fine, or both. The penalty for an adult who transfers a handgun or handgun ammunition to a juvenile is ordinarily a maximum one-year prison sentence. However, if an adult transferred either item to a juvenile knowing or having reasonable cause to know that the juvenile intended to carry, possess or use it in the commission of a violent crime, the adult would be subject to a maximum of ten years imprisonment, fines, or both. Existing law provides that a federal firearms licensee (dealer) who transfers any firearm to a person under 18, or any firearm other than a rifle or shotgun (e.g., handgun) to a person under 21 is subject to a maximum penalty of five years incarceration.

### Domestic Violence

The Act applies the prohibitions of the federal firearms laws to domestic abusers, making it unlawful to dispose a firearm to, or receive of a firearm by, persons who are subject to an order of protection because of domestic violence. The provisions apply to any person subject to a court order restraining the individual from harassing, stalking, threatening or engaging in conduct which would place his or her "intimate partner" (or intimate partner's child) in fear of bodily injury. For the prohibitions to apply,

the order of protection must have been issued with certain procedural protections, such as following hearing of which the restrained person had notice and opportunity to participate.

### Firearms Licensees

The Violent Crime Control Act strengthened the requirements for obtaining a federal firearms dealer license and imposed additional obligations on licensees. License applicants must certify that their firearms business is not prohibited under state or local law. While existing federal law made it a federal offense for a dealer to violate state or local law in the operation of their business, the violations were often difficult to enforce. Applicants must also certify that the chief law enforcement officer for the locality has been notified of the application. In addition, applicants for a dealer's license must provide a photograph and fingerprints with their application. The Act also requires federal firearms licensees (FFLs) to report the theft or loss of any firearm to federal and local law enforcement agencies within 48 hours of discovery. In addition, the new law requires FFLs to respond to a gun trace request in the course of a criminal investigation within 24 hours.

### Gun Crime Penalties

As a result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, smuggling firearms into the United States to aid drug trafficking or crimes of violence is subject to up to 10 years incarceration, fine, or both. The penalty for gun trafficking was increased from a maximum five years incarceration to up to ten years in prison.

Conspiring to commit a violent or drug trafficking crime with a firearm now yields up to 20 years incarceration and/or fine, and if the firearm is a machine gun, or equipped with a firearm silencer, the authorized incarcerative penalty is any term of years or life.

The penalty for theft of a firearm which is a part of interstate or foreign commerce is now 10 years imprisonment, fine or both. There was also a prohibition added for possessing firearms which have moved in interstate or foreign commerce which are known, or should be known to be stolen. Receipt of firearms by non-United States residents who are not licensed importers, manufacturers, dealers, or collectors was made a federal crime, unless such receipt is for lawful sporting purposes.

Revocation of federal supervised release and probation was made mandatory if the offender possessed a firearm in violation of federal law or as a condition of supervised release or probation. The penalty for knowingly making a false, material statement in connection with the acquisition of a firearm from a FFL was increased from a maximum sentence of five years incarceration and/or \$5,000 to a maximum of ten years incarceration and/or a fine.

In addition, the U.S. Sentencing Commission was charged with promulgating

amendments to federal sentencing guidelines to enhance penalties for firearms crimes in the following circumstances: 1) using (including carrying) of a semiautomatic firearm during a violent or drug trafficking crime; 2) using a firearm in the commission of counterfeiting or forgery; and 3) possession of a firearm by a person with one or more prior convictions for a violent felony or serious drug offense.

## CANADIAN VS. UNITED STATES FIREARMS LAWS

It is interesting to note that the provisions which would require registration of long guns have been the most controversial of the 1995 Canadian gun legislation (C-68). In the United States, since enactment of the "Gun Owners' Protection Act of 1986," federal statute [18 U.S.C. 926(a)] has explicitly prohibited the federal government from maintaining centralized records on firearms and their owners -- generally interpreted as "firearms registration." The federal law does not bar the states from adopting centralized firearms registration systems, and some have done so. The United States Supreme Court has construed the scope of the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution to be a limitation only on the power of the Federal Government to constrain the right of the people to keep and bear arms and has said that this limitation is not applicable to the states (see, Presser v. Illinois, 116 US 252 [1886]). Also, the Supreme Court has ruled that the Second Amendment's "right of the people to keep and bear arms" is not an unrestricted right with regards to the Federal action (see, United States v. Miller, 307 US 174 [1939]). These cases point to two basic distinctions between the "gun cultures" of the United States and Canada: 1) the emphasis on gun possession and privacy regarding such as a constitutional right in the United States, absent in Canada's Constitution; and 2) the diversity of laws between the states and the Federal Government as opposed to the one national law of Canada.

## COMPARISON OF STATE LAWS

While there are federal firearm statutes and case law applicable nationwide, complexity in enforcement results from the diversity of gun laws between the states. Therefore, even though an individual state may have strict purchase requirements, gun traffickers typically purchase firearms in states with limited purchase regulations. The guns are then transported to the more restrictive states, where they are illegally purchased, and some are used in crimes. When a given state's firearm purchase requirements become more restrictive, traffickers simply shift their purchases to states with less stringent requirements.

State firearm laws differ in various ways, as exemplified by the following comparisons. Thirteen states require an instant background check at point of purchase. Seventeen states mandate a waiting period prior to handgun purchase, and five states have a waiting period for purchase of long guns. A license or permit to purchase is required for handguns in 12 states, and for long guns in six states. Three states mandate registration of handguns, and the same number of states require registration

of long guns. Carrying firearms openly in public is prohibited in 27 states. Firearms rights are a constitutional provision in 43 states, and state firearm laws preempting laws of local jurisdiction exist in 39 states.

## NEW YORK STATE GUN STATUTES

New York State has a comprehensive firearms statutory scheme, prescribed in Articles 265 and 400 of the State's Penal Law, for the issuance of licenses to carry, possess, repair and dispose of firearms. Private citizens may obtain licenses to possess handguns in their home or place of business, and to carry them when necessary, by showing that they are United States citizens over the age of 21, have never been convicted of a felony or other serious offense and have not suffered mental illness or been confined to any hospital or institution for mental illness.

The licensing officer (in most cases, a judge) reviews the application before approval, and thereafter controls the acquisition of each individual firearm. Public possession of machine guns, which continuously fire with each trigger pull, has been outlawed in New York State for decades. In addition, the Penal law prohibits possession of shortened long guns (rifle or shotgun with an overall length of under twenty-six inches), which because of their ease of concealment, are a particular threat to law enforcement.

Article 265 includes provisions regarding the manufacture, transport, disposition and defacement of weapons. Exemptions from the licensing provisions of Article 400 are provided in Article 265 for individuals including police and peace officers, military personnel, licensed gunsmiths and firearms dealers, participants in approved shooting range activities and handgun manufacturer employees.

In New York State, most firearms offenses are classified as violent felony offenses and, therefore, have increased penalties for the sale and possession of handguns, as well as strict plea bargaining restrictions.

Regarding New York City, individuals with otherwise valid handgun permits issued outside the jurisdiction must receive the permission of the City Police Commissioner in order to transport handguns in the City. In addition, according to City ordinance, citizens are required to obtain a permit for possession of a long gun (shotgun or rifle), as well as a handgun within City limits. Semiautomatic assault weapons are banned in the City.

## AMERICAN "GUN CULTURE"

There are an estimated 210 million firearms in the United States -- one third of these being handguns. On average, one handgun is manufactured in the U.S. **every twenty seconds**. In short, there is an abundance of guns possessed by Americans. In Canada, there are an estimated 6 to 7 million legally owned firearms.

The interpretation of the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution has certainly evoked debate over the years. The Second Amendment states that: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The "infringement" of course pertains to actions which the U.S. Congress -- the Federal government -- is forbidden to take. Central to the Second Amendment is the meaning of the word "militia." Debate has ranged from whether this now means the National Guard, or all able-bodied citizens. The United States Supreme Court has as yet not firmly defined the term "militia," and, in fact, has chosen not to decide the meaning of "militia" by refusing to hear (denying certiorari for) cases involving this issue. Therefore, regulation of firearms has historically been left largely to the states.

As a way to get around the "constitutional quagmire," legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Congress which would ban the sale and possession of ammunition for guns most often used by criminals. However, legislative passage has not been obtained. Other handgun bullets, including Winchester's "Black Talon" which develops a protruding star-shape upon impact with attendant massive tissue damage, have also evoked controversy. As a result of public outcry concerning the destructive impact of these bullets in the hands of criminals, Winchester voluntarily stopped producing the Black Talon handgun ammunition.

In 1992, there were 775 million rounds of center-fire handgun ammunition manufactured in the United States, though there are a large number of competitive and recreational handgun shooters in America. Imported ammunition in 1992 accounted for 857 million rounds of center fire bullets (both handgun and long gun).

Larson (1994) describes the extensive "gun culture" in the United States, pointing to America's prior dependence, fascination, and continued reverence for guns as part of heritage -- particularly among certain areas, generally more rural than urban. Loopholes in federal and state laws are also described. These deficiencies are described in the context of contributing to 16 year-old Nicholas Elliot obtaining a Cobray M-11/9 assault weapon, and on December 16, 1988, taking it to school and using it to kill one teacher and severely wound another. It was fortunate that the 32-round magazine which Nicholas had inserted into the Cobray was faulty and caused the gun to jam and limit his carnage, since he had several other fully loaded magazines yet with him. The gun was purchased in a Virginia gun shop by Nicholas' cousin to whom Nicholas allegedly said he wanted that particular gun, and gave his cousin \$300 for it in the presence of the store clerk, who claims he did not see the money transfer. There have been various alleged, and proven instances of certain federal firearms dealers turning a "blind eye" toward circumstances that would cause most people to suspect that the purchaser did not meet the legal requirements. Many dealers argue that it is not their job to question beyond what is presented to them at the time of sale, and not their business to delve into individuals' private lives, so long as the sale is technically legal.

Various recommendations in Lethal Passage have now become law as a result of the Federal crime law (Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1994). These include making it a felony for a federal firearms dealer to knowingly fail to keep accurate firearms transaction records, allowing the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to conduct more than one compliance audit of federal firearms licensees per year, and ensuring that federal firearms dealer applicants first show that they have permission from state and local authorities to deal in a specified location before the federal license is granted.

## EFFECTIVENESS OF FIREARMS LAWS

### Canada and the United States

The foregoing has discussed various firearms laws and proposals for Canada, the United States and New York State. Statutes and policy are developed in this area to reduce firearms crime and violence. Canada has had more stringent regulation of guns and lesser gun ownership per household. A survey indicated that 29 percent of households in Canada as compared with 48 percent of households in the United States owned guns(of any type). Concerning solely handguns, five percent of households in Canada and 29 percent of households in the United States owned these types of firearms. During the same time period, 8.4 people per million in Canada versus 44.6 people per million residents of the United States were murdered with guns. These numbers represent approximately 32 percent and 59 percent of the total murders in Canada and the United States, respectively. One could presume from this data that firearms laws or gun ownership is directly associated with the amount of murders committed with firearms. However, the effectiveness of laws on the books is sometimes uncertain.

Marvel and Moody (1995) examined the impact of enhanced prison sentences for felonies committed with firearms. They looked at the effect of various state statutes mandating minimum prison sentences or penalty enhancements for crimes committed with guns in reducing gun crime. The findings: the laws produced only a possible impact of reducing gun crime in no more than a few states, and that there is minimal evidence that such laws generally reduce crime or increase prison populations.

## POSSIBLE UNINTENDED EFFECTS OF FIREARM LAWS

Lizotte (1986) and others [(Loftin, Heumann and McDowell (1983))] question the effectiveness of various gun control laws in achieving their intended result. Lizotte goes further, and posits that if gun control laws produce effect, the impact may occur with unexpected consequences. More specifically, in 1983, Loftin and McDowell analyzed the effects of a Detroit mandatory sentencing law which required a two-year mandatory sentence for committing a crime with a gun. After extensive research, they concluded that the law was simply not enforced in Detroit. It had no effect.



Dr. Lizotte also raises considerations of the possible costs" of some types of gun control, such as the possible effects of gun control on the homicide rate. Some people claim that since handguns are the weapon of choice for committing homicide, the government should confiscate handguns, or handguns should not be manufactured. Kleck (1984) strived to determine whether or not the death rate in crime would decrease if all handguns were confiscated. He used existing research on ballistic tests and wounding patterns for different firearms to determine lethality. On this basis, Kleck calculated that given the average number of trigger pulls per criminal attack with a gun, if only 20 percent of handgun criminals shifted to either sawed off or unmodified rifles and shotguns, the death rate in crime would double because of the increased lethality of rifle and shotgun projectiles. Some might argue that less than 20 percent of handgun criminals would shift to more deadly long guns in response to handgun confiscation. In research sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, Wright and Rossi (1985) surveyed prison inmates to determine their patterns of gun use in crime. They asked gun criminals what they would do if they could not acquire a handgun to commit a crime. About 75 percent of them responded that they would saw off a rifle or shotgun as a substitute for the handgun, and approximately 75 percent of this group said that they had previously done so.

Lizotte also refers to research by Cook (1980) who found that injury rates in knife attacks are higher than in gun attacks. However, death rates in gun attacks are higher than in knife attacks. Assuming the handgun confiscation effort to be effectively enforceable, and that some of the criminals would shift from handguns to knives, Lizotte posits that "handgun only" control might result in the paradox of an increase in the death rate and an increase in the injury rate. Whether these or other "costs," Lizotte is raising the point that effectively enforced gun control policies may have associated costs as well as benefits, and these consequences should be carefully evaluated before new laws or policies are enacted or implemented.

## NEW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

Even without new laws, innovative enforcement efforts can help to reduce gun crime. Examples include the FLARE program in New York City and a similar New York State program in which law enforcement officers interview new applicants or those re-applying for the three-year federal firearms license. The license allows the holder to purchase virtually unlimited quantities of firearms from wholesalers, and sell them, subject to the provisions of federal law. One of these provisions is that licensees must comply with all state and local requirements to deal in firearms at a specified business location. Following implementation of FLARE, approximately 98 percent of the license applicants withdrew their application after the interview reminding them of the license requirements. Other efforts around the country include local police making sure that firearms dealer businesses are operating in areas that are commercially zoned, as opposed to "kitchen table tops."

New technology is also of great assistance in helping to solve firearms crimes and in identifying FFLs who are operating illegally. Because of computer assistance leading to quicker and better intelligence, the number of firearms traces which the Federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) can complete is dramatically higher than before, and is expected to become more efficient with improved technology. ATF's computer imaging has produced over one-half million firearms for its gun library. These images provide automated identifying characteristics of each firearm recovered. New gamma ray and other imaging devices are another form of arising technology -- to detect concealed firearms without intrusive or harmful physical effects.

Gun courts which use a special gun court calendar in order to more speedily process firearms cases are another innovation which holds promise in the efforts against gun crime. The gun court calendar operating in Rhode Island (Providence and Bristol Counties) might be used as an example.

### MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL COOPERATION

Originally initiated between New York and Virginia, multi-state compacts to reduce interstate firearms trafficking and to pool resources to deter and apprehend gun criminals within the respective states now involve twelve other states, the District of Columbia, ATF and the U.S. Department of Justice. These cooperative agreements involve establishing computerized firearms tracing units within each state to strengthen their combined ability to counter firearms trafficking. The agreements also provide for sharing intelligence information and participating in joint investigations in order to trace illegally possessed firearms to their source, interdict illegal gun shipments, enforce existing firearms laws more rigorously, and arrest and prosecute those trafficking in illegal firearms.

### CONCLUSION

As Canada considers its comprehensive gun control legislation (C-68), the debate continues as to the most effective means of curtailing gun crime while avoiding infringement of the activities of legitimate gun owners. It is not an easy balance to achieve. United States history has shown this, and firearms violence continues. The different cultures of Canada and the United States may also prevent any reliable translation of U.S. firearms history to Canada's future. In addition to well contemplated laws, effective enforcement techniques are also necessary to reduce firearms crime. Included in these efforts are multi-jurisdictional cooperation, such as with the multi-state compacts in the United States.

Canada, the United States, and states adjoining Canada such as New York should expand their efforts to work together to reduce firearms trafficking between the jurisdictions, and to more effectively enforce the firearms laws of each respective entity. Techniques, technology, information and investigations can be shared through a team

approach. This must be done to effectively counteract gun criminals who are not inhibited by jurisdictional boundaries.

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## The Toll of Guns

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Ours is a peaceful nation but no generation of Americans has been without wars or conflicts. Before the Revolutionary War there were the French and Indian Wars and soon after Independence came the War of 1812. After a war with Mexico there was the Civil War and within the life time of some of its veterans there were the Spanish-American and two World Wars. Persons born during the First World War served in the Second World War and then in Korea and in Vietnam. Later came Panama and Desert Storm. Yet despite our nearly continual defenses and forays it can be shown that all our battle losses were much less than the deaths from firearms at home and at peace.

Since 1920 more than 1,500,000 peacetime deaths from firearms have been recorded in the vital statistics of the United States. These compare with our losses in battle as follows:

Civil War	140,000	(Union forces only)
Spanish American War	<500	
World War I	53,000	
World War II	292,000	
Korean Conflict	34,000	
Vietnam Conflict	47,000	(Over 8 years in duration)

These add up to less than 514,000. Even if we add another 200,000 for the Southerners who lost the Civil War and an equal but excessive number for the wars and conflicts not listed above that would be far below the number killed by firearms at home, at school, in the courthouse, at work, and on the campaign trail. Among the most dangerous of occupations to seek or to hold is the Presidency. Almost one in ten of our Presidents have been assassinated and attempts have been made on one in five. Two attempts were made on Gerald Ford, both by women. Ronald Reagan was seriously wounded while in office. Theodore Roosevelt was wounded while campaigning and the Mayor of Chicago was killed as he accompanied Franklin Delano Roosevelt. George Wallace was also wounded on the campaign trail and Robert Kennedy was killed. All of these deaths and woundings were accomplished by quite ordinary firearms. Recently shots were aimed at the White House, perhaps in an attempt upon President Clinton.

Here we should note that we have not taken into account war deaths that occurred because of disease or accidents. Probably World War II was the first of our major conflicts in which the number of battle deaths exceeded noncombat deaths. And neither have we taken into account the toll exacted by wounds, either in battle or in assaults or robberies. Note also that a small number of deaths from explosives are

included in the Vital Statistics lists of deaths by firearms and explosives. Despite recent happenings in Oklahoma City and New York, the relatively small number of deaths from explosives included in the firearms count will not alter any of the conclusions.

### Types of Deaths from Firearms

In Vital Statistics three major categories of deaths from firearms are given. These are listed below with the numbers in each category for the period 1920-1970 and for the year 1990.

	1920-1970	1990
Total Deaths by Firearms	1,405,794	36,519
Homicide	555,780	16,218
Suicide	685,168	18,865
Firearm Accidents	164,846	1,416

The number of suicides with guns is now greater than that for homicides both for the 71 year period and for 1990. That was not the case in the early years and occurs now because so many of the elderly people, both male and female commit suicide with guns. That is also true of the increasing number of young males who now commit suicide. In comparison with the number of homicide and suicide deaths with guns the number from firearm accidents looks small. Still the number of firearm accidents exceeds the number of battle deaths in World War I and the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts taken together.

	Number of Deaths By Guns, 1990	Percent of Deaths from All Causes, 1990
Total	36,519	1.70
White Male	21,840	2.30
White Female	3,993	0.44
Black Male	8,776	6.04
Black Female	1,243	1.03

As you might expect males are more likely to die from guns than females. Shown above are the number of gun deaths in 1990 for white and black males and females along with the proportion such deaths are of deaths from all causes.

More alarming than the numbers are the proportions of deaths from all causes that were attributed to firearms in 1990. More than one in fifty deaths of white males was from guns, still a small proportion as compared with the one in 16 for black males. These proportions, however, are for the total population (infants through old age). Few very young children commit suicide and it is easy to murder a child through suffocation, strangulation, or through simple neglect. Also, in homicides the proportion killed by firearms decreases with age. Thus it is the late adolescent and young adult years that we find the highest proportions of deaths from guns (as Table 1 illustrates).

Table 1

Percent of Deaths from Guns by Race, Sex and Age

	All Ages	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39
Total	1.70	12.29	26.09	24.75	18.77	12.62	8.58
White Males	2.30	13.96	22.24	21.63	17.99	13.31	9.65
White Females	0.44	5.35	9.80	10.40	9.73	8.06	5.27
Black Males	6.04	22.13	59.12	50.33	32.75	18.39	11.66
Black Females	1.03	13.26	22.33	17.24	12.86	6.34	4.20

In the first year of life, about 4 of every 1,000 children are killed by guns. That figure is about the same regardless of sex or race. At age 1 the proportion is higher and it almost always goes up with each succeeding age. At age 10-14 the percentage varies from 5 percent for white females to 22 percent for black males. For every group the highest percentage is at ages 15-19. At that age no less than 59 percent of all the black males who die do so from firearms. Differences are not great between the 15-19 and 20-24 age group but in the 30s the gun takes a much lower toll.

It is only in recent years that suicides with guns have exceeded homicides with guns. That is because of the differences in trends over time. In the 1920s rates of suicide with guns were less than those for homicide with guns but during the Great Depression of the 1930s the rates became about equal. From the middle 1930s into the 1950s rates for both homicide and suicide decreased. However those for homicide with guns fell by two-thirds and maintained low levels until the early 1960s. Afterward the rates for homicide with guns rose by 1990 to about the same level as in the 1930s

and then declined somewhat. In contrast rates for suicide with guns rose consistently from the time the soldiers came back after World War II and are now the highest ever. The rate of suicide by guns now exceeds that for homicide with guns. Since very few children commit suicide, suicide deaths and particularly those by guns are much greater than homicide with guns.

Here we should note that almost any statement referring to rates of suicide for the total population, regardless of method, is almost the same as a statement about white males. While black males are much more likely than white males to be victims or aggressors in homicide they commit relatively few suicides. Also suicides of females, white or black are low compared with those of males, and that is particularly true of those committed with guns.

Below we show the proportion of homicides committed with guns for the year 1990. You will notice that these for the younger ages are very much like those for all deaths from guns. That is because for the younger age deaths from guns are mostly homicides. At the older ages suicides with guns are more numerous.

Table 2

Percent of Homicides Committed with Guns, 1990

	Total	0	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-30
White Males	64.4	3.8	15.4	15.4	26.9	27.8	35.1	80.3	75.3	68.9	69.7
White Females	49.3	3.9	5.3	36.8	26.7	NA	39.2	45.2	54.8	50.3	51.6
Black Males	74.7	.4	10.0	8.3	6.7	22.2	48.3	85.2	90.3	85.6	70.3
Black Females	48.2	4.1	9.1	4.4	33.3	33.3	36.4	66.1	67.0	56.0	48.0

After ages 25-30 the proportions killed by guns remain about the same even at 65 and over. An especially interesting feature of this table is that the proportion killed by guns goes up in almost every age group from the first year of life. Note that while the proportions killed by guns in the first year of life are very low, about four percent for blacks and whites, males and females. By ages 5-9 the proportion is over a third and by 10-14 it is over 80 percent for males. At the earliest ages there is chance variation because of the small number on which the percentages are based. It is clear, however, that the increase in killing with guns begins during the second year of life and continues almost age by age. Indeed, when we add the number of homicides together for five years or so the percentages increase age by age with almost no exceptions until ages 10-14.



Also note that the rates for females are generally lower than those for males. However, when we look at these rates over a long period of time we find that when homicides were lowest in the 1950s there were actually years in which a higher percentage of female homicides were from guns than was the case for males. It appears that when times are bad the rate of homicides with guns goes up much more sharply for males than for females and falls more than it does for females in good times. We would therefore expect a reversal of the usual male-female differential occur only in the best of times and be especially noticeable for the age groups that have the highest proportions of homicides with guns.

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the enormous prevalence of guns in the house and on the street in the United States results in large numbers of deaths. It is true that some homicides and suicides would occur anyway but since many of both occur because of momentary impulses, guns, not just criminals, result in large numbers of American deaths.



## Homicide, Age, and Economic Conditions

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Economic conditions have long been stated as a cause of crime and homicide. Unemployment, GNP, GDP and other indicators of business cycle have been used to show the relationship between the economy and the occurrence of homicide. Unfortunately, findings of these attempts contradict one another. This study will utilize economic indicators together with age to examine whether or not a relationship exists to support the statement linking economic conditions and homicide.

### Rationale of Economic Indicators

The selection of economic indicators is a very important step for this study. Two economic indicators are selected, we call them ECO1 and ECO2.

ECO1 is disposable personal income (DPI) per capita divided by gross national product (GNP) per capita. Actually, ECO1 is the ratio of disposable personal income per capita over gross national product per capita. GNP is an aggregated measure which comprises purchases of goods and services by consumers and government, gross private domestic investment, and net exports of goods and services. This aggregated index includes government's purchase and private investment which can be manipulated by either of the two without affecting daily life of ordinary people. Yet, gross domestic product (GDP) and GNP are good indicators which mirrors the economic situation of a given country from different aspects, our daily life may not be greatly affected by these two indicators.

Disposable personal income is the income available to persons for spending and saving. Actually, DPI is the money you get for yourself and your family. This index (per capita) will be affected by annual inflation and continuing increase of demand on durable and nondurable goods. The living standards in 1930s can never be the same as in the 1990s. With this in mind, the ratio of DPI and GNP will be a better measure of living standard even when the standards change over time. When there is a prosperous time, the ratio will be lower due to the increase of GNP. When recession comes, the ratio will be higher due to the decrease of GNP which is the denominator.

ECO2 is the proportion of service section (SER) in personal consumption expenditure (PCE) among PCE. Basically, there are three categories in PCE, durable goods, nondurable goods, and service. When we have extra money to spend, there is an increase of expenditure in durable and non durable goods (especially durable goods). During the recession years, people tend to save some portion of their income and spend less on durable and non durable goods. Therefore, the proportion of SER will increase during the recession years, decrease during prosperity.

## Rationale of Age Factor

Many studies found that homicides are most likely to be committed by young males. If this statement is true, there must be a relationship between the proportion of a given age male population and homicide. Over time, when there is an increase of the proportion of male population in a given age, there will be an increase of homicide rates, and vice versa. Two variables are computed for this purpose. One is the male population ages 15 to 24 among the total population. The other is male population ages 20-24 among total population.

In addition to the economic conditions and age effect, we expect different responses from different sections of population in terms of age, race, and sex, since demands of different age groups vary by race.

### Hypothesis

1. ECO1 is supposed to have a positive relationship with homicide rate in the U.S., which is to say that when economic condition is better, there is a relatively low homicide rate, and vice versa. For different age groups by race and sex, the impact of ECO1 will vary, since some age-groups in the work force are more sensitive to the fluctuations of economic condition while other age-groups are not.

2. ECO2 is also supposed to have a positive correlation with homicide rate in the U.S. as a whole, which means when people have more money for luxury goods, there is a lower homicide rate. When people don't have enough money for durable and nondurable goods, their money will basically be spent on bare necessities. In this situation, the impact from bad economic condition will be negative, which is to say that there will be an increase of homicide rate. The response from different age-group will vary by sex and race since they have different situations of their own.

3. %M15-24 is the proportion of males ages 15-24 among total population. It is expected that when there is an increase of this proportion, which means the base that composes killers increases, there will be an increase of homicide rates. When this proportion is relatively small, there will be less bodies found by homicide.

4. %M20-24 is the proportion of males ages 20-24 among total population. This variable contains narrow age range than the other proportion variable. The purpose of including this variable is to see whether the killers are among this proportion of males or a wider range of age-groups. Correlation will be used to check the relationship among all these independent variables to the homicide rates for the U.S., as well as for the rates by race, age-group, and sex.

### Results

Table 1 to 5 show the correlations of these independent variables with homicide

rates by race, age, and sex.

Table 1

Correlations of Homicide Rates of Age Groups with ECO1, ECO2, Percent Male 15-24, and Percent Male 20-24

	ECO1	ECO2	%M15-24	%M20-24
Total	.7440**	.7749**	.8298**	.8485**
Age 0	.5342**	.5828**	.4587**	.4985**
Age 1-4	.3749*	.8456**	.4114**	.4873**
Age 5-9	.5125**	.8574**	.6087**	.6761**
Age 10-14	.4898**	.8461**	.5118**	.6171**
Age 15-19	.4995**	.8431**	.5229**	.6014**
Age 20-24	.6856**	.8137**	.7401**	.7692**
Age 25-29	.7686**	.7718**	.8286**	.8202**
Age 30-34	.7338**	.7200**	.8382**	.7826**
Age 35-39	.7097**	.6104**	.8588**	.7677**
Age 40-44	.6565**	.6338**	.8244**	.7369**
Age 45-49	.6941**	.6387**	.8281**	.7550**
Age 50-54	.6871**	.6932**	.8203**	.7451**
Age 55-59	.7310**	.6464**	.8329**	.7456**
Age 60-64	.7448**	.6486**	.8481**	.7518**
Age 65-69	.7697**	.5782**	.8603**	.7879**
Age 70-74	.6770**	.6963**	.8028**	.7864**
Age 75-79	.7022**	.7372**	.7290**	.7674**
Age 80-84	.6739**	.8171**	.6849**	.7369**
Age 85+	.6879**	.7442**	.6937**	.7215**

Signif:       \* - .01       \*\* - .001

Table 2

Correlations of White Male Homicide Rates with ECO1, ECO2, Percent Male  
15-24, and Percent Male 20-24

	ECO1	ECO2	%M15-24	%M20-24
Total	.7372**	.7973**	.8076**	.8450**
Age 0	.4164**	.1258	.3819*	.3727*
Age 1-4	.4364**	.8793**	.5059**	.5698**
Age 5-9	.5099**	.6664**	.6093**	.6329**
Age 10-14	.4693**	.8045**	.4407**	.5619**
Age 15-19	.5005**	.8894**	.5522**	.6328**
Age 20-24	.6230**	.8769**	.6846**	.7372**
Age 25-29	.7206**	.8597**	.7758**	.7969**
Age 30-34	.7383**	.8041**	.8201**	.8176**
Age 35-39	.7615**	.7218**	.8583**	.8340**
Age 40-44	.7494**	.6923**	.8506**	.8402**
Age 45-49	.7522**	.6429**	.8355**	.8168**
Age 50-54	.7482**	.6043**	.8396**	.8006**
Age 55-59	.7498**	.4829**	.8008**	.7356**
Age 60-64	.7224**	.4009*	.8154**	.7224**
Age 65-69	.6790**	.2621	.7761**	.6867**
Age 70-74	.6081**	.3887*	.7552**	.6997**
Age 75-79	.6871**	.4798**	.7032**	.6841**
Age 80-84	.5160**	.5963**	.6181**	.6183**
Age 85+	.5574**	.6307**	.6495**	.6043**

Signif:       \* - .01       \*\* - .001

Table 3

Correlations of White Female Homicide Rates with ECO1, ECO2, Percent Male 15-24, and Percent Male 20-24

	ECO1	ECO2	%M15-24	%M20-24
Total	.6699**	.9190**	.6878**	.7608**
Age 0	.3651*	.1553	.3279*	.3268*
Age 1-4	.3553*	.8813**	.4750**	.5166**
Age 5-9	.4785**	.7498**	.5742**	.5844**
Age 10-14	.5015**	.8474**	.5497**	.6608**
Age 15-19	.6224**	.8972**	.6627**	.7282**
Age 20-24	.7160**	.8676**	.7270**	.7814**
Age 25-29	.7074**	.9074**	.6595**	.7344**
Age 30-34	.6531**	.8933**	.6753**	.7019**
Age 35-39	.6762**	.8485**	.6683**	.6952**
Age 40-44	.6273**	.8659**	.6610**	.6850**
Age 45-49	.6298**	.8459**	.6278**	.6924**
Age 50-54	.4763**	.8633**	.4513**	.5040**
Age 55-59	.5875**	.8588**	.6558**	.6554**
Age 60-64	.5680**	.7888**	.6031**	.6069**
Age 65-69	.5977**	.8396**	.6563**	.6913**
Age 70-74	.4507**	.8051**	.5022**	.5326**
Age 75-79	.4698**	.7603**	.5461**	.5924**
Age 80-84	.5791**	.8449**	.6336**	.6653**
Age 85+	.4545**	.6509**	.4961**	.5624**

Signif: \* - .01 \*\* - .001

Table 4

Correlations of Black Male Homicide Rates with ECO1, ECO2, Percent of Male 15-24, and Percent of Male 20-24

	ECO1	ECO2	%M15-24	%M20-24
Total	.6449**	.3834*	.7981**	.7487**
Age 0	.3961*	.8179**	.3273*	.4018*
Age 1-4	.3763*	.8295**	.4677**	.5341**
Age 5-9	.3757*	.7551**	.4881**	.5849**
Age 10-14	.3662*	.5252**	.4474**	.4804**
Age 15-19	.3577*	.5921**	.3701*	.4038*
Age 20-24	.4635**	.3183	.6141**	.5247**
Age 25-29	.5222**	.2452	.7127**	.5842**
Age 30-34	.4757**	.1504	.6873**	.5373**
Age 35-39	.4466**	.1461	.6860**	.5033**
Age 40-44	.3208	.1752	.5472**	.3452*
Age 45-49	.3237	.2429	.5444**	.3571*
Age 50-54	.3008	.3893*	.5759**	.4248**
Age 55-59	.3819*	.4735**	.6136**	.4993**
Age 60-64	.5331**	.6780**	.6348**	.5337**
Age 65-69	.6516**	.6795**	.6824**	.6004**
Age 70-74	.5723**	.6662**	.6885**	.6729**
Age 75-79	.4543**	.5836**	.4797**	.5483**
Age 80-84	.5881**	.6455**	.4135**	.5133**
Age 85+	.4613**	.4584**	.2962	.3589*

Signif: \* - .01 \*\* - .001



Table 5

Correlations of Black Female Homicide Rates with ECO1, ECO2, Percent Male 15-24, and Percent Male 20-24

	ECO1	ECO2	%M15-24	%M20-24
Total	.7051**	.2399	.7920**	.7439**
Age 0	.3076	.7250**	.2155	.2844
Age 1-4	.3811*	.8327**	.4617**	.5289**
Age 5-9	.3336*	.7471**	.4273**	.5142**
Age 10-14	.4600**	.6649**	.4682**	.5146**
Age 15-19	.5701**	.0681	.6803**	.6569**
Age 20-24	.4940**	-.1117	.6445**	.5612**
Age 25-29	.4996**	-.1311	.4884**	.4125**
Age 30-34	.3572*	-.1414	.3402*	.1916
Age 35-39	.0655	-.0013	.1644	-.0616
Age 40-44	.0203	.0718	.0995	-.0887
Age 45-49	.0781	.2378	.1930	.0586
Age 50-54	.2194	.4239**	.2579	.1463
Age 55-59	.4342**	.6046**	.4727**	.3737*
Age 60-64	.3552*	.6127**	.4617**	.4390**
Age 65-69	.4882**	.7139**	.5020**	.5575**
Age 70-74	.3434*	.6032**	.3642*	.4204**
Age 75-79	.4293**	.5910**	.3402*	.4598**
Age 80-84	.2194	.3489*	.1844	.3045
Age 85+	.1506	.4236**	.1079	.2091

Signif: \* - .01 \*\* - .001

## Conclusion

Both ECO1 and ECO2 are found to have a high correlation with homicide rates in the U.S. over more than 70 years. Caucasians seem to be more sensitive to the fluctuation of economic conditions than African-Americans probably due to participation in work force. There is a difference between male and female. Proportions of young male population have immediate impact over homicide rates in the U.S. For African-Americans, male responds more sensitively than females. This, from another angle, reflects that most males kills males. Age selection is much clearer for black females, for younger black females responds more sensitively to the proportion of males than black females in their 30s to 50s.

When two factors, economic condition and proportion of young males, are combined, some of the correlations reach more than 0.9 and for these age-groups a historical trend rates can be almost exactly fitted. This indicates the impact of economic condition and our human biological process can be basically used to explain our human behavior on homicide in this society.

# Uncleared Homicides in Canada and the United States<sup>1</sup>

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It is reasonably clear that the proportion of homicides which are unsolved have been rising in the United States at least since the early 1960s (Cardarelli and Cavanagh, 1992) and a similar phenomenon exists in Canada (Silverman and Kennedy, 1993). Unsolved homicides in a country reflect more than the obvious fact that police either have not found a perpetrator or do not have enough evidence to charge. Unsolved homicides seem to be different from those that are solved in several respects. Most notably, those that are unsolved are often crimes committed by strangers. In effect, they represent crimes that are more difficult to solve. Further, these are the crimes that are most feared in society -- random violence by strangers (Riedel, 1993). For all of these reasons (and especially because they are rising) they deserve further investigation.

This presentation is the beginning of a more thorough examination of the topic and is purely exploratory. We will present our initial findings with the caveat that these may be altered with further research. Nonetheless, the basic description of the phenomenon should be valid.

Research on homicide in Canada and the U.S. has shown that the U.S. homicide rate is consistently three to four times that of Canada. Further, the nature of homicide in the two countries is similar but is characterized by some significant differences. For instance, as a proportion of all homicide, stranger homicide is far higher in the U.S. and more intimate social relations between victim and offender is more common in Canada. Hence, we expect similar variation with regard to unsolved (uncleared) homicide.

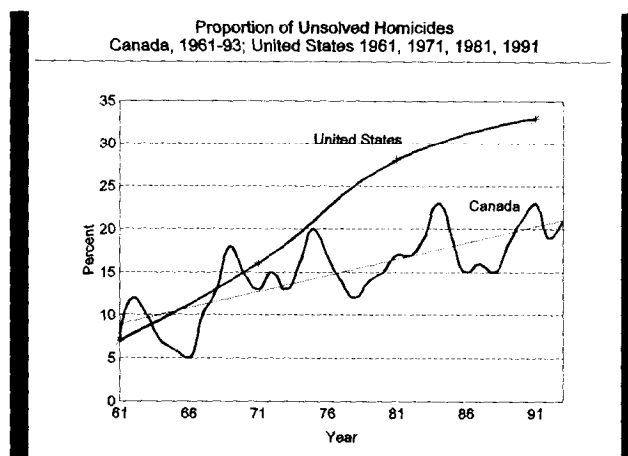
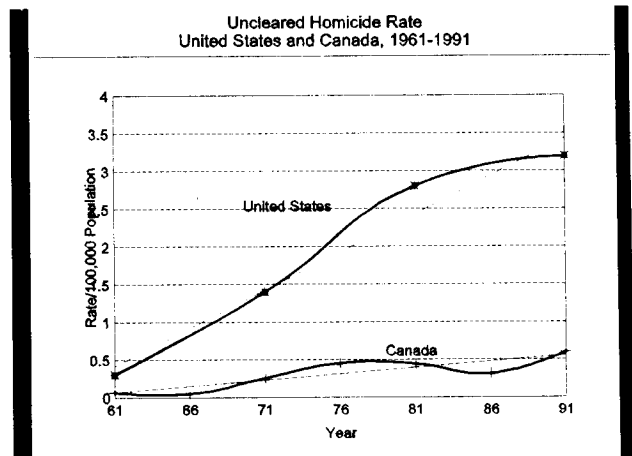


Figure 1 shows the proportion of uncleared homicides in the U.S. and in Canada for the

years 1961 through 1991<sup>2</sup>. Canada's peak uncleared homicide year is 1983 and in the last year of available data (1993) just slightly more than 20% of all of the homicides were uncleared. Over the 32-year period the average proportion of uncleared is about 16%. Nonetheless, there has been a dramatic rise from the 5% uncleared in 1966. In the United States, the rise in uncleared homicides appears to be more monotonic than it really is, as a result of using only four data points. It is interesting to note that in 1961 Canada and the United States had identical (93%) clearance rates. The proportion of uncleared in the United States departs from Canadian trends in the mid 1970s and continues to a point where fully one-third of all homicides do not result in clearance.

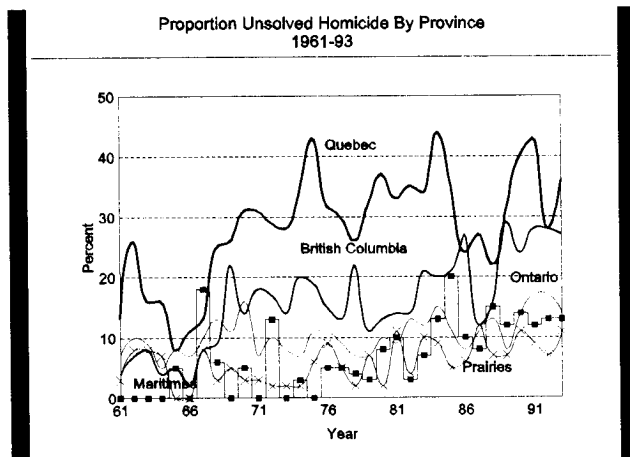
Figure 2 uses the same data to show rates of uncleared homicides in the two countries. The highest rate achieved in Canada is barely 0.6 per 100,000 while in the United States the peak rate is more than three per 100,000 (higher than Canada's homicide rate). While the homicide rate in the United States is three to four times that of Canada (Silverman and Kennedy, 1993), the uncleared homicide rate is closer to six times as high in the United States.

At this point we turn to an examination of the uncleared homicide situation in Canada in more detail. We will return to a discussion of the two countries later.

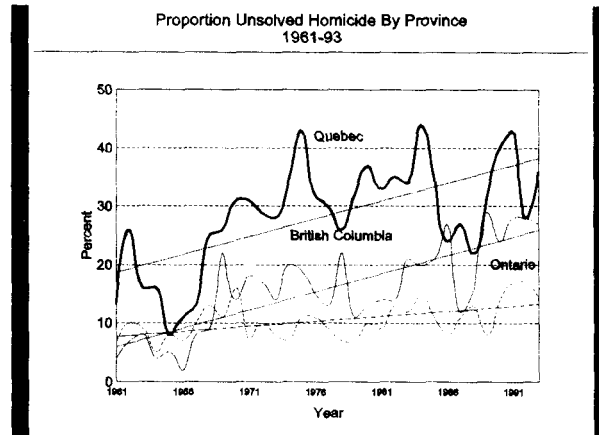


### Uncleared Homicides in Canada

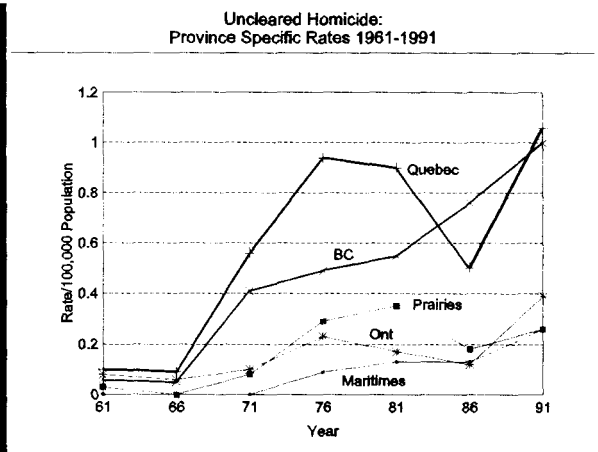
Homicide in Canada is not distributed equally between the provinces and it stands to reason that uncleared homicides will also not be equally distributed. Figure 3 shows the proportion of uncleared homicides by province<sup>3</sup>. Figure 3 shows that two provinces contribute more to the rates than any of the other provinces.



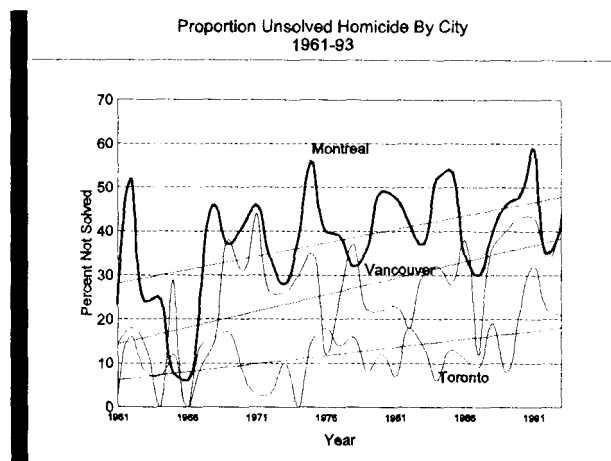
The Prairies and the Maritimes usually have cleared more than 90% of their homicides during the entire period. Figure 4 shows the same data but only for the two provinces (Quebec and British Columbia) which have the lowest clearance rates and for Ontario which is the most populated province (but also has a relatively high clearance rate). Uncleared homicides in Quebec peak at more than 40% while in British Columbia the highest proportion is close to 30%. No other province or area comes even close to these proportions.



Because the provinces have widely differing population bases, it makes sense to examine the province specific clearance rates for these areas. Figure 5 makes the differences between the provinces abundantly clear. Quebec and (to a lesser extent until recently) British Columbia drive the uncleared rate. Both Quebec and British Columbia peak at about one per 100,000 populations for uncleared homicides while the highest any other province or region reaches is barely 0.4 per 100,000. All uncleared rates were low until about 1966. Between 1966 and the early 1970s the rates of uncleared homicides in Quebec and British Columbia took off.



While there have been some noticeable variations in the rates in Quebec, the British Columbia climb has been very consistent to the early parts of this decade in which they have reached virtual equity with Quebec.



The last Figure returns to proportions instead of rates (which will be calculated as a part of the continuing research). It seemed to us that if particular provinces drive the uncleared homicide rate for the country then the larger cities in those provinces likely play a major role in that rate. indeed figure 6 shows that the

shows that the countries three largest cities have high proportions of uncleared homicide. Toronto is an exception except for a brief period in 1990-1993 in which more than 20% of the homicides were uncleared. It is Montreal that has startlingly high uncleared percentages (as high as 59%) while Vancouver has more than 40% uncleared in some specific years.

#### Findings up to the time of presentation

We started with an assumption that like the homicide rate in Canada and the United States, uncleared homicide would also share some characteristics. What we have seen so far is that the uncleared rate in the United States is climbing at a much higher rate than that in Canada and is six times as high as the Canadian rate. Further, if we were to remove the influence of Quebec and British Columbia from the Canadian data, the differences between the two countries would be even more significant. In fact, in most of Canada (exclusive of Quebec and British Columbia) between 80% and 90% of homicides are cleared.

What is it about Quebec and British Columbia that set them apart? First, both have well developed, flourishing drug trades that are not found to the same extent in the other provinces. Second, in Quebec, at least, there is very active organized crime which contributes to unsolved homicide through “gangland” murders. The natures of these crimes make them inherently less solvable.

Again, this highlight’s differences between the two countries. Cardarelli and Cavanagh (1992) show that there are regional differences in uncleared homicides within the United States, ranging from a high of 35% in the Northeast to a low of 21% in the South. In fact, when smaller units are observed, the East South Central United States has only a 12.5% uncleared proportion. Nonetheless, no region drives the proportions in the United States in the same way as Quebec drives the Canadian data. While a state by state examination might yield more comparable data, the distribution of populations probably obviates direct comparability. Cardarelli and Cavanagh also show that like Canada, the largest cities have high uncleared rates.

Cardarelli and Cavanagh (1992) show that there is little difference in homicide clearance by race of victim (1976-89). In Canada the racial issue is different from that in the United States. There is no significant black or Hispanic group of victims to compare to whites. However, there is a significant Native Canadian group and their rate of clearance is higher than that for whites. The reason is that many of these offences take place on Native reserves, most likely involve family members (and alcohol), and are the easiest kinds of homicide to solve.

#### Some other initial findings for uncleared homicides in Canada

- ◆ Homicides involving guns have the lowest clearance rates but this relationship disappears when Quebec is taken out of the mix. That is, clearance rates do not seem to vary much by weapon, except in Quebec
- ◆ There are more uncleared homicides when the victim is a male than when the victim is a female. This is consistent with our earlier comments about “gangland”

- murders.
- ◆ There is no observable effect of age of victim on homicide clearance.
  - ◆ With regard to marital status of victim, divorced and single victims have the highest uncleared rates.

### Caution

Because this is a work in progress, all findings must be considered preliminary and subject of greater scrutiny.

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## Endnotes

1. We would like to thank the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, and particularly, Orest Fedorowycz, for providing the Canadian data for this investigation. We would also like to thank Albert Cardarelli, University of Massachusetts, Boston for providing the U.S. data.
2. U.S. data are from Cardarelli and Cavanagh (1992) and are based on the SHR. Canadian data were generated by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada. Straight lines appearing in the graphs are trend lines.
3. Because of small populations and high clearance rates provinces have been combined in a traditional way -- the Maritimes consist of the four most easterly provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island), while the Prairies consist of three western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta).



**Section Three:**  
**Perceptions and Conceptions of Homicide**



## Homicide In Canada: Perception And Reality

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Homicides are objects of intensive news coverage and discussion. But what sort of picture of homicidal violence does the public derive? In what ways does perception depart from reality?

These questions are of practical importance. People's activities, movements and quality of life are evidently constrained by concerns about the risk of violent victimization, but we have little understanding of their apprehension of risk. In the substantial literature on fear of crime, perceived risk has been assessed mainly by undefined subjective metrics such response to a question like "how likely do you feel it is that you will be victimized?", on a scale ranging from "not at all likely" to "very likely" (see Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; Sparks & Ogles, 1990). A limitation of this approach is its circularity: one's personal likelihood of victimization is both a cause and a consequence of lifestyle choices and routine activities. Another is that group differences (e.g. by age or sex) could represent any combination of differences in beliefs about statistical realities, differences in self-regulated exposure to risk, and differences in the subjective definition of such vague terms as "very likely". It is therefore of potential interest to begin to separate beliefs about the incidence of crime from these other factors affecting perceived risk and fear. Moreover, with respect to such issues as policing, gun control, and criminal sanctions, public support for policy initiatives is likely to be influenced by popular beliefs about violent crime, and perhaps especially by the perception that the incidence of such crime is rapidly rising. Nevertheless, although both fear of crime and attitudes towards relevant policy issues are frequently assessed by pollsters, little is known about public awareness of the facts concerning homicide and other violent crime.

### A Survey of Students' Knowledge and Attitudes

In January-March, 1995, we conducted a survey of undergraduate students' beliefs about the facts concerning homicide in Canada, and their attitudes to some potentially related issues. The subjects were 194 students (62 male, 132 female) registered in Introductory Psychology at McMaster University. Ages ranged from 18 to 56, with 85% between 18 and 22; 86% were born in Canada.

Prior to completing the questionnaire, subjects read a cover sheet explaining their task as follows:

Homicide is the term used to mean the killing of a human being by another person. It includes murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Murder is the unlawful, malicious and intentional killing of a human being by another. Manslaughter is the unlawful killing of a human without malice and intent, for example, crimes of passion or

severe violence causing death. Infanticide is the killing of infants. These are the crimes referred to in this questionnaire when the word homicide is used. The definition of homicide does not include suicide or accidental deaths such as those that occur in traffic accidents.

This survey is designed to look at people's knowledge of the facts about homicide, and includes some attitudinal questions as well. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. When alternatives are provided, please circle only the letter beside the answer you believe is correct. If you are unsure about a factual question, give your best estimate. Most people won't know the answers to these 'fact' questions but we would like to know what your best guess is. So please don't leave any blanks or "I don't know" answers. In answering all of these questions, we would like you to think of homicide as it occurs within Canada and during the 1990's (unless the question specifies otherwise).

Survey respondents then completed a four-page questionnaire, consisting of (1) 16 factual questions, each accompanied by a "confidence scale" on which subjects were instructed to indicate "how sure you are that your answer is roughly correct" on a 5-point scale ranging from "not at all confident (pure guess)" to "absolutely confident"; (2) ten attitudinal questions; and (3) ten demographic questions about the respondent. A random variate was whether the factual or attitudinal questions were presented first, with the demographic questions always appearing last. Only certain highlights are presented in this report.

### Misperception of Homicide's Incidence

The first "factual question" was this:

What is the average number of homicides in Canada per year since 1990? \_\_\_\_\_

According to Statistics Canada's "Homicide Survey", the national archive of all homicides known to Canadian police forces, the correct answer at the time of our survey was 646.

The students' answers ranged from 6 to 200,000. Only 29% of estimates were accurate within a factor of two (i.e. between 323 and 1292). Estimates were mostly low, with 52% falling below 323 and 19% above 1292; the median estimate was 300.

Subjects were not highly confident that their estimates were even roughly correct, but those who were most confident indeed tended to be those who were most nearly correct: the mean confidence of the 29% who missed by a factor of two or less was 2.28, compared to 1.97 for those whose estimates were less than half the correct value and 1.77 for those whose estimates were more than twice the correct value ( $F_{2,188} = 3.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

## Misperception of Homicide Trends

Homicide rates in Canada have been fairly stable, with a slight downward trend since the mid-1970's (Figure 1). However, fully 90% of survey respondents answered (a) or (b) to this question:

Has the homicide rate in Canada increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 20 years?

- a) increased substantially
- b) increased somewhat
- c) stayed the same
- d) decreased somewhat
- e) decreased substantially

Subjects were much more confident that their answers to this question were "roughly correct" (mean confidence = 3.49) than for the preceding numerical estimate (mean confidence = 2.03). In fact, however, subjects were almost unanimously mistaken, falsely believing that homicide in Canada has been on rising. Only 6% of the respondents (7% of women and 5% of men) correctly chose alternative (d), and only another 4% were within one category of the right answer, by choosing (c). 37% were as wrong as it was possible to be, opting for "increased substantially" (Figure 1).

Strikingly, and unlike the case with estimates of the absolute incidence of homicide, confidence in one's answer concerning trends over the past 20 years was inversely related to accuracy. As the mean confidence scores in Table 1 indicate, men were more confident of their answers than women, but within both sexes, the respondents who were the wrongest, believing that homicide rates have "increased substantially", were the ones who were most confident that they were right! In a 2 x 2 ANOVA, main effects of being a male ( $F_{1,187} = 6.14, p < .02$ ) and of being wrong ( $F_{1,187} = 17.93, p < .001$ ) were both significant, and there was no significant interaction.

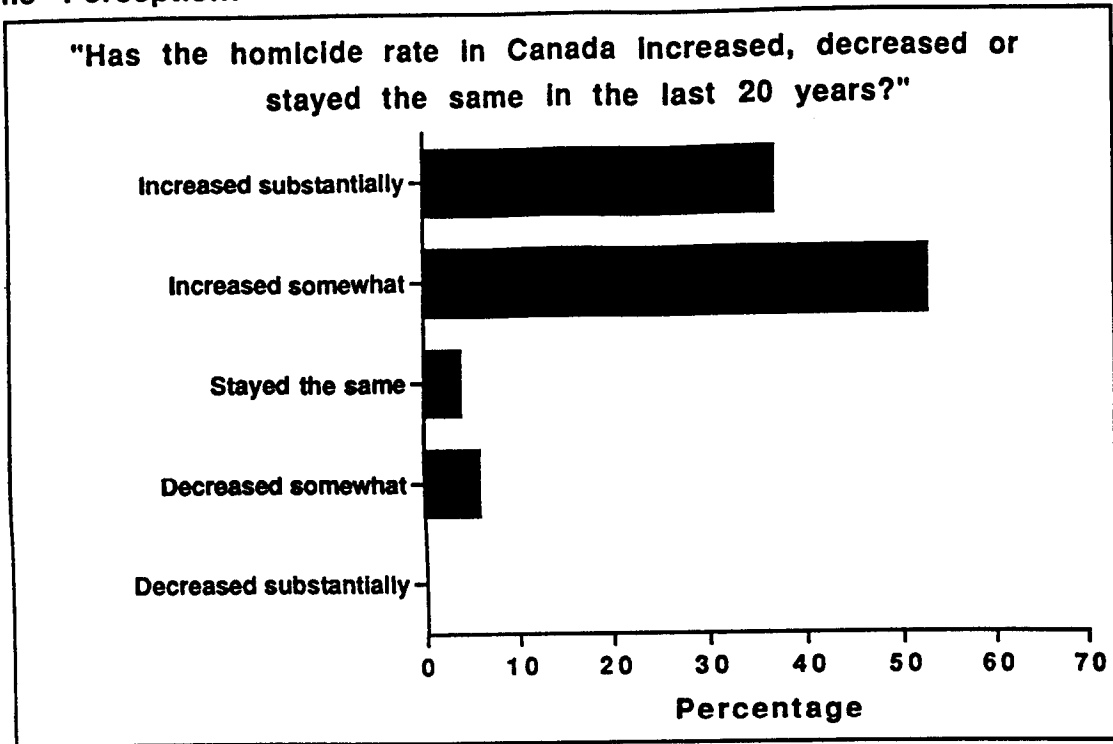
Table 1

Mean confidence of McMaster undergraduate survey respondents that their answers to the question "Has the homicide rate in Canada increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 20 years?" were "roughly correct." Within both sexes, respondents whose answers were farthest from reality were most confident.

	Those who wrongly believed that the homicide rate has "increased substantially" over the past 20 years	Those whose answers were more nearly correct
Women	3.85	3.10
Men	4.26	3.42

Scores are on a 5-point scale, where 1="not at all confident (pure guess)," and 5="absolutely confident"

**The Perception:**



**The Reality:**

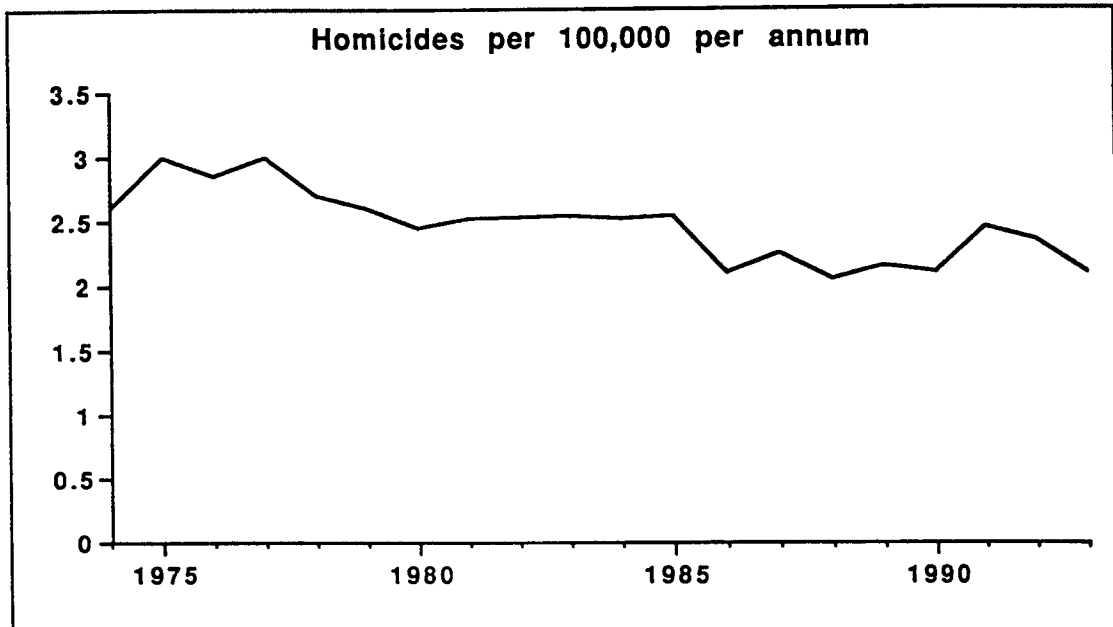


Figure 1. Misperception of homicide trends: students mistakenly believe that homicide is on the rise in Canada.

## Misperception of Sex-Differential Victimization

Subjects were asked "Who is most likely to be a victim of homicide?", with children, adolescents, adult women and adult men presented as the alternatives. In fact, only 6% of Canadian homicide victims in 1990-1992 were children under 12 years of age, and just 4% were adolescents aged 12-17. Twenty-nine percent were adult women and 61% were adult men. Thus, slain men outnumbered women by slightly more than 2 to 1, with children and adolescents constituting small minorities of homicide victims.

Again, misperception of this reality is substantial: most female respondents believed women to be more often slain than men, and so did almost half the male respondents (Figure 2). Men were again more confident of their answers than women, but confidence was scarcely related to accuracy. In both sexes, the few respondents who guessed that either children or adolescents were the principal victims were (appropriately) lacking in confidence, but the mean confidence rating of those who incorrectly chose women as the principal victims was identical to that of those who correctly chose men (Figure 2).

## Misapprehension of Victim-Killer Relationship Prevalences

Two "factual" questions addressed the prevalence of certain victim-killer relationships. These were:

What percentage of homicides are committed by strangers?

Please give a number between 0% (none) and 100% (all).

and

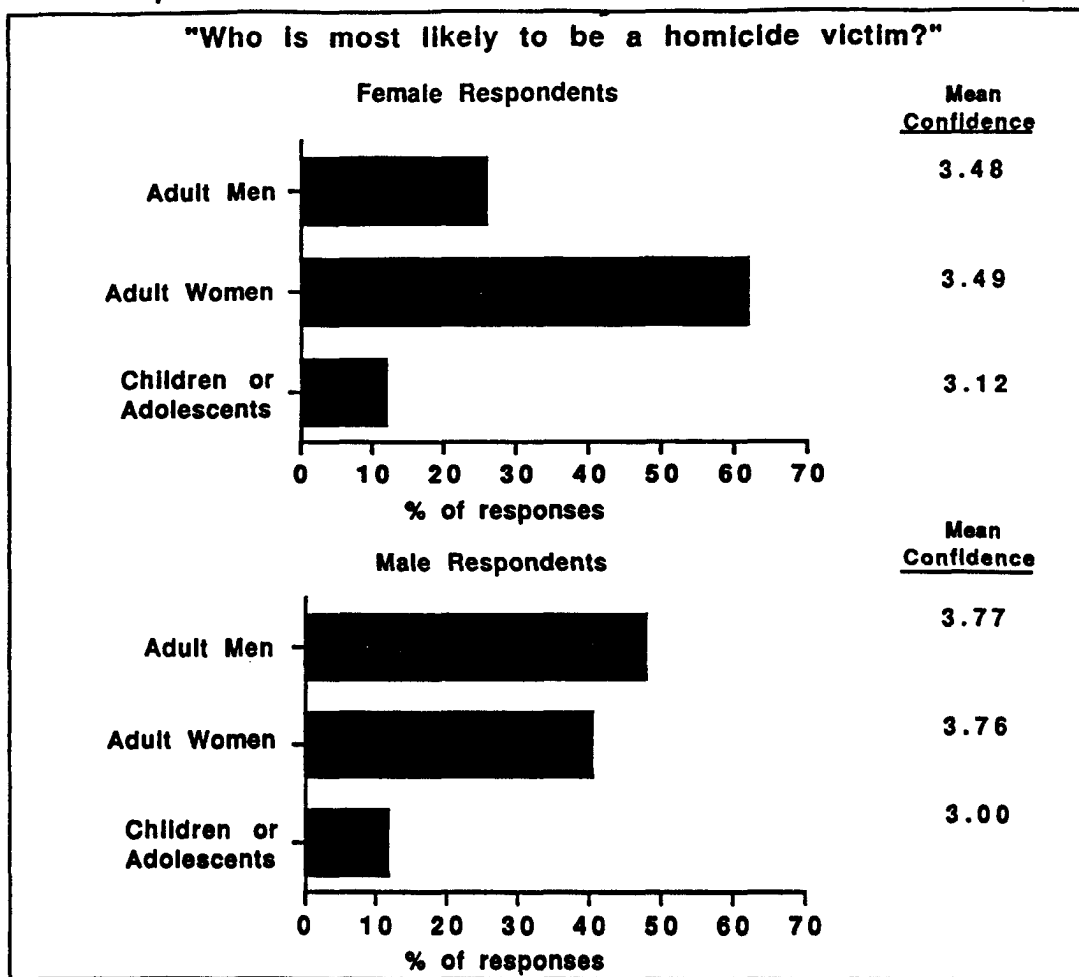
What percentage of homicides are committed by family members (i.e. persons related by blood or marriage to their victims)? Please give a number between 0% (none) and 100% (all).

The residual category of unrelated acquaintanceship was not mentioned.

The mean estimates were 33% committed by strangers and 52% by family members; women's and men's estimates were similar. In reality, according to Statistics Canada data, 14% of solved homicides in Canada in the 1990s had been committed by strangers, 30% by family members, and 56% by unrelated acquaintances. Thus, the proportions of both stranger and family cases among Canadian homicides were substantially overestimated.

This overestimation may, of course, have been due largely to the fact that the questionnaire mentioned only the "stranger" and "family member" options, without reminding respondents of the third possibility. Indeed, 28% of respondents gave answers to these two questions that summed to exactly 100%, suggesting that they considered the two categories exhaustive; an additional 10% gave answers that

**The Perception:**



**The Reality:**

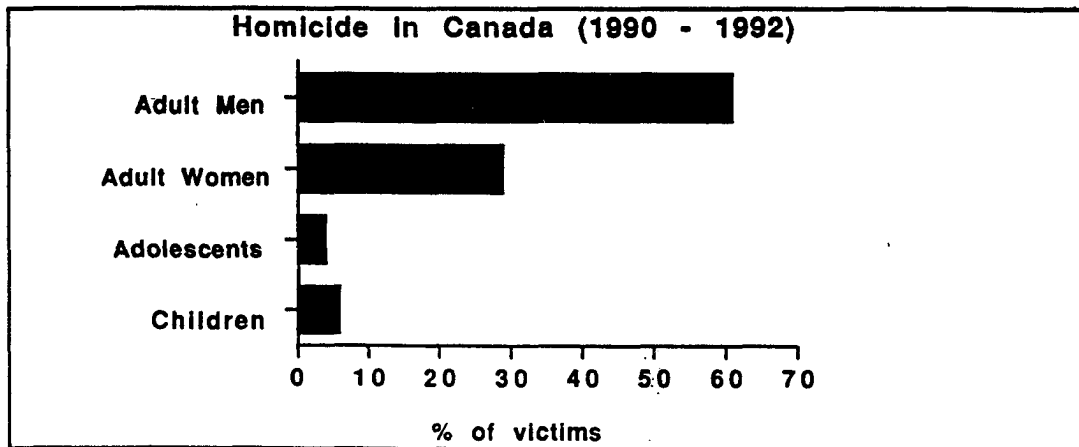


Figure 2. Misperception of sex-differential victimization. Most Canadian homicide victims are men, but many students mistakenly believe that women are the principle victims, and they are just as confident of their answers as those who answer correctly.



summed to more than 100%, even though the questions were immediately adjacent, suggesting innumeracy or incomprehension. But even among the remaining 120 respondents, all of whom provided estimates for "stranger" and "family member" that summed to less than 100%, the proportionate representation of these two victim-killer relationships was still substantially overestimated, with mean estimates of 28% and 41%, respectively.

### Misperceptions are not Predictive of Expressed Attitudes

By and large, responses to the attitude items were unrelated to responses to the factual items. Perhaps of greatest interest in this regard are attitudes toward the use of the death penalty.

We asked subjects to respond to this question:

"Do you believe that the death penalty should be reinstated for homicide?"

on a 5-point answer scale, where 1 was designated "definitely yes", 3 "neutral or undecided" and 5 "definitely no".

The mean response was 2.60, with 57% of respondents in favour of reinstating the death penalty (answer 1 or 2), and only 26% opposed (answer 4 or 5). Women (mean = 2.61) and men (2.58) answered almost identically.

We anticipated that subjects who overestimated homicide's incidence and/or misperceived it to be steeply rising might especially favour the death penalty. This hypothesis was not supported. Those who overestimated homicide's incidence by at least twofold were actually slightly less supportive of the death penalty (mean = 2.77) than those who guessed low (2.56) or more nearly correctly (2.57); these differences did not approach significance (ANOVA,  $p = .71$ ). Similarly, those who mistakenly believed Canada's homicide rate has "increased substantially" over the past 20 years were slightly less supportive of the death penalty (mean = 2.73) than those who were more nearly accurate (2.53); again, this is a nonsignificant comparison ( $p = .31$ ).

Attitudes to the death penalty were significantly related to one thing: the order in which questions were asked. Since the death penalty question was the first attitude item, half the subjects encountered it as their very first question, whereas the other half answered the 16 factual questions first. Those who were first required to consider the factual questions were significantly more supportive of the death penalty (mean = 2.41) than those who began with the attitude items (mean = 2.81;  $t_{192,df} = 2.11$ , 2-tailed  $p < .05$ ).

### Discussion

These Canadian university students are not well informed about homicide.

Almost all believed that the rate of this crime has been rising when it has not, and yet most underestimated its numerical incidence. Many falsely believed that women are more frequent victims than men, and that most cases involve strangers or family members. In general, the students' confidence in their beliefs was little related to accuracy, and with respect to recent trends, the most misinformed were the most confident.

Some of these misapprehensions are unsurprising. Homicides involving women, strangers, and family members receive much more media coverage than the more prevalent lethal disputes between unrelated, acquainted men (Daly & Wilson, 1988: 124), and these portrayals presumably affect notions of prevalence. Moreover, the idea of a "rising tide" of violent crime seems to have perennial appeal, regardless of actual trends (Daly & Wilson, 1988: 291). Nevertheless, it is important to begin to inquire what effects these systematic misperceptions may have on attitudes, discourse, and politics. It is unlikely that the general public is better informed than this relatively well educated sample.

It is perhaps surprising that attitudes toward the death penalty did not vary systematically in relation to the respondent's sex, beliefs, or even other attitudes (e.g. stances regarding abortion). This should not be taken to imply that views on this issue are impervious to information, however. To the contrary, the experimental manipulation of the ordering of questions had a significant impact on death penalty attitudes. This apparently represents a "framing" effect, such that merely being obliged to think about homicide (without actually acquiring any information) produced an increase in punitiveness. This suggests that important policy-related attitudes are indeed influenced by the contexts within which they are elicited.

### Acknowledgments

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## Reconstructing a Stereotype of Violent Criminality

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Conflict theorists have historically argued that the effective law is a selective process that operates to the disadvantage of poor and minority defendants at various stages of legal decision making (Sellin, 1930; Sutherland, 1949; Quinney, 1970; Chambliss and Seidman, 1982). These inequities are said to result not only from direct discrimination against such groups but from their lack of accessibility to the resources required for successful defense. Regardless of the seriousness of their offenses or prior criminal histories, they are thought to receive more severe legal treatment than their socially and economically more advantaged counterparts. Research on the effects of these status versus legally relevant variables on legal decisions, however, has produced mixed evidence for this explanation of law (for reviews, see Kleck, 1981; Blumstein, Cohen, Martin, and Tonry, 1983; Tittle and Curran, 1988).

As an extension of the conflict perspective, and based in part on these contradictory findings, it has been argued that discrimination in the legal process may be more subtle than the theory implies, operating through institutionalized stereotypes of criminality that disadvantage only certain minority group members (Swigert and Farrell, 1977; Lurigio and Carroll, 1985; Drass and Spencer, 1987; Farrell and Holmes, 1991; Case and Farrell, 1995; Farrell and Case, 1995). This "interpretive approach" takes the position that the judicial system's commitment to equal justice and its organizational imperatives for bureaucratic efficiency prevent more general and overt forms of discrimination (Swigert and Farrell, 1977; Farrell and Holmes, 1991). The stereotype, however, lends legitimacy to legal decisions and helps routinize the legal process so that cases may be disposed of efficiently and without threat to the "collective myth" of equal justice. Thus, Farrell and Holmes (1991:536) state that:

...Court actors internalize crime stereotypes as cognitive schemata that provide a shorthand for information-processing in a system characterized by time and resource constraints. Alleged transgressions that fit stereotypes are, therefore, dealt with routinely while exceptions require more careful consideration. Court actors are motivated to reinterpret the latter to correspond with their schemata...[The decision of] either outcome preserves shared stereotypes and affords jointly derived decisions.

The interpretive approach is grounded in Myrdal's (1944) now familiar observation that our society is characterized by both an official stance of equality before the law and extreme conditions of social and racial inequality. Institutionalized stereotypes of crime and criminality that incorporate class, race, and ethnic characteristics become a way of easing this dilemma in the justice system (Swigert and Farrell, 1977; Farrell and Case, 1995). Because these stereotypes reflect more general beliefs and are officially validated by their application in the courts, they become taken-for-granted assumptions (Emerson, 1983; Farrell and Holmes, 1991) that are often blind to their underlying ethnic, racial, and class biases.<sup>1</sup> In a system that seeks bureaucratic efficiency (Blumberg, 1967; Emerson, 1983; Nardulli, Eisenstein, and Fleming, 1988) cases that conform to the stereotypes are thus disposed of routinely, while cases at variance are accorded more careful attention (Farrell and Holmes, 1991: 530). Because the offense and social attributes of poor and minority defendants more often fit the stereotype, they are accordingly disadvantaged in criminal proceedings (Swigert and Farrell, 1977). By routinizing and rationalizing these discriminatory legal actions, however, institutionalized stereotypes function to avert any cognitive dilemmas that would otherwise undermine the collective myth of equal justice (Swigert and Farrell, 1977; Farrell and Holmes, 1991).

The interpretive approach has produced a fair amount of research, with studies seeking to identify the operation of stereotypes throughout the legal process. Decisions regarding prosecution (Stanko, 1981; Bishop and Frazier, 1984; Miethe and Moore, 1986), defense (Maynard, 1982, 1984), conviction (Farrell and Swigert, 1986; Miethe, 1987; Williams and Farrell, 1990), and sentencing (Cohen and Kluegel, 1978; Farnworth and Horan, 1980; Frazier, Bock, and Henretta, 1983; Kruttschnitt and Green, 1984; Zatz, 1984), as well as those pertaining to law enforcement (Dannefer and Schutt, 1982; Irwin, 1985; Sampson, 1986; Gilboy, 1991) and regulation (Case and Farrell, 1995; Farrell and Case, 1995), have been explored for the effects of these imageries. Although most of these studies have suggested the operation of institutionalized stereotypes, they have suffered fundamental problems in operationally defining the phenomena (Farrell and Holmes, 1991). Because of the elusiveness of such stereotypes, virtually all of the research from this perspective has had to assume their influence through status variables, without directly measuring the stereotypes and testing for their effects.<sup>2</sup> An extensive search of the literature has shown that only one study has ever discerned an institutionalized stereotype of criminality and could, therefore, test directly for its effects on legal decision making. That is the senior author's study on the effects of an institutionalized stereotype of violent criminality on legal decisions in cases of homicide (Swigert and Farrell, 1977).

The study found that a court psychiatric clinic's diagnosis of propensity to violence -- a diagnosis which the clinic called "normal primitive" -- was related to legal outcomes (Swigert and Farrell, 1977). Resembling the subculture of violence thesis (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967), the clinic's description of the diagnostic category held that the spontaneous expressions of violence that characterize the "normal primitive" are endemic to certain poor and minority populations. It was found that this diagnosis was

indeed applied more often to black and lower class defendants. And, although the diagnosis was not shared with the court until the time of sentencing, those so labeled were less likely to obtain bail or a jury trial, the lack of which resulted in more severe convictions, effects that were independent of the defendant's race and class. That the clinic's diagnosis of "normal primitive" affected these earlier -- presentencing -- stages of decision making, suggests that the label was representative of a more general institutionalized stereotype of violent criminality that operated at various levels of the court.

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

Because the "normal primitive" label was unique to the clinic of the jurisdiction in which the study was conducted, efforts to replicate these findings have had to assume the influence of the stereotype on legal outcomes without direct measures of the variable (see e.g., Boris, 1979; Walsh, 1985). The operation of the stereotype has been inferred largely from the status characteristics of defendants and, to a lesser extent, their victims. Thus, as with virtually all of the research from the interpretive perspective, these studies do not tell us if it is the stereotype or some other underlying factors that account for the effects of the status characteristics.

The data from this earlier study provide an unusual opportunity to address this general problem of research in the area. They allow us to develop a direct measure of a stereotype by reproducing the "normal primitive" diagnosis from other variables contained in the study. Toward that end, we have sought to identify the social, legal background, and instant offense characteristics that coalesce around the application of the stereotypical label. To establish the validity of the measure, we then seek to determine if the combination of these characteristics is as effective as the diagnostic label in predicting legal outcomes. By reconstructing a valid picture of the combination of factors that entered into the designation of offenders as "normal primitive," we hope ultimately to provide for more systematic studies of legal decision making in cases of violent criminality.

## THE DATA

The data contain information on cases in criminal homicide in a large urban jurisdiction in northeastern United States for the period 1955 through 1973. Information on the offense and characteristics of defendants and victims was drawn from the files of the court's psychiatric clinic. Charged with the assessment of violent offenders as part of pre-sentence investigations, the clinic had established a routine policy of examining all cases of criminal homicide. Consequently, all persons arrested for murder in the jurisdiction were seen at the clinic, where a thorough assessment was done of their psychological condition and social background. Except in cases where the defendant was thought to be insane, and therefore unable to stand trial, the findings of these evaluations were summarized, sealed, and forwarded to the presiding judge for use in sentencing. Thus, the results of the clinic's assessment were made available to the court only after the defendant was found or pled guilty.

The clinic files were exhaustive of cases involving an arrest on general charges of murder over the 19 year period of the study. The final sample included 444 defendants and 432 victims, a 50 percent simple random selection of the cases seen at the clinic. Supplementary legal information on these cases was obtained from the indictment records maintained by the jurisdiction's Clerk of Courts. A detailed description of the sample and sampling techniques appears in Murder, Inequality and the Law (Swigert and Farrell, 1976).

## THE NORMAL PRIMITIVE

Part of the standard diagnostic terminology of the clinic staff, a description of the "normal primitive" classification was provided by the clinic and is summarized here. It is clear from this description that the clinic category was more a social classification of criminality reflective of popular conceptions, than a medical or psychological classification of mental disorder (the description is taken from Swigert and Farrell, 1977: 18-19).<sup>3</sup>

While treated as a diagnostic category, the designation "normal primitive" constitutes a social description of a group of people whose behavior, within their own social setting, is best described as normal. The "normal primitive" comes largely from the foreign-born and black populations. Their lives are characterized by impoverished economic conditions which, as with their behavior, may be described as "primitive." Occupational achievements center around unskilled, menial labor, and these careers are often sporadic. Educational levels are minimal and testing indicates borderline to low-average intelligence. While the children of the foreign-born do acclimate to a less "primitive" existence, the offspring of the black population seem unaffected by improved educational and social opportunities.

The personality characteristics of the "normal primitive" are childlike or juvenile, the behavior and attitude being similar to that of an eight to 12-year-old boy. At the same time, acceptance as a man by his group is very important. In this regard, the "normal primitive" is sensitive and takes offense to any question of his masculinity.

Interaction among such individuals often occurs in bars where arguments readily result in aggressive encounters. Compelled to fight any challenger of his masculinity or courage, the "normal primitive" protects himself by carrying a lethal weapon.

While sexual patterns among the foreign-born are relatively stable, promiscuity among the blacks provides additional grounds for aggression. Sexual prowess is a reflection of the masculinity of males, but is denied to females. Thus, when infidelity occurs, "as it inevitably does," the humiliation

perceived by the male will result in threats and physical abuse that may produce the death of any one, or all members, of the sex triangle.

In summary:

"The primitive man is comfortable and without mental illness. He has little, if any, education and is of dull intelligence. His goals are sensual and immediate -- satisfying his physical and sexual needs without inhibition, postponement or planning. There is little regard for the future -- extending hardly beyond the filling of his stomach and the next payday or relief check. His loyalties and identifications are with a group that has little purpose in life, except surviving with a minimum of sweat and a maximum of pleasure. He has a 10-year-old boy's preoccupation with muscular prowess and "being a man." Unfortunately, he lacks the boy's external restraint and supervision so that he is more or less an intermittent community problem and responsibility." (clinic description)

The "normal primitive" classification represents a conception of criminality that combines both class and race characteristics. The imagery suggests a group of people whose style of life and innate attributes predispose them to violence. The tendency toward physical aggression over "trivial" issues, histories of family disorganization, and tenuous marital ties, combined with a perception by the offender that the violent response is appropriate and necessary, are manifestations of the volatile life style in which the "normal primitive" is said to exist.

## PREDICTOR VARIABLES

The clinic description of the "normal primitive" served to guide our choice of the characteristics considered in developing our measure. In reconstructing the "normal primitive" classification, we first identified the social, legal background, and instant offense characteristics that predict the application of the label. Having identified these characteristics, we suggest that they constitute important aspects of the stereotype that can be used by others as a composite measure of the extent to which cases conform to the stereotype. Most of this information is accessible in archival data on violent crimes, particularly in the police reports of such offenses and in the pre-sentencing materials compiled by offices of probation and parole.

### Social Characteristics

The social characteristics include the sex, race, age, education, source of income, marital status, and intelligence of defendants. Based on the clinic description, we thought defendants would more likely be designated "normal primitive" if they were male, black, 30 years-of-age and older, with less than 10 years of schooling, on public assistance, separated or in a common-law relationship, and of borderline to low-average

intelligence. While some of these categories are self-evident from the clinic description, those pertaining to age, education, source of income, marital status, and intelligence require additional explanation.

Age. It was felt that older defendants would be viewed as having the more habitual aggressive tendencies attributed to the "normal primitive." Without youth as an excuse for their behavior, they would more likely be seen as having established such a pattern of violence.

Education. Because state law in the jurisdiction required school attendance through age 15, drop-out would normally occur before completion of the tenth grade. The characteristic of "minimal" education attributed to the "normal primitive" would, therefore, seem to preclude those who completed more than the minimum required schooling.

Source of Income. Standard measures of social class may not sufficiently capture the status distinctions made among these cases in the courts. Because of the generally poor and minority backgrounds of such defendants, more subtle distinctions might be made among cases within these groups. As reflected in the clinic description, one such distinction may be the individual's dependency on public assistance versus any kind of gainful employment. This is indeed evident in clinic statements regarding the "normal primitive's" tendency toward "sporadic" employment and a dependency on "relief checks."<sup>4</sup>

Marital Status. The "normal primitive" is characterized as promiscuous and lacking traditional marital ties. Those who were separated or living in common law relationships seem to have been viewed in the clinic records as possessing these attributes and, therefore, as less legitimate than those who were married, widowed, divorced, or never married.

Intelligence. The clinic used the Wechsler-Bellevue and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales to classify most of the defendants studied, although a substantial number of subjective assessments also appear to have been made. All evaluated cases were subsequently categorized along a continuum ranging from "low moron" (1) to "superior intelligence" (14). Because the clinic description states that "normal primitives" have "borderline to low-average intelligence," defendants evaluated as having intelligence levels that fell on either side of these classifications were not expected to elicit the clinic label.<sup>5</sup>

### Background and Offense Characteristics

The clinic description of the "normal primitive" implies both an intergenerational pattern of criminality and a history of violence on the part of the individual. The defendant background characteristics therefore included notation of a family criminal history, and arrest and conviction for a violent crime. Offense characteristics included



the race and class composition of the defendant-victim pair,<sup>6</sup> the mode, circumstances and location of the murder, and any indication of remorse on the part of the defendant. Again, based on the clinic description, we expected the "normal primitive" designation to be more often applied in cases involving only black and lower class defendants and victims, where the incident involved bar room arguments and fights that resulted in deadly knifings or beatings,<sup>7</sup> and when the clinic file indicated an absence of defendant remorse.

Garfinkle (1949) argues that offenses involving blacks against blacks are viewed as normal within their context and that such a definition was the underlying cause of the differential treatment of inter- and intra-racial offenses found in his research. When the social class composition of defendant-victim pairs has been introduced in similar analyses, however, it has emerged as the more important determinant of legal outcomes, with no significant effects of the racial composition of the dyad (Farrell and Swigert, 1978a), thus suggesting that apparent racial differentiation may be operating through class differences in inter- and intra-racial defendant-victim pairs. For these reasons, both the race composition and class composition of the dyad were used in our analysis. The social class of defendants and victims was measured through the use of Trieman's (1977) Index of Occupational Prestige, with the variable dichotomized at the mean for purposes of making the paired comparisons.

That some of the defendants may have been recent migrants from the South, with its popular association with violence and higher homicide rates, also may have contributed to their designation as "normal primitive" (see Swigert and Farrell, 1976 for a discussion of the relationship of the "normal primitive" stereotype to the subculture of violence thesis). Unfortunately, the data did not provide for an analysis of the effects of this variable on the application of the clinic label. Neither time in the U.S. or in the jurisdiction were systematically available in the clinic records.

## ANALYSIS

The analysis proceeded first to describe the distribution of the sample in terms of the categories of the dependent and predictor variables. We then conducted chi-square analyses of the differences in the frequency of predictor variables in the "normal primitive" and non-normal primitive categories. Those variables that were found to differ significantly between groups were then entered into a logistic regression (logit) analysis to determine their relative importance in predicting the dependent variable, "normal primitive" diagnosis. The significant variables from the logit analysis were then used to construct a measure of the stereotype that could be employed in research on legal decision making in cases of violent crime. Finally, to explore the construct validity of the measure, we conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regression analyses to examine the relationships among the relevant variables used in original analysis (Swigert and Farrell, 1977), first with the clinic label -- "normal primitive," and then with our newly constructed measure of the label.

## Predicting the Label

The distribution of cases for the normal primitive designation and the various categories of the predictor variables is shown in Table 1. The figures reflect the pattern of generally impoverished social conditions that surround the problem of criminal homicide in the U.S. The Table shows that about two-thirds of the defendants were black, almost half had not completed the tenth grade, and nearly a third were receiving public assistance (i.e., welfare payments). Almost half had been evaluated as having less-than-average intelligence and nearly a third had been arrested for a violent crime. More than half of the incidents involved blacks killing blacks. The clinic had designated almost a quarter of the defendants as "normal primitive."

The results of the chi-square tests of differences in the frequency of the predictor variables in the "normal primitive" and non-normal primitive categories are also shown in Table 1. The figures show that the differences between "normal primitives" and those not labeled "normal primitive" were large, with statistically significant differences for all but five of the 16 variables. The exceptions were defendant sex, family criminal history, conviction for a violent crime, death by knifings or beatings, and indication of an absence of remorse. Based on this analysis, we conclude that "normal primitives" were more often black, older, with less than a tenth-grade education, receiving public assistance, separated or in a common-law relationship, and of borderline to low-average intelligence. They also more frequently had records of arrest for a violent crime. Their offenses were more often black intra-racial and intra-lower class homicides, and were more likely to have involved an argument or fight and to have occurred in a bar. Especially noteworthy is the substantially (seven times) greater likelihood of the "normal primitive" label being applied to blacks. Also, those on public assistance, those of borderline to low-average intelligence, those involved in black intra-racial homicides, and those involved in intra-lower class homicides were considerably (more than three times) more likely to be given the label. Although the description of the "normal primitive" might appear to have greater relevance to males, it is also noteworthy that sex differences did not emerge in the clinic's application of the label.

The 11 variables that produced significant chi-square results were then entered into a logistic regression analysis in order to determine their relative importance in predicting the dependent variable, "normal primitive" diagnosis. However, three pairs of these variables (defendant's race and racial composition of the defendant-victim pair; education and intelligence; and source of income and socio-economic composition of the defendant-victim pair), were highly correlated. The analysis was therefore repeated with the variables which were most strongly correlated with the dependent variable (defendant's race and intelligence), except source of income which was included because of its greater accessibility in archival data on violent crime.<sup>8</sup>

Table 1

Sample Distribution and Chi Square Analysis for Normal Primitive and Non-Normal Primitive Defendants

	N	%	Normal Primitive (N=99) %	Non-Normal Primitive (N=336) %	Significance	Odds Ratio
<u>Defendant</u>						
Male	345	79	76	80	.394	----
Black	272	63	91	56	.000*	7.65
Age 30 and above	253	58	72	54	.003*	2.14
Education <10	196	45	65	40	.000*	4.78
Public Assistance	137	32	54	25	.000*	3.40
Separated/Common-law relationship	100	23	38	18	.001*	2.75
Borderline to low-average intelligence	157	40	65	32	.000*	3.91
<u>Criminal History</u>						
Family criminal history <sup>8</sup>	38	9	13	07	.118	----
Violent crime arrest	122	29	38	27	.039*	1.71
Violent crime conviction	66	16	20	15	.255	----
<u>Incident</u>						
Black/Black defendant-victim pair	190	54	79	46	.000*	4.39
Low/Low class defendant- victim pair	36	18	37	14	.004*	3.52
Knifing/beating	169	39	47	37	.108	----
Argument or fight	121	29	42	16	.004*	2.06
Barroom incident	43	10	17	08	.013*	2.41
No remorse <sup>8</sup>	47	11	13	10	.506	----

<sup>8</sup>Noted in the clinic record.

An additional concern was that the "normal primitive" category might be inferred not only as an additive function of the individual case attributes, but from configurations of the social and offense characteristics. To identify such configurations, we explored

the interaction effects among the significant predictor variables in Table 1. An interaction effect was indeed found, that of being black with less than 10 years of schooling. Thus, in decisions to assign the label, the clinic seems to have attended to the issue of low education in cases of blacks but not in cases of whites. This interaction variable was, therefore, also entered into the logit analysis.

The results for the logit analysis are presented in Table 2. Six variables emerged with significant independent contributions to designation as "normal primitive." The variables are race, source of income, intelligence, marital status, location of the offense, and race/education. Defendants were more likely to be classified as "normal primitive" if they were black, receiving public assistance, believed to have borderline to low-average intelligence, separated or living in a common-law relationship, alleged to have murdered someone in a bar, and black with less than 10 years of schooling. Education by itself was not a significant predictor of the stereotypical label in a logit reanalysis of the data with education substituted for intelligence.

Table 2

Logit Results for Normal Primitive Diagnosis by Characteristics of The Defendant and Offense

Variables	Beta* (unstandardized) (N=351)	T-ratio	p Value	Beta** with only sig. vars (N=375)
Black	1.096	2.39	.017	1.07
On Public Assistance	1.205	3.95	.000	1.17
Borderline to Low-Average Intelligence	0.964	3.18	.001	0.88
Separated/Common-Law Relationship	0.676	2.02	.044	0.90
Barroom Incident	0.918	2.01	.045	0.95
Black/Education <10	0.681	1.97	.049	0.95
Age 30 and above	0.498	1.53	.127	----
Violence Crime Arrest	-0.020	-0.06	.951	----
Argument or Fight	0.344	1.08	.277	----

\* $\chi^2 = 90.813$  w/9df,  $p < .000$

\*\*Used to weight normal primitive measure  
 $\chi^2 = 97.456$  w/6df,  $p < .000$

## The Measure

The six significant variables from the logit analysis were used to construct a measure of the "normal primitive" stereotype. It is obvious from the analysis that these attributes do not weigh equally in decisions of whether an offender fits the institutionalized imagery. To address this issue, we have assigned to each attribute the value of the unstandardized coefficient for its relationship to the diagnostic label in a logit analysis including only the six significant variables (see Table 2, column 4). Cases in which there was missing information (15 percent) were deleted from the sample.<sup>9</sup> The sample scores for the measure ranged from 0 to 5.92, with a mean of 2.04 and a standard deviation of 1.42. The higher the score for a particular case, the greater the extent to which that case is thought to conform to the stereotypical imagery of violent criminality. For example, if the defendant was black, on public assistance, and was alleged to have killed someone in a bar, but did not have borderline to low average intelligence, did not have less than a tenth-grade education, and was not separated or living in a common-law relationship, he would receive a score of 3.19.<sup>10</sup>

This newly constructed measure conceptualizes the stereotype as a continuous rather than dichotomous variable. It thus measures the degree to which a case conforms to the imagery, rather than indicating if the case falls within or outside the parameters of the label. That the composite scale is a higher order of measurement would appear to be an advantage methodologically, especially if the clinic label is indeed representative of a more general conception of violent criminality (Swigert and Farrell, 1977). The ordinal quality of the measure would presumably make it a more sensitive measure, identifying cases that more or less approximate the stereotype, some cases of which might otherwise fall outside the limits of the original label. One would therefore expect more significant effects of the variable in analyses of differential justice.

## Validity of the Measure

The final stage of the analysis addresses the validity of this measure as a proxy for the "normal primitive" stereotype of violent criminality. If the scale does indeed have such construct validity, the pattern of findings should be the same when the scale scores are substituted for the presence or absence of the "normal primitive" clinic label.

Although the original analysis (Swigert and Farrell, 1977) addressed the antecedents of the "normal primitive" label, the research sought primarily to determine the effects of the application of the stereotype on the acquisition of legal resources and conviction severity. Employing a path analytic technique, that analysis attempted to specify, in the following stages: 1) the effects of the defendant's sex, occupational status, and race on the development of a prior conviction record; 2) the influence of all these variables on the application of the stereotypical label, "normal primitive;" 3) the effects of the defendant's social characteristics, prior conviction severity, and designation

as "normal primitive" on obtaining a) private counsel, b) bail (with counsel included), and c) jury trial (with counsel and bail included); and 4) the influence of all prior variables (defendant social characteristics, prior criminal record, the "normal primitive" designation, and access to legal resources) on conviction severity. Because we have established the antecedents of the "normal primitive" label in reconstructing the stereotype, we will address only stages three and four of the design in our reanalysis of the data. Further, we have omitted defendant occupational status and race from the analysis because of their incorporation into our measure of the

Table 3

Distribution on Categories of Variables Used in the Reanalysis of the Data\*

VARIABLE	N	%
<u>Defendant Sex</u>		
Female (0)	91	20
Male (1)	353	80
<u>Prior Conviction Severity</u>		
$\bar{x} = 4.99$	----	----
<u>Normal Primitive Diagnosis</u>		
No (0)	336	77
Yes (1)	99	23
<u>Normal Primitive Measure</u>		
$\bar{x} = 2.04$	----	----
<u>Victim Race</u>		
Not Black (0)	152	43
Black (1)	205	57
<u>Defense Attorney</u>		
Public (0)	107	27
Private (1)	287	73
<u>Bail Bond</u>		
No (0)	254	67
Yes (1)	125	33
<u>Jury Trial</u>		
No (0)	222	60
Yes (1)	147	40
<u>Conviction Severity</u>		
Not held for court, nolle prossed, dismissed (1)	46	12
Acquittal (2)	46	12
First Degree Misdemeanor (3)	37	9
Second Degree Felony (4)	125	31
First Degree Felony (5)	103	26
First Degree Murder (6)	42	10

\* A summation of the prescribed maximum penalties for offenses for which the defendant previously had been found guilty constituted a ratio measure of prior conviction severity (see Swigert and Farrell 1977).

stereotype.<sup>11</sup> Table 3 presents the values for the variables used in this last stage of the analysis.

The results of the analyses of the data with the original clinic label, "normal primitive," and then with our newly constructed proxy for the label are shown in Table 4. The mix of dichotomous and ordinal level dependent variables required that both logit and OLS analyses be used to estimate their parameters. Logistic regression was necessarily used to predict the dichotomous variables -- private attorney, bail bond, and jury trial, while OLS regression was used to predict the ordinal level variable -- final conviction severity (see Labovitz, 1970; Borhnstedt and Carter, 1971; Kim, 1975). Because the findings of both analyses were essentially the same, and in order to compare coefficients across equations, the results for only the OLS analysis are presented. Accordingly, Table 4 shows each independent variable's unstandardized coefficient and standard error for the OLS equations. Significant relationships to the dependent variable are indicated with asterisks and their probability levels and the explained variance values ( $R^2$ ) for the combined effects of the independent variables are noted.

The coefficients in Table 4 show that the pattern of results for the model using the clinic diagnosis, "normal primitive," and the newly constructed measure of the label are indeed similar. In each instance in which the diagnosis has an effect there is a corresponding effect of the measure. Of particular interest is that both the diagnosis and the measure significantly predict the withholding of bail which, in turn, results in a more severe conviction for both models. We also note that both the diagnostic label and the measure are directly and positively related to conviction severity, with the measure reaching statistical significance. Other patterns that emerge in both models are the significant effects of: 1) a more extensive prior conviction record on the denial of bail; 2) a private attorney on the ability to obtain a jury trial; and 3) being female and having a jury trial on a less severe conviction.

The effects of victim's race varies across models. When our measure of the "normal primitive" was substituted for the diagnosis, the race of the victim made a significant independent contribution to the issuance of bail, a contribution, along with that of the new measure, that has produced an  $R^2$  value nearly twice that of the model using the diagnosis. Thus, we see here that defendants alleged to have murdered white victims did not as often obtain bail, again, the lack of which resulted in more severe convictions. In addition, there was a direct effect of victim's race on conviction severity; defendants who murdered white victims were more severely convicted. These effects were not obtained in the model utilizing the original diagnosis. This suggests that the clinic's application of the "normal primitive" diagnosis may have been influenced by the race of the victim, with defendants alleged to have murdered blacks more often eliciting the label, thus precluding a finding of an independent contribution of victim race in the model that included the diagnosis. This finding is likely a function of the predominately black intra-racial composition of defendant-victim pairs in "normal primitive" offenses, a condition that we had hypothesized might contribute to the perceived "normality" of

Table 4

Comparison of the Contribution of the Normal Primitive Diagnosis and Newly Constructed Normal Primitive Measure at Each Stage of the Analysis [Ols Coefficients (Standard Errors) for Each Independent Variable Are Presented]

<u>Dependent Variables</u>	<u>Private Attorney</u>		<u>Bail Bond</u>		<u>Jury Trial</u>		<u>Conviction Severity</u>	
	Diagnosis (No-Yes)	Measure (L-H) <sup>a</sup>	Diagnosis (No-Yes)	Measure (L-H)	Diagnosis (No-Yes)	Measure (L-H)	Diagnosis (No-Yes)	Measure (L-H)
<u>Independent Variables</u>								
Normal Primitive	.078(.066)	-.018(.024)	-.165(.070)**	-.095(.025)***	-.120(.076)	-.014(.029)	.317(.199)	.179(.078)**
Sex (F-M) <sup>a</sup>	-.042(.066)	-.024(.069)	-.026(.069)	-.010(.071)	.104(.077)	.135(.079)*	.526(.203)**	.482(.218)**
Prior Conviction Severity (L-H) <sup>a</sup>	.001(.003)	-.000(.003)	-.007(.003)**	-.006(.003)**	.002(.003)	.003(.003)	.000(.008)	.001(.009)
Victim Race (B-W) <sup>a</sup>	-.051(.057)	.034(.069)	.061(.060)	-.164(.071)**	-.044(.066)	-.082(.082)	-.238(.174)	-.433(.221)*
Private Attorney (No-Yes)			.015(.064)	-.001(.065)	-.128(.069)*	-.183(.072)***	-.134(.184)	-.065(.200)
Bail Bond (No-Yes)					.103(.067)	.122(.072)*	-.556(.179)***	-.451(.198)**
Jury Trial (No-Yes)							-.362(.169)***	-.382(.184)**
	R <sup>2</sup> =n/s	R <sup>2</sup> =n/s	R <sup>2</sup> =.042**	R <sup>2</sup> =.079***	R <sup>2</sup> =.052**	R <sup>2</sup> =.073***	R <sup>2</sup> =.119***	R <sup>2</sup> =.109***

Note: <sup>a</sup>F-M = Female-Male; L-H = Low-High; B-W = Black-White.

\* = p < .10

\*\* = p < .05

\*\*\* = p < .01



violent criminality (see also Garfinkel, 1949). Recall, however, that we had to eliminate the variable from the analysis of items considered for inclusion in the measure of "normal primitive" because of its high correlation to the race of the defendant.

Differences also emerged for the relationships of sex and bail bond to jury trial. In the model employing the measure, sex and bail bond reached statistical significance, with men and those who received bail more often obtaining jury trials. These relationships substantially increase the  $R^2$  value over that obtained with the diagnosis in the model.

## CONCLUSION

In the construction of this measure we have taken steps toward operationally defining the stereotype of violent criminality. In view of the time period for which the data were collected, however, some may question the applicability of the measure to the conceptions and practices regarding violent criminality that currently exist in the legal system.<sup>12</sup> The trend toward determinant sentencing and widespread adoption of sentencing guidelines that have been taking place since the mid-1970's, in themselves, imply limitations on the influence of criminal stereotypes in judicial decision making, if not actual changes in attitudes. In fact, these reforms are said to have developed partially in response to the inequities grounded in "judicial ideologies" (see Pruitt and Wilson, 1983), and it has been suggested that they may have indeed solved some of the problem (see e.g., Pruitt and Wilson, 1983; Klein, Petersilia, and Turner, 1990).

Others have questioned the equalizing effects of the reforms and argue that discrimination, though more subtle and indirect, remains a very real problem (see e.g., Miethe and Moore, 1986; Zatz, 1987). Most sentencing reforms have not addressed discretionary decisions at earlier stages of the legal process. Given the increased constraints on sentencing, these earlier decisions would be expected to shape the final disposition of cases even more now than in the past. If decisions prior to sentencing continue to be influenced by stereotypical assessments of the offender and the offense, the result will be for lower class and minority defendants to be convicted of crimes whose gravity now demands more severe sanctions. The more severe convictions accorded murder defendants who did not obtain bail and jury trial because of their conformity to the race and class based "normal primitive" stereotype of violent criminality (Swigert and Farrell, 1977) is by now a familiar illustration of how individuals come to be placed at such disadvantage in sentencing.

Sentencing guidelines may also further institutionalize criminal stereotypes through their reliance on prior records. To the extent that such records are a reflection of earlier discrimination based on stereotypes, they serve to compound unequal justice as they have become a primary criterion for subsequent decision making (Farrell and Swigert, 1978b; Horan, Myers, and Farnworth, 1982; Nelson, 1992). Now, defendants

are not only differentially adjudicated on the basis of class and race related stereotypes, but the records that they accrue as a result of such discrimination have become an additional officially sanctioned basis for meting out more severe penalties for subsequently alleged offenses.

Although we believe that there has been a persistence, if not further institutionalization, of the "normal primitive" stereotype, the issue in fact remains an empirical question. While our data do not allow us to address any changes that may have occurred since the onset of sentencing reforms, the fact that the data span almost two decades will allow us to subsequently examine any changes in the stereotype and its application during that time period. By providing a baseline of information on the stereotype, the measure developed here also provides a means of addressing the question of changes in more recent time periods and in other jurisdictions. Although the enduring quality of the attributes that we have identified would suggest that they continue to comprise contemporary images of violence, any changes in the stereotype that might be occurring would certainly be interesting to identify. Combinations of interviews with court personnel and the use of hypothetical case material with controlled variation of case characteristics, including those identified in our study, are among the ways that one might employ our findings to determine the present existence and content of such imageries. These vignettes might likewise be used to test the effects of the different sets of case attributes on legal decision making, such as decisions regarding the award of bail, conviction, and sentencing. Our findings accordingly provide a basis for the examination of a range of important questions grounded in the interpretive approach to the legal process, questions that heretofore have gone unanswered.

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## Notes

1. This subtle discriminatory process is also evident in the widespread adoption and public acceptance of bail and sentencing guidelines. These guidelines incorporate stereotypical criteria that clearly disadvantage poor and minority defendants, such as employment, ties to the community, and prior offense record (see Farrell and Swigert, 1978b).
2. Earlier efforts to discern the effects of demeanor and perceived respectability on decisions in law enforcement have also produced findings that have been interpreted as support for the operation of stereotypes in the legal process (Westley, 1953; Goldman, 1963; Piliavin and Briar, 1964; Cameron, 1964; Reiss, 1968; Chevigny, 1969; Black, 1970). However, these studies, too, have had to infer such effects from status variables.
3. It should be clear from the original work on this issue (Swigert and Farrell, 1976, 1977) that the "normal primitive" label is a clinic diagnosis and description. Some researchers (Rose and McClain, 1990) have nevertheless misunderstood the concept to be a pejorative term applied to alleged offenders by the authors themselves, which it definitely is not.
4. Unemployed defendants, including those collecting unemployment insurance, were not classified as dependent on public assistance.
5. The "borderline" and "low average" intelligence categories were defined by the clinic and were adjoining categories on the continuum from low to high intelligence.
6. Although the clinic description implies a close relationship between the "normal primitive" defendant and the victim, the large number of victims in the categories of family members, friends, and acquaintances (83 percent) precluded the use of the variable in the analysis. Only 17 percent of the victims were "strangers" and all but four cases in the entire sample had some prior social contact with the defendant.
7. Both carrying a "lethal weapon" and "physical aggression" are part of the clinic description of the "normal primitive." Although the description is not explicit on what kind of weapons were likely to be involved, our assumption was that knifings more closely approximated the stereotypical mode of such murders for the time period of the study.
8. Indicators of victim's social class are often not available in archival data on violent crime.

9. The alternative of estimating the values for the missing information by assigning the mean of observed cases may be a questionable procedure when using clinic records. The procedure assumes that the known information is representative of the missing information, an assumption that may not be warranted if, as some have suggested, there is a selective recording of information in such records, a process that, itself, may be influenced by institutionalized stereotypes (see Farrell and Swigert, 1986:263-264; Farrell and Holmes, 1991:533).
10. Although the information that comprises this score is usually available in police and pre-sentencing records on homicide, data sets in which a particular point of information is not accessible would not preclude use of the scale. Deletion of items should be kept to a minimum, however, in order to retain the validity of the measure.
11. The high correlation (.632) of race of the defendant with the "normal primitive" measure precluded inclusion of the defendant's race in the model. However, a reanalysis of the data with the somewhat less highly correlated (-.438) occupational status of the defendant did not produce significantly different results.
12. See Peterson and Hagan (1984) for an analysis and discussion of this issue as regards the impact of changing race-related conceptions of offender-victim relationships in drug offenses on sentencing decisions.



## **A Theoretical Model for Offender Risk Assessment**

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In Canada, as in the United States, there is tremendous concern over crime and the threat some offenders pose to the community. Correctional agencies are charged with the responsibility of managing offenders in a safe manner both in the community and in institutions. Fundamental to this offender management is the assessment of offender risk.

Offender risk assessment usually takes one of two forms, and it is often a mixture of both. First, the assessment can be largely subjective and based upon professional expertise and experience. For example, many psychiatric and other clinical assessments can be categorized as subjective in nature. The second form of offender risk assessment is objective and empirically based. The actuarial risk scales in use today comprise this second form of risk assessment. In almost all cases, empirically based risk assessments tend to outperform the subjective approaches to risk assessment (Bonta, in press; Dawes, Faust & Meehl, 1993).

The earliest actuarial risk assessment can probably be traced to Burgess (1928). Parolees were evaluated on a number of criminal history and personal demographic characteristics and 21 variables were found related to parole success. These 21 variables comprised a scale that could be assigned quantitative weights, with higher scores indicating a higher likelihood of recidivism. Since Burgess' pioneering research there have been numerous risk scales developed following an actuarial approach (Hoffman & Beck, 1974, Nuffield, 1982).

Although the actuarial risk scales have shown satisfactory predictive validity with various measures of recidivism, their predictive validity coefficients rarely surpass .30. Further, because of their strict empirical approach, the assessment of offender risk has provided little added knowledge about the nature of criminality. That is, these risk scales are atheoretical. I will argue in this paper that improvements in prediction and a better understanding of offender behaviour can be reached if theory is integrated into risk assessment technology.

The paper begins with an appraisal of the theoretical situation today and how theory relates to offender risk assessment. Specific theories will not be discussed but rather a more general approach will be taken. The position adopted here is that most theories of criminal behaviour can be categorized into three general perspectives:

1. Sociological Criminology
2. Clinical Criminology
3. Social-psychological Perspectives

Each of the three general theoretical orientations will be discussed in turn. Specific comments will be made with respect to the empirical support for each perspective and its relevance to risk assessment. The paper ends by concluding that the social-psychological perspectives enjoy the most empirical support and provide the most practical suggestions for improving offender risk assessment.

## SOCIOLOGICAL CRIMINOLOGY

The various sociological theories of crime - anomie, subcultural, labelling, conflict - all share one common theme. That is, the cause of crime is to be found in broad based socio-economic-political factors. Since the members of society vary with respect to their social status and economic and political power, crime becomes a function of one's position in society. Those who are at greatest risk for engaging in crime are the lower classes, the poor, the young and the racial and ethnic minorities.

Translating theory into practice, we can generate a number of risk indicators (see Table 1). Two observations can be drawn from Table 1. First, there are relatively few risk indicators and they tend to be indicators of social position. Even the risk factors suggested by subcultural theories can be traced back to social position (i.e., certain social groups are blocked from participating fully in society and they are left feeling alienated and poorly about themselves). Second, the risk indicators are largely static in nature. As a result, the potential for individuals to change is not given a prominent role in sociological criminology. Offender rehabilitation is considered a futile exercise and the only effective way of eradicating crime is to bring about social structural change.

Many of the factors presented as important by sociological theories of crime have failed to receive unequivocal support from empirical studies. For example, one of the earliest challenges to the importance of class as a correlate of crime came from Tittle, Villemez and Smith (1978). Reviewing the literature available at the time, they found that although class and crime were correlated, the relationship was small ( $\gamma = -.08$ ). More recently, Gendreau, Little and Coggin (1995) subjected 24 longitudinal studies on class and crime to a meta-analysis. The selection of longitudinal studies ensures that the findings are truly predictive and therefore of practical use for risk prediction. Gendreau et al. (1995) found an  $r$  of  $-.05$ . Clearly, the major predictors suggested by sociological criminology offer little for the development of offender risk scales.

Table 1

Sociological Criminology and Suggested Risk Indicators

Theory	Risk Indicator
Limited Opportunity	Socio-economic status Race Ethnicity
Subcultural	Alienation Self-esteem
Labelling	Social Position
Conflict	Social Position

CLINICAL CRIMINOLOGY

In contrast to sociological perspectives of criminal behaviour, clinical criminology situates the cause of crime within the individual. Consequently, significant emphasis is placed on offender rehabilitation. Criminals are a product of some form of psychopathology or psychological deficit and treatment can correct the problem. Table 2 summarizes some of the key risk indicators within the clinical criminology approach.

Table 2

Clinical Criminology and Suggested Risk Indicators

Theory	Risk Indicator
Personal Distress	Anxiety Self-esteem Depression
Mental Disorder	Schizophrenia Manic-depression
Existentialist	Alienation Loneliness

Once again, we can examine the empirical support for the risk factors suggested by clinical criminology. Returning to the Gendreau et al. (1995) meta-analysis, 64 longitudinal studies examining personal distress variables and recidivism were evaluated. The mean  $r$  across studies was .05, no better than that found for social class.

For some, the finding that variables like anxiety and feelings of loneliness are only mildly related to recidivism is not surprising. Transient and moderate levels of psychological discomfort are prevalent in both offender and non-offender populations and there is no compelling reason to believe that these variables should play a special role in criminal behaviour. More severe forms of mental disorder however, could be important. At least in the public's eye, serious mentally ill offenders are viewed as especially dangerous.

Bonta, Law and Hanson (1995) are conducting a meta-analysis of predictors of recidivism among mentally disordered offenders. The preliminary results are shown in Table 3. Only one type of psychiatric diagnosis had any significant predictive validity - antisocial personality disorder. The other major forms of serious mental disorder were unrelated to either general or violent recidivism.

Table 3

Correlations between Mental Disorder and Recidivism

Diagnosis	Recidivism Outcome	
	Violent	General
Schizophrenia	-.03	-.06
Psychotic Disorders	-.07	-.05
Antisocial Personality	.20	.20

Summarizing the results of studies on the predictors suggested by both sociological and clinical criminology, it appears that many of the variables demonstrate weak relationships with recidivism. This may confirm the sceptic's view that criminal behaviour cannot be predicted. However, the problem may really lie with poor theorizing about what are the best risk indicators. In fact, there is a considerable amount of evidence that recidivism can be predicted. A summary of the Gendreau et al. (1995) meta-analysis indicates a number of constructs that show much better predictive validity than social class and clinical variables (see Table 4).

A theory of criminal behaviour must be comprehensive enough to include the variables identified by research. At the same time, a good theory should give prominence to the best predictors of recidivism. Sociological and clinical criminology fail to adequately account for the data. Social-psychological perspectives appear to provide the best fit between theory and research.

Table 4

Rank Order of Risk Factors

Risk Factor	Sample Size	r
Antisocial Supports	11,962	.21
Antisocial Attitudes	32,335	.18
Antisocial Personality	13,335	.18
Criminal History	145,978	.16
Education/Employment	98,391	.13
Age/Gender/Race	180,060	.11
Family Factors	66,057	.10
Substance Abuse	54,838	.10
Lower Class	20,632	.05
Personal Distress	18,787	.05

(from Gendreau et al., 1995)

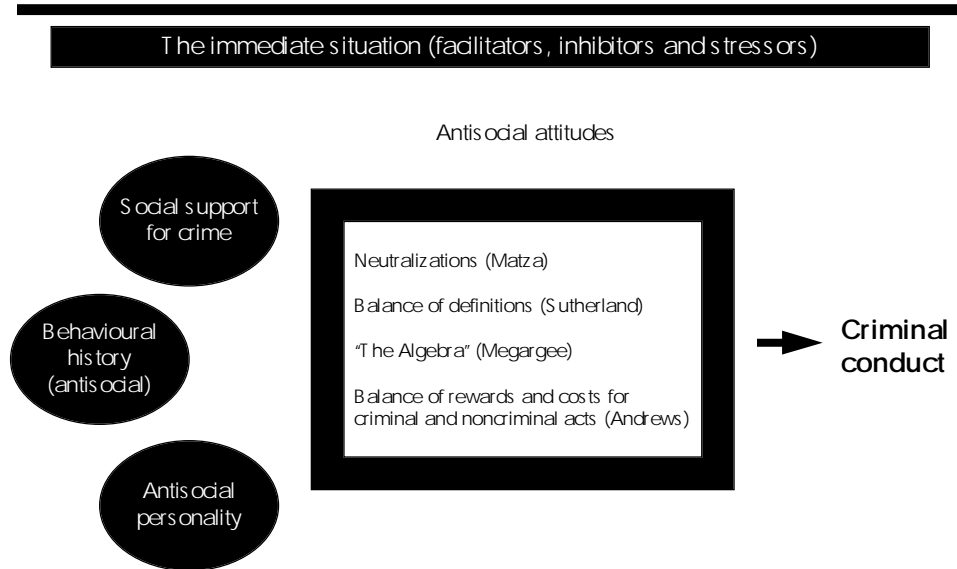
A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

"Behaviour is under the control of the immediate situation in interaction with factors the person brings into the situation."

This statement has two important components. First, there is the idea of the immediate environment exercising control over behaviour. This usually refers to the rewards and punishments that operate to alter the probabilities of various behaviours. Second, there are certain attributes that the person brings into the situation which interact with the rewards and punishments operating in a given environment. Rewards and punishments do not have the same controlling properties with all people and in all situations. For example, physical pain may function as a reinforcer for a sadist and food as a punishment for an anorexic. The key ideas of a social-psychological theory of crime are illustrated in Figure 1.

Referring to Figure 1, we have the immediate situation comprised of rewards and punishments that control behaviour. The immediate situation may consist of fairly tangible rewards/punishments (e.g., an argumentative companion) or symbolic stimuli (e.g., a gun lying on a table). Part of the difficulty in the prediction of behaviour is

## The psychological situation in the general social psychological model



(Source: Andrews, D.A. & Bonta, J., The Psychology of Criminal Conduct, 1994.)

knowing what kind of situation a person may find himself or herself. However, most people do not find themselves, or place themselves, in "dangerous" situations. The type of people who are found in high risk situations can be described in terms of what Andrews and Bonta (1994) call the "Big Four" correlates of criminal conduct.

The "Big Four" are shown in Figure 1 as criminal history, social support for crime, antisocial attitudes and antisocial personality. Criminal history reflects a reinforcement history for antisocial behaviour and, if this history is long enough, it serves as a good indicator of habitual ways of responding to many situations. Social support for crime includes other individuals who can directly reinforce criminal behaviour (e.g., criminal companions, antisocial parents). Antisocial attitudes are the cognitions supportive of criminal conduct (e.g., rationalizations for crime, "techniques of neutralizations"). Finally, we have the antisocial personality constellation (e.g., impulsiveness, egocentrism, callousness, thrill seeking).

These four personal constructs are what the person brings into the situation that, in interaction with situational stimuli, determine behavioral outcomes. All of these factors can be objectively assessed and three of the factors (antisocial supports, attitudes and personality) are dynamic or changeable. This last point is important for the management of offender risk.

The social-psychological perspective must respect the empirical evidence. Referring back to Table 4, we see that the four best predictors of criminal behaviour are given prominence in the theory. Recall also from Table 3 the importance of antisocial personality disorder. The other predictors listed in Table 4 are also included in the general social-psychological theory. However, for a more detailed discussion of their role

the reader is referred to Andrews and Bonta (1994).

At a minimum, social-psychological theory calls for offender risk assessments to include measures of these four important constructs (for youthful offenders, family factors are also given special attention in the theory, but not discussed here). In practice, most offender risk instruments have been heavily loaded with criminal history information. Two good examples are the Salient Factor Score (SFS) in the United States (Hoffman & Beck, 1974) and the Statistical Information on Recidivism (SIR) in Canada (Nuffield, 1982). Both of these risk scales are heavily represented by criminal history and offence items. There are no items tapping antisocial companions, procriminal attitudes and antisocial personality.

Research with the SFS and the SIR have consistently shown that these risk scales predict recidivism (Bonta, Hann, Harman & Cormier, in press; Hoffman, 1994). There are numerous other similar risk scales that have shown comparable predictive validities. There is however, one major problem with risk scales that rely on criminal history information. All the information is static. As a result, minimal information is given that can assist in the reduction of risk. Offenders who score high on such scales will always be categorized as high risk. For the correctional officer who must deal with minimizing the offender's risk, there is little to be gained by knowing that the offender has a long criminal history and has committed a certain type of offence.

There is now a body of evidence suggesting that certain types of treatment programming can reduce the risk of recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 1994; Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, & Cullen, 1990). Social-psychological theory suggests that certain dynamic aspects of the individual (e.g., antisocial attitudes) are related to criminal behaviour and these dynamic characteristics may function as treatment targets. For example, reductions in offender risk can be achieved by replacing criminal social networks with prosocial supports, by changing antisocial attitudes, etc.

In the last 10 to 15 years there has been the development of offender risk-needs scales that assist in the identification of treatment targets and the reduction of risk. The Wisconsin risk-needs scale is one offender assessment instrument that objectively assesses dynamic aspects of the offender (Baird, Heinz & Bemus, 1979). The Wisconsin instrument was not developed from a theoretical model but does appear to tap some of the important factors suggested by a social-psychological perspective of crime.

Another offender risk-needs instruments developed directly from a social-psychological perspective is the Level of Service Inventory - Revised or LSI-R (Andrews & Bonta, 1995). The LSI-R measures criminal history, companions, attitudes and personality variables. It also measures other factors suggested by the complete theory (e.g., employment/academic, substance abuse, etc.). Studies on the LSI-R have repeatedly found that the instrument predicts future criminal behaviour and that changes on the scale are related to changes in recidivism (i.e., dynamic validity).

## SUMMARY

There are three general theoretical orientations in criminology: 1) sociological, 2) clinical and 3) social-psychological. Each orientation places differential emphasis on variables hypothesized to be related to criminal behaviour and the evidence for the different perspectives vary. When examining the research on the correlates of criminal conduct, the social-psychological perspective appears to have the strongest empirical support.

Social-psychological theory identifies four general factors as essential for understanding criminal behaviour. They are a history of criminal behaviour, antisocial supports for crime, antisocial attitudes and antisocial personality. For offender risk assessment, the theory suggests that, at the least, all four factors should be assessed in order to provide a comprehensive offender assessment. A particular advantage of social-psychological theory in guiding offender risk assessment is the identification of dynamic risk factors that may be useful for the planning of offender rehabilitation.

Today, there exists a number of offender risk-needs assessment instruments that are congruent with theory and evidence. These scales advance the field beyond the criminal history risk instruments so prevalent in North American corrections. They provide a theoretical rationale for why certain variables should be assessed and offer direction for the reduction of offender risk.

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## **Juvenile Homicide in the United States: Trends and Contributing Factors**

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When it comes to discussion of juvenile homicide in the United States, practitioners in the criminal justice system, politicians, the media and the public are in rare agreement: Murder by juveniles has become an increasingly serious problem. The cry of alarm being sounded appears warranted as illustrated by an examination of homicide arrests in the United States over the period 1968-1993 (FBI, 1969-1994).

Perusal of statistics over the last 25 years reveals four grim facts in support. First, the number of juveniles arrested for homicide in 1993 was the highest during the period. In 1993, of the 20,285 homicide arrestees, 3284 or 16.2 percent were juveniles. In comparison, in 1968, of the 10,394 homicide arrestees, 1029 or 9.9 percent were juveniles. Although the number of homicide arrests in 1993 was almost twice the number in 1968, the number of juveniles arrested for homicide in 1993 was more than three times the number arrested 25 years earlier.

Second, the proportionate involvement of juveniles in homicide arrests has increased over the period 1968 through 1993. Over the 25 year period, the mean percentage of juvenile arrests for homicide was 10.3. Since reaching its low of 7.3 in 1984, the percentage of juveniles arrested for homicide has steadily increased over the last ten years. The percentage of those arrested for homicide who were under 18 was at its highest (16.2) in 1993. In 1993, the odds were almost 1 out of 6 that an individual arrested for homicide was a juvenile. Ten years earlier, the odds that the arrestee was under 18 were about 1 in 14.

Third, an examination of trend data reveals an especially dramatic increase in homicide arrests among juveniles during the most recent 10 year period. Juvenile homicide arrests increased by 167.9 percent from 1984 through 1993. Interestingly, of the 3730 additional homicide arrests reported by the participating agencies in 1993, 1938 (52 percent) were committed by youths under 18.

Fourth, the rise in the percentage involvement of juveniles arrested for homicide since the mid 1980s cannot be attributed to an increase in the juvenile population in the United States. Calculation of the percentage of the population of children aged 5-17, which Ewing (1990) suggested is the juvenile population at risk of committing homicide, over the last 25 years indicated that this percentage has declined significantly since 1969. The percentage of juvenile involvement in murder, particularly in recent years, has been rising during a time when the percentage of young Americans in the United States has generally been declining (Heide, 1994; Heide, In Press).

The rise in killings by juveniles during the last decade has been taken as evidence to support assertions made for the past 20 years that there is a new breed of youths who kill intentionally, remorselessly, and gleefully (Heide, 1986). The data have also been cited to indicate that juvenile homicide is a national epidemic (Ewing, 1990). In response, practitioners and policymakers have implemented various measures to get tough with juveniles. These include lowering the age of majority in some jurisdictions for all juveniles or for those who commit certain crimes, and making it easier to transfer juveniles to adult courts by changing or adding procedures to effect this process.

### Causal Connections

Why are juveniles killing in record numbers in the United States? It appears to me, after evaluating approximately 100 adolescents involved in murder, that many variables often act in concert when youths kill. I have grouped these variables into four main categories: situational factors, personality characteristics, resource availability and societal influences.

#### Situational Factors

Child abuse, neglect and exposure to violence are commonplace in the lives of young killers. Despite a decrease in the number of children, reports of *child abuse* in the United States have greatly increased in recent years (Florida Center for Children and Youth, 1993). Some children who are physically, sexually, verbally and psychologically abused kill the abusive parent because they are afraid, or see no other way out to escape this situation or to end the abuse (Heide, 1992). Other youths who are abused do not bond with others. Consequently, they develop no values or empathy to insulate them from killing innocent human beings. Still other abused juveniles are angry and in pain, and vent their rage by destroying others (Magid and McKelvey, 1987).

*Neglect* includes the failure to supervise children (Heide, 1992). During the last 25 years, three significant changes in the family structure have occurred that increase the likelihood that youths will not be supervised and, hence, are at greater risk of getting into serious trouble. These changes include a rise in the number of children born to single mothers, the increase in the number of children raised by a single parent due to illegitimacy or the subsequent divorce of the parents, and the increase in the number of working mothers.

*Witnessing violence* has been correlated with lessened inhibition to use violence (Prothrow-Stith and Weissman, 1991). Over the last two decades, TV, including the evening news, and films have become increasingly more violent (Levin and Fox, 1985; Prothrow-Stith and Weissman, 1991; Fox and Levin, 1994). Scores of youths have seen violence in their own homes and in their neighborhoods. To many, the world is a violent place. Accordingly, many youths who eventually kill carry guns and are prepared to use

violence when they perceive the situation as warranting it.

### Personality Characteristics

Adolescent homicide offenders typically lack a healthy self concept. They have deficits in communication skills and decision-making ability.

Youths who kill almost always have *low self-esteem*. They may appear tough and cool, but deep down inside they typically feel insecure and lack a history of success in more conventional activities such as school, sports, and work.

Some juveniles who murder are *unable to deal with strong negative feelings* such as anger in a constructive way. When wronged, they are consumed with rage and feel compelled to strike back. To some, nothing less than murder seems an appropriate recourse to the perceived transgression.

Many juveniles whom I assessed were simply *bored with life* and looking for something exciting to do. Robbing somebody was fun. In the typical scenario, a group of boys would be hanging out unsupervised late at night, drinking and doing drugs, when one would suggest that they rob somebody. Most group members have participated in robberies many times before. But something happened in this interchange, typically quite unexpectedly, that turned the robbery into a homicide.

Some youths who became involved in felony homicides were at the wrong place at the wrong time. They used *poor judgment* when invited to accompany a group of boys "out for a night of fun." The cues as to what might happen were there; these youths missed them.

### Resource Availability

The majority of juvenile homicide offenders whom I assessed used *guns* to effect the homicide. Many of these individuals would not have had the physical ability or the emotional detachment to kill others using other means, such as knives or fists.

Most of the youths involved in felony homicides had used *alcohol and drugs*. Although few claimed that the alcohol or drugs caused them to murder, it is likely that chemical abuse affected their judgment about engaging in criminal activity and their perceptions during the homicidal event.

Other than guns and drugs, kids who kill rarely have access to many resources. The majority of the young killers whom I assessed were from lower class areas where violent crimes were commonplace. Many of these youths were *poor and lacking in resources*. Robbery and burglary provided a means to acquire money and goods, as well as an opportunity for fun.

Most of the juvenile homicide offenders I have known have *no positive male role models*. In some cases, the identities or the whereabouts of their fathers were unknown. Many fathers were uninvolved; those who were present, often violent. Mothers, although loved and often revered, were generally unable to control their sons' behaviors. Boys need to spend time with older males to develop an identity. Without prosocial role models, male youths often felt compelled to exaggerate aspects of masculinity, such as machismo.

### Societal Influences

In addition to being affected by the lack of positive role models in their own lives, youths who kill today are also affected by *the crisis in leadership* that exists on a larger scale. Widely publicized events over the last 10 years involving government leaders who have used their political offices for personal gain and who have mislead voters in campaign promises have clearly shown that some politicians today on the state and national level deny responsibility for their behavior and their decisions. When the leaders of our country are no longer expected to keep their word and held accountable, youths feel free to adopt a similar course of behavior.

Membership in groups that are based on *prejudice and intolerance* on occasion encourages youths to commit murder. Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United States has been increasingly struggling with issues of cultural diversity in recent years. Concepts such as affirmative action, sexual harassment, gender equity, political correctness, and hate crime statutes were once presented as means to move the nation towards a society where all people would enjoy equal rights and opportunities. Today, such terms are synonymous with threat, reverse discrimination, and the demise of first amendment rights to some individuals. Youths, today as in the past, look for identity and for causes in which to believe. Those whose self concepts are fragile are at risk of being attracted to groups that promulgate hate and confer membership and status to those who share certain superficial characteristics, such as skin color.

### Concluding Remarks

For many youth, the effect of the factors enumerated above is cumulative. Put succinctly, many young killers today have *little or nothing left to lose*. These are the kids who are angry, frequently in pain, and too often unattached due to experiences in their home and neighborhood environments. They lack self esteem and the resources to improve their lives. They do not hold conventional values or dreams. Often chronically bored, they use drugs and alcohol to anesthetize themselves and commit crimes for fun. They live in the moment. To them, thrills -- and lives -- are cheap.

Stopping the increasing cycle of destructiveness by juveniles in the United States is a formidable task. Neutralizing or eliminating the variables that contribute to youths

becoming involved in homicidal incidents may require a generation or more to accomplish. Change must include parents, the educational system, communities, government leaders, and the media joining together to raise a healthier next generation and to build a more peaceful society.

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## **Section Four: Sessions**



## Domestic Violence Data

Moderator: Dean Rojek

Recorder: Rosemary Gartner

Presenters:

Parents Who Kill Their Children: A Cohort Study  
Sheilagh Hodgins

Chicago Intimate Partner Homicide: Patterns and Trends Across Three Decades  
Carolyn Rebecca Block and Antigone Christakos

Familicide: Uxoricide plus Filicide?  
Margo Wilson and Martin Daly



## Recorder's Notes

The discussion of Sheilagh Hodgins' paper centred on the causes and correlates of mental disorders among the parents who killed their children. The causes appear to be a combination of genetic and environmental influences; e.g., certain genetic factors may render some people more vulnerable to psychosocial stressors in their environment. There did not appear to be a strong correlation between economic status and mental disorder in the sample of child killers.

The discussion of Becky Block's paper raised a number of issues. Some members of the audience were particularly interested in the marked decline between 1968 and 1993 in the rate of intimate partner killings. Whether this might be due to an increase in services available to battered women was discussed. Clearly, there has been a general increase in such services for women in Chicago. However, whether these services are accessible to and used by women in high risk and/or poor areas is less clear. Many of these women might be hesitant to use these services because of fears of having their children taken from them by the welfare authorities.

The trends in and characteristics of intimate partner killings among African-Americans also received comment. The relatively marked decline in these killings over time raised the question of whether the break-up of the African-American family might be responsible for this decline. This is unlikely to be the case, since the definition of intimate partners used by Block includes a wide range of relationships, including registered and defacto unions, as well as boy/girlfriends. In other words, to qualify as intimate partners, the couple needn't have been living together or involved for a long period of time.

The near equality in the sex ratio of intimate partner killings among African-Americans (in contrast to non-Latino whites and Latinos) raised the question of whether this might be due to the differential availability of support services, particularly services for abused women, for different communities. While this may contribute to the sexual symmetry, it is unlikely to be a major cause of it, since the near equal sex ratio existed before support services became available (including earlier in the century, when Beardsley noted a similar pattern in the U.S.). Moreover, the same pattern occurs for other disadvantaged racial groups in other countries (e.g., among Aboriginal Canadians).

Another factor contributing to the near equal sex ratio may be the higher prevalence of step-children in African-American (and Aboriginal) families. To the extent women feel the need to protect their children from violence by their male partners, they may resort to violence against their male partners more often.

Margo Wilson's and Martin Daly's paper on familicide prompted the observation that Japan tends to have large numbers of familicides which are not represented in their homicide statistics. A typical scenario in Japan, according to this observer, is for a

woman to kill her children, then invite her husband to join her in a suicide pact when he comes home from work. These types of killings are usually prompted by the threat of economic failure or the husband's unfaithfulness.

This particular pattern of familicide is very different from the types described in the Wilson & Daly paper. Their findings indicate familicide with suicide tends to be a male phenomenon. It appears to consist of two types: the depressive familicide/suicide and the hostile familicide/suicide. Familicides by women tend to be depressive familicides. For men, despondency over recent economic difficulties tends to precede depressive familicides. Hostile familicides often occur where the woman is taking the children and leaving the man. Because men's identity is more dependent on the family as a whole, they tend to take everyone with them when they commit suicide/familicide. Women's identity is concerned more with relationships with their children; hence, their familicides rarely include their male partners.

Families in which familicides occur tend to look more like typical marriages than do families in which uxoricides and filicides occur. In other words, they share more characteristics in common with a random sample of all families than do families involved in other types of family killing. It was suggested that this implies that mental illness may play a more important role in familicides than in other family killings. It was also noted that socio-economic status is less strongly associated with the risk of familicides than with the risk of other types of killings, especially male-male killings.

## **Parents Who Kill Their Children: a Cohort Study**

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Little is known about parents who kill their own children. In fact, we have not been able to find one study in the literature which includes an unbiased sample of parents who have been convicted of killing their children. Buried within various literatures we find some reference to parents who kill their children; for example, we find such subjects in studies on child abuse, studies of homicide-suicide, studies of infanticide, studies of mentally ill persons who kill. However, none of these investigations provide a portrait of parents who kill, nor do they provide information that might be useful in thinking about prevention of this type of homicide.

Our study was designed to collect information on an unbiased cohort of parents who were convicted of killing their own children in order to- (1) describe the aggressors, the victims, and the circumstances surrounding the homicide; (2) develop a typology of parents who kill their own children; and (3) provide accessible information to frontline practitioners in contact with families at risk for homicide.

### **Method**

The cohort included all parents who killed their own children (newborn to age 18) in Québec from 1986 through June 1994. The study was authorised by the Ministre de la Sécurité Publique. This authorization allowed us to draw up the list of homicides by parents against their own children during the period of interest from the records of the Chief Coroner, and to examine for each homicide the Coroner's files and the complete record of the police investigation of the homicide. As well, the records of the Child Protection Agency were screened in order to discover if the families had been identified, previous to the homicide, for violence.

### **Results**

During the eight-and-a-half years under study, 69 parents killed 99 children, an annual average rate of 11.7 children killed by their own parents. Sixty-seven of the 69 offenders were the biological parents of the victims, while two were the companions of the biological parents. More than half, 36, of the offenders were females. Sixty-four of the 69 offenders had been born in Quebec. At the time of the homicide, 46.4% of the offenders were officially unemployed, but only 29% were earning a living. Eighty percent of the homicides occurred in the family home.

The victims ranged in age from newborn to age 18, with two thirds of them being six years old or younger. Of the 99 victims, 42 were girls (42.4%) and 57 boys (57.6%).

At the time of the homicide, 28 of the 69 offenders (40.6%) committed suicide, and another 9 (13%) unsuccessfully tried to commit suicide. Also, at the time of the homicide, eight (11.6%) parents were killed by the offenders.

Previous to the homicide, only seven of the families had been identified for violence against their children by the Child Protection Agency, and only two of those seven were officially charged for child abuse. Two of these families received "treatment" as a result of the identification of the child abuse. After the homicide, the police identified 23 families as having a history of child abuse and conjugal violence. The police documented a total of 82 incidents of conjugal violence prior to the homicide. In 70 of the 82 incidents the homicide offender had been the aggressor, while in 10 of the incidents the homicide offender was the victim. Seven of the 82 incidents of conjugal violence lead to criminal charges.

Prior to the homicide, 11 of the homicide offenders had a history of hospitalization in psychiatry. Of the 11, seven had been admitted to hospital, at least in part, because of violent behaviour.

Six (8.7%) of the offenders had a previous criminal record. Three of the offenders had one previous conviction each, two of them had been convicted for two offenses, and the other for four offenses. Five of the 11 offenses were violent, and the other six non-violent.

## Discussion

The findings indicate that during the past eight years, about 12 children have been killed each year in Quebec by their own parents. Half of the offenders were mothers, and half fathers. The data indicate that pre-school children are at greatest risk to be killed as compared to older ones.

Very few (seven of 69) of the families had been identified for violence against the children prior to the homicide. However, following the homicide, family members and neighbours were able to provide the police with information suggesting that violence was occurring in 23 of the families. Under the Quebec Child Protection Law, citizens are required to report suspicions of child abuse. These findings suggest that citizens are not reporting what they know.

Forty-one percent of the homicide offenders killed themselves shortly after killing their children. Previous research on both suicide and on homicide-suicide suggest that these parents were probably severely depressed prior to the homicide. In addition, another 13% tried to kill themselves. These data suggest that 54% of the offenders were seriously depressed at the time of the homicide.



Our analyses to date suggest that these families were isolated and not in contact with any service providers. This dims the hope of prevention. It is clear that a large proportion of the offenders needed mental health treatment, yet received no treatment. In addition, one-third of the families were known to be violent, yet only 10% were known to the Child Protection Agency and only two families received help.



# Chicago Intimate Partner Homicide: Patterns and Trends Across Three Decades<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Violence committed by an intimate partner accounts for a considerable proportion of all murders. In Cook County for example, violent attacks are the leading cause of maternal death (Fildes, Reed, Jones, Martin & Barrett 1992). Many fundamental questions about the prevention of death in intimate violence have yet to be answered, because answers would require longitudinal analysis tracing intimate violence cases to their eventual outcome, lethal or nonlethal. Though studies of homicide, the lethal "tip of the iceberg," cannot provide the definitive answers of longitudinal data, they can define parameters for answering those questions. To develop effective interventions, we must know whether the same configuration of high-risk factors applies to every racial/ethnic and age group and to situations in which the male or the female partner was killed (Browne 1986, Dobash et al. 1992). That is what we attempt to do here.

This paper reviews trends in risk patterns by demographic group over 29 years in Chicago, both the risk of becoming a victim and the risk of becoming an offender. It explores the evidence regarding high risk situations, including weapon, drug or liquor use, estrangement and suicide threat, and situations involving multiple victims or offenders, and examines relationships between these risk factors and who commits the homicide, the male or the female intimate partner.

## Data and Methods

In Chicago from 1965 through 1993, 2,556 people were killed in an intimate partner homicide. The Chicago Homicide Dataset contains detailed information about each of these, archived data from 1965 through 1990 and preliminary data from 1991 through 1993. Collected with the close cooperation of the Chicago Police Department since 1968 and containing detailed information on every homicide recorded by the police (more than 22,000 homicides), the dataset is the largest, most detailed dataset on violence available in the United States.<sup>2</sup> It contains information from the *police* point of view, all cases that police investigation determined to be homicides, regardless of the eventual outcome of prosecution.

This paper uses a broad definition of intimate partner, including several types of union, former as well as current relationships and domestic homosexual couples (Table

1).<sup>3</sup> The definition of spouse versus common-law versus boyfriend/girlfriend is made by the investigator in the field, as is the determination of whether the relationship was current or former. It is unconfirmed by legal documents. (The investigating officer does not ask to see the couple's marriage license.) The determination that the victim and offender were homosexual intimate partners was done by the coders, based on the often limited information in the investigation report. Only domestic gay relationships are included, defined as a long-term relationship, not brief acquaintances.

This broad definition of intimate partner produces a resource with several advantages. It is flexible enough to provide answers to a variety of questions, and by being more inclusive it reduces possible confounding of race/ethnicity or other factors that may be related to type of union. For example, nonLatino whites in Chicago were most likely to be killed by a spouse and nonLatino African Americans most likely to be killed by a boyfriend or girlfriend. As another example, although the overall ratio of female to male victims was almost one-to-one in 1965-1990 (1,185 to 1,186), the ratio for homicide victims in estranged relationships was 1.74 (106 females to 61 males).

Table 1

Definition of Intimate Partner Used in this Analysis  
Gender of Victim/Offender by Type of Union (Percents)  
Chicago Homicide Victims, 1965-1990

Type of Union	Man kills Female Part- ner	Woman kills Male Partner	Gay Couple
Spouse	39.1%	35.6%	--
Ex-spouse	3.5	1.7	--
Commonlaw	27.4	36.9	--
Ex-commonlaw	1.8	.8	--
Boyfriend/girlfriend	24.6	22.2	--
Ex-boyfriend/girlfriend	3.7	2.9	--
Gay couple, male	--	--	89.1%
Gay couple, female	--	--	10.9
Total Percents	100.1%	100.1%	100.0%
Total Homicides	1,180	1,145	46

## Summary of Major Findings<sup>4</sup>

- Intimate homicide accounts for a considerable but varying proportion of homicide victimizations -- 5 percent of Latino, 11 percent of nonLatino white, 13 percent of Asian/other and 14 percent of non Latino African American victims, and as many as 55 percent of nonLatino white women aged 30 to 34 and 18.5 percent of nonLatino African American men aged 45 to 49.

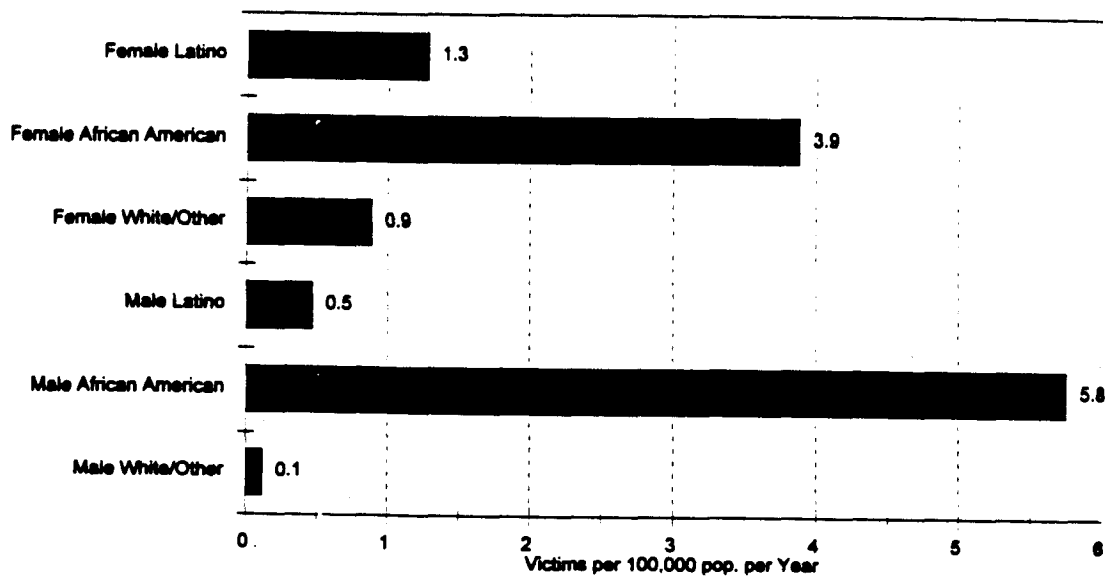
- The people who are most at risk of becoming a victim or an offender in intimate homicide are African American men and women. Victimization rates reach 18 per 100,000 per year for African American men aged 35 to 39 and 11 per 100,000 per year for African American women aged 30 to 34. The risk for African American men is higher than for any other population group.

- In the Latino and nonLatino white populations, the risk of victimization was higher for women than men, while the risk in the nonLatino African American population was higher for men than for women (figure 1). This phenomenon is not just true in a few selected years in Chicago, but has been found to be true in other large cities in the United States (Wilson & Daly 1992), and since 1970 in Chicago.

- African American women are at particular risk of being killed by an estranged or former intimate partner, a partner aged 30 to 39 or a partner with a violent arrest record. Latino and nonLatino white women are at particular risk of being killed by a

Figure 1

### Chicago Intimate Partner Homicides Annual Risk of Victimization 1991-1993



spouse or common-law spouse who is suicidal, or by an ex-spouse or ex-common-law spouse. Compared to men, all women are at particular risk of being killed when attempting to leave the relationship, with a firearm or being beaten to death, by a partner with a violent arrest record, or a suicidal partner (figure 2). In addition to the woman, her children, friends and family may themselves be at risk.

- Types of intimate partner homicide in which the woman is particularly likely to be the offender include cases in which liquor use is involved and cases in which the weapon is a knife. Males are not at risk of being murdered by their intimate partner when she is suicidal (figure 2).

- Intimate homicide accounts for a considerable proportion of the extremely high lifetime risk of homicide victimization among nonLatino African American males. Though their risk of being killed in other types of homicide falls sharply after age group 24 to 25 (Block 1993), their risk of being killed by an intimate partner remains high at older ages. African American men are at particular risk of being killed in a marital or common-law relationship, when liquor use is involved, or when he (the victim) has an arrest record for a violent offense. In addition, their risk is especially high when the intimate partner is in her twenties.

- People in a domestic homosexual relationship are at particular risk when there is a large disparity between the couple’s ages or when the offender has an arrest history for a violent offense. They are not at particularly high risk when the partner is suicidal.

Figure 2

### Intimate Partner Homicides 1965-1990 Offenders Who Committed Suicide

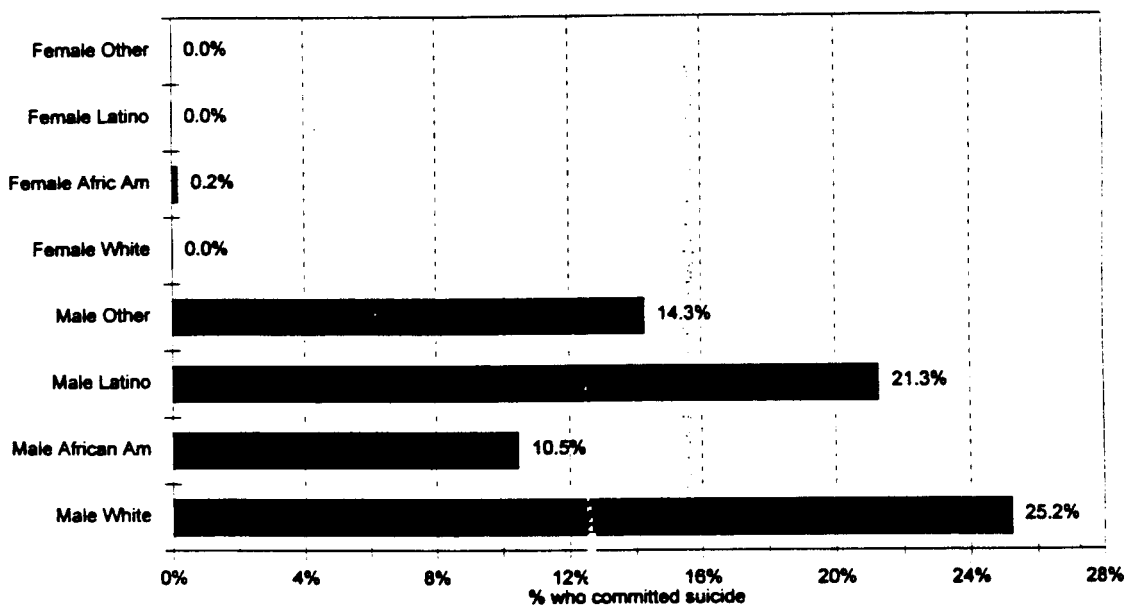


Figure 3a

### Homicide Victims in Chicago 1965-1993

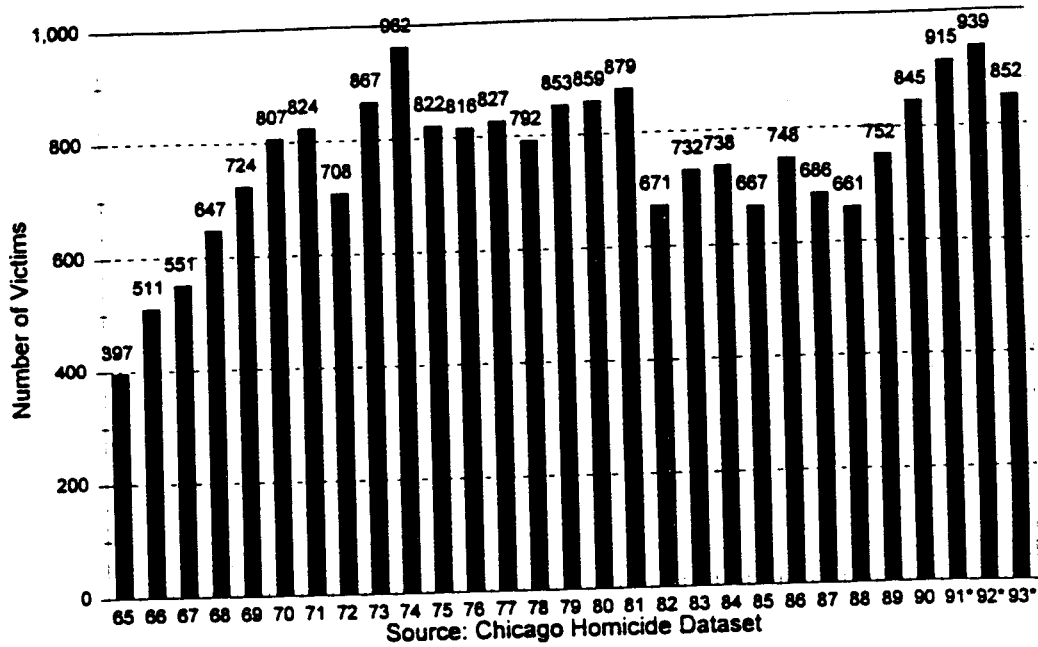


Figure 3b

### Chicago Intimate Partner Homicides by Year of Occurrence 1965-1993

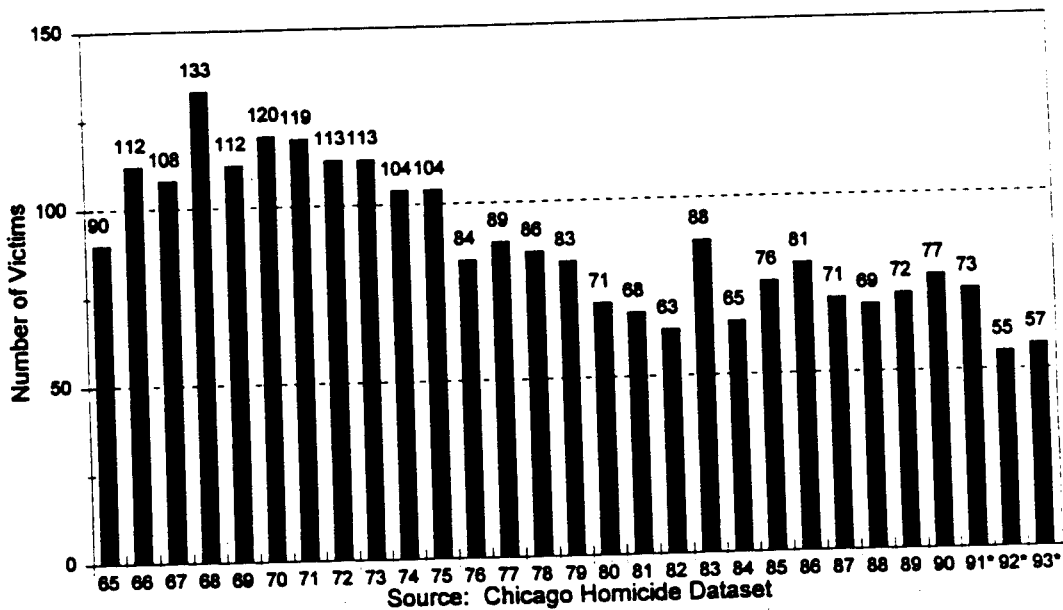


Figure 4  
**Intimate Partner Homicides 1965-1993**  
**Risk of Victimization by Gender**

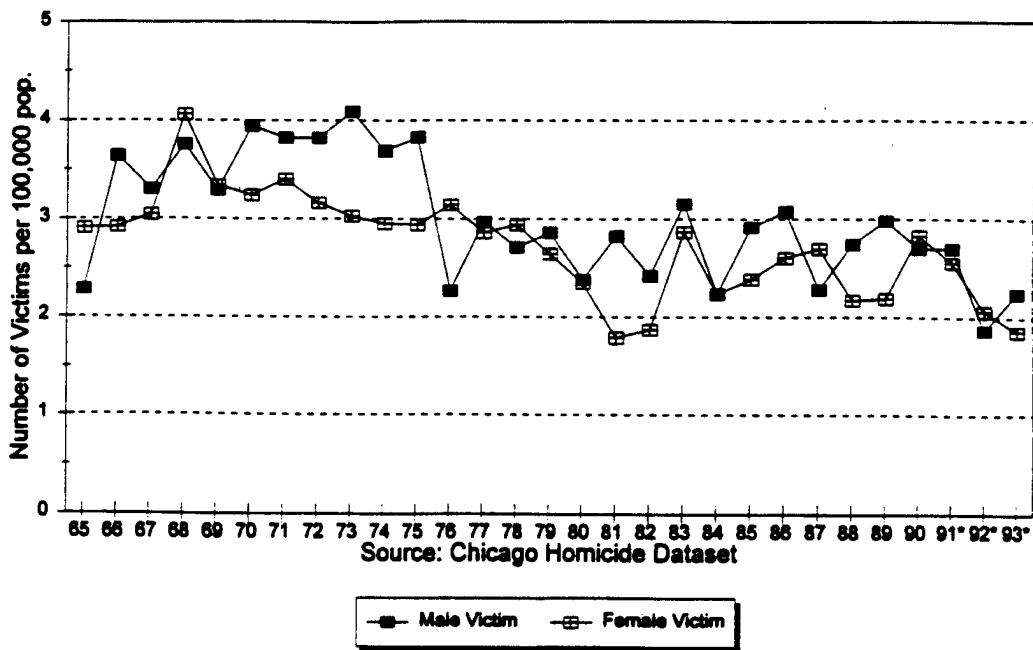
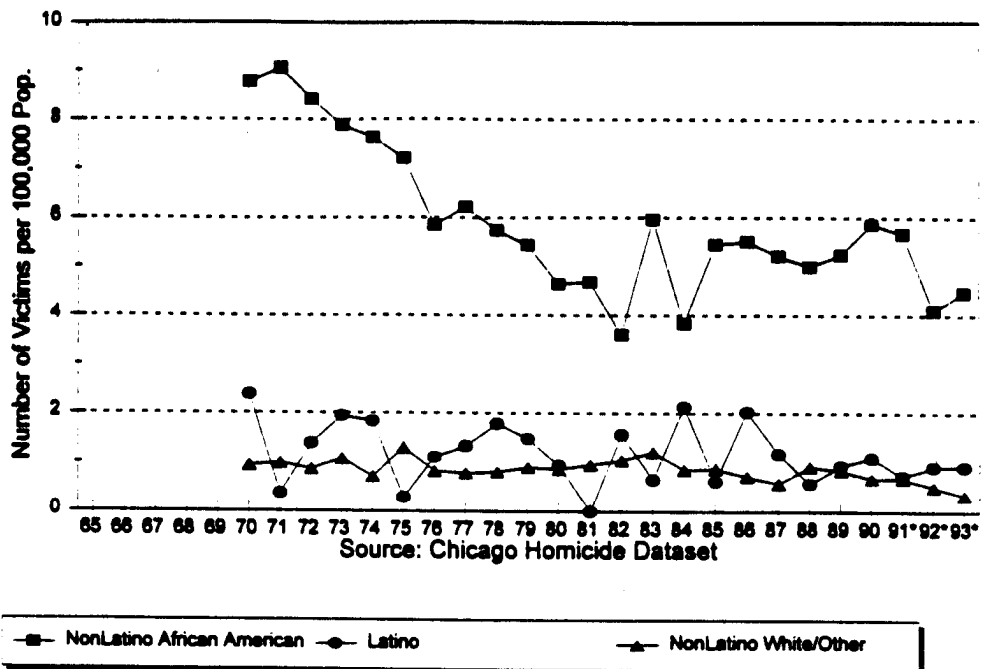


Figure 5  
**Intimate Partner Homicides 1970-1993**  
**Victimization Risk, by Race/Ethnicity**





- In contrast to trends in other Chicago homicides (figure 3a), current levels of intimate partner homicide in Chicago are the lowest in 29 years (figure 3b). The numbers peaked in the late '60s, then dropped by half by the early '80s, with declines occurring in the victimization rates of both men and women (figure 4), but only in homicide victimization rates of African Americans (figure 5).

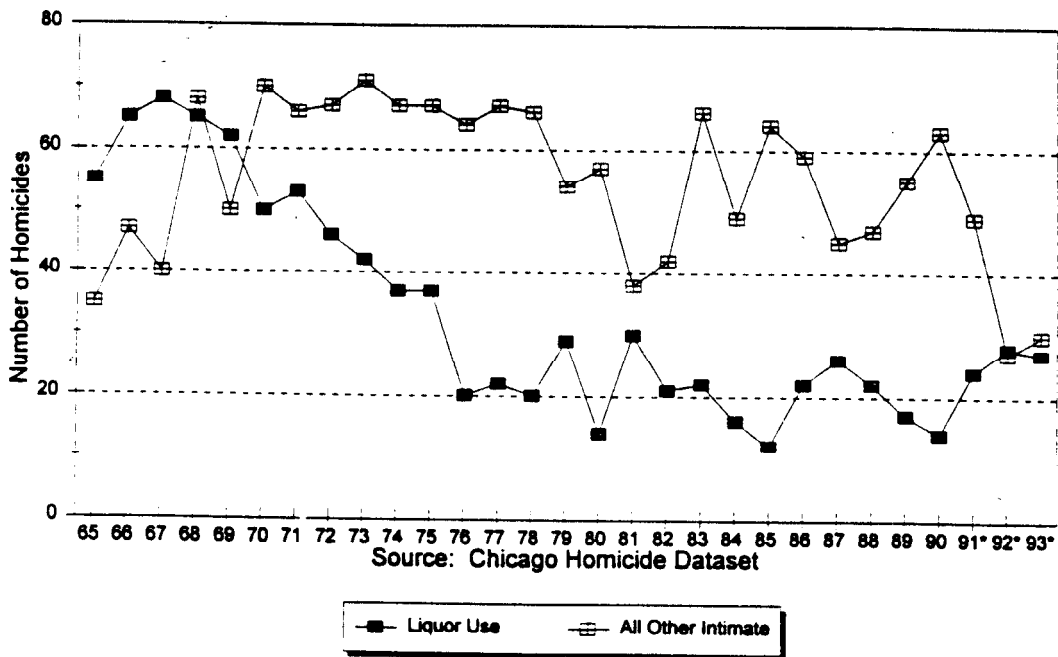
- The precipitous drop of Chicago intimate partner homicides in the 1970s occurred only in homicides involving liquor use (figure 6). Other homicides did not decline. This was true for both male and female victims.

- The 1970s drop occurred specifically in intimate homicides committed with a knife. Those committed with a handgun or with a semi- or fully-automatic weapon increased, not decreased, during that period. Moreover, the *only* knife homicides that declined in the 70s were those involving liquor use; other knife homicides did not decline. Similarly, the only handgun/automatic homicides that increased were those that did not involve liquor use; those that did involve liquor use declined.

- Many types of Chicago homicide have increased rapidly in recent years, particularly homicides committed with a handgun or with a semi- or fully-automatic weapon. This did not occur with intimate partner homicides.

Figure 6

### Liquor Use in Chicago Intimate Partner Homicides, 1965-1993



- The 29-year Chicago data provide no exception to research showing an exceptionally high ratio of female to male intimate homicide offenders for United States African American couples (table 2).<sup>5</sup> However, only current, not former, relationships had more female than male offenders, and liquor involvement explains much of the high gender ratio for African American couples, which was close to equality when liquor was not involved but 1.58 where liquor was involved.

- The availability of firearms does not explain the high gender ratio for intimate homicides of African American partners, but the use of a knife does. The presence of a firearm in the home may be a risk factor for *female* victims of intimate violence (Campbell 1993, Kellermann et al. 1993), but is apparently less dangerous for males. Semi- or fully- automatic weapons and handguns are the weapon of choice for men, but knives are the weapon of choice for women.

- The risk of a Latino woman being killed by her Latino intimate partner is increasing (Table 2). The 1990 death rate for Latino women (1.66 per 100,000 per year) represented a 68 percent increase over 1980, while the .12 death rate for Latino men represented a sharp decline. The risk of a Latino woman dying in intimate violence in Chicago in 1990 was 14 times higher than the risk for a Latino man.

#### Implications for Intervention<sup>6</sup>

##### Intervention Strategies for Male and Female Victimization

Some research suggests that the high ratio of female to male offenders in intimate homicide in the United States is related to the lack of available support systems for women repeatedly abused or threatened by a male partner (Wilson & Daly 1992; Browne and Williams 1989). In Chicago, the male partner was more likely than the female partner to have an arrest history for a violent offense, regardless of the couple's racial/ethnic group and regardless of whether the male was the victim or the offender in the homicide. It was also much more common for male than for female offenders to kill someone else, a child or a friend or relative of the woman, in addition to his intimate partner, and situations in which the female partner killed the male partner had a higher percent of liquor involvement than situations in which the male partner killed the female partner.

One implication of this evidence is that repeated victimization of the woman is a high-risk factor for a lethal outcome to not only the female partner but also the male partner. Interventions targeting repeat victims of intimate assault, then, would reduce risk to women and also reduce risk to her partner, her children, and support people. Citing the large body of evidence that those women who are previous victims of partner abuse are the most at risk of being murdered, Graham Farrell and Ken Pease (Farrell & Pease 1993, Lloyd, Farrell & Pease 1993) have developed intervention strategies focusing on women who have a history of victimization.

Table 2

Female/Male Gender Ratios for Homicide Offenders  
Heterosexual Intimate Partner Homicides: Chicago 1965-1993

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Victimization Rates Per Year</u>		<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Female/Male Offender Ratio</u>
	1979-81	1989-91	1965-1993	1965-1993
<u>White-on-White</u>				
man kills female partner	1.05	.77	220	.31
woman kills male partner	.45	.18	69	
<u>Other-on-Other<sup>7</sup></u>				
man kills female partner	----	----	8	.75
woman kills male partner	----	----	6	
<u>Black-on-Black</u>				
man kills female partner	3.85	4.40	871	1.24
woman kills male partner	5.67	6.37	1,077	
<u>Latino-on-Latino</u>				
man kills female partner	.99	1.66	82	.30
woman kills male partner	.46	.12	25	
<u>White victim; Nonwhite Offender</u>				
man kills female partner	----	----	56	.38
woman kills male partner	----	----	21	
<u>Black Victim; Nonblack Offender</u>				
man kills female partner	----	----	14	1.,00
woman kills male partner	----	----	14	
<u>Latino Victim; Nonlatino Offender</u>				
man kills female partner	----	----	6	2.33
woman kills male partner	----	----	14	
<u>Other Victim; Nonother Offender</u>				
man kills female partner	----	----	13	.00
woman kills male partner	----	----	0	
<u>Total</u>				
man kills female partner	2.26	2.51	1,270	.97
woman kills male partner	2.55	2.47	1,226	

## The Risk to Women of Leaving the Relationship

Males are much more likely than females to kill an estranged or former intimate partner. This is true as well for African American couples. Even though, overall, African American women are more likely than men to be the offender, in reality, African American women are the most frequent offender only in current relationships (spouse or common-law). In former relationships (ex-spouse or ex-common-law), African American men are the most frequent offender. In addition, narrative information in cases where a man murdered more than one person indicates that people who are assisting the woman to flee the relationship are also in danger of being murdered.

Until we have more detailed longitudinal information tracing the history of women who attempt to leave violent relationships, it would be wise to assume that leaving or threatening to leave carries a risk of being killed (Wilson & Daly 1993; Johnson 1995).

## Increasing Risk to Latino Women

Though intimate homicide is rare in the Latino community (Zimring, et al. 1983; Block 1987; Mercy & Saltzman 1989) and most Chicago intimate partner homicides have been decreasing, victimization rates for Latino women (but not for Latino men) were far higher in the early '90s than they were in the '70s or '80s (table 2). These figures may be an early warning of changing violence patterns that could affect not only Latino women but also children and the elderly.

High-risk situations for Latino women include a male partner who has an arrest history for a violent offense, a partner who is much older, or a woman who has left the relationship. Her risk does not decline as the man ages, but stays at a relatively high level. Having a suicidal spouse is also a risk factor: 29 percent of Latino husbands committed suicide after killing their wives.<sup>8</sup>

## Importance of Liquor Use and Weapon

Common threads running throughout this analysis are the effect of liquor use on intimate partner homicide and the importance of weapon. In the 90s, levels of intimate homicide involving liquor rose while all other intimate homicides dropped (see figure 5 above). Given the importance of liquor use in intimate homicide precipitation, this recent trend should be carefully monitored. If the levels of liquor-related intimate homicide rose again to the levels of the '60s, intimate violent deaths would increase substantially.

A firearm was used in 35 percent to 78 percent of Chicago intimate homicides, depending on the type of union and whether the woman or the man was the victim. In addition, the great majority (82%) of women killed by their intimate partner were killed in their home or another residential location. This implies that an effective prevention

strategy for intimate homicide of women (but not for men or for gay couples) would be to reduce the availability of firearms in the home, especially handguns and semi- or fully-automatic weapons. This would be a particularly important consideration in high risk situations, such as estranged relationships, a male partner who is a suicide risk, or a partner who has an arrest history for violent crime.

### Threatened or Attempted Suicide

Research indicates that when a man is at risk of suicide, his partner and children are at risk of being murdered (Block 1987, Crittenden & Crain 1990, Daly & Wilson 1988, Johnson & Chisholm 1989, West 1966), especially for white couples. Palmer and Humphrey (1980:106) found that, ". . . the killing of someone in close relationship to the offender, often a wife, appeared to be part of the evolving process of suicide." In Chicago, male offenders in intimate homicide committed suicide in large proportions (see figure 2). The chance of suicide was especially high for husbands, with as many as 29 percent of Latino men who killed their wives killing themselves as well. In contrast, females who killed their intimate partner almost never killed themselves. The potential risk of being killed by an intimate partner who then commits suicide has clear implications for intervention.

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## End Notes

1. A longer, more detailed version of this analysis appears in the October, 1995 issue of *Crime & Delinquency*, titled "Intimate Partner Homicide in Chicago over 29 Years."
2. The Crime Analysis Unit of the Chicago Police Department has assisted and advised Richard and Carolyn Rebecca Block and other researchers in the Chicago Homicide Dataset project, beginning in 1968 with the collection of 1965 data and continuing today. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority has supported and maintained the data since 1979. The Joyce Foundation currently supports collecting 1991-1994 data and archiving prior years; the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Loyola University of Chicago, Ford Foundation, University of Chicago, Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Institute of Mental Health funded earlier data collection. The National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, provides 1965-90 data on CD-ROM, and data through 1994 will be added to the Archive in 1995. See C. Block and R. Block (1993) for details of the dataset.
3. Type of union data are not yet available for 1991 to 1993.
4. For detailed analysis, see Block & Christakos (1995).
5. To minimize effects of a high or low year, Table 2 rates are annualized over three-year periods around census years. For example, the 1980 rate equals total 1979-to-1981 homicides, divided by the 1980 population (total race/specific population, not the number of married people), divided by three, per 100,000.) White is nonLatino white; black is nonLatino African American; NonLatino white and Asian/other data are combined.
6. For more detail, see Block and Christakos (1995).
7. Because Census data are available only for a "white and other" population category, the rates for nonLatino white and "other" are combined in this table.
8. This percent is higher than that in Figure 2, because Figure 2 includes all types of union.



## **Familicide: Uxoricide plus filicide?**

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"I lost the business due to a legal technicality, but, in the process, lost my house, my cars -- just everything...I cannot let my family suffer the degradation of losing everything we possess and being thrown penniless onto the street". (From letter left by man who killed his wife, his children and himself; Graser 1992a, p. 77).

"I'll kill you and the kids if you ever leave me". (Prior threat from man who killed his wife, his two daughters, and himself; Winnipeg Free Press, Dec. 27, 1989, p. 10).

As different as the motives of these two killers may appear -- the former professing an urge to protect his family, the latter aggressively threatening -- they do seem to share something in common. The killer's avowed rationale for his actions invokes a proprietary conception of wife and family, and he apparently feels entitled to decide his victims' fates.

Such proprietary constructions of the marital relationship are also conspicuous and germane in a large proportion of nonfamilicidal uxoricides (Polk & Ranson 1991; Wilson & Daly 1993a,b). But why are the children spared in some uxoricides and not others? Moreover, there are men who commit nonfamilicidal filicides, that is, who kill their children but not their wives. Thus, one might ask analogously why some filicidal men spare their wives and others do not.

Nonfamilicidal uxoricides and nonfamilicidal filicides are distinguished by motive, demographic risk factors, and situational variables (Daly & Wilson 1988a,b). Men who kill wives are typically moved by jealous, angry concern about the alienation of "their" women, whereas men who kill their children often appear to have acted more in sorrow than in anger (unless the victims were stepchildren; see Daly & Wilson 1994). Epidemiological analyses reveal that uxoricide risk varies in relation to the type of marital union, the woman's age, and the couple's age disparity, and is greatly elevated during marital separation (Wilson & Daly 1993a; Wilson et al. 1993, 1995); filicide risk is associated with situational determinants of variable parental inclinations and solicitude, such as relatedness of father and child (Daly & Wilson 1988b).

We have compared familicide cases with nonfamilicidal uxoricides and with nonfamilicidal filicides in order to identify any similarities and differences (Wilson & Daly 1995). These comparisons were based on all homicides known to police in Canada in 1974-1990 and all homicides known to police in England and Wales in 1977-1990. In this paper, we review some of these findings and report on the familicide incidents which occurred in Chicago in 1965-1989. (The national homicide archive for the United States,

namely the "Supplementary Homicide Reports", has not included the requisite information for comparable analyses; in multiple-victim homicides, only one victim's relationship to the killer is coded, precluding identification of familicide cases. The National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), presently covering nine states, will correct this problem, but is presently too limited in its coverage to permit analysis of events as infrequent as familicides.)

For present purposes, we have defined familicide as a multiple-victim homicide incident in which the killer's spouse or ex-spouse and one or more children are slain. Filicide is defined as the killing of children by parents, including genetic, adoptive and stepparents but not foster parents. Uxoricide is defined as the killing of a wife by her husband, including both registered and de facto marital unions. Uxoricides and filicides are much more familiar types of cases than familicides, but the latter are still regularly occurring incidents. In Canada there were 61 familicides between 1974 and 1990, approximately one familicide incident for every 166 homicide incidents or every 27 uxoricide incidents or every 9 filicide incidents. In England and Wales there were 48 familicides between 1977 and 1990, approximately one familicide incident for every 166 homicide incidents or every 34 uxoricide incidents or every 18 filicide incidents. In Chicago, between 1965 and 1989, there were 15 familicide incidents, approximately one familicide incident for every 976 homicide incidents or every 114 uxoricide incidents or every 24 filicide incidents. The contrast between the relative incidence of familicides and other homicides in Chicago compared with the other places reflects the higher rate of other sorts of homicides in Chicago, not a lower rate of familicide. The 15 Chicago familicides in 25 years represent about 0.19 such incidents per million population per annum, compared to about 0.15 in Canada and about 0.07 in England & Wales.

Very little is known about familicides even though they are often reported in the press and occasionally described by psychiatrists and others (e.g. Goldney 1977; Graser 1992a,b; Guttmacher 1960). These sources reveal recurring themes and situational elements, but prior to Wilson & Daly (1995), no unselected sample of familicide cases had been studied with respect to their epidemiology nor even systematically appraised for context, motive, or other relevant risk factors.

#### Familicide is virtually a male monopoly

93% of the 61 Canadian familicide incidents and 96% of the 48 in England and Wales were perpetrated by men. This degree of male-biased perpetration contrasts with the lesser male bias in (1) killing of spouses: 76% of the 1688 nonfamilicidal spouse-killings in Canada and 81% of the 1609 in England and Wales, and (2) killing of children: 47% of the 487 nonfamilicidal filicide incidents in Canada and 48% of the 881 in England and Wales. For the remainder of the paper, we will mainly address male-perpetrated familicides in comparisons with other male-perpetrated cases of uxoricide and filicide.

Familicides are demographically more similar to families in the population-at-large than are other uxoricides and other filicides

Child victims. The child victims of familicides are almost equally divided between sons and daughters: 51% male in Canada, 50% male in England & Wales. In nonfamilicidal filicides, there were significantly more sons killed than daughters (Canada: 59%; England and Wales: 59%).

In nonfamilicidal filicides, the risk of being killed by one's father decreases monotonically as a function of age into adolescence (Daly & Wilson 1988a,b). In contrast, the ages of child victims in familicides, both in Canada and in England & Wales, do not appear to be skewed toward the very youngest children (Wilson & Daly 1995). This difference is reflected in the ages of child victims in England and Wales where the filicide victims were, on average, 4 years of age, and the familicide child victims were 12 years of age. In Canada, the average age of familicide child victims and nonfamilicidal filicide victims was 7 years, but even here the apparent similarity of familicidal and nonfamilicidal filicides with respect to the average age of the child victims is somewhat misleading as the distribution of victim's ages shows a bias toward infants in filicide-only cases, but not in familicide cases in both Canada and in England and Wales (Figure 1). In fact, the familicides appear to be more similar to the population-at-large families than the other filicide cases with respect to age of child victims and with respect to relatedness to parents.

In Canada, 10% of the 88 child victims of familicides were stepchildren (the slain wives' children from previous unions) when no more than about 6% would be expected from population-at-large data<sup>1</sup>. In England and Wales, 17% of the 66 familicide child victims were stepchildren (and one was an adoptee), when no more than about 10% would be expected. (See Wilson & Daly 1995 for details.)

These comparisons of children in familicide cases with the population-at-large are not particularly remarkable until familicides are compared to nonfamilicidal filicide cases perpetrated by fathers, in which stepchildren comprised 28% of the child victims in Canada and 31% in England and Wales. These latter percentages are much higher than the incidences of stepchildren in either the familicides or the populations-at-large. So although it seems clear that stepchildren are to some degree over-represented as victims in familicides, compared to their numbers in the population-at-large, this over-representation is much less extreme than it is in cases of nonuxoricidal filicide.

Wife Victims. Familicides are also more like the population-at-large families than are other nonfamilicidal uxoricide cases with respect to type of marital union. Fully 37% of nonfamilicidal uxoricides in Canada in 1974-1990 occurred in de facto (unregistered) marital unions, although Wilson et al. (1993) estimated that only 8% of all marital unions in the Canadian population-at-large over that period were of that sort. The figure for the familicides is much closer to the population-at-large figure: 14% de facto marriages.

However, it should be noted that de facto unions are less likely to have children (Statistics Canada 1987) which diminishes the meaningfulness of any interpretation of the difference between familicidal and nonfamilicidal uxoricides. De facto unions are certainly over-represented in both familicides and nonfamilicidal uxoricides, and apparently more in the latter than in the former, but it is hard to be much more precise. The overall rate of uxoricide in de facto unions in Canada in 1974-1990 exceeded the rate in registered unions by about eightfold.

There is a similar pattern in England and Wales. 11% of familicidal uxoricides and 24% of nonfamilicidal uxoricides occurred in de facto marriages. The 1991 census of England and Wales revealed that 9% of marriages were de facto unions. The implication is that in Britain, too, de facto unions are somewhat over-represented in familicide cases, but more strongly over-represented in other uxoricides.

In Canada, Australia, the United States, and England and Wales, the risk of uxoricide is strongly related to the wife's age: young wives incur the greatest risk (Daly & Wilson 1988a,b; Mercy & Saltzman 1989; Wallace 1988; Wilson, Daly & Scheib 1996). In Canada, wives slain in familicide incidents were significantly younger than nonfamilicidal uxoricide victims (34.5 vs. 38.3 years, respectively;  $p < .001$ ), but this was not the case in England and Wales (39.3 vs. 39.7 years, respectively). The distributions of ages of wife victims in familicide incidents and in other uxoricides (Figure 2) are similar in the two countries.

#### Familicide in Chicago

In the 25-year period, 1965-1989, there were 14,756 homicide incidents with 18,483 victims, 1691 nonfamilicidal uxoricides and 370 nonfamilicidal filicide incidents. There were 15 familicide incidents. One of the 15 familicides was perpetrated by a woman who killed her husband and her 13-year old stepdaughter. The other 14 were perpetrated by men. There were never more than two familicide incidents in any one year. The victims were shot in eight of the familicides. There

Figure 1. Age distributions of the children killed by familicidal men and by other filicidal men, compared with age distributions of children in the population-at large for Canada 1974-1990 and for England and Wales 1977-1990.

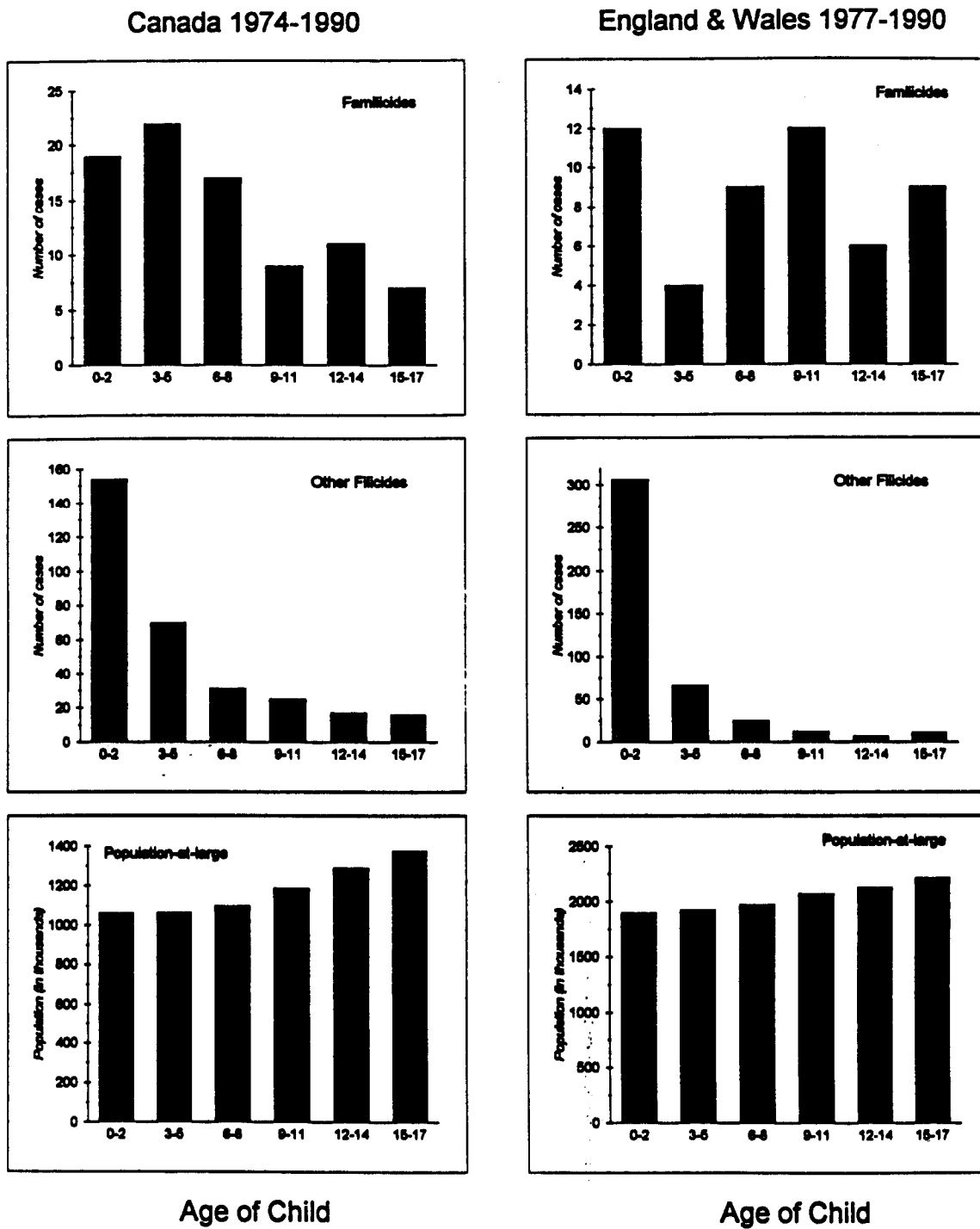
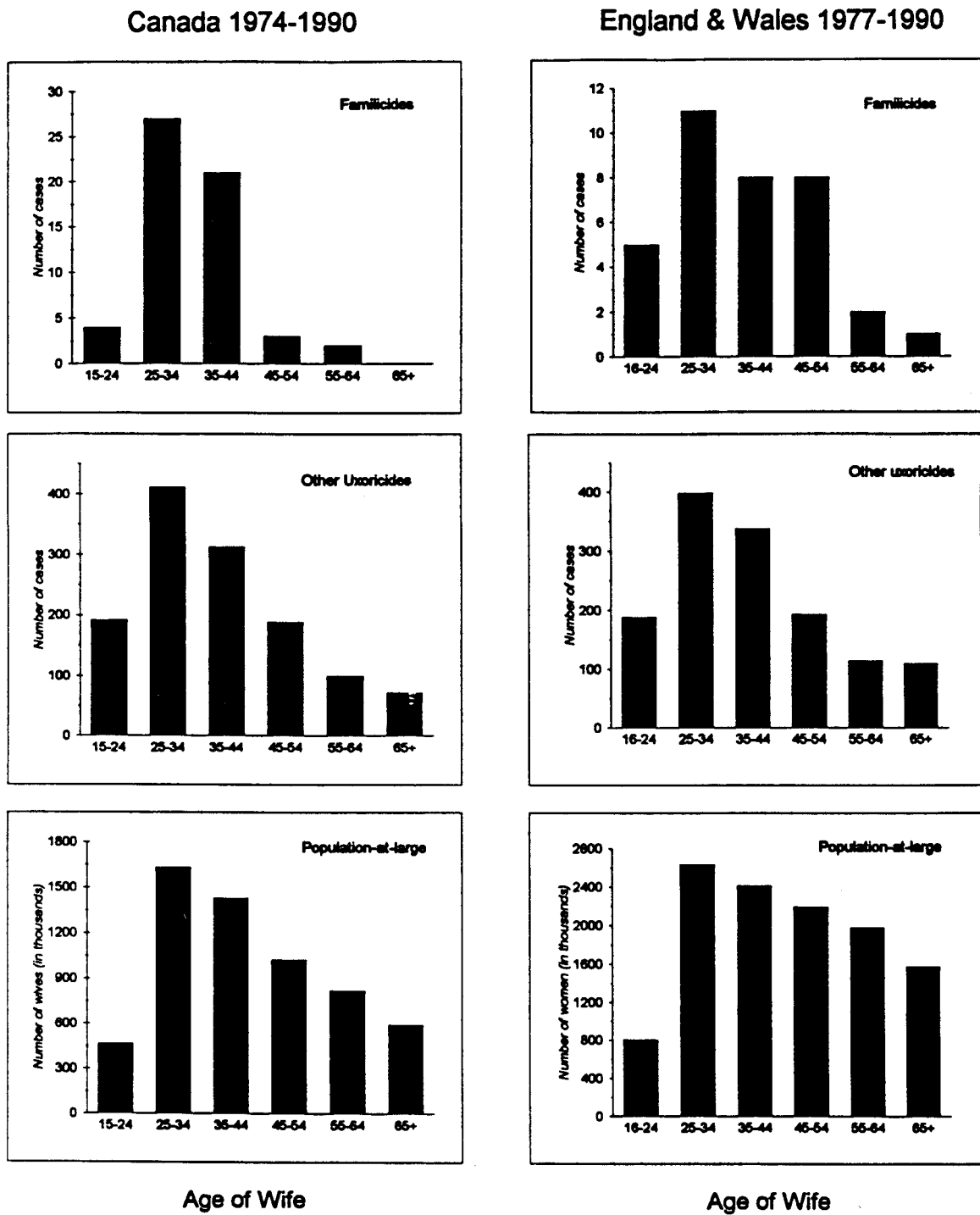


Figure 2. Age distributions of the wives killed by familicidal men and by other uxoricidal men, compared with age distributions of wives in the population-at-large for Canada 1974-1990 and for England and Wales 1977-1990.



were ten 2-victim cases, three 3-victim cases, one 4-victim case, and one 7-victim incident.

The male-perpetrated familicides included 10 registered-marrieds (including one divorced couple) and four de facto married couples. Twelve of the 17 child victims were own offspring and 5 were stepchildren. In addition, there were 7 victims who were not related to the killer or the other victims; this includes 5 unrelated victims unknown to the killer who died in the 7-victim case as a result of arson.

In these few cases, stepchildren are almost as prevalent in the familicides (29% of the filicide victims) as in nonfamilicidal filicides in Chicago in the same period, in which stepchildren comprised 32% of 215 victims. Both of these percentages greatly exceed the proportion of U.S. children living with stepfathers; for children in the same age range as these homicide victims, the proportion living with stepfathers would be well under 10% (Daly & Wilson 1994). If these estimates are applicable to the city of Chicago, stepchildren are significantly over-represented in both familicide incidents and other filicide incidents.

The familicidal child victims and the other filicide victims averaged 9 years of age. The fathers were similar in age for the familicides and the other filicides: 35 and 34 years, respectively. Sons were somewhat over-represented in both familicides and other filicides: 59% and 63%, respectively.

Suicide is particularly prevalent in familicide cases, even in comparison with other family homicides

In Canada, and in England and Wales, half of the male perpetrators committed suicide (Table 1). Suicide was also quite prevalent in nonfamilicidal uxoricides and nonfamilicidal filicides, compared to nonfamilial homicides, in which suicide is rare.

In Chicago, 14% of the familicidal men committed suicide at the incident compared to 11% of nonfamilicidal uxoricides and 3% of nonfamilicidal filicides. As in Canada and Britain, men were much less likely to have killed themselves in other victim-killer relationship categories: less than one percent of such cases. Suicide is obviously an important risk marker, after the fact, for familial homicides in general and familicides in particular. However, whether prior threats of suicide are common in these cases and might become a useful predictor of risk is unknown.

Several psychiatrists who have interviewed familicide perpetrators, sometimes after failed suicide attempts, have published reports that suggest a recurring theme: the man was often brooding and despondent (e.g., Graser 1992a; Guttmacher 1960; West 1965; Scott 1973; Hirose 1979; Bénézech 1991). These case descriptions often reveal a recent, devastating experience of personal and financial failure such that the killer feels that his inability to provide and protect, and the shame likely to befall the wife and

children, warrant the termination of all their lives. Newspaper accounts tell much the same story (Wilson & Daly 1995). These familicides are thus apparently perpetrated more in sorrow than in anger. It is interesting to note that suicide is far more common in familicides and filicides when the child victims are the perpetrator's genetic offspring than when they are his stepchildren (Wilson & Daly 1995).

Table 1

Incidents of suicide by familicidal men versus other filicidal men and other uxoricidal men

	Suicides	Not Suicide	Percent Suicide
<u>Canada 1974-1990</u>			
Familicides	29	28	50.9
Other uxoricides	323	953	25.3
Other filicides	76	224	25.3
All other solved homicides	181	5474	3.2
<u>England &amp; Wales 1977-1990</u>			
Familicides	23	23	50.0
Other uxoricides	198	1100	15.3
Other filicides	45	379	10.65
All other solved homicides	105	4577	2.3
<u>Chicago 1965-1990</u>			
Familicides	2	12	14.3
Other uxoricides	91	739	11.0
Other filicides	6	204	2.9
All other solved homicides	50	12079	0.4

However, suicide does not necessarily indicate a misguided attempt to "protect" or "rescue" loved ones, since some familicidal men, including even some of those who commit suicide, had made clear displays of anger over the wife's termination of the marriage (Wilson & Daly 1995).

It is interesting to note that women who kill their children often commit suicide, especially if the children are not infants, and in many of these cases of murder-suicide



the women appear to have been despondent, like some familicidal men. Such mothers sometimes leave notes indicating that the homicide was conceived as a loving rescue (Daly & Wilson 1988a; Graser 1992b). But whereas suicidal men not infrequently decide to take their wives and children with them, suicidal women almost never decide to "rescue" their husbands as well as their children. We have interpreted this behavioral difference as a reflection of a more general sex difference in proprietary constructions of the "family", with men feeling proprietary primarily about their wives and secondarily their children, while women have strongly proprietary feelings about the children alone (Daly & Wilson 1988a; Wilson & Daly 1992).

### Concluding Remarks

As members of the Homicide Research Working Group are well aware, homicide is not a unitary phenomenon. While there undoubtedly are many factors which increase the risk of different kinds of homicides, it behooves the researcher to identify conceptually coherent categories of cases in order to understand the causal dynamics and risks. We have argued (Daly & Wilson 1988b) that the relationship between the victim and the killer is a useful basis for categorizing violent interpersonal conflicts. One can also categorize with respect to context and "motive", with results that might in principle be orthogonal to victim-killer relationship, but in practice often group the cases similarly. To some degree, familicides share motives and demographic risk factors with nonfamilicidal uxoricides and filicides, but there seems to be more commonality between the familicides and other uxoricides than between the familicides and other filicides. Moreover, familicides appear to differ from other uxoricides and filicides in that the families involved are more nearly representative of the population-at-large: de facto marriages are not so over-represented as in other uxoricides; stepchildren are not so over-represented as in other filicides; and the age distributions of victims are somewhat closer to the population-at-large too. Other striking features of familicides are the virtual absence of female-perpetrated cases, the prevalence of suicide, and the rarity of additional extrafamilial victims.

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#### Notes

1. Adoptees are not discriminable from genetic offspring in Statistics Canada's codings.



Domestic Violence Methods:  
The Canadian Violence Against Women Survey

Moderator: Holly Johnson

Recorder: Margo Wilson

Presenters:

Measuring Violence Against Women and its Impact: Content of the Violence Against Women Survey Questionnaire

Holly Johnson

Caring for Human Subjects

Karen Rodgers

Measuring Violence Against Women and its Impact: The Content of the Violence Against Women" Survey Questionnaire

Holly Johnson

Discussion:

Why do Surveys? How Large-Scale Sample Surveys Can Contribute to Policy Development

Jim Trudeau



## Recorder's Notes

### Panel

Holly Johnson introduced the Canadian survey in terms of major goals of the Canadian Violence Against Women Survey. Linda MacLeod outlined the objectives of consulting with various community groups concerned with violence against women. This process of consultations across the country established several important objectives: (1) the validity of the survey questions and measures of forms of victimization, (2) ethical considerations, especially with respect to the need to provide protective measures and support to survey respondents, (3) previously unanticipated goals such as the utility of the survey process and findings to inform the public-at-large about violence against women. Karen Rodgers elaborated on the special requirements of survey methodology concerned with violence against women, especially with respect to the interviewing and with respect to women's safety and to emotional trauma. Holly Johnson described the survey interview and some of the findings. Tim Trudeau outlined the plans for a replication and extension of the Canadian survey in the United States.

### Discussion

Members of the HRWG were extremely interested in the remarks of all the panelists and asked many questions throughout the session. The questions mainly addressed methodological details. HRWG members were interested in why the women were only interviewed about violence by men. The rationale derived from the mandates of the funding agencies, Statistics Canada and the Department of Health and Welfare, who were concerned to assess the incidence of violence against Canadian women in the most usual contexts. The survey participation rate was queried, and everyone was impressed to learn that 64% of all persons at randomly dialed phone numbers agreed to answer the initial screening questions, and 91% of the target survey respondents (women over 17 years of age) agreed to participate in the interview. No explicit incentives were ever considered to enhance the participation rate; women presumably would implicitly assume that the findings of the survey would benefit women generally. The sampling procedures for the more detailed questioning about one particular incident interested the HRWG audience. Women experienced from one to more than a dozen violent incidents since the age of 16 years, but only one incident was randomly selected for more elaborate description. The incident selection procedure involved random selection with the constraints imposed by a computer-generated algorithm to ensure sample representation of different types of violent experiences (sexual assault, physical assault, and violence by spouse) by different categories of the man's relationship to the woman (stranger, acquaintance, spouse, etc.). If there were several equivalent categories of incidents the most recent was selected. If the interviewee wished to also talk about another incident the interviewer obliged, once the randomly selected incident questions were completed. In general, the interviewers would never rush the interview or discourage a woman who wished to continue to talk. The decision to sacrifice sample

size for time to talk was an explicit methodological consideration. The panelists agreed about the importance of potential definitional problems and clarity of interpretation of survey questions. The widespread consultations during the survey design stage as well as extensive pretesting of the interview protocol solved many potential interpretive problems. Moreover, the survey items themselves afforded cross-checking for inconsistencies in responding. The U.S. members of the audience were intrigued to learn that the extension of the Canadian survey to the United States will include interviewing of both sexes, and that it will include victimization by same-sex as well as opposite-sex partners. Issues of the appropriateness of wordings of certain survey questions for male interviewees, and of possible sex differences in interpretations, were raised. Furthermore, HRWG members were very concerned whether the risk of harm and emotional trauma for participating in the interview was going to be adequately ensured for the US survey.



## **Measuring Violence Against Women and its Impact: Content of the Violence Against Women Survey Questionnaire**

HOLLY JOHNSON  
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics  
Statistics Canada

In 1993, Statistics Canada conducted a telephone survey on the topic of male violence against women. Approximately 12,000 women were interviewed about their experiences of physical and sexual assault since the age of 16. This included acts committed by spouses and ex-spouses, dates and boyfriends, other acquaintances and strangers. Also included were questions about a variety of acts of sexual harassment, perceptions about personal safety and precautionary behaviours.

An entire survey dedicated to women's perceptions and experiences of violence has a number of advantages. It is able to address the wide range of violent experiences that women are subjected to, both inside and outside the home, the consequences and outcomes of the experience for them, reactions of the woman and others around her, who she turned to for support (including social services, police and others) and how she copes. It enables theories to be tested about the etiology of assaults on wives through the examination of demographic factors, the generational cycle of violence, the role of power and control in wife assault, and the role of alcohol. Representative surveys can help us understand how violent marriages are different from non-violent ones, what are the prominent risk factors, and what are the factors predicting very serious, potentially lethal assaults. There is direct policy relevance of these types of discussions in designing awareness and prevention programs, and in determining the important points of intervention to avert an escalation of violence.

This paper deals in detail with the structure, design and scope of the survey questionnaire. The approach taken to develop the questionnaire was guided in large measure by the very extensive community consultations undertaken over the course of two years. The range of groups providing input into the process included crisis counsellors and shelter workers, other community groups, governments, academics and other experts. The traditional crime victimization survey approach was utilized, but with special measures taken to address the unique challenges presented by interviewing women over the telephone about these very personal experiences.

There was a great deal of interest among all the groups consulted in having research and policy questions identified and included in the survey instrument. In particular, there was an interest in taking advantage of the random sample design of the survey to test current theories about the causation of wife assault that could assist in designing prevention and counselling programs. Beyond basic information about prevalence of physical and sexual assaults and the nature of women's fear, the survey funders at the federal department of Health listed as priorities the physical and emotional

consequences of violent assault, awareness and use of community services for victims of violence, involvement and satisfaction with the criminal justice system, and socio-demographic information about victims and offenders. The following additional areas were identified during the course of our research and consultations and were eventually added to the questionnaire:

1. questions about controlling/emotionally abusive behaviour by husbands and common-law partners to test theories about power and control as causal factors in wife abuse
2. questions about offenders' use of alcohol to explore theoretical questions about the role of alcohol in violent interactions
3. questions about exposure to violence in childhood to test theories about the intergenerational transmission of violence
4. detailed questions about experiences of sexual harassment by both known men and strangers in order to more comprehensively explore the dimensions of women's fear

### Structure of the Questionnaire

The content of the questionnaire is outlined below in chronological order.<sup>1</sup>

#### Fear of Violence

This first section introduced respondents to the survey and the issues to follow. It was designed to measure the extent to which women worry about their personal safety in everyday situations, how fear imposes limits on their behaviour, and how they manage threats to their safety in their daily lives. It was designed as a lead-in section on a topic of interest to most women that would facilitate rapport-building between respondents and interviewers.

Questions about "worry" focused on specific domains such as neighbourhoods streets, parking garages, public transportation, being home alone, as well as the frequency of being in these situations. Specific self-protection measures included carrying something to defend herself, self-defence courses, avoiding teenage boys and young men, locking car doors, and checking the back seat of cars before getting in.

#### Sexual Harassment

This section dealt with non-criminal threats of sexual violence such as obscene telephone calls, indecent exposure, being followed, street harassment, and various types of harassment by known men including workplace incidents. One-year and adult lifetime (since age 16) rates were obtained.

These items were designed to tap the more commonplace threats of sexual aggression frequently overlooked in studies of violent victimization. It enables us to expand on the traditional approach to studying women's fear of violent attack which tends to encompass only acts that are counted under the legal codes, and only those that occurred within a six or twelve-month period.

### Violence by Strangers, Boyfriends and Other Known Men

Questions about experiences of sexual and physical assaults in this section form the basis for one-year and lifetime prevalence rates of non-spousal violence against women. Through extensive testing in focus groups of police officers, assaulted women and crisis counsellors, question wording was designed to conform to Criminal Code definitions of these offences. Sexual assault was measured through two questions, one related to unwanted sexual touching and the other to forced sexual activity with violence or the threat of violence. Physical assault was also addressed through two questions, one related to actual assaults and the other to threats of imminent assault.

The range of behaviours considered a sexual assault under Canadian law include unwanted sexual touching up to violent sexual attacks with severe injury to the victim. Rape (i.e., penetration) is included but is not essential to this definition. The following two questions defined sexual assault by strangers and known men other than intimate partners:

#### *sexual attack*

*Has a male stranger (date, boyfriend or other man known to you) ever forced you or attempted to force you into any sexual activity by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way?*

#### *unwanted sexual touching*

*Has a male stranger (or other man known to you) ever touched you against your will in any sexual way, such as unwanted touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling?*

The question about sexual attacks was asked with respect to dates and boyfriends but the question about unwanted sexual touching was not. While technically these behaviours do fall under the legal definition of sexual assault, during the testing of the questionnaire it was clear that a majority of respondents found this concept to be ambiguous and confusing and there was a concern among the survey designers that the results of this question would be of questionable validity.

Physical assaults under the *Criminal Code* range from face-to-face threats of imminent attack up to and including attacks with serious injury. Physical violence outside marriage was measured through responses to the following two questions:

### *physical attack*

*Now I'm going to ask you some questions about physical attacks you may have had since the age of 16. By this I mean any use of force such as being hit, slapped, kicked or grabbed to being beaten, knifed or shot. Has a male stranger (date or boyfriend or other man known to you) ever physically attacked you?*

### *threats of attack*

*The next few questions are about face-to-face threats you may have experienced. By threats I mean any time you have been threatened with physical harm since you were 16. Has a male stranger (date or boyfriend or other man known to you) ever threatened to harm you? Did you believe he would do it?*

Incidents that had both a sexual and a physical component were counted only once as sexual assaults.

### Socio-demographic Characteristics of Victims

Socio-demographic and health measures included in this section included the woman's age, education, employment status, personal and household income, health status, disabilities and drug use. These variables are important to understanding risk factors and other correlates of women's fear and victimization.

### Marriage History

This section included detailed questions about the number of marriages and common-law unions the woman has had, the duration of her current marital union and age at first union.

### Socio-demographic Characteristics of Current Spouse

These included spouse's age, education, employment status, and use of alcohol. They are important for identifying correlates of wife assault and high risk offenders.

### Controlling/Emotionally Abusive Behaviour by Current and Previous Spouses

Increasingly, issues of power and control are seen as central components of battering relationships. However, there have been few efforts to quantify controlling behaviours within statistical surveys. This is one area where extensive testing of the question wording was required, both in focus groups of abused women and in field tests with random samples of women. Five questions were eventually selected which relate to sexual jealousy, isolation tactics intended to limit contacts with family and friends, name-calling and verbal put-downs, and control over family finances. This section was intended to add context to reports of physical assault by spouses and to test theories about the role of male power and control in assaults against female partners.

## Violence in Current and Previous Marriages

Violence by spouses was measured through ten items ranging from threats to hit the woman to using a gun or a knife, and sexual assault. One-year and adult lifetime rates of spousal violence were obtained. The physical aggression questions of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1990) were tested for inclusion in this survey but were found to require clarification and specification. For example, the CTS item "threatened to hit or throw something at you" has been altered to read "threatened to hit you *with his fist or anything else that could hurt you*". Similarly, the item "threw something at you" has been clarified to read "thrown anything at you *that could hurt you*". The item "hit you with something" now reads "hit you with something *that could hurt you*". These modifications were made following field testing in which some respondents were confused about whether to include incidents in which they were threatened or hit in a playful way with harmless objects that could not possibly hurt them. The addition of an item on sexual attacks addresses sexual violence in marriage and the links between wife battering and marital rape.

The Violence Against Women survey also represents a departure from the "conflict tactics" approach in the extensive lead-up it has to questions about spousal violence, through detailed questions about fear of violence in public places and precautions taken to protect oneself, sexual harassment, and sexual and physical violence by strangers, dates and boyfriends and other known men. It does not use the "verbal reasoning" or "verbal aggression" scales of the CTS to ease respondents into questions about violence. Moreover, the introduction to the section inquiring about wife assault states very directly that "*We are particularly interested in learning more about women's experiences of violence in their homes. I'd like to ask you to tell me if your husband/partner has ever done any of the following to you.*" This survey is concerned not with ways of settling differences but with violence against women and this context will have been established at this point.

An additional objective of situating questions about spousal assaults further on in the interview was to allow time for interviewers to assess whether the respondent had sufficient privacy to respond freely to these questions or whether she had been interrupted by someone in the household. Through training and experiences, interviewers became skilled at detecting respondents' level of comfort with the questions and ability to respond candidly. If it was apparent that someone else was present or for some reason the respondent was unable to continue at that time, she was given the option of continuing the interview at another place or time.

The emphasis on measuring spousal violence is on incidents of violence within the relationship and not on quantifying individual assaults or blows. Respondents were asked how many different occasions her spouse had been violent toward her. This series of questions enables us to assess assumptions about the escalation of violence

over time. Together with other contextual questions (frequency, injury, weapons, fearing for her life, how it starts), we can differentiate among assaults of varying degrees of seriousness.

Respondents were also asked whether the assaults occurred before they were married/commonlaw, during the marriage, during pregnancy, and in the case of previous spouses, following separation. These variables add to analyses of risk factors and the role of power and control in spousal assaults.

### Exposure to Violence in Childhood

All respondents are asked about violence committed by their fathers toward their mothers, by current spouses' fathers, and by previous spouses' fathers (where applicable). These variables will help test assumptions about the intergenerational cycle of violence.

### Incident Reports

Respondents who disclosed experiences of violence were asked to provide details on one incident only. If more than one incident was disclosed, one was selected at random by computer. It became apparent during the field tests that multiple experiences of violence are quite common and that detailed discussion of all incidents would pose an unreasonable burden on respondents. Random selection of only one incident reduces respondent burden and ensures statistical representation of the information collected.

Detailed information was collected in this section about the location of (non-spousal) incidents, offenders' use of alcohol at the time of the incident, physical injury, medical attention for injuries, emotional trauma, using drugs or alcohol to cope with the effects of the experience, type of weapon used, who the woman turned to for help, satisfaction with community services, reporting to the police, reasons for not contacting the police, actions taken by the police, satisfaction with the police, whether the case went to court, and satisfaction with treatment in court.

Victims of wife assault were also asked if they ever feared their lives were in danger, whether their children ever witnessed the assaults against them, whether the abuser ever received counselling for his violent behaviour, and whether police intervention had an effect on reducing the level of spouses' violence. They were asked to describe in their own words how incidents of violence by their spouses usually start.

### Testing

Because of the extreme sensitivity of the subject matter, rigorous testing of the survey instrument, the approach and the methodology was a priority. Many questions

had not been applied in the same way in surveys of this nature and some were newly developed for this survey. It was especially important that the overall approach and question wording be tested for clarity and sensitivity to ensure that refusals, both on specific questions and on general participation, would be minimized.

Testing for this survey was extensive and took a number of forms:

1. *focus group testing* with crisis counsellors, shelter workers and victims of abuse regarding the approach, the introduction and specific question wording and response categories
2. *one-on-one interviews* with abuse victims, using drafts of the entire questionnaire, with immediate feed-back regarding question wording, response categories, the impact on the woman responding
3. *two large-scale field tests* in both english and french to test response rates, disclosure rates, clarity of question wording, the flow of the entire questionnaire, and translation
4. *monitoring of live interviews* during the field tests and the interviewing for the actual survey
5. *debriefing sessions with the field test interviewers* who shared their thoughts and ideas about problems and possible improvements to the questionnaire and the procedures.

### Summary Results

The Violence Against Women Survey was comprised of a representative stratified probability sample of 12,300 women 18 years of age and over living in the ten provinces (1% of this population live in households without telephones). The response rate, based on the approximately 19,000 eligible households contacted, was 63.7%. Non-response occurred for a variety of reasons, including refusals, language difficulties, and unavailability of the woman selected for the interview. Most non-response occurred before a respondent was selected. In households where a respondent was contacted (13,500), 91% agreed to be interviewed.

Random selection helps ensure that those who respond are statistically representative and that the results can be generalized to the population at large. Responses were weighted to reflect the sex and age structure of the sampling areas based on Census projections. Figures in the following tables have been weighted to the Canadian adult female population. National estimates are expected to be within 1.2% of the true population at the 95% confidence interval. Estimates of sub-groups of the population will have wider confidence intervals.

According to the Violence Against Women survey, 51% of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual assault since the age of 16 (Table 1). This represents over five million women. Almost one-half of all women (45%) have been victimized by men known to them (including spouses, dates, boyfriends,

family, acquaintances, and other known men) while 23% reported violence by a stranger.

An estimated one million women experienced some form of violence in the one-year period preceding the survey, a figure which represents 10% of the adult female population.

Table 1

Number and percentage of women 18 years of age and over who have experienced violence by relationship of perpetrator

Relationship	Number in millions	Percent adult lifetime	Percent 12 months
Total women reporting violence	5.38	51	10
Spouse or ex-spouse	2.65	29 <sup>1</sup>	3 <sup>1</sup>
Date/boyfriend	1.72	16	2
Other known man	2.46	23	4
Stranger	2.46	23	4

Figures do not add to totals because of multiple responses.

Source: Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.

<sup>1</sup>Based on the number of women who have ever been married or lived with a man in a common-law relationship.

Four in ten (39%) women have been victims of sexual assault. One in four women reported both unwanted sexual touching and violent sexual attacks. One-third of all women have been physically threatened or assaulted (Table 2).

Table 2

Number and percentage of women 18 years of age and over who have experienced violence by type of violence

Type of violence	Number in millions	Percent adult lifetime	Percent 12 months
Total women reporting violence	5.38	51	10
Sexual assault	4.10	39	5 <sup>1</sup>
Sexual attack	2.50	24	1 <sup>1</sup>
Unwanted sexual touching	2.62	25	5 <sup>1</sup>
Physical assault	3.58	34	3 <sup>1</sup>

Figures do not add to totals because of multiple responses.

Source: Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.

<sup>1</sup>Based on non-spousal assaults only as it is not possible to calculate twelve month rates for different kinds of spousal assaults.



Over the one-year period, unwanted sexual touching occurred with the greatest frequency.

The percentage of ever-married or cohabitating women who have been assaulted by a spouse or live-in partner is 29%. Overall, rates of violence in previous unions were significantly higher than currently intact unions: 48% in past unions compared to 15% in marriages that were current at the time of the interview. There is a continued risk of violence to women by *ex-partners* despite a divorce or separation. In fact, 19% of women assaulted by a man who they have since left said the man was violent during a period of separation and in one-third of these cases, the violence became more severe at that time.

As Table 3 illustrates, the most common forms of violence inflicted on women by marital partners were pushing, grabbing and shoving followed by threats of hitting, slapping, throwing something at her, kicking, biting and hitting with fists. While the percentage of women who have been beaten up, choked, sexually assaulted or had

Table 3

Number and percentage of ever-married women 18 years and over who reported violence by a marital partner<sup>1</sup> by type of assault

Types of assault	Number in millions	Percent
Total ever-married women <sup>1</sup>	9.06	100
Total victims of wife assault <sup>1</sup>	2.65	29
1. Threatened to hit her with his fist or anything else hat could hurt her	1.69	19
2. Threw something at her that could hurt her	1.02	11
3. Pushed, grabbed or shoved her	2.22	25
4. Slapped her	1.36	15
5. Kicked, bit or hit her with his fist	.96	11
6. Hit her with something that could hurt her	.51	6
7. Beat her up	.79	9
8. Choked her	.61	7
9. Threatened to or used a gun or knife on her	.42	5
10. Forced her into any sexual activity when she did ot want to by threatening her, holding her down, or hurting her in some way	.73	8

Figures do not add to totals because of multiple responses.

Source: Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.

<sup>1</sup>Includes common-law partners.

a gun or knife used against them are all less than 10%, in each of these categories, between 400,000 and 800,000 Canadian women have been affected.

Not only do Canadian women report significant levels of violence, a majority of those who have been physically or sexually assaulted have been victimized more than once. The greatest risk of repeat victimization outside marriage involves sexual violence. As shown in Table 4, 57% of women who have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a spouse reported more than one such incident, and 26% were assaulted *four times or more*. Four in ten women who have been violently sexually attacked, and almost six in ten who reported unwanted sexual touching, said it happened to them more than once.

Table 4

Percentage of women 18 years and over who have experienced non-marital violence by number of occurrences

Number of occurrences	Total women victimized	Sexual attack	Sexual touching	Total sexual assault	Physical assault
Total 100	100	100	100	100	
One	37	57	40	41	57
Two	20	21	20	20	19
Three	9	10	11	7	
Four or more	30	13	27	26	16
Not stated	2	----	2	2	----

---- not statistically reliable

Source: Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.

In a majority of cases, wife assault is characterized as repeated or, in some cases, ongoing episodes of abuse. Sixty-three percent of women who had been assaulted by a spouse reported more than one episode and 32% more than ten. In past marriages that had ended at the time of the interview, fully 41% involved episodes of ten or more, compared to 10% in the case of current unions.

#### Controlling/emotionally Abusive Behaviour

Research shows that a great deal of violence against wives occurs in the context of the man's possessiveness, jealousy and demands or criticisms over her domestic performance (Dobash, 1984; Hart, 1988; Walker, 1979). The man's obsessiveness about his wife and his desire to control her have also been cited as precursors to wife killings and killings of violent husbands (Daly and Wilson, 1988; Wilson and Daly, 1992 and 1994; Walker, 1984; Browne, 1987). In order to test these linkages empirically, five questions about partners' use of controlling behaviours over their wives were included

in the Violence Against Women Survey. As listed in Table 5, controlling behaviour was measured through responses to statements about the partner's efforts to jealously guard the woman's contact with other men, to isolate her from outside support, to control her whereabouts, or to degrade her through name-calling and put-downs. The percentage of ever-married women reporting controlling behaviour by a spouse was higher than the percentage reporting violence: 35% said their partner has done one or more of these things to them compared to 29% who were the recipients of violent acts.

The controlling and emotionally abusive items are highly correlated with acts of violence, and as the seriousness and frequency of the violent acts increases, so too does the abuser's use of these tactics (Wilson, Johnson and Daly, 1995).

Table 5

Percentage of ever-married women reporting controlling/emotionally abusive behaviour

Type of controlling behaviour	Percent
Any controlling behaviour	35
1. He is jealous and doesn't want her to talk to other men	19
2. He tries to limit her contact with family or friends	16
3. He insists on knowing who she is with and where she is at all times	22
4. He calls her names to put her down or make her feel bad	21
5. He prevents her from knowing about or having access to the family income, even if she asks	10

Figures do not add to totals because of multiple responses.

Source: Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.

Sexual Harassment

For most people, images of violence equate with violent attacks involving blows of some kind that result in injury to the victim. But for most women, subtle threats of male violence, unpredictable situations that potentially *could* turn violent, are more commonplace. For some women, depending on their work or living environment, they exist almost on a daily basis. The fear and the harm these actions cause often go unnoticed. They almost always have a sexual component to them, a sexual undercurrent, that warns women of their vulnerability to assault. They are behaviours that may or may not evolve into something that qualifies as violence under the legal code.

British researcher Liz Kelly (1988) describes the similarities in the dynamics of sexual harassment to various types of actual violence - the intrusion, the uncertainty, the feelings of powerlessness, the fear and vulnerability. The basic common characteristic

that underlies these experiences is the implicit or explicit threat of unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault over which the woman has no control. Kelly and others have highlighted the potential for violence that lies behind sexual harassment and point out that women don't experience flashing, obscene phone calls or being followed as minor incidents (Kelly, 1988; McNeill, 1987; Stanko, 1990; Smith, 1993 and 1993a; Sheffield, 1989). In fact, women are often frightened and upset by these experiences.

While it may be true that women who have these experiences often look back in relief that they escaped physical harm, it is not true that most were not harmed in any way. Many situations in which a man makes sexual advances or threats of sexual contact, it may be very difficult to predict whether he intends to go no further. McNeill (1987), in a study of women who had been flashed at, describes the predominant reactions of fear, panic, shock, disgust, anger, outrage, guilt, humiliation and shame. The women's initial reactions were based on the threat of violence they perceived and the outcome anticipated at the time (1987:102). What was most striking was that while many women linked the experience with a fear of being raped, at the time of the incident women feared death, not rape.

The Violence Against Women survey describes sexual harassment against Canadian women as commonplace. Fully 87% of Canadian women have experienced sexual harassment in a form that was memorable enough to report to this survey (Table 6). Altogether, 85% of women have been sexually harassed by a stranger: they either had received obscene telephone calls, cat-calls and other types of harassment from strangers on the street, were followed by a man in a way that frightened them, or had a man indecently expose himself to them. The most common of these were obscene telephone calls and street harassment. Seven million and six million women, respectively, have had these experiences. Almost 3.5 million women have had the frightening experience of being followed by a man, and 2 million have been victims of indecent exposure.

Table 6

Number and percentage of women who have experienced sexual harassment by type of harassment

Type of sexual harassment	Number in millions	Percent
Total women sexually harassed	9.15	87
<i>Unknown man</i>	8.93	85
Obscene phone call	7.19	39
Unwanted attention from male stranger	6.28	60
Followed in a frightening way	3.48	33
Indecent exposure	2.04	19
<i>Known man</i>	5.32	51
Made inappropriate comments about her body or sex life	3.81	36
Leaned over unnecessarily, got too close, cornered her	3.60	34
Repeatedly asked for a date and wouldn't take "no" for an answer	2.62	25
Hinted her job situation might be hurt if she didn't have a sexual		

Hinted her job situation might be hurt if she didn't have a sexual relationship with him

.477

5

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Figures do not add to totals because of multiple responses.

Source: Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.

At least one-half of all women have also been sexually harassed by men they know. This survey asked about four types of harassment - making her uncomfortable by making inappropriate sexual comments, leaning over unnecessarily, getting too close or cornering her, repeatedly asking her for a date and refusing to take "no" for an answer, and hinting that she would lose her job or her job situation might be hurt if she did not have a sexual relationship with him. Over five million women have had at least one of these experiences, the most common of which were making inappropriate sexual comments, getting too close or cornering her. In one-half of all these situations in which women were sexually harassed by someone they know, the offender was described as an acquaintance or a friend. A large proportion were also work-related: 25% involved a co-worker, 18% a boss or supervisor, and 6% a client, customer or patient. Relatives (fathers, brothers, in-laws) were responsible for 11% of cases, doctors for 4% and other men (such as landlords, teachers, students, repairman) for 7%.

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## Endnotes

1. Copies of the Violence Against Women Survey questionnaire are available from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 19th Floor, R.H. Coats Building, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0T6 (613-951-9023 or toll-free at 1-800-387-2231).





## Intimate Violence Policy

Moderator: Paula McClain

Recorder: Holly Johnson

Presenters:

The Structure of Domestic Violence: An Analysis of Selected Incidents  
John Jarvis

Domestic Murder in Massachusetts  
Reneau Kennedy

Can NIBRS Contribute to our Understanding of Domestic Violence?  
Roland Chilton



## Recorder's Notes

There was a great deal of interest and discussion around the validity of the Quebec newspaper "Allo Police" as a source of information to analyze homicides. According to Marc Ouimet, there is some consistency with Statistics Canada data although the newspaper uses more of a "natural" definition than one that is defined legally.

An observation made that the sex ratio of domestic assaults shown in NIBRS is much different than that shown in the Chicago homicide file. Roland Chilton points out that NIBRS does not contain metropolitan areas and that these smaller areas are subject to greater change over time. The reverse sex ratio demonstrated in Chicago may be an urban/rural phenomenon. It was also pointed out that the sex ratio in Chicago only holds for black couples. There is talk of mapping NIBRS into census data in order to enhance analysis at the city level.

Questions followed about the ability of NIBRS data to be broken down into police divisions. John Jarvis explained that it will necessary to go to local jurisdictions for that type of breakdown because it is not supplied to the FBI in that detail. There is also a debate underway as to which address should be included on the file as a locator, the location of the incident, the victim or the offender.

A question was raised about socio-economic indicators on NIBRS. There are no such indicators at present nor will there in the future because of the nature of the data collection. Information is recorded by the police who will not be able to supply these details about victims or offenders. However, there may be a possibility of linking to court records or census tracts.

There was some discussion about the classification of "latinos" by researchers and by the police. In the Chicago database, the classification was based on the opinion of the investigators but that since 1980 it has been consistent with the census definition. There is a concern about handling racial classifications in general in police recording systems. Diversity tends to get lost.

The point was raised that processing costs of a Canadian system similar to NIBRS have been astronomical and will that be a problem in the U.S. with significantly more cases. John Jarvis responded that NIBRS managers are working closely with the people developing the data capture systems in the U.S., and are trying to detect errors at the jurisdictional level in order to streamline the process by the time the data are received at NIBRS. There was a suggestion by some academics present that some of the problems Statistics Canada is experiencing might have been reduced if the expertise of academics had been exploited better to analyze the data coming in.

Frustration was voiced about the limited access to NIBRS data by anyone outside government. The possibility of releasing the data through ICPSR is currently under discussion; however, there are some concerns about the non-representativeness of the data and about confidentiality of micro data when it is released publically.

## **Can the National Incident-Based Reporting System (Nibrs) Contribute to Our Understanding of Domestic Violence?**

ROLAND CHILTON

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

The National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) was created to replace the summary statistics system now used by the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. (FBI, 1988-92; Jarvis, 1992, 1993) With ten states participating and others working to adopt NIBRS, the traditional system is gradually being replaced. This replacement will be accelerated as more police agencies adopt administrative software that produces incident based reporting as a byproduct. A powerful advantage of NIBRS is that it provides more information about offenses and offenders than the traditional summary statistics system. Moreover, NIBRS complements the offense and offender data collected with information about victims and victim-offender relationships. Those familiar with the UCR's Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) will recognize the potential of NIBRS most easily because NIBRS provides the same kind of information as the Supplementary Homicide Reports. This includes information on the time, place and circumstances of crimes and information on the weapons used, the victims, the offenders, and victim-offender relationships. However, NIBRS provides this information for homicide and 45 other offenses.

As a first step in assessing the contribution that NIBRS might make to our understanding of domestic violence, I analyzed a set of NIBRS homicide data provided by the UCR Section of the FBI. An obvious next step is an analysis of NIBRS, non-lethal, domestic violence data. However, because homicide is the most serious outcome of domestic violence and other assaults, and because the NIBRS homicide data can be checked against two national data sets, a separate analysis seemed worthwhile. The NIBRS data used here were made available in basic NIBRS format with some population information added and with the agency identifiers and incident numbers encrypted. The information comes from small, medium, and large cites and constitutes all of the homicides reported in the NIBRS program for 1993. The results and findings presented below are the product of a tabular analysis designed to illustrate the ways in which NIBRS data can increase our understanding of homicides committed by family members and domestic partners.

Much, but certainly not all, of the research on domestic violence and domestic homicide relies either on victim focused data sets or on offender focused data sets. Data sets that are victim focused often provide no information on offenders. Perhaps the best example of this is the cause of death data drawn from death certificates. (Eckberg, 1995) Studies that use offender focused data, provide little or no information on the victims involved. Perhaps the prime examples of this kind of data are the arrest reports

of the UCR. (Blumstein, 1995; Chilton, 1994) Arrest data tell us something about the age, sex and race of people accused of or charged with specific crimes but tell us nothing about the victims. NIBRS provides information about offenses, victims and offenders. Since the relationships reported in NIBRS include a variety of domestic partnerships and family ties, the National Incident Based Reporting System provides data on offenses committed by and against people who know each other very well.

### Sex, and Race for Specific types of Relationships

Table 1 provides information on the characteristics of homicide victims and offenders reported as having specific kinds of relationships. To construct Table 1, I grouped homicide incidents based on the relationship of the victim to one or more of the offenders. Classifying a relationship by looking at the victim's relationship to one or more of the offenders is necessary because there were multiple offenders in 165 of the 646 NIBRS homicide incidents reported for 1993. When multiple offenders are excluded, the percentages shown in Table 1 are changed by a few points. Such a focus on single offender incidents accentuates the patterns shown but does not appreciably alter the results discussed below.

The categories shown in Table 1 are adapted from those used in a 1994 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) special report (Zawitz). When a victim is the spouse of one of the offenders, the relationship is classified in the table as Spouse. Other relationship groupings include a Friend (boyfriend or girlfriend) category, an Other Family category, a Known (acquaintance) category, and a Stranger category. In each case, the term used is intended to describe the relationship of the victim to one or more of the offenders.

The first part of Table 1 shows the sex of homicide victims in specific relationship categories. For all homicides reported in NIBRS for 1993, about one-third of the victims were female. However, the data in Table 1 make it clear that this percentage varies with the relationship of the victim to the offender. In spouse or boyfriend-girlfriend homicides, a higher proportion of women were victims (67 to 75 percent) than in stranger homicides, where only 16 percent of the victims were female and 84 percent of the victims were men or boys. A note at the bottom of Table 1 indicates that the numbers of victims and offenders in each relationship category can not be summed to create the totals shown at the bottom of each column. This is because the victim can have a different relationship to each offender in a multiple offender incident. This is the case, for example, when one offender is a relative of the victim and another offender involved in the same offense is the victim's spouse. In such a case, the victim and the offenders will be included in both the Spouse and the Other Family Categories.

Table 1

Percent of Homicide Victims and Offenders in Five Relationship Categories who are Male or Female, White, Black, or Other Race

Relationship	Victims (N=656*)					
	Sex		Race			Total
	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	
Spouse	17(25)	50(75)	43(64)	22(33)	2(3)	67(100)
Friend (boy/girl)	20(33)	40(67)	29(48)	31(52)	0(0)	60(100)
Other Family	44(62)	27(38)	40(56)	31(44)	0(0)	71(100)
Known	218(81)	50(19)	116(43)	151(56)	1(1)	268(100)
Stranger	78(84)	15(16)	46(49)	47(51)	0(0)	93(100)
Total**	440(68)	211(32)	344(53)	302(47)	3(0)	(100)
Relationship	Offenders (N=930)					
	Sex		Race			Total
	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	
Spouse	55(74)	19(26)	46(62)	26(35)	2(3)	74(100)
Friend (boy/girl)	54(73)	20(27)	31(42)	42(57)	1(1)	74(100)
Other Family	80(90)	20(20)	55(55)	45(45)	0(0)	100(100)
Known	426(92)	38(8)	181(39)	278(60)	5(1)	465(100)
Stranger	183(95)	10(5)	45(23)	145(75)	3(2)	193(100)
Total**	750(89)	91(11)	322(38)	509(61)	8(1)	(100)

\*The victim's relationship to the offender was not available for 120 victims and 132 offenders.

\*\*The numbers in the columns cannot be summed to create these totals because some victims and offenders are counted in more than one relationship category and because the victim's relationship to the offender is missing for more victims and offenders than is sex or race.

The NIBRS data permit a similar analysis of the offenders involved in the same incidents. An examination of Table 1 indicates that the involvement of women as homicide offenders varies by relationship category in a pattern similar to that shown for victims. Over all, homicides by women or girls are relatively rare. The NIBRS data indicate that women and girls were reported as offenders in 10.8 percent of all homicides. The proportion of women reported as offenders when the victim was the husband, or boyfriend, of the offender gets as high as 26 or 27 percent. However, these categories only include about 16 percent of all offenders. Moreover, the proportion of homicides committed by women decreases as the relationship between victims and offenders becomes more distant. For other family members, 80 percent of the offenders were male. In stranger homicides, about 95 percent of the offenders were male. For the acquaintance and stranger categories combined, 93 percent of the offenders were male.

Among victims, there is no consistent racial pattern--except that the percentages of black victims were much larger (33 to 56) than would be expected based on the

proportion of persons classified as black in the U.S. population. Among offenders, the percentage who were black is 35 percent for husbands and wives and 57 for offenders in boyfriend-girlfriend relationships. It then increases from 45 percent to 75 percent as the victim-offender relationship becomes weaker (See Table 1). For all categories, 47 percent of the victims and 61 percent of the offenders were black. These percentages too are much higher than the proportion of persons classified as black in the U.S. population.

Table 1 does not show the percentages of victims in each relationship category who were in specific age groups. When examined, the age groups, like the racial comparisons, present a less consistent pattern than the percentages by sex. A relatively large percentage (63) of husband-wife victims were over thirty. About 31 percent of those killed by other family members were under 18 but only a relatively small percentage of offenders were under 18.

NIBRS permits an even closer examination of the ways in which race and sex are linked to the victim-offender relationship. Table 2 indicates that in domestic partner relationships (spouse or friend) white women were more likely to be the victims of homicide than any other race-sex category. In incidents where the victim knew the offender as an acquaintance or was a stranger to the offender, the victim as more likely to be a black male than any other race-sex category.

Table 2

Percent of Homicide Victims and Offenders in Four Relationship Categories who are Classified as Black Males, White Males, Black Females, or White Females

Relationship	Victim's Race and Sex (N=656*)				Total
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	
Spouse	4(6)	12(18)	18(28)	31(48)	65(100)
Friend (boy/girl)	14(23)	6(10)	17(28)	23(38)	60(100)
Other Family	22(31)	22(31)	9(13)	18(25)	71(100)
Known	133(50)	85(22)	18(7)	31(12)	267(100)
Stranger	43(46)	35(38)	4(12)	11(12)	93(100)
Total*	267(41)	172(27)	77(12)	130(20)	646(100)
Relationship	Offender's Race and Sex (N=930*)				Total
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	
Spouse	19(30)	31(49)	4(6)	9(14)	63(100)
Friend (boy/girl)	24(41)	20(34)	11(19)	3(5)	58(100)
Other Family	26(41)	28(44)	3(5)	6(10)	63(100)
Known	147(58)	94(37)	6(2)	6(2)	253(100)
Stranger	63(72)	21(24)	1(1)	2(2)	87(100)
Total*	467(56)	275(33)	42(5)	47(5)	831(100)

\*See notes at bottom of Table 1.



The bottom half of Table 2 shows the same information for offenders. In the case of husband-wife relationships, white husbands were more likely than any other race-sex group to be reported as offenders. For the boyfriend-girlfriend category black men were somewhat more likely than white men to be offenders. However, in the relationship categories where the victim knows the offender only as an acquaintance, or where the victim is a complete stranger to the offender, the offender is more likely to be a black male than a white male or a women of either race.

Another way to look at victim-offender relationships is to examine the ways in which the race and sex of victims are linked to the race and sex of offenders--and to do this by the domestic or non-domestic relationship of the victims and offenders. The NIBRS data allow such an examination of intra- and inter-racial homicides by relationship category. Table 3 shows the intra- and inter-racial relationships for all incidents for which the necessary information is available. As an examination of Table 3 indicates, the homicides reported in 1993 were largely but not entirely intra-racial. When the victim was white, at least one of the offenders was white in 84 percent of the incidents. When the victim was black, at least one of the offenders was black in 96 percent of the incidents.

Table 3

Race and Sex of Homicide Victims by Race and Sex for 537 Victims and 804 Offenders

Victim's Race and Sex for 537 Victims					
Victim's Race and Sex	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Total
Black Male	195(87)	9(4)	20(9)	0(0)	224(100)
White Male	22(16)	102(73)	0(0)	16(11)	140(100)
Black Female	55(90)	1(2)	5(8)	0(0)	61(100)
White Female	16(15)	84(77)	1(1)	8(7)	109(100)
Total*	288(54)	196(37)	26(5)	24(4)	534(100)

Offender's Race and Sex for 804 Offenders					
Offender's Race and Sex	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Total
Black Male	301(68)	43(10)	81(18)	18(4)	443(100)
White Male	11(4)	152(56)	3(1)	106(39)	272(100)
Black Female	28(67)	3(7)	10(24)	1(2)	42(100)
White Female	1(2)	28(60)	0(0)	18(38)	47(100)
Total*	341(42)	226(28)	94(12)	143(18)	804(100)

The bottom half of Table 3 suggests another interesting pattern. It suggests that when women are homicide offenders, the victims are more likely to be men than women. When the offenders were white females, 60 percent of the victims were white males. When the offenders were black female, 66 percent of the victims were black males. In general, when the offenders were women, 74 percent of the victims were men.

These findings make sense in light of the findings on the linkages of intimate relationships and homicides by women presented above. Moreover, as noted above, only about 11 percent of all offenders are women.

When tables similar to Table 3 are constructed for specific relationship categories, the patterns that emerge suggest that where the relationship is close, almost all homicides are intra-racial. In husband-wife homicides, with the exception of one wife who was killed by a black husband, all of the homicides were intra-racial. In boyfriend-girlfriend homicides, 93 percent were intra-racial. The exceptions were four white girlfriends who were killed by black boyfriends. As expected, all of the homicides involving victims and offender's in the same family were described by the police as intra-racial.

Of the 252 incidents where the victim knew, but was not related to or intimate with the offender, seven percent were inter-racial, five black men killed by white males, six white males and six white females killed by black males, and one black female killed by a white male. In the incidents where the victim was described as a stranger to at least one of the offenders, 29 percent of the homicides were inter-racial. Twenty victims classified as white were killed by black male offenders. One white female was killed by a black male offender. In addition, three victims classified as black were killed by white male offenders.

These patterns underscore much that is known about domestic violence. They are useful because they are not focused on a single relationship category, such as spouses or intimates. The percentages of female offenders in the spouse and the boyfriend or girlfriend categories are relatively large ( 26 and 27 percent). However, even with over one-quarter of the offenders in these categories being female, this is still only one-half of what we would expect if we consider the number of women in the population. Moreover, the numbers of homicide offenders in the acquaintance and stranger categories are much higher than the number in the close relationship categories. Seventy-one percent of all homicide offenders are in the acquaintance or stranger categories and in these categories only about seven percent of the offenders are women.

#### Checks on the Usefulness of the NIBRS Homicide Data

The importance of any of the findings based on NIBRS data depend to a large extent on the representativeness of the participating agencies. Only one of the ten states participating in the NIBRS program can be described as a state with a large population. It is possible that the data examined are distorted by this limited participation. To assess the distortions that may be caused by these limitations of the 1993 NIBRS homicide data, I compared the results of the NIBRS analysis with the results presented in a 1994 Bureau of Justice Statistics report on domestic violence and with a partial reanalysis of the SHR data for 1992 (Fox, 1994; Zawitz, 1994). The 1992 SHR data were used because they were featured in the BJS report and because they

were available in a manageable format.

When the 1992 SHR data were used to construct a set of tables similar to those presented here, the results were very close. In both data sets, the proportion of victims who were women decreased as the relationship became more distant. The proportion of offenders who were women also decreased as the relationship became more distant. In both data sets, the proportion of offenders who were described as black increased as the relationship becomes more distant. The patterns for the SHR data were not identical to those produced in the NIBRS analysis but the similarity of the nationally reported SHR data and the NIBRS data suggests that, even at this early stage of development, substantive analysis of the NIBRS data is worthwhile.

Another indication of the similarity of the NIBRS patterns with the SHR patterns is shown in Table 4. We see that, in general, the results are comparable--often very close (See Zawitz, p. 10). For intimates, 61 to 62 percent of the victims on both data sets (NIBRS and SHR) were killed by firearms, 17 to 24 percent by knives or other cutting instruments. For victims who were relatives of the offenders, the percentage killed by firearms is smaller--at 44 to 45 percent. For acquaintances, 64 to 69 percent of those killed were killed by firearms. Only stranger homicides suggest any substantial difference between NIBRS and SHR in the percentage of victims killed by firearms--75 percent in the Supplementary Homicide Reports compared with 66 percent in the NIBRS data.

In both data sets, the most frequently reported weapon was a handgun. This was the weapon used in almost one-half of the NIBRS homicide incidents. If the offender was a woman, handguns were used in 37 percent of the incidents. If the offender was a man, a handgun was used in just over one-half of the incidents. When all types of firearms are counted, 62 percent of the homicide victims in the 1993 NIBRS data set were killed by firearms. Other weapons such as knives and other cutting instruments are a distant second. The NIBRS results are consistent with those produced by analyses of the 1992 supplemental homicide data. Such findings, and their consistency across data sets, are useful for discussions of gun control. It is true that people are killed with fists and feet (personal weapons) and with blunt instruments. But if over sixty percent of all victims of homicide are killed by firearms, there can be little question that the best approaches to homicide reduction will be those that work to reduce the ready access to firearms--especially hand guns.

Finally, when I compare the offender characteristics suggested by an analysis of the NIBRS data with the characteristics of offenders suggested by the UCR national level arrest reports, I find them substantially similar. The NIBRS data suggest that about 89 percent of the homicide offenders in 1993 were male. The UCR arrest data for 1993 suggest that this percentage is 90.6 (UCR 1993, 234). In 1993, 36 percent of all arrests for homicide in the United States were arrests of white people (FBI, 1993 p. 236). As shown in Table 1, the percentage of offenders described as white in the 1993 NIBRS reports was 38. The percentage of arrests for homicide of persons under 18 in 1993 was

16.2 percent. This figure is 13 percent in the NIBRS data. Combined with the similarity of the NIBRS results and the SHR results, comparisons with the arrest data suggest that the NIBRS homicide data now available are not greatly misleading. More detailed comparisons, including the comparison of age-, sex-, and race-specific rates, may identify areas in which the NIBRS data are misleading. However, the similarities in the broad areas examined here suggest that the ten-state NIBRS data can be useful in the study of violence.

Table 4

Percentages of the Weapons Reportedly Used in Homicides for Specific Categories of Victims in the Supplemental Homicide Reports and the National Incident Based Reporting System

Intimates (Incidents where victims were husbands, wives, boyfriends or girlfriends of the offenders)								
		Firearms	Knives	Personal	Blunt	Other	Missing	Total
S.H.R.	1992	62%	24%	5%	3%	3%	3%	100%
NIBRS	1993	61%	17%	9%	3%	6%	4%	100%
Relatives (Incidents where the offenders were other family members of the victims)								
		Firearms	Knives	Personal	Blunt	Other	Missing	Total
S.H.R.	1992	45%	18%	18%	6%	8%	4%	100%
NIBRS	1993	44%	20%	10%	7%	10%	10%	100%
Acquaintances (Incidents where the offenders were persons otherwise known to the victim)								
		Firearms	Knives	Personal	Blunt	Other	Missing	Total
S.H.R.	1992	69%	18%	5%	4%	2%	2%	100%
NIBRS	1993	64%	15%	6%	4%	4%	6%	100%
Strangers (Incidents where the victims were strangers to the offenders)								
		Firearms	Knives	Personal	Blunt	Other	Missing	Total
S.H.R.	1992	75%	11%	4%	5%	2%	2%	100%
NIBRS	1993	66%	11%	5%	5%	5%	8%	100%

### Conclusions

Looking only at the results of these preliminary analyses, and limiting our examination to domestic homicides, it seems safe to conclude that NIBRS data will contribute much to our understanding of domestic violence. The results underscore the very limited involvement of women as offenders in incidents involving lethal violence. As

indicated above, the 1993 NIBRS data suggest that women were involved as the offender--or as one of the offenders--in about 12 percent of the homicide incidents. The 1993 national arrest data suggest that women or girls were the offenders in less than ten percent of all homicides. This percentage has remained around ten percent in the national arrest data for 35 years.

One of the most interesting results of this analysis has been the similarity of the findings to those produced by the analysis of other data sets. These similarities are surprising because of the geographical distribution of the states providing NIBRS data and the limited number of police agencies participating in the NIBRS program. Nevertheless, when the findings on the characteristics of victims and offenders and the findings on the kinds of weapons used by offenders in different relationship categories are compared with those suggested by analyses of national Supplementary Homicide Reports, the results are generally similar.

The NIBRS data expand our understanding of this pattern by showing that the involvement of women in homicide incidents is higher than ten percent in domestic partnerships and lower than ten percent in situations where the victim is simply an acquaintance of, or a stranger to, the offender. In my view, there is still a need for convincing explanations of the relatively low involvement of women in violent crime. However, the NIBRS data suggest that whatever factors reduce the use of lethal violence by most women in most situations, they are dissipated as the relationship between the victim and the offender becomes closer. These results support suggestions that the overall low involvement of women in homicide may mislead us as we attempt to explain gender and violence. The results also suggest that studies that focus only on violence against women in domestic relationships may mislead us on the involvement of women as offenders. Studies that focus only on violence by women may fail to call attention to the extremely limited involvement of women as offenders in most other situations.

The most obvious current limitation of NIBRS data in attempts to understand domestic violence is the relatively limited participation of police agencies in the new program. Even when most police agencies submit NIBRS data, there will still be incidents that are not reported to the police--a major limitation of any data supplied by the police. However, these limitations of NIBRS are greatly offset by the details available in the information that is collected. To the extent that incidents not reported differ from those reported, failures to report to the police and the limited participation of police agencies will continue to be a problem. Still, I think there are reasons to believe that the lack of data from many police agencies should not discourage substantive analysis of NIBRS data. To the extent that the NIBRS victim and offender information is similar to that produced by the National Crime Victimization Survey, we can proceed with some confidence.

We cannot compare homicide results with the findings of the National Crime Victimization Survey, because no homicide data are collected in that series. However, detailed comparisons of NIBRS and NCVS information are possible for several other

violent crimes. These comparisons can and should be undertaken. Our knowledge of domestic violence and violence by and against women would be only a few of the areas that would benefit from such analyses. In fact, increased NIBRS information about both victims and offenders for a very large list of offenses will make possible more and better comparisons of police data with victimization survey data. Increasing availability of NIBRS data will permit the kind of cross checking of police and victim survey data that was envisioned when the National Crime Survey was introduced. This in turn may reduce the size of the gaps in our knowledge that so weaken most current theories of the causes of crime in the United States.

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## Youth Violence Policy

Moderator: Kathleen Heide

Recorder: Chris Rasche

Presenters:

The Cost Effectiveness of alternative Early Intervention Strategies in Preventing Violence

Peter Greenwood

Policy Regarding School-Based Violence Prevention Programs

Daniel Lockwood



## Recorders Notes

A lively discussion followed the presentation of papers. It is reported here in question/answer format, though not all the comments by the audience were really questions and not all the answers given by the presenters were really answers to those specific questions. Certainly, none of the questions or answers reported below should be taken as direct quotations, but rather this whole report should be viewed as the recorder's struggling attempt to capture the essence of the dialogue.

**Q: How do the "sophisticated self-reports" you described in your presentation differ from regular self-reports?**

A: Public health people have developed their own self-report methods without telling criminologists about it! Some of these public health approaches are pretty good. They use public health standards which are a little different from the regular strategies used by criminologists.

**Q: What does "sophisticated" mean?**

A: Use of large samples, test and re-test strategies, scales, a long time frame, and asking about really risky behavior.

**Q: What is the "three strikes" analysis that Peter was talking about?**

A: Rand developed a model for this kind of analysis.

**Q: There is a real contrast in these two papers: on the one hand, there is the social good of conflict resolution while, on the other hand, we have the three strikes program! Both have high levels of support, except when it will cost money to implement them. Can both co-exist?**

A: (Peter) Yes, I believe they can.

(Dan) Everyone assumed that higher educational attainment accompanies lower crime involvement--my data shows that this is just not true! But no one wants to believe that. It is a wide-spread belief that is hard to change. Basically, I think that American education is actually criminogenic itself.

**Q: How can we factor in the ability to identify young boys who are at risk? Why did you leave out some large scale projects going on around the year which have better data?**

A: (Peter) There is the selectivity issue: some of those early intervention programs are effective because of selectivity.

(Dan) High risk kids don't come to school enough to participate in some of those projects.

**Q: No, we're talking about kids who are age 6. And in some other countries such early interventions really do work.**

**Q: (Margo) Yes, context is important. There is a huge difference between the low crime in some Canadian towns and big urban American cities.**

A: But even in big cities, there is still some fraction of kids who can be effectively targeted.

**Q: How much of these school programs were trying to change the values these kids hold?**

A: (Dan) Always the programs have a mix of goals.

**Q: I think we need to clarify--and we need to keep the context in mind.**

A: (Dan) "Punishment" is one value which is legitimate on the street--they use violence to punish each other.

**Q: How can effectiveness be evaluated? Where do you find a base line?**

A: Some strategies are straightforward: random assignment, use of control groups, etc. But other strategies are more confusing, and you can't always be sure that the control group is NOT getting in on some aspects of the program

**Q: Do you both accept the notion about that perennial problem such as poverty and crime, that they really can't be reduced?**

A: Yes, pretty much. But you can shift the poverty around a bit--make fewer kids poor and make more old people poor, perhaps.

**Q: But economics may influence why young unwed mothers aren't married---i.e., the young men hanging around on corners are not attractive mates. But even it they were employed, the cultural values would lag and nothing would change for a while.**

A: (Dan) It is a myth that the single mother is not preventing her children from crime. She often is trying very hard to control her kids.

**Q: The three strikes policy is easy--it is simplemindedness about seeking answers to these problems. We don't do a good job of communicating how complicated the issues really are.**

A: The impoverished fathers actually have a more active role in the lives of these kids than we realize because we only see that they are not the financial support. It is the money, not the values, which are at odds here.



# Policy Regarding School-Based Violence Prevention Programs

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## Abstract

This paper reviews current policy and practice about school-based violence prevention programs. Current evaluation research in this area is also described. These activities are related to our knowledge about adolescent violence and recommendations are made for educational policy designed to prevent violence. The paper argues for a "Foxfire" approach to school-based violence prevention. It is suggested that we take social learning programs a step further by calling upon teachers and students to develop an information system about local violent disputes which curriculum writers, including the teachers and students themselves, could use to create learning exercises around the theme of violence prevention.

Disputes among adolescents are the cause of much youth violence. These escalating transactions culminate in destructive outcomes that are often unintended. The participants then suffer the harm of being victims or the punishment of being aggressors. There is hope that dispute resolution can help to reduce the rate of such events among young people. In this paper I discuss school-based conflict resolution programs to diminish such harm, and argue for applying the "Foxfire" approach to violence prevention efforts. I thus recommend a comprehensive way to create such programs while working to enhance the educational success of all the students. This paper should, therefore, interest those who see middle and high schools as arenas for creative conflict resolution.

My theoretical framework calls for viewing the incident as the target of our intervention. Thus, I hold that young people can learn to alter their behavior in aggressive confrontations. I also suggest that school districts can best contribute to this goal by adapting national educational reform strategies, such as the Foxfire approach, to ensure that ideas about violence prevention become part of the overall curriculum instead of becoming a series of stand alone projects. Foxfire is a teaching strategy that could focus on violence and violence prevention as experienced by students. Students could, for example, create "social learning scenarios" from actual local incidents. Educators and students could then use these materials for social skills training, anger management, and conflict resolution - interventions aimed toward defusing potentially dangerous situations.

Schools can offer such "social learning" programs aimed toward preventing violence in homes, the community, and in school. (For reviews of school violence prevention programs see Day, Golench, MacDougall & Beals-Gonzalez, 1995; DeJong, 1994; New York State Bar Association and the New York State Education Department,

1994; Sautter, 1995.) In this paper I discuss current policy, practice, and evaluations of such school-based violence prevention. I also argue for the Foxfire hands-on approach to learning to help develop comprehensive violence prevention programs. I discuss how teachers and administrators can intertwine such ideas with current school reform efforts while focusing on the local community.

Ideas of criminology applied to public school curriculum development are unlikely to have any impact unless they consider resistance to change or, as Seymour Sarason says, "Confronting intractability." In his book, The Predictable Failure of Education Reform (1990), Sarason holds that only through two reforms will a school greatly affect learning and behavior: developing staff and altering power relationships. He goes on to explain that to have power over someone is an invitation to conflict. It is only when the principle of participating in decision making occurs will there be a greater commitment to the total enterprise. Then, students and teachers will take greater responsibility for what happens. He holds that without such a process, no one feels responsible. Blame will always be directed externally. Adversarial relations will be a notable feature of school life. Before I discuss specific policies to overcome such problems in school systems, however, let us examine the seriousness and shape of the adolescent violence problem.

## Literature Review

### Extent of the Problem

Violence is a major social problem in the United States. The U.S. currently has the highest rate of recorded violence among the developed nations of the world. Confrontations involving young people contribute greatly to this situation. The Bureau of Justice Statistics, for example, carried out a special supplement of the National Crime Victimization Survey to measure victimization among school students in 1989. The survey estimated that about 1.2 million public school students in the United States were victims of violent crime during a 6-month period (Bastian and Taylor, 1991). Violent victimization differed little by race in this study (2% of both blacks and whites were victims). However, very serious violent crime particularly affects African - American young people. For example, handgun victimization among blacks, ages 12-19, is about five times higher than similar victimizations among whites (Rand, 1994). Such statistics go on to paint a portrait of other high risk factors. To be black, young, poor and living in the central part of a city puts a person at the greatest risk of harm from violence.

There is controversy about how to measure crime. However, one way to look unambiguously at youth violence is by examining homicide offending patterns. Since a dead body is available to count the event and clearance rates are high, measurement problems are few. Homicide can also be an index of general violence trends. Since 1984, in the U.S., homicide rates increased every year for young people 14-17 years old. These rates have more than doubled in the last seven years. The offender rate for



black males ages 14-17 was already about five times higher than the general rate in 1984. Since then, they have almost doubled by 1993, where they stand at 150 per 100,000. This is about 10 times higher than for white males of similar ages. Rates of homicide victimization for young black males, ages 15-19, mirror these data, with the rates being far higher than that for other ethnic groups.

We must think of these high-risk groups when we plan programs, for the primary purpose of school-based conflict resolution programs should be to reduce death and injury from disputes. Such programs aim to reduce mainly that portion of violence attributed to altercations among persons known to each other. Rates of "nonstranger" homicide are high, which help us estimate how much violence among young people is caused by arguments. For example, an acquaintance or intimate kills half the black homicide victims who are between the ages of 15 and 19, presumably after an argument that escalates to violence. This shows the possible contribution of improved negotiation skills to reducing homicide, in particular among young black males.

Surveys asking about fighting and the carrying of weapons also tell the extent of the problem. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992) gives us national estimates of how much fighting and carrying of weapons goes on among high school students. The Centers for Disease Control carries out this measurement system in the United States as part of its Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. According to the CDC findings for 1990-1991, 12% of high school students had been in a fight that required treatment by a doctor or nurse during the 30 days preceding the survey. Following the patterns seen in the homicide reports, rates of fighting were higher for males than for females and higher for blacks than for whites. About 17% of black male high school students questioned, for example, reported being in a physical fight during the 30 days before the survey: there were 47 fights for every 100 black male students. The survey also asked about weapons, finding that about 40% of black males carried a weapon during the 30 days preceding the survey. Most of this violence and carrying of weapons occurred in places other than schools (Bastian and Taylor, 1991).

### Recent Summaries of the Literature

Recently, there have been three summaries of the literature concerning adolescent violence. These works allude to the contribution that the Foxfire approach could make. In 1992, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, of the U.S. Department of Education, carried out a review of research for the 1993 OERI publication Reaching the Goals, Goal 6: Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools. In this work, Diane Aleem and Oliver Moles critically examine the literature on school violence and violence prevention. The authors note the inconclusive results of evaluations of social learning programs but consider the research findings to still uphold this intervention as "promising." As for the design of studies, they conclude: "Case studies of promising programs and practices using detailed interviews and observations of participants and observations of their interactions would also help in understanding the processes

underlying the effects or lack of them" (p.50). In 1993, the Commission on Violence and Youth of the American Psychological Association published its summary report. They conclude:

Despite high levels of publicity commonly given to violence perpetrated by strangers, interpersonal violence occurs most frequently, and typically in its most violent forms, among people who are connected to each other in some way. They may be in the same peer group or family, or they may only know of each other through social relations by moving in the same or overlapping social circles. Frequently their relationships can be described as "ruptured personal relation" among neighbors, friends, relatives, and intimate partners.

Because the relationship between perpetrator and victim is far more complex than merely that of "actor" and "acted upon," studies of this relationship may yield information that will help build effective preventive interventions (p.43).

The National Research Council, Panel on the Understanding and Control of Violent Behavior (Reiss and Roth), published a landmark review of the literature on violence and violence prevention in 1993. This report states, "One preventive approach [social learning] developed by the public health community was motivated in part by findings that most violent events are preceded by escalation from verbal conflict through insults and threats" (p.108).

#### Current Programs and Policies

Lately there has been an increase in school-based violence prevention efforts. The National Institute on Dispute Resolution estimated in 1991 that there were 2,000 dispute resolution programs in schools: in 1994 they estimated 5,000 (Filner, 1994). The U.S. Public Health Service report, Healthy People 2000 calls for the "teaching of nonviolent conflict resolution skills in half the nations schools by the end of this decade" (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). In its 1995 program plan, the U.S. Government Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reflects this policy in one of its goals, which is to "integrate conflict resolution principles and skills development into all levels of educational curricula in the Nation's schools in order to increase the use of youth centered conflict resolution in schools, community-based youth service organizations, and juvenile facilities" (p.85).

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, working to carry out such a policy, have together developed a national strategy for education, training, and use of conflict resolution skills. The result is the publication, Conflict Resolution Programs in

School: A Guide to Program Selection and Implementation (U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, forthcoming). OJJDP states in its request for proposals to fund a \$200,000 program of training and distribution for this publication:

The Departments of Education and justice agree that many public school curriculums do not adequately provide for the systematic development of problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. Inclusion of problem solving skills in school curriculums and community-based child and youth development programs can provide a continuum of problem-solving skills and approaches to enhance school discipline, to reduce violence among youth in the community, and to lead youth to improved functioning as adults. It is envisioned that exposure to comprehensive school or community-based conflict resolution programs will help youth enhance resiliency factors. Very few youth are currently receiving such assistance (U.S. Department of Justice, 1995, p.85).

Recently, however, governments have put more resources into school-based violence prevention programs. The New York State Education Department has received a \$3 million appropriation to develop violence prevention programs. Georgia's "Safe Schools, Streets" program in the spring of 1994 mandated that all schools in the state have a week-long program of discussions and activities about violence prevention. Scholastic Inc. provided this curriculum (Hagans, 1994), which income from the state lottery supported. Illinois currently mandates school conflict resolution training. Minnesota has given \$2.5 million for violence prevention education in its schools (Sautter, 1995).

School districts are spending these funds for a variety of programs. The modes of intervention making up school-based violence prevention generally fall into the following categories, although most actual programs are made up of a combination of these strategies:

1. Character Education (Lickona, 1994)
2. Civic values
3. Social skills development
4. Law-related education
5. Mediation
6. Anger management.

#### Program Evaluations

Policy makers should not view the programs above as panaceas for the problem of adolescent violence. To date, no properly designed evaluations have conclusively proven their worth (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1992; Reiss and Roth, 1993; Tolan and Guerra, 1994). The Boston Violence Prevention Curriculum, for example, has been a popular social learning program. However, evaluations show a lack of success (Spiro and DeJong, 1991).

Responding to this scarcity of knowledge about what works, researchers are currently carrying out several federally funded evaluations. The breath of this effort to evaluate these programs should give us some idea of just how scanty is our knowledge about the effectiveness of school-based violence prevention programs. As of the Spring of 1995, the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control support most evaluation research in this area. These agencies are hoping to locate a successful program that can then serve as a model for school districts. This is a large-scale research effort to try to give a logical and empirical basis for recommending one type of intervention through evaluation. The establishment of this organized inquiry reinforces our conviction that now we have no firm evidence that any school-based violence prevention program works to reduce rates of injury or death. The programs that the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institute of Justice have chosen to fund will form the basis of our knowledge of what works in school violence prevention for years to come. They also give us a picture of the kinds of programs now operating in different parts of the country.

The CDC-supported evaluations are of programs in a number of locations. In Tucson, Arizona, the "Peace Builders" project operates in elementary schools. This is a social learning program using structured human relations exercises such as modeling, and role playing. In New York City, RCCP or "Resolving Conflict Creatively Program," uses conflict resolution, and peer mediation. It is one of the largest in the nation, involving some 50,000 students and 2,000 teachers. Also in New York City (Brooklyn) the "Education, Counseling, and Community Awareness" project, run by Victim Services, aims to help middle school students. It is a conflict resolution program modeled after "Project Stop," also one of the largest dispute resolution programs in public schools. It teaches young people behavioral techniques they can use in confrontations. In Chicago, the "Cognitive Ecological Approach to Preventing Violence" uses classroom teachers to deliver a curriculum about violence. In Los Angeles, California, the "Attributional Bias and Reactive Aggression" project, a social learning program, works in four elementary schools. In Richmond, Virginia, the "Richmond Youth Violence Prevention Program" delivers an 18-session violence prevention curriculum to 6th grade students. In Indianapolis, Indiana, the "Conflict Resolution Computer Module" teaches social skills and conflict resolution to students in 6-8 grades. In Portland, Oregon, the "System of Values" project includes training in conflict resolution and social skills for 7-9 grades. In Houston, Texas, the "Students for Peace" project uses peer mediation and conflict resolution. In Detroit, Michigan, "Working Toward Peace," is a skill based program. Johnston, County, North Carolina, "Reducing Dating Violence," uses conflict management skills for 8-9 grades. Those concerned with school-based violence prevention await the reports of the CDC-funded evaluations of the above programs. (They are scheduled to be available in early 1997 and will be grouped together in a special issue of a public health journal such as the American Journal of Medicine.) However, until evaluations prove results, the kinds of programs we have described can only be considered experimental.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is also currently funding evaluations of school-based violence prevention programs. These operate in Charlotte, North Carolina, Detroit, Michigan, New York City, and Philadelphia. The fact that NIJ has committed its resources to this research corroborates our conclusion that at this time the effects of existing school programs on violence are unknown. In New York City, NIJ is funding Victim Services to conduct an evaluation of two programs in New York City schools: Project Stop and Safe Harbor. The instrument used to measure the impact on violence is a modified version of the widely used Conflict Tactics Scale. There is also a reasoning subscale, examining the use of mediation. Researchers are also interviewing teachers and students. Thus far, the preliminary findings of the evaluation have detected no increase or decrease of violence or victimization. Young people, however, have been found to have more knowledge of conflict resolution and the students use the behavior taught in actual incidents.

Another NIJ funded evaluation is "Prevention of School Violence in Detroit." This program is in the middle schools of Wayne County and is connected to the Wayne County Department of Violence Reduction. It is based on the "Deborah-Prodham Stith model," i.e., conflict resolution training by an external consulting group. There is also a peer mediation component, with a peer mediation room in the school and a peace club. Four institutions are in the research: two treatment schools and two controls. There are pre and post measures and observations of the program. A self-administered instrument about fighting, attitudes about violence, and responses to hypothetical situations measures program outcomes. The Charlotte program is of a "problem-solving" model of social change. It has four steps: (a) identify the problem, (b) discuss the problem, (c) plan a remedy, and (d) evaluate the plan. The Charlotte program is part of a movement in planned change that extends to ideas such as community policing.

We must carefully follow the reports that will be coming from this program of evaluation research funded by the federal government. Hopefully, we will learn a great deal about what works and does not work in school-based violence prevention. Meanwhile, we should also consider this area of educational policy open for innovation and constructive criticism. We suggest, for example, that few of these programs add to the student's ability to be academically successful in school. The aim often is getting the behavior under control so we can then teach these young people. This is what may need to change the most, for violence prevention integrated into classroom experiences may give us our greatest hope for permanent change.

### Policy Recommendations

Given our current, limited, knowledge about the effectiveness of school programs to prevent violence, I urge schools to set up a process for examining violence rather than any specific program type. My specific recommended policy is to encourage schools to set up a "Foxfire" approach to learning which allows students to examine the violence in their own community. This approach was developed by Eliot Wigginton 25

years ago in Rabun Gap, Georgia (Wigginton, 1985, 1989). It is derived from the progressive education movement and the philosophy of John Dewey (Dewey, 1900, 1902). The approach is defined by eleven core practices that emphasize learning by doing, interacting with the community, and basing the activities on the experiences and interests of the learner.

The Foxfire approach to teaching has never specifically stressed violence prevention. However, I believe it to be appropriate because it is based on experiences that come from students' lives, a central principle of the Foxfire approach to teaching and learning. The approach is based on a belief in the students' ability to document their lives in school, at home, and in the community. Through such activities, students not only document their personal histories but fully understand them and can communicate them to different audiences. Moreover, inherent in the Foxfire approach to teaching and learning are strategies that engage all learners, especially "at-risk youth."

### Foxfire and Violence Prevention

The objections to extending the Foxfire approach to violence prevention activities are likely to come from these sources: (a) school officials justly concerned about the privacy rights of students, (b) principals and teachers legitimately concerned about interference with a core curriculum aimed toward measurable performance on existing standard state tests of basic skills, (c) persons concerned about the image of individual schools and their communities after the incidence of heretofore unreported violence becomes public, and (d) the difficulty of having teachers adopt the Foxfire strategies. It involves a reordering of one's view of the educational process, from teacher directed to student directed.

Counterpoints are available that are likely to overcome these objections. The privacy of individuals forming the subject matter of a Foxfire approach to violent behavior can be protected by using the strict standards of anonymity and confidentiality that professional criminologists use. By making violence a central theme in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science classes, and by creating lesson plans that tie the testable objectives of these classes to Foxfire-like exercises that accomplish general educational goals, violence prevention activities can enhance, not interfere with, the core curriculum. I would also hope that a policy of encouraging students to have open, academic involvement with violence prevention would improve a school's public image.

The short range impact on violent behavior of this approach may, indeed, be limited in reducing rates of injury and death through violence. However, at least we will have a detailed and accurate description of the problem told from the perspective of the young people involved.. The long-range impact, however, could be significant, especially if the Foxfire approach gives feedback to programs. Other benefits of the policy would be to get a variety of persons in the community involved with the school in focusing on the specific violence problems that emerge from the Foxfire activities.

The Foxfire approach can be coordinated with one prevention strategy, social learning programs. Individual teachers or whole school faculties interested in educational reform and violence reduction could become involved with the Foxfire approach to teaching and focus on documenting violence in their communities and solutions to it. Such programs will aim to alter violent values and behaviors. These social learning and behavioral interventions can stress the value of non-violence, and teach nonaggressive methods of responding, often through structured human relations exercises. Thus, they aim to improve "social skills."

School violence prevention programs generally have two goals, which may not necessarily complement each other. The first is to make schools safe and the second is to make public school students less violent. We should be careful in our thinking to distinguish between these two objectives. We may succeed in making institutional climates safe through mechanical or physical means. However, this may be doing nothing to alter violent behavior in the homes or in the communities for students who attend schools. Simultaneously we need to ensure that the methods we use add to the students educational experience, not detract from it.

School-based violence prevention programs have great potential as "early intervention" and "primary prevention" crime control approaches. However, at this time, as I explain in this paper, it is difficult to recommend any school program on sound empirical research findings. Nonetheless, violence prevention projects are increasing in schools. Criminologists concerned with adolescent violence and educators concerned with curriculum reform and innovation need to join forces and contribute ideas to this movement.

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## Other Issues

Moderator: Rob Parker

Recorder: Dwayne Smith

Presenters:

Country Music and Lethal Violence

Jay Corzine

Linn Huff-Corzine

Hugh Witt

Street Violence in and Around Rapid Transit Stations

Richard Block

Sean Davis

A Comparative-Historical Study of Homicide in Four Cities: (Work in Progress)

Rosemary Gartner

Bill Mccarthy

Woman Killing: Twenty Years of Intimate Femicide In Ontario

Maria Crawford

Rosemary Gartner



## Recorder's Notes

The discussion session was dominated by questions and comments directed toward Jay Corzine, Linn Huff-Corzine, and Hugh Witt's preliminary research finding that murder rates were higher in radio listening areas dominated by a country-western music format. Several in the audience questioned whether it was a legitimate research question to impute a possible linkage, wondering if enough evidence existed to justify an analysis that attempts to relate any form of music to lethal violence rates. A number of opinions regarding "rap" music and its alleged incitement to violence were exchanged. Corzine maintained that the question being posed is lacking in direct research. Also, he pointed out that there is an inconsistency in academia; we are comfortable assuming that media influences some attitudes and behavior (such as toward women), but deny that it has any influence on violence. Other audience members posed the hypothetical effects of other kinds of music, such as the extremely violent Italian opera. Someone suggested that people may not listen that carefully to the words of various music forms, including country and western, hence there is no transmission of a message. Huff-Corzine mentioned, though, that media forms can have subliminal effects whether the meanings are consciously absorbed or not, a point supported by an audience member. Another question posed was whether those who listen to country music somehow feel oppressed and that is why they are prone to violence; the music, quite possibly, simply speaks to their oppression rather than motivates their violence. Corzine disagreed that an atmosphere of oppression dominated country music. Another audience member wondered whether the music thematically provided an "excuse" for violence. To this, and several more speculative comments, Corzine reiterated the need for more research that examines in an empirical manner the possibility of an existing linkage.

Research by Block and Davis concerned violence in and around rapid transit stations in Chicago, and its contribution to an area's crime rate. One audience member wondered whether the elevated nature of the stations, and hence exposed nature of those waiting for the trains, made a difference. Block said it was much more a matter of characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood. Another member wondered if stations particularly influenced neighborhoods during rush hour, making them especially prone to crime. Block replied that preliminary findings indicated density of ridership to be a predictor, but rush season, vis-a-vis monthly variations, did not emerge as a viable indicator of an area's crime rate.

Rosemary Gartner reported on her data collection efforts that will allow for an in-depth, four-city historical analysis of homicide, especially those murders occurring within a domestic setting. Questions were raised concerning the concordance between data sources mentioned (medical reports and police data), especially in the early years of collection. Gartner reported that, surprisingly, medical information has not proven to be more comprehensive; yet, the concordance was better than she originally expected. An audience member wondered if there were substantial shifts in the roles of women over

the time period covered by the study, a development that might influence femicide. Gartner said she was not sure at this time, but would try to take this into consideration. Another member questioned whether significant redefinitions in criminal justice definitions of homicide had occurred, but Gartner said she had not found this to be a problem. In response to another inquiry, Gartner clarified that both victim and offender data were being collected.

## **A Comparative-historical Study Of Homicide In Four Cities: A Work In Progress**

ROSEMARY GARTNER  
University of Toronto  
BILL MCCARTHY  
University of Victoria

Women are much less likely than men to be involved in homicides, either as victims or offenders. Conventional sociological theory and research on homicide reflect, but rarely address, this gender difference. Most theories assume male actors; most research examines either individual males' acts of violence or aggregate rates of homicide, which are dominated by male-male killings. The purpose of our research is to assess whether existing theoretical perspectives on homicide account for the social distribution of female victimization and offending by examining (1) changes in the characteristics of female homicides over the twentieth century and (2) similarities and differences between female and male homicides.

The research is comparative and historical. We are gathering data from four cities (Toronto, Vancouver, Buffalo, and Seattle) which differ substantially in their homicide rates. Data for the period 1900 - 1990 are being collected on all criminal homicides known to authorities from police records, medical examiners' & coroners' records, and newspaper reports. We estimate that we will have data on approximately 950 homicides in Vancouver, 1550 homicides in Toronto, 2400 homicides in Buffalo, and 2500 homicides in Seattle. For each of the approximately 7400 homicides, we are recording characteristics of the victim and offender (e.g., sex, age, marital status, employment, criminal record, home address), circumstances of the crime (e.g., victim-offender relationship, apparent motivation, method of killing, location), and a short description of the case. A major constraint on studying women's involvement in homicide has been its infrequency. However, for this study, there will be approximately 1,800 cases of female victimization and 800 cases of female offending from the four cities.

We are also collecting information on the characteristics of the general population in each of the cities from census publications. These data include sex-specific distributions of the general population on age, ethnicity, country of birth, marital and parental status, employment status, educational attainment, labour force participation, and will be used to determine risk factors for victimization and offending.

The use of data from these four cities over 91 years will provide important regional, national, and temporal variation in both homicide rates and the social context relevant to women's involvement in homicide. This will allow us to consider how different social and cultural contexts for violence may condition the relationship between gender and homicide.





## **Woman Killing: Twenty Years Of Intimate Femicide In Ontario**

MARIA CRAWFORD

Women We Honour Action Committee

ROSEMARY GARTNER

University of Toronto

### **The Initial Study**

In February 1991, the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services funded a study of women killed by their intimate partners in Ontario. The study, proposed by the Women We Honour Action Committee, had three primary goals:

- 1) to document the incidence of and trends in killings of women by intimate partners, or intimate femicide, in Ontario from 1970-1990;
- 2) to describe the characteristics of the persons and circumstances involved in these intimate femicides; and
- 3) to present the stories of some of the women who were killed by their intimate partners in Ontario during these years.

The research was intended to combine elements of feminist methodologies with principles of conventional social science research to produce the first systematic study of intimate femicide.

In addressing the first two goals, the primary source of data was the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario. Files on all women aged 15 and older whose cause of death was listed as a homicide were examined for the years 1974-1990. (Files for earlier years were not accessible, and so the years 1970-1973 were dropped from the study.) This information was then cross-checked and supplemented with information from Regional and Municipal Police Forces, the Ontario Provincial Police, and other unofficial sources.

Information on a total of 969 women whose deaths were classified as homicides was recorded and computerized. In 896 of these cases an offender was identified in the records. The relationship between the victim and her killer was used to determine which of these deaths fit the definition of intimate femicide.

### **An Overview Of Findings From The Initial Study**

#### **The Incidence of Intimate Femicide**

According to the official records, a total of 551 women were killed by their current or estranged intimate partners between 1974 and 1990 in Ontario. Depending on the

specific definition of intimate femicide used, intimate femicides accounted for between 61% and 78% of all killings of women where an offender was identified. On average, between 32 and 41 women were victims of intimate femicide each year in Ontario between 1974 and 1990.

#### Trends in the Rate of Intimate Femicide

The rate of intimate femicide varied from year to year, but showed no particular trend over time. The mean annual rate for the years 1974-1981 was not significantly different from the mean annual rate for the years 1982-1990.

#### Intimate Femicide Compared to Spousal Killings of Men

Women killed by their intimate partners accounted for at least 61% of all adult female victims of homicide. Men killed by their spouses accounted for approximately 8% of all adult male victims of homicide. Intimate femicides outnumber spouse killings of males by over three to one.

#### Intimate Femicide Rates in Ontario, Canada, and Other Countries

The intimate femicide rate in Ontario appears to be very similar to that in Canada as a whole. Comparable statistics on intimate femicide are not available from other countries. However, the rate of all woman killing in Canada is more than double the rates in England, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Sweden. Of the developed countries, only the United States has a higher rate of woman killing than Canada.

#### Intimate Femicides in Ontario's Cities and Towns

Intimate femicide rates were not consistently higher in large cities compared to smaller cities and towns.

#### The Victims of Intimate Femicide

The majority of victims were aged 20 - 39, living with legal or common law partners, and born in Canada. Eighty per cent had children and almost half of the victims were employed outside the home.

#### Men Who Kill Their Intimate Partners

Offenders were on average four years older than their victims. The majority were employed and born in Canada. Over half had criminal records.

#### Relationships Between Victims and Their Killers

Although most victims were married to and living with their killers, a large proportion (31%) were estranged from their partners. We found no case where a woman was killed by her divorced spouse. Evidence suggests that in most of the relationships the offender had assaulted the victim in the past, which had often led to police intervention.

#### Women With Particularly High Risks of Intimate Femicide

Women separated from their partners faced particularly high risks of intimate

femicide. Women aged 20 - 39 and, in recent years, women not employed outside the home were also at somewhat higher risk.

#### Motives for Intimate Femicide

The predominant motive for intimate femicides appears to be offenders' anger or rage over estrangement from their partners.

#### Locations of Intimate Femicide

Intimate femicides are private acts, typically occurring in the home (and often the bedroom) of the victim.

#### The Magnitude and Sexualized Nature of the Violence

Intimate femicides are frequently characterized by the use of excessive violence beyond what is necessary to kill a person. Multiple methods and prolonged and extremely brutal attacks appear to be more common than in the killings of men.

In almost one-third of intimate femicides the victims were also sexually assaulted, that is, raped, sodomized, and/or sexually mutilated, before or after their deaths. In another 22% of the cases, the victim's body was found partially or completely unclothed.

#### Extent of Victimization

The killings of 551 women by their intimate partners resulted in the deaths of a total of 767 persons. Most of these additional victims were offenders who committed suicide. However, a further 62 victims, most of them children, were also killed. Many other persons, including family and friends of the victims, witnessed the killings. In 73 cases, the women's own children were present when their mothers were killed.

In the course of collecting and analyzing these data, a number of noteworthy themes and issues arose, which are explored in some depth in the report. These include the potential for under-counting of intimate femicides, the criminal histories of men who kill their intimate partners, the gender-specific nature of intimate femicide, the extent of the consequences of intimate femicide, and the frustrations of professionals whose work exposes them to intimate femicides (e.g., police officers and shelter workers).

### Women's Stories

We encountered a number of problems in our efforts to recreate the stories of women who had died at the hands of their intimate partners. In some cases, the families of these women would not or could not participate in the research. In other cases, even where family members and friends were cooperative, other obstacles arose which compelled us to discontinue some interviews. Together, these impediments demonstrated to us the many and complex ways in which the voices of women killed by intimate partners are silenced.

Nevertheless, we were able to reconstruct the stories of six women killed by intimate partners, and to write a composite story representing the experiences of aboriginal women killed by intimate partners. Two women who were nearly killed by their intimate partners also agreed to speak with us about their experiences.

These stories make up the second half of the report, and provide insights into the phenomenon of intimate femicide that the quantitative data cannot. They are available in the final report. The dynamics and emotions of the events are conveyed through the women's experiences and perspectives. Each story is unique, but each also illustrates the commonalities among very different women who have faced lethal violence from their intimate partners.

### The Continuation Study

In 1994, the Ontario Women's Directorate provided additional funding to update the quantitative data on intimate femicide through 1993. Currently, data are again being collected from the Coroner's records, using the same data collection procedure as in the previous study. An additional focus of the second study is the criminal justice response to intimate femicide: the 1991 - 1993 cases will be traced through the court system to determine the charges filed and final dispositions of the cases.

The 185-page final report on the initial study (the results of which are summarized above) is available by writing to:

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