



National Institute of Justice

R e s e a r c h F o r u m

Proceedings of the Homicide Research Working Group Meetings, 1997 and 1998

*1997: Policy, Practice, and
Homicide Research*

*1998: Bridging the Gaps:
Collaborations on Lethal
Violence Research, Theory,
and Prevention Policy*

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Research Working Group
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Director

Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Please note that this document does not include all of the papers presented at the meetings, only those supplied to the National Institute of Justice by the authors.

*1997: Policy, Practice, and
Homicide Research*

*Proceedings of the 1997 Meeting
of the Homicide Research
Working Group*

Discussion

1997 Keynote Kick-Off: What Works?

Presenter: David Kennedy

Recorder: Kathleen M. Heide, University of South Florida

The keynote address generated a great deal of discussion from the audience. Participants noted that social policy involves ethical decisions and that policy analysis is an “art form,” which ideally involves a collaborative effort from the “number crunchers” to the “people in the trenches.” The challenge for researchers today is how to present practitioners and policymakers with useful information.

It can be difficult to generate sound policy recommendations from research. However, sometimes researchers set their sights too high. Basic knowledge and recommendations that may seem simple and obvious may be helpful to practitioners and policymakers. In fact, sometimes “a non-answer,” that is, clarifying what does not work, may be invaluable to practitioners and policymakers because it leads them in more productive directions.

Social scientists possess extensive knowledge which can be helpful if they can package in a way that others can hear it. Information and contact is necessary. For example, putting a researcher in a police agency enables information to flow both ways.

Researchers need to realize that today’s resources appear more finite than in previous decades. Given the political realities, agencies and programs compete for limited dollars. If one program is demonstrated to work, practitioners from another may fear a loss of their funding. Accordingly, researchers may be dealing with “dueling providers,” whose purpose ostensibly is to solve the same problem (e.g., youth violence), but who feel a need to compete rather than cooperate with one another.

Researchers need to pay attention to funding cycles. Government leaders ask where money should be funneled when budgets are being prepared. They are not interested in empirical findings per se. Politicians simply want to know what to do. Researchers can inform them if they put information at an understandable level. Research, practice, and policy go hand in hand. The suggestion was made that researchers in criminal justice should consider starting with the policy question and designing research from there.

Building Bridges Between Research and Practice: Youth Violence Prevention

(8:15 - 10:50 6/9) Recorded by John Jarvis

Rich Rosenfeld and Troy Miles
Anthony Braga, David Kennedy, and Tito Whittington
Don Faggiani and Colleen McLaughlin

Lois Mock and Bob Flewelling - Organizer Representatives

Lois Mock opened this session by noting that the National Institute of Justice is supporting ideas in this area of building partnerships to prevent youth violence. The purpose of this panel is to report on these efforts. Bob Flewelling also noted that the National Institute on Drug and Alcohol Abuse is interested in more research on drug use prevention. Research ideas on the great disconnect between research and practice is needed. What answers does the research provide? He also asked about designing research to examine how research gets translated into practice. He also noted that emphasis is needed on school-based prevention. Finally, he suggested that there are reasons for this disconnect but feels that there are mechanisms to bridge the gap between research and practice.

Youth Mentoring in St. Louis

Rich Rosenfeld began this presentation by noting that the goal of their efforts was to evaluate community based intervention with community based partnerships. His ideas were critical of some partnerships, but not opposed to such relationships. His project was funded as an urban demonstration project by NIJ. He worked with the St. Louis Police department. The plan was to emphasize mentoring and conflict mediation and evaluate efforts over 6 months. They concentrated on violence among urban black youth. In particular, they focused on youths in the Andy Malone Youth Home. These youths were found to be intermediate risk to violence due to family conflicts and other risk factors- base line indicators of risk among both males and females. Their median age was 13-14. Other data showed elevated risk to violence and particularly gun violence. Preliminary results (4 months) suggest fewer identified needs for a gun for protection across both control and mentoring groups. Those who want a gun also declined but still remained high at 30% among those who do not possess a gun.

Initial partnership effort failed due to structural reasons. Bringing the stakeholders to the table was the failure. Vested interests led to reluctance to share resources, information, etc. Each player was suspicious of the ends sought of the other. The whole was worse than the sum of its parts. The point was not that collaboration would not work. Rather, they suggest that collaborations will work when:

- 1) there are only a few players
- 2) prevention does not work when the demand for prevention is high but when the community resources become surrogate victims.
- 3) the fewer the resources the greater the cooperation. This is due to the fact that the availability of greater resources evolves into competition for larger slices of the pie. The partnership with Americorp worked for St. Louis.

Troy Miles continued by noting that violence prevention can be achieved through community safety by designing a mentoring program that is 1-1. However, there is a necessity to develop volunteers. Perceptions are a source of problems. These kids are no different than other kids. Conflict mediation, listening, and cultural diversity are important. Recruitment is massive. Goal is to get 75 mentors. They have 15 this year and had 35 last year. There are not enough volunteers. The commitment is 2-3 hours a week. Troy Miles attributes the lack of volunteers to fear of these kids and parental fears of mentor due to jealousy. Some acceptance of liability needs to occur through brokering to other agencies. Some are getting sued due to their efforts. Its also about competition. Americorp develops mentors and deposits them with existing mentoring programs. Rich Rosenfeld continued noting that these partnerships are essential to do work-single most important thing is a federal not local presence in the project. Or at least not a state government representative that was some part of the initial problem. Americorp represents a possible solution to this problem since there is no stake in the local competition for services rather on finding a solution.

Youth Violence Prevention Project in Boston

David Kennedy began by noting a program entitled “Ceasefire Intervention” which is a 1 year city-wide treatment program aimed at gang violence. As a result, youth homicide has declined below pre-crack levels. This program began about a year ago. Federal, state, and local representatives consulted and promised to report any useful results. These individuals were also drawn upon for implementation. Much was going on but no one took ownership of violence problem. David Kennedy and Anthony Braga sought out this problem. It was directed at: 1) firearms traffic 2) gang violence and 3) direct communication with gang members emphasizing a crackdown on violence. The interagency work and crackdown were noted as the strongest success in this effort.

Detective Tito Whittington of the Boston Police Department then narrated how this program worked and substantiated much of what David Kennedy noted. In particular, he pointed out that when David initiated this program he did not come into the Police Department with numbers but moved in physically. He also bought publicity into the police department. The embarrassment of a wealth of resources that were either underutilized or underidentified was again noted. Partnerships with the community were the key. Marrying these programs and resources with the community was the key. Through this effort they claim to have eliminated youth homicide by gun. Interagency forum was important to effort. Now they are looking at when these kids leave jail—looking at rehabilitation and the role of females. They are also looking at diversionary

programs. What about resources- no new resources were garnered, rather they were aligned with law enforcement and the community was important. Change in philosophy of policing to look at social service issues rather than simply terminating at the end of the policing role. Single most important solution was the partnership that created publicity and defined resources that were available. For the kids, the message the officers carried to the kids was important. More than busting kids but offering job opportunities, or other services as an option. The main thrust was coordinating law enforcement with probation.

Youth Violence Injury Intervention

Don Faggiani opened this session and described what he termed the “Cradle to Grave Project” which focused on aggregate trends noting that the Supplementary Homicide Report data was useful in the analysis of “Juvenile Murder in Virginia”. This data showed large increases in juvenile murder from about 1988 until about 1993. Much of the increase is in the category under 18 as noted in the report. Also many of the perpetrators were black males and firearms were used. They also examined MSAs and central cities and examined the circumstance surrounding these killings including arguments, robberies, and narcotics. They also focused on single victim- single offender incidents. These trends explained about 90% of the increase in overall homicide rates from 1986-1993. They also analyzed syndromes using the topology offered by the Blocks. Using this Instrumental versus Expressive classification by demographics they were able to gain a lot of response from the agencies responsible for delivering these services. Intervention strategies grew out of this response.

Colleen McLaughlin then detailed the research effort which grew out of this and was funded by NIDA. This work entailed a review of 25 juvenile murders and attempted to merge the existing data with medical examiners data. The results showed offenders were predominantly black, male, and involved in drug selling. Other recent substance abuse was also present in the victim. Substance use on the part of both victim and offender correctly classified these cases about 85% of the time. In an attempt to answer the question of whether these victims were high risk victims further analysis showed prior firearms injuries were present. The medical records of the victim were crossed with the juvenile criminal records and found 65 matches. Of these victims, 2/3 were court involved. Court involvement was found to be a substantial risk factor for injury. Drug sellers even more so. Also increased penetration into juvenile justice system showed increase in likelihood of firearms injury. Injury patterns and patterns of offending were found to be more serious among court involved youth. Normalization, and routine activities associated with these injuries. Eradicating these attitudes was a goal. Education of high risk individuals was used as an intervention to meet this goal.

The California Wellness Foundation: A Violence Prevention Initiative

Peter Greenwood opened this presentation with the identification of collaborators in this effort and gave some background information on the increases in youth violence experienced in California. The Wellness Program grew out of a conversion of health services that led to the

Wellness Foundation. In this effort firearms were identified as a major factor. However, a lack of information on how to combat this violence persisted. Having identified a goal to reduce youth violence and to provide leadership on violence prevention, the Wellness Foundation also shifted the policy discussion from a criminal justice model to a public health model thru gun control, limiting access to alcohol by kids, etc. In order to do this, the Wellness Foundation was formed to focus upon:

- 1) Policy—and public relations focusing on education.
- 2) Community Action Programs-outreach, mentoring, etc.
- 3) Leadership Programs-education to professionals, fellowship program to extend projects
- 4) Research Program-topic analyses firearms, alcohol use, etc.
Also, evaluation component is present.
- 5) Academic advisory committee.

Having established such an entity some conflicts have emerged. Among these are:

- 1) The public health model conflicts with traditional criminal justice system models. Most of money and resources are in criminal justice system so conflict emerges since criminal justice practitioners are seen as the bad guys.
- 2) Sorting through the empirical work? What works is difficult to determine.
- 3) Difficulties in keeping up with the new trends.
- 4) Sorting through national versus state and local data and trends. These are difficult to make sense of and sift through.
- 5) Politics, or pork barrel, problems in terms of how to carve up the pie.
- 6) Alcohol rather than drug use as emphasis?
- 7) Evaluation and perpetuation of programs as a problem? What happened and will it keep going on?

The majority of effort has been primarily been in gun control. There has been a clear strategy, well connected, and the players are known. Passing local ordinances has also played an important role. However, a weak link between policy research and advocacy functions remains.

Some conclusions regarding public education issues are offered. In particular, the public education effort has been effective in getting the message out about handgun violence against kids. Additionally, videoconferencing may have assisted in passing ordinances. There has also been recognized utility of behind-the-scenes involvement with activist organizations.

With regard to community action programs, the main goal is to keep the doors open and keep the services going. There is no time to advocate. All in all, the annual meeting provides the glue to keep this together and all research areas defined have been covered with research findings being generated. Finally, while there is a commitment to mentoring, interaction within the group has been spotty at best. Yet, most activities that were initiated are ongoing, many accomplishments have resulted, and there has been strong movement toward the overall goals. Nonetheless, more

needs to be done with less to continue these directions and integrate research and policy. In the meantime, public education has been the principal success in this effort.

Questions, Answers, and Comments:

Garen Wintemute pointed out the need for the research component and the need for evaluation. One area of collaboration that thrives is the development of limitations on small firearms (Saturday nite specials). Cheryl Maxson, drawing from her gang analyses suggested that identification of risk and prevention factors among gang members may be very important and advocates translations of research efforts into policy development. Allan Abrahamse, on the other hand, suggested that the poor quality of public health data are firing the conflict between the criminal justice model and the public health model. Following on Allan's comments Lois Mock asked for information on resource competition among community organizations and conflict between criminal justice and public health. David Kennedy then offered that their work had been mostly a policing project at beginning but shifted under their feet by attention to working relationships that were exploited privately. Community interaction happened but not formally. These things do not evolve as they should but draw on existing links and strengths. Rich Rosenfeld furthered this point by noting that competition over resources used to be there but has since been transcended by movements. However, entrepreneurship has become the movement. Peter Greenwood then noted that community service organizations have a goal of continuing service rather than a specific issue. Wedding these to violence is the key. Bob Flewelling argued that community organizations and researcher partnerships rather than state agency cooperation is probably more effective than the traditional consensus building among agency players.

On a different note, Jianfang Chen asked about rates versus totals in Boston data, but also noted the role of demographics. David Kennedy responded that such trends are not attributable to demographics or base population changes. Dick Block returned to partnership issues and raised questions about foundations, community groups, and local and state governmental agencies. The evolution of efforts may not be coordinated in the same directions. Who should take the lead? Dick advocated the community group as defining the lead. Rich Rosenfeld commented that the federal presence has incredible influence on local politicians. Peter Greenwood pointed out that deciding how to do this depends on both learning what organizations can do in this effort and on coordinating these efforts.

Roland Chilton then returned to the issue of interventions and asked "Are the kids being told what is right or what is wrong in their behavior? The answer from the research (St. Louis and Virginia) suggests that emphasizing what is right rather than what is wrong to inform their decision making in a nonconfrontational but educational way may be the correct course. Everett Lee then suggested that determining the optimal age for these interventions is important. Some say as early as age 8 but this is inconclusive. Others note that its not only the child, but the levels of intervention that are also important.

Gary Kleck then returned to issues relative to the Wellness Foundation and gun control and research as an afterthought. Gary Kleck argued that such bans are in the direct opposition to known research. Enthusiasm over process may be misplaced if such efforts are demonstrated to be a failure. Peter Greenwood responded by suggesting that only about 1/7th of effort goes to this. Garen Wintemute supported this and noted that Saturday nite special purchasers are at a higher risk for future involvement in violence and injury. Peter greenwood also went further by noting that any movement is good movement. Wintemute also noted that research does not guide policy but substantiates policy. Final comments also noted that emphasis on schools and school structure as a place to quarter many efforts to intervene.

Bridging the Gaps for the Virginia “Cradle-to-Grave” Homicide Project

Colleen R. McLaughlin

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Surgery, Medical College of Virginia

Donald Faggiani

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Abstract

The researchers will address the process and barriers involved in bridging the gaps between research, theory, and practice; and the critical role played by the HRWG in the formation of this collaborative effort. We begin by discussing two parallel, though complementary studies of juvenile murderers in Virginia. One study resulted in a research-based violence prevention program aimed at breaking the cycle of violence for those with a high risk for intentional injuries. We will also discuss how we are overcoming some of the barriers to form a collaboration between two state agencies that will contribute to our understanding of the victims and perpetrators of lethal violence.

Juvenile Murder in Virginia: a Study of Arrests and Convictions

In 1993, the number of juveniles arrested for murder was the highest in Virginia’s history. Most of the growth occurred between 1988 and 1993. Not only are the numbers of murders increasing but the weapons used in homicides are changing as well. During the early 1980’s approximately 65% of juvenile homicide arrests involved the use of firearms. By 1994 this figure had increased to over 87%. To address this growing problem the Criminal Justice Research Center of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services undertook a project to (1) to consolidate information on juveniles arrested for murder, juveniles convicted of murder, and the victims of juvenile perpetrated homicides; (2) to examine the relationships, trends, and situations underlying juvenile arrests for homicide; and (3) to categorize juvenile homicide to aid in identifying strategies to combat the growing trends in juvenile homicides.

The information on juveniles arrested for murder is extracted from the Uniform Crime Reports Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR). Juvenile correctional center data from the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice and Circuit Court Pre-Sentence Investigation reports from the Virginia Department of Corrections provided information on the convictions of juveniles for

murderer. The data from the SHR show that between 1986 and 1994 92% of juveniles arrested for homicide are male. Eighty percent of those arrested are black with white, Mexican American and Asian/Pacific Islander accounting for the remaining 20% of arrests. The average age of juveniles arrested for murder is 15.9 years. Firearms were used in 81.5% of the incidents in which a juvenile was arrested as the suspected offender.

The gender and race characteristics of the victims closely follow those of the individuals arrested. Eighty-six percent of the victims were male, 68% of the victims were black. The average age of victims of incidents in which a juvenile is arrested is 28.5 years.

In our examination of the trends that can be extracted from the available data several factors become readily apparent. First, urban and suburban areas account for the majority of juvenile arrests for homicide. From 1990 through 1994, 90% of all juvenile arrests for murder were within urban and suburban areas. Second, beginning around 1988 the percentage of incidents involving the use of a firearm began to grow rapidly. In fact, between 1989 and 1990 there was a 115% growth in incidents involving the use of a firearm. Third, males, and especially black males, account for the increase in arrests of juveniles for murder and non-negligent manslaughter from 1988 through 1994.

Homicides begin as a form of confrontation. Research has shown that homicides can be characterized by the type of circumstances involved, the victim-offender relationship and the primary motive of the offender. Once characterized this information can be used to develop intervention strategies to combat the growing trends in juvenile perpetrated homicides. Our analysis shows that about 49% of incidents involving the arrest of a juvenile offender for homicide have as the primary motive the acquisition of money, property or drugs. In addition, 48% begin as an act of aggression where the primary motive of the offender is the aggression itself. Less than 25% of incidents where a juvenile is the suspected offender involve the killing of a stranger. The majority (60%) of victims of juvenile perpetrated murder involve the killing of an acquaintance or friend.

Finally, we examined the sentencing of juveniles convicted for murder or non-negligent manslaughter. Most juveniles (83%) charged with some form of homicide are transferred to the circuit court. Once in circuit court it takes, on average, slightly less than one year to receive a sentence. Of those convicted and sentenced in circuit court, 98% receive some form of incarceration. Twenty-one percent of juveniles convicted of murder in circuit court receive a life or death sentence. In addition, juveniles convicted of first degree murder and incarcerated in the Department of Corrections prison system serve on average about 2.8 years longer incarcerated than their adult counterparts.

Re-injury Prevention Program for Victims of Intentional Injuries

Violent crime has been characterized as a public health crisis; demanding the combined efforts of social service, health care and criminal justice professionals serving at the forefront of this

epidemic. In response to this problem, criminal justice and health care professionals in the Commonwealth of Virginia have initiated a major collaborative effort for the study, treatment and prevention of violence. Members of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) have recently completed a study on the relationship between substance use, drug selling and lethal violence in 25 adolescent male homicide offenders and their victims. The results of this study indicated that 28% of the homicides perpetrated by adolescent males were related to the sale or distribution of illegal drugs, while juvenile drug sellers comprised a significant percentage (52%) of those incarcerated for murder. Moreover, recent victim drug use and perpetrator substance use emerged as important predictor variables in identifying drug-related juvenile homicides. These results are consistent with the view of homicide as a behavioral interaction where both victim and perpetrator variables play a role in the final outcome.

Additional research done in collaboration between members of DJJ, the OCME, and the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals further documents a strong relationship between substance use, juvenile offending and assault-related firearms injuries. Retrospective review of the male, pediatric admissions for assault-related firearms injuries (n = 65) revealed that 66% of the victims had documented involvement in juvenile offending. Recent substance use and/or court-involvement was identified in 82% of the cases, suggesting that substance use and criminal offending may represent important risk factors for intentional injuries in adolescent males.

The constellation of individual consequences associated with intentional injuries includes social maladjustment, depression, substance use, and promiscuity, as well as subsequent violent acts and criminal offending. Moreover, the high-risk behaviors linked to initial injuries may be exacerbated by the violent event, significantly increasing the risk for re-injury if not changed. Further compounding the problems associated with intentional injuries, treatment providers increasingly are encountering normalization, and even glamorization or expectation of violent victimization. Thus completing the cycle of violence, the negative sequelae following an intentional injury may increase the risk for re-injury substantially.

Though the causes and consequences of violence are multifaceted and complex, the identification of at-risk populations and characterization of putative risk factors provides an opportunity to develop focused violence prevention programs and break the cycle of violence. Research indicates that certain groups are at increased risk for sustaining intentional injuries. This population includes those previously injured, and individuals involved in substance use, drug selling or other criminal offending. Two programs resulting directly from our ongoing research on the relationship between drugs and violence are the Intentional Injury Prevention Program for high-risk youth, and the Re-Injury Prevention Program. The goals of these treatment and prevention programs are to target individuals at high-risk for intentional injuries or re-injury, attenuate the negative sequelae associated with an assault, and identify and link possible involvement in high-risk behavior to an increased risk for violent victimization through the use of a brief intervention model. The Intentional Injury Prevention Program has been included in a suburban Richmond, Virginia Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court assault diversion program

since May of 1996. It has been expanded recently to include four additional counties in the Richmond, Virginia metropolitan area as part of a jail-based violence prevention program. The Re-Injury Prevention Program will be initiated with pediatric firearms injury victims at the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals during the summer of 1997.

Where Are We Going?

The Virginia “Cradle-to-Grave” Homicide Project

The Virginia “Cradle to Grave” Homicide Project will provide the first opportunity to combine traditionally disparate data resources in an effort to characterize juvenile homicide from a victim, perpetrator and event perspective. These data resources will include complete perpetrator information (criminal, social, and psychological histories), victim information (cause, manner and mechanism of lethal injury; coincident substance use), and crime scene characteristics. The results of this study will significantly enhance ongoing and new treatment and prevention programs by facilitating judicious allocation of scarce programmatic resources, and the identification of putative risk factors for lethal violence. This emerging collaborative effort has the potential to contribute significantly to our understanding the victims and perpetrators of lethal violence; underscoring the need for bridging the gap between research and practice in youth violence prevention.

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The Rewarding and Painful Process of Collaboration to Prevent Domestic Violence

Jacquelyn Campbell, Carolyn Rebecca Block, Deborah Spungen, and Linda Langford

Judy Bonderman, Recorder

This Workshop focused on the advantages, disadvantages, problems, and opportunities of collaborative intimate violence research. Jackie Campbell from Hopkins opened with some of the challenges in research collaboration with community agencies including differences in priorities, paychecks, attitudes, ideologies, and ethnic background. She acknowledged that there is often appropriate mistrust on the part of community agencies dealing with violence because of past paternalistic attitudes of researchers. Other concerns include client safety and confidentiality, lack of appropriate outcome measures, and inappropriate use of research results. Some of the solutions suggested and discussed for building and maintaining true partnerships were:

- Take time to build and maintain collaborative relationships by spending time in each other's worlds (homicide department, domestic violence shelter);
- Negotiate mutual gains through honest discussions. Develop multiple, creative, real world outcome measures by asking what agencies want to find out. Use results for mutually agreed on policy change efforts. List agency contacts as co-authors;
- Use combinations of qualitative and quantitative culturally competent research;
- Use action or empowerment research models which include use of survivors as well as student research assistants who can also assist agency programs.

The presenters then discussed four collaborative projects, which brought together researchers and practitioners, academics and policy makers, public health and public safety agencies, and government entities.

1. "Risk Factors for Femicide in Violent Intimate Relationships"

Jackie Campbell's seven city case control study of the relative risk factors for femicide in a battering relationship is truly interdisciplinary. It is funded by NIJ, CDC, and NIH, with eight primary investigators representing the disciplines of nursing, public health, criminology, and medicine. In each city there is a collaboration between law enforcement, the courts (for orders of protection), universities, domestic violence shelters, and bereavement centers. The study uses the public health case control model; the 250 cases (femicide victims) are represented by police

homicide files as well as by a proxy (surviving mother, sister, or best friend.) The study is also collecting data from 250 attempted femicides and 250 controls (battered women) surveyed by a research firm.

2. “Partner Homicide in Massachusetts, 1991-1995”

Linda Langford discussed a collaborative project between Peace at Home, a human rights agency, and the Harvard School of Public Health. Peace at Home was founded in 1991 to help free women who were in prison for killing their batterers. It started by tracking cases of femicide and publicizing cases of intimate homicide. When they decided they wanted to become involved in serious research, they contacted Nancy Isaak at Harvard who put them in touch with Linda. Together they constructed a database of all spouse and intimate partner related homicides in Massachusetts using multiple data sources. The study has two objectives: 1) to count and characterize accurately all partner homicides in the state over the 5-year period; and 2) to contrast the number of partner homicides in the new database with the number in the Supplemental Homicide Report. The study is in the final stages of data collection.

The study began with a definite advocacy objective. Peace at Home wanted the numbers to show policy makers the seriousness of the problem. They have a lot of political connections and will be able to get the report out to a broad audience. The researchers are interested in how different databases mesh and what the SHR might be missing. An early issue arose when Peace at Home was surprised by how long the project would take. Linda suggested that a realistic time frame for completion should be laid out in the beginning.

3. “The Anti-Violence Partnership of Philadelphia”

Deborah Spungen discussed two programs. The Anti-Violence Partnership of Philadelphia (AVP) began as a support group for the parents of area homicide victims and then evolved into a full-service victim advocate agency known as Families of Murder Victims (FMV). As Special Projects Director for AVP, Deborah is working with the Philadelphia Women’s Death Review Committee to analyze the circumstances leading up to the death of all women murdered in Philadelphia between the ages of 15 and 60. This research project sprung from the concerns of the family of a woman killed by her husband at her place of work. The woman had secured a protection order against her husband and the family wanted to go back through the events of their violent relationship to see if there were other points at which an intervention could have prevented this death. The Philadelphia DA has put together an interdisciplinary group composed of the medical examiner, the police, medical and public health personnel, an individual therapist, and the sheriff’s department. Linda noted that there is lots of resistance in Massachusetts to death review but it is a good way to identify what may have gone wrong in the system.

Deborah’s second project is the Domestic Violence Workplace Partnership, a collaboration between AVP and Women Against Abuse. They studied employer procedures for protecting abused women and found that only 21% had policies in place. The partnership brings Employee

Assistance Programs together with domestic violence shelters to develop a training package to proactively respond to the intrusion of domestic violence in the workplace. Their primary obstacle so far is getting the project funded.

4. “Risk of Serious Injury or Death in Intimate Violence”

Becky Block described her project as a collaboration, not a partnership, that grew organically over the last 3 years. Chicago medical, public health, and criminal justice agencies are working together to identify factors that place women abused by an intimate partner in danger of life-threatening injury or death. Rather than starting with a hypothesis, the project began with the concept that we, as researchers, know who is at risk of being abused, but that doesn't help a 911 operator/dispatcher, a police officer, or an emergency room attendant decide who is at risk of dying from a battering relationship. The point of the project was to link non-lethal and lethal risk factors. Jackie's study is a partner to Becky's project. The goal is to get information to those who can help. Practitioners want to know who is at most risk of dying among battered women.

Aside from the collaborating agencies, the study benefits from the contributions of a number of active participants, including “site advisory boards: of community members. The study is based on a point of service sample at six clinics and hospital sites, with the sampling process integrated into the site intake process. In a sense, all interviewers and service providers are collaborators in the project. The project is currently piloting the study and hiring and training interviewers.

Some major legal and ethical issues have surfaced concerning respondent safety and confidentiality. There is a need for a consultant psychologist or counselor on staff at each site where interviews take place to handle any psychological trauma that may arise. The project is also sensitive to the need to avoid disrupting service or delivery of treatment at the clinic or hospital.

The need to translate the questionnaire into Spanish for the Hispanic community developed into an unintended benefit for the project. A group of 20 women got together to translate each question and make the language culturally relevant. The group enjoyed the process so much that it still meets regularly as a site advisory board.

Discussion

In the group discussion that followed the presentations, several people commented on the emotional overload that researchers sometimes feel when working on homicide issues. Quite a few present seemed relieved to know that others had the same problems.

For example: During a study of female homicide cases at the University of North Carolina, the data collectors, who had been interviewing the police officers and getting graphic detail of murder from the sheriffs, needed to get help from a counselor to overcome the cumulative effect of the information they were processing. The question arose: *Does the project have a responsibility to get emotional help for its interviewers and researchers?* Although the group did

not take a position on this, many commented that such help was an integral part of their work environment.

Susan Wilt from New York City agreed that homicide work is very stressful, whether it's reviewing medical examiner records or interviewing family members. Her projects benefitted from monthly group staff meetings with a counselor. They also limited case load where necessary and had frequent debriefing sessions. David Kennedy also agreed that interviewers burn out and feel guilty because they can't help the people they are interviewing.

Jackie Campbell uses researchers who have to look at color photos from homicide files. She warns researchers about how they may react. Jackie thought it was important to look at the complete files before interviewing surviving family members to develop empathy. Others commented that researchers should not look at photos if they are going to be objective in their research.

Linda suggested that researchers go back to their collaborators who are service providers to get help for the interviewers.

Garen Wintemute asked if any of this research ever leads to an escalation of violence for the interviewee? Jackie pointed out that batterers have the latest telephone technology and could listen in on telephone interviews. Becky said that her Board of Advisors is developing a protocol for what to do when the interviewer uncovers a case where there is a risk of immediate harm. Lois Mock suggested that interview researchers should have phone numbers of where the interviewee can go for help.

Notes From a Collaborative Project: Risk of Serious Injury or Death in Intimate Violence

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Abstract

Chicago's "Risk of Serious Injury or Death in Intimate Violence" project, a study seeking to identify risk factors for life-threatening injury or death in situations in which a woman is being abused by an intimate partner, could never have happened without the close and continuing collaboration of local medical, public health and criminal justice agencies; experts in research methods, practical interventions, and the epidemiology of intimate violence; plus the funding agency, the National Institute of Justice. This Work in Progress reviews the role that collaboration plays in the project, discusses the difficulties and benefits of collaboration, and outlines lessons that similar projects might learn from this collaborative experience.

Who, What, Where, When and Why?

When field-level practitioners (e.g.: nurses, police officers) encounter an abused woman, they need to know how factors such as leaving the situation, pregnancy and firearm availability could affect the risk of a lethal outcome. Earlier research tells us who in the general population is most likely to be abused, but not who among abused women is most at risk of serious physical injury. This study will produce high-risk intimate violence profiles (statistically established relative risk factors) for danger of life-threatening injury or death at the hands of either partner within a year of hospital or medical center contact, for African American, Latino and non-Latino white abused women.

So that the study results will be relevant to decisions made by field practitioners, we are using a "point of service" sample of women identified as they come into a hospital, community health center or clinic for any kind of contact (regular checkup, traffic accident, and so on). The sampling procedure at each of the six point-of-service sites has been developed in close cooperation with staff at the site, and is an integral part of the site's standard intake process.¹ The Chicago Department of Health "Abuse Screener," routinely administered by clinic or hospital staff, identifies women in the "abused" sample and women in a "comparison" sample. We are making a special effort to include women in the sample who may be in high risk situations but who do not contact shelters or support networks, women who are high-risk but underserved or unknown to official agencies. To further reflect the complexity of field-level decisions, we are

The point of service sample includes women sampled at six sites - the Chicago Department of Health's Roseland Clinic, two facilities of Erie Family Health Center, the Chicago Women's Health Center, and the Trauma Unit and the Ambulatory Screening Clinic of Cook County Hospital.

using lengthy face-to-face interviews covering changing circumstances and interventions over a retrospective year, and are re-interviewing the sampled women after six months and a year.

But the purpose of the “Risk” study is to develop risk profiles for serious injury or death. In order to do this, we must compare situations in which abuse ended in death to situations in which it did not. This study was designed to accomplish such a “lethal/nonlethal” analysis within a finite period of time and with a finite budget (table 1). It is built upon a comparative analysis of the longitudinal point-of-service sample and a sample of everyone (women and men) killed in Chicago by an intimate partner over a two-year period. We will interview two proxies (knowledgeable friends or family) of each victim, with the interview covering a retrospective year.

To the extent possible, the same interview schedule is being used for both samples.

Table 1. Sample Design Summary: Risk of Serious Injury or Death in Intimate Violence

POINT-OF-SERVICE SAMPLE:			
	Subjects		Interviews
	Hospital	Health Center	
Abused	200	300	1,500= (500 x 3)
Comparison	30	70	100= (100 x 1)
Total	230	370	1,600
INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE SAMPLE:			
	Subjects	Proxies	
Homicide Victims over Two Years	approx. 100	200= (100 x 2 proxies)	

Role of Collaboration

The study was designed around goals and guiding principals developed jointly by the collaborative team over a three-year period. It is an open and flexible collaboration built on consensus, more organic than a legalistic formal partnership. Although additional agencies and individuals are being added to the list of participants as the study progresses, current collaborators include the Chicago Department of Public Health, Erie Family Health Center, Cook County Hospital, Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, the Chicago Police Department, and the staff of the six point-of-service sample sites. An active Site Advisory Committee of Erie Family Health Center community

members has been instrumental in developing the Spanish translation of the questionnaire and other study materials, and evaluating their cultural sensitivity. Staff at the study sites are vital participants. The sample screener is administered by site staff as part of their usual routine, and a protocol of procedures for each site was developed in close collaboration between project and site staff.

The collaborators have found the following research goals to be crucial: 1) to focus sample selection and data analysis on information available to helping agencies, so that the results of the study will be useful for practical decisions; 2) to link data on abused women with similar data on people who have been killed by an intimate partner; 3) to investigate the effect of multiple factors, changing over time, including interventions, individual help-seeking and support networks; 4) to have an adequate sample so that intimate violence profiles will be valid for African American and Latino women as well as nonLatino white women; and 5) to make every effort to sample high-risk but understudied populations (such as expectant mothers and battered women unknown to helping agencies). The collaborators also consider the following guiding principles to be perhaps even more important than the research goals: 1) respondent safety and confidentiality are to be maintained as crucial and primary considerations throughout all aspects of the study; 2) the research is to be integrated with the procedures and culture of each study site, so that site staff are involved in site decisions and problem-solving and encouraged to become project collaborators; and 3) ethical and safety issues have a strong vote, if not a veto, in cases when they conflict with research goals.

Unanticipated Benefits and Problems

As the project has developed over the years, the maintenance of the collaborative team has required some care and feeding, as we had expected it would. We had not expected, however, some of the benefits and advantages that grew out of the collaboration.

The difficulties are the usual team-building issues. It is necessary to devote a great deal of project resources (measured in time spent) to maintaining group communication and in building smaller work groups within the collaborative team. Although we found it helpful to create computerized mailing lists and use modern communication technologies, nothing substitutes for face-to-face meetings and person-to-person letters, FAXes, EMail and phone calls.

Since decisions are not made without thorough discussion, they take longer than in a non-collaborative project. However, the final decision is something that all of the project participants can support, and it benefits from the expertise and differing perspectives of all of the team members. For example, the questionnaire was developed by more than 20 people working together over many months, but the end product is an extremely innovative and carefully-developed instrument that, we anticipate, will be used in other research studies. Similarly, the translation of the instrument into Spanish, which is being done interactively by members of the Erie Site Advisory Board, has taken quite a long time to accomplish. Again, however, we expect that the process will produce a Spanish questionnaire that reflects a concern for cultural sensitivity as well as a “correct” translation.

Some of the benefits of our collaboration were more surprising. The Erie Site Advisory Board, for example, was neither planned nor anticipated, but grew from the enthusiasm of community members asked to attend a translation “focus group,” and continued to develop through the sensitive encouragement of Eva Hernandez, one of original project collaborators. Also, the collaborative team was in large part responsible for the success of the extensive training class for interviewers, which spanned two weeks. In a third example, the original study design called for the use of the Department of Health “standard screener” for abuse. However, when we began working with the staff of each site, we discovered that the standard screener was not actually being used. Project staff and site staff worked closely together in each site over a number of weeks to develop a screening procedure that the site staff could use and support. Thus, the “Risk” project has served as a pilot for universal abuse screening in Chicago hospitals and health clinics.

Lessons We Have Learned About Collaboration

This project has taught us some techniques for building a collaborative team of diverse groups - public health and criminal justice agencies; researchers, practitioners and community members. I believe, however, that the most important lesson we have learned is that, as David Kennedy pointed out in his keynote discussion, “What Works?” is not the only criterion for a successful research project. “Works” should not be defined narrowly as research results evaluating an intervention or testing a hypothesis. The process of research can not only analyze or describe a problem, but can also be part of the solution. For example, the time and effort devoted to integrating the study within each hospital and health center site was rewarded by the project being a catalyst for each of the sites to develop effective procedures for screening all incoming women for abuse. Though it might have been the “official” procedure, none of the sites had actually been doing universal screening prior to this project.

Thus, because it has been so highly collaborative, the existence of the “Risk of Serious Injury or Death in Intimate Violence” project has developed ties among community agencies and individuals working to reduce lethal violence, and given them new problem-solving tools. This benefit of the project was unanticipated, but may turn out to be among the most important products the project produces.

The Houston Homicide Project: A Comparison of US and Canadian Findings on Uxoricide Risk for Women with Children Sired by Previous Partners (with Additional Findings on Overall Domestic Homicide)

A study of homicide in Houston, 1984-1994.

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Daly, Wiseman and Wilson (1997) found, in a sample of 20 cases of uxoricide (wife killing) of *women who were mothers of coresident minor children*, 55% were women with minor children sired by a previous partner, although comparable women represented only 7.3% of the population at large.

- Approximately 20% of Houston married couple households with coresident children under the age of 18 include stepparents/children.
- The Daly, Wilson, & Wiseman research highlights the increased risk of homicide to women in such families in Hamilton, Ontario.
- Research Question: Are women in Houston, TX, with coresident minor children, at greater risk of being murdered when their present partner is not the father of those children?

**Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the National Consortium on Violence Research.

Comparison of Victims of Uxoricide (and Husband Homicide risk) for Hamilton-Wentworth, Ontario (Pop: 425,000)¹ & Houston, Texas (Pop: 1,625,000)

	Hamilton Uxoricides (1974-1995)	Houston Uxoricides (1985-1994)	Houston Spousal/Male Victim Homicides (1985-1994)
RELATIONSHIP			
Registered Marriage	19 (59.4%)	19 (41.3%)	6 (54.5%)
Common Law	5 (15.6)	8 (17.4)	3 (27.3)
Divorced ²	2 (6.3)	1 (2.2)	***
Defacto ³	6 (18.8)	18 (39.1)	2 (18.2)
Total	32 (100.0%)	46 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)
PROGENY OF OFFENDER			
Natural children	21 (65.6%)	24 (52.5%)	10 (90.9%)
Step-children	11 (34.4)	19 (41.3)	1 (9.1)
Both natural and step-children	***	3 (6.5)	***
Total	32 (100.0%)	46 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)
MURDER/SUICIDE			
Murder/suicide	4 (12.5% ⁴)	8 (17.4%)	4 (36.4%)
No murder/suicide	28 (87.5)	38 (82.6)	7 (63.6)
Total	32 (100.0%)	46 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)
FAMILICIDES			
Familicides	3 (9.4% ⁵)	6 (13.0%)	1 (9.1%)
No familicides	29 (90.6)	40 (87.0)	10 (90.9)
Total	32 (100.0%)	46 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)

¹7 Cases in Hamilton study of men killed by women, 2 in which minor children were present; 1 natural child of male victim; 1 stepchild of male victim.

²Includes ex-married and ex-common law.

³Includes coresider boy/girlfriend and coresident boy/girlfriend.

⁴17% of married/ common-law unions

⁵12.5% of married/common law unions.

Daly, Martin, Karen A. Wiseman, and Margo I. Wilson. "Women with Children Sired by Previous Partners Incur Excess Risk of Uxoricide." *Homicide Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1, February 1997:61-71.

- "Male sexual proprietariness, aroused by women's efforts to leave unsatisfactory marriages or by adulterous or potentially adulterous interactions with other males, is by far the leading ostensible factor in violence against wives, especially lethal violence. An evolutionary psychological perspective suggests that this motive is an especially powerful one because the fitness of our male ancestors depended crucially on sexual and reproductive control of women in a social milieu of rival men. The effect of male rivalry that matters in evolutionary time is differential paternity, and it is therefore not surprising that marital conflict is in general reduced by the presence of children but exacerbated when those children are the products of prior unions." (Daly & Wilson, 1996). Daly, M., & Wilson, M.I. "Evolutionary Psychology and Marital Conflict: The Relevance of Stepchildren." In D.M. Buss & N. Malamuth (Eds.), *Sex, Power, Conflict: Feminist and Evolutionary Perspectives* pp. 9-28. New York: Oxford University Press.
- *In Hamilton, Ontario . . .*
34% of all uxoricides were of women with *coresiding* minor children sired by a previous partner. comparable women represent only 7.3% of the population at large.
- *In Houston, Texas . . .*
41% of all uxoricides were of women with *coresiding* minor children sired by a previous partner. Yet comparable women represent less than 20% of the population at large.
- *In Hamilton, Ontario . . .*
Female-initiated separation was a motivational factor in **56%** of the cases of uxoricide in Hamilton.
- *In Houston, Texas . . .*
Female-initiated separation or jealousy were motivational factors in **56%** of the cases of uxoricide.

"Mother of 4 shot to death....by an estranged boyfriend, as the woman's 10-year-old child looked on...forced his way in after she came home from a date about 2 a.m....." 3/11/86

"A capital murder defendant, accused of killing his ex-girlfriend and her 9-year-old daughter, ... her 7-year-old son also was wounded...her other children hid in a closet during the shooting..." 1/6/93

“A man who spent months harrassing his ex-common-law wife was sentenced Friday to die by injection for a 14-gunshot shooting spree inside her home that killed her and her brother and wounded two bystanders.....” 11/13/93

Source: *Houston Chronicle*

- 17% of all victims of spousal homicide had minor children.
- The male partner was the offender in 79% of the cases where there were coresident minor children. The male partner was the offender in 50% of the cases where there were no children.
- 70% of offenders in couples with minor children were charged with murder or capital murder. 45% of offenders in couples with adult children were charged with murder or capital murder.
- In 18% of the cases of spousal homicide, the offender (predominantly male) also committed, or attempted to commit, suicide. This was the case in 49% of the couples with adult children.
- In 22% of the cases of spousal homicide, there was a 5-10 year age gap between partners. In 27% of the cases, there was an age gap of +10 years.
- 62% of victims were in registered or common-law marriages.
- 4.7% of victims were in coresiding homosexual relationships.

Characteristics of 334 Cases of Spousal Homicide in Houston, Texas 1985-1994

	Couples with Minor Children (n=57)	Couples with Adult Children (n=29)	Couples with No Children (n=248)
GENDER, OFFENDER			
Female	11 (19%)	6 (21%)	111 (45%)
Male	46 (79)	22 (76)	124 (50)
MEAN AGE OF OFFENDER			
	34 years	52 years	34 years
MEAN AGE OF VICTIM			
	33 years	47 years	35 years
AGE GAP OF INTIMATE PARTNERS			
Less than 5 years	26 (46%)	11 (38%)	120 (48%)
5-10 years	14 (25)	5 (17)	53 (21)
10 years or more	15 (26)	9 (31)	65 (26)
OFFENDER RACE			
Asian	2 (4%)	***	3 (1%)
Black	33 (58)	9 (31%)	140 (56)
Hispanic	10 (18)	7 (24)	38 (15)
White	10 (18)	11 (38)	59 (24)
VICTIM RACE			
Asian	2 (4%)	****	5 (2%)
Black	32 (56)	9 (31%)	139 (56)
Hispanic	13 (23)	9 (31)	45 (18)
White	10 (18)	11 (38)	59 (24)
CHARGE			
Capital Murder	4 (7%)	1 (3%)	7 (3%)
Suspect Dead	10 (20)	12 (41)	25 (10)
Justifiable Homicide	***	***	1 (4)
Murder	36 (63)	12 (41)	128 (52)
Referred to Grand Jury	5 (9)	2 (7)	65 (26)
OFFENDER PROGENY			
Natural Children	32 (56%)	21 (72%)	***
Step or non-natural children	20 (35)	5 (17)	***
Both step and natural children	3 (5)	3 (10)	***
Victim currently pregnant w/offenders	2 (3)	***	***
Totals may not = 100, due to rounding and missing values			

Characteristics of 334 Cases of Spousal Homicide in Houston, Texas 1985-1994

	Couples with Minor Children (n=57)	Couples with Adult Children (n=29)	Couples with No Children (n=248)
RELATIONSHIP OF INTIMATE PARTNERS			
Boy/Girlfriend	17 (30%)	2 (7%)	72 (29%)
Married	27 (44)	22 (76)	77 (31)
Common Law	11 (19)	5 (17)	65 (26)
Ex-Boy/Girlfriend	3 (5)	***	11 (4)
Ex-Married	1 (2)	***	6 (2)
Ex-Common Law	***	***	1 (4)
Homosexual	***	***	16 (7)
COHABITATION			
Cohabiting	29 (51%)	23 (79%)	120 (48%)
Not Cohabiting	14 (25%)	2 (7)	92 (37)
Estranged/Separated	13 (23%)	4 (14)	18 (7)
MOTIVE			
Argument	14 (15%)	6 (21%)	90 (33%)
Battered Wife	1 (2)	1 (3)	2 (8)
Defense of self or child	5 (9)	2 (7)	36 (15)
Jealousy	6 (11)	1 (3)	25 (10)
Leave	20 (35)	3 (10)	36 (15)
Mental	6 (11)	12 (41)	14 (6)
Money	***	1 (3)	***
WEAPON			
Firearm	35 (61%)	19 (65%)	162 (65%)
Knife	4 (7)	***	31 (13)
Other	18 (32)	10 (34)	55 (22)
MURDER-SUICIDES			
Committed or attempted suicide	12 (21%)	14 (48%)	35 (14%)
No Suicide	45 (79)	15 (52)	213 (86)
Totals may not = 100, due to rounding and missing values			

Partner Homicide in Massachusetts, 1991-1995: A Collaboration Between Advocates and Academics

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Project Description

“Partner Homicide in Massachusetts, 1991-1995” is a collaboration between Peace at Home (PAH), a human rights agency focused on violence against women, and the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH). Using multiple data sources, we are constructing a database of all homicides related to intimate partner violence in Massachusetts from 1991 to 1995. This study has two objectives: 1. to count accurately and characterize homicides related to partner violence in the state over the 5-year period, and 2. to contrast the number of partner homicides found by our study with the number reported by the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Report during the same time period.

Multiple data sources are used to identify and verify cases and to gather additional case information. Sources used for case identification and verification include news articles, correspondence with district attorney’s offices and advocacy agencies, Supplementary Homicide Reports, and discussions with police. Data sources used to gather information about the victims, offenders, and homicide circumstances include death certificates, news articles, the criminal justice information system, the registry of civil restraining orders, district attorney’s offices, and police officers.

How Did the Collaborative Project Come About?

Unlike many collaborative research studies, this project was initiated by advocates. Borrowing a strategy from her past work as a human rights activist, Stacey Kabat, director of Peace at Home, began to record the domestic violence homicides in Massachusetts. By documenting the lethality of battering relationships, she hoped to help policy-makers and the public understand the dire situation of battered women. Three years into the process of recording the homicides, Ms. Kabat sought the help of researchers at HSPH to help systematize, organize, and present the data. Since HSPH joined the effort, we have expanded the project to collect two additional years of data and access additional data sources to increase the amount of information available on each case.

Benefits of the Collaboration

It is very gratifying to work on a project that was initiated by the advocacy community. Although this project is not the first productive advocate-academic collaboration concerning domestic violence in Boston, it provides an additional opportunity for the advocacy and research communities to work together on a project of mutual interest. PAH is very well respected in the community and has the contacts and clout to use the report to advocate for policy changes that will make a difference for battered women in Massachusetts.

Both groups have much to gain from this project. PAH gets research expertise, the stamp of legitimacy of the Harvard name, and a completed report. Harvard gets access to PAH's data, connections, and political and substantive expertise. Because of its mutually beneficial nature, motivation has been very high on both sides, which has helped tremendously in overcoming obstacles, making cooperative decisions, and finding the time for collaborative work.

Problems with the Collaboration

On the whole, this collaboration has been very successful. Although we were asked to discuss “problems,” it would be more accurate to characterize the following as issues that emerged during the course of this particular collaboration that may provide insights for future efforts.

Initially, there were unexpected “culture clashes” between the research and advocacy worlds. For example, the majority of victims on Peace at Home's list were intimate partners, but they had also included some cases of homicide among other family members. Thus we were faced with the need to decide on a consistent case definition of “domestic” for the purpose of the project. This process was surprisingly painful. It is distinctly “research-like” thinking to rule cases in or out based on a study definition—although second nature to the researchers, this way of thinking was not familiar to PAH staff members. Their perspective was that each victim had died a horrible death at the hands of a family member, and excluding anyone from the list seemed to trivialize their death. Before we could come to an agreement about the case definition we would use, *both* parties had to come to understand the other's way of thinking about the cases and extensive discussion was needed to define our population of interest.

Another issue that emerged was a difference in expectations about how much time it takes to do research. Originally PAH staff thought that HSPH could produce a report in a few months. The question of project duration was further confused by the mutual decision early on to expand the study beyond the original parameters. Even with the project expansion, the expected time to completion was far greater than PAH had expected and was the cause of some frustration, as they were understandably anxious to release the report. Again, this topic required discussion and negotiation to resolve.

There were numerous nitty gritty issues that were also important to the success of the collaboration. For example, in constructing the database, we took care to choose software that is compatible with the computer systems at PAH so they will be able to use the final database without purchasing new software.

Lessons Learned

For any given project, it is obviously best to discuss and clarify as many issues as possible up front. For example, our initial meeting included an explicit agreement about what each party expected to get out of the collaboration. Inevitably, unanticipated issues will arise. It is important to pick your battles carefully. While methodological choices must meet the standards of good research, other decisions are not as critical. Flexibility by both sides is important. When areas of

mutual misunderstanding occur, it is important to devote sufficient time to discussion. Often these issues can bring up strong feelings, and many meetings may be required for resolution. A commitment to listening and patience with the process are crucial. Successful resolution of early problems helps build trust, so later issues are handled more easily.

I wish to give special thanks to my collaborators, Nancy Isaac, formerly with the Harvard School of Public Health and currently with Northeastern University School of Law, and Stacey Kabat of Peace at Home.

Methodological Challenges to Evaluating The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Law

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Contamination of Law Effects

To estimate the effects of public policies such as the Brady Law on violent crime, it common to use quasi-experimental designs that compare intervention groups with no-intervention groups. Although there are known threats to validity associated with these designs, such threats can often be evaluated, and in some instances controlled, with appropriate statistical procedures.

When the intervention being tested is a law, one validity threat that cannot easily be remedied by sophisticated analytic techniques is contamination, i.e., when likely comparison groups, who are not necessarily the target of the law, are nonetheless affected by it. In the case of the Brady Law, it may seem logical to compare violent crime trends in states in which gun dealers were forced to begin conducting background checks of potential handgun purchasers (referred to hereafter as “Brady-affected”) with states that had been screening handgun purchasers prior to Brady. But there are reasons to believe that states that were not targeted by the new screening provisions of the law could nevertheless benefit as much as, or possibly even more than, states that were the target of these provisions.

Why? Because violent crime is highly related to population density and tends to be much higher in urban than in rural areas. Because handgun availability tends to increase the lethality of violent altercations, the effects of handgun regulations (or lack thereof) are likely to be most salient within urban areas. This is obviously an important reason large cities and more urban states tend to enact stricter gun control laws. Most of the Brady-affected states are more rural than the states that required background checks of handgun purchasers prior to Brady. Thirty-two percent of the population of Brady-affected states reside in rural areas compared with 18% in the other states.

Gun density is likely to be higher within Brady-affected states because these states are more rural and gun ownership is twice as high in rural areas than in the largest cities (Cook and Ludwig, 1996). Brady-affects states are also in regions of the U.S. in which gun ownership is highest and, in some states guns are rather ubiquitous. The number of licensed gun dealers per-capita in Brady affected states is 81% higher than in other states (79 vs. 44 FFLs per 100,000 population). The higher density of firearms in Brady-affected states should make it easier than in other states for proscribed handgun purchasers to obtain handguns through non-regulated secondary sales, gun shows, or theft. Supporting this claim is the fact that street prices for guns are significantly higher in states with the greatest restrictions on gun purchases (Cook, Molliconi, & Cole, 1995).

By requiring background checks in all states, dramatically reducing kitchen-table gun dealers, and enhancing the regulation of gun dealers nation-wide, the Brady Law (along with a more concerted effort by ATF to combat illegal gun sales that began close in time to the

implementation of Brady), should curtail both intra- and interstate gun trafficking. It is such trafficking that has plagued states with high-population-density by weakening the effectiveness of their state and local gun control laws. Thus, these more urban states that were not the target of Brady’s handgun screening provisions stand to gain from reductions in illegal gun transactions.

Problems with Other Comparisons: Inequivalence of Gun and Nongun Homicides

Theoretically, gun-crime vs. non-gun-crime comparisons are appealing strategies for isolating gun policy effects and examining potential weapon substitution effects. But these comparisons may need to be narrowed in order to avoid an apples vs. oranges problem. Non-gun homicides differ somewhat from gun homicides in terms of ages of offenders and victims, victim-offender relationships, and circumstances surrounding the homicide.

Demographic Differences

Compared with non-firearm homicides (NFHs), firearm homicides (FH) offenders and victims are more likely to be male (84% vs. 66%), Black (54% vs. 42%), and young (55% vs. 30% are 15-29 years of age) (Table 1). The age distribution of NFH victims is much flatter than that of FH victims. The primary difference in the offender age distributions of FHs and NFHs is that FH offenders are almost twice as likely to be in their teens and NFH offenders are more likely to be in their thirties.

Table 1. Summary of Differences Between Firearm and Non-Firearm Homicides (FBI, UCR-SHR 1994)

	Firearm Homicides	Non-Firearm Homicides
Male Offender	93%	83%
Male Victim	84%	66%
Black Offender	57%	48%
Black Victim	54%	42%
Offender Med. Age	24 yrs	28 yrs
Offender Age 15-19	26%	13%
Victim Med. Age	27 yrs	33 yrs
Victim Age 15-29	55%	30%

Differences in Type of Homicides

NFHs are twice as likely as FHs to involve intimate partners or family members (24% vs. 12%) and somewhat less likely to have the victim-offender relationship be unknown*** (Table 2). FHs and NFHs are similar in that about 4 of 10 for which the circumstances are known are related to “arguments.” But FHs are twice as likely as NFHs (36% vs. 15%) to involve either robberies, gang feuds, or involvement in illegal enterprises (e.g., drugs, gambling, prostitution). Nearly all homicides involving gangs and/or illegal enterprises are committed with firearms.

Table 2. Summary of Differences Between Firearm and Non-Firearm Homicides (FBI, UCR-SHR 1994)

	Firearm Homicides	Non-Firearm Homicides
Intimate Partner/ Family Members	12%	24%
Stranger or Unknown Relation	55%	42%
Robbery	11%	7%
Drugs or Gang Related	15%	4%

Differences in Trends

Because of the differences outline above, it is not surprising that homicide trends have varied by weapon type. Since the mid 1980s, age-adjusted rates of FHs and NFHs have followed two distinct patterns in the United States. Age-adjusted FH rates rapidly declined from 1980 to 1983 and then rose sharply from 1985 to 1993. In contrast, age-adjusted NFH rates have been on a downward trend since the early 1980's. (Figure 1). There is actually a slight negative correlation ($r=-.37$, $p=.11$) between age-adjusted rates of FHs and NFHs within the U.S. from 1975 through 1994. This negative correlation ($r=-.59$, $p=.07$) is much stronger for the period 1985-1994. But looking a correlation coefficient can obscures the somewhat more complex temporal relationship between FHs and NFHs. The year-to-year change, i.e., difference between the age-adjusted homicide rate in a given year and that of the previous year ($Y_t - Y_{t-1}$), for FHs and NFHs were *positively* correlated ($r=.45$, $p=.05$) during 1975-1994.

*** Usually, the relationship is unknown in homicide cases because the police were unable to make an arrest. Because crimes involving strangers are more difficult to solve, homicides which do not lead to an arrest are probably more likely than other homicides to involve strangers.

Confounding Interventions

One can statistically control for any pre-law differences in trends. However, because gun and nongun homicides differ in the ways just described, interventions targeting certain types of crime (e.g., gang-related, drug-related, domestic violence) that occur near in time to the gun law could make it harder to attribute any observed differences in weapon-specific changes solely to gun policies.

Identifying confounding interventions is a common problem in the evaluation of gun policies such as the Brady Law. Deciding which policies to account for in the analysis is not clear-cut. Just determining which policies were implemented in a state at what time is no small task. This is even more difficult at the local level, and it is probably at the city- or even the neighborhood-level that most crime-fighting interventions occur. These local initiatives are often the result of changes in police practices and neighborhood revitalization rather than legislation, and therefore, can be difficult to track. Interactions between policies could also be important, however, testing interactions introduces its own complexities.

Specifying Law Effects

Estimating the appropriate relationship between policy implementation and full policy effect can also be problematic. Is the effect assumed to be immediate or delayed, a yes/no step function, linear or logarithmic over time? There are reasons to believe that the full effect of the Brady Law may not have been realized immediately upon its implementation. First, there was great room for improvement in the systems for searching criminal records in Brady-affected states when the law went into affect, but progress has been made on that front. Second, many people who were proscribed from legally possessing a handgun when Brady was implemented, already had access to one or more handguns through other means. Over time, these individuals may be less able to replace those guns through due to the provisions and enforcement of the Brady Law, in addition to other gun regulations. If there was a surplus of guns available in illicit markets when Brady was implemented, it may take some time before the law, (in conjunction with other efforts targeting illegal gun markets) is able to reduce the supply, and ultimately the “consumption” of handguns by juveniles and convicted felons. Thus, it may be several years before the full effects of the law are realized, but estimating the appropriate function for assessing the law’s effects is no easy task.

Suggested Direction for Evaluating Brady

Given the difficulties mentioned above, we should consider more targeted studies as alternatives to attempts to estimate overall effects on violent crime. For example, one could examine changes in time lags from retail sale-to-crime using tracing data because the waiting period is intended, in part, to prevent impulsive crimes, and because the law should primarily affect new guns. Increasing lags between dealer sales and crime involvement would suggest that greater controls over handgun sales due, in part, to Brady have reduced the availability of new handguns to high-risk groups. Using survey data from state prisoners, one could also look for changes in the number of persons convicted of committing violent crimes that had a previous felony conviction as some evidence that the background checks are having a preventive effect.

These suggestions, of course, have their own limitations. Tracing data is generally unrepresentative of all guns used in crime. Reductions in crimes committed by convicted felons could be due to increasing prison sentences and parole policies. It may be that these evaluation alternatives are no better than the traditional quasi-experimental approach using regression in attempt to control for confounders. As scientists we be honest about our ability to accurately answer certain questions. Because the effects of Brady on violent crime are not expected to be large, immediate, or highly targeted, I suspect that any “state-of-the-art” evaluation of the Brady Law will still leave objective scientists quite uncertain about the effects of the law on violent crime.

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Evaluating the Brady Act and Increasing The Utility of BATF Tracing Data

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Abstract

Pooled cross-sections analyses provide a model for evaluating a particular intervention, one that reduces some of the serious shortcomings of univariate interrupted time series case studies. Annual county-level data on crime and crime-determinants are available for over 3,000 U.S. counties. Dependent variables would include rates of total homicide, gun homicide, and nongun homicide, as well as total, gun and nongun robbery and aggravated assault, and total rape. The main independent variable of interest would be a dummy variable identifying county-years that are located in “Brady states,” i.e. those that had new background checks as a result of the Brady Act, in 1994 or later. To check to see if the law’s effect is being confused with other unmeasured variables changing around 1994, analyses should also be performed on property crime rates.

Comparison of data from the 1991 Survey of State Prison Inmates and a post-1994 survey could also provide information on whether fewer criminals acquired guns from licensed dealers after Brady.

BATF trace data could be used in future, though not in connection with a Brady evaluation, to monitor trends in the share of crime guns that were purchased by their criminal users from a retail dealer. This could be done by getting law enforcement agencies requesting gun traces to note the name of any criminal suspect found in possession of the firearm, and looking for name-age-sex-race matches with the gun’s previous retail purchasers, as indicated in ATF Form 4473 records.

Introduction

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (hereafter, the Brady Act), which became effective on February 28, 1994, is the most significant piece of federal firearms control legislation passed since the Gun Control Act of 1968. The Brady Act, during its first four and a half years, imposes a waiting period of five business days before a handgun may be purchased from a licensed dealer, and requires gun dealers to check with law enforcement authorities to see if the prospective buyer was disqualified under federal law from buying a gun, especially whether they had been convicted of a crime. After November 29, 1998, the waiting period requirement is dropped and the law’s central gun control mechanism becomes an instant background check on persons seeking to purchase guns of any kind, not just handguns, from licensed gun dealers (U.S. Congressional Research Service 1994). By way of full disclosure, I should note that this is basically the primary gun control measure I endorsed in my 1991 book, Point Blank (Kleck 1991, pp. 432-440). The Brady Act exempts those 24 states that already had their own gun purchase background checks in place before 1994, and thus introduced new background checks into the remaining 26 states, which included about 39% of the U.S. population.

The main limitations of Brady are twofold. First, it only restricts gun acquisitions through licensed gun dealers. The best available evidence indicates that about 73% of gun acquisitions by felons are made via routes other than purchases from retail outlets, such as theft or purchases from friends and relatives (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 1993, p. 19). Second, with respect to the 27% of criminals who, pre-Brady, acquired guns from retail dealers, an unknown but presumably nonnegligible share could also obtain guns from nondealer sources. The potential for success of any background check limited to dealer purchases depends heavily on how large this share is.

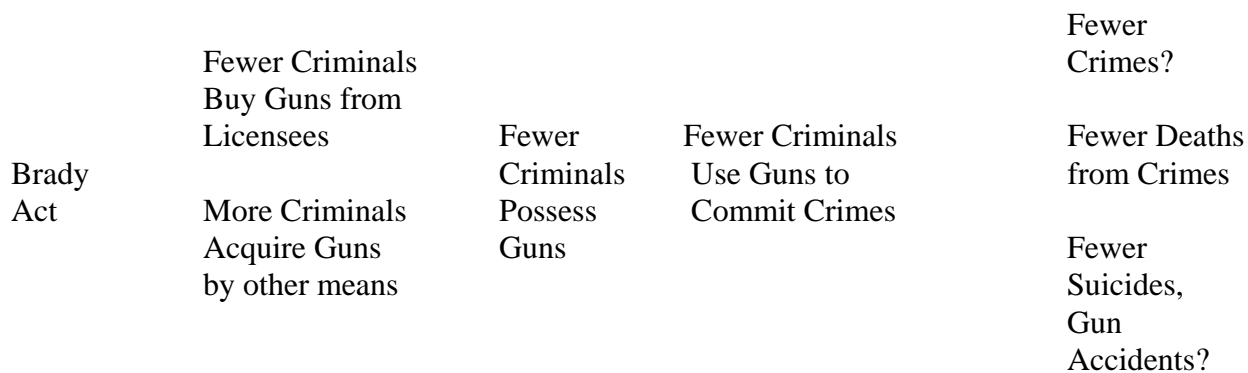
One purpose of this paper is to outline some ways to evaluate the Brady Act's impact on violence. Given the location of these meetings, and who our hosts are, I also use this opportunity to outline how gun tracing activities of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) could have been used in an evaluation, had tracing data been gathered differently. The point is not to cry over spilt milk, but to suggest how improvements in these data might still be useful in evaluating laws not yet passed, as well as enlightening us with respect to patterns of criminal acquisition and use of guns.

How the Brady Act Is Intended to Work

According to proponents, the purpose of the Brady Act is to reduce violence, and more specifically, to reduce gun violence. This presumably implies that in any given violence category, e.g. homicide, there should be a reduction in both total violence and gun violence. Few would regard it as a success if the law produced 500 fewer gun homicides but 500 more nongun (e.g. knife) homicides as a result of weapon substitution. Proponents stress that benefits are most likely to be evident in the homicide category, since many gun control advocates will concede that gun laws may not reduce the frequency of crime, but can reduce the lethality of crimes, reducing the share of violent crimes that result in death, thereby reducing the homicide rate (Cook 1991). Further, given that both fatal gun accidents and suicides disproportionately involve persons with criminal records (Kleck 1991, Chapters 6 and 7), it also possible, though given less emphasis by proponents, that the Brady Act could reduce these kinds of deaths as well.

Figure 1 illustrates the most straightforward way in which the Brady Act could achieve these effects. By requiring gun dealers to seek a background check on prospective gun buyers, a mechanism is provided by which the dealers can know whether the prospective buyer is legally forbidden from purchasing a gun under previously existing gun law. The record check would at minimum scan computerized criminal history files and can also make use of records, of varying degrees of completeness, concerning other categories of persons prohibited from acquiring guns.

Figure 1. How the Brady Act is Intended to Reduce Violence



In practice, however, few permanent denials, as distinct from temporary “administrative” denials due to delays in accessing records, are for any reason other than a criminal conviction. During the first year of Brady’s operation, about 49% of denials were for a criminal record, 39% for administrative reasons, 8% for traffic offenses (presumably erroneous denials), and less than 5% were for other ineligible categories (fugitives from justice, “mental defectives,” mental patients, dishonorably discharged veterans, persons who have renounced their U.S. citizenship, and illegal immigrants) or due to restraining orders (U.S. General Accounting Office 1996). Excluding the presumably temporary administrative denials and erroneous traffic offense denials, 91% of denials were for criminal convictions.

Thus, to the extent that Brady will be effective, it should work largely because it denies some convicted criminals access to guns through licensed gun dealers. In the law’s first year of operation, there were an average of about 3,725 total denials for all reasons per month in Brady states, with about 1,814 of these due to criminal records, implying about 22,000 denials for criminal record per year. The estimated share of background checks resulting in some kind of denial was about 4.3%, and the denial rate based on a criminal record was about half that (U.S. General Accounting Office 1996; see also U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997).

Critics have often noted that the Brady Act’s impact on the extent to which criminals are denied guns can be overstated if one assumes that all those denied a dealer purchase fail to get a gun from any source. It can, however, also be overestimated if one assumes that, when criminals are completely prevented from getting a gun from any source, that they are left without a gun. Many, probably most, criminals (and, for that matter, noncriminals) who seek to buy a gun already have at least one other gun. This is implied by two facts. First, about 77% of gun-owning households in the U.S. own more than one gun, with an average of at least four guns per gun-owning household (Kleck 1991, pp. 54-55). Second, among felons who stole guns and kept one for themselves in Wright and Rossi’s (1986) ten-state prison sample, only 37% reported keeping the gun because they did not have one at the time, suggesting that most gun thieves already had at least one gun at the time of their theft. Criminals, like other people, often purchase guns because they want yet another one, not because they do not have one. Thus, blocking the most recent attempt to get a gun does not necessarily imply a criminal without a gun.

In sum, among criminals who (1) tried to buy a gun from a dealer, (2) were denied a gun because of a background check revealing a criminal conviction, and (3) did not already have a gun, (4) some unknown fraction would fail to circumvent the dealer controls by acquiring a gun from a nondealer source, hopefully resulting in a level of gun possession among convicted criminals that is lower than it would have been without the Brady Act. This “unknown fraction” will be large only to the extent that prospective criminal gun buyers do not know anyone with a gun who is willing to sell them one despite their criminal record, and to the extent that the actual price (including sale price and the cost of search time) exceeds that which the criminal is willing and able to pay.

Reductions in criminal gun possession, in turn, will have a violence-reducing effect only to the extent that gun possession among criminals has a net positive effect on violence rates. No research has separately assessed the impact of criminal gun possession levels on violence rates, and the best available research that lumps criminal and noncriminal gun possession together indicates no net effect of gun levels on violence rates (Kleck 1991; 1997; Kleck and Patterson 1993). Nevertheless, mixed evidence still holds open the possibility that criminal gun possession levels do have the net violence-increasing effects that commonsense leads many to expect (Kleck 1991; 1997; Cook 1991). For example, evidence on individual incidents of violence indicates that offender gun possession has a net positive effect on the likelihood that the incident will result in the victim’s death (Kleck and McElrath 1991; Kleck 1997; Cook 1991).

Case-control research on households in high-crime areas, where a large share of the population has a criminal record, indicates that households with guns are more likely to experience a homicide victimization (Kellermann et al. 1993). The associations found in case-control studies may indicate only that the same factors that put people at higher risk of violent victimization (e.g. drug dealing or membership in a street gang) also motivate many people to acquire guns for self-protection, or they may indicate a genuine causal effect that is, however, limited to households with an unusually high potential for violence, in contrast with net victimization-reducing effects of gun ownership among other gun-owning households (Kleck and Hogan 1997).

Other evidence indirectly suggests that criminal gun levels increase some violence rates, because it directly indicates some violence-reducing effects of state background check laws similar to the Brady Act. Mixed evidence indicates that gun laws requiring a license to own guns or a permit to purchase them, both of which entail background checks for criminal convictions, may reduce both homicide and suicide rates, though they show no apparent effect on rates of aggravated assault, robbery, rape, or gun accidents (Kleck and Patterson 1993, p. 274). This specific mix of findings supports the view that gun laws with background checks do not reduce the frequency of violent acts but may reduce the share that are fatal. Since these laws target only high-risk prospective gun buyers, primarily convicted criminals, the most likely mechanism by which these effects are achieved, assuming they are genuine, would seem to be a reduction in gun possession among criminals. It should be stressed, however, that evidence for an impact of background check laws is by no means consistent.

Evaluation Strategies

How might the hypothesized effects of the Brady Act be empirically detected? It may be worth addressing first the evidence that has most frequently been cited as bearing on this issue. President Clinton, Attorney General Reno, and many lesser proponents of Brady have cited estimates of the number of denials as measures of the law's effectiveness (Wall Street Journal 9-17-96, p. A18). This is at best misleading, since it is unclear whether a large number of denials is an indicator of success. Certainly, an effective Brady Act should lead to a large share (hopefully close to 100%) of convicted criminals who seek to buy guns from dealers being denied. A large number of denials, however, could be seen as a failure of the law's deterrence function, since it necessarily implies that large numbers of criminals attempted to get guns from dealers despite the law. Apparently the word has not yet gotten out to the entire criminal population that they cannot buy guns from dealers. Indeed, a completely effective Brady law might well be accompanied by no denials, if criminals were completely deterred from even attempting to get guns from dealers. And, as noted previously, the fact that a criminal was blocked from buying a gun from a dealer does not imply that he was prevented from acquiring a gun from any source.

Proponents might consider the double-edged nature of their use of denial figures as indicators of effectiveness. These figures almost certainly will decline as awareness of the law's provisions reaches a larger share of the criminal population and fewer criminals try to get guns from dealers. Indeed, data already indicated decreasing denials by the second year after the law became effective (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997, p. 1). Unless proponents want to have to explain why these declines do not indicate declining effectiveness of the background checks, they would do well to concede that the volume of denials indicates nothing about the law's effectiveness.

Macro-level Analysis of Violence Data

A well-established methodology has already been applied, with considerable sophistication, to evaluation of gun laws - pooled cross-sections/time-series analysis (PCTS). With this approach, analysts take advantage of data on variation in crime/violence rates both across space and time. Thus, Marvell and Moody (1995) studied annual crime rates over 24 years, for each of the states, to evaluate the impact of laws providing longer prison terms for felonies committed with guns. This type of law, favored by the National Rifle Association (NRA) as an alternative to gun control, was found to be ineffective. On the other hand, when Lott and Mustard (1997) evaluated another approach favored by the NRA, laws making it easier for noncriminals to get permits to carry guns in public places, they concluded that the laws reduced crime, presumably because criminals perceived greater risk from victimizing potentially armed victims. While I have my doubts about Lott and Mustard's claims of huge deterrent effects, I accept their empirical observation that passage of the laws was generally followed, for whatever reasons, by crime drops.

Using univariate interrupted time series designs (ITSD) applied to fewer than ten counties, McDowall and his colleagues (McDowall et al. 1992; 1995a) had drawn precisely opposite conclusions with respect to both types of laws. They studied sentence enhancement laws in just three states, while Marvell and Moody studied them in all 49 states where they existed. Likewise, McDowall and his colleagues (1995a) studied nondiscretionary gun carry laws in just

seven counties (grouped into five areas), without offering any rationale why they analyzed only these few areas, while Lott and Mustard analyzed all 3,000+ counties for which requisite data were available. In addition, Lott and Mustard measured and statistically controlled for many other potential determinants of crime/violence rates. For these reasons, I place greater weight on the Marvell-Moody and Lott-Mustard findings than I do on the McDowall et al. findings. It is clear that PCTS and ITSD approaches have yielded diametrically opposed findings with respect to the effectiveness of these two sorts of gun controls. Critical flaws in the univariate ITSD approach have been identified, without effective rebuttal from ITSD proponents (Kleck et al. 1993; Polsby 1995a; 1995b; Britt et al. 1996a; McDowall et al. 1995b; 1996b; Britt et al. 1996b). Therefore, the PCTS approach should be preferred.

A PCTS evaluation of the Brady Act could use annual, county-level crime and violence data covering virtually all 3,141 U.S. counties and county-equivalents, over the period from 1977 to 1995 (and later, as more recent data become available), available on public use computer tapes. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) provides tapes with county-level FBI crime data, while Mortality Detail File tapes from the National Center for Health Statistics can provide county-level counts of total homicide, gun homicide, total suicide, gun suicide, and fatal gun accidents. The FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports data on individual homicide incidents can even allow separate estimates of handgun homicide rates and longgun homicide rates, since the data make a gun type distinction not consistently maintained in mortality data.

The unit of analysis would be the county-year, with crime/violence rates varying across both counties and years. Lott and Mustard (1997) have also identified sources of annual county-level data on some other potential determinants of violence rates, such as age, sex, and race distribution of the population, arrest rates, per capita income, and welfare expenditures. The main test of the Brady Act's impact on violence rates would be whether counties located in Brady states (i.e. those that did not already have their own pre-Brady background checks) should have, other things being equal, lower violence rates in 1994 and later years than either counties in nonBrady states or Brady counties prior to 1994. In a regression analysis, there would be a dummy variable indicating whether a county-year was in a Brady state and in 1994 or later. If the Brady Act was effective, the coefficient for this dummy variable should be negative and statistically significant.

To check whether the law's effect was being confused with other unmeasured variables changing around 1994, analyses should also be performed on property crime rates. Since limits on guns should have little impact on crimes not involving guns, if the law is effective it should show impacts on gun crime rates but no impact on either nongun violent crime rates or on property crime rates.

The chief shortcoming of the PCTS approach is that, although it clearly does better than the univariate ITSD approach in explicitly controlling for confounding factors, i.e. other factors that may have changed about the same time as the Brady Act went into effect and that may also have influenced violence rates, it still does not do a very good job. County-level data are not available, between diennial Census years, for more than a handful of potentially confounding factors, and thus the best PCTS analyst has only limited ability to rule out alternative explanations of the violence patterns.

This problem can be ameliorated to a modest degree by more narrowly specifying where the intervention's impact should be observed. Obviously gun homicide should be reduced if the law were effective, while nongun homicides should either be unaffected or increase somewhat as a result of weapon substitution, with similar patterns possible for aggravated assault, robbery, and suicide. Some further refinements are possible as a result of the two-phase aspect of Brady. During the February 1994-November 1998 period, the background checks apply only to handguns, while after November 1998, they apply to all guns. Thus, any impact should be evident only with handgun homicide during 1994-1998, and not with longgun (rifles and shotguns) homicide, while effects should be evident with violence involving any type of gun after 1998. Presumably there are a narrower set of confounding factors that could produce these specific patterns than could produce any old violence reduction. Therefore, if these patterns were observed it would increase our confidence that the Brady Act was responsible for them.

Unfortunately, even these refinements will not rule out some alternative explanations of violence reductions. Homicide began to decline in the U.S. in 1991, and these declines were proportionally greater in the gun homicide category than in the nongun category. Yet, since they began years before the Brady Act's effective date in 1994, they could not be attributed to that law. Further, these declines disproportionately occurred among homicides linked with street gang combat, drug dealing and the robbery that so commonly is linked with drug market violence (U.S. FBI 1996, pp. 21, 58). About 90% of homicides committed in connection with drug dealing and street gang activity are committed with guns (p. 20), implying that changes in the frequency of such homicides will be observed almost exclusively in the gun homicide category, regardless of the causes of the changes.

Thus, even if the Brady Act had no impact at all on homicide, if any nonBrady factors produced declines in these specific types of homicide, one would expect bigger drops in gun homicide than in nongun homicide. Indeed, since handguns claim an even larger share of these homicides than of other homicides (U.S. FBI 1996, p. 20), one would even more specifically expect larger drops in handgun homicides than in homicides with other types of guns. In sum, even the more refined focus on gun homicides or handgun homicides will not rule out alternative explanations that revolve around nonBrady factors reducing drug-related and gang-related violence (e.g., more effective and widely available drug treatment, community policing, a decline in drug market-destabilizing Drug War activity, or whatever else one might favor). A PCTS analysis can therefore provide relevant but far from decisive information on the impact of the Brady law.

Individual-level Survey Data From Criminals

There may also be some fairly direct individual-level evidence available on the way that criminals acquire guns, information that is, or should eventually be, available for periods both before and after February 1994. The Survey of State Prison Inmates (SSPI) was conducted in 1991, and asked a large nationally representative sample of prisoners whether they had owned guns before being sent to prison, and where and how they obtained their guns. The questions distinguished between such licensed sources as "gun shop or store" and "pawnshop" from unlicensed sources such as a crime victim, friend, family member, fence, black market source, or drug dealer. When and if similar data become available from a post-Brady survey, one could separately analyze recently incarcerated inmates who owned guns prior to imprisonment, and examine their sources of guns.

If the Brady law worked as intended, the share of guns acquired from retail sources likely to be licensed should have declined. On the other hand, if no such decline were observed, it would make it less plausible that the law was responsible for any observed declines in gun violence, and certainly undercut the idea that it worked by discouraging retail gun acquisitions. Better still, an improved SSPI could even ask those felons who were denied guns as a result of Brady background check how they responded. Did they already have a gun, making the denial irrelevant to their armed status? If not, did they simply do without a gun, or did they get one from an unlicensed source? If the latter, what kind of source did they get it from?

How Better BATF Gun Tracing Data Could Have Helped

BATF performs over 90,000 “gun traces” a year. Many gun traces fit the following pattern. A police department recovers a gun connected with a crime, and asks BATF to trace it, providing them with the gun’s manufacturer, model, serial number, and other identifying characteristics. BATF contacts the manufacturer (or consults their own archive of records from out-of-business manufacturers) to discover to whom the gun was sold. If it was sold to a wholesaler or distributor, this source is contacted to determine the licensed dealer to whom the gun was sold. If the trace is successful, BATF staff finally reach (sometimes after going through additional intermediate gun dealers) the retail dealer who sold the gun to its first retail buyer. BATF then asks the dealer to identify the individual purchaser, based on the Form 4473 Firearms Transaction Record that must accompany every transfer of a gun from a licensee to a nonlicensee. These forms are kept by the licensed dealers, but are available for inspection by the BATF. Normally, this is as far as the gun can be traced. BATF cannot trace guns first sold at retail before the Gun Control Act of 1968 went into effect, or guns lacking a serial number.

At least two factors limit the utility of trace data for criminological purposes such as evaluating the Brady Act’s impact. First, the trace data say nothing about the criminals who used the traced guns, and virtually nothing about the crimes in which the guns were used. Second, the guns traced are not representative of crime guns in general.

In 1994 there were about 543,000 violent gun crimes known to the police (U.S. FBI 1995, pp. 18, 29, 32), and about 9,830 BATF traces of guns linked with violent crimes (U.S. BATF 1995), implying that less than 2% of violent gun crimes (homicides, assaults, and robberies) known to the police, and less than 1% of all violent gun crimes (reported to police or unreported), result in a trace. Further, this small sample of crime guns traced is not a random sample, nor is there anything in the method of “sampling” that can insure that it is representative of either all crime guns or of those recovered by police (U.S. Congressional Research Service 1992). Instead, the composition of the sample is determined by law enforcement agencies’ preferences as to which guns they choose to have traced. Further, 57% of traces in 1994 were initiated by BATF itself (U.S. BATF 1995), which means that the composition of this sample is largely determined by the enforcement emphases and priorities of a single law enforcement agency.

In this light, it is not surprising that samples of traced guns can be radically different from the entire population of crime guns recovered by police. For example, direct comparison of trace samples with local populations of crime guns recovered by police indicate that the trace samples overrepresented “assault weapons” by a factor of at least four. While these weapons accounted

for, on average, only about 2% of all guns recovered by police, they claimed over 8% of those traced by BATF (Kleck 1991, Chapter 3; Kleck 1997, Chapter 4; U.S. Congressional Research Service 1992).

It is likely that priorities in seeking gun traces are influenced by whether the guns fall into categories subject to a high degree of news media publicity and political attention. Thus, changes over time, or differences across areas, in the character of traced guns may reflect shifts or differences in media attention and political focus rather than actual changes or differences in the types of guns being used in crime.

The forms that law enforcement agencies and BATF currently use to initiate traces include information largely confined to the gun itself. A single item asks for the type of crime to which the gun was connected. About 84% of traces are linked with weapons and drug offenses, possessory offenses in which the identity of a criminal would ordinarily be known to the police at the time the gun was recovered (U.S. BATF 1995). Either the gun was recovered at the time a suspect was arrested or it was seized as a result of a search of a premise linked with a known suspect. And certainly in some of the remaining 16% of the trace cases, a suspect had already been identified by the time the trace was requested.

Therefore, police would ordinarily be able to provide identifying information about the suspect linked with most crime guns on which traces are requested. BATF, however, does not solicit this information. This information could be obtained through nothing more complicated than modifying the trace request form to include a few additional items. Immediately after the place where requestors identify the crime type to which the gun is linked, a question could appear: "At this time, has a suspect in this crime been identified?" If Yes: Suspect's Name Suspect's age at last birthday, Suspect's Sex, and Suspect's Race.

Providing the information would probably entail no more than a few additional minutes of time for the trace requestor, an expenditure of time that would be a very infrequent one for most law enforcement agencies, given the infrequency of non-BATF-initiated trace requests. (Since only about 43% of traces are requested by law enforcement agencies besides BATF, this implies about 38,700 such traces per year, assuming 90,000 total traces [U.S. BATF 1995]. With over 16,000 law enforcement agencies [U.S. FBI 1995, p. 1], this implies only about two trace requests a year per agency.)

What could be done with such information? Most significantly for present purposes, it could help determine whether the criminal user of a crime gun had acquired the gun new from a licensed dealer. All sales by licensed dealers to nonlicensees are supposed to be recorded on a Form 4473, which records the transferee's name, race, date of birth, and residence address, as well as height and weight. The form also uniquely identifies the gun purchased, by recording manufacturer, model, serial number, and other identifying characteristics. A trace could therefore be expanded to include just one additional step beyond those already taken now: seeing if the suspect and the gun identified on the proposed trace request form matches up with the person and gun described on the Form 4473 recording the dealer transfer of that gun. When there is such a match, it proves that the criminal user of the gun obtained the gun from a licensed dealer. Further, the information obtained in this way also indicates how long in the past the gun was obtained, and even indicates whether the gun crossed state lines in the interim.

The major limit on the utility of such research would be that it would rarely be possible to match the traced gun with a buyer who was not the first retail purchaser, since traces usually “lose the trail” once the gun is in the hands of this purchaser. Although any later transfers involving dealers would usually be recorded on a Form 4473 somewhere, there would be no practical way to locate that form, which would typically be in the possession of an unknown licensee. Thus, matching to a Form 4473 would be practical mainly in cases where the eventual criminal user of a gun had purchased the gun when it was new. Had such data been available before as well as after 1994, it would have been possible to test the hypothesis that the share of crime guns purchased new from a licensed dealer decreased after the Brady Act mandated background checks.

The other major problem with the trace data is that they do not cover representative samples of crime guns, but rather samples whose composition is determined largely by law enforcement agency priorities. Were there any serious interest in learning what crime guns in general are like, supplementary samples of guns, in addition to those currently traced, could be selected for tracing, using standard probability sampling procedures.

While it might be prohibitively expensive to obtain a nationally representative sample of guns recovered by police, it might be practical to get a representative sample covering the nation’s largest cities. BATF has about 24 Criminal Enforcement Field Divisions, each located in one of the nation’s largest cities (for a listing, see U.S. BATF 1995, pp. 3-4). If each of these divisions were to obtain probability samples of guns from the police departments covering their home city and one other nearby big city, thereby including the nation’s 48 largest cities, the resulting samples would cover cities with about 40% of the nation’s violent crimes (U.S. FBI 1995, p. 196), and presumably a similarly large share of its crime guns.

Samples could be obtained through systematic sampling of records in each police department’s unit handling recovered property. All guns linked with homicides and rapes could be sampled, along with, say, every fifth gun linked with a robbery or aggravated assault, and every 20th gun linked with the more numerous weapons and drug offenses. The usual traces would then be conducted on the guns sampled from these cities. Cooperation from local agencies should be good, since it provides police with information about their local gun situation at the cost of little more than the time of a property room employee showing BATF personnel how to locate their gun records.

While it is unlikely that an effort of this scale could be carried out frequently, it would seem worthwhile doing it at least once, so that we would finally have some information on a reasonably representative sample of crime guns, or at least big city crime guns recovered by the police. We could, with considerably more confidence than we have now, assess whether there is any truth to the claims that criminals in some sense prefer small, cheap “Saturday Night Specials,” semiautomatic pistols over revolvers, military-style “assault weapons,” large caliber guns, small caliber guns, or particular models of guns produced by particular manufacturers.

We could also estimate, for as many as 48 different cities, subject to differing levels of state and local controls, the share of crime guns that came from out-of-state. This would permit a test of the oft-stated claim that criminals evade stricter controls in their own states by acquiring guns from interstate gun runners or by otherwise obtaining out-of-state guns. And by insuring a more

representative sample, this effort, combined with matching of traced guns with Form 4473 information, would allow more meaningful assessment of the extent to which gun criminals get their guns from licensed dealers.

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Race, Class and Homicide: Looking Beyond Guns, Drugs, and Gangs

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Abstract

The proportion of U.S. homicides attributed to black males suggests a need for coordinated studies of urban homicide. Studies using race- and gender-specific homicide rates with race- and gender-specific measures of poverty and inequality are needed to assess the impact on homicide of racial separatism and the concentration of the poor in urban areas. The long-term overrepresentation of black males as homicide victims and offenders suggests this need to look beyond short-term changes in drug activity, the availability of guns, and the existence of gangs. Increased focus on racial and economic isolation should suggest programs that will reduce the number of black victims and offenders and thus U.S. homicide rates.

Race and Homicide

There is a great need for studies of the geographic distribution of urban homicide that go beyond a focus on guns, drugs, and gangs. This statement is not an attempt to tell others what to study. It is a call for increased focus on what is at least the third most salient aspect of homicide in the United States. Other than facts about the impact of gender and age on lethal violence, the most important facts about homicide in the United States are linked to race. Researchers looking at the distribution of homicide victims and offenders in specific cities should be, and to a certain extent are, working cooperatively as they examine the characteristics of census tracts with high rates of violence and homicide. (Blumstein, 1996) Such research is crucial for any assessment of the impact of racial and economic inequality on homicide rates in U.S. cities. The urgency of this issue becomes clearer as we look at data on race and crime in the United States.

However measured, homicide victimization is a plague for black males in central cities. The National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 39 percent of all 1995 homicide *victims* were black males. (Anderson *et al.*, 1997) In contrast, individuals who identify themselves as black males make up, at most, six or seven percent of the U.S. population. (Census Bureau, 1996) Data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), with data submitted from police agencies in only ten states, produces a figure for 1993 that is very close to the CDC figure. Forty-one percent of all homicide victims reported in the NIBRS program in 1993 were described as black males. (Chilton and Jarvis, 1995) Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR) for 1995 suggest that 40 percent of all 1995 homicide victims were black males. (Snyder, 1997)

Moving from victim to offender characteristics, a similar pattern emerges. Supplemental Homicide Reports for 1995, the National Incident-based Reporting System for 1993, and Uniform Crime Report arrest data for 1995 all suggest that black offenders are responsible for most homicides with black victims. The supplemental Homicide Reports for 1995 suggest that 48 percent of offenders in homicide cases are black males and that most homicides are intraracial. This figure was 51 percent for 1993 and 1994. (Snyder, 1997) Data from the not-yet-national, National Incident-based Reporting System for 1993 suggest a slightly higher

percentage at 56 percent. (Chilton and Jarvis, 1995) National Uniform Crime Report arrest data for 1995 suggest that 52 percent of those arrested for homicide are black males. (FBI, 1996)

Although these percentages are based on reports for 1993-1995, it is important to remember that black males have been over-represented in both the victimization figures and the offender figures for over 35 years. Figure 1 shows the percentage of homicide *victims* that have been identified as black males in the public health data (CDC) since 1960 and the percentage of *victims* that have been reported as black males in the Supplemental Homicide Reports since 1980. The CDC victim data indicate that the average percentage of victims of homicide reported as black males for the period 1960 to 1990 was about 39 percent. This figure was highest for 1969 at about 45 percent and lowest for 1984 at about 33 percent. For the period from 1990 to 1994 it was 40 percent. Averaging the Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) data for victims for 1980 to 1995 produces very similar figures. The lowest percentage of victims described as black males in the Supplemental Homicide Report data was about 33 percent (1984) and the highest was about 42 percent (1994). Sixteen years of SHR data suggests that the average percentage of homicide victims reported as black males was 38 percent but that this percentage increased from 1984 to 1994.

Figure 1. Percentages of Offenders, Victims, and Persons Arrested that are described as Black Males, 1960–1995 and 1980–1995

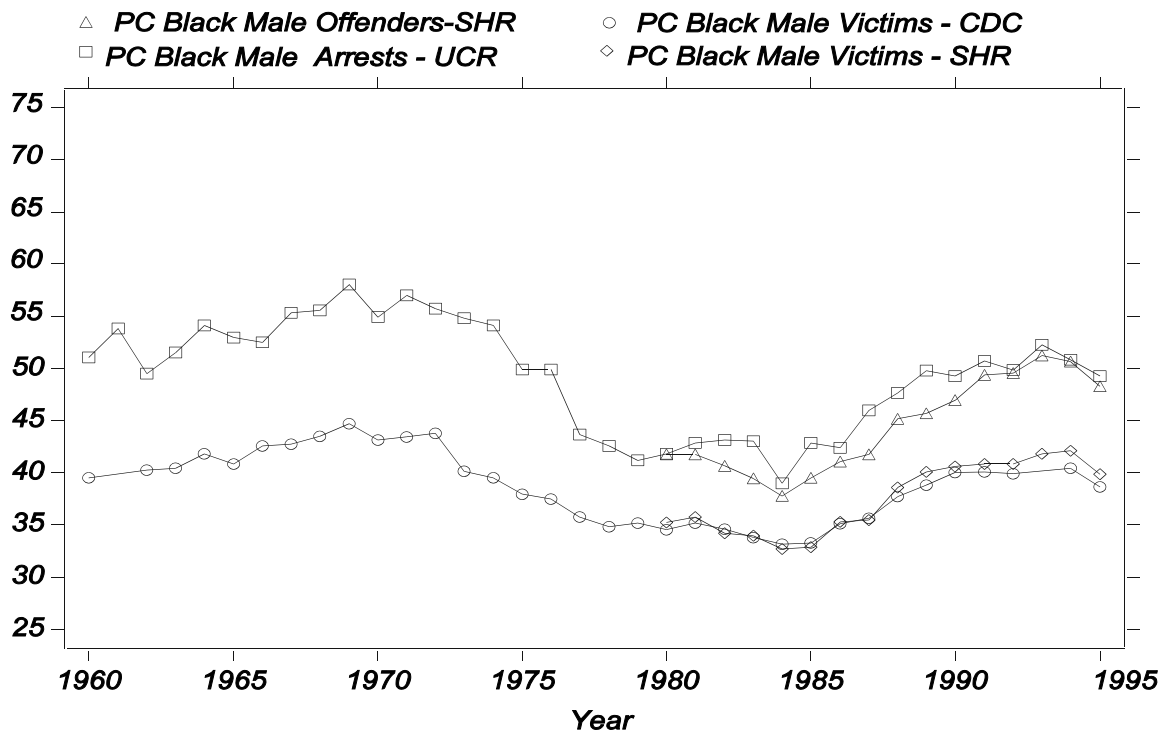


Figure 1 also shows UCR arrest counts for 1960-1995. They provide another indication of trends in offender characteristics and suggest that, on average, about 49 percent of those arrested for homicide were black males. This figure varied from about 39 percent in 1984 to about 58 percent in 1969. However, the percentage of those arrested for homicide described as black males was 49 percent or higher from 1990 to 1995. The Supplemental Homicide Report information about offenders suggests that, on average, about 44 percent of the people reported as homicide

offenders were described as black males. In the SHR program offender information can be provided—whether or not an arrest is made. The highest percentage of offenders described as black males in the SHR program was 51 percent (1993 and again in 1994). The lowest figure was 38 percent (1984). The percentage of offenders described in this data as black males was 49 percent or higher from 1991 through 1994. There is little doubt that black males are, and have for some years been, greatly over-represented as victims of homicide and greatly over-represented as homicide offenders.

Social Class

The traditional response to any discussion of this situation is the suggestion that these high homicide offending rates for black males are more a function of social class than race. In my view, this explanation is generally accurate. However, it is almost as traditional to suggest that we lack sufficient information on social class to claim empirical support for the social class explanation. One way to clarify this murky situation would be through coordinated studies of the geographic distribution of homicide in several U.S. cities. Homicide rates and data about other forms of violence are available for census tracts for a number of cities. This information could be used to test assertions and assumptions about the impact of persistent poverty and exclusion on homicide rates. By linking urban homicide data for census tracts to census data for the same tracts, it should be possible to produce a clearer picture of the impact of racial isolation and social conditions on homicide rates. Collaborative research efforts should also make it possible to link mapped homicide data to public health data and to public expenditures data.

The Chicago data set comes to mind immediately as one that could be used to study the geographic distribution of homicides across census tracts while examining the economic and social characteristics of the same tracts. This might be a particularly useful data set because much of it is already in the public domain. (Block and Block, 1994) It appears that similar if not identical studies could be done for Atlanta, Baltimore, Houston, Milwaukee, Miami, Saint Louis, and San Antonio. There may be comparable data sets for other cities. A set of coordinated and parallel analyses carried out in these cities alone would be a very useful step forward.

In such a coordinated approach, researchers working with data for specific cities would use the same variables, the same logic, and the same research procedures. Central to the effort proposed here would be the construction of race- and gender-specific homicide rates for census tracts for as many decennial censuses as possible—at least 1980 and 1990. It is equally important that these researchers create or capture and use the same set of race- and gender-specific measures of income, education, employment, occupation, family composition, and other measures of poverty and inequality for the same census tracts. Parker and McCall's (1997) city-level analysis of interracial and intraracial homicide provides an indication of the utility of race-specific data. Using race-specific independent variables for about 100 U.S. cities, they conclude that economic deprivation affects the intraracial homicide rates for whites and blacks.

One outcome of a coordinated, tract-level, multi-city effort could be a much better understanding of the factors associated with high and low homicide rates in central cities. Moreover, the results of such studies would very likely suggest long-term, structural strategies for homicide reduction that could be used to complement a variety of short-term solutions suggested every year. Widespread and sustained efforts to increase and improve employment opportunities, to expand

educational opportunities, but especially sustained and comprehensive efforts to reduce exclusion and segregation might be some of the strategies suggested by such studies.

Even the partial list of variables presented above suggests that social class is too broad a term to use in this context. Moreover, social class is the term used in the self-report studies wherein young people are asked about their parents' educations, occupations, and possibly incomes—and their own delinquency. A large number of these studies have been assembled and reexamined to suggest that there is no connection between social class and delinquency. In these studies, the young people are almost never asked about homicide and only rarely asked about serious violence. Nevertheless, some criminologists have relied on such studies to convince themselves and perhaps the general public that there is no empirical link between social class and crime.

Even a term such as “economic factors” is too vague to describe the ways in which vast differences in income and assets probably contribute to high homicide rates in US central cities. In my view, possibilities for understanding and reducing high black homicide rates in the US require that we move away from—or at least put much less emphasis on—self-report studies of delinquency and other individual level approaches. These approaches are simply not as useful as aggregate level approaches to the problem. For issue involving race, class and homicide, asking why the homicide rates are so high in specific areas of U.S. cities is probably more useful than asking why specific individuals commit violent offenses.

Expectations

When we raise such questions, we usually find that high homicide rates are closely linked to exclusion and segregation—economic, racial, and ethnic—but especially to the separation and isolation of large segments of the urban population based on income and assets. This separation is frequently based on race or ethnicity but it is increasingly linked to a combination of racial separatism and poverty. In the studies I am proposing, a concentration of the poor in areas with high homicide rates will probably be indicated by low median incomes, low educational attainment, higher proportions of low paying occupations, unemployment, and under employment. These indicators in turn will probably be closely related to housing conditions, living arrangements, and family composition.

In these same areas, we should find reduced public service facilities (parks, pools, libraries, recreation centers) and reduced expenditures for schools and possibly even for police services. In short, coordinated studies of the geographic distribution of homicide rates will probably show that areas with high homicide rates are areas with concentrations of poor individuals and poor families, regardless of race or ethnicity. Such studies will probably also provide indications of the impoverishment of the community itself.

The policy implications, the suggestions about what should be done to reduce homicide, of the most likely findings may be disturbing or at least daunting for many. However, recognition of the role of our economic and political institutions in the production of high homicide rates for black men could suggest more rational and more effective approaches to homicide reduction than our current attempt to punish our way out of the problem. Coordinated studies would permit criminologists to confront directly the staggeringly high black homicide rates by providing dependable empirical support for the assertion that these rates reflect the impact of exclusion,

isolation, and impoverishment. Coordinated studies for multiple census years that are designed to assess the impact of concentrated poverty on both black and white urban populations should suggest new ways to reduce homicide.

Nothing is gained by pretending that the rates of homicide victimization and homicide offending for black men do not exist or that the picture we have is the result of bad data. Nothing is gained by ignoring one of the most salient aspects of homicide in the United States or acting as if the problem is too sensitive or too complex for empirical analysis. Given the composition of our prison populations and the probability that most Americans are aware of the linkage of homicide and race—but less aware of the extent to which our economic and political institutions contribute to this problem—criminologists and public policy experts who ignore these rates probably exacerbate and perpetuate the current situation.

Just as nothing is gained by avoiding discussion of a set of very obvious trends, continued concentration on a set of closely related secondary problems may be equally unproductive. Fads and fashions occur in every aspect of social life—including crime, drug use, and law enforcement. The popularity of specific psychoactive substances, for example, changes over time. If a drug becomes fashionable at a time when particularly active law enforcement procedures are put in place, we can see the kinds of increases in homicide observed from 1985 to 1992. Such coalescence may occur at the same time as gang activity increases and more deadly firearms arrive on the market. This combination of gun availability, drug popularity, gang activity, and enforcement policy may produce limited, short-term increases in homicide rates in some cities. But this nexus is not a useful explanation of the high proportion of black males who have become victims and offenders in urban homicides every year since at least 1960. Continued focus on short-term trends leaves the extensive and persistent long-term differences unexamined and unexplained.

It is almost certain that reducing the easy availability of guns, creating a more rational drug policy, and reducing or refocusing gang activity would reduce homicide. However, like homicide itself, gun possession, drug work, and gang involvement are not evenly distributed across society. Whatever impact drug policy, gun availability, and gang activity have on short-term trends, these influences will not explain the relatively stable and unusually high rates of homicide victimization and homicide offending reported for black males. For this we will have to look to widespread practices and procedures that persist over time and continue to exclude and isolate a large number of black males from full participation in the economic, political, and social life of American society. Only coordinated research focused on race, class, and persistently high homicide rates can test this assertion. Such research could also suggest programs and policies that will reduce the number of black victims and black offenders and in this way greatly reduce homicide rates in the United States.

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Demography and Lethal Violence¹

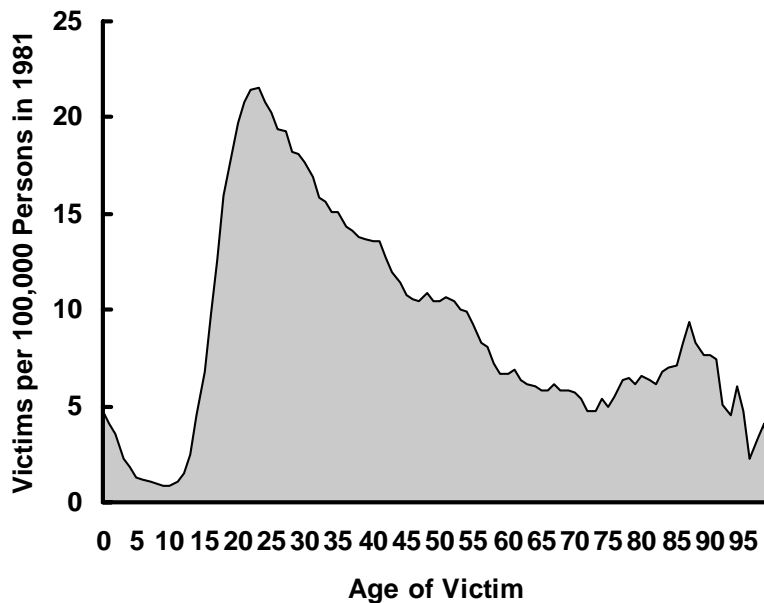
Allan F. Abrahamse, RAND

Summary

Because different demographic groups experience violence at different rates, changes in the homicide rate depend in part on changes in the demographic composition of the population at risk. Data describing the population and homicide experience for California from 1981 through 1995 suggests that demographic changes does not explain the *large* year-to-year changes we see in homicide rates.

The Age Distribution

Figure 1. Homicide Victims per 100,000 At Risk, by Age



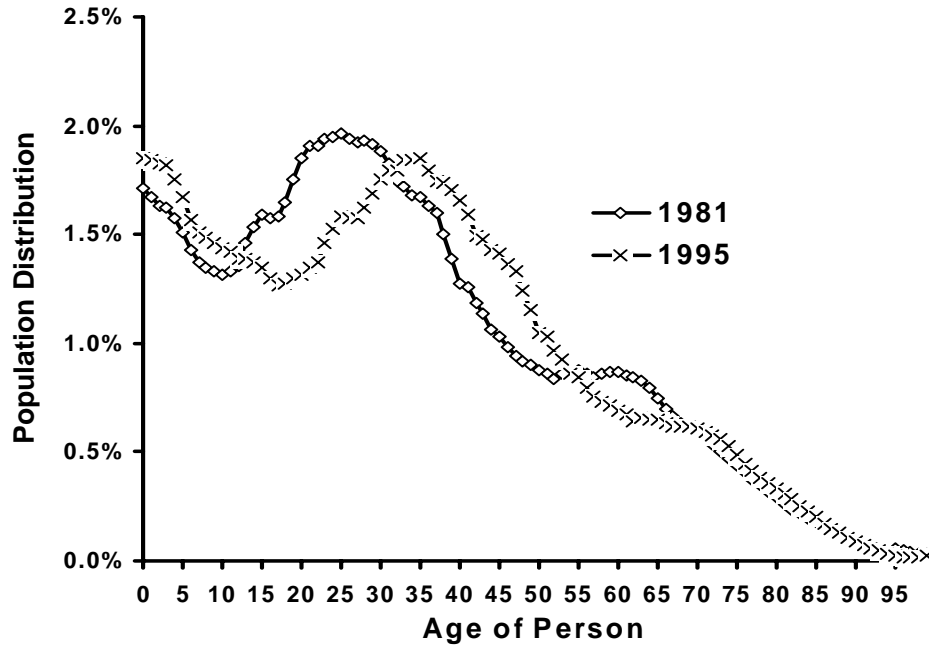
It is well-known that the homicide rate depends strongly on age. Figure 1 shows the age-specific homicide rate for the State of California in 1981. As can be seen, in the first year of life, about 5 out of every 100,000 children is murdered. This risk falls rapidly until about age 10, which was statistically the safest year of life as far as homicide is concerned. During the teen-age years, the risk rose rapidly to a peak at about age 21, and then fell slowly for the next fifty years or so. Late in life, the rate rises, perhaps because

¹ This paper was prepared with support from the James Irvine Foundation.

older folks are more likely to be killed by events that would only have been an injury for a younger person. For the oldest of the old, the rate falls again.

Over the last 15 years, the age composition of California's population has changed. Figure 2 shows the age-specific distribution of the population in 1981 ("diamonds"), and in 1995 ("X's"). Basically, the population got older. Since generally older persons face lower risks of homicide, an aging population could lead to one that appears less violent.

Figure 2. Age Distribution in 1981 and 1995



Race and Ethnicity

Different racial and ethnic groups face sharply different risks of homicide, and the homicide rate for males is always much higher than for females. This chart shows the homicide rate in California in 1981 for four race/ethnic groups, by sex. African-American males faced highest risk, followed by Hispanic males, and then by African-American females.

California has experienced a pronounced change in the ethnic make-up of its population. Figure 3 shows the fraction of its population that is either Hispanic (lower bar) or African-American (upper bar), between 1981 and 1995.

As Figure 4 shows, the relative share of the population that is African-American has remained roughly constant at about 7%. The relative share that is Hispanic has grown. Since Hispanic face higher homicide risks, this rise in the fraction of the population that is Hispanic could lead to an apparent rise in violence.

Figure 3. Race and Ethnic Composition

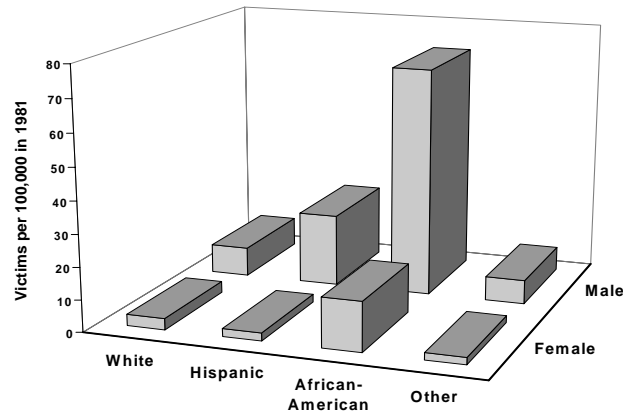
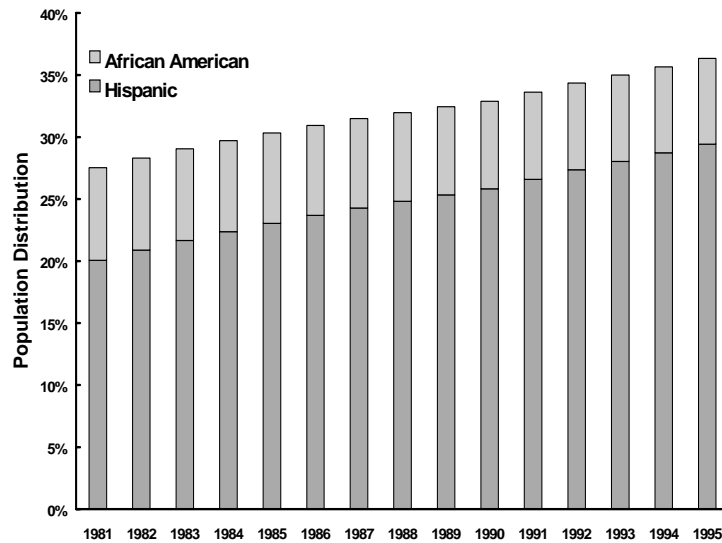


Figure 4. Race and Ethnic Change, 1981-1995



How Much Does Demography Matter?

How much of the variation in the observed homicide rate can be accounted for by these changes in the composition of California's population?

One way to answer this question is to ask: *what would the homicide rate have been if the only thing that changed was the population composition?*

To answer this question, I calculate the homicide rate by age, race/ethnicity and sex specific rates as observed in 1981, and apply this historical rates to the actual population counts in each subsequent year. The formula for the estimated rate in 1995 is just

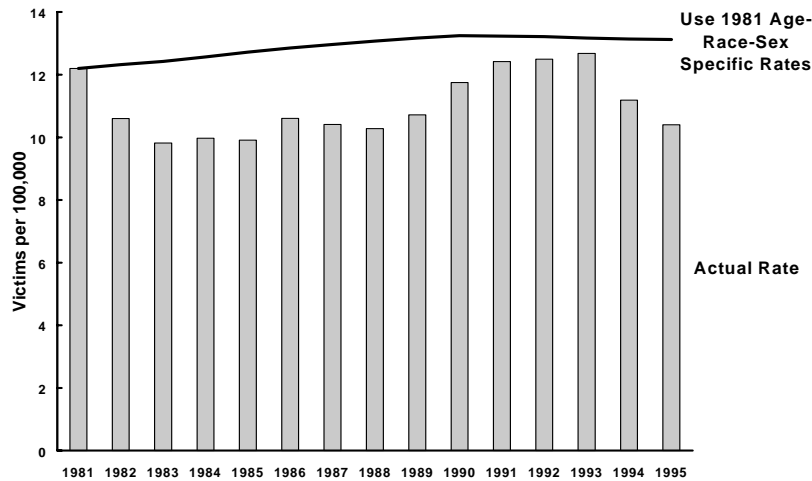
$$\text{Rate}_{1995} = \sum \text{Pop}_{1995,x} \text{Rate}_{1981,x} / \text{Pop}_{1995}$$

where x varies over all age, sex and race/ethnicity classes.

This estimated rate is plotted (line graph) in Figure 5. The homicide rate would have grown slightly over the rate seen in 1981, and then leveled off slightly around 1990. What actually happened (bar graph) was far different. After 1981, the rate dropped sharply in 1982 and 1983, grew rather slowly for the next five years, rose sharply between 1989 and 1993, reached a peak in 1993, and then fell dramatically in 1994 and 1995. Data recently released by the FBI indicate that rates fell again in 1996.

The important point here, however, is that *changes from year to year in the homicide rate are much greater than can be accounted for by mere changes in the composition of the population.*

Figure 5. Actual Homicide Rate and its Demographic Component



The demographic composition of California has changed a lot in the last 15 years, but the changes have been relatively small from one year to the next. Homicide rates depend in part on demographic composition, but these calculations suggest that demographic change plays only a small part in the changes we see from one year to the next.

WHAT WORKS? Using Firearm Tracing Information in Violence Reduction Intervention Projects

June 11, 1997, 8:30-9:45 Session
Session Recorder: Steven Roth

Speakers:

John Firman
Director of Research
International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)

Paul Blackman
National Rifle Association
Institute for Legislative Action

Joseph Vince
Chief, Firearms Division
Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Anthony Braga and David Kennedy
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

John Firman: A Work in Progress: The IACP Gun Trafficking Interdiction Project

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has been conducting a firearm trafficking interdiction project. In essence, it is a technical assistance project in which IACP personnel are sent to police departments throughout the United States to help law enforcement agencies track the source of guns recovered as part of criminal investigations within their respective jurisdictions. In order to get at the root of firearm homicide, information besides forensic evidence concerning the gun and the body can be used. Namely, by determining the trafficking routes and sources of firearms involved in homicides and other violent crimes, illegal gun trafficking can be interdicted. If the sources of illegal guns can be reduced, a decrease in homicides involving firearms will result.

Paul Blackman: The Limitations on BATF Firearm Tracing Data for Policymaking and Homicide Research

Criminological research based on firearm tracing data conducted by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) is suspect because ATF is asked to conduct traces on a

small minority of firearms used in crimes, including homicide. Also, the process by which law enforcement requests ATF to perform traces is selective—focusing on guns manufactured since 1990. It is not representative of all firearms recovered by police.

Of the guns recovered by Project Lead (the ATF/NYPD task force that seeks to determine the origin of firearms recovered by the NYPD), only six percent of the recovered guns are traced to point of original sale. Research by Glenn Pierce et al. has suggested that only two percent of firearms dealers are accountable for 75 percent of all gun sales, as revealed by ATF traces. In addition, ATF does not reported multiple sales. Because of these data deficiencies, while ATF trace data may be useful for law enforcement purposes, it is not useful for research purposes. While Project Lead has indicated that Virginia is the major state of original purchase for firearms recovered in New York City, only two percent of guns associated with homicide in NYC were originally purchased in Virginia, though ATF says this picture is changing . Lois Mock (NIJ) mentioned the NIJ study on gun trafficking in 17 U.S. cities that is based on *100 percent* of the firearms recovered in these cities.

Joseph Vince

Mr. Vince responded to Paul Blackman’s commentary on the research utility of using ATF trace data by saying “The proof is in the pudding.” In other words, firearms trace data has been used effectively to determine sources of guns ultimately used in criminal acts. Since Project Lead started in 1992, as a result law enforcement has interdicted thousands of illegal firearms. There have been 78 prosecutions resulting from evidence acquired through firearm traces. An enormous amount of data is being collected on suspect gun dealers, purchasers and illegal trafficking systems. However, there is a “learning curve” for efficient use of this information. In order for the trace program to be optimally effective, state and local law enforcement must utilize the system. ATF’s reports will be available through its webpage, thereby making the information more accessible, and the program more well-known.

Anthony Braga and David Kennedy

Since January 1991, every gun recovered by the Boston Police Department has been traced by ATF, resulting in 60 percent being successfully traced, 20 percent with obliterated serial numbers, and the remaining guns fitting a “new” profile. Of those who carry illegal firearms, youth (21 and under) are more likely to have semiautomatics, and to have guns with obliterated serial numbers. For non-gang youth from whom firearms were recovered, location of original purchase was as follows—Massachusetts: 35.5 percent; southern states: 29.2 percent; and 15.1 percent New England plus New York. This compares to location of original purchase for guns recovered from youth gang members—Massachusetts: 28.3 percent; southern states: 40.9 percent; and New England plus New York: 15.1 percent.

Concerning newly manufactured (less than two years old, “fast”) guns that are easier to trace, of 426 firearms, the types of guns recovered and traced were as follows—semiautomatics: 80.8 percent; shotguns: 7.7 percent; revolvers: 7.0 percent; and rifles: 4.5 percent. One-quarter of both

traceable and semiautomatic firearms are “fast.” Gang members particularly like to possess semiautomatic weapons—with semiautomatics comprising 87 percent of the firearms recovered from the people in the gang pool, and 75 percent of all guns recovered from youth. Three quarters of these were .380 caliber or 9 millimeter. Adults are more likely to possess .22 caliber firearms and shotguns. Types of guns more likely to have obliterated serial numbers are semiautos, and so-called “Ring of Fire” guns including Loricin.

ATF is conducting a study of guns with obliterated serial numbers, and new forensic techniques are being developed to raise defaced serial numbers to legibility—effective about 50 percent of the time.

Gun trafficking organizations became apparent through tracing of guns recovered from gang members. Most suppliers of gang guns went to Georgia to purchase, brought them to Boston, and sold them on the streets, the guns ending up in the hands of gang members. By examining the gun tracing data, multiple purchasers of guns were identified, which confirmed suspicions of problem gun dealers and purchasers.

As a result of the Boston gun tracing project, certain myths concerning firearm trafficking were debunked. One prior perception shown to be inaccurate is that the overwhelming percentage of guns recovered in Boston were originally purchased from southern states. The study also revealed that most guns involved in criminal investigations were purchased, rather than being stolen as previously believed. A great deal of transfers of firearms between gangs was evident.

One law enforcement strategy developed in response to the study’s identification of criminal gun purchasers was for the police to interview firearm dealers, especially dealers who sold a disproportionately high number of guns that ended up in criminal investigations). The police met with dealers, and made it clear to the dealers that if they sold a firearm to a particular (problem) person, law enforcement would make a thorough examination of the dealer’s business with an eye toward vigorous prosecution. In this and other ways, the study’s data is already being used to target law enforcement efforts.

Joseph Vince concluded that the study’s results shows the value of Project Lead, and extended an offer of assistance (as did John Firman of IACP) to anyone who might benefit from their assistance.

The Limitations on BATF Firearms Tracing Data for Policymaking and Homicide Research

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Abstract

BATF firearms traces are a tool for prosecution of individual crimes, with potential benefits in using the tracing data for law enforcement. There are, however, severe limitations on the utility of those data for criminological analysis and public policymaking aimed at reducing homicides, including the minimal number of trace attempts and successes, the rules for excluding guns and efforts to trace them, the limited information on the basis for gun traces. While gun policies have been influenced by tracing information, scientists should recognize the limitations of BATF tracing data for policymaking, even if encouraging improvements in collection and reasonable uses for law enforcement, policy evaluation, and homicide research.

Introduction

Soon after the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA '68) improved the paperwork trail for so that possible crime guns could be traced, without too much trouble, to their first retail sale, criminologists attempted to study statistical summaries of those traces with a view toward policy recommendations, even though such tracing "was not designed to collect statistics." (Bea, 1992, p. 65) To some extent, the trail had existed since 1938, when the Federal Firearms Act required inexpensive federal licenses for persons selling guns interstate, but it was not used. When Massachusetts' Commissioner of Public Safety, for example, testified on the need for additional federal legislation, his assertion that 87% of the state's crime guns came from elsewhere was based not on tracing them to other states but on failing to find them in Massachusetts' records. (U.S. Senate, 1965, pp. 345-46) Similarly, the staff report of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence relied on permit applications, rather than tracing data, to determine if a gun originated where it was misused. (Newton and Zimring, 1969, ch. 8)

Some of those early efforts, particularly by Frank Zimring, simultaneously attempted analyses while recognizing the limitations of the criminological use of BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms¹) tracing data, limitations also emphasized by the Police Foundation in its study, *Firearm Abuse*. (Zimring, 1975, p. 183; Brill, 1977) For example, while using BATF tracing data to support the theory that relatively new guns are disproportionately used in crime, Zimring noted "the possibility that police and federal agency sampling procedures had produced

¹ Before becoming a bureau in 1972, it was the Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms Division of the Internal Revenue Service; for the past quarter century, its name has been shortened to the letters BATF or ATF, the former being more thoroughly descriptive, but both have been used extensively both outside and inside government, including the Treasury Department itself.

a nonrepresentative sample of guns from New York...the bedeviling problem of sample selection....” (Zimring, 1976, p. 96) He noted that older guns were more difficult to trace; some data were not crime-specific with possessory offenses predominating, something Zimring was reluctant to find a sufficient reason for labeling something a “crime gun”; prescreening prevented even tracing attempts for some firearms, and various other limitations on basing analyses on tracing data. (Zimring, 1976, pp. 97-98, 101, 104-106)

For its part, for the first two decades of GCA’68, as BATF sought to assist law enforcement, it produced annual summaries of tracing efforts, including the number of traces officially attempted and successfully completed, with anecdotal references to a major crimes solved with tracing and/or the speed of tracing guns involved in prominent shootings. For example, BATF proudly noted that tracing a gun from an armored-car robbery “led to the arrest and prosecution of the neo-Nazi cult known as The Order” and that the gun used in the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan was traced to John Hinckley in 16 minutes.² (King, 1988) Nonetheless, as BATF would acknowledge, its tracing is primarily for the purpose of aiding law enforcement in identifying suspects, establishing whether guns were stolen, and proving ownership (Pierce, Briggs and Carlson, 1996, p.5), rather than for the systematic analysis of crime guns or other policy- or research-related purposes.³

Limitations Related to State and Local Law Enforcement

Most guns involved in violent crimes are not traced, and those which are represent not merely a small but an unrepresentative sample. (Bea, 1992, p. 65) Some of this is unavoidable in a country with a relatively low clearance rate for violent crimes. Nonetheless, even most guns seized as a result of violent-crime investigations are not traced, and those traced are unrepresentative of firearms used, leading some scholars to suggest that confiscated firearms, while still flawed as a sample, provide a better sample of “crime guns” than traced guns. (Brill, 1977, pp. 26, 42)

As Gregore J. Sambor, then Philadelphia Police Commissioner, noted, “tracing a gun by use of serial number and proofmarks from a manufacturer, through the wholesaler, to the retailer and then the purchaser, and eventually the user, is not always necessary to prove the facts of the case or the elements of the crime....[And] when a local agency has adequate information and their own means available, they can sometimes produce their own results quicker and with less chance of error.” He went on to cite a police killing where the Philadelphia police found it more expeditious to telephone the German manufacturer, and thence the Virginia dealer, leading them to the brother of the person convicted. (Sambor, 1985)

² BATF offered its tracing capability to the U.S. Secret Service at 2:40 p.m. on March 30, 1981, and the Secret Service had BATF begin the tracing process at 3:20 p.m.; following some confusion on the Secret Service’s part regarding the serial number, the trace was completed by 4:30 p.m. (Office of the General Counsel, 1981, pp. 78-79.) The General Counsel found it noteworthy that the investigative activities were initiated during normal working hours, and that the tracing capability “would assume even more importance if a suspect had not been immediately apprehended at the scene.” (Office of the General Counsel, 1981, pp. III and 81)

³ Many of the limitations noted in this paper replicate the introduction to BATF’s National Tracing Center (NTC) by its director, Gerald A. Nunziato.

Tracing data may be unrepresentative because of the nature of criminal investigations. If state or local requirements provide more thorough recordkeeping than provided by federal law, there is no incentive to have BATF trace guns; tracing through BATF could be considered both superfluous and less efficient. For example, a Justice Department study based on surveys of police departments, reported that some jurisdictions, such as California, began with their own files on guns, and went on to note that such files existed, too, for New York, New Jersey, Iowa, Maryland, in addition to several cities, including Philadelphia and Miami. (Weber-Burdin *et al.*, 1981, ch. 4, p. 9) If jurisdictions with more records first use them (Roth and Koper, 1997, p. 83) and only then turn to BATF for firearms not found, while less restrictive jurisdictions start with BATF, one result of BATF tracing would be to exaggerate the out-of-state sources of “crime guns” in restrictive jurisdictions vis-à-vis less restrictive jurisdictions.

Even without such records, tracing might provide no particular benefit—aside from the sometimes useful one of excluding other suspects or other charges. Tracing is least needed where local resources are sufficient, or the basis for access to the gun irrelevant, as with violent gun-related crimes. Tracing should prove most useful where local resources are insufficient and tracing information is likely to be available and useful, as with out-of-jurisdiction guns not used in serious felonies—particularly if the trace might suggest the possibility of a less obvious serious crime, federal or state, such as gun and narcotics offenses. (For example, had tracing provided evidence that John Hinckley had broken the law in his acquisition of handguns, such tracing might have allowed prosecution for a GCA’68 violation, but tracing provided no information necessary for his prosecution for the violent crime of attempted presidential assassination.)

In the 1970s, most law enforcement agencies, according to an NIJ-funded study led by James Wright and Peter Rossi, made little use of BATF and were dissatisfied with the results. (Wright and Rossi, 1981, p. 23) Surveyed departments which used the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) almost all used it for almost all firearms, but little more than a quarter (with fewer agencies responding) of departments used BATF for most or every firearm implicated in a crime or found, confiscated, or recovered. (Weber-Burdin *et al.*, 1981, ch. 4, p. 13) The departments reporting some use (only about three-fourths as many as reported use of NCIC) found the experience much less useful than the NCIC, with over 30% reporting the experience was seldom useful or was useless. Thus, almost twice as many departments reported generally finding NCIC useful as similarly found BATF generally useful. (Weber-Burdin *et al.*, 1981, ch. 4, p. 16)

Although soon after that BATF began making serious efforts to improve cooperation with local police (Vizzard, 1997, pp. 88-89), and there has clearly been a great change in the willingness of local law enforcement to use BATF’s tracing services, some facts have remained constant over the decades. There is no standardized procedure for ensuring consistent definitions or terms for identifying the circumstances leading to a trace, if identified at all. In addition, categorization may be done hastily, because the investigation which would explain in full the reason a firearm

was obtained by police had not yet been completed, allowing such a determination to be made. (Bea, 1992, pp. 65, 70-71) And some dramatic changes in classification figures would suggest a classification change. For example, traced military-style semi-automatics went from being traced generally for “miscellaneous” reasons (39%) in 1986 to just 1% for that reason in 1990, with disproportionate increases both in violent crimes and gun-law violations. (Bea, 1992, p. 72)

And most guns seized by police and/or traced by BATF are not involved in violent crimes. Possessory offenses constitute the most common basis for a trace, with violent crimes only a minority of the reasons. Violent crimes explained 15% of traces in 1977, and gun-law violations (federal or state) about 45%, along with 20% unspecified “other” reasons than specific sorts of crimes. (Letter and documents from Paul Mosny, BATF Disclosure Branch, to Bob Dowlut, NRA, July 21, 1980) This despite the fact that, during the 1980s, the crime codes were listed in order of BATF-perceived severity, with only one crime code to be chosen. Nonetheless, property crimes, drug investigations, and gun-law violations predominated, with homicide investigations the most common violent crime investigation associated with a trace, and “miscellaneous” and “other” explaining almost as many traces as other violent crimes. (BATF tape analysis for 1989 supplied to the NRA, Feb. 9, 1990, based on coding tables, effective Oct. 1, 1986) There was not even a specific category for burglary. (Bea, 1992, pp. 70-71)

The 1990s’ coding of the types of crimes associated with traces is much more extensive, at nearly three dozen compared to ten or twelve in the 1980s (including transportation/possession of untaxpaid cigarettes), but with property crimes, gun-law violations, drug offenses, and other unspecified criminal investigations still predominating. (Letter from BATF Director John W. Magaw, to Sen. Larry E. Craig, April 1, 1994) In the largest recent study of BATF traces, roughly five-eighths were for weapons offenses, and just over one-seventh for violent crimes. (Pierce, Briggs and Carlson, 1996, Table 3) A study in Boston, where traces were to be conducted wherever possible on all seized guns, showed only 18% were connected to a substantive crimes rather than possessory offenses or in police custody for some other reason (Kennedy, Piehl and Braga, 1996a, Table 10) A Los Angeles area study of traced guns showed two-thirds for possessory offenses and one-sixth for violent crimes. (Wachtel, 1996, p. 12)

And even traces of guns as a result of a violent-crime investigation do not indicate the role of the firearm in the crime or the investigation. A firearm from a homicide investigation may have been used in the homicide, found at the scene, recovered from the body of the deceased—not likely to be uncommon where many homicides involve disputes between persons with criminal records (Kates, Schaffer, Lattimer, Murray and Cassem, 1995, pp. 579-84) where the loser is less likely than the winner to remove any of his weapons from the scene of the crime—or recovered at the time of the arrest. The most detailed statistical information from BATF simply indicates the sort of investigation associated with the trace request.⁴ A firearm simply found, turned in, or

⁴ Categories may not be very revealing: “other”; “miscellaneous.” “Weapons” or “GCA” or “Title 1” include offenses ranging from typographical errors to gun-trafficking and violent offenses. (Bea, 1992, p. 71) A stolen weapon trace could involve the thief or a found gun turned in to authorities. Some police-owned firearms are traced. (Brill, 1977, pp. 23-25) BATF’s Project Lead traces in New York City included the crimes of suicide and loitering. (Memorandum from Project Lead to Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division, BATF, October 22, 1992)

otherwise recovered, might be traced to indicate whether it might have been stolen, potentially making it a property crime investigation, or the official reason given BATF for the trace might be miscellaneous or other. Nothing in the coding, or in any information collected by BATF and thus available to researchers or to others, indicates which of the guns traced were used to commit which crimes. As BATF has made clear with regard to the guns it traces, “ATF does not track the incidence of specific use of each one of these firearms in crimes....[T]races requested by police are not always for guns that are used in crimes. Traces are sometimes submitted for firearms recovered by police investigating crimes where the guns were found but were not necessarily used to commit a crime....We do not establish the criteria as to when State or local law enforcement agencies initiate a trace of a firearm.” (Letter from Daniel M. Hartnett [Deputy Director for Enforcement], for the BATF Director, to Rep. Richard T. Schulze, March 31, 1992)

Traces of guns to other states would not necessarily represent gun trafficking to avoid restrictive gun laws, especially with the average traced gun about five years old (Pierce, Briggs and Carlson, 1996), and untraced guns presumably still older, since age is a key reason for BATF not to attempt a trace. As a mobile nation, where roughly one-fifth of the populace moves each year, guns may be brought from another state simply because persons previously lived in another state. Unsurprisingly, more guns are apt to be bought where paperwork for firearms purchases make the process not only less cumbersome but, in general, less expensive. The large proportion of traces for possessory offenses would support skepticism regarding the amount of trafficking suggested by traces, but, of course, there is insufficient information on the reason for the trace for any such inference to be well founded. And the willingness of youthful offenders to discuss gun dealers but not drug dealers with police (Kennedy, Piehl and Braga, 1996a, p. 80) suggests gun traffickers are perceived by their customers to be less dangerous offenders.

Even when BATF is encouraging tracing, as with Project Lead in New York City, relatively few firearms are traced. During the first nine months of 1992, for example, of 13,382 firearms recovered by the New York Police Department, only 1,231 (9%) were submitted for tracing, and 824 traced (6%). And there is no basis for believing that even that small percentage is representative. At a time period when there were over one thousand gun-related homicides in the city, three firearms were traced to the alleged major crime-gun source, Virginia, as a result of homicide investigations. (Memorandum from Project Lead to Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division, BATF, October 22, 1992) Regarding 1990, when a similar portion of New York City guns were selected for tracing, BATF indicated that “[n]o information is available on why those 1,000 guns were selected out of the 17,000 for tracing.” (Bea, 1992, p. 67) During the first nine months of 1992, there were about 35,000 gun-related violent crimes reported to the New York City police (Letter from Michael A. Markman, NYPD Office of Management Analysis and Planning, to Mark Overstreet, NRA, January 21, 1993); if violent crime involvement in all the traces were similar to the portion traced to Virginia, and from national BATF tracing data over the years, traces would have been completed for approximately 0.4% of New York City’s gun-related violent crimes.

Nonetheless, although traces are much more apt to involve weapons violations rather than violent crimes—roughly five-eighths of the traces analyzed by Pierce, Briggs and Carlson (1996, Table 3)—among violent crimes, homicide traces predominate, and they always have. A study based on traces from the mid-1970s found that, among violent crime-related traces, homicide investigations accounted for 45% of the traces. Unfortunately, that study also found a greater disparity between what confiscation and tracing data suggested about the types of guns used in homicides than for other violent crimes. (Brill, 1977, pp. 61-62) A computer analysis provided to the NRA by BATF for 1989 traces suggested about one gun trace for every four gun-related homicides reported to police, compared to one for every 125 gun-related assaults and one for every 250 such robberies. (FBI, 1990) More recently, with more extensive BATF efforts to persuade local authorities to use their NTC, the figure has risen to one trace for every: two gun-related homicides, 50 gun-related assaults, and 100 gun-related robberies. (Pierce, Briggs and Carlson, 1996, Table 3; FBI, 1996) The numbers for homicides, at any rate, are clearly reaching impressive size, even though the guns are not necessarily murder weapons. The expanded tracing efforts, however, because of BATF tracing practices, mean that for homicide there is now a large and unrepresentative sample rather than a small unrepresentative sample—with murder weapons differing from guns involved in non-lethal assaults. (Brill, 1977, p. 71)

Limitations Due to BATF Tracing Practices

BATF recognizes the limitations local law enforcement practices place on statistical analyses based on tracing data. The standard “data advisory” BATF’s NTC sends out with data requests notes that their data only reflect trends relating to trace-requested guns, not to crime guns overall; that trace requests involve “trace requests submitted on firearms used in crimes, recovered from crime scenes, or suspected of being involved in crimes”; but BATF relies upon those federal, state, or local authorities submitting a request to ensure that guns are related to crime investigations; not every gun recovered is traced, and BATF does not know the extent to which recovered guns are voluntarily submitted for traces. BATF’s NTC notes that the accuracy of their reports are dependent upon the accuracy of data submitted. That advisory is well worth respecting, but it minimizes the limitations of tracing data.

In addition to local law enforcement limitations on the representativeness of traced guns, BATF imposes restrictions on tracing all but guaranteed to make traced guns unrepresentative of crime guns—with changes in those restrictions making temporal comparisons of tracing data problematic even as they improve the efficiency and usefulness of tracing as a law-enforcement tool—even when those restrictions are used without an eye for policymaking or policy support. This is somewhat contrary to the BATF’s NTC’s more limited advisory that the data “ONLY reflects trends relating to those firearms for which a trace request is submitted and is only as accurate as the information provided by trace requestors.”

At least some of BATF’s restrictions on tracing, however, unlike the unknown mechanisms by which local jurisdictions decide which guns to trace, is systematic, even if changing. BATF does

not like to attempt traces where success is unlikely, either to enhance its abilities to report a higher success rate—in the same way prosecutors pride themselves on conviction percentages—or simply because the agency wishes the most cost-effective use of its resources. It has thus long excluded older firearms (Brill, 1977, pp. 94-95), as well as those whose serial numbers have apparently been removed (Kennedy, Piehl and Braga, 1996a, p. 63), the technical efforts needed to restore the number being deemed excessively costly. In order to enhance the apparent success rate, local law enforcement is asked to prescreen guns, and not ask for traces on those likely to be too old to be traced. (Brill, 1977, pp. 57-58) The same cost-effective motivation means rarely seeking to trace a firearm beyond its initial retail transfer.⁵

BATF's desire to make its tracing cost-effective severely limits its ability to provide useful data for analysis. In the past, the records of out-of-business dealers were less accessible than those of active federally-licensed dealers, so such traces would be scotched as not worth the effort (Brill, 1977, p. 125), with such handguns underrepresented in trace samples. (Zimring, 1976, p. 105) With computerization of those records, now over half of traces use information from federal licensees who have gone out of business (Pierce, Briggs and Carlson, 1996, p. 8), a figure likely to rise at least some more as the number of dealers has dropped over 60% during the Clinton administration. And tracing data rarely give much in the way of sufficient detail for some analysis. For example, the make, model, and serial number of a gun may allow a quick trace, but specific information about the cosmetics of the gun may not be on record (e.g., whether a particular semi-automatic rifle has a folding stock); other information not determined by the manufacturer will also be left out, such as the capacity of the magazine in the firearm as recovered; and information which should be readily available may be reported incorrectly or at least inconsistently. (Roth and Koper, 1997, p. 88) Tracing data for 1988 list Colt's semi-automatic versions of its M16 at least a dozen different ways—with variations on spacing, hyphenization, names, letters, abbreviations, and others where the designation is unclear, or the name or model are totally wrong—with even more for the Norinco semi-automatic imitation of the AK-47. In addition, traces rarely go beyond the simple information of who bought a gun where, to whether that same purchaser acquired other firearms within a relatively short period of time in the same or nearby stores. While some additional data could be elicited from traces, that would involve expenditures of manpower incompatible with BATF efforts to make tracing a more cost-effective law enforcement tool.

Improvements in BATF recordkeeping and computerization—some lawful and some apparently *ultra vires*—have enhanced its ability to conduct traces, particularly of recent sales and of out-of-business dealers. And BATF has made efforts to encourage more traces by law enforcement agencies, particularly urban agencies, increasing the number of traces from roughly 40,000

⁵ Such labor-intensive tracing may be attempted when essential to a case. The Beretta used in about half of the so-called Zebra slayings in San Francisco in the 1970s was painstakingly traced by BATF and the San Francisco police beyond the first retail sale through seven private transfers. (Adams, 1978) In the past, traces were counted as successful once traced to a dealer in the state of the requestor on the grounds it was then no longer a matter of interstate commerce and, thus, a federal responsibility. (BATF, 1978, p. 2; Brill, 1977, p. 83)

annually to closer to 100,000. That effort has been seen by a friendly critic with decades of experience at BATF as partially politically inspired and based on a misunderstanding of the firearms market and the purposes of tracing, incorrectly emphasizing trafficking while most crime guns move in individual transactions. (Vizzard, 1997, pp. 202, 210, 217-18) Nonetheless, the increased numbers, combined with limitations on the age of guns the Bureau is willing to attempt to trace, make earlier tracing data chronologically incomparable to more recent data. The improvements are geared toward enhancing the speed with which successful traces can be conducted, and minimizing the need for labor intensive further delving by BATF agents. Yet it is precisely the sorts of information which might be elicited from such further investigation from which criminologists might hope to learn more about criminals and their guns and gun sources.

More recently, recognizing that tracing older firearms to their first retail purchaser is not a cost-effective way to attempt to solve crimes, but that tracing more recent guns may not only help solve crimes but provide benefits in allocating law-enforcement resources toward particular dealers, dealer types, or areas, BATF has more sharply limited its willingness to attempt traces. It has gone this decade from rejecting most attempts at pre-1985 guns to rejecting most attempts at pre-1990 guns. (Kennedy, Piehl and Braga, 1996a, p. 58) With traced guns normally over five years old—and six years for homicide-related traces—such a limitation undermines any confidence that traced guns are representative of crime guns. (Pierce, Briggs and Carlson, 1996, pp. 8-9 and Table 3) The emphasis on newer guns automatically means an emphasis on semi-automatics compared to revolvers, since they have come to dominate the newly-manufactured handgun market, going from about one quarter to about four fifths of new handguns between 1978 and 1993. (Thurman, 1994, pp. 102-103) To some extent, such a new-gun emphasis would also emphasize the relatively newer military-style semi-automatics and relatively inexpensive semi-autos as well, roughly 0.33% of which are traced compared to 0.1% of guns from the more traditional northeastern manufacturers. (Wintemute, 1994, p. 63)

In addition, trace attempts are frequently unsuccessful, even after exclusions, with a figure fairly constant over time, but increasing as more gun traces are attempted. In the 1970s, the estimate was that up to about 40% of traces were unsuccessful (Brill, 1977, pp. 84, 117; Weber-Burdin *et al.*, 1981, ch. 4, pp. 6-7), with a 45% failure rate with the massive tracing the guns of “youth offenders” in Boston. (Kennedy, Piehl and Braga, 1996a, Table 5) And, while the data were not presented particularly clearly, it appears that a trace study by a BATF agent in the Los Angeles area achieved only about a 42% success rate, supplementing California state records checks with traditional BATF tracing procedures. (Wachtel, 1996, pp. 10-12) At the Homicide Research Working Group’s Summer 1997 Seminar, Nunziato reported a 60% failure rate.

Investigations can, whether deliberately with a view toward influencing policy, or by chance, affect what tracing may indicate. Pierce, Briggs and Carlson (1996, p. 9) noted that a “sting” operation made Vermont data stand out disproportionately but irrelevantly. Similarly, a serious investigation had the same effect in evaluating Virginia as a source of crime guns—and the end of the investigation could affect the evaluation of Virginia’s gun rationing law later. When it was reported that 41% of the crime guns came from Virginia, it was variously reported that 27% of the 41% (10% of the total) (Goode, 1992), or “the vast majority” of the 41% (Hynes, 1992) came

from a single gun store, which BATF was investigating in part with undercover purchases going to New York. Whether BATF warned an uncooperative store of the problem of multiple purchasers being gun traffickers, or the owners regularly telephoned BATF regarding suspicious multiple purchases which might be headed for New York, with BATF reassuring them that the guns should be sold, the problem involved some guns carefully followed by BATF to New York and then traced back, not guns which just by chance happened to be traced to Virginia. (Affidavit of BATF Agent Irvin W. Moran, before U.S. Magistrate Judge David G. Lowe, August 25, 1992; letter from BATF Director John W. Magaw to Senator Olympia J. Snowe, February 23, 1996) A speedier crackdown on the offending gunshop would have prevented the gun trafficking data from being so impressive, and Virginia becomes as representative because of an investigation or sting or entrapment—depending upon one’s view of the investigation—as the Vermont sting which Pierce, Briggs and Carlson note made Vermont data artificially high for their study.

Policy-influenced Limitations on Tracing Data

Policy may, intentionally or unintentionally, contribute to the unrepresentative nature of traces. With the rise of the military-style semi-auto issue, special studies influenced the sort of firearm being traced, such as one in Detroit, focusing specifically on “assault weapons,” and BATF made special efforts to check out purchasers of such arms, in projects known as “forward traces” from the dealer to the first retail purchaser, rather than the reverse direction. (Bea, 1992, pp. 67-68; personal communication from gun dealers) In addition, rhetorical statements by politicians and higher-ranking BATF employees that such guns were the preferred choice of drug traffickers, organized crime, etc., could spur at least some local authorities to make greater efforts to trace such guns on the presupposed and circular-reasoning that the traces were more apt to provide evidence of drug trafficking, organized crime, etc. Such an investigative reason could be the basis for the trace request, even if the ensuing investigation demonstrated that gun possession was the most serious offense involved particular cases. “If...law enforcement offices in certain regions have determined that certain types of firearms (such as military-style semiautomatics that accept large capacity magazines) should be traced because they are thought to be used by dangerous offenders, the data in the tracing system will reflect those specific concerns.” (Bea, 1992, p. 68)

Similarly, if certain persons are said to be more apt to be involved in certain types of offenses—say, young black males and gangs—then guns found with the arrest of those persons are more apt to be traced, with the suspected characteristic the basis for the trace request. It then becomes of self-fulfilling prophesy: If there is a greater tendency to trace certain types of guns, or guns found in the course of the arrest of certain types of persons, with narcotics, organized crime, or the like given as the type of criminal investigation, then those guns or persons will be found, using tracing data, to be disproportionately involved in the activity in question. The trace request cites the type of investigation; nothing in BATF tracing data indicates a negative investigative conclusion.

The unrepresentative effect of policy-related tracing was demonstrated perhaps most dramatically with the Cox Newspapers analysis of BATF traces. While BATF tracing data indicated that military-style semi-automatic firearms (“assault weapons”) constituted 19% of crime guns in Los Angeles, the highest of any of the cities studied, LAPD data indicated that such firearms constituted only 3% of crime guns seized in that city. (Cox Newspapers, 1989, p. 4; letter from Edward C. Ezell, Curator, National Firearms Collection, Smithsonian Institution, to Rep. John D. Dingell, March 27, 1989) And their actual use, two years later, in famed youthful drive-by shootings was all but non-existent, at one documented incident in 677 shootings (Hutson, Anglin and Pratts, 1994, p.326), and dismissed for their “minor role” in a study of the gang killings, for which they were supposedly a preferred weapon, during that period. (Hutson *et al.*, 1995)

More recent efforts involve the goal of nationalizing the policy of limiting handgun purchases to one per month, by showing that such legislation curtailed Virginia’s role as a gun-supplying state has been curtailed (Weil and Knox)⁶—a goal easily achieved by determining on which states’ dealers to focus limited BATF investigatory efforts. Working with the Atlanta office of BATF, New York City authorities arranged that an “undercover officer in New York City would place an order for handguns with the defendants, who would then travel to Georgia, use an accomplice to make a seemingly lawful purchase of firearms from a local dealer, and then immediately return to New York with the guns.” Forty-eight firearms were recovered in the course of the investigation and, presumably, dutifully traced by BATF back to the place where New York authorities had arranged for many of them to be purchased. (District Attorney, County of New York, 1997) The New York authorities involved in the investigation are also promoting gun rationing on a national level, which is also the policy of the Clinton administration under which BATF operated. Even if policy is not the only goal, the investigators themselves helped to determine where guns would be traced to, and, in all likelihood, at least some of the details (caliber, action type, and price, if not also makes and models) of the sorts of guns which would be purchased and thus traced.

BATF Tracing Data Used in Policymaking and Evaluation

With some encouragement from BATF, tracing data analyses and studies are being used to influence and evaluate policymaking. The federal ban on so-called “assault weapons” called for an evaluation on the effects of the legislation after three years. The FBI Uniform Crime

⁶ In addition to problems in using tracing data, explaining changes based on the gun rationing law would be undermined by two factors: First, the same legislative session required proof of residency for driver’s license applicants (Virginia Code §46.2-323). And the rationing, in fact, rarely applies; during the first three years, applications for multiple handgun purchase requests were denied to 3% of applicants, and another 2% withdrew their applications. (Personal communication from Captain R. Lewis Vass, Department of State Police, August 30, 1996) Captain Vass testified to a state crime commission that the law has “not significantly affected ... the number of multiple handgun purchases within the Commonwealth.” (August 29, 1995)

Reporting Section was asked in advance if it knew “of any data which exist which would provide a base for determining whether these firearms are used more, less, or the same during the next three or four years, or are more or less available to criminals?” The response was, “The UCR Section knows of no existing data to provide a basis to address the question.” (Letter from Paul H. Blackman, NRA, to J. Harper Wilson, July 20, 1990; letter from J. Harper Wilson, Chief, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, to Paul H. Blackman, September 5, 1990)

The evaluation was assigned to the Urban Institute, which, absent other sources of information, used BATF tracing data, recognizing some of its limitations, including the nonrepresentative sampling suggesting only about 10% of gun crimes and 2% of violent crimes result in BATF trace requests. They further noted the lack of a comparison between traces of “specific banned assault weapon models with trends for non-banned models that are close substitutes.” (Roth and Koper, 1997, pp. 8, 82) They nonetheless defended the use as “the only such national sample” although “BATF trace data should be interpreted cautiously.” (Roth and Koper, 1997, p. 83) With no reliable data on pre- or post-legislative criminal misuse of proscribed or similar guns, the caution is more advised than nevertheless proceeding with the uncertain interpretation.

BATF tracing data were used in popular literature designed to support gun rationing as a means to curb the politically-inspired attack gun trafficking—with “Batman” becoming perhaps the first comic character successfully to lobby for state legislation—and then in its evaluation. (Ostrander and Giarrano, 1993; Sugarmann and Rand, 1994, p. 11; Weil and Knox, 1996; Vizzard, 1997, pp. 217-18) No effort was made to determine whether any of the guns involved in violent crime investigations, before or after the law took effect, or involved multiple purchase, despite the fact that purchases of more than one handgun in a business week are reported to BATF by the dealer [18 U.S.C. §923(g)(3)], and investigations of dealers, such as that which led to the prosecution of the largest alleged Virginia source of New York crime guns, was spurred by such multiple purchase reports. (Hynes, 1992) Project CUE, at a time with similar out-of-state sources for New York’s traced guns, in its investigations, found “that the majority of the firearm movement from States is occurring on an individual basis. That is to say that an individual will acquire a firearm in another State through the actual purchase by relative or friends and then transport that firearm back” to his own metropolitan area, with self-protection the primary motive. (BATF, 1977, p. 61) That view remains the conclusion of the historian of BATF, who voices criticism of the new focus on trafficking. (Vizzard, 1997, p. 202) Project CUE went beyond simple tracing data, which provide no particular reason to suggest any particular explanation as to where New York City’s violent criminals get their guns or whether gun rationing at the state or federal level is a rational response.

Potential Policymaking and Evaluative Uses of BATF Tracing Data and Their Limitations

The improvements in tracing records, and, working with some criminologists, their analysis should enhance law enforcement efforts, particularly against illicit firearms traffickers, even if

their role is exaggerated partly for political reasons. (Vizzard, 1997, pp. 202, 218) There are, however, thus far only two apparent policymaking uses for those tracing data. An evaluation of which dealers are more apt to have firearms traced to them, in addition to suggesting which dealers may be breaking the law themselves, or insufficiently diligent, or simply in an area where criminal misuse by customers is more popular, might suggest the curtailment of which sorts of dealerships might disproportionately reduce illicit firearms trafficking.

Research by Pierce, Briggs and Carlson (1996, Table 5) for BATF suggest that a tiny fraction of dealers are vastly disproportionately involved in firearms traces. Ninety-two percent of dealers were involved with no traces, and less than 2% of dealers accounted for over three-fourths of traces. Those data could provide a basis for seeking more information about those dealers which could suggest for whom federal firearms licenses should be more difficult to obtain, or other regulations which might be appropriate. For example, the administration, eventually with the legislative approval of Congress, has drastically reduced the number of dealers during the past few years. Data on dealer tracing could suggest whether the sorts of dealers driven out of business constitute the sort of dealer most or least apt to sell guns eventually traced to them. Those data were not used to make the policy. And there has been no post facto suggestion that the policy was warranted by the data.

And another study used tracing data to show, among other things, how different guns turned in during amnesties were from guns used by criminals, particularly younger criminals. So different were the guns turned in that only about one-eighth could be traced, and an effort at evaluation found that three-fourths of the guns were manufactured before the enactment of GCA '68. (Kennedy, Piehl and Braga, 1996b, pp. 156-58) The authors went on to conclude that, while tracing data gave no reason to believe turn-in programs would have crime-control value, they might be beneficial for symbolic values. (1996b, p. 165)

There would appear to be no other obvious area where policymaking might benefit from an analysis of BATF firearms tracing data as currently collected. And even in those situations, the traces alone would be insufficient. For example, without additional information about the types of dealerships—their conformity to local zoning and other regulations, and the like—which would make traces more time-consuming and costly, it would not be clear that the dealers whose guns are traced merit loss of license. With more serious follow-up research, there would, however, be other areas where cautious use of tracing data might provide the base for more extensive research.

Similarly, if BATF traces were followed up by more extensive investigation than the simple trace, the data could prove useful in learning more about where criminals get their guns and what their preferences are. For example, if, in addition to encouraging more local law enforcement agencies to trace virtually all recovered firearms, data were collected on the relation of the traced firearm to the criminal investigation (used in the homicide, recovered at the scene, etc.) or follow-up information on the criminal investigation (was the criminal investigation founded?

was there drug trafficking involved, or had the gun in fact been taken in a burglary, etc.? how did the firearm come to be in the state where it was recovered? what was the path of ownership and the means of transfer?), then the potential would exist for learning more about the nature at least of relatively new crime guns or criminal preferences in guns.

Most efforts by BATF, however, have been to make tracing more cost-effective, not expanding the information gathered with labor-intensive follow-up inquiries. An inexpensive expansion involves collecting some information on all guns seized in certain cities, including guns for which no trace is attempted. (Personal communication from Gerald Nunziato, BATF NTC) Thus, while the Congressional Research Service noted the problems with the tracing system in terms of statistical analysis, it made it clear that the limitations on the system should not necessarily be rectified: “the system is designed to expedite requests from law enforcement agencies on the history of firearm ownership, there would likely be little benefit in placing additional restrictions or requirements on officers submitting the trace request. The more important accomplishment of the system design...is to minimize paperwork and administrative burdens on the requesting agency.” (Bea, 1992, pp. 65-66) And efforts to encourage more detailed data collection by BATF and from local law enforcement is apt to be even less successful than the current efforts at more thorough data collection for the Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

Conclusion

Suggesting sharp limitations on the utility of BATF tracing for criminological research in no way undermines either the benefits of tracing as a law-enforcement tool in general, or the benefits of recent improvements in BATF’s tracing abilities. The traces were envisioned as a law-enforcement tool, not a law-making tool, and retain utility for that envisioned purpose. To the extent it might be argued that, however weak, BATF tracing data are the only data available for certain criminological or policymaking goals, that discouraging fact would simply mean there are no data available; absence of other data does not make unrepresentative data representative.

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Gangs, Drugs and Youth Violence

Recorders Notes

Each presentation was followed by a brief question/answer discussion period. What follows is a summary of these questions and answers. Every attempt was made to extract the essence of the question and answer, however, it was not possible to capture verbatim the wording of all questions and answers.

Gangs Race/Ethnicity and Houston Homicide in the 1990's

- Q. What is the Asian and sub-ethnic mix of your data
- A. Vietnamese is the largest proportion of the Asian population in Houston.
- Q. Have look at the structure of police department? Have they added an Asian gang unit?
- A. The Houston police department has for some time had a Chicano squad and now they have an Asian squad. Chicano squad has been in existence since early 80s. The Chicano squad seems to be a political issue so it has stayed around.
- Q. If your are recording location of homicide have you looked the spatial relationship between victim address and offender address?
- A. Right now we have incident address. Adding the victim-offender addresses will be the next task. George Tita looked at the spatial typology of gang homicide and he will be discussing this shortly.
- Q. Does the nature of gang activity differ by ethnicity?
- A. Houston doesn't make a distinction by ethnic groups.

Today's Music and Youth Violence

- Q. What is the effect of Tu Pac and other gang-rappers on glorification?
- A. It brings attention to the issues. What gang rap does is glorify violence, puts the lifestyle out there as a viable lifestyle. Provides messages that glorify dying and the culture. Provides something to emulate.
- Q. Is there any chance that if rap music was different, less violent, that kids would be into in such a way that it would make them less violent?

- A. Gang rap is simplistic. The kids I see already start out with a destructive core. The only course open to them is acting out. Kids who have a challenge need to get out the violence. The literature is mixed. Kids who don't have a recourse repeated experiences. It can have a desensitizing result. For kids who are unhealthy this would.
- Q. What about the media response. The exposure of violence in the media increases the sense of fear and vulnerability.
- A. Yes.
- Q. What about the fantasy aspect—escapism of rap music.
- A. White kids are buying this music, a lot of the kids I see are predisposed to aggression and this music validates their aggression. The fantasy aspect comes from the need for a frame of origin and a need to make sense of the world. Kids who don't have a fantasy— these kids are in the market for a solution.

The Gang-Drug-Gun Nexus: Evidence from Pittsburgh

- Q. Your assumption is that gang motivated homicides are driving the increase in homicides, however, it appears that gang motivated homicides are a relatively small percent of all homicides?
- A. About 30% of all targeted homicides are gang motivated homicides.
- Q. What about the data—how did you make the coding decision to define gang motivated, and how has the quality of the data changed over time?
- A. We came in with no clear idea—read each file and based our coding decision on the eyewitness testimony in the homicide files. I guess the coding was done by the eyewitness or the statements in the files. If they indicated it was gang motivated we used that information.
- Q. Did you have a consistent set of criteria or was it based on each case?
- A. Each case. Also some validation by various police departments.
- Q. Define targeted. Who is included and not included in this group.
- A. As far as our use of the term “Targeted” homicides we use it to distinguish between type of homicides that we hypothesize that might be driving the increase (and subsequent

decrease) in the level of total homicides being committed versus other more stable homicides (felonious, arson, domestics, disputes.) We define a “Targeted” homicide as an event that was:

1. gang involved: either the offender or the victim was a gang member
2. Drug involved: that the precipitating factors that lead to the incident involved the use or marketing of narcotics including the robbery of drug dealers.
3. “youth” involved: either the offender or the victim was less than 25 years of age AND a gun was involved.

GANGS, RACE/ETHNICITY AND HOUSTON HOMICIDE IN THE 1990S

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Abstract

This paper uses police and newspaper data to examine the extent and character of gang-related homicide in the early 1990s in Houston. Gang-related homicides in Houston from 1990-1994 tended to much more involve Hispanics and Asian compared to non-gang homicides. Gang homicides were more likely to occur in the public domain while non-gang homicides were predominately residential in nature. Finally, gang homicides were more likely in school months and relatively rare during non-school months.

Literature

This paper addresses gang-related homicide in Houston, Texas in the 1990s. Although estimations of the exact number of gangs, gang members, and gang-related violent crimes vary widely (due to the lack of an acceptable definition of “gangs” and official reporting inconsistencies) it is generally accepted that gang activity has steadily increased in America since the mid-1980s (Curry, Ball, and Decker 1996; Klein 1995; Spergel 1989). Spergel (1995) found that all 50 states exhibited some form of youth gang activity and others have shown that gangs are present in nearly all large U.S. cities (Miller 1982; Needle and Stapleton 1983). Studies of large urban areas such as Los Angeles and Chicago suggest that gang-related homicides have reached unprecedented levels compared to the recent past. Klein (1995) estimated that by the middle of this decade, there would be over 800,000 gang members in more than 9,000 gangs in the country. Curry et al. (1996) suggest that there are already 16,000 gangs in the country committing over half a million crimes per year.

This apparent increase in gang activity and gang-related crime has led to public perceptions that gang-related violence constitutes a more serious threat to society than non-gang violence. As a result, previous research efforts have been based on the premise that distinct and substantial differences exist between gang and non-gang violence with respect to a variety of demographic and incident-based characteristics. Although a variety of gang-related violent crimes have been studied, particular emphasis has been placed on homicide. This is because it is arguably the more serious criminal offense and because of its reliability as a measure of the extent and seriousness of gang violence (Spergel 1995).

Previous studies suggest that there is some justification for public concerns regarding the threat of gang-related violence as compared to non-gang violence. Research has shown significant differences between gang and non-gang homicides with respect to participant characteristics such as ethnicity, age, number of participants, and relationship between participants (Spergel 1984; Maxson, Gordon, and Klein 1985; Rogers 1993). Gang members involved in homicide incidents were younger and more likely to be minority males than their non-gang counterparts. Gang homicides were also more likely to involve the use of automobiles and firearms and to be committed in public areas than non-gang homicides. Klein, Maxson, and Cunningham (1991) further validated these findings in a study concerning the involvement of Los Angeles gangs in the distribution of crack cocaine.

In a study of all police-reported homicide incidents for California in 1989, Bailey and Unnithan (1994) also found that suspect and victim age, the number of suspects, lack of prior suspect/victim contact, public location, and use of firearms were all significant in distinguishing between gang and non-gang homicides. Gang-related homicides were more likely to involve younger African-American and Hispanic suspects and victims, a greater number of suspects, and the use of a firearm than non-gang homicides. These incidents also typically occurred between individuals with little or no previous social contact and were usually committed in public places.

In general, the majority of gang-related homicides have traditionally been intra-racial. For example, 92 percent of gang-related homicides in L.A. were either black on black or Hispanic-on-Hispanic (Klein 1995). This trend, however, may be undergoing subtle, yet significant, changes. Increasing levels of gang activity and greater race/ethnic heterogeneity may be contributing to an increase in interracial gang-related violence related to territorial disputes (Dellios 1994). Spergel (1995) and Short (1990) contend that the territorial nature of street gangs is responsible for many of the gang-related homicides in urban areas. They argue that fluctuations in rates of gang-related homicide may be due to periodic acts of retaliation for one gang encroaching into another gang's territory. It has also been suggested that involvement in drug trafficking has resulted in increased levels of gang-related violence, particularly homicide, as gangs attempt to protect their economic interests by equipping themselves with firearms (Moore and Kleinman, 1989).

Data

To begin to assess the relationship between gangs and homicide in Houston in the 1990s, we use data collected in two separate enterprises. First, we rely on data by the Houston Police Department Homicide Division (HPD). The police department provided us with their murder log data from all the homicides that were investigated from 1984 (when the homicide records first began to be computerized) to 1994 (N = 5,435). These data include information on motive, relationship between victim and offender, specific (street address) and general (type of premise) location of offense, case status (e.g., cleared by arrest, open, etc.), date of offense, type of weapon used, and name, race, gender, and age of the victim and offender (when known). Beginning in 1989, the department began to code "gang-related" homicides in the "motive"

variable. Since most of the available data on gang and non-gang homicide comes from official police statistics, some concern has arisen as to the reliability and validity of police reporting practices with respect to the designation of homicide cases as being “gang-related” (Spergel, 1995). For example, as Block and Block contend:

Since 1965, the Chicago Police Department has designated incidents, including homicides, as street-gang related if investigation determines that a gang-related motive was the reason for the offense. In contrast, the definition of gang-related in Los Angeles depends on gang membership; gang-related homicide is measured by checking victims and offenders against a list of known street gang members (1991: 13).

To check validity issues, we collected over 7,000 stories printed in the *Houston Chronicle* from March 1985 (when the *Chronicle* first began to computerize its files) to March 1997. Staff members at the *Chronicle* library using keyword searches of “Murders” and “Houston” conducted the search. The most recent years (1989 to the present) have the most complete coverage of homicides in Houston, providing stories on about 80 percent of the incidents reported by HPD. This database has been searched by suspect and victim name, street address, and date to match up with HPD data. The newspaper stories are used to complement the HPD data by providing context for how gang membership impacts homicide.

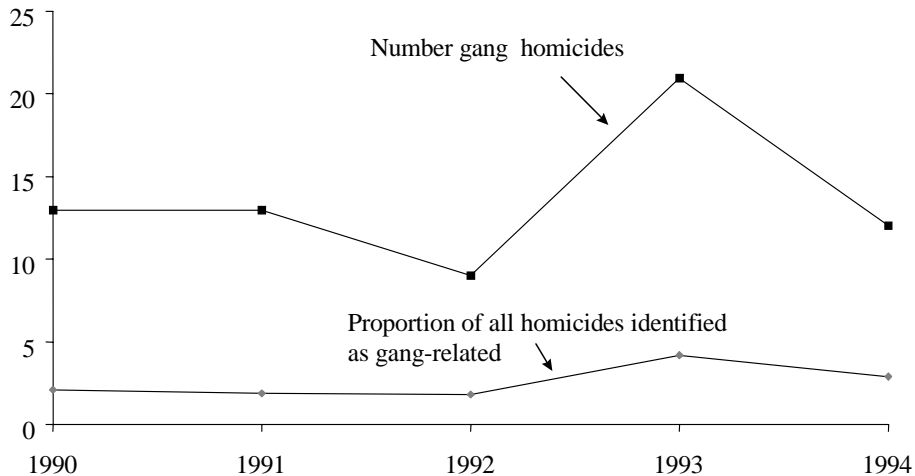
Results

Preliminary content analysis of the newspaper articles associated with the gang homicide data suggests that the HPD, similar to the LAPD, defines “gang” relatedness in a rather conservative fashion. That is, for a homicide to be labeled “gang-related,” there has to be gang members involved, although the question of “motivation” is not always addressed. The Houston Police Department labeled 70 homicides as gang-related from September 1989 to December 1994.

As shown in Figure 1, in the first full year of reporting (1990), they observed 13 gang homicides and by 1993, this number had peaked at 21. While the number dropped to 12 by 1994, there may have been as many as 16 gang-related homicides in 1996 (according to the *Houston Chronicle* data). Figure 1 also shows the proportion of homicides that the HPD linked to gang activity. It has averaged about 2.6 percent over the early 1990s, with a high of 4.6 percent in 1993. These figures suggest that Houston may not have a major gang-homicide problem. By comparison, about 29.5 percent of the homicides California during 1995 were classified as gang-related (Lungren 1996). If the *Chronicle* numbers for 1996 are valid, however, the proportion of homicides related to gang activity may have grown to over 5 percent (Houston experienced less than 300 homicides in 1996).

FIGURE 1.
NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF GANG HOMICIDES

Houston, Texas 1990-1994



In Table 1, we show the comparison of several variables of interest for gang and non-gang homicides in Houston for the 1990s. Since the HPD did not label any homicides as gang-related until late 1989, we only compare gang homicide to non-gang homicides that occurred during the same time frame (1990-1994, N = 2,642). As would be expected, individuals suspected of gang-related homicides are considerably younger on average than non-gang suspects (18.6 years compared to 28.2 years, respectively). What is more surprising is that 40 percent of the gang suspects are over the age of 18. This is still lower than for non-gang homicides where 72 percent of the suspects are over age 18.

In the cases where gender of the suspect was known (N=56), all of the gang suspects were males compared with 91 percent of the non-gang suspects. Most of the non-gang homicides (43.4 percent) were committed by African-American suspects (56 percent) followed by Hispanics (26 percent), Whites (16 percent), and Asians (1.7 percent). Hispanic suspects, on the other hand, committed most of the gang homicides (64.2 percent). This matches closely the findings for Chicago (Block 1991). The proportion of gang homicides by Asian offenders (7.1 percent) is over 4 times higher than for non-gang homicides. The disproportionate involvement of minorities in gang-related homicides is not surprising when we consider that the majority of gangs consist of minority group members (Klein 1995; Sanders 1994). Whites account for only about 10 percent of gang members nationwide, with Asians making up the third largest and most rapidly growing groups of gang members, behind African-Americans and Hispanics (Sheldon, Tracy, and Brown 1997). Over 40 percent of Latino male murderers in Chicago were involved in a gang (compared to 12 percent African-American and White murderers). Two-thirds of Chicago's gang-related homicides involved Latino male teenaged victims. In Los Angeles,

decreasing rates of African-American involvement in gang homicide was matched by increasing rates for Latino gang homicides (Reiner 1992).

The average gang-related homicide victim is younger (21 years old) than the non-gang victim (31 years) and male gang victims predominate. Among the gang-related homicides, Hispanics (45.7 percent) and Asians (10 percent) have much higher percentages than in non-gang homicides (28.4 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively). Only about one quarter of the gang victims are black compared to about one half of the non-gang victims. These numbers parallel the suspect numbers and exhibit the strong intra-racial component common in homicide studies. A striking feature of our data is the experience of Asians. All of the Asians who were killed in gang homicides were killed by Asians and all Asian gang suspects killed other Asians. In the non-gang homicides, only one third of the Asians were killed by other Asians. Thus, it appears that homicide related to Asian gang activity in Houston was limited to conflicts between rival gangs of the same race. The pattern is sustained for the other three race/ethnic groups as well.

The finding of high levels of intra-racial homicides among gangs is supported by the relationship between offender and victim. While over half of the gang homicides were committed by a stranger (when the relationship was known) compared to 36 percent for non-gang homicides, about the same amount of homicides for both gang and non-gang incidents were committed by non-family acquaintances. Homicides committed by acquaintances accounted for 38 percent of the gang homicides and 37 percent of the non-gang homicides. These findings highlight the notion that gang-related homicides in Houston were often incidents involving individuals who knew each other and were often of the same race/ethnicity.

Two other major differences between gang and non-gang homicides are shown in Table 1: premise and peak activity. That there are differences in the location of the homicides is not surprising. Forty percent of the gang homicides occurred on a street, in a park or in a parking lot compared to only 17 percent for non-gang homicides. One-fifth of the non-gang homicides occurred in a residence while only 7 percent of gang homicides were in a home. Some "residence" homicides for gang slayings may have been drive-by shootings or robbery incidents, though some occurred during a party at someone's house.

One of the more intriguing findings is the time of year of the gang homicides. There is no real pattern for the non-gang homicides as far as peak killing month. Each month has about the same amount of homicides, ranging from a low 6.9 percent in October to a high of 9.7 percent in July. Over 27 percent of the non-gang homicides occurred in the summer. Gang homicides, on the other hand, show a much more distinctive pattern. Over 31 percent of the gang homicides occurred in the months of October and November while only 22.8 percent occurred in the summer. The "slowest" months were March (1.4 percent) and December (4.3 percent), both months highlighted by major school breaks. This finding suggests that homicides associated with gang activity may be closely related to school, although few gang-related homicides

TABLE 1. GANG AND NON-GANG HOMICIDES IN HOUSTON (1990-1994).

Characteristics	Gang	Non-Gang
Suspect (when known):		
Age (mean and range)	18.6 (14-38)	28.2 (12-84)
% Male	100	90.9
% Asian	7.1	1.7
% African-American	21.4	56.0
% Hispanic	64.2	26.0
% White	7.1	16.4
	(N=56)	(N=2,050)
Victim:		
Age (mean and range)	21.0 (6-59)	31.3 (0-93)
% Male	92.9	83.8
% Asian	10.0	2.6
% African-American	27.1	49.2
% Hispanic	45.7	28.4
% White	17.1	19.6
	(N=70)	(N=2,642)
% Intra-Racial Homicide:		
Asian	100.0	33.9
African-American	83.3	71.0
Hispanic	61.1	56.4
White	50.0	38.0
	(N=56)	(N=2,050)
Relationship:		
% Acquaintance (non family)	37.8	36.9
% Stranger	56.6	35.6
Premise:		
% Street	40.0	17.0
% Residence	7.1	21.2
Peak Killing Months:	Oct. & Nov. (15.7% each) June, July, & Aug. (22.8%)	No pattern (Oct. 6.9%) June, July, & Aug. (27.4%)
% Not Cleared:	20.0 (14)	27.9 (737)

actually occurred at school. The following story of a homicide later determined to be gang-related by HPD reflects the possible impact of school relationships in the gang-homicide nexus:

Herbert Grant Jr., 18, and an Alief Hastings High School student fought after a pushing incident at a party Friday for about 75 students of Stratford High School, which Grant formerly attended. Homicide Sgt. James Yarbrough said Hastings and Alief Elsik high school students arrived at the party, causing friction. The party was held after Friday night's football game in which Hastings defeated Stratford 40-14. Grant played defensive tackle for Stratford last year. "The people involved in the incident wanted it to be a fair fight," Yarbrough said. "They only wanted Grant and the other student to fight, but it didn't end that way." Witnesses said William Silva, a Hastings dropout, pulled a gun during the fight and shot at the ground, then shot Grant once in the head (Perry 1990: C-11).

Another story three years later shows the extent to which school officials were concerned about gang violence.

As threats echoed between two westside gangs in the wake of a weekend killing, police and residents were preparing for the worst and hoping it was all just talk Monday. Joseph Cedric "C-Dog" Paddio Jr., a 16-year-old Elsik High School student, was beaten and shot to death Saturday night as he attended an unsupervised Halloween party. Paddio has been identified as a member of the Rolling 60s, a small gang of African-Americans. Paddio's alleged killer has been identified as a member of the Lords of Alief, a large Hispanic gang active in the same area. The Rolling 60s, saying they want revenge for Paddio's murder, have launched a campaign of threats. Callers identifying themselves as members of the Lords of Alief gang told the *Houston Chronicle* Monday their gang outnumbers the Rolling 60s by 100-to-1. One professed gang member said if the Rolling 60s retaliate, the Lords of Alief "won't just pay back, we'll exterminate them." Security at Elsik and Hastings high schools, where members of both gangs attend classes, was heavy Monday. Alief Independent School District spokeswoman Ann Spears said, with the exception of a couple of "staredowns" in the Elsik cafeteria at lunch, both campuses remained relatively calm. The beefed-up security included school district officers and extra patrols by the Houston Police Department, continued as classes were dismissed Monday afternoon (Bardwell and Milling 1993: A-11)

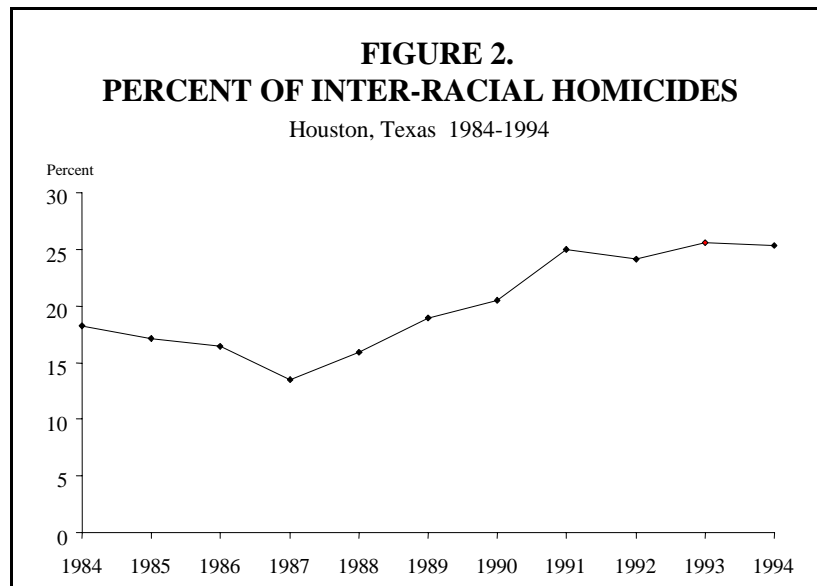
The shooting described above so heightened tensions among gang members at the high schools that officials rescheduled a football game between the two schools. The game, originally scheduled for a Friday night game, was played under increased security Saturday afternoon. Stories such as these help to explain the increased levels of gang homicides in October and November compared to the non-gang homicides.

Finally, the clearance rates for the two types of homicide are different. Only 20 of the gang homicides were still open or inactive compared to 28 percent for non-gang homicides. There are

three possible explanations for increased clearance rates for gang homicides. First, 84 percent of the gang homicides involved the use of some type of firearm compared to 71 percent for non-gang incidents. Cases involving firearm usage usually have higher clearance rates. Second, over half of the gang victims were under 18 years of age. Increased diligence on the part of police as a result of public uproar may result in greater effectiveness. Third, most gang homicides, by definition, involve a large number of witnesses (acquaintances of the victim and the suspect). The availability of witnesses increases greatly the likelihood that an arrest will be made.

While the HPD only began reporting gang activity as a motive in late 1989, there is certainly evidence in the Houston Chronicle data that suggests that gangs were active in Houston before the 1990s. Many gang homicide stories in the 1980s referred to prison gangs like the Mexican Mafia and the Texas Syndicate, both of which were actively involved in increases in prison homicide (Crouch and Marquart 1989). There were other isolated homicides, which appeared to be related to gang activity. In 1986, a group of young Asian men called the “Ghost Shadows” killed a man; in 1988, a man was killed when a group of 30 Hispanic youths fought near the convention center. In both instances, police denied that these were gang-related.

If we use the HPD definition of the beginning of gang homicides as 1989, however, we can create a “pre-gang” and “post-gang” comparison base to examine Houston homicide. Figure 2, for example, shows the percent of Houston homicides, which were inter-racial from 1984 to 1994 (based on incidents where the race of both the victim and the suspect are known). Clearly, inter-racial homicide fluctuated between 15 percent and 18 percent in the “pre-gang” era and then rose to around 25 percent in the “post-gang” period. Thus, increased gang activity may be related to increased violence between racial/ethnic groups.



The use of firearms as weapons in homicides is shown in Figure 3. There is a slight increase in the proportion of homicides involving firearms in general and handguns in particular from the “pre-gang” to the “post-gang” period. In 1992, 79 percent of all homicides in Houston involved the use of firearms, up from around 67 percent in the late 1980s. The pattern is the same for handguns. Gang homicide is often portrayed as involving the use of automatic weapons. Our data show that automatic weapons were used in 26 percent of the gang homicides involving firearms. Prior to 1989, all homicides involving handguns were coded “pistol.” Following that time, HPD provided more specific data, listing the type of firearm used. We show the proportion of homicides which involved the use of .45s, 9mms, automatic and semi-automatic rifles, and Uzis in Figure 3. The proportion rose quickly from 5 percent in 1989 to 15 percent in 1992 before leveling off. We do not know the extent to which this is an artifact of slowly changing reporting procedures or true increases, so these results should be interpreted cautiously.

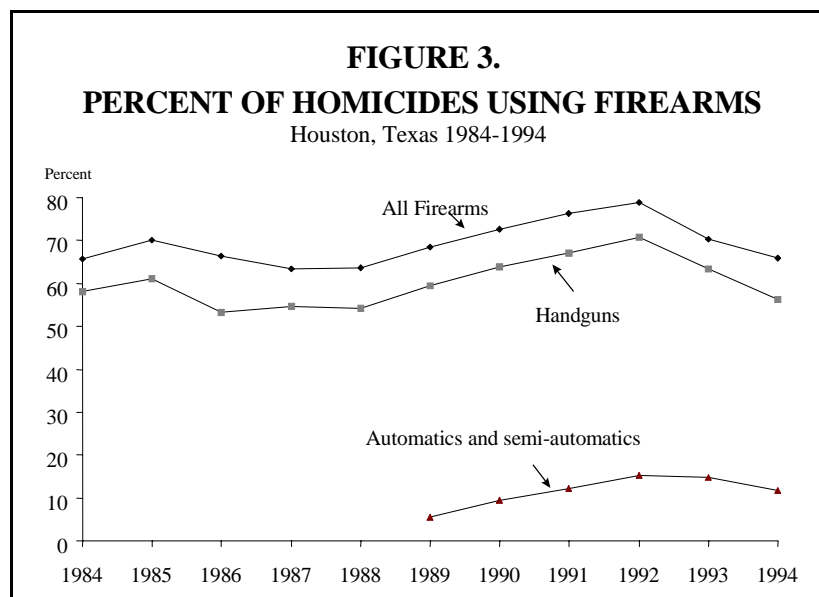
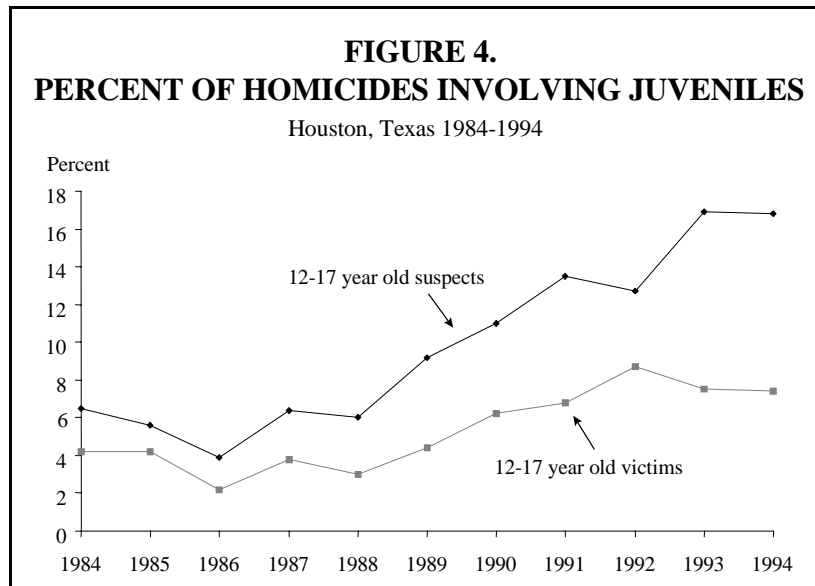


Figure 4 shows the proportion of homicides involving juvenile suspects (between 12 and 17) and juvenile victims (under 18). The percent of suspects whose age was known increased rapidly in the “post-gang” period, from around 6 percent in the mid-1980s to about 14 percent in the early 1990s. The proportion appears to make its ascent around 1987, which might be the true beginning of gang involvement in homicide. Since gang members often kill people much like themselves, the juvenile victim rate follows the pattern of the suspect rate. The proportion of victims under 18 that were murdered in the late 1980s averaged less than 4 percent. By 1992, the proportion had doubled to about 8 percent.



Discussion

Fear of gang violence seems to do little to deter involvement of young people. The attraction of gang involvement for students may be best observed in the following excerpt following a gang slaying.

Several students gathered outside the school Monday afternoon stopped short of condemning gang involvement. If you are a gang member “you’re protected no matter what,” Gomez said. “You know if you’re killed, you won’t be humiliated. They’re going to get them back ... like two for one.” As he began walking across the schoolyard, Gomez said: “Hell, you’re going to die sooner or later anyway.” (Bardwell and Milling 1993: A-11)

As gangs become more a part of life in the city, they impact every facet of our existence. The fear of violence they engender is highlighted by the homicides we see portrayed on the nightly

news and morning paper. This paper has shown how gang activity has changed the nature of homicide in Houston since the mid-1980s. Houston's gang homicide problem is not as great as that witnessed in California in the past two decades but it appears to be increasing. This relatively low percentage is surprising given Houston's past record of high homicide rates (Brewer and Damphousse 1997). Like other studies, we found that most gang homicides involve public incidents, with young males and Hispanics (far more than for non-gang homicides) and that most gang homicides are intra-racial. An exception to this finding is the increasing level of inter-racial homicides over the same period that gang behavior is thought to have flourished. This increase may reflect greater racial tension in increasingly heterogeneous neighborhoods. Perhaps the most striking findings are those of "relationship" and "time-of-year." It seems clear that gang homicides often involved individuals who knew one another and the homicide pattern followed the school calendar (peaking in the late Fall and declining during Winter and Spring breaks).

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Today's Music And Youth Violence

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“Gangsta rap” music has been criticized for its glorification of graphic violence, misogynic messages, and hate-filled ideology. Fear has been expressed that these lyrics incite youths to engage in violent acts. “Gangsta rap” needs to be examined in the context of a society that has become increasingly saturated with violence. Several cases in which violent music lyrics appeared to provide the additional impetus needed for unbonded youths to engage in violent acts are highlighted. Proposals for censorship ignore the real factors underlying why millions of youths listen to this music. Fromm’s theory of malignant aggression is presented as a framework to understand the fascination of some individuals and cultures with acts of cruelty and destructiveness.

A Society Saturated With Violence

“Destroy all girls.” That’s what the slogan advised. It was carefully placed on the laundry-instructions inside thousands of pants, boxer shorts, T-shirts, and sweat shirts marketed to young male teenagers. One mother who was washing her son’s T-shirt did not like it and complained to the sporting goods store where she had purchased it. Her actions produced dramatic results. The store discontinued the clothing line and a national debate ensued.

What’s all the fuss about? The manufacturers defended the practice as a sales gimmick to attract aggressive young male adolescent buyers. The company had considered the slogan “Kill your parents,” but apparently decided that “Destroy all girls” would generate more sales. One company spokesperson dismissed the possibility of the slogan leading to acts of violence against girls as “a bit too ridiculous” (“Retailer pulls apparel with offensive slogan,” 1997).

The slogan in context

Is this issue worth worrying about? Do violent words incite youths to engage in violent behavior? Proponents of free speech argue that the slogan, in and of itself, is harmless. The slogan, however, does not exist in and of itself; it appears in the context of a society that has become saturated with violence in recent years (Heide, 1997b). Films and television shows, including the evening news, have become increasingly violent over the last two decades (Levin and Fox, 1985; Prothrow-Stith and Weissman, 1991; Fox and Levin, 1994). Experts estimate that, on the average, youths in the United States watch 45 violent acts on television every day, with most of them committed with handguns (Myers, 1992). An American Psychological Association study confirmed that children who view two to four hours of television violence daily will see 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence before finishing elementary school (Wheeler, 1993). If the viewing period is extended to the late teens, these youths will have observed about 200,000 violent acts. These figures may be even higher for youths who watch cable programs and R-rated movies on home VCRs (Sleek, 1994).

Research spanning more than 30 years indicates that exposure to television violence is related to violent behavior (Wheeler, 1993). For example, studies have found that aggressive children who have difficulty in school and in relating to peers tend to watch more television (Sleek, 1994). In addition, adolescent deviance and decreased inhibitions to violence have been correlated to witnessing violence (Prothrow-Stith and Weissman, 1991).

Perhaps, even more alarming than the thousands of children watching violent programs are the large numbers of youths who witness violence first hand in their neighborhoods, schools, and homes. The exposure to violence among inner-city youths is especially astounding (Jenkins and Bell, 1994). In a 1992 study, 203 African-American students in a public high school in an inner city Chicago community were surveyed. The area in which the school was located had a long-established reputation as a poor and violent area. It had ranked third in homicides during the year the study was conducted. Among these youths, 80 percent of whom qualified for some type of public assistance, 43 percent reported that they had seen a killing, and 59 percent reported that someone close to them had been killed. The percentages of adolescents who reported exposure to shootings were even higher: 66 percent knew someone close to them who had been shot, 61 percent had witnessed a shooting, and 48 percent had been shot-at themselves (Bell, 1994).

To many of today's young people, the world is a violent place. This image is particularly glamorized in the music known as "gangsta rap." Rappers, such as Ice T, Tu Pac, Spice One, MC8, Eightball and MJG, and Geto Boys sing about robbing, raping, and killing which they claim is part of everyday life in "the hood" for low-income members of society, particularly African-Americans. The lyrics in "gangsta rap" music, similar to the scenes in televised violence, would seem likely to have a disinhibiting and desensitizing effect on individuals who listen to them repeatedly. Although the correlation between "gangsta rap" music and violence has not been established, recent research has provided some empirical evidence that misogynous (hate-filled) rap music was related to sexually aggressive behavior by men against women (Barongan and Hall, 1995).

Unbonded Youths And Gangsta Rap

When I was growing up, my friends and I chanted, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Unfortunately, these lyrics are not true for many young Americans in the 1990s. In today's society words can and do provide the springboard for some youths to kill. In several of my recent cases, violent music lyrics appeared to provide the additional impetus needed for unbonded youths to kill (Heide, 1997a).⁷

⁷ The cases of Donnell and Tommy originally appeared in a 1997 editorial entitled "Killing Words" written by the author and published in the International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 4,(1): 3-8.

The case of Donnell

Donnell, a handsome 17-year-old African-American youth, was charged with three armed robberies of convenience stores and two homicides in connection with them. In all three of these incidents, the youth allegedly fired shots from his handgun. In the last two incidents, Donnell reportedly fired directly at a store clerk in each of the stores, killing both of them. The State indicted the adolescent as an adult with multiple charges, including two counts of first degree murder, and announced its intention to seek the death penalty. Prior to trial, a plea agreement was reached, wherein Donnell avoided a possible death sentence by agreeing to plead guilty to two counts of second degree murder and one count of armed robbery.

Prior to the sentencing hearing, defense counsel contacted me for assistance in gaining understanding of their client and his involvement in these crimes. Defense counsel related that Donnell had been raised for most of his life in a Christian home by his grandparents, who were known to be stable and good-valued people. His grandfather was a hardworking man, who provided well for his family. My evaluation verified that Donnell had his own room at his grandparents' home and was essentially raised as an only child by grandparents who loved and doted on him. He lived a middle-to-upper-middle-class life. The family lived in a beautiful home on about five acres of land with a pool, tennis court, and basketball court. A boy who had a college fund set up for him and a family business to go into was robbing and killing people. The obvious question was "why"?

Thorough assessment in the case of Donnell revealed a confluence of factors that contributed to his violent behavior. Donnell's personality development was low. He had not reached the level of personality development where he could see that he was accountable for his behavior and that he had choices. Rather, he thought and acted like a much younger child (Heide, 1992, 1997a).

Donnell's restricted personality development was partly due to the chaotic nature of his first few years of life. Donnell experienced early abandonment by both his biological parents and repeated breaks in the bonding process. It is questionable whether he ever bonded to anyone, including the grandparents who loved him dearly. There was evidence to suggest that during the short time that he lived with his mother, Donnell might have been neglected and possibly abused.

As a young adolescent, Donnell lived in several households with different ways of relating and standards for behavior, and did not learn responsible behavior. He spent a short stay with his mother when he was about 14. During the two-to-three years preceding his arrest for the robbery/homicides, Donnell was living with his father, who was abusing cocaine. While staying with his father, Donnell rarely went to school. He associated increasingly with delinquent youths who lived in low income neighborhoods known to be violent and was arrested for delinquent behavior on a few occasions. Although it was clear to the family, to the school, and to the juvenile justice system that Donnell needed help, no meaningful intervention occurred.

In addition to the low personality development and unfavorable influences in his early childhood and adolescence, psychological testing revealed that Donnell was of dull-normal intelligence. Donnell also had some brain damage, which appeared to have been present from birth.

During his middle adolescence, Donnell also became heavily involved in listening to “gangsta rap” music. The messages in the songs clearly influenced him. When I listened to several recordings after speaking with Donnell, I discovered that some of the responses that he gave to my questions were lyrics from the songs. For example, when I asked Donnell how come he shot the clerk immediately upon entering the store, he replied that he had gotten “trigga happy,” one of the recordings sung by the rapper known as Spice One.

The case of Tommy

I was retained by defense counsel to evaluate 14-year-old Tommy, the younger of two white brothers charged with killing their parents, prior to the Court’s ruling on the State’s motion to transfer this boy to adult court. Tommy, similar to Donnell, appeared to have been an unbonded and low maturity youth, who idealized his older brother Bill. Psychological testing revealed no apparent pathology.

My evaluation and extensive corroborative data strongly suggested that Bill had pressured Tommy into participating in the double homicide. Tommy related that he listened to “mainly hard core rap music” after Bill introduced him to it. When asked, he named Spice One, Lynch Mob, Ice Cube, ODB, Method Man, Cypress Hill, Wu Tang, and 2 Pac as groups to which they listened.

I was unable to evaluate Bill due to the apparent conflict of interest. Several of Bill’s friends told police that Bill had become increasingly preoccupied with guns, gangs, and killings in the months preceding the murders. They related that Bill was heavily absorbed in “gangsta rap” and was “a wigger.” He had a fascination with guns and drive-by shootings, and was trying to join a gang. He allegedly bragged he could get a gun if he wanted one. Bill reportedly said on several occasions that prison was the way to go and that he expected to wind up in jail. Bill told one friend that if he killed his parents “it would be for the money.” Tommy indicated that Bill emptied his parents’ safe, which contained several hundred dollars during the homicidal incident.

The case of Dwight

Dwight, a 17-year-old boy was referred for a competency and sanity evaluation. He had allegedly kidnapped a small child, beaten her severely, and attempted to rape her. He stopped the vicious attack upon the victim when he heard voices approaching and fled. Dwight was another low maturity, unbonded youth. Consultation with his parents revealed a significant medical history. Dwight was deprived of oxygen at birth, was diagnosed as having attention deficit hyperactive disorder, was dyslexic, and had a history of epilepsy.

In addition to medical trauma, clinical interviews with Dwight and his parents indicated that both parents emotionally neglected Dwight. Dwight's father did not have much interaction with his son when he was a child. Dwight's mother was emotionally unavailable to Dwight for the first seven years of his life because of her mental illness.

Dwight was a victim of emotional incest. He was expected to take on a parent-type role in the sense of caretaking for his mother, who had a serious medical condition, as well as a significant mental health history. Dwight, as a young child, witnessed extreme forms of violence initiated by his mother. These acts undermined his sense of safety and trust in his environment.

Dwight had few accomplishments of which he could be proud. He had difficulty maintaining passing grades in his special education classes and dropped out. His abilities at sports were noticeably compromised by his neurological problems. He had difficulty making friends and never had a girlfriend. He had some familiarity with gangs, more as "a wannabe" than as a gang member.

There was one area where Dwight had gained some proficiency. He did have extensive knowledge of "gangsta rap" music and was pleased by his ability to remember these songs and to sing them. He acknowledged that he had a good memory for auditory learning.

Dwight listened to Tu Paq, Snoop Doggy Dog, Coolio, 69 Boys and 12 Gauge. Dwight played the cassette called "Doggy Style" by Snoop Doggy Dog often at home. He described the eleven songs on the album and was able to provide the words to them. His favorite song was a song called "Gin and Juice," which was interesting because the only hard liquor that he reported liking was gin and he drank it with juice. Dwight was able to sing this song for me. He knew the words, the beat, and the harmony. He said in this song Snoop was telling people how to live life. The ladies in the song were portrayed like "bitches, like trash." Snoop would have sex with them and throw them away.

Dwight indicated he got into gangster rap late in the seventh grade when he was about thirteen. Prior to this time he had been into "heavy metal" music during the fifth and sixth grades. His favorite song was "Runaway Train" by Soul Asylum, which was dedicated to kids who ran away or were kidnapped.

Theoretical And Policy Implications

Clinical case studies such as those above are essential in generating hypotheses about the causes of and solutions to particular problems and, on occasion, in providing disconfirming evidence for a prevailing hypothesis (Rosenhan and Seligman 1989). They also serve to enhance understanding of particular individuals (See e.g., Wertham 1941; Reinhardt 1970; Gardiner 1985; Leyton 1990; Heide 1992). Causation cannot be determined with the case study method, however, because this method investigates only individuals who have a particular problem or fall into a particular category -- in this case, adolescents arrested for serious violent crimes -- and does not focus on those who do not (Rosenhan and Seligman 1989).

It is important to note that millions of youths are exposed to the words of “gangsta rap” every day. Of this large number, some will become absorbed in the messages and the lifestyle. The number who are propelled by these words into violent behavior is unknown.

The case studies of Donnell, Tommy, and Dwight suggest that youths who are most likely to be influenced to take action by violent words are those who believe that they have little or nothing left to lose. Children and teens who would appear to be at higher risk of being negatively effected by “gangsta rap” are the kids who are angry, frequently in pain, and too often unattached due to experiences in their home and neighborhood environments. Despite their often cool veneer, they lack self esteem and often the inner and outer resources to improve their lives. They do not hold conventional values or dreams. Often chronically bored, they frequently use drugs and alcohol to anesthetize themselves and commit crimes impulsively. They live in the moment. To them, thrills -- and lives -- are cheap.

In recent years, politicians from both the Democratic and Republican parties have expressed concern over the violent themes reflected in the record and movie industries. Political figures have called for more societally responsible programming with the threat of censorship looming on the horizon if the warning goes unheeded. Censorship alone ignores the real factors underlying why some young listeners turn to violent behavior. It is a quick fix solution that avoids significant societal examination and change.

Fromm’s theory of malignant aggression

Erich Fromm (1973) took a comprehensive look at the phenomena of violent behavior approximately 25 years ago. He identified a type of aggression that is specifically a human phenomenon. He called this unique type of destructiveness “malignant aggression” because it is biologically non-adaptive. Fromm theorized that some individuals and cultures seem to be driven by a “passion” rooted within their individual and collective “characters” to destroy members of their own species when there exists no rational gain, either biological or economic, to be accrued from such destructive behavior.

Fromm’s theory of malignant aggression provides a theoretical framework in which to view acts of cruelty and destructiveness. It can be used to investigate research questions and to formulate policy decisions. Although “gangsta rap” did not exist when Fromm was conceptualizing his theory, the attraction that it holds for many youths today is easily explained by Fromm’s work.

Fromm maintained that human beings have existential needs, as well as physiological needs. He specifically identified five existential needs: frame of orientation and an object of devotion, rootedness, unity, effectiveness, and excitation and stimulation. He argued persuasively that one of the possible answers to the existential needs is destructiveness. Fromm’s theory of malignant aggression is concerned with the identification of various “passions” within an individual’s character that are associated with constructive and destructive responses to these existential needs. Discussion of these needs suggests that certain individuals are more likely to be influenced by the violent and misogynistic messages in “gangsta rap” than others.

According to Fromm, every human being needs a map of the world and a focal point. Individuals who have a frame of orientation are able to act purposely and consistently. Those who do not have this blueprint feel confused and unsettled. The need for a frame of orientation is so intense that people who lack this map can be highly suggestible and succumb to irrational doctrines. These individuals are at increased risk of joining cults and following the precepts and behavior without discernment.

An object of devotion is closely related to one's frame of orientation. It is the goal to which an individual's strives. A constructive frame of orientation could be making a positive difference in this world, being all that one can be, or approaching life as a series of lessons to learn and master. Objects of devotion consistent with making a positive difference in this world could be selected from one's work, family, or community involvement. For example, a youth could decide to become a physician and aspire to discover a cure for AIDS; another could desire to raise his or her children as good valued, contributing members of society; and still another could choose to get politically involved to work towards eradicating discrimination and helping the poor (Fromm, 1973).

Youths who embrace the messages in "gangsta rap" are at greater risk of adopting a destructive frame of orientation and a related object of devotion. Youths who habitually listen to "gangsta rap" are likely to view the world as a dangerous place, to see women in a disparaging way, and to perceive extensive alcohol and illicit drug use as desirable. As in the case of Donnell, they may actively choose to become a gangster and to engage in violent behavior, such as robbing and killing other people.

Fromm maintained that human beings have an intense need to feel a sense of rootedness. They desire to undo the feeling of separateness that originates with separation from mother's womb at birth. Individuals who are independent and productive are capable of truly loving other people. Fromm argued that those who lack the foundation to forge healthy alliances are more likely to be involved in symbiotic, narcissistic, or destructive relationships (Fromm, 1973). "Gangsta rap" music extols these types of unhealthy relationships. This type of rap music encourages symbiotic relationships by portraying males as controlling females in sadistic-masochistic patterns. The lyrics reinforce narcissism by proclaiming that what the gangster wants is his to take. Many songs openly promote destructiveness through words that relate that the gangster destroys others, particularly women, who have no further use to him or who get in his way.

Fromm explained that people also have a need to feel a sense of unity with themselves, with others, and with the environment. One can achieve this sense of peace in a constructive way by developing human reason and loving others. Fromm identified several negative ways that individuals can attain this sense of unity. They can anesthetize their consciousness with alcohol and drugs and compulsive involvement in some activities, such as sex. They can become over-identified with one's social role to the point that they simply react and no longer think or feel about what they are doing. They can subordinate all their energies to one all-consuming passion, such as the passion for destructiveness, power, or fame (Fromm, 1973). "Gangsta rap"

encourages these types of behaviors by extolling substance abuse and sexual excess. It entices youth to lose themselves by adopting the glorified life of a gangster. The role of the gangster is glamorized in a way that could lead adolescents to develop a craving for the gangster's perceived power, his notoriety, and his thirst for destructiveness.

Human beings also have a need to effect; they need to feel that they can impact on other people and on the environment. Fromm explained that individuals can effect others through love or through fear and suffering. Similarly, they can relate to things in a constructive or destructive way. According to Fromm, the feeling that one is ineffective as a human being is a very painful and difficult experience. "Man will do almost anything to overcome it, from drug and work addiction, to cruelty and murder" (p. 265). Youths who are most likely to embrace the messages of "gangsta rap" are those who lack accomplishments in more constructive arenas. Youths who are doing poorly in school, are uninvolved in sports or other extracurricular activities, are unemployed, and do not have a steady mate are at greater risk of succumbing to these messages than youths who are doing well in school and in their communities.

Fromm stated that people have a need for excitation and stimulation. He explained that there are two types of stimuli: simple and activating. Simple stimuli are neurophysiologically-based and almost reflex-like. The individual "reacts" to them rather than consciously deliberating. He runs away, attacks, or becomes sexually excited. After repeated exposure to simple stimuli, people become habituated to them and stop reacting. Accordingly, human beings will no longer react to these stimuli when they are repeated beyond a certain threshold unless intensified or changed in content. When habituation occurs to a violent stimulus, for example, more intense violent behaviors are needed for the viewers' bodies to react and to register physiological indicators of distress (Fromm, 1973; Donnerstein, 1984; Donnerstein, Linz, and Penrod 1987; Solomon, Schmidt, and Ardragna, 1990).

Activating stimuli require more involvement from the person. A poem, a musical composition, a written report, an architectural design or a landscaping project, for example, require more of a response from an individual. Stimuli of this type invite the person to become active and to put forth an effort. Activating stimuli are always changing because human beings are acting upon them. People who are striving for a goal are responding to activating stimuli; those who are driven to respond to some event are responding to simple stimuli.

Fromm maintained that modern society was overwrought with simple stimuli and that the media was largely responsible. His words, published close to 25 years ago, are even more true today. "Contemporary life in industrial society operates almost entirely with such simple stimuli. What is stimulated are such drives as sexual desire, greed, sadism, destructiveness, narcissism; these stimuli are mediated through movies, TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the commodity market" (p. 270).

Fromm hypothesized that human beings' need for stimulation and excitation is one of the primary factors responsible for acts of destructiveness and cruelty. He argued that it is much easier for people to get excited by anger, rage, cruelty, and the urge to destroy than by

constructive interest and love. In contrast to constructive behaviors, Fromm pointed out that one does not need patience, discipline, critical thinking, concentration, and frustration tolerance to engage in acts of cruelty and destructiveness (Fromm, 1973). Opportunities to vent negative emotions and to behave destructively are immediately available in the United States, with its easy access to handguns and more sophisticated weapons of destruction.

Boredom and chronic depression are closely related to stimulation. Fromm explained that there are three types of persons. The first type is capable of responding to activating stimuli and is rarely bored. The second type is chronically bored, but is able to compensate for his boredom by availing himself of frequently changing simple stimuli, such as drinking, doing drugs, having sex, watching TV, and going to parties. The third type, also chronically bored, is unable to obtain excitement by normal stimulation and is most likely to turn to acts of cruelty and destructiveness.

Fromm related that genuine acts of malignant aggression can take two forms. Spontaneous acts, such as those that occur in wartime or in vengeance, are less of concern than character-rooted acts of malignant aggression. Spontaneous acts of malignant aggression are typically isolated and infrequent acts that occur under extreme conditions unlikely to be repeated. Character-rooted acts of malignant aggression are more pernicious because, as the name suggests, they are rooted in an individual's personality.

Fromm identified two character structures that threaten human health and survival: the sadistic and necrophilous. The sadistic character engages in acts of cruelty to demonstrate power and control. The necrophilous character is further along the continuum of destructiveness. A person with this character structure is excited by death and destructiveness. Fromm used the term necrophilia in the broad sense of destructiveness; sexual necrophilia would be among the most extreme perversions that might be committed by someone with this character structure (Fromm, 1973).

The messages in "gangsta rap" are of the simple stimuli variety. As discussed above, they advocate substance abuse, partying, and compulsive sex. Power and control are recurring themes. Avenues to achieve power and control include acts of human cruelty and destructiveness. Some of the "gangstas" portrayed in these songs could easily fit Fromm's sadistic character; others, his necrophilous category.

About 10 percent of the 90 juvenile murderers whom I have evaluated truly seemed to enjoy telling me about their murderous activities. Their acts of destructiveness seemed to be characterological. These adolescents laughed heartily as they recounted the homicidal events and related that they experienced the victim's dying gestures as "funny."

My clinical experiences with homicidal youths have indicated that the best source of data in uncovering this destructive pattern, however, was not typically the adolescents' description of their homicidal activities. Many youths were understandably guarded in their accounts of the murders. Due to the depth of my clinical interviews and the broad array of topics explored, unguarded remarks made about seemingly "innocuous" material provided invaluable data

regarding sadistic and destructive character traits. These content areas include music and movie preferences, as well as girlfriends, pets, activities, and careers.

Youths with these destructive traits would often become animated as they related incidents when they scared others by catching them off-guard, intimidated others by their persona, beat others badly, and destroyed other living things, such as dogs, cats, and lizards. Along these lines, one of the youths above related that he would like to be a mortician when he got older because he finds death “funny sometimes and just interesting.” When probed, this youth recalled really enjoying a movie where people died from doing “stupid things,” such as bungee jumping. The idea of being a mortician was appealing to this boy because he explained that they make a lot of money, that people are always dying, and that he has always been fascinated by death.

In summary, “gangsta rap” is likely to fill a void for some youths today. For those youths who are drifting aimlessly, the life of a gangster can provide a way to live (a frame of orientation) and a goal of “being somebody” (object of devotion). The music tells youths how to relate to others in symbiotic and destructive ways (rootedness) and how to anesthetize consciousness through drugs, alcohol, sex, partying (unity). It provides reinforcement for engaging in fun, exciting and destructive activities that require little effort (simple stimuli) as a way to impact on society (need to effect). It advocates sadistic and destructive acts as viable ways to achieve power and control in human relationships in today’s world.

Banning “gangsta rap” is not going to stem the tide of adolescent destructiveness, which has increased dramatically since the mid 1980s. A society responding to the challenges faced by today’s youths is needed. “Gangsta rap” appears to provide a way for some youths to meet the five existential needs identified by Fromm. Parents, the educational system, communities, government leaders, medical and mental health professionals, the media, and individuals must join together to find meaningful and effective ways for adolescents in the 1990s to fulfill their existential needs (Heide, 1996, 1997b).

As we rapidly approach the millennium, several questions need to be answered in this regard: Why do millions of kids listen to this music? How come fantasies of cruelty and destructiveness are attractive to youths from the mainstream of society as well as from its margins? Do these violent lyrics, perhaps, fill some cathartic need for some of these youths? For example, does listening to “gangsta rap” drain off stress for some well-positioned and committed youths who embrace the core culture and feel pressured to succeed? And most importantly, what direction and guidance can we as adults provide to increase the likelihood that kids today will choose constructive blueprints for life, positive goals, healthy relationships, and moral ways to effect others and to live their lives?

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Area Research on Homicide: Discussion Notes

Lin Huff-Corzine, University of Central Florida

In this final session of our 1997 Homicide Research Working Group workshop, there were three papers presented. As one might expect, fewer people were in attendance at this session. Nonetheless, the presentations were excellent and the discussion lively. Darrell Cheatwood, organizer, allowed questions following each paper rather than wait until the end of the time period.

“Comparing Apples to Oranges to Lemons: Reconciling Historical Homicide Data” by Vance McLaughlin examines recorded homicides in Savannah for 1896-1903 and 1986-1993. As part of his opening, McLaughlin made two statements many of us may be able to relate to and which I feel compelled to include here: “WILL WORK FOR DATA” and “LET THE STREETS RUN RED WITH BLOOD, I’M DOING RESEARCH.” Anybody need a new office door sign?

His presentation focused on the inconsistencies among his data sources and the difficulties researchers often face when trying to verify homicide events. In addition, some comments were made about specific findings.

Questions and comments from the audience arose primarily in relationship to specific findings. Dick Block pointed out that in historical studies of Omaha and other western towns, the same pattern of police killings were found as in McLaughlin’s examination of Savannah. If a police officer is killed, it most likely happens within one year of joining the force and in the more dangerous parts of town, near brothels, on wharfs, etc. According to McLaughlin, likely assignments for newer officers are located in the less desirable enforcement areas. One could argue as well that these newer hires also have the least experience and are therefore more likely to make deadly mistakes. Roland Chilton followed with a question about the race of offenders and victims. McLaughlin asserted that there was a one-third decrease in the rate of killing among whites between the earlier and later time periods. Among blacks, the number of both offenders and victims increased, but once “drug homicides” are controlled for, there is no significant difference between the two time periods.

Next, Anne Lee presented “Marital Status and Homicide.” A true demographer, Lee offered the audience more numbers relating homicide to marital status than we could even begin to digest in the few minutes of discussion allotted for this purpose. Specifically, Lee pointed out that compared to earlier demographic studies (1939-41 and 1959-61), homicide and other mortality data by marital status allowed researchers to examine race, sex, and age of victims beginning in 1981. Thus, her presentation focused on these differences. In this report, I will include questions, interpretations and insights that are most closely linked to improving data or that may stimulate further research.

Consistent with other research, it appears that women who live with men have a higher rate of homicide. Marital status, which includes “never married,” “married,” “separated,” and “divorced,” however, does not provide a complete picture of marital-like relationships. To examine this in more depth, we need to know about co-habiting partners and common-law marriages as well. As Roland Chilton pointed out women were more “sheltered” by fathers, brothers and other male relatives even if they never married in 1949-51. Research focusing on the victim-offender relationship might shed new light on why women are killed by comparing the older and newer data used in Lee’s paper. We also need some operationalization of “independence” or “autonomy,” perhaps using economic measures to help us better understand the differences between homicide rates for women reported in the earlier and more recent data sets. Certainly, as our discussion indicated, women of the 1990s are more likely to have better incomes and more independence than they were 40 or more years ago and they are more likely to divorce. But there are some nuances that we did not debate. For example, we are assuming that women feel more independent now and that they divorce for that reason. But just because women now make more money does not mean it directly influences their perceptions of autonomy or independence. In addition, we did not discuss the influence of how long people were married. Even 40 years ago, people did not live as long so life-long marriage commitments may have involved fewer years which could reduce the chance of divorce irrespective of other factors like religion, spousal roles in the family or women’s perceptions of independence. Dick Block may have been trying to get at the length (or one’s expectations about the length) of marriages when he questioned the possible influence of maternal mortality on women’s homicide rates. Could it be that death related to childbirth could mask women’s risk of homicide in the earlier data sets, 1939-41 and 1959-61?

A final question that could lead to further research was raised by Becky Block. As she noted, if someone a person is close to and live with dies, risk of death for that person increases. Often, this finding has been explained away by asserting that the survivor loses their will to live. But true to her spatial interests, Block asks if it could indicate the general risk of the area in which they live. Research examining homicide among the elderly may lend support to this argument in that most find the elderly are more likely to be killed in their own homes and by strangers. Examining the marital status of elderly homicide victims and the spatial distribution of these events could shed even more light on this intriguing question.

The final paper, “Homicide in Australia,” was presented by Peter Grabosky. Fortunate for those living in Australia, the homicide rate is much lower there than in the U.S., but this could also be fortunate for studies of homicide as well. In Australia, they have begun collecting data on 47 variables which could be related to the homicide event so our discussion, just as the possible research which could be done using such a vast array of data, became detective-like in our search for causes of homicide.

Knowing that Australia has strict gun control laws, Jay Corzine asked about the type of weapons used in homicides. Over the last half century or so, it seems that only about 3% of homicides are committed with handguns compared to over 50% in the U.S. Lois Mock asked about if percent of all homicides that are women has been significantly increasing since 1989 or if this is due to

increasing homicide rates in general. The former seems to be the case with women representing 40% of Australia's homicide victims, but there are no clear answers why at this time. Finally, Dick Block asked about the urban/rural distribution of homicides in Australia. Grabosky said that homicide is much more of a rural than urban phenomenon and believed this may be explained by a variety of factors including the reluctance of some jurisdictions to restrict access to guns as completely as others and the profound social disadvantages of certain groups, especially those of Aboriginal ancestry, who are concentrated in rural areas.

Appendix A Agenda

HRWG 1997 Intensive Workshop
Theme: The Policy/Practice/Research Connection
May 27, 1997

June 8

6:30–9:00 p.m.
Reception and Discussion Led by David Kennedy—What Works

June 9

7–8
Breakfast in the Dining Room

8–8:15
Hello

8:15–10:50
Theme Session 1: Building Bridges Between Research and Practice, Youth Violence Prevention

This session, features four collaborations between theory/ research and policy/practice in youth violence. What unique perspectives and skills are required of researchers and practitioners in bridging the gaps and building linkages, what are the barriers to establishing these linkages, and how can they be surmounted? Meeting participants will have a chance to “kick the tires” of four collaborations, asking them how they did it, the problems and how they overcame them, the results of their interventions, and what steps can or should be taken to disseminate these prevention models and integrate them into public policy.

Organized and moderated by Lois Mock (NIJ), Linda Dahlberg (CID), and Bob Flewelling (RTI).

Collaborators

Rich Rosenfeld and Troy Miles, Americorp, from a high risk youth mentoring program in St. Louis

Anthony Braga or David Kennedy and Lt. Gary French from the Boston collaborative youth violence prevention project

Don Faggiani and Colleen McLaughlin, who report on a brief intervention model being applied to youthful violent injury patients

Peter Greenwood will wear two hats in his discussion of the California Wellness Foundation

10:50–11:00

Break

11–12:30

Violent Offenders-Motives and History

Moderator- James Trudeau

Garen Wintemute- Prior Criminal History and Other Determinants of Later Criminal Activity among Authorized Purchasers of Handguns

Everett Lee- Infanticides Related to Characteristics of Parents

Range Hustson, Diedre Anglin, Sgt John Yarbrough, Jared Strote, Michael Canter, Kimberly Hardaway- “Law Enforcement Forced Assisted Suicide or Suicide by Cop” LA data on situations in which a suicidal person provokes the police into killing him.

Henry Brownstein- “Prior Experience with Drugs and Violence of Young People Under Custody for Homicide” Preliminary findings from two studies involving interviews with boys and girls under custody for homicide.

12:30–1:45

Lunch and Business Session

1:45–2:50

The Rewarding and Painful Process of Collaboration to Prevent Domestic Violence

Jackie Campbell, Carolyn Rebecca Block, Deborah Spungen and Linda Langford

This workshop is focused on the advantages, disadvantages, problems, and opportunities of collaborative intimate violence research. It brings together four projects in which collaboration between research and practitioners, academics and policy makers, public health and public safety agencies, and/or community-level and federal or state entities is a central component.

2:50–3:00

Break

3:00–5:00

Demo/Poster/Literature Session

Joel Garner Session Coordinator

Presenters so far:

John Firman, IACP; The Two Richmonds: An Implementation of the Recommendations of

Murder in America Summit Report

Skip Sigmon- How to use NCJRS

Kaye Marz: How to use Nat. Archive of CJ Data

Victoria Brewer, Kelly R. Damphousse, and Derek Paulsen

A Comparison of U.S. and Canadian Findings on Uxoricide Risk for Women and Children Sired by Previous Partners

Orest Fedorowicz, Statistics Canada- The Canadian Homicide Data Set

Pamela Lattimore- NIJ Update: Homicide Changes in Eight Cities

Jiafang Chen: Weapons Used in Homicide 1920–1991: Changing Patterns by Ethnicity, Sex, Age, and Region

Richard Block: Firearms Ownership and Firearms Victimization: A Comparison of Nine Western Industrialized Societies in the International Crime Victim Survey-1996

6–9:00

Dinner and Round Table Discussions

Dinner Roundtables: At dinner on Monday. For those of you who were asking form more person-to-person discussion time, this is a chance to hold a nitty-gritty focused discussion with a few (5–10) other interested people over dinner. It is not a presentation session. (But one person can get the discussion ball rolling).

Topics:

Linda Langford: Issues in Homicide Case Definition from a Study of Domestic Homicide

June 10

7:30–8:30 a.m.

Breakfast in the Dining Room

8:30–10:15

The Brady Act: Evaluation Consideration and Where to Go From Here

This session will explore the efficacy of the Brady Act in reducing gun crime (especially violent gun crime), methodological concerns with such an evaluation, legal versus illegal methods of acquiring firearms that may confound findings, and recommendations to better assess the impact of Brady and improve its enforcement potential.

Moderator: Steven Roth, New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Joseph Vince, Chief of Firearms Division, ATF: “Provisions and Intent of the Brady Act” , and Wallace Nelson, Head of Regulatory Bureau, ATF: “How Brady Was Performed—indicators of “success” (Joe and Wally will collaboratively present in tandem)

Daniel Webster, John Hopkins University: “Methodological Consideration in Evaluating the Effects of the Brady Act”

Dean Rojek, University of Georgia: “ Illegal Methods of Acquiring Firearms and their Impact on the Effectiveness of the Brady Act”

Gary Kleck, Florida State University: “Methods to Improve Evaluation of Brady, with Positive Potential for Law Enforcement”

10:00–10:15

Break

10:15–10:45

Linking Data Sources to Understand Firearms Related Deaths

Barbara Pearce, Ralph Tanz, Childrens Memorial Hospital, “Issues in Linking Confidential Pediatric Firearm-Related Deaths”

Judith Lovely, Damir Kukek, Department of Justice Canada, “Firearms Deaths: A Prospective Study in Selected Provinces”

10:45–12:15

Comparing and Coordinating Information on Lethal Violence

Epidemiology and Lethal Violence: Allan Abrahamse (organizer, moderator).

A few short presentations about different techniques followed by a vigorous discussion that might lead, some day, to a partial consensus on what we ought to expect from somebody who claims to know what the future holds. It might also inspire some of us to agree to try a couple of common approaches to datasets with the idea of a session in 1998 contrasting the results.

Al Blumstein, Jacqueline Chohen, John Engberg, George Tita. “Spatial Dependence of Retaliatory Homicides”

Chris Rasche. Open discussion session on the “Tipping Point.” Is this a real epidemiological phenomena and could it apply to homicide? The application of public health ideas to Criminal Justice.

Roland Chilton. “Race, Class, April 9, 1998 and Homicide: A Proposal of Work for other HRWG Members”

Allan Abrahamse: Relating Demographic Trends to Lethal Violence

12:15–1:15

Lunch

1:30–4:45

Tour of the ATF Training Center

Reception at Joel Garner’s House 5:30–6:45

7:00–9:30

Dinner

The speaker is still not confirmed

June 11

7:30–8:30

Breakfast

8:30–9:45

What Works? Using Firearm Tracing Information in Violence Reduction Intervention Projects

John Firman- A Work in Progress: The IACP Gun Trafficking Interdiction Project

Paul Blackman- “The Limitations on BATF Tracing Data for Policymaking and Criminological Research”

Joe Vince or other TF expert Anthony Braga and David Kennedy- “Information Foundations for Violence Reduction Projects: Firearm Tracing Data”

9:45–10:00

Break

10–12:00

Gangs, Drugs, and Youth Violence

Moderator Ron Farrell

Kelly Damphouse, Victoria Brewer, Cary Adkinson: Gangs, Race/Ethnicity and Houston

Homicide in the 1990's

Kathleen Heide: Today's Music and Youth Violence

George Tita, Al Blumstein, Jackie Chohen- The Gang-Drug-Gun Nexus Evidence from Pittsburgh

Buddy Howell, Cheryl Maxson, David Curry: A Comparison of Responses to the National Youth Gang Survey and UCR Data

12-1:30

Lunch and Business Session

1:30-2:30

Area Research on Homicide

Moderator Derral Cheatwood

Vance McLaughlin. "Homicide in Savannah: 186-1903; 1986-1993" Citizen versus citizen homicide, homicides done by the government, research methods for analyzing homicides from the last century

Cheryl Maxson "New Data on Juvenile Homicide in Los Angeles"

Abb Lee: Marital Status and Homicide

Peter Grabosky: Homicide in Australia

3-6

Tour of Antietam Battlefield

(Vans will be provided)

7:15

Dinner at the South Mountain Inn

(at your expense)

*1998: Bridging the Gaps:
Collaborations on Lethal Violence
Research, Theory, and Prevention
Policy*

*Proceedings of the 1998 Meeting
of the Homicide Research
Working Group*

1998 Keynote Address

School Shootings and School Violence: What's Going On and Why?

Kathleen M. Heide, Professor, Department of Criminology
University of South Florida, Tampa

Abstract

Recent data, although limited, suggest that school shootings and school violence have increased in the U.S. Social factors that are converging in the 1990s appear to be contributing to the youth violence problem. These factors include institutional change, societal influences, and situational factors that affect some youths more than others. These variables make children and adolescents more vulnerable to behaving inappropriately and coping maladaptively than youths who have different life experiences. After the discussion of these social factors and their effects, individual factors that identify youths at greater risk of choosing violent solutions to life's challenges are highlighted.

Introduction

The massacre at Jonesboro Middle School on March 24, 1998, happened in a small rural Southern community and became a global event. Time and Newsweek, weekly news magazines that sell millions of copies in the U.S. and across the world, prominently displayed the two young killers, ages 11 and 13, on their covers. These two "kids" were accused of killing four girls and a teacher and wounding 10 more in an ambush of their fellow students.

These two boys did more than allegedly take the lives of five people, however. In a matter of seconds, armed with semiautomatic weapons, they forever changed the reality of millions of children in the United States who now wonder when they go to school each morning whether they too will be shot by a fellow classmate.

This fear of annihilation by "kids" in the hall or on the playground is a new phenomenon. I can honestly say that when I was growing up the thought that I would be shot and killed when I went out to recess or responded to a fire alarm in my school building never even entered my mind -- not even for a split second. I have asked audiences of professionals and university students did they ever fear as a child that they would be shot by a fellow classmate. Always, my question is met with denial and disbelief, typically followed by anguish and sadness.

Multiple School Shootings in U.S. Schools

Data indicate that the type of school shooting exemplified by the Jonesboro massacre has become more common in recent years. These shootings are characterized by multiple victims, often randomly selected. The killings seem to be an explosion of feeling dumped on an

amorphous target rather than directed at a particular individual whom the assailant perceives has injured him.

I found 14 incidents involving multiple shootings of this type from 1993 through 1998. A very different picture emerged when I examined these incidents by calendar years (1/1-12/31) and by academic years (8/1-6/30). As revealed in Table 1, 8 of the 14 incidents of multiple shootings in schools occurred during the most recent school year, 1997-1998.

Table 1. Multiple Shootings by Calendar and Academic Year

<u>Calendar year</u>		<u>Academic year</u>	
1993	2 incidents	92/93	2 incidents
1994	0	93/94	0
1995	2	94/95	0
1996	1	95/96	3
1997	4	96/97	1
1998	5	97/98	8

Table 2 provides additional data on these multiple school shootings. Perusal of these incidents leads to four observations. Drawing firm conclusions at this point is ill-advised given the small number of cases and the possibility that the academic year 1997-98 might be an anomalous year. With these caveats in mind, it behooves us to note the following:

First, the killings and wounding have become more concentrated over the time frame. Over the five to six year period, 30 people were killed and 57 were wounded in these 14 incidents of multiple school shootings. During the academic year 1997-1998, 18 of the 30 dead (60 percent) were killed and 52 of the 57 wounded (91 percent) were injured.

Second, the number of victims killed or wounded per incident has increased. Although the numbers of incidents are very small to permit conclusions, an increasing trend is noticeable. The number of victims killed or wounded in the two incidents in 1992/93 averaged 2; for the three incidents in 1995/96, it averaged 3; for the one incident in 1996/97, it was 4; and for the 8 incidents in 1997/98, it averaged 9.

Third, the age of the assailants appears to be getting younger over time. Of 15 youths involved in the 14 incidents over the five to six year time frame, 8 were 14 or under. Of the 9 youths involved in the academic year 1997/98, 7 were 14 or under. The high proportion of youths under 14 involved in the school homicides is in stark contrast to figures on juvenile homicide offenders in general. Approximately 88 percent of juveniles arrested for murder in the U.S. are ages 15, 16, and 17 years old (Heide, 1999).

Table 2. Multiple Shootings in U.S. Schools

<i>Year (Academic)</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Suspect Age</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>No. Dead</i>	<i>No. Wounded</i>
1992/93	2	17	Grayson, KY (1/18/93)	2	0
		17	Amityville, NY (2/11/93)	1	1
				(3)	(1)
<hr/>					
1993/94	0			0	0
<hr/>					
1994/95	0			0	0
<hr/>					
1995/96	3	16	Blackville, SC (10/12/95)	2	0
		17	Lynnville, TN (11/15/95)	2	1
		14	Moses Lake, WA (2/2/96)	3	1
				(7)	(2)
<hr/>					
1996/97	1	16	Bethel, AL (2/19/97)	2	2
<hr/>					
1997/98	8	16	Pearl, MS (10/1/97)	3	7
		14	W. Paducah, KY (12/1/97)	3	5
		14	Stamps, AR (12/15/97)	-	2
		11, 13	Jonesboro, AR (3/24/98)	5	10
		14	Edinboro, PA (4/24/98)	1	3
		14	Pomona, CA (4/28/98)	2	1
		15	Springfield, OR (5/21/98)	4	22
		14	Richmond, VA (6/15/98)	0	2
				(18)	(52)
<hr/>					
Total For 14 Incidents					
1992-1998				(30)	(57)
<i>Academic year 97/98</i>				<i>(60%)</i>	<i>(91%)</i>

School Violence in U.S. Schools

School shootings and mass killings are among the most extreme acts of violence in our nation's schools. There are less deadly violent victimizations that, unlike multiple school shootings, occur daily in schools across the United States and leave students, parents, and communities in the grips of fear. A 1993 national school-based survey of a representative sample of high school students revealed, for example, that more than 4 percent of responding students missed a day of school each month because they feared for their public safety at school or while traveling to or from school. In a 1994 national survey of parents with children in public school, 40 percent of parents of high school students related that they were worried about their child's safety in school or on their way to, and from, school. In the 1994 National League of Cities survey of 700 communities across the nation, 80 percent of respondents reported that violence was a serious problem in classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds; 40 percent indicated that violence in schools had risen noticeably during the past five years. Moreover, of the schools participating in the survey, 25 percent related that students had died or sustained injuries for which they were hospitalized as a result of violence (Arnette and Walsleben, 1998).

Recently released data from the 1989 and 1995 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that criminal violent victimizations in school have increased (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). These data provide snapshots of students' reports of crime in school during the six months preceding the surveys taken in 1989 and 1995. Nationally representative samples of approximately 10,000 students between the ages of 12 and 19 were surveyed during the two time periods. To be eligible to participate, respondents had to have been in school at some point during the six months preceding the interview. School crime was defined as occurring in the school building, on school grounds, or on a school bus. Criminal violent victimization was defined as involving physical attacks (assaults) or the taking of property by force, weapons, or threats (robberies).

Compared to 1989, students in 1995 were more likely to report being the victim of a criminal violent incident. In 1989, 3.4 percent of students surveyed indicated that they had been physically attacked or had property taken by actual or threatened violence; in 1995, the percentage increased to 4.2 percent. While those percentages may seem small, when extrapolated to the population at risk, the magnitude of the problem of school violence is more apparent. Caution is advised when extrapolating from a sample of 10,000 to the universe, in this case, 21,554,000. With this caveat in mind, extrapolation would suggest that more than 1,000,000 students were the victims of a violent crime in a school building, on school grounds, or on a school bus sometime between the beginning of July 1994 and the end of June 1995.

Comparison of the 1989 and 1995 data revealed several important findings with respect to gender, age, and grade level. Violent victimizations rose for both boys and girls. However, while boys were more likely to be the victims of violent school crimes, the increase in the percentage of girls who reported violent victimizations (from 2.0 percent to 3.3 percent) was higher than that for boys (from 4.8 percent to 5.1 percent).

The percentage of youths reporting violent victimization in school was inversely related to age for youths ages 12 through 17 during both time periods. In 1995, the percentages of youths who reported being a victim of violent crime decreased consistently from 6.8 percent of 12-year-olds to 1.9 percent of 17-year-olds. Similarly, the percentage of youths who indicated that they had been a victim of violent crime was negatively associated with grade level. In 1995, the percentages of school children who reported violent criminal victimization decreased continuously from 6.7 percent of six graders to 1.7 percent of twelfth graders.

Compared to 1989, students in 1995 were more likely to report that street gangs were in their school (15.3 percent vs. 28.2 percent) and that drugs were available at their school (64.8 percent vs. 67.2 percent). Interestingly, close inspection of these data revealed that these problems appear to be correlated with criminal violent victimization at school. Student reports of having been a victim of a violent crime at school were related to street gang presence in their schools and to student reports of drug availability in their schools.

Data on the presence of guns in school, only available for 1995, were alarming. Of those surveyed, 12.7 percent reported that within the last six months they knew someone who brought a gun to school and 5.3 percent indicated that they had seen a student with a gun at school during this time period. These figures, when extrapolated, would suggest that more than 3,000,000 students knew someone who brought a gun to school and more than 1,000,000 students had actually seen a student with a gun in school within a six month period (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

Social Factors Contributing to School Violence And Shootings¹

The data on school shootings and school violence indicate that there is a problem in our schools with respect to violent criminal victimization and suggest it is getting worse over time. For generations, the 3 R's have stood for "reading, writing, and arithmetic." If we don't want the 3 R's to become "reading, writing, and run for cover" for this generation of school children, we need to understand why we are seeing more violence by youths in the 1990s in schools and other settings.

There are social factors that are converging in the 1990s that appear to be contributing to the youth violence problem. These factors include institutional change, societal influences, and situational factors that affect some youths in American society more than others. These variables make children and adolescents more vulnerable to behaving inappropriately and coping maladaptively than youths who have different life experiences. After discussing these social factors and their effects, I will turn to individual factors that identify youths at greater risk of choosing violent solutions to life's challenges.

¹ Some of the material contained in the remainder of this paper previously appeared in Heide, 1997, 1999.

Institutional Change

Dramatic changes have occurred in societal institutions over the last generation that seriously impact on the socialization of children. Historically, families, religious institutions, schools, and communities played major roles in helping children become productive citizens and contributing members of society. Today, these institutions have undergone major changes that have severely curtailed their sphere of influence.

The change in family structure is by far the most serious. More than in other generations, children and adolescents today are growing up in an era beset by "an overall decline of the extent and influence of the family from the extended multigenerational family, to the nuclear family, to the single parent family, to the 'no parent' family of street children" (Friedman 1993, p. 509). With the decline of the family in the United States, the task of socializing children has become more difficult. More children today, compared to the past, are being raised by single mothers. Due to the demands placed on single parents, many children today, relative to their counterparts of even a generation ago, are not learning acceptable ways of behaving. In many households, again due to changes in the family, positive male role models are not available. As a result, appropriate ways of acting as a man are not being taught. In addition, values are not being reinforced; codes of right and wrong are not being effectively transmitted.

The declining power of religious institutions has also taken place over the last generation. Churches and synagogues have traditionally reinforced acceptable codes of behavior and standards of right and wrong. They have played an important role in value transmission. As Church attendance by families declined, many youth in America lost an important voice in the call to behave as law-abiding and moral people.

The loss of authority of teachers and other school personnel has coincided with the deteriorating influence of the family and the churches. Teachers report today that much of their time is spent trying to maintain order in their classrooms. Respect for the teacher's authority, once freely accorded by students and their parents, is no longer a given. For example, seventy percent of the high school students surveyed in the Public Agenda's report, Getting by: What American teenagers really think about their schools, indicated that disruptive students were a serious problem in their schools (Sloan, 1997). Teachers complain that when they try to discipline students, they frequently are challenged by parents who want to know why they are "picking on" their children.

Not surprisingly, this generation of youths, more than other generations, is beset by a loss of communities. The decline in adult authority at the level of families, religious institutions, and schools has clearly impacted on the role of adults in community. For generations, neighbors frequently kept an eye out on children playing in the schoolyard or congregating on the street corner. Adults would step in to offer guidance and even correct children for minor transgressions, such as smoking or using bad language. But rarely do adults get involved anymore in the 1990s. Some maintain that they are too busy with work and other commitments. Others, however, insist that they are afraid that they will be rebuffed by some adults for daring to

correct others' children or that they will be harmed by youths who resent their intrusion into the youths' lives.

Societal Influences

In addition to fundamental institutional change, youths growing up in the 1990s are subjected to societal influences that send confusing messages to them. These include the crisis in leadership and the lack of heroes available today to serve as role models. The saturation of violence in society and changes with respect to firearms are also perplexing to many.

In contrast to previous generations, children and adolescents today are living in a country that has been experiencing a crisis in leadership and lack of heroes. In the past, U.S. Presidents, successful entertainers, and legendary sports figures were presented to the youth of America as people to emulate. In the 1990s, the personal ethics and behavior of many of these individuals have been seriously questioned. Government leaders who break campaign promises and involve themselves in money and sex scandals have shown that many politicians today deny responsibility for their behavior and their decisions. When leaders of our country are no longer expected to keep their word and are not held accountable, some youths become cynical about following societal dictates. When police officers are viewed on nationwide television repeatedly beating an African-American in their custody and are proven to be lying on the witness stand in the case of another African-American man, adolescents, particularly those from minority groups, increasingly lose faith in a criminal justice system that is supposed to protect them and to dispense equal justice. When world class athletes and notorious gangsta rappers are accused of violent criminal acts, some adolescents feel free to adopt similar courses of behavior.

At a time when heroes and moral figures appear to be sorely lacking, American society has become saturated with violence. 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). Violent videogames and gangsta rap music provide graphic scenes and messages of violence. Scores of youths have seen violence in their own homes and in their neighborhoods. To many youths today, the world is a violent place. Accordingly, many youths feel compelled to carry guns and are prepared to use violence when they perceive the situation as warranting it (Heide, 1997, 1998).

Not only do our youths grow up in a world that encourages violence, those in the United States are increasingly finding themselves surrounded with the tools which make acts of violence quick and easy (Sheley and Wright, 1995). Changes in the absolute number of guns in society, the availability of guns to juveniles, the increased firepower of today's firearms, and the attitudes towards the appropriate use of guns are factors that affect children and adolescents in our culture. Recent research has demonstrated that youth involvement in violence has been associated with the frequency of carrying a weapon (Resnick et al., 1997). Moreover, the increase in murders by juveniles in recent years in the U.S. has been tied directly to their use of firearms, particularly handguns (Blumstein, 1995; Fox, 1996; Kennedy, 1997; Snyder,

Sickmund, and Poe-Yamagata, 1997). Recent studies have also shown that juvenile homicide offenders like to equip themselves with newer and more powerful weapons (Kennedy, 1997), which they appear to be acquiring illegally from firearms dealers. The proliferation of guns in American society and the advent of firearms with increased firepower has been accompanied with a change in attitudes towards firearms. In past generations, youths were taught that guns were to be used for self-defense and/or hunting. In the 1990s, cultural messages embedded in music, television, and movies emphasize firearms as a symbol of power and the instrument to use to redress grievances, no matter how trivial.

Situational Factors

The above discussion has suggested that youths growing up in the 1990s are more vulnerable to choosing antisocial means to resolve difficulties and fulfill needs because they live in a society where major institutions of socialization have declined. In addition, they are more vulnerable than their counterparts of the past to respond in violent ways because they are subjected to societal influences that are demoralizing and that also promote violence. Against this background are youths who are subjected to certain situations spared to others, which make particular children and adolescents even more vulnerable to behaving maladaptively. These are youths who are abused, neglected, raised in poverty, using drugs and/or alcohol, and involved in gangs. The prevalence of each of these situational factors has increased in the 1990s, meaning that the numbers of youths in the United States who are exposed to these conditions have also risen (Heide, 1999).

Many of today's youth grow up in families that foster violent and destructive behaviors. Despite a decrease in the number of young Americans, reports of child abuse have greatly increased in recent years (United States Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993; Snyder, Sickmund, and Poe-Yamagata, 1997). Although the majority of children who are victims or witnesses of family violence do not grow up to victimize others (Smith and Thornberry, 1995), a growing body of research indicates that these children are at greater risk of engaging in delinquent behavior (see Heide, 1999). There is a growing body of evidence indicating that exposure to parental violence is also related to violent behavior (Thornberry, 1994; Howell et al., 1995; Heide, 1999). Some youths who are abused do not bond with others. Consequently, they develop no values or empathy to insulate them from killing innocent human beings. Other abused juveniles are angry and in pain, and vent their rage by destroying others (Magid and McKelvey, 1987).

Neglect frequently accompanies abuse, but it can also exist independently, often manifesting itself as the common failure of parents to supervise their children (Heide, 1992). During the last 25 years, several significant changes in family structures have contributed to decreasing levels of child supervision and have placed adolescents 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 (Heide, 1997). Given these familial changes, the time that youths spend with their parents and the amount of guidance that they

receive have significantly decreased during the past several decades (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995).

The percentage of children living in poverty in the 1990s has also increased as a byproduct of the changes in family structure over the last two decades. The escalation in single-female-headed households occasioned by the rise in births to unwed females and in divorce has resulted in more children being raised in poverty (Garfinkel and McLanahan, 1986; Wright and Wright, 1995). Research indicates that about three out of four households headed by single females live in poverty at least some of the time and one third are chronically poor. As we approach the millennium, it appears that one out of every three children under age 6 lives below the poverty line (Stephens, 1997). The rise in the number of children living in poverty means that more children today have limited access to health care, including mental health services, and lack other resources to improve the quality of their lives. Some of these youths will fare well; others will cope maladaptively by engaging in criminal behaviors and by using drugs and alcohol.

Drug use surveys indicate that the rates of illicit drug use by adolescents, which had declined during the 1980s (Osgood, 1995; White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1997) are again rising in the 1990s, and are much higher than they were a generation ago. This increase has been observed among younger, as well as older adolescents ("Drug use up, study shows," 1997). The percentage of youths reporting past month use of marijuana, stimulants, hallucinogens, and inhalants rose from 1991 through 1994 (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1995). A 1993-1994 survey of junior high (grades 6 through 8) and high school students (grades 9 through 12) conducted by the Parent Resource Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE) found a strong link in both groups between use of alcohol and marijuana and several measures of violent behavior, including carrying a gun to school and threatening to harm another person (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1995). These findings are consistent with those from a growing number of studies indicating a substantial relationship between adolescent violence and substance abuse (See, e.g., Elliott et al., 1989; Johnston et al., 1993; Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1995; Osgood, 1995). Although using alcohol or drugs does not cause youths to commit crimes or be violent, it is likely that chemical abuse affects their judgment about engaging in criminal activity and their perceptions during the event. In addition, it is highly probable, in light of prior research, that the use of alcohol and drugs by many children and adolescents is "more a reflection of shared influences on a wide variety of deviant behavior than of any causal relationship" (Osgood, 1995, p. 32). Several researchers have found that various types of deviant or illegal behaviors are positively related to one another (See, e.g., Osgood et al., 1988; Elliott, Huizinga, and Menard, 1989; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Dembo et al., 1992; Resnick et al., 1997).

The numbers of gangs and of gang memberships have increased significantly during the last decade in the United States. Although most noticeable in large urban areas, gangs have also started to appear in suburban areas and smaller towns across America (Howell, 1994, 1995; U.S. Department of Justice, 1997). Substantial evidence exists that gangs have become increasingly responsible for a disproportionate amount of violence (See, e.g., Howell, 1995; Thornberry and Burch, 1997), which appears to be largely due to the ready availability of firearms and more

sophisticated weaponry (See, e.g, Block and Block, 1995; Sheley and Wright, 1995). The presence of gangs in schools, which almost doubled from 1989 to 1995 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998), has also been associated with increased victimization in schools.

Youths at Higher Risk of Behaving Violently

We have identified the social factors impinging on American youth today that make growing up in the 1990s more difficult for them than for children and adolescents growing up a generation ago. We have looked beyond the major changes in our institutions and societal influences to situational factors that affect some children in the United States and consequently put added strain on them. The question becomes, can we do better at isolating the youths who are most vulnerable to behaving violently in society? The number of school shootings, and even the number of juvenile homicides, is far too small to predict which youths will respond in such a fashion. However, my clinical experiences evaluating approximately 100 violent adolescents, mostly murderers, suggest that the possession of certain personality characteristics, particularly when combined with involvement in certain types of activities, put youths at higher risk of choosing violent solutions.

I have frequently observed certain personality characteristics present in the case histories of youths who engage in homicidal behavior. These include low self esteem and an inability to deal with strong negative feelings. These youths are often angry, depressed, alienated from mainstream society, and chronically bored. Their judgment is poor and their behavior is impulsive.

These personality characteristics are not necessarily indicative of youths who will behave violently. The "ante" is raised, however, when these youths are drawn to nihilistic activities and become heavily involved in them. Youths who are preoccupied with fantasy games, such as Dungeons and Dragons, can blur fantasy with reality. Those who become extremely involved in cult and fringe groups that promulgate separation and hate may come to see "outsiders" as the enemy or as inferior human beings that are expendable. Kids who become absorbed in violent media (movies, music, videogames) and are obsessed with acts of dying and destructiveness are aligning themselves with destructive and violent themes. Children and adolescents who are cruel to animals and to more vulnerable human beings (younger children, smaller kids, the mentally ill, homeless people, elderly adults) are displaying sadistic behavior that warrants concern. Youths who are drawn to malignant acts of aggression lack empathy and may see death and destruction as the means to achieve power and control and to fulfill other existential needs in maladaptive ways (Fromm, 1973).

The Cumulative Effect in Context

In summary, changes in major institutions, societal influences, and situational factors affecting some children in the 1990s appear to be significant factors influencing the behaviors of youths,

including those who resort to violence. These variables likely interact with the personality characteristics of particular adolescents, making some youths more likely to engage in violent behavior than others.

In essence, for many youths, the effect of these factors is cumulative. Put succinctly, many youths growing up in the 1990s feel that they have little or nothing left to lose. These are the kids who are angry, frequently in pain, and often unattached to other human beings due to experiences in their home and neighborhood environments. Many of these youngsters lack self-esteem and the resources to improve their lives. They are living in a society experiencing increases in youths having sex and babies outside of marriage (Friedman, 1992), using drugs, participating in criminal violence, and dying violently whether through homicide or suicide. As a result, many young people today are severely alienated (Lerner, 1994). They do not hold conventional values or dreams. Often chronically bored, they use drugs, alcohol, and sex to numb themselves and commit crimes for fun. They live in the moment. To them, thrills -- and lives -- are cheap.

Biological factors also may be intricately entwined in the homicidal equation in many cases. A growing body of research suggests that criminal behavior may be linked at least in some cases to genetics, neurological factors, and biochemical reactions (Widom, 1991; Lewis, 1992; Pincus, 1993; Heide, 1999).

Sociobiologists have maintained that criminal behavior is influenced by both individual biological factors and social and environmental conditions (Jeffrey, 1979). Lewis's extensive studies on juvenile murderers led her to conclude that genetic factors and biological vulnerabilities, particularly when severe, predispose certain individuals to respond violently. Her research suggests that if these individuals are subjected to intense psychological, social, and environmental stressors that exceed their ability to cope, violent expression is more likely to result, particularly among males (Lewis et al., 1989; Lewis et al., 1991; Lewis, 1992). Lewis' theory of neuropsychiatric vulnerability also received support in a larger study involving urban delinquents in Chicago (Hughes et al., 1991).

What can be done to reverse the upward surge in violence by today's juveniles? Neutralizing or eliminating the variables that contribute to youths becoming involved in violent incidents may require a generation or more to accomplish (Heide, 1999). My clinical experiences with violent youths have convinced me that change must include parents, the educational system, communities, government leaders, medical and mental health professionals, the media, and individuals joining together to raise a healthier next generation and to build a more peaceful society. I will provide a blueprint to reduce youth violence in the United States during my talk on Friday. (This paper is contained later in these proceedings.)

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Session 1: Essentials of Violence Surveillance Data

Responses by Lois Fingerhut

What's the difference in the mortality vs. morbidity e-codes for injuries by firearms?

Lois: The code structures are basically the same, the question is how they're used. They're generally a pretty good match.

What about the sibling crime idea, questions on homicide as the outcome of something else? So these e-codes, since they don't reflect specific crimes, can't be used to trace sibling crimes?

Lois: The forms only have good information on this if the physician puts the description of how the event happened on the form. The ICECI, a new classification coding from Injury Violence has a very detailed violence module which might help.

My experience using ICD-9 was difficult, it was hard to access firearms data from this.

Lois: ICD-10 is even harder. Using CDC Wonder (interactive software) it's pretty simple, however, to get to any mortality data.

Do the differences in ICD-10 provide for better descriptions of types of firearms?

Lois: It is better in ICD-10, but is still not complete.

Are there materials for doing historical analysis?

Lois: Yes, there are materials on which the codes are comparable to each other across time.

How do you determine "undetermined intent"?

Lois: When there isn't enough information to classify, we classify as undetermined intent.

How good are the surveillance systems on mortality and morbidity for looking at homicide and lethal violence?

Lois: Better than they were. For example, in the emergency room data, very often due to malpractice and confidentiality issues, information on intent does not get into the record. But, there is a big movement to get ER personnel to enter the full information. The national data aren't the best source or the most ideal source, but they are all we have access to. I think it will be a good source eventually on lethal data. There is more money going into the training of

individuals for coding on these items, much more extensive training for physicians. Physicians have to become convinced that prevention is part of their job.

Regarding discharge data - this discharge data is only overnight. In New York state, if someone doesn't stay overnight they weren't considered a discharge.

Lois: I will check on that.

Hargarten: Increasingly, people are not even being admitted. They are being observed for 8, 10, or 22 hours but not admitted, so researchers need to look carefully at state data. And, having practiced in an ER, it is very hard to get information in the ER on the incident. The Crash Outcome Data Evaluation made links between medical and law enforcement data. That's an exciting possibility, since there are inherent limits to hospital or morbidity data.

When you have information on children, do you also have data on parents?

Lois: Not from what we have in the mortality or morbidity data, we might have that in the National Health Interview Survey.

What's available on tape versus CD-ROM?

Lois: Everything on data tapes is available on CD-ROM. I haven't used the CD-ROM, but my understanding is that the level of the data on the CD-ROM is the same. I understand you can get these free from ICPSR, if not call or e-mail me to get them.

Are there specific reliability issues regarding child homicides?

Lois: In the details on cause it may be a problem. Child abuse is underrepresented on death certificates. Much more is reported in other sources.

Injury Surveillance Using Data From the National Center for Health Statistics

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Abstract

The mission of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is to provide statistical information that will guide actions and policies to improve the health of the American people. Many of the data systems at NCHS can be used for injury surveillance. Most of these collect reliable data that are E-coded. In this presentation, I will explain what is meant by national injury surveillance and why E-codes are crucial for good surveillance. In addition, the individual data systems will be explored in terms of their strengths and weaknesses for injury surveillance. Detailed information on data availability and documentation can be found on the NCHS home pages: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/>.

What is an injury surveillance system and why is it important?

Very broadly and very simply, a surveillance system is a data driven system that continually or periodically collects information and data for a particular purpose. In this case we are focused on injuries - optimally the system will be able to be used to describe the circumstances, the person injured, the timing, the location and perhaps most importantly both the diagnosis of the injury and the external cause of the injury. The external causes of injury are most often identified in the data classification system by the World Health Organization's internationally accepted classification scheme, the International Classification of Disease. Currently, the Ninth revision is in use in this country. The chapter of the Ninth revision of the ICD on the external causes is commonly referred to the E-code chapter.

Why are E-codes important for surveillance?

E-codes help identify and prioritize injury problems. E-codes provide information about both the event during which the injury took place and about the individuals who were injured. When used correctly, E-codes recreate a picture of the specific circumstances of an injury including the "how" and the "where" the event occurred. (Children's Safety Network, 1998)

Value of E-codes: [based on unpublished material prepared by State of Minnesota]

- 1-Calculating costs associated with treatment of injuries related to specific causes
- 2-Development of community education programs to address injuries from particular causes
- 3-Evaluation of impact of local laws and regulations
- 4-Health system planning for program development
- 5-Identification of patterns in injury

The data that are captured with E-codes are used to measure trends, detect patterns and identify risk factors for injury. The data systems can be national, state or local. My role this morning is to focus on national systems.

My remarks are limited to national data systems from the NCHS- despite the fact that there are many other national sources for injury data . First and very importantly, NCHS data systems are designed to be useful as general purpose surveillance tools. Injury is but one component, and quite frankly, a small one, but an exceedingly important one. There are different ways one can classify NCHS surveillance systems, and for the purposes of this presentation, they will be dichotomized into ones that collect data on mortality vs. those that collect data on morbidity.

There are fundamental differences between E-code guidelines for mortality vs. those for morbidity.

Mortality:

- Single event
- Underlying cause
- Single code
- Explains death event
- "Undetermined" intent requires official confirmation
- No updates in between revisions

Morbidity:

- Multiple episodes of care/different settings
- Refers to proximal/principal diagnosis
- Multiple codes
- Explains cause of injury
- "Undetermined" defaulted-unintentional (pre-10/96)
- Annual updates

An example: An elderly female "accidentally" falls down the stairs and strikes her head on the wall. If she dies, the E-code on the death certificate is for an "Unintentional fall" as the fall was the underlying cause or initiating event. The injury to her head will be included on the death certificate, not as the underlying cause, but as a contributing cause. It will be coded from the death certificate but can only be found on the multiple cause of death data tapes. If she survives the fall and is taken to the emergency room, the principal diagnosis is related to her head injury and the relevant E-code on the medical record is for "striking against an object," as that is the proximal cause. If the information on the certificate is questionable as to the intent of the fall, that is if it could not be determined that the fall was unintentional or intentional (as in she was pushed), the code would be for a fall of undetermined intent. Until October 1996, the emergency department record would have been coded to unintentional as there was no code guideline allowing for undetermined intent; the default was to unintentional. For official morbidity coding guidelines, see: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/datawh/ftpserv/ftpicd9/ftpicd9.htm#guide>.

Mortality

E-code guidelines

Use an E-code for the underlying cause when the morbid condition is classifiable to ICD-9 800-999; assign E-code to initiating event (except when initial event was "trivial" leading to a more serious injury or if initial event was a slight injury (one that rarely causes death).

"Accident" due to disease condition: when a disease condition such as heart attack or alcoholism is indicated as the underlying cause of the injury event (accident), code to the injury event unless there is evidence that the death occurred prior to the event with few exceptions (one of which is accidents resulting from epilepsy).

For more detail, see: Instructions for Classifying the Underlying Cause-of-Death, 1992, at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/major/dvs/im.htm>.

National Vital Statistics System

The National Vital Statistics is used by most people to describe the epidemiology of injury mortality in this country. While most NCHS data systems are sample based, the national vital statistics system is universal in its coverage. NCHS mortality data can be analyzed at least 3 levels: national, state and county level surveillance. In the decentralized vital statistics of the U.S., death certificates are legal and statistical documents of the states, not of the Federal government. Some degree of standardization in the structure and content of the various death certificates used by the states is achieved by their willingness, for the most part, to adhere to a "model" certificate promulgated by NCHS.

Death Certificates

In the United States, two persons complete the information on the death certificate. The bottom half of the certificate is the medical certification of death which is completed by the attending physician, and in the case of injury generally by a medical examiner, or coroner; and the top half, which contains the demographic information, is completed by the funeral director, who also has the ultimate responsibility for filing the certificate with the appropriate state registration officials, who are custodians of the original records. The state registration officials also have the authority and responsibility to conduct queries for questionable or incomplete information (such as follow up for death whose cause is pending investigation), or where the particulars of an 'accident' or injury are not adequately described.

For injury-related deaths, the U.S. Standard Certificate of Death has a number of items including the date and time of the injury, whether the injury occurred at work, a description of how the injury occurred, the place of injury, and the actual street location of the injury. Clearly, the death

certificate is a potentially rich source of statistical information on injuries. It is also instructive to note what the standard death certificate does not ask regarding injuries. It does not, for example, ask explicitly about drug or alcohol involvement; and it does not clearly specify the degree of detail that is acceptable when describing how the injury occurred. Moreover, it does not include prompts specific for accidents that would encourage the medical provider to provide useful information in an automobile accident for example as to whether the decedent was the driver or a passenger.

Definition of underlying cause of death:

The disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death, or the circumstances of the accident or violence which produced the fatal injury.

Additional detail on the National Vital Statistics System can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/major/dvs/mortdata.htm>.

National Mortality Followback Survey (NMFS 1993):

The 1993 survey samples individuals aged 15 years or over who died in 1993. Forty- nine of the 50 State vital registration areas granted approval to sample their death certificates, as well as the independent vital registration areas of the District of Columbia and New York City. (South Dakota declined to participate in the NMFS due to State law restricting the use of death certificate information.) A sample of 22,957 death certificates from the Current Mortality Sample was drawn. To meet specific research needs, the sample included 9,636 death certificates selected with certainty. There is an over-sample of death certificates to obtain reliable numbers for important population subgroups; persons under age 35, women, and the black population.

The 1993 NMFS focused on five subject areas:

- Socioeconomic differentials in mortality

- Associations between risk factors and cause of death

- Disability

- Access and utilization of health care facilities in the last year of life

- Reliability of certain items reported on the death certificate

The 1993 NMFS is different from the five previous mortality followback surveys in several ways. It emphasizes deaths due to homicide, suicide, and unintentional injury. The subject areas are considerably broader. However, many previously-surveyed subject areas are included for trend analysis. The survey is the first to acquire national-level information from medical examiners and coroners. The complexity of the questionnaire necessitated telephone or in person interviews.

The 1993 NMFS was designed in collaboration with other agencies of the Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration. Several of these agencies provided funding through NCHS's Reimbursable Work Program. Results from the first release of data from the 1993 NMFS are available on the FTP server.

Additional detail on the survey can be found at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/major/nmfs/nmfs.htm>.

General Mortality Issues: (Rosenberg and Kochanek, 1995)

Completeness of Death Certificate Information

Completeness of reporting is a critical element in the effective use of death certificate information for injury prevention and control. For example, it is important to know who the person injured is in motor vehicle injuries, and to completely specify falls, and the type of weapon when a firearm is the cause.

How can this be addressed? For one thing, *better education of medical certifiers* is needed on how to complete the death certificate. NCHS has initiated a number of efforts directed at physicians to improve cause-of-death reporting beginning with two national workshops, one in 1989 and the other in 1991. These initiatives are continuing. A second approach to addressing this problem is *querying at the state level*. Death certificates with incomplete information on injuries should not be permitted to pass to the stage of processing without asking the medical certifier for sufficiently complete information to make it useful for injury surveillance. These initiatives need to be national in scope if they are to result in good information on which to base injury prevention programs.

Information Augmentation

It needs to be recognized that even if all the items on the death certificate were answered completely and accurately, there would still be need for additional information on injuries that is not routinely captured on the death certificate, or, if captured, not in a standard, uniform, and dependable way. Examples include whether drugs or alcohol may have been involved in the accident. Without a direct question to the certifier asking about substance abuse, one can expect as many studies have shown that the impact of substance abuse on injuries cannot be adequately measured using information on the standard death certificate. Additional information from another source is needed to *augment the information routinely collected* on the death certificate.

What kinds of augmentation are possible? One type is what NCHS calls "follow back" surveys. These are surveys using death certificates as a sampling frame that can be used to get additional information on deaths for a special subset of the decedent population, based on demographic characteristics or on causes of death. The 1993 National Mortality Follow back Survey (NMFS) was designed to provide national estimates of important characteristics of the 2,218,940 people

aged 15 years and older who died in 1993. Last conducted in 1986 (21); the National Mortality Follow back Survey focused on obtaining socioeconomic information such as income, and information on health care in the last year of life.

Another approach to augmenting information reported on the death certificate is by *linking information reported on the death certificate with that from another source*. For example, the 1993 national mortality follow back survey includes a component to link with abstracts of coroner/medical examiner records. This will not only augment information on the death certificate but will also be a useful basis for checking the reliability of the cause of death reported by the same medical examiner or coroner who completed the death certificate.

The death certificate can be linked to a variety of other sources including hospital records, health examination survey records, health interview records, and administrative records -- each of which can potentially enrich the mortality data base for injury research.

Validity and Reliability

The question of validity and reliability is one that suffuses information from the vital registration system. The death certificate, and in particular cause of death, is always a prime suspect in these investigations. Many studies have been published on the validity of cause of death reflected in the NCHS annotated bibliography of 128 such studies carried out over a period of 23 years, with an update published in 1991.

Some of these studies raise troubling questions regarding the medical certification of death, but these have been largely in the area of natural causes, or deaths related to disease processes of relatively long duration. For injuries, the cause of death tends to be more clear-cut and immediate in its fatal action. Nevertheless, *questions of validity do often arise regarding manner of death, that is, whether the injury was accidental, suicidal, or homicidal*. Only in-depth studies can shed light on this, and, even in some cases, the basic records will not reveal what the medical certifier has chosen not to report.

E-coded mortality data are useful to the extent that they reflect accurate, specific information about the circumstances surrounding the fatal injury-causing event that are recorded on the death certificate. The specificity of these data could be improved by:

- encouraging greater specificity in reporting and avoiding use of generalized codes, such as "fracture, cause unspecified", "unspecified accident" and "assault by unspecified means;"
- providing sufficient narrative detail in the item "how the injury occurred" on the death certificate in order to enhance the information on the cause-of-death section of the certificate. It is particularly important to identify when an agent (e.g., consumer product,

type of motor vehicle) is involved in an injury, as well as specific information about the agent and the injury scenario, since that information is not routinely captured in the E code.

- educating medical certifiers about the usefulness of E-coded mortality data. (McLoughlin, Annest, Fingerhut, et. al., 1997)

ICD 9 vs. ICD 10 for mortality (Fingerhut, Rosenberg, Kochanek and Pickett, 1998)

The United States will begin coding its national mortality data using ICD-10 beginning in 1999. Major changes have been made from ICD-9 to ICD-10 in terms of both diagnostics codes as well as external cause of injury codes. For example, the external cause of injury codes are no longer a supplementary chapter of the ICD. All ICD chapters are divided into an alphanumeric coding scheme of one letter and two numbers at the 3-digit level with decimal subdivisions for the 4th digit. Codes for external causes of injury are found in Chapter 20 and use letters V, W, and X- and thus are definitely not "E-codes". Injury diagnostic codes are found in Chapter 19 and use letters S and T. The codes in ICD-10 are multi-axial in concept, in that there are requisite codes for injury incidents for place of occurrence and for activity the victim was involved in when the death occurred. Transportation related mortality codes have undergone a major revision. The letter "V" is used for transportation related injuries with the first subdivisions being for the victim's mode of transport (for example, pedestrian, occupant, pedal cyclist); the third character identified the victim's counterpart or the circumstance of the accident (collision with vehicle, noncollision). The fourth character identifies the activity of the victim (driver, passenger) and whether the incident occurred in traffic or a non-traffic situation. Other examples of significant changes in this chapter: "fracture not otherwise specified" which was classified with Falls in ICD-9 is now classified with "exposure to unspecified factors". Homicide codes will now include more detailed codes for abuse, neglect and abandonment and contain codes for perpetrator. Late effects codes are now combined in one section rather than being placed with relevant sections of unintentional, suicide or undetermined intent.

Morbidity

National Surveys:

National Hospital Discharge Survey

In this survey, data are collected from a sample of records from a sample of hospitals. In 1995 data were collected for about 263,000 discharges from 466 hospitals. Data from this survey can be used to make national estimates of hospital discharges. The injury diagnostic information that is derived from this survey related primarily to the diagnosis, that is ICD 9 CM codes 800-999.

In 1994, only about half of the medical records for which an injury was the principal diagnosis had an accompanying E-code.- This proportion has increased remarkably to 64% in 1996 as the

number of states mandating e-codes has increased. *Information is likely in the detailed patient record but not on the summary face sheet from which the abstract information is gathered.*

Hospital records are for identification of severe nonfatal injury discharges not people. There can be multiple discharges for the same person.

For more information on the survey, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/major/nhcs/nhcs.htm#nhds>.

National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS) Emergency Department component

NCHS also conducts a family of surveys related to outpatient care. The one that is most useful for injury surveillance is the NHAMCS that was begun in 1992. In this survey, both ICD codes for injury diagnoses as well as for external causes of injury can be captured. In this survey, information is abstracted for a systematic random sample of visits during a randomly assigned 4-week reporting period.

In 1995, patient record forms were completed for 22,000 visits to the emergency department and for 28,000 visits to outpatient clinics. Overall, injuries represented about 40% of visits to the emergency department; approximately 85-90% of those visits had an associated E-code.

For more information on the survey, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/major/ahcd/ahcd1.htm>.

For detailed injury data from the NHAMCS-ED, see:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/products/pubs/pubd/series/sr13/pre-131/sr13_131.htm.

National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

Historically, the NHIS has not been a rich source of data on cause of injury. Data were collected in a national sample of households on conditions that either caused some kind of restricted activity or resulted in medical attention. These are the injuries at the base of the injury pyramid. Beginning in 1997, the core questions of NHIS were redesigned including an entire section on injury- including the verbatim text of how the injury occurred. There are as yet no data, but we are looking forward to seeing some preliminary results in the next few months.

For more information on the survey, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/major/nhis/nhis.htm>.

State role in Morbidity Surveillance

While E-codes for mortality have more or less been taken for granted in this country and elsewhere, E-codes for morbidity are considerably rarer, although things are improving quickly.

As of this year, 34 States and the District of Columbia have been collecting statewide hospital discharge data with cause of injury coding as a part of each record. Fewer have systems that are based on emergency departments. A survey was conducted and completed recently that polled states on the kinds of external cause injury data they were collecting. Highlights include: Approximately 80% of states have a statewide Hospital discharge data system. Most of those routinely collect some level of E-codes. Not all, however, collect them as part of a mandate. RI and Wash were the first states to mandate E-coding in 1989; most other states implemented in the early 1990's. (APHA, 1998)

There is a fair amount of variation across States in the level of detail collected. Fewer states (12) have ED systems and 11 routinely collect some level of E-codes. State role- number of states has been increasing rather sharply during the 1990's.

General morbidity data quality issues

The issues of concern with regard to E-codes that I spoke of in terms of mortality are equally relevant for morbidity: completeness of the information (better education of medical certifiers; of hospital personnel); instead of querying at the state level - query at the hospital level; augment the information routinely collected by, for example, linking information reported on the hospital record with that from another source (for example emergency medical services records)

ICD 10 CM (Fingerhut, Rosenberg, Kochanek and Pickett, 1998)

The clinical modification is due to be implemented in 2001. The current draft of ICD-10-CM contains a significant increase in the number of codes over ICD-10 and ICD-9-CM. Notable improvements in the content and format include: the addition of information relevant to ambulatory and managed care encounters; expanded injury codes; the creation of combination diagnosis/symptoms codes to reduce the number of codes needed to fully describe a condition; the addition of a sixth character; incorporation of common 4th and 5th digit subclassifications; laterality; and greater specificity in code assignment. The new structure will allow further expansion than was possible with ICD-9-CM. In ICD-10, and more importantly in 10 CM, the external cause of injury codes are no longer a supplementary chapter of the ICD.

ICD-9 was often criticized for its single axial approach to external causes of injury as it was not very effective for injury prevention initiatives. In ICD-10 and 10-CM there are requisite codes for all fatal and nonfatal injury incidents for place of occurrence and for the activity the victim/patient was involved in when the injury occurred. Transportation-related ICD codes have undergone a major revision to focus on the victim and the type of vehicle involved, rather than the other way around; the letter "V" is used for transportation related injuries with the first subdivisions being for the victim's mode of transport (for example, pedestrian, occupant, pedal cyclist); the third character identified the victim's counterpart or the circumstance of the accident (collision with vehicle, noncollision). The fourth character identifies the activity of the victim (driver, passenger) and whether the incident occurred in traffic or a non-traffic situation. Other examples of significant changes in this chapter: homicide/assault codes will now include more

detailed codes for abuse, neglect and abandonment and contain codes for perpetrator; and late effects codes are now combined in one section rather than being placed with relevant sections of unintentional, suicide or undetermined intent.

Diagnosis codes have also been revised; the major subdivisions for diagnosis codes are by body part rather than by type of injury as in ICD 9. For example, they are for head, neck, hip and thigh, knee and lower leg- rather than fracture, open wound, or superficial injury. Each of these type of injury categories is specified with body part.

In ICD-10 CM, poisoning codes have undergone a major change in that there will no longer be external cause codes; rather the intent (unintentional, suicide or undetermined) will become an additional digit to the poisoning diagnostic codes. ICD 10 CM will contain many more codes than ICD 10 for mortality.

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On Intimate Partner Homicides in Massachusetts

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Abstract

The FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) is often used by researchers to study intimate partner homicide since it is the only national data source that includes information on the victim-offender relationship. One problem confronting these studies is the extent of missing data in the SHR, meaning that information on intimate partner homicide incidence is incomplete.

The current study examines the extent of this problem in Massachusetts over a five-year time period. Multiple data sources were used to construct a database of all intimate partner violence-related homicide (IPVH) cases in Massachusetts from 1991 through 1995. These data were compared with the SHR for the same time period. Results show that the SHR identified only 71.1% of the intimate partner victims, incidents involving multiple victims were vastly underreported in the SHR during these years, and cases involving unmarried former partners were less likely to be reported as partner homicides in the SHR. An evaluation of one methodology designed to adjust for flaws in the SHR showed that adjusting the SHR data on intimate partner homicides using this methodology overestimated the actual rate of intimate partner homicides during the study years.

Background

Numerous studies of intimate partner homicide have been conducted, many of which have documented national trends. These studies employed the only national homicide data source that includes information on the victim-offender relationship, the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) (Browne & Williams, 1993; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994; Fox, 1994; Mercy & Saltzman, 1989; Plass, 1993; Straus, 1986). While the SHR has important strengths, particularly the collection of homicide data nationally and the inclusion of the victim-offender relationship, some investigators have described shortcomings of the SHR system and cautioned against uncritical use of the data. Because it is a voluntary system, some law enforcement agencies do not take part in the UCR system and therefore some homicides are never reported (Williams & Flewelling, 1987). Even those agencies that do participate sometimes fail to submit reports for a given month, and the extent of this nonreporting may vary across agencies and types of cases. In addition, homicides tabulated by the UCR may not be followed up by a SHR form, which is revealed in the slight discrepancy between the number of homicides reported by the UCR and SHR (Brewer, 1993; Williams & Flewelling, 1987). In addition, there is substantial missing data on victim-offender relationships within reported SHR cases, which limits detection of intimate

homicide cases. Some investigators have compensated for the limitations of the SHR, or indeed of any single data collection system, by using multiple data sources to ensure identification of the greatest number of homicide cases and to increase the amount of contextual information collected (Keppel & Weis, 1992; Rand, 1993). The current study uses multiple data sources to identify and characterize intimate partner violence-related cases. In so doing, an attempt was made to detect the maximum number of cases and compile detailed data about the circumstances of each homicide.

Method

Data Sources

A victim-based database of all partner homicide cases from 1991 through 1995 was compiled from news articles, Supplementary Homicide Reports, lists assembled by District Attorney's offices, and reports from domestic violence advocacy agencies. This database will be referred to as the "study database." Because SHR reports do not contain names, cases identified through the SHR were matched with death certificates to identify individuals by name. The study database is intended to capture all cases of Massachusetts residents killed in IPV-related incidents from 1991 through 1995. Five out-of-state residents were killed in IPV-related incidents in Massachusetts during the five-year study period, and these cases are excluded from the present analysis. Our sample does include four Massachusetts residents killed in adjacent states. There may have been Massachusetts residents killed in IPV-related incidents in more distant locations, but we did not identify any cases of this nature.

Data Analysis

The study database was compared with SHR files to examine the number and types of IPV-related cases that are unreported or miscoded in the SHR. First, we compared the number of Partner Victims in the study database with the number of Partner Victims reported in the SHR. Cases in the study database were then individually matched to SHR cases using city and county; victim-offender relationship; victim's age, race, and sex; offender's age and sex; and weapon. Although SHR records always contained data on the city, month, and year of the homicide, at times missing victim or offender data in the SHR made it difficult to establish a definitive match. In those instances, we compared the SHR record with the full list of death certificates to determine whether the SHR case could conceivably be a match for a different homicide case. If there was no other homicide case among the death certificates that matched the SHR record, it was assumed to be a match for our case. Finally, we compared the number of multiple victim homicides found in the study database with the number reported in the SHR. Note that the SHR files were also used to help detect cases, so these analyses do not compare the completeness of other sources with that of the SHR. Rather, we are comparing a list compiled from all available sources (as close to 100% case finding as we could accomplish) with the SHR files.

We also evaluated one methodology that has been developed to adjust for known flaws in the SHR. Williams and Flewelling (1987) created a methodology to compensate for unreported

cases and missing data when calculating homicide rates based on the SHR. To adjust for nonreporting agencies, a weighting factor is calculated based on the difference between the FBI's overall victim count in the UCR and the number of victims reported in the SHR. To compensate for missing victim-offender relationship data, Williams and Flewelling suggest two possible procedures whereby the homicide rate can be adjusted by extrapolating the characteristics of the known data to the unknown cases. Both procedures involve starting with the number of intimate partner homicides among the cases in which the victim-offender relationship was reported and then adding a percentage of the cases in which the victim-offender relationship was unknown. The rate is then calculated based on the estimated total number of intimate partner homicides among cases with both known and unknown relationships. We applied these procedures to the SHR for 1991-1995 intimate partner homicide cases and compared them to the rate of Partner Victims only (excluding Other Victims) calculated from the study database. We applied these procedures to the SHR for 1991-1995 intimate partner homicide cases and compared them to the rate of Partner Victims only (excluding Other Victims) calculated from the study database.

Results

Comparison of Study Database With SHR

There were 149 Partner Victims killed during the five year period, with a range from 25 to 40 victims per year. A comparison of the study database with the SHR shows that, compared to the 149 Partner Victims in the study database, the SHR reports only 106 (71.1%) of the Partner Victim cases in our study. Examining the yearly data reveals that the SHR data steadily improve over the 5-year period, from reporting 56.0% of intimate partner cases compiled in the study database in 1991 to reporting 85.0% of these cases in 1995. Despite the improvement, in every year the SHR underestimates the true number of victims, which suggests that the problem with underreporting in the SHR is persistent.

We then examined each case in our study to determine whether there was a corresponding case in the SHR. Each one of our cases was classified as "matched" (matched an SHR case and the victim-offender relationship recorded there was correct), "miscoded" (matched an SHR case but the victim-offender relationship was not coded there as a partner relationship), or "unreported" (no SHR case matched the victim, offender, and incident information in the study database.) In some cases, the victim-offender relationship was coded differently than our record but did indicate an intimate partner relationship (e.g., a relationship that we had coded as "girlfriend" was coded "wife" in the SHR.) For this analysis, a relationship was only considered miscoded if we had recorded the victim-offender relationship as an intimate partner relationship but the victim-offender relationship of the matching SHR case was coded as a non-partner relationship.

Of 149 Partner Victim cases, 59 (39.6%) were either unreported or miscoded in the SHR. This number is larger than the discrepancy of 43 cases reported above, due to erroneous and duplicate entries in the SHR, plus intimate partner homicide cases in the SHR that did not meet our inclusion criteria. These errors result in an inflation of the SHR totals.

Of the 59, 34 cases (22.8% of Partner Victim cases) had no match in the SHR. In 25 cases (16.8% of Partner Victim cases), the relationship was coded as a non-intimate relationship. Therefore, these cases would not be identified in an analysis using SHR data that counted intimate partner homicide victims based on victim-offender relationship. Examination of the actual coding of the 25 miscoded cases reveals that, in the majority of cases, the incorrect relationship was recorded as "unknown" (n=10) or "acquaintance" (n=7). The remainder were coded as "other known" (n=4), "friend" (n=2), and "daughter" (n=2). The two cases in which partners were coded "daughter" results from a systematic problem in multiple victim homicide data.

Examining the unreported cases more closely reveals that these cases often occurred in smaller jurisdictions. Of 34 unreported cases, 21 (62%) occurred in cities with populations less than 30,000. These communities may not have full-time law enforcement personnel and agencies may not be familiar with reporting procedures, as homicides occur less often in these localities. In contrast, larger jurisdictions were more likely to report cases with miscoded victim-offender relationships. Of the 25 miscoded cases, 72% had occurred in cities with populations greater than 90,000, with the majority of these cases being reported by Boston.

We investigated the coding of different types of relationships in the SHR to determine whether certain relationships were more likely to be miscoded. These data show that, among cases that were reported in the SHR, ex-girlfriends and ex-boyfriends were coded as intimate partners 59% of the time, while current boyfriends and girlfriends were coded as intimate partners 83% of the time. These findings should be interpreted with caution, due to the fact that they are based on a relatively small number of cases, but they do suggest that the absence of codes for ex-girlfriend and ex-boyfriend in the SHR may contribute to the problem of miscoding. There was also a higher proportion of unreported cases among ex-girlfriends and ex-boyfriends (39%) than among current girlfriends and boyfriends (16%).

Statistical Adjustment for Non-Reporting Agencies and Missing Data

The five-year rate of intimate partner homicide based on the study database (the "true" rate) is 3.10 per 100,000 persons. Calculating this same rate based on SHR reports, without using any adjustment procedures, yields a five-year rate of 2.45 per 100,000 persons, an underestimate of the true rate. Application of Williams and Flewelling's first adjustment procedure results in a five-year rate of 5.02 and the second adjustment yields a figure of 5.75 per 100,000 persons, both of which overestimate the true rate substantially.

Multiple Victim Homicides

Many studies using the SHR exclude multiple victim homicides because investigators theorize that these events are different from single victim incidents and constitute a very small proportion of cases. We examined the reporting of multiple victim homicides in Massachusetts during the

study years. Our data show that 15 of 175 incidents (8.6%) had more than one victim. There were 34 victims in these 15 incidents (18% of the total 194 cases). The SHR for the same time period reports only 4 incidents involving 9 victims.

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An Evaluation of the Completeness and Accuracy of SHR Data in Chicago, 1993 and 1994

HRWG 1998 Intensive Seminar

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Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Discussant: Margo Wilson, McMaster University

At the request of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority conducted a case-by-case comparison of homicide cases in the Supplemental Homicide Reports to Chicago Homicide Dataset cases booked in 1993 or 1994, the SHR Quality Project. This project posed two methodological challenges, database organization and comparative analysis. Now it has been completed, however, the results provide information about the quality of SHR data in Chicago, and by extension, in other cities with similar situations. This presentation will review the methods and the results.

Chart 1 is a schematic overview of the method we used for case-by-case matching, given the constraint that the SHR files did not contain an ID number. Using key variables and an intermediate-stage "Transfer" file, we were able to match each of 1,750 victim records in the Chicago Homicide Dataset (CHD) with one and only one SHR victim record (Chart 2). These 1,750 records accounted for 1,674 separate incidents.

With the 1,674 matched cases, we were able to look at missing and incomplete information in the SHR, relative to the CHD. Some key results regarding missing offender information are in Table 4.12. The 93 incidents with missing offender information differed significantly from the 1,581 in which offender information was not missing in mean offender's age (slightly younger), offender's gender (male), weapon (more handguns), gang motive (more victims were a rival gang member and more motives were a gang altercation). However, there was no significant difference in the race/ethnicity of the offender or in the time lag between injury and death.

Although CHD cases missing completely from the SHR differed from those that were not missing in that almost all of the missing cases had a lag time between injury and death, this was not true of the homicides in which the case was present in the SHR but the offender information was missing. However, the 93 offender-missing cases were significantly more likely to have a lag between the date of injury and the date of arrest. This suggests possibilities for improving the quality of SHR data.

Chart 1, "Variables Used to Match Cases at Stage 1 and Stage 2," is not available in this graphic version.

Chart 2, "Homicide Cases in CHD, Transfer and SHR Datasets; Cases Matched and Cases Not Matched," is not available in this graphic version.

Table 4.12, "Comparing 93 First Offenders Missing in SHR to First Offenders Present in SHR Incidents Using Difference of Means Tests on Relevant Variables," is not available in this graphic version.

The Surveillance Value of "Bad" Data: Using Obliterated Serial Number Data in a Firearm Surveillance System

Bill Sherlock, Illinois State Police

David Kriegbaum, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Purpose

To initiate a project through the Crime Gun Analysis Branch to study current and potential methods to be utilized in the restoration of obliterated serial numbers on crime guns.

The Crime Gun Analysis Branch (CGAB) has recently initiated a project aimed at the restoration, collection, and analysis of data relative to firearms that have been recovered with their serial numbers removed by methods of obliteration.

Historically, obliterated serial numbers on crime gun recoveries are not raised unless there is a specific investigative requirement, i.e., homicide. When these numbers are raised or even partially raised, NCIC and TECS are used to research the status of the weapon and subsequently report positive results to the requester. This information provides a firearms trafficking investigative lead which should be proactively pursued because any firearm that has had the serial number intentionally obliterated has only one purpose—crime. Unfortunately, because of the narrow scope of jurisdictional enforcement in most city and State police departments, these trafficking leads are ignored, often deferring investigative efforts to the local case at hand. If this information is incorporated into Project Lead (which is available in the upgraded version), queries can be made to link information on persons involved in trafficking crime guns using methods of serial number obliteration. The mere fact that a serial number has been obliterated is an absolute "intent to traffic" indicator.

Unfortunately, there has been no coordinated effort to proactively target leads on obliterated serial numbers seized by Federal, State, and local agencies. Labs are swamped and unable or unwilling to handle the potential number of obliterated crime guns now sitting in evidence vaults across the country. These guns are "one step from the burner," yet the information that could be generated from just a few restored numbers is still untested, and intelligence on firearms traffickers remains uninvestigated, because the firearms are being destroyed along with valuable serial number information. Also, due to lack of resources and manpower in the field, firearms with obliterated serial numbers are very seldom investigated because ATF does not routinely try to raise these numbers despite the fact that criminal intent is absolute when serial numbers are obliterated. These are the best leads available to start investigating and removing crime gun traffickers from the streets.

The NTC has determined that raising serial numbers is relatively easy to learn and inexpensive to render. For nonmagnetic guns, generally the cheap handguns (Raven, Lorcin, Davis, etc.) that predominately turn up as crime guns, the investment is approximately \$60 of chemicals that can be mixed in individual batches that have a 30-day shelf life.

Magnetic guns require a different chemical mixture with a similar price and shelf life. Additionally, magnetic techniques can also be applied in combination with chemical techniques for greater success in restoring obliterated markings on magnetic surfaces. This opens opportunities in geographic areas that recover magnetic crime guns of a higher quality (Smith & Wesson, Colt, etc.). The training for certification to restore obliterated serial numbers takes only two days and is a relatively simple concept.

The NTC would like to propose the initiation of an obliterated serial number research program to be housed at the NTC. This program would consist of one special agent, currently detailed to the NTC as a Project Officer, and administrative support. The purpose of this program would be to train special agents in the field on the importance of raising serial numbers in relation to firearms trafficking. In order to provide this information to the field, the special agent detailed to the NTC would travel to each field division and obtain information on possessors associated with obliterated serial numbers and raise serial numbers from crime guns in State and local police department vaults. Once this information is obtained, these firearms will be traced and this information, along with possessor information, will be entered into Project Lead for link analysis.

The NTC recognizes the insufficient manpower in the field and would, in addition to entering this information into Project Lead, research obliterated gun information to build the foundation of firearms trafficking investigations to be referred to the field.

As a basis for this proposal, the NTC has received a list of some 67 restored serial numbers from obliterated serial number firearms sent to the NTC from the Boston Field Division. With the first raised serial number, the NTC traced the firearm and queried the possessor information. The NTC discovered that the individual identified as the purchaser has purchased more than 430 firearms by way of past multiple sales and has since referred the information to the New Orleans Field Division, which has opened a substantial firearms trafficking investigation. This was just one firearm, and more than 430 other firearms were found to be associated to the individual.

Imagine the firearms trafficking cases sitting in vaults just waiting to be investigated. This is a major avenue that has not even been touched. Imagine the impact this could have to enhance ATF's Firearms Trafficking Strategy. The results could be phenomenal because never before has a Federal law enforcement agency chosen to specifically target those individuals associated with the obliteration of serial numbers on crime guns.

Situational Factors Related to Public Mass Murder Incidents: 1965-1998

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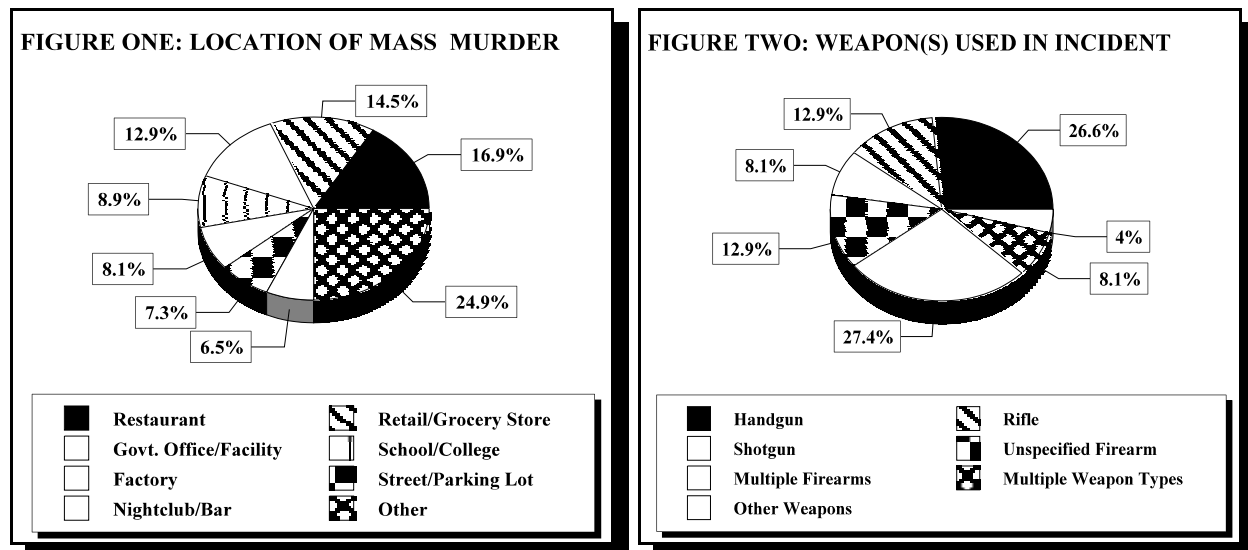
Abstract

This project analyzes 124 public setting mass murder incidents that occurred in the United States between 1965 and 1998. Situational factors such as the primary location of the murders, weapon choice, duration of the event, and how the incident ended were examined to determine if any patterns exist in mass murder events.

Analyzing Mass Murder

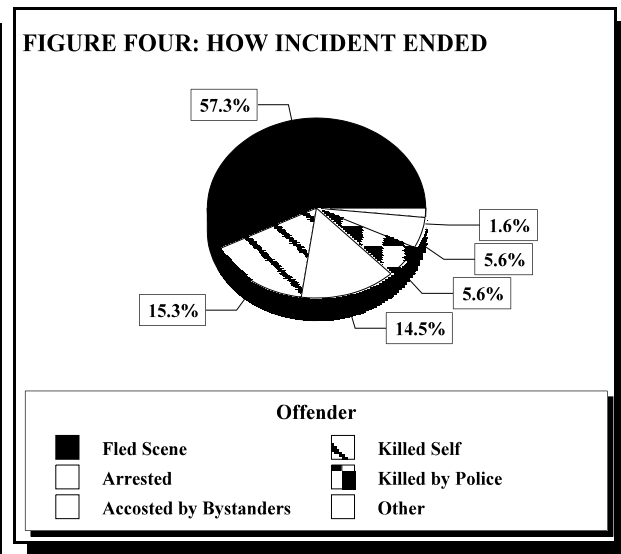
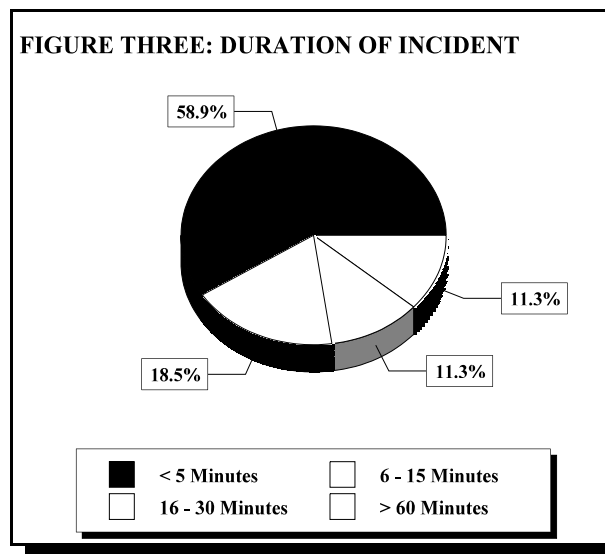
Recent events in Pearl, Mississippi, West Paducah, Kentucky, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and Springfield, Oregon, have resulted in a renewed interest in public episodes of mass homicide. The present study examines 124 incidents of mass murder, defined as the murder of three or more people in one place at one time (see Petee, Padgett and York, 1997 for a detailed discussion of what constitutes mass murder), that occurred in public settings in the United States between January 1965 and May 1998.

Despite concerns over the recent murders that have taken place in school settings, there appears to be no particular pattern to the specific place where public mass murder incidents occur (see Figure One). While restaurants were the most frequent place where mass murders transpire (16.9% of all incidents), there was no single dominant setting for these events. In some cases, the murders occur at an “at-risk” location (e.g., retail/grocery stores for felony-related mass murders). In other cases, the location has some significant meaning for the offender (e.g., the law firm targeted by Gian Luigi Ferri in San Francisco in 1993), or is situationally-related (e.g., in



direct conflict situations- see Petee et al., 1997). Given the differences found in offender motivation, the variation in location for mass murder is not all that surprising.

Frequently, discussion of mass murder tends to focus on issues related to firearms. Typically, mass murder incidents such as that perpetrated by Colin Ferguson on a commuter train in New York City in 1993, or by Joseph Wesbecker in a printing plant in Louisville, Kentucky in 1989 will generate a heated debate over the merits of gun control (Petee, York and Padgett, in press). Indeed, an examination of the weapons used in public incidents of mass murder (see Figure Two) reveals that firearms are the weapons of choice for this type of homicide. In only 12.1% of the cases did the offender(s) use a weapon other than some form of firearm. While it is hard not to conclude that the presence of firearms makes for a more lethal encounter (the exception being



explosives or arson), the actual impact of gun control on the occurrence of mass murder is debatable. A closer examination of these incidents indicates that in most cases the weapons used were legally obtained, and were not of the variety commonly banned by gun legislation (i.e., “assault” weapons).

The response of law enforcement agencies to these types of incidents is another commonly cited concern pertaining to mass murder. Figures Three and Four examine the duration of mass murder incidents and how these incidents ended respectively. In the majority cases, the homicide episode lasted 5 minutes or less (58.9%), and the incident ended with the offender fleeing the scene (57.3%). These findings certainly call into question what impact, if any, law enforcement could have on these incidents.

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D.C. Jail Gun Identification and Style Survey

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Introduction

Urban jail inmates report much familiarity with firearms. This project examined and compared the ability of different age groups of inmates to match the name of a gun to its photograph. Additionally, the project asked the different age groups to discuss features that they admired about particular guns and to identify the gun that they would most want.

Method

The study was conducted during two weeks of July, 1997, at the municipal jail for the District of Columbia. Pictures of nine different guns on a worksheet were shown to 135 pre-trial detainees during voluntary health education classes. The pictures were chosen from a handgun catalog by three randomly selected male detainees as guns which they believed would be recognized by fellow detainees. (The guns were the Uzi, Tec-9, AK-47, Mac-11, Phoenix Arms Raven, Calico M110, Glock 19, Jennings J-25, and Colt Detective Special). See Table 1. Detainees were asked to privately match the name of the gun to the picture of the gun. On a separate worksheet, detainees were asked to identify the gun they would want to have. Additionally, they were asked to list nicknames for each gun and features which they admired, if any, about each gun. The detainees indicated their ages on the worksheets, but no name or identifying information.

Results

Ninety-six percent (96%) of the 15-19 year old males could correctly match the manufacture's name to the gun. Each successive age group was less successful in correctly identifying the guns in nearly a linear distribution. See Table 2.

When asked to identify the gun that they would most like to have, younger inmates chose weapons with a menacing appearance and reputation for rapid fire and multiple rounds (the Calico was their first choice). Older inmates preferred guns which were smaller (the Glock was their first choice). Younger detainees listed admired gun features which represented speed, destruction, or style. Older detainees listed admired gun features which highlighted utility or practicality. The results suggest that younger detainees are attracted to the manufacturing style and power of guns, while older detainees are more attracted to the utility of the weapon.

Exploring Circumstances of Prior Gunshot Wounds Among Jail Detainees

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Introduction

Many detainees in urban jails have sustained prior gunshot wounds. The purpose of this study was to explore the circumstances surrounding these shootings and how the shootings impacted their lives.

Methods

Detainees entering the city jail in Washington, D.C., from April through June, 1997, were screened for a history of gunshot wounds. One in 4 of the males had been shot before. Extensive interviews were then done with every third male detainee who reported a prior gunshot wound within the past 5 years until 92 interviews had been completed.

Results

A whole continuum of injuries were represented, from single superficial extremity injuries to extensive multiple wounds to the head and torso. Two different clusters emerged based upon the seriousness of the shooting, the circumstance of the shooting and the perceived intention of the shooter. The first cluster involved injuries sustained during arguments, retaliation, or assaults. These wounds tended to have the greatest potential for death. Victims of these shootings were 2-3 fold more likely to have been shot with multiple bullets. They also were more likely to sustain injuries to the head or torso. See Table 1.

This group also were more likely to believe that their shooter meant to kill them. They were more likely to carry a gun after the shooting, more eager to retaliate, and could identify more ways in which the shooting changed their lives including substance abuse and "vicious" behavior.

The second cluster consisted of injuries sustained during robberies, carelessness, crossfire, or police fire. These wounds tended to be less threatening. Victims were more likely to sustain single wounds. They were more likely to be injured in an extremity. See Table 2.

Members of this group were either uncertain of their shooter's intention or did not believe their shooter meant to kill them. They were less likely to carry a gun after the shooting, less likely to retaliate, and experienced less life-altering sequela.

Further exploration of these findings might be useful in designing interventions and responses to survivors of firearm injuries, particularly in interrupting a response of gun-carrying and retaliation.

The Spousal SROK* Revisited: A Comparison of Houston and Chicago Intimate Partner Homicide

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Funded by the National Institute of Justice and the National Consortium on Violence Research. Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the National Consortium on Violence Research.

* In a provocative cross-cultural examination of intimate partner homicide, Wilson and Daly (1992) found that the spousal “sex ratio of killing” (SROK) was approximately twice as great in the U.S. as other Western nations, including Canada, Australia, and Great Britain.

In this analysis of Intimate Partner Homicide in Chicago and Houston, we find both notable similarities and differences in the SROK when disaggregated by race/ethnicity, weapon used, and coresidency.

Wilson, Margo I., and Martin Daly. 1992. “Who Kills Whom in Spouse Killings? On the Exceptional Sex Ratio of Spousal Homicides in the United States.” *Criminology* 30, 2: 189-215.

Spatial-Temporal Clustering of Chicago Homicides

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Abstract

There was significant ($P < .01$) nonrandom spatial-temporal clustering (on a scale from 0 to 5 km and 0 to 30 days) of those homicide incidents in Chicago, Illinois, (1965-1990) in which men killed unrelated men in the context of gang activities and other social conflicts, but not in robbery-burglary homicide incidents. The GIS spatial point patterning algorithms (Splancs™) scale for the number of incidents that would be expected given the extent of spatial and temporal clustering, considered separately.

Between 1965 and 1990 in the city of Chicago, 19,335 people were homicide victims. There was marked variation in the number of victims from year to year (Block and Christakos, 1995) and from neighborhood to neighborhood (Wilson and Daly, 1997), but was there clustering of homicides in space and time? Asynchronous deterioration or improvement of different neighborhoods would be expected to cause nonrandom spatial-temporal clustering on a relatively long (e.g., annual) time scale, but we were interested in whether there might also be nonrandom spatial-temporal clustering on a scale of days or weeks, and blocks. Our interest derives from the expectation that any such clustering might be a signature of one or more of the following social processes: (1) social contagion, including copy-cat murders, power struggles, revenge, and retaliation; (2) nonrandom distribution in space of temporal changes in factors that elevate the risk of homicide; (3) changes in market dynamics.

How to Measure Clustering in Space and Time?

Peter Diggle and colleagues (Diggle et al., 1995; Gatrell et al., 1996) have devised GIS spatial point patterning algorithms which treat each incident (here a homicide) as a focal point for computing observed and expected numbers of additional incidents within a continuously varying radius (s) and time interval (t), in order to determine the degree of space-time clustering in excess of that which would be expected given the extent of spatial clustering and the extent of temporal clustering, considered separately. The resulting numerical value for each s/t combination is a standardized index denoted as D/SE . If there were no space-time clustering, the surface of the 3-dimensional graph (with axes of s , t , and D/SE) would be relatively flat, even if temporal trends and spatial clustering existed. In order to assess whether the 3-dimensional surface pattern is statistically improbable, Monte Carlo simulations are run utilizing the same degree of spatial clustering and temporal clustering. If the sum of the standardized indexes (sum of all D/SE values) is greater than 99% of the obtained simulation values, then $P < .01$.

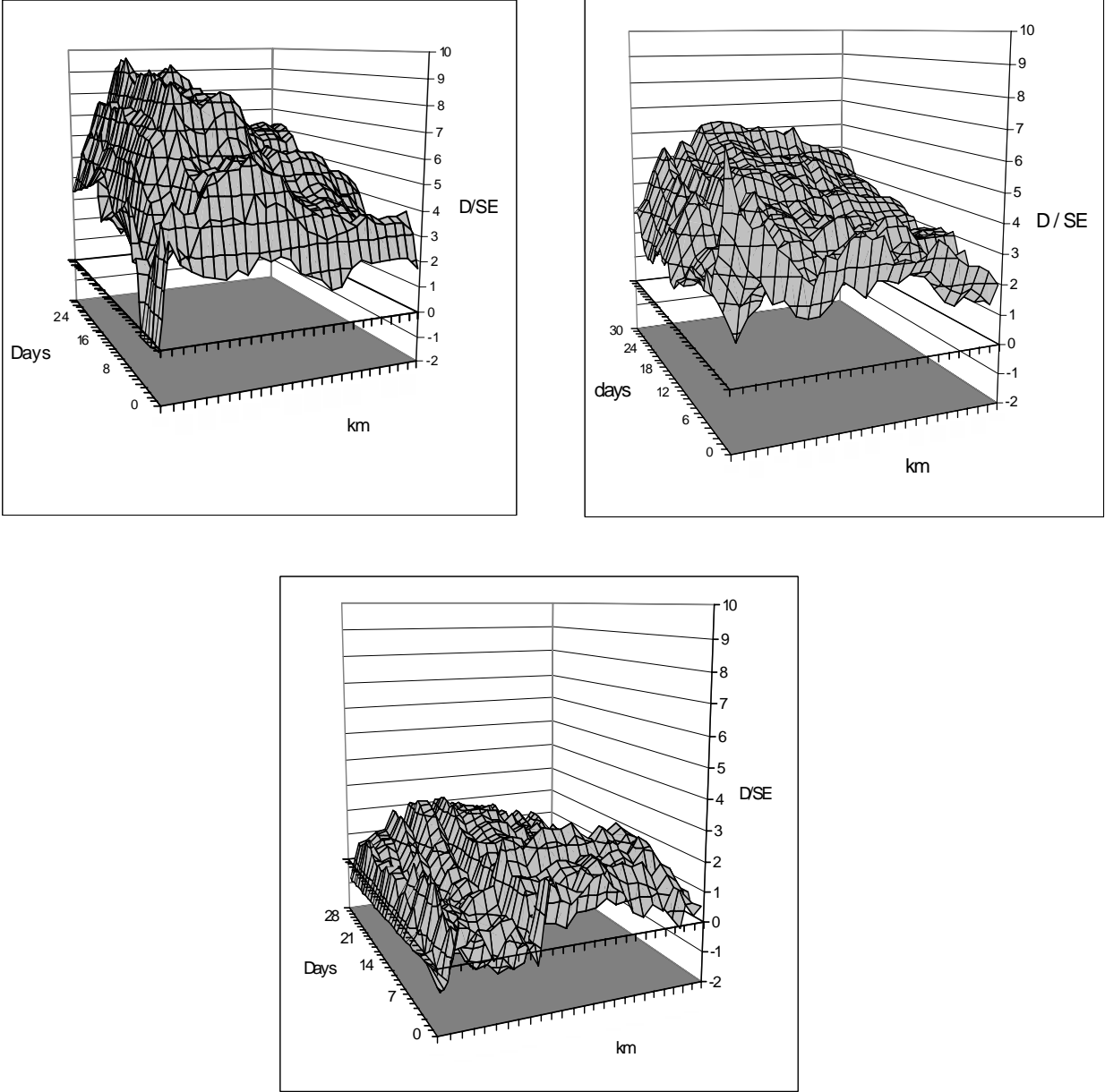
We limited analysis to distances of 0-5 km between any two homicide incidents and intervals of 0-30 days. Incidents are the units of analysis. We asked whether there was nonrandom spatial-temporal clustering of men killing unrelated men in gang-related homicides, other “social conflict” homicides, and robbery-burglary homicides in Chicago over the period 1965-1990.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the 3-dimensional surface pattern of the standardized index, D/SE , of spatial-temporal clustering. Index values greater than 2.0 are likely to be statistically improbable as assessed with Monte Carlo simulations. The probability of the overall surface pattern was statistically significant ($P < .01$) for gang-related incidents and for other social conflicts, but the pattern for robbery/burglary incidents was not significant ($P = .11$). Note that the surface of the robbery/burglary graph is relatively flat compared with the other two kinds of homicide incidents.

Diggle’s method allows one to detect space-time clustering at whatever scale such clustering may actually exist. Interpretation of the observed patterns still requires theory, appropriate control comparisons, and imagination. Interpretation of the three graphs in Figure 1 requires consideration of the social processes and structural forces that underlie the different kinds of homicide incidents.

Figure 1. Space-time clustering index (D/SE) for gang-related incidents (upper; N=1,139), other social conflict incidents (middle; N=7,509), and robbery/burglary incidents (lower; N=1,956) in Chicago 1965-1990. Cases are those in which victim and killer were unrelated males.



Acknowledgments

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Development of an Ultrasonic Method for Restoration of Obliterated Serial Numbers on Firearms

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Special presentation sponsored by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms through an Innovations in Government Award from the Ford Foundation and Harvard University

Introduction

There is a recognized need for a method which will be able to restore an erased serial number on firearms.

One of the instruments that might help to achieve this goal is the acoustic microscope. The basic concept that stands behind this attempt is that the action of pressing the numbers on the surface of the firearm produces a local stress concentration below the numbers. These stresses still exist after the numbers have been erased.

The cause for the stresses comes from the local strains caused by the action of pressing the numbers into the material.

When the ultrasonic parameters are appropriate, then the acoustic microscope is able to see these stresses. Mapping of the stress on the firearm can differentiate between areas with and without stress. As a result of this property, we might get a picture of the erased numbers.

The results of the scanning probably won't give us the image of the full numbers, but further processing of the picture might give us a clue and even more of the original numbers.

Goals

- To find a method in which a firearm's serial number, that has been erased, will be restored.
- To try to define the optimum dimensions and geometry for the letters, which will give us the best capability for restoration of the numbers.
- To look for new methods to mark the serial number that will help the restoration of it later, in the acoustic microscope.

The Acoustic Microscope Scanner

The scanner is based on a computerized ultrasonic system in which a sample is held in a bath of a liquid, usually water, and scanned. As a result, we are receiving an image of the area, in which each pixel represents the change in amplitude in that place.

The changes in amplitude are usually caused by defects in the sample, changes in the materials due to thermal treatment, changes in geometry, stresses, etc.

Shear and Longitudinal Waves

The waves that penetrate the material split into two modes: one is longitudinal waves, and the second is shear waves. They differ by their polarity. The longitudinal waves vibrate in the direction of the beam, and the shear waves are polarized perpendicular to the direction of the beam.

We are using the shear waves because they are more sensitive to stresses.

Leaky Waves

The leaky waves are waves that we are producing by working at a distance much closer to the material, in that often we are making surface waves that leak through the surface of the material. These waves are sensitive to defects of the surface of the material, including surface roughness and stresses at the surface. As we mentioned before, stresses that were caused by the serial numbers can be detected by the stresses that are left after they have been removed.

Experimental

The experiments have been done on a few metallic samples. We used steel plates that were cut from firearms made by New England Firearms Co. and steel plates that we got from the ATF.

The first plates were machined from their backside and then scanned in the SCM (Scanning Acoustic Microscope), from their back using shear waves. As a result, we got a mirror picture of the numbers.

The first step was to polish the numbers, in controlled steps, and then to scan them again, until we didn't detect the numbers anymore. In this stage, we measured the maximum depth in which the number can be detected by this method. These experiments were done on both plates.

Results

We have tried to find a method to restore the numbers after they have been erased, but we didn't succeed. We suspect that the problem lay on the transducers that we have. We suspect that the

field of stresses near and below the numbers is small and for that we need a special transducer, that at this stage we don't have.

Future Research

Our goals for future research are:

- To find a simple way to restore the serial numbers from a firearm after they have been erased. In this research, we will need to find a good fit between the material in use, the transducer, and the ultrasonic scanner. In the meantime, we are working with the existing equipment.
- To define a standard for the serial number (the size and depth of the letters), that will help us in the future to restore the numbers after they have been erased.
- To define the location for the serial number in a place that will make the restoration of it easy, but still the grinding of it will be difficult.

COHORT SURVIVAL PROJECTIONS OF HOMICIDE RATES: VICTIMIZATION TYPES

Allan F. Abrahamse, RAND Corporation, 1700 Main, Santa Monica, CA 90407

ABSTRACT

Cohort survival projections of homicide victims multiply the projected *number* of people of a given age by the projected victimization *rate* for people that age. Projecting age-specific victimization rates looks complicated, because these rates do not merely rise and then fall, they fall (from infancy to about age 12), rise (from age 12 to about age 25), fall (from age 25 to about age 70) and then rise again. One approach may be to partition homicides into a small number of different types, each of which has a relatively simple relationship to age. This paper describes a set of homicide types that meets this objective.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ARREST RATES MUCH SIMPLER THAN VICTIMIZATION RATES

FIGURE 1--RISK OF HOMICIDE ARREST

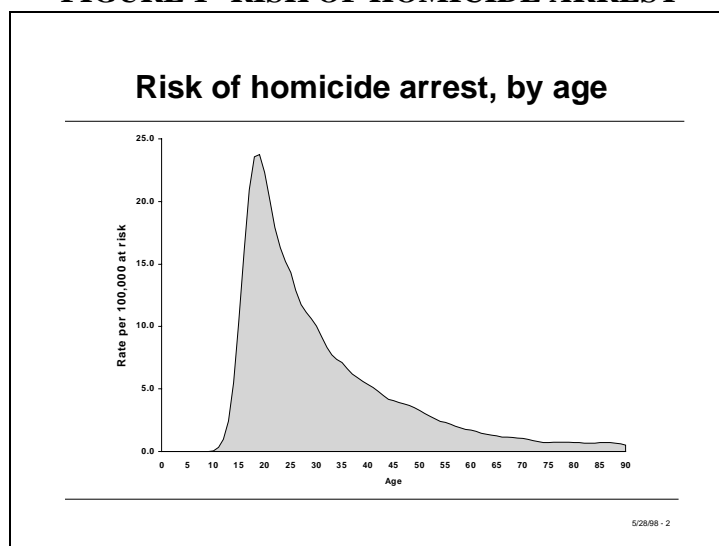
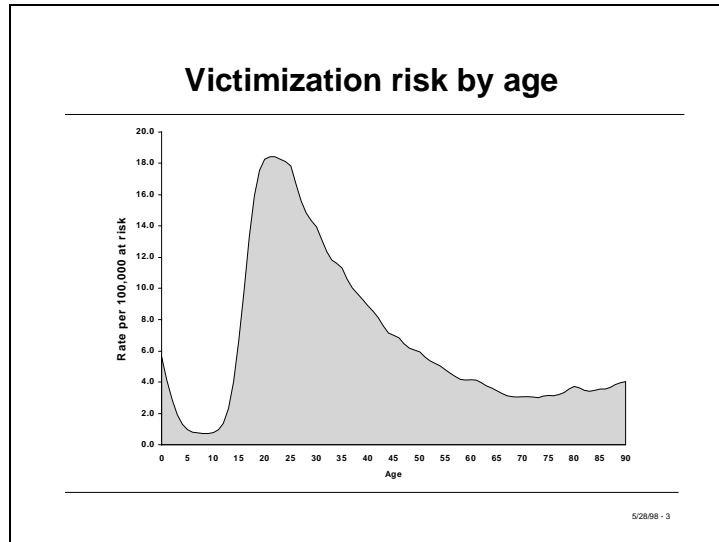


Figure 1 shows the arrest rate for homicide by age¹. While this figure displays rates for all persons for a particular period of time, it resembles what age specific arrest rates for a birth cohort would look like if we had the data to draw such a curve. Rates rise sharply after about age 10, to a peak at about age 20, and then decay steadily from that age on. It seems to suggest a simple process of initiation and desistance. Because this distribution can be described with just a

¹ All charts in this report were drawn using data describing 100,784 victims of non-justifiable murder and non-negligent manslaughter in the Supplemental Homicide Reports for the five years 1988 through 1992, and estimates of the resident population obtained from the Census Bureau.

few parameters, it is relatively easy to project age specific homicide arrest rates for a birth cohort.

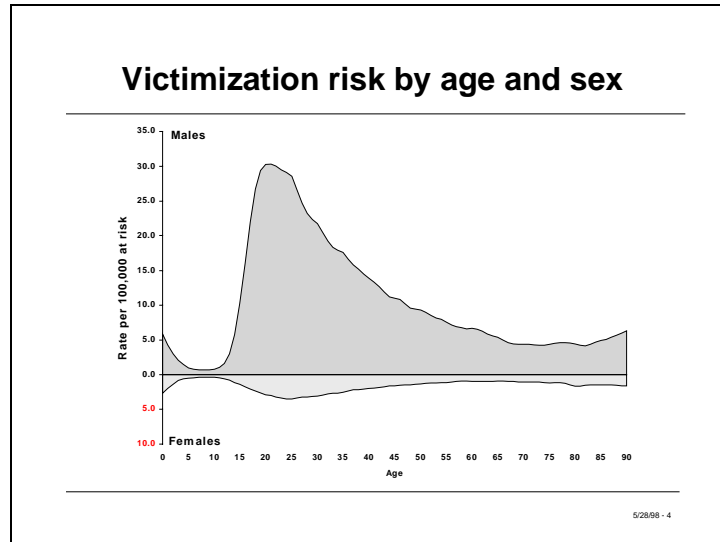
FIGURE 2--VICTIMIZATION RATES



As Figure 2 shows, the corresponding risk of being a homicide victim has a much more complicated shape. It begins in the first year of life at a relative high rate, falls quickly to about age 7 or 8, rises sharply during the teen age years, falls steadily until about age 75, then begins to rise again. It is difficult to view exposure to homicide risk as a simple process of initiation followed by desistance, and we cannot characterize the shape of this curve with just a few parameters.

Figure 3 shows victimization rates by age and sex, with rates for females “pointing down”. The figure is like a population pyramid on its side. Both male and female rates have the same shape: a fall, followed by a rise, followed by a fall, followed by a rise. For most homicide types, rates for males are higher than for females.

FIGURE 3--RISK BY AGE AND SEX



VICTIMIZATION TYPES

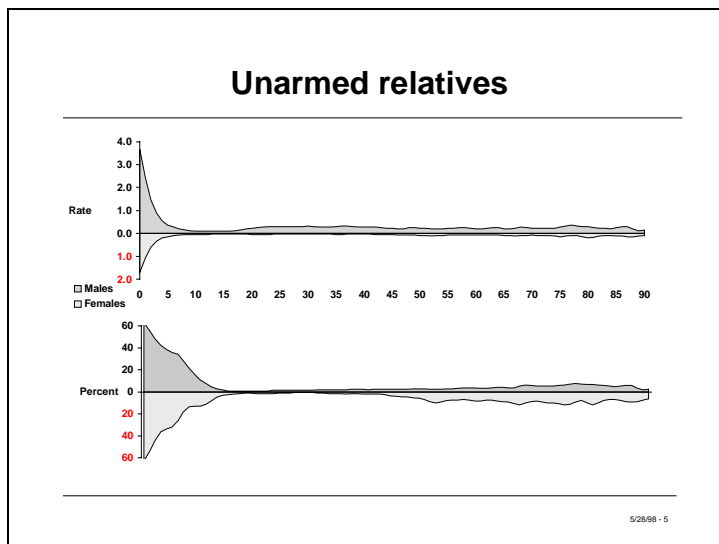
While we can imagine that activities that affect the probability of getting arrested for homicide might follow a simple lifetime trajectory of initiation followed by desistance, we cannot do so for victimization. Instead, perhaps, we can think of the net exposure to victimization as a consequence of exposure to several *different* trajectories, each with its own relatively simple characteristics. Once victimizations are so partitioned, it may be possible to make projections for each type with some simple model, and then combine them.

To explore this idea, I have partitioned homicides into ten mutually exclusive classes. I present, one after the other, roughly in the order in which each class seems to pose the greatest risk, from youngest to oldest. I make no claim for originality; others have discussed much that will appear below².

In what follows, I will display the types roughly in the order of the age at which they present the largest risk of victimization. I give each type a rather simple title, but because the types are mutually exclusive, this title does not fully describe the definition of the type. See the appendix for this definition.

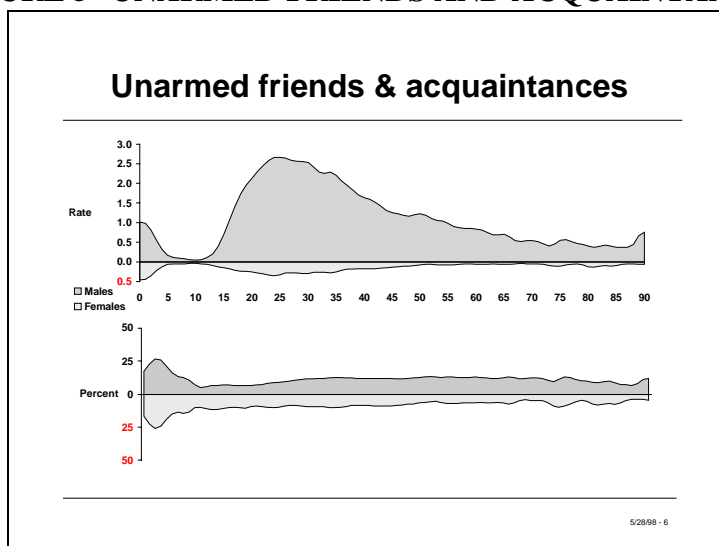
² Nelsen, Candice and Lin Huff-Corzine (1998). "Strangers in the Night: An Application of the Lifestyle-Routine Activities Approach to Elderly Homicide Victimization." *Homicide Studies*, 2: 130-159.

FIGURE 4--UNARMED RELATIVES



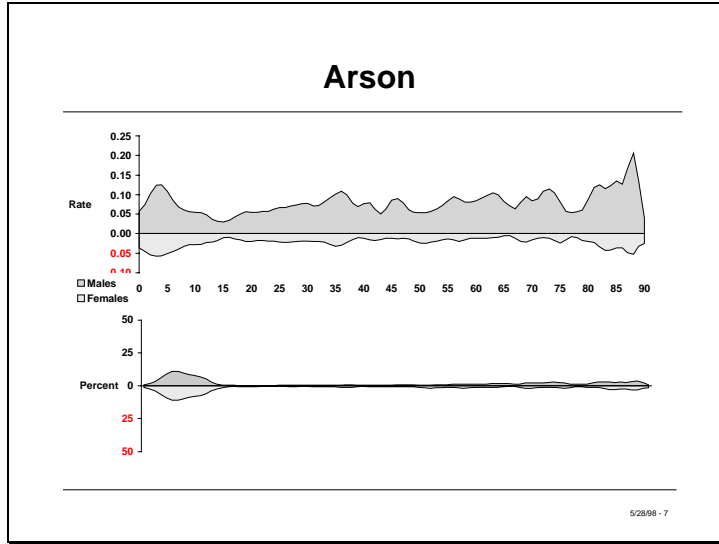
As Figure 4 shows, infant victims are most likely to be killed by unarmed relatives (here and everywhere else in this paper, by “unarmed” I mean “unarmed with a gun”). The top graph shows the victimization rate (victims per 100,000 at risk) by age and sex (males above the horizontal axis, females below it). The lower graph shows the percent of all homicides in which the offender was known to be an unarmed relative, by age and sex (males above the axis, females below). It is hard to understand why the rate for male infants is nearly twice that of female infants.

FIGURE 5--UNARMED FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES



As Figure 5 shows, the other big risk faced by children is homicides by unarmed friends and acquaintances (but not relatives). Homicides of this type account for about a quarter of all children around the age of four.

FIGURE 6--ARSON



In Figure 6 we see that, while an arson homicide is a very rare event, it accounts for a distinct fraction of all homicides victims ages about 5 to 10 years old.

FIGURE 7--ARMED FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

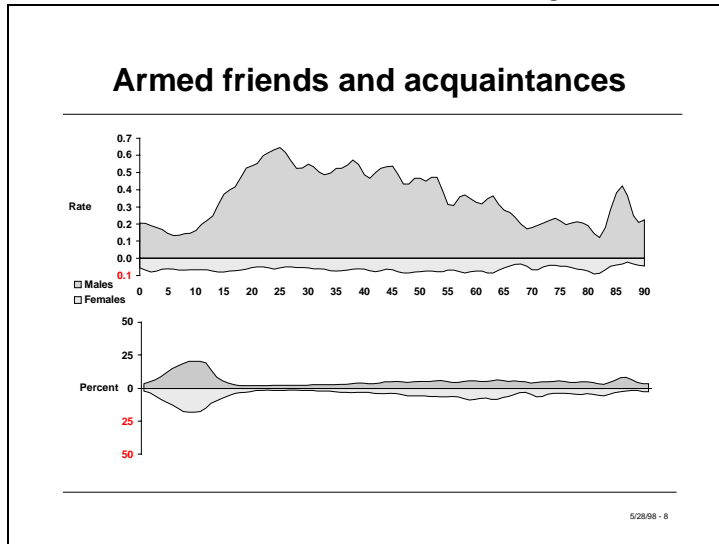
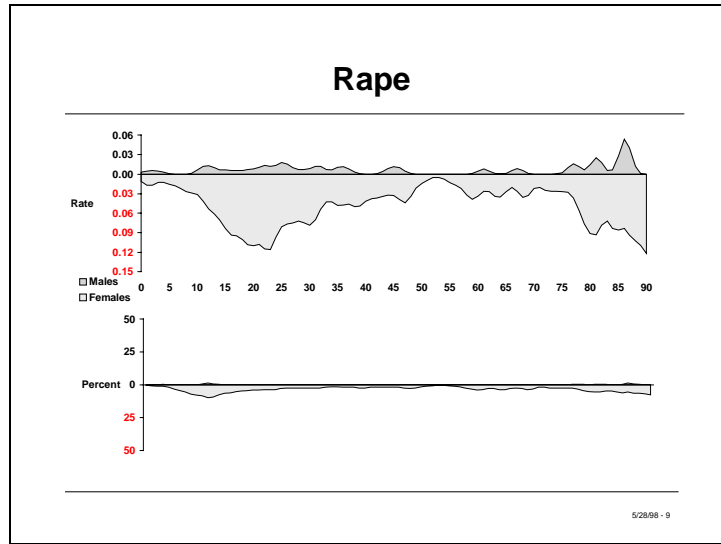


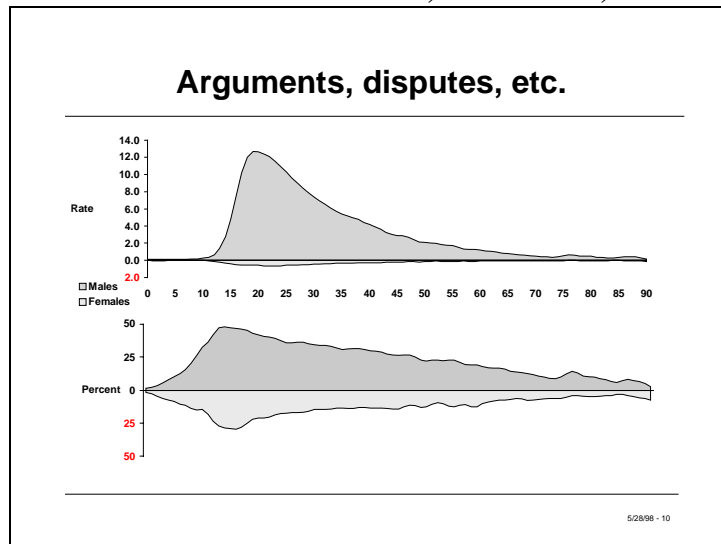
Figure 7 shows that homicides by armed friends and acquaintances accounts for about a quarter of all homicides of children around the age of 10.

FIGURE 8--RAPE



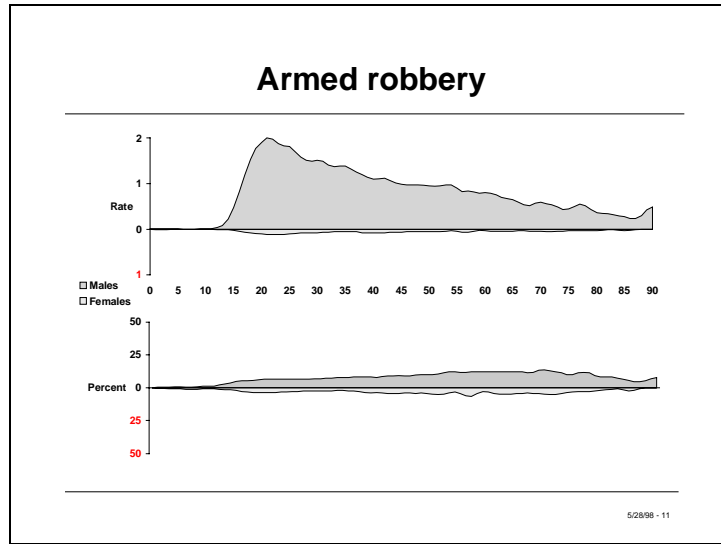
As Figure 8 shows, homicides involving rape are mostly females. The age at which rape accounts for the largest fraction of female homicides is around 12. That there are any rapes for infants, particularly that of males, is probably an artifact of the way homicides are coded. In a multiple victim homicide, some of the coded facts are those that characterize the first victim listed. If a mother is killed in the course of a rape, and her child is also killed, if the mother is the first listed victim the child will be coded as have been killed during a rape, but the child itself may not have been raped.

FIGURE 9--ARGUMENTS, DISPUTES, ETC.



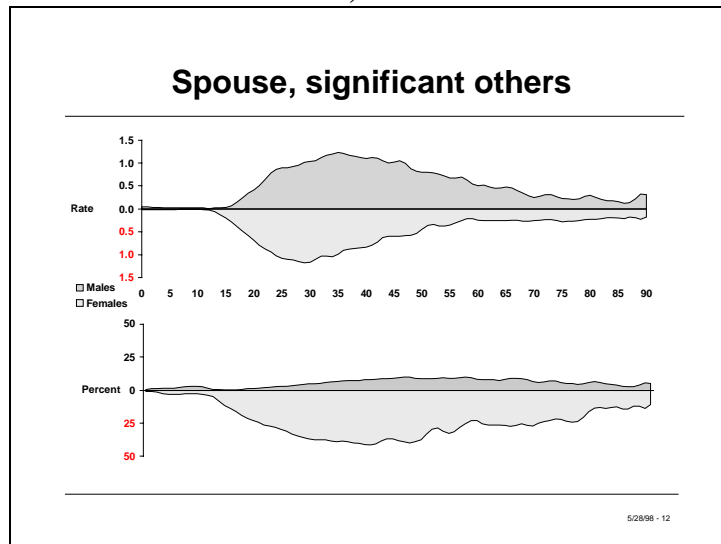
As seen in Figure 9 the class of homicides that I call arguments and disputes accounts for most homicide victims. The rate profile by age looks very similar to the age profile of arrests, and perhaps we have here a broad class of homicides that, like arrests, can be characterized by initiation during the teen-age years followed by a steady desistance for the rest of life.

FIGURE 10--ARMED ROBBERY



Armed robbery, as shown Figure 10, has a pattern similar to arguments and disputes, but the rate peaks at a slightly later age, and accounts for the largest fraction only in old age.

FIGURE 11--SPOUSES, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS



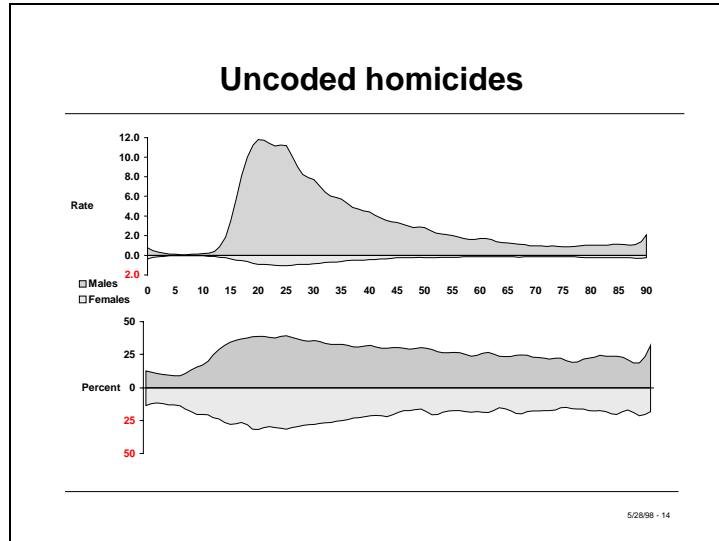
Getting killed by your spouse, ex-spouse, boy/girl friend, etc. is a risk you face relatively late in life, as Figure 11, and later for men then for women. Such homicides account for nearly half of women killed around age 40.

FIGURE 12--UNARMED ROBBERY, PROPERTY CRIMES



As Figure 12 shows, being a victim of a homicide committed during the course of a non-gun robbery, or a burglary or theft, is an increasing risk in the latest years of life. One could hypothesize two different reasons for this phenomenon: (1) older victims are more frail and thus less likely to survive injuries received in the course of an attack, (2) older victims are perceived by predators as being weaker, and thus older folks are more likely to be targets of such attack.

FIGURE 13--UNCODED HOMICIDES



All the homicides whose nature I couldn't figure out I call *uncoded* homicides, instead of using a word like *unknown* which leads to confusion³. Figure 13 shows the distribution of uncoded homicides. People who code homicide files seem to know more about homicides of children than

³ Riedel, Marc (1998). "Counting Stranger Homicides: A Case Study of Statistical Prestidigitiation." *Homicide Studies*, 2:206-219.

homicide of older people. However, it may also be the case that when faced with the death of a child, if little can be determined about the circumstances, the death is less likely to be recognized as a homicide.

APPENDIX: DEFINITION OF THE HOMICIDE TYPES

The ten homicide types were defined using the circumstance, relationship and weapon codes in the Supplemental Homicide File. The following table shows how. Counts are taken from the Supplemental Homicide Files for the years 1988 through 1992, and are counts of murder and manslaughter only.

Type	Circumstance	Unarmed				Armed					
		Spouse	Relative	Friend	Stranger	Un-coded	Spouse	Relative	Friend	Stranger	Un-coded
1 Spouse	2 Rape	11					1				
	3 Robbery	22					10				
	5 Burglary	3					9				
	6 Larceny						2				
	7 Auto theft	1									
	9 Arson	27					4				
	17 Other sex offense	11					8				
	18 Narcotics laws	18					14				
	26 Other felony	63					86				
	40 Lovers triangle	122					280				
	41 Killed by babysitter	2									
	42 Brawl under alcohol	111					109				
	43 Brawl under drugs	23					20				
	44 Argument over money	77					94				
	45 Other arguments	2543					3628				
1 Spouse (continued)	46 Gangland killing						1				
	47 Youth gang killing						2				
	48 Institution killing	2									
	60 Other	609					1399				
	70 Suspected felony	8					12				
	99 Unknown	296					510				
2 Rape	2 Rape		19	184	151	238		2	27	29	24
3 Arson	9 Arson		122	210	84	303			6	5	22
4 Armed robbery	3 Robbery							47	1068	2963	2188
5 Unarmed robbery or any property	3 Robbery		101	1028	1061	1065					
	5 Burglary		10	127	191	214		14	127	206	131
	6 Larceny		4	24	13	9		2	22	52	7
	7 Auto theft		4	22	42	19		2	23	100	25
6 Unarmed relative	17 Other sex offense		14								
	18 Narcotics laws		23								
	19 Gambling		1								
	26 Other felony		229								
	40 Lovers triangle		19								
	41 Killed by babysitter		26								
	42 Brawl under alcohol		68								
	43 Brawl under drugs		22								
	44 Argument over money		103								
	45 Other arguments		1072								
	47 Youth gang killing		1								
60 Other		1795									
70 Suspected felony		10									
99 Unknown		321									

Type	Circumstance	Unarmed				Armed				
		Spouse	Relative	Friend	Stranger	Un-coded	Spouse	Relative	Friend	Stranger
7 Unarmed friend	10 Prostitution			21						
	17 Other sex offense			91						
	18 Narcotics laws			495						
	19 Gambling			10						
	26 Other felony			183						
	40 Lovers triangle			303						
	41 Killed by babysitter			118						
	42 Brawl under alcohol			600						
	43 Brawl under drugs			151						
	44 Argument over money			610						
	45 Other arguments			4903						
	46 Gangland killing			40						
	47 Youth gang killing			97						
	48 Institution killing			73						
	49 Sniper attack			1						
60 Other			1557							
70 Suspected felony			57							
99 Unknown			994							
8 Armed friend	17 Other sex offense							4		
	18 Narcotics laws							33		
	19 Gambling							3		
	26 Other felony							61		
	40 Lovers triangle							27		
	41 Killed by babysitter							2		
	42 Brawl under alcohol							80		
	43 Brawl under drugs							11		
	44 Argument over money							144		
	45 Other arguments							1776		
	60 Other							807		
70 Suspected felony							6			
99 Unknown							301			
9 Other codes	10 Prostitution				20			15	12	
	17 Other sex offense				25			32	8	
	18 Narcotics laws				124			2285	637	
	19 Gambling				5			75	9	
	26 Other felony				89			280	211	
	40 Lovers triangle				33			846	82	
	42 Brawl under alcohol				149			770	238	
	43 Brawl under drugs				12			572	106	
	44 Argument over money				52			1206	139	
	45 Other arguments				1162			8782	1960	
	46 Gangland killing				21			201	131	
	47 Youth gang killing				60			1072	725	
	48 Institution killing				8			1		
	49 Sniper attack							22	64	
	60 Other				476			2344	1004	
70 Suspected felony				44			86	59		
99 Unknown				365			1574	868		

Type	Circumstance	Unarmed				Armed					
		Spouse	Relative	Friend	Stranger	Un-c coded	Spouse	Relative	Friend	Stranger	Un- coded
10	Uncoded					30					9
	10 Prostitution					30					9
	17 Other sex offense					47					9
	18 Narcotics laws					264					2535
	19 Gambling					2					9
	26 Other felony					221					377
	40 Lovers triangle					10					27
	41 Killed by babysitter					2					
	42 Brawl under alcohol					81					107
	43 Brawl under drugs					49					280
	44 Argument over money					30					97
	45 Other arguments					899					2241
	46 Gangland killing					12					135
	47 Youth gang killing					62					1182
	48 Institution killing					15					
	49 Sniper attack										104
	60 Other					698					1052
	70 Suspected felony					323					410
	99 Unknown					7152					13527

Decreasing Violent Gun Crimes in New York City: A Result of Vigorous Law Enforcement Efforts, Other Variables, or Both?

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4 Tower Place, Albany, New York 12203

For the last several years, reported violent crime has been decreasing across the United States. New York City has been notable concerning this trend. Since 1991, while the number of violent crimes reported within the City has decreased significantly, violent crimes involving firearms, especially handguns, have decreased by an even greater percentage. But why? Some point to the New York City Police Department's "Gun Strategy," implemented to decrease the proliferation of guns and gun-related crimes. Since the Strategy's initiation, reports of shooting incidents and shooting victims have dramatically decreased. However, the Gun Strategy was not introduced until March 1994, and the decreases in gun-related violent crimes in NYC began decreasing following 1991, decreasing to a greater extent during 1994 and thereafter. Thus, looking at the statistics alone, it is unclear whether, and to what extent, the efforts of the NYPD can be attributed to decreasing violent firearm offenses in recent years.

Decreasing Violent Crime in New York City

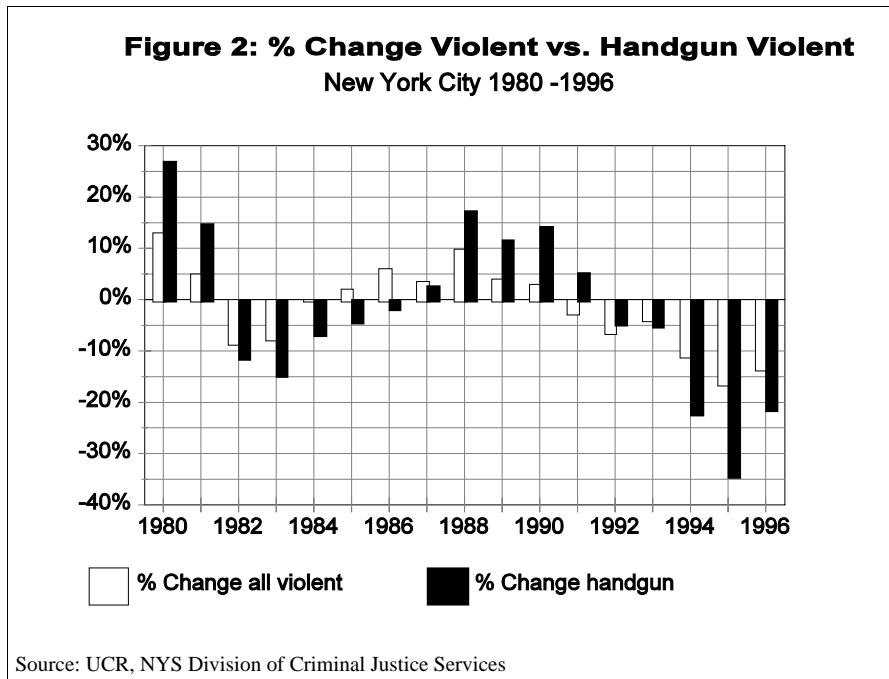
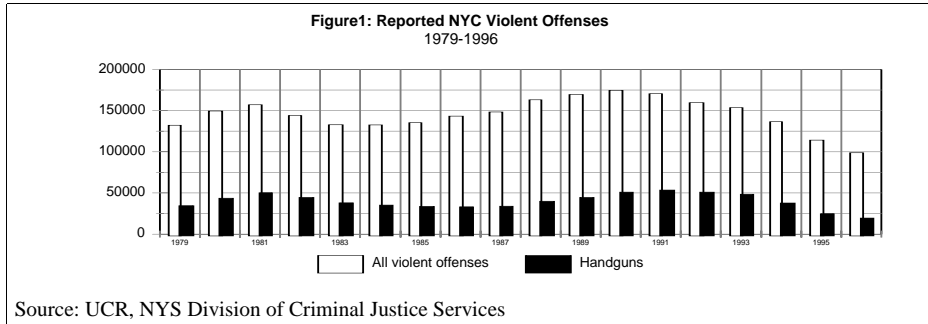
Decreasing Numbers of Reported Crimes

Starting in 1991, and more dramatically following 1993, reported violent crime -- including homicide -- has been decreasing in New York City, following a steady increase since 1985. Between 1991 and 1996 (the latest year available for determining violent crimes involving firearms), while the number of reported violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) has decreased from 170,496 to 98,733 (- 42.1%), violent crimes involving firearms, especially handguns, has decreased by an even greater extent, from 53,621 to 19,495 (- 63.6%). Figure 1 shows that the decrease in violent offenses involving *handguns*, as compared with the decrease in violent offenses overall, has been even more dramatic after 1993 -- percentage change in reported *violent crimes* ('94: -11.1%, '95: -16.4%, '96: -13.5%), versus percentage change in reported *violent crimes involving handguns* ('94: -22.2%, '95: -34.4%, '96: -21.2%). In addition, it could be argued that the annual *increases* in overall violent crimes during the late 1980s ('88: +9.8%, '89: +4.0% and '90: +3.0%) were being driven by the larger increases in violent crimes involving *handguns* ('88: +17.3%, '89: +11.6%, and '90: +14.2%).

Extent of Year-to-Year Decreases

The *percentage decrease* from the prior year in the number of violent crimes *involving handguns*, as compared with violent crimes overall, has been even more dramatic after 1993. The annual percentage change in reported *violent crimes overall* were as follows -- 1994: - 1.1%,

1995: - 16.4%, and 1996: - 3.5%. This compares to the percentage annual change in reported *violent crimes involving handguns* -- 1994: - 22.2%, 1995: - 34.4%, and 1996: - 21.2%. The annual percentage decreases in these two categories of reported crimes are shown in Figure 2.



New York City Police Department Gun Strategy

Many have attributed the New York City Police Department's "Police Strategy No.1: Getting Guns off the Streets of New York" (hereafter "Gun Strategy"), initiated in March 1994, as the "cause" of the decrease in violent firearm crimes, as well as decreases in arrests for illegal possession of a loaded handgun (which is also classified as a Violent Felony Offense, but not included in the aforementioned "violent crimes"). In most basic terms, the Gun Strategy has involved targeting and expanding investigative and patrol services, revising and expanding training, obtaining and deploying technologically advanced equipment, and securing public support to reduce crimes involving firearms.

Targeting and expanding investigative resources involves efforts to: 1) identify and pursue all accomplices involved in the commission of violent crimes; 2) identify and pursue gun traffickers inside and outside New York whenever a gun is used in the City; 3) utilize detectives in the precincts to strengthen all gun arrests made by uniformed and plainclothes police officers; and 4) assign case responsibility at the precinct level to encourage results-oriented police and investigative work. Refocusing patrol resources concerns targeting and expanding the Street Crime Unit of the Patrol Services Bureau to attack specific areas of high gun violence. Training revision and expansion was developed to teach detectives case development of gun investigations, apprehension of illegal firearm traffickers, confidential-informant registration, search warrant procedures, and to teach police officers to better recognize the signs of weapons possession and to make stronger cases against people they arrest. Technologically advanced equipment is obtained and deployed to match guns used in more than one outstanding crime, and to trace firearms to illegal sellers throughout the country. Public support is secured to identify and help locate those who possess, use or sell illegal guns in their neighborhoods.¹

Particular means by which illegal guns are seized include a "radio run" -- usually turned in by a citizen as "a man with a gun." Another method is a search warrant (more common for narcotics than firearms in buy and bust operations lasting months to garner evidence for a search warrant) when illegal guns are discovered in the search for illegal drugs. Other means by which the police seize illegal firearms are calls to crimes in progress in which a perpetrator is fleeing a crime scene with a gun. Another effective means by which the police have seized guns is apprehending subway turn-style jumpers who are caught with illicit firearms. When an arrest is made, the officer has the constitutional right to search the arrestee for the weapons in order to ensure the officer's person protection, a process by which illegal guns are sometimes found and seized.²

On a limited basis, a "model block" program has been conducted where barriers are placed at each end of streets in high crime areas -- with police stopping people based on reasonable

¹*Police Strategy No. 1: Getting Guns off the Streets of New York*, New York City Police Department, (March 7, 1994), pp. 8-9.

²Interview with Joseph Lovelock, Deputy Inspector, Office of Management Analysis and Planning, New York City Police Department, (March 9, 1998).

suspicion and asking about their business, and to see identification. If a positive i.d. is not produced, the officer has the right to detain, arrest and search the person for the officer's protection -- which may produce an illegal firearm. Another specific example is if a schoolyard closes at certain time, people have no legitimate reason to be there after hours. Someone being present under these circumstances, by itself, is an acceptable reason for an officer to stop the individual and ask questions. In addition, the "bulge in the pocket," or reasonable suspicion of carrying a gun determined by examining walking style or other gestures (as developed by an NYPD detective with hundreds of illegal gun arrests) has produced numerous other illegal firearm confiscations.³

A vital aspect of the effort to get guns off the streets was the February 1997 expansion of the NYPD's Street Crime Unit by 300 officers, and its reorganization into citywide and borough units to combat violent street crime and firearm offenses.⁴ City areas are targeted based on pattern and trend analyses. A computerized repeat calls-for-service application allows identification and tracking of high volume crime locations that need increased enforcement. Precinct commanders, given more direct decision-making by the COMPSTAT Program, may also use MAPINFO crime mapping techniques to deploy resources most effectively as they see fit.⁵ Detectives debrief all prisoners charged with unlawful possession of a firearm in order to identify the weapon's source, and all firearms are subject to gun tracing through NYPD Ballistics in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

The NYPD continues its enhanced efforts to identify individuals who illegally possess firearms, to track the sources of illegal guns trafficked into the City with the assistance of ATF in Project Lead and contact with law enforcement officers across the country, and use advanced technology comparison systems in its Ballistics Unit to investigate firearms, bullets and bullet casings involved in crimes. In addition, the NYPD has participated with 16 major municipal police agencies across the country in the Federal Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, a pilot program developed by ATF to trace guns used by juveniles in the commission of crimes to the location and dealer from which they were purchased. The project is using ATF's National Tracing Center to produce information about the sources of weapons, aggregate and analyze trace data, and share information with state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is to curtail the supply of illegal firearms used by youths to commit crime, and to encourage arrests where appropriate.⁶ In addition, another factor possibly associated with decreasing homicides in

³*Ibid.*

⁴*The Mayor's Management Report, Preliminary Fiscal 1998, Vol. I, Agency Narratives, City of New York, p. 13.*

⁵*The Mayor's Management Report, Fiscal 1997, City of New York, p. 11.*

⁶*The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative: The Illegal Youth Firearms Markets in 17 Communities, Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (July 1997).*

the City is the overall increase in NYPD full-time sworn personnel from 32,855 in 1990 to 37,090 in 1996.⁷

Hopefully, as a result of these and other criminal justice efforts, slightly over 2,000 people were shot in New York City in 1997, as opposed to over 5,000 people shot in the City in 1993. Based on firearm arrests, the strong appearance is that fewer people in New York City are carrying guns on their persons -- resulting in less opportunity to commit crimes with firearms, including those that are not pre-meditated.

New York City Mayor's Management Report

In March 1994, the NYPD introduced its Gun Strategy to reduce the proliferation of guns and gun-related crimes in the City. The NYC Mayor's Management Report: Preliminary Fiscal 1998 indicates that shooting *incidents* in NYC have declined 62.5%, from 5,269 in calendar 1993 to 1,977 in calendar 1997. The number of shooting *victims* also declined 61.4 % during this same time period, from 5,862 in calendar 1993 to 2,262 in calendar 1997. This trend continued during the first four months of Fiscal '98, with a 15.3% drop in shooting victims -- to 834 from 985 during the same period of Fiscal '97. Since implementation of the Gun Strategy, *arrests* for gun possession have declined by 43 %. From the first four months of Fiscal '97 to the same period of Fiscal '98, arrests with gun possession as the highest charge fell almost 18%, from 1,440 to 1,185.⁸ But what empirical research is there that might shed light on whether the NYPD's recent strategy to reduce gun crime has indeed done so?

Study on Declining Homicide in New York City: Association With Police Practices

Researchers Franklin Zimring, Jeffrey Fagan, and June Kim, in their draft report "Declining Homicide in New York City: A Tale of Two Trends" (which will appear in the Summer 1998 issue of *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*), examined whether NYPD's Gun Strategy is associated with recent and dramatic declines in firearm homicides in the City. **With the authors' permission, the remainder of this paper uses graphs and statements as contained in the draft report.** As the authors state, "The recent decline in homicides in New York City is an exception to the usual pattern, the most celebrated example of crime-news-as-good-news in decades." The drop in homicides was both large and abrupt -- the homicide rate in the Nation's largest city fell 52 percent in five years. The authors further state, " If this drop can be plausibly tied to enforcement activities, it would be the most conspicuous success of city police deployment policies in the 20th century."

In an effort to empirically assess whether the homicide decline between 1993 and 1996 is significantly associated with police practices, the researchers put the decline in a variety of

⁷*Crime and Justice Annual Report, 1990 - 1996*, New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

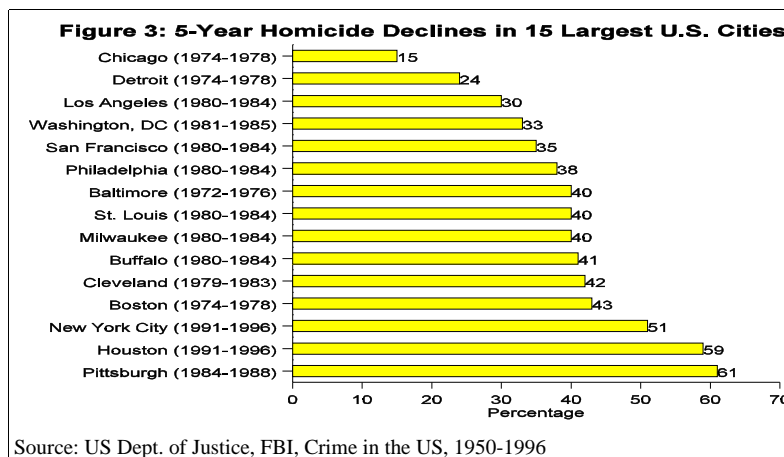
⁸*Mayor's Management Report, Preliminary Fiscal 1998*, City of New York, p. 13.

statistical contexts, comparing the drop to previous New York experience and to the experiences of other cities in the United States. They also examined changes in homicide patterns during the decline in search of clues about causes. They viewed available police and other data about the scope of the decline in crime and violence over the years when homicide dropped -- researching such questions as: "Did many crime categories fall, and by how much?" and "Was the decline concentrated in a few categories or spread evenly across the spectrum of felony crime?"

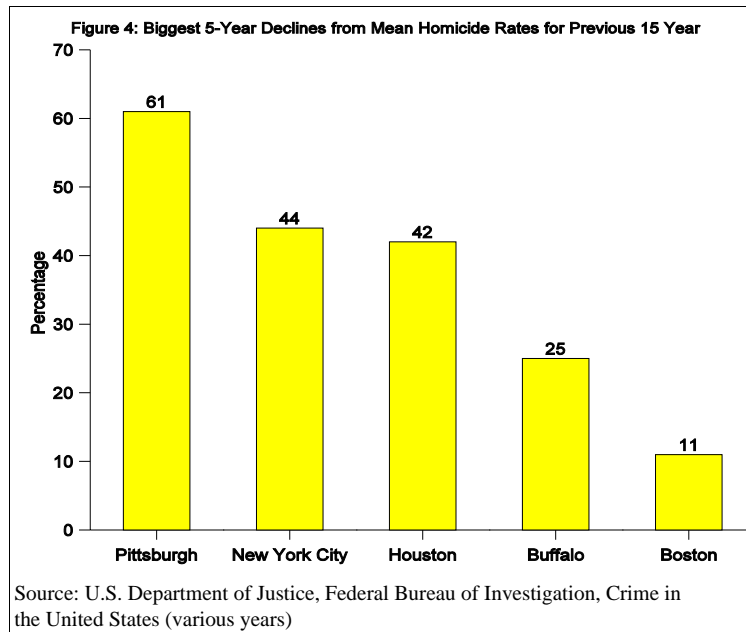
Size of the Homicide Decline

Magnitude of Homicide Decline

In its relative and absolute magnitude, the homicide drops after 1992 were by far the largest in the post-World War II history of NYC. The number of lives involved is even more impressive, with more than 1,100 fewer homicides in 1996 than in 1992. This reduction in homicide far exceeded the total number of homicides the City experienced each year in the 1950s and early 1960s.



New York City's homicide decline was also compared with homicide declines experienced in other major U.S. cities for five-year periods from 1950-1996. (See Figure 3.) The five-year records for big cities vary from a 61 percent decline in Pittsburgh through a 15 percent decline in Chicago. The median decline was 40 percent, and seven cities reported highest decline percentages of between 43 percent and 38 percent. The New York decline is the third highest for major cities, behind Pittsburgh, equal to Houston, and about 25 greater than the cluster of city records around 40 percent. On the straight arithmetic, the New York experience is not unprecedented, but is a higher percentage drop than 12 of the Nation's 15 biggest cities have experienced in a five-year span. Of the very largest U.S. cities, NYC had the greatest percentage decline in reported homicide.



Drop in Accordance With Previous Abnormally High Rate?

The researchers tested the five cities with the highest five-year declines against the possibility that an abnormally high homicide rate for a short period of time is the reason for a large drop in the homicide rate -- negating the existence of a unique "trend". The low year in the largest five-year decline is compared to the mean rate in that city for the prior 15 years, as shown in Figure 4. Three of the five largest declines (including NYC) represent a substantial reduction from the average rate for the previous 15 years. Zimring et al. concluded that because of the steep decline in NYC homicides after 1993 (preceded by a temporary rise), it is difficult to argue that the drops in recorded homicides were merely part of a cyclical "roller-coaster" downward trend following abnormally high rates.

In a time when very wide swings in criminal homicide rates occur, sharp downward movements in the homicide rate might be expected after sharp upward movements, akin to a roller-coaster that drops faster after climbing to a great height. To use the roller-coaster metaphor, the homicide climb in New York City was not as steep before the post-1991 drop, so that less of the decline appears likely to be merely cyclical. However, as late as the end of 1995, New York's homicide rate was within 10 percent of its 1985 level.

The rate of homicide broke important "new ground" only after 1995. In sum, the percentage decline experienced by New York City in five years is quite large, but in no means unprecedented in major cities. Nevertheless, such a homicide decline is also rather uncommon. Thus, the decline is large by historical standards and not merely an "echo" of a sharp but temporary previous rise. This research dealt with the *size* of the homicide decline.

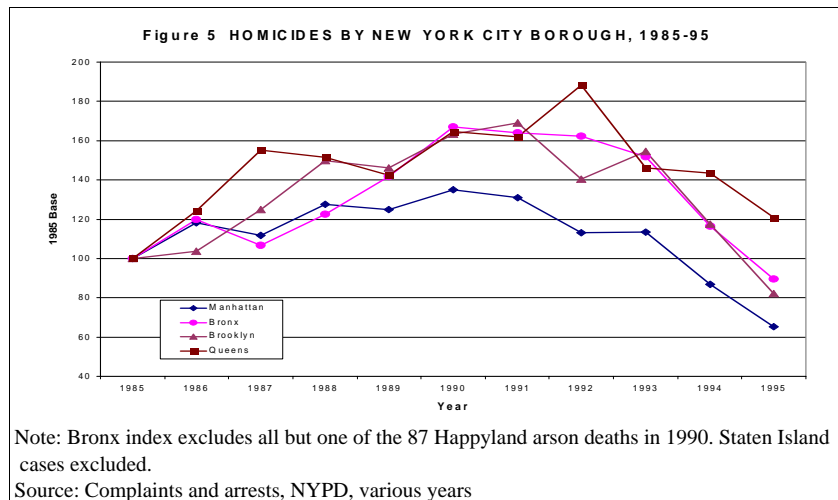
Nature of the Homicide Decline

The homicide statistics discussed above involve an aggregation of many different types of law enforcement, community areas and population groups within New York City. The researchers further analyzed the types of homicides that changed the most in order to detect probable causes of the changes. Specifically, they performed cross-tabulations of NYC homicide over time by borough, by weapon and by demographic groups in the City, which were separately analyzed.

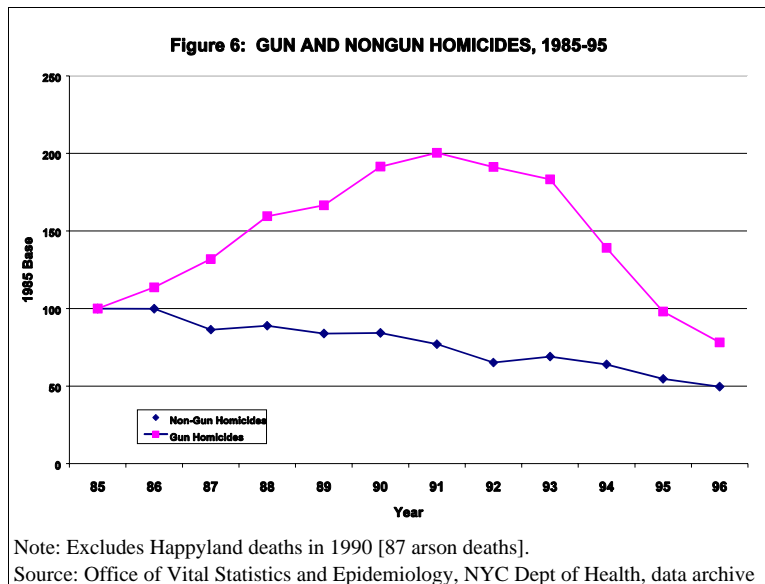
Variations by Individual Borough

The 1985-95 homicide patterns for the City's four largest boroughs were examined to determine whether individual boroughs disproportionately affected the City's steep decline in reported homicides starting in 1994. The boroughs differ importantly in the patterns observed while homicide rates grew in NYC, but are much less divergent during the years of decline -- all running parallel (see Figure 5), discounting disproportionate influence by individual boroughs.

Variation by Weapon



The significant break of homicides by weapon is between gun shot deaths and all others. As shown in Figure 6, the patterns for gun and non-gun homicides differing sharply between 1985 and 1996. Non-gun killings drift steadily downward during this period (interrupted only by the Happyland Social Club fire in 1990 -- 86 of the 87 killings were deleted for this one incident so as not to skew the data). However, gun deaths *double* between 1985 and 1991, and fall sharply from 1993. This reveals that the decreases in homicides *involving firearms* has been driving the reduction in overall homicide in the City since 1991, and the sharper decreases in overall homicides since 1993. In addition, increases in *firearm* homicides between 1985 and 1991 were also responsible for the rise in overall homicides in this time period.



Demographics

The distinct patterns of gun and non-gun homicide raise questions about whether these patterns were similarly distributed among the population of homicide victims. Using Medical Examiner records, the researchers disaggregated characteristics of gun and non-gun homicides by sex, age and race to test the strength of association of each variable with the decreasing homicide rates.

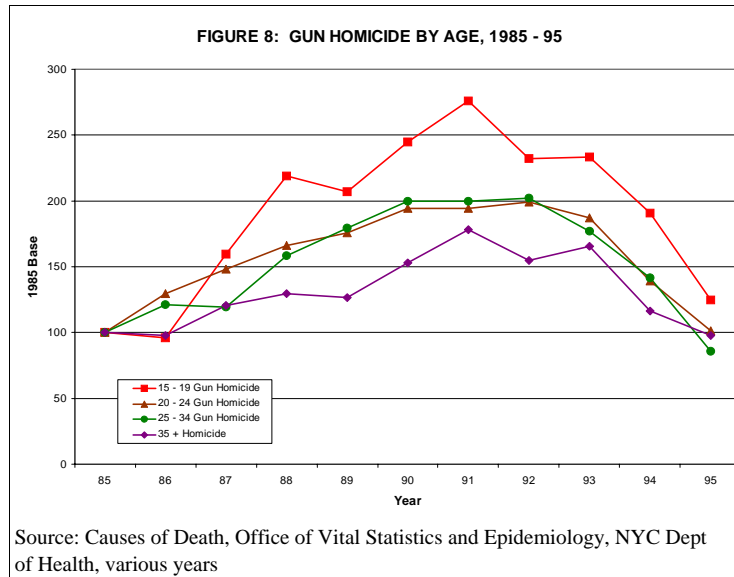
Sex

Overall homicide rates for women were lower than for men from 1985-1995, consistent with homicide trends historically. However, the trends in gun and non-gun homicides for males and females differed in the magnitude, timing and duration of change over the period. Figure 7 shows that *gun homicides* by women increases by 68 percent during this period, compared to an increase of over 105 percent for males. There were steady declines in *non-gun* homicides for both men and women, but the decline was greater for men. By 1995, non-gun homicide rates for males were 45% below their 1985 rates. However, the rates for women declined far less. Actually, the overall trend for women is no change since 1992.

Age

A great deal of public and scholarly attention on violence in the past decade has focused on the increase in gun homicides by adolescents. Trends nationwide indicate that gun homicide rates for adolescents increased during this period while gun homicide rates for persons over 25 years of age were declining. Figure 8 shows that while adolescent participation in gun homicide did rise sharply from 1985-91, rates for other age groups also continued to rise during this period. Gun homicides by adolescents ages 15-19 rose more quickly and sharply over this period. By

1991, gun homicide rates for this group reached a peak of 176 percent their 1985 rate. The other population groups also increased, peaking at approximately the same time at about 100 percent above their 1985 rate. Rates for the oldest population group, those 35 years of age or more, rose slightly more slowly, peaking at 77 percent of their 1985 rate. Accordingly, adolescents did not *replace*, but became an *active part* of a homicide epidemic that spanned age groups.

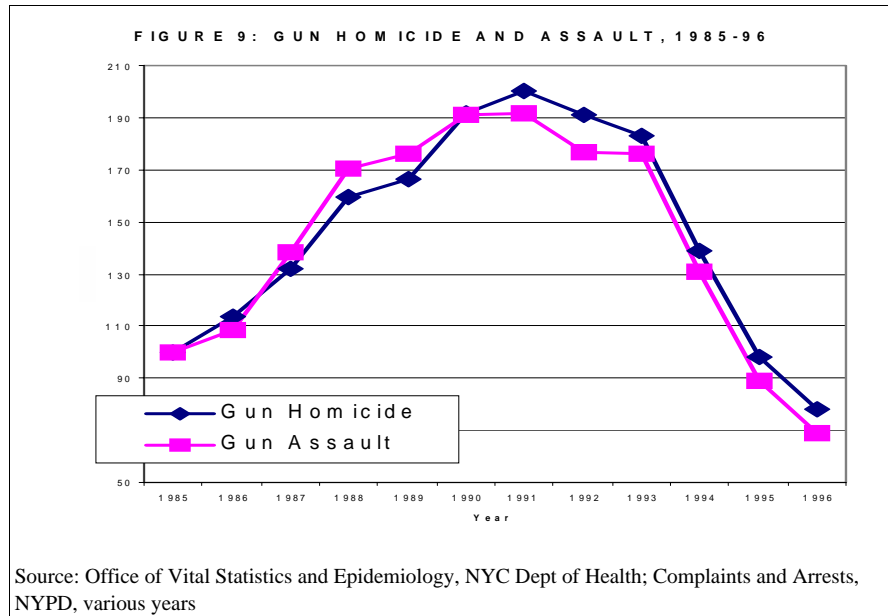


Race

None of the data sources allowed detailed disaggregation of the homicide trends by race over the entire 1985-95 period. Detailed data were available only for African Americans; whites and Hispanics were not distinguished in the police or Medical Examiner data until after 1990. Based on the available data, there were no substantial changes in the racial composition of NYC during this period.

Concomitants

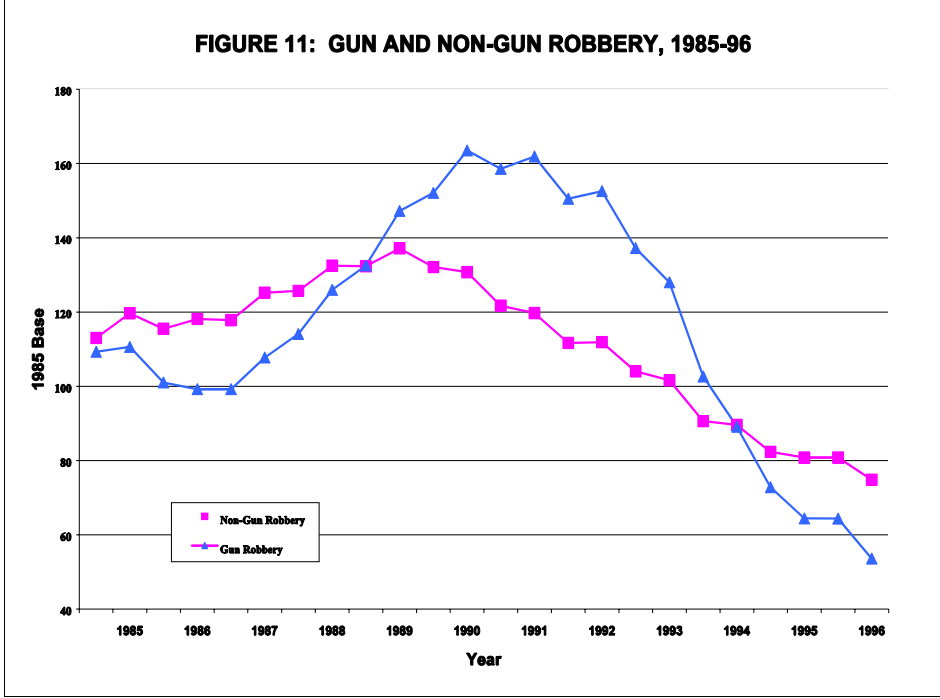
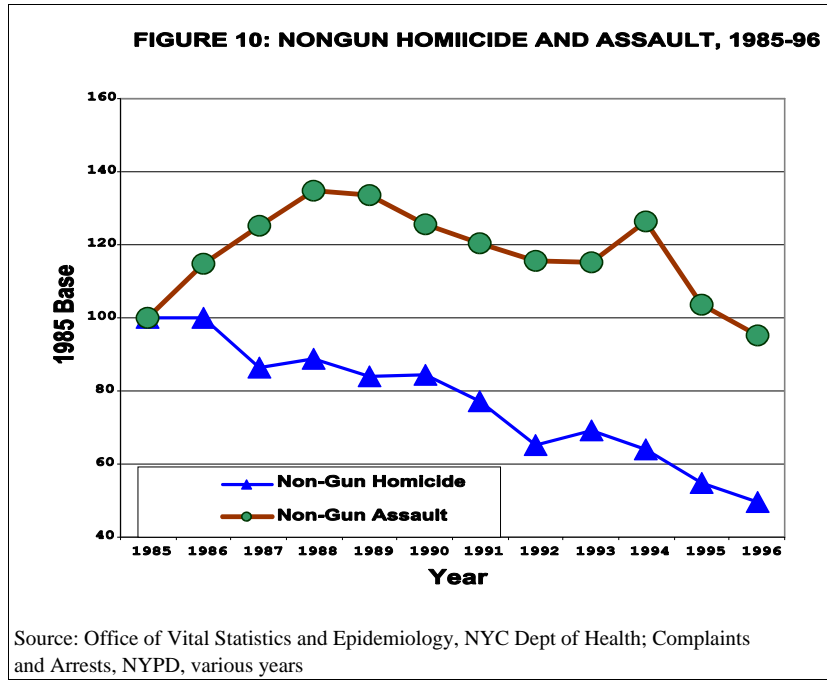
In addition to the aforementioned citywide homicide data, trends in crime statistics and other social data widely believed to be associated to trends in lethal violence should be examined for their possible influence on decreasing homicide rates. The historical data for gun and non-gun violence is presented separately below because of the finding that gun and non-gun homicides have distinctly different histories in the City.



Homicide and Assault Data

Figure 9 shows the pattern over time for firearm homicide and firearms assault, with 1985 rates of shooting deaths and firearm assaults expressed as 100 and all other values normed to that scale. In both timing and relative magnitude, the firearm assault trends match the firearm homicide trends. The increased level of *firearm assaults*, about 8,600 more known cases by 1990 and 1991, appears to be the mechanism driving the increase in gun fatalities until 1991. The sharp drop in firearm assaults after 1993 also seems to be the dynamic for the drop in firearm fatalities.

The police data on *non-firearm aggravated assault* trends and NYC Health Department records on homicides by all means other than firearms (Figure 10) are quite different from the firearm trends for assaults. The decline in non-gun killings that starts in the mid-1980s is merely a shift from knife and personal force attacks to gun attacks. It is widely believed that gun incidents increased largely due to turf conflict in the crack trade.

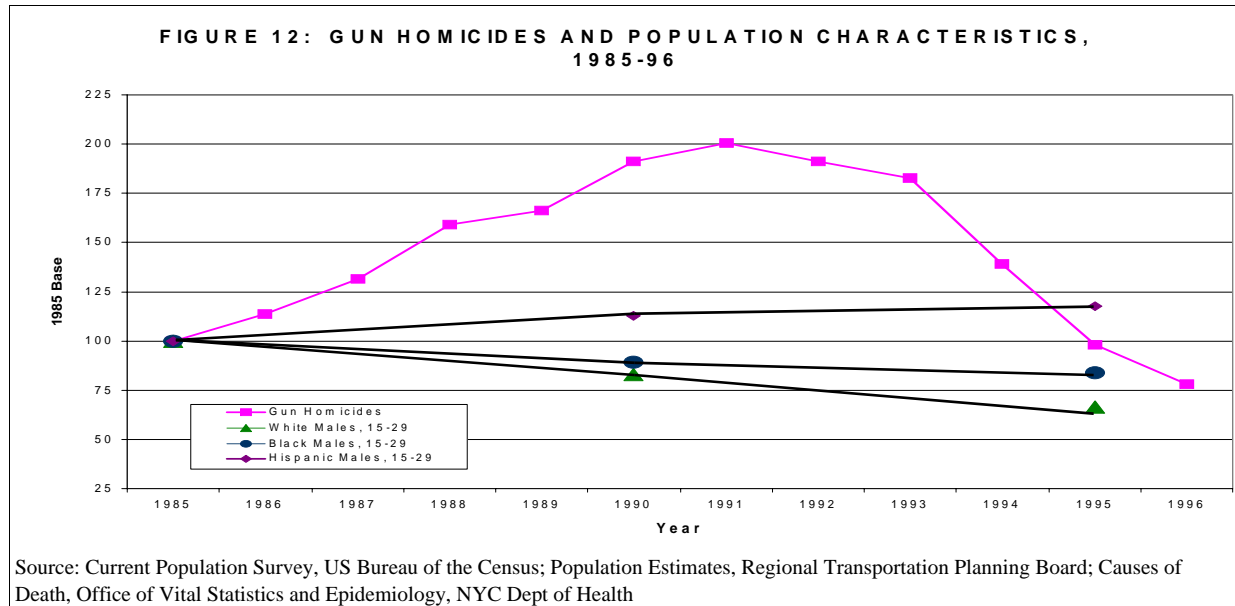


Note: Initial rate is greater than 100 due to smoothing of 3 six-month reporting periods.

Source: New York City Police Department, Complaints and Arrests, various years

Gun and Non-Gun Robbery

The pattern of firearm robbery from 1985-96 (Figure 11) is similar to the patterns of firearm assault and homicide, peaking in 1991 before declining sharply. The general, steady decline in non-firearm assault and homicide is mirrored by the trend for property crimes and non-firearm robberies.



Population of Highest Risk Subgroups

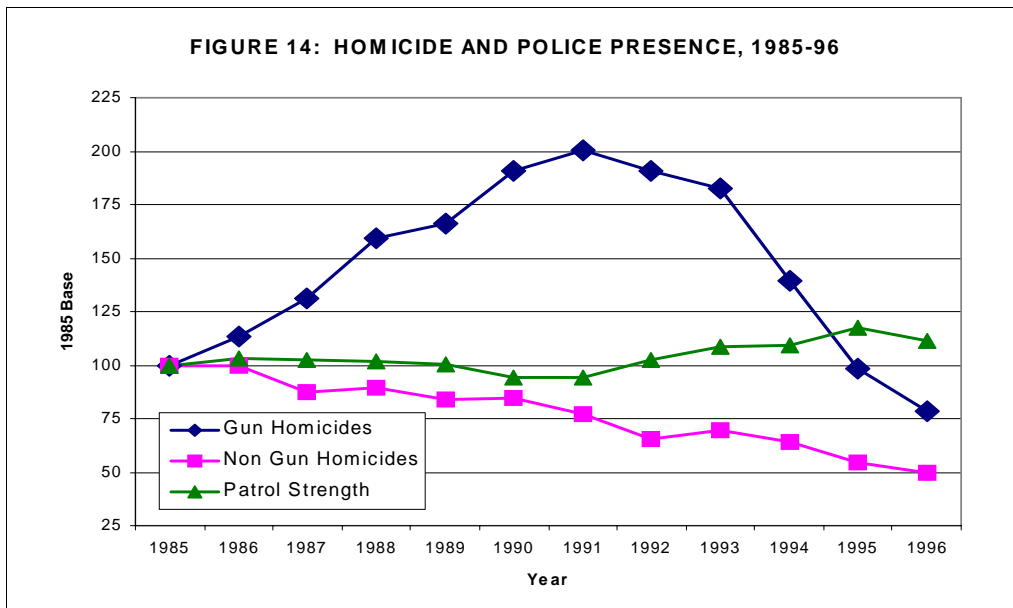
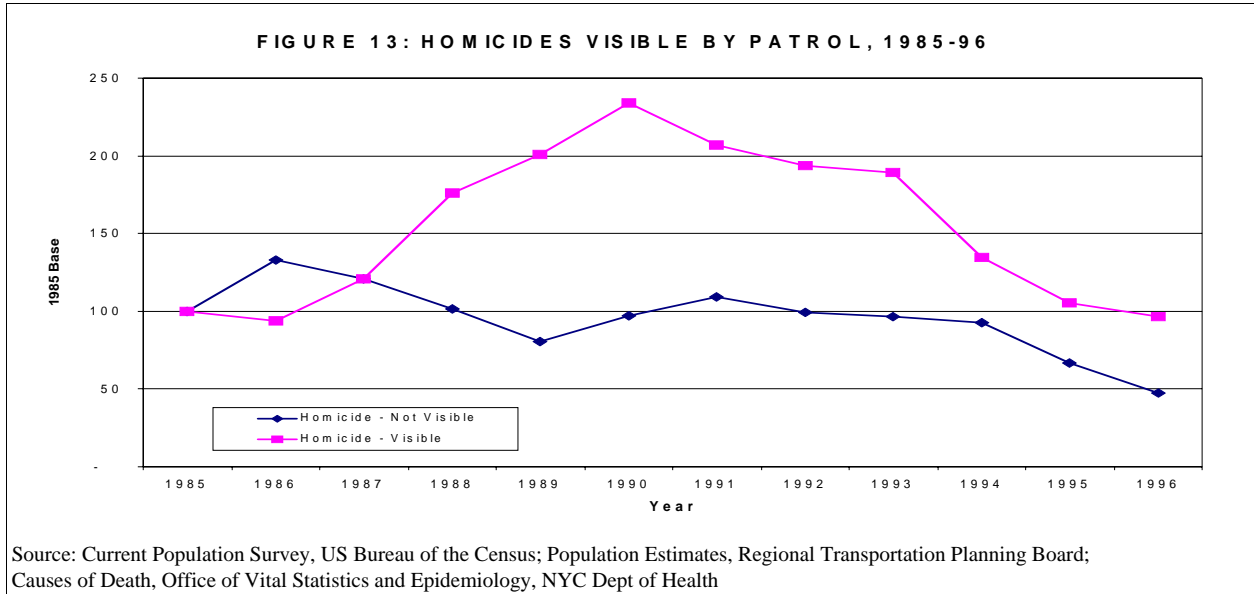
Figures 12 and 13 represent the trends for firearm and nonfirearm homicides arrayed with population estimates for the subgroups with the highest homicide risk: males 15-29 years of age. Demographic trends appear to be unrelated to firearm homicides. However, as shown in Figure 13, non-firearm trends appear to coincide with population declines among white and black males.

Law and Policy

Significant changes occurred in law and criminal justice policy from 1985-96 which produced important changes in the likelihood of detection and punishment of crime (with special emphasis on NYPD's gun strategy), and included a rapidly expanding prison population.

Figure 14 shows the changes in policing over the 11-year period were unrelated to the long-term decline in *non-gun* homicides. However, there are some apparent links between police resources and *firearm* homicides, as well as police strategy and homicide trends. Patrol strength increased from its 1991 count of 6,647 officers to over 8,305 officers in 1995 -- an increase of almost 25

percent. The increase in patrol strength was sharpest from 1991 to 1994, the period of onset of the decline in firearm homicides. Also, marked shifts in policing strategy began in 1994, concurrently with even sharper declines in firearm homicides from 1994-96.



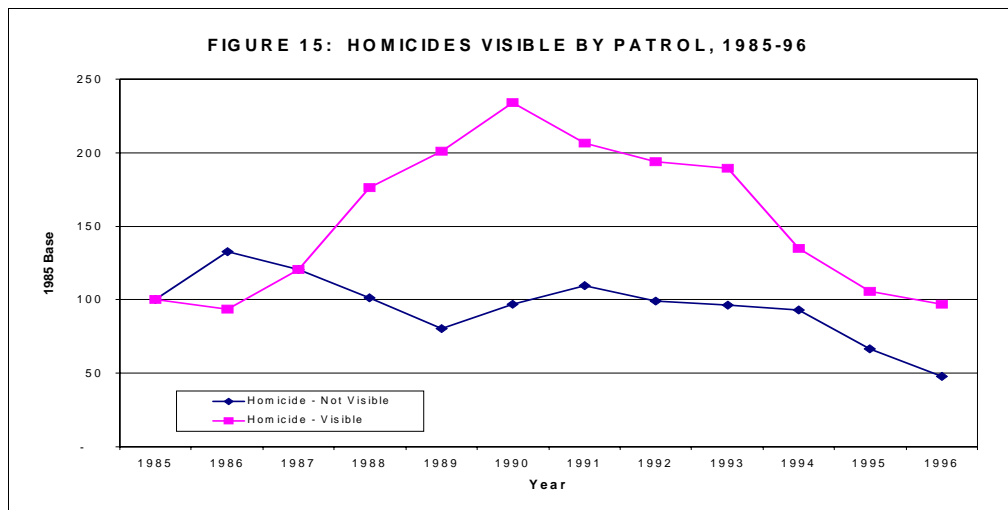
While the increased and aggressive patrol tactics should reduce opportunities for visible or outdoor crime commission, the researchers found no evidence of displacement from outdoor to indoor homicide in these trends (Figure 15).

Increase in Patrol Strength

The authors found that the increase in patrol strength beginning in 1991 had a positive effect on reducing *visible* homicides. The second pressure was tied to changes in the dynamics of drug distribution. The decline in visible homicide was concurrent with the shift from outdoor to indoor drug selling, reducing the volatility of drug transactions and the opportunities for conflicts over money or turf. The dramatic 1994-96 decline in *firearm* homicides (greatly influencing overall homicides) coincides with changes in NYPD strategy. Combined with earlier downward pressures, the shift toward an aggressive enforcement strategy targeted at firearms is believed to be significantly associated with sharp declines in *both* indoor and outdoor homicides.

Incapacitation

Incapacitating potential homicide offenders through changes in incarceration did *not* show an identifiable impact on homicide trends. The NYC jail and State prison populations of NYC offenders rose in lockstep with NYC homicide through 1991, and continued to rise even as firearm homicides, and homicides overall, began their rapid decline after 1993. (See Figure 16.)

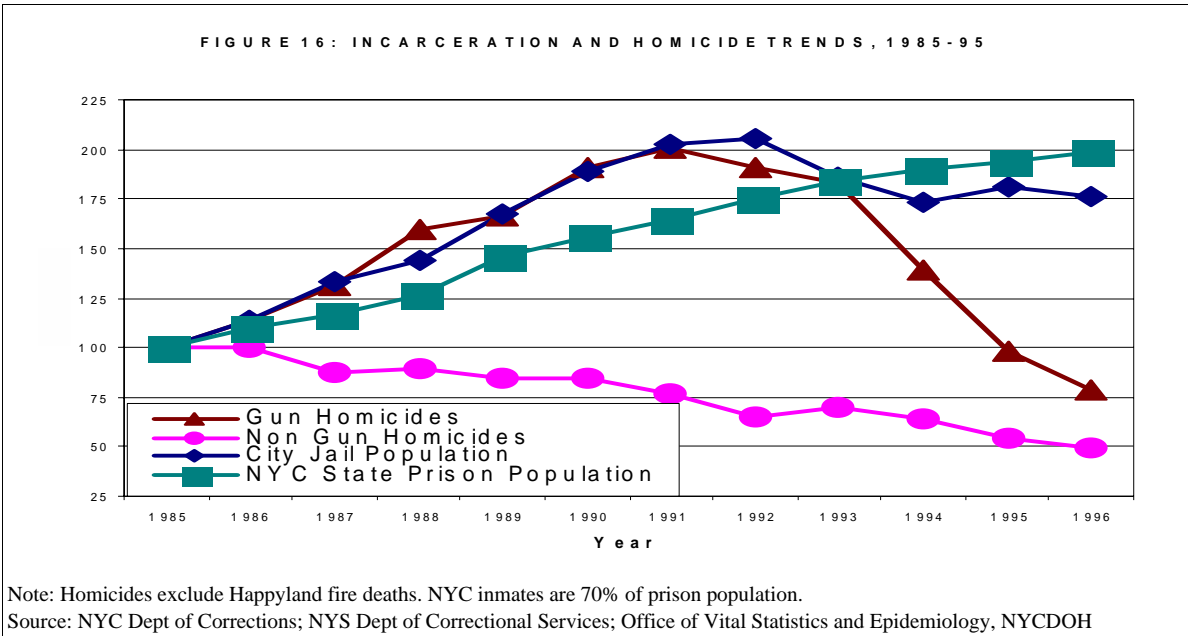


Source: Complaints and Arrests, New York City Police Department, various years; UCR "Return "A" reports, NYPD, various years

Other Factors

Other factors besides the gun strategy likely have contributed to the decline in gun homicides. It is difficult to exactly apportion credit between demography, policing including NYPD's Operation FLARE which has helped reduce the number of federally licensed firearm dealers in

NYC through police interviews of license applicants and enforcement of City fire and zoning codes applying to retail business in firearms, and other strategies being implemented by the NYPD including quality-of-life offense enforcement. Changes in State and Federal gun laws and enforcement efforts also may be influential. Cyclical variation as well as social trends in risk and exposure may also be relevant -- such as people avoiding areas of higher crime incidence. While the researchers concluded that NYPD's firearm law enforcement efforts appear to be strongly associated with decreases in NYC gun homicides in recent years, the question remains: how long will this "trend" of declining firearm homicides continue?



Conclusion

The authors concluded that the effects of both manpower and tactical changes in policing are "no doubt" important and strong contributors to the homicide decline. However, the size and timing of the decline in firearm homicides are so great as to require additional, contemporaneous explanations and effects that interact with policing to produce unprecedented change, including the steady decline in non-gun homicides.

Homicide Trends 1947-1996: Short-Term Versus Long-Term Factors

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This paper presents and analyzes homicide trends for 1947 to 1996 at the national, regional and state levels. National trends are compared to those for other crimes. Long-term trends usually differ greatly between series, but the short-term trends are usually similar. The latter probably results from powerful national factors that drive crime rates everywhere in the country in a similar manner, such as nationwide prison populations. The differences in long-term trends result from secular forces that have different impacts in different areas and for different crime types. For example, although homicide rates are highly correlated with other crime rates, they have grown hardly at all since 1947, whereas other crimes have experienced tremendous growth. A likely partial explanation is that improved emergency services mean that fewer assault victims die.

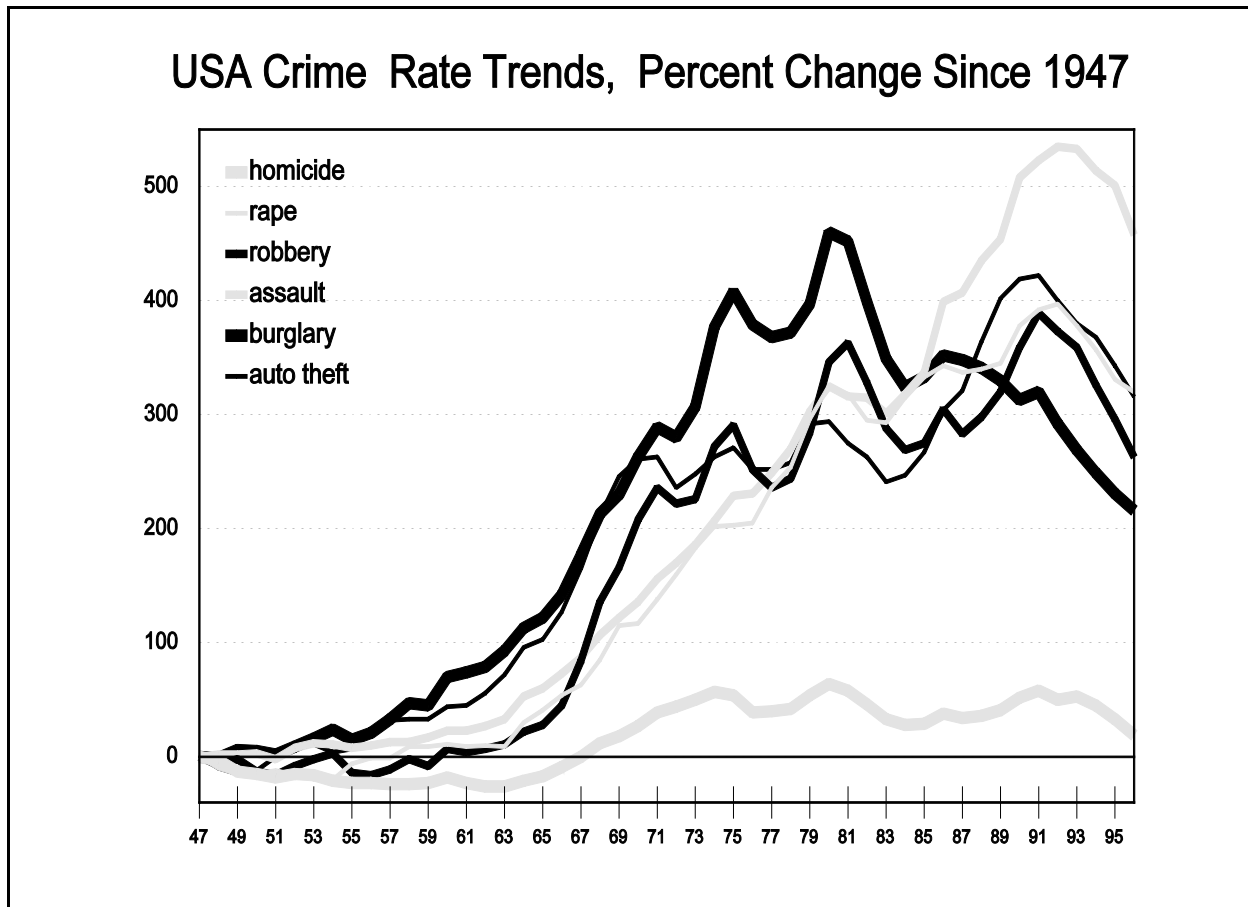
Trends in National Homicide and Other Crimes

The first topic is aggregate national homicide rate trends, especially as compared to trends for other types of crimes (Figure 1). Crime is measured by crime reported to the police, as compiled in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (FBI 1997 and earlier years; Office of Management and Budget, 1974). Besides homicide, data are available since 1947 for rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The beginning year is 1947 because that avoids the dislocations caused by World War II and its aftermath. The latest year with available data is 1996. The crime figures are divided by population.

The pattern is striking. Homicide rates grew hardly at all, by 19% from 1947-96. The other UCR crimes experienced tremendous growth: 320% for rape, 263% for robbery, 458% for assault, 216% for burglary, and 316% for auto theft. That is, the other crimes grew some 10 to 20 times as much as homicide.

This difference is especially odd for three reasons. First, because most criminals do not specialize in crime (e.g., Kempf, 1987), one would expect the various crime types to move roughly in the same manner. This is true for the other five UCR crimes in Figure 1, but not for homicide. Second, most homicides are very similar to aggravated assaults, differing only in that the assault resulted in a death (Harries, 1990). But there is an extreme difference between long-term trends for homicide and aggravated assault in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1



Third, and most important, in spite of the apparent differences between trends in homicide and other crimes, the trends are highly correlated. Table 1 presents the correlations between the various crime rates. There are two sets of correlations, those between the actual rates and those between the percent change in rates. The correlations between actual rates (in "levels") probably overstate the relationships due to stochastic trending and autocorrelation. Correlations between percent changes (which are essentially first differences of logged variables) are unlikely to encounter such problems, but they suffer the opposite bias, understating the relationship. There are two reasons for the bias: 1) percent changes can be greatly affected by errors in the data, and 2) correlations between percent changes tap only very short term relationships, ignoring those that do not fall precisely within a time frame for which the two series are related. (Correlations with prewhitened variables are similar to those with percent changes and, because the variables are differenced, might also be biased downwards.) The "true" correlation, if there is such a thing, is likely to fall somewhere between the correlations with levels and those with percent changes.

Table 1. Correlations Between Crime Rates, 1947-96

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Auto
Homicide	--	.89	.96	.82	.93	.90
Rape	.61	--	.97	.98	.86	.95
Robbery	.74	.35	--	.93	.93	.96
Assault	.82	.51	.67	--	.76	.94
Burglary	.59	.31	.83	.56	--	.87
Auto	.62	.50	.58	.57	.53	--

The correlations are for 1947-96 national crime rates. Variables expressed as levels (the actual crime rates) are above the diagonal, and variables expressed as percent changes are below the diagonal. All correlations are significant at the .05 level.

In spite of the tremendous differences in long-term trends, the correlations between homicide and other crimes are high -- probably as high as one ever encounters in criminology. In levels, the correlations are nearly as high as those between the other crime rates even though the other crime trends seem to bunch together, but not with homicide. Using percent changes, the correlations between homicide and the other crimes are actually much larger than the correlations between crimes, averaging .68 and .54 respectively.

These findings are reinforced by Table 2, where homicide is regressed on the five other crime types. The results do not depend on whether the variables are expressed as levels or as percent changes. The coefficients are elasticities, which is the percent change in homicide associated with each one percent change in the particular crime rate. Assault has the closest relationship with homicide, followed by rape and robbery, as one would expect. Burglary and auto theft have little relationship after controlling for the other crimes. That is, the common factors behind homicide and burglary (or auto theft) that lead to the high correlations in Table 1 are also factors that lead to the high correlation between homicide and violent crimes.

Table 2. Regressing Homicide on Five UCR Crimes

	<u>levels</u>		<u>percent changes</u>	
	Coef.	t	Coef.	t
Rape	.20	2.60	.21	2.67
Robbery	.19	2.19	.23	2.60
Assault	.45	3.48	.57	4.30
Burglary	.06	.73	-.08	.74
Auto Theft	.12	1.57	.06	.75
Intercept	5.35	11.08	-2.92	5.17
Trend	-1.98	7.57	-	--

These are generalized least squares regressions, with national UCR homicide rates for 1947-96 as dependent variables and other UCR crimes as independent variables. Variables are logged in the levels analysis. The regression R-squares are .91 and .78.

Two additional features of Table 2 are noteworthy. First, the coefficients on the individual crimes total to 1.0 in both regressions. A one percent growth in all the other crimes is associated with a one percent growth in homicide. This implies that short-term homicide changes are mainly determined by whatever factors cause changes in the other crimes. Exactly what these factors are is outside the scope of the present study. However, because the breath of their scope makes them the most important factors that affect crime rates, they should be the prime focus of criminology research.

The second feature is the large impacts of the trend variable (that is, a counter) added to the regression with levels and of the intercept in the regression with percent changes (the intercept here is functionally similar to the trend term in the levels analysis). This suggests that there is a very large linear trend effect that affects the other UCR crime but not homicide. This effect applies throughout, applying with approximately the same force for each year.

In sum, homicide trends are very similar to trends for other crimes, except for the slopes. Because the slopes are based on long-term trends, the gist of Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2 is that short-term changes in homicide are close to those for other crimes, but the long-term changes are very different. The difference between short-term and long-term trends means, in effect, that the yearly percent change in the other crimes is larger than that for homicide by the roughly same amount each year, averaging about 2% to 3% depending on the crime.

This is most evident for assault, which again is closely associated with homicide. Even though it grew more than other crimes (Figure 1), the correlation between percent changes in it and homicide is .82 (Table 1), which is an extraordinarily high figure when dealing with percent changes. The next highest correlation is .74 for robberies, which is also a crime associated with homicides.

What then causes the differences between the long-term trends homicide and those for other crimes? As discussed above, the causes must have a continuing impact that does not change much from year to year. To my knowledge there are only two likely explanations, changes in the amount of unrecorded crime and changes in the odds that an assault will result in a death.

As general rule, the portion of crimes that end up as crime statistics has increased substantially. In the Crime Victimization Survey, respondents were asked whether they had reported crimes against them to the police, and there is a consistent series of responses from 1973 to 1992 (the Survey methodology was changed in 1993). The percent reporting for those two years were: 44% and 53% for rape, 51% and 51% for robbery, 52% and 62% for assault, 46% and 54% for burglary, and 67% and 75% for auto theft. Assuming that the growth rate for reporting rates is constant, extrapolation from these 19 years suggests that increase reporting account for 58% of the rape growth between 1947 and 1996, 55% of the assault growth, 48% of the burglary growth, and 33% of the auto theft growth. There is no apparent change in robbery reporting.

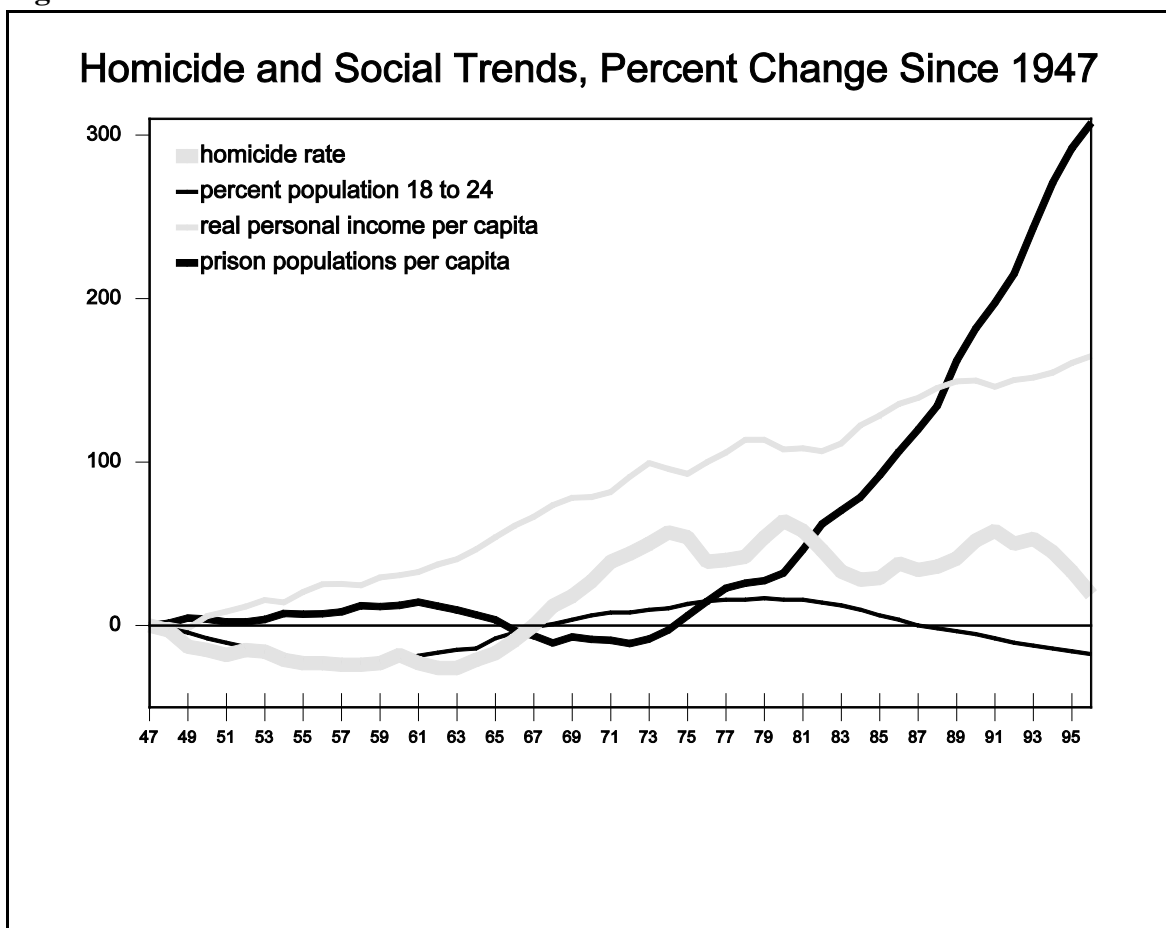
This allows one to adjust the overall growth in Figure 1 for reporting changes. The 1947-96 growth for homicide stays the same, at 19%, under the likely assumption that homicides are nearly always reported. After adjusting for reporting changes, the 49-year growth is 134% for rape, 263% for robbery, 206% for assault, 112% for burglary, and 212% for auto theft. Although this growth is much less than that in Figure 1, it is still sizeable and much larger than growth in homicides. I emphasize, however, that these adjustments are crude. The reporting changes before 1972 might not be similar to those afterwards. Also, the adjustments are only for reporting changes and do not take into consideration changes in police recording of crimes reported; increase recording is especially likely for rape and sexual assault. Nevertheless, the evidence is strong that homicide growth is much less than the growth of other crimes.

The second likely explanation for why homicide trends do not match those for other crimes, especially assault, is improvements in trauma care. After all, if some assault victims survive in 1996 but would not have in 1947, the 1996 homicide rates have been reduced. Improvements in trauma care have taken many forms: quicker reporting of injuries, speedier ambulance service, better professional care while on route to the hospital, greater knowledge about how to treat injuries, and greater available of surgeons versed in treating wounds. Especially important are the gradual adoption of trauma systems in most states over the past four decades. Criminology research tentatively suggests that improved treatment of injuries has reduce homicide, but gives no indication of the extent (Doerner, 1988; Doerner and Speir, 1986; Lattimore et al., 1997).

Trends in Homicides and Associated Factors

Figure 2 graphs homicide rate trends and trends for three factors often said to be associated with homicide. These are 1) the percent 18 to 24 years old, which is the age group with the highest arrest rate for homicides, 2) real per-capita personal income, which is probably the most accurate indicator of economic well being, and 3) prison population per capita, which measures the possible deterrent and incapacitation impacts of imprisonment. The correlations between these three and homicide are much smaller than the correlations between homicide and other crimes (Table 1). There appears to be a close relationship between homicide and age structure until 1967, and a negative relationship between homicide and prison populations through the early 1980s. However, the existence of several causal factors makes interpretation of Figure 2 difficult. In fact, the major import of Figure 2 is that bivariate comparisons have limited utility when attempting to estimate the impact of specific causal factors, when many causal factors are involved. Elsewhere using multiple regression, which can distinguish between the impact of the several causal factors, Marvell and Moody (1997) found that prison population size is by far the most important factor influencing homicide trends, with demographic and economic factors only moderately important. They also found that without control variables, which affect both homicides and prison populations, there is little evidence of a relationship between these homicide and prisons.

Figure 2



Homicide Types

Figure 3 presents three separate pairs of homicide types: 1) gun and non-gun, 2) female and male victims, and 3) white and nonwhite victims. Table 3 presents the correlations between these pairs. The data are from Vital Statistics victimization taken from death certificates, and 1995 is the last year available (National Center for Health Statistics, 1997 and earlier editions).

The interesting fact here is that the female and male homicide trends are much closer than the other two pairs of trends. Gun homicide rates have increase much more than non-gun rates, and white rates have increased much more than nonwhite rates. As will be seen presently, however, the latter two are largely the result of differences between homicide trends for different parts of the country.

Figure 3

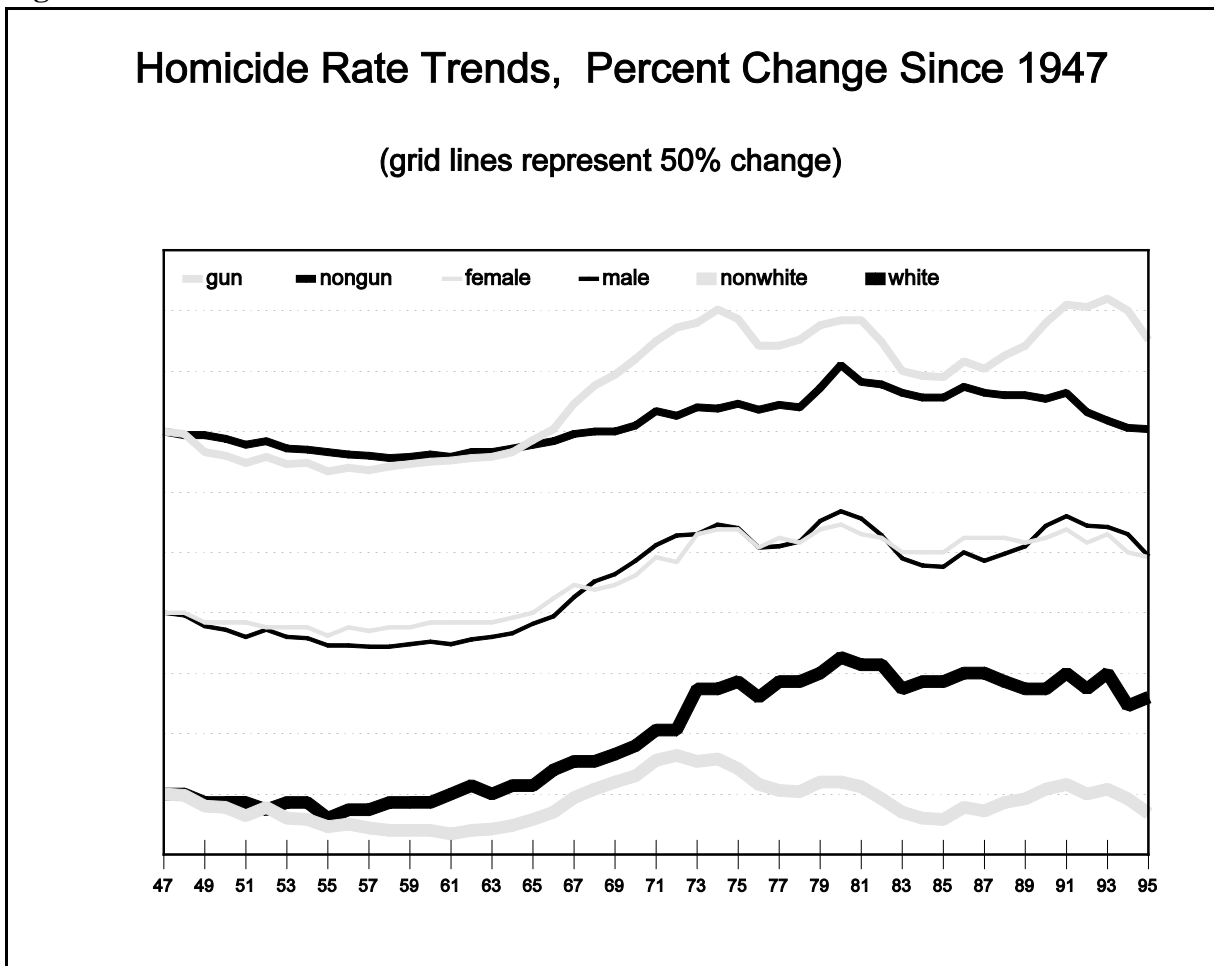


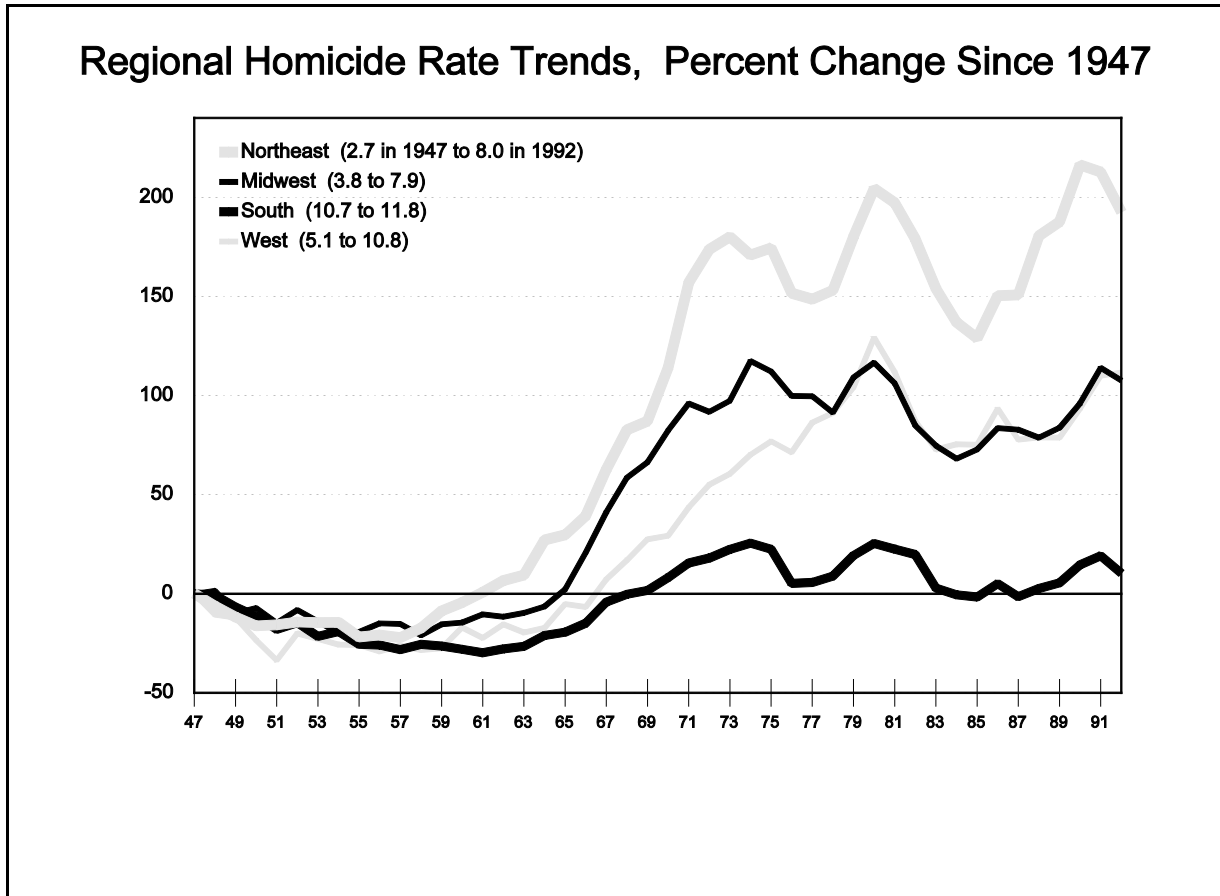
Table 3. Correlations Between Homicide Types, 1947-95

	Gun & Non-Gun	Male & Female	White & Nonwhite
Levels	.83	.98	.56
Percent Changes	.49	.57	.30

Regional Homicide Rates

It is well known that homicide rates are much higher in some sections of the country, especially the South. It is not as well known that homicide trends also differ greatly between regions. Figure 4 divides the states into census regions (for the states in each region, see Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1997). The data are based on aggregation of the individual state vital statistics data, for which homicides are categorized by state of occurrence. The last year with state data is 1992.

Figure 4



Homicide rates in the South are remarkably flat over the 1947-92 period, but rates in the Northeast nearly tripled. Rates in the other two regions, Midwest and West, doubled. These trends are mainly movements towards the average: The homicide rate in the South started at four times that for the Northeast and more than twice those of the Midwest and South. In 1992 the South still had the highest rate, but it was less than 50% higher than rates in the other regions. The differences between regional trends probably explain the differences between white and nonwhite homicide trends in Figure 3. Since the South has more nonwhites, the relatively lower homicide growth there translates into relatively low homicide growth for nonwhites.

Table 4. Regional-Level Correlations, 1947-92

	Homicide Rates				Percent With Guns			
	NE	MW	S	W	NE	MW	S	W
Northeast	--	.98	.89	.97	--	.81	.67	.90
Midwest	.55	--	.93	.95	.38	--	.92	.82
South	.77	.63	--	.87	.34	.48	--	.76
West	.48	.52	.58	--	.19	.38	.32	--

Levels above the diagonals and percent changes below.

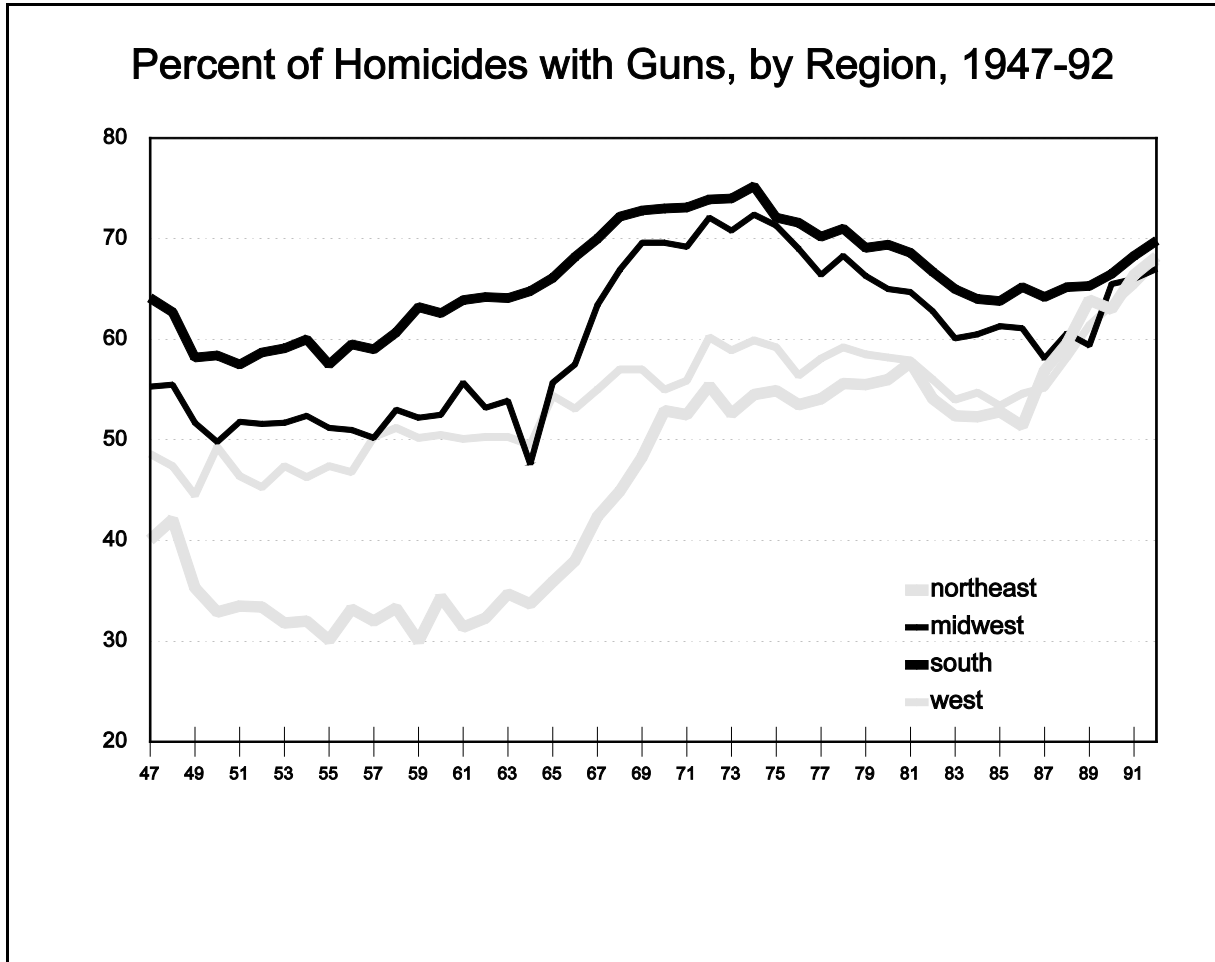
The differences between regional trends, therefore, are similar in magnitude to the differences between homicides and other crimes (after taking into account reporting changes). Similarly, in spite of the huge long-term differences, the short-term regional changes do not differ substantially. On average the correlations between regional trends, whether expressed as levels or percent changes, are very similar to correlations between crime types (Tables 1 and 4). Correlations between the South and other regions are slightly less than correlations between the other regions when expressed as levels, but they are larger when expressed as percent changes.

Another example of movement towards the average is found in the percent of homicides by guns (Figure 5). Large differences between the regions persisted until the early 1960s, with the South having the largest percentage, around 60%, and the Northeast having the smallest percentage, a little more than 30%. In the Midwest and West about 50% of homicides were with guns. Since the early 1960s the percentage figures increased in all areas, but the increase varied inversely with the magnitude of gun use. In the end, by 1992 the figures are almost the same for all regions, at just under 70% (Figure 5). As result, the comparatively large growth of gun homicides since the 1960s (Figure 3) is due mainly to the growth in the Northeast.

The series in Figure 5 differ from the series in Figures 1 to 4 in that the correlations between the trends are quite small. Although all trends in Figure 5 are generally upward, the year-to-year

changes are not at all similar. There appears to be little short-term similarity between gun use regions.

Figure 5



State-Level Analysis

Again, State-level homicide data are for 1947-92. Table 5 lists the percent change in homicide rates in 48 states (excluding Alaska and Hawaii). The differences between states are startling. Eight, mainly Southern states, experienced declines, whereas homicide rates at least doubled in fifteen states. (Changes in small states might be misleading because they usually had so few homicides in 1947 that one more or one less homicide can have a large impact on the percent growth for 1947-92.) Some of the largest increases are found in large industrial states: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The 310% increase for New York stands out, and the recent drop in homicide rates there can be seen as a long overdue adjustment to match the growth rates elsewhere.

Table 5. Percent Change in Homicide Rates by State, 1947-92

Alabama	-14%	Maine	107%	Ohio	25%
Arizona	63%	Maryland	62%	Oklahoma	22%
Arkansas	54%	Massachusetts	162%	Oregon	99%
California	130%	Michigan	195%	Pennsylvania	119%
Colorado	59%	Minnesota	184%	Rhode Island	105%
Connecticut	178%	Mississippi	17%	South Carolina	-12%
Delaware	27%	Missouri	90%	South Dakota	140%
Florida	-31%	Montana	93%	Tennessee	-2%
Georgia	-20%	Nebraska	63%	Texas	30%
Idaho	16%	Nevada	2%	Utah	18%
Illinois	148%	New Hampshire	250%	Vermont	163%
Indiana	81%	New Jersey	61%	Virginia	16%
Iowa	-3%	New Mexico	20%	Washington	72%
Kansas	52%	New York	310%	West Virginia	7%
Kentucky	-46%	North Carolina	8%	Wisconsin	256%
Louisiana	88%	North Dakota	416%	Wyoming	-33%

In spite of the differences in 1947-92 homicide growth rates, the correlations between pairs of states are generally positive. Table 6 give the mean correlation coefficients between states (that is, it averages hundreds of separate correlations). The correlations, although positive, are low compared to those between regions (Table 6). This is largely due to the erratic nature of homicide data in small states because they have few homicides in any one year. The correlations between rates in the ten largest states are somewhat higher (Table 6).

	Levels	Percent Changes
48 States	.52	.12
10 Largest States	.67	.33

The final analysis, in Table 7, is a more complex procedure for estimating the similarity of state and federal trends. This presents the results of six regressions with homicide rates over 1947-92 as the dependent variable in each. The main independent variable is national crime rates and sixteen economic, demographic, and other control variables. The variables are percent changes. The regression is weighted by population to avoid heteroscedasticity, and two lags of the dependent variable are added to correct for autocorrelation. The only difference between the six regressions is the national-level crime variable (for homicide this variable is national homicides less homicide in the state, a transformation that is not possible for other crimes due to the lack of state data in the early years).

Homicide	.95	(14.1)	Assault	.91	(9.6)
Rape	.28	(4.3)	Burglary	.58	(9.1)
Robbery	.49	(11.9)	Auto	.42	(6.3)

This table contains coefficients (and t ratios) on national crime from six multiple time series regressions with vital statistics state-level homicide rates as dependent variables and national-level crime rates among the dependent variables. The variables are percent changes. The regressions contain 16 additional independent variables as controls, and the sample size is 2,182.

The coefficient is .95 for the national-level homicide variable (Table 7); because the variables are percent changes, this means that a one percent change in national homicide is associated with almost the same change in individual states on average, apparently because the factors that affect

changes in one state are those that affect changes in other states. The t-ratio of 14.1 is extraordinarily high and suggests that the size of yearly changes in the states are similar (after taking into account yearly changes due to secular trends). The coefficient on national assault rates is nearly as large, .91, which again suggests that factors that cause changes in assault rates throughout the country are the factors that cause changes in each state's homicide rates.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, short-term factors tend to be broad, and long-term factors are mainly local or otherwise have narrow scope. As a general rule, the various crime trends -- whether for different crime types, subcategories of homicide or regions of the country -- are very similar in the short run but differ greatly in the long run. That is, the series are highly correlated but their 1947-96 growth varies tremendously. The difference between short-term and long-term trends results from the fact that the short-term trends are similar across the various series except for an additional growth element, specific to each series, that is similar from year to year for the particular series. The general rule, however, applies less strongly when comparing gun and non-gun homicide and when comparing homicide rates in individual states, especially small states.

These conclusions have three major implications. First, criminologists have seldom, if ever, considered the existence of broad, over-arching forces that drive crime changes across various categories of crime types and all regions. This means that the tendency in criminology towards disaggregation is likely to miss important factors, which might be called a "disaggregation bias." I did not here study what these national effects are, but in other research we have found that national levels of prison populations have very large (negative) associations with local state crime rates for homicide and the other UCR crime types (Marvell and Moody, 1998). Another candidate is inflation levels, which differ little from state to state.

Second, local effects and crime-specific effects are mainly secular effects. In contrast, when researchers or the public evaluate the impact of politicians and the criminal justice system on crime, they look at short-term changes. Evaluation of the impact on long-term changes requires the passage of too much time to be practical. This means that politicians, police, and others who might have some power to affect crime rates tend to be evaluated on outcomes (short-term crime-rate changes) that are mainly beyond their control. Consequently, it is very difficult to evaluate crime-reduction programs, and it is impossible to evaluate them without taking into account what is going in the rest of the country. (Although this study concentrates on homicide, these conclusions apply to other crimes as well.)

Third, although factors that affect local and crime-specific trends are obviously important, as a practical matter for policy purposes factors that operate at the national level and across crime types are more important. The reason is obvious. Local and crime-specific factors have narrow impacts; factors that operate nationally and across crimes have broad impacts.

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Session 3: Collaborations Among Academics, Practitioners, and the Community

Recorder: Lin Huff-Corzine

Youth, Firearms and Violence in Atlanta: A Problem-Solving Approach
Arthur L. Kellerman, Dawna S. Fuqua-Whitley, Peter Ash, and John Carter

Presenter: Dawna S. Fuqua-Whitley

Tom Marvell: *Can others use the Atlanta data?*

Dawna Fuqua-Whitley: Yes, as far as I am aware.

Roland Chilton: *Has the juvenile rate of crime, especially homicide, gone down in the areas that you studied?*

Dawna Fuqua-Whitley: In Atlanta, crime in general, including homicide, is dropping off. The Atlanta policing initiative program has only been in place 6 months. We have no specific answer yet about the specific link between our program and this decline.

Becky Block: *How often are you feeding data to police?*

Dawna Fuqua-Whitley: Currently, I am feeding them the data on monthly basis. We also report to the Police Chief about once a month and show how there's fluctuation on a quarterly basis.

Cheryl Maxson: *How is the program in Atlanta similar to the one in Boston?*

Dawna Fuqua-Whitley: We looked at the Boston program and have an ongoing discussion about how to modify that program for our use in Atlanta. For example, we thought about using their gang strategies, but our gangs are too different from those in Boston.

The SECURE Program: Safety Enhanced Communities Utilizing Resident Endeavors
Richard Block, David Katz, and Laura Herrin

Presenter: Richard Block

Roland Chilton: *Has the juvenile rate of crime, especially homicide, gone down in the areas that you studied?*

Dick Block: Rates of crime related to juveniles have declined inside the buildings, especially at Park. Doors are actually in place where there were none or they were broken before and they have locks now. In regard to the immediate neighborhood, however, we are not so sure. It seems to have declined in some places, while others just moved a block or two down the street. Some building/complex management say the neighborhood *is* their concern, but other management persons say only the buildings are their concern, not the surrounding area.

A Content Analysis of the Media Portrayal of Child Abuse in Two Australian Newspapers
Ania Wilczynski

Candice Skrapec: *How do you work with reporters?*

Dick Block: *Do the reporters ask questions differently depending on the type of paper?*

Ania Wilczynski: If you delay by only a few hours, you'll miss your advantage. Also, have only a few simple points, fax material to them, and do a write-up yourself. Tabloids are more problematic than others. Only speak to them if you can see their draft first. One reporter made comments about my femininity, my blonde hair, and the fact that I do not have children. I have also been misquoted.

Chris Rasche: *I agree that short clear answers are best, however, I often find that they have a story to do and just want/need an expert to back up their view. Often they are off on a wrong angle so I end up in a teaching mode. They don't want to take the time to learn—they just need to get a story out.*

Ania Wilczynski: Give them another hook or way to look at the issue. If all else fails, sometimes it's better if they just don't write the story.

Sue Avila: *Do these reports help or not?*

Ania Wilczynski: I can't really say if there's a cause and effect relationship. It can be positive if it effects policy changes. Some people will argue, however, that any changes coming this way will be short-term effects only.

Dick Block: *Often it seems that the stories are reasonable, but headlines are sensational.*

Chris Rasche: *Is there an avenue to control headline construction?*

Linda Langford: You can call to complain to the paper about headlines and have some of your friends call too. It works.

Partners and Strategies in Reducing Youth Violence

Kathleen Heide

Robert Smith: *Your list of 50 things to reduce youth violence makes common sense, but many are backed up only by anecdotal stories. It seems that we need to define, measure, and evaluate these strategies.*

Chris Rasche: *One idea was to foster self-esteem with adult offenders. However, although white women lack self-esteem, black women do not. Thus, we can't expect self-esteem programs to decrease violence committed by black women. We need to identify target groups' problems first and then design programs.*

Robert Smith: *What self-esteem is may be different for different groups as well.*

Kathleen Heide: The kids I have worked with don't have healthy self-concepts, that difference by age may transcend gender, race, and other differences.

Dawna Fuqua-Whitley: *People also need "other-esteem"; the ability to value other people.*

Kathleen Heide: Certainly, empathy and respect for others is needed to reduce violence among youth. It's likely that violent youth are also likely to present with restricted personality development so that needs to be checked out too. You can usually identify "problem" children by the time they are 5-6 years old. What also happens is that many people are not good parents so children don't have a good environmental background either.

Jackie Campbell: *How many of the children you studied were physically abused? There's a need more counseling for child abuse victims. Why can't we put more emphasis on these problems? The more severe adult batterers are often child abuse victims.*

Kathleen Heide: Kids are often missed for intervention opportunities.

The SECURE Program: Safety Enhanced Communities Utilizing Resident Endeavors

An Interim Evaluation Conducted by The Center for Urban Research & Learning, Loyola University of Chicago for The Illinois Housing Development Authority

Richard Block, Project Director

David Katz and Laura Herrin, Research Assistants

Foreword

This is an initial report describing the process and implementation of a collaborative project evaluation created by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) and the Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) at Loyola University Chicago. From the beginning, the project has revolved around the concerns and interests of the community members. IHDA intends to use the findings to help make future funding decisions. This report documents the first five months of this year-long effort.

The research team for this study consists of community residents and university faculty and students. A list of participants is located in the appendices at the end of the document. Without their dedicated efforts, this project could not have begun successfully.

Introduction

IHDA is currently implementing a Safety Enhanced Communities Utilizing Resident Endeavors (SECURE) program among four low-income housing developments in the Chicago area. The SECURE program addresses the security needs and concerns among residents who live in transitional neighborhoods with high crime rates. The housing developments participating in the program are The Pines of Edgewater, Northpoint, Diversey Square, and Park Apartments.

IHDA selected the four developments based on the development's location, ability to implement the program, neighborhood make-up, and management capacity. Each development submitted a proposal describing the security concerns at the property and how they planned to address these problems. The security upgrades include hardware, such as lighting, fencing, metal doors, and monitoring equipment. In addition, IHDA requested that the developments create a local partnership including the active participation of residents in the developments, the integration of local community policing strategies (CAPS), and collaboration with an existing organization to promote neighborhood safety. In return, IHDA has committed to providing funding for security improvements at each of the four apartment complexes. The total grant amounts to \$435,000, serving 885 units.

Project Overview

CURL's responsibility is to conduct a comprehensive research evaluation of the SECURE program. The evaluation will measure the success of the security improvements in creating a safer environment and reducing residents' fear of crime. CURL began the evaluation in late August 1997—after security changes had been developed, but before they had been implemented. The final results will not be available until the summer of 1998.

The evaluation design is based on four pre-post test measures:

1. Interviews with the management of each project about crime and security problems and their conception of the security changes.
2. Face-to-face interviews with the residents before and after the security changes are made.
3. A micro-geographic trend analysis of police reported crime patterns both inside the four complexes and in the surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Videotaping of each complex several times during the year-long evaluation.

The pre-test measurement at each project began with a meeting between the CURL research team and the development's management team. Management has generally been very informative and cooperative. At each site, the management team reviewed the resident's security concerns and problems and made suggestions for change in the evaluation process.

Pre-security change interviews have been completed with 209 residents of the four projects. The interviewers are development residents who have been trained, supervised, and paid by CURL for their participation. With the exception of the Pines, all of the interviewers live in the development where the interviews took place. The team of interviewers will attempt to re-interview all of the initial respondents in order to ensure that those who have moved did not leave for fear of crime. The time lapse between the first and second round of interviews is approximately seven months. The primary purpose of the second interview is to assess whether or not the residents feel safer in and around their apartment building after the security changes have been made.

In addition to measuring changes in residents' fears and perceptions of crime, police reported crime patterns in and around the developments will be documented. For this interim report, levels of crime in and around the four complexes are analyzed from January 1996 through August 1997. For the final report, the evaluation will determine the change or trend in police-reported crime levels among the developments since 1991, and assess whether or not the security improvements have an impact on such levels. Richard Block, the project's director, has collected and analyzed these geographic data for this initial report.

In order to gain an accurate measure of the project's implementation, the evaluation team interviewed the four developments property management. The decision-making process, proposed security changes, and goals for the expenditure of the IHDA funding were noted for each development. The evaluation team also videotaped the exterior of the developments to document their physical condition and the neighborhood setting prior to security improvements. After the security changes are completed, the developments will be videotaped again twice: first to verify that the improvements were made, and later to document whether or not they had the intended effect.

The final report of the evaluation will be produced by the end of July 1998. It will include the project's process and implementation, and an assessment of the program's success in increasing residential security among the four housing developments. The following sections describe the research methods and data analyses executed during the first half of the project. The same methodology will be used for the second half of the project.

Evaluation Methods

Overview

An evaluation of this kind involves assessing whether a program's parts are operating as they are supposed to operate. The SECURE program is based on the premise that through community partnerships and security improvements, residents will feel safer in and around their apartment buildings and their fear of crime will diminish. By using four different research methods, the evaluation will determine if the security improvements affect the residents' safety.

The evaluation focuses on crime and insecurity within residents' apartments, in the semi-public areas of each development, and in the neighborhood surrounding each complex. Through security improvements in a housing complex, SECURE hopes to promote positive change in the whole community and to suggest to potential criminals that they should go elsewhere.

Methodologies

The following research methods were used in the first half of the project: 1) interviews with property management, 2) videotaping, 3) interviews with residents, and 4) analysis of geographic crime maps. Each method is described below.

Interviews with property management. The evaluation team met on site with the property management of each development before the first round of interviews began. During the course of the interviews, the property managers discussed the decision-making processes, the proposed security changes, and the goals for expenditure of the IHDA funding. They relayed the most pressing concerns of the residents, and how they sought to alleviate those concerns through upgrading the security measures. Depending on the housing development, residents' concerns ranged from gang activity to non-residents gaining access to the property. Each development proposed security measures that attempt to accommodate their residents' concerns.

The sample of residents who were interviewed was drawn from management lists of current residents. The management also recommended several residents (or, in the case of The Pines, community members) who they thought would make good interviewers for the project. The evaluation team contacted those residents and trained them accordingly.

Videotaping. In the early fall of 1997, the evaluation team, accompanied by a property manager or janitor, videotaped the exterior and surrounding areas of each development. The videotaping documented the conditions and types of security measures existing at each property before the implementation of security changes. The managers and janitors who walked around the property with the evaluation team provided great insight about the apartment buildings and surrounding neighborhoods. The evaluation team learned about enduring issues and recent problems that each development has confronted. As the security changes are implemented, and at the end of the evaluation process, each complex will be revisited. Changes will be documented and coded, and the evaluation team will assess whether or not the security changes remain functional (for example, are lighting and video cameras intact).

Residential interviews. Interview training. Based upon the goals of both SECURE and CURL to include the community in the research process, the evaluation team trained six residents and two community members in face-to-face interviewing. The training session took place on September 10, 1997 at CURL. The session covered topics such as interviewing techniques and appropriate use of the survey instrument. All of the interviewers spoke English, and four of them were bilingual in either Spanish, Russian, or Korean. There were two interviewers for each development. The training manual used at the session is included in the appendices of this report.

The survey design. The survey instrument consisted of 105 items. Approximately a third of the questions were open-ended. Due to the varying ethnic backgrounds of the respondents, versions of the survey were written in English, Spanish, Russian, and Korean. The interviewers translated all of the responses into English. The survey was structured to provide information about residents sense of security, perceptions and fear of crime, and the presence of crime prevention activities in the areas (e.g., neighborhood watch groups). It was divided into five main sections that included sense of security, perceived criminal activity, victimization, crime prevention activities, and demographics. The survey also measured the amount of interaction that occurs among the residents, as well as their awareness of crimes in and around the properties. A survey and interviewing guide are included in the appendices.

The interview process. An initial sample of 300 residents was drawn; however, because of time constraints, respondent concerns and a lack of interviewers in one complex, only 209 interviews were completed. There were forty-eight, eighty-five, thirty-three, and forty-three interviews completed at the Pines, Northpoint, Diversey Square, and Park Apartments respectively. The interviews averaged forty minutes in length and took place in the residents apartments. The respondents were assured confidentiality and could stop the interview at any time. They were also told that they did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable and

they could call CURL if they had any concerns about the survey. The interviewers informed the residents that they would need to be interviewed again in about seven months in order to conclude the study. Overall, the majority of the residents was very cooperative and agreed to participate in the survey.

Data entry. Three of the interviewers expressed interest in learning data entry after the interviewing stage. The evaluation team held a data entry training session at CURL on November 5, 1997. The interviewers were trained in data entry, using computers at CURL to complete the task. The evaluation team, together with the interviewers, completed data entry within about two weeks.

Analysis of Crime Geography

Levels of police-recorded burglary, vandalism, robbery, and drug-related incidents for each of the four developments were documented and analyzed using a Geographic Information System (GIS). The crime maps revealed the number of reported incidents that occurred at a particular address since January 1, 1997. The crime maps enabled the evaluation team to know the types of crimes most prevalent within each of the developments and in their surrounding communities.

In the second half of the study, the evaluation team will re-map each development to determine if the security improvements had an impact on the amount of crime in and around each project. This comparison, along with a companion time-series analysis, will allow the evaluation team to recognize any changes or fluctuations in crime levels.

The Four Developments

Our interviews with management, the demographic breakdowns supplied by IHDA, and our pre-test videotaping revealed four demographically different but physically similar complexes in four very different neighborhoods. However, the proposed security changes in the four developments were very similar, consisting mostly of target hardening with improved locking systems and doors, video cameras, and better lighting.

All four complexes consist of multiple renovated buildings embedded in, rather than isolated from, the surrounding neighborhood. Most of the buildings were three story walk-ups, many with courtyards. The Pines also included mid-rise elevator buildings supplying housing to the elderly. All four developments are within short walking distance of a rapid transit station.

Diversey Square, The Pines, and Northpoint have been subsidized housing for many years. Some residents of these complexes have lived in them for ten or more years, and vacancies are few. Prior to its rehabilitation two years ago, Park apartments had been semi-abandoned. No resident has lived in the development for more than two years. Vacancies and turnovers are high. Turnover in management is also a problem; in the first three months of our evaluation, the complex had three onsite managers.

The Hispanic Housing Development Corporation is rightfully proud of its many resident and community activities including programs for both children and adults. The management was busy planing “Taste of Diversey” the day of our first meeting. While in previous years, Northpoint sponsored many community and educational programs, these are less active today; however, there is still an adult education program and some programs for children. There are some community programs at the Pines, but organizing them is very difficult because of the age structure and ethnic diversity of its residents. Park Apartments has no community or resident programs.

Diversey Square

The Hispanic neighborhood around Diversey Square is rapidly gentrifying with many buildings being converted into condominiums. The management clearly identifies and differentiates the complex with flagpole banners and similar entry gates and lighting for each courtyard building. There is excellent shopping along Milwaukee Avenue and in Logan Square, only one block away. The neighborhood has an obvious problem with gangs—the night before we were videotaping, two buildings had been tagged with gang graffiti. In September 1997, the complex had 241 units (one vacant) and 511 residents (2.13 per household). Seventy-seven percent of the household heads are Hispanic, and thirty four percent are over age 60. Seventy-three percent earn less than \$11,000 per year.

The Pines of Edgewater

The area around The Pines has also had many condominium conversions in the last few years, but still has a significant problem with drug dealing. There are several drug rehabilitation centers nearby, and shortly before our videotaping, a building adjacent to elderly housing at the Pines was identified by the police under public nuisance laws. The area around the northernmost building at the Pines is especially problematic, with relatively high levels of drug dealing, prostitution, and gang crime. Pine trees identify each of the buildings in the development, but ownership is much less clear than the banners and gates of Diversey Square. While many of the residents are elderly, there are some units for larger families in walk-ups. In September 1997, the complex had 214 units (none vacant) and 408 residents (1.9 residents per household). The Pines residents are racially and ethnically diverse. Fifty-three percent of the household heads are white, thirty-two percent are Black, and fifteen percent are Asian (mostly Korean). Many of the elderly residents do not speak English, and fifty-three percent are over age 60. Eighty-seven percent earn less than \$11,000 per year.

Northpoint

The north of Howard neighborhood of Northpoint has been deteriorating for many years, most recently with the collapse of People’s Housing, another apartment management company. Its near suburban location is unfortunately very attractive to drug dealers—we saw several during the videotaping. Shopping is limited in the area and a nearby strip mall that includes an adult bookstore, a pawnshop, and an adult video shop probably contributes to the crime problem in the

neighborhood. However, a new shopping complex is being built adjacent to the area, and residents feel their homes may be threatened by the project. During the interviewing period, a report was produced for the alderman that recommended the replacement of several neighborhood buildings with an expanded park. In September 1997, the complex had 304 units (one vacant) and 673 residents (2.2 residents per household). Northpoint s residents are mostly Black (87% of household heads), but twelve percent of the household heads are white, and seven percent are Hispanic (either white or Black). Twenty-five percent are over age 60. Seventy-nine percent earn less than \$11,000 per year.

Park Apartments

Park Apartments consists of three adjacent buildings on Garfield Boulevard and one courtyard building some distance away. Many of the apartments have three or four bedrooms and are designated for large families. The neighborhood has many vacant lots and abandoned buildings, with very little shopping and few signs of rebuilding. On the day that we were videotaping, almost every entry door and gate in the three-building complex was broken, allowing free access, and the back fence that separated the complex from the surrounding neighborhood had also collapsed. In September 1997, the complex had 120 units (thirteen vacant) and 353 residents (3.3 residents per household).¹ Park's residents are almost entirely Black (99% of household heads). Only eight percent of household heads are over age 60. Reflecting a complex where some rents were at market rates, thirty-one percent earn less than \$11,000 per year and twenty-six percent earn over \$22,000.

Survey Analysis

Interpretation of the data. Analysis of the data revealed both similarities and significant differences between the four properties. In some respects, residents in all of the properties have similar concerns about crime and safety. However, the varying security arrangements and neighborhood conditions at each location result in some concerns that are unique to each development.

Overall results. The first section of the survey deals with feelings of safety and perception of problems at three different geographic levels--apartment, property, and neighborhood. Some of the survey items deal with respondents concerns about their individual apartments (a private domain), some deal with safety on the grounds of the property (semi-public) and in the

¹ These are reported numbers; from our interviewers experience, we estimate that at least 25% of the apartments were vacant.

immediate surrounding area (public), and some questions focus on the neighborhood as a whole. By examining these three different levels, we can specifically identify residents concerns.²

Respondents satisfaction with the places where they live was fairly high overall. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents said they were at least somewhat satisfied with the neighborhood in which they live. By contrast, 89% expressed the same degree of satisfaction with their property. Significant differences in satisfaction between residents of different properties will be discussed below. **For more detailed cross-tabular results, see the Appendix.**

Feelings of safety differed greatly at the apartment, property, and neighborhood levels. When asked about feelings of safety inside their apartments, the vast majority of residents (90%) said they felt at least somewhat safe during the day, and 77% felt equally safe in their homes at night. Feelings of safety in and around the properties during the day were relatively high, with 80% of respondents reporting that they feel somewhat safe or very safe in these areas during the day. At night, however, only 44% of respondents reported feeling the same level of safety around the property. Seventy-three percent (73%) of respondents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood during the day, while only 35% felt this same level of safety in the neighborhood at night. A number of respondents (44%) reported that they avoid certain areas in their neighborhood for fear of crime, and a few said they simply don't go out at night.

Becoming a victim of crime, and learning about crimes committed in or near one's place of residence, both contribute to a person's fear of crime. A very small number of respondents (12%) reported that they had personally been victims of a crime since January 1, 1997. With such a small number of victimizations, it is impossible to tell if the slight differences between the properties are significant. About a third of respondents said that they knew of crimes that had happened to others in or near their property. Again, differences between the properties will be discussed below.

The Pines of Edgewater. At the Pines, 89% of the respondents indicated that they were somewhat or very satisfied with living in the property. Their satisfaction level with the neighborhood was slightly lower at 79%. Safety is clearly an issue for residents of the Pines. Sixty-six percent said they feel very safe in their apartments during the day; only 34% said they feel very safe around the property during the day, and a mere 20% feel very safe in the neighborhood during the day. Many residents (42%) indicated that either they feel very unsafe leaving the Pines at night or that they simply don't go out at all. Twenty-two percent of Pines residents feel very unsafe in the neighborhood at night, and even more (49%) said they simply don't venture into the neighborhood at night. Also, 64% told us they avoid certain areas in the neighborhood due to fear of crime. This level of insecurity is undoubtedly due in part to the large proportion of elderly people living at the Pines.

² This division is derived from Oscar Newman's concept of Defensible Space as presented in his most recent work: *Creating Defensible Space*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Research, Washington, April 1996.

Twelve percent of respondents at the Pines reported being victims of crime since January 1, 1997 the same percentage as the overall sample. Only 21% knew of other victimizations in or near the Pines during this same period. Of all the properties, respondents at the Pines had the lowest levels of perceived problems within the property and in the immediate surrounding area. However, many Pines residents did perceive some problems around the Pines with people just hanging out (37%) and with intruders (33%). Proposed security changes attempt to address these problems. These data suggest that residents of the Pines do not perceive a high level of crime in or around the property itself, but see the problems residing in the neighborhood.

Northpoint. Residents of Northpoint reported a significant amount of dissatisfaction with their neighborhood 60% said they were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the neighborhood as a place to live. By contrast, 80% said they were very satisfied' with the property as a place to live the most positive response of the four properties.

An overwhelming 96% of respondents at Northpoint said they felt somewhat or very safe in their apartments during the day. Eighty-two percent said they felt safe around the property during the day, and 74% felt safe in the neighborhood during the day. While 77% said they felt safe in their apartment at night, only 45% felt safe around the property at night, and only 30% felt safe in the neighborhood at night. Many of the respondents at Northpoint (57%) indicated that they avoid certain areas in the neighborhood for fear of crime this is consistent with our geographic analysis of crime, which indicates several hot spots in the area.

Northpoint residents perceive a relatively moderate level of problems with the property, but perceive more problems in the immediate area around their property than residents at any of the other three developments. However, only 9% of Northpoint residents reported having been personally victimized in 1997, and 24% had knowledge of other crimes committed in or near Northpoint during this year. The area around Northpoint is notorious as a drug market. It is not surprising that residents identified gang activity, drug selling, and drug use as problems around the property.

Diversey Square. Respondents at Diversey Square rated their satisfaction with both the neighborhood and the property very high 76% were somewhat or very satisfied with the neighborhood, and 94% expressed the same degree of satisfaction with the property. Diversey Square is the only development where *none* of the respondents said they were very dissatisfied' with either their property or neighborhood. Some of this satisfaction," however, may be due to the fact that one of the interviewers at Diversey was a member of the management staff respondents may have simply given the most socially desirable response.

However, the level of concern with safety at Diversey Square is very similar to that at Northpoint. During the day, the vast majority (94%) at Diversey feels safe in their apartments, 82% feel safe around the property, and 76% feel safe in the neighborhood. At night, 79% feel safe in their apartments, 47% feel safe around the property, and 47% feel safe in the neighborhood. Sixty-one percent of Diversey Square respondents said they avoid certain areas in the neighborhood due to fear of crime.

Despite reporting a high level of satisfaction with the property, respondents at Diversey indicated the highest level of perceived problems in the property relative to The Pines, Northpoint, and Park. Diversey residents perceived a moderate level of problems in the immediate surrounding area. Fifteen percent said they had personally been victims of crime during 1997, and 36% said they knew of others who had been victimized in or near Diversey Square notably more than at The Pines or Northpoint.

Many residents perceived a problem with gangs (39%), graffiti (55%), or people just hanging out (61%) at Diversey Square. These results are consistent with our observation and police reports.

Park Apartments. Residents at Park expressed significantly higher fear of crime and perception of problems than any of the other properties. This is most likely due to the troubled neighborhood in which Park Apartments is located.

A mere 3% percent of respondents at Park said they were ‘very satisfied’ with the neighborhood as a place to live much lower than the other three properties. However, 64% of Park respondents were ‘somewhat satisfied’ with the neighborhood. The same pattern appears with respect to property satisfaction. Again only 3% said they were very satisfied with the property, but 78% were somewhat satisfied. It may be that those who live in Park are able to deal with that kind of environment.

Similar patterns appear in the responses to questions about safety. Only thirteen percent of Park respondents said they felt ‘very safe’ in their apartments during the day, while between sixty-six and sixty-nine percent of respondents at each of the other three properties felt this same level of safety. However, 67% of Park respondents did say they felt ‘somewhat safe’ in their apartment during the day, and 73% felt the same level of safety in the neighborhood during the day. Again, those who live at Park are those who can cope with such a neighborhood.

The pattern is the same for safety at night. While a fair number of Park residents report feeling ‘somewhat safe’ at night in their apartments, in the property, and in the neighborhood respectively, very few say they feel ‘very safe’ in any of these places at night. This contrasts significantly with the other three properties, where at least a moderate number of respondents reported feeling ‘very safe’ at night.

Another finding unique to Park Apartments relates to whether the respondents avoid certain areas in the neighborhood in order to avoid crime (see Appendix C, question 29). In all the other properties, approximately 60% of respondents said they do avoid certain areas in the neighborhood at least some of the time. At Park, only 33% of respondents said they avoid certain areas in the neighborhood. This may seem like a contradiction for residents living in such a troubled area. It may be that the problems in the area are so widespread that there are no specific ‘danger spots’ to avoid.

Surprisingly, respondents at Park did not perceive significantly more problems within their property or in the immediate area than any of the other developments. Nor did residents of Park report a higher level of personal victimization (e.g. robbery or purse snatching) overall. However, knowledge of other victimizations in or near the property was quite high 60% said they knew of others who had been victimized in or near Park since January 1, 1997. More specifically, break-ins were a big concern. Of those respondents who said they knew of crimes occurring in or near the property, *all of them* mentioned break-ins (some had heard about other crimes as well). Further, 18% of respondents at Park reported that they had personally been victims of one or more break-ins, a significantly higher percentage than any of the other properties. These perceptions mirror our observation of Park and police records.

Uniquely, gun shots were perceived to be a major problem around Park Apartments (60%). Residents preferred apartments in the rear of courtyards as a protection against random shootings.

Geographic Analysis: Police Reported Incidents

While residents surveys describe fear, victimization, and perceptions of crime, police records of crime represent decisions by victims to notify the police, and decisions by police to record the incident. Thus, crimes are doubly filtered and underestimate the true level of crime, yet police reports are a public measure of the crime problem. Linking geographic databases of the four complexes and of police-recorded incidents of crime (between 50,000 and 60,000 per month), the CURL research team was able to derive rates of police-recorded crime per unit occurring within each of the four complexes for the twenty months immediately preceding the evaluation.³

Clearly, the police-recorded crime problem at Park Apartments (Chart One) is very different than at the other three complexes. Not surprisingly, given the essentially open access to Park that we observed during our video-tapping, rates of burglary (34.17 per 100 units) and vandalism (16.67 per 100 units) are far higher than the other complexes. Differences in police recorded rates of burglary and vandalism in the other three complexes were small. The management and tenants were apparently able to protect themselves from these crimes. The risk of robbery was low inside all the complexes. Drug-related incidents occurred in all four complexes; however, the level of these was lower at Diversey Square. According to Diversey Square's management, when a drug-related crime becomes known, the tenant's lease is revoked.

Incidents of police-recorded crime are so low within Diversey Square and The Pines that it is unlikely that any changes in security could significantly reduce them. They may go up, but they

³Crimes known to the police were supplied for the evaluation of CAPS by the Chicago Police Department. However, this paper reflects the work and opinion of CURL staff and not of the Chicago Police Department or the CAPS evaluation team.

are unlikely to go down. However, the remarkably high levels of burglary and vandalism at Park and the lower levels at Northpoint may be reduced by the changes funded by SECURE.

Maps One through Four examine patterns of drug crimes and burglary around the complexes for the eight months immediately preceding the start of evaluation. The maps demonstrate three possibilities.⁴

1. There is not much crime in either the complex or its surrounding neighborhood.
2. Crime is high in the surrounding neighborhood, but not in the complex. The complex is isolated from the neighborhood's problems.
3. Crime is high both in the surrounding neighborhood and in the complex. The complex reflects the high level of crime in the neighborhood.

In each map, IHDA complexes are represented by circles and crimes are represented by icons that vary in size by the number of incidents at an address. Maps One and Two represent drug crimes in and nearby The Pines and Diversey Square. During 1997, many police recorded drug crimes occurred along Winthrop, Bryn Mawr, and Thorndale. The northernmost Pines property was in the heart of an area of serious drug dealing. However, few incidents of drug crime were recorded at the property. Pines management and residents were able to isolate themselves from the drug dealing going on around them. To a lesser extent, high levels of drug crimes in the communities surrounding Park and Northpoint were not reflected in incidents within the IHDA properties. In contrast, near Diversey Square there are very few drug crimes. The low level of drug-related incidents in the complex reflects a community in which few such incidents occur.

Maps Three and Four represent burglaries in and nearby Park Apartments and Northpoint. A large number of burglaries occur both at the Park Apartments and in the surrounding community. The high level of community burglary is especially remarkable because of the relatively scarcity of occupied buildings. Park and other occupied buildings become attractors for victimization. The main buildings of Park Apartments are only four blocks from Robert Taylor Homes (the brown area) each of which has many reported burglaries. The apartments in Northpoint represent two possibilities. Despite a relatively high level of burglary in the surrounding neighborhood, most of the Northpoint buildings had no burglaries. However, a few buildings had several. It would be useful to investigate what differentiated crime risk in the walk-up on Juneway west of Paulina from the other Northpoint buildings.

⁴The fourth possibility, that crime is high in the complex and low in the neighborhood (e.g. a crack house) is fortunately not represented here.

Future Objectives

For the final evaluation, the CURL evaluation team plans to continue the same methodologies that have been described in this report. An attempt will be made to interview the same respondents in approximately seven months to determine if the security improvements have altered their perceptions of crime and safety. The evaluation team will also videotape the housing developments again to ensure that the security improvements were implemented. Crime maps indicating the number of incidences occurring from January 1, 1998 to the close of the project will be compared with the maps of 1997. Thus, any trend or change in crime rates among the properties can be detected. Overall, the second round of data will provide conclusive information regarding the effectiveness of the SECURE Program. If the findings of the survey, geographical analysis and videotaping are positive, a powerful case can be made for the success of the program.

Conclusion

In general, the four measures of crime used in this research concurred. Where survey respondents perceive drugs as a problem, management recognizes the problem, we observed drug dealers when videotaping, and police reports indicate that drug crimes are frequent. Break-ins are a major problem at Park Apartments. Residents know that they are a big problem, the police record many break-ins, management realized the problem in their security plan, and our videotaping reveals a complex that is mostly open to intruders. On the other hand, although few respondents perceive drugs to be a problem at Diversey Square, they do recognize that gangs are a problem. Police records indicate little drug activity around the complex. Our videotaping recorded some very recent gang activity.

The four complexes funded by the SECURE program are very different, but each has a serious crime problem. For the most part, the greatest problems for management and residents of the complex are to keep neighborhood crime and disorder from intruding in the development. In two, The Pines and Diversey Square, levels of police-recorded crime are so low that they are unlikely to be reduced further by SECURE. At Northpoint they may be reduced, but any improvement in safety resulting from SECURE may be submerged by changes in the community. In the fourth, Park, crime frequently intrudes. In this complex, crime prevention must begin by protecting the development from the dangers of the surrounding neighborhood.

Neighborhood Satisfaction* Apartment Complex

% within Apartment Complex

Neighborhood Satisfaction	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Satisfied	25.5%	17.1%	33.3%	2.6%	18.9%
Somewhat Satisfied	53.2%	23.2%	42.4%	64.1%	41.3%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	10.6%	23.2%	24.2%	20.5%	19.9%
Very Dissatisfied	10.6%	36.6%		12.8%	19.9%
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Satisfaction with Property* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Satisfaction with Property	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Satisfied	37.8%	80.0%	69.7%	2.8%	54.1%
Somewhat Satisfied	51.1%	11.3%	24.2%	77.8%	35.1%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	8.9%	5.0%	6.1%	11.1%	7.2%
Very Dissatisfied	2.2%	3.8%		8.3%	3.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Daytime Safety in Apartment* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Daytime Safety in Apartment	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Safe	66.0%	68.7%	66.7%	12.8%	56.9%
Somewhat Safe	19.1%	27.7%	27.3%	66.7%	33.2%
Somewhat Unsafe	10.6%	2.4%	3.0%	12.8%	6.4%
Very Unsafe	4.3%	1.2%	3.0%	7.7%	3.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Daytime Safety in Property* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Daytime Safety in Property	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Safe	34.0%	29.3%	33.3%	7.9%	27.0%
Somewhat Safe	53.2%	52.4%	48.5%	57.9%	53.0%
Somewhat Unsafe	4.3%	14.6%	12.1%	23.7%	13.5%
Very Unsafe	8.5%	3.7%	6.1%	10.5%	6.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Daytime Safety in Neighborhood* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Daytime Safety in Neighborhood	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Safe	19.6%	19.5%	30.3%	8.1%	19.2%
Somewhat Safe	50.0%	54.9%	45.5%	64.9%	54.0%
Somewhat Unsafe	15.2%	15.9%	12.1%	16.2%	15.2%
Very Unsafe	15.2%	9.8%	12.1%	10.8%	11.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Nighttime Safety in Apartment* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Nighttime Safety in Apartment	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Safe	53.2%	45.8%	42.4%	10.0%	39.9%
Somewhat Safe	31.9%	31.3%	36.4%	57.5%	37.4%
Somewhat Unsafe	6.4%	18.1%	15.2%	17.5%	14.8%
Very Unsafe	8.5%	4.8%	6.1%	15.0%	7.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Nighttime Safety in Property* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Nighttime Safety in Property	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Safe	17.8%	13.3%	15.6%	8.1%	13.7%
Somewhat Safe	20.0%	31.3%	31.3%	40.5%	30.5%
Somewhat Unsafe	20.0%	15.7%	21.9%	21.6%	18.8%
Very Unsafe	15.6%	25.3%	21.9%	13.5%	20.3%
Don't Go Out at Night	26.7%	14.5%	9.4%	16.2%	16.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Nighttime Safety in Neighborhood* Apartment Complex Crosstabulation

% within Apartment Complex

Nighttime Safety in Neighborhood	Apartment Complex				Total
	Pines	Northpoint	Diversey Square	Park Apts.	
Very Safe	4.4%	6.0%	9.4%	8.3%	6.6%
Somewhat Safe	13.3%	24.1%	37.5%	47.2%	28.1%
Somewhat Unsafe	11.1%	20.5%	21.9%	22.2%	18.9%
Very Unsafe	22.2%	34.9%	25.0%	8.3%	25.5%
Don't Go Out at Night	48.9%	14.5%	6.3%	13.9%	20.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix A: Project Participants

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Appendix B: Interviewer Training Manual

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 - Status Controls
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I. Description of the Project

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) in conjunction with Loyola University's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) has designed a project to evaluate residential security in four Chicago housing developments (The Pines, Northpoint, Park Apartments, and Diversey Square). IHDA is giving money to each development to increase security in and around the building. Items such as locks and lighting will be installed at the different complexes.

We have written a survey to measure how safe people feel in and around their apartment building. The survey will be administered twice--before the security changes are made and after. It will be given through face-to-face interviews at the residents' homes or in the building's management office. You will attempt to re-interview all the initial respondents in order to ensure that those who have moved did not leave for fear of crime in the development. The interviews will consist of some "yes/no" questions, but a greater emphasis will be placed on the open responses of the residents.

The sample of residents who are interviewed will be randomly chosen by the research team. You will be assigned a list of apartments for interviewing and we will tell you how to choose the respondents. About half of the residents in each development will be interviewed.

There will be a period of about eight months between the first and second interview; therefore, the final results of the project will not be available until July of 1998. You are responsible for keeping track of your sample of residents so that you can interview the same people again in about eight months. The primary purpose of the second interview is to see if the residents feel safer in and around their apartment building after certain security changes have been made.

II. Interviewing Techniques and Guidelines

Preparing for the Interview

You should review and read the survey several times prior to the interviews. The interview should flow like a "conversation" such that there are not long pauses between the questions. Before you begin interviewing, you should basically know what the questions ask and the order they are listed, but you must ask the questions exactly as written. Any questions regarding the survey or the interview procedure should be asked before the interviewing process. Please contact David Katz or Laura Herrin at (312) 915-7531 if you have any questions. Extra materials, such as introductory and fallback statements and prompt cards, must be organized in advance for easy access.

Beginning the Interview

The most important step of the interview process is gaining cooperation from the respondents. Cooperation can be gained by convincing the respondents that the survey is important and will

help make their apartment building a safer place to live. You should always be polite, friendly, and professional in order to gain cooperation from the respondents. Table 1 gives possible responses to respondents who refuse or hesitate to participate in the interview.

Table 1

Refusal/Excuse	Response
Too busy	This should only take a few minutes. Sorry to have caught you at a bad time. I would be happy to come back. When would be a good time to come by in the next day or two?
Bad health	I'm sorry to hear that. I would be happy to come back in a day or two. Would that be OK?
Too old	Older person's opinions are just as important in this survey as anyone else's. For the results to be useful, we have to be sure that older people have as much chance to give their opinion as anyone else does. We really want your ideas.
Feel inadequate	The questions are not difficult at all. There are no right or wrong answers. We are concerned about how you feel rather than how much you know about certain things. Maybe I could read just a few questions to you so you can see what they are like. You can stop the interview any time you like.
Not interested	It's very important that we get the opinions of everyone in the sample. Otherwise, we won't know how people feel about crime and safety in your building. So, I'd really like to talk with you.
No one's business	I can certainly understand. That's why all of our interviews are confidential. Protecting people's privacy is one of our major concerns, so we do not put people's names on the interview forms. All of the results are reported in such a way that no individual can be linked with any answer. Management will not see the survey.
Objects to survey	The questions in this survey are ones that Loyola University really needs answers in order to know about crime and safety in your building and we think your opinions are important.

Asking the Questions

It is very important that the interviewer maintain a neutral attitude during the interview. A neutral attitude is one that does not show criticism, surprise, approval, or disapproval of anything the respondent says, or of anything written in the survey. The main point is to refrain from any behaviors (verbal or nonverbal) that could influence how the respondent answers the questions. The questions should be asked in the exact order and wording as written. The purpose of this is so each respondent hears the same questions; thus, the respondents' answers can be more accurately comparable.

Prompts: Prompts are predetermined statements to be used when respondents seem confused or unclear about how to answer a question. For example, when asked how safe from crime does the respondent feel around the property during the day, the respondent may need to be prompted with “the halls, stairways, common areas, right outside the building.” Prompts are printed on the survey near the item they support. They are read exactly as written.

Probing: Probing is used to obtain more information from the respondents. It is used when the respondents seem to have more to say or when the respondents’ answers are unclear, irrelevant, or incomplete. The following are some examples of interview probes.

Show Interest. An expression of interest and understanding, such as “uh-huh,” “I see,” and “yes,” conveys the message that the response has been heard and more is expected.

Pause. Silence can tell a respondent that you are waiting to hear more.

Repeat the Question. This can help a respondent who has not understood, misinterpreted, or strayed from the question to get back on track.

Repeat the Reply. This can stimulate the respondent to say more, or notice an inaccuracy in the response he/she gave.

Other ways to probe a respondent are by asking a neutral question in order to get a more accurate and complete answer.

For Clarification: “What do you mean exactly?”
“Could you please explain that?”

For Specificity: “Could you be more specific about that?”
“Tell me about that. What, who, how, why?”

For Relevance: “I see. Well, let me ask you again” (REPEAT QUESTION AS WRITTEN)

For Completeness: “What else?”
“Can you think of an example?”
“That’s very interesting. Can you tell me more?”

If a respondent is speaking too quickly, kindly ask him/her to slow down so that you can write down the answer accurately.

Probes should always be neutral. Do not probe with an opinionated or argumentative statement and NEVER argue with the respondent. Also, you should NEVER put words in the respondent’s mouth. It is better to politely ask for more specific information than make any assumptions about the respondent’s answer.

Ending the Interview

You should be very gracious and thank the respondents for their time and cooperation, and reinforce the important role they have played by participating in the interview. If the respondents want you to stay and talk, simply remind them that you have several other interviews still to do. And if the respondents have any questions regarding the study, tell them that they can call David Katz or Laura Herrin at the Center for Urban Research and Learning at (312) 915-7531 and that they will be happy to address any issues or concerns they have about the interview.

You should tell the respondents that you will need to come back in about eight months to do the interview again. If the respondents claim that they will have moved by then, you should ask the respondents how they can be contacted.

III. The Interviewers' Responsibilities

Contacting Respondents

Residents will be notified by the building management and Loyola University that someone will be coming by to interview them about security in and around the building. It is best *not* to call the respondent before going to their home because sometimes people will purposely leave their apartment or not answer the door. Therefore, you should just stop by the apartments of the residents you are assigned to interview. If you need to come back to do the interview at another time, then you can call the respondent and make an appointment to do the interview. The following guidelines apply:

1. The interviews should only be with people who have lived in the building for at least **6 months**. If the respondent has not lived in the building for at least 6 months, thank the respondent and do not conduct the interview.
2. In order to give every adult a chance to be interviewed for the study, the person who has had the **most recent birthday** AND is at least **18 years old** should be the person interviewed. If the person who fits this description is not home, ask whoever answers the door when would be the best time to come back and speak with that person.
3. If no one is home, the interviewer should come back at another time, preferably at a different day and time to increase the chance of someone being available.
4. If **6** attempts are made to do an interview at a certain apartment, but an interview is never completed, you will be given another apartment to interview.

Field Contact Record

A field contact record is used to keep track of the interviews. The form is used to document contact attempts and how they turned out (e.g., respondent not home vs. interview completed) and the amount of time each interview took. Each interview should be documented on the contact record. The following is an example of a field contact record.

Date	Name of Complex	Apartment Number	Interview Start Time	Interview End Time	Outcome

CI = Completed Interview RF = Refusal

NH = Not Home CB = Come Back

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is extremely important. The names of the respondents should not be anywhere on the survey. You should not discuss any of the results during or after completing the survey. Since you live in the same building as the respondents, it is very important that you do not talk about the surveys with anyone. If residents find out that the surveys are being discussed, they may not participate in the survey.

How to Use the Survey

Read the questions exactly as written. Instructions to you are in *italics*. Italicized portions should not be read to the respondents. Prompts are printed in **bold** face. Read them exactly as printed if the respondents seem unclear about answering the questions. Whenever the word “PROPERTY” appears in bold print and in parentheses, insert the name of the housing complex when reading the question aloud. For example, question #6 reads “How long have you been living in **(PROPERTY)**?” The interviewer should insert the name of the property and read the question as “How long have you been living in Diversey Square?” (or Northpoint, Park Apartments, or The Pines depending on where the interview is taking place).

Skip Patterns: Some questions depend on the answers of the previous questions. For example, question #82 reads “Is there a neighborhood watch for this area?” The next question, #83, reads “IF YES @ Do you or does anyone you know participate?” If the answer to #82 is “NO” or “DON’T KNOW,” then you SKIP QUESTION #83 and move on to question #84.

Prompt Cards: Prompt cards are a visual aid for the respondents to look at when answering certain questions. They contain a list of crimes that the respondents think happen the most in or

around their building. Questions #36 and #42 require prompt cards. The card is given to the respondents when they are asked in question #36 “Which two problems happen the most in your building?” and in question #42 “Which two problems happen the most right outside your building?”

Recording Information on the Survey: Write clearly, neatly, and legibly. For questions which have a list of responses, circle the number next to the response given. Answers to open-ended questions must be written exactly. Do not paraphrase, summarize, or shorten the respondents’ answers. If you need more space for writing the open-ended responses, use the back of the survey and make sure that you identify the number of the question.

Editing the Survey

Editing is proofreading the completed survey to find and correct errors, clarify handwriting, and add notes. You should go back and edit each survey at the end of the day you interview. Every survey should be edited before turning it in and a reviewer will do a second edit. If errors or incomplete sections are found, you will be asked to make corrections and possibly go back to the respondents to fill in missing information.

Translation: If an interview was NOT done in English, you should translate all of the open-ended responses into English on a separate survey. Then attach the two surveys together.

Control Sheet: A control sheet is used to record when an interview is completed, edited, and ready to be entered into the computer. The following is an example of the layout of a control sheet.

STATUS	DATE	SIGNATURE
Interview completed	_____	_____
Edit Complete	_____	_____
Corrections Complete	_____	_____
Data Entry Complete	_____	_____ ® FILE

Once the interview is complete, the interviewer dates and signs the first line. When a reviewer has finished editing the survey, the second line is dated and signed, and the survey is given back to the interviewer for corrections if necessary. On completion of corrections, the interviewer signs again, and the survey is ready for the data entry process. Once the data are entered, the survey may be filed.

Completed Interviews

All surveys must be completed, edited, and ready for data entry by **Monday, October 6, 1997**. This deadline is extremely important so please have all of your interviews completed by then. One interviewer from each complex will be responsible for bringing the surveys to the CURL office or to Dr. Block's mailbox at the end of each week. Dr. Block's mailbox is located at Loyola's lake shore campus on the 9th floor of Damen Hall (Damen Hall is located just north of Sheridan and Winthrop). PLEASE DO NOT MAIL THE SURVEYS. The designated interviewer will be reimbursed for any transportation costs.

Data Entry

After the first round of interviews are completed, we will train and pay you for data entry. This process must be done after each round of interviews in order to analyze the results.

Payment

You will be paid bi-weekly. The first paycheck may take three weeks because of paper work, but after that you will be paid ever other week. You will be paid \$5 per "substantially" completed interview. You will also be paid \$10 per hour for training sessions. Loyola can mail you your paycheck or you can pick it up at CURL. CURL is open 9AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday.

Resident Survey

Center for Urban Research and Learning
Loyola University Chicago

1. CASE ID # _____
2. PROPERTY (CIRCLE ONE): 1 PINES 2 NORTHPOINT 3 DIVERSEY SQ 4 PARK
3. Building Address : _____
4. Apartment Number: _____
5. Interviewer: _____

RECORD CONTACT ATTEMPTS BELOW:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Notes</u>
__ / __ / __	__ : __	_____
__ / __ / __	__ : __	_____
__ / __ / __	__ : __	_____
__ / __ / __	__ : __	_____
__ / __ / __	__ : __	_____
__ / __ / __	__ : __	_____

<u>STATUS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SIGNATURE</u>
Interview Complete	_____	_____
Edit Complete	_____	_____
Corrections Complete	_____	_____
Data Entry Complete	_____	_____ FILE

Introduction

Hello my name is (**NAME**), and I'm working with Loyola University to find out what people think about crime and safety around (**PROPERTY**) and three other apartment complexes. (**PROPERTY**) is about to make some changes in safety and security and before they do, we want to see how the residents feel about their apartment and neighborhood. We chose your apartment to ask some questions about living in (**PROPERTY**). None of the questions are the result of anything that has happened at (**PROPERTY**). We want to talk to people who have been living here a while. *IF RESPONDENT IS HESITANT, USE FALLBACK STATEMENTS.*

6. How long have you been living in (**PROPERTY**)? _____ months years (*CIRCLE ONE*)

IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE, PROBE: Has it been more than 6 months?

IF LESS THAN 6 MONTHS OR IF RESPONDENT REFUSES TO ANSWER, THANK RESPONDENT AND STOP HERE

We need to be sure we give every adult a chance to be interviewed for this study. Thinking only of people 18 or over who live in this apartment, which one had the most recent birthday?

IF IT IS THE PERSON YOU'RE TALKING TO, GO TO SECTION A

May I speak to _____?

IF PERSON IS NOT HOME "When is a good time to speak to _____?"

Best day / time: _____

USE THIS SAME FORM WHEN YOU RETURN

A) Can I ask you some questions about living in (**PROPERTY**)? None of the questions are the result of anything that has happened at (**PROPERTY**). We just want to know how safe you feel in your apartment and neighborhood. I don't work for the management, and your answers will be kept secret. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to, and you can stop at any time. The questions will take about half an hour. The building manager knows about the survey—you can call (**him/her**) or you can call David Katz or Laura Herrin at Loyola (312)-915-7531.

7. *Date of Interview:* ____ / ____ / ____ *Start Time:* ____ : ____

8. How long have you lived in this neighborhood?

9. On the whole, how do you feel about this neighborhood as a place to live? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

1 Very Satisfied

3 Somewhat Dissatisfied

2 Somewhat Satisfied

4 Very Dissatisfied

8 Don't Know

9 Refused

10. What is the best thing about living in this neighborhood?

11. What is the worst thing about living in this neighborhood?

12. On the whole, how do you feel about (**PROPERTY**) as a place to live? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

1 Very Satisfied

3 Somewhat Dissatisfied

2 Somewhat Satisfied

4 Very Dissatisfied

8 Don't Know

9 Refused

13. What is the best thing about living in (**PROPERTY**)?

14. What is the worst thing about living in (**PROPERTY**)?

15. How safe from crime do you feel inside your apartment during the day? Do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?

34. How likely is it that you will move out of (**PROPERTY**) within the next year? Will you definitely move, probably move, probably not move, or definitely not move?

1 Definitely 2 Probably 3 Probably Not 4 Definitely Not 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

35. *IF DEFINITELY OR PROBABLY*

Why do you think you will move?

	Big	Some	No	Don't Know	Refused
a. People being attacked or robbed in the stairwells, hallways, elevators, and lobby of your building? Is that a big problem, some problem, or no problem?	1	2	3	8	9
b. People selling drugs?	1	2	3	8	9
c. People using drugs?	1	2	3	8	9
d. Young people controlling the building?	1	2	3	8	9
e. People just hanging out?	1	2	3	8	9
f. Gang activity?	1	2	3	8	9
g. Graffiti, that is, writing or painting on the walls?	1	2	3	8	9
h. Shootings and violence?	1	2	3	8	9
i. Rape and other sexual attacks?	1	2	3	8	9
j. People who don't belong in the building getting in?	1	2	3	8	9
k. Broken light bulbs that are not replaced for at least a day?	1	2	3	8	9
l. Trash and junk in the halls and stairwells?	1	2	3	8	9
m. Prostitution?	1	2	3	8	9

36. Now please think about the stairwells, hallways, and common areas of **(PROPERTY)**. Tell me whether you think the following things are a big problem, some problem, or no problem in those areas inside your building:

IF ALL QUESTIONS 36a THROUGH 36n ARE ANSWERED NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 39

HAND RESPONDENT CARD 1: I am going to read the list again. Which two problems happen the most in your building? *READ THE LIST, THEN ASK IF IT NEEDS TO BE REPEATED*

(LIST LETTERS)

37. _____

38. _____

If respondent wants to list more than two, write the letters on the line above, then repeat "Which two problems happen the most in your building?" Write the responses into numbers 37 and 38 above.

39. Is there anything else that makes you worry about crime in this building?

1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

40. *IF YES*

What is that? _____

41. *If something is mentioned* Why is that a problem?

GO ON TO NEXT PAGE

	Big	Some	No	Don't Know	Refused
a. People being attacked or robbed right outside your building? Is that a big problem, some problem, or no problem?	1	2	3	8	9
b. People selling drugs?	1	2	3	8	9
c. People using drugs?	1	2	3	8	9
d. People just hanging out?	1	2	3	8	9
e. Gang activity?	1	2	3	8	9
f. Graffiti, that is, writing or painting on the walls?	1	2	3	8	9
g. Shootings and violence?	1	2	3	8	9
h. Rape and other sexual attacks?	1	2	3	8	9
i. Trash and junk in the parking lots and lawns?	1	2	3	8	9
j. Prostitution?	1	2	3	8	9

42. Now lets go over those activities again, but this time please think about the area right outside your building-- the parking lots, the lawns, the street and sidewalks right outside your building. Please tell me whether you think the following things are a big problem, some problem, or no problem in those areas right outside your building:

IF ALL QUESTIONS 42a THROUGH 42j ARE ANSWERED NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 45

Hand respondent **CARD 2**. I am going to read the list again. Which two problems happen the most right outside your building? *READ THE LIST, THEN ASK IF IT NEEDS TO BE REPEATED (LIST LETTERS)*

43. _____

44. _____

If respondent wants to list more than two, write the letters on the line above, then repeat "Which two problems happen the most right outside your building?" Write the responses into numbers 43 and 44 above.

45. Is there anything else that makes you worry about crime right outside your building?
1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

46. *IF YES*
What is that? _____

47. *(IF SOMETHING IS MENTIONED)*
Why is that a problem? _____

48. If you could make any suggestions for improving security in (**PROPERTY**), what would they be?

Victimization

Please tell me if any of the following crimes have happened since January first of this year:

49. Did anyone break into or somehow illegally get into your apartment and steal something?
1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

50. *IF YES*
How many times? _____

51. *FOR EACH INCIDENT*--Did you know the person who did it?
(1st Incident) 1 Yes 2 No (2nd) 1 Yes 2 No (3rd) 1 Yes 2 No (4th) 1 Yes 2 No

52. (Other than the incident(s) just mentioned) Did you find a door jimmed, a lock forced, or any other signs of an ATTEMPTED break in? 2 No 1 Yes

53. *IF YES*
How many times? _____

The following questions refer only to crimes that have happened to YOU since January first of this year:

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “Yes” TO ANY OF THE QUESTIONS BELOW, ASK “How many times?” AND WRITE THE NUMBER IN THE BOX PROVIDED. THEN ASK “Where?” AND PLACE A MARK IN THE APPROPRIATE LOCATION COLUMN. IF THE ANSWER TO “How many times?” IS MORE THAN ONE, THEN ASK “Anywhere else?” AND PLACE A MARK IN THE APPROPRIATE LOCATION COLUMN. REPEAT ASKING “Anywhere else?” AS NEEDED UNTIL THE ANSWER IS “No.”

	Yes	No	Inside Apartment	Inside Building	On This Block	Someplace Else
54. Did you have your (pocket picked/purse snatched)?	1	2				
55. <i>IF YES</i> How many times? Where?	1	2				
56. Did anyone, including someone you know, take something else directly from you by using force, such as by a stickup, mugging or threat?	1	2				
57. <i>IF YES</i> How many times? Where?	1	2				
58. Did anyone, including someone you know, beat you up or attack you (other than incidents already mentioned)?	1	2				
59. <i>IF YES</i> How many times? Where?	1	2				
60. Were you knifed, shot at, or attacked with some other weapon by anyone at all (other than incidents already mentioned)?	1	2				

	Yes	No	Inside Apartment	Inside Building	On This Block	Someplace Else
61. <i>IF YES</i> How many times? Where?	1	2				
62. Did anyone, including someone you know, THREATEN to beat you up or THREATEN you with a knife, gun, or some other weapon, not including telephone threats (other than any incidents already mentioned)?	1	2				
63. <i>IF YES</i> How many times? Where?	1	2				

IF ALL QUESTIONS 49 THROUGH 63 ARE ANSWERED "No," SKIP TO QUESTION 67

IF ALL OF THE ABOVE CRIMES OCCURRED "On This Block" or "Someplace Else," SKIP TO QUESTION 67

64. Did you report (any of) the incident(s) to the police?
1 Yes 2 No 9 Refused
65. Did you report (any of) the incident(s) to the landlord/management?
1 Yes 2 No 9 Refused
66. Were any of the incidents committed by someone you know?
1 Yes 2 No 9 Refused
67. Do you know of or have you heard about any of the following crimes happening to someone in or near **(PROPERTY)** since January first of this year:

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Refused
68. Was anyone's apartment broken into?	1	2	8	9
69. Did anyone have their pocket picked or purse snatched?	1	2	8	9

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Refused
70. Did anyone have something taken directly from them by force, such as by a stickup, mugging or threat (other than any incidents already mentioned)?	1	2	8	9
71. Was anyone beaten up or attacked (other than any incidents already mentioned)?	1	2	8	9
72. Was anyone knifed, shot at, or attacked with some other weapon (other than any incidents already mentioned)?	1	2	8	9
73. Was anyone THREATENED with a knife, gun, or other physical harm, not including telephone threats (other than any incidents already mentioned)?	1	2	8	9

Security

74. As far as you know, since January first of this year, has your management made any changes in your building for improving security?
 1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

IF YES

What? _____

75. Since January first of this year, have you made any changes in your apartment for improving security?
 1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

IF YES

What? _____

76. How do you think the guards are doing at preventing crime in your building? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

1 Excellent 2 Good 3 Fair 4 Poor 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

Why?

77. How do you think the police are doing in this neighborhood? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

1 Excellent 2 Good 3 Fair 4 Poor 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

Now I would like to ask you about crime prevention activities.

78. How many people do you know in this building? Many, some, few or none?

1 Many 2 Some 3 Few 4 None 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

79. Do you and your neighbors watch one another's places when no one is at home?

1 Yes 2 No 3 Sometimes 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

80. Is there a neighborhood watch for this area?

1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

81. *IF YES*

Do you or does anyone you know belong to it? 1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

82. Have you ever been to a CAPS meeting (**If needed prompt: Community Policing or Chicago Alternative Policing Strategies**)?

1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

83. *IF YES* Have you been to a CAPS meeting since January first of this year?

1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

84. Do you participate in any activities sponsored by (**PROPERTY**), such as day care, educational programs, or parties and get-togethers since January 1st?

1 Yes 2 No 9 Refused

85. *IF YES*

Which ones? _____

Demographics

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself and the other people who live in this apartment.

86. What is your date of birth? _____ / _____ / _____
9 Refused month day year

87. Do you get a Section 8 voucher?
1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

88. About how much do you pay for rent each month?

READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES (USE CARD 3 IF NEEDED)

1 \$0 to \$99	4 \$500 to \$699	9 Refused
2 \$100 to \$299	5 \$700 or more	
3 \$300 to \$499	8 Don't Know	

89. Did anyone in your apartment earn money from working last month?
1 Yes 2 No 9 Refused

90. *IF YES*

All together, about how much did the people in your apartment earn from working last month? Is it. . . *READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES (USE CARD 4 IF NEEDED)*

1 \$0 to \$149	5 \$750 to \$999
2 \$150 to \$299	6 \$1000 to \$1499
3 \$300 to \$499	7 \$1500 or More
4 \$500 to \$749	9 Refused

91. Did anyone in your apartment receive money from any government assistance program, child support, social security, or from any charity? (**If needed, prompt: Such as Unemployment Compensation, Food Stamps, AFDC or TANF**)
1 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know 9 Refused

92. *IF YES*

All together, about how much did people in your apartment receive from these sources last month? Is it. . . *READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES (USE CARD 4 IF NEEDED)*

1 \$0 to \$149	5 \$750 to \$999	9 Refused
2 \$150 to \$299	6 \$1000 to \$1499	

- 3 \$300 to \$499 7 \$1500 or More
- 4 \$500 to \$749 8 Don't Know

93. Do you consider yourself to be?

- 1 Black 4 Asian
- 2 White 5 Another race Which one? _____
- 3 Hispanic

94. What is your ancestry or ethnic origin? **Prompt: For example, are you Puerto Rican, Russian, Korean?**

95. How many people 18 or over live in the apartment? _____

96. *IF MORE THAN ONE PERSON 18 OR OVER*

Are you the head of the household?

1 Yes 2 No

97. How many teenagers age 12 to 17 live in the apartment? _____

98. How children under 12 live in the apartment? _____

99. I need your phone number because my supervisor may call to check on this interview.

Phone number: ____ / ____ - ____ 7 No Phone 9 Refused

100. **(PROPERTY)** is going to make some changes in security in the next few months. I will be coming to talk to you again in 7 or 8 months. If you move, is there anyone I can call to find out your new telephone number? 1 Yes 2 No 9 Refused

101. *IF YES*

Who is that and what is the phone number?

Who _____

Phone number ____ / ____ - ____

Thank you for your time and assistance. Your answers will help make (PROPERTY) a better place to live.

102. **Record Gender:** ___ Female ___ Male **End Time:** ___ : ___

Youth, Firearms and Violence in Atlanta: A Problem-Solving Approach

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Abstract

The authors have conducted an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data sets to produce baseline, process and outcome evaluation measures of juvenile and young adult firearm violence in a five-county area of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. Data are collected on an ongoing basis and provided to the Atlanta Police Department Guns and Violent Crime Suppression Unit, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and other partners to shape, refine and evaluate an intervention strategy to reduce firearm crime and victimization in the project area. GIS analysis of firearm crime is conducted monthly and reviewed with the unit. Targeted law enforcement activities are being implemented in identified "hot spot" times and places. Measures will be conducted again at the end of the project period to determine the impact of the prevention and intervention initiatives.

Introduction and Background

In 1994, metropolitan Atlanta was named a Project PACT ("Pulling America's Communities Together") city. Project PACT is an ongoing federal violence prevention initiative intended to encourage local governments and federal agencies to work together to identify local problems and create local solutions. Through Metro Atlanta Project PACT, area leadership and community stakeholders were asked to identify the most pressing violence problems in the project area. The participants identified youth firearm violence as a significant local problem and a top priority for the city. The Emory Center for Injury Control was funded by the National Institute of Justice to obtain baseline measures of the magnitude and extent of juvenile firearm violence in Atlanta, and to conduct formal process and outcome evaluations of Metro Atlanta Project PACT's efforts to reduce juvenile firearm violence in the five-county area.

Project Objectives

Our project has three key objectives: 1) With partners, apply a problem-solving approach to develop, implement, evaluate and refine a comprehensive youth firearm violence prevention program; 2) Determine whether broad-based community action can reduce juvenile firearm violence; and 3) Evaluate the utility of retrospective and prospectively collected data to guide the development and refinement of local violence prevention countermeasures.

Methods

Table 1. Indicators, Data Sets, Data Sources and Collection/Analysis Schedule

INDICATOR	DATA SET/SOURCE	COLLECTION/ANALYSIS
Historical firearm mortality, 1970-present (Fulton County) 1989-present (All age, all circumstance, 5 counties)	NCHS records County medical examiner records	Beginning of project and yearly
Juvenile firearm mortality	County medical examiner records	Monthly
Juvenile firearm morbidity	Regional firearm injury notification system	Monthly
Juvenile weapons offenses	Georgia Crime Information Center	Yearly
Reduction or shifts in “hot spots” of criminal firearm activity in target area	GIS analysis of City of Atlanta 911 System CAD data, homicide and assaults	Monthly
Attitudes and behaviors of area adults regarding youth violence and firearm ownership, acquisition and storage	RDD telephone poll of metro Atlanta adults	Yearly
Attitudes, behaviors and recommendations of high-risk teens regarding firearm violence	Randomly-selected focus groups (12-13 yo A/A males, 15-16 yo A/A males, 15-16 yo A/A females, 15-16 yo white males)	Beginning and end of project
Attitudes, behaviors and recommendations of incarcerated youth regarding firearm violence	Semi-structured interviews with youth in juvenile justice facilities.	Beginning and end of project
Attitudes, behaviors and recommendations of law enforcement and juvenile justice officers regarding firearm violence	Semi-structured interviews with officials in the five-county project area	Beginning and end of project

Data analysis

We calculated descriptive statistics on the quantitative data sets and the quantitative sections of the semi-structured interview using SPSS 6.0.3 for Windows monthly, quarterly and yearly. We analyzed the qualitative data sets using content analysis methodology.

We analyzed incident location from the quantitative data sets using ESRI ArcView 3.0a and Spatial Analyst GIS (geographic information system). We perform geographic and spatial analysis monthly, quarterly and yearly and reports are shared with the participating agencies.

Results

Firearm mortality

Fulton County has by far the highest frequencies and rates of firearm death in the metro area. Analysis of homicide rates for Fulton County (the county that contains most of the City of Atlanta) for the years 1970-1995 reveals that the overall rate of homicide has declined, but rates of homicide for 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds increased sharply between 1986 and 1994. All of this increase was due to a marked increase in firearm homicide. Non-firearm homicides remained stable and low (see Appendix). Analysis of medical examiner records revealed 1812 deaths involving a firearm during the period 1989-1996 in Fulton County. Persons aged 19 years or younger accounted for 278 (15.3%) of the victims. Of these 278 cases, 233 (83.8%) were due to homicide, 30 (10.8%) were due to suicide, and 15 cases (5.4%) were ruled accidental. Of the 233 firearm homicides, 206 (88.4%) were male, and 215 (92%) were African-American. Youths aged 14 through 19 accounted for 88.4% of the deaths; 18 year olds alone accounted for 27.5%. There were an average of 29 firearm homicides per year, with a low of 24 in 1992 and a high of 38 in 1994.

Non-fatal firearm assault

In 1997, population-based analysis of gunshot reports from area emergency departments and local law enforcement agencies identified 3.42 cases of nonfatal firearm assault for every case of firearm homicide. Forty-four percent (44%) of the 774 victims of firearm assault were \leq 24 years of age. In 44% of homicide and assault cases, the age of the offender was recorded. In 58% of these shootings the offender was noted to be \leq 24 years of age.

Hot spots of firearm activity

City of Atlanta 911 CAD system data were analyzed for January 1997-present for calltypes 24, 50,504 and 69 (shots fired, person shot, person shot/ambulance and person armed) for all police zones in Atlanta. In 1997, there were an average of 893 firearm-related calls per month; 78% were "shots fired," 16% were "person shot/ambulance" and 4% were "person armed." When analyzed by zone and beat, geographic concentrations emerged: 53% of the calls originated from Zones 1 and 3, the two hottest zones for firearm homicide and aggravated assault in the city. GIS analysis indicated the "hot spots" of 911 firearm related calls overlapped closely with "hot spots" of firearm assault and homicide. Within beats, high-frequency streets and intersections were identified and stable across analysis periods.

Views of adults regarding youth violence

A random digit dialing survey of metro area adults was conducted in 1995, and again in 1996. Adults consider juvenile crime a serious problem in metro Atlanta, but are less concerned about juvenile crime in their own county than in the metro area overall. Respondents stated they think juvenile crime is getting worse, and they vary in their opinions about the effectiveness of local

efforts to reduce juvenile crime. Local church groups were rated most effective by African-Americans, while whites gave the police the highest scores for impact on reducing criminal activity among juveniles. Local (non-religious) community groups were also considered somewhat effective in combating juvenile crime. Public schools and the juvenile justice system were seen as being less effective in reducing the number of youth crimes.

Views of high-risk teens

All four youth focus groups stated violence is a serious problem in the metro area. Despite witnessing violent events in their home communities, most thought the problem was worse outside of their own neighborhoods. African-American teens reported witnessing more violence than white teens, although participants from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods reported higher exposure to violence and weapons regardless of race or gender. Participants stated that teens who carry a weapon generally do so to protect themselves from other teens. Most felt they would be a victim of violent crime at some point in their life. Participants stated that escalating teen violence was linked to drug use and dealing. Nearly all reported that guns are cheaply and easily obtained in the metro area, either by "asking around" or by taking one from home. Participants did not feel safe in school, and did not think that school safety measures were effective. Most were convinced that violence is an inescapable fact of modern life and were very pessimistic about their ability to change anything. None felt that non-violent means were a viable or respectable way to settle disputes. Some suggested that stiffer penalties for criminals and/or sports programs for youth might have some positive effect. Participants stated that media campaigns, gun buy-backs, school programs and nearly all other means were ineffective among their peers. Some felt that religious devotion was the only refuge left.

Views of incarcerated youth

A convenience sample of 63 offenders (42 male and 21 female) were interviewed. The average age was 15.7 (range 13 to 18). Ninety-eight percent of male youths reported experience with firearms, while 57% of females reported firearm experience. Among gunowners, 84% state they carry for protection, and most had acquired their first firearm by age 15. Forty percent (40%) felt safer while carrying, while 34% felt scared or anxious while carrying, most commonly related to being worried about being stopped by the police. "A club" was the place most commonly cited as where they would want to carry a gun. More than half of gun carriers got their first gun inadvertently (they found it during a theft or it was given to them). Thirty-eight percent (38%) purposefully sought their first gun by purchase or trade. Members of this group were more likely to become regular carriers. Females most often obtained their gun through an older (often drug-dealing) boyfriend. Many youth suggested they would change their gun-carrying behavior if they thought the police would hold them accountable or if their family thought it was a bad idea. Interviewees reported they would not be swayed by media campaigns or by sports or music figures.

Views of law enforcement and juvenile justice officers

To ascertain the views of law enforcement and juvenile justice professionals we conducted 58 semi-structured interviews with officers identified as particularly knowledgeable about juvenile crime and violence. Sixty-two percent (62%) were African-American and 75% were male. Respondents averaged 14 years of experience, and spend approximately 63% of their on-duty time working with juveniles. Respondents stated that juveniles can easily obtain weapons and reliable sources of firearms are known to area teens. Officers identified drug addicts, drug dealers and theft from homes as primary sources of guns used by teens. Respondents believe kids carry weapons to feel safe, powerful and respected. A majority of respondents feel less safe on duty today than five years ago. Eighty-one percent (81%) rated public education to encourage homeowners to lock up their guns and street level interdiction to target gun trafficking as likely to make an impact in their jurisdiction. Seventy-eight percent (78%) agreed that enhanced oversight of gun dealers and gun tracing to identify scofflaw dealers and adults who knowingly supply guns to kids could be effective in their jurisdiction.

Multi-Agency Intervention Strategy

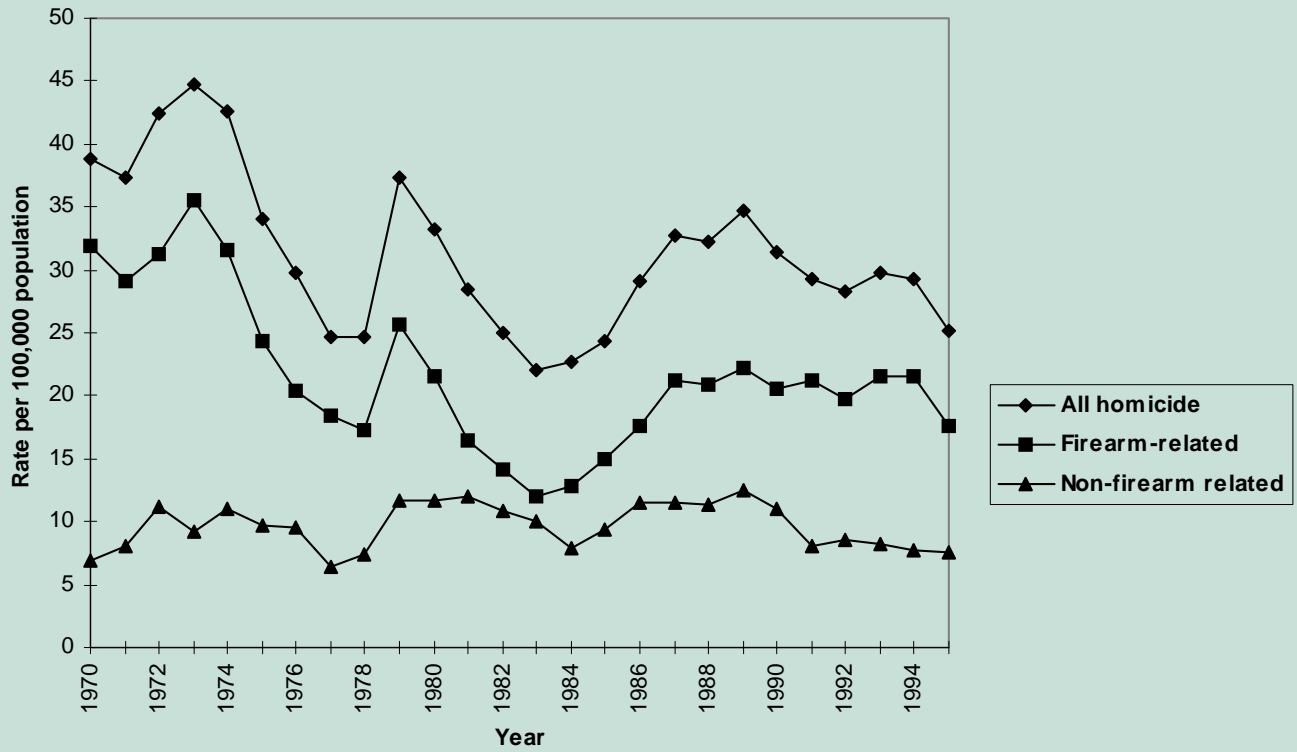
Based on the literature and our analysis of the problem in metro Atlanta, a three-pronged intervention strategy was devised: 1) demand reduction through community-based efforts and programs; 2) supply reduction through targeted law enforcement efforts; and 3) rehabilitation through local juvenile court systems in cooperation with law enforcement and the community. Due to resource constraints and an analysis of the efforts that have the highest likelihood of making a measurable impact during the project period, efforts were concentrated on targeted law enforcement and juvenile justice initiatives.

Following the baseline analysis and planning process, the Atlanta Police Department, the Atlanta Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Fulton County Juvenile Court, the Fulton County District Attorney, Fulton County Probation and the Emory Center for Injury Control joined forces in a coordinated effort to reduce overall gun violence, with a particular emphasis on juveniles and young adults.

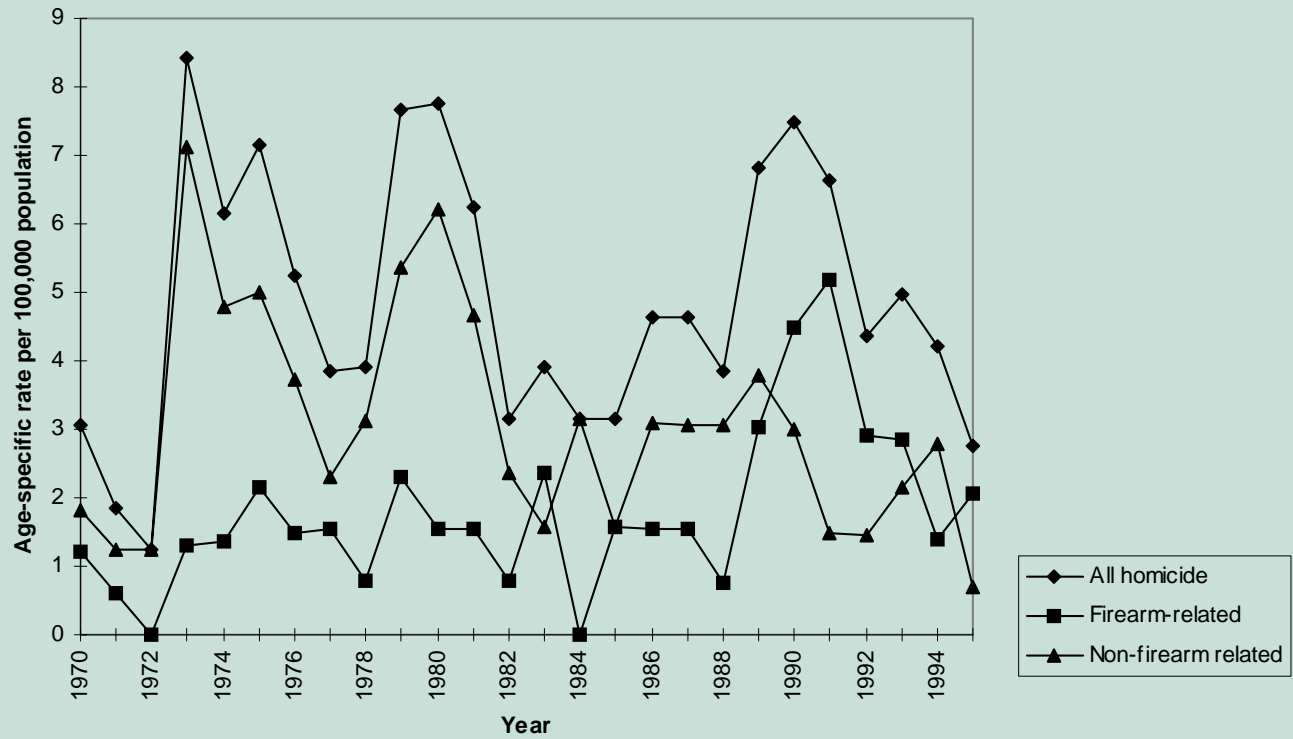
In the fall of 1997, the APD deployed the "Guns and Violent Crime Suppression Unit." This unit and its partners are carrying out targeted law enforcement activities designed to reduce the flow of illegal weapons in the City of Atlanta (particularly those to and between juveniles) and reduce criminal firearm activity. Using Emory GIS data, the unit is carrying out "street heat" initiatives in identified high-incidence areas and time periods. The unit also participates actively in the ATF Youth Gun Crime Interdiction Initiative, conducts cooperative investigations with the APD Gang Task Force, runs pawn desk details, and participates in joint enforcement activities with the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles and Fulton County Probation. The unit works cooperatively with ATF, the Fulton County District Attorney and the United States Attorney's Office to develop cases for local and federal prosecution.

As the academic partner in this effort, the Emory Center for Injury Control provides monthly reports on firearm crime and injury to the unit, all partners and law enforcement leadership. Initiatives are refined or redirected based on data and findings from this ongoing evaluation. During the next 12 months, repeat measures of firearm mortality, morbidity, 911 utilization and juvenile crime will be obtained and compared to historical values. Quantitative and qualitative measures will be repeated and compared to pre-intervention values to determine effectiveness of intervention, inform policy and guide future action.

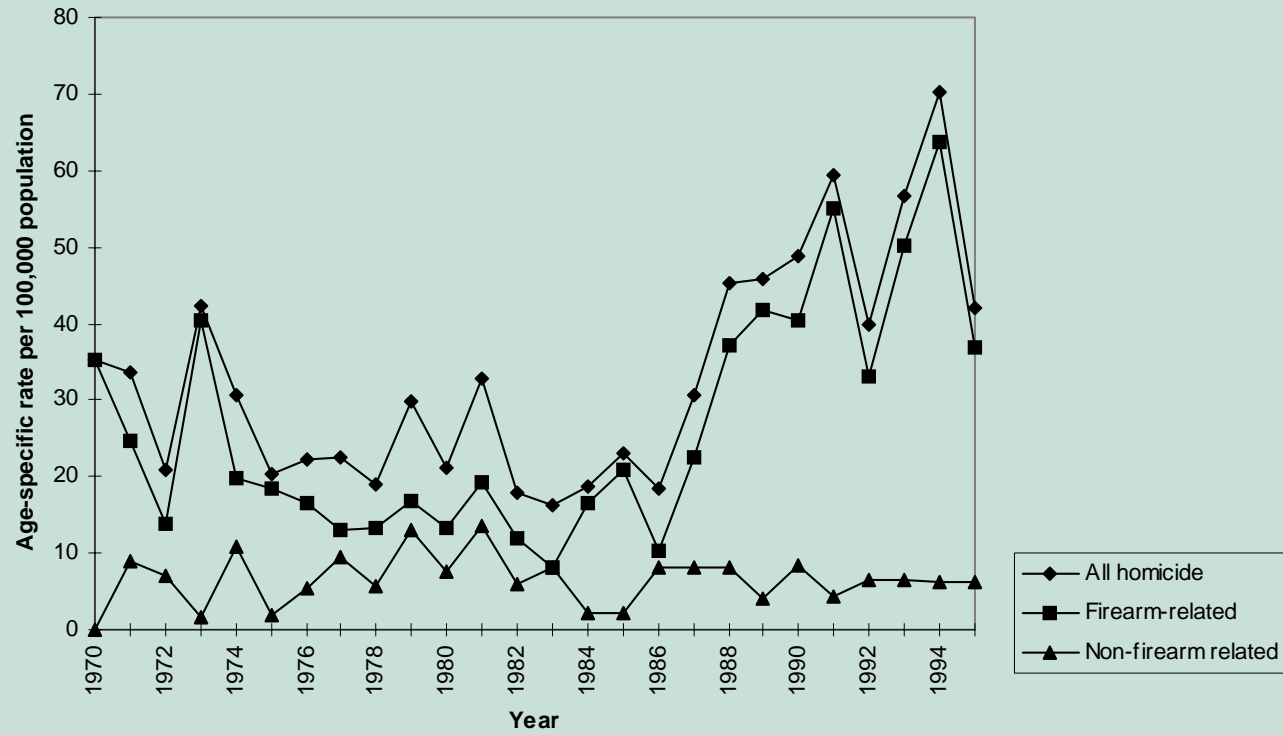
Homicide Rates, Fulton County, Georgia
All ages, 1970-1995



Homicide rates, Fulton County, Georgia
00-14 years old, 1970-1995



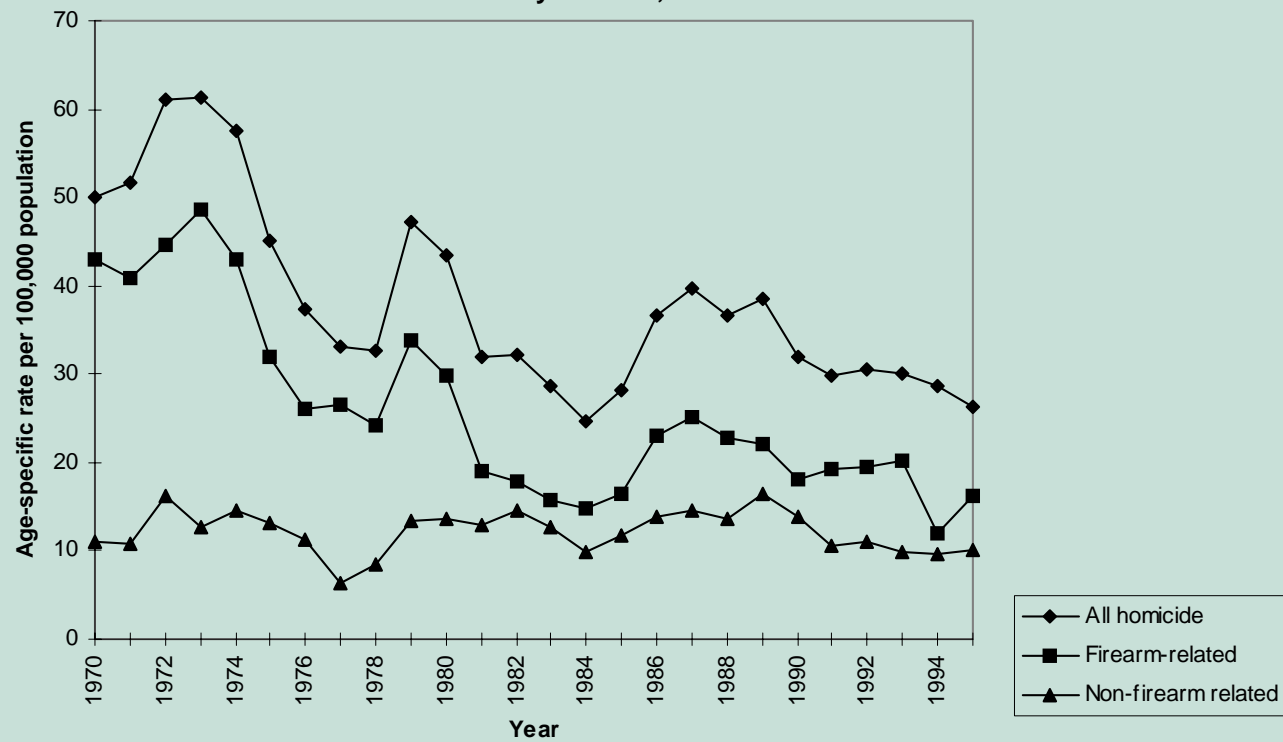
Homicide rates, Fulton County, Georgia
15-19 years old, 1970-1995



Homicide rates, Fulton County, Georgia
20-24 years old, 1970-1995



Homicide rates, Fulton County, Georgia
25+ years old, 1970-1995



Media Portrayal of Child Abuse: A Content Analysis of Australian Newspapers

Ania Wilczynski, University of New South Wales

The research (a content analysis of the media portrayal of child abuse in 2 Australian newspapers) hasn't involved collaboration as such on the actual research itself, but one of the recommendations arising from the research has been the need for child protection professionals and journalists to develop a more proactive relationship with each other. The key things this presentation will discuss:

- * Brief summary of the findings, eg., the media, concentrates on the most atypical and serious abuse cases, gives little attention to the causes and prevention of abuse, portrays abusers as evil or disturbed, and there is a great deal of 'systems bashing' of workers. These findings are similar to those found for studies of the media portrayal of crime generally.
- * Outline the recommendation re: the need to develop a more proactive relationship with the media, and some practical strategies for developing this, eg., developing ongoing relationships with key journalists, using imaginative strategies to get coverage of under-reported issues, using knowledge about the media's criteria of newsworthiness, eg., 'pegging' issues to individual cases. I think this is a more general issue which is applicable to researchers generally.
- * Discuss some of the strategies I have personally been involved in, eg., organising conference sessions on the media with both child protection professionals and journalists, and regularly speaking to journalists about child protection issues.

Reducing Youth Violence in the 21st Century

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Abstract

My clinical experiences evaluating adolescent murderers indicate that, as the cause of youth violence is multi-faceted, so must be its solution. My follow-up interviews with youths convicted of homicide, as well as available research studies, suggest that parents, the educational system, communities, government leaders, the media, and individuals must work together to foster a healthy next generation. Individuals and institutions must collaborate to create a more peaceful society before a significant reduction in youth violence in the U.S. will be realized. I propose 50 strategies designed to reduce youth violence in the hope that these will be further investigated.

Introduction

Reversing the increasing trend toward death and destructiveness by juveniles in the United States is a difficult task (Heide, 1999). As discussed in my keynote address on Wednesday evening, the⁵ conditions that lead to youth violence are multi-faceted and must be confronted if change is to be effected. On a macro level, institutional change, societal influences, situational factors, and the resources available to youths must be addressed to curtail youth violence, of which homicide is the most extreme form.

In the 1990s, we have seen child maltreatment reach an epidemic proportion. Positive male role models have become fewer in American families and in neighborhoods across the country. As we approach the millennium, strong, moral leaders and heroes have become harder to identify. Our society has become increasingly saturated with violence. The number of children growing up in poverty has increased. Sadly, many youths today have far easier access to violent images, gangs, guns and drugs than prosocial role models, good education and part-time jobs.

Against this societal backdrop are literally millions of youths, each of whom has a unique biology, developmental history, and personality. On a micro level, individuals' personality characteristics and biological vulnerabilities must be evaluated in the total equation (Reiss and Roth, 1993; Roth, 1994). The effect of these extrinsic and intrinsic variables is often cumulative. Youths who have low self-esteem, who cannot deal with strong negative feelings, who exercise poor judgment, who are chronically bored, or who are prejudiced towards others are at higher risk of acting maladaptively than emotionally healthier, happier, and more confident youth.

⁵ Material presented in this talk, as well as other information pertinent to reducing violence, is published in chapter 13 in Heide, 1999 (publication date: late summer 1998).

Adolescents who are genetically or neurologically impaired (e.g., Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, brain injury) are more likely to behave impulsively than youths who are biologically normal.

As we enter the twenty-first century, science has enabled us to identify risk factors associated with violence and delinquency at various developmental periods in children's lives, ranging from birth to adolescence (American Psychological Association, 1993a, 1993b; Howell, 1995; Foote, 1997; Loeber and Farrington, 1998). Programs that have demonstrated effectiveness for reducing delinquency and that show promise for stemming the tide of youth violence have been recognized (Tremblay, et al., 1991, 1992; Tolan and Guerra, 1994; Howell, 1995; Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995; Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996; Foote, 1997; Loeber and Farrington, 1998). In addition, several reviews of methodologically-sound evaluations of preventative interventions aimed at risk factors associated with delinquency, violence, and substance abuse are now available (Hawkins and Catalano, 1992; Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller, 1992; Institute of Medicine, 1994; Olds and Kitzman, 1993; Yoshikawa, 1994; Powell and Hawkins, 1996). Research clearly indicates that reducing juvenile violence requires a multi-faceted, coordinated approach in which the importance of early intervention is recognized (American Psychological Association, 1993a; Kelley, et al., 1997; Loeber and Farrington, 1998).

Several researchers have developed thorough and systematic approaches to curtail youth violence (DeJong, 1994; Howell, 1995; Howell, Krisberg, Hawkins, and Wilson, 1995; Wilson and Howell, 1995). Some programs are geared to parents and their children from conception to age 6 (Hawkins, Catalano, and Brewer, 1995; Howell, 1995); others are more appropriately targeted at children from age 6 through adolescence and at the communities in which they live (Brewer, et al., 1995; Howell, 1995). Many promising strategies aimed at high risk youths at various developmental stages have been designed and implemented (see Howell, 1995; Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996; Powell, et al., 1996; Powell and Hawkins, 1996; Heide, 1999).

Partners in Creating a Safer, Healthier Society

My clinical experiences evaluating youths charged with murder underscore many of these research findings and recommended public policies. As the cause of youth violence is multi-faceted, so must be its solution. Parents, the educational system, communities, government leaders, the media, and individuals must work together to foster a healthy next generation. Individuals and institutions must collaborate to create a more peaceful society before a significant reduction in youth violence will be realized.

Given the changes that have occurred in families and in western society since the 1970s, the concept of partnership is a critical one now and will remain so in the 21st century. Parents today, possibly more than at any time in history, need help in raising moral sons and daughters who can function well in a global and technologically complex world. The schools ideally build on the foundation that parents have laid.

The educational system, however, must provide a safety valve in the form of a back-up plan for children whose parents have failed to instill the personal discipline and qualities needed to succeed in school, work, sports, and other prosocial activities. When parents do not equip their children with the social skills and strategies needed to interact harmoniously with others, it is in society's interest for the schools to assume these functions. Children who are subjected to ineffective child-rearing practices and who are poorly socialized typically lack self-control and a sense of strong attachment to others, including parents and teachers. Unbonded youths with poor self-control are at higher risk of committing criminal acts and engaging in other acts that can result in harm, such as drinking, using drugs, and reckless driving (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990).

Communities, the government, and the media are also potentially important institutions in the socialization of children. They give youths a sense of connection with others and "stakes in conformity." Youths who are bonded to others, committed to school and involved in prosocial activities in their communities have a sense of "buy-in" with respect to conventional goals and the means to achieve them. Adolescents who trust their leaders and believe that they themselves can make a positive difference in the world are far less likely to engage in violent behavior than youths who feel a sense of alienation from others and hopelessness about the direction of their lives (Hirschi, 1969; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Individual adults who interact positively with young people increase youths' sense of connectedness with older members of society and build bridges to a brighter and more successful future for them. This partnership of people and institutions, with 50 recommended strategies for reducing youth violence, is encapsulated in Table 1.

Parents

First, parenting must once again become a priority for Americans. When asked in follow-up interviews how parents could help their children, the young men who had killed someone during their adolescent years repeatedly emphasized the need for greater parental involvement. The young men also stressed the importance of setting limits.

Key findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, published in 1997 by the American Medical Association, underscored the important role parents and families play in the lives of today's youths. "Parent-family connectedness" was one of two variables that consistently protected youths from engaging in high risk behaviors that threatened their health. Youths who felt love, warmth and caring from one or both parents, in contrast to those who did not, were significantly less likely to engage in violent behavior, to use cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana, and to begin having sexual intercourse at a young age. Youths who felt connected to their parents and were satisfied with their relationships with mothers and/or fathers were also less likely to report being emotionally distressed and having a history of suicidal ideation and behaviors than adolescents who did not feel close to their parents (Resnick, et al., 1997).

Table 1. Partners And Strategies in Reducing Youth Violence

A. Parenting -- A Priority Concern

1. Greater parental involvement
2. Limit-setting by parents
3. Parenting classes for parents
4. Participation by parents in support groups
5. Child development and parenting courses in high schools

B. Educational System

6. Design courses to identify child maltreatment (K-12)
7. Provide information on the effects of parental chemical dependency
8. Allow support groups like Ala-teen in schools
9. Improve communication skills
10. Foster self-esteem
11. Provide social skills training
12. Teach conflict resolution
13. Give techniques to deal with feelings and to develop self-control (e.g., anger management, stress management)
14. Develop moral reasoning
15. Encourage understanding of cultural differences
16. Set appropriate limits regarding acceptable behavior
17. Provide a supportive network (e.g., Child Advocate Program)
18. Greater involvement by teachers

C. Communities

19. Greater involvement by adults in the lives of children
20. Mentors
21. Medical community
22. Business community
23. Law enforcement
24. Religious organizations
25. Neighborhood centers or recreation halls
26. Organized community sports
27. Community organizations
28. Volunteer work in the community

29. "Youths helping youths" programs
30. Artists and art organizations

D. Government Leaders

31. National commitment to children
32. Future-oriented legislation
33. Supportive services for parents
34. Quality health care for children and their families
35. Research to prevent brain dysfunction
36. Expanded National Leave Policy
37. Incentives for business re: day care
38. Prevention programs
39. Early intervention programs for youths with substance abuse and behavioral problems
40. Educational programs targeted to assist disadvantaged children and those with special needs
41. Programs aimed at truancy reduction and drop-out prevention
42. Shelters/drop-in centers
43. Gun policy (numbers, access, and lethality)

E. The Media

44. Increase public awareness about community programs to reduce violence
45. More responsible programming re: violence
46. Public service announcements denouncing violence
47. Continuing campaign to deglamorize drugs

F. The Individual

48. As taxpayer
49. As voter
50. As human being

Table contained in Young Killers (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), copyright by Kathleen Margaret Heide. Reprinted with permission.

In light of the difficulties of raising children, particularly those with special needs, parenting classes should be made available to help mothers and fathers (See, e.g., Tremblay, et al., 1991, 1992). Research shows that increasing parental awareness about home and child management enhances the development of communication, emotional ties, and parent-child bonding. These factors, in turn, help prevent child maltreatment (Heide, 1992).

Parents should also be informed about the benefits of attending support groups. Self-help groups that may be helpful include Parents Anonymous (for mothers who have abused their children) and Tough Love (for parents whose children are acting-out). Other support groups led by professionals include Parents United International, Inc. (for parents whose children have been sexually abused) and Parental Stress Services (for children and parents from stressful environments) (Straus, 1994).

Many cases of child neglect or mistreatment are result from parental ignorance. Reducing this ignorance through education and parental training can go a long way toward increasing parental involvement and ending today's high rates of child abuse and neglect. With this end in mind, child development and parenting skills courses need to be incorporated into high school curricula for both boys and girls, as well as made available in the community (Haugaard, et al., 1995; Murray, 1995b).

Educational System

The prevention of domestic violence -- child maltreatment, spouse abuse, and the witnessing of violence -- is the keystone to the prevention of overall violence in society. Parent education about child abuse and neglect should be effectuated both directly, through courses for mothers and fathers, and indirectly, through children who might be in abusive or potentially abusive situations. There are many ways that the educational system can help youths rebound from unhealthy influences in their homes and neighborhoods and develop into healthier human beings (American Psychological Association, 1993a; Murray, 1995c). Elementary, junior high, and high schools need to develop courses on child maltreatment. The curricula should help students recognize abuse and encourage them to take appropriate action if victimized or threatened (Heide, 1992; Haugaard, et al., 1995).

Similarly, the education system should also provide information to children about the effects of parental alcoholism and chemical dependency. Youths need to learn how to differentiate functional from dysfunctional families and to understand that abuse and neglect are often a consequence of the latter. Children and adolescents from substance abusing families should be aware that they themselves are at greater risk of chemical dependency and violent death in the home than youths whose families do not have this malady (Heide, 1992; Rivara, et al., 1997). They should learn about how to address the problems in their home lives through support groups like Ala-teen, which helps youths cope with living with alcoholic or drug dependent parents. Such groups should be allowed and encouraged to meet in the schools during lunch, free periods, or immediately following classes (Heide, 1992).

The schools are also the ideal place in which to improve the communication skills of students, to encourage increased self-esteem, to promote prosocial behaviors, and to teach peaceful methods of conflict resolution (See, e.g., DeJong, undated; Tremblay, et al., 1991, 1992; Bannister, 1996; Embry, et al., 1996; Farrell, Meyer, and Dahlberg, 1996). Dissension is often the result of misunderstanding. Schools can help eliminate this ignorance and once again become the safe places they were a generation ago. Classes can be constructed to help students understand and respect cultural differences, which in turn will foster empathy and encourage students to interact with their peers and others in harmonious ways (See, e.g., American Psychological Association, 1993a; Attorney General Daniel E. Lungren's Policy Council on Violence Prevention, 1995).

In addition to tolerance, children and teens need to be taught communication skills and how to deal with their feelings. Anger management, stress management, moral reasoning, social skills training and conflict resolution skills could easily be implemented into school curricula from kindergarten through high school (Goldstein and Glick, 1987; Goldstein, 1988; Tremblay, et al., 1991, 1992; DeJong, 1994; Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996. See, e.g., Prothrow-Stith, 1987; Kelder, et al., 1996). Children and adolescents need to learn self-control. They need to know how to make good and moral decisions and how to fight fair. They need to learn that an argument is not won by silencing the opposition with an insult, a raised fist, or a bullet.

Youths also need limits set for them and consequences for disregarding rules and standards for appropriate behavior. Two national studies recently revealed that principals and students both supported tougher discipline policies. Ninety percent of principals surveyed in the National Association of Elementary School Principals' study identified strict disciplinary policies as essential to keep schools safe. More than eighty percent of the high school students surveyed in the Public Agenda's report, Getting by: What American teenagers really think about their schools, believed that disruptive students should be removed from class (Sloan, 1997).

All schools should make some provision to ensure that there is a supportive network available for children who need help. This network, perhaps fashioned as a child advocate program (Heide, 1992), would be designed to ensure that appropriate referrals to mental health and social services agencies are made. The current system of school guidance counselors is not adequate. Access to guidance counselors is often encumbered by the excessively high counselor-student ratio. In addition, the tasks assigned to guidance departments usually reflect academic goals rather than the psychological or social needs of students. School counselors are expected to assist in course selection, provide college and career advice, and handle conflicts that students have with teachers and with one another. Consequently, they often have little time to assist youths with family or adjustment problems.

Teachers were seen as potentially important figures by the young killers and their parents during follow-up interviews. They were depicted as "role models" and as individuals who could impact significantly on youths. As a group, the young men and their mothers stressed that teachers need to get more involved in their students' lives in spite of increasing class enrollment and related demands.

The National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health found that "school connectedness" was the other variable that was significantly correlated to several adolescent health risk behaviors. Youths who felt that teachers treated them fairly and who felt close to people at school were significantly less likely to be violent, to smoke cigarettes or marijuana, to drink alcohol, and to have had sexual intercourse than youths who felt disconnected from school. Adolescents who felt part of their schools were also less likely to be emotionally distressed and to have engaged in suicidal thoughts or behaviors than youths who felt estranged from the junior and senior high school experience (Resnick, et al., 1997).

Community

The community can also play a potentially pivotal role in helping youths make prosocial choices, particularly if many groups, including residents, become actively involved in developing the strategies to reduce youth violence (Preventing interpersonal violence among youth, 1994; Ansari and Kress, 1996; Stephens, 1997). The increasing proportion of juveniles involved in homicide is indicative of a breakdown in the community. The old African proverb encapsulated in the title of Hillary Clinton's 1995 book, "It takes a village to raise a child," is particularly apropos today in an era besieged with a loss of a sense of community (DeAngelis, 1995).

Male and female mentors are needed to guide children who do not have healthy parents who care about them. Mentors can help youth with their difficulties and encourage them to achieve and make a positive contribution to society. They can assist teens in learning leadership skills and in resisting peer pressure to use drugs, commit crimes, or join gangs (Becker, 1994; Straus, 1994; Murray, 1995a; Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996. See, e.g., Ringwalt, et al., 1996).

Physicians, particularly those involved in primary care, are often in an excellent position to counsel high-risk youth about homicide prevention, including firearms (May and Martin, 1993; May, Christoffel, and Sprang, 1994; Holmes, et al., 1995). They can play a critical role in educating the public about violence prevention and in encouraging participation in a variety of activities, including gun amnesty programs (See, e.g., DeJong, 1994; "Help Member Focus," 1995).

Leaders from the business community must also take action to help youths to feel a part of their community and to learn responsibility. Employment opportunities for youths provide a legitimate way for them to earn money and acquire desired goods and services. Neighborhood businesses need to provide meaningful part-time employment, summer jobs, and training programs for youths to develop their skills and confidence (See, e.g., Ringwalt, et al., 1996). Partnerships of private employers, schools, and government, such as the National Jobs Corps, have succeeded in providing intensive, community-based job-training programs for youths (Straus, 1994; Stephens, 1997).

Law enforcement can also provide leadership in the community by working with residents and neighborhood groups, as well as organized institutions and agencies, to reduce youth violence (Marans and Berkman, 1997). As noted by the National Crime Prevention Council, "Fruitful

partnerships between law enforcement and citizens are promoted by community policing, with law enforcement becoming acquainted with community residents, learning about problems in the neighborhoods, and enlisting support for preventing crime and improving neighborhood safety" (National Crime Prevention Council, 1994a, p. 1). Groups that can benefit from a partnership with police include area schools, youth groups, neighborhood associations, community service and social clubs, home/school organizations (e.g., PTA), tenant groups, religious organizations, associations of homeowners or merchants, and taxpayer and political groups (National Crime Prevention Council, 1994b; Cronin, 1995).

Religious groups can help youths to make good choices. In poor and minority areas, the church is often one of the strongest and most visible institutions. Churches, synagogues, and other religious organizations need to develop programs to meet the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of adolescents and their families. Religious beliefs can help to dissuade teens, who are easily and powerfully influenced by ideology, from engaging in antisocial behavior. Research indicates that youths who are low in religiosity, as measured by infrequent church attendance, are more susceptible to a variety of adolescent problems, including delinquency, teen pregnancy, school failure, and substance use (Straus, 1994).

At follow-up the young killers and their mothers repeatedly mentioned the need for neighborhood centers or recreation halls. Adolescents need a safe place available where they can hang out, play sports, listen to music and dance and interact with peers and adults (Straus, 1994). Youths who have available a supervised location where they are welcome and where there are constructive things to do are less likely to be bored with life and become high on drugs and alcohol than adolescents who are hanging out in the streets day after day. Teens with attractive prosocial alternatives are also unlikely to be drawn to gangs and hate groups and to feel they have little or nothing left to lose (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996; see, e.g., McGillis 1996).

There are data to indicate that lower income male youths who are involved in community sports are significantly less delinquent than their nonathletic counterparts. Studies suggest that youths who play sports also demonstrate achievement in other areas. Participants in the Midnight Basketball program in Chicago, for example, showed positive gains in education and job placement, as well as avoiding criminal involvement and remaining drug and alcohol free (Straus, 1994).

The community can do more than provide recreational centers and organized sports to help adolescents use their time and talents wisely. More than 400 community organizations have been identified nationally. These include recreational (e.g., YMCA), character-building (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Club of America), career- or avocation-based (e.g., 4H, Junior Achievement), politically-focused (e.g, Young Democrats), religious-oriented (Christian Youth Groups), and those that instill ethnic pride. Research indicates that many benefits accrue to youths who participate in community organizations, including improved social skills and competencies, enhanced educational achievement, positive peer relationships, and increased social responsibility (Straus, 1994).

Community involvement in the form of service fosters trust, facilitates learning, and builds self-esteem. Youths who participate in community volunteer programs such as VISTA or the National Youth Conservation Corps gain a greater understanding of others and connection to the community, while reducing their feelings of alienation and isolation (Straus, 1994; Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996).

Setting up programs where older youths help younger children also appears to reap benefits. Adolescents have served effectively in the roles of tutors and Big Brothers and Sisters. They have performed well as advocates for other troubled youth and as mediators in youth conflicts in schools. Studies indicate that teens benefit from being in the position of helping others and of being needed and respected by other children and adolescents (Straus, 1994).

A number of communities across the United States have effectively involved youths in using art to address teen problems. Artists, art organizations, and community groups have received assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts, the 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies, and the seven regional art organizations in recognition of the role that the arts can play in the lives of children and their families. Mediums utilized have included dance, music, storytelling, maskmaking, painting, film, sculpture, pottery, photography, and theater (Costello, 1995).

Recent research has indicated that collective efficacy, as measured by community involvement and trust among residents, is linked to reduced violence in neighborhoods. These findings held when the effects of individual-level characteristics, prior violence, and measurement error were controlled. Collective efficacy was also shown to mediate the effects of concentrated disadvantage and residential instability on violence levels (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997).

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, provides an excellent example of a community that successfully mobilized its resources to reduce juvenile crime, including violent crime (Hsia, 1997). The antiviolence effort involved the "coordination, collaboration, and involvement of all parts of the community, resulting in positive systemic changes and collaboration across socioeconomic, ethnic, and political lines" (Ibid., p. 2).

Government Leaders

Ideally, initiatives like those implemented in Allegheny County will become increasingly common in the United States and other countries experiencing a serious juvenile crime problem. If juvenile violence is going to decrease in America, the conditions that breed alienation, isolation, poverty, rage, and resignation must be effectively tackled. Strong and moral leadership is needed. If society wants to hold youths accountable for their behavior, those in power must act responsibly. Whether we look at personal responsibility from the top down or the bottom up, the result is likely to be the same. Youths are more apt to make responsible choices if they live in a nation where government leaders, communities, parents, teachers, and adults see that each has a responsibility to contribute to the moral growth of children.

The United States must make a national commitment to improve the lives of today's children or risk that its citizens will live increasingly in fear of its young. Government leaders need to propose legislation that looks to the future for all youths. Parents must have access to supportive services to ensure the physical and mental health of their children as well as their own medical needs (Reiss and Roth, 1993). The government needs to join with health professionals in funding research and programs to prevent brain injuries, children's exposure to lead, substance abuse by pregnant women, and other prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal events associated with brain dysfunctions and an increased potentiality for violence (Reiss and Roth, 1993).

The national leave policy that permits parents to take needed time off from work to care for a newborn child, a newly adopted child, or a seriously ill child without risk of losing their employment was a big step forward for U.S. families and their children (Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993; Stockfisch, 1997). Initiatives to expand this policy to make more parent employees eligible should be pursued. The nation also must explore incentives to make it feasible for businesses and organizations to operate quality daycare facilities on their premises or close by at a cost affordable to its employees (Magid and McKelvey, 1987).

Programs aimed at prevention and early intervention must be implemented on a grand scale with the knowledge that the direct results may take 20 to 30 years to see. Effective programs for low income children and their families need to be made available with the foresight that most of the youths arrested for violent crimes are poor (Straus, 1994). Funding of programs such as Headstart is important in ensuring that poor children are on the same playing field when they enter school with their more affluent counterparts. Early diagnosis of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and learning disabilities is essential to increase the chances that these youths will obtain the educational opportunities needed to reach their potential. In addition, programs aimed at truancy reduction and drop-out prevention need to be implemented in recognition of the correlation between school failure and delinquency (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996).

Federal and state governments must also ensure that shelters and drop-in centers are easily accessible to youths across the country. High-risk youths, particularly homeless teens and runaways, often need crisis intervention, individual counseling, alcohol and drug counseling, transportation, long-term foster care, recreation and job training (Straus, 1994). Denying mental health benefits, social services, and educational resources to children today to save money ensures that our prison population, already at a record high in terms of the number and rate of persons incarcerated in the United States, will continue to grow (Magid and McKelvey, 1987; Schorr, 1988; American Psychological Association, 1993a; Gilliard and Beck, 1996; Bonczar and Beck, 1997).

Given that the majority of homicides are committed with guns, Congress should provide funding to develop, implement, and evaluate school-based programs to inform youth regarding the prevention of firearm violence (American Psychological Association, 1993a; "Reducing youth gun violence," 1996). The federal government, as well as the individual states, must take meaningful action to regulate firearms (Roth, 1995). In addition, the federal government must

prioritize reducing the number of guns in our society and restricting their access to juveniles (Jacobs and Potter, 1995; O'Donnell, 1995; "Reducing youth gun violence," 1996). Research has shown that the dramatic increase in juvenile homicides since the mid 1980s has been directly due to gun-related homicides (Blumstein, 1995; Fox, 1996; Snyder, Sickmund, and Poe-Yamagata, 1996; Kennedy, 1997). Recent studies have also shown that juvenile homicide offenders like to equip themselves with newer and more powerful weapons (Kennedy, 1997). Accordingly, restrictions on assault weaponry must be imposed (Sheley and Wright, 1993; "Reducing youth gun violence," 1996). Stricter handgun policies have been shown to reduce both homicide and suicide among adolescents (Straus, 1994).

Some may argue that the United States, and other countries facing similar problems in juvenile crime, cannot afford to implement policies and programs such as these on a widespread scale. The focus in the last few years has been on cutting costs, reducing benefits, and "downsizing." Those who maintain that the United States cannot and should not accept this financial and moral challenge need to look back to the Savings and Loan Crisis of the 1980s. Congress appropriated billions of dollars to resolve the S&L troubles. A few government officeholders and businesspersons walked away "big winners," while approximately 250 million Americans picked up the tab. In 1992, the Congressional Budget Office estimated the cost at \$800 for every man, woman, and child in the United States based on a bailout figure of \$200 billion (Congressional Budget Office, Congress of the United States, January 1992). In July 1996, the General Accounting Office study put the price tag at more than \$480 billion ("S&L bailout may cost more," 1996). If the federal government could find the money to redress a situation created by government irresponsibility and human greed, surely funds can be allocated to act responsibly and to reduce human suffering on a national scale.

Media

The media, including the record industry, have enormous power and resources available to reduce youth violence in the 21st century (American Psychological Association, 1993a; "Preventing interpersonal violence among youth," 1994; Straus, 1994; Osofsky, 1995). The media can increase public awareness about the nature and scope of the violence problem. They can publicize groups and initiatives in a community organized in response to violence and encourage participation from all of its citizens. The media can also reinforce the lessons of school and community programs designed to reduce conflict, improve communication skills, and change institutional arrangements or policies that appear to contribute to violent solutions (DeJong, 1994).

Efforts are currently under way by the entertainment industry to limit gratuitous violence. In addition to more socially responsible programming, the media have begun to release public service announcements denouncing violence (DeJong, 1994). Provocative posters and billboard displays that promote violence-prevention themes for at-risk youths have been designed and widely disseminated (E.g., Rise High Projects, Inc., Chicago, IL).

The media can do more to effect positive social change by continuing its campaign to deglamorize drugs. The electronic and print media can also contribute to violence reduction by promoting acceptance and respect for diversity through accurate portrayals of various groups, including age, gender, and class, as well as racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and sexual orientation minorities (Attorney General Daniel E. Lungren's Policy Council on Violence Prevention, 1995). The media was extremely successful in educating the American public about child abuse and changing societal attitudes in this regard in less than 20 years (Donnelly, 1991). In the 1990s, talk shows like Geraldo Rivera, Maury Povich, and Oprah Winfrey have done a great deal positive in informing the public about the relationship between child maltreatment and adolescent violence. The media's potential in raising public consciousness about constructive solutions and the richness of diversity during the next decade is almost limitless, given today's technology and its widespread availability to the U.S. population.

Individuals

My recommendations look for people in their roles as parents, educators, organizational members, government leaders, and media personnel to work in collaboration with one another. The discussion of roles and systems, however, is not intended to obscure the power of the individual to influence the lives of children in our country.

Individuals impact as voters, taxpayers, and most importantly, as human beings. Studies of abused children who did not grow up to abuse or hurt others are instructive in this regard (Egeland, Jacobvitz, and Sroufe, 1988). These adults, in recalling their lives as children, often identify an adult figure in their lives who was nice to them. The person could have been the lady next door, the man down the street, a teacher or coach in school, or a clerk in the town deli. The exchanges were often brief and not at all dramatic. In that moment, the youth was aware of being acknowledged by an adult who communicated, whether intentionally or inadvertently, that the adult believed in the child and cared about him or her.

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Session 4: Integration: Theoretical Connections

This was an open discussion session involving the chairs of many of the panels which were presented during this meeting. Participants included Becky Block, Don Faggiani, Dick Block, Ania Wilczynski, Kathy Heide, and Lin Huff-Corzine serving as session chair. Each panelist was given a chance to present ideas from their session before discussion was opened up for all.

Becky Block: She began by noting that sometimes she thought we needed a "Society of Mindless Empiricists" to study the effect of data surveillance on theory. She noted that Lois Fingerhut had asserted that it is very important to learn about other datasets (other than the ones we normally work with, that is) because they expand the explanations we can see. Lois also asserted that if a theory is true, then it should be shown to be true through a variety of different datasets.

However, theory often follows from the availability of data (and sometimes from the availability of technology, also). For example, before crime surveys, theory didn't deal with victims or women, just with male offenders. We need to ask ourselves what questions are out there that people are NOT addressing because they don't have good data. She believes that the best quality of theory comes from practitioner's data. But we have to ask: Do practitioners really USE this data? If not, will they collect the data WELL? For example, do police use SHR reports? (Everyone agreed that they do not.)

Don Faggiani: The panelists from his session would probably want to be members of Becky's "Society of Mindless Empiricists." As a policy analyst for a state, he deals with two types of theory: Democratic and Republican. If his data fits these ideologies, then it is considered "good data." Otherwise, it is not!

Richard Block: We used to assume that crime was sort of an random event and we did not see the patterns. So, police patrolling was random and there was no view of increasing victimization. So two things have happened: (1) Our ability to control an amazing amount of information and digest it rapidly has increased; and (2) we have finally seen that these things really do have patterns. So now we can predict crime.

Ania Wilczynski: From the presentations in their panel, it was clear there was a theme in needing the constant feedback loop between theory and practice. On the flipside, we already target vulnerable groups for more police intervention, so doing things like identifying "hot spots" may actually be a further form of victimization! Another thought is that in the media construction of crime, the historical perspective was very important.

Kathy Heide: Sometimes the climate we work in as researchers is atheoretical and framed by political expediency. So the HRWG is good for reflecting on what we are doing. The multi-

disciplinary make-up of HRWG is good! It pushes us beyond our own models. Our units of analysis vary. It is important to look at implementation of some of the ideas generated here.

Allan Abrahamse: I was trained as a mathematician, which means that I was trained to believe that nothing is true and we need no data. We have had presentations which are so general they don't seem to be real theory. Also we have had a lot of data dumps.

Everett Lee: I recently read a book, the title of which I think is *Consilience* (sp?), which is a combination of biological and social sciences. It argues that we need to look at work in many different fields in order to get at the truth. I suggest that we begin with the biological/genetic in studying homicide. For example, in his path analyses, everything begins with the conditions of birth.

Tom Marvell: I don't like path analyses. The big problem with theory is that there is so much of it! So people have their pet theories. But if you are looking at data only through the lens of your pet theories, they get what they want. We have NOT paid good attention to the rapidly dropping crime rates. That is what we should be studying.

Becky Block: The question is, how to match people to make theories which can be disproven and match them up with data people.

Dick Block: Frank Zimring said "The real problem will come when the crime rate goes down." One of the basic things to explain how things go down as well as go up. This is the real test of a theory!

Chris Dunn: Remember that John Jarvis said that "There is theory and then there is *theory*." That was a way of saying that some theory is politically unacceptable. Also, there are different levels of theory.

Vickie Brewer: The group yesterday was discussing encouraging ourselves in the HRWG to indicate clearly at the beginning of a presentation what theoretical perspectives you are using. We also agreed that we need to routinely address the question of "So what?"

Linda Langford: In contrast to John Jarvis' comment, from a public health perspective, we speak in terms of "modifiable" and "non-modifiable" factors in risk. Clearly, we focus on the modifiable factors that offer possible solutions. But we leave the non-modifiable factors on the table just to keep them alive in the inquiry.

Also, I think it is important to note that the way in which a problem is defined IS theoretical.

Kim Vogt: It's important to remember that theory and data drive each other.

Tom Petee: I disagree with Don in saying that he doesn't really work with theory as a policy analyst. I think he really does. In 1998, we are in a unique position: we CAN test things we simply could not test before! We are at a research and theoretical crossroads.

Tom Marvell: I disagree! We tend to just pick one theory and we ignore all the rest!

Don Faggiani: I agree with Tom. He has a sociology background. I do have a theory which underlies my work: life! We need to look at homicide as a system and we need to know all the parts.

Becky Block: We need to have this discussion on the Web site. Let's begin with Don's comments. Our goal should be to have measurable hypotheses but general theory. Then we need to define the best data sources to measure these.

Dawna Fuqua-Whitley: Has anyone done anything on "complex dynamical systems?" It purports to do Wilson's *Consilience* and integrate theories at different levels.

Allan Abrahamse: In criminal justice statistics, variances are always larger than can be explained!

Kathy Heide: If we focus/build on theories in one area. This is a mistake to believe we HAVE to build only on older models. We can put multi-level models together.

Sometimes, if we adhere to a notion of science as a value-free, we ignore ethical issues. For example, even if we can't restructure the economics system in America, we need to leave that issue on the table.

Lin Huff-Corzine: And we just *might* be able to improve the lives of others in small ways.

Derek Paulsen: In the past, we tried to study all types of homicide using just one theory. It seems better to separate different types of homicide and desegregate our theories to fit the different types.

Becky Block: A thought regarding the ethical issues: Ania talked about the ethics of targeting interventions at certain groups. But there are also other types of targeting. For example, the repeat victimization of being targeted by researchers for study!

In my experience, people who live in bad neighborhoods are really concerned about their kids getting killed. We need to look for local level theory that has variables people can do something about!

Everett Lee: The whole history of epidemiology is concerned with this. If we don't target people for disease prevention, we can't help them.

Tom Marvell: The history of medicine is important to the social sciences. Medicine started with two little specialties: public health and surgery. We are not far from this model. We are really on the edge of disciplinary growth.

Chris Rasche: The study of homicide is very much like the study of disease. There are the same ethical dilemmas: should we stop the study if the results are positive? Or continue on, as they did in the Tuskegee study of syphilis?

Anna Lee: We need to remember the usefulness of serendipity. Those working with datasets are sometimes locked in. But *field* researchers and practitioners can sometimes stumble on connections which elude the rest of us. For example, look at how we discovered the connection between German measles and babies being born blind.

Linda Langford: I am intrigued by Chris Rasche's statement regarding policy statements. So can we begin somewhere? We could begin with Kathy Heide's list of 50 factors and ask which ones are the most important or have the most bang for the buck.

Tom Marvell: My nihilist position is that the body of literature is NOT useful!

Linda Langford: The only way to move forward is to systematically look at each variable to see which one has good data and which ones are too divergent.

Lin Huff-Corzine: Maybe Linda will offer a session next year on this....?

Becky Block: Or do a discussion on the listserv and report it here.

Jay Corzine: I don't think the state of crime research is in *that* much disarray. Some areas are worse than others, but some areas of homicide we know pretty well, such as reducing domestic violence will reduce crime in general.

Paul Blackman: But people often evaluate their own programs: How value-free can that be?

Linda Langford: Let's have a session next year on program evaluation and its various methodologies.

Tom Marvell: It is hard to get good datasets. And you cannot trust people to check their own datasets.

Dick Block: Some of this reminds me of metatheory.

Candice Skrapec: The different perspectives we all bring to the table may make it hard for us to evaluate the merits of different datasets or to see various methodological problems.

Jackie Campbell: Do an evaluation session next year, but pay attention to *outcome measures*. It is hard to get a good and big enough dataset. We need to design issues in getting useable outcomes.

Lin Huff-Corzine: We need research to be driven by theory.

Everett Lee: Einstein said that all theories, good or bad, are good because they can be tested; but bad data is just bad!

Kathy Heide: This discussion has been very helpful. We have heard some really good suggestions for panels for next year, especially on issues on ethics, evaluation outcome and measures, and different models of explanation in theory building.

Appendix A Agenda

Bridging the Gaps: Collaborations on Lethal Violence Research, Theory, and Prevention Policy

Annual Meeting/Intensive Workshop of the Homicide Research Working Group

Wednesday, June 10, 1998–Saturday, June 13, 1998
Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Wednesday, June 10

6:30–9:00 p.m. **Opening Reception**
Michigan Union, University Club

Get Acquainted
Introductory Conversation: Youth Violence in Schools by Kathleen Heide,
University of South Florida

Thursday, June 11

8:15–8:45 a.m. **Opening Introduction, Agenda Review**
Michigan Union, 2nd Floor—Pendelton Room

8:45–9:45 a.m. **Session 1: Essentials of Violence Surveillance Data**
Michigan Union, 2nd Floor—Pendelton Room
Organizer: Rebecca Block, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Session Questions: What is the definition of violence surveillance data? What data sources are available? What are their advantages and limitations? How does someone go about using them, and what does a potential user need to know to avoid misuse or misinterpretation? What new data sources are on the horizon?

Essentials of Violence Surveillance Data, Part 1: Briefings on two major sources of violence surveillance data: public health injury surveillance data and the National Crime Victimization Survey

- 8:45–9:45 a.m.** **Injury Surveillance Using Data from the National Center for Health Statistics**
Lois Fingerhut, CDC, National Center for Health Statistics
- 9:45–10:00 a.m.** **Break**
- 10:00–11:00 a.m.** **Violence Surveillance Data in the National Crime Victimization Survey**
Mike Rand, Bureau of Justice Statistics
- 11:00 a.m.–
12:00 p.m.** **Essentials of Violence Surveillance Data, Part 2:** New information on the Supplemental Homicide Report
- An Evaluation of the Completeness and Accuracy of SHR Data on Intimate Partner Homicides in Massachusetts**
Linda Langford, Harvard School of Public Health; Nancy Issac, Northeastern University School of Law; and Stacey Kabat, Peace at Home
- An Evaluation of the Completeness and Accuracy of SHR Data in Chicago, 1993 and 1994**
Thomas D. Patterson, Daniel Dick and Carolyn Rebecca Block, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
- Discussion by HRWG participants, led by Margo Wilson, McMaster University
- 12:00–2:00 p.m.** **Business Meeting Lunch**
Anderson Room, First Floor
Luncheon is provided as part of registration fee.
- 2:00–3:15 p.m.** **Essentials of Violence Surveillance Data, Part 3:** Violence surveillance data on the horizon: the current status of development of firearm surveillance data systems
- Developing Firearm Surveillance Data Systems**
Chair: Joe Vince, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms/CGAB
- Combining Public Health and Public Safety Databases to Track Firearm Trafficking**
Glenn Pierce, Northeastern University

Combining Public Health and Public Safety Data to Track Firearm Availability

John Freeman, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

The Surveillance Value of "Bad" Data: Using Obliterated Serial Number Data in a Firearm Surveillance System

Bill Sherlock, Illinois State Police, and David G. Krieghbaum, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms/NTC/CGAB

Stephen W. Hargarten, Medical College of Wisconsin

Discussion by HRWG participants, led by Dick Block, Loyola University

3:15–4:15 p.m.

Poster Session

Pond Room

Canadian Center for Justice Statistics: Publications and Reports

Orest Fedorowycz, Statistics Canada

Situational Factors Related to Public Mass Murder Incidents: 1965-1998

Tom Petee, Auburn University

The Effect of Gun Violence on a Large Urban Trauma System

Robert Smith and Susan Avila, Cook County Hospital

Case-Control Methodology in Investigating Unexplained Hospital Deaths

Michael Goodman and David Cowan, Exponent Health Group, Steven Lamm, Consultant in Epidemiology and Occupational Health

Gun Identification by Inmates

John May and Khalid Pitts, D.C. Central Detention Facility Health Services

Circumstances of Gunshot Wounds Among Inmates

Khalid Pitts and John May, D.C. Central Detention Facility Health Services

Regional Variations in Spousal Sex-Ratio of Killings

Derek Paulsen and Victoria Brewer, Sam Houston State University

Space-Time Clustering of Chicago Homicides

Margo Wilson and Martin Daly, McMaster University

Serial Murder and Phenomenological Method: Asking Different Questions

Candice Skrapec, California State University/Fresno

Publicized Executions and the Incidence of Homicide: Methodological Sources of Inconsistent Findings

Steven Stack, Wayne State University

Sophia B. Jones Room:

Injury Surveillance Using Data from the National Center for Health Statistics

Lois Fingerhut, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NCHS

Available Data from the National Crime Victimization Surveys

Mike Rand, Bureau of Justice Statistics

Project Facelift: Restoration of Obliterated Serial Numbers Project

William Sherlock, Illinois State Police, and David G. Kreighbaum, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Project LEAD Demonstration

Joseph Vince and Gerald Nunziato, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Multiple Firearm Purchases and Firearm Crime in Chicago

John Freeman, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

4:15–5:30 p.m.

Use of Technology to Identify Illegal Firearms Traffickers (Includes break)

Yari Yacobi, National Institute of Science and Technology

Sponsored by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, "Innovations in Government Award" from the Ford Foundation and Harvard University, granted to Joseph Vince

Thursday Evening: Organize Dinner Groups—On Your Own

Friday, June 12

8:45–10:00 a.m. Session 2: Trends in Crime: Projections for the Future

Michigan Union, 2nd Floor—Pendelton Room

Session Questions: Will crime be going up or down? Which types of crime?

Organizers: John Jarvis, FBI, and Allan Abrahamse, RAND Corporation

Panelists:

Cohort Survival Projections of Homicide Victimization: Projection Rates, A Work-In-Progress

Allan Abrahamse, RAND Corporation

John Jarvis, FBI

Don Faggiani, Virginia Statistical Analysis Center

Decreasing Violent Gun Crimes in New York City: A Result of Vigorous Enforcement Efforts, Other Variables, Or Both?

Steve Roth, Division of Criminal Justice Services, State of New York

Thomas Marvell, Justec Research

10:00–10:15 a.m. Break

**10:15 a.m.–
12:00 p.m. Discussion**

12:00–2:00 p.m. Lunch—On Your Own

2:00–3:15 p.m. Session 3: Collaborations Among Academics, Practitioners, and the Community

Michigan Union, 2nd Floor—Pendelton Room

Organizer: Richard Block, Loyola University

Panelists:

The SECURE Program: Safety Enhanced Communities Utilizing Resident Endeavors

Richard Block, David Katz, and Laura Herrin, Loyola University

Youth, Firearms and Violence in Atlanta: A Problem-Solving Approach

Arthur L. Kellermann, Dawna S. Fuqua-Whitley, Peter Ash, and John Carter, Emory University

A Content Analysis of the Media Portrayal of Child Abuse in Two Australian Newspapers

Ania Wilczynski, University of New South Wales

Partners and Strategies in Reducing Youth Violence

Kathleen Heide, University of South Florida

3:15–3:30 p.m. Break

3:30–5:00 p.m. Discussion

Friday Evening: Dinner on Your Own

Saturday, June 13

8:45–10:00 a.m. Second Business Meeting
Unfinished Business, Final Issues

10:00–10:15 a.m. Break

**10:15 a.m.–
12:30 p.m. Session 4: Integration: Theoretical Connections**
Michigan Union, 2nd Floor—Pendelton Room

Session Question: How does what we have heard so far inform theory?
Organizer: Lin Huff-Corzine, University of Central Florida

Panelists:

One organizer or designee from each of the previous panels to help lead discussion. This is our chance to integrate what we have learned at the meeting.

12:30 p.m. Meeting Ends: Final Comments

Appendix B Meeting Participants*

Name	Affiliation
Abrahamse, Allan	RAND Corporation
Avila, Susan	Cook County Hospital
Bienen, Leigh	Northwestern University Law School
Blackman, Paul H.	NRA-ILA
Block, Carolyn Rebecca	Criminal Justice Information Authority, Statistical Analysis Center
Block, Richard	Loyola University, Department of Sociology
Brewer, Victoria E.	Sam Houston State University, College of Criminal Justice
Carlson, David	Northeastern University
Cheatwood, Derral	University of Texas at San Antonio, Division of Social and Policy Sciences
Chilton, Roland	University of Massachusetts, Department of Sociology
Corzine, Jay	University of Central Florida, Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Cowan, David	Exponent Health Group
Daly, Martin	McMaster University, Department of Psychology
Dawson, Myrna	University of Toronto, Department of Sociology/Centre of Criminology
Dunn, Chris	University of Michigan, ICPSR
Faggiani, Donald	State of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services
Federowycz, Orest	Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics
Fingerhut, Lois	Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics
Freeman, John	Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Fuqua-Whitley, Dawna	Emory Center for Injury Control
Hargarten, Stephen W.	Medical College of Wisconsin, Department of Emergency Medicine
Heide, Kathleen	University of South Florida
Huff-Corzine, Lin	University of Central Florida, Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Jarvis, John	Federal Bureau of Investigation
Jasinski, Jana	Wichita State University, Department of Sociology
Kim, Allegra N.	California State Dept. of Health Services, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch
Krieghbaum, David G.	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms/NTC/CGAB
Langford, Linda	Harvard University

Lee, Anne S.	University of Georgia, Gerontology Center
Lee, Everett S.	University of Georgia, Gerontology Center
Marvell, Thomas B.	Justec Research
Marz, Kaye	University of Michigan, ICPSR
Maxson, Cheryl	University of Southern California, Social Science Research Institute
May, John P.	D.C. Central Detention Facility Health Services
Nunziato, Gerald A.	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms/NTC
Paulsen, Derek	Sam Houston State University, College of Criminal Justice
Pierce, Glenn	Northeastern University
Petee, Thomas A.	Auburn University, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work
Pitts, Khalid	D.C. Central Detention Facility Health Services
Regoeczi, Wendy	University of Toronto, Department of Sociology
Rand, Michael	Bureau of Justice Statistics
Roberts, Roxanne	Cook County Hospital
Rose, Harold M.	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Department of Geography
Roth, Steven	New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
Sherlock, William	Illinois State Police
Skrapec, Candice	California State University, Fresno, Department of Criminology
Smith, Robert	Cook County Hospital
Stack, Steven	Wayne State University, Criminal Justice Department
Trent, Roger B.	Emergency Preparedness and Injury Control Program
Vince, Joseph J.	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms/CGAB
Vogt, Kimberly A.	University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Department of Sociology
Wachtel, Julius	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Webster, Daniel	Johns Hopkins University, Center for Gun Policy and Research
Wilczynski, Ania	University of New South Wales, Social Policy Research Centre
Wilson, Margo	McMaster University, Department of Psychology
Yacobi, Yari	National Institute of Science and Technology

*As of June 1

About the National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a component of the Office of Justice Programs, is the research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, NIJ is authorized to support research, evaluation, and demonstration programs, development of technology, and both national and international information dissemination. Specific mandates of the Act direct NIJ to:

- Sponsor special projects, and research and development programs, that will improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce or prevent crime.
- Conduct national demonstration projects that employ innovative or promising approaches for improving criminal justice.
- Develop new technologies to fight crime and improve criminal justice.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice programs and identify programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated.
- Recommend actions that can be taken by Federal, State, and local governments as well as by private organizations to improve criminal justice.
- Carry out research on criminal behavior.
- Develop new methods of crime prevention and reduction of crime and delinquency.

In recent years, NIJ has greatly expanded its initiatives, the result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Crime Act), partnerships with other Federal agencies and private foundations, advances in technology, and a new international focus. Some examples of these new initiatives:

- New research and evaluation are exploring key issues in community policing, violence against women, sentencing reforms, and specialized courts such as drug courts.
- Dual-use technologies are being developed to support national defense and local law enforcement needs.
- The causes, treatment, and prevention of violence against women and violence within the family are being investigated in cooperation with several agencies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- NIJ's links with the international community are being strengthened through membership in the United Nations network of criminological institutes; participation in developing the U.N. Criminal Justice Information Network; initiation of UNOJUST (U.N. Online Justice Clearinghouse), which electronically links the institutes to the U.N. network; and establishment of an NIJ International Center.
- The NIJ-administered criminal justice information clearinghouse, the world's largest, has improved its online capability.
- The Institute's Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program has been expanded and enhanced. Renamed ADAM (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring), the program will increase the number of drug-testing sites, and its role as a "platform" for studying drug-related crime will grow.
- NIJ's new Crime Mapping Research Center will provide training in computer mapping technology, collect and archive geocoded crime data, and develop analytic software.
- The Institute's program of intramural research has been expanded and enhanced.

The Institute Director, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, establishes the Institute's objectives, guided by the priorities of the Office of Justice Programs, the Department of Justice, and the needs of the criminal justice field. The Institute actively solicits the views of criminal justice professionals and researchers in the continuing search for answers that inform public policymaking in crime and justice.