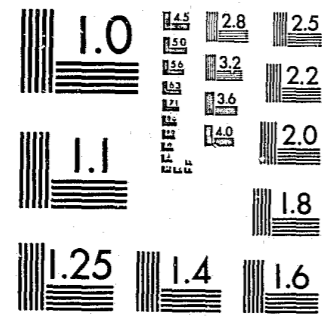


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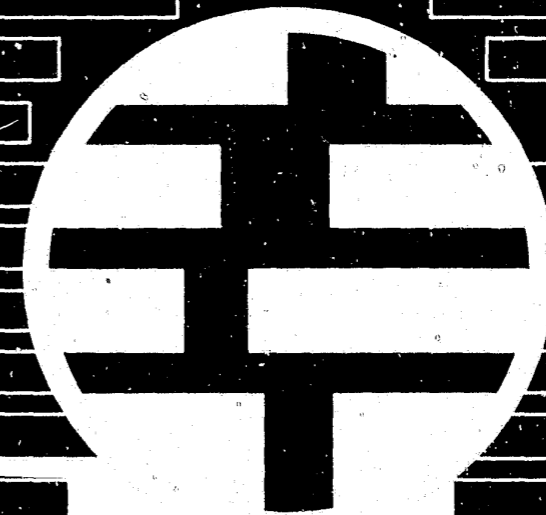
1973 to 1982

December 1983



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MURDER IN ILLINOIS:

1973 to 1982

December 1983

by Louise S. Miller
Information Resource Center

ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY
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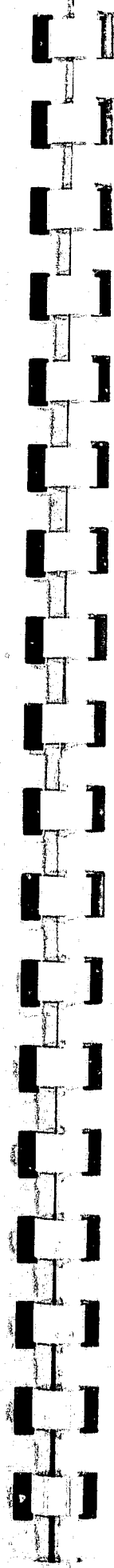
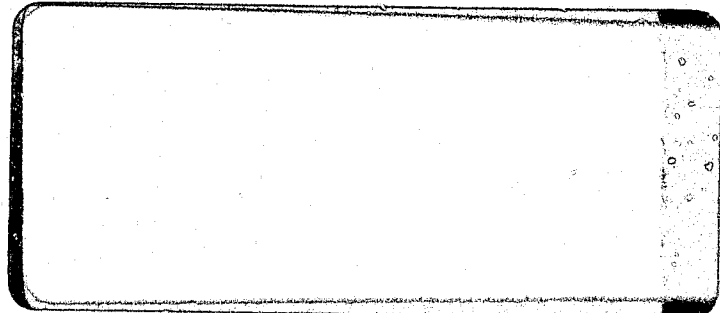


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the characteristics of every murder known to the police in Illinois from 1973 through 1982. Using victim-level data derived from the Illinois Department of Law Enforcement's Supplementary Homicide Reports, analyses were conducted comparing the age, race and sex of murder victims and known offenders, the murder weapons used, the relationship between the victims and known offenders, and the circumstances surrounding the murders. Analyses were also conducted for Chicago and the rest of the State separately, and by four victim age groups: children, young adults, adults, and the elderly.

The major findings are summarized as follows:

- Between 1973 and 1982, more than 11,500 people were murdered in Illinois.
- The city of Chicago accounts for less than 30% of Illinois' population, but about 70% of all Illinois murders annually.
- The murder rate per 100,000 population is higher for both males and females in Chicago than for males and females in the rest of the State. In 1982, males in Chicago were murdered at a rate of nearly 50 per 100,000 male population. For Chicago females, the rate was about 10. Outside Chicago, the male and female murder rates were less than 6 per 100,000 population.
- Outside Chicago, the proportion of murder victims who are female is higher (28%) than in Chicago (18%).
- The vast majority of murder victims statewide are male, although murdered children are almost as likely to be female as male.
- In Chicago, blacks account for the majority of murder victims. This is true for both male and female victims, and for every age group of victims except for females 60 and over. In that group, almost two-thirds of the victims are white.
- The majority of murders in Illinois, where an offender has been identified, are intra-racial. In Chicago, 98% of black victims are killed by black offenders. Conversely, only 76% of white murder victims are killed by whites. In the rest of the State combined, 85% of the white victims were killed by whites, versus 96% of black victims killed by blacks.
- The most prevalent murder weapon in Illinois is a firearm, usually a handgun. Where the sex of the offender is identified, male offenders Statewide and female offenders outside Chicago use guns in about 64% of the murders they commit, and use knives in another 20%. Female offenders in Chicago, however, use knives more often than guns (44% versus 39% of murders, respectively).

• Statewide, female murder victims are about two and one-half times more likely to be killed by a family member than are male victims. Males are twice as likely to be killed by strangers than are female victims.

• More than half (57%) of all murders in Illinois in which the circumstances were known were precipitated by an argument or brawl. Another 39% of the murders were committed during the course of a felony (robbery, burglary, etc.). Murder victims aged 60 and over are more likely to be killed during the course of a felony than are any other age group of victims.

INTRODUCTION

Murder is the willful killing of one person by another. Approximately 1,000 to 1,300 people were murdered annually in Illinois between 1973 and 1982, for a 10-year total of more than 11,500 murder victims.¹ This paper describes the demographic and situational factors surrounding these murders, by addressing the following questions:

- Who were the victims? What was their age, race and sex? Where in Illinois were they killed?
- Who were the people that killed them, according to police investigation?
- What were the circumstances of the murders, what weapons were used, and what was the relationship between the victims and offenders?
- Did murders, or specific types of murders, increase or decrease over the period?

The source of the murder data in this report is the Illinois Victim-Level Murder (VLM) file. These data, derived from the Illinois Department of Law Enforcement's annual Uniform Crime Reports Supplementary Homicide Reports (UCR-SHR) data, represent the investigating police officers' assessment of each incident. If the police investigation found an incident to be a murder, even if the suspect was later cleared of murder in court, the incident is still counted as a murder on the VLM. All offender information on the file pertains to the person(s) that the police considered to be the most likely suspect(s), even if no arrest was made, not the person(s) who might have been eventually convicted of murder. Thus, the VLM data give no information about the number or type of people who are convicted murderers in Illinois. Rather, it reflects information about each individual murder incident, and the likely offenders and circumstances surrounding these murders.²

There are two important limitations inherent in using VLM data. First, all analyses of offender characteristics are limited because the data are victim-level. The data reflect the number of murders attributed to an offender (or offenders) of a certain age, race or sex, but not the number of offenders. For example, if a victim was murdered by three 17-year-old offenders, the data would read "victim killed by multiple offenders, all

¹Detailed 1982 murder data for the city of Joliet are not currently available, and thus are not included in the 1982 State totals. There were 16 Index murders (including voluntary manslaughters) in Joliet in 1982.

²For a discussion of the quality of the VLM data, see the Authority publication Illinois Murder Data, 1973-1981: Guide to Quality, Availability and Interpretation.

aged 17," but would not indicate that there were three offenders. Thus, the offender information presented in the analyses below reflects the characteristics of the known offenders of murder victims, but not the actual number of offenders.

Second, offender information for jurisdictions outside of Chicago generally begins in 1974. For Chicago, offender information generally begins in 1976.³ Also, approximately 25% of all murder cases after 1976 have missing offender information. This is due to a combination of factors: 1) many murders go unsolved, with no offender identified, and 2) when offender information becomes known to the police at a later date, often this new information is not reported to DLE, and the SHR/VLM files are not updated. Thus, the analyses below represent the characteristics of only those offenders, or offender characteristics, that the police have identified.

Because murders occurring in Chicago account for about 70% of all Illinois murders, these murders were initially analyzed separately from the rest of the State. Where differences were found, they are highlighted. Also, because Chicago and the rest of the State do not report data on racial characteristics in the same format, these data are always analyzed separately. For a discussion of these differences, see the Appendix.

Previous analyses of some of the Illinois victim-level murder data found that there are important differences in the murder weapons used against adults and children, and in the circumstances surrounding the murders (see the Compiler: May 1982). In light of these findings, for some of the analyses below, Illinois murders are separated into four categories of victim ages: birth to 14, 15 to 24, 25 to 59, and 60 and over. These categories were chosen to represent children, crime-prone age young adults, adults, and the elderly. These category divisions are subjective but, as will be seen below, do allow for informative analyses.

³Only 89 of the 1,127 murder cases in 1973 have offender sex information. About two-thirds of the 89 cases are Chicago murders.

MURDER IN ILLINOIS

In 1982, the Illinois murder rate per 100,000 population was 8.8, which was lower than the national Index murder rate of 9.1. The national figure, from the FBI report Crime in the U.S. 1982, includes murders and voluntary manslaughters. In 1982, there were 1,010 Index murders in Illinois; fewer than 10 of these were voluntary manslaughters. On the average, over the 10-year period, Chicago alone accounted for about 28% of the Illinois population, but 72% of all murders annually.

Unlike most serious crimes in Illinois, murder does not vary according to the season of the year.⁴ A 1982 study entitled Illinois Crime Trends, 1972-1981 found that the Index crimes of aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft all show a good deal of seasonal fluctuation in Illinois. Generally, these crimes tend to occur more often in the summer months, and least often in the winter months. While Index forcible rape and robbery were also found to have some seasonal variation, Index murder was found to have none; there are no months of the year that consistently have more or less murders than other months.

Figure 1 shows the number of males and females murdered in Illinois each month between 1973 and 1982. Superimposed on each series is the line that best describes the series over time. Overall, the number of people killed each month since 1973 has remained quite stable. Between 1973 and 1982, the number of males killed in a typical month increased very slowly from about 74 to 79, then dropped in 1982 to just under 60. This drop is the result of a large decrease in the total number of murders in Chicago from 876 in 1981 to 668 in 1982. The number of females killed decreased minimally during the 10-year period, from about 22 to 20 per month. There was no noticeable 1982 decrease in the number of females murdered, as was seen for male victims.

There is much more variation in the number of males than in the number of females killed per month. The number of males killed in a single month ranged from a low of 50 to a high of 135.⁵ For female victims the range was 11 to 39. Two months in particular, November 1974 and December 1978, are extremes for male victims. The latter month includes 33 teenage males, all murdered over a long period of time by one offender. These

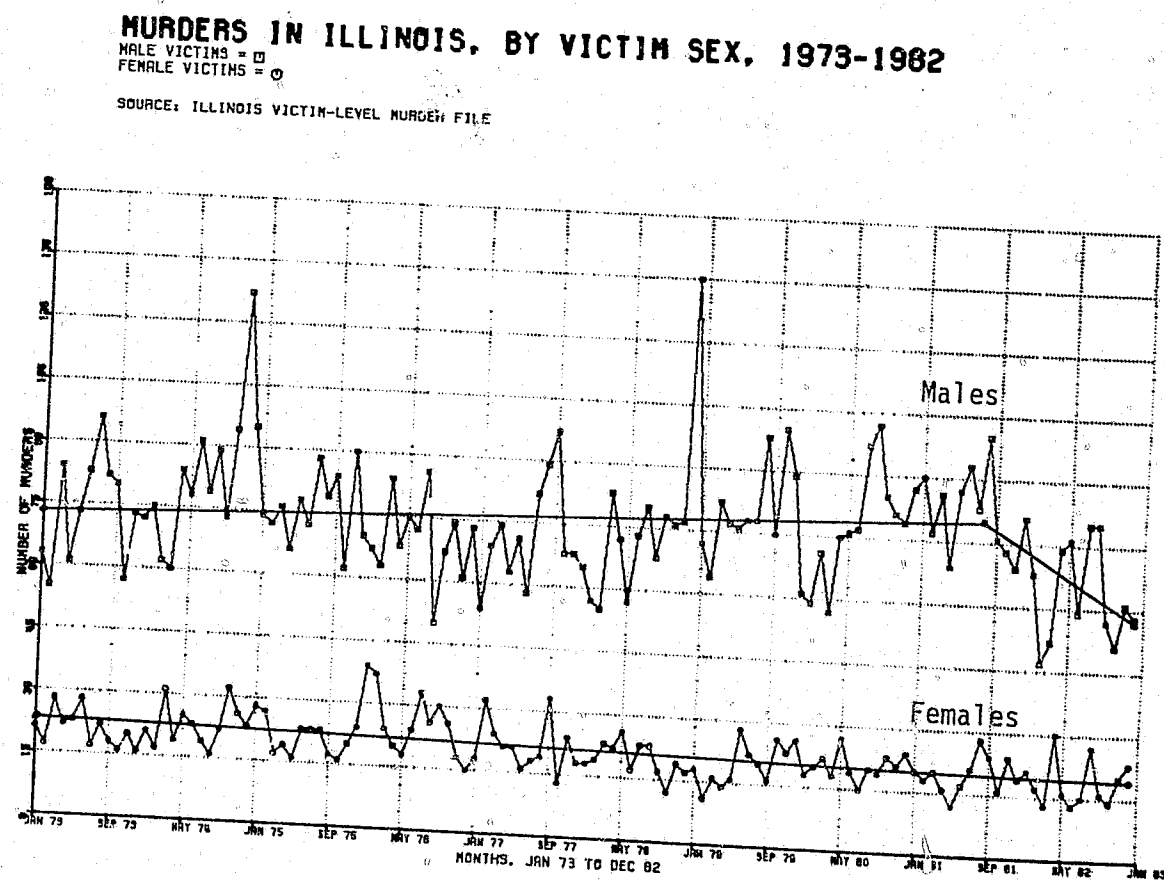
⁴The male and female victim and the total Illinois 10-year monthly series were tested for the presence of seasonality using the Bell-Canada seasonality program. In testing hundreds of time series data sets using this, and the Census X-11 program, The Authority has only found one murder series (male victims in Chicago murdered either outside or in a vehicle between 1965 and 1981) with significant seasonality.

⁵In February 1982 there were only 47 males murdered, but because 1982 data for Joliet are not included (see footnote 1), this figure is probably too low.

victims were discovered and reported in that one month. The high number of killings in November 1974, cannot be attributed to any one or a few particular people or events.⁶

The two highest months for female murder victims are January and February, 1976. Included here are 23 elderly women (and one man) who were asphyxiated in an arson fire in a nursing home, and died over a period of days.

Figure 1



⁶See Block and Block Patterns of Change in Chicago Homicide: The Twenties, The Sixties and The Seventies for a discussion of this extreme month.

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

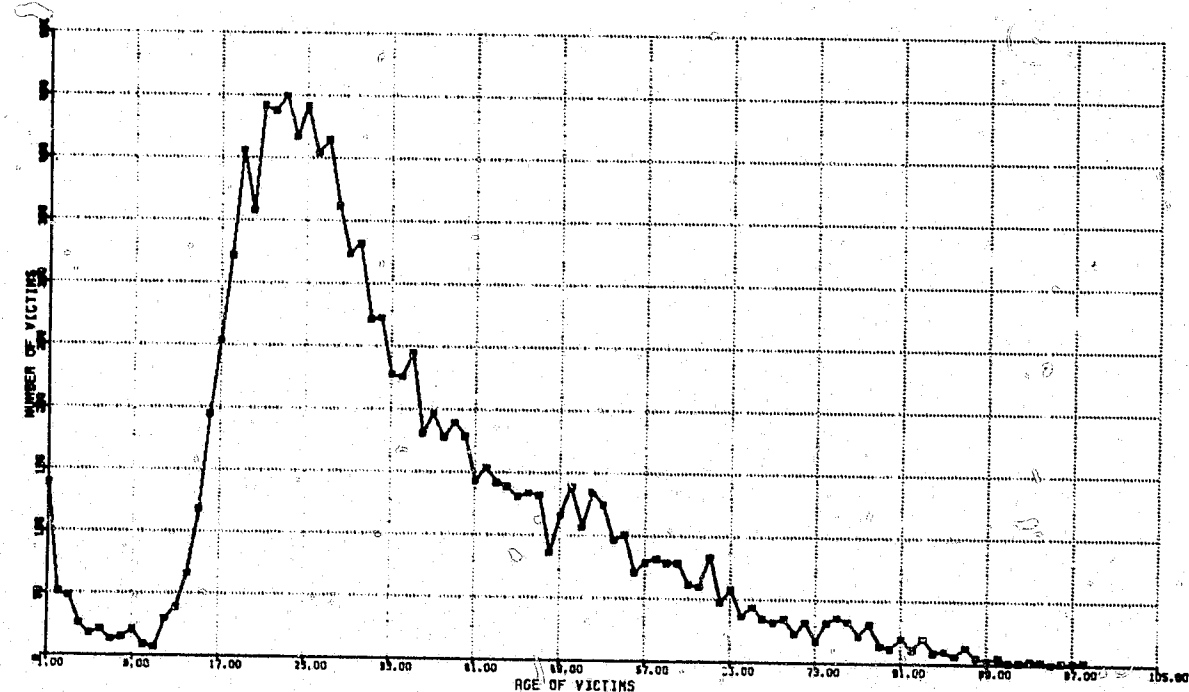
Age of Victims

In the 10 years from 1973 through 1982, murder victims ranged in age from birth to at least 98.⁷ The distribution across different ages, however, was not even. Figure 2 shows the number of people murdered in Illinois between 1973 and 1982, by age of the victim. More infants ages one and under (139) were killed in this time period than were any other 2-year combinations of age groups under 15. Beginning at age two, the number of child murders decreases steadily, reaching its lowest point at age 11. After age 11, the number of teens and young adults murdered increases rapidly, peaking at age 23. After that, the number of adults murdered declines rapidly to about age 40, then continues to decline at a gradual rate.

Figure 2

ILLINOIS MURDER VICTIMS BY AGE, 1973-1982

SOURCE: ILLINOIS VICTIM-LEVEL MURDER FILE.
 N=11482. 81 JUVENILES OF UNKNOWN AGE ARE NOT INCLUDED.



⁷The highest SHR/VLM victim age code is "Age 98 or above". There is no way to tell from the data if there were actually any victims older than 98.

Using 1980 murder data and 1980 census figures for the distribution of ages in the population, murder rates per 100,000 population were calculated for four age groups: birth to 14, 15 to 24, 25 to 59, and 60 and over. Table 1 shows that murder rates in Chicago are higher for each age group than are the rates of corresponding populations outside the city.

Table 1
1980 Murder Rates per 100,000 Population
by Victim age and Area of the State

Victim Age	Chicago	Not Chicago
Birth-14	4	1
15-24	45	6
25-59	42	5
60 and over	10	2

Although each of the murder rates is higher in Chicago than in the corresponding age group for the rest of the State, in both areas the 15-24 year olds have the highest murder rate of any of the four age groups. The youngest group has the lowest rate of all four groups, both in and out of the city.

Sex of Victims

The overwhelming majority of Illinois murder victims are male. According to the 1980 census figures, of the almost 11.5 million Illinois residents, just less than half (48%), were male. However, more than three-quarters (78%) of the Illinois murder victims between 1973 and 1982 were male. This figure varied little from year to year, ranging from a low of 73% in 1976 to a high of 81% in 1981. However, outside of Chicago, the proportion of murder victims who are male is lower than in the city. During the 10-year period, an average of 71% of the victims outside Chicago were male, versus an average of 81% of the city victims.

Because there are more males murdered than females, and fewer males in the population, the rate of males murdered per 100,000 population is higher than the female rate. The total Illinois murder rate in 1980 was 10.5 per 100,000 population. For males, however, it was 17.1; for females, only 4.1. These rates differ even more when Chicago and the rest of the State are examined separately (Table 2). In Illinois as a whole in 1980, men had a higher murder rate per 100,000 population than did women. However, women in Chicago had a higher murder rate than did men outside the city. The least victimized group of all was

women outside Chicago.⁸

In Chicago, the difference between the male and female murder rates is much greater than outside of the city. In Chicago, the male rate is about five times that of the female rate, while in the rest of the State, the male rate is only about two and one-half times as great as the female rate. This is because a higher proportion of murder victims outside of Chicago are female (29% versus 19% in the city).

Table 2
1980 Murder Rates per 100,000 population

Sex of Victim	Chicago	% of Victims	Outside of Chicago	% of Victims
Males	49.7	82%	5.8	72%
Females	9.6	18	2.2	28
Total	28.7	100%	4.0	100%

Over the 10-year period, the relative proportion of male to female murder victims varied little. Roughly three quarters of murder victims annually are male. However, this rule does not hold for all age groups of victims. Table 3 compares the overall proportion of male and female murder victims in four age categories in and out of Chicago.

Murder victims aged 14 and under are almost as likely to be female as male. Outside of Chicago they are equally likely. One reason for this is that the circumstances surrounding many child murders (child abuse/beatings) are different from the circumstances surrounding many adult murders (arguments or brawls--see "Circumstances Surrounding the Murders," below). Whereas violent arguments among adults usually involve males, child abuse typically does not vary by the sex of the child.⁹

While Chicago has a slightly higher proportion of females in its population than does the rest of Illinois, the proportion of female murder victims was slightly lower in Chicago in each age group. The largest difference was in the 15 to 24 age group,

⁸Of course, this could vary further by individual jurisdiction. Rates were not calculated for each of the several hundred local jurisdictions in the State.

⁹According to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, of the 148,218 reported cases of child abuse or neglect in Illinois between July 1979 and June 1982, 49% of the victims were female and 49% were male. In the remaining 2% of cases, the sex of the victim was not reported.

Table 3
Sex of Murder Victims, by Age
1973-1982*

	<u>Age of Victim</u>			
	<u>Birth-14</u>	<u>15-24</u>	<u>25-59</u>	<u>60 and Over</u>
<u>Chicago</u>	<u>n=338</u>	<u>n=2,534</u>	<u>n=4,778</u>	<u>n=626</u>
Male	59%	82%	84%	71%
Female	41	18	16	29
<u>Not Chicago</u>	<u>n=164</u>	<u>n=866</u>	<u>n=1,862</u>	<u>n=313</u>
Male	50%	68%	74%	64%
Female	50	32	26	36

*Missing observations = 92 (<1%).

where females comprise 32% of murder victims outside of Chicago, but only 18% in the city. Statewide, female victims aged 60 and above constituted the group with the second highest proportion of female victims. Again, this is probably influenced by the circumstances surrounding the murders of this age group of victims. Also, there are more females than males in the population of this age group. Based on 1980 census figures, 58.6% of the Illinois population aged 60 and above was female. In Chicago, the figure was 59.3%. Thus, it is possible that this imbalance between the number of males and females in the population has some effect on the imbalance in victimization between the sexes in this age group.

Race of Victims

As mentioned above, Chicago reports race data to the SHR using different categories than do the other reporting agencies in the State. For this reason, Chicago race data cannot be aggregated with the data for the rest of the State, and must be analyzed separately. The following chart shows the race categories that afford the closest possible comparison of Chicago and non-Chicago data:

<u>Chicago</u>	<u>Not Chicago</u>
White: includes Hispanics	White (not Hispanic)
Black: includes Hispanics	Black (not Hispanic)
Other: includes Asian/Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaskans.	Other: includes Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaskans.

In Chicago, all Hispanic offenders are coded as either white or black. Outside of Chicago, however, they are coded as "other." All of the following analyses follow this coding scheme.¹⁰

Blacks make up a disproportionate number of all murder victims both in and out of Chicago. According to the 1980 census, blacks made up 40% of Chicago's population. However, between 1973 and 1982, 68% of all murder victims in Chicago were black. Similarly, in 1980, blacks made up 6% of the rest of Illinois' population, but accounted for 37% of murder victims outside of Chicago during the 10-year period.

In Chicago, victim race does not vary by victim sex. Just less than 70% of all male and female victims there are black. Outside of Chicago, however, the sex of the victim seems more closely associated with victim race. Table 4 compares the sex and race of victims in and outside of Chicago.

Outside of Chicago, almost three-quarters of female murder victims are white, versus just over half of male victims. Thus, there seems to be a relationship between victim sex and victim race (i.e. if a murder victim outside of Chicago is female, it is highly likely that she will be white). One explanation for this sex/race relationship is that females outside of Chicago are more likely to be murdered by a family member than are males outside of the city, or males and females in Chicago. (See "Relationship Between Victims and Offenders"). Because whites constitute 94% of the population outside Chicago and because families are usually intra-racial, and since half of all female murder victims outside of Chicago are killed by family members, it is logical that the majority of victims would be white.

Further differences between victim sex and race around the State emerge when the victim age variable is included in the analysis. Table 5 compares the age, race and sex of murder victims in and out of Chicago.

¹⁰ See the Appendix for a complete explanation of the coding of Illinois race data.

Table 4

Race of Murder Victims, by Sex and Area
1973-1982

Chicago	Victim Sex	
	n=6,739 Male	n=1,561 Female
<u>Victim Race</u>		
White	32%	30%
Black	68	69
Other	<1	1
Total	100%	100%
Not Chicago		
	n=2,311	n=960
<u>Victim Race</u>		
White (not Hispanic)	55%	71%
Black (not Hispanic)	41	27
Other	4	2
Total	100%	100%

*Missing observations = 2 (<1%). In Chicago, "White" and "Black" include Hispanics. Outside of Chicago, "Other" includes Hispanics.

There are several interesting findings in Table 5. First, in Chicago, blacks make up the largest proportion of victims in every age group and sex category except for one: female victims 60 and older. Almost two-thirds of these victims were white. For each of the other age groups of female victims in Chicago, whites constituted a maximum of only 28%. In fact, the over-60 age group had the highest proportion of white victims of all the age groups within each sex and place.

Outside of Chicago, the youngest age group has the next highest proportion of white victims after the oldest age group.

Table 5

Age and Race of Victims
1973-1982*

	Victim Age			
	Birth-14	15-24	25-59	60 and Over
<u>Chicago Males</u>	n=199	n=2,086	n=3,392	n=446
White	23%	33%	30%	42%
Black	76	67	69	57
Other	1	<1	1	<1
<u>Chicago Females</u>	n=139	n=448	n=786	n=180
White	17%	24%	28%	62%
Black	81	75	70	38
Other	2	1	1	<1
<u>Not Chicago Males</u>	n=82	n=586	n=1,386	n=200
White (not Hispanic)	72%	46%	54%	76%
Black (not Hispanic)	26	50	41	24
Other	2	4	5	1
<u>Not Chicago Females</u>	n=82	n=280	n=476	n=113
White (not Hispanic)	73%	69%	69%	85%
Black (not Hispanic)	24	28	29	14
Other	2	3	2	1

*Missing observations = 692 (6%). In Chicago, "White" and "Black" include Hispanics. Outside of Chicago, "Other" includes Hispanics.

This is true for both male and female victims. However, in Chicago the youngest victims are the least likely of any age group to be white. In other words, murder victims aged 14 and under in Chicago are more likely to be black than are any other age group of victims there.

In sum, there are several important differences between murder victims of different ages, races and sexes. In Chicago, females make up a lower percentage of murder victims than do females outside of the city. However, the murder rate, per 100,000 population is higher for Chicago females than for either males or females outside of the city.

In general, black males in Chicago aged 15-24, and both black and white males outside of Chicago aged 15-59 are the most common murder victims. Child victims, ages birth to 14, are overwhelmingly black in Chicago, and white outside of the city. An equal proportion of male and female victims in Chicago are black, but outside of the city, female victims are much more likely to be white than are male victims. Also, older victims, aged 60 and above, are more likely to be white if they are female, or live outside of Chicago.

OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

The offender information in the VLM file refers to the primary suspect(s) (when known) in each murder, according to the police investigation. These data represent descriptive characteristics of the murder suspects, but do not necessarily refer to people later tried and/or convicted of murder in Illinois. If no specific person is identified as the offender but witnesses provide some description (for example, that the offender was a white male) then this information should appear on the data file. If information about more than one offender in an incident is known, it is included on the VLM file beginning in 1976.

The VLM file contains very little offender information for 1973 (see footnote 3). In 1974 and 1975, there is offender information for every Illinois jurisdiction except Chicago. Beginning in 1976, there is offender information for the entire State. Between 1976 and 1982, information about the primary suspect(s) is present in almost three-quarters of the cases. During that time, an average of 17% of murders annually in Chicago where some offender information was known, involved multiple offenders. Outside of Chicago the figure was 10%, for a statewide total of 15%.¹¹

Age of Offenders

The distribution of known offender ages in murders attributed to a single offender (Figure 3) resembles the pattern of victim ages seen earlier in Figure 2 (page 5).¹² The number is low until the teen years, then increases very sharply until the mid-20s then declines steadily to about age 90. This pattern is true for both male and female offenders, although the female series is much lower in overall numbers.

Young people (15-24) account for more murders of the elderly, children, and other young people than any other age group of offenders. This was true both in and outside Chicago. Every age group of victims, except for the 25-59 year olds, are more often killed by offenders aged 15-24 than by any other age offenders. The 25-59 year old victims are most often killed by other 25-59 year olds.

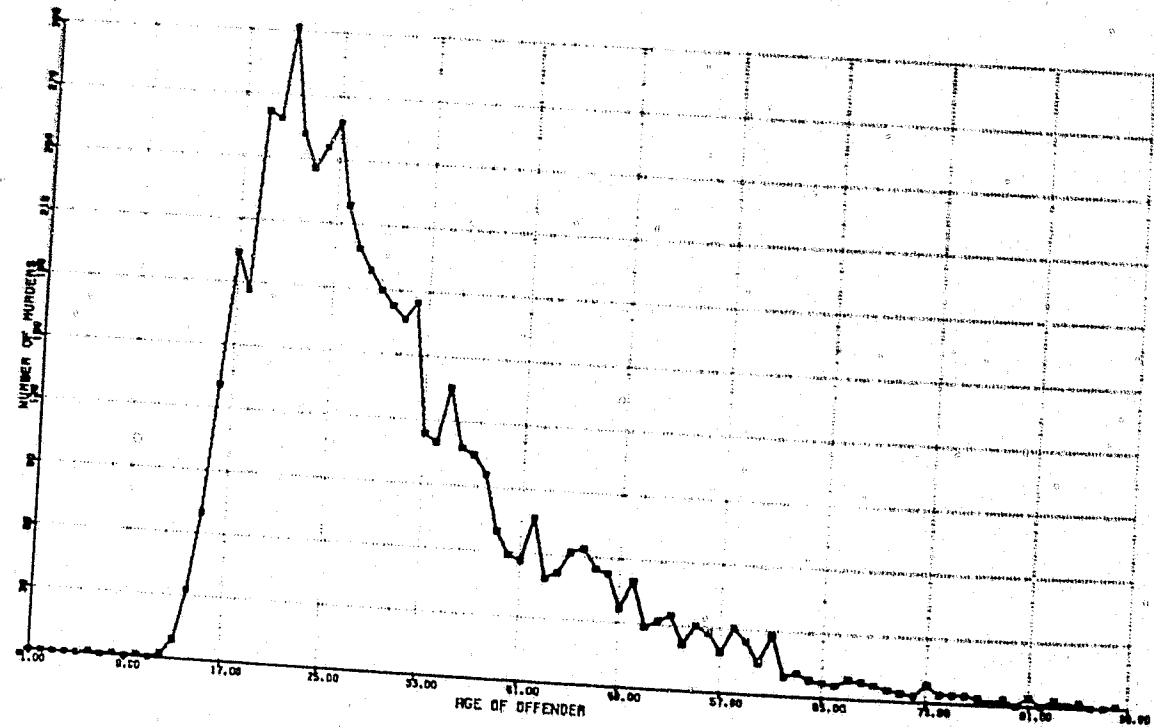
¹¹ Because offender information is unknown in more than 25% of the murders since 1976, it is likely that multiple offenders were involved in a number of these cases as well.

¹² Because of the recoding of multiple offender information necessary to create a victim-level file, individual ages of offenders in multiple offender killings are unavailable, and thus excluded from Figure 3. There were 781 murders between 1974 and 1982 where police identified that the crime was committed by multiple offenders of different ages. Murders by multiple offenders of the same age are included, as one victim each, in Figure 3.

Figure 3

MURDERS ATTRIBUTED TO A SINGLE OFFENDER, BY OFFENDER AGE

SOURCE: ILLINOIS VICTIM-LEVEL MURDER FILE.
INCLUDES CHICAGO DATA FOR 1976-1982 AND OUTSIDE
OF CHICAGO DATA FROM 1974-1982. TOTAL N=5500.



About one-fourth (24%) of all murders where offender information is known were attributed to offenders aged 20-24. Another fifth (20%) of the murders were attributed to offenders aged 15-19. Known male offenders tended to be younger than known female offenders. While 20% of the murders committed by male offenders were by 15-19 year olds, only 9% of murders by females fell in this category.

On the other hand, 60% of murders by females were committed by 25-59 year olds, versus only 51% of murders by males. These findings are consistent with other studies of female murderers (Blum and Fisher, 1978; Rafter and Stanko, 1982) that found female offenders to be slightly older than male offenders. This fact is related to the differences in the circumstances surrounding murders by males and females (see page 34), and is discussed further below.

Sex of Offenders

The vast majority of murder victims between 1973 and 1982 were male. The same was true of the known offenders. Statewide, 85% of the victims were killed by males, and 13% were killed by females. In 2% of the cases, there were multiple offenders, at least one of whom was male, and at least one female. This was true both for Chicago and for the rest of the State.

Because the majority of Illinois murder victims and offenders are male, it seems logical to conclude that murder is usually intra-sexual. Table 6 shows the proportion of all murders between 1973 and 1982, by sex of the victims and known offenders. Both in and out of Chicago, male offenders murdered male victims the greatest percentage of the time. The next largest group was females murdered by males.

Table 6

**Illinois Murders
by Sex of the Victims and Known Offenders**

Offender Sex	1976-1982 Victims: Chicago n=4,159		1974-1982 Victims: Not Chicago n=2,168	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Male	70%	16%	57%	28%
Female	10	2	11	2
Mult. Offenders, Different Sexes	2	<1	1	<1
Total	81%	19%	69%	30%

*Totals do not add to 100 due to rounding. Missing observations = 2,365 (27%).

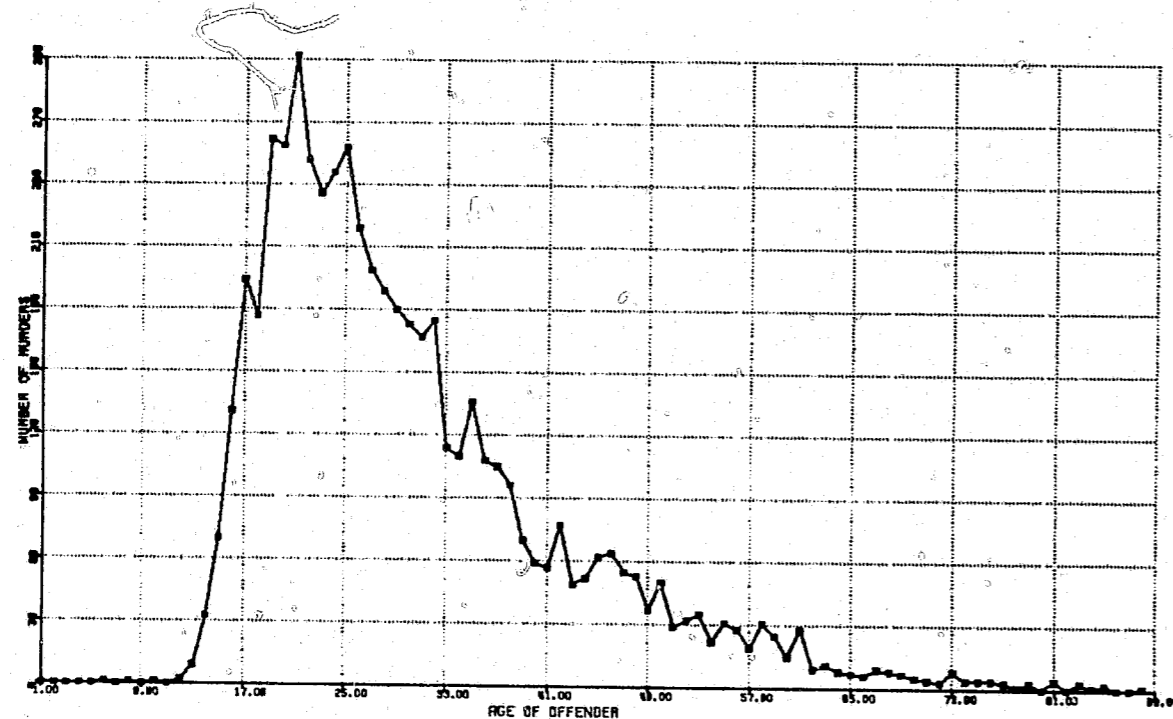
Outside Chicago, females murdered by males made up a greater proportion of all murder victims than did females killed by males in Chicago. Conversely, the proportion of all victims killed by female offenders was the same Statewide.

Throughout the State, the likelihood of a male or female being the offender was different for each age group of victims. Table 7 shows the proportion of male and female offenders by victim age. Murders of children ages 14 and under were more

Figure 3

MURDERS ATTRIBUTED TO A SINGLE OFFENDER, BY OFFENDER AGE

SOURCE: ILLINOIS VICTIM-LEVEL MURDER FILE.
INCLUDES CHICAGO DATA FOR 1976-1982 AND OUTSIDE
OF CHICAGO DATA FROM 1974-1982. TOTAL N=5500.



About one-fourth (24%) of all murders where offender information is known were attributed to offenders aged 20-24. Another fifth (20%) of the murders were attributed to offenders aged 15-19. Known male offenders tended to be younger than known female offenders. While 20% of the murders committed by male offenders were by 15-19 year olds, only 9% of murders by females fell in this category.

On the other hand, 60% of murders by females were committed by 25-59 year olds, versus only 51% of murders by males. These findings are consistent with other studies of female murderers (Blum and Fisher, 1978; Rafter and Stanko, 1982) that found female offenders to be slightly older than male offenders. This fact is related to the differences in the circumstances surrounding murders by males and females (see page 34), and is discussed further below.

Sex of Offenders

The vast majority of murder victims between 1973 and 1982 were male. The same was true of the known offenders. Statewide, 85% of the victims were killed by males, and 13% were killed by females. In 2% of the cases, there were multiple offenders, at least one of whom was male, and at least one female. This was true both for Chicago and for the rest of the State.

Because the majority of Illinois murder victims and offenders are male, it seems logical to conclude that murder is usually intra-sexual. Table 6 shows the proportion of all murders between 1973 and 1982, by sex of the victims and known offenders. Both in and out of Chicago, male offenders murdered male victims the greatest percentage of the time. The next largest group was females murdered by males.

Table 6

**Illinois Murders
by Sex of the Victims and Known Offenders**

Offender Sex	1976-1982 Victims: Chicago n=4,159		1974-1982 Victims: Not Chicago n=2,168	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Male	70%	16%	57%	28%
Female	10	2	11	2
Mult. Offenders, Different Sexes	2	<1	1	<1
Total	81%	19%	69%	30%

*Totals do not add to 100 due to rounding. Missing observations = 2,365 (27%).

Outside Chicago, females murdered by males made up a greater proportion of all murder victims than did females killed by males in Chicago. Conversely, the proportion of all victims killed by female offenders was the same Statewide.

Throughout the State, the likelihood of a male or female being the offender was different for each age group of victims. Table 7 shows the proportion of male and female offenders by victim age. Murders of children ages 14 and under were more

likely to be attributed to female offenders than were murders of teens or adults. Recall that it is in this age category that the victims are equally likely to be female, because child abuse is performed regardless of the sex of the child. In addition, because the degree of force necessary to kill a child is relatively low, a beating, performed by either a male or female offender, can easily escalate into a murder. Statewide, females were least likely to be offenders in murders of victims aged 15-24.

Table 7
Proportion of Known Male and Female Offenders
by Age of the Victim
Chicago, 1976-1982 and Not Chicago, 1974-1982

Offender Sex	Victim Age			
	n=338 Birth-14	n=1,920 15-24	n=3,586 25-59	n=439 60 and Over
Male	66%	93%	84%	80%
Female	31	6	14	15
Mult. Offenders, Different Sexes	3	1	2	5

*Missing observations = 2,409 (28%).

Race of Offenders

Despite the limitations on statewide comparisons of race information, there are legitimate differences visible between murder suspects in and outside Chicago, especially by sex of the offender (Table 8).

Outside of Chicago, there is little relation between race and sex of offenders. About half of all offenders, of either sex, were white. In Chicago, however, sex does seem to be associated with offender race. While more than one-quarter of male offenders there were white, only one-tenth of the female offenders were white.

Murder in Illinois is generally intra-racial. In Chicago, intra-racial murders accounted for 91% of all murders between 1976 and 1982 where the race of the offender was known. Outside of Chicago, 88% of murders between 1973 and 1982 were

intra-racial.¹³ Table 9 shows victim and offender race breakdowns.

Table 8
Number of Victims
by Race and Sex of Known Offenders*

	Males	Females	Mult. Offenders, Different Sexes
<u>Chicago 1976-1982</u>	n=3,554	n=515	n=87
White	27%	10%	13%
Black	72	89	81
Other	<1	1	2
Mult. Offenders, Different Races	<1	<1	5
Total	100%	100%	100%
<u>Not Chicago 1974-1982</u>	n=1,856	n=284	n=26
White (not Hispanic)	52%	48%	50%
Black (not Hispanic)	42	50	50
Other	6	2	0
Mult. Offenders, Different Races	<1	<1	0
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Missing observations = 2,370 (27%). N's represent the number of murder victims who were killed by each type of offender, not the number of offenders. In Chicago, "White" and "Black" include Hispanics. Outside Chicago, "Other" includes Hispanics.

¹³These figures were derived by totalling the number of intra-racial murders from each of the three race categories and calculating percentages based on the total number of murders.

Both in and outside Chicago, in cases where offender information is known, black victims were almost always killed by black offenders. White victims were usually killed by white offenders, but not to the degree that blacks were killed by blacks. These findings were especially true for Chicago victims.

Table 9

Victim Race by Known Offender Races*

Victim Race: Chicago, 1976-1982

Offender Race	White n=1,242	Black n=2,884	Other n=30
White	76%	2%	23%
Black	21	98	33
Other	1	<1	43
Mult. Offenders, Different Races	2	<1	0

Victim Race: Not Chicago, 1974-1982

Offender Race	White (not Hispanic) n=1,255	Black (not Hispanic) n=810	Other n=101
White (not Hispanic)	85%	4%	15%
Black (not Hispanic)	12	96	10
Other	3	<1	75
Mult. Offenders, Different Races	<1	0	0

*Missing observations = 2,370 (27%). In Chicago, "White" and "Black" include Hispanics. Outside Chicago, "Other" includes Hispanics.

WEAPONS USED IN THE MURDERS

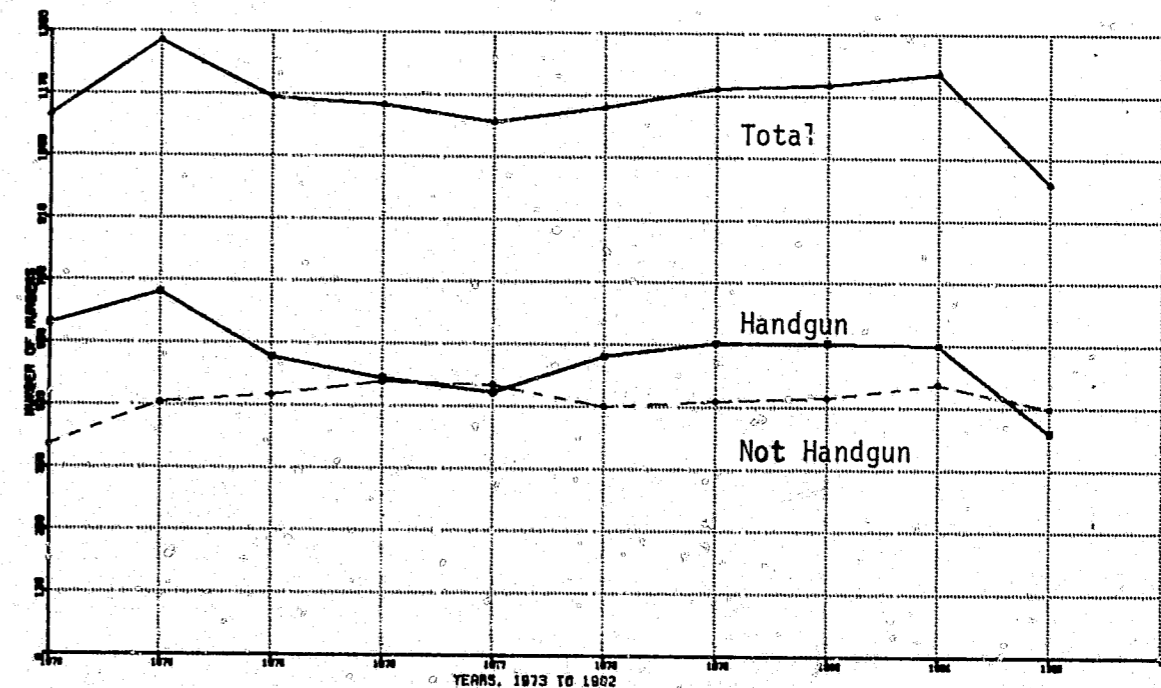
The most common murder weapon used in the United States is a firearm.¹⁴ The same is true for Illinois. Between 1973 and 1982, 64% of Illinois murders were committed with a firearm, usually a handgun. The proportion of firearm murders to total murders was the same outside Chicago as in the city. During the 10-year period, handguns accounted for between 61% (1973) and 47% (1982) of all Illinois murders. Figure 4 shows the total number of murders, broken down into handgun and not-handgun murders. The pattern over time of the number of handgun murders follows the pattern of total murders almost exactly.

Figure 4

ILLINOIS MURDERS, BY WEAPON, 1973-1982

HANDGUN MURDERS - □
NOT HANDGUN MURDERS - ○
TOTAL MURDERS - ▲

SOURCE: ILLINOIS VICTIM-LEVEL MURDER FILE.



The VLM file allows for 20 specific categories of weapon codes. For the purposes of this analysis the weapon types have

¹⁴See Crime in the U.S., 1973-1981. Handguns accounted for an average of 50% of all murders nationally during these years.

been combined into four groups: (1) firearm (all types); (2) knife (includes all cutting or stabbing instruments); (3) personal force (includes beatings with blunt object, or with hands and feet, drowning, pushed from window, and strangulation); (4) other (includes poison, arson, drugs, asphyxiation, and explosives). Table 10 shows the types of murder weapons used in the more than 11,500 Illinois murders between 1973 and 1982.

Table 10
Murder Weapons, Total Illinois, 1973-1982
n=11,573

Firearm	64%
Handgun	(54%)
Long gun	(8)
Other/Unknown	(2)
Knife	19
Personal Force	13
Other	3

The distribution of weapon use in murders was generally the same in and outside Chicago. Although firearms accounted for about the same proportion of murders throughout the State, the type of firearm used in Chicago and in the rest of the State differed. Specifically, the proportion of murders committed with long guns (rifles and shotguns) was higher outside of Chicago than in the city. The opposite is true for the proportion of murders committed with handguns.

In Chicago, only 9% of all firearm murders were committed with long guns. Outside of Chicago, however, the figure was 19%. One of the factors influencing this difference may be that there is a higher rate of ownership of long guns outside of Chicago than in the city. In 1976 and 1977 surveys of Illinois residents, Bordua et al. (1978) found that about 5% of Chicago residents admitted owning at least one long gun. In contrast, outside of Chicago, about 22% admitted owning at least one long gun. Thus, outside of Chicago, there are proportionately more long guns available to be used as murder weapons than in Chicago. However, this "availability" argument does not explain the difference in handgun usage in murders in and outside Chicago. Bordua et al. found that admitted ownership of handguns was slightly higher outside of Chicago (11% versus 8% in the city). Yet handguns account for a higher proportion of Chicago firearm murders than in the rest of the State.

Female Offenders

Based on previous research, one would expect female offenders to use firearms less often than male offenders. Willbanks (1982) notes that,

Although there is a common stereotype of a woman wielding a kitchen knife, the extent of this stereotypes accuracy is unknown. One study of incarcerated female murderers found that women were as likely to use a knife as a gun, but this finding is difficult to interpret given the biased nature of the sample. (1982:170)

In Illinois, this stereotype seems to fit only known female murderers in Chicago. Table 11 compares the weapons used by males statewide, and by females in and outside Chicago.

Table 11
Murder Weapons, by Sex of Known Offenders

	n=5,415 Total Males*	1976-1982 n=515 Chicago Females	1974-1982 n=284 Not Chicago Females
Firearm	65%	39%	66%
Handgun	(55%)	(38%)	(54%)
Long gun	(9)	(1)	(11)
Other/Unknown	(1)	(0)	(1)
Knife	19	44	21
Personal Force	14	9	5
Other	3	8	8

*Data for Chicago males begin in 1976. Data for other males begin in 1974. Missing observations = 2,478 (29%).

Females outside of Chicago use guns and knives in about the same proportions as do male offenders statewide. In contrast, known female offenders in Chicago use knives more than twice as often when committing murder than do males statewide and females outside of Chicago.¹⁵

There are several possible explanations for the difference in the weapons used by female offenders in and outside Chicago. One is that women outside the city have more access to firearms than do Chicago women. If one makes the assumption that most murders are not planned events, but rather impulsive actions, then weapon availability is an important factor. In the course

¹⁵This may vary by jurisdiction. For example, both male and female offenders in East St. Louis use firearms 82% and 76% of the time, respectively. Males there use knives in only 7% of the murders they committed.

of an impulsive assault, the weapon closest at hand becomes the murder weapon. If women outside Chicago have more firearms available to them at any given time, then their proportion of murders committed by shooting will be higher.

Bordua et al. (1978) found that 10% of survey respondents in Chicago reported owning some type of firearm. The ownership level outside of Chicago was estimated at about 25%.¹⁶ Thus, people outside the city have about two and one-half times as much access to firearms than do city residents. However, while this could possibly explain the difference in the proportion of gun usage in murders by females in and outside Chicago, it does not explain the lack of a difference for males.

With regard to the "impulse murder" assumption, an examination of the circumstances leading up to murders committed by females found that the vast majority (90%) of these murders began as fights or arguments. Unfortunately, because of the limitations of the SHR data, it is impossible to tell how many of these murders can rightly be called impulsive. Regardless, the proportion of murders by females that began as arguments is the same in and outside Chicago. Thus, the impulsiveness of the murders, coupled with weapon availability, does not seem to explain the differences in weapon usage between female offenders in Chicago and in the rest of the State.

It also does not explain why handguns are used more often than long guns in murders in areas where long guns are the more prevalent firearm. Possibly the answer lies in how firearms are stored-- for example handguns in a drawer versus long guns in a locked cabinet. In that case, while long guns are more prevalent, handguns may be more accessible. Finally, there is no indication of why knives are used more often by females in Chicago murders than in murders outside the city. It is probably fair to assume that females Statewide have equal access to knives, especially in murders that occur in the home. Perhaps when both knives and guns are available, the gun is the preferred weapon. This inference merits further study.

Another possible explanation besides gun availability is that women outside the city are more accustomed to using firearms, especially long guns, than are Chicago women, while men are equally accustomed Statewide. This hypothesis may have some credence for female offenders, but probably does not hold for males. Further research into the psychology of firearm usage would certainly be enlightening.

¹⁶For females, the ownership levels were 5% in the city and 7% in the rest of the State (although the household ownership levels were higher, and thus likely better indicators of availability). However, due to small sample cell sizes and changes between the 1976 and 1977 surveys, these figures should be interpreted with caution.

Age of Victims

Although the use of particular murder weapons varies little statewide, additional differences appear when comparing victim ages. Table 12 shows the murder weapons used in Illinois as a whole, by age of the victim.

Table 12
Murder Weapon, by age of Victim
1973 - 1982*

Weapon	n=503 Birth-14	n=3,400 15-24	n=6,640 25-59	n=939 60 and Over
Firearm	25%	72%	66%	44%
Knife	14	19	20	20
Personal Force	42	8	11	27
Other	20	2	2	8

*Totals do not add to 100 due to rounding. Missing observations = 91 (<1%).

Firearms are by far the most common weapons used to murder people between the ages of 15 and 59. More than two-thirds of these victims were killed by firearms between 1973 and 1982. However, for the oldest age group, victims aged 60 and over, the proportion of firearm murders dropped to just less than half (44%). Children, ages 14 and under, were least often murdered with a firearm (only one-quarter of these murders). The most common method of murdering children was by a beating or similar activity. These murders accounted for almost half (42%) of all child murders, but only about one-tenth of murders of teens and adults under 60. In the over 60 age group, personal force also accounted for many murders (27%). Although this percentage is still lower than the firearm figure for this category, it nonetheless indicates that the degree of force needed to kill older people is less than for younger adults. Murders by arson, in the category "other," were relatively rare in Illinois, but accounted for 7% of child murders.

Using the broad category of children aged birth to 14 masks some important comparisons in the types of weapons used against children of different ages. When the youngest age group is separated into victims aged birth to 6, and 7 to 14, these differences become apparent. Table 13 shows that the younger the

child, the more prevalent is death by personal force, and that most of the victims that were killed by firearms and knives are the older, and presumably less helpless, children.

Table 13
Weapons Used to Kill Children
1973-1982

<u>Chicago</u>	<u>Birth-6</u> <u>n=198</u>	<u>7-14</u> <u>n=140</u>
Weapon		
Gun	9%	54%
Knife	8	15
Personal Force	65	21
Other	18	9
<u>Not Chicago</u>	<u>n=105</u>	<u>n=60</u>
Weapon		
Gun	13%	28%
Knife	17	22
Personal Force	38	20
Other	31	30

In Chicago, a surprising 54% of the older child victims were killed with firearms, and another 15% with knives. Less than 25% were beaten to death. The youngest Chicago victims, however, were killed by guns or knives less than 20% of the time. Outside the city, the differences between the age groups is not as severe. Older children were killed with guns or knives only 50% of the time. The younger children were killed by these weapons in 30% of the cases. While guns and knives were used most often on older children, especially in Chicago, younger children outside of the city were more likely to be killed in this manner than young Chicago victims.

If the assumption is made that most murders are not planned in advance, then Tables 12 and 13 shed some interesting light on

the degree of force necessary for a situation to become a murder. For instance, it is logical that child beating, or related abuse, can easily escalate into murder, as people may overestimate the amount of force sufficient to kill a child. Also, children are unlikely to be able to resist an attack by an adult. Thus, it is reasonable that the offender will not be armed with a weapon (such as a gun or a knife) to perform the child abuse that may lead to murder. Still, 22% (n=66, the combined N of Chicago and not Chicago) of murders of young children in Illinois from 1973 to 1982 were committed with a gun or a knife.

Murder weapons used on adults, by the same token, largely reflect the degree of force necessary to stop an older, presumably larger, person. Young and middle-aged adults are most often killed with the most lethal weapons: guns and, to a lesser extent, knives. These weapons are most likely to overcome, or prevent, physical or other resistance from the victim. Guns and knives are used less often to murder elderly victims presumably because such victims do not have as much physical strength to resist as do younger adults. Thus, beatings are used three times more often to murder older than younger adults.

As with children, where the younger the child the lower the degree of force necessary to cause death, with older adult victims, the same is true. Table 14 shows the weapons used statewide to murder victims aged 60 to 70, and ages 71 and older.

Table 14
Weapons Used to Kill Older Adults
1973-1982

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Victim Age</u>	
	<u>n=574</u> <u>60 - 70</u>	<u>n=365</u> <u>71 and Over</u>
Gun	55%	27%
Knife	19	22
Personal Force	22	36
Other	4	15

Both in Chicago and in the rest of the State, firearms were used to kill more than half of the victims in the 60 to 70 age group. Murders by personal force made up less than one-quarter of the murders in this age group. Conversely, guns were used less frequently to murder the more elderly victims, and personal force was used in a greater proportion of murders of victims 71 and older than in murders of victims 60 to 70.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VICTIM AND OFFENDER

The VLM data provide descriptions of the victim/offender relationship, when known through police investigation. The 33 possible relationship categories are grouped into three separate types for purposes of analysis: murders among family members (including "common-law" marriages and step-relatives); murders among friends, acquaintances and other people known to each other (includes boyfriends and girlfriends, ex-spouses); and murders among strangers. Table 15 shows the known victim/offender relationships by sex of the victim.

Table 15

**Relationship Between Murder Victims and Known Offenders
by Sex of the Victim
Chicago, 1976-1982 and Not Chicago, 1974-1982***

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Victim Sex</u>	
	n=4,735 Male	n=1,388 Female
Family	16%	42%
Spouse/Common-law	(6%)	(27%)
Other Known	59	46
Boy/Girlfriend, Ex-Spouse	(3%)	(15%)
Stranger	25	12

*Missing observations = 2,569 (30%).

Both sexes are most often killed by people they know. However, female murder victims in Illinois are murdered by relatives more than two and one-half times as often as are male victims. Of the women killed by a relative, 65% of those (376) were killed by their husband or common-law husband. This proportion is fairly similar in and outside Chicago. Conversely, only 39% (292) of the 745 male victims who were killed by relatives were killed by their wives or common-law wives.

Of the 642 female victims in the "other known" category, 32% (203) were murdered by their boyfriend or ex-husband. However, of the 2,808 male victims who were killed by people known to them (not relatives), only 5% (129) were killed by their girlfriend or ex-wife. Thus, female victims killed by intimates (spouses,

common-law spouses, boyfriends or ex-husbands) comprised 42% of all female murder victims where the victim-offender relationship is known, versus only 9% of male victims.

One-quarter of all male victims were killed by strangers. Females were killed by strangers only half as often. However, because of the high number of cases where the offender and the relationship were unknown, it is probably fair to assume that the real proportion of all murders committed by strangers is higher.

There are a few differences between Chicago and the rest of the State in the known murder victim/offender relationships. One-half of murders of females outside Chicago were committed by relatives of the victim, but in Chicago, the proportion of females killed by relatives was only 36%. Also, males killed by relatives made up a higher proportion of murders outside Chicago (24% versus 13% in the city).

Sex of Offenders

Female victims are very often murdered by family members, especially outside Chicago. Likewise, female offenders very often murder family members, especially outside of Chicago (Table 16).

In Chicago, half of all victims who were murdered just by females were related to their killer. Outside of Chicago, the figure was almost two-thirds. Victims of male offenders were less often related to their killers, but outside of Chicago, males murdered family members a greater proportion of the time than did males in Chicago. In murders where there were multiple offenders of both sexes, victims outside of Chicago were twice as likely to be related to one of the offenders than were victims in Chicago.¹⁷

Age of Victims

The relationship between murder victims and offenders in Illinois also differs by age of the victim and area of the State. Table 17 shows these relationships.

Statewide, children are more likely to be killed by family members than is any other age group of victims. In Chicago, half of all child murder victims were killed by relatives, while outside of the city the proportion was almost three-quarters. Additionally, children were least likely to be killed by strangers than were victims in any other age group.

¹⁷Due to the small number of cases with multiple offenders of different sexes, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 16
Relationship Between Murder Victims and Known Offenders
by Sex of the Offender*

Chicago 76-82	Offender Sex		Mult. Offenders Different Sexes n=86
	Male n=3,530	Female n=515	
Relationship			
Family	12%	50%	17%
Other Known	64	46	56
Stranger	24	3	27
<u>Not Chicago 74-82</u>	<u>n=1,570</u>	<u>n=276</u>	<u>n=23</u>
Family	27%	62%	35%
Other Known	49	34	43
Stranger	24	4	22

*Missing observations = 2,692 (31%). In Chicago, missing observations account for less than 4% per column. Outside Chicago, 16% of male offender, 6% of female offender, and 11% of multiple offenders observations are missing.

Outside Chicago, victims aged 60 and older were killed by relatives approximately half of the time. In Chicago, however, this age group was victimized by relatives in less than one-fifth of the murders. This group had the highest proportion of stranger murders (one-third) of any age group, both in and outside Chicago. As will be seen in the next section, this group also had the highest proportion of murders committed during the course of a felony.

Table 17
Relationship Between Murder Victims and Known Offenders
by Age of the Victim*

Relationship	Victim Age			
	Birth-14 n=217	15-24 n=1,369	25-59 n=2,368	60 and Over n=267
Chicago 76-82				
Family	49%	9%	19%	17%
Other Known	39	68	60	51
Stranger	12	23	22	33
Not Chicago 76-82	n=115	n=496	n=1,107	n=143
Family	71%	19%	32%	49%
Other Known	23	55	48	32
Stranger	6	25	20	19

*Missing observations = 2,610 (30%).

The victims least likely to be murdered by relatives were the 15 to 24 year olds. Both in and outside Chicago, these victims were killed by relatives one-tenth and one-fifth of the time, respectively.

CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE MURDERS

The precipitating event, or the circumstances leading to a murder, are described in three general categories: (1) felony or suspected felony (where the murder was committed in the course of another crime, such as rape, robbery, or arson); (2) arguments or brawls (including alcohol or drug influenced fights; lover's triangles); and (3) other (including institutional, gang related, and some child abuse killings).¹⁸ Table 18 shows the circumstances, where known, surrounding Illinois murders between 1976 and 1982.¹⁹

Table 18
Circumstances Surrounding Illinois Murders
1976-1982
n=6,010

Felony	39%
Argument	57
Other	5

*Totals do not add to 100 due to rounding. Missing observations = 1,990 (25%).

Statewide, murders resulting from an argument or brawl accounted for more than half of all murders where the circumstances were known. Murders committed during the course of a felony accounted for 39% annually. This proportion ranged from

¹⁸Because of descriptive limitations of the circumstance codes available to agencies reporting to the SHR, there may be some overlap between categories. Usually, the police code the most serious offense. For example, a person commits arson after having an argument with the owner of the building, and some residents are killed. The circumstances of this murder offense would be coded as arson. Or after a fight in which someone is killed, the offender, as an afterthought, takes the victim's wallet. In this case, the circumstances would be coded as robbery. However, it is impossible to check the consistency of the coding without a case-by-case audit.

¹⁹Because of coding changes beginning in 1976, it is difficult to compare the circumstances of the earlier years with those of the later years. For example, before 1976, circumstance codes such as "spouse killed spouse" and "parent killed child" were used, along with the regular relationship codes. Such circumstance codes do not provide the information necessary to categorize the murders as either felony, argument or other.

a low of 32% in 1978 to a high of 42% in 1976. However, there seems to be no consistent increasing or decreasing trend in the proportion of murders that are known to have begun as felonies.

There is moderate variation between Chicago and the rest of the State in the circumstances surrounding murders. In Chicago, felonies comprise a higher percentage of all murders where the circumstances are known (41% versus 32% outside of the city). Fights or brawls make up a higher percentage of murders outside Chicago (66% versus 54% in the city). This helps explain the high proportion of murders between relatives outside of Chicago. It is logical that family members will be killed more often as a result of an argument rather than in the course of a felony. Females outside Chicago were killed during the course of a felony in only 32% of the cases, while females in Chicago were killed during the commission of a felony in almost half of the murders (48%).

Age of Victims

The circumstances surrounding murders also varies by the age of the victim. Table 19 shows the circumstances of the murders by age of the victim and by area of the State.

Table 19 includes all of the cases where the circumstances surrounding the murders were unknown. In Chicago, the circumstances of the murders were known in more than 80% of the murders of victims aged 15 and above. However, the circumstances are known only in about 40% of the murders of children. This may be an artifact of the coding scheme of the SHR/VLM file. There is no specific code for "child abuse" murders, so it is likely that many such cases are coded as either "other" or "unknown" circumstances.

Outside Chicago, the percent of murders where the circumstance information is missing was higher for every age group than for the corresponding age group in Chicago. Circumstance information was known in less than 60% of all murders outside of Chicago. Again, the category with the highest number of unknowns was the youngest age group, where more than two-thirds of the cases were missing circumstance information.

Statewide, victims aged 60 and over were more likely to be killed during the commission of a felony (robbery, burglary, etc.) than any other age group. In Chicago, almost two-thirds of the older victims were killed under these circumstances. Outside the city, the proportion was much less (37%), but there was a higher percentage of cases missing circumstance information. Many of those missing cases may be, in fact, felony murders.

Table 19
Circumstances Surrounding Murders
by Age of the Victim, 1976-1982*

	Victim Age			
	Birth-14	15-24	25-59	60 and Over
<u>Chicago</u>	<u>n=241</u>	<u>n=1,782</u>	<u>n=3,234</u>	<u>n=410</u>
Circumstances				
Felony	20%	25%	36%	63%
Argument	8	47	50	19
Other	13	10	1	6
Unknown	59	18	13	12
<u>Not Chicago</u>	<u>n=123</u>	<u>n=628</u>	<u>n=1,305</u>	<u>n=205</u>
Circumstances				
Felony	20%	15%	14%	37%
Argument	6	39	44	13
Other	6	1	1	<1
Unknown	68	45	41	50

* Missing observations = 72 (<1%).

Victims of female offenders were almost always killed during an argument or brawl (or lover's triangle). Victims of male offenders were less often killed under these circumstances, but more often (25% of the time) killed during the course of a felony. Interestingly, victims killed by multiple offenders of different sexes were most often killed during the commission of a felony.

The high proportion of "argument/fight" murders committed by female offenders probably includes what are arguably "self defense" murders. The SHR has circumstance codes for "justifiable homicides," but these are used only in cases where the victim was committing a felony when he/she was killed. Such cases include a police officer killing a bank robber, or a

citizen killing a home invader. Cases where a woman kills her husband while he is beating or otherwise attacking her probably are counted on the SHR as "argument" rather than "justifiable homicide."

Table 20
Circumstances Surrounding Murders
by Sex of Known Offenders, 1976-1982*

Circumstances	Offender Sex		
	n=3,970 <u>Males</u>	n=594 <u>Females</u>	n=90 <u>Mult. Offenders</u> <u>Different Sexes</u>
Felony	25%	6%	64%
Argument	70	89	36
Other	5	5	0

* Missing observations = 3,346 (42%).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has described murders committed in Illinois between 1973 and 1982. The 10 years of victim-level data provided a good overview of the characteristics of murder victims and murder situations. However, due to the limitations of the data set, the findings of this report provide only basic descriptions about murder in Illinois. Indeed, several important questions remain unanswered:

- Why do female offenders outside Chicago use firearms as often as men in their murders, but female offenders in Chicago tend to use knives and guns equally as often? Are women outside the city more accustomed to using firearms?

- Why are 22% of all murder victims ages six and under killed with either guns or knives, when much less force is necessary to kill the child?

- Why do offenders outside Chicago kill family members a higher proportion of the time than do city offenders? Similarly, why do male offenders outside Chicago kill females proportionately more than city males?

- Why are female victims over the age of 60 more likely to be white, both in and outside Chicago, than are victims in any other age group?

While the above questions may be examined in future research, there remains much untapped information on the VLM file database. Further analyses could examine individual jurisdictions other than Chicago; urban/rural differences could be studied; and trends over time in different variables could be compared.

APPENDIX

Beginning in 1980, the FBI asked all agencies that report to the UCR program to begin to report "ethnicity" in addition to race. The agencies were given the choice of reporting in one of two possible formats:

1. Combined Format (Single Variable)

- White, not of Hispanic origin
- Black, not of Hispanic origin
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native

2. Separate Format (Two Variables)

Race

- White
- Black
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native

Ethnicity

- Hispanic origin
- Not of Hispanic origin

Using the combined format, all Hispanics, whether white or black, are combined into one category. The advantage of this format is that it is consistent with the white, black, Hispanic classification of earlier years. This is the preferred format of IDLE.

Using the separate format, there are two pieces of information for every victim and offender: their race, and whether or not they are of Hispanic origin. Chicago is the only agency in Illinois that reports race data in this format.²⁰ Format 2 is the preferred format of the FBI.

Chicago reports to DLE in the separate format, but DLE tallies the data in the combined format only. Since only one field is used with this format, DLE puts the Chicago race data in this field, and ignores the Chicago ethnicity variable. For this reason, Chicago race data since 1980 cannot be aggregated with or compared to race data for the rest of the state, and must be analyzed separately.²¹

²⁰ Chicago reports directly to the FBI as well as to DLE, and chooses to report to both in the FBI's preferred format (race and ethnicity in separate fields).

²¹ According to the Chicago Police Department, race data for earlier years is comparable to the post-1980 data. Before 1980, apparently most Hispanics were coded as white, although there are a few coded as Puerto Rican or Mexican.

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