

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

NIJ

National Institute
of Justice

Research Report

The Nature and Patterns of American Homicide

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by

U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

9796402

About the National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice is a research branch of the U.S. Department of Justice. The Institute's mission is to develop knowledge about crime, its causes and control. Priority is given to policy-relevant research that can yield approaches and information that State and local agencies can use in preventing and reducing crime. The decisions made by criminal justice practitioners and policymakers affect millions of citizens, and crime affects almost all our public institutions and the private sector as well. Targeting resources, assuring their effective allocation, and developing new means of cooperation between the public and private sector are some of the emerging issues in law enforcement and criminal justice that research can help illuminate.

Carrying out the mandate assigned by Congress in the Justice Assistance Act of 1984, the National Institute of Justice:

- Sponsors research and development to improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and related civil justice aspects, with a balanced program of basic and applied research.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of justice improvement programs and identifies programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated.
- Tests and demonstrates new and improved approaches to strengthen the justice system, and recommends actions that can be taken by Federal, State, and local governments and private organizations and individuals to achieve this goal.
- Disseminates information from research, demonstrations, evaluations, and special programs to Federal, State, and local governments, and serves as an international clearinghouse of justice information.
- Trains criminal justice practitioners in research and evaluation findings, and assists practitioners and researchers through fellowships and special seminars.

Authority for administering the Institute and awarding grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements is vested in the NIJ Director. In establishing its research agenda, the Institute is guided by the priorities of the Attorney General and the needs of the criminal justice field. The Institute actively solicits the views of police, courts, and corrections practitioners as well as the private sector to identify the most critical problems and to plan research that can help resolve them. Current priorities are:

- Alleviating jail and prison crowding
- Assisting victims of crime
- Enhancing involvement of community resources and the private sector in controlling crime
- Reducing violent crime and apprehending the career criminal
- Reducing delay and improving the effectiveness of the adjudication process
- Providing better and more cost-effective methods for managing the criminal justice system
- Assessing the impact of probation and parole on subsequent criminal behavior
- Enhancing Federal, State, and local cooperation in crime control

James K. Stewart
Director

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

The Nature and Patterns of American Homicide

Marc Riedel
Southern Illinois University

Margaret A. Zahn
Temple University

Lois Felson Mock
National Institute of Justice
Technical Editor

May 1985

National Institute of Justice
James K. Stewart
Director

This project was supported by Grant Number 79-NI-AX-0092, awarded to Center for the Study of Crime, Southern Illinois University, by the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are extended to our very dedicated staff: Research Associate: Jerry Brown; Research Assistants: Joseph Brita, Katie Jamison, Robert Jones, Lynnae Marty, Victor Metzger, Mike Roling, and Annette Signorio; Programmers: Ira Goldstein, Todd Nickel, and Peter Wang; Secretaries: Cathy Jauch, Mary Joiner, Cynthia Olsen, Annie Smith, Gloria Wolford, and Margaret Bomstein; and Coders: Jo Blair, Cynthia Bowens, Michael Lichtenstein, Celia Feinstein, Patricia Leonard, Lauren Bretz, and Brenda Smith. ["Ashton" coders not listed because of anonymity required by their police department.]

For help in the analysis of tape data, we would like to extend our appreciation to Paul Zolbe and Ken Candell of the Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Harry Rosenberg of the Vital Statistics Division, National Center for Health Statistics.

For help in the collection of city data, we would like to thank the following:

Philadelphia: Morton Solomon, Commissioner of Police; Captain Jerrold Kane and all the detectives in the Homicide Division, Philadelphia Police Department; and Dr. Marvin Aronson, Chief Medical Examiner.

Newark: Charles Zizza, Chief of Police; Arnold Evans, Deputy in Charge of Detectives; Inspector Thomas O'Rielly, Lieutenant Neal Patterson, and all the detectives in the Violent Crimes Unit; Thomas DeMaio, William Zuzzio, and their staffs in the Records Division; and Dr. Thomas Santoro, Helen Accuosti, and the staff of the Essex County Medical Examiner's Office.

Oakland: Roland Prahm, Chief Deputy Coroner; George T. Hart, Chief of Police; Lieutenant Terence Greene of the Homicide Division; and Dan Whyte of the Alameda County Court House.

"Ashton": Because police officials in this city required a code name, we cannot directly thank them, those at the county medical examiner facility, or those at the local university who assisted us, but we trust that they know they were appreciated.

Memphis: E. Winslow Chapman III, Director of Police; Dr. Jerry Francisco, Chief Medical Examiner; and John Jones of the Probation Department.

Dallas: Glen D. King, Chief of Police; Captain Marvin Bullard, Mary Spencer, Ralph Clinnard, and Pauline Ellis, Dallas Police Department; and Charles S. Petty, Chief Medical Examiner, and James Garriott of the Southwest Institute of Forensic Science.

Chicago: Richard Brzeczek, Superintendent of Police; Sergeant Timothy Tidmarsh and Pat Conway of the Crime Analysis Unit; Director Renaldo Cozzi, Mrs. Juanita Tucker, and Mrs. Gloria Johnson of the Records Division; Captain William McGann and Lieutenant Howard Finn of the Identification Section, Chicago Police Department; and Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Robert Stein and Christopher Morris of the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

St. Louis: Chief Medical Examiner Dr. George E. Gantner and Baxter Liesure; and Lieutenant William Kaslick and the staff of the Records Division, St. Louis Police Department.

San Jose: While material from San Jose was not included in this report, we would also like to thank Dr. John Hauser, Chief Medical Examiner for Santa Clara County; Joseph MacNamara, Chief of Police; and E. Hernandez, Deputy Chief.

Abstract

The project on trends and patterns of American homicide analyzed national FBI data for 1968-1978 as well as data from eight selected cities for 1978. Overall, homicides increased to the early 1970s, then decreased, and finally increased again, with the homicide rate for 1978 the second highest in the eleven-year period. Regionally, the Western states differed from the national trend by showing a linear increase in homicide during the period, while the Southern states differed by having significantly higher rates throughout the period.

Changes were also noted in homicide patterns. For example, over the period, the proportion of black homicides dropped by more than ten percent, from a high of 54 percent in 1970 to less than 44 percent in 1978, with a corresponding increase in the proportion of white homicides.

The data were further analyzed by type of homicide, with cases categorized as family homicides, acquaintance homicides, and stranger homicides. Men were dominant as victims and offenders in all three categories, but women were relatively more prevalent in cases of family homicides. Generally, the more remote the relationship between victim and offender, the greater the disparity in their ages. White offenders were somewhat more likely to be found in cases of family homicide; black offenders, in cases of stranger homicide. Stranger homicides were frequently found to be linked with other felonies.

Implications for criminal justice policy and practice were drawn from the findings, as was an agenda for future research. Finally, the project produced an annotated bibliography on homicide consisting of over 350 entries.

The project's detailed technical research report is available on loan from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. The following documents are available in printed form: NATURE AND PATTERNS OF AMERICAN HOMICIDE (the present volume); NATURE AND PATTERNS OF AMERICAN HOMICIDE: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	1
CHAPTER 2. Homicide Incidence and Trends	7
CHAPTER 3. Characteristics of the Homicide Victim	15
CHAPTER 4. Characteristics of the Homicide Offender	31
CHAPTER 5. Homicide Weapons	45
CHAPTER 6. Felony Circumstances Associated with Homicide	53
CHAPTER 7. Homicide Locations	61
CHAPTER 8. Conclusions and Implications	67

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table Number and Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table 1-1. States Classified into Four U.S. Regions	5
Table 1-2. Selected Demographic Characteristics of the Eight U.S. Cities Included in the Study	5
Table 2-1. Incidence of Homicide Victimization in the Nation and Four Regions, 1968-1978	12
Table 2-2. Incidence of Three Types of Homicide in the Nation and Four Regions, 1976-1978	13
Table 2-3. Incidence of Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	14
Table 3-1. Age of Homicide Victims in the Nation, 1968-1978	22
Table 3-2. Sex of Homicide Victims in the Nation, 1968-1978	23
Table 3-3. Race of Homicide Victims in the Nation, 1968-1978	24
Table 3-4. Median Age of Victims in Three Types of Homicide in the Nation, 1978	25
Table 3-5. Sex of Victims in Three Types of Homicide in the Nation, 1978	25
Table 3-6. Race of Victims in Three Types of Homicide in the Nation, 1978	25
Table 3-7. Median Age of Victims in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	26
Table 3-8. Sex of Victims in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	27
Table 3-9. Race of Homicide Victims in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	28
Table 3-10. Victims with Narcotics in System at Time of Death in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	30
Table 4-1. Age of Homicide Offenders in the Nation, 1968-1978	36
Table 4-2. Sex of Homicide Offenders in the Nation, 1968-1978	37
Table 4-3. Race of Homicide Offenders in the Nation, 1968-1978	38

<u>Table Number and Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table 4-4. Median Age of Offenders in Three Types of Homicide, in the Nation, 1978	39
Table 4-5. Sex of Offenders in Three Types of Homicide, in the Nation, 1978	39
Table 4-6. Race of Offenders in Three Types of Homicide, in the Nation, 1978	39
Table 4-7. Median Age of Offenders in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	40
Table 4-8. Sex of Homicide Offenders in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	41
Table 4-9. Race of Homicide Offenders in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	42
Table 5-1. Weapons Used in Homicide in the Nation, 1968-1978	48
Table 5-2. Weapons Used in Three Types of Homicide in the Nation, 1978	49
Table 5-3. Weapons Used in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	50
Table 6-1. Felony-Homicide Associations in the Nation, 1973-1978	56
Table 6-2. Felony Associations in Three Types of Homicide in the Nation, 1978	57
Table 6-3. Felony-Homicide Associations in Eight Cities, 1978	58
Table 6-4. Felony Associations in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	59
Table 7-1. Homicide Locations in Eight Cities, 1978	64
Table 7-2. Homicide Locations in Three Types of Homicide in Eight Cities, 1978	65

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure Number and Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1. Incidence of Homicide Victimization in the Nation and Four Regions, 1968-1978	8
Figure 2. Incidence of Homicide Victimization in Eight Cities, 1978	9

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this project were fourfold:

- 1) To examine trends and patterns of American homicide during an eleven-year period, 1968-1978 (the national and regional data).
- 2) To examine homicide patterns in eight selected U.S. cities in one particular year, 1978 (the city data).
- 3) To compare the two data sets where possible.
- 4) To develop a selected bibliography of homicide research over a twenty-year period, 1960-1979.

The bibliography constitutes a separate document, available from the National Institute of Justice. The other three objectives are met by this Executive Summary and by archival data at the Criminal Justice Archive and Information Network at the University of Michigan.

PRESENT PROJECT AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

After reviewing previous research and examining the possibilities for analyzing the data collected for this project, we elected to focus on certain critical socio-demographic variables (age, sex, and race) and on the relationship between the victim and the offender. The importance of victim-offender relationship had been suggested in earlier studies, but there had been little systematic exploration of factors associated with such relations.

In the present study, victim-offender relations are treated as a classificatory type, with homicides divided into three categories: Family (homicides within the family unit, as when spouse kills spouse or parent kills child); Acquaintance (homicides outside the family but involving individuals known to each other, as in a tavern brawl or dispute between neighbors); Stranger (homicides in which victim and offender have no known previous connection with one another). Throughout the report, "type of homicide" refers to these categories of victim-offender relationship. In some cases, we also present results on homicides in which the victim-offender relationship is unknown.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL HOMICIDE DATA

There are two major sources of data on homicide in the United States.

The first of these is the National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which publishes an annual report of "Mortality Statistics" for the nation, compiled from local medical examiner records on causes of death (including homicide). The second data source is the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, compiled from information submitted by local police departments on serious offenses, including homicide. The FBI publishes these statistics annually, in a report of "Crime in the United States."

The current project relied exclusively on two types of homicide data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports: a) the "Supplementary Homicide Reports" (SHR), monthly reports containing detailed data on victim, offender, and circumstances of the offense, and b) the "Age, Sex, and Race of Arrested Offender Reports" (ASR), monthly reports on three specific characteristics of arrested offenders. The SHR and ASR were selected because they represent the major sources of detailed information, both nationally and regionally, on the demographic characteristics of victim and offender and the circumstances of the offense. In addition, after 1976, the SHR data permitted a detailed classification of victim-offender relationship--or "type of homicide"--a central feature of the project analysis.

According to the Uniform Crime Reports, homicide is defined as the "willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another." This is the definition of homicide adopted for this report, as well.

Prior to 1976, the UCR used a victim-based system in which detailed crime data were reported on the SHR for each homicide victim. The only information collected on arrested offenders was their age, sex, and race, reported on the ASR as a monthly aggregate by type of crime. Thus, before 1976, there was no way of associating specific offenders with specific crimes and victims for purposes of analysis. In 1976, however, the UCR changed to an incident-based system, in which detailed SHR data on the victim, offender, and crime situation was reported for each homicide incident, permitting the victim-offender relationship to be determined. For this reason, project analyses which classify homicides by type of victim-offender relationship have been confined to the period 1976-1978.

In addition, because some homicide incidents involve multiple victims, pre-1976 UCR data (on number of homicide victims) were not comparable to the information (on number of homicide incidents) reported in subsequent years. Therefore, in order to achieve comparability over all eleven years, the 1976-78 incident-based homicides were converted to victim-based occurrences by including SHR data on multiple-victim incidents once for each victim.¹ This conversion also made the national/regional data comparable to the data collected in the cities, which used a victim-based reporting system as well.

From the national and regional data, the following variables were used:

¹ The one exception to the use of victim-based frequencies was in the analyses of offender age, sex, and race by victim-offender relationship (i.e., by "type of homicide").

- 1) Age, sex, and race of the victim.
- 2) Age, sex, and race of the offender.
- 3) Weapon used.
- 4) Associated felony (homicide linked to another crime, such as robbery or rape).
- 5) Victim-offender relationship (1976-78 only).

HOMICIDE IN EIGHT AMERICAN CITIES

The city component of this study was designed to provide an in-depth analysis of various types of homicide. To provide a systematic basis for city selection, we used the following procedure:

The United States was divided into four regions, following the FBI convention (see Table 1-1). Within each region, a city-specific homicide rate for 1968-78 was computed for all cities with a population of 250,000 or more, and these city trend lines were compared with those of the region. In general, the city that most closely followed the regional trend line and the city that diverged the most from it were selected for the study, provided that they had at least 100 homicides for the test year before eliminating police homicides and discrepant cases (those reported by the police department or medical examiner but not by both). The test year was 1978, chosen because it was sufficiently recent to represent the current pattern of homicide, yet distant enough to allow for court processing of most cases. A further proviso was that the selected cities should have a single medical examiner's office and a single police department dealing with city homicide cases. Based on these considerations, the final sample of cities included Philadelphia and Newark in the Northeastern region, Chicago and St. Louis in the North Central region, Memphis and Dallas in the southern region, and Oakland and one other city in the Western region.

As it happened, in the Northeastern region, no city diverged from the trend line; both Philadelphia and Newark, therefore, typify the regional homicide pattern. In the other regions, the first-named city is typical of the regional trend line and the second-named city diverges from it.

Once the cities were selected, we secured permission from the medical examiner and police department in each city to code from their records. One police department, while eventually agreeing to the data collection effort, did insist upon anonymity. That city has accordingly been listed under a fictitious name, "Ashton," throughout the report.

The cities varied in size from 329,000 to over three million. Their rank order by population is shown in Table 1-2. Also included are selected demographic characteristics.

Where possible, the same coders were used in all cities. In all cases, the coders were carefully instructed on how to use the code book so that variables were interpreted and entered in the same manner at each site.

Information was also obtained during informal interviews with medical examiner and police personnel, primarily to help account for differences in records of different jurisdictions. The interviews provided information about how each agency investigated homicide cases; to what extent 1978 was a typical year in terms of homicide; and how and what kinds of staff in the various agencies collected the data that were available in their records.

Of the data collected from police and medical examiner departments in the eight cities, the following variables were selected for discussion in this report:

- 1) Age, sex, and race of the victim.
- 2) Age, sex, and race of the offender.
- 3) Weapon used.
- 4) Associated felony (homicide linked to another crime, such as robbery or rape).
- 5) Alcohol and drug use by victim.
- 6) Location of homicide.

Reports from the police department were used for most of the variables. (Police department data tend to have more information on victim-offender relationships, which are the focus of this report.) Data from medical examiner offices, however, were used for alcohol and drug use of the victim.

Table 1-1. STATES CLASSIFIED INTO FOUR U.S. REGIONS
(FBI Convention)

NORTHEASTERN	NORTH CENTRAL	SOUTHERN	WESTERN
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Florida	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Kentucky	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Louisiana	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Maryland/D.C.	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Mississippi	New Mexico
	Ohio	North Carolina	Oregon
	South Dakota	Oklahoma	Utah
	Wisconsin	South Carolina	Washington
		Tennessee	Wyoming
		Texas	
		Virginia	
		West Virginia	

Table 1-2. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EIGHT U.S. CITIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

CITY	REGION	POPULATION	MEDIAN AGE	PERCENT BLACK
Chicago	NC	3,005,072	31.1 yr.	39.8%
Philadelphia	NE	1,688,210	32.5 yr.	37.8%
Dallas	S	904,078	29.3 yr.	29.4%
"Ashton"	W	---	30.2 yr.	4.9%
Memphis	S	646,356	28.8 yr.	48.0%
St. Louis	NC	453,085	32.8 yr.	53.5%
Oakland	W	339,288	33.4 yr.	46.9%
Newark	NE	329,248	28.8 yr.	54.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Preliminary Census Data.

CHAPTER 2 - HOMICIDE INCIDENCE AND TRENDS

HOMICIDE RATES FOR THE NATION AND THE REGIONS

Figure 1 and Table 2-1 present trends in homicide victimization rates for the nation and the four regions from 1968-1978. As these trend data show, the homicide rate for the U.S. as a whole increased from 6.0 (per 100,000 population) in 1968 to a high of 8.8 in 1974 and 1975. The rate declined to 7.7 in 1976 and then began to rise again, increasing to 8.8 by 1978.

The trend for the North Central region approximated the national pattern, as did the Northeastern region, with the exception of a precipitous drop in 1976, attributable to the failure of New York City to submit complete SHR data to the UCR that year.²

The Southern region followed the national pattern of annual homicide variation, but differed in its overall level, with homicide rates that were consistently higher than the nation as a whole, ranging from 8.0 in 1968 to 11.0 in 1978.

In the Western region, the pattern differed sharply from those in the other regions and in the nation as a whole. There was an almost linear increase in the homicide rate from 5.1 to 9.3 over the eleven-year period.

TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION AND REGIONS

The project identified three major categories or "types of homicide" based on victim-offender relationship: Family Homicide (in which the victim and offender were members of the same family); Acquaintance Homicide (in which they were known to each other but were not family); and Stranger Homicide (in which victim and offender were total strangers). Homicides in which the victim-offender relationship was unknown made up a fourth category.

Table 2-2 presents the incidence of each type of homicide in the nation and four regions for 1976-1978.³ As the table shows, acquaintance homicide was the most frequent type of homicide for all three years (accounting for

² The lack of complete returns from New York City in 1976 affects all Northeastern regional data and--to a smaller extent--all national data for 1976.

³ As noted earlier, victim-offender relationship cannot be determined from SHR data prior to 1976. Therefore, Table 2-2 is restricted to a three-year time period, 1976-1978.

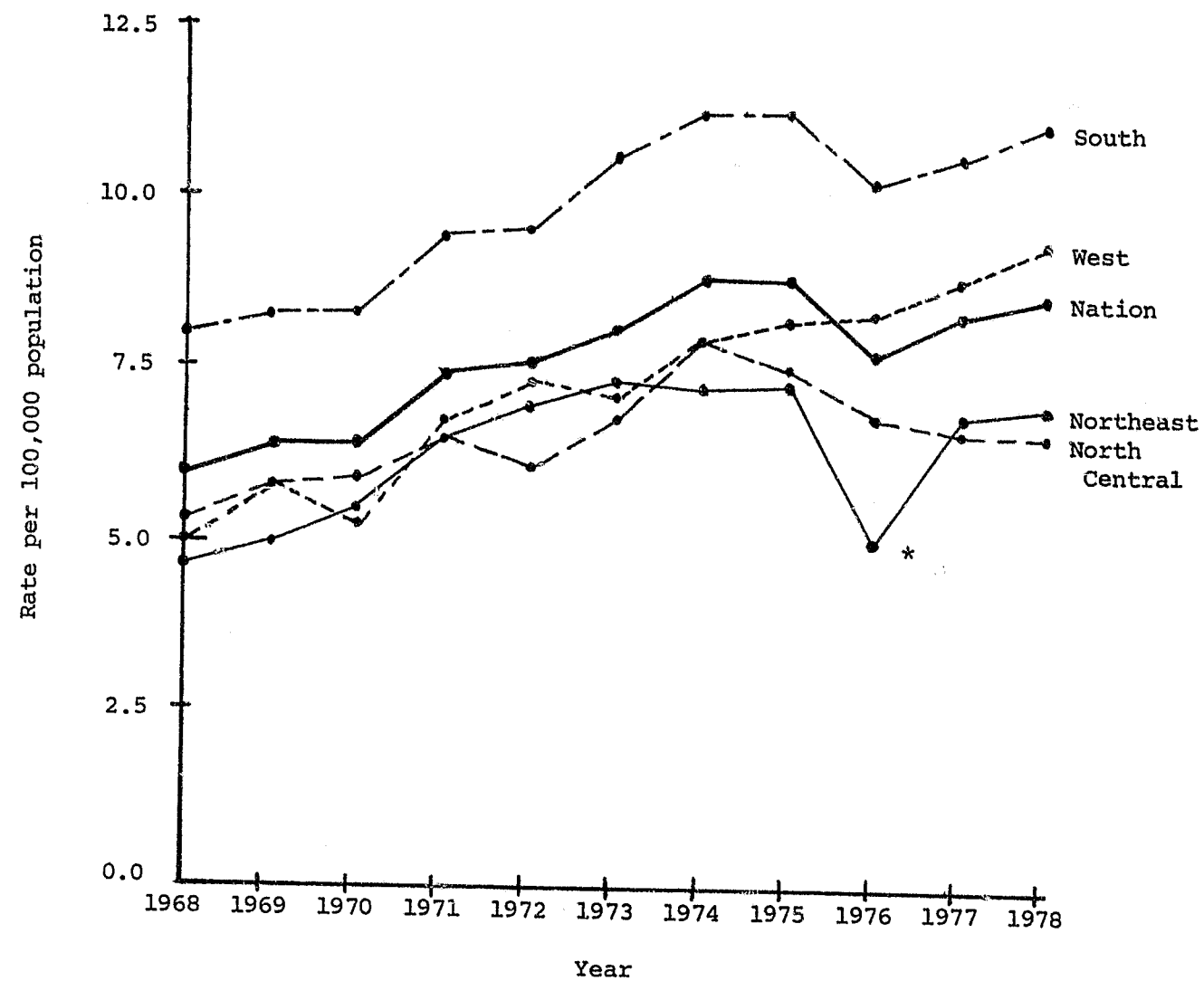


FIGURE 1. INCIDENCE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMIZATION IN THE NATION AND FOUR REGIONS, 1968-1978 (rates per 100,000 population)

Source: (a) Victimization frequencies are from: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.
 (b) Population estimates used in calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, 1968-1978.

Note: * Rate of victimization for the Northeast in 1976 does not include all New York City homicides; New York City did not send complete returns to the FBI that year.

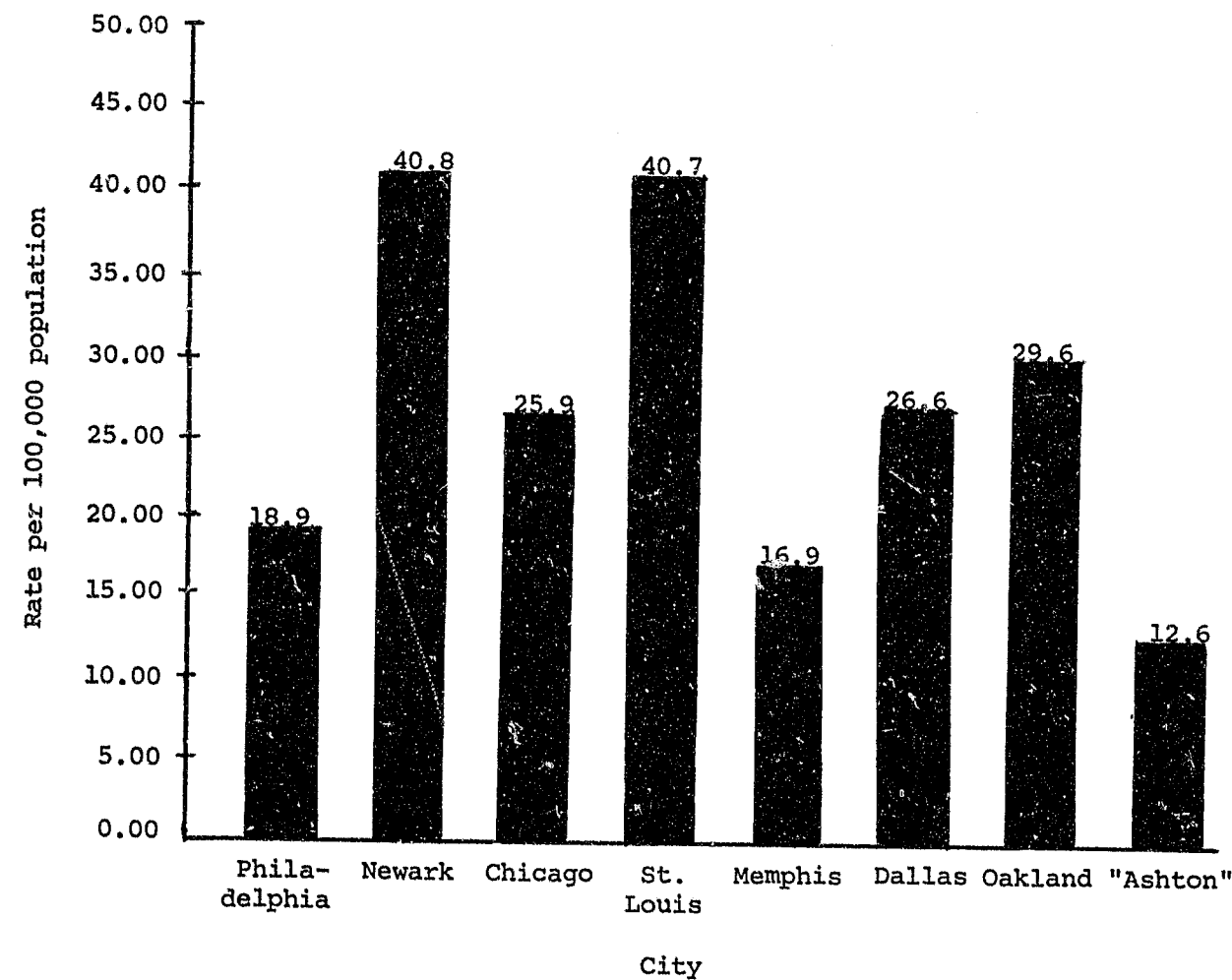


FIGURE 2. RATES OF HOMICIDE VICTIMIZATION IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978 (rates per 100,000 population)

Source: Population estimates used in calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Preliminary Census Data.

from 38-41 percent of all homicides), followed by family homicide (19-21 percent) and stranger homicide (13-14 percent), in that order. Also of note was the large percentage of cases in which the victim-offender relationship was classified as unknown--not only large, but increasing over the three-year period. This trend may reflect an increase in stranger homicides, which are less likely to be cleared by arrest at the time they are reported to the UCR and are thus more likely to report the offender (and his relationship to the victim) as unknown.

TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE CITIES

In classifying homicide data in the cities, we attempted to make the classifications comparable to those used in the SHR. Except for six categories, the types matched completely. (For example: hostage killed by felon; citizen killed by security guard; police officer killed by felon.) After reviewing the circumstances surrounding these cases--a total of 148 in the eight cities--we decided that all of them should be classified as stranger homicides.

Figure 2 shows the rates of homicide victimization in the selected cities in 1978. The rates ranged from a low of 12.6 per 100,000 population in "Ashton" to highs of 40.8 and 40.7 in Newark and St. Louis respectively. As to type of homicide, Table 2-3 indicates that family homicides accounted for between 10 percent and 20 percent of the homicides in the eight cities. The lowest proportion of family homicides occurred in Oakland; the highest occurred in "Ashton," also in the Western region of the country. The two Southern cities also varied widely in their frequencies of family homicides, whereas the Northeastern and North Central cities showed rather similar frequencies. Overall, family homicide was the least frequent case.

As in the national data, acquaintance homicide accounted for the largest proportion of homicides in the eight cities, ranging from nearly one-third in Newark to more than one-half in Memphis.

In each of the eight cities--in contrast to the national data--stranger homicide fell between the other two categories in frequency. As with the other categories, however, there was considerable inter-city variance in the figures for stranger homicide.

Inter-city variations may be attributable to social, economic, and political differences among the cities, differences which were beyond the scope of this study.

CONCLUSIONS

- For the nation, the homicide rate increased from 6.0 per 100,000 in 1968 to 8.8 in 1975, then declined, and increased again to 8.6 in 1978.
- Although the Southern region followed the national pattern of annual homicide rate variations, it differed from the nation and the other three regions in its overall homicide level, having significantly higher rates throughout the eleven-year period.

- The Western region differed from the national trend, showing an almost linear annual increase in homicide rate from 1968 through 1978; the other three regions generally tracked the national homicide rate pattern of an increase, followed by a decline, followed by another increase.
- When national data for 1976-1978 were classified into types of homicide, by victim-offender relationship, the most prevalent type was acquaintance homicide, followed in order by family homicide and stranger homicide, respectively.
- Among the eight cities in the study, there was substantial inter-city variation as to the prevalence of the three types of homicide. In all the cities, however, acquaintance homicide was the most frequent case, followed by stranger homicide, with family homicide the least frequent.
- When national and city findings were compared, national data showed fewer stranger homicides and more unknowns than did the city records. This may reflect the failure of local city police to update their SHR reports in cases where offenders were arrested after the initial reports had been filed--more likely to occur in stranger homicides, where it often takes longer to identify and arrest the offenders.

TABLE 2-1. INCIDENCE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMIZATION IN THE NATION AND FOUR REGIONS, 1968-1978
(rates per 100,000 population)

Year	Nation		Geographic Region							
			Northeast		North Central		South		West	
	Frequency	Rate	Frequency	Rate	Frequency	Rate	Frequency	Rate	Frequency	Rate
1968	11,955	6.0	2,294	4.7	2,938	5.3	5,008	8.0	1,715	5.1
1969	12,918	6.4	2,436	5.0	3,279	5.8	5,224	8.3	1,979	5.8
1970	13,039	6.4	2,663	5.4	3,356	5.9	5,185	8.3	1,835	5.3
1971	15,322	7.4	3,203	6.5	3,701	6.5	6,014	9.4	2,404	6.8
1972	15,832	7.6	3,473	7.0	3,527	6.1	6,190	9.5	2,642	7.3
1973	17,123	8.2	3,623	7.3	3,917	6.8	6,990	10.6	2,593	7.1
1974	18,632	8.8	3,582	7.2	4,557	7.9	7,537	11.2	2,956	7.9
1975	18,642	8.8	3,616	7.3	4,313	7.5	7,619	11.2	3,094	8.2
1976	16,608	7.7	2,467	5.0	3,908	6.8	7,046	10.2	3,187	8.3
1977	18,034	8.3	3,365	6.8	3,847	6.6	7,376	10.6	3,446	8.8
1978	18,715	8.6	3,377	6.9	3,816	6.6	7,798	11.0	3,724	9.3

Sources: (a) Victimization frequencies are from: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.

(b) Population estimates used for calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, 1968-1978.

TABLE 2-2. INCIDENCE OF THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION AND FOUR REGIONS, 1976-1978

Year by Geographic Region	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
<u>Total Nation</u>										
1976	3,440	20.7	6,877	41.4	2,329	14.0	3,962	23.9	16,608	100.0
1977	3,467	19.2	7,288	40.4	2,419	13.4	4,860	27.0	18,034	100.0
1978	3,494	18.7	7,049	37.7	2,534	13.5	5,638	30.1	18,715	100.0
<u>Northeast</u>										
1976	376	15.2	969	39.3	346	14.0	776	31.5	2,467	100.0
1977	446	13.3	1,169	34.7	594	17.7	1,156	34.4	3,365	100.1
1978	501	14.8	1,029	30.5	437	12.9	1,410	41.8	3,377	100.0
<u>North Central</u>										
1976	707	18.1	1,560	39.9	675	17.3	966	24.7	3,908	100.0
1977	742	19.3	1,574	40.9	519	13.5	1,012	26.3	3,847	100.0
1978	745	19.5	1,474	38.6	664	17.4	933	24.5	3,816	100.0
<u>South</u>										
1976	1,780	25.3	3,230	45.8	920	13.1	1,116	15.8	7,046	100.0
1977	1,709	23.2	3,395	46.0	1,006	13.6	1,266	17.2	7,376	100.0
1978	1,689	21.7	3,636	46.6	1,089	14.0	1,384	17.8	7,798	100.1
<u>West</u>										
1976	577	18.1	1,118	35.1	388	12.2	1,104	34.6	3,187	100.0
1977	570	16.5	1,150	33.4	300	8.7	1,426	41.4	3,446	100.0
1978	559	15.0	910	24.4	344	9.2	1,911	51.3	3,724	99.9

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 2-3. INCIDENCE OF THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

City	Homicide Rate (per 100,000 population)	Type of Homicide									
		Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Philadelphia	18.9	46	12.7	138	38.1	106	29.3	72	19.9	362	100.0
Newark	40.8	13	12.7	32	31.4	28	27.5	29	28.4	102	100.0
Chicago	25.9	61	14.4	206	48.5	92	21.6	66	15.5	425	100.0
St. Louis	40.7	27	13.0	92	44.4	37	17.9	51	24.6	207	99.9
Memphis	16.9	16	13.8	68	58.6	23	19.8	9	7.8	116	100.0
Dallas	26.6	44	18.9	95	40.8	63	27.0	31	13.3	233	100.0
Oakland	29.6	11	11.2	51	52.0	14	14.3	22	22.4	98	99.9
"Ashton"	12.6	19	21.1	38	42.2	21	23.3	12	13.3	90	99.9

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

Population estimates used for calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Preliminary Census Data.

CHAPTER 3 - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOMICIDE VICTIM

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS IN THE NATION AND REGIONS

Age of the Victim

Table 3-1 presents homicide victim age trends for the nation from 1968-1978. The 20-29 age group had the highest victimization rate, rising from 11.5 (per 100,000 age-specific population) in 1968 to 16.4 in 1974, then decreasing slightly, and increasing again to 16.0 in 1978.

These trends were similar to those for the total population, for the 30-49 age group (the second most frequently victimized group), and for the 15-19 and 50-64 age groups (which shared third place in frequency of victimization). The oldest (65+) age group (with the second lowest rate of victimization) did not experience the increased victimization in the late 1970's which was found among the more highly victimized groups, while the youngest--and least victimized--age group (0-14) showed a more consistent annual increase in victimization rate over the eleven-year period.

Findings for the four regions paralleled the national data with respect to the relative victimization rates of the various age groups. Three of the four regions paralleled the national pattern of within-group trends over time as well, with the most frequently victimized groups showing an increase in victimization rates from 1968 to the mid-1970's, followed by a brief decline, and then a levelling-off or modest upturn again by 1978. Only the Western region diverged from these trends, showing an almost steady increase in victimization over the eleven-year period for its most highly victimized age groups. Finally, while the Southern region followed the national pattern for relative age group victimization and trends over time, victim-prone age groups in the South had consistently higher victimization rates than did their counterparts in the three other regions and in the nation overall.

Sex of the Victim

Table 3-2 presents the sex distribution of homicide victims for the nation from 1968-1978. As the table indicates, between 75.3 percent and 77.8 percent of all homicide victims during the eleven-year period were males, with no apparent trend in such minor variations as were registered from year to year.

All four regions reflected this predominance of male victimization and lack of consistent change over time, with the Northeastern and North Central regions most similar to the nation as a whole. In the Southern region, the proportion of female victims tended to be slightly lower than in the rest of

the nation, while in the Western region, the proportion of female victims tended to be somewhat higher. However, in no case did females represent less than 20 percent or more than 29 percent of the total homicide victims.

Race of the Victim

Table 3-3 presents national data on the race of homicide victims over the eleven-year period. The findings show a consistent trend in the racial distribution of homicide victimization. In 1968, black homicide victims accounted for 53.1 percent of the total, while white victims accounted for 45.6 percent. By 1978, a significant reversal had taken place with white homicide victims constituting the majority (54.0 percent) and black victims, the minority (43.8 percent). The table indicates that this reversal reflected a consistent annual trend of proportionately decreasing black victimization, with white victims becoming predominant in 1975. Despite this trend, however, blacks continued to be overrepresented as homicide victims, given the relative proportions of whites and blacks in the overall population.

Among the regions, racial differences in homicide victimization partly reflected their different population racial proportions. The North Central and Southern regions had the highest percentages of black victimization, followed closely by the Northeastern region. The Western region had a far lower percentage of black homicide victims, reflecting its smaller black population overall. On the other hand, the Western region had the highest percentage of homicide victims belonging to "other races," reflecting its greater concentration of Orientals, Hispanics, and American Indians.

All four regions reflected the national trend of proportionately decreasing black victimization. However, the Southern and Northeastern regions showed the greatest decreases (10 and 9 percent, respectively) over the eleven-year period, followed by the Western region (with a 7 percent decrease), and the North Central region (with a decrease of 3 percent, which began to occur somewhat later than in the other regions).

Victim Characteristics and Type of Homicide

Tables 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6 examine homicide victim characteristics (age, sex, and race) for each "type of homicide" (victim-offender relationship) for the nation in 1978.

As Table 3-4 indicates, victims of the three types of homicide did not differ greatly in age. However, family homicide victims were slightly older, with a median age of 33 years, as compared with median ages of 30 and 31 for victims of acquaintance and stranger homicide, respectively.

With regard to sex (Table 3-5), a majority of the victims of all three types of homicide were male. However, male victims were much more predominant in acquaintance and stranger homicides, accounting for more than 80 percent of the victimizations in each of these types, while constituting only 57 percent of the family homicide victimizations. Thus, only in homicides between family members did female victimization occur with any frequency and, even in this type, female victims were found in only a minority of the cases (43 percent).

Table 3-6 shows that racially, white victims predominated in both stranger and family homicides, accounting for 64 and 55 percent of the cases, respectively. By contrast, a majority (53 percent) of the acquaintance homicide victims were black.

Regional patterns for the three types of homicide were generally similar to the national data with respect to victim age and sex. However, for victim race, the Western region differed from the general pattern. In the West, a clear majority (70 percent) of acquaintance homicide victims were white, and the predominance of white victimization in stranger and family homicides was much greater than in the nation and other regions, reflecting the lower proportion of blacks in the overall Western population.

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS IN THE CITIES

Age of the Victim

Table 3-7 gives the median ages, by type of homicide, for victims in the eight cities selected for detailed analysis. The data showed that Newark had the oldest median age for homicide victims as a group: 32.9 years. Philadelphia, Oakland, "Ashton," and Memphis had median ages between 30 and 31 years. Dallas, Chicago, and St. Louis had much younger median ages, between 28 and 29 years.

The age patterns were much different, however, when analyzed by type of homicide. Among family homicides, for example, Newark exhibited the youngest median age. The oldest group of the three tended to be victims of stranger homicide. A possible explanation for this distribution is that many stranger homicides involved store owners and clerks, who tended to be older than the general population of victims. In any event, the city data did not appear to support the conclusions drawn from the national data--i.e., that, except in the Northeastern region, the victims of family homicide tended to make up the oldest group of victims.

Sex of the Victim

Table 3-8 shows the sex distribution of homicide victims in the cities in 1978. As the table shows, males greatly outnumbered females as victims of homicide. Generally, 80 percent of the victims were male and 20 percent were female--an even more striking pattern than exhibited by the national data. The proportion of female victims was somewhat higher in Oakland and "Ashton" and somewhat lower in the other six cities.

When the city data were analyzed by type of homicide, the patterns again paralleled those of the national data. That is, while women made up a minority of all homicide victims--including family homicide--nevertheless they were more likely to be killed in a family relationship than otherwise.

Race of the Victim

Since population-base figures were available for cities in terms of race, it proved possible to analyze racial differences by actual race-specific homicide rates, as shown in Table 3-9. Race for purposes of this analysis was

classified into White, Black, and Other categories, with the third category including Hispanic, Native American, and Oriental persons. The cities varied fairly widely in their population distributions, with "Ashton" having the largest proportion of whites and Newark the lowest. The black population generally comprised between 30 percent and 50 percent of the population, with "Ashton" the lowest (4.9 percent black) and Newark the highest (58.2 percent black). The proportion of "other races" also varied, with Memphis and St. Louis having less than one percent of their populations in this category and Oakland, Newark, "Ashton," and Chicago each having over 10 percent.

Table 3-8 shows that, consistent with other literature, blacks and members of "other races" had substantially higher rates of victimization in the eight cities than did whites. In the two Eastern cities, the homicide rate for "other races" exceeded that of blacks by a decided margin.

Despite the high homicide rate exhibited by "other races" in some of the cities, a percentage analysis showed that blacks generally comprised a majority of the homicide victims in the eight cities. The exception was "Ashton," with a black population of less than 5 percent. Indeed, in six of the cities blacks accounted for more than 60 percent of all homicide victims; in three cities, more than 70 percent; and in one city--St. Louis--more than 80 percent.

The data in some cities showed a relationship between type of homicide and race of the victim.

- In Philadelphia, when a white was killed he was most likely to be killed by a stranger; a black was most likely to be killed by an acquaintance or in an encounter where his relationship to the assailant was unknown.

- In Newark, also, whites seemed more likely to be killed by strangers (or in situations where the victim-offender relationship was unknown) and blacks by acquaintances. However, the number of white victims in Newark was extremely small.

- In Oakland, white homicide victims were most likely to be found in situations where their relationship with the assailant was unknown; blacks were more likely to be killed by acquaintances.

- "Ashton" showed a rather different pattern, with white victims about equally distributed between family and stranger homicides, while the largest percentage of black victims was found in family homicides.

- In Memphis, white victims were most frequent in family homicides and black victims were most frequent in acquaintance homicides.

- In Dallas, whites were most often the victims of stranger homicide, while blacks were relatively more frequently the victims of family homicide.

- Chicago followed the same pattern as Dallas, with whites most commonly the victims of stranger homicide and blacks most dominant in cases of family homicide.

- In St. Louis, white victims were relatively more common in cases of stranger homicide and blacks in cases where the victim-offender relationship was unknown.

Drug and Alcohol Status of the Victim

Medical examiner offices in all cities perform some toxicology tests on homicide victims. This information on drug and alcohol status of victims is, as a rule, far more reliable and accurate than that to be found at police departments. Accordingly, the information for this section was drawn from medical examiner records rather than police records.

In all cities the victim was tested for alcohol; in Newark the test was for brain alcohol rather than blood alcohol level, as was the case in the other seven cities. The extensiveness of testing for other drugs varied from city to city. Generally speaking few victims had drugs other than alcohol or narcotics in their systems at the time of death.

The percentage of victims testing positive for alcohol varied significantly from city to city, with a low of 38.4 percent in Philadelphia and a high of 62 percent in Memphis. When alcohol use was analyzed by victim-offender relationship, however, there appeared to be no systematic connection between alcohol use by the victim and his or her relationship to the offender.

Drug use by victims also showed substantial variations by city. While only 6.2 percent of victims in seven of the cities died with narcotics in their systems, the percentage was substantially higher in Oakland (18.5 percent) and Newark (11.8 percent). ("Ashton" was dropped from this analysis because only eight victims in that city were tested for narcotics use.) The two southern cities showed extremely low percentages of homicide victims testing positive for narcotics: 1.7 percent in Dallas and 1.9 percent in Memphis.

Generally speaking, few homicide victims died with drugs in their systems; those who did, tended to be narcotics users rather than users of amphetamines and barbituates.

Table 3-10 shows narcotics use by homicide victims in the eight cities, controlled for type of homicide. In all cases, the figure shows the percentage of victims testing positive for narcotics.

In Philadelphia, Newark, and Chicago, narcotics users were relatively more frequent among the victims of acquaintance homicide and in cases where the victim-offender relationship was unknown. In St. Louis, narcotics users were about equally prevalent in family homicides, acquaintance homicides, and cases where the relationship was unknown. In Oakland, narcotics users were most frequently found as victims of acquaintance homicide, with family homicide second. In none of the five cities which had sufficient numbers of cases for analysis did stranger homicide show large victim frequencies of narcotic use.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of homicide victimization data suggests the following conclusions:

- For the nation and its four regions over the eleven-year period, the highest rate of victimization occurred for the 20-29 age group. In the Western region, there was a linear increase in homicide victimization for this age group from 1968 through 1978. Nationally and in the other three regions, the victimization trend for this group showed an increase until the middle 1970s, a brief decline, and then an increase to 1978. Both in the nation and in the regions, the oldest (65+) and youngest (0-14) age groups had the lowest homicide victimization rates.
- For the nation and the regions, the victims of family homicide tended to be older than the victims of acquaintance or stranger homicide; in the cities, however, the reverse was true.
- The percentage distribution of male and female victims remained fairly constant over the eleven-year period, at approximately 75 percent male and 25 percent female, for the nation and two regions, with female victimization slightly lower in the South and slighter higher in the West.
- In the national, regional, and city data, female victimization was much more prevalent in family homicide than in acquaintance or stranger homicide. However, even in family homicide, male victimization was generally predominant.
- With respect to racial distribution, the percentage of black homicide victims declined over the eleven-year period, while the percentage of white homicide victims increased. However, blacks were still much more likely than whites to become homicide victims, given their smaller population size.
- In the national and most regional data, white victims predominated in family and stranger homicides, while in acquaintance homicides, a majority of the victims were black. In the Western region, however, white victims were predominant in all three types of homicide.
- The city data agreed with the national and regional data with regard to the race of the victim in cases of stranger homicide and acquaintance homicide, but the race of the victim was more evenly divided in cases of family homicide.
- Cities varied significantly with respect to alcohol usage by victims, with the Southern cities having higher percentages of victims dying with alcohol in their systems, and the Northeastern cities and Oakland having lower percentages.

- Cities also varied significantly with respect to narcotics usage by victims, with Oakland and Newark having the highest numbers in this sample and Memphis the lowest. In the cities, few drug users were found among the victims of family homicide or stranger homicide; when a drug user was a victim, he or she was most likely to be the victim of acquaintance homicide.

TABLE 3-1. AGE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978
(rates per 100,000 age-specific population)

Year	Age of Victim															
	0-14		15-19		20-29		30-49		50-64		65+		Age Unknown		Total Victims	
	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate
1968	511	0.9	954	5.3	3,174	11.5	4,770	10.2	1,629	5.7	645	3.4	272	---	11,955	6.0
1969	571	1.0	1,123	6.1	3,537	12.2	5,009	10.8	1,701	5.8	656	3.4	321	---	12,918	6.4
1970	542	0.9	1,096	5.8	3,740	12.5	4,839	10.4	1,800	6.6	715	3.6	307	---	13,039	6.4
1971	669	1.1	1,275	6.6	4,547	14.4	5,700	12.2	1,983	6.6	821	4.1	327	---	15,322	7.4
1972	621	1.1	1,340	6.7	4,814	14.7	5,871	12.5	2,059	6.7	816	3.9	311	---	15,832	7.6
1973	869	1.6	1,476	7.2	5,140	15.3	6,177	13.0	2,219	7.1	996	4.7	246	---	17,123	8.2
1974	816	1.5	1,716	8.3	5,681	16.4	6,597	13.7	2,478	7.9	1,051	4.8	293	---	18,632	8.8
1975	840	1.6	1,604	7.7	5,662	15.8	6,550	13.5	2,480	7.8	1,187	5.3	319	---	18,642	8.8
1976	838	1.6	1,414	6.7	5,148	13.9	5,685	11.6	2,221	6.9	1,085	4.7	217	---	16,608	7.7
1977	920	1.8	1,639	7.8	5,625	15.0	6,158	12.2	2,351	7.3	1,113	4.7	228	---	18,034	8.3
1978	952	1.9	1,618	7.7	6,117	16.0	6,364	12.3	2,316	7.1	1,095	4.6	253	---	18,715	8.6

Sources: (a) FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.
(b) Age-specific population estimates used for calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, 1968-1978.

TABLE 3-1. AGE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978
(rates per 100,000 age-specific population)

Year	Age of Victim														Total Victims	
	0-14		15-19		20-29		30-49		50-64		65+		Age Unknown			
	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate
1968	511	0.9	954	5.3	3,174	11.5	4,770	10.2	1,629	5.7	645	3.4	272	---	11,955	6.0
1969	571	1.0	1,123	6.1	3,537	12.2	5,009	10.8	1,701	5.8	656	3.4	321	---	12,918	6.4
1970	542	0.9	1,096	5.8	3,740	12.5	4,839	10.4	1,800	6.6	715	3.6	307	---	13,039	6.4
1971	669	1.1	1,275	6.6	4,547	14.4	5,700	12.2	1,983	6.6	821	4.1	327	---	15,322	7.4
1972	621	1.1	1,340	6.7	4,814	14.7	5,871	12.5	2,059	6.7	816	3.9	311	---	15,832	7.6
1973	869	1.6	1,476	7.2	5,140	15.3	6,177	13.0	2,219	7.1	996	4.7	246	---	17,123	8.2
1974	816	1.5	1,716	8.3	5,681	16.4	6,597	13.7	2,478	7.9	1,051	4.8	293	---	18,632	8.8
1975	840	1.6	1,604	7.7	5,662	15.8	6,550	13.5	2,480	7.8	1,187	5.3	319	---	18,642	8.8
1976	838	1.6	1,414	6.7	5,148	13.9	5,685	11.6	2,221	6.9	1,085	4.7	217	---	16,608	7.7
1977	920	1.8	1,639	7.8	5,625	15.0	6,158	12.2	2,351	7.3	1,113	4.7	228	---	18,034	8.3
1978	952	1.9	1,618	7.7	6,117	16.0	6,364	12.3	2,316	7.1	1,095	4.6	253	---	18,715	8.6

Sources: (a) FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.
(b) Age-specific population estimates used for calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, 1968-1978.

TABLE 3-2. SEX OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978

Year	Sex of Victim			Total Victims	
	Male	Female	Sex Unknown	Freq.	%
1968	9,138	2,804	13	11,955	100.0
1969	9,881	3,018	19	12,918	100.1
1970	10,034	2,992	13	13,039	100.1
1971	11,845	3,467	10	15,322	100.0
1972	12,312	3,517	3	15,832	100.0
1973	13,122	3,998	3	17,123	100.0
1974	14,282	4,340	10	18,632	100.1
1975	14,178	4,444	20	18,642	100.0
1976	12,532	4,059	17	16,608	100.0
1977	13,580	4,442	12	18,034	100.0
1978	14,252	4,441	22	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 3-3. RACE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978

Year	Race of Victim									
	White		Black		Other Race		Race Unknown		Total Victims	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1968	5,449	45.6	6,351	53.1	120	1.0	35	0.3	11,955	100.0
1969	5,740	44.4	6,984	54.1	158	1.2	36	0.3	12,918	100.0
1970	5,812	44.6	7,065	54.2	130	1.0	32	0.3	13,039	100.1
1971	6,840	44.6	8,238	53.8	207	1.4	37	0.2	15,322	100.0
1972	7,158	45.2	8,422	53.2	238	1.5	14	0.1	15,832	100.0
1973	8,031	46.9	8,863	51.8	212	1.2	17	0.1	17,123	100.0
1974	9,034	48.5	9,266	49.7	306	1.6	26	0.1	18,632	99.9
1975	9,463	50.8	8,831	47.4	298	1.6	50	0.3	18,642	100.1
1976	8,475	51.0	7,732	46.6	345	2.1	56	0.3	16,608	100.0
1977	9,470	52.5	8,176	45.3	358	2.0	30	0.2	18,034	100.0
1978	10,111	54.0	8,201	43.8	352	1.9	51	0.3	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.
 "Other Race" includes American Indians or Alaskan Natives; Asians or Pacific Islanders; and persons of Hispanic origin.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.
 "Other Race" includes American Indians or Alaskan Natives; Asians or Pacific Islanders; and persons of Hispanic origin.

TABLE 3-4. MEDIAN AGE OF VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION, 1978

Median Age	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Number of Victims	Median Age	Number of Victims	Median Age	Number of Victims	Median Age	Number of Victims	Median Age	Number of Victims	Median Age
	3,485	33	6,998	30	2,503	31	5,476	30	18,462	31

TABLE 3-5. SEX OF VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION, 1978

Sex	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	1,982	56.7	5,677	80.5	2,141	84.5	4,452	79.0	14,252	76.2
Female	1,510	43.2	1,366	19.4	388	15.3	1,177	20.9	4,441	23.7
Sex Unknown	2	0.1	6	0.1	5	0.2	9	0.2	22	0.1
Total	3,494	100.0	7,049	100.0	2,534	100.0	5,638	100.1	18,715	100.0

TABLE 3.6. RACE OF VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION, 1978

Race	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
White	1,906	54.6	3,183	45.2	1,631	64.4	3,391	60.2	10,111	54.0
Black	1,525	43.7	3,748	53.2	830	32.8	2,098	37.2	8,201	43.8
Other Race	60	1.7	106	1.5	67	2.6	119	2.1	352	1.9
Race Unknown	3	0.1	12	0.2	6	0.2	30	0.5	51	0.3
Total	3,494	100.1	7,049	100.1	2,534	100.0	5,638	100.0	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1978.
 Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 3-7. MEDIAN AGE OF VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

City	Type of Homicide					
	Family Homicide	Acquaintance Homicide	Stranger Homicide	Type Unknown	Total Homicides	
	<u>Median Age</u>	<u>Median Age</u>	<u>Median Age</u>	<u>Median Age</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Median Age</u>
Phila.	37.0	28.8	31.8	30.9	362	30.3
Newark	23.0	32.5	37.2	27.5	102	32.9
Chicago	25.4	28.6	30.2	31.0	98	28.6
St. Louis	35.2	26.2	36.8	30.5	90	28.6
Memphis	31.5	28.5	32.0	30.0	116	30.6
Dallas	25.5	29.0	25.9	33.5	223	28.3
Oakland	25.0	31.8	30.5	29.0	423	30.0
"Ashton"	32.0	29.5	36.2	28.5	207	30.2

TABLE 3-8. SEX OF VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Victim Sex by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Phila.										
Male	26	56.5	114	82.6	90	84.9	62	86.1	292	80.7
Female	20	43.5	24	17.4	16	15.1	10	13.9	70	19.3
Total	46	100.0	138	100.0	106	100.0	72	100.0	362	100.0
Newark										
Male	10	76.9	24	75.0	25	89.3	26	89.7	85	83.3
Female	3	23.1	8	25.0	3	10.7	3	10.3	17	16.7
Total	13	100.0	32	100.0	28	100.0	29	100.0	102	100.0
Chicago										
Male	43	70.5	179	86.9	82	89.1	52	81.3	356	84.2
Female	18	29.5	27	13.1	10	10.9	12	18.8	67	15.8
Total	61	100.0	206	100.0	92	100.0	64	100.1	423	100.0
St. Louis										
Male	20	74.1	83	90.2	32	86.5	45	88.2	180	87.0
Female	7	25.9	9	9.8	5	13.5	6	11.8	27	13.0
Total	27	100.0	92	100.0	37	100.0	51	100.0	207	100.0
Memphis										
Male	12	75.0	57	83.8	19	82.6	6	67.7	94	81.0
Female	4	25.0	11	16.2	4	17.4	3	33.3	22	19.0
Total	16	100.0	68	100.0	23	100.0	9	100.0	116	100.0
Dallas										
Male	32	72.7	78	82.1	58	92.1	30	96.8	198	85.0
Female	12	27.3	17	17.9	5	7.9	1	3.2	35	15.0
Total	44	100.0	95	100.0	63	100.0	31	100.0	233	100.0
Oakland										
Male	6	54.5	44	86.3	13	92.9	13	59.1	76	77.6
Female	5	45.5	7	13.7	1	7.1	9	40.9	22	22.4
Total	11	100.0	51	100.0	14	100.0	22	100.0	98	100.0
"Ashton"										
Male	12	63.2	28	73.7	20	95.2	11	91.7	71	78.9
Female	7	36.8	10	26.3	1	4.8	1	8.3	19	21.1
Total	19	100.0	38	100.0	21	100.0	12	100.0	90	100.0
Total Cities										
Male	161	67.9	607	84.3	339	88.3	245	84.5	1,352	82.9
Female	76	32.1	113	15.7	45	11.7	45	15.5	279	17.1
Total	237	100.0	720	100.0	384	100.0	290	100.0	1,631	100.0

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 3-9. RACE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Victim Race by City	Victimization Rate (per 100,000 race- specific population)	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
		Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
		Rate	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Philadelphia											
White	7.8	12	26.1	22	15.9	29	27.4	14	19.4	77	21.3
Black	38.9	30	65.2	103	74.6	64	60.4	52	72.2	249	68.8
Other	54.3	4	8.7	13	9.4	13	12.3	6	8.3	36	9.9
Total	--	46	12.7	138	38.1	106	29.3	72	19.9	362	100.0
Newark											
White	9.9	1	7.7	0	0	4	14.3	5	17.2	10	9.8
Black	39.6	10	76.9	26	81.3	20	71.4	20	69.0	76	74.5
Other	44.3	2	15.4	6	18.8	4	14.3	4	13.8	16	15.7
Total	--	13	12.7	32	31.4	28	27.5	29	28.4	102	100.0
Chicago											
White	5.0	4	6.6	19	9.2	33	35.9	19	29.7	75	17.7
Black	22.5	52	85.2	154	74.8	46	50.0	29	45.3	281	66.4
Other	21.1	5	8.2	33	16.0	13	14.1	16	25.0	67	15.8
Total	--	61	14.4	206	48.7	92	21.7	64	15.1	423	99.9
St. Louis											
White	14.4	4	14.8	14	15.2	13	35.1	4	7.8	35	16.9
Black	83.3	23	85.2	78	84.8	24	64.9	47	92.2	172	83.1
Other	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0
Total	--	27	13.0	92	44.4	37	17.9	51	24.6	207	100.0
Memphis											
White	7.8	8	50.0	7	10.3	8	34.8	3	33.3	26	22.4
Black	29.2	8	50.0	61	89.7	15	65.2	6	66.7	90	77.6
Other	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0
Total	--	16	13.8	68	58.6	23	19.8	9	7.8	116	100.0

Other	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0
Total	--	16	13.8	68	58.6	23	19.8	9	7.8	116	100.0

TABLE 3-9. RACE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978 (cont'd)

Victim Race by City	Victimization Rate (per 100,000 race- specific population)	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
		Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
		Rate	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Dallas											
White	12.4	8	18.2	25	26.3	28	44.4	8	25.8	69	29.6
Black	46.7	30	68.2	57	60.0	24	38.1	13	41.9	124	53.2
Other	48.1	6	13.6	13	13.7	11	17.5	10	32.3	40	17.2
Total	--	44	18.9	95	40.8	63	27.0	31	13.3	233	100.0
Oakland											
White	19.3	2	18.2	6	11.8	4	28.6	13	59.1	25	25.5
Black	38.9	8	72.7	40	78.4	9	64.3	5	22.7	62	63.3
Other	21.8	1	9.1	5	9.8	1	7.1	4	18.2	11	11.2
Total	--	11	11.2	51	52.0	14	14.3	22	22.4	98	100.0
"Ashton"											
White	6.7	11	57.9	19	50.0	12	57.1	1	8.3	43	47.8
Black	45.1	6	31.6	8	21.1	2	9.5	1	8.3	17	18.9
Other	35.2	2	10.5	11	28.9	7	33.3	10	83.3	30	33.3
Total	--	19	21.1	38	42.2	21	23.3	12	13.3	90	100.0
Total Cities											
White	--	50	21.1	112	15.6	131	34.1	67	23.1	360	22.0
Black	--	167	70.5	527	73.2	204	53.1	173	59.7	1,071	65.7
Other	--	20	8.4	81	11.2	49	12.8	50	17.2	200	12.3
Total	--	237	100.0	720	100.0	384	100.0	290	100.0	1,631	100.0

Source: Population estimates used in calculating rates are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Preliminary Census Data.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 3-10. VICTIMS WITH NARCOTICS IN SYSTEM AT TIME OF DEATH IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

City	Type of Homicide								Total Narcotics Homicides	% of all Homicides
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Phila.	0	0.0	16	13.3	1	1.1	6	9.6	23	7.2
Newark	0	0.0	3	9.7	0	0.0	6	21.4	9	9.3
Chicago	1	1.6	14	6.9	3	3.4	5	7.9	24	5.5
St. Louis	1	3.8	4	4.4	0	0.0	2	3.9	7	3.4
Memphis	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.3	1	11.1	2	1.7
Dallas	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	1.6	1	3.2	3	1.3
Oakland	1	11.1	12	24.0	1	7.1	1	4.5	15	15.9
"Ashton"	Too few cases tested for analysis*									

Source: Medical examiners' data, 1978.

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

In 7 of the 8 cities a large percentage of homicide victims were tested for narcotics. In "Ashton" however, only 8 victims were tested. Because of this small number, "Ashton" was eliminated from this analysis.

CHAPTER 4 - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOMICIDE OFFENDER

OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS IN THE NATION AND REGIONS

Age of the Offender

Table 4-1 presents the age distribution of homicide offenders for the nation from 1968-1978. The table shows that, just as for homicide victimization, the highest rates of homicide offending occurred in the 20-29 age group, which ranged from 14.2 (per 100,000 age-specific population) in 1968 to 19.6 in 1978. The lowest rates occurred in the oldest (65+) and youngest (0-14) age groups. Homicide offenders, however, were slightly younger than their victims. While the peak victimization period spanned the 20-29 and 30-49 age groups, the highest rates of offending were found in the 15-19 and 20-29 age groups.

Regarding trends over time, little change occurred in the rates of offending for the 0-14, 50-64, and 65+ age groups between 1968 and 1978. However, the three groups with the highest offending rates (15-19, 20-29, and 30-49) showed substantial increases from 1968 to 1972, followed by annual up-and-down fluctuations through 1978. Over the eleven-year period, offending rate increase ranged from 35 to more than 45 percent for these three high-offending groups.

All four regions followed the national pattern with respect to the relative distribution of offenders among the various age categories, with the 20-29 age group having the highest rates and with the peak offending ages being the 15-19, 20-29, and 30-49 groups. The regions differed, however, in their absolute levels of homicide offenses. The Southern region had the highest levels in all three high-offending age groups, followed by the North Central, Northeastern, and Western regions, in that order. Regional differences also existed in trends over time. For example, while the Northeastern, North Central, and Western regions generally followed the national pattern for the highest offending (20-29) age group--an initial increase, followed by up and down fluctuations--the Southern region showed a more consistently increasing annual trend over the eleven-year period. Overall, however, all four regions showed an increase in rate of offending for the 20-29 age group from 1968 to 1978.

Sex of the Offender

With respect to offenders' sex (Table 4-2), males predominated throughout the period studied. Both nationally and for the regions, males accounted for between 80 percent and 90 percent of the annual homicide arrests. While both male and female arrests increased over the eleven-year period, the increase

was greater for males, so that the proportion of female arrests decreased between 1968 and 1978.

Race of the Offender

Table 4-3 presents the racial distribution of offenders for the nation from 1968 to 1978. As the table shows, throughout the eleven-year period, blacks accounted for a greater percentage of offender arrests than did whites--especially significant, given their smaller overall population size. While the proportion of "other race" offenders was twice as large as their victimization percentages, it was negligible compared with black and white offending.

Paralleling the trend in black victimization, the proportion of black offenders decreased over time. However, the decrease in relative black to white offending began later than the relative decrease in black victimization and started with a higher initial level. Thus, although black offending declined by 12 percent (from a high of 62 percent in 1971 to 50 percent in 1978), whites never became predominant in offending, as they did in victimization.

Regional differences were found in the racial distribution of offenders, as well as victims, again partly reflecting the racial distribution in the overall population of each region. As was found for victims, black offenders were most predominant in the North Central, Southern, and Northeastern regions, with the Western region having a far smaller proportion of black offenders. In fact, while the other three regions followed the national pattern of predominant black offending, the majority of offenders in the West were white. The Western region also differed from the other three in its greater proportion of "other race" offenders, again (as in victimization) reflecting its greater concentration of Orientals, Hispanics, and American Indians.

While all four regions showed decreases in relative black to white offending over the eleven-year period, they differed in the size of these declines. The Northeastern and Southern regions showed the greatest declines (of 14 and 12 percent, respectively), followed by the West (with a 7 percent decline) and the North Central region (with a decline of only 3 percent).

Offender Characteristics and Type of Homicide

Tables 4-4, 4-5, and 4-6 present homicide offender characteristics (age, sex, and race) for each type of homicide (victim-offender relationship) for the nation in 1978.

As Table 4-4 shows, offenders in all three type of homicide were slightly younger than their victims. Family homicide offenders (like their victims) were oldest, with a median age of 32, followed by acquaintance and stranger homicide offenders, with median ages of 29 and 25, respectively.

With respect to sex (Table 4-5), homicide offenders followed the same pattern as their victims. Males predominated as offenders in all three types of homicide, but were much more dominant in stranger and acquaintance homicide (constituting, respectively, 87.5 and 85.5 percent of offender arrests.) They

constituted only 65.4 percent of arrests in family homicide. Thus, the only type of homicide in which females were involved to any substantial degree--either as victims or as offenders--was family homicide, and even here their involvement was far less prevalent than that of males.

National comparisons of offenders' race (Table 4-6) showed that white offenders were predominant in family homicide (accounting for 53 percent of the offender arrests), while blacks were more prevalent in acquaintance and stranger homicide (constituting 54 and 48 percent of the arrests, respectively.) The racial distribution of offenders followed that of victims in family and acquaintance homicide, with both victims and offenders predominantly white in family homicide and black in acquaintance homicide. There was a reversal in stranger homicide, however, with blacks constituting a majority of the offenders, but only a minority of the victims.

The four regions generally followed the national pattern with respect to homicide offenders' age and sex, although offenders in the South were slightly older in all three types of homicide than offenders in the other regions. With respect to race, however, the West showed far less black offending than the Northeastern, North Central, and Southern regions or the nation as a whole. Like black victimization, black offending in the West was less than half as great as that of whites in all three types of homicide, due to the smaller proportion of blacks in the Western population.

OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS IN THE CITIES

Age of the Offender

In the cities in 1978, the 20-29 age group accounted for more than 40 percent of all homicide arrests. Further, a significant portion of the offenders--approximately 20 percent overall--involved young offenders under the age of 20. The cities with the youngest offenders were Newark, Chicago, St. Louis, and "Ashton." Table 4-7 compares the median ages of offenders in each of the eight cities, with the median age in different types of homicide. The results were fairly consistent across cities, showing a clear tendency for the median age of family homicide offenders to be oldest and that of stranger homicide offenders to be youngest. The major exception to this pattern was in Oakland, where the oldest offender median age was found in acquaintance homicide, while family homicide offenders had the youngest median age.

When the mean ages of victims and offenders were compared, the same pattern became apparent as that found in the national data. In all types of homicide, while victims and offenders were fairly close in age, the offenders tended to be slightly younger than their victims. This was especially true in cases of stranger homicide, in which the age disparity between victim and offender was greater and more consistent across cities.

Sex of the Offender

As Table 4-8 shows, in all eight cities, males greatly outnumbered females as homicide offenders, typically amounting to more than 80 percent of the total. Consistent with the national data, when a woman was a homicide

offender she was most likely to kill a family member, usually a spouse. In several cities, indeed, women nearly made up a majority of family homicide arrests. These cities were Oakland (50 percent female offenders in cases of family homicide), Newark (46.2 percent), and Chicago (49.2 percent). Outside of the family, males made up the overwhelming majority of homicide offenders, almost exclusively so in the case of stranger homicide.

Race of the Offender

Table 4-9 presents rates of homicide offenders, by race, in the eight cities, as well as the percentage figures by race for the three categories of homicide. Both a percentage analysis and an analysis based on rates were done. In terms of percentage, blacks constituted a majority of homicide offenders in all cities except "Ashton," where 84 percent of the population is white. When the figures were converted to rates using race-specific population bases, in all eight cities the arrest rate was highest among blacks, lowest among whites, and intermediate among "other races." When victim data were compared to offender data, members of "other races" exhibited much higher rates of victimization than of offending.

In six of the cities, offender racial differences among the three types of homicide were small. In these cities--Philadelphia, Newark, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, and Oakland--blacks accounted for the largest share of homicide offenders in all three categories. The two exceptions to this pattern were Memphis and "Ashton." In both cities, whites accounted for a large or dominant share of arrests for family homicide; in "Ashton," offenders of other races accounted for a significant share of arrests for acquaintance and stranger homicide.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the characteristics of the homicide offender for the nation, the regions, and eight cities suggests the following conclusions:

- The 20-29 age group had the highest homicide offending rates over the eleven-year period in the nation, regions, and cities. Approximately 40 percent of all arrested offenders were in this 20-29 age group and up to 20 percent were even younger. While the 20-29 group contained the highest rates for both victims and offenders, offenders were slightly younger than their victims overall.
- For the nation, the regions, and the eight cities, the oldest offenders were found in cases of family homicide, while the youngest offenders were found in cases of stranger homicide.
- In the nation, region, and cities, males generally accounted for over 80 percent of all offender arrests. Both male and female arrests increased in the nation and regions over the eleven-year period, with the rate for males showing a relatively larger increase.
- Women were relatively more likely to be offenders in cases of family homicide, although nationally and in most of the cities they constituted a minority of the arrests even in this category. These findings

paralleled the findings for female victimization, which was also greater in family than in acquaintance or stranger homicide.

- Both nationally and in the cities, homicide offenders were disproportionately black. However, national trends over time showed that, although arrests had increased from 1968-1978 nationally for both blacks and whites, the proportion of black to white offenders had decreased by 12 percent during this period.
- In the national and regional data, white offenders were generally predominant in cases of family homicide, while black offenders predominated in acquaintance and stranger homicides. In the cities, however, blacks generally were the predominant offenders in all three types of homicide.

TABLE 4-1. AGE OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978
(rate per 100,000 age-specific population)

Year	Age of Offenders															
	0-14		15-19		20-29		30-49		50-64		65+		Age Unknown		Total Offenders	
	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.	Rate
1968	164	0.3	1,866	10.3	3,918	14.2	3,606	7.7	825	2.9	202	1.1	2	---	10,583	5.3
1969	161	0.3	2,148	11.7	4,675	16.1	3,817	8.2	905	3.1	216	1.1	5	---	11,927	5.9
1970	187	0.3	2,477	13.0	5,017	16.8	4,094	8.8	999	3.4	233	1.2	6	---	13,013	6.4
1971	190	0.3	2,731	14.0	5,922	18.7	4,552	9.8	1,079	3.6	219	1.1	0	---	14,693	7.1
1972	482	0.9	3,015	15.0	6,289	19.2	4,789	10.2	1,010	3.3	284	1.4	13	---	15,882	7.6
1973	234	0.4	3,074	15.0	6,452	19.2	4,706	9.9	1,028	3.3	275	1.3	0	---	15,769	7.5
1974	224	0.4	2,960	14.3	6,603	19.1	4,512	9.4	1,027	3.3	261	1.2	15	---	15,602	7.4
1975	163	0.3	2,708	12.9	6,362	17.7	4,241	8.8	913	2.9	240	1.1	8	---	14,635	6.9
1976	209	0.4	3,045	14.4	6,714	18.1	4,407	9.0	1,011	3.2	245	1.1	4	---	15,635	7.3
1977	196	0.4	2,790	13.2	6,414	17.1	4,457	8.9	955	3.0	228	1.0	4	---	15,044	7.0
1978	229	0.5	3,165	15.1	7,489	19.6	5,364	10.4	1,118	3.4	267	1.1	6	---	17,638	8.1

Sources: (a) FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Age, Sex, and Race of Arrested Persons Reports; 1968-1978.
(b) Age-specific population estimates used for calculating rates are from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, 1968-1978.

TABLE 4-2. SEX OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978

Year	Sex of Offender					
	Male		Female		Total Offenders	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1968	8,888	84.0	1,695	16.0	10,583	100.0
1969	10,117	84.8	1,810	15.2	11,927	100.0
1970	11,009	84.6	2,004	15.4	13,013	100.0
1971	12,305	83.7	2,388	16.3	14,693	100.0
1972	13,293	83.7	2,589	16.3	15,882	100.0
1973	13,408	85.0	2,361	15.0	15,769	100.0
1974	13,327	85.4	2,275	14.6	15,602	100.0
1975	12,384	84.6	2,251	15.4	14,635	100.0
1976	13,422	85.8	2,213	14.2	15,635	100.0
1977	12,867	85.5	2,177	14.5	15,044	100.0
1978	15,114	85.7	2,524	14.3	17,638	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Age, Sex, and Race of Arrested Persons Reports; 1968-1978.

TABLE 4-3. RACE OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN THE NATION, 1968-1978

Year	Race of Offender							
	White		Black		Other Race		Total Offenders	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1968	3,643	37.8	5,774	53.9	229	2.4	9,646	100.1
1969	3,897	36.0	6,693	61.8	236	2.2	10,826	100.0
1970	4,427	38.9	6,715	59.0	244	2.1	11,386	100.0
1971	4,792	35.7	8,323	62.0	316	2.4	13,431	100.1
1972	5,532	37.8	8,740	59.7	367	2.5	14,639	100.0
1973	5,551	39.0	8,362	58.8	311	2.2	14,224	100.0
1974	5,782	40.6	7,982	56.0	489	3.4	14,253	100.0
1975	6,142	46.0	6,915	51.8	281	2.1	13,338	99.9
1976	6,400	44.4	7,621	52.9	393	2.7	14,414	100.0
1977	6,820	45.4	7,736	51.5	468	3.1	15,024	100.0
1978	8,122	46.2	8,757	50.0	711	4.0	17,590	100.2

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Age, Sex, and Race of Arrested Persons Reports; 1968-1978.

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

"Other Race" includes American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, and persons of Hispanic origin.

TABLE 4-4. MEDIAN AGE OF OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE, IN THE NATION, 1978

Median Age	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Number of Offenders	Median Age	Number of Offenders	Median Age	Number of Offenders	Median Age	Number of Offenders	Median Age	Number of Offenders	Median Age
	3,431	32	6,815	29	2,196	25	1,452	25	13,894	28

TABLE 4-5. SEX OF OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE, IN THE NATION, 1978

Sex	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	2,243	65.4	6,435	85.5	2,825	87.5	1,916	32.5	13,419	66.8
Female	1,167	34.0	946	12.6	155	4.8	145	2.5	2,413	12.0
Sex Unknown	21	0.6	145	1.9	247	7.7	3,831	65.0	4,244	21.1
Total	3,431	100.0	7,526	100.0	3,227	100.0	5,892	100.0	20,076	99.9

TABLE 4-6. RACE OF OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE, IN THE NATION, 1978

Race	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
White	1,828	53.3	3,195	42.5	1,375	42.6	1,142	19.4	7,540	37.6
Black	1,515	44.2	4,054	53.9	1,539	47.7	855	14.5	7,963	39.7
Other Race	63	1.8	126	1.7	56	1.7	22	0.4	267	1.3
Race Unknown	25	0.7	151	2.0	257	8.0	3,873	65.7	4,306	21.5
Total	3,431	100.0	7,526	100.1	3,227	100.0	5,892	100.0	20,076	100.1

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 4-7. MEDIAN AGE OF OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

City	Type of Homicide			Total Homicide Offenders	
	Family Homicide	Acquaintance Homicide	Stranger Homicide	#	Median Age
	Median Age	Median Age	Median Age		
Phila.	34.8	29.1	26.5	244	28.6
Newark	27.0	25.8	23.5	68	25.7
Chicago	25.8	25.9	23.8	354	25.6
St. Louis	33.0	25.2	23.0	145	25.9
Memphis	31.5	28.2	23.8	103	28.3
Dallas	36.7	27.2	24.0	202	26.8
Oakland	24.0	31.8	27.0	66	28.9
"Ashton"	30.0	25.2	21.5	72	25.5

TABLE 4-8. SEX OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Offender Sex by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicide Offenders	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		#	%
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Phila.										
Male	31	72.1	119	88.1	62	100.0	6	100.0	218	88.6
Female	12	27.9	16	11.9	0	0	0	0	28	11.4
Total	43	17.5	135	54.9	62	25.2	6	2.4	246	100.0
Newark										
Male	7	53.8	24	77.4	20	83.3	4	100.0	55	76.4
Female	6	46.2	7	22.6	4	16.7	0	0	17	23.6
Total	13	18.1	31	43.1	24	33.3	4	5.6	72	100.0
Chicago										
Male	31	50.8	176	86.7	85	95.5	15	100.0	307	83.4
Female	30	49.2	27	13.3	4	4.5	0	0	61	16.6
Total	61	16.6	203	55.2	89	24.2	15	4.1	368	100.0
St. Louis										
Male	18	66.7	77	93.9	33	97.1	14	100.0	142	90.4
Female	9	33.3	5	6.1	1	2.9	0	0	15	9.6
Total	27	17.2	82	52.2	34	21.7	14	8.9	157	100.0
Memphis										
Male	10	62.5	61	89.7	20	90.9	3	100.0	94	86.2
Female	6	37.5	7	10.3	2	9.1	0	0	15	13.8
Total	16	14.7	68	62.4	22	20.2	3	2.8	109	100.0
Dallas										
Male	26	60.5	82	87.2	55	91.7	8	88.9	171	83.0
Female	17	39.5	12	12.8	5	8.3	1	11.1	35	17.0
Total	43	20.9	94	45.6	60	29.1	9	4.4	206	100.0
Oakland										
Male	5	50.0	38	86.4	9	90.0	7	100.0	59	83.1
Female	5	50.0	6	13.6	1	10.0	0	0	12	16.9
Total	10	14.1	44	62.0	10	14.1	7	9.9	71	100.0
"Ashton"										
Male	12	63.2	31	83.8	15	93.8	5	100.0	63	81.8
Female	7	36.8	6	16.2	1	6.3	0	0	14	18.2
Total	19	24.7	37	48.1	16	20.8	5	6.5	77	100.0
Total Cities										
Male	140	60.3	608	87.6	299	94.3	62	98.4	1,109	84.9
Female	92	39.7	86	12.4	18	5.7	1	1.6	197	15.1
Total	232	100.0	694	100.0	317	100.0	63	100.0	1,306	100.0

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 4-9. RACE OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Offender Race by City	Offending Rate (per 100,000 race-specific population)	Type of Homicide									
		Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown Homicide		Total Homicide Offenders	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Philadelphia	Rate										
White	4.5	11	25.6	22	16.3	11	17.7	0	0	44	17.9
Black	28.6	27	62.8	104	77.0	46	74.2	6	100.0	183	74.4
Other	28.7	5	11.6	9	6.7	5	8.1	0	0	19	7.7
Total	--	43	17.5	135	54.9	62	25.2	6	2.4	246	100.0
Newark											
White	1.9	1	7.7	0	0	1	4.2	0	0	2	2.8
Black	30.2	11	84.6	24	80.0	20	83.3	3	75.0	58	81.7
Other	30.5	1	7.7	6	20.0	3	12.5	1	25.0	11	15.5
Total	--	13	18.3	30	42.3	24	33.8	4	5.6	71	100.0
Chicago											
White	2.2	4	6.6	17	8.5	9	10.1	3	21.4	33	9.0
Black	22.6	53	86.9	150	74.6	62	69.7	5	35.7	270	74.0
Other	19.5	4	6.6	34	16.9	18	20.2	6	42.9	62	17.0
Total	--	61	16.7	201	55.1	89	24.4	14	3.8	365	100.0
St. Louis											
White	8.7	4	14.8	11	13.4	5	14.7	1	7.7	21	13.5
Black	65.4	23	85.2	71	86.6	29	85.3	12	92.3	135	86.5
Other	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	--	27	17.3	82	52.6	34	21.8	13	8.3	156	100.0
Memphis											
White	4.2	8	50.0	3	4.5	3	14.3	0	0	14	13.1
Black	30.2	8	50.0	64	95.5	18	85.7	3	100.0	93	86.9
Other	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	--	16	15.0	67	62.6	21	19.6	3	2.8	107	100.0

TABLE 4-9. RACE OF HOMICIDE OFFENDERS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978 (cont'd)

Offender Race by City	Offending Rate (per 100,000 race-specific population)	Type of Homicide									
		Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown Homicide		Total Homicide Offenders	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dallas	Rate										
White	7.6	7	16.3	20	21.3	15	25.0	0	0	42	20.4
Black	48.9	30	69.8	60	63.8	33	55.0	7	77.8	130	63.1
Other	40.8	6	14.0	14	14.9	12	20.0	2	22.2	34	16.5
Total	--	43	20.9	94	45.6	60	29.1	9	4.4	206	100.0
Oakland											
White	8.5	2	20.0	3	7.1	2	20.0	4	66.7	11	16.2
Black	30.8	7	70.0	32	76.2	8	80.0	2	33.3	49	72.1
Other	15.9	1	10.0	7	16.7	0	0	0	0	8	11.8
Total	--	10	14.7	42	61.8	10	14.7	6	8.8	68	100.0
"Ashton"											
White	4.2	11	61.1	12	32.4	3	20.0	1	25.0	27	36.5
Black	61.0	6	33.3	12	32.4	5	33.3	0	0	23	31.1
Other	28.2	1	5.6	13	35.1	7	46.7	3	75.0	24	32.4
Total	--	18	24.3	37	50.0	15	20.3	4	5.4	74	100.0
Total Cities											
White	--	48	20.8	88	12.8	49	15.6	9	15.3	194	15.0
Black	--	165	71.4	517	75.2	221	70.1	38	64.4	941	72.8
Other	--	18	7.8	83	12.0	45	14.3	12	20.3	158	12.2
Total	--	231	100.0	688	100.0	315	100.0	59	100.0	1,293	100.0

Source: Population estimates used in calculating rates are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Preliminary Census Data.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

CHAPTER 5 - HOMICIDE WEAPONS

HOMICIDE WEAPONS IN THE NATION AND REGIONS

This chapter focuses on the weapons used in homicide, with weapons classified as handguns, long guns (generally rifles and shotguns), knives, other weapons (such as clubs or blunt objects), and--for the national data--strongarm force (such as fists).

Table 5-1 presents the national trends in homicide weapon use from 1968 through 1978. By far, the most significant finding was the consistent predominance of firearms--and especially handguns--as the type of weapon used in homicide throughout the eleven-year period. Nationally, the proportion of homicides committed with handguns increased from 44 to 50 percent between 1968 and 1974, followed by annual declines to 45 percent in 1978.

The regions followed the same pattern, with firearms--and especially handguns--again predominating as the weapon of choice in all four regions and over all eleven years. However, the proportionate contribution of handguns differed from region to region, with the North Central and Southern regions having a higher percentage of handgun use over the period than the Northeast and Western regions. While knives were used most often in the Northeast, where more than a quarter of all homicides were committed with this weapon, handguns increased in use over the eleven-year period in this region and, as they did so, the use of knives decreased. The Northeast and West had the greatest percentage of homicides attributed to weapons other than guns and knives, although in these--as in the other--regions, both firearms and knives were more frequently used.

Table 5-2 compares the types of weapons used in family, acquaintance, and stranger homicide for the nation in 1978. Again, firearms--and especially handguns--predominated as the weapon used in all three types of homicide. Moreover, handguns increased in predominance as the victim-offender relationship became more remote, with the greatest percentage of handgun use (53 percent) found in stranger homicide, followed by acquaintance homicide (with 49 percent) and, lastly, family homicide (with only 40 percent). The use of long guns followed an opposite pattern, however, so that overall firearms use was approximately equal in all three homicide types, as was the use of knives and other weapons. Firearms far outdistanced all other weapons, being used more than three times as often in each of the three types of homicide.

Regional trends followed those of the nation with respect to increasing handgun use from family to acquaintance to stranger homicide. However, the regions differed in the relative predominance of handgun use in each homicide type. In family homicide, the Northeast was substantially lower than the

other regions in its use of handguns followed by the Western, North Central, and Southern regions, in that order. These inter-regional differences progressively decreased in acquaintance and stranger homicide, however so that, in stranger homicide, handgun use was equal in the Northeastern and Western regions, with North Central and Southern handgun use only slightly higher.

HOMICIDE WEAPONS IN THE CITIES

Consistent with the national data, the largest percentage of homicides in most of the cities was committed with handguns. The exception was Newark, where knives were the favored homicide weapon by a narrow margin (35.2 percent knives, 34.1 percent handguns). Handguns also accounted for less than a majority of all homicides in Philadelphia (48.8 percent) and "Ashton" (47.8 percent), although even in these two cities they were the most common weapon. The two southern cities, Memphis and Dallas, registered the highest percentages of handgun use, 65.5 percent and 62.7 percent respectively.

Table 5-3 compares city findings on weapon use by type of homicide. (In this table, rifles and shotguns are aggregated with handguns into a single variable, since long guns were too infrequently used to be separately classified. This may reflect an urban-rural difference, with city dwellers tending to buy handguns when purchasing weapons.) In five of the cities, there were significant differences among categories as to what kind of weapon was used, with a general tendency for guns to be used more frequently outside the family, less frequently within the family. In Philadelphia and Oakland, for example, weapons in cases of family homicide were divided fairly evenly into firearms, knives and others. Stranger homicide, by contrast, involved a dramatically higher percentage of firearms use, 62.9 percent in Philadelphia and 71.4 percent in Oakland. In the other three cities, there was a decided tendency for firearms to be used, whatever the type of homicide. This was especially true in the two southern cities, Memphis and Dallas, where over two-thirds of the homicides in each category were committed by firearms.

"Ashton" appears to be somewhat atypical with respect to weapons use. Family homicides, acquaintance homicides, and those with unknown victim-offender relationships all involved firearms in more than two-thirds of the cases. Stranger murders, by contrast, involved firearms in less than a majority of cases--42.9 percent, the lowest frequency in the eight cities. Possibly this represents a unique fluctuation. The number of stranger homicides in "Ashton" was small, and in some instances resulted from offenders setting fire to sleeping drunks, an unusual pattern which may have been unique to that year.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the weapons used in homicide leads to the following conclusions:

- Handguns were the most prevalent weapon used in homicides for the nation and the regions over the eleven-year period. However, handgun use was more prevalent in the North Central and Southern regions than in the Northeastern and Western regions.

- In the nation and the regions in 1978, handguns were (with one exception) the favored weapon for all three types of homicide, with handguns increasing in use with remoteness of the victim-offender relationship. That is, handguns were most prevalent in stranger homicides, less prevalent in acquaintance homicide, and least prevalent in family homicide (where they were surpassed by knives as the predominant homicide weapon in the Northeast).
- In all of the cities except Newark, the largest percentage of homicides involved handguns. Overall, firearms use was highest in the two southern cities, Memphis and Dallas, and lowest in the two northeastern cities, Newark and Philadelphia.
- In five of the eight cities, as in the nation and regions, there was a greater tendency for family homicides to involve a variety of weapons, while homicides outside the family (and especially stranger homicides) were more likely to involve firearms. In the two southern cities, however, firearms predominated as the homicide weapon for all three types of homicide.

TABLE 5-1. WEAPONS USED IN HOMICIDE IN THE NATION, 1968-1978

Year	Type of Weapon													
	Handgun		Long Gun		Knife		Other Weapon		Strongarm Force		Weapon Unknown		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1968	5,245	43.9	2,279	19.1	2,340	19.6	1,343	11.2	628	5.3	120	1.0	11,955	100.1
1969	5,958	46.1	2,263	17.5	2,530	19.6	1,202	9.3	790	6.1	175	1.4	12,918	100.0
1970	6,025	46.2	2,378	18.3	2,429	18.6	1,213	9.3	811	6.2	183	1.4	13,039	100.0
1971	7,150	46.7	2,703	17.7	2,996	18.6	1,327	8.7	972	6.3	174	1.1	15,322	100.1
1972	7,890	49.8	2,489	15.7	2,974	18.8	1,407	8.9	916	5.8	156	1.0	15,832	100.0
1973	8,405	49.1	2,844	16.6	2,985	17.4	1,486	8.7	1,064	6.2	339	2.0	17,123	100.0
1974	9,336	50.1	3,138	16.9	3,228	17.3	1,678	9.0	993	5.3	259	1.4	18,632	100.0
1975	8,767	47.0	3,294	17.6	3,245	17.4	1,904	10.2	1,117	6.0	315	1.7	18,642	99.9
1976	7,649	46.1	2,945	17.7	2,956	17.8	1,552	9.3	1,025	6.2	481	2.9	16,608	100.0
1977	8,074	44.8	3,199	17.8	3,441	19.1	1,800	10.0	1,001	5.6	519	2.9	18,034	100.2
1978	8,496	45.4	3,414	18.3	3,526	18.8	1,692	9.0	1,070	5.7	517	2.8	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1968-1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 5-2. WEAPONS USED IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION, 1978

Type of Weapon	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Handgun	1,394	39.9	3,428	48.6	1,342	53.0	2,332	41.4	8,496	45.4
Long Gun	845	24.2	1,292	18.3	352	13.9	925	16.5	3,414	18.3
Knife	579	16.6	1,381	19.6	432	17.1	1,134	20.1	3,526	18.6
Other Weapon	274	7.8	509	7.2	212	8.4	697	12.4	1,692	9.0
Strongarm Force	310	8.9	370	5.3	141	5.6	249	4.4	1,070	5.7
Weapon Unknown	92	2.6	69	1.0	55	2.2	301	5.3	517	2.8
Total	3,494	100.0	7,049	100.0	2,534	100.2	5,638	100.1	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 5-3. WEAPONS USED IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Type of Weapon by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Phila.										
Firearm	17	37.0	79	57.2	66	62.9	41	56.9	203	56.2
Knife	14	30.4	47	34.1	19	18.1	15	20.8	95	26.3
Other	15	32.6	12	8.7	20	19.0	16	22.2	63	17.5
Total	46	12.7	138	38.2	105	29.1	72	19.9	361	100.0
Newark										
Firearm	4	30.8	10	31.3	18	64.3	9	50.0	41	45.1
Knife	2	15.4	16	50.0	8	28.6	6	33.3	32	35.2
Other	7	53.8	6	18.8	2	7.1	3	16.7	18	19.8
Total	13	14.3	32	35.2	28	30.8	18	19.8	91	100.1
Chicago										
Firearm	25	41.7	139	67.5	62	67.4	36	58.1	262	62.4
Knife	20	33.3	48	23.3	18	19.6	17	27.4	103	24.5
Other	15	25.0	19	9.2	12	13.0	9	14.5	55	13.1
Total	60	14.3	206	49.0	92	21.9	62	14.8	420	100.0
St. Louis										
Firearm	17	65.4	71	77.2	29	80.6	44	86.3	161	78.5
Knife	6	23.1	16	17.4	1	2.8	3	5.9	26	12.7
Other	3	11.5	5	5.4	6	16.7	4	7.8	18	8.8
Total	26	12.7	92	44.9	36	17.6	51	24.9	205	100.0
Memphis										
Firearm	12	75.0	53	77.9	19	82.6	3	100.0	87	79.1
Knife	4	25.0	11	16.2	2	8.7	0	0	17	15.5
Other	0	0	4	5.9	2	8.7	0	0	6	5.5
Total	16	14.5	68	61.8	23	20.9	3	2.7	110	100.1
Dallas										
Firearm	30	68.2	70	73.7	48	76.2	23	74.2	171	73.4
Knife	8	18.2	17	17.9	10	15.9	4	12.9	39	16.7
Other	6	13.6	8	8.4	5	7.9	4	12.9	23	9.9
Total	44	18.9	95	40.8	63	27.0	31	13.3	233	100.0
Oakland										
Firearm	4	36.4	42	82.4	10	71.4	8	36.4	64	65.3
Knife	3	27.3	6	11.8	2	14.3	4	18.2	15	15.3
Other	4	36.4	3	5.9	2	14.3	10	45.5	19	19.4
Total	11	11.2	51	52.0	14	14.3	22	22.4	98	100.0

TABLE 5-3. WEAPONS USED IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978 (cont'd)

Type of Weapon by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
"Ashton"										
Firearm	13	68.4	25	65.8	9	42.9	9	75.0	56	62.2
Knife	5	26.3	8	21.1	5	23.8	1	8.3	19	21.1
Other	1	5.3	5	13.2	7	33.3	2	16.7	15	16.7
Total	19	21.1	38	42.2	21	23.3	12	13.3	90	100.0
Total Cities										
Firearm	122	51.9	489	67.9	261	68.3	173	63.8	1,045	65.0
Knife	62	26.4	169	23.5	65	17.0	50	18.5	346	21.5
Other	51	21.7	62	8.6	56	14.7	48	17.7	217	13.5
Total	235	100.0	720	100.0	382	100.0	271	100.0	1,608	100.0

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

CHAPTER 6 - FELONY CIRCUMSTANCES ASSOCIATED WITH HOMICIDE

FELONY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NATION AND REGIONS

Some homicides take place in the context of another felony, such as robbery or rape. For the nation and the regions, information on "felony circumstance" was not available from the Uniform Crime Reports before 1973; accordingly, the data in this section cover only the period 1973-1978.

Table 6-1 indicates that both felony and non-felony homicides varied only slightly over the six-year period, with robbery-homicide accounting for about 10 percent of total homicides; rape-homicide, about 1 percent; other felonies, about 7 percent; and with non-felony homicides accounting for over two-thirds of the total. Both felony and non-felony homicides tended to increase slightly between 1973 and 1975 or 1976 and then to decline slightly to 1978. This trend seemed to be associated with the number of homicides in which felony association was "unknown," since this category reversed the previous pattern.

In general, the four regions followed the national pattern with respect to their relative frequencies of the various felony-homicide types. However, there were some regional variations, with the Northeastern and North Central regions showing higher proportions of robbery-homicide than did the Southern and Western regions and with the South somewhat lower in other felony-homicides. There were also regional variations in non-felony homicide, which were proportionately highest in the South and lowest in the Northeast. Overall, the South had the highest total number of homicides--about twice the frequency occurring in any other region.

Felony Associations and Type of Homicide

Table 6-2 presents the relationship between felony circumstances and type of homicide in the nation for 1978. For all three types of homicide, non-felony homicides constituted a majority of cases. However, non-felony homicides were much more predominant in family and acquaintance homicides (accounting for 95 and 86 percent of the cases, respectively), while in stranger homicide, only 51 percent of the cases were associated with non-felony circumstances. This difference is not surprising since homicides involving persons known or related to each other would be more likely to arise from arguments or jealousies instead of occurring in the course of a felony, such as robbery or rape.

Where a known felony was associated with the death, robbery was the dominant felony, and especially so in cases of stranger homicide, in which robbery-homicides constituted 32 percent of the cases. While rape was also

associated with more stranger homicides than family or acquaintance homicides, it accounted for only a small percentage of any type of homicide, ranging from 0.1 percent of family homicides to 2.0 percent of stranger homicides.

Overall, while only 17 percent of all homicides were associated with felony circumstances, the likelihood of a felony-association increased with the remoteness of the victim-offender relationship, from 2 percent (for family homicide) to 10 percent (for acquaintance homicide) to 43 percent (for stranger homicide).

FELONY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE CITIES

Approximately one-quarter of the homicides in the eight cities occurred in the context of another felony. Table 6-3 shows the distribution of these felony homicides. Of all offenses, robbery was the felony most commonly associated with homicide, ranging from a low of 11.1 percent in "Ashton" to a high of 20 percent in Chicago. Of all other felonies, a few homicides were related to rape in all the cities, with "Ashton" notably higher at 3.3 percent (N = 3). Of the other felonies, arson was most strongly linked to homicide in Philadelphia (N = 9) and narcotics showed its strongest link in Oakland (N = 5). In general, most homicides are not associated with other felonies; when they are, the most common association is with robbery.

Felony Associations and Type of Homicide

As Table 6-4 shows, felony circumstance and type of homicide were highly associated in all the cities. Very few family homicides took place in the context of another felony; in fact, only six cases (or 2.6 percent) were so linked in the eight cities. Acquaintance homicide was also infrequently linked to another felony. When there was such a link, acquaintance homicide usually involved robbery (Philadelphia, Memphis, Dallas, Chicago, and St. Louis) or narcotics and/or rape. In each city, however, the vast majority of acquaintance homicides were unrelated to another felony.

The strongest connection between felony circumstance and homicide type was shown in stranger homicides and those in which the victim-offender relationship was unknown. In each of the eight cities, more than half of all stranger homicides were linked to another felony; in Newark, two-thirds of the stranger homicides were so linked.

The type of felony associated with stranger homicides was generally robbery. In all cities except "Ashton," this was true in 60 percent to 80 percent of the cases. The second crime frequently associated with felony-linked stranger homicide was burglary, but the number of cases was small.

Where the victim-offender relationship was unknown, the felony connection was not as systematic. In some cities--Philadelphia and St. Louis, for example--only one-third of the homicides with unknown offenders had a presumed felony connection. In other cities--Newark, Oakland, and Dallas--an association was evident in 60 percent of the cases. Robbery was the felony circumstance in at least a quarter of these homicides. There was a slight tendency for rape and narcotics to be linked to cases where the victim-offender relationship was unknown, as compared with stranger homicides. This apparent difference between stranger homicides and "unknowns" warrants further research.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of felony and non-felony homicides supports the following conclusions:

- Over the six years, there was no substantial variation in the percentage of felony-linked homicides in the nation and the regions and no consistent trend over time.
- Homicides linked to robbery tended to be higher in the Northeastern and North Central regions, lower in the Southern and Western regions.
- Felonies were much more strongly associated with stranger homicides than with acquaintance or family homicides in both the national data (where felony circumstances were present in 43 percent of the stranger homicide cases) and in the city data (where felony associations were present in from one-half to two-thirds of the stranger homicides). In contrast, felonies were associated with only a small fraction of the non-stranger homicides in the nation, regions, and cities.
- Robbery was the felony most associated with homicide in the nation, regions, and cities.

TABLE 6-1. FELONY-HOMICIDE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NATION, 1973-1978

Year	Type of Felony-Homicide Association										Total Homicides	
	Robbery-Homicide		Rape-Homicide		Other Felony-Homicide		Non-felony Homicide		Felony Association Unknown			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1973	1,649	9.6	71	0.4	1,436	8.4	11,436	66.8	2,531	14.8	17,123	100.0
1974	2,162	11.6	134	0.7	1,301	7.0	12,633	67.8	2,402	12.9	18,632	100.0
1975	2,131	11.4	126	0.7	1,679	9.0	13,164	70.6	1,542	8.3	18,642	100.0
1976	1,711	10.3	182	1.1	1,048	6.3	12,263	73.8	1,404	8.5	16,608	100.0
1977	1,778	9.9	211	1.2	1,018	5.6	12,472	69.2	2,555	14.2	18,034	100.1
1978	1,914	10.2	183	1.0	1,024	5.5	13,005	69.5	2,589	13.8	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1973-1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 6-2. FELONY ASSOCIATIONS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN THE NATION, 1978

Type of Felony Association	Type of Homicide									
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Robbery	15	0.4	298	4.2	802	31.7	799	14.2	1,914	10.2
Rape	4	0.1	57	0.8	50	2.0	72	1.3	183	1.0
Other Felony	38	1.1	379	5.4	240	9.5	367	6.5	1,024	5.5
No Felony Assn.	3,316	94.9	6,065	86.0	1,281	50.6	2,343	41.6	13,005	69.5
Felony Assn. Unknown	121	3.5	250	3.6	161	6.4	2,057	36.5	2,589	13.8
Total	3,494	100.0	7,049	100.0	2,534	100.2	5,638	100.1	18,715	100.0

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1978.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0, due to rounding.

TABLE 6-3. FELONY-HOMICIDE ASSOCIATIONS IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

City	Type of Felony-Homicide Association											
	Robbery-Homicide		Rape-Homicide		Other Felony-Homicide		Non-felony Homicide		Felony Association Unknown		Total Homicides	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Phila.	51	14.2	5	1.4	25	6.9	251	69.7	28	7.8	360	100.0
Newark	17	16.6	1	1.0	7	6.9	52	51.0	25	24.5	102	100.0
Chicago	84	20.0	5	1.2	22	5.2	287	68.2	23	5.5	421	100.1
St. Louis	33	16.1	2	1.0	15	7.3	136	66.3	19	9.3	205	100.0
Memphis	15	13.0	1	.9	7	6.1	85	74.0	7	6.1	115	100.1
Dallas	36	15.6	2	.9	15	6.5	162	70.4	15	6.5	230	99.9
Oakland	15	15.3	2	2.0	8	8.2	66	67.3	7	7.1	98	99.9
"Ashton"	10	11.1	3	3.3	6	6.7	66	73.3	5	5.6	90	100.0

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 6-4. FELONY ASSOCIATIONS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Felony Association by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Phila.										
Felony Assn.	2	4.3	12	8.8	53	52.5	16	32.0	83	24.9
No Felony Assn.	44	95.7	125	91.2	48	47.5	34	68.0	251	75.1
Total	46	13.8	137	41.0	101	30.2	50	15.0	334	100.0
Newark										
Felony Assn.	0	0	3	9.7	18	66.7	4	66.7	25	32.5
No Felony Assn.	13	100.0	28	90.3	9	33.3	2	33.3	52	67.5
Total	13	16.9	31	40.3	27	35.1	6	7.8	77	100.0
Chicago										
Felony Assn.	1	1.6	36	17.5	54	60.0	24	53.3	115	28.6
No Felony Assn.	60	98.4	170	82.5	36	40.0	21	46.7	287	71.4
Total	61	15.2	206	51.2	90	22.4	45	11.2	402	100.0
St. Louis										
Felony Assn.	3	11.1	15	16.3	23	62.2	11	34.4	52	27.7
No Felony Assn.	24	88.9	77	83.7	14	37.8	21	65.6	136	72.3
Total	27	14.4	92	48.9	37	19.7	32	17.0	188	100.0
Memphis										
Felony Assn.	0	0	9	13.2	15	65.2	0	0	24	22.0
No Felony Assn.	16	100.0	59	86.8	8	34.8	2	100.0	85	78.0
Total	16	14.7	68	62.4	23	21.1	2	1.8	109	100.0
Dallas										
Felony Assn.	0	0	13	13.7	35	55.6	8	50.0	56	25.7
No Felony Assn.	44	100.0	82	86.3	28	44.4	8	50.0	162	74.3
Total	44	20.2	95	43.6	63	28.9	16	7.3	218	100.0
Oakland										
Felony Assn.	0	0	8	16.0	7	50.0	10	62.5	25	27.5
No Felony Assn.	11	100.0	42	84.0	7	50.0	6	37.5	66	72.5
Total	11	100.0	50	54.9	14	15.4	16	17.6	91	100.0
"Ashton"										
Felony Assn.	0	0	5	13.5	10	50.0	4	44.4	19	22.4
No Felony Assn.	19	100.0	32	86.5	10	50.0	5	55.6	66	77.6
Total	19	22.4	37	43.5	20	23.5	9	10.6	85	100.0
Total Cities										
Felony Assn.	6	2.6	101	14.1	215	57.3	77	43.7	399	26.5
No Felony Assn.	231	97.5	615	85.9	160	42.7	99	56.3	1,105	73.5
Total	237	100.0	716	100.0	375	100.0	176	100.0	1,504	100.0

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

CONTINUED

1 OF 2

CHAPTER 7 - HOMICIDE LOCATIONS

The Uniform Crime Reports do not provide information about the specific location of homicides. Accordingly, the discussion in this chapter is limited to data collected from the eight cities.

Location can be defined in several ways. For this analysis, we coded the various types of immediate vicinity: the street, a bar, tavern, or other type of commercial establishment, such as a bank, grocery store, or gas station; a personal residence, whether the victim's, the offender's, or someone else's; or "other places" such as an automobile, public transit, abandoned building, and the like.

Location can also refer to the place where an episode begins or where it ends--i.e., where the fatal injury is sustained. The latter is the focus of this report. (In fact, the place where the homicide incident begins and where it ends tends to be the same. When they differ, there is a tendency for the victim to leave a residence or a bar or commercial establishment and then to die in the street.)

Table 7-1 classifies the locations in which homicides occurred in the eight cities. For seven cities, the most frequent homicide location was in a residence. Overall, 42.7 percent of victims died there. In Memphis, Oakland, and Chicago the percentage was higher; in Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Newark it was lower. Newark, indeed, was an exception to the general rule, with 36.1 percent of that city's victims dying in a residential setting and 37.3 percent dying on the street.

The second most frequent homicide location was on the street, representing about a third of all homicides in the eight cities. Philadelphia, Newark, and St. Louis reported more than a third, while Memphis, Oakland, and "Ashton" reported less.

Commercial establishments accounted for 14.4 percent of all homicides, with 7.6 percent in bars and 6.8 percent elsewhere. There was, however, major city variation in the mix between bars and other commercial establishments. Philadelphia, "Ashton", Memphis, and Dallas had a higher percent killed in bars, while Newark, Oakland, Chicago, and St. Louis reported much lower percentages. In general, cities with fewer homicides in bars tended to have more killings in gas stations, package stores, and the like. St. Louis, for example, had 2 percent in bars and 8.8 percent in other commercial establishments; in Newark, the figures were 7.2 percent and 9.6 percent respectively. Indeed, Newark was unique in that approximately one-tenth of all homicide victims sustained their injuries in commercial establishments other than bars.

Philadelphia, by contrast, had the lowest percentage of homicides in a commercial establishment other than a bar (5.1 percent).

The category of "other" made up 8.2 percent of the cases on the average. Most of the cities conformed to that, with the exception of Oakland on the high side (12.4 percent) and Memphis on the low side (3.5 percent). The results in Oakland may be attributable to a rash of cab-driver murders there in 1978--a pattern that may have been unique to the study year.

When private spaces (i.e., a residential setting) are compared to public spaces (i.e., the combination of commercial establishments and the street), the distribution is roughly half, with 42.7 percent of the homicides taking place in private and 49 percent in public. The cities with higher percentages of "private" homicides were Oakland, Memphis, and Chicago. Those with higher percentages of "public" homicides were Philadelphia, Newark, Dallas, and St. Louis.

HOMICIDE LOCATIONS AND TYPES OF HOMICIDE

Table 7-2 shows homicide location by type of homicide for the eight cities in the study. For all cities except Memphis, there were highly significant differences between homicide location and homicide type. Family murders in all cities were most likely to occur at home, with this location associated with 60 percent of all family homicides in Newark and St. Louis to over 90 percent in Memphis and Chicago. Seldom if ever did such a homicide occur in a bar or other commercial establishment, although such homicides sometime took place on the street, especially in Newark, Oakland, and St. Louis.

Acquaintance homicides occurred in a variety of locations, roughly one-half in residences, one-third on the street, and a smaller proportion (between 5 percent and 17 percent) in a bar or other commercial establishment.

The location of stranger homicides varied from one city to another. In all eight cities, stranger homicides were more likely than other types to occur in bars or commercial establishments. In six of the cities they were also more likely to occur on the street than in a home, although the reverse was true in Newark and Memphis. Stranger homicides in residences ranged from a low of 4.8 percent in "Ashton" to a high of 34.8 percent in Memphis; apart from these extremes, between 13 percent and 28 percent of stranger homicides took place at home. If street and commercial establishments are combined, we find that over half of all the stranger murders occur in "public spaces" in each of the eight cities. In five cities, 70 percent or more of the stranger homicides occurred in a public space.

Homicides with unknown offenders also show city variability. When contrasted with stranger homicides, a smaller percentage of these offenses take place in bars and other commercial establishments, while a greater percentage take place in residences and on the street. The residential connection, however, is not as strong as is the case with family or acquaintance homicides.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions may be drawn from an analysis of homicide location in the eight cities involved in the study:

- The single most lethal place, in all of the cities except Newark, is a private residence. The second most dangerous place is the street.
- Victims dying in commercial establishments (including bars) made up 14.4 percent of the victims, with minimal variation from one city to another. However, the mix of bars and other commercial establishments did vary from city to city.
- Victim-offender relationship was highly correlated with homicide location in all cities. Specifically: family homicides occur within residences, acquaintance homicides occur at home and on the street, and stranger homicides tend to occur on the street or in a commercial establishment. (In some cities, such as Newark and Memphis, stranger homicides also occurred in private residences.)
- Homicides in which the victim-offender relationship was unknown showed city variability, but in five of the eight cities were most likely to occur on the street.

TABLE 7-1. HOMICIDE LOCATIONS IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

City	Type of Location										Total	
	Residence		Street		Bar		Other Commercial Establishment		Other Locations			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Phila.	145	40.4	135	37.6	35	9.7	18	5.0	26	7.2	359	22.6
Newark	30	36.1	31	37.3	6	7.2	8	9.6	8	9.6	83	5.2
Chicago	184	44.3	142	34.2	27	6.5	25	6.0	37	8.9	415	26.1
St. Louis	81	39.5	87	42.4	4	2.0	18	8.8	15	7.3	205	12.9
Memphis	62	54.9	26	23.0	11	9.7	10	8.8	4	3.5	113	7.1
Dallas	94	41.2	77	33.8	22	9.6	16	7.0	19	8.3	228	14.4
Oakland	46	47.4	27	27.8	4	4.1	8	8.2	12	12.4	97	6.1
"Ashton"	37	41.6	25	28.1	11	12.4	6	6.7	10	11.2	89	5.6
Total Cities	679	42.7	550	34.6	120	7.6	109	6.9	131	8.2	1,589	100.0

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE 7-2. HOMICIDE LOCATIONS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978

Type of Location by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Philadelphia										
Residence	36	78.3	58	42.3	28	26.4	23	32.9	145	40.4
Street	9	19.6	48	35.0	46	43.4	32	45.7	135	37.6
Bar, Commercial	1	2.2	20	14.6	25	23.5	7	10.0	53	14.7
Other	0	0	11	8.0	7	6.6	8	11.4	26	7.2
Total	46	12.8	137	38.2	106	29.5	70	19.5	359	100.0
Newark										
Residence	8	61.5	13	41.9	8	28.6	1	9.1	30	36.1
Street	5	38.5	13	41.9	5	17.9	8	72.7	31	37.3
Bar, Commercial	0	0	3	9.7	10	35.7	1	9.1	14	16.8
Other	0	0	2	6.5	5	17.9	1	9.1	8	9.6
Total	13	15.7	31	37.3	28	33.7	11	13.3	83	100.0
Chicago										
Residence	55	90.2	98	47.6	15	16.3	16	28.6	184	44.3
Street	2	3.3	68	33.0	46	50.0	26	46.5	142	34.2
Bar, Commercial	3	4.9	24	11.6	18	19.5	7	12.5	52	12.5
Other	1	1.6	16	7.8	13	14.1	7	12.5	37	8.9
Total	61	14.7	206	49.6	92	22.2	56	13.5	415	100.0
St. Louis										
Residence	17	65.4	47	51.1	5	13.5	12	24.0	81	39.5
Street	7	26.9	37	40.2	16	43.2	27	54.0	87	42.4
Bar, Commercial	2	7.7	5	5.4	11	29.7	4	8.0	22	10.8
Other	0	0	3	3.3	5	13.5	7	14.0	15	7.3
Total	26	12.7	92	44.9	37	18.0	50	24.4	205	100.0
Memphis										
Residence	15	93.8	35	51.5	8	34.8	4	66.7	62	54.9
Street	1	6.3	18	26.5	6	26.1	1	16.7	26	23.0
Bar, Commercial	0	0	12	17.7	8	34.8	1	16.7	21	18.5
Other	0	0	3	4.4	1	4.3	0	0	4	3.5
Total	16	14.2	68	60.2	23	20.4	6	5.3	113	100.1

TABLE 7-2. HOMICIDE LOCATIONS IN THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE IN EIGHT CITIES, 1978 (cont'd)

Type of Location by City	Type of Homicide								Total Homicides	
	Family Homicide		Acquaintance Homicide		Stranger Homicide		Type Unknown			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dallas										
Residence	30	68.2	44	46.3	11	17.5	9	34.6	94	41.2
Street	9	20.5	32	33.7	30	47.6	6	23.1	77	33.8
Bar, Commercial	3	6.8	12	12.7	16	25.4	7	26.9	38	16.6
Other	2	4.5	7	7.4	6	9.5	4	15.4	19	8.3
Total	44	19.3	95	41.7	63	27.6	26	11.4	228	100.0
Oakland										
Residence	8	72.7	25	49.0	3	21.4	10	47.6	46	47.4
Street	3	27.3	16	31.4	4	28.6	4	19.0	27	27.8
Bar, Commercial	0	0	6	11.0	6	42.9	0	0	12	12.3
Other	0	0	4	7.8	1	7.1	7	33.3	12	12.4
Total	11	11.3	51	52.6	14	14.4	21	21.6	97	99.9
"Ashton"										
Residence	14	73.7	21	55.3	1	4.8	1	9.1	37	41.6
Street	3	15.8	11	28.9	5	23.8	6	54.5	25	28.1
Bar, Commercial	0	0	4	10.6	10	47.6	3	27.3	17	19.1
Other	2	10.5	2	5.3	5	23.8	1	9.1	10	11.2
Total	19	21.3	38	42.7	21	23.6	11	12.4	89	100.0
Total Cities										
Residence	183	77.5	341	47.5	79	20.6	76	30.3	679	42.7
Street	39	16.5	243	33.8	158	41.2	110	43.9	550	34.6
Bar, Commercial	9	3.8	86	12.0	104	27.1	30	11.9	229	14.4
Other	5	2.1	48	6.7	43	11.2	35	13.9	131	8.2
Total	236	99.9	718	100.0	384	100.1	251	100.0	1,589	99.9

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

CHAPTER 8 - SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THREE TYPES OF HOMICIDE

Of the three types of homicide, based on victim-offender relationship, acquaintance homicide accounted for the largest share (38-41 percent) of homicides in the nation from 1976-1978, followed in order by family homicide (19-21 percent) and stranger homicide (13-14 percent).⁴ There was little change in the incidence of the three types during this period.

For the cities in 1978, acquaintance homicide again accounted for the largest proportion of homicides. However, in contrast to the nation as a whole, strangers were second in frequency and family homicides were least frequent. There was also substantial inter-city variation in the absolute frequencies of each type, although relative frequencies generally followed the above pattern.

Family Homicide

Victim Characteristics:

In the nation, victims of family homicide were older than victims of the other types of homicides, with a median age of 33 years. In the cities, median ages varied widely for family homicide victims, but tended to be younger than in the nation. Only two cities had median ages older than 33, while four cities had median ages considerably younger. The remaining two cities approximated the nation in median age of victims.

Nationally, 57 percent of the family homicide victims were male; in the cities, male victims predominated to an even larger extent. However, although they were in the minority, females were much more prevalent as victims of family homicide than as victims of the other homicide types, in both the nation and the cities.

Whites constituted 55 percent of the family homicide victims nationally, while blacks accounted for 44 percent. The cities tended to reverse this pattern, however, with only one city following the national pattern of white victim predominance, while six cities showed the opposite pattern (black victim

⁴ The proportion of stranger homicides is likely to be greater than the 14 percent shown, however, due to the large percentage of cases (24-30 percent) in which the victim-offender relationship was "unknown." As noted previously, stranger homicides are more likely to be reported as "unknown" because of the greater difficulty in identifying their offenders.

predominance) and one city showed equal victimization for blacks and whites.

Offender Characteristics:

With respect to offenders in family homicide, the national data showed a median age of 32 years, slightly lower than was the case for victims. However, like their victims, family homicide offenders were older than the offenders in other types of homicide. Although the median age of offenders in cities varied widely (ranging from 24 to 37 years), most of the cities followed the national pattern, showing family homicide offenders to be older than offenders in the other homicide types.

In the nation, 65 percent of the family homicide offenders were male. White male offenders predominated, however, female offenders (like female victims) were much more prevalent in family homicide than in the other homicide types. In the cities, female family homicide offenders were even more prevalent than in the nation, with several cities showing equal or nearly equal percentages of male and female offending.

Nationally, whites made up 53 percent of the offenders in family homicide, with blacks accounting for 44 percent. In the cities, however, this pattern was reversed. In six cities, blacks accounted for a large majority of the family homicide offenders (ranging from 63 to 87 percent), while one city showed equal percentages of black and white offending. Only in one city (where most of the overall population was white) did whites predominate as family homicide offenders.

Crime Characteristics:

In the nation, the weapon of choice in family homicide was a handgun (used in 40 percent of all cases), followed by other guns (24 percent) and knives (17 percent). Thus, firearms were used in 64 percent of the family homicides nation-wide. Four of the eight cities followed the national pattern, showing a decided preference for firearms as the family homicide weapon. In the other four cities, however, family homicide weapons were more evenly distributed among firearms, knives, and other weapons.

Felonies were infrequently associated with family homicide. In the nation, less than 2 percent of the cases in 1978 were linked to a felony; in the cities, only 2.6 percent were so associated.

The city data indicated that most family homicides took place within the home, with cities ranging from 60 percent to over 90 percent in the proportion of cases occurring there.

Acquaintance Homicide

Victim Characteristics:

Nationally, victims of acquaintance homicide had a median age of 30 years in 1978--younger than the victims of family homicide. In the city data, the median age varied from slightly below to slightly above 30 years.

Females accounted for a much smaller proportion of the victims in acquaintance homicide than in family homicide, with males accounting for more than 80 percent of the victims, both nationally and in the cities.

Nationally, the black and white victim percentages of acquaintance homicide reversed those found in family homicide, with blacks constituting 53 percent of the victims and whites accounting for 45 percent. Among the cities, there was substantial variation in the race of victims. In general, however, blacks predominated as the victims of acquaintance homicide, following the national pattern.

Offender Characteristics:

With respect to acquaintance homicide offenders, the median age for the nation was 29 years--slightly younger than their victims and younger than the offenders in family homicide. In the cities, the offenders in acquaintance homicide ranged from 25-32 years of age but, like the nation, were generally younger than family homicide offenders.

Nationally, males were the offenders in 86 percent of all cases of acquaintance homicide, with similar percentages in the city data. Thus, for both the nation and the cities, females were much less prevalent as offenders in acquaintance than in family homicide.

Blacks were more frequently the offenders in acquaintance homicide than they were in cases of family homicide. In the nation, the proportions of black and white offenders in acquaintance homicide reversed those of family homicide, as they did for victims, with blacks accounting for 54 percent and whites constituting 43 percent of the offenders. In the cities, blacks were even more predominant as acquaintance homicide offenders.

Crime Characteristics:

Nationally, the predominance of handguns as a murder weapon was greater in acquaintance homicide (49 percent) than in family homicide. Other guns, however, were less frequently used (18 percent), and were replaced by knives as the second-choice weapon (20 percent). Overall, firearms were slightly more predominant in acquaintance than in family homicide, being used in 67 percent of the cases. The cities followed the national pattern, with firearms more prevalent in acquaintance than in family homicide.

Although acquaintance homicide was more likely than family homicide to be linked to another felony, nevertheless such an association was evident only in a small minority of cases (approximately 10 percent nationally and less than 20 percent in the cities). Where a felony association did exist, it generally involved robbery or--in the cities--narcotics.

In the cities, acquaintance homicide tended to occur in a variety of locations, although private residences were (as in family homicides) the most common site. About one-half of all acquaintance homicides occurred in a residence, about one-third on the street, and from 5 to 17 percent in a bar or other commercial establishment.

Stranger Homicide

Victim Characteristics:

Nationally, the victims of stranger homicide had a median age of 31 years, intermediate between the victims of family and acquaintance homicide in age. In the cities, the median age was generally higher, averaging about 36 years. In fact, in contrast to the nation, stranger homicide victims in the cities tended to be older than the victims of other types of homicide.

In the nation, 85 percent of all stranger homicide victims were male, a higher proportion than for any other type of homicide. In the cities, as well, males predominated as stranger homicide victims, accounting for more than 80 percent in all eight cities.

Nationally, white victims constituted a considerably larger percentage of the victims of stranger homicide (64 percent) than of acquaintance or family homicide (45 and 55 percent, respectively). Blacks, by contrast, accounted for only 33 percent of the stranger homicide victims--their lowest proportion among the three types of homicide. In the cities, however, black victimization was greater, with five cities having more black than white stranger homicide victims. Nevertheless, even in these cities, the percentage of white victims was higher for stranger homicide than for the other homicide types.

Offender Characteristics:

The offenders in cases of stranger homicide were substantially younger than their victims. Nationally, the median age for offenders was 25 years, younger than for offenders in acquaintance and family homicide. The same relationship was apparent in the cities, as well, with stranger homicide offenders tending to be younger than their victims and younger than the offenders in other homicide types.

As in the other homicide types, males predominated as offenders in stranger homicide, in both the nation and the cities. Nationally, males accounted for 95 percent of all stranger homicides--the highest percentage of male offenders among the three homicide types. The same pattern of male predominance was present in the cities, as well, where the proportion of male offending was also greatest in stranger homicide.

Nationally, offenders in stranger homicide were more evenly distributed between blacks and whites than in the other type of homicide, with black offending only slightly higher than that of whites (48 and 43 percent of the cases, respectively). In seven of the eight cities, blacks predominated, as well, but the proportion of black offenders was much higher, ranging from 55 to 86 percent. Only in the one city--with the smallest black population overall--did blacks constitute a minority of the stranger homicide offenders and, even here, blacks (33 percent) predominated over whites (20 percent), with "other races" accounting for the largest proportion of offenders (47 percent).

Crime Characteristics:

Handguns were involved in a majority of all stranger homicides in the

nation (53 percent), followed by knives (17 percent) and other guns (14 percent). Overall, firearms were involved in 67 percent of the stranger homicides nationally, the same percentage as in acquaintance homicide. The cities closely approximated the national pattern, with firearms involved in an average of 68 percent of the stranger homicides.

In both the nation and the cities, stranger homicide was more likely than the other homicide types to be associated with a felony. Nationally, 46 percent of all stranger homicide were linked to other felonies with robbery being the most frequent felony association. The proportion of felony-homicides was even higher in the cities, where an average of 57 percent of the stranger homicides were associated with other felonies. As in the nation, the most common felony-homicide association was robbery-homicide.

In contrast to the other homicide types, most stranger homicides (68 percent) in the cities took place outside the home, with streets, bars, and other commercial establishments being the three most frequent sites.

In sum, the three types of homicide, family, acquaintance and stranger, share some commonalities. In all three, the victim is likely to be in his or her early 30s, is likely to be somewhat older than the offender who kills him or her, and is usually killed by a firearm. There are, however, also some key differences between the types. Family homicides involve more women both as victims and as offenders than the other two types, and they occur within the home. Acquaintance homicides involve both victims and offenders who are most likely to be black males. Stranger homicides involve a higher percentage of white victims; a higher percentage of interracial murders, and have the youngest offenders of all three types. Furthermore, stranger homicides are more commonly associated with another felony, especially robbery, and take place in public as opposed to private places.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

Regional Trends

Our analysis of homicide trends showed a linear increase in the Western region, with the homicide rate almost doubling over the eleven-year period. The analysis also showed that the Southern region, while following the national trend, had consistently higher homicide rates. These findings underscore the need for a careful review of these two regions of the country in order to determine whether particular regional (or state) characteristics may be responsible for their atypical homicide rates and, if so, how such factors (or their effects) may be reduced. Criminal justice officials in these regions should also be made aware of their special homicide problem so that greater resources might be allocated to its prevention and control.

Racial Trends

In several places in this report, we have documented a decrease in the relative involvement of blacks in homicides, both as victims and offenders, with a corresponding increase in the relative involvement of whites. Despite the fact that black overrepresentation in homicide appeared to be decreasing during the 1970s, it must be remembered that black homicide rates were still

ten times those for white citizens as late as 1978 and this racial disproportion has continued into the 1980's as well. What is needed are studies which will identify the variables associated with this decline in the disproportionate homicide victimization and offending of blacks so that policies can be developed which would encourage the continuation of these trends. The National Institutes of Health have adopted black homicide as a special program initiative and we would encourage other research and action program efforts focusing on this issue as well. Local law enforcement agencies might also increase their efforts to address the problem of black homicide by initiating special educational and crime prevention programs in black communities.

Homicide Weapons

Both nationally and in the cities, our findings clearly show firearms to be the predominant homicide weapon. In the nation, guns consistently accounted for about two-thirds of the homicides for the entire eleven-year period studied. In the cities, gun homicides predominated over any other weapon type and ranged as high as 79 percent in two of the study sites. While our data do not address the question of causality directly, they do suggest that the greater lethality of firearms might be contributing to their predominance as the weapons used in homicides, due to the greater likelihood that assaultive violence will result in the victim's death when an offender is armed with a gun than when another weapon or strongarm force is used. This has implications for legislators and criminal justice policy-makers, suggesting the appropriateness of enhanced sanctioning and sentencing policies for crimes committed with a gun, based on their greater risk of victim death or homicide.

Victim-Offender Relationships: Family, Acquaintance, and Stranger Homicide

It is frequently asserted that homicide victims and offenders have similar demographic characteristics. Our analysis suggests that, while this generalization may be valid in cases of family and acquaintance homicide, it is less appropriate in cases of stranger homicide, where there was a clear tendency for the offender to be younger than the victim and where the offender and the victim were often of different races, as well.

Our findings show several other important differences between stranger homicides and those involving acquaintances or family members. Not only were they more likely to be associated with another felony (usually a robbery), but they were also more likely to occur in the street or other public location. Both of these features make stranger homicide more open to public (and law enforcement) observation and, consequently, more susceptible than other types of homicide to both formal and informal social controls, such as police patrols, community surveillance programs, and environmental security strategies. One particular type of stranger homicide--serial murders--began to receive special attention from federal law enforcement officials, with the establishment of a special FBI "Behavioral Science Unit" focusing solely on its investigation and control. Our findings suggest that priority programs should be initiated to address other types of stranger homicide as well, by criminal justice agencies at all jurisdictional levels.

Both nationally and in the cities, our findings show little female

involvement in acquaintance and stranger homicide. This was not the case in family homicide, however, where we found considerable female victimization and offending. In light of this finding, we suggest that the increased utilization of female police officers (or of teams consisting of one male and one female officer) to respond to family violence calls deserves promotion as a law enforcement strategy.

Family homicide has traditionally presented special problems for law enforcement, due to its less public character and a social attitude respecting the privacy of family interactions. However, our findings show that a sizeable proportion (approximately one-fifth) of all homicides during the period studied (1976-1978) occurred between family members and this proportion has remained constant through the early 1980's as well. Because of its frequency, therefore, it is recommended that law enforcement officials establish stricter and more consistently-applied procedures for dealing with family homicide and for responding to family violence incidents before they escalate to homicide. In this regard, our data support the recommendations recently issued by the Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence in its Final Report (September, 1984), which specifies specific law enforcement and adjudication procedures which local criminal justice agencies should adopt for dealing with family violence and homicide.

Finally, the differences found among family, acquaintance, and stranger homicide clearly show the utility of the relationship-based classification system adopted by this study and suggest the need for further research which will examine in greater detail the factors associated with (and the impacts of) homicides involving each of these three types of victim-offender relationship. Such research could have potential implications for differential criminal justice policies which would maximize the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts against each type.

END