ASSESSING INCREASES IN VIOLENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF HOMICIDE CASES FROM ORLEANS PARISH, LOUISIANA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

In

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

By
Helen Virginia Bouzon
B. A., University of Tennessee, 2001
May 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks goes to Dr. Frank Minyard, Coroner Orleans Parish, for allowing me to use his facility for my research. A special thanks also goes to Mr. John Gagliano, Chief Coroner's Investigator, for helping me gain access to the coroner's office and showing me around. I would also like to thank Ms. Ann Black for keeping me entertained, making sure I was well fed, and making me feel at home. Additionally, I would like to thank the ladies in the toxicology lab for their friendship and assistance. Thank you to all of the staff of the Orleans Parish coroner's office for making each day enjoyable.

Thank you to my advisor, Ms. Mary H. Manhein, for all your assistance during this project. Thank you for helping me gain access to the coroner's office, for your guidance, and for your support. Thank you also to the other members of my committee, Dr. Miles Richardson and Dr. Robert Tague, for your patience and guidance.

I would like to thank my dear friends, Tia and Kady Lamb, for all their support and encouragement during this project. Without your love and friendship this project would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family, most importantly, my mother and father, Leonard Bouzon and Catherine Kinabrew. I would like to thank them for all the love and support they have given me over the years. Without their encouragement and patience, this thesis would not have been possible. Thank you also to John Kniabrew for your support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Analysis of homicides in different cities can provide valuable research information. The information gathered from such an analysis can be used to aid those who are the primary targets of homicide. Such studies can also be used to understand the nature of homicide and what measures can be taken to decrease the rates of homicide. Information on the nature of homicide and who is primarily affected can be used by police departments and public organizations to develop methods to decrease the amount of homicide in any area.

This study is an analysis of homicide cases from the Orleans Parish coroner's office. A total of 1,334 cases were reviewed. The first goal of the research was to determine trends in homicides in Orleans Parish. The second goal was to determine whether the rate of violence in homicide cases has increased over time. To determine changes over time, the years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000 were reviewed. The results of this study indicate that African American males aged 21 to 30 are the primary victims of homicide in Orleans Parish. Gun related homicides were consistently in the majority.

When violence was analyzed, the results indicated that homicides in Orleans Parish have become more violent in recent years. Both the number of overly violent cases per year and the average number of wounds per victim increased over the years under study. The results also indicated that the victims of overly violent homicides were principally African American males aged 21 to 30.

INTRODUCTION

Homicide has long been a problem in our world. “Although man views the fatal gesture with abhorrence, still it persists. Brother kills brother; spouse kills spouse; neighbor kills neighbor; stranger kills stranger; the assaultive hand is turned even against the self” (Danto 1982:vii-viii). One of the most important factors in understanding homicide is comprehending how and why murder is committed. Knowing what factors lead one human being to kill another human being offers an understanding of the nature of our human race. Recognizing what causes people to commit excessively violent crimes offers insight into the increasing violence in our society.

Investigation of homicide cases has been carried out in numerous studies. Previous studies have focused on a wide range of variables. Some studies have focused on sex, race, and age assessment of victims and offenders (Fox and Zawitz 2001; Wolfgang 1958). Other studies have looked at comparisons between homicide rates in different nations, states, or cities (Fox and Zawitz 2001; Parker and Pruitt 2000). Further studies have considered the causes of increases or decreases in homicide rates over time. Information gathered from these kinds of studies can offer valuable insight into understanding homicide. A better understanding of the nature of homicide can further assist law enforcement in solving cases and in taking measures to decrease homicide rates.

The media has claimed that violence has increased in the United States in recent decades. This increase in violence, in turn, is often associated with the media itself. Excessive violence in movies, television, and video games has been blamed for the increase in violence in our society. However, statistics show that the rates of homicide

have begun to decrease in our nation (Fox and Zawitz 2001). To understand the amount of violence present in today's society, homicide cases should be assessed to determine if a decrease in the number of homicide cases has been coupled with an increase in the amount of violence present in each case. All homicide cases are violent, but the degree of violence in each case can differ. Unlike the numerous studies on homicide rates based on age, sex, or race and studies on overall homicide rates, few studies have considered the overall degree of violence in homicide cases.

Orleans Parish is located in southeastern Louisiana. The parish includes the city of New Orleans and the surrounding areas. Orleans Parish stretches from the Mississippi River to Lake Ponchartrain in the north to south direction and from Jefferson Parish to St. Bernard Parish in the west to east direction. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), Orleans Parish included a population of 484,647 people in the year 2000. The population of Orleans Parish constituted 10.8 percent of the total population of Louisiana in the year 2000. In the year 2000, Louisiana had a total of 560 reported homicides. Orleans Parish, on the other hand, had a total of 204 reported homicides. The homicide rate in Orleans Parish represented 36.4 percent of the total homicide rate for the state of Louisiana (Fox and Zawitz 2001).

This study focuses on homicide cases from Orleans Parish in an attempt to determine shifts in the amount of violence over time. Information on homicide cases was obtained from the Orleans Parish coroner's office. In order to gain a perspective on changes in violence over time, the years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000 were used in this analysis. Orleans Parish was chosen as the target area because of the high rate of crime that continuously occurs in the parish.

This study analyzes information on homicide cases including sex, race, age, marital status, occupation, nativity, date of death, time of death, cause of death, location of the homicide incident, date of trauma, time of trauma, number of wounds, location of wounds on the body, weapons used, presence of drugs or alcohol, the situation surrounding the homicide, and the district in which the homicide took place. The first objective of this analysis was to analyze the information to determine trends in homicide cases in Orleans Parish during the years mentioned above. The second objective was to determine whether the rate of violence increased over time.

Analysis of this type of data offers insight into trends in homicide cases in Orleans Parish. The information gained from this type of analysis can be used by law enforcement to determine methods for decreasing the rate of homicide. The information can also be used to assist in implementing measures to decrease the amount of violence present in today's society. This study focuses on the victims of homicide rather than the perpetrators. The information presented in this study is meant to aid those who are the primary victims of homicide. The information should not be used to target groups represented in this study. Rather, it should be used to develop public safety measures to decrease the amount of violence and to aid those who are the primary targets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Homicide is legally defined as, “the destruction of human life by the act, agency, procurement or culpable omission of some other person or persons. It can result from an act or from failure to perform an act where the duty to act is imposed by law” (Adelson 1974:3). There are numerous forms of homicide. The type of homicide committed in a specific case must be established in order for punishment, or lack thereof, to be determined. Homicide can be defined in numerous ways including criminal, non-criminal, justifiable, or excusable. Criminal homicides include, “violent deaths which are legally classified as murder (in the first or second degree) or manslaughter” (Adelson 1974:4). Homicides which are considered non-criminal are those which include justifiable and excusable homicide. Justifiable homicides are those committed by law enforcement in the line of duty. Justifiable homicides also include cases in which an offender is killed by a person in self-defense or to protect that person’s property. Homicides which are excusable are those cases in which death occurred as the result of an accident or unintended injury (Adelson 1974). First degree murder is, “the willful, deliberate and premeditated killing of a human being, feloniously and maliciously” (Wolfgang 1958:23). Second degree murder is, “the killing of a human being, feloniously and maliciously, but without specific intent to take life” (Wolfgang 1958:23). Manslaughter differs from murder in that it does not involve malice or intent to cause injury. Voluntary manslaughter is defined as, “the unlawful killing of another in a sudden heat of anger, without premeditation, malice or depravity of heart” (Wolfgang 1958:24). Finally, involuntary manslaughter involves the unintentional killing of another without

malice (Wolfgang 1958). These are only a sample of the numerous ways in which homicide can be defined.

Information on Homicide

Specific information on homicide cases can be gathered from police departments, coroners' offices, and medical examiners. In the police department, the homicide detective takes part in homicide investigation. The homicide detective gathers information concerning conditions of the crime scene, assessment of the victim, information from witnesses, and any other information concerning the homicide itself. In cases of homicide, the victim's body is then sent to the coroner's office for determining cause of death and for autopsy. In the autopsy, the coroner gains valuable information on the cause and manner of death of the victims. The coroner also offers an accurate time of death (Bintliff 1993).

Medical examiners are similar to coroners in the work they perform. Depending on a parish's or county's jurisdiction, it will have either a coroner, medical examiner, or both. A coroner may be elected or appointed and in some cases can be a funeral director. A medical examiner, on the other hand, is usually appointed and typically has medical qualifications (Wingate 1992). Coroners and medical examiners are consulted in cases of, "unnatural or suspected unnatural deaths" (Hanzlick and Combs 1998:870). The coroner or medical examiner is required to complete an autopsy report in cases of homicide, suicide, and accidental deaths. The autopsy report includes information on the age, race, and sex of the victim, date and time of death, a description of the body of the deceased, a detailed description of all wounds found on the body, toxicological examination, and cause of death (Wilson 1992). In Louisiana, parishes have the coroner system.

Types of Trauma

Information gathered from autopsy reports offers insight into the wounding patterns found on an individual. The autopsy report records the types, number, size, and location of wounds on each individual. The types of wounds present in any case are divided into numerous categories. Types of wounds include gunshot, knife, blunt force, asphyxia, and child abuse. Each type of wound creates different patterns on the body and can be caused by different objects.

When recording gunshot wounds in an autopsy, the coroner makes note of where the wounds occur, the number of wounds, the size of the entrances, the body structures penetrated by the bullets, whether the bullet exits or lodges in the body, and the size of the exit or fragment recovered. Because types of guns vary widely, the types of wounds they create can also vary widely. Guns are the most commonly used weapon in homicide, with handguns being used most often (Welti et al. 1999).

The type of ammunition can also have an effect on the subsequent wound that is produced. Guns, and therefore bullets, come in many different calibers. The size of a bullet that will fit in a gun is determined by the size of the gun barrel. Bullet calibers include .22, .25, .32, .38, .357, .380, 9mm, .40, .44, and .45 bullets. Bullets that are .22 and .25 are considered small caliber while bullets that are .32, .38, .357, .380, and 9mm are considered medium caliber. Large caliber bullets are the .40, .44, and .45 bullets. A bullet caliber can be increased in strength if it is a magnum bullet such as the .357 magnum and .44 magnum. Generally, the larger the bullet caliber, the more destruction the bullet causes. Guns can be either semiautomatic or automatic. In a semiautomatic, the gun fires one bullet at a time and the trigger must be pulled each time. An automatic gun

will fire bullets continuously until the trigger is released or until there are no more bullets in the gun (Welti et al. 1999).

A bullet must do three things if it is to inflict a fatal wound. The bullet must "penetrate sufficiently into the body, directly impact (or come close to) a vital organ or structure, and impart a relatively large amount of energy over a relatively short period of time" (Welti et al. 1999:80). Entrance wounds may be classified based on the distance of the gun from the victim at the time of the shooting. Entrance wounds can be classified as contact, intermediate, and indeterminate. In a contact entry wound, the gun is placed against the skin and fired. Contact wounds involving small caliber bullets will create exit wounds roughly the same size as the entry wound. Contact wounds involving medium and large caliber bullets create entry wounds that are larger than the exit wound. Intermediate wounds occur when the gun is between one and thirty inches from the skin. Both contact and intermediate wounds tend to leave gun residue on the skin near the area of entry. Indeterminate wounds result when there is no gun residue on the skin causing the distance of the gun from the skin to be indeterminable. A gunshot wound can also be classified as a graze wound. Graze wounds occur when a bullet travels across the skin but does not enter the body (Welti et al. 1999).

Wounds caused by rifles and shotguns have a much greater effect on the body than do wounds caused by handguns. The greater amount of damage caused by rifles and shotguns is due to the greater amount of kinetic energy that is released from a rifle or shotgun barrel. Rifle bullets cause more damage to internal organs than do handgun bullets. Shotguns produce wounds that are large and often leave pellets surrounding the

area of the entry wound. Unlike handgun residue, shotgun pellet dispersion is more likely when a shotgun is held far away from the body (Welti et al. 1999).

When recording knife wounds in an autopsy, the coroner makes note of where the wounds occur, the number of wounds, the types of wounds, the size of the entrances, the body structures penetrated by the weapon, and the depth of the wound (Mason 1978). As with guns, different types of knives cause different types of wounds. Homicides involving knives are less frequent than those involving guns. However, the number of wounds is often greater in cases involving knives than in cases involving guns.

Knives and sharp instruments create wounds with straight, sharp borders. Wounds created by knives can be either incised or stab wounds. Incised wounds are wounds that do not penetrate deep into the skin. Incised wounds occur when a knife or sharp object is drawn across the skin rather than plunged into the body. Stab wounds, on the other hand, are deep rather than shallow. Stab wounds that encounter bone are often longer than they are deep. Wounds created by large cutting objects may display marks similar to those created by blunt force including bruising. Multiple stab wounds cause excessive bleeding which leads to death. However, a single stab wound that penetrates a vital area such as the jugular vein can also lead to death from excessive bleeding. Often in cases of stabbings, the victim will display numerous wounds which are not fatal. Such wounds include both incised wounds and wounds of defense (Welti et al. 1999).

Unlike bullet calibers, the type of knife used is not always determinable. This is due, in part, to the fact that the length or depth of the wound may not match the size of the object used (Welti et al. 1999). When the weapon is extracted from the body the wound becomes rounder because of skin’s elastic quality. When bruising is present

around a stab wound, it often indicates that the knife was plunged into the skin up to the hilt of the weapon. When attempting to determine the size of the object used, the coroner can use the shallowest stab to determine the weapon's minimum length. The other measurements can then be used to suggest the relative size of the weapon (Mason 1978).

According to Mason (1978:155), it takes little force to create a stab wound and "once the skin is penetrated the weapon slips easily through all the underlying tissues and viscera." Because stab wounds require excessive bleeding to cause death, the victim can often function for a longer period of time than would be expected before collapsing. According to Mason (1978), homicide cases involving upwards of 40 stab wounds are often associated with a homosexual homicide. In cases of homosexual homicide, most of the wounds are of an incised rather than stab quality (Mason 1978).

When recording blunt force injury in an autopsy, the coroner makes note of where the wounds occur, the types of wounds, and the resulting destruction to the inner body. As with guns and knives, different types of blunt objects cause different types of wounds. Homicides involving blunt objects are similar to those involving knives in that they are less frequent than those involving guns. The number of wounds from blunt force injury can be equal to those created by knives or more extensive.

According to Welti et al. (1999:1), blunt force injury "occurs when excessive energy impacts the tissues. Severity is determined not only by the amount of force applied, but also by how rapidly it is applied and over how much of the body surface." Cases involving numerous wounds to a small area are more destructive than cases involving wounds distributed over a wide surface. Blunt force injuries can be divided into numerous types including contusions, hematomas, subdural hematomas, abrasions, and

lacerations. Contusions are wounds that disrupt blood vessels under the skin. Hematomas are wounds where blood gathers in an area due to injury. Subdural hematomas occur when the brain moves inside the skull causing tearing and blood clotting. Abrasions are areas where the skin has been forcefully rubbed by a foreign object or surface. Finally, lacerations are areas of the skin that have torn due to severe impact. Lacerations are often surrounded by contusions or abrasions. In some cases of blunt force injury, the type of weapon used can be determined from the resulting wounding pattern left on the skin (Welti et al. 1999).

Kicking and punching are specific types of blunt force injury because they involve body parts as weapons rather than foreign objects. All areas of the body can be affected by a kick or punch if it is forceful enough. Kicks and punches can produce both external and internal injuries which can be severe in nature. When kicked or punched a victim may fall to the ground which, in many cases, elicits further beating from the assailant. The victim usually takes a defensive position when knocked to the ground. Eventually, the victim may become unconscious though this does not always stop the perpetrator from continuing to beat the victim. Extensive head injury and skull fractures can result from a prolonged beating which eventually leads to death (Mason 1978).

Asphyxiation is similar to blunt force injury in the wounds it produces. Asphyxiation can create contusions, hematomas, and abrasions. According to Welti et al. (1999:109), asphyxiation is typically associated with “external bruising of the neck, extensive bleeding into the muscles and soft tissues of the neck, [and] fractures of the cornua of the hyoid and thyroid cartilage.” The extent of the injury indicates both the amount of struggle involved and the victim’s age. Because younger individuals have

more elastic bodies, the hyoid and thyroid are not usually fractured in cases of asphyxiation. If the strangulation is not manual, marks from the object used are often evident on the skin of the neck. Fingernail marks on the neck are common in cases of asphyxiation because of attempts by the victim to struggle (Welti et al. 1999). In cases of manual strangulation, finger marks from the perpetrator can often be seen on the skin of the neck. Asphyxiation may also cause marks on the eyelids of the victim from blood clotting. According to Mason (1978:190), the extent of the wounds caused by asphyxiation "is more closely related to the position and force of the construction than to its nature." Cases involving asphyxiation are often associated with sexual assault and rape (Mason 1978).

Child abuse is a unique form of physical homicide because of the age of the victims. Child abuse resulting in death is attributed to cases where a victim displays multiple wounds that often combine old and new wounds. Child abuse can come in many forms, but common wounds found on child abuse victims include rib fractures, burns, abrasions, and bruises. In some cases, the wounds on a child are not evident until an autopsy is performed when hemorrhages and hematomas may be found under the skin. Many child abuse cases involve claims that the child fell, but the extent and seriousness of the injuries indicate otherwise. Child abuse is often suspected in cases where there was delayed treatment for the child by the parents. Because children have more elastic and undeveloped bodies, they are more susceptible to death from abuse than are adults (Welti et al. 1999).

Studies on Homicide

Studies on homicide trends in the United States are common (Bell and Vila 1996; Fox and Zawitz 2001; Kraus 1987; Parker and Pruitt 2000; Wolfgang 1958). Fox and Zawitz (2001) studied trends in homicide in the United States from 1976 to 2000. This study found that homicide rates in the United States declined after 1991. The study focused on trends by sex, race, age, number of victims and offenders, circumstances surrounding homicides, weapons used, regional trends, city size, and clearances (number of solved cases). Fox and Zawitz (2001) found that males comprised 75 percent of homicide victims and were eight times more likely to commit homicide than were females. African Americans were six times more likely than Caucasians to be murdered and were eight times more likely to commit a homicide. Homicide victims were typically 25-34 years of age and offenders were usually 18-24 years of age. Multiple offenders in homicide cases were more likely than multiple victims. Homicide cases where circumstances surrounding the incident were unknown increased significantly. Fox and Zawitz (2001) also found that homicides are typically committed using handguns. Most homicides occurred in cities with populations over 100,000. Finally, the number of homicide cases in the United States which were solved (when the offender is arrested, charged, and convicted) steadily decreased until recent times (Fox and Zawitz 2001).

In comparison to the United States, Louisiana has also seen a decrease in the number of homicide cases in recent years according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001). The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001) covered all years from 1976 until 2000 and offered information on the age, race, and sex of homicide victims as well as the weapons used and the number of homicide cases per year. As with the rest of the United

States, in Louisiana males constituted the majority of homicide victims. African Americans were more likely than Caucasians to be murdered. Homicide victims were typically 25-34 years of age followed by victims 18-24 years of age. In Louisiana, guns were the most commonly used weapon in homicide cases for the years covered in the study (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2001).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001), in comparison to Louisiana, Orleans Parish has also seen a decrease in the number of homicide cases in recent years. As with the rest of the United States and Louisiana, in Orleans Parish males constituted the majority of homicide victims. African Americans were more likely than Caucasians to be murdered. Unlike the United States and Louisiana, homicide victims in Orleans Parish were typically 18-24 years of age followed by victims 25-34 years of age. Guns were still the most commonly used weapon in homicide cases in Orleans Parish (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2001).

Historically, homicide rates have been the highest in the South. Compared to the rest of the country, the South has shown the highest homicide rates since the 1880s. Parker and Pruitt (2000) claimed that homicide rates in the West have begun to exceed those in the South especially for certain race groups. Parker and Pruitt (2000) examined causes of race-specific homicide in the United States. In comparing race-specific homicide rates for the South and the West, Parker and Pruitt (2000) found many similarities. However, further research showed that these similarities broke down once "structural and cultural forces that contribute to the race-specific homicide rates" were analyzed (Parker and Pruitt 2000:1483). In terms of structural conditions, Parker and

Pruitt (2000) referred specifically to resource depravation and social isolation as contributing to the higher rates of homicide among African Americans.

Jess Kraus (1987) studied homicide in the workplace. The study looked at homicide cases from 1979 to 1981 in California. One goal of the research was to identify those jobs with the highest possibility of work related homicide. The study found that, "Police and security guards and persons in occupations having frequent public contact involving exchange of money, particularly in late afternoon or evening hours, were at highest risk" (Kraus 1987:1285). There were slight differences in homicide rates in the workplace for males and for females. Males were two times more likely than females to be killed while at work. The study also noted that guns were the primary weapons used in work related homicides (Kraus 1987).

Though the above mentioned studies were concerned with the rate of homicide in a specific circumstance, none considered the amount of violence present in actual homicide cases. One study that did consider the issue of violence in homicide cases was conducted by Marvin Wolfgang (1958) in Philadelphia. Though his study focused on all of the previous mentioned variables, the amount of violence in homicide cases in Philadelphia from 1948 to 1952 was also considered. The study attempted to analyze violent homicides and to measure the amount of violence. Wolfgang (1958:158-159) stated, "Police reports and those of the medical examiner make possible a record of the number of assaultive acts in each criminal homicide, on the basis of which the following classification of violence was made: (a) two acts; (b) three to five acts; (c) more than five acts; (d) severe beating; (e) severe beating followed by one stab; (f) severe beating followed by one shot." The study found a significant correlation between the offender's

sex and the amount of violence. Males were more likely to commit violent homicide than were females. Whites were slightly more violent than African Americans. The highest amount of violence inflicted by an offender occurred in the age group from 20 to 29. Sex of the victim also showed a significant correlation with females being more likely to be killed in a violent manner by those with whom they are personally involved (Wolfgang 1958).

Bell and Vila (1996) studied homicide cases in Fort Lauderdale, Florida from 1982 to 1992. The study focused on the rates of violence among homosexual homicides compared to heterosexual homicides. Bell and Vila (1996) state that homosexual homicides have been found more violent and involve overkill and excessive wounding of the victims. Bell and Vila (1996) analyzed cases of homicide based on number and extent of injuries for homosexual and heterosexual cases. Bell and Vila (1996) found that homosexual homicides were more violent in terms of number of injuries and extent of injuries found on the body of the victims. The authors also found that in homosexual cases of homicide there were often multiple causes of death.

Determining what constitutes violence in homicide cases can be arbitrary. However, distinction must be made between what is considered violent and what is non-violent. As stated previously, all homicide cases are violent but the degree of violence in each case can differ. Wolfgang (1958) grappled with this issue in his own study. “It may be argued that two stabs or two gunshots are not necessarily violent. However, in terms of both our prevailing idealized and behavioral norms governing human interrelationships, it may be contended just as strongly that an individual who can fire a gun a second or more times after having once pulled a trigger, heard the blast, and seen

his victim stagger, or who can raise his knife a second time after having felt his weapon cut or puncture flesh, and after having seen blood flow, has engaged in behavior somewhat more violent than one act involves" (Wolfgang 1958:159).

In order to determine if violence has increased or decreased, a definition of what constitutes violence must be reached. Though such a consensus may be achieved, there would still be problems in determining whether violence has increased or decreased. According to Mason (1978:371), the problem of determining increase or decrease persists because "the total amount of violence in a society can never be accurately measured because the vast majority is domestic in nature and occurs behind closed doors." Mason (1978) also recognized that determining increase or decrease in violence depends on the amount of time considered in the analysis. An increase or decrease in violence may be found when looking at a short span of time. Yet, according to Mason (1978:371), "It may be true, for example, that violence has increased or decreased over the past decade but does that mean very much in terms of the social history of a nation?" When a larger time frame is considered, a different trend may be discovered.

Not all violent incidents will be reported to the police. The recent trends in increased police reporting could be due to an increase in public willingness to report such incidents. Regardless of whether or not this causes a change in estimating violence, the fact that society is more willing to report cases of violence is a positive change. Because of technology, today's society has reached a global level of communication. The global level of communication can be negative in that it can expose people to more types of violence around the world. However, global communication can also be positive in that it can entice people to react against the violence found in our world (Mason 1978).

The Media

Though homicide rates have declined in recent years, the media often proclaims that our society has become more violent. What is questioned is whether the media is responsible for the increase in violence in our society or whether the media is simply responding to the increase in violence. There are many ways that humans learn about cultural behavior. Children learn appropriate cultural behavior from adult instruction and from observing their peers. As they develop, children begin to understand what kind of behavior is acceptable in their culture. As children continue to grow, influences such as the media can affect their view of social norms. The media, in turn, can be altered by changes in social norms (Potter 2003).

Because the media can have such a strong influence on people's perceptions of appropriate social behavior, the media has often been blamed for the increase in violence that has occurred in today's society. Television, movies, music, comic books, and video games have become increasingly violent in recent times. Potter (2003) believed this increase in violence in the media had, in effect, desensitized us, causing crime rates to increase. According to Potter (2003:xiii), "the media are conditioning people to believe that aggression and violence are the means to living an exciting life. Even if we were to lock up all of today's criminals, the media are still helping to train another generation to believe that violence is a successful way to solve problems."

Because culture often involves imitation and conformity, an increase in violence in the media can be seen as a causative factor for an increase in the amount of violence in our society. However, some claim that the media is not to blame for the increase in violence. Barker (2001) argued that many people can view violence in the media without

any effect on their subsequent action. What is important is how people respond to violence in the media through their understanding of culture. Though studies have found that media violence does affect behavior, those who argue against the influence of media violence claim that the way in which violence is defined in these kinds of studies is faulty (Barker 2001). Regardless, the media has the potential to have some effect on our behavior. But as Mason (1978:373) argued, the media "would be amazingly successful if they could really make us change our basic habits and attitudes."

People today claim to be revolted by the amount of violence present in our society. Yet, as Danto (1982:73) explained, "let even a handyman get murdered in a small-town barroom misunderstanding, and it's big news to the weekly paper." Stories about high-profile murders can be found on the front page of any newspaper. Some newspapers will go so far as to have anniversary write-ups about high-profile cases. On the other hand, stories of everyday murders which do not involve high-profile victims or perpetrators are often forgotten shortly after being reported (Danto 1982). Because high-profile cases tend to be sensationalized by the media while low-profile cases are given little attention, the media remains an inappropriate source for determining the amount of violence present in today's society.

Solutions

Homicide continues to be a problem in today's society regardless of the amount of violence involved. Communities must take action in order to decrease the number of homicides and possibly the violence involved in homicide. There are numerous solutions available to decrease the amount of homicide. Most importantly, what is needed is the will of the society to make changes. According to Danto (1982) education regarding

violent crime is needed at all levels of society. Schools should implement programs to teach students about crime. Community resources which aim to help both the victims and perpetrators of crime should be established (Danto 1982). The U.S. Department of Justice conducted a study on homicide in eight U.S. cities including New Orleans. The study noted that homicide rates decreased with the implementation of, "social and public services, including emergency medical services and domestic violence programs" (U.S. Department of Justice 1997:3). Increases in law enforcement services and resources were also cited as helping to decrease the homicide rate (U.S. Department of Justice 1997). Studies aimed at gathering profile data of both the victims and perpetrators of homicide can be used to gain a better understanding of the nature of homicide. These studies can offer information on why people commit murder, how the victims are involved, and how the families of the victims deal with the death of their loved ones (Danto 1982).

Because guns account for the majority of homicides, some measure of gun control is necessary. According to Danto (1982:47), "although only 25 percent of all firearms in this country are hand guns, they are used in 75 percent of the homicides involving firearms." One argument for the lack of gun control is that people have a right to protect themselves. This argument is used to justify keeping guns in the home for protection from robbery. However, according to Danto (1982), guns kept in the home are rarely used for such occasions. More often, guns kept in the home are used in suicides or domestic homicides. To some extent, the easy access Americans have to guns accounts for the high rate of gun-related homicides in this country. Though some measures have been taken to reduce the amount of access to guns, further steps must be taken to alleviate this problem.

This chapter focuses on the issue of homicide in our society. An explanation of the different forms of homicide shows the diversity with which people can commit murder. Case studies on homicide offer insight into the rates of homicide in our nation. An analysis of homicide trends in Orleans Parish will offer a better understanding of how homicide in New Orleans relates to homicide in the rest of Louisiana and in the United States. Most importantly, this study can be used to determine whether the amount of violence in homicide cases has increased or decreased.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Information for this study was gathered from files at the Orleans Parish coroner's office. The research took place from June of 2003 to January of 2004. The Orleans Parish coroner's office handles cases from New Orleans and the surrounding areas. Cases which are sent to the coroner's office are those which involve unnatural deaths. Unnatural deaths include deaths from homicide, suicide, child abuse, accident, or similar circumstances. When a case arrives at the coroner's office, an autopsy is performed to determine the cause of death in each case. At the autopsy, samples of tissue and blood are taken for analysis. In cases of suspected rape or sexual assault, swabs of the mouth, vagina, and anus are also taken for analysis. These samples are analyzed to determine blood type, presence of drugs or alcohol, and presence of semen in the body. An autopsy report is then completed and filed along with the findings from the blood and tissue analysis. The coroner's files also contain a day record detailing when the case was called in to the coroner's office and picked up by the coroner's office. In cases of homicide, most files contain a police report describing the details of the case.

The coroner's office contains records on cases from 1980 until present. Cases which occurred before 1980 are held at the Orleans Parish public library. In order to study violence over time, this analysis attempted to focus on a range of dates that was as wide as possible. Therefore, the years under study included 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000. Because files at the library would have been more difficult to obtain, the study began with the year 1980. In order to ensure that the final year of analysis was complete, the year 2000 was chosen as the last year of study.

The Orleans Parish coroner's office keeps a record of all cases brought to their office. The information from the day record is recorded in a log book. The day record includes a case number and the deceased's name, sex, race, age, marital status, occupation, nativity, address, date of death, time of death, cause of death, date of trauma, and location of the homicide incident. All of this information is entered into the log book. The log book identifies the classification of all cases considered unnatural. Log books from each of the years under study were consulted to find which cases were classified as homicides. As each case of homicide was identified, the information contained in the log book was recorded on a form created by the researcher (Figure 1). Once all the information was collected from each log book, the number of homicide cases per year was calculated.

After information from the log book was collected, the autopsy reports had to be located in order to gather the remaining information. Autopsy reports are filed at the coroner's office by year and by the name of the victim. To ensure anonymity of the victims, only a case number created by the researcher was recorded on the researcher's form. The names of the victims were recorded on a separate form in order for the files to be located. Once all files were located, the form containing the names of the victims was destroyed. In order to further ensure anonymity, the address of the deceased was recorded by street only rather than house number.

Date Entered: _____ **Case number: _____**

Address of deceased: _____
Sex: _____ **Race: _____** **Age: _____**
Marital status: _____ **Occupation: _____**
Nativity: _____ **Date of death: _____** **Time of death: _____**

Cause of death: _____
_____
_____
_____

Location of event: _____

Date of trauma: _____ **Time of trauma: _____**
Number of wounds: _____
_____
Location of trauma on body: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Description of trauma: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Weapons used _____
_____
Presence of drugs or alcohol _____
_____
_____
_____
Situation surrounding the incident_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
District_____

Figure 1: Researcher's form

When collecting files for analysis, not all of the files could be located. The number of missing files tended to be small. For the years 1990, 1985, and 1980 a few files were located which were not recorded in the log books. These files were added to the study. The year 1990 proved to be the most difficult due to the fact that roughly half of the files could not be located. The un-located files from 1990 were stored in an alternate location and, therefore, could not be gathered for the study. The cases in which files were missing were not excluded from the study because some information could still be gained from what was recorded in the log books. The year 1990 was also not excluded because there were still a large number of files present for a significant analysis. A total of 1,334 cases were located and recorded.

Once files were located, the remaining information necessary for the study was gathered. The autopsy reports were reviewed to obtain information regarding a full explanation of the cause of death, the number of wounds, location of wounds, and the tracks of bullets and knife wounds. The toxicology reports were reviewed to obtain information on the presence or absence of alcohol or drugs. If alcohol was present, the amount of alcohol was recorded. If drugs were present, the types of drugs were recorded. The blood and tissue analysis was not used except to record cases where semen was present on the body of the victim. Finally, the police reports were reviewed to obtain information on the date of trauma, time of trauma, location of the homicide incident, weapon used, the situation surrounding the homicide incident, and the police district in which the incident took place. In many cases, the police reports filed with the coroner's office were the initial reports filed after the incident occurred. Typically, follow-up police reports were not included in the coroner's files. Therefore, the information contained in

the police reports may have changed once a full investigation was performed by the police department. Not all case files contained a toxicology report, blood and tissue analysis, or police report.

In cases where a file did not contain the required information, the category was listed as unknown. On some occasions, information differed from one report to another. The date of death and time of death were recorded in both the log books and autopsy reports. If the two records differed, the information contained in the autopsy report was used. The address of the deceased was recorded in both the day record and in the police report. On numerous occasions, the two reports differed in the recorded address of the victim. Because of this, the address of the deceased was removed from this study. Initially, information on alterations to the body after death was considered for this study. However, the autopsy and police reports rarely contained such information so it too was removed from the study. The presence of semen on the body was recorded but was not used in the analysis.

Once all the information was recorded, it was entered into a Microsoft Excel database. A separate database was used for each year under study. Each year was further divided according to the manner in which the victims were killed. Each year was divided into subheadings according to the following: homicides involving guns, homicides that were physical in nature (including strangulation, beating, or burning), homicides involving knives, and multiple weapon homicides. A section was also created for information from those files that were missing. Each case was entered into the database under the appropriate subheading. Once all of the information was entered into the database, it was analyzed. In order to perform an analysis, each variable recorded had to

be divided into categories and counted. Each type of homicide (gun, physical, knife, multiple weapon, and those with missing files) within each year was counted separately. The totals for each year were analyzed first. Once information on each year had been analyzed, information on each type of homicide was analyzed.

For each variable studied, some of the categories used were those established by the log books, autopsy reports, toxicology reports, and police reports. Other categories were established by the researcher. The variables and categories used to analyze all years under study were as follows:

Number of cases per year
Type of homicide: gun-related, knife-related, physical, multiple weapon, or missing file
Sex of the victim: Male or female
Race of the victim: African American, White, Asian, "other", or unknown
Age of the victim: Under 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51 to 60, 61 to 70, 71 and above, or unknown
Marital status of the victim: Single (never married), married, divorced, widowed, or unknown
Nativity of the victim: Louisiana, another state in the United States, another country, or unknown
Date of trauma and date of death: recorded by month or unknown; date of trauma was further recorded by day of the week on which the trauma occurred or unknown
Difference in the date of trauma and date of death: less than one day, one to two days, more than two days, or unknown
Time of trauma and time of death: 12:00 AM to 3:59 AM, 4:00 AM to 7:59 AM, 8:00 AM to 11:59 AM, 12:00 PM to 3:59 PM, 4:00 PM to 7:59 PM, 8:00 PM to 11:59 PM, or unknown
Difference in the time of trauma and time of death: less than one hour, one to twenty-four hours, more than twenty-four hours, or unknown
Police district in which the homicide occurred: first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, or unknown. In some cases, homicide incidents occurred outside of Orleans Parish. In such cases, a victim was transported to Orleans Parish for treatment but subsequently expired as a result of their wounds. The cases are still considered Orleans Parish cases because the victim died in Orleans Parish.
Location of the homicide incident: recorded by street
Presence of drugs at the time of death: no record, negative, positive, type of drugs present in cases with positive results
Presence of alcohol at the time of death: no record, negative, positive, level of alcohol in cases with positive results
Situation surrounding the homicide incident: caused by an argument, over drugs,

domestic issues, domestic issues leading to a homicide/suicide, revenge, robbery, police intervention, someone playing with or cleaning a gun or other weapon, drive-by, occurring inside or outside of a bar, victim found lying outside, victim found lying inside, victim found sitting in a car, victim who had been reported missing, beating, victim found in an abandoned area, "other" cause, or unknown

Occupation of the victim: recorded according to what was listed in the log book

Because the data were quantified separately based on type of homicide, certain variables were divided differently depending on the type of homicide involved. The variables and categories used to analyze each type of homicide were as follows:

Gun-related Homicides:

Number of cases per year

Cause of death: single gunshot wound, multiple gunshot wounds, single shotgun wound, multiple shotgun wounds, or multiple gunshot and shotgun wounds

Number of wounds per victim: 1 to 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, or 31 to 40

Tracks of bullets: total number of bullets that exited the bodies of the victims per year, total number of bullets that lodged in the bodies of the victims per year, number of unknown tracks, and total number of wounds per year

Presence of additional wounds: Recorded as the presence or absence of additional wounds. Additional wounds included bullet grazes, abrasions, lacerations, and contusions.

Types of weapons used: handgun, shotgun, rifle, handgun and shotgun; handgun and rifle; or unknown

Physical Homicides:

Number of cases per year

Cause of death: asphyxiation, asphyxiation and other injury; head injury, body injury, head and body injury; burn injury

Number of affected body sections per victim: Because the number of wounds in physical cases was not typically counted in the autopsy reports, a different method was devised. The number of wounds was divided based on the total number of sections of the body in which wounds occurred. (The separation of body sections is explained below.) The division was as follows: 1 to 2 sections, 3 to 4 sections, 5 to 6 sections, 7 to 8 sections, or 9 to 10 sections.

Presence of additional wounds: presence or absence of additional wounds

Types of weapons used: blunt object, hands or feet; blunt object and another weapon; hands and another object; other weapon, or unknown

Knife-related Homicides:

Number of cases per year

Cause of death: single stab wound or multiple stab wounds
Number of wounds per victim: 1 to 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, 31 to 40, or more than 40
Presence of additional wounds: presence or absence of additional wounds
Types of weapons used: knife, other sharp object, or unknown

Multiple Weapon Homicides:
Number of cases per year
Number of cases per type: physical and knife-related; physical and gun-related; or gun and knife-related
Cause of death: head injury and single stab wound; asphyxiation and single stab wound; head injury and multiple stab wounds; asphyxiation and multiple stab wounds; multiple gunshot wounds and beating; single gunshot wound and single stab wound; or multiple causes
Number of wounds per victim: Because multiple weapon homicides involve multiple weapons, the number of wounds was separated first by type of weapon and then by number of wounds. The categories used for number of wounds were those explained previously for each type of homicide.
Presence of additional wounds: presence or absence of additional wounds
Types of weapons used: hands and knife; hands and another weapon; handgun and another weapon; knife and another weapon; or unknown

Homicides Where Files Were Missing: Because information was not available for all the variables used in the study, only those variables for which information could be obtained were used.
Number of cases per year
Type of homicide: gun-related, knife-related, physical, or multiple weapon
Cause of death: single gunshot wound, multiple gunshot wounds, single shotgun wound, multiple shotgun wounds, single stab wound, multiple stab wounds, asphyxiation, head injury, body injury, head and body injury; burn injury, or asphyxiation and multiple stab wounds

In addition to the previously mentioned variables, the location of wounds was recorded for each type of homicide. The body was divided into 10 sections to map the location of wounds (Figure 2). The division was developed to determine which areas of the body were most often wounded during a homicidal attack. Therefore, the number of wounds within each section was calculated for each case.

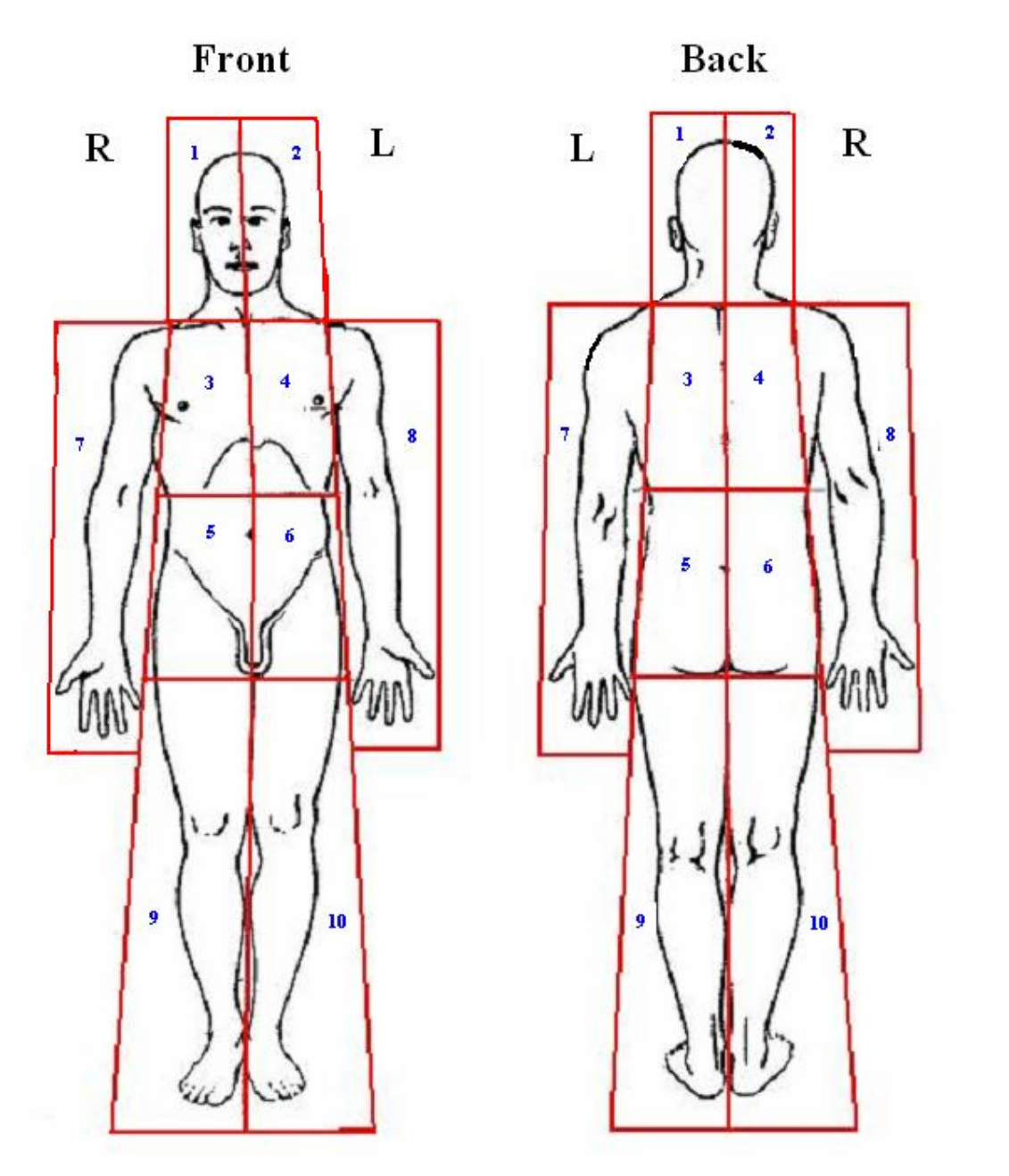

Figure 2: Body sections

The most important factor to be considered was the amount of violence present in each type of homicide for each year under study. All homicides can be considered violent in nature. However, homicides can differ in the amount of violence present in each case. Because violence is measured differently depending on the type of homicide, this analysis used the number of wounds to determine the amount of violence present in each case. For homicides involving guns and knives, cases were considered non-violent if the victim had one to two wounds. All cases where the victim had more than two wounds were considered violent. For physical homicides, cases were considered non-violent if the victims had wounds on only two sections of the body regardless of which sections. All cases where the victim had wounds on more than two sections of the body were considered violent. Counts for the total year were then quantified for the number of non-violent versus violent cases. Multiple weapon homicides were automatically counted as violent because of their nature. Cases where the files were missing were not included in the analysis of violence because of the lack of information available on such files.

The totals for each type of homicide and yearly totals were then compared to determine whether the amount of violence in each type of homicide and over all years increased or decreased over time. It is possible that the parameters for determining violence were too strict. Therefore, for comparative purposes, the data were reanalyzed using different parameters. In the reanalysis, gun and knife-related cases were considered non-violent if the victims had 1 to 5 wounds. Physical cases were considered non-violent if the victims had wounds in 1 to 4 body sections. In order to further understand whether violence increased or decreased over time, the average number of wounds for each type of homicide was then compared for all years in the study.

For a final analysis, the number of violent cases was counted for each year. Cases which were considered violent were analyzed using certain variables. The variables analyzed for violent cases included the sex, race, and age of the victim; date of trauma, time of trauma, presence of drugs or alcohol, the police district in which the homicide occurred, and the situation surrounding the homicide incident. The data are presented by variable and include all years under study.

RESULTS

The data for this study consisted of 1,334 homicide files for the years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000. The data are first presented as totals for each type of homicide including all years under study. Next, totals for each year are presented. The totals for each year include information that was available on cases in which the files were missing. The data are then compared for changes in variables for each type of homicide including all years under study. Once each type of homicide is presented, the issue of violence is addressed. Each type of homicide is compared for all years under study in terms of rates of violence. The rate of violence is then compared using totals for each year. Next, the average number of wounds is compared for each type of homicide for all years under study in order to further demonstrate changes in violence. Finally, violent homicides are analyzed to determine trends for all years under study.

Comparison of Variables for Each Total Year

Table 1 shows that for all years under study, the greatest number of homicides occurred in 1995 while the fewest number of homicide cases occurred in 1985. Gun-related homicides were consistently the highest percentage of homicides for all years under study. Gun-related homicides were followed by physical homicides, knife-related homicides, and multiple weapon homicides. Only in 1990 did knife-related homicides outnumber physical homicides. Though the numbers fluctuated from year to year, the results were relatively consistent throughout the study. The number of missing files remained small for all years except 1990 when the number of missing files was almost equal to the number of located files.

Table 1: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by type

	Year					
Type of homicide	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Gun-related	181 (66.5)	113 (66.5)	124 (39.2)	319 (86.7)	178 (85.6)	**915 (68.6)**
Knife-related	28 (10.3)	22 (12.9)	19 (6.0)	18 (4.9)	10 (4.8)	**97 (7.3)**
Physical	30 (11.0)	27 (15.9)	14 (4.4)	20 (5.4)	14 (6.7)	**105 (7.9)**
Involving more than one type of weapon	7 (2.6)	4 (2.4)	0	3 (0.8)	2 (1.0)	**16 (1.2)**
Missing files	26 (9.6)	4 (2.4)	159 (50.3)	8 (2.2)	4 (1.9)	**201 (15.1)**
Total	**272 (100)**	**170 (100)**	**316 (100)**	**368 (100)**	**208 (100)**	**1334 (100)**

The distribution for the sex of the homicide victims for all years under study is shown in Figure 3. For all years under study, males represented the majority of homicide victims. Though the number of males was highest in 1995, the highest percentage of males (89.4) occurred in 2000. The greatest number of female victims occurred in 1980, but the highest percentage of females (19.4) occurred in 1985. Based on percentages, the percentage of male homicide victims has increased in recent years, while the percentage of female victims has declined in recent years.

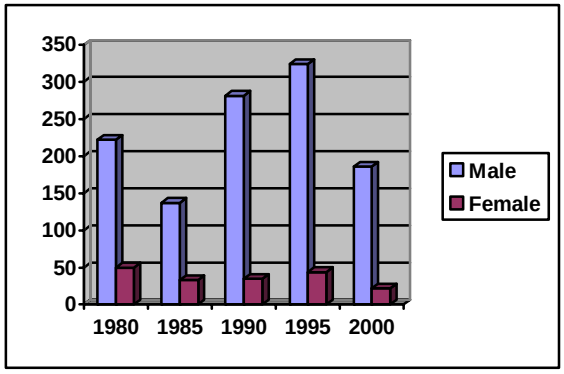

Figure 3: Number of homicide deaths by sex of the victim

Table 2 presents data on the race of homicide victims for all years under study. African Americans were consistently the majority of homicide victims. Whites were the next most commonly represented race. Asians and "other" races consistently represented low numbers of homicide victims. The percentage of African American homicide victims increased for all years under study except 1995 when the percentage decreased. The opposite is true of whites, with percentages decreasing for all years under study except 1995 when there was an increase.

Table 2: Number and percentage (%) of homicide victims by race

	Race				
Year	**Black**	**White**	**Asian**	**Other**	**Total**
1980	196 (72.1)	76 (27.9)	0	0	**272 (100)**
1985	138 (81.2)	31 (18.2)	1 (0.59)	0	**170 (100)**
1990	278 (88.0)	36 (11.4)	2 (0.63)	0	**316 (100)**
1995	321 (62.8)	44 (12.0)	0	3 (0.8)	**368 (100)**
2000	189 (90.9)	13 (6.3)	6 (2.9)	0	**208 (100)**
Total	**1122 (84.1)**	**200 (15.0)**	**9 (0.7)**	**3 (0.2)**	**1334 (100)**

Table 3 reveals that throughout all the years under study, victims ranging in age from 21 to 30 were constantly the highest percentage of homicide victims. For the years 1980, 1985, and 2000 victims ranging in age from 31 to 40 were the second most common victims of homicide. In 1990 and 1995 victims ranging in age from 11 to 20 were more common than those ranging in age from 31 to 40. The age ranges encompassing the oldest and youngest victims consistently represented the smallest percentages.

Table 3: Number and percentage (%) of homicide victims by age

	Year					
Age	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Under 10	8 (2.9)	7 (4.1)	6 (1.9)	6 (1.6)	3 (1.4)	**30 (2.2)**
11 to 20	32 (11.8)	23 (13.5)	79 (25.0)	95 (25.8)	39 (18.8)	**268 (20.1)**
21 to 30	106 (39.0)	67 (39.4)	106 (33.5)	138 (37.5)	92 (44.2)	**509 (38.2)**
31 to 40	51 (18.8)	34 (20.0)	68 (21.5)	67 (18.2)	44 (21.2)	**264 (19.8)**
41 to 50	32 (11.8)	20 (11.8)	34 (10.8)	40 (10.9)	21 (10.1)	**147 (11.0)**
51 to 60	25 (9.2)	10 (5.9)	12 (3.8)	11 (3.0)	8 (3.8)	**66 (4.9)**
61 to 70	11 (4.0)	6 (3.5)	6 (1.9)	8 (2.2)	1 (0.5)	**32 (2.4)**
71 and above	7 (2.6)	2 (1.2)	5 (1.6)	3 (0.8)	0	**17 (1.3)**
Unknown	0	1 (0.6)	0	0	0	**1 (0.07)**
Total	**272 (100)**	**170 (100)**	**316 (100)**	**368 (100)**	**208 (100)**	**1334 (100)**

Table 4 reflects data on the marital status of homicide victims. Throughout all the years under study, individuals who were single or never married were among the highest percentage of homicide victims. The percentage of homicide victims who were single increased over all years under study. Single individuals were followed by married individuals as the next most common victims of homicide. Divorced individuals followed married individuals in the number of homicide victims. Widowed individuals were consistently in the smallest percentage of homicide victims.

Table 4: Number and percentage (%) of homicide victims by marital status

	Marital Status					
Year	**Single**	**Married**	**Divorced**	**Widowed**	**Unknown**	**Total**
1980	127 (46.7)	88 (32.4)	39 (14.3)	9 (3.3)	9 (3.3)	272 (100)
1985	108 (63.5)	34 (20.0)	19 (11.2)	6 (3.5)	3 (1.8)	170 (100)
1990	222 (70.3)	45 (14.2)	32 (10.1)	10 (3.2)	7 (2.2)	316 (100)
1995	268 (72.8)	42 (11.4)	27 (7.3)	7 (1.9)	24 (6.5)	368 (100)
2000	159 (76.4)	29 (13.9)	16 (7.7)	1 (0.5)	3 (1.4)	208 (100)
Total	**884 (66.3)**	**238 (17.8)**	**133 (9.8)**	**33 (2.5)**	**46 (3.4)**	**1334 (100)**

The nativity of the homicide victims is shown in Table 5. Understandably, because the study involves a Louisiana parish, most of the homicide victims were born in Louisiana. The percentage of Louisiana natives who died as a result of a homicide incident increased until 1990. The percentage decreased in 1995 and then increased again in 2000. Victims born in another state in the United States were the next most common victims of homicide. Homicide victims born outside of the United States were consistently in the lowest percentage of those killed in Orleans Parish.

Table 5: Number and percentage (%) of homicide victims by nativity

	Nativity				
Year	**Louisiana**	**Other State**	**Other Country**	**Unknown**	Total
1980	199 (73.2)	54 (19.9)	10 (3.7)	9 (3.3)	272 (100)
1985	125 (73.5)	34 (20.0)	7 (4.1)	4 (2.4)	170 (100)
1990	268 (84.8)	33 (10.4)	8 (2.5)	7 (2.2)	316 (100)
1995	286 (77.7)	56 (15.2)	18 (4.9)	8 (2.2)	368 (100)
2000	186 (89.4)	12 (5.8)	6 (2.9)	4 (1.9)	208 (100)
Total	**1064 (79.8)**	**189 (14.2)**	**49 (3.7)**	**32 (2.4)**	**1334 (100)**

A homicide "incident" does not necessarily represent the actual date that a victim died from the violent act; therefore, date of trauma and date of death may fluctuate. The greatest number of homicide incidents occurred in March. The greatest number of homicide deaths happened in August. February and July, and August also included high numbers of homicide incidents and homicide deaths, respectively. The least number of homicide incidents occurred in October. The least number of homicide deaths happened in September. April also included low numbers of homicide incidents and homicide deaths (Table 6).

Table 6: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by date of trauma and date of death

	Year					
Date of Trauma	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
January	27 (9.9)	15 (8.8)	28 (8.9)	32 (8.7)	12 (5.8)	114 (8.5)
February	23 (8.5)	22 (12.9)	24 (7.6)	37 (10.1)	19 (9.1)	125 (9.4)
March	29 (10.7)	12 (7.1)	23 (7.3)	41 (11.1)	22 (10.6)	127 (9.5)
April	21 (7.7)	15 (8.8)	23 (7.3)	22 (6.0)	17 (8.2)	98 (7.3)
May	30 (11.0)	8 (4.7)	19 (6.0)	29 (7.9)	25 (12.0)	111 (8.3)
June	23 (8.5)	11 (6.5)	25 (7.9)	29 (7.9)	23 (11.1)	111 (8.3)
July	22 (8.1)	13 (7.6)	40 (12.7)	27 (7.3)	19 (9.1)	121 (9.1)
August	21 (7.7)	29 (17.1)	29 (9.2)	35 (9.5)	12 (5.8)	126 (9.4)
September	16 (5.9)	8 (4.7)	26 (8.2)	28 (7.6)	18 (8.7)	96 (7.2)
October	14 (5.1)	14 (8.2)	25 (7.9)	25 (6.8)	11 (5.3)	89 (6.7)
November	22 (8.1)	16 (9.4)	22 (7.0)	27 (7.3)	15 (7.2)	102 (7.6)
December	22 (8.1)	7 (4.1)	30 (9.5)	36 (9.8)	15 (7.2)	110 (8.2)
Unknown	2 (0.7)	0	2 (0.6)	0	0	4 (0.3)
Total	**272 (100)**	**170 (100)**	**316 (100)**	**368 (100)**	**208 (100)**	**1334 (100)**
Date of Death						
January	27 (9.9)	14 (8.2)	27 (8.5)	34 (9.2)	10 (4.8)	112 (8.4)
February	24 (8.8)	19 (11.2)	24 (7.6)	35 (9.5)	19 (9.1)	121 (9.1)
March	26 (9.6)	12 (7.1)	24 (7.6)	43 (11.7)	22 (10.6)	127 (9.5)
April	22 (8.1)	15 (8.8)	23 (7.3)	21 (5.7)	17 (8.2)	98 (7.3)
May	29 (10.7)	10 (5.9)	19 (6.0)	29 (7.9)	25 (12.0)	112 (8.4)
June	23 (8.5)	13 (7.6)	24 (7.6)	28 (7.6)	24 (11.5)	112 (8.4)
July	25 (9.2)	13 (7.6)	39 (12.3)	27 (7.3)	18 (8.7)	122 (9.1)
August	21 (7.7)	28 (16.5)	31 (9.8)	36 (9.8)	13 (6.3)	129 (9.7)
September	17 (6.3)	8 (4.7)	23 (7.3)	28 (7.6)	17 (8.2)	93 (7.0)
October	14 (5.1)	14 (8.2)	30 (9.5)	25 (6.8)	11 (5.3)	94 (7.0)
November	22 (8.1)	16 (9.4)	22 (7.0)	27 (7.3)	15 (7.2)	102 (7.6)
December	22 (8.1)	8 (4.7)	30 (9.5)	35 (9.5)	17 (8.2)	112 (8.4)
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**272 (100)**	**170 (100)**	**316 (100)**	**368 (100)**	**208 (100)**	**1334 (100)**

The day of the week on which homicide incidents occurred per year is illustrated in Table 7. The numbers fluctuated from day to day and from year to year. The highest number of homicide incidents occurred on Saturday followed by Sunday for all years under study. The fewest number of homicide incidents occurred on Wednesday followed by Friday.

Table 7: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by day of week on which trauma occurred

	Year					
Day of Week	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Monday	38 (14.0)	22 (12.9)	47 (14.9)	42 (11.4)	32 (15.4)	**181 (13.6)**
Tuesday	36 (13.2)	27 (15.9)	46 (14.6)	49 (13.3)	33 (15.9)	**191 (14.3)**
Wednesday	35 (12.9)	27 (15.9)	35 (11.1)	40 (10.9)	21 (10.1)	**158 (11.8)**
Thursday	39 (14.3)	21 (12.4)	49 (15.5)	48 (13.0)	24 (11.5)	**181 (13.6)**
Friday	27 (9.9)	22 (12.9)	38 (12.0)	50 (13.6)	26 (12.5)	**163 (12.2)**
Saturday	49 (18.0)	27 (15.9)	57 (18.0)	70 (19.0)	33 (15.9)	**236 (17.7)**
Sunday	46 (16.9)	23 (13.5)	42 (13.3)	68 (18.5)	39 (18.8)	**218 (16.3)**
Unknown	2 (0.7)	1 (0.59)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	0	**6 (4.5)**
Total	**272 (100)**	**170 (100)**	**316 (100)**	**368 (100)**	**208 (100)**	**1334 (100)**

To further understand the difference between the date of trauma and date of death for each homicide case, the exact period of time was calculated for each case. The differences are shown in Table 8 for each year. For all years under study, the majority of

homicide victims lived for less than one day after the homicide incident occurred. Victims who lived for one to two days following the homicide incident comprised the second highest percentage. The lowest percentage of victims lived for more than two days after the homicide incident occurred.

Table 8: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by difference in date of trauma and date of death

	Difference in date of trauma and date of death				
Year	**< 1 day**	**1-2 days**	**> 2 days**	**Unknown**	Total
1980	213 (78.3)	32 (11.8)	25 (9.2)	2 (0.7)	272 (100)
1985	133 (78.2)	23 (13.5)	14 (8.2)	0	170 (100)
1990	265 (83.9)	31 (9.8)	18 (5.7)	2 (0.6)	316 (100)
1995	317 (86.1)	33 (9.0)	18 (4.9)	0	368 (100)
2000	171 (82.2)	22 (10.6)	15 (7.2)	0	208 (100)
Total	**1099 (82.4)**	**141 (10.6)**	**90 (6.7)**	**4 (3.0)**	**1334 (100)**

Table 9 presents data on the time of trauma and time of death for all years under study. Because information on time of trauma could not be gathered for cases in which the files were missing, those cases were left out of the analysis. The numbers show that the highest percentage of homicide incidents happened between the hours of 8:00 PM to 11:59 PM followed by 12:00 AM to 3:59 AM. The fewest number of homicide incidents took place between the hours of 8:00 AM and 11:59 AM. The highest percentage of homicide deaths occurred between the hours of 12:00 AM to 3:59 AM, followed by 8:00 PM to 11:59 PM. The fewest number of homicide deaths happened between the hours of 4:00 AM and 7:59 AM.

Table 9: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by time of trauma and time of death

	Year					
Time of Trauma	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
12:00am to 3:59am	54 (22.0)	35 (21.1)	37 (23.6)	90 (25.0)	41 (20.1)	**257 (22.7)**
4:00am to 7:59am	24 (9.8)	9 (5.4)	12 (7.6)	47 (13.1)	25 (12.3)	**117 (10.3)**
8:00am to 11:59am	21 (8.5)	15 (9.0)	11 (7.0)	24 (6.7)	16 (7.8)	**87 (7.7)**
12:00pm to 3:59pm	24 (9.8)	20 (12.0)	20 (12.7)	36 (10.0)	21 (10.3)	**121 (10.7)**
4:00pm to 7:59pm	35 (14.2)	30 (18.1)	25 (15.9)	54 (15.0)	25 (12.3)	**169 (14.9)**
8:00pm to 11:59pm	63 (25.6)	50 (30.1)	48 (30.5)	97 (26.9)	64 (31.4)	**322 (28.4)**
Unknown	25 (10.2)	7 (4.2)	4 (2.5)	12 (3.3)	12 (5.9)	**60 (5.3)**
Total	**246 (100)**	**166 (100)**	**157 (100)**	**360 (100)**	**204 (100)**	**1133 (100)**
Time of Death						
12:00am to 3:59am	59 (24.0)	37 (22.3)	39 (24.8)	90 (25.0)	53 (26.0)	**278 (24.5)**
4:00am to 7:59am	43 (17.5)	20 (12.0)	23 (14.6)	56 (15.6)	28 (13.7)	**170 (15.0)**
8:00am to 11:59am	28 (11.4)	15 (9.0)	12 (7.6)	36 (10.0)	16 (7.8)	**107 (9.4)**
12:00pm to 3:59pm	39 (15.9)	27 (16.3)	20 (12.7)	45 (12.5)	26 (12.7)	**157 (13.9)**
4:00pm to 7:59pm	25 (10.2)	23 (13.9)	21 (13.4)	50 (13.9)	30 (14.7)	**149 (13.2)**
8:00pm to 11:59pm	52 (21.1)	44 (26.5)	42 (26.8)	83 (23.1)	51 (25.0)	**272 (24.0)**
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**246 (100)**	**166 (100)**	**157 (100)**	**360 (100)**	**204 (100)**	**1133 (100)**

The difference between the time of trauma and time of death was calculated for each case. The differences are shown in Table 10 for each year. For the years 1995 and 2000, the majority of homicide victims lived for less than one hour after the homicide incident occurred. For the years 1980, 1985, and 1990, victims who lived for one to twenty-four hours following the homicide incident comprised the highest percentage. The lowest percentage of victims lived for more than twenty-four hours after the homicide incident occurred. Once again, these numbers do not include those cases in which files were missing.

Table 10: Number and percentage of homicides by difference in time of trauma and time of death

	Difference in time of trauma and time of death				
Year	**<1 hour**	**1-24 hours**	**> 24 hours**	**Unknown**	Total
1980	66 (26.8)	136 (55.3)	19 (7.7)	25 (10.2)	246 (100)
1985	63 (38.0)	84 (50.6)	12 (7.2)	7 (4.2)	166 (100)
1990	38 (24.2)	108 (68.8)	7 (4.5)	4 (2.5)	157 (100)
1995	206 (57.2)	124 (34.4)	18 (5.0)	12 (3.3)	360 (100)
2000	141 (69.1)	40 (19.6)	11 (5.4)	12 (5.9)	204 (100)
Total	**514 (45.4)**	**492 (43.4)**	**67 (5.9)**	**60 (5.3)**	**1133 (100)**

In terms of geographical location of homicides within the parish, for all the years under study, the fifth and sixth police districts consistently contained the highest number of homicide cases (Table 11). For the first three years of study, the sixth district contained more homicides than the fifth district. During the last two years of study, the fifth district homicides outnumbered the sixth district homicides. For all years under study, the fewest number of homicides occurred in the third, fourth, and eight districts. Understandably, homicide cases which occurred outside of Orleans Parish also consistently contained the fewest number of cases. Figure 4 is a map of the police districts from the New Orleans Police Department webpage (2003).

Table 11: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by police district

	Year					
District	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
First	19 (7.0)	18 (10.6)	33 (10.4)	40 (10.9)	46 (22.1)	**156 (11.7)**
Second	34 (12.5)	12 (7.1)	28 (8.9)	35 (9.5)	26 (12.5)	**135 (10.1)**
Third	7 (2.6)	13 (7.6)	27 (8.5)	22 (6.0)	14 (6.7)	**83 (6.2)**
Fourth	20 (7.4)	18 (10.6)	16 (5.1)	28 (7.6)	17 (8.2)	**99 (7.4)**
Fifth	57 (21.0)	28 (16.5)	76 (24.1)	106 (28.8)	46 (22.1)	**313 (23.5)**
Sixth	60 (22.1)	50 (29.4)	92 (29.1)	82 (22.3)	42 (20.2)	**326 (24.4)**
Seventh	19 (7.0)	8 (4.7)	23 (7.3)	42 (11.4)	11 (5.3)	**103 (7.7)**
Eighth	15 (5.5)	5 (2.9)	6 (1.9)	8 (2.2)	5 (2.4)	**39 (2.9)**
Out of Orleans	22 (8.1)	10 (5.9)	4 (1.3)	4 (1.1)	0	**40 (3.0)**
Unknown	19 (7.0)	8 (4.7)	11 (3.5)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.5)	**40 (3.0)**
Total	**272 (100)**	**170 (100)**	**316 (100)**	**368 (100)**	**208 (100)**	**1334 (100)**

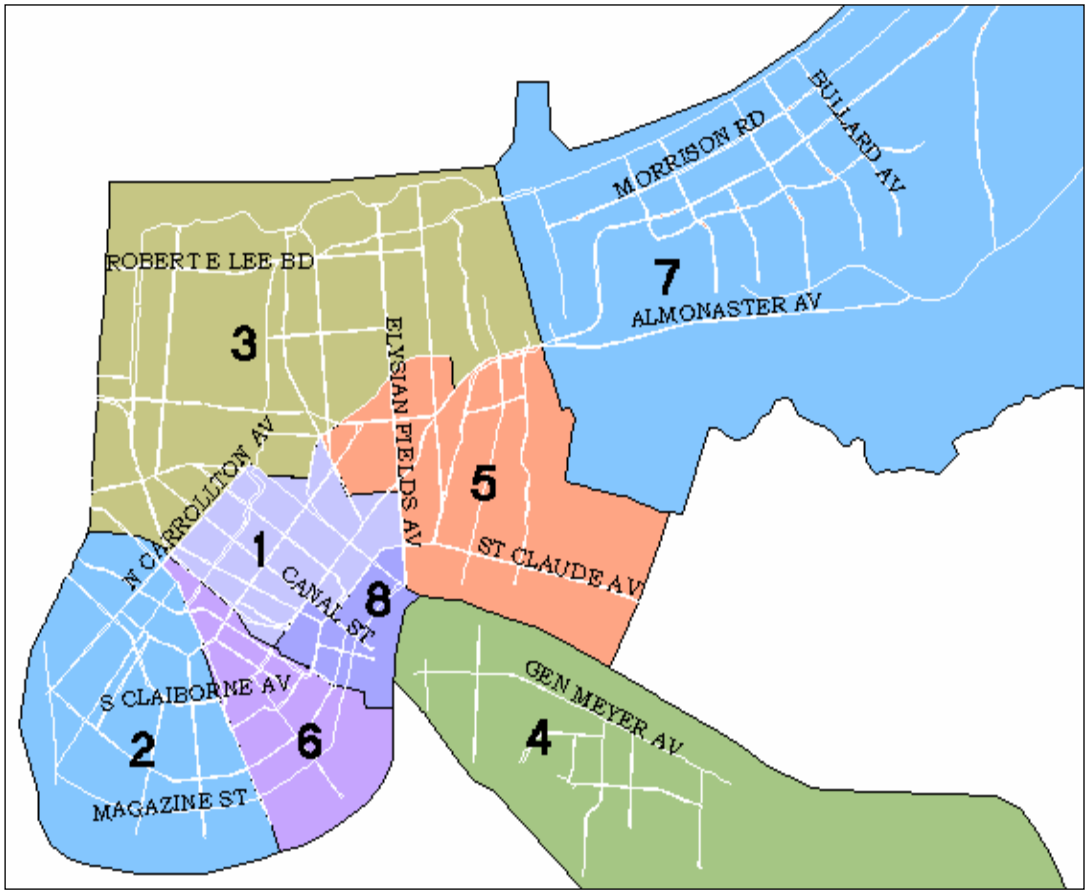

Figure 4: Orleans Parish police districts (New Orleans Police Department 2003)

Because the location of the homicide incidents varied widely from year to year, the information is presented in Table 12 according to the most common locations for all years under study. The location which was listed most frequently was along a street named Desire located in the fifth police district. Other very common streets included Thalia and Washington, both located in the sixth police district.

Table 12: Frequency of common locations

	Year					
Location (police district)	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Annunciation (6th)	3	0	6	3	0	**12**
Chef Menteur (5th)	4	0	0	6	0	**10**
Desire (5th)	10	3	12	5	3	**33**
Erato (6th)	0	5	6	3	4	**18**
Florida (5th)	3	5	0	3	0	**11**
Jackson (6th)	6	0	4	4	0	**14**
Le Boeuf (4th)	4	3	0	6	0	**13**
Martin Luther King (6th)	4	0	3	3	5	**15**
N. Claiborne (5th)	0	0	5	0	5	**10**
N. Villere (5th)	0	0	3	3	4	**10**
S. Galvez (6th)	0	0	6	0	5	**11**
St. Ann (1st)	3	0	3	4	6	**16**
St. Bernard (5th)	0	0	5	5	0	**10**
St. Claude (5th)	4	0	4	6	5	**19**
Thalia (6th)	6	8	7	6	0	**27**
Washington (6th)	0	6	7	5	4	**22**

Table 13 presents data on the presence of drugs per year. For all years under study, more victims were negative for drugs than were positive for drugs. However, as the years progressed, the percentage of victims who were negative for drugs decreased as the percentage of victims who were positive for drugs increased. Because missing file cases contained no information on the presence of drugs, those cases were omitted from the analysis.

Table 13: Number and percentage (%) of victims with drugs in their system

	Presence of Drugs			
Year	**No Record**	**Negative**	**Positive**	Total
1980	55 (22.4)	161 (65.4)	30 (12.2)	246 (100)
1985	27 (16.3)	97 (58.4)	42 (25.3)	166 (100)
1990	11 (7.0)	82 (52.2)	64 (40.8)	157 (100)
1995	24 (6.7)	183 (50.8)	153 (42.5)	360 (100)
2000	11 (5.4)	100 (49.0)	93 (45.6)	204 (100)
Total	**128 (11.3)**	**623 (55.0)**	**382 (33.7)**	**1133 (100)**

Table 14 presents information on the types of drugs which were common among homicide victims during this study. Only drugs which were found to occur most frequently were selected. Some of the drugs listed, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and diphenhydramine (Benadryl), are over-the-counter drugs. In 1980 the most popular drugs were pentazocine and pyribenzamine, referred to as “Ts and Blues”. For the rest of the years, cocaine was the most popular drug. As the years progressed, drugs like cannabis, codeine (which can be abused), and morphine increased in popularity.

Table 14: Frequency of common drugs per year

	Year					
Drugs	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Acetaminophen	0	2	2	4	1	**9**
Cannabis	0	0	0	48	28	**76**
Cocaine	0	24	51	94	73	**242**
Codeine	0	1	3	2	16	**22**
Diphenhydramine	0	2	0	4	3	**9**
Lidocaine	0	5	6	5	1	**17**
Morphine	2	1	3	36	26	**68**
Pentazocine	26	0	0	0	0	**26**
Phencyclidine	0	13	0	1	0	**14**
Pyribenzamine	25	0	0	0	0	**25**

In addition to information on drugs, toxicology reports offered information on the presence and levels of alcohol. For all years under study, the highest percentage of homicide victims were negative for alcohol. For those victims who were positive for alcohol, the highest number of victims had an alcohol level of .01 to .08. As the alcohol level increased, the number of victims decreased. Once again, these numbers do not reflect missing cases where information on alcohol was not available (Table 15).

Table 15: Number and percentage (%) of victims by presence of alcohol

	Year					
Alcohol level	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
No record	55 (22.4)	27 (16.3)	11 (7.0)	24 (6.7)	11 (5.4)	**128 (11.3)**
Negative	126 (51.2)	81 (48.8)	91 (58.0)	233 (64.7)	130 (63.7)	**661 (58.3)**
.01 to .08	25 (10.2)	27 (16.3)	22 (14.0)	50 (13.9)	39 (19.1)	**163 (14.4)**
.09 to .20	22 (8.9)	16 (9.6)	28 (17.8)	44 (12.2)	21 (10.3)	**131 (11.6)**
.21 and above	18 (7.3)	15 (9.0)	5 (3.2)	9 (2.5)	3 (1.5)	**50 (4.4)**
Total	**246 (100)**	**166 (100)**	**157 (100)**	**360 (100)**	**204 (100)**	**1133 (100)**

Information on the situation surrounding the homicide incident is shown in Table 16. The number of cases per situation fluctuated from year to year. The most common situation surrounding homicides involved victims who were found lying outside. Homicides were also often associated with domestic issues, robberies, and arguments. The fewest number of homicides involved cases where someone was playing with or cleaning a gun or other weapon. Domestic issues leading to a homicide/suicide and cases of revenge were also infrequent. Because cases where the files were missing offered no information on the situation surrounding the homicide incident, those cases were left out of the analysis.

Table 16: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by situation surrounding the homicide

	Year											
Situation	**1980**		**1985**		**1990**		**1995**		**2000**		**Total**	
Argument	25	(10.2)	32	(19.3)	19	(12.1)	23	(6.4)	16	(7.8)	**115**	**(10.2)**
Over drugs	13	(5.3)	6	(3.6)	20	(12.7)	31	(8.6)	11	(5.4)	**81**	**(7.1)**
Domestic	45	(18.3)	24	(14.5)	24	(15.3)	25	(6.9)	12	(5.9)	**130**	**(11.5)**
Domestic/suicide	3	(1.2)	3	(1.8)	2	(1.3)	6	(1.7)	1	(0.5)	**15**	**(1.3)**
Revenge	5	(2.0)	1	(0.6)	6	(3.8)	1	(0.3)	3	(1.5)	**16**	**(1.4)**
Robbery	24	(9.8)	26	(15.7)	14	(8.9)	42	(11.7)	22	(10.8)	**128**	**(11.3)**
Police intervention	17	(6.9)	2	(1.2)	0		3	(0.8)	2	(1.0)	**24**	**(2.1)**
Playing with or cleaning a gun or other weapon	3	(1.2)	2	(1.2)	2	(1.3)	3	(0.8)	0		**10**	**(0.9)**
Drive-by	3	(1.2)	5	(3.0)	5	(3.2)	13	(3.6)	0		**26**	**(2.3)**
Inside or outside of a bar	22	(8.9)	10	(6.0)	5	(3.2)	3	(0.8)	5	(2.5)	**45**	**(4.0)**
Found lying outside	21	(8.5)	17	(10.2)	32	(20.4)	127	(35.3)	67	(32.8)	**264**	**(23.3)**
Found lying inside	14	(5.7)	14	(8.4)	5	(3.2)	11	(3.1)	12	(5.9)	**56**	**(4.9)**
Sitting in a car	8	(3.3)	6	(3.6)	10	(6.4)	34	(9.4)	21	(10.3)	**79**	**(7.0)**
Missing	6	(2.4)	2	(1.2)	0		9	(2.5)	2	(1.0)	**19**	**(1.7)**
Beaten	12	(4.9)	2	(1.2)	0		2	(0.6)	2	(1.0)	**18**	**(1.6)**
Found in an abandoned area	4	(1.6)	2	(1.2)	2	(1.3)	3	(0.8)	8	(3.9)	**19**	**(1.7)**
Other	6	(2.4)	2	(1.2)	5	(3.2)	2	(0.6)	4	(2.0)	**19**	**(1.7)**
Unknown	15	(6.1)	10	(6.0)	6	(3.8)	22	(6.1)	16	(7.8)	**69**	**(6.1)**
Total	**246**	**(100)**	**166**	**(100)**	**157**	**(100)**	**360**	**(100)**	**204**	**(100)**	**1133**	**(100)**

The occupation of the homicide victim varied widely from year to year. That information is presented in Table 17 according to the most common occupations for all years under study. The occupations which were listed most frequently were those categorized as laborer and student. Victims who were listed as unemployed were also very common. Other very common occupations included those listed as homemaker, truck driver, and waiter.

Table 17: Frequency of common occupations per year

	Year					
Occupation	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Carpenter	4	0	4	7	0	**15**
Clerk	7	0	0	7	5	**19**
Cook	0	0	10	12	3	**25**
Disabled	0	3	4	4	0	**11**
Gardener	0	0	5	5	3	**13**
Homemaker	15	10	11	7	4	**47**
Janitor	4	3	3	0	5	**15**
Laborer	65	43	45	67	55	**275**
Maintenance	4	0	6	6	3	**19**
Mechanic	4	5	5	3	4	**21**
Never worked	0	0	5	6	0	**11**
Painter	3	7	12	3	0	**25**
Seaman	6	0	4	6	0	**16**
Security guard	7	0	3	6	4	**20**
Self-employed	4	0	3	5	0	**12**
Student	16	11	64	55	20	**166**
Truck driver	9	4	7	7	6	**33**
Unemployed	4	9	24	21	0	**58**
Waiter	6	0	6	11	0	**23**

Comparison of Variables for Each Type of Homicide

Gun-related Homicides: Gun-related homicides were consistently in the majority among all types of homicide. There were a total of 915 gun-related homicides

throughout all years studied. The number of gun-related homicides per year is reflected in Figure 5. The greatest number of gun-related homicides occurred in 1995, while the least number occurred in 1985. The numbers do not reflect gun-related homicides where the files were missing. Those cases will be analyzed separately.

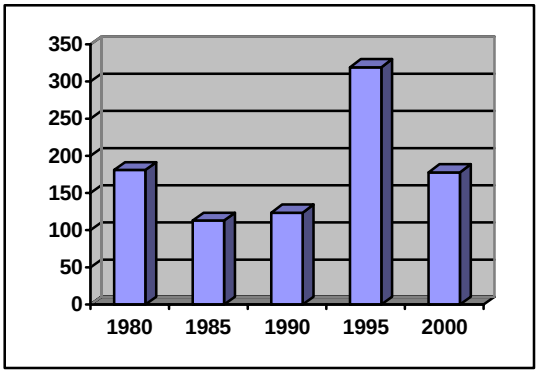

Figure 5: Number of gun-related homicides per year

Table 18 illustrates the number and percentage of gun-related homicides by cause of death. The greatest number of gun-related homicides involved victims who died as a result of multiple gunshot wounds. The second highest number of cases involved victims who died as a result of a single gunshot wound. Victims with multiple shotgun wounds and victims with both multiple gunshot and shotgun wounds consistently contributed to the lowest percentage of homicides.

Table 18: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by cause of death

	Year											
Cause of Death	**1980**		**1985**		**1990**		**1995**		**2000**		**Total**	
Gunshot wound	96	(53.0)	47	(41.6)	50	(40.3)	114	(35.7)	44	(24.7)	**351**	**(38.4)**
Multiple gunshot wounds	73	(40.3)	57	(50.4)	69	(55.6)	194	(60.8)	127	(71.3)	**520**	**(56.8)**
Shotgun wound	8	(4.4)	8	(7.1)	5	(4.0)	7	(0.2)	6	(3.4)	**34**	**(3.7)**
Multiple shotgun wounds	1	(0.6)	0		0		3	(0.9)	0		**4**	**(0.4)**
Multiple gunshot and shotgun wounds	3	(1.7)	1	(0.9)	0		1	(0.3)	1	(0.6)	**6**	**(0.7)**
Total	**181**	**(100)**	**113**	**(100)**	**124**	**(100)**	**319**	**(100)**	**178**	**(100)**	**915**	**(100)**

In gun-related homicides, the highest number of homicides involved victims with one to two wounds (Table 19). The second highest number of homicides involved victims with three to five wounds. As the number of wounds increased, the number of victims decreased for all years under study. The lowest percentage of homicides consistently

occurred in cases where victims had from 21 to 30 wounds and cases where victims had from 31 to 40 wounds.

Table 19: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by number of wounds per victim

	Number of wounds						
Year	**1-2**	**3-5**	**6-10**	**11-20**	**21-30**	**31-40**	**Total**
1980	138 (76.2)	33 (18.2)	9 (5.0)	1 (0.6)	0	0	**181 (100)**
1985	75 (66.4)	34 (30.1)	4 (3.5)	0	0	0	**113 (100)**
1990	76 (61.3)	33 (26.6)	6 (4.8)	9 (7.3)	0	0	**124 (100)**
1995	164 (51.4)	108 (33.9)	39 (12.2)	5 (1.6)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	**319 (100)**
2000	82 (46.1)	56 (31.5)	33 (18.5)	7 (3.9)	0	0	**178 (100)**
Total	**535 (58.5)**	**264 (28.9)**	**91 (9.9)**	**22 (2.4)**	**2 (0.2)**	**1 (0.1)**	**915 (100)**

Table 20 displays the tracks of bullets for each year in gun-related homicides. The number of wounds per victim was added to obtain a total for each year. The total number of wounds was then divided into the total number of bullet exits and the total number of bullet lodges. The majority of bullets in gun-related cases exited the bodies of the victims. However, when compared from year to year, some years involved more bullets that lodged in the bodies of the victims. As time increased, bullets were more likely to exit the bodies of the victims.

Table 20: Tracks of bullets and total number and percentage (%) of wounds per year

	Tracks of bullets			
Year	**Total exits**	**Total lodges**	**Unknown**	Total number of wounds
1980	132 (35.9)	232 (63.0)	4 (1.1)	368 (100)
1985	99 (39.0)	141 (55.5)	14 (5.5)	254 (100)
1990	197 (49.5)	199 (50.0)	2 (0.5)	398 (100)
1995	550 (52.3)	456 (43.4)	45 (4.3)	1051 (100)
2000	444 (66.0)	222 (33.0)	7 (1.0)	673 (100)
Total	**1422 (51.8)**	**1250 (45.6)**	**72 (2.6)**	**2744 (100)**

The number of wounds per body section is shown in Table 21. Because victims could have wounds in multiple body sections, the total does not equal the total number of cases. In gun-related homicides, the majority of wounds occurred in the upper bodies of the victims. The most common areas involved the left upper chest and right side of the head. There were also a high number of wounds in the left arm. The body sections affected the least frequently included the left and right legs of the victims.

Table 21: Number and percentage (%) of wounds per body section

	Year					
Body sections	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
1	53 (16.7)	32 (13.7)	22 (7.6)	122 (15.9)	74 (15.8)	**303 (14.6)**
2	48 (15.1)	38 (16.3)	33 (11.5)	108 (14.1)	67 (14.3)	**294 (14.2)**
3	34 (10.7)	28 (12.0)	34 (11.8)	99 (12.9)	58 (12.4)	**253 (12.2)**
4	58 (18.3)	42 (18.0)	59 (20.5)	91 (11.9)	55 (11.8)	**305 (14.7)**
5	31 (9.8)	19 (8.2)	31 (10.8)	56 (7.3)	37 (7.9)	**174 (8.4)**
6	35 (11.0)	19 (8.2)	34 (11.8)	63 (8.2)	41 (8.8)	**192 (9.3)**
7	22 (6.9)	18 (7.7)	21 (7.3)	64 (8.4)	48 (10.3)	**173 (8.4)**
8	25 (7.9)	22 (9.4)	33 (11.5)	77 (10.1)	46 (9.8)	**203 (9.8)**
9	2 (0.6)	9 (3.9)	11 (3.8)	36 (4.7)	19 (4.1)	**77 (3.7)**
10	9 (2.8)	6 (2.6)	10 (3.5)	49 (6.4)	23 (4.9)	**97 (4.7)**
Total	**317 (100)**	**233 (100)**	**288 (100)**	**765 (100)**	**468 (100)**	**2071 (100)**

Along with the total number of wounds per victim, the presence of additional wounds per victim was also recorded. The number and percentage of cases where victims had additional wounds is shown in Table 22. For all years under study, the majority of homicide victims in gun-related homicides did not have additional wounds. The percentage of victims who had additional wounds increased over all years under study except 1995 when the percentage decreased slightly. Therefore, the presence of additional wounding has become more common in recent years in gun-related homicides. When a chi-square test was run for all years under study, the results indicated that "year" had a significant effect on the presence of additional wounds at the 5% level of significance. However, when chi-square was compared per year, only 1980 showed a significant relationship between the year and the presence of additional wounds at the 5% level of significance.

Table 22: Number and percentage (%) of cases where victims had additional wounds

	Presence of additional wounds			
Year	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**	**Chi-square**
1980	21 (11.6)	160 (88.4)	**181 (100)**	**20.2**
1985	24 (21.2)	89 (78.8)	**113 (100)**	**1.5**
1990	40 (32.3)	84 (67.7)	**124 (100)**	**2.2**
1995	99 (31.0)	220 (69.0)	**319 (100)**	**3.7**
2000	57 (32.0)	121 (68.0)	**178 (100)**	**3.0**
Total	**241 (26.3)**	**674 (73.7)**	**915 (100)**	**30.6**

Table 23 presents the data on the types of weapons used in gun-related homicides. For all years under study, the highest number of homicides involved handguns. Roughly half of the cases had no data on the type of weapon used in the homicide incidents.

Homicides involving multiple types of guns were consistently the least common for all years studied.

Table 23: Number and percentage (%) of homicides per type of weapon

	Year					
Weapon	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Handgun	82 (45.3)	70 (61.9)	69 (55.6)	150 (47.0)	80 (44.9)	**451 (49.3)**
Shotgun	9 (5.0)	8 (7.1)	6 (4.8)	10 (3.1)	6 (3.4)	**39 (4.3)**
Rifle	1 (0.6)	2 (1.8)	2 (1.6)	14 (4.4)	9 (5.1)	**28 (3.1)**
Handgun and shotgun	4 (2.2)	1 (0.9)	0	1 (0.3)	1 (0.6)	**7 (0.8)**
Handgun and rifle	0	0	0	5 (1.6)	1 (0.6)	**6 (0.7)**
Unknown	85 (47.0)	32 (28.3)	47 (37.9)	139 (43.6)	81 (45.5)	**384 (42.0)**
Total	**181 (100)**	**113 (100)**	**124 (100)**	**319 (100)**	**178 (100)**	**915 (100)**

Physical Homicides: Physical homicides (those involving strangulation, beating or burning) were consistently the second most common form of homicide. There were a total of 105 physical homicides among all years studied. The number of physical homicides per year is reflected in Figure 6. The greatest number of physical homicides occurred in 1980. The least number of physical homicides occurred equally in 1990 and 2000. The numbers do not reflect physical homicides where the files were missing.

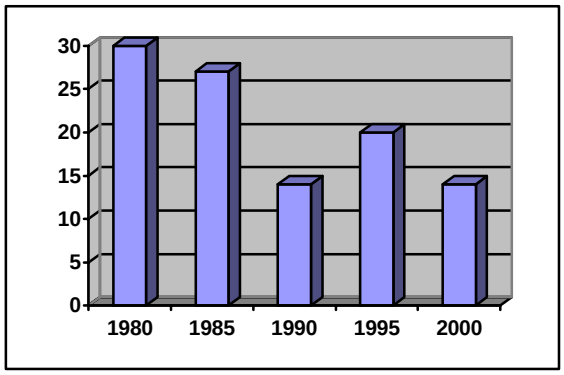

Figure 6: Number of physical homicides per year

Table 24 illustrates the number and percentage of physical homicides by cause of death. The greatest number of physical homicides involved victims who died as a result of head injury. The second highest number of cases involved victims who died as a result of asphyxiation. Victims with body injury and victims with burn injury consistently contributed to the lowest percentage of homicides.

Table 24: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by cause of death

	Year					
Cause of Death	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Asphyxiation	6 (20.0)	4 (14.8)	3 (21.4)	6 (30.0)	3 (21.4)	**22 (21.0)**
Asphyxiation and other	2 (6.7)	2 (7.4)	2 (14.3)	8 (40.0)	3 (21.4)	**17 (16.2)**
Head injury	14 (46.7)	14 (51.9)	7 (50.0)	3 (15.0)	4 (28.6)	**42 (40.0)**
Body injury	1 (3.3)	0	1 (7.1)	0	0	**2 (1.9)**
Head and body injury	6 (20.0)	5 (18.5)	1 (7.1)	3 (15.0)	4 (28.6)	**19 (18.1)**
Burn injury	1 (3.3)	2 (7.4)	0	0	0	**3 (2.9)**
Total	**30 (100)**	**27 (100)**	**14 (100)**	**20 (100)**	**14 (100)**	**105 (100)**

In physical homicides, the highest number of homicides involved victims with wounds on one to two body sections (Table 25). The second highest number of homicides involved victims with wounds on five to six body sections. The lowest percentage of homicides consistently occurred in cases where victims had wounds in nine to ten body sections (covering the whole body).

Table 25: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by number of affected body sections

	Number of wounds					
Year	**1-2**	**3-4**	**5-6**	**7-8**	**9-10**	**Total**
1980	20 (66.7)	4 (13.3)	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	1 (3.3)	**30 (100)**
1985	16 (59.3)	5 (18.5)	2 (7.4)	4 (14.8)	0	**27 (100)**
1990	5 (35.7)	2 (14.3)	4 (28.6)	2 (14.3)	1 (7.1)	**14 (100)**
1995	11 (55.0)	2 (10.0)	6 (30.0)	1 (5.0)	0	**20 (100)**
2000	6 (42.9)	1 (7.1)	5 (35.7)	2 (14.3)	0	**14 (100)**
Total	**58 (55.2)**	**14 (13.3)**	**18 (17.1)**	**13 (12.4)**	**2 (1.9)**	**105 (100)**

The number of wounds per body section is shown in Table 26. Because victims could have wounds in multiple body sections, the total does not equal the total number of cases. In physical homicides, the majority of wounds occurred in the head of the victims. The upper chest was the second most common area followed by the abdomen. There were also a high number of wounds in the left arm. The body sections affected the least frequently included the left and right legs of the victims.

Table 26: Number and percentage (%) of wounds per body section

	Year					
Body sections	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
1	29 (29.6)	24 (32.1)	14 (21.9)	18 (26.5)	14 (24.6)	**99 (27.3)**
2	29 (29.6)	23 (30.8)	13 (20.3)	18 (26.5)	14 (24.6)	**97 (26.7)**
3	8 (8.1)	4 (5.1)	5 (7.8)	4 (5.9)	5 (8.8)	**26 (7.2)**
4	8 (8.1)	4 (5.1)	5 (7.8)	5 (7.4)	4 (7.0)	**26 (7.2)**
5	7 (7.1)	5 (6.4)	4 (6.3)	4 (5.9)	2 (3.5)	**22 (6.1)**
6	7 (7.1)	5 (6.4)	4 (6.3)	4 (5.9)	2 (3.5)	**22 (6.1)**
7	2 (2.0)	3 (3.8)	6 (9.4)	3 (4.4)	4 (7.0)	**18 (5.0)**
8	5 (5.1)	4 (5.1)	7 (10.9)	6 (8.8)	5 (8.8)	**27 (7.4)**
9	2 (2.0)	1 (1.3)	3 (4.7)	3 (4.4)	4 (7.0)	**13 (3.6)**
10	1 (1.0)	3 (3.8)	3 (4.7)	3 (4.4)	3 (5.3)	**13 (3.6)**
Total	**98 (100)**	**76 (100)**	**64 (100)**	**68 (100)**	**57 (100)**	**363 (100)**

The number and percentage of cases where victims had additional wounds is shown in Table 27. For all years under study, the majority of homicide victims in physical homicides did have additional wounds. Because homicides that are physical in nature often involve a large number of wounds, it is not surprising that more victims had additional wounds than not. However, the percentage of victims who had additional wounds decreased from 1985 to 1995. The numbers once again increased in 2000. Therefore, the presence of additional wounding has become more common in recent years in physical homicides.

Table 27: Number and percentage (%) of cases where victims had additional wounds

	Presence of additional wounds		
Year	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**
1980	26 (86.7)	4 (13.3)	**30 (100)**
1985	24 (88.9)	3 (11.1)	**27 (100)**
1990	12 (85.7)	2 (14.3)	**14 (100)**
1995	14 (70.0)	6 (30.0)	**20 (100)**
2000	12 (85.7)	2 (14.3)	**14 (100)**
Total	**88 (83.8)**	**17 (16.2)**	**105 (100)**

Table 28 presents the data for the types of weapons used in physical homicides. For all years under study, the highest number of homicides involved the use of hands or feet as weapons. The second most commonly used weapons were blunt objects. The largest number of cases had no record for the type of weapon used. Homicides involving multiple types of physical weapons were consistently the least common for all years studied.

Table 28: Number and percentage (%) of homicides per type of weapon

	Year					
Weapon	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Blunt object	6 (20.0)	9 (33.3)	5 (35.7)	4 (20.0)	2 (14.3)	**26 (24.8)**
Hands or feet	11 (36.7)	5 (18.5)	4 (28.6)	5 (25.0)	2 (14.3)	**27 (25.7)**
Blunt object and other weapon	0	0	0	3 (15.0)	0	**3 (2.9)**
Hands and other weapon	0	0	0	0	3 (21.4)	**3 (2.9)**
Other	3 (10.0)	5 (18.5)	2 (14.3)	3 (15.0)	1 (7.1)	**14 (13.3)**
Unknown	10 (33.3)	8 (29.6)	3 (21.4)	5 (25.0)	6 (42.9)	**32 (30.5)**
Total	**30 (100)**	**27 (100)**	**14 (100)**	**20 (100)**	**14 (100)**	**105 (100)**

Knife-related Homicides: Knife-related homicides were consistently the third highest percentage of cases among all types of homicide. There were a total of 97 knife-

related homicides among all years studied. The number of knife-related homicides per year is reflected in Figure 7. The greatest number of knife-related homicides occurred in 1980, while the least number occurred in 2000. The number of knife-related homicides decreased over time. The numbers do not reflect knife-related homicides where the files were missing.

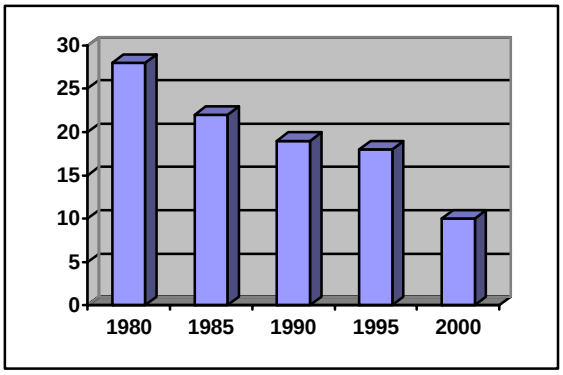

Figure 7: Number of knife-related homicides per year

Table 29 illustrates the number and percentage of knife-related homicides by cause of death. The greater number of knife-related homicides involved victims who died as a result of multiple stab wounds. When compared by year, the data show that the percentage of victims with multiple stab wounds has decreased in recent years. On the other hand, the percentage of victims with a single stab wound has increased in recent years.

Table 29: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by cause of death

	Year					
Cause of Death	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Stab wound	11 (39.3)	5 (22.7)	7 (36.8)	8 (44.4)	5 (50.0)	**36 (37.1)**
Multiple stab wounds	17 (60.7)	17 (77.3)	12 (63.2)	10 (55.6)	5 (50.0)	**61 (62.9)**
Total	**28 (100)**	**22 (100)**	**19 (100)**	**18 (100)**	**10 (100)**	**97 (100)**

In knife-related homicides, the highest number of homicides involved victims with one to two wounds (Table 30). The second highest number of homicides involved victims with three to five wounds followed by victims with six to ten wounds. High

numbers of wounds (more than 10) consistently contained the lowest numbers of cases for all years studied.

Table 30: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by number of wounds per victim

	Number of wounds							
Year	**1-2**	**3-5**	**6-10**	**11-20**	**21-30**	**31-40**	**41 or more**	**Total**
1980	14 (50.0)	7 (25.0)	5 (17.9)	2 (7.1)	0	0	0	**28 (100)**
1985	7 (31.8)	8 (36.4)	5 (22.7)	0	1 (4.5)	0	1 (4.5)	**22 (100)**
1990	5 (26.3)	7 (36.8)	3 (15.8)	2 (10.5)	1 (5.3)	0	1 (5.3)	**19 (100)**
1995	10 (55.6)	3 (16.7)	3 (16.7)	0	1 (5.6)	0	1 (5.6)	**18 (100)**
2000	5 (50.0)	2 (20.0)	1 (10.0)	0	0	2 (20.0)	0	**10 (100)**
Total	**41 (42.3)**	**27 (27.8)**	**17 (17.5)**	**4 (4.1)**	**3 (3.1)**	**2 (2.1)**	**3 (3.1)**	**97 (100)**

The number of wounds per body section is shown in Table 31. Because victims could have wounds in multiple body sections, the total does not equal the total number of cases. In knife-related homicides, the majority of wounds occurred in the upper bodies of the victims. The most common areas involved the left upper chest and left side of the head. There were also a high number of wounds in the left arm. The body sections affected the least frequently included the left and right legs of the victims.

Table 31: Number and percentage (%) of wounds per body section

	Year					
Body sections	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
1	7 (10.4)	9 (14.5)	7 (11.7)	6 (12.8)	2 (7.4)	**31 (11.8)**
2	13 (19.4)	10 (16.1)	7 (11.7)	9 (19.1)	3 (11.1)	**42 (16.0)**
3	11 (16.4)	10 (16.1)	8 (13.3)	8 (17.0)	4 (14.8)	**41 (15.6)**
4	18 (26.9)	14 (22.6)	13 (21.7)	8 (17.0)	9 (33.3)	**62 (23.6)**
5	2 (0.3)	4 (6.5)	3 (5.0)	4 (8.5)	2 (7.4)	**15 (5.7)**
6	3 (4.5)	5 (8.1)	5 (8.3)	5 (10.6)	1 (3.7)	**19 (7.2)**
7	4 (6.0)	4 (6.5)	5 (8.3)	2 (4.3)	2 (7.4)	**17 (6.5)**
8	7 (10.4)	6 (9.7)	10 (16.7)	5 (10.6)	4 (14.8)	**32 (12.2)**
9	1 (1.5)	0	1 (1.7)	0	0	**2 (0.8)**
10	1 (1.5)	0	1 (1.7)	0	0	**2 (0.8)**
Total	**67 (100)**	**62 (100)**	**60 (100)**	**47 (100)**	**27 (100)**	**263 (100)**

The number and percentage of cases where victims had additional wounds are shown in Table 32. For all years under study except 1990, the majority of homicide victims in knife-related homicides did not have additional wounds. The percentage of victims who had additional wounds increased for the first three years of study and then decreased in recent years. Therefore, the presence of additional wounding has become less common in recent years in knife-related homicides.

Table 32: Number and percentage (%) of cases where victims had additional wounds

	Presence of additional wounds		
Year	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**
1980	6 (21.4)	22 (78.6)	**28 (100)**
1985	10 (45.5)	12 (54.5)	**22 (100)**
1990	12 (63.2)	7 (36.8)	**19 (100)**
1995	6 (33.3)	12 (66.7)	**18 (100)**
2000	2 (20.0)	8 (80.0)	**10 (100)**
Total	**36 (37.1)**	**61 (62.9)**	**97 (100)**

Table 33 presents the data for the types of weapons used in knife-related homicides. For all years under study, the highest number of homicides involved knives including kitchen knives, butcher knives, etc. The least number of cases involved "other" sharp objects. A large number of cases had no data on the type of weapon used in the homicide incidents.

Table 33: Number and percentage (%) of homicides per type of weapon

	Year					
Weapon	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Knife	12 (42.9)	16 (72.7)	13 (68.4)	12 (66.7)	6 (60.0)	**59 (60.8)**
Other	3 (10.7)	4 (18.2)	5 (26.3)	2 (11.1)	0	**14 (14.4)**
Unknown	13 (46.4)	2 (9.1)	1 (5.3)	4 (22.2)	4 (40.0)	**24 (24.7)**
Total	**28 (100)**	**22 (100)**	**19 (100)**	**18 (100)**	**10 (100)**	**97 (100)**

Multiple Weapon Homicides: Homicides involving more than one type of weapon were consistently among the minority of all homicide cases, but are, nonetheless, significant because of their violent nature. There were a total of 16 multiple weapon homicides among all years studied. The number of multiple weapon homicides per year is reflected in Figure 8. The greatest number of multiple weapon homicides occurred in 1980. There were no multiple weapon homicides in 1990. For the most part, the number of multiple weapon homicides decreased over all years studied. The numbers do not reflect multiple weapon homicides where the files were missing.

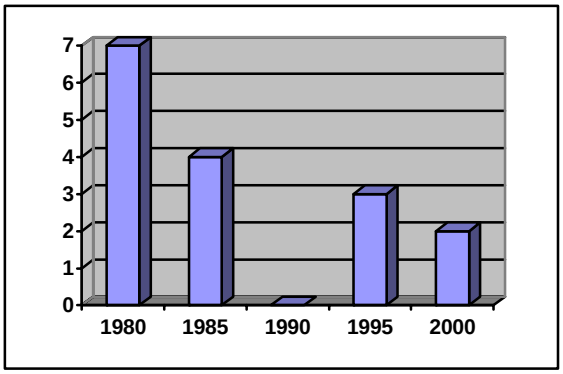

Figure 8: Number of multiple weapon homicides per year

For multiple weapon homicides the cases were divided by type as shown in Table 34. For all years studied, the majority of cases were physical and knife-related. There were two cases which were physical and gun-related. For all years studied, there was only one case that was gun and knife-related.

Table 34: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by type

	Year				
Type of homicide	**1980**	**1985**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Knife and physical	7 (100)	2 (50.0)	2 (66.7)	2 (100)	**13 (81.2)**
Gun and physical	0	1 (25.0)	1 (33.3)	0	**2 (12.5)**
Gun and knife	0	1 (25.0)	0	0	**1 (6.3)**
Total	**7 (100)**	**4 (100)**	**3 (100)**	**2 (100)**	**16 (100)**

Table 35 reflects the number of multiple weapon homicides by cause of death. The majority of homicides were the result of multiple causes for all years under study. The second highest number of victims died as a result of asphyxiation and multiple stab wounds. The third highest number of victims died as a result of head injury and multiple stab wounds. An equal number of cases occurred among all other causes of death.

Table 35: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by cause of death

	Year				
cause of death	**1980**	**1985**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Head injury and stab wound	1 (14.3)	0	0	0	**1 (6.3)**
Asphyxiation and stab wound	1 (14.3)	0	0	0	**1 (6.3)**
Head injury and multiple stab wounds	2 (28.6)	0	0	0	**2 (12.5)**
Asphyxiation and multiple stab wounds	1 (14.3)	2 (50.0)	0	0	**3 (18.8)**
Multiple gunshot wounds and beating	0	1 (25.0)	0	0	**1 (6.3)**
Gunshot wound and stab wound	0	1 (25.0)	0	0	**1 (6.3)**
Multiple causes	2 (28.6)	0	3 (100)	2 (100)	**7 (43.8)**
Total	**7 (100)**	**4 (100)**	**3 (100)**	**2 (100)**	**16 (100)**

In multiple weapon homicides, the number of wounds was separated by type of homicide and by year for each case (Table 36). For cases involving guns, more cases involved one to two wounds than three to five wounds. For cases involving knives, more cases involved one to two wounds. The second highest number of homicides was found equally among cases involving three to five wounds and cases involving 21 to 30 wounds. For physical homicides, more cases involved wounds on one to two body sections. The second highest number of homicides was among cases involving wounds on three to four body sections.

Table 36: Number of homicides by number of wounds per type of homicide

	Year			
Number of wounds	**1980**	**1985**	**1995**	**2000**
Gun				
1-2	0	1	1	0
3-5	0	1	0	0
Knife				
1-2	5	0	1	1
3-5	0	2	0	0
6-10	0	0	1	0
11-20	0	0	0	1
21-30	2	0	0	0
Physical				
1-2	6	2	0	0
3-4	1	1	0	0
5-6	0	1	0	0

The number of wounds per body section is shown in Table 37. Because victims could have wounds in multiple body sections, the total does not equal the total number of cases. In multiple weapon homicides, the majority of wounds occurred in the upper bodies of the victims. The most common areas involved both sides of the head and the right upper chest. There were also a high number of wounds in the left upper chest. There were no wounds in the ninth or tenth body sections for all homicides involving multiple weapons.

Table 37: Number and percentage (%) of wounds per body section

	Year				
Body sections	**1980**	**1985**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
1	7 (25.9)	2 (18.2)	3 (23,1)	1 (10.0)	**13 (21.3)**
2	7 (25.9)	3 (27.3)	3 (23.1)	1 (10.0)	**14 (23.0)**
3	3 (11.1)	3 (27.3)	2 (15.4)	2 (20.0)	**10 (16.4)**
4	2 (7.4)	2 (18.2)	2 (15.4)	1 (10.0)	**7 (11.5)**
5	3 (11.1)	0	0	1 (10.0)	**4 (6.6)**
6	3 (11.1)	0	0	1 (10.0)	**4 (6.6)**
7	1 (3.7)	0	2 (15.4)	1 (10.0)	**4 (6.6)**
8	1 (3.7)	1 (9.1)	1 (7.7)	2 (20.0)	**5 (8.2)**
9	0	0	0	0	**0**
10	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**27 (100)**	**11 (100)**	**13 (100)**	**10 (100)**	**61 (100)**

The number and percentage of cases where victims had additional wounds are shown in Table 38. For all years under study, the majority of homicide victims in multiple weapon homicides had additional wounds. The percentage of victims who had additional wounds decreased over all years under study. Therefore, the presence of additional wounding has become less common in recent years in multiple weapon homicides.

Table 38: Number and percentage (%) of cases where victims had additional wounds

	Presence of additional wounds		
Year	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**
1980	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	**7 (100)**
1985	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	**4 (100)**
1995	3 (100)	0	**3 (100)**
2000	2 (100)	0	**2 (100)**
Total	**13 (81.3)**	**3 (18.8)**	**16 (100)**

Table 39 presents the data for the types of weapons used in multiple weapon homicides. For all years under study, the highest number of homicides involved the use of hands and knives. The second highest number of cases involved the use of hands and another weapon. There were only 2 cases where the weapon was unknown.

Table 39: Number and percentage (%) of homicides per type of weapon

	Year				
Weapon	**1980**	**1985**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Hands and knife	3 (42.9)	0	1 (33.3)	2 (100)	**6 (37.5)**
Hands and other weapon	2 (28.6)	2 (50.0)	1 (33.3)	0	**5 (31.3)**
Handgun and other weapon	0	2 (50.0)	0	0	**2 (12.5)**
Knife and other weapon	0	0	1 (33.3)	0	**1 (6.3)**
Unknown	2 (28.6)	0	0	0	**2 (12.5)**
Total	**7 (100)**	**4 (100)**	**3 (100)**	**2 (100)**	**16 (100)**

Missing Files: For all years under study those cases in which the files were missing generally represented the minority. Only in 1990 was the number of missing files

significant. There were a total of 201 missing files among all years studied. The number of missing files per year is reflected in Figure 9. The greatest number of missing files occurred in 1990, while the least number occurred equally in 1985 and 2000. Because missing files do not contain all of the variables used in the study, only those variables which were available for analysis are presented.

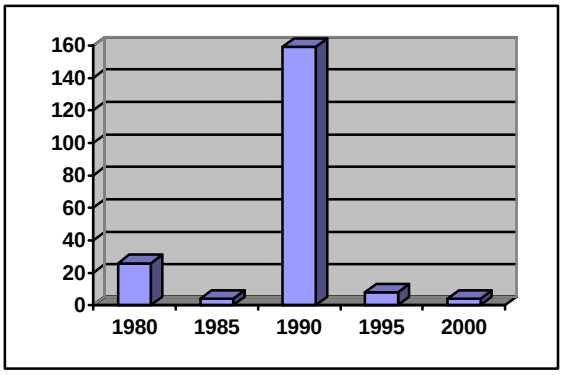

Figure 9: Number of homicides with missing files per year

Table 40 presents data on the number and percentage of homicides by type for missing files. The majority of missing files involved gun-related cases. Gun-related homicides were followed by physical homicides, knife-related homicides, and multiple weapon homicides. Only in 1980 did knife-related homicides outnumber physical homicides. Though the numbers fluctuated from year to year, the results were relatively consistent throughout the study. The number of multiple weapon cases was the lowest for all years studied.

Table 40: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by type

	Year					
Type of homicide	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Gun-related	18 (69.2)	2 (50.0)	134 (84.3)	5 (62.5)	4 (100)	**163 (81.1)**
Knife-related	4 (15.4)	0	8 (5.0)	0	0	**12 (6.0)**
Physical	3 (11.5)	2 (50.0)	16 (10.1)	3 (37.5)	0	**24 (11.9)**
Multiple weapon	1 (3.8)	0	1 (0.6)	0	0	**2 (1.0)**
Total	26 (100)	4 (100)	159 (100)	8 (100)	4 (100)	**201 (100)**

Table 41 illustrates the number and percentage of missing files by cause of death. For gun-related cases, the greatest number of missing files involved victims who died as

a result of multiple gunshot wounds followed by victims who died as a result of a single gunshot wound. For knife-related cases, the greatest number of missing files involved victims who died as a result of a single stab wound. For physical cases, the greatest number of missing files involved victims who died as a result of head injury.

Table 41: Number and percentage (%) of homicides by cause of death

	Year					
Cause of Death	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Gunshot wound	10 (38.5)	1 (25.0)	63 (39.6)	1 (12.5)	1 (25.0)	**76 (37.8)**
Multiple gunshot wounds	6 (23.1)	0	67 (42.1)	4 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	**79 (39.3)**
Shotgun wound	1 (3.8)	1 (25.0)	3 (1.9)	0	1 (25.0)	**6 (3.0)**
Multiple shotgun wounds	1 (3.8)	0	1 (0.6)	0	0	**2 (1.0)**
Stab wound	2 (7.7)	0	5 (3.1)	0	0	**7 (3.5)**
Multiple stab wounds	2 (7.7)	0	3 (1.9)	0	0	**5 (2.5)**
Asphyxiation	0	2 (50.0)	3 (1.9)	2 (25.0)	0	**7 (3.5)**
Head injury	3 (11.5)	0	6 (3.8)	0	0	**9 (4.5)**
Body injury	0	0	1 (0.6)	0	0	**1 (0.5)**
Head and body injury	0	0	6 (3.8)	1 (12.5)	0	**7 (3.5)**
Burn injury	0	0	1 (0.6)	0	0	**1 (0.5)**
Asphyxiation and multiple stab wounds	1 (3.8)	0	0	0	0	**1 (0.5)**
Total	**26 (100)**	**4 (100)**	**159 (100)**	**8 (100)**	**4 (100)**	**201 (100)**

Amount of Violence in Each Type of Homicide

In order to infer the amount of violence present in homicides, cases were divided into categories based on whether the homicides were violent or not. As stated previously, all homicides are violent. However, the amount of violence within each homicide case can vary. Each type of homicide is compared for all years under study in terms of rates of violence. The rate of violence is then compared using totals for each year. The categories into which each case was placed were explained previously. The results are shown in Table 42.

In gun-related homicides the majority of cases were primarily non-violent in nature. The percentage of non-violent homicides decreased over time while the percentage of violent homicides increased over time. In both knife-related homicides and physical homicides the majority of cases were primarily non-violent in nature. In both types of homicides, the percentage of violent homicides increased until 1995 when the numbers decreased. However, in 2000 the percentage of violent homicides once again

increased. To obtain totals for each year, multiple weapon homicides were automatically considered violent. Cases in which the files were missing were not included in the yearly total. For yearly totals, the majority of cases were primarily non-violent in nature. For all years under study, the percentage of non-violent homicides decreased over time while the percentage of violent homicides increased over time. The results for each type of homicide and for the yearly totals indicate that homicides are becoming more violent in recent times.

Table 42: Number and percentage (%) of violent versus non-violent homicides per year

	Year					
Violence	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	Total
Gun-related						
Non-violent	138 (76.2)	75 (66.4)	76 (61.3)	164 (51.4)	82 (46.1)	535 (58.5)
Violent	43 (23.8)	38 (33.6)	48 (38.7)	155 (48.6)	96 (53.9)	380 (41.5)
Knife-related						
Non-violent	14 (50.0)	7 (31.8)	5 (26.3)	10 (55.6)	5 (50.0)	41 (42.3)
Violent	14 (50.0)	15 (68.2)	14 (73.7)	8 (44.4)	5 (50.0)	56 (57.7)
Physical						
Non-violent	20 (66.7)	16 (59.3)	5 (35.7)	11 (55.0)	6 (42.9)	58 (55.2)
Violent	10 (33.3)	11 (40.7)	9 (64.3)	9 (45.0)	8 (57.1)	47 (44.8)
Yearly total						
Non-violent	172 (69.9)	98 (59.0)	86 (54.8)	185 (51.4)	93 (45.6)	634 (56.0)
Violent	74 (30.1)	68 (41.0)	71 (45.2)	175 (48.6)	111 (54.4)	499 (44.0)

Because the results may have been influenced by the narrow categories indicating violence versus non-violence, the results were reanalyzed using different parameters. For gun-related and knife-related homicides, non-violence was previously assigned to cases involving only one to two wounds. In the reanalysis, cases which involved one to five wounds were considered non-violent. In physical homicides, non-violence was previously assigned to cases involving wounds on only one to two body sections. In the reanalysis, cases which involved wounds on one to four body sections were considered non-violent. When the numbers were reanalyzed, the results were found to be the same as the initial results. The reanalysis further implied that violence has increased in all types of homicides in recent years.

Average Number of Wounds Per Year

In order to further infer the amount of violence per year, the average number of wounds was calculated for each year. The results are shown in Table 43. In gun-related homicides, the total number of wounds fluctuated from year to year. When the averages are calculated, the numbers indicate that the average number of wounds per year in gun-related homicides increased over time. In knife-related homicides, the average number of wounds increased for the first two years of study and then decreased for the next two years of study. In the final year of study the average number of wounds once again increased. In physical homicides, the average number of wounds increased for the first three years of study and then decreased in the fourth year of study. In the final year of study the average number of wounds once again increased. In multiple weapon homicides the average number of wounds decreased in the first three years of study. For the last two years of study the average number of wounds increased. For the totals for each year, the average number of wounds increased in the first three years of study. The average number of wounds decreased in the fourth year of study but increased again in the final year of study. The results for the average number of wounds in each type of homicide and in yearly totals indicate that homicides are becoming more violent in recent times.

Table 43: Total number of wounds and average number of wounds per year

	Year				
Violence	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**
Gun-related					
Total number of wounds	368	254	398	1051	673
Average number of wounds	2.03	2.25	3.21	3.29	3.78
Knife-related					
Total number of wounds	120	179	146	116	86
Average number of wounds	4.29	8.14	7.68	6.44	8.6
Physical					
Total number of wounds	99	90	63	68	57
Average number of wounds	3.3	3.33	4.5	3.4	4.1
Multiple weapon					
Total number of wounds	72	27	0	24	19
Average number of wounds	10.29	6.75	0	8.0	9.5
Yearly total					
Total number of wounds	659	550	607	1259	835
Average number of wounds	2.68	3.31	3.87	3.5	4.09

Comparison of Variables for Violent Homicides

Once the amount of violence was ascertained for this study, an analysis was performed only on cases which were considered violent. This analysis was performed to determine trends in homicides which are more violent. Only variables which would be beneficial to such an analysis were used. The variables were compared as yearly totals rather than by type of homicide. The number of violent homicides per year is illustrated in Figure 10. There were a total of 499 violent homicides for all years studied. The greatest number of violent homicides occurred in 1995 while the least number of violent homicides occurred in 1985.

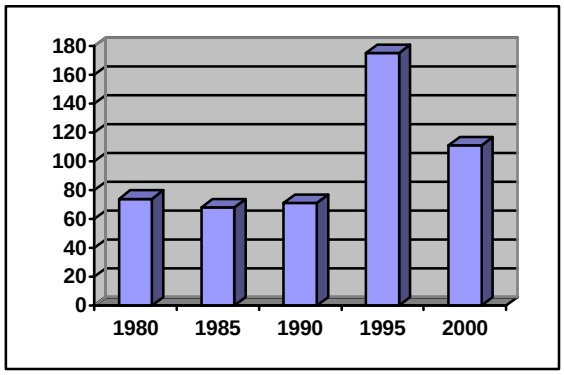

Figure 10: Number of violent homicides per year

The distribution for the sex of the homicide victims for violent homicides is shown in Figure 11. The graph shows that males far outweighed females in terms of numbers for violent homicides. Males were consistently killed in a more violent manner than were females. Overall, the number of males who died in a violent manner increased over time while the number of females who died in a violent manner decreased over time.

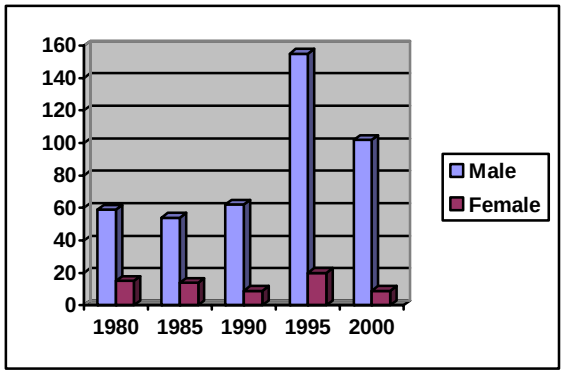

Figure 11: Number of violent homicides by sex of the victim

Table 44 presents data on the race of homicide victims in violent homicides. For all years under study, African American consistently died in a more violent manner than did whites. The percentage of African Americans who died in a violent manner increased over time while the percentage of whites who died in a violent manner decreased over time. Few Asians died in a violent manner and no races listed as "other" died in a violent manner.

Table 44: Number and percentage (%) of violent homicides by race

	Race				
Year	**Black**	**White**	**Asian**	**Other**	**Total**
1980	57 (77.0)	17 (23.0)	0	0	**74 (100)**
1985	54 (79.4)	14 (20.6)	0	0	**68 (100)**
1990	59 (83.1)	12 (16.9)	0	0	**71 (100)**
1995	155 (88.6)	17 (9.7)	3 (1.7)	0	**175 (100)**
2000	104 (93.7)	5 (4.5)	2 (1.8)	0	**111 (100)**
Total	**429 (86.0)**	**65 (13.0)**	**5 (1.0)**	**0**	**499 (100)**

Table 45 reveals that throughout all the years under study, victims ranging in age from 21 to 30 were constantly the highest percentage of homicide victims killed in a violent manner. The next most common age groups were those that included victims aged 11 to 20 and victims aged 31 to 40. The age ranges encompassing the oldest and youngest victims consistently represented the smallest percentages.

Table 45: Number and percentage (%) of violent homicides by age

	Year					
Age	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Under 10	3 (4.1)	3 (4.4)	2 (2.8)	2 (1.1)	1 (0.9)	**11 (2.2)**
11 to 20	7 (9.5)	11 (16.2)	13 (18.3)	49 (28.0)	18 (16.2)	**98 (19.6)**
21 to 30	37 (50.0)	27 (39.7)	30 (42.3)	70 (40.0)	57 (51.4)	**221 (44.3)**
31 to 40	10 (13.5)	13 (19.1)	10 (14.1)	31 (17.7)	26 (23.4)	**90 (18.0)**
41 to 50	3 (4.1)	7 (10.3)	9 (12.7)	13 (7.4)	7 (6.3)	**39 (7.8)**
51 to 60	10 (13.5)	3 (4.4)	5 (7.0)	6 (3.4)	2 (1.8)	**26 (5.2)**
61 to 70	3 (4.1)	1 (1.5)	0	3 (1.7)	0	**7 (1.4)**
71 and above	1 (1.4)	2 (2.9)	2 (2.8)	1 (0.6)	0	**6 (1.2)**
Unknown	0	1 (1.5)	0	0	0	**1 (0.2)**
Total	**74 (100)**	**68 (100)**	**71 (100)**	**175 (100)**	**111 (100)**	**499 (100)**

The number of violent homicide incidents per month was relatively evenly spread from month to month for all years under study. The greatest number of violent homicide incidents occurred in March. February, July, August, and November also included high numbers of violent homicide incidents. The least number of violent homicide incidents occurred equally in October and April (Table 46).

Table 46: Number and percentage (%) of violent homicides by Date of Trauma

	Year					
Date of Trauma	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
January	3 (4.1)	5 (7.4)	5 (7.0)	16 (9.1)	4 (3.6)	**33 (6.6)**
February	10 (13.5)	8 (11.8)	2 (2.8)	19 (10.9)	10 (9.0)	**49 (9.8)**
March	5 (6.9)	6 (8.8)	7 (9.9)	24 (13.7)	16 (14.4)	**58 (11.6)**
April	6 (8.1)	6 (8.8)	5 (7.0)	8 (4.6)	7 (6.3)	**32 (6.4)**
May	9 (12.2)	1 (1.5)	2 (2.8)	13 (7.4)	14 (12.6)	**39 (7.8)**
June	4 (5.4)	4 (5.9)	3 (4.2)	17 (9.7)	9 (8.1)	**37 (7.4)**
July	2 (2.7)	7 (10.3)	13 (18.3)	11 (6.3)	9 (8.1)	**42 (8.4)**
August	7 (9.5)	11 (16.2)	13 (18.3)	22 (12.6)	4 (3.6)	**57 (11.4)**
September	4 (5.4)	5 (7.4)	5 (7.0)	7 (4.0)	12 (10.8)	**33 (6.6)**
October	5 (6.9)	5 (7.4)	2 (2.8)	14 (8.0)	6 (5.4)	**32 (6.4)**
November	10 (13.5)	8 (11.8)	9 (12.7)	15 (8.6)	8 (7.2)	**50 (10.0)**
December	9 (12.2)	2 (2.9)	5 (7.0)	9 (5.1)	12 (10.8)	**37 (7.4)**
Total	**74 (100)**	**68 (100)**	**71 (100)**	**175 (100)**	**111 (100)**	**499 (100)**

Table 47 presents data on the time of trauma for violent homicides. The numbers show that the majority of violent homicide incidents happened between the hours of 8:00pm and 11:59pm. The second highest number of violent homicides occurred between the hours of 12:00am and 3:59am. The fewest number of violent homicide incidents took place between the hours of 8:00am and 11:59am.

Table 47: Number and percentage (%) of violent homicides by time of trauma

	Year					
Time of Trauma	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
12:00am to 3:59am	17 (23.0)	16 (23.5)	20 (28.2)	40 (22.9)	18 (16.2)	**111 (22.2)**
4:00am to 7:59am	7 (9.5)	5 (7.4)	6 (8.5)	27 (15.4)	12 (10.8)	**57 (11.4)**
8:00am to 11:59am	8 (10.8)	7 (10.3)	4 (5.6)	11 (6.3)	11 (9.9)	**41 (8.2)**
12:00pm to 3:59pm	9 (12.2)	6 (8.8)	9 (12.7)	16 (9.1)	14 (12.6)	**54 (10.8)**
4:00pm to 7:59pm	8 (10.8)	13 (19.1)	12 (16.9)	24 (13.7)	16 (14.4)	**73 (14.6)**
8:00pm to 11:59pm	17 (23.0)	17 (25.0)	19 (26.8)	54 (30.9)	36 (32.4)	**143 (28.7)**
Unknown	8 (10.8)	4 (5.9)	1 (1.4)	3 (1.7)	4 (3.6)	**20 (4.0)**
Total	**74 (100)**	**68 (100)**	**71 (100)**	**175 (100)**	**111 (100)**	**499 (100)**

Table 48 presents data on the presence of drugs and alcohol per year. In violent homicides, the majority of victims were negative for both drugs and alcohol at the time of death. Though the percentages fluctuated from year to year, the negative percentages were consistently higher than the positive percentages. However, in 1990, 1995, and 2000 the percentages of victims positive for drugs were very similar to the percentages of victims who were negative for drugs.

Table 48: Number and percentage (%) of victims with drugs or alcohol in their system

	Presence of Drugs			
Year	**No Record**	**Negative**	**Positive**	**Total**
1980	12 (16.2)	49 (66.2)	13 (17.7)	74 (100)
1985	7 (10.3)	39 (57.4)	22 (32.4)	68 (100)
1990	4 (5.6)	34 (47.9)	33 (46.5)	71 (100)
1995	7 (4.0)	85 (48.6)	83 (47.4)	175 (100)
2000	5 (4.5)	54 (48.6)	52 (46.8)	111 (100)
Total	**35 (7.0)**	**261 (52.3)**	**203 (40.7)**	**499 (100)**
	Presence of Alcohol			
Year	**No Record**	**Negative**	**Positive**	**Total**
1980	12 (16.2)	44 (59.5)	18 (24.3)	74 (100)
1985	7 (10.3)	40 (58.8)	21 (30.9)	68 (100)
1990	4 (5.5)	42 (59.2)	25 (35.2)	71 (100)
1995	7 (4.0)	113 (64.6)	55 (31.4)	175 (100)
2000	5 (4.5)	74 (66.7)	32 (28.8)	111 (100)
Total	**35 (7.0)**	**313 (62.7)**	**151 (30.3)**	**499 (100)**

For all the years under study the fifth and sixth police districts consistently contained the highest number of violent homicide cases (Table 49). For all years under study, the fewest number of violent homicides occurred in the seventh and eight districts and outside of Orleans Parish.

Table 49: Number and percentage (%) of violent homicides by police district

	Year					
District	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
First	6 (8.1)	3 (4.4)	7 (9.9)	16 (9.1)	19 (17.1)	**51 (10.2)**
Second	10 (13.5)	3 (4.4)	6 (8.5)	17 (9.7)	14 (12.6)	**50 (10.0)**
Third	1 (1.4)	8 (11.8)	6 (8.5)	11 (6.3)	10 (9.0)	**36 (7.2)**
Fourth	8 (10.8)	5 (7.4)	1 (1.4)	16 (9.1)	10 (9.0)	**40 (8.0)**
Fifth	16 (21.6)	10 (14.7)	19 (26.8)	51 (29.1)	23 (20.7)	**119 (23.8)**
Sixth	16 (21.6)	25 (36.8)	26 (36.6)	41 (23.4)	26 (23.4)	**134 (26.9)**
Seventh	7 (9.5)	4 (5.9)	1 (1.4)	19 (10.9)	5 (4.5)	**36 (7.2)**
Eighth	3 (4.1)	1 (1.5)	1 (1.4)	3 (1.7)	3 (2.7)	**11 (2.2)**
Out of Orleans	3 (4.1)	4 (5.9)	2 (2.8)	1 (0.6)	0	**10 (2.0)**
Unknown	4 (5.4)	5 (7.4)	2 (2.8)	0	1 (0.9)	**12 (2.4)**
Total	**74 (100)**	**68 (100)**	**71 (100)**	**175 (100)**	**111 (100)**	**499 (100)**

Information on the situation surrounding the homicide incident is shown in Table 50. The number of cases per situation fluctuated from year to year. The most common situation surrounding violent homicides involved victims who were found lying outside. Violent homicides were also often associated with drugs, arguments, and domestic issues. The fewest number of violent homicides involved cases where someone was playing with or cleaning a gun or other weapon. Domestic issues leading to a homicide/suicide and drive-bys were also infrequent.

Table 50: Number and percentage (%) of violent homicides by situation surrounding the homicide incident

	Year					
Situation	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**Total**
Argument	4 (5.4)	12 (17.6)	8 (11.3)	13 (7.4)	5 (4.5)	**42 (8.4)**
Over drugs	4 (5.4)	2 (2.9)	10 (14.1)	23 (13.1)	11 (9.9)	**50 (10.0)**
Domestic	10 (13.5)	12 (17.6)	9 (12.7)	4 (2.3)	3 (2.7)	**38 (7.6)**
Domestic/suicide	1 (1.4)	0	0	3 (1.7)	0	**4 (0.8)**
Revenge	3 (4.1)	0	3 (4.2)	1 (0.6)	3 (2.7)	**10 (2.0)**
Robbery	6 (8.1)	7 (10.3)	6 (8.5)	15 (8.6)	6 (5.4)	**40 (8.0)**
Police intervention	9 (12.2)	1 (1.5)	0	2 (1.1)	1 (0.9)	**13 (2.6)**
Playing with or cleaning a gun or other weapon	0	1 (1.5)	0	0	0	**1 (0.2)**
Drive-by	0	1 (1.5)	1 (1.4)	4 (2.3)	0	**6 (1.2)**
Inside or outside of a bar	6 (8.1)	5 (7.4)	4 (5.6)	3 (1.7)	4 (3.6)	**22 (4.4)**
Found lying outside	7 (9.5)	5 (7.4)	16 (22.5)	68 (38.9)	48 (43.2)	**144 (28.9)**
Found lying inside	4 (5.4)	9 (13.2)	3 (4.2)	5 (2.9)	5 (4.5)	**26 (5.2)**
Sitting in a car	1 (1.4)	3 (4.4)	4 (5.6)	19 (10.9)	12 (10.8)	**39 (7.8)**
Missing	3 (4.1)	2 (2.9)	0	3 (1.7)	1 (0.9)	**9 (1.8)**
Beaten	7 (9.5)	0	2 (2.8)	0	0	**9 (1.8)**
Found in an abandoned area	2 (2.7)	1 (1.5)	1 (1.4)	3 (1.7)	3 (2.7)	**10 (2.0)**
Unknown	7 (9.5)	7 (10.3)	4 (5.6)	9 (5.1)	9 (8.1)	**36 (7.2)**
Total	**74 (100)**	**68 (100)**	**71 (100)**	**175 (100)**	**111 (100)**	**499 (100)**

DISCUSSION

A total of 1,334 homicide cases were reviewed for this study. The years covered in the analysis included 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000. The cases reviewed were separated by year to determine shifts. The cases were also separated by type of homicide to look at differences in each type of homicide. Numerous variables were considered including sex, race, age, marital status, nativity, date of trauma, date of death, difference between the date of trauma and date of death, day of week on which trauma occurred, time of trauma, time of death, difference between time of trauma and time of death, police district in which the incident occurred, presence of drugs or alcohol, situation surrounding the homicide incident, cause of death, number of wounds, location of wounds, presence of additional wounds, and weapon used.

Next, the amount of violence per year was analyzed. Violence was inferred by looking at the number of violent versus non-violent cases and the average number of wounds per year. Cases which were considered violent were then reviewed using some of the previously mentioned variables to determine trends in violent homicides.

The number of homicides fluctuated from year to year. From 1980 to 1985 there was a decrease in the number of homicide cases. In 1990 and 1995 the numbers increased. In 2000 the number of cases once again decreased. The greatest number of cases occurred in 1995. The high number of cases in 1995 may have influenced the results. In many cases, the results would show a pattern that would fluctuate only in 1995.

Of all the cases reviewed for all years under study, gun-related homicides consistently represented the majority of homicide deaths. The high rate of homicides involving guns is an indication of the problems associated with lack of gun control. The

high frequency of gun use to commit murder may be due to the quickness with which guns can kill a victim. By using a gun, the perpetrator of a homicide does not even have to come into contact with his or her victim.

The majority of homicide victims were found to be African American males aged 21 to 30. According to the 2000 census, African Americans contributed to 67.3 percent of the population in Orleans Parish. Males accounted for 46.9 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau). Yet, African Americans made up 90.9 percent of homicide victims in 2000 while males accounted for 89.4 percent of homicide victims. It is disturbing that such a large discrepancy exists between the population percentage and the victim percentage. Perhaps the implementation of public safety measures to aid those who are the primary targets of homicide would decrease the high percentage of African American male homicide victims. For all years studied, most homicide victims were single, or never married, and were born in Louisiana. As stated previously, because this study was performed in a Louisiana parish, it is not surprising that the majority of victims were born in Louisiana.

The results showed that the highest number of homicides occurred in February, March, July, and August. The results indicate that homicides are more common in the beginning of the year and during the summer months. For all years studied, the fewest number of homicides occurred in April, September and October. Therefore, the months with the fewest number of cases occur after the months with the highest number of cases. The majority of homicide incidents occurred on Saturday and Sunday while the minority occurred on Wednesday. Therefore, homicides tended to occur more frequently on the weekends than in the middle of the week. Homicide incidents typically occurred between

the hours of 8:00 PM and 3:59 AM indicating that the late evening and early morning hours are the most dangerous. Most of the victims did not live for more than twenty-four hours after the homicide incident occurred. The low survivability of victims may be due to the fact that guns were the primary weapons used and guns typically lead to a quick death.

Throughout all years under study, the fifth and sixth police districts consistently maintained the highest number of homicide cases. Because the locations of homicide incidents varied widely by street, the results were presented according to which streets were listed most often. Not surprisingly, the majority of streets found to be the most common were located primarily in either the fifth or sixth police districts.

The analysis of the presence of drugs and alcohol revealed that most victims were negative for drugs and alcohol at the time of death. However, the results showed that the percentage of victims who were positive for drugs and alcohol has increased in recent years. There appeared to be trends in the types of drugs which were popular from year to year. Victims who had a high blood alcohol level at the time of death were less common than victims who had a low blood alcohol level.

Situations surrounding the homicide incident varied from year to year. The situation was sometimes dependant on the type of homicide. For example, drive-bys could only be associated with gun-related homicides. The most common situations involved victims found lying outside. The high number of victims found lying out in the open is a result of the high rate of homicides occurring outside. Many homicides were associated with domestic issues. The large number of domestic related homicides is an indication of the need to reduce domestic violence in our society.

Certain occupations were found to occur more frequently among homicide victims. The high number of cases found among such occupations is not necessarily an indication that those occupations are more hazardous. It may be simply that the categories used to determine occupation are narrowly based. For instance, one of the most common occupations listed was “laborer”. The category of laborer can include numerous different occupations.

When variables were compared for each type of homicide, there was sometimes variation in the results. As stated previously, gun-related homicides were consistently in the majority. The highest number of gun-related homicides occurred in 1995. Deaths in gun-related cases were primarily caused by multiple gunshot wounds. Therefore, perpetrators of homicide were more likely to shoot a victim multiple times than only once. Perhaps this is due to the perpetrator’s desire to kill the victim rather than just wound the victim.

Most gun-related cases were attributed to multiple gunshot wounds. Most of the victims in gun-related cases had only one to two wounds on their bodies. As the number of wounds increased, the number of cases decreased. Among all the cases reviewed, the highest number of gunshot wounds occurred in 1995 when a victim had between 31 and 40 wounds. The results showed that as time increased, it was less likely for a victim to have only one to two wounds. In the earlier years, most of the bullets lodged in the bodies of the victims while in later years most of the bullets exited the bodies of the victims. In gun-related cases the majority of wounds occurred in the upper bodies of the victims, primarily in the head and upper chest. These results imply that the perpetrators of homicide are aiming for areas of the body which will be more affected by gunfire.

Though most of the victims did not have additional wounds on their bodies, the percentage of victims who did have additional wounds increased over time. There are many explanations for the presence of additional wounds. Additional wounds may be caused prior to the shooting and may or may not have been caused by the perpetrator. Or, additional wounds may be caused when the body of the victim hits the ground after the shooting. The most often used weapons in gun-related homicides were handguns. This fact may be an indication of the availability of handguns or may be due to the ease with which handguns can be used to kill.

Physical homicides were those which included strangulation, beating, or burning. Physical homicides were consistently the second most common form of homicide. The highest number of physical homicides occurred in 1980. The cause of death varied for physical homicides but the majority of victims died as a result of head injury. Asphyxiation was also found to occur frequently in physical homicides. Because of the nature of physical homicides, victims often displayed numerous wounds on numerous sections of their bodies. Because wounding could be widespread, the number of wounds was determined by the number of sections of the body which were affected. Most of the victims in physical homicides had wounds on one to two body sections. However, there were relatively high numbers of cases where victims had wounds on multiple body sections. Only two cases involved victims with wounds all over their bodies. The body sections affected were primarily within the upper bodies of the victims. Not surprisingly, most of the victims also had additional wounds on their bodies. Weapons varied but hands, feet, or blunt objects were the primary weapons used in physical homicides.

As stated previously, knife-related homicides were consistently the third most common form of homicide. The highest number of knife-related homicides occurred in 1980. The results showed that knife-related homicides have become less common in recent years. The decrease in the use of knives to commit a homicide may be due to an increase in the use of guns to commit a homicide.

From year to year, the cause of death in knife-related cases fluctuated. When all years were considered, multiple stab wounds were found to have occurred more frequently. Most of the victims in knife-related cases had one to two wounds on their bodies but were followed closely by those who had three to five wounds. There were three cases where victims had over 40 wounds. Unlike gun-related cases, as the years increased it was more likely for victims in knife-related cases to have fewer wounds. Still, as the years increased, there were more cases where victims had excessive numbers of wounds. In knife-related cases the majority of wounds occurred in the upper bodies of the victims, primarily in the head and upper chest. Once again, the location of wounds in the upper body may be due to perpetrators aiming for areas which will be more affected. Most of the victims did not have additional wounds on their bodies. However, the presence of additional wounds has become more common in recent years. The weapon of choice was most often a knife and not some other type of sharp instrument.

Multiple weapon homicides were consistently among the minority of all homicide cases. Though the numbers were typically small, multiple weapon homicides remained important to the analysis because of their violent nature. The use of more than one type of weapon is an indication of overkill. The highest number of multiple weapon homicides

occurred in 1980. Although most of the homicides in the study involved guns, most of the multiple weapon homicides were physical and knife-related.

The cause of death in multiple weapon homicides was primarily due to multiple causes. The category of multiple causes was attributed to cases where there were three or more types of wounding. For instance, multiple causes would be attributed to a case where a victim was strangled, had head injury, and had stab wounds. Asphyxiation and multiple stab wounds were also common causes of death. In multiple weapon homicides there was no indication as to which type of wounding occurred first. For cases involving guns and knives, most victims had one to two wounds. For cases that were physical, most victims had wounds on one to two body sections. The body sections affected were primarily within the upper bodies of the victims but wounds to the lower abdomen were also common. Most of the victims also had additional wounds on their bodies but the presence of additional wounding was becoming less common in recent years. Because most of the multiple weapon homicides were physical and knife-related, the primary weapons used were hands and knives.

Most of the information that was available on cases where the files were missing was analyzed in the yearly totals. Information from missing files would be expected to be similar to what was found among files which were located. For individual analysis, missing files were analyzed by number of cases, type, and by cause of death. The number of missing files tended to be small except in 1990 when roughly half of the files could not be located. As with the yearly totals, among the missing files, gun-related homicides represented the majority of homicide deaths. The cause of death in the missing files

varied because it included all types of homicide. However, the majority of the cases were caused by multiple gunshot wounds as would be expected.

The amount of violence in each type of homicide was then analyzed. Though gun-related homicides were primarily non-violent in nature, the percentage of violent homicides increased over time. In knife-related cases the numbers fluctuated from year to year, but the percentage of violent homicides was shown to be increasing in recent years. The percentages for physical homicides also fluctuated from year to year but violent homicides were shown to be increasing in recent years. For all the years under study, the percentage of violent homicides has been increasing over time. These results indicate that homicides, regardless of type, are becoming more violent nowadays. When a reanalysis was performed, the results were the same. When the average number of wounds was analyzed for each type of homicide, the results also indicated that homicides are becoming more violent in recent times. Therefore, although all homicides can be considered violent, the amount of violence present in each case is increasing.

To infer information about violent homicides, variables were compared for those cases which were determined to be violent. Of the 1,334 cases reviewed, roughly 37.4 percent of the cases were considered more violent in nature. The results were similar to the results for the yearly totals. Once again, African American males were found to be the majority of victims killed in a violent manner. As with the yearly totals, the majority of victims who died in a violent manner were also aged 21 to 30.

There was some variation in when the violent homicide incidents occurred. The date of the homicide incident was more evenly distributed for violent homicides. High percentages of violent homicide incidents were found to have occurred in February,

March, July, August, and November. Therefore, unlike yearly totals, violent homicides were also common at the end of the year. Months in which a high number of homicide incidents occurred were followed by months in which fewer homicide incidents occurred. The highest percentage of violent homicide incidents occurred between the hours of 8:00pm and 3:59am. Most of the victims who died in a violent manner were negative for both drugs and alcohol. In terms of the situation surrounding the homicide incident, many violent homicides involved domestic issues and victims found lying outside. Some violent homicides also involved arguments. Violent homicides primarily occurred in the fifth and sixth districts.

It may not be surprising that the results for violent homicides were similar to the results for all homicide cases reviewed. Those categories which consistently contributed to the highest percentages would be expected to be the same in violent homicides. However, because excessively violent homicides are distinct in nature, it was unknown prior to analysis whether the results would be the same or not.

CONCLUSION

This study involved an analysis of homicide cases from the Orleans Parish coroner's office. In order to look at changes in violence over time, the years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000 were selected for analysis. All files which could be located for each year were analyzed based on numerous variables. Multiple variables were used in order to determine trends in homicides in Orleans Parish. There were two objectives for this study. The first objective was to analyze the information to determine trends in homicide cases in Orleans Parish. The second objective was to determine whether the rate of violence in homicide cases in Orleans Parish has increased over time.

The results showed that gun-related homicides were consistently in the majority. The high percentage of gun-related homicides is indicative of a need for gun control. The fact that handguns are the weapon of choice in homicide may be due to the fact that guns are more effective and get the job done quickly. Victims were primarily African American males aged 21 to 30. The high percentage of homicides among this narrow group of individuals indicates that more public safety measures need to be implemented to aid those who are the primary targets of homicide. Though the date of death and date of trauma varied, the beginning of the year and the summer months were found to be the most dangerous. The day of week also varied but more homicides occurred on the weekend than any other days. Many of the homicide incidents and homicide deaths occurred during the late evening and early morning hours. Most victims of homicide lived only for a short period of time after the homicide incident occurred. The low survivability of victims is further proof of the effectiveness of guns in committing a homicidal act. Though the presence of drugs and alcohol was uncommon in homicide

victims, it is becoming more common in recent years. The high percentage of homicides occurring in the fifth and sixth districts is indicative of a need for increased public safety measures in those areas.

When wounds were considered, most cases involved relatively low numbers of wounds. However, when wounds were considered in relation to violence, the results showed that all forms of homicide are becoming more violent in recent times. Even a reanalysis of the data did not change the fact that violence is increasing. The increase in the amount of violence in homicides may imply that our society as a whole has become more violent. When violent cases were analyzed to determine trends, the trends were similar to those found for the yearly totals.

Studies on homicide can be beneficial to the society in which they are performed. Studies which use different sources may end up with different results. However, understanding who takes part in violence can offer insight into how violence can be averted. Understanding who is affected by violence can also be used to aid those who are most likely to be victims of violence. Information garnered from such studies should always be used to benefit others rather than to target others. This study focuses on the victims of homicide rather than the perpetrators. Because this study focuses on the victim, information gathered from this study is meant to help the victims of homicide. This sort of information can be used by police departments, government agencies, or society as a whole to implement programs to decrease the amount of violence present in our society.

REFERENCES CITED

Adelson, Lester
1974 *The Pathology of Homicide.* Springfield: Charles C Thomas.

Barker, Martin and Julian Petley
2001 *Ill Effects: the Media/Violence Debate*. New York: Routledge.

Bell, MD and RI Vila
1996 Homicide in Homosexual Victims: A study of 67 cases from the Broward County, Florida, Medical Examiner's Office (1982-1992), with special emphasis on "overkill." *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology* 17(1):65-69.

Bintliff, Russell
1993 *Police Procedural: A Writer's Guide to the Police and How They Work.* Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.

Danto, Bruce L., John Bruhns, and Austin H. Kutscher, eds.
1982 *The Human Side of Homicide*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fox, J.A. and M.W. Zawitz
2001 Homicide Trends in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Hanzlick, Randy and Debra Combs
1997 Medical Examiner and Coroner Systems. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 279(11):870-873.

Kraus, Jess F.
1987 Homicide While at Work: Persons, Industries, and Occupations at High Risk. *American Journal of Public Health* 77(10): 1285-1289.

Mason, J.K. ed.
1978 *The Pathology of Violent Injury.* Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc.

New Orleans Police Department
2003 The City of New Orleans: New Orleans Police Department. www.new-orleans.la.us/home/nopd/maps/basecrimemap.html July 2003.

Parker, Karen F. and Matthew V. Pruitt
2000 How the West Was One: Explaining the Similarities in Race-Specific Homicide Rates in the West and South. *Social Forces* 78(4): 1483-1508.

Potter, W. James
1998 *The 11 Myths of Media Violence*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

U.S. Census Bureau
2004 State and County Quick Facts: Orleans Parish Quick Facts from the United States Census Bureau. www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/22033.html: February 2004.

U.S. Department of Justice
1997 A Study of Homicide in Eight U.S. Cities: An NIJ Intramural Research Project. National Institute of Justice. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Welti, Charles V., Roger E. Mittleman, and Valerie J. Rao
1999 *An Atlas of Forensic Pathology.* Chicago: ASCP Press.

Wilson, Keith D.
1992 *Cause of Death: A Writer's Guide to Death, Murder and Forensic Medicine*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.

Wingate, Anne
1992 *Scene of the Crime: A Writer's Guide to Crime-Scene Investigations*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.

Wolfgang, Marvin E.
1958 *Patterns in Criminal Homicide*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia.

VITA

Helen Virginia Bouzon was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on September 30, 1978. She was raised in New Orleans and graduated Cum Laude from the Academy of the Sacred Heart in 1997. She began her college career at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, in 1997. She transferred to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 1999. She completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in December of 2001. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and was recognized as the top graduate in the College of Arts and Sciences-Social Sciences division. In 2002 she began working toward a Master of Arts degree in anthropology at Louisiana State University and is currently a candidate for that degree. She plans to take a hiatus from school to work for a period of time before possibly returning to pursue a doctoral degree.