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VIOLENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS

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The Epidemiology of Homicide
in Massachusetts, 1977-1983

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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VIOLENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS

The Epidemiology of Homicide
in Massachusetts, 1977-1983

September 1987

*A Study Prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Public Health for the
Massachusetts Conference on Violence and Public Health*

All photographs ©1987 Linda Haas.

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FORWARD

"Violence is every bit a public health issue for me and my successors in this century as smallpox, tuberculosis and syphilis were for my predecessors in the last two centuries."

C. Everett Koop
U.S. Surgeon General

Homicide is among the top five causes of death for teens and young adults in Massachusetts.¹ It is the leading cause of death for 15-24 year-olds in Boston.² Young adult males in poor urban areas are at highest risk both as victims and as perpetrators of homicide. And friends, family, and acquaintances—*not strangers*—are the most frequent attackers.

How prevalent is homicide in Massachusetts? Who is at risk? What are the precipitating circumstances?

This report presents some of the facts about lethal violence in Massachusetts. Research for the report was undertaken in association with planning for the *Massachusetts Conference on Violence and Public Health: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Preventing Violence Among Adolescents and Young Adults*. The focus of the conference was on non-stranger violence, including peer violence and domestic abuse. Three themes consistently emerged from the conference as important in understanding and preventing violence:

- **male socialization** encourages violence against male peers and violence against women;

- **urban poverty** is correlated with high homicide rates and disproportionately affects blacks and Hispanics;

- **local culture** teaches attitudes toward violence and power via media, schools, families, health professionals, and government.

Violence is endemic to life in Massachusetts and throughout the nation. Massachusetts police report over 30,000 violent crimes every year.³ In 1986 over 21,000 Abuse Prevention Act petitions were filed in Massachusetts courts, the majority by women seeking protection from violent partners.⁴ In addition, the Department of Social Services confirmed 9,985 cases of child abuse or child sexual abuse in 1986.⁵

Homicide, which claims approximately 200 lives in Massachusetts each year, represents only the tip of the iceberg in violent crime. Nevertheless, a study of homicide can provide valuable insight into the demographic and interpersonal characteristics of serious violence.

This report is based on a study of 1,492 victims of homicide and manslaughter reported by Massachusetts police over a seven year period, 1977-1983. (See *Sources and Definitions*, page 38.)

SECTION I

TEN FACTS ABOUT VIOLENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS

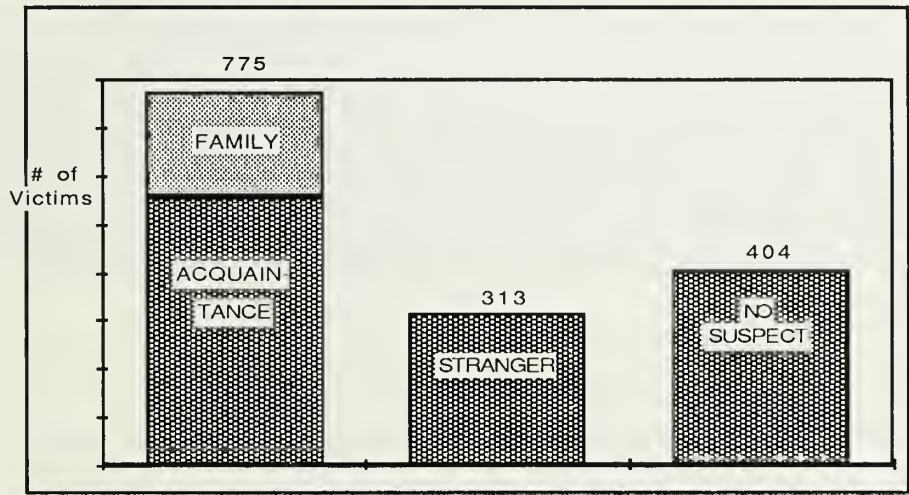
1

Most Massachusetts homicide victims are killed by someone they know.

- At least 52% of Massachusetts homicide victims are killed by someone they know and 21% are killed by a stranger. No suspect is reported for the remaining 27%.
- Among victims for whom a suspect is reported, 9 out of 10 victims are killed by someone of their own race.
- 8 out of 10 children are killed by a family member or acquaintance.

Relationship of Victim to Offender

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983





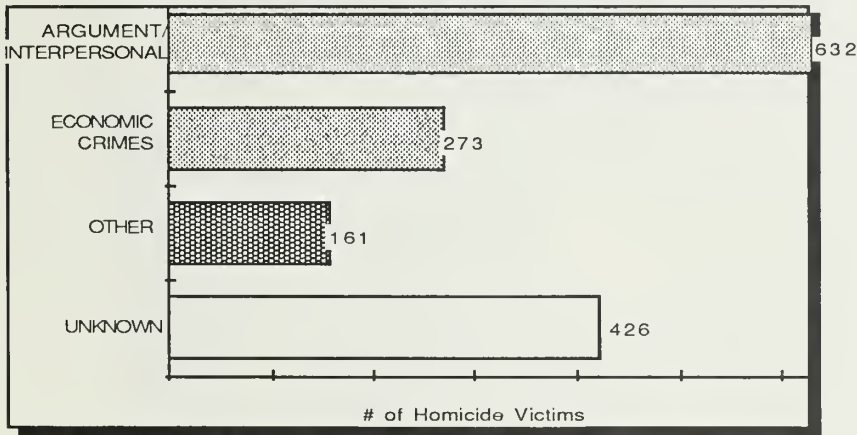
2

Most homicides in Massachusetts are precipitated by arguments or other interpersonal problems, not robbery or mugging.

- Arguments and abuse account for 59% of all homicides in which circumstances are noted.
- Economic crimes such as robbery and mugging account for 26% of all homicides in which circumstances are noted.
- Precipitating factors for homicide can be as minor as a dispute over a parking space.

Precipitating Circumstances

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983



3

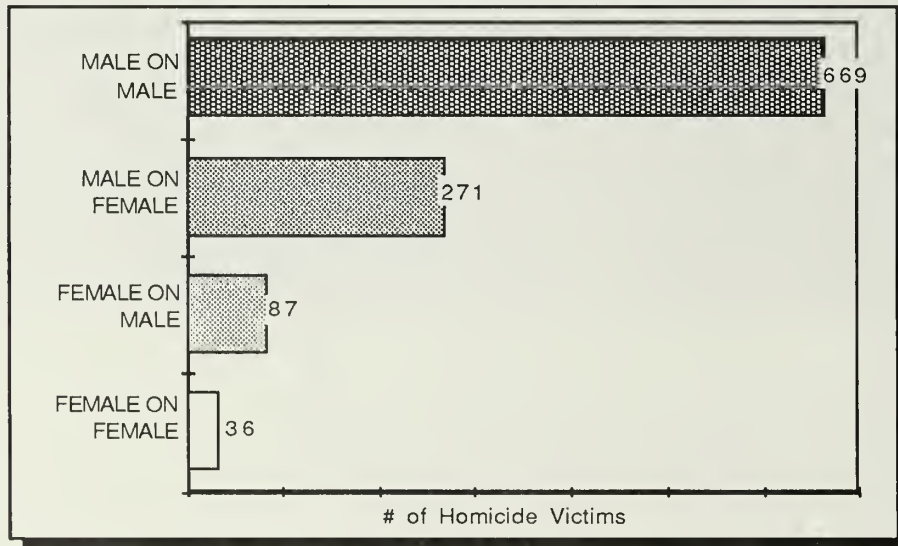
Males are at highest risk both as victims and as perpetrators of violence.

Male violence plays a strikingly dominant role in homicide:

- 9 out of 10 homicide suspects are male.
- 73% of all homicide victims are male.
- "Male-on-male" violence accounts for 64% of all murders in which a suspect is reported.

Sex of Offender by Sex of Victim

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983







4

Poor urban areas are hardest hit by violence.

- The risk of homicide in Massachusetts is five times greater for people living in cities of over 50,000 residents than for people living in smaller communities.
- Of all large cities, those ranking *highest* in homicide rates had median household incomes *below* \$15,000 in 1980. All but two of those ranking *lowest* in homicide rates had median household incomes *above* \$15,000.
- Homicide is the leading cause of death among 15-24 year-olds in Boston.²

Homicide Rate and Household Income in Cities of Over 50,000 Residents Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983

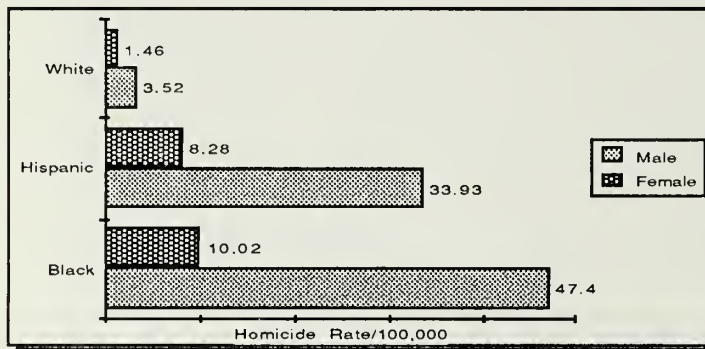
<u>City</u>	<u>Homicide Rate Per 100,000</u>	<u>1980 Population</u>	<u>1980 Median Household Income</u>
Boston	17.53	562,994	\$ 12,530
Springfield	7.69	152,319	13,309
Lawrence	6.33	63,175	11,980
Lowell	5.10	92,418	14,415
Worcester	5.03	161,799	14,116
Lynn	4.54	78,471	14,368
Somerville	4.43	77,372	14,401
Fall River	4.17	92,574	<u>11,506</u>
		Average income:	\$ 13,076
Cambridge	3.45	95,322	\$ 14,211
Chicopee	2.86	55,112	15,452
Brockton	2.85	95,172	15,309
New Bedford	2.76	98,478	11,634
Medford	2.22	58,076	18,266
Malden	2.14	53,386	15,938
Brookline	2.07	55,062	19,536
Weymouth	2.05	55,601	19,505
Quincy	2.02	84,743	17,376
Pittsfield	1.65	51,974	15,854
Waltham	.98	58,200	18,615
Framingham	.88	65,113	21,057
Newton	.85	83,622	<u>26,663</u>
		Average income:	\$ 17,433
Statewide average	3.71	5,737,081	\$ 17,575

5

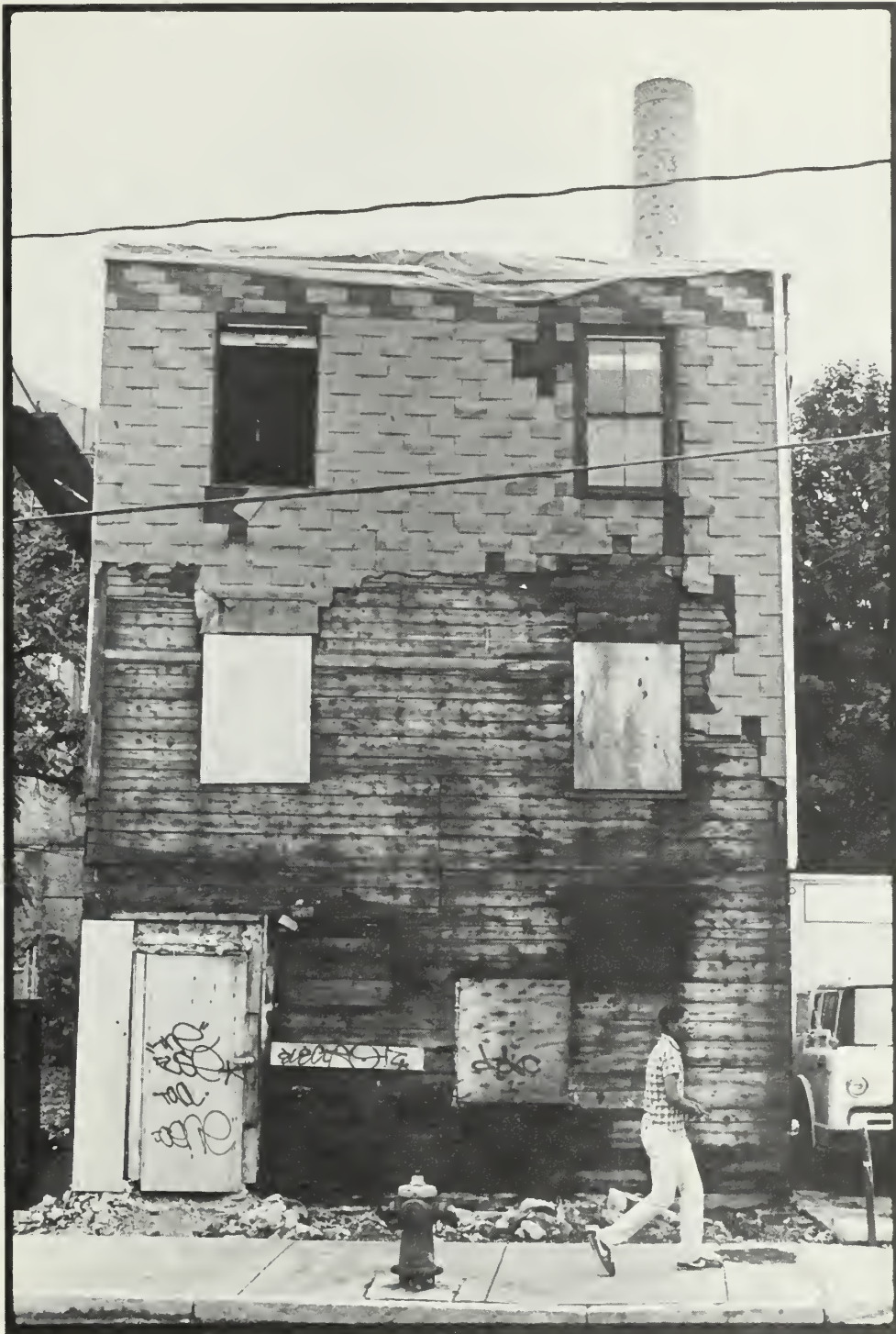
Blacks and Hispanics in Massachusetts are at eight times higher risk than whites of being murdered.

- The annual homicide rate among white victims is 2.4 deaths per 100,000 whites, while the rate for blacks is 27.7 and for Hispanics, 20.3.
- Nationally, homicide is the number one cause of death for black males and females aged 15-34.⁶
- When blacks and whites of similar socioeconomic status in Boston were compared, the racial difference in homicide rates was substantially reduced.

Homicide Rate per 100,000 by Race and Sex of Victim
Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1980-1983 *



*FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports did not differentiate Hispanics and non-Hispanics before 1980.



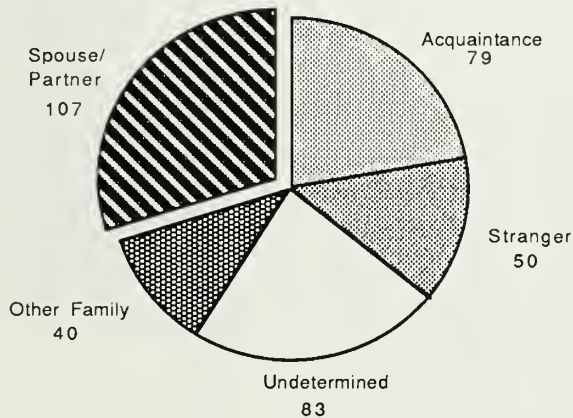


6

Women are more likely to be killed by their husbands or boyfriends than by strangers, acquaintances, or other family members.

- At least 30% of all women murdered in Massachusetts are killed by their current or former husband or boyfriend.
- A woman is killed by a male partner every 22 days in Massachusetts.*
- In 1986, over 21,000 Abuse Prevention Act petitions were filed in Massachusetts courts, the majority by women seeking protection from violent partners.⁴

Relationship of Female Victims (Aged 15 and Over) to Offender
Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983



*Figure based on 1980-1983 police reports and newspaper accounts of homicide deaths in Massachusetts.

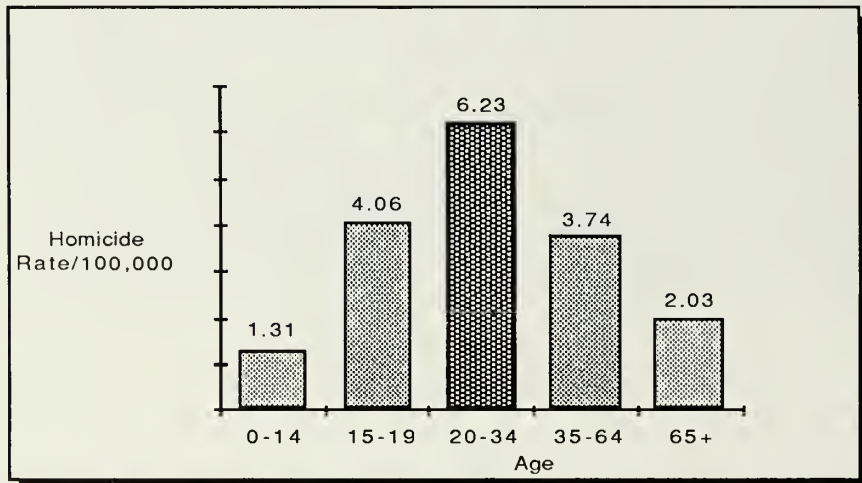
7

Young adults are the most frequent victims of homicide in Massachusetts.

- Homicide is among the top five causes of death for young people aged 15-29 in Massachusetts.¹
- Young adults aged 20-34 are the most frequent victims of homicide.
- Children under 15 and elders over 65 are at lowest risk for homicide.
- Nationally, homicide ranks as the eleventh leading cause of death. When measured by Years of Potential Life Lost, homicide ranks as the *fourth* leading cause of premature death.⁷

Homicides by Age of Victim

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983



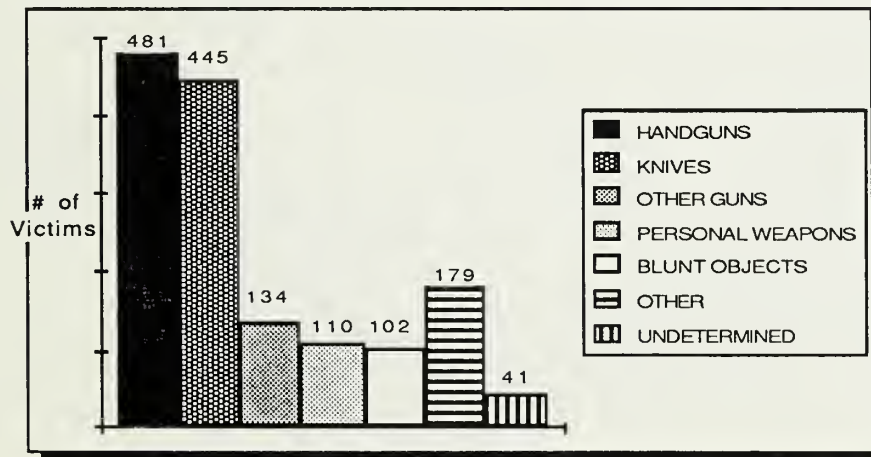
8

The percentage of murders committed with a handgun is lower in Massachusetts than in the nation.

- In Massachusetts, 32% of all homicide victims are killed with a handgun. Nationwide, 50% of all homicide victims were killed with a handgun in 1980.⁸
- Knives and other sharp instruments are more prominent in Massachusetts murders, accounting for 30% of homicide deaths, compared to only 19% nationally.⁸

Homicides by Weapon Type

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977 -1983



9

Violence occurs in cities and towns of all sizes in Massachusetts.

Although homicide and assault are critical problems in poor urban areas, rural and suburban areas are also affected.

- About one quarter of all homicides in Massachusetts are committed in small towns and cities of fewer than 50,000 residents.
- Small cities and towns are not immune from assault; for instance, the battered women's shelter serving non-urban Cape Cod received 5,475 hotline calls in 1986.⁹
- Teens aged 15-19 received hospital treatment for assaults at a rate of 2,090 assaults per 100,000 teens, according to a Department of Public Health survey of hospital records in 14 small and medium-sized communities.¹⁰





10

The United States has the highest homicide rate of any Western industrialized country.

- No other Western country has a homicide rate approaching that of the United States.
- The homicide rate in Massachusetts, and New England in general, is more than 50% lower than that of the nation as a whole. However, unlike the rest of New England, Massachusetts has a slightly *higher* aggravated assault rate than the nation (316.5/100,000 in Massachusetts compared to 302.9 for the nation).¹¹

Deaths in 1980 from Homicide and Injury Purposefully Inflicted by Another Person (Rates/100,000 Population)¹²

<u>Country</u>	<u>Homicide Rate</u>	<u>Absolute Number</u>
United States	10.5	23,967
Massachusetts³	3.9	223
Canada	2.1	495
Australia	1.9	280
Italy	1.9	1,067
Denmark	1.3	67
Austria	1.2	91
Switzerland	1.0	60
Germany, Federal	1.2	709
Japan	1.0	1,113
France	1.0	545
England and Wales	.8	400

SECTION II

DISCUSSION: DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOMICIDE PATTERNS

HOMICIDE PATTERNS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Homicide strikes in every type of community across the state and affects people of every race, sex, class, and age. High-risk groups, however, stand out, most notably young adult males from poor urban areas. The risk and nature of homicide vary significantly according to factors of age, race, sex, class, and neighborhood of residence. This section will discuss the impact of demographic factors on homicide patterns in Massachusetts.

Homicide and Gender

Men

One of the most consistent factors related to homicide is the prevalence of males as victims and offenders. The high homicide rate among men (aged 15 and over) accounted for the loss of 1,020 lives in Massachusetts between 1977 and 1983.

Both statewide and nationally, male victims outnumber female victims at a ratio of 3 to 1. This ratio varies, however, according to the relationship between victim and offender, with females predominating in family homicides and males predominating in acquaintance and stranger homicides. In Massachusetts, females made up 59% of domestic homicide victims, while males made up 82% of acquaintance

homicides and 84% of stranger homicides. Among elders (aged 65 and over) and children, sex distinction disappeared and victims were likely to be male or female in equal numbers.

Among suspected perpetrators, males outnumbered females at a ratio of 9 to 1. It is significant, but often overlooked, that no other factor related to homicide is as consistent or dominant as male perpetration.

Women

More women (aged 15 and over) were killed by their male partners than by offenders in any other category, including strangers or acquaintances. Spouses, lovers, and ex-partners accounted for 107 women's deaths (compared to 50 men's deaths) over the seven-year period studied. This represented close to one third of all women victims. Homicides of women are strikingly interpersonal when compared to male victims: fully 41% of all women victims were killed by family members or lovers, compared with 10% of men victims.

Homicides of women often occurred in particularly violent settings. For instance, in 19% of all cases in which a woman was murdered, the offender also attempted to take his own life or killed another victim. This was true in 7% of the cases for men victims. Additionally, firearms accounted for approximately

one half of adult male victims, compared to only 26% of adult female victims. A higher incidence of beatings and strangulation in the murders of women accounted for the difference. Knives were about equally prevalent in the murders of both men and women, at 32% and 30% respectively.

Overall, women's victimization rate was substantially lower than men's (1.92/100,000 vs. 5.69/100,000). Black and Hispanic women, however, fell into a significant high-risk group with rates almost double that for white men (although one quarter that for black and Hispanic men). (See page 34.)

Homicide, Race, and Income

Violence is one of the most sobering public health issues currently facing the black and Hispanic communities. Nationally, homicide is the leading cause of death for blacks aged 15-34.⁶ In Massachusetts, the Hispanic homicide rate is eight times higher than the rate for non-Hispanic whites. Black homicide rates outnumber white rates at a ratio of 11 to 1.

While the difference in rates is staggering, it would be misleading simply to conclude that blacks and Hispanics are more violent than whites. As the discussion on page 27 indicates, poverty and urban density are two factors closely correlated with high homicide

rates. Blacks and Hispanics are far more likely than whites to live in poor urban areas. In Boston, the homicide rate among blacks living in upper income census tracts was not high. When blacks and whites living in comparable census tracts were compared, the difference in homicide rates was substantially reduced.

Further, when poor white urban neighborhoods were compared with middle income neighborhoods, the gaps between murder rates were as dramatic as those between races. For instance, Charlestown, a low-income Boston neighborhood, has a homicide rate 10 times higher than that of nearby Malden, a moderate-income suburban area. Both communities are over 97% white.

The table opposite clearly illustrates that race alone is not the best predictor of highly violent neighborhoods in Boston. Murder rates in the largely white neighborhoods of Charlestown, East Boston, and South Boston exceed that of ethnically diverse, low-income Jamaica Plain. In fact, South Boston, the most exclusively white neighborhood in Boston, has a homicide rate equal to that of South Dorchester/Mattapan, a poor community that is nearly 50% black. Clearly, however, Roxbury stands out as the critically troubled area, with soaring homicide rates, staggering poverty, and a large youth population.

Homicide Rate Per 100,000 Residents

City of Boston, 1979-1984²

Neighborhood	Homicide Rate	Racial Composition of Neighborhood			
		% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Other
Roxbury	32.1	6	69	13	12
N. Dorchester	24.7	32	45	11	12
Charlestown	21.8	97	-	1	2
South End	21.8	34	27	10	29
S. Dorchester/ Mattapan	14.6	45	48	4	3
South Boston	14.5	98	-	1	1
East Boston	13.0	95	-	3	2
West End	8.9	92	3	2	3
Back Bay	8.7	80	9	4	6
North End	8.6	96	1	2	1
Jamaica Plain	7.1	53	9	21	17
Hyde Park	6.1	82	14	2	2
Allston/Brighton	5.4	83	4	5	8
Roslindale	4.0	91	3	3	3
West Roxbury	3.4	96	1	1	2
Boston	14.5	64	22	6	8

Note: Homicide rates for Boston neighborhoods are based on Vital Statistics and are lower than those based on police Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR). Boston SHRs cover all murders which occurred in Boston, while Vital Statistics include only murders of Boston residents.



Other Races

Homicide rates for Asians and Pacific Islanders and for American Indians were roughly equivalent to the statewide average of 3.7/100,000. The actual number of incidents was too low, however, to allow for generalization of homicide characteristics.

Racial Differences in Homicide Characteristics

Although homicide rates varied dramatically across racial and ethnic lines, homicide characteristics generally did not. In fact, far greater differences existed between males and females of the same race than between blacks and whites.

For both races, murder victims were most likely to be killed during an argument or abusive situation with someone they knew. Although far more black homicides occurred in large urban areas, black victims appeared no more likely than whites to be killed by strangers.

Most homicides occur between people of the same race. Among victims for whom a suspect was reported, 9 out of 10 were killed by a member of their own race, although black males deviated from this pattern:

<u>Victim Group</u>	<u>Suspect Same Race as Victim</u>
Black male	79%
Black female	94%
White male	90%
White female	91%

The ratio of white victims to black victims in Massachusetts is about 3 to 1. For instance, family homicides followed the typical pattern of three white victims for every one black victim. However, some categories of homicide stand out as particularly white-dominated. Parent homicides, for example, occurred almost exclusively in white families: 34 white parents (including step and foster parents) and only one black parent were killed by their children. Another largely white crime was homicide/suicide, with 29 of the 30 reported incidents involving white offenders.

Homicide and Community Characteristics

The table on the next page summarizes murder rates in Massachusetts communities grouped according to population size and average median household income. Two consistent patterns emerged. Homicide rates were highest in poor communities and large cities, and lowest in rich communities and small towns. The patterns were most striking for stranger and acquaintance homicides and somewhat less marked for family and spouse murders.

Community Size

The risk of homicide in Boston, the state's largest city, was over 16 times higher than the risk in the smallest communities of under 2,500 residents. The relative

Homicide Rates by Type of Community
 Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983

<u>Population of Community</u>	<u>Homicide Type</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>Spouse/ Partner</u>	<u>Other Family</u>	<u>Acquain- tance</u>	<u>Stranger</u>	<u>Undeter- mined</u>	
A. ≥500,000 (Boston)	1.14	.71	4.72	3.32	6.27	16.16
B. 100,000-249,999	1.18	.73	2.27	1.55	1.23	6.96
C. 50,000-99,999	.34	.28	1.14	.66	.40	2.83
D. 25,000-49,999	.21	.20	.57	.37	.30	1.66
E. 10,000-24,999	.20	.27	.36	.26	.21	1.29
F. 2,500-9,999	.19	.28	.40	.11	.36	1.34
G. ≤2,500	.14	.29	.29	-	.29	1.00
Line A + Line G †	8.1	2.4	16.3	-	21.6	16.2

<u>1980 Median Household Income of Community</u>	<u>Homicide Type</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>Spouse/ Partner</u>	<u>Other Family</u>	<u>Acquain- tance</u>	<u>Stranger</u>	<u>Undeter- mined</u>	
A. \$ 6,000-12,999§	.86	.51	3.66	2.42	4.03	11.49 4.22 (w/o Boston)
B. \$13,000-14,999	.61	.42	1.58	1.03	.69	4.34
C. \$15,000-16,999	.28	.35	.77	.42	.42	2.24
D. \$17,000-18,999	.12	.25	.37	.23	.37	1.34
E. \$19,000-20,999	.21	.22	.39	.24	.13	1.20
F. \$21,000-22,999	.16	.41	.29	.23	.25	1.33
G. ≥\$23,000	.22	.12	.25	.12	.19	.91
Line A + Line G †	3.9	4.2	14.6	20.2	21.2	12.6
Line B + Line G	2.7	3.5	6.3	8.6	3.6	4.8

Note: Excluded are 88 victims for whom information regarding community is unavailable.

† This calculation indicates how much higher the risk of homicide is for communities in Line A compared to communities in Line G.

§ This category includes Boston, which dominates the rates. The rate for communities in Line A excluding Boston is also indicated in the "Total" column.

risk, however, varied greatly according to the type of homicide. Stranger homicides were 33 times higher in Boston than in the smaller towns, while family homicides were only 2.4 times more prevalent. Therefore, although all types of homicide are more prevalent in urban areas, this pattern was weakest for domestic homicides and strongest for acquaintance and stranger murders.

Poverty and Wealth

Relative wealth of communities was also correlated with homicide rates, although not as closely as population size. The poorest communities had homicide rates over 11 times higher than the richest communities. Boston, however, was included among the poorest communities and dominates the rates. When Boston was excluded from analysis, the gap between rich and poor dropped from a ratio of 1:11.5 to 1:4.2.

In the comparison of homicide types, again the correlation between poverty and high murder rates was strongest in the case of acquaintance and stranger murders, and weakest in the case of domestic homicides.

The table on page 11 illustrates that poverty and urban density are a lethal combination. However, homicide cannot be predicted by demographics alone. New Bedford, one of the state's largest and poorest cities, has a surprisingly low homicide rate. Therefore, local practices and values also appear to play a

significant role in encouraging or discouraging serious violence.

Homicide and Age

Young adults aged 20-34 made up the high-risk age group for homicide victimization. Adolescents aged 15-19 and older adults fell into a second-tier risk group, and children and elders were at lowest risk. Homicide patterns for teens and adults followed the general overview outlined in Section I. Children and elders, however, followed divergent patterns.

Children

Approximately 15 children aged fourteen and younger are killed every year in Massachusetts. Strangers play a startlingly small role in the violent deaths of children: at least 80% of all child victims were killed by someone they knew. Parents and stepparents were the most frequent assailants, comprising 44% of all reported suspects, followed by acquaintances at 39%. Child murder followed a somewhat less urban pattern than other murders, with 33% of the victims living in communities of fewer than 50,000, compared to 23% for all age groups.

An unusually high percentage of child victims (27%) were killed during a multiple-victim incident in which typically another child or family member were also killed. For the general population,

multiple-victim incidents made up only 9% of all homicides.

Arson (which is included among homicide statistics when it results in a fatality) accounted for 14% of the child victims' deaths, compared to 3% of victims of all ages.

For the years 1981-1984, during which 59 children were killed, 62.3% of the known perpetrators were males, 26.4% were females, and 11.3% were males and females acting together. Perpetrators were young, with an average age of 26.6. Among 53 suspected perpetrators, fully 21 were themselves teenagers or younger.

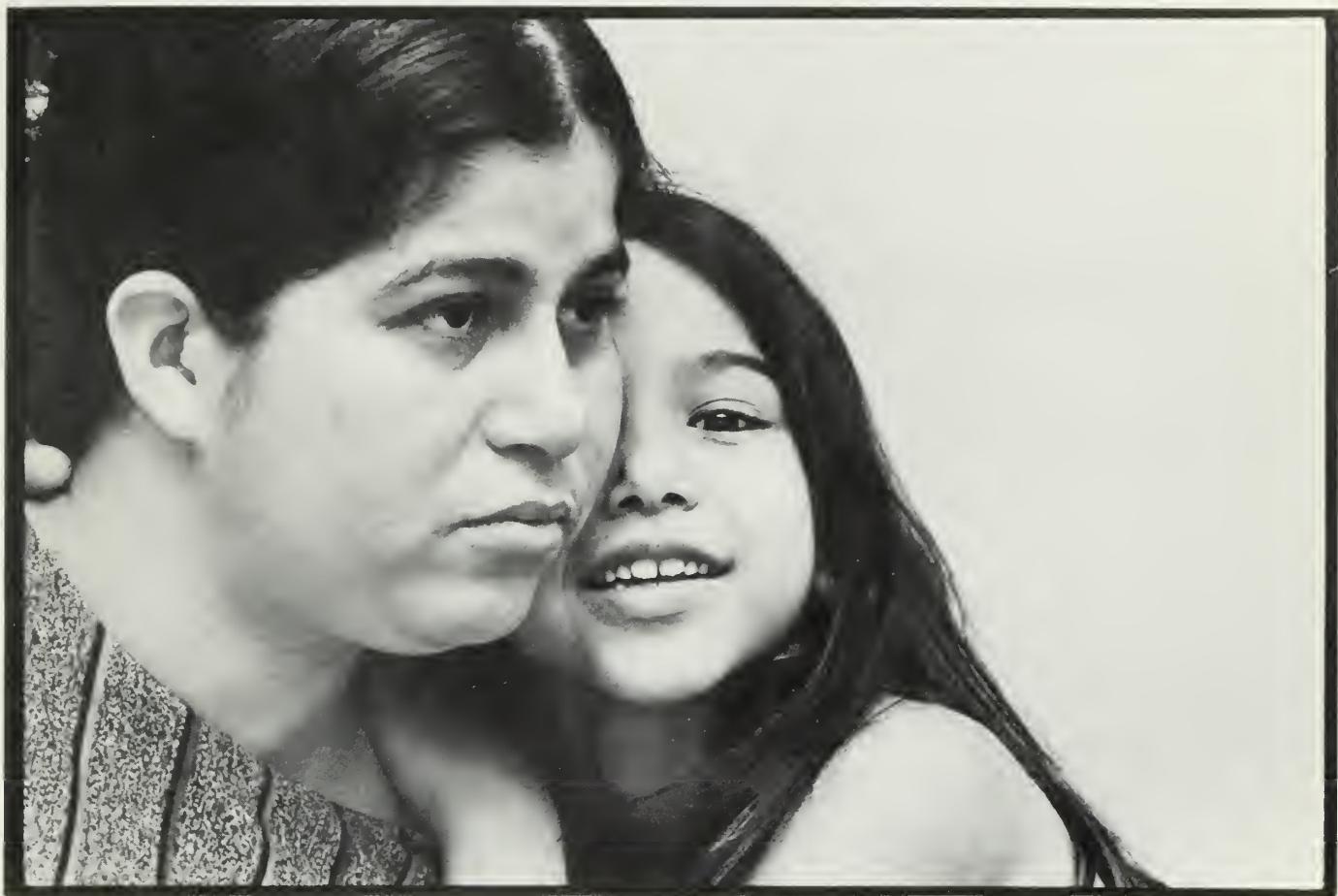
Elders

One hundred and three people aged 65 and older were killed in Massachusetts between 1977 and 1983. Females made up a slight majority (53%) of the victims. At least 21% of elderly female victims were wives or mothers of the offender.

Elderly victims were the only group studied in which economic crime played a dominant role: in cases where crime circumstances were reported, 52% of all elderly victims were killed during a robbery or other economic crime (compared to 26% for the general population). Offenders and victims were strangers in 40% of all elder murders in which a suspect was reported. This percentage was unusually high compared to young adult age groups.

CONCLUSION

Homicide strikes across all race, class, sex, and age lines. Clearly, however, young adult males from poor urban areas, particularly black and Hispanic males, are at highest risk. Further, while economic crime and violence by strangers play important roles in homicide, interpersonal problems between people who know one another make up the largest proportion of homicides. Finally, the striking difference in homicide rates between the United States and comparable nations, and among different communities within Massachusetts, indicates that cultural values also appear to play a role in determining levels of violence.



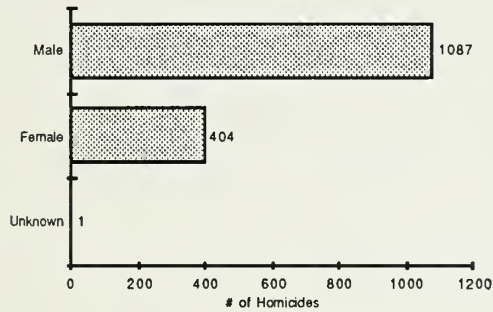
APPENDIX

Basic Fact Sheet

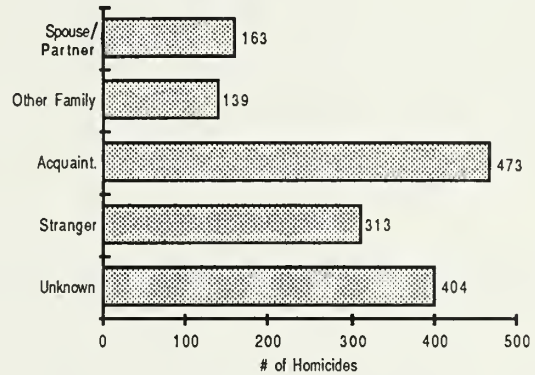
Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983

Total number of homicide victims: 1,492 (See page 38 for Sources and Definitions)

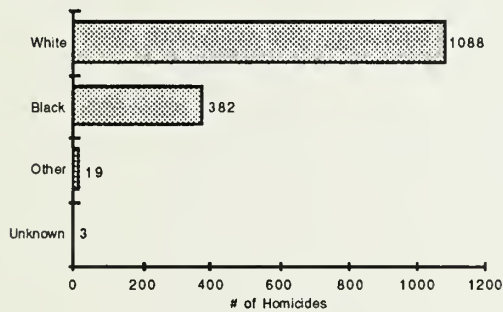
Sex



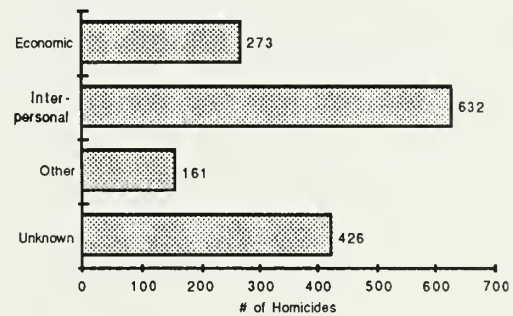
Relationship



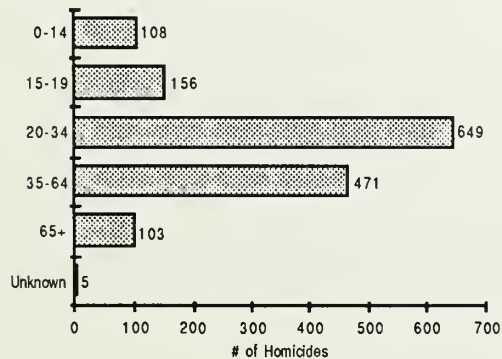
Race



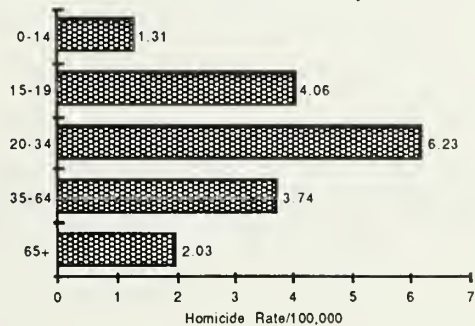
Circumstance



Age (# of Victims)



Age (Rate of Victimization)



Homicide Rates per 100,000 by Sex and Age

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
0-14	62	1.47	45	1.12	108	1.31 *
15-19	93	4.83	63	3.29	156	4.06
20-34	510	10.01	139	2.61	649	6.23
35-64	367	6.12	104	1.57	471	3.74
65+	50	2.63	53	1.66	103	2.02
Unknown Age	5		-		5	
Total	1087	5.69	404	1.92	1492	3.71

Estimated Homicide Rates per 100,000 by Race/Sex/Age

Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1980-1983

Age	White			Black			Hispanic		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-14	.78	.68	.73	9.98	6.87	8.44	10.27	3.15	6.79
15-19	2.66	2.48	2.57	46.07	9.84	27.79	26.18	13.38	19.78
20-34	5.61	1.74	3.64	86.65	16.24	49.38	62.81	11.59	35.82
35-64	4.31	1.39	2.78	49.52	8.20	27.05	37.64	9.07	22.22
65+	2.19	1.46	1.74	31.18	3.26	14.03	35.21	9.11	19.90
Total	3.52	1.46	2.44	47.40	10.02	27.75	32.93	8.28	20.23

*Includes one victim of unknown sex.

Note: Hispanic ethnicity was not identified in Supplementary Homicide Reports before 1980. The rates reported are estimates because 52 of the 819 black or white victims were not identified as Hispanic or non-Hispanic. The 52 were distributed in appropriate proportions by race/sex/age.

Homicides by Sex/Age of Victim and Relationship of Victim to Offender
 Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983

Age	Homicide Type											
	Spouse/ Partner		Other Family		Acquain- tance		Stranger		Undeter- mined		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
White Male												
0-14	0	0.0	18	36.7	22	44.9	3	6.1	6	12.2	49	100.0
15-19	0	0.0	5	9.1	31	56.4	13	23.6	6	10.9	55	100.0
20-34	10	2.9	12	3.4	131	37.4	103	29.4	94	26.9	350	100.0
35-64	13	4.8	17	6.2	93	34.1	59	21.6	91	33.3	273	100.0
65+	2	4.9	4	9.8	7	17.1	19	46.3	9	21.9	41	100.0
Total	25	3.3	56	7.3	284	37.0	197	25.6	206	26.8	768	100.0
White Female												
0-14	1	2.8	18	50.0	9	25.0	3	8.3	5	13.9	36	100.0
15-19	14	27.4	3	5.9	10	19.6	5	9.8	19	37.2	51	100.0
20-34	29	30.2	4	4.2	35	36.5	10	10.4	18	18.7	96	100.0
35-64	33	39.8	10	12.0	13	15.7	15	18.1	12	14.5	83	100.0
65+	7	13.7	16	31.4	8	15.7	13	25.5	7	13.7	51	100.0
Total	84	26.5	51	16.1	75	23.7	46	14.5	61	19.2	317	100.0
Black Male												
0-14	0	0.0	7	53.8	3	23.1	2	15.4	1	7.7	13	100.0
15-19	1	2.6	0	0.0	12	31.6	14	36.8	11	28.9	38	100.0
20-34	11	7.4	6	4.0	46	30.9	30	20.1	56	37.6	149	100.0
35-64	11	12.4	4	4.5	34	38.2	13	14.6	27	30.3	89	100.0
65+	1	11.1	0	0.0	3	33.3	0	0.0	5	55.6	9	100.0
Total	24	8.0	17	5.7	98	32.9	59	19.8	100	33.6	298	100.0
Black Female												
0-14	0	0.0	6	66.7	2	22.2	1	11.1	0	0.0	9	100.0
15-19	2	16.7	1	8.3	1	8.3	1	8.3	7	58.3	12	100.0
20-34	11	26.8	2	4.9	6	14.6	6	14.6	16	39.0	41	100.0
35-64	10	55.6	1	5.6	4	22.2	0	0.0	3	16.7	18	100.0
65+	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	2	100.0
Total	23	28.0	10	12.2	14	17.1	8	9.8	27	32.9	82	100.0

Notes: Excluded are two white males and two black males of unknown age and one white victim of unknown sex. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. Hispanics are not differentiated on this table, but included under the Black and White categories.

Homicides by Race, Sex, Age of Victim and Precipitating Circumstance
 Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1977-1983

<u>Age</u>	<u>Precipitating Circumstance</u>									
	Economic		Argument/ Interpersonal		Other		Undeter- mined		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
White Male										
0-14	8	16.3	21	42.9	6	12.2	14	28.6	49	100.0
15-19	4	7.3	27	49.1	7	12.7	17	30.9	55	100.0
20-34	64	18.3	139	39.7	60	17.1	87	24.9	350	100.0
35-64	54	19.8	99	36.3	23	8.4	97	35.5	273	100.0
65+	23	56.1	9	21.9	1	2.4	8	19.5	41	100.0
Total	153	19.9	295	38.4	97	12.6	223	29.0	768	100.0
White Female										
0-14	5	13.9	16	44.4	8	22.2	7	19.4	36	100.0
15-19	3	5.9	19	37.2	8	15.7	21	41.2	51	100.0
20-34	6	6.2	47	49.0	15	15.6	28	29.2	96	100.0
35-64	10	12.0	51	61.4	8	9.6	14	16.9	83	100.0
65+	16	31.4	23	45.1	2	3.9	10	19.6	51	100.0
Total	40	12.6	156	49.2	41	12.9	80	25.2	317	100.0
Black Male										
0-14	2	15.4	9	69.2	0	0.0	2	15.4	13	100.0
15-19	4	10.5	21	55.3	5	13.2	8	21.0	38	100.0
20-34	29	19.5	59	39.6	14	9.4	47	31.5	149	100.0
35-64	18	20.2	40	44.9	8	9.0	23	25.9	89	100.0
65+	2	22.2	3	33.3	0	0.0	4	44.4	9	100.0
Total	55	18.5	132	44.3	27	9.0	84	28.2	298	100.0
Black Female										
0-14	0	0.0	7	77.8	2	22.2	0	0.0	9	100.0
15-19	0	0.0	5	41.7	1	8.3	6	50.0	12	100.0
20-34	0	0.0	15	36.6	5	12.2	21	51.2	41	100.0
35-64	1	5.6	12	66.7	1	5.6	4	22.2	18	100.0
65+	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Total	2	2.4	40	48.8	9	11.0	31	37.8	82	100.0

Notes: Excluded are two white males and two black males of unknown age and one white victim of unknown sex. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. Hispanics are not differentiated on this table, but included under the Black and White categories.

Number and Percentage of Hispanic Homicides by Sex/ Age of Victim
 Massachusetts Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1980-1983

Age	Homicide Type											
	Spouse/ Partner		Other Family		Acquain- tance		Stranger		Undeter- mined		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hispanic Male												
0-14	0	0.0	2	20.0	6	60.0	2	20.0	0	0.0	10	100.0
15-19	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	50.0	3	37.5	1	12.5	8	100.0
20-34	0	0.0	2	4.4	22	48.9	10	22.2	11	24.4	45	100.0
35-64	1	5.0	0	0.0	10	50.0	3	15.0	6	30.0	20	100.0
65+	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0.0	3	100.0
Total	1	1.2	4	4.6	43	50.0	20	23.3	18	20.9	86	100.0
Hispanic Female												
0-14	0	0.0	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	0	0.0	3	100.0
15-19	2	50.0	0	0.0	2	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	100.0
20-34	4	44.4	0	0.0	4	44.4	1	11.1	0	0.0	9	100.0
35-64	2	28.6	0	0.0	2	28.6	2	28.6	1	14.3	7	100.0
65+	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Total	8	33.3	1	4.2	9	37.5	5	20.8	1	4.2	24	100.0

Age	Precipitating Circumstance									
	Economic		Interpersonal		Other		Undeterm.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hispanic Male										
0-14	2	20.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	5	50.0	10	100.0
15-19	2	25.0	5	62.5	0	0.0	1	12.5	8	100.0
20-34	6	13.3	24	53.3	7	15.6	8	17.8	45	100.0
35-64	4	20.0	9	45.0	0	0.0	7	35.0	20	100.0
65+	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100.0
Total	17	19.8	41	47.7	7	8.1	21	24.4	86	100.0
Hispanic Female										
0-14	1	33.3	1	33.3	0	0.0	1	33.3	3	100.0
15-19	0	0.0	3	75.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	4	100.0
20-34	1	11.1	5	55.6	1	11.1	2	22.2	9	100.0
35-64	3	42.9	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	14.3	7	100.0
65+	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Total	6	25.0	12	50.0	1	4.2	5	20.8	24	100.0

Note: SHRs did not record Hispanic ethnicity before 1980. Excluded are 52 victims of unknown ethnicity.

Sources and Definitions

This report is based on a study of Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHRs) submitted by local law enforcement agencies to the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system. The data set covers a seven-year period, 1977-1983, and includes 1,492 victims of fatal injury. The majority of cases (96.2%) involve criminal homicide; the remainder represent justifiable homicide (2.5%) and manslaughter by gross negligence, excluding traffic fatalities (1.3%).

Homicide rates are calculated based on the *1980 Census of Population* published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Throughout this report, various categories of victims and offenders are used. These categories are defined below:

Race and Ethnicity

Before 1980, SHRs did not differentiate Hispanics and non-Hispanics. Therefore, for the data set as a whole and throughout this report, Hispanics are subsumed within the race categories of "Black," "White," and "Other." Exceptions to this are the tables and facts which refer specifically to the years 1980-1983. Here, "Black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks, "White" refers to non-Hispanic whites, and "Hispanic" refers to people of Spanish origin regardless of race.

Relationship of Victim to Offender

Spouse/Partner - Includes current or former spouse, girlfriend, or boyfriend.

Other Family - Refers to all family members other than spouses, including in-laws, step-relations, and foster parents and children.

Partner/Family - Includes both of the above categories.

Acquaintance - Includes any person known to the victim before the homicide, excluding partners or family members.

Stranger - Includes only those offenders who were unknown to the victim at the time of the murder.

Unknown - Indicates that no suspect is reported in the case or that the relationship of victim to suspect was undetermined.

Precipitating Circumstance

Economic - Includes all homicides committed in association with an economically motivated crime such as robbery, burglary, larceny, arson, drug trafficking, gambling, and gangland killing.

Interpersonal - Includes verbal arguments, revenge or jealousy attacks, brawls, and abuse cases such as fatal child abuse.

Other - Includes justifiable homicide, negligent manslaughter, sex-related killings, sniper attacks, and murder of innocent bystander or intervener.

Weapons

Knives - Includes any cutting or stabbing instrument.

Personal Weapons - Refers to the offender's fists, feet, or other body parts.

Blunt Objects - Refers to bludgeoning by objects such as a bat, crowbar, or hammer.

Other - Includes strangulation, asphyxiation, drowning, fire, poison, explosives, and intentional vehicular homicide.

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