ATTACHMENT B

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Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics

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PATTERNS & TRENDS

Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980-2008
Annual Rates for 2009 and 2010

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Contents

Overview

This report contains a series of tables and figures that describe homicide patterns and trends in the United States from 1980 through 2008. It also includes overall homicide rates for 2009 and 2010 (for which detailed data are not yet available).

Data in this report are from the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), unless otherwise noted. The SHR Program of the FBI collects yearly supplementary homicide data regarding homicides committed in the United States. Statistics in this report detail homicide trends by age, sex, and race, including homicides of children under age 5 and of persons age 65 or older. It examines the relationship between the victim and the offender, particularly in cases of intimate and family homicide. The report also examines multiple victim and offender homicides, circumstances surrounding the death, justifiable homicides, law enforcement officers killed, homicides cleared, and homicide trends by city size and weapon use.

These data may differ slightly from previously published versions because of updates to the data file, changes to the imputation methods used, and refinements in the analyses. (See *Methodology* for more information on the imputation methods used in this report.) In addition, analyses presented here include data from 1980 through 2008 only. This modification was made, in part, to reflect revisions in the SHR in 1980.

The SHR are available at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. Spreadsheets used to generate the figures in this report are available on the BJS website.
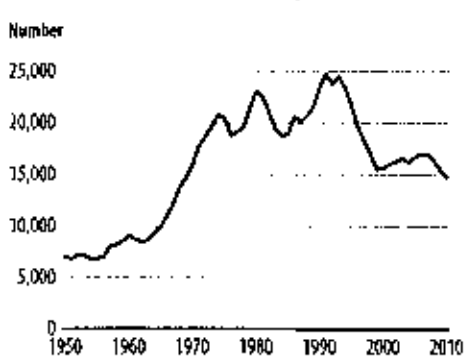
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FIGURE 1
Homicide victimization rates, 1950–2010
Rate per 100,000
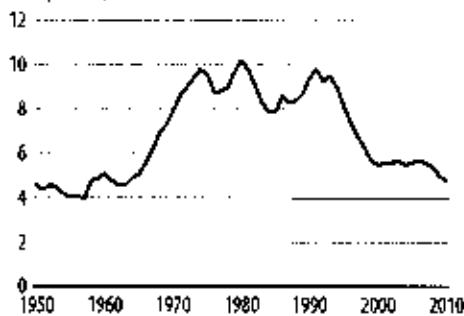
Note: Data are based on annual estimates of homicide from previously published versions of *Crime in the United States*. Data for 1989 to 2008 reflect updated homicide estimates from *Crime in the United States, 2008*. Data for 2009 and 2010 reflect updated homicide estimates from *Crime in the United States, 2010*.
Source: FBI, *Uniform Crime Reports, 1950-2010*.

FIGURE 2
Number of homicide victims, 1950–2010
Number

Note: Data are based on annual estimates of homicide from previously published versions of *Crime in the United States*. Data for 1989 to 2008 reflect updated homicide estimates from *Crime in the United States, 2008*. Data for 2009 and 2010 reflect updated homicide estimates from *Crime in the United States, 2010*.
Source: FBI, *Uniform Crime Reports, 1950-2010*.

Long term trends and patterns

In the last decade (since 2000) the homicide rate declined to levels last seen in the mid-1960s

- The homicide rate doubled from the early 1960s to the late 1970s, increasing from 4.6 per 100,000 U.S. residents in 1962 to 9.7 per 100,000 by 1979 (figure 1). (See *Methodology* for information on rate calculations.)

- In 1980 the rate peaked at 10.2 per 100,000 and subsequently fell to 7.9 per 100,000 in 1984.

- The rate rose again in the late 1980s and early 1990s to another peak in 1991 of 9.8 per 100,000.

- The homicide rate declined sharply from 9.3 homicides per 100,000 in 1992 to 4.8 homicides per 100,000 in 2010.

The number of homicides reached an all-time high of 24,703 homicides in 1991 then fell rapidly to 15,522 homicides by 1999

- The number of homicides increased steadily from the early 1950s until the mid-1970s (figure 2).

- Between 1999 and 2008, the number of homicides remained relatively constant, ranging from a low of 15,552 homicides in 1999 to a high of 17,030 homicides in 2006. These homicide numbers were still below those reported in the 1970s, when the number of reported homicides first rose above 20,000 (reaching 20,710 in 1974).

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The demographic characteristics of homicide victims and offenders were different from the characteristics of the general population

Based on available data from 1980 to 2008—

- Blacks were disproportionately represented as both homicide victims and offenders. The victimization rate for blacks (27.8 per 100,000) was 6 times higher than the rate for whites (4.5 per 100,000). The offending rate for blacks (34.4 per 100,000) was almost 8 times higher than the rate for whites (4.5 per 100,000) (table 1).

- Males represented 77% of homicide victims and nearly 90% of offenders. The victimization rate for males (11.6 per 100,000) was 3 times higher than the rate for females (3.4 per 100,000). The offending rate for males (15.1 per 100,000) was almost 9 times higher than the rate for females (1.7 per 100,000).

- Approximately a third (34%) of murder victims and almost half (49%) of the offenders were under age 25. For both victims and offenders, the rate per 100,000 peaked in the 18 to 24 year-old age group at 17.1 victims per 100,000 and 29.3 offenders per 100,000.

TABLE 1
Victims and offenders, by demographic group, 1980–2008

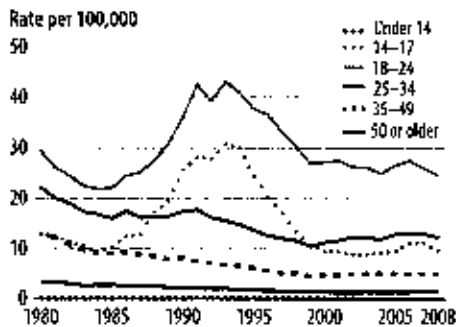|	Percent of—			Rate per 100,000	
	Victims	Offenders	Population	Victims	Offenders
Total	100%	100%	100%	7.4	8.3
Age					
Under 14	4.8%	0.5%	20.0%	1.8	0.2
14-17	5.2	10.6	5.8	6.6	15.0
18-24	24.4	37.5	10.6	17.1	29.3
25-34	28.7	28.0	15.6	13.7	14.9
35-49	22.8	17.1	21.1	8.0	6.7
50-64	8.9	4.9	14.7	4.5	2.7
65 or older	5.1	1.6	12.3	3.1	1.1
Sex					
Male	76.8%	89.5%	48.9%	11.6	15.1
Female	23.2	10.5	51.1	3.4	1.7
Race					
White	50.3%	45.3%	82.9%	4.5	4.5
Black	47.4	52.5	12.6	27.8	34.4
Other*	2.3	2.2	4.4	3.8	4.1

*Other race includes American Indians, Native Alaskans, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

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Rate per 100,000

Legend:
- Under 14
- 14–17
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–49
- 50 or older
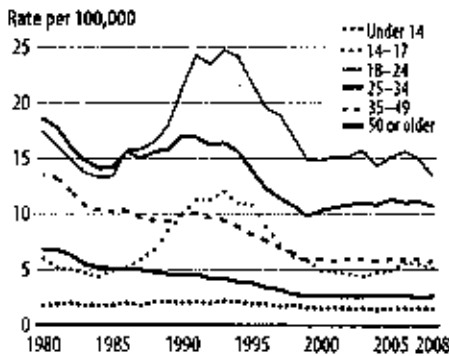
FIGURE 4
**Homicide offending rates, by age,
1980–2008**

Rate per 100,000

Legend:
- Under 14
- 14–17
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–49
- 50 or older

Trends by age

Young adults had the highest homicide victimization and offending rates

- Homicide victimization rates for teens and young adults increased rapidly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, peaking in 1993 at 12 homicides per 100,000 for teens and 24.8 homicides per 100,000 for young adults.

- The homicide victimization rate for children under age 14 was the lowest of all age groups, peaking in 1993 at a high of 2.2 homicides per 100,000. By 2004, this rate had declined to the lowest level recorded—1.4 homicides per 100,000—and remained stable through 2008 at 1.5 homicides per 100,000 (figure 3).

- The homicide victimization rate for teens (14 to 17 years old) increased almost 150% from 4.9 homicides per 100,000 in 1985 to 12.0 homicides per 100,000 in 1993. Since 1993, the victimization rate for teens has declined to 5.1 homicides per 100,000.

- In 2008, young adults (18 to 24 years old) experienced the highest homicide victimization rate (13.4 homicides per 100,000).

- In the early 1980s, 25 to 34 year-olds had the highest homicide victimization rate—18.6 homicides per 100,000. By 2008, this rate had fallen to 10.7 homicides per 100,000, a 42% reduction.

- Homicide victimization rates for adults ages 35 to 49 and 50 or older have remained stable since 1999 at between 5.7 and 5.9 homicides per 100,000 for adults ages 35 to 49 and between 2.5 and 2.7 homicides per 100,000 for adults ages 50 or older.

Homicide offending rates followed a pattern similar to victimization rates

- The offending rates for teens (14 to 17 years old) and young adults (18 to 24 years old) increased dramatically in the late 1980s while the rates for older age groups declined (figure 4).

- From 1980 to 2008, young adults (18 to 24 years old) have consistently had the highest offending rate. This rate nearly doubled from 1985 to 1993, going from 22.1 offenders per 100,000 young adults to 43.1 offenders per 100,000.

- Since 1993, the offending rate for 18 to 24 year-olds has declined to 24.6 offenders per 100,000 in 2008.

- The offending rate for teens (14 to 17 years old) increased substantially from 10.4 offenders per 100,000 in 1985 to 30.7 offenders per 100,000 by 1993. After 1993, the rate fell so much that by 2000, the offending rate for teens was near its 1985 level, at 9.5 offenders per 100,000.

- The offending rates for adults ages 35 to 49 and 50 or older have remained relatively stable since 2000, at between 4.8 and 5.1 offenders per 100,000 for adults age 35 to 49 and between 1.3 and 1.5 offenders per 100,000 for adults age 50 or older.

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After many years of decline, the average age of both victims and offenders has leveled off

The average age of—

- victims fell from 34.1 years in 1980 to 31.3 years in 1994, then increased to 32.7 years by 2008 (figure 5)

- offenders fell from 29.6 years in 1980 to 26.4 years in 1994, then increased to 28.8 years in 2008

- both offenders and victims increased slightly in recent years, yet remained lower than they were prior to the late 1980s.

The age distribution of homicide victims and offenders differed by type of homicide

From 1980 to 2008—

- A quarter of the victims (24%) of gang-related homicides were under age 18. Juveniles were also a fifth (19%) of persons killed by family members, and they represented more than a quarter (28%) of persons killed by arson or by poison (table 2).

- Victims age 50 or older were 39% of workplace homicide victims and 34% of victims of homicide by poison.

Younger victims were more likely than older victims to know the offender (figure 6)

FIGURE 5
Average age of homicide victims and offenders, 1980–2008
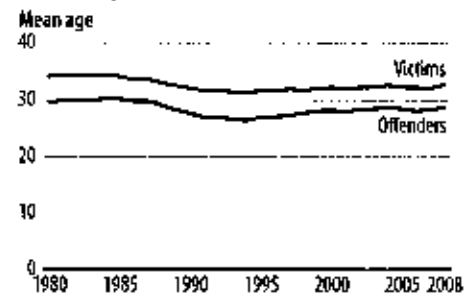
FIGURE 6
Percent of homicides in which offender was known to victim, by age of victim, 1980–2008
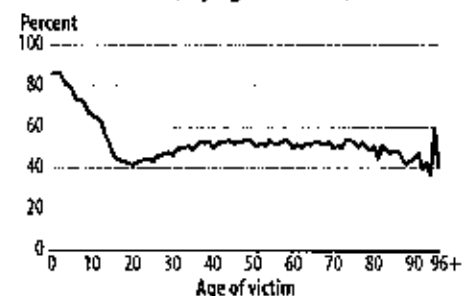
TABLE 2
Homicide type, by age, 1980–2008

	Victims					Offenders				
	Total	Under 18	18–34	35–49	50 or older	Total	Under 18	18–34	35–49	50 or older
All homicides	100%	10.0%	53.2%	22.8%	14.0%	100%	11.0%	65.5%	17.1%	6.5%
Victim/offender relationship										
Intimate	100%	1.3%	48.5%	33.6%	16.6%	100%	1.0%	47.0%	34.7%	17.2%
Family	100%	19.3	32.8	26.0	21.9	100%	6.1	50.5	27.5	15.9
Infants	100%	100				100%	7.4	81.2	10.2	1.1
Elders	100%				100	100%	9.4	47.8	20.7	22.1
Circumstances										
Felony murder	100%	7.5%	48.2%	22.2%	22.1%	100%	14.6%	72.7%	10.7%	2.0%
Sex related	100%	18.4	45.3	18.2	18.1	100%	9.7	73.1	15.2	1.9
Drug related	100%	5.4	70.9	20.2	3.6	100%	10.8	76.4	11.5	1.3
Gang related	100%	23.7	68.8	6.2	1.3	100%	26.0	70.2	1.6	0.2
Argument	100%	5.7	56.2	26.3	11.8	100%	7.0	60.7	23.0	9.2
Workplace	100%	0.5	26.7	33.5	39.3	100%	2.8	53.6	28.0	15.6
Weapon										
Gun homicide	100%	8.1%	59.7%	22.0%	10.3%	100%	12.2%	65.9%	15.1%	6.9%
Arson	100%	27.9	26.4	20.4	25.2	100%	10.6	57.0	24.9	7.5
Poison	100%	28.6	20.8	16.8	33.8	100%	3.5	48.8	29.8	17.8
Multiple victims or offenders										
Multiple victims	100%	17.9%	47.0%	19.3%	15.8%	100%	9.5%	66.3%	18.3%	5.9%
Multiple offenders	100%	10.4	58.4	19.2	12.0	100%	17.9	73.1	7.7	1.3

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The percentages of victim/offender relationships are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known. The percentages of homicides involving multiple victims or offenders were known for 69.1% of incidents.

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FIGURE 7
Number of homicides of children under age 5, by race of victim, 1980–2008
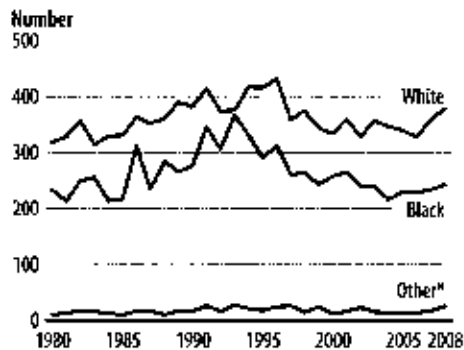
Number
500

*Other race includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

FIGURE 8
Homicide victimization rates for children under age 5, by race of victim, 1980–2008
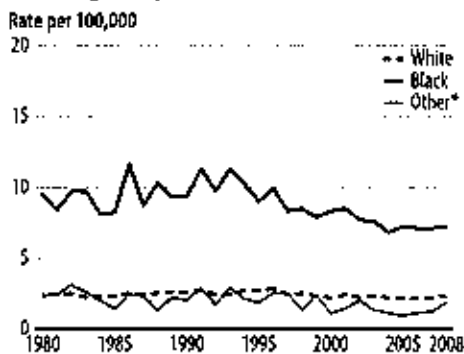
Rate per 100,000

*Other race includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

FIGURE 9
Homicides of children under age 5, by age of victim, 1980–2008

Rate per 100,000
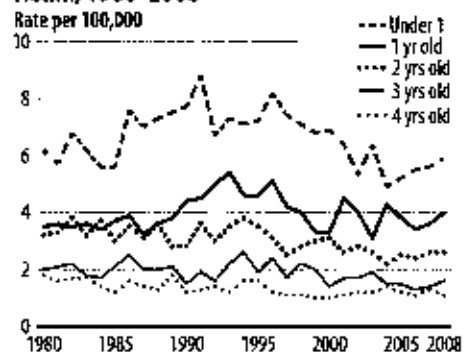
CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5

The homicide rate for children under age 5 has remained stable or declined for all racial groups

- The number of homicides of children under age 5 declined between 1993 and 2006, but increased in 2007 and 2008 (figure 7).

Homicide rates for—

- black children under age 5 declined 36% between 1993 and 2008, dropping from 11.3 homicides per 100,000 in 1993 to 7.2 homicides per 100,000 in 2008 (figure 8).

- black children under age 5 have remained substantially higher than rates for white children or children of other races.

- white children under age 5 remained relatively stable between 1980 and 1990, with an average rate of 2.4 homicides per 100,000. The rate rose to 2.8 homicides per 100,000 by 1996, then dropped down to 2.1 homicides per 100,000 in 2006. Since 2006 the rate has risen slightly to 2.3 homicides per 100,000 in 2008.

In general, the younger the child, the greater the risk for being the victim of a homicide (figure 9)

- Throughout the 28-year period from 1980 to 2008, infants under 1 year of age had the highest homicide victimization rate of all children under age 5.

A parent was the perpetrator in the majority of homicides of children under age 5 (figure 10)

Of all children under age 5 murdered from 1980 through 2008—

- 63% were killed by a parent—33% were killed by their fathers and 30% were killed by their mothers (table 3)

- 23% were killed by male acquaintances

- 5% were killed by female acquaintances

- 7% were killed by other relatives

- 3% were killed by strangers.

Of children under age 5 killed by someone other than their parent, 80% were killed by males (not shown).

TABLE 3
Offender relationship to child victim under age 5, 1980–2008

Sex of offender	All relationships	Parent	Other family	Friend/ acquaintance	Stranger
All offenders	100%	63%	7%	28%	3%
Male	63%	33%	4%	23%	3%
Female	38	30	3	5	0

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

Most of the victims and offenders of homicides involving children under age 5 were male

Since 1980, the number of homicides involving male children under age 5—

- killed by male offenders increased dramatically in the early 1990s before dropping in 1997 (figure 11)

- followed a similar pattern for female victims killed by male offenders, although the changes were less pronounced.

For additional information on this topic, see the BJS publication *Child Victimizers: Violent Offenders and Their Victims* (NCJ 153258, BJS Web, March 1996).

FIGURE 10
Homicides of children under age 5, by relationship with the offender, 1980–2008
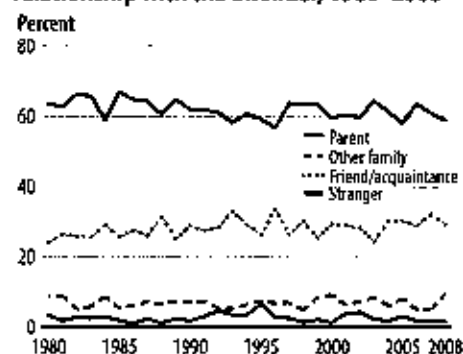
Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.
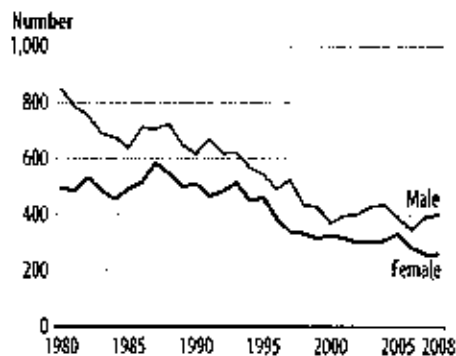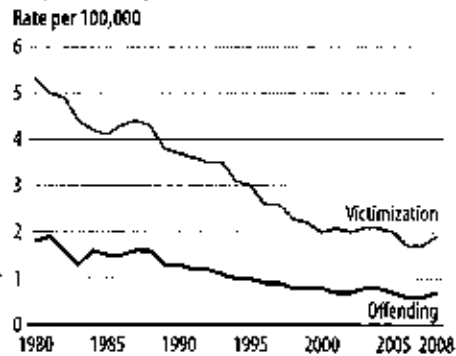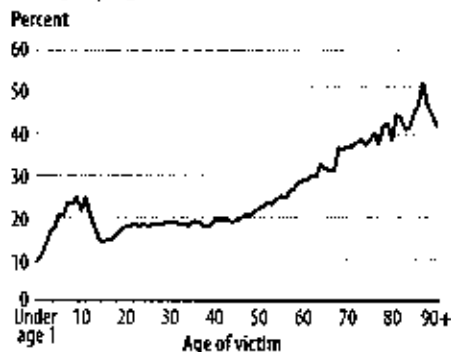
FIGURE 11
Number of homicides of children under age 5, by sex of victim and offender, 1980–2008
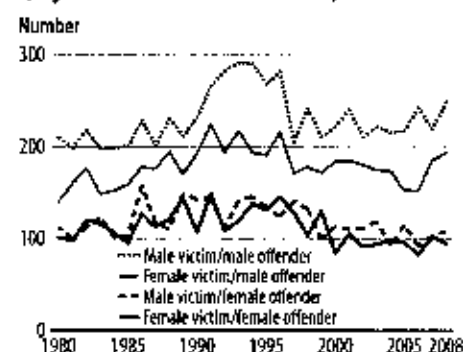
Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

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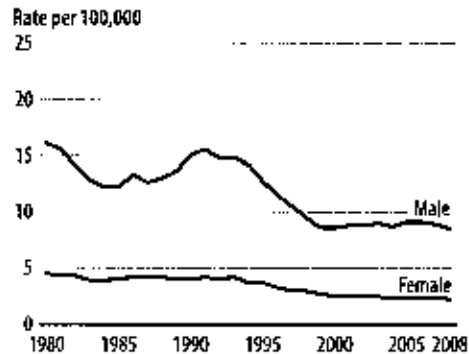
FIGURE 12
Number of homicides of persons age 65 or older, by sex of victim, 1980–2008

Number
1,000

800
600
400
Male
200
Female
0
1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2008

FIGURE 13
Homicide victimization and offending rates for persons age 65 or older, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000

6
5
4
3
Victimization
2
1
Offending
0
1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2008

FIGURE 14
Percent of homicides committed during a felony, by age of victim, 1980–2008
Percent

60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Under 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90+
age 1   Age of victim

ELDERS AGE 65 OR OLDER

For the elderly (65 or older), both the number of homicides and the homicide victimization rate declined from 1980 to 2000 and then stabilized

- About 5% of all homicide victims between 1980 and 2008 were elderly.

- Between 1980 and 2008, males accounted for nearly 6 out of 10 homicide victims age 65 or older.

- Since 2000 the number of homicides involving elderly males (age 65 or older) has increased slightly, while the number involving elderly females has decreased (figure 12).

- The homicide victimization and offending rates for persons age 65 or older have been relatively stable since 2001, ranging from a high of 2.1 victims and 0.8 offenders per 100,000 in 2003 to a low of 1.7 victims and 0.6 offenders in 2007.

- In 2008, both victimization and offending rates for persons age 65 or older remained low at 1.9 victims and 0.7 offenders per 100,000 (figure 13).

Older homicide victims were more likely to have been killed during a felony than younger victims (figure 14)

Homicides committed during a felony were those that occurred in conjunction with a serious crime, usually punishable by at least one year in prison, such as rape, robbery, burglary, or arson.

- Between 1980 and 2008, the percentage of homicides that occurred during a felony was higher for elderly homicide victims age 65 or older than for homicide victims of other ages.

- Among murder victims ages 20 to 40, the percentage of homicides committed during a felony was relatively stable, ranging from 17.7% to 19.3% of all homicide victims in this age group.

- Among murder victims age 40 or older, the proportion of homicides committed during a felony began increasing, accounting for 32.8% of homicides of 64-year-old victims and 40.3% of homicides of 76-year-old victims.

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Trends by sex

Most victims and perpetrators in homicides were male (table 4)

TABLE 4
Homicide offenders and victims, by sex, 1980–2008

Victim/offender relationship	Percent
Total	100%
Male offender/male victim	67.8%
Male offender/female victim	21.0
Female offender/male victim	9.0
Female offender/female victim	2.2

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

Victimization rates for both males and females have been relatively stable since 2000

- Males were nearly 4 times more likely than females to be murdered in 2008 (figure 15).

- The homicide victimization rate for both males and females was at its highest in 1980—16.1 homicides per 100,000 for males and 4.5 homicides per 100,000 for females. By 2008, the rates for both groups had fallen, reaching 8.5 homicides per 100,000 for males and 2.3 homicides per 100,000 for females.

Homicide offending rates for both males and females followed the same general pattern as homicide victimization rates

- Males were 7 times more likely than females to commit murder in 2008 (figure 16).

- The offending rate for females has declined from 3.1 offenders per 100,000 in 1980 to 1.6 offenders per 100,000 in 2008.

- The offending rate for males peaked in 1991 at 20.8 per 100,000, then fell to a low of 11.3 per 100,000 in 2008.

FIGURE 15
Homicide victimization rates, by sex, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000

FIGURE 16
Homicide offending rates, by sex, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000
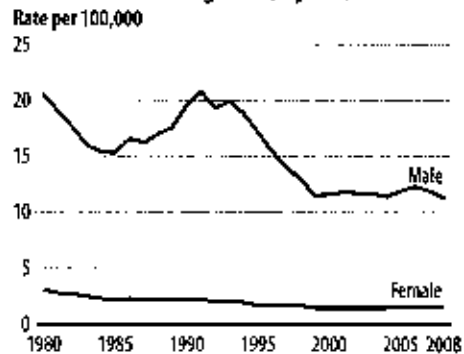
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The sex distribution of homicide victims and offenders differed by type of homicide

From 1980 to 2008, among all homicide victims—

- Females were more likely than males to be the victim of intimate killings (63.7%) and sex-related homicides (81.7%) (table 5).

- Males were more likely to be involved in drug- (90.5%) and gang-related homicides (94.6%).

The relationship between the victim and the offender differed for female and male victims

- Female murder victims (41.5%) were almost 6 times more likely than male murder victims (7.1%) to have been killed by an intimate (table 6).

- More than half (56.4%) of male murder victims were killed by an acquaintance; another quarter (25.5%) were murdered by a stranger.

TABLE 5
Homicide type, by sex, 1980–2008

Types of homicide	Victims			Offenders		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
All homicides	100%	76.8%	23.2%	100%	89.5%	10.5%
Victim/offender relationship						
Intimate	100%	36.3%	63.7%	100%	70.3%	29.7%
Family	100%	54.7	45.3	100%	74.4	25.6
Infants	100%	54.7	45.3	100%	62.5	37.5
Elders	100%	57.2	42.8	100%	84.8	15.2
Circumstances						
Felony murder	100%	79.2%	20.8%	100%	93.2%	6.8%
Sex related	100%	18.3	81.7	100%	93.7	6.3
Drug related	100%	90.5	9.5	100%	95.5	4.5
Gang related	100%	94.6	5.4	100%	98.3	1.7
Argument	100%	77.2	22.8	100%	86.6	13.4
Workplace	100%	79.1	20.9	100%	91.3	8.7
Weapon						
Gun homicide	100%	82.6%	17.4%	100%	92.1%	7.9%
Arson	100%	54.7	45.3	100%	78.8	21.2
Poison	100%	56.1	43.9	100%	60.5	39.5
Multiple victims or offenders						
Multiple victims	100%	64.4%	35.6%	100%	93.6%	6.4%
Multiple offenders	100	88.0	12.0	100	91.6	8.4

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The percentages of victim/offender relationships are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known. The percentages of homicides involving multiple victims or offenders were known for 69.1% of incidents.

TABLE 6
Victim/offender relationship, by victim sex, 1980–2008

Victim/offender relationship	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%
Intimate	7.1%	41.5%
Spouse	4.0	24.1
Ex-spouse	0.2	1.9
Boyfriend/girlfriend	3.0	15.5
Other family	10.9%	16.7%
Parent	2.0	4.1
Child	3.6	7.5
Sibling	1.8	1.2
Other family	3.5	3.9
Acquaintance/known	56.4%	29.9%
Neighbor	1.6	1.7
Employee/employer	0.2	0.2
Friend/acquaintance	46.2	22.8
Other known	8.3	5.2
Stranger	25.5%	11.9%

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The percentages of victim/offender relationships are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known. The percentages of homicides involving multiple victims or offenders were known for 69.1% of incidents.

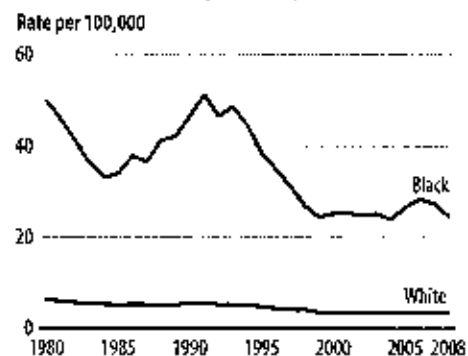PATTERNS & TRENDS

Trends by race

Blacks were disproportionately represented among homicide victims and offenders

- In 2008, the homicide victimization rate for blacks (19.6 homicides per 100,000) was 6 times higher than the rate for whites (3.3 homicides per 100,000).

- The victimization rate for blacks peaked in the early 1990s, reaching a high of 39.4 homicides per 100,000 in 1991 (figure 17).

- After 1991, the victimization rate for blacks fell until 1999, when it stabilized near 20 homicides per 100,000.

- In 2008, the offending rate for blacks (24.7 offenders per 100,000) was 7 times higher than the rate for whites (3.4 offenders per 100,000) (figure 18).

- The offending rate for blacks showed a similar pattern to the victimization rate, peaking in the early 1990s at a high of 51.1 offenders per 100,000 in 1991.

- After 1991, the offending rate for blacks declined until it reached 24 per 100,000 in 2004. The rate has since fluctuated, increasing to 28.4 offenders per 100,000 in 2006 before falling again to 24.7 offenders per 100,000 in 2008.

FIGURE 17
Homicide victimization rates, by race, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000
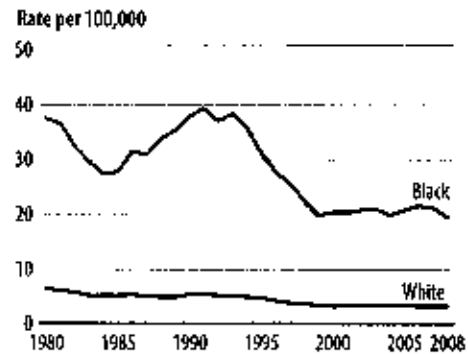
FIGURE 18
Homicide offending rates, by race, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000

PATTERNS & TRENDS

The race distribution of homicide victims and offenders differed by type of homicide

From 1980 to 2008—

■ Black victims were over-represented in homicides involving drugs, with 62.1% of all drug-related homicides involving black victims. By comparison, 36.9% of drug-related homicide victims were white and 1% were victims of other races.

■ Compared with the overall percentage of murder victims who were black (47.4%), blacks were less likely to be victims of sex-related homicides (30.4%), workplace killings (12.5%), or homicides of elders age 65 or older (28.6%) (table 7).

■ While two-thirds of drug-related homicides were committed by black offenders (65.6%), black offenders were less likely to be involved in sex-related killings (43.4%), workplace homicides, (25.8%) or homicides of elders age 65 or older (41.9%) compared to their overall involvement as homicide offenders (52.5%).

TABLE 7
Homicide type, by race, 1980–2008

	Victims				Offenders			
	Total	White	Black	Other	Total	White	Black	Other
All homicides	100%	50.3%	47.4%	2.3%	100%	45.3%	52.5%	2.2%
Victim/offender relationship								
Intimate	100%	55.0%	42.7%	2.4%	100%	54.2%	43.5%	2.3%
Family	100%	59.2	38.2	2.0	100%	59.2	38.3	2.5
Infants	100%	56.2	41.0	2.8	100%	55.8	41.6	2.6
Elders	100%	69.6	28.6	1.8	100%	56.3	41.9	1.8
Circumstances								
Felony murder	100%	53.1%	44.1%	2.8%	100%	38.4%	59.9%	1.7%
Sex related	100%	66.8	30.4	2.8	100%	54.4	43.4	2.2
Drug related	100%	36.9	62.1	1.0	100%	33.2	65.6	1.2
Gang related	100%	56.5	40.0	3.5	100%	53.3	42.2	4.6
Argument	100%	49.5	48.1	2.4	100%	47.5	50.2	2.4
Workplace	100%	83.9	12.5	3.6	100%	70.8	25.8	3.3
Weapon								
Gun homicide	100%	46.5%	51.4%	2.0%	100%	41.2%	56.9%	1.9%
Arson	100%	57.9	38.8	3.3	100%	55.6	41.7	2.7
Poison	100%	80.5	16.8	2.8	100%	80.6	16.8	2.6
Multiple victims or offenders								
Multiple victims	100%	61.7%	34.7%	3.6%	100%	53.9%	42.4%	3.6%
Multiple offenders	100%	51.5	45.7	2.8	100%	43.2	54.3	2.5

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The percentages of victim/offender relationships are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known. The percentages of homicides involving multiple victims or offenders were known for 69.1% of incidents.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

Most murders were intraracial
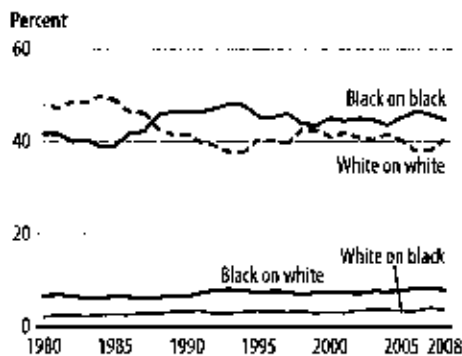
From 1980 through 2008—

- 84% of white victims were killed by whites (figure 19).

- 93% of black victims were killed by blacks.

Stranger homicides were more likely to cross racial lines than homicides involving friends or acquaintances
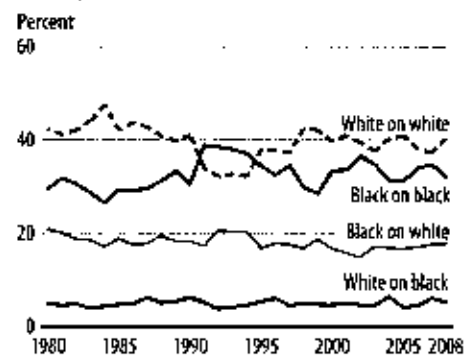
For homicides committed by—

- a stranger to the victim, 26.7% were interracial (figure 20a)

- a friend or acquaintance of the victim, 9.7% were interracial (figure 20b).

FIGURE 20a
Stranger homicides, by race of offender and victim, 1980–2008

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 19
Homicides, by race of offender and victim, 1980–2008

Percent

FIGURE 20b
Friend/acquaintance homicides, by race of offender and victim, 1980–2008
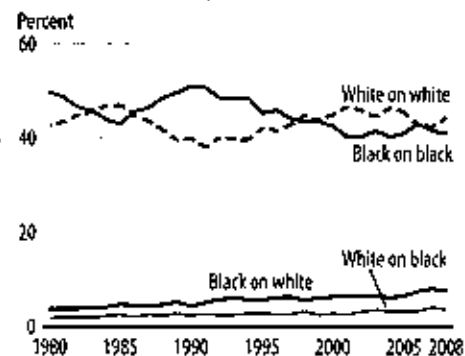
Percent

Note. Percentages are based on the 63.3% of homicides for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

FIGURE 21a
White male homicide victimization rates, by age, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000
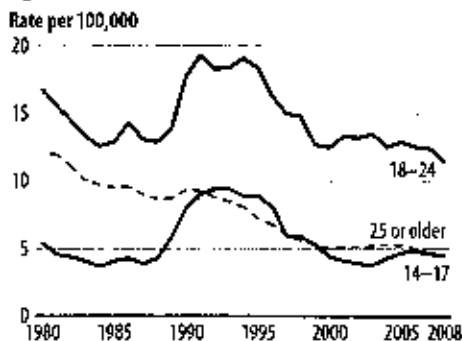
FIGURE 21b
Black male homicide victimization rates, by age, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000
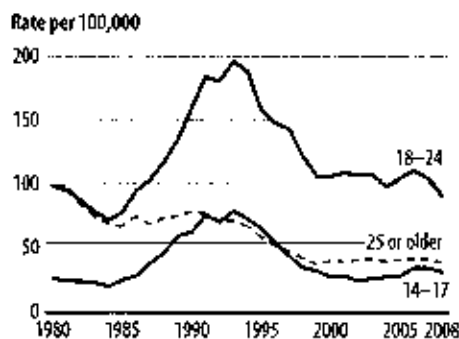
FIGURE 21c
White female homicide victimization rates, by age, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000
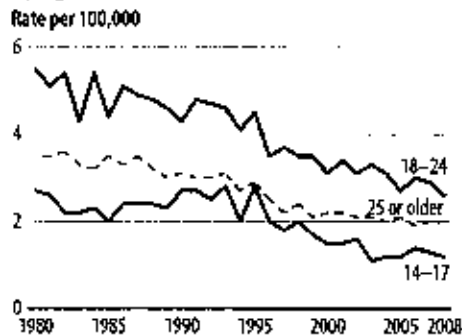
Trends by age, sex, and race

Patterns of victimization and offending varied by age, sex, and racial group

- During the late 1990s, homicide victimization rates dropped for all groups. In recent years, rates for most groups have stabilized.

- In 2008, young adults (18 to 24 years old) had the highest victimization rate in each racial and sex group.

- After increases in the early 1990s, the victimization rates for both white and black male teens (14 to 17 years old) peaked in 1993 at 9.4 homicides per 100,000 for whites and 79 homicides per 100,000 for blacks (figures 21a and 21b).

- Since 1993, the victimization rates for both white and black male teens (14 to 17 years old) have declined. By 2008, the rates for both groups were similar to the rates in the mid-1980s, at 4.5 homicides per 100,000 for whites and 31.4 homicides per 100,000 for blacks.

- In 2008, black males age 18 to 24 years-old had the highest homicide victimization rate (91.1 homicides per 100,000). That rate was more than double the rate for black males age 25 or older (38.4 homicides per 100,000) and almost triple the rate for black males age 14 to 17 (31.4 homicides per 100,000).

- Among black males age 18 to 24, the homicide victimization rate was much lower in 2008 (91.1 homicides per 100,000) than in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when it reached a high of 195.9 homicides per 100,000 in 1993.

- For white females of all ages, homicide victimization rates have declined. Among white women age 18 to 24, the rate declined from 5.5 homicides per 100,000 in 1980 to 2.6 per 100,000 in 2008 (figure 21c).

- Since 1993, the victimization rate for black females has declined across all age groups. Girls age 14 to 17 experienced the largest victimization rate decline, dropping from 13.1 homicides per 100,000 in 1993 to 4.6 per 100,000 in 2008 (figure 21d).

FIGURE 21d
Black female homicide victimization rates, by age, 1980–2008
Rate per 100,000
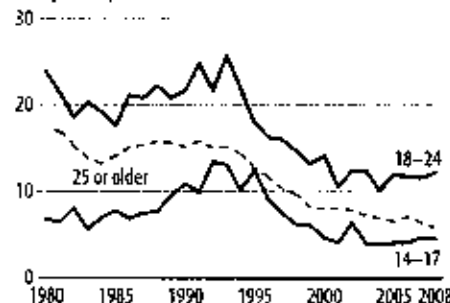
PATTERNS & TRENDS

Homicide offending patterns were generally similar to victimization patterns

- Young adults (18 to 24 years old) had the highest offending rate in each racial and sex category.

- The offending rate for white male young adults (18 to 24 years old) was 20.4 offenders per 100,000 in 2007 and 2008, which was an all-time low (figure 22a).

- Between 1980 and 2008, young adult black males had the highest homicide offending rate compared to offenders in other racial and sex categories.

- The offending rate for black male teens peaked in 1993 at 246.9 offenders per 100,000 before declining. In recent years, the black male teen offending rate has increased from 54.3 offenders per 100,000 in 2002 to 64.8 offenders per 100,000 in 2008.

The offending rate for black male young adults —

- increased from 205.2 offenders per 100,000 in 1980 to a high of 365.0 offenders per 100,000 in 1993

- dropped by more than half from 1993 to 2008, when it reached an all-time low of 175.8 offenders per 100,000

- remained more than double the rate of black male teens (64.8 offenders per 100,000) and 4 times the rate of black males age 25 or older (37.8 offenders per 100,000) (figure 22b).

Homicide offending rates among females show—

- White females of all ages had the lowest offending rates of any racial or age groups (figure 22c).

- The offending rates for black females of all ages has declined since the early 1990s. Black female teens experienced the largest decline in offending, dropping from 11 offenders per 100,000 in 1992 to 3 offenders per 100,000 in 2008 (figure 22d).
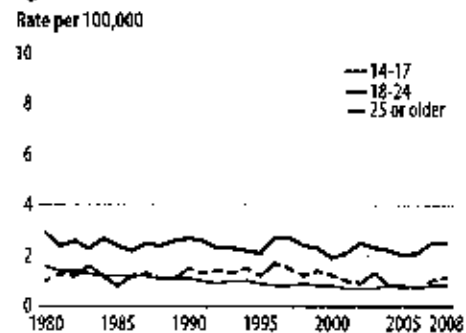
FIGURE 22a
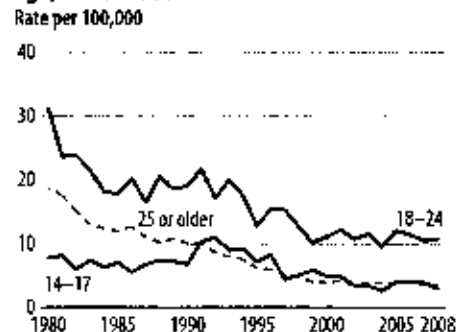**White male homicide offending rates, by age, 1980-2008**
Rate per 100,000
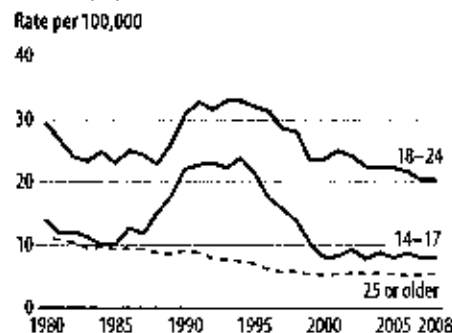
FIGURE 22b
Black male homicide offending rates, by age, 1980-2008
Rate per 100,000
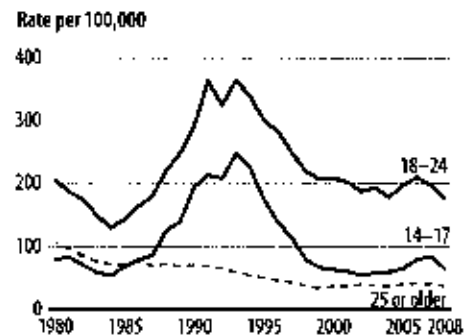
FIGURE 22c
White female homicide offending rates, by age, 1980-2008
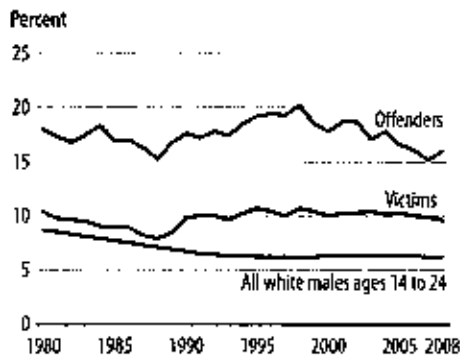Rate per 100,000

FIGURE 22d
Black female homicide offending rates, by age, 1980-2008
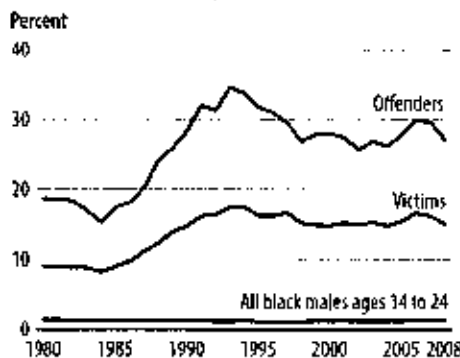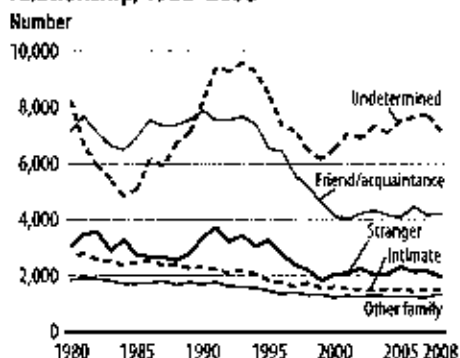Rate per 100,000

PATTERNS & TRENDS

FIGURE 23a
White males age 14 to 24 who were homicide victims or offenders, 1980–2008
Percent

FIGURE 23b
Black males age 14 to 24 who were homicide victims or offenders, 1980–2008
Percent

FIGURE 24
Number of homicides, by victim/offender relationship, 1980–2008
Number

Note: Intimate includes spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, and same-sex relationships. Friend/acquaintance includes neighbors, employees, employers, and other known persons.

These data are grouped from the original categories. For detailed categories, see appendix table 24a and appendix table 24b for weighted and unweighted data.

Young males (14 to 24 years-old), particularly young black males, were disproportionately involved in homicide compared to their proportion of the population

- Since 2000, young white males have accounted for about 6% of the population and about 10% of homicide victims. Their proportion of offenders has declined slightly from 18% in 2000 to 16% by 2008 (figure 23a).

- While young black males have accounted for about 1% of the population from 1980 to 2008, they have made up an increasing proportion of homicide victims, going from 9% of all homicide victims in 1980 to 18% in 1994. After 1994, their proportion of homicide victims has remained relatively stable at about 16%.

- The percentage of young black male homicide offenders also increased rapidly from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, going from 17% in 1985 to 35% by 1993 before declining. By 2008, young black males made up about a quarter of all homicide offenders (27%) (figure 23b).

Victim/offender relationship

Most homicides with known victim/offender relationships involved people who knew each other

- Since the early 1990s, homicides for which the victim/offender relationships were unknown constituted the largest category of homicides (figure 24).

- The proportion of homicides in which the victim/offender relationships were unknown increased from 36% of all homicides in 1980 to 44% in 2008.

Among homicides for which the victim/offender relationships were known, 22% of victims were killed by strangers

- More than half (56%) of victims were acquaintances of the assailant (table 8).

- Another 22% of victims were killed by a spouse or other family member.

TABLE 8
Victim/offender relationship, 1980–2008

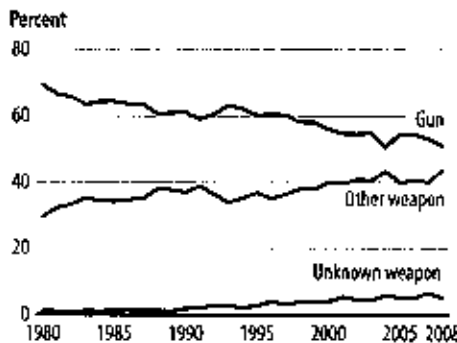|	Percent of homicides with known victim/offender relationship
Total	100%
Stranger	21.9%
Nonstranger	78.1%
Spouse	10.0%
Other family	12.4
Boyfriend/girlfriend	6.3
Other acquaintance	49.4

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

Homicides by a friend/acquaintance or a stranger were more likely to involve a gun than those committed by an intimate or family member (figures 25a, 25b, 25c, and 25d)
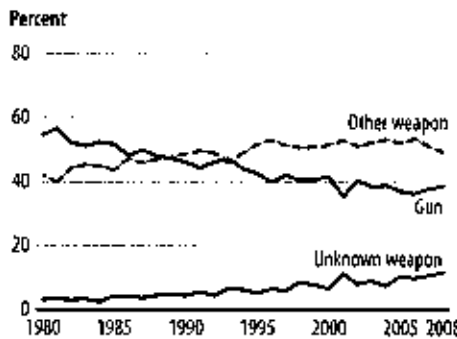
■ Across the 28-year period, the percentage of homicides committed by intimate partners that involved a gun declined from 69% of all intimate homicides in 1980 to 51% in 2008, a 26% decline.

■ Compared to homicides committed by intimates, friends/ acquaintances, or strangers, homicides committed by a non-intimate family member were more likely to involve weapons other than guns (such as knives, blunt objects, or personal weapons).

■ Among homicides for which the victim/offender relationships were unknown, the percentage of homicides involving a gun increased 33%, from 59% in 1980 to 78% in 2008 (figure 25e).

FIGURE 25c
Homicides, by friend/acquaintance and weapon use, 1980–2008
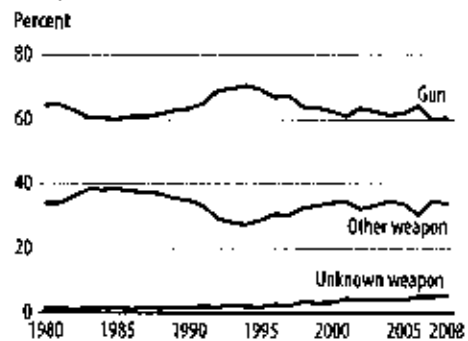
Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 25a
Homicides, by intimate and weapon use, 1980–2008

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 25d
Homicides, by stranger and weapon use, 1980–2008

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 25b
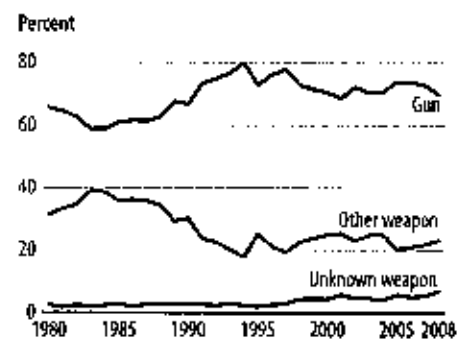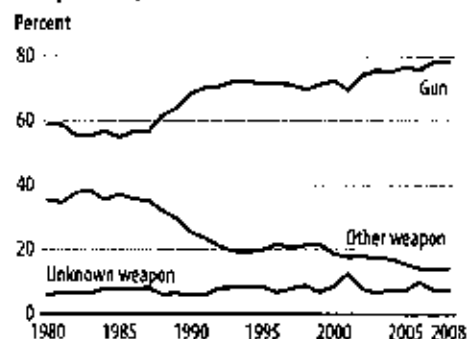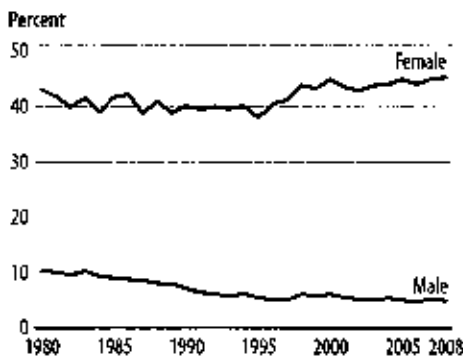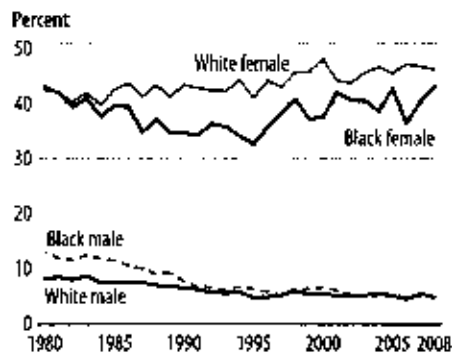**Homicides, by other family and weapon use, 1980–2008**

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 25e
Homicides, by unknown offender and weapon use, 1980–2008

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

FIGURE 26
Homicides of intimates, by sex of victim, 1980-2008

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

Intimate includes spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, and same-sex relationships. Friend/acquaintance includes neighbors, employees, employers, and other known persons.

FIGURE 27
Homicides of intimates, by sex and race of victim, 1980-2008

Percent

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

Intimate homicide

Female victims were substantially more likely than male victims to have been killed by an intimate

Among homicides with known victim/offender relationships—

- Nearly 1 out of 5 murder victims (16.3%) were killed by an intimate (table 9).

- 2 out of 5 female murder victims were killed by an intimate.

- The percentage of males killed by an intimate fell from 10.4% in 1980 to 4.9% in 2008, a 53% drop. For females, the percentage killed by an intimate increased 5% across the same period (figure 26).

- The percentage of females killed by an intimate declined from 43% in 1980 to 38% in 1995. After 1995, that percentage gradually increased, reaching 45% in 2008.

TABLE 9
Intimate homicides, 1980-2008

	Percent of all homicides
Total	100%
Intimate	16.3
Nonintimate	83.7

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

For additional details, see section on victim/offender relationship.

The proportion of black males killed by an intimate has declined

Among homicides with known victim/offender relationships—

- The percentage of black male murder victims killed by an intimate declined steadily from 13% in 1980 to a low of 5% in 2008 (figure 27).

- The percentages of white males and black males killed by an intimate have been relatively similar since 2002, at about 5% for both groups.

- Intimate homicides of white women fluctuated slightly between 1980 and 2008, averaging 44% of all white female homicides across that period.

- Intimate homicides of black women decreased from 43% of all black female homicides in 1980 to a low of 33% in 1995. After 1995, that percentage increased to 43% of all homicides of black females in 2008.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

In every age group, female victims were more likely than male victims to have been killed by an intimate (table 10)

TABLE 10
Age of intimate and nonintimate homicide victims, by sex, 1980-2008

Age	Male victims killed by —		Female victim killed by —	
	Intimate	Non-intimate	Intimate	Non-intimate
12-17	0.5%	99.5%	17.5%	82.5%
18-24	2.8	97.2	42.9	57.1
25-29	6.3	93.7	52.4	47.6
30-34	8.9	91.1	57.1	42.9
35-39	11.0	89.0	57.8	42.2
40-44	12.2	87.8	55.6	44.4
45-49	13.4	86.6	52.3	47.7
50-59	13.3	86.7	42.1	57.9
60 or older	9.5	90.5	29.4	70.6

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

See *Methodology* section for additional information about the data for weighting and imputation procedures used.

The proportion of intimate homicides by a spouse has decreased since 1980, while the proportion committed by a boyfriend or girlfriend has increased (figure 28)

- In 1980, the majority (69.1%) of all intimate homicides were committed by a spouse while a quarter of intimate homicides were committed by a boyfriend or girlfriend (26.8%).

- After 1980, the proportion of intimate homicides involving a spouse began decreasing while those involving a boyfriend or girlfriend began increasing.

- By 2008, the proportion of intimate homicides committed by a spouse (46.7%) was nearly equal to the proportion committed by a boyfriend or girlfriend (48.6%).

The proportion of male and female intimate homicide victims killed with guns has decreased (figures 29a and 29b)

- In 1980, the majority (68.9%) of male intimate homicide victims were killed with guns and a third (30.5%) were killed with other weapons (knives, blunt objects, or personal weapons).

- After 1980, the proportion of male intimate homicide victims killed with guns gradually declined while the proportion killed with other weapons increased. Since 2000, guns have been less prevalent than other weapons in intimate homicides against male victims.

- By 2008, a higher proportion of male intimate homicide victims were killed with weapons other than guns (54.6%) than with guns (41.9%).

FIGURE 28
Homicides of intimates, by relationship of victim to offender, 1980-2008
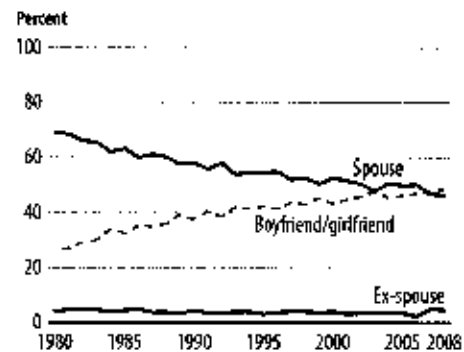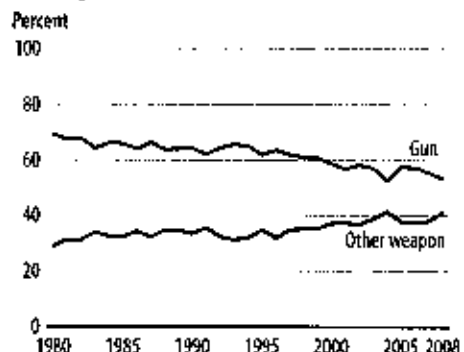

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 29a
Male victims of intimate homicide, by type of weapon, 1980-2008
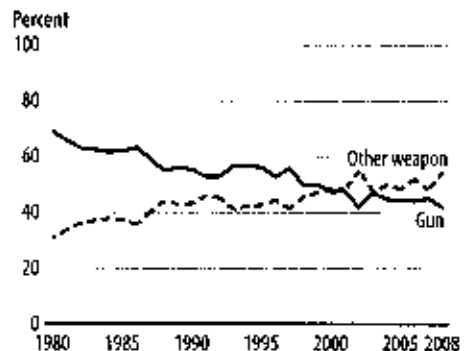
Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 29b
Female victims of intimate homicide, by type of weapon, 1980-2008

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

- Female intimate homicide victims showed a similar pattern. In 1980, two-thirds were killed by guns (69.5%) and less than a third were killed with other weapons (28.9%).

- After 1980, the proportion of female intimate homicide victims killed by guns decreased while the proportion killed by other weapons increased, although guns were still the most prevalent weapon used by intimate offenders against female victims.

- In 2008, 53% of all female intimate homicide victims were killed with guns while 41% were killed with other weapons.

Guns were the most frequently used type of weapon in intimate homicides, but weapon type varied by relationship

From 1980 through 2008—

- Overall, over two-thirds of victims murdered by a spouse or ex-spouse were killed by guns (table 11).

- Boyfriends were more likely to be killed by knives than any other group of intimates.

- Girlfriends were more likely to be killed by force than any other group of intimates.

TABLE 11
Homicides, by intimate relationship and type of weapon, 1980–2008

Victim's relationship to offender	Total	Gun	Knife	Blunt object	Force[a]	Other weapon	Unknown weapon
Husband	100%	66.1%	27.6%	2.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.8%
Ex-husband	100%	83.6	10.9	1.6	0.4	1.3	2.2
Wife	100%	66.7	14.5	4.7	10.3	1.1	2.7
Ex-wife	100%	75.0	13.2	2.7	6.4	0.7	2.1
Boyfriend	100%	44.8	49.7	1.2	1.3	0.9	2.1
Girlfriend	100%	54.5	20.4	5.0	15.2	1.1	3.8
Same-sex relationship	100%	30.3	41.1	10.3	14.1	1.4	2.4

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known. See section on intimate partner violence.
[a]Includes hands, fists, or feet.

Family homicide

**Family homicides most often involved spouses or ex-spouses**

- Homicides by a spouse or ex-spouse were an increasingly smaller proportion of all family homicides from 1980 through 2008. In 1980, they made up half (52%) of all family homicides. By 2008, they accounted for just over a third (37%) (figure 30).

- Children killed by their parents were the second most frequent type of family homicide. These homicides increased from 15% of all family homicides in 1980 to 25% of all family homicides in 2008.

- Parents killed by one of their children have been an increasing proportion of family homicides, rising steadily from 9.7% of all family homicides in 1980 to 13% in 2008.

The proportion of family homicides that involved a spouse has decreased for both blacks and whites

- Murders of children by a parent accounted for an increasing percentage of family homicides, regardless of race.

- In 1980, 16.1% of white family homicides and 13.4% of black family homicides involved a parent who murdered a child.

- By 2008, 23.5% of white family homicides and 30% of black family homicides involved a child killed by a parent (figures 31a and 31b).
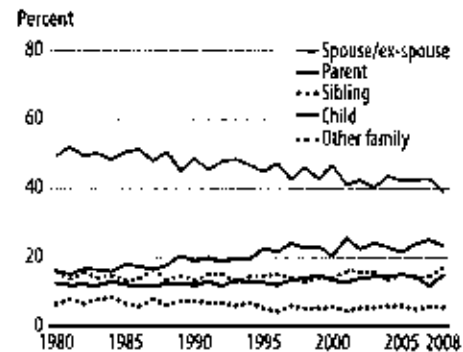
FIGURE 30
Family homicides, by relationship, 1980–2008
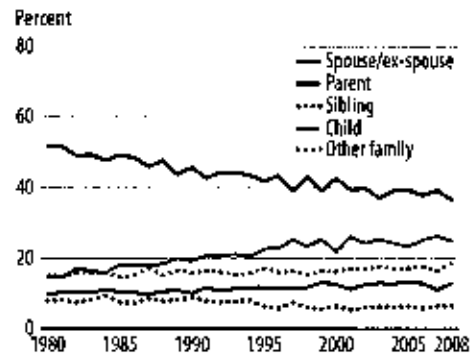
Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known. For additional details on spousal homicides, see section on intimate homicides.
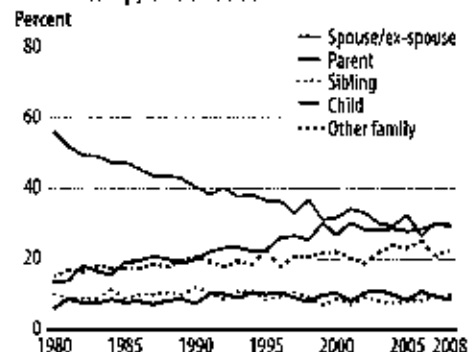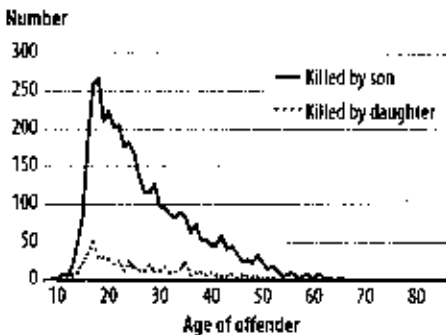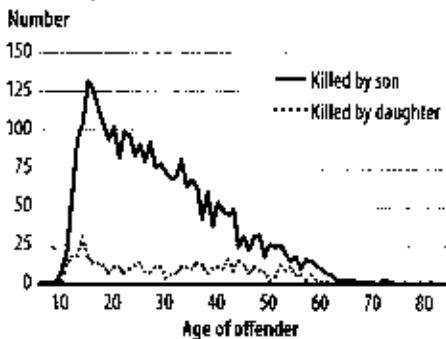
Figure 31a
White victims of family homicides, by relationship, 1980–2008

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known. For additional details on spousal homicides, see section on intimate homicides.

FIGURE 31b
Black victims of family homicides, by relationship, 1980–2008

Note: Percentages are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known. For additional details on spousal homicides, see section on intimate homicides.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

FIGURE 32a
Fathers killed by children, by sex and age of offender, 1980–2008

Number

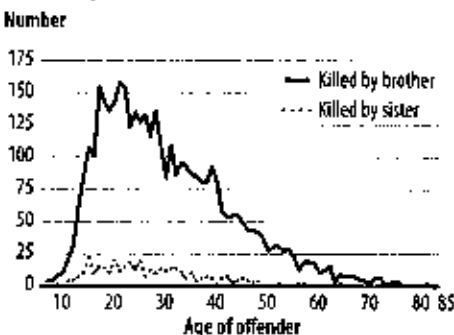
— Killed by son
···· Killed by daughter

Age of offender

Note: Estimates are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 32b
Mothers killed by children, by sex and age of offender, 1980–2008

Number

— Killed by son
····Killed by daughter

Age of offender

Note: Estimates are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

FIGURE 33a
Brothers killed by sibling, by sex and age of offender, 1980–2008

Number

— Killed by brother
···· Killed by sister

Age of offender

Note: Estimates are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

Fathers were more likely than mothers to be killed by their children

■ Teenage sons (16 to 19 years-old) were most often the perpetrators in parental killings (figures 32a and 32b).

Brothers were more likely than sisters to be killed by a sibling

■ About half of brothers who killed their own brother were between 16 and 30 years-old (figure 33a). Relatively few sisters killed their own brother.

■ Sisters killed by a sibling were more likely to be murdered by a brother than a sister (figure 33b). A quarter of all murders of sisters by a sibling were committed by a teenage sibling between 13 and 18 years-old.

FIGURE 33b
Sisters killed by sibling, by sex and age of offender, 1980–2008
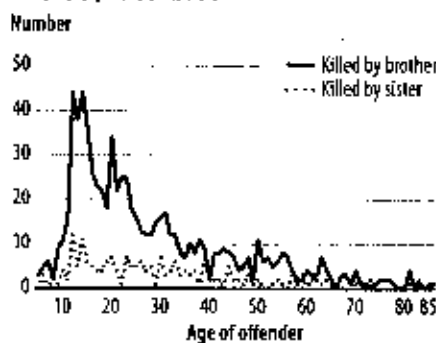
Number

— Killed by brother
···· Killed by sister

Age of offender

Note: Estimates are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which victim/offender relationships were known.

Law enforcement officers killed

The number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty has declined since the early 1980s (figure 34)

Information on the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty comes from the FBI's Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA). For these data, the FBI reports circumstance information for the most recent 10 years of data.

- From 1980 to 2010, the number of reported law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty dropped by 46%, from a reported 104 law enforcement officers killed in 1980 to 56 reported law enforcement deaths in 2010.

Of the 541 officers killed from 2001 to 2010—

- 23% were in arrest situations
- 22% were in ambush situations
- 18% were making traffic pursuits/stops
- 14% were on disturbance calls
- 11% were investigating suspicious persons/circumstances
- 12% were in other situations.

Of the 587 assailants identified in the killing of law enforcement officers from 2001 through 2010—

- 64% had a prior conviction
- 82% had a prior arrest for any type of crime; 43% had a prior arrest for a crime of violence.

**Most law enforcement officers were killed with firearms, particularly handguns**

- The recent overall decline in murders of law enforcement officers may be attributed to the decline in law enforcement officers killed by a handgun (figure 35).

FIGURE 34

Law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, 1980–2010
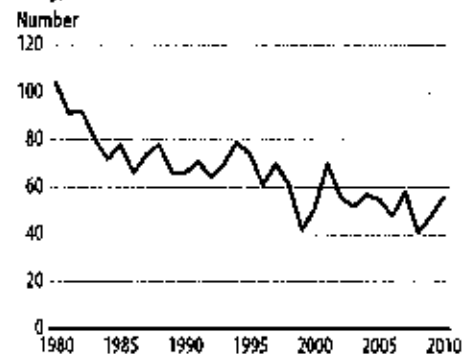
Source: FBI, Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 1980–2010.

FIGURE 35

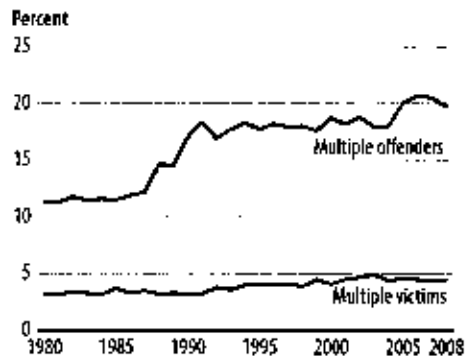**Law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty by weapon type, 1980–2010**
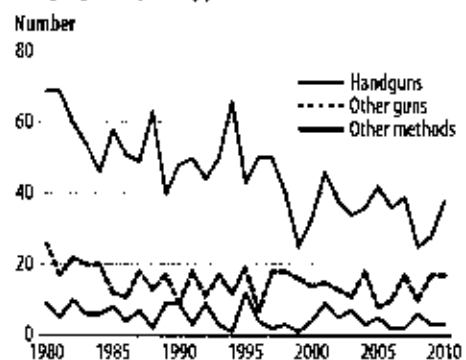
Source: FBI, Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 1980–2010.
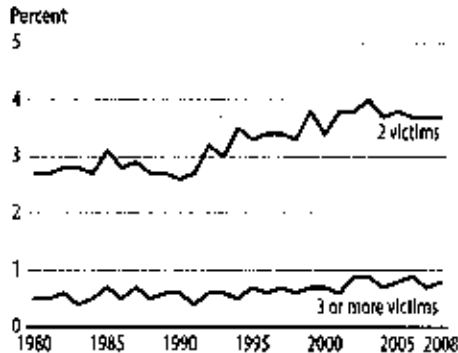
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FIGURE 36
Homicides involving multiple offenders or multiple victims, 1980–2008

Percent

FIGURE 37
Homicides involving multiple victims, by number of victims, 1980–2008

Percent

Multiple victims and offenders

1 in 5 homicides in 2008 involved multiple offenders

- Homicides were more likely to involve multiple offenders than multiple victims (figure 36).

- The proportion of all homicides committed by two or more offenders increased from 11.3% of all homicides in 1980 to a high of 20.7% of all homicides in 2006. In 2008, homicides involving multiple offenders accounted for 19.8% of all murders.

Most homicides involving multiple offenders were perpetrated against a single victim

- Of all homicides from 1980 through 2008, 15% involved the killing of a single victim by multiple offenders, and 1% involved multiple offenders killing multiple victims (table 12).

TABLE 12
Homicides involving single or multiple victims or offenders, 1980–2008

	Offenders			
	Single		Multiple	
Victims	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single	437,289	81%	82,013	15%
Multiple	15,601	3	4,929	1

Note: Of the 539,832 homicide incidents from 1980 through 2008, data on the number of victims and the number of offenders involved were known for 69.1% of incidents.

The proportion of homicides involving two or more victims has remained relatively stable at 4.5% since 2000

- The proportion of homicide incidents involving two victims has increased slightly from 2.7% in 1980 to 3.7% in 2008 (figure 37).

- Homicide incidents involving three or more victims have also increased during this same period, but have remained less than 1% of all homicides each year.

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In 2008, of all homicide incidents—

- 3.7% involved two victims
- 0.5% involved three victims
- 0.2% involved four victims
- 0.1% involved five or more victims.

Older offenders were less likely than younger offenders to be involved in multiple offender homicides (figure 38)

The proportion of homicides involving multiple offenders decreased with offender age:

- In 2008, of the homicides committed by offenders 14 to 17 years-old, 37.5% involved multiple offenders.
- During this same period, slightly more than one-fourth (27.5%) of the homicides committed by offenders 18 to 24 years-old involved multiple offenders while around one-seventh (13.7%) of the homicides committed by offenders age 25 or older involved multiple offenders.

Multiple victim homicides were more likely to involve guns than single victim homicides (figure 39)

- In 2008, three-quarters (77.2%) of multiple victim homicides involved guns while two-thirds (65.7%) of single victim homicides involved guns.
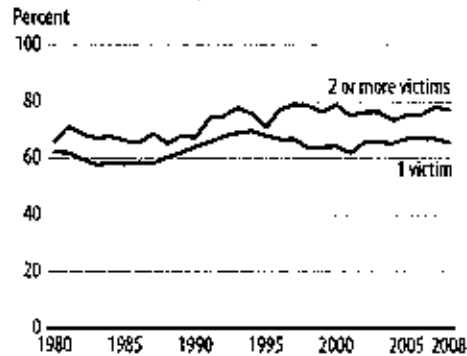
FIGURE 38
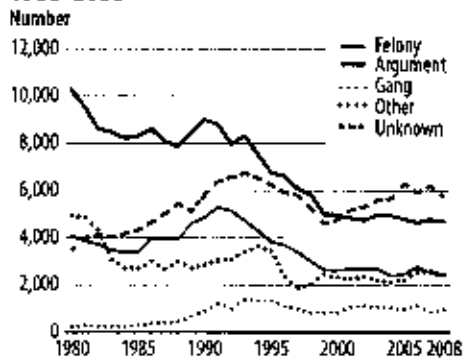**Percent of homicides involving multiple offenders, by age of offender, 1980–2008**
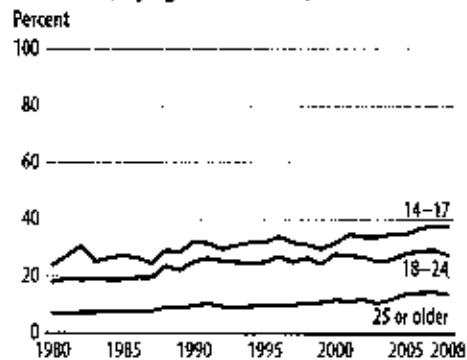
FIGURE 39
**Percent of homicides involving guns, by number of victims, 1980–2008**

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FIGURE 40
Number of homicides, by circumstance, 1980–2008
Number

Note: Arguments include brawls due to the influence of narcotics or alcohol, disagreements about money or property, and other arguments. Felony types include homicides committed during a rape, robbery, theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and violations of prostitution and commercial vice laws, other sex offenses, narcotic drug laws, and gambling laws. Gang homicides include gangland killings and juvenile gang killings.

FIGURE 41
Homicides involving guns, by circumstance, 1980–2008
Percent
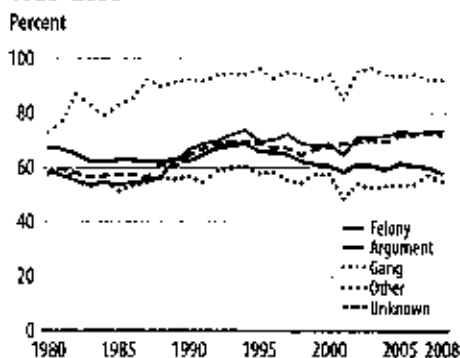
Note: For 5.0% of homicides from 1980 through 2008, the type of weapon used was unknown.

Circumstances

The mix of circumstances surrounding homicides has changed over the last two decades

The number of homicides—

- for which the circumstances were unknown was greater in 2008 than any known category of circumstances (figure 40)

- resulting from arguments declined by nearly half from 10,300 homicides in 1980 to 4,696 homicides in 2008, but as of 2008 remained the most frequently cited circumstance of the known circumstances

- that occurred during the commission of another felony, such as a robbery or burglary, declined from about 5,300 homicides in 1991 to 2,600 homicides in 2000, then stabilized

- involving adult or juvenile gang violence increased from about 220 homicides in 1980 to 960 homicides in 2008. Gang violence accounted for 1% of all homicides in 1980 and 6% of all homicides in 2008.

The proportion of homicides involving guns differed by circumstance

Gun involvement—

- in gang related homicides increased from 73% in 1980 to 92% in 2008 (figure 41)

- in homicides that occurred during the commission of a felony increased from 59% in 1980 to 74% in 2008

- in homicides resulting from arguments remained relatively stable from 2000 through 2008; about 60% of homicides resulting from arguments involved guns during this period.

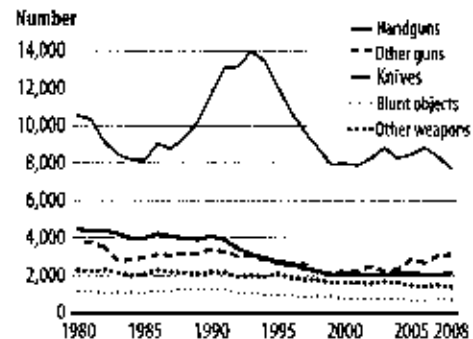PATTERNS & TRENDS

Trends by weapon type

Homicides were most often committed with handguns

- Handgun-involved incidents increased sharply in the late 1980s and early 1990s before falling to a low in 2008.

- Homicides committed with guns other than handguns hit a low point in 1999, but have increased since then.

- From 1980 through 2008, homicides involving weapons other than firearms have declined slightly or remained steady (figure 42).

Homicides of teens and young adults were more likely to be committed with a gun than homicides of persons of other ages
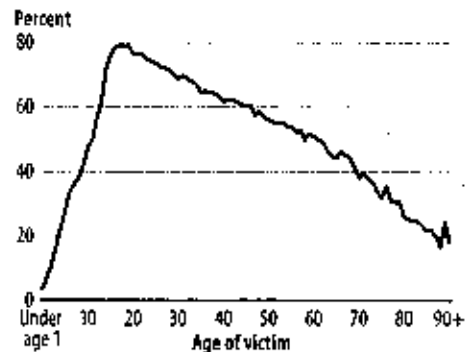
- The percentage of homicide victims killed with a gun increased with age of the victim until age 17, where it peaked at 79%, and declined thereafter (figure 43).

FIGURE 42
Homicides, by weapon type, 1980–2008

Note: For 5.0% of homicides from 1980 through 2008, the type of weapon used was unknown.
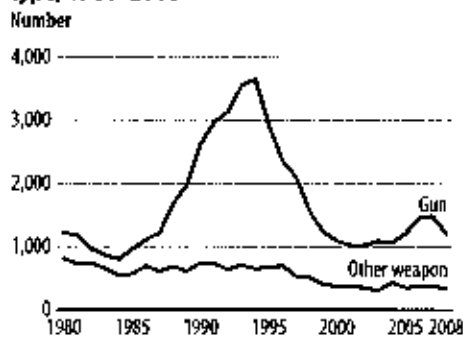
FIGURE 43
Homicides involving guns, by age of victim, 1980–2008

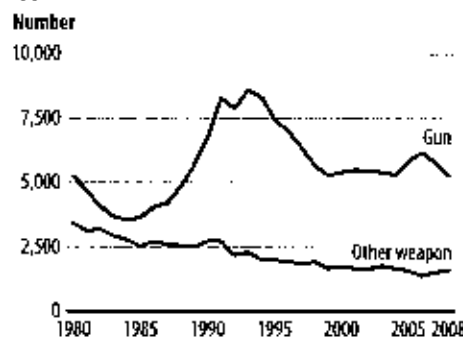Note: For 5.0% of homicides from 1980 through 2008, the type of weapon used was unknown.

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FIGURE 44a
### Homicide offenders age 14 to 17, by weapon type, 1980–2008

Number

Note: Weapon type was unknown for 2.6% of homicides involving offenders ages 14 to 17.

FIGURE 44b
Homicide offenders age 18 to 24, by weapon type, 1980–2008

Number

Note: Weapon type was unknown for 3.1% of homicides involving offenders ages 18 to 24.

FIGURE 44c
Homicide offenders age 25 or older, by weapon type, 1980–2008

Number
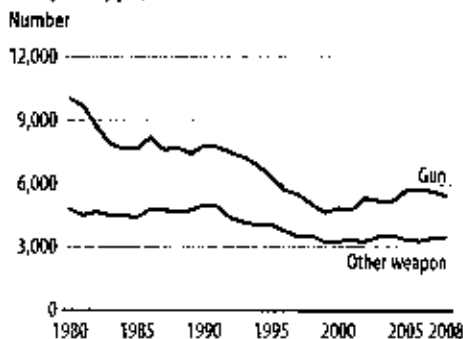
Note: Weapon type was unknown for 4.1% of homicides involving offenders age 25 or older.

Gun homicides by teens and young adults increased sharply beginning in the mid-1980s and fell after the early 1990s

- The trend in homicides involving weapons other than guns showed little change over this period, declining or fluctuating slightly for all age groups (figures 44a, 44b, and 44c).

- Gun homicides by persons age 18 to 24 peaked at about 8,600 in 1993 then declined to about 5,300 in 2008. The number of gun homicides in 2008 was still higher than the number of gun homicides in the early and mid-1980s.

- Gun homicides involving adult offenders age 25 or older declined from over 10,000 in 1980 to 4,660 in 1999, and increased since then to 5,460 in 2008.

- The sharp increase in homicides from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, and much of the subsequent decline, is attributable to gun violence by teens and young adults.

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Trends by city size

Changes in homicide trends have been driven by changes in the number of homicides in large American cities

From 1980 to 2008—

■ Over half of homicides (57.7%) occurred in cities with a population of 100,000 or more (figure 45).

■ More than a third of all homicides in large cities occurred in the biggest cities (those with a population of 1 million or more) (not shown).

In large cities of all sizes, the homicide victimization rate has declined steadily since the early 1990s
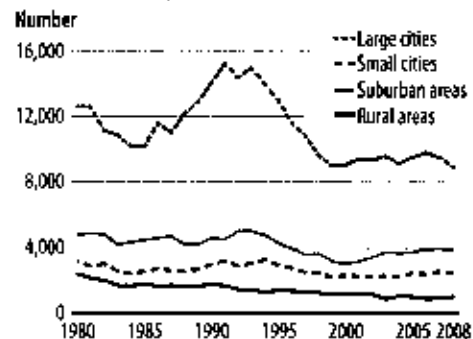
The homicide victimization rate—

■ in cities with a population of 1 million or more dropped dramatically from 35.5 homicides per 100,000 U.S. residents in 1991 to an all-time low of 11.9 homicides per 100,000 U.S. residents in 2008 (figure 46).

■ in cities with a population of 100,000 to 249,999 was the lowest among large cities, ranging from a high of 15.0 homicides per 100,000 in 1994 to a low of 8.8 homicides per 100,000 in 2008.

As with the victimization rate in large cities, the homicide offending rate has also declined since the early 1990s

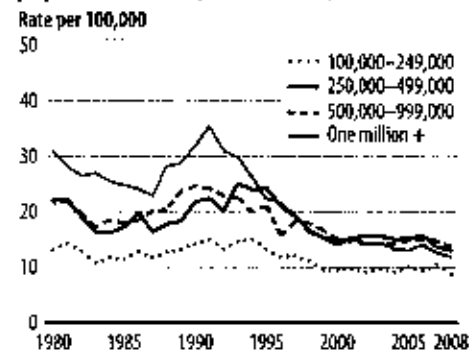The homicide offending rate in cities with a population of—

■ 1 million or more dropped from 45 offenders per 100,000 U.S. residents in 1991 to an all-time low of 12 offenders per 100,000 U.S. residents in 2008 (figure 47)

■ 500,000 to 999,999 increased between 2004 (14.5 offenders per 100,000) and 2008 (17.8 offenders per 100,000), but remained below the offending rates from the late 1980s and early 1990s, which averaged around 22 offenders per 100,000.

FIGURE 45
Number of homicides in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1980–2008
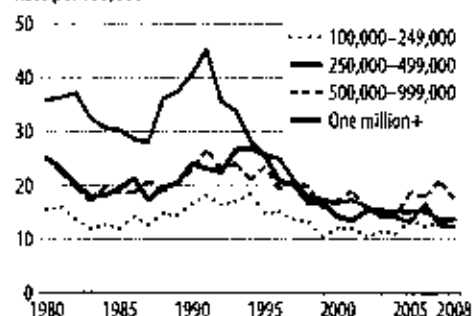

Note: Large cities have a population of 100,000 or more, while small cities have a population of less than 100,000.

FIGURE 46
Homicide victimization rates for cities with a population of 100,000 or more, 1980–2008

FIGURE 47
Homicide offending rates for cities with a population of 100,000 or more, 1980–2008
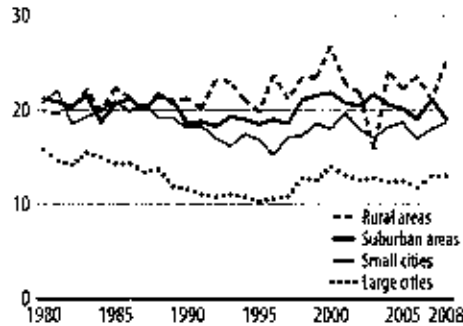
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FIGURE 48
Percent of all homicides involving intimates by urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1980–2008

Percent

Note: Large cities have a population of 100,000 or more, while small cities have a population of less than 100,000. Percent of homicides by an intimate are based on the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 through 2008 for which the victim/offender relationships were known.

Certain homicide types varied by city size

From 1980 to 2008—

- the majority of all drug-related (67.4%) and gang-related (69.6%) killings took place in large cities (table 13)

- relatively fewer family (44.8%) or workplace (30.8%) homicides occurred in large cities compared to the overall percentage of homicides in large cities (57.7%).

TABLE 13
Characteristics of homicide, by city size, 1980–2008

		Percent of all homicides			
	Total	Large city	Small city	Suburban area	Rural area
All homicides	100%	57.7%	13.6%	21.3%	7.5%
Victim/offender relationship					
Intimate	100%	46.7%	16.0%	27.1%	10.2%
Family	100%	44.8	14.9	28.5	11.8
Infants	100%	47.3	18.5	26.2	8.0
Elders	100%	45.8	17.0	25.4	11.8
Circumstance					
Felony murder	100%	60.8%	12.6%	20.8%	5.8%
Sex related	100%	48.4	14.9	27.3	9.4
Drug related	100%	67.4	10.8	18.1	3.7
Gang related	100%	69.6	13.3	16.6	0.5
Argument	100%	53.5	15.5	21.6	9.4
Workplace	100%	30.8	16.3	38.3	14.6
Weapon					
Gun homicide	100%	59.6%	12.4%	20.3%	7.7%
Arson	100%	53.0	16.1	22.7	8.2
Poison	100%	38.0	18.3	31.0	12.7
Multiple victims or offenders					
Multiple victims	100%	47.6%	14.1%	27.2%	11.1%
Multiple offenders	100%	65.5	10.8	18.0	5.7

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Percentages of victim/offender relationships are based on the 63.1% of homicides for which victim/offender relationships were known. The percentages of homicides involving multiple victims or offenders were known for 69.1% of incidents.

The proportion of intimate homicides differed by place and city size

Since the mid-1980s, the percentage of homicides committed by an intimate (spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, and same-sex relationships) was larger in rural areas than in suburban or urban areas (figure 48).

Homicides for which the offender was known to be an intimate have declined in cities of all sizes and types. From 1980 through 2008, the number of known intimate murders—

- in large cities fell by more than half (52%) from about 1,150 homicides in 1980 to 550 homicides in 2008, while the number of known nonintimate murders dropped approximately 40% from an estimated 6,145 homicides to 3,662 homicides.

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- in small cities dropped by 43% from 500 homicides in 1980 to 290 homicides in 2008, while the number of known nonintimate homicides dropped by a third (35%) from 1,900 homicides in 1980 to 1,250 homicides in 2008

- in suburban areas declined by 26% from 670 homicides in 1980 to 490 homicides in 2008, while known nonintimate homicides declined by 15% from 2,460 homicides in 1980 to 2,090 homicides in 2008

- in rural areas dropped by 50% from 390 homicides in 1980 to 200 homicides in 2008, while known nonintimate homicides dropped by 63% from 1,570 homicides in 1980 to 580 homicides in 2008.

Clearances

The percentage of homicides cleared by arrest or other exceptional means has declined

- In 2008, 64% of all homicides were cleared, compared to 72% in 1980 (figure 49).

- Homicide has the highest clearance rate of all serious crimes.

Police were more likely to identify a suspect when the victim was a child (figure 50)

- A suspect was most likely to be identified when the victim was a child under age 5 (89%).

- The percentage of homicides in which a suspect was identified dropped sharply after age 5, declining to 63.5% of homicides for victims age 20. After age 20, the percentage of homicides in which an offender was identified remained relatively stable.
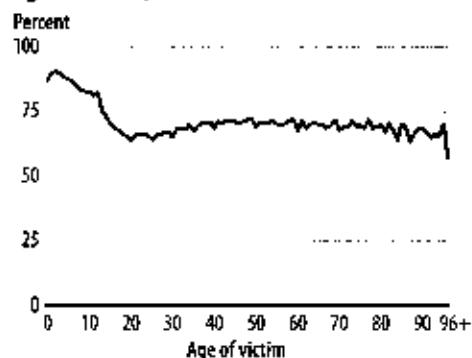
FIGURE 49
Homicides cleared by arrest or exceptional means, 1980–2008
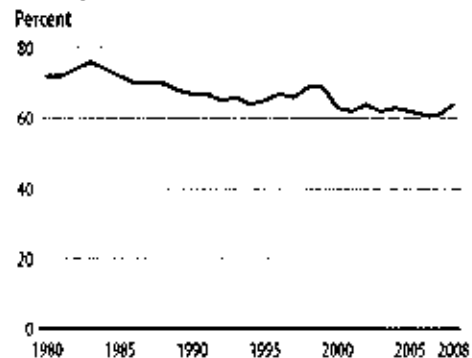
Note: Law enforcement agencies clear or solve an offense when at least one person is arrested, charged with the commission of the offense, and turned over to the court for prosecution. Law enforcement agencies may also clear a crime by exceptional means, such as when an identified offender is killed during apprehension or commits suicide

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, 1980–2008.

FIGURE 50
**Homicides where suspect was identified, by age of victim, 1980–2008**

Note. The FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports data do not include information on arrest of homicide offenders. For the above figure, a suspect was determined to be identified if police knew and recorded two or more demographic characteristics of the offender.
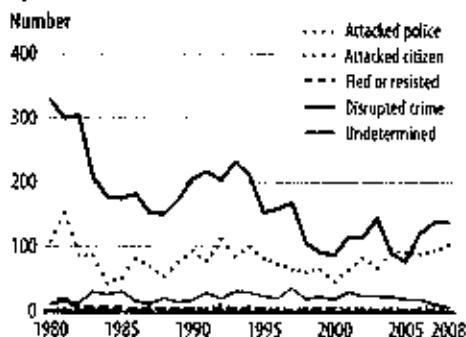
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FIGURE 51
Number of justifiable homicides, by police and citizens, 1980–2008
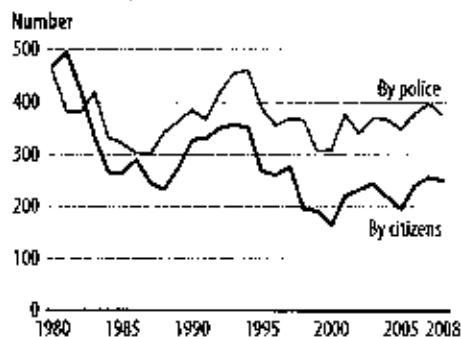
Number

Note: Justifiable homicides are defined as the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty or the killing of a felon during the commission of a felony by a private citizen. Numbers are based on only justifiable homicides reported to the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports Program from 1980 through 2008.

FIGURE 52a
Number of justifiable homicides by police, by circumstance, 1980–2008
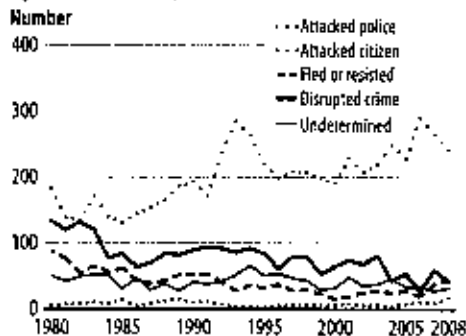
Number

Note: Justifiable homicides are defined as the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty or the killing of a felon during the commission of a felony by a private citizen. Numbers are based on only justifiable homicides reported to the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports Program from 1980 through 2008.

FIGURE 52b
Number of justifiable homicides by citizens, by circumstance, 1980–2008

Number

Note: Justifiable homicides are defined as the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty or the killing of a felon during the commission of a felony by a private citizen. Numbers are based on only justifiable homicides reported to the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports Program from 1980 through 2008.

Justifiable homicides

The number of justifiable homicides declined through 2000 and has seen slight increases since then

- The number of justifiable homicides of felons committed by police exceeded the number committed by citizens (figure 51).

- In the last 10 years, the number of justifiable homicides has increased by 25.4% from 500 in 1999 to 630 in 2008.

The circumstances surrounding justifiable homicides differed for those committed by police than those committed by citizens

- Most justifiable homicides by police were the result of attacks on officers, accounting for 64% of justifiable homicides by police in 2008 (figure 52a).

- The most frequent circumstances cited for justifiable homicides by citizens were the disruption a crime in progress (55% of justifiable homicides by a citizen in 2008) or when a citizen was attacked (41% of justifiable homicides by a citizen in 2008) (figure 52b).

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Most justifiable homicides were intraracial

- In incidents involving citizens, three-quarters involved citizens and felons of the same race (table 14).

- In incidents involving police, two-thirds involved police officers and felons of the same race.

TABLE 14
Percent of justifiable homicides

|	Race of citizen who killed felon				Race of officer who killed felon			
Race of felon	Total	White	Black	Other*	Total	White	Black	Other*
Total	100%	55%	42%	3%	100%	86%	13%	1%
White	41%	37%	3%	1%	60%	56%	3%	1%
Black	57	17	39	2	38	27	11	—
Other	2	1	—	1	3	2	··	··

Note. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.
—Less than 0.5%.
*Other race includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

The age distribution of felons killed by police was slightly older than that of felons killed by citizens (figure 53)

FIGURE 53
Number of justifiable homicides by police and citizens, by age of victim, 1980–2008
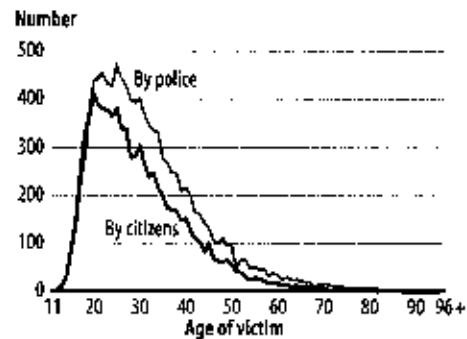
Note: Justifiable homicides are defined as the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty or the killing of a felon during the commission of a felony by a private citizen. Numbers are based on only justifiable homicides reported to the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports Program from 1980 through 2008.

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Additional information about the data

Data Sources

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program

Launched over 70 years ago, the UCR program collects and publishes criminal offense, arrest, and law enforcement personnel statistics. Under the UCR program, law enforcement agencies submit information to the FBI monthly. Offense information is collected on the eight Part I offenses: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Information on the number of persons arrested includes many additional crime types, such as drug abuse violations and driving under the influence. The FBI annually publishes data from the UCR in *Crime in the United States*, available online at: http://www.fbi. gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr#ucr_cius. The UCR is one of two major national indicators about crime. For more information about these two indicators, see *The Nation's Two Crime Measures* (NCJ 122705, BJS Web, October 2004).

The UCR program collects data on only those crimes that come to the attention of law enforcement through victim reports or observation. Of all the crimes included in the UCR, homicide is the most completely reported. Homicide counts suffer from a minimal level of underreporting. In addition, the number of crimes for which law enforcement makes an arrest or clears the offense is the highest for homicide compared to the other serious offenses collected by the UCR. Other offenses, including forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, are currently available only in summary count form without details about the incident, victims, or offenders. Homicide information—through the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) data—is available in incident form.

FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR)

Most of the data used here are from the SHR, which is a part of the UCR Program. Supplemental data about homicide incidents are submitted monthly with details on location, victim, and offender characteristics. These reports include information on the reporting agency and its residential population, county and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) codes, geographic division, and population group; on the age, race, and sex of victims and offenders; and on the victim/offender relationship, weapon use, and circumstance of the crime. From 1980 to 2008, contributing agencies provided supplemental data for 508,568 of the estimated 565,636 murders.

Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA)

Also a part of the FBI's UCR Program, the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) utilizes data from several sources, including the UCR. Once notified of a line-of-duty death, the FBI contacts the employing agency to obtain additional details. LEOKA includes data about federal, state, and local law enforcement officers who were killed feloniously or accidentally or who were assaulted. An annual report is published by the FBI, available online at: http://www.fbi. gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr#ucr_leoka.

Methodology

Homicide as defined here includes murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, which is the willful killing of one human being by another. The general analyses excluded deaths caused by negligence, suicide, or accident; justifiable homicides; and attempts to murder. Justifiable homicides based on the reports of law enforcement agencies are analyzed separately. Deaths from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, are not included in any of the analyses. These homicide data are based solely on police investigation, as opposed to the determination of a court, medical examiner, coroner, jury, or other judicial body.

Not all agencies that report offense information to the FBI also submit supplemental data on homicides. About 91% of homicides reported in the UCR are included in the SHR. To account for the total number of homicides, this analysis weighted the total number of homicide victims included in the SHR data to match national and state estimates of the total number of homicide victims prepared by the FBI. All victim-based analyses are adjusted in this manner.

While many agencies report supplemental data on homicides, much of the data concerning offenders may not be reported because no suspects were identified or the agency chose not to report the information. The most significant problem in using SHR data to analyze offender characteristics is the sizable and growing number of homicides in the data file for which no offender information is reported. Ignoring these homicides with no offender information would understate calculated rates of offending by particular subgroups of the population, distort trends over time among these same subgroups, and bias observed patterns of offending to the extent that the rate of missing offender data is associated with offender characteristics.

PATTERNS & TRENDS

To adjust for homicides with no offender information, a method for offender imputation was devised that uses available information about murder victims for which corresponding offender information was provided as well as those with missing offender information. Through this imputation algorithm, the demographic characteristics of unidentified offenders were inferred on the basis of similar homicide cases—similar in terms of the victim's demographic profile, circumstances of the homicide such as felony or argument, location of the homicide (region and urban), gun involvement, and year of the offense—for which offender data were provided. In other words, unknown offender profiles were estimated based on the offender profiles in offender-known cases, matched on victim age, sex, and race; circumstances of the homicide; location of the homicide; gun involvement; and year. Offender-based estimates in this report were imputed using this procedure. Other estimates in this report were based on homicides with known attributes, unless otherwise indicated.

An estimated 30.8% of homicides involved an unknown number of offenders. For these homicides, the offender imputation method conservatively assumed the number of offenders to be one, likely resulting in an undercount of the number of homicides involving multiple offenders.

All rates were calculated using the estimated number of homicide victims or offenders as the numerator and dividing by the U.S. resident population estimates for the appropriate groups or subgroups. This report used bridged-race population estimates developed by the National Center for Health Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau. All rates were per 100,000 U.S. residents unless otherwise specified.

Homicide victim/offender relationships were calculated based on the attributes of the first offender in the incident record for which the relationship was known. Other estimates in this report were based on homicides with known attributes, unless otherwise indicated.

The National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) provided the data file analyzed in this report. The NACJD is available online at: www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD.

To analyze these data online, please visit the NACJD Data Analysis System at: www.icpsr.umich.edu.

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