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HOMICIDE IN CHICAGO: A NINE-YEAR STUDY (1965–1973)

RICHARD BLOCK*

Patterns of violent crime have been typically characterized as both a changing and stable phenomenon. While police statistics indicate that the level of violent crime is increasing, many researchers have found that the nature of these crimes is fairly stable. For example, homicides are characterized as intraracial mostly between close acquaintances and committed by those who have essentially no criminal career.[1] While there is an element of stability in the pattern of homicide over time, the rapid increase in the number of homicides committed would lead one to suspect that there are changes in the nature of the crime as well. Over the nine year period from 1965 to 1973 the homicide rate in Chicago more than doubled: from 395 criminal homicides and a rate of 11.4 per 100,000 in 1965 to 854 homicides and a rate of 25.3 in 1973. This great increase in the rate of homicide is not unique to Chicago, and suggests that analysis of patterns of homicide over time might add a useful dimension to the data base provided by earlier studies.

In 1971 a study was completed of patterns of homicide in Chicago from 1965 to 1970.[2] This study was primarily concerned with changes in rates of homicide for various age, sex, and race groups and changes in patterns of motive and gun use in homicide. This study has now been extended through 1973, allowing analysis of patterns of homicides over a nine year period. This paper will analyze changes in patterns of age, race, and sex distribution and motive and gun use for both victims and offenders. Rather than using rates to analyze these changes two new techniques are used: (1) demographically standardized excess increases from 1965 to 1973, and (2) computergraphic displays.

The data for this nine year study were collected from police records of the homicide division of the Chicago Police Department. Information was coded on all 6,075 crimes labelled as criminal homicide by the police from 1965 to 1973. Although the type of data collected was remarkably stable over the nine year period there were some changes. When these changes affect the analysis presented here the possible effects of the changes will be noted. This data source limits possible analysis and explanations. For example, killings by police are generally not included in police records and the relationship between a crime and use or sale of drugs is not coded in police data for the earlier years of the study. A recent comparative study has noted a dramatic increase in drug related homicides in Philadelphia.[3] Thus, many variables which might be useful in this analysis were not available.

An analytic technique used in this paper, excess increase analysis, is dependent upon knowledge and projection of the age, race, and sex specific population distribution of Chicago. For this analysis, base populations are derived by linear interpolation of the 1960 and 1970 population distribution of the city and continuing with a linear projection of age, race, and sex specific population distributions through 1973. Analysis based upon these population estimates only roughly estimates changes in homicide distribution. The population estimates are even more tentative for Latinos and young Black males. They are dependent on a census count which probably grossly underestimated the real population in these groups. The Latin population was estimated for 1960 using city of Chicago estimates of the entire population and the age, race, and sex distribution for Puerto Ricans.

The primary purpose of this paper is to determine if the patterns of continuity and change in homicides observed in the period from 1965 to 1970 contin-

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[1] M. CLINARD & R. QUINNEY, CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS 24–55 (1973).

[2] Block & Zimring, *Patterns of Homicide in Chicago 1965–1970,* 10 J. RES. CRIME & DELINQUENCY 1, 2 (1973).

[3] M. Zahn & J. Glenn Snodgrass, *The Structure of Homicide in Two American Cities: The Homicide Victim,* 1974 (paper delivered to American Society of Criminologists, Chicago, Illinois).

ued through 1973, or if new patterns of crime have developed in recent years. Therefore, a special demographically controlled technique was used to analyze changes in patterns of homicide over time. This is the technique of excess increase. Using this technique, a rate of homicide victimization or offense is created for age, race, and sex specific population categories for 1965. Then using the population distribution estimated for 1973, the number of homicides expected in 1973 based upon 1965 age, race, and sex specific rates is calculated. These projected counts are then compared to real counts and an estimated number of excess homicides in 1973 is calculated. This count summed over all race, sex, and age specific categories is used to calculate what per cent of the total excess increase is accounted for by population in each category. In some tables, an additional variable is added (*e.g.*, age, race, sex, and weapon specific estimates). However, the analytic technique remains the same. Thus, the technique of excess increase allows demographically controlled comparisons of changes in patterns of crime over time.

Analysis for this initial paper is not concerned with multiple regression explanation models of variance in homicide rates as in several recent studies.[4] The analysis is descriptive instead. Thus, where a graph or table was deemed to be a better description of a situation, it was included rather than a verbal statement. Later analysis of this data will attempt to take into account such variables as the business cycle, "southernness," and the traditional ecological variables of the Chicago school of criminology.[5]

Stability and Change

Some of the findings of this research are quite similar to those of several other homicide studies.[6] Looking at Table I, it is clear that in the aggregate, patterns of homicide show some remarkable stability from 1965 to 1973. For all nine years homicide remains a crime that is overwhelmingly intra-racial with most victims and offenders being Blacks. In 1965, 90 per cent of the victims and offenders were of the same race. In 1973, 86 per cent were of the same race. The percentage of victims who were Black varies between 70 per cent and 74 per cent for the entire time period. During the nine year time period the percentage of known offenders who were Black varied from 77 per cent to 83 per cent.

However, hidden by this apparent racial stability in patterns of homicide was another pattern of dynamic change. In 1965 there were 284 Black homicide victims and in 1973 there were 592 Black homicide victims. Thus, the number of homicides with Black victims more than doubled in the nine year period. Similarly, the number of interracial homicides increased in the nine year period from thirty-six to 103.

There have been some major changes in general characteristics of homicides in Chicago. These changes are primarily in the type of weapon used, the relationship between victim and offender, and in the age of the offender. As seen in Table I, although there have been fluctuations during the nine year period of this study, the percentage of homicides where victim and offender were acquainted dropped from 76 per cent to 64 per cent; or put another way, the number of homicides where victim and offender did not know each other increased from ninety-five to 307 during the nine year period of the study. While it is still true that most victims and offenders know each other before a killing, it is not nearly so true as in the past. The increase in homicides where victim and offender are not acquainted has not been uniformly spread throughout the population. Later in this paper this distribution will be discussed.

Continuing a long-term trend the percentage of homicides where the murder weapon was a gun increased during every year of the nine year period. During the nine year period the number of all murder weapons which were guns increased from 197 in 1965 to 608 in 1973. Most of this increase was in hand guns.

In a period of changing patterns of homicide some forms of homicide remained relatively constant. As already noted, killings by and of women did not rise nearly so rapidly as those involving only men. The number of intersexual killings and the number of killings in which victim and offender were sexually linked did not increase nearly as fast as other killings. As seen in Table II, there were 149 intersexual killings in 1965 and 195 in 1973. The number of

[4] Gastil, *Homicide and a Regional Culture of Violence*, 36 Am. Sociological Rev. 412 (1971); Loftin & Hill, *Regional Subculture and Homicide: An Examination of the Gastil-Hackney Thesis*, 39 Am. Sociological Rev. 714 (1974).

[5] *See, e.g.*, Hackney, *Southern Violence*, in The History of Violence in America 505 (H. D. Graham & T. R. Gurr eds. 1969); C. Shaw & H. McKay, Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas (1942).

[6] *E.g.*, M. Wolfgang, Patterns in Criminal Homicide (1958); Hepburn & Voss, *Patterns of Criminal Homicide: A Comparison of Chicago and Philadelphia*, 8 Criminology 21 (1970).

TABLE I

CRIMINAL HOMICIDE IN CHICAGO—1965–73

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
Percentage of Homicides with Black Victims	72	71	71	73	73	74	74	73	70
Percentage of Homicides Attributed to Black Offenders when Offender Known	78	77	78	79	78	83	81	81	80
Percentage of Homicide Victims and Offenders Same Race	90	90	86	89	89	86	89	88	86
Median Age of Victim	31.2	32.3	33.4	33.4	32.0	31.1	29.7	30.4	31.3
Median Age of Offender	24.4	27.0	30.1	28.8	27.5	26.8	25.8	24.8	25.3
Percentage of Homicides Where Victim and Offender Had Been Acquainted	76	73	73	73	63	62	67	71	64
Percentage of Homicides by Guns	50	52	57	58	61	65	64	69	71
Number of Homicides	397	510	552	636	760	831	826	709	854

TABLE II

NUMBER OF INTERSEXUAL KILLINGS

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
Number of Intersexual Homicides	149	167	166	207	206	226	226	183	195
Percentage of Total Killings	37	32	30	32	27	27	27	26	24
Number of Spouses and Ex-Spouses	88	108	106	125	104	113	120	111	100
Percentage of Total Killings	22.2	21.2	19.2	19.6	13.7	13.6	14.6	15.7	11.7

intersexual homicides increased 31 per cent as compared to an overall increase in the number of homicides of 115 per cent. Similarly the number of homicides in which victim and offender were husband and wife or otherwise sexually linked did not increase as fast as the overall rate of homicides. Thus, familial killings and killings of women did not increase nearly as rapidly as homicides in general.

AGE ANALYSIS OF VICTIM AND OFFENDER

As Table I indicates, there has been little change in the median age of the victim of homicide or in the median age of the offender. The median age of the offender, however, appears to have peaked in 1967 and has been declining in a fairly consistent fashion since then. However, Figures 1–18 indicate that summary measures of age change hide more than they reveal. In these computergraphic charts, the "x" axis is age in two year intervals, the "y" axis is number of homicides. Victims charts (left) and offenders charts (right) are broken into three groups: Whites, Blacks, and Latinos. In all cases police designation was used. It was expected that patterns of homicides of or by Latinos might be different from those of either Whites or Blacks. These expectations were not entirely supported. While the number of homicides among Latinos was higher than that for Whites and lower than that for Blacks, the age distribution is quite similar to the White age distribution. As can be seen in the left side graphs, age of victims of homicide has become increasingly skewed toward the younger age groups among Blacks with less change in the distribution among Whites and Latinos. The highest number of victimization for Blacks occur in the late teens and early twenties. There is a peak among Whites in late middle age and retirement—these victims were probably killed in robberies.

The pattern of age of offenders has changed even more dramatically than that of the victims. The increased skewing in age distribution is far more ob-

HOMICIDES IN CHICAGO
1965–1973

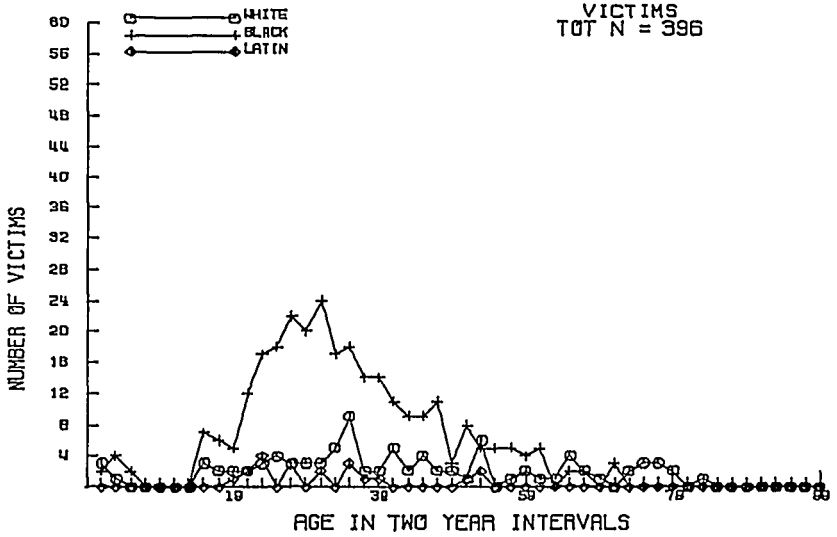


FIGURE 1.

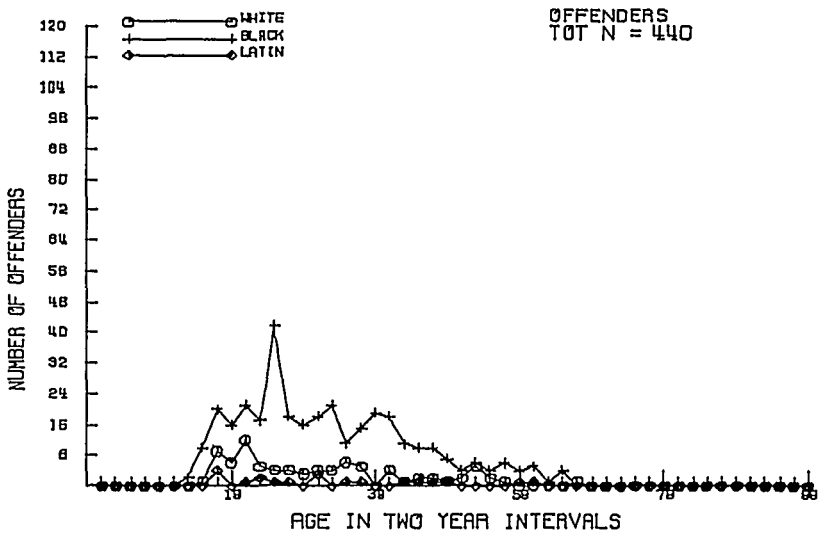


FIGURE 2.

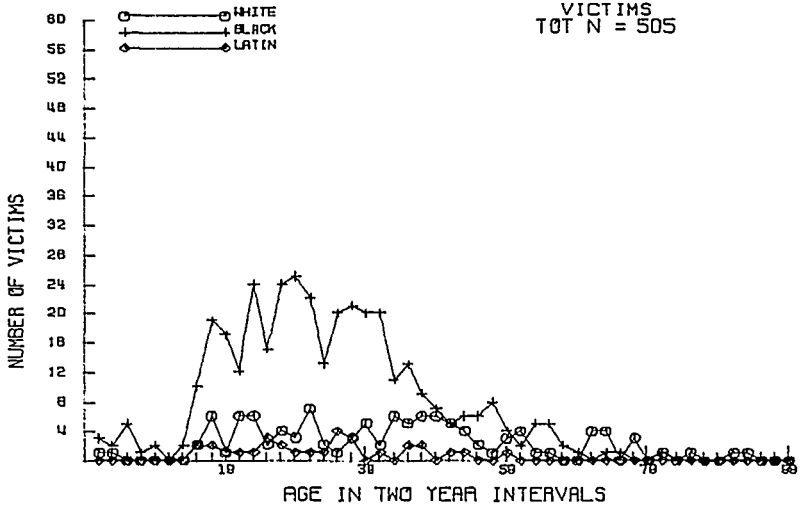


FIGURE 3.

1966

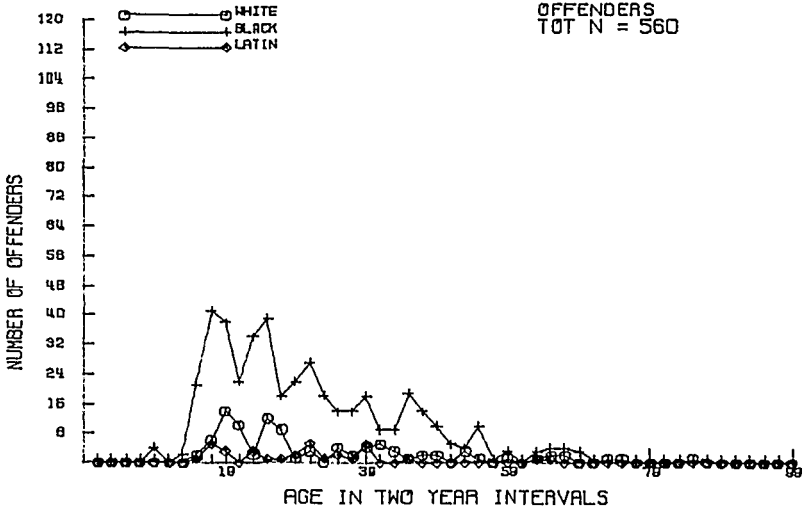


FIGURE 4.

1966

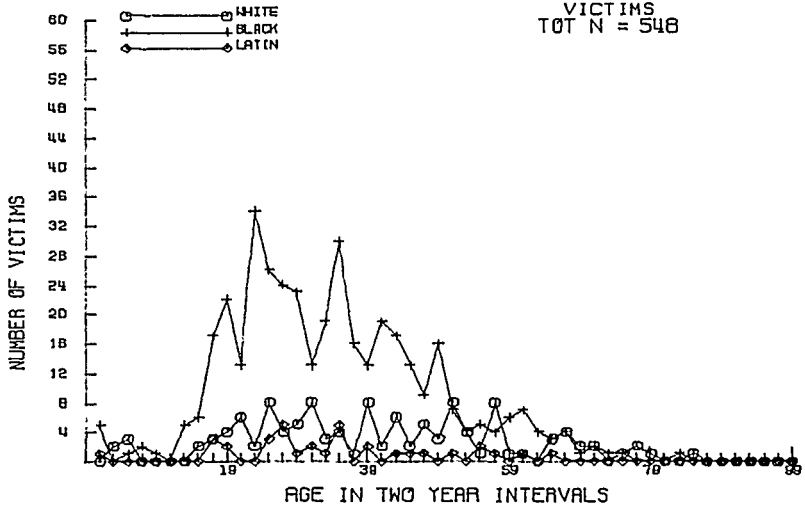


FIGURE 5

1967

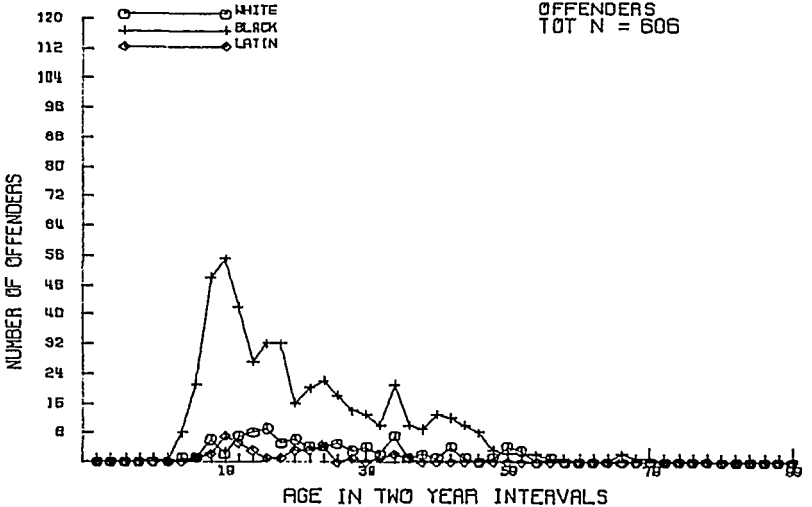


FIGURE 6.

1967

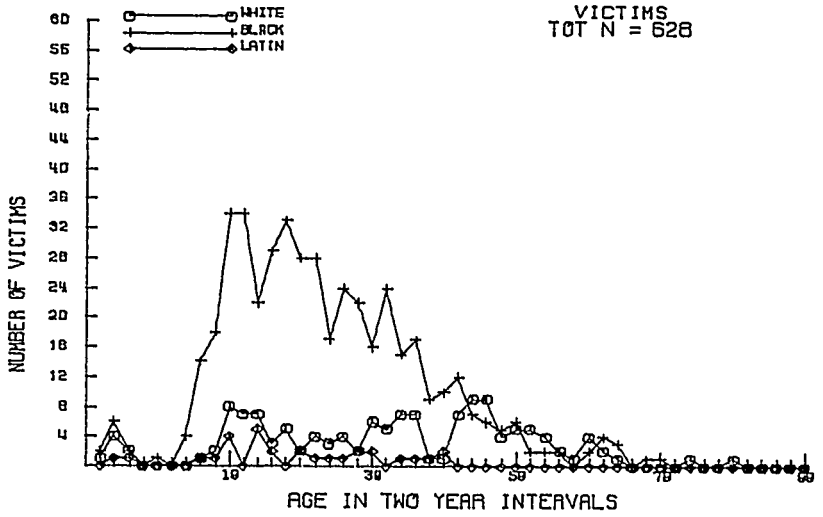


FIGURE 7. 1968

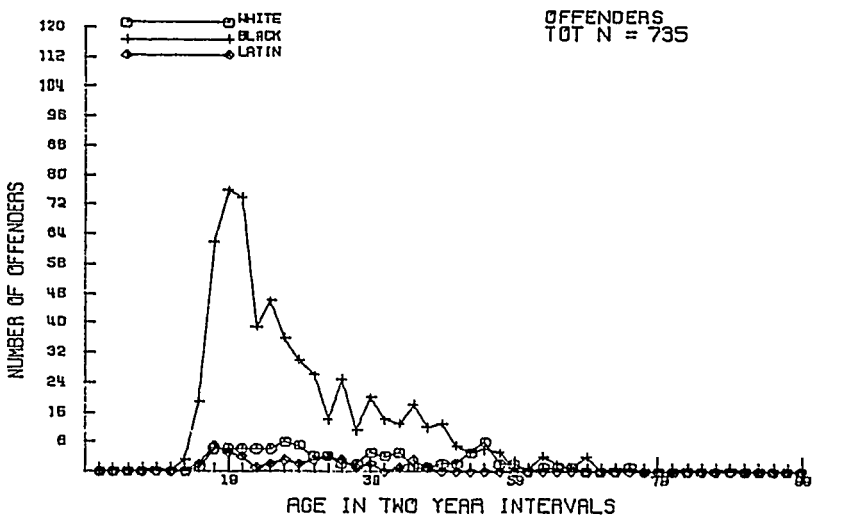


FIGURE 8. 1968

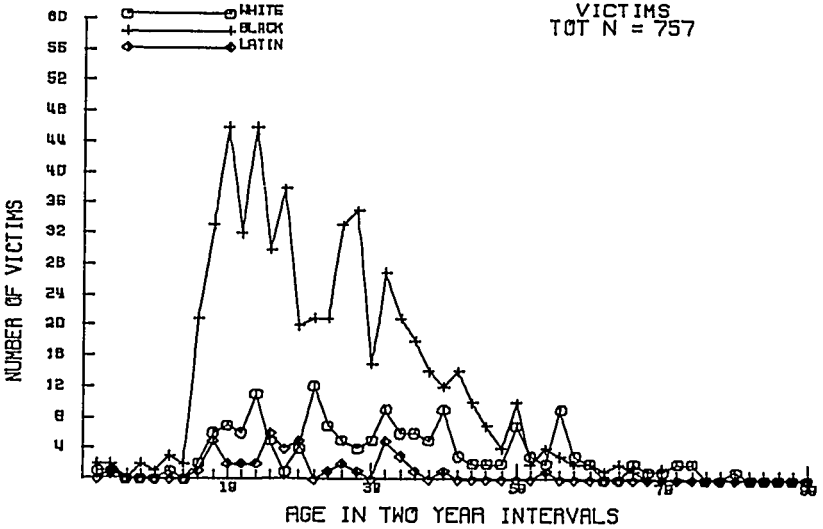


FIGURE 9. 1969

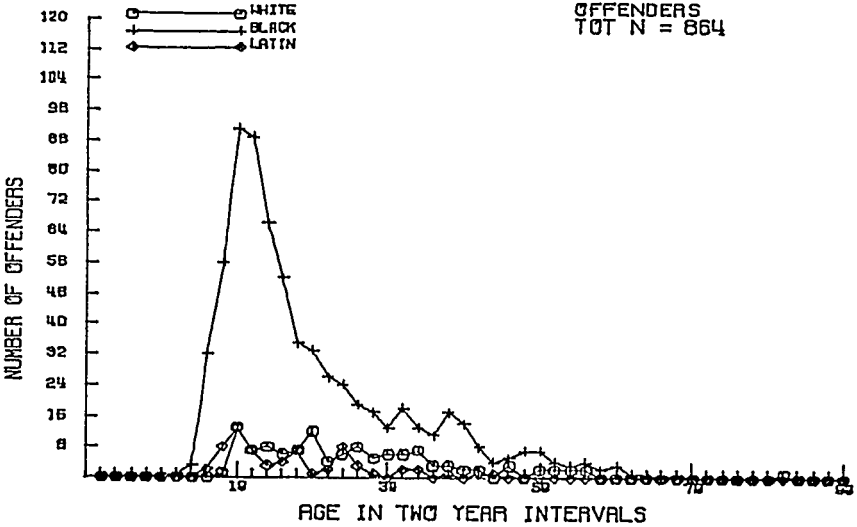


FIGURE 10. 1969

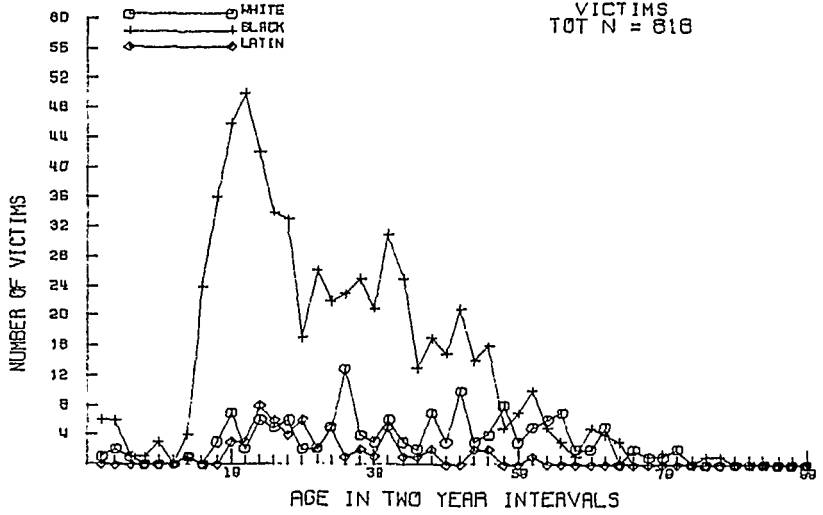


FIGURE 11. 1970

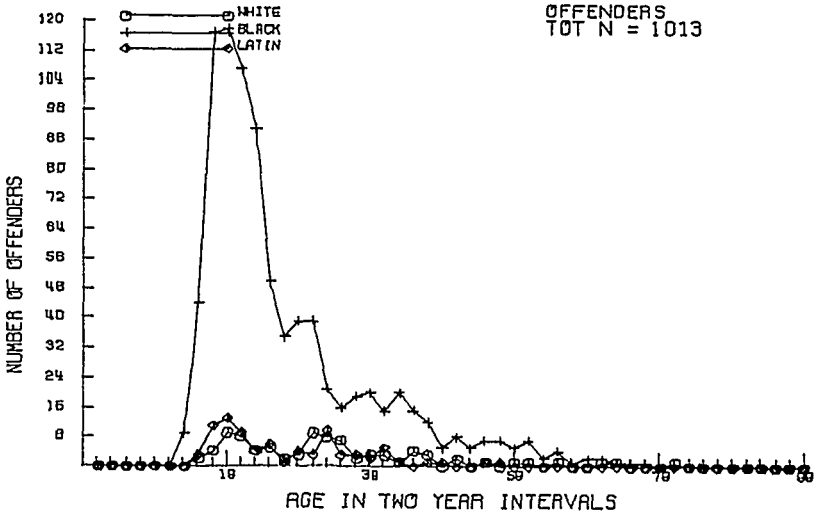
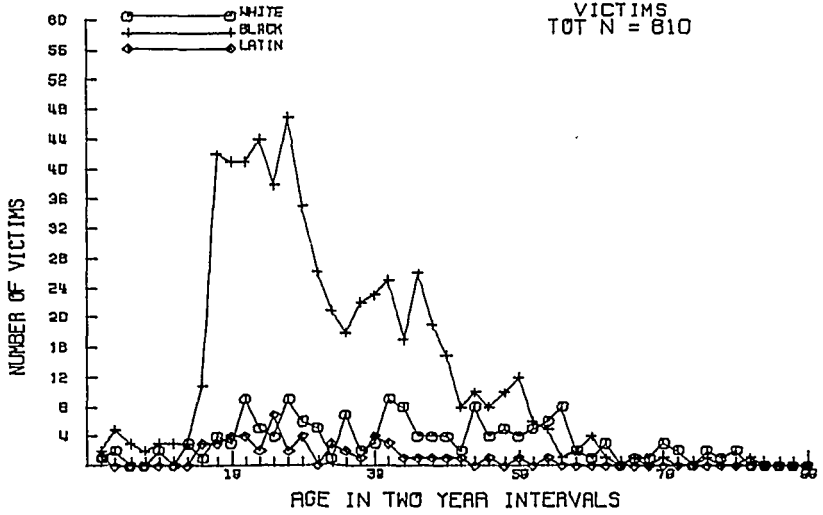


FIGURE 12. 1970



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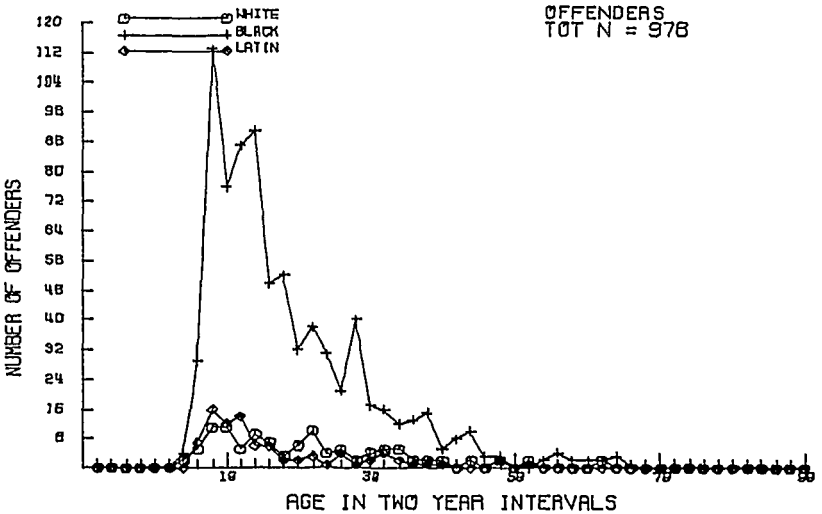

FIGURE 14. 1971

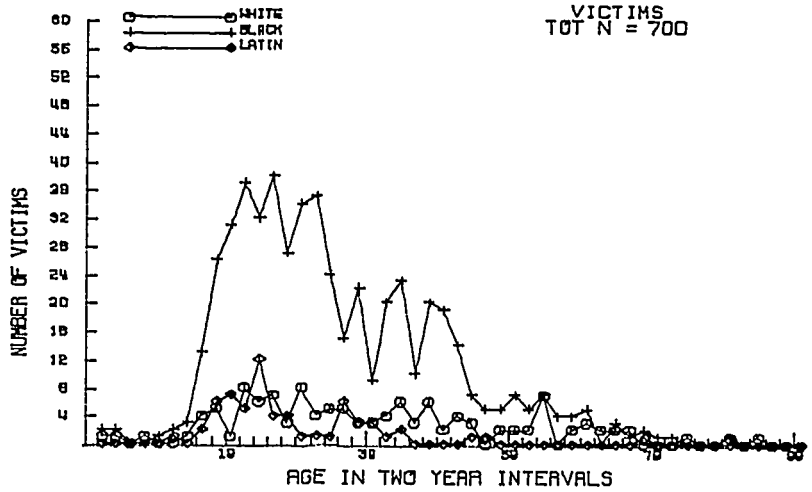

FIGURE 15. 1972

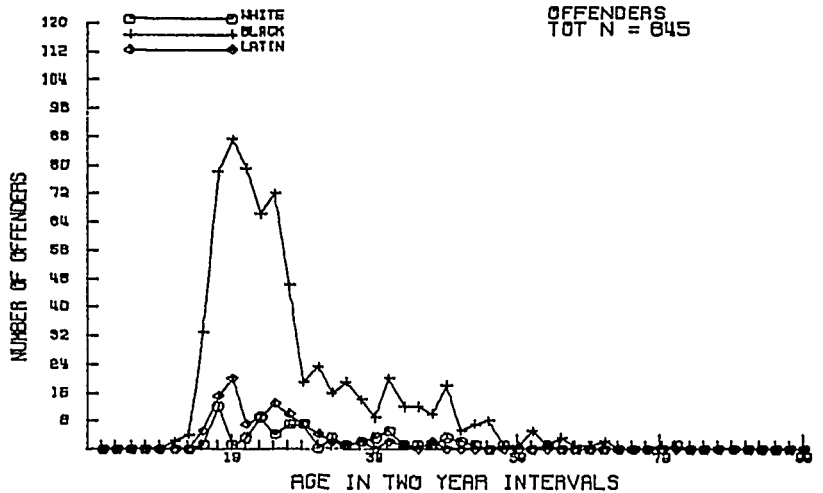

FIGURE 16. 1972

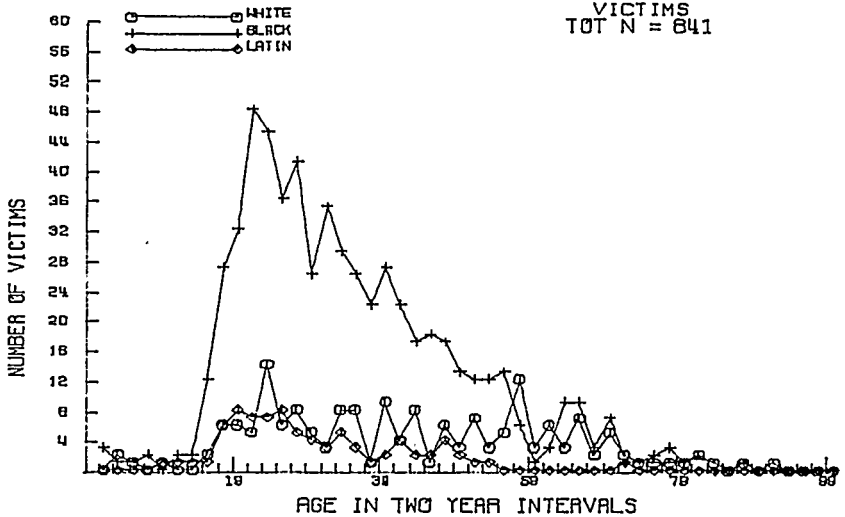

FIGURE 17. 1973

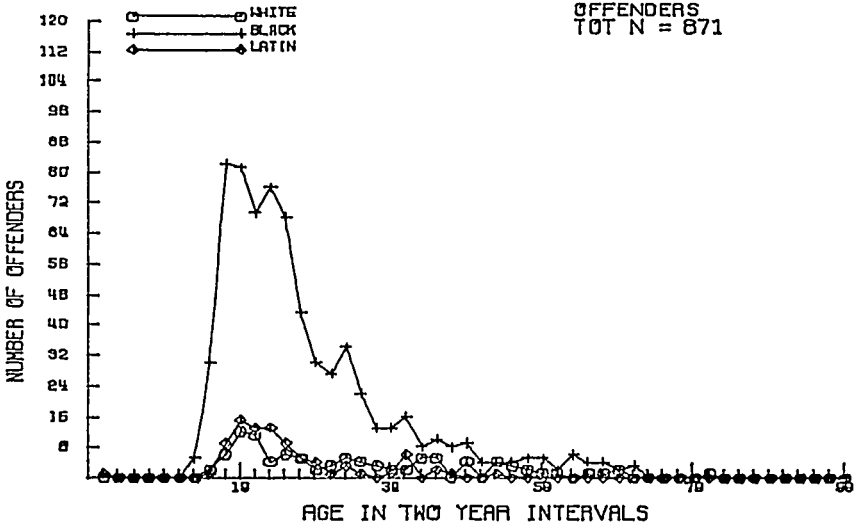

FIGURE 18. 1973

vious, peaking in the year 1970, and spreading in the following three years. Because these charts are by offenders rather than by crime, the peakedness of these graphs may be somewhat distorted. Multiple offenders (most likely gang related killings) peaked in 1970 and have been declining in the following three years. In the last three years there has been an important change in the characteristics of homicide offenders. The late teen peak of Black homicide offenders has spread out.

From the charts just presented it is clear that the increase in homicides was not spread uniformly throughout the population or even consistently with earlier patterns of homicide. The number of Black male victims of homicide age fifteen to twenty-four increased 302 per cent from thirty-six to 145, while the number of killings of Black males of other ages increased 103 per cent from 171 to 348. Homicides with White victims, male or female and young or otherwise, also increased about 100 per cent. Killings of young Black females increased 150 per cent, while killings of other Black women hardly increased at all. There was also a substantial increase in the number of killings of Latino males, but this may in part reflect the changing population structure of Chicago.

The pattern of increases for victims is fairly well matched for offenders. The greatest increases in homicide offenders are in the category of young Black males and Latino males. The number of Black male offenders ages fifteen to twenty-four was increased from seventy-two to 231 over the nine year period, while the number of other Black male offenders increased from 169 to 272. (Caution is advised in considering the characteristics of homicide offenders, since the number of offenders about whom little is known increased substantially over the time period from six to 115.)

Thus, within a context of a homicide rate that doubled, certain population groups stand out as contributing most to this increase. The greatest increases in both victims and offenders have been among Black males aged fifteen to twenty-four.

Excess Increase Analysis

Demographically controlled estimation of the contribution of particular age, race, and sex categories of Chicagoans to the overall increase in the number of homicides seemed to be a concise way of presenting the changing patterns of homicide in the city while taking into account changes in the population structure of the city. The method of excess increase was developed for this analysis. Table III presents an analysis of excess increase comparing 1965 and 1973 for both victims and offenders. The first column in each section of the table is the age, race, and sex specific rate of homicide for 1965. The second column is the number of homicides expected in 1973 based upon these rates and the projected population of 1973. The third column is the real number of homicides which occurred in 1973. Column four is the difference between real and projected. Column five lists the age, race, and sex specific percentages of total excess. The same format is followed in all tables of excess increase.

As can be seen in Table III victimization was projected to rise to 475.0 in 1973. There were 841 homicides in that year, an excess increase of 366 victims. Similarly, there was an excess increase of 351 offenders. In calculating offenders a projected number of unknown offenders was calculated as well as age, race, and sex specific counts. This was done because of the large increase in unknown offenders during the nine year period.

Looking at column five of Table III (for victim and offender), it can be seen that the excess increase in homicides is not uniformly distributed throughout the population. This is expected since homicides are concentrated among Black males and particularly high among young Black males. However, the particular distribution among Black males is somewhat unexpected. Young Black males contributed 25.1 per cent to the increase in victims and 35.6 per cent to the increase in offenders. Older Black males contributed 39.3 per cent of the excess increase in victimization but only 10.8 per cent of the excess increase in offenders. Thus, offenses were increasing faster than victimization among the young and victimization was increasing much faster than offenses by older Black males. As we shall see later, much of this excess was in robbery homicide.

Older whites also contributed more to the increase in victimization than to the increase in offenders. There was actually a smaller increase in homicide victimization and offenses for older Black women than expected. Both older and younger Latino males contributed substantially to the increase in victimization and offenders, while Latino females were exceedingly unlikely to be either victims or offenders in homicide. The quality of the estimates of excess increase for Latinos is suspect because of difficulties in estimating the real Latin population of Chicago. Forty per cent of the excess increase in homicide offenders was among unknown offenders. If these unknown offenders are added to the known offenders according to the distribution of

TABLE III

1973 REAL AND PROJECTED HOMICIDE VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS BY AGE, RACE AND SEX

	Victims					Offenders				
	1965 Rate	1973 Projected N	1973 Real N	Excess N	% Excess	1965 Rate	1973 Project	1973 Real	Excess N	% Excess
White Males										
15–24	9.4	15.5	25	9.5	2.6	13.3	21.9	20	−1.9	−.5
Other Age	7.6	52.9	105	52.1	14.2	5.1	35.5	47	11.5	3.3
Black Males										
15–24	54.0	53.2	145	91.8	25.1	107.9	106.3	231	124.7	35.6
Other Age	44.4	202.4	346	143.6	39.3	42.8	195.1	233	37.9	10.8
Latino Males										
15–24	37.9	10.0	30	20.0	5.5	31.6	8.4	31	22.6	6.4
Other Age	14.5	17.2	40	22.8	6.2	11.9	14.1	30	15.9	4.5
White Females										
15–24	2.9	5.3	8	2.7	.7	1.5	2.7	0	−2.7	−.8
Other Age	1.9	17.5	33	15.5	4.2	.7	6.5	9	2.5	.7
Black Females										
15–24	14.6	17.4	30	12.6	3.4	13.4	16.0	20	4.0	1.1
Other Age	15.3	78.9	69	−9.9	−2.7	11.3	58.3	58	−.3	−.1
Latino Females										
15–24	5.8	1.6	5	3.4	.9	5.8	1.7	0	−1.7	−.5
Other Age	2.9	3.3	5	1.7	.5	2.9	3.3	1	−2.3	−.7
Total Known	13.1	475.0	841	365.8	100.0	12.5	469.8	680	210.2	59.8
Unknown Offenders	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	.6	20.7	161	140.3	40.2
Total	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	13.1	490.5	841	350.5	100.0

known excess offenders, it is estimated that 58.8 per cent of the excess increase in offenders was due to young Black males and 30.5 per cent was due to older Black males. Thus, it can be seen that the increase in homicide offenders between 1965 and 1973 was extremely concentrated. Sixty per cent of the excess increase was due to 3 per cent of the entire population. Nevertheless, homicide is a rare crime even among this most physically violent part of the population. The rate of homicide for young Black males was probably no more than 250 per 100,000 population.

ROBBERY HOMICIDE

Much of the increase in homicides can be accounted for by an increase in the number of homicides related to robbery. The number of robbery related homicides increased from thirty-three in 1965 to 162 in 1973, an increase of 309 per cent. Robbery homicides increased from a total of 8 per cent of all homicides to 19 per cent of all homicides. Victims of robbery homicide are different demographically from victims of most other homicides. They tend to be far older than their assailants, as shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

MEAN AGE DIFFERENCE VICTIM-OFFENDER FOR ROBBERIES AND NON-ROBBERIES

	Non-Robbery	Strong-Armed	Armed
1965	.14	26.0	23.9
1966	.79	25.5	21.1
1967	.50	33.0	26.1
1968	.30	17.3	11.5
1969	.02	18.1	18.6
1970	1.05	33.1	22.2
1971	.64	29.6	22.9
1972	1.68	48.2	17.1
1973	1.46	13.0	20.6
Total	.75	27.26	20.19

*F = 536.68

The average age difference between non-robbery homicide victims and offenders was never more than two years in any period. The average age difference for armed robbery victims and offenders was twenty years while for strong armed robbery homicide the average age difference was twenty-seven years. The age composition of robbery homicide offenders

has changed dramatically in the nine year period. In 1965 there were eleven robbery homicide offenders between fifteen to twenty-four years old and fifteen offenders of other ages. In 1973 there were seventy-nine offenders ages fifteen to twenty-four and twenty-seven offenders of other ages. In addition, the number of offenders whose age was unknown grew substantially.

Not only the age composition, but also the racial composition of robbery homicides changed over the nine year period. Most significantly, the racial composition of robbery victims has become similar to the racial composition of other homicides. In 1965, 80 per cent of all male robbery homicide victims (most robbery victims are male) were either Whites or Latins. In 1973, 34 per cent were Latins or other Whites. During the nine year period the number of robbery homicides of White males approximately doubled. During the same time period the number of robbery killings of Black males increased from six to ninety-six. The number of such killings increased 1500 per cent. This increase is so large that it might indicate that the police have changed their procedures for designating the cause of homicides of Black males. Tangential evidence would indicate that this is not the case. First, the increase in robbery designated homicides does not occur at once but over the entire time period. Second, the age difference between Black victims and offenders in robbery homicide has not changed significantly during the time period although the number has, of course, increased. Thus, the racial composition of robbery victims has become more similar to offenders over the nine year period. It is not likely that these Black male targets of robberies are affluent. Preliminary analysis indicated that robbery homicide is concentrated in the same very poor neighborhoods of Chicago as are other Black homicides. These neighborhoods are not only racially but economically segregated.

Robbery Excess Increase

In order to analyze the change in patterns of robbery and non-robbery homicides from 1965 to 1973, the technique of excess increase is once again used. In Tables V (victims) and VI (offenders) counts of robbery and non-robbery homicide are calculated based upon 1965 rates and 1973 population distributions. These counts are compared to the real occurrence of homicides in 1973. Using this technique it was found, as in Table III, that there were over 360 excess victims of homicide in 1973 when controlled for demographic population shifts. Of this excess increase 65 per cent were in non-

TABLE V

1973 Real and Projected Homicide Victims by Robbery Motive, Age, Race and Sex

	1965 Rate		1973 Project N		1973 Real N		Excess N		% Excess	
	No Rob	Rob	No Rob	Rob	No Rob	Rob	No Rob	Rob	No Rob	Rob
White Males										
15–24	9.4	0.0	15.5	0.0	20	5	4.5	5.0	1.2	1.4
Other	5.0	2.7	34.8	18.8	72	33	37.2	14.2	10.2	3.9
Black Males										
15–24	54.0	0.0	53.2	0.0	128	17	74.8	17.0	20.5	4.7
Other	42.8	1.6	195.1	7.3	267	79	71.9	71.7	19.7	19.7
Latino Males										
15–24	37.9	0.0	10.0	0.0	28	2	18.0	2.0	4.9	.5
Other	10.5	4.0	12.5	4.7	30	10	17.5	5.3	4.8	1.5
White Females										
15–24	2.9	0.0	5.3	0.0	6	2	.7	2.0	.2	.5
Other	1.6	2.3	14.7	2.8	27	6	12.3	3.2	3.4	.9
Black Females										
15–24	14.6	0.0	17.4	0.0	29	1	11.6	1.0	3.2	.3
Other	15.1	1.2	77.9	1.0	62	6	−15.9	5.0	−4.3	1.4
Latino Females										
15–24	5.8	0.0	1.6	0.0	5	0	3.4	0.0	.9	0.0
Other	2.9	0.0	3.3	0.0	4	1	.7	1.0	.2	.3
Total	12.0	1.1	441.3	34.6	678	162	236.7	127.4	64.9	35.1
Grand Total	13.1		475.9		840		364.1		100.0	

TABLE VI

1973 Real and Projected Homicide Offenders by Robbery Motive, Age, Race and Sex

	1965 Rate		1973 Project N		1973 Real N		Excess N		% Excess	
	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R
White Males										
15–24	11.0	2.3	18.1	3.8	17	3	−1.1	−.8	−.3	−.2
Other	4.5	.6	31.3	4.2	44	3	12.7	−1.2	3.7	−.4
Black Males										
15–24	96.0	12.0	94.5	11.8	160	71	65.5	59.2	19.1	17.3
Other	40.5	2.3	184.6	10.5	212	20	27.4	9.5	8.0	2.8
Latino Males										
15–24	31.6	0	8.4	0	28	3	19.6	3.0	5.7	.9
Other	11.9	0	14.1	0	30	0	15.9	0	4.7	0
White Females										
15–24	1.5	0	2.7	0	0	0	−2.7	0	−.8	0
Other	.7	0	6.5	0	9	0	2.5	0	.7	0
Black Females										
15–24	13.4	0	16.0	0	18	2	2.0	2.0	.6	.6
Other	11.2	.2	57.3	1.0	57	1	−.3	0	−.1	0
Latino Females										
15–24	5.8	0	1.7	0	0	0	−1.7	0	−.5	0
Other	2.9	0	3.3	0	1	0	−2.3	0	−.7	0
Total Known	11.6	.8	438.5	30.3	576	103	137.5	69.7	40.1	21.0
Unknown	.4	.2	13.7	6.9	101	54	87.3	47.1	25.5	13.8
Total	12.0	1.0	452.2	37.2	677	157	224.8	116.8	65.6	34.8
Grand Total	13.0		489.4		834		341.6		100.4	

robbery related homicides and 35 per cent were in robbery related homicides. In 1965, there were approximately twelve times as many non-robbery homicides as robbery homicides. In 1973 there were approximately 4.2 times as many. It is clear that robbery homicides accounted for a greater percentage of the increase in homicides than non-robbery homicides.

The increase in robbery homicide victims was clearly concentrated in older Black males. More than half of the excess increase in robbery homicides (19.4 per cent of 35.1 per cent) is due to robbery killings of older Black males. This is precisely the same percentage as non-robbery killings of this group. Younger Black males were victims in approximately 25 per cent of the excess killings; most of these were victims of non-robbery killings (some gang-related). White victimization increased most significantly in non-robbery killings of older men and women. Non-robbery killings of older Black women was actually lower than expected. Most of the excess increase in victimization among the Latino population of Chicago was centered in non-robbery killings of Latino males. It can be seen that much of the excess increase in killings was centered upon older Black men as victims and that this increase was equally likely to be in robbery related or non-robbery related killings.

The story told by Table VI is quite different. Table VI analyzes excess increase of offenders rather than victims. The excess increase in offenders is clearly concentrated in two categories: Black males age fifteen to twenty-four and unknowns. Non-robbery killings by young Black males accounted for 19 per cent of this excess increase and unknown assailants accounted for 26 per cent. Robbery killings by young Black males accounted for 17 per cent of the excess increase and unknown robbery assailants accounted for 14 per cent. If the unknown assailants are redistributed according to the pattern of the known excess increase, the results are even more dramatic: 32 per cent of the excess increase in offenders would be in young Black male non-robbery killings and 29 per cent in robbery killings by this group.

Thus, as in Table III, young Black males contribute excessively to the increase in homicide offenders, while older black males contribute excessively to the increase in victims. Two things become important in this analysis: first, predicting

the trend in homicide rates in the future; and second, attempting to explain the increased violence of young Black males.

There is little reason for optimism about the nature of the trend in homicide rates. Graphic analysis clearly indicated that a violent cohort of young Black males whose violence peaked in 1970 and remained high for the next three years was joined by another violent cohort. Thus, one would expect less of a fall off in violence in this older cohort with maturity than earlier cohorts have exhibited.

Answers to the second question are far more difficult. However, part of the answer is fairly simple: the increased use of guns as weapons in assaultive crimes.

Guns and Homicide

As seen in Table I, the use of guns in homicides clearly and consistently increased over the nine year period under study. In Tables VII and VIII, the method of excess is used to examine the relationship between increases in homicides and increased gun use. Using the method of excess increase, the relationship between gun use and increased homicides can be examined holding demographic changes in the city population and race, sex, and age differences in choice of weapon constant.

As can be seen in Table VII the *entire* increase in homicides between 1965 and 1973 in Chicago can statistically be accounted for by homicides where a gun was the weapon. The method of excess increase predicted that there would be 234 non-gun homicides in 1973. There were in fact 232. It was predicted that 241.5 gun homicides would occur; there were in fact 607. Thus, 100.6 per cent of the excess increase in homicide victims was accounted for by gun killings. About 70 per cent of this excess increase in victimization was due to killings of Black males: 27 per cent due to killings of Black males age fifteen to twenty-four and 43 per cent due to killings of other Black males. (In 1973, young Black males were estimated to form 3 per cent of the city's population and other Black males 13 per cent of the city's population.)

In Table VIII, excess increase in offenders by weapon choice is examined. Almost 100 per cent of the excess increase is accounted for by Black male and unknown offenders using guns. An additional 10.3 per cent is due to non-gun killings by unknown offenders. Once again, there is a greater increase in young Black male homicide offenders than young Black male victims. At the same time, older Black males suffer a greater increase in

TABLE VII

1973 Real and Projected Homicide Victims by Weapon, Age, Race and Sex

	1965 Rate		1973 Project N		1973 Real N		Excess N		% Excess	
	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun
White Males										
15–24	7.1	2.4	11.7	4.9	16	9	4.3	4.1	1.1	1.1
Other	3.3	4.1	23.0	28.6	63	41	40.0	12.4	11.0	3.4
Black Males										
15–24	33.0	21.0	32.5	20.7	130	15	97.5	−5.7	26.8	−1.6
Other	22.6	21.8	103.0	99.4	261	84	158.0	−15.4	43.5	−4.2
Latino Males										
15–24	26.3	13.2	7.0	3.5	25	5	18.0	1.5	5.0	.4
Other	10.5	4.0	12.5	4.7	28	12	15.5	7.3	4.3	2.0
White Females										
15–24	2.2	.7	4.0	1.3	5	3	1.0	2.7	.3	.7
Other	.2	1.7	1.8	15.7	14	19	12.2	3.3	3.4	.9
Black Females										
15–24	7.3	7.3	8.7	8.7	19	11	10.3	2.3	2.8	.6
Other	6.6	8.7	34.0	44.9	41	28	7.0	−16.9	1.9	−4.6
Latino Females										
15–24	5.8	0	1.7	0	3	2	1.3	2.0	.4	.5
Other	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.6	2	3	.4	1.4	.1	.4
Total	6.5	6.5	241.5	234.0	607	232	365.5	−2.0	100.6	−.6
Grand Total	13.0		475.5		839		363.5		100	

TABLE VIII

1973 REAL AND PROJECTED HOMICIDE OFFENDERS BY WEAPON, AGE, RACE AND SEX

	1965 Rate		1973 Project N		1973 Real N		Excess N		% Excess	
	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun	Gun	Nongun
White Males										
15–24	4.7	8.6	7.8	14.2	3	11	−4.8	−3.2	−1.3	−.9
Other	2.6	2.4	18.1	16.7	9	24	−9.1	7.3	−2.6	2.0
Black Males										
15–24	54.0	54.0	53.2	53.2	185	46	131.8	−7.2	37.5	−2.0
Other	22.6	20.3	103.0	92.6	179	54	76.0	−38.6	21.6	−11.0
Latino Males										
15–24	32.9	0.0	8.8	0.0	27	4	18.2	4.0	5.2	1.1
Other	7.9	4.0	9.4	4.7	19	11	9.6	6.3	2.7	1.8
White Females										
15–24	.7	.7	1.3	1.3	0	0	−1.3	−1.3	−.4	−.4
Other	.5	.2	4.6	1.8	6	3	1.4	1.2	.4	.3
Black Females										
15–24	4.9	8.5	5.8	10.1	11	9	5.2	−1.1	1.5	−.3
Other	3.8	7.6	19.6	39.2	32	26	12.4	−13.2	3.5	−3.8
Latino Females										
15–24	0.0	5.7	0.0	1.6	0	0	0.0	−1.6	0.0	−.5
Other	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.6	0	1	−1.6	−.6	−.5	−.2
Total Known	6.2	6.3	233.2	237.0	471	189	237.8	−48.0	67.6	−13.9
Unknown	.3	.2	10.3	6.9	136	43	125.7	36.1	35.8	10.3
Total	6.5	6.5	243.5	243.9	607	232	363.5	−11.9	103.4	−3.6
Grand Total	13.0		487.4		839		351.6		99.8	

homicide victimization than in responsibility as offenders.

Use of weapons other than guns by known offenders was 13.9 per cent lower than projected and use of weapons other than guns increased less than expected among younger Black males and actually decreased among other Black males. Older Black women homicide offenders also chose weapons other than guns fewer times than projected. In fact, the increase in gun use approximated the decline in non-gun use. Thus, especially among older Blacks, use of guns in homicides may have been a substitute for the use of other weapons. The effect of rigorous gun control legislation upon the rate of homicide or the increase in that rate, unfortunately, cannot be answered by the data available for this study. It is not possible to know whether the increase in homicides was due entirely to the increasing availability of guns or if the increase was due to an increased propensity to violent crime with a gun instead of another weapon. However, the entire increase in homicides in Chicago from 1965 to 1973 can be statistically accounted for by an increase in homicides using a gun as the weapon.

It is not likely that the entire increase in homicides was caused by the increased use of guns as a weapon. Other important changes occurred in the pattern of homicide in Chicago. Rates of robbery homicides increased significantly and the proportion of robbery homicides where the victim was an older Black male increased. Unless it is assumed that offenders in robberies where a Black male is the target are more likely to carry a gun than offenders in other robberies, the increase in robberies of Black males cannot be explained by an increase in gun use. In further analysis, it is hoped that other reasons for the increase in homicides can be sorted out using a more detailed analysis of the relationship between the victim and the offender and ecological and geographical characteristics of the community where the homicide occurred.

CONCENTRATION

Homicide in Chicago is an extremely concentrated crime. Thirty-four per cent of all offenders in 1973 were Black males between age fifteen and twenty-four, as were 18 per cent of all victims. Young Black males accounted for 60 per cent of the excess increase in offenders. Black males fifteen to twenty-four are 3 per cent of Chicago's population.

Of the 2,389 homicides in Chicago between 1971 and 1973, 495 (21 per cent) occurred in an area of 375 blocks. Two per cent of the blocks of Chicago accounted for 22 per cent of the homicides. The blocks where these homicides occurred are among the most economically depressed areas of the city. The areas of highest concentration were the Robert Taylor Homes on the south side, a massive high rise housing project, and a burned out area of Madison Street on the west side. These neighborhoods are among the poorest in the city. Thus, poverty and availability of guns appear to be the overriding phenomena explaining much of the increase in homicide.

Conclusions

From an analysis of changes and continuity of patterns of homicide over the nine-year period from 1965 to 1973 in Chicago the following can be concluded. First, homicides have increased and continued to increase—in only one year of the study did the number of homicides decline. Second, there are essentially two patterns of homicide: a pattern of altercation homicide based on domestic feuds or arguments between friends, and a second pattern of homicide based on robbery. The second form of homicide is increasing much more rapidly than the first, but the characteristics of victims of robbery homicides are becoming more similar to those of non-robbery homicides and to those of the offender. The victim of robbery homicide is increasingly the Black male. Third, over the nine-year period of the study there has been a dramatic increase in the number of young Black male victims and offenders. If all offenders are included, the age distribution of Black offenders reaches a maximum skew and peakedness in 1970, probably due to multiple-offender gang killings. By 1973, this peak has broadened out, indicating that one cohort of violent youth has probably been joined by another. Fourth, the entire increase in homicides between 1965 and 1973 can be statistically accounted for by an increase in homicides using guns. This indicates, at a minimum, the current failure of gun control legislation and the possibility that more restrictive gun control legislation may aid in the control of homicides. Fifth, because of the geographical, racial, and sexual concentration of the homicide offense among poor young Blacks and Latinos, the community may be unwilling to make available the resources necessary to combat the homicide offense.