HOMICIDE

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HOMICIDE II

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December, 1987

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PREFACE

In 1986, the Bureau published a major research study <u>Homicide — The Social Reality</u> by Alison Wallace which analysed homicides reported to police in N.S.W. in the period 1968 to 1981. This report contains a statistical update of the data on homicide to the end of 1986.

The following Bureau members were involved in the production of this report:

The report was typed by Carmel Byrne with graphics and artwork by Johnny Bruce. Data collection was carried out by Roseanne Bonney and Michael Charles. Computing was by Maria Gojski and Roseanne Bonney. The data were analysed and the report written by Roseanne Bonney. Additional statistical testing was done by Tom Robb. Julie Stubbs, Tom Robb and Alix Goodwin commented on earlier drafts of the report.

The Bureau also wishes to thank the New South Wales Police Department for its co-operation during the data collection phase of this study.

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Dr. A. J. Sutton
<u>Director</u>

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INTRODUCTION

In 1986, the Bureau published <u>Homicide - The Social Reality</u> by Alison Wallace. This report details the results of Wallace's analysis of homicides reported to police in New South Wales between 1968 and 1981.[1]

The intention and the scope of the present report on homicide is much narrower. It seeks only to update Wallace's major analyses to include the years 1982 to 1986. It does not seek to address any of the major theoretical issues relating to homicide which she considered.

Perceived public anxiety that the rate of homicide in New South Wales had increased since 1981 prompted the N.S.W. Attorney General, the Hon. Mr. Terry Sheahan in May, 1987 to direct the Bureau to examine all homicides which occurred in this State to the end of 1986, and to assess whether or not there were any grounds for the public's concern. If it was found that the homicide rate was increasing the Bureau was further directed to investigate which types of homicide accounted for the increase.

Definitions and data sources

The methodology used in this study is the same as that used in <u>Homicide - The Social Reality</u> and the reader is referred to that publication for its details.

Briefly, this study has collected information about all offences initially classified as murder, conspiracy to murder, manslaughter and infanticide. With regards to manslaughter, excluded from this category for the purposes of this study are events in which there was no element of inter-personal contact or friction - generally deaths which resulted from train, car or air accidents.

The sample

The study includes all homicides which were recorded in the New South Wales police homicide files between 1968 and 1986. The new data collected from the period 1982 to 1986 was integrated with files of Wallace's 1968 - 1981 data to allow trend analysis of the full nineteen year period. A copy of the abbreviated data collection schedule used for the 1982 - 1986 cases is shown in Appendix I.

The cases fall into three categories as outlined by Wallace:

1. All homicides (murders and manslaughters as defined above) which resulted in a person or persons being charged with a homicide offence.

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[1]Wallace, A. (1986). Homicide - The Social Reality, N.S.W. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Attorney General's Department, Sydney.

2. All murder/suicide incidents classed as murder by New South Wales police.

3. All unsolved homicides – that is, deaths regarded by police as murder, but for which no suspect was apprehended.

The major divergence in this study from the approach adopted by Wallace is that the only records consulted for the 1982 to 1986 data collection were police records. No additional material was obtained from the files of the Office of the Solicitor for Public Prosecutions. Consequently, the demographic information available about some victim characteristics is somewhat fuller for 1968 to 1981 than for the subsequent period.

So far as possible, the format of chapter headings and sequence in this report follows that of the Wallace study. This comparability is to assist readers who might wish to read this report in conjunction with the fuller descriptions and discussions contained in the earlier study of homicide.

Summary of findings from earlier study of homicide

The major findings from Wallace's report appear below.

1. *Most homicide victims are killed by members of their families (43%), by friends or acquaintances (20%) and a minority are killed by strangers (18%).*

   Amongst 'family killings' the largest group was spouse killings – most of these were husbands killing their wives. Females were much more likely to have been killed by a member of their own family than were men.

2. *Domestic violence was an important factor in many homicides.*

   Almost one quarter of homicides were spouse killings, and there was evidence of previous domestic violence in around half of these killings. Where women killed their husbands the level of previous violence was even higher (70%). More than half of the women who killed husbands acted in response to an immediate threat or attack.

   Including cases where people were killed while intervening in domestic disputes, almost one third of homicides were related to marital conflict.

   One third of husbands who killed wives were separated from them at the time. In an additional 13 per cent of cases, they were in the process of separation.

3. *Guns were the most frequently used weapon.*

   Guns were used more often than any other weapon (34.7%). The rate of gun homicides was 60 per cent higher in rural areas than

urban areas. The use of guns varied with the type of homicide. It was twice as high in cases where murder was coupled with sucide.

4. *Family killings were higher in rural areas.*

Overall the rate of homicide in urban and rural areas was the same. The rate of family killing however, was significantly higher in rural areas. Family killings in rural areas were much more likely to involve guns.

5. *Homicide occurs at a lesser rate than suicide.*

The rate of homicide (2.2 per 100,000 population) is less than that of other violent deaths. The rate of fatal traffic accidents (29.4) is eleven times greater, suicide (10.0) is five times greater, and the death rate due to industrial accidents (5.0) is twice as high.

6. *Homicide offenders are not typically mentally ill, nor do they have criminal records for serious violent offences.*

The incidence of mental illness among homicide offenders is not higher than in the population in general, according to the evidence examined by the study. Few of the offenders had a criminal record involving a serious violent offence (6.5%). Research shows that homicide offenders are less likely to re-offend than are other violent offenders.

7. *Most children were killed by family members (85%).*

Many of these killings occurred in the context of murder-suicides (1/3). Relatively few children were killed by strangers (4.7%). The greatest majority of the children killed were aged five years or less — the report focuses on this age group. Females were responsible for 55 per cent of the child killings and males for 45 per cent. Children were killed in a variety of circumstances but the biggest group was battered children (36.6%).

8. *One in seven homicides involved suicide (or the attempt).*

The incidence of murder suicide was greater amongst the higher socio-economic groups. Of professional or managerial offenders, 21 per cent were suicidal, compared with 12 per cent of the skilled offenders and 6 per cent of the unskilled.

The majority of murder-suicides were committed within the family (78%). The predominant type was that of men killing spouses or lovers. Men who committed murder-suicide frequently killed their wives and also their children. Women were more likely to kill only their children.

9. *Homicides outside the family.*

Most of these (76.5%) involved interpersonal conflicts occurring around hotels and clubs, between neighbours or in disputes between lovers and rivals. A minority involved homicides committed in the course of other crimes such as robbery or sexual assault, or in the attempt to avoid arrest.

10. *The rate of homicide over the last sixty years.*

There has been no dramatic increase in the N.S.W. homicide rate over recent decades. By comparision the homicide rate in the United States almost doubled between 1960 and 1980.

11. *The Australian homicide rate compared with other countries.*

The Australian homicide rate (1.9 per 100,000 in 1981), is less than that of countries such as Canada, Singapore and Finland. It is substantially less than that in the United States (9.4) but is higher than that in Scotland (1.8), New Zealand (1.6), and England and Wales (0.8).

Rate of homicide in New South Wales and Australia

Figure 1 and Table 1.1 following, are placed in advance of the main body of text to provide a context in which to place the later detailed analyses of homicide characteristics.

Figure 1 shows the rate of homicide victimisation per 100,000 of population in New South Wales between 1968 and 1986. Over the 19 year period there was no linear trend towards an increasing rate of victimisation (F = 0.33, p > 0.05).

Table 1.1 shows the rates of homicide victimisation for New South Wales and the other states and territories of Australia from 1968 to 1985. Figures for 1986 were available only for New South Wales. With the exception of the Northern Territory, the homicide rates in other parts of Australia have been quite similar and stable over this 18 year period. The New South Wales homicide rate has closely resembled the national rate for the 18 year period.

The rate of 11.8 per 100,000 population recorded in 1985 in the Northern Territory was six times the national rate. Although substantially less than the rate of 26.0 per 100,000 population recorded in 1981, the rate is still amongst the highest world homicide rates of the late 1970s (Wallace, 1986).

FIGURE 1
Homicide in NSW
1968-1986

FIGURE 1
Homicide in N.S.W.
1968 - 1986
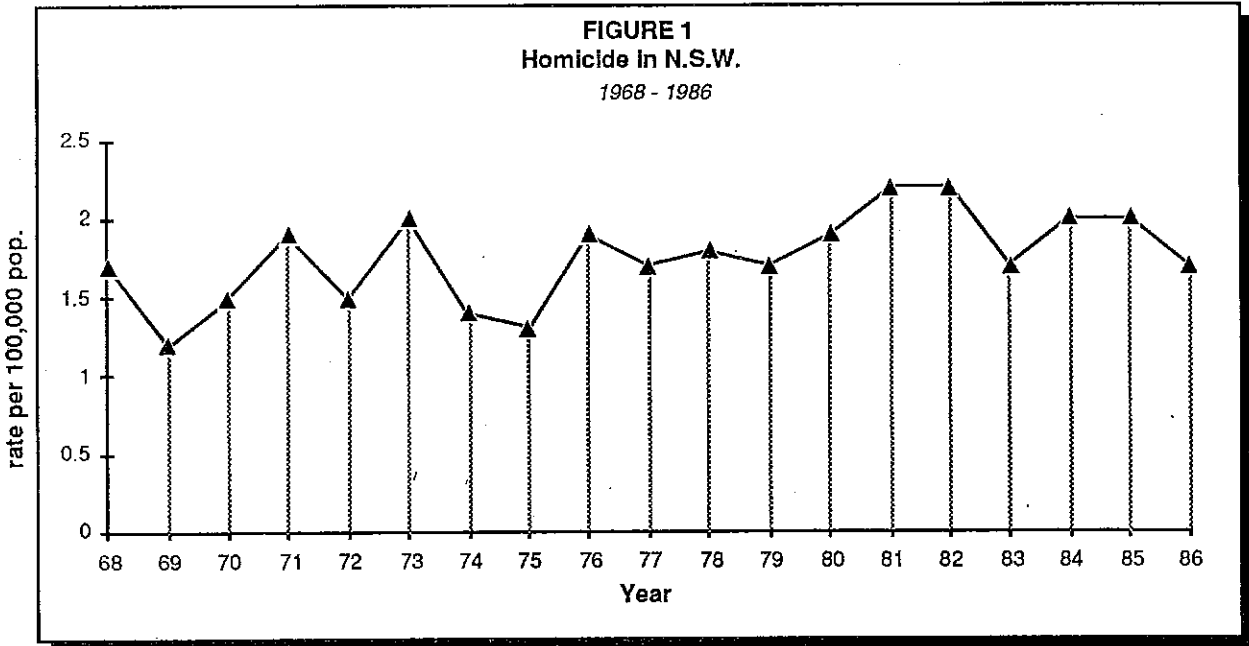
TABLE 1

Deaths due to homicide and injury purposefully inflicted by other persons
Homicide rates per 100,000 population 1968 – 1986
States, Territories and Australia

Year ended 31st December	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Northern Territory	Australian Capital Territory	Australia
1968	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.0	1.3	15.0	0.0	1.6
1969	1.2	0.9	1.7	1.1	0.8	2.0	13.0	1.7	1.2
1970	1.5	1.4	1.3	2.3	0.8	2.0	8.1	0.0	1.5
1971	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.9	1.5	2.0	8.7	4.1	1.8
1972	1.5	1.5	2.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	8.3	1.9	1.7
1973	2.0	1.6	2.8	0.7	1.7	1.8	9.0	1.8	1.9
1974	1.4	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.0	0.8	6.7	0.0	1.8
1975	1.3	1.3	2.5	1.4	1.9	2.0	14.5	0.0	1.6
1976	1.9	1.4	2.6	1.7	2.1	2.5	22.7	1.0	2.0
1977	1.7	1.7	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.2	19.0	1.4	1.9
1978	1.8	1.3	2.0	2.1	1.6	2.2	15.1	0.9	1.8
1979	1.7	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.4	9.5	0.5	1.8
1980	1.9	2.1	1.7	2.2	0.9	1.7	12.4	0.0	1.9
1981	2.2	1.0	1.1	1.8	0.9	1.3	26.0	1.9	1.9
1982	2.2	1.9	1.6	2.2	1.5	1.6	6.9	0.4	1.9
1983	1.7	1.9	1.4	1.2	1.6	2.0	17.9	2.5	1.9
1984	2.0	1.5	2.1	1.0	1.8	2.0	15.1	1.6	1.9
1985	2.0	1.6	2.1	1.2	2.3	1.5	11.8	1.1	1.9
1986	1.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

SECTION 1

PATTERNS IN HOMICIDE

Aspects of suspect and victim

(a)   Sex characteristics

(i)   Suspects

Between 1968 and 1986, 1,875 distinct persons were charged[2] with
one or more homicide offence relating to the deaths of 1,894 distinct
persons. Male suspects greatly outnumbered female suspects: 1,592
or 84.9 per cent of the suspects were male and 283 or 15.1 per cent
were female.

The rates per 100,000 for each sex specific population are shown in
Figure 2 and again in Appendix II. The calculation of rates is based
on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data for 1971, 1976, 1981
and inter-censul population estimates calculated by the Bureau of
Crime Statistics and Research.

In Wallace's report, data from two earlier homicide studies
(Mackenzie, 1961; Rod, 1979)[3] were added to her 1968 - 1981 cases
producing a 49 year period for analysis. She found that although
homicide rates fluctuated throughout the 49 year period "overall an
upward linear trend was discernible for male homicide offenders".
She also reported that "an upward trend was also apparent for females
but the level of significance was much lower than that for males".
Wallace concluded that "on the available statistical evidence, it
would appear that male participation in homicide has increased both
relative to women, and in absolute terms" (Wallace, 1986, p. 31).

However, when only the 19 year period (1968 to 1986) was considered
there was no linear trend towards an increasing proportion of males
among suspects (F = 2.09, p = 0.16).

(ii) Victims

Just as the majority of suspects in each of the 19 years between 1968
and 1986 were male, so too were the majority of victims in each .
year. In only one year (1978) was the victim population evenly
divided between the sexes. Considered overall, males represented
63.7 per cent of victims.

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[2]The term "charged" is not entirely accurate in those cases where
the assailant took his/her own life after committing murder.

[3]Rod, T., Murder in the family in N.S.W. 1958 - 1967, unpublished
Master's thesis in Anthropology, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1979.

Mackenzie, R. W., Murder and the social process in New South Wales 1933 -
1957, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sydney, 1961.

FIGURES 2 &3

FIGURE 2
Homicide by Sex of Suspect
NSW 1968 - 1986

FIGURE 3
Homicide by Sex of Victim
NSW 1968 - 1986
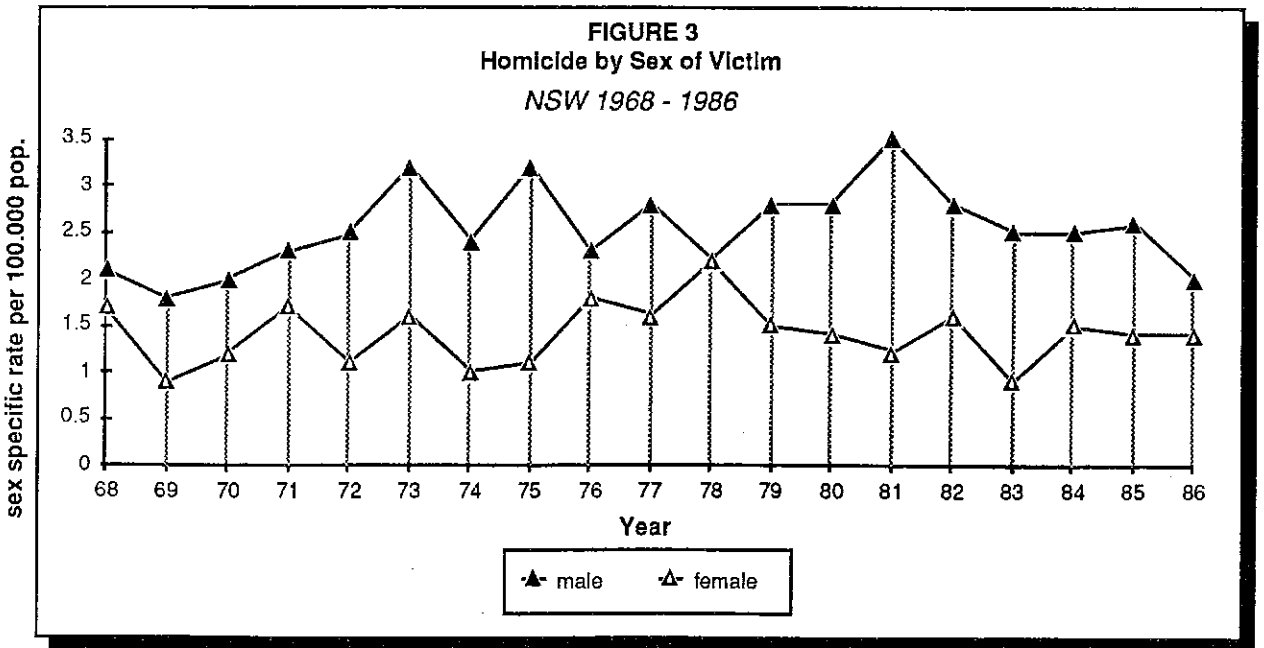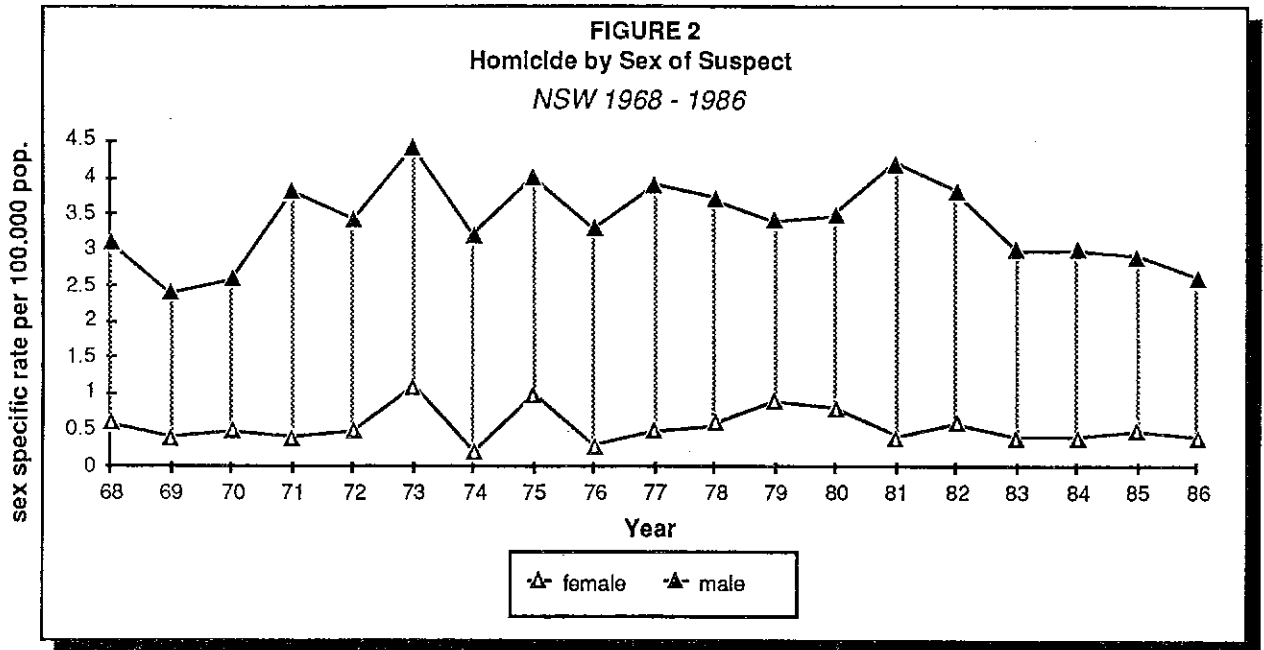
Women, who made up only 15 per cent of suspects, accounted for slightly more than a third of victims (36.3%). They were therefore approximately twice as likely to be victims as suspects.

Figure 3 and Appendix III show the sex specific rate per 100,000 of population for male and female victims. As with the sex of the suspect there was no linear trend over the study period towards an increasing proportion of male victims (F = 0.21, p = 0.65).

(b)   Age

(i)   Suspects

When the age characteristics of male and female homicide suspects were jointly analysed, the pattern which emerged over the 19 years was that suspects of both sexes were disproportionately concentrated in the younger age groups (Table 1.1). Suspects under the age of 30 years accounted for more than half of all suspects, and within this population, suspects in the 20 - 24 year age group made up approximately 20 per cent of all homicide suspects.

Young suspects, that is, suspects aged between 15 and 29 years accounted for 53.6 per cent of the suspect population but over the 19 year period the share of the general population which this age group held was approximately 25 per cent.

Most homicide suspects in the under 30 years age group were male (84.6%). In fact, 46.1 per cent of all homicide suspects were young males aged under 30 years.

Overall, however, there was little difference between the proportions of the sexes in each offender age group (see Table 1.1). For example, three in ten of both male and female suspects were aged between 30 and 44 years at the time of the homicide and there were only minor percentage differences between male and female suspects aged between 45 and 59 years (males, 10.9 per cent; females, 12.3 per cent). Only 3.9 per cent of suspects were aged over 60 and, like younger homicide suspects, were predominantly male.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 show the homicide rate per 100,000 population for the suspect age groupings 15 to 29, 30 to 44 and 45 to 59 years.

As with sex of suspect, Wallace examined a 49 year period to 1981 in terms of the age of the suspect and concluded that a significant upward linear trend was apparent in both the 15 to 29 and 30 to 44 years age groups. But this trend was not present when the data for 1968 to 1986 were analysed (F = 3.31, p = 0.08).

(ii)   Victims

The distribution of victims' ages is shown in Table 1.2. Numbers of victims would appear to be more evenly spread throughout the age groupings than were suspects ages. However, there were more 20 - 29

FIGURE 4
Homicide by Suspects 15-29 years
NSW 1968 - 1986

FIGURE 5
Homicide by Suspects 30-29 years
NSW 1968 - 1986

FIGURE 6
Homicide by Suspects 45 - 59 years
NSW 1968 - 1986
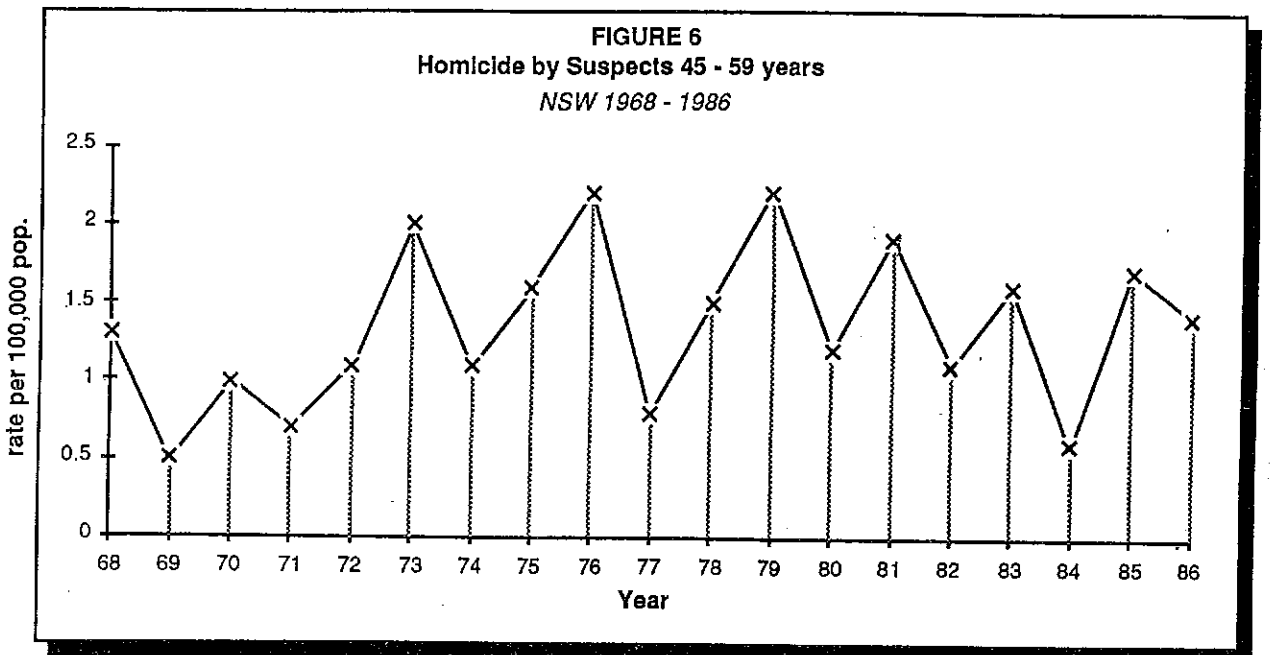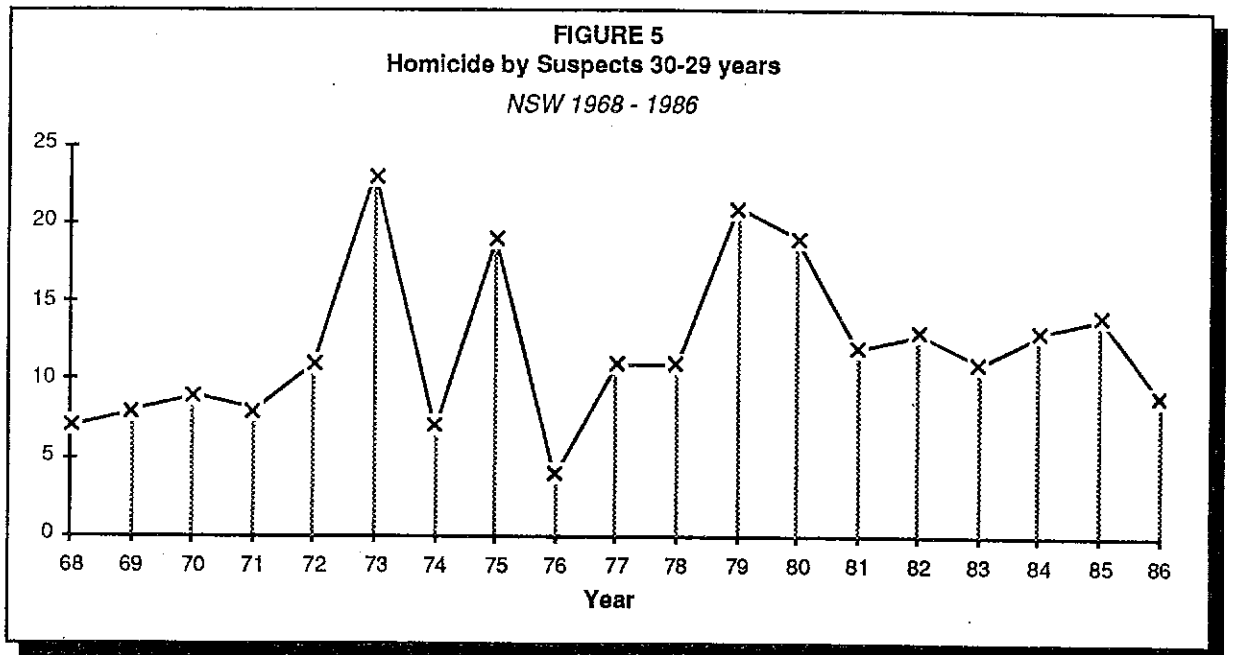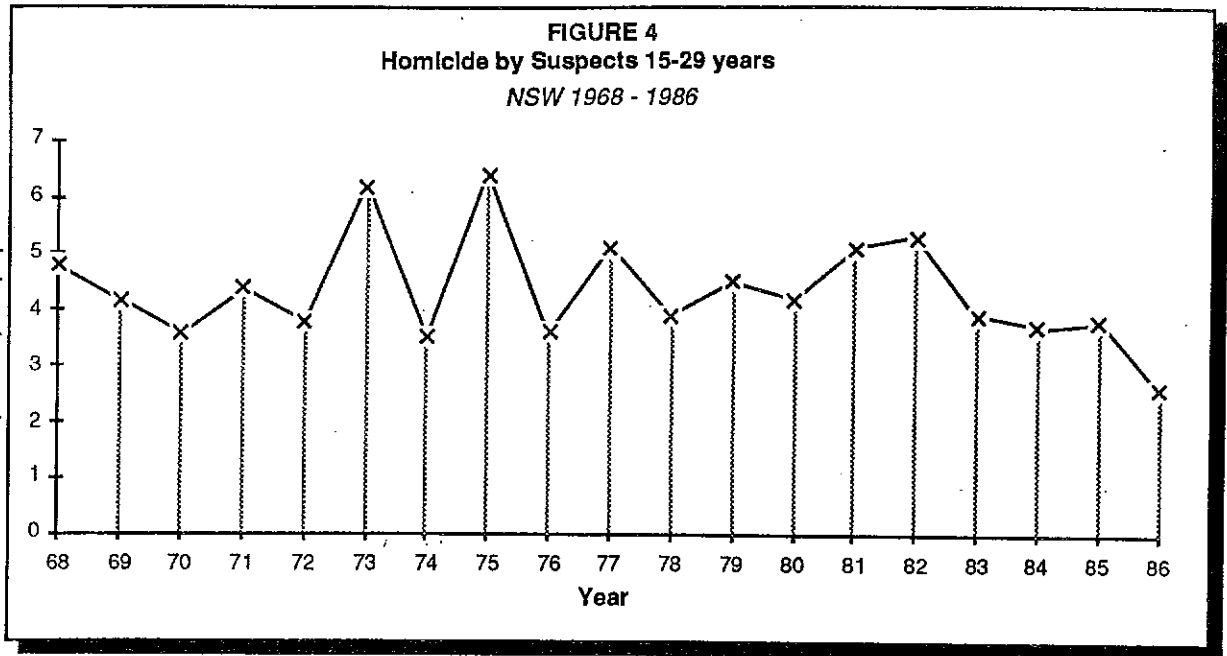
year old victims than one would expect on the basis of the frequency of that age group in the general population. Approximately 23 per cent of victims were in this age group compared with 16 per cent - 17 per cent of the general New South Wales population over the 19 year period.

TABLE 1.1
Age by sex of suspect, 1968 - 1986

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10 to 14	14	0.9	1	0.4	15	0.8
15 to 19	257	16.1	40	14.1	297	15.8
20 to 24	312	19.6	60	21.2	372	19.8
25 to 29	282	17.7	56	19.8	338	18.0
30 to 34	207	13.0	34	12.0	241	12.9
35 to 39	156	9.8	30	10.6	186	9.9
40 to 44	118	7.4	21	7.4	139	7.4
45 to 49	96	6.0	20	7.1	116	6.2
50 to 54	47	3.0	10	3.5	57	3.0
55 to 59	31	1.9	5	1.7	36	2.0
60 to 64	30	2.0	3	1.1	33	1.8
65 and over	37	2.3	3	1.1	40	2.1
Unknown	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.3
TOTAL	1,592	100.0	283	100.0	1,875	100.0

Wallace observed that victims, when compared to earlier periods in this century, were getting older just as suspects were getting younger. She recorded that one in ten victims in the 1968 - 1981 period were aged less than 15 years at the time of their death although between 1933 and 1967 one in five was in this age range. This proportion (1:10) was maintained when the period 1982 - 1986 was added to Wallace's earlier figures. Between 1968 and 1986 persons aged less than 15 were approximately 27 per cent of the general population, consequently, this age group is considerably under-represented in the homicide figures.

Persons aged 5 to 9 years provided the least number of homicide victims (31) compared with the other age ranges used in the present study.

TABLE 1.2
Age by sex of victim, 1968 — 1986

Age	Male No.	Male %	Female No.	Female %	Total No.	Total %
0 to 4	87	7.2	64	9.4	157*	8.3
5 to 9	15	1.2	16	2.3	31	1.6
10 to 14	32	2.7	20	2.9	52	2.7
15 to 19	81	6.7	42	6.2	123	6.5
20 to 24	140	11.6	66	9.7	206	10.9
25 to 29	141	11.7	79	11.6	220	11.6
30 to 34	107	8.9	64	9.4	171	9.0
35 to 39	98	8.1	56	8.2	154	8.1
40 to 44	95	7.9	44	6.5	139	7.3
45 to 49	99	8.2	52	7.6	151	8.0
50 to 54	80	6.6	45	6.6	125	6.6
55 to 59	43	3.6	21	3.1	´64	3.4
60 to 64	42	3.5	29	4.3	71	3.7
65 and over	70	5.8	53	7.8	123	6.5
Unknown	77	6.3	30	4.4	107	5.8
TOTAL	1,207	100.0	681	100.0	1,894	100.0

*Includes 6 cases in which the sex of the victim was not stated.

(c) Usual occupation

The occupations of suspects, and more particularly of victims, are often omitted from police homicide files. Even where the information is entered there is not, nor is there any current requirement for, any verification of the data. Consequently the categories of occupation shown in Tables 1.3 and 1.4 should be treated cautiously and are, at best, only an indication of the distribution of occupational categories among homicide suspects and victims. Because of the flawed nature of the data it was decided not to compare these figures with any estimates of the proportions in the general community who fell into the same occupational groups as such a comparison could not yield reliably interpretable results.

Table 1.3 indicates that 40.7 per cent of the suspects fell into the unskilled workers category. A smaller proportion of victims than suspects were classified as unskilled (21.8%).

TABLE 1.3
Usual occupation of suspects, 1968 – 1986

Occupation	No.	%
Professional/managerial	10	0.5
Semi-professional/middle managerial	54	2.9
Sales/small business/clerical/skilled trades ...	433	23.1
Unskilled	763	40.7
Pensioner	139	7.4
Domestic duties	134	7.1
Unemployed	149	7.9
Student	40	2.1
Prostitute/pimp	12	0.7
Not stated	140	7.5
TOTAL	1,874*	100.0

*1 child under 15 years of age was excluded from count.

TABLE 1.4
Usual occupation of victims, 1968 – 1986

Occupation	No.	%
Professional/managerial	20	1.1
Semi-professional/middle managerial	77	4.4
Sales/small business/clerical/skilled trades ...	290	16.9
Unskilled	375	21.8
Pensioner	212	12.2
Domestic duties	174	10.0
Unemployed	79	4.5
Student	99	5.8
Prostitute/pimp	26	1.6
Not Stated	374	21.7
TOTAL	1,726*	100.0

*168 children under the school age of 6 years were excluded
from count.

There were slightly more victims classified as belonging to professional or semi-professional occupations than in the suspect group (suspects, 3.4 per cent; victims, 5.5 per cent), though the small number in each group indicate that this difference should be treated with caution.

A note on the category "domestic duties": This is the usual way of describing married women in a number of official record systems. If they have separate occupations there is no way of knowing what they would be. But, given the general spread of female occupations it is likely a proportion could be re-classified to the unskilled or clerical categories.

(d)   Aboriginality

Of the 1,875 homicide suspects, 131 (7.0%) were identified in police records as being of Aboriginal descent. Although victim information about Aboriginality is more sketchy than with suspects, at least 86, or 4.5 per cent of victims were positively identified as being Aboriginal. For the period 1968 - 1986, 75 or 87.2 per cent of Aboriginal victims were killed by other Aboriginals.

In the 1981 Census, Aboriginals were shown as representing 0.6 per cent of the total population of New South Wales (Year Book Australia, 1986). On this population base Aboriginal suspects would be over-represented by a factor of 11.6 and Aboriginal victims by a factor of 7.5. However, these levels of over-representation should be treated with great caution. Cunneen and Robb (1987) have cited a number of sources (Kamien, 1978; Fisk, 1985; Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1984)[4] which dispute the size of the Aboriginal population in New South Wales. Fisk (1985) in particular argues that the 1981 Census under-estimated the Aboriginal population by a minimum of 13 per cent.

Summary

Homicide suspects and victims may be characterised as follows: the majority of both suspects and victims are male; suspects are generally young (under 30 years) and homicide victims are drawn from a broader band of age groups although they are proportionately more at risk in their twenties; Aboriginals are over-represented among both suspects and victims and the figures from this study almost certainly understate the numbers of Aboriginals among victims.

This has been the pattern of homicide over the 19 years - 1968 to 1986 and no significant trend away from this pattern was detected.

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[4]Cunneen, C., Robb, T., Criminal Justice in North-West New South Wales, N.S.W. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Attorney General's Department, Sydney, 1987.

SECTION 2

ELEMENTS OF THE HOMICIDE ACT

Spatial patterns

For the purposes of this study, in the classification of the location of homicide offences as either urban or rural, the Sydney Statistical Division, Newcastle and Wollongong constituted the urban areas and the rest of New South Wales was regarded as rural. This definition of urban is narrower than that used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics classification which includes some larger country centres in its urban divisions.

When the geographic distribution of homicide offences was analysed the results showed that while the bulk of offences during the 19 year period were committed in areas of highest population density, there was remarkably little difference between urban and rural homicide rates. The mean rate per 100,000 population for urban areas was 1.9 victims and for rural areas 2.0 victims. The highest homicide rate during the 19 year period was 3.1 per 100,000 recorded for rural N.S.W. This compared with the highest urban rate of 2.4 per 100,000 population.

(a)   Relationship and spatial patterns

All of the homicides in the sample were classified according to the principal relationship between the victim and the suspect. The categories of relationships were domestic (killings within the family), sexual, occupational, residential, friend or stranger.

Compared to urban regions, rural areas have a larger proportion of domestic or family homicides. Of homicides which took place in rural areas, 47.2 per cent were classified as domestic, compared with 37.5 per cent in urban areas. Similarly, there were differences between urban and rural districts in terms of the proportion of homicides which involved stranger assailants. While strangers were implicated in 11.2 per cent of rural homicides, they were nominated as the assailant in 17.6 per cent of urban homicides.

The mean rate of domestic homicides in rural regions was 0.93 per 100,000 population and in urban districts the mean domestic rate was 0.68. With stranger killings the mean rates per 100,000 were: urban, 0.29 and rural, 0.18.

(b)   Urban homicides

Urban homicides were not evenly distributed across the areas designated urban. In fact, 87.1 per cent occurred within the Sydney Metropolitan Area. Even within this division there was a high concentration of homicides in the Central Sydney Division. Table 2.1

shows that 35.9 per cent of homicides took place in this area although, at the 1981 Census, the proportion of Sydney's population who lived there was only 14.1 per cent (in the 1971 Census 17.7 per cent of Sydney's population lived in this Division and in 1976, 15.6 per cent of the population lived here).

TABLE 2.1
Distribution of homicides occurring in Sydney Metropolitan Area

District	No.	%
Central	424	35.9
West	303	25.6
South	163	13.8
North	126	10.7
Inner West	67	5.7
South West	62	5.2
Gosford/Wyong	37	3.1
TOTAL	1,182	100.0

Even within the Central Sydney Division, the distribution of homicides was uneven. Almost half of the homicides in this Division happened in the areas of the City, Bondi, Darlinghurst, Potts Point, Redfern and Newtown. Homicides in these areas made up 46 per cent of all killings in the Central Sydney Division and 16.4 per cent of homicides in the Sydney Metropolitan Area. The population in the areas mentioned above constituted 19 per cent of the Central Sydney Division at the Census of 1981. Compared to the homicide sample as a whole there were more stranger killings in these areas (approximately 25 per cent compared with less than 18 per cent for the total sample).

Sydney's Southern and Northern Divisions had fewer homicides than might be expected on a population basis. Homicides in the Northern Division were 10.7 per cent of Sydney homicides, but this Division contains 21.1 per cent of Sydney's population. Equally, with the same proportion of the population (21.0%), the Southern Division only generated 13.8 per cent of homicides. Other Divisions produced proportionately as many homicides as might be expected on a population basis.

A higher than usual proportion of the homicides in the Western and Gosford/Wyong Districts were domestic killings (Western, 47 per cent; Gosford/Wyong, 54 per cent) compared with the overall figure of 37.1 per cent for the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

The relationship between the victim and the suspect was classed as
'stranger' in 18.1 per cent of homicide offences in the Sydney
Metropolitan Area. Stranger killings were not, however, evenly
spread across the Sydney Metropolitan Area. The Central and Western
Districts together accounted for 62.7 per cent of the stranger
killings in the Sydney Metropolitan Area (Central, 42.7 per cent;
Western, 20.0 per cent).

The Central Sydney Area (because the major entertainment venues are
found here) attracts to it large numbers of people who live in other
parts of Sydney. These people, however, contribute very little to
either the homicide suspect or victim population of the Central
Sydney Area. For example, of the 359 suspects whose residential
address was in the Central Sydney Area, 302 or 84.1 per cent were
alleged also to have committed the homicide offence in the same
area. Similarly, 380 victims had residential addresses in the
Central Sydney Area. Of these, 349 (89.7%) were killed in the
Central Sydney Area. This ecological containment of homicide is not
peculiar to the Central Sydney Area. In Western Sydney, 82.9 per
cent of suspects resident in the area are also alleged to have killed
there. Similarily, 85.4 per cent of the 302 Western Sydney victims
both lived and were killed in Western Sydney. Similar results were
found for other parts of Sydney and the State as a whole.

Location

The distribution of the physical location of homicides for the 19
year period in Table 2.2 shows that more than half of all homicides
(57.8%) occurred in a private dwelling. In almost half the total
homicides (48.4%) the victim was killed where he/she lived - and in
over half of those cases (58.9 per cent i.e. 28.0 per cent of all
cases) the dwelling was described as the home of both the victim and
the suspect.

When the sex of the victim was taken into account, however, a
different pattern emerged. A larger proportion of female victims
than male victims were killed at their own or someone else's home
(female, 73.8 per cent; males, 48.6 per cent). Indeed, 66.7 per cent
of all female victims were killed in their own home (compared with
38.1 per cent of male victims) and most frequently they were killed
in a house also occupied by the suspect.

Within the home, the bedroom was the place where homicide most
frequently occurred for both sexes. Even when considering homicides
as a whole, the bedroom was, as a single category of location, the
most common site of death for female victims (23.7%). The bedroom
was also the most common part of the house for a male to be killed
but, overall, only 12.1 per cent of males were killed in such rooms.

The street (which includes cars) is the most common single location
outside the home for the commission of homicide offences. While this

is true for both sexes, a larger proportion of men than women were killed in the street (males, 17 per cent; females, 8.7 per cent). Almost half (45.4%) of street homicides of male victims involved stranger suspects while women were considerably more at risk of homicide from family members than from strangers when killed in the street (58.1 per cent vs. 20.0 per cent).

Slightly more than one in ten of all male victims were killed in, or in the vicinity of hotels or other licensed premises. Again the stranger assailant was implicated in almost half of male homicides in these locations (45.6%). Friends or acquaintances, however, were nominated as the assailant in most of the remaining male homicides in or around hotels (43.1%).

TABLE 2.2
Location of offence by sex of victim

	Sex of victim					
	Male		Female		Total	
Location	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Home of victim	208	17.2	179	26.2	387	20.4
Home of accused	83	6.9	30	4.4	116*	6.1
Home of victim and accused	252	20.9	275	40.3	527	28.0
Home of other	43	3.6	20	2.9	63	3.3
Total in Home	586	48.6	504	73.8	1,093*	57.8
In or around hotel or other licensed premises	136	11.2	12	1.8	148	7.9
In or around other buildings	114	9.4	32	4.7	146	7.7
Street (including car)	205	17.0	59	8.7	264	14.0
Park/reserves/ country etc.	116	9.7	50	7.3	166	8.6
Other	50	4.1	24	3.6	77*	4.0
TOTAL	1,207	100.0	681	100.0	1,894	100.0

*Includes 3 victims of unknown sex.

Day of homicide

As shown in Table 2.3 slightly more than half of the homicide victims
(51.0%) were killed on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The proportion
of homicides on Saturday was highest where the victim was male, 21.2
per cent of male victims were killed on this day. Male victims were
almost twice as likely to be killed on Saturday than on either
Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

TABLE 2.3
Day of week of offence by sex of victim

| Day of week | Sex of victim | | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monday	139	11.5	90	13.2	229	12.1
Tuesday	134	11.1	88	12.9	223*	11.8
Wednesday	124	10.3	95	14.0	219	11.6
Thursday	199	16.5	108	15.8	307	16.2
Friday	199	16.5	104	15.3	305*	16.1
Saturday	256	21.2	98	14.4	355*	18.7
Sunday	153	12.7	95	14.0	250*	13.2
Not known	3	0.2	3	0.4	6	0.3
TOTAL	1,207	100.0	681	100.0	1,894	100.0

*Totals include victims of unknown sex.

The deaths of female victims were more evenly distributed through the
days of the week. Women were no more likely to be killed on Saturday
than on Wednesday or Sunday, and only marginally more likely to be
killed on Thursday.

Table 2.4 shows the distribution of homicides through the week by the
sex of the suspect. Both men and women tended to kill towards the
end of the week - Thursday through Saturday - although male suspects
were slightly more active on Saturdays (20.2%) than women suspects
(16.3%).

When the day of the week on which the homicide took place was
analysed by relationship between victim and suspect, domestic
homicides - killings within the family - were shown to be very evenly
distributed throughout the week with only a marginal increase on
Fridays (15.8%). Homicides involving friends or strangers, however,
increased substantially towards the end of the week: 36.2 per cent

of all friend killings, and 43.6 per cent of all stranger killings occurred on either a Friday or Saturday.

Alcohol consumption was less pronounced among suspects in the earlier part of the week. In homicides occurring on Saturdays slightly less than half of the suspects had been drinking in the 12 hours prior to the alleged offence (47.8%). Victims who were killed on Saturdays were also more likely, than on other days of the week, to have consumed alcohol (39.8%).

TABLE 2.4
Day of week of offence by sex of suspect

	Sex of suspect					
	Male		Female		Total	
Day of week	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monday	189	11.9	38	13.4	227	12.1
Tuesday	184	11.6	38	13.4	222	11.8
Wednesday	172	10.8	30	10.6	202	10.8
Thursday	242	15.2	46	16.3	288	15.4
Friday	270	17.0	41	14.5	311	16.6
Saturday	322	20.2	46	16.3	368	19.6
Sunday	208	13.0	44	15.5	252	13.4
Not known	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.3
TOTAL	1,592	100.0	283	100.0	1,875	100.0

Methods and weapons

Tables 2.5 and 2.6 show the principal weapon utilised in the killings for the 19 year period from 1968 to 1986.

Unlike other aspects of homicide, the figures in Table 2.5 show that there is little difference in the types of weapons used to kill both sexes. That is, both male and female victims were more likely to be killed by a gun than any other single means (males, 35.5 per cent; females, 35.1 per cent). Slightly more females were bashed or strangled than males (females, 24.7 per cent; males, 22.1 per cent) and slightly more males than females were knifed to death (males, 21.5 per cent; females, 19.5 per cent). Other differences between the sexes were equally small.

TABLE 2.5

Weapons used by sex of victim

Weapons used	Sex of victim					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gun	428	35.5	239	35.1	667	35.2
Manual means (bashing/strangling etc.)	267	22.1	168	24.7	435	23.0
Knife	260	21.5	133	19.5	393	20.7
Axe or other heavy object	123	10.2	59	8.7	182	9.6
Other	129	10.7	82	12.0	217*	11.5
TOTAL	1,207	100.0	681	100.0	1,894	100.0

*Includes 6 victims of unknown sex.

TABLE 2.6

Weapons used by sex of suspect

Weapons used	Sex of suspect					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gun	498	31.3	58	20.5	556	29.7
Manual means (bashing/strangling etc.)	439	27.6	55	19.4	494	26.3
Knife	298	18.7	76	26.9	374	19.9
Axe or other heavy object	164	10.3	19	6.7	183	9.8
Other	193	12.1	75	26.5	268	14.3
TOTAL	1,592	100.0	283	100.0	1,875	100.0

Sex differences are more pronounced when the weapon used or the
method employed to kill is related to the sex of the suspect (Table
2.6). Almost one third (31.3%) of male suspects used a gun compared
to one in five female suspects (20.5%). Men were also more likely
than women to bash or strangle their victims (males, 27.6 per cent;
females, 19.4 per cent). Although, 18.7 per cent of male suspects
utilised a knife in the homicide, this was the weapon of choice of
26.9 per cent of female suspects.
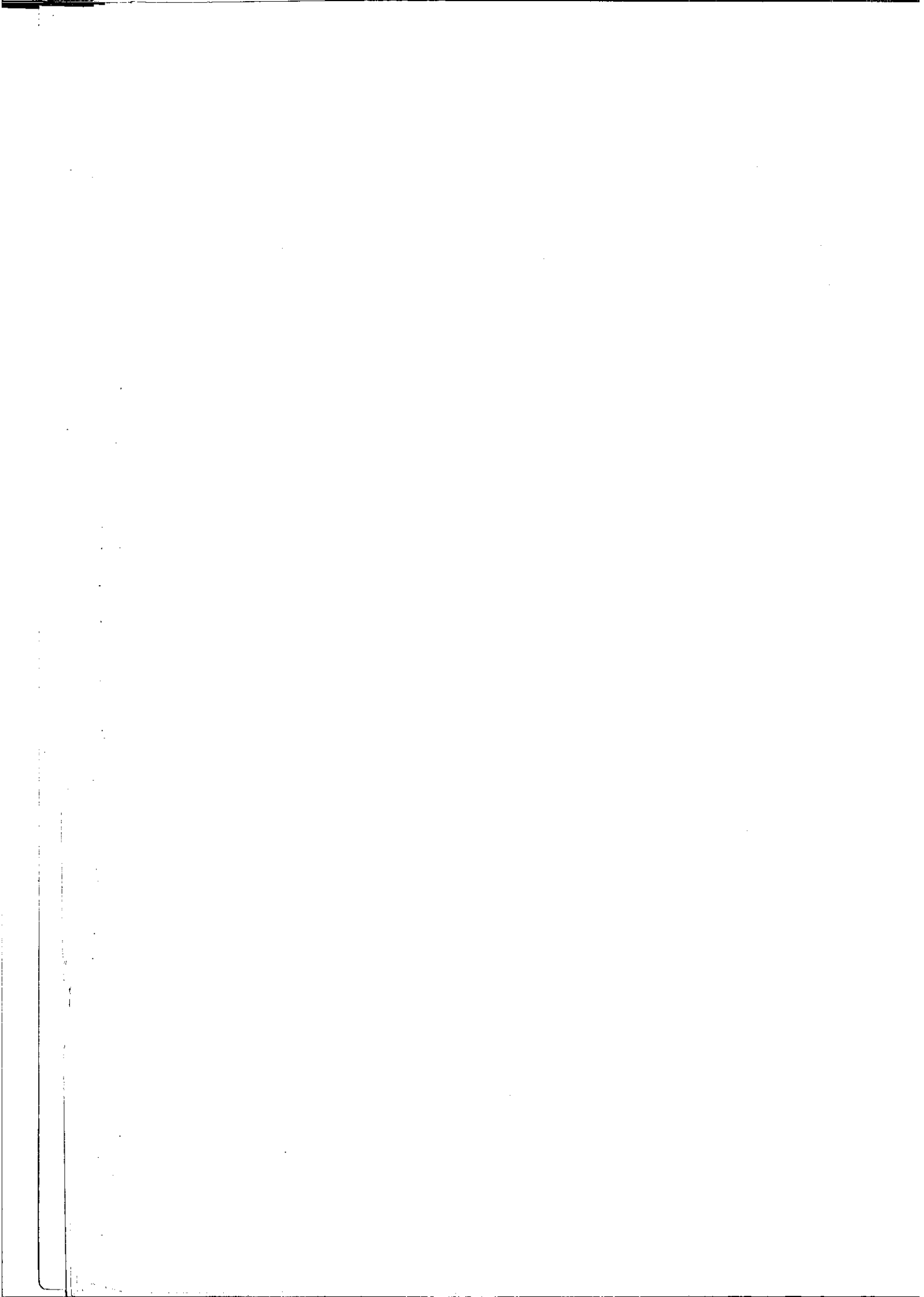
SECTION 3

SUSPECT — VICTIM RELATIONSHIP

Sex of suspect — victim pairs

The most common suspect — victim relationship in homicide was that between male suspect and male victim. More than half of the homicides fell into this category (56.0%). Furthermore, of all male victims, 83.2 per cent were killed by other males (see Table 3.1 and also Appendix IV).

However, even when the victim was female the male suspect was more frequently implicated than female suspects. Male suspects were involved in the deaths of female victims in 29.3 per cent of homicides, whereas female suspects were mentioned in only 3.4 per cent of homicides with female victims.

Men are thus overwhelmingly nominated as suspect in the killings of both males and females — 83.2 per cent of male, and 89.7 per cent of female victims were killed by men. There was no linear trend away from this pattern over the 19 years ($F = 1.83$, $p = 0.19$), i.e. the proportion of male suspects was neither increasing nor decreasing during this time.

TABLE 3.1
Sex of suspect by sex of victim, N.S.W. 1968 — 1986

Type of relationship*	1968 — 1986	
	No.	%
Male suspect — male deceased	1,145	56.0
Male suspect — female deceased	598	29.3
Female suspect — male deceased	230	11.3
Female suspect — female deceased	68	3.4
TOTAL	2,041**	100.0

*The figures are based on all offender—victim pairs, not principal offender—victim pairs.

**Excluded from total are 6 cases in which the sex of victim was not established in 1969.

Relationship of victim to suspect

As with rape (Bonney: 1985),[1] homicide victims frequently knew
their assailants on a quite intimate level, but the level of intimacy
varied according to the sex of the victim. Table 3.2 details the
relationship which existed between the victim and the suspect by the
sex of the victim.

The most common relationship was one of family connection
representing 42.9 per cent of homicides. Proportionately, however,
there were almost two and a half times more female victims than male
victims with family ties to their alleged killer (females, 68.0 per
cent; males, 28.4 per cent).

Male victims, on the other hand, were more often than women to be
killed by their mates or strangers. Men were killed by friends or
acquaintances in 26.7 per cent of cases and by strangers in 22.0 per
cent of homicides with male victims. By comparison, friends and
strangers each accounted for approximately 9 per cent of female
killings.

Differences between the sexes were not so pronounced where the
relationship between victim and suspect was either residential,
sexual or occupational. Together these categories of relationship
accounted for 18.2 per cent of male killings and 11.9 per cent of
female killings.

TABLE 3.2
Relationship of victim to suspect by sex of victim*

Relationship of victim to suspect	Sex of victim					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family	313	28.4	430	68.0	743	42.9
Friend/acquaintance	293	26.7	60	9.5	353	20.4
Stranger	241	22.0	57	9.0	298	17.2
Residential	99	9.0	24	3.8	123	7.1
Sexual	69	6.2	44	7.0	113	6.5
Occupational	34	3.0	7	1.1	41	2.4
Unknown	51	4.7	10	1.6	61	3.5
TOTAL	1,100	100.0	632	100.0	1,732	100.0

*Figures based on principal victim/suspect pairs and exclude
unsolved cases.

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[1]Bonney R., (1985). Crimes (Sexual Assault) Amendment Act 1981
Monitoring and Evaluation, Interim Report No. 1 - Characteristics of
the Complainant, the Defendant and the offence, N.S.W. Bureau of
Crime Statistics and Research, 1985.

When the relationship of the victim to the suspect was analysed in terms of the sex of the suspect (Table 3.3) the strong family orientation of women, both as victims and as alleged killers was firmly established. Relative to other types of homicide a larger proportion of women than men were killed by, but also killed, members of their family. In 80.7 per cent of homicides with female suspects the relationship to the victim was familial. For male suspects 36.5 per cent of homicides occurred in the family. Table 3.4 shows the various types of relationships involved in family killings.

It is only in the category of family killings, however, that the representation of females was proportionately greater than for male suspects. The proportion of men was more than three times higher than women in slayings of friends or acquaintances (males, 22.7 per cent; females, 6.8 per cent), and five and a half times higher in the slayings of strangers (males, 19.5 per cent; females, 3.6 per cent). Similarly, more males were involved in the killings of sexual lovers, rivals or the off-spring of a sexual partner than were women (males, 7.4 per cent; females, 1.2 per cent). Residential and occupational homicides accounted for 10.0 per cent of male killings and 6.0 per cent of female killings.

The rate per 100,000 population for the major categories of homicide (family, friend and stranger) are shown in Figure 7. A slight, but insignificant downward linear trend was shown in stranger homicides over the 19 years ($F = 1.043$, $p > 0.05$). No linear trend in any direction was detected in family killing ($F = .013$, $p > 0.05$).

TABLE 3.3
Relationship of victim to suspect by sex of suspect*

	Sex of suspect					
Relationship of victim to suspect	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family	542	36.5	201	80.7	743	42.9
Friend/acquaintance	336	22.7	17	6.8	353	20.4
Stranger	289	19.5	9	3.6	298	17.2
Residential	109	7.3	14	5.6	123	7.1
Sexual	110	7.4	3	1.2	113	6.5
Occupational	40	2.7	1	0.4	41	2.4
Not known	57	3.9	4	1.7	61	3.5
TOTAL	1,483	100.0	249	100.0	1,732	100.0

*Figures based on solved homicides and principal suspect-victim relationships.

TABLE 3.4
Relationship of victim to suspect by sex of suspect –
family killings*

Relationship of victim to suspect	Sex of suspect					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Spouse						
Legal	183	34.0	53	25.9	236	31.8
Defacto	120	22.3	47	23.0	167	22.5
Total spouse	303	56.3	100	48.9	403	54.3
Offspring						
Son	64	11.9	48	23.5	112	15.0
Daughter	41	7.7	38	18.6	79	10.7
Child – sex unknown	1	0.1	8	4.0	9	1.3
Total offspring	106	19.7	94	46.1	200	27.0
Parent						
Father	30	5.5	1	0.4	31	4.1
Mother	27	5.0	3	1.4	30	4.0
Total parent	57	10.5	4	1.8	61	8.1
Sibling						
Brother	19	3.5	3	1.4	22	3.0
Sister	5	1.0	–	–	5	0.6
Total sibling	24	4.5	3	1.4	27	3.6
In laws	21	4.0	1	0.4	22	3.0
Other family	27	5.0	3	1.4	30	4.0
TOTAL	538	100.0	205	100.0	743	100.0

*Principal relationships.

FIGURE 7

FIGURE 7
Victim-Suspect Relationship
Homicides in NSW 1968 - 1986
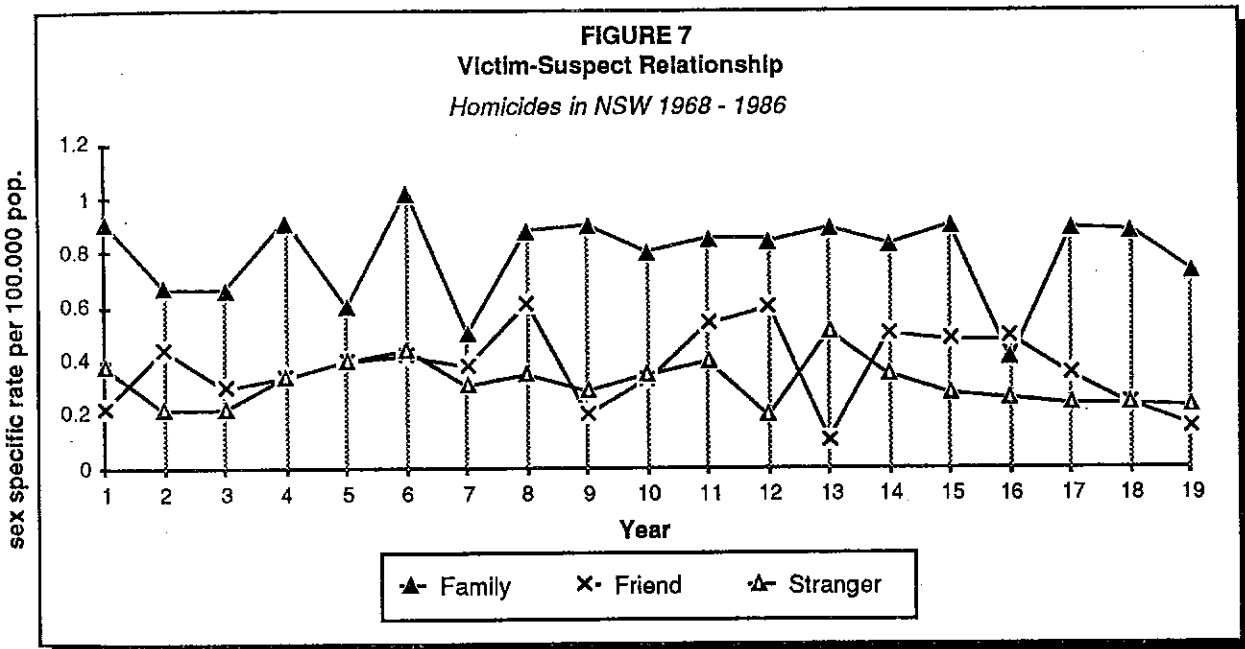
To summarise the above findings, it was found that where women killed it was more likely to be within the family — however, the vast majority of family homicides were committed by males. Males were most likely to kill and be killed within the family but also had homicidal links with many groups outside the family. Approximately, a quarter of males slew or were slain by people designated as either friends or acquaintances, and around one in four male homicides involved strangers either as victim or as perpetrator.

SECTION 4

CHILD KILLINGS

Of all homicides in our society, the killing of children attracts most public outcry and media attention, especially if the alleged assailant is a stranger to the child victim.

'Child killing' in this section, is defined as the homicide of a person 0 to 4 or 5 to 9 years of age. This is an older group than examined by Wallace (1986) which considered only the 0 to 4 age group.

Victims

In the period 1968 – 1986, 188 (9.9%) victims were aged 9 years or less at the time of the homicide. Most of the victims (157 or 8.3 per cent) were aged 4 years or less. Table 4.1 below shows the age of the victims.

TABLE 4.1
Age of child victims

Years	No.	%
Less than 1	76	40.4
1	20	10.7
2	23	12.2
3	25	13.2
4	13	7.0
5 to 9	31	16.5
TOTAL	188	100.0

Considered as two groups, those under 5 years and those between the ages of 5 and 9, the younger group was substantially more at risk of homicide than the older children with the greatest risk attaching to those children who had not turned one year. More than twice as many children under one were killed than in the entire 5 to 9 year age group.

Method of killing

Table 4.2 shows that most commonly the means used to kill children
were the fists or feet of the assailant. Slightly more than one in
four (26.0%) child victims were bashed to death in this way. Shooting
was the method of killing in 12.7 per cent of the younger group and
35.4 per cent of the 5 to 9 year olds. Where guns were used to kill
in this, as in all other victim age groupings, the suspect was almost
always male (90.0%).

TABLE 4.2
Method of killing child victims

Method	No.	%
Bashing fists/feet	48	26.0
Shot	31	16.8
Strangled/smothered	22	11.9
Drowned	17	9.1
Cause of death unclear	17	9.1
Stabbed	15	8.1
Neglect	13	7.0
Hit by object	7	3.8
Gassed	4	2.1
Pushed out window/off cliff	3	1.7
Burned	3	1.7
Stabbed/strangled/sexually assaulted	3	1.7
Poisoned	2	1.0
TOTAL	185*	100.0

*Figures do not add to total number of distinct victims because
figures in Table 4.2 are based on principal relationship
classification.

Relationship of victim to suspect

In each of the 19 years under consideration the overwhelming majority
of child homicide victims were killed by people known to them (see
Table 4.3). In 191, or 96.0 per cent, of total cases children in
this age group were killed by familiars. Most frequently these
familiars were tied to the victim by blood or loco-parental status
(87.0%). Acquaintances and neighbours accounted for the remaining
9.0 per cent of known assailants.

Children were rarely killed by strangers. There were eight stranger
killings in the 19 year period representing 4.0 per cent of total
killings in this age group. Even if the three unsolved child
killings (not included in these analyses) were all committed by
strangers the proportion of stranger killings would only be increased

by 1.5 per cent. In 13 of the 19 years under consideration there were no strangers implicated in the homicide of any child in this age group.

TABLE 4.3

Relationship of child victim to suspect by sex of suspect*

Relationship of victim to suspect	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Biological child	51	51.5	81	81.0	132	66.4
Child of de-facto spouse/ foster/stepchild	27	27.5	6	6.0	33	16.6
Other relative	4	4.0	4	4.0	8	4.0
Neighbour	4	4.0	2	2.0	6	3.0
Acquaintance	6	6.0	6	6.0	12	6.0
Stranger	7	7.0	1	1.0	8	4.0
TOTAL	99	100.0	100	100.0	199	100.0

*Figures based on all victim-suspect pairs.

Although females accounted for approximately 15 per cent of homicide suspects overall, they made up 55.2 per cent of suspects in child homicide. Table 4.4 shows the distribution of male and female suspects where the victim was aged nine years or less.

TABLE 4.4

Age of child victim by sex of suspect*

Sex of suspect	0 to 4		5 to 9		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	55	39.9	15	83.3	70	44.8
Female	83	60.1	3	16.7	86	55.2
TOTAL	138	100.0	18	100.0	156	100.0

*Figures based on distinct suspects and therefore do not equal number of distinct victims.

SECTION 5

MURDER-SUICIDE

Incidence

Between 1968 and 1986 there were 10,973[1] suicides in New South Wales and, during the same period, there were 1,894 homicides of which 159 were accompanied by the suicide death of the person suspected of the homicide. In a further 52 cases, the suspect attempted, but did not succeed in killing him/herself after the homicide.

Approximately one in nine (11.1%) homicides in New South Wales over the 19 year period featured the suicide, or the attempted suicide of the alleged killer (see Table 5.1). Most suicide attempts, whether successful or unsuccessful, occurred before the arrest of the suspect for the homicide in question. The usual pattern in this type of homicide was for the body of the presumed assailant to be found at the same time and at the same place as the presumed murder victims.

Sex of suicidal suspect

The ratio of male to female suicidal suspects was 5:1, but was higher where the suicide attempt was successful (7.8:1).

TABLE 5.1
Type of suicide by sex of suspect

	Sex of suspect					
	Male		Female		Total	
Type of suicide	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Successful prior to arrest ...	125	71.0	14	40.0	139	65.9
Successful after arrest	16	9.0	4	11.4	20	9.4
Total successful	141	80.0	18	51.4	159	75.3
Attempt prior to arrest	30	17.0	14	40.0	44	20.9
Attempt after arrest	5	3.0	3	8.6	8	3.8
TOTAL	176	100.0	35	100.0	211	100.0

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[1]Australian Bureau of Statistics figures were available until 1985. Figures for 1986 were estimated on the assumption that there were the same number of suicides as in 1985.

Relationship of victim to suspect

Table 5.2 shows that where homicide is accompanied by suicide, the homicide victim is usually closely related to the suspect. In 75 per cent of cases the victim was a member of the suspect's family whether by blood or marriage. Where the suicidal suspect was female the homicide victim was almost invariably a family member (93.0%).

The other types of relationship which existed between the victim and the suspect are also shown in Table 5.2. Where the victim was a stranger to the suspect the homicide was rarely followed by suicide (2.6%).

TABLE 5.2
Relationship between suicidal murders
and their victims by sex of suspect

Relationship of victim to suspect	Sex of suspect					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family	165	71.7	40	93.0	205	75.0
Sexual	37	16.1	0	0.0	37	13.6
Occupational/ residential	8	3.5	1	2.3	9	3.3
Friend/acquaintance	10	4.3	2	4.7	12	4.4
Stranger	7	3.0	0	0.0	7	2.6
Unknown	3	1.4	0	0.0	3	1.1
TOTAL	230	100.0	43	100.0	273	100.0

SECTION 6

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Wallace's study of homicide (1986) examined homicides between 1968 and 1981. To these data were added details of homicides which occurred between 1982 and 1986. Based on these combined figures the following characteristics of homicide emerged.

1.   Rate of homicide

No upward linear trend was established over the 19 year period in the overall rate of homicide victimisation.

2.   Characteristics of victims and suspects

(a)   Sex

The majority (63.7%) of victims were male as were the vast majority of suspects (84.9%). With neither victims nor suspects was there any linear trend over the 19 years. That is, the proportion of males was neither increasing nor decreasing over time.

(b)   Age

During the period under review age distribution was not related to sex of victim. Victimization for both sexes declined with age so that approximately 41.6 per cent of victims were aged less than 30, 32.4 per cent between 30 and 50, and 26.0 per cent were in the 50+ age bracket.

Wallace integrated her 1968 to 1981 data with two earlier homicide studies to produce figures on age covering a 49 year period (1932 - 1981). Over this period she found an upward linear trend was apparent in the younger aged suspects - those between 15 and 44. This trend was not found when only the 1968 - 1986 period was examined.

(c)   Usual occupation

The quality of the data relating to both the victims' and the suspects' occupations was sufficiently flawed to preclude proportional comparisons being made with the general community. The largest single category of occupation for both suspect and victim was unemployed (suspect, 40.7 per cent; victim, 21.8 per cent).

(d)   Aboriginality

Aboriginal suspects and victims were over-represented when compared
to Census figures for their overall numbers in the New South Wales
population.   However, the true level of over-representation may be
lower given that a number of writers have suggested that the
Aboriginal population is much higher than officially stated.

3.   Elements of the homicide act

(a)   Spatial patterns

Numerically, homicide victimization was greater in urban areas than
in rural areas but when expressed as a rate per 100,000 of population
there was little difference (urban, 1.9; rural, 2.0).

The mean rate of killing by strangers was higher in urban than in
rural areas, 0.29 and 0.18 per 100,000 population, respectively.   The
mean rate of family homicides per 100,000 was 0.93 for rural areas
and 0.68 for urban regions.

(b)   Urban homicides

The Sydney Metropolitan Area accounted for 87.1 per cent of urban
homicides and within the Area 35.9 per cent occurred in the Central
Sydney division.   Even within the Central Division a small group of
suburbs furnished 46 per cent of the killings.

(c)   Location

In almost half the total homicides (48.4%) the victim was killed
where he/she lived.   The proportion of home deaths varied with sex —
with proportionately more women being killed at home than men.
Within the home, the bedroom was the most common homicide location
for both sexes.

After the home, the street was the most common single location for
the commission of homicide.   However, both numerically and
proportionately more men than women were killed on the streets and
more often male deaths involved stranger assailants.

(d)   Day of homicide

Slightly more than half of the victims (51.0%) were killed on
Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Slightly less than half of the suspects who killed on Saturdays
(47.8%) and victims who were killed on Saturdays had consumed
alcohol, in the 12 hours prior to the homicide.

(e)   Methods and weapons used to kill

Slightly more than a third of male and female victims were shot. The
gun was the most common single cause of death for both sexes. Sex
differences were more pronounced, however, when the weapon used to
kill was analysed by the sex of the suspect. Almost a third of male
suspects (31.3%) used a gun to kill compared to only one in five
female suspects (20.5%). More than a quarter of female suspects
(26.9%) used a knife compared to 18.7 per cent of male suspects.

4.   Suspect-victim relationship

(a)   Sex of suspect-victim relationship

The most common suspect-victim relationship in homicide was that
between male suspect and male victim. Of the males who died in the
19 year study 83.2 per cent were killed by other males. Similarly
males were the suspects in 89.7 per cent of the female deaths. There
was no linear trend away from this pattern over the 19 years, the
proportion of male suspects neither increasing nor decreasing during
this time.

(b)   Victim-suspect relationship

Women were over-represented both as victim and accused in family
homicide but were infrequently involved in other types of homicide.
Males were also most likely to kill and be killed within the family
but also had homicidal links with many other groups outside the
family. Approximately, a quarter of males slew or were slain by
people designated as either friends or acquaintances, and around one
in four male homicides involved strangers either as victim or as
perpetrator.

5.   Child killings

For this study a child victim was one aged 9 years or less. Such
victims make up a small proportion of total homicides. Between 1968
and 1986 there were 188 victims (9.9 per cent of total victims) in
this age group.

Children were rarely killed by strangers (4.0%) (in 13 of the 19
years under consideration there was no stranger implicated in the
homicide of any child in this age group). The suspect was, in most
cases, the biological parent (66.4%) or a foster or step-parent
(16.6%).

6.   Murder — suicide

Approximately 1 in 9 homicides (11.1%) in New South Wales over the 19
year period featured the suicide, or the attempted suicide of the
alleged killer.

Conclusion

The patterns of homicide offences in New South Wales have been
examined in this report from 1968 — 1986. No evidence was found
which suggests that the overall patterns have undergone any
significant change during this period.

APPENDIX I

HOMICIDE STUDY – POLICE FILE DATA SHEET

FILE IDENTIFICATION

1 = one suspect/one victim
2 = one suspect/multiple victims
3 = multiple suspects/one victim
4 = multiple suspects/multiple victims
5 = no suspect/one victim
6 = no suspect/multiple victims

Homicide file year – year known to police

Police file number

Initial charge –

1 = murder
2 = manslaughter

Multiple accused identification –

0 = 1 accused only
1 = if more than one accused – first accused
2 = if more than one accused – second accused etc.

Multiple victim identification –

0 = one victim only
1 = if more than one victim – first victim
2 = if more than one victim – second victim etc.

WHERE THERE ARE MULTIPLE ACCUSED AND ONE VICTIM A SEPARATE SCHEDULE SHOULD BE FILLED OUT FOR EACH ACCUSED (I.E. ACCUSED AND VICTIM INFORMATION).

1. How many accused? (enter number)

WHERE THERE ARE MULTIPLE VICTIMS AND ONE ACCUSED A SEPARATE SCHEDULE SHOULD BE FILLED OUT FOR EACH VICTIM (I.E. BOTH ACCUSED AND VICTIM INFORMATION).

4. How many victims? (enter number)

SUSPECT/ACCUSED CHARACTERISTICS

2. Age at time of offence (enter age of last birthday)

3. Sex (1 = male; 2 = female)

4. Address (postcode) _____

_____

5. Usual occupation (record) _____

6. Employed at time of offence? (1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = d/k)

7. Country of birth (postcode)

8. Aboriginal descent? (1 = yes; 2 = no, not known/mentioned)

9. Marital status –

01 = single	07 = married/separated and defacto
02 = separated	08 = divorced and defacto
03 = divorced	09 = widowed and defacto
04 = widowed	10 = defacto separated
05 = married	99 = not known
06 = defacto	

10. Number of children living with accused (enter number) –

11 = nil
99 = not known

11a. Suicide following offence –

1 = attempt following offence prior to arrest
2 = attempt following arrest
3 = successful following offence prior to arrest
4 = successful following arrest
5 = no attempt
6 = not known (use this code when no arrest made)

11b. If not Australian born, how many years resident in Australia (enter years)

00 = less than one year
88 = not applicable
77 = not applicable, visiting Australia only
99 = not known

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

2.   Relationship to suspect/s (postcode)

3.   Length of relationship (enter years) –

     00 = less than 1 year
     88 = not applicable
     99 = not known

4.   If separated, length of separation (enter in months) –

     00 = less than 1 month
     88 = not applicable
     99 = not known

5.   Age at time of offence (age last birthday)

6.   Sex (1 = male; 2 = female)

7.   Address (postcode)   _____

     _____

8.   Usual occupation (postcode)   _____

9.   Employed at time of offence?   (1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = d/k)

10. Country of birth (postcode)

11. Aboriginal descent (1 = yes; 2 = no, not known/mentioned)

12. Marital status –

     01 = single   07 = married/separated and defacto
     02 = separated   08 = divorced and defacto
     03 = divorced   09 = widowed and defacto
     04 = widowed   10 = defacto separated
     05 = married   99 = not known
     06 = defacto

OFFENCE CHARACTERISTICS

1.   Time of offence (24 hour clock) – If unknown give verbal
     description

2.   Day of week –

    1 = Sunday   5 = Thursday
    2 = Monday   6 = Friday
    3 = Tuesday   7 = Saturday
    4 = Wednesday

3.   Date of offence

4.   Location of offence (postcode)

5.   Geographical location of offence (record fully) –

    _____

    _____

    _____

6.   Method: see notes and record fully –

    _____

    _____

    _____

7.   Alcohol and/or drugs in 12 hours prior to offence

8.   Victim precipitation –

    1 = first blow/cut struck by suspect
    2 = first blow/cut struck by victim
    3 = not known who struck first blow
    4 = first blow/cut struck by a co-accused
    5 = not known/impossible if co-accused struck first
    6 = strong doubt about any blow being struck

9.   Charge –

    1 = murder
    2 = manslaughter
    3 = other (specify)
    4 = not applicable – murder suspect dead
    5 = not applicable – manslaughter suspect dead
    6 = not applicable – murder suspect not apprehended
    7 = not applicable – manslaughter suspect not apprehended

      DISTINCT SUSPECT NUMBER
      DISTINCT VICTIM NUMBER
      PRINCIPAL RELATIONSHIP NUMBER
      (All above coded 0 or 1)

APPENDIX II

Rate per 100,000 of N.S.W. Population by Sex of Suspect

Year	Male No.	Male Rate per 100,000	Female No.	Female Rate per 100,000	Total No.	Total Rate per 100,000
1968	70	3.1	14	0.6	84	1.9
1969	55	2.4	11	0.4	66	1.4
1970	61	2.6	12	0.5	73	1.6
1971	88	3.8	10	0.4	98	2.1
1972	80	3.4	13	0.5	93	2.0
1973	103	4.4	26	1.1	129	2.7
1974	76	3.2	7	0.2	83	1.7
1975	96	4.0	24	1.0	120	2.5
1976	79	3.3	9	0.3	88	1.8
1977	95	3.9	14	0.5	109	2.2
1978	92	3.7	17	0.6	109	2.2
1979	86	3.4	23	0.9	109	2.1
1980	89	3.5	22	0.8	111	2.1
1981	109	4.2	12	0.4	121	2.3
1982	100	3.8	16	0.6	116	2.2
1983	80	3.0	12	0.4	92	1.7
1984	81	3.0	13	0.4	94	1.7
1985	80	2.9	16	0.5	96	1.7
1986	72	2.6	12	0.4	84	1.5

APPENDIX III

Rate per 100,000 of N.S.W. Population by Sex of Victim

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Rate per 100,000	No.	Rate per 100,000	No.	Rate per 100,000
1968	48	2.1	39	1.7	87	1.9
1969	41	1.8	22	0.9	69*	1.5
1970	47	2.0	28	1.2	75	1.6
1971	54	2.3	41	1.7	95	2.0
1972	59	2.5	26	1.1	85	1.8
1973	77	3.2	39	1.6	116	2.4
1974	58	2.4	24	1.0	82	1.7
1975	77	3.2	28	1.1	105	2.2
1976	55	2.3	45	1.8	100	2.0
1977	68	2.8	39	1.6	107	2.2
1978	56	2.2	55	2.2	111	2.3
1979	71	2.8	38	1.5	109	2.1
1980	72	2.8	37	1.4	109	2.1
1981	91	3.5	32	1.2	123	2.3
1982	73	2.8	42	1.6	115	2.2
1983	66	2.5	26	0.9	92	1.7
1984	67	2.5	41	1.5	108	2.0
1985	72	2.6	39	1.4	111	2.0
1986	55	2.0	40	1.4	95	1.7

*Includes 6 cases in which sex of baby victim was not stated.

APPENDIX IV

FIGURE 8 (a)
Reported Homicides 1968-1986
Male Suspect and Sex of Victim by Year

Figure 8 (b)
Reported Homicides 1968-1986
Female Suspect and Sex of Victim by Year