

REDUCING MURDERS IN THE BAHAMAS

A Strategic Plan Based on Empirical Research



Chaswell A. Hanna

*This study is dedicated to the family,
friends and loved ones of murder victims
in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.*

Conventional wisdom tells us that murder cannot be prevented, that the police and community are relatively powerless. Summit participants do not accept conventional wisdom. They believe that by changing the traditional approach, homicide can be controlled more successfully.

... IACP Murder Summit, November 1994

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again
and expecting different results.

... Albert Einstein

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Author's e-mail: channa@cob.edu.bs OR channa@rovalbahamaspolice.org

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Message

Hon. Tommy Turnquest, MP
Minister of National Security

The crime of murder is one that has always been regarded as the most serious of all criminal offences. The fluctuation of local incidents over the last few years has sparked national attention and remains a top priority for The Ministry of National Security and the entire government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The first line of defense against crime is the socialization of youths to internalize norms against illegal behavior. Thus families, schools, and religious institutions are the key crime fighters. Unfortunately, these entities cannot do it alone and the police, as formal agents of social control, must assist.

Policy decisions can be extremely effective if informed and guided by empirical research. The research and strategy presented in this study will add value to policy decisions regarding the safety of our citizens and visitors.

I wish to thank Commissioner Ellison Greenslade, Deputy Commissioner Marvin Dames and the Executive Management Team of the Royal Bahamas Police Force for continuing to encourage police officers throughout the rank and file of the Force to offer input in the fight against crime.

I also wish to give special thanks to the Office of Research at the College of The Bahamas for extending a research grant toward this most timely research study. Finally, I wish to thank Sgt. Hanna for continuing to put his skills and expertise to use and make contributions to the continued development of the Force and safety of our nation.

Message

Mr. Ellison Greenslade, QPM, MBA
Commissioner of Police



Crime prevention and reduction efforts are directly dependent on the nature of the relationship between a nation's police agency and the public which they serve. Over the last decade, the adoption of Problem-Oriented Policing has changed the way law enforcement agencies approach crime prevention. The Royal Bahamas Police Force has recognized the value of this philosophy and continues to foster partnerships with public, private, international and educational institutions with the intent to address the root causes of crime.

As noted in my Policing Plan for 2010, the offence of murder tops the Force's list of priority crimes of which it is vital to compile accurate information about its incidence. The Plan also speaks to fostering a closer working relationship with the College of The Bahamas and other tertiary institutions. This relationship will be characterized by cooperative survey research and making crime data available to academic researchers for analysis. This study represents one aspect of this new partnership as we continue to deepen the scope of policy decisions of the Executive Management Team.

I offer thanks to the Research Advisory Board of the College of The Bahamas for providing support for this study. I congratulate Sgt. Hanna and other members of our noble organization who continue to put their skills and talents to constructive use and offer contributions in various capacities to make The Bahamas a safer place to live, work, visit, and play.



Message

Janyne Hodder
President
College of The Bahamas (2006 - 2010)

Crime and violence are robbing us of our most precious resource - our human capital. In 2009, 85 homicides were committed, a record for The Bahamas up to that time. I congratulate adjunct faculty in the School of Social Sciences, Sgt. Chaswell Hanna, for producing this book, *'Reducing Murders in The Bahamas, A Strategic Plan Based on Empirical Research'*. The information will be useful for students of criminal justice, law and other researchers. It will also hopefully be used to inform public policies and programs to address crime and violence.

Research is a fundamental part of The College's mission and, as such, we have increased our funding and support for an expanded research agenda. In fact, Sgt. Hanna is among several other faculty who received grants from the Research Advisory Board for the 2009-2010 academic year.

The sustainable development of The Bahamas depends upon the availability of highly skilled human capital. The overwhelming challenges that we face as a nation and a global community - challenges like global warming, poverty alleviation and crime and violence - will only be successfully overcome with well-educated people making thoughtful and smart choices.

I applaud Sgt. Hanna for his book and hope his example will inspire others to create knowledge to help support and drive national development.

About the Author



**Sgt. Chaswell A. Hanna,
A.A. B.Sc. (Hons), MCJ**

Sergeant 2666 Chaswell A. Hanna enlisted in the Royal Bahamas Police Force in August of 2002 and won the Baton of Honor for the best recruit. He received an Associate of Arts Degree in Law & Criminal Justice from the College of the Bahamas in 1997, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice & Military Science from Northern Michigan University in 1999 and a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement from the University of South Carolina in 2002. He is presently a doctoral candidate at the Nova Southeastern University, pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D.) in Organizational Leadership with a minor in Conflict Resolution.

Sgt. Hanna spent much of his policing career attached to the Central Detective Unit's Homicide Squad as a homicide detective. He also spent 2 years as the Officer-in-Charge of the Force's Research & Planning Unit. He is currently attached to the Strategic Policy & Planning Branch.

Sgt. Hanna has served as an Adjunct Lecturer at the College of The Bahamas since 2003. Under the School of Social Sciences, he lectures in Criminal Justice, Criminology and Sociology. As a graduate student, Sgt. Hanna had the opportunity to serve as an Adjunct Professor at the University of South Carolina's College of Criminal Justice, providing instruction in Criminology.

He has authored several books including *Homicide in The Bahamas, 1991-2003: A Descriptive Research Study*. His future research interests include police shootings, the sub-culture of policing in The Bahamas, suicides and school violence.

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Preface

This study is a comprehensive analysis of local murder and involves three main objectives. First, Chapters 1 through 6 present a descriptive analysis of murder incidents that occurred within The Commonwealth of The Bahamas between 2005 and 2009. This time frame will be referred to as the *study period*. A host of variables including incidence, victims, suspects, motives, detection and conviction have been collected and analyzed from case files and presented. Although specifically focused on the study period, data for other years and time periods will also be discussed and duly indicated.

Second, Chapters 7 and 8 present a comprehensive review of literature on the issue of homicide prevention and way by which detection rates can be improved. Best practices and innovative preventative programs devised and/or adopted by law enforcement agencies throughout the world are examined and discussed. Careful attention is given to the results of scholarly evaluation of such programs to determine the extent of their effectiveness.

Finally, Chapter 9 presents a *Murder Reduction Strategy* for The Bahamas based on the findings of this study. This strategic plan proposes the introduction of several police initiatives, policy adjustments, legislative amendments and community-based programs to reduce specific types of murders. The strategy also aims to add value to the decision making process of police administrators and executives.

It must be noted that the recommendations offered in the Murder Reduction Strategy are based exclusively on the findings of this study and associated research and may not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or positions of the Ministry of National Security, the Royal Bahamas Police Force or the College of The Bahamas.

Foreword

High crime and violence rates present a paramount challenge to the development of a country as they directly affect human welfare in the short-term and economic growth in the long term. Unfortunately, the rise in violent crime has been among the top issues facing The Bahamas today. As you will read, law abiding citizens are least likely to become murder victims. Nevertheless, the fear of crime remains the most important issue on the minds of Bahamians, surpassing the recent global economic recession. Moreover, the direct effect that crime and violence have on victims is widespread.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, murder rates in the Caribbean that average 30 per 100,000 are higher than any other region of the world. The Caribbean is especially vulnerable to crime for two main reasons. First, it suffers from the disadvantage of being situated between the world's source of cocaine (South America) and the primary consumer market (US). Second, the widespread availability of guns, primarily due to the drug trade, has caused significant criminal justice resources to be diverted from preventative programs to interdiction efforts. However, sound policy making at the national and regional levels can make a difference in changing the regional culture of violence.

Murder figures are considered to be the most reliable indicator of the violent crime situation in a country as most murders come to the attention of the police. As a result, sociologists use a country's murder rate as a social barometer. Murder incidents, however, should not be seen as solitary incidents but as fundamental indicators of social and economic conditions including race, poverty, and social isolation. There has been an over-reliance on the criminal justice system's approach to crime reduction to the detriment of other complementary approaches which can be effective in reducing certain types of crime and violence. Murder research has focused on how macro-level changes in demographics, the economy, drug distribution, and criminal justice policies are connected to changes in murder rates at specific time periods. Indeed, the incidence of murder is merely a symptom of deep rooted social problems that have manifested itself through the trafficking of guns, the drug trade and the back-log of criminal cases. As you will read, these three factors have contributed, by a large extent, to the increasing level of violent crime. Thus, any strategy aimed at reducing violence must address these factors in order to be successful.

The Bahamas is not the only nation to experience a murder problem and probably will not be the last. Fortunately, crime and violence are not immutable as punishments that are swift, certain and severe can have an effective deterrent effect. Other jurisdictions continue to use research to assist in the development and evaluation of crime prevention policies. Amidst claims of widespread success, criminal justice scholars have spent time carefully evaluating these initiatives to ensure that findings did not occur by chance.

Reducing murders requires different approaches and innovative tactics in order to produce tangible results. Successful interventions must be evidence based, grounded on a clear diagnostic about types of violence and risk factors, and carefully evaluated to inform future actions. Interventions that are void of such capacities merely address the symptoms of a crime problem rather than its root causes. It is acknowledged that all of the recommendations may not be readily accepted as some require bold shifts in local criminal justice policies, while others necessitate constitutional amendments. Nevertheless, the recommendations are also intended to cause policy makers and police executives to think 'out of the box' and consider pioneering efforts toward crime reduction. While it may be easy to find reasons why new approaches cannot work, progressive organizations focus on finding ways in which they can.

INCIDENCE

Key Facts at a Glance

- *The 85 murders reported in 2009 were the highest ever reported for The Bahamas.*
- *The Bahamas' murder rate ranks 14th out of a survey of 142 nations.*
- *The Bahamas had more than three times as many homicides as the US (per capita).*
- *The Caribbean's murder rate of 18.1 (per capita) is higher than North America, Europe or Asia.*

Chapter 1

Introduction

The offence of murder can be defined as a high-visibility crime. It is taken very seriously by the news media and members of the general public, who both closely monitor its occurrence on a regular basis (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Erickson (1981) argued that what newspapers choose as exceptional or newsworthy was predicated on an assessment of what was morally acceptable at the time. Since members of the general public consistently rank homicide as the most serious crime, the news media devote inordinate attention to its occurrence (Blau, 1993; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Ermann & Lundman, 2002; Meyers, 1997:90).

Researchers have spent time trying to determine factors that impact fluctuations of murder rates. Several studies indicated that murder rates varied greatly by time and geographic location (Cohen & Tita, 1999; O'Brien, 2003). For example, homicide rates in Chicago, Illinois fluctuated between neighborhoods based on the intensity of poverty and social cohesion (Morenoff et al., 2001). Homicide patterns also differ according to the time of day and season (Tennenbaum & Fink, 1994). Time of day is associated with a number of routine activities including going out at night for social activities. Moreover, lifestyle activities are correlated to the risk of personal victimization by increasing a person's exposure to violent offenders (Felson, 1994; Roundtree et al., 1994). Altogether, there is a wealth of knowledge that has been generated on the correlates and characteristics of homicide incidents (McDonald, et al. 2005).

The Dark Figure of Crime

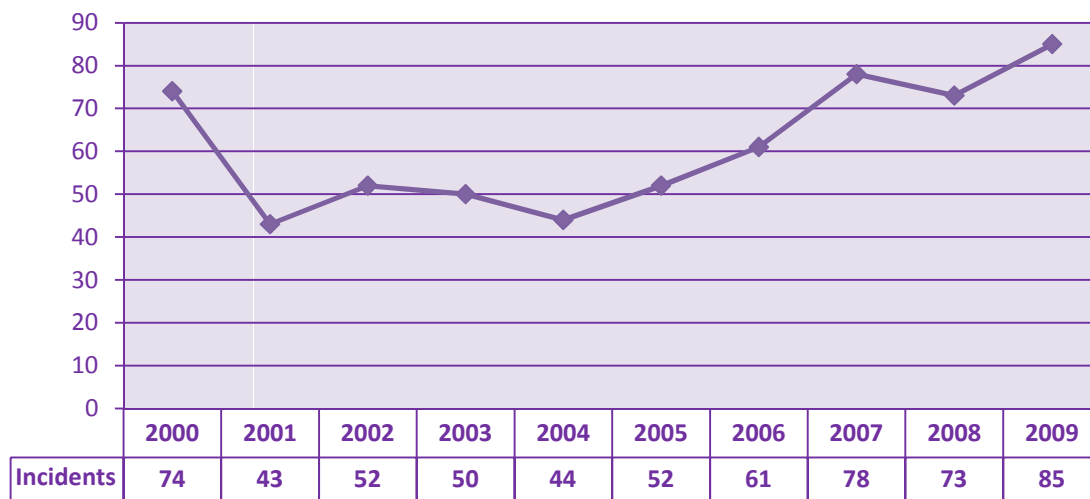
One of the major shortcomings of official police statistics in general is that they do not account for unreported or unidentified crimes. Early European criminologists used the phrase *dark figure of crime* to refer to the number of criminal offenses that had seemingly escaped public notice. It was therefore assumed that for every offense that came to the attention of authorities, there were also an unspecified number of undisclosed crimes. Kennedy (1998) argued that most crimes were neither reported to nor observed by police. Modern crime collection methods, however, seek to gain a more precise and accurate account of the number of criminal offenses. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collected by the United States' Bureau of Justice Statistics, for example, focuses its attention on persons who have been victims of criminal offenses but failed to report their victimizations. The NCVS differs from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), which compiles reported crime data.

Although easier for other categories of crime, determining an accurate figure showing the incidence of murder can present its own unique intricacies. The challenge in determining the exact number of murders comes as a result of various classifications of death. According to the Penal Code of The Bahamas, murder is the intentional and unlawful taking of a person's life. For the purpose of this study, the words "homicide" and "murder" are used interchangeably and take on the legal definition of murder in The Bahamas. Other categories include deaths described as *sudden*, *suspicious*, *accidental* or *suicidal*. The determination of an official classification is typically based on the findings of the crime scene and facts of the investigation. The crucial question, however, becomes just how many deaths not classified as murders were in fact murders. An answer of zero cannot be reasonably assumed. The unit of analysis in this research will be limited to reported cases officially classified as murder by the police.

Murder Incidence in The Bahamas

The annual number of local homicides over the last decade produced an interesting pattern. As shown in Figure 1.1, the annual number of incidents remained virtually the same between 2001 and 2005 following a notable decrease from 2000. Beginning in 2004, however, incidents gradually increased and peaked in 2009 with 85 incidents, the highest number ever recorded in The Bahamas. The average number of murders during the first 5 years of the decade increased from 53 to 70 in the last 5 years. Figures for the last decade indicate an average of 61 murders each year. The inconsistent pattern and sharp increases in murders over the last decade is normally viewed by criminologists as an indication that authorities have not exercised a consistent level of control over the offence. In fact, the only appearance of consistency in the numbers appeared to have been between 2001 and 2005.

Figure 1.1 Bahamas Homicide Incidents (2000-2009)



It must also be noted that the number of murders reported annually could have been notably higher considering the incidence of other serious offenses. The 493 shootings, 1,119 stabbings and 21 attempted murders reported during the study period (2005-2009) all had the potential to result in a murder. Some may argue that early medical attention and the location of the wound are the only reasons why the murder count was not significantly higher. It is also worth mentioning that annual fluctuations of these other violent crimes matched murder trends. Hence, a year marked by an increase in murder also marked an increase in other violent crimes.

This finding is probably why many experts view the offence of murder as confrontations that escalate along a violence continuum ending in death. Moreover, a number of researchers have argued that social correlates and the dynamics of murders tended to be identical to those of other forms of violence (Fyfe et al., 1997; Harries, 1990). As Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) pointed out, many violent interactions occurred which, although not resulting in murder, were very similar in etiology and intent. They argued that the difference between a murder and an assault may simply be the intervention of a bystander, the accuracy of a gun, the weight of a frying pan, the speed of an ambulance or the availability of a trauma center. Simply put, many murders can be appropriately considered as deadly assaults.

The Murder Rate

The growing number of local murders recorded annually has left members of the Bahamian public with the view that there are simply too many occurring in The Bahamas considering its relatively small population. As a result, there is a continuing need to compare and contrast the incidence of murder in The Bahamas with other countries and other population sizes. For such comparisons to be made, a homicide *rate* must be generated for The Bahamas. The murder rate is a statistical tool researchers use to accurately compare and contrast the incidence of murder among different countries. This figure is different from the *number* of murder incidents and is calculated as a function of the population of the particular county or jurisdiction of interest. Murder rates are typically quoted per 100,000 and generated using the equation shown below. To accommodate smaller or larger populations, the rate can also be expressed per 1,000,000, 10,000 or 1,000 by simply making the necessary substitution in the equation.

Murder Rate Equation

$$\frac{\text{Number of Murders}}{\text{Population}} \times \frac{100,000}{1} = \text{Murder Rate (per 100,000)}$$

The Bahamas' Murder Rate

As indicated by the equation, a country's population must be taken into account when calculating its murder rate. According to projections following the 2000 census, the population of The Bahamas increased from 303,600 in 2000 to 342,400 in 2009 (DOS, 2002). Using each incremental annual projection, the murder rate for each year during the past decade was calculated and is displayed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Bahamas' Homicide Rates (2000-2009)

YEAR	POPULATION	INCIDENTS	RATE
2000	303,600	74	24.4
2001	307,800	43	14.0
2002	312,100	52	16.7
2003	316,900	50	15.8
2004	320,800	44	13.7
2005	325,200	52	16.0
2006	329,500	61	18.5
2007	334,000	78	23.4
2008	338,300	73	21.6
2009	342,400	85	24.8

(DOS, 2002)

The average murder rate for The Bahamas over the last decade was 18.8. This means that during the last decade, almost 19 out of every 100,000 Bahamians became victims of murder. This rate is 2 points higher than the average murder rate of 16.7 observed between 1991 and 2003 (Hanna, 2005). It must be noted that a higher number of murder incidents for a particular year does not necessarily yield a higher murder rate when compared to another year. For example, the year 2007 recorded a higher number of murder incidents than 2000, even though that year had a higher rate. This disparity can be explained by the fact that the population during 2000 was less than that of 2007.

Comparison to Other Countries

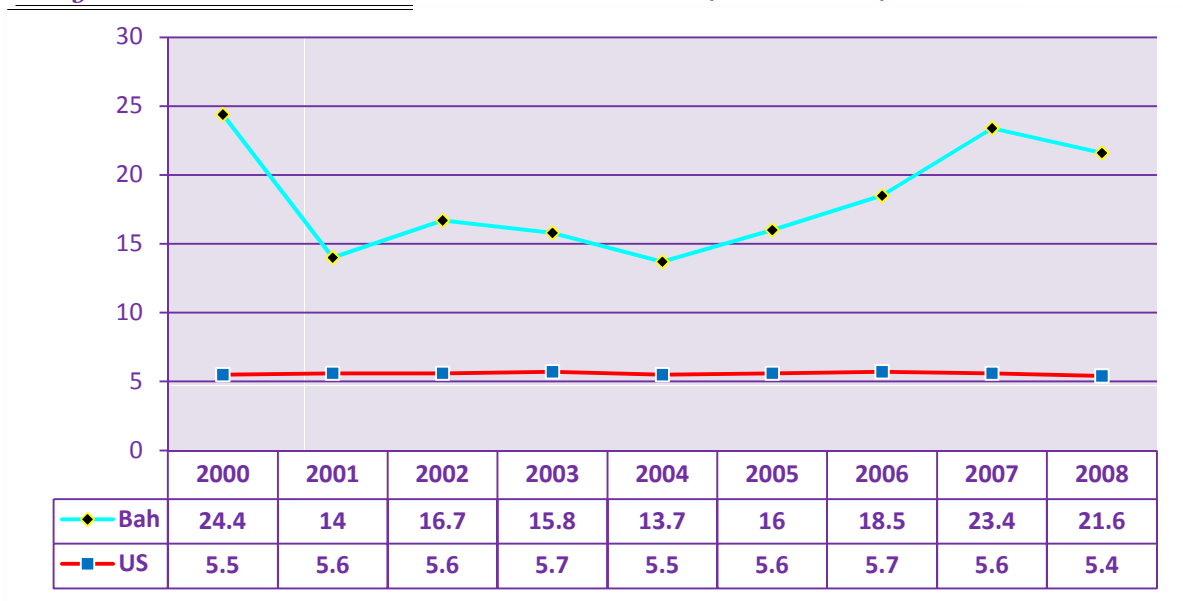
Now that murder rates for The Bahamas have been generated, local rates can be compared to other countries' around the world. However, one must be careful when comparing a country's rate with others as its reliability may vary. In fact, comparing crime rates among countries is difficult because of the differences in jurisprudence, reporting and crime classifications. This is largely due to the fact that the legal definition of the word homicide or murder differs from one country to the next. For example, England & Wales' homicide rate includes the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide while Scotland's homicide rates only include murder and culpable homicide (Richards, 1999). The United States' homicide rate includes murder and non-negligent manslaughter. While definitions vary from one jurisdiction to the next, homicide rates remain a useful comparative tool for crime experts in their research activities.

United States

After notable increases in violent crimes during the 1960s and early 1970s, US trends and patterns remained fairly stable for about 25 years (Lane, 1997). In 1980, however, the US murder rate peaked at 10.7 (per 100,000) and has gradually declined ever since. By the mid-1980s, a number of urban areas also experienced dramatic increases in homicides. The incidents were attributed mostly to the advent of crack cocaine and violence associated with attempts to control the growing market (Baumer et al., 1998). Following the mid-1990s, dramatic reductions in murder and other violent crimes have been observed at the local and national level. The US murder rate dipped in 1998 to 6.1 (per 100,000) and has remained fairly constant ever since (UCR, 2008).

For the last 9 years, the US murder rate remained virtually unchanged as it pivoted between 5.4 and 5.7 (per 100,000). As shown in Figure 1.2, the homicide rate of the US has consistently been notably lower than The Bahamas' rate. While the US averaged a murder rate of 5.6 over the last 9 years, The Bahamas averaged 18.2. To put it simply, The Bahamas had more than three times as many homicides as the US (per capita).

Figure 1.2 Bahamas vs. US Homicide Rates (2000-2008)



Source: Uniform Crime Reports, 2008.

Canada

The findings of a study conducted by Statistics Canada indicated that comparisons with the US on homicide rates were more reliable (Gannon, 2001). The Canadian homicide rate has been decreasing since the mid-1970s following increases during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The homicide rate for Canada went down by 7% in 2003 to its lowest level in over 35 years. According to official figures, Canada's murder rate has averaged 1.85 (per 100,000) for nearly a decade (Statistics Canada, 2009). Canada's murder rate tends to be less than 1/3 of the US'. Compared to local figures, Canada's homicide rate is approximately 9 times lower than that of The Bahamas.

United Kingdom

European murder rates are usually lower compared to a number of Western nations. Figures indicated that the UK's murder rate was usually observed around 1.6 (per 100,000) with its 2006 rate of 1.37 being one of the lowest (World Murder Rates, 2010).

Australia

The National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) is an annual report released by the Australian Institute of Criminology. For the rate per 100,000 each year, homicide incidents decreased from 1.9 in 1990–91 and 1992–93 to the second-lowest recorded rate of 1.3 in 2006–07 (Dearden & Jones, 2008).

Regional Homicide Rates

Issues of crime and violence have increasingly captured the attention of the public and policy-makers throughout the Caribbean. A number of Caribbean countries recorded

increases in serious crimes such as murder, robbery, rape, burglary and larceny in the 1980s and 1990s (De Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999; Harriott, 2002), even though in many cases the overall crime rates were actually lower in the 1990s than those in the 1980s. According to the Global Burden of Armed Violence Report, the Caribbean's murder rate of 18.1 (per 100,000) is higher than North America, Europe or Asia (Global Burden of Armed Violence, 2010). To make sense of the increases in serious crimes, McElroy (2000:9) described what he called a *third wave of globalization* within the Caribbean economy. This followed an era of sugarcane production and an era of island tourism. What he described as the Caribbean's *narco-economy* places the Caribbean in a new phase of globalized economic integration following successful US efforts to halt the flow of Colombian drugs across the Mexican border. Drug traffickers had to re-route their activities along the island chain leading to new criminal subcultures via the drugs trade, firearms and gangs. Facing this violence, law enforcement has become more complex and complicated. This development is in line with wider shifts in transnational crime associated with globalization. As the movement of people and goods has increased and the possibilities for communication enhanced, opportunities for the illicit transfer of goods and services have also been considerably improved, with the drug trade being one of the biggest beneficiaries (Shelley, 2005; Van Schendel & Abraham, 2006).

Trinidad & Tobago

With a population of about 1.2 million, Trinidad & Tobago reports crime trends in line with other Caribbean countries. According to the Trinidad & Tobago Police Service, overall recorded crime declined by about a third during the 1990s. On the other hand, violent crimes including murder, kidnapping and robbery have increased since the late 1990s. Miller and Hendricks (2007) described Trinidad & Tobago's murder rate as spiraling within the country. Recent figures indicate a murder rate of 42.3 (per 100,000) placing this country's rate as the 10th highest in the world (See Table 1.2). As with other Caribbean countries, stakeholders have a strong perception that violent crime in Trinidad & Tobago is driven by drugs. Evidence suggested that murders and kidnappings were motivated by conflicts arising from the increasingly significant drug trade, highlighting the country's role in receiving drugs from Latin America for distribution in North America and Europe (Transparency International, 2006).

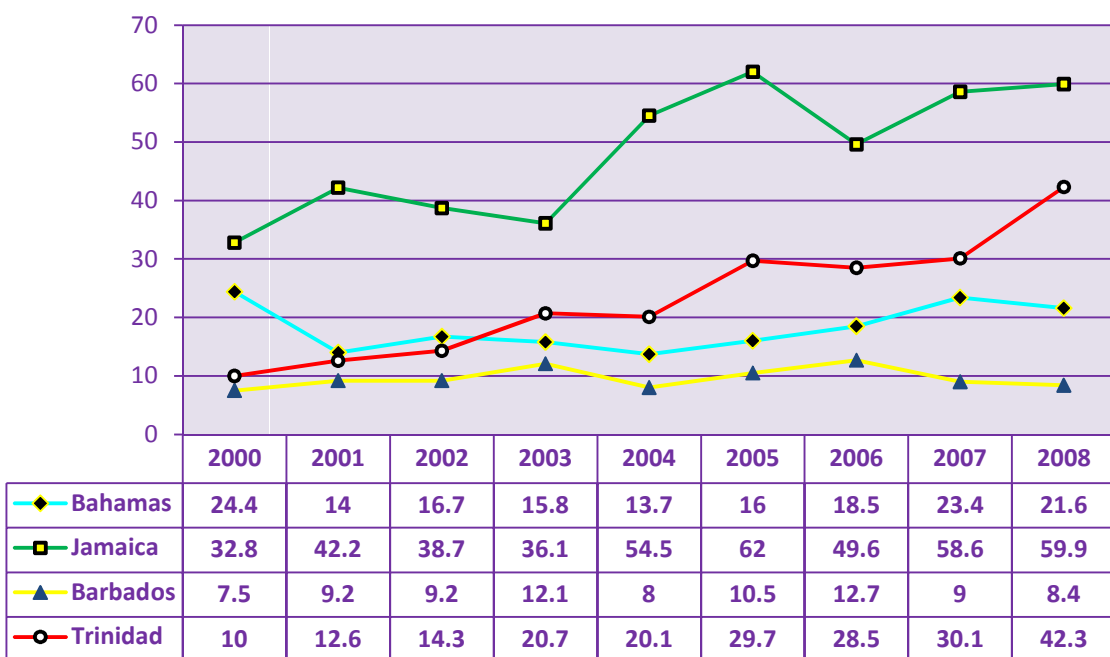
While the conventional problem-solving approach provides logical strategies for prevention, it would likely face significant challenges because of problems with corruption and capacity within state institutions. Suspicions continue to grow regarding important and powerful people within Trinidad & Tobago being closely linked to the drug trade, often beyond the reach of law enforcement efforts. These suspicions extend to include politicians, police officers, customs officers and members of the business community. In 2002, the Center for Geopolitical Drug Studies also linked senior government figures in Trinidad & Tobago with international drug cartels involved in cocaine and heroin trafficking throughout the country. Transparency International's 2006 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Trinidad & Tobago close to the middle of the 163 countries surveyed, alongside Morocco and Algeria, with levels of perceived corruption greater than previous survey years (Transparency International, 2006).

Jamaica

Jamaica has been infamously known to have one of the highest murder rates in the world and was once dubbed the murder capital of the world. Since the 1990s, murder rates in

Jamaica, a country of 2.7 million people, have hovered in the vicinity of 40-45 (per 100,000). More than 1,100 people were murdered in Jamaica during 2001, an increase of nearly 30% over the previous year and the highest number ever recorded in a single year up to that point (Penketh, 2002). With a total of 1,674 murders in 2005, the murder rate reached a record 62 per capita. These relatively high murder rates have placed Jamaica among the top countries in the world that experience high murder rates. Jamaica's average murder rate of 48 over the last few years now ranks first in the world followed by Columbia and Honduras (See Table 1.2). As shown in Figure 1.3, The Bahamas' rate is notably lower than Jamaica's and Trinidad & Tobago's but higher than Barbados'. Most of the other Caribbean nations have populations of less than 100,000 and their murder rates are relatively low. For example, Bermuda, which has a population of about 70,000, reported 5 murders for 2008 and Dominica, which has a population of 72, 000, reported 13 murders in 2009 (Bermuda Police Service, 2010).

Figure 1.3 Regional Homicide Rates* (2000-2008)



* Per 100,000. Sources: Jamaica Constabulary Force, Royal Barbados Police Force and Trinidad & Tobago Police Service.





















Summing It Up

While The Bahamas' murder rate has been steadily increasing over the last few years, its regional attention has been somewhat dwarfed by Jamaica's and Trinidad & Tobago's rate. If local trends persist, however, The Bahamas' rate may catch the attention of the international community and global surveyors of crime. While The Bahamas was not included in the survey displayed in Table 1.2, the evidence suggests that its propensity for attention could grow considering the record setting year of 2009.

World's Highest Homicide Rates

According to an annual global survey of 142 nations, the country with the highest murder rate is Jamaica (World Murder Rates, 2010). As shown in Table 1.2, The Bahamas' murder rate would have placed 14th on the list if included in the survey.

Table 1.2 World's Top Average Murder Rates* (per 100,000)

Rank	Nation	Rate	Rank	Nation	Rate
1 st	 Jamaica	48.3	11 th	 Trinidad & Tobago	23
2 nd	 Columbia	47.7	12 th	 Puerto Rico	22
3 rd	 Honduras	47	13 th	 Dominican Republic	20
4 th	 El Salvador	43	14 th	 Bahamas	18.2
5 th	 South Africa	42.3	15 th	 Ecuador	17.3
6 th	 Venezuela	41.8	16 th	 Mexico	12.7
7 th	 Guatemala	34.3	17 th	 Mongolia	12.6
8 th	 Belize	29	18 th	 Nicaragua	11
9 th	 Brazil	27	19 th	 Panama	10.8
10 th	 Russia	24	20 th	 Lithuania	9.5

Source: *World Murder Rates, 2010*. *These rates reflect figures directly from the respective police forces. Other rates only reflect those collected by the source, which uses data from all or most of the 2000-2009-time period.

SPATIAL & TEMPORAL VARIANCES

Key Facts at a Glance

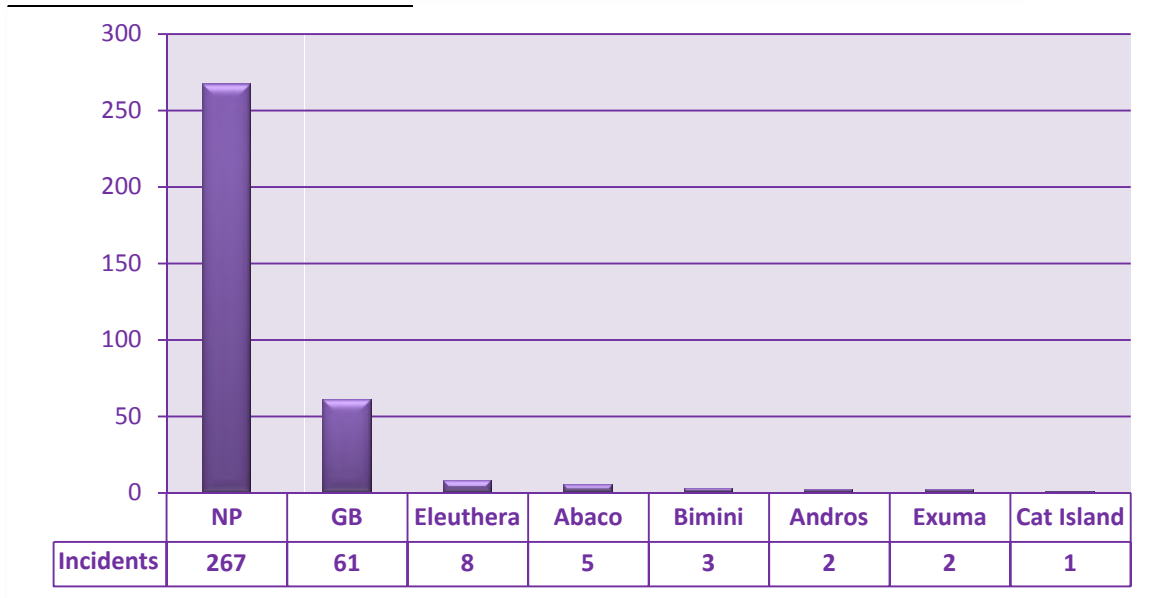
- *While murders in New Providence have been increasing, murders in Grand Bahama have been decreasing.*
- *Most murders occurred in the Southeastern policing division (which includes the Pinewood and Nassau Village communities).*
- *Murders were heavily concentrated in ‘over the hill’ neighborhoods including Bain & Grants Town.*
- *Most murders occurred during the months of January and November.*
- *Most murders occurred on Saturdays.*
- *Most murders occurred between the hours of 4pm and 12am.*
- *In 2009, a murder was reported every 4 days.*

Chapter 2

Spatial Variance

Homicides have occurred on most of the inhabited islands of The Bahamas. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, most murders (267 or 77%) during the study period occurred on the capital island of New Providence inclusive of Paradise Island. This was followed by the nation's second city, Grand Bahama, with 61 or 17% of the incidents. New Providence averaged 52 murders per annum with above-average increases being observed in the last three years of the study period. The increasing number of murders in the country is largely a product of increases in New Providence as opposed to any other island. Grand Bahama, on the other hand, averaged 12 murders per annum, a number that has not risen above 14 for any single year during the study period. In other words, murder incidence in the second city tends to remain stable as opposed to fluctuating as observed in New Providence. Murders in the Family Islands were relatively rare occurrences during the study period. The islands of Abaco and Eleuthera reported the two largest numbers of homicides on Family Islands during the study period, both combining for 13 incidents.

Figure 2.1 Murders by Islands (2005-2009)



The number of homicides occurring on a particular island was usually relative to its population size. Seeing that most of the country's inhabitants (70%) reside on New Providence (DOS, 2002), it is expected that most of the country's murders would occur on that island. If this perception is correct, the rank order of number of murders on an island should correlate with the rank order of each island's population size. Such a relationship, however, was not observed for all islands. As shown in Table 2.1, Eleuthera had the 3rd highest number of reported murders, but the 4th highest population. Bimini Island had the 5th highest number of reported murders, but the 8th largest population size (DOS, 2003).

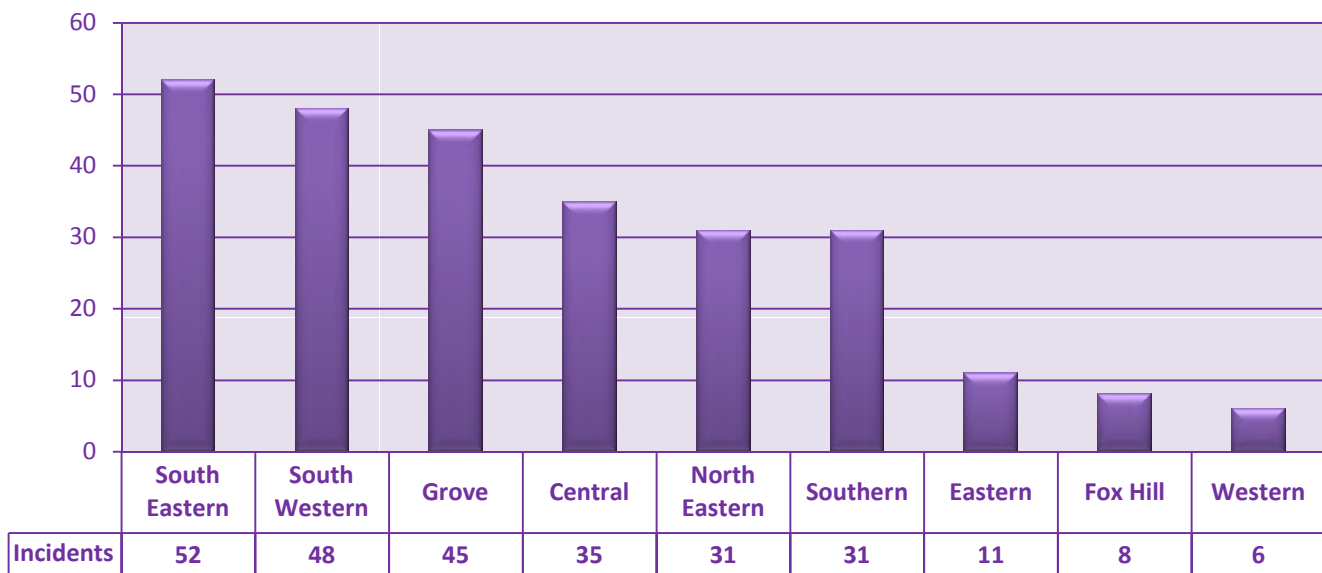
Table 2.1 Top Five Islands by Murders & Populations (2005-2009)

Island By Homicide	Number	Island By Population	Population*
1. New Providence	267	1. New Providence	244,400
2. Grand Bahama	61	2. Grand Bahama	46,994
3. Eleuthera	8	3. Abaco	13,170
4. Abaco	5	4. Eleuthera	7,999
5. Bimini/Berry Islands	3	8. Bimini/Berry Island	1,717

*New Providence figures are based on population projections from The Bahamas DOS. Grand Bahama and Family Island populations are derived from the 2000 census of The Bahamas.

Murders by Policing Divisions

The islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama are divided into various zones for crime management and deployment purposes. Known as police divisions, these areas encompass all or some sections of constituencies and sub-divisions whether residential or otherwise. Illustrations of the New Providence and Grand Bahama policing divisions are displayed in Appendixes A and B respectively. Examining New Providence divisions alone, displayed in Figure 2.2, the Southeastern Division observed the highest number of incidents accounting for 52 (19%) of the murders during the study period. Some of the communities in this division include Pinewood Gardens, South Beach and Nassau Village. Southeastern murders have fluctuated over the last five years with an average of about 10 per annum. In 2008, this division observed its highest number with 18 incidents. The Southwestern (formerly Carmichael) and Grove Divisions observed the second and third highest number of incidents, with 48 (18%) and 45 (17%) respectively. These three divisions alone accounted for more than half (54%) of the murders in New Providence.

Figure 2.2 Murders by Policing Divisions* (2005-2009) [New Providence Only]

* See Appendix A

Homicide Mapping

The proliferation of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has elevated the interest in crime mapping through the identification of locations historically experiencing high rates of crime and disorder. Law enforcement's interest in using GIS technology to map crime incidence occurred in sync with research activities that identified patterns in crime and criminal behavior in the emerging field of environmental criminology (Ratcliffe, 2004).

While the past is commonly regarded as an accurate predictor of what may happen in the future, the way in which facts about the past are chosen and weighted will determine the predictive power achievable. Generally, crime patterns observed from even the recent past may or may not be erroneous. Some areas have enduring high crime rates where the allocation of resources represents an efficient resource targeting strategy (Bowers et al., 2004).

Treating the crime event as opposed to the area's crime rate as the focal point has interesting ramifications. For policing purposes, the identification of an ellipse defining a hot spot is, alone, useless. The question then becomes: what does a police officer do after finding him or herself in the middle of a designated hotspot. Experts stress that as long as nobody knows what is *heating* the hotspot, responses may be futile (Groff & LaVigne, 2002).

Over the last decade, the number of published studies that explored the spatial distribution of violent crime and homicide has increased. Much of the work was a result of the unprecedented growth in the number of youth homicides in the US during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Researchers sought to map homicides in an effort to identify vulnerable populations and determine if observed patterns of incidents were consistent with spatial distribution or contamination. Studies hold that homicides exhibit a non-random pattern of spatial concentration, known as a *positive spatial autocorrelation*, which characteristically occurs within disadvantaged urban areas (Groff & LaVigne, 2002).

The socio-economic composition of place, however, fails to account for the spatial concentration of homicide events. There appears to be certain neighborhoods that matter above and beyond poverty (Blumstein & Rosenfeld, 1998; Cohen & Tita, 1999). The latest census report of The Bahamas measured the annual household incomes throughout Bahamian communities. The island of New Providence was divided into twenty-four communities which averaged an annual household income of \$42,381.75 (DOS, 2000). Although most murders occurred within the Southeastern policing division, the locations were not heavily concentrated in relation to the entire map of New Providence. Spatial analyses of New Providence murders revealed that the Southeastern Division (inclusive of Pinewood Gardens, etc) was one such division which included neighborhoods where murder events occurred above and beyond poverty. The annual household income in these areas was \$43,316.00, just above the New Providence average (DOS, 2000).

Figure 2.3 is a GIS ortho-image of New Providence, with the location of each murder incident plotted and represented by a red dot. Although conducting an exploratory spatial data analysis is beyond the scope of the present study, several viable conclusions can be drawn. A preliminary assessment of the image shows that very few murders have occurred in the extreme western and eastern regions of the island. These areas of New Providence have historically been regarded as the more affluent with annual incomes well above the national average. For example the eastern community of Yamacraw had an annual household income of \$60,910.00 while the western community of Delaporte had an annual household income of \$85,630.00 (DOS, 2000).

While the largest residential areas of New Providence include the Carmichael, South Beach, Pinewood Gardens and Nassau Village communities, murder incidents were not heavily concentrated in these neighborhoods. Although these residential communities have large land masses, they are not as densely populated as other neighborhoods throughout the island.

Moreover, the image illustrates a heavy concentration of incidents located just outside of the city's center, covering the northern segment of the island's central region. These areas primarily involve segments of the Central, Southern, Northeastern and Grove Divisions. Most of these "over the hill" communities that fall within the encircled area have been historically regarded as lower class, densely populated areas. These areas have annual household incomes around \$25,000.00, which fall well below New Providence's average. According to the Bahamas' Department of Statistics, the poverty rate was 9.3 for 2001. Although not yet localized by specific communities, it is quite likely that many of these households could fall below the poverty line (Bahamas Living Conditions Survey, 2001).

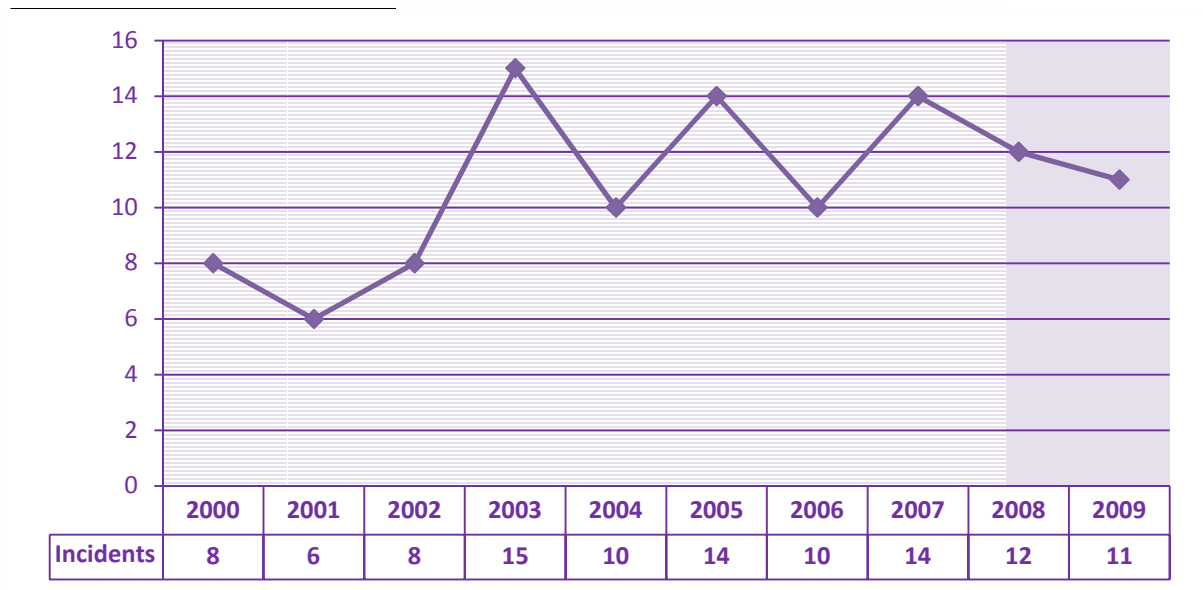
It must also be noted that the capital city of Nassau in New Providence was never properly planned. This resulted in a number of communities that seemingly emerged and developed on their own. Being among the first native communities, Bain and Grants Towns were in close proximity to the city's center. The city of Nassau is the business as well as the tourism center.

In summary, the spatial distribution of murder incidents in New Providence indicates that incidents were not distributed randomly, suggestive of positive spatial autocorrelation. Densely populated, lower income areas appear to be the ideal murder locations. This is in line with the literature as most serious crimes tend to occur in densely populated, urbanized, poverty stricken areas. In fact, one of the most consistent findings of American studies is that there are strong statistical associations between areas with high homicide rates and areas with high levels of poverty and inequality (Loftin & Hill 1974; Parker & Smith, 1979).

Grand Bahama Murders

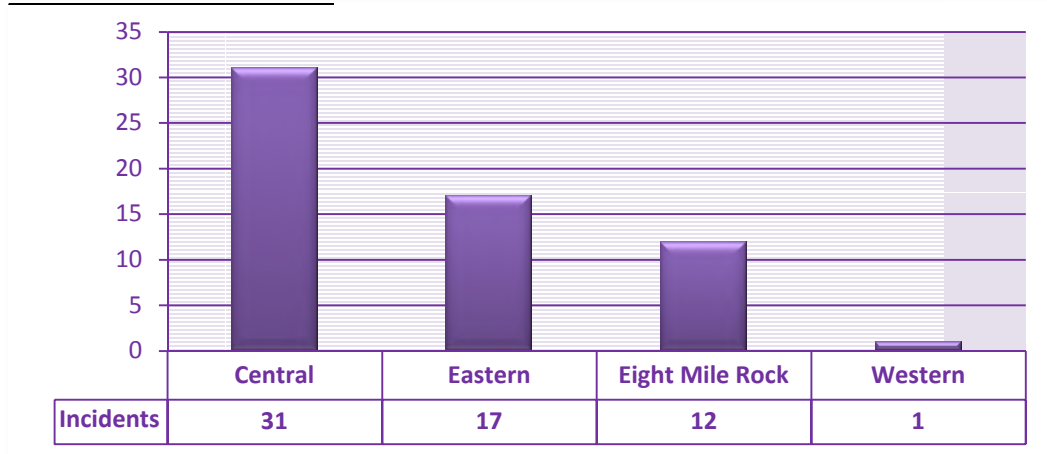
When examining murder incidents on the island of Grand Bahama alone, a different pattern emerges in comparison with the pattern for the entire country (See Figure 1.1, Chapter 1). As illustrated in Figure 2.4, Grand Bahama murders have typically fluctuated over the last decade. After a steady increase beginning in 2001, the incidents increased in one year then declined the next; this pattern persisted for six years. Since 2007, the incidents have gradually decreased. This is markedly different from the trend observed for the entire country, which has been steadily increasing since 2004.

Figure 2.4 Grand Bahama Murders (2000-2009)



When Grand Bahama policing divisions were examined alone, displayed in Figure 2.5, the Central Division observed the highest number of incidents accounting for more than half (31 or 51%) of the incidents.

Figure 2.5 Murders by GB Policing Divisions* (2005-2009)

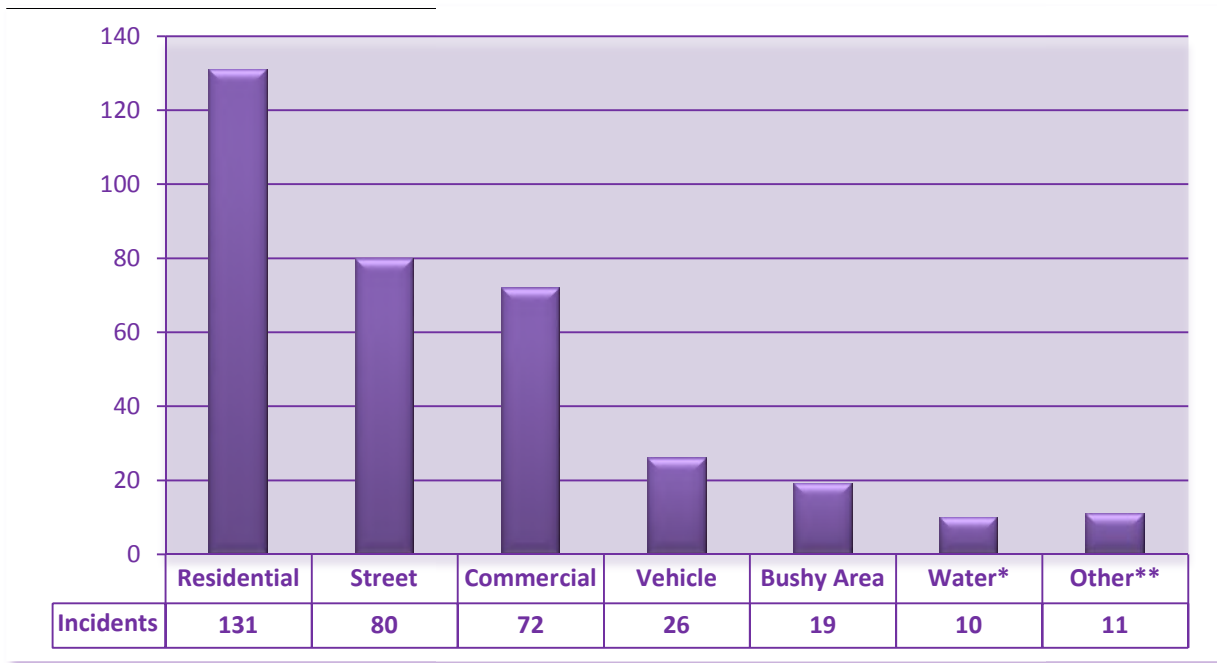


*See Appendix B

Murder Locations

Most murders during the study period occurred at residential locations, that is, in and around dwelling homes. As illustrated in Figure 2.6, residential areas accounted for 131 or 38% of murder location types. This finding is consistent with other spatial analyses of murder. For example, the US also reported that most of their incidents occurred in and around homes (UCR, 2008). Local police practitioners explain this local finding with the fact that policing divisions with the largest observed number of incidents (Southeastern & Southwestern) encompassed the largest residential communities on New Providence. Homicides occurring on streets accounted for 80 (23%) of all locations. Homes and streets have historically been ranked as the first and second locations for over a decade, both accounting for more than half (60%) of all location types.

Figure 2.6 Murder Locations (2005-2009)

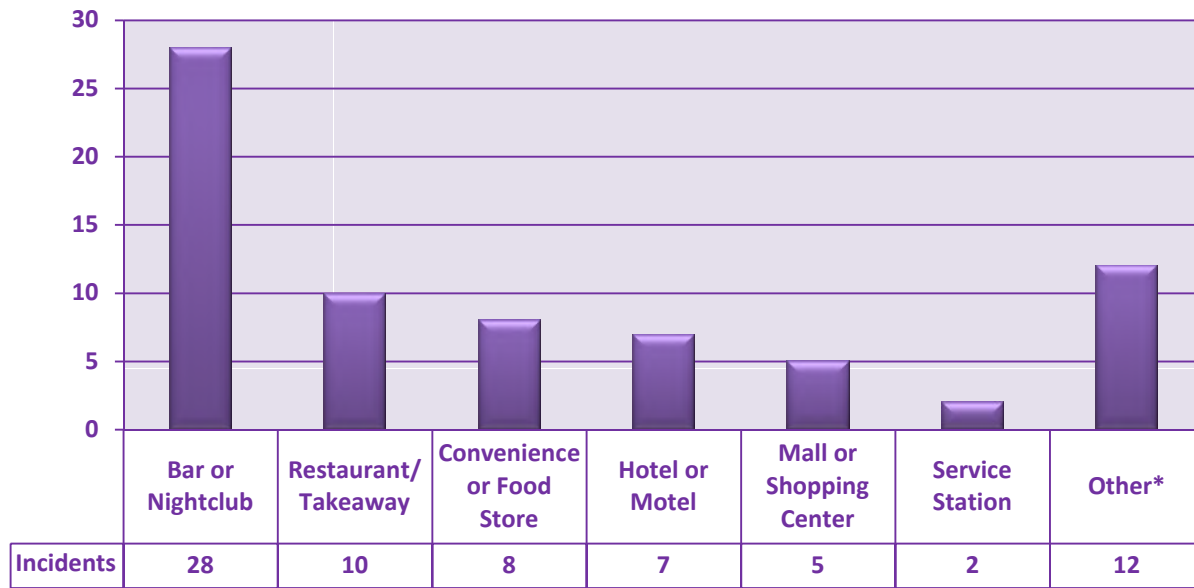


*Victims found near large bodies of water

** Includes parking lots, near churches and other locations not matching other attributes of this variable

Taking a closer look at murders at commercial locations, several interesting patterns emerged. Out of the 72 business location types where murders occurred, *bars & nightclubs* were found to be the most frequent. As illustrated in Figure 2.7, these locations accounted for 28 (39%) of all homicides at commercial or business establishments. Incidents at these locations have shown increases from 2 in 2006 to 8 in 2009. These locations will be discussed in depth in Chapter 7.

Figure 2.7 Murders at Commercial Locations (2005-2009)



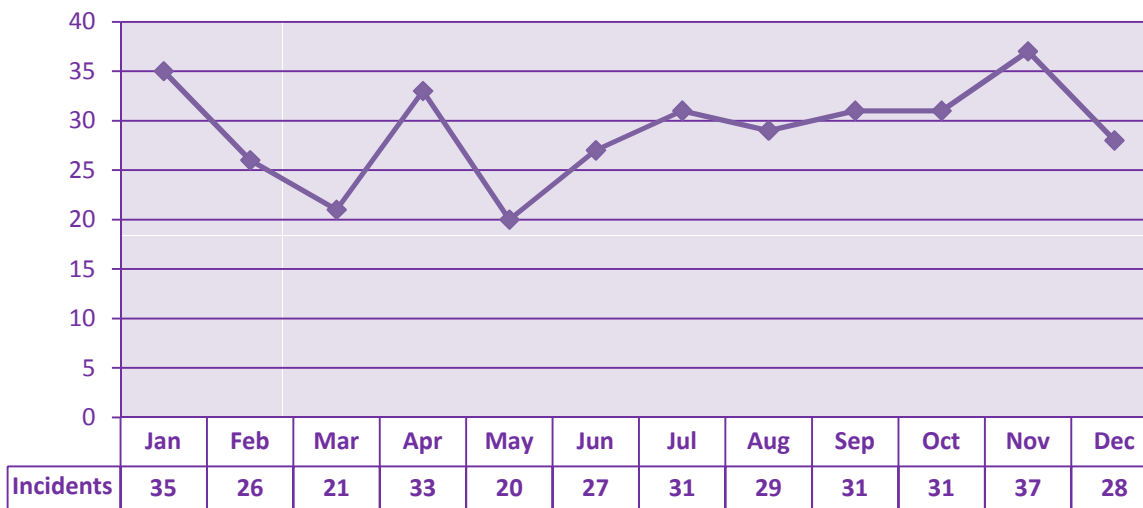
* Includes department stores, laundry mats, banks and web shops.

Temporal Variance

Murders by Month

As shown in Figure 2.8, the pattern of murder incidents revealed a sporadic *up-down* trend for the first half of the year, peaking in January and April before leveling between July and October. Incidents then produced their highest peak in November before dropping in December. The highest number of murders in one single month (11) was observed on four separate occasions during the study period: October 2005, December 2006, November 2007 and September 2009.

Figure 2.8 Murders by Month (2005-2009)



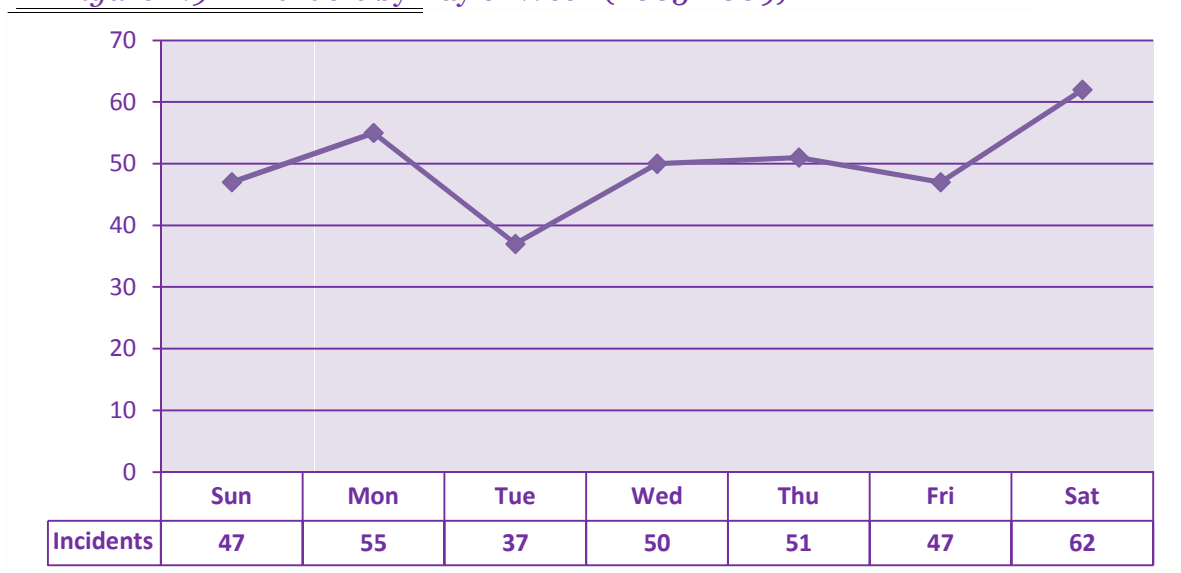
Temperature Aggression Theory

Some criminologists, including Anderson (1989), support the Temperature Aggression (T/A) Theory. It holds that the bulk of crimes transpire during the warmest times of the year. This is based on the view that heat leads to discomfort, thereby increasing aggression. Monthly distribution of murder incidents in The Bahamas, however, showed a different pattern during the study period. The summer months of May through August yielded the fewest number of reports (107 or 31%), compared to January through April (115 or 33%) and September through December (127 or 36%). Hence, in contrast to the T/A Theory, most homicides in The Bahamas occurred during the cooler months of the year.

Murders by Day of Week

Hanna (2005) found Wednesday to be the day of the week when most homicides came to the attention of local law enforcement. The findings of the present study yielded different results, as Saturday was the most frequent day. As shown in Figure 2.9, Saturday accounted for 62 (18%) of the incidents during the study period. The weekend days of Friday through Sunday, accounted for 156 (45%) of the incidents, the same percentage found during 1991-2003 (Hanna, 2005).

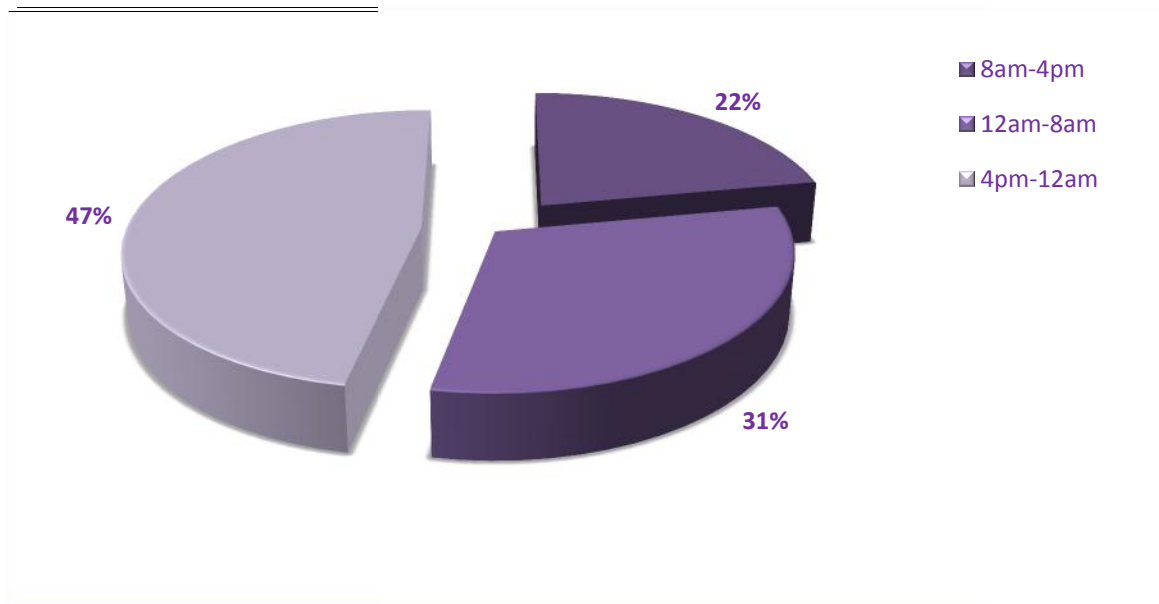
Figure 2.9 Murders by Day of Week (2005-2009)



Murders by Shift

The 4pm to 12am shift has consistently remained the most common time frame for murders to be reported over the last decade. As shown in Figure 2.10, this shift accounted for nearly half (163 or 47%) of all murder incidents. This was followed by the 12am to 8am shift with 108 (31%) and the 8am to 4pm shift with 78 (22%) of the incidents.

Figure 2.10 Murders by Shifts (2005-2009)



When the *day-of-week* variable was cross-tabulated with the *shift* variable, a familiar finding was disclosed. As illustrated in Table 2.2, a notable number of murders occurred on Friday and Saturday evenings, both accounting for 54 incidents.

Table 2.2 Shifts & Days of Week Cross-Tabulation (2005-2009)

	8am-4pm	4pm-12am	12am-8am	Total
SUN	13	21	13	47
MON	14	25	16	55
TUE	6	15	16	37
WED	10	24	16	50
THU	10	24	17	51
FRI	8	26	13	47
SAT	17	28	17	62
Total	78	163	108	349

The Murder Clock

A crime clock is the most aggregate representation of crime data and conveys the annual reported crime experienced by showing the relative frequency of occurrence of crimes. It represents a ratio of crime incidence in relation to fixed time intervals. The murder clock captures the relative frequency for the offence of murder. For example in the US, 1 murder occurred every 32 minutes (UCR, 2008). Critics argue that rendering such data is simply political rhetoric as crime is displayed in a manner that exaggerates its seriousness and frequency (Baer & Chambliss, 1997). Crime clocks, therefore, should be viewed with care and should not be interpreted literally or used to imply some regularity in the commission of crime. The graphic below illustrates the murder clock for The Bahamas during the study period.

The Bahamas' Murder Clock

- During the study period, 1 murder was reported every 5 days.
- During 1991-2003, 1 murder was reported every 8 days.
- In 2009, 1 murder was reported every 4 days.



Summing It Up

This chapter supported several common findings in contemporary criminology related to the association between crime and its temporal and spatial trends. It supports previous studies which found that most murders occurred in inner city areas that tend to fall below the average household income of New Providence (DOS, 2000). Explanations offered by the popular T/A Theory, however, were not supported by current findings. The high number of murders reported during evenings and over the weekends was a typical finding for other violent crime categories. This underscores the realization that murder and other forms of violence take on similar temporal characteristics.

MOTIVES, CAUSES OF DEATH & WEAPONS

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Most murders stemmed from arguments between acquaintances.*
- *Illegal firearms (handguns) were used in 54% of murder cases during the study period.*
- *Drug related murders more than doubled from 6 in 2007 to 14 in 2009.*
- *75 (22%) of the murders were the end result of ongoing feuds between rivals.*
- *24 (10%) of the murder victims were previously threatened with death by their assailant.*
- *Making shotguns available to members of the public did not have a major impact on the number of gun murders.*
- *Investigators were able to recover 76 (22%) of the murder weapons during the study period.*

Chapter 3

Murder Motives

Historically, the establishment of a motive has been a tedious task for law enforcement officials worldwide. A momentary look at this question may result in the conclusion that such a query should not warrant much effort or skill in identifying a perpetrator's motivation when they decided to take the life of another. However, there are solved and unsolved murder cases that remain void of a clear answer to such a question. Following an analysis of homicides and homicide clearances, Wolfgang (1958) held that police officials could only speculate about the motive of an unsolved murder. Moreover, a detective's reasoning regarding the circumstances of murders may change as new facts related to the investigation emerge. Oftentimes, a clear motive is not established unless a suspect is arrested or charged (Maxfield, 1989).

The complexity in accurately measuring this variable can be a result of the lifestyle of the murder victim. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, a growing number of murder victims were known to law enforcement officials and several were regarded as violent criminals in their circles. This presents a challenge for investigators as some murder victims were involved in so many illegal activities that varying groups of potential suspects may wish to have them killed.

It must be stressed, however, that a motive may not be correctly classified by the nature of the homicide victim's lifestyle alone. For example, even though a notorious drug lord may have been killed, his death may not necessarily be a direct result of his involvement in the illegal drug trade. Hence, in the absence of empirical facts or information concerning the murder itself, any determination of motive may very well be a mere unsubstantiated assumption. In addition, in some cases where individuals have been found responsible for or have even confessed to a particular murder, their unwillingness to provide an answer to this question further complicates the issue. In fact, it is not an uncommon practice for homicide suspects to conjure up fictitious explanations for their actions in hopes of their punishment being attenuated. Consequently, motives for some homicides where perpetrators have been either identified or charged can only be safely categorized as *unknown* or *undetermined*. It is therefore essential for homicide detectives, as well as criminal investigators at large, to carefully examine and evaluate all facts disclosed during an investigation before assigning a motive to an incident.

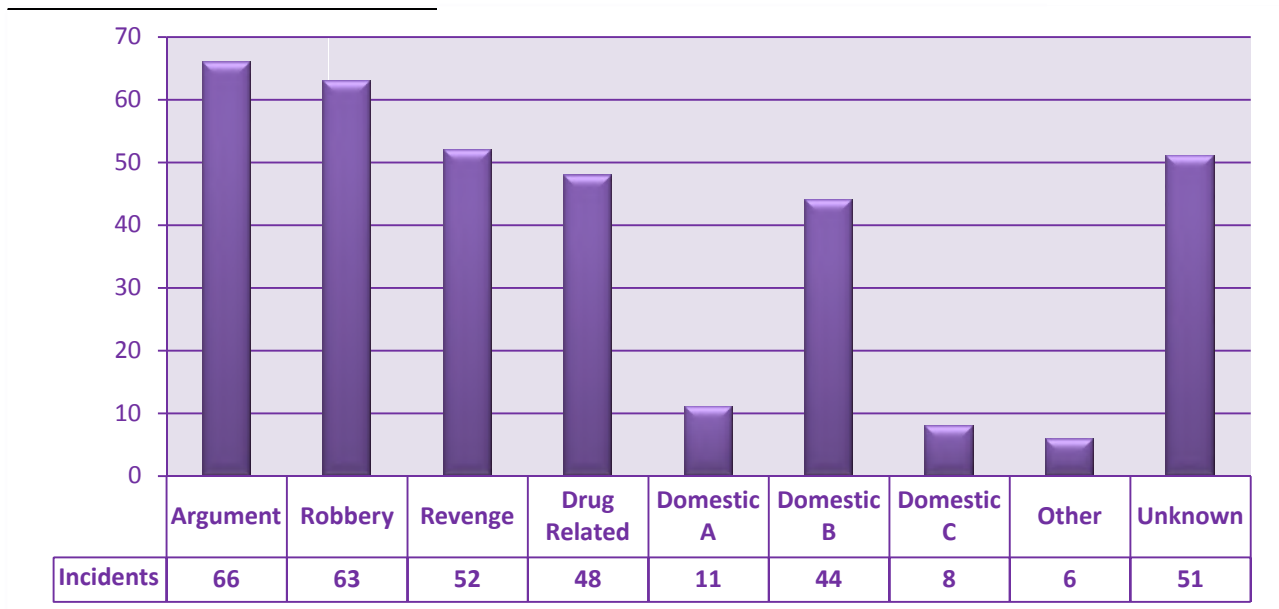
The term *motive* is often misconstrued as meaning the relationship between an offender and victim although an essential difference exists. For the purposes of this study, the variable *motive* captures the essence of the *circumstances* that lead to the death of a murder victim. It must be made clear that attributes assigned to this variable were based on investigators' views and treatment of information and evidence at their disposal. This variable had eleven mutually exclusive categories which bore similarity to international measures (See Appendix C).

During the study period, murders stemming from *arguments* were the most frequent. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, this type of murder accounted for 66 (19%) of all incidents. These cases involved killings that originated from verbal or physical disputes and altercations between individuals who were not related or intimately involved. This motive was also the most frequent during the 1991-2003 time period (Hanna, 2005).

Murders occurring at the commission of an armed robbery or an attempted armed robbery were the second most frequent with 63 (18%) of all motives. This type of murder

has been gradually increasing over the past few years, ranking second in 2007 and first in 2008. Out of this number, a total of 22 armed robbery murders occurred at business establishments. These 22 cases included mainly convenience/food stores and bar/night clubs. Murders classified as *unknown* were the fourth most frequent, accounting for 51 (15%) of the incidents. As previously discussed, these cases were ones in which insufficient factual information existed to safely place them in one of the specific categories of murder motivations. During the study period, drug related murders more than doubled from 6 in 2007 to 14 in 2009.

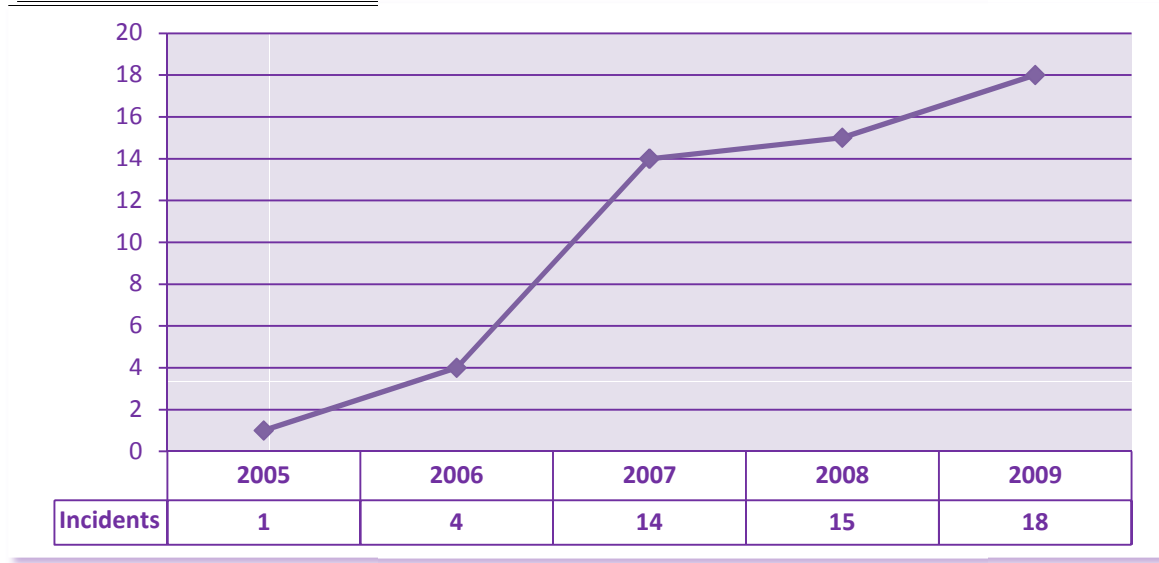
Figure 3.1 Murder Motives* (2005-2009)



*See Appendix C

Revenge & Retaliation Murders

Murders classified as *revenge* or retaliation killings were the third leading category. This particular motive accounted for 52 (15%) of the incidents. These cases were ones that typically stemmed from previous criminal activity between suspects and victims. A closer examination of this type of murder demonstrated a steady increase during each year of the study period from 1 in 2005 to 18 in 2009. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, incidence for this category showed its sharpest increase in 2007, a year in which it ranked first among all motives. Further analysis of case files revealed that 75 (21%) of the murders were the end result of ongoing feuds between rivals. In addition, 24 (10%) of the murder victims were previously threatened with death by their assailant.

Figure 3.2 Revenge/Retaliations Murders (2005-2009)

*See Appendix C

Domestic Murders

The term *domestic* used in a murder context has oftentimes been referred to without a clear or concise description in the minds of laymen and practitioners. Some persons define this term as arguments between spouses, while others describe it as altercations between siblings. The adjective *domestic*, which essentially means matters relating to the family and household affairs, is indeed an extremely broad grouping. Hence, murders resulting from brothers arguing over a remote control or a married couple fighting over infidelity could accurately fall into the domestic category even though extremely dissimilar factors were at work. This may lead to questions regarding the validity of results as what is thought to be measured may differ from what is actually being measured. Therefore, researchers should present a clear definition for this category based on the essence of the measure. In this study, domestic homicides were divided into three main categories that involved three distinct circumstances. The *Domestic A* category involved altercations arising from issues concerning the home and family life, specifically between parent/child, siblings and other relatives, but not including intimate partners. *Domestic B* referred to cases where disputes and arguments centered on intimate relationships, whether they entailed marriage partners, extra-marital affairs, or courtships between singles. *Domestic C* referred to cases where altercations arose out of relationships between persons with alternative lifestyles, including gays and lesbians. This category was acknowledged as it has become an emerging subject area in contemporary criminology.

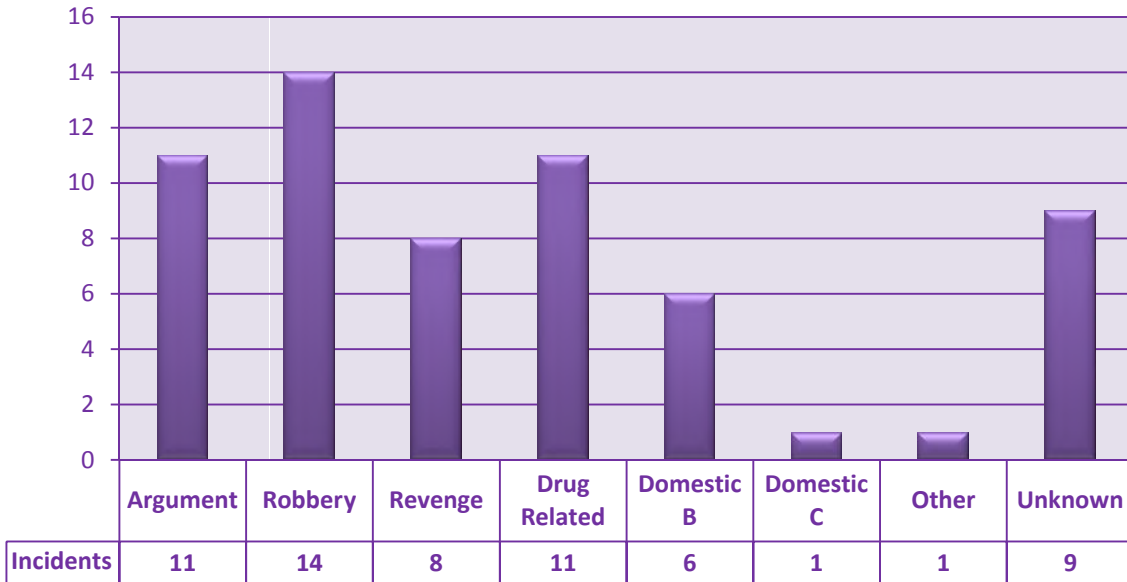
Violence in Bahamian homes has been studied by a number of local researchers (Brennen, Fielding, Carroll, McCants-Miller, & Thompson, 2010; Plumridge & Fielding, 2009). Brennen and others (2010) found that violence, physical or domestic, occurred in 62% of respondents' homes. Plumridge and Fielding (2009) argued that the presence of domestic violence was associated with elevated risks of deviant behaviors. Clearly, the prevalence of domestic violence and its impact on future violent behavior is evident.

During the study period, *Domestic B* murders were the most frequent among the domestic murder categories. These incidents, which involved intimate partner relationships (*boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, etc*), fluctuated over the study period but more than doubled during the final two years. If all three domestic categories were added, its sum of 63 would tie with armed robbery as the second most frequent type of murder motivation.

Motives in Grand Bahama & Family Islands

The rankings for motives were essentially similar for Grand Bahama murders, with a few exceptions. As illustrated in Figure 3.3, robbery related murders were the most frequent for Grand Bahama, representing 14 (23%) of the cases. Unlike murders for the entire country, revenge murders were not among the three most frequent categories for Grand Bahama. Family Island murders did not yield any notable trend as the motives for the islands were somewhat evenly distributed.

Figure 3.3 Grand Bahama Motives (2005-2009)



*See Appendix C

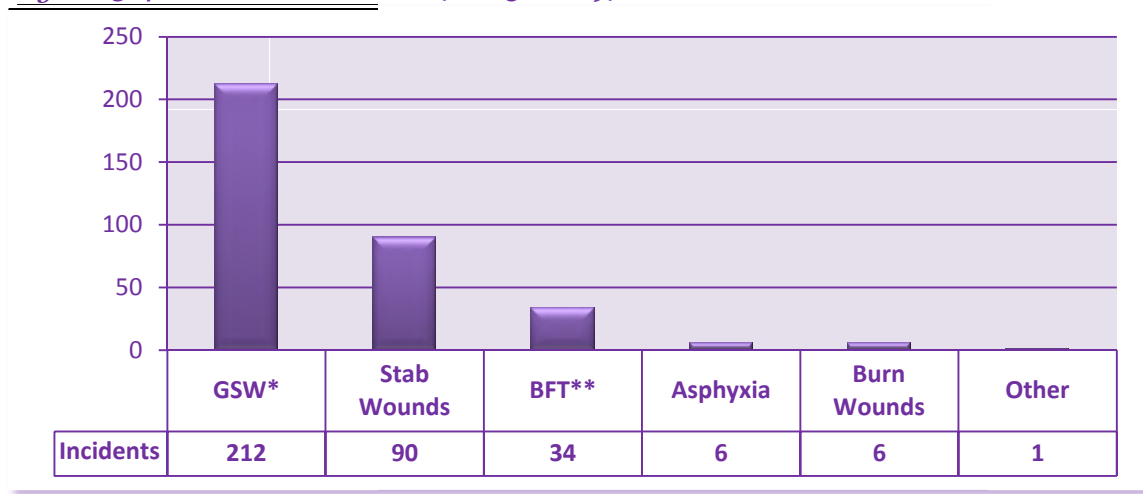
Motive & Location

When examining cross tabulations of the *motive* and *location type* variables, several interesting patterns emerged. As expected, most of the Domestic B murders (65%) occurred in and around dwelling homes. Also expected were revenge killings occurring on the streets, constituting 45% of such cases. However, murders arising from arguments usually occurred at business establishments, accounting for 34% of the argument motive as opposed to residential locations. Murders stemming from a robbery or an attempted robbery were more likely to occur at commercial establishments or dwelling homes with 37% for each location. Probably most interesting was the fact that drug related murders occurred more frequently in homes (41%) than during 1991-2003 (Hanna, 2005).

Cause of Death

During the study period, the leading cause of death was by gunshot wounds (GSW). As shown in Figure 3.4, this category represented 212 (61%) of all causes of death. GSWs were also the leading cause of death during the 1991-2003-time period (Hanna, 2005). Stab wounds ranked second with 90 (26%) and blunt force trauma (BFT) third with 34 (10%).

Figure 3.4 Causes of Death (2005-2009)



*GSW: Gun Shot Wound

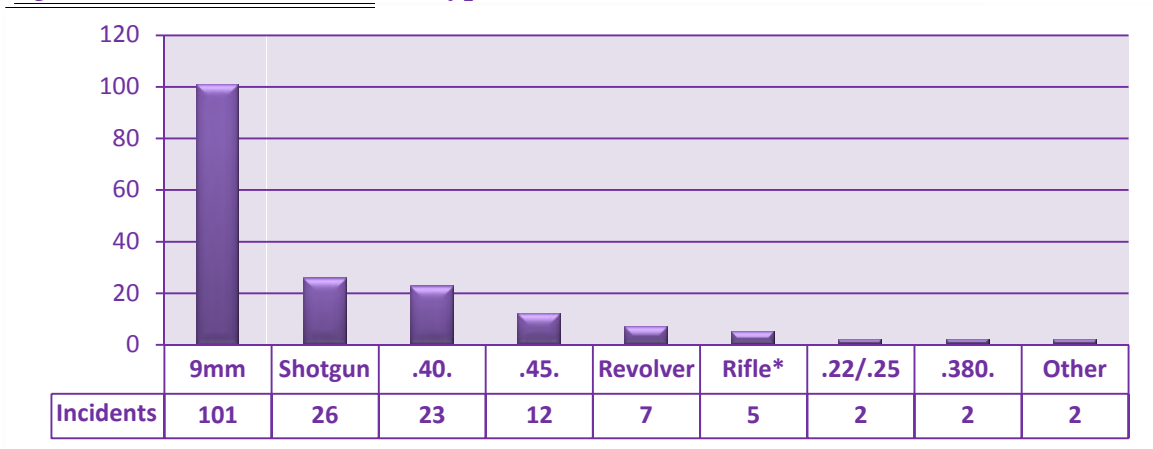
**BFT: Blunt Force Trauma

Murder Weapons

As indicated above, most murder victims died as result of GSWs. Generally, firearms are illegal in The Bahamas. The Commonwealth of The Bahamas does not manufacture firearms nor is it a leading distributor of such products. Hunting licenses are usually issued for shotguns and certain low-caliber semi-automatic rifles, which are the only types local retailers are authorized to sell. Special licenses to own or carry a handgun are only granted by the Cabinet on the advice of the Police Commissioner. Needless to say, only a small number of Bahamians are legally authorized to have handguns in their possession. Holders of special handgun licenses are typically business owners.

Nevertheless, handguns are the most common type of weapon used to commit murders. During the study period, investigators were able to determine the caliber of 180 weapons used in the 212 gun murders. As illustrated in Figure 3.5, the 9mm pistol was the most frequently used firearm accounting for 101 (56%) of all *known* firearm types. Handguns were used in the majority (149 or 83%) of known gun murders. Illegal firearms (handguns) were used in 54% of murder cases during the study period. Shotguns, which can be licensed in The Bahamas, were used in 26 (14%) of the known cases. In other words, making shotguns available to members of the public did not have a major impact on the number of gun murders as the majority of murder victims died at the hands of illegal firearms.

Figure 3.5 Known Firearm Types (2005-2009)



*Includes fully automatic firearms such as the AK-47 Assault Rifle and the Mac-10

Weapon Recovery

Securing murder weapons is of particular interest to homicide investigators who tend to exhaust all avenues for their recovery. Although not necessary in identifying perpetrator(s) in each case, the recovery of the murder weapon is pivotal to a murder investigation. Considering the reluctance of some murder suspects to cooperate with the police, even in cases of confession, finding the murder weapon can be quite a daunting task. In fact, according to local investigators, “*I threw it in the canal...*” has become the most common response from a murder suspect when asked about the location of the weapon. Investigators were able to recover 76 (22%) of the murder weapons during the study period. This is slightly lower than the 30% recovered during the 1991-2003 time period (Hanna, 2005). It must be noted that depending on the type of murder, a “weapon” cannot be recovered as in the case of burn victims or victims who were strangled (asphyxia). It is also necessary to point out that some recoveries were made at the crime scene, by way of investigative procedures, or as a result of assistance from the suspect. In fact, other murder weapons were found or retrieved from persons arrested during other criminal offenses. In some cases, murders weapon were recovered years after being used in the homicide. These recoveries were a result of ballistic linking or recovery from other crime scenes.

Summing It Up

The steady increase in certain categories of murders in recent years, particularly *revenge* and *Domestic B* murders, clearly necessitate the design and implementation of appropriate strategies to address them. Although each type of domestic murder involved different factors, it is safe to conclude that a significant number of murders stemmed from issues around the home and between persons who were closely tied to one another. With murders stemming from *arguments* leading all motive categories, it can be concluded that there is a need for future generations to develop adequate conflict-resolution and anger management skills in order to resolve their conflicts in a non-lethal manner. Finally, the discovery of the growing number of murders occurring during the course of an armed robbery or an attempted armed robbery at a food or convenience store presents an ideal preventative opportunity that will be further explored in later chapters.

VICTIMS & SUSPECTS

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Married persons were less likely to be murdered than single persons.*
- *Females were more likely to be killed by a current or former male partner than anyone else.*
- *7 out of 10 victims knew their assailant.*
- *Most murders victims and suspects resided in the Southeastern Division.*
- *Persons involved in criminal activity are more likely to be murdered than those who are not involved in criminal activity.*
- *7 murder victims were previously charged with murder.*
- *A larger number of suspects of Haitian ancestry were being charged with murder between 2005-2009 compared to 1991-2003.*
- *19 suspects were charged with 2 different murders while 4 suspects were charged with 3 different murders, all of which occurred during the study period.*
- *7 suspects during the study period became murder victims themselves.*
- *15% of suspects with violent criminal records were previously charged with a separate murder.*
- *32% of persons charged with murder over the last 5 years re-offended after being granted bail or otherwise discharged by the courts.*
- *Persons on bail were responsible for 35% of the murders during the study period.*

Chapter 4

Homicide Victims

Notwithstanding the fact that a large number of anti-social persons become victims, murder victims are not confined to any specific age group, gender, race, nationality or socio-economic status. In fact, some of the world's most esteemed persons have been murdered including US President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Thus, although a person may be the leader of the world's most powerful nation or a famous civil rights activist, their status may not eliminate the possibility of them becoming a murder victim. Nevertheless, a person's lifestyle can have a powerful effect on the probability that they will become a victim of murder.

Family members and friends become *co-victims* when their loved one is murdered. The violent death of a family member, intimate partner, or close friend is one of the most traumatic experiences that a person may ever face. Victimology, the study of crime victims, has gained considerable attention in the field of policing in recent years. Whereas traditional crime fighting techniques focused primarily on the perpetrator and his capture, contemporary crime fighting methods center on the nature of the victim. This rapidly emerging paradigm shift in crime prevention adopts a new crime fighting philosophy. By identifying patterns, characteristics and behaviors common among large numbers of crime victims, those most at risk of becoming a target can be identified. With this knowledge, the public can be educated on how to avoid lifestyles and daily behavior that increase their likelihood of becoming the victim of a crime (Hanna, 2005).

Bahamian Victims

In sync with victim studies across the world, Bahamian murder victims are not confined to any specific age group, gender, race, nationality or socio-economic status. From notorious drug lords and hit-men, to a Catholic nun and a former Member of Parliament, Bahamians from all walks of life have become murder victims. A closer look at the demographic variables of the 349 murder victims during the study period revealed several interesting patterns.

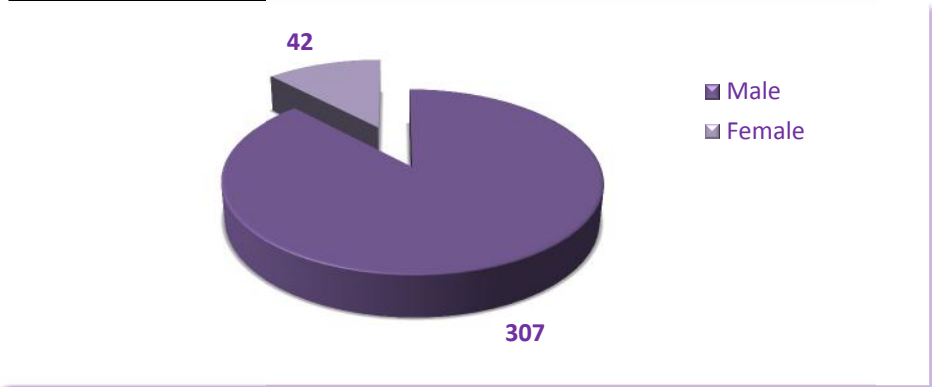
Victim's Gender

Men were always more likely than women to commit criminal acts (Burton et al., 1998). Traditional criminology attempts to account for this gender gap by arguing that females have fewer opportunities for crime, especially because they are more extensively supervised by parents and other agencies of social control. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) do not dispute that opportunity or crime factors may differentially affect male and female involvement in crime. However, they suggested that self-control played a large role in accounting for gender differences in crime and predict a substantial self-control difference between the sexes.

Patterns of offending by men and by women are notable both for their similarities and differences. Both men and women are more heavily involved in minor property and substance abuse offenses than in serious crimes such as robbery or murder. However, men offend at much higher rates than women for all crime categories except prostitution. This gender gap is greatest for serious crime and least for mild forms of lawbreaking such as minor property crimes (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996).

The gender gap also holds true for The Bahamas as data regarding the gender of murder victims indicates that males are more likely to become victims. In fact, males are more likely than females to be offenders *and* victims of homicides. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, 307 (88%) of victims during the study period were male compared to 42 (12%) females. The number of female victims has shown subtle fluctuations but generally remained around an average of 8 each year, the highest number being 10 in 2009.

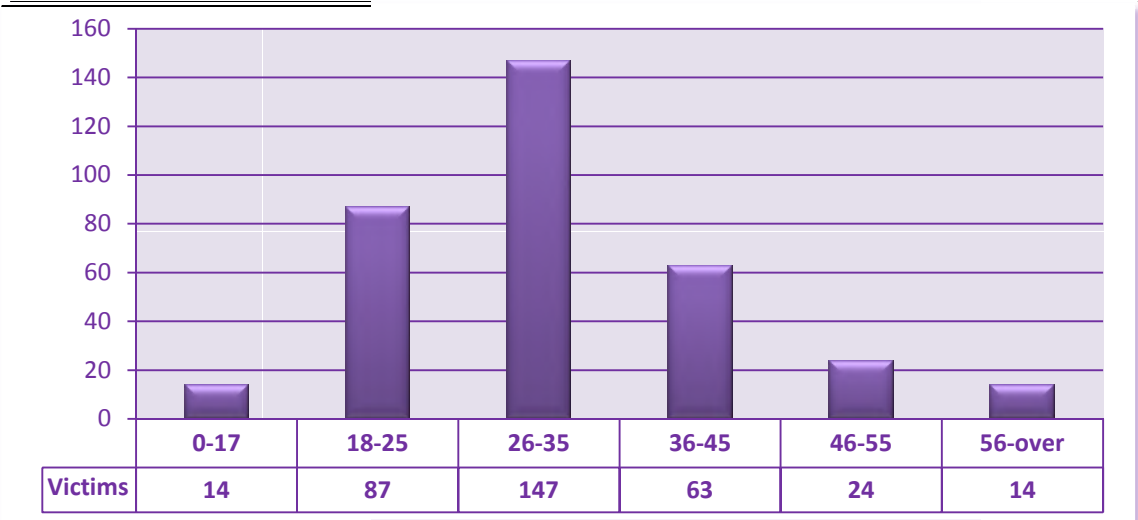
Figure 4.1 Victims' Gender (2005-2009)



Victim's Age

Younger adults are generally at a greater risk of becoming a victim than children or older adults. As shown in Figure 4.2, the peak age-range among victims was 26-35 years. This age group alone accounted for nearly half (42%) of the victims during the study period. Moreover, persons under age 35 years accounted for 71% of victims. This percentage was disproportionately high considering that only 63% of the Bahamian population is under the age 35 (DOS, 2002). Interestingly, it appeared that the age range of victims during the study period was slightly higher than earlier years when murder victims' ages tended to be in the 16-25 bracket (Hanna, 2005). The 26-35 age-bracket has become the fastest growing age group for murder victims increasing from 23 in 2006 to 41 in 2009. In contrast, the number of victims in the 36-45 age-bracket has been decreasing since 2007.

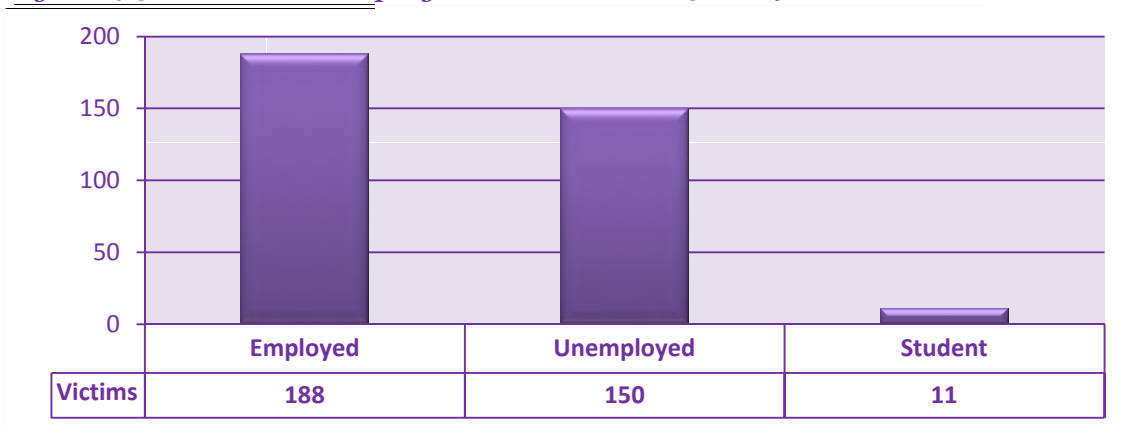
Figure 4.2 Murder Victims' Age Brackets (2005-2009)



Victim's Employment Status

According to Figure 4.3, the majority (54%) of murder victims were employed. This finding was notably different from an earlier one that showed most murder victims (64%) were unemployed (Hanna, 2005). During the study period, grade-school student victims were only observed during 2007 and 2008.

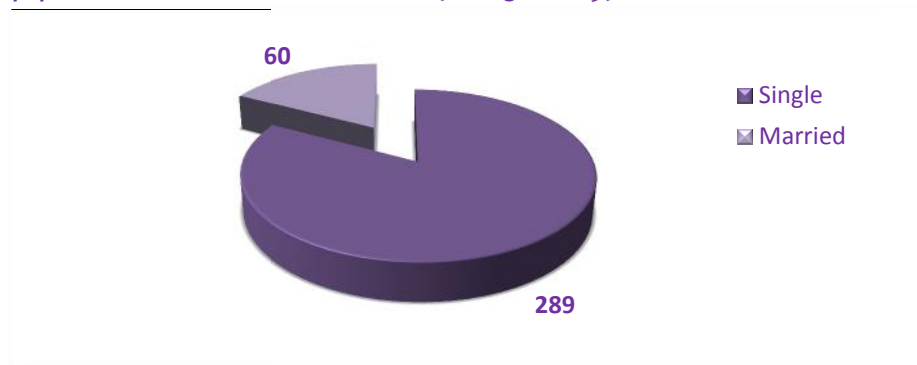
Figure 4.3 Victims' Employment Status (2005-2009)



Victim's Marital Status

According to Figure 4.4, the vast majority (83%) of murder victims were single at the time of the incident. This finding was similar to an earlier study which indicated that 76% of murder victims were single (Hanna, 2005).

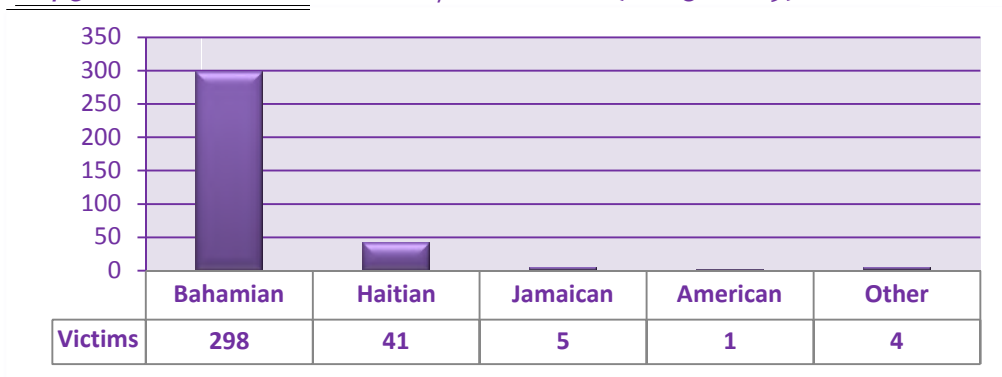
Figure 4.4 Victims' Marital Status (2005-2009)



Victim's Nationality/Ethnicity

The data clearly showed that the vast majority of murder victims were Bahamian or of Bahamian ethnicity. Depicted in Figure 4.5, 298 (85%) murder victims during the study period fell within this category. The number of victims of Haitian ethnicity appears to be decreasing. After peaking with 12 victims in 2007, the number declined to 7 in 2009.

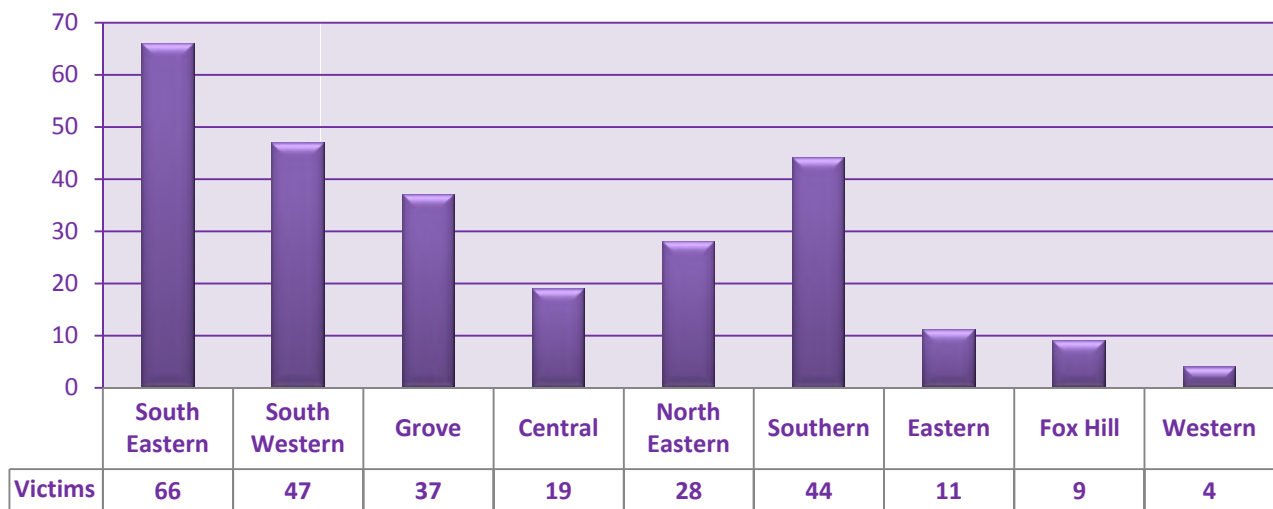
Figure 4.5 Victims' Nationalities/Ethnicities (2005-2009)



Victim's Residential Divisions

Research has found that serious crimes, including murder, typically occurred in areas close to where victims live (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1984). Although several victims may have been killed while visiting other islands or divisions, this trend was generally supported by local findings. As illustrated in Figure 4.6, most New Providence murder victims resided in the Southeastern Division, which was also the division with the most incidents. During the study period, 4 victims resided outside of The Bahamas. The remainder resided in New Providence (265), Grand Bahama (59) and the Family Islands (21).

Figure 4.6 Victims' Residential Divisions* (2005-2009) [New Providence Only]



*This Figure does not include two victims who resided on the Family Islands but were killed on New Providence

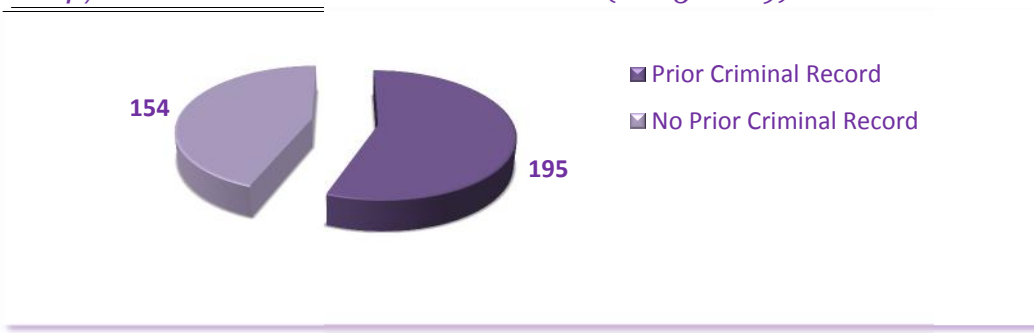
Similar numbers were observed for this variable in most divisions with an interesting trend for the Central Division. The data indicated that even though the Central Division had the 4th highest number of incidents (35, see Figure 2.2), only 19 victims actually resided within its boundaries. This was because 22 (63%) of Central's murders took place on streets or at business establishments, 8 of which were *bars & nightclubs*.

Moreover, the leading motive for the Central Division was *revenge*, which typically occurred on streets as opposed to within dwelling homes. Since this division is regarded as a highly commercialized area, it is expected that the number on the victim's division variable would be relatively lower than its incidence. This same trend was observed in Grand Bahama as most of its murders were observed in the Central Division, while most victims resided in its Eastern Division.

Victim's Prior Criminal Record

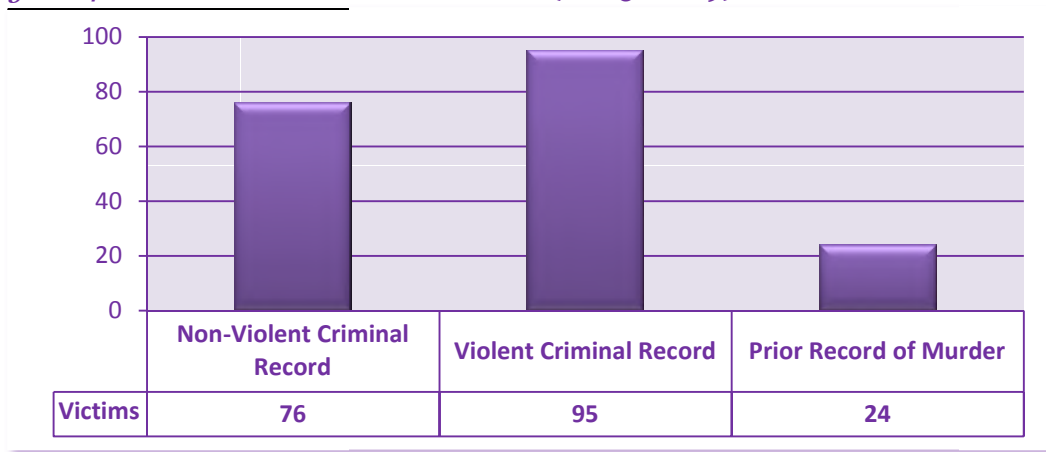
It is certainly interesting to note that a growing number of murder victims had been involved in criminal activity and had been in contact with the police resulting in an arrest or a charge for a criminal offence. As shown in Figure 4.7, 195 (56%) murder victims during the study period had prior criminal records. Interestingly, the number of murder victims with prior criminal records has crossed over to the majority for three consecutive years; 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Figure 4.7 Victims' Prior Criminal Records (2005-2009)



A closer analysis of victims with prior criminal records revealed more interesting findings. The majority of the 195 murder victims with prior criminal records have been previously involved in *violent* criminal behavior. As illustrated in Figure 4.8, about 61% of such victims had been previously taken into police custody for violent criminal activity. In fact, 24 (7%) of *all* murder victims had been previously charged with murder themselves.

Figure 4.8 Victims' Criminal Records (2005-2009)



Victim's Profile

Research has indicated that the subpopulation at greatest risk for homicide victimization was, and continues to be, young urban minority males, who were killed with guns (Blumstein & Rosenfeld, 1998). Most aspects of these findings hold true for The Bahamas considering the murder victim's profile. The murder victim profile during the study period was a single employed, Bahamian male between ages 26-35, residing in the Southeastern Division with a prior criminal record. This profile has remained virtually unchanged for the last 15 years (Hanna, 2005).

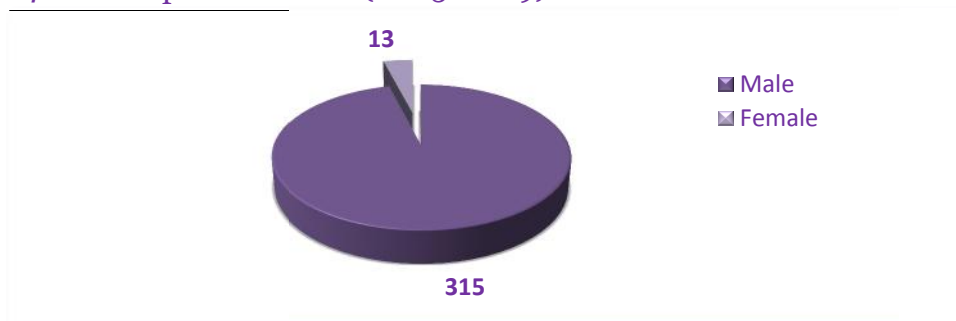
Murder Suspects

Murder investigators have identified 328 persons as those responsible for the 349 murders reported during the study period. A person described as a *murder suspect* in this study refers to one on whom a formal charge of murder has been levied or can be levied once brought into custody. Interestingly, 19 suspects were charged with 2 different murders while 4 suspects were charged with 3 different murders, all of which occurred during the study period. There are 19 suspects who are still at large, but should face formal charges once brought into custody. Finally, 7 suspects are now deceased, all of whom became murder victims themselves.

Suspect's Gender

Gender gaps discussed earlier in this chapter also applied to murder suspects, but with a larger gap. According to Figure 4.8, 315 (96%) of the suspects were males. On average, about 3 females tended to become murder suspects each year, with 4 being the highest number of female suspects in any single year during the study period.

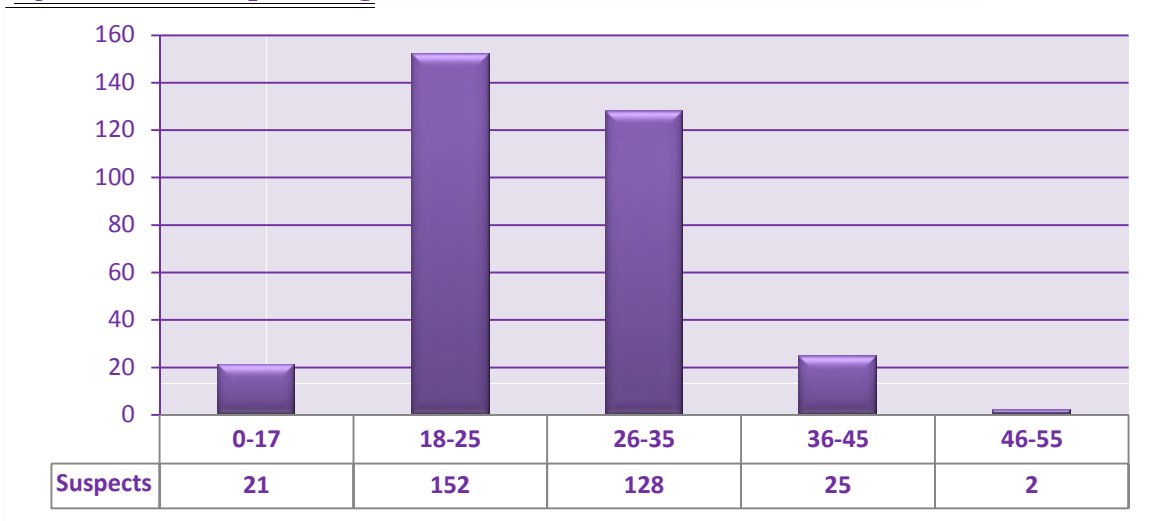
Figure 4.8 Suspects' Gender (2005-2009)



Suspect's Age

Younger people were generally more likely to commit criminal offences, including murder, than children or older adults. As shown in Figure 4.9, the peak age bracket among suspects was 18-25 years. This age group alone accounted for nearly half (46%) of the suspects during the study period. Moreover, persons under the age of 35 years accounted for 92% of the suspects. Like murder victims, this percentage was disproportionately high considering that only 63% the Bahamian population is under age 35 years (DOS, 2000).

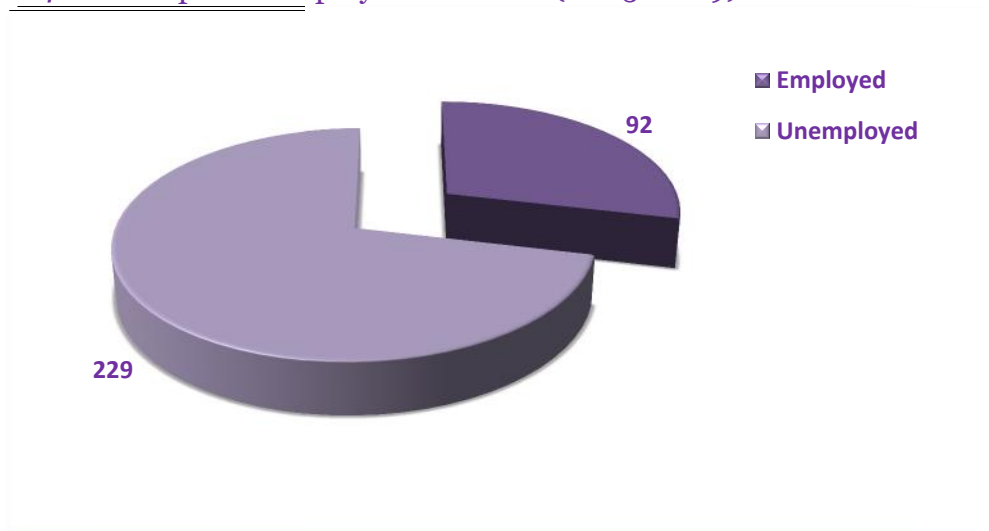
Figure 4.9 Suspects' Age Brackets (2005-2009)



Suspect's Employment Status

Researchers have used bi-variate analysis to lend support to a common finding. Previous research found that unemployment was associated with an increased risk of involvement in criminal activity (Brame et al., 2004). If one excluded the 7 suspects in grade-school, the employment status of the remaining 321 suspects supported this finding. According to Figure 4.10, 229 (71%) of the remaining murder suspects were not gainfully employed at the time of the incident.

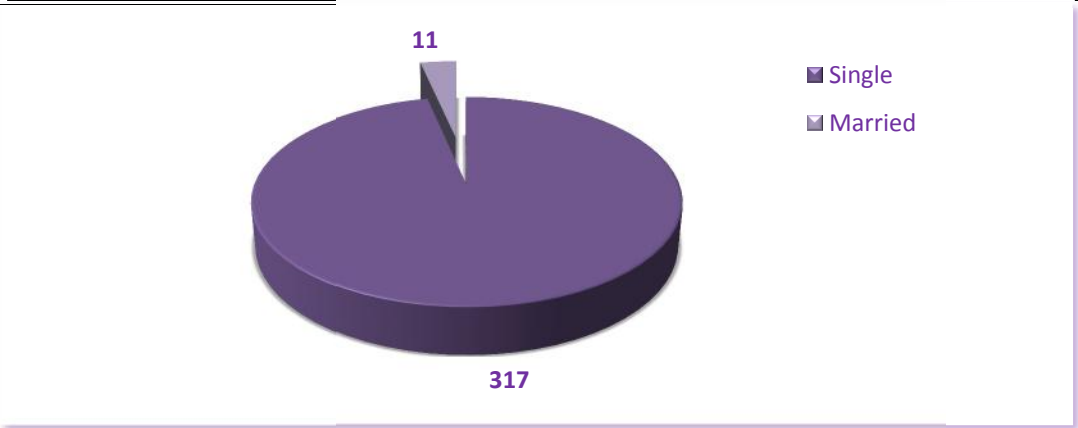
Figure 4.10 Suspects' Employment Status (2005-2009)



Suspect's Marital Status

Similar to murder victims, the majority of murder suspects were single at the time of the incident. As shown in Figure 4.11, 317 (97%) murder suspects were not married when the incident transpired. This finding was similar to an earlier study which showed 92% of murder suspects being single during the 1991-2003 time period (Hanna, 2005).

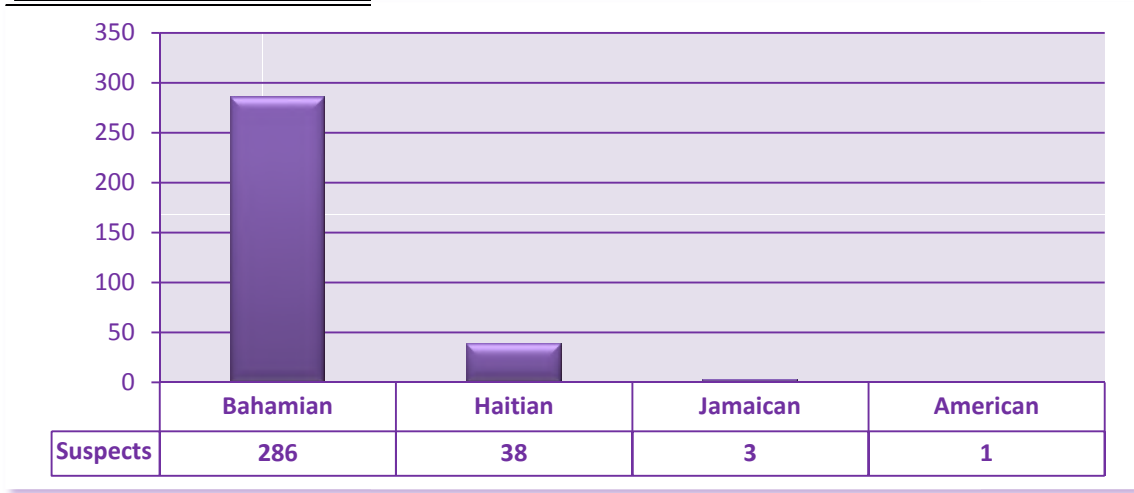
Figure 4.11 Suspects' Marital Status (2005-2009)



Suspect's Ethnicity

There was not as much variation in the murder suspect's ethnicity when compared to homicide victims, as it was limited to four attributes. As illustrated in Figure 4.12, Bahamians comprised the majority (87%) of homicide suspects. Compared to earlier research, suspects of Haitian descent were being charged with a greater number of murders. According to Hanna (2005), persons of Haitian ethnicity made up 6.5% of the murder suspects during the 1991-2003 time period. This percentage nearly doubled between 2005 and 2009, with persons of Haitian ethnicity accounting for 12% of murder suspects.

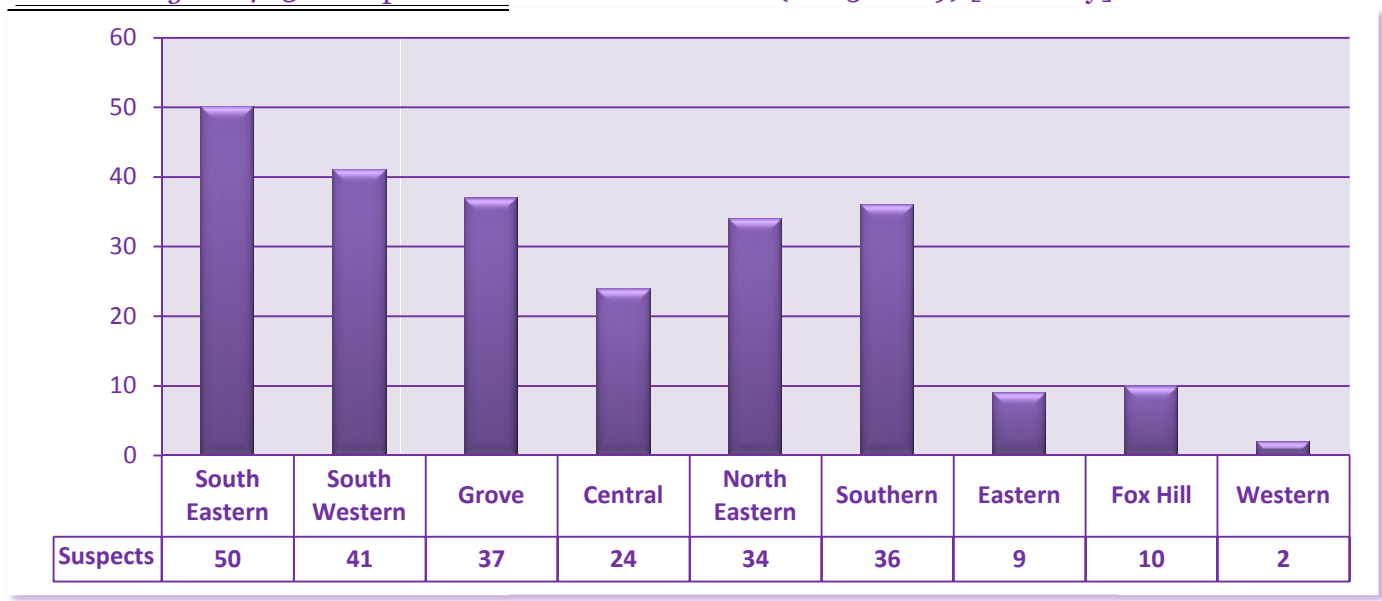
Figure 4.12 Suspects' Ethnicities (2005-2009)



Suspect's Residential Division

While most (243 or 74%) murder suspects resided on the island of New Providence, 65 (20%) lived in Grand Bahama, 19 (6%) throughout the Family Islands and 1 outside The Bahamas. When New Providence suspects were categorized by their residential policing division, trends similar to those related to murder victims were observed. As shown in Figure 4.13, the Southeastern Division had the highest number of suspects during the study period. This finding was different from those for the 1991-2003 time period when the Southern Division had the highest number of suspects residing in its boundaries (Hanna, 2005).

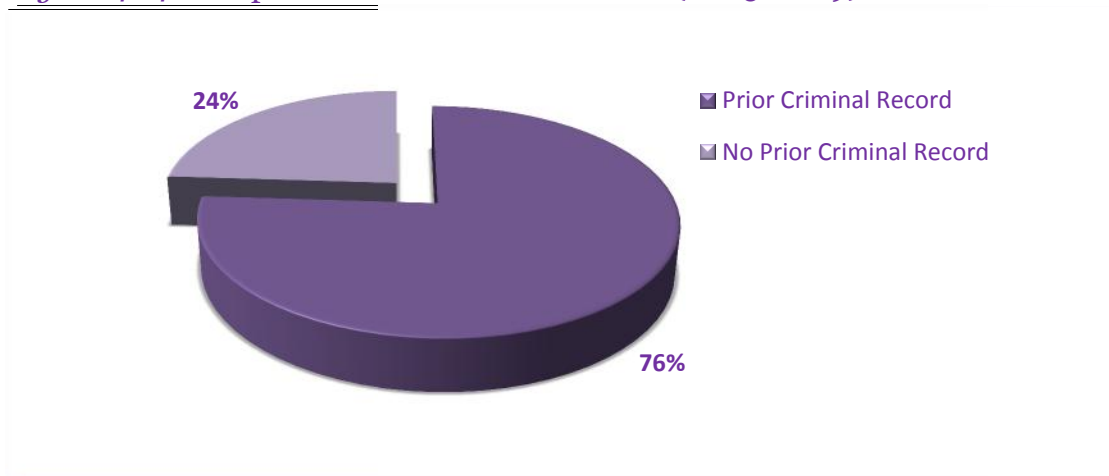
Figure 4.13 Suspects' Residential Divisions (2005-2009) [NP Only]



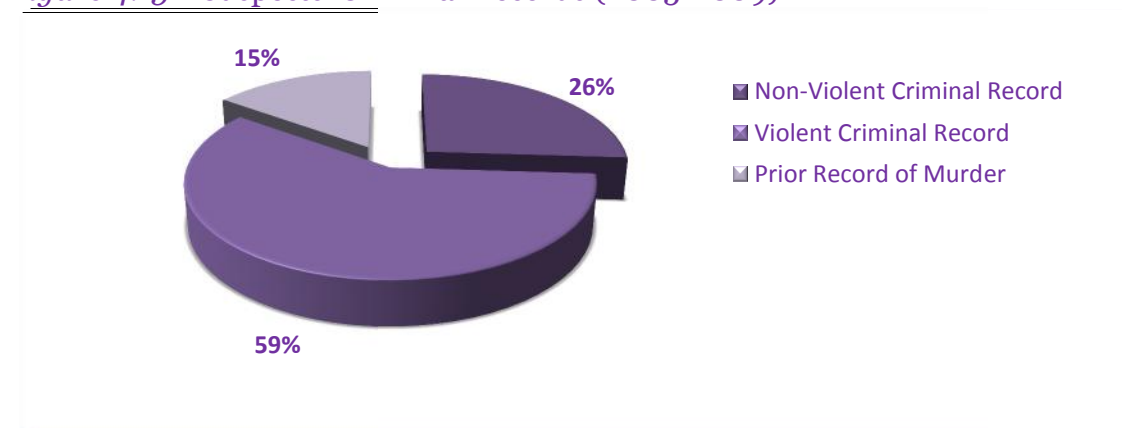
An obvious trend concerning the Southeastern Division must be highlighted. Most murders occurred in the Southeastern Division, which was where most suspects and victims resided. While preliminary assessments of other crimes suggested that some suspects left their divisions and allegedly committed crimes in others, such a situation did not hold true for this study. Findings in this study suggested that many murder suspects did not venture outside their own neighborhoods to allegedly commit crimes.

Suspect's Prior Criminal Record

It is certainly worth mentioning that a significant number of murder suspects had been involved in criminal activity and in contact with the police resulting in an arrest or a charge for a criminal offence. As Figure 4.14 illustrates, 76% of murder suspects had prior criminal records at the time of the incident. In addition, 46% of the suspects had a prior record involving a violent crime.

Figure 4.14 Suspects' Prior Criminal Records (2005-2009)

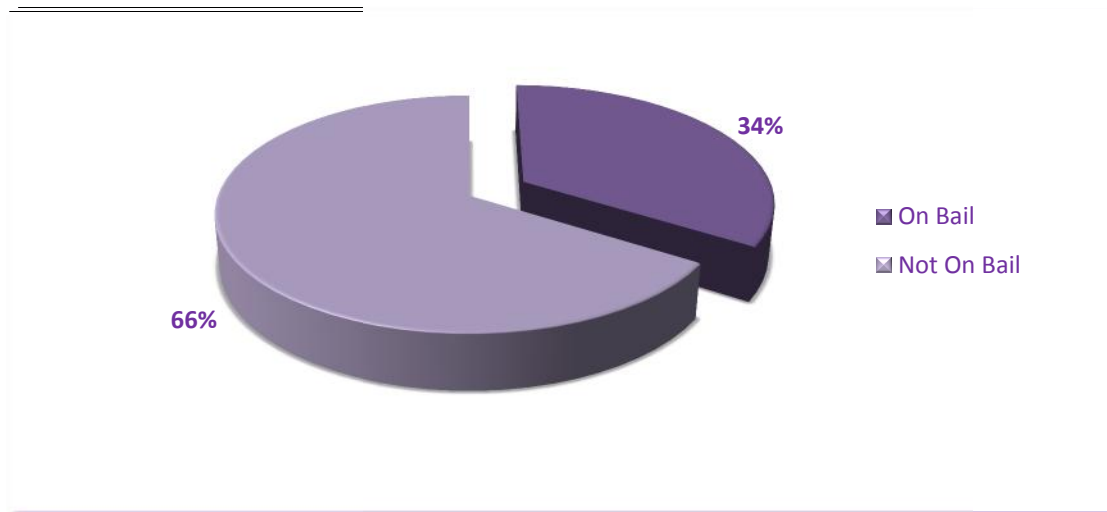
A closer examination of suspects with prior criminal records was conducted. It was found that the majority of suspects with prior criminal records had been previously involved in violent criminal behavior. As illustrated in Figure 4.15, about 59% of suspects with prior criminal records had been previously taken into police custody for violent criminal activity. Moreover, 15% of suspects with prior violent records had been previously charged with a separate murder at the time of the incident.

Figure 4.15 Suspects' Criminal Records (2005-2009)

Murder Suspects on Bail

Deeper research into the background of murder suspects revealed some interesting findings as it related to bail. There were a notable number of murder suspects who were already on bail at the time of the incident. As shown in Figure 4.16, just over a third (34%) of the murder suspects were on bail at the time of the offense. In fact, 19 suspects were already on bail for a previous murder. Others were on bail for a variety of other violent crimes including rape, armed robbery and possession of a firearm with the intent to endanger life. It was also discovered that 32% of the persons charged with murder over the last 5 years re-offended after being granted bail or otherwise discharged by the courts.

Figure 4.16 Murder Suspects on Bail



Suspect's Profile

The profile of the murder suspect during the study period was a single, unemployed Bahamian male between the ages of 18-25, with a prior criminal record involving violence, who resides in the Southeastern Division. This profile has remained virtually unchanged for the past fifteen years (Hanna, 2005).

Summing It Up

While persons from all walks of life have the potential to become a murder victim, several demographic variables increases one's likelihood. One of the most definitive factors that push the odds against a person is their involvement in criminal behavior. This holds true for both murder victims and suspects. In other words, persons who involve themselves in criminal activities increase their risk of becoming a murder victim. Conversely, law abiding citizens have been found to be generally safe and least likely to become murder victims. It should also be noted that there are a number of persons who have seemingly persisted in criminal activities, despite being faced with pending murder charges. Some may argue that these suspects feel as if they have little or no chance of survival outside of a life of crime. Others may hold that local punishment or the threat of punishment has no deterring effect. The finding that a large number of suspects were already on bail for previous criminal matters presents an avenue for murder prevention. This will be further elaborated in future chapters.

DETECTION

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Police solved 73% of murders during the 2005 -2009 study period.*
- *Murders were solved at higher rates on Grand Bahama & Family Islands.*
- *When compared to the United States, local clearance rates tended to be higher.*

Chapter 5

Murder Investigations

The first small detective unit was established in the London Police Department in 1842 (Smith, 1985). However, the London police could not ignore the need for detection activities before that time. Consequently, plainclothes police officers were used to catch pickpockets and attended union and political meetings to gather any crime information. The establishment of the detective unit was justified based on the need to respond to murder, which was a crime that the police could not investigate without the assurance of public support. The task of conducting inquiries into criminal acts has traditionally been thought of as one aspect of police work that requires highly developed skills and innate abilities to collect and evaluate case facts (Glick & Riccio, 1979). By its very nature, detective work is concerned with information acquisition and generation.

The investigation of a murder involves a complex range of tedious and, at times, emotional tasks ranging from the death notification to testifying in court. Few crimes warrant as much time, effort or investigative fortitude. Murder inquiries, though intricate and at times overwhelming, are assigned to elite individuals who must carefully analyze each minute piece of information to meet success. As in larger law enforcement agencies, investigations into murder cases are conducted by a special group of detectives typically referred to as the Homicide Unit or the Murder Squad. Members of these units, staffed with an average of about 20 officers, are usually the most experienced detectives, highly trained in advanced investigative procedures. Though not envied by some colleagues, homicide investigators are respected for the arduous task they are mandated to carry out. These squads, whose working hours are neither predicted nor limited, are sometimes viewed as outcasts by fellow detectives.

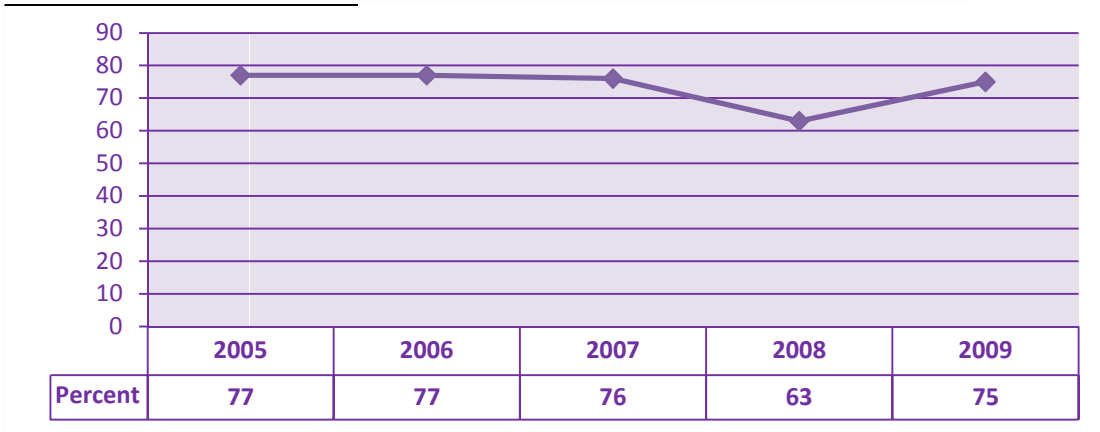
In The Bahamas, the Royal Bahamas Police Force is outfitted with a Homicide Squad within the Central Detective Unit headquartered in New Providence. Although responsibility for murder investigations was initially assigned to the Serious Crimes Squad, the Homicide Squad was officially formed in 1998 in response to the deaths of two tourists visiting Paradise Island. The Squad's detectives possess special investigative skills sets that include intelligence gathering, interviewing, computer information systems and clinical counseling. Murder detectives are the only front line detectives required to attend murder scenes at any hour, even if the scene is located on a Family Island. Since its inception, the Homicide Squad has proven its efficiency and effectiveness in keeping with the Force's core mandate on the detection of crime. As will be discussed later in this chapter, The Bahamas' murder detection rate dropped only once since 1998. In fact, the clearance rate of 82% observed in 2004 was the highest ever recorded locally.

The most important measure of accomplishment for detectives is the *clearance* rate, commonly referred to as the *solvency* or *detection* rate (Skolnick, 1975). High crime clearances, expressed in percentages, tend to be highly respected by police personnel. Tiff (1975) suggested that investigators appeared to be most influenced by production-evaluation controls pertaining to their success in arrest and clearance percentage of assigned cases. For most law enforcement bodies, a high crime clearance rate is a direct measure of that organization's effectiveness.

Bahamas' Detection Rate

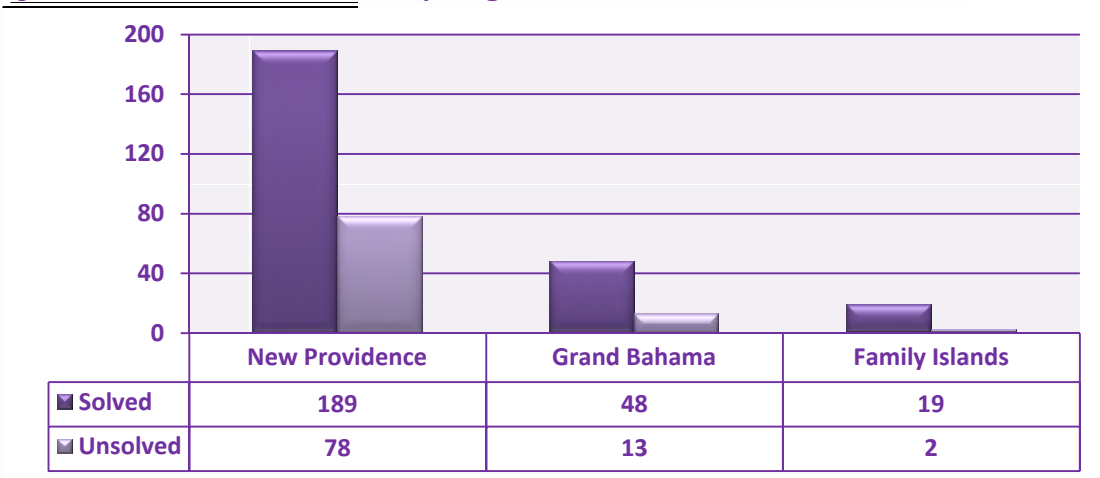
During the study period, a case was regarded as detected or solved when sufficient evidence was secured to levy a charge of murder against a person or persons for a murder incident. The overall detection rate for the study period was 73%. The murder detection rate noticeably improved during the last five years of the study period, well above the 69% average during the 1991-2003 time period (Hanna, 2005). As shown in Figure 5.1, the detection rate during the study period remained virtually steady, with the largest decrease observed in 2008. Rates during the five year period produced an annual average of 74%.

Figure 5.1 Bahamas' Detection Rate (2005-2009)



Murders occurring on Grand Bahama and the Family Islands yielded a higher detection rate than New Providence. As shown in Figure 5.2, the individual detection rates for Nassau, Grand Bahama and the remaining Family Islands were 71%, 79% and 90% respectively. Some observers explain this phenomenon by suggesting that Grand Bahama and the Family Islands are less populated, have less crime and have many closely-knitted communities. They deduce that local police officers had more resources to dedicate to such cases and were able to garner more community support and intelligence regarding the perpetrators of serious crimes.

Figure 5.2 Detection Rate by Region (2005-2009)



Clearance Time

The length of a murder inquiry has also been a concern for members of the public. In fact, several television producers have created shows that explore the relationship between murder clearance and length of time. These shows illustrate the determination and resolve of investigators who challenge themselves with cases where the odds of clearance are sometimes minimal. More importantly, relatives of murder victims expect that their loved one's assailant(s) is brought to justice as soon as possible.

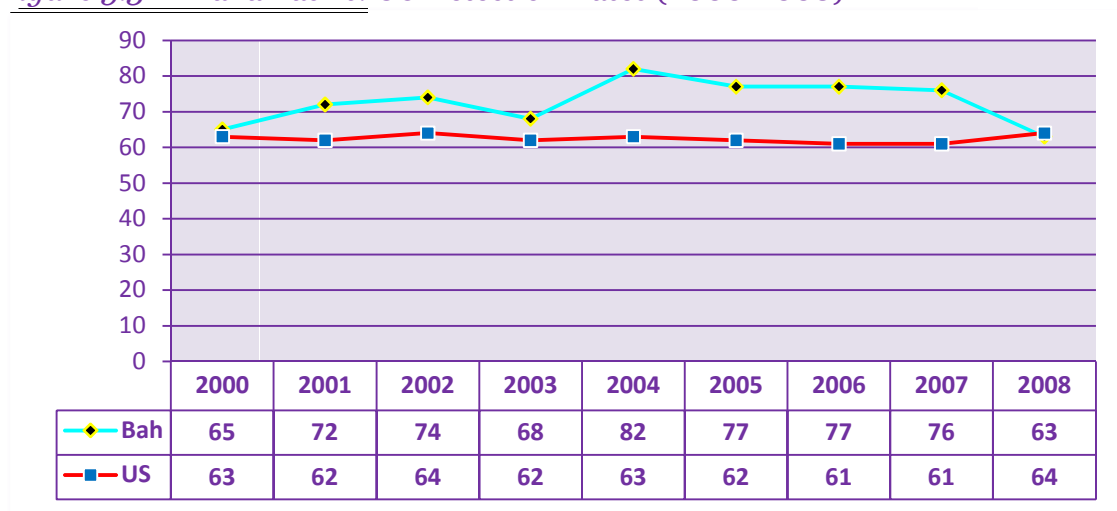
During the study period, 76% of all solved murders were solved within 7 days of the reported date of the incident. This indicated that if a homicide was not cleared within 7 days of first coming to the attention of police, the probability of it being solved was considerably reduced. However, it should also be noted that one case had been cleared even though its investigation extended over a year.

The Bahamas' Clearance Rate Compared to Other Countries'

United States

When compared to the United States, local clearance rates tended to be higher. As shown in Figure 5.3, the US averaged a 62% clearance rate between 2000 and 2008, while The Bahamas averaged a clearance rate of 73% for the same time period. In fact, the US' clearance rate only surpassed The Bahamas' rate for one year (2008) during the nine year period.

Figure 5.3 Bahamas vs. US Detection Rates (2000-2008)



Source: Uniform Crime Reports, 2008

United Kingdom

In the UK during 2002/03, 1,045 deaths were initially recorded as homicides. This represented an increase of 21% (1% excluding the controversial Shipman matters) over the previous year (Povey, 2004). Of these offences, 38 were no longer recorded as homicides by November 13, 2003. Hence, the official number of murders totaled 1007.

For 183 victims, no suspects were identified. This yielded a clearance rate of 82% for 2002/03 (Povey, 2004). Similar detection rate percentages have been recorded for more recent years indicating that UK rates were generally higher than local rates.

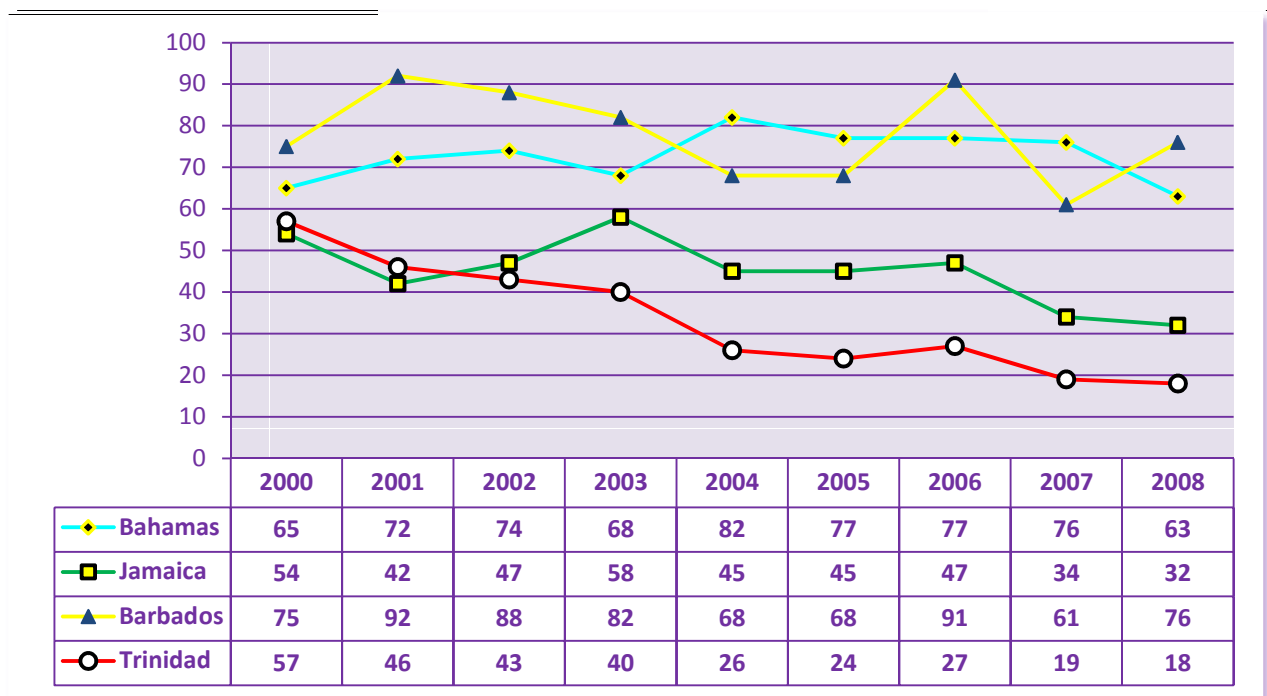
Australia

In Australia, there were 311 identified homicide offenders in 2002-03 (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2004). At the time of data collection, 14 per cent (42) of the incidents were unsolved and an offender had not yet been identified. In other words, during the 2002-2003 time period, Australia had a murder clearance rate of 86%, indicating a higher detection rate than that of The Bahamas.

Regional Detection Rates

A comparison of the murder detection rates in the Caribbean was conducted and is displayed in Figure 5.4. As shown by the trend lines, The Bahamas' murder detection rate was among the highest in the region. Barbados produced the highest average murder detection rate, 78%, over the last 9 years followed by The Bahamas with 73%. Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago produced comparatively lower average murder detection rates at 45% and 33% respectively. Some observers attribute Barbados' high detection rate to its relatively low murder rate which averaged about 9 (per 100,000) during the last decade. Observers may also attribute Jamaica's and Trinidad & Tobago's relatively low murder detection rate to its relatively high murder rate (See Chapter 1). The data also revealed an inverse correlation between a nation's murder rate and its detection rate. In other words, as murders in a country increase, its detection rates tended to decrease.

Figure 5.4 Regional Detection Rates (2000-2008)



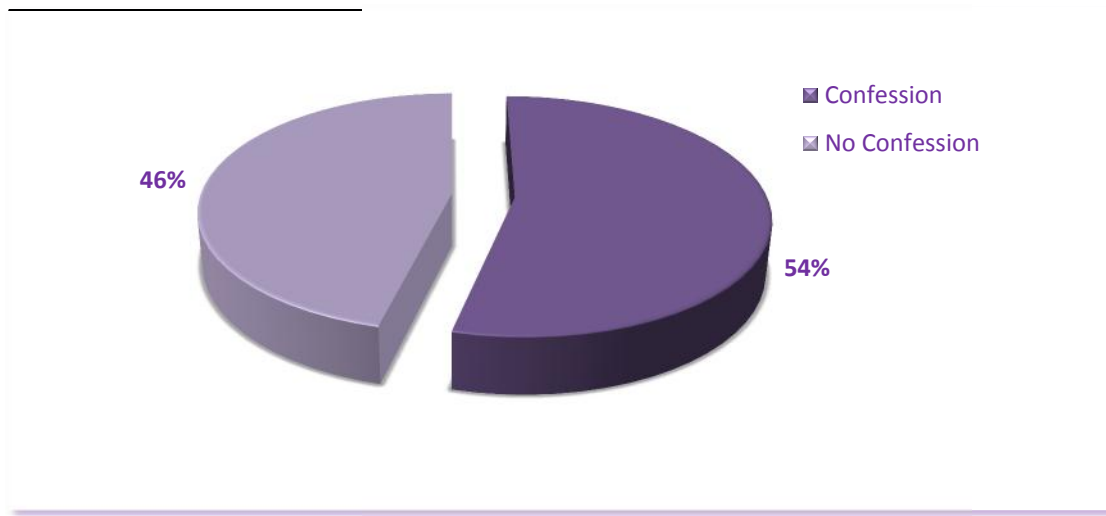
Sources: Jamaica Constabulary Force, Royal Barbados Police Force & the Trinidad & Tobago Police Service.

Suspect Confession

When a suspect is taken into custody and sufficient evidence to support a murder charge is secured, homicide investigators usually provide the subject with an opportunity to “come clean” and verbally claim responsibility for his or her alleged acts. Even though a suspect’s admission is not a compulsory part of an investigation and is not required to secure a conviction, confessions are seen as the final triumph for investigators secondary to case solution (Tift, 1975).

Obtaining confessions, however, is by no means an effortless undertaking considering how many suspects are familiar with the criminal justice system. Consequently, it is not unusual for investigators to spend time speaking with suspects who display hints of remorse when being interviewed in hopes of securing a confession. These efforts, however, have certainly not gone without reward, if only in terms of investigative closure. As illustrated in Figure 5.5, most (54%) murder suspects offered a full or partial confession. The attribute *partial* ascribed to this variable measured those cases in which the suspect claimed responsibility for the victim’s death, but his account was inconsistent with the crime scene investigation. Nonetheless, there was still sufficient evidence to proceed with a charge of murder without the confession.

Figure 5.5 Suspect Confessions (2005-2009)



Summing It Up

The Bahamas had a relatively high murder detection rate, surpassing that of the US and a number of regional nations. Using murder rate data from Chapter 1, detection patterns appear to have a negative correlation for two countries in the Caribbean region. As Jamaica’s and Trinidad & Tobago’s murder rates gradually increase, their detection rates gradually decrease. Such a relationship, however, was not observed in The Bahamas whose detection rates have remained relatively constant despite recent increases in the murder rate.

Case Disposal, Conviction & Sentencing

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Most preliminary inquiries into murder cases result in committal to Supreme Court for trial.*
- *Juries returned a guilty verdict in 69% of cases presented to them for deliberations.*
- *Most sentences for murder convictions included prison time.*
- *Persons convicted of manslaughter were likely to receive an 11-15 year prison term.*
- *Prosecutors were mostly successful in securing committals in P.I.'s and convictions in murder cases that presented to juries for deliberations.*

Chapter 6

Introduction

The police are considered the gate-keepers of the criminal justice system as they control the number of persons who enter the system at the arrest stage. Hence, law enforcement operations have major impacts on judiciaries across the world. The more felons the police arrest, the greater the workload of the prosecutors and the more overcrowded the prisons (Hanna, 2005). The Homicide Funnel of Justice displayed in Figure 6.1, shows a breakdown of the adjudication of murder cases during the study period up to the end of the 2009 judicial year.

Figure 6.1 The Homicide Funnel of Justice* (2005-2009)

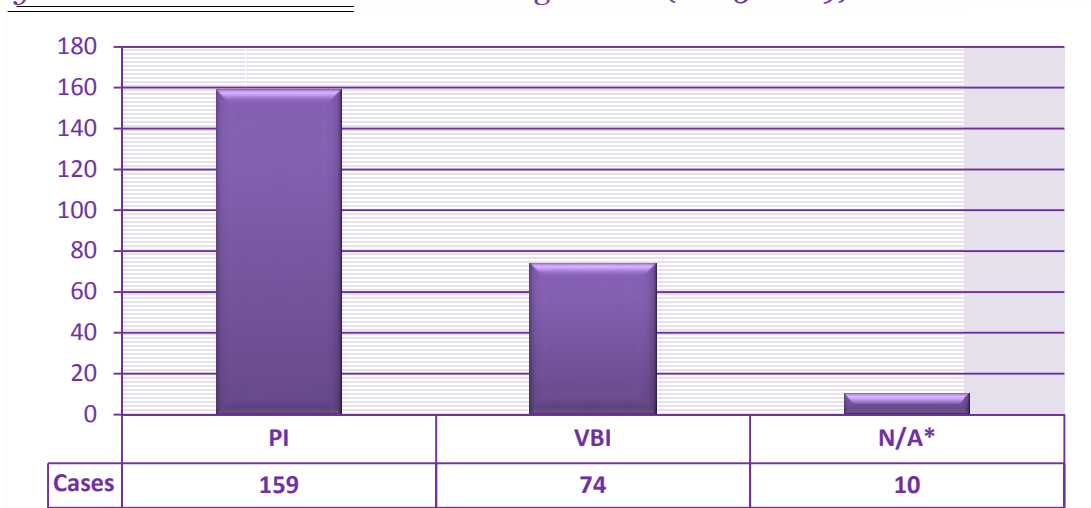


**The 349 murders during the study period generated 333 cases as several incidents involved the killing of more than one person. As indicated, not all solved cases resulted in charges being filed in the courts. The difference in these two measures, totaling 12 cases, captured those cases in which suspects were still at large or died prior to being charged. Although some suspects are still at large, cases involving multiple suspects were counted as 'charged' if at least one of the suspects was charged. The 63 completed cases indicated the number of murder cases that have been disposed of by the courts (Magistrate's or Supreme Courts) and exclude matters whose outcomes are still pending (see Tables 6.3 & 6.4). There are 4 cases that resulted in a murder conviction that are awaiting a sentence to be handed down.*

Preliminary Inquiries, Voluntary Bill of Indictments & Murder Cases

A preliminary inquiry, also known as a PI, is a legal proceeding in the Magistrate's Court (a lower court) where an inquiry is conducted by a Magistrate for a case that may go to trial in a higher court (Curzon, 2002). The object is to determine whether the prosecution can establish a prima facie (on the face) case against the accused. If it can, the accused is committed for trial; if not, the defendant is discharged. In other words, the Magistrate examines the prosecution's case to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to commit a defendant to the Supreme Court (a higher court) to stand trial. A Voluntary Bill of Indictment (VBI), on the other hand, is a method undertaken by prosecutors who seek to have a case for an indictable offence (major offences triable by a judge and jury) proceed directly to trial in the Supreme Court. VBI cases are typically authorized by a country's Attorney General's Office and are normally cases in which the evidence is clear and strong. As illustrated in Figure 6.2, most (159 or 65%) of the 243 solved cases entered the court system via a PI.

Figure 6.2 Murder Cases' Court Assignments (2005-2009)

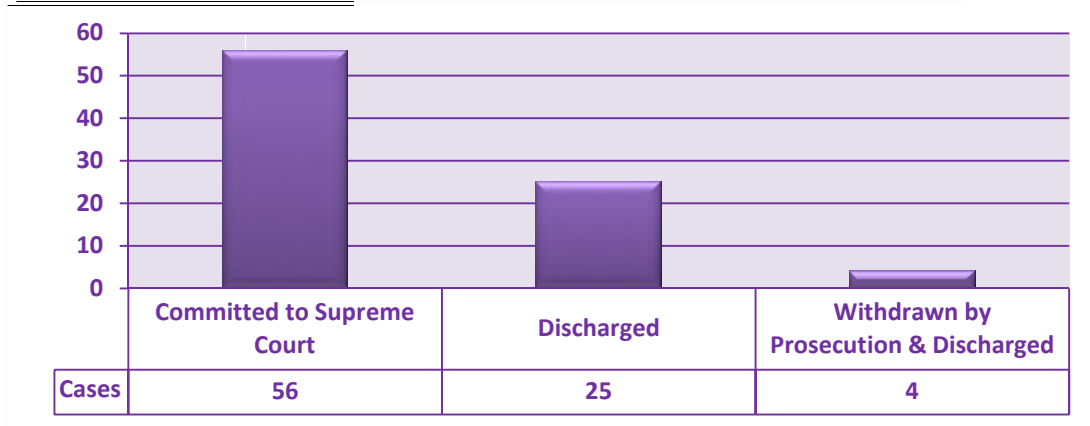


*These cases were ones in which suspects were still at large or deceased and have thus been sent to the Coroner's Court for an inquest or are pending court assignments when suspects are eventually brought into custody and formally charged.

Murder Case Disposal in Magistrate's Courts

Out of the 159 cases which entered the Magistrate's Court via PI, most (85 or 53%) were completed and disposed of by one of three methods. As Figure 6.3 illustrates, (56 or 66%) of the cases were committed to the Supreme Court for trial. This indicates that the prosecution was usually successful in convincing the court that sufficient evidence against the defendants existed to proceed with the murder case by trial in the Supreme Court. The other cases were either discharged by the court for a lack of evidence or withdrawn by prosecutors who declined to proceed further with the matter within the study period.

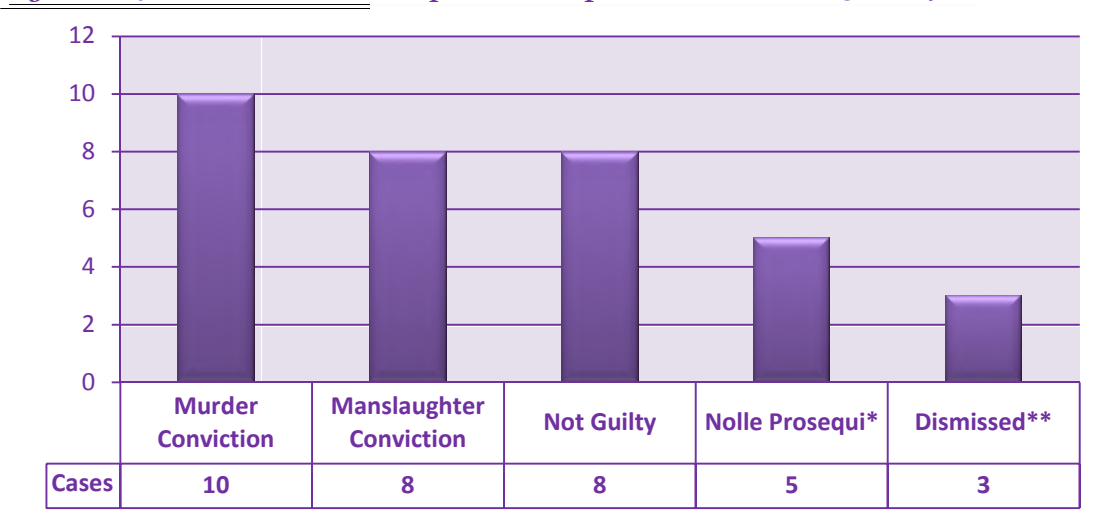
Figure 6.3 Murder Case Disposal in Magistrate's Court (2005-2009)



Murder Case Disposal in the Supreme Court

Out of the 243 detected cases, 130 made it to the Supreme Court by either being committed by the Magistrate's Court or via a VBI. Out of these 130 cases, 34 were completed by the end of the 2009 judicial year. These 34 completed cases resulted in 18 convictions. As shown in Figure 6.4, 10 were *murder* convictions while 8 were *manslaughter* convictions. Depending on the evidence, the judge may advise jurors to consider both a murder and manslaughter charge in their deliberations. Therefore, an accused facing a murder charge may wind up being convicted of manslaughter. The data revealed that in most cases, prosecutors were successful in convincing the court that sufficient evidence existed against the defendant(s) to secure one of two guilty verdicts. In fact, juries only returned a not guilty verdict in 31% of the cases presented to them. The other cases were not presented to a jury for deliberation as they were either dismissed by the court for a lack of evidence prior to deliberations or withdrawn (*nolle prosequi*) by the prosecution.

Figure 6.4 Murder Case Disposal in Supreme Court (2005-2009)



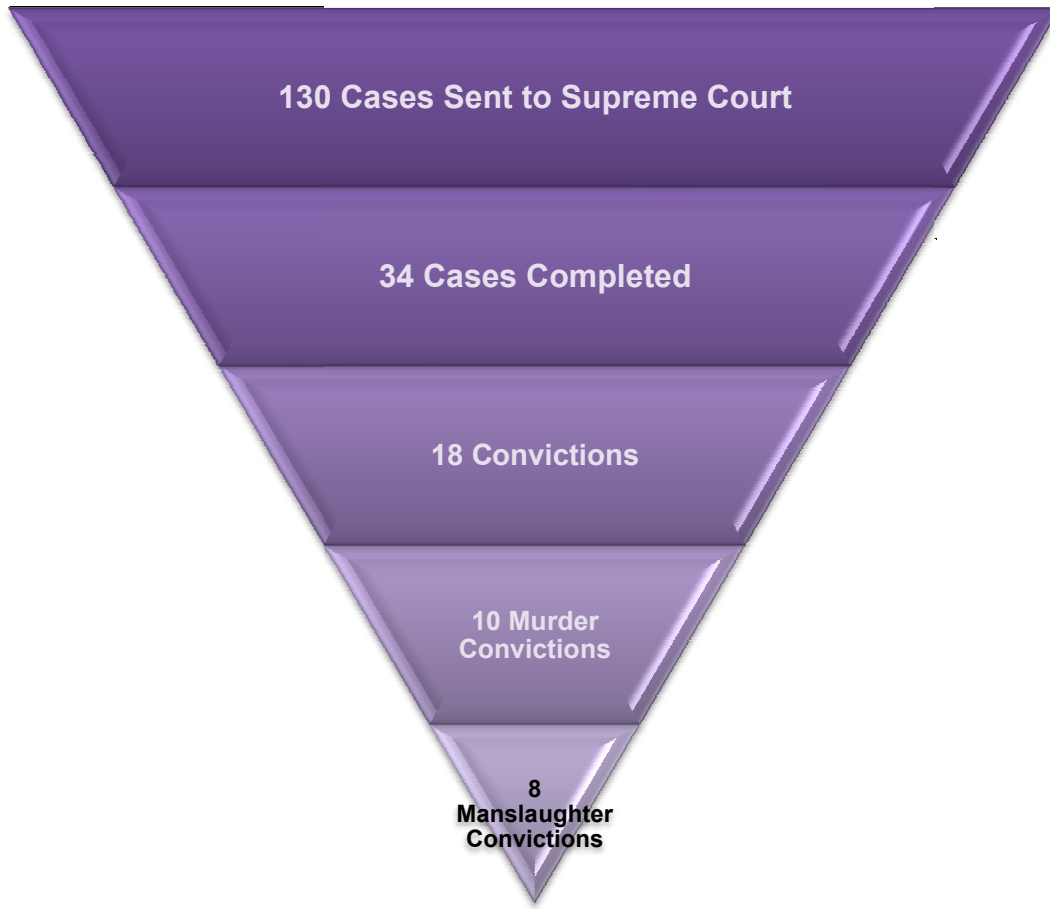
**Nolle Prosequi* stays a prosecution on indictment. This decision is usually made by a country's Attorney General. It is not an acquittal as fresh proceedings may be brought on the same charge at a later date.

** *Dismissed* cases were those in which the Supreme Court Justice advised the jury, prior to deliberations, to enter a not guilty verdict or acquit the accused and dismiss the charges on grounds of insufficient evidence.

Murder Conviction Rate

The Murder Conviction Funnel, displayed in Figure 6.5, illustrates that 18 (53%) cases where persons were charged with murder resulted in a conviction, whether it was a murder or a manslaughter conviction. However, only 10 (29%) completed murder cases in this study resulted in a murder conviction. The differences in the types of murder convictions across jurisdictions make direct comparisons between countries difficult.

Figure 6.5 Murder Conviction Funnel (2005-2009)

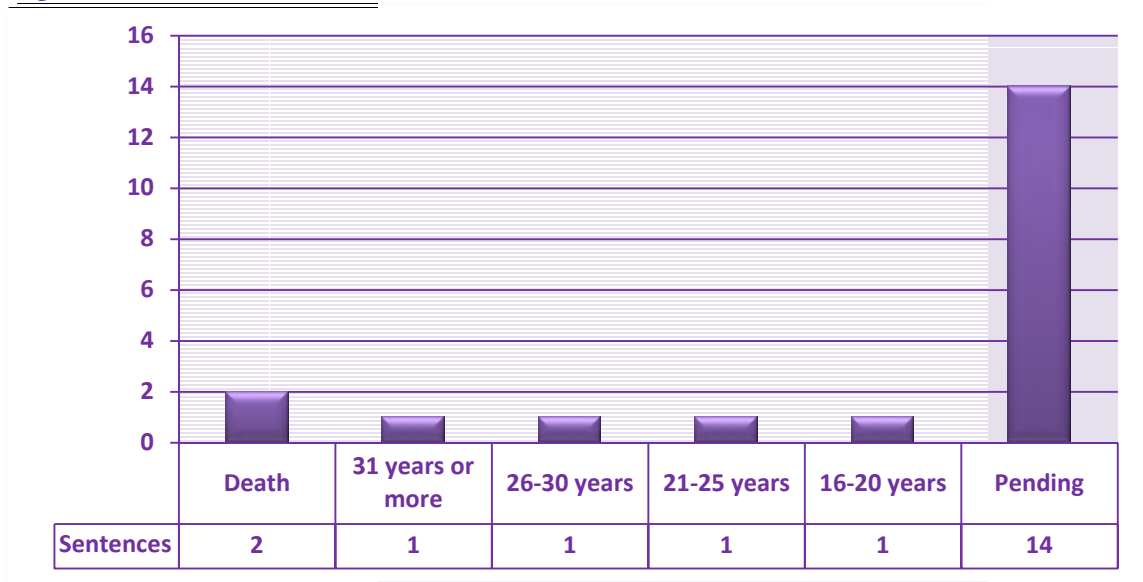


Sentencing & Punishment

Retribution, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation are the four primary justifications offered for punishment. These sentencing philosophies, however, differ in important ways. While some focus on past behavior, others are directed toward future actions. While some stress that the punishment should fit the crime, others emphasize that the punishment should fit the criminal. These and other issues influence contemporary beliefs about sentencing (Hanna, 2005). Historically in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the penalty for a person convicted of murder was automatically death by hanging. Following a 2006 review by the Privy Council in England, the Lords ruled that it was not mandatory to impose the death penalty on all persons convicted of murder. They further decided that each case should be determined

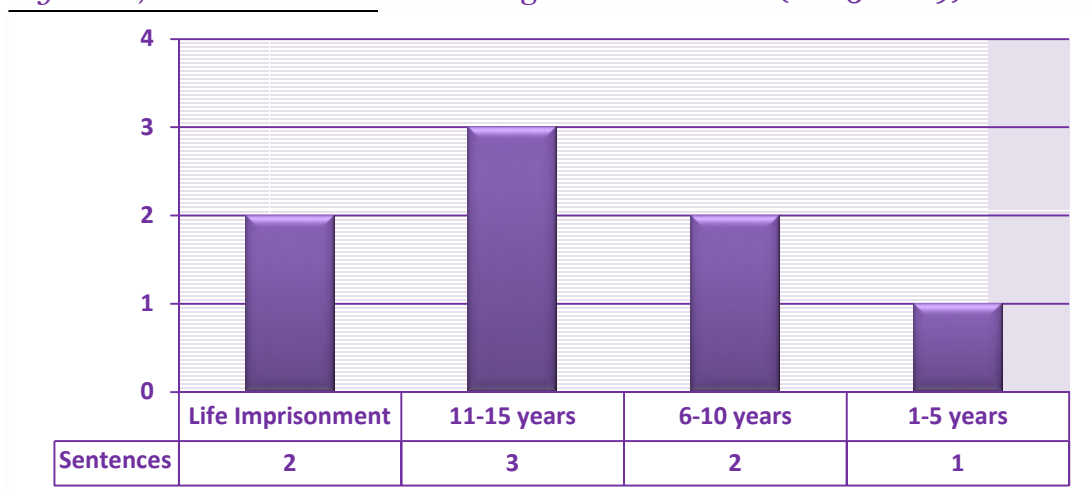
by its own facts and merit. This ruling created a sentencing phase of the trial in which the judge hears arguments from the defense and prosecution as to whether the death penalty should be levied on the convict. Hence, Supreme Court Justices have vast discretion in imposing the death penalty for murder convicts. Judges also have broad discretion in sentencing persons convicted of manslaughter in which a sentence of life imprisonment could be imposed. As shown in Figure 6.6, sentences were handed down in 6 of the 10 cases where murder convictions were secured. Most of the sentences (4) involved prison time ranging from a 16-20 year jail term to more than 31 of years imprisonment. A sentence of death was handed down in 2 of these cases.

Figure 6.6 Sentences for Murder Convictions (2005-2009)



As shown in Figure 6.7, sentences were handed down in all of the 8 cases where manslaughter convictions were secured. Defendants were mostly sentenced to an 11-15 year jail term. A “life” sentence was handed down in 2 of the cases.

Figure 6.7 Sentences for Manslaughter Convictions (2005-2009)



Summing it Up

Findings shared in this chapter suggest that prosecutors were mostly successful in securing committals in PI's and convictions in murder cases that presented to juries for deliberations. Findings over the last five years indicated that most cases entering the Magistrate Courts via a PI were found to have sufficient evidence to proceed with a trial and were subsequently committed to the Supreme Court. Findings over the last five years also indicated that most cases *which made it to the jury* resulted in some type of conviction. Nonetheless, the 3 dismissed cases and the 8 not guilty verdicts may paint a less favorable picture in the minds of other evaluators. Moreover, findings over the last five years indicated that there was a notable number of cases still pending trial. This back-log will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

PREVENTING MURDERS

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Problem-oriented policing strategies have been associated with decreases in homicide and violent crimes.*
- *Local police have seized over 1,100 illicit firearms over the last 5 years.*
- *Most Bahamians blame the courts for the state of crime in the country.*
- *Punishment must be swift, certain and severe in order to produce a deterrent effect.*
- *“The difference between homicide and assault may simply be the intervention of a bystander, the accuracy of a gun, the weight of a frying pan, the speed of an ambulance or the availability of a trauma center” (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990:34)*

Chapter 7

Can Murders Really Be Prevented?

Historically, murder was seen as an offence that law enforcement simply had no control over. There are a number of police practitioners who firmly believe that the police cannot in anyway affect the homicide rate. Some argued that murders appeared to have a 'life of their own' and were relatively immune to police interventions (McGuire, 2002). Others held that homicide rates were, for the most part, an indication of economic and social variables, over which the police had virtually no authority (Mercy & Hammond, 1999). Without the ability to change social and economic conditions or change the psychology of persons most affected by deadly violence, this historic reasoning concluded that there was little police officers could do to combat homicide. As a result, law enforcement efforts to address murders involved mostly improving re-active tactics and procedures beneficial in case-by-case, after-the-fact investigation (White et al., 2003). In addition, homicide investigators tend to operate as virtually independent agents, responding in an ad hoc fashion to cases brought to their attention and doing little to foresee or avert such problems.

In recent times, however, the implementation of community and problem-oriented policing strategies has been followed by notable decreases in homicide and violent crime. This has raised many questions concerning exactly what police agencies can realistically be expected to achieve regarding murders that occur in their jurisdictions. More pointedly, new developments have led researchers to speculate about whether embracing problem-oriented, and other law enforcement strategies, and securing public involvement could significantly reduce the incidence of violence and murder (White et al., 2003).

Approaches to Crime Prevention

Crime reduction has been attempted through a wide variety of approaches. A primary distinction has been made between what some call *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary* crime preventative strategies. The primary approach focuses on direct prevention of the actual crime event: the fitting of locks and bolts. Secondary approaches are aimed at reducing a potential perpetrator's motivation before he/she commits a crime: alternative activities to keep idle youths off the streets. Finally, tertiary approaches focus on stopping potential career criminals by means of treatment or punishment (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). As Pease (2002) noted, police officers in the UK tended to spear head primary prevention, youth services in secondary prevention and prison and probation services in tertiary prevention.

In the UK, however, policy has been strongly influenced by a different grouping of crime prevention called *situational crime prevention*. The main focus of situational crime prevention is to lessen the opportunities or particular types of crime in particular situations or locations while increasing the chances of detection. First based on *target hardening* or surveillance of geographical locations, this approach has become progressively more flexible. It now incorporates strategies that focus on likely criminals, victims and scenes. Interestingly, there has been a resurgence of interest in wider *social* crime prevention policies. Some of these polices include community regeneration, literacy initiatives, parenting seminars and offender treatment programs. Many police agencies today incorporate these different forms of prevention into one comprehensive, multi-agency project (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Principal Correlates of Violence

Poverty

One of the most persistent findings is that murders, like other crimes of a violent and predatory nature, are strongly associated with social inequality and poverty. Researchers and criminologists have found a strong economy as a factor in reducing crime (Blumstien & Rosenfeld, 1998). This implies that reduction efforts toward specific offences should be complementary to and complemented by wider, long-term strategies which address poverty. It can also be useful for policy-makers to think about the interaction between poverty and specific local factors. Some pundits argued that the wave of homicides in New York during the 1980s could be attributed to a volatile mix of financial decline, harsh cuts in welfare benefits, the expansion of a profitable illegal drug trade, easy access to guns and low police morale and effectiveness (Bowling, 1999). Hence, the hopelessness caused by growing poverty sparked a demand for large supplies of cheap crack cocaine. This attracted many young men with no other viable career alternative to the violently competitive drug dealing trade in hopes of making easy money. The overall effect was the transformation of an area of extreme poverty and social inequality to one of serious violence (Bowling, 1999).

After several social, economic and policing initiatives in the mid-1990s, there was a dramatic fall in homicide rates in New York. However, there have been various disputes concerning the primary reason for the reversal. While some believed it was due to zero tolerance policing, others chalked it up to a variety of structural and cultural changes. However, the New York story illustrated the value of taking wider social problems, such as poverty, and specific local circumstances both into account (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Illicit Drugs & Firearms Trades

The rise in violent crimes was largely related to the emergence of crack cocaine on the streets. Blumstein (1995) attributed the increases in gun homicides involving US youths during the last decade to the growing arms race in inner-city neighborhoods where illicit drug markets were concentrated. He further suggested that the escalating demand for this cheap drug in the 1980s caused pushers to recruit and arm growing numbers of inner-city youths as street-level drug peddlers. At first, the gun violence was associated with the illicit drug market. Later, firearm violence soon adopted an independent trait as additional youths armed themselves in reaction to a threatening urban surrounding. Consequently, rates of gun assault and homicide increased (Blumstein, 1995). Baumer et al. (1998) found that cities in which levels of crack use were higher experienced significantly higher homicide rates and more rapid increases in homicide.

UK officials systematically target offenders who are involved in the drug trade and who are prepared to use violence. Operation Trident, a major coordinated strategy (based in London but with a national brief), was launched in 1999. This operation was made up of an intelligence gathering function as well as an operational arm. Although no independent research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the operation, early indications suggested that it is performing well in terms of detecting offenders (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). By the Spring of 2000, 26 suspects were charged in relation to 17 murders. In part, this apparently high level of success was attributed to the

cooperation of key members of the black community in London. Their close working relationship with the police permitted officers to bridge gaps with black victims and witnesses who were previously fearful of giving evidence against accused persons. Another vital factor affecting gun murders is the demand for illegal substances that make drug-dealing a profitable business. This encourages persons to kill in order to ensure their place in the market. Strategies that ignore this point are sure to have a low chance of success in the long term (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Preventative Approaches to Homicide

Problem-Oriented Policing

As mentioned in Chapter 1, murder incidence in the entire US experienced a decline during the mid-1990s. Several explanations have been suggested for the decline. Janet Reno, former US Attorney General, argued that the decrease was a direct result of federally supported and directed initiatives that increased the number of police officers, tougher gun control legislation, improved coordination between law enforcement agencies and a combination of punishment, intervention and prevention (Fields & Johnson, 1999). Other scholars of prevention held that the removal of firearms from illegitimate hands and the suppression of the drug market were major contributors to the declining crime rate (Blumstien & Rosenfeld, 1998).

The most recent factor identified that could provide a basis for the decrease in violence was the implementation of the problem-oriented policing philosophy. This law enforcement shift exemplifies a major rethinking of how police agencies ought to carry out their duties with the involvement of the community (Goldstein, 1979). Recent research indicated that innovative police strategies and tactics played an important role in violence reduction. For example, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) developed Compstat (computer statistics) that identified police problems at the local level in a timely manner. Police executives, in turn, held local commanders and associated support and specialist units accountable for addressing them. This persuaded officers to enforce laws against minor quality-of-life violations and to rid communities of street level criminals who were believed, with some accuracy, to be responsible for a disproportionate percentage of more serious, violent, subway crime. They also cracked down on truants in an attempt to reduce daytime offenses including burglary and auto larceny (Bratton, 1998; White et al., 2003).

Comprehensive Homicide Reduction Initiatives

In 1995, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) hosted a Murder Summit to study violent crimes and make recommendations for the creation of a multi-agency comprehensive approach to reducing violence. Since the leading cause of death for black males and females aged 15-24 in the US was murder (BJS, 2004), the Summit's 55 practitioners and scholars set out to address the most evident and threatening dimension of contemporary violence in the United States. In the summit's final report, murder was viewed as the result of a gamut of violence in the larger context. Drugs, firearms, and stranger-on-stranger violence were factors identified as affecting murders and its changing nature. Finally, the Summit concluded by offering 39 recommendations highlighting the key components of a useful murder reduction strategy. By using best

practices and lessons learnt, Comprehensive Homicide Initiatives (CHIs) were developed. These referred to holistic, multi-agency approaches designed by law enforcement officials to address the incidence of homicides in the long term. CHIs involve clearly articulated strategies and plans connected with new and existing policies and programs. The strategies are focused on a comprehensive, long-term approach to reducing homicides.

One of the first US cities to test a CHI was Richmond, California. Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, an arm of the US Justice Department, Richmond established a violence reduction strategy in the Fall of 1995. With Richmond's police executives serving as leaders of the process, the strategy relied heavily on the Summit's 39 recommendations. The CHI integrated preventative, legislative and prosecutorial tactics into its strategies (White et al., 2003).

Between 1985 and 1994, Richmond experienced increases in drug-related violence and homicides. In fact, by 1991, murders had tripled compared to 1985. This placed the city among the most violent (per capita) in the US. In response to the escalation, the Richmond Police Department (RPD) took initial steps to re-engineer its strategy to combat violence. In 1992, a number of staff and specialized officers were re-assigned to the patrol division and a cooperative agreement with nearby law enforcement agencies had been initiated by 1994. Hence, by the time the RPD was selected as the pilot agency for the CHI, it was deeply involved in problem oriented policing (White et al., 2003). Through research, the RPD uncovered that most of its homicides took place in the city's minority communities and involved drugs, firearms, and gangs. They also discovered that most of the persons involved in the murders had prior involvement in crime and violence. Finally, their research indicated that the streets of Richmond had become extremely dangerous, as drive-by shootings were relatively commonplace. These problems became the focus of their CHI, with its strategies expressly targeted toward such trends (White et al., 2003).

Following 12 months of preparation that involved members of the Richmond community, Richmond CHI was launched. The final scheme was comprised of a range of traditional and contemporary practices that crossed law enforcement lines. With RPD's homicide detectives acting as program facilitators, the main theme of the initiative was the acknowledgment that preventing murders was a crucial police function best achieved by uncovering factors that typically resulted in murders and detecting them by means of early intrusion (White et al., 2003). The strategy created activities to specifically deal with the relationship between firearms, drugs, gangs and murder.

Several years after implementation, the murder rates of Richmond were studied to gauge possible effects of the program. Results showed that rates for murder involving victims and offenders related by blood or marriage declined by 55% following CHI implementation. Drive-by murder dropped by 64% (8.7 to 3.1 per capita). The largest decreases involved murder with the use of a firearm and drug-related murders. In fact, gun-killings decreased from 46.0 to 26.2 per 100,000 annually. Drug-related murders dropped significantly from 41.1 to 16.7 per 100,000. The number of murder victims with prior criminal convictions decreased by 31%, while the number of murder suspects with prior criminal convictions decreased by nearly 50% (White et al., 2003).

The results clearly demonstrated that many of the murder characteristics were inter-related and over-lapped. A clear instance would be drive-by murders, which are

obviously related to gun-related murders. The results also uncovered a key change in Richmond's homicide problem. Although some of the unsettling trends continued during and following the CHI, the number of murders decreased significantly, especially in areas targeted by the violent reduction tactics. Researchers also spent time refuting claims that the results from Richmond were witnessed by many cities in the state and could not be the results of the CHI. After employing an interrupted time-series design called ARIMA, researchers found that the drop in Richmond's murder rate was unique (White et al., 2003).

Evaluation results of the homicide program in Richmond indicated that it was successful in reducing the overall homicide rate as well as specific types of homicides (e.g. homicides that occur outdoors as a result of drive-by shootings, and those committed by offenders with prior convictions) (White et al., 2003). Regrettably, experts were not able to confirm that the CHI was the exact *cause* of the reductions as retrospective studies are not suitable for true experimental designs (White et al., 2003).

Directed Patrol & Field Interrogations

Directed patrol involves increasing police patrol to lessen violent crime in targeted areas during peak times of the day. Research indicates that perpetrators and locations are extremely time-sensitive targets (Sherman, 1992). Directed patrols typically involve detailing officers to work in certain high crime areas and focus on targeting various types of behaviors so that serious offenders can be arrested. This type of patrol in high crime areas has shown evidence of being effective in several US cities (including Los Angeles, Indianapolis and Kansas) for reducing homicide and gun violence (Tita et al., 2003; McGarrell et al., 2001). Field interrogations entail officers spending more time questioning motorists, pedestrians, and violators of minor infractions. It is believed that this tactic may increase the likelihood of a perpetrator being caught for committing a violent crime, either by catching potential offenders or by changing an area's perception of the likelihood of apprehension (Sherman, 1992).

Both of these techniques have been found to be beneficial as research indicated that field interrogations and enforcement of traffic and disorderly conduct offenses were associated with lower rates of homicide and robbery (Wilson & Boland, 1978). Directed patrol and field interrogations also have the advantage of requiring modest coordination with other public safety agencies and allowing swift implementation. Specifically, this strategy could be used on the *day of week* and *time of day* variables for individual divisions. This may at least limit violence at certain times. However, the potential for the diffusion of murder to other time frames warrants a closer examination (Sherman, 1992).

Limits to the effectiveness of directed patrol and field interrogations might exist if the broader community experienced inconveniences resulting from increased police presence and stricter enforcement of traffic laws. Gaining community trust and acceptance to make directed patrol effective may necessitate a major public relations effort. Moreover, costs associated with directed patrol would be absorbed primarily by each police department and the program may therefore be only as effective as department resources allow. There is research, however, which suggested that workload and manpower modifications could be used to efficiently shift police resources to precise areas and times (Sherman, 1992). Even if collective bargaining agreements do not allow shifting rotations for officers without overtime pay, the benefits of directed patrol in

detering potential young adults from carrying guns during peak times of violence suggest that it may indeed be a worthy investment of resources.

Preventable Murders

Since homicide is a crime that involves varying characteristics, dynamics and causes, any effort to lessen its occurrence requires careful tailoring of particular categories. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) pointed out that although many violent interactions occurred every incident did not result in a homicide. However, they were very similar in etiology and intent:

“The difference between homicide and assault may simply be the intervention of a bystander, the accuracy of a gun, the weight of a frying pan, the speed of an ambulance or the availability of a trauma center” (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990:34)

Strategies for reducing homicide can be developed in conjunction with those aimed at reducing violent crime in general – or, alternatively, at reducing the most serious kinds of violent crime. There are other forms of murders that have a preventative value, but are not mentioned in depth here. These include infanticide and alcohol related murders. This study focuses on the prevention of *Domestic B* murders, robbery-related murders, murders at bars and nightclubs, murders involving the use of illegal firearms and murder committed by persons on bail.

Domestic B (Intimate Partner) Murders

Domestic B (intimate partner murders), are clearly a brand of homicide that preventative measures can affect. As indicated in Chapter 3, this type of murder accounted for 13% of the murders during the study period. Researchers have reliably discovered that a large number of female victims of this category of murder have experienced domestic violence in the past (Moracco et al., 1998 & Smith et al., 1998). Hence, one may assume that a smart start in preventing domestic murders would involve the identification of and intervention for female victims of domestic violence. Unfortunately, one must recognize that domestic violence may be more widespread than domestic homicides. Sherman (1993) found that only a tiny fraction of households with repeated domestic disturbance calls to the police witnessed a domestic homicide. Ironically, he discovered that about three-fifths of all domestic homicides studied took place at homes where police were never called. He concluded that a prediction of domestic murders from repeat domestic disturbance calls would be incorrect about 997 times out of 1,000 (Sherman, 1993). Hence, it would be cumbersome to isolate those females who are most at risk of being fatally wounded in order to prevent a small number of domestic homicides (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Fortunately, several methods have been explored to improve the accurateness of prediction including the use of actuarially based risk assessment instruments. Several experts have devised such instruments based on research and clinical experience which,

although not psychometrically validated, have proved valuable in assessing the potential for lethality within domestic violence settings (Campbell, 1995). Some common danger signs include threatening a female partner with a weapon in hand, drug or alcohol dependency by the abuser and extreme male dominance or attempts to achieve such dominance (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). Other research indicated that that a considerable percentage of domestic murders committed by males were in some way connected to the relationship's separation or threat of separation (Wallace, 1986; Campbell, 1992). In these incidents, the perpetrator may be motivated by sexual jealousy and concerns about losing their partner. Polk and Ranson (1991:96) reminded readers of the popular remark, "If I can't have you, no one will."

Research has also identified stalking as increasing the risk of serious violence from an ex-partner. Sheridan and others (2001) found that in almost half of stalking cases, the stalker was an ex-partner of the victim. Half of the victims were threatened with physical assault, a third were actually assaulted and a quarter were victims of a murder attempt. Moracco et al., (1998) found that 36% of female murder victims had been killed by a current or former partner who had previously committed domestic violence against them. In addition, 23% of the latter cases (8% of the total sample of females), involved the perpetrator stalking the victim prior to the fatal incident. Based on these findings, McFarlane and others (1999) argued that when stalking occurs, coupled with intimate partner violence, there was a notably enhanced risk of serious violence and murder.

Other studies presented positive findings in predicting the risk of repeat violence, although not directly of homicide. First, the use of a Danger Assessment Scale (DAS), when administered to female domestic violence victims who sought assistance from the criminal justice system, significantly contributed to the prediction of short-term abuse recurrence among arrested batterers (Stuart & Campbell, 1989). Second, Weisz et al., (2000) assessed the accuracy with which female domestic violence victims could predict further incidents of severe violence against themselves. Findings indicated that women who strongly predicted future violence were often likely to be correct. The researchers suggested that victim predictions should be integrated into existing risk assessment models and should be taken seriously even when other indicators do not recognize a risk. It should also be noted that there were domestic homicides that had no reported history of domestic abuse (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

It is worth mentioning that violence between partners was also crucial considering the problem of partner homicides perpetrated by females. Several researchers have indicated that women who killed their male partners did so in response to violence perpetrated by the male (Wilson & Daly, 1993). They furthered that such violence was often linked to male sexual jealousy and propriety. Therefore, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator, partner homicide often occurred as a result of a history of habitual male aggression and abuse: physical and/or sexual (Smith et al., 1998). The core weapon of the criminal justice response to domestic violence is the prosecution of offenders. However, this has always been hampered by the major problem of case attrition most frequently due to fear or reluctance some victims have regarding testifying in court.

Armed Robbery Murders

As indicated in Chapter 3, 18% of murder incidents during the study period were a result of robberies, representing the second most observed motive. Further examinations revealed that 22 of such murders occurred at business establishments; 5 at convenience

stores, 4 at bar/clubs and 3 at restaurants. Armed robbery murders have also been on a steady increase with 9 in 2005, 16 in 2008 and 15 in 2009. It is evident that this type of murder warrants specific attention.

The offense of armed robbery is one that is widely regarded as a preventable crime, a position well supported by research in the professional and academic arenas. Hence, if armed robberies have been shown to be preventable, so could murders resulting from armed robberies. Most of the studies on robbery prevention center around those occurring at business establishments, as researchers attempt to uncover environmental factors that may determine the likelihood of an establishment becoming the site of a robbery. A major factor in measuring the likelihood is the establishment's *vulnerability* based on risk factors, which some offenders appear to take into account as they make a rational decision to commit a crime. Crow and Bull (1975), for example, held that robbers selected their targets and that behavioral changes at locations can notably reduce robberies. Other experts, on the other hand, argued that new offenders were less likely to distinguish between high and low risk targets (D'Alessio & Stolzenberg, 1990). Hence, some prevention strategies may not be effective as such offenders were not rational in selecting their targets.

Vulnerability Factors

By identifying and manipulating factors thought to increase a store's vulnerability, the number of armed robberies at such establishments and the number of murder that result from them could be reduced. Most of the robbery prevention literature identify a number of environmental factors believed to have a strong association or relationship with robberies.

Clerks on Duty & Their Location

The number of persons or clerks on duty appears to be a factor associated with robberies at a store. It was discovered that one-clerk stores were robbed at rates of 1.77 to 3.6 times more than two-clerk stores (Maclan, 1993). The Gainesville Police Department in Florida commissioned two separate studies on the prevention of armed robberies. The first study, conducted by White (1986), found that the number of clerks on duty was the strongest predictor of the potential for robbery. The second study, conducted by Swanson (1986), concluded that two or more clerks were beneficial in reducing the likelihood of a store being robbed. The location of clerks on the premises also appeared to play a vital role in robbery prevention. Amandus and others (1995) found that stores with cashiers located at the back or the side of the store had higher incidence of robbery. Experts learned that if clerks were located in the center of the store, the establishment would reduce its likelihood of being robbed (Amandus et al., 1995).

Cash Handling

Since most robbers use violence to get cash, another key risk factor related to store robberies was the manner in which cash was handled on store premises. Crow and Bull (1975) found that stores with limited available cash or signs that indicated limited cash on hand saw reduced robbery incidents. In fact, this factor was supported by perpetrators of robberies. Scott and other researchers (1985) spent time interviewing convicted robbers and found that enhanced cash handling procedures, which limited the

amount of funds were available to perpetrators, were the most effective prevention strategy.

CCTV & Bullet Proof Enclosures

The Gainesville study also uncovered the value of closed circuit television (CCTV) and surveillance camera recordings in reducing the potential for robbery. Figlio (1991) found support for CCTV cameras, typically interactive television and color monitors, as a useful prevention technique. Seeing that CCTV provides police with the opportunity to view offences and identify perpetrators, its deterrent effect can be potent since the footage may be used as evidence in court. In addition, stores in which cashiers were located in security enclosures is one of the more recent research areas related to commercial robberies. Prior research indicated the importance of this factor (Amandus et al., 1996). Specifically, Hendricks et al. (1998) indicated that bullet proof shielding of clerks had significant associations with reduced robbery vulnerability.

Enhanced Visibility

The use of enhanced lighting and the removal of visual obstructions have proven beneficial for robberies in the city of Jacksonville, Florida. Researchers found that convenience store robberies were reduced by half three years following the adoption of these factors (Hunter & Jeffery, 1992). Other experts in Tallahassee, Florida supported this finding as clear visibility both inside and outside of a store were found to be key factors in reducing robberies (Figlio, 1991).

Prior History of Robbery

Figlio (1991) also identified a store's prior robbery history as a factor that influenced its vulnerability for robbery. This view was supported by other researchers who discovered that stores with more than one previous robbery incident were more likely to be robbed again (Schreiber, 1991). Experts also found that stores that had not yet been robbed were less likely to be robbed (Erickson, 1996).

Re-Evaluation of Prevention Strategies

It is important to note that the manipulation of these factors must be done on a scheduled basis in order to be most effective. In 1990, Hunter re-analyzed stores in the Tallahassee study after the risk factors were manipulated and discovered that a lesser number of variables appeared to have an effect on reducing robberies. Hunter found that while several high-risk stores experienced decline, several low risk stores experienced increase. He surmised that environmental factors lost their effectiveness over time and were permanent. Hunter concluded that prevention strategies had to be regularly updated in order to be effective (Hunter, 1990).

This principle holds true for new laws and regulations enacted to reduce store robberies. For example, based on the findings of White (1986) and Swanson (1986), the city of Gainesville, Florida imposed a city ordinance requiring convenience stores to limit on-hand cash, use a security safe, have adequate parking lot lighting, remove visual obstructions, purchase robbery detention cameras and train clerks. Following the implementation of the ordinance in mid 1986 however, robberies continued at the same

rate (Hunter, 1990). The following year, another ordinance mandated that stores either use 2 clerks *or* close between 8pm and 4pm. After the implementation of this second ordinance, convenience store robberies declined dramatically (Clifton & Callahan, 1987).

Another example was the enactment of Florida Statute 90-346 by the Florida Legislature. Where death, serious injury or sexual battery had occurred, the Statute required local governments to enforce strict rules regarding the use of silent robbery alarms, security cameras, posting signs that read "*less than \$50.00 in cash on hand*", cash handling policies and other tactics (Butterworth, 1991). By 1992, Statute 90-346 had been amplified with the passage of the Convenience Business Security Act. This Act refined and added other tactics in the prevention of robbery including stationing two or more employees on the premises and installing bullet resistant safety enclosures. As lawmakers anticipated, convenience store robbery rates within Florida dropped significantly following the execution of the regulation (Hunter, 1990). Both of these examples underscore the point that prevention strategies need to be constantly refined in order to be effective.

Although these prevention factors focused on robbery murders occurring at specific commercial establishments, some of its principles are useful for other robbery circumstances. For example, the cash-handling factor may be useful to persons who tend to carry large amounts of cash on their person. Also, the enhanced visibility and lighting factors can be of use to persons who work late hours and arrive home during early morning hours. Contacting neighbors to be on the lookout and installing better lighting around their homes may prove useful as incidents where persons were accosted as they pulled up to their homes late at night have been recorded.

In summary, the process of manipulating these factors, also known as target hardening, has shown to be an effective catalyst in robbery prevention. Unfortunately, it is recognized that financially strapped businesses may be unable to introduce increased target hardening measures remain vulnerable to robbery. Nevertheless, several law enforcement agencies and other governing bodies have taken advantage of this research and have used risk factors as the impetus implementing various crime prevention strategies inclusive of laws, ordinances and business codes.

Murders In & Around Bars & Nightclubs

General violence reduction measures are clearly relevant for reducing homicides in and around bars and nightclubs. As indicated in Chapter 2, a total of 28 (8%) of murders during the 2005-2009 period occurred in and around bars and nightclubs. There have been efforts to ascertain approaches to lower the number of violent acts in and around such places. Although this remains an area in need of more examination, early indications suggested that several measures used appeared to have some level of success. Much of the research on this subject acknowledged that not all pubs and clubs were regularly associated with violent behavior. However, several cities have a number of 'hotspots' or establishments with a high frequency of (and reputation for) violent incidents (Deehan, 1999). Research and interventions have focused chiefly on the physical and social environment at these locations (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). Some researchers have recognized a number of factors favorable to violence in public houses and clubs including the concentration of activities and its indoor design. They argued that design features, such as the location of pool tables, walls and bars, can affect the social environment by creating a particular ambiance (Graham & Homel, 1997).

Other approaches to reduce this type of violence involved training for employees including those who worked inside clubs and at its entrance. Evidence suggested that properly trained staff members were able to identify signs of potential problems and take swift yet discrete action to avoid them (Deehan, 1999). On the other hand, evidence has indicated that inadequately trained or unsupervised door staff could actually incite violence (Hobbs et al., 2002). Some cities have resorted to threatening to withdraw licenses in establishments where managers may be uncooperative. These measures, however, may prove less beneficial than using a partnership approach. The partnership arrangements, which facilitate joint actions by the police, licensing magistrates and managers of licensed premises, appeared to be the best method of learning and solving root problems on certain premises (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Attention has also been given to other interventions directly related to the monitoring and control of drinkers and the number of persons entering such premises. These interventions included the use of CCTV surveillance by well-trained security staff, refusal of drinks to intoxicated customers and 'Pubwatch' schemes (Deehan, 1999). Initial analysis of these strategies showed their potential to reduce violence. However, limited rigorous research was available about their ability to prevent homicide (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

It is also imperative to be attentive to methods specifically targeted at lessening the level of injury from the violent incidents that could not be prevented. One strategy would involve encouraging the use of safer glassware and bottles. The use of these items has been identified as a crucial factor in reducing the seriousness of injuries from assaults in and around such premises (Shepherd, 1997). Toughened glass is viewed as safer as most damage occurs in glassing incidents when the glass breaks on impact. With this in mind, large-scale adoption of drinking glasses made from toughened glass necessitates further consideration. Another possibility is the wider use of unbreakable plastic glasses. These were successfully used throughout Cardiff city center during the 1999 Rugby World Cup. Substantial numbers of people drank outside pubs on the streets. While using safe glasses are encouraged, the Portman Group (1998) argued that ensuring empty bottles and glasses were regularly collected was the immediate solution. Such policies may also reduce the number of assaults that end fatally (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

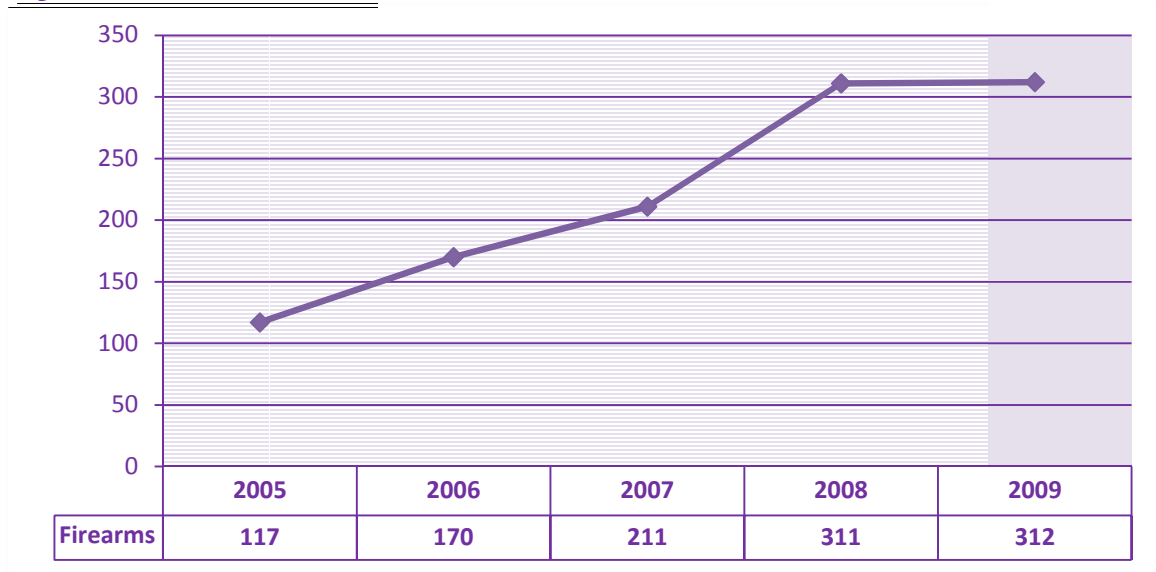
Murders Using Illegal Firearms

Guns are now regarded and utilized as the most effective and final means of resolving conflicts. Situations normally resolved by negotiation, a big argument or even a fistfight, are now quickly settled by gunfire. As indicated in Chapter 3, gunfire was the leading cause of death for murder victims, representing 61% of cases during the study period. Killing by gunfire steadily increased from 34 cases in 2005 to 51 in 2009. Moreover, illegal firearms (handguns) have been used in 54% of murder cases during the study period.

As stated earlier, The Bahamas does not manufacture firearms and the issuance of handgun licenses are controlled by the Cabinet of The Bahamas. Nevertheless, police continue to seize a growing number of firearms each year throughout The Bahamas. As shown in Figure 7.1, a total of 1,121 firearms were confiscated during the last 5 years. During 2008 and 2009, 75% of the firearms seized were handguns or other prohibited weapons. It appears that while more guns are being taken off the streets, suspects are still able to get their hands on them and commit a larger number of murders with them.

Clearly, a strategy designed to reduce and control the number of illegal firearms in The Bahamas will have a residual effect on the high number of gun-murders.

Figure 7.1 Firearms Seizures in The Bahamas (2005-2009)



In the United States, firearms are also the most common weapon used in homicides. At the peak of the ‘murder boom’ in New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s, almost 80% of murders were committed with handguns (Tardiff et al., 1995; Bowling, 1999). However, not all countries witnessed a similar trend. It appears that countries with tougher gun laws and restrictions tended to be those that experienced fewer gun murders. In the UK, sharp instruments, particularly knives, were the weapons most often used in murders. In fact, homicides by shooting were relatively unusual in the UK. There was a slight decrease in the 1990s in the number of homicides attributed to firearms in England and Wales. The average dropped from 9% between 1990 and 1994 to fewer than 6% between 1995 and 1999. Even though 2001-02 figures indicated a slight increase, numbers remained relatively low (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). Bowling (1999) noted that the rise and fall of murders in New York was, in some respects, related to major changes in the enforcement of laws that opposed carrying weapons. Evidence suggested that maintaining tight controls to restrict the availability of firearms was a pivotal aspect of any effective strategy to reduce the incidence of homicide by firearms. In order to effectively address the problem of gun homicide, key initiatives include tackling the overall supply of guns, increasing the risks to anyone in possession of illegal weapons, intervening in drug markets, and targeting criminal groups whose members are known to own or use guns.

Even though US murder rates declined during the 1980s and 1990s, murder among the nation’s youths, especially those committed with firearms, rose significantly. Between 1984 and 1994, youth murders committed with hand guns rose by 418% while those committed with other firearms increased by 125% (Fox, 1996). It was clear that all of the increases in juvenile murders were gun homicides (Cook & Laub, 1998). With the advent of problem-oriented policing and its increased use to create and implement programs to reduce crime, the city of Boston established a violence reduction initiative geared toward

lessening the number of youth gun murders. Funded by the US National Institute of Justice, this program involved core agencies such as the Boston Police, Office of Parole and Probation, the Attorney General's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other neighboring law enforcement agencies. Most importantly, the project was based on research leading to informed policy decisions and operational direction.

Beginning in early 1995, the initiative led to the implementation the *Operation Ceasefire* intervention in mid 1996. Operation Ceasefire was a multi-agency program with two key elements: (1) focused attention on the illicit firearm trafficking and (2) efforts to deter gang violence. It merged direct law enforcement attacks on the illicit gun market with a strategy coined *Pulling Levers*. This policy involved directly reaching out to gangs, setting strict rules for their behavior and backing up that message by *pulling every lever* lawfully accessible when standards were breached. The operation made use of a wide variety of traditional criminal justice tools by assembling them in different ways. If gangs refrained from serious violence but continued in illegal behavior, the normal workings of the criminal justice system attended to them (Kennedy, 1998). The following is a message sent from the authorities to 20 of the most violent drug markets in Boston:

"We have three serious crackdowns ready to deploy. They will involve heavy police and probation presence; warrant service, and the like. Those arrested will receive special prosecutorial attention and, if convicted, probation and strict supervision probation regime; groups and individuals with a history of violence will be screened for added attention by DEA and the US Attorney. We will decide over the next 2 weeks where to direct those crackdowns. We will make our decisions based on whether, between now and then, there is any violence associated with your drug market" (Kennedy, 1998:6).

In addition to the actions during and following crackdowns, authorities planned to disrupt drug activities by giving special attention to low-level street crimes such as trespassing and public drinking, serving outstanding warrants, enforcing stricter probation and parole restrictions, seizing proceeds from drugs sales and other assets, guaranteeing stiffer plea bargains and enforcing stronger bail terms. Creators of the program were clear to indicate that they were not making 'deals' with gangs, but were promised them that violent behavior would summon a swift, severe and coordinated response. Speaking directly to gangs made them aware of the new cause and effect policy and further strengthened the program's credibility. This approach also provided 'retail deterrence' for those gangs that may have been on the brink of carrying out violent acts. Finally, this innovative approach created a balance of power favorable to the authorities. By sending the message to all of the gangs, even though they only had the capacity and resources to execute a major crack down on one, the others could be controlled without an actual crackdown. In this case, violence could be prevented by

other gangs who gained knowledge about what had happened to others in the target population (Kennedy, 1998).

As the strategy progressed, the core group maintained contact with the gangs and reaffirmed their resolve to stop violence. The fundamental belief was that a notable interlude of significantly reduced violence may act as a “fire-break” and cause a longer lasting decrease in future gun violence among youths (Kennedy, 1998). The program has been given credit for a two-thirds drop in youth homicide in Boston since 1996 (Kennedy, 1998). After an analysis conducted by Braga and others (2001), the approach was found to be an effective intervention associated with a significant reduction in youth homicides. They also found that the program was associated with notable reductions in ‘shots-fired’ calls for service and gun-related assaults. A comparative analysis of youth murder trends and patterns in other major US cities supported a unique program effect associated with the ceasefire intervention. This strategy was said to have overcome the problems that agencies faced as they were unable to devote heightened attention to all gangs at all times and because of the short-term impact of occasional crackdowns (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

In Boston, Massachusetts, interagency efforts directed by the police were found to be effective in reducing youth homicide (Braga et al., 2001). The Boston Gun Project, launched in 1995, made use of the fundamental problem-oriented policing philosophy that involved problem identification, analysis, response, evaluation, and adjustment of the response to fashion a detailed program focused on persons involved in illegal firearms trafficking and gang violence (Piehl et al., 2000). Results indicated that murders involving youths decreased considerably subsequent to implementation of the focused program (Braga et al., 2001; Piehl et al., 2000). Sherman and Rogan (1995) discovered that stringent police enforcement strategies that target illegal gun carrying in violence-prone areas were associated with reductions in violent crime in Kansas City, Missouri. In the same way, directed patrol efforts by police in high crime areas in Indianapolis, Indiana were associated with reductions in homicide and gun related crimes (McGarrell et al., 2001). Finally, the strategy resulted in a 45% drop in homicides in Minneapolis within one year (Kennedy 1998).

Supply vs. Demand

While not all types of murders are likely to be avoided by programs aimed at lessening the availability of firearms, there is clearly relevance for such initiatives in relation to both knives and firearms. Preventing murders with guns requires attention to both supply and demand factors, which include enhancing controls over the availability of firearms. Efforts to reduce the supply of illegal firearms cannot be responsible for the abrupt reductions in gun-related violence in Boston. This is because tracking cases followed rather than anticipated reductions. Anti-supply efforts, therefore, do nothing to reduce the existing number of guns that are already on the streets. The principle impact therefore was certainly a demand-side deterrence effect as opposed to a supply side (Braga et al., 2001).

Use of the Media

The effectiveness of general deterrence is dependent upon the communication of punishment threats to the public. Some experts have discovered that the deterrence threat may best be viewed as a form of advertising (Zimring & Hawkins, 1973). For

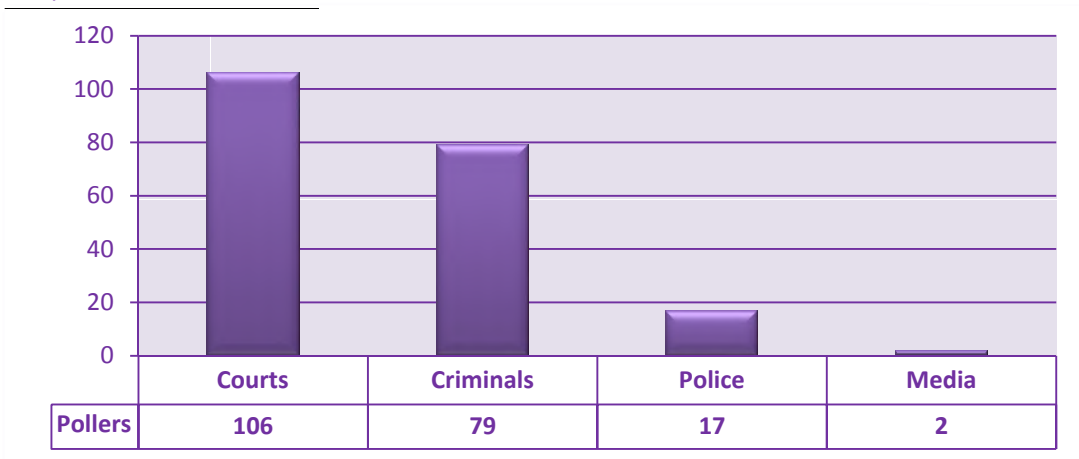
example, the Massachusetts 1975 Barley-Fox Amendment established a mandatory minimum one-year prison sentence for persons who illegally carried guns. The intense media coverage and publicity concerning the amendment apparently caused more citizens to comply with existing legal stipulations surrounding gun acquisition and possession, some of which were not even addressed in the amendment.

Given the high proportion of homicides committed with firearms, authorities have realized the need for better enforcement of firearms laws. Vigorous federal trials of possessors of illegal firearms are one technique to deter violent offenders from committing gun crimes. This strategy also involved “retailing the message” that engaging in violent activity and unlawful firearm possession will no longer be tolerated and will result in stiff penalties, including federal prison time. Prosecution of firearms cases was also a major component of violence reduction strategies in Boston, Richmond and Minneapolis (Kennedy et al., 1996; Braga et al., 2001; Kennedy & Braga, 1998). “Crackdowns” on specific suspects are a related means of confiscating illegal weapons and reducing violence. This tactic entailed focusing probation, parole, and the police on a select group of violent perpetrators for a short period of time and seemed to have helped reduce violence in Indianapolis, Indiana and Richmond, California (Horty & Hutchens, 2004; White et al., 2003). Visiting and searching probationers, parolees and those with outstanding warrants known to engage in violence could increase the chances of seizing illegal weapons from such persons and removing them from the streets. The benefits of such strategies were that, once planned, they could be carried out speedily and yield instant results (White et al., 2003).

Prevention by Punishment

In a 2009 online poll conducted by a Bahamian daily, *The Tribune*, respondents were asked who was to blame for the state of crime in The Bahamas and the impact it is having on tourism. As illustrated in Figure 7.1, most respondents (52%) blamed the courts for “...letting criminals back on the streets” (Tribune, 2009). Clearly, there is public concern about the capacity of the criminal justice system to rise to the complex challenge of coordinating and implementing effective case disposal and crime prevention work.

Figure 7.1 Poll Results for the Main Cause of Crime in The Bahamas



Source: *The Tribune* (Nassau, Bahamas) Online Poll, November 25, 2009.

Addressing Court Backlogs

Courts' backlogs are somewhat common across jurisdictions but vary from one to the next. As indicated in Chapter 6, there were 171 murder cases (which occurred during the study period) pending at the end of the 2009 judicial year; 75 in the Magistrate's Court and 96 in the Supreme Court. This backlog, coupled with other murder (and other indictable offence cases) that date back to years prior to the study period, may be described as 'severe' by some pundits. Preliminary Inquiries or trials in the Supreme Court can last anywhere from several weeks to over a year, depending on a number of related factors. Some of these factors include the availability of witnesses, jury selection and case schedules of defense attorneys.

Case backlogs are also an issue facing governments throughout the Caribbean. Although stakeholders throughout regional jurisdictions have been prompted in recent years to reform and improve elements of the criminal justice system, there was evidence that parts of the system were under-resourced or inefficient (Miller & Hendricks, 2007). Most attempts to address case backlogs included increasing the number of judges, improved case management measures and mediation. Some researchers noted that while case management measures gave an appearance of progress by churning cases, they merely diverted resources from hearing and deciding cases. In fact, summary treatments of appeals, while meritorious, were not helpful to the appearance of progress and occasionally impaired the quality of decision-making. Researchers also held that mediation, absent a high success rate, added a layer of busywork and cost and was resented by both parties (Armstrong, 2006). While some methods are inappropriate for murder cases, increasing the number of judges was found to be successful.

Nearly a decade ago, the Appeals Court of Massachusetts took several different steps to address its backlog problem. With the active support of the Governor, key legislative leaders, the organized bar and the press, the number of judges was increased in 2001 from 14 to 25. As a result, cases which began in June were normally decided before the next court year in September (Armstrong, 2006). Similarly, the New Jersey Judiciary reduced its backlog by 21% during the 2000-2001 legal year. Those assisting with that achievement were retired judges who agreed to be recalled, resulting in significant savings to taxpayers.

Punishment & Deterrence

Classical criminologists, including Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria, promulgated the theory that deterrence and rational choice were factors in criminal offending. They held that crime can be prevented when the costs of committing them were perceived by the offender to outweigh the benefits. This Classical School of thought was premised on the idea that people had free will in making decisions and that punishment can be a deterrent for crime, so long as the punishment was proportional, fitted the crime, and was carried out promptly. This theory was largely dependent upon the rate at which offenders were caught and state, as punishments can only be an effective deterrent if they were swift, certain and severe.

Lane (1999) argued that the most relevant explanation for the decrease in crime in the US was the refinement of legislation which imposed longer and mandatory prison sentences. He furthered that since homicide conviction rates were at an all time high (over 70%), more homicide offenders were effectively incapacitated than ever before

(Lane, 1999). While experts have regularly suggested that the certainty and swiftness of sanctions mattered more than their severity, most political pundits and policy debaters have centered their attention on increasing sanctions. Debates, however, centered on the death penalty and three strikes laws, not on clearance rates for violent crimes or the workloads of prosecutors and judges.

The resulting weakness of deterrence was particularly vexing where chronic offenders are concerned. It has long been recognized that a relatively low number of criminals offended at very high rates, were repeatedly arrested and sanctioned, and, if only by virtue of their continued offending, demonstrated a particular resistance to both deterrence and rehabilitation. This was a particular problem where violent offending was concerned. Not all chronic offenders were violent offenders, but a large proportion of violent crimes were committed by chronic offenders, who also committed property crimes, drug crimes, disorder offenses and the like. Such offenders were themselves victimized at very high rates. Findings of the Boston Gun Project, for example, showed that youth homicides were concentrated among a low number of serial offending, gang-involved youths. Only about 1,300 gang members, less than 1% of their age group citywide, in 61 gangs were responsible for at least 60% of all youth homicides in the city. These gang members were well known to authorities and tended to have extensive criminal records (Kennedy, 1998).

Summing It Up

The findings of the studies mentioned in this chapter offer support to the increasing number of studies which indicate that crime and violence may be controlled by specific police responses (Braga et al., 2001; Goldstein, 1979). The advent of problem oriented policing and predictive policing have resulted in law enforcement executives being led to probe deeper into crime prevention and explore aspects reduction strategies into criminal offences once thought of as un-preventable. Deciding to applying unfamiliar tactics and 'out of the box', innovative thinking to solve crime problems can prove to be beneficial to progressive law enforcement agencies.

IMPROVING DETECTION RATES

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Murder has the highest detection rate among all violent crimes.*
- *The most important measure of accomplishment for detective is the detection rate.*
- *Detectives' work load, experience and physical evidence are all factors that affect the detection rate.*
- *Local investigators were able to solve most murder cases in which no information about the suspect's identity was known at the crime scene.*

Chapter 8

The High Clearance Rate for Murder

Homicides tend to produce the highest clearance (detection) rate of all serious crimes (UCR, 2008). In 1968, Greenwood analyzed New York City Police Department (NYPD) programs for apprehending serious criminal offenders (Greenwood, 1970). Greenwood found that the probability of arrest was higher for crimes against persons (rape, assault, and homicide), while property crimes (larceny, burglary and robbery) showed a lower probability of arrest. Homicide is the type of crime that the public, media and the police place a high priority on solving.

Many explain the high detection rate for murder with the simple fact that the vast majority of murder victims were at least vaguely acquainted with their assailant as opposed to robberies where the victim-offender relationship was usually stranger-to-stranger. Moreover, using statistical tests, including logistic regression, homicide clearance was predicted on the basis of specific victim and offense characteristics (Regoeczi, et al., 2000).

The Importance of the Clearance Rate

As formal agents of social control, law enforcement officers are responsible for a variety of duties. Monitoring public order, maintaining public safety, patrolling jurisdictions, and controlling large crowds are but a few of the many tasks that police personnel are mandated to carry out. Solving criminal mysteries by arresting the 'bad guy' is considered to be one of the most fundamental roles of the police. Criminal investigation divisions are normally comprised of plainclothes officers who are presented with the task of conducting the investigation of criminal offences by a systematic process. This process in general involves the detection of criminal activities, legal evidence collection, apprehension of offenders and the preparation of cases for prosecution.

The investigation of criminal acts has traditionally been regarded as one of the most important and distinguished realms of the law enforcement function. The investigation of crimes and criminal activities is a major responsibility of law enforcement agencies (Kuykendall, 1982). This function and public expectation is so crucial to the overall police mission that it is placed, not only on investigators, but on all police personnel (Bennett & Hess, 1981). The most important measure of accomplishment for detectives is the clearance rate (Skolnick, 1975). High crime clearances by arrest or final case disposition tend to be highly respected by police personnel and are regarded as measures of their effectiveness.

Investigating criminal acts has traditionally been thought of as one aspect of police work that required highly developed skills and perhaps innate abilities to collect and evaluate case facts (Glick & Riccio, 1979). By its very nature, detective work is concerned with information acquisition and generation. An aura of the individual detective has developed that characterizes him as a pain staking individual who single-handedly uncovers evidence, collects tips from informants, identifies the criminals, tracks them down and brings them to justice (Bloch & Weidman, 1975). By the 1960s and 1970s, research into detectives' activities began to provide a systematic assessment of their role and effectiveness. Clearance rates were relatively low and crimes were rarely solved, except in cases where victims provided information that lead to suspect identification

(Skolnick, 1975). In this regard, detectives were not unlike the constables of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Clearance by arrest or final disposition of cases tends to be the most important measure of a detective's efficiency. Tift (1975) suggested that investigators appeared to be most influenced by production-evaluation controls pertaining to their success in arrest and clearance percentage of assigned cases. The tendency of detectives to focus on cases with obvious solutions has been an informal practice of long standing (Conklin, 1972; Saunders, 1977). However, it became more formalized under the rubric of case screening or case management in the 1970s.

Factors Affecting the Murder Detection Rate

Solving crime is a very important aspect of police work and certainly a top priority for murder investigators. Simon (1991:39) clearly noted, "In homicide, the clearance rate is the litmus test, the beginning and end all debate". Solving murder is probably one of the most informative categories of crime for researchers to study and is notably different from street-level law enforcement. Murder investigators work in somewhat of a 'fish bowl', where senior police officials, politicians, the media and the general public are able to see and scrutinize their performance on a regular basis (Blau, 1993; Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Considering its nature, detecting homicides can be viewed as high-visibility police work. These detectives are evaluated using a single performance indicator; the detection rate, as opposed to street-level officers who are evaluated via multiple indicators such as number of arrests and citations.

Extralegal Victim Characteristics

Some empirical work on the factors that may possibly affect the detection of the most serious crime of murder has been completed. Interestingly, several researchers have arrived at somewhat opposing results. On the issue of victim characteristics, for example, some experts found that extra-legal victim characteristics affected murder detection rates (Black, 1980; Peterson & Hagan, 1984). They explained that some murder detectives usually considered the age, social class, gender and race of victims before assessing how enthusiastically or meticulously they would investigate the particular case (Black, 1980; Peterson & Hagan, 1984). Almost always, murders involving African American females and children were solved just as frequently or more often than those that involved Caucasian male and female adult victims (Regoezi et al., 2000). Black (1980:15) put it plainly when he stated that the killing of a businessman or a famous politician would more than likely be investigated with "greater diligence and fanfare" than the killing of a homeless person.

On the other hand, some experts subscribed to a completely different view. Kilinger, (1997) for example, found that murder detectives placed the same amount of emphasis on all incidents regardless of their location or the characteristics of victims. Specifically on the issue of race, Wellford and Croninn (1999) found that the victim's race had no effect on homicide detection. These and other researchers held that extra legal victim characteristics did not affect homicide detection (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Klinger, 1997).

In 2003, Puckett and Lundman set out to clarify these seemingly opposing positions. They discovered that the seriousness, visibility and frequency of murder coupled with the importance of detection for investigators rationally forced victim characteristics to the “explanatory periphery” (p. 174). They furthered that murder detectives performed their duties in the public’s eye under the careful watch of the media. This constant attention left investigators with very little leeway to utilize extralegal victims’ characteristics, including race, to influence homicide clearances (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). They furthered that while it may be possible for some murder investigators to resort to using extralegal factors to decide how hard to work on a case, the utter importance of solving as many murders as possible renders such an option highly unlikely. Simply put, with little or no evaluative leverage, homicide investigators simply cannot afford to lose potential clearances by allocating only superficial attention to certain murders (Puckett & Lundman, 2003).

Detective Workload & Experience

In the famous RAND study, discussed later in this chapter, researchers made mention of two notable findings related to the workload and experience of homicide investigators. First, they held that the experience of detectives was unrelated to the clearance of homicides. Second, they argued that the higher the number of murders detectives has responsibility for clearing, the lower the clearance rate (Chaiken, et.al, 1977). Existing literature on this subject suggested that detective experience was unrelated to homicide clearances, but increases in detective workload decreased homicide clearance (Marche, 1994).

Physical Evidence

Evidence exists to suggest that homicide clearances increased or decreased with the amount of physical evidence created during the commission of the murder (Regoecki et.al, 2000; Welford & Cronin, 1999). Homicides committed with weapons that bring perpetrators and victims in close contact created notable physical evidence and were cleared more often than homicides committed by other means (Puckett & Lundman, 2003).

During the first few decades of the 20th century, police reformers hoped to replace the stereotypical ‘secretive agents’ with scientific criminal investigators. The Bertillion System, involving the identification of persons based on anthropometrical measurements, was regarded as being consistent and perfect. Consequently, the importance of physical evidence at crime scenes was stressed and ‘scientific police’ were admonished to use scientific methods in all phases of their work. Despite attempts to bring the rigor and deductive power of science to the investigation process, detectives still relied on victims, informers and suspects to solve crimes (Deutsch, 1954). The inquisitorial methods set by detectives became known as the ‘third degree’. The arrest was the first degree, transportation to the station was the second and interrogation was the third. Soon after the development of scientific methods of investigation, including finger printing, the normative approach was to use such methods as a means of solving all criminal acts. Fosdick (1915) called for the development of *modus operandi* files and the utilization of physical evidence to identify suspects. Vollmer (1922) believed that detectives needed a systematic approach and a fully scientific laboratory.

Despite these opinions, the traditional method of investigation was not significantly influenced. In spite of the popular perception to the contrary, the use of physical evidence and application of the forensic sciences are not prominent in reality. Systematic sleuthing and scientific successes did not define the criminal investigation process or what may be called 'detective work' (Horvath & Meesig, 1996). In fact, the role of such evidence is limited in most investigations and the outcomes of criminal events are even less frequently influenced by scientific analysis. Jones (1982) in his examination of criminal investigation textbooks held that most authors of the texts were guilty of over-emphasizing the role criminalistics played in the investigative process, while at the same time under-emphasizing the role of informants.

Research showed that crimes which were solved usually had obvious suspects, many of which were identified by victims or through personal contacts (Henderson, 1924). Detective work was said to be more a haphazard than scientific process and the average case did not require any scientific analysis (Smith, 1925). Of course, in some important cases, criminalistics have been a crucial component in the solution of crimes. However, such methods may be exceptional rather than routine for most investigations. In cases other than homicide, evidence such as blood, clothing and paint residues were sent to the crime lab in very few offenses. Furthermore, even if the evidence was collected, it was not often a medium to crime solution (Horvath & Meesig, 1996). The Rand study established that the police collected far more physical evidence, particularly fingerprints, than they could productively process. Aside from fingerprints, scientific evidence was of little utility in most cases. Greenwood and his colleagues (1977) also noted that only one to two percent of detected burglary cases in their sample of departments were actually cleared by identification of a latent print.

Another comprehensive study about the police investigative function was the classic work of Skolnick in 1966. Although this study focused on street policing, not investigators, it provided insight into how detectives functioned in the police subculture. He found that in conducting investigations, detectives acknowledged the limits of science and scientific advancements in helping them fulfill their mission. They emphasized therefore, the human aspects of their craft. Detectives made the 'facts' that they observed into evidence, meaning that they converted criteria governing investigative matters from personally meaningful to legally binding ones. In other words, physical evidence had little or no inherent evidential meaning and was generally useful only to the extent that it could gain police-defined objectives. Skolnick (1966) asserted that advances in technology simply made the police more capable of interfering with individual liberty and created a degree of skepticism about the use of technology to improve the police investigative mission. In a study of a county sheriff's department, Saunders (1977) observed detectives who investigated juvenile offenses, burglaries and major crimes. He discovered that scientific evidence can be viewed as 'information' or 'leads', and focused his examination on how detectives recognized them. He found that the value of physical evidence rested on the detectives' ability to interpret it. He furthered that physical evidence was made available for practical use only through interpretive methods used by the detectives. Saunders concluded that physical evidence was seldom used to identify a suspect independent of a witness' testimony. Instead, it was used primarily during the interview of a suspect to persuade him or her to own up to the crime (Saunders, 1977).

In a study reported around the same time as the Rand study, Wilson (1976) reported on investigative work conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug

Enforcement Administration. He held that once a suspect was identified, the primary investigative task was to develop confirming evidence. In other words, evidence became most useful after a suspect had been identified and not before. Wilson furthered that detective work had less to do with physical evidence than with other activities including speaking to victims and witnesses or canvassing the neighborhood where the crime had been committed (Wilson, 1976). In a study that appeared to be an attempt to correct some of the misinterpretations of investigators created by the controversial Rand study, Eck (1983) examined detective work in three cities, focusing on burglary and robbery cases. He found that the collection of physical, scientifically analyzable evidence was accomplished primarily during the preliminary investigation phase, and was conducted by the patrol officer before the involvement of detectives. He reminded readers that one of the factors often considered in determining the likelihood of a case's solvability was whether or not the patrol officer had collected physical evidence during the preliminary investigation. Eck (1983) also reported results which revealed that follow-up investigations were much more useful than was suggested by the Rand researchers, particularly in regard to identifying and arresting suspects.

Another informative study on the investigative process was Simon's yearlong ethnographic study of homicide detectives in Baltimore. Simon (1991) observed homicide detectives in situations where one would anticipate that the value of physical evidence would be especially evident. Indeed, this expectation was realized in a particular way. Simon stated that it was the 'holy trinity' that solved crimes; physical evidence, witnesses and confessions (Simon, 1991). He explained that without any of the first two, there was little chance that a detective would locate a suspect capable of providing the third. Physical evidence, viewed in this way, provided leverage and without physical evidence there was often a 'stalemate' (Simon, 1991).

Despite its popularity in the early part of the 20th century, the use of criminalistics has been relatively low in many investigations (Henderson, 1924; Horvath & Meesig, 1996; Smith, 1925). With respect to criminal proceedings, criminal events were less frequently influenced by the use of scientific analysis (Greenwood et al., 1977; Saunders, 1977). By and large, criminalistics assumed a secondary role in investigations, coupled with witness information and suspect confessions to secure a conviction (Simon, 1991; Wilson, 1976).

Motive & Clearance Rate

The inclusion of a variable to forecast homicide clearance that becomes evident only after an arrest or charge is clearly open to serious question (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). While identification of circumstances which lead to the commission of a murder is not a mandatory component of the investigation, it is a significant factor in case detection. In fact, only about 20% of murders during the study period were solved where no clear motive was established.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the crime of murder is usually one that yields the highest clearance rate among all crimes, locally falling around 80%. However, the type of murder that tends to fall into the *uncleared* or *open under investigation* grouping frequently mirrors lower rates of clearance of other crimes based on similar motives. In other words, some homicides varied significantly based on crime clearance or based on the perpetrator's motivation.

During the current study period, homicides of a domestic nature yielded the highest clearance percentages. In fact, murders in the *Domestic A* category, which covers homicides resulting from altercations in and around the home, were all solved yielding a clearance rate of 100% during the study period. Moreover, from 1991-2003, the three domestic categories averaged a 90% clearance rate (Hanna, 2005). The *Domestic B* murders also yielded a relatively high detection rate of 96%. Conversely, *Domestic C* murders produced one of the lowest clearance rates of 50%. It is interesting to note that while the crime of robbery typically yielded a relatively low clearance rate around 30%, robbery murders produced a relatively high detection rate of 79%. There are also some classifications of murders that remain challenging to homicide investigators in terms of clearance. Murders that were classified as *drug-related* and *undermined* yielded the lowest clearance rates of 54% and 20% respectively.

Tough v. Easy Cases

There is a limited but nevertheless adequate amount of research concerning the clearance of cases. Rather than limiting the goal of how many cases were cleared, researchers attempted to answer the question of how cases were cleared. Until recently, some researchers and practitioners failed to admit that a number of homicide clearances were not the direct result of detective work but rather cases that 'solved themselves'. Some examples include cases in which the perpetrator committed suicide at the crime scene, was arrested at the scene by first responders, turned himself in and subsequently confessed, made dying declarations (victims who identified their assailant moments before dying) and witnesses provided the identity of the suspects at the crime scene (Whittingham, 1980).

There were, nonetheless, a number of cases that necessitated at least some level of detecting and those that involved widespread effort over years with little or no assurance of success (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). These two distinct categories of murders were what many investigators called 'tough' and 'easy'. During work with the Baltimore Homicide Squad, Simon (1991) found that detectives referred to cases that came along with sufficient evidence and a clear suspect as 'dunkers' and genuine murder mysteries as 'whodunits' (p. 39-40).

Isaacs (1967), under the sponsorship of the President's Commission, studied a sample of cases from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and disclosed investigatory factors that aided in the solution of crimes. In the sample that contained 1,905 crimes, Isaacs found that 25% were cleared. Of those that were cleared, the majority involved a named suspect or an on-scene arrest (Isaacs, 1967). These results suggested a need for not only more investigation at the crime scene, but an improved response time to reported crimes.

Williams and Sumrall (1982) served as evaluators of a Managing Case Investigations (MCI) demonstration project in the Birmingham Police Department. A framework of economic analysis was used to evaluate the efficiency of the demonstration project. The researchers set out to learn whether certain organizational changes involving manpower utilization, management of case processing and the prosecution of offenders increased the effectiveness of criminal investigations. They found that changes in organizational structure brought about by the MCI field test resulted in an increase in effectiveness while total input resources were declining. They also found that the clearance rates of

cases rose during the project without the use of additional resources (Williams & Sumrall, 1982).

Research in this area also attempted to identify factors in the initial or preliminary investigation that would be predictive of making arrests. The results, in general, have been that unless a victim or witness knew the suspect, or could provide an identification or description, a suspect was rarely found. In the crimes of robbery, rape, auto theft and assault with a deadly weapon, cases that were solved tended to solve themselves. This means that routine procedures were employed and such cases were the ones that received the highest priority (Greenwood et al., 1977).

In 1968, Greenwood found that most arrests for property crimes were made either as a result of evidence readily available when the crime was reported or at the crime scene. In addition, Greenwood compared the effectiveness of different types of detective deployment. As a means to avoid the waste of time in investigating unsolvable cases, Greenwood identified certain evidentiary factors for predicting whether or not a case could be solved. These evidentiary factors included a named suspect, a mug shot and a physical description (Greenwood, 1970).

With the intent to extend this line of research, Folk (1971) explored various decision strategies for selecting the cases that investigators should pursue. Folk collected data from the Boston Police Department and showed the contribution of various types of evidence to suspect identification, arrest and conviction. He shared that civilian victims or witnesses contributed about 40% of the evidence to solved cases (Folk, 1971). Greenberg and Felton (1972) examined burglary investigation practices in various Alameda County, California police departments and suggested means of improving them. By statistically analyzing police records, the researchers found five predictors of case closure: 1) estimated range of time of occurrence, 2) witness reporting of offense, 3) on-view report of offense, 4) usable fingerprints and 5) suspect information developed [suspect described or named] (Greenberg & Felton, 1972).

The Rand Corporation of Santa Monica, California conducted one of the largest research studies concerning police detectives and the criminal investigation process of large police departments. In 1973, the Rand Corporation undertook a two-year long nationwide study of the effectiveness of police investigative practices. The National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, which serves as the research arm of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), awarded the contract to the Rand Corporation. The corporation conducted its study by surveys, interviews and direct observations.

The Rand study had four main objectives. The first was to describe the current investigative organization and practices on a national level. The second goal was to discern the effectiveness of new technology and systems adopted to improve investigative performance. Third, researchers sought to disclose how investigative effectiveness was related to differences in organizational staffing and procedures. Fourth, and perhaps most important, the researchers set out to evaluate the contribution police investigation made to the achievement of criminal justice goals (Greenwood & Petersilia, 1975). The Rand Corporation published its findings in October 1975. In regard to the use of detectives' time, researchers shared that substantially more than half of all serious reported crimes received no more than superficial attention from investigators. They also found that 93% of investigators' time was consumed by

administrative duties, services to the public and other activities not immediately related to assigned cases (Greenwood & Petersilia, 1975).

One of the most unsettling findings concerning the effectiveness of detectives was that the most vital determinant of whether a case would be solved was the information the victim supplied to the immediately responding patrol officer. They furthered that only about 20% of crimes cleared by arrest could be attributed to investigative work. The Rand researchers found that approximately 30% of all clearances by arrest were produced by pickup arrests from patrol officers who responded to the scene of the crime. In approximately 50% of the cleared crimes, the perpetrator was identified when the crime report was first taken. Hence, the only tasks for investigators were to locate the perpetrator, arrest them and assemble the facts needed by prosecutors to file charges in court. In essence, only about 20% of the cleared crimes could possibly be attributed to investigative work (Greenwood & Petersilia, 1975).

The single most important determinant of whether or not a case would be solved was the information the victim supplied to the immediately responding patrol officer. If information that uniquely identified the perpetrator was not obtainable at the time the crime was reported, the perpetrator, by and large, would not be subsequently identified. In addition, the Rand researchers found that most of the cases were also solved by patrol officers and members of the public who spontaneously provided further information. Of those cases that were ultimately cleared, but in which the perpetrator was not identifiable at the time of the initial report, roughly all were cleared as a result of routine police procedures (Greenwood, 1975). Hence, the Rand researchers estimated that at best, 2.7% of all crime clearances could be attributed to 'special techniques'. 'Special techniques' and 'unique skills' were defined as those detected cases in which no information concerning the suspect's identity was available at the crime scene or when the initial incident report was received.

Citizen Involvement

Researchers argued that successful homicide detecting hinged mostly on information from witnesses to the murder and other persons who resided where the murder occurred. These persons would be able to inform investigators about victims and possible perpetrators (Wolfgang, 1958). Hence, when members of the public did not trust the police enough to tell them what they know about a murder, the likelihood of the case being solved lessens (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Experts who conducted these and other studies all agreed on one common factor or predictor in the majority of crimes that are cleared; 'citizen involvement'. The information that the victim provided at the time of the initial crime report was key to the likelihood of the crime being cleared (Feeney & Floyd, 1973; Folk, 1971; Greenwood, 1970; Isaacs, 1967).

Findings of these examinations implied that a police department should establish and maintain a healthy rapport with all citizens in the communities they serve in order to improve its investigative success. The role of the community in police work has been pivotal since the inception of policing. In 1829, the London Metropolitan Police Act established the first full-time, uniformed police force. Sir Robert Peel, Britain's Home Secretary, was credited with the formation of the police. Peel believed that in order to effectively carry out their duties and exert their authority, officers had to initially gain legitimacy from members of the public. It is this legitimacy that would propel citizens to

facilitate officers in the solution of criminal acts because the officers have secured their acceptance. This premise, although over one hundred years old, still holds true today.

As stated earlier, the Rand researchers found that approximately 30% of all clearances by arrest were produced by pickup arrests by patrol officers who responded to the crime scene. In approximately 50% of the cleared crimes, the perpetrator was known when the crime report was first received. Thus, about 20% of the cleared crimes could possibly be attributed to investigative work. Since the best predictor of whether or not a case will be 'solved' or cleared by arrest is the quality of information the victim supplied to the first responding patrol officer, there should be relationship between suspect identification at crime scene and crime clearance.

In order to test the reliability of the Rand findings for murder cases during the study period in The Bahamas, the number of cases where no information about the suspect's identity was known at the scene must be secured. This number is also important for critics of murder investigators and their skills, whom often argue that most cases were already 'solved' at the crime scene as the named suspect simply needs to be picked-up and charged. The question then becomes exactly how many cases were eventually detected by investigators although no named suspect (or any information concerning him) was available at the scene.

As shown in Table 8.1, during the study period, homicide detectives solved 121 or 57% of the 214 cases in which no information concerning the suspect's identity was secured at the scene. This is 36% more than the Rand researchers anticipated and thus their findings were not reliable for The Bahamas. It must be mentioned that this can be considered a remarkable feat, even by international standards, as percentages have never surpassed the half mark.

Table 8.1 Suspects' Identity at Scene & Detection Cross-Tabulation

	Solved	Unsolved	Total
Suspect ID Known At Scene	135	0	135
Suspect ID Unknown At Scene	121*	93	214
<i>Total</i>	256	93	349

* Cases solved when no suspect information was known at the scene.

Increasing Murder Detection Rates

In their report, Rand researchers included various recommendations and reforms that would lead to an increased number of crime clearances. Among the major reforms was a reduction in follow-up investigations, except for serious offenses and the assignment of generalist-investigators who would handle obvious leads in routine cases. In relation to

serious crimes, the establishment of a Major Offenders Unit and the assignment of serious offense investigations to closely supervised teams rather than individual investigators were suggested. The researchers also suggested strengthening evidence-processing capabilities as well as the use of information processing systems in lieu of investigations. Since solved cases were generally cleared when the offense was originally reported or shortly thereafter, early deployment of detectives to crime scenes should be sought to maximize their effectiveness (Conklin & Bittner, 1973).

One of the recommendations made by the Rand researchers was to initiate programs designed to impress on the citizens the crucial role they play in crime solution. Rand researchers limited their definition of 'citizen' to include only victims and excluded the passer-by, neighbor or even the vagabond (Greenwood & Petersilia, 1977). It may be that these other groups of citizens have pertinent information about a crime. This may include the suspect's identity as well as why a particular individual became a victim. Such citizens may disclose information about other community crime issues including problem areas and facilities. Therefore, to reduce the possibility of missing such vital law enforcement intelligence, programs designed to improve citizen involvement should not be limited to crime victims, but rather should be inclusive of all citizens.

Summing it Up

To be successful at murder prevention calls for the adoption of active Community Oriented Policing (COP) as well as Problem Oriented Policing (POP) programs. These, as well as other police-community programs, should entail more than increasing community awareness of police presence in their area through activities such as knocking door to door, or community foot patrol. Programs should be geared toward increasing the public's knowledge of exactly what is required for a criminal to be arrested and charged with a criminal act. Seminars, conclaves and community meetings should include the findings of studies which illustrate the important role citizens play in the solution of crimes. This would provide a realistic view of how crimes are really solved and may correct some of the inaccurate perceptions that some members of society hold. Empowering citizens by letting them knowing the value of their knowledge and information may result in a reciprocal effect, since members of the community would share information that would in turn alleviate crime problems present in their neighborhoods.

Programs should also be established that would increase citizens' desire to offer information about criminal acts to the police. Many people may subscribe to the view that if they are not crime victims then they ought not to worry about helping the police. While officers cannot force members of the public to provide them with information, efforts to encourage them to be more forthcoming can be useful. The design of each program should be dependent on and tailored to the needs and expectations of the particular community which the department serves.

A Murder Reduction Strategy for The Bahamas

In order to gain a full appreciation of the reasoning behind the recommendations outlined in this chapter, readers are encouraged to first read the previous chapters.

While some of these recommendations may not be enacted, presenting them provides an opportunity for policy makers and members of the public and private sector to take an ‘out of the box’ approach to murder reduction.

Recommendations offered in the Murder Reduction Strategy are based exclusively on the findings of this study and associated research and may not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or positions of the Ministry of National Security, the Royal Bahamas Police Force or the College of The Bahamas.

Chapter 9

Introduction

The success of organizations is measured by its ability to maximize products and services in the long term. As a result, executives are constantly in search of innovative approaches to improve their strategic performance. As a general rule of any progressive and professional institution, securing empirical research and rigorous analyses on issues are fundamental steps in the formulation of informed strategy decisions geared toward building performance capacity. Interventions that are not grounded in empirical research merely address the symptoms of a problem rather than its root causes.

In law enforcement there are several factors that can hinder the development and implementation of crime reduction strategies. Although the field of policing is extremely dynamic, its culture is marked by a strong resistance to change (Dunham & Alpert, 2001). Such a culture has the tendency to stifle innovative suggestions and the organization's propensity to learn. This has resulted in a number of police agencies spending much of their time addressing day-to-day demands while paying little attention to the development of macro-level, long-term strategies to improve their services and gauge their effectiveness.

Although beyond the scope of the police, additional factors that stifle crime prevention strategies include poverty and social inequality. One of the most consistent findings related to murder is that homicide, like other violent and predatory property crime, is strongly associated with poverty and social inequality (Bowling, 1999). As noted in Chapter 2, most local murder incidents in New Providence occurred in communities where annual household incomes fell below the island's average (DOS, 2000). This indicates that preventive strategies aimed at particular offences ought to be complemented by and complementary to broader, long-term initiatives to address poverty and social exclusion. It may also be useful for policy-makers to reflect on how major structural factors, like poverty, interrelate with specific local factors. When persons, places and circumstances are identified as being associated with an exceptionally high risk of serious violence, focus should be placed on them. This would reduce the opportunity for more common types of murders to occur. In other words, one must identify methods by which the chances that an assault ending fatally can be reduced.

While murder is regarded as the most serious offence, it is not a completely separate or distinctive phenomenon. Murder can be understood as an extreme manifestation of serious violence, with similar underlying causes and influenced by similar situational factors. Strategies for reducing murders can be developed in conjunction with those aimed at violent crime in general and the most serious types of violent crime. In other words, the 349 murders that occurred during the 2005-2009 time period can be considered alongside the number of attempted murders (21) and a much greater number of shootings (493), stabbings (1,119) and other acts that endanger life. It is useful to note, however, that there were murders marked by a clear intent to fatally wound as opposed to merely injuring a victim. In such cases, strategies to reduce overall violence may be less effective (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Murder Reduction Strategy

This Murder Reduction Strategy (MRS) is based on the findings of this study and related research in other jurisdictions. Recommendations offered in the Murder Reduction

Strategy are based exclusively on the findings of this study and associated research and may not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or positions of the Ministry of National Security, the Royal Bahamas Police Force or the College of The Bahamas. As noted earlier in the study, challenges to local murder prevention include the illicit gun trade and the back-log of murder cases. These and other issues are addressed in this MRS.

Since murder is a crime that is impacted by characteristics which vary geographically, universal approaches to its reduction may be less successful than programs specifically developed with knowledge of the geographic and cultural factors associated with violent behavior. Efforts and policies geared at successfully reducing its occurrence, therefore, require careful tailoring to the idiosyncratic nature of each agency's culture and governmental policies. In order to gain a full appreciation for the suggestions of this MRS one should first read the previous chapters and consider their descriptive findings. While other types and forms of murder may be prevented, this strategy only explores several of them. Other aspects of the strategy are sensitive and will require direct communication with the relevant authorities and agencies.

Strategic Intent

After varying levels of analyses of local murder incidents, particularly between 2005 and 2009, several trends and factors along with criminal justice issues have been identified as useful in developing an effective preventative strategy. The intent of this strategy is to reduce specific types and forms of murders thereby reducing the overall number of murder incidents. The target murders are illustrated in Table 9.1. This strategy will also produce residual reduction effects on the number of crimes committed with firearms, the number of armed robberies at business establishments, the number of violent crimes at bars and nightclubs and the frequency of domestic violence calls for service at repeat households.

Figure 9.1 Target Murders



Target 1 Domestic B (intimate partner) Murders

Domestic violence is a major problem in The Bahamas. Historically, acts of violence in the home were mostly ignored by law enforcement worldwide as they were viewed as 'private' matters, inappropriate for public intervention. In order for domestic violence to be reduced, it must be treated as a serious criminal offence for which perpetrators are brought to justice. Fortunately, the recently passed Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act 2007 seeks to achieve this.

This study disclosed that Domestic B murders were the most frequent among all domestic murders and doubled during the final two years of the study period (See Chapter 3). This category accounted for 13% of the murders during the study period. Researchers have reliably learned that a large number of female victims of Domestic B murders had experienced domestic violence in the past. In fact, females are more likely to be killed by a current or former male partner than anyone else. Women who were previously abused and have been threatened or stalked are at greatest risk of becoming victims. Moreover, 5 cases during the study period involved women who were previously threatened by a current or former intimate partner.

Research suggests that predictions of serious domestic violence may be reassessed to allow targeted interventions (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). However, the scope for predicting domestic homicide (specific interventions) may be more limited. Even so, there is evidence of links between the two, suggesting that a significant reduction in the overall frequency of domestic violence (especially those involving serious and repeated assaults) would be accompanied by at least a small reduction in the number of homicides. The goal of interventions should be to reduce the frequency of interpersonal violence in general, thereby reducing this type of murder.

Interventions from governmental agencies alone are unlikely to have a significant impact on the problem of domestic violence and, by extension, on domestic homicide. Hence, a well-coordinated, multi-agency approach is vital. The agencies most likely to be involved in the approach are the police, social services, and NGOs, such as those who provide domestic violence shelters. A coordinated program of intervention should operate at various levels starting with identifying the risk of an escalation in violence then dealing appropriately and effectively with victims and offenders. This aspect of the MRS makes use of risk assessments, prosecutes perpetrators, protects victims and monitors cases.

Tactics:

Police

- Each divisional commander should complete a standard *Risk Assessment Form* (see example on next page) for all domestic violence calls for service. Increased follow-up and visits should be made in domestic violence cases where one party left the scene prior to police arrival. Intimate partners categorized as being at a 'high' risk should be referred to the Family Services Unit of the Department of Social Services or the Crisis Center to attend counseling.

ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Form			
Points	Y	N	Risk Factor
1			Access to or ownership of guns
1			Displaying weapons such as knives within the household
1			Threats with weapons
1			Threats to kill
1			Serious injury in prior abusive incident
1			Threats of suicide by partner (in response to other partner's threats to leave)
1			Drug and alcohol abuse by partner
1			Forced sex from partner
1			Possessiveness and extensive jealousy, extensive dominance
1			Victim's predictions of future risk and its likely severity
1			Evidence of stalking
1			Recent ending of a relationship instigated by female partner
Total:			(out of 12)

Risk Level: High Y (9pts - 12pts)
 Moderate Y (5pts - 8pts)
 Low Y (0pts - 4pts)

- Each divisional commander should be responsible for maintaining a *Violent Partner Register* detailing domestic violence calls for service. Partners identified as a 'high risk' will be visited and spoken to by divisional officers monthly. Officers will be tasked with developing a productive rapport with both partners with the goal of fostering safe communication and peaceful conflict resolution.
- Divisional commanders should keep abreast of the status of all protection orders against moderate and high risk partners who reside within their division.
- A mandatory arrest policy should be implemented that removes police discretion and requires arrest in all cases where officers have reasonable suspicion that an act of domestic violence has occurred.
- Additional research should be conducted to identify other risk factors associated with serious domestic violence. More attention should be given to risk factors such as stalking by ex-partners and victim's own assessments of risk. Further examination of the effectiveness of various preventive measures is recommended in order to work towards tailored responses that meet the needs of vulnerable victims.

Legislative/Judicial

- A specialized Domestic Violence Court solely focused on domestic violence related complaints should be established. This will assist with a general ‘tightening up’ of the processes involved in the handling of domestic violence cases and associated follow-ups.
- To the frustration of police and prosecutors, domestic violence victims are often uncooperative with efforts to prosecute and convict their abusers. Before making a formal charge, police and prosecutors are forced to consider the willingness of victims to participate in cases based solely on victim testimony as public resources might be wasted if the only witness is unwilling or reluctant to testify. In an effort to alleviate this issue, an Amendment to the Domestic Violence Protection Order Act should be made to include a provision that provides for ‘victimless’ prosecutions for high risk couples under the risk assessment model. Commonly referred to as *non-coercive* or *no-drop prosecutions* in other jurisdictions, such a provision requires prosecution of a domestic violence perpetrator, regardless of the victim’s wishes. The victim will only have decision-making authority over the extent of *their own* participation in the prosecution. Evidence such as testimonies of police officers, neighbors and *excited utterances* made by the victim at the time of the alleged attack will be crucial as the responding officer acts as the ‘victim’. This would call for enhanced monitoring and evidence gathering by the police at crime scenes to support prosecutions. Prosecutors and police should seek to ensure that victims of serious domestic violence crimes have an opportunity to consult with and provide information to the prosecution prior to the decision on whether or not to prosecute. While the victim’s opinion may not directly affect the decision to prosecute, the consultation can indicate that the victims’ wishes and views were considered by a prosecutor.
- An amendment to the Firearms Act should be made to include a provision that revokes firearms licenses for persons deemed at a high risk for committing an act of domestic violence according to the risk assessment model.
- An amendment to the Domestic Violence Protection Order Act should be made to include a provision that requires partners in households where police had to be called in on 3 or more occasions for domestic violence complaints to attend mandatory counseling at the Family Services Unit of the Department of Social Services or the Crisis Center.
- Electronic Monitoring should be used for aggressors in domestic violence cases where the risk for committing a domestic related murder is high according to the risk assessment model. Much like England’s Protection from Harassment Act of 1997, stalkers and violent partners could be electronically tagged to discourage them from approaching their victims in the future.

Community Partnership/Programs

- Offender programs should be established and/or supported at counseling centers including the Family Services Unit of the Department of Social Services and the Crisis Center. These programs can play a pivotal part in a comprehensive

strategy to protect the safety of partners and their children. Programs should be tailored to each situation as some suspects may require special alcohol/mental health attention while others may only require counseling.

- The National Crime Prevention Office should increase the sharing of the latest domestic violence prevention information, including risk factors, with members of the public via all forms of print and electronic media. Victims should also be provided with information that will empower them to become survivors.
- Members of the public who may be aware of current or former intimate partners they suspect of being at a high risk for domestic violence should be encouraged to share this information with the police, the Family Services Unit of the Department of Social Services or the Crisis Center.

Target 2 Murders Committed by Persons on Bail

Findings in this study revealed that 46% of persons charged with murder during the last 5 years had prior criminal records involving violence. In fact, 15% of these suspects had been previously charged with another murder. Further analysis disclosed that 34% of persons charged with murder during the study period were already on bail for other matters, 19 of whom were on bail for an earlier murder. Others were on bail for other serious crimes including rape, armed robbery and possession of a firearm with the intent to endanger life. These findings bring to light two important trends. First, a significant number of persons whom police believe to be responsible for many of today's murders are habitually violent offenders, typically in and out of the court system. Second, these individuals usually have cases pending in court. Evaluators of Boston's Gun Project (See Chapter 7) noted a similar phenomenon as only 1,300 gang members (less than 1% of their age group city wide) were responsible for at least 60% of all youth homicides in the city (Braga et al., 2001). One can reasonably presume that if cases pending by such habitual offenders are given priority, the number of this type of murder would be reduced.

It is a well known fact that members of the public rely heavily on the criminal justice system to administer fair and timely justice for all persons. To be effective, however, a country's criminal justice system must consistently flow. As indicated in Chapter 6, there were 171 murder cases (which occurred during the study period) still pending at the end of the 2009 judicial year, 75 in the Magistrate's Court and 96 in the Supreme Court. Local commentators have held that the backlog of criminal cases is so severe that many of these cases may never be brought to trial. In several cases, witnesses have either died or relocated to other jurisdictions. Other witnesses have received death threats and financial bribes to prevent them from testifying in courts. Additionally, key witnesses in several cases have been murdered. Given the fact that most Bahamians blame the courts for the current state of crime locally, efforts to enhance the criminal justice system must be included as an important aspect of a strategy geared toward reducing murders.

Tactics:

Police

- Offenders granted bail under the provisions of the Bail Act should be aggressively monitored to ensure that all conditions are being adhered to at all times. When found in breach, offenders should be swiftly dealt with accordingly.

Judiciary/Legislative

- The Supreme Court Act Chapter 53 Section 3[1] provides for not more than 11 Justices of the court. An amendment to this Act should be made to increase this number to not more than 15 Justices of the court. It is further recommend that no less than 5 Supreme Court Justices be maintained and specifically tasked to hear criminal cases, including murder, armed robbery and rape. This will reduce situations in which criminal judges are required to hear time consuming civil cases including election court and union disputes. In other tactics to reduce court backlogs, some jurisdictions have coordinated vacation leave among judges in such a way that only a minority number of them are on leave at any point during the legal year.
- A formalized system of case management that gives priority to pending cases involving violent habitual offenders should be developed and implemented.
- Pre-Trial Conferences should be introduced. Also known as a pre-trial hearing, a pre-trial conference is a meeting of the parties involved in a case conducted prior to trial. Held before a trial judge or magistrate, the conference can be requested by a party involved in a case or ordered by the presiding judge. These conferences help to promote a fair and expeditious trial. In criminal cases, preliminary matters such as what evidence will be excluded from trial and which witnesses will be allowed to testify are decided. The judge or magistrate may make rulings on motions, eliminate repetitive evidence and set tentative schedules. This process can expedite case disposition, assist in establishing managerial control over the case and discourage unnecessary pre-trial activities.
- The implementation of plea bargaining should also be considered. Plea bargaining involves an agreement where prosecutors offer the defendant the opportunity to plead guilty, usually to a lesser charge or to the original criminal charge, with a recommendation of a lighter than the maximum sentence. The reality is that the current rate of cases entering the court system makes it virtually impossible for all to make it to trial. Plea bargaining, however, not only relieves court congestion, but alleviates the risks and uncertainties of trial.
- The Preliminary Inquiry process should be abolished for murder cases. Since police and prosecutors have secured sufficient evidence to warrant the serious charge of murder, all cases should be sent directly to the Supreme Court via a Voluntary Bill of Indictment.

Target 3 Robbery Related Murders

As noted in this study, robbery related murders accounted for 63 (18%) incidents during the study period, representing the second most popular motive. A total of 22 cases occurred at business establishments, mostly food or convenience stores, while 2 occurred at service stations. Since the offence of armed robbery is a preventable crime, murders resulting from armed robberies can be prevented using similar tactics. The focus of this target group centers on robberies at business establishments, particularly service stations, food stores, convenience stores and laundry mats.

Tactics:

Police

- Divisional commanders should complete a standard *Robbery Vulnerability Assessment Form* for all business establishments within their division (see example below). A copy of the assessment should be given to each business operator and should include suggestions on how they can lessen their risk. A new risk assessment should be completed each year.
- Business establishments found to have a high or moderate risk of robbery should be closely monitored and receive targeted patrols, particularly those that were previously victimized.

ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE Robbery Vulnerability Assessment Form			
Points	Y	N	Vulnerability Factor
1			2 or more clerks on duty
1			Clerks located in center of establishment
1			Limited available cash kept on premises
1			CCTV in use and properly maintained
1			Bullet proof enclosure where cash is handled
1			Use of enhanced lighting in and outside of establishment
1			Absence of visual obstructions to doors and windows
1			No prior history of robbery
Total:			(out of 8)

Risk Level: High N (6pts - 8pts)
 Moderate N (3pts - 5pts)
 Low N (0pts - 2pts)

Legislative/Regulatory

- In 2008, an examination of armed robberies at 24-hour operated business establishments in The Bahamas was conducted. The study found that robbers targeted those establishments without a bullet proof enclosure and virtually ignored those that had one installed. An amendment should be made to the Business License Act requiring all 24-hour operated businesses under Section 4[2], excluding those described as *petty* or *very small*, to have bullet proof enclosures installed around cash handling areas as a licensing requirement (the state of Florida enacted a similar provision in Statute 90-346 of their Convenience Business Security Act, which mandated the installation of bullet resistant safety enclosures).

Community/Public/Private Partnership

- In an effort to lessen the amount of cash being exchanged and on hand at business establishments, operators should be admonished to invest in a debit/credit card system as a method for payments of their products and services. This will promote the safety of their customers, clients and workers.
- Gasoline station operators should be admonished to invest in gas pumps equipped with debit/credit card technology so that drivers are able to swipe their cards directly at pumps for payment and eliminate the need for cash.
- Local financial institutions should be encouraged to offer a debit card system for their clients, reducing the need for persons to carry large amounts of cash on their person.
- Business establishments should be admonished to invest in and properly maintain a CCTV system.
- A national campaign should be publicized through all forms of media to provide safety tips for business owners including:

- ✓ *Use of armored cars for cash pick-ups*
- ✓ *Use and proper maintenance of surveillance equipment (sorting data for at least 2 weeks)*
- ✓ *Improve visibility by providing adequate lighting, installing mirrors, and keeping signs and shelves low*
- ✓ *Install drop safes and signs that indicate little cash is kept on hand*
- ✓ *Install silent and personal alarms*
- ✓ *Restricting customer access by reducing store housing and closing portions of the store*
- ✓ *Take precautions when using remote, isolated spots such as garbage areas and outdoor freezers*
- ✓ *Lock doors that are not in use*
- ✓ *Increase staffing during high risk periods (see Chapter 2)*

Target 4 Homicides at Bars & Night Clubs

Over the last decade, the local social nightlife has rapidly expanded. Results from the study disclosed that 28 (39%) commercial murders took place at bars and/or nightclubs, the highest number of all commercial establishments. Nearly half (12 or 42%) of these incidents were motivated by fights and arguments. Clearly, authorities should focus on controlling late-night gathering of crowds of individuals in and around bars and nightclubs in order to reduce fights between patrons.

Tactics:

Police

- Targeted patrols should be conducted in and around bar and nightclub parking lots, particularly during peak times and at special events (club anniversaries, guest performers, holiday weekends, etc).
- Regular, random inspections of licensed premises (bars and nightclubs) should be conducted to ensure that all requirements and conditions under all relevant Acts (Liquor License Act, Business Licensing Act, Music & Dancing Act, etc) are properly adhered to at all times.

Legislative/Regulatory

- Most nightclubs operate under a license granted under the Liquor License Act or the Music and Dancing Licenses Act. Incidentally, the police have a considerable amount of influence on the granting of licenses, inspection of premises and random inspection of licenses (Sections 12, 15, 16[2], 17, 18 & 19[2]). An amendment to these Acts should give the police the authority to recommend the revocation of a licensed premises under the Act that the police deem unsafe to members of the public as a result of violent criminal activity in and around the premises of the establishment.
- Authorities should strictly enforce Section 22[k] of the Liquor Licenses Act, which provides for revocation of licenses from licensees who permit their premises to be used by “*notorious bad characters or thieves longer than is necessary for the purpose of obtaining refreshments*”.

Community/Public

- Authorities should establish co-operative and coordinated responses between landlords, door-staff, the police and licensing authorities, especially in responding to violent hotspots to ensure speedy responses to violent disorder.
- Nightclub owners and operators should be encouraged to invest in and properly maintain a CCTV system with special coverage at entrances, exits and parking areas.

Target 5 Homicides by Illegal Firearms

Findings of this study indicated that 61% of the murders during the study period were committed by a firearm. Killing by gunfire steadily increased from 34 cases in 2005 to 51 in 2009. Moreover, more than half (54%) of the murders committed during the study period were committed with the use of an *illegal* firearm, mostly the 9mm pistol. Police have seized more than 1,100 firearms over the last 5 years, most of which were illegal. In fact, during 2008 and 2009, 75% of the confiscated firearms were handguns or other prohibited weapons. While more guns are taken off the streets each year, suspects are still able to get access to firearms and commit a larger number of murders with them. Illegal gun possession has become a major problem in The Bahamas as persons use guns as a final means of resolving conflict. Clearly, a strategy designed to reduce and control the number of illegal firearms in The Bahamas will have a residual effect on the high number of gun murders. While all types of murders are not likely to be prevented by interventions aimed at reducing the availability of firearms, there is obviously some use for such initiatives.

Stop and search activities by the police may result in some weapons being taken off the streets. However, this tactic alone increases the *demand* for more weapons. Stop and search tactics fail to address *supply* factors as figures continue to indicate a constant inflow of illegal weapons entering the country. Since stop and search initiatives alone will not reduce the number of murders committed with firearms, tactics that give attention to supply factors present a more effective strategy. These include enhancing controls over the availability of firearms and stronger penalties for illegal possession.

Tactics:

Police

- Stop and search quotas should be implemented for every patrolling tour of duty. Patrol officers should be required to stop and search a specified number of suspicious vehicles and persons whom they reasonably suspect may be in possession of an illegal firearm. More time should also be spent speaking to motorists and pedestrians. This tactic will enhance police visibility and presence, which may make persons increase their perception of being caught with an illegal firearm on their person or in their vehicle.
- Increased attention should be given to all reports of gunshots, including intelligence gathering and careful analyses of hotspots for shooting incidents.
- After being given due opportunity to reconcile, registered owners of firearms who have not paid their annual licensing fee should have their licenses revoked and firearm(s) confiscated.
- Divisional commanders should execute search warrants on homes, business establishments, bars and nightclubs in which they suspect an illegal firearm may be found, especially those with prior history of gun possession or shooting incidents.
- A greater focus and more attention should be placed on gathering intelligence related to the illegal importation of firearms. Clearly, the present level of gun

violence necessitates a national, multiagency response. The units tasked with this responsibility should be outfitted with investigators from the Customs Department, the Royal Bahamas Defense Force and a qualified expert in the field of ballistics. Investigative time should not be consumed with preparing case files for daily confiscations of single firearms. Rather, investigators should take a macro-level approach to local firearm possession interdiction, providing pointed attention to the illegal importation of firearms and gun traffickers operating in The Bahamas. This should involve increased targeting and monitoring of criminals and criminal groups known to own and/or use guns. Cooperation with the US Customs Department, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) and the US Department of Homeland Security will be vital and should be renewed and enhanced.

- Considering the large number of crimes involving a firearm, speedier processing and identification of weapons are crucial. If firearms can be quickly linked to other criminal offences, suspects would be discouraged from carrying weapons used in other crimes, thereby reducing the likelihood of these persons using a gun to commit a crime. The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) software should be acquired. In 1999, the ATF established and began administering the NIBIN and automated ballistic imaging technology for NIBIN partners. Partners use Integrated Ballistic Identification Systems (IBIS) to acquire digital images of the markings made on spent ammunition recovered from crime scenes. Partners may also initiate a crime gun test fire and compare the images (in a matter of hours) against earlier NIBIN entries via electronic image comparison. If a high-confidence candidate for a match emerges, firearms examiners compare the original evidence with a microscope to confirm the match or NIBIN “hit.” By searching in an automated environment either locally, regionally, or nationally, NIBIN partners are able to discover links between crimes more quickly. Such links may never have been identified without the technology. The number of NIBIN entries can also be used to gauge the number of active firearms that are still on the streets.

Legislative/Government

- Consideration should be given to creating a strict liability offence for persons found with an illegal firearm on their person. Violators should face a mandatory prison term.
- An amendment of the Firearms Act should be made to have persons convicted of illegal firearm possession face a mandatory prison term.
- An amendment to the Firearms Act should be made to include an offence known as Illegal Importation of Firearms. Upon conviction, punishment for this offence should carry a mandatory prison term.
- Amendment of the Firearms Act should include an offence known as Conspiracy to Illegally Import/Export Firearms. Upon conviction, punishment for this offence should carry a mandatory prison sentence for each firearm.

- A specialized Firearm's Court should be created with a Magistrate specifically dedicated to hearing illegal gun possession, importation/exportation cases and related matters.
- Under the current Firearms Act Section 6[c], non-residents who arrive on foreign vessels must declare firearms on board their vessel to a Customs Officer or a Family Island Administrator within 48 hours of their arrival. This Section should be amended to require immediate declaration. In the absence of a Customs Officer or a Family Island Administrator, the firearms should be declared at the nearest police station. Those in contravention of this requirement should face strict penalties.
- Investment should be made to acquire the latest firearm detection technology to be used at the most active ports of entry in the country including airports, seaports and shipping docks. This will include advanced training for customs and police officers.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other pertinent local and international agencies, firearms vendors in the US, particularly those in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, should be prohibited from selling firearms to Bahamians without specific authorization and a special license from the Government of The Bahamas.
- A period of amnesty should be promulgated at the announcement of these new initiatives in order to allow persons to surrender unlicensed firearms without penalty, liability or prosecution.

Community Partnership

- The National Crime Prevention Office should host a series of regular educational campaigns regarding the dangers and penalties of carrying weapons such as knives and guns in schools and youth organizations.
- A "Get One Gun" program should be established in which members of the community are admonished to help to bring in or to provide information regarding the confiscation of at least one illegal firearm.
- Increased marketing of the crime-tipsters hotline (328-TIPS) is recommended. Members of the public should be reminded that if a suspect is caught red handed with a gun, there is no need for the witness to give evidence in court.

Strategy Evaluation & Performance Indicators

The nature and magnitude of many of these suggestions and recommendations would indeed take quite some time to partially or fully implement. This strategy requires constant and regular adjustments and refinements as the field of law enforcement is quite dynamic. Each agency should be responsible for driving their associated tactics suggested within this strategy. Most importantly, rigorous research into the dynamics of local homicides must continue into order to properly gauge the impact of this MRS on future murder rates.

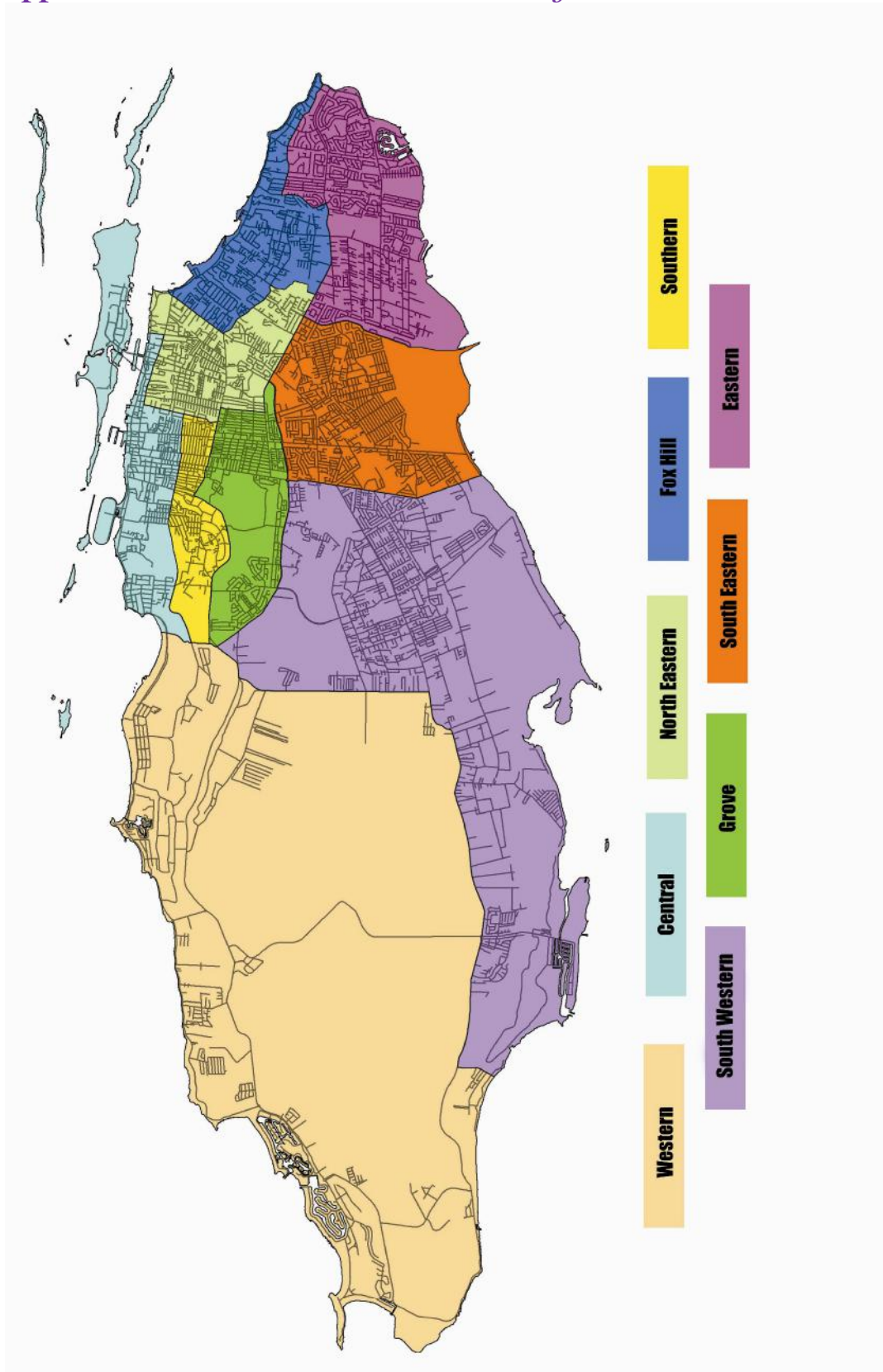
If these recommendations are accepted, an examination of local murders over the next five years should produce decreases in the 5 targeted types of murder previously indicated in Figure 9.1. Examiners should also observe decreases in the annual number of crimes committed with firearms, the number of armed robberies at business establishments, the number of violent crimes at bars and nightclubs and the frequency of domestic violence calls for service at repeat households.

Conclusion

This MRS and its associated recommendations were based on a rigorous analysis of murders which occurred throughout The Bahamas over the last 5 years. The analysis of homicide files provided the first step for assessing violence in a community and developing a data-driven intervention. Moving forward, it will be vital to continue to properly analyze trends and share knowledge about murders in general along with factors that relate to specific forms of murder. Engaging criminal justice officials and members of the community by way of research is a good way to identify underlying issues that must be properly addressed in order to effect change. Discussions in earlier chapters demonstrated how analysis of homicide patterns in local areas could be used to offer policy recommendations for government to consider and develop interventions for communities impacted by violence.

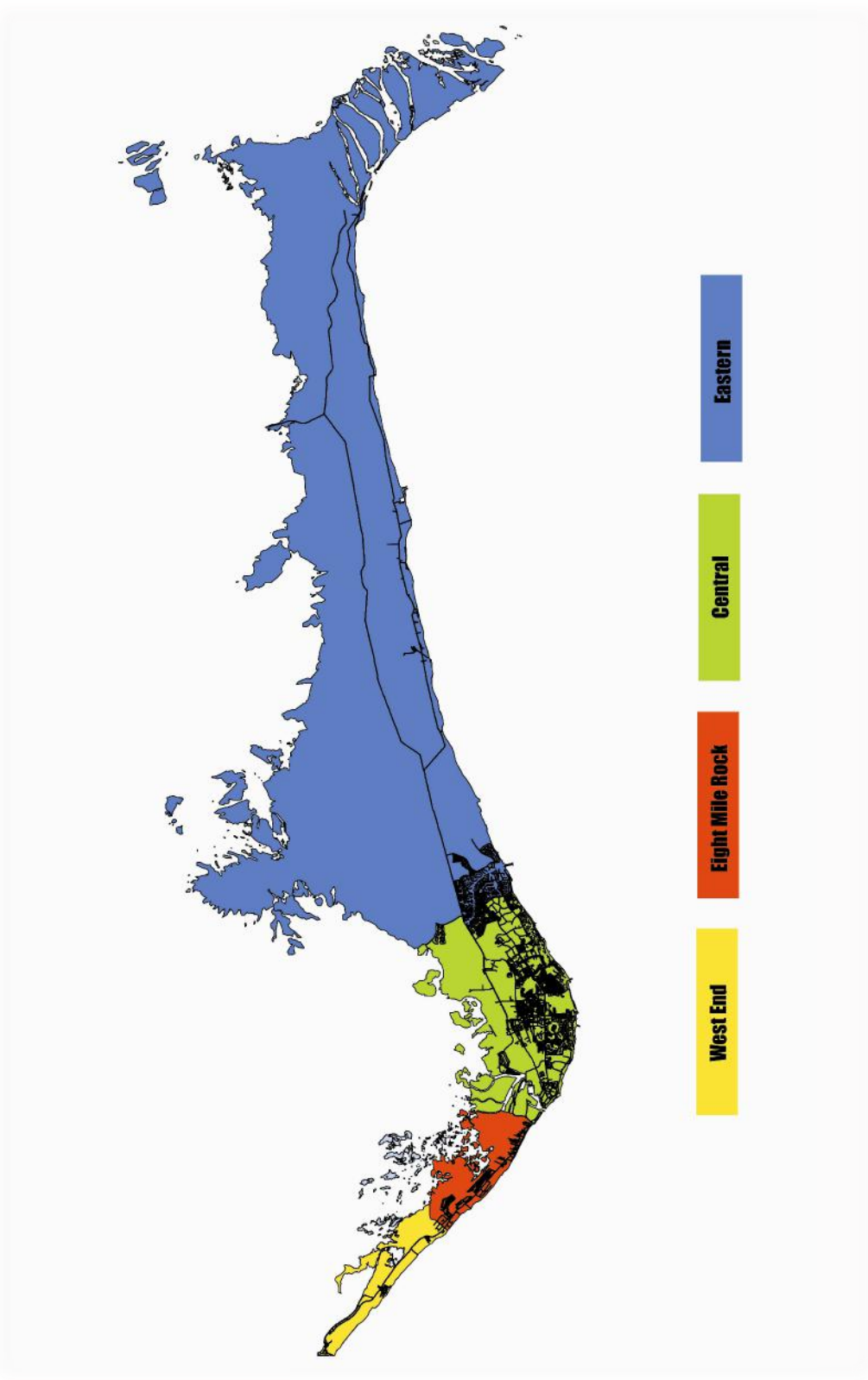
Local collaborations between law enforcement and community agencies can be effective in reducing homicide. Programs and initiatives can be relatively successful because they involve intervention strategies guided by a thorough assessment of the characteristics of the local homicides. It is accepted that this or any other strategy will not be successful in preventing all types of murders. Nonetheless, the success or failure of this strategy is essentially dependent upon sound cooperation between the police and the community, a commitment to program fidelity, and rigorous program evaluation. As long as there are differences of opinions, conflicts and subsequent violence are bound to arise. The key for policy makers and formal agents of social control is to increase the likelihood for persons to resolve their conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Appendix A *New Providence's Policing Divisions*



Appendix B

Grand Bahama Policing Divisions



Appendix C *Motives*

1. DOMESTIC A

Killing as a result of altercations concerning and arising out of family affairs and other household issues, but not including significant others.

2. DOMESTIC B

Killing as a result of arguments, disputes and altercations concerning issues of intimate relationships (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, 'sweet-hearting', etc.)

3. DOMESTIC C

Killing as a result of arguments, disputes and altercations concerning issues of alternative lifestyles including homosexuality and lesbianism.

4. ROBBERY

Killing during any stage of a robbery or an attempted robbery.

5. SEXUAL ASSAULT

Killing during any stage of a rape, attempted rape, or as a result of other sexually motivated violent situations.

6. FIGHT/ARGUMENT

Killing resulting from verbal and/or physical disputes and altercations between individuals, not fitting in any of the Domestic categories.

7. GANG RELATED

Killing as a result of turf wars and other gang focal concerns.

8. DRUGS/DRUG RELATED

Killing as a result of the sale, distribution, trafficking or business of drugs.

9. REVENGE/RETALIATION

Killing in response or reaction to prior confrontations, altercations, crimes or other issues.

10. UNKNOWN/UNDETERMINED

Insufficient factual information to safely support and assign a specific categorization.

11. OTHER

Any other motivations not exclusively or specifically described in other classifications.

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