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## RESEARCH REPORTS

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### A COMPARISON OF HOMICIDES IN TWO CITIES

ALEX D. POKORNY \*

This study is a partial replication of the definitive analysis by Wolfgang<sup>1</sup> of criminal homicides in Philadelphia during 1948-1952. The cases analyzed in the present paper were collected for use in a comparative study of homicide, aggravated assault, suicide, and attempted suicide.<sup>2</sup> In view of the similarities of the data-securing approach to that of Wolfgang, it was decided to compare some of the findings in a Southern city with comparable ones in Philadelphia.

Wolfgang studied all of the criminal homicide cases occurring in Philadelphia during the years 1948 through 1952. There were 588 victims and 621 offenders. His book is crammed full of tables, maps, references, literature reviews, and scholarly discussions, and it is not possible to summarize it adequately here. Neither is it possible to replicate his entire study without creating another book. The present study seeks to confirm some of Wolfgang's more general findings.

In brief, Wolfgang studied all criminal homicides, using files of the Homicide Squad of the Philadelphia Police Department. He stated that police files were the most inclusive, in that they include the unsolved cases, those in which the offender committed suicide, etc. Homicide series collected from coroners' reports, court records, or prison commitments are progressively more selective (though they may be superior to police files in other respects). Wolfgang distinguishes clearly between homicide generally and criminal homicide, as well as between criminal homicide and the narrower category of murder. He points out that many studies fail to distinguish between these and between offender and victim; crime reports statistics generally refer to offenders, whereas mortality statistics refer to victims (the latter usually include non-criminal homicide too).

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<sup>1</sup> WOLFGANG, PATTERNS IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE (1958).

<sup>2</sup> See research paper that follows this one, *infra* p. 488.

For assistance in the collection of this data the author wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. Fred B. Davis.

Wolfgang then presents a detailed analysis of offenders and victims by race, sex, age, previous criminal records, etc. He also analyzes methods, degree of violence, the contribution of alcohol, and motives. An important part of the study analyzes the victim-offender relationship, in terms of race, sex, the interpersonal relationship, and the possible role of the victim in precipitation of the homicide. In a final section he presents analyses of homicide-suicide, unsolved homicides, and the results of adjudication.

More specific findings from Wolfgang's study will be presented later, in relation to findings from the present study.

#### PROCEDURE

All criminal homicides occurring in Houston, Texas, during the period March 15, 1958, through December 31, 1961, were abstracted from the files of the Houston Police Department.<sup>3</sup> "Murder by Auto" cases were excluded. The total number of the remaining cases was 438, with 430 offenders and 425 victims. The data on age, sex, race, home address, and method of homicide were available on virtually all of the known offenders and victims. The exact place where the offense occurred was usually identified fully in the case file. The personal or legal relationship between offender and victim was likewise identified in almost all of the cases where both parties were known.

Persons dealt with by the Houston Police Department are identified by race, except that a "Latin-American" category is separated from the other whites. In some of the subsequent analyses, the "White" category will be similarly subdivided into Latin-American and "Other White".

#### RESULTS

The main findings will be presented in the form of eight tables. These are arranged and patterned like eight comparable tables in the book by Wolfgang, and in most of the tables the corresponding Philadelphia data is included in parentheses, to

<sup>3</sup> The author expresses his appreciation to the officials of the Houston Police Department for their cooperation, and particularly to Inspector Larry W. Fultz of the Records Division of the Department.

facilitate comparisons. Most of the tabulated material is reported in percentages, and the actual number of cases is given at the top or bottom of each column. It should be noted that the "total white" category for the Houston data is comparable to Wolfgang's "white" group. Particular attention should be paid to whether the analysis is from the standpoint of the victim or the offender; this is stated in the title of the table.

### 1. Race, Ethnic Group, and Sex:

Table 1 shows the numbers and rates of homicides broken down by race and sex. Although the percentage of Negroes in the population was larger in Houston (18% in Philadelphia in 1950, 23% in Houston in 1960), Negroes were the offenders in only 63% of Houston homicides as compared to 75% in Philadelphia.

TABLE 1

NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION, VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, HOUSTON, 1958-1961, BY RACE, ETHNIC GROUP, AND SEX  
(Comparable Philadelphia rates in parentheses)

Race, Ethnic Group, Sex	Victims			Offenders		
	Number	Rate per 100,000	(Philadelphia Rates)	Number	Rate per 100,000	(Philadelphia Rates)
Negro						
Male	214	54.45	(36.9)	194	49.36	(41.7)
Female	49	11.60	(9.6)	70	16.58	(9.3)
Total	263	32.26	(22.5)	264	32.38	(24.6)
Latin-American						
Male	29	24.65		30	25.50	
Female	0	0.00		2	1.63	
Total	29	12.07		32	13.32	
Other White						
Male	96	7.87		93	7.62	
Female	35	2.75		27	2.12	
Total	131	5.26		120	4.39	
Total White						
Male	125	9.34	(2.9)	123	9.19	(3.4)
Female	35	2.51	(1.0)	29	2.08	(0.4)
Total	160	5.86	(1.9)	152	5.57	(1.8)
Other Races						
Male	2	43.96		0	0.0	
Female	0	0.00		0	0.0	
Total	2	20.02		0	0.0	
All Races						
Male	341	19.65	(9.0)	317	18.07	(10.2)
Female	84	4.61	(2.6)	99	5.24	(2.0)
Total	425	11.95	(5.7)	416	11.70	(6.0)

An examination of Table 1, however, shows that the homicide rates in Houston are approximately double the Philadelphia rates. Although the Negro rates in Houston are somewhat higher than in Philadelphia, the most striking difference is in the White rates. When the Latin-American group is separated from the "Other Whites", their rate falls in an intermediate position. As usual, the female rates are far smaller than the male rates; in the Latin-American group, there were no female victims at all.

2. Method:

Table 2 shows the principal method in homicides from the standpoint of the victim. One striking finding is that, in Houston, shooting accounts for almost two-thirds of the deaths; in Philadelphia, only one-third of the deaths are by shooting. Much of the difference is made up by the comparative infrequency of beating in Houston. In both series stabbing is more frequent among Negroes.

3. Hour of Day:

Table 3 shows clearly that homicides are bunched in the hours from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

with about half of the cases occurring during those six hours. By contrast, the half-day from 2:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. accounts for only about one-quarter of the homicides. There is a close similarity between the hourly distribution in Houston and in Philadelphia.

4. Place of Occurrence:

The places where the homicides occurred are shown in Table 4. These are also summarized into sites at home and away from home. The classification of places is that of Wolfgang, and there were numerous instances in the Houston data in which the place did not fit one of these categories; these are listed under "other". It will be noted that in Houston, 58% of the homicides occurred away from home, whereas in Philadelphia the corresponding figure was 49%. This contrast is even more marked in the Negro group. The Philadelphia percentages show more homicides in the kitchen, living room, and in stairways. All of this may reflect different living arrangements in the two cities and perhaps differences in the amount of leisure time spent outdoors.

The Latin-American group, which had no female

TABLE 2  
METHOD USED IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, BY RACE AND SEX OF VICTIM, 1958-1961  
(In per cent)

Method	Victim								
	All Races			Negro			White		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Stabbing	25.4	25.5	25.0	29.9	27.8	38.8	17.9	21.2	5.7
Shooting	63.5	65.4	56.0	62.4	67.0	42.9	65.4	63.0	74.3
Beating	5.9	5.0	9.5	4.6	2.8	12.2	8.0	8.7	5.7
Other	5.2	4.1	9.5	3.1	2.4	6.1	8.7	7.1	14.3
Total	100.0 (425)	100.0 (341)	100.0 (84)	100.0 (261)	100.0 (212)	100.0 (49)	100.0 (162)	100.0 (127)	100.0 (35)

Comparable Philadelphia data from Table 5, page 84 (Ref. 1)

Stabbing	38.8	40.3	33.8	46.8	48.3	41.7	17.4	17.8	16.3
Shooting	33.0	33.9	30.2	34.0	35.4	29.1	30.4	29.7	32.6
Beating	21.8	21.4	23.0	14.1	12.4	19.8	42.3	46.6	30.2
Other	6.4	4.4	13.0	5.1	3.9	9.4	9.9	5.9	20.9
Total	100.0 (588)	100.0 (449)	100.0 (139)	100.0 (427)	100.0 (331)	100.0 (96)	100.0 (161)	100.0 (118)	100.0 (43)

TABLE 3  
DISTRIBUTION OF CRIMINAL HOMICIDE BY FOUR SIX-HOUR PERIODS OF THE DAY AND BY RACE AND SEX OF VICTIM,  
HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
(In per cent)

Hours	Houston			(Philadelphia)		
	All Races			(All Races)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
8:00 p.m.-1:59 a.m.	49.9	52.1	40.0	49.7	50.6	46.7
2:00 a.m.-7:59 a.m.	10.5	9.9	13.3	16.5	16.2	17.3
8:00 a.m.-1:59 p.m.	11.7	11.7	12.0	9.2	7.6	8.0
2:00 p.m.-7:59 p.m.	27.9	26.3	34.7	24.7	25.6	21.6
	100.0 (409)	100.0 (334)	100.0 (75)	100.0 (588)	100.0 (449)	100.0 (139)

TABLE 4  
PLACE OF OCCURRENCE OF CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, BY RACE AND SEX OF VICTIM, HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
(In per cent)

Place	Race and Ethnic Group				Sex	
	Total	Negro	Latin-American	Total White	Male	Female
Bedroom	13.8	13.1	0.0	15.3	11.3	23.8
Kitchen	3.6	3.2	0.0	3.9	3.3	4.8
Living Room	7.6	8.1	3.6	7.0	8.3	4.8
Stairway	3.3	4.2	0.0	1.9	3.9	1.1
Highway (Public Street, Alley, or Field)	26.1	30.0	46.4	19.7	29.0	14.3
Taproom	13.6	14.6	28.6	12.1	13.8	13.1
Other Commercial Place	3.6	3.8	0.0	3.2	3.9	2.4
Other-At home	13.6	11.5	10.7	17.2	13.1	15.5
-Away from Home	14.8	11.5	10.7	19.7	13.4	20.2
Total	100.0 (419)	100.0 (260)	100.0 (28)	100.0 (157)	100.0 (335)	100.0 (84)
In the Home	41.9	40.0	14.3	45.2	40.0	50.0
Not in the Home	58.1	60.0	85.7	54.8	60.0	50.0

(Comparable Philadelphia data, from Table 12, p. 123, Ref. 1)

Bedroom	19.0	19.0		19.3	14.3	34.5
Kitchen	12.1	13.1		9.3	11.1	15.1
Living Room	12.1	12.9		9.9	12.3	11.5
Stairway	6.8	8.7		1.9	6.9	6.5
Highway	30.1	31.4		26.7	33.2	20.1
Taproom	8.2	7.5		9.9	9.6	3.6
Other Commercial Place	8.0	4.9		16.2	8.5	6.5
Other	3.7	2.6		6.8	4.2	2.2
Total	100.0 (588)	100.0 (427)		100.0 (161)	100.0 (449)	100.0 (139)
In the Home	51.2	54.8		41.6	45.9	68.3
Not in the Home	48.8	45.2		58.4	54.1	31.7

TABLE 5  
 TYPE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIM AND PRINCIPAL OFFENDER, BY RACE AND SEX OF VICTIM, CRIMINAL HOMICIDES, HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
 (In per cent)  
 (Philadelphia data from Table 24, p. 207, Ref. 1)

Interpersonal Relationship	All Races			Negro			Total White			(Philadelphia) (Both Races)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Close Friend	27.9	28.4	26.2	28.9	29.9	24.5	26.3	25.6	28.6	28.2	34.0	9.3
Family Relationship	22.9	19.1	38.2	20.2	16.8	34.7	27.5	23.2	42.8	24.7	16.4	51.9
Acquaintance	4.7	5.3	2.4	3.0	3.7	0.0	7.5	8.0	5.7	13.5	15.7	6.2
Stranger	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.9	1.9	2.0	0.6	0.8	0.0	12.2	14.2	5.4
Paramour, Sex Relationship	6.6	5.3	11.9	8.7	7.5	14.3	3.1	1.6	8.6	9.8	6.4	20.9
Sex Rival	6.2	7.1	2.4	6.9	7.5	4.1	5.0	6.4	0.0	4.0	4.8	1.6
Enemy	5.7	6.5	2.4	6.1	6.5	4.1	5.0	6.4	0.0	2.9	3.6	0.8
Felon or Police Officer	1.9	2.1	1.2	1.1	1.4	0.0	3.1	3.2	2.9	1.1	1.4	0.0
Other Categories	22.7	24.8	14.1	23.2	24.8	16.3	21.9	24.8	11.4	3.7	3.5	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b> (423)	<b>100.0</b> (339)	<b>100.0</b> (84)	<b>100.0</b> (263)	<b>100.0</b> (214)	<b>100.0</b> (49)	<b>100.0</b> (160)	<b>100.0</b> (125)	<b>100.0</b> (35)	<b>100.0</b> (550)	<b>100.0</b> (421)	<b>100.0</b> (129)

victims, also shows up quite different from all the others in regard to place. There were only 14% in the home, none in the bedroom, kitchen, etc.

5. Type of Interpersonal Relationship:

The type of interpersonal relationship existing between victim and offender is shown in Table 5. The classification used was again that of Wolfgang. Over twenty per cent of the Houston cases fell into the "other categories" group, whereas only 3.7% of Wolfgang's cases did. Subject to this limitation, it appears that there were noticeably fewer "stranger" and "acquaintance" relationships in Houston. Otherwise the percentages tend to be about the same. It is noteworthy that a criminal homicide interaction occurs much more often between people who have had a personal relationship to each other than between strangers, in the course of a crime, etc.

6. Husband-Wife Criminal Homicide:

The 61 Houston homicides involving husband and wife (common-law marriages are omitted) are analyzed in Table 6. The comparable Philadelphia findings are also listed in the Table. It is again seen that Whites account for a greater proportion of the Houston husband-wife homicides, and that shooting is a much more common method in Houston. The differences in the place of the of-

TABLE 6  
 HUSBAND-WIFE CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, BY RACE, METHOD, AND PLACE, HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
 (Per cent of Total)

(Philadelphia percentages calculated from Table 26, p. 213, Ref. 1, given in parentheses after each figure)

	Total	Husband Killed by Wife	Wife Killed by Husband
Both Races	100.0 (100.0)	52.4 (47)	47.6 (53)
Negro	57.4 (80)	31.1 (40)	26.3 (40)
White	42.6 (20)	21.3 (7)	21.3 (13)
Method			
Stabbing	16.4 (46)	8.2 (30)	8.2 (16)
Shooting	73.8 (34)	44.2 (15)	29.6 (19)
Beating	6.5 (15)	0.0 (0)	6.5 (15)
Other	3.3 (5)	0.0 (2)	3.3 (3)
Place			
Bedroom	34.4 (35)	14.7 (11)	19.7 (24)
Kitchen	8.2 (29)	4.9 (19)	3.3 (10)
Living Room	14.8 (11)	9.9 (4)	4.9 (7)
Stairway	3.3 (9)	3.3 (6)	0.0 (3)
Highway	4.9 (8)	1.6 (4)	3.3 (4)
Taproom	8.2 (3)	6.6 (2)	1.6 (1)
Commercial	1.6 (4)	1.6 (1)	0.0 (3)
Other	24.6 (1)	9.8 (0)	14.8 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b> (61)	<b>52.4</b> (47) (32)	<b>47.6</b> (53) (29)

fense are about the same as have been noted in the entire group of homicides. The differences between the sexes appear to be minor.

#### 7. Relationship between Victim and Offender, in Terms of Race, Ethnic Group, and Sex:

Perhaps the most interesting facet of Wolfgang's study is his detailed analysis of "who kills whom", the relationship between race and sex of victim and offender. In 94 per cent of the 550 identified relationships, the victim and offender were members of the same race. To make the relationships completely clear, it is necessary to view the data from the standpoint of the victim, and then separately from the standpoint of the offender.

This has been repeated for the Houston data, as presented in Tables 7 and 8. It will be noted that there has been a further breakdown of the White category into Latin-American and "Other White" groupings, to see if this "segregated" characteristic of homicides would extend to these further sub-

divisions. Such has indeed proven to be the case. If one reads Table 7 or Table 8 on the diagonal from upper left to lower right, it can be seen that most instances of homicide are intra-group: 97% of Negro victims are at the hands of Negro offenders; 86% of Latin-American victims are at the hands of Latin-American offenders; and 91% of "Other White" victims are at the hands of "Other White" offenders. Wolfgang's corresponding findings have not been reproduced in the Table because of crowding, but his comparable percentages are 97.6% for Negroes and 85.7% for Whites. Thus the present study provides a striking confirmation of Wolfgang's finding, from which he concluded that only slight error results from using mortality (victim) statistics to make inferences about the racial distribution of offenders.

The Latin-American group again appears deviant in these tables, in that female victims are completely absent and there are only two female offenders.

TABLE 7

RACE, ETHNIC GROUP, AND SEX OF OFFENDER BY RACE, ETHNIC GROUP, AND SEX OF VICTIM, CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
(Per cent of Total)

Offender	Victim														
	All Races			Negro			Latin-American			Other White			Total White		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	(411)	(329)	(82)	(257)	(209)	(48)	(29)	(29)	(0)	(123)	(89)	(34)	(152)	(118)	(34)
All Races	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Male	76.0	74.8	80.5	72.8	73.2	70.8	89.7	89.7	0.0	78.9	73.0	94.1	80.9	77.1	94.1
Female	24.0	25.2	19.5	27.2	26.8	29.2	10.3	10.3	0.0	21.1	27.0	5.9	19.1	22.9	5.9
Negro	63.0	63.6	61.0	96.9	96.6	97.9	3.5	3.5	0.0	6.5	5.6	8.8	5.9	5.1	8.8
Male	46.0	46.6	43.9	69.6	69.8	68.7	3.5	3.5	0.0	6.5	5.6	8.8	5.9	5.1	8.8
Female	17.0	17.0	17.1	27.3	26.8	29.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Latin-American	7.0	8.8	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	86.2	86.2	0.0	2.4	3.4	0.0	18.4	23.7	0.0
Male	6.6	8.2	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	79.4	79.4	0.0	2.4	3.4	0.0	17.1	22.0	0.0
Female	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.7	0.0
Other White	30.0	27.6	39.0	2.7	2.9	2.1	10.3	10.3	0.0	91.1	91.0	91.2	75.7	71.2	91.2
Male	23.3	20.1	36.6	2.7	2.9	2.1	6.8	6.8	0.0	69.9	64.0	85.3	57.9	50.0	85.3
Female	6.7	7.5	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	3.5	0.0	21.2	27.0	5.9	17.8	21.2	5.9
Total White	37.0	36.4	39.0	3.1	3.4	2.1	96.5	96.5	0.0	93.5	94.4	91.2	94.1	94.9	91.2
Male	29.9	28.3	36.6	3.1	3.4	2.1	86.2	86.2	0.0	72.4	67.4	85.3	75.0	72.0	85.3
Female	7.1	8.1	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.3	10.3	0.0	21.1	27.0	5.9	19.1	22.9	5.9

TABLE 8  
 RACE, ETHNIC GROUP, AND SEX OF VICTIM BY RACE, ETHNIC GROUP, AND SEX OF OFFENDER,  
 CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
 (Per cent of Total)

Victim	Offender														
	All Races			Negro			Latin-American			Other White			Total White		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	(416)	(317)	(99)	(264)	(194)	(70)	(32)	(30)	(2)	(120)	(93)	(27)	(152)	(123)	(29)
All Races	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Male	80.8	79.8	83.8	81.1	81.4	80.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	75.0	69.9	92.6	80.2	77.3	93.1
Female	19.2	20.2	16.2	18.9	18.6	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	30.1	7.4	19.8	22.7	6.9
Negro	62.7	60.3	70.7	95.8	94.3	100.0	3.1	3.3	0.0	5.8	7.5	0.0	5.3	6.5	0.0
Male	51.2	49.6	56.7	78.0	77.3	80.0	3.1	3.3	0.0	5.0	6.5	0.0	4.6	5.7	0.0
Female	11.5	10.7	14.0	17.8	17.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.0
Latin-American	7.2	8.5	3.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	81.3	80.0	100.0	2.5	2.1	3.7	19.1	21.2	10.3
Male	7.2	8.5	3.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	81.3	80.0	100.0	2.5	2.1	3.7	19.1	21.2	10.3
Female	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other White	29.6	30.6	26.3	3.4	4.7	0.0	15.6	16.7	0.0	90.9	89.3	96.3	74.9	71.5	89.7
Male	21.9	21.1	24.2	2.3	3.2	0.0	15.6	16.7	0.0	66.7	60.2	88.9	55.8	49.6	82.8
Female	7.7	9.5	2.1	1.1	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.2	29.1	7.4	19.1	21.9	6.9
Total White	36.8	39.1	29.3	3.8	5.2	0.0	96.9	96.7	100.0	93.4	91.4	100.0	94.0	92.7	100.0
Male	29.1	29.6	27.3	2.7	3.7	0.0	96.9	96.7	100.0	69.2	62.4	92.6	74.9	70.8	93.1
Female	7.7	9.5	2.0	1.1	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.2	29.0	7.4	19.1	21.9	6.9
Other Races	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.0
Male	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.0
Female	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

#### 8. Comparison with Earlier Houston Study:

The findings in the present study are also of interest when compared with findings in an earlier study of Houston homicides by Bullock covering homicides in the years 1945-49, about 13 years earlier than the present study.<sup>4</sup> Bullock's cases were also drawn from records of the Houston Police Department. Though his was primarily an areal study, he also explored the relationship between assailant and victim and other factors included in the present paper.

There is a striking difference in the average homicide rate. Bullock's 1945-49 rate was 22.7, whereas the 1958-61 rate was 11.95, or approxi-

mately half (this is still more than double the Philadelphia rate).

Bullock also analyzed the relationship between race and ethnic group of the assailant and victim. He found that 108/119 (90.8%) of the victims of white (non-Spanish-American) offenders were white; 42/43 (97.7%) of the victims of Spanish Americans were Spanish American; 321/327 (98.2%) of the victims of Negroes were also Negroes. Considering this from the victim standpoint: when the victim was white, 108/114 (94.7%) of the assailants were white; when the victim was Spanish American, 42/46 (91.3%) of the assailants were Spanish American; when the victim was Negro, 321/329 (97.6%) of the assailants were Negro. Thus there was a very striking intra-class relationship here. A comparison of these percentages with

<sup>4</sup> Bullock, *Urban Homicide in Theory and Fact*, 45 J. CRIM. L., C. & P. S. 565 (1955).



Tables 7 and 8 shows that the findings for Other White and Negro are very similar. There is a drop in the intraclass percentage for the Latin American group between 1945-49 and 1958-61; this suggests that this group may have become more assimilated into the general white group during this interval.

Bullock also studied the distance between home addresses of the two persons involved in homicide; he found that assailants and victims tended to live near each other. This same matter was examined in the 1958-61 homicides. Because the distance units used were different from Bullock's, it is not possible to give a full comparison; a summarized one, using approximately the same steps, is given in Table 9. In the more recent series, there is an even more marked tendency for the two persons to have lived near each other. Since a fourth of the homicides involve husband-wife and common-law partners, this accounts for much of this tendency (although not all the married couples or the common-law couples were shown as living at the same address). Table 10 shows a somewhat more detailed breakdown of distance for the 1958-61 data, and shows the effect of removing the married and common-law married couples. Even after the subtraction of the husband-wife and common-law cases, the residual group is made up of pairings who lived near each other (65% within one mile). To put this into proper context, it should be pointed out that the area of Houston is very large, the dimensions of the city being approximately 18 miles by 20 miles.

This same question was explored for the 1958-61 Houston cases using census tracts. The 360 criminal homicide cases in which the home address of both offender and victim were known, and in which

TABLE 10  
DISTANCE BETWEEN HOME ADDRESSES OF ACCUSED AND VICTIM IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, HOUSTON, 1958-1961  
(Numbers of Cases)

Distance in Miles	(1) All Homicides	(2) Husband- Wife and Common Law Partners	(3) All Others Col. (1)-(2)
Same Address	126	77	49
0-.33	101	6	95
.34-.67	25	2	23
.68-1.00	10	1	9
1.01-2.00	28	0	28
Over 2.00	70	4	66
Total	360	90	270

both home addresses were within the city, were studied to determine the percentage of cases in which both parties had lived in the same tract (Houston had 120 census tracts at time of the 1960 census).<sup>5</sup>

With all 360 cases considered, there were 221 cases or 61.4% in which both parties lived in the same census tract. When the 90 husband-wife and common-law marriage cases were removed, the remainder showed 137 of 270, or 50.7%, instances in which both parties lived in the same census tract. Again it is evident that homicide tends to involve persons who live near to each other, and this holds true even after removal of the married group.

SUMMARY

The 438 criminal homicides which occurred in Houston in 1958-61 were analyzed and examined in several ways to make it possible to do comparisons with the definitive study by Wolfgang of Philadelphia criminal homicides during 1948-1952. In addition, the White race group was subdivided into Latin-American and "Other White".

It was found that homicide rates in Houston are about double those in Philadelphia. Negroes account for a smaller proportion of the Houston homicides than in Philadelphia. Negro homicide rates are about six times as high as those of "Other

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Bureau of Census: *U. S. Census of Population and Housing. Census Tracts. Final Report PHC (1)-63, U. S. Gov. Pr. Off., Wash., D. C. 1962.*

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF 1945-49 AND 1958-61 HOUSTON HOMICIDES IN DISTANCE BETWEEN HOME ADDRESSES OF ACCUSED AND VICTIM  
(Per cent of cases)

Distance in Miles	Bullock's (Ref. 4) Findings for 1945-49 Houston Homicides	All Homicides, Houston, 1958-61
	(489)	(360)
Zero to one	57.5	72.8
One to two	12.7	7.8
Two and over	29.8	19.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Whites", with Latin-Americans falling in between. In Houston, shootings accounted for almost two-thirds of the deaths, compared to one-third in Philadelphia; death by beating was less frequent in Houston. The distribution through the hours of the day was strikingly similar, with half of the homicides occurring between 8:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. and three-fourths of them occurring between 2:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.

Fifty-eight per cent of the Houston homicides occurred away from home, as compared to 49% in Philadelphia. There were also some differences in more specific sites, such as rooms of the house involved. The Latin-American group was deviant in that 86% of their homicides occurred away from home; this group also had no female victims at all.

The inter-personal relationships between offender and victim were broadly similar in the Houston and Philadelphia data, with somewhat fewer "stranger" and "acquaintance" relationships in Houston. The husband-wife homicides seem to be similar in the two studies, except that the Houston husband-wife cases reflect the differences found in the total homicide group (larger proportion of Whites, more shootings).

As in Wolfgang's study, it was found that criminal homicide is predominantly an intra-racial

phenomenon. 97% of Negro victims were at the hands of Negro offenders, and 91% of the "Other White" victims were at the hands of "Other White" offenders. This relationship held true when it was extended to the Latin-American group. 86% of Latin-American victims were at the hands of Latin-American offenders.

The Houston data is then compared briefly with an earlier (1945-49) study of Houston homicides; except for a halving of the homicide rate in this interval, the other findings are rather similar.

Findings are presented concerning the distance between the home addressees of offender and victim. Almost three-quarters of the group lived within a mile of each other. Even after the married pairs were removed, two-thirds lived within two miles of each other. Over 60% of the pairs lived in the same census tract.

Thus it appears that in Houston as well as in Philadelphia, criminal homicide occurs most often between members of the same race; that the persons involved tend to be relatives or friends rather than strangers; that males are much more frequently involved, both as offenders and victims; and that the most likely hours are between 8:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. The persons involved typically live at the same address or within a mile or two of each other.