


Winter 1965

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Alex D. Pokorny

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Recommended Citation

Alex D. Pokorny, Human Violence: A Comparison of Homicide, Aggravated Assault, Suicide, and Attempted Suicide, 56 J. Crim. L. Criminology & Police Sci. 488 (1965)

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HUMAN VIOLENCE: A COMPARISON OF HOMICIDE, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, SUICIDE, AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

ALEX D. POKORNY *

SUICIDE-HOMICIDE

One of the most familiar themes in discussions of suicide and homicide is that these behaviors are closely related. Not only do they both represent the taking of human life by a human, but it is held that they are related in their motivation, that they spring from the same soil.

Perhaps the best known of these views is that suicide is a kind of inverted or retroflected homicide¹: "Nobody kills himself who had not intended to kill somebody else".² The classical psychoanalytic view is that suicide represents a murder of an "incorporated object"—the internalized image of an ambivalently-regarded person.³ Suicide and homicide are seen as having similar underlying and often unconscious motivations. Karl Menninger has emphasized that persons who commit suicide have a wish to kill as one of the necessary components; he speaks in terms of instinctual destructive tendencies, which may be directed inward or outward.⁴

A contrasting view is that suicide and homicide are just the opposite of each other.⁵ Durkheim quotes Ferri and Morselli as insisting that the polar character of suicide and homicide is an absolutely general law, that they always change inversely with each other.⁶ Durkheim expresses doubt about the universality of this inversion, but he lists a number of observations which are compatible with it: (1) With regard to rates in European countries, there is a good fit; Spain, Ireland, and Italy are the three countries with the least suicide, yet they

have the most murders, whereas France and Prussia are just the reverse; (2) Wars tend to decrease suicides but to increase homicides, and political crises have the same effect; (3) Suicide is more urban than rural, with homicide the opposite; (4) Catholic countries have high homicide and low suicide rates, whereas Protestant countries are just the opposite.⁷

Suicide and homicide clearly come from the same source in the dual act of homicide and suicide committed by the same person. As part of his study of Philadelphia homicides, Wolfgang has studied Homicide-Suicide, the instances in which a person committed a homicide and then committed suicide.⁸ Of 621 Criminal Homicide offenders, 24 or 4% also killed themselves. It is pointed out that this is a low rate as compared to England, where a quarter to a third of homicide suspects commit suicide. The author quotes Cavan's belief that the homicide and suicide are really part of the same act, in which one eliminates one's self but simultaneously gets even with the cause of one's troubles. Another common hypothesis in such cases is that the person commits a homicide, then kills himself because of the resulting guilt. Suicide may also represent an attempt to escape punishment.

Series of homicide offenders usually contain some individuals who have previously made suicide attempts.⁹ There are other instances where homicide offenders make unsuccessful suicide attempts at the time of the homicide.¹⁰

SUICIDE-ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

Suicide is also linked in contrasting ways with Attempted Suicide. For many decades the prevail-

⁷ It should be noted that the United States has a far higher homicide rate than any of these European countries. Dublin & Bunzel, *Thou Shall Not Kill, A Study of Homicide in the United States*, 24 SURVEY GRAPHIC 127 (1935).

⁸ Wolfgang, *An Analysis of Homicide-Suicide*, 19 J. CLIN. & EXP. PSYCHOPATHOLOGY 203 (1958); Wolfgang, *op. cit. supra* note 5.

⁹ Lanzkron, *Murder and Insanity: A Survey*, 119 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 754 (1963).

¹⁰ Adelson, *Slaughter of the Innocents*, 246 N. E. JOUR. MED. 1345 (1961).

* Dr. Pokorny, the author of this research paper, as well as the preceding one, is Chief of the Psychiatry and Neurology Service of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Houston, Texas. He is also a member of the faculty of the College of Medicine of Baylor University.

¹ Jackson, *Theories of Suicide*, in SENEIDMAN & FARBEROW, *CLUES TO SUICIDE* (1957).

² FENICHEL, *THE PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF NEUROSIS* (1945).

³ Cassity, *Personality Study of 200 Murderers*, 2 J. CRIM. PSYCHOPATHOLOGY 296 (1941); BROMBERG, *THE MOLD OF MURDER* (1961).

⁴ MENNINGER, *MAN AGAINST HIMSELF* (1938).

⁵ WOLFGANG, *PATTERNS IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE* (1958); STENGEL & COOK, *ATTEMPTED SUICIDE* (1958).

⁶ DURKHEIM, *SUICIDE* (1951).

ing view was that Attempted Suicide was a kind of bungled or unsuccessful suicidal act, perhaps quantitatively different but essentially representing the same behavior. A great many of the published studies of Suicide are really based on Attempted Suicide cases, because they were the ones who survived to be studied, and the findings were generalized uncritically to Suicide.

More recently, the view has emerged that Attempted Suicide is mostly a different class of behavior than Suicide.¹¹ This view has been most clearly and convincingly stated by Stengel and Cook.¹² They find that those who attempt suicide and those who commit suicide are two different, though overlapping, populations. Suicide is intended to terminate life, whereas suicide attempts, in the majority of cases, are aimed at improving one's life. A suicide attempt is seen as a social behavior pattern which cannot be understood fully unless seen in relation to the human environment; it usually has widespread social effects. Frequently suicide attempt cases are "moving towards others" in the course of the act, in contrast to suicides who are withdrawing. Jackson has pointed out that suicide attempts are often intended to manipulate, force, or get revenge.¹³

HOMICIDE-AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Just as Suicide has a related and larger category of Attempted Suicide, Homicide has a related, larger category of Aggravated Assault. This has been defined as an attempt to deprive an individual of his life or to cause him serious injury.¹⁴ Is Aggravated Assault properly viewed as a bungled or unsuccessful Homicide, with the same motivations and characteristics? Or is it possible that, as in Suicide-Attempted Suicide, it is a different, though perhaps overlapping, class of human violence?

It has been stated that homicide offenders have, as a long-term characteristic, greater impulsivity, less ability to control emotions.¹⁵ It has been found (3) that in many instances of homicide fierce arguments precede the murder, with progressive escalation in emotion and violence.¹⁶ It may therefore be largely a matter of chance that

an offense becomes a homicide or an assault. Wolfgang points out that in the past generation there has been a lower rate of criminal homicide but an actual increase in offenses against the person—particularly Aggravated Assault;¹⁷ he suggests that the decrease in homicides may be a function of more prompt attention and improved medical care. This can be likened to the lowered death rate from wounds in World War II as compared with World War I.

Pittman and Handy have recently published a thorough study of Aggravated Assault, using a random 25% sample of the 965 such cases seen by the St. Louis Police in 1961.¹⁸ They investigated the time, place, relationship and kinship status, type of force, method of reporting, apprehension, disposition, etc. They then compared the typical patterns with those developed for Criminal Homicide by Wolfgang. In almost all respects, the patterns were similar, which would indicate that these were likely to be the same broad class of behavior.

Goal of Present Study

Few of the various comparisons of types of violence which have been quoted are based on strictly comparable data. Even the excellent study by Pittman and Handy is limited to Aggravated Assault; they then compare their findings with the findings of the study on Homicide done by Wolfgang in another city.

The present study was undertaken to see whether these four categories of violent behavior would show similar or contrasting patterns when studied in the same city at approximately the same time, using case data from the same source. The general aim was to contrast the four types of violence, self-directed (complete and partial), and outward-directed (complete and partial), to see if they could be differentiated from each other by objective characteristics of the events and the persons involved. Among such promising objective factors appeared to be the place of the occurrence,¹⁹ the time and various aspects of the persons such as age, sex, race and ethnic group.

PROCEDURE

Data for individual cases of Suicide, Attempted Suicide, and Criminal Homicide were abstracted

¹¹ Schmid & Van Arsdol, *Completed and Attempted Suicides*, 20 AM. SOC. REV. 273 (1955); HENDIN, *SUICIDE IN SCANDINAVIA* (1964).

¹² *Op. cit. supra* note 5.

¹³ *Op. cit. supra* note 1.

¹⁴ *Op. cit. supra* note 4.

¹⁵ BREARLY, *HOMICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES* (1932).

¹⁶ Berg & Fox, *Factors in Homicide Committed by 200 Males*, 26 J. Soc. Psy. 109 (1947).

¹⁷ *Op. cit. supra* note 5.

¹⁸ Pittman & Handy, *Patterns in Criminal Aggravated Assault*, 55 J. CRIM. L., C. & P. S. 462 (1964).

¹⁹ Adelson, *op. cit. supra* note 10; Wolfgang, *op. cit. supra* note 5; Bullock, *Urban Homicide in Theory and Fact*, 45 J. CRIM. L., C. & P. S. 565 (1955).

from the files of the Houston Police Department.²⁰ Initially the complete year of 1960 was used, to make possible derivation of rates on the basis of the 1960 census.²¹ There were 91 suicides in 1960, and this series is used in the analysis of the exact place of the offense. For most purposes, the study period for suicides was increased to July 1958 through 1961 (a 3½ year period centered on the census-taking date) in order to increase the number of cases. Similarly, all homicide cases were abstracted for the period March 15, 1958 through 1961. "Murder by Auto" cases were not included. This yielded a total of 400 Attempted Suicides (the round number is fortuitous), 320 Suicides, and 438 Homicides.

It should be pointed out that there is some loss in numbers as one shifts from one type of evaluation to another. In Homicide, there may be multiple victims or multiple offenders, making these totals unequal to each other and to the total number of homicide offenses. Fourteen of the homicide offenders were unknown, so that they do not appear in age, race, and sex tabulations. With regard to the hour of the day, this is sometimes vague or unknown, especially in suicide cases, so that these totals are smaller. For the census tract comparisons, the numbers are smaller because a number of the persons involved lived outside the city. Aside from such losses, the tabulations represent all of the cases investigated by the Houston Police Department during the intervals specified.

The Aggravated Assault cases were not studied individually; rather the findings on Aggravated Assault are taken from the tables and summaries of the Police Department Annual Reports.²² For this reason there are no data on place of residence of participants, or place (in the home, street, etc.) where the offense occurred.

In addition, certain data on Homicides, Suicides, and Attempted Suicides (day of week, month) were also taken from Police Department Reports; for these tabulations various combinations of years between 1955 and 1962 are used, as indicated in the individual tables.

²⁰ The author wishes to express his appreciation to the Houston Police Department, and particularly Inspector Larry W. Fultz of the Records Division for their cooperation, and to Dr. Fred B. Davis for his assistance in data collection and analysis.

²¹ U. S. Bureau of Census: *U. S. Census of Population and Housing*. Final Report (1)-63, U. S. Gov. Pr. Off., Wash., D. C. 1962.

²² *Annual Report, 1960 (1961, 1962)*, City of Houston, Tex. Police Dept. Bureau of Technical Services, Division of Records and Analytical Data.

The Homicide data has also been used in a partial replication of the definitive study of Criminal Homicide by Wolfgang, and the results of this are presented elsewhere.²³

RESULTS

1. Place:

a. *Place of Occurrence.* The various types of locations, such as rooms in the house, bars, etc., where Homicides, Suicides, and Attempted Suicides occurred are shown in Table 1. The Homicides are also subdivided into (1) a category of husband-wife (plus common-law husband-wife) killings, and (2) all the remaining Criminal Homicides. This was done because it was suspected that the large proportion (41.8%) of slayings in the home might be due mainly to these husband-wife cases. It will be noted in the table that husband-wife slayings do occur more frequently in the home (71.9%), while the residual group shows 33.5% of cases in the home.

When one compares all three classes of behavior, it is readily apparent that Suicides and Attempted Suicides occur typically at home, whereas Homicides occur more typically away from home, in public places such as bars, streets, and sidewalks, places where suicides and suicide attempts are virtually unknown. This is consistent with the idea that Suicide is a "private affair", whereas Homicide requires a partner. In this respect Attempted Suicide seems more like suicide. Unfortunately, because the Police reporting of attempted suicide is less thorough, the room of the house was not known in a high proportion of these cases.

b. *Census Tract in Which Offense Occurred.* A tabulation was made for the 120 census tracts of Houston in terms of how many of the July 1958-1961 Homicides (N = 412) occurred in each. Similar data was available for the 1960 Aggravated Assault cases (N = 1559). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between these two sets of figures is .946, indicating a very striking similarity in place of occurrence.

c. *Census Tract of Residence of Persons Involved.* A tabulation was made for the 120 census tracts, crediting each tract with its residents who were involved in Suicide, Attempted Suicide, and Homicide (offender and victim). In addition,

²³ See author's research paper immediately preceding this one in the present issue of this Journal.

TABLE 1
PLACE OF OCCURRENCE OF HOMICIDES, SUICIDES, AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDES
(In per cent)

	All Homicides	Husband-Wife Plus Common Law Husband-Wife Homicides	Homicides Except Husband-Wife and Common Law	Suicides (1960 Only)	Attempted Suicide
Total Number of Cases	438	89	349	91	400
Bedroom	13.8	33.7	8.6	30.7	12.0
Living or Dining Room	7.6	12.3	5.7	12.1	1.8
Kitchen	3.6	5.7	2.9	7.7	3.0
Bathroom	0.4	0.0	0.6	8.8	9.2
Porch or Yard	8.0	10.1	7.4	2.2	0.7
Other Area of Home	3.4	1.1	4.0	9.9	1.8
Home, Area Unknown	5.0	9.0	4.3	4.4	50.7
Total at Home	41.8	71.9	33.5	75.8	79.2
Club, Bar, Lounge	13.0	10.1	13.7	0.0	0.7
Sidewalk, Parking Lot, Driveway	13.9	6.7	15.8	0.0	0.0
Street, Alley	8.0	3.4	9.2	0.0	0.3
Car, Away from Home	4.8	3.4	5.2	6.6	1.5
Other Areas Away from Home	16.9	4.5	20.6	15.4	18.3
Total, Away from Home	56.6	28.1	64.5	22.0	20.8
Unknown	1.6	0.0	2.0	2.2	0.0
Overall Total (Per cent)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

the place of occurrence of Homicide was included. These values were then correlated, and the results are shown in Table 2.

It can be seen that the three Homicide figures show a very high positive correlation. Suicide and Suicide Attempts show a moderate positive correlation, but otherwise the relationships are unimpressive. It appears that Homicide occurs in certain areas of the city, and that the offenders and victims in homicide live in these same areas. The participants in Suicide and Attempted Suicide tend to come from the same areas, but these are different from the "Homicide Areas".

2. Time:

a. *Hour of Occurrence.* The hours of the day at which the Suicides, Suicide Attempts, Homicides, and Assaults occurred have been plotted in Figure 1. It is evident that the curves for Homicides and Aggravated Assaults are quite similar,

with the offenses bunched in the periods from 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. The hourly distribution for Suicide is strikingly different, with a peak in the morning and tapering off in the afternoon and evening. The hourly distribution of Attempted Suicide is approximately midway between the others; the peak hours of Attempted Suicide do fall into the "after work" period of the day, suggesting that presence of other people was a factor. All four types of behavior fall off during the hours of 2:00 to 6:00 a.m.

b. *Day of Week.* The distribution of Suicide, Attempted Suicide, Homicide, and Aggravated Assault through the days of the week is shown in Table 3. These four distributions have then been correlated in all possible combinations, also shown in Table 3. It is seen that the weekly distributions for Homicide and Aggravated Assault show the astonishingly high correlation of .997; both tend to occur on weekends with a

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN 120 CENSUS TRACTS, HOUSTON, IN TERMS OF NUMBERS OF HOMICIDES AND NUMBERS OF RESIDENTS INVOLVED IN SUICIDE, ATTEMPTED SUICIDE, AND HOMICIDE

	Suicide (294)	Suicide Attempts (387)	Homicide Offenders (384)	Homicide Victims (378)	Homicide Place of Occurrence (412)
Suicide					
Suicide Attempts		.425*			
Homicide Offenders			.114	.120	.129
Homicide Victims			.176	.195	.207
Homicide Place of Occurrence				.940	.945

* Pearson product-moment coefficients of correlation (With an N of 120, a value of .181 is significant at the .05 level.)

peak on Saturday. Attempted Suicide likewise is more frequent on weekends and shows some positive (though non-significant) correlation with Homicide and Assault. In this series Suicide is more common in the middle of the week, so that the relationship to the other behaviors is a negative one.

c. *Months.* The monthly distribution of Suicides, Attempted Suicides, Homicides, and Aggravated Assaults, for the same time intervals shown in Table 3, was tabulated and compared. There were no striking monthly variations and no discernable trends or significant correlations.

d. *Quarters of Year.* The data for months was also grouped into four quarters of the year (January–March, April–June, etc.). Again there were no positive findings.

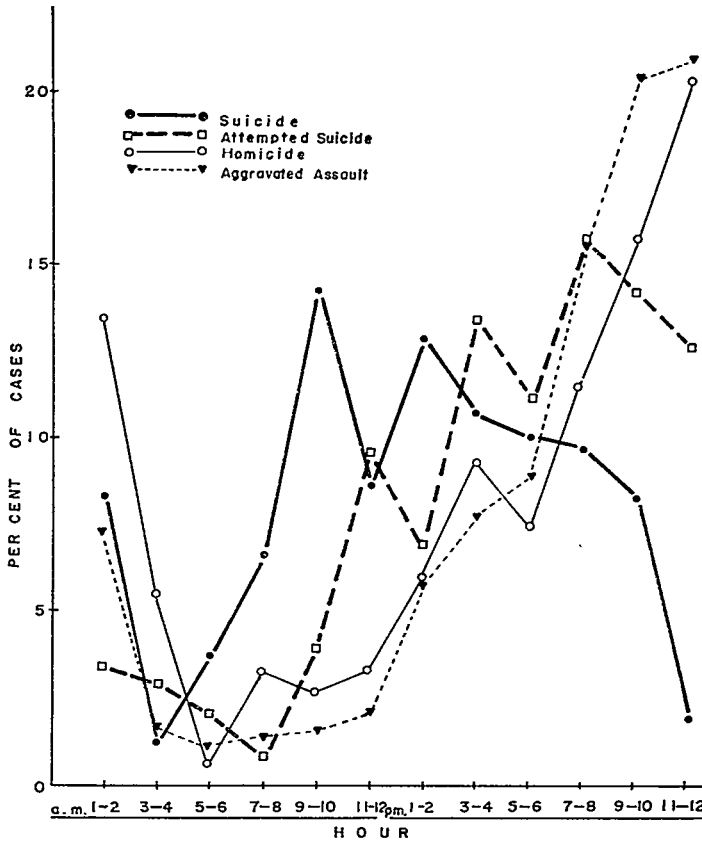


FIGURE 1

Hour of Occurrence: Suicide, Attempted Suicide, Criminal Homicide, and Aggravated Assault

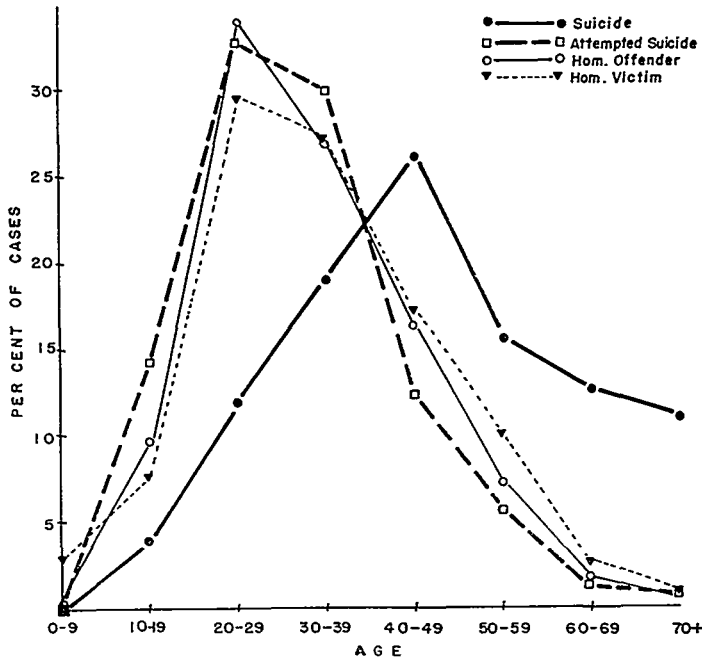


FIGURE 2

Age Distribution of Persons Involved in Suicide, Attempted Suicide, and Criminal Homicide

TABLE 5

AGE-SPECIFIC RATES*, CITY OF HOUSTON, FOR PERSONS INVOLVED IN SUICIDE, ATTEMPTED SUICIDE, CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, AND AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Age Group	Suicide	Attempted Suicide	Homicide Offender	Homicide Victim	Aggravated Assault Offender	Aggravated Assault Victim
Under 15	0.0	0.3	0.4	2.0	6.1	9.9
15-19	5.6	95.4	14.6	8.7	228.7	240.2
20-24	8.9	106.0	26.7	24.1	308.2	371.8
25-29	7.8	98.9	27.6	27.2	332.5	460.0
30-34	10.5	74.5	18.6	25.5	294.2	338.7
35-39	12.4	86.8	18.6	14.7	222.4	302.4
40-44	19.5	53.7	15.0	16.3	183.8	255.4
45-49	20.5	32.3	14.7	16.6	116.6	159.7
50 and over	21.5	21.0	7.3	9.2	54.7	67.3
Total	9.7	42.6	11.7	11.9	172.6	172.6

* All rates are per 100,000 persons per year.

centages of the total number of cases of a given behavior (Suicide, Homicide, etc.). This was done to bring out how each behavior is distributed through the age periods.

Another way of handling age groupings is to derive age-specific rates. This brings out the frequency of a behavior in relation to the population at risk, as shown by the 1960 census.

This has been done for the same data discussed in the preceding section, and the results are shown in Table 5. Because this complex table makes it difficult to compare the several behaviors, the data have also been graphed in Figure 3. It should be noted that three different scales have been used, to permit easy visual comparison. It is readily seen that the Suicide

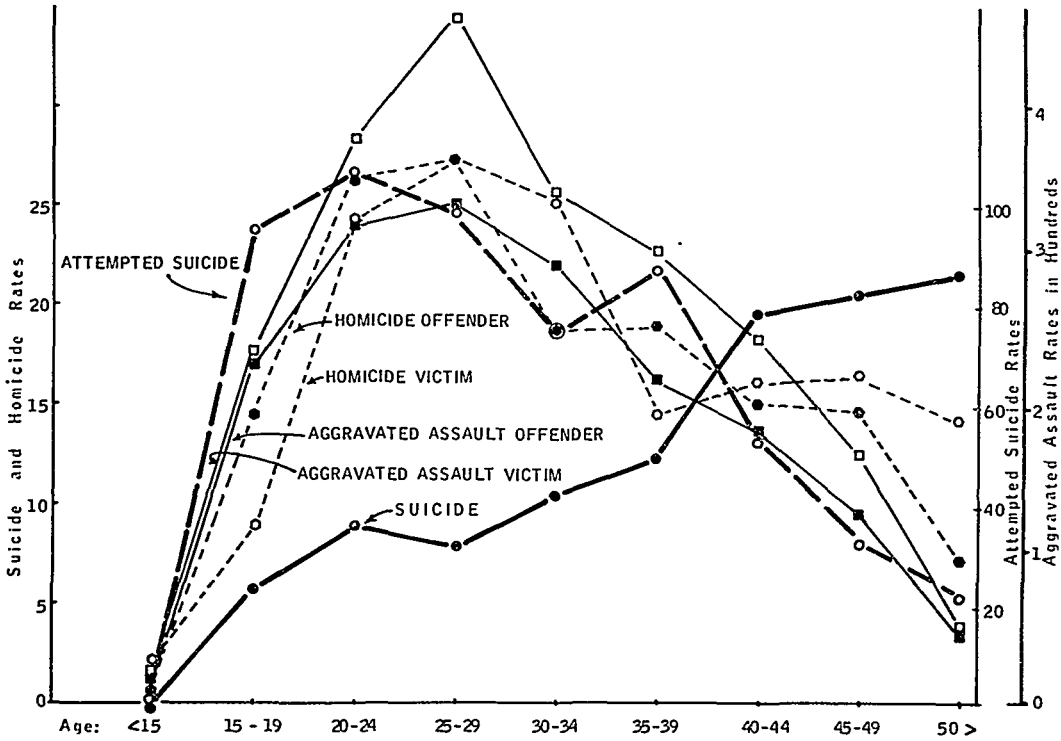


FIGURE 3
Rates for Suicide, Attempted Suicide, Homicide, and Aggravated Assault

TABLE 6
RACE AND ETHNIC GROUP OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, SUICIDE, AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
(Per cent of total)

Race and Ethnic Group	Homicide		Aggravated Assault		Suicide	Attempted Suicide	Total City Population
	Offender	Victim	Offender	Victim			
Negro	61.4	61.9	66.1	68.2	8.8	7.2	22.9
Total White	35.3	37.6	29.1	31.7	90.6	92.8	76.8
Latin-American	7.4	6.8	9.0	9.1	1.2	5.0	6.8
Other White	27.9	30.8	20.1	22.6	89.4	87.8	70.0
Other	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.3
Unknown	3.3	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0 (416)	100.0 (425)	100.0 (1619)	100.0 (1619)	100.0 (320)	100.0 (400)	100.0 (938,219)

distribution is deviant, but that the other five distributions are very similar. Again Attempted Suicide resembles Homicide and Aggravated Assault more closely than it does Suicide.

c. *Race and Ethnic Group, by Behavior Category.*
The race and ethnic membership of the persons

involved in Criminal Homicide, Aggravated Assault, Suicide, and Attempted Suicide is shown in Table 6. The percentages of these groups within the general city population are also shown. The white group (called "Total White") is subdivided into Latin-American and "Other

White". For the percentage of city population listed after Latin-American, I have used the "White with Spanish surnames" category of the 1960 U.S. census.

The table is in terms of percentages of a particular behavior, to bring out how this is distributed among the Race and Ethnic groups.

d. *Race and Ethnic Groups, Rates.* The same data has been converted into rates, using the population figures of the 1960 census. The findings are shown in Table 7.

With regard to both ways of handling the Race and Ethnic groups data, it is apparent that Negroes are greatly overrepresented in the Homicide and Aggravated Assault columns, while being sharply underrepresented in the Suicide and Attempted Suicide columns. Just

the opposite is true for the "Other White" group. The Latin-American group shows by far the fewest Suicides, and they are moderately low in Suicide Attempts. Thus, with regard to race and ethnic grouping, Suicide and Attempted Suicide are similar, and the same is true for Homicide and Aggravated Assault.

e. *Sex.* The sex of the persons involved in Homicide, Aggravated Assault, Suicide, and Attempted Suicide is shown in Table 8. It is readily seen that males account for about three-fourths of the cases in all columns (including victims in Aggravated Assault and Homicide cases) except for Attempted Suicide; here the proportions are about reversed. Thus in terms of this one factor, Attempted Suicide does not appear to resemble any of the other behaviors.

TABLE 7

RATES* OF HOMICIDE, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, SUICIDE, AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY RACE AND ETHNIC GROUP

Race and Ethnic Group	Homicide		Aggravated Assault		Suicide	Attempted Suicide
	Offender	Victim	Offender	Victim		
Negro	31.3	32.3	497.6	513.4	3.7	13.5
Total White	5.4	5.9	65.4	71.2	11.5	51.5
Latin-American	12.9	12.1	230.4	232.0	1.8	31.6
Other White	4.7	5.6	49.5	55.7	12.4	53.4
Total (Including Other and Unknown race)	11.7	11.9	172.6	172.6	9.7	42.6

* All rates are per 100,000 persons per year.

DISCUSSION

In practically all of the characteristics studied, Suicide and Homicide are the opposite of each other. Suicide tends to occur at home, homicide away from home. The areas of residence of persons involved tend to be in different census tracts of the city. The hours of the day and days of the week are clearly different. The age distribution of the persons involved is distinctly different. Homicide is much more common in Negroes, whereas Suicide is much more common in Whites; in both cases, the Whites with Spanish surnames are in an intermediate position. The only similarity of these behaviors in the characteristics examined is in the sex distribution: both are more common in males.

Thus most of the findings here support the view that these are polar opposites, rather than that they are directly related. At least this appears to be true of the groups as a whole. It may be that

TABLE 8

SEX OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, SUICIDE, AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE (In per cent)

Sex	Homicide		Aggravated Assault		Suicide	Attempted Suicide	Total City Population
	Offender	Victim	Offender	Victim			
Male	73.7	80.2	68.6	75.8	73.1	28.0	48.8
Female	23.0	19.8	26.6	24.2	26.9	72.0	51.2
Unknown	3.3	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0 (430)	100.0 (425)	100.0 (1619)	100.0 (1619)	100.0 (320)	100.0 (400)	100.0 (938,219)

there exist subpopulations within these groups which would be similar; the Homicide-Suicide group might be one example. Durkheim²⁴ has suggested that his Egoistic suicide is incompatible with Homicide, whereas his Altruistic and Anomic types may be compatible with it.

The view that Attempted Suicide is a class of behavior distinct from Suicide was supported in several facets of this study. The distribution in hour of occurrence is different, with Suicide highest in the morning and afternoon, whereas Attempted Suicide is most frequent in later afternoon and evening. The distribution in the days of the week is different. The distribution of ages is quite different, with Attempted Suicide commonest in the teens and twenties, whereas Suicide is infrequent before thirty and increases progressively with age. The proportions of the sexes are markedly different, in that 73% of Suicides are males and only 28% of Attempted Suicides are males.

The difference between Suicide and Attempted Suicide is not supported by the findings with regard to race, ethnic grouping, place of occurrence, and census tract location of home. Both Suicide and Attempted Suicide rates are low among Negroes, even lower in the Latin-American group, and relatively high in the "Other White" group. With regard to place, both Suicide and Attempted Suicide occur within the home in three-quarters of the instances. The persons involved tend to have lived in the same census tracts of the city.

By contrast, Criminal Homicide and Aggravated Assault seem to be similar in all of the analyses. They tend to occur in the same census tracts of the city. The distributions for the hour of the day and day of the week are remarkably similar. They have a very similar age distribution, with regard to both victims and offenders. The race and ethnic proportions in the two categories of offenses are quite similar. So is the representation of the sexes, in both victims and offenders. These findings suggest that Aggravated Assault and Criminal Homicide are basically the same category of behavior, and that it may be mainly a matter of chance that an assault becomes a homicide.

²⁴ *Op. cit. supra* note 6.

It should be acknowledged that the police data are probably not equally complete or representative for the four classes of behavior. They are likely to be the most complete for Homicide, since this major crime involves a death and is vigorously investigated. They are likely to be fairly complete in Suicide, since this involves a death. In cases of Assault, it is possible for the incident to go unreported, and this is even more true in case of Attempted Suicide where the attempt is not seriously life-threatening. It has already been mentioned that those Attempted Suicide cases reported to the Police are not investigated or reported as fully as Suicide cases, for obvious reasons.

How serious a problem is this presumed differential reporting in the data presented? It is my opinion that this is not a major problem, since socio-economic status is not being studied. The basic comparison is between four categories of violent behavior, in terms of objective items like sex, race, hour, day, etc., and these are unlikely to be seriously influenced by selective reporting.

SUMMARY

1. Four types of human violence, Suicide, Attempted Suicide, Homicide, and Aggravated Assault, were compared to see if they arose in the same or different populations.
2. Data were obtained from Police records and tabulations, for all of such cases occurring in one city in periods ranging from one to five years, at or near the time of the 1960 census.
3. Comparisons were made in terms of type of place, census tract site of offense, census tract of home of persons involved, hour, day of week, month and quarter of year, age, race and ethnic group, and sex.
4. Suicide and Homicide differed from each other in all the comparisons except for sex; both were higher in males.
5. Suicide and Attempted Suicide were similar in place, race, and ethnic grouping, but differed in hour, day, age, and sex.
6. Homicide and Aggravated Assault were similar in all aspects studied, which suggests that these are basically the same category of behavior.