Women who Kill: An Analysis of Ninety Years of Female-Perpetrated Homicide
by

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We accept this thesis as conforming
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ABSTRACT

Both criminologists and feminists have neglected the study of violent women; this oversight masks the sexist nature of traditional criminological work on women who kill and perpetuates the use of stereotypical images of homicidal women as either "mad" or "bad". This thesis is an effort to better understand female-perpetrated homicide. I use homicide data from Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia over a ninety year period to explore three questions. Does investigating specific aspects of homicide such as victim type, circumstance and location help us to understand women's homicidal behaviour? How well do three interpersonal theories of violence, *Strain*, *Legal Activities* and *Illegal Activities*, predict female-perpetrated homicide? Are these same theories able to predict women's homicidal behaviour over time? My findings suggest that exploring homicide as a variety of behaviours can be supported both theoretically and empirically; the theories were able to predict variation in women's homicidal behaviour and did so most effectively for cases that occurred after 1970. While all three theories predicted variation in victim type, *Illegal Activities* theory was the most successful in explaining variation in the circumstance and location of female-perpetrated homicide. I also identify several control variables including ethnicity, marital status and substance use prior to the crime that effect female-perpetrated homicide. These results suggest that criminologists need to develop gender-based homicide theories that examine female deviance as a part of women's place in patriarchy and are sensitive to historical and cultural trends that may influence women's lives. Furthermore, the findings suggest that we should abandon the

traditional approach of treating female homicide offenders as a homogenous group and their crimes as monolithic behaviour. By exploring variations in victim type, circumstance and location, we may better understand the differences among women that kill and the factors that precipitate women's involvement in violent crime.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

> In January of 1953, a 21-year old woman was charged in Toronto with the murder of her two-year old son. The victim died of a brain hemorrhage as a result of a cracked skull, although the child also had burns on his hands, ankles, and legs that were bone-deep and whip marks from a dog leash. The police concluded that the wounds were inflicted over a two-week period of time.
>
> A woman plead guilty to manslaughter in April of 1985 for killing her ex-common law spouse. He had come to her apartment drunk and started to grab her. She reached for a knife that she kept concealed in the sofa and stabbed him to death. In the past, the woman had been hospitalized more than once for injuries sustained from spousal assaults. The most recent and severe assault occurred a few days before the homicide.

In the earliest annals of criminology, women's homicidal behaviour was largely ignored except for discussions about infanticidal mothers. Theorists depicted these women as heinous murderers devoid of compassion, femininity, and virtue. Some theorists went as far to claim that of the sexes, women were the most deadly because when they killed, they were capable of greater violence and barbarity than men. In sharp contrast, more contemporary criminologists, and in particular feminists, have focused on battered women who kill their spouses after years of emotional and physical abuse. Feminists argue that in convicting battered women of murder, the courts ignored the dynamics of spousal assault. The introduction of the Battered Women's Syndrome as a defense for murder reflects the belief that battered women kill only when their lives, or those of their children are threatened or as a result of victim-precipitated violence. Rather than depicting homicidal women as evil, feminists have portrayed them as *victims* of incessant and brutal male violence. In so doing, the conceptual boundaries between offender and victim have become blurred (Daly,1994); in the two cases noted above, the

first woman falls more clearly into the category of offender, whereas in the second case, the homicidal woman was a victim of life-threatening violence. My interest in studying homicidal women is to explore this boundary and understand the circumstances that lead some women to use lethal force.

In reviewing the literature on female-perpetrated homicide, I noticed that although this research provides preliminary profiles and patterns, it is limited: most studies use aggregate-level data from the United States and are atheoretical, anecdotal, descriptive, and cross-sectional. Thus, although the theoretical literature points to different factors that precipitate specific homicide circumstances, victims, and locations, studies in the field usually fail to make these distinctions clear. The empirical literature tends not to distinguish between homicide circumstances (e.g., instrumental versus expressive), victims (e.g., intimates versus non-intimates) or locations (e.g., public versus private venues). Furthermore, few studies examine women's offending across several decades though some theories predict that the level of women's violent offending will change over time.

The purpose of my study is to address some of these concerns. Specifically, I use homicide data from Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia over a ninety year period to document the backgrounds of female offenders, their victims, and the circumstances in which these homicides occurred. Thus, I provide detailed information on offenders' and victims' age, ethnicity, marital and employment status, history of prior offenses and substance use prior to the crime. Using three theories of interpersonal violence as a guide, I then examine the relationship between key theoretical variables and variation in the victims, circumstances, and locations of female-perpetrated homicide. I

also explore these three theoretical approaches' ability to explain change in women's offending over time. Finally, I investigate whether individual theories account for homicides in a particular period or apply to the entire ninety year period under study. Though most researchers use aggregate-level data, I assess whether the theories' predicted relationships are robust at the individual level.

In order to explore these issues systematically, I divide my work into several chapters. In Chapter Two, I review the theoretical literature on homicidal women and note some of the limitations of this body of work. In Chapter Three, I summarize the empirical studies in the field and point to some of the weaknesses in this literature. In Chapter Four, I introduce the research hypotheses generated by these literature reviews. I also outline the dataset, variables, and procedures I use to test these hypotheses. Chapter Five presents descriptive information about the offenders, victims and their crimes. In Chapter Six, I examine the findings of several logit models that test the research hypotheses. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the implications of my research.

Definitions

As noted above, this research concerns females and homicides. Although female is a generic term meaning girl or woman, I use it interchangeably with woman; the majority of homicide offenders in this dataset were in their late twenties and early thirties and there were no offenders younger than 13. Defining "homicide" is more difficult. The data used in this study were collected from police and coroner records. Consequently, the data reflect these officials' decisions to label a death a "homicide". This label does not mean that an offender was charged, nor eventually found guilty of committing a crime; rather,

the label simply means that the police and/or coroner considered the death a homicide. In Canada, police and coroners use the legal definitions of homicide as provided in the Canadian Criminal Code (C.C.C.). According to the C.C.C., homicide is either culpable or not culpable (Tremeear's Criminal Code,1997). Culpable or criminal homicide includes murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Murder is classified as either first (planned and deliberate taking of another's life) or second degree (killing that is deliberate but not planned). Murder is reduced to manslaughter if a person kills in the heat of passion and by sudden provocation -- the law recognizes that intent to kill in manslaughter cases is mitigated by situational factors rendering the perpetrator less culpable than a murderer. According to the C.C.C., infanticide is a type of culpable homicide reserved solely for women who cause the death of their newly-born children while suffering from the after-effects of giving birth.[1] Finally, non-criminal homicides are killings considered justifiable and excusable under the law such that perpetrators are not charged with an offense. Justifiable homicides include vehicular and negligent manslaughter as well as the killing of another person in self-defense. The data used in this study are from cases designated as culpable or criminal homicide by authorities; those defined as justifiable by police have been excluded.

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[1]It is interesting to note that infanticide is the only form of culpable homicide that does not carry a minimum or maximum sentence.

CHAPTER 2: ETIOLOGICAL WORK ON HOMICIDAL WOMEN

Imposing an organizational structure on the etiological literature on homicide and in particular female-perpetrated homicide is difficult for three reasons. First, theoretical work on women who kill is frequently inductive or exploratory. Rather than beginning with a theory and a set of hypotheses that predict the type (positive or negative) or magnitude (low or high) of a relationship between certain variables and women's homicidal behaviour (Creswell,1994), exploratory studies merely provide post hoc explanations for the behavioural patterns they uncover. As the explanations proffered in exploratory studies usually remain untested, they cannot be equated to theoretical propositions although they may eventually form the building blocks of an etiological perspective. Because much of the etiological work on homicidal women is middle-range and substantive, I refer to empirical studies and the explanations they have generated throughout this chapter. Second, two types of explanations dominate the literature on women who kill: those that focus solely on homicide and those that locate homicide within a continuum of aggressive behaviour. By viewing aggression as a continuum, theories of interpersonal violence ground our understanding of how and why certain situations escalate into lethal violence -- a level of sensitivity some homicide theories are unable to provide. Therefore, a review of the theoretical work on women who kill must include both theories of homicide and interpersonal violence. Finally, many homicide theories are interdisciplinary (drawing on concepts developed in sociology as well as social

and clinical psychology) and combine a variety of criminological traditions such as opportunity and motivational models;[1] thus, they are difficult to categorize.

Following Mann (1996:37), I divide the theoretical work on homicide into three categories: "*biogenic*, or those originating inside the human body; *psychogenic*, which locate the cause in the human psyche; and *sociogenic*, which find the etiology of murder in the social structure". I retain this structure throughout the chapter while noting that within each of these categories there are both traditional and women-centred explanations of homicidal behaviour. Traditional theorists concentrate on male patterns of behaviour and although they usually advance their work as gender neutral, they typically ignore, marginalize, or stereotype female offenders (Heidensohn,1985). In comparison, Heidensohn (1985) notes that women-centred theories are informed by feminist analyses, focus on female patterns of homicide and make no attempts to generalize to the homicidal behaviour of men. I begin each section with a summary of traditional explanations of homicide; I include recent attempts by theorists to extend these explanations to women and, where applicable, I discuss women-centred versions of these theories. I conclude this chapter with a review of some of the weaknesses in the etiological literature and propose an alternate approach to the study of homicidal women.

Biogenic Theories of Homicide

The biogenic approach to homicide assumes a certain view of human nature: people are non-violent and good. According to this perspective, involvement in criminal

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[1]Gartner and McCarthy (1991) argue that opportunity models focus on situational and structural factors and assume motivations are constant, whereas motivational models concentrate on the factors that encourage offenders to use violence.

activity and homicidal behaviour is abnormal. One version of the biogenic approach argues that although most people are born good, criminals are born evil. Another strain posits that uncontrollable biological conditions transform good people into evil. By focusing on individual pathologies, these theorists are able to maintain their view that people are essentially peaceable and law-abiding (Smart,1981; Chesney-Lind,1986). Extending this approach to women, traditional theorists have developed two models: deadlier species (homicidal women are born with evil tendencies) and biological defect (women kill due to physical impairments beyond their control).

1. The Deadlier Species Model

Lombroso (1895) was one of the first criminologists to investigate female homicide offenders. Lombroso posits spuriously that women have less active cerebral cortexes than men, a condition that accounts for women's primitive simplicity, conservativeness and sedentary lives. According to Lombroso, this condition also explains why women's rates of violent crime are lower but more heinous than men's. Lombroso contends that female murderers are born evil, lack pure reason and possess supra-masculine qualities, as evidenced by their insensitivity to pain and undeveloped maternal instincts. Attributing women's homicidal actions to over-flowing passions, Lombroso likens these women to monsters and considers their killing more cruel and violent than men's.[2] This line of reasoning is also evident in the work of Pollak (1950) who argues that most women kill their victims by poisoning them. Pollak concludes that women are deadlier and sneakier than men because they plan their victim's death, pick the most

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[2]Although Lombroso discovered three cases in which women killed in a "revolt against ill treatment and excessive humiliation" (Rasche,1990:252), he argues that these cases are the exception to the rule and concentrates on the more "callous" or less "sympathetic" homicidal women in his sample.

painful method, and are able to mask their crime. Although contemporary scholars reject the deadlier species thesis, it shaped generations of criminologists' views about women who kill and continues to surface in popular understandings of homicidal women (Rasche, 1990; Faith, 1993). As well, some contemporary scholars in the sociogenic tradition have embraced elements of Lombroso's masculinity hypothesis (see the work of Adler (1975) detailed later in this chapter).

2. The Biological Defect Model

Proponents of the biological defect model assert that women's homicidal behaviour is a result of pathological syndromes unique to their physiology. These physical processes generate mental instability, mood swings, and irrationality; these conditions help to explain why some women resort to behaviour uncharacteristic of their gender. Both the deadlier species and biological defect models assume that homicidal women are not accountable for their actions; homicidal women cannot control the fact that they have natural evil tendencies (the former model) nor that they suffer from biological conditions (the latter model) that overwhelm their femininity and tendencies toward non-violence.

Pollak's (1950) work represents one of the earliest examples of the biological defect model. Inspired by Sigmund Freud,[3] Pollak claims to find a relationship between women's homicidal behaviour and the progesterone imbalances they experience during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause. According to Pollak, hormonal imbalances cause temporary insanity during which some women experience homicidal tendencies. In

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[3]Freud correlated women's offending to penis envy, the female Oedipal complex, weak female superegos and the castration complex all of which were in turn caused by women's lack of male sexual organs. For an excellent critique of Freudian analysis regarding women's offending, refer to Mann (1984) and Chait (1986).

turn, Pollak's work inspired a rash of studies maintaining that women commit murder while suffering from premenstrual or pre/post partum syndromes.[4] Altering the focus from raging hormones to genes, Cowie, Cowie and Slater (1968) posit that abnormal chromosomal structures or chromosomal deficiencies are linked to violent female offending.

Another popular theme in the biological defect genre is "strangeness", an instinctual condition triggered by puerperal psychosis. This argument is evident in Piers' (1978) historical examination of infanticidal mothers. Piers argues that strangeness causes women to deliberately turn off their "ethic of caring". The condition explains why some women kill their infants in the face of more humane ways to deal with unwanted pregnancies such as adoption.[5] Continuing in this tradition, sociobiologists Daly and Wilson (1988) posit that in some societies the killing of newborns by mothers is natural and instinctual. In order to kill their newborns, these mothers develop strangeness by distancing themselves from infants they know to be too weak to survive or those who, during times of food scarcity, jeopardize the survival of existing children. Noting the greater number of young mothers as compared to mothers over the age of thirty who kill their infants, Daly and Wilson contend that as mothers age, they are less likely to kill their newborns who pose a diminished opportunity cost to a mother's reproductive value and use.

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[4]Lawyers rely on these studies, the bulk of which were generated in the 1950s-1970s, to establish diminished capacity defenses for homicidal women; women are not accountable for their actions if hormonal imbalances during menstruation and pregnancy are uncontrollable and cause them to be irrational. For feminist critiques of these defenses, refer to Edwards (1986), Chait (1986), and Wilczynski (1991).

[5]Piers also notes that abject poverty and the stigma of premarital sex causes mothers to commit infanticide.

Feminist critics of the biogenic approach argue that it justifies and affirms patriarchal ideology and structures. First, the model depicts homicidal women as helplessly reacting to biological processes outside of their control and denies women the same standards of rationality and blameworthiness applied to "reasonable" men who kill (Smart,1981; Allen,1987; Naffine,1987). Second, by depicting women as sick, weak, and irrational, the biogenic model supports the biological determinist notion that women's anatomy is their destiny (Chait,1986). Third, the approach presents a static view of female personality, neglecting economic, political and social realities that may precipitate female-perpetrated homicide and shape the lives and homicidal behaviour of women differently over time, place, and across race, class, and age (Gavigan,1993). Finally, Faith (1993) contends that biogenic theorists present a circular argument by relying on reified notions of femininity (e.g., passive, emotional, weak) and masculinity (e.g., aggressive, reasonable, strong): these theorists contend that female hormones such as estrogen or features of the X chromosome generate womanliness while simultaneously promoting aggression. How can the very features that define femininity also cause women to engage in behaviour (i.e., violence) that is more typically associated with men and male hormones such as testosterone?

Psychogenic Theories of Homicide

Similar to the biogenic approach to homicide, psychogenic theories view homicidal behaviour as abnormal and indicative of individual pathology. The key difference between the two approaches is the stance taken on the mental health of homicidal women. Whereas some biogenic theorists argue that women kill because they suffer from physical

conditions that cause "momentary madness", psychogenic theorists maintain that female murderers are mentally ill and that this illness is neither temporary nor the result of physical ailments. According to proponents of the psychogenic approach, homicidal women suffer from *psychiatric* rather than physical disorders.

As early as the 1930s, empirical studies located a connection between mental illness and homicidal behaviour in women, although a theoretical perspective was not generated until the late 1960s (Rashe,1990). The most frequently cited psychogenic explanation specific to homicidal women is Cole, Fisher and Cole's (1968) six clinical categories: masochistic, overtly hostile, covertly hostile, psychotic, amoral and inadequate. Another example is Widom's (1978) four profiles of female offenders, two of which apply to homicidal women: 1) *primary psychopaths* are under-socialized, hostile, impulsive, aggressive and unremorseful; and 2) *normal criminals* exhibit little personality pathology but are slightly hostile and tense due to incarceration.[6]

Feminist critiques of biogenic explanations of women's homicidal behaviour apply to psychogenic theories as well; indeed, at one level, the only difference between the two approaches is that the latter depicts women who kill as helplessly reacting to *psychological* rather than biological processes. Both approaches, for example, are androcentric because they use men as a normative standard by which to assess women's behaviour and by default treat women as anatomically, intellectually and emotionally

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[6]The other two profiles pertain to women incarcerated for prostitution, alcohol/drug violations, robbery, and assault: 3) although *secondary psychopaths* are more anxious, depressed and remorseful, they generally display traits similar to primary psychopaths; and 4) *overcontrolled offenders* had the highest scores on a scale measuring lying but the lowest levels of hostility and anxiety. According to Widom (1978:43), this indicates "a certain amount of denial of psychological problems and a high degree of control".

inferior (Mann,1984). Jones (1980) argues that biogenic and psychogenic theorists are sexist and misogynist as their work is intentionally damaging to women. For Jones, it is hardly coincidental that most biogenic and psychogenic theorists are male and that their work became popular during the suffragette movement of the early twentieth century, the liberalization of gender roles in the 1920s, and the women's liberation movement of the 1970s. In other words, this body of work developed in the context and is supportive of a larger societal backlash toward women. According to Jones, psychogenic theorists impose a deep and damaging stigma on a small minority of women (female offenders) in order to deter all others from non-conformity (Heidensohn,1985).

Sociogenic Theories of Homicide

By examining the roles social structures play in shaping people's homicidal behaviour, sociogenic theories of homicide avoid the biological and psychological determinism of the above approaches. Furthermore, unlike biogenic and psychogenic theorists who view murder as a matter of individual pathology, sociogenic theorists argue that "if the right buttons are pushed, anyone is capable of committing murder" (Mann, 1996:38). Each of the six sociogenic homicide theories that I review below takes a different position on which "buttons" are the right ones for women.

1. Homicide as Learned Behaviour

Unlike proponents of the biogenic and psychogenic approaches who view homicide as irrational and uncontrollable behaviour, theorists of the learned behaviour approach view homicide as a conditioned response or adaptation to particular stresses in the offender's environment (Bartol,1995). According to Bartol, the use of violence

(including lethal violence) can become part of a habitual response pattern. If people recognize that the use of violence is effective in a certain situation, they may resort to violence when this situation next arises; thus, the effectiveness of violence in handling particular stressors reinforces its continued use whenever these stressors surface in a person's life. Other ways of acquiring and reinforcing a particular response pattern include: a) imitating or modeling the behaviour of significant others (socialization); and b) pairing the use of aggression with rewards (operant conditioning). Learning theorists also assume that violence breeds violence. They posit that socialization involves acquiring a repertoire of suitable conduct, values, and definitions from role models in one's immediate environment; should these significant others frequently use violence, one is likely to see violence as legitimate and acceptable. Drawing on this body of work, subculture and intergenerational transmission of violence theorists examine the importance of learned behaviour in establishing views about the appropriateness of using lethal violence -- views that may predispose some people to homicidal behaviour.

Subculture theorists contend that norms and values of some groups are more conducive to lifestyles of violence than those more generally held in the dominant culture (Wolfgang,1958). These pro-violence lifestyles often reflect historical grievances that form a cultural legacy, the salience of which is still pertinent today. For example, according to proponents of this theory, the southern culture of violence in the United States is rooted in the South's "defeat in the Civil War and the subsequent economic exploitation by the North, which created collective grievances and a low threshold for aggression" (Blau and Blau,1982:115). Subculture theorists claim that this southern

culture of violence accounts for high homicide rates among young urban Afro-American males and in the southern United States (Wolfgang,1958). Subculture theorists also argue that "low perceived access to legitimate goal utility leads classes of structurally disadvantaged actors to generate higher levels of behaviour utility for criminal choice" (Harris,1977:8). Therefore, higher rates of homicide among people in the lowest socio-economic classes reflect values more receptive to interpersonal violence than those held by the wealthy. Subcultures of violence are passed on from generation to generation and reinforced in the everyday interactions of lowerclass households, southern-American communities and Afro-American ghettos (Mann,1996).

Although subculture theorists tend to concentrate on male deviance, some efforts are being made to extend the approach to women's offending. While claiming not to work within the sociogenic tradition, Rosenbaum (1990) and Wilson and Daly (1992) explain the prevalence of spouse killing among Afro-American women using aspects of the subculture thesis. These researchers argue that Afro-American women are less likely to tolerate spousal abuse due to strong matrilineal ties in Afro-American communities that sanction women's use of aggression in response to wife abuse. Other researchers claim that a subculture of violence exists among lowerclass women (Ward, Jackson and Ward, 1979) and women who reside in southern American states (Wilbanks,1983; Browne and Williams,1989).

According to its critics, subculture explanations present a static view of culture that "divorces cultural production from its situated context and tends to see culture as a distinct and imposing force" (Simpson,1991:128) on human agency. Simpson argues that

subculture theorists are prone to cultural determinism because they downplay that culture involves an ever-changing system of norms, beliefs, and values. Block and Block (1991) also point out that the subculture of violence thesis can be turned on its head if one argues that, in the dominant culture of North America, violence is normative. In this context, subcultures are those in which violence is considered *unacceptable*. Finally, some critics claim that the subculture of violence thesis:

> subtly implies that the social problems of disadvantaged minorities are intrinsically generated rather than being the products of exploitation and economic opportunity, and that it is mere happenstance that the poorer classes in industrial society exhibit more face-to-face violence than the privileged, rather than the reverse (Daly and Wilson,1988:287).[7]

Another version of the homicide as learned behaviour approach is the inter-generational transmission of violence thesis (ITV). Simons, Wu, Johnson and Conger's (1995) work introduces three different models of ITV all of which derive from Bandura's (1977) social learning perspective.[8] I concentrate on the first two approaches, parenting and family roles, as they are most relevant to homicidal women. The *parenting roles* version posits that women who were abused as children are more likely to behave violently toward their own children because parenting styles are modeled behaviour: abused children assume that corporeal punishment is a normal part of discipline and as they become mothers themselves they unwittingly copy their parents' abusive behaviour. The

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[7]It is interesting to note that Daly and Wilson (1988) scathingly criticize the subculture approach while appearing to draw on the subculture of violence thesis to explain the homicidal behaviour of Afro-American women in a later work (e.g., Wilson and Daly,1992) -- an inconsistency the authors do not acknowledge.

[8]Bandura (1977) asserts that aggression is rewarded behaviour that is first learned through association and observation. Individuals also set personal standards regarding the levels of aggression they will accept and these standards work as internal constraints on behaviour. Bandura maintains that women are more likely than men to view their use of aggression as aberrant and as brought on by strong emotions that break down their internal moral constraints (Bartol,1995).

family roles version widens the scope of violence alleging that women who grew up in violent homes are more likely to abuse their own children and their spouses. In their childhood, these women learned that violence was an effective means of communicating or solving problems and in adulthood they model their own domestic relationships on that of their parents' acrimonious households.[9] The key to either version of ITV with regard to women's homicidal behaviour is that the frequent use and tolerance of violence in the home may help to explain why, on occasion, this violence becomes lethal.

Feminist critics point out that both versions of ITV tend toward social determinism by denying actors (particularly adult offenders) responsibility for their own behaviour. If faulty socialization leads to adult violence, mothers and fathers with poor parenting skills are to blame for their children's homicidal behaviour even as these children reach adulthood. Perhaps this extends the power of one's childhood experiences too far; there may be more immediate circumstances that trigger women's homicidal behaviour such as abuse at the hands of their spouses or financial difficulties.

2. Homicide and Economic/Racial Inequality (Strain)

Blau and Blau (1982) advocate a structural approach to homicidal behaviour and extend criminological theories of strain[10] by focusing on two factors: racial and economic inequality. According to the Blaus, traditional theories of strain that examine the link

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[9]The family roles version of ITV can be used to support the Battered-Husband's Syndrome because it implies that some women are as likely to instigate spousal violence as men. For an explanation and critique of the Synrome refer to Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1993) and Dobash, Dobash, Wilson and Daly (1992).

[10]According to Naffine (1987) and Leonard (1982), strain theorists argue that lower-class males offend because they are denied access to societal goals (economic wealth) via legitimate opportunities (work and higher education). Strain is the tension these males experience as a result of desiring a legitimate goal that they are blocked from attaining lawfully.

between poverty (i.e., the lack of resources) and crime typically neglect the relationship between crime and economic inequality (i.e., the lack of resources the poor experience in comparison to others and that is a result of capitalism). Their central thesis is that socioeconomic inequalities associated with ascribed positions consolidate and reinforce ethnic and class differences, thereby engendering pervasive conflict (Blau and Blau, 1982).[11] Drawing on notions of class struggle, they argue that economic inequalities deprive the poor of the resources they need to overthrow the status quo; racial inequalities create further divisions among the poor, diffusing their will to unite against a common oppressor. Unable to alter the structural conditions and the ascriptive barriers that block their material success, the poor experience hopelessness, alienation and frustration. Moreover, because they lack class consciousness, the poor direct their hostilities toward life in general rather than their oppressors; it is these diffuse hostilities that encourage homicidal behaviour. In this way, the poor frequently release their frustrations in "acts of violence directed at persons from a similar race/ethnic and socioeconomic background" (Corzine and Corzine,1992:160).

Corzine and Corzine (1992) extend the Blaus' work by incorporating insights from social psychology; specifically, they draw on Berkowitz's (1989) frustration-aggression hypothesis to flesh out the process by which deprivation leads to aggression. According to Berkowitz, most people become frustrated when blocked from attaining material success. However, how people *interpret* this lack of success may determine whether their frustrations dissipate or translate into aggression. Thus, if people believe that their lack of

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[11] Rather than attributing the higher rates of violent crime in the South to subcultures of violence, Blau and Blau (1982) note that the southern United States has greater economic imbalances between and within ethnic groups than the North and it is these inequalities that provide such fertile grounds for aggression.

success is intentional and attribute it to an ascriptive trait such as race or gender, they are more likely to conclude that society's distribution of rewards is illegitimate and fundamentally undemocratic; under these conditions frustration caused by relative deprivation escalates into aggression (Corzine and Corzine,1992). Furthermore, people's powerlessness to change the status quo and to make their oppressors "pay" encourages the poor to direct their hostilities and homicidal behaviour toward those in similar circumstances.

Although Simon (1975) is typically viewed as an opportunity theorist, she later incorporates elements of the strain approach into her model and thereby extends strain to female offending. Simon maintains that, as a result of patriarchal social structures, men and women have different opportunities to commit white collar crime. Unlike men, women have traditionally been segregated to the private sphere that blocks access to legitimate (paid employment) and illegitimate (embezzlement) means of acquiring financial success. Simon predicts a convergence in the male and female rates of property offenses as the women's liberation movement begins to free women from the constraints of the domestic sphere and increases their labour force participation. Simultaneously, Simon predicts that women's liberation will engender a decrease in women's violence. As women's financial position improves so too will their financial independence; women will feel more justified in and capable of leaving abusive situations before they become fatal.

Critics of Simon argue that opportunities to commit white collar crime are not converging (Mann,1984; Chesney-Lind,1986; Naffine,1987; Radosh,1990). First, men are still more likely than women to be in positions that provide opportunities to commit

embezzlement. Second, it is women's economic marginalization rather than their inclusion in the paid labour force that leads to increases in female property offenses (Messerschmidt,1986). Simon and Landis (1991) respond by altering the differential opportunity thesis: men and women occupying the same social position will equally be subject to *strain* and as likely to take advantage of available legitimate and illegitimate opportunities. It is here that Simon incorporates elements of strain into her thesis. Essentially, strain theorists assume that people of the same socioeconomic position (SES) will *equally* be subject to strain. There are several problems with this assumption. First, women face sexual harassment and work place discrimination which may exacerbate the levels of strain they experience in comparison to men of the same SES. Second, how does one compare the level of strain a working mother experiences to a man or woman of the same SES who have no children? In patriarchal cultures, men and women of the same SES do not experience strain equally because men's greater social power provides them with alternate avenues of success and means to release their frustrations.

Simpson (1991) provides another women-centered version of strain that links various forms of oppression (sexism, racism, and economic inequality) to female violent offending. Thus, Simpson is the first strain theorist to acknowledge and attempt to explain the pronounced gender and racial differences in direct predatory offenses. In particular, Simpson explores why Afro-American women have higher homicide rates than their Caucasian counterparts. Drawing on Wolfgang's subculture thesis, Simpson argues that Afro-American women experience contradictory cultural tendencies: as women, they are socialized to be non-violent; yet, as Afro-Americans, they are socialized within a

subculture that exposes them to values more tolerant of interpersonal violence. Similar to Blau and Blau, Simpson contends that the relative deprivation of racial, economic and gender inequality further predisposes Afro-American women to diffuse hostilities and homicidal behaviour. Her greatest contribution though, is Simpson's explanation of the following paradox: although Afro-American women's relative deprivation is greater (and therefore their homicidal tendencies higher) than that of Afro-American men, women's homicide rates are lower. The key point for Simpson is that:

> black females, given their dedication to keeping home and community together are more apt than black males to delegitimate violence. However, given their racial oppression and differential experience of patriarchy in the family, Afro-American females are perhaps <u>less</u> apt to delegitimate violence than their white counterparts (Simpson, 1991:129; underscore added).

Although structural arguments are useful at the aggregate level, in that they explain why a certain class or group of people might commit an offense, critics contend that strain theorists are unable to account for variances within class. There is no *a priori* reason to assume that women of the same SES equally resort to violence or have equal opportunities to commit violent crime. As noted by routine activity theorists later in this chapter, women's location within the social structure may influence their opportunity to commit direct predatory offenses. Unable to incorporate subjective accounts of oppression into their work, strain theorists diminish human agency by portraying members of a certain class as a homogenous population who experience and react to oppression in the same way.

3. Homicide and Character Contests

While structural and cultural explanations of homicide focus on macro factors that explain homicide patterns for a particular region or ethnic group/class, the interactionist school focuses on micro factors that explain the process by which some individuals become engaged in fatal altercations. An example of the interactionist perspective, Luckenbill's (1977) character contest thesis examines the specific roles the offender, victim and bystander play in escalating homicide dramas. This dramaturgical approach to homicide illuminates the dynamic processes that shape and are shaped by social interactions.

After studying 70 fatal confrontations, Luckenbill concludes that the homicide drama normally begins with an affront made by the victim to which the offender responds by attempting to establish or save face. The affront usually involves a physical gesture or verbal expression that insults the offender. If the confrontation is not resolved (the victim does not apologize), the offender and victim come to a working agreement that violence is a suitable means for settling the character contest. In some cases, the working agreement is as simple as both parties raising their fists or drawing their weapons to fight. In other cases, the working agreement involves a verbal exchange in which both parties determine whether the other is willing to fight. Luckenbill (1977:184) notes that once a working agreement is struck, the:

> offender and, in many cases, victim appeared committed to battle. They contributed and invested in the development of a fatal transaction, one which was problematic and consequential to their face and wider reputation.

In their study of 94 homicidal interactions, Felson and Steadman (1983) find that victims are more likely than offenders to resort to evasive actions during the fatal confrontation, casting doubt on Luckenbill's notion that participants come to working agreements. Although they concur with Luckenbill that fatal conflicts usually escalate because of face-saving measures, they argue that Luckenbill's explanation does not appreciate the role strategic (self-defense) concerns plays in the homicide dramas. Furthermore, Jurik and Gregware (1991) contend that because Luckenbill bases his analysis predominantly on cases of fatal bar-room brawls between men, his conclusions cannot be easily generalized to cases involving homicidal women. Specifically, his notion of working agreements assumes that victims and offenders have similar levels of experience and preparedness in fighting, as well as equal abilities to inflict harm; an assumption that is completely erroneous with regard to infanticide, for example.[12] Furthermore, Jurik and Gregware point out that battered women often kill incapacitated victims (e.g., victims who are asleep or inebriated), indicating that working agreements between female offenders and their victims may not be struck.

Katz's (1988) phenomenological analysis of the sensual dynamics of crime, a more recent interactionist perspective, improves upon Luckenbill's work by capturing the passion and spontaneity of murder while at the same time acknowledging that homicide often involves face-saving measures. According to Katz, most people tolerate an enormous amount of frustration, shame, and humiliation in their everyday lives without

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[12]Luckenbill (1977) acknowledges that a third of the cases he studied involve a victim refusing to obey an offender's wishes. In one such case, a child did not stop crying when asked and the offender took this as a challenge to his authority. The problem is that Luckenbill then assumes that the child and her father came to a working agreement that violence was an acceptable way to solve this character contest.

resorting to violence. This negative affect transforms into homicidal rage only when people feel they must restore their reputation by defending a higher moral principle. Thus, homicide is an act of righteous anger or sacrificial rage whereby offenders experience such strong, immediate, and overwhelming emotions that they feel *compelled* to kill. The underlying assumption here, similar to Hirschi's (1969) social control thesis, is that crime is inherently seductive behaviour and we are all tempted by it.

Katz makes another contribution to Luckenbill's character contest thesis by extending it to women. In exploring the process by which females experience righteous anger, Katz notes several studies have found that women's transition from humiliation to rage is more sudden than men's. Some women, when pressed into a moral last stand, have no reservations in resorting to violence, behaviour supposedly uncharacteristic of their gender. That some women are able to overcome (and quickly) their inhibitions toward aggression is, for Katz, evidence of the power of the sensual dynamics of murder. Furthermore, other studies have shown that homicidal women are more likely than men to experience traumatic shock after committing murder. Katz argues that this shock is a result of some women's inability to reconcile notions of their righteousness and innocence to the intensity and ease of their rage.[13]

Totam (1978) introduces a women's-centred version of the character contest model. Totam uses data on 50 women, all of whom killed intimates, to explain the following paradox: the majority of homicidal women kill intimates yet they are taught to seek rewards from personal relationships. Totam argues that a woman resorts to murder

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[13]As an example, Katz (1989) argues that battered women often kill their spouses in defense of a moral position like "true love".

when her commitment to mate and children, her life's purpose, is threatened or questioned. Thus, women entertain homicidal notions when they believe failure as mothers or wives is imminent and they resort to murder when they are able to (re)-construct their loved one(s) as "other" and deserving of death. The likelihood of resorting to murder increases in situations where women are unable to communicate to their families or friends that they have experienced a challenge to their identity and to share with others the profound emotions this character contest evokes for them.

Ben-David (1993) provides another women's-centred version of the character contest thesis. Ben-David bases her work on three assumptions: a) women's offending is emotionally motivated and linked to their sexual lives; b) private rather than public sphere trauma instigates greater levels of violence and stress for women; and c) women most often perpetrate violence at home. For Ben-David, the greater the number of psychological, behavioural, and situational stressors in the domestic sphere, the more violent a woman's response to trauma and stress. Psychological factors refer to the feelings a woman experiences when confronted by a threatening situation in her home, behavioural factors involve the learned or socialized reactions a woman has to these psychological stressors, and situational factors embody the anticipated response/reactions others will have to a woman's use of violence.

According to Ben-David, women's status and psyches are largely determined by the functions they serve in the domestic realm. Moreover, femininity is defined through attachment and is most threatened by social isolation. Thus, women experience help-lessness and anger when their home life is threatened because their very identities are

wrapped up in its operation. It is at this point Ben-David's work becomes particularly puzzling as she argues that women are generally socialized not to use violence *except* in the home where female-perpetrated violence is tolerated, if not supported. Although she notes that violence is a learned response particularly for women raised in abusive homes, Ben-David is completely unclear as to why other women (e.g., those not abused as children) use violence at home and as a response to the afore-mentioned psychological stressors. Even more curious, is her assertion that women resort to violence in the home because they believe family members would not harm them nearly as severely as would acquaintances or strangers. Ben-David completely ignores a decade of empirical evidence indicating that known assailants are far more violent than strangers and that violence in the home is more frequent than in the public sphere (Browne,1987).

Similar to Katz's and Totam's explanations, Ben-David's approach reifies stereotypical notions of femininity and assumes that gender roles in patriarchal cultures define women's "true" natures. Furthermore, all of these writers ignore that homicidal women are often reacting to victim-precipitated violence; their violence is in self-defense and reflects fear rather than a moral position or an attempt to save face.

4. Homicide and Routine Activities

Cohen and Felson's (1979) routine activity theory (RAT) presents a paradigmatic shift in criminological work, predicting the probability of becoming a victim rather than an offender. The key to RAT is Cohen and Felson's etiological concentration on the ecological patterns of victims' routine activities or lifestyles that lead to direct predatory victimization. The authors maintain that there is a symbiotic relationship between legal

and illegal activities such that illegal activities are sustained by the legal activities of everyday life (Cohen and Felson,1979:588). According to this perspective, victimizations occur due to the convergence of three factors: suitable targets, motivated offenders and the lack of capable guardians. For example, Cohen and Felson (1979:594) expect:

> routine activities performed within or near the home and among family or other primary groups to entail lower risk of criminal victimization because they enhance guardianship capabilities.

Similarly, they predict that as people spend more time away from home, both for work and play, the amount of guardianship decreases while the likelihood of victimization by strangers increases.

In a later article, Cohen, Kluegel and Land (1981) introduce two risk factors that increase the likelihood of victimization: proximity (living close to motivated offenders) and exposure (being visible and accessible to motivated offenders). They also maintain that race, age, and income shape routine activities and, in turn, the risk of victimization at the hands of a stranger. First, poor, young, ethnic minorities tend to live in closer proximity to one another, most often in apartments or housing complexes. Second, people of similar income, age and race tend to interact socially. Third, risk of exposure and proximity increase if victims share sociodemographic traits with potential offenders. Noting the inordinate number of American offenders and victims (for assault, burglary and personal larceny) who are poor, young and non-white, they predict that these same traits increase victimization.

Drawing on the concepts of proximity, exposure and shared demographic traits, Messner and Tardiff (1985) argue that homes are dangerous places because motivated

offenders and suitable targets may confront each other on a daily basis. First, women, minority groups,[14] the very young and the very old, the unemployed, and married people are at risk of victimization at home and by intimates as their lifestyles are more likely to center around the home and family. Second, risk of victimization in the private sphere and by intimates increases during those times in which routine activities concentrate around the home such as supper time or weekends. Based on these conditions, Messner and Tardiff predict that motivated female offenders are more likely to kill intimates who spend a considerable time at home. Yet, Messner and Tardiff merely provide a description rather than an explanation of women's opportunities to kill and fail to address the preventative role of guardianship in RAT: Cohen and Felson (1979) maintain that capable guardianship is greater within domestic settings and that higher levels of guardianship lower the risk of victimization (offenders prefer targets who are not well-guarded).

Although Adler (1975) predates RAT, she provides one of the first analyses of women's opportunities to commit homicide. For Alder, low levels of female criminal activity are an extension of women's subordinate position in the social structure; constraining sex roles and differential socialization or social control shape women's access to legitimate and illegitimate opportunities (Mann,1984). Adler's masculinity hypothesis posits that, as a result of the women's liberation movement, gender roles converge such that women aspire to goals and have the opportunities to become involved in activities (including violent crime) traditionally considered the domain of men. Thus, women's

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[14]According to Messner and Tardiff (1985), the relationship between race and homicidal victimization is mediated by economic inequalities. They maintain that because minorities often have lower incomes than the dominant racial group, their lifestyles are more likely to revolve around the home. Clearly Messner et al. equate higher levels of income to routine activities outside of the home.

involvement in violent crime will increase as the emancipation of women encourages them to become aggressive, assertive and violent. The link to RAT is that Adler predicts, as do Cohen and Felson (1979), that involvement in the public sphere (traditional male activity) increases a motivated offender's (male or female) opportunity to commit direct predatory offenses.

Several criminologists have spent more than a decade consumed in responding to Adler, determined to disprove the notion of a liberated, violent female offender.[15] Critics maintain that by causally linking women's emancipation to violent offending, Adler ignores the political ramifications of her work; her thesis continues to be used in the backlash against women's emancipation and effectively marginalizes other feminist analyses of women's offending (Jones,1980; Chesney-Lind,1986; Naffine,1987). Others note that Adler did not take changes in population composition nor shifts in law-enforcement practices into account (Steffensmeier and Streifel,1993). Messerschmidt (1986) argues, for example, that any increase in the number of women arrested and charged with violent crimes could be a result of the police dropping their chivalrous attitude toward violent female offenders in response and retaliation to the women's liberation movement. Still other critics argue that gender roles are not converging. Not only have recent studies shown that female offenders appear to hold very traditional beliefs about sex roles (Leiber, Farnworth, Jamieson and Nalla,1994) but women predominantly work in the service industry at jobs reifying traditional sex roles (Radosh,1990). Moreover, Steffensmeier and Streifel (1993) demonstrate that over the past three decades,

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[15]For a thorough analysis of this controversy see Dallam (1987); Streifel (1989); and Kruttschnitt (1993).

the female share of total homicide arrests has decreased and female arrest rates have remained stable.[16]

Brownstein, Spunt, Crimmins, Goldstein, and Langley (1994) provide another women-centred version of RAT. They claim that because the majority of theoretical and empirical work on homicidal women focuses on domestic situations, recent trends indicating that women are committing more instrumental and drug-related homicides have been ignored. The researchers argue that rates and patterns of female-perpetrated homicide may change as a result of varying degrees of participation in the drug industry and use of drugs/alcohol, a contention shared by Mann (1990). Specifically, Brownstein et al. predict that women's involvement in instrumental homicide increases as they engage in routine activities outside of the home regardless of whether this entails a drink at a bar with friends or trafficking crack-cocaine on the street. Furthermore, women addicted to either alcohol or drugs are likely to engage in instrumental offenses such as robbery and break and enter to secure their next fix and often these felonies result in fatal altercations. In support of their assertions, the authors point out some preliminary evidence indicating that, over time, women are increasingly killing strangers and committing instrumental murders (Goetting,1988, Weisheit,1984).

According to Meithe, Stafford and Long (1987), one problem with RAT is its assumption that crime is a rational decision (i.e., offenders decide to commit crimes when there are suitable targets and no guardians); this precludes the spontaneity of expressive offenses and diminishes the importance of interpersonal relationships in shaping homicide

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[16]Using the Uniform Crime Statistics, Steffensmeier and Streifel (1993) record that while women were responsible for 17% of total homicide arrests in 1960/62, the percentage dropped to twelve in 1988/90 and female arrest rates for homicide remained at 2 per 100,000 Americans from 1960-1990.

events. Furthermore, Cohen and Felson's (1979) contention that victimization decreases in the home due to the availability of capable guardians precludes the possibility that capable guardians are motivated offenders. If RAT is predicated on the notion that motivations are constant, then all people including capable guardians are liable to be motivated offenders. Thus, the ability of RAT in predicting victimization at the hands of homicidal women is suspect if, as several theorists claim (Totam,1978; Ogle, Maier-Katlin and Bernard,1995), women predominantly commit crimes of passion against intimates in their homes.

5. Homicide and Victim-Precipitated Violence

While Wolfgang's (1958) seminal work on homicide generated the subculture of violence thesis, it is his recognition that women often kill their spouses in retaliation to victim-precipitated aggression that sparked an entire field of analysis dedicated to homicidal battered women. Furthermore, Wolfgang's awareness that victim-precipitated violence often involves alcohol use by victims and offenders inspired further etiological work on the influence of substance use on homicidal women.

Agreeing in part with Walker,[17] Browne (1987) acknowledges that battered women suffer from learned helplessness, however, when they strike out violently they do so *rationally* and in response to victim-precipitated aggression. According to Browne, battered women are capable of reasoned decision-making. After years of abuse, these women can determine when: a) the level of violence has sufficiently altered for them to

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[17]Walker's (1979;1987) Battered Women's Syndrome posits that battered women suffer from learned helplessness, a condition whereby women are unable to take advantage of extra-legal or legal resources to end spouse abuse because they assume the abuse is deserved, that their partners' behaviour will eventually change, and that the batterers' hold on their lives is pervasive.

fear for their or their children's lives and b) other resources for ending the abuse are exhausted. Browne indicates that compared to battered women who do not kill their spouses, homicidal battered women live with more frequent and injurious abuse, forced sex, and with partners who are more regularly intoxicated or high. Browne's key contribution is that she extends rationality to the criminogenic behaviour of homicidal battered women and encourages the notion that there is something unique to the circumstances in which homicidal battered women live that separate them from other (battered) women.

With regard to alcohol use, Mann (1990) and Blount, Silverman, Sellers, and Seese (1994) maintain that it is a double-edged sword for battered women. On the one hand, alcohol use is a coping mechanism that eases the emotional and physical trauma a battered women experiences as a result of her partner's abuse. On the other hand, alcohol use may loosen a battered woman's inhibitions toward violence and may actually hamper her ability to leave the violent relationship. Thus, a battered woman who drinks less heavily is more likely to seek refuge in a shelter and to avoid using violence in retaliation to victim-precipitated aggression. Noting the influence of alcohol in spousal homicides, Browne (1987) and Goetting (1989) argue that women's violent offending and their victimization increases in these homicide dramas because both victims and offenders are likely to be drinking.

6. Homicide and Overcontrolled Personalities

A final group of theories draw on the work of Megargee (1977). According to Bartol (1995), Megargee identifies two kinds of criminal dispositions: under- and over-

controlled. Undercontrolled personalities, frequently men and extroverts, resort to violence when provoked, upset, or stressed because aggression is an habitual response. Offenders with this personality type have few or no inhibitions regarding the use of violence and usually do not internalize their rage. Overcontrolled personalities, most often women and introverts, rarely resort to violence when frustrated because they associate punishment with the use of aggression. Offenders with this personality type develop strong inhibitions regarding the use of violence and usually internalize their rage. However, should these internal constraints become overwhelmed, overcontrolled personalities will engage in extreme and often brutal violence (Bartol 1995).

Weisheit (1986) uses Megargee's theory to explain the homicidal behaviour of mothers. According to Weisheit, up to the 1950s, mothers predominantly killed infants conceived through pre- or extra-marital sex and that these mothers had overcontrolled personalities. Although premeditated, overcontrolled mothers kill because their normal inhibitions against violence are overwhelmed by the stigma of an illegitimate pregnancy and the desire to protect their children from living in shame. Due to the availability of abortions since the 1970s, the number of infanticides (ages birth-1) have decreased such that homicidal mothers now predominantly kill non-infanticidal children (ages 1-18) by fatal child abuse or neglect. Weisheit asserts that these undercontrolled mothers are completely unaware that their behaviour is inappropriate and potentially fatal as corporeal punishment and neglect is an habitual response used to vent daily frustrations. Silverman and Kennedy (1988) concur with Weisheit, although they come closer to examining the

patriarchal structures that effect the lives and behaviours of homicidal mothers.[18] They argue that infanticidal mothers kill because they are immature (lack of proper parenting/life skills) whereas children of non-infanticidal offenders are killed because they are outlets for their mothers' frustration and rage (most often caused by the combined pressures of poverty, motherhood, and wife abuse).

Ogle, Maier-Katlin, and Bernard (1995:186) generate a very promising theoretical lead by combining several criminological insights including the work of Megargee. They posit that:

> Baseline stress and negative affect in the lives of women + blockages in women's coping mechanisms + overcontrolled personalities + situational stresses = female homicidal behaviour that victimizes intimates.

The first component of the model, baseline stress, argues that women experience an enormous amount of stress caused, among other things, by role socialization and dissonance, structural inequities, and involvement in and support of social/familial networks. At the same time, women experience contradictory images of self and when combined with stress, women's coping mechanism are often taxed in attempting to dissipate this negative affect (frustration). Ogle et al. hypothesize that on average, stress is higher for women than men and women with low socioeconomic status (SES) experience more stress than women of high SES.

The second and third components of the model, explore the ways in which women handle this baseline stress. Specifically, the second component of the model, blockage of

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[18]Two other Canadian researchers, Rosenblatt and Greenland (1974), speculate that some women kill altruistically hoping to prevent their children from growing up in the same cycles of poverty and abuse they experienced. However, Silverman and Kennedy (1988) do not acknowledge this etiological contribution.

coping mechanisms, is based on Agnew's (1985) concept of strain; anomie is caused by blockages in coping mechanisms rather than access to goals. Unlike men, whose coping strategies are expressive, women internalize or block the release of their emotions causing anomie. In addition, lowerclass women experience anomie as a result of their limited access to socially prescribed goals. The third component of the model, overcontrolled personality, posits that although women have high levels of stress they also have high levels of self-control. Thus, women are very rarely aggressive having been socialized with strong inhibitions toward engaging in violence. However, when their coping mechanisms are overwhelmed, women lash out in extreme violence. The authors hypothesize that on average, women are more likely to develop overcontrolled personalities than men.

The final component of the model, situational stressors, builds on the notion that most people direct their violence toward "visible and vulnerable targets" in their immediate surroundings. Ogle et al. contend that women never learn how to effectively and appropriately deal with external expressions of violence because they spend an inordinate amount of time learning to internalize their anger. Therefore, when high levels of stress overwhelm women's traditional coping mechanism of converting anger into hurt or guilt, women experience uncontrolled rage that they direct toward spouses and children. They hypothesize that on average, targets of women's violence are more likely to be those in immediate environments; women are less likely than men to develop ways in which to handle or express anger, and women experiencing peaks of stress are more likely to explode with episodes of extreme uncontrolled violence.

Conclusions

Although I have imposed an organizational structure on the etiological literature on homicidal women, the three categories I have chosen (biogenic, psychogenic and sociogenic theories) are somewhat arbitrary as theorists borrow concepts from all three traditions. For example, Wilson and Daly (1992) are sociobiologists who study homicide in the biogenic tradition but incorporate insights from the subculture of violence thesis (sociogenic tradition) in their work. Furthermore, dividing theories in the sociogenic tradition into six categories is also tenuous as many of the theories predict a relationship between the same variables and women's homicidal behaviour. For example, poverty is identified as a factor precipitating violence in RAT, as well as in cultural and structural explanations. Another example is the link between sex roles and women's use of violence as evidenced in the work of Ben-David (1993), Adler (1975), Simon (1974), and Ogle et al. (1995). Despite these commonalties, a general theory of women's homicidal behaviour has yet to emerge; currently, there is a wide array of theories that are not organized in any systematic way.

An overview of the etiological work on homicidal women also reveals that some theories are directed toward all types of homicide (e.g., theories in the psychogenic and interactionist tradition) whereas others focus specifically on one kind of homicide. While limited in scope, theories concentrating on one type of homicide nonetheless provide explanations for the complete homicide drama including the kinds of victims, locations and circumstances predicted. There are several examples of this approach in the theoretical literature on homicidal women. First, drawing on RAT, Brownstein et al. (1994) predict

an increase in the death of strangers killed in public places for instrumental reasons. Second, Totam (1978), Ogle et al. (1995), Simpson (1991) and Simon (1975) offer various explanations for why intimates or spouses and children are killed in their homes by expressive violence. Third, Weisheit (1986) and Silverman and Kennedy (1988) hypothesize why mothers kill their children at home in expressive homicide dramas. Finally, Browne (1987) explores the likelihood of killing an abusive spouse at home with expressive violence.

The underlying assumption in theories that focus on a specific type of homicide is that women's homicide offending cannot be treated as a monolithic type of behaviour. The purpose of my study is to examine this very assumption. First, I explore the possibility that different theoretical traditions are better in predicting certain types of female-perpetrated homicide. Second, I test the predictive power of these theories as well as their salience over time. To this end, I develop research hypotheses, introduced in Chapter Four, about the likelihood of women killing particular victims (intimates versus non-intimates), in certain locations (domestic versus non-domestic) and in specific circumstances (instrumental versus expressive).

CHAPTER 3: PREVIOUS STUDIES ON HOMICIDAL WOMEN

I begin this chapter by noting some of the difficulties in compiling a literature review on homicidal women. I then use the organizational structure introduced in Chapter Two to review the empirical literature; thus, I divide studies on homicidal women into three research traditions: biogenic, psychogenic and sociogenic.

One fundamental problem of previous studies on homicide is researchers' tendency to use homicide and murder interchangeably. Homicide is the more inclusive term and refers to the taking of another person's life, whereas murder is a specific type of culpable (planned and deliberate) homicide (Wilbanks,1982). According to Wilbanks, readers are often unclear whether a study is examining why women kill (homicide) or why women kill with premeditation and intent (murder). Furthermore, studies that claim to be investigating female-perpetrated homicide, often provide data only on women who are incarcerated or arrested for murder, ignoring the population of women who commit justifiable or excusable homicide and have not been charged with an offense (e.g., cases involving battered women). For example, Browne and Williams (1989) explore the association between the availability of support services for battered women who kill. In describing their data and variables, Browne et al. (1989:81) state that "the term homicide will be used to denote incidents of murder and non-negligent manslaughter". This is essentially an incorrect use of the term homicide and is potentially misleading. To further exacerbate this problem, most official databases (e.g., city studies that rely on prison and/or police records and national studies that use the Canadian Crime Statistics or the American Uniform Crime Reports) collect information solely on murder and non-negligent manslaughter.

Researchers who rely on official sources frequently claim to give a complete picture of female-perpetrated homicide when in fact these databases do not collect information on justifiable homicide and negligent manslaughter. Although this may appear to be a matter of semantics, the distinction between murderous and homicidal women may have important theoretical and empirical consequences.

Comparing the findings of one study to another is also difficult. First, socio-political definitions of homicide change over time and place (Wilbanks, 1982). In the Canadian context, the Supreme Court's 1992 decision to allow expert testimony regarding the Battered Women's Syndrome, effectively created a new category of justifiable homicide. Battered women who killed their abusive partners and were convicted of murder before the R v. Lavallée decision are currently petitioning for clemency under the spirit of this precedent-setting case because, according to today's definition of murder, they may be innocent (Vienneau, 1995). Similarly, with the decriminalization of abortion in 1968, Canadian women could legally terminate their pregnancies, whereas prior to this date women who obtained an abortion could have been charged with an offense. Second, Jurik and Gregware (1992) maintain that police and prison records contain a "theory of office" that may tell us more about the record keepers and the institutions for which they work than they do about actual homicide cases. Record keepers, for example, may unwittingly include personal theories about homicide or omit/alter key variables for research purposes due to time constraints and pressures to meet political protocols. These institutional biases and inconsistencies further complicate the ability of researchers to compare findings from one study to another.

Having outlined some of the challenges in compiling a literature review on homicidal women, I turn now to the specific limitations of studies in the field. First, the majority of studies are American, clinical, anecdotal, descriptive and atheoretical. The dearth of Canadian studies on women who kill makes grounding my work difficult; there are few studies by which to compare the descriptive information I collect and little or no guidance regarding the applicability and predictive power of certain homicide theories to Canadian women. Second, while the results of clinical research (Barnard, Vera, Vera and Newman,1982; Foster, Mann-Veale, Fogel, 1989; Rosenbaum,1990) may aide nurses, social workers, and psychologists in their work with or treatment of homicidal women, these studies rarely provide testable hypotheses. Third, researchers continue to use small samples[1] -- often ranging between 10-60 homicidal women -- that focus on a particular kind of offender (e.g., battered women or infanticidal mothers). Thus, few studies explore an entire population of homicidal women and fewer still examine women's offending over time.

Finally, researchers justify avoiding theoretical work by noting that the field is relatively new and exploratory (e.g., Goetting,1987; Mann,1990; Wilczynski,1991). Although this may explain the number of descriptive studies, it is no excuse for using poor research designs; when comparison groups (usually other violent female offenders or male homicidal offenders) are used, researchers tend not to report the similarities and differences between the study and comparison group(s) on several key variables. Furthermore, researchers often reveal ideological rather than or in lieu of theoretical explanations in their

[1]This practice is especially confusing as the population of women who kill in any given year or place remains quite small and conducive to complete analysis.

analyses. An example of this approach is evident in studies that investigate women who kill women: unlike Goetting (1988) whose work is purely and admittedly exploratory, Mann (1993) imposes a political agenda upon her analysis hoping that violence will be viewed by the academic community as a human rather than gender issue.[2] Thus, Mann uses female intrasexual homicide to argue that women are as violent toward women as they are toward men; and thus violence is a human issue.

Other researchers (Brownstein, Spunt, Crimmins, Goldstein and Langley,1994) contend that it is equally ideological to assume that the patterns, profiles and motives of homicidal battered women are true of all homicidal women. Although a large proportion of women who kill do kill male partners and many of these women experience violence at the hands of these spouses, there is no a priori reason to assume that the characteristics observed of homicidal battered women hold true for women who kill their children, strangers or friends. Moreover, studies on homicidal battered women usually depict women as passive victims reacting to male violence rather than perpetrators of violence in their own right. Faith (1992) argues that some women may choose to kill; murder may be a rational decision made in light of alternatives rather than a helpless reaction to victim-precipitated violence. According to Faith, feminist criminologists must characterize women as survivors rather than victims and interpret women's homicidal behaviour as indicative of their resilience and capacity for positive action. This tension between viewing homicidal women as offenders or victims engenders a space for ideological battle that often surfaces in place of etiological advancements. Furthermore, the political ramifications of

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[2]Mann also avoids any mention of her previous work (e.g., McNeely and Mann,1990) in which she draws heavily on the sexual symmetry of violence thesis and the Battered Husband's Syndrome, two perspectives that challenge the notion that domestic violence is a gender issue.

this debate or the impacts it might have on homicide research are rarely articulated. Despite the above limitations, there are several noteworthy studies in the field and I review them below.

Empirical Studies in the Biogenic Tradition

Most studies in this tradition claim an association between dysmenorrhea or Pre/Post Partum Syndrome and women's homicidal behaviour. Earlier studies in this tradition are over two decades old, have small effects, and remain unreplicated (Chait, 1986; Morris,1987; Faith,1993; Bartol,1995). Given these limitations, I focus on more recent contributions that explore the correlation between evolutionary factors and women's homicidal behaviour. In comparing a Chicago data set of spousal murders, 1965-1989, to similar data for several other nations, Wilson and Daly (1992) find that the spousal sex ratio of killing[3] in Canada is 31 in contrast to 75 in the United States. According to Wilson and Daly, the American spousal SROK is higher than all other nations and this cannot be fully explained by the greater use of guns or advanced gender role convergence in the United States. After running several univariate tests, the authors note that variation in the American spousal SROK is systematically associated with the proportion of couples who are de facto (common-law), age discrepant, and separated. Wilson and Daly (1992:204) anticipate that these three variables are somewhat correlated and run a stepwise discriminant function analysis on the Chicago dataset to determine their separate and cumulative impacts. The researchers find that de facto, age discrepant and separated couples all significantly predict the victim's sex as male.

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[3]A spousal sex ratio of killing or SROK of 31 indicates that for every 100 men who killed their wives, 31 women killed their mates.

In explaining these findings, Wilson and Daly cite research on battered wives. First, violence against women is prevalent in common-law relationships due to the presence of stepchildren who often instigate acrimony between partners. Second, spousal coercion increases after couples separate as some husbands are unable to relinquish control of their wives. Third, rates of marital violence and divorce increase among couples with more than ten years separating their ages. Distancing themselves from Straus and Gelles (1990) who suggest that the high American spousal SROK is indicative of sexual symmetry in marital violence, Wilson and Daly conclude that the spousal SROK rises if women feel trapped by increasing spousal coercion, believe their children are at risk, and have strong matrilineal ties.

It is noteworthy that Daly and Wilson cite research on battered wives to explain Chicago's unusually high spousal SROK rather than relying on the evolutionary principles (e.g., competition, selection, and fitness) they extol in their theoretical work on homicide (1988;1990). Critics argue that the dearth of recent work in the biogenic genre is a result of the inability to operationalize or accurately measure evolutionary and biological concepts (Chait,1986; Bartol,1995). For example, researchers typically rely on women's memories regarding their cycles to pin point whether they killed during menstruation and while suffering from PMS. Considering the fact that women's cycles and occurrences of PMS are often irregular, an accurate measure of dysmenorrhea and its association with women's violent behaviour is unlikely.

Empirical Studies in the Psychogenic Tradition

Studies in the psychogenic tradition use one of two methodological approaches. The first approach places the entire population or sample of homicidal women into various clinical categories (Cole, Fisher, and Cole,1968; Widom,1978) while the second approach simply reports the number of homicidal women who are mentally ill in a particular sample or population (Rosenblatt and Greenland,1974; Daniel and Harris,1982; Barnard, Vera, Vera and Newman,1982; Robertson, Bankier, and Schwartz,1987; Rosenbaum,1990). I focus on studies employing the second approach as the first appears to have fallen out of favour. Perhaps psychologists are leery of using the first approach because it assumes what cannot be supported empirically: that all female homicide offenders are mentally ill.

One of the first Canadian studies to employ the second approach is Rosenblatt and Greenland's (1974) analysis of violent female offenders held in Ontario mental hospitals (N=22, 90% homicidal) and jails (N=4, 50% homicidal). The researchers find that 80% of the women had prior contact with psychiatrists, 69% attempted suicide before or after the crime, and 46% of the women were diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenics or manic depressives. Based on residents in a Missouri hospital during 1974-1979, Daniel and Harris (1982) examine pre-trial psychiatric evaluations of all homicidal women (N=22) and compare them to women charged with other crimes (N=44). The authors report that 77% of the homicidal women had prior psychiatric hospitalizations (versus 64% of the comparison group) and 41% were diagnosed as psychotic[4] (versus 25% of the comparison group). In a third study, Barnard, Vera, Vera and Newman (1982), provide descriptive

[4]Daniel and Harris define psychosis as schizophrenia or organic brain syndromes that cause mental illness.

information on 11 female spouse killers who were evaluated pre-trial in a Florida hospital between 1970 and 1980. Barnard et al. find the following: 36% had psychiatric hospitalizations, 76% had out-patient psychiatric treatments, and 55% had attempted suicide. Finally, Robertson, Bankier and Schwartz (1987:752) summarize the findings of several clinical studies on homicidal women by noting that "approximately 10-20% of female homicide offenders are found to be mentally ill with the highest incidence occurring in women convicted of maternal filicide".

Critics argue that the clinical studies' findings are skewed because the samples are drawn from homicidal women residing in psychiatric hospitals and rarely include a control group (i.e., homicidal women in jails) by which to compare levels of mental illness. According to Robertson et al., studies that record high levels of psychiatric disturbance in homicidal women are misleading because they do not distinguish between psychiatric disorders (e.g., antisocial personality disorder, alcoholism, sociopathy) and psychiatric illnesses (e.g., schizophrenia, manic-depression, psychotic depression). The majority of women in these studies suffer from psychiatric disorders that, unlike psychiatric illnesses, rarely require hospitalization. Furthermore, in their analysis of 100 women arrested for violent offenses (one homicide and five attempted murder cases) at the Winnipeg Remand Centre, Robertson et al. conclude that psychiatric disorders, family history of mental illness, and incidence of neurological problems are <u>unrelated</u> to violent crimes. Highlighting the lack of consistency in clinical studies, Rosenbaum (1990) finds that *male* perpetrators of spousal murder-suicide are more likely to have depressive illnesses complicated by personality disorders than female offenders. Finally, although Bernard et

al. (1982) report a high percentage of psychiatric problems in their sample of homicidal women, all of the women were diagnosed as sane or competent to stand trial.

Empirical Studies in the Sociogenic Tradition

As in the theoretical literature, the empirical studies in the sociogenic tradition can be divided into six types, although a large proportion of the studies are descriptive and merely refer to theories as a way of summarizing their findings.

1. Homicide as Learned Behaviour

Although efforts have been made by theorists to extend the subculture of violence thesis to women, there are few empirical tests. Most of the studies reviewed here simply refer to the subculture of violence thesis in their conclusions. For example, Ward, Jackson and Ward (1979) investigate 444 women incarcerated for violent crimes at the California Institution for Women (1963-4, 1968) and at the Minnesota Women's Reformatory (1964-1966). The researchers collected descriptive information on women who committed robbery (N=105), burglary (N=80), homicide and (N=179) and assault (80). In their conclusion, Ward et al. divide the assault and murder cases into three categories: *subculture of violence* - crimes perpetrated by women of the lowest SES whose values allow/tolerate interpersonal violence; *domestic violence I* - offenses committed in passion and usually in the context of marital conflict; and *domestic violence II* - mothers who killed their children through excessive corporeal punishment or starvation. Referring to the subculture of violence cases, the authors note that the majority involve lowerclass women (specifically prostitutes and waitresses) who, unlike women of higher SES, were willing to carry weapons for protection and engage in physical altercations. Yet, the researchers may

have misinterpreted the subcultural conditions of these women's lives; sex trade workers and waitresses may carry weapons as a practical response to working in high-risk professions that involve interactions with a male subculture that tolerates treating women violently.

Other studies explore whether the southern culture of violence thesis applies to female homicide offenders. Wilbanks (1983) reviews all 569 homicides reported to the Dade County police in 1980, 47 of which were committed by women.[5] The first indication of a "southerness" effect is revealed in criminal homicide rates: in 1980, the female rate in Dade County (3.3) was higher than that of women in other Florida counties (2.6) and the United States as a whole (2.1). Second, the male rate in Dade County was higher than the national average and because previous research establishes a positive correlation between male and female homicide rates, Wilbanks argues that both male and female homicide rates in Dade County reflect a "southerness" effect. However, Wilbanks (1983:13) concludes the study by arguing that:

> the wide range in female homicide offender rates among subgroups by age and race would suggest that any subculture of violence that does exist...is present only in some subgroups of the female population (e.g., black females 25-44).

Unlike Wilbanks, Browne and Williams (1989) are willing to extend a "southerness" effect to all female homicide offenders residing in the southern United States. Browne et al. find a correlation of .75 between southern location and female-perpetrated spousal homicide rates for 50 states. Thus, they introduce a South/non-South dummy as a control variable in their multivariate analysis of female-perpetrated partner homicide; however, they find

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[5]Wilbanks (1983) notes that 27 of these women were arrested for murder, 17 of whom were incarcerated.

that regional location has a small and insignificant effect when domestic violence legislation and resources for abused women are introduced into the equation. In other words, southern and northern states do not vary substantially in their levels of legislation and resources for battered women although the number of female-perpetrated spousal homicides is higher in southern states.

Finally, Mann (1996) finds only modest support for the southern culture of violence thesis in her sample of 296 randomly selected female-perpetrated homicide cases in Chicago, Houston, Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York and Baltimore collected from 1979-1983.[6] The only significant difference between southern and nonsouthern women is the use of firearms: 60% of the southern versus 40% of the nonsouthern killers used guns. Otherwise, there is some indication that nonsouthern women are actually more violent than their southern counterparts; Mann notes that nonsouthern women were more likely to inflict multiple stab wounds and to have violent arrest histories than southern women. As most of the differences were insignificant, Mann concludes that southern and nonsouthern homicidal women are more similar than dissimilar.

Another group of studies claims that the association between strong matrilineal ties in Afro-American communities and Afro-American women's relatively high murder rate denotes a subculture of violence. Rosenbaum (1990) tests whether there is a difference between spouses who commit murder and those who commit murder-suicide by drawing on the entire population of spousal homicides (24 killers, 12 are women) and spousal murder-homicides (12 killers, 1 is female) from Albuquerque's police and hospital records

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[6]There are 148 southern and 148 nonsouthern homicidal women in Mann's study.

for the period 1978-1987. According to Rosenbaum, the homicide group consists mostly of lower income Afro-American and Hispanic couples whose relationships are in crisis (nearing separation). Noting the high number of women among the Afro-American homicide perpetrators (5 of 8), Rosenbaum (1990:1038) concludes that this "reflects the matriarchal aspect of black society in which women are both dominant and aggressive".

In their analysis of the spousal sex ratio of killing (SROK), Wilson and Daly (1992:208) introduce the following hypothesis: "the spousal SROK rises when women feel socially empowered to retaliate against male coercion". The researchers report that a higher number of women (N=862) than men (N=844) killed their partners in Chicago from 1965-1989 and that the Afro-American spousal SROK is 122 while the Caucasian value is 57 and the Hispanic value is 29. According to Wilson and Daly, the high Afro-American spousal SROK is a result of the strong matrilineal and matrilocal traditions in Afro-American communities[7] that provide women with support/justification for reacting violently to their partners' abuse. The researchers also associate the low number of women who kill their spouses in an African study (4 women versus 70 men = SROK of 6) and in two East Indian studies (0 women versus 20 men; 0 women versus 14 men = SROKs of 0 in both studies) to the patrilineal and patrilocal cultures of these nations. Therefore, low spousal SROKs in Africa and India are a result of women lacking support networks that: a) identify wife abuse as wrong and b) encourage the use of violence to end or, at the very least, retaliate against abusive husbands.

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[7]Afro-American women constitute 87% of the female spouse killers in the Chicago dataset and Afro-American men constitute 68% of the male spouse killer in the Chicago dataset.

There are several problems with testing the subculture of violence thesis. First, researchers typically lack indicators of norms or attitudes that establish the existence of violent subcultures (Block and Block,1991). Second, "if an observed correlation between an antecedent and crime rates can be shown to be accounted for by a structural condition that can be empirically measured, it obviates the needs to advance conjectures about cultural influences that cannot be demonstrated" (Blau and Blau,1982:118). Third, according to Block and Block (1991), people who believe violence is acceptable are often confused with those who believe a certain level of violence is *unavoidable* in modern life. Finally, Harris (1977) argues that because women are more disadvantaged than men, the subculture of violence thesis predicts that women will have higher homicide rates than men; a prediction that is empirically unsubstantiated.

Simons, Wu, Johnson and Conger (1995) are the first researchers to test the *parenting* and *family roles* strains of the intergenerational transmission of violence thesis (ITV) on mothers and fathers. The purpose of their study is to explore whether adults who witnessed or were abused as children also use violence in their familial interactions. The researchers utilize data from four waves of a panel study, The Iowa Youth and Families Project, involving 325 mothers and 320 fathers who were first recruited in 1989 and are studied annually. While the authors test several hypotheses generated by ITV, I concentrate on the one most pertinent to homicidal women. Simons et al. find that mothers' physical aggression persists over time and that the effect is strong and significant: over two waves or two years, the correlation between a mother's harsh discipline of her

children is .61 and against her spouse is .50.[8] The study's findings reveal that the *family roles* version of ITV which claims that adults who were abused as children are likely to engage in violent interactions with both their children and their spouses is applicable to women. Furthermore, the study is important because it supports the notion that, in some homes, women's use of violence is habitual and may, on occasion, become fatal.

The greatest difficulty with ITV research is its reliance on self-reports of abuse; self reports involve a subjective component and thus may include non-abusive events or under-report abusive ones. Subjects who are asked to recall violence in their childhood may have repressed some of the incidents or simply cannot remember all occurrences due to its frequency or because the abuse happened so long ago. As well, subjects may not report some incidents because they do not define the actions (e.g., a push or a shove) as abusive and may not be aware that certain behaviour constitutes emotional, physical, or verbal abuse. Finally, as noted by Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1993), advocates of the Battered Husband's Syndrome argue that men are less likely to admit abuse by their wives because it may emasculate and embarrass them.

2. Homicide and Economic/Racial Inequality (Strain)

While there is ample evidence that the majority of homicidal women are unemployed, have unsteady job histories and are in the lowest socioeconomic brackets (Wolfgang,1958; Totam,1978; Weisheit,1986; Dallam,1987; Goetting,1988; Robertson, Bankier, and Schwartz,1987; Hatch and Faith,1989; Jurik and Winn,1990; Rosenbaum,

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[8]The p value is set a .05 throughout this study.

1990; Daly, 1994; Lawrence,1994; Mann,1996), few studies actually test the association between economic/racial inequality and women's homicidal behaviour.

An exception to this rule is Hagan's (1985) work. Noting the high rates of violent crime perpetrated by native Canadian women, Hagan (1985) predicts that the gender-crime relationship is suppressed among minorities and that the race-crime relationship is suppressed among men. Hagan combines data on all offenders admitted to Ontario jails during 1979-80 and Winnipeg arrest statistics for 1974 with relevant census figures to calculate race/sex rates and ratios of offending for each jurisdiction. The author finds that the non-native sex ratio is larger than the total native sex ratio and that the total female race ratio is higher than the total male race ratio and for both datasets. Hagan argues that both of these suppression effects are a result of the structural positions occupied by non-native and native women. While both groups are restricted from full social and economic participation, non-native women are less disadvantaged than native women (Hagan, 1985:136). Therefore, structural differences and varying levels of oppression among women are reflected in their crime rates and help to explain why the difference between native and non-native crime rates is greater among women than men and why the difference between male and female offending is greater among native than non-native peoples.

Unlike Hagan, whose work more closely tests the Blaus' (1982) racial/economic inequality hypothesis, Mann (1996) tests two basic versions of the strain model with a random sample of 296 women arrested for homicide between 1979-83 in six American cities. The first version draws on the frustration-aggression hypothesis -- the stresses and

strains of unemployment, especially in urban areas, frustrate some women and this frustration eventually builds into homicidal rage. According to Mann, this hypothesis is particularly relevant to domestic homicides as women are most likely to vent these frustrations on those closest to them -- their partners and their children. However, Mann finds that employment does not significantly differentiate women who commit domestic versus non-domestic homicide and that domestic killers in her sample are actually more frequently employed (37%) than non-domestic killers (21%). The second version of strain theory that Mann tests focuses on the economic motivations of women who engage in instrumental homicides; that is, the killing of others for economic gain. Mann reports reserved support for this version of strain as the homicidal women in her sample are significantly more likely to kill strangers (23%) than friends (4%) or acquaintances (4%) for economic benefit and do so in the classic instrumental homicide drama: killing their victims without provocation, in a public place, with accomplices and by gun shot.

Similar to studies in the biogenic tradition, researchers testing strain hypotheses often have difficulty in operationalizing key concepts (e.g., strain or economic inequality) and thus produce inconsistent findings. Golden and Messner (1987) point out, for example, that SES-based measures (a combination of income and education levels) of economic inequality are more effective than measures based solely on income. However, Blishen, Carroll and Moore (1987:473) argue that SES-based measures merely "describe inequality in the technical division of labour" and are unable to capture the influence of social relations (gender and race politics) on the relative deprivation of one person to another. The impact of these social relations on inequality may be most relevant in

versions of strain that explore the interdependent effects of race, gender, and class oppression (i.e., Blau and Blau,1982; Simpson,1991). Finally, Corzine and Corzine (1992:160) point out that homicide research within the strain tradition:

> is intertwined with several methodological issues, including the proper units of analysis for macrolevel research and the appropriate solutions for multicollinearity and influential cases. Attaining consistency in research results is partially dependent on investigators reaching a consensus on these methodological questions.

3. Homicide and Character Contests

Although Totam's (1978) work does not test the character contest model, her work supports Luckenbill's thesis: the majority of the 50 homicidal women Totam interviewed at a state prison in California killed as a result of an affront made to their identities as mothers and spouses. The only study that directly tests Luckenbill's (1977) work is Jurik and Gregware's (1992) investigation of the applicability of the impression management model to 43 cases of women convicted of murder or manslaughter in Maricopa County, Arizona in 1979-84.[9] The researchers began by coding each case according to Luckenbill's script for homicidal dramas: 1) victim issues an offensive move; 2) offender retaliates with verbal/physical challenges to save face; 3) a working agreement is struck that the victim will use violence to answer the attack; and 4) a battle ensues resulting in the death of the victim. Jurik and Gregware find that only 35% of the cases they study follow the first two acts of Luckenbill's script; many of the women or offenders (44%) issue a move that the victim interprets as offensive and it is the victim rather than the offender who reacts to save face. With regard to establishing working agreements, the

[9]The actual population of women convicted of murder in Maricopa County is 50 (1979-1987) but only 43 cases had sufficient information in the presentence reports to conduct the study.

researchers find that all cases involve this aspect of the homicide drama. However, Jurik and Gregware (1992:187) argue that the concept of working agreements "may under-emphasize the one-sided manner in which men often initiate violence against women". Finally, in 53% of the cases the ensuing battle entails self-defense rather than face-saving measures, although both strategic and face-saving measures are cited in 12% of the female-perpetrated homicides.

Jurik and Gregware conclude that interactionists diminish the strategic dimension of female-perpetrated homicide; a large proportion of women who kill, kill in retaliation to victim-precipitated violence rather than to save face. Furthermore, the authors contend that interactionists study only the pivotal event leading up to the murder. This time frame is too limiting as previous verbal/physical altercations are often key precipitating factors when women kill. In 65% of the Maricopa County cases involving female killers, there is a past history of violence between the offender and victim and in 12% of the cases women kill their victims (particularly their partners) hours or days after the initial fight, often waiting until the victims are incapacitated (e.g., drunk or asleep).

Mann (1996) also questions the applicability of Luckenbill's thesis to homicidal women. In particular, Mann takes issue with Luckenbill's notion that bystanders play a key role in the homicide drama because they often encourage the offender and victim to establish a working agreement that violence must be used. First, most of the women in Mann's sample (82%) killed alone or without the presence of bystanders. According to Mann, face-saving measures imply the need to rectify one's humiliation in front of others and should not be a factor in homicides involving only the victim and the offender.

Second, Mann notes that even when bystanders are present, they do not "instigate, escalate or "egg on" the female homicide offender, actions that are more common in male *intragender* victim-offender situations (Mann,1996:62)."

4. Homicide and Routine Activities (RAT)

In their examination of national crime rates for 1947-1974, Cohen and Felson (1979) find a positive and significant relationship between non-negligent homicide and non-household routine activities as well as an increased likelihood of stranger victimization in the United States. In their review of other routine activity studies, Meithe, Stafford, and Long (1987) and Forde (1992) confirm Cohen and Felson's work; RAT best predicts instrumental rather than expressive violence and homicidal victimization at the hands of strangers rather than intimates. These results question RAT's applicability to homicidal women as research indicates that women usually commit expressive violence against intimates in the private sphere (Wolfgang,1958; Ward, Jackson, and Ward,1979; Wilbanks,1983; Mann,1996).

The only empirical work that draws on RAT for predicting female-perpetrated homicide is Brownstein, Spunt, Crimmins, Goldstein, and Langley's (1994) study. The researchers divide their sample of nine women incarcerated in New York into three categories reflecting the importance of drugs and alcohol as a factor in precipitating their homicidal behaviour. The first category, psychopharmacological, involves cases in which offenders/victims ingested alcohol and the ensuing arguments are fatal. The second category, systemic, includes cases which occur in the course of the offenders' or victims' involvement in the drug industry as users, pushers, dealers, or traffickers. The final

category, economic compulsive, involves addicts who kill needing money for a drug fix. Brownstein et al. argue that women's increasing use of and employment in the drug industry shifts their routine activities from the private to the public sphere which in turn is correlated to shifts in their homicidal behaviour. Specifically, they predict a decline in the proportion of murders committed against abusive partners and an increase in the proportion of murders committed against strangers.

5. Homicide and Victim-Precipitated Violence

Studies illustrating the relationship between victim-precipitated violence and women's homicidal behaviour are numerous and often concentrate on women who kill their spouses. The concept of victim-precipitated violence is widely attributed to Wolfgang's (1958) study of 588 murders recorded by police in Philadelphia between 1948-1952. Wolfgang documents that wives killed their husbands in 45% of the 105 female-perpetrated homicides and that in 28 or 60% of these cases, the women were provoked by their partners. Goetting (1987;1989) found a similar pattern in her comparison of all spousal homicides in Detroit (11% of all homicides in that city) perpetrated by men (N=28) and women (N=56) for 1982-1983. According to Goetting, the most notable difference between male and female spouse killers is that 71% of the women and only 10% of the men killed as a result of their spouses instigating the violence. Foster, Veale and Fogel (1989) located a sample of 12 female spouse killers and note that 75% of these women cite victim-precipitated violence. Finally, Mann (1996) finds that victim-precipitated violence is a major contributing factor to female homicidal behaviour as 66% of the cases in her study involve women reacting to a victim's use of violence. Furthermore, Mann reports

that victim-precipitated violence significantly differentiates female-perpetrated spousal (88%) and non-spousal homicides (49%).

Another aspect of the victim-precipitated violence thesis concerns the victim's and offender's substance use. Utilizing a portion of her larger sample, Mann (1990) compares 96 women who killed drunk/stoned to 137 who killed sober. Although she finds no statistically significant differences between the study groups, the data contradict her assumption that drug-related murders would reflect a drug deal gone wrong (e.g., murders involving non-intimates who are killed undeliberately and in the heat of an argument). In comparison to alcohol users, drug users are less likely to kill strangers and to claim self defense or premeditation. Mann also predicts that homicidal drug users would form a "marginal offending population, possibly in a subculture with criminal underpinning" (Mann,1990: 102). This assumption is supported by the data as drug users are more likely to kill men with previous arrest records than either alcohol users or women who killed sober. In a later work utilizing her complete sample, Mann (1996:168) notes that victims' alcohol rather than drug use plays a major and significant role in female-perpetrated homicide. Mann finds that victims who were drunk (56%) were more likely to precipitate their deaths than those who were sober (44%), whereas victims who were stoned were less likely to instigate their own deaths (only 8% of victims who had used drugs died in victim-precipitated murder). Furthermore, women who drank prior to the homicide (79%) were more likely to encounter victim-precipitated violence than women who were stoned prior to the offense (33%).

Unlike the above study, Blount, Silverman, Sellers, and Seese (1994) examine the effects of alcohol and drug use specifically on battered women. First, they drew a sample of 42 women convicted of intimate homicide in Florida and compared it to 59 battered women residing in three Florida shelters. The only statistically significant differences between the groups with regard to demographic information are race (40% vs. 70% Caucasian),[10] attitudes about the importance of religion (90% vs. 60%) and the number of children (1.5 vs. 2.5). Other significant home life indicators include the subject's sexual abuse after twelve (7% vs. 21%), mother's abuse by father (for subject 29% vs. 49%; for her spouse 19% vs. 40%), and partner's abuse as a child (31% vs. 50%). Finally, five of the substance use variables are significant (partner/subject alcohol use, subject's IV/ marijuana use and her parents' drug use). The researchers construct a stepwise discriminate analysis containing the significant demographic and home life indicators in the first step and the significant alcohol/drug use variables in the second step. All of the indicators loaded into the model are significant except for abuse of subject's mother by father and subject's marijuana use which approaches significance at $p < .06$. Once all of the home life and demographic variables are controlled, Blount et al. find that in comparison to the shelter group, the women convicted of homicide drank more heavily (64% vs. 44%) as did their spouses (62% vs. 34%), and are more likely to use marijuana (24% vs. 8%) and IV drugs (10% vs. 0%). The authors conclude that the alcohol/drug use by women and their spouses in the homicide group differentiates them from women in the shelters, even though some of the variance is due to demographic and home life variables.

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[10]Read the information in the brackets as homicide versus shelter sample.

6. Homicide and Overcontrolled Personalities

Similar to other studies in the sociogenic tradition, Weisheit (1986) concludes his work with explanations for the patterns he finds in his sample of homicidal women rather than testing a set of research hypotheses. Weisheit's (1986) sample consists of 39 women incarcerated for killing their children in Illinois from 1940-66 (N=25) and 1981-83 (N=14). He explains their homicidal behaviour with Megargee's (1977) concept of over- and under-controlled personalities. Weisheit finds that 62% of women in the first group killed their newborns; a statistic that leads Weisheit to conclude that child killers in the first half of this century may have had overregulated personalities. These women's obsessive concerns over the stigma and shame resulting from illegitimate pregnancies motivate them to kill their newborns. In comparison, none of the cases perpetrated from 1981 to 1983 involve the killing of a child at birth. According to Weisheit, this group of female child killers appears to have underregulated personalities, although only one case description is provided to support this claim. Another sweeping conclusion Weisheit makes is that the diminishing number of overregulated child killers over time indicates that a category of female offenders may have been eliminated by the greater accessibility of abortions.

Although Silverman and Kennedy (1988) do not draw on Megargee, their findings are similar to Weisheit's: women who kill newborns are under great psychological stress due to unwanted pregnancies and their immaturity ill equips them for motherhood (over-controlled personalities) whereas women who kill children between the ages of 1-18 are responding to habitual behaviour, child abuse, that on this occasion became fatal (under-controlled personalities). Silverman et al. use national homicide data to collect a sample of

infanticidal mothers (N=45) arrested between 1974-1983 and non-infanticidal mothers (N=230) arrested between 1961-1983 in Canada. The authors hypothesize that infanticidal mothers are younger, less mature and have fewer parenting skills than non-infanticidal mothers; this is confirmed by their data. Specifically, the authors find that infanticidal mothers are younger (69% are < 21 and 30% are < 17) and more likely to be single at the time of the offense (69%) than non-infanticidal mothers (only 12 are <21 and 11% are single).[11] The authors also note that non-infanticidal (22%) women are more likely to kill by beating than infanticidal mothers (13%), indicating the likelihood that non-infanticidal mothers commit fatal child abuse. Silverman et al. conclude that their research confirms previous work in the field: women who kill infants have different motivations from those who kill children. According to the researchers, these findings point to the danger in assuming female-perpetrated homicide is a monolithic act and that one theoretical framework will explain the homicidal behaviour of all women. Thus, while the literature on developmental psychology is helpful for infanticidal women, studies on child abuse may be more suitable for understanding and explaining what motivates non-infanticidal women.

Conclusions

What emerges clearly from the empirical literature is a demographic profile of women who kill and the crimes they commit, a profile that remains robust after reviewing both Canadian and American studies using a variety of methods and samples. Homicidal women are generally in their late twenties and early thirties, married with 1-2 children, poorly educated, of low SES, unemployed or under-employed, and living (or have) in

[11] Silverman and Kennedy (1988) use marital status to measure level of maturity. It is unclear to me how marriage necessitates maturity, particularly in those who marry very young.

abusive situations. Furthermore, Aboriginal Canadian and Afro-American women are over-represented in official homicide statistics. In terms of the crime, women most often kill intimates (children or male spouses of the same ethnicity) in their homes on weekend evenings using either a gun or a knife and are usually sole perpetrators reacting to victim-precipitated violence.

Although this profile is useful in grounding the descriptive information I collect, there are enormous limitations to this body of literature. First, because the studies are predominantly exploratory, atheoretical and cross-sectional, they fail to provide etiological explanations for women's homicidal behaviour and offer few clues as to why this behaviour may change over time. Second, some of the studies lump all homicides into one category, ignoring theoretically important differences in victim-offender relationships, homicide locations and circumstances of the crime. Recognizing these limitations in the empirical literature on homicidal women, I propose several research hypotheses that test whether theoretical differences in victims, locations and circumstances are indeed statistically significant differences. Furthermore, by utilizing a dataset that includes ninety years of women's homicidal behaviour, I will be able to test the predictive power of these hypotheses over time. The research hypotheses I developed are introduced in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS

In this chapter, I introduce my research hypotheses and design. Drawing on both the theoretical and empirical literature on homicidal women, I developed three sets of hypotheses that provide specific rather than general explanations and estimate individual rather than aggregate-level homicidal behaviour. Thus, the research hypotheses predict the likelihood of a woman killing: a particular kind of victim (intimate versus non-intimate) as a result of a certain type of circumstance (expressive versus instrumental)[1] in a specific location (public versus private sphere). Using a secondary dataset that provides offender, victim and event information on a population of homicidal women, I run several logit regression models to explore the research hypotheses I have developed.

Research Hypotheses

As illustrated by Gartner and McCarthy (1991), there are two conventional perspectives on homicidal behaviour: opportunity and motivational. The former perspective identifies situational and structural factors (i.e., routine activities that occur away from home and away from capable guardians) that provide motivated offenders with opportunities to commit homicide. The basic argument of the latter perspective "is that people kill others whom they feel threatened by or in competition with over scarce and valued resources. These threats may be status, reputational or economic; similarly, competition may be over material or less tangible resources" (Gartner and McCarthy, 1991:289). For the most part, opportunity theorists focus on predicting opportunities to commit instrumental murder against non-intimates in public places, whereas motivational

[1] I define expressive homicides as those committed out of passion whereas instrumental homicides are committed to acquire money, goods (i.e., drugs), or to secure territory in an illegal business venture.

theorists concentrate on expressive homicidal behaviour directed toward intimates in the private sphere. Of the three sets of hypotheses I have developed, the first two incorporate insights from the opportunity perspective and the last set draws on the motivational perspective. Furthermore, the hypotheses make predictions about women's homicidal behaviour in relation to victim type, circumstance and location and how this behaviour may change over time.

Legal Activities

The first set of hypotheses explore the link between women's labour force participation and their homicidal behaviour. Cohen and Felson's (1979) routine activity theory and Adler's (1975) masculinity thesis posit that women's involvement in the work force will influence the kinds of victims, as well as the circumstances and locations of homicide they commit. Specifically, working women's increased interaction in the non-domestic sphere provides them with greater access to suitable targets with low levels of guardianship, the conditions most conducive to committing direct predatory or instrumental crimes against non-intimates. The following hypotheses capture predictions derived from the *Legal Activities* perspective:

#1 Homicidal working women are more likely to kill non-intimates;
#2 Homicidal working women are more likely to commit instrumental murders;
#3 Homicidal working women are more likely to kill in the public sphere.

Illegal Activities

While the first set of hypotheses focus on opportunities resulting from women's increased participation in the legitimate business world, the second set of hypotheses predict the results of women's involvement in the criminal world. Brownstein, Spunt,

Crimmins, Goldstein, and Langley (1994) and Mann (1992)[2] contend that women's homicidal behaviour is related to participation in criminal activities. Specifically, these theorists posit that illegal business ventures such as the sex trade or the trafficking/pushing of drugs increase women's access to and involvement with non-intimates outside of the home. Furthermore, this contact revolves around monetary or instrumental concerns that may need to be defended with force (e.g., a drug trafficker's or prostitute's defense of their territory). Finally, these theorists contend that women engaged in illegal businesses often have access to illegal substances that further precipitate homicidal behaviour. The following hypotheses capture predictions derived from the *Illegal Activities* perspective:

#1 Homicidal women involved in illegal activities are more likely to kill non-intimates;
#2 Homicidal women involved in illegal activities are more likely to commit instrumental murders;
#3 Homicidal women involved in illegal activities are more likely to kill in the public sphere.

Strain

The final set of hypotheses explore the background stressors that motivate women's homicidal behaviour. Simon and Landis (1991) and Simpson (1991) argue that women of low SES experience high levels of strain as their goals of material success, independence, and stability are blocked. Thus, strain incorporates the tensions women encounter as a result of the feminization of poverty, the ghettoization of women in low-paying, part-time jobs, and workplace discrimination. When combined with homelife stressors such as step children and wife abuse, high levels of strain induce frustration and aggression. Women of low SES are more likely than others to alleviate or cope with their

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[2]In her analysis of 25 violent female offenders incarcerated in New Haven during 1981-86, Daly (1994) finds that the majority engaged in illegal business and leisure activities.

strain by reacting violently and targeting those with whom they reside. The following hypotheses summarize individual-level predictions of the *Strain* approach:

#1 Homicidal women of low SES are more likely to kill intimates;
#2 Homicidal women of low SES are more likely to commit expressive murders;
#3 Homicidal women of low SES are more likely to kill in the domestic sphere.

In way of summation, Table 4.1 outlines each theoretical approach and its predictions regarding the victims, circumstances, and locations of women's homicidal offending as well as the key indicator of this behaviour. The *Legal Activities* model posits a relationship between women's homicidal behaviour and their increased labour force participation: women who kill strangers in venues outside of the home for instrumental reasons are more likely to be employed outside of the home. The *Illegal Activities* model states that women's involvement in instrumental murders against strangers in public places

Table 4.1. Predictions Regarding Female Homicidal Behaviour

Theoretical Approach	*Kind of Victim*	*Type of Circumstance*	*Location of Homicide*	*Key Factor*
Legal Activities Adler, 1975 Cohen and Felson, 1989	Non-Intimate	Instrumental	Public	Labour Force Participation
Illegal Activities Mann, 1992 Brownstein et al., 1994	Non-Intimate	Instrumental	Public	Sex and Drug Trade
Strain Simon and Landis, 1991 Simpson, 1991	Intimate	Expressive	Private	Low SES

is correlated to their involvement in the sex or drug trade. Finally, the *Strain* model predicts that women's socioeconomic position is related to their homicidal behaviour; women of low SES are more likely to kill intimates in the domestic sphere as a means of alleviating stress (expressive homicide dramas).

Predictions Over Time

Both of the above opportunity theories predict that women's involvement in direct predatory homicide increases over time. *Legal Activities* theorists argue that women's access to suitable, unguarded targets in the public sphere was blocked until the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s released women from the cloistered private sphere. *Legal Activities* theorists assert that although women's motivations to commit homicide are constant over time, their participation in the paid labour force provides new-found opportunities to commit a type of homicide that once had been the domain of men. Thus, the proportion of female-perpetrated homicide cases involving non-intimates should be lower for decades prior to the 1970s. *Illegal Activities* theorists contend that women have increasingly become involved in criminal activities and in particular the drug trade. According to Brownstein et al. (1994), forms of illicit substances that can be manufactured in cottage industries such as crack cocaine, hashish or marijuana have allowed women, since the late 1960s and early 1970s, to make in-roads into male-dominated drug markets. As women increasingly become traffickers and dealers, their opportunities to engage in direct predatory offenses likewise increase (e.g., disputes over territory or money owed for a fix). Therefore, prior to the 1970s, the proportion of women who killed non-intimates for instrumental reasons as opposed to intimates in expressive homicide dramas should be lower than the post 1970s.

Unlike opportunity theorists, proponents of the strain approach are at odds about whether female-perpetrated homicide will increase over time. On the one hand, Simon asserts that the by-products of the women's liberation movement, economic stability and

self-sufficiency, allow women to leave violent relationships and alleviate some of the tensions of domestic life (Simon and Landis,1991). Simon maintains that women will commit fewer violent offenses, particularly the killing of intimates at home and out of passion, because their socioeconomic position has improved. On the other hand, proponents of the economic marginalization thesis (Messerschmidt,1986; Radosh, 1990; Simpson,1991) argue that women's involvement in violent crime will increase due to the current absence of legitimate employment opportunities and women's decreasing SES. Combined with the added number of female-headed households dependent on the state, the feminization of poverty has exacerbated the strain in women's lives such that violent crime more frequently becomes an outlet for women's frustrations and their targets are those closest to them -- their partners and their children (Ogle, Maier-Katlin and Bernard,1995).

The above disagreement among strain theorists revolves around the percentage of women who kill intimates, at home, in expressive homicides; Simon contends that the proportion of expressive homicides committed by lower-class women will decrease, whereas Simpson argues that the proportion will increase over time. Similarly, proponents of the opportunity approach contend that the percentage of women committing direct predatory offenses is increasing. However, all three theories claim that the effects of their key theoretical variables will remain constant over time. Regardless of the decade, strain theorists agree that women of low SES are more likely than their wealthier counterparts to commit homicide and opportunity theorists argue that women who are legally employed outside of the home or those who are involved in the sex/drug trade are more likely to

engage in homicidal behaviour than unemployed women or those that refrain from illegal activities. The purpose of my study is not to test whether the proportion of instrumental versus expressive female-perpetrated homicides is changing over time, but whether the effects of the theories' key variables are stable for nine decades of female homicide offending.

Dataset

I analyze the predictive power of the above research hypotheses with a dataset originally collected by Dr. Rosemary Gartner and Dr. Bill McCarthy (Gartner and McCarthy,1991). The data include all homicides known to police and public health officials in Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia for the years 1900-1990. The researchers used police files, archives and daily newspapers to collect demographic information on homicide victims and offenders and, descriptive information on the homicide events. Data collection began with the consent of the Toronto police department in the spring of 1989 and ended in the fall of 1990; the Vancouver data were collected during 1990-1991. Gartner and McCarthy include only those cases that fit their definition of homicide as the "intentional use of force against a person that results in the death of a person" (Gartner and McCarthy,1996:5). Therefore, the dataset does not include deaths related to abortion, vehicular accidents, nor negligent manslaughter.

Procedures

The researchers were first granted access to chief's reports and other documents of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department, Homicide Division. Supplemental information was provided by annual reports of the Toronto Police Department and the

Ontario Archives. Finally, the researchers used Toronto's daily newspapers to gather data on cases for which only partial information was gleaned from official records. In Vancouver, the researchers were given access to case files of the Vancouver Major Crimes Division that contained information on all homicides investigated by police detectives between 1960-1990. They also were granted permission to review case files housed in the Vancouver police museum that contained summary information on all Vancouver homicides for the years 1900-1953. To supplement this information, police case summaries for 1930-1959, transcripts of police court cases for 1903-1923 and police court calendars for 1900-1935 were also located in the Vancouver Provincial Archives. Finally, the researchers collected data from Vancouver daily newspapers gaining information on cases that were sketchy in the police files.

The coding scheme used by Gartner and McCarthy is primarily categorical and includes demographic information on victims and offenders such as sex, age, marital status, number of children, employment status and type, education, ethnicity, prior arrests and substance abuse. In terms of the homicide event, the researchers collected information on the time, year, location, victim-offender relationship, method, and circumstance. The variable, method, recorded the way that the victim was murdered such as gun shot or stab wound and the variable, circumstance, combined the researcher's assessment of motive and situational factors leading to the homicide (i.e., self-defense, quarrel, robbery). I have attached the coding scheme used by Gartner and McCarthy as Appendix 1.

There are several advantages to using an existing dataset not the least being that it conserves time and money. Second, important regional variations in Canadian homicide patterns may be captured by comparing Vancouver and Toronto cases.[3] Third, the ninety years of homicide data incorporate several important social landmarks that theorists predict are relevant to changes in women's homicidal behaviour including the introduction of divorce and abortion laws as well as the women's liberation movement. Moreover, the small number of women killers in Canada requires a dataset that is large enough to provide a sufficient N.

There are, however, some limitations to this dataset. First, generalizability of the study may be limited as the cases are all urban and inferences may differ from those in small cities and rural communities. Second, there are missing cases due in part to misdiagnosis or under-reporting by official sources. Infanticides, particularly in the early part of the century, are a case in point. Infant deaths caused by abuse or negligence were often listed by medical examiners as accidental "if no obvious signs of injury or an offender came forward" (Gartner and McCarthy,1996:6).[4] As noted by Gartner and McCarthy, the problem of missing cases lessens over time due to improved police and medical procedure; nonetheless, police records continue to under-report justifiable homicides including deaths committed in self-defense or caused by police officers while at work.[5] Third, several cases were so sketchy that variables were left blank. Although a

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[3]Forde (1992) notes that the higher homicide rates in Western Canada may be due to regional subcultures or aggregate structural factors such as unemployment, levels of transiency, alcohol abuse and divorce.
[4]These missing cases may be significant to female offending as previous empirical studies note that roughly 20% of women kill their children (Ward et al.,1979; Silverman and Kennedy,1988).
[5]The former may be problematic as empirical studies indicate that women are likely to kill in self-defense, however, the latter is less significant of a problem as women have only recently been hired as police officers.

problem, the researchers note that variables such as victim-offender relationship and homicide event, particularly relevant to my investigation, are well coded. Fourth, information on several theoretically important variables could not be systematically collected. For example, police homicide records rarely contain information on past experiences of spousal violence, victim-precipitation, previous marital problems or the presence of step-children. Finally, Gartner and McCarthy admit that some of the unreliability and invalidity of the dataset may be due to inaccuracies in coding and data entry. Moreover, they sometimes made judgment calls on certain variables, most specifically race and motive, when official records either neglected to state relevant offender characteristics or provided contradictory information.

Population

For the purposes of my research, I focus exclusively on homicides committed by female offenders. In Toronto and Vancouver for the years 1900-1990 there are 266 known female offenders; these women killed 297 people. Therefore, there are 297 homicide events that I examine in this dataset.

Variables

Independent Variables: I operationalize the *Legal Activities* model using the variable, offender's employment status. In order to compare homicidal women whose lifestyles revolve around the home to those whose lifestyles involve predominantly public sphere activities, I dichotomize the *Legal Activities* variable as 0=Not employed or homemaker; and 1=Employment outside of the home. I use information on the offender's involvement in criminal activities to operationalize the *Illegal Activities* model. I code this

independent variable as 0=Uninvolved in illegal activities and 1=Involved in the sex or drug trade. Finally, I operationalize the *Strain* model using the variables offender's employment status and job type to approximate socioeconomic status. SES is measured on a six point scale ranging from low to high: 0=Unemployed, 1=Irregular income, 2=Homemaker, 3=Labourer, 4=Service worker, 5=Low skilled, white collar worker, 6=High skilled, white collar worker and professional.

Controls: I control for the effect of several independent variables. I introduce offender's age, a continuous variable, as researchers expect age to shape women's legal and illegal activities as well as their socioeconomic status (Gartner and McCarthy,1991). Theorists from several perspectives (Totam,1978; Piers,1978; Weisheit,1983; Silverman and Kennedy,1989) contend that there is a positive relationship between the number of children in a household, a mother's stress and her financial instability -- factors strain theorists link to women's homicidal behaviour; thus, I also control for number of children, a continuous variable.

I introduce controls for marital status because theorists (Browne,1989; Foster, Mann-Veale and Ingram-Fogel,1989; Stout,1991) argue that some women's homicidal behaviour is in retaliation to violence initiated by male intimates and that this violence escalates in severity and frequency upon divorce or separation. Furthermore, opportunity theorists (Cohen and Felson,1979; Brownstein et al.,1994) maintain that homicidal single women are more likely to engage in public sphere activities that increase proximity to unguarded, suitable targets. For these reasons, I coded marital status into three dummy variables: 1=Divorced or separated; 1=Single; and 1=Married (0=all others in each

variable). I include the first two variables in my analysis and use the third as the comparison group.

Among others, Mann (1989) finds that non-Caucasian women (particularly Afro-Americans) are over-represented in American crime statistics while Laprairie (1993) and Hagan (1985) find similar results with regard to aboriginal women in Canadian crime statistics. In response to these findings, I constructed three dummy measures of ethnicity: 1=Aboriginal; 1=Other Minorities (Asian, East Indian, Afro-Canadian, and Middle-Eastern); and 1=Caucasians (all others categories in each variable are coded as zero). I include the first two variables in my analysis and use the third as the comparison group.

Finally, I also include dichotomous measures of substance use (1=Substance Use, 0=Non User), prior criminal record (1=Criminal Record, 0=No Such Record) and psychological record (1=Psychological Record, 0=No Such Record). Mann (1990) and Blount, Silverman, Sellers, and Seese (1994) note that alcohol and/or drug use loosen women's inhibitions toward violence and Wilbanks (1982; 1983) argues that homicidal women are likely to have prior arrest records indicating a pattern of aggression. As well, proponents of the psychogenic approach (Widom,1978; Barnard, Vera, Vera and Newman,1982) argue that homicidal women may suffer from psychological disturbances.

Dependent Variables: I operationalize *Victim Type* using the variable victim-offender relationship; this is coded as 0=Non-intimates and 1=Intimates. The category non-intimates includes strangers, acquaintances, friends, business partners, and neighbours -- the victims opportunity theorists predict women are most likely to kill in public places for instrumental reasons. Only those victims that are related by birth or marriage to the

offenders are coded as intimates -- the victims strain theorists posit women are most likely to kill at home for expressive reasons.

Circumstance is operationalized using the variable circumstance. I coded this dependent variable as 0=Instrumental and 1=Expressive. Instrumental murders represent those committed during other crimes and/or business transactions (either legal or illegal) whereas expressive murders are crimes of passion committed under duress. Opportunity theorists expect that homicidal women commit instrumental murders against non-intimates in public places and strain theorists expect homicidal women commit expressive murders against intimates at home.

Finally, I use the variable location to operationalize *Location*; this is coded as 0=Public sphere and 1=Private sphere. According to proponents of the *Legal* and *Illegal Activities* models, public sphere murders occur in businesses, hotels, bars, parks or abandoned buildings and involve victims unknown to the offender. *Strain* theorists, on the other hand, claim that private sphere murders occur at the victim's and/or offender's home and usually involve victims known to the offender.

Data Analysis

I begin my analysis with a descriptive summary of the population. First, I provide victim and offender demographic information including age, education, SES, and marital status as well as data about the homicide event including method and circumstance. Second, I use case descriptions to give more detailed, personal information about the women's lives and to contextualize the homicide events. Third, as informed by the three theoretical approaches, I report the distributions of intimate versus non-intimate,

expressive versus instrumental, and public versus private homicides committed by women in this dataset. Finally, I compare the descriptive information for this dataset to others studies in the field.

Next, I conduct a series of logit analyses using the statistical package SPSS. I begin with bivariate logit models that test the relationship between the theoretically relevant variables and the kinds of victims, circumstances and locations of female-perpetrated homicide. I then use multivariate logit regression models to determine whether the relationships evident at the bivariate level remain robust after introducing control variables and competing explanations. Finally, I divide the dataset into two time frames (pre-1970 and post-1969) and re-run the analyses to determine the relevance of the theoretical variables over time. I decided to divide the dataset into two time frames for a variety of reasons. First, the pre-1970 and post-1969 design has been used on the same dataset by Gartner and McCarthy (1991) in their examination of femicides. Second, I expect by 1970 that the gains made in the previous decade from increased labour force participation, the feminist movement, and easier access to abortions and divorces were taking effect. Third, less than half of the 297 cases in the dataset fall in the pre-1970 time frame and the number of cases from 1900-1930 is especially small. Thus, the data cannot support an analysis of shorter time spans as there are simply too few cases.

I use logistic regression models because the dependent and most of the independent variables are dichotomous. For example, the dependent variable, circumstance, is coded as 0=Instrumental and 1=Expressive and the independent variable for *Legal Activities* theory is coded as 0=Unemployed or homemaker and 1=Employment

outside of the home. Unlike continuous variables, values less than 0 and greater than 1 have no meaning for the above variables and the purpose of regression in this case is to estimate the likelihood of falling into one or the other category. According to Agresti and Finlay (1986:482), using an ordinary least squares (OLS) model to estimate the relationship between categorical in/dependent variables 'implies that the probability of a "1" response is a linear function of X.' However, the assumption of linearity is violated when using categorical dependent variables and OLS models would result in non-nonsensical probabilities of lower than 0 and greater than 1. Furthermore, inference assumptions break down, "since the dichotomous response distributions are drastically different from normal distributions with constant standard deviation" (Agresti and Finlay, 1986:482). The latter problem is less of an issue for my study as I use a population rather than a sample.

According to Aldrich and Nelson (1984), one way of estimating the relationship between a dichotomous dependent and independent variable is to use non-linear probability models. The logit model, a form of non-linear probability models, uses logarithmic transformations to convert a non-linear, dichotomous relationship into a linear, continuous one. The advantage of using these transformations is that equations and coefficients similar to those in OLS models can be generated. Specifically, logit equations predict the natural logarithm of the odds of the dependent variable by the linear function of the independent variables and interaction effects. Odds are the frequency of one category of a variable compared with the frequency of another category and natural logarithms are the linear version of the logarithmic scale. Thus, they incorporate both elements of

probability and of linearity. Finally, in order to interpret the findings, I convert the logit estimates into either predicted probabilities or odd-ratios. For predicted probabilities, I use the following formula as detailed by Aldrich and Nelson: $P = e^{Zi} /(1 + e^{Zi})$, where P is the predicted probability, e is the base of the natural logarithms, and $Z_i = b_i x_i$. For odds ratios, I use the formula $(e^b-1) \times 100$, where e^b represents the antilogs of the logit coefficient (b). For continuous variables, comparisons refer to individuals who fall at either end of the continuum measured by the variable.

CHAPTER 5: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

One objective of this study is to improve our understanding of homicidal women, particularly in the Canadian context. Thus, this chapter presents a detailed summary of the backgrounds of offenders and their victims and it describes various features of the homicides women commit. In my discussion, I focus on key theoretical factors such as socioeconomic and employment status that may contribute to female-perpetrated homicide. I use three procedures to provide a profile of homicidal women in Toronto and Vancouver. First, I present frequencies and crosstabulations on several offender, victim and event variables. This information is summarized in Tables 5.1 through 5.3. Second, where applicable, I include qualitative data in the form of case descriptions; these highlight some of the statistical trends, contextualize the findings, and provide a glimpse into the lives of the research subjects. However, some of the scenarios I use do not reflect all of the patterns introduced in the demographic profile. The cases are provided as a way in which to highlight the variance among homicidal women (or how they might differ from this profile) and to elaborate on specific aspects of the offenders, victims and homicide events. Third, I explore the similarities and differences between the data I collected and those of other studies.

Throughout this chapter, I record the percentages for known cases (i.e., percentages that do not average missing cases across the entire population). The Gartner and McCarthy dataset is based on official records and these are often inconsistent in their recording of demographic information; thus, data are unavailable for several cases. Missing information is most noticeable for offender education and number of children, as

well as for the ethnicity of both offenders and victims. Furthermore, the number of missing cases is generally higher, regardless of the variable, in Vancouver rather than in Toronto. However, theoretically important variables such as victim-offender relationship, homicide location and homicide circumstance have fewer missing cases.

The Offenders

As indicated in Table 5.1, female homicide offenders from Toronto and Vancouver closely resemble one another on several demographic traits. First, although the range of ages was slightly larger for the Toronto population (13-66 versus 17-58)[1], the mean age of women killers in Toronto (172 known cases) was 33.3 and in Vancouver (79 known cases) it was 30.5. Second, most of the women had completed two or three years of high school, were married or in common-law relationships and had between 1-2 children. Third, in contrast to psychogenic theorists who argue that homicidal women have a history of psychological problems (i.e., mentally disturbed), few of the women had known psychological records (5.9% and 8.5%; 7 and 5 missing cases) or suicidal tendencies (15.5% and 10.5%; 4 vs. 2 missing cases). Fourth, roughly a third of the killers in both cities had arrest records. Finally, in both Toronto (77.2%; 11 cases missing) and Vancouver (52.4%; 6 cases missing), the majority of women did not appear to have used drugs or alcohol prior to their crimes. However, the Toronto population was less likely than that of Vancouver to use alcohol (22.8% versus 43.9%) and drugs (0% versus 3.7%) before the murders. The following case from 1960 is an example of the typical homicidal woman in this dataset:

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[1]The information in brackets refers first to Toronto and second to Vancouver.

> The offender was 36 years old and had completed Grade 8. She was married with one child, was a homemaker, and had no previous psychological or arrest records. Her daughter reports escalating arguments between her parents and an increase in her mother's drinking. The night of the homicide, the couple had been arguing and the offender was charged with murder after stabbing her husband to death.

Despite the aforementioned similarities, the populations differ on two major traits: ethnicity and job status. Whereas Toronto's homicidal women were over-whelmingly Caucasian (82.9%), the percentage of Caucasian killers in Vancouver was less prominent (46.5%) due to the over-representation of Aboriginal killers (4.6% versus 39.7%; 26 versus 30 missing cases). This over-representation of Aboriginal women in Vancouver is evident in other statistics: 60% of women with prior arrest records and 67% of women who used alcohol/drugs prior to the crime were Aboriginal. These trends were not apparent in Toronto; in that city, 75% of the women with prior criminal records and 97% of the women who had used alcohol/drugs before the crime were Caucasian. In either city, Aboriginal offenders were unique in that none attempted or committed suicide at the time of their crime whereas 93% of homicide-related suicides in Toronto and 60% in Vancouver involved Caucasian women.[2] Some of these patterns are evident in this 1916 case involving two Aboriginal women:

> In May, a woman was charged with the murder of her 35 year-old sister. They both had been drinking when an argument began over the way the dinner should be cooked. The offender maintained that the victim seized an axe and rushed towards her. In wrenching the axe away from the victim, the offender fatally slashed her sister.

The populations also varied with regard to job status, a key theoretical variable. In both cities, the majority of offenders were not involved in paid labour outside of the home;

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[2]The remaining 30% of homicidal women who committed suicide in Vancouver were of Non-Caucasian ethnic backgrounds including Asian and East Indian.

however, in Toronto most of these women were homemakers (39.2% versus 3.2%) whereas in Vancouver, they were unemployed (28.1% versus 67.8%; 25 versus 26 missing cases). The remaining women were legally employed (30.1% versus 17.1%) or worked in the illegal economy (2.6% versus 11.3%). According to opportunity theorists, unemployment or homemaking increases the likelihood of killing intimates in crimes of passion while employment outside of the home increases the potential of killing non-intimates in instrumental circumstances. Thus, given the patterns described above, we should expect that the majority of women killed intimates in expressive homicide dramas and only a small portion will have attacked non-intimates in instrumental offenses.

A more in-depth look into Vancouver's unemployed killers revealed that these women differed from other homicidal women in four respects: 1) 82% of women who took alcohol/drugs prior to the murder were unemployed; 2) 87% of women with prior arrest records were not working; 3) 67% of women with prior psychological records were out of work; and 4) 71% of women with suicidal tendencies were unemployed. The following case from 1982 reflects the typical unemployed Vancouver offender:

> The offender was a 27 year-old woman who was on social assistance. She had spent the afternoon drinking at a friend's home and was later joined by her common-law spouse. As it was getting late, the couple decided to go home. The hotel manager assisted the couple, who were very intoxicated, to their room and left to make the couple some tea. A few minutes later, the offender appeared at the manager's apartment claiming that her partner was dead. The manager found the victim lying face up across the bed having died from a single stab wound to the chest. The offender had been charged with murder three years earlier for having killed her then common-law husband by a stab wound.

Table 5.1. Descriptive Characteristics of Offenders

	Toronto (N=178)			Vancouver (N=88)		
Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**
Ethnicity						
Caucasian	126	82.9%	70.8%	27	46.5 %	30.7%
Aboriginal	7	4.6%	3.9%	23	39.7%	26.1%
Non-Caucasian	19	12.5%	10.7%	8	13.8%	9.1%
Missing	26	100%	14.6%	30	100%	34.1%
	178		100%	88		100%
Employment						
Legal	46	30.1%	25.8%	11	17.7%	12.5%
Illegal	4	2.6%	2.3%	7	11.3%	8.0%
Homemaker	60	39.2%	33.7%	2	3.2%	2.3%
Not Employed	43	28.1%	24.2%	42	67.8%	47.7%
Missing	25	100%	14.0%	26	100%	29.5%
	178		100%	88		100%
Marital Status						
Single	30	17.8%	16.9%	25	34.2%	28.4%
Married	112	66.7%	62.9%	43	59.0%	48.9%
Separated/Divorced	23	13.7%	12.9%	5	6.8%	5.7%
Widowed	3	1.8%	1.7%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Missing	10	100%	5.6%	15	100%	17.0%
	178		100%	88		100%
Prior Records						
None	99	57.8%	55.6%	49	59.0%	55.7%
Criminal	62	36.3%	34.8%	27	32.5%	30.7%
Psychological	10	5.9%	5.6%	7	8.5%	7.9%
Missing	7	100%	4.0%	5	100%	5.7%
	178		100%	88		100%
Suicidal						
No	147	84.5%	82.6%	77	89.5%	87.5%
Yes	27	15.5%	15.2%	9	10.5%	10.2%
Missing	4	100%	2.2%	2	100%	2.3%
	178		100%	88		100%
Substance Use						
None	129	77.2%	72.5%	43	52.4%	48.9%
Alcohol	38	22.8%	21.3%	36	43.9%	40.9%
Drugs	0	0.0%	0.0%	3	3.7%	3.4%
Missing	11	100%	6.2%	6	100%	6.8%
	178		100%	88		100%

Table 5.1. Descriptive Characteristics of Offenders, Continued

	Toronto (N=178)			Vancouver (N=88)		
Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**
Education						
Up to Grade 8	44	36.7%	24.7%	5	21.7%	5.7%
Grade 9+	76	63.3%	42.7%	18	78.3%	20.4%
Missing	58	100%	32.6%	65	100%	73.9%
	178		100%	88		100%
Number of Kids						
0	13	14.6%	7.3%	11	31.4%	12.5%
1-2	53	59.6%	29.8%	19	54.3%	21.6%
3+	23	25.8%	12.9%	5	14.3%	5.7%
Missing	89	100%	50.0%	53	100%	60.2%
	178		100%	88		100%

These trends noted for Vancouver's unemployed killers were not mirrored in Toronto. First, homemakers (34.3%) were just as likely as unemployed killers (34.3%) to use drugs/alcohol prior to their crimes. Second, while 57% of the women with suicidal tendencies were homemakers, only 11% of suicidal offenders were unemployed. Third, of the women who had prior psychological records, 70% were homemakers and 20% were unemployed. The only similarity to Vancouver was that unemployed women (42%) were more likely than (26%) homemakers, legally employed (25%) and illegally employed (7%) killers to have prior criminal records. An example of an employed killer is provided below; surprisingly, employed women were the second largest category of killers after homemakers in Toronto:

> In 1945, the offender, a 32 year-old foundry worker was drinking with her common-law partner. After sharing 3 bottles of wine, the offender wanted to go to the movies but the victim refused. Upset, she threw an orange at her partner and he, in turn, hit her with a fruit bowl. The offender then grabbed a 14 inch knife and stabbed the victim in the heart. The victim died in the offender's arms while she was crying, "I love you".

Another key theoretical variable is involvement in the criminal economy, particularly in the sex or drug trade. The *Illegal Activities* hypotheses predict that involvement in the criminal world will increase the likelihood of motivated offenders killing non-intimates in public places for instrumental reasons. Vancouver had more than four times the amount of killers who were illegally employed (2.6% versus 11.3%). Thus, we should expect that women in Vancouver were more likely than those in Toronto to kill non-intimates in public places due to instrumental circumstances. This pattern is suggested by a 1976 case in which a sex-trade worker was involved in a robbery and homicide:

> The offender, a prostitute, was seen pushing the victim over several times. The victim, an elderly man, eventually fell backwards and struck his head on the sidewalk. The offender then fled the scene after taking something from the victim's pocket. While the police apprehended the offender, the victim was rushed to the hospital where he underwent surgery from which he never recovered.

A final note regarding offenders: of the 266 killers in the dataset, only sixteen killed multiple victims. These sixteen women were responsible for the deaths of 47 people or 15.8% of the total number of victims killed. Specifically, fourteen of the 178 female offenders (8%) in Toronto and two of the 88 female offenders (2%) in Vancouver killed more than one victim. The number of multiple victims killed ranged from a low of two to a high of eight and the victims in these cases were predominantly children.

The Victims

Unlike offenders, victims in Toronto and Vancouver differ on several demographic traits. As indicated in Table 5.2, the mean age of victims in Toronto was a decade younger than in Vancouver, although the age range was slightly smaller in Toronto.

Specifically, of 203 known cases in Toronto, the mean age of victims was 34.2 and the ages ranged from birth to 86 years of age whereas, of the 84 known cases in Vancouver, the mean age was 24.3 and the ages ranged from birth to 90 years of age. Compared to offenders, Toronto victims were on average one year older whereas those in Vancouver were 6.3 years younger.

Most studies find that female-perpetrated homicide is intersexual. The Toronto and Vancouver data are consistent with this pattern as approximately two thirds of the victims in both cities were male. However, the gender distribution of child victims was surprising. Most studies report that mothers are more likely to kill female children,[3] whereas, in Toronto and Vancouver, mothers were more likely to kill male children. Of the 92 child victims in Toronto, 49 (53%; 5 missing cases) were male and of the 16 child victims in Vancouver, 10 were male (63%; 9 missing cases). However, while children represented 84% of the female victims in Toronto, children represented a smaller portion of all female victims in Vancouver; of the 18 female victims in Vancouver, 33% were children. A 1930 case illustrates a typical female-perpetrated homicide involving a child victim:

> An 11 day-old boy washed ashore near Kitsalano Bridge in Vancouver. The infant's mother was charged with murder after she confessed to putting her baby into the water. The cause of death was strangulation rather than drowning as the police had reason to believe the baby was already dead before he was thrown into the ocean.

Other gender-related differences include victims' substance use before their death and previous arrest records. The majority of victims in Toronto were sober at the time of

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[3]Silverman and Kennedy (1988) found that 57% of children killed by their mothers were female and Mann (1996) found that 60% of child victims killed by women were female. According to Mann these findings indicate the continued devaluation of female infants in North America.

Table 5.2. Descriptive Characteristics of Victims

	Toronto (N=206)			Vancouver (N=91)		
Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**	**Frequency**	**All Cases**	**Known Cases**
Sex						
Female	52	25.5%	25.2%	21	23.9%	23.1%
Male	152	74.5%	73.8%	67	76.1%	73.6%
Missing	2	100%	1.0%	3	100%	3.3%
	206		100%	91		100%
Ethnicity						
Caucasian	138	87.4%	67.0%	26	51.0%	28.5%
Aboriginal	1	0.6%	0.5%	13	25.5%	14.3%
Non-Caucasian	19	12.0%	9.2%	12	23.5%	13.2%
Missing	48	100%	23.3%	40	100%	44.0%
	206		100%	91		100%
Employment						
Legal	47	30.1%	24.3%	17	28.5%	19.8%
Illegal	3	1.8%	1.5%	5	8.0%	5.5%
Not Employed	116	68.1%	54.8%	41	63.5%	44.0%
Missing	40	100%	19.4%	28	100%	30.7%
	206		100%	91		100%
Marital Status						
Single	103	53.7%	50.0%	23	33.9%	25.3%
Married	74	38.5%	36.0%	28	41.2%	30.8%
Separated/Divorced	10	5.2%	4.8%	11	16.1%	12.1%
Widowed	5	2.6%	2.4%	6	8.8%	6.6%
Missing	14	100%	6.8%	23	100%	25.2%
	206		100%	91		100%
Prior Records						
None	174	87.4%	84.5%	67	78.8%	73.6%
Criminal	25	12.6%	12.1%	18	21.2%	19.8%
Missing	7	100%	3.4%	6	100%	6.6%
	206		100%	91		100%
Substance Use						
None	156	77.6%	75.7%	45	50.5%	49.5%
Alcohol	44	21.9%	21.4%	37	41.6%	40.7%
Drugs	1	0.5%	0.5%	7	7.9%	7.7%
Missing	5	100%	2.4%	2	100%	2.1%
	206		100%	91		100%

Table 5.2. Descriptive Characteristics of Victims, Continued

	Toronto (N=206)			Vancouver (N=91)		
Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**	**Frequency**	**All Cases**	**Known Cases**
V-O Relationship						
Spouse/Lover	76	37.7%	36.9%	24	28.8%	26.4%
Child	74	36.8%	35.9%	16	19.6%	17.6%
Other Relative	10	5.0%	4.9%	6	7.2%	6.5%
Business Relation	16	8.0%	7.8%	7	8.4%	7.7%
Friend/Acquaintance	19	9.5%	9.2%	24	28.8%	26.4%
No Relationship	6	3.0%	2.9%	6	7.2%	6.6%
Missing	5	100%	2.4%	8	100%	8.8%
	206		100%	91		100%

their murders (94% female and 72% male) whereas only the majority of female victims in Vancouver were sober (71% female versus 42% male). Second, male victims in both cities were more likely to have previous arrest records (15% and 25%) than female victims (6% and 14%), although the percentage of female victims with criminal records in Vancouver is only slightly lower than that of male victims in Toronto. In comparison to offenders, victims in both cities were less likely to have prior arrest records; however, this trend is more pronounced in Toronto.

In both cities, victims differed with regard to ethnicity as well as employment and marital status. The majority of victims were Caucasian (87.4% and 51%) and when compared to the ethnicity of offenders, two thirds of the homicides in both cities were intraracial. Nonetheless, the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples that characterizes Vancouver's offender statistics is also evident for victims: 25.5% of victims in Vancouver as compared to 0.6% in Toronto were Aboriginal (there were 158 cases in Toronto and 51 cases in Vancouver with information on this variable). Furthermore, victims in Toronto

were less likely than those in Vancouver to be married but more likely to be unemployed. Of the 192 known cases in Toronto, 38.5% of the victims were married and 68.1% (40 missing cases) were unemployed; of the 68 known cases in Vancouver, 41.2% of the victims were married and 63.5% (28 missing cases) were unemployed. While fewer victims than offenders were married in either city, this was true only of Vancouver in terms of unemployment. Thus, in Toronto, victims were more likely than offenders to be unemployed as captured in the following case from 1988:

> The victim (a 21-year old, unemployed, Caucasian woman) and the offender (a 28 year-old waitress, also Caucasian) were involved with the same man. Although he lived with the offender, he had just recently fathered the victim's child and was suggesting moving in with the victim. The offender was so enraged by this that she went to the victim's house and stabbed her. The victim died shortly after from the stab wounds.

Having detailed some of the victims' demographic information, I turn now to a key variable, victim-offender relationship. We expect that offenders will kill intimates (spouses and children) at home in expressive homicide dramas and non-intimates (friends, strangers, business partners, etc.) in public places for instrumental reasons. In both cities, the majority of the victims were intimates (79% versus 55%); however, the proportion of intimates is considerably higher in Toronto. Offenders in Toronto were equally as likely to kill a spouse or lover (37.7%) as a child (36.8%); in contrast, fewer offenders in Vancouver killed spouses and lovers (28.9%). As well, only 17.6% of Vancouverites killed their children, a difference of almost twenty percent between the two cities. A difference equally as large between the two populations was the percent of friends, acquaintances, and neighbours killed (9.5% versus 28.9%). Finally, as expected, strangers accounted for only 6 of the 201 known cases in Toronto and 6 of the 83 known cases in

Vancouver. The following two cases, both from the 1950s, demonstrate the prototypical expressive homicide drama in which intimates were killed; the first involves a spouse and the second involves children:

> After arguing, the victim and offender went to bed around 10:30 p.m. However, the offender woke up at midnight and fetched a crow bar that was amongst other tools the couple were using to fix up their home. She returned to the bedroom and struck her husband several times on the head. When she called the police, she explained that she had hit him because he had threatened to kill her in an earlier argument.
>
> The offender's husband, a truck driver, arrived home at 3:00 a.m. to find his wife, three daughters and son poisoned to death. His wife's suicide note explained that she had killed herself and her children (ages 3, 4, 6, and 7) over an argument she had had with her mother-in-law. In the note, the offender stated, "Mom said you'd be better off without me. I love you too much to spoil your life...You'll have a chance now to get out of debt. It was wonderful to have you love me".

Homicide Events

Consistent with other studies, the great majority of women killed alone and if they killed with accomplices, the accomplices were usually male (refer to Table 5.3). With regard to method or the way in which the victim was killed, offenders in this dataset did not resemble those in American studies who more frequently used guns than knives. In Toronto, the most commonly cited methods of death were stabbing (33.5%), other (21.2%), and beating/hitting (17.2%). The other category includes smothering, pushing from a height, strangulation, arson, hanging, drowning, and scalding. The most commonly cited methods of death in Vancouver were stabbing (53.9%), other (18%) and shooting (11.2%). (There were 3 missing cases in Toronto and 2 missing in Vancouver for this variable). This case from the early 1960s illustrates the most common method of homicide used by women in Toronto and Vancouver -- stabbing:

> The offender, a 55 year-old Caucasian woman claimed that her husband had made unwelcome sexual advances. When she resisted, he hit her with his shoe. She fled to the basement and after 15 minutes went upstairs to find him lying in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor at which time she called the police. In their investigation, the police found a bloodied butcher knife in the basement and blood on the stairs leading to the basement; she was charged with murder.

A closer investigation of method reveals that female offenders used different means to kill male and female victims. For example, male victims in Toronto and Vancouver most often died of stab wounds (42% and 61%), shootings (15% and 14%) or beatings (18% and 6%). In Toronto, female victims were most often poisoned (28%), strangled (22%) or beaten (16%) whereas the majority of female victims in Vancouver died as a result of stab wounds (38%), beatings (14%) or strangulation (14%).

Two aspects of the homicide event are theoretically important to this research: location and circumstance. In terms of location, we expect intimates to be murdered at home and non-intimates to be murdered in public places. Most murders were committed in private-sphere settings: 90% of the homicides in Toronto and 79% in Vancouver. The majority of these private-sphere homicides were committed in a home shared by the victim and offender (64% and 57%; 6 and 5 missing cases). Furthermore, as expected, the majority of homicides that occurred at home involved intimates (88% and 59%). In terms of circumstance, we expect that intimates will be killed as a result of expressive factors and non-intimates will be killed as a result of instrumental factors. The majority of homicides in both cities were expressive (97% and 93%; 21 and 22 missing cases). Of the instrumental homicides that occurred in Toronto, 75% involved non-intimates and of the five instrumental homicides that occurred in Vancouver, all cases involved non-

Table 5.3. Descriptive Characteristics of Homicide Events

	Toronto (N=206)			Vancouver (N=91)		
Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**	**Frequency**	**Known Cases**	**All Cases**
With Accomplices						
No	185	89.8%		75	82.4%	
Yes	21	10.2%		16	17.6%	
	206	100%		91	100%	
Sex of Accomplices						
Female	2		9.5%	23		25.0%
Male	19		90.5%	68		75.0%
	21		100%	91		100%
Location						
Home	179	89.5%	86.9%	68	79.1%	74.8%
Leisure Establishment	1	0.5%	0.5%	2	2.3%	2.2%
Place of Business	3	1.5%	1.5%	1	1.2%	1.1%
Street/Park	17	8.5%	8.2%	15	17.4%	16.5%
Missing	6	100%	2.9%	5	100%	5.5%
	206		100%	91		100%
Method						
Stab	68	33.5%	33.0%	48	53.9%	52.7%
Beat/Hit	35	17.2%	17.0%	7	7.8%	7.7%
Shoot	26	12.8%	12.6%	10	11.2%	11.0%
Poison	26	12.8%	12.6%	4	4.5%	4.4%
Abortion/Neglect	5	9.8%	9.8%	4	12.3%	12.1%
Other	43	13.9%	13.6%	16	10.3%	9.9%
Missing	3	100%	1.4%	2	100%	2.2%
	206		100%	91		100%
Circumstance						
During Other Crime	6	3.1%	2.9%	5	7.2%	5.5%
Domestic Dispute	117	63.3%	56.8%	42	61.0%	46.2%
Quarrel - Public Place	3	1.6%	1.5%	6	8.6%	6.6%
Mental Illness	48	26.0%	23.3%	13	18.9%	14.3%
Other	11	6.0%	5.3%	3	4.3%	3.3%
Missing	21	100%	10.2%	22	100%	24.1%
	206		100%	91		100%

intimates. A case depicting a public-sphere, instrumental murder is provided below:

> In 1984, a 20 year-old prostitute watched as her boyfriend engaged in a territorial dispute with other pimps. During the confrontation, she picked up a knife that had fallen to the ground and, in order to protect her boy-friend, she fatally stabbed one of the pimps in the back. The victim was 23 years old and was high on acid at the time of his death.

An in-depth analysis of homicide location revealed that, in Toronto, the majority of both male (63%) and female (65%) victims were slain at a home shared by the victim and offender; however, this was consistent only with male victims in Vancouver (65%). Instead, more women in Vancouver were slain in the victim's home (37%) than in a shared residence (32%).[4] With regard to circumstance, most male victims were killed during a domestic dispute (59% and 35%) while a surprising amount of women were killed as a result of psychological problems in the family (54% and 25%). The prevalence of mental illness is particularly surprising as less than 10% of offenders, in both cities, had previous psychological records and no more than one fifth had suicidal tendencies. This finding may be a result of official biases; in coding circumstance, researchers combined information from police and newspaper files regarding motive and situational factors that led to the victim's death. Several authors have noted the tendency of police and journalists to label homicidal women as mentally ill (Boyd,1988; Faith, 1993). This 1974 case helps to contextualize expressive homicides that involve psychological problems in the family:

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[4]When comparing victim gender to the location of their deaths, the number of missing cases is 6 for Toronto and 7 for Vancouver.

> The offender, a 41 year-old woman had been happily married for eighteen years. However, she became depressed during the pregnancy of her second child and saw a psychiatrist regularly until she gave birth. At that time she was hospitalized for three weeks of psychiatric treatment. One day, after her release, her husband took their eldest daughter to Sunday school. Upon his return an hour later, he found the baby drowned in the bath tub and his wife overdosed on pills, having attempted suicide.

By way of summation, while I have divided the information in this chapter by city (to illustrate some differences between the Toronto and Vancouver populations), I tested the hypotheses against the entire population. The following percentages reflect the key variables I explored in Chapter 6 for the entire population or for both cities. Beginning with the theoretical variables, the distribution of *Legal Activities* was as follows: 68% unemployed or homemaker versus 32% employed outside of the home (of 215 known cases). In terms of *Illegal Activities*, 95% of the women in this dataset were uninvolved in illegal activities whereas 5% were involved in the sex or drug trade (there were also 215 known cases for this variable). Finally, *Strain* was measured using socioeconomic status and of the 266 known cases, the percentages were as follows: 26% unemployed, 11% irregular incomes, 38% homemakers, 7% labourers, 8% service workers, 7% were low skilled, white collar workers, and 3% professionals. Thus, there was a larger distribution of women in the lower SES categories. With regard to the homicide characteristics: 72% of the victims were intimates and 28% were non-intimates (of 284 known cases); 69% of the homicides were expressive while 31% were instrumental (of 254 known cases); and, 80% of the women killed at home whereas 20% killed in public places (of 286 known cases). The combination of these homicide characteristics and theoretical variables

suggests that women in this dataset were more likely to kill intimates at home in expressive circumstances.

Comparing This Dataset to Other Studies

Two factors made it difficult to compare the above findings with those of other studies. First, many studies of homicidal women focus on certain kinds of victims or offenders and rarely include information on the entire population. Second, a considerable amount of the information concerning offenders remains anecdotal; this is particularly true of the Canadian literature. Nevertheless, I located seven studies, all American, that collected information on homicidal women suitable for comparing most of the above findings and, where possible, I refer to pertinent Canadian work. The studies include: Wolfgang's (1958) analysis of 105 female-perpetrated homicide cases in Philadelphia; Ward, Jackson and Ward's (1979) examination of 444 violent female offenders incarcerated at the California Institution for Women and at the Minnesota Women's Reformatory; Wilbanks' (1983) exploration of 47 female murderers in Dade County, Florida; Dallam's (1987) investigation of 117 violent female inmates in New Jersey; Mann's (1996) examination of 296 women arrested for homicide in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York; and using the same dataset, Jurik and Winn's (1990) and Jurik and Gregware's (1992) analysis of 50 women convicted of homicide in Maricopa County, Arizona.

First, of the total[5] population of homicidal offenders in Toronto, for the years 1900-1990, 16% are women as compared to 11% in Vancouver. These statistics appear

[5]Total murders indicates the murders committed by both men and women in this dataset.

consistent with other studies reporting the percentage of total murders committed by women: 18% in Philadelphia for 1948-1952 (Wolfgang,1958); 15.5% for 1963 and 12.5% for 1987 using Uniform Crime Reports (Simon and Landis,1991); and using the Canadian Crime Statistics, 12.7% for 1961-1983 (Silverman and Kennedy,1988) and 14% for 1987 (Hatch and Faith,1989).[6]

In terms of offender characteristics, Wolfgang (1958), Wilbanks (1983), and Mann (1996) found that the mean age of women killers was roughly between their late twenties and early thirties. This is also true of female offenders in this dataset; the mean age in Toronto was 33.3 and in Vancouver was 30.5. Unlike age, there is no consensus in the literature regarding education. On the one hand, Jurik and Winn (1990) found that 46% of the homicidal women in their dataset had not completed high school whereas Mann (1996) found that 68% of her sample had completed 13 or more years of schooling. With regard to this dataset, 63.3% in Toronto and 78.3% in Vancouver had completed 9 or more years of education (however, the number of missing cases for this variable was quite large: 58 in Toronto and 65 in Vancouver). Finally, only Jurik and Gregware (1992) give a detailed analysis of occupational status. They found that, in Maricopa County, 52% of the offenders were legally employed, another 44% were unemployed, and only 4% were homemakers. This contrasts remarkably with the dataset I used: 30.1% of the offenders were legally employed, 28.1% were unemployed and 39.2% were homemakers in Toronto and 17.7% were legally employed, 67.8% were unemployed and 3.2% were homemakers

[6]Jurik and Winn (1990) found that women were responsible for 31.6% of all murders committed in Maricopa County for 1979-1985, a percentage inconsistent with most other studies.

in Vancouver. Thus, the only similarity between these two studies was the percentage of homemakers in Maricopa County and Vancouver.

Other significant differences between the dataset I used and American studies included the percent of offenders with prior arrest records and offender ethnicity. Whereas 36.3% of offenders in Toronto and 32.5% in Vancouver had previous arrest records, American studies ranged from 48% (Wolfgang) and 54% (Mann) to 60% (Jurik and Winn). While I found that Aboriginal peoples were over-represented in Vancouver, Table 5.4 highlights a similar result for Afro-Americans in some American studies. Notice however, that Jurik and Winn found, as I did, that the majority of homicidal women were Caucasian.

Table 5.4. Ethnicity of Female Offenders in Various Studies

Ethnicity	*Wolfgang*	*Wilbanks*	*Mann*	*Jurik & Winn*	*Toronto*	*Vancouver*
Afro-Am./ Afro-Can.	85%	59%	77%	26%	6%	3%
Caucasian	15%	25%	13%	45%	83%	46%
Hispanic		13%	10%	12%	0%	0%
Aboriginal				1%	5%	40%

Note: blank cells indicate unreported

Demographic information on victims is scant, although gender and victim-offender relationship is often reported. Consistent with the Toronto and Vancouver data, other studies report that the majority of female-perpetrated homicide victims were male: 84% (Wolfgang), 81% (Mann), 53% (Ward et al.), and 54% (Dallam). As outlined in Table 5.5, the percentage of male partners killed by women ranged from a low of 26% in Vancouver to a high of 49% in Maricopa County, whereas the percentage of child victims killed by women ranged from a low of 6% in Maricopa County to a high of 37% in

Toronto. The percentage of stranger victims was less erratic ranging from 3% in Toronto to 13% in Jurik and Gregware's (1992) study.

Table 5.5. Type of Victim in Various Studies

Type of Victim	*Wolfgang*	*Ward et al.*	*Mann*	*Wilbanks*	*Silverman Kennedy*	*Jurik & Gregware*	*Toronto*	*Vancouver*
Male Partner	45%	35%	48%			49%	36%	26%
Child		19%	11%			6%	37%	19%
Stranger	3%	8%	8%	9%	7%	13%	3%	7%
Family	67%	54%	67%	70%	64%	65%	80%	55%

Note: blank cells indicate unreported

Finally, the majority of the spousal homicides involved heterosexual partners; only three of 76 spousal victims in Toronto and two of 24 spousal victims in Vancouver were known to involve lesbians. These findings are supported by three other studies. First, in their examination of 969 femicides in Ontario from 1974-1990, Crawford and Gartner (1992) found that two of 551 cases involving intimate partners were perpetrated by women. Second, Goetting (1988) found that fifteen of 136 homicidal women in Detroit for the years 1982-183 killed other women and only two of these women killed lesbian partners. Third, Mann (1993) reported that 3.5% of spousal homicides in her random sample of female-perpetrated homicides in six American cities for the years 1979 and 1983 involved lesbian lovers.

With regard to homicide events, the studies consistently document that most victims were killed at a residence shared by the victim and offender: 62% (Ward et al), 60% (Wilbanks), 56% (Dallam), 63% (Jurik and Winn), 57% (Vancouver) and 64% (Toronto). However, a greater range of responses is evident in regards to motive. For example, Wolfgang found 2% of women claimed self-defense, a level comparable to that

found in Toronto (2.7%) and Vancouver (4.3%). In comparison, other studies report much higher percentages of women claiming self-defense: 21% (Wilbanks), 22% (Ward et al) and 37% (Dallam). Finally, as illustrated in Table 5.6, type of method varies from study to study, such that shooting deaths range from a low of 11% (Vancouver) to a high of 59-60% (Dallam and Jurik and Winn). However, the range of findings is larger for stabbings and smaller for deaths as a result of beatings.

Table 5.6. Type of Method in Various Studies

Type of Method	*Wolfgang*	*Ward et al*	*Mann*	*Wilbanks*	*Dallam*	*Jurik & Gregware*	*Toronto*	*Vancouver*
Shoot	20%	34%	47%	32%	60%	59%	34%	11%
Stab	64%	35%	38%	37%	26%	18%	13%	54%
Beat	3%						17%	8%

Note: blank cells indicate unreported

Conclusions

In this chapter, I explored the frequencies of several variables including those that are relevant to the research hypotheses. In particular, I examined the distribution of victim-offender relationships as well as homicide locations and circumstances. I also explored key theoretical indicators, employment (at home or outside of the home and legal versus illegal) and socioeconomic status. I found that the majority of women in both Toronto and Vancouver killed intimates at home in expressive homicide dramas. In the following chapter, I test the predictive power of three theoretical approaches in predicting this type of homicide drama. Furthermore, I explore whether the theories' key variables remain constant over time.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

In this chapter, I review the results of several logit equations that estimated the hypotheses introduced in Chapter 4. The reader will recall that the first two sets of hypotheses propose a connection between women's labour force participation and their homicidal behaviour. Specifically, opportunity theorists contend that women's work, be it legal or illegal, influences the kinds of victims (intimates versus non-intimates), as well as the circumstances (expressive versus instrumental) and locations (public- versus private-sphere) of female-perpetrated homicide. On the one hand, *Legal Activities* theorists argue that women's involvement in legal, public-sphere activities increases their access to non-guarded, suitable targets or two of the three factors that precipitate direct predatory crimes. When non-guarded, suitable targets are combined with motivated offenders (the third factor), the probability of working women committing instrumental murders against non-intimates rises. On the other hand, proponents of the *Illegal Activities* approach maintain that women's involvement in direct predatory crime is connected to their increasing participation in the criminal world. While the combination of non-guarded, suitable targets and motivated offenders occurs from time to time for women working in legitimate businesses, this combination of factors is ever-present for sex-trade workers and drug traders. That these women frequently defend their territory and their lives by using lethal force is indicative of a lifestyle of risk. Thus, women engaged in illegal activities are more likely than other homicidal women to commit direct predatory offenses. The final set of hypotheses concentrate on the role of strain in women's lives. Advocates of this approach assert that there is a positive relationship between strain and homicidal

behaviour; strain caused by the blockage of societal goals fosters frustration which often is relieved through aggression. Furthermore, women of low socioeconomic status experience greater amounts of strain than their wealthier sisters and simultaneously lack the resources needed to relieve their strain and aggression in socially acceptable ways. For these reasons, *Strain* theorists expect that women of low SES kill to relieve their tension (i.e., commit crimes of passion) and target intimates residing in the home as they are more accessible than non-intimates.

In order to systematically summarize my findings, I have divided this chapter into three parts. The first part reviews the ability of *Legal Activities*, *Illegal Activities* and *Strain* theories to predict women's homicidal behaviour and in particular the types of victims, circumstances and locations of their crimes. These equations used the entire population of cases (all ninety years). I then explore whether the effect of these hypotheses varies over time; I document the findings for pre-1970 cases and, in the final part, I record the results for the post-1969 cases.

In each section, I examined the robustness of the theoretical predictions by estimating several models. I begin by estimating the bivariate effect of the variable of interest (Model 1); I then introduced several control variables (Model 2). As well, at the end of each section, I estimated additional equations (Models 3 and 4) that contained both control and theoretically competing variables. I used a block rather than a step-wise design because the theories do not designate which independent variables are likely to have more powerful effects. Also, as legal employment and socioeconomic status (the

variables used to measure *Legal Activities* and *Strain*) were highly correlated, I did not add both independent variables to the same equations.

Finally, as per convention, I use significance tests to judge the predictive power of the independent variables. However, these tests are less pertinent for my study because I use a population rather than a sample; significance tests estimate the probability that a certain effect in the population from which the sample was drawn occurred by chance or sampling error. As the population is known, I report insignificant effects if they are sizable because they have not occurred by chance and are the absolute effect. Thus, I report effects with rates of change (recorded as e^b in the tables) that are greater than or equal to 1.5 or less than or equal to 0.5.

Part One -- The Entire Population

Predicting Kind of Victim

Table 6.1 contains information on the effects of *Legal Activities* models on victim type. *Legal Activities* is measured by employment outside of the home which is coded as unemployed (0) versus employed (1) and victim type which is coded as non-intimates (0) versus intimates (1). Model 1 reveals a moderate, negative effect of employment; this effect remained moderate and significant with the introduction of control variables (Model 2). According to this model, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 60% if the offender was working outside of the home (i.e., -.402-1 x 100 = -59.8%). Several control variables also had significant and moderate effects. First, compared to Caucasian killers, the probability of killing intimates was 17% (i.e., -.213/1.213 x 100 = -17.5%) lower for Aboriginal and 13% lower for Other Minority offenders. Second, divorced or separated

women were 15% less likely to kill intimates than married women. Third, offenders with prior arrest records were 31% less likely than those without records to kill intimates. Fourth, Vancouverites were 28% less likely than Torontonians to kill intimates. Finally, although the other controls were insignificant, the direction of the effects were as predicted except for the variable Single. Thus, as expected, older women and mothers with several children were more likely to kill intimates, whereas offenders who used alcohol or drugs prior to the murders were less likely to kill their spouses or children. However, single women were more likely to kill intimates than married women; I expected a negative relationship. Of the control variables that were insignificant, Single and Psychological Record had sizable effects.

According to the results in Table 6.2, socioeconomic status (coded from low to high) had a small, non-significant bivariate effect on victim type. However, the results for Model 2 indicate that this effect became significant when controls for several variables and competing explanations were introduced. Thus, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 20% with each increase in the offender's socioeconomic status. The source of the suppression effect appears to be the combination of measures of ethnicity, Divorced/Separated, and City; in a reduced equation, the four variables change the non significant effect of socioeconomic status to a significant one ($p=.02$). This pattern suggests that the effect of SES occurs only once variation in ethnicity, marital status and city is removed. As anticipated, the control variables in the *Strain* models behaved similarly to those in the *Legal Activities* models, both in terms of significance and direction although none of the insignificant controls had sizable effects.

The next analysis explores the effects of *Illegal Activities* models on victim type. *Illegal Activities* is measured by involvement in criminal activities and is coded as Uninvolved (0) versus Involved (1). According to Model 1, involvement in the sex and/ or drug trade had a strong, negative effect on victim type (see Table 6.3). Specifically, at the bivariate level, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 87% if the offender was involved in illegal activities. However, upon introducing the controls into the equation (Model 2), the effect between criminal activities and victim type became insignificant. This reduction is due to the combination of ethnicity, marital controls, Substance Use and City.[1] Models 3 and 4 introduce the other two theoretically pertinent variables, *Legal Activities* and *Strain* into the equation. As expected (given the results reported in Tables 6.1 and 6.2), both variables had a significant effect on victim type. Thus, even after controlling for involvement in illegal activities, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 29% if the offender was employed outside of the home and by 44% for every unit increase in offender's socioeconomic status.

Predicting Type of Circumstance

The next set of models concern the circumstances of the homicides (coded as instrumental=0 and expressive=1). As summarized in Table 6.4, working legally outside of the home had a sizable, negative, and significant effect on circumstance; that is, the odds of committing an expressive homicide decreased by 67% if the offender worked outside of the home. This effect was essentially unchanged by the introduction of control variables. Note however, that none of the controls were significant although Substance

[1]The other control variables in Model 2 behaved similarly to those in the *Legal Activities* equations although Arrest Record did not reach significance.

Use and Arrest Record had sizable effects; moreover, only half behaved as expected. As anticipated, older women and mothers with several children were more likely to commit crimes of passion whereas Other Minorities, women with prior arrest records and women living in Vancouver were less likely than Caucasians, offenders without prior arrests and those living in Toronto to commit expressive homicides. Of the unexpected results, single women were more likely than married women to commit expressive homicides as were substance users relative to non users. However, the effects of Aboriginal, Married, and Psychological Record are uncertain given the size of their standard errors.

In contrast to the *Legal Activities* models, the effects of SES on circumstance was weak and insignificant at both the bivariate and multivariate level. As reported in Model 2 in Table 6.5, the odds of committing expressive homicides, decreased by 6% for every unit of increase in socioeconomic status. Consistent with the *Legal Activities* models, none of the control variables had significant effects and the standard errors for many of the controls were high.

According to the findings presented in Table 6.6, *Illegal Activities* had a strong and significant relationship with circumstance. Model 1 indicates that women engaged in criminal activities were 82% less likely than those uninvolved in the drug or sex trade to commit expressive homicides. However, the introduction of control variables reduces the size (by almost half) and significance of the effect of working in the illegal economy. Once the marital, ethnicity and prior record controls were combined with Substance Use and City, the effect between illegal employment and circumstance became insignificant. As per the *Legal Activities* models, the controls were all insignificant and only Arrest Record was

sizable. Finally, as revealed in Models 3 and 4, the competing theoretical variables are both insignificant although the effect of legal employment is sizable (b= -1.13) whereas the effect of SES is very small (b= -.08) after controlling for criminal activities. This is to be expected as the bivariate effect for *Illegal Activities* (refer to Table 6.4) is significant whereas the bivariate effect of *Strain* (refer to Table 6.5) does not reach significance.

Predicting Location

My third and final set of analyses that use the entire population focus on the homicide setting and distinguish attacks committed in public places (i.e., parks, parking lots, streets, bars and are coded as 0) from those committed in private locations (i.e., the victim and offender's home are coded as 1). As reported in Table 6.7, the bivariate effect of employment on location was weak and insignificant; that is the odds of killing in the private sphere decrease by 31% if the offender is employed outside of the home. The introduction of control variables dramatically reduces the effect of legal employment (i.e. from b= -.37 to b= -.03%) although three of these variables had strong and significant effects on location. Other Minorities were 24% less likely that Caucasians to kill victims in the private sphere; substance users were 77% more likely than non-users to kill in these location; and women with prior arrest records were 70% more likely to kill victims at home than women without records. With regard to the control variables that were insignificant, only Aboriginal and Married were sizable although the direction of all of the effects was as expected. Thus, older women and those with several children were more likely to kill at home as were offenders who had prior psychological records. Furthermore, Aboriginal killers were less likely than Caucasians to commit homicide in the

private sphere as were women who were divorced, separated, or single (compared with married women) or living in Vancouver (compared with those living Toronto).

The findings noted in Table 6.8 reveal that, although in the predicted direction, the relationship between location and socioeconomic status was small and insignificant for both models. For example, in Model 2, the odds of killing victims in the private sphere decreased by 6% with every increase in SES. As expected, the controls behaved similarly to those in the *Legal Activities* models.

The previously noted patterns for *Illegal Activities* models also occur for location; that is, illegal activities had a sizable, negative, and significant bivariate effect that is reduced to non significance with the introduction of control variables. As Model 1 records in Table 6.9, the odds of committing private-sphere homicides decreased by 73% if the offenders engaged in illegal business activities. The variables that appear to reduce the significance are the marital, ethnicity, previous record, and city controls; when combined as a block, these control reduced the relationship between illegal activities and location to insignificance. The other controls behaved as per the *Legal Activities* models. Finally, Models 3 and 4 introduce *Legal Activities* and *Strain* into the equation and neither of the theoretical competing variables reach significance.

To summarize the findings for the entire population, it appears that the theories are best able to predict victim type and least able to predict location; furthermore, while the controls were helpful in predicting victim type and location, they were of little help with regard to circumstance. When comparing the predictive power of the theories at the bivariate level, the effects reported by the *Strain* models were the weakest whereas the

Illegal Activities models recorded the largest effects. Finally, at the multivariate level, *Legal Activities* models more consistently reached significance: after controlling for a variety of variables, employment outside of the home had a sizable and significant effect for both victim type and circumstance; SES had a weak but significant effect on victim type; and involvement in the sex or drug trade was insignificant for all three aspects of women's homicidal behaviour.

Part Two -- Pre-1970 Cases

In order to examine whether the effects shown in the entire population varied over time, I divided the population into two time-frames. The first time frame captured cases that occurred before 1970 (N=125) and the second time frame included cases that occurred after 1969 (N=172). In re-running the equations on the pre-1970 cases, I was forced to drop the third independent variable, *Illegal Activities*, as only one offender was illegally employed. Thus, I only tested the hypotheses generated by *Legal Activities* and *Strain* theories; however, my two variables were highly correlated and I was unable to introduce competing theoretical explanations into the equations. Instead, I focused on the bivariate relationships and the effects of introducing the control variables.

In brief, none of the theoretical variables had significant effects in any of the models, although employment had a sizable effect on circumstance and location at both the bivariate and multivariate levels. The only control variable that had a significant ($p=.04$) effect was Arrest Record when introduced into the strain equation for predicting circumstance; the probability of committing an expressive homicide decreased by 6% if the offender had an arrest record as compared to an offender without a record. However,

because its standard error was greater than one, its effect is uncertain. With regard to the other models, Number of Kids and Arrest Record had sizable effects but the signs for Aboriginal, Other Minority, Age, and Divorced/Separated[2] varied erratically and their standard errors were substantial; thus the effects of these variables are also uncertain. Recognizing the controls' lack of predictive power in the multivariate models, I ran a series of bivariate correlations to isolate their effects on the dependent variables. The following variables had sizable and significant effects on victim type: Number of Kids, Single, Substance Use, Arrest Record, and City. Whereas Arrest Record had a large and significant effect on circumstance, none of the controls assisted in predicting location for the pre-1970 cases (Other Minorities, Substance Use and Arrest Record were significant for the entire population).

Overall, the theories were unable to predict women's homicidal behaviour in this time frame as indicated by the fact that none of the theoretical variables had significant effects at the bivariate level. Furthermore, the controls appear to have limited effects on the three homicide aspects tested although this may be partly explained by the smaller number of cases in this time frame; as controls were introduced, the number of empty cells increased and the variation between cases became insubstantial. These findings call into question the ability of *Legal Activities*, *Illegal Activities* and *Strain* to predict women's homicidal behaviour in the first half of this century.

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[2]In the pre-1970 cases, the Divorced/Separated variable only measures the effect of women separated from common-law relationships as the divorce laws had only recently passed and no women in this time frame had been granted a divorce.

Part Three -- Post-1969 Cases

The hypotheses introduced in Chapter 4 posited that the effects of the theoretical variables would remain stable over time (e.g., employment outside of the home increases the risk of involvement in direct predatory crimes regardless of the time period). The object of re-running the analyses on cases divided into two time frames is to investigate whether these effects (i.e., size, significance and direction) have indeed remained stable for ninety years. Should the following findings resemble those of the pre-1970 cases, then we may conclude that there is some support for this contention.

Predicting Kind of Victim

The results in Table 6.10 closely mirror those reported in Table 6.1. For example, employment had a noticeable, significant, and negative effect in both models as do Aboriginal, Other Minorities, Divorced/Separated and City. According to Model 2 in Table 6.10, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 62% (60%)[3] if the offender worked outside of the home. Furthermore, in the post-1969 cases, the probability of killing intimates was 14% (18%) lower for Aboriginal and 7% (13%) lower for Other Minority offenders than for Caucasian killers; separated women were 14% (15%) less likely to kill intimates than married women; and Vancouverites were 26% (28%) less likely than Torontonians to kill intimates. As well, the direction of all of the controls in the post-1969 cases remained consistent with those demonstrated in the entire population. These similarities suggest that the pre-1970 cases did not contribute substantially to the effects in the entire population. Put another way, the effects reflected in the entire population are

[3]Percentages in brackets refer to the entire population.

mostly drawn from post-1969 cases. However, there are some noticeable differences between the post-1969 cases and the entire population. First, Arrest Record failed to reach significance in the post-1969 cases. Second, the effects of Single and Psychological Record were sizable in the post-1969 model whereas they were weak for the entire population.

In exploring the *Strain* models for the post-1969 cases (refer to Table 6.11), the results resemble those for the entire population (refer to Table 6.2); at the bivariate level, the relationship between socioeconomic status and victim type was small and insignificant but the relationship became significant with the introduction of the control variables. As reported in Model 2 of Table 6.11, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 22% (20%) with each increase in the offender's socioeconomic status. However, unlike the entire population, the variables causing the suppression effect in the post-1969 cases were both marital (as opposed to just Divorced/Separated) and ethnicity controls when combined with City. This pattern suggests that the effect of SES occurs only once variation in ethnicity, marital status and city is removed. Finally, the controls behaved similarly to those in the entire population; thus, Aboriginal, Other Minorities, Divorced/Separated, Arrest Record and City had sizable and significant effects. Of the insignificant variables, the only aberration from the results of the entire population was that the effect of Single was more sizable in the post-1969 cases.

As noted in Tables 6.3 and 6.12, the results for *Illegal Activities* and victim type also resemble each other closely. While the bivariate relationship between involvement in criminal activities and victim type was significant and sizable, it became insignificant at the

multivariate level. In the post-1969 cases, women who engaged in the sex and drug trade were 87% (82%) less likely than those uninvolved in illegal pursuits to kill intimates. Unlike the entire population, the introduction of ethnicity and marital controls did not reduce the significance of the model; the combination of variables that produced a decrease in the effect for the post-1969 cases were marital, ethnicity, and prior record controls. However, like the entire population, Aboriginal, Other Minority, and Divorced/ Separated had large and significant effects on victim type (City did not reach significance in the post-1969 cases). As illustrated in Models 3 and 4, only *Strain* was significant in the post-1969 cases; this was unexpected as *Legal Activities* had a sizable bivariate effect on victim type and both competing variables reached significance with the entire population. Thus, the odds of killing an intimate decreased by 43% (99%) for every unit the offender's socioeconomic status increased

Predicting Type of Circumstance

The relationship between employment and circumstance was significant for the entire population (refer to Table 6.4) whereas the relationship was neither significant at the bivariate nor multivariate level for the post-1969 cases (refer to Table 6.13). However, the controls behaved similarly to those in the complete model in that none were significant although the signs changed for Number of children, Single and Arrest Record.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between socioeconomic status and type of homicide was insignificant at both the bivariate and multivariate levels as the *Strain* models were both insignificant for the entire population. Tables 6.5 and 6.14 also report that none of the controls reached significance. However there are some important

differences between the two tables. First, in the post-1969 cases, the sign of socioeconomic status changed from negative to positive and the standard error is comparatively small to other variables in the model (the signs for Aboriginal and Single also became negative but the standard errors for each of these controls was quite large). Second, while the effect of Arrest Record was sizable for the entire population (-.78), its effect diminished by more than half for the post-1969 cases.

With regard to the *Illegal Activities* models, the relationship between involvement in criminal activities and circumstance was significant only at the bivariate level for both the entire population (refer to Table 6.6) and the post-1969 cases (refer to Table 6.15). Thus, Model One of Table 6.16 indicates that women engaged in the sex and drug trade were 86% (82%) less likely to commit expressive homicides than women uninvolved in such activities. Another similarity is that neither of the competing theoretical variables (Models 3-4) were significant and this is not surprising as the effects of both *Legal Activities* and *Strain* on circumstance were not significant at the bivariate level. The variables that appeared to reduce the effect of *Illegal Activities* were the ethnicity and marital controls combined with City and Substance Use. Unlike the entire population, only Psychological Record contributed to an insignificant relationship in the post-1969 cases (both prior record variables reduced the significance of the relationship for the entire population). Furthermore, Other Minority was significant and sizable for only the post-1969 cases although all other controls remained insignificant as per the entire population. Another difference was that the signs changed for Single, Arrest Record, and City although their standard errors were quite high.

Predicting Location

The relationship between *Legal Activities* and homicide location was insignificant, regardless of the model, as illustrated in Tables 6.7 and 6.16. However, the tables reveal that only two of the three control variables that were sizable and significant for the entire population, reached significance for the post-1969 cases; Other Minority, and Arrest Record (Substance Use was significant only for the entire population). With regard to the control variables that were insignificant, the direction of all of the effects were similar to those for the entire population.

Similar to the equations run for the entire population, the relationships between location and socioeconomic status were insignificant for all models in the post-1969 cases. Tables 6.8 and 6.17 summarize the findings for the *Strain* models. Note that both ethnicity controls were significant only in the post-1969 cases, whereas only Other Minorities was significant for the entire population. Moreover, Substance Use and Arrest Record were insignificant for the post-1969 cases but reached significance for the entire population. Otherwise the controls behaved similarly to those in the complete models.

With regard to *Illegal Activities*, the relationship between location and criminal activities was significant only at the bivariate level for both the entire population (refer to Table 6.9) and the post-1969 cases (refer to Table 6.18). Model One of Table 6.18 reveals that the odds of committing private-sphere homicides decreased by 72% (73%) if the offenders were involved in the sex and/or drug trade. As controls were included into the equation, the relationship became insignificant and the variables responsible for reducing the effect in the entire population did so for the post-1969 cases as well; marital,

ethnicity, and prior record controls combined with City reduced the effect. However, there were some differences. First, two rather than three controls were significant in the post-1969 cases; Single and Arrest Record (Substance Use was only significant for the entire population). Second, the insignificant controls behaved similarly to those in the entire population in terms of size, however, the sign of City changed from negative to positive in the post-1969 model. Finally, neither of the competing variables reached significance (Models 3-4) but this was expected as, at the bivariate level, *Legal Activities* and *Strain* were unable to predict location.

In way of summation, the effects recorded in the post-1969 cases resemble those for the entire population rather than the pre-1970 cases. Although the direction of the relationship between the theoretical variables and the dependent variables were consistent for both the pre-1970 and post-1960 cases, the size and significance of the effects varied over time. Clearly, the predictive power of *Legal Activities*, *Illegal Activities* and *Strain* is stronger for those cases that occurred in the latter part of this century. These results call into question the theories' claims that the effects of their key theoretical variables remain stable across time frames. Furthermore, my findings indicate that viewing female-perpetrated homicide as a monolithic behaviour (a behaviour in which its key proponents such as victim type, circumstance and location remain constant over time) may not be supported empirically.

Table 6.1. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Victim Type by Legal Activities

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Legally Employed	-.722*	.283	.486	-.910*	.360	.402
Controls						
Age				.006	.019	1.006
# of Children				.261	.216	1.300
Aboriginal				-1.548*	.498	.213
Other Minority				-1.864*	.411	.155
Divorced/Separated				-1.739*	.748	.176
Single				.446	.564	1.561
Substance User				-.456	.388	.634
Arrest Record				-.815*	.347	.443
Psych. Record				.543	.860	1.722
City				-.960*	.390	.383
Constant	1.200	.166		2.344	.798	
χ^2/df		6.40/1			94.48/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.2. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Victim Type by Strain

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Strain	.020	.078	1.020	-.223*	.094	.800
Controls						
Age				.011	.018	1.011
# of Children				.336	.218	1.400
Aboriginal				-1.640*	.499	.194
Other Minority				-1.919*	.411	.147
Divorced/Separated				-1.710*	.736	.181
Single				.393	.553	1.482
Substance User				-.519	.390	.595
Arrest Record				-.847*	.349	.429
Psych. Record				.320	.835	1.377
City				-1.062*	.391	.346
Constant	.930	.208		2.386	.801	
χ^2/df		.066/1			93.84/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.3. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Victim Type by Illegal Activities

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Illegal Activities	-2.046*	.691	.129	-.898	.794	.407	-.224	.846	.800	-1.089	.805	.337
Controls												
Age				.007	.018	1.007	.006	.019	1.006	.006	.019	1.007
# of Children				.350	.217	1.419	.261	.216	1.299	.311	.217	1.365
Aboriginal				-1.432*	.488	.259	-1.531*	.502	.216	-.1585*	.502	.205
Other Minority				-1.892*	.408	.151	-1.866*	.411	.155	-1.933*	.415	.145
Divorced/Separated				-1.550*	.727	.212	-1.737*	.749	.176	-1.747*	.745	.174
Single				.456	.551	1.578	.443	.565	1.558	.364	.558	1.440
Substance User				-.400	.386	.670	-.457	.389	.633	-.559	.395	.572
Arrest Record				-.636	.350	.529	-.789*	.360	.454	-.743*	.359	.476
Psych. Record				.436	.795	1.547	.528	.856	1.696	.248	.826	1.282
City				-.826*	.389	.438	-.935*	.401	.392	-.955*	.403	.385
Legally Employed							-.874*	.385	.417			
Strain										-.236*	.094	.789
Constant	1.065	.139		1.770	.735		2.334	.797		2.548	.813	
χ^2/df		10.17/1			89.41/12			94.55/12			95.82/12	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.4. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Circumstance by Legal Activities

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
		S.E.	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Legally Employed	-1.121*	.495	.326	-1.075*	.558	.341
Controls						
Age				.045	.037	1.046
# of Children				.146	.343	1.157
Aboriginal				.665	1.201	1.944
Other Minority				-.514	.653	.598
Divorced/Separated				-.868	1.128	.420
Single				.265	.850	1.303
Substance User				.864	.704	2.372
Arrest Record				-.784	.543	.457
Psych. Record				6.409	19.547	607.410
City				-.433	.642	.648
Constant	2.985	.342		1.781	1.301	
χ^2/df		4.95/1			20.66/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.5. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Circumstance by Strain

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Strain	.043	.157	1.044	-.066	.166	.936
Controls						
Age				.042	.036	1.043
# of Children				.256	.341	1.291
Aboriginal				.366	1.151	1.442
Other Minority				-.617	.652	.539
Divorced/Separated				-.710	1.110	.492
Single				.379	.828	1.461
Substance User				1.021	.721	2.776
Arrest Record				-.784	.541	.457
Psych. Record				6.368	20.067	582.846
City				-.640	.635	.527
Constant	2.492	.378		1.507	1.282	
χ^2/df		.077/1			17.16/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.6 Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Circumstance by Illegal Activities

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Illegal Activities	-1.740*	.728	.175	-.657	.878	.518	.185	.982	1.203	-.704	.886	.494
Controls												
Age				.038	.036	1.039	.046	.037	1.047	.039	.036	1.040
# of Children				.229	.340	1.257	.149	.345	1.161	.221	.341	1.247
Aboriginal				.536	1.191	1.709	.632	1.205	1.881	.506	1.192	1.658
Other Minority				-.576	.643	.562	-.512	.652	.600	-.607	.647	.545
Divorced/Separated				-.642	1.096	.526	.886	1.13	.412	-.700	1.110	.497
Single				.306	.837	1.358	.286	.859	1.331	.277	.839	1.319
Substance User				.953	.718	2.594	.880	.711	2.411	.906	.7223	2.475
Arrest Record				-.682	.553	.51	-.815	.568	.442	-.698	.556	.495
Psych. Record				6.271	20.462	529.066	6.448	19.315	631.647	6.246	20.349	515.848
City				-.431	.684	.650	-.478	.681	.620	-.460	.685	.631
Legally Employed							-1.127	.623	.324			
Strain										-.082	.171	.921
Constant	2.721	.267		1.465	1.256		1.770	1.300		1.652	1.31	
χ^2/df		4.49/1			17.53/11			20.69/12			17.76/12	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.7. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Location by Legal Activities

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Legally Employed	-.375	.320	.687	-.032	.371	.968
Controls						
Age				.016	.018	1.016
# of Children				.208	.195	1.231
Aboriginal				-.811	.562	.444
Other Minority				-1.129*	.417	.323
Divorced/Separated				-1.119	.700	.327
Single				-.038	.508	.962
Substance User				1.200*	.482	3.319
Arrest Record				.860*	.386	2.363
Psych. Record				7.076	12.368	1182.900
City				-.172	.391	.842
Constant	1.525	.181		.594	.725	
χ^2/df		1.34/1			39.77/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.8. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Location by Strain

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Strain	-.079	.085	.924	-.059	.096	.942
Controls						
Age				.016	.018	1.016
# of Children				.207	.194	1.230
Aboriginal				-.833	.561	.435
Other Minority				-1.124*	.413	.325
Divorced/Separated				-1.157	.702	.315
Single				-.056	.506	.945
Substance User				1.168*	.483	3.215
Arrest Record				.826*	.389	2.284
Psych. Record				7.037	12.356	1137.815
City				-.214	.397	.807
Constant	1.581	.239		.750	.751	
χ^2/df		.85/1			40.15/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.9. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Location by Illegal Activities

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Illegal Activities	-1.297*	.625	.273	-1.083	.776	.338	-1.233	.846	.291	-1.135	.778	.321
Controls												
Age				.014	.018	1.014	.014	.014	1.014	.014	.018	1.014
# of Children				.183	.193	1.201	.193	.194	1.213	.178	.193	1.195
Aboriginal				-.726	.570	.484	-.739	.570	.478	-.743	.572	.4758
Other Minority				-1.136*	.417	.321	-1.167	.424	.311	-1.122	.417	.325
Divorced/Separated				-1.101	.701	.333	-1.083	.703	.339	-1.151	.705	.316
Single				-.086	.510	.917	-.077	.511	.925	-.114	.509	.892
Substance User				1.116*	.477	3.052	1.133	.479	3.106	1.066	.481	2.903
Arrest Record				.999*	.407	2.716	1.031	.414	2.804	.960	.409	2.613
Psych. Record				7.01	12.47	1112.822	7.008	12.511	1105.402	6.963	12.457	1056.483
City				-.056	.404	.945	-.032	.508	.968	-.103	.409	.902
Legally Employed							.186	.409	1.204			
Strain										.-073	.097	.930
Constant	1.480	.155		.682	.707		.599	.730		.899	.764	
χ^2/df		3.95/1			41.69/11			41.90/12			42.24/12	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.10. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Type of Victim by Legal Activities for cases 1969 +

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Legally Employed	-.719*	.344	.487	-.959*	.457	.383
Controls						
Age				.006	.024	1.006
# of Children				.038	.347	1.038
Aboriginal				-1.846*	.589	.158
Other Minority				-2.536*	.560	.079
Divorced/Separated				-1.857*	.845	.156
Single				.947	.655	2.578
Substance User				-.464	.502	.629
Arrest Record				-.789	.431	.454
Psych. Record				.656	1.217	1.927
City				-1.018*	.525	.361
Constant	.758	.199		2.606	1.085	
χ^2/df		4.38/1			68.93/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.11. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Type of Victim by Strain for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Strain	-.035	.082	.966	-.254*	.111	.776
Controls						
Age				.010	.024	1.010
# of Children				.077	.344	1.080
Aboriginal				-2.007*	.599	.134
Other Minority				-2.646*	.562	.071
Divorced/Separated				-1.821*	.832	.162
Single				.855	.644	2.352
Substance User				-.577	.507	.562
Arrest Record				-.852*	.436	.426
Psych. Record				.430	1.22	1.538
City				-1.139*	.520	.320
Constant	.594	.226		2.811	1.090	
χ^2/df		.182/1			69.95/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.12. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Type of Victim by Illegal Activities for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Illegal Activities	-2.030*	.808	.131	-1.080	.934	.340	-.342	1.018	.710	-1.256	.935	.295
Controls												
Age				.005	.023	1.005	.005	.024	1.005	.004	.024	1.004
# of Children				.076	.345	1.079	.032	.347	1.032	.022	.346	1.022
Aboriginal				-1.765*	.578	.171	-1.819*	.593	.162	-1.928*	.600	.145
Other Minority				-2.639*	.555	.071	-2.547*	.561	.078	-2.678*	.570	.069
Divorced/Separated				-1.649*	.815	.192	-1.857*	.847	.156	-1.904*	.846	.149
Single				.896	.639	2.451	.941	.656	2.562	.824	.649	2.279
Substance User				-.339	.498	.712	.457	.504	.633	-.627	.519	.536
Arrest Record				-.553	.435	.575	.743	.452	.476	-.713	.449	.490
Psych. Record				.529	1.117	1.7698	.622	1.207	1.863	.300	1.202	1.350
City				-.925	.528	.4396	-.976	.540	.377	-.954	.545	.385
Legally Employed							-.888	.504	.412			
Strain										-.267*	.115	.765
Constant	.646	.168		2.154	1.008		2.606	1.081		3.070	1.117	
χ^2/df		8.21/1			65.92/11			69.05/12			71.96/12	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.13. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Circumstance by Legal Activities for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Legally Employed	-.888	.636	.411	-.108	.798	.340
Controls						
Age				.027	.046	1.027
# of Children				.076	.578	1.079
Aboriginal				.195	1.345	1.100
Other Minority				-1.740	.926	.175
Divorced/Separated				-1.310	1.361	.270
Single				-.058	.942	.943
Substance User				.657	.100	1.929
Arrest Record				.027	.735	1.027
Psych. Record				6.493	33.158	660.511
City				.254	.924	1.290
Constant	2.862	.420		2.743	1.748	
χ^2/df		1.87/1			13.94/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.14. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Circumstance by Strain for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Strain	.199	.207	1.220	.074	.212	1.078
Controls						
Age				.022	.044	1.022
# of Children				.225	.570	1.253
Aboriginal				-.250	1.27	.779
Other Minority				-1.693	.903	.184
Divorced/Separated				-.797	1.281	.450
Single				-.078	.912	.925
Substance User				1.011	1.008	2.748
Arrest Record				-.062	.725	.940
Psych. Record				6.428	35.11	618.704
City				-.157	.855	.855
Constant	2.265	.402		2.263	1.70	
χ^2/df		1.04/1			12.26/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.15. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Circumstance by Illegal Activities for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Illegal Activities	-1.971*	.780	.139	-1.772	1.057	.170	-1.369	1.265	.254	-1.751	1.065	.173
Controls												
Age				.013	.044	1.013	.016	.046	1.016	.013	.044	1.013
# of Children				.017	.568	1.017	-.005	.573	.995	.026	.571	1.026
Aboriginal				.229	1.418	1.257	.306	1.432	1.359	.238	1.419	1.269
Other Minority				-1.818*	.924	.162	-1.818*	.936	.162	-1.787	.943	.167
Divorced/Separated				-.976	1.258	.377	-1.158	1.327	.314	-.928	1.284	.395
Single				-.381	.945	.683	-.315	.962	.730	-.384	.945	.681
Substance User				.649	.962	1.913	.582	.972	1.790	.669	.967	1.953
Arrest Record				.277	.771	1.320	.273	.777	1.314	.269	.772	1.308
Psych. Record				5.919	35.712	372.011	6.013	34.947	408.77	5.902	35.922	365.635
City					.972	1.669	.573	.983	4	.507	.971	1.660
Legally Employed							-.542	.975	1.773			
Strain									.582	.037	.228	1.037
Constant	2.818	.364		.512	1.741		2.997	1.778		2.84	1.821	
χ^2/df		5.18/1		2.930	14.85/11			15.14/12			14.87/12	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.16. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Location by Legal Activities for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Legally Employed	-.654	.382	.520	-.258	.470	.773
Controls						
Age				.014	.023	1.014
# of Children				.346	.362	1.413
Aboriginal				-1.216	.647	.296
Other Minority				-1.555*	.534	.211
Divorced/Separated				-1.191	.779	.304
Single				.081	.580	.922
Substance User				1.001	.596	2.721
Arrest Record				.932*	.467	2.540
Psych. Record				7.544	21.226	1888.822
City				-.150	.511	.861
Constant	1.408	.233		.803	.966	
χ^2/df		2.87/1			31.47/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.17. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Location by Strain for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Strain	-.123	.092	.885	-.111	.111	.895
Controls						
Age				.015	.023	1.015
# of Children				.370	.367	1.447
Aboriginal				-1.294*	.640	.274
Other Minority				-1.572*	.525	.208
Divorced/Separated				-1.247	.784	.287
Single				-.093	.577	.911
Substance User				.967	.595	2.630
Arrest Record				.874	.472	2.397
Psych. Record				7.535	21.79	1873.369
City				-.222	.514	.801
Constant	1.435	.268		.996	.989	
χ^2/df		1.76/1			32.18/11	

* $p < .05$

Table 6.18. Maximum-Likelihood Logit Estimates of Location by Illegal Activities for cases 1969+

Variable	*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*		
	b	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**	**b**	**S.E.**	**(e^b)**
Illegal Activities	-1.286*	.662	.276	-1.125	.858	.324	-1.142	.964	.319	-1.213	.856	.297
Controls												
Age				.011	.023	1.011	.011	.022	1.011	.011	.023	1.011
# of Children				.281	.360	1.324	.280	.360	1.323	.295	.367	1.343
Aboriginal				-1.160	.649	.313	-1.163	.653	.312	-1.180	.651	.307
Other Minority				-1.634*	.527	.195	-1.640*	.545	.194	-1.582*	.531	.206
Divorced/Separated				-1.190	.779	.304	-1.188	.780	.305	-1.287	.787	.276
Single				-.127	.581	.880	-.127	.581	.881	-.168	.581	.845
Substance User				.965	.579	2.626	.970	.590	2.637	.821	.594	2.274
Arrest Record				1.126*	.491	3.085	1.131*	.508	3.099	1.033*	.496	2.809
Psych. Record				7.379	21.622	1602.670	7.377	21.625	1599.459	7.337	21.397	1536.204
City				.020	.537	1.020	.022	.539	1.022	-.033	.540	.967
Legally Employed							.020	.533	1.020	-.128		
Strain										1.255	.113	.879
Constant	1.286	.194		.879	.956		.873	.969			1.021	
χ^2/df		3.60/1			32.89/11			32.89/12			34.18/12	

* $p < .05$

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore three questions: 1) Does investigating specific aspects of a homicide such as victim type, location, and circumstance improve our understanding of women's homicidal behaviour?; 2) How well do *Legal Activities*, *Illegal Activities* and *Strain* theories predict women's homicidal behaviour?; and 3) Can these theories predict women's homicidal behaviour over time? I address these questions below given what I found in Chapter 6.

According to Katz (1988), the convention in criminological work is to develop causal explanations that apply to any age, race, class, or sex. For example, in their general theory of crime, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) claim that low self control precipitates any type of crime (e.g., summary and indictable offenses), at all times, and by all people.[1] The tendency to develop general explanations that view crime as a monolithic behaviour is evident in homicide theories as well; proponents of the biogenic and psychogenic approaches claim that particular illnesses (be they biological or psychological) explain women's homicide offending regardless of the victim type, circumstance or location. In the sociogenic tradition, some feminist theorists generalize the homicidal behaviour of battered women to all women who kill (Brownstein, Spunt, Goldstein and Langley,1994). I suggest a different approach that recognizes the following: a) factors instigating homicide may vary substantially from those of other offenses; b) factors precipitating male and female homicide offending may differ; c) differences in the homicidal behaviour among

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[1]There is a group of researchers who contend that women who kill (particularly infanticidal mothers) have overcontrolled personalities. These women defy Gottfredson and Hirschi's causal categories: although they have several of the elements Gottfredson and Hirschi claim are necessary for conformity such as the ability to defer gratification by investing in long-term possibilities, sensitivity to the needs of others and high tolerance for frustration (i.e., high levels of self control), they still commit murder.

women may require explanations that are sensitive to variances in victim type, location, and circumstance; and d) explanations may be more suitable for specific time periods, cultures or societies.

My findings provided modest support for the contention that exploring homicide as a variety of behaviours is more effective than treating it as a monolithic behaviour. In this analysis, I focused on three theories and their ability to predict three aspects of women's homicidal behaviour: victim type, circumstance and location. According to the data analyzed in Chapter 6, the theories were best able to predict why some women killed intimates rather than non-intimates. As well, several control variables -- ethnicity, marital status, prior arrest record and city -- contributed to our understanding of victim type.

The theories were less successful with regard to circumstance, although two (i.e., *Legal* and *Illegal Activities*) were able to predict the odds of a woman committing an expressive versus instrumental homicide. However, none of the control variables improved our understanding of this aspect of homicide. This is particularly surprising as many of these variables measure key aspects of dominant explanations about women's homicidal behaviour. My findings point to the need for more theoretical work in this area.

Finally, only one (e.g., *Illegal Activities*) of the three theories was able to predict the probability of a woman killing at home versus in a public venue; however, ethnicity, substance use and prior arrest record added to our understanding of homicide location. As with circumstance, more detailed etiological work on homicide setting is warranted.

My second question focused on the predictive power of the specific theories. My findings revealed that *Strain* theory had the least predictive power: SES had only one

significant effect (i.e., on victim type) and this effect was quite small (-.21).[2] In contrast, *Legal* and *Illegal Activities* theories fared much better. The *Illegal Activities* model, as measured by involvement in the sex and drug trade, had the strongest effects and was the only variable to have significant bivariate effects on all three homicide aspects that I tested. Although the measure of *Legal Activities*, employment outside of the home, had weaker bivariate effects, it reached significance at the multivariate level for both victim type and circumstance. Thus, even after controlling for ethnicity, marital status, previous arrest record and city, there was a significant and sizable effect between legal employment and victim type.

Interestingly, *Illegal Activities* is the only theory that developed hypotheses specifically to explain women's homicidal behaviour and it appears best able to draw attention to differences among female offenders. One problem with the previous work on women who kill is that much of it (Wolfgang,1958; Wilbanks,1983; Goetting,1989; Jurik and Winn,1990) compares women to men, rather than focusing on the unique characteristics of female-perpetrated homicide. For example, while the current theoretical and empirical literature point to victim type, circumstance and location as factors that may distinguish homicides, these factors are typically used to differentiate between female and male perpetrators (or among male offenders). One drawback of such studies is that women's involvement in homicide is presented as a homogenous phenomenon thereby obscuring differences among female offenders. My findings reveal that differences among women with regard to victim type, circumstance and location demand further theoretical

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[2]This supports Katz's (1988:10) contention that materialist theories of crime are poorly grounded empirically and are more sentimental than credible.

attention in their own right and that gender-based explanations of homicidal behaviour are warranted.

Another area requiring empirical and etiological attention is the effect of some control variables on the relationship between SES and victim type and between employment in the drug/sex trade and all three homicide aspects. The introduction of the following controls appear to suppress the bivariate association between SES and victim type: Aboriginal, Other Minority, Divorced/Separated and City. One possible explanation is that the control variables intervene (e.g., SES → Divorced/Separated → Victim Type) such that SES only *indirectly* causes variation in victim type but *directly* causes variation in the controls. If the controls are indeed intervening variables, their causal order with SES is somewhat convoluted as exemplified in the relationship between SES and Divorced/Separated. On the one hand, divorce may alter a woman's socioeconomic status: her SES may worsen due to the loss of a second income or improve as a result of alimony payments (e.g., Divorced/Separated → SES). On the other hand, change in a woman's SES may influence her marital status: gaining a job may provide a woman with the economic stability and independence she needs to leave an unhappy marriage or losing a job may create emotional and financial tensions that eventually lead to divorce (e.g., SES → Divorced/Separated). Exploring the direct relationships between the controls and various homicide aspects may improve our understanding of women who kill.

Unlike the above circumstance in which the introduction of controls causes the relationship to be revealed, the relationship between *Illegal Activities* and all three of the dependent variables disappears upon including controls into the model. One possible

explanation is that the relationship between involvement in the drug/sex trade (independent variable) and victim type, circumstance and location (dependent variables) is spurious. Should this be the case, the dependent and independent variables are not causally related; they vary together only because they are both influenced by changes in ethnicity, marital status, substance use and city. While it is conceivable that ethnicity and marital status have direct effects on illegal activities and the three homicide aspects, the role of substance use and city are less clear. For example, can alcohol or drug use immediately prior to the offense cause variation in a woman's involvement in illegal activities (i.e., activities that she presumably engaged in days, weeks, etc., before the homicide event? Further research must be conducted to ascertain the effects between these variables and their influence on female-perpetrated homicide.

With regard to the third and final question, it appears that the three theories tested here are unable to predict women's homicidal behaviour in the first half of this century. As reported in Chapter 6, the theories' lack of predictive power for the pre-1970 cases discredits their claim that the effects of employment outside of the home, involvement in illegal activities and low socioeconomic status remain constant over time. This is further evidence that creating general theories of crime may be problematic. Clearly the influence of the above theoretical variables has greater salience for post -1970 cases and generalizations to other time periods cannot be supported empirically. Thus, the ability to predict women's homicidal behaviour over a ninety-year period may require several etiological explanations. Over the past ninety years, the lives of women have altered substantially and developing theoretical work that is cognizant of these changes may help

to explain temporal shifts in victim type, circumstance and location. This work is necessary if we are to understand why and if the proportion of women killing intimates at home for expressive reasons varies over time.

Study Limitations

The following conditions may have influenced my results and my ability to address my research questions. First, although I worked with a population that spanned ninety years, the number of cases (N=297) was still relatively small. The small number of cases limited the number of variables I could control for in my analysis. As well, the standard error of a variable can be inflated by multicollinearity; a problem that may increase with the number of control variables included in the analysis. Finally, some of the variables I used were skewed; for example, of the homicidal women examined, only 11 were illegally employed, 57 were legally employed, and the remaining 198 were out of the labour force. In multivariate analyses, skewed variables can result in empty cells further increasing standard errors. This problem was exacerbated by missing data, as in some cases (e.g., SES), the modal category was missing.

My operationalization of theoretical variables may have also influenced my results. The predictive power of a theory relies heavily on the ability of the researcher to adequately measure its influence in a sample or population. While I was able to locate indicators for the major aspects of the theories I tested, there were other aspects that remained unexamined that may contribute to the theories' predictive power. For example, *Legal Activities* theory explores the effects of public activities on victimization and homicidal behaviour. Although my operational measure, employment outside of the

home, is a key risk factor, leisure activities that take people away from their homes at night such as going to the movies, a tavern, night school or a sports event may also increase direct predatory victimization. I anticipate that the effect of *Legal Activities* on various aspects of women's homicidal behaviour will improve with measures that capture other aspects of women's routine, legal activities.

Finally, this research was conducted on a dataset capturing the homicidal behaviour of Canadian women in two metropolitan centres. The findings reported here may not be generalizable throughout the country and especially not to rural centres: the behaviour of women living outside of large cities may be qualitatively different from those in urban centres.

Recommendations

In this study, I have explored three aspects of the homicidal event (victim type, circumstance and location). However, there are several other factors such as method, availability of weapons, influence of bystanders, time of day, and victim-precipitation that warrant investigation. Furthermore, researchers may wish to explore whether characteristics of the offender and victim (e.g., attitudes toward violence and gender politics, levels of emotional support from friends and family, and history of childhood abuse) help to explain variation in women's homicidal behaviour.

In choosing to compare the predictive power of *Legal Activities*, *Illegal Activities* an *Strain* theories, I recognize that several other approaches still require analysis. I recommend testing feminist explanations of battered women's behaviour, particularly their ability to predict various homicide characteristics. I suspect that such analyses may reveal

further differences among homicidal women and contribute to our understanding of their behaviour.

While I encourage moving beyond exploratory, descriptive research, there still is a need to profile women's homicidal behaviour over time. Are women more aggressive as Adler (1975) contends and are they engaging in more instrumental offenses as suggested by Brownstein et al. (1994)? Few Canadian studies have undertaken to answer these questions; to better prevent violent crime we must first understand trends in female-perpetrated homicide. Thus, researchers must analyze datasets similar to the one I used to compile profiles of female offenders in various times and places. Furthermore, qualitative accounts of women who kill should be investigated in order to capture the historical and cultural contexts that shape the way in which women respond to their environments. Qualitative accounts and in-depth interviews can also be used to complement cross-sectional analyses that are unable to examine the interactional history proceeding women's homicidal actions -- a history that may not be documented in official records. To fully appreciate concepts such as learned helplessness and inter-generational transmission of violence, researchers must delve beyond the immediate circumstances of the murder; by exploring women's familial relations weeks and months before the crime, researchers may be able to understand the processes that precipitate women's violent crime. These investigations may help us discover patterns that ground etiological work on women's homicidal behaviour as it develops and changes over time.

Since a truly national picture was not presented by this study, future homicide research should collect data from other regional centres particularly in the Prairie and

Maritime provinces. Researchers must also collect data from rural populations in order to explore the homicidal behaviour of women living in non-urban settings and to compare female-perpetrated homicides in various regions and settings. Furthermore, while I used population data gleaned from police records, the majority of studies in the field use samples generated from prison data. I recommend that researchers collect information from police records in order to gain more representative samples of homicidal women (i.e., there may be significant differences between why women kill and why incarcerated women kill).

Conclusions

There are several reasons for studying women who kill. First, feminist criminologists have concentrated on critiquing and providing alternatives to traditional explanations of women's involvement in shoplifting and the sex trade while ignoring the study of violent female offending. However, studying women who kill provides a forum in which we can deconstruct stereotypical images of violent women sustained by psychiatry, the legal system and news media; images that marginalize and silence the lived experiences of women and downplay the significance of underlying stressors that precipitate women's homicidal behaviour (Chait,1986; Edwards,1986; Wilcyzenski,1991). Viewing women's violent behaviour as a result of, or at the very least, exacerbated by women's powerlessness in society and the economic, social and psychological ramifications of such a position provides an opportunity to extend analyses of gender relations to an area traditionally neglected by feminists. For instance, Edwards (1986) notes in her analysis of the British legal system that judges and lawyers frequently view homicidal women as either

"mad" (i.e., mentally unstable) or "bad" (i.e., wicked and callous) and typically regard women's involvement in violent crime as an exercise in power. In deconstructing these assumptions, Edwards (1986:86) argues that a violent female offender:

> is neither some monstrous dangerous person, nor sick, maladjusted and mentally impaired. Instead she frequently responds to a trained incapacity for spontaneous retaliation by waiting neither through scheming nor cunning, where the frustration and strain of the familial environment and her helplessness within it result in the violent response out of defensive reaction and self-preservation, or as with children sheer desperation.

Second, although homicide is rare and is located at the extreme end of a continuum of violence, its study may help to shed light on other forms of violence. Thus, taking another person's life may result from years of sustaining or engaging in more common forms of aggression. Recognizing the factors that precipitate homicidal behaviour (i.e., the destruction of life) may help to identify why certain people are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviours that harm rather than destroy life. Studying female-perpetrated homicide in particular may highlight cycles of violence in the domestic sphere and the impact habitual aggression such as child abuse has on the life circumstances of violent women and their families.

Third, homicide is interactional, a social behaviour that requires our understanding of the dynamics of a relationship between two or more people. Rather than viewing the role of participants in isolation, we must explore the way in which their interaction escalates levels of stress, frustration, and aggression; levels creating circumstances or risk factors that are conducive to violence and, in some situations, homicide. For example, the literature on battered women has a tendency to present the continuum of domestic violence from the stand point of the abuser as beginning with a spouse's verbal, emotional

and physical abuse and ending with femicide. I argue that another continuum should be constructed from the stand point of the victim that begins with her emotional and physical reaction to the first signs of abuse, incorporates her coping mechanisms as the violence continues, includes her attempts to separate from her partner (be they successful or unsuccessful) and ends with the taking of her own life and/ or that of her partner's or children's. Only by intersecting these two continuums will we truly begin to understand the scope of violence by and against women.

Our use of intersecting continuums may help us to ascertain the similarities and differences between women who are killed by their partners, women who kill, and women who use other means to escape the frustration, stress, and violence in their lives. Understanding these patterns could improve proactive strategies for dealing with violence by and against women and help to develop resources that are sensitive to variances in the lives and needs of women. Simultaneously, by providing evidence that violence by and against women is predictable, patterned behaviour, social workers, medical professionals, and other advocates can dispel the view that "violence is inevitable, unavoidable and inherent in intimate relationships" (Crawford and Gartner,1992:171); a view that frustrates attempts to depersonalize domestic violence by locating it within larger societal contexts and conditions.

Modest support was found in this study for exploring homicide as a series of behaviours that require separate and specific explanations. By recognizing variation in homicide patterns, we may be able to predict more accurately the factors that precipitate certain kinds of homicidal behaviour. In other words, we may be in a better position to

predict a person's risk of victimization by a certain type of offender, under particular circumstances and in specific locations. The findings also support the development of gender-based homicide theories that recognize, rather than mask, the differences between male and female homicide offenders. Although it is helpful to establish the gender differences in homicidal behaviour, to truly understand women who kill we must go deeper than mere descriptions and comparisons to male offenders. We must advance etiological work that provides explanations for the unique characteristics of female-perpetrated homicide.

APPENDIX ONE

HOMICIDE DATA CODING SCHEME

VARIABLE NAME	CODING CATEGORIES
VICTIM'S SEX	0=MALE 1=FEMALE
VICTIM'S AGE	IN YEARS
VICTIM'S MARITAL STATUS	1=UNMARRIED 2=MARRIED 3=WIDOWED 4=DIVORCED 5=SEPARATED 6=COMMON LAW 7=SEPARATED, COMMON LAW
VICTIM'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS	0=UNEMPLOYED 1=LEGALLY EMPLOYED, FULL-TIME 2=LEGALLY EMPLOYED, PART-TIME 3=UNEMPLOYED HOUSEWORKER 4=STUDENT >14 YEARS OLD 5=OUT OF LABOUR FORCE (RETIRED/CHILD) 6=ILLEGALLY EMPLOYED (PROSTITUTION) 7=ILLEGALLY EMPLOYED (DRUGS) 8=OTHER ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT 9=WELFARE/DISABILITY/PENSION
VICTIM'S ETHNIC GROUP	1=FRENCH-CANADIAN 2=ANGO-CANADIAN 3=ABORIGINAL 4=BLACK 5=ASIAN 6=EAST INDIAN 7=EASTERN EUROPEAN 8=SOUTHERN EUROPEAN 9=MIDDLE EASTERN
VICTIM'S PRIORS	0=NO PRIOR RECORD 1=PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD 2=PRIOR MENTAL HOSPITALIZATION 3=HISTORY OF MENTAL PROBLEMS
VICTIM'S SUBSTANCE USE	0=NONE INDICATED 1=ALCOHOL 2=DRUGS

VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP	0=SPOUSE 1=EX-SPOUSE/COMMON-LAW 2=PARENT 3=CHILD 4=SIBLING 5=OTHER RELATION 6=STEP RELATION 7=LOVERS, DATING, EX-LOVERS, EX-DATING 8=LOVERS' TRIANGLE 9=ROOM/HOUSEMATES 10=FRIENDS 11=ACQUAINTANCES 12=CO-WORKERS 13=NEIGHBOURS 14=LEGAL BUSINESS RELATIONS 15=ILLEGAL BUSINESS RELATIONS (PROSTITUTION) 16=NO PRIOR RELATIONSHIP 17=COMMON LAW SPOUSE 18=OTHER COMMON LAW RELATION 21=ILLEGAL BUSINESS RELATION (DRUGS) 22=ILLEGAL BUSINESS RELATION (THEFT) 23=ILLEGAL BUSINESS RELATION (ABORTION) 24=GANG RELATED 25=HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP
LOCATION	0=VICTIM'S HOME 1=OFFENDER'S HOME 2=VICTIM/OFFENDER'S HOME 3=TAVERN/RESTAURANT OR ITS VICINITY 4=STORE, BUSINESS, OFFICE, ETC. 5=STREET NEAR VICTIM'S HOME 6=OTHER STREET/PARKING LOT 7=PARK, BEACH, FIELD 8=OTHER HOME 9=INSTITUTION (HOSPITAL/JAIL) 10=SEMI-PUBLIC PLACES (ELEVATOR, LOBBY, LAUNDRY AREA, ETC.) 11=ROOMINGHOUSE, VICTIM/OFFENDER'S ROOM 12=ROOMINGHOUSE, OTHER ROOM 13=VACANT/ABANDONED BUILDING

METHOD	0=STAB 1=SHOOT 2=BEAT (MULTIPLE HITS, KICKS) 3=SMOTHER 4=POISON 5=ARSON 6=HANGING 7=STRANGULATION 8=ABORTION 9=DROWNING 10=THROWN/PUSHED FROM HEIGHT 11=HIT, PUNCHED (ONCE OR TWICE) 12=SCALDING 13=NEGLECT (CHILD)
CIRCUMSTANCE	1=ROBBERY AT VICTIM'S EMPLOYMENT 2=ROBBERY IN OPEN, SUDDEN ATTACK 3=ROBBERY, PRIVATE PREMISES, NO VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP 4=ROBBERY, PUBLIC PLACE, VICTIM-OFFENDER SHORT RELATIONSHIP 5=ROBBERY, PRIVATE PLACE, VICTIM-OFFENDER SHORT RELATIONSHIP 6=ROBBERY, PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, VICTIM-OFFENDER LONG RELATIONSHIP 7=ROBBERY, UNKNOWN REASONS 8=ATTACKS IN COURSE OF SEXUAL OFFENSE 9=ATTACKS ON POLICE/BYSTANDERS 10=ATTACKS FROM DOMESTIC DISPUTES OR QUARRELS, PRIVATE PREMISES, AMONG FAMILY 11=SAME AS 10: AMONG NEIGHBOURS 12=SAME AS 10, AMONG FRIENDS 13=SAME AS 10, AMONG ACQUAINTANCES 14=ATTACKS FROM QUARRELS BEGINNING IN RESTAURANTS, TAVERNS, ETC. 15=ATTACKS IN PARKS WITH VICTIM PROVOCATION 16=SAME AS 15, NO VICTIM PROVOCATION 17=FAMILY KILLING WITH EVIDENCE OF MENTAL PROBLEMS 18=MALTEATMENT/ANGER OF CHILD 19=INADVERTANT ACT 20=MURDER/SUICIDE PACT, MERCY KILLING
OFFENDER'S SEX	0=MALE 1=FEMALE
OFFENDER'S AGE	IN YEARS

OFFENDER'S MARITAL STATUS	1=UNMARRIED 2=WIDOWED 3=WIDOWED 4=DIVORCED 5=SEPARATED 6=COMMON LAW 7=SEPARATED, COMMON LAW
OFFENDER'S # OF KIDS	CODE # (E.G., 1=1)
OFFENDER'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS	0=UNEMPLOYED 1=LEGALLY EMPLOYED, FULL-TIME 2=LEGALLY EMPLOYED, PART-TIME 3=UNEMPLOYED HOUSEWORKER 4=STUDENT 5=OUT OF LABOUR FORCE (RETIRED) 6=ILLEGALLY EMPLOYED (PROSTITUTION) 7=ILLEGALLY EMPLOYED (DRUGS) 8=OTHER ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT 9=WELFARE/DISABILITY/PENSION
OFFENDER'S EMPLOYMENT TYPE	0=NOT APPLICABLE 1=BUSINESS OWNER 2=SMALL BUSINESS OWNER 3=PROFESSIONAL 4=MANAGER/SUPERVISOR, WHITE COLLAR 5=HIGH SKILL, WHITE COLLAR 6=LOW SKILL, WHITE COLLAR 7=SERVICE WORKER 8=SKILLED LABOURER 9=UNSKILLED LABOURER
OFFENDER'S EDUCATION	0=8 YEARS OR LESS 1=9-10 YEARS 2=11 YEARS-SECONDARY GRADUATION 3=COLLEGE
OFFENDER'S ETHNIC GROUP	1=FRENCH-CANADIAN 2=ANGO-CANADIAN 3=ABORIGINAL 4=BLACK 5=ASIAN 6=EAST INDIAN 7=EASTERN EUROPEAN 8=SOUTHERN EUROPEAN 9=MIDDLE EASTERN

OFFENDER'S PRIORS	0=NO PRIOR RECORD 1=PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD 2=PRIOR MENTAL HOSPITALIZATION 3=HISTORY OF MENTAL PROBLEMS
OFFENDER'S SUBSTANCE USE	0=NONE INDICATED 1=ALCOHOL 2=DRUGS
OFFENDER'S SUICIDE	0=NONE INDICATED 1=SUCCESSFUL 2=ATTEMPTED

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Women Who Kill: An Analysis of Ninety Years of Female-Perpetrated Homicide

Author [redacted]

Andrea Louise Crum-Ewing
July 21, 1997