

Solutions

TO THE MURDER PROBLEM

DR. CHASWELL A. HANNA



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

We cannot solve our problems with the same
thinking we used when we created them.

...Albert Einstein



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THE NATIONAL ANTI-DRUG SECRETARIAT

The National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS) within the Ministry of National Security is the principle national body charged with effecting coherence, collaboration and coordination in all anti-drug efforts throughout The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. NADS maintains a comprehensive overview of drug control activities of Government Ministries and Agencies, NGOs, community organizations and other entities concerned with drug control. NADS also provides assistance in the development of policies and programs related to drug prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, supply and demand reduction.

The research arm of NADS, known as the National Drugs Observatory (NDO), is the central location for obtaining drug information and statistics in The Bahamas. The NDO also serves as the principle research center for compiling and analyzing drug data in order to track trends in supply and demand activities for the generation of timely and accurate assessments of the drug situation and drug control efforts to inform local drug policy and drug related services. More specifically, the NDO conducts scholarly research studies that analyze the relationship between drugs and crime and offers strategies, policy changes and legislative adjustments to reduce crimes that are driven by the illicit drug trade.

The findings of this study will be used to add to the relatively small but growing body of local research aimed at developing ways in which the crime problem can be addressed. Finally, it should be noted that the recommendations offered at the end of this study referred to as a *Murder Reduction Strategy* are based on the findings of this study and associated research.

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Preface

This study presents a Murder Reduction Strategy based on an empirical examination of murders that occurred in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas between 2010-2015. This study had three main objectives. Firstly, Chapters 1 through 6 presented a descriptive analysis of murder incidents that occurred within The Commonwealth of The Bahamas between 2010 and 2015. This time frame will be referred to as the *study period*. A host of variables including incidence, victims, suspects, motives, detection and conviction were collected and analyzed from case files and criminal justice databases. Although specifically focused on the study period, data for earlier years and time periods were also discussed and duly indicated.

Secondly, Chapters 7 and 8 presented a comprehensive review of literature on the issue of homicide prevention and ways by which detection rates may be improved. Best practices and innovative preventative programs devised and/or adopted by law enforcement agencies throughout the world were also shared and examined. Careful attention was given to the results of scholarly evaluations of such programs to determine the extent of their effectiveness.

Thirdly, Chapter 9 presented a *Murder Reduction Strategy* for The Bahamas based on the findings of this study. This strategic plan proposes the introduction of several police initiatives, policy adjustments, legislative amendments and community-based programs to reduce murder and other violent crimes. The strategy aims to add value to the decision making process of law enforcement administrators and executives.

Foreword

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

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

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

As you will read, these and other factors have contributed, by a large extent, to the increasing level of violent crime. Thus, any strategy aimed at reducing violence must address these factors in order to be successful. The Bahamas is not the only nation to experience a murder problem and probably will not be the last. Fortunately, crime and violence are not immutable as punishments that are swift, certain and severe can have an effective deterrent effect. Other jurisdictions continue to use research to assist in the development and evaluation of crime prevention policies. Amidst claims of widespread success, criminal justice scholars have spent time carefully evaluating these initiatives to ensure that findings did not occur by chance.

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

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CHAPTER 1

INCIDENCE

Key Facts at a Glance

- ❖ *There were 719 murders recorded between 2010-2015.*
- ❖ *The 146 murders reported in 2015 were the highest ever reported for The Bahamas in one year.*
- ❖ *The Bahamas' murder rate ranks 13th out of a survey of 142 nations.*
- ❖ *The Bahamas had more than 5 times as many murders as the US (per capita).*
- ❖ *The Caribbean's murder rate of 18.1 (per capita) is higher than North America, Europe or Asia.*

Introduction

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

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

The Dark Figure of Crime

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

Although easier for other categories of crime, determining an accurate figure showing the incidence of murder can present its own unique intricacies. The challenge in determining the exact number of murders comes as a result of various classifications of death. According to the Penal Code of The Bahamas, murder is the intentional and unlawful taking of a person's life. For the purpose of this study, the words 'homicide' and 'murder' are used interchangeably and take on the legal definition of murder in The Bahamas. Other categories include deaths described as *sudden*, *suspicious*, *accidental* or *suicidal*. The determination of an official classification is typically based

on the findings of the crime scene and facts of the investigation. The crucial question, however, becomes just how many deaths not classified as murders were in fact murders. An answer of zero cannot be reasonably assumed. The unit of analysis in this research will be limited to reported cases officially classified as murder by the police.

Murder Incidence in The Bahamas

The study period for this research study covered 2010 to 2015. During this period, a total of 719 persons were murdered in The Bahamas. There were 18 double murders, 1 triple murder, and 1 quadruple murder during the study period. This works out to 696 murder cases.

The annual number of local murders over the last decade produced a specific pattern. As shown in Figure 1.1, the annual number of incidents steadily increased over the last decade peaking in 2015 with 146 incidents. There were two years where the number of incidents showed decreases including a 6% drop in 2008 and a 13% drop in 2012. The average number of murders between 2005-2009 increased from 70 to 120 incidents between 2010 to 2015. Figures for the last eleven years produce an average of 97 murders annually. The gradual increase in murders over the last decade is normally viewed by criminologists as an indication that authorities have not exercised a consistent level of management over the offence.

Figure 1.1 Bahamas Murder Incidents (2005-2015)



It should also be understood that the number of murders reported annually could have been notably higher considering the incidence of other serious offenses. The 906 shootings, 1,054 stabbings and 123 attempted murders reported during the study period (2010-2015) all could have resulted in a murder. Some may argue that early medical attention may have been the only factor why the murder count was not significantly higher. It is also worth mentioning that annual fluctuations of these other violent crimes matched fluctuations in murder incidents. Hence, a year marked by an increase in murder typically marked a year with an increase in other violent crimes.

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

The Murder Rate

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

How to Calculate the Murder Rate



The Bahamas' Murder Rate

As indicated by the equation, a country's population must be taken into account when calculating its murder rate. According to The Bahamas' Department of Statistics Population Projections 2010-2040, the population of The Bahamas increased from 351,500 in 2010 to 373,630 in 2015 (DOS, 2015). Using each incremental annual projection, the murder rate for each year during the study period was calculated and is displayed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Bahamas' Homicide Rates (2010-2015)

Year	Population*	Incidents	Rate
2010	351,500	94	26.7
2011	355,930	127	35.7
2012	360,360	111	30.8
2013	364,780	119	32.6
2014	369,210	122	33.0
2015	373,630	146	39.1

**Bahamas Department of Statistics 'Population Projections 2010-2040'*

The average murder rate for The Bahamas during the study period was 33. This means that during the last six years, about 33 out of every 100,000 Bahamians became victims of murder. This rate is notably higher than the average murder rate of 18.8 observed between 2005 and 2009 (Hanna, 2011) and the 16.7 observed between 1991 and 2003 (Hanna, 2005). It must be noted that a higher number of murder incidents for a particular year does not necessarily yield a higher murder rate when compared to another year. For example, the year 2007 recorded a higher number of murder incidents than 2000, even though that year had a higher rate. This disparity can be explained by the fact that the population during 2000 was less than that of 2007.

Regional Murder Rates

Issues of crime and violence have increasingly captured the attention of the public and policy-makers throughout the Caribbean region. A number of Caribbean countries recorded increases in serious crimes such as murder, robbery, rape, burglary and larceny in the 1980s and 1990s (De Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999; Harriott, 2002), even though in many cases the overall crime rates were actually lower in the 1990s than those in the 1980s. According to the Global Burden of Armed Violence Report, the Caribbean's murder rate of 18.1 (per 100,000) is higher than North America, Europe or Asia (Global

Burden of Armed Violence, 2010). To make sense of the increases in serious crimes, McElroy (2000:9) described what he called a *third wave of globalization* within the Caribbean economy. This followed an era of sugarcane production and an era of island tourism. What he described as the Caribbean's *narco-economy* places the Caribbean in a new phase of globalized economic integration following successful US efforts to halt the flow of Colombian drugs across the Mexican border. Drug traffickers had to re-route their activities along the island chain leading to new criminal subcultures via the drugs trade, firearms and gangs. Facing this violence, law enforcement has become more complex and complicated. This development is in line with wider shifts in transnational crime associated with globalization. As the movement of people and goods has increased and the possibilities for communication enhanced, opportunities for the illicit transfer of goods and services have also been considerably improved, with the drug trade being one of the biggest beneficiaries (Shelley, 2005; Van Schendel & Abraham, 2006).

Trinidad & Tobago

With a population of about 1.3 million, Trinidad & Tobago reports crime trends in line with other Caribbean countries. According to the Trinidad & Tobago Police Service, overall recorded crime declined by about a third during the 1990s. On the other hand, violent crimes including murder, kidnapping and robbery have increased since the late 1990s. Miller and Hendricks (2007) described Trinidad & Tobago's murder rate as spiraling within the country. Recent figures indicate a murder rate of 42.3 (per 100,000) placing this country's rate as the 10th highest in the world (See Table 1.2). As with other Caribbean countries, stakeholders have a strong perception that violent crime in Trinidad & Tobago is driven by drugs. Evidence suggested that murders and kidnappings were motivated by conflicts arising from the increasingly significant drug trade, highlighting the country's role in receiving drugs from Latin America for distribution in North America and Europe (Transparency International, 2006).

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

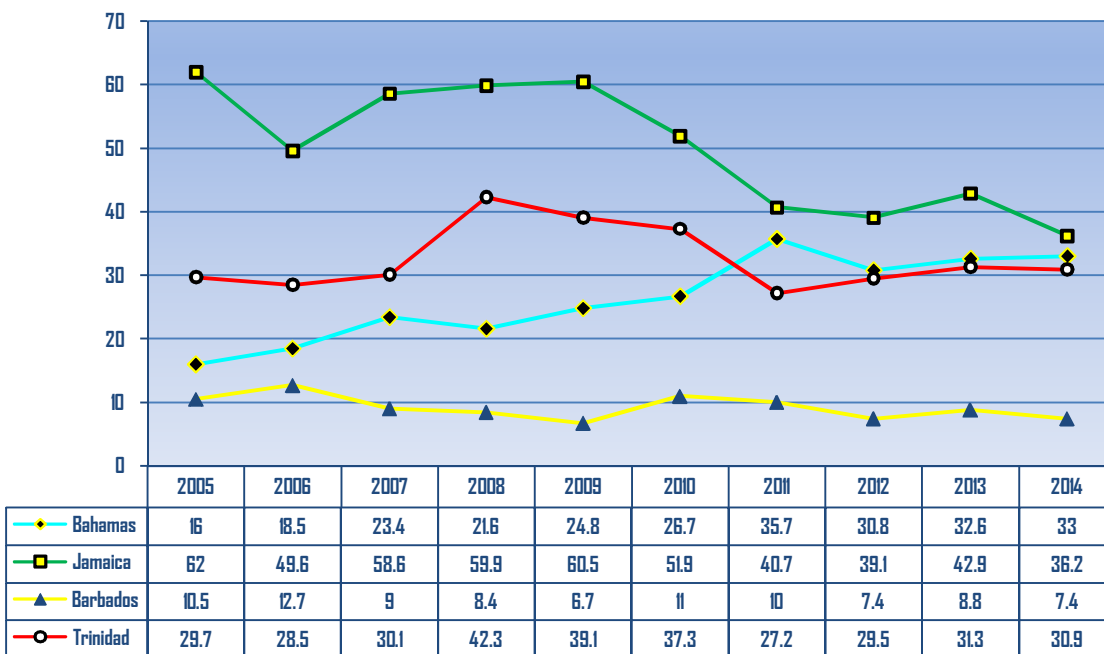
Jamaica

Historically, crime throughout Jamaica maybe as a result of several factors: poverty, retribution, drugs, gangs and politics. Jamaica has been infamously known to have one of the highest murder rates in the world and was once dubbed the murder capital of

the world. Since the 1990s, murder rates in Jamaica, a country of 2.7 million people, have hovered in the vicinity of 40-45 (per 100,000). More than 1,100 people were murdered in Jamaica during 2001, an increase of nearly 30% over the previous year and the highest number ever recorded in a single year up to that point (Penketh, 2002). With a total of 1,674 murders in 2005, the murder rate reached a record 62 per capita. These relatively high murder rates have placed Jamaica among the top countries in the world that experience high murder rates.

As shown in Figure 1.2, The Bahamas' rate is notably lower than Jamaica's and Trinidad & Tobago's but higher than Barbados'. Some of the other Caribbean nations have populations of less than 100,000 and their murder rates are relatively low. For example, Bermuda, which has a population of about 70,000, reported 5 murders for 2008 and Dominica, which has a population of 72,000, reported 13 murders in 2009 (Bermuda Police Service, 2010). It is also interesting to note that while The Bahamas' rate has been trending upwards, Jamaica's rate has been trending downward.

Figure 1.2 Regional Murder Rates* (2005-2014)



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

Murder Rates Around the World

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

United States

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

For the last 9 years, the US murder rate remained virtually unchanged as it pivoted between 4.5 and 5.8 (per 100,000). As shown in Figure 1.3, the homicide rate of the US has consistently been notably lower than The Bahamas' rate. While the US averaged a murder rate of 5.1 over the last 9 years, The Bahamas averaged 25.6. To put it simply, The Bahamas had more than five times as many homicides as the US (per capita).

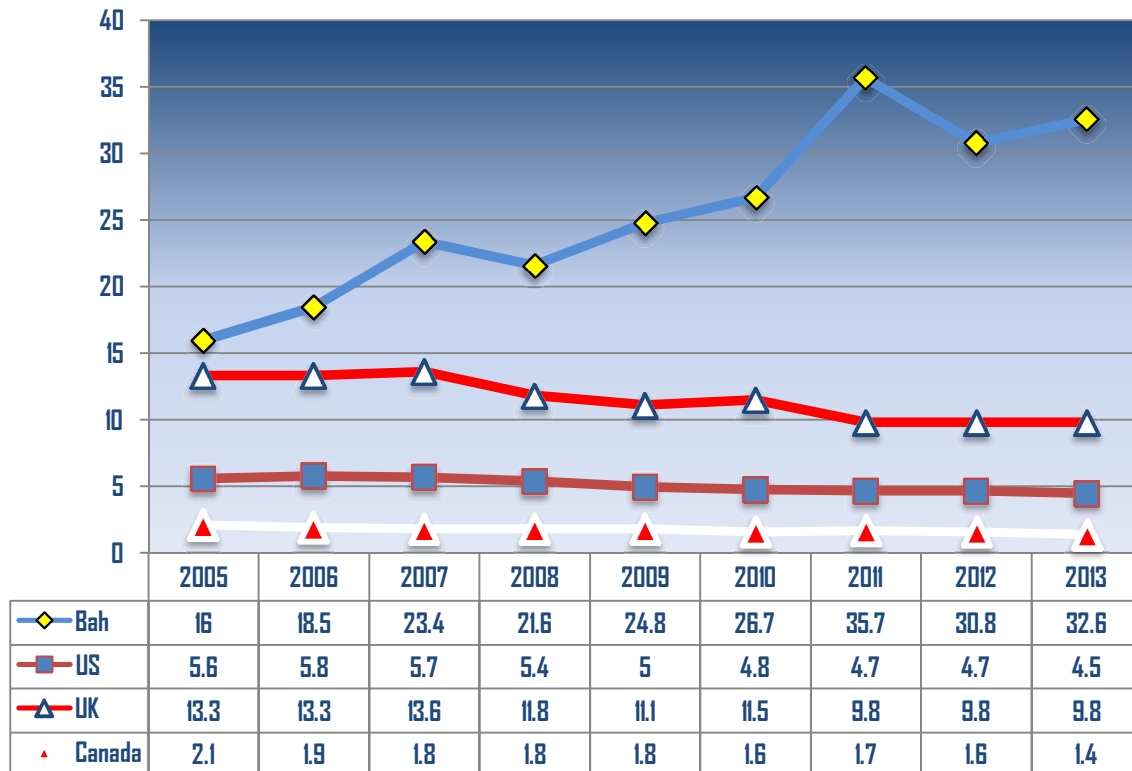
Canada

The findings of a study conducted by Statistics Canada indicated that comparisons with the US on homicide rates were more reliable (Gannon, 2001). The Canadian homicide rate has been decreasing since the mid-1970s following increases during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The homicide rate for Canada went down to 1.4% in 2013; its lowest level in over 35 years. According to official figures, Canada's murder rate has averaged 1.85 (per 100,000) for nearly a decade (Statistics Canada, 2009). Canada's murder rate tends to be less than 1/3 of the US'. Compared to local figures, Canada's homicide rate is approximately 9 times lower than that of The Bahamas.

United Kingdom

European murder rates are usually lower compared to a number of Western nations. Figures indicated that the UK's murder rate was usually observed around 11 (per 100,000) with its 2013 rate of 9.8 being among the lowest (World Murder Rates, 2010).

Figure 1.3 Bahamas vs. US, UK & Canada Murder Rates (2005–2013)



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2014.

Summing It Up

While The Bahamas' murder rate has been steadily increasing over the last few years, other countries such as Jamaica's and Trinidad & Tobago's rate have decreased. If local trends persist, however, The Bahamas' rate may catch the attention of the international community and global surveyors of crime. Other countries such as the United States and Canada have stabilized their murder rates over the last few years. The propensity for attention could grow considering the record setting year of 2015.

World's Highest Homicide Rates

The United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) examines murder rates globally. As shown in Table 1.2, The Bahamas' ranks 13th among the top 20 nations with the highest murder rate.

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

Rank	Nation	Rate	Rank	Nation	Rate
1 st	 Honduras	90.4	11 th	 South Africa	31.0
2 nd	 Venezuela	53.7	12 th	 Columbia	30.8
3 rd	 US Virgin Islands (US)	52.6	13 th	 The Bahamas	29.8
4 th	 Belize	44.7	14 th	 Trinidad and Tobago	28.3
5 th	 El Salvador	41.2	15 th	 Dem. Rep. of the Congo	28.3
6 th	 Guatemala	39.9	16 th	 Puerto Rico (US)	26.5
7 th	 Jamaica	39.3	17 th	 St. Vincent and the Grenadines	25.6
8 th	 Lesotho	38.0	18 th	 Brazil	25.2
9 th	 Swaziland	33.8	19 th	 Rwanda	23.1
10 th	 Saint Kitts and Nevis	33.6	20 th	 Dominican Republic	22.1

**Source: UNODC Global Study on Homicide. The reliability of underlying national murder rate data may vary. The legal definition of intentional homicide differs among countries and may or may not include infanticide, assisted suicide or euthanasia.*

CHAPTER 2

SPATIAL & TEMPORAL VARIANCES

Key Facts at a Glance

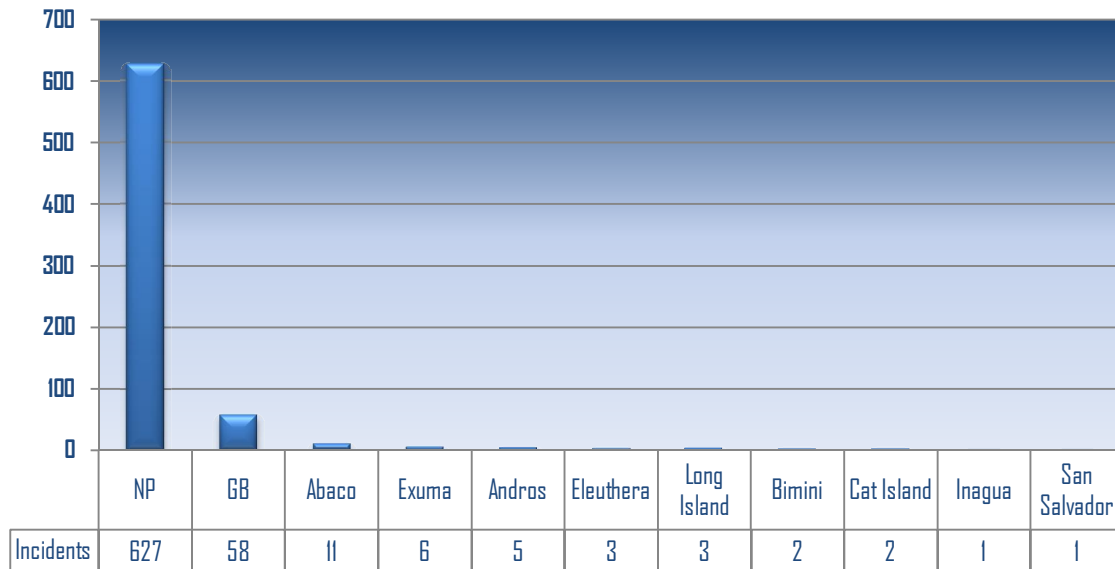
- *Most murders occurred in the Southeastern policing division (which includes the Pinewood and Nassau Village communities).*
- *Murders were heavily concentrated in inner cities and 'over the hill' neighborhoods.*
- *Most murders occurred during the month of May.*
- *Most murders occurred on Saturdays.*
- *Most murders occurred between the hours of 4pm and 12am.*
- *In 2015, a murder was reported every 2 days (on average).*

Spatial Variance

Murders by Island

Homicides have occurred on most of the inhabited islands of The Bahamas. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, most murders (627 or 87%) during the study period occurred on the capital island of New Providence inclusive of Paradise Island. This was followed by the nation's second city, Grand Bahama, with 58 or 8% of the incidents. New Providence averaged about 105 murders per year, twice as much as the 2005-2009 time period. The increasing number of murders in the country may be largely a product of population increases in New Providence as opposed to any other island. Grand Bahama, on the other hand, averaged about 10 murders each year, slightly less than the average of 12 during 2005-2009. Murders in the Family Islands were relatively rare occurrences during the study period only accounting for 5% of the incidents during the study period. The islands of Abaco and Exuma reported the two highest numbers for murder incidents on Family Islands during the study period, both combining for 17 incidents.

Figure 2.1 Murders by Islands (2010-2015)



The number of homicides occurring on a particular island was usually relative to its population size. Seeing that most of the country's inhabitants (70%) reside on New Providence (DOS, 2012), it should be expected that most of the country's murders would occur on that island. If this perception is correct, the rank order of number of murders on an island should correlate with the rank order of each island's population size. Such a relationship, however, was not observed for all islands. As shown in Table 2.1, Exuma had the 4th highest number of reported murders, but had the 6th highest population. Eleuthera had the 6th highest number of reported murders, but had the 4th largest population (DOS, 2012).

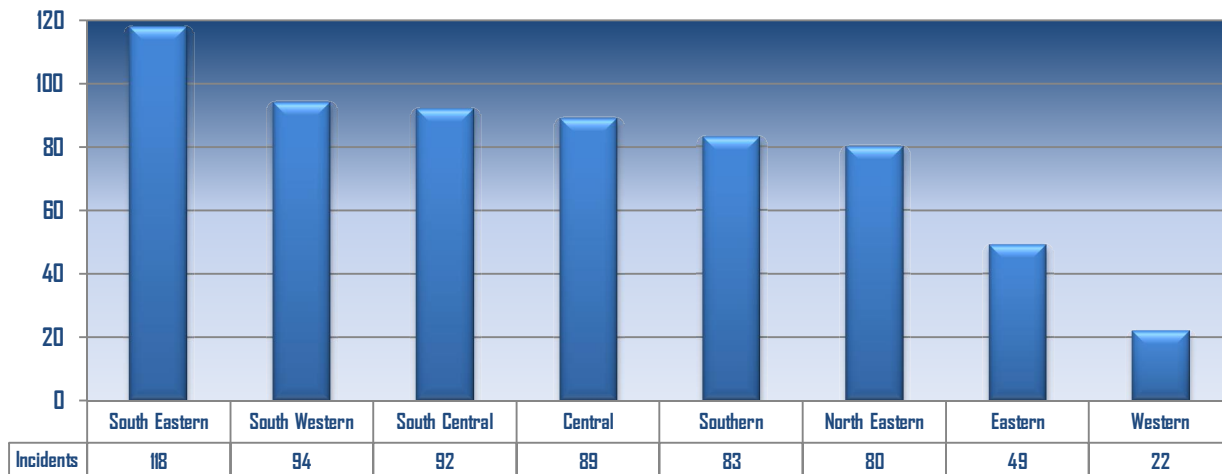
Table 2.1 Top Five Islands by Murders & Populations (2010-2015)

Island By Homicide	Number	Island By Population	Population*
1. New Providence	627	1. New Providence	246,329
2. Grand Bahama	58	2. Grand Bahama	51,368
3. Abaco	11	3. Abaco	17,224
4. Exuma	6	4. Eleuthera	8,202
5. Andros	5	5. Andros	7,490
6. Eleuthera	3	6. Exuma	6,928

*These figures are derived from the 2010 census of The Bahamas.

Murders by Policing Divisions

The islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama are divided into various zones for crime management and deployment purposes. Known as 'police divisions', these areas cut across some sections of constituency boundaries and sub-divisions, whether residential or otherwise. Illustrations of the New Providence and Grand Bahama's policing divisions are displayed in Appendixes A and B respectively. Examining New Providence divisions alone, displayed in Figure 2.2, the Southeastern Division observed the highest number of incidents accounting for 118 (19%) of New Providence murders and 16% of murders nationwide. Some of the communities in this division include Pinewood Gardens, South Beach and Nassau Village. Southeastern has averaged about 20 incidents annually during the study period and peaked at 23 incidents during 2011 and 2015. The Southeastern Division was also the division with the highest number of incidents during the 2005-2009 period accounting for 19% of murder during that time period. The Southwestern (formerly Carmichael) and South-central (formerly Grove) Divisions observed the second and third highest number of incidents in New Providence, with 94 (15%) and 92 (15%) respectively. It is interesting to note that the three leading divisions during the current study period, were also the three leading division during the 2005-2009 time period.

Figure 2.2 Murders by Policing Divisions* (2010-2015) [New Providence Only]

* See Appendix A

Homicide Mapping

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

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

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

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

The socio-economic composition of place, however, fails to account for the spatial concentration of homicide events. There appears to be certain neighborhoods that matter above and beyond poverty (Blumstein & Rosenfeld, 1998; Cohen & Tita, 1999). The latest census report of The Bahamas measured the annual household incomes throughout Bahamian communities. The island of New Providence was divided into twenty-four communities which averaged an annual household income of \$42,381.75 (DOS, 2000). Although most murders occurred within the Southeastern policing division, the locations were not heavily concentrated in relation to the entire map of New Providence. Spatial analyses of New Providence murders revealed that the Southeastern Division (inclusive of Pinewood Gardens, etc) was one such division which included neighborhoods where murder events occurred above and beyond poverty. The annual household income in these areas was \$43,316.00, just above the New Providence average (Bahamas Living Conditions Survey, 2001).

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

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

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

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

In summary, the spatial distribution of murder incidents in New Providence indicates that incidents were not distributed randomly, suggestive of positive spatial autocorrelation. Densely populated, lower income areas appear to be the ideal murder locations. This is in line with the literature as most serious crimes tend to occur in densely populated inner cities. In fact, one of the most consistent findings of American studies is that there are strong statistical associations between areas with high homicide rates and areas with high levels of poverty and inequality (Loftin & Hill 1974; Parker & Smith, 1979). This finding will be discussed in greater depth in the Murder Reduction Strategy in Chapter 9.

Figure 2.3 GIS Ortho-Image of New Providence Murders (2010-2015)

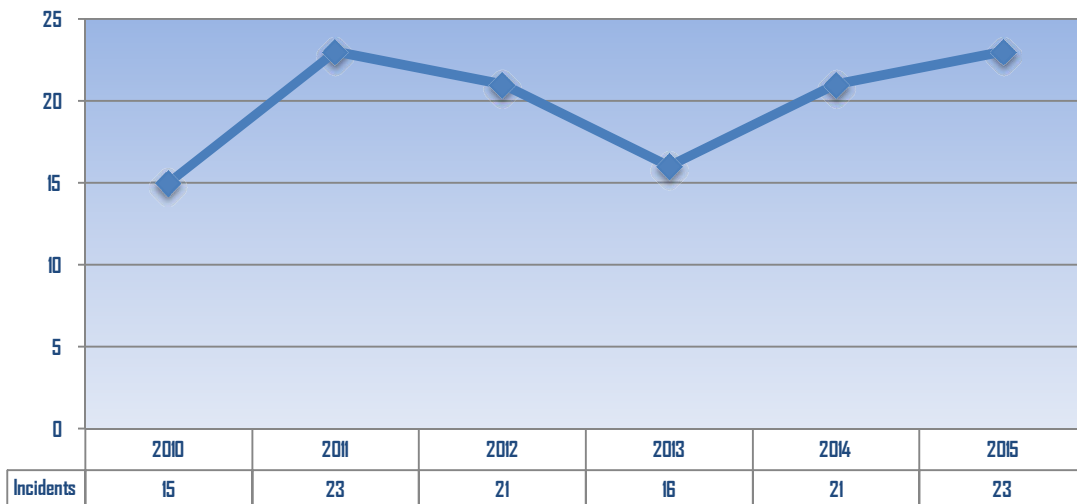


A GIS ortho-image of New Providence with the location of each murder incident plotted and represented by a red dot. The hotspot is noted by a yellow circle. Prepared by Cpl. 3205 Davard Deveaux, Strategic Policy & Planning Branch.

Grand Bahama Murders

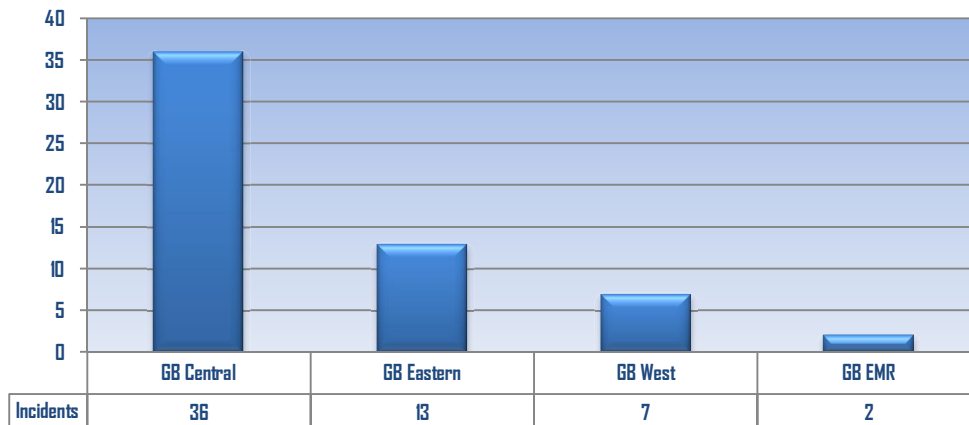
When examining murder incidents on the island of Grand Bahama alone, a slightly different pattern emerges in comparison with the pattern for the entire country (See Figure 1.1, Chapter 1). As illustrated in Figure 2.4, Grand Bahama murders have typically fluctuated during the study period. After an increase in 2011, incidents trended downward until 2013. Since that year, incidents increased to 23 in 2015. This is different from the trend observed for the entire country, which has been steadily increasing over the last decade.

Figure 2.4 Grand Bahama Murders (2010-2015)



When Grand Bahama policing divisions were examined alone, displayed in Figure 2.5, the Grand Bahama Central Division observed the highest number of incidents accounting for more than half (36 or 62%) of the incidents. The Grand Bahama Central Division also led among Grand Bahama murders during the 2005-2009 period when it accounted for 31 or 51% of that island's murders.

Figure 2.5 Murders by GB Policing Divisions* (2010-2015)



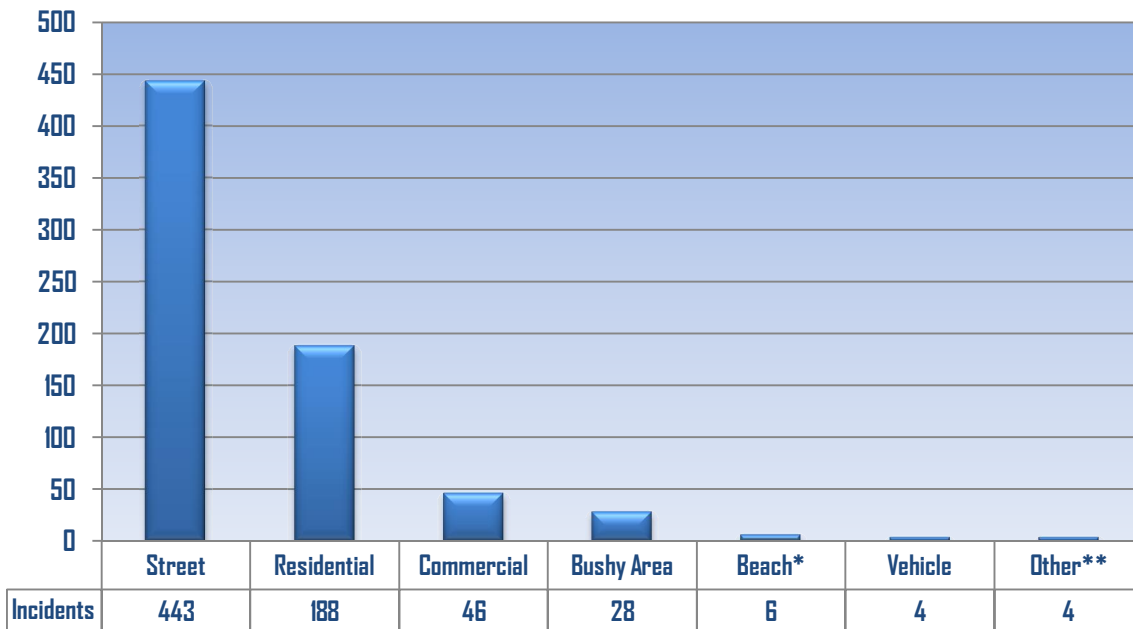
*See Appendix B

Murder Locations

Most murders during the study period occurred on the streets. As illustrated in Figure 2.6, street murders accounted for 443 or 62% of all murder location types. This finding is inconsistent with other spatial analyses of murder. For example, the US reported that most of their murder incidents occurred in and around homes (UCR, 2008).

However, residential locations still accounted for a significant number of incidents. More specifically, murders that occurred in and around dwelling homes represented 188 (26%) of the incidents. Local police practitioners explain this local finding with the fact that the 2 police divisions with the highest number of incidents (Southeastern & Southwestern) encompassed the largest residential communities on New Providence.

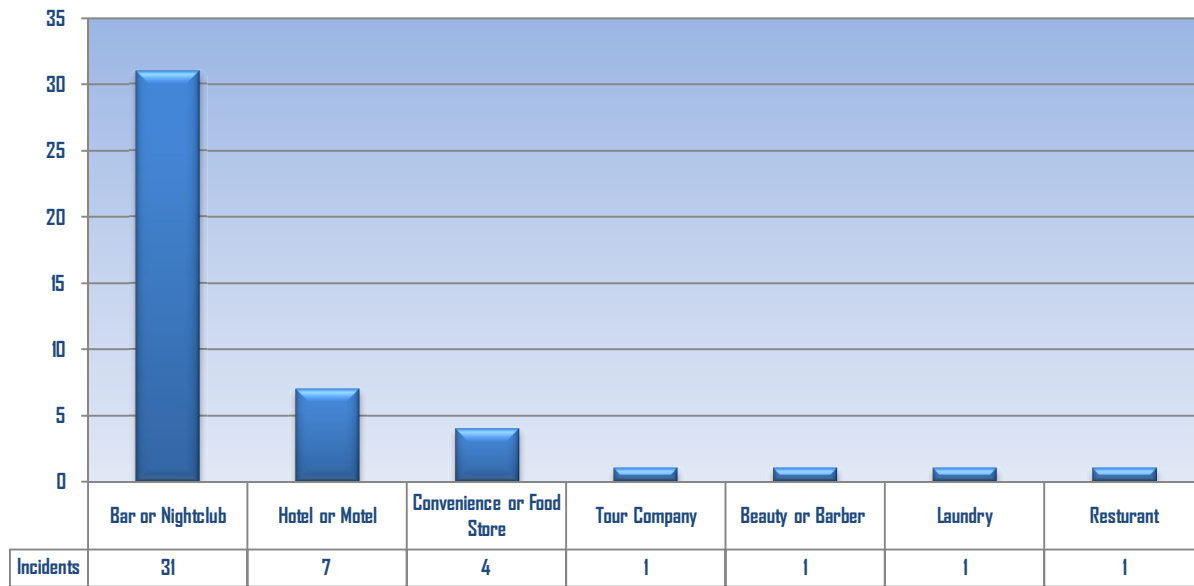
Figure 2.6 Murder Locations (2010-2015)



*Victims found near large bodies of water

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

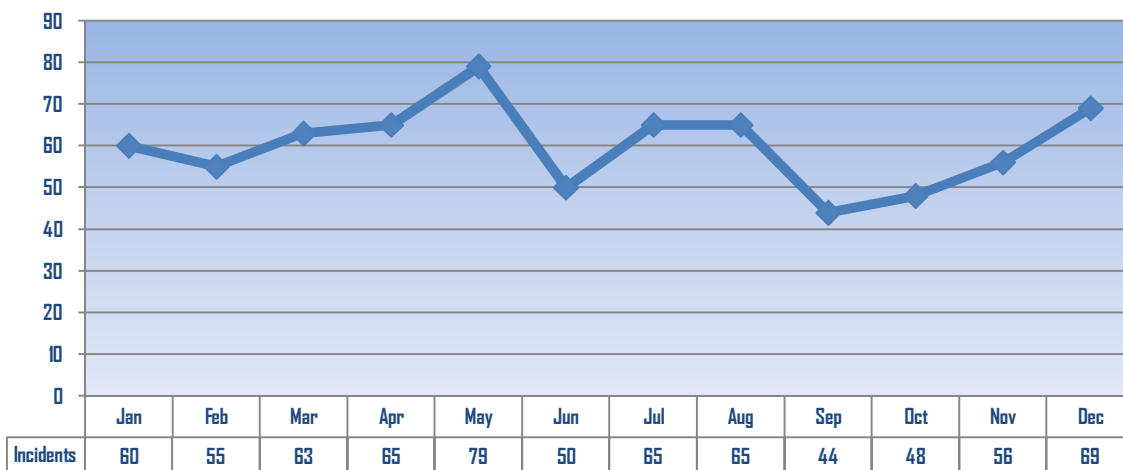
Taking a closer look at murders at commercial locations, several interesting patterns emerged. Out of the 46 commercial location types where murders occurred, *bars or nightclubs* were found to be the most frequent. As illustrated in Figure 2.7, these locations accounted for 31 (67%) of all homicides at commercial or business establishments. These locations will be discussed in depth in Chapter 7.

Figure 2.7 Murders at Commercial Locations (2010–2015)

Temporal Variance

Murders by Month

The pattern of murder incidents by month over the entire study period revealed a relatively sporadic trend. As shown in Figure 2.8, incidents tended to peak in May and drop in September. Most of the murder incidents during the study period occurred during the month of May with 79 or 11% of the incidents. The highest number of murders in one single month of the study period was 21 during July of 2011. The least number of incidents during the study period occurred during the month of September with 44 or 6% of the incidents. The least number of murders in one single month of the study period was 3 during February of 2013.

Figure 2.8 Murders by Month (2010–2015)

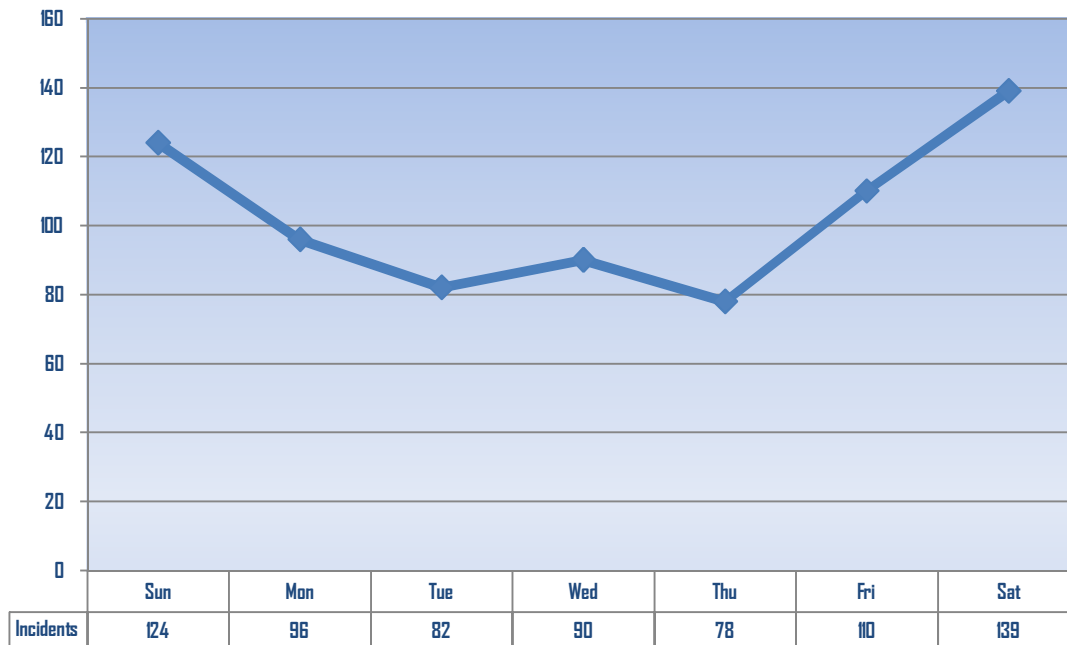
Temperature Aggression Theory

Some criminologists, including Anderson (1989), support the Temperature Aggression (T/A) Theory. It holds that the bulk of crimes transpire during the warmest times of the year. This is based on the view that heat leads to discomfort, thereby increasing aggression. This study found support for the TA Theory as the summer months of May through August yielded the highest number of reports (259 or 36%), compared to January through April (243 or 34%) and September through December (217 or 30%). However, the fluctuations of incidents by month are subtle and yielded no statistically significant differences. This finding was similar to incidents during the 2005-2009 time period as the observed differences were also not statistically significant.

Murders by Day of Week

The highest number of murder incidents was reported on Saturdays. As shown in Figure 2.9, Saturday accounted for 139 (19%) of the incidents during the study period. In fact, the weekend days of Friday through Sunday accounted for more than half (373 or 52%) of the incidents. This was a similar trend for the 2005-2009 time period when weekend murders accounted for most (156 or 45%) of the incidents. Clearly, most murders occur on weekends. The day with the fewest number of murder reports was Thursday with 78 or 11% of the incidents. This was different for the 2005-2009 time period when Tuesday was the day of the week with the fewest number of reported incidents which totaled 55 or 11%.

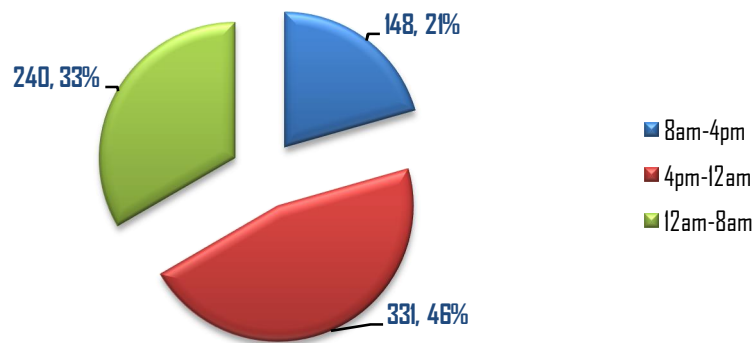
Figure 2.9 Murders by Day of Week (2010-2015)



Murders by Shift

The 4pm to 12am shift has consistently remained the most common time frame for murders to be reported over the last decade. As shown in Figure 2.10, this shift accounted for nearly half (331 or 46%) of all murder incidents. This was followed by the 12am to 8am shift with 240 (33%) and the 8am to 4pm shift with 148 (21%) of the incidents. This finding was similar to incidents during the 2005-2009 time.

Figure 2.10 Murders by Shifts (2010-2015)



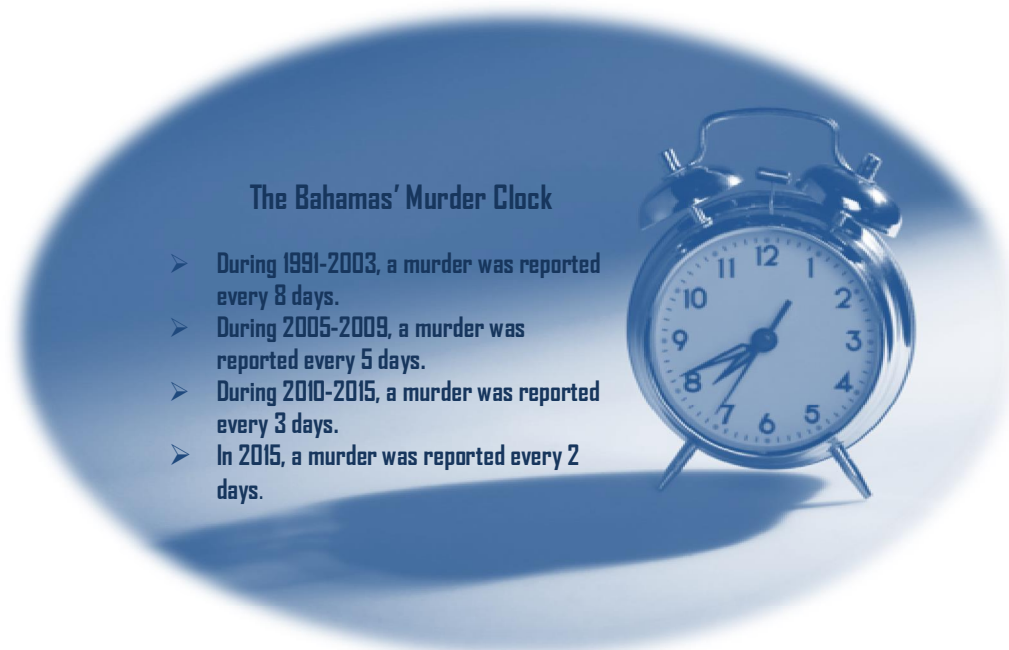
When the *day-of-week* variable was cross-tabulated with the *shift* variable, a familiar finding was disclosed. As illustrated in Table 2.2, a notable number of murders were reported on Friday and Saturday evenings, both accounting for 119 incidents. It is worth mentioning that there were also a significant number of incidents reported during the early morning hours of Sunday totaling 55 incidents.

Table 2.2 Shifts & Days of Week Cross-Tabulation (2010-2015)

	8am-4pm	4pm-12am	12am-8am	Total
SUN	25	44	55	124
MON	25	43	28	96
TUE	25	39	18	82
WED	18	48	24	90
THU	11	38	29	78
FRI	20	59	31	110
SAT	24	60	55	139
Total	148	331	240	719

The Murder Clock

A crime clock is the most aggregate representation of crime data and conveys the annual reported crime experienced by showing the relative frequency of occurrence of crimes. It represents a ratio of crime incidence in relation to fixed time intervals. The murder clock captures the relative frequency for the offence of murder. For example according to the Office for Victims of Crime, of the US Department of Justice, 1 murder occurred every 31 minutes (UCR, 2008). Critics argue that rendering such data is simply political rhetoric as crime is displayed in a manner that exaggerates its seriousness and frequency (Baer & Chambliss, 1997). Crime clocks, therefore, should be viewed with care and should not be interpreted literally or used to imply some regularity in the commission of crime. The graphic below illustrates the murder clock for The Bahamas during the study period.



Summing It Up

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

CHAPTER 3

MOTIVES, CAUSES OF DEATH & WEAPONS

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Most murders stemmed from arguments.*
- *Firearms were used in 78% of murders during the study period.*
- *177 (25%) of the murders were the end result of ongoing feuds between rivals.*
- *The 9mm pistol was the most frequently used murder weapon*
- *Making shotguns available to members of the public did not have any impact on the number of gun murders.*

Murder Motives

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

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

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

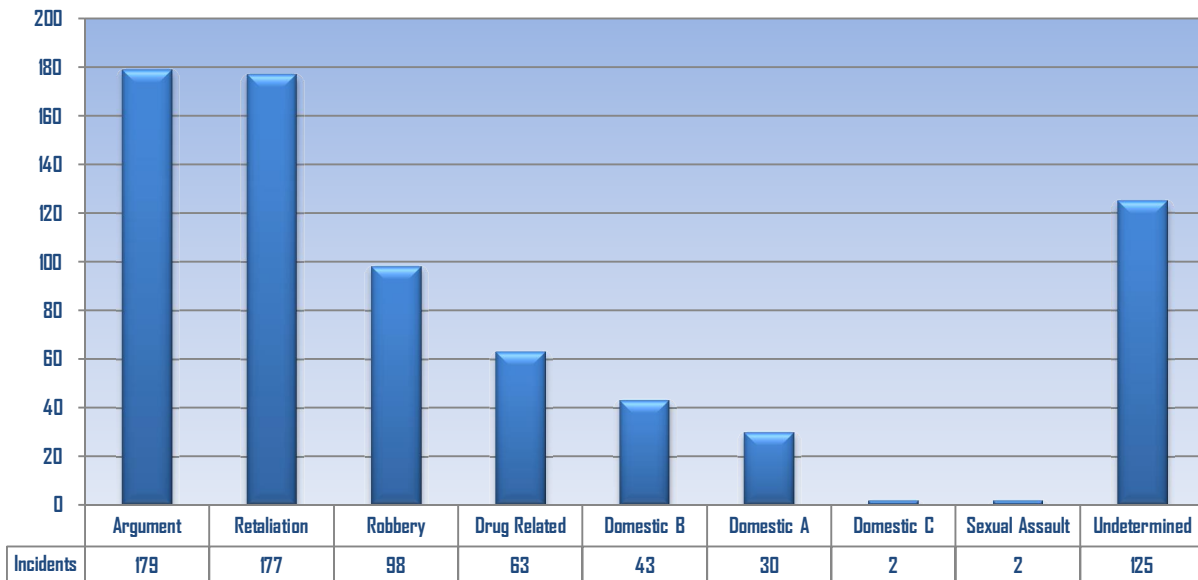
The term *motive* is often misconstrued as meaning the relationship between an offender and victim although an essential difference exists. For the purposes of this study, the variable *motive* captures the essence of the *circumstances* that lead to the death of a murder victim. It must be made clear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

During the study period, murders stemming from *arguments* were the most frequent. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, this type of murder accounted for 179 (25%) of all incidents. These cases involved killings that originated from verbal or physical disputes and altercations between individuals who were not related or intimately involved. This motive was also the most frequent during the 1991-2003 time period as well as the

2005-2009 time period. Murders classified as *revenge* or retaliation killings were the second most frequent with 177 (25%) of all motives. This type of murder, which typically involved gang members, will be discussed in more depth below.

Murders classified as *undetermined* or *unknown* were the third most frequent, accounting for 125 (17%) of the incidents. As previously discussed, these cases were ones in which insufficient factual information existed to safely place them in one of the specific categories of murder motivations. The fourth most frequent motive were murders committed during the course of an armed robbery or an attempted armed robbery representing 98 (14%) of the incidents. Drug related murders were the 5th most frequent motive accounting for 63 (9%) of the incidents.

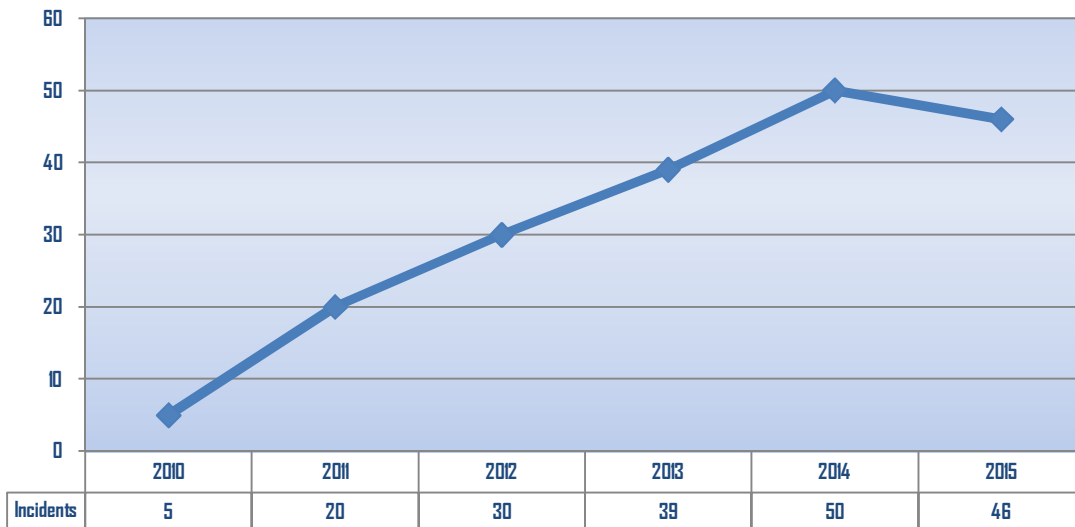
Figure 3.1 Murder Motives* (2010-2015)



*See Appendix C

Revenge & Retaliation Murders

As stated above, murders classified as *revenge* or retaliation killings were the second leading category during the study period. This particular motive accounted for one quarter of the incidents. These cases were ones that typically stemmed from previous criminal activity between suspects and victims, who were oftentimes gang members. A closer examination of this type of murder demonstrated a steady increase over the study period from 5 in 2010 to 46 in 2015. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, incidence for this category showed its highest number of reports in 2014 with 50 incidents. Further analysis of case files revealed that many of these murders were the end result of ongoing feuds between rival gang members, with a number of the victims being previously threatened with death by their assailant.

Figure 3.2 Retaliation Murders* (2010-2015)

*See Appendix C

Domestic Murders

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

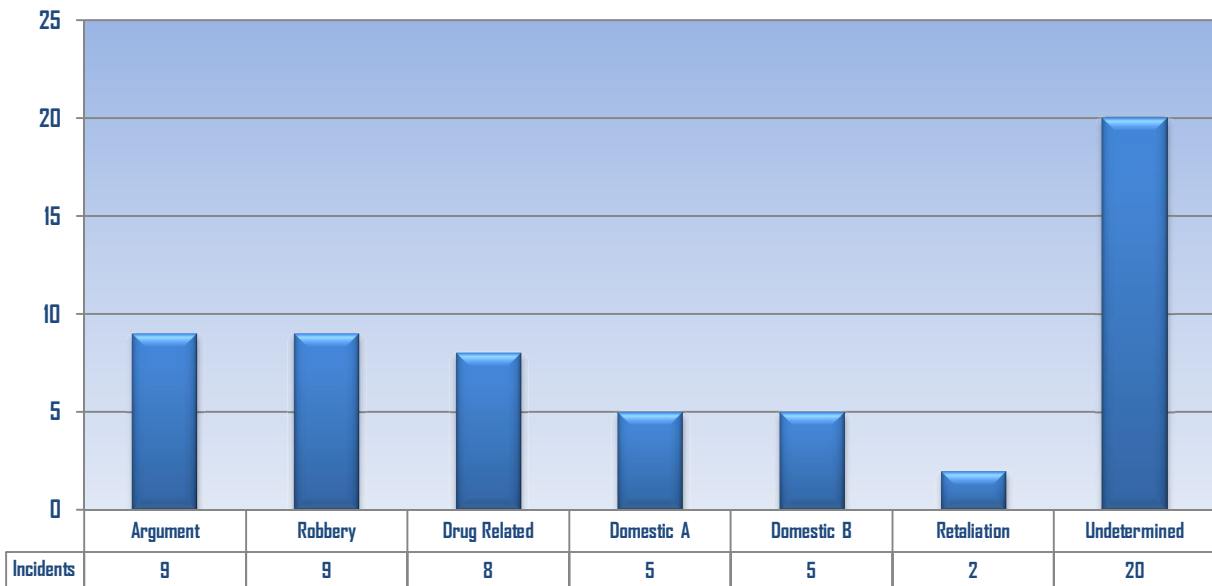
Violence in Bahamian homes has been studied by a number of local researchers (Brennen, Fielding, Carroll, McCants-Miller, & Thompson, 2010; Plumridge & Fielding, 2009). Brennen and others (2010) found that violence, physical or domestic, occurred in 62% of respondents' homes. Plumridge and Fielding (2009)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

During the study period, *Domestic B* murders were the most frequent among the domestic murder categories. These incidents, which involved intimate partner relationships (*boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, etc*), fluctuated over the study period but did not yield any significant increase or decrease.

Motives in Grand Bahama & Family Islands

The rankings for motives were essentially similar for Grand Bahama murders, with a few exceptions. As illustrated in Figure 3.3, arguments and robbery related murders were the most frequent for Grand Bahama, combining for 18 (31%) of Grand Bahama incidents cases. Unlike murders for the entire country, retaliation murders were not among the three most frequent categories for Grand Bahama. Family Island murders did not yield any notable trend that was different from national murders.

Figure 3.3 Grand Bahama Motives* (2010-2015)



*See Appendix C

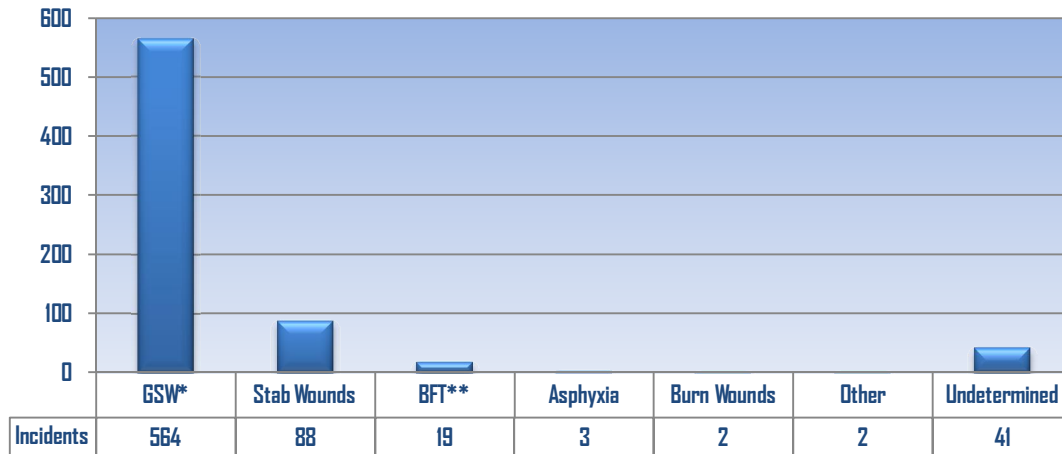
Motive & Location

When examining cross tabulations of the *motive* and *location type* variables, several interesting patterns emerged. As expected, most of the Domestic B murders (49%) occurred in and around dwelling homes. Also expected were revenge killings occurring on the streets, constituting 75% of such cases. However, murders arising from arguments did not occur mostly at business establishments, which was not the case during the 2005-2009 time period. Murders stemming from a robbery or an attempted robbery were more likely to occur on streets as opposed to commercial establishments, which was the case during the 2005-2009 time period.

Cause of Death

During the study period, the leading cause of death was by gunshot wounds (GSW). As shown in Figure 3.4, this category represented 564 (78%) of all causes of death. GSWs were also the leading cause of death during the 2005-2009 and 1991-2003-time periods. Stab wounds ranked second with 88 (12%) and blunt force trauma (BFT) third with 19 (3%).

Figure 3.4 Causes of Death (2010-2015)



*GSW: Gun Shot Wound

**BFT: Blunt Force Trauma

Murder Weapons

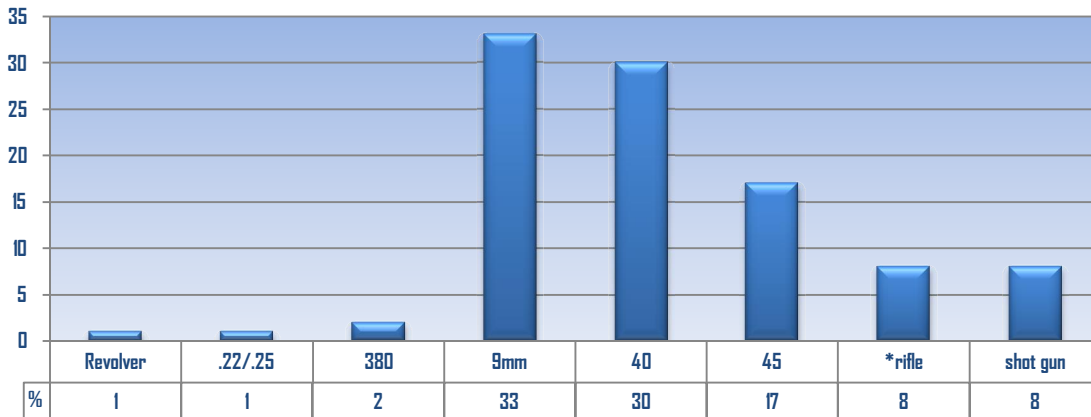
As indicated above, most murder victims died as result of GSWs. Generally, firearms are illegal in The Bahamas. The Commonwealth of The Bahamas does not manufacture firearms nor is it a leading distributor of such products. Hunting licenses are usually issued for shotguns and certain low-caliber semi-automatic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

Nevertheless, comparative analyses between the current study period and the 2005-2009 time period revealed that murder suspects are using more and more firearms and less knives or other weapons to commit murders. More specifically, the rate of firearm use for murders has increased while the use of other types of weapons has decreased.

Hand guns are the most common type of weapon used to commit murders. A random sample 362 known murder weapon types during the study period, are illustrated in Figure 3.5, the 9mm pistol was the most frequently used firearm accounting for 33% of the cases. Shotguns, which can be licensed in The Bahamas, were used in 8% of the known cases. In other words, making shotguns available to members of the public did

not have a major impact on the number of gun murders as the majority of murder victims died at the hands of illegal firearms. Of note is the increasing use of high-powered rifles which accounted for 8% of the gun murders during the study period. This is higher compared to the 2005-2009 period when such rifles were used in only 3% gun murders.

Figure 3.5 Firearm Types (2010-2015)



*Includes fully automatic firearms such as the AK-47 and the AR-15 rifles.

Summing It Up

The steady increase in certain categories in recent years, particularly revenge murders were significant. *Domestic B* murders are no longer a leading category as it was during the 2005-2009 time period. However, murders involving family members have risen over the last 2 years. These changes support the need for regular review and re-tooling of appropriate strategies to address them. Murders stemming from *arguments* remain a leading category. This supports the need for conflict-resolution and anger management skills to remain in the murder prevention and reduction.

CHAPTER 4

VICTIMS & SUSPECTS

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Persons involved in criminal activity are more likely to be murdered than persons who are not involved in criminal activity.*
- *7% murder victims were previously charged with murder.*
- *19% of murder victims were on bail*
- *18 suspects during the study period became murder victims themselves.*
- *12% of suspects with criminal records were previously charged with a separate murder.*
- *13 suspects were charged with more than one murder which occurred during the study period*
- *39% of persons charged with murder were on bail*

Homicide Victims

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

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

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

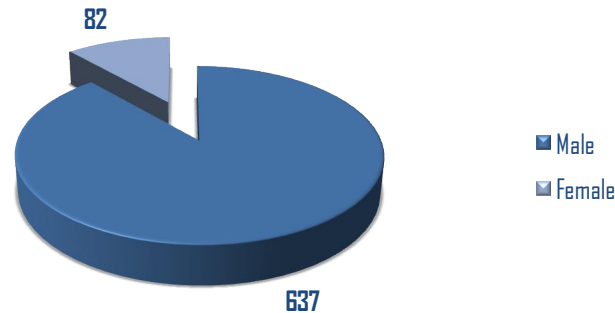
Victim's Gender

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

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

The gender gap also holds true for The Bahamas as data regarding the gender of murder victims indicates that males are more likely to become victims. In fact, males are more likely than females to be offenders *and* victims of homicides. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, 637 (89%) of victims during the study period were male compared to 82 (11%) females. The number of female victims has shown subtle fluctuations but generally remained around an average of 14 each year, the highest number being 16 in 2011 and 2015.

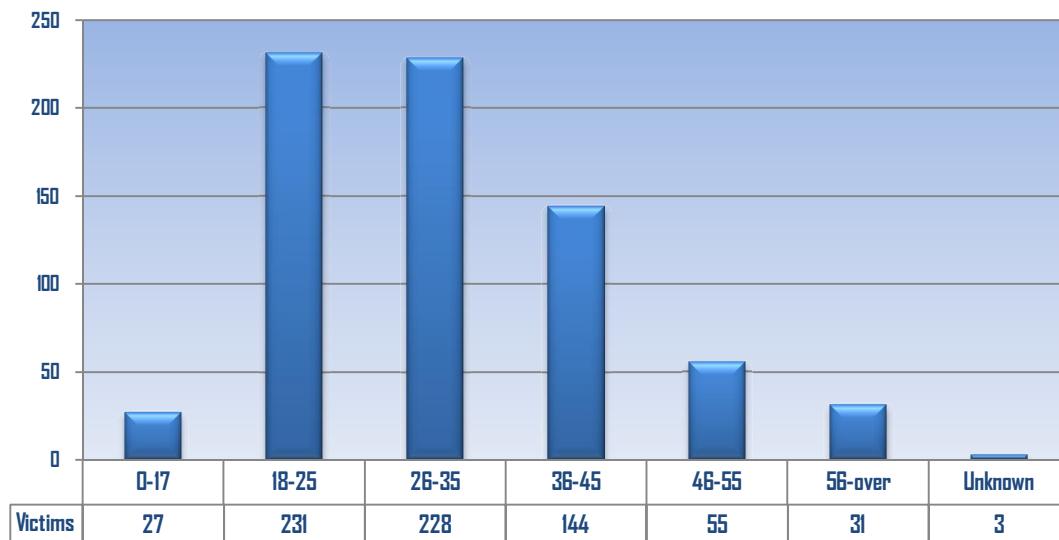
Figure 4.1 Victims' Gender (2010-2015)



Victim's Age

Younger adults are generally at a greater risk of becoming a victim than children or older adults. As shown in Figure 4.2, the peak age-range among victims was 18-25 years. This age group alone accounted for 231 (32%) of the victims during the study period. This finding was different from the 2005-2009 time period when the 26-35 year age group was the most frequent category. Moreover, persons 35 years or younger accounted for 68% of victims. This percentage was disproportionately higher considering that only 63% of the Bahamian population is under the age 35 (DOS, 2002).

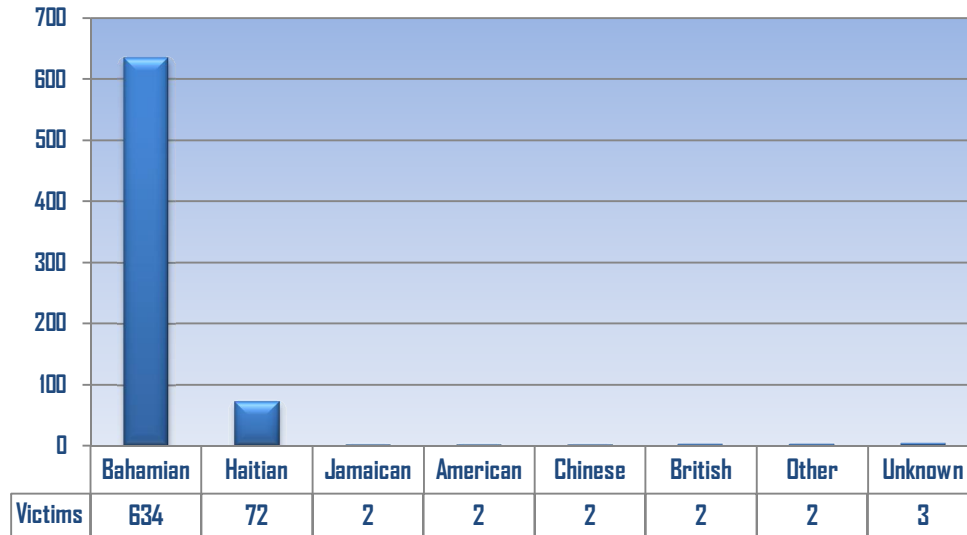
Figure 4.2 Murder Victims' Age Groups (2010-2015)



Victim's Nationality/Ethnicity

The data clearly showed that the vast majority of murder victims were Bahamian or of Bahamian ethnicity. Depicted in Figure 4.5, 634 (88%) murder victims during the study period fell within this category. The percentage of victims of Haitian nationality/ethnicity appeared to be decreasing. During 2005-2009, 12% of murder victims were of Haitian nationality/ethnicity compared to 10% observed during 2010-2015.

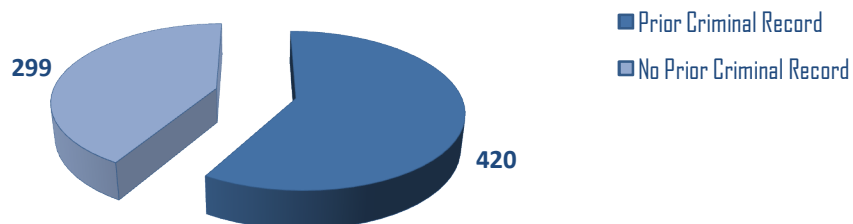
Figure 4.5 Victims' Nationalities/Ethnicities (2010-2015)



Victim's Prior Criminal Record

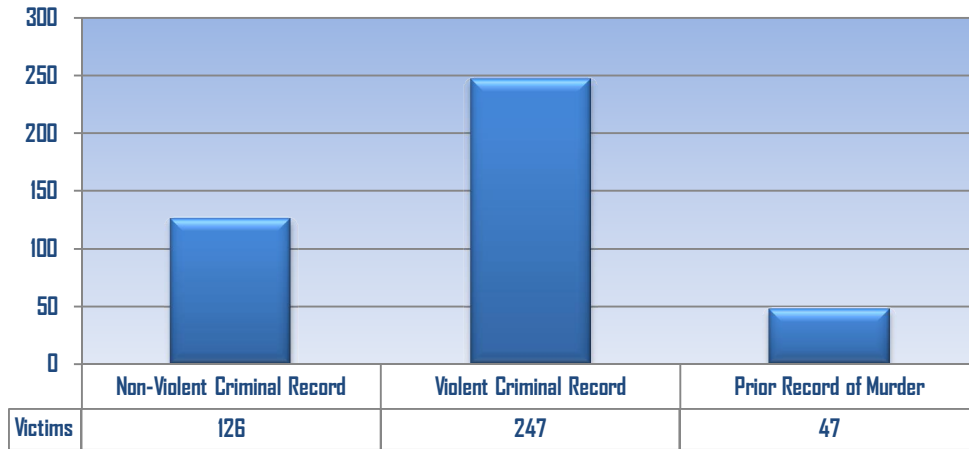
A significant number of murder victims during the study period had been involved in criminal activity and had been in contact with the police resulting in an arrest or a charge for a criminal offence. As shown in Figure 4.6, 420 (58%) murder victims during the study period had prior criminal records.

Figure 4.6 Victims' Prior Criminal Records (2010-2015)



A closer analysis of victims with prior criminal records revealed more interesting findings. The majority of the 420 murder victims with prior criminal records have been previously involved in *violent* criminal behavior. As illustrated in Figure 4.7, about 59% of such victims had been previously taken into police custody for violent criminal activity. Moreover, 47 (11%) of them had been previously charged with murder themselves. This number nearly double compared to the 2005-2009 period when 24 all murder victims had been previously charged with murder themselves.

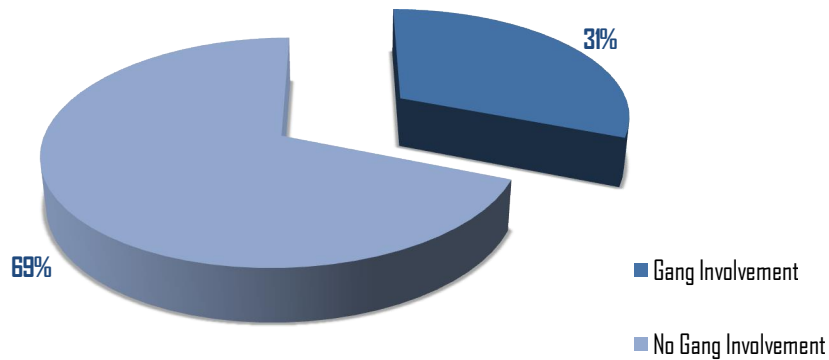
Figure 4.7 Victims' Criminal Records (2010-2015)



Murder Victims Involved in Gangs

Deeper research into the background of murder victims revealed that a significant number of persons who were murdered were suspected of being involved in gangs and gang activity. As shown in Figure 4.8, 31% of the murder victims were suspected of being involved in a criminal gang at the time of the offense.

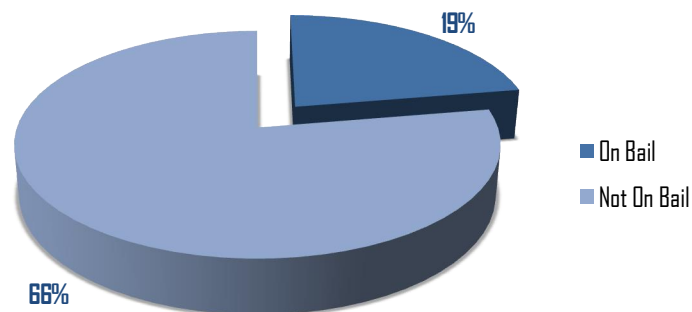
Figure 4.8 Murder Victims Involved in Gangs (2010-2015)



Murder Victims on Bail

Deeper research into the background of murder victims revealed some interesting findings as it related to bail. There were a notable number of murder suspects who were on bail at the time of their death. As shown in Figure 4.9, 132 (18%) of the murder victims were on bail at the time of the offense. Moreover, 10 of these victims were on bail for murder. Others were on bail for a variety of other violent crimes including rape, armed robbery and possession of a firearm with the intent to endanger life.

Figure 4.9 Murder Victims on Bail (2010-2015)



Victim's Profile

Research has indicated that the subpopulation at greatest risk for homicide victimization was, and continues to be, young urban minority (African American) males, who were killed with guns (Blumstein & Rosenfeld, 1998). Most aspects of these findings hold true for The Bahamas considering the murder victim's profile. The murder victim profile during the study period was a young Bahamian male between ages 18-25, with a prior criminal record. This profile has remained virtually unchanged for the last 15 years (Hanna, 2005).

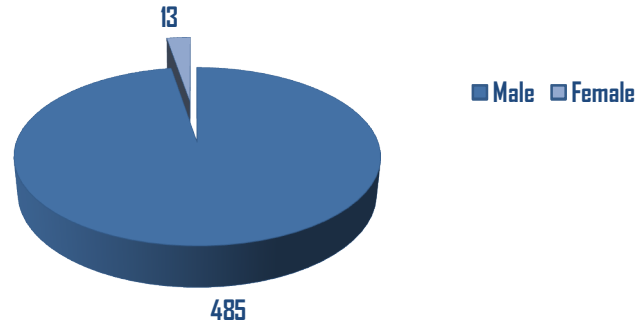
Murder Suspects

Murder investigators have identified 498 persons as those responsible for the 374 cases solved during the study period. A person described as a *murder suspect* in this study refers to one on whom a formal charge of murder has been levied or can be levied once brought into custody. Interestingly, 13 suspects were charged with more than one all of which occurred during the study period. There are 6 suspects who are still at large, but should face formal charges once brought into custody. Finally, 18 suspects are now deceased, all of whom became murder victims themselves.

Suspect's Gender

Gender gaps discussed earlier in this chapter also applied to murder suspects, but with a greater intensity. According to Figure 4.10, 485 (97%) of the suspects were males while 13 (3%) were female. This finding is similar with the gap percentage during the 2005-2009 period when 4% of the murder suspects were female. On average, about 2 females tended to become murder suspects each year.

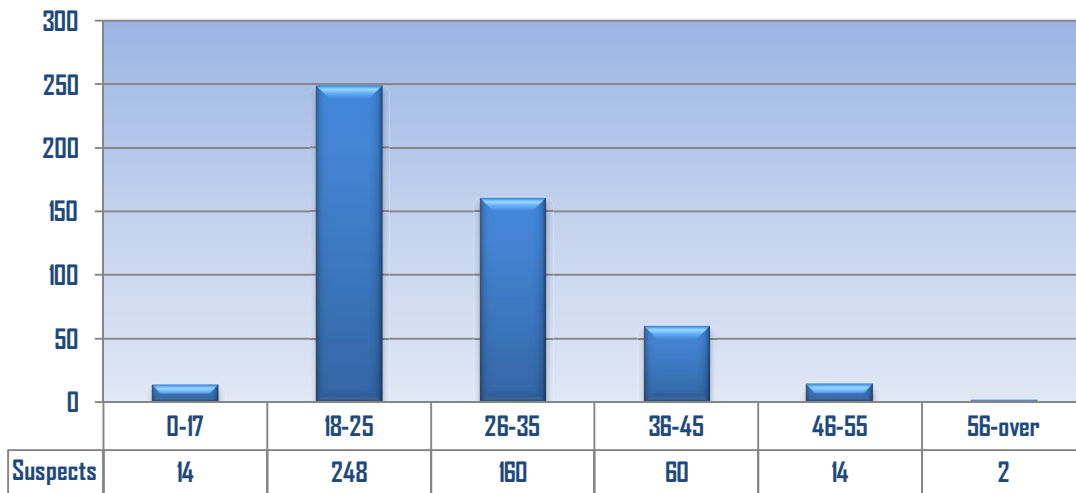
Figure 4.10 Suspects' Gender (2010-2015)



Suspect's Age

Younger people were generally more likely to be charged with murder, than children or older adults. As shown in Figure 4.11, the peak age bracket among suspects was 18-25 years. This age group alone accounted for nearly half (49.8%) of the suspects during the study period. Moreover, persons 35 years or younger accounted for 85% of the suspects. Like murder victims, this percentage was disproportionately higher considering that only 63% the Bahamian population is under the age of 35 years (DOS, 2000).

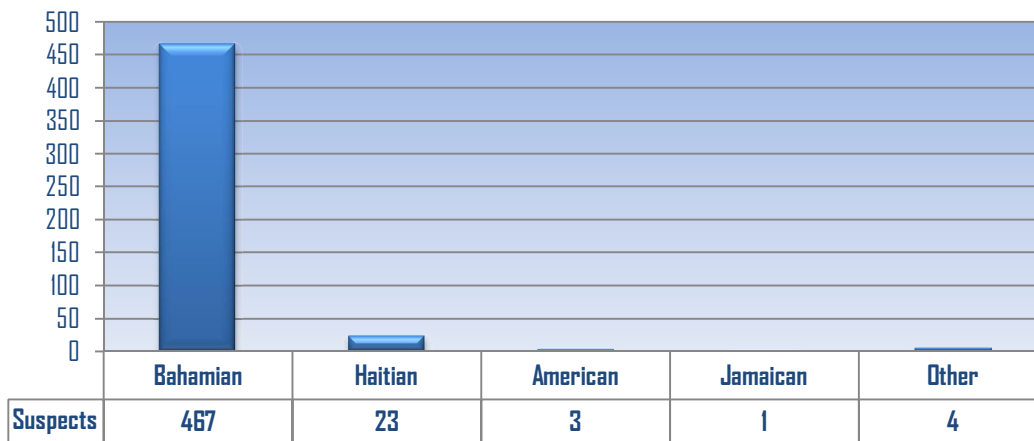
Figure 4.11 Suspects' Age Brackets (2010-2015)



Suspect's Ethnicity

There was not as much variation in the murder suspect's ethnicity when compared to homicide victims, as it was limited to four attributes. As illustrated in Figure 4.12, Bahamians comprised the vast majority (94%) of homicide suspects. This trend is similar with 2005-2009 data when the vast majority (87%) of the suspects were Bahamians. Suspects of Haitian ancestry followed with 5% of the suspects. This percentage was notably lower than earlier research when 12% of murder suspects were of Haitian ancestry.

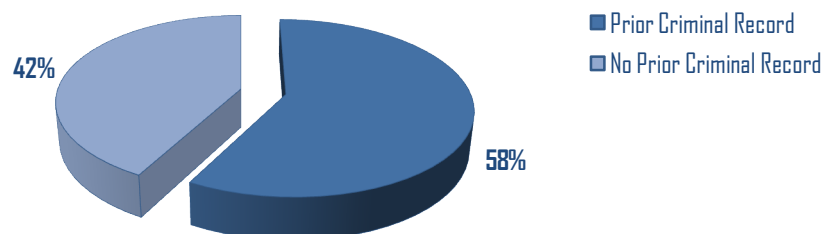
Figure 4.12 Suspects' Ethnicities (2010-2015)



Suspect's Prior Criminal Record

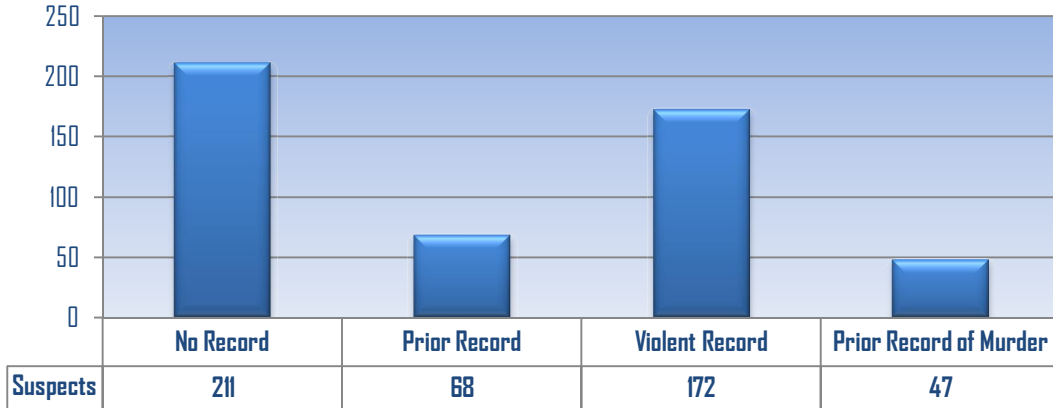
During the study period, a significant number of murder suspects had been involved in criminal activity and in contact with the police resulting in an arrest or a charge for a criminal offence. As Figure 4.13 illustrates, 58% of murder suspects had prior criminal records at the time of the incident. This is slightly lower than the percentage observed during the 2005-2009 period when 76% of murder suspects had prior criminal records at the time of the incident.

Figure 4.13 Suspects' Prior Criminal Records (2010-2015)



A closer examination of suspects with prior criminal records was conducted. It was found that the majority of suspects with prior criminal records (172) had been previously involved in violent criminal behavior. Moreover, 47 (16%) suspects with prior records had been previously charged with a separate murder at the time of the incident. This is slightly higher than the 2005-2009 time period when only 9% of suspects with prior records had been previously charged with a separate murder at the time of the incident.

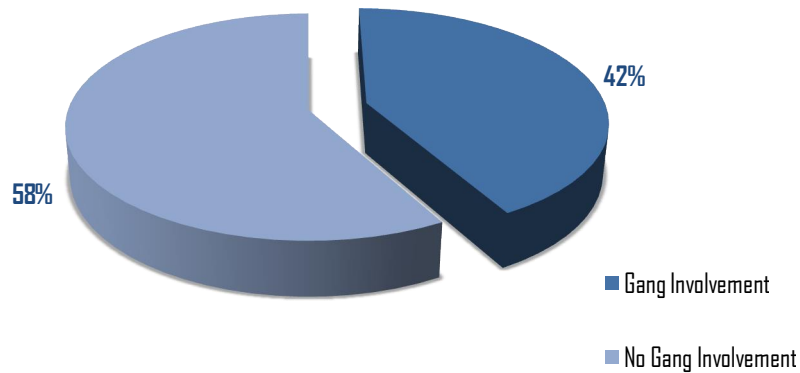
Figure 4.14 Suspects' Criminal Records (2010-2015)



Murder Suspects Involved in Gangs

Deeper research into the background of persons charged with murder revealed that a significant number of persons who were murdered were suspected of being involved in gangs and gang activity. As shown in Figure 4.15, 42% of the murder suspects were suspected of being involved in a criminal gang at the time of the offense.

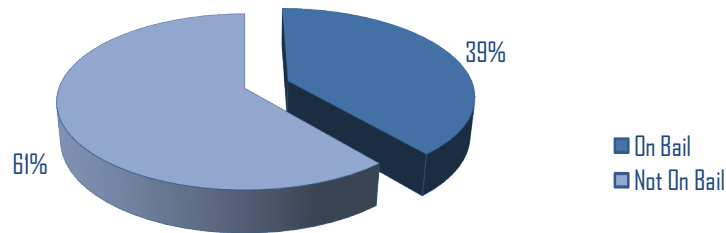
Figure 4.15 Murder Suspects Involved in Gangs (2010-2015)



Murder Suspects on Bail

Deeper research into the background of murder suspects revealed some interesting findings as it related to bail. There were a notable number of murder suspects who were already on bail at the time of the incident. As shown in Figure 4.16, over a third (39%) of the murder suspects were on bail at the time of the offense. Offences ranged from murder and other violent crimes including rape, armed robbery and possession of a firearm with the intent to endanger life.

Figure 4.16 Murder Suspects on Bail



Suspect's Profile

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

Summing It Up

While persons from all walks of life have the potential to become a murder victim, several demographic variables increased one's likelihood. One of the most definitive factors that push the odds against a person is their involvement in criminal behavior. This holds true for both murder victims and suspects. In other words, persons who involve themselves in criminal activities increase their risk of becoming a murder victim compared to those who do not. Conversely, law abiding citizens have been found to be least likely to become murder victims. It should also be noted that there are a number of persons who have seemingly persisted in criminal activities, despite being faced with pending murder charges. This also means that, for the most part, the same group of persons continue to find themselves of the wrong side of the law. This further suggests that the threat of punishment in The Bahamas seems not to be sufficient enough to have any deterring effect.

CHAPTER 5

DETECTION

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Police solved 55% of murders during the study period, compared to 73% during 2005-2009.*
- *Murders were solved at higher rates on Grand Bahama & Family Islands.*
- *When compared to the United States, local clearance rates tended to be higher.*

Murder Investigation

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

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

In The Bahamas, the Royal Bahamas Police Force is outfitted with a Homicide Squad within the Central Detective Unit headquartered in New Providence. Although responsibility for murder investigations was initially assigned to the Serious Crimes Squad, the Homicide Squad was officially formed in 1998 in response to the deaths of two tourists visiting Paradise Island. The Squad's detectives possess special investigative skills sets that include intelligence gathering, interviewing, computer information systems and clinical counseling.

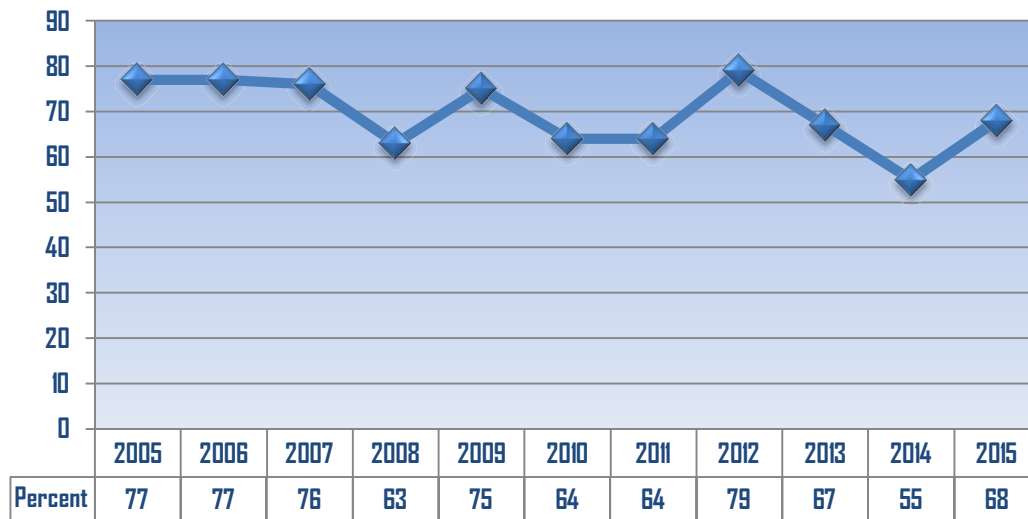
Murder detectives are the only front line detectives required to attend murder scenes at any hour, even if the scene is located on a Family Island. Since its inception, the Homicide Squad has proven its efficiency and effectiveness in keeping with the Force's core mandate on the detection of crime. As will be discussed later in this chapter, The Bahamas' murder detection rate dropped only once since 1998. In fact, the clearance rate of 82% observed in 2004 was the highest ever recorded locally.

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

Bahamas' Detection Rate

During the study period, a case was regarded as detected or solved when sufficient evidence was secured to levy a charge of murder against a person or persons for a murder incident. The overall detection rate for the study period was **55%**. This is a significant reduction from the 2005-2009 period when the overall detection rate was 73%. This rate was also lower than the 69% observed during the 1991-2003 time period (Hanna, 2005). As shown in Figure 5.1, the detection rate over the last decade showed gradual drops during 2012-2014 before showing a slight increase during 2015.

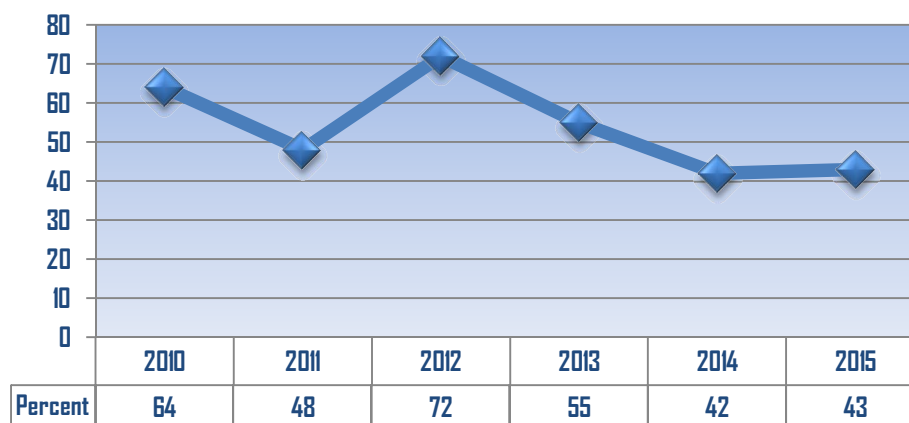
Figure 5.1 Bahamas' Detection Rate (2005-2015)



New Providence Detection Rate

The detection rate for New Providence during the study period was 53%, slightly less than the national rate. As noted in Table 5.2, the New Providence detection rate took on a downward trend during the study period with 2014 observing the lowest annual rate of 42%.

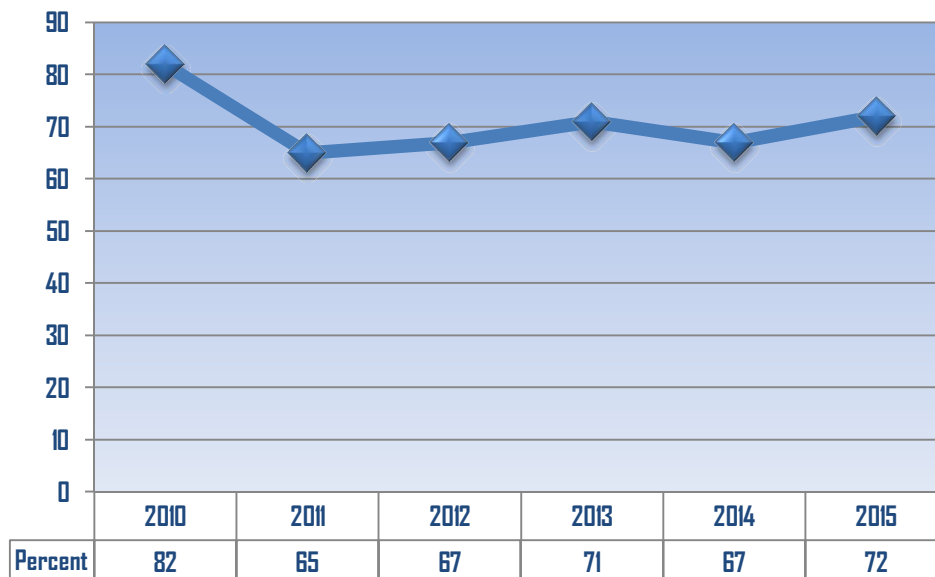
Figure 5.2 New Providence Detection Rate (2010-2015)



Grand Bahama & Family Island Detection Rate

In contrast, murders occurring on Grand Bahama and the Family Islands yielded a higher detection rate than New Providence. The detection rate for Grand Bahama and the Family Islands during the study period was 71%, notably higher than the New Providence and national rates. As shown in Figure 5.3, annual detection rates remained relatively constant in comparisons to fluctuations observed in the national and New Providence trends.

Figure 5.3 Grand Bahama & Family Island Detection Rates (2010-2015)



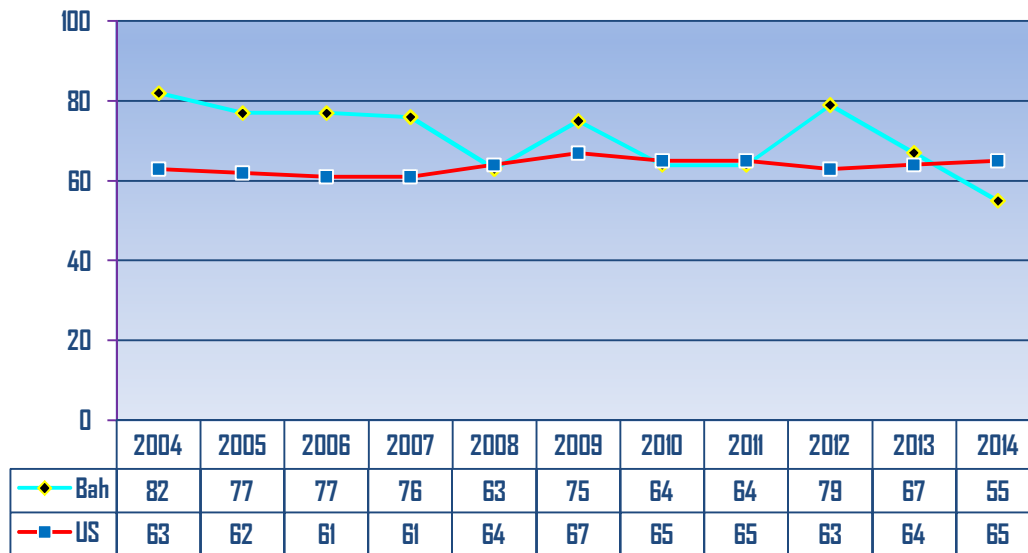
Some observers explain this phenomenon by suggesting that Grand Bahama and the Family Islands are less populated, have less crime and have more closely-knitted communities. They deduce that local police officers had more resources to dedicate to such the incidents and were able to garner more community support and intelligence regarding the perpetrators of serious crimes. Whether or not this is the case, it is clear that the number of murder incidents and detection rates are negatively correlated. This means when murder rates are higher, detection rates are typically lower.

The Bahamas' Detection Rate Compared to Other Countries'

United States

Historically, local clearance rates tended to be higher when compared to the United States. However, this trend has somewhat changed during the study period. As shown in Figure 5.4, between 2004 and 2007, local detection rates were consistently higher than those observed in the US. Between 2008 to 2014, however, local detection rates began to fluctuate and fall closer to US rates. Finally in 2014, the detection rate for The Bahamas fell below the US, the first time in over a decade. Nonetheless, between 2004 and 2014, the US averaged a 64% detection rate while The Bahamas averaged a detection rate of 70% for the same time period

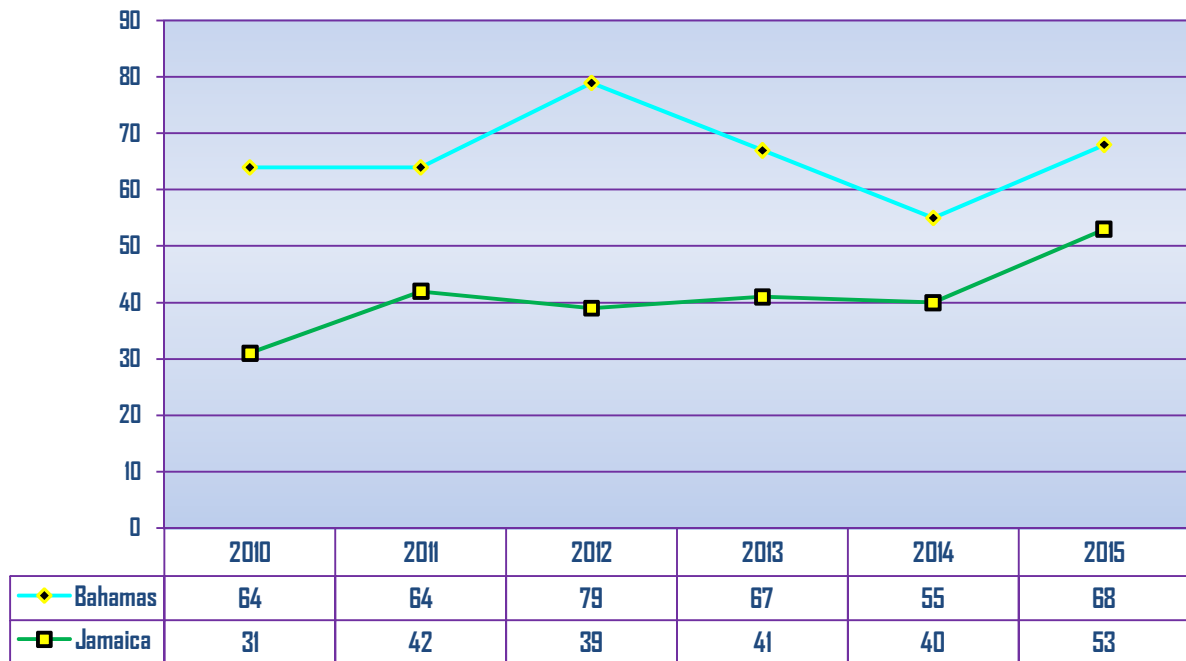
Figure 5.4 Bahamas vs. US* Detection Rates (2004-2014)



*Uniform Crime Reports, 2014

Regional Detection Rates

A comparison of the murder detection rates in another Caribbean nation was conducted and is displayed in Figure 5.4. As shown by the trend lines, The Bahamas' murder detection rate was among typically higher than Jamaica until 2015. During that year, Jamaica observed a murder detection rate of 53% compared to the 43% achieved in The Bahamas. The data also revealed an inverse correlation between a nation's murder rate and its detection rate. In other words, as murders in a country increase, its detection rates tended to decrease.

Figure 5.4 Regional Detection Rates (2010-2015)

Sources: Jamaica Constabulary Force.

Summing It Up

The Bahamas murder detection rate is decreasing and falling closer to US and other regional nations. Using murder rate data from Chapter 1, detection patterns appear to have a negative correlation indicating that as incidents increase, detection tends to decrease. Ways in which to increase detection rates are discussed in depth in Chapter 8.

Chapter 6

Case Disposal, Conviction & Sentencing

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Juries returned a guilty verdict in 76% of cases presented to them for deliberations.*
- *The conviction rate for murder is up from 53% to 58%*
- *Most sentences for murder convictions included 31-40 years imprisonment.*
- *Most sentences for manslaughter convictions included 11-15 years imprisonment.*

Introduction

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

Figure 6.1 The Homicide Funnel of Justice* (2010-2015)



**The 719 murders during the study period generated 696 cases as several incidents involved the killing of more than one person. As indicated, not all solved cases resulted in charges being filed in the courts. The difference in these two measures, totaling 23 cases, captured those cases in which suspects were still at large or died prior to trial or while on bail. Although some suspects are still at large, cases involving multiple suspects were counted as 'charged' if at least one of the suspects was charged. The 134 completed cases indicated the number of murder cases that have been disposed of by the courts (Magistrate's or Supreme Courts) and exclude matters whose outcomes are still pending (see Tables 6.3 & 6.4). There are 15 cases that resulted in a conviction that are awaiting a sentence to be handed down up to the publication of this study.*

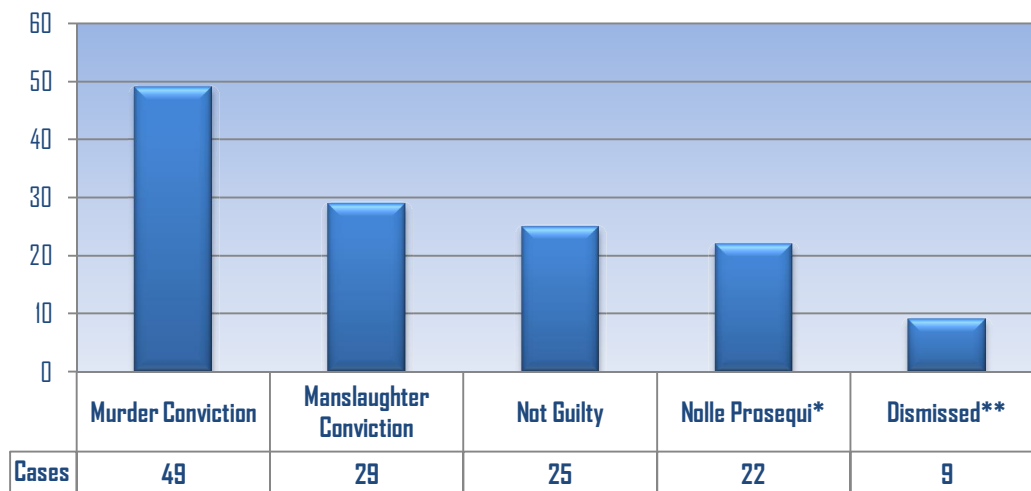
Preliminary Inquiries, Voluntary Bill of Indictments & Murder Cases

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

Case Disposal

Out of the 351 cases up for trial 134 (38%) of them were completed up to the publication of this study. These 134 completed cases resulted in 78 convictions. As shown in Figure 6.4, 49 were murder convictions while 29 were manslaughter convictions. Depending on the evidence, the judge may advise jurors to consider both a murder and manslaughter charge in their deliberations. Therefore, an accused who initially faced a murder charge may end up being convicted of manslaughter. The data revealed that in most cases, prosecutors were successful in convincing the court that sufficient evidence existed against the defendant(s) to secure one of two guilty verdicts. In fact, juries only returned a not guilty verdict in 24% of the cases presented to them. This is less than the 31% observed during the 2005-2009 period. The other cases were not presented to a jury for deliberation as they were either dismissed by the court for a lack of evidence prior to deliberations or withdrawn (*nolle prosequi*) by the prosecution.

Figure 6.4 Murder Case Disposal in Supreme Court (2010-2015)

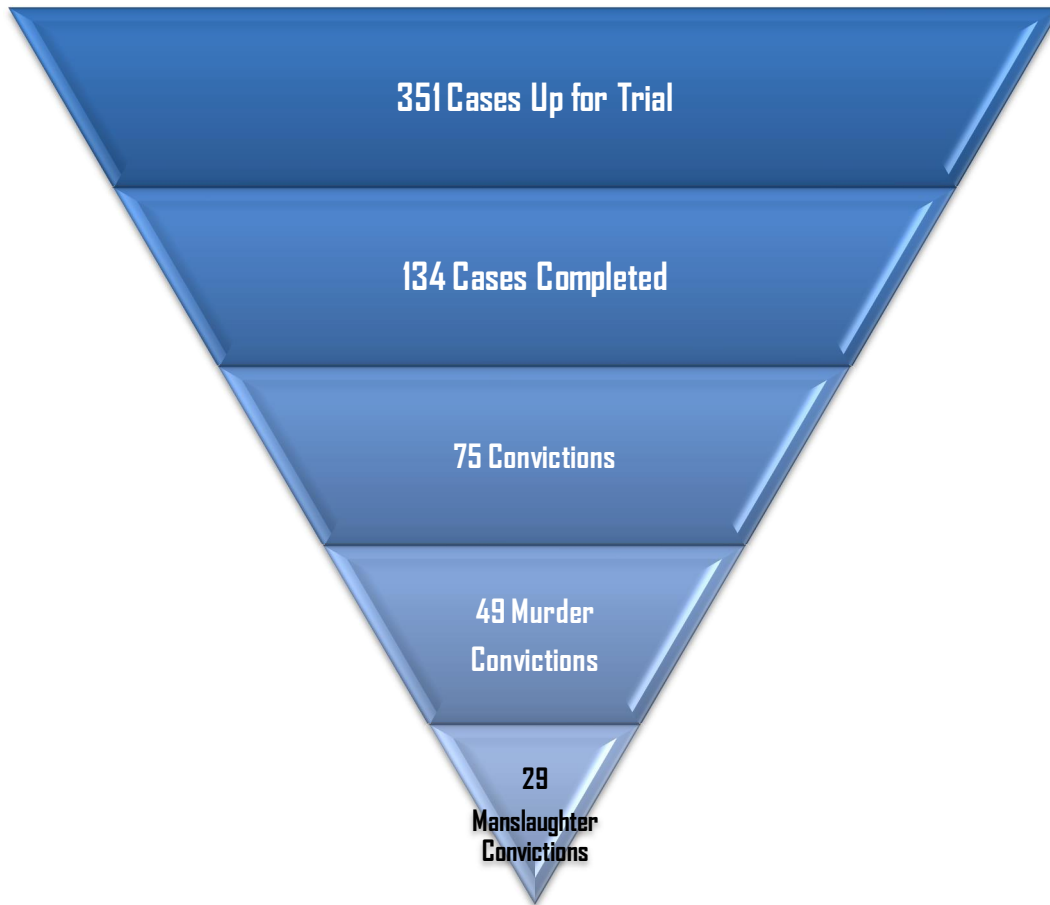


**Nolle Prosequi* stays a prosecution on indictment. This decision is usually made by a country's Attorney General. It is not an acquittal as fresh proceedings may be brought on the same charge at a later date. **Dismissed cases were those in which the Supreme Court Justice advised the jury, prior to deliberations, to acquit the accused and dismiss the charges on grounds of insufficient evidence.

Murder Conviction Rate

The Murder Conviction Funnel, displayed in Figure 6.5, illustrates that 78 (58%) cases where persons were charged with murder resulted in a conviction, whether it was a murder or a manslaughter conviction. This is up from 53% observed during 2005-2009. The differences in the types of murder convictions across jurisdictions make direct comparisons between countries inaccurate.

Figure 6.5 Murder Conviction Funnel (2010-2015)



Sentencing & Punishment

Retribution, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation are the four primary justifications offered for punishment. These sentencing philosophies, however, differ in important ways. While some focus on past behavior, others are directed toward future actions. Some stress that the punishment should fit the crime while others emphasize that the punishment should fit the criminal. These and other issues influence contemporary beliefs about sentencing (Hanna, 2005). Historically in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the penalty for a person convicted of murder was automatically death by hanging.

In 2006 in *Bowe v. The Queen*, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, struck down the mandatory death penalty for murder in The Bahamas, holding that the relevant legal provision should be construed as imposing a discretionary and not a mandatory sentence of death. The court reasoned that the mandatory death sentence contravened the constitutional prohibition on inhuman or degrading punishment because of its lack of individualization.

This ruling created a sentencing phase of the trial in which the judge hears arguments from the defense and prosecution as to whether the death penalty should be levied on the convict. Following this decision, the death sentences of death row inmates, who had been sentenced under the mandatory death penalty provisions, had to be reviewed.

In 2011, there were two more key decisions handed down by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. First, in the *Maxo Tido* case, the Council overturned Tido's death sentence stating that the murder did not meet their "worst of the worst" standard. Later that year, the Council also tackled the question of mental health assessments by concluding imposing death could not be lawful without expert psychiatric evidence. In the *Locakhart* case, they applied the *Trimmingham Principle* which states that in each case where the death penalty is being considered, the report of a consultant psychiatrist is needed before the question whether the reasonable possibility of reform can be properly addressed (Cornell Law School, 2016).

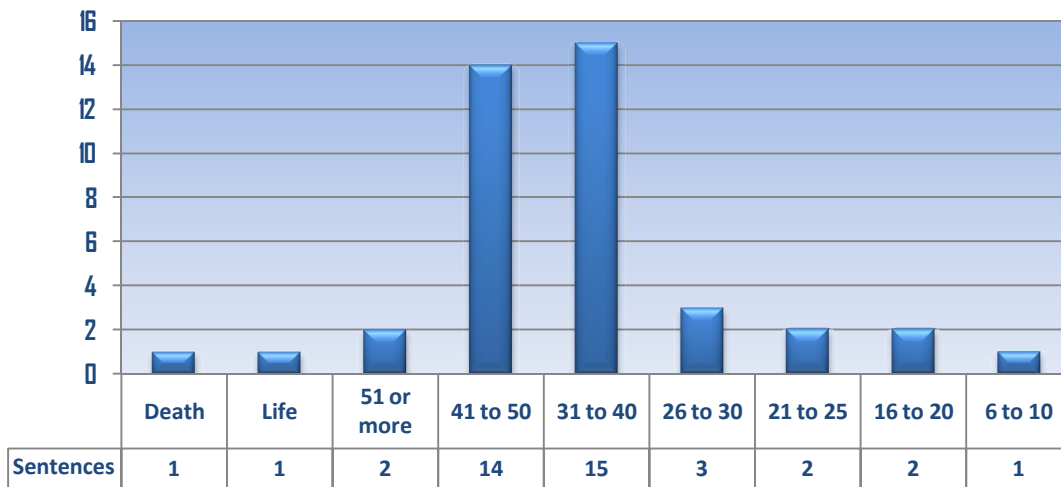
In response to these rulings, in November of 2011 the Parliament of The Bahamas passed an amendment to the Penal Code, which sought to accommodate imposing the death penalty while respecting the 2006 Privy Council ruling. It specified various types of murder that are punishable by death including the murder of law enforcement officers, judicial officers, witnesses or jurors, and murders of more than one person, murder committed by an accused with a prior murder conviction. In such cases, the accused can only be sentenced to death or life (natural). Persons convicted of other types of murders could be punished to limited prison terms.

Despite this new law, persons sentenced under this amendment were still able to get their sentences reduced. For example, in July 2013, The Bahamas Court of Appeal commuted a sentence of life without parole handed down under the 2011 amendment. The court ruled that the provision's failure to specify a minimum prison term made the sentence too uncertain to be applied, and reduced the life (natural) to 40 years imprisonment.

The court also suggested that the provision instituting life without parole may infringe upon the Constitution's prohibition on torture and inhuman and degrading punishment and the Governor General's constitutional power to grant clemency (Cornell Law School, 2016). Hence, Supreme Court Justices have vast discretion in imposing the death penalty for murder.

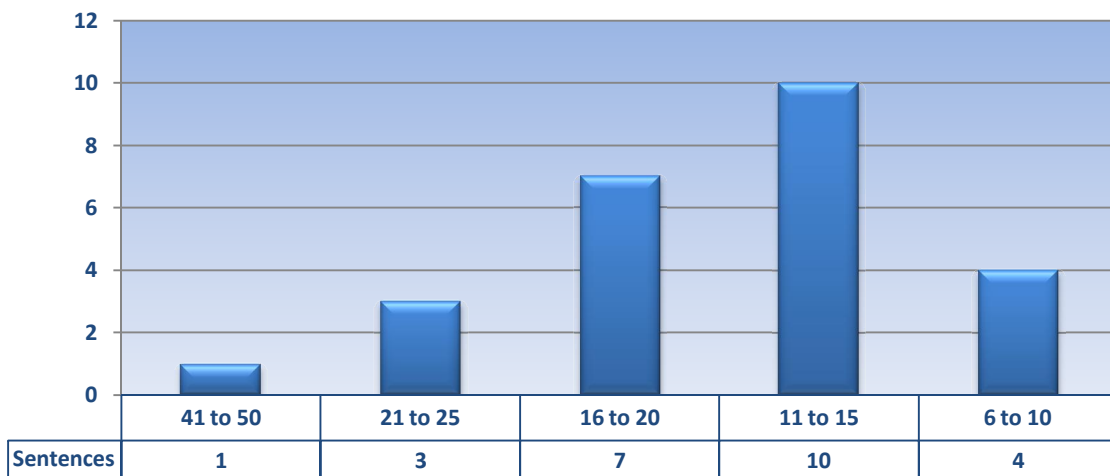
As shown in Figure 6.6, sentences were handed down in 41 of the 49 cases where murder convictions were secured. Most of the sentences (40) involved prison time ranging from a 6-10 to a 51 or more year jail term. The majority of persons punished for murder (37%) received prison sentences within 31 to 40 years. A sentence of death was handed down in one of these cases.

Figure 6.6 Sentences for Murder Convictions (2010–2015)



As shown in Figure 6.7, sentences were handed down in 25 of the 29 cases where manslaughter convictions were secured. Most of the persons punished for manslaughter (40%) were sentenced to an 11 to 15 year jail term.

Figure 6.7 Sentences for Manslaughter Convictions (2010–2015)



Summing it Up

Findings shared in this chapter suggest that prosecutors were mostly successful in securing convictions in murder cases that were presented to juries for deliberations. Nonetheless, the 9 dismissed cases and 25 not guilty verdicts may paint a less favorable picture in the minds of other evaluators. Moreover, findings over the last five years indicated that there was a notable number of cases still pending trial. This back-log will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 7

PREVENTING MURDERS

Key Facts at a Glance

- *Problem-oriented policing strategies have been associated with decreases in homicide and violent crimes.*
- *Local police have seized over 2,566 illicit firearms over the study period.*
- *Most Bahamians blame the courts for the state of crime in the country.*
- *Punishment must be swift, certain and severe in order to produce a deterrent effect.*
- *“The difference between homicide and assault may simply be the intervention of a bystander, the accuracy of a gun, the weight of a frying pan, the speed of an ambulance or the availability of a trauma center” (Gottfredson & Hirschi,1990:34)*

Can Murders Really Be Prevented?

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

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

Approaches to Crime Prevention

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

In the UK, however, policy has been strongly influenced by a different grouping of crime prevention called *situational crime prevention*. The main focus of situational crime prevention is to lessen the opportunities or particular types of crime in particular situations or locations while increasing the chances of detection. First based on *target hardening* or surveillance of geographical locations, this approach has become progressively more flexible. It now incorporates strategies that focus on likely criminals, victims and scenes. Interestingly, there has been a resurgence of interest in wider *social* crime prevention policies. Some of these polices include community regeneration,

literacy initiatives, parenting seminars and offender treatment programs. Many police agencies today incorporate these different forms of prevention into one comprehensive, multi-agency project (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Principal Correlates of Violence

Poverty

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

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

Illicit Drugs & Firearms Trades

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

UK officials systematically target offenders who are involved in the drug trade and who are prepared to use violence. Operation Trident, a major coordinated strategy (based in London but with a national brief), was launched in 1999. This operation was made up of an intelligence gathering function as well as an operational arm. Although no independent research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the operation, early indications suggested that it is performing well in terms of detecting offenders (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). By the Spring of 2000, 26 suspects were charged in relation to 17 murders. In part, this apparently high level of success was attributed to the cooperation of key members of the black community in London. Their close working relationship with the police permitted officers to bridge gaps with black victims and witnesses who were previously fearful of giving evidence against accused persons. Another vital factor affecting gun murders is the demand for illegal substances that make drug-dealing a profitable business. This encourages persons to kill in order to ensure their place in the market. Strategies that ignore this point are sure to have a low chance of success in the long term (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Preventative Approaches to Homicide

Problem-Oriented Policing

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

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

Comprehensive Homicide Reduction Initiatives

In 1995, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) hosted a Murder Summit to study violent crimes and make recommendations for the creation of a multi-agency comprehensive approach to reducing violence. Since the leading cause of death for black males and females aged 15-24 in the US was murder (BJS, 2004), the Summit's 55 practitioners and scholars set out to address the most evident and threatening dimension of contemporary violence in the United States. In the summit's final report, murder was viewed as the result of a gamut of violence in the larger context. Drugs, firearms, and stranger-on-stranger violence were factors identified as affecting murders and its changing nature. Finally, the Summit concluded by offering 39 recommendations highlighting the key components of a useful murder reduction strategy. By using best practices and lessons learnt, Comprehensive Homicide Initiatives (CHIs) were developed. These referred to holistic, multi-agency approaches designed by law enforcement officials to address the incidence of homicides in the long term. CHIs involve clearly articulated strategies and plans connected with new and existing policies and programs. The strategies are focused on a comprehensive, long-term approach to reducing homicides.

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

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

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

activities to specifically deal with the relationship between firearms, drugs, gangs and murder.

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

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

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

Directed Patrol & Field Interrogations

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

Both of these techniques have been found to be beneficial as research indicated that field interrogations and enforcement of traffic and disorderly conduct offenses were associated with lower rates of homicide and robbery (Wilson & Boland, 1978). Directed

patrol and field interrogations also have the advantage of requiring modest coordination with other public safety agencies and allowing swift implementation. Specifically, this strategy could be used on the *day of week* and *time of day* variables for individual divisions. This may at least limit violence at certain times. However, the potential for the diffusion of murder to other time frames warrants a closer examination (Sherman, 1992).

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

Preventable Murders

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

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

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

Domestic B (Intimate Partner) Murders

Domestic B (intimate partner murders), are clearly a brand of homicide that preventative measures can affect. As indicated in Chapter 3, this type of murder accounted for 43 of the murders during the study period. Researchers have reliably discovered that a large number of female victims of this category of murder have experienced domestic violence in the past (Moracco et al., 1998 & Smith et al., 1998). Hence, one may assume that a smart start in preventing domestic murders would involve the identification of and intervention for female victims of domestic violence. Unfortunately, one must recognize that domestic violence may be more widespread than domestic homicides. Sherman (1993) found that only a tiny fraction of households with repeated domestic disturbance calls to the police witnessed a domestic homicide. Ironically, he discovered that about three-fifths of all domestic homicides studied took place at homes where police were never called. He concluded that a prediction of domestic murders from repeat domestic disturbance calls would be incorrect about 997 times out of 1,000 (Sherman, 1993). Hence, it would be cumbersome to isolate those females who are most at risk of being fatally wounded in order to prevent a small number of domestic homicides (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

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

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

Other studies presented positive findings in predicting the risk of repeat violence, although not directly of homicide. First, the use of a Danger Assessment Scale (DAS), when administered to female domestic violence victims who sought assistance from the

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

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

Armed Robbery Murders

As indicated in Chapter 3, 14% of murder incidents during the study period were a result of robberies, representing the third most observed motive. Further examinations revealed that 46 of such murders occurred at business establishments; 4 at convenience stores, 31 at bar/clubs and 7 at hotels/motels. Armed robbery murders have also been on a steady increase with 9 in 2005, 16 in 2008 and 15 in 2009. It is evident that this type of murder warrants specific attention.

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

Vulnerability Factors

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

Clerks on Duty & Their Location

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

Cash Handling

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

CCTV & Bullet Proof Enclosures

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

Enhanced Visibility

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

Prior History of Robbery

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

Re-Evaluation of Prevention Strategies

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

This principle holds true for new laws and regulations enacted to reduce store robberies. For example, based on the findings of White (1986) and Swanson (1986), the city of Gainesville, Florida imposed a city ordinance requiring convenience stores to limit on-hand cash, use a security safe, have adequate parking lot lighting, remove visual obstructions, purchase robbery detention cameras and train clerks. Following the implementation of the ordinance in mid 1986 however, robberies continued at the same rate (Hunter, 1990). The following year, another ordinance mandated that stores either use 2 clerks *or* close between 8pm and 4pm. After the implementation of this second ordinance, convenience store robberies declined dramatically (Clifton & Callahan, 1987).

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

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

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

Murders In & Around Bars & Nightclubs

General violence reduction measures are clearly relevant for reducing homicides in and around bars and nightclubs. As indicated in Chapter 2, a total of 31 murders during the study period occurred in and around bars and nightclubs. There have been efforts to ascertain approaches to lower the number of violent acts in and around such places. Although this remains an area in need of more examination, early indications suggested that several measures used appeared to have some level of success. Much of the research on this subject acknowledged that not all pubs and clubs were regularly associated with violent behavior. However, several cities have a number of 'hotspots' or establishments with a high frequency of (and reputation for) violent incidents (Deehan, 1999). Research and interventions have focused chiefly on the physical and social environment at these locations (Brookman & Maguire, 2003). Some researchers have recognized a number of factors favorable to violence in public houses and clubs including the concentration of activities and its indoor design. They argued that design features, such as the location of pool tables, walls and bars, can affect the social environment by creating a particular ambiance (Graham & Homel, 1997).

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

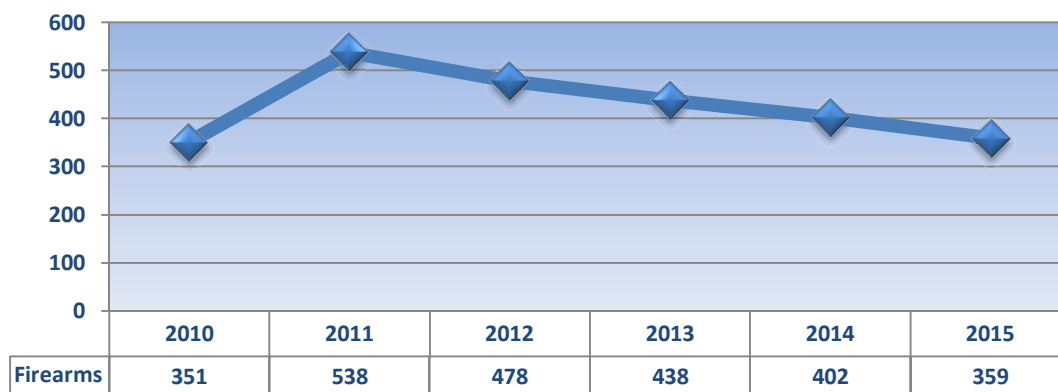
Attention has also been given to other interventions directly related to the monitoring and control of drinkers and the number of persons entering such premises. These interventions included the use of CCTV surveillance by well-trained security staff, refusal of drinks to intoxicated customers and 'Pubwatch'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

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

Murders Using Illegal Firearms

Guns are now regarded and utilized as the most effective and final means of resolving conflicts. Situations normally resolved by negotiation, a big argument or even a fistfight, are now quickly settled by gunfire. As indicated in Chapter 3, gunfire was the leading cause of death for murder victims, representing 78% of cases during the study period. As stated earlier, The Bahamas does not manufacture firearms and the issuance of handgun licenses are controlled by the Cabinet of The Bahamas. Nevertheless, police continue to seize a growing number of firearms each year throughout The Bahamas. As shown in Figure 7.1, a total of 2,566 firearms were confiscated during the study period. It appears that while more guns are being taken off the streets, suspects are still able to get their hands on them and commit a larger number of murders with them. Clearly, a strategy designed to reduce and control the number of illegal firearms in The Bahamas will have a residual effect on the high number of gun-murders.

Figure 7.1 Firearms Seizures in The Bahamas (2010-2015)



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

Even though US murder rates declined during the 1980s and 1990s, murder among the nation's youths, especially those committed with firearms, rose significantly. Between 1984 and 1994, youth murders committed with hand guns rose by 418% while those committed with other firearms increased by 125% (Fox, 1996). It was clear that all of the increases in juvenile murders were gun homicides (Cook & Laub, 1998). With the advent of problem-oriented policing and its increased use to create and implement programs to reduce crime, the city of Boston established a violence reduction initiative geared toward lessening the number of youth gun murders. Funded by the US National Institute of Justice, this program involved core agencies such as the Boston Police, Office of Parole and Probation, the Attorney General's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other neighboring law enforcement agencies. Most importantly, the project was based on research leading to informed policy decisions and operational direction.

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

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

In addition to the actions during and following crackdowns, authorities planned to disrupt drug activities by giving special attention to low-level street crimes such as trespassing and public drinking, serving outstanding warrants, enforcing stricter probation and parole restrictions, seizing proceeds from drugs sales and other assets, guaranteeing stiffer plea bargains and enforcing stronger bail terms. Creators of the program were clear to indicate that they were not making 'deals' with gangs, but were promised them that violent behavior would summon a swift, severe and coordinated response. Speaking directly to gangs made them aware of the new cause and effect policy and further strengthened the program's credibility. This approach also provided 'retail deterrence' for those gangs that may have been on the brink of carrying out violent acts. Finally, this innovative approach created a balance of power favorable to the authorities. By sending the message to all of the gangs, even though they only had the capacity and resources to execute a major crack down on one, the others could be controlled without an actual crackdown. In this case, violence could be prevented by other gangs who gained knowledge about what had happened to others in the target population (Kennedy, 1998).

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

In Boston, Massachusetts, interagency efforts directed by the police were found to be effective in reducing youth homicide (Braga et al., 2001). The Boston Gun Project,

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

Supply vs. Demand

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

Use of the Media

The effectiveness of general deterrence is dependent upon the communication of punishment threats to the public. Some experts have discovered that the deterrence threat may best be viewed as a form of advertising (Zimring & Hawkins, 1973). For example, the Massachusetts 1975 Barley-Fox Amendment established a mandatory minimum one-year prison sentence for persons who illegally carried guns. The intense media coverage and publicity concerning the amendment apparently caused more citizens to comply with existing legal stipulations surrounding gun acquisition and possession, some of which were not even addressed in the amendment.

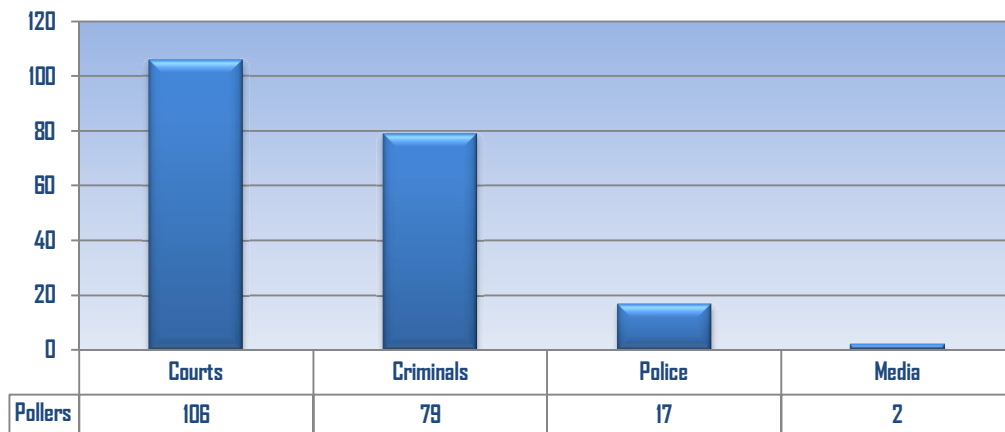
Given the high proportion of homicides committed with firearms, authorities have realized the need for better enforcement of firearms laws. Vigorous federal trials of possessors of illegal firearms are one technique to deter violent offenders from committing gun crimes. This strategy also involved “retailing the message” that engaging in violent activity and unlawful firearm possession will no longer be tolerated and will result in stiff penalties, including federal prison time. Prosecution of firearms cases was also a major component of violence reduction strategies in Boston, Richmond and Minneapolis (Kennedy et al., 1996; Braga et al., 2001; Kennedy & Braga, 1998). “Crackdowns” on specific suspects are a related means of confiscating illegal weapons and reducing violence. This tactic entailed focusing probation, parole, and the police on a select group of violent perpetrators for a short period of time and seemed to have helped reduce violence in Indianapolis, Indiana and Richmond, California (Horty &

Hutchens, 2004; White et al., 2003). Visiting and searching probationers, parolees and those with outstanding warrants known to engage in violence could increase the chances of seizing illegal weapons from such persons and removing them from the streets. The benefits of such strategies were that, once planned, they could be carried out speedily and yield instant results (White et al., 2003).

Prevention by Punishment

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

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



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

Addressing Court Backlogs

Courts' backlogs are somewhat common across jurisdictions but vary from one to the next. As indicated in Chapter 6, there were 217 murder cases (which occurred during the study period) pending up to the publication of this study. This backlog, coupled with other murder (and other indictable offence cases) that date back to years prior to the study period, may be described as 'severe' by some pundits. Preliminary Inquiries or trials in the Supreme Court can last anywhere from several weeks to over a year, depending on a number of related factors. Some of these factors include the availability of witnesses, jury selection and case schedules of defense attorneys.

Case backlogs are also an issue facing governments throughout the Caribbean. Although stakeholders throughout regional jurisdictions have been prompted in recent years to reform and improve elements of the criminal justice system, there was

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

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

Punishment & Deterrence

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

Lane (1999) argued that the most relevant explanation for the decrease in crime in the US was the refinement of legislation which imposed longer and mandatory prison sentences. He furthered that since homicide conviction rates were at an all time high (over 70%), more homicide offenders were effectively incapacitated than ever before (Lane, 1999). While experts have regularly suggested that the certainty and swiftness of sanctions mattered more than their severity, most political pundits and policy debaters have centered their attention on increasing sanctions. Debates, however, centered on the death penalty and three strikes laws, not on clearance rates for violent crimes or the workloads of prosecutors and judges.

The resulting weakness of deterrence was particularly vexing where chronic offenders are concerned. It has long been recognized that a relatively low number of criminals offended at very high rates, were repeatedly arrested and sanctioned, and, if only by virtue of their continued offending, demonstrated a particular resistance to both deterrence and rehabilitation. This was a particular problem where violent offending

was concerned. Not all chronic offenders were violent offenders, but a large proportion of violent crimes were committed by chronic offenders, who also committed property crimes, drug crimes, disorder offenses and the like. Such offenders were themselves victimized at very high rates. Findings of the Boston Gun Project, for example, showed that youth homicides were concentrated among a low number of serial offending, gang-involved youths. Only about 1,300 gang members, less than 1% of their age group citywide, in 61 gangs were responsible for at least 60% of all youth homicides in the city. These gang members were well known to authorities and tended to have extensive criminal records (Kennedy, 1998).

Summing It Up

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

CHAPTER 8

IMPROVING DETECTION

RATES

Key Facts at a Glance

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

The High Clearance Rate for Murder

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

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

The Importance of the Clearance Rate

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

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

Investigating criminal acts has traditionally been thought of as one aspect of police work that required highly developed skills and perhaps innate abilities to collect and evaluate case facts (Glick & Riccio, 1979). By its very nature, detective work is concerned with information acquisition and generation. An aura of the individual detective has developed that characterizes him as a pain staking individual who single-handedly uncovers evidence, collects tips from informants, identifies the

criminals, tracks them down and brings them to justice (Bloch & Weidman, 1975). By the 1960s and 1970s, research into detectives' activities began to provide a systematic assessment of their role and effectiveness. Clearance rates were relatively low and crimes were rarely solved, except in cases where victims provided information that lead to suspect identification (Skolnick, 1975). In this regard, detectives were not unlike the constables of the 17th and 18th centuries.

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

Factors Affecting the Murder Detection Rate

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

Extralegal Victim Characteristics

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

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

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

Detective Workload & Experience

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

Physical Evidence

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

During the first few decades of the 20th century, police reformers hoped to replace the stereotypical 'secretive agents' with scientific criminal investigators. The Bertillion System, involving the identification of persons based on anthropometrical measurements, was regarded as being consistent and perfect. Consequently, the importance of physical evidence at crime scenes was stressed and 'scientific police' were

admonished to use scientific methods in all phases of their work. Despite attempts to bring the rigor and deductive power of science to the investigation process, detectives still relied on victims, informers and suspects to solve crimes (Deutsch, 1954). The inquisitorial methods set by detectives became known as the 'third degree'. The arrest was the first degree, transportation to the station was the second and interrogation was the third. Soon after the development of scientific methods of investigation, including finger printing, the normative approach was to use such methods as a means of solving all criminal acts. Fosdick (1915) called for the development of *modus operandi* files and the utilization of physical evidence to identify suspects. Vollmer (1922) believed that detectives needed a systematic approach and a fully scientific laboratory.

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

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

Another comprehensive study about the police investigative function was the classic work of Skolnick in 1966. Although this study focused on street policing, not investigators, it provided insight into how detectives functioned in the police subculture. He found that in conducting investigations, detectives acknowledged the limits of science and scientific advancements in helping them fulfill their mission. They emphasized therefore, the human aspects of their craft. Detectives made the 'facts' that they observed into evidence, meaning that they converted criteria governing investigative matters from personally meaningful to legally binding ones. In other words, physical evidence had little or no inherent evidential meaning and was generally useful only to the extent that it could gain police-defined objectives. Skolnick (1966) asserted that advances in technology simply made the police more capable of

interfering with individual liberty and created a degree of skepticism about the use of technology to improve the police investigative mission. In a study of a county sheriff's department, Saunders (1977) observed detectives who investigated juvenile offenses, burglaries and major crimes. He discovered that scientific evidence can be viewed as 'information' or 'leads', and focused his examination on how detectives recognized them. He found that the value of physical evidence rested on the detectives' ability to interpret it. He furthered that physical evidence was made available for practical use only through interpretive methods used by the detectives. Saunders concluded that physical evidence was seldom used to identify a suspect independent of a witness' testimony. Instead, it was used primarily during the interview of a suspect to persuade him or her to own up to the crime (Saunders, 1977).

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

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

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

Motive & Clearance Rate

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

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

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

'Tough' v. 'Easy Cases'

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

There were, nonetheless, a number of cases that necessitated at least some level of detecting and those that involved widespread effort over years with little or no assurance of success (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). These two distinct categories of murders were what many investigators called 'tough' and 'easy'. During work with the Baltimore Homicide Squad, Simon (1991) found that detectives referred to cases that

came along with sufficient evidence and a clear suspect as 'dunkers' and genuine murder mysteries as 'whodunits' (p. 39-40).

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

Williams and Sumrall (1982) served as evaluators of a Managing Case Investigations (MCI) demonstration project in the Birmingham Police Department. A framework of economic analysis was used to evaluate the efficiency of the demonstration project. The researchers set out to learn whether certain organizational changes involving manpower utilization, management of case processing and the prosecution of offenders increased the effectiveness of criminal investigations. They found that changes in organizational structure brought about by the MCI field test resulted in an increase in effectiveness while total input resources were declining. They also found that the clearance rates of cases rose during the project without the use of additional resources (Williams & Sumrall, 1982).

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

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

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

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

The Rand study had four main objectives. The first was to describe the current investigative organization and practices on a national level. The second goal was to discern the effectiveness of new technology and systems adopted to improve investigative performance. Third, researchers sought to disclose how investigative effectiveness was related to differences in organizational staffing and procedures. Fourth, and perhaps most important, the researchers set out to evaluate the contribution police investigation made to the achievement of criminal justice goals (Greenwood & Petersilia, 1975). The Rand Corporation published its findings in October 1975. In regard to the use of detectives' time, researchers shared that substantially more than half of all serious reported crimes received no more than superficial attention from investigators. They also found that 93% of investigators' time was consumed by administrative duties, services to the public and other activities not immediately related to assigned cases (Greenwood & Petersilia, 1975).

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

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

Citizen Involvement

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

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

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

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

As shown in Table 8.1, during the 2005 to 2009 study period, homicide detectives solved 121 or 57% of the 214 cases in which no information concerning the suspect's identity was secured at the scene. This is 36% more than the Rand researchers anticipated and thus their findings were not reliable for The Bahamas. It must be

mentioned that this can be considered a remarkable feat, even by international standards, as percentages have never surpassed the half mark.

Table 8.1 Suspects' Identity at Scene & Detection Cross-Tabulation (2005-2009)

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

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

Increasing Murder Detection Rates

In their report, Rand researchers included various recommendations and reforms that would lead to an increased number of crime clearances. Among the major reforms was a reduction in follow-up investigations, except for serious offenses and the assignment of generalist-investigators who would handle obvious leads in routine cases. In relation to serious crimes, the establishment of a Major Offenders Unit and the assignment of serious offense investigations to closely supervised teams rather than individual investigators were suggested. The researchers also suggested strengthening evidence-processing capabilities as well as the use of information processing systems in lieu of investigations. Since solved cases were generally cleared when the offense was originally reported or shortly thereafter, early deployment of detectives to crime scenes should be sought to maximize their effectiveness (Conklin & Bittner, 1973).

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

Summing it Up

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

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

Chapter 9

A Murder Reduction Strategy for The Bahamas

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

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

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

Introduction

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

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

While murder is regarded as the most serious offence, it is not a completely separate or distinctive phenomenon. Murder can be understood as an extreme manifestation of serious violence, with similar underlying causes and influenced by similar situational factors. Strategies for reducing murders can be developed in conjunction with those aimed at violent crime in general and the most serious types of violent crime. In other words, the 719 murders that occurred during the 2010-2015 time period can be considered alongside the number of attempted murders and a much greater number of shootings, stabbings and other violent acts that endanger life. It is useful to note, however, that there were murders marked by a clear intent to fatally wound as opposed to merely injuring a victim. In such cases, strategies to reduce overall violence may be less effective (Brookman & Maguire, 2003).

Murder Reduction Strategy

This Murder Reduction Strategy (MRS) is comprised of 7 key action points and is based on the findings of this study and related research in other jurisdictions. Recommendations offered in the MRS are based on the findings of this study and associated research and may not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or positions of the Ministry of National Security or the Royal Bahamas Police Force. As noted earlier in the study, challenges to local murder prevention include the illicit gun trade and the back-log of murder cases. These and other issues are addressed in this MRS.

Since murder is a crime that is impacted by characteristics which vary geographically, universal approaches to its reduction may be less successful than programs specifically developed with knowledge of the geographic and cultural factors associated with violent behavior. Efforts and policies geared at successfully reducing its occurrence, therefore, require careful tailoring to the idiosyncratic nature of each agency's culture

and governmental policies. In order to gain a full appreciation for the suggestions of this MRS one should first read the previous chapters and consider their descriptive findings. While other types and forms of murder may be prevented, this strategy explores murder reduction at the strategic level. Other aspects of the strategy are sensitive and will require direct communication with the relevant authorities and agencies.

Strategic Intent

After varying levels of analyses of local murder incidents, particularly between 2010 and 2015, several trends and factors along with criminal justice issues have been identified as useful in developing an effective reduction strategy. The intent of this strategy is to reduce specific types and forms of murders thereby reducing the overall number of murder incidents. The 7 Action Points are illustrated in Figure 9.1. This strategy will also produce residual reduction effects on the number of violent crimes overall.

Figure 9.1 7 Action Points to Reduce Murders in The Bahamas



Action Point 1: Punish the Most Violent Offenders

Classical criminologists found that crime can be prevented when the punishment outweighs the crime. The fact that almost 60% of persons charged with murder had a criminal record may indicate that their punishments did not outweigh the benefits of committing their crimes. Moreover, sanctions for at least 47 persons who faced a prior murder charge (whether they were bailed or punished) did not have any impact on them being charged with another murder. In addition, the 2013 ruling by the Court of Appeal has made sentencing an accused to life (natural) imprisonment unlikely. Simply put, there are a small number of chronic violent offenders who are in and out of the justice system, who are responsible for the largest amount of violent crime. This cycle is depicted in the chart below.

The Cycle of Murder



A coordinated approach to punishing such persons would not only reduce a large portion of violent crime, but may prevent them from becoming a murder victim as well. This coordinated approach must have support from both the Office of the Attorney General as well as the Office of the Chief Justice in order to be effective. It will also involve constitutional amendments.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **Establish a Violent Repeat Offender (VRO) Program:** This program will bring police, prosecutors, judges and corrections together in a collaborative effort to identify, prosecute and punish the most violent criminals responsible for committing most of the violent crimes. This evidence-based model for fighting persistent violent crime is based in the understanding that lasting crime suppression will never be achieved by broad-based “enforcement sweeps,” which often only impact minor offenders and risk creating community

- resentment from what may be seen as strong-arm tactics. Instead, VRO members devise objective measures that shift the focus from prosecuting the 'troublesome' to prosecuting the truly 'dangerous'. To accomplish this, VRO uses empirical data, such as a subject's criminal history, age, and frequency of firearm use, combined with ground-level intelligence to list the most violent offenders. VRO members should meet weekly to adjust the list and review the status of each offender.
- b. **Establishment of Sentencing Guidelines:** These are non-binding rules that set out a uniform sentencing policy for persons convicted of violent crimes. The guidelines facilitate a precise calibration of sentences, taking into account a number of factors. These factors consider various aggravating circumstances such as the offender's criminal history, the seriousness of the offense, whether a firearm was used, and the number of victims. While not binding, judges must consider them when determining a criminal offender's sentence. When a judge determines within his or her discretion to depart from the guidelines, the judge must explain what factors warranted the increased or decreased sentence. When the Court of Appeal reviews a sentence imposed through a proper application of the guidelines, it may presume the sentence is reasonable.
 - c. **Application of the Death Penalty:** Many of those opposed to capital punishment fail to understand that it was not created for prevention but rather incapacitation and retribution. This fact is made clearer when one considers the fact that 47 of the persons charged with murder during the study period were previously charged with a different murder. The 2006 and 2011 rulings by the Privy Council discussed in Chapter 6 have made it virtually impossible for the death penalty to be carried out in The Bahamas. In fact, Chief Justice Sir Hartman Longley recently stated that unless there was a "Charlie Hebdo" attack (referring to the 2015 massacre in Paris), the likelihood of imposing the death penalty in The Bahamas would be nil. Nonetheless, there may be another avenue to explore. An Amendment to the Constitution could be made to specify that the punishment for a person convicted of murder is death or life (natural) without parole.
 - d. **New Bail Constraints for Persons Charged with Murder:** An Amendment to the Constitution should be made which specifies that no bail shall be granted to persons who were previously charged with murder. For persons charged with murder for the first time, bail should be set to at least \$1 million. The 2014 Amendment to the Bail Act which prevents present sureties from posting new bail will buffer these tactics. Offenders granted bail otherwise should be aggressively monitored to ensure that all conditions are being adhered to at all times. When found in breach, offenders should be arrested swiftly under the 2014 Amendment.
 - e. **No Remission for Persons Sentenced for Murder or Manslaughter:** Remittance means that an inmate may not have to remain in prison for the full term of their sentence. Under Section 27 of the Correctional Service Act 2014, a person serving a prison sentence may have up to one third of their sentence remitted. This means that a person sentenced to 10 years for manslaughter may only

- serve about 6-7 years. An amendment to the Correctional Service Act 2014 should be made to disqualify persons sentenced for murder or manslaughter from being eligible for remittance.
- f. **Bahamas Court of Appeal as Final Appellate Court:** One of the contributing factors in the delay of justice is the ability for defendants to appeal their rulings and sentences to the Privy Council. For example, in the Maxo Tido case, it took 9 years from the date of the murder to the ruling handed down by the Privy Council. To lessen this time, an Amendment to Article 104 and 105 of the Constitution of The Bahamas should be made to make the Bahamas Court of Appeal as the final appellate court.
- g. **Expansion of the Swift Justice Program:** The ongoing Swift Justice Initiative by the Office of the Attorney should be expanded. This program has not only increased the number of completed cases, but has also increased the murder conviction rate (see Chapter 6). However, findings from this study indicated that there are still 217 murder cases pending up to the publication of this study which were committed during the 2010-2015 study period (this does not include cases in which suspects have died or are still at large). In order to further reduce the backlog, hiring of additional judges and the creation of more criminal Supreme Courts must be considered. Other activities such as *pre-trial conferences*, and *plea bargaining* should be expanded which can both have a positive impact on relieving the current court congestion.

Action Point 2: Dismantle Illegal Gun Trafficking in The Bahamas

Findings of this study indicated that nearly 80% of the murders during the study period were committed by a firearm. This is significantly up from the 61% of gun murders observed during the 2005-2009 period. While law enforcement has seized over 2,566 guns between 2010 and 2015, criminals are still able to get access to firearms and commit a larger number of violent crimes with them. There are also a growing number of high-powered rifles including the AR-15 and AK-47, which have been confiscated. For example, in 2013, there were 7 murder scenes where this type of was used. In addition, local ballistics experts have linked one particular Ak-47 to 2 murders and a damage incident in 2013 (see graphic below).



Intelligence suggests that most guns are being smuggled into The Bahamas via mail and shipping services, cargo containers, and private crafts. Recent data from the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) indicate that 98% of guns confiscated in The Bahamas were purchased or acquired in the United States. In 2016, the US Government took several steps to assist local authorities with this issue including establishing an ATF Working Group in Florida specifically designed to interdict gun trafficking in the region. In addition, ATF staffers are assigned to the US Embassy in Nassau. These moves have resulted in arrests and indictments in Florida of US citizens on gun related charges.

Stop and search activities by the police result in many weapons being taken off the streets. However, this tactic alone increases the *demand* for more weapons and fail to address *supply* factors as figures continue to indicate a constant inflow of illegal weapons entering the country. Tactics that also give attention to supply factors present a more effective strategy. These include enhancing controls over the availability of firearms and stronger penalties for illegal possession.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **Enhancement of Intelligence Gathering Capabilities:** Greater focus and attention should be placed across all local intelligence mechanisms on gathering intelligence related to the illegal importation of firearms. The communication, training, resources, technology and information sharing between the Central Intelligence Bureau, Security & Intelligence Branch, the National Intelligence Agency and the ATF should be enhanced. Increased marketing of the crime-tippers hotline (328-TIPS) is also recommended as one small tip could eventually lead to the dismantling of a major gun trafficking ring. Members of the public should be reminded that if a suspect is caught with a gun, there is no need for the caller to give evidence in court.
- b. **Establishment of a Gun Interdiction Task Force:** With over 2,566 guns being illegally imported over the last few years, there is a clear need for a nationally coordinated, multiagency response. The current Firearms Tracing & Investigating Unit (FTIU) of the RBPF should be further supported by such a Task Force. This Task Force should be made up of officials from FTIU, the Royal Bahamas Defense Force, Customs Department, Immigration Department, Bahamas Department of Correctional Services, National Intelligence Agency, ATF and the Office of the Attorney General. With weekly meetings, the mission of this Task Force would be to ensure that there is appropriate interest, information sharing, cohesiveness and accountability among all agencies in relation to gun interdiction. Since the focus of other agencies is not directly related to gun control, the establishment of this Task Force would promote more buy-in to the required unified effort to be successful.
- c. **Capacity Building in the Ballistics Section of the Forensic Laboratory:** Speedier processing and identification of weapons are crucial in gun interdiction. The new IBIS TRAX HD3D technology should be acquired. With this platform, analysts are able to use a 3D, high-definition image to further manipulate it to

- highlight markings found on fired bullets and cartridge cases. There should also be at least 5 fully trained ballistics experts attached to the Forensic Lab as a part of new full-service Forensic Laboratory.
- d. **Legislative & Judicial Adjustments:** NADS researchers conducted an analysis of punishments for firearm and ammunition possession convictions in 2016. Out of the 98 convictions, the majority (60%) involved a sentence of 2 years in jail or less, some of which were as low as 6 months in jail. Fines were imposed in 17% of the convictions, one of which was low as \$1,000. There were also 2 cases where the suspects were sentenced to probation or community service. An amendment of the Firearms Act should be made to have persons convicted of illegal firearm possession face a mandatory prison term. Punishment should be weighted in cases where a firearm was used before, during or after a crime. Consideration should be given to creating a strict liability offence for persons found with an illegal firearm on their person and violators should face a mandatory prison term. Some of the bail constraints mentioned under Action Point 1 should also apply to violators of the Firearms Act. Hence, no bail should be granted to persons who were previously charged with an offence under the Firearms Act. A specialized Firearm's Court should be created with a Magistrate specifically dedicated to hearing illegal gun possession, importation/exportation cases and related matters.
- e. **Stipulations on Visitors to The Bahamas:** Visitors to The Bahamas who legally own firearms in their country should be properly advised of laws regarding gun possession in The Bahamas. They should be advised of consequences for bringing their legally owned guns concealed in their baggage. Under the current Firearms Act Section 6[c], non-residents who arrive on foreign vessels must declare firearms on board their vessel to a Customs Officer or a Family Island Administrator within 48 hours of their arrival. This Section should be amended to require immediate declaration to a law enforcement official which should also include a member of the RBPF or RBDF. The law should also require that all vessels (including private aircrafts) visiting The Bahamas be subjected to a search by law enforcement and any firearms legally owned by the visitors will be confiscated and returned upon departure from The Bahamas. Those in found in contravention of this law should be charged. Cases in which law enforcement have evidence to suggest that a visitor may be attempting to illegally traffic firearms should be prosecuted.
- f. **Acquiring New Firearm Detection Technology:** Investments should be made to acquire the latest firearm detection technology to be used at all ports of entry in the country including airports, seaports and shipping docks. This will include all associated training for law enforcement officials. Some of the new technologies include the ACT system, designed by Thermal Matrix USA, which combines safety of stand-off inspection with the accuracy and reliability of a pat-down search. The system detects virtually any type of threat including explosives, guns, knives and liquids even when hidden under layers of clothing. Another is a polar-metric radar where irregular metal objects can change the polarization of the signal, allowing for the detection of concealed items. The techniques could be used to scan large groups of people, with each subject

taking less than a second to process. This would then allow security personnel to closely observe the individual in question or even take suspects aside for more comprehensive scans. Making it a requirement for mail and shipping services to partially fund these and other scanning instruments should be explored.

ACTION POINT 3: A DNA FORENSIC LABORATORY

In an age of witness tampering and legal challenges to confessions, the importance of scientific evidence is more evident. As discussed in Chapter 6, 31 (23%) of the 134 completed cases were dropped or dismissed. Most of these cases were ones in which prosecution witnesses recanted their stories due to being intimidated by suspects. Various sciences offered criminalistics as the safest and most reliable means and methods to find the truth and to recreate the juridical act on scientific bases through objectivity and accuracy.

The contribution of criminalistics to solving criminal cases is achieved on three well-structured but interconnected levels: **Tactical level** - activity that implies developing an inquiry from the initial to the final stage, according to a plan materialized once the investigations at the crime site are over; **Technical level**- the central scene of scientific investigations, accomplished by forensic methods implies identification of all persons involved, of objects or many other items connected to the crime. For that purpose, forensic science gives the judicial system the scientific means and methods able to discover, assess, interpret and examine the traces of the crime. Equally important the technical component also offers the scientific means to prevent criminality. **Methodological level** - combines the technical and scientific methods of the police for identifying the criminals and for proving their guilt.

The Scientific Support Services arm of the Royal Bahamas Police Force currently lacks DNA testing ability. DNA evidence becomes more reliable as offenders oftentimes leave their DNA at murder scenes on a variety of items. If collected, examined and compared to suspects, this may be the lone piece of evidence sufficient for charging a suspect and possibly a conviction. At the moment, DNA samples have to be sent abroad to be tested. This can be a costly venture as a DNA mini-STR Analysis costs around \$1,000 per item. This process typically has a standard turnaround of months with extra costs for a shorter turnaround. Aside from the financial aspect, the delay in DNA results can negatively impact the investigation and may force the release of suspects.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **Establishment of a DNA Lab:** A fully functional DNA lab should be opened to support all criminal investigations including homicides. Appropriate investments into suitable accommodations, staffing, training, equipment and technology should be made and maintained.

- b. **Enhanced DNA Evidence Collection:** The Criminal Records Office should be properly outfitted with enhanced evidence collection capabilities. Properly collecting evidence is also a critical aspect in using science to assist in criminal investigations, which may lead to a conviction. Hence, CSI officers must have access to the best technology and equipment and facilities.
- c. **Creation of a DNA Database:** Several jurisdictions have passed laws that require all persons entering the correctional system (whether awaiting trial or sentenced) to submit a DNA sample. Such a move locally could be supported by the fact that murder suspects tend to be responsible for other crimes. Checking DNA samples in the database may assist detectives in indentifying suspects in other crimes and could lead to increased detection rates, thereby reducing crime.

ACTION POINT 4: DISMANTLING CRIMINAL GANGS

As noted in Chapter 4, 31% of murder victims and 42% of murder suspects were active gang members or involved in gang activity. Gangs are often the result of system failures or community dysfunction. Preventing young people from joining gangs in the first place is crucial to realizing a significant and lasting reduction in youth gang activity. In The Bahamas, there are 3 main criminal gangs. Many of the revenge/retaliation murders were bi-products of on-going feuds between gang members. These gangs emerged as a result of criminal activity including the stealing of vehicles and illegal drug activities. They have expanded in number and reach and operate in a number of local communities such as Nassau Village, Kemp Road, and Bain & Grants Town. These gangs steal drugs from each other and compete for limited turf in which to operate. These turf disputes have resulted in a spate of retaliation murders where one gang seeks to avenge the death of their fellow gang member.

The 3 Most Popular Criminal Gangs in The Bahamas



Clearly, the dismantling of the local gangs will reduce murders involving gang members.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **Strict Enforcement of the Anti-Gang Legislation:** A 2014 Amendment to the Penal Code made being a member of a criminal gang an offence. Persons charged under the law could face a 20-year sentence and \$500,000 fine. This law should be appropriately enforced. Up to publication date, no person had been successfully prosecuted under this law. Gang charges brought against 5 men in a November 2015 case were later dropped.
- b. **Establishment of an Anti-Gang Unit Supported by a Gang Task Force:** A team of properly trained and equipped investigators should be established in the Central Detective Unit and mandated to exclusively investigate gang activity. The mission of the Anti-Gang Unit will be to constantly identify, target and charge gang members under the 2014 Amendment with a view to dismantle their operation and organization. A Gang Task Force should be established to support the Anti-Gang Unit and should include officials from the Unit, Bahamas Department of Correctional Services, the National Intelligence Agency, Financial Intelligence Unit and the Office of the Attorney General. The Task Force should meet weekly to pursue violent gangs through sustained, proactive and coordinated investigations to obtain successful prosecutions. These anti-gang entities should make use of the 'Enterprise Theory of Investigation (ETI)' which combines short term, street level enforcement activity with sophisticated consensual monitoring and financial analysis to root out and prosecute the entire gang, from the street level thugs up to the gang's leadership structure.
- c. **Gang Prevention in Schools & Communities:** Gang prevention initiatives at the school and community level are a critical component of responses to gangs. The goal of prevention is to stop youths from being interested joining gangs. Prevention responses, therefore, are targeted at the largest segment of the problem: youths at risk for gang membership and youths in the general population, often in primary or secondary schools. The most successful and sustainable gang-prevention strategies include partnerships among law enforcement, schools, parents, the community, faith-based organizations, civil society and youth. The most effective response to youth gangs is a combination of interdependent prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies, selected by a community to target its emerging or chronic gang problems, which have been identified comprehensive, systematic assessment. Gang-joining prevention efforts should be informed by what is known about risk and protective factors for children of particular ages. School Police Officers will play an integral role in driving this program. Partnerships can help reinforce and enhance the existing strengths of families and communities to reduce gang-joining, especially with supporting activities such as tutoring, mentoring, life-skills training, case management, parental involvement, and supervised recreation.

ACTION POINT 5: DISSUADE YOUTHS FROM USING DRUGS

Criminals who are involved in the drug trade are prepared to use violence. According to Chapter 3, 63 of the murders were drug related. Drugs lie at the core of the crime issue. In 2015, local drug officials seized nearly 16,000 lbs. of marijuana, 16,056 marijuana plants and 1,543.57 lbs. of cocaine. A total of 1,499 suspects were arrested, 1,219 of whom were subsequently charged with drug related offences. The drug trade has resulted in increased levels of violence ranging from petty theft to murder. Local drug traffickers have morphed into gangs in order protect themselves and their contraband from rivals.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **A Public Health Approach to Drug Prevention:** The historical over reliance on the law enforcement approach to the drug problem should be adjusted to a public health approach. Overall, there will an appropriate balance between demand reduction and supply reduction. Specifically, there should be more focus and attention on activities aimed at dissuading at risk youths from becoming interested in using drugs.
- b. **A National Drug Prevalence Survey:** While drug prevalence surveys have been conducted in local schools, a national survey to measure the level of drug use and abuse in local communities should be conducted. Findings from this and similar studies should be used to guide drug prevention polices.
- c. **Increased Use of Social Media:** Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to raise awareness among youth on the harmful impact that different types of legal and illegal drugs have on the body including alcohol, tobacco, abuse of prescription drugs, beedies, hookahs, marijuana and cocaine. Positive roles models including Olympic Gold Medallist Shaunae Miller and NBA star Buddy Hield should be used more to participate in leading the message of a drug free life.
- d. **Establishment of a Drug-Treatment Court:** The purpose of a Drug-treatment Court is to provide an alternative to incarceration for drug abuse through treatment and rehabilitation. The court should be made up of a team of specially trained professionals including magistrates, prosecutors, police officers, psychologists and social workers, who will work together to design a program that will enable drug addicts to successfully re-integrate into society as productive law abiding citizens. The establishment of the court will require the full support of the Judiciary and all stakeholders.

ACTION POINT 6: INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH.

One of the most persistent findings is that murders, like other crimes of a violent and predatory nature, are strongly correlated with social inequality and poverty. Chapter 2 points out that most murder incidents in New Providence occurred in communities where annual household incomes fell below the island's average. Conversely, significantly fewer murders occur in communities where annual household incomes fell above the island's average. According to a recent survey at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services, 40% of sentenced inmates indicated that they committed their crime(s) because of economic issues (Minnis, Stevenson, Symonette & Gibson, 2012). Researchers also discovered that 34% of sentenced inmates stated that the economy was the underlying cause of crime. Criminologists have found a strong economy as a factor in reducing crime (Blumstien & Rosenfeld, 1998).

These findings suggest that preventive strategies aimed at particular offences ought to be complemented by and complementary to broader, long-term initiatives to address poverty and social exclusion. It may also be useful for policy-makers to reflect on how major structural factors, like poverty, interrelate with specific local factors. When persons, places and circumstances are identified as being associated with an exceptionally high risk of serious violence, focus should be placed on them. This would reduce the opportunity for more common types of murders to occur.

Youths are disproportionately represented in the ranks of both victims and perpetrators of crime and violence. Moreover, violent crimes are being committed by younger perpetrators. According to the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services Annual Report for 2015, 72% of remanded inmates were under the age of 35 and about 60% of sentenced inmates were under the age of 35.

It is clear that a young person in our country must have a chance to get an education, receive job skills, and have some level of positive family and/or community involvement in order to lead a productive, crime-free life.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **More Youth Empowerment & Employment Programs:** These programs work to provide business development and career advice to young persons. The goals of such programs include institutional and policy advancement to guarantee that new governmental policies assist youths to gain employment. Such programs also empower youth by establishing and supporting ongoing youth councils and leadership positions. Moreover, these programs should provide employment and job experience by creating internships and directing student graduates to jobs.
- b. **More Connections Between Youths & Employers:** This requires the creation of a space for public employment services to be better in touch with employable youths and potential employers.

- c. **Expansion of the Technical Cadet Corps Program:** This program was created in 1990 for students entering the tenth grade and is fully sponsored by the Bahamas Electricity Corporation (now BPL), Water and Sewerage Corporation, Bahamas Telecommunications Company and the Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas. It is geared toward training students in technical areas in which these organizations specialize with the objective to identify youths who show a degree of capacity to hold jobs in technical-related fields and provide them with associated job skills and on the job training.
- d. **Re-Establishment of the Royal Bahamas Police Cadet Corps Program:** The first Cadet Corps of the Force began in the late 1960s where youths were able to understudy full-fledged officers until they reached the required age to be recruited into the Force. Today, the Corps not only prepares potential recruits for a career in law enforcement, but also kept candidates interested in the policing field. Cadets are paid a stipend and put in 18 hours weekly, which mostly includes duties at the Police College. The Corps work in tandem with the student's academic commitments and cadets benefit from a wide array of professional skill building needed to serve as an effective law enforcement officers.
- e. **More Research:** Local longitudinal studies that gauge the correlation between crime and poverty should be undertaken.

ACTION POINT 7: INCREASED EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

There is a large body of research that supports the position that educational attainment and crime are correlated. In the United States, for example, 41% of incarcerated offenders did not complete high school compared with 18% in the general population (Hopkins, 2012). A survey of recently sentenced inmates in the United Kingdom indicated that 47% of them had no educational qualification compared to 15% in the general population. Local researchers found that 54% of sentenced inmates dropped out of school and 48% were expelled from school (Minnis et al., 2012).

Educational achievement for students who 'complete' secondary or high school are low. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2015 the National Grade Average for the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) was 'E' for Mathematics and 'D+' for English. In 2015 the National Grade Average for the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) was 'E+' for Mathematics and 'D-' for English. Since schooling significantly reduces the probability of arrest and incarceration. Hence, any serious strategy to reduce crime and violence should include efforts to increase educational attainment.

Tactics under this Action Point include:

- a. **Regular Revisions to Education Policy & Laws on Discipline:** Amendments to the Education Act and a re-tooling of educational policies related to discipline should be undertaken to ensure that no school aged child is prevented from completing a high school education. This means that suspensions and expulsions should be made illegal.
- b. **Expansion of Technical & Vocational Subject Options:** For students who may benefit from a different learning experience, more technical and vocational options for high school students may be a good fit. In vocational high school programs, students study a skill or trade, such as engineering or plumbing, in addition to completing core academic requirements. These subjects can prepare a student for a job directly out of high school or equip them to become self-employed entrepreneurs. At the very least, such graduates should be equipped with enough skills to be employed as a semi-skilled worker.
- c. **Establishing Special Schools for Students with Behavioral Challenges:** A specially designed full service school should be opened where students with chronic behavioral challenges can complete their high school education under the supervision of specially trained and equipped educators. This school's curriculum should be augmented to include discipline related subject matters similar to those in Program SURE and TAPS. The creation of this school will absorb shorter term responses and should include technical and vocational electives. School Based Police Officers should also be assigned to this school, who will be used not only for security, but also to provide classroom instruction on conflict resolution, drug prevention, gang prevention and related subjects.
- d. **Capacity Building at the Penn-Pratt Co-Educational Unit:** Youths who are serving time at the Simpson Penn or Willimae Pratt School should also be given technical and vocational training options, which may better assist them with earning an honest living. Oftentimes, these youths are released back onto the streets because their sentences typically end when the academic year has already started. This could be corrected by ensuring that court officials coordinate with schools in such a way that upon release, the student can smoothly matriculate back into a school.
- e. **Capacity Building in Educational Programs at BDOCS:** The educational program at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS) should be expanded to give inmates and opportunity to earn their BGCSE and High School Diplomas while incarcerated. Incentives such as early consideration for the work scheme and time off their prison term should be considered for inmates who have attained certain educational milestones. The vast variety of technical and vocational options at BDOCS should have similar incentives.

Strategy Evaluation & Performance Indicators

The nature and magnitude of many of these suggestions and recommendations would take time to fully fund and implement. This strategy requires constant and regular adjustments and refinements as the field of law enforcement is quite dynamic. Each agency should be responsible for driving their associated tactics suggested within this strategy. The Ministry of National Security should also conduct program evaluation to gauge the impact of this MRS. Most importantly, rigorous research into the dynamics of local homicides must continue in order to properly gauge the impact of this MRS on future murder rates. If these recommendations are accepted, an examination of local murders over the next five years should produce decreases in the overall murder incidence.

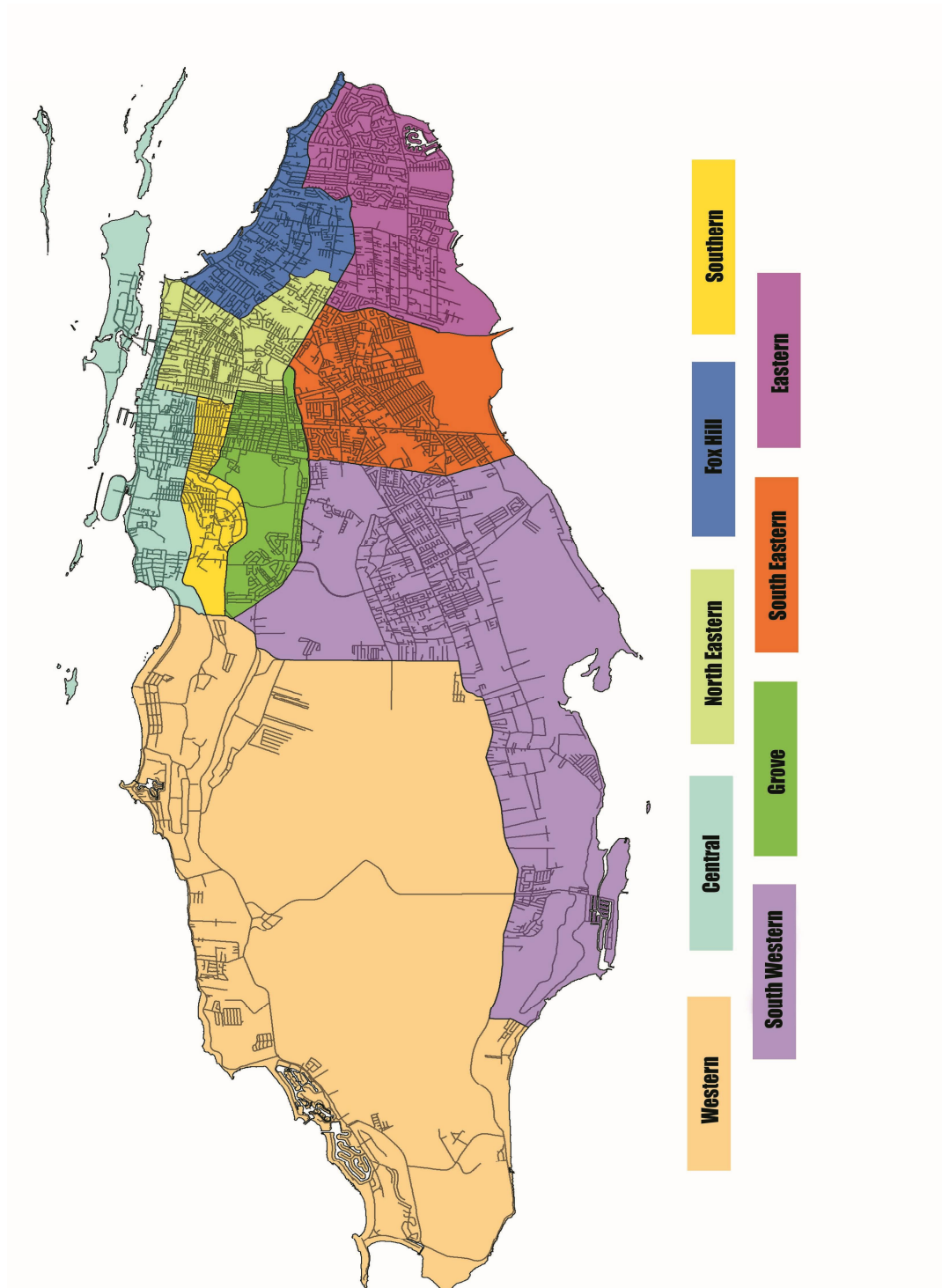
Conclusion

This MRS and its associated recommendations were based on a rigorous analysis of murders which occurred throughout The Bahamas over the last 6 years. The analysis of homicide files provided the first step for assessing violence in a community and developing a data-driven intervention. Moving forward, it will be vital to continue to properly analyze trends and share knowledge about murders in general along with factors that relate to specific forms of murder. Engaging criminal justice officials and members of the community by way of research is a good way to identify underlying issues that must be properly addressed in order to effect change. Discussions in earlier chapters demonstrated how analysis of homicide patterns in local areas could be used to offer policy recommendations for government to consider and develop interventions for communities impacted by violence.

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

Appendix A

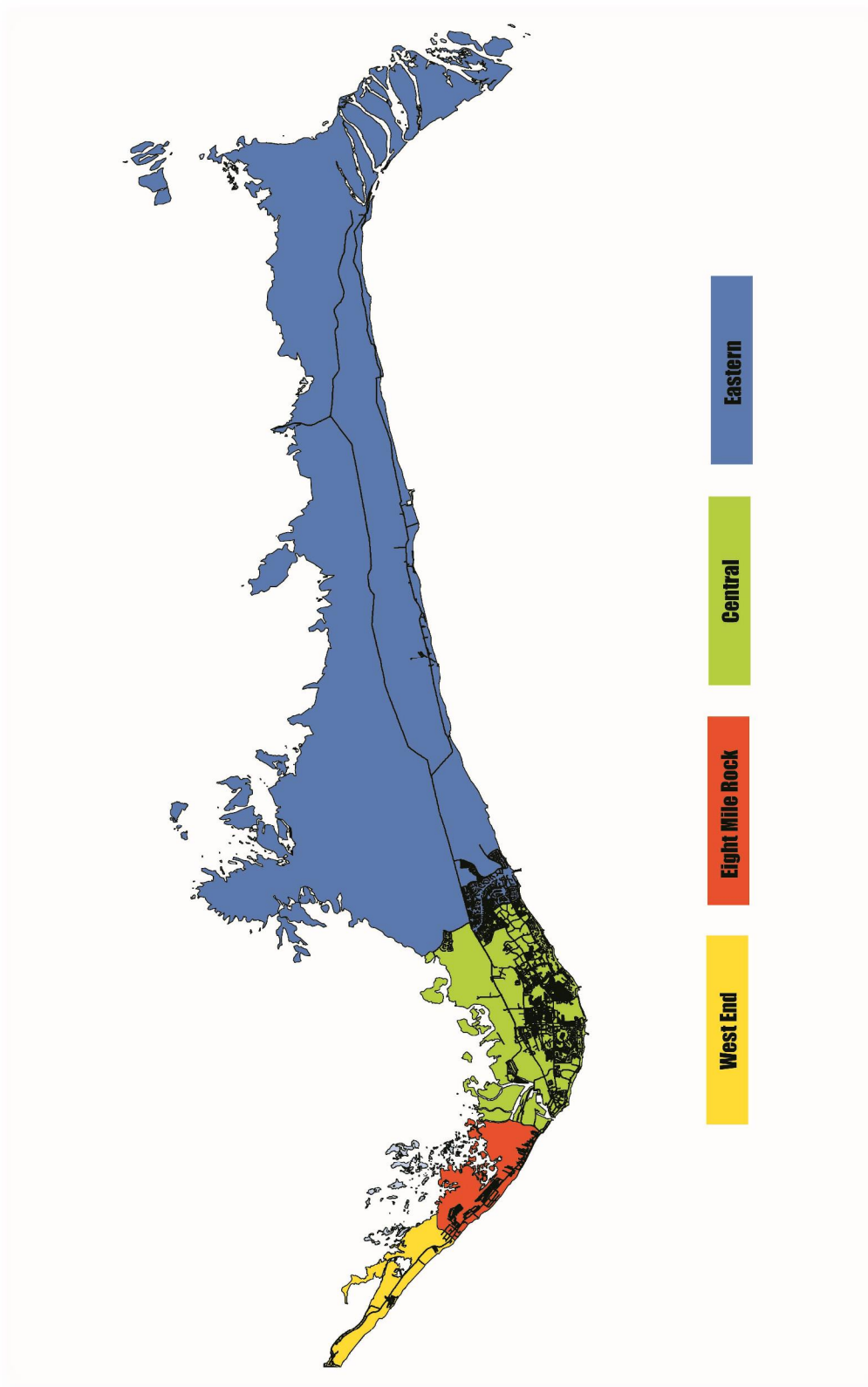
*New Providence's Policing Divisions**



*The 'Grove' Division is now known as the 'South-central' Division, the 'Fox Hill' Division has merged with the 'Eastern' Division, and a 'Paradise Island' Division has been created from the 'Central' Division.

Appendix B

Grand Bahama Policing Divisions



Appendix C *Motives*

1. DOMESTIC A

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

2. DOMESTIC B

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

3. DOMESTIC C

Killing as a result of issues related to members of the LGBT community.

4. ROBBERY

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

5. SEXUAL ASSAULT

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

6. ARGUMENT

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

7. DRUG RELATED

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

8. RETALIATION

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

9. UNDETERMINED

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

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