

FATAL HUMILIATION: THE ROLE OF SHAME IN HOMICIDAL MOTIVATIONS

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By Elizabeth M. Green

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FATAL HUMILIATION: THE ROLE OF SHAME IN HOMICIDAL MOTIVATIONS

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BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Trina Hope, Chair

Dr. B. Mitchell Peck

Dr. Constance Chapple

Dr. H. Michael Crowson

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Dedicated to my mom — my constant cheerleader and my biggest fan.

ABSTRACT

Few criminological researchers have focused on the role of shame in homicide motives. However, those that have (Anderson 1994, Websdale 2010), have emphasized shame as an important contributing factor to homicides, particularly when there is an interpersonal conflict involved. This study ultimately focuses on the significance of shame as a predictor of expressive homicides and homicides that arise from an interpersonal conflict. It begins with an inter-rater agreement study that empirically assesses coding decisions for the key variables later used in this study: homicide circumstance, instrumental/expressive homicide type, shame, and victim-offender relationship. The results indicated a moderate to substantial level of agreement for the coded variables. In the second part of the study, instrumental and expressive homicides are analyzed with victim-offender relationship as the key independent variable. The results confirmed the centrality of that variable in predicting homicide type and identified victim's sex, offender's race/ethnicity, and weapon choice as significant predictors of expressive homicides. Finally, in the third part of the study, I examine the role of shame, as well as victim and offender demographics, victim-offender relationship, and weapon choice in homicide types (instrumental or expressive) and the circumstances surrounding the homicide. The results confirmed the salience of shame in understanding homicide motives. Like in the second part of the study, victim-offender relationship, offender's race/ethnicity and sex, and weapon choice were also significant predictors of expressive homicides. Additionally, offender race/ethnicity and sex, offender age, and weapon choice were also significant in predicting the circumstances surrounding homicides.

Keywords: homicide motives, shame, inter-rater agreement, victim-offender relationship, homicide circumstance, instrumental and expressive homicides

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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

According to the latest statistics released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), there were 17,815 murder and nonnegligent manslaughter victims, in the United States (U.S.) in 2020 (FBI n.d.). 2020 is the most recent year of complete data collected by the FBI, due to the change from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The number of homicides in 2020 has increased significantly from the 13,201 victims in 2010 and an average of 13,744 victims for the years 2010 to 2019 (FBI n.d.). According to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI), from 2010 to 2021, there were 2,755 homicides in Oklahoma. During that timeframe, 2014 was the least lethal year with 178 homicides, whereas 2020 was the most fatal, with 287 homicides (OSBI n.d.). On average, there were around 230 homicides each year. For decades, researchers have analyzed homicides with the goal of greater understanding leading to reduction or even prevention. However, lethal violence in the U.S. and in Oklahoma remains high and warrants continued research.

While homicide accounts for a relatively small percentage of overall deaths in the United States, it remains a significant health issue and is differentially distributed by age, gender, and race/ethnicity. For example, homicide is the third leading cause of death (16.3%) for persons aged 10 to 24, compared to sixth (6.0%) for the age group of 25 to 44, and outside of the top ten for the remaining age groups (45 to 64, 65 and older, 85 and older) (Curtin, Tejada-Vera & Bastian 2024). While homicide is not a top ten overall leading cause of death for males or females (Curtin, Tejada-Vera & Bastian 2024), a different picture arises when considering sex and age. In an analysis of firearms-related homicides from 1990 to 2021, there was a high of 28.7 per 100,000 for persons in the age group 20 to 24, which coincided with a peak in the rate of homicides of same-aged Black men (141.8 per 100,000) (Rees, et.al. 2022). Finally, homicide

is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States for Blacks, compared to the 21st leading cause of death for Asians. Homicides are the 20th leading cause of death for Whites, while Hispanics (12th), American Indians/Alaska Natives (13th), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders (15th) are ranked between the high of Blacks and the low of Asians and Whites (Curtin, Tejada-Vera & Bastian 2024).

For United States homicide research, investigators often rely on the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) of the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program (Pampel and Williams 2000). These data are distributed by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Participating law enforcement agencies provide data on specific crimes and other information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for UCR compilation. While participation in UCR reporting is voluntary, the UCR is the most comprehensive collection of crime data in the United States and has been collected for more than 90 years. Agencies can also provide detailed additional information in homicides, via the SHR. ICPSR archives the UCR data, creating datasets and codebooks (United States Department of Justice, 2016). The SHR provides additional details about homicides not captured in the UCR, such as homicide circumstance, victim(s)-offender(s) relationship, weapon use, situational context, race and sex of victim(s) and offender(s), and other variables.

One essential way of using these data is to better understand homicides, and criminological perspectives attempt to do this.. The importance of this is not simply an intellectual undertaking but allows for the identification of potential intervention points and preventative measures. Importantly, while understanding motives may be legally unnecessary, identifying the nuanced reasons that motivate lethal violence allows for policy recommendations that will potentially lead to decreases in homicidal events. Motive research often includes a

classification of the type of homicide event (Wolfgang 1958; Daly and Wilson 1988; Pampel and Williams 2000) and/or categorizing the motive as instrumental or expressive (Luckenbill 1977; Felson 1978; Katz 1988; Decker 1996; Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005; Fox and Allen 2014; Adjorlo and Chan 2017). Some researchers have explored the role of shame and humiliation in homicide motives (Anderson 1999; Websdale 2010). Additionally, many researchers have noted the importance of examining homicide victim and offender demographics as well as victim-offender relationship in homicides (Wolfgang 1958; Polk 1993; Decker 1996; Aldridge & Browne 2003; Drawdy & Myers 2004; Field & Caetano 2004; Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005; Swatt & He 2006; Cooper & Smith 2011; Quinet & Nunn 2014; Fox and Allen 2014; Petrosky, Blair, Betz, Fowler, Jack, & Lyons 2017; Frankenfeld & Leslie 2021). Finally, weapon selection in homicides has been a focus of researchers for most of the past century (Wolfgang 1958; Sorenson 2006; Mize, Shackleford, and Weekes-Shackleford 2011; Zimring 2004; Allen & Fox 2013).

Motives and Homicide Classifications

Wolfgang (1958) conducted pioneering research into homicides, studying 588 homicides that occurred between 1948 and 1952 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His analysis included examining, among other components of the homicide event, sex, race, age, methods/weapon usage, temporal and spatial patterns, victim/offender relationship, and motives. Wolfgang (1958) classified motives in his study using the terminology utilized by the police, categorizing them as “Altercation of relatively trivial origin” (35%), “Domestic quarrel” (14.1%), “Jealousy” (11.6%), “Altercation over money” (10.5%), “Robbery” (6.8%), “Revenge” (5.3%), “Accidental” (3.9%), “Self-defense” (1.4%), “Halting of felon” (1.2%), “Escaping arrest” (1%), “Concealing birth” (1%), “Other” (3.4%), and “Unknown” (4.8%).

Wolfgang notes that “motives for killing another must be interpreted in terms of the culture value system and goals within which the offender operates” (1958:186). This, in addition to a lack of consistent language and definitions of motives, makes comparisons both across the United States and around the world difficult. However, he did conclude that in many studies, altercations, domestic disputes, robberies, and jealousy were frequently cited motivations (Wolfgang 1958).

Daly and Wilson (1988) examined the different demographic and situational variables in homicides among the different victim/offender relationship types - family, parents killing children, children killing parents, intimate partners killing each other, and in non-familial or intimate relationships. They argue that Wolfgang’s characterization of “altercation of relatively trivial origin” as a homicide motive characterizes the prevalence of such events, but perhaps does not truly enlighten what it purports to; that is, the *motive* of the altercation that led to homicide. Indeed, this category best describes the spontaneous temporal nature of the dispute and interaction, relative to homicides that occurred at a later time, but due to the same initial interaction (Daly and Wilson 1988).

Instead, Daly and Wilson (1988) utilize and extend the initial classification scheme of Wilt’s 1974 homicide study - “social conflict” and “crime-specific”. Social conflict homicides included the typologies of “Escalated showing-off contests”, “Retaliation for previous verbal or physical abuse”, “Jealousy conflicts”, “Business conflicts”, “Intervention in family dispute”, “Miscellaneous unique disputes”, and “Insufficient information” (Daly and Wilson 1988: 177).

The circumstances surrounding the homicide event are another lens through which criminologists focus research efforts. Indeed, Wolfgang’s (1958) ground-breaking research utilized police terminology to categorize homicides. In contemporary studies, many researchers

use the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) categories (see Fegadel & Heide 2018 for a comparison of NIBRS and SHR). In 2021, NIBRS replaced the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) as the method for collecting information on homicide events in the United States. The SHR have been used by researchers for homicide research for decades (e.g. Mize, Shackelford & Weekes 2010; Allen & Fox 2013; Fox & Allen 2014). NIBRS has 17 categories for their “Circumstances” variable, which describe the motive for the different types of felony, negligent manslaughter, and justifiable homicides.

Instrumental and Expressive Homicides

Feshbach (1964) was the first to identify aggression as arising from either an instrumental or hostile (expressive) motive. Instrumental aggression was aggression that was used to achieve nonaggressive goals, whereas hostile (expressive) aggression had a goal of injury. Unlike other species, “the derivation of satisfaction from eliciting pain and suffering in others is a peculiarly human phenomenon” (Feshbach 1964: 264). Rewards for the perpetrator include the implication of power and status (Feshbach 1964).

Extending that language to homicides, researchers began classifying homicides as having instrumental or expressive motives. “Instrumental homicides are events in which offenders seek to improve their position” (p. 428) by somehow gaining an advantage over the victim (Decker 1996). Financial gain is a common instrumental motivation seen in the classic example of robbery-homicides. Expressive homicides, on the other hand, have the goal of inflicting injury or death (Decker 1996). These types of homicides can be motivated by revenge or retaliation-seeking (Felson 1978), arise from a “character contest” (Luckenbill 1977), or as a manifestation of “righteous slaughter” (Katz 1988).

Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez (2005) focused their research on homicides in Miami (n=1,033) and San Diego (n=461) and they classified homicides into two expressive motives (escalation and intimate) and two instrumental motives (robbery and drug-related). They emphasize the findings of Decker (1996), that motive cannot be simply assumed by the relationship between the victim and the offender, and instead must be assessed through analysis of homicide case files for information that is not available in sources such as the Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR) gathered and published by the FBI (Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005).

In their 2014 study, Fox and Allen used 30 years of SHR data to argue that a revised instrumental/expressive continuum should include the categories of instrumental-offensive, expressive-offensive, and expressive-defensive homicides. Their classification scheme examined homicides along the dimensions of instrumental-expressive and offensive-defensive and utilized gender of the victim and offender, victim/offender relationship (categorized as family, acquaintance, and stranger), and weapon used to classify homicide motives through correspondence analysis. Like principal component analysis for continuous data, correspondence analysis identifies the “factors” for categorical data (Fox & Allen 2014).

They found that homicides clustered into three categories that they termed instrumental-offensive, expressive-offensive, and expressive-defensive. Instrumental-offensive homicides most often included males killing male nonfamily members - either strangers or acquaintances, with firearms. Expressive-offensive homicides included “males killing female acquaintances, strangers, and family members in addition to males killing male family members with clubs, other weapons, or no weapons. Male offenders comprise the majority of offenders in this quadrant and are associated with weapons other than knives or firearms...Females killing female family members are also represented [here]” (Fox & Allen 2014: 311). Finally, expressive-

defensive homicides are often associated with female offenders utilizing knives. The homicide victims in this category are both male and female. Fox and Allen (2014) acknowledge the limitations of their research and recommend inquiries that utilize individual level measures of motive.

Adjorlo and Chan (2017) argue that the instrumental/expressive dichotomy has a practical utility, beyond a scholarly one, in criminal investigations. Indeed, their review of previous literature finds that crime scene behaviors have been consistently classified into this dichotomy, although in some cases with subthemes. Crime scene behaviors that have been classified as expressive are those behaviors that serve no utilitarian purpose in committing the crime, such as excessive, different weapon usage, or post-mortem wounding to victims. In contrast, crime scene behaviors that are instrumental are attacking when victims are most vulnerable, displaying forensic awareness, or harming victims with the intent of achieving a specific goal-whether that goal is possession of resources, sexual gratification, or something else. While nuanced, these differences in instrumental and expressive motives envelop more than simply classifying as planned or unplanned events. Indeed, the instrumental-expressive motive may be best understood as a continuum, rather than a dichotomy. In a single homicide event, some offender behaviors can be identified that are arguably both instrumental and expressive, such as planning to rob the victim and an interpersonal exchange happening during the event that angers the offender and leads to overkill of the victim. The practical application of this in criminal investigation includes crime scene analysis and its derivatives, such as criminal investigative analysis and suspect prioritization (Adjorlo and Chan 2017). Now we will discuss the importance of shame and humiliation and how that relates to homicide motives.

Shame

To understand the importance of shame and humiliation, one must first comprehend how an individual is related to society. As explained by George Herbert Mead (1961), the individual (*the self*), is realized as a function of society - a product of society. “Selves can only exist in definite relationships to other selves. No hard-and-fast line can be drawn between our own selves and the selves of others, since our own selves exist and enter as such into our own experience only in so far as the selves of others exist and enter as such in our experiences also” (Mead 1961:168). The self cannot exist separately from the social world (Cooley, 1961).

In the development of *the self*, another Meadian concept, the *generalized other* is formed. The *generalized other* consists of recognition of collective concepts, symbols, group communication, and attributes shared by others in the community. This concept allows *the self* to have empathy and identify with others, even if that shared feeling is kept secret (e.g., cheering for vigilantes). This framework provides *the self* with internalized rules and societal expectations (Burns and Kick 2015; Mead 1961a; Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018).

As no individual is really a non-conformist, everyone cares on some level about the opinion of others, the *I and me* take shape (Burns and Kick 2015; Mead 1961b; Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018). For Mead, the *I* is the immediate individual response to others and is stressed for the purposes of novelty in social processes. It is where *the self's* most important values are, it contains the understanding of *the self*, and is evolutionarily important - modern societies have a greater *I* factor. The *me*, on the other hand, is the “organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes” (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018: 338).

“At the most general level, Mead uses the term *society* to mean the ongoing social process that precedes both the mind and the self. He draws on both evolutionary and Hegelian perspectives to give us “a picture of a society as a living process of formation and

transformation' (Cote, 2015:14)" (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018:339). *Society* is the guiding force of the individual, the *me* in the *I* and *me*. *Society* imparts the norms, the rules, the ability to develop self-control on the individual *self*. "The self, he insisted, could not be understood outside of its social context. In particular, he [Mead] was interested in the relationship between society, self, and social change" (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018:339).

Mead describes the processes by "which unique wholes develop out of the relationship between their parts" as *emergence*, noting that the whole (society) is "more than the sum of its parts" (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018: 340). *Society* consists of not only the individual interactions, but also the nascent consciousness from and through the social. Mead posits that through education, the "common habits" of the social institutions are internalized (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018: 340). Without this internalization of societal norms, "people neither have selves nor are genuine members of the community" (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018: 340). Again, this internalization guides and defines the *me* (Mead 1961a; Mead 1961b; Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018).

Charles Cooley termed the *looking glass self*, meaning "that people possess consciousness and that it is shaped in continuing social interaction" (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2018:201). The *looking glass self* has "three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification" (Cooley 1961:824). As one sees his image in the looking glass of others, he imagines how others view him, and if favorably, reacts with pride and pleasure. If, however, one imagines the other being displeased with his appearance (mannerisms, actions, etc.), then he is affected negatively, and feels mortified or disgust (Cooley 1961).

Individuals classify their attributes through this lens of their social worlds. Definitions on what it means to be masculine or feminine, be successful, expectations of prosocial conduct, beliefs, norms, etc. are social facts, located externally to the individual. Durkheim posits “social facts are to be treated as ‘things’ and they must be, initially, conceptualised and examined in terms of their ‘external’, observable properties, ... understood against this background...Social phenomena are not merely plastic creations of the will of the observer, but share the properties of physical objects in the sense that they exist independently of his observation of them” (Giddens, 1972, p. 31). Social facts include material and non-material facts and are “modes of human conduct which are enforced upon the individual member of a group in virtue of that membership” (Giddens, 1972, p. 33). While these social facts occur externally to the individual and a part of society, Durkheim hastens to point out that the properties are studied in consideration of the whole, much like different organs of the human body must be examined in association to one another (Giddens, 1972).

“A social fact is to be recognised by the power of external coercion which it exercises or is capable of exercising over individuals; and the presence of this power can be recognised in turn either by the existence of some definite sanction or by the resistance offered against every individual act that tends to contravene it. However, one can also define it in terms of its diffusion within the group, provided that, in following our previous remarks, one takes care to add as a second and essential characteristic that it exists independently of the individual forms it assumes in its diffusion.” (Giddens, 1972, p. 64).

Shame or humiliation is rooted in the concept of “the looking glass self” (Cooley 1961) and the juxtaposition of the Median self and society (Mead 1961a; Mead 1961b). “For shame to occur there must be an emotional relationship between the person and the ‘other’ such that the

person cares what the ‘other’ thinks or feels about the self” (Lewis 1976: 193). While humiliation is a deeply felt personal emotion, its process is located externally to the individual, in the relationship between the individual and his social world (Klein 1991).

The socially acceptable responses to shame and humiliation are gendered. Modern male individuation leads men particularly vulnerable to shame, especially when they fail to achieve the requisites of masculinity (Websdale 2010). “Shame can be such a powerful motivator for men...the shame of feeling powerless, inadequate or not ‘man enough’ according to discourses of hegemonic masculinity. To be shamed as a man is to feel ‘unmanned’— emasculated and humiliated, not to mention vulnerable and weak” (Blyth 2021: 63). How can this shame or humiliation lead to violence? Daly and Wilson (1988) note that “in most social milieus, a man’s reputation depends in part upon the maintenance of a credible threat of violence” (p.128).

Indeed, Websdale (2010) posited that the “humiliated fury” present in male-perpetrated intimate partner homicides and familicides stems from the perpetrators’ “failure to live up to the ideological imperatives...of hegemonic masculinities” (p. 395). Like murder in general, humiliated fury leading to murder is a “gendered process of individuation (that) happens consciously and subconsciously, creating modern men who increasingly value independence, autonomy, and competition as opposed to emotional connections and cooperation” (Websdale 2010: 415). Certainly, “the humiliation dynamic in our society is, for the most part, played out within a highly competitive win-lose context” (Klein 1991:104).

While most of the research on shame and humiliation focuses on homicides in an intimate or family context, Anderson’s (1999) *Code of the Streets* illustrates a similar concept as a motive for homicide – respect. In Philadelphia’s Black, inner city, impoverished neighborhoods, there are two orientations – “decent” and “street”. The decent values are mainstream, conventional

norms, whereas the street orientation has subcultural attitudes. These subcultural values include *definitions* that favor violence in resolving interpersonal conflict and revere respect (Anderson 1999).

In the “street” culture, definitions of using violence and obtaining money through unlawful means (theft, robbery, drug selling) as favorable is exemplified in music and movies. In the neighborhoods described by Anderson (1999), fraught with economic isolation and hardship as well as prejudice and discrimination, young Black men have a difficult time obtaining legitimate employment and commit crimes to “survive.” “By selling drugs, they have a chance to put more money into their pockets than they could get by legal means, and they can present themselves to peers as hip, in sharp contrast to the square image of those who work in places like McDonald’s and wear silly uniforms” (Anderson 1999:114). Children growing up in these neighborhoods see a dearth of individuals successful through legitimate routes and the notion of delayed gratification is not emphasized. Meanwhile, exposure to “street” families and the “code” encourages adopting definitions favorable to law violation for power, economic success, self-esteem, respect, etc. Under this code, respect is a zero-sum game – it is hard won and easily lost. In an area that is so materially deprived, respect is highly guarded through physical means if necessary, including losing one’s life (Anderson 1999). I argue that this extreme emphasis on respect, and the threat of losing respect as an impetus for fatal violence, is the same concept as the presence of shame or humiliation. Websdale (2010) draws a similar parallel. Next, we discuss the demographics of offenders and victims and victim-offender relationships in homicide research.

Victim and Offender Demographics and Victim-Offender Relationship

As far back as Wolfgang's 1958 homicide research, it has been noted that the relationship between the victim and offender is central to homicide investigations, motives, and research. Homicides are predominantly intrasexual and intraracial events. The majority of homicide victims and offenders are males. For example, of the 11,341 total homicides committed in the United States in 2003, only 1,123 are known female-perpetrated homicides (Swatt & He 2006). Similarly, in 2023, there were 14,327 male homicide offenders, compared to 1,898 female homicide offenders (Statista n.d.). Such gender disparity in particularly violent criminality is well-known and well-documented. However, the disproportionate gender perpetration is significantly less in intimate partner homicides (IPH) (Swatt & He 2006). In IPH cases from 1976 to 2005, females accounted for 34.5 percent of offenders. This contrasts sharply with females accounting for 11.2 percent of offenders for all homicides during that same time (Fox & Zawitz 2007). A similar pattern emerges in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) data where 90% of homicide victims are male (Frankenfeld & Leslie 2021).

From 1976 to 2002, 86% of White homicide victims were killed by White offenders. For Black victims, 94% were killed by Black offenders (Fox & Zawitz 2004). Utilizing NVDRS data from 2005 to 2015, Frankenfeld and Leslie (2021) classified more than 51,000 homicides as concordant (same race/ethnicity), discordant (different race/ethnicity), or unknown. Unfortunately, in many cases there was unknown race/ethnicity information (32 to 45% across race/ethnicity categories), but aside from unknown, homicides were generally race/ethnicity-concordant (46.4%) rather than discordant (13.1%). They posited that changes in cross-racial violence in more recent years closely follows changes over time in peer groups and close relationships. Interestingly, there were differences based on the victim-offender relationship and/or motive of the homicide. For example, discordance was more likely in justifiable self-

defense homicides by private citizens. Discordance was “less likely to occur in intimate partner violence-related homicides; less likely when the homicide was preceded by an argument over money or property; less likely when the homicide was associated with a family problem; more likely among rival gangs and strangers than other known person relationships; and more likely with drug-involved homicides” (Frankenfeld & Leslie 2021:9707).

In contrast to the general homicide research, females were more likely to be victims of IPH compared to males (Cooper & Smith 2011). For both male and female victims of IPH, the homicide is most often precipitated by abuse from the male towards the female (Swatt & He 2006). Unlike in general violent crime or other homicides, the gap between male and female offenders of IPH is much closer, at a ratio of six (females) to ten (males) (Swatt & He 2006). Further, this research continues to highlight the intersectionality of race and sex. Not only are females more likely to be the victim, but Black females are the highest category among other race/sex categories (Petrosky, Blair, Betz, Fowler, Jack, & Lyons 2017).

However, there are not always differences between general homicide and IPH. Like general homicide, Blacks report higher rates of IPH compared to Whites (Field & Caetano 2004). Further connecting to general homicide, racial analysis of IPH concludes that racial minorities are more likely to be both the perpetrator and the victim (Field & Caetano 2004).

Beyond the relationship between offender sex and race/ethnicity and victim sex and race/ethnicity, there are studied differences in the relationship type between the victim and offender. The relationship between the victim and offender “is a significant and often best predictor of homicide case clearance” (Quinet and Nunn 2014: 275). From the years 1980 to 2010, for homicides with known victims and offenders, around 22% were in a familial relationship, 56% were acquaintances, and the remaining 22% were strangers (Quinet & Nunn

2014). Indeed, many homicide researchers have examined this relationship as it relates to homicide motives, weapon usage, location, context, and other factors.

Drawdy and Myers (2004) classified victim-offender relationships into two categories- primary, which included intimates, relatives, and friends; and secondary, which included acquaintances and strangers. They utilized four motive categories (romantic dispute, argument/conflict, revenge, and felony type) and found a significant correlation between victim-offender relationship and motive, noting the potential inherent bias between primary relationships and romantic disputes, and subsequently subsuming romantic disputes into argument/conflicts. They did not find any correlation between victim-offender relationship and weapon choice (firearm, contact, combination), a result that was surprising, but perhaps due to small sample size or offender being unknown (Drawdy & Myers 2004).

As already noted, U.S. researchers have focused on victim-offender relationships, often using the UCR SHR as a dataset. However, the centrality of victim-offender relationship is consistent worldwide. In more than half of Victoria, Canada homicides, the victim-offender relationship was one of intimacy or primacy (e.g.: sexual intimates, friends, family) and more than one in five were acquaintances engaged in honor contests (Polk 1993). Additionally, in England and Wales, 37% of all femicides were perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner (Aldridge & Browne 2003). Finally, we turn to the research on weapon usage in homicides.

Weapon Choice

Firearms are used in around 70% of all homicides (citation). Arguably firearm deaths are more than double all other types combined *because* of the lethality of guns. Indeed, a study in Chicago in 1969 found that firearms assaults were five times as lethal as knife assaults, even

though knives are the second most lethal weapons. However, the United States is also fairly violent, *and* firearms are readily accessible. “When viewed in the light of the concept of contributing causation, the United States has both a violence problem and a gun problem, and each makes the other more deadly” (Zimring 2004: 36). Beyond just firearms, how are weapons used in homicides?

Allen and Fox (2013) analyzed single-offender/single-victim homicides, where the offender and victim were married, from 1980 to 2006. In that study, using data from the UCR SHR data, weapons used in the homicide were collapsed to seven categories: handgun, long gun, knife, blunt object, strangulation, other weapon, and no weapon. They found older husband victims were overrepresented in being killed with handguns, while younger husband victims were more often killed with knives. Younger wives were overrepresented for strangulation and no weapons used in the homicide while older wives were killed more by long guns, blunt objects, and other weapons (Allen & Fox 2013).

Utilizing 25 years of SHR data, Mize, Shackleford, and Weekes-Shackleford (2011) found that in the majority of IPH of women, firearms were used (71.2%) followed by knives or other sharp/cutting instruments (12.9%). Interestingly, they also found that there was a higher percentage (14.7%) of reproductive age women killed by stabbing than older women (8.7%). In additional analyses, they found that hands-on killing methods, such as stabbing, blunt force, personal weapons, strangulation, drowning, and asphyxiation were used in 27.6% of IPH with reproductive age women (Mize, Shackleford, and Weekes-Shackleford 2011).

While men and women both are more likely to be killed by firearms, both are more likely to be killed by male offenders and men are more likely to be killed outside or in a public place,

while women are more likely to be killed at home (Sorenson 2006). As noted throughout, the research on victim-offender relationship and weapon choice are often inextricably intertwined.

Current Study

This research examines homicides in Tulsa, Oklahoma, ultimately through the lens of shame and humiliation as a motive. If shame and humiliation are significant predictors of certain homicide types, then key inferences can be drawn that will lend to important policy recommendations regarding education and prevention. Chapter 2 expounds on the dataset and methods used for this study.

This study adds to the existing literature in three important, distinct ways: Firstly, criminology researchers often rely on variable classifications that are initially made by law enforcement professionals into Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) or National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) reporting. There may be strengths in that –the officials have access to more information, which could lead to more comprehensive and informed coding decisions; however, definitions should be empirically assessed to ensure variable coding is reliably occurring. Having accurate, reliable coding decisions is foundational for any subsequent analyses. Additionally, as part of this study, I have operationalized and defined the concept of shame as a novel variable. With these considerations in mind, an inter-rater agreement study is the critical first step, prior to conducting any analyses on the data.

In Chapter 3 of this study, I conduct an inter-rater agreement study to test the agreement of coding decisions made, using an approach common to social science research – rating decisions made by graduate students. The inter-rater reliability study includes a two-study structure, which utilized feedback from the initial group of raters to inform definition and

training changes. After individually assessing cases, the second group of raters reached consensus on the coding decisions, and I used those coded cases in the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5.

Secondly, previous research has identified the relationship between the victim and offender as the key predictor of instrumental vs. expressive homicides. In Chapter 4, I test this using the Tulsa homicide data. Additional analyses of these data include the role of victim and offender demographics and weapon choice in predicting instrumental vs. expressive homicides, net of the victim-offender relationship. These findings answer the call made by previous researchers in examining homicides at the case level and defining instrumental/expressive as an independent variable. They also add to the growing body of research into victim and offender demographics and weapon choice in homicides.

Finally, I utilize the novel variable *shame* and examine its role in homicides. In Chapter 5, there are two sets of analyses, including shame as the key predictor of instrumental vs. expressive homicides and shame as the key predictor of homicide circumstances type. In this chapter, I also explore victim and offender demographics and weapon choice as they relate to both instrumental vs. expressive homicides and homicide circumstances, net of the role of shame.

In operationalizing and defining shame in this manner, I have brought together Anderson's (1999) "respect" and Websdale's (2010) "humiliated fury" in a manner that allows for the examination of the role of shame in different contexts and in different victim-offender relationship types. This novel theoretical approach, and the findings that shame is indeed an important predictor of expressive homicides and homicides arising from an interpersonal conflict are a significant contribution to extant homicide motive research and open the door for future

researchers to conduct both qualitative research teasing out the particulars of shame in different contexts and relationships, and quantitative research empirically assessing this concept in larger, more representative samples.

In Chapter 6, I conclude with a discussion on policy recommendations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO. METHODS

Data

Data for this study come from the Tulsa, Oklahoma Police Department (TPD). Tulsa is the second largest city in Oklahoma and has a population of 413,066, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. Females accounted for 51.2% of the population. More than half of the population (53.2%) identified as White alone, 14.8% as Black alone, and 17.1% as Hispanic or Latino. Two or more races (10.5%), Asian alone (3.5%), American Indian or Alaskan Native alone (4.5%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone (0.2%) were the remainder of the population. Eighteen percent of individuals lived below the poverty line (United States Census Bureau n.d.).

From 2010 to 2022, Tulsa ranged from a low of 46 homicides (2012), to a high of 83 homicides (2018), with an average of nearly 65 homicides per year (Killman 2023). This average equals a homicide rate of approximately 15.7 per 100,000 residents. According to the Centers for Disease Control (n.d.), in 2020, Oklahoma had a homicide rate of 9 per 100,000 residents, compared to 7.8 for the entire United States.

TPD is the second largest police department in Oklahoma, behind the Oklahoma City Police Department. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol has the third highest number of sworn officers in the state. TPD is the primary law enforcement agency for the City of Tulsa, providing patrol, investigative, 911 services, and laboratory examinations. For fiscal year 2021, TPD had 943 sworn police officers. This equates to around one police officer for every 438 residents.

TPD investigates homicides occurring in their city limits and has a dedicated Homicide Division. Cases in this study include solved homicide cases only, as the motive can only be

ascertained in such cases. From 2010 to 2021, there were 619 solved TPD homicide cases. Each case included a brief synopsis of the facts of the case. The synopsis was written by the investigating detective and contained a very brief summary (generally two to four sentences) of the case. Homicide investigations regularly include hundreds of pages of documents and gigabytes or even terabytes of digital information. The case synopses and additional information about the homicide cases were obtained by researchers at the Oklahoma State University, Tulsa Campus Motives Lab for the purposes of other research projects. Additional case information was provided directly from TPD in a spreadsheet and included the date of the homicide, demographic information about the victim and offender, the type of weapon used/injury received, and the homicide type assigned by TPD (e.g. altercation, robbery, gang, officer-involved shooting, etc.). I submitted additional variables for coding, including Homicide Circumstance, Instrumental/Expressive, Victim-Offender Relationship, and the presence of Shame/Humiliation. The four variables were coded by two groups of graduate student raters, discussed in more detail below and in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, two IRA studies were conducted, after the initial study demonstrated the need for additional training and clarification. In the first study, there were 563 closed homicide cases from 2010 to 2021. The number of cases that the raters assessed were determined by the researchers at the Oklahoma State University, Tulsa Campus Motives Lab as part of their larger research study. They had the additional complication of obtaining case information from TPD and in some instances, ran into administrative issues that caused case information to be unavailable at the time of the study. Each case in this dataset was rated by four raters who used the definitions for the four variables for rating decisions (see Appendix A). Rating decisions were made independently and at the end of the rating period, there was not a discussion to

resolve any discrepancies. At the conclusion of the rating period, feedback was obtained from some of the coders (e.g.: instructions on if there was more than one offender or more than one victim, definition of “justifiable”), that resulted in additional clarification added into the definitions for use by the second group.

For the second IRA study, there were 262 closed homicide cases that were coded in the same manner and under the same conditions (see Appendix B). The 262 cases were a subset of the 563 cases coded during the first IRA study. They were chosen by researchers at the Oklahoma State University, Tulsa Campus Motives Lab as they were the older cases (2010 to 2015) of the dataset and contained other variables that had already been coded. At the end of the rating period, consensus was reached to resolve any discrepancies and provide a final coding decision for each of the four variables.

TPD also provided demographic information on the victims and offenders in the homicides, as well as their own homicide circumstance type (i.e.: altercation, domestic, drugs, officer-involved shooting, etc.), and weapon used. This information, along with the four variables coded by the students, was used to develop one dataset. Cases with missing information, except as outlined in the imputation strategy, were listwise deleted, with six cases removed. The resulting analytical dataset for the analyses conducted in Chapters 4 and 5 included 256 solved homicides from 2010 to 2015 with non-missing data, after utilizing the imputation strategy outlined below. This study was exempt from IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval.

Variables

Student-Coded Variables

Homicide Circumstance. The first coding decision was the initial classification of the homicide circumstance. Consistent with state and national classification of homicides, I am using the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) categories. In 2021, NIBRS replaced the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) as the method for collecting information on homicide events in the United States. NIBRS has 17 categories for their “Circumstances” variable, which describe the motive for the different types of felony, negligent manslaughter, and justifiable homicides. I condensed the 17 categories to the following 8, with the original categories in parentheses:

1. Argument (Argument)
2. Lovers Quarrel/Domestic Violence (Lovers Quarrel/Domestic Violence)
3. Drug-Related (Drug Dealing)
4. Gang-Related (Gangland, Juvenile Gang)
5. Accidental/Negligence (Other Negligent Killings, Other Negligent Weapon Handling, Child Playing with Weapon, Gun-Cleaning Accident, Hunting Accident)
6. Justifiable (Criminal Killed by Private Citizen, Criminal Killed by Police Officer)
7. Other (Other Circumstances, Other Felony Involved, Assault on Law Enforcement Officer(s), Mercy Killing)
8. Unknown (Unknown Circumstances)

For overall instructions for the first group of coders, students were instructed that if there was more than one motive for the initial classification of the homicide, the single description that best captured the primary motive should be selected. In the second group of coders, they received the additional instructions that the determination of motive is based on the perpetrator of the homicide (i.e.: the killer), regardless of whether the homicide results in criminal charges.

And, in the event of more than one perpetrator and/or more than one victim, the motive classification is based on the motivation between the primary offender and the primary victim.

All coders had Arguments defined as quarrels or altercations between individuals not in a domestic or family relationship, as defined. Domestic or family relationship was defined as “a current or former spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim; a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; a person who is cohabiting with or has cohabited with the victim as a spouse, parent, or guardian; or by a person who is or has been similarly situated to a spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim” (NIBRS User Manual 2023: 123).

Both groups of coders were instructed that Drug-related is defined as being primarily related to the sale or purchase of drugs. An example from the NIBRS User Manual (2023) was also provided: “Two juvenile street gangs fought over ‘turf rights’ to see drugs and a member of one gang killed a member of the other gang.” (p. 123). Students were instructed that while argument, drug dealing, and gang-related are all appropriate selections, drug dealing is the most descriptive value for this incident.

Students in both coding groups were told Gang-related is defined “for NIBRS reporting purposes, a gang is an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons who have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct” (NIBRS User Manual 2023: 92).

Students in the first coding group received no instruction on the category Justifiable. In the second coding group, students were instructed that this was defined as a case where the homicide victim is committing a criminal act and is killed by a perpetrator (citizen or law

enforcement officer) in a legally justifiable manner, that is no criminal charges will be filed against the perpetrator; examples include self-defense, defense of others, etc.

For the analysis in Chapter 6, I collapsed the categories to Argument/Domestic Violence (1); Drug- or Gang-Related (2); Accident, Negligence, or Justifiable Homicide (3); Other Criminal Circumstances (4); and Unknown (5). Nearly 35% of the cases (n=89) were classified as Argument/Domestic Violence, followed by Accident, Negligence, or Justifiable Homicide (n=60, 23.4%), Unknown (n=40, 15.6%), Other Criminal Circumstances (n=37, 14.5%), and finally Drug- or Gang-Related (n=30, 11.7%).

Instrumental/Expressive Classification of Homicides. The second coding decision is the classification of the homicide motive as Instrumental or Expressive, utilizing the same classification scheme as numerous researchers (Block and Zimring 1973; Berkowitz 1986; Riedel 1987; Block and Block 1992; Decker 1996). This classification examines the primary motive of the homicide, recognizing that homicides are complex events and both instrumental and expressive motives may be present in varying degrees. Instrumental motives “include a mechanism designed to gain an advantage for the offender over the victim” (Decker 1996: 431). Instrumental motives often include financial gain but may also include self-defense. Expressive motives “are found in violent events where ‘hostile’ or ‘angry’ aggression is the primary goal. That is, the primary goal of expressive violence is to inflict injury or create ‘dread’ (Katz 1988) independent of instrumental gain” (Decker 1996: 431).

Students in both coding groups were instructed that the primary motivation of instrumental motives “include a mechanism designed to gain an advantage for the offender over the victim” (Decker 1996: 431). Instrumental motives often include financial gain but may also include self-defense. Expressive motives were defined for them as “found in violent events

where ‘hostile’ or ‘angry’ aggression is the primary goal. That is, the primary goal of expressive violence is to inflict injury or create ‘dread’ (Katz 1988) independent of instrumental gain” (Decker 1996: 431). Just over half of the homicides (n=131, 51.2%) were classified as Instrumental.

Shame/Humiliation. Coding for the presence of shame or humiliation is a No (0)/Yes (1) dichotomy. Student coders were instructed the following constitute circumstances indicative of the presence of shame or humiliation: being devalued or excluded, threats to personal identity and sense of self (loss of face), contempt or ridicule from others, and feeling lowly or powerless because of the actions of another in a greater power position. Even if the shameful or humiliating event is not known to anyone else at the time of the homicide, fear of discovery and fear of humiliation is a powerful motivator too (Klein 1991). Therefore, the presence of any shameful or humiliating events (“experienced by the perpetrator” added here for the second group of coders) should be coded as a Yes response. Shame was identified in 11 (4.3%) cases.

Victim-Offender Relationship. Consistent with prior research (Decker 1996) the coding for the relationship between the victim and offender consists of four categories: 1. Primary relationships; 2. Secondary relationships; 3. Strangers; and 4. Unknown (note: Unknown is an added category for this research, Decker’s 1996 research only included the first three categories). The primary relationships category includes family members, current or former romantic or intimate partners, and friends. Acquaintances are in the secondary relationships category. Student coders were instructed that Acquaintances are distinguished from friends as friends have “a mutually reinforcing relationship of a positive nature that had endured for an extended period of time...Friends were often distinguished from acquaintances by the frequency of their interaction and also by the extent to which they engaged in supportive acts, such as providing

transportation, loaning small amounts of money, and doing things (crime, attending social events, meals) together” (Decker 1996: 432). Most victims and offenders were known to each other and in a Primary relationship in 27.3% (n=70) of the cases or in a Secondary relationship 25.8% (n=66) of the cases. The relationship between the victim and offender was Unknown in 11.7% of cases (n=30). Strangers were designated as the reference category.

Additional Coding Instructions

Race, sex, age, and weapon use are all key variables that were coded as part of the larger data coding/studies taking place. To ensure that none of those variables affect the coding decisions for the classification of homicides (both types) and the coding of the presence of shame/humiliation, coders considered the homicide event synopsis separate from the demographic and other variables present in the reports. This instruction was to theoretically reduce the introduction of bias into coding decisions (e.g., age and race of offender leading to assumptions about gang involvement, sex of victim leading to assumptions about domestic violence, etc.).

Additional Variables

The additional variables were received directly from TPD in a spreadsheet and coded as described below for this study.

Victim’s sex. Homicide victims were coded as Males (0) and Females (1). In 200 cases (78.1%), the victim was male.

Victim’s race/ethnicity. Homicide victims were classified as White (0), Black (1), and Other (2). The Other category included victims originally classified as Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian. Most victims were Black (n=121, 47.3%), followed by White (n=104, 40.6%).

Victim's age. Age was collapsed into the reference category of 24 and Under (n=88, 33.4%), and additional categories of 25 to 35 (n=83, 32.4%), and 36+ (n=85, 33.2%).

Offender's sex. Homicide offenders were coded as Males (0) and Females (1). In the large majority of cases (n=227, 88.7%), the offender was male.

Offender's race/ethnicity. Homicide offenders were classified as White (0), Black (1), and Other (2). The Other category included victims originally classified as Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian. Most offenders were Black (n=143, 55.9%), followed by White (n=88, 34.4%).

Offender's age. Age was collapsed into the reference category of 24 and Under (n=112, 43.8%), and additional categories of 25 to 35 (n=83, 32.4%), and 36+ (n=61, 23.8%).

Weapon. The weapon used in the homicide was collapsed into categories Firearm (0), which included gunshot wounds; Blunt Force/Strangulation (1), which included blunt force trauma, pipe, hammer, vehicle, and strangulation; Sharp Force (2), which included edged weapons; and Other/Unknown (3), which included fire, asphyxia, carbon monoxide, drowning, other trauma, and unknown. More than three-quarters of homicide cases were committed with a Firearm (n=193, 75.4%), followed by Blunt Force/Strangulation (n=28, 10.9%), Sharp Force (n=24, 9.4%), and Other/Unknown (n=11, 4.3%).

For the analyses in Chapter 5, I created two variables that combined the victim's race/ethnicity and sex and the offender's race/ethnicity and sex.

Victim's race/ethnicity and sex. White males were coded 1, White females 2, Black males 3, Black females 4, Other Race males 5, and Other Race females 6. Black males comprised the

largest group of homicide victims (n=104, 40.6%), followed by White males (n=73, 28.5%). Other Race females were the smallest group of homicide victims (n=8, 3.1%).

Offender's race/ethnicity and sex. White males were coded 1, White females 2, Black males 3, Black females 4, Other Race males 5, and Other Race females 6. Like the composition of homicide victims, Black males were the largest group of offenders (n=126, 49.2%), followed by White males (n=77, 30.1%). Other Race females were also the smallest group of offenders, with only one in the dataset.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables in the complete analytical dataset (N=256).

[Table 1 about here]

Missing Data

Missing data threatens internal validity by reducing sample size, and therefore statistical power, and/or by biasing results and subsequent conclusions. Statistically, missing data would need to be analyzed to determine if it is ignorable or nonignorable. Allison (2002) defines nonignorable data as data that are neither missing completely at random (MCAR) nor missing at random (MAR). There were six cases that had data that appeared to be MCAR or MAR, and were handled through listwise deletion, as previously described. However, there were 21 cases with missing data that were not MCAR nor MAR. Five of those cases were missing data for the offender race and sex. All 21 cases were missing data for the offender's age. Since the data were not MCAR nor MAR, an imputation strategy was used.

In the cases with missing data for offender's race and sex, four of those cases were identified by TPD as officer-involved shootings and the officer was identified as the offender or

perpetrator of the homicide. According to the Killman (2016), from 2007 to 2016, 90% of TPD officer-involved shootings involved male officers, and 77% of the cases involved White officers, with the remaining 23% involving officers of another race or bi-racial. Based on this information, all four cases were assigned as males, three were assigned as White, and one was assigned as Other race. The remaining case was identified as self-defense. Through open sources, the offender was identified as an off-duty police officer from another jurisdiction. This case was also assigned as a White Male.

For cases missing offender's age, 20 of the cases were identified by TPD as officer-involved shootings (with the officer identified as the offender or perpetrator of the homicide), and the remaining case was the aforementioned off-duty police officer self-defense case. Killman (2016) identified that on average, officers involved in the officer-involved shooting events had been on the force for ten years. In another study, the mean age of officers involved in officer-involved shootings was 37.1 (SD=8.6) (Smith, Ferguson, Henderson, & Bourgeois 2023). Considering this information, one of the officer-involved shooting cases offender age was input at 24 & Under, nine at age 25 to 35, and ten at age 36+. The off-duty officer self-defense case was assigned offender age 36+.

Appendix A: IRA Study Coding Table

Variable	Categories
Homicide-Initial¹	Argument²
	Lovers Quarrel/Domestic Violence³
	Drug-related⁴
	Gang-related⁵
	Accidental/negligence -negligent weapon handling, child playing with weapon, hunting accident, other negligent killing
	Justifiable -criminal killed by private citizen or police officer
	Other -other circumstances, other felony crime involved, assault on law enforcement officers, mercy killing
	Unknown
Homicide-I/E	Instrumental⁶
	Expressive⁷

¹ While there may be more than one motive for the initial classification of the homicide, the single description that best captures the primary motive should be selected.

² Quarrel or altercation between individuals not in a domestic or family relationship as defined below.

³ A Domestic and Family Violence relationship is defined as “a current or former spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim; a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; a person who is cohabiting with or has cohabited with the victim as a spouse, parent, or guardian; or by a person who is or has been similarly situated to a spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim” (NIBRS User Manual 2023: 123).

⁴ Primarily related to the sale or purchase of drugs. Example in NIBRS User Manual (2023): “Two juvenile street gangs fought over ‘turf rights’ to see drugs and a member of one gang killed a member of the other gang.” (p. 123). While argument, drug dealing, and gang-related are all appropriate selections, drug dealing is the most descriptive value for this incident.

⁵ “For NIBRS reporting purposes, a gang is an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons who have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct” (NIBRS User Manual 2023: 92).

⁶ Primary motivation of instrumental motives “include a mechanism designed to gain an advantage for the offender over the victim” (Decker 1996: 431). Instrumental motives often include financial gain but may also include self-defense.

⁷ Expressive motives “are found in violent events where ‘hostile’ or ‘angry’ aggression is the primary goal. That is, the primary goal of expressive violence is to inflict injury or create ‘dread’ (Katz 1988) independent of instrumental gain” (Decker 1996: 431).

Shame/Humiliation	Yes ⁸
	No- does not include the circumstances specified above
Victim-Offender Relationship	Primary- family members, current or former romantic or intimate partners, and friends
	Secondary- acquaintances ⁹
	Strangers- someone unknown to the victim
	Unknown

⁸ The following constitute circumstances indicative of the presence of shame or humiliation: being devalued or excluded, threats to personal identity and sense of self (loss of face), contempt or ridicule from others, and feeling lowly or powerless because of the actions of another in a greater power position. Even if the shameful or humiliating event is not known to anyone else at the time of the homicide, fear of discovery and fear of humiliation is a powerful motivator too (Klein 1991). Therefore, the presence of any shameful or humiliating events should be coded as a Yes response.

⁹ Acquaintances are distinguished from friends as friends have “a mutually reinforcing relationship of a positive nature that had endured for an extended period of time...Friends were often distinguished from acquaintances by the frequency of their interaction and also by the extent to which they engaged in supportive acts, such as providing transportation, loaning small amounts of money, and doing things (crime, attending social events, meals) together” (Decker 1996: 432).

Appendix B: IRA Study Coding Table (revised)

Variable	Categories
Homicide-Initial¹⁰	Argument¹¹
	Lovers Quarrel/Domestic Violence¹²
	Drug-related¹³
	Gang-related¹⁴
	Accidental/negligence- negligent weapon handling, child playing with weapon, hunting accident, other negligent killing
	Justifiable¹⁵
	Other- other circumstances, other felony crime involved, assault on law enforcement officers, mercy killing
	Unknown- circumstances are unknown

¹⁰ While there may be more than one motive for the initial classification of the homicide, the single description that best captures the primary motive should be selected. The determination of motive is based on the perpetrator of the homicide (i.e.: the killer), regardless of whether the homicide results in criminal charges. In the event of more than one perpetrator and/or more than one victim, the motive classification is based on the motivation between the primary offender and the primary victim.

¹¹ Quarrel or altercation between individuals not in a domestic or family relationship as defined below.

¹² A Domestic and Family Violence relationship is defined as “a current or former spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim; a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; a person who is cohabiting with or has cohabited with the victim as a spouse, parent, or guardian; or by a person who is or has been similarly situated to a spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim” (NIBRS User Manual 2023: 123).

¹³ Primarily related to the sale or purchase of drugs. Example in NIBRS User Manual (2023): “Two juvenile street gangs fought over ‘turf rights’ to see drugs and a member of one gang killed a member of the other gang.” (p. 123). While argument, drug dealing, and gang-related are all appropriate selections, drug dealing is the most descriptive value for this incident.

¹⁴ “For NIBRS reporting purposes, a gang is an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons who have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct” (NIBRS User Manual 2023: 92).

¹⁵ Homicide victim is committing a criminal act and is killed by a perpetrator (citizen or law enforcement officer) in a legally justifiable manner, that is no criminal charges will be filed against the perpetrator. Examples include self-defense, defense of others, etc.

Homicide-I/E	Instrumental ¹⁶
	Expressive ¹⁷
Shame/Humiliation	Yes ¹⁸
	No- does not include the circumstances specified above
Victim-Offender Relationship	Primary- family members, current or former romantic or intimate partners, and friends
	Secondary- acquaintances ¹⁹
	Strangers- someone unknown to the victim
	Unknown

¹⁶ Primary motivation of instrumental motives “include a mechanism designed to gain an advantage for the offender over the victim” (Decker 1996: 431). Instrumental motives often include financial gain but may also include self-defense. The determination of motive is based on the perpetrator of the homicide (i.e.: the killer), regardless of whether the homicide results in criminal charges. In the event of more than one perpetrator and/or more than one victim, the motive classification is based on the motivation between the primary offender and the primary victim.

¹⁷ Expressive motives “are found in violent events where ‘hostile’ or ‘angry’ aggression is the primary goal. That is, the primary goal of expressive violence is to inflict injury or create ‘dread’ (Katz 1988) independent of instrumental gain” (Decker 1996: 431). The determination of motive is based on the perpetrator of the homicide (i.e.: the killer), regardless of whether the homicide results in criminal charges. In the event of more than one perpetrator and/or more than one victim, the motive classification is based on the motivation between the primary offender and the primary victim.

¹⁸ The following constitute circumstances indicative of the presence of shame or humiliation: being devalued or excluded, threats to personal identity and sense of self (loss of face), contempt or ridicule from others, and feeling lowly or powerless because of the actions of another in a greater power position. Even if the shameful or humiliating event is not known to anyone else at the time of the homicide, fear of discovery and fear of humiliation is a powerful motivator too (Klein 1991). Therefore, the presence of any shameful or humiliating events experienced by the perpetrator should be coded as a Yes response.

¹⁹ Acquaintances are distinguished from friends as friends have “a mutually reinforcing relationship of a positive nature that had endured for an extended period of time...Friends were often distinguished from acquaintances by the frequency of their interaction and also by the extent to which they engaged in supportive acts, such as providing transportation, loaning small amounts of money, and doing things (crime, attending social events, meals) together” (Decker 1996: 432).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	N	Percent
Shame Present		
No	245	95.7
Yes	11	4.3
Homicide Type		
Instrumental	131	51.2
Expressive	125	48.8
Homicide Circumstances		
Argument/Domestic Violence	89	34.8
Drug- or Gang-Related	30	11.7
Accident, Negligence, or Justifiable	60	23.4
Other Criminal Circumstances	37	14.5
Unknown	40	15.6
Victim-Offender Relationship		
Primary	70	27.3
Secondary	66	25.8
Strangers	90	35.2
Unknown	30	11.7
Victim's Sex		
Male	200	78.1
Female	56	21.9
Victim's Race/Ethnicity		
White	104	40.6
Black	121	47.3
Other	31	12.1
Victim's Race/Ethnicity & Sex		
White Male	73	28.5
White Female	31	12.1
Black Male	104	40.6
Black Female	17	6.6
Other Race Male	23	9.0
Other Race Female	8	3.1
Victim's Age		
24 & Under	88	34.4
25 to 35	83	32.4
36+	85	33.2
Offender's Sex		
Male	227	88.7
Female	29	11.3
Offender's Race/Ethnicity		
White	88	34.4

Black	143	55.9
Other	25	9.8
Offender's Race/Ethnicity & Sex		
White Male	77	30.0
White Female	11	4.3
Black Male	126	49.2
Black Female	17	6.6
Other Race Male	24	9.3
Other Race Female	1	0.4
Offender's Age		
24 & Under	112	43.8
25 to 35	83	32.4
36+	61	23.8
Weapon		
Firearm	193	75.4
Blunt Force/Strangulation	28	10.9
Sharp Force	24	9.4
Other/Unknown	11	4.3

N=256

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

CHAPTER THREE. HOMICIDE DATA CLASSIFICATION: AN INTER-RATER AGREEMENT STUDY

Homicides are complex events with numerous variables and contextual factors, such as motive, that are arguably open to interpretation. As such, prior to analyzing any data to explicate research hypotheses, the first step is determining whether homicide events can be reliably classified. An inter-rater agreement (IRA) study was utilized for this assessment. The IRA study included the initial classification of the homicide, the binary instrumental/expressive dichotomy assignment for the homicide motive, the presence of shame/humiliation, and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator of the homicide.

While the terms inter-rater reliability (IRR) and inter-rater agreement (IRA) are often used interchangeably in the social sciences, there is a methodological distinction between the terms reliability and agreement. In the technical sense, IRR studies examine “the extent to which raters can consistently distinguish different items on a measurement scale...In contrast IRA is the degree to which two or more evaluators using the same scale assign the same rating to an identical observable situation” (Shweta, Bajpai, and Chaturvedi 2015: 20). As such, this study is more appropriately identified as an IRA study.

Methods

Data

Two IRA studies were conducted, with the first containing 563 cases and the second containing 262 cases. For both studies, there were four raters on each homicide case, coding for the four aforementioned variables. The coders assessed the cases individually.

Analytical Strategy

Commonly, Cohen's Kappa is utilized as the agreement coefficient (AC) to measure agreement between two raters, correcting for chance. For three or more raters, researchers generally use Fleiss's generalization of Scott's pi, described in statistical software as Scott/Fleiss' Kappa, to estimate chance-corrected agreement. All of these methods, including an alternate method called Krippendorff's Alpha, utilize marginal distributions to calculate chance agreement. Researchers have noted that paradoxes with these methods, especially in the case of Cohen's Kappa, can result in instances of high percentage of rater agreement, yet a Cohen's Kappa value that indicates agreement that is worse than expected by chance alone (Wongkapanan, Wongkapanan, Wedding, and Gwet 2013; Klein 2018). "Kappa is sensitive to the bias between raters and the overall prevalence of responses" (Shweta, Bajpai, and Chaturvedi 2015: 22).

However, Gwet's AC- accounts for the number of rating categories, instead of relying on just marginal distributions. Gwet's AC1 allows for any number of raters using categories. Gwet's AC2 allows for any number of raters using ordered categories (Blood & Spratt 2007). Gwet's AC1 is a "'first-order agreement coefficient' which adjusts the overall probability based on the chance that raters may agree on a rating, despite the fact that one or all of them may have given a random value" (Wongpakaran, Wongpakaran, Wedding, and Gwet 2013: 62). Indeed, Wongpakaran, et. al. (2013) found Gwet's AC1 to be a more stable alternative to Cohen's Kappa coefficient, resistant to the paradoxes of Kappa, and affected less by marginal probabilities and prevalence problems.

Traditionally, researchers have used a model-based approach to determining statistical inference for ACs. For example, Kappa values are commonly interpreted through three simplified categories: 0.75 or greater is Excellent, 0.40 to 0.75 is Fair to Good, and 0.40 or below

is Poor (Shweta, Bajpai, and Chaturvedi 2015). Gwet elucidates a “fundamental flaw” in this approach, as ACs are point estimates and therefore would be best interpreted through benchmarking that was probabilistic, rather than deterministic, in nature (Klein 2018: 880). “As an alternative, he proposes a statistical approach that consists of the following three steps: 1. Compute the probability for a coefficient to fall into each of the benchmark intervals. 2. Compute the cumulative probability, starting from the highest benchmark level. 3. Select the first benchmark interval for which the cumulative probability exceeds a given threshold (95% by convention).” (Klein 2018: 880).

Data for this study were analyzed using Stata/SE version 18.0 statistical analysis package. The command *kappaetc* was used to evaluate interrater agreement, along with option *benchmark showscale* to calculate and display the probabilistic benchmark interval as well as the benchmark scale. The *kappaetc* command estimates the following ACs: percent agreement, Brennan and Prediger, Cohen/Conger’s Kappa, Scott/Fleiss’ Kappa, Gwet’s AC, and Krippendorff’s Alpha, including their standard errors and confidence intervals. Stata utilizes the benchmark scale developed by Landis and Koch in 1977, where <0.00 is Poor, 0.00 to 0.20 is Slight, 0.21 to .40 is Fair, 0.41 to 0.60 is Moderate, 0.61 to 0.80 is Substantial, and 0.81 to 1.00 is Almost Perfect (Klein 2018). However, in Stata output, the scale ranges do not include the .01 (e.g.: .21 to .40 is .20 to .40 in Stata). Percent agreement and the Gwet ACI are the primary statistics of this study. However, Scott/Fleiss’ Kappa statistic was also estimated and reported.

Results

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Table 2 contains the results for the first IRA study, for the four coded variables (Homicide Circumstance, Instrumental/Expressive, Shame/Humiliation, and Victim-Offender Relationship). The first four columns are related to the Percent Agreement statistics; the second four to Gwet's AC1 statistics; and the final four to Scott/Fleiss' Kappa. The last three columns in each grouping contain the probability in interval, cumulative probability >95%, and probabilistic benchmark intervals. These columns are, respectively, steps 1, 2, and 3 as recommended by Gwet for probabilistic, rather than deterministic interpretation (Klein 2018).

For Homicide Circumstance, there was 57.52% agreement between the raters, and a Gwet's AC1 coefficient of 0.5169. With 100% certainty, this indicates a moderate level of agreement. While Instrumental/Expressive had a higher percent agreement (70.99%), the chance-corrected Gwet's AC1 was 0.4652, which indicates with 99.5% probability that there was at least a moderate level of agreement. Similarly, the coefficients for Shame/Humiliation had percent agreement at 71.28% and a Gwet's AC1 of 0.5897, with a 100% certainty of a moderate level of agreement. Finally, the category for Victim-Offender Relationship had an agreement coefficient of 0.6042, with a Gwet's AC1 of 0.4738, again signifying with 100% probability that there was at least a moderate level of agreement.

[Insert Table 3 Here]

Table 3 contains the results of the second IRA study, with the same formatting as Table 1. In this study, there was 73.16% agreement between raters for Homicide Circumstance, and a Gwet's AC1 of 0.6945, indicating with 100% certainty there was substantial agreement. Similarly to the first study, Instrumental/Expressive variable had a high percent agreement (78.82%), but a lower Gwet's AC1 (0.5775), which remained in the moderate level of agreement benchmark interval (100% probability). The Shame/Humiliation variable also showed

improvement in IRA, with a percent agreement of 92.18% and a Gwet's AC1 of 0.9118, signifying with 100% certainty a substantial level of agreement. Finally, for Victim-Offender Relationship, similarly to the first study, there was 64.50% percent agreement and a Gwet's AC1 (0.5299) that indicated with 100% probability a moderate level of agreement.

Discussion

Criminology researchers often rely on variable classifications that are initially made by law enforcement professionals into UCR or NIBRS reporting. There may be strengths in that – the officials have access to more information, which could lead to more comprehensive and informed coding decisions. However, as do many other IRA and IRR studies, this study highlights the need for empirically assessing agreement between raters. Do the variable category definitions consistently lead to specific classifications? Is there a difference between raters with a law enforcement background versus individuals with no such experience? Are the coding decisions agreed upon across raters, settings, and time? Only IRA and IRR studies can answer these questions and lend to reliable coding decisions that ultimately inform research.

For more than half a century, researchers have relied on coding decisions of variables that have consistently been identified as central to homicide research, such as homicide circumstances (Wolfgang 1958; Daly and Wilson 1988; Pampel and Williams 2000) and/or categorizing the motive as instrumental or expressive (Luckenbill 1977; Felson 1978; Katz 1988; Decker 1996; Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005; Fox and Allen 2014; Adjorlolo and Chan 2017). Researchers have also heavily examined the role of victim-offender relationship in homicides (Polk 1993; Decker 1996; Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005; Quinet and Nunn 2014; Fox and Allen 2014) and a few have explored the role of shame in homicide motives (Klein 1991; Anderson 1999; Websdale 2010). For results to be reliable, the data must be consistently coded

– something rarely (if ever) formally tested by homicide researchers. If not, it calls into question any resultant findings, as the old adage says, “garbage in, garbage out”.

This study utilized an approach common to social science research – rating decisions made by graduate students. Construct validity was not evaluated in this study, indeed only the extent to which raters agreed upon coding decisions was assessed. Due to the extent to which researchers rely on coding decisions, this study highlights the need for empirical assessment of agreement. Additionally, the two study structure of this analysis and utilizing feedback from the initial group of raters to inform definition and training changes, resulted in changes in the level of agreement for half of the variables – an important methodological contribution to the extant literature.

This study also calls into question coding decisions made by law enforcement professionals, upon which researchers heavily rely for homicide research. As noted in Chapter 2, there were challenges in even obtaining complete data from one police department – how does that bode for the entire country? There were additional issues with trained raters, in a controlled environment, with specific written definitions to reference, in levels of agreement in coding decisions. If under those conditions, only moderate to substantial agreement can be obtained, how reliably are law enforcement professionals making coding decisions?

While this study certainly has strengths, it also is plagued by serious limitations. Most consequentially, the synopses the raters reviewed for coding decisions were generally three to four sentence summaries of the case. They included very limited information, particularly for the Shame/Humiliation variable. While there was substantial inter-rater agreement in the second IRA for this variable, the dearth of information undoubtedly led to a significant lack of “Yes” classifications. Indeed, many researchers have pointed to the presence of shame and/or

humiliation in interpersonal homicides, including intimate partner violence (Klein 1991; Websdale 2010), familicides (Websdale 2010), and even gang or street violence (Klein 1991; Anderson 1999). While this may not affect the inter-rater agreement, it certainly brings to question construct validity.

The limited information in the synopses also left raters with apparent difficulties in coding both the Instrumental/Expressive and Victim-Offender Relationship variables, where only a moderate level of agreement was obtained, even after additional training and clarified/expanded definitions were provided. Perhaps this was simply due to the brief synopses containing not enough information, or perhaps it indicates the need for additional training and/or more comprehensive definitions.

Additionally, this analysis is limited to solved homicides solely in the jurisdiction of the Tulsa Police Department. Does the way TPD documents investigations affect later coding decisions? Limited information could be the driving force for some of the lower levels of agreement or it could be unique to TPD documentation. Only future research comparing to other agencies can effectively parse out any nuances.

Future research should examine the effects of rater background, having access to the entire case information, and additional rater training. Do law enforcement officials consistently rate homicide events differently than those with no criminal justice background? Does having access to the entire case file improve inter-rater agreement as well as the validity of the coding decisions? Does the documentation process by the investigating agency affect coding decisions? Finally, does additional rater training improve reliability and validity? These are all empirical questions that future research should assess.

Table 2: Interrater Agreement Statistics for First Study

	Percent Agreement				Gwet's AC1				Scott/Fleiss' Kappa			
	<i>Percent Agreement Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability In Interval (Step 1)</i>	<i>Cumulative Probability >95% (Step 2)</i>	<i>Probabilistic Benchmark Interval (Step 3)</i>	<i>Gwet's AC1 Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability In Interval (Step 1)</i>	<i>Cumulative Probability >95% (Step 2)</i>	<i>Probabilistic Benchmark Interval (Step 3)</i>	<i>Scott/Fleiss' Kappa Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability In Interval (Step 1)</i>	<i>Cumulative Probability >95% (Step 2)</i>	<i>Probabilistic Benchmark Interval (Step 3)</i>
Homicide Circumstance	0.5752	0.96	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.5169	1.00	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.4974	1.00	1.000	0.4000-0.6000
Instrumental/ Expressive	0.7099	1.00	1.000	0.6000-0.8000	0.4652	1.00	0.995	0.4000-0.6000	0.3660	0.91	1.000	0.2000-0.4000
Shame/ Humiliation	0.7128	1.00	1.000	0.6000-0.8000	0.5897	0.67	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.0431	1.00	0.995	0.0000-0.2000
Victim-Offender Relationship	0.6042	0.37	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.4738	1.00	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.4676	1.00	1.000	0.4000-0.6000

N=563

Benchmark scale

<0.0000	Poor
0.0000-0.2000	Slight
0.2000-0.4000	Fair
0.4000-0.6000	Moderate
0.6000-0.8000	Substantial
0.8000-1.0000	Almost Perfect

Table 3: Interrater Agreement Statistics for Second Study

	Percent Agreement				Gwet's AC1				Scott/Fleiss' Kappa			
	<i>Percent Agreement Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability In Interval (Step 1)</i>	<i>Cumulative Probability >95% (Step 2)</i>	<i>Probabilistic Benchmark Interval (Step 3)</i>	<i>Gwet's AC1 Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability In Interval (Step 1)</i>	<i>Cumulative Probability >95% (Step 2)</i>	<i>Probabilistic Benchmark Interval (Step 3)</i>	<i>Scott/Fleiss' Kappa Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability In Interval (Step 1)</i>	<i>Cumulative Probability >95% (Step 2)</i>	<i>Probabilistic Benchmark Interval (Step 3)</i>
Homicide Circumstance	0.7316	1.00	1.000	0.6000-0.8000	0.6945	1.00	1.000	0.6000-0.8000	0.6841	1.00	1.000	0.6000-0.8000
Instrumental/ Expressive	0.7882	0.76	1.000	0.6000-0.8000	0.5775	0.75	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.5752	0.77	1.000	0.4000-0.6000
Shame/ Humiliation	0.9218	1.00	1.000	0.8000-1.0000	0.9118	1.00	1.000	0.8000-1.0000	0.3076	0.12	1.000	0.0000-0.2000
Victim-Offender Relationship	0.6450	0.99	0.989	0.6000-0.8000	0.5299	1.00	1.000	0.4000-0.6000	0.5170	1.00	1.000	0.4000-0.6000

N=262

Benchmark scale

<0.0000	Poor
0.0000-0.2000	Slight
0.2000-0.4000	Fair
0.4000-0.6000	Moderate
0.6000-0.8000	Substantial
0.8000-1.0000	Almost Perfect

CHAPTER FOUR. WHY DID THEY DO IT? EXPLORING INSTRUMENTAL AND EXPRESSIVE HOMICIDES IN TULSA, OKLAHOMA, 2010-2015

Unlike previous research (Fox and Allen, 2014) that assumes motives as instrumental or expressive based on the victim/offender relationship, victim/offender sex, and weapon used, this research analyzes individually coded homicide cases for motive and considers victim/offender relationship and other variables separately. Consistent with Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez (2005), this method emphasizes motive as a standalone variable. Taking this approach will empirically assess the reliability of the instrumental/expressive homicide motive dichotomy as well as identify predictors of the categories. While the motives of many cases may be significantly predicted by victim/offender relationship, as Decker (1996) illuminated, a significant number of homicides are “deviant” based on that classification system alone.

For this study, the primary research hypothesis is that the relationship between the victim and the offender will be a significant predictor of whether the motive is classified as instrumental or expressive. Specifically, I hypothesize that the victim and offender being intimately known to each other is a significant predictor of an expressive motive. I will also explore other characteristics of the homicides, paying particular attention to weapon choice, as well as victim and offender race, sex, and age, and how they relate to homicide motive classifications.

Methods

Data

The dataset for this study included solved homicides from 2010 to 2015 (N=256) with non-missing data, after using the imputation strategy described in Chapter 2.

Variables

The dependent variable was whether the homicide was classified as Instrumental (0) or Expressive (1). The key independent variable was Victim-Offender Relationship. Control variables included victim's sex, victim's race/ethnicity, victim's age, offender's sex, offender's race/ethnicity, offender's age, and weapon usage.

Analytical Strategy

Two models were used to estimate the relationship between the independent variables and homicide type, using Stata/SE version 18.0 statistical analysis package. Both models were binary logistic regressions with the first including only the key independent variable and the second including all the independent variables. The reference categories for each independent variable in the model are outlined above. The full model was calculated based on the following equation:

$$\ln\left(\frac{Pr(y = 1)}{1 - Pr(y = 1)}\right) = \alpha + \beta_1(X_1) \dots + \beta_k(X_k)$$

where Y is the dependent variable binary outcome (Instrumental or Expressive homicide), X_1 is the key independent variable (Victim-Offender Relationship), and β_1 is the accompanying coefficient. X_k are the additional independent variables with β_k capturing their effects on classifying homicides as instrumental or expressive. The results were exponentiated (odds-ratios).

Results

While the percentage of cases that were identified as instrumental (51%) or expressive (49%) were nearly evenly dispersed, a notable difference is observed in the proportions of independent variables in the homicide type categories, particularly for Victim-Offender Relationship. In 18% of instrumental homicides, the victim and offender were in a primary

relationship, compared to 38% of expressive homicides. However, more than half (54%) of instrumental homicides were identified as involving strangers, compared to only 15% of expressive homicides. Compared to instrumental homicides, there are higher proportions of blunt force/strangulation (16% vs. 6%) and sharp weapon usage (14% vs. 5%) in expressive homicides. Additionally, there is a lower proportion of firearms (66% vs. 85%) used in expressive homicides. Table 4 shows the proportion of the independent variables by homicide type.

[Table 4 about here]

Table 5 shows the results of the binary logistic regression of Victim-Offender Relationship, and the independent variables on homicide type, reported in exponentiated coefficients (odds-ratios).

[Table 5 about here]

In Model 1, Victim-Offender relationship was the single regressor. If the victim and offender were in a primary relationship, the odds ratio (OR) of the homicide being expressive rather than instrumental, is 7.64 ($p < 0.001$), relative to victims and offenders in a stranger relationship. Secondary relationships had an odds ratio of 4.77 ($p < 0.001$) and Unknown relationships had an OR of 10.28 ($p < 0.001$) and were also significant predictors of expressive homicides, compared to strangers.

Model 2 included all independent variables, some of which were significant predictors of expressive homicides. Primary ($OR = 5.14, p < 0.01$), secondary ($OR = 4.78, p < 0.001$), and unknown ($OR = 8.72, p < 0.001$) relationships remained significant predictors that increased the odds of homicides being classified as expressive, relative to strangers. The model predicts that holding all other variables at their means, 61.1% of homicides involving primary relationships

between the victim and offender are expressive, 59.4 of homicides involving secondary relationships are expressive, and 72.7% of unknown relationships are expressive, compared to only 23.4% when the victim and offender are strangers.

Female homicide victims have an OR of 2.79 75 ($p < 0.05$) of being victimized in an expressive homicide, compared to an instrumental homicide and male victims. Put more plainly, the model predicts that if there is a female victim, there is a 67.3% probability of the homicide being expressive, holding all other variables at their means, as compared to a 42.5% probability for male victims.

Relative to their White offender counterparts, Other Race offenders have an OR of 5.86 ($p < 0.01$) to commit an expressive homicide, compared to an instrumental homicide. Indeed, the predicted probability of an Other Race offender committing an expressive homicide is 77.4%, compared to 49.3% of Black offenders and 37% of White offenders committing expressive homicides, holding all other variables at their means, and relative to instrumental homicides.

Finally, relative to firearms, the OR of a Sharp Force instrument being used in an expressive homicide is 3.46 ($p < 0.05$), compared to instrumental homicides. Holding all other variables at their means, the model predicts 61.2% of homicides involving blunt force/strangulation are expressive and 72.1% of sharp force homicides are expressive, compared to 42.7% of firearms-related homicides being expressive. For other/unknown weapons, the predicted probability is near chance, with 51.4% predicted as expressive.

Analysis of the difference between groups outside of the reference categories, using the Stata command *mchange* revealed that there is a -0.153 decreased ($p < 0.05$) probability of offenders that are 36 years or older, compared to offenders who are aged 25 to 35, committing an expressive homicide. In addition to the significant difference between other race offenders

compared to white offenders, there is a significant difference between other race offenders and black offenders, with a 0.222 ($p < 0.05$) increased probability of other race offenders committing expressive homicides.

Unlike OLS models where R^2 values give the amount of variance explained by the variables in the model and each R^2 has the same numeric value, categorical models have pseudo R^2 values, which do not have such a straightforward interpretation of fit (Long & Freese 2014). For Model 1, the McFadden R^2 value was 0.135 and the pseudo R^2 count value was 0.691, meaning that the model correctly classified the homicide type nearly 70% of the time. For Model 2, the McFadden R^2 value was 0.229 and the pseudo R^2 count value was 0.699.

Discussion

Consistent with the findings of Decker (1996) and other researchers, stranger relationships are much more likely to be instrumental homicides than other victim-offender relationships. Indeed, while the types of cases were nearly evenly split across the two categories, 54% of instrumental cases were between strangers, compared to 18% between offenders and victims in a primary relationship, and 22% in a secondary relationship.

While the percentage of male victims was slightly lower than general homicide research, still, 78% of the victims were male. However, a different picture arises for victimization when examining instrumental versus expressive homicides. Having a female victim was a significant predictor of an expressive homicide, with female victims accounting for 32% of all expressive homicides and only 12% of instrumental homicides.

Though somewhat lower than overall use in United States homicides, firearms were used in three-quarters of the homicides in Tulsa. However, sharp weapon use was a significant

predictor of expressive homicides. While these data did not tease out the particular homicide circumstance, such as intimate partner violence, robbery, drug-related, etc., these findings are consistent with sharp weapon usage in IPH cases (Mize, Shackleford, & Weekes-Shackleford 2011; Fox & Allen 2013), particularly since primary victim-offender relationships were also predictive of expressive homicides.

Although these results are supportive of the findings of Fox and Allen (2014), they answer the call made by those researchers in considering the instrumental-expressive motive as an individually coded variable, rather than determining it through clustering based on dependent variables. This approach considers the effects of each variable independently *and* net of the other variables in the model.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the synopses that the students coded the instrumental/expressive and victim-offender relationship variables were short and included very limited information. While a previous interrater agreement study on the coding decisions of the variables had a high level of agreement for the dependent variable and a moderate level of agreement for the coded independent variable in this study, there still were more than 10% of cases coded as “unknown” for victim-offender relationship. As evidenced by this being a significant predictor of expressive homicides, the unknown category contains valuable information that unfortunately, this study was unable to explain. Second, a larger sample size could have provided more statistical power to the analyses of homicides. Perhaps then other weapon choices, particularly hands-on methods like blunt force/strangulation, would have risen to the level of statistical significance. These data are also limited to solved homicides solely in the jurisdiction of the Tulsa Police Department, and therefore caution should be used in any attempts to generalize these findings elsewhere.

Future studies should examine homicide data with a larger, ideally nationally representative, dataset. Fox and Allen's 2014 study had similar findings but made assumptions about the relationship and called for "future research at the individual level that better measures homicide motives" (p. 313). This research answered that call, but should be replicated on a larger scale. In conducting individual level research of homicide cases, additional coding measures should be considered to classify all relationships between victims and offenders, which should be theoretically possible for all closed homicide cases.

The findings that victim-offender relationship, among other variables, is an important predictor of homicide types, lends to important policy implications and intervention points. For example, victims and offenders in primary relationships are more likely to be involved in expressive homicides than instrumental homicides. Knowing that the motivation in these homicide events is often expressive, bolsters the call for early education efforts that focus on healthy relationships. Indeed, youth violence prevention programs have shown promise in reducing dating violence (a step in the path to IPH) and promoting healthy relationships (Antle, et. al. 2011).

Table 4: Proportion of Independent Variables by Homicide Type

	Instrumental	Expressive
Victim-Offender Relationship		
Primary	.18	.38
Secondary	.22	.30
Strangers	.54	.15
Unknown	.06	.18
Victim's Sex (female)	.12	.32
Victim's Race/Ethnicity		
White	.45	.36
Black	.44	.50
Other	.11	.14
Victim's Age		
24 & Under	.31	.38
25 to 35	.37	.27
36+	.31	.35
Offender's Sex (female)	.10	.13
Offender's Race/Ethnicity		
White	.44	.25
Black	.52	.60
Other	.05	.15
Offender's Age		
24 & Under	.45	.42
25 to 35	.28	.37
36+	.27	.21
Weapon		
Firearm	.85	.66
Blunt Force/Strangulation	.06	.16
Sharp Force	.05	.14
Other/Unknown	.04	.05
Homicide Type	.51	.49

N=256

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

Table 5: Binary Logistic Regression Models of Expressive Homicides

	Model 1		Model 2	
Victim-Offender Relationship				
Primary	7.64***	(2.77)	5.14**	(2.32)
Secondary	4.77***	(1.71)	4.78***	(1.85)
Unknown	10.28***	(5.00)	8.72***	(4.63)
Victim's Sex				
Female			2.79*	(1.17)
Victim's Race/Ethnicity				
Black			2.02	(0.80)
Other			1.94	(1.07)
Victim's Age				
25 to 35			0.58	(0.22)
36+			1.04	(0.40)
Offender's Sex				
Female			1.00	(0.50)
Offender's Race/Ethnicity				
Black			1.65	(0.64)
Other			5.86**	(3.64)
Offender's Age				
25 to 35			1.67	(0.62)
36+			0.71	(0.30)
Weapon				
Blunt Force/Strangulation			2.11	(1.12)
Sharp Force			3.46*	(2.08)
Other/Unknown			1.42	(1.14)
N	256		256	
AIC	314.74		307.35	
BIC	328.92		367.62	

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

CHAPTER FIVE. FATAL HUMILIATION: THE ROLE OF SHAME IN HOMICIDAL MOTIVATIONS

This study combines Websdale's (2010) "humiliated fury" and Anderson's (1995) (challenged) "respect" as one concept - shame. There are two research hypotheses for this study:

1. The presence of shame or humiliation is a significant predictor of expressive homicides, even when controlling for victim-offender relationship, and
2. The presence of shame or humiliation is a significant predictor of certain types of homicides, in particular, homicides with an interpersonal conflict, such as an argument or domestic violence.

I will also analyze other characteristics of homicides, specifically victim and offender demographics and weapon choice, and how they relate to homicide motive classifications.

Methods

Data

The dataset for this study included solved homicides from 2010 to 2015 (N=256) with non-missing data, after using the imputation strategy described in Chapter 2.

Variables

There were two dependent variables for this study. The first was whether the homicide was classified as Instrumental (0) or Expressive (1). The second dependent variable was a classification of the Homicide Circumstance. I collapsed the categories to Argument/Domestic Violence (1); Drug- or Gang-Related (2); Accident, Negligence, or Justifiable Homicide (3); Other Criminal Circumstances (4); and Unknown (5). Accident, Negligence, or Justifiable Homicide was designated as the base outcome category.

Shame was the key independent variable for this study. Control variables for the second binary logistic regression model included victim-offender relationship, victim's sex, victim's race/ethnicity, victim's age, offender's sex, offender's race/ethnicity, offender's age, and weapon usage. Control variables for the third binary logistic regression model included victim-offender relationship, victim race/ethnicity and sex, victim's age, offender race/ethnicity and sex, offender's age, and weapon usage. There was a strong correlation between victim-offender relationship and homicide circumstance, therefore these two variables were not utilized as independent variables in the same model. Additionally, concerns about confounding also kept victim-offender relationship as an independent variable out of the multinomial logistic regression model. The multinomial logistic regression model included the control variables of victim's race/ethnicity and sex, victim's age, offender's race/ethnicity and sex, offender's age, and weapon usage.

Analytical Strategy

Three binary logistic regression models were used to estimate the relationship between the independent variables and homicide type (instrumental/expressive), using Stata/SE version 18.0 statistical analysis package. The first model included only the key independent variable - shame. The second model included shame and the control variables of victim-offender relationship, victim's sex, victim's race/ethnicity, victim's age, offender's sex, offender's race/ethnicity, offender's age, and weapon usage. The final model included shame and the control variables of victim-offender relationship, victim race/ethnicity and sex, victim's age, offender race/ethnicity and sex, offender's age, and weapon usage. The reference categories for each independent variable in the model are outlined in Chapter 2. The full model was calculated based on the following equation:

$$\ln\left(\frac{Pr(y = 1)}{1 - Pr(y = 1)}\right) = \alpha + \beta_1(X_1) \dots + \beta_k(X_k)$$

where Y is the dependent variable binary outcome (Instrumental or Expressive homicide), X_l is the key independent variable (Shame), and β_1 is the accompanying coefficient. X_k are the additional independent variables with β_k capturing their effects on classifying homicides as instrumental or expressive. The results were exponentiated (odds-ratios).

A multinomial logistic regression was used to estimate the relationship between shame, victim race/ethnicity and sex, victim age, offender race/ethnicity and sex, offender age, weapon choice and the homicide circumstance, using Stata/SE version 18.0 statistical analysis package. Accidental, Negligent, or Justifiable Homicides was the base outcome of the model. Multinomial logistic regression models compare categories to the same base category, essentially fitting separate binary logits for the pairs of outcome categories. This means that for five outcomes, with category x (Accidental, Negligent, or Justifiable) as the base, there are four comparisons: x to Argument/Domestic Violence, x to Drug- or Gang-Related, x to Other Criminal Circumstances, and x to Unknown (Agresti 2018; Long & Freese 2014). The reference categories for each independent variable in the model are outlined in Chapter 2. The model was calculated based on the following equation:

$$\ln\left(\frac{Pr(Y=j)}{Pr(Y=j')}\right) = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$$

where Y is a categorical dependent variable (Homicide Circumstance), j is a category of Y , j' is the remaining categories j is not when $Y=j$, X_l is a vector of independent variables, and β_l is its accompanying coefficient. The results were exponentiated (relative risk ratios).

Results

While the percentage of cases that were identified as instrumental (51%) or expressive (49%) were nearly evenly dispersed, a notable difference is observed in the proportions of independent variables in the homicide type categories. In eight percent of expressive homicides, shame was present, compared to only one percent of instrumental homicides. In 18% of instrumental homicides, the victim and offender were in a primary relationship, compared to 38% of expressive homicides. Moreover, more than half (55%) of instrumental homicides were identified as involving strangers, compared to only 15% of expressive homicides. White males committed a higher proportion of instrumental homicides than expressive homicides (.39 vs. .21). However, Black males committed a slightly higher proportion of expressive homicides than instrumental homicides (.51 vs. .48). Younger offenders (24 & Under) committed a higher proportion of instrumental homicides (.45) than expressive homicides (.42). However, offenders in the middle age group (25 to 35) committed a greater percentage of expressive homicides (37%) than instrumental homicides (28%). Interestingly, the proportions returned to favor instrumental homicides in the oldest age group (.26 vs .21). Compared to instrumental homicides, there are higher proportions of blunt force/strangulation (16% vs. 6%) and sharp weapon usage (14% vs. 5%) in expressive homicides. Additionally, there is a lower proportion of firearms (66% vs. 85%) used in expressive homicides. Table 6 shows the proportion of the independent variables by homicide type.

[Table 6 about here]

Table 7 shows the results of the binary logistic regression of Shame, and the independent variables on homicide type, reported in exponentiated coefficients (odds-ratios).

[Table 7 about here]

For Model 1, Shame was the single regressor. Shame was a significant predictor ($p < 0.05$) of an expressive homicide and was 11.3 times as likely to be present in an expressive homicide, as an instrumental homicide.

Model 2 included Shame and other independent variables, many of which were predictive of expressive homicides. Shame remained a significant predictor of expressive homicides ($\beta = 20.96, p < 0.05$). Relative to stranger relationships, primary relationships ($\beta = 4.80, p < 0.001$), secondary relationships ($\beta = 4.81, p < 0.001$), and unknown relationships ($\beta = 9.12, p < 0.001$) all had higher OR of being involved in expressive homicides, compared to instrumental homicides. Female homicide victims have an OR of 2.64 75 ($p < 0.05$) of being victimized in an expressive homicide, compared to an instrumental homicide and male victims. Relative to their White offender counterparts, Other Race offenders have an OR of 4.75 ($p < 0.05$) to commit an expressive homicide, compared to an instrumental homicide. Indeed, the predicted probability of an Other Race offender committing an expressive homicide is 74.1%, compared to 51.5% of Black offenders and 37.6% of White offenders committing expressive homicides, holding all other variables at their means, and relative to instrumental homicides. Finally, the OR of a Sharp Force instrument being used in an expressive homicide, compared to a firearm, was 4.11 ($p < 0.05$). Holding all other variables at their means, the model predicts 63.2% of homicides involving blunt force/strangulation are expressive and 75.7% of sharp force homicides are expressive, compared to 43.1% of firearms-related homicides being expressive. For other/unknown weapons, the predicted probability is near chance, with 53.9% predicted as expressive.

Model 3 included Shame and control variables, with the combined race/ethnicity and sex variables for victims and offenders. Shame is still a significant predictor of expressive

homicides ($\beta = 19.88, p < 0.05$). Relative to strangers, victims and offenders being in primary ($\beta = 5.48, p < 0.001$), secondary ($\beta = 4.91, p < 0.001$), or unknown ($\beta = 9.18, p < 0.001$) relationships remained significant predictors of expressive homicides, compared to instrumental homicides. Relative to firearms, sharp force also remained a significant predictor of expressive homicides ($\beta = 4.96, p < 0.05$), compared to instrumental homicides. There were no victim race/ethnicity and sex categories that were significant predictors of expressive homicides. However, compared to their White male offender counterparts, Other Race male offenders have an OR of 6.47 ($p < 0.01$) to commit an expressive homicide, compared to an instrumental homicide.

Unlike OLS models where R^2 values give the amount of variance explained by the variables in the model and each R^2 has the same numeric value, categorical models have pseudo R^2 values, which do not have such a straightforward interpretation of fit (Long & Freese 2014). For Model 1, the McFadden's R^2 value was 0.026 and the pseudo R^2 count value was 0.547, meaning that the model correctly classified the homicide type nearly 55% of the time. For Model 2, the McFadden's R^2 value was 0.251 and the pseudo R^2 count value was 0.711. Finally, for Model 3, the McFadden's R^2 value was 0.261 and the pseudo R^2 count value was 0.718.

As noted for instrumental and expressive homicides, there were observable differences in the proportions of independent variables in the homicide circumstances categories, shown in Table 8. In ten percent of argument/domestic violence homicides, shame was present, compared to only two percent of accident, negligent, or justifiable homicides and three percent of other criminal circumstances homicides. Drug- or gang-related homicides and homicides with unknown circumstances had zero cases with the presence of shame. Different patterns emerged for the victim's race/ethnicity and sex categories, with White males being the largest proportion

of accident, negligent, or justifiable homicide (.40) victims and Black males being the largest percentage of drug- or gang-related homicide victims (60%). For the offender's race/ethnicity and sex, similar patterns were noted where White male offenders committed the largest proportion of accident, negligent, or justifiable homicides (.58) and Black male offenders committed the largest proportion of drug- or gang-related homicides (.67). Drug- or gang-related homicides were predominantly committed by the youngest offenders (70%), whereas the majority of accident, negligent, or justifiable homicides were committed by the oldest offenders (42%). Finally, different patterns were observable for weapon choice across weapon types. While firearms were the weapon of choice in the majority of all homicides, they were used in only 62% of argument/domestic violence homicides, compared to 90% of drug- or gang-related homicides. Additionally, for argument/domestic violence homicides, more intimate methods of killing were used (blunt force/strangulation-21% and sharp force-13%).

[Table 8 about here]

Table 9 shows the results of the multinomial logistic regression of Shame, and the independent variables on homicide circumstance, reported in exponentiated coefficients (relative risk ratios). Relative risk ratios are the probability of choosing one outcome over the probability of choosing the base outcome of the dependent variable, relative to the categories and base outcomes of each independent variable.

[Table 9 about here]

Shame is a significant predictor of argument/domestic violence homicides ($\beta = 18.20, p < 0.05$), compared to accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides. Shame was not a significant predictor of any other homicide circumstances. The *mchange* command in Stata was utilized to determine the difference in predicted probabilities between categories of independent

variables. On average, for homicides similar on other characteristics, the presence of shame or humiliation increases the probability of a homicide being the result of an argument or domestic violence by 0.50 ($p < 0.001$). Conversely, the presence of shame or humiliation decreases the probability of a homicide being the result of drug- or gang-related circumstances ($-0.12, p < 0.001$), accident, negligence, or other justifiable circumstances ($-0.18, p < 0.01$), or from unknown circumstances ($-0.16, p < 0.001$).

For homicide victims, race and gender had significant effects on the predicted probability of the homicide circumstance. For instance, compared to otherwise similarly situated White males ($0.33, p < 0.05$) or Black males ($0.30, p < 0.05$), Black females had increased probability of being victims of homicides resulting from arguments or domestic violence. Black females had a decreased probability of being victims of homicides resulting from other criminal circumstances compared to White males ($-0.25, p < 0.001$) and Black males ($-0.09, p < 0.001$). Compared to Black females, White females had an increased probability of being homicide victims resulting from other criminal circumstances ($0.24, p < 0.01$) and Other Race females had a decreased probability of being the victim of an argument or domestic violence homicide ($-0.38, p < 0.05$).

Likewise, race and gender have significant effects for homicide offenders. Compared to White male offenders, Black male offenders had an increased relative risk of committing argument or domestic violence homicides by a factor of 9.00 ($p < 0.001$), an increased relative risk of committing drug- or gang-related homicides by a factor of 8.11 ($p < 0.001$), an increased relative risk of committing other criminal circumstances homicides by a factor of 13.65 ($p < 0.001$), and an increased relative risk of committing unknown circumstances homicides by a factor of 12.60 ($p < 0.001$), compared to accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides.

Explained as predicted probabilities, compared to average White males, average White females had a decreased probability of offending in drug- or gang-related homicides ($-0.09, p < 0.05$) and unknown circumstances homicides ($-0.12, p < 0.01$). Black male offenders had a decreased probability of committing accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides ($-0.33, p < 0.001$), but an increased probability of committing other criminal circumstances ($0.11, p < 0.05$) homicides compared to similarly situated White male offenders. Both Black male offenders ($-0.47, p < 0.01$) and Black female offenders ($-0.42, p < 0.01$) had decreased probability of committing accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides compared to White female offenders.

The offender's age was significantly associated with the homicide circumstance. Younger offenders (24 & Under) had a higher predicted probability of committing drug- or gang-related homicides, compared to otherwise similar offenders in the 25 to 35 age group ($0.10, p < 0.05$) and the oldest age (36 +) group ($0.12, p < 0.05$). However, the oldest offenders (36 +) had higher predicted probability of committing accident, negligent, or justifiable homicides compared to both the youngest (24 & Under) offenders ($0.29, p < 0.001$) and the middle age group (25 to 35) of offenders ($0.20, p < 0.01$).

Finally, the weapon used in the homicide was a significant predictor of the type of homicide. Holding other variables in the model constant, for argument or domestic violence homicides, the relative risk for using blunt force or strangulation was increased by a factor of 7.00 ($p < 0.05$) and the relative risk for using sharp force was increased by a factor of 20.50 ($p < 0.01$), compared to firearms and accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides. Relative to firearms, sharp force also had an increased relative risk in drug- or gang-related homicides ($\beta =$

13.10, $p < 0.05$) and unknown circumstances homicides ($\beta = 39.34$, $p < 0.01$), compared to accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides.

As explained for the binary logistic regression models, R^2 values are not interpretable as they are in OLS models (Long & Freese 2014). The McFadden R^2 value was 0.220 and the pseudo R^2 count value was 0.527, meaning that the model correctly classified the outcome nearly 53 percent of the time, with the included variables.

Discussion

Few criminological researchers have focused on the role of shame in homicide motives. However, those that have (Anderson 1999, Websdale 2010), have emphasized shame as an important contributing factor to homicides, particularly when there is an interpersonal conflict involved. Websdale's (2010) research concentrated on the concept of shame as "humiliated fury" in male-perpetrated intimate partner homicides and familicides. I argue that Anderson's (1999) idea of respect, and the corresponding violence when that respect is lost or attacked, is the same sociological construct of shame.

In positing that those concepts, both humiliated fury and loss of respect, are indeed shame, this research has identified a common homicide motive that exists in both domestic violence homicides and street conflict homicides. This novel theoretical approach led to the ability to analyze homicide events, at an individual level, to empirically assess whether shame was indeed a salient motivation that differentiated homicide types.

In this study, shame was indeed found to be a significant predictor that distinguished between instrumental and expressive homicides and identified argument/domestic violence as the homicide circumstance. Even when other known significant predictors were included in the models (i.e.: victim-offender relationship, weapon choice, victim and offender demographics),

shame remained significant in its ability to predict homicide types and circumstances. Consistent with the research of both Websdale (2010) and Anderson (1999), shame was a significant predictor of interpersonal conflict motive homicides (arguments/domestic violence).

In the binary logistic regression models, the addition of control variables increased the magnitude of the effect of shame on predicting expressive homicides. Additional analyses were conducted (results not shown) regressing each control variable with shame on instrumental/expressive homicides, but the large change occurred when all the variables were added into the model, rather than individually. There is certainly the possibility of an interaction effect between shame and one or more of the control variables; however, there were not enough cases with shame for this to be parsed out with this study.

The addition of control variables to the model explained more of the variance, increasing the power of the whole analysis. These findings make sense theoretically as well – in all of the cases where shame was present, there were male offenders and the majority of them were in the older age group. Considering the social construction of shame, and its differential meanings, consequences, and experiences for different genders, different races, and different age groups, the effect of shame increasing in magnitude (though maintaining the same level of significance) is expected.

In agreement with the findings of Decker (1996) and other researchers, stranger relationships are much more likely to be instrumental homicides than other victim-offender relationships. Indeed, while the types of cases were nearly evenly split across the two categories, 54% of instrumental cases were between strangers, compared to 18% between offenders and victims in a primary relationship, and 22% in a secondary relationship. Although these results are supportive of the findings of Fox and Allen (2014), they answer the call made by those

researchers in considering the instrumental-expressive motive as an individually coded variable, rather than determining it through clustering based on other independent variables. This approach considers the effects of each variable independently *and* net of the other variables in the model. These findings remained significant with shame in the model, indicating that both shame and victim-offender relationship are salient factors in homicides.

While the role of shame has been considered by some researchers (Anderson 1999, Websdale 2010), and the centrality of the relationship between the victim and offender in homicides has been examined by many researchers (Wolfgang 1958; Polk 1993; Decker 1996; Aldridge & Browne 2003; Drawdy & Myers 2004; Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005; Quinet and Nunn 2014; Fox and Allen 2014; Frankenfeld & Leslie 2021), there are no known researchers to date that have evaluated how both of these variables are related to homicide motives. Considering together how shame is sociologically constructed *and* the role of the relationship between victims and offenders in homicides, this research fills an important gap in extant knowledge.

This study has also empirically assessed weapon choice and how it relates to homicide types (instrumental vs. expressive) and homicide circumstances. It has added to the growing body of research on weapon choice (Wolfgang 1958; Sorenson 2006; Mize, Shackleford, and Weekes-Shackleford 2011; Zimring 2004; Allen & Fox 2013) by confirming that weapon choice is indeed a significant predictor of homicide type and circumstances. More specifically, sharp force is predictive of expressive homicides and homicides with an interpersonal conflict motive (argument/domestic violence) or being drug- or gang-related, compared to firearms and homicides that were accidental, negligent, or justifiable. Blunt force/strangulation was also a significant predictor of a homicide resulting from an argument or domestic violence.

Finally, some researchers have examined the intersectionality of both victim and offender race/ethnicity and sex (Field & Caetano 2004; Petrosky, Blair, Betz, Fowler, Jack, & Lyons 2017). While this particular study was inconsistent with previous research in identifying Black females as having significantly higher risk of victimization, it did identify Black males as having a higher probability of offending in all homicide circumstances, other than accident, negligent, or justifiable homicides, relative to White males. This study also concluded that Other Race males have higher odds of committing expressive homicides, relative to White males and instrumental homicides. These findings add to the body of research examining intersectionality and homicides by identifying some nuances to types of homicide commission.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the synopses that the students coded the shame, instrumental/expressive, homicide circumstances, and victim-offender relationship variables were short and included very limited information. The synopses were generally three to four sentence summaries of the case, written by the TPD. There was a dearth of information, particularly for the Shame variable. While a previous interrater agreement study on the coding decisions found there was substantial interrater agreement for this variable, the lack of information calls into question the potential for significant underreporting of shame in the cases. Indeed, many researchers have pointed to the presence of shame and/or humiliation in interpersonal homicides, including intimate partner violence (Klein 1991; Websdale 2010), familicides (Websdale 2010), and even gang or street violence (Klein 1991; Anderson 1999). Perhaps if more cases had been coded for having shame present, other homicide circumstance categories, such as drug- or gang-related would have been significant. Future research should take a more qualitative approach and review more case information to determine the presence of shame in homicides.

The inter-rater agreement study in Chapter 3 also found a moderate level of agreement for the Victim-Offender Relationship variable, and there were more than 10% of cases coded as “Unknown”. As evidenced by this being a significant predictor of expressive homicides, the Unknown category contains valuable information that unfortunately, this study was unable to explain.

Additionally, a larger sample size could have provided more statistical power to the analyses of homicides. For example, there was only one Other Race female offender in the dataset. A larger sample size would also allow for categories of variables to be expanded, further identifying the nuances between homicide circumstances and weapon choice in particular. Finally, a larger sample size would allow for the exploration of interaction effects between independent variables. These data are also limited to solved homicides solely in the jurisdiction of the TPD, and therefore caution should be used in any attempts to generalize these findings elsewhere. Future research should replicate these findings on a larger, nationally representative sample.

While the findings of this study highlight the salience of shame and other variables in homicides, the findings also illuminate opportunities for exploration. For example, Black male offenders were significantly more likely to be involved in homicides that were not classified as accidental, negligent, or justifiable, compared to white male offenders. Why is that? Perhaps the intersectionality of race and gender are important factors in determining the criminality of a homicide event. While that question was outside the scope of this study, the pattern of findings that emerged leads to an area that would be ripe for future research.

Additionally, sharp force was a significant predictor of drug- or gang-related homicides, relative to accidental, negligent, or justifiable homicides. These findings were somewhat

surprising and are likely the result of the base outcome category; however, additional research should be conducted in this area. Are sharp weapons used more often than originally thought in drug- or gang-related homicides? Are these findings consistent in other parts of the country or is this specific to Tulsa and that particular timeframe?

Beyond exploring homicide events for relevant variables, researchers have the opportunity, or arguably even the duty, to connect findings to actionable policy recommendations. The key finding of this study was the predictive power of shame in expressive homicides and in homicides where an interpersonal conflict was the precipitating event. Since shame is socially constructed, and as a society we have the ability to affect social constructs, the context, construction, and responses to shame present intervention points for preventing or reducing violent crime and homicides through social control.

Indeed, social control theory offers numerous policy implications for decreasing crime and delinquency. Control theories' focus on the "differences in the probability of delinquent conduct are seen to be a function of differential controls" sums up quite nicely that policy implications must place emphasis on the controls to affect behaviors (Gottfredson & Hirschi 2020: 145) and the tools to react to shameful events in a prosocial way. For social control theory, early childhood and school-based intervention efforts that promote the components of the social bond (Gottfredson & Hirschi 1990; Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka 2001; Hirschi 2004; Farrington 2011; Fagan 2013; Farrington, Ttofi, & Piquero 2016; Gottfredson & Hirschi 2020) and "reintegrative shaming" (Braithwaite 1989) have demonstrated considerable promise. Importantly, however, Braithwaite (1989) argues that negative shaming leads to stigmatization and failed reintegration of the individual. These broken bonds free the individual to act in delinquent or criminal ways.

Elements of social control theory have been operationalized, studied, and supported in research on drug use (Smith & Paternoster 1987), peer pressure (Costello & Hope 2016), friendship networks (McCarthy, Femlee & Hagan 2004), and adult desistance from crime (Sampson & Laub 1993). Researchers have also found support for informal social control in intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of neighborhoods (Browning 2002; Frye 2007; Frye, et. al. 2012; Emery et. al. 2017), in positive parenting practices and prosocial peers (Garrido et. al. 2013), or its inverse effect of poor parent-child bond on IPV-perpetration (Rosenbaum & Leisring 2003).

The social construction of shame and humiliation, and the differential experiences of the context of shame, especially for the requisites of hegemonic masculinity, are ripe for the identification of intervention points and policy recommendations. Modern male individuation has left men particularly vulnerable to shame and therefore de- or re-constructing what this process entails will both introduce stronger social bonds and invite implementation of prosocial ways of dealing with shame or humiliation. Policies that focus on applying these ideas for young men and boys are critical to reduce violence and homicides.

Table 6: Proportion of Independent Variables by Homicide Type

	Instrumental	Expressive
Shame Present (yes)	.01	.08
Victim-Offender Relationship		
Primary	.17	.38
Secondary	.22	.30
Strangers	.55	.15
Unknown	.06	.18
Victim's Race/Ethnicity & Sex		
White Male	.36	.20
White Female	.08	.16
Black Male	.42	.39
Black Female	.02	.11
Other Race Male	.09	.09
Other Race Female	.02	.05
Victim's Age		
24 & Under	.32	.38
25 to 35	.38	.27
36+	.31	.35
Offender's Race/Ethnicity & Sex		
White Male	.39	.21
White Female	.05	.04
Black Male	.48	.51
Black Female	.05	.09
Other Race Male	.04	.15
Offender's Age		
24 & Under	.45	.42
25 to 35	.28	.37
36+	.26	.21
Weapon		
Firearm	.85	.66
Blunt Force/Strangulation	.06	.16
Sharp Force	.05	.14
Other/Unknown	.04	.05
Homicide Type	.51	.49

N=255

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

Table 7: Binary Logistic Regression Models of Expressive Homicides

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Shame Present	11.30*	(11.94)	20.96*	(28.74)	19.88*	(27.69)
Victim-Offender Relationship						
Primary			4.80***	(2.23)	5.48***	(2.64)
Secondary			4.81***	(1.88)	4.91***	(1.95)
Unknown			9.12***	(4.84)	9.18***	(4.90)
Victim's Sex						
Female			2.64*	(1.13)		
Victim's Race/Ethnicity						
Black			1.86	(0.75)		
Other			2.18	(1.24)		
Victim's Age						
25 to 35			0.61	(0.24)	0.61	(0.24)
36+			1.04	(0.41)	1.08	(0.43)
Offender's Sex						
Female			1.13	(0.57)		
Offender's Race/Ethnicity						
Black			1.76	(0.69)		
Other			4.75*	(3.07)		
Offender's Age						
25 to 35			1.57	(0.58)	1.59	(0.60)
36+			0.53	(0.24)	0.53	(0.25)
Weapon						
Blunt Force/Strangulation			2.27	(1.24)	2.19	(1.23)
Sharp Force			4.11*	(2.50)	4.96*	(3.15)
Other/Unknown			1.54	(1.26)	1.33	(1.11)
Victim's Race/Ethnicity & Sex						
White Female					2.23	(1.26)
Black Male					1.72	(0.75)
Black Female					4.24	(3.38)
Other Race Male					1.72	(1.11)
Other Race Female					7.35	(8.39)
Offender's Race/Ethnicity & Sex						
White Female					1.35	(1.06)
Black Male					1.83	(0.76)
Black Female					2.40	(1.69)
Other Race Male					6.47**	(4.50)
<i>N</i>	256		256		255	
<i>AIC</i>	349.43		301.54		303.03	
<i>BIC</i>	356.52		365.35		377.40	

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

Table 8: Proportion of Independent Variables by Homicide Circumstance

	Argument/Domestic Violence	Drug- or Gang- Related	Accident, Negligence, or Justifiable	Other Criminal Circumstances	Unknown
Shame Present (yes)	.10		.02	.03	
Victim's Race/Ethnicity & Sex					
White Male	.22	.27	.40	.41	.15
White Female	.17	.03	.07	.16	.13
Black Male	.36	.60	.38	.32	.48
Black Female	.13	.03	.02		.08
Other Race Male	.09	.07	.10	.08	.10
Other Race Female	.02		.03	.03	.08
Victim's Age					
24 & Under	.38	.37	.28	.35	.33
25 to 35	.25	.40	.40	.27	.38
36+	.37	.23	.32	.38	.30
Offender's Race/Ethnicity & Sex					
White Male	.20	.20	.58	.24	.23
White Female	.04		.10	.03	
Black Male	.49	.67	.20	.62	.68
Black Female	.10	.07	.05	.03	.05
Other Race Male	.15	.07	.07	.08	.05
Other Race Female	.01				
Offender's Age					
24 & Under	.45	.70	.23	.65	.33
25 to 35	.34	.20	.35	.19	.48
36+	.21	.10	.42	.16	.20
Weapon					
Firearm	.62	.90	.83	.84	.75
Blunt Force/Strangulation	.21	.03	.03	.08	.08
Sharp Force	.13	.07	.03	.03	.18
Other/Unknown	.03		.10	.05	

Homicide Circumstance	.35	.12	.23	.14	.16
Homicide Circumstance Count	89	30	60	37	40

N=256

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

Table 9: Multinomial Logistic Regression of Homicide Circumstances

	Argument/Domestic Violence		Drug- or Gang-Related		Other Criminal Circumstances		Unknown	
Shame Present	18.20*	(22.92)	0.00	(0.01)	4.33	(6.73)	0.00	(0.00)
Victim's Race/Ethnicity & Sex								
White Female	4.06	(3.28)	0.80	(1.05)	2.53	(2.23)	6.35	(6.31)
Black Male	0.73	(0.43)	0.68	(0.47)	0.23*	(0.16)	1.08	(0.77)
Black Female	4.65	(5.68)	0.83	(1.34)	0.00	(0.00)	3.55	(4.83)
Other Race Male	1.65	(1.28)	0.79	(0.82)	0.76	(0.70)	2.66	(2.45)
Other Race Female	1.10	(1.43)	0.00	(0.00)	0.70	(1.04)	8.15	(10.62)
Victim's Age								
25 to 35	0.53	(0.29)	1.10	(0.70)	0.87	(0.54)	0.75	(0.47)
36+	0.91	(0.51)	0.75	(0.54)	1.22	(0.77)	0.71	(0.47)
Offender's Race/Ethnicity & Sex								
White Female	1.14	(1.02)	0.00	(0.00)	0.21	(0.29)	0.00	(0.00)
Black Male	9.00***	(5.12)	8.11**	(5.67)	13.65***	(8.96)	12.60***	(8.14)
Black Female	8.14*	(8.01)	7.83	(9.66)	3.58	(4.89)	4.24	(5.19)
Other Race Male	3.72	(2.93)	2.28	(2.49)	2.41	(2.34)	0.84	(0.92)
Other Race Female	1.6e+07	(8.2e+10)	1.08	(9797.39)	1.47	(12446.90)	0.63	(5236.38)
Offender's Age								
25 to 35	0.57	(0.30)	0.24*	(0.16)	0.20*	(0.13)	1.43	(0.86)
36+	0.14***	(0.08)	0.07**	(0.06)	0.12**	(0.08)	0.22*	(0.16)
Weapon								
Blunt Force/ Strangulation	7.00*	(6.27)	1.09	(1.48)	2.27	(2.40)	2.39	(2.59)
Sharp Force	20.50**	(19.51)	13.10*	(15.76)	3.52	(4.77)	39.34***	(40.57)
Other/Unknown	0.48	(0.49)	0.00	(0.00)	2.10	(2.31)	0.00	(0.00)
<i>N</i>	256							
<i>AIC</i>	762.13							
<i>BIC</i>	1031.56							

Exponentiated coefficients (relative risk ratios); Standard errors in parentheses; model base outcome: Accident, Negligent, or Justifiable Homicide

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Tulsa Police Department Solved Homicides, 2010 to 2015

CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION

Homicide studies often include data from UCR or NIBRS reports, which are coded by law enforcement professionals. Researchers need reliable data to obtain reliable results; however, rarely are the coding definitions and the reliability or agreement to which they are classified examined by homicide researchers. Answering the call of others to examine homicides at an individual level, this study is novel in its approach of assessing both the underlying data themselves, as well as analyzing the data to explain homicides.

In Chapter 3, two IRA studies were conducted. In the first study, graduate student coders were provided definitions for four variables of interest: Homicide Circumstance, Instrumental/Expressive, Shame/Humiliation, and Victim-Offender Relationship. There were 563 cases and four individual coding responses for each of the variables. The results of the first IRA study were a moderate level of agreement for all four variables. Feedback was obtained from some of the raters, leading to the addition of clarifying language to the definitions.

In the second IRA study, there were 262 cases. Four graduate students attended a short training session and received the amended definitions. They then rated the same four variables for all of the cases, later resolving any discrepancies for usage in analyses of parts two and three of this study. The results of the second IRA study were improved agreement for Homicide Circumstance (substantial agreement) and Shame/Humiliation (substantial agreement), whereas Instrumental/Expressive and Victim-Offender Relationship stayed at a moderate level of agreement.

In Chapter 4 of this research, I examined the role of victim-offender relationship in predicting whether a homicide was instrumental or expressive. There were 256 cases with non-

missing data (after an imputation strategy) that were analyzed using two binary logistic regression models with victim-offender relationship as the key independent variable.

Consistent with the findings of many researchers, stranger relationships were significantly more likely to be instrumental homicides than any other victim-offender relationship. However, victim-offender relationship alone did not explain instrumental vs. expressive homicides. Indeed, other variables were salient in predicting homicide types, such as the victim's sex (female), offender's race/ethnicity (Other race), and weapon choice (sharp force) for expressive homicides.

For the final section of this research (Chapter 5), I focused on the role of shame in homicide motivations. Other researchers, namely Anderson (1999) and Websdale (2010), have identified a construct of shame as a motivator in homicides. For Anderson (1999), it was the loss of "respect" whereas for Websdale (2010) it was "humiliated fury". I theorized these were the same sociologically constructed idea of shame, and predicted shame would be a significant predictor in homicides with an interpersonal conflict motive.

First, I utilized three binary logistic regression models (N=256) to determine if shame was a significant predictor of instrumental vs. expressive homicides. The first model contained shame as the only independent variable. The second model included shame, victim-offender relationship, victim demographics, offender demographics, and weapon choice. The third model included shame, victim-offender relationship, a combined variable of victim race/ethnicity and sex, victim's age, a combined variable of offender race/ethnicity and sex, offender's age, and weapon choice.

Shame was significantly predictive of expressive homicides in all three models. Like the analyses in the second part of the study, net of shame, victim-offender relationship remained a significant predictor of expressive homicides, where all victim-offender relationship types were more likely than strangers to be involved in expressive homicides. Sharp force was a significant predictor of expressive homicides, as was Other Race male offenders.

Second, I utilized a multinomial logistic regression model (N=256) to determine if shame was a significant predictor of the homicide circumstance. Net of all of the other variables in the model (the same variables as the second logistic regression model), shame was a significant predictor of argument/domestic violence homicides. Other variables (Black male offenders, offender's age, and weapon choice) were significant in their abilities to predict different homicide circumstances as well.

There are theoretical and practical implications for the entirety of this study. Firstly, the IRA studies highlight the need for researchers to empirically assess definitions and coding decisions, particularly since the variables are used extensively in criminological research. While it was outside the scope of this particular study, it remains unknown whether law enforcement professionals (with additional case information) can code with higher levels of agreement than graduate students. Having this information is critical to determine if more comprehensive definitions and/or additional training in coding is needed. A better understanding of these variables and their construction/coding is foundational for homicide research.

Secondly, this study answers the call of previous researchers to examine homicide motives at the individual level of the homicide itself. Previous studies have operationalized motive as a combination of variables, such as victim-offender relationship and weapon choice,

instead of assessing them as individual, discrete variables. This adds to the growing body of research on homicides and the importance and complexity of their study.

Lastly, and most importantly, this study operationalizes the concept of shame in a way that builds on and combines existing literature on violence and homicide motives. This is both theoretically and practically important. Defining shame in this manner will allow future researchers to both conduct qualitative analyses to tease out the particulars of shame in interpersonal conflict and empirically assess its role in homicidal motivations in larger, more representative samples. Identifying shame as a significant predictor of certain homicides also lends to policy recommendations. Indeed, policies that focus on the social context of shame and teaching prosocial ways to deal with shame and humiliation, particularly for boys and young men, are key intervening points to reduce violence and homicides.

Shame and humiliation don't have to be fatal.

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