**SOC 3290 Deviance**

**Overheads Lecture 19: Homicide 1**

\* Today we will look at:

(1) Canadian Homicide Statistics

(2) Theories of Homicide

1. **Canadian Homicide Statistics 2018:**

* In 2018, police reported 651 homicides, 15 fewer than the previous year. This represents a 4% decrease in the homicide rate from 1.82 homicides per 100,000 population in 2017 to 1.76 in 2018.
* The decrease in the national number of homicides was a result of notably fewer victims in Alberta (-38 homicides), British Columbia (-30), Quebec (-10) and Nova Scotia (-10), but was offset by a record increase in Ontario due to homicides in the Toronto census metropolitan area.
* There were 266 homicides reported in Ontario in 2018, an increase of 69 from 2017. This is the highest number of homicides and the largest year over year increase reported in a single province since Statistics Canada began collecting this data in 1961. With a rate of 1.86 per 100,000 population, it is also the highest rate in Ontario since 1991 (2.36).
* With 142 victims in 2018, Toronto, Canada’s most populated census metropolitan area (CMA), had the most homicides of all CMAs as well as the most homicides ever reported in Toronto since collection at the CMA level began in 1981. This is a 53% increase in the number of victims (93 victims in 2017) and a 50% increase in the rate of homicide from 2017 (1.51 victims per 100,000 population in 2017 to 2.26 victims per 100,000 population in homicides 2018).
* The national rates for both firearm-related (-8%) and gang-related (-5%) homicides declined in 2018. This marks the first decrease in firearm-related homicides since 2013 and the first decrease in gang-related homicides since 2014.
* The national year over year decline in the number of firearm-related homicides (-18) is a result of fewer firearm-related homicides in areas outside of census metropolitan areas (-20).
* In 2018, there were 140 Indigenous victims of homicide, a decrease from 157 in 2017. Although the rate of homicide for Indigenous peoples in 2018 decreased from 2017 (7.31 per 100,000 Indigenous people in 2018 compared to 8.45 in 2017), it was still approximately five times higher than the rate for non-Indigenous people (1.44 per 100,000 non-Indigenous people in 2018). The highest rates of homicide were among Indigenous male victims, followed by Indigenous females and non-Indigenous males.
* Spousal homicide was the only category of homicide to increase in 2018 (+9 victims). In contrast, there were 31 fewer homicides committed by someone with whom the victim had a criminal relationship (e.g., drug dealers and their clients).

**(2) Why do people kill?**

\* Three kinds of theory attempt to explain homicide:

(1) *Biogenic*

(2) *Psychogenic*

(3) *Sociogenic*

(1) *Biogenic* theories: ethological & genetic approaches:

*Ethological*: humans, like other animals, have killer instinct. Yet, as we suddenly developed artificial weapons, no inhibiting instinct stops us (cant explain why some murder rathe r than others)

*Genetic*: killer genes/XYY chromosome (empirical problems)

(2) *Psychogenic* theories: psychoanalytic theory & frustration-

Aggression:

*Psychoanalytic*: Poor ego development allows desires & thanatos

(the death instinct) comprising the id to rule (untestable/ applicable to only a few killers)

*Frustration-Aggression*: goal frustration increases the odds of

aggression (some limited empirical support)

(3) *Sociogenic* theories:

*External constraint* theory: whether frustrated people commit

homicide or suicide depends on: (i) if they experience weak or

strong external constraints; & (ii) type of punishment experienced

during socialization (physical vs. psychological). Some empirical

support for this approach

*Subculture of violence* theory: socialization into a violent model of

behavior & value system by family/peers (problem is other factors

are associated more with violence, such as poverty)

*Victim-offender precipitation*: the victim either provokes or gets

into an escalating dispute with the offender to save face

*Structural* theories: feminist arguments about patriarchal violence

\* Next class: victims of homicide.