Final Paper: Murder

I will be studying types of weapons used in the murder cases of police officers in the United States; They range from hands to firearms. I will also be studying the victims and offenders of the murder cases. I am using data compiled from all over the United States that is centralized in the FBI’s Uniformed Crime Report. I am looking more specifically at a few different races of the victims of homicide. Also including what age, race and sex the offenders were.

The first things I will be looking at are the weapons that law enforcement officers were killed with. This dati set ranges from 2003 to 2012. In 2003 there were 52 police officers that were killed. Of said 52 officers 45 were killed by firearms, consisting of: 34 handguns, ten rifles, and one shotgun. The remaining deaths were spread out into only two other groups: blunt instruments and vehicle. A blunt instrument killed only one officer and vehicles killed the other six. These numbers slightly go up in 2007 halfway through the ten years of data collected on this topic. There were 58 total victims. 56 were killed by firearm, of those firearms 39 were handguns, eight were rifles, eight were shotgun and one firearm type was not reported; Only two were killed by vehicle. These numbers went up in the aspect of number of firearms used to kill police officers but the vehicular murder went down by 66.6%, which is a good thing. Also the number of rifles used went down at the expense of the shotguns that were used went up. But in 2011 numbers skyrocketed with 72 officers killed, 63 of them being with firearms, 50 specifically handguns and 13 with rifles and shotguns. One officer was killed with a knife, two were killed with personal weapons (hands, feet, etc.) and a total of six were killed by vehicle. This came after a slight decline in all officers killed in 2008-2009, 2010 went up but only slightly. And in 2012 the number of officers killed was the second lowest it ever had been, at 48 total killed. This low was also in 2006 and 2009. The amount of officers killed goes up and down with no real trend being low in 2003 to high in 2004 back low in 2005 and even lower in 2006 then highest yet in 2007 to lowest ever in 2008, high again in 2009, higher in 2010, then highest ever in 2011, and back low in 2012. (See graph one). In regards to the number of officers killed with firearms and with the recent “assault rifle” scares, even though only a small select group of data was observed these data show that the majority of murders was committed with handguns and not rifles. These data are not specific to what type of rifle was used so feeding into that are all types of rifles. So taking that into consideration it is a possibility of an overwhelmingly low amount of “assault rifles” were used which is contrary to popular belief that “assault rifles” are responsible for an extremely large amount of deaths in the United States.

For this next section I am going to focus on the murder offenders in the different categories of age, sex, and race. I sought out the top three highest numbers for race, sex, and age. The age with the highest murder offences is 20-24 with 2,417 total murderers. The second highest was 25-29 with 1,649 murderers, and the third highest is 17-19 with 1,487 murderers. Of the 2,417 murders between the 20-24 age range 2,179 of them were males, 235 were females and three unknown. Of those 2,179 males 904 were white, 1,435 were black, 55 other, and 23 unknown. With the age range at 25-29 there were 1,649 murders and of those 1,456 were male, 187 were female and 6 unknown. In the 1,456 male 747 were white, 836 were black, 45 were other, and 21 were unknown. The third highest was 17-19 with 1,487 murderers. Of those 1,487, 1,371 were male and 116 female. 449 of the murderers were white, 946 were black, 34 other and 8 unknown. (See table one). The trend here is that the majority of the offenders are black males although white males still have a huge role in this statistic. Females play a very small role in the murder statistics but that does not mean it doesn’t happen. In this case the publics belief that black males are more likely to commit murder is true but these data do show that white males hold a much higher majority over the “other” category, which includes the Latinos who are seen by the media as a huge part in the gang wars that are going on.

For the third and final section I will be looking at the victims of murders: the three highest age ranges, sex and race. The highest-ranking number of victims is age range 20-24 with 2,329 victims. Of those victims 2,010 of them were male, 316 were female and 3 unknown. In the category of race there were 781 whites that were killed, 1,471 blacks, 52 other and 25 unknown. In the age range of 25-29 there was a total of 1,892 murder victims: 1,573 were males, 317 were females, and two unknown. Of the total number of victims 698 were white, 1,125 were black, 50 other and 19 unknown. In the last age range of 30-34 there were a total of 1,414 victims: 1,164 were male, 248 were female and 2 were unknown. Of the total number of victims 601 were white, 772 were black, 29 other and 12 were unknown. With these data the gap between the whites and blacks being killed is a little smaller but it is very obvious that there are more blacks that have been killed. These data also support the fact that the gang war is a very big problem and that blacks do have a bigger involvement in the illegal actions. Also the amount of “other” victims was very low showing us that the “drug war” is not yielding as many deaths in the Latino areas of the United States as most people come to believe.

After looking at all of the data I have come to multiple conclusions. The first one being that a large majority of the murders of police officers are due to handguns and not “assault rifles”, also that there is really no cycle to the amount of police officer deaths year after year. The second being that it is true that backs do kill more people than whites and that according to these data there are not a lot of Latinos committing murder in relation to drug trafficking. Lastly blacks do indeed get killed more than whites do. This could be in relation to gangs but whites do have some gang affiliations. All data that was used was taken out of the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report on the FBI’s webpage.

Graph One: Weapons Used to Kill Police Officers

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Total | Sex | Race |
| Male | Female | Unknown | White | Black | Other | Unknown |
| 20 to 24 | 2,417 | 2,179 | 235 | 3 | 904 | 1,435 | 55 | 23 |
| 25 to 29 | 1,649 | 1,456 | 187 | 6 | 747 | 836 | 45 | 21 |
| 17 to 19 | 1,487 | 1,371 | 116 | 0 | 499 | 946 | 34 | 8 |

 Table one: Murder Offenders-2011

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Total | Sex | Race |
| Male | Female | Unknown | White | Black | Other | Unknown |
| 20 to 24 | 2,329 | 2,010 | 316 | 3 | 781 | 1,471 | 52 | 25 |
| 25 to 29 | 1,892 | 1,573 | 317 | 2 | 698 | 1,125 | 50 | 19 |
| 30 to 34 | 1,414 | 1,164 | 248 | 2 | 601 | 772 | 29 | 12 |

Table Two: Murder Victims-2011