

A Decade of Child-Initiated Family Violence

Comparative Analysis of Child–Parent Violence and Parricide Examining Offender, Victim, and Event Characteristics in a National Sample of Reported Incidents, 1995-2005

Jeffrey A. Walsh

Jessie L. Krienert

Illinois State University, Normal

This article examines 11 years (1995-2005) of National Incident Based Reporting System data comparing victim, offender, and incident characteristics for two types of child-initiated family violence: child–parent violence (CPV) and parricide. The objective is to better understand the victim–offender relationship for CPV and parricide and to highlight distinguishing features between the two offenses. This work extends the research and addresses shortcomings in the extant literature. Data analysis consists of chi-square tests and logistic regression. Findings suggest that CPV and parricide are distinct and unique crimes. In short, parricide offenders and victims are both older than CPV offenders and victims, with CPV offenders more likely to be female, more likely to be African American, and less likely to use a weapon than parricide offenders. The study calls for future research and exploration of preliminary support for a family violence escalation hypothesis.

Keywords: *child–parent violence; parricide; family violence, escalation, violence; juveniles*

The empirical study of family violence, although certainly not a new pursuit, has been dramatically transformed over the past 50 years by historically influential social forces, changing social conventions, and improved

Authors' Note: The opinions expressed herein are solely the authors' and do not reflect the opinions or official position of any other individuals or organizations. Please address correspondence to Jeffrey A. Walsh, Department of Criminal Justice Sciences, Illinois State University, Campus Box 5250, Normal, IL 61791; e-mail: jawalsh@ilstu.edu.

research opportunities and methodologies. Although the purview of family violence has been expanded through the discovery and study of additional types of intrafamilial violence such as elder abuse, sibling violence, child-parent violence (CPV) and parricide, adult-initiated family violence, including violence between intimates and violence by parents toward their children, remains the primary focus (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 2006). Far less prevalent in the burgeoning family violence literature are empirical studies of child-initiated violence against parents; examples include parental abuse and its more malign counterpart, parricide—the common though somewhat misused term that although technically referring to the killing of a close relative has become synonymous with the killing of one or both parents (Heide & Petee, 2003). The term *parricide* is used here to refer to the killing of one's parent(s) (Heide, 1995)—a topic that has been largely neglected by the extant literature. The reasons for a lack of prior research are varied though in large part stem from cultural views about family and a general reluctance in modern society to place blame on children for norm-violating behavior. Furthermore, with specific regard to parricide, the relative low incidence has likely contributed to neglect of the topic in the empirical literature.

The emphasis of the present work is on this understudied vein of family violence—child-initiated family violence with a biological or stepchild perpetrator ages 7 through 21—specifically CPV and parricide in which the victim and offender roles are reversed or contrary to what is expected, with the parent cast as the victim and the child as the aggressor. The work is conducted in an effort to better understand the victim-offender relationship and to identify how these two types of child-initiated family violence might be similar (or different) across several victim, offender, and incident characteristics. More specifically, this research seeks to identify whether CPV offenders and parricide offenders comprise the same population of offenders under 21 years of age or whether evidence exists to suggest that these groups consist of unique, mutually exclusive offenders. Similarly, this work examines victimization patterns looking at age, race, and victim-offender relationship to determine whether victims of CPV and parricide share a pooled victim population. Incident characteristics, including weapon usage and drug and alcohol consumption, are also examined across both CPV and parricide.

An objective of this work is to address several reoccurring shortcomings identified in both the CPV and parricide literature. Extant shortcomings include an overreliance on small cross-sectional clinical samples and case studies, a lack of publicly available official records crime data, an underexamination of victim-offender relationships, and a host of methodological and measurement issues, all of which significantly limit external validity

(Walsh & Krienert, 2007; Walsh, Krienert, & Crowder, 2008; for examples and a more thorough discussion of many of these shortcomings in the CPV literature, see Agnew and Huguley, 1989; for examples in the parricide literature, see Newhill, 1991; or Shon and Targonski, 2003). The present work is exploratory and descriptive, offering important insights into victim and offender characteristics that may help to generate hypothesis testing, social service responses, education, and follow-up qualitative study.

The work concludes with a speculative offering of an escalation hypothesis and calls for additional research into this potential. It is suggested that some forms of CPV may escalate through a cycle of family violence and conflict beginning with relatively innocuous family discord and increasing in frequency and severity through more malign behaviors and eventually culminating in parricide. The parent's inability or unwillingness to impose meaningful discipline may have the deleterious effect of undermining informal family controls and acceptable codes of conduct.

A Review of the CPV Literature

CPV is a social problem that has remained well hidden for decades (Robinson, Davidson, & Drebot, 2004). Harbin and Madden (1979) are credited with first identifying this new form of family violence: "battered parent syndrome." More recently, Cottrell (2001) identified CPV as a crime of assault against one's parent(s) done to intentionally cause physical, psychological, or financial pain to gain control and power over a parent. Since its first formal acknowledgement nearly 30 years ago, CPV has remained a neglected subtype of family violence, though by nearly all estimates, CPV is a pervasive and growing social problem with broad implications (Robinson et al., 2004).

Complicating efforts to document the extent of the problem, parental victims of CPV frequently go to great lengths to protect their abusive children from formal legal responses to their abusive behavior by not reporting and thereby keeping their abuse hidden. Similar to other abuse victims, when confronted, victims frequently deny the abuse or mitigate the severity of the abuse in an attempt to maintain an illusion of normalcy (Kethineni, 2004). For these reasons, CPV is least likely to be reported to law enforcement, although it is estimated to be more prevalent than both spousal abuse and child abuse (Charles, 1986). Despite the gross underreporting that plagues this crime, there is little doubt that CPV is a hardship endured by a significant number of parents with published figures falling far short of actual estimates (Jackson, 2003). Work by Pelletier and Coutru

(1992) more than a decade ago found that 18% of two-parent and 29% of single-parent families experience CPV. These estimates, when projected to the entire population of families in the United States, equate to millions of incidents of CPV annually, the vast majority of which go unreported (Walsh & Krienert, 2007).

Offender Characteristics

The gender predominance of the offender varies across studies depending on the methodology used. For example, “[c]linical (e.g., Harbin & Madden, 1979; Laurent & Derry, 1999), anecdotal (Dugas, Mouren, & Halfon, 1985), and forensic studies (Cochran, Brown, Adams, & Doherty, 1994) suggest sons as more likely perpetrators than daughters” (Pagani et al., 2004, p. 528). McCloskey and Lichter (2003), using a convenience sample of 296 mother-child pairs over a 10-year period found no gender differences in reported child-parent aggression. Conversely, larger size epidemiology studies, although not statistically significant, find slight gender differences with 9.7% ($n = 62$) of females engaged in assault compared to 8.8% ($n = 62$) of males (Agnew & Huguley, 1989; Pagani et al., 2004). Walsh and Krienert (2007) in their 1-year study of 17,957 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) incidents with offenders 21 years of age or younger found that males accounted for a majority of all forms of CPV including intimidation, simple assault, and aggravated assault representing between 60% and 73% of offenders, respectively.

The age of onset and peak age of offender also tends to vary depending on the study methodology and age inclusion parameters. Ullman and Straus (2003), using data from the 1975 National Family Violence Survey, found that children between the ages of 3 and 5 years had the highest rates of CPV, with approximately one third of the 1,023 child sample having been violent to a parent in the preceding 12 months. However, Paulson, Coombs, and Landsverk (1990) found that younger children between the ages of 9 and 11 were less likely to abuse their parents than 12-to 14-year-olds or 15-to 17-year-olds in their examination of 445 families. Cottrell (2001) found that children between 12 and 14 years old were peak offenders in her Canadian sample of 45 parents, 39 teenagers, and 34 community workers. Kethineni (2004) found that in her 5-year case sample consisting of 85 families, adolescents age 15 to 16 were the group most likely to be abusive, with female perpetrators tending to be younger than males. Walsh and Krienert (2007) found offenders between 14 and 17 years of age to be most predominant for all three of their categories of CPV (intimidation, simple

assault, aggravated assault). As evidenced by a meta-analysis conducted by Ullman and Straus (2003), sample age categories used in past studies vary dramatically, and one can only speculate on the impact these seemingly arbitrary age parameters have on study outcomes and findings.

Prior findings suggest that there is little question as to the predominant race of the CPV offender, with Whites consistently more likely to be perpetrators than Blacks. Kethineni's (2004) sample of juvenile offenders was composed of 68% ($n = 56$) White, 24% ($n = 20$) Black, 5% ($n = 4$) Hispanic, 2% ($n = 2$) Asian, and 1% ($n = 1$) Other. Agnew and Huguley (1989) also found Whites more likely to assault parents than Blacks, with 9.8% of White males offending compared to 4.9% of Black males, though the racial differences were only statistically significant for females with 10.8% of White females assaulting parents compared to 2.4% of Black females. Furthermore, Charles (1986) found that 32% of his sample of White youth ($n = 79$) were abusive compared to a mere 5% of youth in the Black sample ($n = 121$). Walsh and Krienert (2007) also found Whites to be the predominant offenders, with significant racial differences for aggravated assaults and intimidation. Table 1 provides a selected examination of extant research on child-initiated violence.

Victim Characteristics

Much of the prior literature suggests that mothers are the most likely victims of CPV. For example, Nock and Kazdin (2002) found that 88% of their 606-case clinical sample perpetrated parent-directed aggression toward their biological mother, followed by their adoptive mother (5.4%), other (4.1), and finally their biological father (2.7). Similarly, Kethineni (2004) found that biological mothers were the victims of CPV in 81% of cases.

Currently there is discrepant research suggesting that fathers may experience a disproportionate amount of violence compared to mothers. For example, Peek, Fischer, and Kidwell (1985), studying a sample of 1,545 sophomore, junior, and senior male high school students drawn from the larger Youth in Transition study, found that between 5% and 8% of sophomore, junior, and senior males reported hitting their fathers compared to between 2% and 6% hitting their mothers. Furthermore, the male youth also directed more actual abuse and more proportional violence toward their fathers than toward their mothers.

Evans and Warren-Sohlberg (1988) found that in 49% of the 73 cases in their police record sample, sons abused mothers, compared to 16% of cases of sons abusing fathers. Adolescent males were three times more likely to abuse

Table 1
A Review of Selected Examinations of Child-Parent
Violence (CPV) and Parricide

Study	Offense	Victim	Sample
Agnew & Huguley, 1989	CPV	Parent	1972 National Survey of Youth; Interviews with 1,395 adolescents age 11-18
Boots & Heide, 2006	Parricide	Parent, stepparent	Content analysis of news reports from 226 parricide cases from 1870-2003
Braithwaite, 2007	Parricide	Parent, stepparent	Content analysis of 30 juvenile parricide cases from major metropolitan newspapers from 1995-2005
Brezina, 1996	CPV	Parent	1966 Youth in Transition Survey; 1,886 male public high school sophomores and juniors
Charles, 1986	CPV	Parent	Retrospective clinical sample; 300 inpatient and outpatient psychiatric cases, including 50 CPV cases
Cottrell, 2001	CPV	Parent	Individual and focus group interviews with 45 parents, 39 teenagers, and 34 community workers
Cottrell & Monk, 2004	CPV	Parent	Combines two Canadian studies; Individual and focus group interviews with 70 community workers, 62 parents, and 44 youth in 1995-1997
Evans & Warren-Sohlberg, 1988	CPV	Parent, stepparent	Police records over 3 years in Western Washington State; 73 cases age 12-18
Heide, 1993a, 1993b	Parricide	Parent, stepparent	Supplemental Homicide Report data 1977-1986; 2,871 adult and juvenile (under 18) cases
Heide & Petee, 2007a, 2007b	Parricide	Parent	Supplemental Homicide Report data 1976-1999; 5,781 victims; 5,558 offenders; adult and juvenile (under 18) cases
Hotaling, Straus, & Lincoln, 1989	CPV		1985 National Family Violence Survey
Jackson, 2003	CPV	Mother	Snowball sample of six Australian women recruited in health facilities

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Study	Offense	Victim	Sample
Kethineni, 2004	CPV	Parent, stepparent	Court records from one Illinois county from 1996-2001; 83 juveniles age 11-18
Marleau, Millaud, & Auclair, 2003	Parricide	Parent	Clinical sample of 39 adults found not guilty by reason of insanity between 1976 and 1999 in Canada
McCloskey & Lichter, 2003	CPV	Parent	Interviews at three time points over 10 years with mother and child; 296 mother-child pairs; Convenience Sample, 1/2 with domestic violence in the past year, 1/2 without
Millaud, Auclair, & Meunier, 1996	Parricide	Parent	Clinical sample of 12 mentally ill men in Canada; age 17-44 at time of offense
Nock & Kazdin, 2002	CPV	Biological, foster, step, or adoptive mothers	Interview and survey data from 606 children and families receiving outpatient treatment at the Yale Child Conduct Clinic; 74 cases of CPV
Pagani et al., 2004	CPV	Parent	Interviews and survey data from 1,175 parent-child dyads from kindergarten to age 15/16 in Canada
Paulson, Coombs, & Landsverk, 1990	CPV	Parent	Three interviews with a convenience sample of 445 families in Los Angeles over a 5-year period, recruited from Community Boys Clubs
Peek, Fischer, & Kidwell, 1985	CPV	Parent	1966 Youth in Transition Survey, with 1,545 White male high school juniors and seniors
Shon & Targonski, 2003	Parricide	Parent, stepparent	Supplemental Homicide Report data, 1976-1998; 6,629 cases, all ages, but victim must be at least 12 years older than the offender
Ullman & Straus, 2003	CPV	Parent	1975 National Family Violence Survey; 1,023 couples with a child between age 3 and 17 living at home
Walsh & Krienert, 2007	CPV	Parent, stepparent	National Incident-Based Reporting System data, 2002; 17,957 cases; age 21 and under
Walsh, Krienert, & Crowder, 2008	Parricide	Parent, stepparent	Supplemental Homicide Report data, 1976-2003; 2,599 cases; age 21 and under

their mothers than their fathers, whereas 32% of cases involved daughters abusing their mothers with a mere 1.4% of cases involving daughters abusing their fathers. Similarly, Walsh and Krienert (2007) found that across all three types of abuse (intimidation, simple assault, aggravated assault), mothers (both biological and step) were victims in 70% ($n = 12,646$) of cases, with biological mothers the most likely target. Furthermore, they found that females were significantly more likely than males to abuse their mothers regardless of offense type. One explanation for the dramatically disproportionate abuse of mothers may be explained by their willingness to report their victimization compared to fathers. In addition, mothers are typically primary caregivers in a single-parent home, placing them at increased risk.

Incident Characteristics

Incident characteristics extrapolated from the existing CPV literature and reviewed here include the use of a weapon and the use of alcohol and/or drugs by the offender. Charles (1986) found that female abusers tended to be younger and more likely to use a household object as a weapon, compared to males. However, Brezina (1999) states that assaults of parents by male children are less likely to be trivial and more likely to involve use of a weapon, causing additional intimidation. Nock and Kazdin (2002) found that less serious forms of abuse were perpetrated more frequently than serious forms but that most children in their 606-case clinical sample (89%) engaged in relatively aggressive behavior toward parents, including throwing objects, hitting, kicking, biting, or beating. Furthermore, females were more likely to perpetrate aggression, with males more likely to engage in extreme abuse—beatings. No children in the Nock and Kazdin study were found to have used a gun or a knife to threaten or injure a parent. Walsh and Krienert (2007) found that males were significantly more likely to use a gun in both maternal and paternal abuse cases, with females significantly more likely to use a knife in paternal abuse cases.

Several studies have linked the abuse of alcohol or drugs to parental abuse and aggression (Charles, 1986; Ellickson & McGuigan, 2000; Jackson, 2003). Cottrell and Monk (2004) found that some teens who abuse drugs or alcohol exhibit a general lack of emotion in response to their abusive behavior. Pagani et al. (2004), using longitudinal data from 1,175 parent-child dyads, found that substance abuse among adolescents actually increased mother's risk of verbal aggression by their adolescent children by 60%. Walsh and Krienert (2007) found that although drug and alcohol use were

infrequent, there were significant sex differences. Males were significantly more likely than females to use drugs or alcohol in cases of both maternal and paternal abuse.

A Review of the Parricide Literature

Turning now to the literature on parricide—the killing of one’s parent(s)—it is evident that although historically influential with both psychosocial and psychosexual undertones, parricide has also been neglected by empirical research and scholarship. Despite an enduring presence throughout history and across cultures (Newhill, 1991), there is surprisingly limited research examining this most extreme form of child-initiated family violence (Ewing, 2001; Hillbrand, Alexandre, Young, & Spitz, 1999) and, with few exceptions (Heide, 1993a, 1994; Heide & Petee, 2007a, 2007b; Shon & Targonski, 2003; Walsh et al., 2008), extremely limited work doing so with multiple years of nonclinical data. Parricide by all calculations is an infrequent crime of child-initiated murderous family violence (Hillbrand et al., 1999; Marleau, Millaud, & Auclair, 2003). The reported prevalence of parricide varies across studies, with Cooke (2001) noting that estimates of parricide committed by individuals under 18 years of age range from as little as 2% to as much as 15% of homicides. Boots and Heide (2006), using 27 years of Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) data and approximately 350,000 cases of known victim–offender relationship, found that mothers (0.9%) and fathers (1%) were victims of homicide in less than 2% of cases in which the relationship was known.

Although the number of annual incidents is not high, parricide is an offense similar to CPV, in which knowledge, explanation, and understanding are impeded by a lack of consensus about incident precursors or victim, offender, and incident characteristics. However, there is consensus that more research needs to be conducted to better understand this complex crime of child-initiated family violence. To this end, Walsh et al. (2008), studying 27 years (1976–2003) of parricide cases with an offender between the ages of 7 and 21 years old, found that contrary to popular belief and sensationalized media reporting, parricide incidents have been decreasing over time. Furthermore, Heide and Petee (2007a), examining 24 years of SHR data (1976–1999), found no indication that parricides were increasing among those under 18 years of age, measured across six time periods.

Offender Characteristics

Without exception, the act of parricide is most frequently committed by sons (Ewing, 2001; Hart & Helms, 2003; Heide, 1993a; Heide & Petee, 2007a; Hillbrand et al., 1999; Marleau et al., 2003). For example, Marleau et al. (2003) report that between 1961 and 1989, 90% of all Canadian parricides were committed by boys. Research by Hillbrand et al. (1999) suggests that, “[c]ombining data from all available studies yields a 15:1 male to female ratio of youthful perpetrators of parricide” (p. 180). Walsh et al. (2008) found that boys outnumbered girls as perpetrators by a ratio of 7:1.

Currently, there exist contradictory empirical findings regarding the most prevalent age of parricide offenders. It is important to note that although some studies do include offenders of all ages in their analyses, juvenile and adult parricide offenses are distinct and are believed to originate and evolve from largely independent etiologies (Cooke, 2001). Juvenile offenders are believed to primarily act in response to past and present abuses, whereas adult offenders are often mentally ill at the time of the killing (Heide, 1992, 1993a, 1994; Hillbrand et al., 1999; Millaud, Auclair, & Meunier, 1996). Shon and Targonski (2003), examining 6,629 male and female offenders of patricide and matricide separately, found that male offenders of patricide dramatically peak in the late teen years (17 years of age). Similarly, male offenders of matricide are also likely to be adolescents, though there is no dramatic age peak. Female offenders of patricide also tended to peak in adolescence, with too few cases involving female offenders of matricide to speculate on peak offender age. Walsh et al. (2008) found significant differences between the age of boys and girls committing parricide in the United States, with males peaking in late adolescence (18 to 21 years of age) and females peaking in midadolescence (14 to 17 years of age).

Despite significantly limited empirical inquiry, research suggests that parricide is an intraracial White crime. Although overrepresented as perpetrators of homicide, African Americans are significantly underrepresented in incidents of parricide (Hillbrand et al., 1999). Heide (1995), studying 10 years of homicide data (1977-1986), found that both parricide perpetrators and victims are predominantly White non-Hispanic. Walsh et al. (2008) corroborated Heide's (1995) earlier results, finding that White males (68%) and White females (62%) committed parricide more frequently than other races. However, Walsh et al. also found that girls committing parricide were significantly more likely to be African American than boys, with female offenders of patricide significantly more likely to be African American.

Victim Characteristics

Victimology has led to an understanding that victims play an instrumental role in the criminal event (Newhill, 1991). This is not to imply that victims are to blame for their victimization but rather to suggest that they are not always hapless, helpless, or random. "The stereotype of a victim as a helpless, passive individual, and the perpetrator as an overly aggressive individual is not always correct; and this is certainly true in many cases of parricide" (Newhill, 1991, p. 381).

Existing studies, both national and international in scope, reveal that patricides outnumber matricides. Walsh et al. (2008), examining 27 years of parricide cases (1976-2003) with an offender 21 years of age and younger, found that patricides outnumbered matricides nearly 4:1. Although much of the existing research neglects biological and stepparent relationship distinctions, a review of the research literature by Ewing (2001) identified that perpetrators under the age of 18 are most likely to kill their stepfathers, then their stepmothers, followed by their fathers, and lastly their mothers. Ewing (2001) speculates that this is due to greater conflict experienced between children and their stepparents. Alternatively, Heide's (1993a) study found the victim ordering as follows: biological fathers, followed by biological mothers, then stepfathers, and finally stepmothers. Similarly, Walsh et al. (2008) found that victims were more likely to be male with no significant offender sex differences, though biological parents were more likely to be killed than stepparents by a ratio of nearly 3:1. Results further suggest that girls were significantly more likely than boys to kill a stepparent. In sum, the predominant parental relationship between victims and offenders has remained conflicted and uncertain, likely due in part to differing methodologies, operationalization, and analytical techniques.

Heide's (1993a) study, inclusive of all parricide offenders and victims regardless of age, revealed that the mean age of biological fathers was 54; biological mothers, 58; stepfathers, 46; and stepmothers, 50. Heide and Petee's (2007a) analysis of parricide incidents from 1976-1999 revealed very similar results to those of Heide's earlier study covering 1977-1986: mean ages of biological fathers and mothers were 55 and 58, respectively. Shon and Targonski (2003), using a more broadly defined definition of parents, conclude that both fathers and mothers are at greatest risk of being killed in their early 40s. Walsh et al. (2008) found that the mean age of both biological mothers and fathers was 46 years of age, with the mean age of stepfathers and stepmothers being 42 years of age.

There is limited information in the prior literature examining the race of the victim, though Shon and Targonski (2003), in their study of 6,629 victims, found that nearly 70% of victims were White and 28% were African American. More recent work by Walsh et al. (2008) found that 67% of victims were White and 31% were African American, a slight shift when compared to earlier works. It is interesting that Walsh et al. also found that African American victims were significantly more likely to be killed by a daughter (36%, $n = 121$) than by a son (30%, $n = 682$), whereas White victims were significantly more likely to be killed by a son (68%, $n = 1,528$) than by a daughter (63%, $n = 212$). Heide and Petee (2003, 2007a) also note significant victim race differences, with victims of matricide events even more likely to be White than those in patricide events from 1976-1999. In 3,189 patricide incidents, 68% of victims were White and 30% were Black. In 2,592 matricide incidents, 75% of victims were White and 23% were Black.

Incident Characteristics

Adult and adolescent parricide offenders differ in their choice of weapons. Heide (1993b) found that juveniles during the period 1977-1986 were significantly more likely than adults to use firearms to kill fathers (82% vs. 60%), mothers (65% vs. 34%), and stepfathers (75% vs. 62%). Adults were significantly more likely than juveniles to use other methods (knives, blunt objects, personal weapons) to kill parents. However, these methods did not overshadow the use of firearms by adults to kill parents. Heide and Petee's (2007b) analysis of weapon usage in parricidal incidents from 1976-1999 by juveniles and adults revealed amazingly consistent findings with respect to firearms used to kill fathers (80% vs. 57%) and mothers (62% vs. 38%). Shon and Targonski's (2003) review of the literature uncovered discrepant findings across studies regarding the use of weapons. Several studies reviewed suggest that weapons other than firearms are most prevalent (see Green, 1981; Millaud et al., 1996; Shon & Targonski, 2003; Weisman & Sharma, 1997). The discrepant findings are likely due in large part to differences in the data sources used, with studies involving relatively small samples of hospitalized patients likely to use knives and weapons other than firearms. Shon and Targonski, using a graphical analysis rather than a statistical analysis of SHR data from 1976-1998, also replicate Heide's (1993a) physical strength hypothesis. Walsh et al. (2008), also studying SHR data, found similar results, that boys committing patricides are significantly more likely to use a firearm than girls (who are significantly more likely to use a knife). Walsh et al. also found that both

boys (67%, $n = 1,506$) and girls (60%, $n = 198$) preferred using a gun rather than a knife, though when a knife was used, girls were significantly more likely than boys to be the assailant.

Limitations of Prior CPV and Parricide Research

The extant CPV and parricide literature provides important context and insight into the demographic and incident-based correlates of these two types of child-initiated family violence. Nevertheless, there are several reoccurring and mutually shared shortcomings in the literature that have plagued prior studies of CPV and parricide. First and most notably, there is a dearth of empirical research addressing these offenses with much of what does exist consisting of small clinical samples and case studies. Due to the potential for extreme variability across small clinical samples and the resulting lack of generalizability, many of the findings from past work exploring characteristics such as victim–offender age, gender, race, relationship, use of weapons, and substance abuse, are contradictory and inconclusive.

The few existing large-scale empirical studies drawing on national samples of data also suffer from noteworthy data limitations. The most common problems these studies encounter are a reliance on antiquated data, restrictive and limited age parameters of offenders, and unspecified parent–child relationships. For example, a study of CPV published in 1989 relied on data gathered from a sample of 1,395 youth as part of the National Youth Survey in 1972—data collected 17 years earlier (Agnew & Huguley, 1989). Similarly, a study published in 1999 analyzed data collected from the 1966 Youth in Transition Survey ($n = 1,886$)—data collected 33 years prior and limited to only 10th graders (Brezina, 1999). Yet another study of CPV, published in 1990 and drawing on data from the 1985 National Family Violence Survey ($n = 2,688$), was limited to children living with both parents (Hotelling, Straus, & Lincoln, 1989).

Turning to the crime of parricide, there are currently very few nonclinical studies drawing on officially reported data represented in the literature. Heide (1992) published the first large-sample study drawing on 10 years of officially reported parricide cases extracted from the SHR, 1977–1986. Heide's work, although seminal in the study of parricide, was reliant on data that was 7 years old. Furthermore, Heide (1993a) included all parricide cases with a 1:1 victim–offender relationship in her study, with limited control for offender and victim age. Shon and Targonski (2003) expanded on Heide's (1995) work by using newly available SHR data that included the years 1976–1998. However, Shon and Targonski's (2003) work was

primarily a graphical trend analysis rather than a statistical analysis, and their case inclusion criteria (as it applied to age) only resulted in cases where the victim was at least 12 years older than the offender or where the age of the offender or victim was missing. Heide and Petee (2007a, 2007b) replicated Heide's earlier study using all parricidal incidents that occurred from 1976 to 1999. Their study examined victim, offender, and incident correlates between juveniles under 18 years and adult offenders. Most recently, Walsh et al. (2008) used the most comprehensive data available consisting of 27 years (1976-2003) of parricide cases extracted from the SHR to study victim, offender, and incident correlates. Their study used an offender age inclusion threshold of between 7 and 21 years of age.

In light of these shortcomings, we seek to address several of the above concerns by using official NIBRS data in such a way that has not been done previously to compare CPV and parricide cases across several offender, victim, and incident cases. Currently, to the best of our knowledge, only one CPV study of a single year of NIBRS data exists, with not a single empirical study of parricide drawing on NIBRS data existing in the literature. We believe this to be the only comparative analysis of these two types of child-initiated family violence.

In sum, a review of both the CPV and parricide literature reveals discrepant findings across an array of study methodologies frequently using unique non-generalizable samples infrequently reflective of national or cross-national samples and rarely drawing on officially reported offenses. Furthermore, although the extant literature does occasionally lend itself to CPV and parricide comparisons across various child-initiated family violence characteristics, none of the comparisons has been drawn intentionally using comparative and comparable data. The present work allows for these comparisons.

Method

The current study consists of a comparative analysis of reported CPV and parricide perpetrated by a child age 7 through 21 years of age, across several offender, victim, and incident characteristics. The age of 7 was selected as the lower age limit, because many jurisdictions do not recognize legal wrongdoing of children under 7; and 21 years was selected as the upper limit, as it is recognized that by age 21 years, most youth no longer reside in the home (Arnett, 2000), which likely serves as a moderating influence limiting opportunities for family conflict within the home, the location where most family conflict becomes physical (Straus et al., 2006). The objectives are, in part, to

fill in gaps in the existing knowledge about these two forms of child-initiated family violence; to determine whether the victim, offender, and incident characteristics are similar across the two crime types; and to address several of the shortcomings in the extant literature.

Past work on both crime types relies heavily on two types of data: (a) small, nongeneralizable, clinical samples generating qualitative data focusing on interpersonal familial dynamics and seemingly subjective clinical interpretation (see Gallagher, 2004); (b) national samples of antiquated data rarely taking into consideration offender and victim age parameters and relationship dynamics. The present work is unique in that it looks at reported incidents of both CPV and parricide using a large, multiyear, cross-national sample of existing data, including an expanded examination of victim–offender relationship and age parameters. Following initial data diagnostics, this work compares the relationship between CPV and parricide across several victim, offender, and incident characteristics, using chi-square analyses and logistic regression to identify distinctions between the two while holding all other predictors stable.

Data Source and Selection

The data were extracted from the NIBRS developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The data represent reported cases for the years 1995–2005 and includes incident-level information for each crime reported to the FBI by counties in participating NIBRS states.¹ The amount of available data—11—and the level of detail provide a distinct advantage in analyzing groups of offenders, victims, and event characteristics for crimes that are otherwise infrequently reported, in the case of CPV, or otherwise occur infrequently, as is the case for parricide.

NIBRS data are arranged in 13 separate segments with linkage variables, making the data set rectangular, not flat. Each criminal event is assigned a unique number, which allows for the linkage of any given incident with all associated offenders and victims with the same number. The structure of the data allows the researcher to choose from one of several units of analysis, including offender, victim, and event. For the present study, event was chosen as the level or unit of analysis. All criminal events reported in the 1995–2005 NIBRS data as an act of CPV or parricide against a parent or stepparent were selected for inclusion in the current data file for further analysis.

The data selection criteria for CPV limited selected cases to aggravated and simple assault perpetrated by an offender between the ages of 7 and 21. Incident inclusion criteria were determined following a modified version of

Cottrell's (2001) definition of CPV as an act committed by a child done to intentionally cause physical pain to gain control and power over a parent. Selection criteria for parricide limited selected cases to only those in which a biological or stepchild offender between the ages of 7 and 21 had committed the act of homicide against a biological or stepparent victim of either gender, regardless of the stated motive. All criminal incidents (CPV and parricide) were further restricted to cases with a solo offender and a single victim—a 1:1 relationship.

Participants

Between 1995 and 2005, there were 108,231 CPV offenders and 79 parricide offenders in the NIBRS data meeting the requisite selection criteria for a total of 108,310 reported child-initiated acts of family violence. Males committed 67,848 of these offenses, or approximately 63%; females committed 40,430 offenses, or approximately 37% of CPV and parricide offenses combined. Descriptive statistics were used to assess offender, victim, and incident of CPV and parricide. The sample consisted of primarily White victims (78%) and offenders (76%), with most victims falling in the 35 to 44 years old category (55%) and most offenders between 14 and 16 years old (48%).

Analysis Plan

The first step of the analysis uses chi-square tests to identify and measure the relationship between CPV and parricide across all victim, offender, and incident characteristics. The next sequence of the analysis includes binomial logistic regression to predict CPV and parricide differences with victim, offender, and incident characteristics as predictors. Logistic regression relies on maximum likelihood estimates and uses an iterative process of estimating the population parameters that created the dependent variable. In other words, "this simply means that we can predict which of two categories a person is likely to belong to given certain other information . . . [for example] which variables predict whether a person is male or female" (Field, 2005, p. 218). The logistic regression uses a dichotomous dependent variable—offense type (CPV or parricide). The analysis predicts whether the offense is CPV or parricide, based on other victim, offender, and incident characteristics, including victim sex, victim age, offender sex, offender age, offender race, victim-offender relationship, substance abuse, and weapon usage.

Results

A Comparison of CPV and Parricide, 1995-2005

As indicated in Table 2, there were several statistically significant distinguishing characteristics evident when comparing these two types of child-initiated family violence—CPV and parricide. When looking at the three offender age categories, parricide offenders are older than CPV offenders, with more parricide offenders (63%) comprising the 17 to 21 years old category and CPV offenders (48%) tending to peak in the 14 to 16 years old age category, $\chi^2(2, N = 108,310) = 23.273, p = .000$. Parricides were also significantly more likely to be committed by a male perpetrator (85%) than were CPV offenses (63%), $\chi^2(1, N = 108,278) = 16.577, p = .000$.

Table 2 indicates that significant differences were found with regard to victim sex when comparing CPV and parricide. Parricide victims were significantly more likely to be males (77%) than were CPV victims (28%), with the majority of CPV victims being female, $\chi^2(1, N = 108,192) = 89.584, p = .000$. In thinking about victim and offender sex differences across CPV and parricide incidents, it is interesting to note that the majority of parricide offenders and victims are male. Conversely, for CPV cases in which the majority of offenders are male, the majority of victims are female. Significant differences were also found when comparing CPV and parricide across the three categories of victim age. Parricide victims were significantly more likely to be in the 45 and older age category (60%) than CPV victims (29%), who were most prevalent in the 35 to 44 years old category (55%), $\chi^2(2, N = 107,710) = 34.569, p = .000$.

Examination of the victim–offender relationship reveals that biological parents occupied the most predominant victim relation to the offender, with 79% of parricides and 92% of CPV incidents involving a biological parent. That said, stepparents were significantly more likely to be victims of parricide (22%) than they were victims of CPV (8%), $\chi^2(1, N = 108,310) = 18.845, p = .000$. There were no significant differences in the victim's race when comparing the two crime types.

Table 2 suggests that significant differences exist between parricide and CPV across several incident-based characteristics. Parricide incidents (53%) were significantly more likely to involve a gun than CPV incidents (1%), $\chi^2(1, N = 108,310) = 3,610.972, p = .000$, and although the majority of both parricide and CPV cases did not involve the use of a knife, parricide incidents

Table 2
CPV and Parricide Characteristics, 1995-2005 (N = 108,310)

Characteristics	CPV (<i>n</i> = 108,231)		Parricide (<i>n</i> = 79)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Offender age				
13 and under	16,451	15.2	5	6.3
14 to 16	51,422	47.5	24	30.4
17 to 21	40,358	37.3	50	63.3
Offender sex				
Male	67,781	62.6	67	84.8
Female	40,418	37.4	12	15.2
Offender race				
White	81,900	76.3	57	72.2
Black	24,624	23.0	19	24.1
Other	757	0.7	3	5.2
Victim sex				
Male	30,384	28.1	59	76.6
Female	77,731	71.9	18	23.4
Victim race				
White	83,322	78.1	57	74.0
Black	22,685	21.3	19	24.7
Other	641	0.6	1	1.3
Victim age				
Under 35	17,164	15.9	7	9.1
35 to 44	58,993	54.8	24	31.2
45 and above	31,476	29.2	46	59.7
Relationship				
Parent	99,414	91.9	62	78.5
Stepparent	8,817	8.1	17	21.5
Used a gun				
No	107,614	99.4	37	46.8
Yes	617	0.6	42	53.2
Used a knife				
No	103,167	95.3	55	69.6
Yes	5,064	4.7	24	30.4
Alcohol				
No	103,682	95.8	73	92.4
Yes	4,549	4.2	6	7.6
Drugs				
No	106,376	98.3	76	96.2
Yes	1,855	1.7	3	3.8

(30%) were significantly more likely to involve a knife than CPV incidents (5%), $\chi^2(1, N = 108,310) = 116.473, p = .000$. No significant differences were found between the two offenses when looking at alcohol or drug use.

In sum, parricide offenders are older than CPV offenders, more likely to be male, and more likely to be White. Victims of parricide are also more likely to be older than CPV victims and are more likely to be males and stepfathers than are victims of CPV. Weapons—both guns and knives—are more likely to be used in parricide incidents than in CPV incidents, with no significant differences in drug or alcohol use.

Logistic Regression Results for CPV Compared to Parricide, 1995-2005

The next step of the analysis includes logistic regression used as a discriminant function to explain offense differences between CPV and parricide using victim, offender, and incident characteristics as independent predictor variables. Offense type—CPV or parricide—was used as the dichotomous dependent variable, with CPV coded as 0 and parricide coded as 1. Independent variables were coded as 0 = *no* and 1 = *yes* for all variables except victim and offender age, where actual numerical age was used. As indicated in the correlation matrix in Table 3, regression diagnostics revealed severe multicollinearity between offender race and victim race, $r(106,091) = .933, p = .000$. This was expected, given the parent-child, victim-offender relationship and the strong intraracial nature of these crimes, which also tends to transcend stepparent relationships. The race of the victim was eliminated from the regression equation to limit the effects of multicollinearity on the analysis.

Logistic regression results support several of the bivariate analyses, yielding a number of significant findings. As shown in Table 4, victims of CPV are significantly more likely to be female than parricide victims, $\chi^2(1, N = 106,687) = 14.229, p = .000$. CPV victims are also significantly younger than parricide victims, $\chi^2(1, N = 106,687) = 12.998, p = .000$. Furthermore, offenders of CPV are significantly more likely to be African American than parricide offenders, $\chi^2(1, N = 106,687) = 5.685, p = .017$, which, barring corrections made for multicollinearity, implies that if extrapolated to the victim, race characteristics would support significantly more African American CPV victims compared to parricide victims. The use of weapons—both guns, $\chi^2(1, N = 106,687) = 335.492, p = .000$; and knives, $\chi^2(1, N = 106,687) = 96.110, p = .000$ —was significantly more likely in cases of parricide compared to CPV. Finally, no significant

Table 3
Pearson Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Offender race	1.00											
2. Offender sex	.011	1.00										
3. Offender age	-.013	-.082	1.00									
4. Victim race	.933	.009	.004	1.00								
5. Victim sex	.070	.189	-.166	.054	1.00							
6. Victim age	-.081	-.057	.292	-.081	-.233	1.00						
7. Relationship (1 = stepparent)	-.016	-.045	.064	-.012	-.321	-.055	1.00					
8. Gun	.039	-.048	.040	.043	-.045	.018	.026	1.00				
9. Knife	.051	-.006	-.038	.054	-.064	-.005	.044	-.013	1.00			
10. Alcohol	-.048	-.063	.178	-.044	-.072	.053	.010	.014	.001	1.00		
11. Drugs	-.026	-.028	.060	-.025	-.013	.030	-.009	.008	.011	.147	1.00	
12. Crime type (1 = parricide)	.001	-.012	.017	.002	-.029	.021	.013	.183	.033	.005	.004	1.00

Table 4
Aggregate Logistic Regression Results, Child–Parent Violence
Versus Parricide, 1995-2005 (N = 106,687)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	<i>p</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Victim female	−1.124	.298	14.229	.000	0.325
Victim age	0.050	.014	12.998	.000	1.051
Offender female	−0.167	.349	0.229	.633	0.846
Offender age	0.100	.054	3.440	.064	1.105
Offender Black	−0.704	.295	5.685	.017	0.495
Victim stepparent	0.306	.304	1.009	.315	1.357
Alcohol or drug use	−0.065	.413	0.025	.875	0.937
Gun	5.575	.304	335.492	.000	263.651
Knife	3.109	.317	96.110	.000	22.396

differences were found for offender sex, offender age, stepparent relationship, or drug and alcohol abuse when using logistic regression.

Discussion

The purpose of the present work was twofold: to compare and contrast two neglected forms of child-initiated family violence—CPV and parricide—across victim, offender, and incident characteristics drawing on 11 years of reported incidents; and to extend the research while addressing several recurring shortcomings in the extant literature.

Findings of this comparative and descriptive work suggest that CPV and parricide are discrete events. The two offenses differ significantly across several victim, offender, and incident characteristics, including offender age, offender sex, offender race, victim sex, victim age, biological or stepparent relationship, and weapons use.

Parricide offenders are older than CPV offenders, more likely to be male, and more likely to be White. Parricide victims are also older, more likely to be male, and more likely to be a stepparent than CPV victims and, relying on past work on intraracial crime, more likely to be White. Parricide incidents are also more likely to involve the use of a weapon, including a gun or a knife.

The contrast between these two offenses across several characteristics might also suggest that the etiologies of CPV and parricide are unique and contingent on event-, incident-, and offender-specific criteria. For example, given that CPV offenders tend to be younger, female, Black, less likely to use

a weapon, and more likely to abuse their mothers, this might suggest that CPV offenders are individuals with less criminal sophistication or awareness and familiarity with violent behavior as a means of conflict resolution; have limited or no access to weapons, or at the very least are less inclined to use extreme violence as a means of solving family conflict and discord. Furthermore, mothers are frequently the primary disciplinarians in homes of younger children. Mothers' frequent exposure to their children subsequently puts them in harm's way and in conflict more often than fathers.

On the other hand, parricide offenders—being older and male, using a weapon, and victimizing fathers (particularly stepfathers)—are more likely to resort to extreme violence as a means of conflict resolution. Males as parricide offenders may have more access to and comfort with weapons, guns, and knives; more desensitization to violence; and a greater willingness to resolve family conflict through extreme violence. Given that parricide offenders are older than CPV offenders—often in mid- to late adolescence, compared to early adolescence at the time of the incident—hormonal and developmental factors may be an important consideration affecting the level of violence and aggression used by boys to resolve family conflict.

Findings suggest that girls are more likely to resort to low-level violence at a younger age in an attempt to either level a counterattack at an abusive parent for purposes of retaliation or self-preservation, or simply as a means of asserting control and dominance in the conflict relationship. Older boys, though, may be less inclined to use low-level violence as a means of control or self-preservation, or they may be more likely to exhaust these options earlier and feel the need to act in a defining and culminating manner to assert control, self-preservation, or dominance. Supporting this finding, Walsh and Krienert (2007), in a study of CPV, found a significant difference between boys (31%) and girls (21%) in the 18 to 21 years old category committing aggravated assault, with girls committing significantly more simple assaults in the under 13 years old and 14 to 17 years old categories, when compared to boys. Boys also may be more reluctant than girls to abuse their mothers, due to cultural prohibitions against males hitting females, though willing to use decisive force against their fathers, especially stepfathers. Stepparent relations have previously been linked to increased family discord and conflict with parricide serving as an extreme resolution of this conflict in some families.

An alternative, though related, explanation might be that CPV and parricide are connected through a complex escalation process whereby CPV occurs at an earlier stage of a family violence cycle. This is loosely supported by the finding that CPV offenders and victims are significantly younger than both parricide offenders and victims. Parricide may be the final stage and

culminating action for some, albeit few, families in the violence escalation process. Younger offenders are less violent and tend to have younger victims. Low-level CPV committed by children and early adolescents would indicate an early stage of the escalation cycle, with mid- to late adolescence being a culminating point in the level of violence exhibited. Although the data in their present form do not allow for direct investigation of the escalation hypothesis, we believe that the present finding and related extant literature offer enough support to warrant further investigation.

Supportive of the escalation hypothesis, research has found that parent-child relations are dynamic interactions prone to conflict and turmoil, with puberty a more susceptible time than others. The frequency and intensity of conflict between parents and their children appears to progress over time, frequently coinciding with hormonal changes, physical changes, and puberty (Eckstein, 2004; Steinberg, 1987). Research by Eckstein (2004) found that the abuse of one's parents frequently begins with verbally abusive episodes that progress over time in frequency and intensity to a point where the verbal abuse eventually escalates to emotional and physical abuse when the intended effect is no longer achieved. We postulate that this escalation process may increase in frequency and intensity for some children, primarily males, to such a point that parricide is the culminating action in select cases and under specific circumstances, yet to be identified.

Furthermore, escalation may be indicative of a particular type of child-parent conflict or of a particular type of child, given that children who are abused themselves and commit parricide rarely show an escalating history of violence toward parents. Heide (1995) identified the dangerously antisocial child as the type of child most likely to exhibit an escalating history of violence, only capable of the shallowest of emotions. Heide (2007) also notes that these youth often have a conduct disorder and demonstrate behaviors that would routinely place them in conflict with parents due in part to inadequate and absent limit setting by parents combined with a history of failed and rebuked efforts at discipline by children. Identification of an escalation process would provide valuable information that could assist family intervention and nonviolent conflict resolution strategies.

How parents exert control and discipline their children can have a significant impact on how children subsequently respond to aggressive discipline, potentially leading to counterattacks. Frequent punishment reinforces maladaptive anger resolution strategies (Pagani et al., 2004). We hypothesize that one—though extreme—maladaptive anger resolution strategy is parricide.

Although the existing literature has traditionally held that youth offenders of parricide—as many as 90% of them, according to Mones (1991)—are frequently responding to ongoing and intolerable abuse (see Heide, 1994, 1995),

more recent research by Braithwaite (2007), suggests that alternative explanations, emergent in recent years, may provide new insight. Braithwaite's exploratory work supports the escalation hypothesis, finding that an increasingly common catalyst to acts of parricide are more traditional and typical intrafamilial tensions and disputes stemming from parent-child conflict, including excessive cell phone usage, curfew violations, parental approval of boyfriends and girlfriends, and inconsistent discipline. This finding offers support for the contention that parricide is an extreme culminating act of child-initiated family violence frequently resulting from escalating intrafamilial tensions over time. Furthermore, although prior abuse may be prevalent in families that have experienced parricide, the victim of the abuse is not always the child as assumed, but rather the parent, at the hands of the child.

The findings and conclusions of the present work suggest that more recent trends in CPV and parricide, reflective of changing family dynamics, conflict, changes in peer influence, and changes in socialization and social factors, may lead to current findings that are contrary or unique to work that was conducted more than a decade ago. Although an important initial step in contrasting and distinguishing between different types of CPV, this work is not without limitations. Beginning with consideration of the data, this work relied on NIBRS data, which contain all of the usual concerns regarding underrepresentation and accuracy in official sources. Furthermore, NIBRS data, as yet, do not have complete national exposure; only about half of U.S. states report data, and the addition of new reporting departments each year complicates longitudinal data analysis. Even though we reviewed 11 years of data, we were not able to conduct traditional longitudinal analyses due to the changes in reporting practices over time. Second, we limited our cases to those with a one-to-one victim-offender relationship to simplify case linkage and statistical analysis, thereby excluding reported cases with multiple offenders or victims. We were limited in the contextual variables that were available and as a result were not able to explore dynamic relational processes that may serve as a catalyst for family conflict precipitating CPV and/or parricide.

The relatively small size of the sample for parricide offenses compared to CPV offenses is unfortunate, but mitigating this limitation is the assurance that these are official data and represent what has been reported to law enforcement. Finally, although we believe there is preliminary and compelling evidence to suggest that escalation might be an explanatory process of child-initiated family violence toward parents beginning with low-level forms of abuse and culminating for some families in homicide, we did not have the necessary data to directly test this hypothesis. Our statements, although speculative, provide a springboard for future research.

Offsetting the limitations of this work are the important contributions offered, which includes extending the extant research and addressing several previous shortcomings in the literature. This work used a large cross-national sample of reported cases of CPV and parricide drawn from 11 years (1995-2005) of NIBRS data. This is the only work we know of comparing and contrasting two neglected forms of child-initiated family violence: CPV and parricide. Furthermore, the sample is larger than all previous studies of CPV and most previous studies of parricide (for exceptions, see Heide, 1993a, 1994; Heide & Petee, 2007a, 2007b; Shon & Targonski, 2003; Walsh et al., 2008). The work used a more representative group of offenders than traditional small sample clinical did, and case studies have yielded and used more thorough analysis, with previous studies tending to focus on descriptive statistics and frequencies. Finally, compared to previous works on this topic, this study has more thoroughly addressed several victim and offender characteristics, including the age of the victim, the age of the offender, the victim's parental relationship to the offender, and the use of drugs or alcohol.

Future research, in addition to examining the escalation hypothesis, which serves to link CPV and parricide along a dysfunctional family conflict resolution continuum, might also focus on family dynamics and circumstances that serve to escalate and de-escalate intrafamilial conflict. Along these lines, racial differences between these two crimes, from both a victim and offender perspective, warrant further examination. For example, although White male offenders are more likely to kill their parents, African American females are more likely to abuse their mothers. The racial differences between these crimes may be the result of family structure, cultural mores regarding the intolerance of specific types of intrafamilial violence, and the acceptance of other lower level forms of aggression in some households; or the differences may be more reflective of intrafamilial dynamics and relationship characteristics rooted in household structure. Furthermore, future research might explore offenses committed by multiple offenders (siblings) and offenses with multiple victims (both parents). Along this line of inquiry, future research might explore whether parentally abusive children are also abusive toward siblings. From a victimological perspective, what behavioral queues indicate parental vulnerability, and when does the power shift occur in the parent-child relationship?

Note

1 The states and counties participating in National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data reporting have increased over the study period from 9 states comprising 481 counties (4% of the population) in 1995 to 27 states and D.C., comprising 5,617 agencies in

2005. The increasing annual participation by states and counties in the NIBRS reporting program makes longitudinal analyses—including pattern and trend analyses—extremely difficult at the present time. This article uses the NIBRS data in the aggregate and is therefore less affected by annual changes in participation.

References

- Agnew, R., & Huguley, S. (1989). Adolescent violence toward parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 51*(3), 699-711.
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*(5), 469-480.
- Boots, D. P., & Heide, K. M. (2006). Parricides in the media: A content analysis of available reports across cultures. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 50*, 418-445.
- Braithwaite, J. (2007, October). *A qualitative investigation of parricide cases*. Paper presented at the Midwest Criminal Justice Association Conference, Chicago.
- Brezina, T. (1996). Adapting to strain: An examination of delinquent coping responses. *Criminology, 34*(1), 39-60.
- Brezina, T. (1999). Teenage violence toward parents as an adaptation to family strain: Evidence from a national survey of male adolescents. *Youth & Society, 30*, 416-444.
- Charles, A. V. (1986). Physically abused parents. *Journal of Family Violence, 1*(4), 343-355.
- Cochran, D., Brown, M. E., Adams, S. L., & Doherty, D. (1994). *Young adolescent batterers: A profile of restraining order defendants in Massachusetts*. Boston: Office of the Commission on Probation.
- Cooke, G. (2001). Parricide. *Journal of Threat Assessment, 1*(1), 34-45.
- Cottrell, B. (2001). *Parent abuse: The abuse of parents by their teenage children*. Retrieved July 27, 2006, from http://www.canadiancrc.com/parent_abuse.htm
- Cottrell, B., & Monk, P. (2004). Adolescent-to-parent abuse: A qualitative overview of common themes. *Journal of Family Issues, 25*(8), 1072-1095.
- Dugas, M., Mouren, M. C., & Halfon, O. (1985). Les parents battus et leurs enfants [Battered parents and their children]. *Psychiatrie de l'Enfant, 28*, 185-219.
- Eckstein, N. J. (2004). Emergent issues in families experiencing adolescent-to-parent abuse. *Western Journal of Communications, 68*(4), 365-388.
- Ellickson, P. L., & McGuigan, K. (2000). Early predictors of adolescent violence. *American Journal of Public Health, 90*(4), 566-572.
- Evans, E. D., & Warren-Sohlberg, L. (1988). A pattern analysis of adolescent abusive behavior towards parents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 3*(2), 201-216.
- Ewing, C. P. (Ed.). (2001). *Parricide*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gallagher, E. (2004). Parents victimised by their children. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 25*(1), 1-12.
- Green, C. M. (1981). Matricide by sons. *Medicine, Science and the Law, 21*, 207-214.
- Harbin, H. T., & Madden, D. J. (1979). Battered parents: A new syndrome. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 136*(10), 1288-1291.
- Hart, J. L., & Helms, J. L. (2003). Factors of parricide: Allowance of the use of battered child syndrome as a defense. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 8*, 671-683.

- Heide, K. M. (1992). *Why kids kill their parents: Child abuse and adolescent homicide*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.
- Heide, K. M. (1993a). Parents who get killed and the children who kill them. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 8*(4), 531-544.
- Heide, K. M. (1993b). Weapons used by juveniles and adults to kill parents. *Behavioral Science and the Law, 11*, 397-405.
- Heide, K. M. (1994). Evidence of child maltreatment among adolescent parricide offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 38*(2), 151-161.
- Heide, K. M. (1995). *Why kids kill parents*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Heide, K. M. (2007). Parricide. In N. Jackson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of domestic violence* (pp. 530-536). New York: Routledge.
- Heide, K. M., & Petee, T. (2003, June). *Parents who get killed and the children who kill them: An examination of a quarter century of data*. Paper presented at the Homicide Research Working Group, Sacramento, CA.
- Heide, K. M., & Petee, T. A. (2007a). Parricide: An empirical analysis of 24 years of data. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23*(11), 1382-1399.
- Heide, K. M., & Petee, T. A. (2007b). Weapons used by juveniles and adult offenders in U.S. parricide cases. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 22*(11), 1400-1414.
- Hillbrand, M., Alexandre, J. W., Young, J. L., & Spitz, R. T. (1999). Parricides: Characteristics of offender and victims, legal factors, and treatment issues. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 4*(2), 179-190.
- Hotaling, G. T., Straus, M. A., & Lincoln, A. J. (1989). Intrafamily violence, and crime and violence outside the family. In L. Ohlin & M. Tonry (Eds.), *Family violence. Crime and justice: A review of research* (Vol. 11, pp. 315-375). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jackson, D. (2003). Broadening constructions of family violence: Mothers' perspectives of aggression from their children. *Child and Family Social Work, 8*, 321-329.
- Kethineni, S. (2004). Youth-on-parent violence in a central Illinois county. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 2*(4), 374-394.
- Laurent, A., & Derry, A. (1999). Violence of French adolescents toward their parents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 25*(1), 21-26.
- Marleau, J. D., Millaud, F., & Auclair, N. (2003). A comparison of parricide and attempted parricide: A study of 39 psychotic adults. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 26*, 269-279.
- McCloskey, L. A., & Lichter, E. L. (2003). The contribution of marital violence to adolescent aggression across different relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*(4), 390-412.
- Millaud, F., Auclair, N., & Meunier, D. (1996). Parricide and mental illness: A study of 12 cases. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 19*(2), 173-182.
- Mones, P. (1991). *When a child kills*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Newhill, C. E. (1991). Parricide. *Journal of Family Violence, 6*(4), 375-394.
- Nock, M. K., & Kazdin, A. E. (2002). Parent-directed physical aggression by clinic-referred youths. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 31*(2), 193-205.
- Pagani, L., Tremblay, R. E., Nagin, D., Zoccolillo, M., Vitaro, F., & McDuff, P. (2004). Risk factor models for adolescent verbal and physical aggression toward mothers. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 28*(6), 528-537.
- Paulson, M. J., Coombs, R. H., & Landsverk, J. (1990). Youth who physically assault their parents. *Journal of Family Violence, 5*, 121-133.

- Peek, C. W., Fischer, J. L., & Kidwell, J. S. (1985). Teenage violence toward parents: A neglected dimension of family violence. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 47*(4), 1051-1058.
- Pelletier, D., & Coutu, S. (1992). Substance abuse and family violence in adolescents. *Canada's Mental Health, 40*, 6-12.
- Robinson, P. W., Davidson, L. J., & Drebot, M. E. (2004). Parent abuse on the rise: A historical review. *American Association of Behavioral Science, 58*-67.
- Shon, P. C. H., & Targonski, J. R. (2003). Declining trends in U.S. parricides, 1976-1998: Testing the Freudian assumptions. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 26*, 387-402.
- Steinberg, L. (1987). The impact of puberty on family relations: Effects of pubertal status and pubertal timing. *Developmental Psychology, 25*, 451-460.
- Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Steinmetz, S. K. (2006). *Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Ullman, A., & Straus, M. A. (2003). Violence by children against mothers in relation to violence between parents and corporal punishment by parents. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 34*(1), 41-60.
- Walsh, J. A., & Krienert, J. L. (2007). Child-parent violence: An empirical analysis of offender, victim, and event characteristics in a national sample of reported incidents. *Journal of Family Violence, 22*(5), 563-574.
- Walsh, J. A., Krienert, J. L., & Crowder, D. (2008). Innocence lost: A gender based study of parricide offenders, victims, and incident based characteristics in a national sample, 1976-2003. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma, 16*(2), 202-227.
- Weisman, A. M., & Sharma, K. K. (1997). Forensic analysis and psycholegal implications of parricide and attempted parricide. *Journal of Forensic Sciences, 42*(6), 1107-1113.

Jeffrey A. Walsh is an assistant professor of criminal justice at Illinois State University. He has written journal articles and also published a book chapter on underserved victim populations in *Victims of Crime*. His research interests include predatory crime and behavior, family violence, and community structure and crime.

Jessie L. Krienert is an associate professor of criminal justice at Illinois State University. She has written journal articles and edited several books and book chapters. Her research interests include prison culture, incarceration, and family violence.