

## PARTICULARITIES OF VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP IN HOMICIDES COMMITTED BY MALES AGAINST MALES

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### ABSTRACT

Studies carried out worldwide (inclusive in Romania) intensively approached particular types of homicide, such as intimate partner homicide. However less knowledge exists in connection to other types such homicide committed by men against men. So far in Romania no analysis was elaborated in this field. Studies conducted also showed that the characteristics of the homicide (location of occurrence, tools used, injuries on the victim, etc.) depend not only on the age, education or gender of the victim and the perpetrator, but also on the relationship between the two parties. From the point of view of the criminal investigators the description of these particularities is crucial since it will directly support the identification of the perpetrators. Therefore the aim of this article is to describe for the first time the characteristics of the male-to-male homicides occurred in Romania and its peculiarities in connection to the victim-perpetrator relationship.

Homicide perpetrated by males against males is the most common form of homicide in Romania. The data showed that most homicides committed by men against men occurred on the background of interpersonal conflicts. It also revealed differences between homicides in regard to the number of perpetrators, their age, environment and place of occurrence, contexts and weapons used in connection with the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator perpetrator-victim relationship.

*Keywords: male-to-male homicide, victim-perpetrator relation, weapons, criminal context.*

### INTRODUCTION

The impact of homicide is particularly high both on victims and the community. The killing of a person has a direct impact on the victim and her/his family, but it also makes the community and society in general to feel harmed and in danger in regard to the risk for another of its members to become victim of

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crime, too. Especially in case of an unidentified perpetrator, until the case is solved the community will experience a deep feeling of insecurity.

A lot of attention was paid worldwide to the study of homicide by international actors (HEUNI 2016, 2016a, UNODC 2019), national institutions or individual scholars. Also in Romania several studies were conducted on this topic. They addressed homicide as part of violent crimes (Balica 2008) or as one of the felonies with lethal consequences (Ioan and Teodoroiu 2004), approached homicide in general (Banciu and Teodorescu 2000; Cintează 2004; Ivan and Maxim 2015) or particular types of homicide: women killers (Butoi 2003; Liiceanu, Săucan and Micle 2004), homicide committed with stabbing and splitting objects (Dumitran 2018), intrafamilial homicide (Balica 2006), homicide-suicide (Balica 2015; Balica and Stockl 2016; Balica 2016; Balica 2018), while less or no attention has been paid to other forms, such as homicides perpetrated by males on male victims.

Data reveals that homicide is a gender sensitive crime. First, it shows a predominance of male perpetrators and victims. Worldwide, men represented 90% of murderers (UNODCa 2019, 71) and 81% of victims in 2017 (UNODC 2019, 15). Statistical data collected for Europe reveal a similar situation: men represented 96.7% of suspected persons in Albania, 94.3% in Italy, 93.4% in Turkey, 93.1% in Bulgaria, 92.5% in Norway and 91.7% in Luxembourg in 2018 (Eurostat 2020<sup>1</sup>). In Romania 93.8% of the perpetrators accused of homicide in the period 2014–2016 were men and only 6.2% were females (Crime Research and Prevention Institute – CRPI 2020, 38).

In 2018, men accounted for 85.7% of victims in Montenegro, 81.8% in Turkey, 82.1% in Estonia, 76.2% in Ireland, 75.4% in Scotland, 70.7% in Greece (Eurostat 2020). A lower share of male victims was reported, for example, in Switzerland 44%, in Germany 54.3% or Lithuania 57.8% (ibidem).

Furthermore certain forms of homicide disproportionately affect men and women. For example, in 2017, worldwide only 36% of victims of family-related homicides (including intimate partner homicide) and 18% of victims of intimate-partner homicides were men (UNODC 2019, 15).

Data also shows that male and females commit different types of crime. While female tend to kill their intimate partners and family members, the male perpetrators are overrepresented in case of stranger and acquaintances/friends homicides (Dooley 2001). For example, in England and Wales, between April 2019 and March 2020, males were frequently killed by friends/acquaintances (22%) and strangers (32%) while female were killed by a partner/ex-partner (32% of female victims in comparison to 2% of male victims) and another family member: 14% in comparison to 6% of males (Home Office 2021). Also, in Scotland, between 2009 and 2019, 59% of the male victims were killed by acquaintances, 22% by strangers,

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical analysis performed by the authors based on the numbers collected by EUROSTAT.

8% by relatives and only 5% by a partner or ex-partner (Scottish Government 2019, 13).

Data gathered in Romania describe a similar picture in term of preponderance of male perpetrators and victims to that registered worldwide. Overall two thirds of the victims of homicides were males and only one third were females in the period 2016–2019 (CRPI 2020, 50). Differences in regard to the share of male/female victims of particular types of homicides are also comparable with international data: 53.9% of victims of homicides committed by family members (intimate partner included) were represented by girls and women (ibidem). Males are mostly killed by unrelated perpetrators (83.1% of the persons killed by an unrelated person are males) while women represent the great majority (85%) of victims of intimate partner homicides (ibidem).

### CONTEXTS OF HOMICIDES

The motivations or contexts in which male and female homicide occur are also different. In England and Wales, between April 2019 and March 2020, most male victims were killed following a quarrel, revenge or loss of temper (53% in comparison with 39% of female victims), in the pursuit of theft or gain (8% in comparison with 3%) and less as an irrational or motiveless act: 3% of male victims in comparison with 7% of females (Home Office 2021). Some authors distinguish between different patterns of male homicide: one related to honour contest violence (connected to altercations in pubs, discos, in streets, etc.), homicides occurred in the context of another crime (robbery, burglary), homicides resulted from the use of violence as a device of dispute resolution and a pattern of use of violence by males as a device of ultimate control in situations of sexual intimacy (Polk 1997, 2-3).

In Romania, most homicides occurred as a result of non-premeditated conflicts (38.4%), while revenge/ hatred /enmity towards a person is the cause of more than a tenth of murders (12.9%). Analysing the motives of the murder in relation to the gender of the victim, it was revealed men are rather killed as a result of non-premeditated conflicts (almost half of murders with men victims occurred in this context). Other causes with a significant share in the total number of homicides with male victims are revenge/hatred/enmity towards a person 15.7% and old conflicts between family members, other than intimate partners 10.3% (CRPI 2020, 38). In opposition, the most common cause for which women are killed is jealousy: more than one-fifth of female homicides were determined by this motive. Significant shares of homicides with female victims occurred on the background of old / chronic conflicts in the couple / ex-couple (19.5%) or against the background of non-premeditated conflicts 18.6% (CRPI 2020, 38).

### TYPES OF HOMICIDES

Taking in consideration the gender of the victim and of the offender, statistical data gathered worldwide shows that male-on-male homicides is the most common form of homicide, representing approximatively two-thirds of all homicides cases in a society. For example, in the USA, in 2019 63.7% of homicide cases were perpetrated by a male against a male victim, 25% were male-on-female homicides, 7.3% were female-on-male homicides while 3.1% had female offenders and victims<sup>2</sup> (FBI 2019). In Scotland, between 2009 and 2019, 67% of homicide cases were male-to-male homicides while only 4% of cases included killing of females against females (Scottish Government 2019, 13). In England and Wales, in 2017–2018 male-on-male homicides represented more than 60% of all homicide cases (Morgan et al. 2020, 19). In Ireland, between 1992–1996, male-on-male homicides accounted for 65.4% of homicide cases, male-on-female for 22.4%, in 7.3% of homicides the perpetrator was female and the victim was male and in 2.4% both the victim and the perpetrator were female (Dooley 2001, 11–12).

Even though a lower percentage of male-on-male homicides were reported in Australia, however it was by far the most frequent form of homicide (Carcach 2001, 191; Bricknell 2020, 52). Thus, between 1989 and 1999, male-on homicides represented 52.2% of cases, male-on-female 33.3%, female-on-male 3% and female-on-female 11.5% (Carcach 2001, 191). 20 years later, between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2018, male-on-male homicides accounted for 55.2% of cases, male-on-female for 30.2%, female-on-male for 11.6% and female-on-female for 2.9% of cases (Bricknell 2020, 52). Small scale studies bring additional data: in regard to homicides occurred in Saint Louis between 1985 and 1989, 84% of stranger homicides and 83% of acquaintances homicides were male-on-male homicides (Decker 1993, 603).

While significant information exists on homicides committed by men against women (especially on the intimate partner) less is known about the homicides committed by men against men. Significant data were revealed in regard to male victims and their characteristics. As most male victims are killed by male, data on male victims can be used as a proxy for the victims of male-on-male homicides. In consequence we will further take in consideration the characteristics of male victims whenever available in the absence of data strictly related to males killed by other males.

### ALCOHOL-RELATED HOMICIDES AND MALE VICTIMS/PERPETRATORS

The influence of alcohol consumption on criminal victimization has been well-documented in homicide studies. On one hand alcohol consumption favours a

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<sup>2</sup> Percentages were calculated by the authors based on the FBI values.

provocative conduct of the victim (Goodman, R.A. *et al.* 1986, 144). On the other hand, persons under the influence appear to be vulnerable targets and are therefore victims of intended robbery or predatory crimes that can lead to murder (*ibidem*). According to other specialists, the correlation between alcohol consumption and violent crimes is an indirect one, both conducts being actually explained by the same psychological traits, such as antisocial personality (Kevin, M. *apud* Carcach and Conroy 2001, 185).

Statistical data confirm the strong influence of alcohol consumption on homicide. In Australia, between 1989 and 1999, 85.4% of all alcohol related homicides were male-on-male homicides (Carcach 2001, 191). Data also documented a higher percentage of male-on-male alcohol related homicide in comparison with other types of homicides: 21.2% in comparison with 2.8% of male-on-female homicides, 6.6% of female-on-male homicides and 6.7% of female-on-female homicides (Carcach 2001, 191). Taking into account the victim-offender relationship, same statistics showed that 55.1% of all homicides alcohol-related occurred between friends or acquaintances and in 13.1% of cases the victims and the perpetrator were strangers (Carcach 2001, 192).

More recent data show an even higher percentage of alcohol-related homicides in Australia: 47% in the period 1 July 2000–30 June 2006 (Dearden and Payne 2009, 3). The share of alcohol-related homicides depends also on the location, time and cause of death or gender of the victim. It is higher when the homicide occurs within recreation locations (80% of this type of homicide are alcohol related) or street (60%), offender's home (53%) in comparison with crimes occurred inside the victim's home (37%) (Dearden and Payne 2009, 3). A higher share was registered in case of homicides produced by beating (58%) and stabbing (52%) than by strangulation (28%) or gunshot (27%) (Dearden and Payne 2009, 3); also in case of homicides with male victims (54% in comparison with 34% of homicides against a female) (Dearden and Payne 2009, 4).

European data certifies the role of alcohol in homicides in general and in homicides perpetrated by males in particular. In England and Wales, between April 2019– March 2020, 22% of male victims of homicides were under the influence of alcohol in comparison with 11% of female victims, 8% were under the influence of illicit drugs in comparison with 4% of females, while 8% had consumed both categories of substances, in comparison with 5% of females (Home Office 2021). In Scotland, in the period 2009–2019, 47% of male accused of homicide were under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs in comparison with 40% of females (Scottish Government, 15). In the period 2003–2006, the homicide victims drunk at the time of the killing represented approximately 77% of homicide victims in Finland and 45% in Sweden (Ganpat *et al.* 2011, 86–87). Also, data reveal that a total of 59% of the victims (63% of male and 42% of female victims) in Finland were characterized as alcoholics; compared to 31% of victims in Sweden (Ganpat *et al.* 2011, 87).

### **WEAPONS USED**

As data strictly related to male-on-male homicides is limited, we will further describe the most common weapons male victims are killed by. As it will be revealed, notable differences exist in this regard between homicides against males and females. In the USA most men are killed by firearm (73.1% in comparison with 49.3% of females) and less by knife or blunt object (15.8% in comparison with 22.2%) or by being pushed or thrown out of the window, drowning, asphyxiation, strangulation or hanging; by poison, explosives, fire, narcotics or drugs (11.1% in comparison with 28.5% of females) (Smith and Cooper 2013, 12). In England male victims were mostly killed by sharp instruments (44% in comparison to 27% of female victims) and by hitting, kicking etc. without a weapon (19% of male victims) and just 9% (in comparison to 16% of females) by strangulation, asphyxiation (Home Office 2021).

### **LOCATION**

Males are rather killed in public places in contrast with females who are rather killed in private dwellings. 62% of the males killed in England and Wales, between April 2019 and March 2020 lost their lives in public places, 38% of them in the street, footpath, alleyway and 38% in residential places in comparison with 78% of female victims (Home Office 2021). A slighter lower share of male was killed in a dwelling in Scotland, in the period 2009–2019: 55% in comparison with 83% of female victims (Scottish Government 2019, 14).

### **THE INFLUENCE OF VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP ON HOMICIDE**

Different studies and statistical data collected revealed that the place of occurrence of the homicide, the location of the wounds, their severity or the weapons used varies in connection with the victim-perpetrator relationship (Douglas et al. 2006). For example, increased violence or over violence was connected with a close relationship between victim and perpetrator (Gillies 1976, Douglas et al. 2006). Injuries to the face and head were associated with a closed relationship between the two parties (Trojan and Krull 2012; Last and Fritzonapud Alvarez Cussen 2017, 25). A higher share of stabbings, manual violence or use of an opportunity weapon was reported in intimate homicide (Trojan and Krull 2012, 29). Data at international level reveals strangulation as being responsible for 10–20% of homicidal deaths, with a higher incidence in the case of family homicides (Häkkinen 2007, 73–74).

A higher share of intimate-partner homicides occur inside premises in comparison with the other types (Decker 1993, 606). In Taiwan, homicides between acquaintances and between intimates are more likely to take place in homes or in cars, whereas stranger homicide is more likely to occur outside homes and in public domains (Cao *et al.* 2007, 9). Some data also reported a higher probability of premeditation in acquaintance homicides (Cao *et al.* 2007, 12). The share of multiple perpetrators was found to be higher in case of acquaintances and stranger homicides (Decker 1993, 607). In regard to the context of the homicide, a lower percentage of intimate and family homicide were connected to an instrumental goal in comparison with acquaintance/ friend homicides (Decker 1993, 599; Cao *et al.* 2007, 12). Data in Romania from past studies also demonstrated differences between homicides in connection with victim-offender relationship (CRPI 2020). A higher share of past violent conducts of the perpetrator in regard to the victim was reported in intimate partner and family homicides, also a higher share of use of arson in intimate partner violence. While most of homicides against relatives or intimate partners (87.2%) occurred inside a dwelling, the highest share of stranger or acquaintances homicides occurred in the street 25% and 22.9% (CRPI 2020).

#### METHODOLOGY

This article takes in consideration homicide, defined according to the Romanian Criminal Code as the killing of an individual (art. 188 Criminal Code). Homicide makes reference only to intentional and consumed acts. Involuntary manslaughter (meaning the killing of a person by negligence) and attempted homicide will not make the subject of this analysis. This paper will focus only on a particular type of homicides – those committed by men against men. The goal of this paper is to identify the situations that are likely to determine the occurrence of male-to-male homicides, the socio-demographic of men who are at highest risk of becoming victims or aggressors in order for the society to better target its prevention measures/actions. Data will be presented comparatively between four types of homicides identified according to the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Special attention will be paid to differences between the four homicide types taken into consideration.

The paper relies on data gathered from the indictments prepared nationwide for homicides in Romania in the period July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019 within a study on homicide carried out by the Crime Research and Prevention Institute in 2020. The information was collected through a criminological fiche<sup>3</sup> that aimed at

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<sup>3</sup> The criminological fiche was designed within a team of officers of the Crime Research and Prevention Institute: chief superintendent Corina Chirvasiu, chief superintendent Mugurel Ghiță and

describing the characteristics of homicide, the perpetrators and the victims as well as at describing the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. During our research there were identified 436 cases of male-on-male homicides (including murders with multiple victims or perpetrators out of which at least one is male), 443 male victims and 565 male perpetrators. Taking in account the gender of the perpetrator and the victim, in Romania, 62% of homicides analysed were male-on-male homicides, 31% male-on-female, 5% were female-on-male and 2% female-on-female homicides.

## RESULTS

### **Types of male-on-male homicides according to victim-offender relationship**

Based on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, we divided homicides into 5 types. In case of multiple perpetrators or victims, the homicide was classified according to the closest relationship: for example, if a victim was killed by a relative and a stranger, the murder was classified as family homicide.

**Family homicide (105 cases):** the perpetrator was a relative/ family member, other than the intimate partner of the victim. Most frequent male-to-male family homicides occurred between parents and children: in 27.6% of the cases the victim was the perpetrator's father and in 14.3% the perpetrator's son. Other victims of family homicides were brothers (29.5%), cousins, uncles and the brother of the grandfather. Also under this umbrella were included murders committed against the current or former father-in-law, husband/concubine of the mother or grandmother.

**Intimate-partner homicides (4 cases):** the data revealed 3 cases of male-on-male homicides that occurred between males that had sexual relationships and 1 murder committed by the husband against his whole family (wife, daughter and son). Due to the low number of cases, no statistical analysis was performed within this type of homicide. However, information on murder, aggressor and victim was included in the general analysis regarding male-on-male homicides.

**Stranger homicide (42 cases):** the victim and the perpetrator didn't know each other previous to the crime). Furthermore we made a distinction based on the closeness of the relationship between the two parties. Therefore we distinguished between homicides committed against a well-known person (the victim and the offender knew each other well and had a significant number of social interactions along the time) and acquaintance homicides when the social interactions between

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superintendent Adriana-Anca Cuşmir. Indictments from all Romanian counties were collected, with the exception of Arges County.

the two parties were limited. This distinction was allowed by the significant number of homicides whose victims and the perpetrators knew each other (therefore this larger category could be split in two) and also due to a relative low number of homicides analysed that permitted an evaluation of each particular case.

**Homicide against a well-known person (93 cases):** this category includes homicides committed against a friend (28 cases – 30.1%), a neighbour (27 cases – 29%), a co-worker (9 cases – 9.7%). It also numbered 7 murders committed on a person the aggressor used to work for (performing different domestic tasks) and 3 killings of a member of the same gang/criminal group.

**Homicide against an acquaintance (192 cases):** within this category there were included killings of people living in the same village (81 cases – 42.2% of situations) or in the same neighbourhood. It also included 5 situations in which the victim and the aggressor were part of distinct gang/criminal groups. Also homicides committed against or by the current partner of victim/perpetrator's former intimate partner were numbered under this umbrella.

*Table 1*

Characteristics of perpetrators and victims of homicides, according to the victim-perpetrator relationship

	<b>Victim-perpetrator relationship</b>			
	Family Homicide (%)	Well-known person Homicide (%)	Acquaintance Homicide (%)	Stranger Homicide (%)
<b>Number of perpetrators</b>				
1	94.3	89.2	74	71.4
2	4.7	8.6	14	14.3
3	1	1.1	6.3	11.9
4+		1.1	5.7	2.4
<b>Number of victims</b>				
1	98	96.8	97.9	95.2
2	1	3.2	1.6	4.8
3+	1		0.5	
<b>Age of the perpetrator</b>				
Under 18	4.4	8.8	12.7	9.8
18–34	34.5	42.2	54.4	65.6
35–54	47.8	35.3	25.8	19.7
55+	13.3	13.7	7.1	4.9

### Number of perpetrators and victims

82.2% of male-on-male homicides were committed by a single perpetrator. 2 perpetrators were registered in 10.5% of cases and 3 in 4.3% (19) homicides. Also, during our investigation there were identified 8 homicides committed by 4 perpetrators, 3 cases with 5 perpetrators, 1 homicide committed by 6 men and 1 by 7 aggressors. Data reveals differences between the 4 categories. 94.3% of family homicides and 89.2% of acquaintance homicides were committed by a single perpetrator. The share of a single perpetrator homicides is lower when the victims were acquaintances 74% or strangers 71%. The share of single perpetrator decreased while the social distance between the victim and the offender increases. Most homicides (424) were perpetrated against a single victim. The percentage of multiple victims homicides is slightly higher in the case of stranger homicides and well-known person homicide. However it must be taken into consideration that other persons could have been victimized during the homicides– for example injured.

### Characteristics of the perpetrators

The perpetrators of male-to-male homicides are relatively young: more than three-quarters (79.1%) are under 45 years old and 90.4% under 55 years. Differences are reported in regards to the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The share of perpetrators under 45 years is lower in case of family homicides (65.4%) in comparison with perpetrators of homicides against a well-known person (72.5%), acquaintance (84.7%) or a stranger (90.1%).

An important aspect revealed is the involvement of boys in homicides. According to the data gathered, 1 in 10 perpetrators of male-to-male homicides is under 18 years of age. Young males rather tend to commit homicide against an acquaintance (12.8% of perpetrators of this sub-type of homicide were under 18), a stranger (9.8%) or a well-known man (8.8%) and are less implicated in homicides against a family member (4.4%). Overall 63.6 of boys who committed a homicide killed an acquaintance. Even though in one fifth of cases this information was not mentioned within the indictments the data gathered indicates a low level of education of the perpetrators. Overall, only 1 in ten murderers (11.8%) graduated high school.

Table 2

Characteristics of homicides according to the victim-offender relationship

	Victim-perpetrator relationship			
	Family Homicide (%)	Well-known person Homicide (%)	Acquaintance Homicide (%)	Stranger Homicide (%)
<b>Place of occurrence</b>				
Town/city	27.6	33.3	33.3	50

Table 2 (continued)

Village	71.4	65.6	63	35.7
Outside a locality		1	3.1	14.3
<b>Location – most frequent</b>				
Victim and perpetrator's joint house	53.3	7.5	–	–
Victim's house	16.2	16.1	20.3	19
Perpetrator's house	12.4	15.1	10.9	–
Other person's house	1.9	1.1	4.7	2.4
Street	8.6	10.8	26.6	26.6
Restaurant/club/bar (in and out)	1.9	5.4	11.5	11.9
Sheepfold		11.8	11.8	2.4
Isolated place	2	8.7	6.3	14.3
<b>Weapons – most frequent</b>				
Stabbing	39	37.6	26.6	33.3
Punching/Hitting with fists/ Kicking	23.8	30.1	39.1	38.1
Hitting with blunt object *** several weapons were possible in a case	25.7	30.1	39.1	38.1
<b>Degree of planning</b>				
Spontaneous	91.3	89.1	88	78.6
Planned	8.7	10.9	12	21.4
<b>Alcohol consumption</b>				
– by victim and/or perpetrator	83.8	75.3	80.7	61.9
– by victim and perpetrator together	38.1	45.2	32.8	7.1
– by the victim	56.2	50.5	54.2	50
– by the perpetrator	57.1	53.8	65.1	38.1
<b>Context</b>				
Revenge/hatred towards a person	10.5	21.5	17.2	16.7
Quarrel/ conflict	86.7	70.9	64.1	42.9
– chronic conflicts	40	16.1	11.5	
In the furtherance of theft or gain	16.7	8.6	10.9	35.7

### Crime-related homicides

In addition to homicide, other crimes were committed by the perpetrators or by their accomplices. Some of them were actually the mobile of the perpetrator's conduct (for example, the aim was to steal something from the victim's household), while others were committed after the murder. In 32 cases (7.3%) the perpetrators were also held responsible for robbery, in 21 cases (4.8%) for theft, in 17 cases (3.9%) for attempted homicide, 13 cases (3%) for entering the home without permission, 10 cases (2.3%) for non-compliance with the weapons and ammunition regime, 9 cases (2.1%) desecration of graves or corpses and in 10 cases (2%) for destruction.

### **Environment of occurrence of male-to-male homicides**

Most male-to-male homicides (62.7%) occurred in villages. One third (33.9%) took place in a town/city. 13 homicides (3%) were committed outside a locality while in two cases the place of the occurrence was not mentioned. The family homicide is a phenomenon characteristic to the Romanian villages: 71.4% occurred in a village and only 27.6% in a city/town. The share of homicides against well-known persons and acquaintances committed in the villages is lower: 65.6% and 63%. In opposition half of stranger homicides occurred in a town/city, one third (35.7%) in a village and 14.3% (6 cases) outside a locality.

### **Location of male-to-male homicides**

Overall, most male-to-male homicides were committed in a dwelling: 18.3% inside victim's house, 16% inside the victim and perpetrator's joint home and 11.2% inside the aggressor's home. Also 9 cases the murder occurred in the house of a friend/relative/acquaintance of the perpetrator. Almost one fifth of homicides (18.8%) occurred in the street. 8% of homicides were perpetrated inside or nearby a restaurant/bar/club/discotheque, 7.9% in an isolated place (between localities, in the field, an abandoned building etc.) and 3.7% in a sheepfold.

Differences exist between the four types of male-to-male homicides. Half of family homicides (53.6%) occurred within the victim and aggressor's joint home, 16.2% inside the victim's home, 12.4% within the aggressor's home and 8.6% in the street. The most common locations in case of homicides perpetrated against a well-known person were: the victim's house 16.1%, the aggressor's house 15.1%, at the sheep hold 11.8%, in the street 10.8% and the joint home of the victim and aggressor 7.5%. The street is the most common location for acquaintance and stranger homicides and (26.6% of acquaintance and 26.2% of stranger homicides occurred on the street), followed by the victim's home, bar/restaurants (in and out), the perpetrator's home or an isolated place.

### **Degree of planning**

Most cases of male-to-male homicides are not planned by the perpetrators. Only in 11.9% of cases previous preparation was reported. These preparatory acts consisted in: wearing a mask 4 cases of male-to-male murders, hiding their faces 3 cases, procurement of a car 1.4% (6 cases), procurement of tools 4.8% (21 cases), following the route/ program of the victim 3.2% (14 cases), establishing the modus operandi 5.3% (23 cases), establishing the place 5% (22 cases), establishing the date 2.1% (9 cases), kidnapping 1 case, ensuring of an alibi 3 cases. No significant difference was identified between the four homicide types analysed.

### **Context of male-on-male homicides**

16.5% of murder cases were motivated by revenge/hatred towards a person. Most cases (69.1%) occurred during a quarrel or conflict between victim and

offender or between friends/relatives of one party and the other intervened to protect his people. In 27.2% of these situation (18.8% of all male-on-male homicides) they occurred against the background of a chronic condition between the two. 11.7% of homicides perpetrated by males on males produces in the furtherance of theft or gain. A provocative conduct of the victim was reported in approximatively one quarter of cases for all 4 types of male-on-male homicides. These include cases when the victim was the first one to insult or threaten the perpetrator or the one who initiated the physical violence.

Differences are recorded between the four types of homicides. Quarrels/ conflicts have the most important impact on family homicides and their influence decreases once the social distance between victim and offender increases. Family is far from being a supportive environment, characterized by respect and mutual agreement between its members, but on the contrary: arguments and violent conflicts are a constant characteristic of this entity. Not surprisingly 40% of male-to-male family homicides occurred on the background of chronic conflicts while 10% were motivated by revenge/hatred against a family member. The share of homicides occurred on the background of quarrels/ conflicts is lower in case of stranger homicides. In parallel, approximately one third of stranger homicides occur in furtherance of gain or theft.

### **Weapons used**

Most frequently the male victims of homicides committed by men in Romania are hit with blunt objects (33.9%), punched and/or kicked (33.2%) and stabbed (33%). In a low percentage of cases the victim was killed by mechanical asphyxia (6.2%), arson (2.3% – 10 cases), was shot (8 cases), tied during the crime (7 cases), hit with a vehicle (6 cases) or applied electric shocks (6 cases). The use of acidic chemicals was reported in 6 situations, torture in 2 situations, drowning in 1 case. In one situation the victim was kidnapped and in 1 the use of toxic chemicals was reported. In 10.8% the perpetrator/perpetrators entered victim's home without permission. The share is higher in acquaintance and stranger homicides: 13.5%, respectively 16.7%.

The mechanism of committing homicides varies in regard to the type of crime: hitting with blunt objects is less common in case of homicides committed against relatives 25.7% in comparison with acquaintances or strangers (39.1% and 38.1%). Stabbing the victim was present in 39% cases of family homicides and in 37.6% of homicides on a well-known person in comparison with acquaintance and stranger homicides: 26.6% and 33.3%. In Romania strangulation was present in 11.4% of male-on-male family murders in comparison with lower percentages in case of homicide on well-known persons 5.4%, acquaintances 4.7% or strangers – 2.4%. Hitting the victim with fists or legs is more common if the victim and the aggressor are strangers (38.1%) or acquaintances (39.1%) in comparison with family homicides 23.8%.

### **Alcohol consumption – risk factor of homicide**

Alcohol consumption has a huge impact on male-to-male homicides in Romania. It is the main condition under which the persons involved in conflicts (some of them started from misunderstandings or minor issues, such as verbal insults) lose their control and violence, including the lethal one, occurs. In more than 3 quarters of situations there was mentioned alcohol consumption by victim and/or perpetrator. The share is lower in case of homicides on strangers (61.9%) in comparison with the other types: family homicides (83.3%), well-known person homicides (75.3%) or acquaintance homicides (80.7%).

The victim and the perpetrator consumed alcohol together in approximately one third of the cases (34.1%). The share is slightly higher in the case of family homicides (38.1%) and homicides on well-known persons (45.2%) in comparison with acquaintances homicides (32.8%). In a low number of situations (7.1%) the victim and the perpetrator consumed alcohol together, even though they didn't know each other previously. In more than half of the situations (53.5%) the perpetrator consumed alcohol – alone or with other persons. The victim was reported to be under the influence of alcohol in 57.9% of male-to-male homicides. The share is much lower in case of stranger homicides 38.1% in comparison with acquaintances homicides between (65.1%), well-known person homicide (53.8%) and family homicide (57.1%).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Taken in consideration the gender of victim and offender, the homicide perpetrated by males on male is the most common form of homicide in Romania. It accounts for approximately 62% of all homicides, value comparable with those registered in Scotland (Scottish Government 2021), England and Wales (Morgan et al. 2020), Ireland (Dooley 2001) or USA (FBI 2019). In Romania most males are killed by acquaintances. The situation is comparable with the one registered, in England and Wales (Home Office 2021) or Scotland (Scottish Government 2021). In regard to victim-offender relationship a peculiarity of Romania is the high share of male victims murdered by relatives in parallel with the lower share of stranger homicides. Even though the share of alcohol-related homicide is different worldwide, it certifies a strong influence of alcohol consumption on homicide. In Romania, in three quarters of homicides alcohol consumption of victim and/or the perpetrator was reported. In more than half of homicides the victims were under the influence of alcohol. The same is valid for perpetrators. A lower consumption of alcohol is registered in stranger homicides.

Most of male-on-male homicides occur during quarrels/ interpersonal conflicts and on the background of alcohol consumption. The data discloses an

important role of chronic conflicts in the etiology of family homicides. Crime-related homicides are frequent in case of stranger homicides. Information collected also reveals a low level of education of the perpetrators. These are the main circumstances under which sometimes minor problems provoke a disproportionate reaction on behalf of the offender. Victims have an important role in the development of the conflict, in one quarter of cases being reported a provocative conducts on their behalf (for example, the victim was the first to insult or even physically aggress the offender).

Most cases of male-to-male homicides are committed by a single perpetrator against a single victim. In accordance with data reported by other studies (Decker 1993) multiple perpetrators are more frequent in case of murders committed on an acquaintance or a stranger. While most of the perpetrators are under 45 year old, the share of elder perpetrators decreases with the social distance between the victim and the perpetrator. Data reveals that one in ten male perpetrators is minor. They are less probable to kill a family member than a person outside their family. Frequently the homicides committed by men against men are not planned by the aggressors. No difference was reported from this point of view between the four types, in contradiction with aspects certified by other studies (Cao *et al.* 2007; Decker 1993).

Data reveal that most frequently males are killed inside a dwelling, in contradiction with the situation reported in England (Home Office 2021). However differences exist in connection to victim-offender relationship. Homicides between relatives and acquaintances are more likely to take place inside a dwelling. Stranger homicides occur more frequently on the street, aspect also mentioned by the results of other studies (Cao *et al.* 2007). Firearm homicides are very rare in Romania. Most frequently victims die following hitting with blunt objects, punching and/or kicking and stabbing. Differences in regard to weapons used exist taken in consideration victim-offender relationship. Kicking/ hitting the victim with fists and hitting with blunt objects are more frequent in acquaintance and stranger homicides. Stabbing is more frequently used in family homicides.

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