

# HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 2003

## CRIMES

(part 1)

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# CRIMES

## HOMICIDE CRIMES

Homicide is defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program as the "willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another." The homicide category comprises murder and nonnegligent manslaughter. Attempted murder, justifiable homicide, manslaughter by negligence, and suicide are excluded. Data depicting homicide in California have been collected and published for 52 years.

From 2002 to 2003:

- The homicide rate per 100,000 population decreased 1.5 percent (6.8 to 6.7).
- The number of homicides increased 0.4 percent (from 2,392 to 2,402).

Comparing 1994 to 2003:

- The homicide rate per 100,000 population decreased 41.7 percent (11.5 to 6.7).
- The number of homicides decreased 35.1 percent (from 3,699 to 2,402).

Comparing 1952 to 2003:

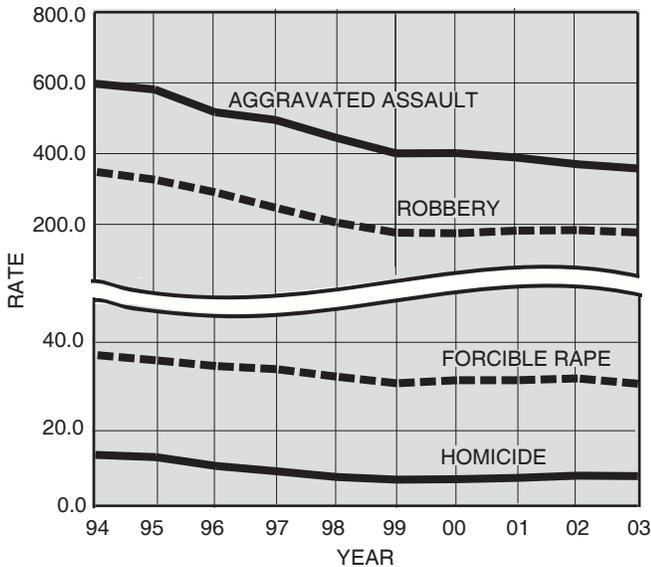
- The homicide rate per 100,000 population increased 179.2 percent (2.4 to 6.7).
- The number of homicides increased 760.9 percent (from 279 to 2,402).

 ***From 2002 to 2003, the number of homicides increased slightly (0.4 percent). However, due to a larger increase in the number of persons living in California during this period, the homicide rate per 100,000 population decreased slightly (1.5 percent).***

Table N-1  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1952-2003  
Number and Rate per 100,000 Population

| Year(s)    | Number | Rate |
|------------|--------|------|
| 2003 ..... | 2,402  | 6.7  |
| 2002 ..... | 2,392  | 6.8  |
| 2001 ..... | 2,201  | 6.3  |
| 2000 ..... | 2,074  | 6.0  |
| 1999 ..... | 2,006  | 5.9  |
| 1998 ..... | 2,170  | 6.5  |
| 1997 ..... | 2,579  | 7.8  |
| 1996 ..... | 2,910  | 9.0  |
| 1995 ..... | 3,530  | 11.0 |
| 1994 ..... | 3,699  | 11.5 |
| 1993 ..... | 4,095  | 12.9 |
| 1992 ..... | 3,920  | 12.5 |
| 1991 ..... | 3,876  | 12.6 |
| 1990 ..... | 3,562  | 12.1 |
| 1989 ..... | 3,159  | 11.0 |
| 1988 ..... | 2,947  | 10.5 |
| 1987 ..... | 2,929  | 10.7 |
| 1986 ..... | 3,030  | 11.3 |
| 1985 ..... | 2,781  | 10.7 |
| 1984 ..... | 2,724  | 10.6 |
| 1983 ..... | 2,640  | 10.5 |
| 1982 ..... | 2,778  | 11.3 |
| 1981 ..... | 3,140  | 13.1 |
| 1980 ..... | 3,405  | 14.4 |
| 1979 ..... | 2,941  | 12.6 |
| 1978 ..... | 2,601  | 11.4 |
| 1977 ..... | 2,481  | 11.1 |
| 1976 ..... | 2,214  | 10.1 |
| 1975 ..... | 2,196  | 10.2 |
| 1974 ..... | 1,970  | 9.3  |
| 1973 ..... | 1,862  | 8.9  |
| 1972 ..... | 1,789  | 8.7  |
| 1971 ..... | 1,633  | 8.0  |
| 1970 ..... | 1,355  | 6.8  |
| 1969 ..... | 1,376  | 6.9  |
| 1968 ..... | 1,171  | 6.0  |
| 1967 ..... | 1,051  | 5.4  |
| 1966 ..... | 897    | 4.7  |
| 1965 ..... | 892    | 4.8  |
| 1964 ..... | 758    | 4.2  |
| 1963 ..... | 656    | 3.7  |
| 1962 ..... | 671    | 3.9  |
| 1961 ..... | 609    | 3.7  |
| 1960 ..... | 620    | 3.9  |
| 1959 ..... | 515    | 3.4  |
| 1958 ..... | 547    | 3.7  |
| 1957 ..... | 497    | 3.5  |
| 1956 ..... | 474    | 3.5  |
| 1955 ..... | 417    | 3.2  |
| 1954 ..... | 419    | 3.3  |
| 1953 ..... | 276    | 2.3  |
| 1952 ..... | 279    | 2.4  |

Figure 1  
 VIOLENT CRIMES, 1994-2003  
 Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 1.

There are four offenses classified as violent crimes by the FBI: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. For comparison, changes in the rates of the four offenses follow:

From 2002 to 2003:

- Homicide decreased 1.5 percent (6.8 to 6.7).
- Forcible rape decreased 4.2 percent (28.8 to 27.6).
- Robbery decreased 3.6 percent (183.6 to 177.0).
- Aggravated assault decreased 3.2 percent (370.0 to 358.1).

Comparing 1994 to 2003:

- Homicide decreased 41.7 percent (11.5 to 6.7).
- Forcible rape decreased 19.1 percent (34.1 to 27.6).
- Robbery decreased 49.3 percent (348.9 to 177.0).
- Aggravated assault decreased 40.1 percent (597.8 to 358.1).

***On average, the homicide crime rate per 100,000 population accounted for approximately 1 percent of the total violent crime rate from 1994 to 2003. For comparison, the forcible rape crime rate accounted for approximately 4 percent, the robbery crime rate accounted for approximately 32 percent, and the aggravated assault crime rate accounted for approximately 63 percent of the total violent crime rate during the same period.***

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Figures 2, 3, and 4 display homicide rates per 100,000 population for victims classified by gender, race/ethnic group, and age.

In 2003,

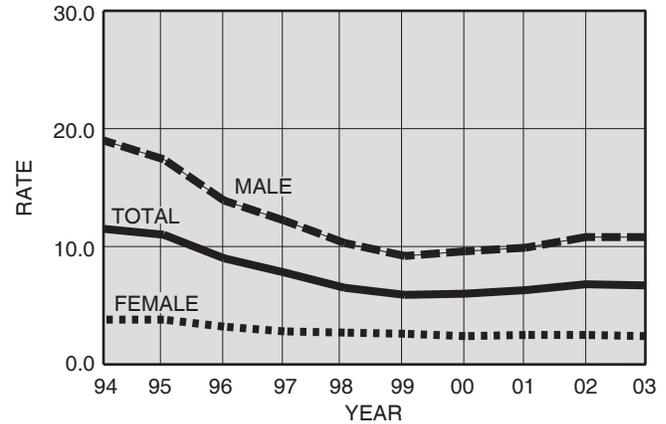
- The total homicide rate was 6.7 per 100,000 population.
- The male homicide rate was 4.5 times that of the female homicide rate (10.8 vs. 2.4).
- The black homicide rate was almost 12 times that of whites and over 3 times that of Hispanics (29.8 vs. 2.5 and 9.0, respectively).

Comparing 1994 to 2003:

- The male homicide rate decreased 43.2 percent and the female homicide rate decreased 36.8 percent.
- The white homicide rate decreased 43.2 percent, the Hispanic homicide rate decreased 46.4 percent, and the black homicide rate decreased 39.6 percent.

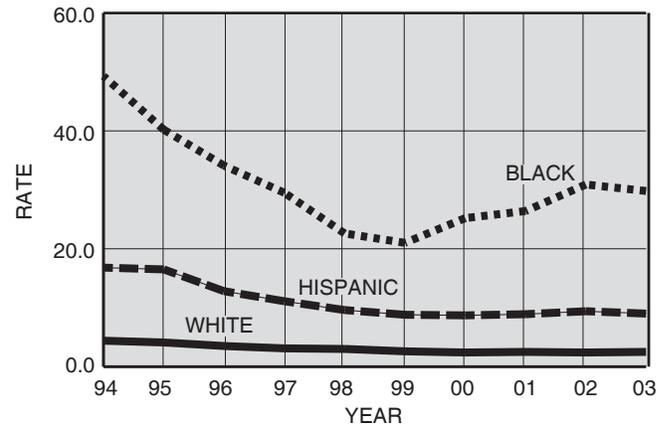
 **Since 1994, homicide rates have declined considerably for both males and females (down 43.2 and 36.8 percent, respectively). Similarly, homicide rates have declined for whites, Hispanics, and blacks (down 43.2, 46.4, and 39.6 percent, respectively).**

Figure 2  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1994-2003  
By Gender of Victim  
Rate per 100,000 Population



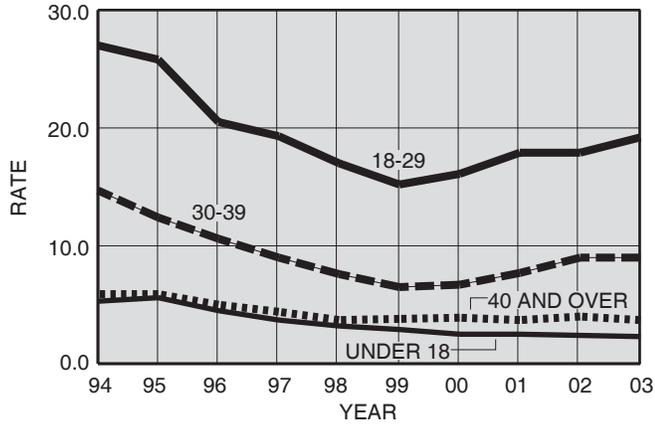
Source: Table 2.

Figure 3  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1994-2003  
By Race/Ethnic Group of Victim  
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 3.

Figure 4  
 HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1994-2003  
 By Age of Victim  
 Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 4.

In 2003,

- Persons aged 18-29 had the highest homicide victimization rate (19.2 per 100,000 population).

Comparing 1994 to 2003:

- The homicide rate decreased 56.6 percent for victims under age 18, 28.9 percent for victims aged 18-29, 38.8 percent for victims aged 30-39, and 37.3 percent for victims aged 40 and over.

*In 2003, the homicide rate for victims aged 18-29 was over 8 times that of victims under age 18, over 2 times that of victims aged 30-39, and over 5 times that of victims aged 40 and over (19.2 vs. 2.3, 9.0, and 3.7 percent, respectively).*

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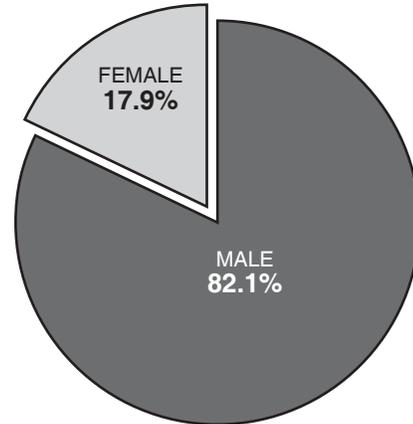
# CRIMES

In 2003,

- Males represented 82.1 percent of total homicide victims; they comprised 50.2 percent of the population.
- Females represented 17.9 percent of total homicide victims; they comprised 49.8 percent of the population.

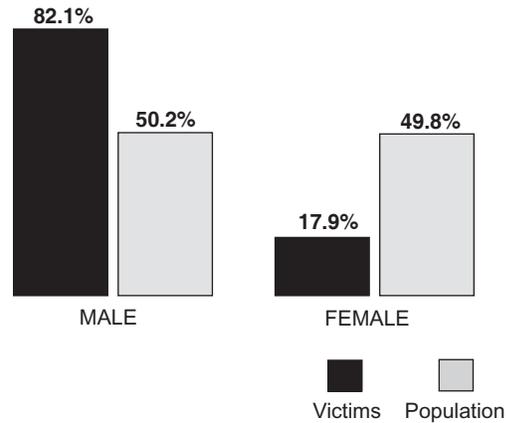
 ***In 2003, the ratio of male to female population was approximately 1:1. The ratio of male to female homicide victimization was approximately 4:1. These ratios represent a consistent historical trend (see Tables 2 and 5).***

Figure 5  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
By Gender of Victim



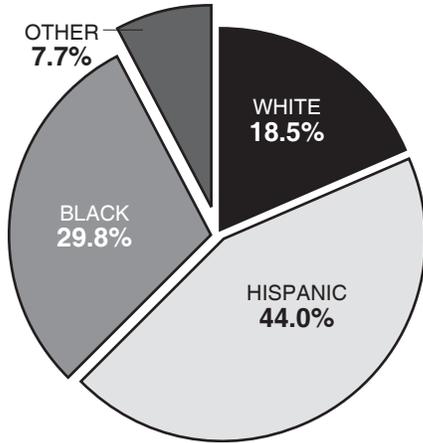
Source: Table 5.

Figure 6  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
Gender of Victim by Percent of Total Victims and Percent of Population



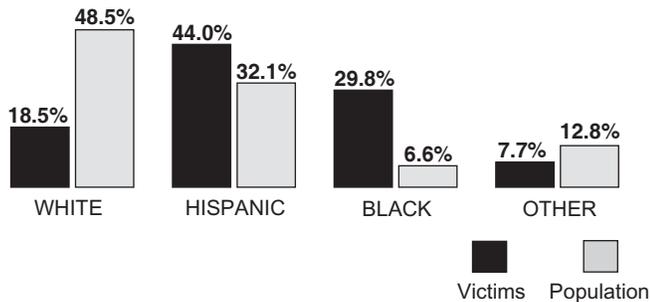
Sources: Tables 2 and 5.

Figure 7  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
By Race/Ethnic Group of Victim



Source: Table 6.

Figure 8  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
Race/Ethnic Group of Victim by Percent of Total Victims and Percent of Population



Sources: Tables 3 and 6.

In 2003,

- Whites represented 18.5 percent of total homicide victims; they comprised 48.5 percent of the population.
- Hispanics represented 44.0 percent of total homicide victims; they comprised 32.1 percent of the population.
- Blacks represented 29.8 percent of total homicide victims; they comprised 6.6 percent of the population.
- The “other” race/ethnic group category represented 7.7 percent of total homicide victims; they comprised 12.8 percent of the population.



*In 2003, the percentage of homicide victims who were black was just over 4.5 times larger than their percentage of the population (29.8 percent vs. 6.6 percent). This difference far exceeds the disparities between homicide victims belonging to the other race/ethnic groups shown and their percentages of the population.*

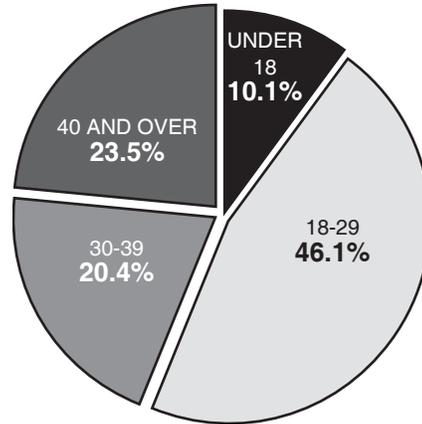
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In 2003,

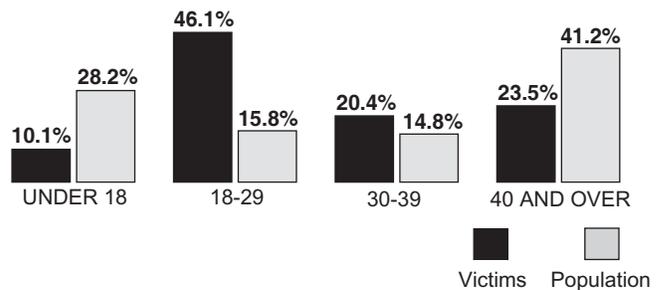
- 10.1 percent of total homicide victims were under age 18; this age group comprised 28.2 percent of the population.
- 46.1 percent of total homicide victims were aged 18-29; this age group comprised 15.8 percent of the population.
- 20.4 percent of total homicide victims were aged 30-39; this age group comprised 14.8 percent of the population.
- 23.5 percent of total homicide victims were aged 40 and over; this age group comprised 41.2 percent of the population.

Figure 9  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
By Age of Victim



Source: Table 7.  
Note: Percentages do not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

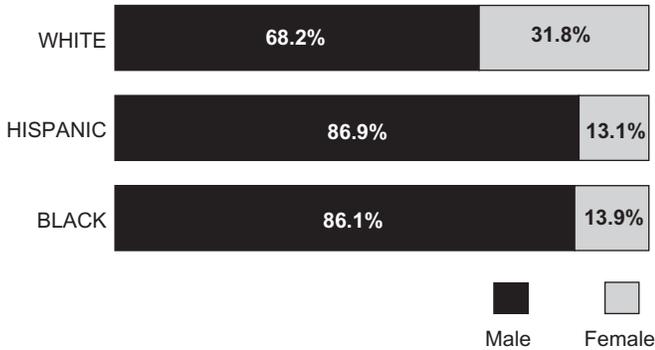
Figure 10  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
Age of Victim by Percent of Total Victims  
and Percent of Population



Sources: Tables 4 and 7.  
Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

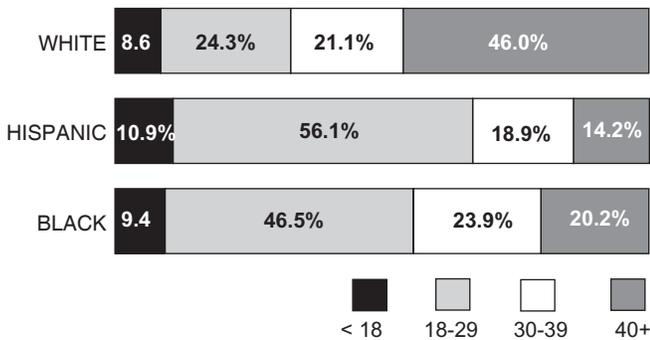
 ***In 2003, the percentage of homicide victims aged 18-29 was almost 3 times larger than the percentage of the population aged 18-29 (46.1 percent vs. 15.8 percent).***

Figure 11  
 HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
 Race/Ethnic Group of Victim by Gender of Victim



Source: Table 8.

Figure 12  
 HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
 Race/Ethnic Group of Victim by Age of Victim



Source: Table 9.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

In 2003,

- A greater percentage of white victims were female than were either Hispanic or black victims (31.8 vs. 13.1 and 13.9 percent, respectively).
- A greater percentage of Hispanic and black victims were aged 18-29 than were white victims (56.1 and 46.5 vs. 24.3 percent, respectively).
- A greater percentage of white victims were aged 40 and over than were either Hispanic or black victims (46.0 vs. 14.2 and 20.2 percent, respectively).

 *In 2003, the percentage of white homicide victims who were female was over twice the percentage of Hispanic or black female victims. White victims also tended to be older, Hispanic and black victims, younger.*

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When homicides were examined by the relationship of the victim to the offender, it was found that:

In 2003,

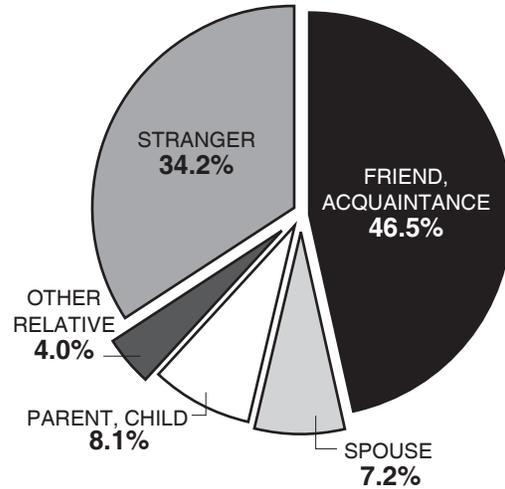
- 46.5 percent of victims were friends or acquaintances of offenders.
- 7.2 percent of victims were spouses of offenders.
- 8.1 percent of victims were parents or children of offenders.
- 4.0 percent of the relationships of victim to offender fell into the "other relative" category.
- 34.2 percent of victims were strangers to offenders.

Comparing 1994 to 2003:

- The proportion of homicides in which victims were friends or acquaintances of offenders decreased from 62.1 percent to 46.5 percent.
- The proportion of homicides in which victims were strangers to offenders increased from 26.2 percent to 34.2 percent.

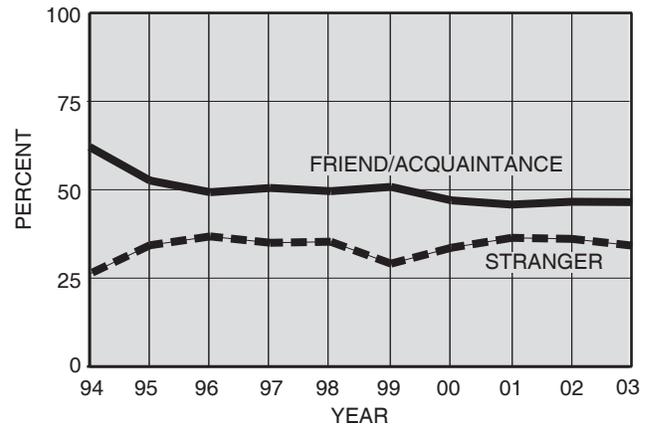
**✓ From 2002 to 2003, the number of homicide victims killed by friends or acquaintances decreased 9.4 percent. The number of victims killed by strangers also decreased (14.0 percent).**

Figure 13  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
By Relationship of Victim to Offender



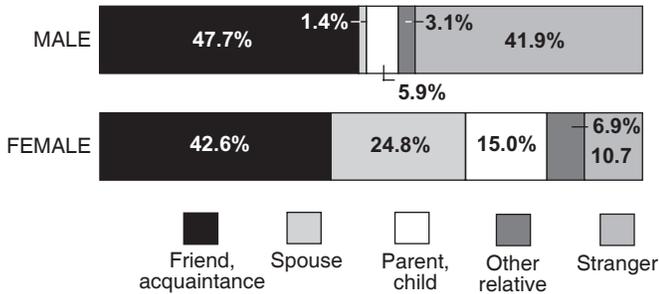
Source: Table 11.

Figure 14  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1994-2003  
By Selected Relationships of Victims to Offenders



Source: Table 11.

Figure 15  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
Gender of Victim by Relationship of Victim to Offender

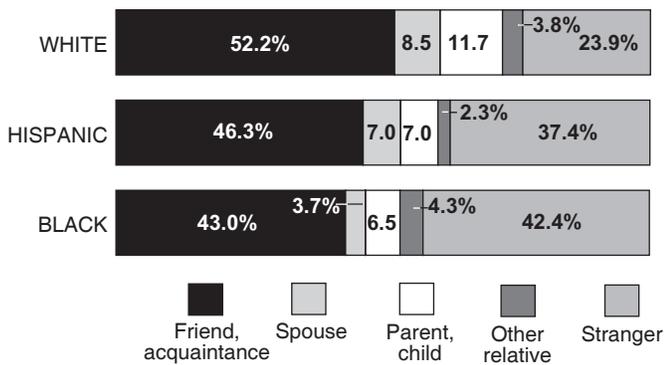


Source: Table 12.

In 2003,

- A greater percentage of female victims were spouses of offenders (24.8 percent) than were male victims (1.4 percent).
- A greater percentage of Hispanic and black victims were strangers to offenders than were white victims (37.4 and 42.4 vs. 23.9 percent, respectively).

Figure 16  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
Race/Ethnic Group of Victim by Relationship of Victim to Offender



Source: Table 12.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

 ***In 2003, almost 25 percent of all female homicide victims were killed by their spouses. In contrast, less than 1.5 percent of male victims were killed by theirs.***

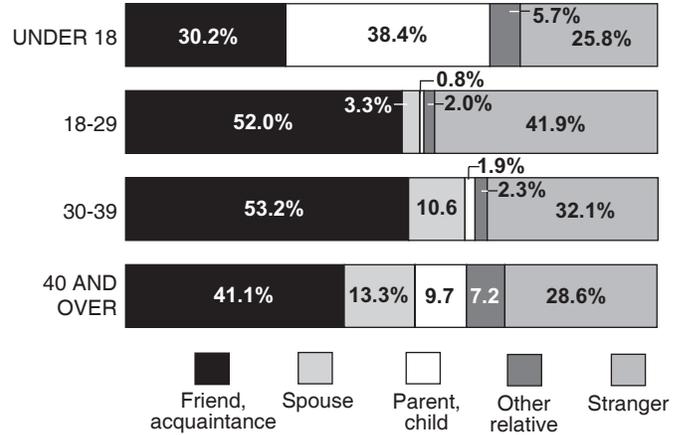
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In 2003,

- The largest percentage of homicide victims under age 18 were parents or children of the offenders (38.4 percent).
- The largest percentage of homicide victims aged 18-29, 30-39, and 40 and over were friends or acquaintances of the offenders (52.0, 53.2, and 41.1 percent, respectively).
- A greater percentage of victims aged 40 and over were spouses of the offenders (13.3 percent) than were victims in any other age group shown.

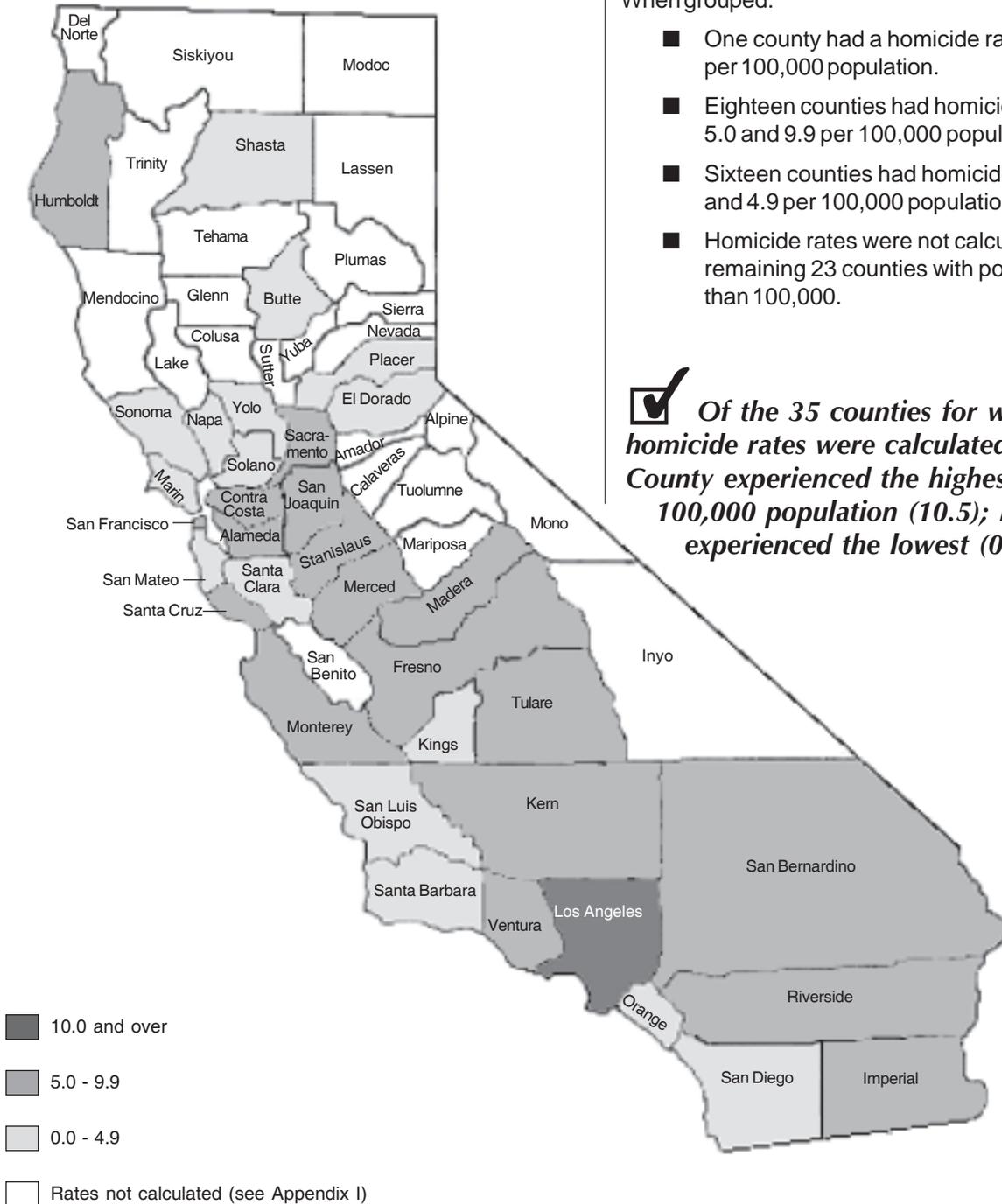
Figure 17  
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
Age of Victim by Relationship of Victim to Offender



Source: Table 13.  
Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

**✓** *In 2003, almost 40 percent of homicide victims under age 18 were parents or children of the offenders. Over 50 percent of homicide victims aged 18-29 and 30-39 were friends or acquaintances of the offenders.*

Figure 18  
 HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2003  
 County by Rate per 100,000 Population



In 2003, 10 of California's 58 counties exceeded the statewide homicide rate of 6.7 per 100,000 population. When grouped:

- One county had a homicide rate of 10.0 and over per 100,000 population.
- Eighteen counties had homicide rates between 5.0 and 9.9 per 100,000 population.
- Sixteen counties had homicide rates between 0.0 and 4.9 per 100,000 population.
- Homicide rates were not calculated for the remaining 23 counties with populations of less than 100,000.

☑ ***Of the 35 counties for which 2003 homicide rates were calculated, Los Angeles County experienced the highest rate per 100,000 population (10.5); Marin County experienced the lowest (0.0).***

Source: Table 14.

**More -->**