

Multiple victim homicides, mass murders, and homicide-suicides as domestic violence events

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Acknowledgment

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Outline of the talk

- Multiple victim intimate partner homicide, including familicides and mass murders
- Intimate partner homicide-suicides, including those with multiple victims
- Theory on why this occurs
- Precursors to the homicides
- Use of guns
- Implications



Multiple victim intimate partner homicide

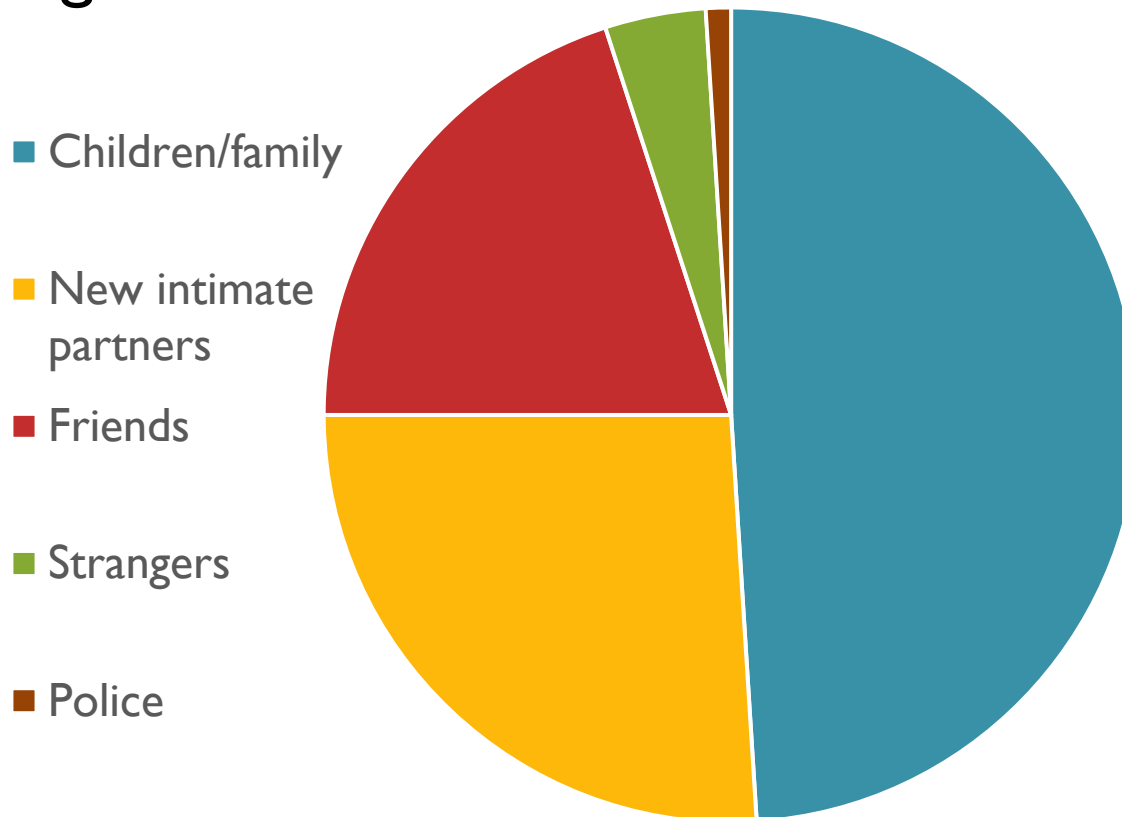
- Between 6% and 20% of intimate partner homicides involve fatal victims in addition to the intimate partner
- Additional victims include
 - Children
 - Family members
 - Friends/coworkers
 - New intimate partners
 - Police officers or strangers

Sources: Smith et al., 2014; Smucker et al., 2014; Yousuf et al., 2017



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Relationship of 1,120 corollary victims to intimate partner victims in 16 states from 2003 through 2009



Source: Smith et al., 2014



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Familicides

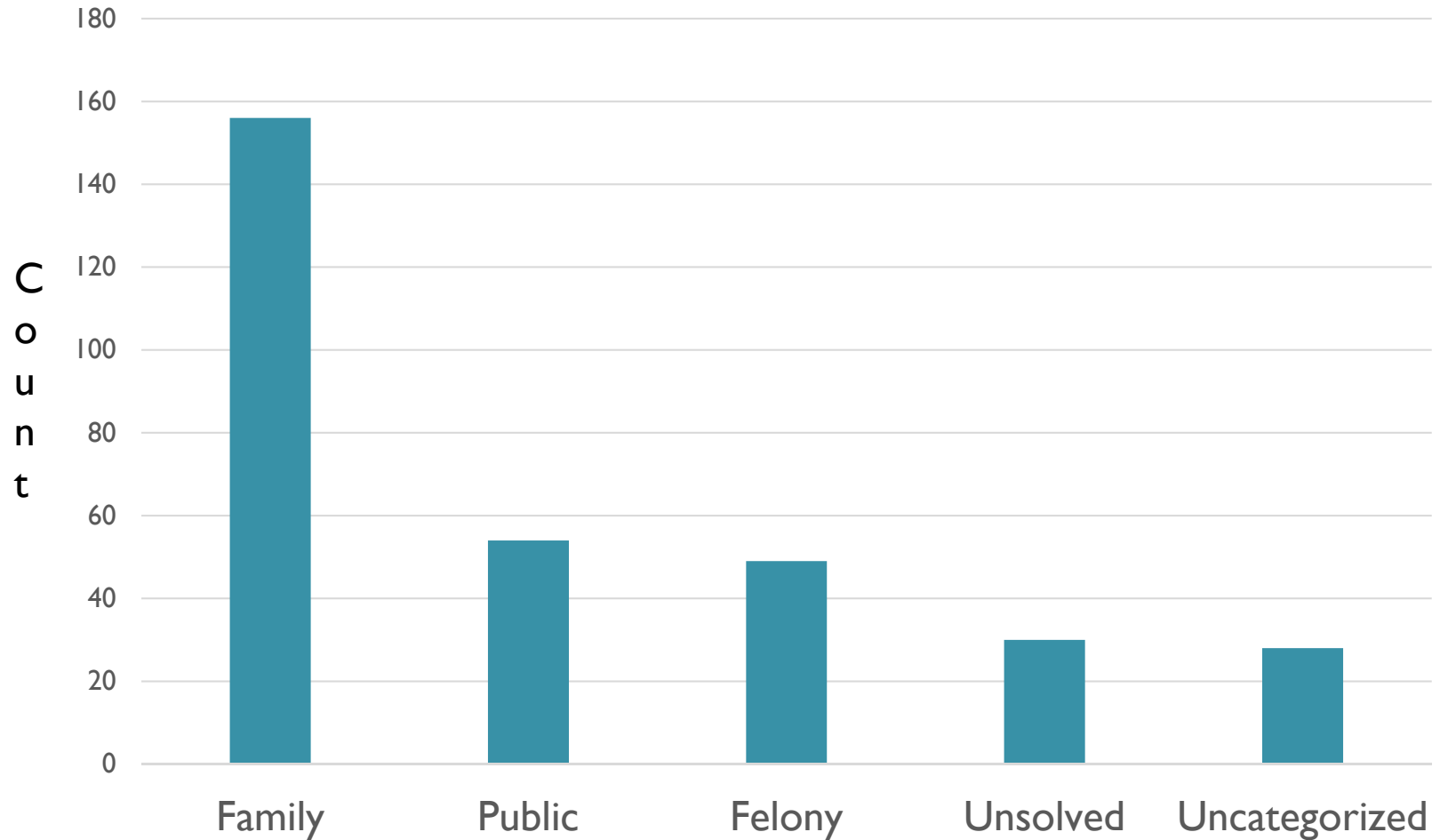
- Familicide: The killing of family members, including spouse/intimate partner, children, parents, siblings
 - 62% of familicides involved intimate partner and child murders
- Familicides (killing of intimate partner and her children) are the most common type of multiple victim intimate partner homicide.

Source: Liem et al., 2013; Liem & Reichelmann, 2014



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Number of mass murders (≥ 4 deaths) by type from 2006-2016

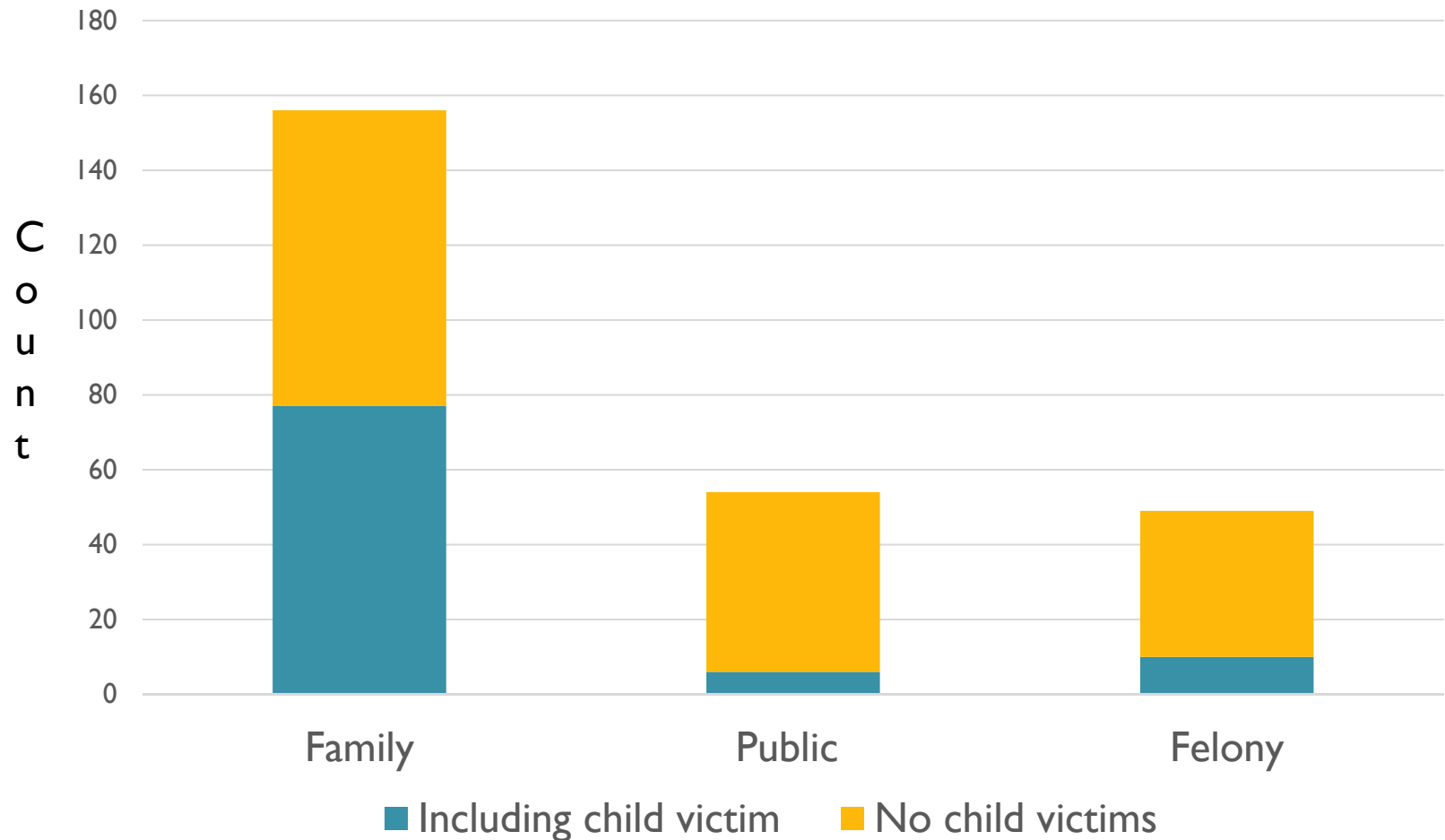


Source: Fridel, 2018



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Percentage of mass murders that involved child victims from 2006-2016



Source: Fridel, 2018



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Intimate partner homicide-suicides

- The most common type of homicide-suicide
 - 20% to 59% of all intimate partner homicides followed by the offender's suicide
 - 5% of all homicides followed by the offender's suicide

Sources: Banks et al., 2008; Barber et al., 2008; Knoll & Hatters-Friedman, 2015; Lund & Smorodinsky, 2001; Morton et al., 1998; Smucker et al., 2018; Yousuf et al., 2017



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Multiple victim intimate partner homicide-suicides

- Of all intimate partner homicide-suicides in 50 states from 1999 through 2004
 - Offender killed at least one child in 23% of cases
- Of all intimate partner homicide-suicides in which the couple had more than child in 50 states from 1999 through 2004
 - Offender killed all children in 21% of cases

Source: Sillito & Salari, 2011



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Crimes of passion?

- Not generally.
- 83% of 150 homicides of intimate partners and children had signs of premeditation

Source: Liem & Reichelmann, 2014



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Why involve corollary victims?

- Reasons of proximity
 - They are present at the time of the homicide
 - They try to intervene in the violence
- Theoretical reasons
 - Evolutionary psychology: male proprietariness theory



Male proprietariness theory

- Premise: Men are not 100% certain that children born to their female partners are biologically theirs. To achieve certainty, they may take ownership of their female partner's sexuality by limiting their freedom.
- Engaging in strategies to control one's partner is intimate partner violence.

Source: Stark, 2007; Wilson et al., 1995



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When control is threatened

- Control is threatened by suggestion that partner may take a new sexual companion
- Lethal violence may be used to reassert control

Source: Stark, 2007; Wilson et al., 1995



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Separation

- Intimate partner homicides, intimate partner homicide-suicides, multiple victim intimate partner homicides, parental homicide-suicides are all more likely around time of separation from a romantic partner

Sources: Campbell et al., 2007; Holland et al., 2018; Knoll & Hatters-Friedman, 2015; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006; Morton et al., 1998; Taylor, 2018



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Children

- Killed in retaliation against their intimate partner, often for separation
- The homicide-suicide offender may kill children then self, leaving intimate partner alive to devastate her.
- Children may be viewed as extensions of the mother, and not their own persons (murder-by-proxy)

Sources: Cooper & Eaves, 1996; Liem, Levin, Holland, & Fox, 2013; Liem & Reichelmann, 2014; Logan et al., 2013; Sillito & Salari, 2011; Websdale, 2010; Wilczynski, 1995



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Suicide-by-proxy

- Suicide may motivate some familicides
- Suicidal familicide offenders may not have known histories of partner violence (but may still have divorce/separation as precursor)
- Desire to commit suicide, but belief that their family would not survive without them (they are the leaders of their family and can decide their fate)

Sources: Sillito & Salari, 2011; Websdale, 2010



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Circumstances of familicides

- Homicides tend to occur
 - In private homes
 - With guns
- Offenders tend to be
 - Non-Hispanic White
 - Male
 - ~30 to ~49 years old

Source: Liem & Reichelmann, 2014; Logan et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2014



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Precursors to the homicides

- Separation (or threat of separation) and related issues
 - Child custody
- Separation increased risk of intimate partner homicide-suicide over 2x of risk of nonfatal abuse

Source: Holland et al., 2018; Knoll & Hatters-Friedman, 2015; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006; Morton et al., 1998; Sillito & Salari, 2011



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Precursors to the homicides

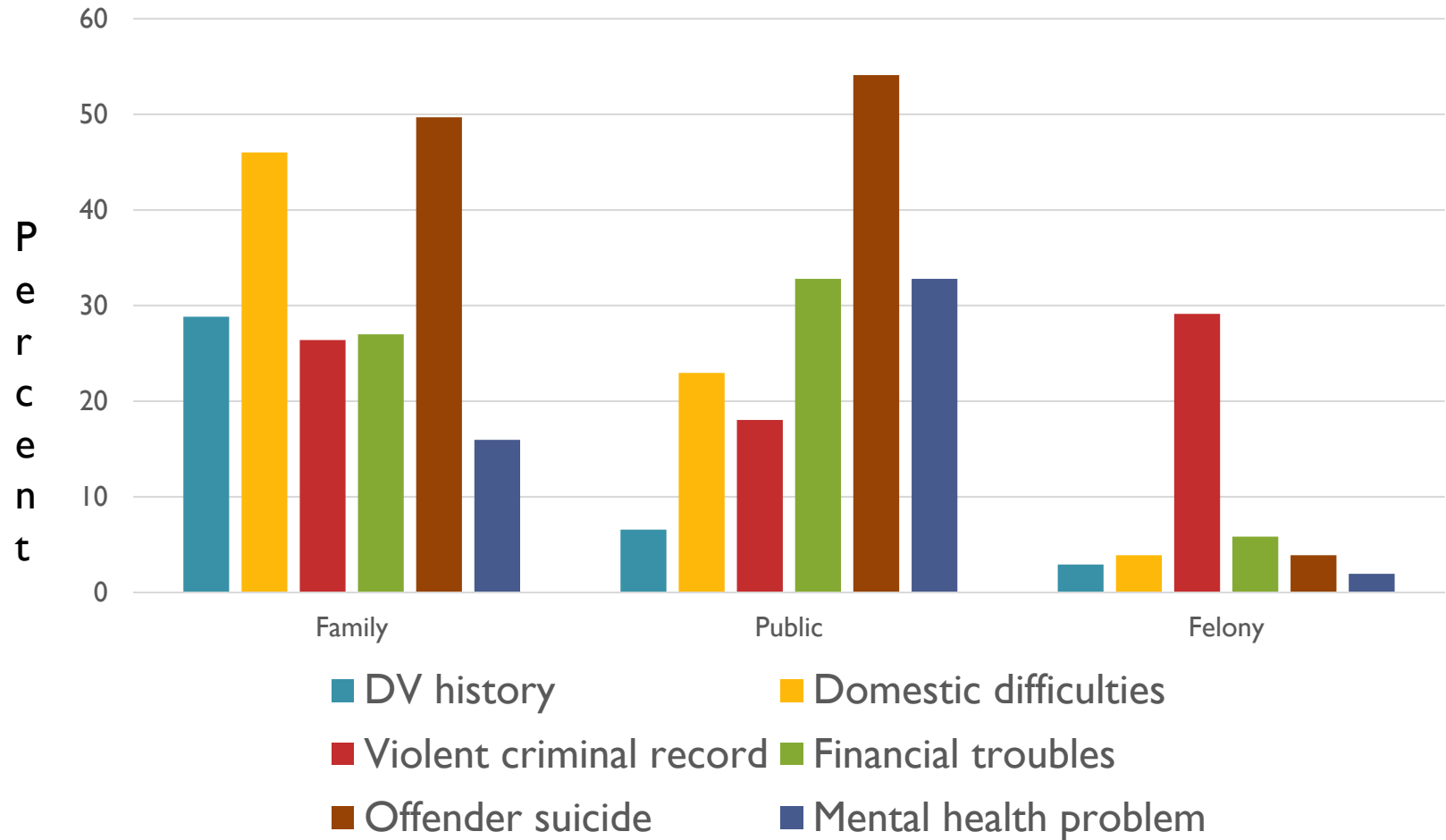
- “Relationship issues”
 - Intimate partner violence, restraining orders, arguments
- 80% of 238 cases of familicide (including those that didn’t involve children or intimate partner deaths) had “intimate partner problems”

Source: Liem & Reichelmann, 2014



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Percent of mass murderers with key characteristics from 2006-2016



Source: Fridel, 2018

Premeditation

- Written or verbal threats or warnings in 70% of familicides
 - Some are only minutes before, but some were days before the homicide
 - There may be time to intervene in some cases!
- Threats of suicide doubles risk of intimate partner homicide-suicide

Source: Holland et al., 2018; Knoll & Hatters-Friedman, 2015; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006; Liem & Reichelmann, 2014



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Mental health

- 30% of those who committed parental homicide-suicide were known to have mental health concerns (but 74% known to have “intimate partner problems”)
- 21% of male and 52% of female homicide-suicide offenders who killed their children had mental health problems

Sources: Holland et al., 2018; Logan et al., 2013



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Use of guns

- Guns are deadlier than other weapons
 - Comparing cases of intimate partner femicide to worst episodes of intimate partner violence, cases where the abuser used a gun were 41 times more likely to end in death

Sources: Campbell et al., 2003; Saltzman et al., 1992



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Gun use in intimate partner homicide-suicide

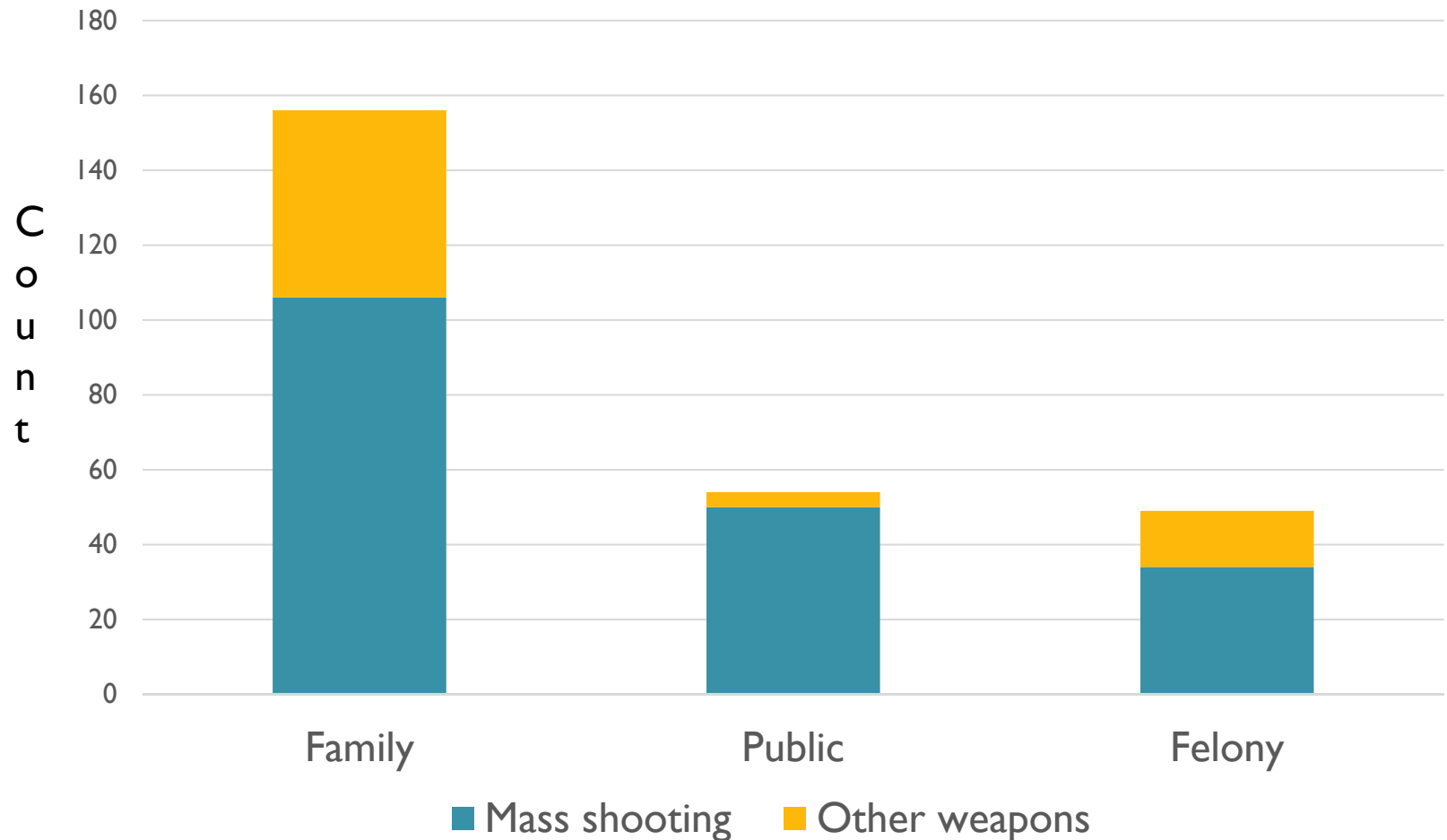
- “Among men who kill their female partners with a firearm, homicide-suicide is the norm” (Barber et al., 2008, p. 293).
- Used in 61% to 89% of intimate partner homicide-suicides

Sources: Banks et al., 2008; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006; Smucker et al., 2018



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Percentage and number of mass murders that are mass shootings from 2006-2016



Source: Fridel, 2018



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Implications

- Threats and other warning signs offer opportunity to intervene
 - Red flag laws / gun violence restraining orders / extreme risk protection orders

“As suicidal batterers will not be deterred from [intimate partner homicide] by threat of punishment, the results [of this research] underline the importance of preemption by limiting batterers’ access to guns” (Smucker et al., 2018, p. 337).



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Gun restrictions

- Domestic violence restraining order gun restriction associated with reductions in intimate partner homicide
- Violent misdemeanor gun restriction associated with reductions in intimate partner homicide

Sources: Vigdor & Mercy, 2006; Zeoli et al., 2010; Zeoli et al., 2018



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Association of DVRO provisions with IPH and gun IPH compared with no state DVRO firearm restriction law^a

Total IPH		Gun IPH	
State has DVRO law and...	Associated reduction ^b	State has DVRO law and...	Associated reduction ^b
Dates not covered	--	Dates not covered	--
Dates covered	13%	Dates covered	16%
Ex parte not covered	--	Ex parte not covered	--
Ex parte orders covered	13%	Ex parte orders covered	16%
No relinquishment law	--	No relinquishment law	--
Relinquishment law	12%	Relinquishment law	16%

^a Each provision tested in a separate model (ie, 6 models represented)

^b Associated reductions reported only for those estimates that reached statistical significance at $p < .05$

Source: Zeoli et al., 2018



 **THANK YOU!!!**

QUESTIONS?



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