

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Homicide, Drinking and Night-Culture

Professor Stephen Tomsen of the Institute for Culture and Society and the School of Social Sciences and Psychology with Mr Jason Payne of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is examining the prevalence, locations and trends in homicide linked to commercial night-time leisure, problematic drinking and drug use. This research is funded through a Criminology Research Grant from the AIC (formerly the Criminology Research Council). UWS criminology graduate, Jason Payne is a Research Manager at the AIC and supervises the Institute's Australian National Homicide Monitoring Program and its database.

'Recent research has focused on levels of violence and crime and its links with public socialising at night', explains Professor Tomsen. 'Assaults peak on weekend nights and follow the rhythms of socialising in the direct confines of the night-time economy or by indirect relation to it. These crimes include serious confrontational violence in and around licensed premises with a "spill" on to other locations, including public transport, and domestic settings. The specific circumstances and trends in relation to night deaths in settings with significant drinking and/or drug use will remain unclear without deeper study. A thorough study of homicide cases will provide some further insight into the nature and real levels of night-time violence as well as the apparent success or failure of current policing and crime prevention strategies.'

The researchers will examine national homicide records and carry out detailed analysis of case files. Information on demographic variables, offender motives and offender-victim interactions will be scrutinised to draw out information about typical fatal scenarios.



The team will compare location and neighbourhood incidents with local council restrictions, anti-violence campaigns and police and public security strategies to identify high risk scenarios and localities.

Confrontational violence in locations of night-time public drinking and illicit drug use is a phenomenon known internationally. This project will shed light on the effectiveness of Australian policing and crime prevention strategies and how they might be more effective in the reduction of many homicides.

Project Title: Homicide and the Night-Time Economy

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