A white paper on

Examining 10 Years of Felony Family Violence Offenses in Bexar County

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Executive Summary

Nationally, cases of domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence or locally in San Antonio as family violence, are known to be on a fairly steep decline. In Texas, cases are also shown to be declining. But in San Antonio and Bexar County, domestic violence is on the increase, as are domestic violence homicides of women by their male intimate partners. Further investigation is needed into the causes and conditions of domestic violence locally, and one aspect of this is identifying felony cases and offenders to see if any patterns emerge. Consequently, almost 10 years of felony family violence cases were identified and analyzed, and the results of that analysis are contained in this report. Race and ethnicity, age at time of offense, and geographical distribution by ZIP Code of offenders was analyzed. Additionally, repeat offenders were identified, and costs of their arrests were described. Further, an association has been made in the research literature with domestic violence offenses that involve choking or strangulation as a precursor crime to domestic violence homicide. According to the research literature, when these crimes are considered felonies, the incidence of domestic violence homicides should drop. Accordingly, we analyzed the incidence of these felony offenses locally and saw that they are on the increase, as the number of domestic violence homicides also continues to climb. As a result, more research is needed into what aspects of San Antonio/Bexar County’s approach to the problem of domestic violence need further work; and/or what aspects of culture, including the normalization of domestic violence through repeat felony offenses, might be contributing to the problem.
Introduction

Domestic violence murders of women by male intimate partners have been on the rise recently in San Antonio and Bexar County, as documented by the Texas Council on Family Violence in their year-to-year reviews and as reported in the “Status of Women in San Antonio” report prepared for the mayor and City Council this year. This increase in domestic violence fatalities for women locally stands out all the more since domestic violence is known to be on a sharp decline nationally, and on slight decline in Texas (Catalano, 2013; Texas Department of Public Safety, 2017; Truman and Morgan, 2014).

Figure 1 The number of women murdered by male intimate partners in Bexar County has been on the increase since 2012. Data obtained from the Texas Council on Family Violence.

Consequently, an effort was made to determine if felony family violent offenses have also been on the rise during the same time period. Data was obtained from the Bexar County District Court website (Bexar County District Court, 2019) and subsequently
analyzed, with a focus on five key felony offenses, including one first-degree felony, one second-degree felony, and three third-degree felonies. Initial emphasis was placed on two particular felony offenses, assault categories that capture family violence which includes choking and/or strangulation, because experts indicate this serious act often precedes domestic violence homicide of women by their male intimate partners. Later the analysis was expanded to include all the main family violence felonies, a look at repeat offenders, and look at 2018 cases on their own. A breakdown of the data follows.

**Domestic Violence Felonies Over Time - All**

In the graph above, a strong uptick in cases is evident in 2010, which likely reflects a law change in Texas the previous year, when the Texas legislature passed a law
making choking or strangulation in family violence a second- or third-degree felony offense, depending on the elements of the crime.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Number</th>
<th>Felony Level</th>
<th>Offense Description</th>
<th>Total Offenses</th>
<th>Percent of Total Offenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>130089</td>
<td>Third degree</td>
<td>Second or subsequent domestic assault</td>
<td>7,452</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130090</td>
<td>Third degree</td>
<td>Continuous violence against a family member</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130091</td>
<td>Third degree</td>
<td>Assault by choking or strangulation</td>
<td>2,574</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130092</td>
<td>Second degree</td>
<td>Assault by choking or strangulation</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130130</td>
<td>First Degree</td>
<td>Aggravated assault with a deadly weapon or serious bodily injury against a family member or dating partner</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3 Types of offenses, descriptions of offenses and percentages of total offenses*

**Data Analysis**

For **all family violence felony cases**, 1999-present, there were 11,690 cases minimum (we looked at five main offenses, but there were scattered others with generally low numbers, so these emerged as the main ones). (There were also other offenses, such as aggravated kidnapping or stalking, which could have fallen within family violence as well, depending on the relationship of the offender to the victim, but these were omitted from the present analysis.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Number</th>
<th>Youngest Age at Time of Offense</th>
<th>Oldest Age at Time of Offense</th>
<th>Average Age of Offenders at Time of Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Offenses</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130089</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130090</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130091</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130092</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130130</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4 Age of offenders at time of offense by felony offense*
There were 499 (4.3%) women and 11,191 men (95.7%). The age at offense ranged from 16.6 years old to 75.4 years old, with an average age of 33.3 years old at date of offense, and a mean of 31.1 years old\(^1\). There was no important difference between male (33.2) and female (33.1) average age at time of offense.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Location} & \text{Whites} & \text{Blacks} & \text{Hispanics} & \text{Other} & \text{Male} & \text{Female} \\
\hline
\text{Bexar County} & 28\% & 7\% & 60\% & 5\% & 49\% & 51\% \\
\text{San Antonio} & 25\% & 7\% & 64\% & 4\% & 49\% & 51\% \\
\hline
\text{Offense Code} & & & & & & \\
130089 & 16.8\% & 15.5\% & 67.5\% & 0.1\% & 95.9\% & 4.1\% \\
130090 & 34.8\% & 15\% & 49\% & 1.3\% & 92.5\% & 7.5\% \\
130091 & 37.3\% & 20.2\% & 41.3\% & 1.2\% & 97.4\% & 2.6\% \\
130092 & 19.3\% & 22.7\% & 57.5\% & 0.4\% & 99.2\% & 0.8\% \\
130130 & 36.9\% & 16.5\% & 43.7\% & 2.9\% & 75.2\% & 24.8\% \\
\hline
\text{Average} & 29.02\% & 17.98\% & 51.80\% & 1.18\% & 92.04\% & 7.96\% \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Figure 5 Distribution of mean age at time of offense}\]

\[\text{Figure 6 Demographics by Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Offense}\]

\(^1\) Age at time of offense was calculated by comparing date of offense to assailant’s date of birth.
Regarding race and ethnicity of offenders overall, offenses were ascribed to 14 Asians (0.1%), 1,967 Blacks (16.8%), 1 marked “C” (0.0%), 3 marked “I” (0.0%), 6,942 Hispanics (59.4%), 45 marked “O” (0.4%), possibly for “Other,” 3 marked “U” (for “Unknown”) (0%), and 2,715 Whites (23.2%). The average age for Asians at time of offense was 30.4 years old; for Blacks, 33.9; Hispanics, 33.4; white, 32.5; and other, 30.7.

Of these offenses, 4,267 or 36.5% are committed as repeat offenses within the overall family violence felony “bucket” of offenses, along not necessarily within the same offense category. The age range of these repeat offenders ranged from 17.1 to 75.2 years old, with an average age at time of offense of 33.1 years old.

Of the five family violence felony offenses analyzed in this report, three (130089, 130090 and 130130) are currently on the decline, while two (130091 and 130092) are currently on the increase. Of special note is that these two offenses, related to choking and strangulation at both the second- and the third-degree felony level, are considered by experts to be precursor crimes to domestic violence homicide; and once they are considered felonies within the local jurisdiction, one should see domestic violence homicides drop. We discuss this issue in greater depth in its own section.

The ZIP Code distribution of all the assailants charged is indicated below. The top five ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged are: 78207 (904); 78228 (530); 78210 (513); 78237 (510); and 78227 (482).

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2 Race and ethnicity was noted in the original spreadsheets produced by the Bexar County District Court, but it’s not clear whether it was self-reported or whether it was noted by intake staff. There are questions about the validity of this information, based on a brief review of surnames. It’s possible that it’s not useful information at all, but it is what they provided.
As a point of reference, Bexar County is currently considered to be 7% Black, 28% white, 60% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 2% biracial or multiracial, with 0% Native American, Pacific Islander or other, according to ACS 2017 1-Year data. “Hispanic” can be of any race. San Antonio, which makes up about three-quarters of Bexar County by population, is currently considered to be 7% Black, 25% white, 3% Asian, 64% Hispanic, and 1% biracial or multiracial, with 0% Native American, Pacific Islander or other, according to ACS 2017 1-Year data. Hispanic can be of any race.
Felony Domestic Violence Offenses

An analysis of data for each key family violence felony offense follows. The ZIP Code data visualizations that illustrate this paper throughout are located online.³

![ZIP Code distribution of felony offenders for 130089, plus cases per year](http://bit.ly/BexarDVFelonies)

**130089**

For offense 130089, a third-degree felony, “Second or Subsequent Domestic Assault,” there were 7,452 cases. The age at time offense ranged from 17 years old to 75 years old, with an average age of 34.2 years old at time of offense. There were 306 women (4.1%) and 7,146 men (95.9%). There were 3 Asians (0%), 1,155 Blacks (15.5%), 2 marked “I” (0%), 5,033 Hispanics (67.5%), 9 marked “O” (0.1%), 1 marked “U” (for “Unknown”?) (0%), and 1,249 white (16.8%). The ZIP Code distribution of assailants charged is indicated. The top five ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged are: 78207 (668); 78237 (378); 78228 (356); 78210 (353); and 78227 (306).

³ The ZIP Code maps are hyperlinked in the text above, but are also reachable via this short link: [http://bit.ly/BexarDVFelonies](http://bit.ly/BexarDVFelonies)
Repeat Offenders within Second or Subsequent Offense Category

Separately, the cases for 130089, “second or subsequent offense against a family member,” were reviewed and analyzed as a subset of the data. This is an interesting category, because it is the most prevalent of the five domestic violence felony offenses under review. It is also in some ways a “gateway” domestic violence offense to the felony category, because a first domestic violence assault, unless a deadly weapon is involved is a misdemeanor—but a second offense, or the use of a deadly weapon, raises the offense to a felony.

A more complete examination of this category of offenses reveals the following. Of the 7,452 cases identified over an almost 10-year period from January 2009 through April 2019, 4,432, or 59.5%, were committed by non-repeat offenders. However, 3,020, or more than four in 10 (40.5%) of the assaults were committed by repeat offenders. Additionally, at least 69 individuals were identified who had four or more felony “second or subsequent offenses” against a family member, without regard to other felonies or misdemeanors committed. Although the assault category is known as “second or subsequent offense,” in reality, many of the perpetrators have committed multiple offenses against a family member. There was no observable average age difference between repeat offenders and non-repeat offenders in this category: The average age at time of offense for both groups was 34 years old.
For offense 130090, a third-degree felony, “continuous violence against family,” there were 961 cases. The age at time of offense ranged from 17 to 70 years old, with an average age of 31 years old at date of offense. There were 72 women (7.5%) and 889 men (92.5%). There were 3 Asians (0.3%), 144 Blacks (15%), 471 Hispanics (49%), 9 marked “O” (1.0%) and 334 whites (34.8%). The ZIP Code distribution of assailants charged is indicated. The top five ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged are: 78207 (59); 78210 (47); 78237 (46); 78228 (43); and 78227 (42).
For offense 130091, third-degree felony “Assault by Strangulation,” there were 2,574 cases in the data range we analyzed. Of these cases, 2,508 (97.4%) of the assailants were male and 66 (2.6%) were female. For a racial and ethnic breakdown of the assailants, 521 were Black (20.2%), 1,062 were Hispanic (41.3%), 960 were white (37.3%), and 22 were other (0.9%). The age of assailant at time of offense ranged from 17 years old to 75 years old. The assailant’s average age was 31.2 years old at the time of the offense. The ZIP Code distribution of assailants is indicated. The top five ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged are: 78207 (124); 78227 (111); 78228 (104); 78245 (93); and 78223 (88).
For 130092, second-degree felony “Assault by Strangulation,” the more serious of the two felony levels for choking and strangulation offenses, there were 497 cases in the date range we analyzed. Of these cases, 493 of the assailants were male (99.2%) and four (0.8%) were female. Age at time of offense ranged from 17 to 73 years old, with an average age at time of offense of 33.7 years old.

For a racial and ethnic breakdown of the assailants, 113 were Black (22.7%), 286 were Hispanics (57.5%), 96 were white (19.3%) and 2 were “other” (0.4%).

The ZIP Code distribution of assailants charged is indicated. The top five ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged are: 78220 (40); 78210 (28); a three-way tie among 78201 (20), 78220 (20) and 78223 (20); a two-way tie between 78228 (19) and 78237 (19).
For offense 130130, a first-degree felony, “Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon or Serious Bodily Injury Against Family Member,” there were 206 cases. The age at time of offense ranged from 19 to 71 years old, with an average age of 34.6 years old at date of offense. There were 51 women (24.8%) and 155 men (75.2%). (This is the only offense where women rise to a considerable portion of the offenders.) There were 34 Blacks (16.5%), 90 Hispanics (43.7%), 6 marked “O” (2.9%) and 76 whites (36.9%). The ZIP Code distribution of offenders is indicated. The top ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged are: 78207 (13); a four-way tie among 78210 (9), 78211 (9), 78221 (9) and 78245 (9); 78228 (8); and a tie between 78201 (7) and 78202 (7).
Separately, an attempt was made to analyze the felony family violence offenses for the most recent year for which data was available (2018). If we look at the subset of only 2018 felony family violence data, we find the following.

There were a total of 922 cases recorded in the five categories previously identified. The age range was from 18 years old to 74 years old, with an average age for the assailant at date of offense of 34.5 years old. There were 64 women (6.9%) and 858 men (93.1%). By race and ethnicity, there were a total of 1 Asian (0.1%), 187 Blacks (20.3%), 406 Hispanics (44%), 5 marked “O” (0.5%), 1 marked “U” (for “Unknown”) (0.1%), and 322 Whites (34.9%). The ZIP Code distribution of assailants charged is shown above. The top five ZIP Codes by number of assailants charged for 2018 offenses are: 78207 (61); 78228 (46); 78237 (45); 78223 (42); and 78245 (36).
Figure 14 Repeat felony domestic violence offenders by number of offenses over an approximately 10 year period in Bexar County

Repeat Offenders with Multiple Domestic Violence Felonies

Returning to the dataset as a whole, an attempt was made to analyze the 11,306 felony family violence offenses committed between 2009 and the end of April, 2019. Of these 11,306 cases, 3,970 or more than a third (35.1%) were committed as repeat offenses. The age range for repeat offenders within felony domestic violence offenses was between 17.1 and 75.2 years old, with an average age at time of offense of 33.2 years old.

Of these repeat offenders, 25 individuals were responsible for 5-6 felony domestic violence offenses each. The numbers breakdown is as follows for repeat offenders:

This core group of 25 multiple repeat offenders (with 5 or more felony domestic violence offenses apiece) were 100% male, 0% female; and 25% Black, 62.5% Hispanic and 12.5% white. No other races or ethnicities were cited. The age range of these 25 committing 5-6 domestic violence felonies apiece is from 19.8 to 55.3 years old, with an average age for hard-core repeat offenders as 34.8 at the time of offense. (As mentioned
elsewhere in this report, the racial/ethnic identification seems somewhat less than completely accurate.)

**Time between Offenses for Repeat Felony Domestic Violence Offenders with 5-6 Felony Offenses**

For these 25 repeat offenders with 5-6 domestic violence felonies apiece, the time between offenses — with multiple offenses committed on the same day removed from the calculation — ranged between 5 days and 10.7 years, with an average time between offenses of 2.1 years.

**Calculating Arrest Costs for Repeat Offenders**

Regarding this same group of 25 felony domestic violence offenders with 5-6 domestic violence felonies apiece, a further examination was made to see whether they also had committed other felonies and/or misdemeanors. The following information was obtained. Twenty-four of the 25 (96%) had misdemeanors, and approximately two-thirds (64%) of the group had other felonies beyond family violence. On average, the 25 highest-volume repeat offenders within felony family violence had 6.2 misdemeanors apiece and 1.3 other felonies. (Of the approximately two-thirds who had other felonies, their average was 2.6 felonies.) All told, including their felony domestic violence offenses, this group of 25 multiple repeat offenders ranged from having a low of 7 offenses to a high of 30 offenses total, with an average of 17.3 offenses, both misdemeanor and felony.

Introducing the idea that all encounters with the criminal justice system represent expenses to the community, and utilizing only the average cost of an arrest determined locally to be $3,500 — without even accounting for court costs and costs to the family from lack of earnings, etc. — the range for these offenders is from $24,500 (7 offenses)
to $105,000 (30 offenses) (Personal communication, Roger Enriquez, August, 2019).

And the estimate for the group of 25, based on the differing counts of their offenses, comes out to be $1,515,500, or an average expense of $60,620.
Choking and Strangulation Felony Offenses as Precursor Crimes to Domestic Violence Homicides

In Rachel Louise Snyder’s new book, “No Visible Bruises: What We Don’t Know about Domestic Violence Can Kill Us,” and in her prior article for the New Yorker magazine, she describes the act of strangulation in domestic violence as frequently the precursor event to homicide.

Sixty percent of domestic violence victims are strangled at one point in the course of their abusive relationships, she writes. Strangulation “dramatically increased the change of domestic violence homicide,” she describes Gael Strack as asserting, based on Strack’s review of 300 non-fatal strangulation cases (p. 65). (Strack, a lawyer and former prosecutor, is the CEO of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention.)

“Statistically we know that once the hands are on the neck, the very next step is homicide,” Snyder quotes Sylvia Vela, a detective and clinician with the San Diego
Police Department as saying. “They don’t go backwards,” Vela adds (p. 66). (Vela works in the domestic violence unit at the San Diego Family Justice Center.)

Ninety-nine percent of the assailants in domestic violence strangulation cases are men, Snyder writes. Forty-five of 50 U.S. states now prosecute domestic violence strangulations as felonies, and in those jurisdictions that do, who also intervene with a multidisciplinary team, domestic violence homicides drop, according to Snyder — for example, Maricopa County in Arizona, where homicides dropped by 30 percent. (p. 67)

Total Cases by Year in Bexar County 2009 - Present

![Figure 16 Number of women killed by male intimate partners, 2nd and 3rd degree family violence felony choking and strangulation cases according to Bexar County District Court case files, by year from 2009 to 2019.](image)

Given San Antonio/Bexar County’s year-over-year increase in domestic violence homicides for the past few years, including a more than 500% increase between 2014 and 2018, it seemed worth investigating whether domestic violence felonies were increasing as well, and at what rate. Two of the signature felonies were second- and third-degree choking and strangulation, and records were obtained by last name of defendant and combined for the years 2009 through April of 2019.
There were 3,071 cases. Most 2,574 (83.8%) were third-degree felonies, and a minority 497 (16.2%) were second-degree felonies. In total, 70 of the assailants were women (2.3%) and 3,001 were male (97.7%). The age range at time of offense ranges from 17 to 75, with an average age of 31.6 years old at time of offense.

With a racial and ethnic breakdown for both second- and third-degree family violence felony choking and strangulation offenses combined, there were 634 Blacks (20.6%), 1,348 Hispanics (43.9%), 1,056 whites (34.4%) and 33 others (1.1%).

From third- to second-degree felony family violence choking and strangulation cases, the percentage of Black assailants who commit them increases from 20.2% to 22.7%, the percentage of white assailants goes down from 37.3% to 19.3%, and the percentage of Hispanic assailants goes up, from 41.3% to 57.5%. The percentage of “Other” race and ethnicity assailants was negligible for either offense. Compared to third-degree felony family violence choking and strangulation offenses, whites are less likely to commit second-degree felony family violence choking and strangulation offenses, and Blacks and Hispanics appear more likely to commit them. The age of an assailant of any race and ethnicity is likely to be older by about two and a half years, from third- to second-degree felony.

Repeat Offenses within Felony Choking or Strangulation Cases

There were also 241 repeat offenses in this combined category. 7 had three (3) felony domestic violence offenses just within the combined choking and strangulation category; the rest of the 220 offenses were committed by 110 offenders with two (2) offenses apiece. Of just the repeat offenders within this combined choking and strangulation felony offense category, there was only one (1) female offender; the rest
were male. Seventy-two (72) of the offenses were committed by Black offenders (29.9%), 111 by Hispanic offenders (46.1%), and 58 by white offenders (24.1%). There were no repeat offenses in this category noted as committed by other races or ethnicities.

Additionally, the age range of offenders among repeat offenders in this combined category was from 17.6 to 73.4, with an average age of 31.0 years old at time of offense.

![Figure 17](chart.png)

*Figure 17 A comparison of third- and second-degree felony family violence cases, assault involving choking or strangulation, in Bexar County by year, 2009 to end of April, 2019 only*

Analysis of the data for the two felony domestic violence offenses thought to be associated with domestic violence homicide do not seem to be dropping, but increasing unevenly year after year, during the same time period where domestic violence homicide has been increasing sharply. Further research is needed into what the relationship is within our local area, and why the prediction put forth in Snyder’s work does not seem to be happening here.
Observations and Conclusions

- Women are charged with far fewer domestic violence felonies than men in Bexar County, both over time (1999 to present) and also past year (2018). The highest percentage noted in this report was 24.8% for first-degree aggravated assault against a family member or in dating. The lowest percentage noted was 0.8% for second-degree felony assault with choking or strangulation. For men, the highest percentage noted in this report was 992% for second-degree felony assault with choking or strangulation. The lowest percentage noted was 75.2% for first-degree felony aggravated assault against a family member or in dating.

- The age range of those charged with felony domestic violence crimes stays consistently within the 17/18 to 74/75 year old range, with an average age in the low thirties, irrespective of the felony offense. There is not much difference ascribable to gender or race in terms of average age at time of offense by offense.

- The distribution of assailants charged by race and ethnicity seems to fluctuate somewhat across various felony offenses, but nothing conclusive is indicated. When compared against the demographics of San Antonio and Bexar County, Blacks seem to be consistently charged with felony domestic violence at a rate higher than their level in the population at large. Blacks are 7% of the population in both San Antonio and Bexar County. The highest at which Blacks are charged is 22.7% for second degree felony choking and strangulation, and the lowest rate is 15% for third-degree continuous violence against a family member. Whites seem to be charged unevenly compared to their rate in the population, sometimes above it and sometimes below it. For example, whites are 25% of the population of San Antonio and 28% of the
population of Bexar County. By comparison, whites are charged at the highest rate of 37.3% of the offenders in third-degree felony assault with choking or strangulation, and at the lowest rate of 15% of third-degree second or subsequent assault in family violence. Hispanics represent 64% of the population in San Antonio, and 60% of the population in Bexar County. By comparison, they are almost always charged at a rate below their participation in the population. The highest rate of Hispanics who are charged with a felony domestic violence offense is 67.5% of the offenders for third-degree felony second or subsequent assault. For all the other felony domestic violence charges under consideration, they are charged below their percentage level in the population. The lowest rate for Hispanics as offenders was 41.3% for third-degree felony assault with choking or strangulation.

- Overall, offenses are charged to Black defendants at a level of 18% of the felony family violence offenses, while offenses charged to whites represent 29% of the offenses and those charged to Hispanics represent 52% of those charged. Without making assumptions about their guilt or innocence, it’s nevertheless accurate to say that of the three main racial/ethnic groups in San Antonio and Bexar County, Blacks seem to have a disproportionate number of offenses charged to them with respect to their population level. It would be important to discover where this figure lies with regard to any national norms within felony family violence.

- Of the five felony domestic violence offenses analyzed, as well as the set of offenses for 2018 only, it’s clear that some ZIP Codes — in particular 78207 and 78228 — appear repeatedly throughout at the top of the list for offender ZIP Codes. Several other ZIP Codes appeared high in offender counts across multiple sets — for
example, 78223 and 78237. Across all five of the felony domestic violence offenses under review, ZIP Code 78207 leads the list in number of charges to offenders who provide that ZIP Code for the offenses committed as where they reside.

- There is a core group of repeat offenders who commit considerable (five or more) domestic violence felonies over time. It is unclear why a “three strikes”-type rule does not come into play, as it might with drunk driving offenses.

- Similarly, in the assaults assigned to “2nd offense against a family member” within family violence felonies, more than 40% of the offenses are committed by repeat offenders. At least 69 individuals have accumulated four or more felony offenses in this category alone, which raises the question why there appears to be no limit and no escalation to a different type of felony charge. It raises the question why the allows an individual to commit multiple “second offenses” against family members without additional repercussions.

- More research is needed into ways that Blacks, whites and Hispanics in San Antonio/Bexar County experience domestic violence, whether as victims or perpetrators, and also whether cultural differences exist regarding attitudes towards domestic violence that could be valuable to learn re: norms, potential effectiveness of proposed interventions, etc.

- Continued comparison rates and instances of domestic violence in San Antonio/Bexar County and other major cities in Texas, as well as nationally, would be beneficial, since San Antonio/Bexar County appears to have some unique characteristics, as yet un-identified, that may be contributing to our being on the increase while the nation and even the state are on the decrease in experience of domestic violence.
• Despite Rachel Snyder’s observations that throughout the country, as crimes considered to be precursors to domestic violence homicide — i.e., crimes associated with choking and strangulation — are made felonies, you can expect to see the domestic violence homicide rate drop. Since ours is increasing not dropping, further investigation is needed into why that might be the case here, and where the gaps are (for example, discretionary sentencing may result in different outcomes here than in other jurisdictions, etc.)

• Of particular concern is the observation that the two felony family violence offenses that include choking or strangulation are also on the increase locally, even as domestic violence homicides continue to climb.
About the Data

Felony family violence offenses in the categories examined were obtained from the Bexar County District Court website in July, 2019, and represented offenses occurring between 2009 and the end of April, 2019. Demographics about race, ethnicity and gender in Bexar County and San Antonio were obtained from American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2017.

Author Bios

Lily Casura, MSW is a graduate of UTSA’s Masters in Social Work program. In 2017 she was chosen as UTSA’s “Most Outstanding Graduate Student” in the College of Public Policy. She co-authored the “Status of Women in San Antonio” report with Rogelio Sáenz, Ph.D., and the white paper on “Trends in Home Flipping” with Roger Enriquez, J.D. Her award-winning mapping work has been presented and referenced widely.

Roger Enriquez, JD is an Associate Professor in the department of Criminal Justice and Director of the Policy Studies Center in UTSA’s College of Public Policy. Enriquez is the Principal Investigator for Roadrunners Helping with Estate Planning (RHEP), which is a partnership with the City of San Antonio and Westside non-profit Mexican American Unity Council that helps homeowners’ preserve the family home for future generations.

NOTE: All data visualizations are done by Lily Casura, and are available on her TableauPublic.com profile: https://public.tableau.com/profile/lilygc#
References


