

Convenience Store Robberies in Metropolitan Atlanta

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Background

According to the FBI Uniform Crime Reports, in 1990 there were 38,435 convenience store robberies, an alarmingly high number, given that for the same year there were only an estimated 71,000 convenience stores in the entire country (Schreiber, 1991). In an effort to better understand crime in convenience stores (with the hope of being better able to control such crime), the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) funded several national research projects. One of these studies covered robbery, homicide, sexual assault, and other crimes involving harm to persons (Schreiber, 1991), while a second focused solely on homicide and rape (Erickson, 1991). The third was directed at assessing specific robbery-prevention measures, such as multiple-clerk staffing and bullet-resistant barriers; Figlio, 1991.

In the first study, Schreiber (1991) surveyed all 1,256 NACS member companies in order to quantify violent crime in convenience stores in 1989 and 1990. In a brief questionnaire, company officials supplied the number of robberies, homicides, sexual assaults, or other violent crimes that their stores had reported. The 1,256 NACS member companies covered approximately 63,000 individual stores. Complete data were obtained for 35,701 stores in 1989 and 36,011 in 1990 (which represents roughly 60% of the total NACS stores and approximately 51% of the total estimated convenience stores in the United States).

The responding companies retrospectively self-reported a total of 9,848 convenience store robberies in 1990, which was slightly higher than the total for 1989 (9,784 robberies). The 1990 figure was used to estimate 22,855 convenience store robberies nationwide, an estimate substantially lower than the 38,435 reported by the FBI. For the companies that responded, the rate of robberies per store remained basically constant (31.7 robberies per 100 stores in 1989, 31.2 robberies per 100 stores in 1990).

With respect to other violent crime, Schreiber's survey went on to indicate that in 1990, among the stores for which data were available, there were 49 homicides and 76 sexual assaults. Both these figures were higher than those reported for 1989, when there were 33 convenience store homicides and 64 sexual assaults. The final "category" of crime was an aggregate of all violent crimes resulting in harm to persons (*e.g.*, assault, abduction, and intentional injury), excluding the crimes of robbery, homicide, and sexual assault. Based on reports from responding NACS member companies there were 491 instances of such crimes in 1989 and 655 in 1990, (Schreiber, 1991).

In a similar but more detailed analysis of homicides and rapes, sampled from the 1,256 NACS member companies, Erickson (1991) reported that for 1989 and 1990 combined there were 79 homicides and 72 rapes. (Note that the two studies do not report the same number of homicides, even though they cover the same time period. Respondent compliance was much lower in Erickson's study.) Among the 79 homicides, 64.6% were "gratuitous violence, with no signs of resistance" (NACS Convenience Store Security, 1991, p. 33). Additionally, two

¹ This study was funded by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

thirds of the homicides were associated with robberies or attempted robberies. Only one third of rapes, on the other hand, were associated with robberies.

An important methodological issue to consider in evaluating these results is that they are derived from retrospective self-report surveys. Furthermore, it could be argued that these results are not representative of all convenience stores, in that they surveyed only members of NACS. In addition, the studies did not record data on individual stores, but rather relied on each member company to submit information for dozens of stores.

In order to provide a better assessment of the incidence of violent crime and harm to persons in convenience stores, the present study was designed to overcome the methodological considerations noted above. First, care was taken to ensure that *all* convenience stores within the area of study were included. Second, the individual store was the unit of analysis; data were gathered on individual stores rather than through the store owners. Additionally, actual police incident reports were consulted as a means of objectively determining the occurrence of violent crimes.

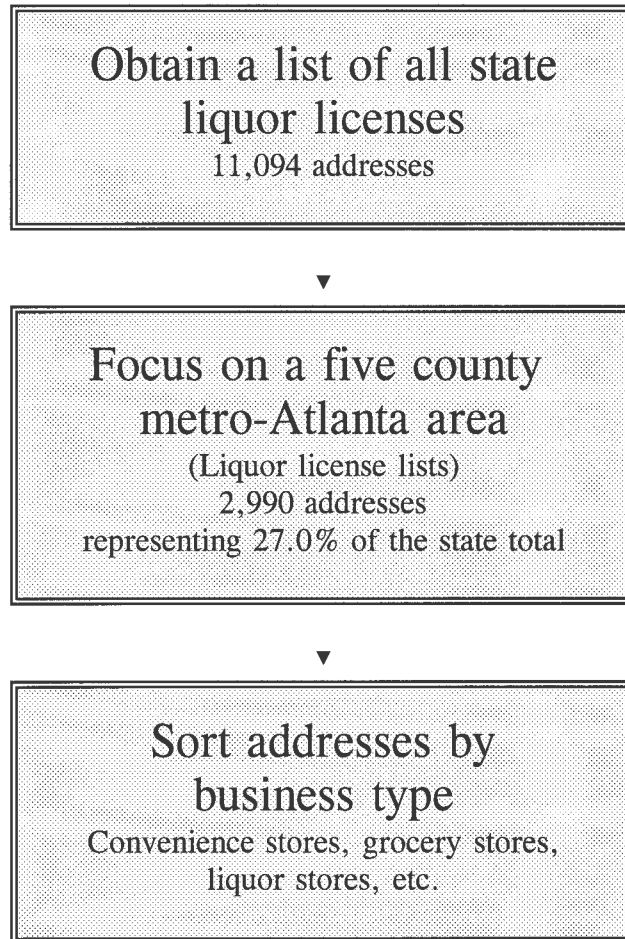
Methodology

Before beginning to collect epidemiological data on violent crime in Georgia's convenience stores, we first had to develop an appropriate sample of convenience stores. Because there was no existing list of all convenience stores (either state-wide or local), we had to construct one. Figure 1 outlines the process we followed in developing our list of convenience stores. Since the vast majority of convenience stores sell beer, we felt that an efficient way of compiling the population of Georgia convenience stores would be to start with a list of state liquor licenses.

The list of all Georgia liquor licenses totaled 11,094 store names and addresses. Because robberies are concentrated in urban areas, we selected the five-county metro-Atlanta area to serve as a focal region, as it is the largest urban area in Georgia (representing 33.6% of the state's population). Furthermore, within the metro-Atlanta, these five counties (Clayton County, Cobb County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, and Gwinnett County²) represent the heaviest concentration of population and convenience stores. In the five-county focal region there were 2,990 addresses, representing 27.0% of the state total. There were 215 addresses in Clayton County, 553 in Cobb County, 740 in DeKalb County, 1084 in Fulton County, and 398 in Gwinnett County.

² To avoid confusion, a distinction must be made between referring to a specific county in general and referring to the county police jurisdiction within that county. The unincorporated area of each county forms a separate police jurisdiction, and is treated the same as any other police jurisdiction within that county.

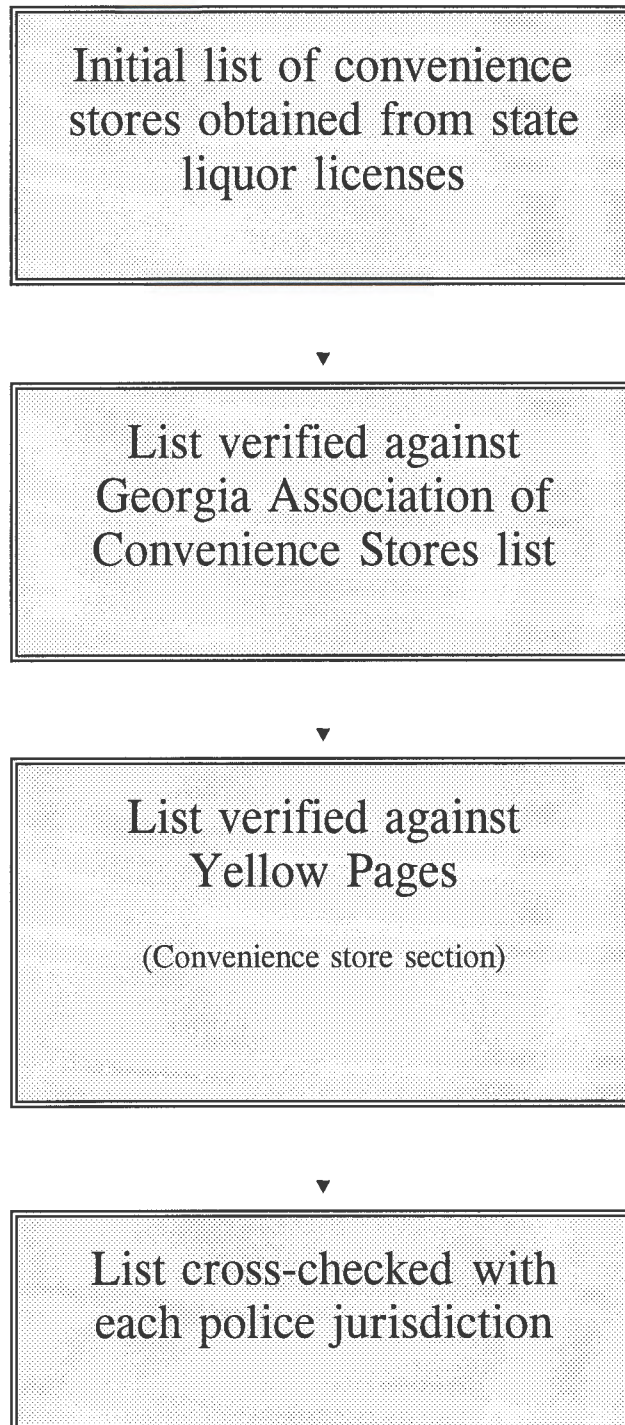
Figure 1. Process of obtaining the sample of convenience stores.



The list of businesses holding a liquor license included all locations in the region that sell beer, wine, and/or liquor (with the exception of bars and nightclubs, which were listed under a different type of liquor license). As might be expected, this list covered a wide variety of businesses. A "business classification" was included on each liquor license, categorizing each business as a grocery store, service station, liquor store, package store, or restaurant. Additionally, there was a designation for "other" types of businesses.

In that there was no "convenience store" designation on the liquor license forms, the list had to be sorted and the convenience stores had to be identified. For the purpose of this study a convenience store was defined as a retail store that sells a combination of gasoline, fast foods, soft drinks, dairy products, beer, cigarettes, publications, grocery items, snacks, or non-food items, and has a size less than 5,000 square feet. Gasoline stations with store operations were also included. The majority of convenience stores fell within the "other" business designation

Figure 2. Process of verifying the comprehensiveness of the list of convenience stores.



on the liquor license forms, followed by "service station." There were some small ("mom and pop") grocery stores that met the definition of a convenience store as well. All addresses that seemed questionable were verified either by phone contact or by site visit.

To locate convenience stores that were not included in the list of liquor licenses, we took three additional steps. First, we cross-checked our list of convenience stores with a member list of the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores. Second, we checked our list against the Yellow Pages listings for convenience stores. Finally, we consulted each police jurisdiction to see if there were any additional stores within their jurisdiction that were not already listed.

Virtually all of the convenience stores were identified through the list of liquor licenses. There were a few additional stores that were identified through the Yellow Pages and through the police. As a result of this process, to the best of our knowledge, our list of convenience stores represents all convenience stores in the five-county metropolitan area. The final list of convenience stores totaled 1,269 addresses. This list of stores represents 42.4% of the 2,990 liquor license addresses for the five-county area.

Distribution of Stores

Our sample of 1,269 convenience stores spanned 39 individual police jurisdictions. In order to sort the stores into their appropriate jurisdictions, each police department was sent a list of addresses and was asked to identify which stores fell within their jurisdiction. For example, all stores with a mailing address in Marietta (in Cobb County) were sent to the Marietta Police Department. The officers there identified those addresses that were in their jurisdiction and those that were in the Cobb County Police Department jurisdiction. The county police departments asked that we first have the smaller police departments sort out which addresses fell within their jurisdictions. This reduced the number of addresses that the larger jurisdictions had to sort.

There was considerable variation in the distribution of convenience stores across the five counties, ranging from 126 stores in Clayton County to 392 in Fulton County. Table 1 lists by county the number of convenience stores, the size in square miles, and the population. A density rate measure, which gives the population per square mile, is provided as well. As can be seen, Fulton County is the largest county, both in terms of geographical area and population. DeKalb County, however, has the greatest population density, with over 500 more persons per square mile than Fulton County.

The distribution of stores among the 39 jurisdictions covered by the five county area varied even greater, as can be seen from Table 2. Geographical sizes and populations are again provided for comparison. Three of the smallest jurisdictions did not have any convenience stores. The Atlanta Police Department was the jurisdiction with the greatest number of stores. The DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, Clayton, and Fulton County Police Department jurisdictions were the next largest jurisdictions.

| Table 1. Total number of stores in each county, size of each county, total population* of each county, and population density of each county. | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| County | Number of Convenience Stores | County Size (sq mi) | County Population | Density Rate (pop/sq mi) |
| Clayton County | 126 (9.9%) | 229.2 | 182,052 | 794.3 |
| Cobb County | 254 (20.0%) | 547.1 | 447,745 | 818.4 |
| DeKalb County | 276 (21.8%) | 431.6 | 545,837 | 1264.7 |
| Fulton County | 392 (30.9%) | 850.2 | 648,951 | 763.3 |
| Gwinnett County | 221 (17.4%) | 696.1 | 352,910 | 507.0 |
| Total | 1,269 (100.0%) | 2754.2 | 2,177,495 | 790.6 |

* Population data are based on the 1990 census.

| Table 2. Total number of stores in each jurisdiction, approximate size* of each jurisdiction, and population* of each jurisdiction. | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Jurisdiction Size (sq mi) | Jurisdiction Population |
| Acworth | 9 (0.7%) | 10.0 | 4,519 |
| Alpharetta | 5 (0.4%) | 25.0 | 13,002 |
| Atlanta | 261 (20.6%) | 212.0 | 394,017 |
| Austell | 4 (0.3%) | 4.2 | 4,173 |
| Avondale Estates | 0 (0.0%) | 1.7 | 2,209 |
| Chamblee | 7 (0.6%) | 4.6 | 7,668 |
| Clarkston | 3 (0.2%) | 1.0 | 5,385 |
| Clayton County Police | 86 (6.8%) | 146.0 | 141,144 |
| Cobb County Police | 166 (13.1%) | 346.0 | 348,114 |
| College Park | 13 (1.0%) | 14.0 | 20,457 |
| Decatur | 6 (0.5%) | 4.0 | 17,336 |

Table 2. Total number of stores in each jurisdiction, approximate size* of each jurisdiction, and population* of each jurisdiction.

| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Jurisdiction Size (sq mi) | Jurisdiction Population |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| DeKalb County Police | 231 (18.2%) | 271.0 | 476,161 |
| Doraville | 8 (0.6%) | 3.0 | 7,626 |
| Duluth | 13 (1.0%) | 8.0 | 9,029 |
| East Point | 16 (1.3%) | 18.1 | 34,402 |
| Fairburn | 4 (0.3%) | 5.0 | 4,013 |
| Forest Park | 10 (0.8%) | 11.2 | 16,925 |
| Fulton County Police | 80 (6.3%) | 534.6 | 148,581 |
| Gwinnett County Police | 153 (12.1%) | 436.0 | 297,289 |
| Hapeville | 7 (0.6%) | 2.0 | 5,483 |
| Jonesboro | 7 (0.6%) | 2.8 | 3,635 |
| Kennesaw | 9 (0.7%) | 7.2 | 8,936 |
| Lake City | 4 (0.3%) | 1.5 | 2,783 |
| Lawrenceville | 27 (2.1%) | 18.0 | 16,848 |
| Lilburn | 5 (0.4%) | 1.5 | 9,301 |
| Lithonia | 2 (0.2%) | 1.0 | 2,448 |
| Marietta | 42 (3.3%) | 32.8 | 44,129 |
| Morrow | 8 (0.6%) | 3.5 | 5,138 |
| Norcross | 5 (0.4%) | 3.8 | 5,947 |
| Palmetto | 0 (0.0%) | 4.9 | 2,612 |
| Pine Lake | 0 (0.0%) | 0.2 | 810 |
| Powder Springs | 6 (0.5%) | 6.0 | 6,893 |
| Riverdale | 10 (0.8%) | 4.5 | 9,359 |
| Roswell | 19 (1.5%) | 52.4 | 47,923 |
| Smyrna | 18 (1.4%) | 18.3 | 30,981 |
| Snellville | 12 (1.0%) | 8.8 | 12,084 |

| Table 2. Total number of stores in each jurisdiction, approximate size* of each jurisdiction, and population* of each jurisdiction. | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Jurisdiction Size (sq mi) | Jurisdiction Population |
| Stone Mountain | 2 (0.2%) | 1.5 | 6,494 |
| Suwanee | 6 (0.5%) | 9.0 | 2,412 |
| Union City | 5 (0.4%) | 8.4 | 8,375 |

* Size and population data were obtained through the 1990 census or from specific police departments or cities.

The Distribution of Crime

Each police jurisdiction was provided with a list of addresses and asked to supply the number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults that had occurred at each address. Because the data obtained were simple incident reports, details such as who the victim was (*e.g.*, clerk or customer) and where the incident occurred (*e.g.*, within the store or in the parking lot) were not provided. This information would be available only through manually pulling and reading individual case reports (a labor intensive task). Thus, the following data are based on the numbers of incidents provided by each police department.

| Table 3. Total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults in 1992 for each county. | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| County | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
| Clayton County | 126 (9.9%) | 56 (7.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 21 (3.8%) |
| Cobb County | 254 (20.0%) | 83 (11.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (7.1%) | 25 (4.6%) |
| DeKalb County | 276 (21.8%) | 342 (45.9%) | 1 (14.3%) | 12 (42.9%) | 149 (27.1%) |
| Fulton County | 392 (30.9%) | 214 (28.7%) | 6 (85.7%) | 14 (50.0%) | 354 (64.4%) |
| Gwinnett County | 221 (17.4%) | 50 (6.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (0.2%) |
| Total | 1,269 (100.0%) | 745 (100.0%) | 7 (100.0%) | 28 (100.0%) | 550 (100.0%) |

In 1992, for the 1,269 convenience stores in our sample there were a total of 745 robberies, 7 homicides, 28 rapes, and 550 assaults. Table 3 shows the totals for each type of offense in each county. DeKalb County and Fulton County accounted for the greatest proportions of reported crimes. Together, they accounted for 74.6% of all robberies, 100% of all homicides, 92.9% of all rapes, and 91.5% of all assaults.

These same data are broken down by jurisdiction in Table 4. As can be seen, few offenses were recorded among the smaller jurisdictions. The six largest jurisdictions, which represent 78.2% of all convenience stores in the five county area, account for most of the recorded crimes. For 1992, Atlanta (which is the largest of the 39 jurisdictions) accounted for 20.4% of all robberies, 100% of all homicides, 63.0% of all rapes, and 64.7% of all assaults. DeKalb County Police (the jurisdiction with the second most convenience stores), accounted for 38.8% of all robberies, 28.6% of all rapes, and 19.3% of all assaults.

As might be expected, the largest jurisdictions, which had the largest proportion of convenience stores, also accounted for the greatest number of convenience store crimes within each county. This is evident from Table 5. Clayton County Police Department reported 71.4% of the 56 robberies in Clayton County. Thirty-five (42.2%) of the 83 Cobb County robberies were reported by the Cobb County Police Department. In DeKalb County, 83.7% of the robberies were reported by the DeKalb County Police Department. The Gwinnett County Police Department reported 90.0% of the Gwinnett County convenience store robberies. Atlanta accounted for 60.3% of Fulton County's convenience store robberies, while the County Police Department reported 17.3% of the robberies.

Table 4. Total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults in 1992 by jurisdiction.

| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Acworth | 9 (0.7%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Alpharetta | 5 (0.4%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Atlanta | 261 (20.6%) | 152 | 7 | 17 | 356 |
| Austell | 4 (0.3%) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Avondale Estates | 0 (0.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chamblee | 7 (0.6%) | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Clarkston | 3 (0.2%) | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clayton County Police | 86 (6.8%) | 40 | * | | |
| Cobb County Police | 166 (13.1%) | 35 | | | |
| College Park | 13 (1.0%) | 10 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Decatur | 6 (0.5%) | 10 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| DeKalb County Police | 231 (18.2%) | 289 | 0 | 8 | 106 |
| Doraville | 8 (0.6%) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Duluth | 13 (1.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| East Point | 16 (1.3%) | 26 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Fairburn | 4 (0.3%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Forest Park | 10 (0.8%) | | | | |

Table 4. Total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults in 1992 by jurisdiction.

| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Fulton County Police | 80 (6.3%) | 37 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Gwinnett County Police | 153 (12.1%) | 45 | | | |
| Hapeville | 7 (0.6%) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Jonesboro | 7 (0.6%) | 6 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Kennesaw | 9 (0.7%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Lake City | 4 (0.3%) | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lawrenceville | 27 (2.1%) | | | | |
| Lilburn | 5 (0.4%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lithonia | 2 (0.2%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marietta | 42 (3.3%) | 21 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Morrow | 8 (0.6%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Norcross | 5 (0.4%) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Palmetto | 0 (0.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pine Lake | 0 (0.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Powder Springs | 6 (0.5%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Riverdale | 10 (0.8%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Roswell | 19 (1.5%) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| Table 4. Total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults in 1992 by jurisdiction. | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
| Smyrna | 18 (1.4%) | 20 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Snellville | 12 (1.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stone Mountain | 2 (0.2%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Suwanee | 6 (0.5%) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Union City | 5 (0.4%) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 1,269 (100.0%) | 745 | 7 | 28 | 550 |

* Empty cells indicate that data were either not available or were not provided.

Table 5. Total number of stores and total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults for 1992 broken down by county.

| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Clayton County | | | | | |
| Clayton County Police Dept. | 86 (6.8%) | 40 | * | | |
| College Park** | 2 (0.2%) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Forest Park | 10 (0.8%) | | | | |
| Jonesboro | 7 (0.6%) | 6 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Lake City | 4 (0.3%) | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Morrow | 7 (0.6%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Riverdale | 10 (0.8%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 126 (9.9%) | 56 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| Cobb County | | | | | |
| Acworth | 9 (0.7%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Austell | 4 (0.3%) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Cobb County Police Dept. | 166 (13.1%) | 35 | | | |
| Kennesaw | 9 (0.7%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Marietta | 42 (3.3%) | 21 | 0 | 2 | 3 |

Table 5. Total number of stores and total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults for 1992 broken down by county.

| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Powder Springs | 6 (0.5%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Smyrna | 18 (1.4%) | 20 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Total | 254 (20.2%) | 83 | 0 | 2 | 25 |
| DeKalb County | | | | | |
| Atlanta*** | 16 (1.3%) | 23 | 1 | 3 | 38 |
| Avondale Estates | 0 (0.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chamblee | 7 (0.6%) | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Clarkston | 3 (0.2%) | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Decatur | 6 (0.5%) | 10 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| DeKalb County Police Dept. | 231 (18.2%) | 289 | 0 | 8 | 106 |
| Doraville | 8 (0.6%) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lithonia | 2 (0.2%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pine Lake | 0 (0.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stone Mountain | 2 (0.2%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 276 (21.8%) | 342 | 1 | 12 | 149 |

Table 5. Total number of stores and total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults for 1992 broken down by county.

| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Fulton County | | | | | |
| Alpharetta | 5 (0.4%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Atlanta** | 245 (19.3%) | 129 | 6 | 14 | 318 |
| College Park* | 11 (0.9%) | 9 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| East Point | 16 (1.3%) | 26 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Fairburn | 4 (0.32%) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fulton County Police Dept. | 80 (6.3%) | 37 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Hapeville | 7 (0.6%) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Roswell | 19 (1.5%) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Union City | 5 (0.4%) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 392 (30.9%) | 214 | 6 | 14 | 354 |
| Gwinnett County | | | | | |
| Duluth | 13 (1.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gwinnett County Police Dept. | 153 (12.1%) | 45 | | | |
| Lawrenceville | 27 (2.1%) | | | | |

| Table 5. Total number of stores and total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults for 1992 broken down by county. | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Number of Convenience Stores | Number of Robberies | Number of Homicides | Number of Rapes | Number of Assaults |
| Lilburn | 5 (0.4%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Norcross | 5 (0.4%) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Snellville | 12 (1.0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Suwanee | 6 (0.5%) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 221 (17.2%) | 50 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

* Empty cells indicate that data were either not available or were not provided.

** The College Park jurisdiction falls in both Clayton and Fulton Counties. Each College Park entry represents the number of College Park convenience stores that fall in each county.

*** The Atlanta jurisdiction falls in both Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Each Atlanta entry represents the number of Atlanta convenience stores that fall in each county.

Robberies

The distribution of robberies varied substantially across counties and jurisdictions. From Table 3 it can be seen that DeKalb County reported the largest number of robberies, representing 45.9% of the total number of robberies. Fulton County was second (28.7%), followed by Cobb County (11.1%), Clayton County (7.5%), and Gwinnett County (6.7%). The six largest individual jurisdictions (Atlanta, DeKalb County Police, Cobb County Police, Gwinnett County Police, Clayton County Police, and Fulton County Police) accounted for 80.3% of all robberies. Of these 80.3% of robberies, 289 (48.3%) were reported by the DeKalb County Police and 152 (25.4%) were reported by the Atlanta Police.

Robberies varied in nature, with some perpetrators using firearms or knives while others employed strongarm tactics. Due to wide variations in the coding of computerized records across the different police jurisdictions, no systematic analysis of types of weapons or threats employed are available without pulling individual case reports. However, based on the jurisdictions that did code the robberies according to type of threat, firearms were by far the most prevalent type of weapon used.

In order to compare the rates of robberies across the five counties, robbery rates were calculated in several different ways. First, the rate of robberies per 100 stores is presented in the second column of Table 6. As can be seen, DeKalb County has by far the highest rate of robberies, with an average of nearly 124 robberies for each 100 convenience stores. The rates of robberies per 100 stores for the other counties were more similar, ranging from 22.62 (Gwinnett County) to 54.59 (Fulton County).

| County | Robberies /100 stores | Robberies /100 sq. mi. | Robberies /100,000 people |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Clayton County | 44.4 | 24.4 | 30.8 |
| Cobb County | 32.7 | 15.2 | 18.5 |
| DeKalb County | 123.9 | 79.2 | 62.7 |
| Fulton County | 54.6 | 25.2 | 33.0 |
| Gwinnett County | 22.6 | 7.2 | 14.2 |
| Total | 58.7 | 27.0 | 34.2 |

DeKalb County also had the highest robbery rate with respect to how the robberies were distributed geographically. The third column of Table 6 shows the rate of robberies per 100 square miles. Comparison of these rates yields a pattern similar to that of the robberies per 100

stores, with nearly 80 robberies per 100 square miles in DeKalb County. Among the other counties, rates ranged from 7.2 (Gwinnett County) to 25.2 (Fulton County).

Finally, robbery rates were calculated with respect to population. The last column of Table 6 shows the rate of robberies per 100,000 people in each county. Results were similar to the other robbery rate measures, with DeKalb County again having a higher rate of robberies than the other counties.

Table 7 provides a similar analysis for the six largest individual jurisdictions. As can be seen, results followed similar patterns as before. Again, the Atlanta and DeKalb County Police jurisdictions were much higher than the other jurisdictions.

| Table 7. Robbery rates for each of the six largest jurisdictions. | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Robberies /100 stores | Robberies /100 sq. mi. | Robberies /100,000 people |
| Atlanta | 58.2 | 71.7 | 38.6 |
| DeKalb County Police | 125.1 | 106.6 | 60.7 |
| Cobb County Police | 21.1 | 10.1 | 10.0 |
| Gwinnett County Police | 29.4 | 10.3 | 15.1 |
| Clayton County Police | 46.5 | 27.4 | 28.3 |
| Fulton County Police | 46.3 | 6.9 | 24.9 |

Homicides

All seven of the 1992 homicides for the 1,269 convenience stores in this sample occurred in Atlanta. An investigation of the police files for these homicides revealed that only two occurred within the store at that particular address. In one case, a store clerk was killed during the course of an armed robbery. In the second case, the store clerk shot and killed the perpetrator following an armed robbery. The five remaining homicides occurred in parking lots outside stores. One incident started out as a fight that ended in an individual being fatally shot. Another occurred during the course of a car-jacking. A third case was that of a cab driver fatally shooting his attacker during the course of a robbery attempt on the driver. The final two homicides followed a traffic stop by two police officers. The driver shot and killed one officer, and was immediately shot by the other officer.

Rapes

The distribution of rapes followed much the same pattern as did the distribution of homicides. Atlanta and DeKalb County Police Departments together accounted for 92.6% of

all rapes. In the computerized records of the police reports, no differentiation was made as to whether a rape reported at a specific address occurred inside the convenience store or in the parking lot, only that a rape had occurred at that specific address. Further information could be obtained only by reading through each individual case report.

Assaults

Generally, assaults followed much the same pattern as did robberies, with the vast majority being reported by the Atlanta and DeKalb County Police Departments. Together Atlanta and DeKalb County Police Departments accounted for 84.0% of all assaults. Unlike robberies, however, a substantially greater number of assaults were reported by Atlanta rather than the DeKalb County Police Department.

The problems associated with the recording of homicides and rapes were also present in the recording of assaults. No differentiation was made as to whether the assault occurred within or outside the store. Determining whether the store clerk was involved in the assault was not possible without reading individual case reports. Many of the police departments did not differentiate between simple assault or aggravated assault in their reports. A great many of the assaults appeared to be domestic assaults or simple assaults (e.g., fighting).

One small police department (Austell) automatically charged armed robbers with aggravated assault, but other police departments did not. Although the number of assault charges directly associated with robberies is undetermined, informal interviews with officials from several different police departments revealed that the likelihood of aggravated assault charges being filed in addition to robbery charges is small. Generally, aggravated assault charges are filed in robbery *attempts*, rather than in completed robberies.

Crime Data from Additional Years

Some police departments were able to supply us with data from years in addition to 1992. Table 8 displays the data available from 1990 through 1993. The available data from other years generally followed the same patterns as did the 1992 data. With the exception of one homicide reported by College Park in 1993, all homicides were reported by either Atlanta or DeKalb County Police Departments. Four homicides were reported in 1990 (all by Atlanta), eleven in 1991 (ten by Atlanta, one by DeKalb County Police), seven in 1992 (all by Atlanta), and five in 1993 (three by Atlanta, one by Dekalb County Police and one by College Park).

The occurrence of rapes was somewhat similar, being reported infrequently by jurisdictions other than Atlanta and DeKalb County Police Departments. Twenty-two rapes were reported in 1990 (15 by Atlanta, five by DeKalb County Police, one by Chamblee and one by Suwanee), 27 in 1991 (21 by Atlanta, six by DeKalb County Police), 27 in 1992 (17 by Atlanta, eight by DeKalb County Police, two by Marietta), and 16 in 1993 (twelve by Atlanta, two by DeKalb County Police, one by Hapeville and one by Lawrenceville). Not all jurisdictions provided data for years other than 1992, so no general comparisons across years can be made.

Table 8. Total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults for each jurisdiction for each year between 1990 and 1993. Empty cells indicate that data for that year and crime type were not available or were not provided.

| Jurisdiction | Robberies | | | | | Homicides | | | | | Rapes | | | | | Assaults | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------|------|------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------|----------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total |
| Fulton County | 34 | 47 | 37 | 22 | 140 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| Gwinnett County | 37 | 39 | 45 | 28 | 149 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hapeville | 7 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 15 |
| Jonesboro | | | 6 | | 6 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 14 | | 14 |
| Kennesaw | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Lake City | | | 5 | 5 | 10 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lawrenceville | | | | 2 | 2 | | | | 0 | 0 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Lilburn | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Lithonia | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marietta | 5 | 6 | 21 | 10 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 14 |
| Morrow | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Norcross | | | 4 | 4 | 8 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Palmetto | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pine Lake | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Powder Springs | | | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Riverdale | | | 2 | | 2 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 5 | | 5 |
| Roswell | 3 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 |

Table 8. Total number of robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults for each jurisdiction for each year between 1990 and 1993. Empty cells indicate that data for that year and crime type were not available or were not provided.

| Jurisdiction | Robberies | | | | | Homicides | | | | | Rapes | | | | | Assaults | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------|------|------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------|----------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | Total |
| Smyrna | | | 20 | 11 | 31 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 15 | 9 | 24 |
| Snellville | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 |
| Stone Mountain | | | 2 | | 2 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Suwanee | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Union City | | | 4 | | 4 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Total | 471 | 643 | 745 | 656 | 2515 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 27 | 22 | 27 | 27 | 16 | 91 | 429 | 386 | 550 | 490 | 1854 |

Other Crimes

Although other crimes, such as shoplifting, were not systematically investigated in the present study, it became evident while examining police records in some of the jurisdictions that a great many crimes occur in or around convenience stores. Listings of police calls to some of these stores were several pages long, with dozens of crimes occurring at a single location. These crimes ranged from the expected theft of gas ("drive-offs") to the types of violent crimes that were the focus of the present study.

In addition to robberies, homicides, rapes, and assaults, other violent crimes were noted as occurring at some of the convenience stores. These included such crimes as kidnapping and bomb threats. A number of suicides were reported. Additionally, there were many drug charges and weapons violations. Prostitution and sex crimes were common occurrences at some locations as well. Although these crimes may not have a direct impact on the store clerks, they do combine to create an area that may be more conducive to violent crimes that could involve clerks.

Future Research

As this study attempted to provide an epidemiological description of the prevalence of convenience store related violent crime, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is planning to enlarge this research in the near future to focus on other aspects of crime characteristics in an effort to provide attenuating measures that will successfully cope with violent crimes in convenience stores.

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