

If you have issues viewing or accessing this file, please contact us at NCJRS.gov.

167169

CARJACKING SURVEY
100 LARGEST POLICE AGENCIES

AGENCY NAME _____

CODE _____

Purpose:

- (1) Have you experienced any carjackings in your jurisdiction?
Yes _____ No _____

How many in 1991 _____

How many in 1992 _____

If unavailable, do you think the numbers of carjackings are
increasing or decreasing _____

- (2) Is there a typical geographical pattern to carjackings in
your jurisdiction?

Inner City Area _____

Shopping Centers Malls _____

Drug Distribution Centers _____

Convenience Stores _____

Other _____

- (3) Is there a typical temporal pattern to carjackings?

Over a month _____

Over a week _____

Over 24 hrs _____

Describe pattern _____

- (4) Is there a typical criminal profile for perpetrators of this
offense?

Describe _____

- (7) Is there a pattern with respect to particular groups or
gangs involved in this offense?

Describe _____

- (6) Is there a typical pattern or method of operation used in
carjackings?

Describe _____

(7) Which Police department unit or units are assigned to carjackings?

(8) Have you created any special unit or units to deal with this problem exclusively? Yes _____ No _____

Describe _____

(9) What other crimes have been committed during carjackings?

Murder	Yes _____	No _____
Kidnapping	Yes _____	No _____
Rape	Yes _____	No _____
Aggravated Assault	Yes _____	No _____
Simple Assault	Yes _____	No _____
Other	Yes _____	No _____

Describe _____

(10) In your jurisdiction have there been any special statutes or policies designed specifically to deal with carjackings?

Describe _____

(11) Does either your Department or another Agency publish any document advising citizens on how they can avoid becoming a victim of carjacking? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, can we get a copy of this document?

(12) Does your Department have knowledge of any mechanical devices designed to prevent auto thefts and carjackings?

Yes _____ No _____

Type _____	Effectiveness _____
Type _____	Effectiveness _____
Type _____	Effectiveness _____

(13) Has your Department identified any problems resulting from the use of such devices? Yes _____ No _____

Describe _____

(14) Does your Department have any special "hotline" numbers for citizens to report carjackings? Yes ____ No ____

Describe _____

(15) Does your Department offer any special rewards to citizens who provide information on carjackings which lead to the arrest and conviction of an offender? Yes ____ No ____

(16) What, if any, role do you think the media has played in either warning citizens of the potential risk of carjackings or encouraging copycat offending patterns?

Describe _____

(17) Can you think of other important questions concerning carjackings which should be the focus of attention for developing a model program to reduce carjackings?

Describe _____

(18) Would attendance at a national conference on carjacking sponsored by the National Institute of Justice for participating police agencies be of benefit to your efforts to curtail this type of offense? Yes ____ No ____

Appendix B
Data Coding Instrument

02/24/94
(Carr)

Characteristics of Carjacking Locations
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

PART ONE: Data Collection

Characteristics of the Incident: Incident Report

1. Observation Number:
2. Report Number: _____
3. File Classification:
 Auto Theft Burglary Carjacking Robbery Homicide
4. District: 5. Beat
6. Date: month: day: year:
- 6a. Weekend? Holiday? Extended Weekend?
7. Time of Day: 8. Day of Week:
9. Street Address: _____
10. City _____ 11. State _____
12. Victim's location during carjacking

<input type="checkbox"/> traffic light (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> fast food lot/line (11)
<input type="checkbox"/> automatic teller machines (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> self-serv gas stations (12)
<input type="checkbox"/> convenience stores lot (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> gas stations (13)
<input type="checkbox"/> shopping center parking lot (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> car wash (14)
<input type="checkbox"/> commercial parking garage (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> pay telephones (15)
<input type="checkbox"/> commercial parking lots (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> park (16)
<input type="checkbox"/> bank parking lot (7)	<input type="checkbox"/> highway entrances/exits (17)
<input type="checkbox"/> residential driveways (8)	<input type="checkbox"/> work (18)
<input type="checkbox"/> apartment parking lot (9)	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know (19)
<input type="checkbox"/> single family home (10)	<input type="checkbox"/> other (20) _____
13. Was it a bump and rob? yes no don't know
14. What activity was the victim engaged before the carjacking?

<input type="checkbox"/> waiting (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> eating (7)
<input type="checkbox"/> getting fast food (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> collecting money from ATM (8)
<input type="checkbox"/> pumping gas (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> waiting for gas stations (9)
<input type="checkbox"/> parking/unparking (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> talking on pay telephone (10)
<input type="checkbox"/> entering/exiting a highway (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> leaving home (11)
<input type="checkbox"/> returning home (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> going to work (12)
<input type="checkbox"/> don't know (13)	<input type="checkbox"/> other (14) _____

15. Was there another crime (other than carjacking) committed?
 yes no

15a. If yes, what other types of crimes? (check all that apply)
 kidnapping robbery assault murder

16. Was anything else was stolen? yes no

16a. What else was stolen? (check all that apply)
 am/fm radio stereo purse wallet
 clothing jewelry money other _____

17. Number of offenders?

18. Weapon used to threaten? yes no

19. Weapon used to injure? yes no

20. Type of weapon used?
 handgun knife club rifle
 other _____

21. Was the car recovered? yes no

Characteristics of Vehicle: Incident Report

22. Type of car stolen:
Make: Model: Year:
Color: State of Tags:

23. Were the keys in the ignition? yes no

24. Was the driver the owner of the car? yes no

Characteristics of Victim: Incident Report

25. Age of victim (driver)?

26. Sex of victim (driver) male female

27. Race of victim (driver):
 Black (1) Caucasian (2) Hispanic (3) Asian (4)
 Other (5) _____

28. No. of Victims?

29. Was the victim (driver) injured? yes no

30. If yes, how was the victim (driver) injured?
 assaulted (1) shot (3) stabbed (5) dragged (7)
 raped (2) kicked (4) choked (6) other (8) _____

31. Was the victim (driver) killed? yes no

32. Were there children in the car? yes no

33. How many? one two or more

Characteristics of Offender: Incident Report

34. Age of offender1
34a. Age of offender2
34b. Age of offender3
34c. Age of offender4

35. Sex of offender1? male female
35a. Sex of offender2? male female
35b. Sex of offender3? male female
35c. Sex of offender4? male female

36. Race of offender1:
 Black (1) Caucasian (2) Hispanic (3) Asian (4)
 Other (5) _____
36a. Race of offender2:
 Black (1) Caucasian (2) Hispanic (3) Asian (4)
 Other (5) _____
36b. Race of offender3:
 Black (1) Caucasian (2) Hispanic (3) Asian (4)
 Other (5) _____
36c. Race of offender4:
 Black (1) Caucasian (2) Hispanic (3) Asian (4)
 Other (5) _____

37. Were any of the offenders apprehended? yes no

Everyone being at equal risk of being carjacked each time they leave their homes is not supported by these data. Rather, the risks of carjacking are clearly higher for certain ages, gender, and racial groups.

The race of the offender was related to the race of the victim and the age of the offender is related to the age of the victim. Most of these crimes were committed by African American males under the age of 30 on African American males between the ages of 21 and 40 years old.

Male offenders were more likely to use a weapon. They used these weapons to threaten other males, although females are injured with weapons at the same rate. Although, we cannot determine the difference in the severity of the injury. It is likely that carjackers and their victims have lifestyles that require them to be away from home between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m and in hot spots.

Whether or not carjackers are making rational choices to steal a vehicle of a specific type, make, or model was not discernible from this study. Although, we do know they are making rational choices to carjack at specific times and places. Temporal patterns suggest that weekends are not more risky than weekdays. Seasonal patterns show an upward trend as the months progress. September through December show twice as many carjackings per month as does January through April.

Reflecting on Related Research. Lifestyles theory, rational choice, and routine activities theories together lay a useful framework for exploring carjacking incidents. However, much of what has been found in this study is similar to findings in studies of other crimes. The clustering of events is not limited to carjackings. Brantingham and

Brantingham (1981) found in their environmental studies that "there are neighborhoods in which concentrations of criminals reside" (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1981). These same areas are often hot spots for other predatory crimes. "Empirical studies in criminology [have] also repeatedly demonstrated] that most offenders commit a large number of their offenses 'close to home'" (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1981).

Certain groups have been found to be more susceptible to certain lifestyles in other studies as well. "The old, those with young children, and women [have] more limited action spaces and spent more time at home", thus they are usually less likely to be victims of predatory crimes. On the other hand, young unattached people spend the most time away from home (Chopin and Brent, 1969)." Due to their lifestyles, they are more likely to be out late at night, in hot spots, doing such things as pumping gas, talking on the pay phone, and other risky events.

Poor people may be more at risk than other social classes. This may also explain the clustering of events into hot spots. Inhabitants of poorer areas of the county had more limited cognitive maps of the area than people from affluent areas (Chopin and Brent, 1969), thus their lifestyle may leave them no choice but to conduct their daily activities in places described as crime "hot spots".

A look at similar crimes found that robbery targets are also temporally and spatially clustered (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1981). In contrast, auto thefts usually occur in areas of easy availability such as outdoor public parking lots, private driveways, and car rental and leasing companies (Saville and Murdie, 1988) when the vehicle is unattended. But the majority of auto thefts are still concentrated in crime hot spots (Laycock, 1992).

Implications for Further Research. Future research should explore the effect of location on carjackings. The proximity of carjacking in relation to the offenders' and victims' homes should also be explored to see just how large a role routine activities plays in the selection of a target. In addition, the likelihood of a carjacking given the physical and environmental conditions would also be valuable information. This research should determine whether a location: (1) offers easy access to suitable targets; (2) allows easy escape from the crime scene; (3) ensures anonymity; and (4) has little or no surveillance. In addition, interviews should be conducted with offenders to determine lifestyles and societal commitments.

It would also be useful to test the applicability of rational choice theory in future studies. Obtaining the total number of registered vehicles, total number of motorist, and the number of person commuting in and out of police districts would allow researchers to calculate risk. Knowing the risk of a carjacking or the risk of a specific type of vehicle being stolen during a carjacking will allow researchers to determine if carjackings are making rational choices.

References

- Beekman, M.E. 1993. "Auto Theft: Countering Violent Trends." *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Oct:17-22.
- Brantingham P.J. and Brantingham, P.L., 1981. *Environmental Criminology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- _____. 1984. *Patterns in Crime*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co.
- Burke, T.W. and O'Rear C.E. 1992. "Armed Carjacking: The Latest Nightmare." *Law and Order*, Oct: 165-168.
- Carr, S.D., 1994 "Carjacking: A Description Analysis of Carjackings in Prince George's County, Maryland 1992, College Park, MD: University of Maryland..
- Chopin and Brent 1969. "Human Activity Systems in the Metropolitan Units State." *Environment and Behavior* 107-130.
- Clarke, R.V. 1983. "Situational Crime Prevention: Its Theoretical Basis and Practical Scope." In M. Tonry and N. Morris eds. *Crime and Justice*, 4:1-25 Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Clarke, R.V. and Harris, P.M. 1992. "Auto Theft and Its Prevention," *Crime and Justice* 16:1-54.
- Cohen L.E. and Felson M. 1979. "Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach." *American Sociological Review* 44:588-608.
- Cornish, D.B. and Clarke, M. 1986. *The Reasoning Criminal: Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending*, New York: Springer-Verlag.
- _____. 1987. "Understanding Crime Displacement: An Application of Rational Choice Theory." *Criminology* 25:933-948.
- Eckblom, P. 1988. "Preventing Post Office Robberies in London: Effects and Side Effects." *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies*, New York: Harrow and Heston Publishers.
- Felson, M. 1987. "Routine Activities and Crime Prevention in the Developing Metropolis." *Criminology* 25:911-932.
- Government Employee Insurance Company, 1993. *GEICO Direct*. Washington, DC.

- Harris, K.D. 1971. "The Geography of American Crime 1968." *The Journal of Geography* 70:204-213.
- Hindelang, M.J., Hirschi, T., and Garafalo, J. 1978. *Victims of Personal Crimes: An Empirical Foundation for a Theory of Personal Victimization*, Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- Hindelang, M.J., Hirschi, T., and Weis, J. 1981. *Measuring Crime*. Beverly Hill, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kowalski, G.S., Dittman, R.L., Jr. and Burg, W.L. 1980. "Spatial Distribution of Criminal Offenses by States, 1970-76." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 17:4-25.
- Laycock, G. 1986. "Property Marking as a Deterrent to Domestic Burglary." In *Situational Crime Prevention*, eds. Kevin Heal and Gloria Laycock. London: H.M. Stationery Office.
- Letkemann, P. 1973. *Crime as Work*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Lottier, S. 1938. "Distribution of Criminal Offenses in Sectional Regions." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 29 (3):329-344.
- Lowe, J.C. and Moryadas, S. 1975. *The Geography of Movement* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Mayhew, P., Clarke R.V., and Hough, J.M. 1992. "Steering Column Locks and Car Theft." In R. Clarke (eds.). *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies*, New York: Harrow and Heston Publishers.
- Mayhew, P., Clarke R.V., Sturman, A.S., Hough, J.M. and Winchester, S.W.C. 1979. *Crime and Public View*, London: H.M. Stationery Office.
- Melbin, Murray., 1987. *Night as Frontier: Colonizing the World After Dark*. New York: Free Press.
- National Prevention Crime Council. 1992. *Carjacking Brochure*. Washington, DC.
- O'Neill, Brian. 1997, January 8. "This Just in: Everthing's OK." *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* C-1.
- Reiss, A.J. Jr., and Roth, J., eds. 1993. *Understanding and Preventing Violence*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Repetto, T.A. 1974. *Residential Crime*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- Roneck, D. and Maier, P.A., 1991. "Bars, Blocks, and Crime Revisited: Linking the Theory of Routine Activities to the Empiricism of the 'Hot Spot'." *Criminology* 29:725-753.

- Shannon L.W. 1954. "The Spatial Distribution of Criminal Offenses by States." *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 45:264-273.
- Sherman, L., Gartin P.R., and Buerger M.E., 1989. "Hot Spots of Predatory Crime: Routine Activities and the Criminology of Place." *Criminology* 27:27-55.
- Waller, I. and Okihiro, 1978. *Burglary: The Victim and the Public*, Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.
- Walters, G.D. 1990. *The Criminal Lifestyle: Patterns of Serious Criminal Conduct*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publication.
- Wilson, J.Q. and Hernstein, R.J. 1985. *Crime and Human Nature*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Wolfgang, M.E. 1975. *Patterns of Criminal Homicide*, Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith.
- Wright, R.T. Decker, S.H., 1994 *Burglars on the Job: Street Life and Residential Break-Ins*, Boston, MA: Northeastern Univ. Press.

Appendix A
National Survey on Carjacking

Temporal patterns were also reported. Carjackings were reported to have primarily occurred on weekends and evenings. Generally, summer months had the highest number of carjackings. Fall months, especially around the holidays were reported to be higher than what would have been expected by chance. Carjackings reportedly dropped drastically during the winter months. The information presented on temporal patterns must be viewed with caution. There appeared to be confusion about the term "temporal patterns". This term may have been too vague or unfamiliar. Answers to this question ranged from the day of the week and time of the day to descriptions of suspects and weapon usage.

Most of the police agencies (68 percent) that responded to the national survey have developed a local profile of the typical carjacker. Although the profiles vary from one jurisdiction to the next, there were some commonalities. Carjackers were typically young males, often African American, in their late teens to early twenties with prior criminal records.

In addition, these youths were often described as violent, using firearms and physical force to scare motorists into relinquishing their vehicles. A large number of the police agencies that responded reported aggravated (68 percent) and/or simple (53 percent) assaults accompanying carjackings. In addition, victims were robbed of other personal items during carjackings. Sixty-four percent of the police agencies that responded to the survey reported a kidnaping, 38 percent a murder, and 29 percent a rape during the commission of a carjacking.

Police agencies seemed to disagree on whether carjackers were most often working independently or as gang members. Sixty-three percent of the police agencies who

responded stated they were not aware of any patterns with respect to particular groups or gangs involved in carjackings. The remaining 26 percent of the survey respondents were split on whether or not carjackings were the work of gangs or small groups of individuals with no gang affiliation.

Survey respondents also felt that drugs played a large role in carjackings. Many carjackers are believed have been drug dealers and their victims “junkies”. These drug users rent or trade their their vehicles for drugs, usually crack. Later these victims or “junkies” reported their vehicles stolen during a carjacking.

Survey respondents agreed (70 percent) that there were commonalities in the methods of operations employed by carjackers to take vehicles from motorists. Motorists in these jurisdictions reported being approached while stopped at a traffic lights or stops sign, while stopped at a gas station and while entering or exiting their vehicles at a convenience store or shopping mall parking lot. Many carjackings were reported to have occurred in or near areas known for drug trafficking. The vehicles is then taken with either physical force or at gunpoint,

Carjackers are felt to be opportunists who approach vehicles when that are immobile and occupied. When working in small groups, ploys such as requesting directions, assistance, or staged minor accidents were often used to catch motorist off guard.

Departmental Carjacking Procedures

Most police agencies (51 percent) do not report publishing any documents advising citizens on how they can avoid becoming a victim of a carjacking. Further, 74 percent of the police agencies reported not having knowledge of any mechanical devices designed to

prevent auto thefts and carjackings. The few devices identified by the remaining agencies included cutoff switches or ignition interfaces, alarm systems, and the use of “dummie” passengers. The wording of this question may have been confusing (see Appendix A). The question not only limited the response to mechanical devices, but it also ask that it prevent both carjacking “and” auto theft. Many police practitioners believe that there is no full proof method to prevent an auto theft or carjacking if the offender really wants the vehicle. Lastly, there may be devices that were not designed to prevent these offenses but have proven effective.

Many departments have formed task forces with other jurisdictions with the responsibility of responding to these incidents. Other departments assign these cases to auto theft or robbery units. Eighty-seven percent of the police agencies responding did not have a special hotline number for citizens to report carjackings. The majority rely on the 911 system for reporting carjackings. Ninety-two percent of the police agencies responding did not offer special reward to citizens for providing information on carjackings which lead to the arrest and conviction of an offender. “Crimestoppers” in may jurisdictions provide some type or reward for assistance in closing serious crime cases. Most of the states responding to our survey rely on state laws already in existence, but a few use Federal laws to hold these criminals.

When survey participants were asked if there were outstanding questions that needed to be answered concerning carjackings when developing any model program to reduce carjackings, several questions were of interest. Are particular types of vehicles or areas targeted by carjackers? Will the targeting of certain offenders by police be effective in

reducing carjackings? Are there any vehicles recovery patterns? Are Federal Law Enforcement agencies interested in implementing a national registry to track carjackers? How much attention has been given to the increasing number of false reports which inflate the statistics. Specifically, "rock rentals where subjects loan their vehicles for payment of crack cocaine?

and then report the incident a carjacking. What are the reasons and motivations behind carjackings? What role has anti-theft technology played in increasing or decreasing carjacking? Are automobile manufacturers currently designing devices to reduce carjacking?

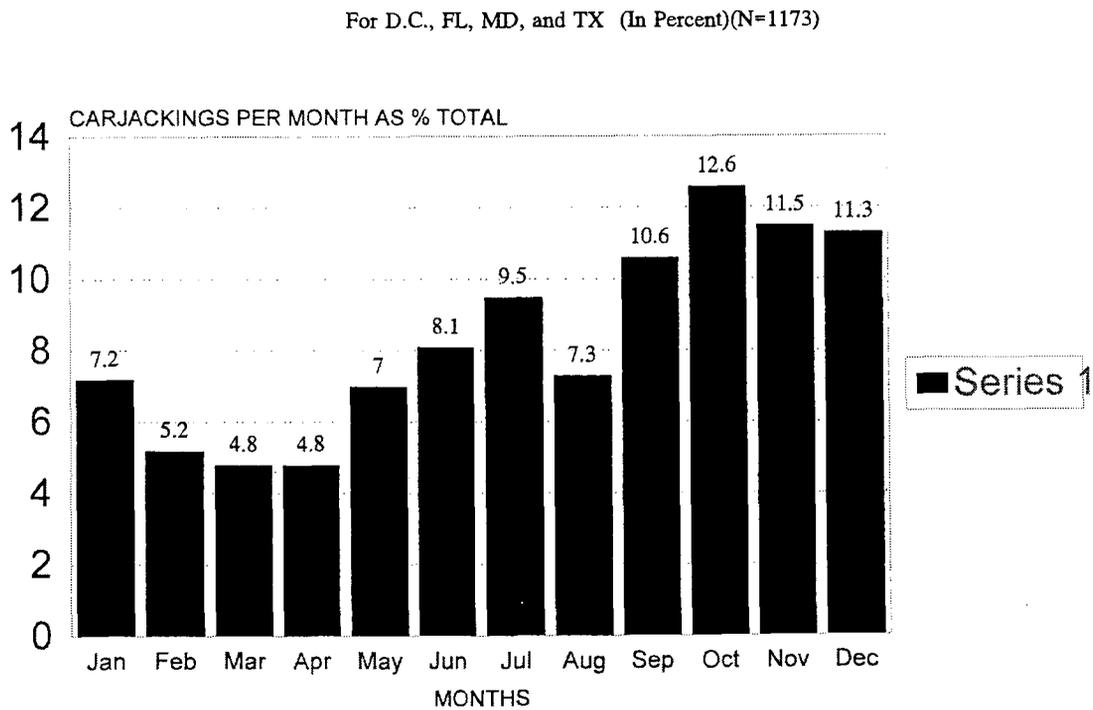
There were also interesting questions concerning victims of carjackings? What is the profile of the typical victim? What level of effort has been devoted to educating citizens and the business community about the dangers of routines that make them susceptible to carjacking? Can information be added to consumer or buyer packages distributed by car manufacturers?

Descriptive Statistics. The following section begins with a general description of carjacking incidents in the four states studied. Frequency distributions are used to describe patterns of carjacking. The analysis then moves into bi-variate chi-square tests with alpha of .05. The age, sex, and race characteristics of the victims and offenders are correlated with characteristics of the offense, such as method of injury, weapon use, injury and/or death, vehicle recovery, and arrest status.

Temporal Patterns. The monthly and weekly distribution of carjackings in the District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, and Texas are similar, so the information has been

combined. The monthly distribution of carjacking for these four states shows a upward trend as the months progress. September through December, average almost twice as many carjackings per month as January through April. The early months average about 5.5 percent (65 carjackings) of the carjackings and the later months 11.5 percent (135 carjackings) (Figure 1). Although the information presented here must be viewed with

Figure 1: Monthly Distribution of Carjackings



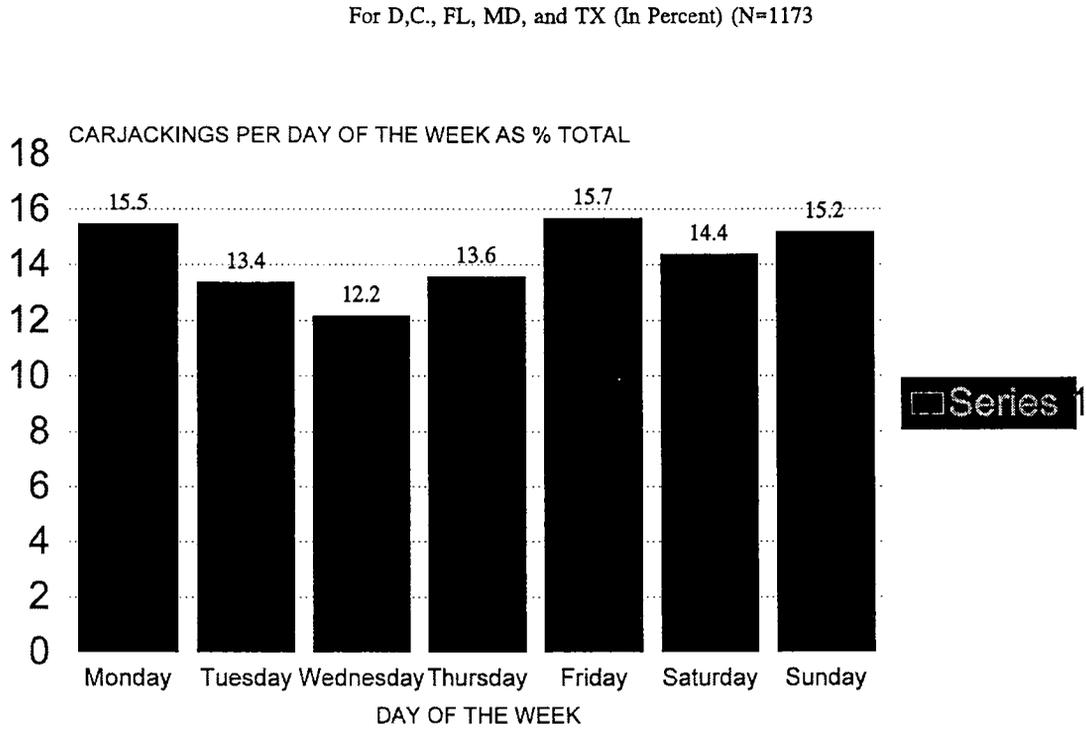
caution because of the short time period, some patterns unfold. The winter seems to have the fewest carjackings, then carjackings increase some with the spring and summer months when the days are longer, and increases further in the fall. October is the highest month with 12.6 percent (148 carjackings) of all carjackings and January is the lowest with only 4.2 percent (85 carjackings).

Patterns of carjackings are not discernible by day of the week (Figure 2). Wednesday has the fewest at 12.2 percent (143 carjackings) and Monday the most with 15.5 percent (182 carjackings). The other days are fairly equivalent averaging about 167 carjackings a day. About 30 percent of the carjackings occurred on a weekend, which is about what would be expected by chance. Three percent, occurred on a major holiday¹, slightly higher than what was expected by chance.

Distribution by hours of the day (Figure 3) has been tabulated for quarter periods, or four six-hour divisions for each state. Hourly patterns were discovered. More carjackings occurred at night than at any other time. Of the 635 cases in Maryland, and 145 cases in Texas the largest percent occurred (69.0 percent and 42.1 percent) between midnight and 5:59 a.m. The second most risky time was between 6:00 p.m. and midnight (19.4 percent and 32.4 percent). In the District of Columbia and Florida the opposite was true. The hours between 6:00 p.m. and midnight account for the majority of carjackings (40 percent and 39.4 percent), midnight to 6:00 a.m. followed with 28.1 percent and 34.8 percent for the District of Columbia and Florida respectively.

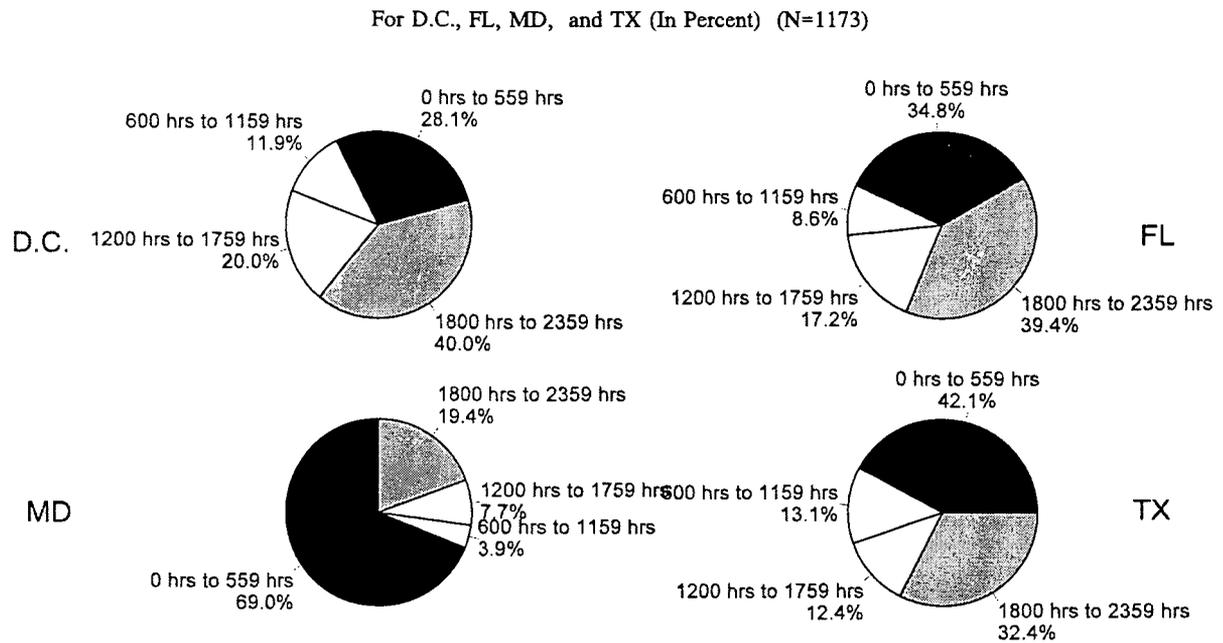
¹Holidays as defined by the U.S. Government.

Figure 2: Distribution of Carjackings by Day of the Week



In all four states the hours between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. represent the most risky period of time for carjackings. During this time period, somewhere between 70 to 90 percent of the carjackings occurred. It is the activities that people engage in and the places

Figure 3: Percent of Carjackings at Various Periods of Time



they frequent during these hours that make them more or less vulnerable to carjackers.

These data support the lifestyles theory.