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Robberies in Chicago, 1982-1983

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Franklin E. Zimring and James Zeuhl

ICPSR 8951

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Franklin E. Zimring and James Zeuhl
ROBBERIES IN CHICAGO, 1982-1983 (ICPSR 8951)

SUMMARY: These data examine the factors that cause victim injury and death in robberies. The study investigated the relationships of victim and offender, place of event, relationship to drugs, weapon used, sex of victim, resistance to assailant, incidence of injury and/or death, and the clearance patterns of the offense. The researchers constructed narratives of criminal events from police records and, in the cases of death, from interviews with police conducted while an investigation was still in progress or shortly after it concluded. The data consist of the actual narrative accounts. CLASS IV

UNIVERSE: Robberies reported to and recorded by the Chicago Police Department.
SAMPLING: For the sample of robberies resulting in victim injury, the sample was constructed from a screening and referral of the first thirty reports of robbery to the Detective Division each month where a notation was present that hospital assistance was required for the victim.

NOTE: Records per case varies in this collection depending on the length of the narratives. In Part 1 there are from three to 70 80-character records per case. In Parts 2 and 3 the number of records per case ranges from two to 70.

EXTENT OF COLLECTION: 3 data files
DATA FORMAT: Logical Record Length

Part 1: Robberies With Homicides	Part 2: Homicides With No Apparent Motive
File Structure: rectangular	File Structure: rectangular
Cases: 95	Cases: 142
Variables: 2	Variables: 2
Record Length: 80	Record Length: 80
Records Per Case: inap.	Records Per Case: inap.

Part 3: Robberies With Injury
File Structure: rectangular
Cases: 346
Variables: 2
Record Length: 80
Records Per Case: inap.

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RELATED PUBLICATION:

Zimring, Franklin E., and James Zeuhl. "Victim Injury and Death in Urban Robbery: A Chicago Study." JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES 15 (January 1986), 1-40.

ACQUISITIONS

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Jack Katz

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS OF PROPERTY OFFENSES BY YOUTHS AT UCLA, 1983-1984
(ICPSR 8950)

SUMMARY: These data examine the attraction of shoplifting and vandalism to nonprofessional offenders. The data consists of actual autobiographical accounts of offenses committed by undergraduates enrolled in three sections of undergraduate criminology classes at the University of California, Los Angeles. Verbatim answers of the respondents are presented. CLASS III

UNIVERSE: Undergraduate university students in the United States.

SAMPLING: The sample consisted of 250 students in three offerings of an undergraduate criminology class.

NOTE: For reasons of confidentiality names have been blanked from the data and replaced with spaces. Profanity has also been blanked and replaced with spaces. The number of records per case in this file varies depending on the length of statement given by each respondent.

EXTENT OF COLLECTION: 1 data file

DATA FORMAT: Card Image

File Structure: rectangular

Cases: 122

Variables: 2

Record Length: 80

Records Per Case: 9-70

RELATED PUBLICATION:

Katz, Jack. "Sneaky Thrills." SEDUCTIONS OF CRIME. New York: Basic Books, 1988.

Robbery, the taking of property by force or threat of force, is a major problem in its own right and a central issue in the analysis of violent crime in America. Robbery is a property crime, unlike theft and burglary, that frequently threatens the physical security of its victim. Robbery is a crime of violence that strikes many more victims than rape and reaches across boundaries of social distance far more often than aggravated assault. Robbery is the stranger-to-stranger crime that most frequently results in victim death and injury in the United States.

This paper reports the first systematic comparison of noninjury, injury, and fatal robberies in a big city setting. The first section of this report addresses our empirical findings, including estimates of the volume of robbery killing in Chicago, an analysis of patterns of robbery killing, an examination of patterns of robberies that cause injury, and a preliminary look at rates of clearance by the police of various categories of robbery. A second section addresses some implications of this study for criminological theory and criminal law.

The study collected data on robbery experience in the city of Chicago over a twelve-month period. Our central interest is those factors and conditions in robbery events that cause victim injury and death. Chicago is a large city with a large volume of robbery, robbery resulting in victim injury, and robbery killing. The study period extended from October 1, 1982, through September 30, 1983. For that period we gathered data on all killings classified by the police as robbery related (a total of ninety-five), on the 142 killings for which no motive was assigned by the police, on a sample 346 robberies resulting in victim injury, and on a sample of 360 nonlethal robberies of all kinds that were reported to and recorded by the Chicago police.

The data in this study were collected prospectively--or, more accurately, almost prospectively--rather than as a historical record of past events. Each month, the fatalities and sample of nonfatal cases were referred to us within a short period after the police report. In many of the death cases, we were able to interview police while an investigation was still in progress or shortly after it concluded. We were often able to correct misstatements or premature inferences in the paper record of the case and to benefit from the developing insights of the investigation process.