

# Domestic Violence in Atlanta, Georgia: Before and During COVID-19

The objectives of the study are 3-fold: (1) to determine if domestic crimes increased in 2020 compared with prior years (2018 and 2019) and if so, whether the timing aligned with the issuance of city and/or state-level shelter in-place orders; (2) to determine how much domestic crimes had changed from the year prior (2019); and (3) to determine if the observed changes in domestic crime patterns were reflective of population changes over time.

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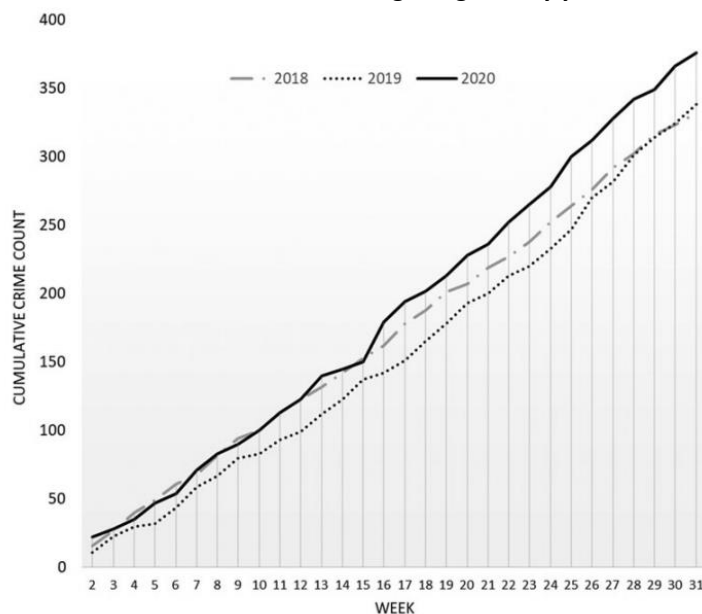
## Methods

Thirty weeks of crime data were collected from the Atlanta Police Department (APD) and examined for changes in Part I domestic crimes before (2018-2019) and during (2020) the COVID-19 pandemic in Atlanta, GA. The cumulative counts of domestic crimes were graphed to model yearly trendlines through August 1, 2020. Then, a layer bar chart was generated using percent change computations for all Part I and domestic crimes to explore the variance in the subset of incidents within the broader crime context. The domestic crime counts were normalized to the city population as a rate per 100,000 residents and crosswalking the rows.

## Findings

- The rise of cumulative counts of domestic crimes during the COVID-19 period of 2020 compared with the previous 2 years suggests increased occurrence of domestic violence, especially during COVID-19 related shelter-in-place orders.
- A spike in domestic crimes was recorded after city and statewide shelter-in-place order (weeks 12-13).
- Domestic crimes rose again in weeks 24–28, the period corresponding with the fallout from the murder of Rayshard Brooks and a spike in COVID-19 cases.
- Some of the highest domestic crime percent changes took place during the time that city and statewide shelter-in-place orders were in effect, whereas the largest decreases in Part I offenses align with the protests after George Floyd’s death.

**Growth in Atlanta Police Department reported Part I domestic crimes through August 1 by year**



## Discussion

During the co-occurring pandemics of COVID-19 and domestic violence, and a period of racial justice reckoning – Part I offenses slowed, while domestic crimes increased in Atlanta, GA. Addressing universal health care, resources directed to domestic violence prevention and response programming, unemployment, and financial hardship would benefit those facing harms as a result of COVID-19 and those at risk of experiencing IPV.