

Los Angeles Police Department



## FOREST FLUX

Review of the Literature

# CRIME ANALYSIS

by

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As data analytics becomes more common in criminal justice research, law enforcement and researchers have increased the use of large datasets to better understand and interpret crime patterns. Research shows that modern crime data reflects criminal activities, how crimes are reported, where and when crimes occur, and what groups are affected most. Our literature review will provide context for analyzing crime patterns that vary widely in Los Angeles and will focus on three key areas that are relevant to this project: crime reporting delays, spatial and temporal crime hotspots, and victim age patterns. Using data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), Baumer and Lauritsen demonstrate that crimes are significantly more likely to be reported to police than non-violent property crimes and crimes involving injury or weapons are especially likely to be reported due to the severity of it.

Baumer and Lauritsen's peer-reviewed paper emphasizes the significance of looking at delayed reporting and concludes that reporting practices have evolved over time. It's possible that some offenses will be recorded later rather than right away, but these delays aren't arbitrary. Instead, they are affected by things including the seriousness of the offense, the victim-offender relationship, the perceived value of calling the police, and how they would react. Baumer (2002)

Violent crimes are generally reported quicker than property crimes, while theft and fraud have longer delays because victims discover their losses after the crime has occurred and believe that reporting may have limited the benefit. (Baumer, 2002) NCVS studies show that crimes involving acquaintances or family members are associated with longer reporting delays due to relational pressure. To add, recent research also shows that lower trust in law enforcement is associated with reduced and delayed reporting, especially in urban areas, such as Los Angeles.

Police crime data is shaped by victims' decisions to report incidents, and research consistently shows that reporting behavior varies across crime types and situations. Scholars

highlight the importance of ‘when’ crimes are reported. Victims often delay their reporting due to fear of relation, uncertainty of the severity of the incident, or concerns of how authorities will respond but these reporting delays are common and impactful as they can affect investigative outcomes and accuracy of crime statistics.

A major theme in criminology research is the concentration of crime in specific locations, commonly referred to as “crime hotspots”. Early studies in environmental criminology demonstrate that crime is not evenly distributed across cities but instead clustered in a small pack of places. A research found that a limited portion of street segments accounted for a disproportionately large number of crime incidents, finding that it has been replicated across numerous urban contexts. (Baumer, 2002)

Weisburd confirms that crime concentration is a stable and predictable phenomenon. Places with high crime rates are likely to maintain their rates in the future. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses have confirmed that place-based policing strategies are effective in crime reduction without displacement. These findings are relevant to our case city of Los Angeles since any strategies to minimize crime have to consider heterogeneity and concentration at the neighborhood level.

Time concentration of crime: Data has also shown that property crimes are closely related to daytimes and commercial activities, while violent crimes are often concentrated on weekends and late nights. These are consistent with the routine activity theory of crime, which holds that crimes are committed when targets and offenders converge in place and time without adequate supervision.

Additional research also indicates that the relevance of location depends on timing as areas that are relatively low risk during the day may become hot spots at night i.e. wealthy neighborhoods.

Victim demographics, specifically age, represent another important factor of crime research. Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics show that younger individuals experience higher rates of violent victimization, while older adults are more likely to be affected by certain property crimes and fraud. These differences are often explained by variations in routine activities and exposure to risk. Incident level police data show that younger victims are more likely to be involved in violent crimes occurring in public spaces during late night hours and often include weapons. Whereas older victims are more frequently affected by theft and fraud during daytime hours and in residential locations. The age factor is important with our research to identify the activity patterns and how they differ across different neighborhoods in Los Angeles. An important key note is to consider the crime type, location, and time of occurrence to help come to a conclusion of conditions that influence crime outcomes.

This study's purpose is to examine LAPD's crime data, allowing for a focused analysis of how reporting delays, hotspot intensity, and victim age patterns manifest within LA.

## References

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