**Systematic Scoping Review Protocol: Crime Location Choice Studies**

A systematic scoping review of crime location choice studies and spatial unit of analysis

**Objectives**

The objective of this systematic scoping review is to map and synthesize the existing literature on crime location choice and its spatial unit of analysis, with particular attention to studies that examine offenders' decision-making using discrete choice models or related selection frameworks.

# 3. Eligibility Criteria

- Population: Offenders (any type of offender or crime)  
- Concept: Location or target selection, decision-making processes of offenders, the application of discrete choice models, or selection frameworks in criminological contexts.  
- Outcomes: The study must report on crime location choices or factors influencing offender decision-making.  
- Study Types: The review will include empirical quantitative studies that analyze crime location choices using discrete choice models, offender decision-making, or spatial targeting. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals will be prioritized.

# 4. Information Sources

We will conduct searches in the following databases:  
1. Web of Science (WOS)  
2. Scopus  
3. ProQuest Criminal Justice Database  
4. Google Scholar (First 100 results)

# 5. Search Strategy

Search terms will include combinations of key terms related to crime, offender decision-making, and discrete choice models. The following search terms have been applied across different sources:  
  
- Web of Science: TS=((( "location" OR "target" OR "decision-making" OR "decision making") AND ("offend\*" OR "crime\*") AND ("discrete" OR "choose" OR "choice" OR "select")))  
- Scopus: TITLE-ABS-KEY ( noft ( ( ( "location" OR "target" OR "decision-making" OR "decision making" ) AND ( "offend\*" OR "crime\*" ) AND ( "discrete" OR "choose" OR "choice" OR "select" ) ) ) )  
- ProQuest Criminal Justice Database: noft(((( "location" OR "target" OR "decision-making" OR "decision making") AND ("offend\*" OR "crime\*") AND ("discrete" OR "choose" OR "choice" OR "select"))))  
- Google Scholar: ((( "location" OR "target" OR "decision-making" OR "decision making") AND ("offend\*" OR "crime\*") AND ("discrete" OR "choose" OR "choice" OR "select")))  
  
Searches will be limited to studies published in English, and only peer-reviewed articles will be included.

# 6. Study Selection

Studies will be selected based on the following inclusion criteria:  
- Direct focus on offenders’ decision-making processes and crime location choice.  
- Use of discrete choice models or related frameworks in explaining or analyzing crime locations.  
- Empirical data or quantitative insights on offender behavior concerning spatial decision-making.  
  
The exclusion criteria will be:  
- Studies without offender decision-making focus or spatial analysis.  
- Review articles or purely theoretical models without empirical evidence.

# 7. Data Extraction

A data extraction form will be used to gather the following information from each included quantitative study:  
  
- Study title  
- Authors  
- Year of publication  
- Country of study  
- Sample size and type of crime/offender  
- Unit of analysis (e.g., individuals, neighborhoods, street segments)  
- Size of spatial scale (e.g., census block, city, region)  
- Key variables of interest (e.g., location, target, offender behavior)  
- Methodological approach (e.g., discrete choice model, logistic regression, spatial regression, other quantitative methods)  
- Main findings related to crime location choice and decision-making  
- Spatial and temporal characteristics (e.g., if spatial and/or temporal lags are considered)  
- Statistical techniques used to measure spatial dependence or clustering

# 8. Outcomes and Prioritization

The primary outcome of interest is to understand the factors influencing offenders’ location and target choices. Secondary outcomes include identifying gaps in the literature and examining the methodologies employed across studies.

# 9. Risk of Bias

The risk of bias will be assessed for each study using the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool or similar frameworks adapted for scoping reviews. This step is included to ensure that study limitations and biases are accounted for during data synthesis.

# 10. Data Synthesis

The results will be synthesized through narrative summaries that map the existing evidence on the factors influencing crime location choices. Where possible, we will categorize studies by the type of crime, geographic location, and the decision-making frameworks used (e.g., rational choice theory, situational crime prevention).

# 11. Presentation of Results

The findings will be presented using the PRISMA flow diagram to detail the selection process of studies. Results will include a descriptive summary of the included studies, identifying key themes, trends, and research gaps in the field of crime location choice.

# 12. Amendments

If amendments to the protocol are required during the review process, they will be documented with the reasoning for the changes.