

Making a Hotspot Map

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Note: If you have skipped ahead and run the code in Lesson #8: SQL Part 2, then some of the queries involving `PrimaryType` in this set of notes will not work. You will need to modify those queries to left join with the `iucr` table.

1 Introduction

In the previous section, you built a SQLite database to store and manage the large Chicago crime data. In this section, you will query the database to extract the latitude and longitude of crime incidents and create a hotspot map with a large dataset. The concept of determining the geographic locations where crime is most intense, a crime hotspot, is very important to criminological theory as well as to the very practical question of where to focus public safety efforts.

Here we will make hotspot maps with our Chicago crime data (which requires use of SQL). Of course, if you have acquired a dataset with latitude and longitude not in a SQL database, you could use these same methods to make a hotspot map using only R.

2 Setting up the data

Let's first load up the `sqldf` library and reconnect to our Chicago crime database.

```
library(sqldf)
con <- dbConnect(SQLite(), dbname="chicagocrime.db")
```

Let's run a SQL query to extract the two columns, `Latitude` and `Longitude`, from our crime database, creating a data frame with one row for each crime incident.

```
dataAllcrime <- dbGetQuery(con, "
  SELECT Latitude, Longitude
  FROM crime
  WHERE Latitude IS NOT NULL AND
        Longitude IS NOT NULL")
nrow(dataAllcrime)
```

```
[1] 8284414
```

How would your query differ if you wanted to do a hotspot map of only assaults?

```
dataAssaults <- dbGetQuery(con, "
  SELECT Latitude, Longitude
  FROM crime
  WHERE PrimaryType='ASSAULT' AND
        Latitude IS NOT NULL AND
        Longitude IS NOT NULL")
nrow(dataAssaults)
```

```
[1] 557660
```

Always do a quick check to make sure the data looks the way you expect it to look.

```
dataAssaults |> head()
```

	Latitude	Longitude
1	41.91944	-87.77556
2	41.96846	-87.70761
3	41.74878	-87.60517
4	41.76889	-87.61413
5	41.87296	-87.75366
6	41.88448	-87.63131

3 Creating leaflet maps

We will be using `leaflet` to make our maps, so be sure you have it installed. We will also use the `sf` package for some of our spatial calculations. Here we avoid saying too much about the `sf` package since we go into great detail about it in later parts of the course.

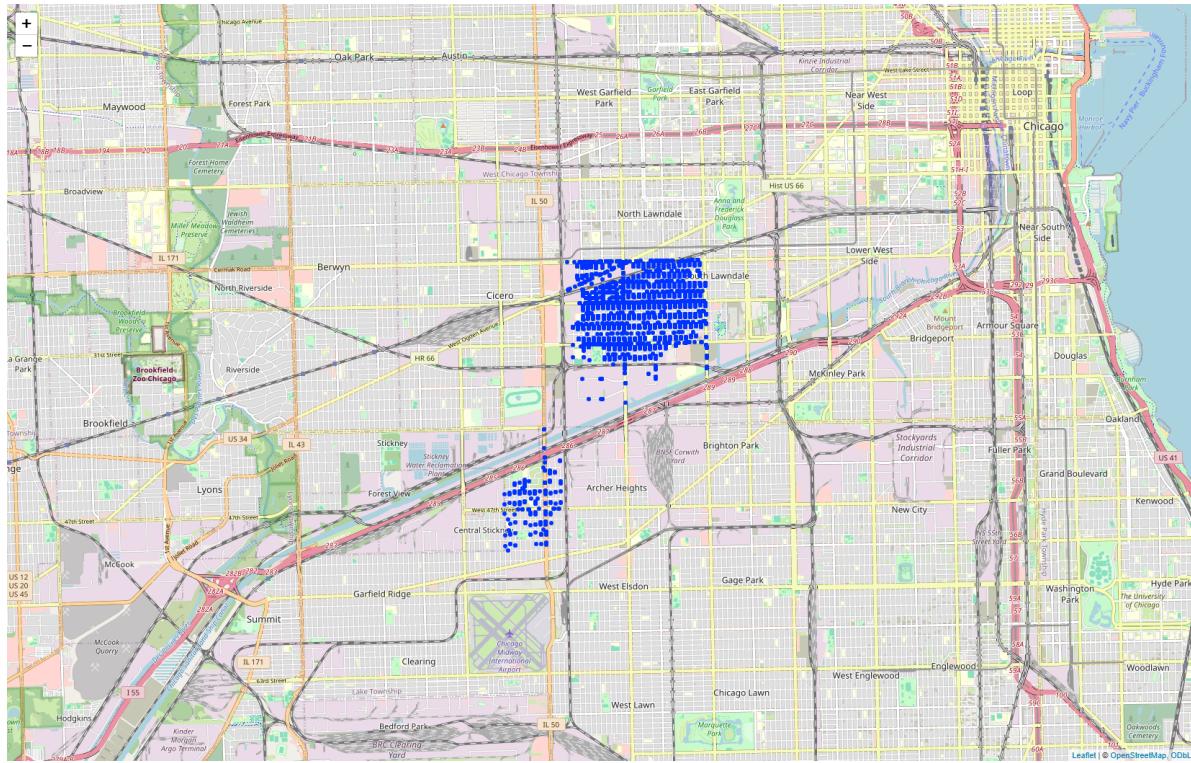
```
library(dplyr)
library(leaflet)
library(sf)
```

Let's start small by creating a leaflet map just showing assaults in Ward 22.

```
dataWard22Assaults <- dbGetQuery(con, "
  SELECT Latitude,Longitude
  FROM crime
  WHERE PrimaryType='ASSAULT' AND
    Latitude IS NOT NULL AND
    Longitude IS NOT NULL AND
    Ward=22")

leaflet(dataWard22Assaults) |>
  setView(lng=-87.73, lat=41.83, # selected map's center
         zoom=13) |>           # zoom in to "neighborhood" level
  addTiles() |> # add the base street layer
  addCircleMarkers(~Longitude, ~Latitude,
                   radius=3,
                   stroke=FALSE,
                   fillOpacity = 1)
```

file:///C:/Users/greg/_AppData/Local/Temp/Rtmp4k8bfh/file7abc9c66bbf/widget7abc31da40a2.html



Leaflet has placed dots all over the map for ward 22. With so many dots, it is rather difficult to determine where exactly there is a higher crime density. It seems that crime is simply everywhere in ward 22. Instead of showing all the dots, we are going to make a new map layer that colors different areas depending on the number of crime incidents per square kilometer, the crime density.

3.1 Hexagonal tiling

One strategy is to chop up the Chicago map into a bunch of smaller tiles. For this we are going to overlay our leaflet map with hexagonal tiles. Then we will count how many dots land within each hexagonal tile and color the tile according to that count. Hexagonal bins are convenient because they produce smoother, more visually appealing density maps, especially when compared with square tiles. Each hexagon has a consistent distance to its neighbors and their geometry better approximates a circle, reducing distortion in how densities appear. This uniformity makes patterns in the underlying data easier to interpret, especially when mapping phenomena like crime incidents, where you want to highlight true spatial concentrations rather than artifacts of the grid shape.

This time we will make a hotspot map of all assaults in Chicago. First, we need to communicate to R that latitude and longitude are special geographic coordinates. We will use a special coordinate system, the [Universal Transverse Mercator](#) coordinate system, for the part of globe

sharing Chicago's longitude area (CRS 26916 = UTM zone 16N) to avoid distortion (because we are projecting points on a round earth to a two dimensional screen). The problem with using latitude and longitude coordinates is that differences in coordinates are measured in degrees rather than meters. At the equator 0.01° longitude is about 1 kilometer, but 0.01° degree gets shorter and shorter as you move toward the earth's poles. Therefore, all of our tiling and counting will be done in the UTM Zone 16N coordinate system that has distances measured in meters. After we have done all of our calculations, we will convert back to latitude and longitude to overlay our results on top of leaflet.

```
# convert to an sf object
# tells R that Longitude and Latitude are special columns
dataAssaults <- dataAssaults |>
  st_as_sf(coords = c("Longitude", "Latitude"),
            crs = 4326,           # lat/long coordinate system (WGS 84)
            remove = FALSE) |> # don't remove the lat/long columns
  st_transform(crs = 26916)  # project to UTM 16N, Chicago
```

Next, we will create the set of hexagonal tiles that covers the assault locations. We need to set the size of the hexagons, specifically the distance between opposite edges of each hexagon. First check what units of distance R will use with these data.

```
# check the distance units dataAssaults is in
st_crs(dataAssaults)$units
```

```
[1] "m"
```

Confirming that the distance measurements are in meters, let's set the hexagon size to 0.5 km or 500 meters. After that, we can use `st_make_grid()` to make an R object (an `sf` object) that creates the hexagons and stores them in a convenient format.

```
# set distance (meters) between opposite sides of each hexagon
sizeHex <- 500
# create hexagonal tiles
gridHex <- st_make_grid(dataAssaults,
                        cellsize = sizeHex,
                        square = FALSE) |> # prefer hexagons
  st_as_sf() |> # convert to sf object
  rename(geometry = x)
gridHex
```

```

Simple feature collection with 6762 features and 0 fields
Geometry type: POLYGON
Dimension:      XY
Bounding box:  xmin: 422095.9 ymin: 4610178 xmax: 456845.9 ymax: 4652757
Projected CRS: NAD83 / UTM zone 16N
First 10 features:
              geometry
1  POLYGON ((422345.9 4610611, ...
2  POLYGON ((422345.9 4611477, ...
3  POLYGON ((422345.9 4612343, ...
4  POLYGON ((422345.9 4613209, ...
5  POLYGON ((422345.9 4614075, ...
6  POLYGON ((422345.9 4614941, ...
7  POLYGON ((422345.9 4615807, ...
8  POLYGON ((422345.9 4616673, ...
9  POLYGON ((422345.9 4617539, ...
10 POLYGON ((422345.9 4618405, ...

```

`gridHex` is like a regular data frame with one column containing polygon objects as each row's data element. There is also a header that gives some summary information like how many hexagons there are in `gridHex` (6,762) and its coordinate system (NAD83 / UTM zone 16N).

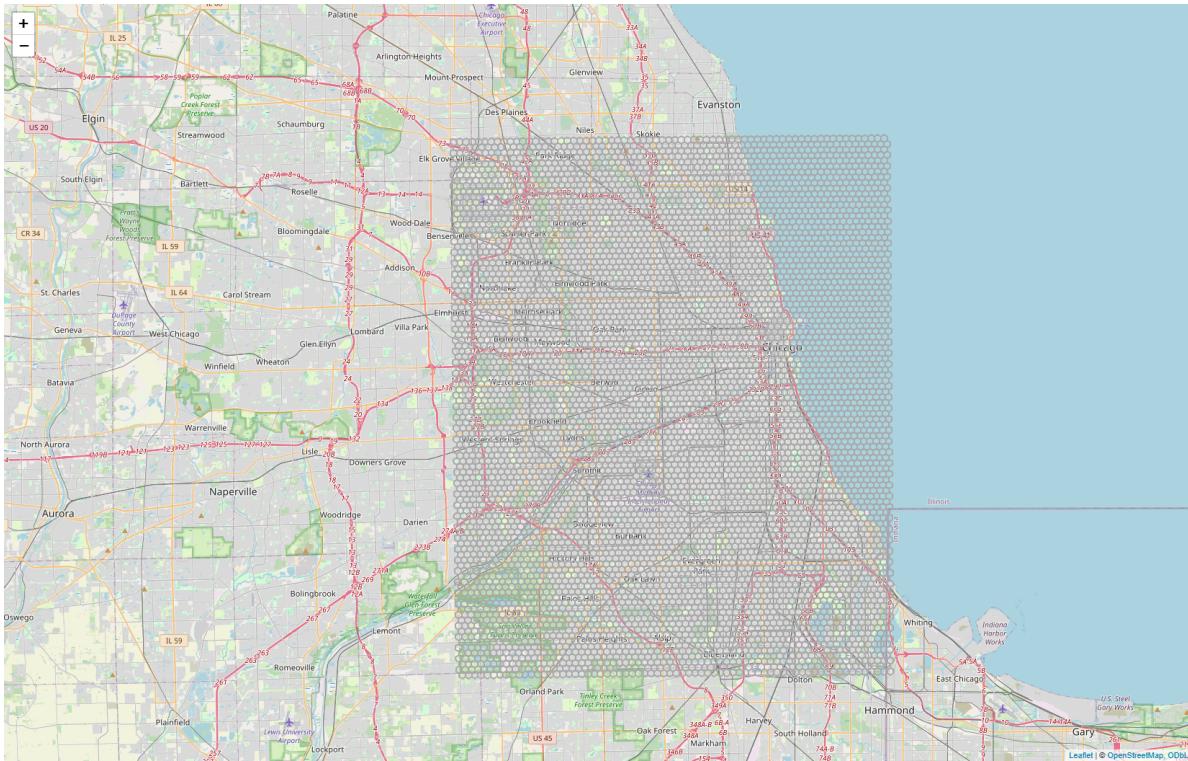
Let's check our work so far by displaying the hexagons over a leaflet map of Chicago.

```

leaflet() |>
  addTiles() |>
  # zoom=11 -> tight city level view
  setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 11) |>
  addPolylines(
    # convert coordinates back to lat/long (CRS 4326)
    data = gridHex |> st_transform(crs=4326),
    fillOpacity = 0,      # don't color in the hexagons
    color = "darkgray", # border of hexagons
    weight = 2,          # border thickness
    opacity = 1)         # border transparency

```

file:///C:/Users/greg/_AppData/Local/Temp/Rtmp4k8bfh/file7abc580f25f8/widget7abc5f26612.html



We are making progress. We have covered the map of Chicago with 6,762 hexagons. Some of our hexagons are tiling parts of Lake Michigan. We will end up dropping those by filtering our hexagons with 0 crime counts.

Now we need to count how many of the assaults land in each of these hexagonal tiles. `st_intersects()` will figure out which points in `dataAssaults` land inside each hexagon and `lengths()` will count their number. We will also compute the crime density (incidents per square kilometer per year), eliminate any hexagons with 0 assaults (like all those in Lake Michigan), and project coordinates back to latitude/longitude, which leaflet requires.

We will need to know the number of years of data we have so we can normalize results to a “per year” rate.

```
a <- dbGetQuery(con, "SELECT Date FROM crime") |>
  mutate(Date = lubridate::mdy_hms(Date)) |>
  summarize(firstDate = min(Date),
            lastDate = max(Date))
nYears <- as.numeric(difftime(a$lastDate, a$firstDate, units = "days") / 365.25)
nYears
```

[1] 24.59138

`st_intersects()`, when used with polygon shapes (`gridHex`) and points (`dataAssaults`), returns for each polygon a list of the indices of points that the polygon intersects. Here is what the results of `st_intersects()` look like for 10 hexagons plucked from the middle of Chicago. For some hexagons, the list is empty signalling that no assaults landed in that hexagon. For other hexagons we see lists of points. These are the row numbers from `dataAssaults` of points that landed in that specific hexagonal tile.

```
gridHex |>
  slice(3480:3489) |>
  st_intersects(dataAssaults)
```

```
Sparse geometry binary predicate list of length 10, where the predicate
was `intersects'
1: (empty)
2: (empty)
3: (empty)
4: (empty)
5: (empty)
6: 12, 3388, 6990, 7234, 7427, 7487, 18670, 19382, 20377, 27893, ...
7: 9391, 14771, 18938, 19218, 25833, 30536, 31292, 31427, 33952, 43080, ...
8: 29548, 30511, 37116, 49594, 54512, 58866, 95299, 121602, 127701, 169652, ...
9: 7158, 11117, 17344, 20963, 42193, 92508, 99246, 134087, 141568, 142694, ...
10: 146006, 150503, 378307
```

If we apply `lengths()` to this list it will return the number of points in each of these lists.

```
gridHex |>
  slice(3480:3489) |>
  st_intersects(dataAssaults) |>
  lengths()
```

```
[1] 0 0 0 0 0 94 98 34 38 3
```

Now for all of our hexagons covering Chicago let's compute the number of assaults per km^2 per year.

```
gridHex <- gridHex |>
  # find which dots each hex intersects...
  mutate(nAssaults = geometry |>
    st_intersects(dataAssaults) |>
```

```

    lengths(), # ...and count them
    # get area in square kilometers
    areakm2 = as.numeric(st_area(geometry)) / 10^6,
    # compute incidents per km2 per year
    density = nAssaults / areakm2 / nYears) |>
  filter(nAssaults > 0) |> # drop those that are empty
  st_transform(crs=4326) # transform back to lat/long for leaflet

```

`gridHex`

```

Simple feature collection with 2667 features and 3 fields
Geometry type: POLYGON
Dimension:     XY
Bounding box:  xmin: -87.94064 ymin: 41.64168 xmax: -87.51863 ymax: 42.02491
Geodetic CRS:  WGS 84
First 10 features:

```

	geometry	nAssaults	areakm2	density
1	POLYGON ((-87.93757 41.9944...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
2	POLYGON ((-87.93472 42.0061...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
3	POLYGON ((-87.93153 41.9944...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
4	POLYGON ((-87.92789 41.9516...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
5	POLYGON ((-87.928 41.9594, ...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
6	POLYGON ((-87.92846 41.9905...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
7	POLYGON ((-87.92538 41.9867...	4	0.2165064	0.7512881
8	POLYGON ((-87.92561 42.0023...	3	0.2165064	0.5634661
9	POLYGON ((-87.92186 41.9516...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220
10	POLYGON ((-87.92197 41.9594...	1	0.2165064	0.1878220

Now `gridHex` has three new columns associating to each hexagon an assault count, the area of the hexagon (all should be identical), and the assault density. We want to break up that density into bins and assign a color to each bin. This way we can color-code each hexagon based on the assault density. `colorBin()` creates a function that will take a density value and return a color. The combination of `bins = 10` and `pretty = TRUE` will create some nice intervals for the different colors. Viridis is a family of color palettes that has been engineered to be perceptually uniform (equal steps in data values look like equal steps in color), colorblind-friendly, printer-friendly (maintains contrast in grayscale), and is readable on screens and projectors.

```

pal <- colorBin("viridis",
                 domain = gridHex$density,
                 bins = 10,
                 pretty = TRUE) # choose "nice" breakpoints

```

So what is this `pal()` function? If we give `pal()` a number it will produce a color code.

```
pal(125)
```

```
[1] "#3B528B"
```

`pal(125)` produces the color code `#3B528B`, which gives the hexadecimal code for mixing the primary source colors red (3B), green (52), and blue (8B). That mix is like a deep indigo blue. When creating the hexagon overlay, each hexagon's `density` will be run through `pal()` which will determine how to color the hexagon.

What breakpoints did `pal()` decide on?

```
pal |> attr("colorArgs")
```

```
$bins
[1] 0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450

$na.color
[1] "#808080"
```

The `bins` value shows that `pal()` will assign one color to 0-50, another color to 50-100, and so on up to the last bin 400-450. It also shows that if there happens to be any hexagons with missing values for `density` (there are in fact none), those hexagons will get colored with `#808080`, which is gray.

Let's make our leaflet map!

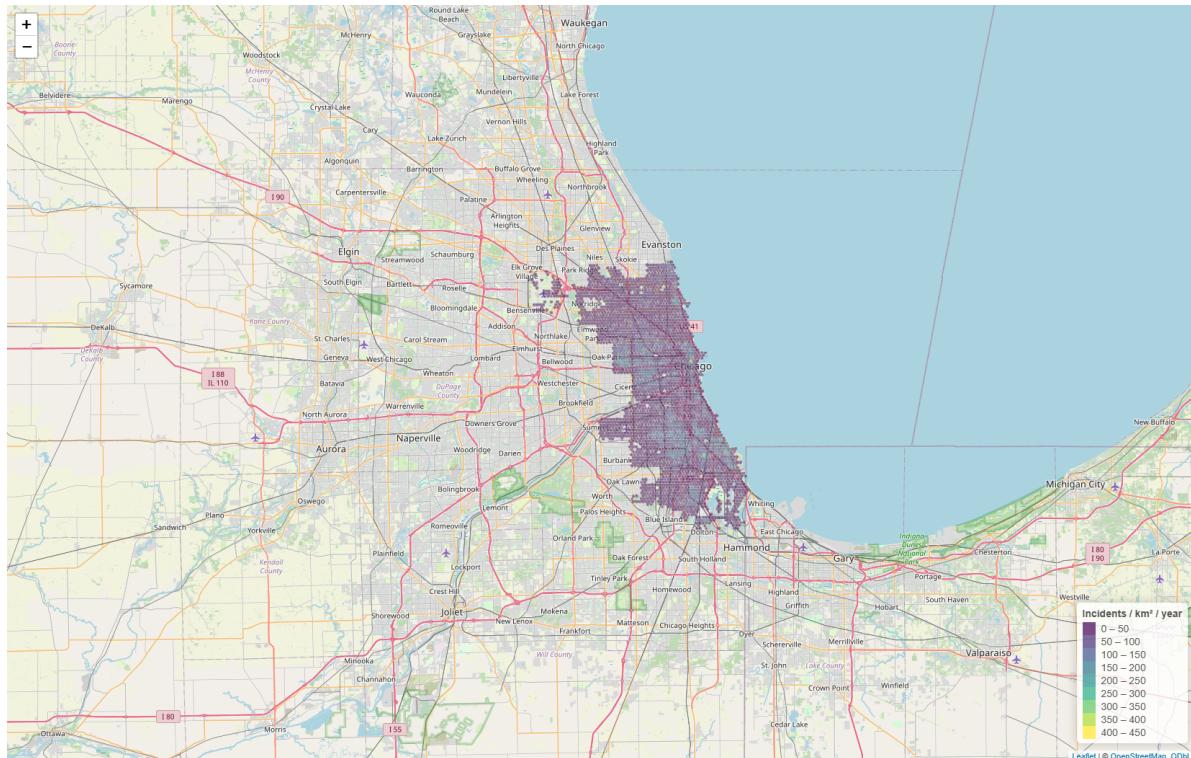
```
leaflet() |>
  addTiles() |>
  setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 10) |>
  addPolygons(
    data = gridHex,
    fillColor = ~pal(density),
    fillOpacity = 0.5,
    color = "darkgray", # border of hexagons
    weight = 0.5,       # border thickness
    opacity = 0.8,      # border transparency
    # make popup box when hovering
    label = ~paste("Count:",
                  format(nAssaults, big.mark=",",)),
```

```

    "<br>Density: ",
    format(round(density,1), nsmall=1),
    "/ km2 / year") |>
  lapply(htmltools::HTML), # signal HTML so <br> is linebreak
  highlightOptions = highlightOptions(color = "red", # hover highlight
                                      weight = 2,
                                      bringToFront = FALSE)) |>
  addLegend(position = "bottomright",
            pal = pal,
            values = gridHex$density,
            title = "Incidents / km2 / year",
            opacity = 0.7,
            labFormat = labelFormat()) # use pal() to figure out format

```

file:///C:/Users/greg/_AppData/Local/Temp/Rtmp4k8bfh/file7abc1d7b3012/widget7abc7a686ac8.html



You can zoom in on specific neighborhoods or specific hexagons. You can also hover your mouse over a hexagon to see the assault density.

You can try to make your own color palettes, like

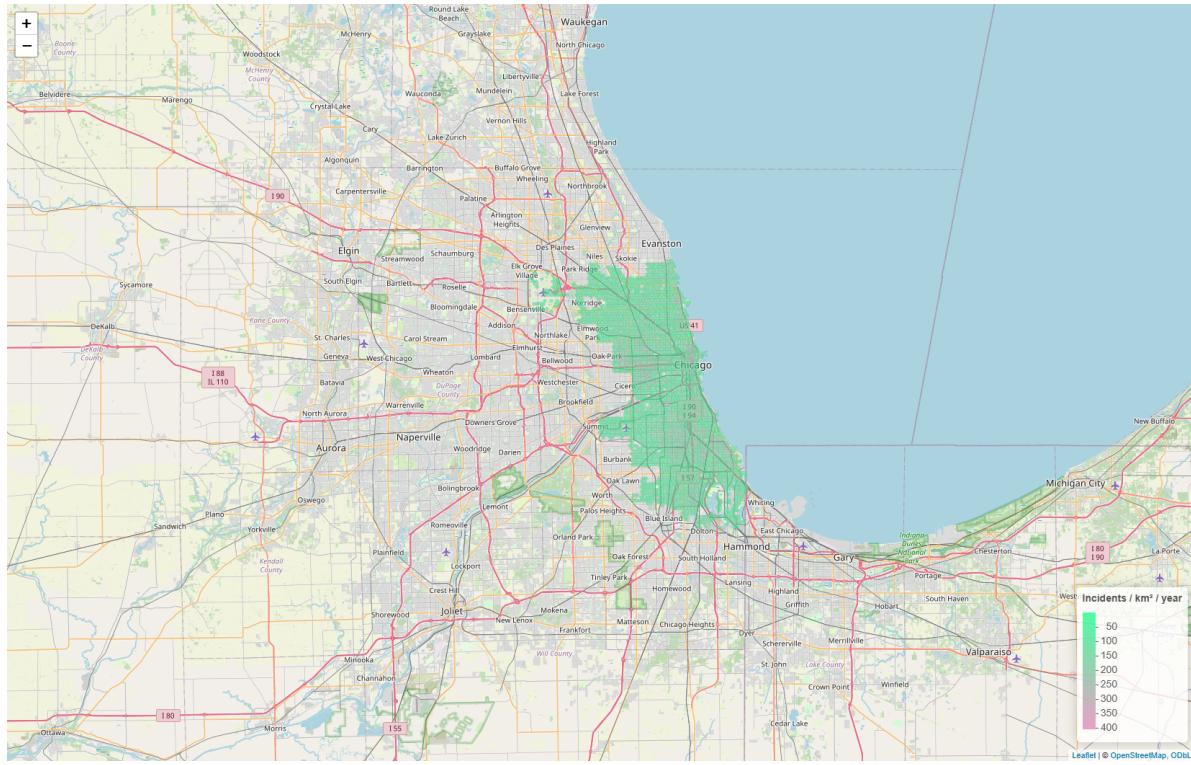
```

palGreg <- colorNumeric(
  palette = colorRampPalette(c("springgreen", "hotpink"))(10),
  domain = c(0, 450))

leaflet() |>
  addTiles() |>
  setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 10) |>
  addPolygons(
    data = gridHex,
    fillColor = ~palGreg(density),
    fillOpacity = 0.5,
    color = "darkgray",
    weight = 0.5,
    opacity = 0.8,
    label = ~paste("Count:",
                  format(nAssaults, big.mark=","),
                  "<br>Density: ",
                  format(round(density,1), nsmall=1),
                  "/ km2 / year") |>
      lapply(htmltools::HTML),
    highlightOptions = highlightOptions(color = "red",
                                         weight = 2,
                                         bringToFront = FALSE)) |>
  addLegend(position = "bottomright",
            pal = palGreg,
            values = gridHex$density,
            title = "Incidents / km2 / year",
            opacity = 0.7,
            labFormat = labelFormat())

```

file:///C:/Users/greg_/AppData/Local/Temp/Rtmp4k8bfh/file7abc26f64539/widget7abc4f4933ba.html



Yikes! I have made awful color choices here. I find it best to rely on the built in color palettes that have been more thoughtfully constructed.

3.2 Contour map

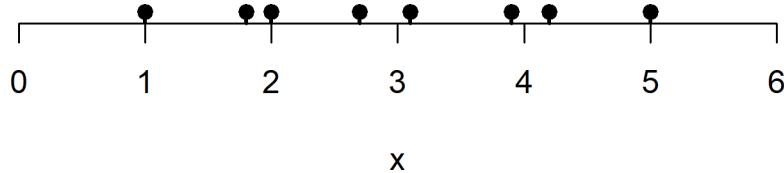
You can also create a map that shows the high crime areas in a way that is akin to elevation on a topographical map. The more concentrated the concentric areas, the higher the crime (or, in the case of a topographical map, the higher the terrain).

3.2.1 Kernel density estimation

We are going to use a two-dimensional kernel density estimate. Two-dimensional kernel density estimation (2D KDE) is a smoothing technique that transforms a set of crime incident points into a smooth looking surface, highlighting areas where events are more concentrated. Instead of plotting individual dots, KDE places a smooth “bump” (the kernel) over each point and sums them up, producing a measure of how many incidents are expected per unit area. When used for crime hotspot mapping, this method makes clusters of incidents visually stand out, reduces noise from random scatter, and allows analysts to interpret patterns of concentration at a chosen spatial scale (controlled by a bandwidth parameter).

To give the general idea how this works, let's look at a one-dimensional version. Imagine we have single street that is 6 kilometers long and we know the crime locations of 8 crimes along this street. I have marked those 8 crime locations on the horizontal axis.

```
# Small set of points (e.g., crime locations on a 1D street axis)
x <- c(1.0, 1.8, 2.0, 2.7, 3.1, 3.9, 4.2, 5.0)
plot(0, 0, type = "n",
      xlim=c(0, 6),
      ylim = c(0, 1.8),
      xlab = "x", ylab = "",
      axes = FALSE)
axis(1)
rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)
```



Centered on each point place a bell-shaped curve. I have used the normal distribution here, but other choices are possible. The parameter `bandwidth` controls how wide these bell curves are around each point. The total area under these bell curves adds up to 8, the total number of incidents. Rather than treat the incident as occurring at one specific point, the kernels kind of smudge the incident so that the weight of any one incident is spread over nearby areas.

```
plot(0, 0, type = "n",
      xlim=c(0, 6),
```

```

ylim = c(0, 1.8),
xlab = "x", ylab = "Incidents")
rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)

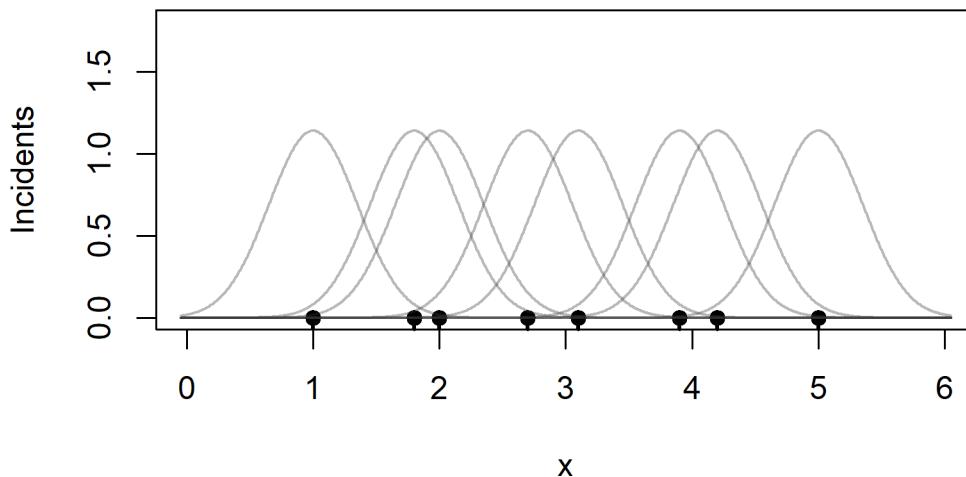
# Bandwidth (controls smoothness)
h <- 0.35

# Grid to evaluate densities
g <- seq(min(x) - 3*h, max(x) + 3*h, length.out = 1000)

# compute kernels
kernels <- sapply(x, function(xi) dnorm((g - xi)/h) / h)

# Overlay individual kernels (light lines)
apply(kernels, 2,
      function(y) lines(g, y,
                        col = rgb(0.2, 0.2, 0.2, 0.35),
                        lwd = 1.5))

```



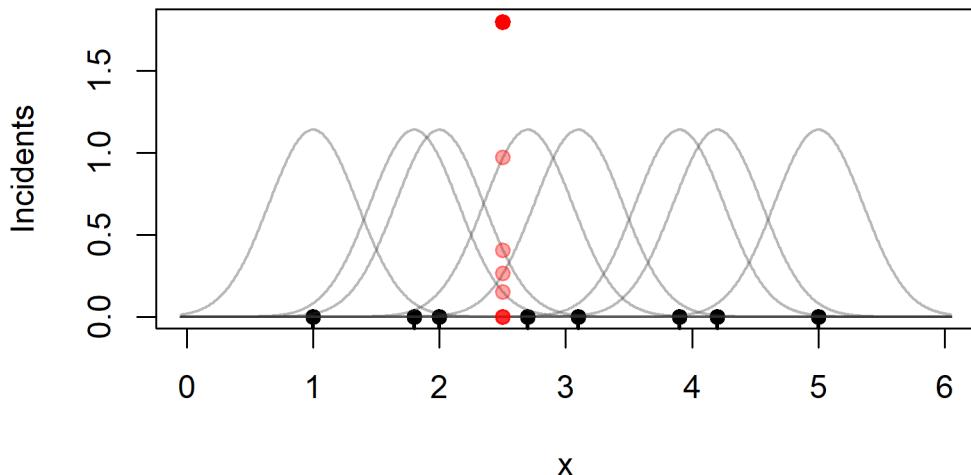
To estimate the number of incidents we can sum those kernel values at any point x . So if you want to compute the KDE of the incidents at 2.5.

```

plot(0, 0, type = "n",
      xlim=c(0, 6), ylim = c(0, 1.8),
      xlab = "x", ylab = "Incidents")
rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)
apply(kernels, 2,
      function(y) lines(g, y,
                        col = rgb(0.2, 0.2, 0.2, 0.35),
                        lwd = 1.5))

# find the kernel heights near 2.5
i <- abs(g-2.5) |> which.min()
points(rep(2.5, 8), c(kernels[i,1:8]), col=rgb(1,0,0,0.35), pch=19)
points(2.5, sum(kernels[i,1:8]), col="red", pch=19)

```



That sum is 1.8. A more useful measure is an incident rate per kilometer. Since we have a 6-kilometer street segment, the crime incident rate at the 2.5 km marker divides that sum by 6, 0.30 incidents per kilometer. I will divide the KDE by 6 through the rest of this section so that the vertical axis is incidents / km.

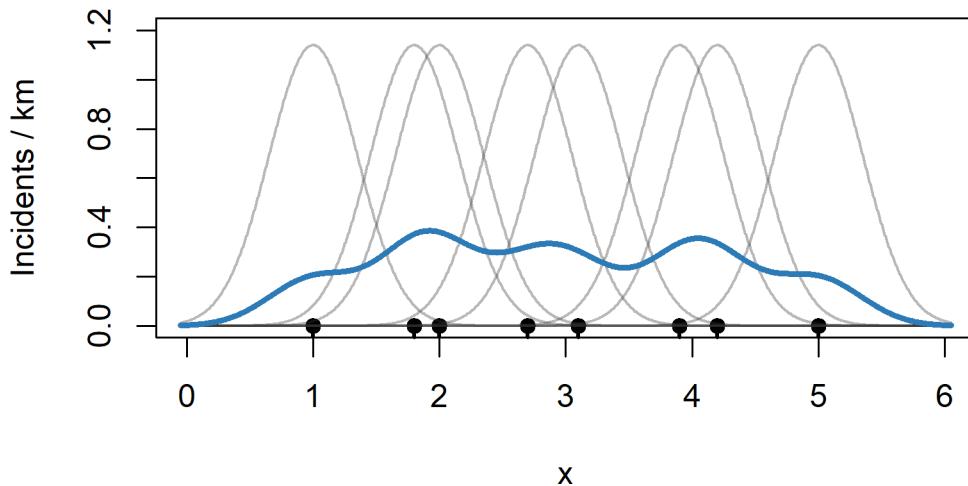
Repeat this process for a range of values of x . Note that I am summing up the kernel values and then dividing by 6 (the length of the road) to get an incident per kilometer rate.

```

plot(0, 0, type = "n",
      xlim=c(0, 6), ylim = c(0, 1.2),
      xlab = "x", ylab = "Incidents / km")
rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)
apply(kernels, 2,
      function(y) lines(g, y,
                        col = rgb(0.2, 0.2, 0.2, 0.35),
                        lwd = 1.5))

# KDE = sum of kernels
kde <- rowSums(kernels) / 6 # divide by number of kms -> incidents/km
lines(g, kde, col = "#2C7BB6", lwd = 3)

```



Selecting a bandwidth can be a little tricky. A bandwidth that is too small gives a KDE that is unstable and too jagged. A bandwidth that is too large smooths away interesting features and fails to highlight hotspots. The R MASS package has useful tools for choosing reasonable bandwidth parameters that we will use on our Chicago data.

```

plot(0, 0, type = "n",
      xlim=c(0, 6), ylim = c(0, 1.2),
      xlab = "x", ylab = "Incidents / km")

```

```

rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)

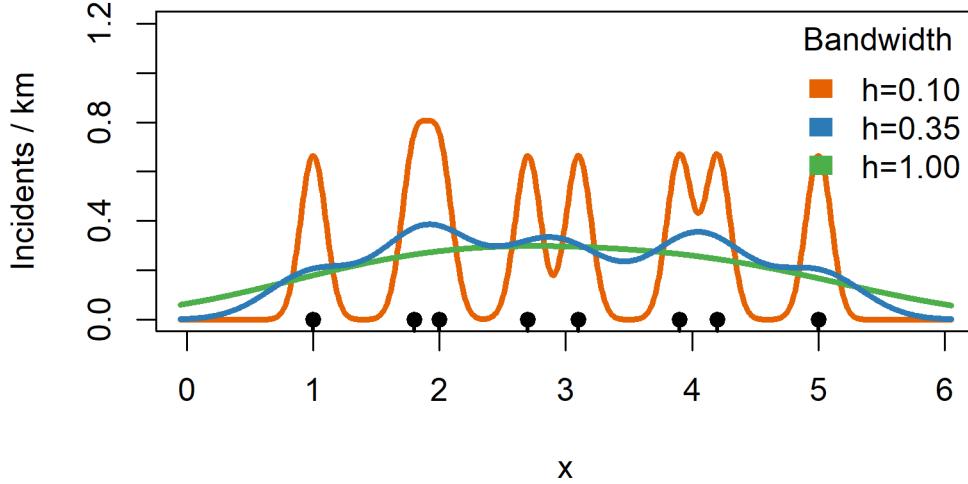
# too small
h <- 0.1
kernels <- sapply(x, function(xi) dnorm((g - xi)/h) / h)
lines(g, rowSums(kernels) / 6, col = "#E66101", lwd = 3)

# too big
h <- 1.0
kernels <- sapply(x, function(xi) dnorm((g - xi)/h) / h)
lines(g, rowSums(kernels) / 6, col = "#4DAF4A", lwd = 3)

# original h=0.35
h <- 0.35
kernels <- sapply(x, function(xi) dnorm((g - xi)/h) / h)
lines(g, kde, col = "#2C7BB6", lwd = 3)

legend("topright",
       legend = c("h=0.10", "h=0.35", "h=1.00"),
       fill    = c("#E66101", "#2C7BB6", "#4DAF4A"),
       border  = NA,
       bty     = "n",
       title   = "Bandwidth")

```



The color that we would apply to any stretch of the road depends on how high the crime density is at a particular point. I have shaded the regions showing the relationship between the KDE estimate and what color we would shade the road segment.

```

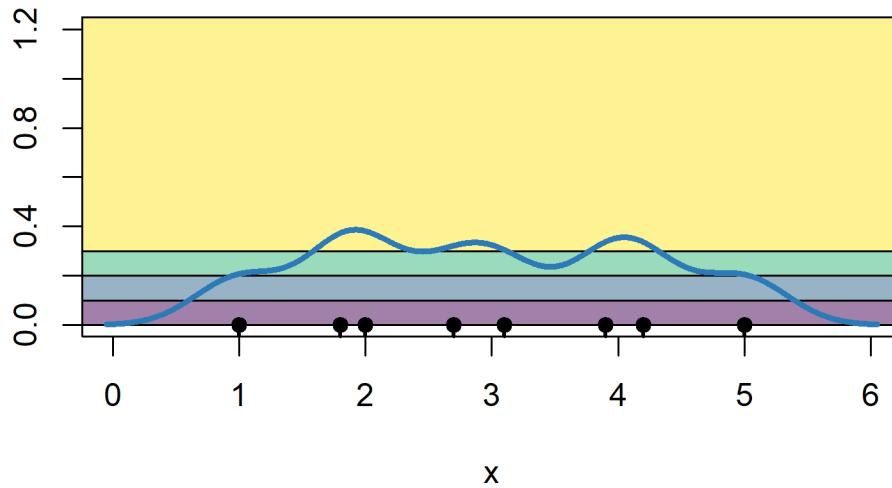
plot(0, 0, type = "n",
      xlim=c(0, 6), ylim = c(0, 1.2),
      xlab = "x", ylab = "")

pal1dKDE <- colorBin("viridis",
                      domain = kde,
                      bins = 4,
                      pretty = TRUE)
rect(par()$usr[1], 0.3, par()$usr[2], par()$usr[4],
     col=pal1dKDE(0.35) |> adjustcolor(alpha.f = 0.5))
rect(par()$usr[1], 0.2, par()$usr[2], 0.3,
     col=pal1dKDE(0.25) |> adjustcolor(alpha.f = 0.5))
rect(par()$usr[1], 0.1, par()$usr[2], 0.2,
     col=pal1dKDE(0.15) |> adjustcolor(alpha.f = 0.5))
rect(par()$usr[1], 0.0, par()$usr[2], 0.1,
     col=pal1dKDE(0.05) |> adjustcolor(alpha.f = 0.5))

rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)

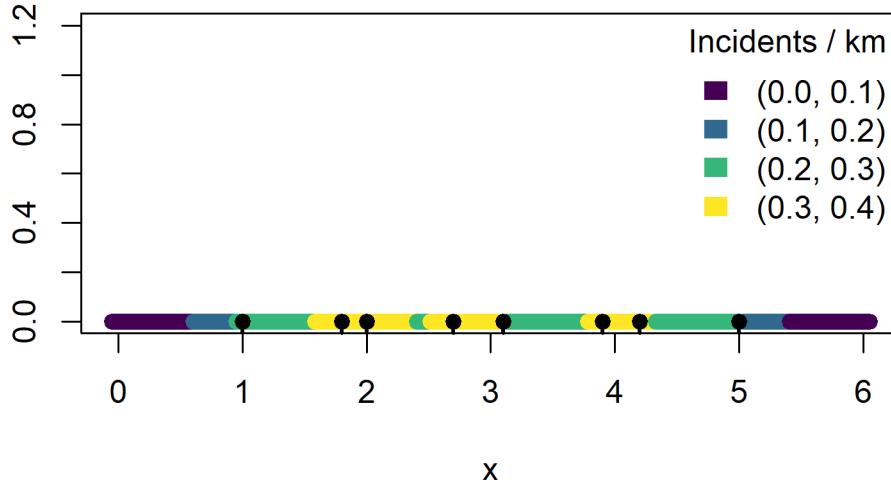
```

```
lines(g, kde, col = "#2C7BB6", lwd = 3)
```



To simplify, we draw the road colored by crime incident rate.

```
plot(g, rep(0,1000), ylim = c(0, 1.2),
      xlab = "x", ylab = "",
      col=pal1dKDE(kde))
rug(x, lwd = 2)
points(x, rep(0, length(x)), pch = 19)
bins <- attr(pal1dKDE, "colorArgs")$bins
mid <- (bins[-1] + bins[-length(bins)]) / 2
bins <- bins |> format(nsmall=1)
labs <- paste0("(", bins[-length(bins)], ", ", bins[-1], ")")
legend("topright",
       legend = labs,
       fill   = pal1dKDE(mid),
       border = NA,
       bty    = "n",
       title  = "Incidents / km")
```



The process of computing a KDE for a two-dimensional collection of points is similar. We use a two-dimensional version of the normal distribution kernel and create a two-dimensional grid of values at which we will compute the incident rate per square kilometer.

3.2.2 Contour map with two-dimensional kernel density estimation

The MASS package provides a two-dimensional KDE function `kde2d()`. We will also use the `isoband` package. Isobands are the filled regions between pairs of contour lines representing areas where the incident rate values fall within a given range.

```
# for computing 2-dimensional kernel density estimates
library(MASS)
# for creating polygons from contours
library(isoband)
```

Here we use `bandwidth.nrd()` to select bandwidths, one for the x direction and one for the y direction. `kde2d()` will compute the KDE on a 200 x 200 grid of points.

```
# extract the (x,y) coordinates
xy <- dataAssaults |>
  st_coordinates() |>
  data.frame()
```

```

# simple bandwidth guess for how much smoothing
h <- c(bandwidth.nrd(xy$X), bandwidth.nrd(xy$Y))
kdeAssaults <- kde2d(
  xy$X, xy$Y, # coordinates
  n = 200,      # a 200 x 200 grid
  h = h)        # bandwidth

```

Stored in `kdeAssaults` is a component `z` that contains the crime density estimate. As we requested, `kde2d()` chopped the map of Chicago into a 200 x 200 grid of dimension and `z` contains the estimated crime density at those grid points. Those points are centered in a box with width and height equal to:

```

# width in meters
diff(kdeAssaults$x[1:2])

```

[1] 169.6576

```

# height in meters
diff(kdeAssaults$y[1:2])

```

[1] 211.274

`z` is scaled so that `z` times the width times the height equals the fraction of expected crime incidents in that box. So `z` is like the fraction of crime incidents per square meter. If we multiply each value of `z` by the width and height of the boxes (which all have the same size) and add them up, we should get a number close to 1.

```

sum(kdeAssaults$z * diff(kdeAssaults$x[1:2]) * diff(kdeAssaults$y[1:2]))

```

[1] 0.9973903

If we multiply all the values of `z` by the total number of crime incidents, then rather than describing the fraction of incidents per square meter (a hard to understand quantity), we estimate the expected number of incidents per square meter. Multiply that by 10^6 to convert square meters to square kilometers and divide by the number of years of data that we have so that we get an estimated number of crime incidents per km^2 per year, a measurement that describes the pace of incidents over space and time.

```

# scale so that the units are incidents/km2/year
kdeAssaults$zKM2Year <- kdeAssaults$z * nrow(dataAssaults) * 10^6 / nYears
hist(kdeAssaults$zKM2Year,
      xlab = "Crime rate",
      ylab = "Number of points",
      main = "")

```

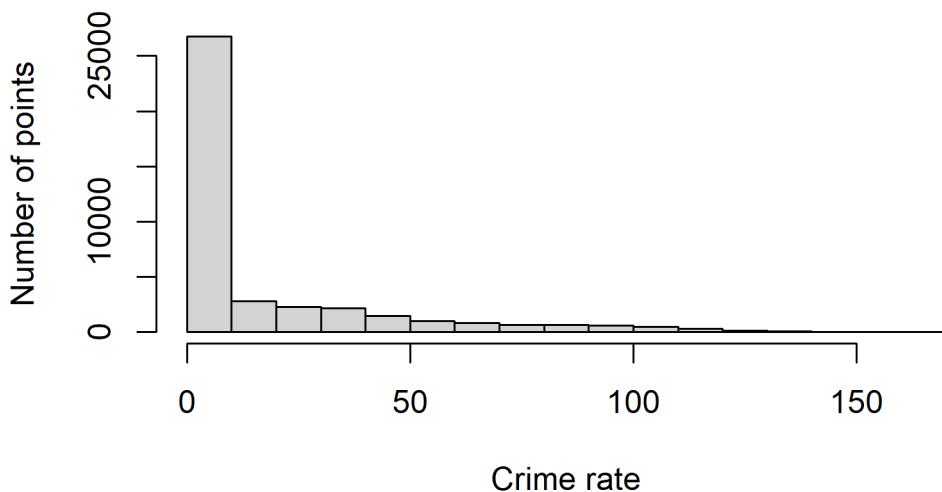


Figure 1: Histogram of estimated crime intensity (incidents per km^2 per year)

The histogram shows that a large number of areas have very low crime rates, but this histogram has a long right tail, meaning some parts of Chicago have high crime rates. Let's determine some nice breakpoints for our map.

```

breaks <- kdeAssaults$zKM2Year |>
  range() |>
  pretty(n=10)
breaks

```

```
[1] 0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180
```

Now we ask `isobands()` to find level sets for each value of `breaks`. That is, `isobands()` will find curves through `x` and `y` where the value of `zKM2Year` is close to each value of `breaks`.

```

contourAssaults <-
  isobands(kdeAssaults$x,
            kdeAssaults$y,
            kdeAssaults$zKM2Year,
            levels_low = breaks[-length(breaks)],
            levels_high = breaks[-1]) |>
  iso_to_sfg() |>      # convert to sf geometry object
  st_sfc(crs = 26916) |> # convert to sf data column
  st_sf(levels_low = breaks[-length(breaks)], # convert to sf object
         levels_high = breaks[-1],
         geometry = _) |>
  st_transform(4326)

# show the result so far
contourAssaults |>
  slice(-1) |> # drop the outer edge
  st_geometry() |>
  plot()

```



Figure 2: Isobands for Chicago assault incident rate

Let's create a viridis color palette to shade the areas between these contour lines.

```

pal <- colorBin("viridis",
                 domain = (contourAssaults$levels_low +
                            contourAssaults$levels_high)/2,
                 bins = breaks,
                 pretty = FALSE)

```

Now we are ready to overlay a colored contour map on top of our Chicago leaflet map.

```

leaflet() |>
  addTiles() |>
  setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 10) |>
  addPolygons(
    data = contourAssaults,
    fillColor = ~pal((levels_low + levels_high)/2),
    fillOpacity = 0.4,
    color = "#808080", # contour band edges
    weight = 0.5,
    opacity = 0.5,
    label = ~paste0("Density: ",
                   format(levels_low, scientific=FALSE), "-",
                   format(levels_high, scientific=FALSE)) |>
      lapply(htmltools::HTML),
    highlightOptions =
      highlightOptions(weight = 2, bringToFront = TRUE)) |>
  addLegend(
    position = "bottomright",
    pal = pal,
    values = (contourAssaults$levels_low +
               contourAssaults$levels_high)/2,
    title = "Incidents / km2 / year",
    opacity = 0.7)

```

file:///C:/Users/greg/_AppData/Local/Temp/Rtmp4k8bfh/file7abc3cc32584/widget7abc55369f1.html

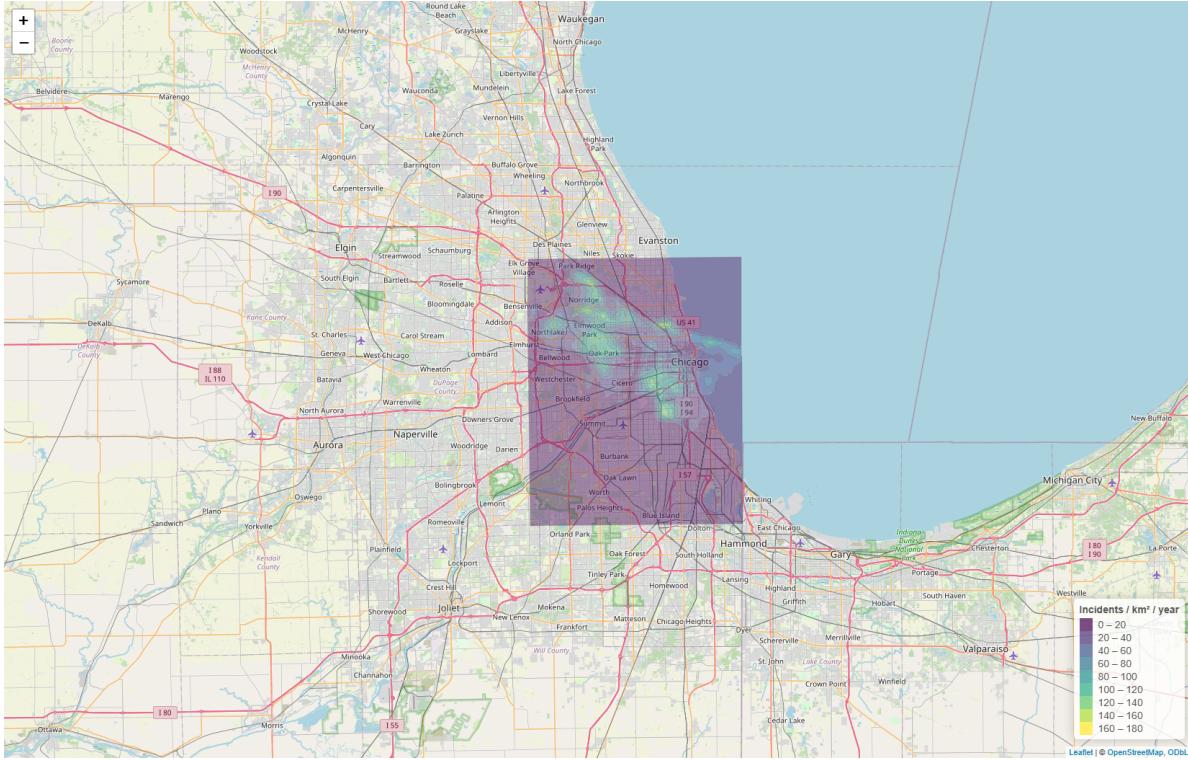
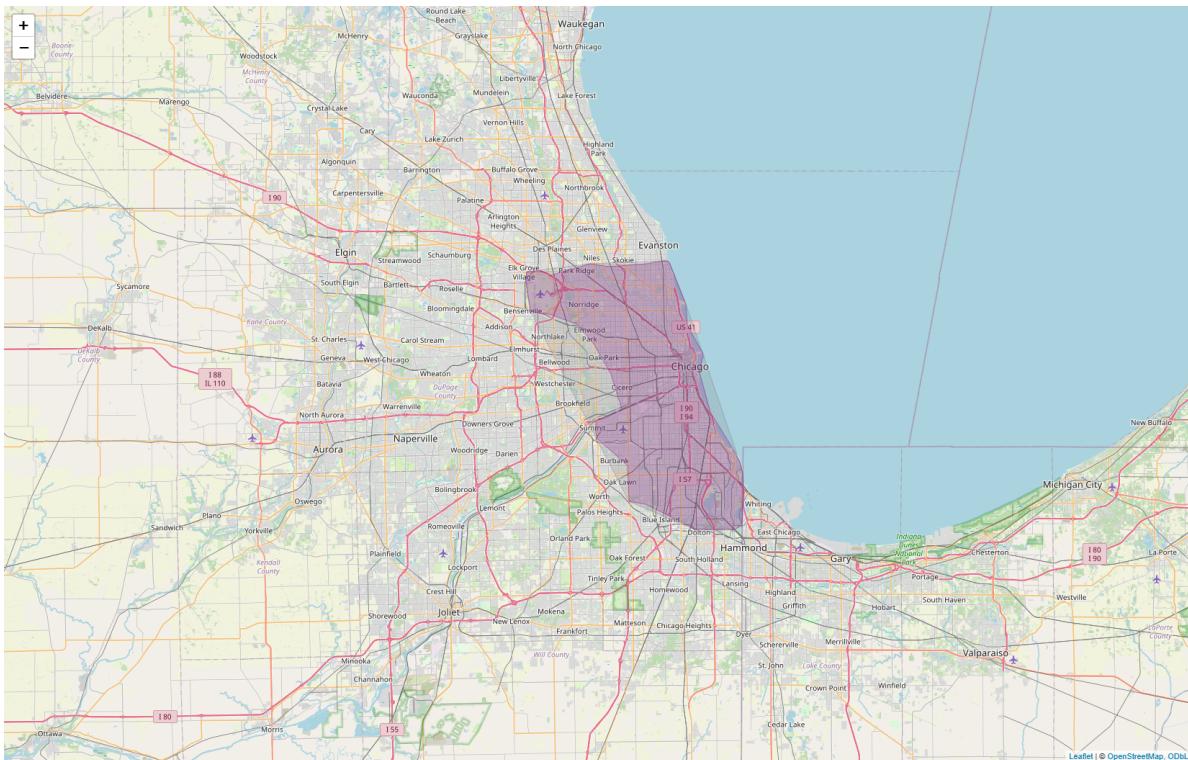


Figure 3: Chicago assault hot spots

The contours have been created over the Chicago bounding box, which ends up looking a little strange, with areas highlighted in Lake Michigan. We are going to intersect the contours with the data points' concave hull, a tight-fitting polygon that wraps a point set while allowing some inward dents. The `ratio` parameter sets how tight the fit is, roughly the fraction of the convex hull's area to keep. This leaflet map shows the convex hull (the smallest polygon that contains all the data points with no inward dents) in gray and the concave hull with ratio set to 0.2 in purple. We could use either one to trim the KDE contour map to places where assaults actually occur.

```
leaflet() |>
  addTiles() |>
  setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 10) |>
  addPolygons(
    data = dataAssaults |>
      st_geometry() |>
      st_combine() |>
      st_convex_hull() |>
      st_buffer(200) |> # add a little extra at the edges
```

```
    st_transform(crs = 4326),
    color = "#808080",
    weight = 0.5,
    opacity = 0.9) |>
addPolygons(
  data = dataAssaults |>
    st_geometry() |>
    st_combine() |>
    st_concave_hull(ratio=0.2) |>
    st_buffer(200) |> # add a little extra at the edges
    st_transform(crs = 4326),
  color = "purple",
  weight = 0.5,
  opacity = 0.9,
highlightOptions =
  highlightOptions(weight = 2, bringToFront = TRUE))
```



Also, let's make the hotspot map only highlight the hottest spots, those with a crime rate exceeding 80 incidents per km² per year. Zoom in on some of the brightest areas to see what is in these high car theft areas.

```

legendMid <- (contourAssaults$levels_low +
                contourAssaults$levels_high)/2
legendMid <- legendMid[legendMid > 80]
legendCol <- pal(legendMid)
legendLabs <- paste0(contourAssaults$levels_low, "-",
                      contourAssaults$levels_high)
legendLabs <- legendLabs[5:9]

leaflet() |>
  addTiles() |>
  setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 10) |>
  addPolygons(
    data = contourAssaults |>
      st_intersection(dataAssaults |>
          st_geometry() |>
          st_combine() |>
          st_concave_hull(ratio=0.2) |>
          st_buffer(200) |> # add a little extra at the edges
          st_transform(crs = 4326)) |>
        filter(levels_low >= 80), # highlight just the hottest spots
    fillColor = ~pal((levels_low + levels_high)/2),
    fillOpacity = 0.4,
    color = "#808080",
    weight = 0.5,
    opacity = 0.5,
    label = ~paste0("Density: ",
                   format(levels_low, scientific=FALSE), "-",
                   format(levels_high, scientific=FALSE)) |>
      lapply(htmltools::HTML),
    highlightOptions =
      highlightOptions(weight = 2, bringToFront = TRUE)) |>
  addLegend(
    position = "bottomright",
    colors = legendCol,
    labels = legendLabs,
    title = "Incidents / km2 / year",
    opacity = 0.7)

```

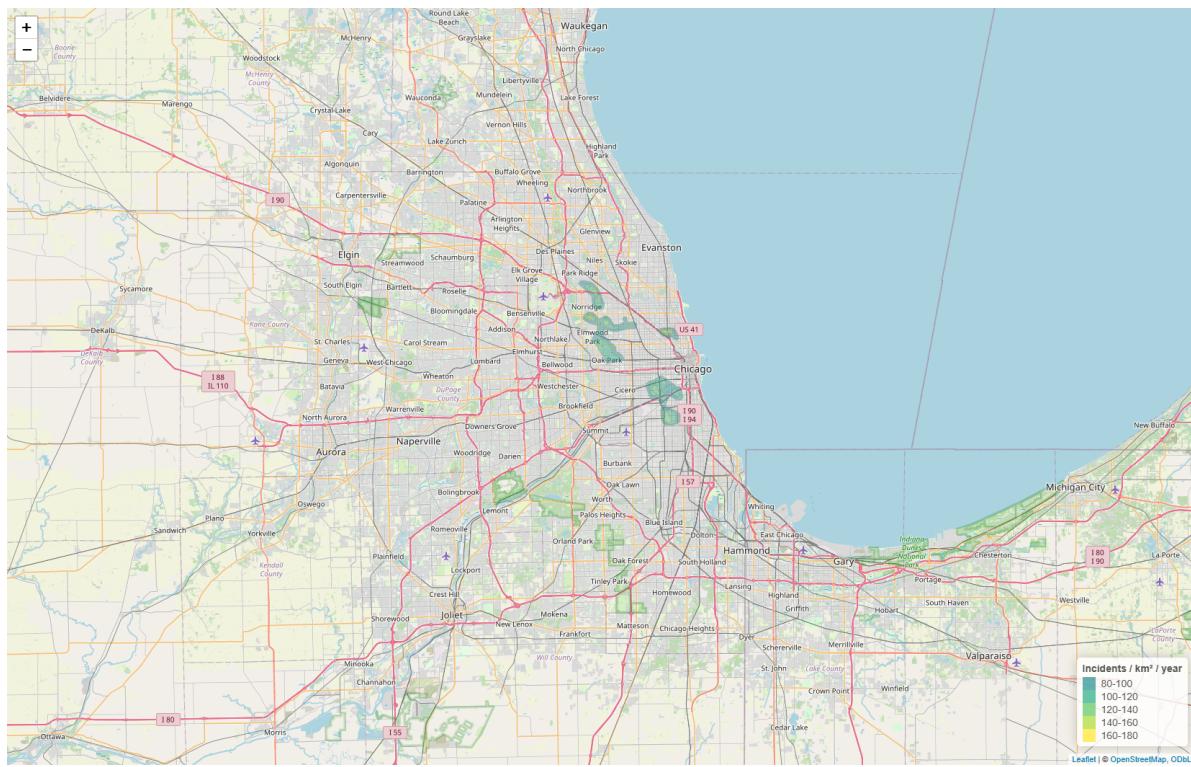


Figure 4: Chicago assault hot spots

4 Visualizing changes in hotspots over time

Let's create hotspot maps with just motor vehicle theft, and let's make a map for each year between 2018 and 2024. Take a look at the Date column in our initial dataset.

```
dbGetQuery(con, "SELECT Date
                  FROM crime
                  LIMIT 5")
```

	Date
1	07/29/2022 03:39:00 AM
2	01/03/2023 04:44:00 PM
3	08/10/2020 09:45:00 AM
4	08/26/2017 10:00:00 AM
5	09/06/2023 05:00:00 PM

We want only the year part of these dates. The year starts with the 7th character and has a length of 4 characters. So to extract just the year we can use the built-in SQL function SUBSTR().

```
dataCarTheft <- dbGetQuery(con, "
  SELECT Latitude,
         Longitude,
         SUBSTR(Date,7,4) AS year
  FROM crime
  WHERE PrimaryType='MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT' AND
        Latitude IS NOT NULL AND
        Longitude IS NOT NULL AND
        year >= 2018 AND year <= 2024")
dataCarTheft |> head()
```

	Latitude	Longitude	year
1	41.76935	-87.61501	2022
2	41.80890	-87.61814	2023
3	41.76170	-87.71864	2023
4	41.90969	-87.79601	2023
5	41.76342	-87.70524	2023
6	41.98896	-87.78277	2023

Now that we have the car theft data pulled out of our SQL database, convert to a spatial data frame with `st_as_sf()` and make a color palette for the range of car theft rates.

```
dataCarTheft <- dataCarTheft |>
  st_as_sf(coords = c("Longitude", "Latitude"),
            crs = 4326, # lat/long coordinate system
            remove = FALSE) |>
  st_transform(crs = 26916)

breaks <- seq(0, 140, by=20)

pal <- colorBin("viridis",
                 domain = (breaks[-length(breaks)]+breaks[-1])/2,
                 bins = breaks,
                 pretty = FALSE)
```

We then loop through the years 2018 to 2024, subsetting the data to one of those years at a time, and generate a hotspot map.

```

maps <- lapply(2018:2024,
function(year0)
{
  message(paste("Mapping", year0))

  xy <- dataCarTheft |>
    filter(year == year0) |> # for just one year
    st_coordinates() |>
    data.frame()

  h <- c(bandwidth.nrd(xy$X), bandwidth.nrd(xy$Y))
  kdeCarTheft <- kde2d(xy$X, xy$Y, n = 200, h = h)

  # no need to divide by year here... only one year of data
  kdeCarTheft$zKM2Year <- kdeCarTheft$z * nrow(xy) * 10^6

  contourCarTheft <-
    isobands(kdeCarTheft$x,
              kdeCarTheft$y,
              kdeCarTheft$zKM2Year,
              levels_low = breaks[-length(breaks)],
              levels_high = breaks[-1]) |>
    iso_to_sfg() |>
    st_sfc(crs = 26916) |>
    st_sf(levels_low = breaks[-length(breaks)],
          levels_high = breaks[-1],
          geometry = _) |>
    st_transform(4326) # back to lat/long

  leaflet() |>
    addTiles() |>
    setView(lng = -87.8, lat = 41.85, zoom = 10) |>
    addPolygons(
      data = contourCarTheft |>
        st_intersection(dataCarTheft |>
          st_geometry() |>
          st_combine() |>
          st_concave_hull(ratio=0.7) |>
          st_buffer(200) |>
          st_transform(crs = 4326)) |>
        filter(levels_low >= 25), # highlight just the hottest spots
      fillColor = ~pal((levels_low + levels_high)/2),
      fillOpacity = 0.4,

```

```

color = "#808080",
weight = 0.5,
opacity = 0.5,
label = ~paste0("Density: ",
                 format(levels_low, scientific=FALSE), "-",
                 format(levels_high, scientific=FALSE)) |>
  lapply(htmltools::HTML),
highlightOptions =
  highlightOptions(weight = 2, bringToFront = TRUE)) |>
addLegend(
  position = "bottomright",
  pal = pal,
  values = (contourCarTheft$levels_low +
             contourCarTheft$levels_high)/2,
  title = paste(year0, "Incidents / km2 / year"),
  opacity = 0.7)
})

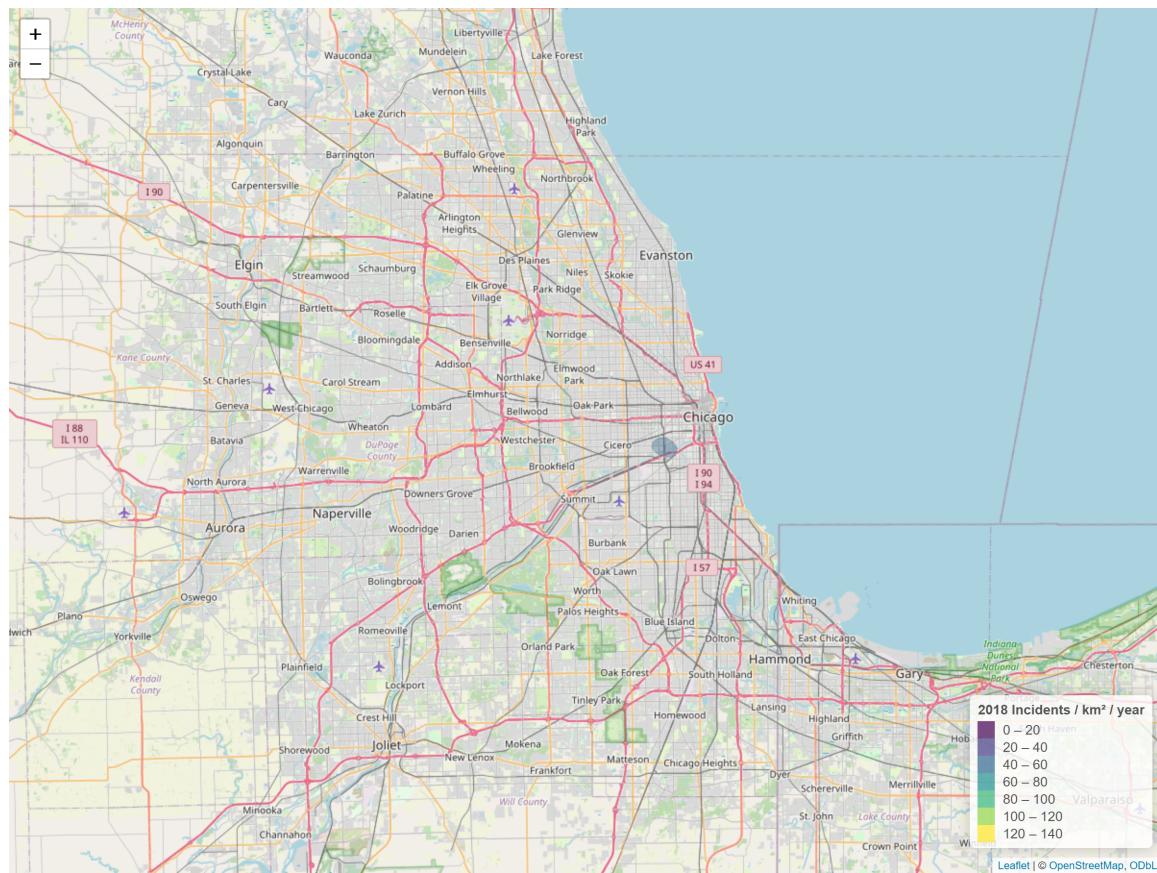
dir.create("figs", showWarnings = FALSE)

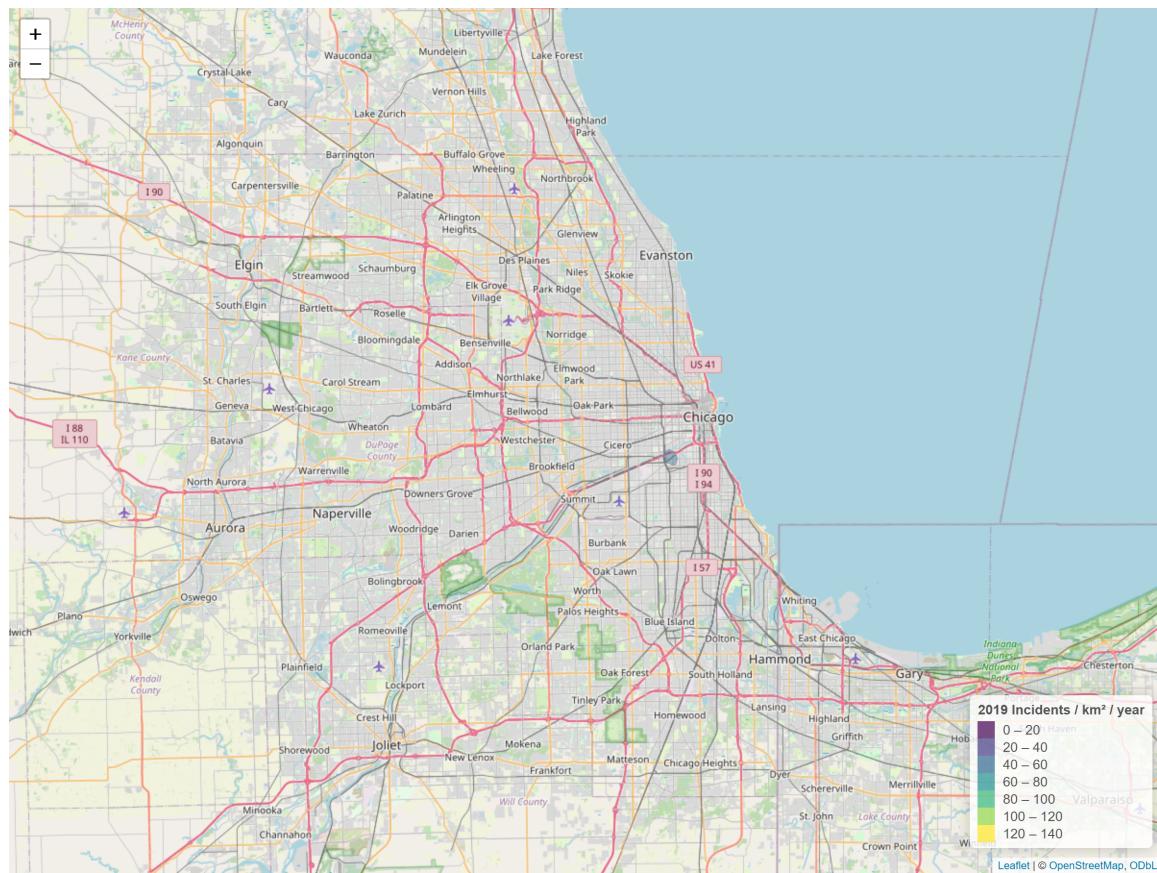
yrs <- 2018:2024
pngs <- character(length(maps))

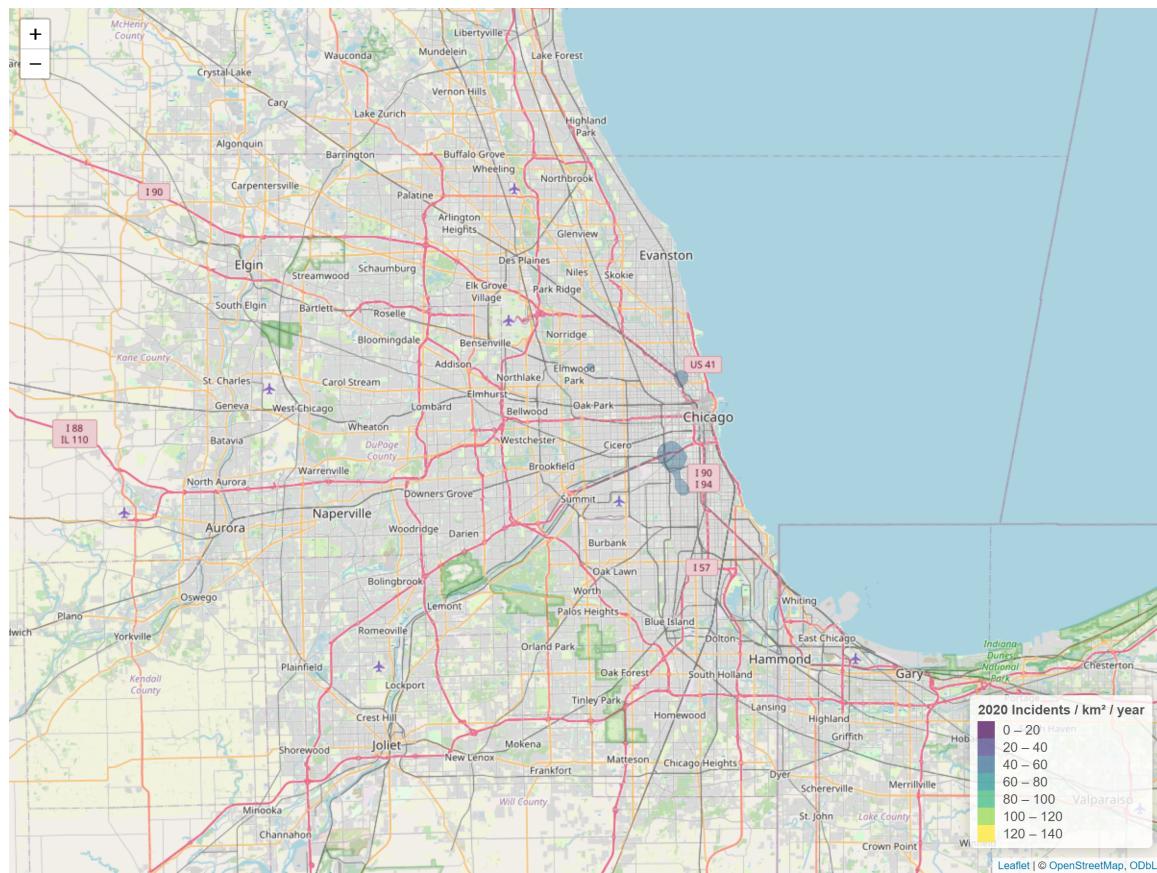
for (i in seq_along(maps)) {
  htmlf <- tempfile(fileext = ".html")
  pngf  <- file.path("figs", paste0("car-theft-",yrs[i],".png"))
  htmlwidgets::saveWidget(maps[[i]], htmlf, selfcontained = TRUE)
  webshot2::webshot(htmlf, pngf, vwidth = 1200, vheight = 900, zoom = 2)
  pngs[i] <- pngf
}

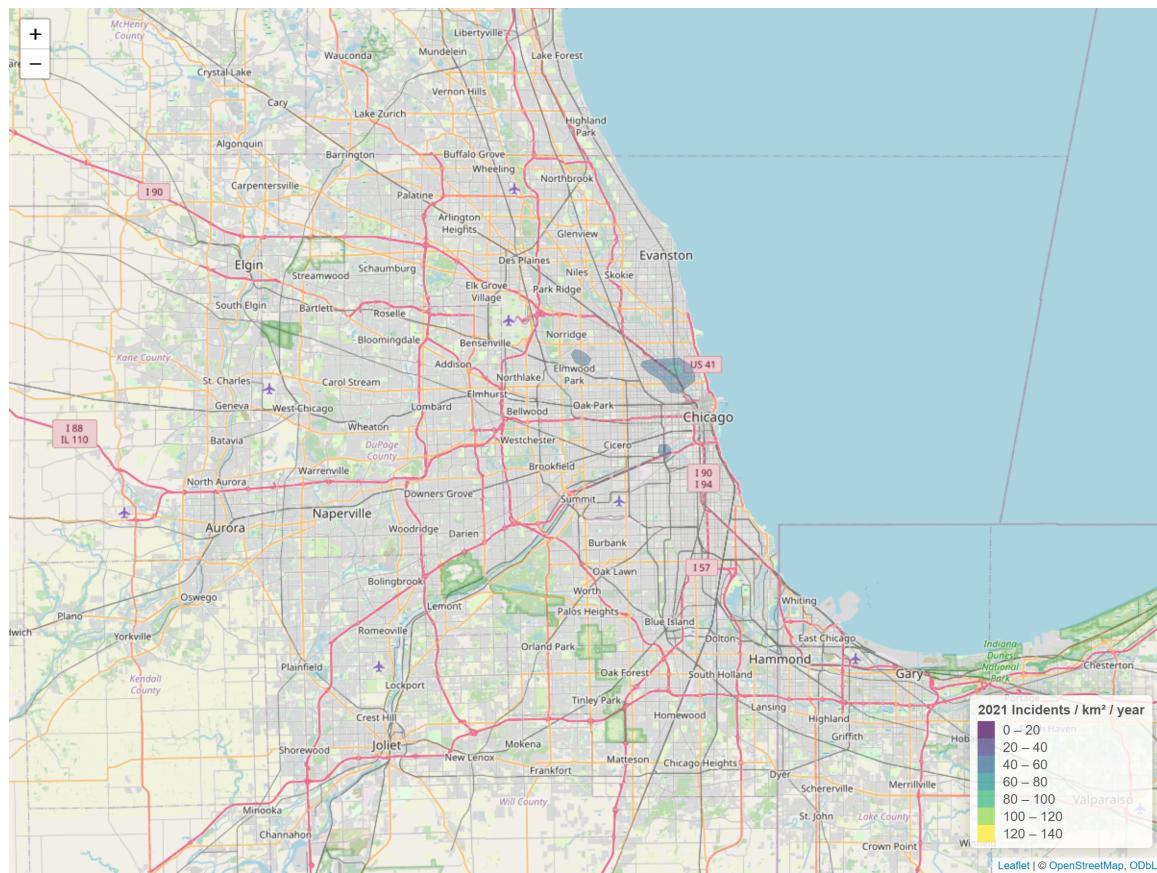
knitr:::include_graphics(pngs)

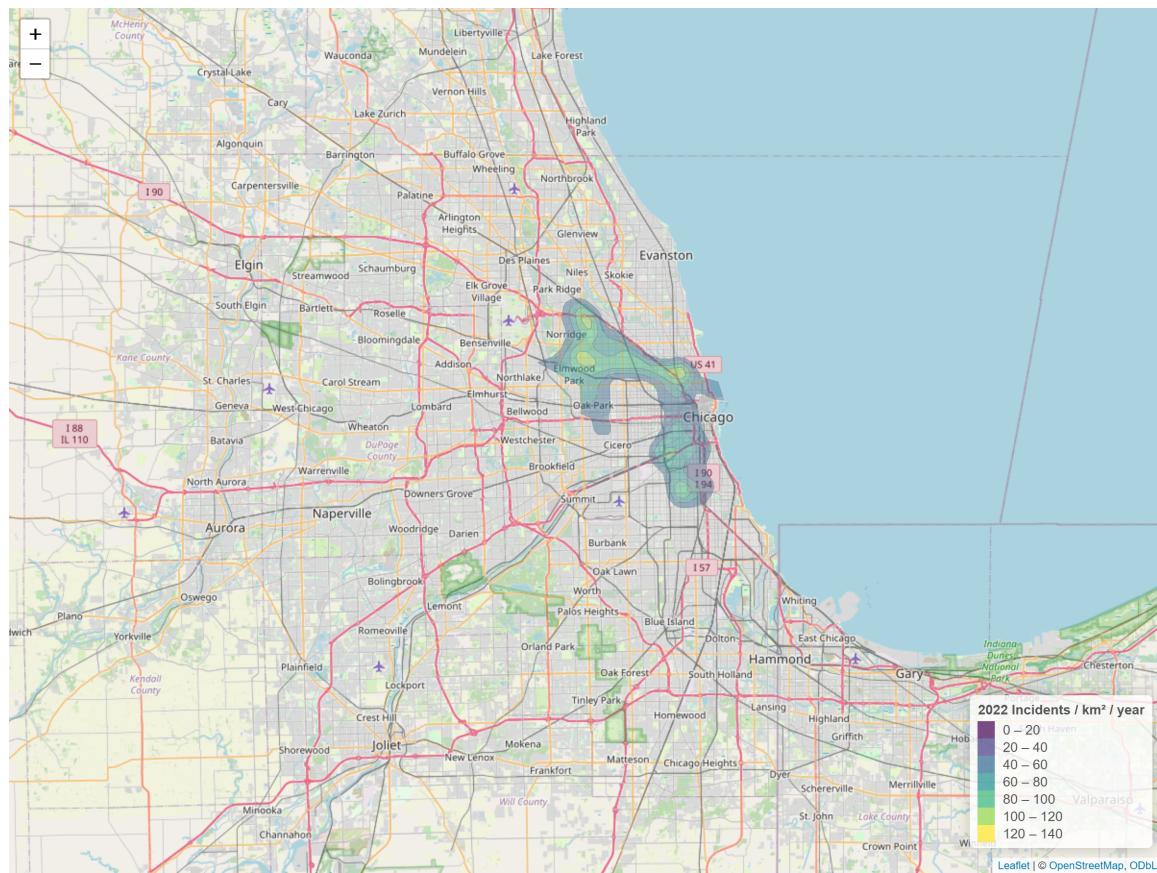
```

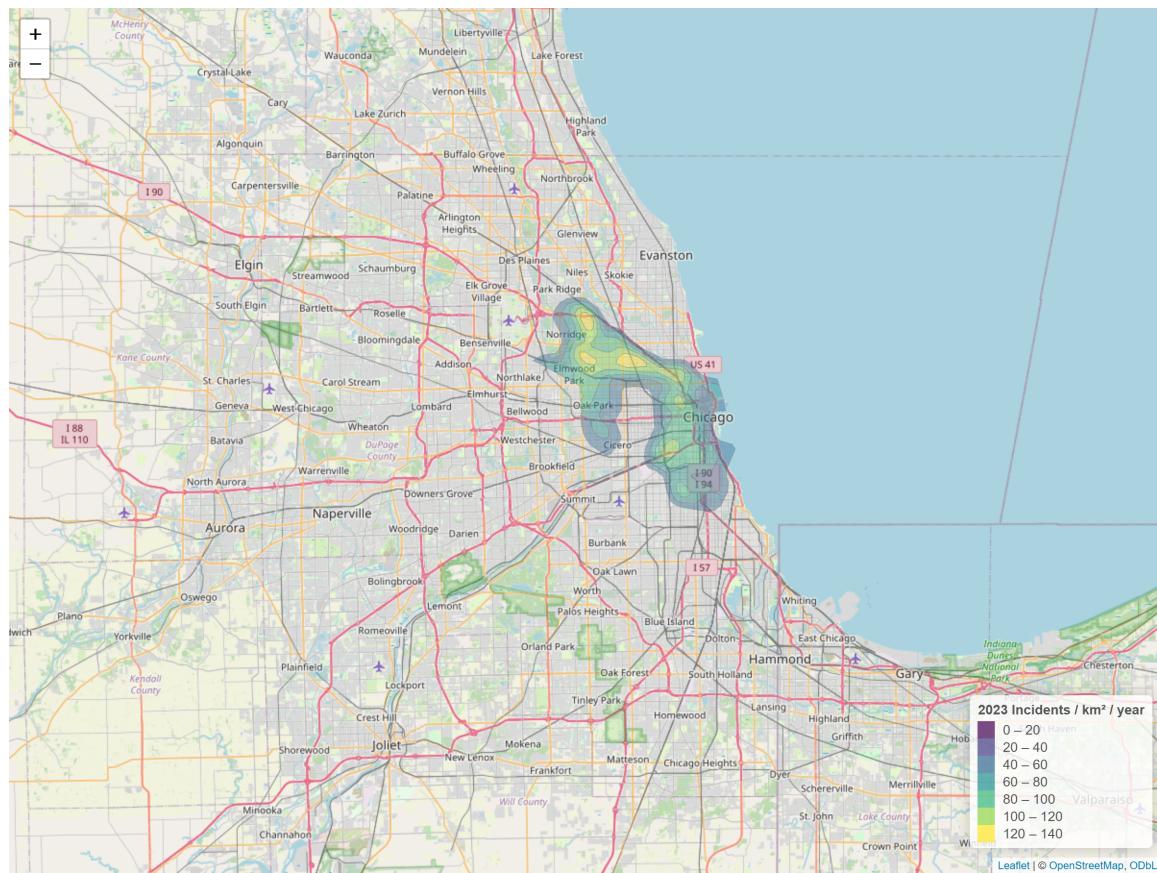


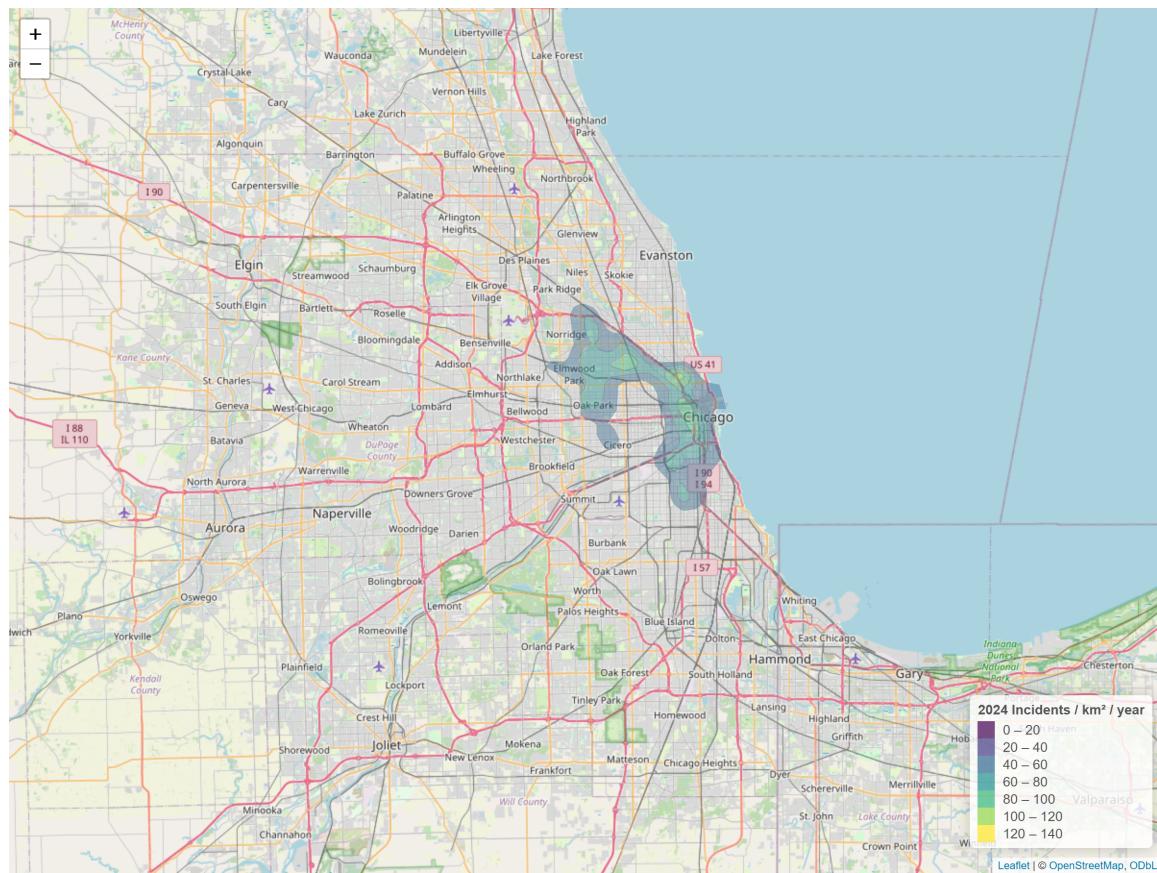






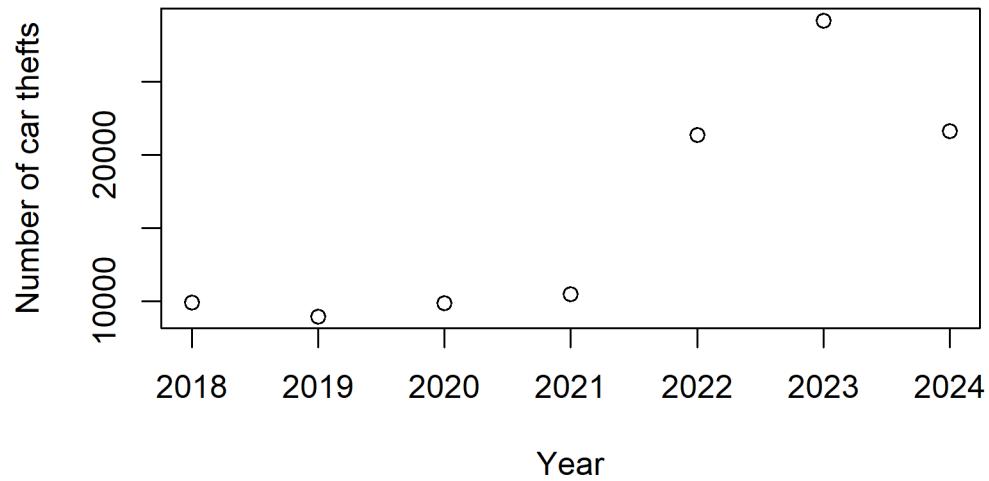






Car thefts spiked in between 2022 and 2024.

```
dataCarTheft |>
  count(year) |>
  plot(n~year, data=_,
       xlab = "Year",
       ylab = "Number of car thefts")
```



That spike was fueled by thefts of Kia and Hyundai vehicles, which lacked passive immobilizer antitheft devices as standard equipment and led to a social media trend describing how to steal Kia and Hyundai vehicles.

Many cities other than Chicago have accessible incident-level data. You can easily modify the code here to make a hotspot map for Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Baltimore, or Washington, DC.