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Mapping Crime Hotspots to Deter Crime

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Mapping Crime Hotspots to Deter Crime

The criminal justice system plays a critical role to ensure there is peace in the country. Normally, the system comprises several agencies and institutions working together to reeducate criminals, prevent crimes, and offer moral support for victims. Thus, law enforcement agencies, correctional facilities, and courts should work together to ensure the goals are achieved. Moreover, the mapping crime hotspot will have a significant role in criminal justice management in helping to prevent crimes from happening as well as ensure proper allocation of resources. Besides, mapping crime hotspots will help manage and control crime in specific areas identified to have crime patterns and trends. This paper will focus on analyzing several literature on mapping crime hotspots to deter crime by examining how it is useful to law enforcement and how it helps reduce crime and improve public safety.

Research Questions

How is crime mapping useful to law enforcement agencies?

How mapping of crimes helps in reducing crime and improving public safety?

Literature Review

Dağlar & Argun (2016) posits that the significant feature of crime is location because when linked with other geographical information and the criminal activity can lead to an easy understanding of the characteristics of the offenders and thus helping to develop better prevention strategies. One of the functions of law enforcement agencies is to detect and prevent crimes from happening. Despite responding, law enforcement agencies are required to detect and prevent crimes; therefore, the location of the crime and the frequency of occurrence plays a significant role in designing prevention strategies. Furthermore, Fitterer et al. (2015) adds that

understanding the environment is critical during the analysis to identify regions with high crime incidences. Moreover, almost everyone in the society can realize regions with a high crime rate; therefore, the main reason for mapping is to distinguish areas that have low crime incidences and those with high crime occurrences. During the analysis, the regions will be assessed based on the features or individuals living in the areas.

According to Helbich & Jokar Arsanjani (2015), crime analysis are developed to recognize the crime patterns, realize solutions, and identify the required resources that will help address the issues. Currently, law enforcement agencies such as the police are inclined by various strategies and techniques, including community policing, crime analysis, and problem-based policing. While the use of a geographic information system is among the criminal analysis tools, problem-based policing objectives are achieved through criminal analysis because it involves realizing crime issues and their solutions to evaluate the results. Nonetheless, Dağlar & Argun (2016) argues that crime analysis comprises recognizing the ¹ patterns and associations between crime data and other relevant information sources to arrange and mark police operations. Also, to realize the crime hotspots, the data utilized in the analysis may involve information from police reports, arrests, and other calls made; thus, through this information, they can derive effective measures and strategies to handle crime activities and maintain order.

Geographic information plays a critical role in law enforcement operations; for that reason, presenting them in a map is crucial. However, geographic crime data is not sufficient to provide correct mappings for analysis; accordingly, there is a need to add more data to help law enforcement and other government agencies. Additionally, geographic information system uses locations such as street names to present their information. However, the information might be represented wrongly due to errors that may arise, such as misspelling street names, omitting the

address altogether, and using wrong abbreviations (Rosser et al., 2017). These errors are very critical in crime hotspots because it will make the criminal justice analysis team analyze the wrong information hence coming up with the right strategies to deter wrong regions. Moreover, the aim of crime analysis will not have been performed well as they aim to identify areas regarded as crime hotspots to work on them and develop essential strategies to counter the crimes and maintain order.

Hart (2020) states that law enforcement officers benefit a lot from the geographic information system because despite providing the crime hotspot areas, the system can provide other additional information, including the number of crime occurrences in the region, mapping features of suspects and victims, crime types and time as well as space. Therefore, the law enforcement team will have the ability to know the time when most criminal activities happen and the type of crime, thus allowing them to determine the best strategy that will prevent such crimes from happening again. Similarly, the system will map the offenses based on the specific, precise space, for instance, a city or a town, and provide the best interpretation of the geographic location as well as the features of victims and suspects of the incidences. Also, since the geographic information system integrates several databases in the same place, law enforcement agencies will benefit from the system because of data integration.

According to Santos (2016), realizing crime hotspots is critical in the criminal justice system because it allows them to identify crime patterns through geographic analysis. Similarly, the designs will reveal where criminals and victims lived hence assisting the law enforcement officers in knowing the regions that entice felons as well as where they are located. Also, Weisburd & McEwen (2015) conducted research focused on the importance of geographic information system and how it helps in preventing crimes. Literature revealed that the criminal

justice officers would be able to visualize data, evaluate an individual's behavior over topographic location as well as spatial trail outlines, and confirm theories.

With the increase in crime hotspot within different areas, crime is prevented because of new strategies to deal with the crime incidences. Moreover, research conducted by Weisburd & McEwen (2016) found out that the crime hotspots enable criminal justice institutions to recognize variations between urban and rural settings. While there are many crime incidences in cities than in rural areas, urban regions may be considered as crime hotspots. Thus, law enforcement focuses on the areas with high crime rates to decrease the incidences. Similarly, it is hard to recognize crime trends in rural regions because they will need to gather as much information as possible and for a long period in order to realize the trends. Nevertheless, based on the data collected, they will find some rural areas lacking crime hotspots, and thus will need to utilize other methods of geographic assessment to realize the regions where crimes occur. Besides, analyze the geographic locations to recognize local crime movements and create explicit prevention techniques.

Eck & Weisburd (2015) researched on crime analysis and realized that crime mapping hotspot would enhance public safety. Every law enforcement agency works in reducing criminal activities hence ensuring the public is safe and secured. Therefore, recognizing and developing a strategic response to the crime hotspot will decrease the incidences in hotspot regions as well as the nearby areas. Also, an assessment of crime hotspot enhances the pieces of evidence that crime solution is needed in specific areas. Furthermore, the strategies to be employed in hotspot areas will be realistic because they are based on the information gathered in the place, hence it will not lead to the displacement of criminals from the region to another area, as they always shift due to pressure instilled to them by the strategies implemented by law enforcement without

careful analysis. Similarly, according to the research conducted by Dağlar & Argun (2016), argues that deriving solutions based on data collected would lead to the formulation of strategies that will reduce criminal activities in a relatively low hotspot area without increasing in other areas. The same source also concludes that utilizing the crime data in various regions allows law enforcement to derive prevention strategies that will not harm other citizens and reduce the crime incidences in the neighboring regions.

While law enforcement officers can predict where certain criminal activities are likely to occur, they can utilize several prevention strategies to ensure public safety is enhanced. For instance, they can partner with other community organizations and help each other prevent such crimes. Community members live in society and understand the better ways of how they can handle certain crimes; however, law enforcement is available to ensure the law is followed and that every individual is safe. Also, understanding the hotspot of the region, public safety can be enhanced by performing public campaigns to raise awareness for all individuals.

In summation, having focused on analyzing several literature on mapping crime hotspots to deter crime by examining how it is useful to law enforcement and how it helps reduce crime and improve public safety, it is clear that criminal justice system requires better ways of oversight and supervision due to the changing ways of how crimes are performed. Technology advancement has made work easy for criminal justice system, and thus law enforcement officials can easily analyze crime rate in different geographic locations. Several pieces of literature have concluded that mapping crime hotspot reduces crime incidences. Hence, law enforcement agencies should use the geographic information system to map the crime hotspot to develop effective strategies to prevent crimes from happening.

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