Trends in Crime Measures: British Columbia, 1999-2013

Paul J. Brantingham  
*Simon Fraser University*

Kathryn Wuschke  
*Portland State University*, wuschke@pdx.edu

Silas Melo  
*Simon Fraser University*

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Paul J. Brantingham; Kathryn Wuschke; Silas Melo
Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies - Simon Fraser University

CRIME MEASURES
Three different measures of crime intensity are available in British Columbia: the Standard Crime Rate (SCR) which measures the number of crimes per 100,000 population; the Crime Severity Index (CSI) which measures the weighted risk to residents of a police jurisdiction; and the Crime Gravity Score (CGS) which measures the seriousness of the set of crimes handled by police in a particular jurisdiction. Figure 1 explores trends in these three measures for British Columbia as a whole during 1999-2013.

British Columbia as a whole exhibits an overall decline in each of the three available crime measures. When continuing to explore these trends at the police jurisdiction level, further variation can be identified in each of these measures.

All three measures show declines over the past decade. British Columbians are safer now than they were in the early 2000's. Police resource implications of the measures are different. The SCR and CSI have both declined by about 45% since their peak in 2003; the CGS has declined much less, about 17% between 1999 and 2013. This difference suggested that the demand for police resources continues to be clustered in northern and remote areas. By analyzing the temporal patterns of crime intensity within British Columbia, a clearer understanding of longer-term patterns emerges. These trends emphasize the overall decline across measures, with less significant reduction in Crime Gravity Scores. When data is analyzed spatially, a distinct urban and remote divide is apparent in maps of the Standard Crime Rate and Crime Severity Index, but this trend is also less prominent when exploring Crime Gravity.

REFERENCES
Calculations by P.J. Brantingham based on Statistics Canada Uniform Crime Reports and Police Resources data sets. For fuller discussion see: P. J Brantingham, ICURS Technical Note 1.1.

Police jurisdiction spatial files have been created based on existing police detachment boundaries linked with municipal boundary files. Some jurisdictional boundary changes occur throughout the timeline under investigation – this created boundary file aims to act as a suitable proxy.

CONTACT
Name:  P.J. Brantingham
University: Simon Fraser University
Email: branting@sfu.ca
Phone: (778) 782-4175