

# TEMPORAL ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTS TO THE POLICE LINE (155) RELATED TO STREET CRIMES IN THE CITY OF DIYARBAKIR

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## Abstract

The prevalence of crime is a major problem in Turkey, and the city of Diyarbakir is among the cities in Turkey where crime rate is very high. Therefore, reporting of crimes to the police is very crucial in finding criminals and reducing crime rate. It is expected that there is a correlation between the time a crime is committed and the time of reporting. The aim of this study is to reveal the temporal distribution of the reports related to some street crimes such as purse-snatching, theft forms in workplaces, and burglary. A descriptive analysis was conducted in order to analyze the temporal distribution of reports of the crimes in 2011 in the city of Diyarbakir. However, it was found that the police take most of the reports on Saturdays. Reporting criminal suspects reaches the peak on Sundays. The least reports on crimes were made between 01.00 a.m. and 04:00 a.m., while most of the report was made between 05:00 and 08:00 in the mornings. The findings were discussed at the end of this article.

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**Keywords:** Public Order, Time of the Crime, Report, Temporal Distribution of the Crime, Theft

## Introduction

The prevalence of crime is a major problem in Turkey. 342,664 crimes were committed in 2003 in Turkey and 322,189 of them (94%) were street crimes (such as theft, armed-robbery, purse-snatching, homicide, pick-pocketing, attempted murder, and fire in residential areas). Theft (81.1%) is the most common type of crime among street crimes in Turkey (Yılmaz & Günayergün, 2004).

Diyarbakir is among most crime cities in Turkey (rank number is 14). According to the data from the Turkish Statistical Institute; 36,319 of the 3,001,735 crimes (1.22%) adjudicated by the courts were committed in the city of Diyarbakir in 2011. Diyarbakir is on the 4. rank in terms of open

cases (Günel, 2011) and 35. rank in terms of safety perception among 81 cities (Zaman Newspaper, 2010).

Understanding the time factor of a crime analysis is crucial for the police. Sometimes, a target may be suitable for an offender and some other times may be not. A purse-snatcher may choose a weak target in the daytime while he has to wait till the dark hours for stronger targets. A burglar can force the door of a house open in the afternoon, however, he has to use silent techniques in the nights (Felson & Clarke, 1998:14-15).

On the other hand, reporting crime is crucial in finding the criminal so as to prevent such crimes. It is expected that there is a correlation between the time of a crime and the time the crime was reported. Although there are some cases which indicate that the police was informed after a long time, researches reveal that the time of the crime and the time of the reporting are very close to each other. Also, the reporting of the crime immediately after the crime occurs facilitates the arrest of a criminal or the description of at least his figure. Of course, it is difficult to suggest that people should always call the police to report a crime; sometimes they may call to ask for some assistance or for other issues. For example, the New Jersey Police Department took 1,198,575 calls between 1996 and 2000; 80.8% of the calls were crime reports and the remaining calls were related to citizen's complaints from the police behavior when reporting a crime and other issues (Weisburd, Wyckoff, Ready, Eck, Hinkle and Gajewski, 2005:71). It is clear that citizens generally call the police to report a crime and those calls are very crucial in solving the crimes and aiding the police in finding the criminals.

The aim of this study is to reveal the temporal distribution of the reports related to some street crimes such as purse-snatching, theft forms at workplaces, and burglary. The knowledge of the temporal distribution of the crimes would be useful to allocate appropriate number of staff and material according to the situation during the day. This study would be useful for the Turkish National Police to reveal the time of some crimes. Furthermore, there is no study of temporal analysis of the crimes in the city of Diyarbakir and this fact makes this study important.

### **The Importance of Reporting to the Police**

Reviewing preventive policing services and if necessary, changing them with the new ones based on reports is a common police practice in the United States (Weisburd & Green, 1995). One of the most important benefits of reporting is the easy determination of hot crime spots and time of the crime.

It is assumed that the police are aware of the areas which are problematic and which ones are clear in terms of crime (Braga, 2008:6).

However, the police would be confident which spots they should focus on and what times they should be more cautious with the assistance of reports. Crime producers (places which attract people such as shopping centers, bus stops, sport activities), crime charmings (reasons such as prostitutes and drug dealers which attract people to some places), and factors that pave the way for the crime (such as the lack of guardian in schools) can be controlled with the assistance of the reports (Clarke & Eck, 2005:46).

In 2011, 932 theft crimes were solved, 1629 suspects were prosecuted related to the theft crime, 341 of the suspects were arrested and sent to jail by the Public Order Police in Diyarbakir. 297 purse-snatching crimes were solved, 457 suspects were prosecuted related to the purse-snatching crime, 171 of the suspects were arrested and sent to jail the same year (DAP Journal, 2011:52-58). Reporting is the most important assistance required by the police to solve the crime and arrest the criminals. It is a known fact that the thieves leave very few evidence and even no evidence in most cases (Briody & Prenzler, 2005). In this situation, reporting becomes more important for the police.

### **The Temporal Distribution of the Crimes**

According to the Routine Activities Theory, three components of the crime should converge at the same time in the same place: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the lack of guardians. People commits crimes based on different motivations such as socio-economic reasons (poverty and necessity) and emotional reasons (revenge and hate). A suitable target may be an expensive jewelry or a kidnapped child for ransom. Guardians are not only biologic bodyguards (parents) and legal protectors (police and gendarmerie) but also some equipment such as closed circuit televisions, dogs and even the existence of a neighbor which discourages criminals to commit crime (Felson & Clarke, 1998:4).

Briefly speaking, the temporal and spatial distribution of the crime is systematic, but not fortuitously. Crime only occurs when the three components converge at the same time and at the same place. As an example, the exposition of some houses in some streets to the burglary cannot be explained by the chance factor. Some of the scholars (Newman, 1972) focused on environmental features such as lightning, the appearance of the city and the residence of the buildings, while the others (Byrne & Sampson, 1986) studied the socio-economic factors of the victims such as annual income, the level of welfare and ethnicity.

The fact that more crimes were committed in some days of the month and some hours of the day comparing to the others, attract attention of the criminologists in 1950's. To the Hawley, one of the most famous of those criminals, humans are creatures who interact with each others in an

ecosystem, and not as independent entities. One of the strongest ties of the ecosystem was time phenomenon and time phenomenon could be explained by three key terms: rhythm, tempo, and timing. Rhythm explains the time period daily routine activities occur in general; tempo expresses how much events occur in a specific time period; and timing clarifies the coordination among the events which is assumed to be independent from each other (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

It can be argued that there is a huge effect of the time of the activities on the problems faced in daily life. As an example, a city's parking problem is highly related to the time of going to work and turning back home. The traffic jam and shopping time are causal effects of auto theft and theft from car crimes. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the armed robbery attacks against drunks are concentrated on closing hours of beerhouses on Fridays and Saturdays. People generally enjoy themselves on Fridays and Saturdays and they turn back to their homes nearly closing hours of beerhouses. There is also a rhythm for schools and mass transportation. While it is easy to detect and analyze the exact time of some crimes by offender on victim such as assault, rape, and injure crimes; it is difficult for some crimes whose effects can be determined lately such as auto theft, burglary, and pick-pocketing (Clarke & Eck, 2005:62).

Seasonal variation is the first thing to consider while analyzing the relationship between crime and time. Seasonal variation is related to whether there is a change in crimes by months (or seasons) and the analysts focus on the crime fluctuations and its possible reasons such as temperature, the length of the days, vacations, and social activities. If an analyst find that some crimes increase or decrease in some months (or some seasons), he can conclude that seasonal variation has an effect on crimes. It was recorded in the state of Victoria (Australia) between 1996 and 2001 that assault crimes are over 1,800 cases in warm months (January, February, and March) and are under 1,700 cases in cold months (April, August, and September). Motor car theft crimes occur at the average of over 7% in warm months and 4% lower of the average in cold months. Drug consumer crimes drops to 21% in January compared to December, and 15% in August compared to July statistics. It was argued that there is a correlation between temperature and assault and motor car theft crimes since there are more people on the streets on warm days. The change of the drug consumer crimes was considered to be related with open or close days of the schools (Parliament of Victoria Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee, 2002:35-38).

The crime variation day by day is an attractive topic for criminologists since 1940's. The suggestion of Kvaraceus (1945) that juveniles commit more crimes in week days compared to weekends was supported by later studies (Sickmund, Snyder and Yamagata, 1997; Snyder

and Sickmund, 1999). For example, it is a known fact that burglaries generally occur in weekdays (Prenzler, 2009:13).

Consequently, the hour of crime is also an important part of the crime analysis. Most of the robberies (8.62%) in Albany, New York occurs between 20:00 p.m. and 21:00 p.m. while the least ones (.25%) occurs between 07:00 a.m. and 08:00 a.m. (Felson & Poulsen, 2003). However, in Bursa, Turkey, most theft crimes (pick-pocketing, swindle, auto theft, purse-snatching, and theft from workplace) (15.3%) occurs between 02:00 a.m. and 02:59 a.m. while the least ones (.3%) occurs in 06:00 a.m. and 06:59 a.m. as shown in Table 1 (Bursa Police Department, 2010).

*Table.1. Time of the Theft Crimes in the City of Bursa in 2002-2003*

<b>Time of the Crime</b>	<b>The Number of Crime</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>00:00-00:59</b>	20	2%
<b>01:00-01:59</b>	72	7.2%
<b>02:00-02:59</b>	153	15.3%
<b>03:00-03:59</b>	112	11.2%
<b>04:00-04:59</b>	84	8.4%
<b>05:00-05:59</b>	63	6.3%
<b>06:00-06:59</b>	3	0.3%
<b>07:00-07:59</b>	15	1.5%
<b>08:00-08:59</b>	9	0.9%
<b>09:00-09:59</b>	14	1.4%
<b>10:00-10:59</b>	10	1%
<b>11:00-11:59</b>	16	1.6%
<b>12:00-12:59</b>	24	2.4%
<b>13:00-13:59</b>	15	1.5%
<b>14:00-14:59</b>	24	2.4%
<b>15:00-15:59</b>	46	4.6%
<b>16:00-16:59</b>	55	5.5%
<b>17:00-17:59</b>	27	2.7%
<b>18:00-18:59</b>	43	4.3%
<b>19:00-19:59</b>	44	4.4%
<b>20:00-20:59</b>	36	3.6%
<b>21:00-21:59</b>	14	1.4%
<b>22:00-22:59</b>	43	4.3%
<b>23:00-23:59</b>	64	6.4%
<b>Total</b>	1000	100%

Source: Bursa Police Department, 2010

Furthermore, an important point that should be taken into consideration is that in different countries and cultures, a crime can be committed at different times. For example, burglary is a crime committed in day times in the United States. According to the FBI records in 2010, 65% of the burglaries were committed in day times and the remaining (35%) were at night (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010). In the city of Bursa, Turkey, 36.7% of burglaries were committed in day time and the remaining (63.3%)

were at night (Donmez, 2011:66). The main reason for the differences in time of the burglary crime between United States and Turkey is that 40% of the American women (Rengert and Wasilchick, 2000:41) and 25% of Turkish women (Turk-Is Report, 2005:7) work far from their homes. However, if both spouses work outside and there is no one at home in day time, this situation gives an opportunity for burglars. However, but if the woman does not have a job and she is always at home, the best time for burglars to work is at night since people sleeps at those times and houses are defenseless (Donmez, 2011:98).

### The Temporal Distribution of the Reports

Citizen reports vary season by season, month by month, day by day and hour by hour like crimes. In Merseyside region of Liverpool, it was recorded that the number of reports for burglaries reached 772 in cold months (February and March) and decrease to 39% and become 473 on average in warm months (July and August) (Farrel and Pease, 1994).

Citizen reports vary day by day also. For example, 192,690 people live in the city Greenville, North Caroline (United States Census Bureau, 2011), and the average reports are 325 in this city. In order to analyze the daily variation of the reports in Greenville, it is appropriate to investigate four-week calls between 18 February 2013 and 17 March 2013. It is quite clear that most of the crime reports are made on Fridays and the least number of crime reports are made on Sundays (See Table 2) and there is a 5.9% gap between them (Greenville Police Department, 2013).

*Table.2. Report Days in Greenville, North Caroline*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Week 1</b>	268	237	245	272	236	231	224
<b>Week 2</b>	203	174	291	298	356	296	207
<b>Week 3</b>	238	286	265	249	320	230	174
<b>Week 4</b>	223	191	226	314	344	277	229
<b>Total</b>	932	888	1027	1133	1256	1034	834
<b>Percentage</b>	13.1%	12.5%	14.4%	15.9%	17.6%	14.5%	11.7%

Source: Greenville Police Department, 2013

The reporting hours of the selected three days (the 28th days of the December, January, and February) in the City of Greenville are shown in the table below (Table 3):

*Table.3. Reporting Hours of Days in Greenville, North Caroline*

Reporting Hours	December 28	January 28	February 28	Average
00:00-00:59	11	7	13	10.3
01:00-01:59	4	3	12	6.3
02:00-02:59	16	6	7	9.6
03:00-03:59	2	0	5	2.3
04:00-04:59	7	3	3	4.3
05:00-05:59	0	2	5	2.3
06:00-06:59	5	3	8	5.3
07:00-07:59	7	2	6	5
08:00-08:59	16	13	16	15
09:00-09:59	25	13	34	24
10:00-10:59	31	28	19	26
11:00-11:59	22	18	30	23.3
12:00-12:59	10	26	25	23.6
13:00-13:59	17	19	17	17.6
14:00-14:59	36	14	19	23
15:00-15:59	15	13	17	15
16:00-16:59	17	18	24	19.6
17:00-17:59	20	13	24	19
18:00-18:59	14	12	17	14.3
19:00-19:59	19	7	16	14
20:00-20:59	12	13	10	11.6
21:00-21:59	13	2	9	8
22:00-22:59	28	11	9	16
23:00-23:59	16	9	11	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>324.6</b>

Reference: Greenville Police Department, 2013

Most of the citizen's reports were taken between 10:00 a.m. and 10:59 a.m. in the morning and the least ones were between 03:00 a.m. and 03:59 a.m. and 05:00 a.m. and 05:59 a.m. in Greenville.

### **The Daily and Hourly Distribution of Reports Related to Burglary, Theft from Workplace, Theft from Auto, and Purse-Snatching in the City of Diyarbakir**

It would be appropriate to conduct a descriptive analysis to reveal the temporal distribution of reports. Data used for analyzing the temporal distribution of reports of theft crimes consist of citizen's calls to police phone line (155) in 2011. Those calls were categorized according to their subjects and they were recorded in data files. Data columns were labeled as "the number of reports, call time, call hour, content of report, type of crime, and department referred". The police officers who answer the phone took

short notes about the content of the report. Type of crime was also labeled by the officer and he refers the crime to the related department immediately. Two examples of the records were shown in the following table (Table.4.):

*Table.4.The Recording Frame of the Citizen Calls for Services in Diyarbakir*

The number of Report	Call Time	Call Hour	Content of Report	Type of Crime	Department Referred
2963	14 January 2011	23:59:29	A glazier was burglaried in Peyas Neighborhood 342. Street Galip Civan Apartments	Theft from workplace	Public Order Unit
2972	15 January 2011	01:30:37	Picket Fences Belong to Mazlum Store were stolen. It is Behind the Kurt İsmail Pasa Elementary School	Theft	Public Order Unit

Source: Diyarbakir Police Department, 2011

There were 10,645 citizens who reports to police line (155) in Diyarbakir related to public order in 2011 and only 9,960 of them were eligible to be analyzed in this study.

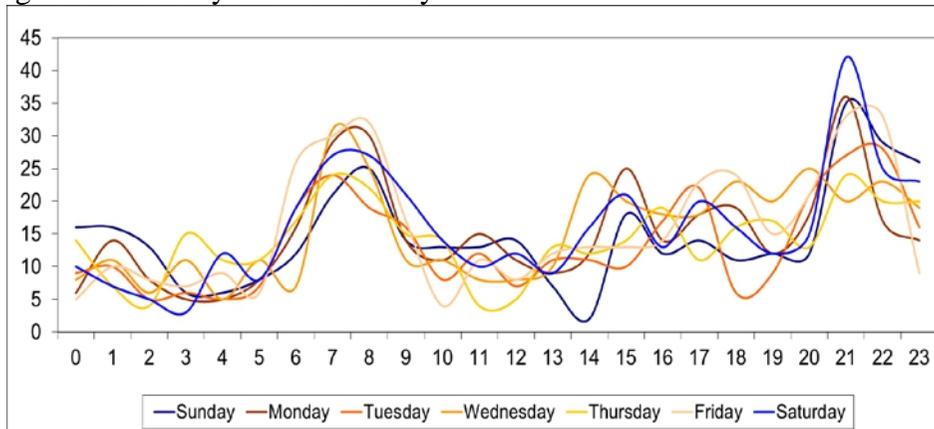


Figure.1. The Distribution of Citizen Reports to Police Line (155) Related to Public Order Crimes by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

In Figure 1, the numbers on the horizontal axis represents hours of the day and the numbers on the vertical axis represents the numbers of the reports. Days are symbolized with different colours. According to Figure 1, the least reports were taken on Saturdays at approximately 14:30 p.m.; the most reports were taken on Saturdays at approximately 22.00 p.m. related to public order crimes in Diyarbakir. Therefore, it is remarkable that the numbers of reports are relatively high on 08:00 a.m. every morning. The highest level of the reports is 22:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and

Mondays; and the lowest level is taken between 03:00 a.m. and 04:00 a.m. every day. The report levels are very close to each others at 13:00 p.m. on every day.

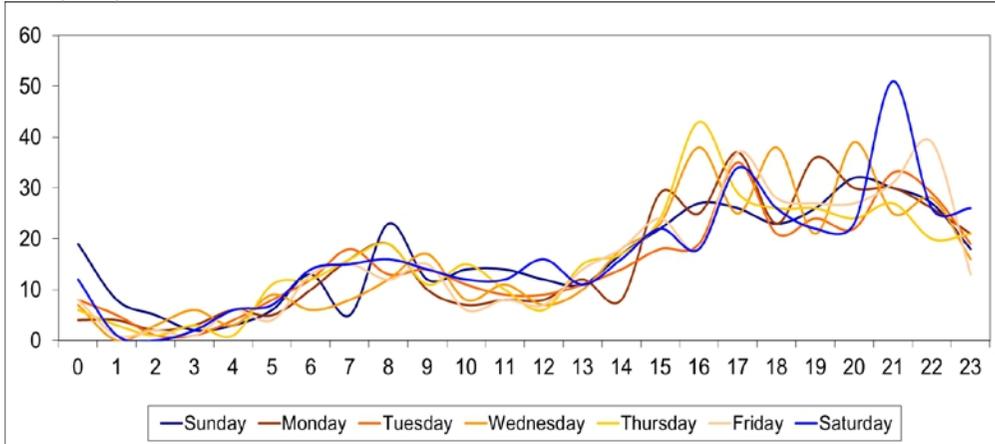


Figure.2. The Distribution of Citizen reports to Police Line (155) Related to Burglary by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

Figure 2 indicates that burglary reports are on the top level on Saturdays and on the bottom level on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The reports are very low between 01:30 a.m. and 04:00 a.m. for everyday (even close to zero); thus, they are: gradually increasing between 04:00 a.m. and 07:00 a.m., very close to each other between 07:00 a.m. and 14:00 p.m., gradually increasing again between 14:00 p.m. and 22:00 p.m., and decreasing sharply after 22:00 p.m.

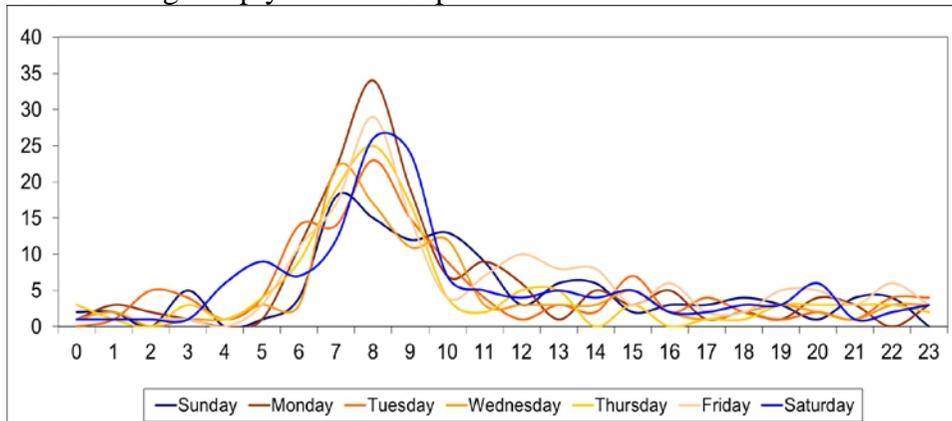


Figure.3. The Distribution of Citizen reports to Police Line (155) Related to Theft From Workplace by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

Citizen reports are on the highest level on Mondays and on the lowest level on Sundays. Reports begin to increase after 06:00 a.m. and keep on

increasing until 12:00 p.m., and reports are on the highest level between 08:00 a.m. and 09:00 a.m., as shown in Figure 3.

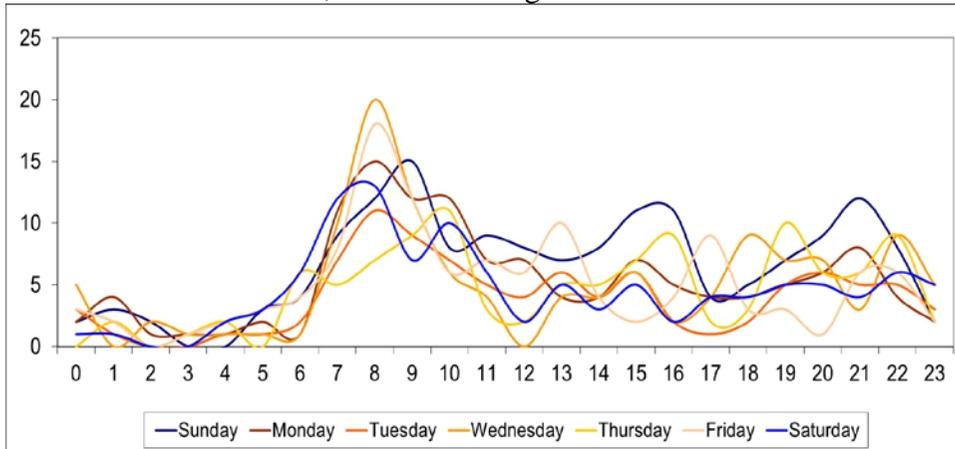


Figure.4. The Distribution of Citizen reports to Police Line (155) Related to Theft From Auto by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

Reports related to the theft from auto are on the maximum level on Tuesdays and on the minimum level on Wednesdays. The reports increases from 06:00 a.m. to 08:00 a.m. and decreases between 08:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. They are wavy but are decreasing between 12:00 p.m. and 23:00 p.m., according to Figure 4.

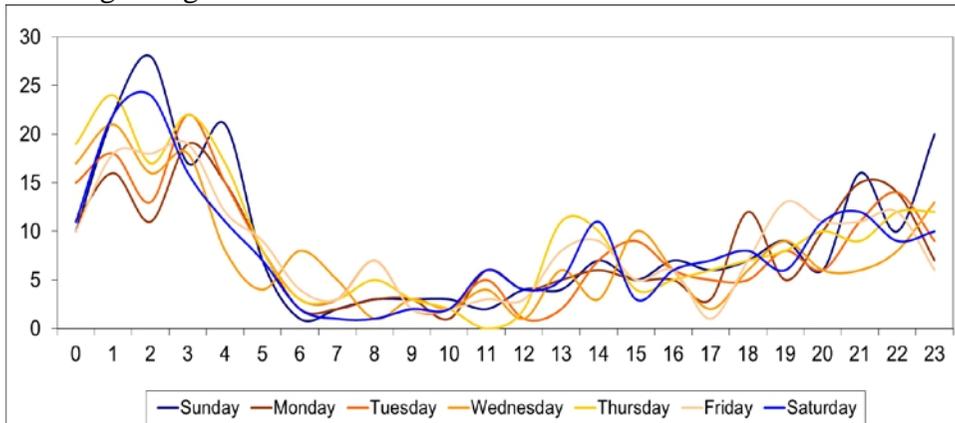


Figure.5. The Distribution of Citizen reports to Police Line (155) Related to Thief Suspects by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

Reports related to thief suspects are on the maximum level on Sundays and on the minimum level on Mondays. However, these kinds of reports sharply increase between 20:00 p.m. and 03:00 a.m. and sharply decrease between 03:00 a.m. and 07:00 a.m. The reports gradually increase between 07:00 a.m. and 20:00 p.m. every day, according to Figure 5.

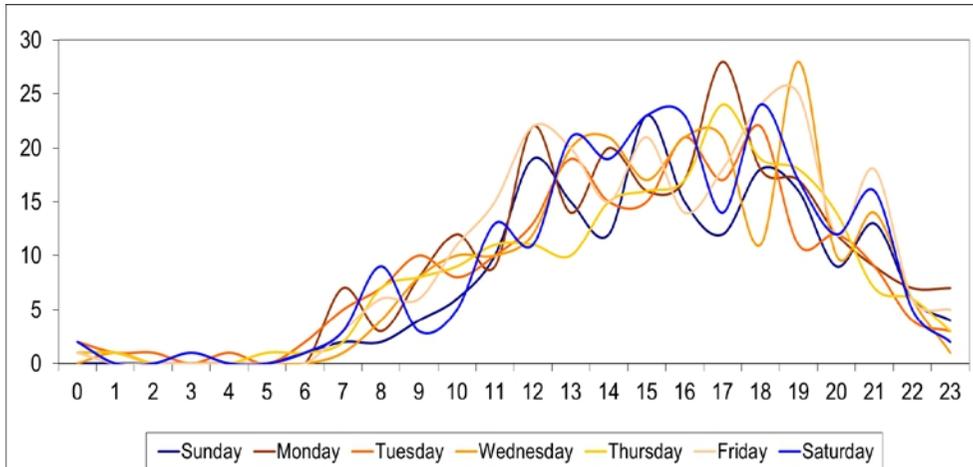


Figure.6. The Distribution of Citizen reports to Police Line (155) Related to Purse-Snatching by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

Reports related to purse-snatching are on the top on Mondays and Tuesdays, and on the bottom level on Sundays. The reports generally begin at 07:00 a.m. and gradually increase until 16:00 p.m. After that time, they decrease gradually and there is almost no report between 01:00 a.m. and 06:00 a.m., according to Figure 6.

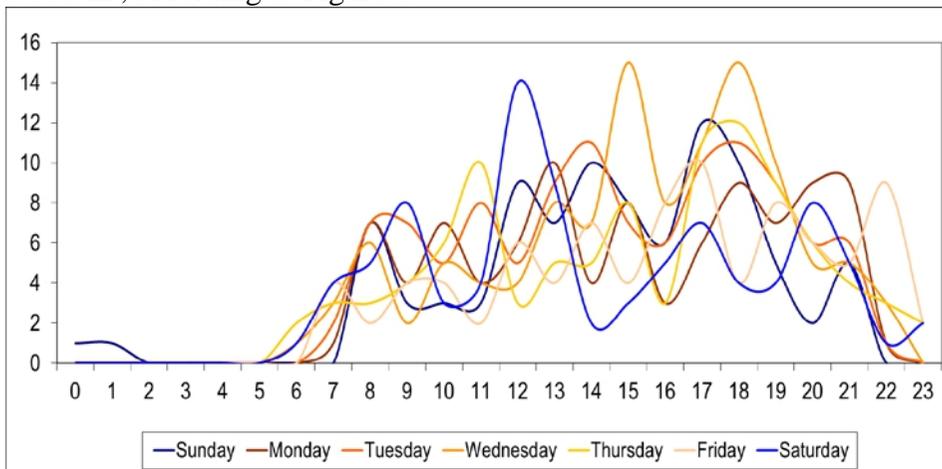


Figure.7. The Distribution of Citizen reports to Police Line (155) Related to Purse-Snatching Suspects by Days of the Week and by Hours of the Day

Reports related to purse-snatching suspects are on the maximum level on Saturdays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays and on the minimum level on Sundays. There is no reporting between 02:00 a.m. and 06:00 a.m., and after 06:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., the reports gradually increase. The reports are wavy between 12:00 p.m. and 22:00 p.m. but generally, they are relatively high compared to the other times of the days, according to Figure 7.

## **Results and Discussion**

The increase and decrease of the crimes and crime reports in certain days can be explained by the Routine Activity Theory. Offenders generally monitor people when they sleep, go out for fun, take a rest and work, and they choose best time to commit a crime in Diyarbakir, as this is the same in the rest of the world. They take into consideration whether there is a guardian or not around their target.

The fact that most of the crime reports are made on Saturdays is an expected result. People go for shopping and for a ride on the weekends and their houses become unattended which is attractive to offenders. The main reason for the increase of the citizen's reports may be related to yelling of the drunken young people during weekends. The main reason the citizen's reports are on the top level on Mondays is that storekeepers generally do not work on at weekends. Their workplaces remain vulnerable at weekends and later become aware on the first day of the week, Monday that their goods have been stolen. In spite of the fact that storekeepers generally do not work on the weekends, very few people around the workplaces report thief suspects since they are not familiar with them. This fact explains why the reports related to thief suspects are so high on Sundays. Therefore, there is no meaningful difference among the reports by days about theft from auto and purse-snatching suspects.

That all crime reports except for thief suspects are on the minimum level between 01:00 a.m. and 04:00 a.m. can be explained by noticing the victimization very late because of sleeping. Reports related to thief suspects are very high at night between 01:00 a.m. and 05:00 a.m. That crime reports related to burglary and theft from auto are on the highest level in the morning between 05:00 and 08:00 can be explained by the awareness of the stolen goods at those times at first.

Crime is a universal fact and it is a problem for every society. Are there solutions or preventive measures against theft by using citizen's reports?

In 1970's and 1980's, the essentials of preventive policing were assumed which include arriving at the crime scene as soon as possible after receiving citizen report and increasing the number of patrols as much as possible. So, police organizations measured their performance by reducing their time of arrival to the crime scene (Weisburd and Eck, 2004). However, some scholars think that arriving at the crime scene right after receiving citizen report and beginning the investigation have limited effect on preventing the crime (Kelling, Pate, Dieckman and Brown, 1974; Spelman and Brown, 1981). According to those scholars, the assumption of reduced crime through the abundance of the citizen reports is based on the fact that if the police arrive at the crime scene as soon as possible, they can catch the

offenders and so it discourages people to commit a crime close to that area. However, it is a known fact that 75% of the offenders are caught long after the crime has been committed and there is always enough time to run away from the police after committing a crime (Weisburd and Eck, 2004).

It was argued that citizen reports may help to apply “hot spot policing” tactics. The scholars indicated that hot spot policing is a successful tactic used by police organizations to decrease crime rates within a short time period (Weisburd and Eck, 2004). Hot spot policing tactic is used by more than 70% of the local police organizations whose personnel number is more than 100 in the United States (Weisburd et al., cited from Braga, 2008:6).

Of course, hot spot policing have disadvantages like other police tactics. For example, hot spot policing does not eradicate crimes, instead, it shifts crimes to another spots and times. However, with the hot spot policing, theft rate may seem to decrease at the beginning, however, it only transforms to another crime such as burglary or robbery. Hot spot policing focused on the night thefts may discourage thieves to steal in the nights, but they prefer to go on stealing during the daytime. Drug dealers may sell their products online and they earn easier money in a shorter time (Clarke & Eck, 2005:38). Despite all disadvantages and defects, it can be argued that hot spot policing is the best based on citizen’s reports. Thus, in order to increase citizen’s reports, police should develop public-community relations to a reasonable level.

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