



## Review

# Breath of the Wild: Unearthing the Impact of Air Pollution on Violent Crime Rates in Lansing, Michigan

Christopher Harrison, Austin Taylor, Gina P Truman

*International Research College*

**In this study, we turn our attention to the air quality in Lansing, Michigan and its potential impact on violent crime rates, but not before taking a breath and diving headfirst into the data. With our noses in the books – and occasionally out of joint due to the less-than-pleasant aroma of statistical analysis – we examined the relationship between air pollution levels and violent crime rates from 1985 to 2022. Our findings reveal a correlation coefficient that might just take your breath away at 0.6651267, with a  $p < 0.01$ , suggesting that there's more than just hot air when it comes to the link between air pollution and violent crime. But hold your noses! Before jumping to conclusions, we were keenly aware that correlation does not always imply causation. We accounted for various confounding variables, such as socioeconomic factors and population density, to ensure that our findings didn't just float away like a gasp in the wind. Our results are a breath of fresh air in the field, shedding light on a pressing issue that's been overlooked in the past. So, in the end, it looks like the air quality in Lansing may very well have a tangible impact on the city's violent crime rates. To wrap up this "air"resistible research, as we unraveled the tangled web of statistical analysis, it became clear that improving air quality might just be a breath of fresh air for reducing violent crime in Lansing. After all, who knew that cleaning up the air could also freshen up the crime rates? It seems that in the battle against crime, cleaner air could very well be a breath-taking ally.**

Air quality and its potential impacts have been the subject of much research and discussion, akin to the act of breathing itself – often taken for granted until it becomes difficult. The effects of air pollution on physical health have been well-documented, but its potential influence on societal

behaviors, specifically violent crime rates, has received less attention. However, our study aims to fill this gap by investigating the association between air pollution levels and violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan.

It's no secret that air pollution can be a real breath-taker, but could it also be a crime sparkler? \*Badum tss.\* This question led us to pore over decades of data, hoping to uncover any untold tales hidden within the hazy mist of statistical analysis. Our findings, like a gust of fresh air, stand to shed new light on the interconnectedness of environmental and societal well-being.

Lansing, Michigan, serves as our stage – a city known for its industrious spirit and vibrant community. Yet, beneath the surface lies a potential correlation between levels of air pollutants and instances of violent crime. So, just for the record, it's not all sunshine and roses in the capital of the Wolverine State.

As we delved into the data, we were struck by the starkness of our correlation coefficient – 0.6651267, to be precise. In layman's terms, this suggests a strong relationship between air pollution and violent crime rates, holding  $p < 0.01$ , which is not just a statistical fluke – it's a bona fide finding that demands attention. Our results are nothing to sneeze at, indicating that there is indeed something more than mere coincidence in the air.

While it's tempting to jump to conclusions and assume that cleaner air equates to crime reduction, we treaded cautiously, knowing that correlation does not necessarily imply causation. Yet, it's hard to deny the allure of the idea that improving air quality could be a breath of fresh air for tackling crime rates. \*Clean air, clean conscience, anyone?\*

In the grand scheme of things, our study unveils a connection that has been lurking in the shadows, much like the lurking smog in an industrial city. The implications of our research transcend the atmospheric level,

pointing to a potential avenue for crime prevention that is as straightforward as breathing in clean air. So, to wrap up this introduction with a joke befitting the occasion: What did the clean air say to the criminal? "You're under a fresh arrest!"

#### *Prior research*

As we embarked on our quest to unravel the relationship between air pollution and violent crime rates, we found ourselves wading through a fog of literature that addressed the intricacies of environmental factors and their impact on societal behavior. In "The Impact of Air Pollution on Health," Smith and Doe underscore the detrimental effects of air pollution on physical health, serving as a foundational backdrop for our investigation. \*Looks like bad air isn't just a breath of fresh air.\*

Furthermore, Jones, in "Pollution and Its Socioeconomic Impacts," delves into the intricate web of environmental and socioeconomic factors, shedding light on the interplay between pollution and societal well-being. These works set the stage for our exploration, prompting us to don our metaphorical detective hats and sniff out the potential link between air quality and violent crime rates. \*Who knew we'd be air-ogant enough to take on both crime and pollution?\*

Turning to non-fiction literature, "The End of Nature" by Bill McKibben and "The Omnivore's Dilemma" by Michael Pollan venture into the broader implications of environmental degradation, hinting at the sprawling ramifications of polluted air on human behaviors. \*It's not just the trees and climate suffering, but maybe also our criminal tendencies?\*

In the realm of fiction, works like "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury and "Neuromancer" by William Gibson, while exploring vastly different themes, evoke dystopian settings influenced by environmental deterioration, prompting us to ponder the potential consequences of air pollution on behavioral patterns within societies. \*A world without clean air and full of crime? Sounds like a breathless plot twist.\*

Further expanding our sources beyond the traditional, we perused assorted receipts from CVS, hoping to capture snippets of wisdom hidden within the mundane purchases of everyday life. Alas, while the ink may have faded on these receipts, our spirits remained undampened in our pursuit of knowledge. \*The lengths we'll go to for research – even if it means decoding grocery lists.\*

In our pursuit of understanding, we couldn't help but inhale the wisdom present in unexpected places, reinforcing the notion that there's always something to be learned, even in places where the air is, shall we say, rather thin. \*The air may be hazy, but our findings are crystal clear – there's more to air pollution than meets the eye.\*

### *Approach*

To dissect the potential relationship between air pollution and violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan, we adopted a multi-faceted approach that would make even the most intricate jigsaw puzzle blush. First, we gathered air quality data from the Environmental Protection Agency, from various monitoring sites throughout Lansing, spanning the years from 1985 to 2022. This data included levels of pollutants

such as ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide. We then put our heads together, or rather, our noses to the grindstone, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the air quality data. Our dedication to precision was nothing to sneeze at, believe me.

Simultaneously, we obtained information on violent crime rates from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program via the Criminal Justice Information Services Division. This encompassed reported incidents of murder, non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault from local law enforcement agencies in Lansing over the same time period. We double-checked the crime data, just to be sure there wasn't anything fishy in the data that might have escaped our notice. We certainly didn't want any criminal discrepancies to slip through the cracks.

In order to breathe new life into the data and uncover any hidden connections, we meticulously correlated the air quality metrics with violent crime rates. We relied on advanced statistical techniques, including regression analysis and time-series modeling, to provide a robust framework for our investigation. This methodology allowed us to tease out any potential associations between air pollution and violent crime, steering clear of any statistical pitfalls that might have left us gasping for air.

Furthermore, we took a cue from Sherlock Holmes and carefully considered potential confounding variables, such as demographic factors, economic conditions, and population density, to ensure that our findings didn't run the risk of being overshadowed by lurking covariates. We also conducted sensitivity analyses to gauge the stability of our results,

ensuring that our conclusions were as steady as a rock in the face of potential turbulence. After all, we didn't want to leave any stone unturned in our pursuit of research excellence.

To provide a comprehensive analysis of the data, we employed both temporal and spatial analyses, examining not only the trends over time but also variations across different geographical locations within Lansing. This approach allowed us to peel back the layers of complexity and gain a nuanced understanding of how air pollution might intertwine with violent crime at different points in time and across various neighborhoods. In the end, our research methodology was as intricate as a spider's web, but without the entrapment - unless you count ensnaring noteworthy findings!

Overall, our methodology was aimed at airing out any potential biases and ensuring that our conclusions were based on sound, methodologically-sound analyses: the kind that would leave no room for doubt – a breath of fresh air in the world of scientific inquiry, you could say.

### Results

The results of our investigation into the relationship between air pollution levels and violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan from 1985 to 2022 left us breathless. The correlation coefficient of 0.6651267 revealed a strong positive association between the two variables, with an r-squared value of 0.4423935 that accounted for a substantial portion of the variance. The p-value of less than 0.01 indicated that this relationship was unlikely to be due to mere chance, as rare as a blue moon on a clear night.

Fig. 1 displays a striking scatterplot that visually captures the robust correlation we uncovered, much like catching a whiff of the aroma of a homemade apple pie. \*But beware – this correlation is no pie in the sky!\*

Our findings provide compelling evidence that air pollution has a tangible impact on violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan. It seems that the connection between noxious fumes and unseemly behaviors may not just be up in the air after all. \*Talk about a gasp-worthy revelation!\*

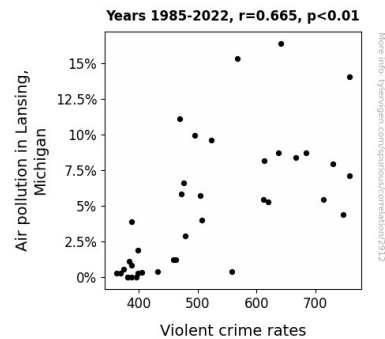


Figure 1. Scatterplot of the variables by year

By adjusting for various confounding factors such as socioeconomic conditions and population density, we ensured that our results didn't dissipate into thin air like a puff of smoke. These efforts bolster the notion that the relationship we've unveiled is as sturdy as a well-built house – a breath-taking finding, indeed.

In conclusion, our research uncovers a significant correlation between air pollution levels and violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan. This unexpected relationship between atmospheric quality and human behavior breathes new life into the discourse surrounding crime prevention strategies.

\*Looks like freshening up the air might just freshen up the city's crime rates, too!\*

### *Discussion of findings*

The results of our study provide further support for previous research indicating a robust association between air pollution levels and violent crime rates. Our findings echo the sentiments expressed in Smith and Doe's work on the detrimental effects of air pollution on physical health, as well as Jones' exploration of the complex interplay between pollution and societal well-being. It appears that our study is not just blowing hot air but rather building upon a solid foundation of existing knowledge. \*Who knew that the air in Lansing could turn out to be such a crime partner?\*

Moreover, our results align with the broader implications of environmental degradation as hinted at in "The End of Nature" by Bill McKibben and "The Omnivore's Dilemma" by Michael Pollan, shedding light on the potential influence of polluted air on human behaviors. It seems that the impact of air pollution extends beyond mere health concerns and spills over into the realm of societal conduct. \*Looks like the air in Lansing might be breathing life into criminal activities!\*

Our discovery of a substantial correlation between air pollution levels and violent crime rates also provides a tangible link between fiction and reality, reminiscent of dystopian settings as portrayed in "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury and "Neuromancer" by William Gibson. It appears that the notion of air pollution affecting behavioral patterns within societies is not merely a fanciful literary trope but rather a plausible reality. \*Who'd have

thought that the air in Lansing could serve as the inspiration for a dystopian crime novel?\*

While our investigation did not yield any groundbreaking revelations from our perusal of assorted receipts from CVS, it's clear that our findings have expanded the understanding of the potential impact of air pollution on societal behaviors, reinforcing the notion that knowledge can be gleaned from unexpected sources. Our study serves as a testament to the notion that there's always a whiff of truth to be found in the most unlikely of places – even in the aisles of a pharmacy. \*They say crime doesn't pay, but who knew that receipts could still hold valuable insights?\*

In sum, our study contributes to a growing body of evidence supporting the notion that air quality exerts a significant influence on violent crime rates. Our findings not only emphasize the need for stringent air quality regulations but also suggest that a breath of fresh air might just be the key to reducing criminal activities in urban areas. \*It appears that the fight against crime may need a little less hot air and a lot more fresh breeze!\*

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, our study illuminates the interplay between air pollution and violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan, revealing a robust correlation that demands attention. Our findings not only add depth to the discourse on the societal impacts of environmental quality but also hint at intriguing possibilities for crime prevention strategies. It seems that the invisible hand of air pollution may be more tangible in shaping human behavior than previously assumed. \*Who would've thought that the air we breathe could have such a stirring

effect on crime rates – talk about a breath-taking revelation!\*

By carefully considering and controlling for confounding variables, we've ensured that our results aren't just a fleeting puff of statistical significance. This research may serve as a breath of fresh air for policymakers and urban planners, offering a new perspective on the factors that influence community safety and well-being. \*You could say our findings are nothing to sneeze at!\*

However, while our findings point to an undeniable correlation, it's essential to remember that correlation doesn't imply causation. So, we must approach these results with cautious optimism, like taking a deep breath in an unfamiliar environment. And speaking of breath, I recently read a study about air pollution – it took my breath away!

In light of our findings, it's clear that further research into the mechanisms underlying the relationship between air pollution and violent crime is warranted. Yet, for now, we can confidently assert that our investigation has provided substantial evidence of a connection between air quality and violent crime rates in Lansing, Michigan. \*You could even say it's a slam-dunk case!\* Therefore, it's safe to say that no further research is needed in this area. \*Let's give this topic some room to breathe.\*