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## Book Review: “Crime Geography”, by Szabolcs Mátyás

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Book Review

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## Book Review: "Crime Geography", by Szabolcs Mátyás

Few researchers in the world deal with the geography of crime. One of them is the Hungarian Szabolcs Mátyás, who considers the popularization of this field of science a matter of his heart. In addition to the textbook presented, he founded two criminal geographical journals, one in English (Criminal Geographical Journal), organized an English-language crime geography competition, and founded the International Criminal Geographical Association. The latest book by the Ludovika University of Public Service associate professor is *Crime Geography*, published in 2024 by the University of Oradea.

Szabolcs Mátyás's work *Crime Geography* is an important step in the series of interdisciplinary research emerging at the intersection of criminal sciences and geography. The book comprehensively examines the spatial relationships of crime and shows in detail how the analysis of crime patterns is related to social and geographical factors. The author offers a unique point of view to those interested in the topic through his extensive scientific and practical experience and innovative approaches.

The book is aimed at professionals, university students, and those interested in criminal sciences. Mátyás aims to introduce the geography of crime, a relatively new scientific field, to the Hungarian and international audience and present its application possibilities in law enforcement, criminology, and urban planning.

Mátyás's book clarifies that the spatial approach to crime is not only of theoretical interest but can also be a practical tool for understanding and preventing crimes. The author emphasizes that spatial analysis can play a key role not only in the discovery of crime patterns but also in the development of crime prevention strategies.

The central idea of the volume is that crime is not only a social phenomenon, but its spatial distribution is also closely related to socio-economic conditions. Mátyás emphasizes that the use of geographic information systems (GIS) has revolutionized crime geography research, as these tools enable accurate on-site identification and analysis of crimes.

An interesting part of the book is the history of crime geography. Mátyás guides the reader through the development of the scientific field, starting with 19th-century French moral statistics, presenting the work of André-Michel Guerry and Adolphe Quetelet. Their research laid the statistical foundations of crime, complemented by map representation.

A significant part of the book is devoted to practical applications. Mátyás highlights that crime mapping and the analysis of hot spots can be extremely important tools for law enforcement agencies. This type of investigation helps to identify the spatial concentration of crimes and predict their possible future locations. This can be particularly useful for the police in allocating resources more efficiently.

The most interesting part of the book is 8.9.1, which displays the Mátyás crime classification system. This system uniquely combines qualitative and quantitative aspects of crime data to provide a comprehensive overview. By employing a classification method inspired by Köppen's meteorological system, the model uses visual and structured categories to enhance clarity and interpretability. Its ability to highlight regional differences in crime trends more effectively than earlier methods is a significant advancement. This dual-focus system improves crime representation and adapts flexibly to various legal and social contexts.

The volume provides many specific examples from different parts of the world, such as research conducted in the United States, India, and Hungary. Analyzing crime data in India, the author highlights the extent to which gender inequalities and social norms influence crime patterns. In Hungary, the author emphasizes the analysis of the spatial characteristics of organized crime, according to which Budapest and the Hungarian-Serbian border regions are particularly affected.

One of the greatest virtues of the book is that it shows that the geography of crime does not only mean crime mapping. The publications published so far - mainly American and English - under the title crime geography dealt almost exclusively with crime mapping. Mátyás showed that the geography of crime is much broader than this. Crime mapping is an integral part of the geography of crime, but the possibility of using the area are much wider and more diverse. He sought and showed connections with many social and natural sciences. With disciplines related to the geography of crime, they can help the investigation. According to Mátyás, crime geography is a "key" in the hands of the investigator. A key that can help get to the perpetrator.

The language of the book is professionally precise (the reviewer was a native Englishman) but also understandable, which is particularly important since the author's goal is to make the geography of crime more widely known. The volume is enriched by the author's own experiences, during which he shares his knowledge as an investigator and researcher.

Another strength of the book is that it demonstrates the applicability of crime geography through international and domestic examples. In addition to the research results, Mátyás proposes innovative solutions that can form the basis of crime prevention strategies.

The book *Crime Geography* by Szabolcs Mátyás is a pioneering work at the intersection of criminal sciences and geography. The volume offers theoretical foundations and practical guidance while providing insight into the historical and international context of the geography of crime. The author successfully demonstrates how important the spatial analysis of crime can be in understanding crime patterns and improving public safety.

The book is an ideal reading for anyone interested in social sciences, criminology, or geospatial informatics. Mátyás's work is a significant contribution to the field of science and is essential reading for both domestic and international crime specialists.