

Where is crime nowadays?

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The significance of regional aspects of criminality was already recognised in the early examinations of crime statistics. Also at the beginning of the 20th century the statistic data collection covered the place of commitment and after 1909 it recorded also the criminal's place of birth. János Bud called these data and the indicators calculated on the basis thereof criminal geography and emphasized their importance in searching the reasons for crime.

The statistical process of these data restricted to the classification by counties and besides it the classification according to the type of the place of commitment was also considered (Budapest, towns, villages). This system of data collection was in use until the World War II.

After World War II until the 60's the criminal statistics were secret. Afterwards and still today the judicial statistics process the data by counties. The classification according to the type of place of commitment has terminated because due to the lots of changes in public administration the data became incomparable. Year 1964 brought a new event in criminal statistics, ERÜBS (United Statistics of the Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office database) was introduced that year. The system observed the committed crimes including the place of commitment and the criminals with their domiciles. Although the collected data would have ensured more varied possibilities for processing, ERÜBS made classifications only according to counties until lately also with regards to the place of commitment and the domicile.

In the first part of the 20th century the task of law enforcement was relatively easy because the place of commitment and the criminal's domicile was the same settlement, the local policemen knew the potential criminals. Crimes committed by people not living in the specific region were rare. In the second part of the 20th century the composition of criminals considerably changed regarding the connection between the place of commitment and the domicile. As a result of the development of motorisation crimes became more mobilised. By the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century not only the place of commitment and the domicile had got separated from each other but also the so-called moving crime occurred. By opening the boarders the mobility of criminals crossing the boarders became widespread, especially in case of the most severe crimes.

There was no thorough-going examination in the regional features of crime in the second part of the 20th century either, because the different statistics (police, public prosecutor's office, judicial) observed and processed the data of the region only up to county level. The improvement of methods in computer science made it possible to extend observation and recording also to the level of villages and towns. Since 2001 ENYÜBS (United Statistics of the Crime Investigation Service and the Public Prosecutor's Office database) has been collecting data up to the level of settlements making it possible to establish "criminal geography".

Since the data on act include the place of commitment and the personal data include the criminal's domicile the detailed regional data provide important information also on the mobility of the criminals. In respect of crime prevention it means important information to show which settlements are the most endangered ones regarding crimes and which ones serve as the criminals' domiciles.

The system of indicators described in the study may provide help in the examination of the reasons for crimes because observation covers many factors that may be brought into connection with the crimes, such as the types of settlements, the demographic features of the population living there, the development of the settlement, its catchment area, tourism, financial situation. Also with the help of modern technology we can prepare crime maps.

The objectives of the study also include the determination of the centre of crime and the centre of gravity of crime. Giving answers to organisation questions that are based on the determination of the regional centre and focus of crime plays an important role in crime prevention.

I wish to illustrate the methods used to examine the regional features of crimes and the results through the data of a county (villages, towns, small regions).

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