

GEOGRAPHY OF CRIME IN THE STRUCTURE OF CRIMINOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

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The relevance of the study lies in the fact that the concept of "geography of crime" is relatively young in the science of criminology. There is much debate as to whether it is a concept of criminologists or geographers. In this paper we have tried to sort it out and concluded that the concept has more to do with the science of criminology.

The purpose of the study is a systematic and detailed consideration of the concept of "geography of crime", its content, which is ambiguously interpreted in science.

Material and methods. The concept of the geography of crime and its trends are examined. There are two theories according to which this concept belongs to geography, or to criminology. Modern scholars refer "geography of crime" to criminology, as there are very many issues related to jurisprudence in the study.

The methodological basis of the study consists of a dialectical method of cognition and system analysis, generalization, method of synthesis, formal legal method.

Findings and their discussion. The concept of "geography of crime", which is part of a science such as criminology, is increasingly making sense in modern domestic science. The concept itself originated in the early 19th century with foreign geographers. In Russian science, the term began to be actively used in the works of criminologists as a synonym for the territorial distribution of crime or territorial differences in crime rates from the 1970s.

In different periods, different researchers have classified geography of crime in different scientific disciplines. At first, the notion belonged to the socio-humanitarian block, namely geography. Nowadays, it belongs to socio-legal science, i.e. criminology.

As this notion is rather vast and covers large areas of knowledge, the question arises: is it more criminological or geographical term? So far, in our view, there is no definitive answer. There has been a long-standing debate among scholars on the subject [1].

We need to try to understand what the true purpose of crime geography is and how objective the claims of geographical science are in recognizing their priority in developing problems related to the study of the influence of natural and geographical environment objects on crime rates. In our view, it is still a criminological term. The branch of geography covers much less than criminology. The geography of crime studies the distribution of crime in a given territory over a period of time and how this is influenced by various factors. For example, population density, demographic, sex and age structure, climate, etc. [2].

In general, the issue of the existence of geographical factors of crime and determining their impact on the growth or decline in criminal activity of the population in a particular area has interested representatives of criminological science for a much longer period than geographers. This proves once again that the term "geography of crime" has more to do with the science of criminology. Forces of nature and acts of criminal behaviour cannot be borderline, the former are never the direct cause of the latter – there is

always a link between them in the form of certain social contradictions, the negative consequences of which may create conditions and then causes of crime [3, p. 35].

As for the introduction of synonyms of crime geography, such as geocriminology, or renaming it in such a way, this step does not seem quite appropriate either. Firstly, the term "geography of crime" is firmly established in science. And secondly, the use of the word "criminology" contributes to an unduly expansive interpretation of the proposed term.

Crime is any illegal act punishable by law. Reflection on crime, delinquency and the fear of crime has led to certain conclusions. These findings show how different geographical environments can and do shape crime and criminogenic outcomes. What is of interest to scholars is where crime occurs in spatial environments, why some places are more prone to crime than others, and how conditions in space shape crime.

The literature highlights that the relationship between crime and geography remains controversial as a result of the interference of 'individual factors' and 'environmental factors' or a combination of both. Some scholars believe that the extent to which nature and upbringing influence crime and fear of crime is important. It has been interestingly suggested that the fear of crime or the risk of becoming a victim of crime is unevenly or non-randomly distributed across space, and that these differences reflect the level of socio-economic differences between and within areas [4, p. 233-234].

Conclusion. Neither economics nor geography is better prepared to deal with the emergence of crime than jurisprudence and its separate branch, criminology, which was originally formed as a comprehensive social and legal science designed to synthesise methods and achievements of related branches of knowledge in order to study the social phenomenon of crime.

The study of the geography of crime is one of the most complex and difficult criminological tasks, as it requires serious familiarity with many humanities (sociology, socio-economic geography, regional economics, socio-economic statistics), not only with their theoretical foundations, but also with the current state of affairs in them and the development prospects of these sectors.

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