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Nodes, paths and edges: Considerations on the complexity of crime and the physical environment

Patricia L. Brantingham ... Paul J. Brantingham

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Abstract

Crime has long been thought to be intimately associated with the physical environment in which it occurs. Theoretical and empirical developments over the past 20 years demonstrate that this relationship is complex and varies substantially at different levels of spatial and temporal resolution. Research on the distribution of property crimes in time and space resonates with research on the target selection processes of offenders to suggest that crime is strongly related to aggregate elements of the perceived physical environment: nodes, paths, edges and an environmental backcloth. The relationship between crime and the physical environment is mediated through individual awareness and action spaces. This implies a series of research issues and crime control policies for future exploration.



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