Space, Time, and Crime

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Space, Time, and Crime

Fifth Edition

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Introduction

On October 1, 2017, more than 20,000 fans made their way to Las Vegas to attend the last night of the Route 91 Harvest Country Music Festival. The festival was being held at the Las Vegas Village, a 15-acre lot along Las Vegas Boulevard, formerly U.S. Route 91. The festival's main concert stage was located directly across from the Luxor Las Vegas hotel and casino and diagonally across from the Mandalay Bay resort and casino. Some of the top country singers performed at the festival, including American country music singer Jason Aldean. Before Jason could finish his set, however, the deadliest mass shooting by an individual in modern U.S. history would unfold.

Stephen Paddock lived in Mesquite, Nevada, about 80 miles northeast of Las Vegas. He checked into the Mandalay Bay on September 25, 2017, four days before the festival began. According to police records, for the next six days, Paddock stockpiled an arsenal of weapons in his two hotel rooms, including 14 AR-15s, 8 AR-10s, a bolt-action rifle, and a revolver. At 10:05 p.m. on October 1st, Paddock smashed out the windows in his suites and over the next 10 minutes indiscriminately fired on the concert goers below. When it was all over, he killed 58 and injured hundreds of others. Paddock died as a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound before police could take him into custody.

While the case of Stephen Paddock has garnered international attention, it should be noted that this type of violence targeted against random victims is the exception, not the rule. In fact, one could argue that the lack of a pattern in the location, time, and victim selection is what made this horrible tragedy especially newsworthy. If this same madman had targeted drug dealers or prostitutes in poor urban neighborhoods, more than likely this book would have had a different introduction, since few of us would have been able to recall any details from the media reports of the incident (if there had been any national coverage at all).

Our journey through space, time, and crime begins with a basic statement of fact: Crime is not evenly distributed across locations, times, victims, or targets. In every city in America, there are "safe" areas where serious crimes are a relatively rare event. There are also not-so-safe areas where crimes — especially violent, predatory street crimes — are an everyday occurrence. Certain times of the day are safer than others, although this varies with the type of crime. While one is much less likely to become a victim of a violent assault during the daytime hours, one's home is at greater risk for an attack by a burglar during the same time frame. While some will (fortunately) live their entire lives free from serious incidents of crime, others, especially those who happen to be young, single, members of a minority group, and/or urban residents have a much higher likelihood of becoming a victim of crime. Far from being a random event that occurs without rhyme or reason, crime is concentrated in certain areas and at certain times.

The purpose of this book is to explore issues related to the spatial and temporal clustering of crimes. The book is divided into four sections. The first section, which includes Chapters 2, 3, and 4 — a new chapter in this new edition of our book — explores the issues of "why." Why are some neighborhoods overrun with crime, while others enjoy safety, peace, and harmony among the local residents? In the second section, Chapters 5 and 6 explore the issue of "what." Once a high crime location or time is identified, what can we do about it? How do the theories get translated into policy? The third section, which is comprised of Chapters 7, 8, and 9 — another new chapter in this new edition — explores the issues of "how." How do we know where the crimes are located? How do police agencies, security managers, and others identify the areas that need more crime prevention services or special patrol operations? The book ends with some closing thoughts on ways to move forward (e.g., looking at how technology is impacting research about space, time, and crime).

In this fifth edition, the research and references have been updated throughout the text. As noted previously, two new chapters have been added and more up-to-date examples have been presented from practitioners in the field. We continue to strive to make this new edition of our book relevant to both students and working professionals. We hope that you enjoy our most recent effort.