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## PLACE, SPACE, CRIME, AND DISORDER

*Anthony E. Bottoms\**

For a woman to make an argument in favour of urban life may come as a surprise. Many women and much feminist writing have been hostile to the city, and recent feminist contributions to the discussion of urban problems have tended to restrict themselves narrowly to issues of safety, welfare and protection. This is a mistake, since it re-creates the traditional paternalism of most town planning. Women's experience of urban life is even more ambiguous than that of men, and safety is a crucial issue. Yet it is necessary also to emphasise the other side of city life and to insist on women's right to the carnival, intensity and even the risks of the city. Surely it is possible to be both pro-cities and pro-women, to hold in balance an awareness of both the pleasures and the dangers that the city offers women, and to judge that in the end, urban life, however fraught with difficulty, has emancipated women more than rural life or suburban domesticity.

(Wilson 1992: 10)

In this quotation, Elizabeth Wilson provides a gendered perspective on a long-standing controversy, and affirms both the risks and the attractions and vitality of city life. It is a basic and long-established criminological truth that crime rates are higher in urban than in rural areas (Cressey 1964: ch. 3); but, since our life choices are made on many grounds, of which risk of victimization is just one, most of us prefer to live in cities rather than in the countryside.<sup>1</sup>

Cities can be understood in many ways. Town planners are obliged by their profession to take a holistic and somewhat abstract view of issues such as overall land use and transportation, or the juxtaposition of different kinds of urban activities (residential

\* In the previous two editions of this *Handbook*, the corresponding chapter to this has been written jointly by Paul Wiles and myself. On this occasion, Paul Wiles's duties as Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office have made his continuing involvement impracticable, but many of the insights he contributed to earlier editions remain in the present text, to its considerable benefit.

<sup>1</sup> For this reason, rural crime has been largely ignored by criminology. For an attempt to begin to redress the balance, see the volume edited by Dingwall and Moody (1999). Note especially the comments by one of the editors (Susan Moody): 'The main problem continues to be the lack of engagement on the part of criminologists themselves with the rural...Rurality has something of significance to offer criminology. Sadly, however, criminology has offered little in return' (*ibid.*: 24).

areas, industry, shopping areas, parks, etc.). Demographers develop complex analyses of population patterns within cities, shifts over time, and so on. Ordinary citizens experience cities in a more direct way, drawn to different parts of the city for different activities (work, home, entertaining children, a 'night on the town'), often with very different emotional connotations. Ordinary citizens also do not shrink from describing different cities as having their own 'character' or 'feel'—some are elegant, some unsightly, some intimidating and some mundane' (Hayward 2004: 1). Criminologists, somehow, need to draw upon all of these perspectives—and more besides—in understanding crime and responses to crime in the city: the town planner's view, the demographer's view, and the ordinary person's everyday experience of the city are all important in helping us to get to grips with issues relating to cities and crime.

The field of study commonly called 'urban sociology' has experienced a lengthy identity crisis in the last half-century. Some have argued that, since most people in advanced societies now live in cities, and the metropolitan elite dominate government, business, and the all-pervasive media, there is no longer a role for a distinctive 'urban sociology'—all sociology, even the sociology of rural areas, is suffused with urban preoccupations. Others, however, have pointed especially to what is sometimes called the 'embodiment' of human beings. By this is meant the fact that, despite the manner in which modern communications can now overcome traditional barriers of distance, human beings still exist only within human bodies, and human bodies can be located in only one place at a time. Moreover, it is a matter of common observation that human beings feel safe and comfortable in some locations, but not in others. Hence, it is argued, in studying modern social life (and certainly crime and disorder, to which the concept of safety is central), we cannot ignore the importance of the spatial, as well as the social, dimension of life in cities (Dickens 1990). The combination and interaction of the spatial and the social—the so-called *socio-spatial perspective*—is therefore now increasingly accepted as the conceptual bedrock of urban sociology (see Gottdiener and Hutchison 2006). It is also the central focus of what has often been called 'environmental criminology', but which I shall here call 'socio-spatial criminology'.<sup>2</sup> As Paul Wiles and I suggested in the previous edition of this *Handbook*, this field of research can usefully be defined as 'the study of crime, criminality, and victimization as they relate, first, to particular *places*, and, secondly, to the way that individuals and organizations shape their activities *spatially*, and in doing so are in turn influenced by *place-based* or *spatial* factors' (Bottoms and Wiles 2002: 620).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In all previous editions of this *Handbook*, the term 'environmental criminology' has been used, but there are two reasons for altering this. First, 'environmental criminology' is increasingly being used to refer to the study of criminality in relation to 'green' issues, and it is sensible to avoid unnecessary confusion between these two separate research fields. Secondly, the term 'socio-spatial' captures the *interaction* between the social and the spatial—the central core of the subject—in a way that 'environmental criminology' arguably does not.

<sup>3</sup> As this definition implies, 'place' is not the same as 'space'. The former concept refers to a geographical location, with fairly definite boundaries, within which people may meet, engage in various activities, etc. 'Space' is a much broader concept, but socio-spatial criminologists are interested in it because some social activities have become quite markedly *spatially differentiated* (see for example the 'zoning' approach of much urban planning), and the spatial juxtaposition of individuals' and communities' routine social activities is, as we shall see, crucial to the explanation of some criminal phenomena.

Traditionally, the two central concerns of socio-spatial criminology have been *explaining the spatial distribution of offences* and *explaining the spatial distribution of offenders*, and these remain core topics in the field. To them must now be added, however, the *study of the spatial distribution of incivilities* (or ‘anti-social behaviour’). But although some of the goals of scholars in this field have long remained unchanged, the object of study has not. Scholars studying Jane Austen’s novels are studying the same texts in 2006 as in 1906, although of course they are doing so in a very different social context. But for urban sociologists and socio-spatial criminologists, it is not only the social context of study, but also the object of study (‘the city’) that has changed hugely in the last century. Increasingly, therefore, researchers recognize the need to consider the changed nature of the city in criminological study, and that perspective will emerge from time to time in this chapter.

The chapter is organized in the following way. Initially, there is a historical introduction and some brief methodological comments. This is followed by core sections on the spatial distribution of, respectively, offences, disorder, and offenders. Finally, the macro-social dimension will be considered, with an especial emphasis on the changing nature of contemporary cities.

## PLACE, SPACE, AND CRIME: A BRIEF HISTORY

Although socio-spatial analyses of crime can be traced back to the first half of the nineteenth century, for present purposes the obvious starting point for a historical overview is the important criminological work carried out between the two World Wars from within the Chicago School of Sociology (on which see generally Bulmer 1984; Abbott 1997).

The main Chicagoan criminological contribution came from Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, whose magnum opus on juvenile delinquency in urban areas is still read, sixty years on (Shaw and McKay 1942). Their main contribution to criminology was empirical, and their research embraced two very different styles, always seen by the authors themselves as complementary. In the first place, they meticulously mapped the residences of juvenile delinquents, initially in Chicago itself at different points in time, and then also in other American cities. Secondly, they also tried, in the tradition of the Chicago School more generally, to stay close to the life of the people and the communities they were writing about, particularly by producing life histories of offenders and low life in the city (see for example Shaw 1930).

We can concentrate here on Shaw and McKay’s mapping of delinquent residences. In developing this research, they drew upon the more general work in urban sociology of the Chicago School, notably that of Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, the dominant concept of which was ‘human ecology’. Human ecology was seen as the study of the spatial and temporal relations of human beings as affected by the selective, distributive,

and accommodative forces of the environment; the concept was derived, by analogy, from the botanical subdiscipline of plant ecology. Shaw and McKay drew only to a limited extent upon the most explicitly quasi-biological elements of Park's urban sociology, but they made quite central use of Burgess's zonal theory of city development. According to this theory, the typical city could be conceptualized as consisting of five main concentric zones. The innermost zone was described as the non-residential central business district, which was then circled by a 'zone in transition', where factories and poorer residences were intermingled, and finally by three residential zones of increasing affluence and social status as one moved towards the outer suburbs. New immigrants, it was postulated, would move into the cheapest residential areas of the city (in the 'zone in transition') and then, as they became economically established, migrate outwards. This would be a continuous process, so that the 'zone in transition' would (as its name implies) have a high residential mobility rate and a rather heterogeneous population. In the case of a rapidly expanding city, particular districts which had once been peripheral and affluent might become, in time, part of the zone in transition within a larger metropolis.

Applying this zonal model to their empirical data, Shaw and McKay made three central discoveries (see Finestone 1976:25):

1. The rates of juvenile delinquency residence conformed to a regular spatial pattern. They were highest in the 'zone in transition', and then declined with distance from the centre of the city; and this was so not only in Chicago but in other cities as well.
2. The same spatial pattern was shown by many other indices of social problems in the city.
3. The spatial pattern of rates of delinquency showed considerable long-term stability, even though the nationality make-up of the population in the inner-city areas changed greatly from decade to decade (with successive waves of migration to American cities in the early twentieth century).

In seeking to explain these striking findings, Shaw and McKay focused especially upon the observed *cultural heterogeneity* and the *constant population movements* in the 'zone in transition'. Economic mobility lay at the heart of the process they described, but they did not posit a direct relationship between economic factors and rates of delinquency. Instead, the zone of transition, characterized as it was by economic deprivation, physical deterioration, population mobility, and population heterogeneity, was seen as containing both *social-structural weakness* (institutional incapacity to provide successful routes to valued societal goals; institutional discontinuities in socialization) and *cultural fragmentation* (Kornhauser 1978: 61–82). It was these factors, in Shaw and McKay's view, which especially influenced juvenile delinquency through a process that they called 'social disorganization' (although some later commentators have felt it might have been better described as 'weaknesses in social organization'). In their formulation, 'social disorganization exists in the first instance when the structure and culture of a community are incapable of implementing and expressing the values of its

own residents' (Kornhauser 1978: 63), including the near-universal value of a non-delinquent future for one's children. The view was that, given the social fluidity and moral diversity<sup>4</sup> in the zone of transition, incoming immigrant communities could not provide for their young people common and clear non-delinquent values and control.<sup>5</sup>

It is a measure of the standing and achievement of Shaw and McKay that, in the quarter-century immediately after the end of the Second World War, there were relatively few major new developments in socio-spatial criminology, despite the publication of some significant individual research monographs (e.g. Lander 1954; Morris 1957). However, the 1970s were to see the subject given new impetus, mainly by two fresh developments.

The first of these can be described as the *rediscovery of the offence*. Shaw and McKay's work had been all about *area offender rates* (i.e. the rate of offenders per head of population in each area) but these are not necessarily the same as area offence rates (i.e. the rate of offences committed in each area), since we cannot necessarily assume that offenders commit offences close to their homes (see further below). Various different criminological developments combined to refocus attention on *crimes* rather than *offenders* in the 1970s (see generally Brantingham and Brantingham 1981a: Introduction). These included, in particular, the first-ever large-scale victim surveys (initiated in the USA in the late 1960s), and the early work of the Home Office Research Unit on 'crime as opportunity' (Mayhew *et al.* 1976), leading in due course to the more sophisticated development of 'situational crime prevention' approaches (see Clarke 1995; Smith and Cornish 2003), on which see further below.

The second major development of the 1970s came in the field of explaining offender rates. In his pioneering 1957 book, Terence Morris (1957) had shown that, given the existence in post-war Britain of a sizeable social housing sector (then called 'council housing'), and, as a part of this, some 'peripheral problem estates', the areal rates of offender residence in Croydon did not conform to the Chicago zonal hypothesis. This finding was confirmed and strengthened by work in Sheffield (Baldwin and Bottoms 1976) which indicated that, while there was something of a clustering of high-offender-rate areas around the central business district, for the city as a whole the data did not display any tidy zonal pattern. In seeking to explain these findings, the Sheffield researchers were drawn increasingly towards the exploration of the *direct and indirect consequences of the operation of housing markets* (see for example Bottoms and Wiles 1986). This emphasis on housing markets has been taken up by other researchers, and has been found to be of particular significance when assessing change in offender and offence rates in residential areas (see for example Wikström 1991; Foster and Hope 1993; Hancock 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The moral diversity arose not only from the presence in the zone in transition of several different immigrant groups, but also from the fact that 'many illegitimate enterprises and deviant moral worlds' (Finestone 1976: 28) found their natural home in this zone of the city.

<sup>5</sup> At various points in their writings, Shaw and McKay also speak of another and rather different theoretical approach to the explanation of criminality, namely that of *criminal subcultures*, linked to the cultural transmission of delinquent values. The precise relationship between these two varied theoretical strands of Shaw and McKay's work was not always made fully clear in their writings (see Kornhauser 1978: ch. 3).

The *rediscovery of the offence* and the *discovery of the significance of housing markets* between them did much to revivify socio-spatial criminology from the mid-1970s onwards. In more recent years, that revitalization has continued apace, with three fresh developments. The most obvious of these is the advent of computerized 'geographical information systems' (GIS), which has led to an explosion of interest in so-called 'crime mapping', and the development—particularly in the United States—of a new profession of 'crime analysts', mostly working in police departments. The study of the spatial dimensions of crime, offender, and victim data—which, within the professional memory of not-yet-retired criminologists, could literally only be accomplished by sticking pins in maps—has been completely transformed by the advent of GIS, although inevitably some of the applications of this technology have been, in practice, somewhat mundane.<sup>6</sup>

The second and third recent developments in the field are more theoretical, although involving different kinds of theory. One strand can be read as a continuing attempt to grapple with the issues raised by Shaw and McKay in their 'social disorganization' formulation; this strand of work has made us familiar with a new theoretical vocabulary of concepts such as 'collective efficacy' and 'control signals'. The other strand of work arises above all from the realization that the city of the early twenty-first century is in many ways very different from the city of the early twentieth century—a difference expressed in conceptual formulations such as 'the shift from modern to late modern society', or 'the change from a producer to a consumer society'. Both these approaches will be considered more fully later in this chapter.

These various recent developments in the field have led—perhaps inevitably—to some academic disputation, and it is not too difficult to identify at least three separate 'academic tribes' working in the field of socio-spatial criminology (see 'Selected further reading' at the end of this chapter). The text that follows tries to be fair to the various different traditions of work in the area (whilst not disguising the author's own preoccupations), within an overview that primarily concentrates on substantive issues. How far it succeeds in this aim is for others to judge.

## PRELIMINARY METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Before we turn to substantive research findings, two key methodological issues must be briefly addressed: they are the distinction between the offence, the offender, and the victim, and the validity of official statistics.

The distinction between the offence rate and the offender rate has already been highlighted above. It is an absolutely central issue in socio-spatial criminology, as will

<sup>6</sup> An increasing number of introductory guides to the world of 'crime mapping' have been published in recent years: for good recent treatments see Chainey and Ratcliffe (2005) and Boba (2005).

quickly become apparent if one compares maps of offence locations in any given city (see for example Figure 17.1, discussed later) with a map of offender residences in the same year. Interestingly, however, research has shown that if one excludes non-residential areas such as the city centre, shopping malls, and industrial districts, there is often a strong (but not perfect) correlation between offender and offence rates in residential areas (Mawby 1979).

One should further note that, in any given geographical area, both the offence rate and the offender rate are in principle measurable both by official (police-recorded) data and by survey data (namely, victim surveys in respect of offence rates, and self-report surveys in respect of offender rates). In practice, however, self-report studies carried out on an areal basis are rare. One should also be aware that there is an important distinction in principle between an *area offence rate* and an *area victimization rate*. The former measures all offences committed in an area, whether against businesses, individual residents, or individuals who are visiting the area; the latter measures all offences committed against a defined population (e.g. respondents to a household victim survey living in a particular residential district), wherever those offences were committed. Because of this conceptual difference, particular care must be taken when comparing *total police-recorded offence rates* for a given area (which will be geographically limited to that area, but will include offences against businesses, and against individual visitors to the area) and *victimization rates generated from a household victim survey* in the same neighbourhood (which will exclude both crimes against businesses, and crimes against individual victims visiting the area, but will include crimes committed against residents of the area when they have ventured outside the district, e.g. to the city centre or their place of work).

These considerations take us straight to the second methodological issue, that of the validity of official criminal statistics in relation to area-based data. This is an important topic because, very often, the only easily available data for studying crime in a given local area are police-recorded statistics.<sup>7</sup> Over the years, there have been some lively debates surrounding this issue, with particular scepticism being expressed about the validity of official statistics during the heyday of labelling theory in the 1970s (for a useful historical overview of the debate, see Mawby 1989). Commenting on this debate in a short space is difficult, but to begin with the uncontroversial, there is now no doubt that, on a large-area basis—for example as between police forces—the message conveyed by official criminal statistics can be misleading, particularly because of different police investigative and recording practices in different areas (see for example Farrington and Dowds 1985; Burrows *et al.* 2000; HM Inspectorate of Constabulary 2000; see also Maguire, Chapter 10, this volume). On a smaller-area, within-city basis, where police recording practices are more often similar, there are good empirical grounds for believing that differential police-recorded offence and offender rates as

<sup>7</sup> Specially conducted local victimization surveys are by no means unknown, but have been conducted in only a small minority of areas. Large-scale national victimization surveys, such as the British Crime Survey, are—for reasons of sample size and error estimates—at best able to provide victimization estimates for large areas rather than small areas.

between different areas will frequently give basically true indications of neighbourhood differences in crime or criminality levels. However, one must always be very careful in interpreting even such data, and that is true especially (i) for offences that are recorded as a result of proactive policing, such as drug possession or soliciting for prostitution, and (ii) when one or more of the areas is severely socially disadvantaged, since the probability of the public reporting crimes to the police is significantly lower in such areas (Baumer 2002; Goudriaan *et al.* 2006).

## EXPLAINING THE LOCATION OF OFFENCES

### DESCRIPTIVE DATA

In turning to our substantive review of the issues, it is convenient to begin with the location of offences, not least because this is the topic that analysts using the new GIS technology have tended to prioritize.

Wikström's (1991) study of police-recorded offences in Stockholm provides one of the best illustrations of the way in which such offences are locationally distributed in a major city. Previous research work (see Baldwin and Bottoms 1976, using Sheffield data) had shown that offences tend, in traditional cities, to be clustered heavily around the city centre; and the offence data in Wikström's study (see Figure 17.1(a), (b), and (c)) show this to be especially the case for violence in public, vandalism in public, and theft of and from cars. (Wikström does not present data concerning shoplifting or thefts from the person, but other research studies have shown that these offences also are particularly located in city centres.) However, there is nothing necessarily immutable about such patterns. For example, in cities that develop large shopping or entertainment complexes on peripheral sites, some corresponding modification of this traditional geographical pattern may well occur; and in Sheffield the development of such a complex (the Meadowhall shopping mall) helped to reduce the proportion of all crime occurring in the city centre from 24 per cent in 1966 to 10 per cent in 1995 (Wiles and Costello 2000: 46). This is just one example of the changing nature of contemporary cities, highlighted in the introduction to this chapter.<sup>8</sup>

Turning to offences in residential areas, the distributions of family violence and residential burglaries in Wikström's study are shown in Figure 17.1(d) and (e). The highest rates of family violence were found in certain outer-city wards, and additional

<sup>8</sup> The Sheffield example is a small-scale manifestation of a development that Gottdiener and Hutchison (2006: 14) call the 'multicentered metro environment'—a process that has progressed further in the USA than in most other countries. According to Gottdiener and Hutchison (2006: 5), in contrast to the traditional city with its city centre or 'downtown', this 'new form of space can be typified by two features: it extends over a large [metropolitan] region, and it contains many separate centers, each with its own abilities to draw workers, shoppers and residents'.

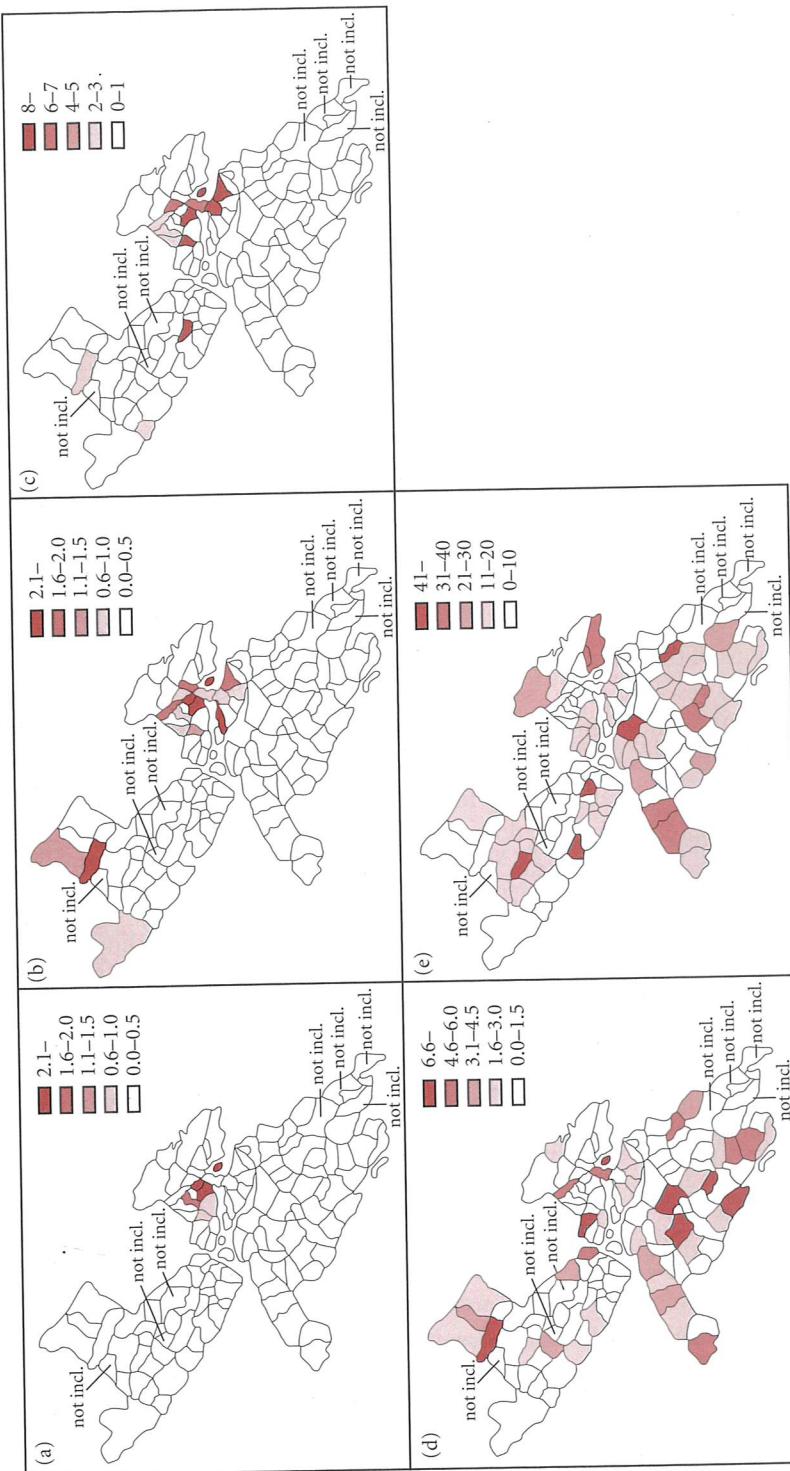


Fig. 17.1 Areal offence rates for selected types of crime, Stockholm, 1982: (a) family violence in public per hectare; (b) vandalism in public per hectare; (c) residential burglaries per 1,000 households; (d) thefts of and from cars per hectare; (e) violence in public per hectare.

Source: Wikström (1991:203–6).

analysis showed that this offence was heavily concentrated in the poorer public housing areas. A further inspection of the Stockholm maps indicates, however, that the distribution of offences of residential burglary was substantially different from that of family violence; indeed, Wikström (1991: 226–7) showed that recorded residential burglaries tended to occur disproportionately in areas of high socio-economic status, and especially in districts where there were nearby high offender-rate areas. This finding, while not unique in the literature,<sup>9</sup> conflicts with the results of many other research studies, which suggest that rates of residential burglary are greatest in, or in areas close to, socially disadvantaged housing areas (for a summary, see Mawby 2001: ch. 5). I will return to this contrast later.

Wikström's study demonstrates, at any rate as regards crimes measured by police data, first that there are marked geographical skews in the patterning of offence locations, and secondly that areal patterns can vary significantly by type of offence. This general message of locational variation has been heavily reinforced in other research. For example, Sherman *et al.* (1989), using police call data for Minneapolis for 1985–6, found (i) that just 3.3 per cent of specific locations in the city generated 50 per cent of crime-related calls, and (ii) that there was considerable variation in the victimization rate (as measured by call data) of specific micro-locations even within high crime rate areas—that is, even high-crime areas have their relatively safe specific locations, as well as their 'hotspots' where the public are likely to be especially vulnerable. Areas with different land-use patterns also often have different crime levels; city centres have already been mentioned, but other non-residential areas, such as industrial estates, can have burglary rates much higher than those of residential neighbourhoods, yet with significant variations which appear to be related especially to their proximity to high-offender-rate residential areas (see Johnston *et al.* 1994). Finally, even in high-offence-rate residential neighbourhoods, the chance of being victimized is not random, with some households not being victimized at all in a year, but others being repeatedly victimized. For example, in the worst tenth of areas studied in the 1988 British Crime Survey, only 28 per cent of respondents reported having been the victim of a property offence in the previous year, but the average number of incidents reported by property crime victims was 4.6, with some having been victimized only once, but others very frequently (Farrell 1995: 526). Spatial variations in offence-rate distributions are, in short, a pervasive feature of the crime-pattern landscape.

### VEHICLE CRIME

To supplement the basic descriptive data in the previous subsection, let us take a closer look at one kind of crime—offences against vehicles. This will develop our description, and also begin to open up some theoretical issues.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Baldwin and Bottoms (1976: 63), Winchester and Jackson (1982: 18–19). It should be pointed out that these studies, like Wikström's, are based on data recorded by the police, and it is likely that they proportionately overstate the number of high-value burglaries, since value is known to be related to the decision to report.

Wikström's (1991) offence maps of Stockholm clearly suggest a very high incidence of vehicle crime in the city centre area. However, closer consideration quickly reveals an underlying difficulty—namely, what is the best way to measure offence rates? Offender rates are straightforward to measure, because the appropriate denominator for such a rate is obviously the area population (or some subgroup of it such as a specified age/gender group). When measuring offence rates, however, using population denominators would often be highly misleading—and, as it happens, vehicle theft is an excellent example of this (for example, measuring city centre vehicle theft offences as a rate per 1,000 of the resident city centre population would clearly be inappropriate). Wikström's pragmatic solution to this difficulty, for vehicle crime, was to use a simple 'rate per hectare' measure.<sup>10</sup> However, this too has some difficulties.

Table 17.1 presents data from the British Crime Survey (BCS) for 2004–5 on the location and timing of vehicle-related thefts<sup>11</sup> in England and Wales. Column 3 of the table shows that as many as two-thirds of such thefts occur when the vehicle is located at or very near the victim's home. This gives a very different impression from the Stockholm data, but in fact the two data-sources are not necessarily incompatible (although of course they relate to different countries and different years) because vehicle thefts occurring near victims' homes will occur throughout a city or metropolitan area, and therefore will very likely not show up at all strongly when one analyses offences on an aggregate 'per hectare' basis.

There are additional subtleties in the data in Table 17.1. The vehicle-related thefts occurring near victims' homes are temporally very skewed, nearly 90 per cent of them occurring in the evenings or at night; conversely, most workplace-related vehicle crimes occur by day, while such offences in other locations are evenly split by day or night (column 4 of the table). Vehicle-related thefts from near victims' homes also very rarely occur in fully private areas (i.e. garages linked to the home); this seems to reflect the obvious fact that it is much easier to steal from cars parked on the driveway or in the street outside the home.

But there are further complications yet. If I park my car for the night on the driveway outside my home, it will probably be there for eight hours or more; if I park in a city centre car park when I go shopping, the car will be there for a much shorter period. Table 17.1 takes no account of these differing exposures to risk, but an analysis of earlier BCS data by Ronald Clarke and Pat Mayhew (1998) has attempted this. These authors calculated a rate of 'vehicle-related theft per 100,000 cars per 24 hours' for different locations; and on this basis, public car parks had the highest rate (454), followed by

<sup>10</sup> Wikström's (1991: 193–200) book contains a good short discussion of the technical problems of calculating valid area crime rates. For vehicle thefts, the best solution would be, as he recognizes, a denominator consisting of some kind of vehicle count, but this was unavailable in his Stockholm study. As the text near Figure 17.1 shows, the Stockholm study used different denominators for different offence types.

<sup>11</sup> This table includes both the taking of vehicles (i.e. theft of vehicles, plus taking without the consent of the owner) and theft from vehicles (for example, theft of car radios or property left inside vehicles). These might seem to be very different offences, but their general locational patterning is in fact usually (though not always) similar.

**Table 17.1** British Crime Survey 2004–2005: Location and Timing of Vehicle-Related Thefts (%)

	Morning/Afternoon (6 a.m.–6 p.m.)	Evening/ Night (6 p.m.–6 a.m.)	Total	% in category occurring in evening/ night
<i>Home area</i>				
Private	2	2	2	
Semi-private*	11	28	24	
Street	15	49	41	
(Subtotal)	(28)	(79)	(67)	89.3%
<i>Workplace</i>				
Car park	9	1	3	
Street	6	1	2	
(Subtotal)	(15)	(2)	(5)	28.3%
<i>Other</i>				
Car park	33	11	16	
Street	20	8	11	
Other	4	1	2	
(Subtotal)	(57)	(20)	(29)	50.9%
Total	100	100	100	
Unweighted base	678	2,007	2,685	

\* ‘Semi-private’ includes outside areas on the premises (house driveways, etc), and garages or car parks around but not connected to the home.

Source: Nicholas *et al.* (2005: 66).

street parking not outside the home or workplace (327), and—some way behind—by street parking outside the home and workplace (117 and 118 respectively). ‘Semi-private’ home locations (see Table 17.1) were well down the list on 40, with home garages on a rate of 2.

So, different measurement methods for offence rates yield different results, but it can be argued that each provides some valuable information. From the police viewpoint, it is useful to know that on a simple ‘per hectare’ basis, vehicle thefts are disproportionately concentrated in city centre areas. For the ordinary car owner wanting to avoid a vehicle-related theft, it is equally useful to know that the highest risk rate per hour of parking is to be found in public car parks. But since, if one parks outside one’s home in the evening, it is almost always with the intention of leaving the vehicle there for several hours, it is also very important to recognize that *nearly two-thirds* of British vehicle-related thefts occur in such locations, overwhelmingly in the 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. period (Table 17.1).

The above examples do not exhaust the criminological interest of the locational study of vehicle thefts. Further examples from this crime type will be included as we begin to consider theoretical explanations for variations in offence locations, beginning with the concept of 'opportunity'.

### OPPORTUNITY THEORY AND ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY

Felson and Clarke (1998: 5) have usefully suggested that there are four main components of the concept of opportunity in property crimes, namely 'value, inertia, visibility and access', which can be easily remembered by the mnemonic 'VIVA'. These components, however, really group into two main aspects of opportunity. The first of these is *target attractiveness*, a concept which includes both value (monetary and/or cultural) and what Felson and Clarke call 'inertia', or portability (heavy goods such as washing machines are rarely stolen). 'Target attractiveness' thus relates to the intrinsic attractiveness of the object, from the point of view of the offender, leaving aside issues of access and guardianship (on which see further below). In explaining the location of offences, property value is the most important aspect of target attractiveness, since target values are often locationally skewed, both as regards the general affluence of different areas (see Wikström's data on residential burglary, above), and as regards the value of a particular target, by comparison with neighbouring potential targets. For example, in a 1993 analysis of vehicle crime using British Crime Survey data, it was found that, within a given residential area, the cars of the more obviously affluent residents were the more likely to be targeted.<sup>12</sup>

The second main dimension of opportunity can be described as *accessibility*, a concept that includes visibility, ease of physical access, and the absence of adequate guardianship. This dimension of opportunity is also well illustrated by a vehicle crime example, this time the vehicle theft rates from different multi-storey car parks in Croydon (see table in Bottoms 1994: 603). Three short-stay multi-storey car parks that were used primarily by shoppers (and which therefore had a constant stream of passers-by providing natural surveillance and guardianship) were found to have substantially lower crime rates per car park space than two long-stay car parks, primarily used by commuters from Croydon to London, which lacked such surveillance; it was the difference in the levels of natural guardianship that was apparently crucial. Many other similar examples of the importance of accessibility and natural surveillance can also be found in the literature.

Two interim observations should be made at this point about the concept of opportunity. First, if opportunities can be unintentionally *created* (for example, by building car parks with low natural guardianship), they can, at least in principle, also be intentionally *blocked*. This simple observation has given rise to what is now a sophisticated

<sup>12</sup> Specifically, in thefts of and from vehicles from immediately around the house, 'consumerist' households were more likely to be victimized, even when area and type of residence was controlled for (see Mayhew *et al.* 1993: 140–41). ('Consumerist' households were those owning three or more of five specified electronic consumer products.)

body of criminological literature organized around the concept of 'situational crime prevention'—that is, altering the physical and social environment ('situations') in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of crimes being committed (see Crawford, Chapter 26, this volume; also Clarke 1995, 1997; Smith and Cornish 2003). The concept of opportunity has an important, though not an exclusive, role to play within situational crime prevention; and when opportunity-blocking measures are successfully applied, this can itself lead both to overall crime reduction, and (importantly for the purposes of this chapter) to a change in the locational distribution of offences. For example, a few years ago analyses showed that in many house burglaries the offender(s) entered through the rear of the property; and this led to the installation, in suitable contexts, of gates and fences across alleyways or footpaths running behind houses (a process known as 'alley-gating'), with successful crime-preventive results (Chainey and Ratcliffe 2005: 28–31; Bowers *et al.* 2004).

Secondly, it will be apparent from the preceding discussion that opportunity theory uses, implicitly, a rational choice theory of offending, in which offenders are assumed to assess potential benefits (e.g. lucrative targets) and possible costs (e.g. an enhanced probability of getting caught if one attempts a vehicle theft in a car park with high natural surveillance, or a burglary through a front rather than a back window). This rational choice dimension of the opportunity approach (and of situational crime prevention theory more generally) has been explicitly embraced and developed especially by Derek Cornish and Ronald Clarke (1986, 2003).

Opportunity theory is often considered alongside 'routine activities theory', originally developed by Cohen and Felson (1979) and subsequently elaborated particularly by Marcus Felson (see for example Felson 2002). The central hypothesis of routine activities theory was originally stated as:

the probability that a violation will occur at any specific time and place might be taken as a function of the convergence of likely offenders and suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians [Cohen and Felson 1979: 590].

However, of the three elements identified in the above quotation, in its early days routine activities theory in practice concentrated very heavily on the second and third (suitable targets and capable guardians).<sup>13</sup> That being so, the link with opportunity theory is self-evident—although (as will become clear shortly) by initially ignoring the offender dimension, advocates of routine activities theory closed off a promising approach. But, despite the similarities between routine activities and opportunity theory (see, more fully, Clarke and Felson 1993), there are nevertheless two features of the routine activities approach which usefully developed and extended the straightforward concept of 'opportunity'. These are as follows:

*First, there is a strong interest within routine activities theory in the day-to-day activities of potential victims of crime, and of those potentially able to offer 'natural surveillance'.* There is

<sup>13</sup> See Cohen and Felson (1979: 589): 'Unlike many criminological enquiries, we do not examine why individuals or groups are inclined criminally, but rather we take criminal inclination as given and examine the manner in which the spatio-temporal organisation of social activities helps people to translate their criminal inclinations into action.'

therefore seen to be an interdependence between the varied social organisation of daily life patterns (for example, in different decades, and/or in different places, and/or among different social groups in the same area) and the spatial-temporal patterns of illegal activities.

Secondly, routine activities theory has an explicitly spatial dimension, which, while implicitly present in simple opportunity theory, has not always been much developed by writers of that school. Routine activities theory, precisely because of its interest in the everyday lives of potential victims of crime, and of potential 'natural guardians', specifically emphasises 'the fundamental human ecological character of illegal acts as *events* which occur at specific locations in *space* and *time*, involving specific persons and/or objects' [Cohen and Felson 1979: 589, emphasis in original].

In sum, routine activities theory in effect embeds the simple concept of opportunity within the routine parameters of the day-to-day lives of ordinary people, and in doing so also emphasizes the spatial-temporal features of opportunity. Routine activities theory is also better able than opportunity theory to explain the location of offences against the person, rather than offences against property. For example, the common observation that offences of violence in public occur very disproportionately at weekends, and in or near places of public entertainment such as bars and clubs, is obviously more naturally explained by the concept of 'routine activities' than in the language of 'opportunity'.

Taking all the evidence of this subsection together, there is not much doubt that opportunities and routine activities powerfully influence crime locations. However, the research literature also suggests that matters are more complex than this. To begin to see why that is so, let us consider two pieces of evidence, one general and one specific. The general point is that, on their own, opportunities and the routine activities of victims and guardians seem unable to account for the overall distribution of victimization in residential areas in most cities. As already explained above, some affluent neighbourhoods, with plenty of attractive targets, do have high victimization rates, but others do not (and this is not necessarily because they have effective guardianship). Moreover, often the highest victimization rates are found in the poorest neighbourhoods, with relatively low levels of target attractiveness. The more specific piece of evidence (one of many that could have been selected) is taken from an ethnographic study of convicted burglars in a Texas city (Cromwell *et al.* 1991). In this study it was found, congruently with opportunity theory, that offenders weighed potential gains, levels of guardianship (e.g. signs of occupancy) and risks of detection at possible sites of residential burglary. Hence, it appeared that *active weighing of the opportunity factor at the potential crime site* was indeed a significant factor in the ultimate decision whether or not to commit a particular crime. On the other hand, Cromwell and his colleagues also found that there was individual variation in the degree of planning as between different offenders (or groups of offenders); complex interactive effects (including emotional interactions) within groups of burglars; differences related to whether illicit drugs were used by the offenders; and interactions with fences that could affect the decision processes. What all this suggests is first, that we need to take a closer look at offenders and their routine

activities; and secondly, that the rational-choice model of decision-making, implicitly or explicitly used by most opportunity and routine activities theorists, might need some modification. To consider these potential complexities, we will first look at the literature on offenders' perceptions and use of space, and then discuss more explicitly some apparently non-instrumentally-rational dimensions of offending.

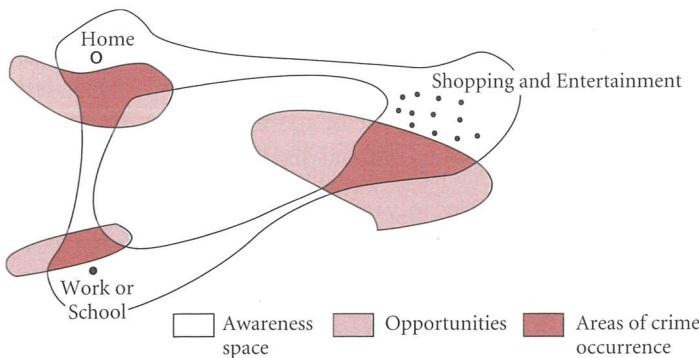
### OFFENDERS' PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF SPACE

It is a commonplace of criminological textbooks that much crime is committed close to offenders' homes. There are a number of 'crime and distance' studies, which explore detected offenders' distance from home when committing offences (for a brief review see Wiles and Costello 2000); however, it can reasonably be argued that this topic is rather less interesting than the related question of the relationship of the place of the offence to the offender's habitual use of space.

Let us first note that there are some purely *opportunist* property crimes, where a person responds 'there and then' to a set of attractive environmental cues; for example, a teenage boy calls at a friend's house, finds the back door open and £20 unguarded on the table. There are also some *affectively spontaneous* crimes, where a person commits, say, an assault in the course of a sudden heated argument with an acquaintance. These offences, by definition, must occur in the place where the offender happens to be, as a result of his/her daily life choices.

However, Patricia and Paul Brantingham (1981b) long ago proposed that offenders' daily life patterns might influence the location of offending behaviour even when the offender is engaging, to some degree, in a search pattern for a suitable target, having already decided in principle to commit an offence.<sup>14</sup> They argued that all of us carry in our heads 'cognitive maps' of the cities where we live. Some parts of the city we will know extremely well (e.g. the areas immediately around our home, near our workplaces and leisure sites, and in the city centre where we go for shopping and entertainment purposes); and we will also tend to know well the roads linking these various areas. On the other hand, there will be some areas of the city which we hardly know at all, such as residential areas (away from main roads) in which we have no social acquaintances and nothing else to attract us. The Brantinghams postulated that most offenders, preferring (like most people) to operate in contexts with which they are familiar, will not commit offences in poorly known areas. Hence, in their model, offences, even 'search pattern' offences, were thought to be most likely to occur where *criminal opportunities* (see earlier subsection) intersect with *cognitively known areas*—a hypothesis schematically illustrated in Figure 17.2. They also suggested that, where an individual is motivated to commit an offence, 'the actual commission of the offense is the end result of a multi-staged decision process which seeks out and identifies, within the general environment,

<sup>14</sup> For later refinements of this model see Brantingham and Brantingham (1993, 1999). The model is now usually referred to as 'crime pattern theory', and it has been argued that it incorporates rational-choice and routine-activities perspectives together with certain key principles from environmental psychology (Rossmo 2000).



**Fig. 17.2** The Brantinghams' hypothetical model of intersection of criminal opportunities with offenders' cognitive awareness space

Source: Newman, Charles L.; Brantingham, Paul J.; Brantingham, Patricia, *Patterns in Crime*, 1st edition © 1984. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

a target or victim positioned in time and space? There will however be differences in this process depending on the motivation of the offender. In particular, it was suggested by the Brantinghams that in offences of 'high affect motivation', this decision process 'will probably involve a minimal number of stages', in which case one might reasonably expect that the distance travelled to commit the offence will usually be shorter than for more instrumentally calculated offences.

The degree of empirical testing of the Brantinghams' important model has not been as extensive or specific as one might wish; nevertheless, what evidence we have tends clearly to support it. To illustrate this, we may look briefly at two small-scale American studies, and then at some recent British research.

Rengert and Wasilchick (2000: ch. 3) carried out an interview study of imprisoned adult burglars from Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and showed that burglary sites were clustered disproportionately in areas closest to the offenders' normal routes to work and recreation. By contrast, a very different directional pattern was observed for the few burglaries in the sample committed not as a result of the offender's own search pattern, but because a secondary source (e.g. a fence) told the offender about an appropriate opportunity for crime. An earlier study in Oklahoma City had found some similar results (Carter and Hill 1979), though because Oklahoma City is a racially divided city, neither black nor white offenders ventured much into residential areas predominantly lived in by the other ethnic group. Based on their findings, Carter and Hill (1979: 49) proposed an interesting distinction between 'strategic' and 'tactical' choices in search-pattern property crimes. 'Tactics' refer to 'short-term operational considerations for a specific crime' and are likely to be influenced by (instrumentally rational) opportunity factors. However, these 'tactical' decisions, Carter and Hill suggest, will be taken only within a limited geographical framework already set by 'strategic' considerations. These 'strategic' considerations relate especially to the issue of familiarity, and are thus more likely to be based on affective factors (e.g. 'areas towards which he has a favorable feeling': Carter and Hill 1979: 49).

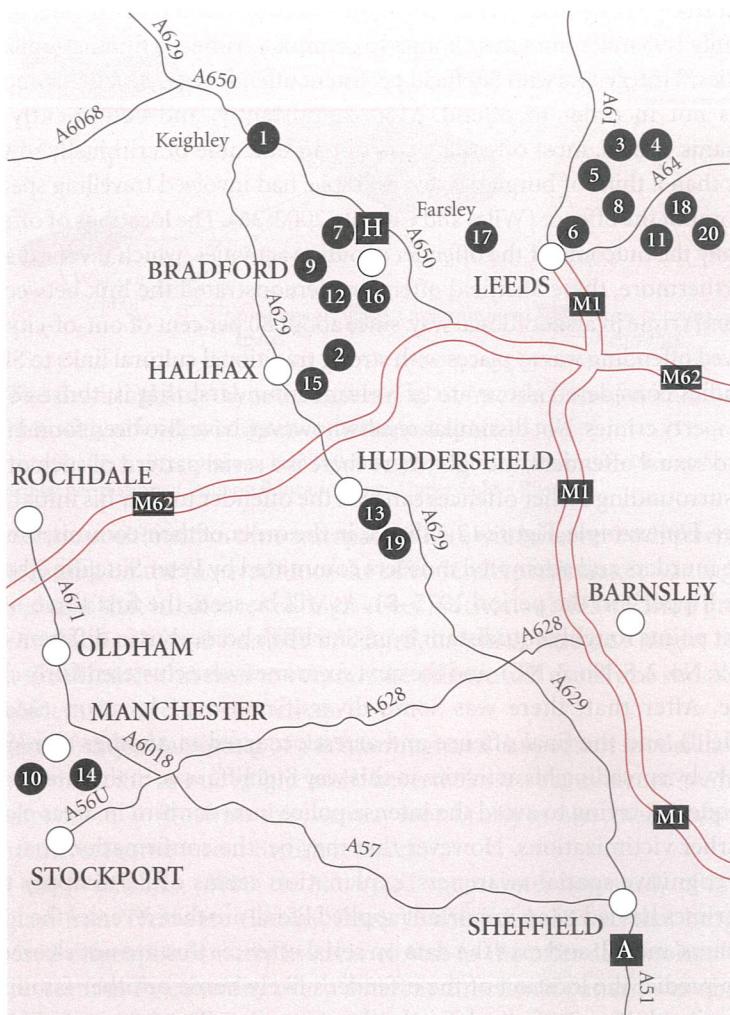
A recent study in Sheffield (Wiles and Costello 2000) found that offenders on average travelled only 1.93 miles from their homes to commit a crime—a finding similar to many other studies.<sup>15</sup> Interviews with Sheffield persistent offenders suggested that most of their travel was not in order to offend. More importantly, and congruently with the Brantinghams' model, most offending was not an outcome of criminally instrumental travel: less than a third of burglaries, for example, had involved travelling specifically in order to commit the offence (Wiles and Costello 2000: 36). The locations of offences were more usually the outcome of the offender's routine activities, which involved some travelling. Furthermore, these Sheffield offenders demonstrated the link between routine activities and crime in an additional way, since about 80 per cent of out-of-city travelling that involved offending was to places with strong traditional cultural links to Sheffield.

The studies considered above are of 'volume offenders', that is, those committing mainly property crimes. Not dissimilar results, however, have also been found for serious violent and sexual offenders, though where there is a serial pattern of such offences the publicity surrounding earlier offences can lead the offender to alter his initial locational preferences. For example, Figure 17.3 shows, in the order of their commission, the location of the murders and attempted murders committed by Peter Sutcliffe (the so-called 'Yorkshire Ripper') in the period 1975–81. As will be seen, the first three offences all occurred at points roughly equidistant from Sutcliffe's home, but in different directions (No. 1, NW; No. 2, S; No. 3, NE), and the next six crimes were clustered fairly close to the first three. After that, there was some diversification of location (Manchester, Huddersfield), and the final offence and arrest occurred in another city (Sheffield); presumably, by spreading his activities in this way Sutcliffe was, in the later stages of his offence sequence, trying to avoid the intense police hunt for him in areas closer to the sites of earlier victimizations. However that may be, the confirmation that a 'routine activities/cognitive spatial awareness' explanation seems often to apply to serious personal crimes has led to an important applied literature that reverses the logic of the Brantinghams' model, and uses the data on serial offences that are not cleared up in an attempt to predict the location of the offender's likely home or other familiar areas,<sup>16</sup> thus narrowing the scope of search for the detective team. This is known as 'geographic profiling' (see for example Canter 2003; Rossmo 2000).

In the light of the Brantinghams' model, it also becomes possible to explain why burglary patterns in different cities have produced conflicting results (see earlier subsection). The apparently conflicting findings may simply reflect the differing social geographies of the cities in which research has been carried out; that is, whether high-offender-rate areas are near affluent residential neighbourhoods, or the extent to

<sup>15</sup> Of course, average distance from home can vary by, for example, the age of the offender and the type of offence. However, the research literature on such factors does not always yield consistent results—see more fully Wiles and Costello (2000).

<sup>16</sup> In the majority of such offence sequences, including that of Peter Sutcliffe, the offender is found to live within 'an area that can be defined by a circle whose diameter [joins] the two furthest crimes: the "circle hypothesis"' (Canter 2003: 129). In a minority of cases, the offender seeks out targets away from a base—sometimes colloquially called a 'commuter'.



**Fig. 17.3** Sequential locations of murders and attempted murders by Peter Sutcliffe 1975–1981

Notes: H = Sutcliffe's home; A = location of arrest.

Source: Copyright © David Carter 2003, Virgin Books Ltd.

which low-offender-rate areas act as 'social attractors' to offenders in their (non-criminal) routine activities.<sup>17</sup> Further support for this suggestion derives from British Crime Survey property-crime victimization data, when analysed by ACORN groups, which shows that whilst most better-off areas have low victimization rates, this is not true of those which are more likely to be located near to high-offender-rate areas

<sup>17</sup> For example, one low-offender/high-offence area in Sheffield (Wiles and Costello 2000: 53) is a fashionable small inner-suburban shopping and entertainment area surrounded by residential properties; it is likely that the high residential offence rate arises from offenders' familiarity with the area when visiting it for leisure purposes.

(Nicholas *et al.* 2005: 69).<sup>18</sup> The extent to which different cities have such better-off areas near to poorer areas with high offender rates will produce differing city maps of offence-rate distributions; in other words, the crime maps for a city will reflect the way in which the history of the city has relatively located different social groups, and facilities such as shopping and entertainment centres. Cities with the same degree of social differentiation can, therefore, have very different socio-spatial distributions of offences.

However, the proximity of offenders to offences and therefore to victims is not just geographical but also often social (a point that emphasizes the importance of considering the social as well as the spatial dimension in socio-spatial criminology). It has been known for some time, for example, in relation to crimes of violence, that individuals who choose to go out frequently at night, especially to certain areas or places of entertainment, have higher risks of personal victimization arising out of these social activities (see, e.g., Gottfredson 1984); and American data suggest that even robbery by acquaintances is far from unknown (Felson *et al.* 2000). Evidence is also now beginning to emerge that known offenders have high rates of property-crime victimization. An unpublished study in Sheffield has shown that, for police-recorded burglary, households which contained a (current) known offender had a higher rate of victimization than other households, even when the area offence rate is controlled for; and also that repeat victimization was higher in offender-households. A follow-up interview study suggested that one reason for these high victimization rates was that offender-victims were much more likely than the average burglary victim to be offended against by an acquaintance (Bottoms and Costello 2001). In short, the worlds of offending and victimization are not necessarily separate, and this is part of the explanation as to why high-offender-rate areas also have high offence rates.

### BEYOND INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY

I have already several times referred to emotional or affective dimensions of offending—for example, in the within offending-group emotional interactions discussed by Cromwell *et al.* (1991), and in the Brantinghams' suggestion that offenders' search patterns will be truncated in crimes of 'high affect motivation'. Such comments suggest a need to move beyond straightforward instrumental rationality in studying the locational patterns of offences, but it has to be said that the literature on this topic remains underdeveloped.

Two main points can however be made, the first concerning offences committed for financial gain, and the second concerning 'crimes for excitement'. In an important ethnographic study of non-incarcerated persistent burglars, Wright and Decker (1994) reported that offenders usually decided to commit a residential burglary 'in response to

<sup>18</sup> ACORN ('A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods') classifies areas according to demographic, employment, and housing characteristics, based on small-area census data. There are five main ACORN area groups, amalgamated from 56 basic area types. Among the five main groups, BCS household victimization data for 2004–5 showed that, in general, victimization tended to be lowest in the richest areas ('Wealthy achievers'), rising as one went down the social scale to the poorest areas ('Hard Pressed'). The exception was the 'Urban Prosperity' area group (consisting of 'prosperous professionals', 'educated urbanities', and 'aspiring singles') who tend to live in inner-city areas. Their victimization rate was actually the *highest* for any of the five main ACORN groups for burglary, vehicle-related theft, and theft from the person.

a perceived need', typically an urgent need for money—for drugs, paying the rent, or for some other reason.<sup>19</sup> Because such needs were 'almost invariably regarded by the offenders as pressing', they were 'not disposed to consider unfamiliar, complicated or long-term solutions' (*ibid.*: 60) to the perceived problem. Having decided to commit a burglary in response to the need, offenders then had to choose an area, and a specific target. The choice of areas was, surprisingly often, restricted by the fact that some offenders did not (at the time of the pressing need) have access to a car. Additionally, however—and congruently with the Brantinghams' model—searches were constrained by a psychological need to search only in locations 'with which [offenders] were already intimately familiar', since committing any offence is 'alive with hazards', and familiarity with the area reduces the perceived hazards. Thus, the emotional dimensions of the urgency of the perceived need, and the desire to stay within areas where the offenders felt comfortable, significantly reduced the complexity of the 'search pattern' process, exactly as the Brantinghams had predicted. Such factors clearly help to explain data that are apparently anomalous from the perspective of simple rational choice theory, such as high victimization rates in the poorest communities.<sup>20</sup>

Secondly, and taking the non-instrumental dimension a stage further, Jack Katz (1988) has argued that at least part of the reason why many people—especially young people—offend lies in the excitement, or 'buzz', of the offending itself. Indeed, a current longitudinal study in Sheffield (see Bottoms *et al.* 2004) is examining desistance and persistence among a sample of (mostly) highly recidivistic offenders in their early twenties; at first interview, members of this sample were asked to rate various perceived 'obstacles to going straight or staying straight', and no fewer than 60 per cent of them rated 'the need for excitement' as such an obstacle. This 'excitement' dimension of offending is strongly stressed by those who describe themselves as 'cultural criminologists'; such scholars also usually link such issues, in contemporary societies, to the development of a consumer culture, with its emphasis on display. Thus, for example, Keith Hayward's (2004: 157) recent text on urban crime offers a number of tentative suggestions as to how 'various features associated with consumer culture are creating and cultivating—especially among young people—new forms of concomitant subjectivity based around desire, simultaneity, individualism and impulsivity that, in many instances, are finding expression in certain forms of transgressive behaviour'.

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, Wright and Decker suggest that their work reveals more about the non-instrumental nature of burglars' actions than earlier studies because they interviewed active burglars who were not incarcerated. They argue that those in prison are more likely to rationalize the accounts of their previous actions.

<sup>20</sup> Rational choice theorists can and do respond to such observations by referring to the concept of 'bounded rationality'—for the truth is that none of us instrumentally calculates every decision in our lives; rather, we deploy rationality only within the limits (or bounds) of a set of habitual or working assumptions, and of the practical constraints that we face in seeking to put our plans into action (e.g. whether or not we have access to a car). Following such logics, many social scientists take the view that rational choice theory, using bounded rationality, can provide the basis of a unified and comprehensive theory of social behaviour. An alternative view, which is followed here, is that 'rational choice theory does provide empirically adequate explanations of certain social phenomena... [b]ut such explanations are adequate only under precise conditions, and many of the unresolved problems of rational choice theory as a research program result from extending its explanations beyond their proper, restricted scope' (Bohman 1992: 207). On this view, both emotionality and norms require analytic separation from instrumental rationality.

The research literature does not yet contain many clear examples of the ‘crime for excitement’ phenomenon that can be specifically linked to particular locations, but one good case study can be found—again—in the sphere of vehicle crime. This example concerns the phenomenon of youth from West Belfast taking cars, prior to the mid-1990s Irish Republican Army (IRA) ceasefire. The 1989 International Victimization Study (a cross-national crime survey carried out in 14 jurisdictions) found that, overall, in 1988 Northern Ireland had the lowest victimization prevalence rates of all the participating countries; however, its prevalence of vehicle-taking (as distinct from theft from vehicles) was actually above the mean for the countries concerned (van Dijk *et al.* 1990: 48).<sup>21</sup> But the distribution of vehicle-taking across Northern Ireland was, at that time, very highly skewed: in 1987 no fewer than 42 per cent of all cars illegally taken in the whole of Northern Ireland were recovered in the small area of West Belfast (McCullough *et al.* 1990: 2), hence the rate of offending relating to that neighbourhood was very high. At the time, West Belfast was largely a ‘no-go’ area for the official police (the Royal Ulster Constabulary) unless they used armoured vehicles; this was because of the strong support for the republican movement (including its armed wing) within the local community. In these unusual circumstances, formal social control in the area was therefore largely exercised by the Republican movement itself, including punishment beatings and shootings administered by the IRA (Moran 2006).

A small study of vehicle crime in West Belfast (McCullough *et al.* 1990), including interviews with offenders, commented on ‘the excitement in the area as a stolen car is raced about’ (1990: 8). The offenders had very unfavourable social prospects (they typically had no educational qualifications, and no work experience except on Youth Training programmes), in the light of which, it was reported, ‘the thrills and possibilities of car theft can become an exciting option’ for them (*op. cit.*: 9). In a complex set of social processes, their ‘joyriding’ tended to isolate them from the rest of the West Belfast community (because of the distress that it caused, notably through racing cars in the streets); yet that community was at that time itself a somewhat embattled social group because of the political context. The punishment beatings or shootings that offenders received could also sometimes ‘provoke an angry reaction from the joyriders’; indeed, ‘it has even been known for a severe punishment shooting to be followed by a heightened spate of car thefts in West Belfast—a collective act of defiance’ (*op. cit.*: 8).<sup>22</sup> It is clear that much of this evidence sits uneasily with the standard ‘theory toolbox’ of mainstream ‘location of offence’ researchers, based as it is on the rational-choice and routine-activities approaches. It is however important that our criminological imagination is broad enough to encompass such behaviour, as well as that more obviously

<sup>21</sup> A ‘prevalence rate’ in a crime victimization survey is the proportion of survey respondents reporting one or more victimizations for the offence(s) in question. For this measurement, therefore, single victims and multiple victims count equally. Prevalence rates are usually considered to be statistically more reliable than incidence rates.

<sup>22</sup> This is an example of a situation which itself seems to ‘actively bring on behaviour’ through a kind of provocation; that is, where ‘the motivation to commit crime may itself be situationally dependent’ (Wortley 2001: 63). Such observations have led to an important recent debate within situational crime prevention theory (Wortley 1998, 2001; Cornish and Clarke 2003).

motivated by instrumentally rational considerations. This is an important challenge for the socio-spatial criminology of the future.

### REPEAT VICTIMIZATION

A final topic relating to the location of offences is repeat victimization. A few studies of this topic have reported analyses, using police-recorded data, over a five- or six-year period. Such analyses show that some revictimizations of the same target (e.g. a particular house in studies of residential burglary) can occur years after the first offence, but still at a level that is well above chance (Kleemans 2001; Costello and Bottoms 2004). It is very unlikely that such revictimizations are due to the same offender returning, and the most plausible explanation is that there are some targets that, over time, are repeatedly attractive to different offenders, acting—unknown to one another—on the same set of cues. Such an explanation is, of course, fully congruent with opportunity theory.

Of greater interest for present purposes are repeat victimizations where the *very fact of the first offence seems to have heightened the probability of the second*; such revictimizations usually occur within weeks of the initial offence. This is the type of repeat victimization that has attracted the greatest interest in the criminological literature (see generally Farrell and Pease 2001), and there is research evidence (reviewed in Everson and Pease 2001) that many such crimes are due to the same offender returning. From the point of view of socio-spatial criminology, such offences (which are by no means rare) shape the overall locational pattern of offences because of offenders' motivation to return to the same crime-site—a motivation that is not yet fully understood, although in general terms it is clearly compatible with the kind of evidence uncovered in, for example, Wright and Decker's study of burglary (see above). Further research using BCS data has shown that the higher the *area prevalence rate* (see note 21 above) for a given offence in a given area, the higher the rate of repeat victimization among those who are victimized (Trickett *et al.* 1992; Farrell 1995)—though again, the reasons for this are not yet fully understood. Establishing the full dimensions of this complex picture of repeat victimization (involving area characteristics, target characteristics, and offender motivation) remains an important challenge for socio-spatial criminology.

## SOCIO-SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF INCIVILITIES AND DISORDER

Around the turn of the millennium, an interesting conversation took place in Surrey between its then Chief Constable and researchers from the University of Surrey. The Chief Constable pointed out that the police seemed to be dealing with a new problem. Overall recorded crime rates, and BCS victimization data, suggested that most crime had been falling since the mid-1990s, but public anxiety about crime remained high, with, for example, surveys showing that most people believed crime rates were continuing to

increase. Why, the Chief Constable asked, was this happening, and what should the police response be?

A key conceptual move made by the researchers in response to this puzzle was to argue that, as Martin Innes (2004: 336) later put it, the criminological literature lacked 'a coherent explanation of the public understanding of crime and disorder, and how such understandings are imbricated in the wider symbolic construction of social space'. To fill this gap, the researchers' 'central proposition' was that '*some crime and disorder incidents matter more than others to people in terms of shaping their risk perceptions*' (Innes 2004: 336, emphasis added). Thus, for example, three spouse murders in a medium-sized town in a year would be unusual, but would not necessarily create widespread fear, or a sense of threat, in the community at large, because they would be seen as 'private matters'. By contrast, the abduction and murder of a local schoolgirl on her way to school would almost certainly generate much more fear, and a sense of threat, in the area, because of the *signal* it would transmit about potential risks in the community. In the light of this signal, ordinary people might freshly consider as 'risky' certain places, people, or situations that they could easily encounter in their everyday lives; hence signals are 'social semiotic processes by which different crimes and disorders might have a disproportionate effect' in terms of fear and perceived threat (Innes and Fielding 2002: Abstract).

These core ideas were subsequently developed by Martin Innes in his work for the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP). As part of that programme, Innes and colleagues conducted detailed qualitative interviews in 16 residential areas across England, asking representative respondents in each area what they would identify as the key *potential threats to neighbourhood safety* in their area. Some early results from six areas are shown in Figure 17.4 (later results are similar). For each area (here designated 'A' to 'F'), respondents' perceived threats to neighbourhood safety are listed in descending order of importance; thus, for example, in Area F 'drugs' were perceived as the principal threat to neighbourhood safety, followed by 'youths hanging around' and 'public drinking'.

Three points are especially striking about the information in this figure. First, there is some significant variation by area in the details of the responses. Secondly, however, there are some common themes that clearly emerge as the first three perceived 'signals' of lack of neighbourhood safety in the six areas: they are 'youths hanging around', drugs, litter/graffiti, damage, and public drinking. Thirdly, it is extremely interesting that burglary does not appear in the 'top three' in any of the six areas, and only features at all in three areas.

What explains the second and third points above? The answer seems to lie in the fact that the most commonly identified 'top signals' are all *disorderly events occurring in public space*. Thus, perhaps, these kinds of incidents send a powerful signal to residents (in a way that residential burglaries do not) that 'my area is out of control'. As one respondent put it to Innes (2004: 348):

Yes, it is daft, it is almost daft, but graffiti is the thing that sort of bothers me more, because it is in my face every day. I mean obviously rape and murder are more horrendous crimes, but it is graffiti that I see.

Crime or Disorder 'Signal'*	Areas					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Drugs	Youths hanging around	Youths hanging around	Youths hanging around	Youths hanging around	Drugs
2	Youths hanging around	Litter	Graffiti, litter and public urination	Vandalism and damage	Drugs	Youths hanging around
3	Assault	Damage	Damage	Public violence and drinking	Damage and graffiti	Public drinking
4	Burglary	Public drinking	Public violence and mugging	Racing vehicles and skateboarding	Abandoned /racing vehicles	Antisocial neighbours
5	Mugging	Public violence and speeding	Drugs	Murder	Burglary	Damage
6	Public drinking	Verbal abuse	Burglary		Verbal abuse	Gangs

**Fig. 17.4** National Reassurance Policing Project: top 'crime and disorder signals' across trial areas

\* Crime or disorder signals are listed in descending order of perceived importance in each area.

Source: Innes, M., Hayden, S., Lowe, T., Roberts, C., and Twyman, L. (2004), *Signal Crimes and Reassurance Policing (Volume 1)*, Guildford: University of Surrey.

In short, the Surrey data show that even quite minor incivilities in an area can, on occasion—and especially if persistent ('in my face every day')—be perceived as major threats to local safety.

National data on incivilities in residential areas can be derived from the British Crime Survey, and two findings from the Survey are of especial importance in the present context. First, since 1992 the BCS has continually tracked responses to questions asking people whether, in their view, certain matters constitute a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem in their residential area: the chosen indicators are 'rubbish or litter', 'vandalism and graffiti', 'teenagers hanging around', 'drug use or dealing', and 'noisy neighbours'. For all of these indicators, perceived problem levels were static, or slightly increasing, in the 11 years 1992–2002 inclusive (Wood 2004: 12), by contrast to the decreases in both recorded crime and the victimization counts of the BCS; though since 2002 the 'disorder' indicators also show a small decrease (Nicholas *et al.* 2005: 23).

If these respondents' perceptions accurately reflect real disorder levels,<sup>23</sup> then—given the Surrey University results on the importance of disorders as perceived indicators of local threat—these data certainly help to answer the Chief Constable of Surrey's question about why public anxieties have remained high.

<sup>23</sup> This raises difficult methodological issues which cannot be fully discussed here.

Secondly, the BCS provides specific data on the perceptions of disorders in different kinds of neighbourhoods; these consistently show that respondents in economically deprived areas report a far higher incidence of both 'physical' and 'social' disorders than do those in better-off areas (Wood 2004).<sup>24</sup>

These various data pose two central explanatory questions for the socio-spatial criminologist. These are, first, *why* do disorders in the public spaces of neighbourhoods appear to be of such significance as threats to the perceived safety of residents—more so, for example, than residential burglary? And, secondly, what explains the preponderance of disorders in economically deprived areas?

On the first point, the best answer (see generally Innes 2004; Bottoms 2006) seems to focus upon relating incivilities to people's *general sense of order* in a locality, bearing in mind Goffman's (1972: 241) observation that the non-performance of conventional courtesies in public places can act as an 'alarming signal' to individuals that something is wrong. There is clear social-scientific evidence that human beings value a *degree of predictability and order in everyday routines*,<sup>25</sup> and where this is disturbed by, for example, social disorders such as youths shouting insults, or physical disorders such as encountering a pool of urine in the lift, this can lead to genuine emotional upset and concern. Jack Barbalet (1998: 141) has also cogently argued that the basic needs of human beings include not only physical and individual needs, but also 'the need for society, the need for collective and co-operative activity'. If all this is correct, it is not surprising that apparent threats to predictable and peaceable social order in communal spaces can generate what at first sight seem to be surprisingly strong empirical results, such as those shown in Figure 17.4. To use the language of Anthony Giddens (see note 25 above), it would seem that incivilities have the capacity to generate genuine 'ontological insecurities', that is, insecurities that can strike at the very roots of people's welfare and self-understanding as sentient beings. Or, to put the point slightly differently (as Girling *et al.* (2000: 170) did after a study of a small town in 'Middle England'), ordinary people's 'everyday talk about crime and order (its intensity, the vocabularies used, the imagery mobilized, the associations that are made), *both depends upon, and helps to constitute, their sense of place*' (emphasis added).

This leads us to the second question, namely, why are incivilities focused in the poorest areas? One possible answer to this question is that high offender rates are also concentrated in poor areas (see a later section of this chapter), and that high disorder in an area is simply a by-product of high local offender rates. However, this answer is less than fully convincing, given that (i) in England and Wales from the mid-1990s disorder

<sup>24</sup> The distinction between 'physical' disorders (litter, graffiti, the residue of vandalism, drugs needles on the street, etc.) and 'social' disorders (noisy neighbours, young people hanging around and being rude, prostitution, etc.), is well established in the US literature—see, e.g., Skogan (1990).

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., for example Giddens (1984: 64): 'Ordinary day-to-day social life... involves an ontological security founded on an autonomy of bodily control within predictable routines and encounters. The routinized character of the paths along which individuals move in... daily life... is "made to happen" by the modes of reflexive monitoring of action which individuals sustain in circumstances of co-presence. The "swamping" of habitual modes of activity by anxiety that cannot be adequately contained by the basic security system is specifically a feature of critical situations.' On 'the problem of social order' see further Elster (1989) and Wrong (1995).

apparently did not decrease, whilst offending did (see above); and (ii) there is other evidence of disorder and offending not always being co-incident in local areas (Taub *et al.* 1984). A possible alternative answer (see Bottoms 2006) focuses instead on recent social change—specifically, the social conditions of ‘late modernity’. In the United Kingdom, traditional industries have declined, and long-term unemployment (especially for unskilled males) is much higher than it was before 1980, so those in the poorest areas often face the future with pessimism. Yet all this is occurring within a society where GDP continues to grow, the division between rich and poor has significantly widened, and a consumerist ethos places emphasis on desirable display and hedonism (Hayward 2004, Boutellier 2004). Not surprisingly, in these circumstances there is less social solidarity in the poorest areas, with (sometimes at least) a particular lack of understanding between old and young. And, as Bryan Turner has recently emphasized, ‘the erosion of common values and shared sentiments undermines trust’ (Turner 2006). Given all this, it is perhaps not surprising that much of the behaviour described as ‘disorder’ in the poorest residential areas is ‘non-instrumental behaviour’ by the young, ‘undertaken to cause symbolic affront’ (Turner 2006). This analysis has here been only briefly sketched; but if its general thrust is correct, then contemporary incivilities are very closely linked to the changing nature of contemporary economies and contemporary cities, discussed early in this chapter. The non-instrumental, expressive character of much disorderly behaviour also reinforces the case for socio-spatial criminologists to pay more attention than hitherto to this kind of behaviour (see earlier discussion).

There is one further matter relating to incivilities that requires discussion, and that is the famous thesis—known colloquially as the ‘broken windows hypothesis’—which postulates that if disorders in an area are left unchecked, they will escalate, and this will lead inexorably to the arrival of much more serious crime (and criminal actors) in the neighbourhood. The best-known exponents of this thesis were Wilson and Kelling (1982) (see also Kelling and Coles 1996), and the thesis seemed to be supported by later research by Skogan (1990). More recent research, however, requires a more sceptical evaluation of the thesis, and here two contributions have been of special importance. First, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) directly tested the assumption of the broken windows hypothesis that ‘disorder [is] a fundamental cause of crime’ against their own alternative hypothesis. Their postulated view was first, that ‘disorder is a manifestation of crime-relevant mechanisms and that *collective efficacy* should reduce disorder and violence by disempowering the forces that produce both’; and secondly, that ‘structural constraints such as resource disadvantage account for both crime and disorder’ (*ibid.*: 614, emphasis added). Since Sampson and Raudenbush’s empirical tests favoured their own hypothesis, it is quite important to understand exactly what they meant by ‘collective efficacy’. We can reasonably speak, these authors argue, of an individual having or failing to have ‘efficacy’ (that is, being able to achieve what he or she wants to achieve); in a similar manner, they say, we can speak of differential ‘collective efficacy’ between areas, on the assumption that (among other things) all communities share the goal of wanting a safe neighbourhood. ‘Collective efficacy’ is then more precisely defined as comprising two linked elements: first, the willingness of local residents (as judged by

survey responses) to intervene for the common good in defined situations (such as children spray-painting graffiti on a building); and secondly, the existence or otherwise of 'conditions of cohesion and mutual trust among neighbors' (since 'one is unlikely to take action in a neighborhood context where the rules are unclear and people mistrust each other'). Thus, the concept of collective efficacy incorporates both a static 'relations of trust' dimension and a more action-oriented 'willingness to intervene' dimension.

Although the empirical data in this study favoured Sampson and Raudenbush's hypothesis over Wilson and Kelling's, it is important to note that in their conclusions the authors emphasized that the results do not 'imply the theoretical irrelevance of disorder' (1999: 637). On the contrary, their results negate only the direct 'broken windows lead to serious crime' hypothesis. Since, however, the authors also consider that disorders 'comprise highly visible cues to which neighborhood observers respond', it follows that disorder might indeed 'turn out to be important for understanding migration patterns, investment by business and overall neighborhood viability', in which case it could 'indirectly have an effect on crime' (*ibid.*).

The second major evaluation of the 'broken windows' thesis was by Ralph Taylor (2001), based on research in Baltimore. It is more explicitly longitudinal than Sampson and Raudenbush's work, and uses data for 66 areas of the city in 1981, and in 30 of the same areas in 1994.

In one sense, Taylor's research results could be said to be more positive for the broken windows hypothesis than Sampson and Raudenbush's. He did find partial support for the thesis: 'incivilities do affect some later changes in crime rates, in neighborhood fabric and in reactions to crime' (2001: 231). But there were two crucial qualifications to be made. First, 'the pattern of results has not proved robust across indicators or outcomes'. Secondly, the inconsistency of the longitudinal results for incivilities contrasts with 'other, more consistent' findings in the analysis, in particular the strength of the initial economic status and the initial racial composition of the area in predicting later outcomes. Disorder, in short, is a less strong predictor of serious crime than neighbourhood structural context.

Taylor's more general conclusion, arising from his results, is forcefully made (2001: 20), and is consistent with Sampson and Raudenbush's results as well as his own. His important message is that theorizing on incivilities

needs to reconnect more firmly with works in the areas of urban sociology, urban political economy, collective community crime prevention and organizational participation. Changes in neighborhood fabric, neighborhood crime rates and residents' safety concerns are each tangled topics with a range of causes. To gain a clearer picture of these processes, it is necessary to break away from [incivilities] *per se*, and broaden the lines of inquiry.

There is no doubt that the strong version of the 'broken windows' thesis has been severely damaged by the rigorous empirical analyses of Sampson and Raudenbush and Taylor. However, neither of these alternative analyses rejects the potential significance of disorders in affecting some social outcomes, such as residents' confidence in the neighbourhood, or moving decisions (and these outcomes were also previously

emphasized by Skogan (1990)). That is an important conclusion because, as Innes (2004: 340) has reminded us, criminal justice agencies such as the police have traditionally tended to dismiss disorders as ‘comparatively trivial’ (by comparison with ‘real crimes’ such as burglary). The ‘broken windows’ thesis was faulty in claiming almost inevitable escalatory crime outcomes from the existence of disorder; but at least it can be said to have engaged ‘with the problem of why, when asked about their experiences and anxieties concerning crime, members of the public consistently attach considerable significance to . . . physical and social disorder’ (Innes 2004: 340). It would seem, therefore, that we need better theoretical guidance for policy than ‘broken windows’ has offered us, but without reverting to a trivialization of disorders in policy terms. We also need to make sure that disorders are considered not in isolation, but in their total social context, ‘reconnecting’ criminology with urban sociology, urban political economy, and so on.

A possible policy lead in these circumstances is provided by Innes’s (2004) concept of ‘control signals’. For Innes, just as a ‘signal crime or disorder’ acts as a warning signal to people about potential risks or threats in the community (see above), so a ‘control signal’ is said to be ‘an act of social control that communicates an attempt to regulate disorderly and deviant behaviour’. A useful empirical example of ‘control signals’ in action derives from some Chicago research published twenty years ago by Taub *et al.* (1984). They found evidence of two city neighbourhoods (Lincoln Park and Hyde Park/Kenwood) which had high crime rates, but also (i) positive ‘satisfaction with safety’ scores in residents’ surveys, and (ii) rapidly appreciating residential property values. Clearly, these results are unexpected: one would normally expect high crime rates to coincide with depressed property values and low feelings of safety. In both neighbourhoods, however, the authors reported that ‘there [were] highly visible signs of extra community resources being used to deal with the crime problem’ (*ibid.*: 172), and to generate confidence in the area. By no means all of this activity was initiated by the police; for example in Hyde Park/Kenwood, those managing the regeneration (including the University of Chicago, which is located in the area) themselves invested heavily in the urban infrastructure, and also helped to obtain substantial federal urban renewal funds for the neighbourhood; additionally, they directly addressed residents’ ‘safety in public space’ issues by introducing a private security force, 24-hour ‘safety buses’, and emergency telephones on street corners. It is not hard to see how all this could send a strongly positive ‘control signal’ to residents; the message would be, ‘powerful people in this neighbourhood are taking seriously the need to halt the decline of the urban infrastructure, and the need to make the area feel safe to residents’.

Is there any evidence that a ‘control signals’ approach of this kind actually works, empirically speaking? The best evidence is very recent, and comes from the Home Office’s evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (Tuffin *et al.* 2006)—to which, it will be recalled, Martin Innes’s own research has been closely linked. The NRPP was conducted in 16 sites, using Innes’s conceptualization to guide police managers in consulting the public about ‘threats to safety’ (of the kind shown in Figure 17.4); in response to such perceived threats, police managers then tried to

develop appropriate action strategies, closely targeted to the perceived threats. For six of the sites, Home Office researchers were able to identify viable control areas, and then to measure before/after changes in the experimental sites, by comparison with the designated control site. The results were encouraging, auguring well for the 'signal crimes' perspective, although further replication is needed before one treats the conclusions as definitive.

Seeking to build on this positive result, in an earlier essay (Bottoms 2006), I have also suggested the possibility—based on wider research evidence—that, in any given area the successful deployment by the powerful of effective 'control signals' will enhance the likelihood that ordinary citizens will exercise improved 'collective efficacy'. This suggestion also seems consistent with Sampson and Raudenbush's theorization, since 'relations of trust' are, for these authors, a component of collective efficacy, and it seems reasonable, on all the evidence, that effective control signals could generate enhanced trust within a community. These suggestions are tentative, but seem well worthy of further exploration.<sup>26</sup>

## EXPLAINING THE LOCATION OF OFFENDER RESIDENCE

As seen in an earlier section, traditionally the study of the location of offender residence was dominated by the conceptualizations of the Chicago School; and their explanations were themselves strongly influenced by the facts of stability over time in the zonal distribution of area offender rates, the nature of land use in different zones of the city, and the social instability in the 'zone of transition'.

Post Second World War evidence, however, dealt a heavy blow to some of these underpinning assumptions. For example, as previously indicated, because of the location of some social housing, offender rates in post-war British cities have borne little resemblance to the Chicagoan concentric ring pattern; and evidence from Sheffield showed that high-offender-rate areas did not necessarily have high residential mobility rates (Baldwin and Bottoms 1976: ch. 7; Bottoms *et al.* 1989).<sup>27</sup> Hence, socio-spatial

<sup>26</sup> A topic much in the news in relation to incivilities (or 'antisocial behaviour') is the antisocial behaviour order (ASBO). This topic cannot be discussed fully here, but, in brief, while some might regard ASBOs as effective 'control signals', others argue (in effect) that their use to date falls foul of the trap identified by Ralph Taylor (2001); on this latter view, ASBOs take a high-profile 'enforcement' approach to individual cases, but such actions can too easily be taken in isolation from analysis of the more general social conditions and problems in the area. It is difficult to resolve this debate in the absence of convincing empirical evidence on the effect of ASBOs (cf. reassurance policing, which has been much more rigorously researched). See more fully the essays in von Hirsch and Simester (2006), including Bottoms (2006).

<sup>27</sup> Even in Chicago, careful analysis by Bursik (1986) showed that the old areal regularities had broken down, and that while the areas of the city that underwent the most rapid social change generally experienced considerable increases in delinquency, nevertheless there were some atypical areas where this relationship did not hold.

criminologists do not now utilize Burgess's zonal theory of city development, nor do they assume an axiomatic linkage of high area offender rates with high residential mobility. Interestingly, however, the Chicagoan 'social disorganization' tradition has a direct theoretical successor in the 'collective efficacy' research approach.<sup>28</sup>

As a prelude to any discussion of areal offender rates, it is initially useful to consider how, in principle, area of residence and offender rates might be statistically related. This might occur, first, because more or less crime-prone individuals or groups are distributed (by the dynamics of the local housing market) to certain areas. However, in this kind of correlation, the social life of the area does not itself affect the criminality levels of the residents. But secondly, in principle *the social life of the area might itself influence criminal motivation*. This possible influence might be transient—for example, acquaintance patterns among local residents might lead to some being influenced by others to commit offences. Alternatively, however, the social life of an area might have longer-term effects on a person's daily routines, social activities, thought processes, etc, such that his or her overall propensity to commit crime in certain situations is intrinsically affected. This kind of longer-term effect is obviously most likely to be manifested among young residents of an area, but the possibility of its occurring among older residents should not be ruled out.

### DO NEIGHBOURHOOD EFFECTS ON OFFENDER RATES EXIST?

Some criminologists (e.g. Wilson and Herrnstein 1985) have expressed scepticism about the existence of neighbourhood effects on criminal careers. The argument of the sceptics is that research has uncovered a number of key 'risk factors' in the causation of offending which are individual in nature, such as low intelligence and ineffective parenting. They further argue that research on criminal careers shows that persistent offenders typically begin to offend early in life, well before communal factors—such as delinquent peers or neighbourhood processes—could play much of a role (Wilson and Herrnstein 1985: 311).

Using data from the Pittsburgh Youth Study (a major longitudinal research project on male criminal careers), Wikström and Loeber (2000) set out to assess this sceptical case. They divided their sample into those with high individual risk scores for criminality, those with high protective scores (the obverse of individual risk factors), and an intermediate

<sup>28</sup> Although there are clear continuities between the concepts of social disorganization and collective efficacy, there is also one important difference. In testing social disorganization theory in the late 1980s, Sampson and Groves (1989: 779) assumed that 'local friendship networks' were an important dimension of local community social organization, and hence that their absence indicated 'social disorganization'. The concept of 'collective efficacy' makes no such assumption, reflecting the dual realisation (i) that some middle-class areas have few friendship networks but can nevertheless—when necessary—organize well to produce 'collective efficacy', (ii) that 'what many impoverished and dangerous neighborhoods have in common is a relatively high degree of social integration (high levels of local neighboring while being relatively isolated from contacts in the broader mainstream society) and low levels of informal social control (feelings that they have little control over their immediate environment, including the environment's negative influence on their children' (Wilson 1996: 63).

group, which was numerically the largest. They also divided the sample into four groups by 'neighbourhood context': these comprised those living in advantaged, middle range, and disadvantaged areas, the latter being further subdivided into areas of public housing and non-public housing. Table 17.2(a) shows the principal results for serious juvenile offending. In the sample as a whole, the proportion of boys who became serious juvenile offenders rose rapidly as one moved from those with a high protective score to those with a high risk score (in advantaged and middle-range areas, from less than 10 per cent to over 70 per cent). Among individuals with high individual risk scores, there was no neighbourhood effect (all types of residential area had offending rates between 70 per cent and 80 per cent among high-risk boys). But for those outside the high risk group, living in a disadvantaged area with public housing tenure significantly increased the probability of offending; for these youths, therefore, there seemed to be a clear neighbourhood effect.<sup>29</sup> Further analysis showed, however, that in one respect Wilson and Herrnstein's scepticism was apparently correct: for a first serious offence at the age of 12 or less, no neighbourhood effect was discernible in any of the risk groups.

The results shown in Table 17.2(a) are, nevertheless, in an important sense incomplete, and they almost certainly underestimate the neighbourhood effects on juvenile offending in Pittsburgh. To understand this point, Table 17.2(b) should be examined. This shows, in detail, the percentage of research subjects in different types of neighbourhood who were assessed as 'high risk' on each of the six variables that comprised the 'risk-protective score'. As may be seen, the overall risk index (bottom row of table) produced markedly higher scores in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, especially public housing areas; and these overall differences were predominantly the result of strong area differences in the individual variables of 'low school motivation', 'poor parental supervision', and 'lack of guilt'. It is obviously in principle possible that each of these allegedly 'individual' factors might have been significantly influenced by the community context in which the youths had been raised (e.g. parenting styles might have been learned, perhaps years ago, by parents from their relatives or neighbours; 'lack of guilt' might be influenced by the dominant norms of the local community, and so forth). Since, however, Table 17.2(a) controls for these 'individual' risk factors, it follows that it might in fact be 'overcontrolling'—that is, in effect Table 17.2(a) could be said to be unwarrantably discounting the possibility of such indirect neighbourhood effects. This possibility is explicitly recognized by Wikström and Loeber (2000: 1134).<sup>30</sup>

We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that neighbourhood effects on offending can and do sometimes exist. In a direct sense, they are weaker than the so-called 'individual risk factors', as Table 17.2(a) shows; but these 'individual' risk factors almost certainly

<sup>29</sup> It is also important to note that, in the disadvantaged public housing areas, there was little difference (and no statistically significant difference) in the offender rate by the number of risk or protective factors present. Thus, in these areas, the neighbourhood context appeared to 'swamp' the effects of individual risk factors that were—in other areas—highly significant.

<sup>30</sup> For interesting parallel work in psychology see Bronfenbrenner (1979); the relevance of Bronfenbrenner's work for criminologists is well discussed by Martens (1993).

**Table 17.2** Key results from the Pittsburgh Youth Study

(a) Per cent having committed serious offence by risk/protective score and neighbourhood context

	Neighbourhood context					
	Advantaged	Middle-range	Non-public	Public	Gamma	N
High Protective Score	11.1	5.1	16.7	37.5	0.23	155
Balanced Risk and Protective Score	27.3	40.1	38.5	60.7	0.23	651
High Risk Score	77.8	71.3	78.3	70.0	n.s.	222
Gamma	0.70	0.74	0.69	n.s.		
N	142	556	188	142		

(b) Per cent subjects with high risk scores by neighbourhood context

	Neighbourhood context					
	Advantaged	Middle-range	Non-public	Public	Gamma	N
High Hyperactivity-Impulsivity-Attention Problems	13.8	20.9	28.7	20.1	0.15	1436
Lack of Guilt	19.2	30.0	35.5	46.0	0.26	1254
Poor Parental Supervision	15.8	22.8	29.1	39.7	0.28	1414
Low School Motivation	21.9	31.2	44.9	47.6	0.30	1432
Many Peer Delinquents	17.9	22.9	27.7	29.4	0.15	1323
Positive Perception of Anti-Social Behaviour	29.2	25.8	19.8	25.9	n.s.	1431
Risk Index	13.3	19.9	28.8	34.9	0.30	1148

Source: Wikström, P.-O.H., and Loeber, R., 'Do Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods cause Well-adjusted Children to be Adolescent Delinquents? A Study of Male Serious Juvenile Offending, Individual Risk and Protective Factors and Neighbourhood Context', in *Criminology*, 38: 1109–42 © 2000. Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishing.

themselves often incorporate significant 'hidden' neighbourhood effects. We may finally note one further interesting feature of the Pittsburgh study, namely that the neighbourhood effect was particularly evident in 'public housing' areas. In the US context, 'public housing' means both severe and concentrated economic disadvantage, and a specific housing tenure; and that thought directs us to a fuller examination of both of these matters in the context of offender rates.

## AREAS OF CONCENTRATED DISADVANTAGE

Is there evidence that areas of concentrated disadvantage have high offender rates? And, if they do, is there a causal link between the disadvantage and the offending?

On the first question, two recent British studies provide rather striking evidence. Roger Houchin (2005) conducted a study of the home addresses (prior to incarceration) of the Scottish male prison population on the night of June 30 2003. He found that a quarter of the prison population had lived in just 53 (4 per cent) of the 1,232 local government wards in Scotland; and, further, that taking all wards together, there was a close and positive relationship between each ward's number of prisoners and its score on the official Index of Multiple Deprivation. Craglia and Costello (2006) conducted a parallel study in South Yorkshire, though with two main differences: first, the geographical units they utilized were not wards but the much smaller 'census output areas'; and secondly, they studied the annual offender rate for each small area, thus including not only those sent to prison but also the much larger number of those dealt with non-custodially. Their findings were, nevertheless, strikingly similar to Houchin's. Box 17.1 shows the results, from this study, of a regression using the area offender rate as the dependent variable; the predominance of factors associated with either poverty or unpopular housing stock is very evident.<sup>31</sup>

So, economically and socially disadvantaged areas have high offender rates, but does the disadvantage cause the offending? In overall terms, the answer to this question is clearly in the negative, since known offenders (such as ex-prisoners) may and do gravitate to economically deprived areas in search of cheap accommodation, and criminal

### **Box 17.1 REGRESSION ON SMALL-AREA OFFENDER RATES IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE:**

#### **INCLUDED VARIABLES**

- X1 = Per cent unemployed in economically active age-groups (excluding students, disabled, home carers, etc.).
- X2 = Per cent of households renting from other (i.e. hostels, boarding houses, and other communal establishments)
- X3 = Per cent of households with lone parents with dependent children
- X4 = Per cent of residential spaces vacant ('voids')
- X5 = Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004—Health Domain score
- X6 = Index of multiple deprivation 2004—Crime Domain score
- R<sup>2</sup> = 0.82

*Source:* Craglia and Costello (2005), 'A model of offenders in England' in F. Toppen and M. Painho.

<sup>31</sup> Note also that the final variable in the equation (X6) is an offence location variable, thus confirming that, in residential neighbourhoods, there is overall a positive correlation between offender rates and offence rates, at least on police data.

justice agencies such as the Probation Service often tend to locate their specialist hostel accommodation in such areas. Clearly, in such situations, the disadvantaged area acts as an attractor of existing offenders (some of whom may then reoffend), not as a causal creator of fresh offences. On the other hand, we have observed in the Pittsburgh example (above) what seems—in one city at least—to be a causal relationship between disadvantage and serious juvenile offending. Can we make any progress in disentangling what is clearly a very complex set of social circumstances in disadvantaged areas?

There have been a number of recent reviews of this issue, all of which agree that the empirical evidence is not wholly consistent across studies, probably because of the complexity of interacting factors, and variation in different cities. I shall select here some highlights from three different reviews, each of which makes a useful point.

First, Weatherburn and Lind (2001), after a careful review, suggest that effects of economic stress on criminality do exist, but these are mediated principally through parenting, since there is empirical evidence that both economic and social stress exert 'a very disruptive effect on the parenting process' (*ibid.*: 44).<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the housing market's concentration of deprived and stressed families in disadvantaged areas 'can be expected to produce adverse effects on parenting above and beyond those which would be expected if they were distributed across neighbourhoods independently of each other' (*ibid.*: 45). Nevertheless, according to these authors the effects of defective parenting on criminality are not all direct, but are probably mediated at least in part by association with delinquent peers, arising from the weaker parental supervision over childrens' leisure time in disadvantaged areas (*ibid.*: 66).

Secondly, Sampson *et al.* (2002: 465) concur with the view that 'social and institutional processes [such as parenting] mediate the association of neighborhood structural factors with crime'. The mediating process that they particularly emphasize is the 'construct of collective efficacy' (*ibid.*: 459), as previously developed by Sampson and others (see above). Despite such mediating factors, however, these authors note that, at least in the US context, 'factors such as concentrated disadvantage... remain direct predictors of many outcomes' (*ibid.*: 465). Like Weatherburn and Lind on parenting, they also point out that collective efficacy, while apparently very important in relation to local offending rates, is 'not produced in a vacuum', and is more easily generated 'in environments with a sufficient endowment of socioeconomic resources and residential stability' (*ibid.*: 465). To which one might add (see earlier discussion) that clear 'control signals', in Innes's sense, also appear—at least tentatively—to promote the exercise of collective efficacy by local residents.

A third review of this topic is by Oberwittler (2005). He suggests that the evidence for a 'concentrated disadvantage effect' on offending is greater from US research than from European studies, a conclusion that arguably might be related to the greater

<sup>32</sup> Weatherburn and Lind (2001: ch. 1) identify a number of problems with what they call the 'ESIOM' paradigm ('economic stress-induced offender motivation'); these include for example the 'non-utilitarian crime anomaly', i.e. that rates of violent crime are strongly statistically associated with economic disadvantage, but the motivation for violence is rarely economic. The authors believe that all the identified anomalies can be overcome when the effects of economic stress are seen as mediated through parenting.

economic inequality, and weaker welfare safety nets, in the USA. Presenting data from his own empirical study in Cologne and Freiburg (see also Oberwittler 2004), Oberwittler reports an overall neighbourhood contextual effect on serious youth crime after controlling for individual disadvantage, though there were a number of differential effects for specific sub-groups. Some of these effects were quite complex and interesting. For example, many native-born German youths spent much of their leisure time with friends from outside their immediate residential area, and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods it was above all the 'youths of low educational status and with a preference for unsupervised routine activities that have local friends'. Moreover, in this study, only if a youth's friends came from the (home) disadvantaged neighbourhood was there a neighbourhood contextual effect on offending. Oberwittler points out the very important implications of this kind of finding—scholars must, when studying potential neighbourhood effects on offending, cease to take 'the neighbourhood as a fixed environmental context', and start instead to trace in detail the actual 'daily itineraries' and social interactions of different groups of neighbourhood residents. This will include, in the case of adolescents, measuring potential 'school effects' as opposed to 'neighbourhood effects' (at least where, as is increasingly the case, school admissions policies are not simply based on geographical catchment areas). These last points are of great potential significance for the future of socio-spatial criminology. Traditionally, the 'environmental criminologists' of the past have tended to study only *neighbourhood* effects, but 'environments' are not simply neighbourhoods, as the 'socio-spatial' terminology (see note 3 above) emphasizes. The Brantinghams (see earlier section of this chapter) have very usefully drawn attention to offenders' routine activities (including non-criminal activities) in relation to the specific locations of offences—but, it is clear, we need to expand this approach to consider how the active use of space varies as between people from different kinds of neighbourhoods; and, within neighbourhoods, also people of different ages, males and females, young people from different schools, and so on. Research in this field has begun, but is still in its infancy (see, for example, Wikström and Sampson (2003) on 'eometrics').

### THE ROLE OF THE HOUSING MARKET

As indicated in an earlier section of this chapter, in the 1970s and early 1980s research studies in Sheffield strongly suggested that the operations of housing markets might be relevant to the spatial distribution of offender rates, over and above other relevant variables such as the social class distribution of households in the area (Baldwin and Bottoms 1976; Bottoms and Wiles 1986). Subsequently, Wikström (1991) produced similar results, based on a path model analysis for offender rates in different areas of Stockholm.

To illustrate housing market effects on offending levels more concretely, I will focus attention here on one particular case study—namely, research conducted by Janet Foster and Tim Hope (1993: ch. 8) on a public sector housing estate in Hull. This estate was studied as part of research into the so-called 'Priority Estates Project' (PEP) improvement initiative in selected difficult housing areas across England.

The PEP improvement programme on the Hull estate had two linked features. First, there were some management changes, focused especially on greater tenant consultation in the running of the estate. Secondly, a number of environmental improvements were also initiated in part of the estate, notably various 'defensible space' changes to some low-rise housing, including 'the addition of front gardens, fencing, and blocking off walkways' (Foster and Hope 1993: 36).<sup>33</sup> The researchers adopted a quasi-experimental evaluative design to assess these various changes, including comparing the estate with a 'control' estate; and they utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In brief, they found a number of significant reductions in crime levels in the low-rise part of the estate, as a result of the PEP improvements, with both design and management changes apparently playing their part. Simultaneously, however, there was an unplanned-for change in the composition of the tenant population in three tower blocks on the same estate. In the past, these blocks had incorporated a substantial proportion (over 40 per cent) of elderly tenants; but during the study period, tenant vacancies in the tower blocks increased significantly—partly through natural causes (illness, deaths) and partly because of a planned transfer of some older tenants to low-rise housing. The resulting tower block vacancies were allocated to new tenants in accordance with the standard lettings rules of the local authority; but, as it happened, these allocations brought to the area new tenants who were disproportionately young, poor, unemployed, and single, including some who had recently been released from prison or a young offenders' institution. This influx of new tenants had the effect of increasing the number of criminal acts in that part of the estate simply because of the arrival of more criminally prone residents; but it also had more complex consequences, described by the researchers as follows:

At the outset of the study, adolescent 'gang' members on the estate tended to be distinct from the adult criminal networks... but as the young people moved into the tower blocks on the estate, they began to form links between the estate adults and adolescents. Members of the adolescent gang started to use the youths' flats in the tower blocks... to 'hang out'; while the youths began to establish or solidify contacts with older persons involved in offending. The consequence was a widening and deepening of the networks of adolescents, youths and adults engaged in criminal activities on the estate [Foster and Hope 1993: 76].

Thus, the operation of the housing market in the Hull estate had the unintended effect of producing what the authors describe as a 'deepening criminal network', linking previously separate groups in the area. It is an analytically telling (if substantively depressing) example of the way in which housing market processes can influence area criminality in broader ways than simply altering the composition of the resident population. Not dissimilarly, in Sheffield, a detailed case study was carried out in two adjacent housing areas, which were in demographic and social class terms very similar,

<sup>33</sup> 'Defensible space' is an architecturally based crime prevention approach originally developed by Oscar Newman (1973). Architectural crime prevention approaches are not always successful: see, e.g., Department of the Environment (1997).

but which had markedly different offending rates. In these areas, the operation of the housing market seemed to hold the key to the maintenance of this offending differential (Bottoms *et al.* 1989).<sup>34</sup> Hence, it is clear that in studying offender rates in a given local area, attention should always be paid to the possibility of both direct and indirect effects of housing market processes.

### TOWARDS EXPLANATION

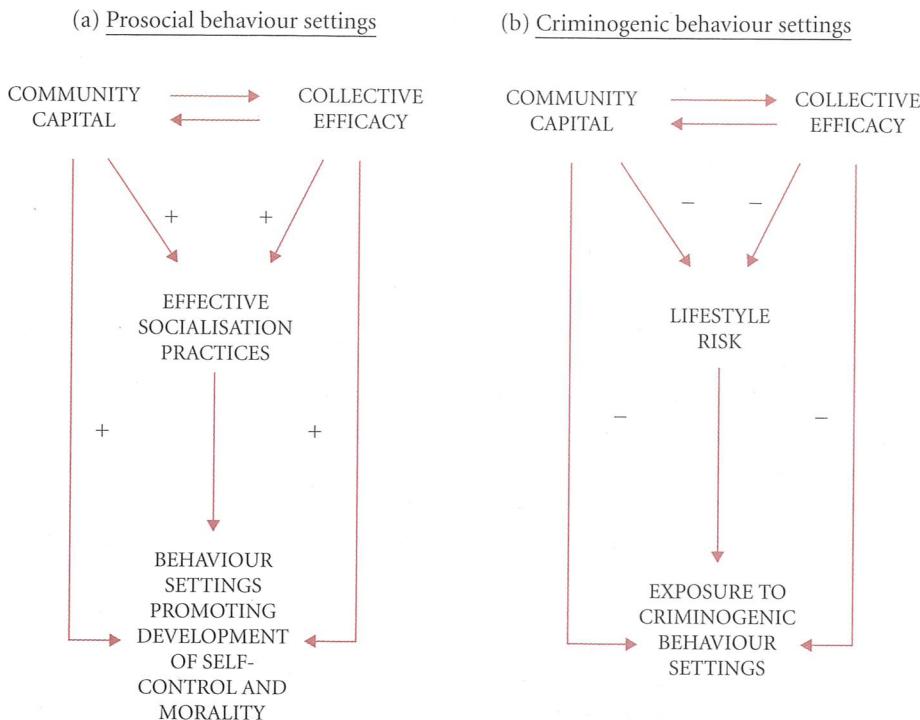
How can we develop the various strands noted above into an overall explanation of how community context might influence offender rates? This is an important question because, as Wikström and Sampson (2003: 119) have correctly noted, up to now 'research on environmental influences has largely failed to specify in any detail the causal mechanisms that link social context with crime and pathways into crime.'

Given the current state of research and theorization, no definitive explanatory framework can be offered. However, the tentative suggestions of Wikström and Sampson (2003) are summarized in Figure 17.5, and they provide the best available framework at the present time.

As will be seen, the two parts of Figure 17.5 each has a postulated outcome in a particular kind of *behaviour setting*—either behaviour settings promoting the development of self-control and morality (Figure 17.5(a)) or criminogenic behaviour settings (Figure 17.5(b)). The authors do not assume that behaviour settings are the only relevant variables in the generation of criminal acts—rather, they explicitly postulate that the behaviour setting will interact with the individual's developed morality, and his or her self-control, both of which could have been partly shaped by environmental influences. But individuals, with different propensities (morality and self-control), find themselves in (or actively seek out) different behaviour settings—and behaviour settings themselves vary on a continuum from the criminogenic to those which promote morality and self-control (Figure 17.5). Out of these interactions (propensity  $\times$  behaviour setting) arise acts of crime or acts of conformity (Wikström and Sampson 2003: 122).

So, according to this theory, what helps to shape whether behaviour settings are criminogenic or otherwise? The two key postulated variables are *collective efficacy* and *community capital*. 'Collective efficacy' has been discussed in an earlier section of this chapter; clearly, if community residents are willing to intervene to, for example, 'nip in the bud' some emerging vandalism, this will constitute a setting less favourable to delinquency. 'Community capital' is defined by the authors as 'the aggregate of individual and institutional resources in a community' (*ibid.*: 128), and appears to equate to an amalgam of what others have referred to as the separate subspheres of economic,

<sup>34</sup> Both the Sheffield and Hull examples concern public-sector housing, from which some have inferred that housing market processes are relevant to the production of offender rates only in a public-sector context. This is wholly erroneous, as careful reflection on 'tipping' processes in private sector contexts will quickly reveal—see Taub *et al.* (1984) for an excellent discussion of the dynamics of 'tipping'.



**Fig. 17.5** Community contextual influences on two kinds of behaviour settings

Source: Wikström, P.-O.H. and Sampson, R.J., 'Social Mechanisms of Community Influences on Crime and Pathways in Criminality', in B.B. Lahey, T.E. Moffitt, and A. Caspi, *Causes of Conduct Disorder and Juvenile Delinquency* © 2003. Reprinted by permission of Guilford Publications Inc.

human, and social capital,<sup>35</sup> the suggestion is that greater resources in the neighbourhood will promote fewer criminogenic behaviour settings.

As will be seen from Figure 17.5(a) and 17.5(b), Wikström and Sampson's argument is that collective efficacy and community capital have a *direct* effect on the generation of more pro-social or antisocial behaviour settings, but also some *mediated* effects. Specifically, it is suggested that pro-social behaviour settings are generated by collective efficacy and community capital mediated by *effective socialization practices* (cf. also Weatherburn and Lind 2001); while antisocial behaviour settings are generated by (negative) collective efficacy and community capital mediated by *lifestyle risk* among less well-supervised youths.

<sup>35</sup> 'Economic capital' (financial resources) and 'human capital' (human resources, especially those derived from formal education and industrial/professional experience) are straightforward concepts. 'Social capital' refers to the potentially positive effects of social interactions (including functioning social institutions such as voluntary organizations) within a given society or subsociety. People living in a particular community may benefit from social capital even if they do not contribute to it: 'if the crime rate in my neighborhood is lowered by neighbors keeping an eye on one another's homes, I benefit even if I personally spend most of my time on the road and never even nod to another resident on the street' (Putnam 2000: 20). See further Halpern (2005).

This important contribution to the 'area offender rate' research literature will need careful testing in the future. One brief comment, however, perhaps can and should be made here. As previously indicated, the 'collective efficacy' approach has some important continuities with the Chicagoan 'social disorganization' approach, one of the assumptions of which is that communities share the goal of crime prevention. That assumption is usually valid, but sometimes matters are more complex; for example, in some areas organized criminal gangs can exert an influence on neighbourhoods in a way which clearly demonstrates a degree of 'collective efficacy', but the results are not necessarily unambiguously desirable. A vivid recent British demonstration of this point arose in one of the two high-crime areas of Salford studied by Walklate and Evans (1999). In 'Oldtown' (an inner-city area with quite strong family and kinship ties, and a reputation for 'toughness') there was an organized criminal group known as the 'Salford Firm'. This group, while both practising and condoning criminal activity outside the local area, took it upon themselves to police local criminal incidents (such as burglaries) by giving the culprits (mostly local youth) a 'smacking' in a process of self-proclaimed 'street justice' (*ibid.*: 93). Moreover, 'grassing' by local residents to the police was discouraged by, for example, writing informants' names on a wall in a central location in the area. The researchers report that ordinary people felt intimidated by the presence of the gang and its activities, but also felt that it had at times afforded the community a degree of protection from criminal victimization, protection that was not always provided by the police (for example, the gang had apparently kept hard drugs out of the area). Residents were, as a result, often ambivalent about the area; they recognized that a particular kind of social order was in operation, and 'appreciated the personal advantage it afforded them', but they 'nevertheless worried about their children growing up in such an environment' (*ibid.*: 95). The complexities of this kind of situation are not adequately encompassed by unidimensional concepts of 'collective efficacy' and 'community capital', because of the element of normative tension clearly present in the Oldtown community, but not fully allowed for in most current theorization.

## INTEGRATING SOCIO-SPATIAL CRIMINOLOGY

One of the most important criminological developments of the last twenty years, for which particular credit should be assigned to Per-Olof Wikström, is the attempt to produce a better integration between developmental criminology and socio-spatial criminology (Farrington *et al.* 1993; Wikström and Sampson 2006). Promising first steps have been made in that task, but—as all informed observers would agree—there remains also much to accomplish.

In the meantime, this chapter has, it is hoped also demonstrated that there remain significant and necessary steps to be taken to achieve better empirical and theoretical integration within socio-spatial criminology itself. The two traditional core topics in the field (explaining the locational distribution of offences and offenders) are, for the most part, tackled by different scholars, and sometimes with different theoretical

approaches (for example, rational choice theory is more prominent among offence-focused scholars). The newer topic of areal disorder is of interest to both offence-based and offender-based scholars, but its relationship to each is not yet fully established—not least because the dust on the ‘broken windows controversy’ is perhaps only just settling. It should be clear, however, that the socio-spatial dimensions of offences, offending, and disorder need to be considered in relation to one another, and the linkages between the different subtopics need to be more securely established. This presents a large—but exciting—future research agenda for socio-spatial criminology.

## MACRO-LEVEL ISSUES

Socio-spatial criminology necessarily focuses on variations in offences, offending, and disorder across relatively small areas; and, within these areas, on micro-locations such as exactly where cars are parked when an offence is committed (see Table 17.1). In dealing with such matters, it is sometimes easy to forget the macro-social dimension, but to do this is of course a serious mistake, since—especially in our contemporary, globalized world—macro-social issues can powerfully influence everyday life in local communities. For example, earlier in this chapter—in the course of discussing local crime rates, offender rates, and disorders—we have touched on macro-level phenomena such as the decline of traditional manufacturing industries (in the discussion of disorders) and the advent of an international consumer economy and consumer culture (Hayward 2004).

In an important text, Bursik and Grasmick (1993) noted that, in Shaw and McKay’s early research in Chicago, the almost exclusive focus was upon the world of the residents themselves. Too often, later socio-spatial criminologists have followed this example. Bursik and Grasmick decisively corrected this tendency by drawing attention, first, to the links between residents and corporate and public bodies in local neighbourhoods, and secondly, to the links between the local neighbourhood and institutions and agencies external to the area itself (such as city governments; or decision-makers in large corporations, who might choose to invest, or cease to invest, locally). These are both potentially very important influences on local life, as Taub *et al.* (1984) also showed in their case study of the Hyde Park/Kenwood area of Chicago (see earlier discussion).

Bursik and Grasmick’s work, however, is restricted to residential areas, and it focuses on specific corporate and/or external actors, and not on more general macro-social issues such as global economic change. A study which makes good these omissions is the important recent British research on crime and social control in the night-time economy by Dick Hobbs and his colleagues (2003). These authors note that, in cities in the north of England which suffered grievously from the economic transformations of the 1980s, one way of promoting economic regeneration has been to attempt to

revitalize sites left redundant by the collapse of the traditional industrial base. This usually involves:

a number of high-profile 're-imaging' and 'place-marketing' initiatives designed to secure investment from external and 'mobile' capital, to attract an influx of skilled and professional residents, and to boost the local tourism, leisure, and retail sectors. Such 'beauty contests' . . . often centre around 'flagship' projects such as waterfront developments, heritage and theme parks, concert halls, shopping centres, prestigious office and leisure complexes, and the hosting of major cultural or sporting events [Hobbs *et al.* 2003: 34].

In such circumstances, civic government usually takes it upon itself to attempt to promote the city, which in turn involves a significant reorientation of local government activities towards the needs of business (in—at least in intention—the longer-term interests of the city's residents). One aspect of such regeneration in many cities has been the growth of the 'night-time economy' of pubs, clubs, and the like. Indeed, 'the existence of a thriving night-time economy is now taken as a prerequisite for any city hoping to make a claim upon progressive profitability' (*ibid.*: 35), and major national and international leisure companies are keen to invest in such activities. These economic imperatives, however, quite frequently conflict with the requirements of crime prevention—since deliberately encouraging an alcohol-fuelled night-time economy, typically focused upon a small geographical area, and seeking to attract (in particular) young adult clients, is hardly an ideal recipe for an assault-free environment. Entrepreneurial local governments can then face a dilemma if there are high-profile, violent incidents, which might seem to threaten the city's carefully fostered image of regeneration; and this can lead to conflicts between local government and the police. So, for example:

On 12 March 1998 the front cover of the *Manchester Evening News* carried details of a strongly worded letter sent by the Leader of the [City Council], Richard Leese, to the then Chief Constable of GMP [Greater Manchester Police] . . . The grim tone of the letter stood in stark contrast to the Council's usual '24-hour city' marketing rhetoric. Leese described a state of 'rampant lawlessness' in which problems of both street violence and the intimidation of licensees had reached 'critical' proportions. It was 'a crisis', Leese claimed, that GMP appeared 'either unable or unwilling to address' [Hobbs *et al.* 2003: 103–4].

As Hobbs and his colleagues emphasize, while pressures of this sort are very evident in a number of post-industrial cities, the ways in which they are resolved vary from place to place (see also Girling *et al.* 2000: 8–9). This is an important point, because scholars who are particularly interested in 'globalization', 'late modernity', and the like can display an unfortunate '*insensitivity to place*', and a 'tendency to *presume* that certain [issues] have global prevalence under late modern conditions, rather than to investigate how these mutations are received, resisted or altered in specific institutional and political settings, with all the *unevenness* that such enquiry is likely to reveal' (*ibid.*: 163 emphasis in original). Macro-social criminology which ignores socio-spatial criminology will, in short, be as impoverished as socio-spatial criminology which ignores the macro-social dimension. We need both.

## ■ SELECTED FURTHER READING

As indicated in the text of this chapter, there are at least three identifiably separate groups of scholars working in the field of socio-spatial criminology, and there is no good overall text that covers all three traditions. Students most interested in the routine activities/rational choice/crime pattern theory approach might begin further reading with Felson, *Crime and Everyday Life*, 3rd edn (Sage, 2002) and those parts of Chainey and Ratcliffe, *GIS and Crime Mapping* (John Wiley, 2005) that interest them; at a more advanced level they might then move on to the essays in Smith and Cornish, *Theory for Practice in Situational Crime Prevention* (Criminal Justice Press, 2003). Students who wish to acquaint themselves with the social disorganization tradition and its modern developments should begin by mastering Kornhauser's excellent chapter on early social disorganization theory in his *Social Sources of Delinquency* (University of Chicago Press, 1978: ch. 3); and then move on to strong recent essays such as those by Wikström and Sampson, *Social Sources of Delinquency* (University of Chicago Press, 2003) and Sampson and Raudenbush, 'Systematic Social Observation of Public Spaces: A New Look at Disorder and Crime', *American Journal of Sociology*, 105: 603–51 (1999). Finally, those interested in the more ethnographic and 'cultural criminology' approach to the subject are recommended to read Keith Hayward's textbook, *City Limits: Crime, Consumer Culture and the Urban Experience* (Glasshouse, 2004); and, in more empirical vein, the excellent study of the night-time economy by Dick Hobbs and his colleagues, *Bouncers: Violence and Governance in the Night-Time Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

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