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The Importance of Place: Safety and Security of Rural Peoples and Communities in an Urbanising World

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Even though this article has a primary focus on crime in rural environments, it attempts to be more inclusive through its discussion of the sociological concept of community and of the work of C. W. Mills, Jock Young and others who link social structure and crime. Hence, the title is narrower than the implications of the narrative, and that is because the concept of community has a universality for what is has to say in gaining a greater understanding of crime and of citizens' perceptions of both the police and of safety and security in any kind of environment, from the smallest villages to the largest cities in the world today. This article primarily discusses issues associated with understanding crime from the point of view of the vast diversity of rural community environments found throughout the world, and of the diversity of urban community environments as well. It describes a general theory of community and then applies it (through three core elements associated with all communities, and six reciprocal relationships) to key rural criminological issues, including: drug production, trafficking, and misuse; agricultural crime; and violence against women. It examines an emergent and very important issue in the study of rural crime, and one can be seen in all of the articles in this edition of the journal.[2] It is the issue of "access to justice" in terms of its many dimensions – geography, marginalised groups, the challenges of people with disabilities, and the distribution of police resources and the consolidation of police stations and agencies, among others. The article concludes with a small set of recommendations for the advancement of research and theory in rural criminology.

Key words: safety/security, rural community, rural criminology, urbanising world

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1 Introduction

An internationally-known US sociologist whose work revolutionised sociological thinking over 60 years ago was C. W. Mills (1959). He wrote a very influential book called "The Sociological Imagination" in which he sought to link "public issues" with "personal troubles". He argued that the personal troubles or the social problems of individuals – which may include the perception of risk by someone of becoming the victim of a crime and of concerns and fears about safety and security – cannot be understood without also accounting for broad and long-term social structural, cultural and economic change. Mills' concept of the sociological imagination was influential in moving criminological thought in the US away from individualistic-level explanations of crime and spawned new ways of theorising in criminological thought, including many approaches which are subsumed under the label of "critical criminology". The late Jock Young (2011), inspired by C. W. Mills (1959), adopted such a critical criminological stance, and wrote the "Criminological Imagination", exploring connections between power and inequality and criminal behaviour, as well as issues associated with prisons, convicts, rehabilitation, and in general, justice.

Yet, both imaginations can be criticized for a significant shortcoming. Neither accounted for community, that is, place. Perhaps this judgment on my part is too harsh, because the importance of place is implied throughout their theorising, yet, it is never quite as explicit as it should be.

Anyone who begins a scholarly journey toward considering crime in a rural context will inevitably be drawn to the ways that diverse communities, both large and small, moderate the influence of broad societal changes on the victimisation experiences of individuals and their perceptions of safety and security, including their views on law enforcement, and

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[2] Frequent reference is made to the other manuscripts published in this issue of the journal. The citations to articles in this same issue are not included in the references. However, recognition of the insights and observations of these scholars in this particular article is certainly appropriate. In all cases, the names of authors are in italics so that readers may reference and read their articles as well.

more generally, the criminal justice system. Fortunately, the articles in this special issue, which consider the issues of safety and security in Slovenian communities, both rural and urban, avoid the mistake of ignoring place.

The study of rural crime is a recent development in rural criminology, even though throughout criminology's long history, scholars have occasionally turned their attention to crime in various rural contexts. For example, the early 20th century sociological theorist, Pitirim Sorokin, and his associates published "The Systematic Sourcebook of Rural Sociology" (Sorokin, Zimmerman, & Galpin, 1930–1932), including a chapter on crime in the rural places of various countries, based on government statistics available at the time. Bruce Smith, who helped establish the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting system (Wilson, 1956) wrote a book in 1933 titled "Rural Crime Control." Even further back in time, 1839 to be exact, R. W. Rawson published a statistical analysis of crime in manufacturing, mining and agricultural communities of Great Britain for the "Journal of the Statistical Society of London" (Rawson, 1839). In it, he discovered that different kinds of communities exhibit different crime profiles, a finding hardly surprising today, but at the time he conducted his research, it was indeed ground-breaking. In fact, it is ground-breaking by default, since it can be argued that criminology as a science had not yet begun, except for an occasional scholar who tried to make a connection between physiological and genetic traits and criminal behaviour or expressions of criminal actions from a more legalistic point of view (Jeffery, 1959).

Emulating the work of Rawson (1839) one hundred and sixty-five years later, Jobes, Barclay, Weinand, and Donnermeyer (2004) used cluster analysis to develop a typology of rural-located "local government areas" of New South Wales, Australia, from which they statistically developed six types of non-urban places.[3] Cluster analysis allows for the grouping of places by common social and economic characteristics, aiding researchers in identifying distinctive types within a measured phenomenon, which in this case, were rural places. For this analysis, these clusters ranged from smaller "urban centres" to "small farming communities." The profile of crime varied significantly when comparing each type with the others. More importantly, they observed in regard to their application of social disorganisation theory, a theory that developed out of the urban milieu of Chicago in the early 20th century, that it was not entirely successful in helping them to statistically explain crime rates. Specifically, medium declining communities (that is, those with moderate population loss and representing the second lowest in population size amongst the six types) showed higher than average rates of assault and motor vehicle theft, and general, this cluster displayed higher rates of crime than the most urban of the six clusters. Even though amongst these six clusters, crime rates remained associated with population size (as size increased, so did the rate of crime), there were many "anomalies". They concluded: "to speak of rural versus urban crime is insufficient…intra-rural variations in crime is itself a complex phenomenon that merits complex analyses and explanations" (Jobes et al., 2004: 134).

Later, Wells and Weisheit (2012) found much the same thing when testing both social disorganisation theory (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003) and a variation on social disorganisation theory known as civic community theory (Lee, 2008).[4] Significantly, what Wells and Weisheit (2012) found was that the amount of variance explained for both violent and property crimes rates, as well as arrest rates for juveniles, was higher in metropolitan counties and lower in the three varieties of non-metropolitan counties.[5] Also significant was their

[3] A local government area, or LGA, is a census-based definition of a region containing both a central market town and centre of local government, and a surrounding area or "hinterland" which may include several smaller localities. For this analysis, LGAs of 50,000 or less in population were included. Six clusters were identified and assigned names based on their social and economic profiles. For the study by Jobes et al. (2004), clusters included (average population sizes of each LGA are in parentheses): urban centres (33,250); coastal communities (12,100); satellite communities (8,500); medium stable communities (11,050), medium declining communities (8,115), and small farming communities (3,990).

[4] Lee's theory (2008) was specifically focused on the explanation of crime and variance in crime rates within a rural context. It is one of only three "rural indigenous" criminological theories so far developed in rural criminology's short history (Donnermeyer, 2019a). The other two are male-peer support theory for violence against women (DeKeseredy, Hall-Sanchez, Dragiewicz, & Rennison, 2016) and primary socialization theory of adolescent drug use (Oetting, Donnermeyer, & Deffenbacher, 1998). Civic community is a variation on the systemic version (Bursik, 1999) of social disorganisation theory, with both the civic community approach and the systemic version focusing more on measures of the internal dynamics of a community, whether large or small. The difference between both and the so-called structural antecedent version of social disorganisation is that the former relies more on "proxy" measures of social disorganisation, such as population instability and the proportion of female-headed families. Civic community applies indicators that are assumed to measure "civility", such as the proportion of owner-occupied housing, the proportion of the adult population who are members of a church, and the rate of voting in national elections, among others.

[5] For the Wells and Weisheit (2012) analysis, the level of analysis was the county. A county in the US is a political subdivision, most of whom include a town or city that is the "county seat" where government offices are located, plus several other (mostly smaller) communities, and a hinterland or countryside. In this respect,

finding that as the population size of the non-metropolitan county declined, so too did the amount of variance explained. In other words, both theories were increasingly less fit for explaining crime within increasingly rural contexts.

2 Urbanisation and the Development of a Rural Criminology

No doubt, the subtitle looks like a set of contradictory words. It is not! The reason is that criminology developed with a decidedly urban bias when a majority of the populations of almost all societies in the world lived in rural localities, and rural criminology did not develop into a recognized subfield within criminology until this century, when the populations of most societies transitioned over to urban. The subtitle may indeed be ironic, but not contradictory.

The first country to urbanise was also arguably the first to industrialise, namely, Great Britain. A majority of its population lived in cities by 1855, according to World Bank (2018) estimates. In this journal's issue, *Bučar Ručman* acknowledges this fundamental demographic trend by citing Marx's (1876/2015) indictment of capitalism for its deleterious effects on agricultural workers and peasants, removing them from their villages and land, and ultimately, through the enactment of laws, such as the poor laws, creating social structural conditions (or, as Marx noted – the necessary discipline) conducive to a form of capitalism that can take advantage of the large-scale arrival of rural peoples into city environments as inexpensive labour. *Flander and Tičar's* analysis of the role of the state in developing a framework for policing and the provision of security in the diverse community environments of Slovenia is a present-day example of the essentials of law to create conditions conducive, theoretically, for safeguarding citizens' rights and the security and safety of both rural and urban peoples, and of their trust in the legitimacy of the police. This too is a form of discipline, but without the more ideological content of the way Marx used it.

Given its early urbanization, it is not surprising that Great Britain is frequently identified as the cradle of modern policing, especially through the efforts Sir Robert Peel in the first half of the 19th century to establish a new kind of police organization in the city of London. His efforts influenced policing throughout the cities of Great Britain during the 1800s, and the heritage of his principles of policing today influence policing across the globe (Hurd, 2008). The principle that the police have a primary duty to assure the safety and security of citizens, no matter if they live in cities, suburbs, villages or the open-country is embedded today in police organizations of many countries, whether or not those ideals are ever achieved.

As Prime Minister and in other leadership positions as well throughout his life of service to Great Britain, Sir Robert Peel represented the interests of business, which as a political philosophy is referred to as mercantilism. *Prislan and Lobnikar* quote Peel in their article to make the fundamental point that police legitimacy, and therefore, their effectiveness, is dependent to a considerable degree on the support of citizens. In turn, citizen perceptions of the police are dependent on police actions. In the U.S., research finds that it is not so much the nature of the encounter between a citizen and a police officer (such as a driver being stopped for a speeding violation) that counts, but the perception that the law or regulation is applied uniformly to everyone else (Skogan & Frydl, 2004; Skogan, 2005). That is why, in the Slovenian context, the 2017 Security and Safety in Local Communities surveys are so essential to understanding factors that influence the interactions and relationships of the police and citizens. How does the context within the diversity community environments in which people live influence their perceptions of the police and by extension, of their own safety and security? This is a fundamental point, and one that is the basis for a scholarly agenda for research and theorizing, as *Pirnat and Meško* point out, and one that should inform police policy and practice.

Inexorably, urbanisation has arrived at the front door of almost every society in the world. The United States became a majority-urban society in the decade of 1910–1919 (likely, 1917), and was the second country to reach this status. Quickly, both Canada (1925) and France (1932) followed (World Bank, 2018). In more recent times, the urban populations of countries like Brazil (1964), Iran (1980), Botswana (1996), Mauritania (2001), Albania (2009), and now the most populous society of all, China (2011), came to exceed 50 percent. By the late 1980s, Slovenia too reached the rural to urban "tipping point", according to the World Bank (2018).

Urbanisation is the most fundamental social change in the world over the past 200 years because it is so intimately tied to the transformation of economies from agricultural to industrial. Concomitant with these trends was not only the development of modern policing, but development of the science of criminology and criminal justice as well. Debates about who is a founder of criminology and criminal justice

they are similar to LGAs in Australia. For their analysis, Wells and Weisheit (2012) used metropolitan counties, defined as possessing an urban centre of at least 50,000 population, and three categories of non-metropolitan counties, including nonmetropolitan-city (largest city with at least 20,000 people but not exceeding 50,000), nonmetropolitan-small town (largest place with a population exceeding 2,500 but no more than 20,000), and nonmetropolitan-rural (largest place with a population 2,500 or less).

studies as a science can occupy fully the career of a professor, from granting of the Ph.D. to the retirement party many years later. Was it Beccaria, Lombroso, Quetelet, Durkheim or some other 18th or 19th century philosopher, theorist or researcher? Or, shall we wait until professors at the University of Chicago, from W. I. Thomas, to Ernest Burgess to Robert Park, came along and developed their particular school of thought? Or, shall we wait a little longer until Karl Mannheim and other theorists influenced the direction of criminological thought in England? (Garland, 2002).

The answer is that for consideration of the past, present and future of a rural criminology, and one that is based on the importance of the local in considering the safety and security of rural peoples and communities in an urbanising world, an answer to questions concerning the history of criminological thought are completely irrelevant. What is certain is that during the time when the world was a majority-rural world, the formative gaze of criminology was almost exclusively urban. Hence, the urban bias of criminology is not an accusation, but a fact.

It is estimated that the majority of the world's population lived in urban environments, for the first time, during 2008, and it is projected that nearly 70 percent of the population by 2050 will live in cities, with a sizeable share living in mega-cities whose metropolitan populations exceed 10 million inhabitants each (United Nations, 2018). However, given that the world's population by then is estimated variously at 10 to 11 billion people, 3 to 4 billion will still live in rural environments.[6]

One key intellectual tool for theorising and researching crime and criminal justice issues in diverse rural environments is to return to Mills' concept of the sociological imagination and combine it with the concept of place or community.[7] Specifically, place can be conceptualized as a mediator between public issues and personal troubles, that is, as a mid-range unit of analysis for both quantitative and qualitative studies of citizens and police alike about the effects of broad social structural change on perceptions of security and safety and rates of both crime and arrests. This is essentially the approach of every article in this special issue, including statistical analyses by *Sotlar and Tominc* and *Hacin and Eman*. For example, *Sotlar and Tominc* find suburban and rural residents responded to the surveys of 2011 and 2017 similarly, whilst respondents who live in cities hold differing views. In a sense, all respondents were in agreement about various threats, but the degree to which they viewed the seriousness of these threats were distinctive when comparing urban respondents with those from suburban and rural environments. Likewise, *Sotlar and Tominc* noticed much the same thing in their analysis of police officers working in urban vs. rural environments. Differences of perception were by degree, which is to say moderate, and not opposite.

What is to be made of these and other statistical findings, such as those from other parts of the world about what constitutes a source of fear about crime (Lee, 2001, 2007; Wooff, 2016)? It seems that the more research probes into rural and urban differences, the more blurred become the distinctions, hence, raising the question: why is place important, and by extension, why is rural criminological research important? The answer lies in incorporating the concept of community or place into theories of criminology. One might claim that this was done a very long time ago, especially the development of social disorganisation theory. Yet, consider that social disorganisation theory prioritises crime first, and place secondarily. Instead, the logic needs to be reversed, not only to advance rural criminological scholarship, but to diffuse the study of rural crime into mainstream criminological thinking, that is, to view the fundamental sociological elements or characteristics of place as the same across all types of communities, and then recognize how the interplay of these elements create an infinite combination of place-based environments. Hence, it is this variability which makes the incorporation of

[6] I had the comical (my interpretation) experience several years ago of being asked by a very prominent criminologist why the study of crime in a rural context has any significance, given the growth of the city and criminogenic conditions which he presumed exists only in urban environments. My defence of a rural criminology was first, based on demographics ("in 2050, there will remain a worldwide rural population of 3–4 billion") and second, based on my dismissive retort that: "if we follow your simplistic logic, criminology throughout the 19th and 20th centuries should have been almost completely focused on rural crime since that is where most people lived, not the urban context of crime in places like Chicago, which back then should have been regarded as irrelevant to criminological theorising as much as your question considers rural today, or even makes any sense to me. It is place that matters, especially the diversity of place, for how else can one explain variations in crime, whether based on quantitative or qualitative data." Admittedly, this is a reconstructed version of the event, including my words in quotation, but should serve to illustrate how contemporary scholars can defend the significance of their rural work.

[7] "Place" and "locality", for the purposes of this article, are interchangeable with the word "community." Ironically, some of the earliest intellectual developments of sociological considerations of community come out of the Chicago School of Sociology, where the focus was on the social and cultural milieu of diverse neighbourhoods in Chicago, a direct consequence of massive immigration there during the latter decades of the 19th century and into the early 20th century. A great deal of this immigration was from rural environments of Europe to Chicago and other US cities, as W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaneicki (1918), in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, observed.

place more explicitly into thinking with both a sociological and a criminological imagination that allows space for a rural criminology, and also for the recognition that empirical findings may well discover that differences relative to victimisation experiences, perceptions of safety and security and other criminological and criminal justice phenomena might not be as clear-cut as expected based on previous definitions of what constitutes essential characteristics of rurality and urbanity.

Returning to the idea that community as a mediator between large-scale change and individual experiences, the recommended visualisation for remembering this fundamental theorem is an hourglass. The sands of change from the top of the hourglass are unevenly distributed on individuals in the bottom of the hourglass through the filter provided by the communities in which they live, which is the narrow, middle neck of the hourglass.

The idea of the meditative function of places is simply an extension of insights from Marx, Polanyi, Tönnies, Durkheim and others, as discussed in the article by *Bučar Ručman*, all of whom attempted to describe the essential or core characteristics of rural places and their differences from cities. By conceptually placing community in the middle of an hourglass is made more explicit the ways diversity of rural places, and by extension, urban localities, creates a more rigorous conceptual approach to guide research about security, safety and threats. This is because all communities are the product (Durkheim (1895/1938) likely would say, a "social fact", representing something that is more than the sum of its parts) of three core elements associated with people who live in close proximity to each other, that is, social relationships based on contiguity. These three elements are: spaces and structures, meanings, and practices.[8] The causality or influence of these three elements is always reciprocal, such that: (1 meanings legitimate practices; (2 practices enable the circulation and challenging of meanings; (3 practices occur in spaces and through structures and shape both spaces and structures; (4 spaces and structures affect how practices can occur; (5 spaces and structures enable the materialization of meanings; and (6 meanings are embedded in spaces and structures. Readers likely have noticed that these six relationships are not specific to criminological phenomena, but to social phenomena more generally. Hence, the construction of place-based theories of crime, whether focused on a rural or an urban environment, begin with the concept of community and then applies it to criminological phenomena, which is the opposite of the origins of other place-based theories that begin with crime mostly before thinking about place and its influence on criminological phenomena.

What is the advantage of this approach for examining crime in diverse rural environments, as well as for diverse urban environments? Consider again the various articles found in this issue. *Bučar Ručman's* analysis of rural, suburban and urban residents' perceptions of social distance from various people they may not want as their neighbours show mostly similarities and some differences in percentages that one might interpret as relatively minor and insignificant to the extent that one might ask why there was even a focus on rural populations because their perceptions appear similar to city people, who are now the majority in Slovenia and most other countries. Or, how do the implications of the findings from the discriminant analysis by *Hacin and Eman* take on greater theoretical significance, especially the fact that the views of threats to safety and security amongst rural-located police officers are "more unified" than amongst urban-local police officers, and that rural officers view rural community environments more positively? The answer is that a generalising understanding of the sociological dimensions of community leads to the possibility of comparing across to studies of the same kind in other countries/societies. How do the police elsewhere view their rural and community environments, and if the same as the findings found in the various articles found here about Slovenia, then there is something more universal about rural-urban differences which can be empirically established?

The strength of the surveys on safety and security conducted in 2011 and 2017, respectively, is that the wording of the questionnaire items are similar to studies conducted in other countries, but that presents the challenge for how the Slovenian results, both generally and within specific community environments of Slovenia, adds value to the body of scholarly already conducted in other countries, and how do the results from Slovenia contribute to future studies in other societies (and cited, as well)? The only answer is to harken back when interpreting research results to the idea that the community is in the middle of the hourglass, as a mediator of the ways broad social change affects individuals "on the ground", that is, in the communities where they live. This takes a discussion of significance beyond elementary rural-urban comparisons.

This same principle, which is that the concept of community or place is ideal for cross-comparative work across geographic boundaries, can be applied to almost any criminological phenomena. For example, how did drug production, trafficking and misuse become such a prominent feature in the Appalachian and Ozark regions of the US (Weisheit & Brownstein, 2016)? Does Stallwitz's (2012, 2014) ethnographic

[8] For a fuller account of these core community elements, see the original article by R. Liepins (2000), and fuller applications of Liepins' concept of community to criminological phenomena by Donnermeyer (2016, 2019a).

work on the assimilation of drug use (heroin) amongst North Shore oil workers in the Shetland Islands provide insights for the studies from the US and other localities of the world? Groves' (2019) examination in Australia, for example, finds alcohol abuse and other drug misuse to be increasing in rural and regional Australia, as well as offending by the populations beyond the cities of that country. How do findings from these diverse studies of rural drug use fit within community theory as stated through the six generically-based set of reciprocal relationships above that combined, describe specific rural environments, allowing for a more unified approach to studies of drug abuse? Specifically, Stallwitz's (2012, 2014) work from the Shetland Islands shows how the second reciprocal relationship (how practices enable the circulation and challenging of meanings) and the fourth reciprocal relationship (how spaces and structures affect practices) define the local context in which tolerance for drug use develops.

Consider agricultural crime and how the concept of community might be applied there. Utilizing routine activities theory, which, like social disorganisation theory has a significant place-based lens, Bunei and Barasa (2017) considered a large number of factors associated with the victimisation of agricultural operations in the countryside of Kenya. Even though their examples are specific to that region of the world, their findings are far more generalisable, especially the idea that the displacement of young people from the countryside into the capital of Nairobi, high youth unemployment, and a desire to purchase cell phones and other materials objects symbolic of "westernized" lifestyles, has greatly increased the motivation of some of these rural-to-urban migrants to return to where they grew up to steal from farms, where security is low due to the challenges of guardianship, and many crops and farm animals are attractive targets because they can be easily sold for cash. These trends are identical to the problem of theft from farm operations around the world, such as cattle rustling in Nigeria (Bamidele, 2018) where it is associated with violence and even homicide and where it takes on decidedly religious and ethnic dimensions, the theft of harvested crops in Australia associated with the transport of harvested grain (Harkness & Larkins, 2019), and the clandestine shipping of stolen farm machinery from the Isle of Angseley, Wales to continental Europe (Holmes & Jones, 2017). The challenge of farm victimisation studies in agricultural regions around the world is to find the commonalities, and each of the factors identified through a routine activities approach can be re-stated within the set of six reciprocal relationships of community theory. For example, the desire of young rural-to-urban migrants in Kenya to steal farm commodities back in the villages from which they came in order to sell the purloined items for the acquisition of monies for the purchase of clothes, alcohol, cell phones and other desirable lifestyle items, is an expression of the way meanings assigned to spaces and structures have changed. Many times, these young men steal from their own family's farm or the farms of neighbours with whom they grew up as children (Bunei & Barasa, 2017). This dynamic refers more specifically to the first reciprocal relationship (meanings legitimate practices) and the sixth reciprocal relationship (meanings are embedded in spaces and structures).

Violence against women in diverse rural environments provides another example of both the need to synthesize empirical findings from rural studies with a unified theory of place, but to extend those findings to studies from diverse urban environments. DeKeseredy and Schwartz' (2009) explication of male-peer support theory is one example. It demonstrates how a culture of patriarchy creates tolerance for violence and other forms of deviant behaviour, which is also mentioned by *Bučar Ručman's* in his article for this special issue. Campbell's (2000) research shows how these kinds of cultural patterns occur within communities, small and large, and more specifically, how they are expressed within specific places of communities. It must be remembered that from an environmental criminology point of view (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1991), crime creates patterns of occurrence, often called "hot spots" (Patten, Mckenlden-Coner, & Cox, 2009). So too, where offenders, such as men who physically, verbally and in other ways abuse their spouses and girlfriends, exchange information that helps them rationalise their actions, also occurs at spots within a community, such as bars and pubs. Hence, there are public spaces and structure that facilitate a type of crime that more often occurs in private spaces and structures (i.e., the home). This theory, which has great potential to synthesize the global literatures on violence against rural women can be interpreted as a direct application of a more general theory of community, and again, based on the reciprocal relationships described above. Specifically, male peer support theory explicates how meanings legitimate practices (#1) and how practices occur in spaces and through structures (#3).

3 An Emergent Issue: Access to Justice

Every article in this issue of the journal has implications for one of the newest directions for a vital, dynamic rural criminology. It is "access to justice". What is access to justice? It is the idea that there exist systemic inequities in criminal justice services of all kinds, but especially the provision of police services and various social service programmes, such as drug rehabilitation centres. *Flander and Tičar's* outline of how laws and regulations of the state are meant not only to be comprehensive, but also uniformly applied in most cas-

es, provide the ideal, especially in democratic societies, for access to justice. However, laws can target certain groups discriminately, and laws can change, affecting the criminality of behaviours from one day to the next. For example, laws regarding marijuana possession in many states of the US have reduced greatly the penalties for possessing small amounts, and purchase of marijuana at legally sanctioned medical marijuana retail outlets is much more prevalent today. Another example, is that the US Supreme Court ruled as far back as 1968 that it is not illegal for a police officer to stop and search (or stop and frisk) someone who the officer suspects may be committing a crime, including carrying a weapon illegally. These practices became associated with the criminological theory known as "broken windows" (Kelling & Coles, 1997), and allegations that police in cities like New York disproportionately target blacks and other minorities led to a substantial scaling back of the practice and tarnished greatly the credibility of the theory for guiding police policy (Harcourt, 2005).

In particular reference to rural communities around the world, and to the advancement of a rural criminology, the issue of access to just is not only about discriminately practices that affect who is more likely to be arrested and charged with a crime, but to ordinary citizens as witnesses and victims as well (Camilleri, 2019). Therefore, the essence of building a body of knowledge about access to justice amongst rural peoples and in rural communities are about the ways uneven services are provided and laws are applied, and how that affects perceptions of safety and security.

A recent article by Camilleri (2019) examined access to justice in regard to what might, at first glance, seem like a relatively small issue, which is lack of access amongst rural residents with disabilities. There are the obvious obstacles for people with disabilities associated with living in more isolated (both geographically and socially) environments and how that affects access to both police and other social services. However, Camilleri (2019) also discovered that the police were less likely to consider credible the reporting of a crime, including when the caller was the victim, if that person is disabled in some way (physically, mentally, or both). In her article, she examined the case of an individual who was autistic. Camilleri (2019: 94) points that that "barriers to justice" may include "not being believed", being "viewed as unreliable and lacking credibility", police perceptions about the "capacity of people with disabilities to be competent witnesses" and perceptions that create barriers when a witness with a disability is interviewed by the police or to testify in court on a criminal case. In a larger framework, Camilleri's (2019) is quite significant.

Earlier research by Barclay, Donnermeyer and Jobes (2004) noted that farmers who reported theft were not taken seriously by police if they also held a job in a nearby town, that is, they were not full-time farmers, or that it was a woman who managed the farm operation. Geography and distance plays into this dynamic because it can require several hours for an officer to drive out to a farm in the remote regions of Australia, conduct an interview about an alleged crime, and drive back to the office. Many rural and remote police stations might only have one or two officers, and in turn, officers consider carefully the value of their time in assigning priority their diverse duties. Unfortunately, questions about who belongs or who does not belong (and who is more deserving of police services, and who is less deserving) may be decided by factors that are not standard, such as discrimination against minorities in a particular society (as discussed in the article by *Bučar Ručman*), women, and even those with disabilities.

All of the articles in this issue that applied findings from the public opinion surveys of 2011 and 2017 are actually addressing issues of access to justice. One interesting finding by *Pirnat and Meško* from their study in Ljubljana that is directly related to a rural criminology was the pattern of differences in perceptions of security issues (robbery, burglary, harassment on the street, etc.) of residents in low-risk vs. high-risk neighbourhoods of the capital city, with risk defined by the number of offences recorded by the police. Low-risk respondents more likely believed that the occurrence of a criminal event was less likely, and even more importantly, were more trusting of the police and that the police do a credible job of explaining their decisions. What makes these and other findings so intriguing from a consideration of access to justice and rural criminology is to examine the characteristics of the population in these high-risk and low-risk urban neighbourhoods. Not only may there be social class differences, along with differences in the race/ethnicity of people who live in them, but even a study of the most urban place in a country may have implications for a rural criminology, because as *Pirnat and Meško* point out, about two-thirds of migrants to Ljubljana came from rural places in Slovenia over the recent decades. Are they more likely to live in one type of neighbourhood, or the other, or are they now more evenly distributed across the neighbourhoods of the city? As *Pirnat and Meško* note, not only is there an instrumental dimension to justice, there is a normative one as well, and it the latter where research and theory about rurality and access to justice should mainly focus.[9]

[9] The work of Thomas and Znaniecki (1918), published over 100 years ago, like the work of *Pirnat and Me*ško, was also focused on rural to urban migration.

4 The Future of Rural Crime Studies in an Ever-Urbanising World

What is the future of a rural criminology that only recently emerged[10] and during a time when there is not only a worldwide trend of urbanisation, but a blurring of rural-urban boundaries through the exchange of people who move for many reasons, including those associated with jobs and lifestyle? After-all, even though many millions of rural people move to cities, there are also many rural places who feel the effects of encroachment from suburban developments, the growth of rural tourism and seasonal housing, and various forms of energy developments whose workers are described as "fly-in-fly-out" (i.e., temporary and non-local) (Jones, 2016; Ulrich-Schad, Fedder, & Yingling, 2019).

For rural criminology to continue to grow and to contribute to criminology and criminal justice studies more generally, there are three fundamental needs which must be met. All three may seem obvious, but are nonetheless worth discussing. The first need is sound theory that accounts for the diversity of rural places. That is why a modified version of the sociological imagination that more explicitly incorporates the concept of community is necessary. Further, a rural criminology, by virtue of the fact that billions of people live in millions of places with smaller populations and smaller populations densities, must develop a sound theory of community and crime. Very likely, it will not be (and should not be) social disorganisation theory because of two serious conceptual flaws. First, it begins with thinking about crime, and then seeks to examine community-level characteristics as correlates of crime, assuming correlation is causation. Thinking about crime should go in the opposite direction by first establishing a sound theory of community and using this theory to consider types of diverse rural environments and their expressions or profiles of crime (Donnermeyer, 2019b). This article provided an overview of what a theory of community applied to crime in rural environments might look like, but there is still must work to be done to create a fuller theoretical statement.

A second flaw of social disorganisation theory is that it assumes disorganisation or disorder is a cause of crime. A case can be made that the opposite is true – crime is an expression of social organisation, and in fact, disorganisation is a frequently cited concept without any reality. For example, to say that rapid population growth is an indicator of disorganisation is not correct. Rapid population growth is a description of a different social order than one associated little or no (i.e., stable) population change. Indeed, rapid growth may increase criminal behaviour and perceptions of vulnerability to crime, which is to say that population growth describes relative degrees or variances in forms of social organisation or social structure that co-occur with increases or decreases in various type of crime, whether crime is measured through official police statistics or in some other way.

Second, there is a great need for more rural-focused research, and even more importantly, for a way to provide an integrated body of knowledge about rural crime, policing and criminal justice issues. Even though the volume of rural crime studies is small when compared to the vast volume of studies of urban peoples and urban communities, it is substantial for many topics. However, what is largely missing is synthesis, that is, an integrated set of the findings from rural studies on various topics, inclusive of as many rural localities as is possible. An example is agricultural crime. Studies in this area range across the world, from Ethiopia to England, yet, the study of farm victimisation, and the publication of the research in peer-reviewed venues, is non-existent in countries like India (and generally, Asia), Eastern and Central Europe, and South America (so far as I know). Until a synthesis of the literature was accomplished (Donnermeyer, 2018), however, awareness of the gaps was impossible to gauge.

Third, there is a great need to sustain recent efforts to build networks of scholars who have varying degrees of interest in rural crime studies. One is the recent establishment of the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime, and the other is the start-up of the Division of Rural Criminology in the American Society of Criminology. To the greatest extent possible, both organisations must include a diverse, international membership of individuals who can share vital information and insights about theory, research, funding sources and whatever else it required to build a cohesive network of scholars.

The prospects for rural criminology are bright through the next three decades, even those decades will see the proportion of the world's population who live in cities burgeon to nearly 70 percent. However, always remember, that leaves a rural world occupied by as many as three billion people, living in millions of diverse rural environments.

[10] For a graphic overview of rural criminology's development see Donnermeyer (2019a: 6).

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Pomen kraja: varnost ruralnega prebivalstva in ruralnih skupnosti v urbaniziranem svetu

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Čeprav se avtor v članku osredotoča predvsem na kriminaliteto v ruralnih okoljih, poskuša vključiti tudi svojo razpravo o sociološkem konceptu skupnosti in delih C. W. Millsa, Jocka Younga in drugih, ki povezujejo družbeno strukturo in kriminaliteto. Naslov prispevka je ožji od dejanske vsebine, predvsem zato, ker ima koncept skupnosti lastnost univerzalnosti pri sporočanju svojega namena, da bi bolje razumeli kriminaliteto in kako prebivalci dojemajo tako policijo kot varnost v kakršnemkoli okolju, od najmanjših vasi do največjih mest na svetu. Članek govori predvsem o vprašanjih, povezanih z razumevanjem kriminalitete, z vidika velike raznolikosti okolij ruralnih skupnosti in raznolikosti urbanega okolja po vsem svetu. Opisuje splošno teorijo skupnosti in jo nato uporabi (skozi tri temeljne elemente, povezane z vsemi skupnostmi, in šest vzajemnih odnosov) pri ključnih vprašanjih kriminalitete na podeželju, med drugim: nezakonita proizvodnja drog, trgovina z ljudmi in zlorabe; kriminaliteta v kmetijstvu; in nasilje nad ženskami. Preučuje nastajajoče in zelo pomembno vprašanje pri raziskovanju kriminalitete na podeželju, opazimo pa ga lahko v vseh člankih te številke revije. To je vprašanje "dostopa do pravnega varstva" z vidika njegovih številnih razsežnosti – geografije, marginaliziranih skupin, izzivov invalidov ter porazdelitve policijskih virov in konsolidacije policijskih postaj ter uprav. Članek se zaključi z majhnim naborom priporočil za napredek raziskav in teorije v ruralni kriminologiji.

Ključne besede: varnost, ruralna skupnost, ruralna kriminologija urbaniziran svet

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