

Towards a Critical Criminology of Rural Spaces

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Abstract

An analysis of the existing corpus of scholarly works reveals that, in recent years, there has been a discernible increase in the amount of attention paid, from the point of view of critical criminology, to the study of crimes that occur in rural areas and the responses of the societies that are affected by these crimes. However, it is essential to keep in mind that rural critical criminology is still in its infancy as an area of study; hence, there is a significant amount of potential for additional research and development. This essay draws extensively from previous research on the abuse of rural women as well as the groundbreaking work of Taylor, Walton, and Young, which was published in their seminal book *The New Criminology* in 1973. Its fundamental goals are twofold: (1) to define important components of a more comprehensive rural critical criminology, and (2) to explicate the primary causes underlying the need for such a development. Its primary objectives are as follows: (1) to delineate key elements of a more comprehensive rural critical criminology. In addition to this, the essay offers a succinct review of the historical evolution of rural criminology and engages in a discourse on the possible benefits of adopting a critical approach in the study of rural crime, particularly in regard to informing policy-making and practical applications.

Keywords- Towards Critical Criminology, Rural Spaces

Introduction

Since the 1970s, the academic discipline of critical criminology has been variously referred to as new criminology or radical criminology (Platt 1975; Lynch, Michalowski, and Groves 2000; Taylor, Walton, and Young 1973, 1975) (DeKeseredy and Perry 2006). These names were given to the discipline by Platt, Lynch, and Groves. The idea of critical criminology, as it is used in the context of this article, refers to an interdisciplinary framework that assigns crime largely to the underlying societal dynamics of patriarchy, class, and racism. This article focuses on the first of these three societal dynamics.

In addition, critical criminology debunks the idea that quick solutions to crime, such as tougher laws, longer jail terms, and coercive counseling sessions, can serve as effective treatments for the underlying causes of criminal behavior. On the other hand, advocates of critical criminology claim that in order to reduce crime and advance social justice, considerable

changes need to be made in both the structural and cultural parts of society. They say this is necessary in order to achieve social justice. Critical criminologists do not ignore the issue of criminal justice reform for the only reason that they advocate for significant changes in the fields of politics, economics, society, and culture. On the other hand, conservative scholars display a significant level of attention with regard to the reform of the criminal justice system. According to DeKeseredy and Perry (2006), it is obvious that all civilizations require a mixture of formal and informal social control mechanisms. However, the proposed reforms to the criminal justice system by critical criminologists do not include the introduction of harsher punishments or more extreme methods of treatment, such as electric shock therapy. Lea and Young (1984) and Kinsey, Lea, and Young (1986), two examples of British left realism researchers, recommend the adoption of techniques such as "minimal policing," "preemptive deterrence," and the development of democratic oversight in order to solve difficulties relating to law enforcement. Other examples of left realist scholars are Kinsey, Lea, and Young (1986). In addition, proponents of critical criminology call for the implementation of "short-term policies that embody a broader perspective" with the proposed improvements to the criminal justice system. This phrase was coined by sociologist William Julius Wilson (1996) of Harvard University.

This necessitates the development of alternative approaches that diverge from the viewpoints of Lynch et al. (2000), Schwartz and Hatty (2003), and Thomas and O'Maolchatha (1989) regarding the idea of critical criminology. According to Young (1988), this type of radical criminology might be classified as a subcategory of radical criminology. There are many different versions of the left realism theory, but they all share a common starting premise, which is the statement that inner-city violence is a big problem for those who are socially and economically poor, regardless of their gender or ethnic/cultural origin (DeKeseredy 2003). There are many different incarnations of the left realism theory.

The promotion of proactive police engagement, the limiting of police coercion, the minimizing of police intervention, and the facilitation of broad public accessibility to law enforcement services are some of the core ideas that underpin minimum policing. This strategy involves engaging in community-based efforts that are aimed at proactively discouraging criminal activity inside an area. Rather than sending a big police force in response to an incident, this approach uses community-based efforts to achieve its goal. An analysis of critical criminology

in rural contexts is presented in point number seven. In modern times, there has been a discernible growth in the prevalence of critical criminological studies relevant to rural crime and the corresponding societal reactions. These analyses have been prompted by the fact that there has been an increase in the number of people who are interested in these topics. A study was carried out in Australia by Hogg and Carrington (2006), while a study with very similar findings was carried out in the United States by DeKeseredy et al. (2007). Both of these studies acknowledged the existence of a crisis in rural masculinity, and their primary focus was on the problem of sexual assault occurring in rural communities during the process of divorce or separation. Grant's (2008) feminist investigation of the experiences of Appalachian women as they traverse the journey from addiction to recovery is a significant scholarly addition to the existing body of knowledge on this subject. The author focuses on the experiences of these women as they go from active addiction to recovery. In contrast, the study of rural critical criminology is still in its infancy and calls for additional academic research. This is an area that has to be developed further. The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive overview of the primary components that are included in a more comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of criminology that is known as "new" or critical criminology. This study makes substantial use of the research that Hogg and Carrington (2006:171) undertook on the subject of "gendered violence and the architecture of rural life." In addition to this, it makes use of the seminal work that Taylor and his co-authors published in 1973 under the title *The New Criminology*. On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to get things started by giving a brief introduction to the historical evolution of rural criminology.

A representation of rural criminology cases extracted from historical records as an illustration. The Rural Sociological Society, which was founded in 1936, was the organization that provided support for the publication *Rural Sociology*. The initial members of the American Sociological Society were dissatisfied with the restricted amount of time and space that was available on the annual calendar, which prompted them to form the organization. In 1937, the third edition of the second volume featured the first publication on rural crime. This issue was part of the second volume. An assessment of the closeness of rural counties to more densely populated places was the primary focus of this research, which was directed by Mapheus Smith, an associate professor of sociology at Kansas State University. Smith's primary purpose was to explicate the factors influencing official delinquency rates by focusing on the proximity of rural

counties to these areas. The essay made relatively few references to the work done by other researchers, with the exception of a small number of citations that were located in the footnote on the first page. Edwin Sutherland's textbook on criminology is mentioned in the article that was written by Smith in 1937. Sutherland's textbook was published in 1934. Smith arrived at the conclusion that the proximity to larger towns had a major impact on delinquency rates after conducting an exhaustive review of the data.

Marshall Jones (1939), an associate professor who specialized in economics and sociology at Tusculum College in eastern Tennessee, conducted an analysis of crime patterns that were subsequently acknowledged by the state police in western Massachusetts two years later. This analysis was included in the first edition of volume 4 of *Rural Sociology*, which was published in 1939. The area was not only cut off from the rest of the world by geography, but it also had a bad reputation for being a hotbed for criminal activity (p. 139). Marshall Jones' use of references demonstrated a level of restraint, which was in line with the tone that was predominant in many publications within the area of rural sociology during that time period. This restrained nature was consistent with the tone that was prevalent. However, Jones was successful in bringing attention to the groundbreaking research undertaken by Sorokin and Zimmerman in 1929 and published under the title "Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology."

Marshall Clinard, a well-known criminologist, examined the relationship between urbanization and criminal conduct in two articles that were published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1942 and 1944. In his pioneering study, Clinard (1942) made the critical discovery that people living from rural areas demonstrated a lesser predisposition to engage in gang-related activities or identify themselves with criminal organizations, in contrast to their counterparts who lived in metropolitan areas. This was a noteworthy finding. In addition to this, it was discovered that the rural offenders in question possessed a lessened understanding of the illegality of their behavior. In Clinard's later work (1944), he reaffirmed his earlier findings by emphasizing the limited applicability of the differential association theory, as popularized by Sutherland and the Chicago School of Sociology, to rural criminals, namely those who originated from agricultural backgrounds.

This was done in order to counter Sutherland's and the Chicago School of Sociology's assertion that differential association could be applied to rural criminals. Even though the author makes note of the exhaustive research that was carried out by Sorokin, Zimmerman, and

Galpin and included in their book "Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology," which was published in 1931, it is important to point out that neither of the two books that are being discussed makes any overt reference to the research that has been done in the area of rural sociology. The research conducted by Clinard is limited in its breadth due to the fact that it concentrates primarily on the interpretation of factual data concerning rural criminals. This information has been gleaned from the published works of eminent scholars who have focused primarily on the investigation of urban crime. These scholars include Sutherland, Wirth, Shaw, Thrasher, and others who have been affiliated with the Chicago School. The individual in question earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the highly regarded University of Chicago, and both publications originated from the research that was carried out during the course of his doctoral dissertation. As a result, the obvious nature of this assertion can be linked to the fact that both papers originated from the research that was carried out during his doctoral dissertation.

The reader may find it intriguing why an essay that proposes a fresh and more discerning approach to rural criminology would find it necessary to revisit these outmoded studies. The reader may find it intriguing why the author would find it necessary to revisit these outmoded studies. Nevertheless, it accomplishes something useful. It is necessary to incorporate historical ideas in order for future academics to have the legitimacy to regard the current profusion of conceptual and empirical study on many aspects of rural crime. Prior to the late 1970s, research on crime in rural areas was characterized by a variety of methodologies that were both fragmented and varied. The contributions of rural sociologists were frequently ignored by academics, and rural sociologists never acknowledged the progress made in mainstream criminology and sociology. With the notable exception of the given first name "Marshall," there was a striking absence of integration and synergy between the disparate subfields of rural sociology and criminology.

In addition, a sizeable percentage of the first research was devoid of a theoretical framework and concentrated mostly on description rather than analysis. In studies that took a theoretical approach, functionalism was the most frequently used theoretical framework as a starting point. The theoretical framework of the Chicago School, which contains the idea of concentric circles and draws a social analogy to Newton's mechanistic understanding of gravity, has been widely investigated by scholars working in the topic of early rural crime. Because of this, they were

able to examine rural crime in all of its myriad manifestations in connection to the distance between rural areas and the nearest urban center, taking into account the total number of people living in the urban area.

Moving Forward into Uncharted Waters Criminology Today: A Dismal State of Affairs There are nine places where crimes seem to happen more frequently. They may have forgotten that Einstein had already overtaken Newton by several decades, when he established his widely known general theory of relativity. All things, according to this idea, are in constant motion, and there is no such thing as a fixed point of reference. Despite being superseded by a more in-depth understanding of space and time, the individuals persisted in making connections between a physics theory that had been around for centuries but was inaccurate (specifically, deteriorating only under highly demanding conditions, such as intense gravitational pressures). In this discussion, the concept of "rural critical criminology" is proposed as a new academic subfield. The reader will see that this proposition is constant all through the text. Crime in rural locations is an issue that calls for research into the unique social and cultural dynamics of those settings. Movement of people, closeness to cities of varied sizes, and links to criminal cliques and gangs all pale in comparison to the complexity of the phenomenon under examination. Within a larger and more contextual range of explanatory variables, however, it is crucial to recognize that these qualities remain acceptable and legitimate elements.

Urbanism is a culturally and historically contingent phenomena, and early research in rural criminology occasionally veered away from analyzing its localized effects to probe its broader implications. Wirth's (1938) seminal portrayal of city life and Ogburn's (1928) notion of lag provided inspiration for this investigation. Ascribing recent criminal issues in a rural setting to recent migrants, temporary residents, or any individuals not considered local residents was sufficient for a cursory understanding of rural crime in this context, as was a familiarity with past incidents in major urban centers in the United States.

Therefore, by the middle of the twentieth century, when significant cultural, economic, and social transformations occurred in American society, rural crime was seen as a phenomenon similar to urban crime, albeit with a delayed manifestation in terms of the nature and frequency of criminal acts (Fischer 1980). The urbanization strategy, which sought to free rural areas from the shackles of geography and distance, constituted an important intellectual progression, but it also functioned under the assumption of a deceptive unidirectional causation. It's

possible that urbanization has changed the character of rural areas, leading to higher crime rates in some smaller towns than would be expected. Furthermore, given that urbanization was taking place in these formerly rural areas, it's reasonable to assume that factors beyond the inherent social, structural, economic, and normative characteristics of these locations were responsible for the shift. Anthropological and sociological works examining issues like folk societies. A subfield of sociology, southern rural sociology examines the unique social patterns and institutions that characterize rural communities across the South.

The all-encompassing plan for protecting citizens from harm. It was during this time that parallels to the current state of affairs in the United States were drawn, as the country was experiencing racial unrest and political instability as a result of an imperialistic and unequal conflict in Vietnam. Evidence showed that criminality was on the rise everywhere from densely populated cities to more remote towns and rural areas. The National Institute of Justice was established as a result of the aforementioned efforts.

The National Rural Crime Prevention Center (NRCPC) at The Ohio State University received a portion of the massive federal funding allotted to the study of rural crime. Both the positive and negative trends in rural criminology documented in previous years have apparent antecedents in the NRCPC. As of 2008, it was hosted by the OSU Rural Sociology Program, which also offers stand-alone Master's and Doctoral degrees in Sociology. Traditional criminologists tend to focus on crimes that occur in major cities while ignoring those that happen in rural areas. The study primarily focused on property crimes and took a functionalist theoretical stance in its approach. G. Howard Phillips's groundbreaking research in the field of criminology helped pave the way for the development of rural criminology (Carter et al., 1982). Department of Sociology criminologists like Simon Dinitz, a former president of the American Society of Criminology, provided valuable insight and direction for the study. Furthermore, the National Rural Crime Prevention Center's (NRCPC) activities prompted researchers at other universities to focus on issues of rural crime. There was a substantial increase in studies of agricultural crime in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Barclay and Donnermeyer, 2007; Mears, Scott, and Bhati, 2007). Research has also been done on how urbanization affects crime rates in rural areas .

Conclusion

One could argue that, contrary to popular belief, crime rates in rural areas are just as high as those in large cities. It has been shown that the occurrence of such incidents in the country may exceed that of urban regions in certain rural areas and for certain kinds of criminal activity (Jobes et al., 2004). The official rate of violence in many rural US counties is higher than the rates seen in several hundred metropolitan areas, as Donnermeyer (2007b) explains using data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. According to the statistics, the homicide rate in rural parts of Canada is 2.5 per 100,000, which is significantly higher than the rates in both large cities (2.0) and small towns (1.7). This trend has persisted throughout the past decade, which is noteworthy (Statistics Canada, 2007). Empirical evidence shows that women in rural areas are more likely to be sexually assaulted during divorce or separation than women in metropolitan areas (DeKeseredy, 2007). The presence of a rural setting is not indicative of a sociological state free from criminal activities, as stated by Donnermeyer et al. (2006:205).

Institutionalized socioeconomic inequality serves as a primary cause of crime in a constant and observable way, and this disturbing reality must be addressed in theoretical studies relevant to rural crime. Now is the time for a thorough investigation into rural crime. The prevalence of alcoholism and drug addiction, as well as poverty, unemployment, patriarchal practices and discourses, and the mistreatment of women, have all been shown to have a strong correlation in several studies conducted in rural Appalachia (DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Grant, 2008; Websdale, 1998).

The way in which society approaches these difficulties is similarly impacted by a wider range of social, political, and economic issues. Grant (2008:22) makes the valid observation that rural areas are often overlooked when national political agendas or transformational tactics are being developed. This indifference is also visible on a regional scale, and it often has its roots in a desire to keep things just the way they are: unequal and unequally distributed. DeKeseredy (2007) claims that many men in rural Ohio rely on their male friends and neighbors, especially police officers, to maintain the violent patriarchal system that allows them to act abusively toward their ex-wives. However, these people rely on the help of these people to reduce the occurrence of public offenses like vandalism.

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