



# Towards a Criminology of the Domestic

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*Abstract: Criminology has paid insufficient attention to the 'domestic' arena, as a locale that is being reconfigured through technological and social developments in ways that require us to reconsider offending and victimisation. This article addresses this lacuna. We take up Campbell's (2016) challenge that criminology needs to develop more sophisticated models of place and space, particularly in relation to changing patterns of consumption and leisure activity and the opportunities to offend in relation to these from within the domestic arena.*

**Keywords:** domestic; home; relational; technological and social change

Criminological theory and empirical work have drawn upon concepts of space and place across the history of the discipline and many of its traditions. Important and useful though much of this work is, we argue that there has been a problematic tendency to focus largely or entirely on the public realm. Criminology, we argue, needs to take up challenges from social geography that require space and place to be considered in more complex ways, beyond a flat two-dimensional cartography, and understand the social, cultural, and lived experiences that give territory meaning. Technological change provides another set of reasons to develop a more sophisticated appreciation of space and place, since it transforms sites of offending and victimisation such that personal and private places can become as criminologically significant as those public domains that have been the traditional focus of disciplinary enquiry.

The domestic environment has largely been conceptualised as private space and criminology has tended to dwell on the problem of crime, order, and incivilities in public places and spaces: domains that have been the focus of criminal justice policy and practice. Tapping into this broader critique of criminology's failure to be sensitive to the important linkage between crime and place, we are proposing a criminology of the domestic. Here we begin to illustrate how the home and the domestic environment more broadly is the site and relational nexus for a much wider range of harms, victimisation, and criminal activity.

As suggested, we outline broader socio-technological trends that mean it is timely to engage in this project. First, as a site of criminal victimisation, we will argue that – following critical work around domestic abuse – a wider understanding of the nature of the domestic environment in the experiences of criminal victimisation should be considered. In particular, online victimisation means that the physical spatial understanding of the domestic be addressed. This takes up Campbell's (2016) challenge that urges criminology to take space seriously. To do so she envisages the development of more sophisticated models of place and space that move beyond two-dimensional cartography to understand place and space in social terms. Second, the status of the domestic as a site of offending behaviour is considered, particularly in relation to changing patterns of consumption and leisure activity and the opportunities to offend in relation to these, from within the domestic arena. Across much of this, we argue that established distinctions within criminology and criminal justice practice between 'public' and 'private' realms are insufficiently sophisticated: technological change – and related shifts in employment routines, cultural life and practices of consumption – mean that many sites cannot easily be categorised in such binary terms. Domestic places can be both public and private spaces through online engagement, some parts of cyberspace – on the Dark Web perhaps – might be relatively private, while others are wholly public. Individuals in public environments can communicate privately with friends or strangers in ways previously impossible. All of this provides further reason to recognise that the boundary between private and public domains are fuzzy and transitional rather than demarcated and fixed. If sociology is largely focused on the ways in which private troubles become public issues (as Mills famously stated it (Brewer 2005)) then why not draw upon analysis that unsettles this simple distinction and argue that criminology needs to pay greater attention to the changing nature of the domestic realm.

### **Crime and Place**

Before we outline more fully the conceptual gap that our analysis of the criminology of the domestic seeks to fill, we engage in a review that shows how criminology has intermittently throughout its history engaged with spatial analysis, and this has extended across different theoretical traditions. We flag at the outset the significant attention paid by generations of scholars and activists in the field of domestic abuse (Bows 2018; Walby and Towers 2018) and want to acknowledge how scholars have repeatedly reported on the failure to protect women and children in the domestic space we call home. 'Walls', both real and mythic, both protect offenders and deter protectors (Wykes and Welsh 2009). We return to this important body of work below.

Beyond this work – across criminology more widely – space and place have been recurring concerns of criminology and criminal justice, but in ways that have been undertheorised and sometimes only implicitly noted. As Kim, LaGrange and Willis (2013) noted, Quetelet – the pioneer of

applied statistical analysis of crime trends and patterns – identified in the 1830s that offences were not evenly distributed in spatial terms and that some districts were more greatly affected than others. Kindynis (2014) suggested that such efforts at mapping crime have been a ‘flickering presence’ within criminology, but that ‘criminology’s use and understanding of maps, their production and application remain largely superficial and uncritical’ (p.222). Geographies of crime have informed public consciousness and criminal justice responses as districts and communities have come to be associated with danger, crime, and threat: and, in Britain, these associations can be traced back to 18th-Century urbanisation (Ackroyd 2001; Hancock 2001; Walkowitz 2011). In the mid-20th Century, the work of Park and Burgess (1925) and Shaw and MacKay (1942) and the wider Chicago School from the 1920s onwards, argued that space and place played a constitutive role in forming and sustaining offenders and offending behaviour. Much more recent concerns about neighbourhoods, crime and disorder, share similar conceptualisations in spatial terms. ‘Broken windows’ theory reaffirms the claim that urban decay promotes an environment in which crime can develop (Wilson and Kelling 1982) and, in the UK at least, the identification of antisocial behaviour as a political priority from the 1990s onwards has relied on an environmental focus on troubled families in troubled neighbourhoods (Burney 2009). As Millie (2008) has shown, the resultant practices of regulation have a material impact on access to urban space and behaviours that are permitted within them, establishing an ‘urban aesthetic’ that identifies forms of antisocial behaviour not to be tolerated in these environments.

Throughout much of this work, attention has been paid to the environmental circumstances that can develop and sustain, as well as prevent, crime. What remains under-considered in terms of this body of work, however, is that the nature of space and place considered is – largely – that which is broadly public in nature. Challenges for urban planners, law enforcement agencies, and local authorities have related to the policing, designing, and regulating of public space. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design ‘solutions’ that seek to ensure that crime or antisocial behaviour are ‘managed out’ (Reynald 2011) and myriad uses of CCTV, access control systems, street furniture and target hardening technologies (Davis 1990) are focused on forms and practices of offending in public spaces.

In policing, the identification of ‘hot spots’ (and subsequently, hot people and hot times) at which crimes are concentrated provides a basis for targeting resources in ways that are more effective than traditional policing models based on routine foot patrol (Sherman 1995). More broadly, Keith’s (1993) work uncovered enduring and powerful ways in which police officers identified and responded to ‘symbolic locations’ in local neighbourhoods which were understood as ‘frontlines’: contested territories between police and communities. These ‘authoritative geographies of policing’ (Keith 1993) related to public spaces: sites of crime and urban disorder that formed priorities for police attention. This analysis is evocative of historical accounts that chart the development of the modern police

as a response to increasing demands to tackle street disorders – such as drinking, gambling, and prostitution – that were becoming morally and normatively problematic in early periods of urbanisation in Britain (Emsley 2010; Silver 1967).

In cultural criminology, too, space and place feature in accounts of the ways in which crime problems are constructed, and in the notion that crime is a performative action. The notion of the ‘carnival of crime’ (Presdee 2000), invokes a dramaturgical model of crime and so focuses attention on scenery, location, space, and place. Graffiti artists value their work because it confronts dominant commercial and political narratives of urban landscape (Rowe and Hutton 2012). It is not just the aesthetic form and content of a piece of work that marks its significance, but also its physical location. Recent analysis of crime fiction has noted how landscape and environment not only provide ‘couleur locale’ in literary terms but also frame readers’ imagination of events, suspects and detectives (Shaw 2011). In Ian Rankin’s depiction of Edinburgh, Yrsa Sigurdardottir’s Iceland or Peter Hoeg’s representation of Danish snow and ice in *Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow*, landscape represents the threat, peril and danger embodied in the actions of offenders and victims. Again, though, as with other criminological traditions, space and place are considered almost entirely in their communal and public forms: the ‘domestic’ arena is largely absent through much of these perspectives. We are suggesting, following Campbell (2016) (see below), that space be taken more seriously and that domestic space be more carefully considered in relational terms that move beyond a flattened cartography to understand space in terms of how it is used and understood. This draws upon social geographical approaches that adopt an ‘anti-essentialist’ approach to identifying or categorising spaces and, instead, recognise that they are constructed in ways that reflect wider social relations and contexts of power, culture, economics, and demography (Creswell (2013), cited in Laing and Cook (2014)). As has been briefly sketched out in the discussion above, such approaches have been developed criminologically in respect of some dimensions of crime and regulation in the public sphere that have sought to understand space in relational and contested terms. We argue here that such analysis ought to be extended to the private ‘domestic’ realm.

Having claimed that criminology has largely ignored the domestic sphere, we have already also briefly noted the considerable work done in relation to domestic abuse. We now expand on how this has sought to address some of the wider challenges that we want to develop in this article. Interpersonal, familial, sexual, and gendered violence have been increasingly recognised in criminological research and theory and in criminal justice practice as causes of substantial social harm. In many respects the focus of some of that research, especially in terms of the policing of domestic abuse, has been on the failure of criminal justice agencies to intervene in an environment conceptualised as private space beyond the purview and remit of public officials. Contrariwise, in any physical environment, at school, at work, at home, or in public space such as the town centre, fear pervades women’s lives such that fearfulness is routine and safety is

constantly negotiated through strategising to mitigate risks (Stanko 1990). On this basis, activists and scholars rue the artificial division between the public and private realm in relation to community safety where, in respect of gendered violence and abuse in the home, a pane of glass may literally represent the cut-off between public and domestic disorder (Davies 2008). Close ties, the local and 'quite small units' (Walklate and Evans 1999, p.138) need to matter. These 'quite small units' include family living arrangements, intimate and personal, formal and informal relationships and ties, working and professional relationships. Very, very local areas and small units possess harm-reducing potential capable of producing successful and effective outcomes to conflict and for restoring equilibrium at the same time as they are also capable of wreaking havoc, destroying trust, and producing conflict (Davies 2011). These ideas come close to a criminology of the domestic and are worthy of being further developed. We suggest that similar thinking is extended to other crime types and harms in addition to domestic abuse. However, this illustrates one of our key points in the sense that beyond this work, much of the spatial analysis featuring in the history of criminology more widely has been, often only implicitly, on public space. If private space has been considered this has tended to be in terms of domestic abuse – crime occurring on commercial premises, in retail or residential spaces gated from the public, and at entertainment and sporting venues, occur on private space in terms of legal ownership, but socially are 'public' in terms of access. Other harmful intrusions into our personal and intimate space are evident in contemporary life that surely qualify as material ripe for study within a criminology of the domestic. For example, consider the online abuse received by women in public life where misogynistic, obscene, sexist, and foul language is used in tweets (Watson 2019), the online abuse among women who debate feminist politics (Lewis, Rowe and Wiper 2016), and online and offline revenge porn carried out by ex-partners.

To recap, an important element within our argument is that technological developments mean that a criminology of the domestic sphere will consider environments that have been significantly overlooked. As a starting point, consider ways in which domestic spaces are being reconfigured by technology – which itself operates in a social context – such that experiences of victimisation and offending are themselves transformed. The domestic sphere thus represents an increasingly important site of crime (both for perpetrators and in terms of victims). What we are suggesting is that the private sphere in terms of the home or the domestic environment be considered from a criminological perspective and in relation to a much wider range of crime types than has been the case heretofore. This provides an appropriate segue in to the conceptual approach we wish to further.

### **Policing and its Spatial Imaginaries**

As introduced above, criminology has engaged with notions of space and place but this has had limited connections to 'the domestic'. In this article,

and this themed section as a whole, we foreground and emphasise the unsafe, insecure, conflictual and contested space and environment that is home for many. In this article, however, we have pledged to take up Campbell's (2016) challenge as outlined above – that space be taken more seriously and that criminology develops more sophisticated models of place and space. First, we provide a summary of Campbell's arguments.

In an article published in the *Journal of Theoretical & Philosophical Criminology* entitled 'Policing and its spatial imaginaries', Campbell (2016) takes critical stock of the spatial imaginaries which she argues map the policing landscape. While her arguments are based on a mapping of security and policing, or what Johnston and Shearing (2003) term 'governance of security', we suggest that a similar approach can be appropriated to the spatial imaginaries which currently map the landscape in respect of safety, harm, and victimisation. Of course, this might well be a controversial starting point, nevertheless we will proceed on the basis that Campbell's thesis is compelling and useful in respect of moving towards a 'criminology of the domestic'.

In summarising the spatial imaginaries perspective, we are at risk of oversimplification. Campbell's arguments are theoretically rich and closely argued. Her work draws on a sophisticated and complex amalgam of ontological and political positions including that of the topological social. Significant emphasis is given over to approaches that build on the relational geographies 'site of the social' work of Schatzki (2002) and the notion of 'site ontology'. Skipping forward, though Campbell's (2016) concluding position has already been summarised above, in her words, criminology might 'take a turn to relationality in spatial analysis is' (p.82). Part of this undertaking involves us drawing on an alternative conceptual vocabulary in order to develop this new topological approach, which harnesses the intersections of criminology, policing/security studies, and human geography where space is taken seriously:

Topological thinking opens up fruitful ways of engaging with policing spatialities in a way which not only unsettles criminology's ontological commitments to territories, borders, scales and networks, but also re-energises and redirects its critical, political efforts. (Campbell 2016, p.82)

The introduction to Campbell's (2016) article provides examples in policing, of vocabularies that emphasise the spatial and scalar, and, for example, the bounded space or place, the territorial, the global, and transnational. We, too, in the context of the domestic, have already identified a number of ways in which criminology has embraced the 'spatial lexicon' and the space theoretic. However, early on Campbell's review becomes critical in nature. She contends that the spatialised is undertheorised. Space is configured as neutral or taken for granted – in Campbell's terms – conceptually 'given' with critical examination of forms of space notable for their absence. She asks us to reject traditional ways of articulating space which typically operate under the current fragmented form of networked policing. Instead, she proposes we proceed with reference to space which is more 'place meaningful'. The social aspects of place are better captured

through the emplacement process – a socio-psychological process in which space becomes transformed into a meaningful place.

As Campbell (2016) acknowledges, her challenge is not so great. Rather than it being a new departure, it is a reminder that space emerges from the relation between things, ‘continuity and change, repetition and difference are spatially accomplished’ (p.82). Though we are sensitive to the theoretical and empirical distinctions between concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’, we take on her call for the criminological imagination to rekindle the notion of space. The ambition of this article is to do precisely that. We now move to examine the wider socio-technological trends that give impetus to this project. This is done in two sections, the first considers how victimisation in the domestic space is being transformed, and that is followed by a parallel analysis of the changing scope of offending in that environment.

### **Victimisation and a Domestic Spatial Imaginary**

Having established the importance of becoming more spatially curious and sensitive to the unique characteristics that places have in criminology generally (Kim, LaGrange and Willis 2013), we now drill into how this approach might be illuminating from both a victimological, as well as from an offending, perspective, following the blueprint established by Campbell (2016) in the context of policing. In doing this we seek to extend understanding of the ‘domestic’ space within criminology, in terms of victimisation and – further below – offending. This also takes up Blunt and Dowling’s (2006, p.32) identification of the importance of recognising ‘the ways in which the home is politically, socially and culturally constituted, but lived and experienced in personal ways’.

There is emerging work that is beginning to develop understanding of how new web and communications technology transforms the scope, capacity, and depth of victimisation and people’s experiences of harm. Extant cybercrime literature for example, separates out offending that could only be committed in an online environment from that which might be exacerbated by technology but could be committed offline (Wall 2007). The literature about online abuse also tends to be technologically deterministic in that it assumes that such abuse is unique to, or caused by, the cyber environment in which it occurs (Wall 2008). It is perhaps timely to draw a halt to such distinctions becoming embedded in our understanding of victimisation. Conceiving of space in social terms, *pace* Campbell (2016), victimisation is often experienced such that cyberspace and ‘real’ places exist in iterative relation: what occurs in one space links to experiences in the other. Boundaries between the two can be highly porous.

In a rather different imaginary, where we are reacquainted with spatiality and are sensitive to a sociology of place and an environmental criminology such that a social relational approach is furthered, the distinctions between public and private, online and offline become blurred. The ‘real’ and the virtual are not separate experiential realms; activities that take place in the text- and image-based virtual world are still experienced as reality, with material consequences. The symbolic power of language to pro-



duce virtual violence is identified in the work of Bourdieu (2001, p.2002) and this captures important elements of the experiences of social harm in an online environment. We suggest, though, that this still maintains the virtual online experience as a space distinct from material reality. Instead, we advocate that an approach which appreciates the relational geographies of online and offline behaviour is better placed to move us in the direction of a new criminology of the domestic. We now explore emerging evidence in support of such new relational conceptions of space and, in keeping with the focus on gendered violence, we draw on the ideas that have been developed around 'safe space' by feminist activists together with scholars. In collaboration they have revealed the lack of safe spaces for women at home, at work, and in public spaces, including the virtual world (Lewis *et al.* 2015, p.1). Though safe space is a keenly-contested idea in feminist politics, the debates challenge models that assume a spatial binary between public and private.

In their research findings concerning online abuse of feminists as an emerging form of violence against women and girls (VAWG), Lewis and colleagues (2016) show that, far from being a form of behaviour unique to the cyber environment, online abuse of feminists shares several features of offline abuse of women. Like real world VAWG, forms are multiple and varied. There are similarities, too, in terms of the perpetrators. VAWG is committed most often by perpetrators 'known to' victims, demonstrating that risks are in not just public places, but also in private, familiar, and familial places. Even in the relatively anonymous online environment, a third of their sample reported that perpetrators were members of their online community and so not strangers in a disembodied virtual space. Furthermore, online abuse is experienced in an ambivalent domain that is simultaneously private and public. Social media may offer forms of private space so that interaction is only performed in front of those 'followed' or 'befriended' rather than to a wider public. However, content is easily re-circulated and might be considered public in the sense that it is performed and shared, even if only among invited contacts. In terms of the content, many respondents to Lewis *et al.*'s (2016) study suggested that perpetrators intended their messages to have communicative action that served to exclude targets from online spaces often conceived as 'creative commons', a place in which cultural, social, and political exchanges occur. Victims, therefore, interpreted their experiences as having occurred publicly since they were intended to be witnessed by others. Similarly, there is a 'performative' aspect of online abuse; the motivation and impact may be not only to belittle, demean, or exclude the individual 'victim', but thereby to build up the identity and status of the communicator. Nonetheless, the language of the violation of private domestic space simultaneously emerges in victim accounts of their experiences. This online abuse was simultaneously public *and* private in spatial terms understood in Campbell's (2016) terms. The experience of receiving abuse may be individual, private, and solitary, even while the communication of abuse is public, social, and performative.

There are, however, distinctive features to the experience of online abuse. Williams (2006) argues that online, where identities are less secure



because of their reliance on text, ‘the permanency and visibility of violent narratives online gives a certain longevity’ to the abusive text (p.103). Traces of abuse remain in many ways, occupying cyberspace and infiltrating online identities and reputations; the tentacles of abuse can be enduring in ways unique to the online environment. There may also be significant differences between the experience of online abuse and the motivation behind it. Perpetrators may be motivated by a transitory sense of entertainment, boredom, or ‘humour’, and be unaware that abuse may be experienced as intensely threatening and frightening, with enduring impacts. The latter ideas are informed by extant research but further study of perpetrator motivations remains a pressing task in terms of online abuse.

The domestic place contrasted as a site of safety and refuge relative to the risk and danger of public space requires reconfiguration, not only in response to online abuse and virtual violence. Identity theft, fraud, trade in counterfeit goods, are long-standing forms of offending transformed by technology, as is widely discussed in the criminological literature (Levi *et al.* 2017; Yar and Steinmetz 2019) but our point takes this emerging attention further through questioning how these developing practices require rethinking in spatial terms. If the location of an offence is significant, and all crimes occur, or are experienced, at some particular location, there are implications in terms of how that shapes experience of victimisation. Following Blunt and Dowling (2006) we do this in recognition of ‘the importance of unsettling the home as a fixed and stable location’ (p.33). The potential for crime victims to feel additionally violated if an offence occurs domestically is increased if the range of types of offences that can be played out in that environment widens ever further. As Tombs’s (2020) contribution to this issue indicates, corporate crimes, even – potentially manslaughter – are committed in the domestic environment. The sale of goods that are unsafe and dangerous and pose ongoing threats in the home has been a significant challenge in recent times and draws our attention to ways in which the danger of physical harm are present in domestic environments. The Internet of Things, connecting domestic goods and services – kitchen appliances, light fittings, thermostats, and door-entry systems – to the web, not only creates new sites for offending. The low-security vulnerability of such devices makes them prime targets for hackers but also transforms the landscape of crime and makes mundane features of our domestic environments criminogenic. Fear, suspicion, and insecurity enter the home in ways not previously possible.

The ‘State-corporate violence’ that Tombs (2020) outlines victimises people in their domestic environment. Such practices often have a disproportionate impact on poor and marginalised communities such as those living in environments where traffic pollution, for example, causes harm to health as well as raising criminogenic risks in more traditional terms (Lynch, Stretesky and Long 2018). For such reasons, these offences might form an important agenda for criminologists and criminal justice practitioners. That this has not been the case, and such harms have often not been understood or defined as crimes, even though they often entail multiple legal violations, requires critical challenge. The impetus for this

is further exemplified by the public and media discourse relating to the ‘mis-selling’ of financial instruments such as mortgage endowments and payment protection insurance. It is clear that such products were sold to consumers in relation to their domestic consumer spending, not as a result of an inadvertent ‘mis-selling’ but as an outcome of strategic corporate practice that broke the law. These practices have spawned a plethora of corporate legal firms pursuing financial ‘compensation’ for victims. This itself has become part of a proliferation of ‘banal fraud’ normalised among ‘respectable’ sections of the population prepared to seek increased income through ‘padding’ an insurance claim, or to misrepresent their religious beliefs to facilitate their children attending a school of their choice (Karstedt and Farrall 2006).

Having provided justifications and illustrated our case for a criminology of the domestic through showing how victimisation in the domestic space is being transformed, we now offer a parallel case from an offending perspective.

### **Offending, Perpetrators and the Spatial Imaginary**

As mentioned, there is a wealth of criminological work that continues to develop understanding of how new web and communications technology transforms the scope, capacity, and depth of criminal offending. There is an important distinction that emerged early in analysis of cybercrime (Wall 2007) between those types of offences that are facilitated by the web (but that could be, and have been, perpetrated in pre-digital periods) and those that exist only because the web exists, and so are enabled by technology. Arguably it might be that this distinction reflects a binary understanding of online and offline space that is increasingly irrelevant in a period when social media, the Internet and other technology means that almost any offence has both an online and an offline dimension. The Global Positioning System (GPS) means that any offender carrying a mobile phone is susceptible to surveillance and monitoring such that even if the technology does not play a direct role in the decision to commit an offence, it likely might be used for the purposes of investigation or detection. From the detection of bank robberies to the management of crowds in public spaces, the geolocation of individuals via social media and smart phones has become a routine part of police work (Ferguson 2017; Zhu *et al.* 2016). Social networking theory informs analysis of social media relationships in efforts to identify individuals at risk of becoming engaged in gang-related crime, indicating that crime prevention strategies can also utilise online activity (Joh 2014).

If we consider the online and offline environment in spatial terms that reflect their social relational construction, we further extend Campbell’s (2016) argument that was applied in the previous discussion of victimisation. In terms of offenders, it is clear that technological transformation has created new – and expanded old – opportunities to perpetrate crime. We argue that the domestic context in which such offending often occurs be more centrally recognised. Not only does technological change mean that such offences can be more easily committed in the domestic space, but also

a relational understanding of territory encourages recognition of the social meaning of places such that offending is normalised and routinised. This is well illustrated in relation to online hacking. While recent cases have been attributed to various State intelligence services and those engaged in global industrial espionage, this type of offending is often represented in terms of the isolated single perpetrator, able to inflict harm on targets in ways hugely disproportionate to their apparent status *vis-à-vis* those on the receiving end. That these perpetrators are often colloquially presented as lone ‘geeks-in-the-bedroom’ illustrates very clearly how the domestic environment can represent an opportunity to normalise and neutralise offending behaviour in ways similarly applied by those referred to earlier who commit mundane and routine fraud (Karstedt and Farrall 2006).

Offending in the domestic environment extends to radicalisation of potential terrorists or in preparation of acts of child sexual exploitation, whereby individual offenders can identify potential targets and commission extraordinarily grievous offences. Young people using technology in private spaces are likely to do so in isolation, which might increase their vulnerability to grooming of various kinds. Karstedt and Farrall (2006, p.1011) identified the crimes of everyday life ‘that are committed at the kitchen table, on the settee and from home computers’, and explained these in terms of a cognitive landscape relating to changing market environments, consumerism, and the risk economy. A criminology of the domestic would capture this and more. Further to Campbell’s (2016) work, the implications of the domestic place, considered in social and relational, as well as physical, terms, in the commissioning of offences requires further and more widespread research attention. A criminology of the domestic opens up a framework for doing so and a modern research agenda comprised of contemporary crimes and victimisations.

### **Conclusion: A Criminology of the Domestic**

Place is the locale where all things social occur. It is more than a space with physical boundaries and physical characteristics. Place is where social interactions and relationships occur and can influence the nature and extent of these relationships. Place is dynamic and subject to change in character, usage, and meaning. (Kim, LaGrange and Willis 2013, p.144)

Further to the quote from Kim, LaGrange and Willis’s work, our argument is that criminology takes more seriously the domestic environment as a place in which crime is committed and in which victimisation occurs. Technological and social changes associated with consumerism and shifting patterns of leisure activity mean that the domestic sphere – understood to be a complex and shifting category – is a site, and a place, associated with a wide spectrum of crime and social harm. In general terms, criminology has developed an increasing body of knowledge, since the early 1970s, relating to domestic and sexual abuse, intimate partner and gendered violence in various forms. We are not suggesting that such work is in any way complete or that attention can be ‘moved on’. Indeed, we continue to research and write about these issues. What we are suggesting, though, is that

criminology continues to expand understanding and recognition of the 'domestic' realm since it becomes the locale for a broadening and deepening set of matters relevant to criminological and victimological enquiry. We have sought to develop some of this analysis in the discussion contained here and have shown that multiple and increasing forms of victimisation and offending are now experienced in the domestic environment but much more remains to be done, and no doubt some of what has been said here can be critiqued and improved upon. To continue movement towards a criminology of the domestic we suggest that research attention ought to be applied in a number of directions, including, but not limited to, those outlined above and for the reasons summarised in the paragraphs below.

The changing status and nature of the domestic sphere deserve further criminological examination. Considering the private place in terms of a social understanding of space that pays attention to the ways in which particular environments are used, experienced and perceived in relational terms, rather than defining them in two-dimensional cartographical terms, offers an important basis for further consideration of the ways in which changing patterns and forms of offending and victimisation are experienced, and opens up the possibility of more effective interventions.

As technological and social change, for example in relation to new media, leisure, consumption, and cyberised cultures, have made boundaries between public and private space ever more fuzzy, criminological research ought to pay greater attention to domestic environments in which both offending and victimisation occur. If place and space play a constitutive role in the experience of crime, and fear of crime, in terms of the conventionally-understood public domain then, by extension, similar processes need to be investigated in relation to the domestic realm. 'Home' and the domestic realm might be understood relationally and against specific social contexts reflecting power, cultural, and economic relations, rather than simply as a place defined simply as the antithesis of public space.

Further research and analysis within the domestic terrain would identify the opportunities for perpetrators, as well as the related risks to safety and victimisation. Such research will further our understanding of the influence of such spaces on perpetrators' decision making. This would help to identify whether the domestic environment creates particular techniques of neutralisation that allow normative morality to be sustained. Similarly, research into online abuse has illustrated that those making violent misogynistic threats on social media simultaneously present themselves in loving familial relations with women and girls (Lewis, Rowe and Wiper 2016). Online ethnographic research could generate better understanding of the impact (if any) of the domestic environment on such behaviour and inform strategies to intervene and reduce harm.

A recurring research finding in relation to intimate partner violence is that the impact can be greater precisely because the offences occur in private domestic spaces usually constructed as places of safety and security. In this context the violations experienced may be more impactful than they might be in other environments. If this conventional bifurcation of public and domestic space and place continues to apply, then research with

victims of other types of crime might find that this greater impact extends to fraud, threats of harm, and other offences. Given that we have argued that technology has made the distinction between public and domestic environments considerably less clear-cut, it might, instead, be found that the underlying sense of security and safety associated with 'the home' applies less strongly. Our traditional assumptions about risk may need reconceptualising, especially in respect of young people's online activities. While this might mean that there is less of an additional impact in terms of individual experiences of crime in environments once presumed to be safe sanctuaries, it would represent a highly-problematic outcome if this reflected a more fundamental rise in insecurity, risk and danger.

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Date submitted: June 2019

Date accepted: March 2020