

## Crime, place and explaining rural hotspots

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### Abstract

*The fact that most research on offence patterns and crime hotspots has focused on urban areas is scarcely surprising, given the almost unanimous finding that crime is concentrated therein. However, there are also marked variations in crime levels between rural areas. Using data collected in one rural county of England (Cornwall) as part of the 2004 crime audits, this paper seeks to identify hotspots and unsafe areas in the county and explain why risk increases in such areas.*

*Variations in crime and disorder are derived from two main data sources:*

- *Police crime data for 2001-2004.*
- *Victim survey data, covering both experiences of crime and perceptions of crime and disorder in ones area of residence and local town.*

*These are compared according to three sets of variables, using primary and secondary data:*

- *Urban/rural location*
- *Deprivation/disadvantage*
- *Tourism*

*Crime and disorder concentrations are illustrated on both a county-wide and town level. Analysis suggests that crime is more prevalent in the most urban parts of the county, but that there are variations in crime and disorder between different towns. These are to some extent explained by deprivation/disadvantage, with less affluent areas experiencing most crime. However, both the extent and nature of tourism are important: in particular, towns marketed as centres for mass tourism and youth tourism, or those where poverty combines with tourism, experience most problems.*

**Key words:** Rural crime, tourism, crime hotspots, victim surveys, fear of crime.

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## **Introduction**

‘Environmental criminology would be of little interest – either to scholars or to those concerned with criminal policy – if the geographical distribution of offences, or of victimization or offender residence, were random’ (Bottoms and Wiles 2002, 620).

As Bottoms and Wiles go on to acknowledge, this is scarcely the case. Crime rates are, for example, generally higher in urban areas than in rural areas, and in poorer, more disadvantaged communities. However, partly as a result, most of the research to date has concentrated on urban environments. Research on public safety has also tended to focus on urban areas, especially their commercial and leisure centres (Bromley, Thomas and Millie 2000). In contrast, the present article focuses on a rural county of England and seeks to explain crime patterns across the county. In so doing, the emphasis is on why particular areas are ‘crime hotspots’ rather than why within areas particular properties or victims are targeted. In addition to police and victim survey data on crime patterns, the article draws on public perceptions of different areas. That is, the analysis combines data on where offences occur with local people’s views on which areas are unsafe and what crime and disorder problems exist there.

Crime is overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon. Rural residents of the U.K. appear to enjoy a higher quality of life than their urban counterparts and crime is also less common there (Aust and Simmons 2002; Countryside Agency 2002; Nicholas, Kershaw and Walker 2007). These findings of less crime and disorder in the countryside echo those from the U.S. (Duhart 2000; Rennison 2003; Weisheit and Donnermeyer 2000). Almost exceptionally, Australia provides an example of a country where rural crime rates, particularly for violence and public disorder, are often above average (Hogg and Carrington 2006).

The British Crime Survey (BCS) also reveals lower levels of ‘fear’ of crime in rural areas (Nicholas, Kershaw and Walker 2007). The relationship between crime and rurality is, nevertheless, a topic of particular interest in England and Wales. The trial and subsequent imprisonment in 2000 of Tony Martin, a farmer who shot two young burglars, generated widespread criticism of crime and policing services in the countryside (Mawby 2004), one argument being that more isolated locations were particularly vulnerable to crimes like burglary.

Within urban areas, offenders are disproportionately drawn from amongst the poor and unemployed and areas of deprivation are the setting for high levels of crime, as well as being home to large numbers of offenders and victims (Baldwin and Bottoms 1976; Bottoms and Wiles 2002). However, less is known about the relationship between crime and deprivation in rural areas, with the often implicit assumption that levels of deprivation, and consequently a deprivation-crime link, are less evident there. On the contrary, rural areas incorporate some areas of extreme poverty, and levels

of crime have been shown to be higher in such areas (Dingwall and Moody 1999).

Although not generally researched by criminologists, tourism is a particular feature of the area under study. Tourism has also been found to influence area crime levels (Albuquerque and McElroy 1999; Brunt and Hambly 1999; Fujii and Mak 1980; Pizam and Mansfeld 1996). However, not all such areas generate high levels of crime and disorder, with those featuring hedonistic tourism and targeting a youth market reporting particular problems (Homel et al 1997; Kelly 1993; Prideaux 1996). Second homes (Mawby 2001) have also been found to be particularly susceptible to crimes such as burglary, and indeed to repeat victimisation. Visitors may contribute to local crime and disorder problems (Cohen 1980), as may casual workers in the tourist industry (Prideaux 1996).

In the context of Cornwall, this article consequently addresses the impact of urbanism, disadvantage and tourism on patterns of crime and disorder.

### **The research**

The research was conducted on behalf of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Community Safety Partnerships as part of the 2004 Crime and Disorder Audits for the six Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) areas in mainland Cornwall.<sup>1</sup> The audits concentrated on six research strategies:

- Analysis of police data.
- Collation of other secondary data.
- The Cornwall Crime Survey (CCS), a survey of a random sample of electors from each CDRP area.
- The Cornwall Business Crime Survey (CBCS), a survey of local businesses across the county.
- Canvassing the views of key players in the area.
- A survey of youths in local schools.

The data used herein are primarily drawn from three of these sources: police data on crime and disorder; the CCS; and secondary data.

Police data for predetermined offence and incident categories for the three years 2001-2004 were abstracted from records at Police Headquarters. However, in an improvement to the position in 2001,<sup>2</sup> additional material on a small area basis was provided by *Project Amethyst*,<sup>3</sup> for each of the 121 mainland wards in the county. *Project Amethyst*, an information hub based in New County Hall, Truro, was established in 2002. While it is intended that *Project Amethyst* will collate data on a regular basis, resource problems meant that for the current audits police data on a ward level were

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<sup>1</sup> The research was carried out by a local company MSR Limited. The author acted as consultant to the partnership network.

<sup>2</sup> For further detail of the 2001 audits see Mawby (2003).

<sup>3</sup> For more recent auditing, see [www.amethyst.gov.uk/strataudit.htm](http://www.amethyst.gov.uk/strataudit.htm)

only available for two years, 2002-2004. However, because *Project Amethyst* is primarily geared towards mapping crime and other problems, only crimes recorded by the police and assigned a location address were passed on to it. Detailed comparison of headquarters' and *Project Amethyst* data suggested a significant difference, especially for some categories like violent crime where over the two year period (2002-2004) there was a 5.0% shortfall. Another difficulty arose from the fact that some police data that were considered essential for a comprehensive audit were unavailable. For example, we were unable to access home addresses of offenders in order to identify 'travel to offend' patterns or assess the extent to which crimes were committed by local people or visitors. We were, in this respect, able to carry out a small scale pilot of burglary patterns in two Cornish districts,<sup>4</sup> Caradon and Kerrier (Mawby 2007), but data for other districts and other crimes were unavailable.

In addition to these local difficulties, the more general problems with recorded crime statistics have been well rehearsed (Coleman and Moynihan 1996). By no means all crimes are reported to the police, and where they are they may not be recorded as such. Clearly some offence categories, for example homicides or thefts of motor vehicles, are almost all reported, albeit for different reasons. But some crimes, like malicious damage or shoplifting, are rarely reported, and even an offence like burglary (dwelling), generally reported when the offence results in financial loss, is not always recorded as a burglary. Even more care must be taken in detailing evidence on offenders' characteristics. Where detection rates are low, police data may tell us more about failed offenders than about offenders in general.<sup>5</sup> Police crime statistics do, however, usually cover the most serious crimes. For example, successful burglaries are more likely to be reported and recorded than are attempts (Nicholas, Kershaw and Walker 2007).

One additional difficulty with using police statistics arises where the recording process is changed. This occurred with changes to the Home Office Counting Rules in 1998, and most significantly in the present context, with the introduction of the new National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. Nationally, this latest change in practice appears to have resulted in a 10% increase in recorded crime, with the impact greatest for recorded violent crime, criminal damage and theft from the person (Dodd, Nicholas, Povey and Walker 2004; Simmons, Legg and Hosking 2003).

Accepting the inadequacy of police statistics as the sole measurement of crime and disorder, victim surveys have become increasingly popular. The

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<sup>4</sup> On mainland Cornwall, districts are synonymous with CDRP areas except in the case of Penwith, where the district includes the Isles of Scilly CDRP. For convenience, this article uses the terms district and CDRP area interchangeably, but it should be noted that in the case of the Penwith district this always excludes the Isles of Scilly.

<sup>5</sup> To take the burglary example further, one US study of active burglars found that many had not been convicted of any offence, only a few had ever been convicted of burglary, and the most prolific burglars tended to be the most successful (i.e. not arrested) ones (Wright, Decker, Redfern and Smith (1992).

International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) has now been carried out on four occasions<sup>6</sup> in a range of countries, including – on each occasion – England and Wales, and the British Crime Survey (BCS) (restricted, despite its name, to England and Wales) is now an annual event, with its findings published alongside police statistics in one volume (Walker, Kershaw and Nicholas 2006). Victim surveys provide detailed information about crime, but additionally information on respondents' attitudes and perceptions – *vis a vis* crime and the criminal justice system.

The BCS involves personal, face to face interviews, while the ICVS largely depends on telephone interviews. However, postal victim surveys are also common, and were indeed used in the 2001 Cornwall Crime Survey (CCS) and Cornwall Business Crime Survey (CBCS) (Mawby 2003). It must be stressed though, that findings may vary slightly according to the method deployed. For example, postal surveys tend to elicit higher levels of crime, more explicit criticism of the criminal justice system, and more fear of crime than do telephone and particularly face to face interviews (Kury and Wurger 1993).

A major part of the 2004 Cornwall audits involved a survey of a random sample of the local population, the second Cornwall Crime Survey (CCS).<sup>7</sup> The questionnaire used was a refined version of that introduced in 2001, allowing the findings from each to be compared. However, in 2004 it was administered by Devon and Cornwall Police rather than, as in 2001, Cornwall County Council,

Questionnaires were sent out in April 2004 to 7254 people on the Cornish mainland. Although 2214 questionnaires were completed, the response rate (at 30.5%) was lower than in 2001, when it was 36.5%. This may indicate a greater willingness to respond to a questionnaire emanating from County Hall than from Police Headquarters, even though on each occasion the accompanying letter was from the Partnership. However, informal discussion suggests that the response rate is relatively high compared with surveys conducted elsewhere as part of the audit process.

The questionnaire included six sections, covering:

- Characteristics of respondents
- Perceptions of problems/crime in both the area in which they lived and the town they went to most often
- Home security and lifestyle as it related to risk of victimisation
- Experiences and attitudes towards local policing and law enforcement
- Opinions about alternative crime prevention measures
- Awareness of the audit process
- Experience of crime.

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<sup>6</sup> For findings from the 2000 survey, see: van Kesteren, Mayhew and Nieuwebeerta (2001).

<sup>7</sup> The questionnaire used on the Isles of Scilly was slightly different and the results are excluded from subsequent analysis here.

The victim survey allows us an alternative image of crime across the county and within each district to that presented in recorded data. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that it covers a somewhat different population from police statistics. Police data for Cornwall, for example, refer to all offences recorded as occurring in each district, including crimes against nonresidents and commercial and other organisations. In contrast, the CCS refers to crimes committed against adult residents of mainland Cornwall; this largely excludes crimes against youths, corporate bodies and non-residents, but includes crimes against residents committed elsewhere in Cornwall or farther afield.

Finally, secondary data have been used in this analysis. Although some secondary data collated by *Project Amethyst* concerned crime and disorder issues, here the emphasis is upon measures of the independent variables, namely urbanisation, disadvantage and tourism. Sources used include tourism statistics collected by the county and its tourist board,<sup>8</sup> but are predominantly drawn from the 2001 Census, with data available at the ward-level.

Combining these three sources, subsequent sections draw on the following:

- *Measures of crime and disorder and fear/perceptions of crime and incivilities:* police data for crime in general and specific offences, in terms of where the crime was committed; survey data on experiences over the preceding twelve months and on a range of measures of ‘fear’ analysed in terms of where residents lived and spent their time.
- *Urbanisation:* population density on a ward level; residents’ descriptions of the area in which they lived; comparison between perceptions of local neighbourhood and ‘most used’ town.
- *Deprivation/disadvantage:* census data on various measures of deprivation;<sup>9</sup> residents’ perceptions of unemployment and poverty in local neighbourhood and ‘most used’ town.
- *Tourism:* secondary data on tourism in the county, caravan parks and second home ownership; residents’ perceptions of their areas.

Before analysing the data, however, the following section provides a brief description of the county and its people.

## **Cornwall**

The county is comprised of six districts: Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier, North Cornwall, Penwith and Restormel, each comprising between 18 and 23 wards. For policing purposes, it forms one of four Police Command Units (PCUs) within the Devon and Cornwall Police Force Area. It has an overall population of about 497,000. Cornwall is known to most people as a tourist

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<sup>8</sup> See [www.cornwalltouristboard.co.uk](http://www.cornwalltouristboard.co.uk) and ‘Towards 2015: Shaping Tomorrow’s Tourism’ (on [www.towards2015.co.uk/pdf](http://www.towards2015.co.uk/pdf)) and [www.cornwall.gov.uk/business/economy/corn1.htm](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/business/economy/corn1.htm)

<sup>9</sup> However composite deprivation scores were not used, since these are no longer constructed at ward level.

base, but is also characterised as a rural county with high levels of poverty and deprivation.

Cornwall is unquestionably a rural county. As the Cornwall County Council website acknowledges:

‘Cornwall remains essentially rural in character...The County contains a wide scatter of small towns and villages, reflecting an economy hitherto largely dependent on farming, fishing and widespread metalliferous mining, and difficulties of terrain and communications which did not favour the growth of urban centres. Only 31%, or just under one third of the population live in towns of over 10,000 inhabitants, compared with four-fifths in England and Wales...At the other end of the scale, a little over a fifth of the population live in rural areas and smaller settlements of less than 1000. A further fifth live in villages of between 1000 and 2000 and just over a quarter live in the larger villages and smaller towns with populations between 2000 and 10000.’

As Table 1 indicates, only nine towns in Cornwall have populations in excess of 10,000 and three districts have only one such town. The only sizeable city in the vicinity is Plymouth (with a population of a quarter of a million) in neighbouring Devon. Table 1 also charts the population density in each district. This is 0.1381248 people per 1,000 hectares in the county as a whole, being highest in Restormel and Penwith and lowest in North Cornwall.

**Table 1: Towns in Cornwall with populations in excess of 10,000 and population density.**

	Main Towns		Pop. per 1000 hectare
<b>Caradon</b>	Saltash		0.1166326
<b>Carrick</b>	Truro	Falmouth	0.1859823
<b>Kerrier</b>	Camborne	Redruth	0.1931181
<b>North Cornwall</b>	Bodmin		0.0665267
<b>Penwith</b>	Penzance		0.2026019
<b>Restormel</b>	Newquay	St.Austell	0.2087405

The rural nature of Cornwall was confirmed when respondents to the CCS were asked to say what best described the area where they lived. Only 16.8% said they lived in a large town. In contrast, 35.7% said they lived in a small town, 37.1% a village, and 10.4% in a relatively isolated area. Included in the questionnaire was a list of 30 towns or cities in or close to Cornwall, and respondents were asked which one they most often frequented. The most common towns that people went to were Truro (14.1%), Penzance (10.8%) and St.Austell (8.7%). Plymouth, in Devon, was mentioned by 2.8%, who were almost entirely residents of neighbouring Caradon district (14.8% of whom cited Plymouth). Nevertheless, most respondents named a ‘most used town’ within their own district, the only other exception being Truro, that was also cited by 11.3% of Restormel residents.

For all its rural and coastal imagery, Cornwall is an impoverished county (Cemlyn, Fahmy, Gordon and Bennett, 2002; Williams 2003), as illustrated through its accreditation with government Objective One status, signifying that as one of the poorest areas of the country it is eligible for significant European Union funding.<sup>10</sup> However, it is often difficult to quantify poverty in rural areas, where the criteria used in urban settings may be inappropriate. For example, the proportion of rented housing is lower, and high rise blocks commonly associated with deprivation are less evident, and where rural transport systems are inadequate a car may be even more of a necessity than a luxury. Socio-economic data for Cornwall confirm this. The proportion of car owners and owner-occupiers, for example, is at or above the average for the South West region, and substandard housing is only marginally more of an issue. On the other hand, qualification levels fall below the national and regional averages, unemployment is greater and seasonal employment creates local problems.

Socio-economic data in Table 2 illustrate these points. The proportion of car owners for example, at 79.5%, is above the average for England and Wales (73.2%), as is the proportion of owner-occupiers (72.3% compared with 68.9%). On the other hand, poor quality housing, as measured by homes without central heating, is relatively common, 18.3% compared with 8.5% in England and Wales, and unemployment levels also exceed the national average. Table 2 also illustrates the degree of variation within Cornwall. Clearly, Penwith stands out as the most disadvantaged district, with high unemployment, low levels of car ownership, low owner occupation and poor housing standards. Census data and other government statistics also demonstrate the enormous variations in affluence and deprivation between wards within the same district.. In Penwith, for example, the three most disadvantaged wards were quite clearly Penzance East, Penzance Promenade and Penzance Central. Each had low levels of owner occupancy and car ownership and high unemployment, ranking on these criteria as the three most deprived wards in Cornwall.

Differences were also evident where we asked residents for their views about poverty and unemployment locally. Nearly a quarter (23.4%) of Cornwall residents said that 'unemployment and poverty' was a problem in their immediate neighbourhood, while over half (51.9%) said it was a problem in their most used town. In each case, there was a significant difference between districts, with Penwith people most likely to see it as a problem. Four towns in Cornwall were identified as having a particular problem: Camborne (85.6%) and Redruth (77.8%) in Kerrier and Penzance (78.7%) and Hayle (76.2%) in Penwith.

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<sup>10</sup> When E.U. structural funds were last reviewed, Cornwall was one of only three parts of the U.K. to be awarded Objective One status, due to its exceptionally low GDP per head of population, which the EU takes as the best single measure of poverty.

**Table 2: Measures of affluence/deprivation for each CDRP area in Cornwall.**

	<b>Owner occupied*</b>	<b>No central heating*</b>	<b>No car household*</b>	<b>Two plus car household*</b>	<b>Male** unemployment</b>	<b>Female** unemployment</b>	<b>Total** unemployment</b>
Caradon	73.9	17.4	18.1	33.6	4.2	3.8	4.0
Carrick	72.0	17.7	21.5	30.4	5.6	4.0	4.9
Kerrier	73.8	17.3	19.7	31.2	6.5	4.8	5.8
North Cornwall	70.8	15.4	17.0	33.8	5.2	4.3	4.8
Penwith	68.9	24.7	27.1	23.7	8.5	5.2	7.0
Restormel	74.0	18.4	20.0	31.1	5.8	4.3	5.1
<b>Cornwall</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>

\* Based on 2001 Census

\*\* As percentage of all economically active.

Tourism is also a crucial feature of the local economy, with Penzance, for example, the main town for those visiting Lands End and the Lizard Peninsular. While the juxtaposition of deprivation and tourism may seem surprising, and indeed tourism may be crucial for the local economy, the seasonal nature of the tourist industry contributes to high rates of unemployment in the close season. Thus nationally Agarwal and Brunt (2006) have identified a number of resorts that are characterised by high levels of deprivation.

The 2001 census indicates that in each district the numbers employed in hotels and catering alone exceeded the combined total in agriculture and fishing, the two traditional employment sectors. At the peak of the season there are over 270,000 visitors to the county, which adds more than 50% to the all year population. London and Devon are the only areas in the UK that attract more visitors. Tourism accounts for at least 30000 jobs, with many more at the peak of the season.

The CCS and CBCS confirm the importance of tourism to the county. No less than 76.9% of residents felt that tourism was important to the town they most often visited and 65.3% felt it was an important industry in the area where they lived. In the business survey, 56.6% felt that the tourist industry was important in the area where their business was located and 26.8% said their business was dependent on tourism.

However, the districts of Cornwall are not uniform in their popularity amongst visitors and Table 3 illustrates the impact of tourism on each of the districts, using official sources. Overall, the data indicate that tourism is especially important to Carrick, North Cornwall, Penwith and Restormel, less so to Caradon and Kerrier, although the pattern for second home ownership is somewhat different.

**Table 3: Indicators of the extent and impact of tourism in the different districts of Cornwall**

	<b>Jobs related to tourism spending</b>	<b>Percentage employment supported by tourism</b>	<b>Spend by staying visitors (£m)</b>	<b>Spend by day visitors (£m)</b>	<b>Percentage housing second homes</b>
<i>Caradon</i>	6,822	18	£114.172	£ 68.611	3.8
<b>Carrick</b>	10,203	30	£155.768	£115.771	3.5
<b>Kerrier</b>	6,410	16	£ 98.277	£ 62.524	2.8
<b>N. Cornwall</b>	11,465	33	£226.838	£110.036	8.2
<b>Penwith</b>	8,077	34	£160.913	£ 70.032	7.1
<b>Restormel</b>	12,043	28	£253.019	£ 87.645	2.7

Tourist Board statistics indicate that the five most visited locations in the county are St.Ives (visited by 29.2% of tourists), Penzance (19.0%), Newquay (17.3%), Truro (15.9%) and Lands End (15.6%). The places visitors are most likely to stay are Newquay (12.4%), St.Ives (9.7%), Penzance (7.5%), Falmouth (6.0%) and St.Austell (6.0%). On a town level,

seven towns in the county were considered by respondents to the CCS as especially tourism-oriented: <sup>11</sup> Bude, Falmouth, Looe, Newquay, Penzance, St.Ives and Wadebridge. Notably, only three of these (Falmouth, Newquay and Penzance) had resident populations exceeding 10000 and only one (Penzance) was also considered by over three quarters of those frequenting it to be characterised by unemployment and poverty.

It is also important to stress that the nature of the tourism industry varies in different parts of the county. Restormel, and Newquay in particular, is the only area characterised by mass tourism, with young singles comprising a significant section of the market, partly but not exclusively through the appeal of surfing and special events like the annual 'Run to the Sun' (Barton and James 2003).

Cornwall can thus be described as a predominantly rural county, dependent upon tourism, but with high levels of deprivation. The following sections explore how far these three features impact upon levels of crime and perceptions of insecurity within the county.

### **Crime, insecurity and urbanism**

Four aspects of police statistics well illustrate the impact of urbanisation on patterns of offending. First, the crime rate varied markedly between different wards, where variation was consistently and significantly ( $p=0.000$ ) related to population density. Areas with higher levels of population density had higher rates of crime for overall crime, vehicle crime, domestic burglary and violence. Second, as Map 1 illustrates, crime rates were notably highest in the most urban wards of the county and low in the more rural wards, and this applied in each district. Maps 2-5 illustrate this for burglary and violent crime in Penwith and Restormel, where Penzance and Newquay, respectively, stood out from the remainder of their districts. Third, spot maps of the main towns consistently reveal a concentration of crime in the central commercial areas of the towns, with recorded incidents less common on the outskirts. This was particularly so for violent crime, but a similar pattern is evident for different offence types, with variations according to the location of clubs and bars (in the case of violence) and parking areas (in the case of vehicle-related crimes). <sup>12</sup> Maps 6-7 illustrate this for recorded violent crime in Penzance and Newquay. Fourth, a detailed analysis of 'travel to burgle' patterns in Caradon and Kerrier showed that although domestic burglary was no greater a problem in Caradon, in those towns bordering Devon a majority of known offenders were residents of Plymouth; that is, small towns in east Cornwall were adversely affected by the proximity of the large city (Mawby 2007).

Victimisation data from the CCS supported this pattern. Those who described themselves as living in the centres of (large or small) towns –

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<sup>11</sup> I.e. Over 90% of those who frequented it said that tourism was important there.

<sup>12</sup> Although damage to vehicles tended to follow a similar pattern to violence, suggesting that such incidents occur on the way to/from clubland.

rather than more rural locations – were significantly more likely to record that they had experienced within the preceding twelve months: at least one of eleven listed crime or disorder incidents ( $p=0.000$ ); a vehicle-based offence ( $p<0.005$ ); a crime occurring within the home ( $p<.0005$ ); and an aggressive incident ( $p=0.000$ ).

There was also a clear indication that those living in the more urban parts of the county were more concerned about crime and disorder than those from more rural locations. Again, those who described where they lived as a town centre, or in this case also the suburbs of a large town, recorded:

- A greater willingness to avoid some places nearby in the daytime or after dark
- More feelings of insecurity ‘walking out alone after dark’ in the neighbourhood
- Being more worried about crimes like burglary, ‘mugging’ and assault
- And were more likely to cite a range of crimes and other examples of anti-social behaviour (such as burglary, <sup>13</sup> mugging, noisy neighbours, and assaults) as local problems.

Asked about problems in their ‘most used town’ and local neighbourhood, respondents almost universally considered problems more extensive in the former. Finally, those who cited Plymouth (in Devon) as the town they used most consistently identified it as evidencing a range of crime and disorder problems.

Police statistics and data from the CCS graphically illustrate the extent to which both crime and fear of crime are associated with the main towns, even where these towns might be considered relatively small by city-dwellers. Nevertheless, there were marked differences between different towns, a finding that can be largely explained in terms of disadvantage and tourism.

### **Deprivation, disadvantage and insecurity**

Ward variations in official crime rates were consistently and significantly ( $p=0.000$ ) related to socio-economic variables. Rates for overall crime, vehicle crime, domestic burglary and violence were highest in areas with low levels of owner-occupation, low car ownership <sup>14</sup> and high unemployment. <sup>15</sup> This applied both across the county and within individual districts.

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<sup>13</sup> For example, 32.4% of those living in the centres of large towns felt burglary was a local problem, compared with only 14.8% of all respondents ( $p=0.000$ ).

<sup>14</sup> Measured as proportion of households with a car, proportion of two car households, and average cars per household.

<sup>15</sup> Measured as unemployed males/females/total as proportion of economically active population.

Victimisation data from the CCS confirm this relationship. Thus, those who described their neighbourhood as experiencing problems with unemployment/poverty were significantly ( $p=0.000$ ) more likely to record that they had experienced within the preceding twelve months: at least one crime or disorder incident; a vehicle-based offence; a crime occurring within the home; and an aggressive incident. In the latter case, for example, 25.4% of those living in (self-defined) disadvantaged areas had been victimised, compared with 13.0% of those from other areas of the county.

There was also a clear indication that those living in the more disadvantaged areas or frequenting the most deprived towns were most concerned about crime and disorder. They reported: a greater willingness to avoid some places in the daytime or after dark; greater feelings of insecurity 'walking out alone after dark' in the neighbourhood/town; were more worried about crimes like burglary, 'mugging' and assault; and were more likely to cite a range of crimes and other examples of anti-social behaviour as commonplace. For example, those who felt that unemployment/poverty was a problem in their town were more likely than other respondents to identify burglary (63.3% compared with 32.1%) and drug misuse (68.3% and 33.9%) as problems therein ( $p=0.000$ ). Even more starkly, those who felt that unemployment/poverty was a problem in their local neighbourhood were more likely than others to consider burglary (30.3% and 8.9%) and drug misuse (38.0% and 7.9%) as problems there ( $p=0.000$ ).

Police statistics and data from the CCS thus indicate the extent to which both crime and fear of crime are associated with more disadvantaged areas within the county.

### **Tourism and risk**

At first sight, any area relationship<sup>16</sup> between tourism and crime and disorder appears negligible. There was no relationship, at the ward level, between the proportion of either second homes or static caravans/park homes and crime rates. Nor were those living in (self-defined) tourist areas or frequenting tourist towns more likely to have experienced crime. Moreover, measures of fear of crime and perceptions of crime and disorder were rarely related to tourism. However, this does not indicate a lack of association between tourism and crime. On the one hand, it may illustrate the ecological fallacy. For example, those buying second homes in Cornwall tended to opt for more affluent wards, with low crime rates, although they themselves might be more at risk than others in the ward, and caravans might be at high risk even if the areas in which they are located, being less densely populated, have low crime rates. On the other hand, the *nature* of tourism may be more important than the *extent* of tourism. For example, many caravan parks cater for families, and second-home owners are a distinctive subcategory of tourists who might experience relatively low rates of victimisation (Stangeland 1998). The difference between tourism-

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<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, there was a clearer seasonal pattern, with crime and disorder more evident in peak season.

dominated towns is, however, best illustrated by focusing on crime and disorder issues on a ward/town level.

### **The impact of deprivation and tourism upon urban crime and insecurity**

Crime and insecurity were greatest in the more urban parts of the county, but not all the major towns had a crime and disorder problem. This is illustrated by a review of police and survey data on crime and survey data on public perceptions of problematic and unsafe areas.

Data from the CCS provide only a rough indication of crime risks, since we have no measure of where crimes actually occurred. Bearing this in mind, there was a significant difference in overall victimisation rates according to 'most used town' ( $p < 0.05$ ), with overall rates highest for: Newquay (42.9%); Hayle (42.2%); Bodmin (41.5%); Camborne (40.2%); and Penzance (39.2%). The CCS does, however, provide a better indication of public *perceptions* of different towns' safety. In terms of public perceptions of the extent to which problems existed in their local town four towns consistently stood out: Newquay; Penzance; Camborne; and Plymouth. For example, assaults were considered a problem by 60.3% of those frequenting Newquay, 52.7% of those frequenting Plymouth, 44.6% of those frequenting Penzance and 38.1% of those frequenting Camborne.<sup>17</sup> Among the Cornish towns, police data are less pronounced for Camborne but revealed a similar picture for Newquay and Penzance. Considering the ten highest rate wards for overall crime, vehicle crime, household burglary, violence and drug offences, two Newquay wards, Gannel and Edgumbe North, featured on all five measures, and two Penzance wards (East and Promenade) on four. It is therefore instructive to consider the impact of deprivation and tourism on crime and disorder, and public perceptions of insecurity, in these two towns.

#### *Penzance*

Local people saw Penzance as being one of the most deprived towns in Cornwall. Statistics from the 2001 Census confirm this: Penzance Central, Penzance East and Penzance Promenade are three of the most deprived wards in the district and converge on the town centre. Penzance East includes the main clubs, while Penzance Promenade covers the main car parks. Yet local people also identify Penzance as a town that is reliant on tourism, and it ranks highly in the county for both visitor numbers and staying tourists.

Official statistics suggested that the crime problem was greater in Penwith than the other five districts, but there were still marked variations within the district, with two Penzance wards (Penzance East and Promenade) standing out. Penzance East ranked highest in the district for: overall crime (378.4);

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<sup>17</sup> These were the four highest ranked on this item.

domestic burglary (34.2); violent crime (90.7); and drug arrests (24.1). The rate for vehicle crime (62.5) ranked second in the district. The burglary rate was the highest in the county, while overall crime and violence ranked third. Penzance Promenade (274.0) had the third highest overall crime rate in the district. The rate of vehicle offences was, however, highest in Penzance Promenade (80.0), which had the second highest rate in Cornwall. The burglary rate (28.6) ranked second in the district and fifth in the county. Penzance Promenade also had a relatively high rate of violent crime (44.3).

As already noted, the CCS identified those local residents who frequented Penzance as having the fifth highest victimisation rate in the county. Public perceptions of Penzance as having a variety of problems associated with crime and anti-social behaviour were, however, even starker. For example, considering the proportion of respondents who felt there was a very/fairly big problem:

- It ranked highest for 'people using or dealing in drugs' (86.2%), 'people begging on the streets' (65.4%) and 'abandoned vehicles creating a nuisance/eyesore' (42.5%).
- It ranked second for 'street crime such as mugging or robbery' (44.4%) and 'drunken people on the streets/in public places' (66.4%).
- It ranked third for 'burglary/breaking into shops, offices or houses' (69.2%), 'vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property' (75.9%), assaults (44.6%) and 'tourists/visitors being victimised/picked on' (15.1%).

As a result, 63.8% felt there were places in the town they would avoid at night and 26.7% that they felt very unsafe walking out alone in the town after dark.

The crime and disorder problem in Penzance appears to stem from a cocktail of tourism and disadvantage. Seasonal work results in large numbers of unemployed workers through the close season, while the disparity between relatively impoverished local people and more affluent day visitors generates property crime – notably tourists are relatively more likely to be seen as victims than the cause of the problem. Local drug agencies have long seen the drug problem in the county as concentrated on Penzance, and local people concurred, and this – along with other social and physical cues of disorder – generates a feeling of insecurity in the town. However, tourists and tourism were clearly not blamed for Penzance's crime and disorder. Rather, tourists were more likely to be seen to suffer from crime than cause it. In this sense, tourism was a 'generator' (Brantingham and Brantingham 1995) of crime and disorder in Penzance in so far as it attracted a surplus of potential victims to the town.

### *Newquay*

In contrast to Penzance, local people did not consider Newquay to be one of the most deprived towns in Cornwall. Only 49.4% felt unemployment and

poverty were problems there, slightly below the county average. Statistics from the 2001 Census confirm this: although Newquay had three of the four most deprived areas in the district, on a county-wide level it scarcely registered. However, more visitors to the county stay in the Newquay area than in any other town, and Newquay is associated with mass tourism, especially youth tourism. It is distinctive in marketing young single tourists, has a national reputation for surfing and for its nightlife, and is commonly cited as the place where British teenagers spend their first holiday away from their parents.

Police figures indicate that within the county two Newquay wards stood out as crime hotspots. For the two years 2002-2004, Gannel (617.3) had the highest overall recorded crime rate in Cornwall. It also had the highest rate of vehicle offences (97.3) and violent crime (142.1) in Cornwall. It ranked third in the county for drug arrests (25.5) and domestic burglary (30.1). Edgecumbe North (370.2) had the fourth highest overall crime rate in the county, and also ranked second for vehicle offences (97.3) and drug arrests (27.5), eighth for violent crime (64.9) and tenth for household burglary (26.4).

As already noted, the CCS identified local residents frequenting Newquay as having the highest victimisation rate in the county. Public perceptions of Newquay as having a variety of problems associated with crime and anti-social behaviour were equally pronounced. For example, considering the proportion of respondents who felt there was a very/fairly big problem:

- It ranked highest for 'burglary/breaking into shops, offices or houses' (72.8%), 'street crime such as mugging or robbery' (48.7%), tourists/visitors causing a nuisance' (84.0%), assaults (60.3%), 'drunken people on the streets/in public places' (97.5%) and 'tourists/visitors being victimised/picked on' (18.8%).
- It ranked second for 'people using or dealing in drugs' (79.2%) and vehicle crime (71.1%).
- It ranked third for 'people begging on the streets' (44.7%).

As a result, 72.0% felt there were places in the town they would avoid at night and 36.7% that they felt very unsafe walking out alone in the town after dark.

Given the lack of significant deprivation in the area, it seems to be tourism, particularly the specific nature of the local tourist industry, that explains much of Newquay's crime and disorder problem. Newquay has been associated both by academics (Barton and James 2003) and the national press (Hattersley 2004) with high levels of anti-social behaviour. While respondents frequenting Newquay identified some 'conventional' crime problems, like burglary, with the town, the main crime and disorder problems in Newquay were unequivocally related to tourism. Respondents correspondingly focused on street crime, violence and anti-social behaviour, particularly associated with alcohol misuse, as endemic to the town. Notably, a staggering 97.5% felt there was a problem with public

drunkenness, while 84.0% felt that tourists/visitors caused a nuisance. In comparison, far fewer (18.8%) (albeit more than in any other town) considered tourists to be victimised. Newquay also ranked second highest (behind Penzance) for drug misuse. Finally, the town ranked highest in the county for a range of more minor examples of anti-social behaviour (e.g. litter; being bothered in the streets by young people or drunks).

The extent to which local people for whom Newquay was their most used town saw tourism as responsible for local crime and disorder problems is further illustrated where we asked who was responsible for, respectively, 'burglaries or thefts from the person', 'violence or threats' and 'drunken behaviour or other disorderly conduct' that was 'experienced by local people'.<sup>18</sup> For the county as a whole, local people were seen as predominantly to blame in each case, followed by casual workers in the case of property crimes and aggressive incidents, and tourists in the case of problem drinking. While those frequenting Penzance were at least as likely as other residents of the county to blame local people rather than tourists, those frequenting Newquay gave very different answers, blaming outside casual workers for property crimes and aggressive incidents and tourists for problem drinking (see Tables 4-6). Similarly, as Table 7 illustrates, given a list of possible benefits or costs that tourism brought to the area, respondents associated with Penzance tended to see tourism in a more positive light than Cornish residents in general, while those associated with Newquay viewed tourism in a more negative light, especially in the context of noise, disturbances/public disorder, alcohol abuse and drug abuse. Notably, drug misuse is perceived to be a greater problem in Penzance than in Newquay, a finding supported by police statistics. But those local people frequenting Newquay saw *tourism as contributing to this* to a much greater extent than did those frequenting Penzance. In this sense, tourism was an 'attractor' (Brantingham and Brantingham 1995) of crime and anti-social behaviour in Newquay.

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<sup>18</sup> Respondents were asked to choose up to two from the list.

**Table 4: Percentage of those frequenting Newquay and Penzance who attributed 'burglaries or thefts from the person...experienced by local people' to the following, compared with Cornwall totals.**

	<b>Newquay</b> (n=78)	<b>Penzance</b> (n=205)	<b>Total</b> (n=1848)
<b>Local residents</b>	38.5	67.3	58.9
<b>Tourists</b>	29.5	5.4	11.3
<b>Local casual labour</b>	25.6	24.9	23.9
<b>Outside casual labour</b>	65.4	39.5	43.1

**Table 5: Percentage of those frequenting Newquay and Penzance who attributed 'violence or threats...experienced by local people' to the following, compared with Cornwall totals.**

	<b>Newquay</b> (n=78)	<b>Penzance</b> (n=192)	<b>Total</b> (n=1757)
<b>Local residents</b>	38.5	71.9	64.5
<b>Tourists</b>	42.3	6.8	14.5
<b>Local casual labour</b>	23.1	21.9	18.8
<b>Outside casual labour</b>	59.0	35.4	35.6

**Table 6: Percentage of those frequenting Newquay and Penzance who attributed 'drunken behaviour or other disorderly conduct...experienced by local people' to the following, compared with Cornwall totals.**

	<b>Newquay</b> (n=81)	<b>Penzance</b> (n=206)	<b>Total</b> (n=1842)
<b>Local residents</b>	44.4	79.1	77.2
<b>Tourists</b>	76.5	25.7	32.8
<b>Local casual labour</b>	17.3	20.4	15.3
<b>Outside casual labour</b>	39.5	24.8	20.2

**Table 7: Impact of tourism on the following, where a positive response is scored 1, a negative response –1 and ‘no difference 0:**

	<b>Newquay</b>	<b>Penzance</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Income and standard of living</b>	0.65	0.73	0.70
<b>Employment opportunities</b>	0.65	0.74	0.65
<b>Area’s overall prosperity</b>	0.63	0.72	0.63
<b>Availability of leisure facilities</b>	0.29	0.43	0.39
<b>Quality of life in general</b>	-1.1	0.21	0.16
<b>Noise</b>	-0.87	-0.50	-0.51
<b>Violent crime</b>	-0.56	-0.16	-0.23
<b>Property crime</b>	-0.58	-0.21	-0.25
<b>Litter, vandalism etc</b>	-0.80	-0.56	-0.52
<b>Disturbances/public disorder</b>	-0.79	-0.32	-0.35
<b>Alcohol abuse</b>	-0.82	-0.33	-0.39
<b>Drug abuse</b>	-0.71	-0.21	-0.29
<b>Amount of affordable housing</b>	-0.55	-0.62	-0.59
<b>Traffic congestion</b>	-0.82	-0.78	-0.76

## **Summary**

Most studies of the spatial distribution of crime have tended to focus on urban areas, where crime rates are highest. However, research in one rural county of England suggests that even here crime is concentrated in the urban areas, and local people also clearly see crime and disorder problems as most evident there. However, not all urban areas in the county have high crime rates, and this paper seeks to explain differences in terms of social disadvantage and tourism. It is evident that areas with high levels of social disadvantage stand out as having particular problems with crime and anti-social behaviour. However, the association between tourism and crime and insecurity is less obvious. There was little evidence to suggest that tourist areas in general generated or attracted more crime. The final section of the paper thus focuses on two towns with distinctive crime and disorder problems: Penzance and Newquay.

The research identified Newquay and Penzance as the main centres of crime and disorder in the county. But whilst the high crime rate in Penzance appeared to stem from its status as the most disadvantaged part of the county, where tourism contributed by generating a new population of potential targets, the situation in Newquay was rather different. There,

levels of deprivation were far lower and crime and disorder were more directly associated with tourism. Local people identified Newquay as a centre of anti-social behaviour, particularly problem drinking, and saw tourists as principally responsible. In this sense, tourism was a 'generator' of crime and anti-social behaviour in Penzance, but an 'attractor' (Brantingham and Brantingham 1995) in Newquay.

In applying environmental criminology to a rural location, and introducing public perceptions of crime and disorder alongside police statistics, we have sought to broaden the boundaries of environmental criminology. Nevertheless, at this stage of the research, we have little data on offenders with which to supplement this picture. Given the vagaries of police statistics, for example, we do not know whether the proportion of known offenders or victims in Penzance or Newquay are visitors. Equally, we have no evidence of how the perceptions of tourists correspond to those of local people. In the context of crime and disorder audits, visitors to an area might be considered disenfranchised (Mawby 2007), but in the context of areas that are dependent upon tourists their views clearly matter. There are, clearly, still a number of gaps in our understanding of variations in crime and safety in rural areas.

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