Luff, Johannes (2017):

Space for Crime

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In addition to the suspect and the victim, the scene of the incident is one of the basic elements of a crime. While the police primarily determine things in a person- or crime-specific manner, the spatial reference of the crime and, more generally, its criminal geography, has been one of the most relevant analysis fields of criminology for almost 200 years. Human interactions always occur at a certain time in a given space and must also be analysed based on this "coordinate system". There has been a change in criminality in recent years concerning the importance of the space for the inspection of criminal offences. As a result of the advent and growth of cybercrime, in addition to the real space, an alternative is developing in the form of virtual space, which promises the perpetrator greater anonymity and thus a lower likelihood of the crime being solved. These spatial relocation trends of crime are the reason to examine the relationships between human emotions, different spatial dimensions and crime from various perspectives.

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WHAT KIND OF SPACE DOES CRIME NEED?

The topic of "crime and space" has been discussed extensively since the beginning of the 19th century[1]; it is now difficult to have any kind of overview of the resulting abundance of literature[2]. Although in the last few decades, the importance of space in the examination of the criminal offence has become increasingly important, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world[3], space is not of central importance for every standard deviation. This dimension is negligible, e.g. in a number of fraud cases, such as subsidy fraud, capital investment fraud or insurance fraud. In the event of a geographical separation between the perpetrator and the victim, the crime scene must be defined in accordance with the police criminal statistics, without having conferred certain advantages or disadvantages on those involved in the crime.[4] In the case of some criminal offences, such as stock market speculation or internet crime in general, the offence occurs in a virtual space. Although these criminal offences are likely to increase significantly in the future, people hardly feel affected by this with regard to their security needs. Young people are especially unaware of these dangers and voluntarily make details of their private lives known by disclosing their identity; the resulting risks are underestimated or suppressed.

The extreme example to prove the opposite is unlawful entry, in which the offence consists of unlawful intrusion into a defined space or not leaving it. In addition, burglary is also elementally linked to a specific space. The subjective sense of

security of human beings is lastingly and considerably disturbed through this intrusion by a stranger into private space.

The space in which a criminal offence occurs always becomes significant when the perpetrator comes directly into contract with the victim or the object of the offence (e.g. in the context of damage to property or a burglary). The categories of space and time should play a more significant role in the calculation of the potential perpetrator, particularly in the case of planned offences, where the perpetrator lures the victim to a certain place at a certain time or lies in wait for the victim there.[5]

TYPOLOGY OF SPACE

In the case of an assumed meaning of space for various criminal phenomena, the question arises first of all as to which "kinds" of real spaces exist and how space can be differentiated for an empirical investigation. There are several variants on the interpretation and categorisation of "space" for the examination of regional peculiarities of crime[6]:

▸ Regional and geographical differentiation: classification of the areas to be examined by their location on the map[7] (north-western area, middle area, southern area …).

▸ Social, economic and planning differentiation: classification by the specific characteristics of area types (wealthy suburban area, renovated historic district, new development area, workers' housing estate …).

▸ Differentiation by degree of urbanisation: classification by the number of inhabitants and population density of a municipality (city, small town, rural region …).

▸ Differentiation by degree of disorder/neglect: classification by visible signs of sophistication of the environment or social disorganisation (smart housing estate, streets full of rubbish …).

In addition to these geographic, social, economic, urban and spatial planning specifications of space, other aspects of space and its differentiation possibilities are mentioned in the literature – for example, the polarity of public and private space with the respective "legal", "functional", "social" and "material/symbolic" dimensions.[8]

The interim conclusion is that space is more than a material and physical environment. Space most notably serves as a social space as well, to which certain functions are assigned and which is perceived in a certain way.[9]

"The events in the neighbourhood, the actions of the various players and their effectiveness should thus be understood from the inside out. This implies immersion in the everyday life and the living environment of the inhabitants, as well as the understanding of the patterns of action and interpretation taking place there, in addition to the understanding of the different perspectives on the problems and the potentials of the area.

The result of this ethnological approach goes far beyond a pure description of the physical substratum of the neighbourhood with its own housing and infrastructure, the green and open spaces, etc., including their use"[10].

SPACE IS LIVING

The neutral area is extended to "living space"[11] and "public space", whose excessive regulation often provokes violent reactions, especially from children and young people. It is mostly young people who are caught up with (violent) criminal offences in public space, older people rather withdraw to private spaces to commit criminal offences.[12] Criminal geography no longer only projects crimes onto a geographical area, but rather asks what peculiarities of

space in terms of its area usage, design and perception trigger, encourage or attract certain types of crimes.

One problem of subjective perception often stems from the so-called "spaces of anxiety". These are places that people fear because of their building structure, location and use, therefore they avoid them if possible.[13] The objective safety situation of such spaces of anxiety is often no worse than that of surrounding areas; certain characteristics, such as lack of lighting, poor visibility or lack of informal social control, make a particular space seem threatening, regardless of whether it actually produces an increased level of crime.

Finally, it should be discussed whether there is a causal link between space and crime, and in which direction the possible influence of these two variables takes place: does a particular space determine a specific form of crime (space as "explanans") or should it be explained the other way around, i.e. why the crime is distributed in the space in the recorded way (space as "explanandum")?[14]

ON THE IDEOLOGY OF SPACE

The assumption of the hypothesis that space causes certain criminal phenomena leads almost inevitably to certain ideological and political consequences.[15] Suspicion is depersonalised; consequently, policing primarily involves the monitoring of space (including video surveillance) instead of checking or observing suspicious persons (irrespective of where they are). In part, tones critical of the police come across in the literature: "In general, a parting with the provocateur principle can be noted in police law. This means the more frequent use of interventions employing measures not reliant on suspicion against the fundamental rights of complete bystanders (non-provocateurs). In the public space, this becomes significant on the one

hand with 'checks on everyone' in connection with dragnet controls, video surveillance, licence plate registration and checkpoints"[16].

Ideologically, this perspective takes us to the point where politics and the police are accused of focussing primarily on cleansing the public space from all nuisances that could affect the assimilated citizen.[17] However, alternative proposals for effective prosecution and case clarification by the police have not been offered.

As research stands now, it is to be assumed that there is an interaction between the population and spatial structures before the occurrence of the crime. The "variable package", which is more important for the quantity and quality of crime seems to be the social profile of the population; in the literature[18], high proportions of:
- disadvantaged minorities and marginalised groups,
- single parents with numerous children,
- male underage persons,
- persons with low educational qualifications, and
- offenders

are named as risk factors.

Such a population structure unfolds its negative potential especially in a spatial environment characterised by:
- a low socio-economic status with a tendency to form social flashpoints,
- a large occupation density of available flats with feelings of being confined,
- a loss-making, monofunctional housing environment,
- poor visibility of access areas to residential buildings with good opportunities to hide and escape for potential suspects, and
- a lack of informal social control.

SAFE SPACES AND DANGEROUS PLACES

Safe spaces and dangerous places cannot always be universally objectified. As

Becker observes, for instance, social proximity (as a man's recreational space) is the danger zone for a woman, even if many women feel safe here; whereas for a man, public space constitutes the danger zone.[19]

However, in addition to this gender differentiation, there also seem to be geographic constants regarding dangerous places. In 1929, Shaw and McKay had already found in their investigations in Chicago[20] that individual city districts retain their typical character and particularly their delinquency rate in the long term, even if the population living in them changes completely.[21] Residential districts are obviously characterised by individual stable structures of social disorganisation.[22] Kube sees such socially disorganised residential districts as risk regions for violence; such areas are characterised by weak neighbourly relations, the departure of "social transgressors" and situations of ethnic competition as well as violence-friendly standards and values of the inhabitants.[23] "Simply equipped mass housing constructions, created in the course of industrial expansion, furnished cheap living space for industrial workers; however, they did not promote ghettos, but districts of a certain character, which have remained until today."[24]

This in turn does not mean that the spatial structures regarded as secondary in terms of the emergence of crime in their original meaning are now underestimated. Eisner presents sociological approaches that attribute the genesis of crime to the effects of certain situations in specific spaces (deserted, secluded streets) and less to the players present as opposed to the individualistic approaches based on the premise that criminal acts occur where persons with appropriate dispositions meet potential victims in the (arbitrary) space. However, people with such dispositions are not evenly distributed over the entire city area, but are concentrated mainly in city districts in which rent is cheap due to small, non-renovated flats in concentrated building complexes. The focus is therefore on certain population groups who are attracted to particular districts on the basis of existing ethnic and social relationships, as well as economic considerations, and then continue to shape this space.

The consequences of the communal policy should also be considered in addition to the social ones. The assessment of an area as a secure space or a dangerous place influences the image of this region and thus its value as an economic location factor.[25]

SPACE FOR MIGRANTS

Migrants also have a significant socio-psychological function in the space, which should not only be taken into account due to the current influx of refugees:

"A new place must be occupied in a foreign country and one must be able to be orient oneself there. Only then can meanings, feelings, memories and ownership claims be assigned to it, which is the condition for spatial identity.

In the same way that the sociopsychological basis for the ability to integrate is laid down in the foreign country through occupying and identifying with a place, the space which represents the old home is abandoned. This 'balancing act' of the movement from a familiar space into another in which one is beginning to develop one's initial trust is characterised by a series of different orientation problems. Heidenreich (Heidenreich 1995, 18, quoted from Dangschat 1998) describes these problems of the transition from one place to another as 'becoming a stranger to one's own person', which produces feelings of impotence and shame due to different degrees of depression and euphoria. The longer this crisis lasts, the later the new

space can be regarded as 'own'. This is much easier in a space defined by one's own ethnicity for a minority surrounded by strangers"[26].

Against this background, it is understandable that newly arrived immigrants seek housing in areas that have already taken in a high proportion of the corresponding ethnic group and, in some cases, already have infrastructures and support services for their fellow countrymen (shops, recreation facilities …). Urban research focusses on the growing socio-economic and ethnic homogenisation tendencies of neighbourhood communities.[27] The structural segregation[28] of individual residential districts associated with this is particularly exacerbated at the margins of the social hierarchy. Formerly publicly accessible spaces are divided and occupied or claimed by certain social groups or less legally. Thus, there are e.g. "no-go areas" for underprivileged groups especially in "gated communities" within the USA, where the middle class population buy fenced spaces with private security services in their living environment.[29] In the last few years, "sealed-off residential areas" have also been established in the German cities of Potsdam, Berlin, Aachen, Münster and Leipzig.[30]

HUMANITY, SPACE AND CRIME
Since Kant's Critique of Pure Reason[31], we know that the categories "space" and "time" form the basic coordinate system of our mind. These categories are also of fundamental importance for standard-compliant and deviant behaviour of people: individuals orient themselves in space and time, use free time and free spaces, and enter and occupy these spaces at a time deemed suitable.

Crime needs space to develop. Crimes do not occur in a sterile environment, but rather in one shaped physically and socially by humans. We are especially afraid of crimes in which the perpetrator is facing us in a dark street or if the criminal invades our private space, i.e. our home. On the other hand, the feeling of subjective safety is rather insignificantly affected in the case of crimes in the virtual space. Often these are not even reported, even though they result in considerable material damage as well as personal victimisation.[32]

There is no doubt that, apart from the space, individual dispositions and motives of the perpetrator, as well as situational variables (for example alcohol consumption), lead to the emergence of crime.[33]

Space-related criminology currently plays a much less important role in the German-speaking world than in English-speaking countries. The ECCA (Environmental Criminology and Crime Analysis) Symposia organised annually in different countries bring together scientists from English-speaking countries to present their current criminological research with spatial reference and to discuss future joint projects. The ECCA Symposium 2016 was organised by the German Police University (DHPol) in Münster (Westphalia) in an attempt to bring this research focus to German-speaking criminologists as well. We hope that this event has fallen on fertile ground, and that spaces for crime will be analysed in a distinguished manner in the future. This article is part of these efforts and aims to promote discourse.

[1] *The literature named two "founding fathers" of discussions on space from a criminological perspective: Guerry 1833; Quetelet 1835.*

[2] *The history of criminal geography is traced in a large number of publications; see also e.g. Eisner 1997; Frehsee 1978; Kasperzak 2000; Langer 1983; Rolinski 1980; Schwind 2006.*

[3] *Bichler/Malm 2015.*

[4] *On this and the following, see Luff 2005.*

[5] *On the spatial reference of crime, see also Herold 1977, 291; Nommel 2002.*

[6] *Aust/Condon 2003. Partially overlapping but slightly more related to architectural dimensions: Rölle/Flade 2004. From a social-geographical perspective: Zierhofer 2005.*

[7] *Guerry (Guerry 1833) had already proved a north-south gradient of crime in France, see Langer 1983, 17. On the north-south gradient of crime in Germany, see Diehl/Schulz 2013; DIW 2015.*

[8] *Siebel/Wehrheim 2003. Under the "legal" dimension, for example, public law dominates in the public space and private authority in private space, or under the "functional" dimension, market and political functions in the public space and reproduction in the private space.*

[9] *Herrmann 2000.*

[10] *Ibid., 208 f.*

[11] *Herold 1977, 290 f.*

[12] *Steiner et al. 2012. On the importance of space in the criminal investigation of different age groups, see Luff 2015.*

[13] *Kaldun 2001. On the characteristics and features of spaces of anxiety, see Rhineland-Palatinate State Office of Criminal Investigation 2002.*

[14] *See also Belina 2000. Corresponding theoretical approaches to the causal relationship of crime and space are also discussed here. On the causal relationship between space and society, see Koch 2005.*

[15] *Legnaro 1997.*

[16] *Kant/Rogan 2005, 19.*

[17] *Cf. Busch/Pütter 2005.*

[18] *For a summary of social and spatial factors influencing crime, see Büttner/Spengler 2002; Jasch/Hefendehl 2001.*

[19] *Becker 2000.*

[20] *Shaw et al. 1929.*

[21] *Shaw/McKay 1929.*

[22] *Eisner 1997, 25.*

[23] *Kube 2004, 79.*

[24] *Frehsee 1979, 322.*

[25] *Bussmann/Werle 2004.*

[26] *Dangschat 1998, 46.*

[27] *Dangschat 2004.*

[28] *Dangschat contrasts structural segregation with functional segregation. This concerns a temporary phase (segregation), in which migrants arriving in a foreign city are prepared by members of their own ethnic group for life in the host community.*

[29] *Helsley/Stange 1999; Wehrheim 2000.*

[30] *Süddeutsche Zeitung 2011.*

[31] *First edition 1781.*

[32] *At this point, only the keyword "cyber-mobbing" is mentioned.*

[33] *Situational action theory combines all these elements into a more recent, spatial approach to crime. See also the special issue "Situational Action Theory. Forschungsergebnisse aus den deutschsprachigen und angrenzenden Ländern" of the monthly journal for criminology and criminal law reform (MschrKrim), issue 3/2015.*

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