# A New Theory of Globalization, Natural Resource Extraction and Violence Against Women: Toward Solving the Linkage Problem

Walter S. DeKeseredy[1] [iD] · Joseph F. Donnermeyer[2]

## Abstract

A small, but growing, body of criminological knowledge shows that natural resource extraction activities contribute to violence against women in rural and remote areas, but the extant literature is undertheorized. This is not to say, however, that this research is not theoretically driven. While not always made explicit, almost all of it is guided, either explicitly or implicitly, by social disorganization theory and Durkheim's anomie theory, both of which ignore the influence of patriarchal social forces embedded in many rural localities where natural resource extraction activities occur. The main objective of this paper, then, is to offer an empirically informed new critical criminological theory that has the potential to more effectively explain the linkage between natural resource extraction and violence against women in rural and remote communities around the world.

## Introduction

An international wave of rural scholarship is now more aggressively applying, challenging, and revising urban-based criminological theories. Nevertheless, the simultaneous advancement of theory and research devoted to crime and social control in rural contexts remains uneven, with research far outpacing theory (Donnermeyer, 2019). Stronger conceptual frameworks are, in fact, much needed in most rural criminological work produced around the world, including scholarship focused on the impact of resource extraction and violence against women in rural and remote communities.

Until recently, place-based perspectives, such as social disorganization theory, were the dominant theoretical frameworks in rural criminology (DeKeseredy, 2021a, b; Harris and Harkness, 2016). This is because a large share of rural criminological scholarship is focused on specific rural localities. Even some offerings that, at first glance, appear to be resolutely

✉ Walter S. DeKeseredy
  walter.dekeseredy@mail.wvu.edu

  Joseph F. Donnermeyer
  donnermeyer1@gmail.com

1  West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA

2  School of Environmental and Natural Resources, The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA

critical in orientation are heavily guided by a thinly veiled version of social disorganization theory, as well as Durkheimian anomie theory. Prime examples of such theories are those that focus on the relationship between natural resource extraction and violence against women in rural areas and other crimes (e.g., Stretesky and Grimmer, 2020; Jones and Mayzer, 2021).

These applications of social disorganization and anomie theories are problematic for reasons identified here and elsewhere (see DeKeseredy, 2021a, b; Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014), especially because they ignore the role of broader patriarchal forces, and of the long-term entrenchment of patriarchy within many rural communities where natural resource extraction activities occur. For decades, feminists have consistently shown that violence against women of any sort cannot be understood without prioritizing the concept of *patriarchy* (DeKeseredy, 2021b; Hunnictutt, 2009; Pease, 2019).

The definition of patriarchy is much debated within the social sciences. As well, contemporary feminist scholars identify varieties of patriarchy (Ozaki and Otis, 2016; Walby, 1990). For the purpose of this article, though, drawing from Dobash and Dobash, (1979), patriarchy is conceptualized as composed of two elements. First, structurally, patriarchy is a hierarchical organization of social institutions and social relationships that allows men to maintain positions of power, privilege, and leadership in society. We contend that these aspects of a society's social structure are not simply vague assertions, but concretized in relationships within specific communities, whether they are rural or urban, and within all societies. Second, as an ideology, patriarchy rationalizes itself. This means that it supplies ways of creating acceptance of subordination not only by those who benefit from such actions, but also by those who are placed in such subordinate positions by society.

The main objective of this article is threefold: (1) to critique what we refer to as an anomie/social disorganization model of violence against women in rural boomtown communities; (2) to offer a new empirically informed critical criminological theory that has the potential to more effectively explain the linkage between natural resource extraction and violence against women in rural and remote areas; and (3) to argue that understanding how the cultural, social and economic contexts of rural communities around the world moderate the impacts of resource extraction and crime.

It should first be noted that while we find social disorganization theory to be highly problematic, we are not dismissive of ecological theories of crime. They are absolutely necessary for the future development of rural criminological scholarship, which we demonstrate in this article. We prefer to reconstruct a theory of place and crime in a more critical context, specifically for the advance of rural crime studies on violence against women and for many other crimes as well. Nor do we completely reject Durkheimian thought. We agree with Pearce's, (1989) claim that much of Durkheim's work can be of value if re-conceptualized from a critical perspective. Hence, we assert that it is not possible to reinterpret previous research based on explicit applications of theories like social disorganization, Durkheimian anomie theory, and other forms of functionalism unless a clear critical framework of place and crime is applied to the review of this literature. In this regard, we view our attempts as a specific form of critical criminology known as left realism (DeKeseredy, 2022; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2009).

**Fig. 1** Anomie/social disorgani-
zation model of woman abuse in
rural boomtown communities
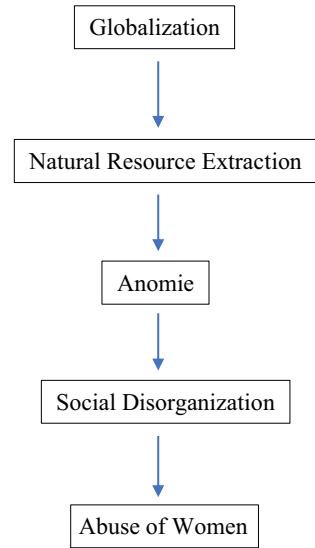
Globalization

Natural Resource Extraction

Anomie

Social Disorganization

Abuse of Women

## An Anomie/Social Disorganization Model of Violence Against Women in Rural Boomtown Communities

A typical non-critical theoretical model that drives the research related to boomtown communities is based on the three primary variables—anomie, social disorganization, and violence—as depicted in Fig. 1. For example, Stretesky and Grimmer (2020: 1148) found in their review of the boomtown literature that 60% of the articles relied "at least partially" on social disorganization theory. Applied to literature related to the impact of extractive industries on rural communities, adopters of social disorganization theory essentially argue that globalization, specifically in the form of a growing world-wide demand for various energy and mineral resources, plus gold, diamonds and other valuable minerals for a consumer-driven market, influences major corporations, often with favorable governmental policies and incentives, to extract natural resources from many rural and remote places, which, in turn, results in the creation of economies of boom and bust. Such rapid community change, according to a non-critical framework, can therefore spawn anomie, social disorganization and ultimately an increase in violence against women.

### Globalization

The phenomenon of boomtowns and of various impacts from resource extraction is global in the sense that it affects many, but certainly not all, rural communities throughout the world. However, it is not a single, homogenous influence, but one with a diversity of effects, including violence against women. Indeed, "[n]atural resource extraction is soaked in history and in suffering" (Magrin and Perrier-Brusle, 2011: 1). It is also fueled by globalization, that is, the spread of market economies to every country around the world and the exchange of goods and services across all national borders. Defining

this concept is subject to much debate, but for the purpose of this article, following Potter (2017: 289), globalization refers to:

> the increasing interdependency and interconnectedness of individuals, social groups, states and economies around the world. It is a complex process, but the single most compelling force behind globalization is the movement of capital and credit from investment, and resource and profit extraction by multinational corporations in global markets.

Multinational corporations "compose the bones and sinew of globalization" (Braun and Dreiling, 2018: 78), and they are now more powerful than states (Potter, 2017). Additionally, it is typically the poorer countries of the world that are most vulnerable to the corporate quest for profits. Furthermore, the setting for research on violence and natural resource extraction is nearly always rural, no matter the country of reference, because that is where the first step in the extraction process largely takes place, from diamonds to cobalt to oil and gas (e.g., see Flynn et al., 2022; Jones, 2016; Kuo, 2020; Maclin et al., 2017; Ruddell, 2017; Rustad et al., 2016; Sharma, 2010; Stretesky et al., 2018; Wakenge et al., 2021; Warren and McAuliffe, 2021). Nonetheless, more prosperous countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the US are not immune to large resource companies seeking to mine iron ore, coal, and other natural resources in their rural and remote regions (Bardi, 2014; Freudenburg and Gramling, 1994; Ruddell, 2017).

It is not surprising that the bulk of the extant published research on boomtown crime is concentrated in a few countries because that is where so many criminological scholars in the field live and where they can obtain the funding for their work. However, there is some research and commentary that can be found in other countries, with much of it published by NGOs, such as Oxfam (2017), and non-criminological journals associated with the impact assessment literature (Jones and Mayzer, 2021; Rustad et al., 2016).

## Natural Resource Extraction

Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1991: 123) use this formula to assess the impact of human activity on the environment: $1 = PAT$ or Impact = Population, multiplied by Affluence, multiplied by Technology. Energy, its mobilization and use, is an important indicator of affluence. Mobilizations of energy include natural resource extraction. Energy use produces such material things as highways, smartphones, computers, homes, airports, plastics, air conditioners, and automobiles. Environmental destruction and degradation occur when mobilization effects are multiplied by use effects.

For example, land is razed of its trees and other flora, as well as the natural environment of fauna is destroyed in order to strip-mine for extractive resources like coal, a significant source of carbon dioxide. Coal-using power plants are inefficient energy users (the technology factor) that contribute to global warming by emitting high volumes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The larger the number of people dependent on the products of coal-using power plants, the greater the harmful impact on the environment (the population factor) (Alvi et al., 2000; Stretesky et al., 2014). All of these negative consequences are frequently referred to in the contemporary literature as the "resource curse" (Auty, 1993; Stretesky and Grimmer, 2020).

Natural resource extraction and the damage done by it are not new phenomena, but these are relatively new areas of criminological inquiry. Humans subject planet Earth to continual and multitudinous environmental harms, but for centuries "criminology stood

on the sideline, leaving the study of environmental crime, harm, law, and regulations to researchers in other fields" (Brisman and South, 2013: 2). Critical criminology was also guilty of this selective inattention. Currently, though, critical criminologists around the world are producing a wealth of what Brisman and South (2013) label *green criminological scholarship*. Green criminology is the term that most observers and practitioners use to describe the investigation of the causes of, and responses to, threats and harms to the natural environment.

Though green criminology is, thus far, mostly gender-blind (DeKeseredy, 2021a, b), there is a growing feminist criminological research on climate change and violence against women (e.g., Wonders, 2018), and some scholars have started ecofeminist examinations of how humans' relationship to nature is connected to gender, patriarchy, and violence against women (see Hunnicutt, 2020). The concerns of green criminologists, however, definitely merge with some rural critical criminologists' interests, such as agricultural crime, both because change affects primary food production as a type of extractive industry, and because agricultural operations themselves are frequently the sources of pollution and other environmental harms (Donnermeyer, 2016a; Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy, 2014).[1] Further, NGOs, such as Oxfam (Kimotho and Ogol, 2021) dedicate themselves to examining gender inequality in extractive and agricultural industries in countries around the world.

Stretesky et al. (2014) are green criminologists and they define the following types of natural resource extraction as *crimes of ecological withdrawals*:

- Harvesting of timber/wood;
- Mountaintop removal;
- Underground mining;
- Surface mining;
- Oil extraction;
- Natural gas extraction; and
- Lead, uranium, gold and the mining of other precious metals.

Even though these activities are representative of globalization, if globalization means world-wide, their impacts occur within social ecologies and related norms, values and beliefs of specific (i.e., local) rural places. Stretesky et al. (2014) argue that natural resource extraction not only harms the environment, but it is also related to social disorganization, which will be discussed shortly. This association is, according to these scholars, mediated by another variable in Fig. 1—*anomie*.

## Anomie

Anomie or *normlessness* is central to Durkheim's work on crime, and he uses this concept in two different ways.[2] In his (1895/1950) book, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, anomie is associated with social change, referring mostly to changes in economic conditions that influence changes in social and cultural condition. An anomic economy increases egoistic behavior

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[1] The interests of green criminologists also fuse with cultural criminology's concerns with culture and compel cultural criminologists to adopt green scholars' views of the *consumption landscape* and the proliferation of environmental harms. See, for example, Brisman and South's (2014) *Green Cultural Criminology*.

[2] DiCrisitiana (2016), however, argues that Durkheim's concept of anomie has five meanings.

because it "frees individuals from the moderating action of [moral] regulation" and places the individual "in a state of war with every other." In his (1897/1951) book *Suicide*, anomie refers to an agitated state of mind induced by the fact that the norms or rules that formerly regulated behavior are no longer appropriate to changed circumstances.

Anomie in the first usage is a characteristic feature of industrialized societies. An industrialized economy provides a context in which egoistic behavior flourishes. Individuals use any means, not just proper or morally appropriate ones, in attempting to satisfy their wants. At the same time, and partly because of industrialization, people become more individualized. The society-wide, shared moral system that in pre-industrialized societies used to be able to effectively regulate egoistic behavior, is no longer capable of doing so. Industrialization, in other words, weakens the hold of the *collective consciousness*, the hold of widely shared values and norms. In this formulation of anomie, the economy, social control, and crime are interrelated (DeKeseredy et al., 2005; Ellis, 1987).

Anomie in the second or social psychological sense of the word also results from normlessness. This means that the norms and values held by the individual are no longer appropriate to changed circumstances. Thus, according to Durkheim (1897/1951), economic crises and periods of prosperity are characterized by higher rates of suicide. In the rapidly changed circumstances created by industrialization, normally operative regulatory influences under the older forms of social organization become ineffective within the newer forms of social organization. Individuals experience societal weakness in this respect as deregulation. Made weary, despondent, and angry at themselves by a lack of any relationship between their changed economic and social circumstances and the regulatory power of existing values and norms, they commit suicide. Anomie, in both senses then, is associated with psychological stress or *strain*.

The traditional model, as found in Fig. 1, contends that any change from the emergence of resource-based boomtowns in rural communities generates anomie in the sense that it creates new forms of social organization, often quite quickly, at places impacted by natural resources mobilization (Stretesky and Grimmer, 2020). Ruddell (2017: 3), for instance, argues:

> While booms can affect communities in different ways, all such places share two similarities: rapid population growth and industrialization. In rural and remote settings, rapid population growth often overwhelms the capacity of local businesses and government to supply the basic needs for newcomers, including safe and affordable housing and health, educational, protective, and social services. Moreover, the industrial development accompanying the boom decreases the quality of community life and residents experience increases in noise, water, and light pollution….

According to Stretesky et al., (2014: 91), a resource-based boom creates not only *ecological disorganization* (e.g., environmental damage), it also changes the economy and "the anomie that is created by structural factors leads to social disorganization and crime." This may be the case, but as Stretesky et al., (2014) also state, there is limited research on the links between ecological disorganization, social disorganization, and violence. The little that has been done was conducted by criminologists who focus on the negative effects of natural resource extraction.

## Social Disorganization

Social disorganization is a place-based theory of crime that attempts to explain variations in crime across differing types of neighborhoods or other geographically bounded areas. It is a near century old theory that is associated with what is commonly known as the

Chicago School of Sociology. Its historic focus was on how crime varies across areas and overtime in cities. It is a theory of social control, working from the logic that change weakens forms of control that in turn gives rise to delinquent and criminal behavior. Originally called zones of transition, high crime areas were depicted as the consequence of how cities, especially in American society, grew and expanded into new suburban spaces. Older areas that were once new decline in value, new arrivals, especially immigrants and the poor replace the previous populations. Social institutions, including the families, churches, and schools no longer exert the same amount of social control, from which subcultures arise that facilitate a rise in illegal behaviors (Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003).

Social disorganization theory itself has transitioned with variations arriving from criticisms of its shortcomings in the mid-twentieth century, and its redevelopment by various criminological scholars in the decades ever since. A subcultural approach was originally part and parcel of the theory until its systematic criticism by Kornhauser (1978). In the latter decades of the twentieth century, three variations, or shall we say "spin-offs" were developed by various criminological scholars. The first is called the structural antecedent model. This version utilizes mostly census measures (such as percent of families with single parent, poverty rate, and population turnover) and official police statistics to analyze variations in offense and arrest rates. The antecedents stand as proxy measures for disorganization. For example, the percentage of single-parent families is assumed to contribute to social disorganization. The second is called the systemic version and seeks to examine more the internal dynamics of places vis-a-vis three kinds of networks—private (intimate relationships), parochial (routine or everyday activities and regular activities associated with membership in volunteer groups, like a church), and public (association with groups who provide services, such as the police) (Bursik, 1999). The third and most recent spin-off is the theory of collective efficacy, pioneered by Robert J. Sampson and his colleagues (e.g., Sampson, 2012; Sampson et al., 1998). Briefly, collective efficacy is defined as social forces that control behaviors through the shared expectations of networks to which people living in an area belong.

In general, as rural criminology grew, the tenets of social disorganization theory were adopted for a great many different kinds of rural crime studies, from homicide and other forms of violence in rural context to the so-called disruptive influences of mining activities (Rogers and Pridemore, 2016). Jones and Mayzer (2021) have identified five stages in the development of research on rural boomtowns. The first stage was dominated by research that touted the economic benefits of various extractive industries for rural localities. The next three stages of research largely adopted the perspective that extractive industries disrupt established social and cultural patterns, hence, are a source of anomie, which in turn increased crime, alcohol and drug abuse, violence, suicide and a host of other social maladies.

Jones and Mayzer (2021: 5) state that even though a fifth wave of research, which they note began around 2010, is more critical in its approach, it still "…shares many characteristics with earlier research…. Within rural criminology, however, a critical approach was adopted somewhat earlier. For example, research on agricultural crime and variations in crime rates in rural localities of New South Wales discovered that localized or community-level expressions of cohesion increased some types of crime, rather than reducing crime (Barclay et al., 2004; Jobes et al., 2004, 2005). At the time, this research referred to the relationship of cohesion and crime as the "dark side of gemeinschaft" (Barclay et al., 2004). For example, community norms that suppress the motivation of a member of a small, agricultural town in Australia from "dobbing in" or reporting to the police a suspected crime (such as livestock theft) committed by another member of the same community for fear of

being stigmatized as a snitch and not having acquaintances to interact with in a friendly manner at a local pub, may seem at first trivial, but has significant implications for how we theoretically think about crime. To quote from Barclay et al. (2004: 19): "The foundation of our argument is that the very cohesiveness and integration of some communities creates a structure that tolerates or refuses to recognize deviance on the part of residents who are considered normal."

Borrowing directly from Barclay and her colleagues, Carrington et al. (2011, 2016) and Hogg and Carrington (2016) have researched the relationship between the Australian mining boom and violence, with consideration of the local social ecologies expressed through shared expectations and cohesiveness. Even though they do not overtly identify themselves as advocates of social disorganization theory, there is substantial evidence of traditional social disorganization theory informing their research on the criminological impacts of resource extraction on rural communities. We are not the first to point this out. Consider that Stretesky et al. (2014) claimed the same with this statement made by Carrington et al. (2011: 353–354), which substantially draws on the logic of social disorganization theory.

> One of the many costs [of natural resource extraction] may be a rise in violence and other social harms in communities affected by the mining and energy sector. These are seriously under-recognized issues and there remains a paucity of empirical data and conceptual understanding of the criminological impact of post-industrial mining regimes and a lack of policy or regulatory approaches to contend with these problems.

Additional evidence of being guided by social disorganization theory, despite their claim otherwise, is provided by Hogg and Carrington (2016: 185) when they argue that in Australia:

> In communities undergoing rapid sociodemographic redefinition due to new mining projects, there is the potential for enormous social and cultural conflict. The sudden influx of hundreds of (mostly male) non-resident workers living in large camps on the fringes of existing, small mining communities or occupying every spare inch of local tourist accommodation, transforms the social dynamics of communities. Enormous stresses are placed on local infrastructure and services, and housing and other living costs often escalate, while most of the benefits flow elsewhere. This can generate dislocation (the "hollowing out of communities") and enormous resentment among existent resident populations….

Hence, globalization as expressed through resource extraction activities may be subject to extensive and rapid forms of economic and social change, with local infrastructures (from medical facilities to police services) unable to keep pace with increased demand (Ennis et al., 2017), with new workers who may be a new source of conflict with the norms and values of the community, but as well, a new source of reinforcing and possibly strengthening norms and values already there, especially about patriarchy and especially in extractive industries that are male-dominated and exhibit various forms of masculinity. As we know, many industries display masculinities linked to violence against women; hence, it can be argued that natural resource extraction activities are quite compatible with pre-established expressions of patriarchy (Ruddell, 2017), a point mostly ignored by Carrington et al. (2016).

Hence, we contend, that it is not social disorganization, but social re-organization that occurs in rural communities impacted by the introduction of extractive industries nearby to small, rural communities, no matter how rapid this change may be. Further, to avoid the

functionalist trap of social disorganization theory as displayed in the work of Carrington et al. (2011, 2016) and many others, rapid change should not be viewed as a middle period of disruption between two stable and relatively unchanging periods (before resource extraction began and then afterward, as this economic activity ends at a particular place), but as part of a continuously changing expression of various beliefs and values of the people who live there, and of the ever-changing networks to which they belong.

This is what we mean by re-organization; that is, the recognition that the social ecologies of rural communities were never static and would not be so even if new economic activities had not arrived. However, our argument is not entirely new, but a renewed recognition of Cressey's (1949) view of coal mining's impact on the social and normative structure of Harlan County, Kentucky, a county dominated for many decades by coal-mining and infamous in its reputation for management-labor conflicts and related incidents of violence. In this pioneering work of historical sociology, Cressey (1949) addresses the ways in which mining increased both inequality and violence in Harlan County, yet the population retained a high degree of individualism in its culture which was there long before coal-mining arrived and long after the coal economy began to decline. In this sense, Cressey (1949), long associated with the Chicago School, recognized both the social disruptions of coal-mining and of Harlan County's "reorganization."

Even rapid change is a form of social reorganization, no matter how quickly introduced and no matter how impactful the changes may be. Social reorganization, therefore, may be defined as change in the structure of networks and of the norms, values and beliefs of people living at specific locations (i.e., bounded ecologies). Even though change or reorganization can occur largely from internal sources, in regard to extractive industries, the source of change almost always is external and related to global economic forces. These changes may become a source of insecurity or risk (Beck, 1992) but not disorganization.

If not viewed in this way, the same fallacies made by Carrington and others are made again, one of which is the latent assumption that these rural communities were static and unchanging places prior to when the new economic forces of resource development came in. A similar criticism was made long ago by Bursik (1988: 524–526) in his critique of social disorganization theory, referring to it as "the assumption of stable ecological structures." In fact, prior context (i.e., to use Bursik's words, ecological structures) in the form of social, cultural and economic conditions is largely missing from the boomtown literature in general.

Hence, we contend that change brought by resource extraction is not a form of social disorganization. Rather, it is social reorganization, generally with serious negative consequences for communities located nearby the extractive activity, but economic gain for multi-national corporations and added revenues for governments vis-a-vis policies that encourage natural resource extraction. This is a phenomenon that even the functional theorist Robert Merton (1957) long ago recognized when he coined the term "functional for whom." To call rapid change of any kind "destructive" or to use descriptors like "stress" and "dislocation" may present a patina of critical thought about it, but as currently used in the Hogg and Carrington (2016) quote above and by most other criminological scholars who focus on boomtown effects, sits squarely within a social disorganization perspective. It relies on an idyllic image of a past to evoke change and the social problems associated with change, as disorganized. It is another in a seemingly endless number of ways to express the mythological "rural idyll" (Hayden, 2021).

Wendt's (2016) commentary on the relationship between natural resource extraction in Australia and violence against women, too, is informed too much by social disorganization theory. She states, for example, that, "In mining communities, studies have found that

community cohesion may not be strong because of the transience of populations, plus there is limited employment opportunities, little choice about housing and lack of services" (p. 193). Wendt is a feminist—not a social disorganization theorist. Yet, many place-based theorists would certainly assert that her statement on the lack of community cohesion concurrent with mining activities means that there is, instead, social disorganization in Australian mining areas. It is a facile assumption that is easy to fall back upon.

Social disorganization is commonly viewed by ecological theorists as the "antithesis" of community cohesion and other elements of collective efficacy (DeKeseredy et al., 2003). Collective efficacy is generally defined as "mutual trust among neighbors combined with a willingness to act on behalf of the common good, specifically to supervise children and maintain public order" (Sampson et al., 1998: 1). To refer to new economic activities in rural places as creating stress, disruption and disorder—whatever particular adjective is used—is a latent albeit clear expression and utilization of social disorganization theory, no matter which of the latter-day variants of the theory one refers to.

Consider, as well, Ruddell and Britto's (2020: 2) identification of the five factors they see as distinctive to boomtowns (all or most of which are also found in mining communities) that create a "perfect storm" where violence against women proliferated: precarious housing arrangements; social isolation of women; lack of battered women shelters and other social support services for survivors; a workplace culture characterized by substance abuse and hypermasculinity; and the inability of boomtown criminal justice systems to respond to violence against women in an effective or timely manner.

Ruddell and Brito's (2020) work and that of the Australian scholars cited above portrays resource-based boomtowns as like a part of a city that the early Chicago School theorist, E. W. Burgess (1925/1967), called the *zone of transition*, which is the area surrounding the central business district in the core of the city of Chicago. Burgess argued that the main cause of transition in this zone was the invasion by expanding or newly established businesses and factories. When houses were vacated, they were allowed to deteriorate because their owners expected them to be purchased and converted to business and industrial use. As housing conditions deteriorated, rents were lowered, which increased the proportion of the most disadvantaged groups who became residents in the community. Those who already lived there could afford to move out and did so. As a consequence, juvenile delinquency rates in these zones, according to Shaw and McKay's (1942) interpretation of police and court statistics, remained the highest in the city of Chicago (DeKeseredy et al., 2005; Ellis and DeKeseredy, 1996).

Shaw and McKay's analysis of these data revealed that a high proportion of juvenile delinquents were detached from conventional community-based institutions (e.g., churches, families, youth clubs). Consequently, the ability of these institutions to control juveniles was significantly weakened. Shaw and McKay asserted that because the population was so transient, with established residents leaving and newcomers arriving all the time, informal patterns of social control by neighbors and friends were also impaired. In short, communities in the zone of transition were in a condition that somehow came to be called social disorganization. Social disorganization was the major cause, detachment from conventional institutions was the mechanism, and ineffective social control was the process that resulted in the highest delinquency rates being found in zones of transition (DeKeseredy et al., 2005; Ellis and DeKeseredy, 1996). As Strekesky and Grimmer (2020) make plain, this view of the impact of population growth and extractive industries on rural boomtowns was adopted in some of the earliest research, mostly by rural sociologists, published in the 1970s and 1980s, and has misinformed the criminological and social science literatures ever since. According to Stretesky and Grimmer (2020), this research, identified in

another literature review by Jones and Mayzer (2021) as stage 2, viewed rural communities as places where rapid population growth reduces the density of acquaintanceship which makes them:

> more crime prone. That is, fewer people recognize each other and know people's routines and can therefore engage in behavior that guard against crimes against people and property. As a result, community norms that regulated behavior changed, making communities more susceptible to crime (p. 1148).

Does the emergence of boomtowns cause a form of social disorganization that makes men more likely to abuse current and former female intimates? Or were these communities already structured in such a way as to promote and legitimate abuse of women? DeKeseredy (2021a, b) points out that communities that became boomtowns have a long history of patriarchal practices, beliefs, and values, which Wendt (2016), Ruddell (2017), Ennis et al. (2017), and Carrington et al (2016) would agree with. In fact, many, if not most, rural communities, especially in Australia, Canada, and the US, are conservative to begin with and promote patriarchal discourses and practices, such as violence against women (DeKeseredy, 2019a; Harris, 2016). Yet, these prior conditions are over-shadowed by researchers when compared to the changes instigated by mining and other extractive activities.

Still, researchers like Carrington et al. (2016) state through the implied logic of social disorganization theory that temporary mining workers have little stake in conforming with local norms and serve to threaten the social relationships of permanent residents. This creates the anomalous logic that if patriarchal norms existed prior to the onset of a resource extraction project, then temporary workers, who are unattached and little involved, might reduce or counter the patriarchal culture that facilitates violence against women in these small communities. Although this might be remotely possible, the evidence clearly suggests the opposite pattern. We do not reject the notion that outside male workers contribute to woman abuse, but following DeKeseredy (2021a, b), we assert that these men are essentially conforming to the communities' patriarchal status quo, and even strengthening it, hence behaving in ways consistent with the actions of many male "insiders." In hyper-masculine cultures associated with mining and other male-dominated occupations, the patriarchy may travel from employment site to employment site, but would likely never conflict with the prior conditions of most of these boomtown communities.

It is well established in the literature that rural places have higher rates of violence against women than do urban and suburban ones (DeKeseredy, 2019b; DeKeseredy et al., 2016). And thus, the arrival of new, abusive temporary residents who often carry hyper-masculine attitudes—attitudes even stronger than those already present (Warren and McAuliffe, 2021) before the boom began—helps maintain and even reinforce a patriarchal form of collective efficacy. Their arrival, then, does not tear up the socio-cultural fabric of the community, but rather, strengthens it. This is a sociological dynamic that is more difficult, if not impossible, to discern through the lens of social disorganization theory.

Patriarchy is an "age-old structure," born long before globalization, natural resource extraction, and boomtowns (Gilligan and Snider, 2018), and men have been abusing women for centuries (DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Miller (2017: 3) reminds us that, "Patriarchy… as embedded in the Old and New Testaments in the Bible and in Roman legal precepts, has been a powerful organizing concept with which social order has been understood, maintained, enforced, contested, adjudicated and dreamt about over two millennia in Western history." To reinforce a previous argument, it is highly unlikely, then, that violence against women became a brand-new social problem

**Fig. 2** A natural resource extraction/patriarchal social reorganization model of rural woman abuse
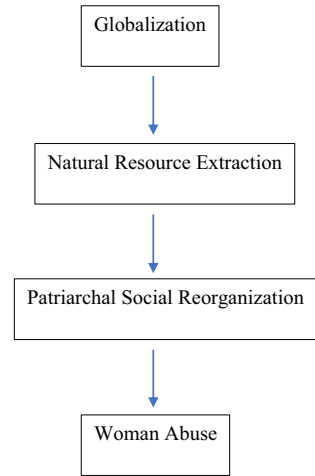
in boomtowns, though there is research indicating natural resource extraction exacerbates a pre-existing condition (see, for example, Ruddell, 2017). Furthermore, male-to-female violence in boomtowns and elsewhere is, as Applin et al. (2022: 7) found, "patriarchy-enhancing when it is patterned and when it maintains or strengthens the given patriarchal order of a culture or society."

The social organization of these communities is, then, strengthened, not weakened, by these changes. We conclude that the glare of drug abuse, prostitution, under-resourced infrastructure, and other phenomena associated with the impacts of natural resource extraction may be mistaken as forms of social disorganization, that is, "dangerous," but forms of change are better understood through the adjusted model outlined in Fig. 2. In a real sense, a social disorganization framework masks a more critical view of boomtown research, specifically, and of the impact of social change on crime for many different kinds of rural places more generally.

Therefore, disorganization is the wrong word and the wrong logic, and, when juxtaposed with organization, presents a simplistic and false conceptual frame that hinders an understanding of rural woman abuse, and other crimes as well. From a critical criminological perspective, and in agreement with Venkatesh (2000) and Wacquant (1997), there is really no such thing as disorganization, only varieties of localized forms of social structure that facilitate and constrain actions that are defined as law abiding or criminal (Donnermeyer 2015). It is true that many rural people, including criminal justice officials, share strong ties through kinship systems and friendship networks. Additionally, many rural citizens are less tolerant of numerous crimes and are more likely to support punitive approaches to violations of legal norms than are metropolitan residents (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy 2014). Nonetheless, collective efficacy can go both ways. Studies done in Tanzania, rural southeast Ohio and in rural Australia (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2009; Jakobsen, 2016, 2018; Saunders, 2015, 2018) found that male peer support for abusing women, neighbor non-intervention, and rural norms of patriarchy and privacy, all of which are expressions of collective efficacy (not social disorganization), are significant predictors of violence against women. In other words, as Jakobsen (2016: 415) puts it, "violence against women… can in itself be a form of community law enforcement, in that it enforces community norms with the permission of the state to maintain a specific social order." Thus, violence against

women in boomtowns is not a product of social disorganization but rather is an outcome of *patriarchal social reorganization* as depicted in Fig. 2.

## Violence Against Women

Violence against women is the dependent variable in Figs. 1 and 2. Following Kelly (1987, 1988) and others guided by her work (e.g., DeKeseredy, 2021a, b; Ptacek, 2016), it is conceptualized here as existing on a continuum ranging from nonphysical acts such as obscene phone calls to physical ones like rape. Although the idea of the continuum is often used to portray movement from least to most serious, all these behaviors are serious and have a "basic common character." They are all means of "abuse, intimidation, coercion, intrusion, threat and force" used to control women (Kelly, 1988: 76). No harm on the continuum is deemed more injurious than another and as Kelly (1988: 48) notes, women's experiences "shade into and out of a given category such as sexual harassment, which includes looks, gestures and remarks as well as acts which may be defined as assault or rape."

The continuum underlines the similarities between seemingly distinct abusive behaviors (McGlynn et al., 2017). Furthermore, creating a hierarchy of abuse based on seriousness, one that prioritizes physical acts from nonphysical ones, obscures the reality that behaviors like cyber-stalking and sexual harassment are often seen by many women as more terrifying than what the law defines as criminal (Ptacek, 2016). What is more, nonphysical forms of abuse, particularly sexual harassment, are much more common in women's lives than are physically violent acts committed by current and former male partners (DeKeseredy, 2021a, b; Kelly, 2012), and these behaviors influence women to avoid going into public places. A large body of research supporting the claim that, "at the time women are being followed/flashed at/harassed they do not know how the event will end. It is only retrospect that such events can be defined as 'minor'" (Kelly and Radford, 1987: 242). In sum, then, the continuum of violence against women helps researchers document and name a wide range of injurious, interrelated behaviors that thousands of women experience daily, many of which are exempt from the purview of the criminal justice system and that are trivialized or minimized by the law, general public, and the mainstream media (McGlynn et al., 2017). More significantly for the model depicted in Fig. 2, it describes part of the context of rural communities in terms of patriarchal structures prior to the arrival of extractive economic activities.

## Toward Solving the Linkage Problem

One thing that our proposed solution to the linkage problem and the work critiqued above have in common is an emphasis on explaining how broader economic changes contribute to woman abuse at specific localities where forms of patriarchy and the actual incidents of abuse occur. This is why we consider our approach to fit within the variant of critical criminology known as left realism (DeKeseredy, 2022). Others would agree with this position, especially those who studied the relationship between urban deindustrialization and woman abuse in the late 1990s and during the beginning of this millennium (e.g., DeKeseredy et al., 2003; Renzetti, 2011; Renzetti and Maier, 2002). Therefore, the model presented in Fig. 2 also includes globalization, which in the case of extractive industries, is a form of capitalist exploitation of resources nearby rural communities in many countries which become victims of the natural resource curse (Stretesky and Grimmer 2020).

Undoubtedly, it contributes to violence against women, but not via anomie and social disorganization. Both anomie and social disorganization assume that localities (from small villages to urban neighborhoods) are passive recipients of outside influences, that is, of change. In fact, these places have their own agency, that is, they have their own internal social and cultural dynamics that, in turn, are influenced by broader forces from the outside, such as an influx of new workers associated with resource extraction. In the case of the violence against women in boomtowns, outside influences reinforce the patriarchy that already existed, with reinforcement as an example of social re-organization.

Consequently, many forms of global economic activities generate patriarchal social reorganization in rural resource-based boomtowns. Though patriarchal prior to major economic transitions, the patriarchal hold grew stronger with the influx of more men (especially temporary workers), which, in turn, "disrupts the normal ratio of men to women" and such quick population growth increases rates of violence against women (Ruddell, 2017: 69).[3] Further, this growth strengthens the existing patriarchal male peer support subculture by potentially increasing the size of local networks of abusive men and through other means, such as male insiders learning new types of patriarchal practices and discourses from male outsiders (DeKeseredy, 2021a, b). As previously mentioned, downscaling occurs (the bust side) when the extractive activity begins to shut down, which can also contribute to higher rates of poverty, business closures and other detrimental effects that also reinforce patriarchy and violence (DeKeseredy, 2019b).

Male peer support is defined as the attachments to male peers and the resources that these men provide that encourage and legitimate violence against women (DeKeseredy, 1988). Over 35 years of quantitative and qualitative research shows that male peer support is ubiquitous and did not start with globalization and boomtowns, but does provide insights into the dynamics of local ecologies and how they can be re-organized (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2013; Dragiewicz, 2011). As well, male peer support is one of the most powerful determinants of violence against women in rural and remote areas (DeKeseredy, 2019b; DeKeseredy et al., 2016; Hall-Sanchez, 2014).

Many women are economically dependent on men in rural areas and there is a conspicuous absence of effective social support services (DeKeseredy, 2019b; Rennison et al., 2013). These problems were not created by boomtowns, but their development intensified them (Jayasundara, et al., 2016; Ruddell, 2017), as it did with male peer support (Hogg and Carrington, 2016; Wendt, 2016). Furthermore, while Ruddell and Britto (2020: 19) contend that various types of violence against women "fall through the cracks" of the criminal justice system and "offenders go unpunished and victims' needs go unmet," and this was always the case in rural communities (DeKeseredy, 2021a, b). Starting with the work of Websdale (1998), a growing literature shows that many rural men who abuse women are part of "good ol' boys" networks consisting of criminal justice officials that serve to dominate and oppress women. Below, a rural Ohio woman describes how such an all-male sexist network and other symptoms of what Websdale refers to as *rural patriarchy* functioned to stop her from escaping her abusive male partner:

Another time, after I finally got away from him and I was having these problems. I was, I was on drugs real heavy um, and I was trying to get away from him. He was still calling me. This was just in the last nine months. Um, I called Victim Assistance

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[3] See Ruddell (2017) for studies of the relationship between rapid population growth and violence against women.

in my town and um, told them that I had been abused by him. Oh, they kept telling me that they was going to do something about it, and they never did. The one other time I went to Victim Assistance, they told me that um, they were going to question the neighbors and stuff. And the neighbors said that um, you know, they said that the neighbors didn't, didn't see or hear anything. So, they said I didn't have enough, ah, proof. Basically, nothing was ever done. He's a corrections officer in the town that I lived in, and he's friends with the sheriff and whoever else (cited in DeKeseredy and Joseph, 2006: 303).

What globalization and natural resource extraction have done is help reassert patriarchy that existed in rural places before they became boomtowns. Hence, we take up the call made by Hunnicutt (2009) to more explicitly incorporate patriarchy into critical criminological theory. Figure 2 responds to two of Ruddell's (2017) keen observations: (1) "The issue of gender roles is not fully addressed in traditional theories of anomie and social disruption" (p. 191) and (2) "Traditional explanations for boomtown effects… fail to take into account the contextual factors of these settings, including their respective histories, economic conditions, and social and political arrangements" (p. 202)….

Figure 2, like any theory, requires improvement. For instance, like all male peer support theories of woman abuse (see DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2013), it does not specifically address whether male outsiders are intentionally recruited into existing patriarchal subcultures of violence or whether they gravitate to these groups as a way of selectively attempting to sustain or receive support for their earlier acquired values and beliefs. Moreover, it does not specify that outsiders may interact with and be influenced by peers who live outside boomtowns. Hopefully, future research on the relationship between globalization, natural resource extraction, and violence against women will help address these shortcomings. Regardless of which new empirical and theoretical directions are taken, what is crucial in considering the links between these three variables is not to revisit the well-worn, erroneous path of social disorganization theory.

## Conclusion

As demonstrated in Donnermeyer's (2016b) *The Routledge International Handbook of Rural Criminology* and in the bulk of articles published in *The International Journal of Rural Criminology*, there is a paucity of novel theories of crime and social control in rural contexts. Moreover, until recently, place-based explanations, such as social disorganization theory, were the dominant theoretical frameworks. They are certainly still around and continue to influence the thinking of those who claim to reject them, particularly scholars who examine crime and deviance in resource-based boomtowns. This paper constitutes a new feminist deviation from the status quo. The model presented in Fig. 2 introduces the concept of patriarchal social reorganization and asserts that globalization and natural resource extraction did not bring violence against women to rural communities, but rather intensified an existing problem.

For reasons discussed previously, our perspective does not answer some important questions, but this can only be done through research specifically designed to do so. It does, however, suggest the future focus of empirical work on the linkages presented in Fig. 2. We recognize that the model is in a state of infancy and thus new research may also uncover the importance of variables unintentionally omitted from it. For example, what role does religion play in the patriarchy of rural communities impacted by natural resource

industries?[4] Again, all theories require refinement and should be subjected to rigorous scientific scrutiny.

It is unfortunate that there is not a larger volume of work about the social organization of rural communities from around the world by which to both build criminological theories as presented here, and to critique them based on empirical evidence (or not) of links between patriarchy, violence and resource extractive industries. A search of prominent international journals about economic development shows very few peer-reviewed articles directly focused on this subject, although there are occasional articles about violence against rural women, but not specifically in terms of boomtowns. Journals searched included *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, *Resources Policy*, *The Extractive Industries and Society*, and *World Development*. They are useful, nonetheless, such as Reynolds' (2021) discourse on integrating women and conflict, with conflict frequently associated with resource extraction, into impact assessments. Consider, also, Sharma's (2010) research and analysis of the gendered inequality of coal mining in the Bowen Basin region of Queensland, Australia. Although not specifically focused on violence, the analysis speaks to the promotion and sustainability of patriarchy in rural settings where there are mining activities. To quote: "…there is a need for a holistic, interdisciplinary examination of the interplay of work, family and community in remote mining towns for the enhancement of human and social capital of women in the communities" (p. 213).

Likewise, a keyword search of such prominent criminological journals as *Feminist Criminology*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, and *Violence against Women* show limited interests in violence against women in the context of resource extractive activities, patriarchy and violence. Hence, there is much work to do, and the starting point can be found in Sharma's (2010) comment above. It is a valuable observation insofar as it points toward how to put detail in the form of economic, social and cultural context to the missing link of patriarchy, as found in Fig. 2. Beyond various North American and Australian studies, for example, Cools and Kotsadam (2017) examined the relationships of various resources, such as household wealth and women's employment, with violence against women in sub-Saharan Africa. Also relevant is the work of Rustad et al. (2016) and Maclin et al. (2017), who looked at small-scale operations mining for gold, tin, and other natural resource commodities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and their relationship to violence against women, especially in the rural settings where mining operations, both large and small, take place. Cane et al. (2014: 18) concluded in relation to mining in Mongolia and gender-based violence (GBV) that "…mining is associated with an increased incidence of GBV, which in turn is linked to transient population migration, employment conditions, infrastructure development, and underpinning economic and cultural changes." OXFAM (2017: 1) begins its report bluntly, with the conclusion that "There is growing recognition that persistent structural gender inequality with the extractive industries (EI) continues to undermine women's rights…Women face systemic discrimination in all phases of an extractive industries project and all along the EI value chain."

On top of wanting to start the development of a new middle-range theory of place and crime, the intent here is to prioritize the concept of patriarchy. As noted by DeKeseredy (2021b), feminist sociological analyses of male-to-female violence that give precedence to this concept have leveled off or declined in the last 12 years. Most violence against women authors are now based in psychology, psychiatry, nursing, and medicine (DeKeseredy

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[4] See Johnson (2015) for comprehensive reviews of the extant social scientific literature on the relationship between religion and men's violence against women.

and Rennison, 2019). This is not to say that these disciplines did not help advance the field. They have, but their offerings are typically atheoretical and ignore the ways in which broader social forces contribute to violence against women and societal reactions to it. Certainly, as demonstrated by over 40 years of feminist research, it is impossible to develop a rich social scientific understanding of the plight of female abuse survivors without addressing the role of patriarchy.

As well, DeKeseredy's (2021b) examination of major peer-reviewed violence journals reveal a conspicuous absence of speculative theories of violence against women. There are, however, two such feminist theories of rural woman abuse (see DeKeseredy et al., 2007, 2004), but more are necessary, which is another reason why Fig. 2 was crafted. It would be easy to simply critique the model featured in Fig. 1 and leave it at that. Still, this would be, in the words of Carlen (2011), another example of merely espousing "oppositional rhetoric" about orthodox social science. The way forward is to jettison this approach and to develop and test a new theory that "resurrects the concept of patriarchy" (Hunnicutt, 2009). It is not that the "language of patriarchy" is altogether missing from the violence against women literature (Pease, 2019), but it is increasingly becoming more marginalized in the academic community and elsewhere.

With these conceptual considerations in mind, we call upon the criminological community, especially feminist criminologists and rural criminologists, to stretch their theoretical imaginations to examine patriarchal linkages between localized expressions of patriarchy, natural resource extraction, and violence against women. In other words, in referring to the stages of boomtown research identified by Jones and Mayzer (2021), it is necessary to take an explicit critical criminological approach (whether it is a left realist approach or some other variant of critical theory) in what is now the fifth stage of impact studies of rural communities and the impacts of extractive resource activities. Further, to the best of their abilities, we call for a consideration of these connections on a global scale by drilling down to specific examples documented at specific localities found throughout the world. This is not a contradictory recommendation because without seeing the effects at a local level, there is no firm theoretical or empirical way to consider the global.

## Declarations

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