

Wikström, Per-Olof, Dietrich Oberwittler, Kyle Treiber, and Beth Hardie, eds. *Breaking Rules: The Social and Situational Dynamics of Young People's Urban Crime*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xxxii + 479 pages. Cloth, \$99.00.

Many criminologists recognize the need for the development and invention of new domain assumptions or paradigmatic approaches that will better explain crime. This is important because existing theories do not adequately address the problem of crime causation. In *Breaking Rules: The Social and Situational Dynamics of Young People's Urban Crime*, the editors, a team of criminologists working under the auspices the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS) at the University of Cambridge, have provided a dazzling text in criminology that unites different perspectives and explains criminal behaviors in urban environments by situating crime as a process of rule breaking.

Breaking Rules employs a longitudinal framework to explain the act of crime on the platform of Situational Awareness Theory (SAT). The book is divided into four parts, with the first part explaining crime as primarily a moral act. Acts that violate moral rules “are ultimately an outcome of a perception-choice process that is initiated and guided by the interaction between a person's crime propensity and criminogenic exposure” (p. 11). This section calls for a rethinking of crime causation and delineation between the causes (by which the authors mean an understanding of the roots of criminal violations) and the causes of the causes of crime. In Part Two, the authors discuss “The Social Dynamics of Young People's Urban Crime.” Additionally, this section articulates the models of distribution of young people within the urban environment and correlates their activity fields and criminogenic exposures. The authors then thoroughly detail the convergence of personal attributes and the social environment in Part Three, entitled “The Situational Dynamics of Young People's Crime.” They explore among other issues the ways in which land use may influence social cohesion and thereby alter the moral context in which young people perceive alternatives to crime. Against the grain of common belief, Part Four examines the dynamics of rule breaking. The authors reveal significant juvenile sobriety in Peterborough, where moral laden perceptions influence choices at the situational meeting point of personal crime propensity and environmental exposure to criminogenic elements.

While retaining ideas from criminology's classical origins, the PADS project re-examines the active functions in a number of criminological theories, including routine activities, general strain, bonding, and self-control. The book shows how the project critically questions criminology for explaining acts of crime without their active processes. To understand the processes involved, the authors engaged in an innovative ten-year study tracking a cohort of 700 youths. They argue that, notwithstanding the situation, the choice to commit crime appears to be more of a moral predicate than an opportunistic, emotional, or a bonding one. Building on this point, this impressive book deconstructs the relationships among a particular moral rule, personal morality, and the moral norms of a setting to consider their effects on crime causation. The book presents a convincing case for its thesis, and its elaborate logical modeling extends the case study to a general explanation of criminal behavior.

As SAT draws in adherents, the intricate methodology on display in *Breaking Rules* confines the book's use to the deeply initiated within the academy. Its main thesis runs through each section with the support of comprehensive index and bibliographical pages. Indeed, the book's rich content would appeal to criminologists and those working in similar disciplines. This book is significant because of its astute scholarship, venerable analysis of socio-political issues, practice and policy-making applications, and its detailed path towards an understanding of the

causation of criminal acts and criminal behavior. I enthusiastically recommend this book to those working in the fields of criminology, criminal justice, and the administration of justice. Certainly, it will play an important role in enhancing our knowledge of crime causation, an issue that still perturbs criminology today.

Kingsley U. Ejiogu, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice
Huston-Tillotson University
Austin, Texas