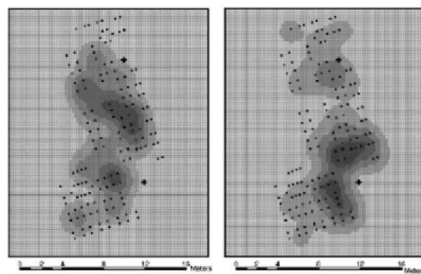


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Bag Theft Environments



Actual (N=19) and perceived (N=97) risk locations within venue.
Taken from Smith et al 2004.

Mapping the Micro-Environment

In a recent study, the locations of bag theft crimes were analysed for a single venue. This was done using data collected from self-report theft forms. Each form included an architectural plan of the bar and victims were asked to indicate on these where each offence took place. This allowed data to be mapped and "hot" locations to be identified. As a complimentary exercise, patrons surveyed as part of a general customer survey were asked to indicate where they believed the risky locations were within the bar.

As a consequence of this mapping exercise, it was possible to see if customers' perceptions of risky areas within the bars aligned with the actual 'hot' locations. The results of this exercise are shown in the Figure. The two maps are displayed over a simple plan of the venue, which indicated the positions of seats within the bars (as dots) and where the doors were located (as crosses). They show where crimes actually occurred (the left hand map) and where patrons perceived the risk of crime to be highest (the right hand map), respectively. The areas shaded darkest are those where the risk was actually or perceived to be highest. The results are somewhat similar but there are clear differences. Patrons perceive the risk to be clearly highest around the south door. While there is a concentration of crime in that area, the hottest area is located a little further away, with much of the crime equidistant between the two doors.

Although the crime hotspot map was based on a relatively small number of observations (N = 19), it illustrates that peoples' perceptions of risk within the bar were not entirely consistent with the actual "hot" locations. Nor are they necessarily consistent with what crime reduction practitioners might think. We suggest that the latter would most likely suggest that the tables closest to both of the doors would be at the greatest risk. While this is to some extent correct, it is by no means the complete picture. One explanation for the cluster in the middle is that this part of the bar offers two entry and escape routes.

Inside a pub (%)	11	n/a
Briefcase/ bag (%)	9	11
Median cost of items taken (£)	£80	£70
Respondent was emotionally affected (%)	86	89
Mean rating of seriousness of crime 1- not serious 20- very serious	6	5

British Crime Survey 2004/2005

Figures from the 2004/05 British Crime Survey show that theft from the person is most likely to happen during the week (62%) and in the morning or afternoon period (67%). The average cost of items taken in a single incident was £80. Perhaps against popular belief, there is often an emotional impact of personal theft offences, with 86% reporting being emotionally affected by the incident to at least some degree. Of particular relevance here is the fact that 11% of theft from the person incidents occurred within a public house or bar, and 9% included the theft of a briefcase or bag. This shows that theft of bags from entertainment venues is a significant proportion of the UK's theft from person problem.

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