

**ARMED ROBBERY FROM AN
OFFENDER'S PERSPECTIVE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR PREVENTION**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The broad purpose of the study was to examine the offender's perspective of armed robbery to assist the development of operational strategies to reduce the incidence of armed robbery.

SURVEY DATA

One hundred and ten convicted robbers, both male and female, were interviewed in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland; additional perspectives were sought from robbery victims, police officers and bank security staff. Information collected from the robbers focussed on one particular robbery, and covered the following topics:

- . their modus operandi;
- . their assessment of security arrangements, including police activity;
- . the likelihood of crime being shifted to other areas if the banks become too tough a target;
- . their progression in crime;
- . their attitudes to staff, customers and hostages; and
- . their reaction to punishment and penalties.

BACKGROUND

The rate of reported robbery in Australia more than doubled in the ten years from 1975/76 to 1984/85 (Mukherjee et al, 1987). Bank hold-ups have mirrored this general upsurge, though with uneven trends peaking in 1983 and again in 1987. Bank robberies entail great financial loss and severe psychological strains for both staff and customers.

ROBBERY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

This report addresses prevention strategies which may be described as 'situational', such as increasing the physical security of potential crime targets (eg installing security cameras, alarm systems and bullet-resistant barriers), changing environmental characteristics of banks and other targets (eg size and location), and introducing surveillance strategies (eg increased police patrols, security guards).

Situational crime prevention aims to increase the risks and decrease the profits of a specific form of crime, in order to discourage potential offenders. Examples of successful situational crime prevention include reduction in airline hijackings due to defensive measures taken by airlines, reduction of cheque frauds in Sweden

following the introduction of cheque guarantee cards, and a drop in public telephone theft in England after aluminium coin boxes were replaced by steel ones (Geason and Wilson, 1988).

THE FINDINGS

The Robbers

Background A 'typical' picture of robbers in general is that they are Australian-born, usually (though not always) male, under 30 years of age, come from a relatively large family, have limited formal education, are unemployed and have little or no formal training in the use of firearms.

Bank Robbers The only difference in background characteristics found between bank robbers and those who robbed other targets was their age, with markedly fewer of those who robbed banks in the very young (15-19 years) category.

Progression in Crime Eighty per cent of respondents had been involved in criminal activity, other than robbery, at some stage during their lives, with shoplifting the most frequently cited activity. More than 40 per cent indicated that they had spent time in a juvenile institution, while more than 60 per cent said they had served time in prison before. Thus, involvement in criminal activity has been a way of life for many of these offenders, and many appear to have 'graduated' to robbery after having tried other forms of criminal activity. The most frequently cited advantages of robbery over other types of crime were 'dealing in cash' and being 'quick and easy'.

Other Robberies Interviewees were reluctant to discuss other robberies with which they had been involved, especially robberies for which they had not been convicted. However, over half admitted to being involved in one or more other robberies.

Stated Reasons for Involvement in Robbery The need for money to support a drug habit was the most common reason given for involvement in criminal activity in general (33.7 per cent) and robbery in particular (44.6 per cent). These figures suggest the possibility that some people may get into criminal activity (other than robbery) for reasons other than drugs, but may then 'move up' to robbery in order to support a drug habit that develops. Generalised poverty appeared to be a further reason for involvement in crime, related to the need to pay off debts, unemployment and the need for income to provide for the family.

Drug usage appears to be a serious problem with both legal and illegal drugs used. Not only did a number of offenders rob in order to get money to buy drugs, but a number also carried out the robbery while

under the influence of a drug. Further, it appears that robbers followed through with their stated intention and used some or all of the proceeds of the robbery to buy drugs. Many interviewees indicated that they would like to join a drug rehabilitation program.

The Robberies: Modus Operandi

Targets Bank robberies accounted for 39 (35.5 per cent) of the robberies discussed during interviews. Financial institutions such as banks, building societies and credit unions formed the largest group of robberies altogether with 44.5 per cent of the total targets.

Location The robberies were typically located in a capital city. An impression was gathered, however, that there is a relatively high incidence of robbery in the south-eastern suburbs of Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. The vast majority of robberies were carried out within a distance of 20 kilometres or less from the robbers' homes.

Time Between 2 and 4pm was the most popular time for bank robberies, with 48.7 per cent occurring at this time. For other robberies, however, the most popular time was 6pm to 12 midnight (34.8 per cent). Friday was the busiest day for bank robberies (61.3 per cent) and the idea that there would be a lot of money in the bank on that day was the most common reason given for the choice. No bank robberies occurred on weekends. In contrast, 32.1 per cent of robberies on other targets occurred on weekends.

Accomplices Out of the 110 interviewees, 49 carried out their robberies alone, 33 worked with one other person, 22 worked with two others, and the remaining six worked with four or more others.

Target Choice The most frequent reason given for choice of target was ease of getting away (55.5%), followed closely by 'happening to be in the area', 'familiarity with the area', 'knowing the place that was robbed', and 'thinking there would be a lot of money in the place'.

Planning The amount of time and effort put into planning a robbery varies. At one extreme is the robber who spends little or no time planning and consequently does not 'case' the target, does not wear a disguise, and makes no plans for escape. At the other end is the robber who spends a number of weeks planning for the robbery, thoroughly 'cases' the target, takes action to overcome security devices, and spends time organising disguises and escape plans. Those who robbed banks were closer to the 'planned' end of the range; only a few bank robbers (15.4 per cent) took half an hour or less on planning, whereas this was true for a large proportion (60.9 per cent) of other offenders. Some of the robbers who tended towards the 'unplanned' end of the continuum appeared also to be stressed by withdrawal from drug taking. Most robbers in the study, however, fell somewhere in the middle of the range, with only a few at either extreme.

Categories of Offenders `Lone' offenders and `gangs' (two or three persons) differed in their reasons for involvement in the robberies, and choices of target, planning the robberies, and outcomes. Lone offenders described their main reason for involvement as needing money to finance a drug habit, whereas more gang members talked about the need for money for supporting themselves and their families. More lone offenders indicated that chance played a part in choice of target, that less planning was involved, that more things went wrong during the robbery, and that they considered themselves under the influence of a drug at the time.

It is clear that the vast majority of offenders are not `professional' in the sense that this term is used to describe carefully planned and rehearsed actions by tightly knit gangs. Even though they may not be `professional', however, it is apparent that many consider the costs and rewards of armed robbery.

Bank Robberies Bank robberies appear to have distinct characteristics. The robbers are generally older, though otherwise share the same kind of background and circumstances as those who rob other targets. The most popular time for robbing banks is 2 to 4pm, compared with 6pm to midnight for robberies on other targets. Those who are suffering drug withdrawal tend to have made less plans for the bank robbery. In terms of planning overall, however, bank robbers tend to be more `professional' in their approach - taking more time to plan, making more effort in casing the target, and planning escapes more carefully.

Use of Weapons Weapons appear to be an integral part of robbery, being used in 92.7 per cent of robberies discussed in this study. Their presence and threat of use are employed to `convince' victims to part with the money or goods in their possession. Out of the 29 bank robbery offenders who had personally carried a weapon, 24 carried a firearm, and none carried a knife. Knives were more popular with other types of robbery offender, though firearms remained the most favoured choice of weapon.

Attitudes to Victims In 75.5 per cent of robberies (92.3 per cent of bank robberies), victims did as they were told. Where victims did not do as they were told, the most common response was to physically attack the victim, with two robberies ending in death resulting from use of a weapon. In general, robbers do not appear to have much concern for the victims of their crime, and are not very aware of the psychological and other effects that a robbery can have on a person.

Reactions to Punishment

Prison and long sentences were seen by many offenders as the two major disadvantages of robbery. Some offenders, including those who may be under the influence of drugs and those who may have become `spontaneously' involved in

robberies, do not appear to spend much time weighing up the risks and rewards of robbery before making the choice to go ahead. On the other hand, there are those who do think about the possibility of being caught and the sentence. The sentence may deter some - but by no means all - of them. Over half said they knew the length of sentences for robbery, and most appeared to believe that they would think about this before committing another robbery.

Reactions to Security Measures

Robbers appeared not to be deterred by the presence of cameras and alarms, though many of those interviewed said that they would not rob a place that had pop-up screens or security guards. However, those who based their answers on the assumption that they would be committing the robbery because of desperation (for drugs or other reasons), suggested that they might go ahead regardless of the security measures they encountered. Protective devices such as time delay locks, guards, and bullet resistant screens appear nonetheless to have a deterrent effect, though many offenders believed that more violence, and/or a displacement effect, might occur as a direct consequence.

Reactions to Environmental Factors

The local environment appears to influence a person's decision to rob a particular target. A majority said they would be deterred in an area where police were patrolling. Factors which may increase the chance of a bank being robbed include a location permitting an easy get-away, a small number of staff on duty, female tellers, teller stations easily visible from the street, isolated teller stations, and interior designs making it easy for robbers to avoid being photographed or observed by the general public.

Future Involvement in Crime

Nearly eighty per cent of interviewees believed that there were no circumstances under which they would do another robbery, and it appears that many will stick to their stated intention. Most have plans for the future which include getting a job and spending time with family. The reality is however that many will be involved in crime again. In the present sample, 61 per cent had been to jail one or more times before. Banks and other financial institutions were seen as a preferred choice of future target, being seen as a source of quick and easy cash.

PREVENTION REDUCING OPPORTUNITIES

Any single strategy aimed at preventing robbery is unlikely to affect all, or even most, offenders. Different measures will deter different robbers. For example, that offenders who operate as a gang of two or three will be more likely to be deterred than will lone offenders. An integrated program of strategies will probably have the greatest effect on robbery rates.

Situational Issues

Surveillance

- . Security cameras play a role in apprehension but do not appear to deter.
- . Security guards would deter many offenders but this is a high cost option and there is a risk of violence.
- . Police patrols would be most effective in the vicinity of high risk targets at high risk times.

Target Hardening

- . Pop-up screens are likely to deter robbers but danger to staff and to public may increase as a result of measures (including violence) robbers take to overcome the screens.
- . Time delay locks, including advertising of their presence, appears to deter at least some offenders and have fewer problems than pop-up screens.

Environmental Management

- . The local environment has the greatest potential to prevent robbery, and should play a major part in the design and location of new buildings such as bank branches. A comprehensive analysis of environmental design features of victimised targets is needed in order to develop prevention strategies, and should take into account:
 - entrance design,
 - teller station design,
 - whether male or female teller,
 - staff numbers in offices,
 - visibility into offices, and
 - capacity for the robber to get away.
- . Support for stronger firearms control is recommended, since firearms appear to be readily available and if potential offenders have greater difficulty in obtaining a firearm, a cooling-off and change of mind about the robbery may occur. The ABA has already taken a strong stand on this issue.
- . Training programs are important to inform tellers about what to do during an armed hold-up. The ABA has already initiated relevant training.

Displacement

- . Most offenders interviewed believed strongly in the likelihood of target displacement as a consequence of the prevention strategies listed above. However, research evidence indicates that displacement is not in reality a major issue. There is clearly a need for further research on this topic, and consideration should be given to an education program on robbery prevention for small businesses and other potential robbery targets.

Punishment

- . Increasing the length of sentences for robbery does not appear necessary, as robbers already perceived them as relatively long.
- . Increased awareness of sentence length and the realities of life in prison may increase the perceived risks of robbery, and may result in potential offenders choosing not to get involved.
- . Increased awareness may be achieved through a closely targetted education strategy for criminal offenders.

Drugs and Other Issues

- . Three broad social conditions appear to be strongly related to armed robbery, these being: relative poverty, unemployment and drug abuse (both legal and illegal).
- . It is difficult to reduce poverty and unemployment, though direct or indirect support for programs is possible. However, it cannot be assumed that lifting particular groups out of poverty will automatically reduce crime.
- . There are distinct prevention opportunities in the area of drug abuse, and for juvenile offenders.
- . Support could be given to the development of offender drug rehabilitation programs (both pre-release and post-release).
- . The Victorian Second Chance Program could be evaluated as a potential job opportunity and support program for offenders.
- . Policy issues on enforcement vs alternative policies for dealing with drug offenders could be approached by sponsoring a think-tank under the auspices of the Drug Policy Foundation of Australia and New Zealand.
- . Both legal and illegal aspects of drug use in relation to robbery could be discussed with the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, to determine appropriate educational strategies.
- . Support could be given to programs for juvenile offenders, including programs that address drug issues, to help prevent the `graduation' to crime syndrome highlighted by this study.

Future Research

- . Closely targetted research projects are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of specific security devices and crime prevention measures to assess the relationship between environmental factors in the location and design of banks and armed robbery.
- . Specific research questions include:
 - testing whether bullet-proof and pop-up screens have increased the incidence of robbery for formerly less vulnerable banks;
 - evaluating the effectiveness of cash reduction measures;
 - examining the possible `copy-cat' or imitative effect of both successful and unsuccessful bank robberies; and
 - evaluating the reasons for a relatively high rate of bank robbery in Australia compared with the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

`There were three guys in the first one (robbery)...they came in and they all had sawn-off shotguns and they were abusive to us and using foul language and threatening to shoot our heads off...we were very frightened and...actually one point there I was just looking down the barrel of a gun and I honestly thought that I was going to get shot...you are relieved when they actually run out of the bank, I think because you're still alive...I was worried for my health I think oh how much can the body handle...one of these days...I'm going to have a heart attack or something...'

`We ran into the bank shouting for everyone to get on the floor...my mate jumped the counter and went to the teller's cage and got money...the people did what we told them to. I knew there'd be no problems...felt good after the robbery cause I knew I could buy some heroin...'

Above are two fairly different accounts of robbery. The first was related by the victim of a robbery, a bank employee, while the second was the product of an interview with a robber. They illustrate the different perspectives of the two main participants in robbery. The offender's perspective is the subject of the survey conducted for this report.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

This is the final report of a study into robbery which was commissioned by the Australian Bankers' Association (ABA). The report presents the findings of interviews with 110 robbery offenders, and critically examines the information gathered during the interviews in the context of strategies for robbery prevention. Due to the ABA's sponsorship of the study, the report pays particular attention to the implications of the findings for the prevention of bank robbery.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Agreement between the ABA and the Australian Institute of Criminology as to the purpose and ambit of the study was formalised in June 1988. The broad purpose of the study was agreed as follows.

`To examine the offender's perspective of armed robbery to assist in the development of operational strategies to reduce the incidence of armed robbery.'¹

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The agreed ambit or scope of the study provides a more detailed description of what the study involves.

The study involves interviewing criminals to obtain information on the following aspects:

- * their modus operandi;
- * their assessment of security arrangements, including police activity;
- * the likelihood of crime being shifted to other areas if the banks become too tough a target;
- * their progression in crime;
- * their attitudes to staff/customers/hostages; and
- * their reaction to punishment/penalties.

The purpose of the study was to determine the opportunities for reduction of bank armed attacks.²

A total of 110 robbery offenders were interviewed in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. These states were selected because of a higher incidence of bank robbery than in other states. Both male and female robbers were included in the sample. This makes it the most comprehensive study of its kind in Australia. Other Australian studies involving interviews with robbery offenders have used smaller samples, have included male offenders only, and have been confined to a single state.

In addition to the 110 interviews with offenders, interviews were also carried out with a number of robbery victims. This was done early in the study as part of the process of developing the offender interview schedule. Other interviews and discussions were held with police officers and bank security staff. These discussions aimed to gather background information and opinions about robbery from some of those involved in its prevention, and provided another perspective on the information collected from offenders.

1.4 BACKGROUND

Mukherjee et al. (1987) show that the rate of reported robbery in Australia more than doubled in the ten year period 1975/76 to 1984/85 (20.52 per 100,000 and 42.88 respectively). Figures on the numbers of armed robberies show that in Victoria in 1976, there were 248, whereas in 1986/87, there were a total of 824 (Cole, 1988).

These increases in robbery rates are reflected in the increased frequency of newspaper reports on the subject. Articles with headlines such as the following now appear almost daily.

`Robbery destroyed woman's life: mate'
(*Courier-Mail* 30 Nov. 1988)

`\$30,000 haul for violent bank gang'
(*Sun* 1 Dec. 1988)

`Alarm over hold-ups by men on bail'
(*News* 18 Jul. 1988)

`Big hike in the number of hold-ups'
(*Sunday Sun* 13 Nov. 1988)

Of the 824 armed robberies in Victoria in 1986/87, 129 (15.7 per cent) were bank robberies (Cole, 1988). As with robberies in general, the frequency of bank robberies has increased dramatically in recent years, though the numbers have peaked and slumped during this period (see Figure 1) indicating to some extent a cyclical pattern. In addition to the substantial financial loss that such robberies represent, there are `costs' in terms of the psychological trauma staff and customers experience. It is in this context of increasing numbers of robberies, and the associated increase in `cost', that the ABA commissioned the current study into robbery prevention.

FIGURE 1

AUSTRALIAN BANK HOLD-UPS



Source: Australian Bankers' Association, Armed Attack Statistics

1.5 DEFINITION OF ROBBERY

For the purposes of this study, robbery is defined as the 'unlawful removal or taking of property or attempted removal or taking of property without consent, by force or threat of force immediately before or after the event' (Mukherjee et al. 1987, p.3). This definition was chosen because it is 'based on important elements found in the statute book definitions' from each of the eight Australian jurisdictions (p.3).

A wide range of behaviour is covered by the above definition. Consider the following situations.

- * A person grabs someone's bag from them and runs off down the street.
- * A 'gang' of three people bursts into a bank and demands money from the staff while aiming rifles in their direction.

Both situations are examples of robbery according to the above definition, but there are obvious differences in regard to the property taken, the nature of the force applied, the numbers of offenders and victims, and the mode of operation of the offender(s). The current study discusses robbery in a broad context.

1.6 ROBBERY PREVENTION

Strategies for reducing the incidence of robbery may take a number of forms. In a recent publication on the theory and practice of crime prevention, Geason and Wilson (1988) discuss four separate categories of prevention.

- (i) Corrective prevention 'attempts to prevent crime by ameliorating social conditions which seem to lead to crime' (p.4). Social conditions which lead to robbery appear to include unemployment and drug use (Gabor et al. 1987).
- (ii) Punitive prevention relies on the apprehension and punishment of people who commit criminal acts. Imprisonment is the traditional form of punishment for robbery offenders. In theory, the possibility of imprisonment should act as a deterrent for people considering committing a robbery.
- (iii) Mechanical prevention involves increasing the physical security of potential crime targets. In relation to bank robbery, this includes the installation of security cameras, alarm systems and bullet-resistant barriers in bank branches.
- (iv) Finally, environmental prevention 'manipulates building design and the relationship between buildings and their environment to reduce opportunities for crime' (Geason & Wilson, 1988, p.4). Characteristics of bank branches such as their size and location have been found to correlate with the probability of robbery (Baumer & Carrington, 1986).

Mechanical prevention and environmental prevention are both forms of what is known as situational crime prevention. As its name suggests, situational crime prevention involves the manipulation of the situation to reduce the incidence of crime. This report pays particular attention to robbery prevention through situational measures and a brief discussion follows of the theory behind this form of prevention.

Situational crime prevention is based on the assumption that people actually choose to commit crime and that the decision to do so is a 'rational' one (Bennett & Wright, 1984). Offenders are seen as rational decision makers who weigh up the risks and expected profits of crime before deciding to become involved. Situational crime prevention aims to increase the risks and decrease the profits of a specific form of crime, in order to discourage potential offenders.

Clarke (1983) identified three broad strategies of situational crime prevention. Two of the three, 'target hardening' and 'environmental management', roughly equate with the above categories of mechanical prevention and environmental prevention respectively. However, Clarke's conception of environmental management appears to be broader than the above definition of environmental prevention and would include, for example, such things as tighter gun control.

The third strategy, which is referred to as 'surveillance', overlaps both environmental prevention and mechanical prevention. Surveillance against robbers would include police patrols in the area of potential robbery targets, security guards at banks, and the installation of electronic devices, eg. security cameras.

The prevention categories to be used in this report combine the categories outlined by Clarke, with those discussed by Geason and Wilson:

- * Corrective Prevention
- * Punitive Prevention
- * Situational Prevention
 - Target Hardening
 - Environmental Management
 - Surveillance.

Geason and Wilson (1988) list a number of examples of successful situational crime prevention strategies including:

'a 15 per cent reduction in airline hijackings in the early 1970s due to defensive measures taken by airlines; a significant reduction in cheque frauds in Sweden in 1975 following the introduction of cheque guarantee cards; and a drop in thefts from a new type of public telephone in England after aluminium coin boxes were replaced by steel ones' (p.6).

Critics of situational crime prevention claim that, while it may prevent crime from occurring in a particular area or on a particular target, it does not really solve the problem. Rather it displaces crime onto other targets, at other times, or in other locations. Clarke (1983) outlined five main types of displacement. These five types, together with examples of how they might apply to robbery, are listed below.

- (i) Geographical: robbing a target in a different area from originally planned.
- (ii) Temporal: carrying out the robbery at a different time than originally planned.
- (iii) Tactical: changing the mode of operation so as to overcome a particular prevention measure.
- (iv) Target: robbing a bank without bullet-resistant barriers rather than a bank that has them installed.
- (v) Activity-related: doing a break and enter rather than a robbery.

The type and extent of displacement resulting from a particular crime prevention strategy is difficult to determine. It will depend on a whole range of factors including the commitment of offenders to the crime, the skills possessed by offenders, and the reasons for their involvement in the crime. However, it does appear that 100 per cent displacement will rarely occur. Geason and Wilson (1988) sum up their discussion of displacement by saying that:

'crime prevention measures stop some criminals from carrying out a crime in a particular place, and not all of them will go elsewhere and commit a crime' (p.8).

Displacement is by no means the inevitable outcome of situational crime prevention measures.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Data Collection and Analysis

As previously indicated, the main data collection technique for the study was the face to face interview. Interviews were conducted with people who had robbery convictions and were serving time in prison as a result of these convictions. A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of collecting data in this manner can be found in Appendix A.

A detailed interview schedule was developed to provide the interviews with structure and to assist in the coding and analysis of the data. The interview schedule was finalised following reference to the relevant literature, consultation with robbery victims, discussions with other researchers, and thorough pilot testing. A complete copy of the schedule is at Appendix B, while an outline of the interview procedure is at Appendix C.

The schedule consisted of 13 sections and 152 questions. Some questions were open-ended while others were closed. A number of sections contained questions related to one particular robbery. It was decided to focus on one particular robbery because of the difficulties associated with discussing a number of different robberies at the same time.

The robbery discussed was the one that resulted in the current prison term. It was felt that offenders would be reluctant to talk about robberies for which they had not been convicted and would find it difficult to discuss robberies that had happened a long time ago. If the offender was serving time for more than one robbery, the robbery discussed was the most recent one.

It might appear that focussing on the robbery that resulted in the current prison term introduces a bias into the study towards the least successful robberies. However, this is not necessarily so. Many of the robberies were successful in that the offender obtained an amount of money and escaped from the scene of the robbery. Often, the offender was not apprehended for weeks or sometimes months, and often as a result of information provided to the police.

Questions about the robbery covered the following areas: when and where it occurred, target selection, the offender's modus operandi including planning for the robbery, the use of weapons, and what happened during the robbery itself.

Discussion of this robbery occupied five of the 13 sections in the interview schedule. The other eight sections contained more general questions about the interviewee and his/her experiences. Topics covered in these sections included the following:

- * the interviewee's personal background and circumstances at the time of the robbery;
- * other robberies in which the interviewee had been involved;
- * the circumstances that led to the interviewee's apprehension by police;
- * details of the sentence being served by the interviewee;
- * drug usage and involvement in other forms of crime;
- * reactions to security measures and environmental factors related to robbery targets; and
- * the interviewee's view of the future.

Data for the study were also collected from the prisoner files held at each prison. In all cases where access to prisoner files was gained, the file of each interviewee was examined and relevant data extracted. The data that were gathered from the files generally related to the offence or offences for which interviewees had been convicted, and to the institutional history of interviewees. These data were used to check the accuracy of information provided during the interviews, and to fill in details that interviewees could not remember.

Data collection was carried out over a 13 week period. The first interview was conducted on 27 July 1988 in Victoria and the last on 17 October 1988 in New South Wales. This was a longer period than originally expected. On the days when everything went to plan, three or four interviews were completed. However, there were not many days when this happened. Whole days and half days were lost on a regular basis due to the unavailability of office space and inmates, crises in the prisons, refusal by prisoners to be interviewed, and the need to travel between the towns and cities where the prisons were located.

Once collected, the data were coded and entered on computer in preparation for analysis. Analysis was undertaken using the SPSS/PC+ statistical package.

1.7.2 Interviewees

The population from which interviewees were sampled was defined as follows: all those people in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland who had committed a robbery in the past ten years. These three states were selected for a number of reasons. New South Wales and Victoria were selected because they have the largest numbers of robberies and the highest robbery rates per 100,000 of the population (Mukherjee et al. 1987). They are seen as the 'centres' of robbery in Australia. For example, 53.1 per cent of bank robberies in Australia in 1987 were committed in New South Wales (Australian Bankers' Association, 1988). Victoria was the only state that came close to New South Wales with 25.1 per cent. New South Wales and Victoria were also selected because of their close proximity to Canberra and the lower travel costs involved. Queensland was selected to provide a contrast to the 'big two'.

Interviewees were sampled from the prison populations in these three states. As such, only people who had been apprehended and imprisoned for robbery offences were interviewed. This limitation was necessary due to the obvious difficulties associated with locating and convincing robbery offenders, who hadn't been caught, to be involved.

The interviewers asked a total of 134 prison inmates to participate. Twenty-four people declined to be involved. Of the 110 who agreed to be interviewed, 95 were men and 15 were women. Thirty five interviews were conducted in New South Wales (30 men and 5 women), 36 in Victoria (32 and 4) and 39 in Queensland (33 and 6). Only one pair of co-offenders was included in the sample.

Interviews were conducted at a total of 15 prisons, located in both country and metropolitan areas. The prisons visited included minimum, medium and maximum security institutions. Considerable time and effort was required to organise access to the prisons as each state had its own procedures for gaining approval to do the research, and each prison had its own particular requirements. A list of the prisons at which interviews were conducted is at Appendix D.

The method by which inmates were selected for interview varied slightly from state to state. However, it generally involved choosing a number of prisons to visit, obtaining lists of robbery offenders at these prisons, and taking a random sample of offenders to interview. The inmates actually interviewed weren't always those in the random sample. This was due to the realities of prison life which meant that selected prisoners were often not available, for a variety of reasons. In these circumstances, robbery offenders, who were not originally selected for interview, were substituted so that valuable time was not wasted.

The extent to which our sample of robbery offenders is representative of the population of offenders, as defined previously, is an important question. There are two major issues to consider: how representative the interviewees are of robbers in prison; and how representative robbers in prison are of the total population of offenders? It is not possible to arrive at a definite answer. However, we believe that the sample is fairly representative of the population of robbery offenders in the three states. A discussion of the issues involved can be found in Appendix E.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next chapter is the first of a number which outline the findings of the study. These chapters present the information gathered during the interviews and discuss the data in relation to strategies for robbery prevention. Situational strategies will be emphasised, but corrective prevention and punitive prevention will also be considered. The final chapter will consist of a discussion of the policy implications of the findings, with particular reference to the implications for robbery prevention at banks.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROBBERS

2.1 BACKGROUND

2.1.1 Personal Background of Offenders

The 110 interviewees ranged in age from 18 to 58 years. Only three interviewees were over 44 years of age and the average was 29.2 years. Over half the interviewees were aged between 20 and 29, as shown in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1

AGE OF OFFENDERS AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

Age Range (Years)	Offenders	
	(No)	(%)
15 to 19	8	7.3
20 to 24	34	30.9
25 to 29	26	23.6
30 to 34	15	13.6
35 to 39	17	15.5
40 to 44	7	6.4
45 to 49	0	0.0
50 to 54	1	0.9
55 to 59	2	1.8
Total	110	100.0

The vast majority of interviewees were born in Australia (96 of the 110). Of the 14 born overseas, six were born in England and five in New Zealand. One interviewee was born in each of the following countries: Wales, Germany and Yugoslavia. Four of these 14 had become Australian citizens, while seven were permanent residents. Information on the citizenship status of the other four was not obtained.

All but one of the interviewees had received at least some secondary education, although only nine had completed year 12 or its equivalent. Of the rest, 48 had completed year 10, and 52 had received some secondary schooling (but had not stayed until the end of year 10).

A small number of offenders had obtained further qualifications since leaving school. One had completed a tertiary diploma, 14 had obtained a trade certificate, and seven indicated that they held some other qualification.

Exactly half the interviewees indicated that they came from relatively large families with three or more siblings. Twenty per cent said that they had two siblings. The rest said they had either one sibling or none (21.8 per cent and 7.3 per cent respectively). The overall average was 3.2 siblings per interviewee. This is above the national average of 2.7 children per family derived from 1986 Census data.

The majority of interviewees (69.1 per cent) said that they had received no formal training in the use of firearms or other weapons. Of the six people who said they had received some formal training, three said that this was in the armed services, while one indicated each of the following sources of training: school cadets, a gun club, and the police force. Twenty people did not answer the question, while eight were not asked.

Based on the above, it is possible to develop a word picture of the 'typical' robber amongst this sample of offenders. He is Australian-born and under 30 years of age. He comes from a relatively large family and has limited formal education. Finally, he has little or no formal training in the use of firearms.

2.1.2 Circumstances at Time of Robbery

As discussed in the previous chapter, a large part of the interview with offenders focussed on one particular robbery. For the 101 people who could remember the year in which this robbery occurred, their age at the time of the robbery was calculated. Ages ranged from a minimum of 16 years to a maximum of 49. The mean age at the time of the robbery was 26.5 years. A distribution of ages across groupings is shown in Table 2.2.

At the time of the robbery, 51 of the interviewees were either married or in a defacto relationship, while 50 were single and had never been married. The other nine were either separated or divorced.

Forty-six of the interviewees had one or more dependants. Thirty-six of the 46 had either one or two dependants, while the other ten had between three and six. Not surprisingly, the majority of offenders who had dependants were either married or in a defacto relationship. This was true for 36 of the 46. The marital status of the other ten was as follows:

- * single 3;
- * separated 4;
- * divorced 3.

TABLE 2.2**AGE OF OFFENDERS AT TIME OF ROBBERY**

Age Range (Years)	Offenders	
	(No)	(%)
15 to 19	18	17.8
20 to 24	33	32.7
25 to 29	21	20.8
30 to 34	17	16.8
35 to 39	6	5.9
40 to 44	4	4.0
45 to 49	2	2.0
Total	101	100.0

Only 22.7 per cent of those interviewed were in some form of paid work at the time of the robbery. Nearly three quarters of them were unemployed (74.5 per cent), while 2.7 per cent were pensioners.

Thirteen of the 25 who said that they were in paid work at the time of the robbery, gave their occupation as tradesperson or labourer. The next most common category was transport and communication (three interviewees). Of the rest, one or two gave each of the following occupational categories:

- * administrative or clerical;
- * sales;
- * farmer; and
- * armed services.

Of the 82 who were unemployed, 34 said that they had been unemployed for more than two years. Twenty-seven said that they had been unemployed for six months or less, while 19 said that their period of unemployment had been more than six months but less than two years. The strong correlation between this group of robbery offenders and unemployment was probably best emphasised by the fact that a number of offenders said that they had never been in paid employment.

Sixty-eight people were in receipt of some form of Commonwealth social security payment:

- * unemployment benefits 41;
- * sickness benefits 18;
- * supporting parents benefits 7;
- * other payment 2.

Those who were unemployed and not receiving benefits were asked why that was. This produced some interesting responses including the following:

- * don't like being on unemployment benefits;
- * chose not to go on benefits;
- * didn't want to be on the Government's books;
- * was surviving on armed robbery;
- * was being assessed for sickness benefits; and
- * couldn't be bothered.

These findings further develop our picture of the 'typical' robber. It now reads as follows. He is Australian-born and under 30 years of age. He comes from a relatively large family and has limited formal education. He may be either single and without dependants, or with a wife or defacto wife and children. Finally, he is unemployed and has little or no formal training in the use of firearms.

Of course, it would be a mistake to presume that all, or even most, of the robbery offenders in our sample fit this description. We have already seen that a number of the offenders were women, some were born overseas, a number were over 30, a few had no siblings, and some were in full-time employment. However, the above description of the 'typical' robber does serve as a summary of the findings in relation to the background and circumstances of offenders.

2.1.3 Background and Circumstances of Offenders Who Robbed Banks

Additional analysis of the data on background and circumstances of offenders was undertaken in order to determine whether there were differences between those who robbed banks during the robbery discussed in detail, and those who robbed other targets. This analysis revealed that the only difference was in terms of the age of offenders at the time of the robbery.

Table 2.3 shows that the proportion of 'bank robbers' in the 15 to 19 year age group was much smaller than the equivalent figure for offenders who robbed targets other than banks. This suggests the possibility that people who rob banks are, on average, older than robbery offenders in general. This in turn may indicate a progression from other forms of robbery to bank robbery. However, it could also indicate that offenders who 'get into' robbery later in life, are more likely to choose a bank as the target, than those who start before they are 20.

TABLE 2.3**AGE OF BANK ROBBERS VERSUS OTHER ROBBERS**

Age Range (Years)	Offenders Who Robbed Banks		Offenders Who Robbed Other Targets	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
15 to 19	3	8.3	15	23.1
20 to 24	13	36.1	20	30.8
25 to 29	7	19.4	14	21.5
30 to 34	7	19.4	10	15.4
35 to 39	2	5.6	4	6.2
40 to 44	4	11.1	2	3.1
Total	36	100.0	65	100.0

2.2 REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME**2.2.1 Crime in General**

Interviewees were asked to identify the one thing in their life which played the biggest part in becoming involved in criminal activity. They were also asked the same question in relation to their involvement in robbery. Responses to the two questions were the same or very similar for many individuals.

Criminal activity: `...gambling debts...'

Robbery: `...debts brought on by gambling...'

Criminal activity: `...using heroin...'

Robbery: `...involvement with drugs...'

However, this was not always the case.

Criminal activity: `...for some excitement...'

Robbery: `...hatred of society...'

Table 2.4 summarises the major reasons given by offenders and shows that the proportion of interviewees who mentioned each reason was generally quite close for criminal activity in general and for robbery in particular. One area in which there was some difference was in relation to drug usage. In this report, drug usage will refer to the use of both licit and illicit drugs. As such, whenever the term `drug' is used, it will refer to alcohol, tobacco and prescribed drugs, as well as the illicit drugs.

Considering all the drug-related reasons together, the proportion of interviewees mentioning these reasons was 44.6 per cent for robbery, and 33.7 per cent for crime in general. This suggests the possibility that some people may get into criminal activity (other than robbery) for reasons other than drugs, but may then 'move up' to robbery in order to support a habit that develops.

Criminal activity: '...it just became a way of life.'

Robbery: '...involvement with drugs.'

The 'other reasons' for becoming involved in criminal activity in general were as follow:

- * an unstable family, bad home;
- * crime becoming a way of life;
- * having personal problems; and
- * being depressed, lonely or unable to cope.

The 'other reasons' for becoming involved in robbery included the following:

- * money problems, debts;
- * having personal problems; and
- * robbery being a natural progression from other crime.

TABLE 2.4

**STATED REASON FOR INVOLVEMENT IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN
GENERAL AND ROBBERY IN PARTICULAR**

Main Reason	Crime (%)	Robbery (%)
Heroin/involvement with heroin	16.4	20.9
Drugs/drug usage	10.0	15.5
Getting mixed up with wrong people/ easily led	9.1	9.1
Alcohol use	7.3	8.2
Needed money to support my family/ myself	7.3	8.2
Preferred criminal lifestyle	5.5	3.6
Hatred of society/anger at authority	0.9	3.6
For the excitement/adventure	3.6	2.7
Debts resulting from gambling	1.8	1.8
Other reasons	14.5	17.3
Don't know/no response	23.6	9.1
Total	100.0	100.0

2.2.2 Robbery Discussed in Detail

Offenders were also asked about the reasons for committing the robbery discussed in detail during the interviews. Initially, they were asked to indicate which of the reasons from a predetermined list had played some part in leading them to commit the robbery. They were then asked to indicate whether there had been any other reasons why they had become involved. The responses to these questions are summarised in Table 2.5.

TABLE 2.5

**MAIN REASON AND REASONS GIVEN AS PLAYING SOME PART IN
LEADING INTERVIEWEE TO COMMIT THE ROBBERY**

Reason	Main Reason (%)	Played Some Part (%)
I needed money to buy drugs to support my habit	29.1	30.9
I simply needed money to support my family/myself	16.4	39.1
I wanted money or goods for a specific purpose	10.0	11.8
I had debts that I couldn't repay	5.5	18.2
I needed money as I was unemployed	4.5	43.6
It's what I did for a living	4.5	9.1
I had emotional problems/ I was angry, confused, depressed	4.5	5.5
I was drunk and wanted to continue drinking	3.6	4.5
I was asked to help with the robbery	2.7	24.5
I wanted money to buy something other than drugs	1.8	13.6
I lost my temper	1.8	7.3
Other	15.6	37.3
Total	100.0	

Having identified a list of factors leading to their involvement, interviewees were requested to indicate the 'main' reason for committing the robbery. As shown in Table 2.5, wanting money for drugs or alcohol was mentioned by 36 of the interviewees (32.7 per cent) as the main reason. Thirty-two said that they had needed money to buy drugs to support their habit. A further four said that they had been drunk at the time and that they had wanted money to continue drinking.

Other 'main' reasons mentioned frequently by interviewees were the need for money to support their families or themselves and needing money for a specific purpose such as:

- * leaving the town or city in which they were living;
- * a grandson's heart operation;
- * a brother's funeral;
- * starting a business; and
- * gambling and living the good life.

The other 'main' reasons were each mentioned by less than ten per cent of offenders. The 'other' reasons given as the main reason for doing the robbery (refers to the last row in Table 2.5), include the following:

- * for the kicks, for the excitement;
- * to help out a friend;
- * as a trial run for a bank robbery; and
- * to balance the account with a drug dealer.

It is interesting to note that while unemployment was rarely mentioned as the main reason for doing the robbery, 48 people said that needing money because they were unemployed had played some part in leading them to commit the robbery. This seems to indicate that unemployment is a contributing factor, a predisposing condition to involvement in robbery, but rarely is the main reason for involvement.

The main reasons given by those who robbed banks were much the same as those given by the sample as a whole. Needing money to support a drug habit was the most common response (14 out of 39 bank robbers gave this reason), followed by needing money to support their family or themselves (9). Four of the bank robbers said that it was what they did for a living, while three said that they had debts that they couldn't repay.

2.2.3 Implications for Prevention

As discussed earlier in this report, there are four major categories of crime prevention. Corrective prevention is the category most relevant to our discussion of reasons for involvement in robbery. The focus of corrective prevention is the social conditions which lead to crime.

Drug usage appears to be a major 'condition' leading people to involvement in crime and robbery in particular, especially when usage leads to addiction to an illicit drug such as heroin. The cost of maintaining an illegal drug habit often means that a person has to obtain the required income from other than legal sources.

However, we believe that a cautionary note on the involvement of drugs is necessary. The researcher who carried out the interviews felt that drug usage was sometimes brought too easily into the discussion of reasons for involvement in crime. It seemed that drug usage was sometimes mentioned because it was an 'easy' answer. The question of correlation versus causation is relevant in this context. There is no doubt that there is a close link between drug usage and criminal activity. However, the

extent to which drug usage causes people to commit robberies and other criminal acts, has possibly been over-stated by this group of offenders. Even so, it appears that a significant proportion of robberies are carried out by people wanting money for drugs.

Poverty, or at least relative poverty, is the other major social condition indicated by the responses as leading to crime. Thirty-one offenders were unemployed and had one or more dependants at the time of the robbery discussed. This situation would generally indicate a relatively low standard of living.

The offenders themselves identified their financial situation as playing a part in their involvement in crime. A number said that they had needed money because they were unemployed and that this had played a part in leading them to commit the robbery. In addition, simply needing money to support family or self was second to drug usage in terms of the main reason for committing the robbery.

Corrective strategies for robbery prevention will include attacking the social conditions associated with involvement in robbery. In relation to illicit drug usage, possible strategies include increasing efforts in the area of drug rehabilitation and the more controversial option of legalising some or all of the 'hard' drugs, in particular heroin. These strategies will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

With reference to poverty, Braithwaite (1979) argues that programs which aim to reduce the number of poor people by lifting a particular target group out of poverty, will not reduce crime. He says that programs of this kind, eg. the community action and manpower training programs, and the Headstart program in the United States:

'will not reduce crime because:

- 1 They will not normally succeed in lifting people out of poverty.
- 2 They foster cynicism and disappointment by raising expectations which they cannot fulfil.
- 3 They label people as disreputable and inferior.
- 4 Even if they do succeed in lifting people out of poverty, in a capitalist economy they typically do so at the expense of other people who are thrust into poverty.
- 5 Even if they do reduce the total number of poor people in a city, this is unlikely to reduce crime because cities with smaller numbers of poor people do not have lower crime rates.' (p.232)

2.3 PROGRESSION IN CRIME

Interviewees were asked a series of questions regarding their previous involvement in criminal activity. The activities specifically discussed were shoplifting, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, robbery, breaking and entering, receiving stolen goods, fraud, illicit drug use, trafficking, assault and prostitution. Where possible, the responses given by interviewees were checked against their prison files.

2.3.1 Involvement in Other Criminal Activity

A large majority of respondents (88, 80.0 per cent) had been involved in criminal activity, other than robbery, at some stage during their lives. Some indicated that they had been involved on hundreds of occasions, while others said that they had been involved on only one or two occasions. Ten interviewees (9.1 per cent) said that they had never been involved in criminal activity other than robbery. For the other 12 people, data was missing.

Shoplifting was the most popular activity, other than robbery, amongst this group of offenders. Sixty-three people (57.3 per cent) indicated that they had shoplifted one or more times during their life. Shoplifting was followed by:

* use of illicit drugs	56.4 per cent;
* breaking and entering	55.5;
* motor vehicle theft	50.9;
* receiving stolen goods	34.5;
* fraud	28.2;
* drug trafficking	27.3;
* assault	19.1;
* vandalism	12.7;
* prostitution	3.6.

Between eight and 11 interviewees either could not remember how often they had been involved in these criminal activities, or chose not to respond to the question.

The 88 interviewees who said they had been involved in criminal activity, other than robbery, were asked whether they had become involved in these activities before or after committing their first robbery. All had been involved in at least one other activity before committing robbery. The number of other activities is shown below:

* one or two other criminal activities	21 offenders;
* three to five other activities	41;
* six to eight other activities	25.

It appears that robbery is often a crime that people turn to after trying other forms of criminal activity.

This apparently applies regardless of the nature of the criminal activity. With respect to fraud, only 4 of the 31 people (12.9 per cent) who indicated that they had been involved at some stage in their life, said that they had become involved after their first robbery. This was the crime for which the highest proportion of offenders had become involved after their first robbery. The next closest was drug trafficking, with ten per cent. The equivalent figure for the other forms of crime was less than five per cent in each case.

2.3.2 Convictions

Interviewees were asked whether they had been convicted of criminal offences other than robbery. Responses indicated that many of the interviewees who had been involved in other criminal activities had never been convicted of these offences. The extent to which this was true depended on the type of offence. A full list of these other activities, showing the proportion of interviewees who had been convicted of each type of offence, is shown in Table 2.6. The table also contains the figures for level of involvement (from previous section), for ease of comparison.

TABLE 2.6

CONVICTIONS FOR OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Offence Type	Number of Offenders Convicted (%)	Number of Offenders Involved (%)
Shoplifting	11.8	57.3
Possession of an illicit drug	24.5	56.4
Breaking and entering	51.8	55.5
Motor vehicle theft	42.7	50.9
Receiving stolen goods	20.9	34.5
Fraud	16.4	28.2
Drug trafficking	5.5	27.3
Assault	18.2	19.1
Vandalism	6.6	12.7
Prostitution	3.6	3.6

2.3.3 Institutional History

In terms of institutional history, 42.7 per cent of the interviewees indicated that they had spent time in a juvenile institution, while 61.8 per cent said that they had served time in prison before. Twenty per cent had been to jail once before, 19.1 per cent had served two previous terms, while 22.7 per cent had been to jail three or more times previously.

2.3.4 Implications for Prevention

It appears that for many of our robbery offenders, involvement in criminal activity has been a way of life. Most have been involved in criminal activity, other than robbery, at one stage or another. Generally, interviewees appear to have 'graduated' to robbery after having tried other forms of criminal activity. In addition to their robbery convictions, many have been convicted for other types of offences. As a result, more than half have spent time in juvenile institutions and/or prison.

One possible way to decrease the incidence of robbery would be to stop people choosing robbery in preference to other forms of crime. Assuming the choices are rational, this might be achieved by increasing the risks and decreasing the profits of robbery. Our sample contained a large number of offenders who turned to robbery after trying other forms of crime. This move might never have been made if the disadvantages of robbery had been seen as outweighing the advantages.

Interviewees were asked what they saw as the advantages and disadvantages of robbery. Thirty-four people did not answer the question on advantages. However, of the 76 who did respond, 30 (39.5 per cent) said that there were no advantages, while ten (13.2 per cent) said that they had never considered it. The other 36 interviewees mentioned one or more advantages of robbery.

The most frequently mentioned advantage was that robbery involved 'dealing in cash' (25 interviewees). This was seen as an advantage due to the difficulties associated with converting stolen goods into money. The next most popular response was that robbery is 'quick and easy' (21). Other advantages were mentioned by four offenders or less:

- '...big money if planned right...'
- '...the clear-up rate is small...'
- '...its exciting...'

The implications for banks are fairly clear. To make robbery less attractive to potential offenders, there is a need to reduce the amount of money available to robbers and to make it harder to get. Time delay locks have been a step in this direction. Further security measures such as pop-up screens would probably increase the difficulty of bank robbery.

However, a word of caution is necessary. It is possible that decreasing the average amount of money taken in robberies may actually increase the number of robberies. This is based on the assumption that the need for money will not decrease simply because the amount obtained in a particular robbery decreases. As such, offenders will need to do more robberies for the same rewards. The recent increase in frequency of bank robbery may be due in part to this effect. Totally cashless teller stations may be an answer but are obviously contradictory to current practices.

The finding on clear-up rates is interesting. Increased clear-up rates for robbery may make it less attractive for some offenders. Of course, any increases would need to be advertised to be effective. The clear-up rate for bank robbery may actually be different to that for robbery in general. If it is higher, advertising this fact may turn some offenders away from banks and onto other targets (target displacement). Obviously, there are questions of social responsibility to be considered, but we have already seen that 100 per cent displacement is an unlikely outcome of any crime prevention initiative.

Turning to the perceived disadvantages of robbery, again a large number of interviewees did not respond (43). Of the 67 who did respond, nine (13.4 per cent) said that there were no disadvantages, while 12 (17.9 per cent) said that they had never thought about it. The other 46 gave one or more disadvantages.

Thirty people said that the long sentences given for robbery were a disadvantage, while 18 mentioned having to serve time in prison. Seventeen saw robbery as dangerous and said that this was one of its disadvantages. A number of these 17 mentioned the possibility of being shot at as a result their involvement. Finally, seven mentioned the loneliness and alienation that had resulted from the conviction for robbery.

`...alienation from family and friends...'

Making people more aware of the length of sentences for robbery and the nature of life in prison, may increase the perceived risks of robbery and decrease the number of people choosing to become involved. However, these risks may become `real' only after someone has been convicted of robbery and has served time in prison. Reactions to punishment will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROBBERIES

3.1 WHAT, WHERE AND WHEN

3.1.1 What They Robbed: The Targets

Bank robberies accounted for 35.5 per cent (39) of the robberies discussed in detail during the interviews. The most popular targets after banks were persons in the street (11), building societies (8), persons at home (8), and chemists (6). None of the other targets mentioned accounted for more than 5 per cent of the total. The other targets included, in descending order of frequency:

* hotels/bottle shops	5;
* service stations	4;
* convenience stores	3;
* taxi drivers	3;
* payrolls	3;
* credit unions	2;
* post offices	2;
* laundromats	2;
* restaurants	2;
* supermarket	1;
* TAB	1.

Nine of the 39 bank robberies were at branches of the Commonwealth Bank. National Australia Bank branches were the target on nine occasions also. Westpac was next with seven robberies, followed by:

* ANZ	6;
* State Bank of Victoria	3;
* National Mutual Royal Bank (Royal Mutual ^B)	2;
* Bank of Queensland	2;
* State Bank of New South Wales	1.

Table 3.1 compares the above figures with the distribution of all bank robberies in Australia in 1987. It shows that the distribution of robberies across banks in the present study, was fairly representative of the distribution of all bank robberies in 1987.

For the purposes of subsequent analysis and discussion, the robbery targets can be divided into three groups. Financial institutions such as banks, building societies and credit unions form the largest group with 44.5 per cent of the total. Commercial targets other than financial institutions follow with 38.2 per cent, while personal and residential robbery accounts for 17.3 per cent of the total.

TABLE 3.1**BANK ROBBERIES BY TYPE OF BANK: COMPARATIVE DATA**

Bank	Present Study		Australia 1987	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
National Australia Bank	9	23.1	154	28.0
Commonwealth Bank	9	23.1	138	25.1
Westpac	7	17.9	83	15.1
ANZ	6	15.4	102	18.5
State	6	15.4	39	7.1
Royal Mutual	2	5.1	32	5.8
Advance	0	0.0	1	0.2
Rural Industries	0	0.0	1	0.2
Total	39	100.0	550	100.0

Victorian data presented at the 1988 Armed Robbery Seminar (Cole, 1988), provide a comparison with the above figures on target categories (see Table 3.2). This data suggest that robberies on financial institutions are over-represented in our sample, while robberies on other commercial premises are under-represented.

TABLE 3.2**THREE CATEGORIES OF TARGETS: COMPARATIVE DATA**

Target Categories	Present Study		Victoria 1986/87	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Financial institutions	49	44.5	171	20.8
Other commercial	42	38.2	512	62.1
Personal and residential	19	17.3	141	17.1
Total	110	100.0	824	100.0

3.1.2 Where Targets Were Located

Thirty-four of the places robbed were in New South Wales, 36 were in Victoria, 39 in Queensland, and one was located in the Australian Capital Territory. Of the 34 robberies in New South Wales, 23 were in Sydney and 11 were in other parts of the state. In Victoria, 30 of the robbery targets were located in Melbourne, while the other six were located elsewhere. Brisbane was the location of 25 of the Queensland robberies, while 14 were in other parts of the state, particularly the Gold Coast.

An impression was gained during the study that there is a relatively high incidence of robbery in the south-eastern suburbs of Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. A discussion of the evidence in support of this impression and possible reasons for a higher incidence of robbery in these areas can be found at Appendix F.

When asked to estimate the distance between the place robbed and their home or residence at the time, the majority of interviewees (80.9 per cent) said that the distance was 20 kilometres or less. Offenders appear to rob targets which are relatively close to home. A full list of response categories and associated frequencies follows:

*	one km or less	10;
*	more than 1 km to 5 kms	26;
*	more than 5 kms to 10 kms	27;
*	more than 10 kms to 20 kms	26;
*	more than 20 kms to 50 kms	6;
*	more than 50 kms to 100 kms	5;
*	more than 100 kms	6.

3.1.3 When Robberies Occurred

The majority of the robberies were carried out in the years 1985 to 1988 (see Table 3.3). However, one of the robberies occurred as early as 1979, and two or more were carried out in each of the years 1980 to 1984 inclusive. Nine people could not remember what year the robbery occurred in.

Between 2pm and 4pm (4pm inclusive) was the most popular time period for carrying out robberies (see Table 3.4). This was due to a large proportion of bank robberies occurring between these times (19 out of 39, 48.7 per cent). Only 12.1 per cent of robberies on other targets occurred between 2pm and 4pm. The most popular time for robberies of these other targets was 6pm to 12midnight (12midnight inclusive), with 34.8 per cent. No bank robberies occurred between these times. Table 3.4 shows the number of robberies in the other time periods. It appears that bank robberies are carried out at different times than are robberies on other targets.

TABLE 3.3**YEAR IN WHICH ROBBERIES WERE CARRIED OUT**

Year	Robberies Discussed in Detail	
	(No)	(%)
1979	1	1.0
1980	2	2.0
1981	4	4.0
1982	2	2.0
1983	6	5.9
1984	8	7.9
1985	16	15.8
1986	29	28.7
1987	26	25.7
1988	7	6.9
Total	101	100.0

TABLE 3.4**TIME AT WHICH ROBBERIES WERE CARRIED OUT**

Time Period	All Robberies		Bank Robberies		Other	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
8am to 10am	5	4.8	1	2.6	4	6.1
10am to 12noon	11	10.5	5	12.8	6	9.1
12noon to 2pm	13	12.4	8	20.5	5	7.6
2pm to 4pm	27	25.7	19	48.7	8	12.1
4pm to 6pm	19	18.1	6	15.4	13	19.7
6pm to 12midnight	23	21.9	0	0.0	23	34.8
12midnight to 8am	7	6.7	0	0.0	7	10.6
Total	105	100.0	39	100.0	66	100.0

When asked why they carried out the robbery at the time they did, 15 of the bank robbers said that there was no particular reason. Ten said they thought there would be more money in the bank at that time, while three mentioned each of the following reasons: that they were desperate for drugs, and that they thought it would be easier to make a get-away at that time. Finally, two said that they chose the time because they thought there would be fewer customers in the bank at that time, and four gave other reasons.

Fridays were the busiest days for bank robberies. Nineteen of the 31 bank robbers who could remember which day they did the robbery said it was a Friday. The equivalent figure for robberies on other targets was 11 (only 53 could remember). Not surprisingly, none of the bank robberies occurred on weekends. In contrast, 32.1 per cent of robberies on other targets occurred on these days.

TABLE 3.5

DAY ON WHICH ROBBERIES WERE CARRIED OUT

Day	All Robberies		Bank Robberies		Other	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Monday	4	4.8	0	0.0	4	7.5
Tuesday	4	4.8	1	3.2	3	5.7
Wednesday	10	11.9	4	12.9	6	11.3
Thursday	19	22.6	7	22.6	12	22.6
Friday	30	35.7	19	61.3	11	20.8
Saturday	10	11.9	0	0.0	10	18.9
Sunday	7	8.3	0	0.0	7	13.2
Total	84	100.0	31	100.0	53	100.0

The idea that there would be a lot of money in the bank on that day of the week was the most common reason given by bank robbers for the choice of day. Two said their choice of day was due to the likelihood of an easy get-away, while three said that they were desperate for drugs. Thirteen said that there was no particular reason for the robbery being on that day.

3.1.4 Summary

As with the offenders themselves, it is possible to develop a description of the 'typical' or most common type of robbery carried out by this group of offenders. The target of this 'typical' robbery is a bank. The robbery is carried out between 2pm and 4pm on a Friday. The main reason for the robbery at this time is the belief that there will be more money in the place between these hours. The robber typically lives 20 kms or less away from the bank, which is located in a capital city.

3.2 ACCOMPLICES

Forty-nine of the 110 interviewees (44.5 per cent) carried out their robberies alone. Thirty-three (30.0 per cent) did the robbery with one other person, while 22 (20.0 per cent) worked with two others. The other six (5.5 per cent) did the robbery with four or more other people. For the 39 bank robbers, the figures were as follow: 17 (43.6 per cent) did the robbery alone; 13 (33.3 per cent) worked with one other person; and nine (23.1 per cent) were part of a gang of three.

Interviewees who had operated as 'singles' were asked why they had done the robbery by themselves. The most common response was simply that they preferred to work alone (16 interviewees gave this answer). Other reasons given included the following.

'...there are less problems working by yourself...'

'...I don't work well with others.'

'...no one was available to help...'

Similarly, those interviewees who had carried out the robbery with other people, were asked why they had operated in this manner. Nineteen said something along the following lines:

'...we were together and were desperate for drugs...'

or

'...we were all desperate for money...'

Other reasons mentioned included the following.

'...we were living together...'

'...we were mates...'

'...it needed more than one person to do the job.'

'...the others needed my help...'

'...the other person knew about the place we robbed.'

3.3 TARGET CHOICE

Interviewees were asked to indicate which factors, from a predetermined list, had played a part in the decision to rob the place they did. The factor mentioned most frequently was that the place chosen was easy to make a get-away from (55.5 per cent of interviewees). Next came chance factors such as just happening to be near the place or in the area (49.1 per cent). Then followed:

- * familiarity with the area in which the place was located (48.2 per cent);
- * knowing the place that was robbed (47.3 per cent);
- * thinking that there would be a lot of money in the place (44.5 per cent);
- * receiving a tip from a friend or contact (16.4 per cent); and
- * someone else deciding (5.5 per cent).

Four of the interviewees said that they had chosen a particular bank to rob because of certain characteristics it possessed. These characteristics were: being close to the bush making escape easier; lack of security; a small number of staff and female tellers on duty.

3.4 PLANNING

There are a number of ways in which someone might plan a robbery. Making arrangements to overcome security measures, organising disguises, and checking escape routes, are just some of the activities which may be undertaken. The plans made by the interviewees of this study ranged from detailed to non-existent. 'Didn't make any plans really' was a common response.

3.4.1 Time Available for Planning

The amount of time available for planning will probably bear some relationship to the amount of planning actually done. As such, interviewees were asked about the amount of time between the decision to commit the robbery and the robbery actually taking place.

Forty-eight interviewees said that there was half an hour or less between the decision to do the robbery and the robbery actually taking place. A number of them claimed that the robbery had been 'spontaneous' and that no planning had occurred.

Another 35 said that more than half an hour but no more than a day had elapsed between the decision and the act. Finally, 25 said that the time delay had been longer than one day, 11 of these claiming that it had been more than two weeks.

Table 3.6 shows the responses of those who robbed banks. It appears that, on average, bank robbers took longer than offenders who robbed other targets between deciding to rob and actually robbing. Only a few bank robbers took half an hour or less, whereas this was true for a large proportion of the other offenders. Whether this translates to more planning on the part of bank robbers is a question that will be explored in the following sections.

TABLE 3.6**TIME BETWEEN DECISION TO ROB AND ROBBERY**

Amount of Time	All Robberies		Bank Robberies		Other	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
1/2 hour or less	48	44.4	6	15.4	42	60.9
More than 1/2 hour but no more than 1 day	35	32.4	20	51.3	15	21.7
More than 1 day but no more than 2 weeks	14	12.9	10	25.6	4	5.8
More than 2 weeks	11	10.2	3	7.7	8	11.6
Total	108	100.0	39	100.0	69	100.0

3.4.2 Task Allocation

In most of robberies where two or more offenders were involved, different tasks were allocated to different members of the team (44 out of 61, 72.1 per cent). Of the 17 robberies in which no tasks were allocated, all were robberies of targets other than banks. All 22 of the bank robberies carried out by more than one offender involved the allocation of tasks.

Three sorts of tasks were mentioned by interviewees. Fourteen said that they were allocated the role of 'driver'.

'I was to drive the get-away car.'

Twenty interviewees said that their job had been to take the money or goods from the victims.

'My job was to walk along the counter and get the tellers to fill up the bag.'

Seven had kept the victims covered and/or had kept watch while the robbery was underway.

'I was to keep the staff and customers bailed up.'

Another three had performed some combination of these tasks.

While different tasks were generally allocated, there was no evidence to suggest that any of the offenders were specialists in the roles they were given. In fact, some interviewees indicated that the allocation of tasks was fairly arbitrary. One offender said that his accomplice and himself had committed seven bank robberies in a very short period and that they had taken it in turns to go into the bank to get the money while the other one waited outside on the motor cycle.

3.4.3 Casing the Target

The most common activity undertaken in order to 'case' the place robbed, was to check it out from the outside (56.4 per cent of those interviewed said that this had happened). This was often done just prior to the robbery to make sure that the 'coast was clear'. Even though it was the most common activity, a large number of interviewees (48) did not bother with this precaution. The other activities carried out by the interviewees were the following:

- * entering the place and having a look around;
- * checking out what security the place had;
- * finding out where the nearest police station was; and
- * finding out how much money was in the place.

Table 3.7 compares the activities undertaken by offenders who robbed targets other than banks, with those undertaken by offenders who robbed banks. It shows that, with either activity, a greater proportion of bank robbers were involved. This suggests that, overall, bank robbers put more effort into planning a robbery than do other robbery offenders. Whether this is an indication that offenders who rob banks are more 'professional' is another question. It may simply reflect the necessity of more careful preparation for bank robberies due to the higher levels of security.

3.4.4 Plans to Overcome Security Measures

Less than a quarter of those interviewed (25, 22.7 per cent), said that they had made plans to overcome security measures at the place they robbed. Nearly all those who had made plans (22 of the 25) were offenders who had robbed a bank during the robbery.

Ten people said they had made plans to 'beat' the security cameras, including wearing disguises and attempting not to be photographed front on. Two people said that they planned to do the robbery as quickly as possible so as to negate the effectiveness of alarms. Nine offenders said they made plans to overcome both security cameras and alarms, while four said that they made some other plan in relation to security measures.

The fact that 95.6 per cent of the offenders who robbed targets other than banks made no plans regarding security does not necessarily imply that they didn't care or that they were 'unprofessional' in their approach. In many cases the lack of planning simply reflected the lack of security in the places robbed.

TABLE 3.7

CASING THE TARGET

Activities	All Robberies		Bank Robberies		Other	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Checked the place out from the outside	62	56.4	32	82.1	30	42.3
Entered the place and had a look around	40	36.4	23	59.0	17	23.9
Checked out what security the place had	29	26.4	18	46.2	11	15.5
Found out how far away the nearest police station was	24	21.8	15	38.5	9	12.7
Found out how much money was in the place	10	9.1	4	10.3	6	8.5

3.4.5 Maximum Time for Robbery

Interviewees were asked if there was a maximum amount of time for the robbery. Forty-five people said that there had been a maximum period. Thirty of these 45 were people who had robbed banks. Only 9 of the 39 bank robbers (23.1 per cent) said that there had not been a maximum amount of time that they were prepared to spend in the bank. The equivalent figure for offenders who had robbed targets other than banks was 78.6 per cent. This difference is probably attributable to the presence of alarms in banks.

'About three minutes' was the most common response from the bank robbers when asked what the maximum period was (15 out of 30, 50 per cent). A complete distribution of maximum periods follows:

- * less than a minute 1;
- * about one minute 6;
- * about two minutes 4;
- * about three minutes 15;
- * about four or five minutes 4.

3.4.6 Disguises

Unlike some of the other planning activities discussed above, the organisation of disguises was relatively popular amongst interviewees. Almost 80 per cent of the 39 offenders who had robbed banks said that they had organised disguises for the robbery (31, 79.5 per cent). However, less than half of the other 71 offenders had done so (34, 47.9 per cent).

The most popular form of disguise was to cover the head with a balaclava or stocking (58.7 per cent of those who used a disguise chose this method). Other forms of disguise included:

- * sun glasses;
- * head gear such as a hat or scarf;
- * gloves;
- * overalls;
- * other clothing such as overcoats and football jumpers;
- * motor cycle helmets;
- * wigs; and
- * false beards or moustaches.

Those interviewees who did not organise disguises for the robbery were asked why this was. The most common response related to being too 'sick' from drug withdrawal to worry.

'...we were sick, desperate, knew we were going to get caught...'

'...too sick to worry about it.'

A number of other reasons related to being under the influence of a drug at the time of doing the robbery.

'...too drunk to think about it.'

'...too stoned to worry...'

Other reasons involved the plans made for the robbery, or the lack of planning. For example, an obvious disguise was considered not appropriate for a plan in which a lone offender enters a bank, waits in line to be served, and quietly demands money from the teller. Offenders who claimed that the robbery was 'spontaneous' and unplanned gave this as the reason for not wearing a disguise.

Finally, a number of reasons were specific to one particular robbery.

'I didn't think a drug dealer would go to the police.'

'...was not considering robbery when I first went to the service station.'

'...had no real experience in crime.'

3.4.7 Plans for the Get-away

Plans to escape the scene of the robbery were also relatively popular with this group of offenders. Sixty-six of the 110 interviewees said that plans were made. However, as with other aspects of planning, bank robbers were more likely than other robbers to have made plans. Only four of the 39 offenders who robbed banks (10.3 per cent) said that no plans were made for escape, while 37 of the 71 offenders who robbed other targets (52.1 per cent) responded in this way.

Table 3.8 provides an indication of what the get-away plans involved. It shows that most escape plans included the use of one or more private vehicles.

TABLE 3.8

ESCAPE PLANS: BANK ROBBERIES VERSUS OTHER ROBBERIES

Plans Involving	All Robberies		Bank Robberies		Other Robberies	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
One or more private vehicles	57	51.8	30	76.9	27	38.0
Public transport only	4	3.6	2	5.1	2	2.8
Escaping on foot only	4	3.6	2	5.1	2	2.8
Other plans	1	0.9	0	0.0	1	1.4
No plans	41	37.3	4	10.3	37	52.1
No response	3	2.7	1	2.6	2	2.8
Total	110	100.0	39	100.0	71	100.0

Table 3.8 also indicates that the robbery target had a bearing on the likelihood of plans being made for escape, an effect which has already been discussed. In addition, it appears that the likelihood of escape plans being made is dependent on the number of offenders involved.

As shown in Table 3.9, most lone offenders said that they had no plans for the get-away. In comparison, only 12 of the 61 offenders, who had done their robberies as part of a gang, said that there had been no plans for escape. More lone offenders than gang members said that their plans involved escaping on foot only, while the opposite was true for plans involving the use of one or more vehicles. The following is an example of one of the more detailed plans developed by a gang of offenders.

'...leave area in a stolen car, then drop me at a railway station. I was to catch a train to the meeting place. The other guy got dropped at the next station. The third guy was to drive car to shopping centre car park and leave it, and then leave area on foot.'

TABLE 3.9

ESCAPE PLANS: LONE OFFENDERS VERSUS GANGS

Plans Involving	Lone Offenders		Gangs of Two or More	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
One or More Vehicles	14	28.6	43	70.5
Public Transport Only	2	4.1	2	3.3
Escaping on Foot Only	3	6.1	1	1.6
No Plans	29	59.2	12	19.7
Other Plans	1	2.0	0	0.0
No response	0	0.0	3	4.9
Total	49	100.0	61	100.0

3.4.8 Summary

The amount of time and effort put into planning a robbery appears to vary along a continuum. At one end is the robber who spends little or no time planning and consequently does not 'case' the target, does not wear a disguise, and makes no plans for escape. At the other end of the line is the robber who spends a number of weeks planning for the robbery, thoroughly 'cases' the target, takes action to overcome any security measures which may be present, and spends considerable time and effort organising disguises and escape plans.

This latter type of robber probably equates to the category of offender commonly known as the 'professional'. Neither this extreme, nor the 'unplanned' extreme, were very common in our sample of offenders. Most seemed to fall somewhere in between. For example, only three of the 39 offenders who robbed banks would fit the above description of the professional extreme, while two would match the description of the unplanned extreme.

However, the offenders who had robbed banks were generally closer to the professional extreme than were offenders who had robbed other targets. We have seen that, on average, offenders who robbed banks took longer between deciding to do the robbery and actually carrying it out; were more likely to allocate tasks when operating as part of a team; put more effort into 'casing' the target, organising disguises, and planning the getaway; and were more likely to have made plans to overcome security measures.

There are two possible reasons for these differences. The first possibility is that offenders who rob banks are a different group of people from offenders who rob other targets. That is, they are more professional in their approach to robbery and would put the same amount of planning into a robbery regardless of the target. The second possibility is that offenders who rob banks are really the same as offenders who rob other targets, but through necessity, put more time and effort into planning a robbery due to the greater security present in banks. The actual reason for the differences found is most probably some combination of these two possibilities.

Some of the offenders who tended towards the 'unplanned' end of the continuum were probably those who were physically sick and psychologically stressed from drug withdrawal at the time of the robbery. As noted previously, one of the main reasons given for not wearing a disguise, was that the interviewee had been too sick from drug withdrawal to worry about it. People in this situation are unlikely to spend much time or effort on other aspects of planning either.

An example of the relationship between drug withdrawal and lack of planning can be found amongst the offenders who had robbed banks. In addition to the two bank robbers who fitted the earlier description of the unplanned extreme, another three came close to this end of the continuum. Of these five, three said that they were feeling physically sick from heroin withdrawal at the time of the robbery, while two said that they were under the influence of a drug at the time. In one robbery this drug was alcohol in the other it was a prescribed drug.

Security measures (mechanical prevention) are unlikely to prevent this type of robber from carrying out a robbery as he/she would probably not be aware of the measures beforehand. Even if the person was aware, we have seen that he/she might not worry about them and do the robbery anyway. Environmental prevention techniques may have some deterrent effect with this type of robber, especially when the choice of target is made while 'cruising around looking for somewhere to rob'. Robbery prevention through environmental design will be discussed in more detail in a later section of the report. Prevention through increased security is also the topic of a later section.

3.5 WEAPONS

A weapon of some sort was used in most of the robberies (92.7 per cent). Generally only one weapon was used (85 of the 102 robberies in which a weapon was present). However, two weapons were used in 12 robberies and three weapons were present in five robberies.

Rifles were the most common type of weapon. Thirty robberies involved the use of one or more rifles. Shotguns were next most common. Then followed knives, imitation guns, revolvers, automatic pistols, and air rifles. Other weapons used included implements such as shovels, iron bars, hammers, scissors and broomsticks.

The weapons used in 40 of the robberies were modified prior to the robbery. The weapons modified were, in all cases, either shotguns or rifles. Most of the modifications involved the barrel of a firearm being sawn off. The reason given for this modification was nearly always that it made the weapon easier to conceal. However one person said that it made the weapon look more threatening. The only other modification mentioned in the interviews was a pistol grip on a shotgun, and the reason given was that it made it easier to handle.

In the eight robberies where no weapon was used, the offender either pretended to have a gun, punched the victim, or simply wrote a note demanding money and handed it to a bank teller. Other information about the involvement of weapons in the robberies will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.6 DURING THE ROBBERY

In most robberies, everything went as the interviewee expected (77, 70.0 per cent). However, 25 interviewees (22.7 per cent) said that nothing went as expected. For the rest, some things did go as expected while others did not.

The reason things didn't go as expected generally had to do with the robbery victim(s) and/or members of the public, either trying to stop the interviewee from getting money, or trying to stop the interviewee from getting away. In a few, the unexpected event was accidental discharge of a firearm.

In 34 out of 39 bank robberies, everything went as expected. In two robberies, some things went as expected, while in another two, nothing went as expected. The other bank robber did not say how things went. For those where things didn't go as expected, it was generally because one or more bank employees did not do as they were told during the robbery. The actions of these employees will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The offenders themselves might be the best ones to describe what happened during the robbery. The following paragraphs outline three different types of bank robberies in the words of the interviewee concerned. First, the unarmed lone offender.

`...just got in queue, handed teller the note saying this is a robbery, give me the money...gave her a bag which she filled up...'

Second, the armed lone offender.

`...walked into the bank and told the customers to get against the wall...walked along the counter and got staff to fill the bag up...'

Finally, the armed gang.

`...both ran into the bank together...ordered everyone to lie on the floor. The other guy jumped the counter and went to each teller cage putting money in the bag...'

The offender who walked along the counter during the robbery said that the idea for this came from the American television show, 'The Streets of San Francisco'. He said that the advantage of doing the robbery this way was that he could see how much money was in the tellers' drawers. This example suggests that depictions of robbery in tv and films may influence the way some offenders carry out their robberies.

3.7 OTHER ROBBERIES

Following detailed discussion of 'the robbery', interviewees were asked about other robberies in which they had been involved. This was a sensitive subject for many interviewees, especially for those who had been involved in robberies for which they hadn't been convicted. This reticence was exemplified by the three people who refused to say whether they had done other robberies, and by the eight people who said that they had committed some other robberies, but would not discuss them further.

Given the general uneasiness with the subject of other robberies, it is quite likely that the extent of involvement was generally understated by the offenders interviewed. Even so, over half of them (61, 55.5 per cent) admitted to being involved in one or more other robberies. The number of other robberies is shown below:

*	one other robbery	21 offenders;
*	two or three others	15;
*	four or five others	4;
*	six to ten others	11;
*	eleven to 15 others	1;
*	more than 15 others	1;
*	some others	8.

Those interviewees who were prepared to discuss the other robberies further, were asked how many they had carried out in the two months prior to the robbery discussed in detail. Their responses were as follow:

*	none	18;
*	one	21;
*	two or more	13.

The thirteen people who had two or more in the two-month period were asked why they had carried out a number of robberies in a short period of time. This question was aimed at exploring why some people seem to go on a robbery 'binge'. A number of responses related to the need for money for drugs.

'... needed money for my heroin habit ... was costing around \$2,000 per day.'

'... all robberies were done in a period of 2 weeks. Accomplice needed money for heroin. I needed money to keep drinking.'

Two of the robbers had needed money for gambling, one saying that he was having a bad run at the casino and so had needed to do a number of robberies to 'keep going'. The other 'binge' robbers gave a variety of reasons.

'I needed a large amount of money for my grandson's operation.'

'... needed money to finance a murder.'

`... did three robberies, all Royal Mutual, in three months ... just got used to having money.'

All interviewees who had carried out other robberies were asked if the robbery discussed in detail was the same as the others, or different. The majority of those who responded said that it was pretty much the same. However 18 people said that there had been some differences. The differences related to the reasons for doing the robbery, the type of place robbed, or the way in which the robbery was carried out.

3.8 CATEGORIES OF OFFENDERS

Various researchers have developed typologies of robbery offenders in an effort to describe different sub-groups amongst the offenders. Examples include a four category typology of Canadian robbers (Gabor et al. 1987), a four-way typology of Australian robbers (Cole, 1988), and a two-way typology of female robbers (Fortune et al. 1980).

The assumption underlying this categorisation is that robbers are not homogeneous, but rather is made up of a number of sub-groups. The implication of categorisation for robbery prevention is that different prevention strategies will probably work better with different types of offenders.

The time requirements of the current study limit offender categories to an analysis of lone offenders versus gang members. Section 3.4 indicated that the escape plans of robbery offenders varied depending on whether they did the robbery discussed in detail by themselves, or as part of a gang. As we are about to see, this was not the only difference between these two groups.

In this section, `gangs' will refer to groups of two or three offenders. Groups of four or more will not be included. This is because only a few of these larger groups were encountered during the interviews, and because none of them were involved in bank robberies. As such, the following discussion of offender categories will be based on interviews with 104 offenders. Forty-nine of these 104 did their robberies by themselves, while the other 55 were part of a gang of two or three offenders.

3.8.1 Main Reason for Committing the Robbery

Table 3.10 presents comparative data for a selection of main reasons given for involvement in the robbery. The table shows that a larger proportion of lone offenders said that the main reason had to do with needing money to finance a drug habit, whereas a larger proportion of gang members gave the following reasons:

- * simply needing money to support family or self;
- * having debts that couldn't be repaid; and
- * needing money because of unemployment.

TABLE 3.10**REASON FOR DOING ROBBERY: LONE OFFENDERS VERSUS GANGS**

Main Reason	Lone Offenders		Gangs of Two or Three	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
I needed money to buy drugs to support my habit	16	32.7	14	25.5
I simply needed money to support my family/myself	4	8.2	14	25.5
I had debts that I couldn't repay	2	4.1	4	7.3
I needed money as I was unemployed	0	0.0	4	7.3
It's what I did for a living	2	4.1	3	5.5
I lost my temper	1	2.0	1	1.8
Other	24	49.0	15	27.3
Total	49	100.0	55	100.0

3.8.2 The Target

Table 3.11 shows that there was little difference between lone offenders and gangs in terms of the sorts of targets they robbed.

TABLE 3.11**CATEGORIES OF TARGETS: LONE OFFENDERS VERSUS GANGS**

Target Categories	Lone Offenders		Gangs of Two or Three	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Financial institutions	23	46.9	26	47.2
Other commercial	18	36.7	21	38.2
Personal and residential	8	16.3	8	14.5
Total	49	100.0	55	100.0

3.8.3 Choosing the Target

Comparative figures for the factors which played a part in target choice are provided in Table 3.12. These figures show that a greater proportion of lone offenders indicated chance factors as playing a part in target choice, whereas a greater proportion of gang members indicated each of the other factors as playing a part. The difference between the two groups was most marked for the following:

- * chance factors; and
- * receiving a tip from a friend or contact.

These findings suggest that gangs are more likely to choose their target based on some assessment of the advantages of robbing a particular target, whereas lone offenders are more likely to decide on their target through chance factors.

3.8.4 Planning

Table 3.13 shows comparative data for the time available for planning the robbery. A greater proportion of lone offenders spent less than half an hour between deciding to do the robbery and actually carrying the robbery out. This suggests that lone offenders are more likely to commit 'spontaneous' robberies and are less likely to have taken action to plan the robbery.

TABLE 3.12

TARGET CHOICE: LONE OFFENDERS VERSUS GANGS

Factors Which Played a Part in Target Choice	Lone Offenders or Three		Gangs of Two	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Chance factors	30	61.2	21	38.2
Thinking that there would be a lot of money in the place	17	34.7	29	52.7
Receiving a tip from a friend or contact	2	4.1	15	27.3
Familiarity with the area in which target was located	18	36.7	32	58.2
Knowing the place target well	18	36.7	30	54.5
Target was easy to get-away from	22	44.9	35	63.6
Someone else deciding	1	2.0	4	7.3

TABLE 3.13**TIME BETWEEN DECISION TO ROB AND ROBBERY: LONE OFFENDERS
VERSUS GANGS**

Amount of Time	Lone Offenders		Gangs of Two or Three	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
1/2 hour or less	26	53.1	19	34.5
More than 1/2 hour but no more than 1 day	13	26.5	21	38.2
More than 1 day but no more than 2 weeks	4	8.2	9	16.4
More than 2 weeks	5	10.2	5	9.1
Missing	1	2.0	1	1.8
Total	49	100.0	55	100.0

This possibility is lent support by another finding in relation to planning. When asked whether there had been enough planning for the robbery, only 13 of the lone offenders (26.5 per cent) said that they thought there had been. In contrast, 28 of the gang members (50.9 per cent) responded in this way.

It appears that gangs may, on average, spend more time and effort in planning a robbery. For further evidence of this possibility, we will look at differences in relation to action taken in planning the robbery. The findings indicate that a greater proportion of gangs did spend time on certain aspects of planning. The aspects of planning for which this was true, together with the percentage of lone offenders (singles) and the percentage of gangs who undertook the activity, are listed below.

- * Checked the target out from the outside
46.9 per cent of singles
63.6 per cent of gangs.
- * Checked out what security the target had
16.3 per cent of singles
34.5 per cent of gangs.
- * Found out how far away the nearest police station was
18.4 per cent of singles
25.5 per cent of gangs.
- * Organised disguises for the robbery
44.9 per cent of singles
72.7 per cent of gangs.
- * Made plans for the escape
40.8 per cent of singles
74.5 per cent of gangs.

3.8.5 During the Robbery

As well as differences in planning the robbery, there were also differences during the robbery itself. Lone offenders appear to have had things go wrong more often than did gangs of offenders. Sixteen of the lone offenders (32.7 per cent) said that nothing went as expected during the robbery, whereas only seven gang members (12.7 per cent) responded this way.

Lone offenders also appear more likely than gangs to have used a weapon during the robbery (16.3 per cent and 9.1 per cent respectively), and more likely to have injured or fought with a victim (18.4 per cent and 9.1 per cent).

Finally, a greater proportion of lone offenders considered themselves to be under the influence of a drug at the time of the robbery. Seventeen of the lone offenders said that they were (34.7 per cent), while 15 of the gang members answered this way (27.3 per cent).

3.8.6 Other Robberies

A slightly larger proportion of gang members indicated that they had carried out previous robberies. Sixty per cent of gang members said that they had, whereas 53.1 per cent of lone offenders said that they had done one or more other robberies.

3.8.7 Summary

Taken as a whole, the above findings suggest that lone offenders and gang members are different subgroups of the robbery offender population. The magnitude of the difference on some characteristics is quite small. However, the findings suggest that, on average, the two groups differ in a number of ways.

- * They appear to have different reasons for involvement in robbery.
- * Gangs of offenders appear more likely to choose their target based on some assessment of the advantages of robbing a particular target.
- * Gangs also appear to have more time available for planning the robbery, to take more action in relation to planning the offence, and to consider that enough planning had been done.
- * In contrast, lone offenders appear to do less planning, and perhaps as a result, are more likely to find that the robbery doesn't go as expected. Lone offenders also appear more likely to injure or fight with a victim of the robbery.

These findings have implications for robbery prevention. Offenders who operate as part of a gang of two or three will apparently be more likely to be deterred by situational prevention strategies, than will lone offenders. This is because they choose their targets on the basis of some assessment of the advantages of a particular target, and because they are more likely to check the targets for security and to generally 'case' the targets. Situational prevention strategies will be considered in more detail in later chapters, and the issue of lone offenders versus gangs will again be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

USE OF WEAPONS AND ATTITUDES TO VICTIMS

4.1 USE OF WEAPONS

The previous chapter contained some preliminary findings on the involvement of weapons in the robbery discussed. Additional findings on the use of weapons will now be considered. Issues which will be discussed include where and when weapons were obtained, whether offenders were prepared to use them during the robbery, and what happened to the weapons after the robbery. The use of firearms will be a particular focus due to the public debate on gun laws and to the potential for injury and death that these weapons hold.

4.1.1 Type of Weapon

We saw previously that one or more weapons were used in 102 of the 110 robberies discussed in detail. (Four of the eight in which no weapon was used were bank robberies.) These 102 interviewees were asked whether they had personally carried a weapon during the robbery. Eighty-one offenders said that they had, while 21 said that they had not carried a weapon. (Six of those who had robbed banks said that they had not personally carried a weapon.)

Table 4.1 shows the type of weapon carried by the 81 offenders. It also shows the type of weapon used by the 29 bank robbery offenders who had personally carried a weapon.

TABLE 4.1

TYPE OF WEAPON USED

Type of Weapon	All Robberies		Bank Robberies	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Firearm	48	59.3	24	82.8
Knife	18	22.2	0	0.0
Other	15	18.5	5	17.2
Total	81	100.0	29	100.0

The figures in the Table 4.1 indicate that a firearm was the most popular choice of weapon, both for robbers in general and for bank robbers in particular. The firearm was usually a rifle or shotgun, but revolvers, automatic pistols, and air rifles were also used.

Knives were not popular with bank robbers. None of them used this type of weapon, whereas 18 non-bank robbers did use a knife. The 15 'other' weapons carried by offenders in general included imitation guns, shovels, iron bars, hammers, scissors and broomsticks. The five 'other' weapons carried by bank robbers were all imitation guns.

Bank robbers appear to have a strong preference for firearms, generally real but sometimes imitation. On the other hand, robbers in general appear to use a greater variety of weapons. The need for bank robbers to 'control' a relatively large number of people probably accounts for this difference.

4.1.2 When and Where Obtained: All Weapons

The offenders who had personally carried a weapon during the robbery were asked where they had got the weapon from. The most common response was that they had bought it (33 of the 81, 40.7 percent). The next most frequent response was that it had been borrowed (27, 33.3 percent). Other responses included that the weapon had been stolen, given as a gift, and given to the interviewee for the robbery.

Interviewees were also asked when they had got the weapon. Slightly more said that they had got it for the robbery (43, 53.1 percent) than said that they already had it (37, 45.7 percent).

TABLE 4.2

WHEN AND WHERE WEAPONS WERE OBTAINED

Where Obtained	Already Had Weapon		Got Weapon For Robbery	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
Bought it	21	56.8	12	27.9
Borrowed it	6	16.2	21	48.8
Stole it	4	10.8	4	9.3
Other	5	13.5	4	9.3
No response	1	2.7	2	4.7
Total	37	100.0	43	100.0

It appears that there is a link between the way in which the weapon was obtained and when it was obtained. Table 4.2 shows that of those who already had the weapon, more than half said that they had bought it, while only six said that they had borrowed it. On the other hand, of those who got the weapon for the robbery, just under half borrowed it, while only 12 said that they bought it. It appears that offenders who had the weapon prior to deciding to do the robbery were more likely to have bought it than they were to have borrowed it. The opposite appears true for offenders who got the weapon for the robbery itself.

4.1.3 When and Where Obtained: Firearms

Twenty-one of the 48 interviewees who carried firearms during the robbery had bought them. Thirteen people said that they bought them prior to deciding to do the robbery, while eight got them specifically for the robbery. The places where they bought them from were many and varied. A number said they had bought them from friends, while others said they purchased their firearm from a shop, either a 'gun shop' or a 'pawn shop'.

'...bought it from a pawn shop...used a different gun for each robbery...all purchased from shops.'

One person bought the gun from a 'trading post mag', while another 'got it at the local pub'. Finally, a few people said they had purchased their firearm illegally, either by using someone else's identification, or on the 'blackmarket'.

Seventeen of the 48 firearms were borrowed, four prior to the decision to do the robbery, and 13 specifically for the robbery. When questioned further, the overwhelming majority said that they had borrowed the gun from a friend.

'...borrowed it from a friend...told him I was going on a shooting trip.'

Of the remaining ten firearms, six were stolen and the rest were either given as gifts or were given to the interviewee for the robbery itself.

There appears to have been a variety of ways in which firearms were obtained for the robbery. Friends were a prime source, both for buying and borrowing a gun. Those offenders who did not have the weapon in their possession prior to deciding to do the robbery apparently had little trouble in getting a firearm for the robbery. All this seems to indicate that firearms are readily available in the community, through both legal and illegal channels. Changes to gun laws should perhaps aim to reduce the overall number of firearms in the community, as well as to increase controls on the sale of guns.

Whether increasing the difficulty of obtaining a gun will have an effect on the robbery rate is another question. There appears to be three possible responses. Offenders may decide to use some other type of weapon. Alternatively, they may just spend more time and effort in obtaining a firearm. Finally, some may 'cool off' while trying to get hold of a gun and decide against doing the robbery.

4.1.4 State Differences

State differences were investigated in relation to the type of weapon used. Table 4.3 shows the state-based distribution of responses for the question regarding the weapon carried by the interviewee. It shows that firearms and knives were used by similar numbers of interviewees in Queensland, whereas in the other two states, firearms far outnumbered knives. This difference is probably due to a bias in the sample rather than to any real difference in the 'population' of robberies in the different states.

TABLE 4.3**TYPE OF WEAPON USED BY STATE**

Type of Weapon	NSW		VIC		QLD	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
None	7	24.1	8	22.9	6	15.8
Firearm	17	58.6	18	51.4	13	34.2
Knife	2	6.9	4	11.4	12	31.6
Other	3	10.3	5	14.3	7	18.4
Total	29	100.0	35	100.0	38	100.0

Eleven of the 13 Queensland offenders who carried firearms said that they had bought them (84.6 percent). One said that the gun had been borrowed while another said that it had been stolen. In contrast, only 5 of the 17 NSW prisoners (29.4 percent), and 5 of the 18 Victorians (27.8), said that they had bought their firearms. The most popular response in these two states was that the gun had been borrowed (37.5 and 55.6 percent respectively).

Of the 11 Queenslanders who had purchased their firearms, seven said they had bought them from friends, three said that the guns had been bought at shops, and one indicated the 'black market' as the source of the purchase. By way of comparison, the five NSW offenders who bought their guns indicated the following methods of purchase: from a friend; from a trading post magazine; at the local pub; illegally; and using some other person's identification. It is not possible to draw any firm conclusions from these findings due to the small numbers involved. However, they do suggest the possibility that robbery offenders in Queensland are more likely to have bought their firearms than are offenders from other states.

4.1.5 Other Issues Relating to Weapon Use

The 48 interviewees who carried a firearm were asked if the weapon was loaded and/or in working order during the robbery. In both cases, the majority said 'yes'. Thirty-five people (72.9 percent) said that the gun had been loaded, while 43 (89.6 percent) said that it had been in working order. It appears that a majority of the guns used in the robberies were capable of being discharged and could have injured or killed the victims of the robberies. The extent to which firearms were actually discharged during the robberies will be discussed in the next section. Only five of the 48 interviewees who carried firearms said that they had held a licence for the weapon.

Interviewees were asked what happened to the weapons after the robbery. This question was asked in relation to all the weapons used during the robbery, whether they were carried by the interviewee or not. The most common response was that the weapon(s) were hidden following the robbery (39 out of 102, 38.2 percent),

generally either in the offender's home or car. Just over a quarter (26.5 percent) said that the weapon(s) had been disposed of or thrown away, often into a river or a lake. Of the other interviewees who answered this question (12 did not), a few said that the weapon(s) had been sold or given away, while a number indicated that the police had got the weapon(s) before anything could be done with it/them.

This final point raises the question of police recovery of the weapons used during the robberies. When asked about this, most (72 out of 102, 70.5 percent) indicated that the police did recover the weapon(s) used during the robbery. However, 22 interviewees (21.6 percent) said that the weapons weren't recovered. Of these 22, most said that the weapon(s) had been thrown away, given away or sold following the robbery. Only two of these 22 said that they had hidden the weapon after the robbery.

4.1.6 Summary

To sum up, weapons appear to be an integral part of robbery for most offenders. Their presence and threat of usage are used to 'convince' victims to part with the money or goods in their possession.

Firearms appear to be the favoured choice of many offenders, probably because of a perception that victims find them more threatening. There is probably also a perception that firearms are better for controlling groups of people during a robbery. This possibility is lent support by the finding that the vast majority of bank robberies involved a firearm or an imitation gun (89.7 percent), while none involved the use of a knife. Firearms appear to be readily obtainable in the Australian community, from a variety of sources.

Stricter gun laws, aimed at making it more difficult to obtain a firearm, may have some impact on the frequency of robbery. The impact would probably be greatest in the area of 'spontaneous' robberies. In these robberies, offenders often make a spur of the moment decision, purchase a firearm, and carry out a robbery, all in a short space of time. Gun laws which prevent the 'spontaneous' purchase of a firearm, may result in some potential offenders 'cooling off' and deciding against doing the robbery. While our study provides no direct evidence to support these statements, some of the findings do suggest that firearms are relatively easy to obtain in Australia at present.

4.2 ATTITUDES TO VICTIMS

In order to gain some understanding of the attitudes of offenders towards their victims, interviewees were asked a number of questions regarding the victims of the robbery. While attitudes are difficult to measure, some indication can be gained from the behaviour of individuals. As such, the questions asked of interviewees generally dealt with their behaviour towards staff, customers and/or other victims during the robbery.

4.2.1 Reactions to Uncooperative Victims

Most victims of the robberies did as they were told (83, 75.5 percent). This was particularly true in relation to bank robberies (36 out of 39, 92.3 percent). However, in 23 robberies (20.9 percent), including three bank robberies, the victims did not do as they were told. This lack of cooperation generally took the form of trying to stop the offender from getting the money or goods that he/she was after. However, some times it involved trying to stop the offender from getting away.

Two of the three bank robberies in which the victims did not do as they were told involved staff members trying to prevent the robber from obtaining money held in a safe.

'...ran into bank and told everyone to get down. Threw bag at teller, told him to fill it up...staff member shut two bottom drawers on day safe. Threatened him again and he got on the floor...ran to day safe, took cash from there...'

'...went in and asked to see the manager. When I got into his office, pulled gun from bag and demanded he open the safe. He refused, so I grabbed girl teller and demanded some money...got very angry and punched girl...'

In the third bank robbery, a customer followed the offender out of the bank and chased him. This caused a disruption to the escape plans and resulted in the interviewee being captured by the police.

The above case studies provide examples of what offenders did in response to victims who refused to do as they were told. Overall, the most common response was to physically attack the victim, either with a weapon or with bare hands. This occurred in 16 of the 23 robberies. In five robberies, nothing was done, while in the remaining two, the victims were verbally threatened.

4.2.2 Injuries to Victims

Fourteen robberies resulted in victims being injured by weapons. Most of these 14 were by males acting alone (8 robberies). Three of the robberies were by pairs of males, while one was carried out by each of the following combinations:

- * one male and two females;
- * two females; and
- * six males.

Persons in the street were the targets of three of these robberies. The same number involved persons at home. The other targets of robberies in which victims were injured by weapons were mainly small businesses:

- * a restaurant;
- * service station;
- * chemist;
- * laundromat;
- * massage parlour;
- * convenience store;
- * supermarket; and
- * taxi cab.

None of these 14 robberies were on banks.

Knives were the most common type of weapon used (4 robberies). They were followed by rifles (2) and shotguns (2). The other six robberies involved the use of a variety of weapons including an imitation gun, a shovel, an iron bar and a walking stick.

Injuries sustained by victims included head injuries, broken jaws and knife wounds to various parts of the body including the kidney, leg and throat. In two robberies, the use of a weapon ended in death. One of these deaths resulted from the shooting of the owner of a chemist shop, while the other death was the result of the victim being bashed with a shovel.

For all 14 robberies, the interviewee said that he/she had been under the influence of a drug at the time. Alcohol was the most common type of drug (8 robberies), although one or two interviewees said that they had been under the influence of each of the following: cannabis, heroin, serepax and LSD.

No money or goods were obtained in four of the robberies. In another four, the offender(s) got \$100 or less. A shirt was obtained in a robbery on a laundromat, while in another robbery, the offenders took a television and a video cassette recorder. Three robberies produced more than \$100 in cash, but still relatively small amounts. One interviewee did not say how much was obtained.

It is possible to develop a description of the `typical' robbery in which an injury to the victim occurred. It was carried out by a lone male on a person at home, in the street, or at work. The man used a knife and was under the influence of a drug at the time of the robbery. The money he obtained during the robbery was minimal. Two examples of this `typical' robbery are outlined below.

A young male goes into a supermarket to buy some milk. He is a heroin addict and has had an injection less than 15 minutes beforehand. He notices that there are only two young females serving in the shop and goes back to his car for a knife that he keeps in the glove compartment. Returning to the shop he proceeds to commit the robbery. One of the shop assistants tries to stop him and is stabbed in the kidney. He escapes with a little money.

An older male has been drinking for about five hours. For some reason, he suddenly decides that he needs money. He takes a knife from his kitchen drawer and goes to the house next door. After entering the house through a window, he is disturbed by a woman who lives there. He grabs the woman and asks her where the money is. She resists and everything goes crazy. He becomes frustrated and angry and stabs the woman in the leg. He gets away with about \$300 in cash.

It appears that a number of the offenders who injured their victims felt little or no responsibility for their actions. This was often explained by their having warned their victims not to do anything silly. The male offender who committed the supermarket robbery outlined above exemplified this attitude.

'...what was I supposed to do. I had warned her not to do anything...it was her own stupid fault.'

4.2.3 Summary

In general, robbery offenders do not appear to have much concern for the victims of their crime. They do not appear to be very aware of the effect which a robbery can have on a person, particularly the psychological effect. In addition, many offenders will apparently respond with physical force if their victim(s) do not do as they are told. Persons who stand in the way of a robber and his/her main objectives, money and escape, appear to run the risk of physical injury.

There are three main implications of these findings for the banks. The present policy of instructing staff to comply with the demands of robbery offenders, is a sensible one. It appears to have been successful in preventing physical injury to most bank staff. Physical force was used against a staff member in only one of the 39 bank robberies discussed in detail. This policy should be maintained. However, some offenders appear to be aware of the policy, saying that they knew that the bank's staff would cooperate. This probably makes banks more attractive as potential robbery targets.

The second implication is that the installation of security devices such as pop-up screens, which are designed to stop offenders from obtaining money, may result in more violence during bank robberies. As we shall see later in the report, the offenders themselves believe this to be a likely outcome.

Finally, moves by the banks to 'harden' themselves as robbery targets may result in an increase in the frequency of violence during robbery in general. This may result if robbery is displaced from banks onto small businesses and individuals. Robbery of the latter targets appears to have a greater chance of violence. The banks could work against this likelihood by initiating an education program for small businesses on what to do during a robbery. Steps could also be taken to educate the general public in the same area.

CHAPTER 5

DRUGS USAGE

We have already seen that drug usage was implicated by many offenders as leading to involvement in robbery. Almost a third of our sample said that the main reason for the robbery was their need for money to buy drugs to support a habit. This section aims to bring together all the findings related to drug usage so that we can gain some appreciation of the extent to which drug usage plays a part in the lives of robbery offenders.

5.1 PAST USAGE

Nearly all the interviewees had tried alcohol at some stage in their life (95.5 per cent). Most had also tried cannabis (79.1 per cent). The extent to which they had tried other types of drugs is shown below:

* amphetamines	49.1 per cent;
* hallucinogens (generally LSD)	45.5;
* heroin	44.5;
* other narcotic analgesics (eg. morphine and methadone)	38.2;
* barbiturates	37.3;
* cocaine	31.8;
* other drug	13.6.

Of those who had used some type of illicit drug, nearly all said that they had used the drug before getting involved in their first robbery. Only one person said that they had started using illicit drugs after their first robbery. This suggests that illicit drug use may play a part in people becoming involved in robbery.

This proposition is certainly supported by the earlier findings on reasons for involvement in robbery. As another check on the relationship between drugs and robbery, interviewees were asked if they had ever committed any crimes to get money to buy drugs or alcohol. Just over half said they had (50.9 per cent). When asked what crimes, the most common responses were:

- * armed robbery; and
- * most or all crimes.

Money for drugs as a reason for robbery is only one aspect of the relationship between drugs and robbery. The other major aspect is committing robbery while under the influence of a drug or alcohol. Interviewees were asked whether they had ever committed any crimes while under the influence of a drug. Most said they had (58.2 per cent). As above, the two most popular responses given, when interviewees were asked what crimes this was true for, were:

- * armed robbery; and
- * most or all crimes.

The issue of robbery while under the influence of a drug will be considered further in the following paragraphs.

5.2 **ROBBERY DISCUSSED IN DETAIL**

5.2.1 Six Month Period Prior to Robbery

Interviewees were asked about their drug usage in the six month period immediately prior to the robbery discussed in detail. The responses of those who answered the questions are summarised in Table 5.1. With respect to each of the drugs asked about, two or three interviewees did not respond.

TABLE 5.1

DRUG USAGE IN THE SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE ROBBERY

Drug Type	Frequency of Use: Percentages			
	Daily	Once or Twice a Week	Once a Month or Less Often	Not Used
Alcohol	29.6	45.4	13.0	12.0
Heroin	27.8	0	6.5	65.7
Cannabis	24.1	18.5	21.2	36.1
Amphetamine	15.0	7.4	9.3	68.2
Barbiturate	8.4	7.4	5.6	78.5
Other Narcotic	4.6	8.3	5.5	81.5
Cocaine	1.9	0.9	12.2	85.0
Hallucinogen	0	5.6	13.9	80.4
Other Drug	3.7	1.8	0.9	93.6

Table 5.1 shows that, with the exception of alcohol and cannabis, most interviewees had not used the drug in the six months leading up to the robbery. However, all the drugs had been used by at least some offenders, and only hallucinogens had not been used on a daily basis.

Heroin was second only to alcohol in terms of the number of people who had used it on a daily basis. With heroin, it seems to be case of 'all or nothing', at least with this sample of offenders. More than 90 per cent of respondents said that they had either used heroin on a daily basis or not used it at all. The relatively high percentage of daily users, together with the high cost of maintaining a daily heroin habit, probably accounts for the large number of interviewees who said that their use of heroin was the main reason for becoming involved in robbery and crime in general.

5.2.2 Immediately Before Robbery

Interviewees were also asked about their drug usage immediately before the robbery discussed in detail. Forty-eight people said that they had consumed a drug in the hour or so beforehand. Alcohol was the most common drug used (23 people), although heroin (5), amphetamines (2) and cannabis (1) were also mentioned. Eleven people had used a combination of drugs, mostly alcohol in combination with cannabis or something else. Finally, six people said that they had used a drug other than those listed in the interview schedule.

Thirty-four of the 48 who had used drugs said that they had been under the influence of the drug at time of the robbery. Seventeen had been under the influence of alcohol, while nine had been under the influence of a combination of drugs. The rest had been under the influence of heroin, amphetamines or some other type of drug. In addition to these 34, a number of offenders said that, while they had not been under the influence of a drug, they did feel physically sick from withdrawal at the time of the robbery.

5.2.3 Summary

Drugs were involved in one way or another in many of the robberies discussed in detail during the interviews. Not only did a number of offenders carry out the robbery in order to get money to buy drugs, but a number also carried out the robbery while under the influence of a drug. Further, it appears that offenders followed through with their stated intention and used some or all of the proceeds of the robbery to purchase drugs. Fifteen interviewees said that they used the money from the robbery to buy heroin, five said they bought alcohol, four used the money to buy cannabis, while fourteen said they bought drugs but did not specify what type.

5.3 DRUGS AND THE FUTURE

When asked if there were any circumstances under which they would do another robbery, most interviewees said that there were none (85, 77.3 per cent). However, 12 said that there was. Eleven of these 12 indicated that if they were desperate for drugs, particularly heroin, they would probably do another robbery.

This appears to tally with a finding about those interviewees who had served time in prison before. Sixty-eight interviewees indicated that they been in prison one or more times before. Of these 68, a number said the reason why they had become involved in criminal activity again, following their previous release from prison, had to do with their use of drugs.

‘...got back on heroin...committed armed robbery...’

Finally, when asked what services they would like available to them when they get released from their current prison term, 16 interviewees said that they would like to have access to a drug rehabilitation program.

5.4 SUMMARY

The findings in this and other chapters of the report indicate that drug usage and robbery are frequently related. Offenders identified a number of effects that drug usage, particularly illicit drug usage, can have in relation to robbery. Other possible effects can be deduced from the data gathered during the interviews. These effects are summarised below.

- (i) Drug usage appears to be a major reason for people becoming involved in crime in general, and robbery in particular.
- (ii) It probably also plays a part in leading some people to 'graduate' from other forms of crime to robbery.
- (iii) The need for money for drugs is frequently the main reason for a particular robbery.
- (iv) Many robberies appear to be done by people who are under the influence of a drug, or who are desperate for drugs. Both situations may have an effect on the way the robbery is carried out. For example, people in these situations may not bother about organising disguises or planning for a robbery. In addition, they may not be deterred by security measures such as pop-up screens.
- (v) Continuing drug usage may result in some robbers reoffending following release from prison.

However, it cannot be assumed that the relationship between drug use and armed robbery is a one-way progression. A New South Wales study of Drugs and Crime (Dobinson and Ward 1984), for example, found that 71.8 per cent of drug users in their sample reported a first instance of property crime before the first use of heroin. The relationship between drugs and crime is clearly complex and worthy of further investigation. Whatever the relationship, it is clear that drug usage is a serious problem in relation to robbery. Both legal and illegal drugs are involved. Increased efforts in drug education, for example national programs such as '*The Drug Offensive*', may have an indirect effect on robbery rates. Drug rehabilitation and policing also offer potential.

However, it appears that legalising drugs such as heroin may have the potential for making a greater impact. Articles such as the one headed "Heroin: Why don't we just legalise it?", which appeared in the December 1988 issue of *The Bulletin*, illustrate the current debate on this issue. On face value, it would appear that the controlled availability of drugs such as heroin, at a cost 'affordable' to users, would negate the need for them to commit robbery and other forms of crime in order to support their habit.

Even this measure is unlikely to prevent all heroin-motivated robberies. Alcohol is a drug which is legally available in our society, and yet four offenders said that being drunk and wanting to continue drinking was the main reason for their robbery.

CHAPTER 6

REACTIONS TO PUNISHMENT

Prison and long sentences are seen as the two major disadvantages of robbery. This chapter will consider in more detail the way in which offenders perceive the risks of punishment.

6.1 ROBBERY DISCUSSED IN DETAIL

6.1.1 Probability of Being Caught

Most of those interviewed (63.6 per cent) indicated that they did not think about the possibility of getting caught before the robbery. This suggests that a large proportion of our offenders may not have 'analysed' the risk of apprehension before becoming involved. Reasons for this probably include not intending to do the robbery, being so desperate for money that nothing is considered, and simply choosing to ignore or forget about the possibility.

'... you would not do it if you thought about getting caught.'

The 38 people who said that they had thought about being caught were asked what chance they thought there was of this happening. Responses indicate that this group did consider the likelihood of apprehension before deciding to go on with the robbery. Their assessment of the size of the risk varied. About a third said that they thought there was little or no chance of getting caught.

'... felt the odds were greatly in my favour.'

A few others thought the chance of getting caught 'was about 50:50'. The rest either did not care if they were caught or thought that one day they would be apprehended.

'I knew that eventually I would get caught.'

It appears that a number of robbers see apprehension as a distinct possibility. Arrest and imprisonment are perhaps thought of as 'occupational hazards', which will occur sooner or later. The choice to go on robbing is made in the knowledge that eventual capture is 'part of the deal'.

'...if you go to work you pay your taxes, if you rob banks you go to jail.'

6.1.2 Probability of Conviction

A large majority of those interviewed (80.9 per cent) said that they had expected to be convicted at the time of their arrest. Even more (87.3 per cent) said that they had pleaded guilty to the charges against them. It would appear that these robbers saw little chance of avoiding punishment once they had been caught.

How did they deal with this? There are probably three main ways based on the previous findings. Some may not have thought about the likelihood of conviction before carrying out the robbery. This is highly likely, given that many offenders did not even think about the possibility of capture. Those who thought that there was little chance of capture would not have been concerned about the high probability of conviction, even if they had considered it. Finally, those who thought that apprehension was inevitable in the long-term, perhaps accepted conviction and punishment with the same inevitability.

6.1.3 Length of Sentences

Over half the interviewees (54.5 per cent) said that they had been aware of the length of sentences given for robbery, at the time when they carried out the robbery. This finding does not indicate whether they considered the possible sentence before deciding to commit the robbery, but it does give an indication of the number who had this sort of information available to consider.

Forty-eight offenders (43.6 per cent), said that they had not been aware of the length of sentences given for robbery. This figure tallies fairly closely with one found in the West German study in which robbery offenders were interviewed (Servay & Rehm, 1988). In that study, nearly half the interviewed robbers did not know the minimum penalty for bank robbery.

6.1.4 Implications for Prevention

It appears that the extent to which robbers consider the risks of their crime, in this case the risks associated with apprehension and imprisonment, varies depending on the individual concerned. Twenty-nine interviewees said that they had been aware of the length of robbery sentences and had thought about the chances of getting caught, 31 said they had been aware of the length of sentences but had not thought about getting caught, nine were not aware but did think about being apprehended, while 39 were neither aware of the sentences nor did they consider the chances of capture.

These differences have implications for the extent to which changes in clear-up rates and sentence lengths will discourage robbers from offending. Increasing the length of sentences given for robbery will have little effect on robbery rates if potential offenders are not aware of the sentences before committing the crime.

More than half the current sample of offenders were aware of sentence lengths at the time of their offence. However, simply being aware will obviously not guarantee that potential robbers are deterred. Many offenders apparently believe that the chances of capture are relatively small, while others see capture and imprisonment as an inevitable outcome of long-term involvement in robbery. In both cases, increasing the length of sentences for robbery may have little deterrent effect.

6.2 FUTURE INVOLVEMENT IN ROBBERY

The way in which our offenders currently view the risks of robbery, will probably have some effect on choices they make regarding involvement in robbery and other

types of crime after release. This is important, considering the relatively high recidivism rates among robbery offenders. For example, Burgoyne (1979) found that 63 per cent of a sample of robbers in Victoria were convicted of at least one offence following release from custody.

This same study also found that only four per cent of the sample had been reconvicted of robbery, indicating a very low specific recidivism rate amongst robbery offenders. However, this finding is apparently contrary to popular opinion in the banking community. The Australian Bankers' Association is in the possession of data which suggest that the percentage of those arrested for armed robbery, who have previous convictions for armed robbery, might be as high as 44 per cent. Even so, it appears that many robbery offenders will not commit further robberies after release from prison.

One possible reason for this can be found in the responses of offenders to a question on the length of sentences for robbery. The most common response was that sentences for robbery are generally longer than sentences for other types of offences (57.3 per cent). Considering this finding in a 'rational-choice' framework, it is possible to hypothesize that those robbers who do reoffend following release, may choose something other than robbery to avoid the long sentences for robbery.

However, this perception was not the only one found. Slightly more than a quarter of the interviewees said that it was hard to compare the length of robbery sentences with other sentences because they varied so much, or that the sentence given depended on the circumstances of the particular case or on circumstances in the community at the time eg. media coverage and prevalence of the offence.

The possibility that at least some offenders 'turn away' from robbery due to the perception of longer sentences, is supported by other findings. We have already seen that long sentences were perceived as the major disadvantage of robbery and that having to spend time in prison was the next most common response.

In addition, most of the 77 interviewees who responded when asked what sentence they thought they would get if they carried out another robbery in the future, said it would be longer than the sentence they were currently serving (92.2 per cent). Fifty-five people said the sentence would be between one and eight years longer, while 16 said they thought it would be more than eight years longer. Only six people thought it would be the same or shorter than their current sentence.

Seventy-five interviewees indicated that they would think about the possible sentence before committing another robbery, while 20 said they would not. Fifteen people did not say either way.

When asked whether thinking about the possible sentence would have any effect on whether they did the robbery, 64 of the 75 said that it would have an effect, they wouldn't do another robbery. Some added that they had had enough of prison. Three people said that they weren't sure whether it would have an effect, while eight did not want to answer.

The 20 interviewees who said they wouldn't think about the possible sentence, were asked why this was. The most common response related to drugs.

`... because if you're desperate for drugs, nothing matters, nothing is considered.'

Other reasons included the following.

`Once you start armed robbery, its hard to stop. Easy money, greed, couple of good hauls, set yourself up for life.'

`... jail doesn't worry me.'

`... the sentence is irrelevant ...'

`... because when doing a robbery, not really thinking about being caught'.

Many convicted robbers appear to believe that they would think about the possible sentence before doing another robbery, and that thinking about the sentence would stop them from getting involved. Reasons for this include their dislike of prison and their perception of the length of sentences for robbery. A significant proportion of convicted robbers apparently would not think about the possible sentence. There are a variety of reasons for this including desperation for drugs, not caring about jail and choosing to ignore the possibility of imprisonment.

6.3 SUMMARY

Some offenders do not appear to spend much time weighing up the risks and rewards of robbery before making the choice to go ahead. People who are desperate for drugs, or under the influence of a drug, are unlikely to spend much time analysing the risks. Others who fall into this group probably include people who do not intend to carry out a robbery but `spontaneously' become involved. These people are unlikely to consider the risk of capture and the length of sentences. Others may choose to ignore the possibility of being apprehended.

Even those who do think through the likelihood of being caught, and the length of the possible sentence, may not be deterred from going on with the robbery. There are a number of possible reasons for this including the following:

- * thinking the chances of apprehension are fairly low;
- * seeing imprisonment as an inevitable and perhaps acceptable part of long-term involvement in robbery;
- * not caring about going to jail; and
- * thinking that sentences for robbery aren't necessarily longer than for other types of crime.

Some people apparently do think through the risks of capture and the length of sentence, and as a result are deterred from committing robberies. The threat of imprisonment perhaps becomes more real after having already served a sentence for robbery, and its deterrence effect is therefore greater. However, rather than avoiding crime altogether, some of these people may choose some other form of crime in preference to robbery.

The effectiveness of punitive prevention depends on offenders being aware of the length of sentences given for robbery, and on them perceiving imprisonment as a likely and undesirable consequence of involvement. We have seen that, for many offenders, these conditions do not prevail. Action can be taken to try to increase awareness of the consequences of involvement in robbery.

Of the 60 interviewees who said they were aware of the length of robbery sentences at the time of carrying the robbery discussed in detail, 19 said they had found out from the media, while 36 said they had found out from talking to other people, either family, friends or other robbers. A more informed public will obviously assist strategies dealing with perceptions of punishment.

Increased awareness amongst the general public is probably best achieved through a carefully planned campaign in the electronic media. Points that could be emphasised include:

- * the length of sentences given for robbery;
- * the length of robbery sentences in comparison with sentences for other offences;
- * the effect of robbery on victims;
- * the likelihood of capture;
- * the likelihood of imprisonment once captured; and
- * the realities of life in prison.

CHAPTER 7

REACTIONS TO SECURITY MEASURES

This chapter considers offenders' reactions to the security measures commonly found in robbery targets, particularly banks. The security measures to be considered include cameras, pop-up screens and bullet resistant glass.

7.1 ROBBERY DISCUSSED IN DETAIL

Offenders were asked whether the place they robbed had any security. Cameras were the most common type of security measure encountered (41 robberies, 37.3 per cent). Then followed alarms which were installed in at least 37 of the places robbed. A number of interviewees said that they didn't know whether such devices were present or not (24 and 32 respectively).

No other security measure was present in more than two of the places robbed. One robber interviewed encountered dye bombs, another glass barriers and a third a security guard. None of the interviewees encountered pop-up screens during the robbery discussed.

It should be noted here that dye bombs have not been used in Australian banks since early 1980, which may indicate the length of incarceration of the two interviewees concerned. Long sentences may also account for the lack of experience of pop-up screens, since one third of banks now have them. However, it would also be the case that robbers are avoiding banks with pop-up screens. This should be evaluated further.

Interviewees were asked what they did about the security measures. In relation to security cameras, the responses were as follows:

* wore disguises	21 offenders;
* tried to avoid being photographed front on	4;
* covered or broke the camera lens so that pictures couldn't be taken	2.

Fourteen offenders out of 41 said that they hadn't taken any action regarding the cameras, three of them because they had not been aware of the cameras until the robbery was underway.

Twenty-four offenders indicated that they had 'moved as quickly as possible' during the robbery due to the presence of an alarm. Two people took some other action, while 11 did nothing about the alarm. Four of the 11 had not been aware of the alarm prior to the robbery.

One of the interviewees who encountered a dye bomb said that it had gone off, staining the money. However, this resourceful offender simply 'washed the money with "White King" and the dye came out'. The other offender said that a dye bomb had been put in with the money he stole, but that he had thrown it out before it exploded.

The glass barriers were encountered in a bank in Queensland. They did not prevent money from being stolen.

'...bank had glass screens which did not go all the way from roof to counter...also had a central teller...just aimed the gun at the teller and got money...'

The 'security guard' was a police officer who was escorting a payroll. As with the glass barriers, the officer was not able to prevent the success of the robbery.

'...accomplice jumped out of car when police officer who was acting as escort left car with money...ordered police officer to lie on ground...grabbed money and took his gun, left area...'

Security cameras and alarms were relatively common in the robberies discussed in detail, with the majority of them located in banks. Other security measures such as screens and guards were rarely encountered. There are two possible reasons for these differences:

The first possibility is that security cameras and alarms have been installed in a large number of potential robbery targets, including a large proportion of the total 'population' of banks, while other security measures are present in only a few potential targets.

The second possible reason is that cameras and alarms do not deter people from robbing places equipped with these devices, whereas screens and guards do act as deterrents and so are rarely encountered in robberies undertaken.

The real reason probably involves some combination of these two. The possibility that security cameras and alarms are installed in a greater proportion of potential robbery targets appears highly likely. In the United States this certainly is so, at least in Indiana (Baumer and Carrington, 1986). At the same time, robbers appear not to be deterred by the presence of cameras and alarms. Simply wearing a disguise and moving quickly is seen as enough to negate their effectiveness. A number of offenders may just ignore their presence altogether. On the other hand, many interviewees say that they would not rob a place that had pop-up screens or security guards. This is demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

7.2 **ROBBERY IN GENERAL**

Section 12 of the interview schedule included two questions about offenders' reactions to various security measures during a hypothetical robbery. Unfortunately,

a large proportion of interviewees refused to answer these questions. Only 34 (30.9 per cent) gave some response. The reasons the interviewees refused to answer include the following:

- * not wanting to think about robberies they hadn't committed as they had no intention of being involved in robbery again;
- * concern over what the information might be used for, especially amongst those getting close to release; and
- * simply choosing not to answer the questions, an option offered at the start of the interviews in relation to any question asked.

The probable reason for not answering was reluctance on the part of offenders to give the 'enemy' (ie. anyone involved in robbery prevention), the edge.

The main reason why some of the interviewees were not asked these questions was that they had difficulty understanding. In particular, they had difficulty grasping the concept of a hypothetical robbery and could not understand what was being asked of them. The other reason for not asking was that some offenders had lost interest by this stage of the interview and were growing restless. The decision was made to skip this part of the interview because of its length and complexity.

Of the 34 who did respond, most agreed that security guards, time delay locks and pop-up screens would make them less likely to rob a place:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| * time delay locks | 79.4 per cent; |
| * pop-up screens | 76.5; |
| * security guards | 70.5. |

When asked what they would do if they were about to rob a place when they noticed that it had time delay locks, pop-up screens or a security guard, the most common response was that they would find somewhere else to rob. However, a number said that they would go ahead with the robbery straight away (at least seven people responded this way in relation to each of the three security measures).

Most of those who indicated that they would go ahead with the robbery straight away said that their answers were based on the assumption that they would be doing the robbery because they were desperate for drugs. They said that this was why they had done robberies in the past, and that in these circumstances, nothing really mattered, nothing was considered.

Interviewees were also asked for their opinions in relation to the effects of pop-up screens on robbery generally. The first question related to the proportion of robbers who would be deterred from robbing a bank that had pop-up screens. A larger number of interviewees responded to this question due to its more general nature. The responses of the 93 people who were asked are listed below:

* all robbers would be deterred	12;
* most would be	39;
* some would be	14;
* a few or none would be	10;
* no response	18.

The next question asked what type of people wouldn't be deterred by screens. Thirty-four interviewees mentioned drug addicts or really desperate people as the type that wouldn't be deterred. People who had planned the robbery really well were mentioned by 12 interviewees, while a further 11 said that some people wouldn't be deterred but did not specify the type of people.

7.3 DISPLACEMENT

While steps aimed at 'hardening' particular targets may decrease the likelihood of them being robbed, there is a possibility that robbery will be displaced onto other targets. Evidence of this effect was sought in the current study.

Interviewees were asked three questions about what they thought might happen if all banks had pop-up screens installed. In response to the first question, 55 offenders said that there would be less bank robberies, at least in the short-term. This was by far the most common response, as would be expected given the findings discussed above.

The second of these questions asked what changes there would be to the way in which bank robberies were carried out. Thirty-seven of the 70 interviewees who answered this question said that bank robberies could become more violent. The violence would probably mean more danger for customers, with the possibility of hostages being taken.

Another four offenders said that people would simply find ways to beat the screens. They would do this by smashing doors into the secured area, using bars to prevent the screens from shutting, or by jumping the counter before the screens went up. These are examples of tactical displacement.

A further eight interviewees mentioned both of the above possibilities, saying that there would be a greater chance of violence and that people would find ways to beat the screens. Eighteen interviewees said that they had no idea what changes would occur.

Finally, interviewees were asked what changes there be to the frequency of robbery in general, if all banks had pop-up screens. The most common response indicated that target displacement would occur. Interviewees said that there would be more robberies at other, less-protected places such as service stations, newsagencies, corner stores and credit unions (52 of the 75 people who answered this question, gave this response). A further six people said that there would more robberies overall, while five said that there would be no change to the frequency of robbery in general.

Most interviewees appear to believe that if banks are 'hardened' as potential robbery targets, the frequency of bank robberies will probably decrease, but at the expense of 'displacement' onto other targets. The likelihood of displacement is supported by the earlier finding that a number of offenders considered they would find somewhere else to rob if faced with a target equipped with time delay locks, pop-up screens or security guards.

Despite the views of offenders indicating a likelihood of displacement, only three examples of displacement actually occurring were uncovered during the 110 interviews. Offenders were asked if the target of the robbery discussed in detail was their first choice. Three people said that it wasn't. They said that they had intended to rob another target but had changed their mind. Two said that this had happened just before committing the actual robbery. Both went on to rob a bank and both said that the change in mind had to do with the get-away.

'...saw the ANZ...had better prospects for the get-away.'

'...just a feeling I had. Seemed a lot of people around...get-away would have been harder.'

The other offender said that the change in mind had come while planning the robbery. The intended target was a bank, however he ended up robbing a service station.

'...were going to rob a bank a few days before, but we got scared.'

While some displacement may occur either between states in Australia or between different target premises, Clarke's analysis (1989) suggests that improved bank security has not generally been at the cost of more robberies of other targets. This result is consistent with the findings of what is known from other research on the effectiveness of specific situational crime prevention measures (Clarke, in press). Though this report based on offender's perspectives suggests that displacement is possible, the weight of the evidence from several studies indicates that if bank security measures are effective many offenders will not turn to robbing other targets.

7.4 SUMMARY

There are generally six protective devices that robbery targets, particularly banks, use to protect themselves against robbery: security cameras, alarm systems, guards, time delay locks, dye bombs and bullet resistant barriers, either pop-up screens or fixed glass barriers. Most offenders appear not to be deterred from robbing places with cameras and/or alarms installed. This is probably due to the perception that simple measures can be taken to negate the effectiveness of these devices, and that robberies can still be successful even when they are present.

However, this doesn't mean that cameras and alarms are a waste of time. There are a number of ways in which they can have an effect. They obviously have a role in apprehending offenders following a robbery. Alarms probably result in some offenders being apprehended at or near the scene of the robbery, increasing the

chances of the money being recovered. In addition, alarms are probably a major reason why time delay locks act as a deterrent for many robbers. Finally, some of the offenders who rob places with less protection than banks, may have robbed banks instead, if the banks had not been equipped with cameras and alarms.

However, other protective devices such as time delay locks, guards and bullet resistant screens appear to have more of a deterrent effect than do cameras and alarms. This is probably due to the perception that these devices significantly decrease the chances of a successful robbery.

We have seen in the case of pop-up screens that many offenders believe that the frequency of bank robberies would decrease if all banks had them installed. It is also the belief of the researchers that such a decrease would occur. However, as with most 'single-focus' crime prevention strategies, hardening banks through the installation of security devices has some limitations.

Firstly, any decrease in the rate of bank robberies may only be temporary. Robbers may find ways to overcome security measures such as pop-up screens and guards. Possible ways to 'beat' pop-up screens were suggested by a number of interviewees as outlined previously.

Another possible consequence of increased security is increased violence in bank robberies. Many of the robbers in our sample believe that more violence would result if all banks had pop-up screens installed. They believe that more hostages would be taken, and that there would be more danger for staff and customers. With increased violence comes the possibility of increased harm to staff and customers, both physical and psychological.

Finally, a possible consequence of increased bank security is displacement of robbery onto other, less-protected targets. This is an important consideration when looking at the problem of robbery overall. The extent to which displacement will occur is unfortunately unknown.

However, this conclusion is based on the views of offenders. Other studies have indicated that displacement is not a major issue and that if bank security measures are effective, many offenders will not turn to robbing other targets.

The interviews with offenders confirm that target hardening and surveillance strategies will have an impact on the incidence of bank robbery. However, it is important to bear in mind the possible consequences of these strategies and the cost of installing security devices. These strategies are probably best employed as part of an integrated program of prevention measures.

CHAPTER 8

REACTIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Reactions to environmental factors were sought from offenders during the interviews. Factors related to banks were a particular focus.

8.1 ROBBERY DISCUSSED IN DETAIL

We have already seen that environmental factors played a part in target choice during the robbery discussed in detail. More than half the interviewees said that the place they robbed was easy to make a get-away from and that this had played a part in the decision to rob it. Other environmental factors which played a part in target choice, when the target was a bank, included proximity to bushland, small numbers of staff, and female tellers on duty.

Other evidence of the effect of environmental factors was found. Offenders who had robbed a bank during the robbery were asked if the interior design of the bank had affected the robbery in any way. This question was a late inclusion and was only asked in New South Wales and Queensland. Twenty-four of the 39 bank robbers came from these two states, and six of them said that the interior design had influenced the way in which the robbery was carried out, or had made the robbery easier. Three responses related to the tellers.

'...tellers were visible from street. You just had to walk in and go straight to them...'

'...teller cages were isolated...easy access...'

'...very open tellers...were not boxed in...easy access.'

One interviewee said that the robbery had been easy because the bank had no pop-up screens. Another said that the way the bank was designed 'gave good coverage from the general public and the camera'. Finally, one offender said that the interior design had influenced the way in which the robbery was carried out because the bank 'was so small and compact'.

Based on the above it is possible to develop a list of environmental factors which may increase the chances of a bank being robbed:

- * a location which enables an easy get-away, including close proximity to bushland;
- * a small number of staff on duty;
- * female tellers on duty;
- * teller stations which are clearly visible from the street;
- * teller stations which are isolated and which provide easy access;
- and

- * interior designs which make it easier for offenders to avoid being photographed or observed by the general public.

8.2 ROBBERY IN GENERAL

Reactions to some of the above environmental factors were sought from all interviewees in relation to a hypothetical future robbery. Other environmental factors were also discussed. As with the questions on reactions to security measures during a hypothetical robbery (see previous chapter), the non-response rate was high. The reasons for this are the same of those for the low response to the security questions.

Two questions were asked in relation to each of ten different environmental factors or situations. The first question asked whether the situation would make interviewees less likely to rob a place, more likely to rob a place, or make no difference. The second question asked what interviewees would do if they were about to rob a place when they noticed that this particular situation existed. Thirty-four offenders responded to the first question, while 33 answered the second.

8.2.1 External Environmental Factors

Three groups of factors or situations were discussed. The first group consisted of factors related to the environment in which the potential robbery target was located:

- * a police station close by;
- * police patrolling in the area;
- * located in the middle of a shopping centre;
- * large numbers of pedestrians passing by outside; and
- * a lot of traffic passing by on the roads near the place.

As Table 8.1 shows, all the situations in this first group would discourage at least some offenders from robbing a particular target. Police patrolling near the target appears to have the greatest deterrent effect. Even so, ten interviewees said that this would make no difference to whether they did the robbery or not. Nine said that they would go ahead with the robbery straight away, while one person said that he would wait until the police patrol left the area and then rob.

As was the case with the security measures, most of the interviewees who said they would go ahead with the robbery straight away said that their answers were based on the assumption that they would be doing the robbery because they were desperate for drugs. They said that this was why they had done robberies in the past, and that in these circumstances, nothing really matters.

TABLE 8.1**REACTIONS TO EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Responses	Situations				
	Police Station (%)	Police Patrol (%)	Pedestrians (%)	Heavy Traffic (%)	Shopping Centre (%)
Q 12.4 (n=34)					
Less likely to rob a place	44.1	70.6	32.4	29.4	29.4
Make no difference	55.9	29.4	61.8	70.6	70.6
More likely to rob a place	0	0	5.9	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Q 12.5 (n=33)					
Go ahead straight away	57.6	27.3	66.7	66.7	72.7
Wait for situation to change	0	3.0	6.1	6.1	0
Find another place to rob	42.4	63.6	27.3	27.3	27.3
Do something else	0	6.1	0	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

A police station close to a target also acts as a deterrent for a number of offenders, however not to the same extent as a police patrol. The other three factors in this group appear to be roughly equal in their effect on offenders. Just under a third of those who responded said that each of these factors would make them less likely to rob a place.

It appears that the location of a bank in the middle of a shopping centre, or in a busy area where many pedestrians pass by outside, and traffic is heavy, increases the chances that at least some people will be deterred from robbing it. Add to this a high police profile in the area and the number of offenders who would look for somewhere else to rob increases.

The findings about police patrols and police stations tally with those of the Canadian study by Gabor et al. (1987). However, in contrast with our findings, the Canadian study found that robbers tended to prefer heavy traffic around the target. They

expressed a preference for times when traffic was dense as they believed that they were less likely to be identified and caught.

A possible reason for this apparent discrepancy is that the reactions of the Australian offenders to these environmental factors were not consistent across offenders. The response given by offenders appears to have depended, to some extent, on whether they did the robbery discussed in detail by themselves or as part of a 'gang' (two or more people).

In relation to each of the situations in Table 8.1, more than 40 per cent of the offenders who had done the robbery as part of a gang, said that they would be deterred by the situation (see Table 8.2). In contrast, with the exception of police patrols and police stations, less than 10 per cent of the offenders who had done their robbery alone, said that the situation would make them less likely to rob a place. It appears that environmental factors such as heavy traffic, crowded streets and a shopping centre location, may be more of a deterrent for gangs of robbery offenders than it is for lone offenders.

The main reason for this may be the difficulty that these factors can present when escaping from the scene of a robbery. As reported earlier, gangs of two or more people appear more likely than lone offenders to use one or more vehicles during their escapes. When vehicles are used, factors such as the ease of getting from the target to the vehicle, and the speed with which the vehicle can leave the area, are both important considerations in choice of target.

Robbers acting alone appear more likely to have no plans for escape. Lone offenders also appear more likely to plan to escape on foot. In both these cases, factors such as heavy traffic, crowded streets and a shopping centre location, would probably either not be considered or would not matter to the offender. Indeed, a crowded street may actually attract a lone offender who plans to escape on foot, due to the possibility of merging in with the crowd.

TABLE 8.2**REACTIONS TO EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: SINGLES VERSUS GANGS**

Situations		Less Likely to Rob a Place	Make No Difference	More Likely to Rob a Place	Total
Police Station	S*(%)	25.0	75.0	0.0	100.0
	G#(%)	54.5	45.5	0.0	100.0
Police Patrol	S (%)	58.3	41.7	0.0	100.0
	G (%)	77.3	22.7	0.0	100.0
Pedestrians	S (%)	0.0	91.7	8.3	100.0
	G (%)	50.0	45.5	4.5	100.0
Heavy Traffic	S (%)	8.3	91.7	0.0	100.0
	G (%)	40.9	59.1	0.0	100.0
Shopping Centre	S (%)	8.3	91.7	0.0	100.0
	G (%)	40.9	59.1	0.0	100.0

* Singles: offenders who carried out the robbery discussed in detail by themselves (n=12).

Gangs: offenders who carried out the robbery discussed in detail as part of a gang (n=22).

8.2.2 Building Design Factors and Staff/Customer Numbers

Table 8.3 shows the responses of offenders in relation to the other two groups of environmental factors. The first of these two groups involved building design, for example:

- * an entrance close to the street;
- * a clear view of the counter area from the street; and
- * large signs outside the place advertising its services.

Most respondents said these factors would make no difference to whether they did a robbery or not. However, some said the first two would make them less likely to rob a place, while others said that it would make them more likely to do a robbery. Two people said that the third of these factors, large signs outside, would make them more likely to rob a particular target. A minority of respondents said that an entrance close to the street and a clear view of the counter area from the street, would cause them to find somewhere else to rob.

TABLE 8.3**REACTIONS TO BUILDING DESIGN FACTORS AND STAFF/CUSTOMER NUMBERS**

Responses	Situations				
	Entry Close to Street (%)	Clear View of Counter (%)	Large Signs Outside (%)	One Staff on Duty (%)	Number of Customers (%)
Q 12.4 (n=34)					
Less likely to rob a place	14.7	17.6	0	2.9	32.4
Make no difference	61.8	67.6	94.1	32.4	67.6
More likely to rob a place	23.5	14.7	5.9	64.7	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Q 12.5 (n=33)					
Go ahead straight away	84.8	75.8	97.0	93.9	69.7
Wait for situation to change	0	0	0	0	6.1
Find another place to rob	15.2	24.2	3.0	6.1	24.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Once again, the offenders who said that they would be deterred by these factors were more likely to be those who had carried out the robbery discussed in detail as part of a gang of two or more. All five offenders who said that an entrance close to the street would make them less likely to rob a place, and that given these circumstances they would find somewhere else to rob, had been part of a gang. Five of the eight people who said that this factor would actually make them more likely to rob a place had been lone offenders.

The effect for the clear view of the counter area from the street was weaker. Four of the six interviewees who said that this situation would make them less likely to rob a place, had been part of a gang, while this was true of six of the eight who said that a clear view would cause them to find somewhere else to rob.

The final group of factors related to staff and customer numbers in a potential robbery target. Most respondents saw a place with only one staff member on duty as

an attractive target. Just under 65 per cent said that this situation would make them more likely to rob a place.

On the other hand, some interviewees saw a number of customers inside a place as a situation to be avoided. Eight said that they would find somewhere else to rob, while two said that they would wait for the customers to leave and then do the robbery. This apparent reluctance to rob a place with a number of customers, probably is due to the perceived difficulty of controlling too many people during the robbery.

People who had been part of a gang during the robbery discussed in detail were more likely to see a number of customers as a deterrent. Only one lone offender said that this situation would make them less likely to do a robbery, while ten gang members gave this response. This may be due, in part, to the fact that some lone offenders do not try to control the scene of the robbery, particularly in the case of bank robberies. Rather, they attempt to blend in with the customers, wait their turn to be served and then make a quiet demand of the teller who is attending to them. Baumer and Carrington (1986) found that this type of offence was more likely to occur in a busy office.

8.2.3 Summary

The above findings are encouraging. While they are obviously tentative due to the small number of respondents and the artificial nature of the questions, they do suggest that environmental factors can influence a person's decision whether to rob a particular target or not.

Most respondents said that they would be deterred from carrying out a robbery in an area where police were patrolling. Seven of the other nine situations appear to act as deterrents for a smaller number of offenders. These seven are listed below. It is interesting to note that, for the last three in the list, some offenders said that this situation would actually make them more likely to rob a place.

- * A police station close by.
- * A lot of traffic passing by on the roads near the place.
- * Located in the middle of a shopping centre.
- * A number of customers inside.
- * Large numbers of pedestrians passing by outside.
- * An entrance close to the street.
- * A clear view of the counter area from the street.

Even though some offenders said that they would be deterred by these seven situations, most respondents said that they wouldn't be deterred from robbing a place and would go ahead with the robbery straight away. However, these responses may reflect the hypothetical nature of the questions, and in some cases, may not be an accurate indication of actual behaviour.

8.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR PREVENTION

The findings in the previous two sections indicate that environmental factors can have an influence on a person's decision whether to rob a particular target or not. Some factors appear to encourage offenders, while others appear to act as deterrents. The environmental factors considered in this study fall into four groups.

8.3.1 Target Location Factors

This first group of factors include characteristics of the environment in which the target is located. Most of these characteristics appear to be related to the likelihood of an easy get-away. We saw that one of the findings from the robbery discussed in detail was that an easy get-away was a major factor in choice of target. In addition, the questions about robbery in general revealed that the location of a target in a busy area, or in the middle of shopping centre, would deter at least some offenders from robbing it, probably because of the difficulties that these factors can cause when escaping from the scene of a robbery.

The location of banks in areas that are difficult to get away from, is one possible environmental management strategy for preventing robbery. However, it appears that some of the factors which make it difficult for gangs to escape may have little effect on lone offenders.

8.3.2 Police Presence Factors

The close proximity of police to the robbery target appears to act as a deterrent for many offenders. Police patrolling in the area of the target seems to have a stronger effect than does a nearby police station.

Greater police presence in the area of banks, particularly those with a high probability of being robbed, appears to be an effective surveillance strategy for robbery prevention. This increased presence could take the form of either foot patrols or mobile patrols, and would be most effective during the times favoured for bank robberies, namely between 1pm and 4pm (Australian Bankers' Association, 1988).

8.3.3 Building Design Factors

This group of factors includes features such as size of building, number and location of entrances, and teller station layout.

Bank size has been found to relate to the probability of robbery in a number of studies. Baumer and Carrington (1986), in a review of the literature, discussed one study which showed that smaller offices were more likely to be robbed (Tiffany & Ketchel, 1978), and another study which found that larger offices were more probable targets (Saylor & Janus, 1981). In a more recent study, Wise and Wise (1984) found that banks with small lobbies were robbed more frequently than those with large lobbies. They conclude that 'banks that appear small to a would-be robber are at higher risk and should receive special design treatment...or be incorporated into larger facilities that make takeovers - particularly likely here - difficult to engineer' (p.46).

The number of entrances in a bank office appears to be related to the probability of robbery. Saylor and Janus (1981) found that offices with more entrances and direct entry from the outside were more likely to be robbed. On the other hand, Baumer and Carrington (1986) found that branch offices were more likely to be robbed than were main offices, and that branch offices were more likely to have only one entrance. The Wise and Wise study sheds some light on this apparent conflict. They found that armed robbers seem to prefer offices with only one entrance, while 'note passers' seem to prefer places with more than one entrance. They suggest that adding entry/exits that are difficult to observe from a single point at the one time, should be a deterrent to armed robbers.

As indicated above, the Saylor and Janus study found that offices with direct entry from the outside were more likely to be robbed. Our study indicates that an entrance close to the street would make some robbers more likely to rob a place. However, other offenders said that it would make them less likely to rob a place. Careful design of bank entrances appears to have the potential to deter at least some offenders from robbing particular targets. More research is needed to determine what the most effective design would be.

Broad distances between tellers was one of a number of factors which Wise and Wise (1984) found to be generally related to the probability of being robbed. Discussion of specific robberies during the present study revealed some anecdotal evidence of the effect which teller station design can have on a robbery. Teller stations which were isolated and which enabled quick access were mentioned as making robbery easier. Teller station design appears to be an important area to consider in relation to environmental management strategies aimed at robbery prevention.

Finally, visibility from the exterior of offices appears to play a part. Tiffany and Ketchel (1978) suggest that limited visibility from the exterior of offices contributes to the probability of robbery. In apparent contrast, Wise and Wise (1984) found that banks which are brightly lit and that have large window areas, are more prone to 'takeover' robberies. The present study found that some offenders would be deterred from robbing a place with a clear view of the counter area from the street, whereas it would encourage others.

These contradictory findings are somewhat understandable. High visibility into the interior of banks enables passing pedestrians to observe a robbery in progress. This may act as a deterrent for some offenders. However, high visibility also enables an offender to case the interior of a bank without going inside. This would probably be seen as an advantage by some offenders. Wise and Wise (1984) conclude that 'where street conditions do not allow casual pedestrian views into a bank interior, it may be better to limit these' (p.47).

Both previous research and the present study provide evidence of the effect which building design factors can have on the probability of robbery. However, the effects

of various design factors appear to be less than simple. They appear to interact with each other and also appear to interact with the modus operandi of the offender.

Wise and Wise (1984) put it this way: 'outside of a few individual security design features that are just good practice everywhere, the security manager can hardly make a blanket argument of what constitutes proper security design for all banks in his/her purview...We believe...that teller line design, lobby layout, bank officer views, and other treatments, can be used to successfully deter robberies...But all of these conditions must be considered as a whole, and they must be attuned to the type of robbery the security manager most wants to prevent' (p.44).

8.3.4 Staff Factors

The present study found evidence that both small numbers of staff and female tellers may increase the chances of a particular office being robbed. This is probably due to a perception that these factors make it easier to obtain and maintain control during a robbery.

8.3.5 Summary

Environmental factors obviously can have an effect on the probability of robbery at a particular bank office. However, a comprehensive analysis of environmental design features at victimised banks in Australia is needed before useful strategies can be developed. The above findings will hopefully provide a starting point for such a study.

CHAPTER 9

THE FUTURE

9.1 FUTURE INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME

We have already seen that the majority of interviewees believe there to be no circumstances under which they would do another robbery. Eighty-five of them (77.3 per cent) answered this way when asked. Of the other 25, 12 (10.9 per cent) said that there were some circumstances under which they would do another robbery, three (2.7) weren't sure, and ten (9.1) chose not to respond to the question. The circumstances under which interviewees would do another robbery were generally related to being desperate for drugs.

It appears that many interviewees will stick to their stated intention and not do another robbery. This was indicated in Chapter 8 which contained a brief discussion of recidivism amongst robbery offenders.

So what will they do once they are released? Most have plans for their life after prison (78.2 per cent) and most have taken some sort of action whilst in prison to help make these plans happen (63.6 per cent). A lot of the plans involve settling down, getting a job, or spending time with family.

'...want to be a computer technician...settle down, get married...doing education courses...going on to grade 12 next year.'

'...settle down, get a job, move away from Victoria...just wrote to friends in another state...hope they can line a job up for me.'

Not surprisingly, none of the plans included getting involved in crime again. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation is that many will. The evidence for this is strong. The Burgoyne study discussed previously found that 63 per cent of a sample of robbers in Victoria were convicted of at least one offence following release from custody. Twenty-two per cent had at least one conviction for a violent offence, while 61 per cent had at least one conviction for a non-violent offence.

In addition, amongst our sample, the majority had been to jail one or more times before (68, 61.8 per cent). When asked how they had supported themselves in the three month period following their previous release from jail, seven said that they had committed a robbery, while 20 said that they had been involved in some other form of crime. Offenders were also asked whether they had ever carried out a robbery while on parole. Eighteen said that they had. There is no reason to believe that things will be different next time they are released. There is thus strong evidence of a 'criminal career' amongst those interviewed.

9.2 TARGET CHOICE IN FUTURE ROBBERY

Given that at least some of the present sample will commit another robbery in the future, it would be interesting to know what type of target they might choose.

Interviewees were asked to say, based on their experience with robbery, what their 'first choice' target would be. Fifty-nine people did not answer the question. However, of those that did, 22 said that their first choice would be a bank, while 18 nominated an armoured car as their first choice. Banks were also popular second choice targets (18), whereas armoured cars were not (2). Financial institutions, other than banks, were the first choice of eight interviewees and the second choice of 19. Finally, chemists, TABs and persons in the street were each mentioned by a few people as their first or second choice.

Interviewees were asked why they chose the places they did as their first or second choice targets. This line of questioning revealed that banks were seen as providing quick and easy cash, armoured cars were seen as holding 'big money' with little chance of being caught, and building societies and credit unions were thought to have both cash and less security than banks.

9.3 SERVICES REQUIRED UPON RELEASE

The likelihood of our sample of offenders committing further robberies or other offences following their release, probably depends to some extent on the support services available to them. As such, interviewees were asked what services they would like available to them when they do get released. A large number mentioned services related to obtaining work. Twenty-six people (23.6 per cent) said that they would like access to work release programs during the latter stages of their sentence, while 36 (32.7 per cent) said that there should be better job opportunities following release.

Access to cheap accommodation immediately after release was another service frequently mentioned (33, 30.0 per cent). Other services which interviewees would like to have available include:

- * drug rehabilitation programs (16, 14.5 per cent);
- * greater financial assistance than the current one week of unemployment benefits provides (14, 12.7);
- * counselling for all prisoners (9, 8.2); and
- * training in social skills (8, 7.3).

One person's response to this question went as follows.

'...everyone should have access to work release and work in prisons, so prisoners could leave with some cash...better accommodation, not necessarily half way houses...'

Given that most of our sample of offenders had been to prison before, better support for prisoners following release may have an indirect effect on robbery rates. The banks could play a part in this, either by sponsoring some of the services discussed above, or by lobbying the Government to provide these services.

CHAPTER 10

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The preceding sections discussed various aspects of robbery from the point of view of the offender. Robbery prevention was the focus of these discussions. Findings in relation to prevention will now be considered with reference to their policy implications for banking organisations.

Any single strategy aimed at preventing robbery is unlikely to affect all, or even most, offenders. Different measures will deter different robbers. As such, an integrated program of strategies will probably have the greatest effect on robbery rates. This program should consider strategies from each of the prevention areas discussed at the beginning of this report.

10.1 SITUATIONAL PREVENTION

10.1.1 Surveillance

In the first section of this report, three different strategies were discussed as examples of robbery prevention through surveillance. They were the installation of security cameras, the use of security guards, and the coordination of police patrols in the area of potential robbery targets.

Most banks have security cameras installed and they appear to have a role in the apprehension of some offenders, especially those who do not wear disguises during the robbery. However, the quality of the picture for this purpose must be good (Servay and Rehm 1988) but it is apparent that the technical level and standard of equipment used by many banks is not satisfactory. Interviews conducted for this study indicate that cameras do not appear to deter people from robbing where they are installed. To date, the deterrent effect of cameras has not been proved.

Security guards, on the other hand, apparently would deter many offenders from robbing a particular target. Interview findings are supported by the evaluative research of Hannah (1982), which suggests that armed guards are an effective deterrent to robbery. The cost of guards, however, can be quite high, with the possibility also open to violence as a direct result of the use of guards, especially armed guards. It is therefore recommended that cost-effectiveness studies be undertaken. Consideration should also be given to placing guards on short shifts (two to three hours only) in order to reduce problems associated with boredom.

This leaves us with police patrols in the vicinity of potential robbery targets. Many offenders said a police patrol would deter them from robbing a particular target. As such, changes in police practice, involving greater emphasis on liaison with the community and presence in the community, would probably help to reduce the incidence of robbery. Police patrols would be most effective at high risk times and in the vicinity of high risk targets.

The banks could take action in two ways. First, they could lobby governments to increase the presence of police in the community. Second, they could liaise with police in order to make police patrols as effective as possible. Information could be provided on high risk times and high risk targets.

10.1.2 Target Hardening

'Hardening' robbery targets through the installation of security measures, appears to have the potential to decrease the incidence of robbery. This study focused on reactions to one particular security device: pop-up screens.

A number of offenders said that they personally would not go ahead with a robbery at a place that had pop-up screens installed. In more general terms, 51 interviewees said that most or all robbers would not rob a bank with screens.

These findings suggest that pop-up screens should be installed in banks as a way of preventing robbery. However, our findings also suggest that some undesirable consequences may result.

There is a possibility of tactical displacement occurring in the form of measures to overcome the screens. Some of these measures could involve more aggression and/or more violence on the part of offenders. The danger to staff and customers may therefore increase. Two of the recent bank robberies in Queensland, in which firearms were discharged, involved banks that had pop-up screens installed. Whether this was purely coincidental, or whether it had something to do with the screens, is unknown. However, it would be worth investigating further.

Target displacement may also result if banks have pop-up screens installed, though further research is needed on this issue (see below). Banks without screens may become more likely targets, and other places with less security than banks may be robbed more frequently.

In the final analysis, the value of screens in the prevention of robbery probably depends on the cost of implementing them. A number of research studies indicate that screens increase the risk of apprehension, reduce amounts stolen and reduce injuries to bank staff. The screens may not necessarily reduce the incidence of robbery but they do have the positive effects mentioned (Clarke, 1989). However, bullet-proof and pop-up screens are highly expensive and it has not yet been determined whether their introduction is cost effective. On balance, the evidence does suggest that they do deter robberies. Though there is the possibility of an escalation of violence with the introduction of pop-up screens there is no firm evidence that this escalation will be widespread or of a sufficient level to curtail their use. Cash reduction measures (see below) may be a more cost-effective security measure than pop-up screens.

This study strongly endorses the worth of cash reduction measures such as "cashless tills" or automated cash delivery systems. Cash reduction measures have also been effective in a variety of other settings (see Clarke, 1989) and appear to have fewer problems than pop-up screens.

Reactions to time delay locks were also discussed during interviews. This form of security, which aims to limit the amount of money obtained during a robbery, appears to deter at least some offenders from robbing targets. Time delay locks also appear to have fewer problems than pop-up screens.

Although there has been considerable debate as to the merit of publicising target hardening measures (screens, cameras, time delay locks, guards, cashless tills) for preventing bank robbery, a variety of criminological perspectives suggest that there may be considerable value in fully publicising the implementation of these measures in banks. This view has been endorsed by Douglas Burns, based on his extensive interviews for this study. Research which specifically assesses offenders' reactions to any publicity should be attempted.

10.1.3 Environmental Management

This has perhaps the greatest potential for robbery prevention.

The findings of this study confirm that robbery offenders are influenced by environmental factors. Even in the artificial arena of a prison interview, some interviewees indicate that certain factors would make them less likely to do a robbery, while others would make them more likely to rob a place. The findings also indicate that reactions to environmental design factors are complex. The reaction to a particular factor appears to depend on the type of offender and on the presence or absence of certain other factors. Other than the above, the findings suggest the following.

- (i) Offenders are deterred from robbing places that are difficult to get away from. However, the factors which make it difficult to get away may vary according to the type of offender.
- (ii) Factors such as entrance design, teller station design and visibility into offices, appear to influence the probability of robbery. However, the extent and nature of the influence is complex and probably varies depending on the type of offender. More research is needed into the effect of these three design features.
- (iii) A small staff presence and female tellers may actually increase the probability of a particular bank branch being robbed. It is recognised that the latter finding is complex in the context of an EEO environment.

While the above findings do not give a clear guide on the effect that various environmental factors will have, they do demonstrate that these factors can play a part in robbery prevention. A comprehensive analysis of environmental design features at victimised banks in Australia is needed before useful strategies can be developed.

We believe that the Australian Bankers' Association is currently undertaking such an analysis. The information gathered during this exercise will be valuable in a number of ways. It should play an important part in the design and location of new bank branches. It should also be used to help identify existing offices which have a high probability of robbery. Action could then be taken to either close these offices or increase their security arrangements.

Firearms control is another form of environmental management which is relevant to the problem of robbery. The current study found that many offenders had carried a firearm during their robbery. It also found that firearms were available from a variety of sources. Tighter controls over the availability of firearms may have an indirect effect on robbery rates. If potential offenders have to wait longer and put more effort into obtaining a gun, a cooling-off may result and the offender may change his/her mind about the robbery. The banks could lend their support to the proponents of stricter firearms control.

Finally, the value of training for bank officers should be noted. Anecdotal evidence from interviews conducted with tellers in the pilot stage of this study revealed that they were generally ignorant of when to press alarms, what to look for as an aid to apprehending the offenders and how to conduct themselves during an armed hold-up. It is understood that the ABA already places a strong emphasis on training.

10.1.4 Displacement

The interviews produced a good deal of evidence to indicate that displacement, of one kind or another, is a possible outcome of most of the situational prevention strategies discussed above. Displacement from banks onto other, less-protected targets, was often mentioned. However, at the same time contradictory research evidence indicates that displacement is not a major issue. There would appear to be a need for further research on this topic.

10.2 PUNITIVE PREVENTION

The interviews provided some evidence of the effectiveness of punitive prevention. Most interviewees thought that the sentences given for robbery were longer than the sentences given for other types of offences, and many saw the long sentences given for robbery as one of its disadvantages. Most said that they would think about the possible sentence before doing another robbery, and that thinking about the sentence would stop them from getting involved.

While these findings are encouraging, there are a number of qualifications to be added. Punitive prevention appears to be most effective for people who have already been convicted and imprisoned for robbery. The risks associated with apprehension and imprisonment probably become more real for people after they have been caught and jailed for robbery offences.

Before this happens, it appears that offenders may not think about the chances of being caught and may not be aware of the sentences given for robbery. Over 40 per cent of interviewees said that they had not been aware of the length of sentences at the time of their robbery. Even more said that they had not thought about the chances of being caught. Many of those who did think about the chances of capture believed that there was little or no chance of being apprehended, while others said that they did not care if they were caught.

Many discussions on effective security measures for armed robberies are predicated on the assumption that at least a sizeable proportion of these robberies are committed by tightly knit, highly organized and planned professional criminals. Neither the data obtained from this study or a West German study (Servay and Rehm, 1988) support this view. The implication here is that strategies to prevent bank robbery should be based on the assumption that the base majority of offenders are not "professional" in the sense that this term is used to describe carefully planned and rehearsed actions by tightly knit gangs.

Although bank robbers may not be "professional" it is apparent that many consider the costs and rewards of community armed hold-ups. The West German study (Servay and Rehm, 1988) and North American research (Gabor, et al, 1987) both suggest that public information campaigns informing the community of some of the realities in regard to armed robberies could usefully be instigated.

These findings have a number of policy implications.

- (i) Increasing the length of sentences for robbery does not appear necessary. They are already perceived as being generally longer than the sentences for other types of offences.
- (ii) However, many robbery offenders do not appear to be aware of sentence length at the time of committing their offence. Increasing awareness of sentence length and of the realities of life in prison, may increase the risks of robbery in the minds of potential offenders. This in turn may result in them choosing not to get involved.
- (iii) Increased awareness amongst the general public is probably best achieved through a carefully planned campaign. Points that could be emphasised include:
 - * the average length of sentences given for robbery;
 - * the length of robbery sentences in comparison with sentences for other offences;
 - * the fact that armed robbers will almost certainly receive a prison sentence if convicted;
 - * that armed robbers serve a significant proportion of the head sentence;

- * that personal problems such as drug addiction or financial difficulties rarely mitigate the length of sentence given; and
 - * the effect of robbery on victims;
- (iv) It is important to keep in mind that increased awareness will not deter all potential offenders. Some will still see apprehension and arrest as acceptable risks, while others may simply choose to ignore the risks or may not be in a position to consider them. Even those who are deterred from robbery may not remain 'crime-free'.
- (v) While these limitations are recognized, it is felt that increased awareness of the risks of robbery is an important component of the overall strategy for robbery prevention.

10.3 CORRECTIVE PREVENTION

As discussed in the first section, corrective prevention deals with the social conditions that appear to lead to crime. The current study, together with other studies on robbery, have found three conditions which appear to be strongly related to robbery. They are drug use, relative poverty, and unemployment.

The involvement of drugs in robbery has already been discussed in detail. It is clear that both legal and illegal drugs are involved, with the latter causing greater problems because of the link with large sums of money required to continue particular habits, such as heroin. Because of existing knowledge that many robberies involve drugs, confirmed through interviews undertaken by the present study, this would appear to present a practical and worthwhile opportunity for further ABA involvement.

The present study could be used as a basis for investigating more fully the relationships between legal drug use, and illegal drug use, and robbery. The ABA could sponsor further research in this area.

Second, the ABA could pursue policy-related investigations through a body such as the Drug Policy Foundation of Australia and New Zealand. This Foundation was established recently to debate the many questions surrounding an enforcement policy for illegal drug use and why it does not appear to be working (despite increasing numbers of enforcement personnel and technologies, drug use is growing) and what alternatives might realistically be considered. (See also the Report by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Crime Authority, 1989).

One of the alternatives is a legalisation policy, though much further debate is required to establish the implications and likely effectiveness of such a policy. Practical options for the ABA would be (a) to join the Foundation, and (b) to sponsor a think-tank through the Foundation, to assess the policy implications of the relationships between drugs and armed robbery, to provide pointers to research needs and to start working towards practical strategies for intervention and prevention.

A further alternative for the ABA is to directly support the development of drug education and rehabilitation programs. Robbers interviewed in this study made a clear request for rehabilitation assistance. Educational assistance could be considered through the offices of the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, which has considerable experience with targetting specific audiences (eg. young people, women) and therefore would be in a good position to advise on specific strategies. Again, the Drug Policy Foundation could advise through its various topic-oriented sub-committees.

Support for the development of drug rehabilitation programs based on Second Chance Program (Victoria) principles would be another practical avenue for the ABA to pursue. This program uses private sponsorship to offer employment and support to those with a criminal record. As such, it opens up opportunities for the reduction of personal poverty. ABA sponsorship could include membership of this organisation, through to funding an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program compared with other types of drug 'rehabilitation' programs in reducing robbery and related criminal offences.

10.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

Finally, the value of further research in the area of armed hold-ups cannot be emphasized too strongly. Such research, as indicated above, is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of specific security devices and crime prevention measures and to assess the relationship between environmental factors in the location and design of banks and armed robbery. Of course, one or two research efforts/projects by themselves will not provide all the answers. Specific security measures already in place, and new measures introduced, have to be evaluated by separate research projects.

Though the literature is still confusing on the effectiveness of security devices and while adequate research on this issue in regard to armed robbery is lacking, it appears that certain security measures may be effective in reducing armed robbery.

Several critically important research questions have been suggested by Clarke (1989) as requiring urgent attention. These questions relate to (1) replicating his study of armed robbery in New South Wales in order to validate and tease out some of the factors found in this Victorian data; (2) testing whether bullet-proof and pop-up screens have increased the incidence of robbery for formerly less vulnerable banks; (3) evaluating the effectiveness of cash reduction measures; (4) examining the possible "copy-cat" or imitative effect of both successful and unsuccessful bank robberies and, (5) evaluating the reasons for a relatively high rate of bank robbery in Australia compared with the United Kingdom.

It should be noted that these research exercises have practical and important policy implications. Only by conducting carefully controlled and highly specific research can costly crime prevention measures be successfully evaluated and the way they are implemented determined.

The banks have already begun to build a useful data base on offender perspectives on armed robbery. It is strongly suggested that the next step for the banks and the ABA is to support specific evaluative research regarding particular security measures and their cost effectiveness. This is the only reliable way that intuitive assumptions about particular measures can be checked by results. The banks might also consider the relative merits of establishing an in-house crime-prevention unit (as Telecom have done), or contracted arrangements with outside research bodies.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCHING ROBBERY

Two main methodologies have been used to study the behaviour of robbery offenders. The first involves the extraction of data on robbery offenders from official records and files. Burgoyne's (1979) study on recidivism amongst robbery offenders is an example of a study employing this methodology. The second type of methodology involves interviewing people convicted of one or more robbery offences. The interviews are generally carried out with offenders who are serving time in prison.

A number of overseas studies have used this second methodology. Recent examples come from the Federal Republic of Germany (Servay & Rehm, 1988) and Canada (Gabor et al. 1987). Two recent Australian studies have involved interviews with robbery offenders. One involved interviews with 23 robbery offenders in New South Wales (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 1987), while the other was conducted in Victoria and included 100 interviews (Kapardis, 1988).

Studies involving interviews with offenders have the advantage of being able to obtain first hand accounts of robbery and of the lives and opinions of those who commit robberies. However, these studies also have a number of limitations. Kapardis (1988) discussed some of them including the limitations of human memory when asked to recall a past event in detail, and the possibility of offenders giving socially desirable responses. This latter limitation could probably be expanded to include offenders giving responses which they see as being in their best interest, whether these responses are socially desirable or not.

Other limitations have to do with the fact that these studies are generally carried out with offenders in prison. The extent to which robbers in prison are representative of the total population of robbery offenders, is unknown. As such, the extent of bias in interview samples is unknown. Akerstrom (1985), in a discussion of the problems of interviewing criminals in jail, cites an author who argues that 'in order to get an accurate picture when studying criminals, one has to use participant observation. To study them in institutions is...comparable to studying animals in cages' (p.11).

Akerstrom balances this criticism with a brief discussion of the advantages of doing interviews in prison and concludes that 'the bias of the environment of prison would be less in this type of study - analyzing the lifestyle, work, etc. - than if one were asking inmates about prison-related areas such as attitudes towards punishment and treatment-orientated problems' (p.12).

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Section 1 : Personal Background

1.1 Gender Male 1
Female 2

1.2 What is your date of birth? ___/___/___

1.3 Were you born in Australia or overseas?
Australia 1
Other country 2

(If other country, ask) What country?
At what age did you come to Australia to live?
Are you a naturalised Australian?

Country: _____

Age: _____

Citizenship status: _____

1.4 What is the highest grade or year of school that you have completed?

No formal schooling 1
Some primary schooling 2
Completed primary 3
Some secondary schooling 4
Completed Year 10 5
Completed Year 12 6
Other (please specify) 7

1.5 How old were you when you left school?
(Note age in years)

- 1.6 Have you obtained any further qualifications since leaving school?
For example, have you obtained a trade qualification?
(Circle any which apply.)

No qualification	1
Tertiary degree	2
Tertiary diploma	3
Trade certificate	4
Other (please specify)	5

- 1.7 Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Brothers: _____

Sisters: _____

- 1.8 Do any of your brothers or sisters ever come to visit you?

Yes	1
No	2

(If no, ask why they don't.)

- 1.9 Do your parents visit you?

	YES	NO
Mother	1	2
Father	1	2

(If no for one or both, ask why they don't.)

- 1.10 Who else comes to visit you?

Section 2 : Identification of Offence

2.1 What offences were you convicted of that resulted in your current jail term?

2.2 Which offence attracted the longest sentence?

2.3 What is your head sentence?

2.4 What is your non-parole period?

2.5 How much of your sentence have you served so far?

I would like to talk in some detail about one of the robbery offences/the robbery offence (whichever applies) for which you are now serving time.

(If interviewee is serving time for more than one robbery, ask if it okay to discuss the most recent offence. If interviewee says no, ask which offence he/she would like to discuss.)

(Once you have established which robbery you will be discussing in detail, go to next section.)

(If interviewee maintains that he/she has never been involved in a robbery, terminate interview.)

Section 3 : Personal Circumstances at Time of Robbery

I would like to ask you a number of questions about your personal circumstances at the time of the robbery.

3.1 What was the date on which you carried out the robbery (If interviewee can't remember the exact date, just record the month and year.)

/ /

3.2 What was your marital status at the time?

Never married	1
Married	2
Defacto	3
Separated	4
Divorced	5
Widowed	6
Other	7
(please specify)	

3.3 Did you have any dependants? ie. Any people who depended on you for food, accommodation etc.

(Record numbers, gender and relationship to interviewee.)

	Male	Female
Spouse	_____	_____
Children	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____
Other		
(Give details)		

3.4 What was your work situation at the time when you committed the robbery?

In full-time paid work	1
In part-time paid work	2
In casual paid work	3
Performing home duties	4
A full-time student	5
Unemployed	6
Retired or a pensioner	7
Other (please specify)	8

- 3.5 (If interviewee was in paid work, ask 3.5 and 3.6. If not go to 3.7.)
What was your main occupation at that time?

Professional (eg. teacher or nurse)	01
Executive (eg. business manager)	02
Administrative or clerical (eg. bookkeeper)	03
Sales (eg. salesperson or shop assistant)	04
Farmer, fisher, forester	05
Miner, quarry worker	06
Transport and communication (eg. driver)	07
Tradesperson, labourer (eg. painter or bricklayer)	08
Armed forces	09
Service industry (eg. cook or waiter)	10
Domestic (eg. housekeeper or nanny)	11
Other (please specify)	12

- 3.6 For how long had you worked in the job you were doing?
-

- 3.7 (If interviewee was unemployed ask the following. If not, go to 3.8.)
How long had you been unemployed for?

< 1 month	1
> 1 month but < 6 months	2
> 6 months but < 1 year	3
> 1 year but < 2 years	4
> 2 years	5

- 3.8 Were you receiving any Commonwealth social security payments at the time when you carried out the robbery? eg. Unemployment benefits or invalid pension.

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, note which payments interviewee was receiving.)

(If no and interviewee was unemployed, probe as to why they were not receiving unemployment benefits.)

Section 4 : Factual Details and Reasons for Involvement

I'd like to ask you some questions about the robbery offence itself. The first group of questions is about where and when the robbery was committed and about how you came to be involved.

4.1 What type of place did you rob?

Armoured car	01
Bank	02
Building society	03
Chemist	04
Convenience store	05
Credit union	06
Hotel or bottle shop	07
Post office	08
Person(s) at home	09
Person(s) in the street	10
Service station	11
Supermarket	12
T.A.B.	13
Take-away food outlet	14
Other (please specify)	15

(If bank, ask the following.) Which bank was it? (eg. ANZ, National, Commonwealth.)
Why did you rob this type of bank?

4.2 What time of day did you commit the robbery?

after 8am up to and including 10am	1
after 10am up to and including 12 noon	2
after 12 noon up to and including 2pm	3
after 2pm up to and including 4pm	4
after 4pm up to and including 6pm	5
after 6pm up to and including 12 midnight	6
after 12 midnight up to and including 8am	7

(Note the exact time if interviewee can remember.)

_____am/pm

4.3 Was there any reason for doing the robbery at that particular time?

4.4 What day of the week was it?

Monday	1
Tuesday	2
Wednesday	3
Thursday	4
Friday	5
Saturday	6
Sunday	7

4.5 Why did you do the robbery on that day of the week?

4.6 Did you carry out the robbery and get-a-way yourself or were you working with others? (Record numbers and sex of any accomplices.)

Males	_____
Females	_____

(Ask one of the following questions, whichever applies.)

Why did you do the robbery by yourself? or

Why did you do the robbery with others?

4.7 (If interviewee carried out robbery by himself/herself, ask the following.)
Did you also plan the robbery yourself or did you have help from others?

Planned it myself	1
Had help from others	2

4.8 (If interviewee carried out the robbery with one or more accomplices, ask the following.) Had you carried out other robberies with any of these people/this person before?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, probe for details.) How many robberies had you carried out? Over what period? What brought you together in the first place?

4.9 I'm interested in what led you to commit this robbery. I have a number of possible reasons for your involvement written down here. I'm going to read them out, and I'd like you to say whether they did or did not play some part in leading you to commit the robbery.

	YES	NO
(a) The group I hung around with were involved in these offences	1	2
(b) I was asked to help with the robbery	1	2
(c) I needed money as I was unemployed	1	2
(d) I needed money to buy drugs to support my habit	1	2
(e) I wanted money to buy drugs but I wasn't an addict	1	2
(f) I wanted money to buy something other than drugs eg. car, stereo etc.	1	2
(g) I simply needed money to support my family / myself	1	2
(h) I did it for kicks, for the excitement	1	2
(i) I had debts that I couldn't repay	1	2
(j) It's what I did for a living	1	2
(k) I lost my temper	1	2
(l) I had tried other crimes and robbery seemed attractive in comparison	1	2
(m) I cannot explain why I did it	1	2

4.10 Were there any other reasons why you committed the robbery?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, note additional reasons below.)

4.11 Which of the reasons we have been discussing was the main reason for committing the robbery?

(Only need to record the letter or number corresponding to the main reason, eg. d or 4.10)

4.12 (Explore the interviewee's personal circumstances behind the main reason identified? eg. What debts did you have? or What drugs were you using? etc.)

Section 5 : The Target

5.1 In what city or town was the place that you robbed located?

City/town: _____

(If in capital city, ask what suburb.)

Suburb: _____

5.2 Approximately how far away from your home/residence was the place that you robbed?

< 1 km	1
> 1 km but < 2 kms	2
> 2 kms but < 5 kms	3
> 5 kms but < 10 kms	4
> 10 kms but < 15 kms	5
> 15 kms	6

(If > 15 kms, ask interviewee to estimate how many kilometres.)

5.3 You said before that you robbed a

Which of the following factors played some part in the decision to rob this place?

	YES	NO
Chance factors (specify) -----	1	2
I thought there would be a lot of money there	1	2
Information or tip from a friend or contact	1	2
Familiarity with the area in which the place was located	1	2
I knew the place well	1	2
The place was easy to make a get-a-way from	1	2
Someone else decided for me 1 2		
Other (please specify)	1	2

5.4 Did the place you robbed have a reputation as a place which was easy to rob?

Yes	1
No	2

5.5 A. Was the (insert type of target) that you robbed the first place that you chose?
or

B. Did you intend to rob somewhere else but then change your mind?

Statement A is correct	1
Statement B is correct	2

5.6 (If statement B is correct ask the following question.) At what point did you change your mind?

- | | |
|---|---|
| While planning the robbery | 1 |
| Just before committing the actual robbery | 2 |
| Other (please specify) | 3 |

5.7 What changed your mind?

Section 6 : Planning

6.1 How much time elapsed between deciding to commit the robbery and the robbery actually taking place?

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| < half an hour | 1 |
| > half an hour but < 2 hrs | 2 |
| > 2 hrs but < half a day | 3 |
| > half a day but < 1 day | 4 |
| > 1 day but < 3 days | 5 |
| > 3 days but < 1 week | 6 |
| > 1 week but < 2 weeks | 7 |
| > 2 weeks | 8 |

6.2 What plans, if any, were made for the robbery?

6.3 In your opinion, was there enough planning done or not?

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Enough | 1 |
| Not enough | 2 |

6.4 How many people were involved in planning the robbery?

One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Four or more	4
Don't know	5

6.5 What was your role in planning the robbery?

Did all the planning myself	1
Assisted willingly in the planning	2
Was forced to help with the planning	3
Played no part in the planning	4
Other (please specify)	5

6.6 (If interviewee carried out the robbery with one or more others, ask the following. If not, go to 6.7.) Were different tasks allocated to different members of the team during the planning?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask the following.) What tasks were you allocated?
What were you expected to do during the robbery?

What roles were the others given?

6.7 Did you do any of the following in order to "case" the place before carrying out the robbery?

	YES	NO
Checked the place out from the outside	1	2
Entered the place and had a look around	1	2
Checked out what security the place had	1	2
Found out how far away the nearest police station was	1	2
Found out how much money was in the place	1	2
Other (please specify)	1	2

6.8 (If interviewee did not check out what security the place had, ask the following.)
Did you think about the possible security arrangements which the place might have?

Yes	1
No	2

6.9 What plans, if any, were made to overcome security measures at the place that you robbed?

6.10 How long were you expecting the robbery to take? ie. How much time did you (and/or the others) expect to spend in the place you robbed?

6.11 Was there a maximum amount of time that you (and/or the others) were prepared to spend in the place that you robbed?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask how long.)

6.12 Were disguises organised for the robbery?

Yes

1

No

2

(If yes, ask what it/they consisted of.)

(If no, ask why this wasn't done.)

6.13 What plans were made for the get-a-way?

Section 7 : Weapons

7.1 Were any weapons used in the robbery?

Yes

1

No

2

(If no, go to next section.)

7.2 How many?

One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Four or more	4

7.3 What type of weapon(s) was/were used? (Note type and number.)

Rifle	_____
Shotgun	_____
Air rifle	_____
Revolver	_____
Automatic pistol	_____
Knife	_____
Imitation gun	_____
Other (please specify)	_____

Would you describe the weapon(s) for me in some detail? (eg. What model? What capabilities?)

7.4 Were any modifications made to the weapon(s) prior to the robbery?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask what modifications were made and discuss the reasons for them being made.)

7.5 (If robbery was carried out by two or more people, ask the following.) Did you personally carry a weapon during the robbery? (If yes, note which weapon it was.)

Yes	1
No	2

(If no, go to 7.13.)

7.6 Where did you get the weapon from?

Stole it	1
Borrowed it	2
Bought it	3
Given as a gift	4
Given to me for robbery	5
Other (please specify)	6

7.7 Did you have the weapon in your possession prior to deciding to commit the robbery, or did you obtain it specifically for the robbery?

Already had it	1
Got it for robbery	2

7.8 Were you prepared to use the weapon if it had become necessary?

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

7.9 (If a firearm was used by the interviewee, ask questions 7.9 to 7.12. If not, go to 7.13.)

Was the firearm loaded when you carried out the robbery?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

(If yes, probe as to the type of ammunition and the reasons for choosing that type of ammunition?)

7.10 Was the firearm in working order?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

7.11 You said before that you stole/borrowed/bought/were given the firearm?
Can you tell me some more about where, when and how you obtained the gun?

7.12 Did you have a licence for the firearm?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes) Where and how did you obtain the licence?

7.13 (If the weapon carried by the interviewee was the only one used in the robbery, go to 7.17.)

Do you know where the weapon(s) carried by the person(s) you were working with came from?

Stolen	1
Borrowed	2
Bought	3
Don't know	4
Other (please specify)	5

(If interviewee does know, ask for details.)

7.14 Did they have the weapon(s) in their possession prior to deciding to commit the robbery, or did they obtain them specifically for the robbery?

Already had them	1
Got them for robbery	2
Don't know	3

7.15 (If other weapon(s) included one or more firearms, ask 7.15 and 7.16. If not, go to 7.17.)

Was/were the firearm(s) carried by the other person(s) loaded during the robbery?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 3

7.16 Was/were this/these firearm(s) in working order?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 3

7.17 What did you do with the weapon(s) after the robbery?

7.18 Did the police recover (any of) the weapon(s)?

- Yes 1
- No 2

(If yes, ask which ones were recovered.)

(If no, ask interviewee if he/she knows what happened to the weapon(s).)

7.19 What formal training, if any, have you had in the use of firearms or other weapons?

Section 8 : The Robbery

I'd like to talk about what happened when you actually carried out the robbery?

8.1 Would you describe for me what took place?

8.2 Did things go as you expected them to during the actual robbery?

Everything went as expected	1
Most things did	2
Some things did, some didn't	3
Most things didn't	4
Nothing went as expected	5

What didn't go as expected?

8.3 How many customers were in the place at the time of the robbery?

None	1
1 - 2	2
3 - 5	3
6 - 10	4
11 - 15	5
16 +	6

(Note exact number if interviewee can remember.)

8.4 Did the customers and staff members do as you told them to or not?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes) How did it feel when they did what you told them to?

(If no) What didn't they do? How did you feel when this happened? What did you do about it?

8.5 (If interviewee or accomplices carried a weapon during the robbery, ask the following.)

Was the weapon/Were any of the weapons (whichever applies) used during the robbery, other than by using the threat of their presence? (eg. Were any of the firearms discharged?)

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask for details.) Which weapon was used? Why was it used? Was anyone injured or killed?

Who? How bad was the injury?

(If no, ask the following.) Would the weapon(s) have been used if it had become necessary?

What circumstances would have made it necessary?

8.6 What security did the place have? (For each measure, record one of the following responses in the table below.)

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 3

When did you become aware of the security measures? (For each measure that was present, note in table below whether interviewee became aware of it:

- before 1,
- during 2, or
- after robbery 3

What did you do about the security measures? (For each measure that was present, note what action was taken by the interviewee. Examples of possible responses include: ignored it; wasn't aware of it until too late; put it out of action; and didn't do anything because it wasn't activated.)

Security Measure	Present	When Aware	Action Taken
Security cameras	_____	_____	_____
Alarm	_____	_____	_____
Security guard	_____	_____	_____
Glass barriers	_____	_____	_____
Pop-up screens	_____	_____	_____
Dye bombs	_____	_____	_____
Other:			
_____	_____	_____	_____

(If interviewee robbed a bank, ask 8.7 and 8.8. If not, go to 8.9.)

8.7 Did the interior design of the bank have any effect on the robbery? ie. Did it have an influence on how you carried out the robbery, or on what happened during the robbery?

- Yes 1
- No 2

(If yes, ask what effect it had.)

8.8 Was there anything about the interior design of the bank which made the robbery easier or more effective?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask interviewee to explain.)

8.9 Had you taken any drugs or drunk any alcohol in the hour or so before carrying out the robbery?

Yes	1
No	2

(If no, go to question 8.13.)

8.10 What had you taken? How much had you had? (Indicate the quantity consumed of each drug mentioned in the space provided. If interviewee can't remember how much he/she had consumed, just put a tick in the space.)

Alcohol	_____
Cannabis	_____
LSD / Other pschedelics	_____
Amphetamines	_____
Cocaine	_____
Heroin	_____
Other (please specify)	_____
_____	_____

8.11 How long before the robbery did you take the drugs/drink the last of the alcohol?

< 5 minutes before	1
> 5 but < 15 minutes before	2
> 15 but < 30 minutes before	3
> 30 mins but < 1 hour before	4
> 1 hour but < 2 hours before	5
> 2 hours before	6

8.12 Do you consider that you were under the influence of these drugs/the alcohol when you did the robbery?

Yes	1
No	2

8.13 How long did the robbery take?

< 1 minute	1
About 1 minute	2
About 2 minutes	3
About 3 minutes	4
4 or 5 minutes	5
6 to 10 minutes	6
11 to 15 minutes	7
More than 15 minutes	8

(If more than 15 minutes, note time taken.) _____

8.14 How much money/What goods (whichever applies) did you get?

8.15 Was this as much as you expected to get?

More than I expected	1
About what I expected	2
Less than I expected	3
Didn't know what to expect	4

8.16 Would any amount over \$500 have been satisfactory or were you seeking big money?

Anything over \$500	1
Big money	2

8.17 I'm interested to know how you felt just before doing the robbery. Can you tell me a bit about this? How did you feel during the robbery? How about afterwards?

Before: _____

During: _____

After: _____

8.18 Did the get-a-way go as expected? What happened?

8.19 What did you do immediately after the robbery and get-a-way?

8.20 What did you do with the proceeds of the robbery? What did you spend the money on?
How long did it take to spend the money?

Section 9 : Other Robberies

9.1 Have you ever committed any other robberies?

Yes	1
No	2

(If no, go to question 9.9.)

9.2 How many?

1 other robbery	1
2 or 3 others	2
4 or 5 others	3
6 to 10 others	4
11 to 15 others	5
More than 15 others	6

9.3 How many did you carry out in the two month period prior to robbery that we've discussed in detail?

None	1
One	2
Two	3
3 to 5	4
6 to 10	5
More than 10	6

(If more than two, ask the following.) Why did you carry out so many in this short time period?

9.4 In the other robberies that you have carried out, what type of places did you rob? In what city/town were they located?

9.5 Did the robbery we've been talking about in detail happen in pretty much the same way as these others, or was it different?

Pretty much the same	1
Different	2

(If different, probe as to the way in which it was different. Record responses on next page?)

- 9.6 I'd like to talk about the first robbery you ever committed.
(Check that it isn't the one you've discussed in detail in the previous sections.
If it is, go to question 9.9.) Can you tell me a bit about that first robbery?

How did it differ from the one we've been talking about in detail?

How old were you when it happened?

- 9.7 I'd like to read out a number of possible reasons why you may have carried out that first robbery. Please indicate whether each reason did or did not play a part in you becoming involved?

	YES	NO
(a) The group I hung around with were involved in these offences	1	2
(b) I was asked to help with the robbery	1	2
(c) I needed money as I was unemployed	1	2
(d) I needed money to buy drugs to support my habit	1	2
(e) I wanted money to buy drugs but I wasn't an addict	1	2
(f) I wanted money to buy something other than drugs eg. car, stereo etc.	1	2
(g) I simply needed money to support my family / myself	1	2
(h) I did it for kicks, for the excitement	1	2
(i) I had debts that I couldn't repay	1	2
(j) It's what I do for a living	1	2
(k) I lost my temper	1	2
(l) I had tried other crimes and robbery seemed attractive in comparison	1	2
(m) I cannot explain why I did it	1	2

- 9.8 Were there any other reasons why you committed that first robbery?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, note additional reasons below.)

9.9 If you had to identify the one thing in your life which played the biggest part in your becoming involved in robbery, what would it be?

9.10 What do you think of robbery in comparison with other forms of crime? What are the advantages and disadvantages of robbery?

9.11 Have you ever carried out any robberies while on bail or on parole? (If yes, ask how many and whether on bail or parole. If no, write a '0' in the spaces provided.)

Bail	_____
Parole	_____

9.12 Have you ever committed any other type of offence while on bail or on parole? (If yes, ask what offence(s), how many times and whether on bail or parole. If no, write a '0' in spaces provided.)

No. of Bail - Offence(s)	Times
_____	_____
_____	_____
Parole - Offence(s)	Number
_____	_____
_____	_____

Section 10 : Apprehension and Sentencing

10.1 Did you think about the possibility of getting caught before you carried out the robbery we've discussed in detail?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask the following.) What chance did you think there was of being caught?

10.2 At the time when you carried out the robbery, were you aware of the length of sentences given for robbery offences?

Yes	1
No	2

10.3 How did you find out about the length of sentences for robbery?

From the media	1
From involvement with courts and lawyers	2
From talking to other robbers	3
From talking to family or friends	4
Other (please specify)	5

10.4 When were you apprehended for the robbery we've been discussing?

Same day as robbery	1
The day after the robbery	2
A few days later	3
About a week later	4
More than a week but not more than a month later	5
More than a month but not more than six months later	6
More than six months later	7

(Note month and year if interviewee can remember.)

10.5 I'd like to discuss the circumstances that led to your apprehension and arrest?
Which of the following played some part in you being caught?

	YES	NO
(a) Poor planning	1	2
(b) A mistake during the robbery itself	1	2
(c) Security equipment	1	2
(d) Actions of staff and/or customers	1	2
(e) Problems with the get-a-way	1	2
(f) Information provided to police	1	2
(g) Other factors (please specify)	1	2

10.6 In your opinion, what single factor contributed most to your apprehension and arrest?

10.7 Was a reward offered in relation to the robbery we've discussed in detail?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

10.8 (If a reward was offered, ask the following.) Do you think that someone collected the reward?

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

10.9 Generally speaking, how do you think the police solve robbery cases?

10.10 At the time of your arrest, did you expect to be convicted?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes) What sentence did you think you would get? How much of it did you think you would serve?

10.11 Did you plead guilty or not guilty?

Guilty	1
Not guilty	2

10.12 (If guilty, ask the following.) Which of the following played a part in your decision to plead guilty?

	YES	NO
I believed I would get a shorter sentence	1	2
They had too much evidence on me	1	2
I just wanted to get it over and done with	1	2
My lawyer advised me to	1	2

10.13 How do the length of sentences for robbery compare to the length of sentences for other types of offences?

10.14 What sentence do you think you would get if you carried out another robbery in the future?

10.15 Would you think about the possible sentence before committing another robbery?

Probably yes	1
Probably no	2

(If yes) Would thinking about it have any effect on whether you did carry out the robbery?

(If no) Why wouldn't you?

10.16 Are there any circumstances under which you would carry out another robbery?
 If there are, what are they?

Section 11 : Criminal History

So far, our discussion has focussed on your involvement in robbery. I would like to talk now about your involvement in criminal activity generally if that is okay.

11.1 I am going to read out a number of criminal activities and for each one, I would like you to tell me the total number of times that you have been involved in this type of activity. If you have never done some of the things I mention, just say so. Approximately how many times in your life have you:

- Never 1
- Once 2
- Twice 3
- 3 to 5 times 4
- 6 to 10 times 5
- 11 to 20 times 6
- 21 to 40 times 7
- More than 40 times 8

	Total (11.1)	Before (11.2)	Freq (11.3)
Shoplifted	_____	_____	_____
Vandalised property	_____	_____	_____
Stolen a car	_____	_____	_____
Robbed someone (no weapon)	_____	_____	_____
Break and entered	_____	_____	_____
Received stolen goods	_____	_____	_____
Robbed someone (with a weapon)	_____	_____	_____
Engaged in fraud	_____	_____	_____
Used illegal drugs	_____	_____	_____
Trafficked in drugs	_____	_____	_____
Assaulted someone (with injury)	_____	_____	_____
Had sex for money	_____	_____	_____

11.2 Which of these activities had you been involved in prior to carrying out your first robbery.

- Before first robbery 1
- After first robbery 2
- Never involved in 3

11.3 You said before that you carried out the robbery that we've discussed in detail in (month and year).

I would like you to think back to the 6 month period prior to the robbery.

During that period, how many times did you:

- None 1
- Only once 2
- 2 or 3 times 3
- 4 or 5 times 4
- Between 6 and 10 times 5
- Between 11 and 20 times 6
- More than 20 times 7

11.4 How many times have you been convicted of the following offences?

	Convicted
Shoplifting	_____
Vandalism	_____
Motor vehicle theft	_____
Robbery/Demand money with menaces	_____
Break and enter	_____
Receiving stolen goods	_____
Armed robbery	_____
Fraud	_____
Possession	_____
Trafficking drugs	_____
Assault	_____
Sexual assault	_____
Prostitution	_____

11.5 Have you ever spent time in juvenile institution?

- Yes 1
- No 2

(If yes, ask for details as to the number of times, the length of time spent in the institutions, and the reasons for being there.)

11.6 Prior to your current term, have you ever served time in jail before?

- Yes 1
- No 2

(If no, go to 11.10.)

11.7 How many times?

Once	1
Twice	2
Three times	3
Four times	4
Five or more times	5

11.8 Following your release after your previous prison term, how long did you go straight for?

Less than a week	1
About one week	2
More than a week but no more than a month	3
More than a month but no more than 6 months	4
More than 6 months but no more than a year	5
More than a year	6

11.9 What happened at the end of this period? What offence did you commit and what circumstances led to your involvement?

11.10 If you had to identify the one thing in your life which played the biggest part in your becoming involved in criminal activity in the first place, what would it be?

11.11 I'd like to ask you a few questions about your use of drugs. Have you ever tried:
(Read out each type of drug and record one of the following responses:

Yes	1
No	2

	Tried (11.11)	Frequency (11.12)
Alcohol	_____	_____
Cannabis	_____	_____
LSD/Psychedelics	_____	_____
Amphetamines	_____	_____
Barbituates/Hypnotics	_____	_____
Cocaine	_____	_____
Heroin	_____	_____
Other Narcotics/Opiates	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

11.12 I'd like you to think back to the 6 month period we talked about before, that is the 6 months prior to the robbery offence we discussed in detail? During that time, did you use any drugs and if so how often did you use them? (Use the code on the next page to record frequency of use.)

- Not used 1
- Daily 2
- Twice a week 3
- Weekly 4
- Monthly 5
- Used 2 or 3 times 6
- Only used once 7

11.13 For those drugs that you have tried, did you at some point in your life stop using any of them, or have you continued to use them ever since? If you did stop using any of them, when did you stop?

Why did you stop using? How did you stop using?

11.14 Have you ever committed any crimes to get money to buy drugs or alcohol with?

- Yes 1
- No 2

(If yes, ask for details of the types of crime and the drugs bought. Record responses below.)

11.15 Have you ever committed any crimes while under the influence of a drug or alcohol?

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

(If yes, ask for details of the types of crime and the drugs used. Record responses below.)

Section 12 : Robbery in General

Getting back to robbery for a while, I'd like to ask you some questions about robbery in general. I'd like you to answer the questions based on all your previous experience with crime and with robbery in particular.

12.1 I have a card here which lists a number of possible places which could be robbed. Based on your experience with robbery, please rate each one in terms of the likelihood that you would choose this type of a place to rob? (If interviewee says that he/she won't be doing any more robberies, explain that the question is a hypothetical one.)

I'd like you to use this scale (bring out card with scale on) to rate the different places shown.

	Definite Would	Probably Would	Probably Wouldn't	Definite Wouldn't
Armoured car	1	2	3	4
Bank	1	2	3	4
Building society	1	2	3	4
Chemist	1	2	3	4
Convenience store	1	2	3	4
Credit union	1	2	3	4
Hotel or bottle shop	1	2	3	4
Post office	1	2	3	4
Person(s) at home	1	2	3	4
Person(s) in the street	1	2	3	4
Service station	1	2	3	4
Supermarket	1	2	3	4
T.A.B.	1	2	3	4
Take-away food outlet	1	2	3	4

12.2 Which, if any, of these would be your first choice as a place to rob? If your first choice is not listed on the card, tell me what it is?

What is it about this type of place that makes it your first choice? What makes it more "robbable" than the others?

12.3 Which, if any, of these would be your second choice as a place to rob? If your second choice is not listed on the card, tell me what it is.

What is it about this type of place that makes it more "robbable" than all the rest except for your first choice?

12.4 On the next page there are a number of situations or characteristics which might apply to some or all of the places listed on the card. What I would like you to do with each one is to tell me if it would make you:

less likely to rob a place	1;
more likely to rob a place	2; or
make no difference	3.

(Give interviewee card with response options listed and record answers on next page.)

12.5 I have another hypothetical question which relates to the situations and characteristics we have just been through.

This time, I would like you to imagine that you were about to rob a (insert first choice type of target), when you noticed that there was a police station close by.

What action would you take? I have a card here with a number of possibilities listed. Would you:

go ahead with the robbery straight away	1;
wait until situation has changed and then do the robbery	2;
find somewhere else to rob	3;
not do a robbery at all	4; or
something else	5.

	<u>12.4</u>	<u>12.5</u>
(a) A police station close by	_____	_____
(b) A number of customers inside	_____	_____
(c) An entrance close to the street	_____	_____
(d) A security guard on the premises	_____	_____
(e) A clear view of the counter area from the street	_____	_____
(f) Signs indicating that the place has time delay locks	_____	_____
(g) Large numbers of pedestrians passing by outside	_____	_____
(h) Only one staff member on duty	_____	_____
(i) A lot of traffic passing by on the roads near the place	_____	_____
(j) Large signs outside the place advertising its services	_____	_____
(k) Police patrolling in the area	_____	_____
(l) Signs indicating that the place has pop-up screens	_____	_____
(m) Located in the middle of a shopping centre	_____	_____

12.6 In your opinion, what proportion of the people who carry out robberies would be deterred from robbing a bank that had pop-up screens?

- All of them 1
- Most of them 2
- Some of them 3
- A few of them 4
- None of them 5

(If not "all", ask the following.) What type of people wouldn't be deterred?

12.7 In your opinion, would there be any change in the frequency of bank robbery if all banks had pop-up screens installed?

Would there be any changes in the way in which bank robberies were carried out, if they all had screens?

What changes might there be to the frequency of robbery in general, if all banks had pop-up screens?

Section 13 : Plans for the Future

13.1 In what year do you expect to be released from prison?

19____

13.2 Do you have any plans for your life after your release?

- Yes 1
- No 2

(If yes, ask interviewee what these plans are. If no, ask interviewee what he/she thinks the future holds for him/her.)

13.3 (If interviewee has plans, ask the following.) Have you taken any action whilst in prison to help make these plans happen?

Yes	1
No	2

(If yes, ask interviewee what action he/she has taken. If no, ask interviewee what has prevented him/her from taking any action.)

13.4 (If interviewee has been to prison before, ask the following questions. If not, go to 13.8.)

Thinking back to your release from prison last time, what was your financial situation at the time of release?

I was broke	1
I had enough to survive	2
I was well off	3
Other (please specify)	4

13.5 Which of the following activities did you undertake in order to support yourself in the 3 month period following release?

	YES	NO
Lived off my savings	1	2
Borrowed money	1	2
Was supported by my family	1	2
Was supported by my friends	1	2
Got a job	1	2
Received unemployment benefits	1	2
Did a robbery	1	2
Was involved in some other type of crime	1	2
Other (please specify)	1	2

13.6 How much contact did you have with the following people during this 3 month period?

	Every Day	Few Times a Week	Few Times a Month	A Few Times in Period	None At All
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Sister(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Brother(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5
Children	1	2	3	4	5
Friend(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Parole Officer	1	2	3	4	5

13.7 Who was the most important person or persons to you during this 3 month period? Why was this person/these people the most important?

13.8 What services would you like to see available to you when you do get released? (eg. a job, temporary accommodation, adequate social security benefits etc.) What difference would they make to your life and future activities?

APPENDIX C**INTERVIEW PROCEDURE**

The interviews were carried out by a person with prior experience in working with offenders in a variety of treatment settings. The procedure followed is outlined below.

- (i) The prisons to be visited were selected.
- (ii) Each prison was visited in turn and the inmates to be interviewed were selected.
- (iii) The interviewer then set himself up in an allocated area of the prison and called the selected inmates one at a time.
- (iv) The purpose of the study was explained to the inmate who was then asked if he/she wished to be involved. A copy of the information provided to inmates at the start of the interview is at Attachment C.
- (v) Those inmates who agreed to be interviewed were then led through the interview schedule and their responses were recorded on the schedule. Most of the interviewees were asked if they were prepared to have the interview recorded on tape. Unfortunately, none consented.
- (vi) Where access to prisoner files was available, they were inspected by the interviewer to verify and supplement the information provided during the interviews.

APPENDIX D**PRISONS VISITED**

The following is a list of the prisons at which interviews were carried out for this study.

New South Wales

Bathurst Gaol
Emu Plains Training Centre
Mulawa Training and Detention Centre for Women
Norma Parker Centre
Parramatta Gaol
Silverwater Work Release Centre

Victoria

HM Prison Bendigo
HM Prison Castlemaine
HM Prison Dhurringile
HM Prison Fairlea
HM Prison Geelong
HM Prison Pentridge

Queensland

Brisbane Prison Complex
HM Prison Wacol
Women's Prison Brisbane

APPENDIX E

REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE SAMPLE

The extent to which our sample of offenders is representative of the population of robbery offenders in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, is an important question. There are two major issues to consider: how representative the interviewees are of robbers in prison, and how representative robbers in prison are of the total population of offenders.

It is not possible to give a definite answer. It is felt that the inmates who were interviewed were fairly representative of the population of robbery offenders in prison at the time. This belief is based on the mix of prisons visited, and on the random sampling of robbers at these prisons. In order to arrive at a more definite answer, we would need to know details of such things as sentence lengths, numbers of robberies, targets chosen and modus operandi of the entire prison population of robbery offenders. Such information is not readily available.

The size of the sample can be compared with the size of the prison population of robbery offenders. Using the figures from the 1986 National Prison Census as a base (Walker & Biles, 1987), we find that the sample size as a proportion of the number of inmates with robbery as their most serious offence, varies from a low of 3.9 per cent for male inmates in NSW, to a high of 85.7 per cent for female inmates in Queensland. Overall, a greater proportion of women were sampled (34.1 per cent of female inmates as opposed to 7.7 per cent of male inmates). Women are therefore over-represented in our sample in terms of the prison population of robbery offenders. However, they still only constitute 13.6 per cent of the sample.

The question of the extent to which robbers in prison are representative of the total population of robbery offenders, is even more difficult to answer. Given the relatively low clearance rates for robbery (25 per cent for the whole of Australia in 1984/85, Mukherjee et al, 1987), it is possible to argue that many offenders do not get caught, and that those who don't are different in some way from those who do. However, it is also possible to argue that most robbers carry out many robberies over time and will eventually be caught. Once caught, they may be convicted for some offences but not all those in which they have been involved. This would give the effect of low clearance rates but at the same time seeing most offenders in prison at one stage or other. We believe that our sample is fairly representative of the population of robbery offenders in the three states.

APPENDIX F

LOCATION OF ROBBERIES IN QUEENSLAND

Thirty-nine of the 110 robbery offender interviews were conducted in Queensland. In addition, all of the interviews with robbery victims were carried out in this State. The researcher who conducted these interviews gained the impression that there is a relatively high incidence of robbery offences in one particular area of Queensland.

This area will be referred to as south-east Brisbane/Gold Coast. It consists of a corridor starting around Annerley and following the South East Freeway and the Pacific Highway all the way to the Gold Coast. Most of the area is to the west of the Highway and includes parts of Brisbane City, Logan City, Albert Shire and the Gold Coast.

Of the 38 robberies discussed with offenders (one pair of co-offenders were interviewed), 14 occurred in the south-east Brisbane/Gold Coast area (36.8 per cent). By way of comparison, 12 of the robberies occurred in the Central Business District or surrounding suburbs, and only four were carried out in the northern suburbs of Brisbane (see Table F.1).

Table F.1 shows that half of the ten bank robberies in Queensland occurred in the south-east Brisbane/Gold Coast area. In addition, most of the robbery victims were working at banks located in this area. One of these banks had been robbed four times in 18 months, while the other had been robbed twice in the space of six weeks.

TABLE F.1

LOCATION OF ROBBERIES IN QUEENSLAND

Location	All Robberies		Bank Robberies		Other	
	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)	(No)	(%)
CBD and surrounds	12	31.6	2	20.0	10	35.7
South-east Brisbane/ Gold Coast	14	36.8	5	50.0	9	32.1
Northern suburbs	4	36.8	2	20.0	2	7.1
Other parts of Queensland	8	21.1	1	10.0	7	25.0
Total	38	100.0	10	100.0	28	100.0

It was recognized that the researcher's impressions were based on a relatively small sample of offences. Detective Sergeant George Sharry of the Armed Hold-up Squad in Queensland was approached about the incidence of robbery in the south-east Brisbane/Gold Coast area. Detective Sharry said that he believed there were significantly more armed robberies in this part of Queensland. However, he had no statistics to support this belief.

Given Detective Sharry's confirmation of the researcher's impressions, possible reasons for this high incidence were considered. One possibility considered was the population growth in the area.

In a recent newspaper article headed 'Booming Brisbane likely to be No 2' Greg Roberts quoted figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics which showed that 'last year the population of the Gold Coast and urban areas south of Brisbane grew at more than four times the rate for Melbourne' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 27 March 1989). Figures on the average annual growth rate for the period 1981 to 1986, were obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and are shown in Table F.2. Two ABS publications (catalogue no. 3204.3 and 3221.0) provided the figures in the table. Full references to these publications have been included in the reference list.

TABLE F.2

**POPULATION GROWTH FOR SELECTED AREAS;
1981 TO 1986**

Area	Average Annual Growth Rate: 1981-1986 (%)
Brisbane City	0.0
Logan City	6.8
Albert Shire Part A	12.9
Albert Shire Part B	10.9
Gold Coast City	2.8
Queensland	2.3
Australia	1.4

The figures in Table F.2 show that each of the cities and shires through which the south-east Brisbane/Gold Coast corridor passes, with the exception of Brisbane City, experienced growth rates in excess of the rates for Queensland and Australia. The growth rates were particularly rapid in Logan City and Albert Shire.

Rapid increases in population are often accompanied by social problems such as high rates of unemployment and the failure of government services, such as police and welfare, to keep pace. These social problems may in turn lead to higher crime rates, including higher rates of robbery, in and around the area of rapid population growth.

These possibilities have implications for the banks. Research should be carried out to investigate whether banks in or near areas of rapid population growth are robbed more frequently. If this proves to be the case, particular attention should be paid to security in designing and locating bank offices in such areas.

APPENDIX G

SOME OBSERVATIONS OF THE LEGAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

During the course of the study, the researchers identified a number of apparent differences in the legal justice systems operating in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. While these differences are not of direct relevance to the current study, they are worth noting.

BAIL

Bail in Victoria and Queensland will be refused if, in the course of committing an indictable offence, the accused is alleged to have used, or to have threatened to use a firearm, offensive weapon or explosive substance, and the defendant fails to show cause why his/her detention is not justified (see Section 4(4) of the Victorian Bail Act 1977, and Section 16(3) of the Queensland Bail Act 1980-87).

In contrast, the provisions of the NSW Bail Act are less restrictive. Armed offenders apparently do not have to justify why they shouldn't be detained. The criteria to be considered in bail applications in NSW are set out in Part V Division 1 Section 32 of the Bail Act 1978.

COURT PROCEDURE

Whilst interviewing offenders in Queensland, it appeared that the period between arrest and commencement of sentence was much shorter than in either Victoria or NSW. This impression was discussed with various members of the legal profession in Queensland, including Mr Justice Carter of the Supreme Court. These discussions generally confirmed that cases are dealt with more speedily in Queensland.

According to Mr Justice Carter, Queensland employs a strict timetable and guidelines for dealing with cases, and constantly monitors the system. In addition, workshops and meetings are held with a view to overcoming any problems that may arise.

SENTENCING

Offenders in Queensland appear less likely to be granted a non-parole period as part of their sentence. Only 19 of the 39 Queensland offenders had non-parole periods, whereas this was true for 31 of the 35 robbery offenders in NSW, and 34 of the 36 Victorian offenders.

This does not necessarily imply that Queensland offenders serve longer sentences than their counterparts in NSW and Victoria. Sentencing policy varies greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and actual sentence length is difficult to compare. Further research could compare actual sentence length across jurisdictions, however it would be important to match offenders on variables such as seriousness of offence and previous convictions.

NOTES

- 1 A direct quote from an attachment to a letter dated 10 June 1988. The letter was addressed to Duncan Chappell (Director, Australian Institute of Criminology), and was signed by John Marsden (Director of Research, Australian Bankers' Association). The attachment outlined the terms of the contract for the robbery study.
- 2 Another quote from the attachment described in 1.
- 3 All of the robbery offenders who mentioned the National Mutual Royal Bank during the interviews referred to it as the `Royal Mutual Bank'. As such the report will refer to it using this abbreviated name.
- 4 These figures are taken from the Australian Bankers' Association's Armed Attack Analysis for 1987. Further details of this document can be found in the References.

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