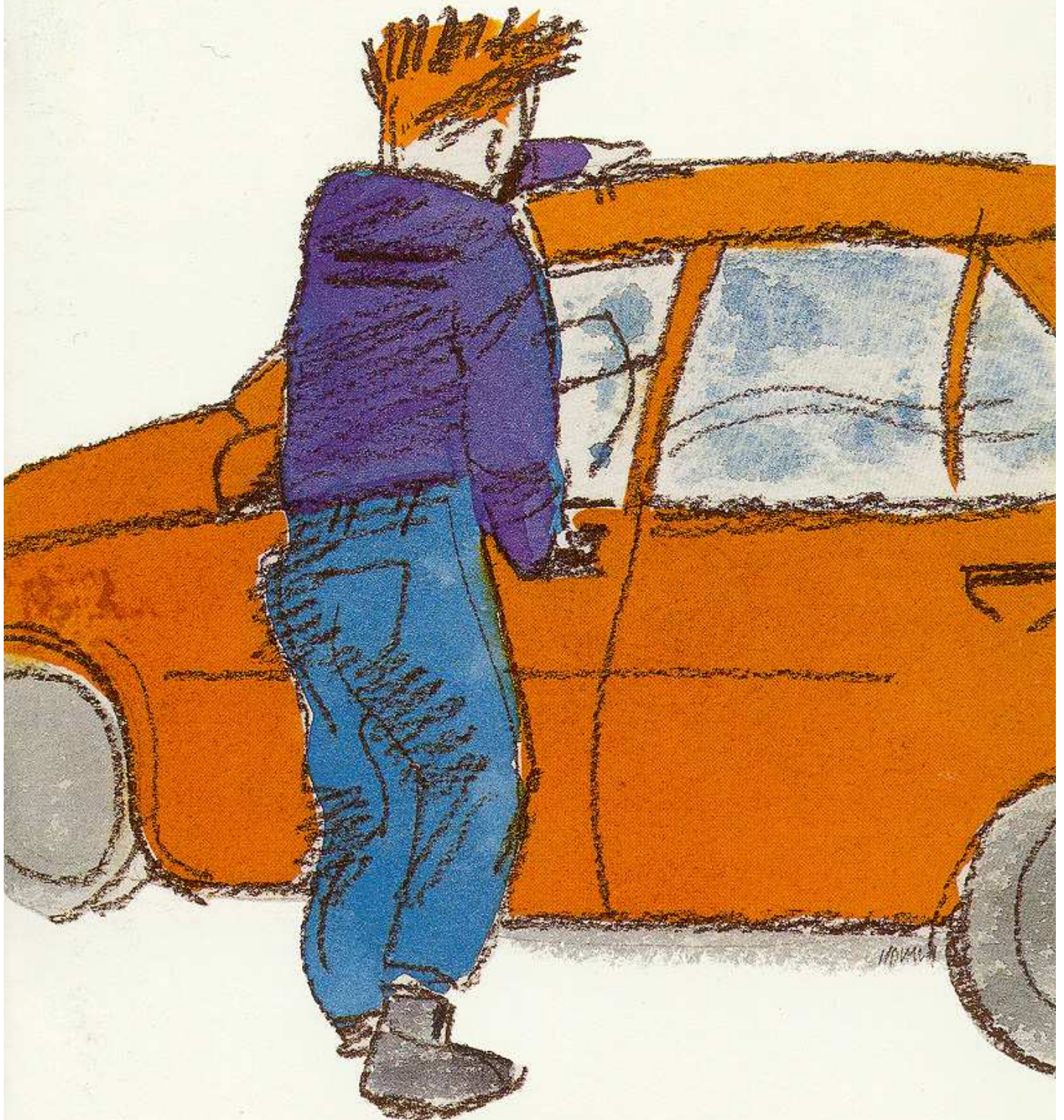


•crime•  
prevention series

# CRIME PREVENTION

*Susan Geason*  
*Paul R. Wilson*

Theory and Practice





# Crime Prevention

**Crime prevention series**

General Editor Paul R. Wilson

*Missing Children*

Forthcoming

*Crime prevention through environmental design*

*Preventing vandalism and graffiti*

*Crime prevention in shopping centres*

*Preventing fraud*

*Preventing armed robbery*

*Preventing arson*

*Crime prevention for migrant communities*

*Community crime prevention*

# CRIME PREVENTION theory and practice

*Susan Geason and  
Paul R. Wilson*



Australian Institute of Criminology

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**Minister for Justice**  
**Senator The Hon. Michael Tate**

This series of monographs on crime prevention, written and published by the Australian Institute of Criminology, is designed to help both individuals and organisations prevent crime, an aim which the Government endorses without reservation.

While the primary responsibility for coping with crime rests with the police, there are many ways in which local organisations and voluntary associations, as well as individuals, can help prevent crime.

Much emphasis in this series is placed on limiting the opportunities for criminals to commit crimes. There is much that can be done by a whole range of people - from families to small business proprietors to town planners - to creatively contribute to preventative environments.

The series, embracing many areas of crime, discusses not only opportunity reduction as a crime prevention method but other practical ways in which citizens themselves can participate.

I know the Australian Institute of Criminology's series on crime prevention will contribute towards countering crime and, in the process, improve the quality of life for individuals and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Tate'.

(Michael Tate)  
July 1988





# Series introduction

Crime, as we are all aware, has been a growing problem throughout Australia, especially in recent years. However, we are not powerless against crime. Much is being done, and a lot more can be done, to reverse the trend.

The Australian Institute of Criminology is committed to helping the community to which it belongs. This commitment is demonstrated by this series of booklets dedicated to crime prevention.

The series is written in everyday language and, hopefully, will provide the information that is needed to prevent crime before it is committed. *Missing Children* is already available. Others in the series will cover the prevention of armed robbery, the prevention of shoplifting and the prevention of vandalism and graffiti. Where the knowledge exists on how to lessen a crime, the Australian Institute of Criminology will put it to work in the service of the community.

With this series, we bring the focus of our knowledge of crime fairly and squarely into the public arena. With community help, the future might see less crime and the distress it brings in our society.

Duncan Chapell  
Director

Paul R. Wilson  
Assistant Director (Research and  
Statistics)



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# Introduction

Crime and the fear of crime lower the quality of life for many Australians, particularly the elderly, those living in poorer areas, damaged by crimes such as arson and vandalism.

Crime is already costing the community thousands of millions of dollars per year in insurance company payouts, police courts and correctional costs, and the replacement of buildings and facilities caused by crimes such as arson and vandalism.

The gaols are overflowing, and backlogs plague the courts. In tough economic times, however, governments are unwilling or unable to respond to public concern about rising crime rates by constantly increasing police numbers, spending more money on the courts, passing harsher laws and increasing penalties, or building new gaols. And insurance companies are refusing to insure those who do not take some responsibility for protecting their own property.

The lesson is clear: it is too expensive to wait till crimes are committed; crime must be prevented.

The traditional approach to crime prevention has been to try to identify the psychological and social causes of crime and to attempt to remedy these deficiencies by treating the individual offender and/or designing special educational, recreational and employment services for groups regarded as being at risk. The escalating crime rate suggests that this approach is not working.

An alternative is 'situational crime prevention'. It rests on two assumptions: that the criminal is a rational decision maker who only goes ahead with a crime where the benefits outweigh the costs or risks; and that the 'opportunity' to commit a crime must be there. Situational crime prevention aims to remove the opportunity, and make the costs of a crime greater than the benefits. It includes various forms of target hardening to make the objects of crime less vulnerable (e.g. car steering column locks, deadlocks on dwelling

doors, passenger and baggage screening at airports); defensible space architecture, which encourages residents of an area to exercise control over their public spaces and keep intruders out; community crime prevention initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch programs and citizens' patrols; and a variety of other strategies such as channelling potential offenders away from potential victims (Clarke 1988).

Situational crime prevention places more responsibility on the individual for ensuring his or her own safety than does traditional law enforcement, but to succeed, it needs the co-operation of the police, public and private organisations and members of the community.

The Institute of Criminology has long been aware of the importance of crime prevention, and has published widely on the subject, namely:

- *Resolving Conflict: Dispute Settlement Mechanisms for Aboriginal Communities and Neighbourhoods*, by Kayleen M. Hazlehurst, July 1986.
- 'Alcohol, Outstations and Autonomy: An Australian Aboriginal Perspective', by Kayleen M. Hazlehurst, in *Journal of Drug Issues*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Spring 1986.
- *Graffiti and Vandalism on Public Transport*, by Paul Wilson and Patricia Healy, July 1987.
- *Neighbourhood Watch: Issues and Policy Implications*, by Satyanshu Mukherjee and Paul Wilson, November 1987.
- *Child Abuse*, edited by Ron Snashall, 1987.
- *National Conference on Domestic Violence*, edited by Suzanne E. Hatty, 1986.
- 'Widening the Middle Ground: The Development of Community Based Options', in *Ivory Scales, Black Australia and the Law*, by Kayleen M. Hazlehurst, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1987.
- 'Racial Tension, Policy and Public Order: Australia in the Eighties', by Kayleen M. Hazlehurst, in *Police in Our Society*, by Police Complaints Authority, Melbourne. Sydney: Butterworth, Sydney, 1988.

- *Community Justice in Northern Queensland: Problems of Implementation and Development*, Australian Institute of Criminology in collaboration with the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council, consultant, Kayleen M. Hazlehurst, Cairns, Queensland, 1988.

To raise the awareness of police, policy-makers and members of the public about the need for crime prevention and to provide practical ways of implementing crime prevention programs and measures, the Institute is compiling a series of publications. It will include:

- *Missing Children*
- *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*
- *Preventing Vandalism and Graffiti*
- *Crime Prevention in Shopping Centres*
- *Preventing Fraud*
- *Preventing Armed Robbery*
- *Preventing Arson*
- *A Handbook for Aboriginal Community Crime Prevention*
- *Crime Prevention for Aboriginal Communities – 1/2 hour video*
- *Crime Prevention for Migrant Communities*
- *Community Crime Prevention*

# The theory

Research has identified four separate categories of crime and delinquency prevention (Perlgut 1981):

- *Corrective prevention* attempts to prevent crime by ameliorating social conditions which seem to lead to crime, e.g. by reducing overcrowding, creating viable neighbourhoods, rehabilitating slums and providing community health clinics and recreation facilities.
- *Punitive prevention* uses police to deter crime through lawyers, the police courts, gaols and the legal system.
- *Mechanical prevention* emphasises hardware such as locks, doors and grilles.
- *Environmental prevention* manipulates building design and the relationship between buildings and their environment to reduce opportunities for crime.

Successful security planning will most likely incorporate some aspects of punitive, corrective, mechanical and environmental techniques; the last two categories are a 'situational crime prevention' approach.

The Institute of Criminology's series will initially concentrate on situational crime prevention. That is, we will investigate and recommend ways of crime-proofing different environments against property theft, vandalism, arson and violence.

## **Rational choice theory**

While traditional criminology tended to see criminals driven by their conditioning and environment, more recent economics based theories portray them as rational decision makers who base their decisions to commit crimes on an analysis of the risks of the venture compared with the expected profits. That is, the criminal does a cost-benefit analysis (Becker 1968).



## Situational crime prevention

Situational crime prevention has been defined as 'the use of measures directed at highly specific forms of crime, which involve the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent a way as possible' (Hough et al 1980). It is sometimes referred to as 'primary prevention' or 'opportunity reduction'.

As we have pointed out, a situational approach to crime prevention has rational choice theory as its basis. That is, it rests on the assumptions that offenders freely and actively choose to commit crimes-, that the decision to commit the crime is made in response to the immediate circumstances and the immediate situation in which an offence is contemplated; and the motivation to offend is not constant or beyond control, i.e. it is dependent on a calculation of costs and rewards rather than being the result of inheriting or acquiring a disposition to offend (Bennett 1986).

Bennett considers the rational choice model in the light of information gathered on the behaviour of burglars. He argues that the decision to offend in the first place is socially or psychologically determined, but that the final decision - whether or not to offend against a particular target - is situationally determined. This means that situational factors are unlikely to motivate the unmotivated to offend, but they will influence the decision of someone who is committed to offending.

In practice this means that, instead of concentrating exclusively on dealing with the factors in a criminal's background or environment which might be causing him-1/her to commit a crime - e.g. poverty, poor education, inadequate socialisation - we design measures directly related to preventing criminal acts (Jeffery 1971).

There is no doubt that situational preventive measures can cut crime in areas like burglary, vandalism, shop crime and autocrime. The ability of situational crime prevention to cut the incidence of violence is, however, in dispute.

Trasler (1986) does not see this approach as working against violence, but Clarke and Mayhew (1988), analysing a decline in suicides over twelve years in England and Wales, concluded that the removal of carbon monoxide from domestic gas deterred large numbers of suicides, and that thousands of those potential suicides did not find other means of killing themselves. That is, the

reduction in opportunity caused a reduction in self-violence which was not displaced to another method.

On the basis of this evidence, they speculate that, if the incidence of suicide can be so dramatically affected by reduced opportunity, the same could be true of deep-seated criminal acts of sex and violence, and that situational crime prevention could be effective in dealing with some self-destructive drug and alcohol offences.

Situational crime prevention seems most relevant to offences which can be shown to cluster in time or space, and which are of a high rate (Poyner 1986).

Examples of successful situational crime prevention strategies include 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 (Cornish and Clarke 1986).

Situational crime prevention methods can operate at different levels, affecting the individual, the community or the physical environment (Bennett 1986).

In the case of crimes directed at households, initiatives which can be employed at the **individual level** include encouraging people to make their homes more secure - sometimes called 'target hardening'- and marking their property for easier identification. Responsibility rests with the individual householder; the police role is usually restricted to giving free specialist security advice.

At the **community level**, the most common situational crime prevention strategy is the Neighbourhood Watch campaign, in which people are encouraged to keep an eye on houses in the neighbourhoods and report suspicious incidents to the police. This program usually forms part of a comprehensive crime prevention program which also includes security surveys and property marking.

**Environmental design** focuses on improving street lighting, controlling access to buildings, restricting pedestrian and traffic flow, and dividing residential spaces into identifiable areas. The most ambitious environmental design schemes have been carried out in the United States.

The most advanced situational crime prevention is to be found

in the protection of the property of the rich, mostly through the use of expensive hardware, alarm systems, and even private guards. Similarly, Neighbourhood Watch is often easier to set up in affluent neighbourhoods than in poor areas. The challenge is to motivate those most in need of protection against crime to help themselves. This raises the need for a corporate or inter-agency response to crime prevention, rather than devolving all responsibility onto the individual.

An equal challenge is to convince government authorities and private organisations of the benefits of protecting themselves from crime. This means, among other things, convincing housing authorities to build anti-burglary measures into public housing estates; encouraging business-people to cut down opportunities for crime on their premises, and convincing car makers to install effective anti-theft devices such as steering locks in new cars, even those in the lower price ranges.

But when these strategies make it impossible or too risky for criminals to proceed, will they simply abandon the project; or will they come back another time, go somewhere else and commit a similar crime, or switch to another type of crime?

## **Displacement**

The most common criticism of situational crime prevention is that it does not solve the problem of crime, merely displaces it – i.e. the criminal tries again, there or somewhere else or turns to another type of crime. The displacement argument maintains that, if we stop burglaries in one area, the burglars may simply move to areas where the residents cannot afford to fortify their houses or are not sophisticated or socially-conscious enough to set up Neighbourhood Watch programs. So while crime might be reduced in one locality, it is held, the overall crime rate does not drop (Cornish and Clarke 1986).

Displacement appears to have occurred when steering-column locks were made compulsory on all new cars in Great Britain and thieves switched their operations to old cars; and where a police crackdown on subway robberies in New York was followed by an increase in street robberies (Cornish and Clarke 1986). In his study of offenders' behaviour, on the other hand, Bennett (1986) found that over half the burglars who were prevented from committing an offence said they 'usually' or 'sometimes' gave up and went

home. And many potential gas suicides in Britain did not go on to kill themselves by other means when domestic gas was detoxified (Clarke and Mayhew 1988).

Research seems to show that where the offender is not strongly committed to a crime, and where the costs and risks of committing the crime are high, displacement is unlikely; however, where the situation is reversed, displacement may well occur (Bennett 1986).

It would seem, then, that situational prevention can reduce crime by influencing the final decision of some potential offenders; and that even where displacement occurs, only a proportion of the initial potential offenders will pursue their intent to commit crime (Heal and Laycock 1986). That is, 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.

To minimise the likelihood of displacement, police and government agencies could concentrate their crime prevention efforts and funds in less-affluent areas.

### **Community crime prevention**

In the face of escalating crime rates, American law enforcement agencies have turned to the community for assistance. Criminal justice professionals admit that, in the absence of help from the public, neither more money and manpower, nor improved technology will substantially cut crime in America (Lindsay and McGillis 1986).

Household burglary, in particular, is an area of crime where collaboration between the community and the police is crucial. In fact, the householder is the only actor in a position to make a real difference to the burglary rate. Only a resident can make sure a household is secure; only a neighbour can recognise suspicious activity at a back door; only a householder can mark property with identifying numbers which help the police locate it if stolen.

A number of community crime-prevention programs have been run in the United States, with varying degrees of success.

A successful program was set up in Seattle in the 1970s to combat household burglaries. Police contacted local organisations and churches to publicise the program, a team of fieldworkers visited all households, and block watches of ten to fifteen households were established. Block watch groups organised property marking, and organisers carried out security surveys of

individual households to help owners identify and minimise security risks. In addition, field staff stayed on call to advise members of block watches.

An evaluation carried out by the Seattle Law and Justice Planning Office showed the project to have been very effective and worthy of being copied in other jurisdictions. The then National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice endorsed the Seattle Community Crime Prevention Project as an exemplary project and urged other jurisdictions across the country to adapt it to local conditions (Lindsay and McGillis 1986).

After examining evaluations of some community crime prevention projects in American cities, Robert Yin (1986) concluded the most successful were those involving a complex array of activities - for example, Neighbourhood Watch programs, police patrols, better communication between police and community, and better communication within the community through actions groups, newsletters, etc.

He also found that the most successful interventions against crime were those involving action by both residents and local police. This was demonstrated by police foot patrols set up in two different cities to reduce crime, where the more effective patrol was that in which the police consulted widely with the community and sought its co-operation before starting the patrols.

# Planning a crime prevention program

Because successful crime prevention measures must be tailored to specific conditions, it is not possible to recommend measures that fit all situations. There is, however, a planning process which is likely to lead to successful crime prevention programs (Poyner and Webb 1987).

The following steps are recommended for devising an effective crime prevention program, and should be followed in order.

- Search for local crime problems.
- Select specific crime problems.
- Analyse the crime problem you have selected.
- Consider a range of possible measures.
- Identify who will implement the measures.
- Document the implementation process.
- Monitor changes in the crime situation over a long period.
- Evaluate the program before proceeding with another.

## **Search for local crime problems**

Most projects arise out of a spontaneous recognition - or just a 'feeling' - that there is a crime problem, but Poyner and Webb (1987) have shown that more methodical research might reveal a different picture of the real crime problem in an area.

For example, when the distribution of crime was examined for the Hillfields public housing estate in Bristol, it became clear that burglary was more of a problem on one edge of the estate and elsewhere on the police beat than in the body of the estate where preventive measures were actually introduced. The right problem was being attacked, but in the wrong place.

Ideally, a crime survey should be carried out and a statistical crime map prepared. This exercise shows exactly what sorts of crimes are being committed, and where.

American student Francis Stoks demonstrated the value of

crime maps in his PhD dissertation, when he prepared a crime site analysis from a computer model of urban Seattle, and was able to predict with 95 per cent accuracy where rapes in public places would occur (Rosenbaum 1986).

Police already use computer and crime analysis units to help them apprehend criminals; by reworking their data, they could predict crime and take steps to prevent it.

Crime surveys could prove invaluable to many groups besides the police. For example, architectural firms and land developers could avoid or minimise many of the crime-producing features of urban development. (Ideally, all new construction proposals would go through a review panel for crime prevention evaluation and approval.)

Insurance companies involved in theft liability insurance could be made aware of crime prevention strategies and could reduce premiums for those who complied with certain crime prevention measures. Major hotel and motel chains, convenience store chains, banks and other potential targets could commission crime data analysis maps, and with the help of planning authorities and the police, could better plan their construction and development activities to minimise crime.

If a crime survey cannot be done, police data can be used, though it might have to be reworked to give a clear picture of crime in a locality. Other sources of information include housing department records, damage records for buses and trains from transport authorities, or local newspapers.

As well, the Australian Bureau of Statistics prepares crime victim surveys which give demographic details of crime. The first came out in 1975, and the latest contains statistics from 1983-84 (Victims of Crime Australia 1983). The Bureau will do statistical runs for specific geographic locations.

### **Select specific crime problem/s**

Crime prevention initiatives are more likely to be successful if they are directed at specific crime problems.

Poyner and Webb (1987) found in their case studies of situational crime prevention programs that measures had more effect on specific crimes than on crime in general. For example, the installation of entryphones at the main entrances of buildings in

the South Acton housing estate in Great Britain had more impact on vandalism in the communal entrance areas than on the burglary rate in the estate.

Similarly, it is often easier to fight crimes focused on one area. A cluster of burglaries in a small group of streets may, for example, be easier to deal with than a similar number spread across a whole neighbourhood.

### **Analyse the crime problem**

Crime measures are often chosen on insufficient analysis of the problem. At the Hillfields and South Acton Estates, where the results of crime prevention measures were disappointing, no detailed examination of the target crimes was made before crime prevention measures were activated (Poyner and Webb 1986). Thus anti-burglary measures were installed and expected to work even though the burglary problem had not been analysed.

### **Consider a range of possible measures**

Poyner and Webb concluded that a common characteristic of less successful projects was that they adopted stereotyped measures copied from general crime-prevention literature without considering their suitability for a particular problem.

At the Lisson Green Estate in Great Britain, for example, walkways were removed to reduce crime, but an evaluation of the program showed that blocking off the walkways and controlling access to residences would have been just as effective and much less expensive (Poyner and Webb 1987).

### **Identify who will implement the measures**

To succeed, crime prevention programs need an agency with sufficient resources and motivation to implement them. This is most likely to happen where the agency believes the measures will save money. Crime prevention measures can also be sold by showing that they will enhance improvements an agency is already making; for example if doors and windows have to be replaced, the new ones might as well be burglar and vandal-proof. Very often, measures can be successfully implemented at little expense as part of a wider program of improvements.



## **Document the implementation process**

It is often impossible to gauge the effectiveness of crime prevention measures in the absence of records about what sorts of intervention took place immediately before, during and after the measures were introduced. Results attributed to the crime prevention may actually be due to other causes. Poyner and Webb suggest that agencies keep a project diary to record all significant changes from the time the initiative is first considered until its evaluation is completed.

## **Monitor changes over a long period and evaluate the project**

Efforts must be made to evaluate the effectiveness of crime prevention initiatives before claims are made about their success or failure. It is often not easy to discern if crime has decreased. Case studies have sometimes revealed substantial crime reductions that nobody was aware of; and conversely, a number of major claims of crime reduction have evaporated on closer examination.

Poyner and Webb's (1986) evaluation of case studies showed that simple crime reductions rarely occurred. There were, however, some long-term impacts on crime, and these could only be identified by examining crime patterns over several years.

Lurigo and Rosenbaum (1986) found standard evaluations of community crime prevention programs in the United States seriously wanting. Evaluations must, therefore, be professional and long-term; this means using instruments that are sensitive to variations in crime over a long period. Data sources which provide a continuous record of crime or related incidents are preferable to survey instruments which can only record crime at discrete intervals.

It is also worth remembering that it is very difficult to make satisfactory evaluations when the total size of the crime problem is small. Good projects and large crime reductions are much easier to achieve when initial crime levels are high.

# Strategies for crime prevention

A model for devising situational crime prevention programs has been suggested by Marcus Felson (1987) who combines physical design and kinetic management in the fight against crime. Felson sees both criminals and victims as creatures of habit, going about 'routine activities'.

Felson's routine activity approach to crime analysis specifies three elements of crime – a likely offender, a suitable target, the absence of a capable guardian against crime or an 'intimate handler', i.e. a person close to the offender who is able to impose informal social control and prevent him/her from committing an offence. Crime occurs when victims and offenders converge in the absence of a guardian or intimate handler. Crime can be prevented by keeping potential offenders and potential victims apart.

Using this routine activity approach, Ronald Clarke and Marcus Felson (1988) have categorised a number of situational crime prevention strategies thrown up by successful case studies, namely:

*Reduce convergence of targets and offenders by:*

- separating the elderly from teenagers and children in public housing, for example.

*Constrain offenders by:*

- strengthening social controls, e.g. through smaller classes in schools to cut down vandalism and rowdyism;
- restricting access to facilitates or means of committing crimes, e.g. by placing a ban on aerosol paint sprays to juveniles;
- restricting access to disinhibitors such as alcohol which might lead some people to commit crimes, e.g. by banning the sale of alcohol at football games.

*Protect targets by:*

- target hardening through using vandal-resistant materials in public places, installing burglar-proof barriers in taxis;
- restricting access to places where crime could be committed, e.g. by placing entryphones on entrances to public housing to keep out intruders, and erecting barriers at bus queues to discourage pickpockets;
- reducing the value of the target, e.g. by inscribing belongings with identification numbers, and limiting the amount of money in cash registers;
- reducing visibility, e.g. by not undressing in front of a lighted window or by making sure a house looks occupied.

*Enhance guardianship by:*

- increasing surveillance, real or apparent, e.g. through Neighbourhood Watch, illuminating the inside of banks at night;
- assigning responsibility, e.g. by training employees to challenge potential offenders;
- increase the capability to intervene, e.g. through radios for bus drivers.

## Crime Prevention Programs

### **Preventing inner-city youth crime in France**

Following an epidemic of attacks on cars in the ghettos of Lyons and Marseille in the summer of 1981, the new Socialist Government introduced *été-jeunes* – a major program of summer camps and activities for young people – and set up a commission and two committees of inquiry into the underlying causes of youth unrest.

Both committees stressed the importance of improving the physical and social environments of major cities, particularly in depressed neighbourhoods with high immigrant populations, poor schools, high unemployment rates and poor housing conditions.

The report of the commission of mayors – the Bonnemaïson report – went much further and launched a multi-faceted attack on crime and its causes, urging immediate, decentralized state action. While a large number of the committee's recommendations were aimed at discouraging or controlling criminal behaviour, many were

also concerned with housing policies and with protecting valuable sections of the population.

The recommendations were designed to encourage social harmony in the cities, communal life, and support for victims, the young and social outcasts. They were also intended to reduce tensions between races and generations by promoting cultural pluralism and encouraging people to participate in the life and decision-making of their community.

The initiative for setting up local committees was left entirely to local councils. Two-thirds of towns and cities with populations between 9,000 and 30,000 complied.

The summer camps/activities program of 1982 was born out of two different approaches to crime prevention in deprived inner-city areas. The first, associated with children's judges and traditional social work, sees crime prevention as protecting young people from the dangers of their moral and social environment and poor living conditions. The second, a more political response, sees the answer in revitalising the inner cities by restoring community life and improving the physical and moral environment.

The summer camps combined these two approaches: they removed young people from trouble and kept an eye on them; and allowed them to take part in activities which interested them and gave them a positive image of themselves and their society while protecting them – at least temporarily – from their deprived environment. This approach piloted in the summer camps program was later to form the backbone of France's crime prevention policies (King 1988).

Changes to the administrative structure, made law in 1983, ensured that power and funding were devolved to the local level, and that national and local politicians became committed to making the crime prevention program succeed. Though social integration was the main objective, petty crime in all major cities has declined in summer.

### **Community crime prevention programs in the United States**

In the mid-1970s, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funded and published a series of national evaluations of specific crime prevention strategies such as citizen patrols, citizen crime reporting projects, Operation Identification and security surveys. This made crime prevention programs more visible.

Since then, citizen involvement in programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, Operation Identification and Home Security Surveys has become a national phenomenon.

In 1977 the US Government funded a consolidated effort in community crime prevention to the tune of \$30 million with the inauguration of LEAA's Community Anti-Crime Program. The money was to be used to 'assist community organisations and neighbourhood groups to become actively involved in activities designed to prevent crime, reduce fear of crime, and contribute to neighbourhood revitalisation' (US Department of Justice 1978 in Rosenbaum 1986). The Justice Department's assumption was that 'the formal criminal justice system by itself cannot control crime without help from neighbourhood residents in fostering neighbourhood-level social controls'.

Police have also recognised that police and citizens share responsibility for crime prevention. Many police departments are now exploring alternative strategies that encourage police to collaborate with neighbourhood residents, for example foot patrols, door-to-door contacts, store-front offices and security surveys (Rosenbaum 1986).

There have been a number of major American community crime prevention programs:

- The Seattle Community Crime Program was initiated in the early 1970s and staffed entirely by city employees. It attacked the problem of residential burglary with door-to-door organising of Seattle neighbourhoods.
- The Portland (Oregon) Anti-Burglary Program was implemented in 1973 as part of the LEAA-funded Impact Cities Program. It focused on citizen efforts to protect themselves and their neighbours from victimisation.
- An innovative and highly-publicised program to reduce crime and fear of crime in Hartford (Connecticut) in 1973 used a three-pronged approach involving changes in the physical environment, changes in police service, and efforts to organise neighbourhood residents.

Descriptions and evaluations of these and other community crime-prevention programs are available in Dennis Rosenbaum's book *Community Crime Prevention. Does It Work?*

## **The UK's standing conference on crime prevention**

Following a report on crime prevention - by the Cornish Committee, 1965 - a Standing Conference on Crime Prevention was established in the UK Home Office. It carried out a series of initiatives and demonstration projects.

The Standing Conference is an advisory body made up of representatives from local and central government, the police, the voluntary sector, the business community and industry. Its goal is to involve all sections of the community in the prevention of crime.

To address specific crime prevention questions, the Conference holds annual Working Groups drawing its membership from experts in that field.

Working Groups report on such areas as residential burglary, commercial robbery, car security, violence associated with licensed premises and shop theft.

As well, crime prevention programs involving changes to the physical environment of public housing estates have been mounted, for example, at the Hillfields, South Acton and Lisson Green estates. And a major property marking program was carried out in South Wales between 1983 and 1985 with a view to reducing burglaries.

## **NACRO**

In 1975 the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) launched a pilot project in a badly vandalised housing project in Cheshire, and this marked the beginning of the neighbourhood approach to crime prevention. Its distinctive features were consultation with tenants and the involvement of a number of agencies in improving the social and physical environment of public housing estates.

More recently, NACRO has begun to develop a notion of 'community safety', emphasising the positive aspects of community involvement.

## **Local initiatives**

At the local level, Crime Prevention Panels have been in operation in some areas for over twenty years. These groups

comprise members of the public and were originally chaired by police. On the recommendation of a Working Group of the Home Office Standing Conference their guidelines were revamped in 1985 and police were relegated to an advisory capacity.

Neighbourhood Watch was introduced in 1982 and has grown to 42,000 groups.

### Five towns demonstration project

In 1985, in response to requests from local authorities, police and voluntary organisations for guidance in setting up crime prevention schemes, the Home Office established demonstration projects in five towns - Bolton, North Tyneside, Wellingborough, Croydon and Swansea. Funded for eighteen months by central and local government, the initiative was designed to generate public confidence that crime and fear of crime could be reduced. When central government financial support ran out, the results were encouraging enough to attract funding from a variety of other sources so work could continue, and several towns have reported significant reductions in crime (U.K. Home Office 1988).

### Ministerial Group

In 1986 an Interdepartmental Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention was set up, with the first of its seminars chaired by the Prime Minister. In the same year, among other crime prevention initiatives, \$15 million was spent by the Department of Transport to reduce crime and disorder on the underground railway system.

Under the influence of this new crime prevention policy, police training has been revamped, private enterprise managers are increasingly taking account of security at the design stage of production, and insurance companies encourage householders to take security precautions by offering financial incentives.

### Manpower programs

In 1987, 8,000 places under the Manpower Service Commission's Community Programme were specifically allocated to crime prevention work. A number of organisations, public and private, run schemes under this Crime Prevention and Community Programme Initiative, involving protecting people and property and

developing social and community activities. Examples include lock fitting schemes for old and disadvantaged people; improved management in tower block housing; providing support for women victims of domestic violence; youth activities in disadvantaged areas, and crime prevention advice and publicity material.

## Publicity

In 1988 the Home Office launched a major publicity campaign to promote crime prevention throughout the country. It included a glossy brochure/manual – *Practical Ways to Crack Crime* featuring advice on keeping the family, home, possessions, neighbourhood, community and workplace safe, and two-page advertisements promoting the manual in national newspapers.

## Further information

Descriptions and evaluations of crime-prevention programs in the UK can be found in *Situational Crime Prevention. From Theory into Practice*, edited by Kevin Heal and Gloria Laycock (1986) for the British Home Office Research and Planning Unit; and in *Successful Crime Prevention Case Studies* by Barry Poyner and Barry Webb (1987).

## Crime prevention in Canada

The major government support for crime prevention in Canada is provided by the Ministry of the Solicitor General, and the police are the primary organisers of crime prevention programs. With its national scope and clearly-defined administrative hierarchy, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has well-developed crime prevention policies and provides an integrated core for police sponsored crime prevention activities (Brantingham 1986).

RCMP officers work full time on crime prevention activities and operate a national crime prevention training program. Crime prevention practitioners' associations have been formed so crime prevention officers can develop support networks.

The major Canadian crime prevention activities and programs fall into three categories: community surveillance, most often through neighbourhood or block watch; property marking through Operation Identification; and target hardening.



## **Australian initiatives**

Spurred on by the insurance industry, most state governments have introduced Neighbourhood Watch programs – which include target hardening and property marking activities – and the Northern Territory is in the process of introducing a program. There are also moves afoot to set up Business Watch, in New South Wales a Marina Watch is proposed in a south coast resort, and a Stock Watch is being organised to prevent theft of farm animals in rural areas. A Schools Watch is foreshadowed.

The State Rail Authority in New South Wales commissioned a study on vandalism and graffiti from the Institute of Criminology and is implementing recommendations made in the Institute's report. Telecom, the national telecommunications body, together with the Institute of Criminology and Australia's police forces, is currently examining the problem of telephone vandalism and has already initiated a number of changes including modifications to equipment, relocation of some call boxes and better lighting around phone boxes.

Most recently, in response to community concern about a spate of violent attacks on women in inner- Canberra in 1988, the minister in charge of the administration of the Australian Capital Territory instituted a situational crime prevention program aimed at making the streets safe.

Initially the Government will be looking to upgrade lighting in dangerous parts of the city, and cutting down hedges and shrubbery which can hide offenders and shield car parks from surveillance by passers-by. As well, the government will be examining the inner city closely with a view to modifying the environment, wherever possible, to reduce opportunities for criminal activity.

# Conclusions

Crime is a multi-faceted problem: there is no easy fix.

Research and experience have, however, provided us with insights into the nature of crime which can help us fight back.

Sanctions against criminals are failing to deter increasing numbers of offenders, and the legal and correctional systems are groaning under the weight of business. For their part, citizens are groaning under the burden of the costs associated with escalating crime – of more police, of improved court systems, of more gaols, of insurance, of locks and bars and grilles on their homes.

American criminal justice professionals have freely admitted that they cannot hope to combat crime without the help of the community; other countries are rapidly reaching the same conclusion. Citizens cannot go about arresting offenders, and we would not wish to see any increase in the number of citizens bearing arms, so the answer is obvious – crime prevention, particularly situational crime prevention. We are not recommending situational crime prevention as the complete solution to crime, however but only as part of a global strategy including better policing and programs to alleviate the social conditions which encourage crime.

For the individual householder, situational crime prevention is the most effective approach to protecting him or herself from victimisation and fear, but this approach has much wider scope. It can be employed by housing authorities to make public housing more secure, by transport authorities to cut down graffiti and vandalism on trains and buses, by education departments trying to battle school arsonists.

Those who oppose situational crime prevention usually do so on the grounds that one person's security is simply another person's vulnerability. That is, they believe criminals who are deterred from committing a crime in one area by tight security or neighbourhood surveillance will simply move their criminal activities elsewhere.

We have carefully considered the question of displacement of crime, and have come to two conclusions. Firstly, it is highly unlikely that all thwarted criminals will go on to commit a crime in all cases; therefore situational crime prevention cuts the crime rate and is to be recommended on that basis. And secondly, displacement can be fought - if it occurs - by concentrating crime prevention efforts where they are obviously needed most, among those least likely to be able to defend themselves - the elderly, those in inner-city, low-income areas, and tenants in public housing.

As neither crime nor fear of crime is distributed homogeneously across the population, crime prevention needs to be promoted and implemented differently in different areas.

The task in inner-city areas, where people usually have an accurate picture of the extent of local crime, is to convince them they can protect themselves from crime through their own efforts. In areas where crime rates are low, but fear of crime is high, the message has to be communicated that crime is not out of control, but that sensible measures must be maintained for the continued well-being of the community.

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