SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

G reat Britain's Home Office is roughly equivalent to the U.S. Department of Justice. Within this agency was a small research unit, located during the 1970s at Romney House on Marsham Street, a 5-minute walk from Scotland Yard. There, in 1973, a 31-year-old research officer named Ron Clarke had just completed a study of why youths abscond from borstals (American translation: why juvenile delinquents run away from reform school).

The usual social science variables did not successfully explain why some boys ran away whereas others stayed put. But Clarke learned that most boys ran away on weekends, when staffing and supervision were light. Because these were not prisons and staff members were not guards, their influence was largely informal. Merely by their presence, adults could prevent a certain amount of trouble, including absconding. With these results, Clarke began to think of crime in general as the result of human situations and opportunities.[1]

In 1976, with Pat Mayhew, A. Sturman, and J. M. Hough, Clarke published *Crime as Opportunity,* which explained many inexpensive ways to reduce crime by removing the opportunity to carry it out. Over time, this has become known as *situational crime prevention.* Clarke later headed the Research and Planning Unit of the Home Office. Under his leadership, several British researchers inside and outside the government created or discovered real-life crime prevention experiments that helped provide a major alternative theory of crime and practical guidelines for its prevention.

Clarke has encouraged or assisted others to study situational crime prevention examples with systematic data and to write up these studies. As it has evolved, situational crime prevention today includes at least 25 categories of prevention (Cornish & Clarke, 2003) and perhaps more than 200 case studies. Situational crime prevention seeks inexpensive means to reduce crime in three general ways:

1. Design safe *settings*. That includes the many methods presented in the previous chapter.

2. Organize effective *procedures*. That includes planning and carrying out the best management principles.

3. Develop secure *products*. That means making cars, stereos, and other products more difficult to steal or abuse (Clarke & Newman, 2005).

Indeed, the crime prevention repertoire is growing so greatly that it offers alternatives should one measure be politically or ethically problematic (see Felson & Clarke, 1997b; von Hirsch, Garland, & Wakefield, 2000). Settings, procedures, and products cover a wide range of crime prevention ideas, which no one person could learn in an entire lifetime. With Clarke's and others' multitude of examples, it is no longer possible to dismiss situational crime prevention as simply installing a better lock. Certainly, this field has produced many subtleties and surprises, dozens of books and monographs, and hundreds of articles (see the POP Center Web site, www.popcenter.org, for the Situational Crime Prevention Evaluation Database, a collection of articles about evaluations of situational crime prevention initiatives; for review of research literature, see also Clarke, 2004; Clarke & Eck, 2005; Clarke & Newman, 2005; Guerrette & Clarke, 2003; Knuttsson & Clarke, 2006; Maxfield & Clarke, 2004; Newman & Clarke, 2003; Smith & Clarke, 2000).

It is increasingly evident that situational crime prevention offers society the best chance for a quick and inexpensive way to reduce crime slice by slice. Thus, Clarke provides not only specific examples, but also principles for inventing your own crime prevention measures. Recently, Clarke and colleague Graeme Newman (2006) have applied the principles of situational crime prevention to terrorism in their book *Outsmarting the Terrorists*.

SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIME ANALYSIS

Clarke and his associates adopted the following policy:

- Do not worry about academic theories. Just go out and gather facts about crime from nature herself (i.e., by observing, interviewing offenders, etc.). (This is not to say you should throw all your education to the wolves. It merely tells you that science has to gather facts and learn from them.)
- Focus on very specific slices of crime, particularly behaviors and environments (as discussed in Chapter 2), such as vandalism against telephones or soccer violence. Even the crime of "vandalism" would be far too broad!
- Do not try to improve human character. You are certain to fail.
- Try to block crime in a practical, natural, and simple way, at low social and economic cost.
- Do small-scale experiments, especially looking for natural environments (see Chapter 11) in which to study each slice of the crime prevention puzzle.
- Use very simple statistics and charts that let you see each comparison directly.

Perhaps we could sum up his approach in three words: "Don't get fancy."

Clarke sometimes claims that he really has no interest in theory, and that his only goal is to find practical ways to prevent crime. This surprises many conventional criminologists, but being practical poses a very good discipline on us all. Make it work! If it does not work, it probably is not very good science in the first place. If it does work, science will improve, too.

Another reason that situational crime prevention is a contribution to crime analysis is that it helps us understand offenders, targets, guardians, and their convergences. Clarke seeks to accomplish prevention by making each criminal act appear

- Difficult
- Risky
- Unrewarding

That breaks down crime into components that can then be explored—exactly what science is all about.

PREVENTING PROPERTY CRIME

A good deal of this chapter presents specific examples of successful situational crime prevention. They have been selected to tell a story. Included are crime prevention methods that were discovered accidentally, those involving criminologists, and others involving people who never heard of situational crime prevention, but did it anyway and were successful! Whether planned or not, people have acquired a variety of crime prevention experience well worth sharing.

Trouble on Double-Deck Buses

Our illustration of situational crime prevention begins with the problem of vandalism against Britain's traditional red double-deck buses. The Home Office researchers (Clarke, 1978) learned that most of the vandalism was on the upper deck, usually in the back row, where supervision was least likely to occur. They also learned that the traditional British bus conductor had a major role in preventing vandalism. A bus conductor would ascend the stairs to the upper deck to collect fares and thus serve as a guardian against the crime of vandalism.

Because some companies had removed the conductor to save money, whereas other companies had not, this was a natural experiment. Those buses with conductors had less vandalism, but they also had more assaults on conductors. This is an instance of how crime prevention can sometimes backfire, solving one crime but leading to another. This example also establishes that situational crime prevention is far from obvious, sometimes producing unexpected results.

Correcting the Criminal Use of Telephones

Ronald Clarke and associates have developed a growing literature on the criminal side of telephones and what to do about it (Exhibit 10.1). They have shown that obscene phone calls can be thwarted by caller identification

services; drug transactions are impaired by pay phones that only call out; fraudulent international calls from pay phones are impossible when phones exclude common paths for the fraud; and stolen or cloned cell phones can be designed to fail for anybody but the owner. Clarke, Kemper, and Wyckoff (2001) documented more than $1.3 billion in cell phone fraud losses during 1995 to 1996. Six technical changes were designed to cut off fraud quickly:

1. Computer profiling to detect strange call patterns

2. Personal identification numbers (PINs)

3. Precall validation by computers

4. Operator checks

5. Radio wave checks

6. Encrypted checks of each phone

These adjustments resulted in a 97% cut in cell phone fraud.

Exhibit 10.1   Phone-Related Crime and Situational Solutions

Phone Crime Problem	*Technical Solution*	*Reference*
a. Obscene phone calls	Caller ID	Clarke, 1997a
b. Drug transactions	Only call out	Natarajan, Clarke, & Johnson, 1995
c. Fraudulent long-distance from pay phones	Programmed to exclude common frauds	Bichler & Clarke, 1996
d. Stolen or cloned cell phones	Designed to fail when stolen	Clarke, Kemper, & Wyckoff, 2001
e. Telephone vandalism	Remove or harden targets	Challinger, 1992

Telephones are important facilitators in drug transactions. Mangai Natarajan, Ronald Clarke, and Mathieu Belanger, in ongoing work, are paying close attention to the use of telephones for doing illegal work. Some localities have thwarted outdoor retail drug dealing by having pay phones

- Moved inside of businesses for extra supervision
- Programmed to call out but not receive calls
- Removed entirely

Car Theft Is Preventable

The interesting case of steering wheel locks preventing car theft already was offered in the Chapter 8 discussion on displacement. Additional information about thwarting motor vehicle theft is found in several studies (Brown, 1995; Brown & Billing, 1996; Southall & Ekblom, 1985). Clarke and Harris (1992) listed numerous technical changes that the auto industry can contribute to help reduce auto theft. Several of these are already common in cars today. Many cars have better security locks for steering columns, doors, and the hood. Door buttons today are more difficult to pull up with a clothes hanger. Window glass is often harder to break. Many models make it difficult to leave your keys in the ignition. Smart keys, elimination of external keyholes, and electronic immobilization after break-ins are no longer confined to the most expensive models.

Manufacturers have improved some of those models listed as most stolen by the Highway Loss Data Institute (see Exhibit 2.3). Tremendous strides in car stereo security have combined with lower fence values, thereby interfering with their theft. The time it takes to steal a car has increased, and the pure amateur has more problems than ever. Brown and Billing (1996) show that more secure cars lead to less theft in Britain, and the American auto industry experience shows that cars with disastrous theft problems can be redesigned for crime prevention and their good names restored. By the time you read this, a new design will have been developed, probably for a model that got into the national media as thieves' favorite.

On the other hand, cars have expensive gadgets or parts to steal, such as GPS units or catalytic converters, both of which have been hot items in recent years. Another example is airbags, which are quickly pried out and sold for about $1,000 for installation in cars at repair shops (for cars where the bags were

deployed or even stolen!). This illustrates what Ekblom refers to as an "arms race" between offenders and forces of crime control. Crime is never permanently prevented, but neither do we get anywhere against crime when we do not try.

Beyond the automobile industry, inexpensive technology already exists to put a personal identification number into every new and valuable electronic item, such as a plasma television or DVD player. The product would not work outside your home unless you entered the right number. It would lose its value to a thief. It also should be possible to program something within your electrical system so an appliance removed from your home would not work elsewhere without punching in the code. Industry could make a major contribution to society by designing and selling more products that go kaput when stolen (see Clarke, 1999, 2004; Clarke & Newman, 2005; Felson, 1997).

A Serendipitous Finding About Motorcycle Theft

American motorcyclists keep complaining about having to put on their helmets and campaigning to stop helmet laws. If they only knew. Wherever helmet safety laws were enacted and enforced, thefts of motorcycles went down greatly.

To understand why, note that many motorcycle thefts are for joyriding and occur on the spur of the moment. The likely offender usually does not have a big motorcycle helmet with him at the time he sees a shiny motorcycle. When Germany enacted and enforced its motorcycle helmet law, thefts went down and stayed down, with no indication of displacement to other vehicle theft (Mayhew, Clarke, & Eliot, 1989).

We see that significant crime prevention can occur completely without planning. Even a very simple change in the law can have a great impact. Because wearing a helmet is highly visible behavior, it provides tangible evidence that the law is being followed and that the motorcycle probably is not stolen.

Saving Billions on Retail Theft

Not all prevention occurs with across-the-board laws enacted centrally. Some crime prevention requires more "personal service." For example, a retail store has to take into account its particular doors, layout, pedestrian flow, and hours of operation in planning for prevention. Good management and crime prevention go hand in hand within retail stores. A well-managed and well-organized

retail store will not only have less shoplifting and employee theft but will usually enjoy more sales and better morale among employees (Clarke, 2002).

Retail stores use many prevention methods. More frequent inventories and audits help to discourage employee theft. Requiring that all merchandise be put in plastic bags that cinch at the top instead of in large open paper bags with large handles makes it harder for a customer to slip something unpaid for into his or her bag. Designing exit routes carefully encourages people to pay for their merchandise as they walk out. Tags that beep when not deactivated discourage shoplifters. To reduce fraudulent returning of items, major department stores put a separate sticker with a scanner code on every price tag at purchase. The sticker is scanned along with the price tag, so any clothes returned have to have that exact yellow sticker. Electronic systems for detecting merchandise are increasingly available at low prices, paying for themselves in loss reduction within a year or two. Robert DiLonardo's (1997) evaluation shows that tags can be tremendously successful in reducing thefts from stores. Barry Masuda (1993, 1997) shows that employee theft also can be reduced.

Retailers can easily lose thousands of dollars in merchandise out the door. In a few seconds, thieves can grab stacks of expensive garments and run to a waiting car. The well-managed store combines comprehensive planning with situational crime prevention to prevent such losses. For the back door, it is essential to schedule deliveries carefully so people do not take away more than they deliver. For the front door, a clever merchant learned to alternate the directions of hangers on the rack so they lock when grabbed. This small but ingenious idea is clearly superior to letting people steal and then waiting for the criminal justice system to find and punish them.

Our knowledge about retail crime has increased greatly in recent years (see Beck & Willis, 1995, 1999; Clarke, 2002; Gill, 1994; Hayes, 1997a, 1997b). A broader field of business crime analysis is offered in two collections of essays (Felson & Clarke, 1997a; Felson & Peiser, 1998). As you read these sources, you will realize that crime prevention should not simply be left to the public sector, although public officials can do an excellent job of preventing crime when they put their minds to it.

Refusing to Accept Subway Graffiti

For many years, the subway trains of New York City were covered inside and out with graffiti and surely were among the ugliest anywhere. Moreover,

the transit system was in chaos, ridership was dropping, and employee morale was low. Many efforts and policies had failed to correct the problems.

Then David Gunn became president of the New York City Transit Authority and announced the Clean Car Program. The aim of the program was to clean off graffiti immediately. Graffiti painters thus would get no satisfaction from their work traveling all over town. New York City's subway cars never returned to the graffiti levels before the program (see Sloan-Howitt & Kelling, 1997). One lesson of the program: Find out exactly what potential offenders want from crime and take it away from them.

Another subway system far distant from New York City prevented graffiti in fixed locations using a very different plan. The Swedish government calls the Stockholm Metro the world's longest art gallery. More than half of its stations have artwork, including mosaics, paintings, engravings, and bas-reliefs. They may not win aesthetic fame, but the artists knew how to beat the graffiti painters with textures and colors. Each of these techniques was used: multicolors, surfaces that are either unusually rough or highly polished, and walls that were either sharply uneven or blocked with metal grills.

Art Theft Appreciation

Art theft is surprisingly common in New York City art galleries. Truc-Nhu Ho (1998) studied 229 such thefts from 45 art dealers. Although the statistics are limited, they show that art thefts fit patterns (see also Conklin, 1994, on routine activities and art theft; James, 2000). Art thieves

- Detest abstract art
- Avoid galleries with security checks
- Hate galleries near active nightlife
- Turn up their noses at large objets d'art
- Appreciate realistic paintings and sculptures
- Prefer galleries on the ground floor on quiet streets
- Resonate with art that has price tags affixed

The discerning art dealer should study art through the eyes of thieves.

Putting Lighting Into Focus

It is not so simple to say "Turn on the lights."

In the 1970s, it was very common for cities to fight crime by scattering streetlights without plan. Consider the logic for why this failed (Pease, 1999):

- Criminal activity is concentrated at or near specific places or blocks (Eck & Weisburd, 1995; Weisburd et al., 2004).
- Streetlight campaigns have often led to scattering placement without plan.

Totally *unplanned* lighting had little effect on crime. As a result, some analysts went to an extreme position, claiming that lighting cannot reduce crime. Ken Pease (1999) refers to these people as the "disciples of darkness."

Yet Painter and Farrington (1997) produced a rigorous study, with victim surveys showing a 41% reduction in crime in the lighting-enhanced area, compared to a 15% reduction in the control area. We have to conclude that lighting has a major possible contribution to reducing crime.

At the same time, lighting can *increase* crime in some cases. Lights can help a burglar see what he is doing. Lights can draw students back to school for after-hours vandalism. Lights can glare in the eyes of victims or guardians. Lights can make a better hangout for getting drunk and becoming disorderly. Thus, lights should not be placed without thought. Lighting can be highly effective in reducing crime when it is *clearly focused on the problem at hand* (Clarke, 2008; Painter & Farrington, 1997; Painter & Tilley, 1999; Pease, 1999).

In an excellent intellectual and factual review of the topic, Pease (1999) noted that a number of cities with strategic improvement of lighting clearly showed decreased crime rates. He also worked out how to think about lighting and to disaggregate the mechanisms whereby it might affect crime. Exhibit 10.2 shows his 17 different ways in which lighting can affect crime. The exhibit explains why lighting can lead to either more crime or less. It also shows that lighting can, surprisingly, affect crime in the daytime. For example, lights can give cues, even in daytime, that the area is not good for crime. It can keep people from moving out of the area, with fewer "for sale" signs to assist burglars in finding empty places to break into. After reading Exhibit 10.2, try to defend the position that the relationship between street lighting and crime is not a sophisticated enough topic for those of us in higher education to study.

Exhibit 10.2   Lighting Affects Crime in Many Ways

A. How More Lights Might *Reduce* Crime After Dark

  1. Get people to spend late time in the yard or garden, serving as guardians.
  2. Encourage people to walk more after dark, serving as guardians.
  3. Make offenders more visible to guardians.
  4. Make police on patrol more visible to offenders.

B. How More Lights Might *Increase* Crimes After Dark

  1. Draw people away from home, assisting burglars.
  2. Give offenders a better look at potential targets of crime.
  3. Assist offenders in checking for potential guardians against crime.
  4. Get nearby areas to *seem* darker, helping offenders to escape into them.

C. How More Lights Might *Reduce* Crimes in Daytime

  1. Put new guardians on the street, those installing and maintaining lights.
  2. Show official commitment; local citizens then cooperate in crime prevention.
  3. Give cues—even in daytime—that the area is not good for crime.
  4. Provide a talking point for citizens, who then get to know one another.
  5. Keep people from moving out (fewer "for sale" signs to assist burglars).
  6. Apprehend more offenders after dark, with fewer left for daytime offending.

D. How More Lights Might *Increase* Crimes in Daytime

  1. Make it easy to pretend to be an electrical or maintenance employee.
  2. Provide more nighttime fun that carries over to daytime drunkenness.
  3. Set up new nighttime hangouts that might spill over as daytime trouble spots.

SOURCE: Adapted from Pease, K. (1999). A Review of Street Lighting Evaluations: Crime Reduction Efforts. In K. Painter and N. Tilley (Eds.), *Surveillance of Public Space: CCTV, Street Lighting and Crime Prevention.* Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

Music and Control

People are influenced not only by what they see but also by what they hear. Young people generally do not like classical music and will go away when it is played. That's far better than nightsticks and imprisonment. Music is also suitable for calming people down, as wise disc jockeys well know. When music is aggressive, crowds in bars are rowdiest (Scott & Dedel, 2006). The type of dancing also has a major influence on their behavior, with wilder dancing making people bump and, sometimes, fight. Yet the topic of music and crime has been little studied. Psychology students with expertise in perception and human factors are especially likely to break new ground in explaining how music provides cues that affect criminal behavior.

Situational Degeneration

Not only can crime situations be improved, but they can also be exacerbated. Thus, a store manager can remove crime control measures and cause shoplifting to rise. A homeowner can let well-trimmed bushes grow up, to the benefit of local burglars. A car manufacturer can cut costs by putting in cheaper steering wheel locks. One of the challenges of crime analysis is to put situational prevention and *situational degeneration* within the same intellectual framework. There is no better place to start than the study of violence.

PREVENTING VIOLENT CRIME

It is quite a mistake to think that situational crime prevention applies only to property crime. Understanding situational features of violence has grown considerably in recent years. The greatest source of progress stems from recognizing that violence is goal oriented and responds to cues from physical settings. As Chapter 3 explained, a book by James Tedeschi and Richard Felson (1994) shows us that all violence is goal oriented. A person might use violence (a) to get others to comply with wishes, (b) to restore justice as he perceives it, or (c) to assert and protect his self-image or identity. (As we shall see, these goals often make violence highly amenable to situational crime prevention as well.) A simple robbery starts out with the robber demanding your money and using

or threatening force to get it. The robber is simply getting you to comply with his wishes—receiving your money without an argument. But if you challenge the robber in front of his co-offender, he may harm you to assert and protect his own identity (the third reason for violence). That is why it is best not to have a big mouth when someone is pointing a gun at you (see situational degeneration, above). It's also best not to go around giving people grievances against you; they may decide to restore justice. Fights between drunken young males usually occur as attempts to assert and protect identity. Road rage is often an effort to meet the second goal, restoring justice. Domestic violence can meet all three purposes (see R. Felson & Outlaw, 2007).

Even with predatory violence, although generally oriented toward the first purpose—gaining compliance—offenders will sometimes seek to protect identity or restore justice. For example, youths angry at the store owner who yelled at them may rob him not only for loot but also to retaliate and punish. Remember, all these evaluations are based on the *offender's viewpoint*. To understand violent or nonviolent crime, we cannot be distracted by our own moral outrage, or by the legal code, or by objective facts about what a person *ought* to think of others. If the guy in the bar hit you because he *thinks* you insulted him, the fact that he heard you wrong is entirely beside the point.

You might readily guess that alcohol plays a major role in violence. It gives people big mouths and big ears. Big mouths help people make aggressive statements that provoke counterattacks and restoration of justice. Big mouths also help people to provoke others into fights. Alcohol makes bigger ears by getting people to hear things that were not said. Managing alcohol is part of preventing violence (see Scott & Dedel, 2006).

Sports Events and Revelry

Speaking of alcohol, British football (soccer) has an unfortunate pattern of serious—and sometimes fatal—violence. Many fans arrive hours before a game, get drunk, and then commit acts of violence, many against fans of the visiting team. Because most of those involved in the violence do not own cars and therefore take buses to the games, the government arranged for these buses to arrive at the game later than in the past, allowing only a few minutes to buy a ticket and no time to get drunk. The effect was a reduction in football violence (Clarke, 1983).

Sweden also has a problem with alcohol-related violence, especially on one day each year. Midsummer's Eve (usually June 21) is the longest day of the year. In much of Sweden, this day has 24 hours of light. It is the most important holiday of the year. Swedes are usually reserved people, but they make an exception on Midsummer's Eve. A common behavior pattern is to get drunk and run wild. People also start bonfires, which sometimes get out of hand and burn more than intended. Moreover, many assaults occur on Midsummer's Eve. The crowds are far larger and wilder than anything police can handle, so deterrence loses its credibility. A more sensible policy was planned by Swedish authorities: They provided bonfires in designated and advertised locations and sought to channel the holiday spirit into these settings. Their efforts paid off by reducing assaults and other illegal behavior (see Bjor, Knutsson, & Kuhlhorn, 1992).

Compared with events like football games in Britain, American sports venues usually are not bad. The probable reason is that American teams try to sell a lot of tickets to families and business groups. This results in people of mixed ages and both sexes. Even in hockey, with its violence on the ice, there is reasonable peace in the stands. We all know of exceptions, but the rule remains.

American sports venues try to prevent people from bringing in their own bottles. This probably is so that they can sell more drinks, but they also use security justifications. They generally sell soft drinks and beer to the larger crowd, with hard drinks sold only within the corporate boxes. Beer sales are cut off later in the game, when some fans are a bit too drunk. Security people with binoculars keep an eye on the crowd to see if there are fights or if fans are getting dangerous. They then cut off the beer sales in that section or even start watering down the beer. Because beer is highly profitable to management, cutting off beer sales reduces proceeds, but it clearly enhances safety. Watering the beer gets the heavy drinkers to complain, but management is glad to give them their money back and have the drinking dwindle.

To prevent conflicts and fights when people are going out of a stadium, the strategy is to keep people moving, whether in cars or on foot, so they have little time to linger or to get mad. A well-managed stadium looks for bottle-necks where crowds cannot move, relieving the traffic problem quickly as a service to customers and as a way to prevent trouble (for a concise summary of literature and evaluation of strategies for spectator violence in stadiums, see Madsen & Eck, 2008).

Cruising

In many European and Hispanic nations, young people walk around the center of town on weekend evenings. The United States version of this activity is cruising in cars. Cruising creates traffic jams and interferes with business. The automobile spreads adolescent activity over more space and makes it harder to prevent trouble; thus, vandalism and assaults become more serious (see Felson, Berends, Richardson, & Veno, 1997; Wikstrom, 1995). Many U.S. cities have enacted special cruising ordinances or enforce traffic and parking ordinances more heavily in trying to control cruising (for a concise summary of literature and evaluation of strategies for cruising, see Glensor & Peak, 2004).

As explained by authors John Bell and Barbara Burke (1992), the city of Arlington, Texas, found that cruising by more than 1,000 cars was creating a major traffic jam on its main street for hours at a time. Ambulances could not get to hospitals, and little else in the way of normal city business could happen. Conventional traffic control methods were doing little good.

City Councilman Ken Groves learned that teenagers wanted two things: an unstructured and unsupervised environment in which to mingle, and restrooms. He speculated that if these were provided, most teenagers would act reasonably. A "cruising committee" was formed to link local agencies, businesses, the University of Texas at Arlington, and teenage representatives.

The committee devised a plan for the city to lease a large parking lot from the university and open it to cruisers on weekend nights while providing unobtrusive police protection, portable restrooms, and cleanup the next morning. Within two weekends, the new cruising area was in use by 1,000 parked or circling cars. The program channeled cruising into a smaller and safer area and pleased both teenagers and adults, while providing the gentle controls of a few police officers on the side.

The lesson of the program is that a crime problem may be related to another problem; solve the other problem, and the crime problem takes care of itself. In this case, the problem was to provide youths with an outlet for a social need in the context of the local situation. When this was done, the related crime problems dissipated.

Foul Play in College Water Polo

Many situational crime prevention measures emerge entirely by accident. An interesting example has to do not with a "crime" as such but with rule

violations in the game of water polo. A former student was a water polo coach at the collegiate level and explained quite frankly how to cheat. When a member of the other team is about to get the ball or move toward the goal, simply put your hand inside his bathing suit, and he cannot proceed. This common form of foul play happens entirely under water, where the referees often fail to see it. The incentives to foul are strong and the controls are weak.

Water polo play got quite a bit cleaner some years ago. This did not happen because of more punishment or because players underwent moral regeneration; rather, new chemicals made the pool water less murky, so rule violations were easier to detect. As pools got clearer, water polo play got cleaner.

Barhopping and Bar Problems

On any given weekend night, more than 6,000 people from the surrounding towns and suburbs would go into Geelong, Australia, to socialize and drink alcohol. Some groups, drunk on the streets, would commit thefts or get into fights with one another. A typical pattern was this:

1. Drive to a packaged liquor outlet to purchase beer.

2. Drink beer in the car for an initial effect.

3. Go to the nearest bar for special prices.

4. Move to the next bar for its specials.

5. Go back to the car and drink more.

At this point, some people would use empty bottles as missiles to throw at people or property. The bars not only involved males in these efforts but also gave free drinks to young females to attract males. As the situation got worse, there were attacks on pub personnel. Bars worried about the money they lost by offering so many specials.

The police decided to do something and got the bar owners or managers together with the liquor board. They formulated "The Accord," a set of policies to discourage barhopping and other alcohol-related problems. It had more than a dozen provisions, but the most important were these:

- Cover charges to enter bars after 11:00 p.m.
- Denial of free reentry after someone exits

- No free drinks or promotions
- No extended happy hours
- A narrower drink price range
- Enforcement against open containers on the street

The Accord was a success in removing most of the street drinking and pub hopping, while reducing the violence and other crime problems in the central city (Felson, 1997).

Other important insights are provided by Ross Homel, Marg Hauritz, Gillian McIlwain, Richard Wortley, and Russell Carvolth (1997) in their study of drunkenness and violence around nightclubs in Surfer's Paradise, an Australian tourist resort. Tourists generate a lot of crime victimization and offending alike (see Pizam & Mansfield, 1996; Stangeland, 1995). The problems and policies that Homel's group discusses, however, can apply to any entertainment district. Among the alcohol policy features considered were

- Reduction of binge-drinking incentives, such as happy hours
- Low- and non-alcohol drinks and lower prices for them
- Staff policies to avoid admitting intoxicated persons
- Food and snacks available more of the time
- Varied clientele, not just hard drinkers
- Smaller glasses or drinks not as strong
- Strategies for dealing with problem customers
- Security training

The result was a substantial reduction in drunkenness and violence around the nightclubs.

Perhaps it is not surprising that a surgeon would be most aware of the ugly injuries from bar glasses. Jonathan Shepherd and his colleagues (see Shepherd, Brickley, Gallagher, & Walker, 1994) have written about the injuries reported by bar staff, classified by different types of glass. A straight-sided 1-pint glass produced 52 of 78 incidents. Only one of these injuries came from a splintered plastic glass. Tankards led to fewer injuries than straight-sided glasses. Half-pint glasses led to fewer injuries, but those drinking half a pint probably were not getting as drunk. Shepherd and colleagues (Shepherd, Hugget, & Kidner, 1993) also carried out an interesting experiment.

By collecting samples of different glass types and smashing them, they learned how nasty a weapon each produces. They found clearly that tankards are more difficult to smash and that tempered beer glasses break into a pile of relatively harmless chunks.

Making sure that bars use safer glasses is an example of what Clarke (1997b) calls "controlling crime facilitators." By paying close attention to what tools or weapons facilitate crime, we acquire more tools for preventing crime.

The general potential for regulating drinking environments to reduce crime has been discussed in an essay by Tim Stockwell (1997). In addition, Stuart Macintyre and Ross Homel (1997) offer a remarkable study titled "Danger on the Dance Floor." In examining behavior and accidents within discos and other nightclubs, they observed brushing, bumping, knocking, spilling drinks, pushing, shoving, hitting, and fighting. They found that the density of activities within nightclubs and the indoor design—including the location of tables and stools, pillars, walls, and bars, as well as the presence of disk jockeys—was very important. This is a good example of how situational crime prevention and crime prevention through environmental design intersect (for a concise summary of literature and evaluation of strategies for assaults in and around bars, see Scott & Dedel, 2006).

PREVENTING DRUNK DRIVING

Liquor policies influence not only intentional violence but also drunk driving and any accidental damage to property or people. H. Laurence Ross offers a brilliant analysis (1992) of how liquor policies and abuses are linked to drunk driving and subsequent deaths in his book *Confronting Drunk Driving*. Ross offers many surprising facts:

- Most drunk drivers involved in accidents or fatalities have never been arrested before for drunk driving. That means that "getting tough" on drunk drivers has its limits for preventing deaths.
- Upping the punishment levels has not accomplished anything in the past and probably will not accomplish anything in the future.
- Modern American society is organized so that it is natural to drive to the bar and back, and hence to drive with a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.

We can prevent drunk driving deaths and injuries only with more focused policies. These include making roads and cars safer to prevent accidents or reduce the injury from them, or to use the regulatory system to get bars to stop serving people who are already drunk.

Australian and Scandinavian efforts to reduce drunk driving have been quite successful in many cases. These include random breath tests on highways (see Graham & Homel, 2008). In New South Wales, they have learned to give dramatic publicity to their breath testing, not only with media coverage but also by placing at the side of the road a large testing vehicle with a big sign reading "Booze Bus." Even the license plates have these words, helping to get people talking and reminding one another not to mix drinking and driving. The public responds quite well to these efforts and tends to reduce its drunk driving, without many arrests and with no draconian punishment.

American efforts to raise drinking ages and make them consistent among states also have produced a major decline in drunk driving and related injuries and deaths. American society has long had in place rules or laws against drinking in the streets and serving alcohol to those already drunk, and limiting the size and conditions of bars. Of course, they are not always enforced (for a concise summary of literature and evaluation of strategies for drunk driving, see Scott, Emerson, Antonacci, & Plant, 2006).

PREVENTING FRAUD

We are increasingly recognizing that situational crime prevention can help reduce fraud. Here are some important illustrations:

Bad checks. Knutsson and Kuhlhorn (1997) found that easy check cashing makes for easy check fraud. When rules were tightened, that crime declined significantly (just as Tremblay, 1986, found in Canada). When banks refused to guarantee bad checks, the merchants stood to lose money and started to be careful before they would hand out cash.

Misleading information. Kuhlhorn (1997) studied how people cheat the government by filling in conflicting information on different forms. Computer comparisons were made to reveal fraud, and the public was told about this development. As a result, people cheated much less often.

Illicit refunds. Many people defraud retail stores by stealing goods, convincing the store they were bought there, then getting a cash refund. Challinger (1997) showed that new rules for refunds made this type of fraud more difficult to accomplish.

Employee falsification. Most organizations that reimburse employees require original receipts to discourage fraudulent medical claims or expense reimbursements.

Embezzling employees. Well-designed auditing and accounting systems make it harder for one person to steal money from an organization. For example, when more than one person signs each large check and when independent auditors go over the books, less fraud occurs. Some people still conspire to commit fraud, but the whole idea of designing out fraud is to *require* conspirators for crime to be committed and hope one of them will lose his or her nerve.

Construction corruption. Racketeering in the New York City construction industry combines fraud with extortion, bribery, theft, sabotage, and bid rigging. The Organized Crime Task Force, directed by Ron Goldstock, involved James Jacobs of New York University and several others to analyze organized crime's involvement in construction. Their recommendations were to change the structure and industry characteristics generating the motivation, ability, and opportunity to act corruptly. They invented the ugly term "racketeering susceptibility," but more important, they realized that the very structure of the industry was creating racketeering opportunities. By altering that structure, organized crime could be made less likely to succeed (Organized Crime Task Force, 1988).

PREVENTING INTERNET FRAUD

Internet fraud includes any type of fraud scheme that uses one or more components of the Internet to present fraudulent solicitations to prospective victims, to conduct fraudulent transactions, or to transmit the proceeds of fraud to financial institutions or to others connected with the scheme. The components of the Internet might include email, chat rooms, message boards, and/or Web sites.

Identity fraudsters may seek to trick the victim into direct transfers of money or goods for a promise not delivered. Other fraudsters seek to steal information from the victim to be used to steal money indirectly via a third party, such as a credit card company. Still other fraudsters get the second party

to provide information to assist in getting at a third party. Thus, a bank may pay the price for a fake account set up.

Internet fraudsters offer a variety of goods or services to those they reach, including free offers, participation in auctions, investments, business opportunities, "work-at-home" schemes, advanced fee loans, and more. Some deliver goods that happen to be counterfeit or fake pharmaceuticals or inoperable electronics.

As we speak, computer software companies are developing and improving software to prevent these crimes. Internet service providers increasingly screen out scams before they arrive. Software is now designed to help keep passwords private and to warn people as they open fraudulent emails or Web pages. Some scams are exposed as quickly as possible on the Internet.

Some credit card issuers offer "substitute" or "single-use" credit card numbers—these allow you to use your credit card without putting your real account number online. Many transactions require copying the security code on the credit card in addition to the other numbers.

Laws have been established that require businesses and institutions to protect private information better—examples include HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996), and FACTA (Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003) (Newman, 2004). As part of FACTA, the Federal Trade Commission implemented the "Red Flags" rule in January 2008 which requires many businesses and organizations to implement a written identity theft prevention program designed to detect the warning signs of identity theft in their day-to-day operations, take steps to prevent the crime, and control the damage inflicted (Federal Trade Commission, 2009). Media and other crime prevention education sources inform people about how to protect their personal information, such as using credit cards (not debit cards) for transactions where the card leaves their sight. Even entire companies have been created whose main function is to constantly monitor people's credit scores to help protect individuals from serious identity theft (see Newman, 2003, 2004; Newman & Clarke, 2003).

PREVENTING REPEAT VICTIMIZATION

Queen Elizabeth bestowed the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) on criminologist Ken Pease for his contributions to crime prevention. Pease (1992; see

also Farrell, 1995) had demonstrated that a very large share of crime victim-
izations were "repeats." People victimized once are especially likely to be
victimized again.

Pease figured out how to focus prevention on those already victimized.
When someone's home was burglarized a first time, a prevention team would
zero in on that particular unit to prevent a repetition. The team enlisted the res-
idents of the five or six homes nearest the burglarized unit to keep an eye on
it, a "cocoon" neighborhood watch. The unit also helped improve locks and
doors, and otherwise reduce the risk. Those housing units in the experimental
group saw declining risk of burglary. The unit's success was far greater than
for the usual methods, such as the unfocused and ineffective neighborhood
watch. Pease's focus on reducing repeat victimization is increasingly applied
to other offenses (Anderson & Pease, 1997; Bowers & Johnson, 2004, 2005;
Farrell, 1995; Farrell, Tseloni, & Pease, 2005; Johnson & Bowers, 2004a,
2004b, 2007; Townsley, Homel, & Chaseling, 2003). Its advantages include

- Efficiently reducing crime at low cost
- Avoiding the usual political controversies
- Assisting the worst victims
- Helping everyone think more clearly about crime

Students of crime should take note of major American efforts by the
National Institute of Justice to prevent repeat victimization on this side of the
Atlantic. By the time this book is out, results of these studies might be available.

## PREVENTING THE SALE OF STOLEN GOODS

As explained in Chapter 5, markets for stolen goods are extremely important.
Mike Sutton (1998) elaborated the "market reduction" approach to prevent
theft and burglary. Detectives have long known to watch pawnshops, jewelry
stores, auto body shops, even flea markets. Crime prevention specialists are
beginning to devise more elaborate efforts at market reduction. A careful
department of motor vehicles can interfere with registration of stolen cars, or
with converting registrations of crashed cars to stolen cars of the same model.
Requiring identification when getting cash for recycled metals such as copper
can reduce metal theft. The Internet offers a fast way to circulate pictures of

stolen jewelry to merchants. Repair contracts for electronics goods could read-
ily be used to trace their ownership and thus help defeat theft. Computers can
handle a lot of this effort, but the reality is lagging behind the potential.

CONCLUSION

Situational crime prevention offers a broad repertoire for preventing crime
here and now, rather than there and eventually. It is verifiable, clear, simple,
and cheap. It is available to people of all income groups, seldom treading on
civil liberties (see Felson & Clarke, 1997b).[1] Situational crime prevention
bypasses the hardliners and softheads. Its idealism is not utopian because it has
found practical ways to do the right thing. Most often it applies to a narrow
slice of crime, but sometimes it can be mass-produced effectively. Exhibit 10.3
shows how the process of control proceeds in six steps. First, we try to build
human character. Then we design secure environments, as Chapter 9
explained. Next, we use other means to remove crime situations, as this chap-
ter considered. Then we make arrests and process suspects, try and convict
offenders, and punish and rehabilitate. We have made it quite clear that our

Exhibit 10.3   When Is the Best Time to Make Crime Prevention Work?

F. Punish and rehabilitate

E. Try and convict

D. Arrest and process

C. Remove crime situations

B. Design secure environments

A. Build human character
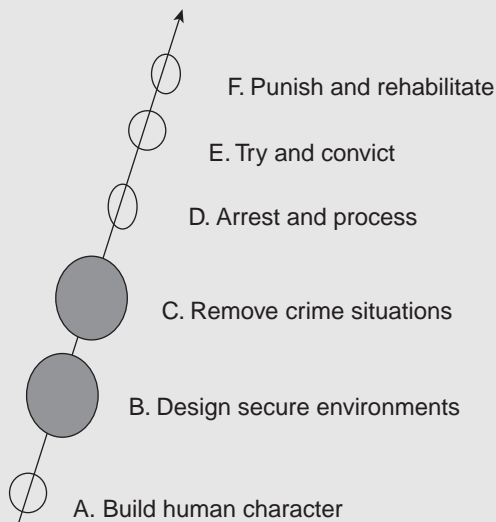
most realistic chance for reducing crime occurs during Steps B and C—designing secure environments and removing crime situations. In other words, situational crime prevention (broadly speaking) offers us our best chance to minimize crime, without interfering substantially or negatively with people's lives. As the repertoire of prevention methods continues to grow, we have a means for slicing away at crime.

MAIN POINTS

1. Situational crime prevention is highly focused on preventing crime here and now and on very specific slices (situations) of crime. It is practical, not utopian. Situational crime prevention seeks inexpensive means to reduce crime in three general ways: design safe settings; organize effective procedures; and develop secure products.

2. Situational crime prevention reduces the inducements to commit crime by making crime targets less rewarding while increasing the risk and effort associated with crime.

3. Situational crime prevention generally does not displace crime elsewhere. Indeed, crime prevention often leads to a "diffusion of benefits," reducing crime even beyond the immediate setting.

4. Specific examples of successful situational crime prevention for property crime include addressing vandalism on double-deck buses, correcting criminal use of telephones, preventing car and motorcycle theft, reducing retail theft, refusing to accept subway graffiti, as well as preventing fraud and sale of stolen goods.

5. Strategies such as utilizing lighting and controlling music are also effective examples of situational crime prevention, but these must be implemented in thoughtful, constructive ways.

6. Crime situations can be improved, but they can also be made worse by making changes to the settings, procedures, and products that increase opportunities for crime.

7. Specific examples of successful situational crime prevention for violent crime include reducing violence at spectator sports events, addressing cruising, controlling bar hopping and bar problems, and preventing drunk driving.

8. Identity theft is a new and increasing problem that is being addressed on a large and small scale with situational crime prevention techniques.

9. Advantages of addressing repeat victims include efficiently reducing crime at low cost; avoiding the usual political controversies; assisting the worst victims; and helping everyone think more clearly about crime.

PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES

Interview projects. (a) Talk to a security person in the retail field. Ask specific questions about each type of situational crime prevention. What does he or she prefer, use, or ignore? (b) During off-duty or slack hours, interview a bartender about specific methods used to prevent conflict from developing and escalating. Ask about shutting off those drinking too much, how to refuse those who are underage, and how to calm people down. What does he or she do when someone spills a drink?

Media project. (a) Check out the magazines in the security field. What products are advertised there, and what situational crime prevention methods are left out? (b) Find out whether any car manufacturer has made major efforts to reduce a certain model's vulnerability to theft. Then use the Highway Loss Data Institute pamphlets to see whether its theft rates really declined relative to other models.

Map project. Map out a shopping mall or mini-mall. Where are its weak spots and strong spots from a situational crime prevention viewpoint?

Photo project. Devise a low-cost situational crime prevention method to make a college dormitory more secure from crime. Cover as many types of situational crime prevention as you can, using photos to strengthen your argument.

Web project. Go to www.popcenter.org and read one of the problem guides. Using the response table at the end of a guide, think about which responses are shown to be most effective and which are based on situational crime prevention. Do they overlap?

NOTES

1. For more on the history of these efforts, see Sullivan (2000), von Hirsch et al. (2000), and Clarke and Felson (in press).

2. Some people make moral and political attacks on situational crime prevention, but any techniques raising ethical controversies are greatly outnumbered by the ones that are innocuous but effective.