



Crime prevention

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines an area of *crime control*—namely *crime prevention*—that takes place to a large extent outside of the criminal justice process. We begin with an overview of crime prevention, focusing particularly upon the difficulties of defining and demarcating crime prevention from other approaches, before moving on to look at how crime prevention policy has developed over only the last few decades to put it in its now central position in contemporary crime control strategies. Following this overview we turn our attention to an account of the rise of crime prevention: why has it risen from a position of relative obscurity to a position of such importance? The reasons are important because they draw attention to controversies and unresolved tensions that play themselves out in the policy and practice of crime prevention. This practice forms the focus of the larger part of this chapter, and we examine, in turn, situational and social crime prevention as the two main constituent elements of contemporary policy, paying particular attention to the criticisms that have been levelled at them. We then end with a conclusion that summarises the discussion and draws attention to the key themes raised in the chapter.

BACKGROUND

Crime prevention and the problem of definition

It would be reasonable to assume that a major reason for the existence of the criminal justice system is the prevention of *crime*. Such an assumption is given weight by the frequency with which the phrase ‘the prevention of crime’ appears in historical documents associated with the emergence of different parts of the system. Thus, for example, it appears in the instructions issued to the new Metropolitan Police, the first permanent professional police service set up in 1829 (Gilling, 1997), and it also appears in the title of an Act of Parliament from 1908, concerned specifically with the introduction of the Borstal system for young offenders (Muncie, 1999). However, crime prevention also exists outside of criminal justice, and it is this latter kind of crime prevention upon which this chapter focuses.

Attempts to define crime prevention generally recognise that it occurs within and outside of criminal justice, and that it takes distinct forms. Thus, for example, Tonry and Farrington (1995) establish a typology of four forms of prevention, namely law enforcement, developmental, communal, and situational, before moving on in their volume to concentrate on the latter three, which represent the forms of crime prevention less associated with traditional criminal justice responses. In a similar way, this time drawing upon the distinctions used in medical epidemiology, Brantingham and Faust (1976) differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention seeks to reduce opportunities for crime by protecting victims or targets. Secondary prevention seeks to change people who may be considered particularly *at risk* of offending. Tertiary prevention seeks to truncate the criminal careers of those who have already offended, and is therefore more within the domain of traditional reactive criminal

justice. There is, incidentally, broad similarity between primary prevention and Tonry and Farrington's situational category; and between secondary prevention and their developmental and communal categories. Developmental prevention aims to prevent the emergence of criminality in (risky) individuals, while communal prevention aims to prevent the emergence of criminality within (risky) communities.

As noted above, the focus of this chapter is upon crime prevention beyond or outside criminal justice. For van Dijk, this *is* crime prevention: it is 'the total of all policies, measures and techniques outside the boundaries of the criminal justice system' (1990: 205). Yet we have just seen that crime prevention also exists within the system's boundaries. Attempts to specify exactly where the boundary lies are probably doomed to failure because the boundary is in any case a shifting one (Crawford, 1998). It is better to accept, therefore, that crime prevention is 'notoriously amorphous' (Hughes, 1998: 2), and to settle, as other authors have done, for trying to make distinctions between the objects of prevention, rather than its location. Van Dijk and de Waard (1991), for example, distinguish, as objects of prevention, offenders, victims, and situations; whilst Pease (2002) distinguishes between preventive interventions that target the structure (broader social and economic changes), the psyche (individual motivations and inclinations), and the circumstance (whether social or physical) where crime occurs. In this chapter, we shall use two broad categories that are commonly used within the literature. These are situational crime prevention, which focuses on preventing opportunities for crime (and is thus most similar to Brantingham and Faust's primary prevention), and social crime prevention, which focuses upon preventing criminal motivations, and can be sub-divided into developmental and community crime prevention, following Tonry and Farrington (1995). Some criminologists object to this distinction, because, like Pease's (2002) circumstance, situations can have both social and physical aspects, but the virtue of this simple distinction, as Crawford (1998: 18) observes, is that it 'explicitly recognises and embodies different assumptions about *what causes crime*' (original emphasis).

The development of crime prevention policy

An important point to recognise at the outset is that crime prevention has become an area of policy and practice that has grown significantly in recent decades. The early origins of a distinctive crime prevention policy can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, when the *Home Office* came under particular pressure from the insurance industry to develop publicity campaigns and corporate approaches to property crime prevention (see Gilling, 1997), in large part because of the growing costs of insured property losses that accompanied the post-war rise in crime (O'Malley and Hutchinson, 2007). Two key points can be made about early policy developments. Firstly, the main orientation was that of situational crime prevention (although the term was not coined until the late-1970s), focusing especially on the reduction of opportunities for property crime by relatively simple means: the publicity slogans of the time, such as 'lock it or lose it' and 'watch out, there's a thief about', very much capture the spirit of the time. Secondly, in recognition of the fact that the means to prevent crime lay beyond the direct control or action of government, the idea of a *partnership* between citizens and the state was integral.

The great leap forward in policy came in the 1980s. Following research and development work on the situational approach (Mayhew *et al.*, 1976), the Home Office established a *Crime Prevention Unit* to promote the spread of crime prevention practice, and issued two circulars, in 1984 and again in 1990, that put public agencies under pressure to establish non-statutory local crime prevention partnerships—with each other, with businesses, and with the public—as the main vehicles for delivery. It also funded two initiatives, the Five Towns Initiative (from 1985) and the much larger Safer Cities Programme (Gilling, 1997). The Safer Cities Programme, which operated in two phases from 1988 through to the mid-1990s, covered some 40 major urban centres across the country, using Home Office funding to employ a crime

prevention coordinator, to establish local partnerships and to fund a variety of locally-tailored crime prevention initiatives (see Sutton, 1996; and Knox *et al.*, 2000). The partnership model also lay at the heart of provisions in New Labour's Crime and Disorder Act 1998, that this time required the establishment of statutory partnerships, with a responsibility to prevent crime, in each of the 376 lower-tier local authority areas of England and Wales.

As crime prevention policy has evolved, it has encountered certain difficulties, two of which stand out. Firstly, the strong emphasis placed upon situational crime prevention was not welcomed by everyone, and despite the Home Office's preferences, local practitioners often steered more of a social crime prevention direction in practice. This was seen particularly in the Safer Cities Programme (Sutton, 1996), but it was also evidenced by the emergence of a 'replacement discourse' (van Swaaningen, 2002). That is to say that, particularly in politically left-leaning urban local authorities, practitioners started talking not of crime prevention, but of *community safety*, conceived as a more progressive approach that combined social and situational approaches, addressed the fear of crime as well as crime itself, and placed crime within the context of other harms, such as environmental pollution, that impacted negatively on the community's collective safety and quality of life. The idea of community safety received some official endorsement when the Morgan report (Home Office, 1991) suggested that its use, rather than that of the term crime prevention, might encourage participation from a broader range of agencies than had hitherto been prepared to jump on the crime prevention bandwagon. The emergence of community safety illustrates the politics of crime prevention: people have very different ideas about how best to prevent crime, and about how to conceive of and contextualise the problem of crime.

Secondly, as Pease (2002) observes, at the heart of the preventive enterprise is a non-event. Crime prevention seeks to stop crimes from happening, but it is difficult to know whether it has been successful in such terms. If crimes do not occur, is it because the crime prevention is effective, or is it because the crimes were not going to occur anyway? When crime prevention involves the use of scarce resources, as indeed it does, there is understandably some concern to ensure that those resources are used to best effect. Consequently, policy-makers and others concerned with the question of '*what works*' began talking in the 1990s not of crime prevention, but of *crime reduction*. Especially since the landmark Crime and Disorder Act 1998, crime reduction has become the preferred term in official discourse. Thus the statutory partnerships established in all local authority areas of England from April 1999 were called crime reduction partnerships; and from that same time the government launched its new *Crime Reduction Strategy*.

The significance of the term crime reduction lies in the fact that it can be achieved in other ways besides crime prevention. It is possible to reduce local crime problems, for example, by catching prolific offenders and taking them out of circulation, and into custody; or by high profile policing strategies that have some deterrent effect, albeit usually only temporary. Referring back to our earlier distinction between crime prevention inside and outside the criminal justice system, what crime reduction in effect does is to open the door of crime prevention to the criminal justice system. This is no less political than the challenge offered by community safety. It allows criminal justice agencies to reclaim an expertise in the control of crime that the emergence of crime prevention as a distinct policy area had done much to challenge, as we shall see in the next section.

In this introductory overview, then, we have established that crime prevention is difficult to define clearly, but that most simply it is seen as being constituted by situational and social approaches that operate with different understandings of the causes of crime, and that therefore target different things, respectively opportunities and motivations. As an area of policy and practice beyond the familiar repertoire of the traditional criminal justice system, crime prevention has grown markedly over recent

decades. In so doing, it has undergone certain mutations, as community safety and crime reduction. While such mutations appear pragmatic responses to, respectively, the alleged limitations of situational crime prevention and the problem of establishing what works in crime prevention, they also reflect and contribute to a politics of crime prevention that cannot be ignored. In the next section we shall explore the reasons for the emergence of crime prevention as a significant policy area in its own right, before moving on, in the following sections, to explore situational and social crime prevention in more detail.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 The idea of partnership has always been integral to the development of crime prevention. Why is this so, and how has government sought to foster it?
- 2 The idea of crime prevention has been challenged by two alternative 'imaginings' of the same basic concept. What are they, and how do they differ from crime prevention?

Accounting for the rise of crime prevention

There are a number of reasons why crime prevention has moved from a position of relative obscurity to centre stage in crime control strategies. Firstly, from the 1950s onwards, as officially recorded rates of crime began their inexorable post-war rise (see Figure 1.1), a growing sense emerged that the criminal justice system did not work well. If it was there

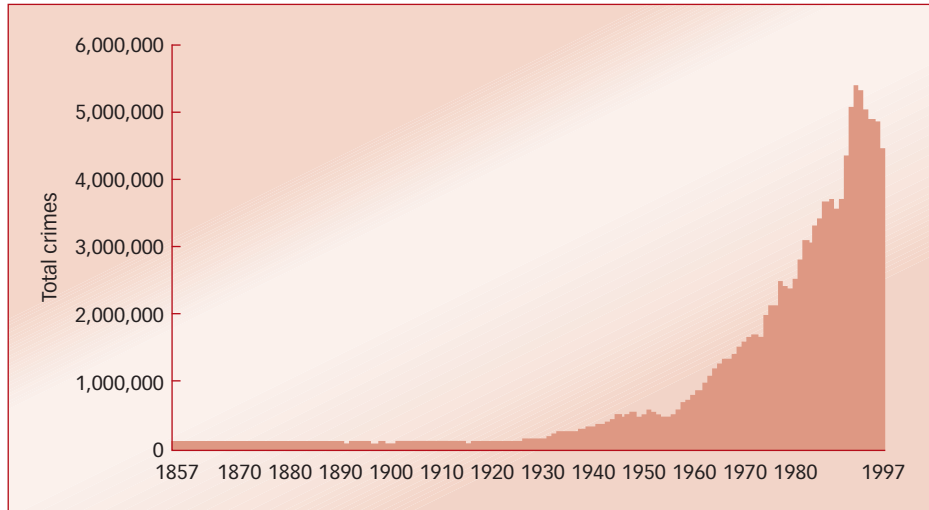


Figure 1.1 Crimes recorded by the police, 1857–1997

Source: From Barclay and Tavares (1999) Digest 4: Information on the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales. London: Home Office Research Development and Statistics.

to prevent crime, why was crime continuing to rise so alarmingly? Officially sponsored research studies into the effectiveness of different aspects of criminal justice started to come back with the depressing conclusion that *'nothing works'* (Brody, 1976; Clarke and Hough, 1980).

Secondly, alongside studies of the (in)effectiveness of criminal justice, other criminological research, most notably crime and *victimisation surveys*, began to shed light on the dark figure of unreported and unrecorded crime. The 'revelation' that police crime statistics undercounted crime was less important than the implication that such surveys had for our understanding of the reach of the criminal justice system. *British Crime Surveys* from 1982 onwards have shown that a relatively small proportion of crime comes to the police's attention, and of this small proportion an even smaller proportion results in a caution or conviction. In other words, the British Crime Survey has allowed researchers to calculate the *attrition rate* for crime; and in 1997, for example, it was revealed that only 3 per cent of all crimes result in either a caution or a conviction, and only 0.3 per cent of all crimes result in a custodial sentence (Barclay and Tavares, 1999—see Figure 1.2). What this means is that the criminal justice system, which is commonly regarded as being at the vanguard of our formal response to crime, only ever gets to touch the tip of the iceberg of all crime. Thus, the idea that the solution to the crime problem lies in additional investment in criminal justice is seriously flawed, and the answer to the question of how to prevent crime lies largely outside of, rather than within, the criminal justice system.

Thirdly, the landscape of late-modern Britain has undergone a political transformation, initially following the unprecedented political success of a resurgent Conservative

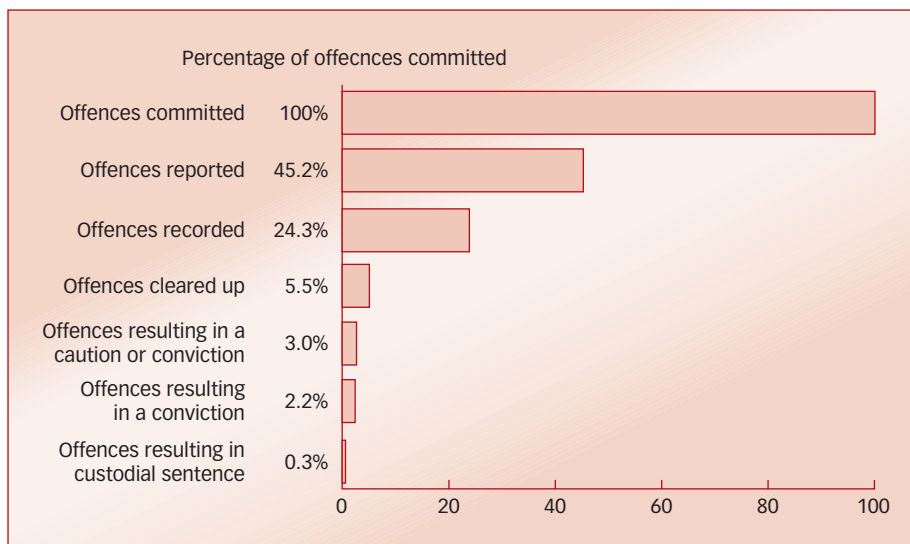


Figure 1.2 Crime attrition

Source: From Barclay and Tavares (1999) Digest 4: Information on the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales. London: Home Office Research Development and Statistics.

Party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. One strong element of the Conservative's political project was neo-liberalism, which promoted the idea of 'rolling back the frontiers of the state', in order to create less dependency upon state institutions, and more space for individual initiative and responsibility. There was a close resonance between this idea and the realisation of the limited reach of the criminal justice system. The implication was that if crime was to be prevented, there needed to be less dependence upon the criminal justice system, and greater *responsibilisation* of others, such as private citizens and private businesses. This does not mean that the government simply gave up on criminal justice, but it did do much to spread the crime prevention message beyond the confines of the criminal justice system, and this is why many of the key policy developments in crime prevention date from around this time.

Fourthly, crime prevention has fed off a number of changes—economic, political, social, and cultural—that have coalesced around the notion of *globalisation*. Globalisation for various reasons has been accompanied by a growing sense of insecurity and anxiety which is easily projected onto a problem such as crime. The fear of crime, therefore, has been something of a criminological 'discovery' of the 1980s. Accompanying the fear of crime is a corresponding quest for security, and there is an elective affinity between this and the spread of crime prevention beyond the boundaries of the criminal justice system. The quest for security encourages the *commodification of security*, and if the state cannot provide it through criminal justice then this opens up space for private sector providers. Hence we have seen an expanded and flourishing market for security in residential areas (e.g. private security patrols, gated communities), and leisure and commercial areas (e.g. security guards in shopping malls, CCTV systems). As a valued commodity, security becomes an important consideration for states and cities, as much as for private enterprise, since each is seeking to attract inward investment within the global marketplace. For those with a choice, who would want to live or work in a high crime neighbourhood, and who would want to shop or seek their cultural entertainment in a run-down and dangerous city centre? A number of crime prevention measures, then, both feed off and feed into the commodification of security that follows on the heels of late-modern social insecurity and anxiety.

Fifthly, criminology itself has not been immune to these changes, with Garland (2001) discerning a particular shift away from orthodox 'criminologies of the other' that dominated the discipline for most of the twentieth century; to newer 'criminologies of everyday life'. Where the former took offending behaviour to be essentially pathological or abnormal, the latter accepts crime as a normal feature of contemporary society, and isolates the thing to be explained as the criminogenic situation: what is it about a person or target that makes it particularly vulnerable to crime? Such criminologies have particularly influenced the development of situational crime prevention, though we should not assume that criminologies of the other have lost all their influence or have no bearing on crime prevention practice.

Having established the reasons for the rise of crime prevention, we are now in a position to explore its two main approaches in more detail.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain how the findings of victimisation surveys and studies into the effectiveness of criminal justice have served to strengthen the case for crime prevention beyond the criminal justice system.
- 2 How have political changes, and the general phenomenon of globalisation, helped to further the cause of crime prevention?

Situational crime prevention

A brief description

Situational crime prevention is classically defined as involving the ‘management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment’ (Hough *et al.*, 1980: 1). It is the product of a way of thinking and acting about the problem of crime that differs from traditional criminal justice responses. Its focus is upon the offence, not the offender; and it is premised upon the idea that opportunities for committing offences are embedded within the immediate *situation* in which such offences occur—hence the name of the approach. As we discussed above, situational crime prevention takes theoretical inspiration from the rise to prominence of criminologies of everyday life, which take it as axiomatic that crime is a normal, routine feature of everyday life. The thing to be explained, therefore, is not the offender. Routine activity theory, for example, simply assumes that motivated offenders exist (Felson, 1994), while for rational choice theory, as its name suggests, offending is the rational choice of largely ‘normal’ people presented with situations where the perceived benefits of committing crime outweigh the perceived costs (Clarke, 1980).

This way of thinking about crime betrays a pessimism that, given continued year-on-year rises in crime, little can be done to correct criminal behaviour at source. Thus advocates of situational crime prevention frequently argue, with some justification, that it is much easier to change situations than it is to change behaviour. They take inspiration from studies that seek to explain crime in terms of characteristics of the environment, rather than of the offender. One particularly influential study was that produced by Oscar Newman (1973), who conducted a statistical analysis of the crime rates and design features of different housing estates in the USA. His analysis suggested that there was a correlation between certain design features, most notably high-rise buildings and the number of entrance and exit points in buildings and the estates themselves. In other words, crimes were more likely to occur in environments that had such features, and this led Newman to propose, within his notion of *defensible space*, a set of design principles that in his view would make crime less likely. Amongst these principles was the injunction to privatise public space, for example by enclosing open land around buildings with fences or walls that would encourage a sense of territoriality; and by designing buildings in such a way that maximised their natural surveillance potential, so that, for

example, one building overlooked another, and windows were sited to overlook potentially vulnerable spaces.

The implications of Newman's work were that crime could be 'designed out'. This could be done by making modifications to the existing built environment or, more efficiently, by incorporating defensible space principles into the planning of new developments. Newman's ideas are certainly not without their critics (see Gilling, 1997), but nevertheless they have had a major practical impact. In the USA, his ideas, and those of others (e.g. Jeffery, 1971), contributed to a multi-million dollar federal programme called *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED), whilst in the UK they have been used to justify substantial modifications to high-crime public housing estates, including the removal of many high-rise buildings under the *Priority Estates Programme*. They also underpin the *Secured By Design* standard for new buildings and developments, and inform the advice proffered by specialist police *Architectural Liaison Officers* to those planning new developments across the UK.

It was within the UK Home Office that the ideas of Newman and others began to coalesce into a model of situational crime prevention that researchers were keen to test out in practice (Gladstone, 1980). This highly rationalistic model, reproduced in Figure 1.3, suggested that crime could be prevented by analysing the situation in which the offence occurred, and then intervening in such a way that made the situation less vulnerable, by taking away the criminal opportunity. In large part, this meant either target hardening, through measures such as locks, bolts, and other security devices; or increasing surveillance, for example by applying defensible space designs, or by deploying CCTV cameras or personnel, such as security guards, park keepers, or bus conductors, who could perform a surveillance role.

In its original formulation, situational crime prevention was relatively straightforward, and much of its attractiveness lay in its simplicity, and its capacity to target established problems—crime *hotspots*—that the spatial analysis of crime statistics was able to isolate. In such hotspots, the characteristics of offenders generally remained unknown, because most were not apprehended, whereas their situations were known, and thus

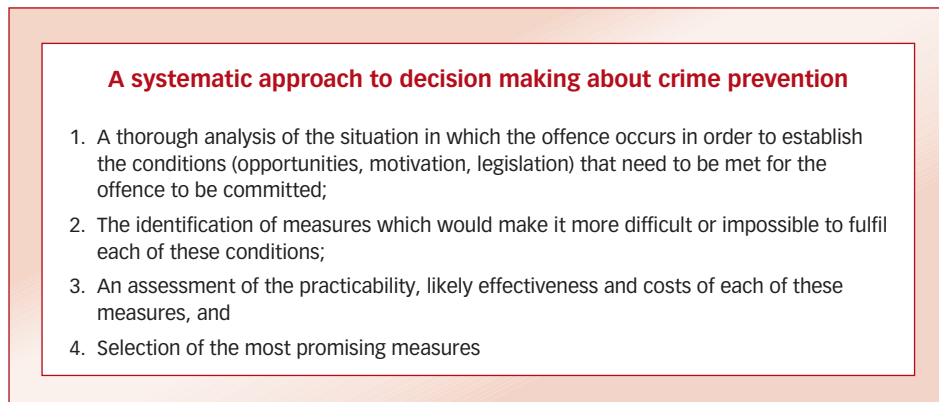


Figure 1.3 The situational crime prevention process

Source: Gladstone (1980:10)

open to analysis. Notwithstanding the debate about whether hotspots are generators or receptors of crime (see Crawford, 1998), situational crime prevention had considerable pragmatic appeal and it is easy to see how it quickly grew to become a major constituent element of crime control strategies (O'Malley, 1992), not least because it was something that could be performed not only by state agencies, but also by others within the private sector.

The theory and practice of situational crime prevention

For many people, situational crime prevention—making crime harder to commit—is little more than common sense, but it would be wrong to suggest that it lacks a theoretical base. Rather, the emergence of situational crime prevention has stimulated the development and refinement of the criminologies of everyday life, notably rational choice theory and routine activity theory. In turn, these very practical theories have then fed back into practice, helping to make situational crime prevention a more complex and sophisticated approach to crime control. Routine activity theory, for example, has contributed to an understanding of crime as a triangular interaction of targets, offenders, and places, each of which may be controlled, respectively, by 'guardians', 'handlers', and 'managers'. Practically, this has informed the development of the *Problem Analysis Triangle* (see Figure 1.4), which is now widely used by crime prevention practitioners (see Clarke and Eck, 2003).

Rational choice theory, meanwhile, has helped to focus attention upon how certain *crime facilitators*, such as the presence of glass bottles in pubs, can influence the choice structuring properties of situations, making criminal event choices more likely. The upshot of this synergy between theory and practice is the development of a quite

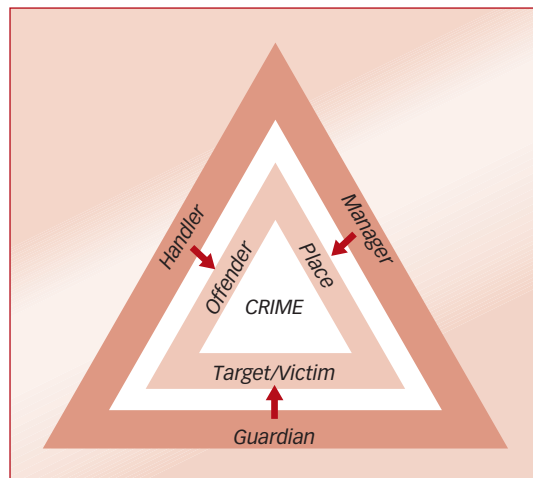


Figure 1.4 The Problem Analysis Triangle

Source: Clarke and Eck (2003) *Become a Problem-Solving Crime Analyst in 55 Small Steps*. London: Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdi/publications/other_publications/55steps.php>.

sophisticated typology of 25 techniques of situational crime prevention which is reproduced in Figure 1.5.

This typology shows that situational crime prevention has moved beyond the general reliance upon target hardening (increasing the effort) and surveillance (increasing the risk) that characterised its early days (Hughes, 1998). In addition to these two broad



Figure 1.5 25 Techniques of situational crime prevention

Source: Clarke and Eck (2003: 32)

categories we have a range of measures intended variously to reduce the rewards, reduce provocations, and remove excuses. The last two of these categories show that situational crime prevention must now be regarded as much more than just a ‘technological fix’ to the problem of crime, even though technological fixes, such as CCTV, often predominate. Indeed, to some extent, through these additional categories situational crime prevention has been ‘socialised’, in the sense that it appears to be paying equal attention to offender motivations. Thus, for example, the setting of rules serves to stimulate the conscience of potential offenders, whilst neutralising peer pressure is very much about taking people out of social situations where they may be influenced by anti-social peers. Such measures would not be out of place in social crime prevention strategies (see below), and their presence in the more recent typology of situational crime prevention shows not only the difficulty of holding a clear distinction between the situational and the social, but also the response of advocates of situational crime prevention to criticisms of its asocial character (Shaftoe, 2004).

CCTV—an example of situational crime prevention

A good example of a situational crime prevention measure is CCTV. It is one of the most high-profile crime prevention measures. In the UK there are estimated to be in excess of four million cameras: this means that the UK possesses nearly one-fifth of all of the world’s supply of cameras—that is one camera for every 15 citizens (McSmith, 2008). Since the mid-1990s central government has invested millions of pounds in local schemes run by local authorities and crime prevention partnerships, and CCTV is also used widely in shopping centres, schools and colleges, hospitals, and other public spaces. Given such widespread usage, one might reasonably conclude that CCTV is a very effective crime prevention measure.

Advocates argue that CCTV acts as a deterrent, whilst its capacity to store images and to track perpetrators of crime in real-time means that it also assists in crime detection, and in gathering evidence for court cases. They also argue that in an age of insecurity it has an important reassurance function, allowing members of the public to feel sufficiently safe in their everyday lives. Indeed, so important is this function that CCTV is increasingly being regarded as a ‘must have’ for proprietors of retail, leisure, and other public facilities, and CCTV schemes also increasingly penetrate residential space.

Evidence of CCTV’s apparent successes is not hard to find. Crime-related CCTV footage, and the resultant ‘catch’, makes up a significant proportion of the ‘infotainment’ diet that currently occupies television programming schedules, whilst news broadcasts have illustrated vividly the virtues of CCTV in piecing together the movements of suspects in high profile cases such as the 7 July London bombings. There are also research studies which have shown, for example, spectacular reductions in crime following the introduction of CCTV schemes in particular areas (see Welsh and Farrington, 2002).

However, other research studies suggest more caution. Gill and Spriggs’s (2005) Home Office-funded study of 14 CCTV schemes found a discernible crime reductive effect in only one of them, a scheme centred around a car park. This finding echoes the conclusions of Welsh and Farrington’s (2002) systematic review of several CCTV scheme evaluations, which indicated that whilst CCTV schemes had a small reductive impact upon

crime, this impact was most noticeable in schemes focused on car parks, and least noticeable upon schemes focused on town centres, public housing estates, or public transport facilities. They note that CCTV can have a significant reductive effect upon vehicle crime, but a minimal effect upon violent crime, suggesting that CCTV is at its most deterrent for opportunist crimes involving rational decision making, and least deterrent for impulsive or emotional crimes, where consideration of the presence of cameras is unlikely to figure prominently in the offender's mind.

The capacity of CCTV schemes to detect crimes depends upon a number of factors. Cameras are not always pointed in the right direction, given an unobstructed view, loaded with film, switched on, working properly, or capable of generating high-quality images. They can be put out of action by potential offenders, and their effectiveness undermined by relatively simple counter-measures, such as the wearing of helmets, balaclavas, or 'hoodies'. The cameras, moreover, are only as good as their operatives, not all of whom are necessarily well trained or supervised, as some studies have found (Norris and Armstrong, 1999).

In terms of reassurance, while survey evidence suggests that many are indeed reassured by the cameras' presence, others are less happy. Some civil libertarians have in mind an Orwellian, nightmare vision of 'big brother' watching us. Others express concern at the potential invasion of privacy, particularly from concealed cameras; from cameras that can hear as well as see; and from incompetent or unscrupulous operators who may lose or misuse video data—there are some notorious cases. Still others are worried at the kind of society that saturation CCTV coverage ushers in: for them it is a society founded on mistrust and suspicion, where the cold face of technology is used to extend surveillance into social space, in order to identify and exclude risky 'others', such as young people, who then become increasingly marginalised from mainstream society. This negative assessment, however, must contend with more progressive uses of CCTV, for example in police custody centres, where cameras can offer some protection to, rather than marginalisation of, the suspect.

Criticisms of situational crime prevention

Situational crime prevention has considerable intuitive appeal. In place of the pessimism that is generated by the realisation that most offenders are not caught or, even if they are, are rarely reformed or deterred from future criminal choices, there is an optimism that something relatively simple can be done to prevent or reduce crime. Yet it also has its critics, perhaps especially because it has broken with criminological and criminal justice orthodoxies.

Firstly, it stands accused of being limited in its scope. It has been suggested that situational crime prevention is more applicable, and in practice has been far more extensively applied, to street crimes than to other crime such as *domestic violence*, corporate crime, or state crimes (Hughes, 1998). In particular, the approach and its rationalistic underpinnings fit much better with acquisitive crimes than emotive, spur-of-the-moment offences. Especially since it is more reliant on efforts made beyond the boundaries of the criminal justice system and the state, it is also argued that situational crime prevention is limited to those best able to pay for it: it protects the relatively well off, and in

so far as it deflects the risk of victimisation on to others, it may therefore increase the immiseration of the relatively poor.

Secondly, it is argued by some that situational crime prevention is not effective (Gilling, 1997). The main issue here is that of crime displacement: situational crime prevention does not directly address criminal motivations, and thus while crime opportunities may be blocked by situational methods, motivated offenders will simply find other opportunities. There are a number of different displacement possibilities:

- spatial displacement: the same offence in a different location;
- temporal displacement: the same offence at a different time;
- tactical displacement: the same offence committed in a different way;
- target displacement: same type of offence, different type of target;
- crime-type displacement: same offender, different type of crime from that originally intended;
- perpetrator displacement: new offenders always available to fill space vacated by existing perpetrators.

It is also argued that the effects of situational measures can be blunted over time (Crawford, 1998). Measures that may at first appear formidable obstacles, such as CCTV, can lose a lot of their deterrent effect as they become a normal part of the physical landscape, and as impressions about their fallibility take root. Alternatively, as some of the forms of displacement indicate, offenders can adapt to these measures and find ways round them, thereby making situational crime prevention practice akin to an 'arms race' between potential offenders and crime preventers (Crawford, 1998).

Thirdly, it is argued that too great an emphasis upon situational crime prevention can produce a number of unwelcome side effects. While the security that crime prevention seeks to provide is a valued social end, it can conflict with other social ends. Practically, for example, it can hinder fire safety, by placing too much security gadgetry in the way. This gadgetry can also contribute to the creation of a *fortress society* that is not only aesthetically but also socially undesirable, communicating a sense of mistrust that tends to manifest itself in division and exclusion. Crime prevention, particularly in its surveillant forms, thus becomes a matter of protecting 'us' from 'them', with 'them' being defined in risk-based terms that often have strong discriminatory or intolerant overtones (e.g. the banning of youths with 'hoodies' from some shopping centres). Perversely, moreover, whilst crime prevention measures are intended to generate security, their proliferation can end up generating its very opposite, because their obtrusiveness can communicate insecurity and fear: the presence of crime prevention can communicate the message that there is, to coin a phrase, a clear and present danger.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 According to the notion of defensible space, how can space be better defended to make it less vulnerable to criminal attack?
- 2 Summarise the main criticisms of situational crime prevention.

Social crime prevention

Social crime prevention is a label covering an array of ideas and interventions oriented towards the prevention of criminality. It is 'social' in the sense that its focus is upon people (not situations), and the factors that motivate or dispose some individuals and groups to engage in criminal activity. Whilst crime prevention as a distinct policy domain outside of the criminal justice system has moved more to the fore, it would be fair to say that compared to the situational approach the social approach has played much more of a back-seat role. Nevertheless, many social crime prevention interventions have been in existence for some time, either as elements of social policy, rather than criminal justice policy, or because they have resonated with criminological orthodoxies that have moved in and out of political fashion. Amongst those who have promoted community safety, and under New Labour's much-vaunted progressive third way, however, social crime prevention has undergone a minor renaissance (Gilling, 2007).

Accounts of social crime prevention tend to divide it into two broad types, namely developmental and community. The former aims to prevent the development of criminality in individuals by addressing its social and social-psychological causes. Now clearly criminal justice has an interest in preventing the further development of criminality in those who have already offended, particularly young people, but this tends to be pursued through the punitive and rehabilitative practices of the criminal justice system, as tertiary prevention, and these practices are therefore explored elsewhere in this volume.



CASE STUDY: SURE START

Sure Start is a New Labour programme that has social crime prevention as one of its purposes, and that is based upon similar models operating in the USA, namely the High/Scope Perry Pre-School Programme, which ran in the 1960s, and Head Start, which started in the 1960s and continues in the present. Both of these models were developmental in their crime prevention orientation, targeting pre-school education at children from deprived backgrounds, along with home visits and support for their parents. The Perry Pre-School Programme was well researched via a longitudinal study, and by the time child beneficiaries of the programme had reached the age of 40, researchers calculated that for every dollar spent on the programme, thirteen dollars were saved in the longer run, because the children made less demands on such things as welfare services and payments, and, importantly, criminal justice expenditure. In other words, amongst other benefits, children subjected to the programme committed less crime than those in a matched control group: by the time they had reached 19, for example, the arrest rate of these children was 40 per cent less than that of their control group peers.

The USA models were quickly identified in the UK as examples of 'What Works' in crime prevention (Graham, 1998), and in the form of Sure Start, New Labour introduced its own version. This was explicitly identified by Tony Blair as an anti-crime measure, thereby demonstrating, in contrast to the previous Conservative regime, New Labour's commitment to longer term social crime prevention measures. Sure Start was announced in July 1998 and became operational in 1999. Initially it involved 250 separate programmes targeted at deprived areas. Although there was no national

blueprint for the programmes (Clarke, 2007), their design generally entails the establishment of a local children's centre which acts as a joined-up 'one-stop-shop' where pre-school education and childcare are integrated together with parenting advice, child and family health services, and employment advice for parents. The programmes were increased to 500 by 2004, and thereafter the Sure Start idea was 'mainstreamed' (Pugh, 2007) and rolled out across the country, so that by 2010 there will be a national network of more than 3,000 children's centres. It is through these centres, then, that the developmental crime prevention is delivered, particularly through the pre-school education and parenting advice and support, which it is thought will do much to improve the life chances of its beneficiaries.

It is too early to tell for sure what impact Sure Start will have upon the future offending behaviour of its beneficiaries, although a national evaluation programme is in place to track this. However, there is a potential problem. While one general aim of Sure Start is to improve the life chances of the most deprived and excluded children, who are also those most at risk of committing crime in later life, there is evidence to suggest that Sure Start is not reaching such a group (Gilling, 2007; National Audit Office, 2006). Rather, since the children's centres are open to all, it appears to be the case that most use of their services is being made by better-off parents and their children—those at less risk of future criminal behaviour. This problem is likely to be exacerbated by the mainstreaming of Sure Start after 2004. This demonstrates a common problem with social crime prevention schemes, where crime prevention is only one of a number of possible aims. In the case of Sure Start, government targets show that there are many other aims, such as improving children's education potential, improving family health, and reducing the number of unemployed households (National Audit Office, 2006), and it may be that such aims are better met by universalising and mainstreaming Sure Start. But, in the meantime, it may be the crime prevention aim that suffers and is overlooked. Even were Sure Start to reach the most deprived children, as its USA counterparts did, there are those who argue that a more effective approach to preventing crime in such a group is not by addressing their alleged parenting deficits, but rather by addressing the material inequalities that so obviously disadvantage them in the first place (Clarke, 2007).

Young people form the main focus of developmental prevention (see the Case Study on the Sure Start Programme), and much of the discourse surrounding developmental prevention involves the concept of risk. Since evidence shows young people to be disproportionately involved in offending behaviour (mostly minor, and mostly street crimes), and because youth, as a point of transition to full adulthood, is regarded as a point of particular vulnerability, young people in general are regarded as being at risk of offending. More specifically, longitudinal research has demonstrated that certain young people are more at risk of offending than others, because of their association with certain risk factors, which are predictive of future offending (see Farrington and Coid, 2002). Initial offending behaviour is predictive of future offending behaviour, but what concerns us more in this chapter are those risk factors embedded within the social circumstances in which young people find themselves. These include, in a far from exhaustive list: social deprivation; elements of schooling, such as poor discipline; bullying experienced as either victim or perpetrator; low educational attainment; truancy and exclusion; family circumstances, including inadequate or inconsistent parenting, offending parents and siblings; and association with delinquent peers. For each risk factor there is an

associated preventive intervention. Social deprivation, for example, might be tackled through income redistribution, housing improvements, and better education and training opportunities; whilst association with delinquent peers may be tackled through the provision of better leisure facilities that provide opportunities to engage in pro-social activities with appropriate role models.

Community crime prevention, meanwhile, picks up on the long-standing association between high rates of crime and certain places, particularly inner-city areas or multiply deprived neighbourhoods, notably some large social housing estates. This association persists, as evidenced in spatial analyses of police crime statistics and the British Crime Survey (see Trickett *et al.*, 1995). The implication that flows from this association is that something in the community, geographically imagined, causes the crime, and that the community is therefore the appropriate site of preventive intervention. Exactly what it is about the community that causes the crime, and how it might be tackled, is the subject of considerable contention.

Many commentators assume high-crime communities to be pathological, possessing some defect that renders them incapable of being 'normal' or 'healthy'. Such a view is underpinned by various 'criminologies of the other', such as the Chicago perspective, from the original work of Shaw and McKay (1942), which argues that high-crime communities are socially disorganised: they possess a culture that fails adequately to exercise control over its members, and that lacks pro-social norms and values. The solution that flows from the Chicago perspective is to develop and organise communities where no such organisation exists: something attempted by the long-lasting *Chicago Area Project*. In the UK, policy has ploughed a not dissimilar furrow via a number of different urban regeneration schemes since the 1960s, most recently under the mantle of New Labour's *New Deal for Communities* (Gilling, 2007).

The Chicago perspective on the causes of urban crime is conservative but sympathetic, regarding it as a consequence of rapid population turnover and waves of in- and out-migration from the inner city. An equally conservative but less sympathetic (and more moralistic) reading of the same phenomenon locates the problem in an indigenous culture of poverty characterised by inadequate parenting, a lack of responsibility, dependency on welfare 'handouts', and a penchant for immediate gratification expressed through 'lifestyle choices' such as sexual promiscuity, substance misuse, and violent *masculinity*. Some commentators have coined, or perhaps resurrected, a distinctive term—the *underclass*—to describe such a phenomenon (Murray, 1990). For such people, community crime prevention is less of a solution than neo-conservative strategies of containment, control, and *punishment*. However, in so far as some are interested in the organisation of communities as a solution to the problem of crime, they see such organisation coming through the defensive actions of the decent or 'respectable majority' against disrespectable or anti-social others. Defence against crime and anti-social behaviour is thus thought to be the glue that will stick these disorganised communities back together.

A more progressive take on the problems of high-crime communities recognises that the problem is not their level of organisation *per se*, but rather their relationship to broader structural forces that result in the material deprivation of people living within their boundaries, and the cultural knock-on effects that result ultimately in high rates of crime. For example, those living in deprived circumstances, with high levels of social

stress, may find it much harder to provide protective factors such as effective parenting, support for education, and pro-social leisure opportunities that can help to insulate children from criminality. Marginalised from the mainstream, they may find it hard to retain a stake in conformity, and may seek out their own delinquent solutions, according to their own particular market positions (Taylor, 1999), as their pathways to 'success' and self-esteem. Here, social crime prevention might involve a combination of redistributive social policies to reduce income inequality and increase *social justice*; improved welfare services that provide access to decent housing, education, and health services; and reforms that enhance the engagement and participation of such people in the democratic processes that govern their lives. It involves a shift, broadly, from exclusion to inclusion; entailing, in Hope's (1995) terms, the strengthening of both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of community linkages.

Criticisms of social crime prevention

Social crime prevention probably has less intuitive appeal than situational crime prevention as a putative solution to crime, because the causes it seeks to address are more distant than the immediate situation, and because the preventive strategies are often uncertain, diffuse, and seemingly only of benefit in the medium- to long-term. It is more likely to find favour amongst those on the political left who support progressive social reforms to counteract the negative criminogenic consequences of market societies. For our purposes, we can summarise in what follows the various criticisms that have been levelled at the approach.

Firstly, there are a range of questions revolving around the issue of effectiveness. Critics (Clarke and Cornish, 1983) have pointed out that what could be regarded as a mass exercise in social crime prevention, namely the establishment of the welfare state from the late-1940s through to the 1970s, coincided not with a period in which national crime rates fell, but rather with a period in which we witnessed a substantial rise, contrary to what many had anticipated. Others (Crawford, 1998) question the logic of such thinking, pointing out that crime rates actually rose faster from the end of the 1970s through to the 1990s—a period marked by the dismantling of parts of the welfare state, and substantially widening income inequalities. The point remains, nevertheless, that the kinds of changes required by social crime prevention, to living standards, quality of life issues, education, parenting, a developing sense of community and so forth, are all essentially long-term changes that are manifestly harder to achieve than the relatively quick and easy manipulations of the physical environment required by the situational approach (Pease, 2002).

On a related point, some might see social crime prevention projects as fundamentally aspirational and utopian, rather than achievable. They are so because they face substantial implementation problems (Hope and Foster, 1992). The general view of risk factors, for example, is that they are most predictive of criminality when they work in combination, and this means that different risk factors have to be addressed at the same time. Yet this requires coordinated action, and a joining-up of different public services that experience of partnership working tells us is, at the very least, problematic (Gilling, 2005). This is particularly the case where, for example, health- or welfare-oriented

agencies may be required to prioritise potential offenders as recipients of services such as drug treatment, when such agencies have scarce resources that they would rather devote to client groups they may regard as more deserving. Media stories abound of drug treatment 'queue-jumping' by offenders, or of anti-social youngsters being 'rewarded' with adventure holidays while better behaved children go without.

The difficulties of engaging and building communities are no less challenging than those of partnership working. Moreover, it may be equally hard to foster the support of political decision-makers for social crime prevention schemes that promise only longer-term changes rather than the immediate results that electoral politics demand; that are often very costly (partly because of the inaccuracy of interventions—see below); and that may be perceived by a sceptical and punitive-minded electorate to be helping groups that are essentially undeserving of such help. It is unsurprising, in view of this, that social crime prevention is rarely 'mainstreamed', and often takes the form only of relatively small-scale, time-limited projects and schemes (Crawford, 1998).

A second set of criticisms revolves around the issue of the accuracy of social crime prevention interventions, and the question of whether they hit the right targets, or are themselves the right interventions. The main underlying problem here is that the primary targets of social crime prevention are potential offenders; that is, people who have not yet been processed through the criminal justice system, and who are therefore not officially known. In the absence of 'hard knowledge' of those who are likely to offend, practitioners have to rely upon 'soft knowledge', in the form of social scientific prediction, which as we have seen is based upon the possession of risk factors, or the high-crime location in which a person lives. Yet these predictions are fraught with problems: people may possess certain risk factors and yet not go on to offend, and most people who live in high-crime areas do not in fact turn to crime. This means that interventions may end up being targeted at people who do not really need them for purposes of crime prevention. On the one hand, in the context of scarce resources, this might be seen as a potential waste; though on the other hand, because there are reasons, other than crime prevention, for addressing social deprivation, inadequate parenting, and other risk factors, this might be regarded as a perfectly acceptable opportunity cost, or even a spin-off, of any intervention.

From a perspective of economic rationality, the aspiration to target resources at those who most need them—in this case, those who are most likely to offend—has intuitive appeal, but we should be mindful that in the real world there are other considerations to take into account. One of the problems with highly targeted interventions, even were it possible to be that accurate, is that they can end up being stigmatising. Providing parenting classes just to those whose 'inadequate parenting' has been identified as a risk factor in their children's potential delinquency may do little more than to consolidate those parents' self-images as bad parents. Residents of areas 'benefiting' from crime prevention spending, meanwhile, might not see the benefit when their job applications are turned down by local employers who may be inclined to write those areas off as notorious 'criminal badlands'. Again, criminology—especially the labelling perspective—has had much to say about the dangers of this kind of stigmatisation.

With particular regard to community crime prevention, there is an argument that both target and solution are wrongly conceived. The dominant discourse, as we have seen,

is that of the disorganised community; and such discourse is fed by a range of normative assumptions. Community in its idealised form—‘the good community’—is imagined as a consensual, cooperative, and essentially crime-free environment. The logic runs that high-crime neighbourhoods must lack this idealised form of community, and thus community is the solution, to be implanted from outside. Notwithstanding the formidable obstacles confronted by those seeking to implant community where it does not appear to exist, the normative ideal itself perhaps does not exist either. Thus, relatively low-crime middle class neighbourhoods, which are thought to be the bastions of the good community, are often no such thing (Crawford, 1998), and the putative solution of an homogeneous, close-knit territorial community is increasingly anachronistic as the nature of community life is changing. Many of us, for example, are more likely to be familiar with the *Neighbours* of Ramsay Street, than with those actually living next door.

Moreover, just as ‘the good community’ is not necessarily the solution to high-crime neighbourhoods, so the disorganised community is not necessarily the problem. There are some very well-organised communities whose very organisation—think of mafias or youth gangs—is a major source of the crime problem. The problem to be tackled, then, may be more about organisation, and particularly *differential* organisation and the conflict it can create, than about disorganisation. This issue applies also more generally: community crime prevention tends to hold within its sights the organised or disorganised street crimes of the relatively marginalised working and non-working classes, and thereby loses sight of the often more highly organised corporate and state crimes that can inflict much more harm on society.

With regard to targeting, risk factors work in combination, in complex ways. Some risks may be manifestations of other risks, and so addressing the former makes little sense without addressing the latter. For example, it may be that inadequate parenting has a lot to do with living in conditions of social deprivation. Consequently, establishing parenting classes to improve the quality of parenting is likely to have a limited impact if the social deprivation is not also tackled. As a further example, in recent years considerable faith has been placed in cognitive-behavioural programmes as a means of preventing crime. Such programmes aim, in effect, to improve the quality of an individual’s thinking and decision making. Individuals who are highly impulsive, for example, and who might resort too quickly to violence, may be taught to curb their impulsiveness, and thus their violence. Impulsiveness in this instance is the risk factor that a cognitive-behavioural programme would aim to address. Yet it may be that this impulsiveness is born of other risk factors, such as social deprivation, which is well known, criminologically-speaking, for creating a strain, or a sense of frustration and powerlessness. This may be at the root of the problem of impulsiveness, and therefore if the deprivation is not addressed the likely effectiveness of cognitive-behavioural programmes may be quite limited. In support of such a point, Newburn (2007), cites the results of a Home Office study which shows that whilst young people on a cognitive-behavioural programme offended less than a matched group of young offenders in the first year after the programme, in the second year there was no discernible difference—the effects of the programme appeared to have worn off.

The third general criticism that can be directed at social crime prevention is that, like situational crime prevention, it can produce unwanted side-effects. Risk-based thinking

has its own dynamic which can end up widening the net of *social control*, and a good example of this is the way that developmental crime prevention has extended its reach to the foetal stage: we can now identify children at risk of criminality before they have been born, by targeting their risky mothers, and ‘helping’ them with parenting skills and other forms of social support. When such help is offered on a voluntary basis this may be just about acceptable, but where compulsion or coercion is involved, there are major ethical concerns.

Another potential side-effect is that of *up-tariffing*. What this means is that if someone commits a crime despite all the preventive support that they have been provided with, they may end up being treated more harshly than they would have been had the support not been provided in the first place. Their offending effectively means that they stand accused not only of committing a crime, but also of failing to respond positively to the ‘help’ that was on offer. Faced with such offenders, sentencers may feel obliged to offer fewer ‘last chances’, and to move quickly from similar forms of help to tougher sentences, culminating in relatively premature recourse to custody.

Finally, social crime prevention increases the risk of the *criminalisation of social policy*. This means that social policy measures come to be defined increasingly in terms of the specific aim of crime prevention: crime prevention becomes their principal rationale. Two problems accrue from this. Firstly, we lose sight of other rationales for social policy measures, such as the pursuit of social justice. We might try to lift people out of deprivation, for example, in order to create a more equal and just society, not simply because it may be a way of stopping them from committing crime. Secondly, if social policy measures fail to work as tools for crime prevention—and we have discussed many problems that can make their failure highly probable—then a rationale for their continued use becomes harder to find. The criminalisation of social policy therefore threatens to chip away at the edges of a welfare state and its associated social rights that were hard won in the 1940s, only to become increasingly vulnerable in more recent times.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Set out the distinguishing features of developmental crime prevention and community crime prevention.
- 2 Summarise the main criticisms levelled at social crime prevention.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have reviewed crime prevention as a distinctive area of policy and practice that takes place beyond the boundaries of the criminal justice system. Its emergence over the last few decades was attributed to a number of factors. These include criminological changes in which explanatory attention has shifted from ‘the other’ to those features of ‘everyday life’, embedded in physical situations, that make them vulnerable to motivated offenders. They also include a growing understanding of the limited reach of the criminal justice system, and a growing concern about the ineffectiveness of criminal justice responses. As one might expect, however, the criminal justice system has not simply taken this lying

down, and since the pessimistic low-water mark of the 'nothing works' era, various attempts have been made to improve the effectiveness of criminal justice, or at least to assert it through a rhetorical appeal to 'what works', which spans, for example, cognitive-behavioural programmes for offenders, but also high-profile measures such as zero-tolerance and intelligence-led policing.

The rise of crime prevention also was attributed to the complex changes comprising globalisation, which have made governments keener to search for non-state solutions to problems such as crime, in order to minimise the fiscal burden, and to keep the economies of nation states competitive in the global marketplace. Crime prevention is attractive here because it opens up spaces for *privatisation*, and for increasing the responsibility of private citizens for their own safety and security. A significant problem, however, is that this neo-liberal agenda must contend with another side-effect of globalisation, to which it has itself contributed, namely the growth of insecurity. This means that at exactly the same time as governments seek to spread the responsibility for crime prevention beyond the state, growing insecurity results in growing demands for protection. The well-off may be able to protect themselves through the purchase of various preventive technologies and services, but others demand not so much crime prevention as more traditional articles of faith, such as 'more bobbies on the beat', and certain punishment for offenders. This lands governments with a 'sovereignty predicament' (Garland, 2001), and helps to explain why, at the same time as we have witnessed the growth of crime prevention, we have seen a significant expansion in policing—particularly through 'the *extended policing family*' (Crawford and Lister, 2004)—as well as a marked increase in the use of punitive sanctions and the size of prison populations. It is important, then, that we analyse crime prevention within its wider context, in order to understand the pressures to which it is subject.

We have seen that crime prevention ultimately boils down to approaches that rest upon different understandings of the causes of crime, namely situational crime prevention and social crime prevention. Situational crime prevention now boasts an array of often highly creative techniques oriented towards the manipulation of opportunities that makes crime harder to commit. Social crime prevention incorporates developmental measures that seek in effect to neutralise the risk factors that threaten to propel risky individuals—particularly young people—into crime, and community measures that seek variously to bring organisation to disorganised communities, or to strengthen communities by addressing the structural disadvantages that have resulted, ultimately, in their social exclusion.

Each approach has its attractions, but also its flaws, though these are often specific to particular measures, deployed in particular contexts, rather than to the approach as a whole (not all situational crime prevention results in displacement, for example, whilst not all social crime prevention hits the wrong targets). The existence of situational and social crime prevention attests not only to different understandings of the causes of crime, but also to contested understandings. That is to say that the choice of how best to prevent crime is not just a technical one, although it is often dressed up in this way by rationalistic problem-oriented processes, devices such as the Problem Analysis Triangle, and preventive technologies themselves, such as CCTV, that have an intuitive, common-sense appeal.

Deciding how best to prevent crime is also a political issue that involves, for example, implicit or explicit consideration about where the moral responsibility for the causes of crime lie; the limits of state action; and the proper role of the private market, and of civil society, in the provision of security. Within the policy domain criminologists and practitioners sometimes take up entrenched positions: they may be for situational crime prevention and against social crime prevention, or vice versa. Others see the merits of combining approaches, perhaps using one approach to overcome the deficiencies of the other, and there is some virtue in this, though it must be recognised that such outcomes are as much political as they are pragmatic.

Attention should be focused, too, on where decisions about crime prevention are taken. The dilemma for governments here is that successful crime prevention often depends upon those beyond the state—private citizens and businesses—taking more responsibility for their security, and yet governments lack much in the way of leverage to encourage such responsibility. They do, however, have leverage over local state agencies, and, as we have seen, pressure has been exerted upon them to work in partnership with themselves and with non-state actors in developing local strategies to prevent or reduce local crime problems. Consequently, a lot of the political baggage surrounding crime prevention—particularly social crime prevention, which remains a largely state-led activity—is loaded on to these partnerships: it is here that decisions are taken about which problems should be prioritised, how they should be tackled, and so forth. It is here, then, that the ‘big’ political issues noted above are worked through, though they are also overlain with a host of other political issues relating, for example, to relations between central and local government, and between different local agencies. These are the most obvious and researchable sites of crime prevention politics, although we need to consider also the role of increasingly important non-state actors, whether it be the owners of shopping malls who ban ‘street people’ from their premises, or the actions of private householders, whose insecurity may gain expression through an exclusionary and often racialised ‘othering’ of those such as young people hanging around on street corners, whom they perceive to pose a threat to their security. Crime prevention, it turns out, is about so much more than ‘what works’.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND EXERCISES

- 1 We often do not recognise the widespread adoption of situational crime prevention techniques because they have become so absorbed into our daily routines that we take them for granted. One way of recognising their pervasiveness is to deliberately look for them. Using Clarke and Eck’s (2003) list of 25 situational techniques as a checklist, see how many different techniques you can find. This is something that is good to do in groups, and digital photographs can be used, appropriately, to evidence what you have found.
- 2 As noted in the chapter, Oscar Newman’s idea of defensible space has been incorporated into a set of *Secured By Design* principles used and promoted by the police. These principles are accessible as a downloadable design guide from the *Secured By Design* website <<http://www.securedbydesign.com>>. Download a copy of the SBD principles, and use them to assess different parts of the physical environment within which you live. Again, if this is done in groups different groups can go to different specified areas and compare their findings, using digital photography as evidence.
- 3 CCTV cameras have their advocates and their detractors. Around locations in which they are used (e.g. town centres, nightspots, shopping centres, bus or railway stations, university campuses, etc.) you could conduct a short survey that sought to determine, for example, whether respondents were aware of the cameras’ presence; whether they made them feel safer; whether they thought they were effective as a deterrent or an aid to detection; whether they thought they were an intrusion into their privacy, and so on. It is worth collecting basic details about, for example, respondents’ age, gender, and ethnicity, so that results can be broken down accordingly—although bear in mind the sampling limitations of these kinds of street surveys, and consider the need to gain the permission of landowners when conducting the surveys.

- 4 It was mentioned in the conclusion that the politics of crime prevention were often played out in the local *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships* (CDRPs) that were established following the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. These CDRPs produce reviewable strategies that set out what they intend to do locally to reduce crime; and they are normally published on local authority or dedicated CDRP websites. Download a CDRP strategy and read its contents. Try to get a sense of the balance the strategy seeks to strike between social and situational measures, for example. In view of the discussion in this chapter (about crime prevention being about measures occurring beyond the criminal justice system, but crime reduction being about measures that more closely involve criminal justice agencies), you might also see to what extent the strategy is dominated by the actions of criminal justice agencies. If this exercise is done in groups, different groups could look at different CDRP strategies: urban CDRPs could be compared with rural ones; high-crime areas could be compared with low-crime ones; or traditionally Labour-controlled areas could be compared with traditionally Conservative-controlled ones. If there is uniformity across different kinds of areas consideration might be given to how far the contents of strategies are influenced by Home Office priorities 'from above'.
- 5 Utilising some of the contents of this chapter and further reading, hold a debate on the following question: which is best, situational crime prevention or social crime prevention? The debate will require two 'sides', and students should be encouraged to suspend their own personal views, if necessary, in order to argue the case for the particular side on which they have been placed.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

In the last decade or so an increasing number of books have appeared on the subject of crime prevention. Although it is now a little dated, Crawford's *Crime Prevention and Community Safety* (1998) provides a good, well-informed, and comprehensive introduction to the subject area. The collection edited by Hughes, McLaughlin, and Muncie, entitled *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: New Directions* (2002) offers a more detailed and advanced conceptual engagement with the subject matter, whilst also having a number of chapters on policy issues in the UK, and comparative developments elsewhere. Gilling's *Crime Reduction and Community Safety* (2007) provides a specific more recent account of the direction in which crime prevention has been pulled under successive New Labour governments. Clarke's *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies* (1997) usefully showcases a range of situational measures, whilst Clarke and Eck's *Become a Problem-Solving Crime Analyst in 55 Small Steps* (2003) provides a valuable insight into the technical, if not the equally important political, aspects of crime prevention practice.

WEB LINKS

The internet has become an important source of information about crime prevention, and it has been used to establish an international marketplace for the exchange of ideas and initiatives. Most internet resources reflect the practical concerns of their host agencies and are oriented towards practitioners: thus, they are there to inform about good practice, to identify what works, and to promote the cause of crime prevention more generally. This does not mean that they are necessarily entirely uncritical, but we should not expect to find a lot of critical social scientific knowledge and understanding in their content. They are, nevertheless, useful sources of information for the development of such knowledge and understanding. Here are five web links that merit further exploration:

<http://www.securedbydesign.com>

This is a link to the police-led Secured by Design (SBD) scheme, which promotes the idea of designing out crime, particularly at the planning stage. Intellectually indebted to the work of Oscar Newman, the website contains a lot of practical information on the SBD scheme, and it offers an insight into the work of practitioners in this area of crime prevention.

<http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au>

This is a link to the Australian Government's national community crime prevention programme, a federally-funded initiative. From this website there are links to reports and evaluations of projects funded by the national programme, and there is also practical advice and guidance, targeted both at practitioners and at members of the public.

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk>

This is a link to the UK Government's crime reduction activities, hosted by the Home Office. It is a veritable mine of information that is generally well organised. Through the website one can access a number of important policy documents that seek to shape local practice. There is also a lot of good practice advice and guidance targeted at practitioners, as well as links to research reports, the conclusions of which have helped to shape such advice and guidance.

<http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/>

This is a link to the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC), established in the mid-1990s. ICPC comprises a network of policy makers, practitioners, and academics, brought together by a common commitment to the United Nations' guidelines for the prevention of crime. There is a strong interest in the promotion of best practice, and the website is a good place from which to access a range of publications, many involving elements of comparative analysis. The website also hosts the proceedings of annual conferences, and there is a newsletter, the International Observer, which is a good source of information on contemporary developments.

<http://www.urbansecurity.org>

This is a link to the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS). EFUS comprises a network of over 300 European urban local authorities, all with a shared interest in what they call urban safety, which is broadly the same thing as community safety. The members are particularly interested in promoting the role of local authorities in the delivery of urban safety. Through the website one can access relevant policy documents of different European countries, some comparative studies, and advice and guidance themed by specific crime-related problems, such as youth crime, or the fear of crime.

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