

SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

SUGGESTED
REVISIONS



Ronald V. Clarke
editor

Situational Crime Prevention

Successful Case Studies

Ronald V. Clarke
editor

*School of Criminal Justice
Rutgers University*



Harrow and Heston

PUBLISHERS
New York

Copyright © 1992, Ronald V. Clarke.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Harrow and Heston, Publishers
Stuyvesant Plaza
P.O. Box 3934
Albany, N.Y. 12203

ISBN: 0911577-22-X (Hard cover)
ISBN: 0911577-21-1 (Paper cover)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Ronald V. Clarke

Situational crime prevention: successful case studies / [edited by]
Ronald V. Clarke.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-911577-22-X : \$49.50

ISBN 0-911577-21-1 (pbk.) : \$17.50

1. Crime prevention—Case studies. I. Clarke, R. V. G.

HV7431.S584 1992

364.4—dc20

91-43240
CIP

Preface

My training as a psychologist and years of employment in the British civil service have taught me that reports must invariably be brief, which may explain why I have always been daunted by the prospect of writing a book. So, when I came to believe that a book on situational prevention was needed, principally to make the approach better known in the United States, I immediately looked around for someone to help me write it. In fact, plans were developed with first one colleague and then another, but in both instances other duties and interests, their's and mine, intruded and in neither case was the book completed.

Had it been written, it would have documented the progress made since the concept of situational prevention was introduced in the mid-1970s by a small team, including myself, working in the Home Office. It would have traced the links between situational prevention and similar approaches in the United States, especially Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, or CPTED, and would have shown how the theoretical base of situational prevention has been strengthened by the development in recent years of routine activity and rational choice theory. It would have reviewed the evidence on displacement and drawn attention to the increasingly recognized, counterbalancing phenomenon of diffusion of benefits. Above all, it would have documented the successes achieved by situational measures in preventing a wide variety of crimes in an equal variety of contexts.

All of this has now been attempted in the *Introduction* to this collection of case studies. In addition, a new classification of situational techniques is presented which benefits from the experience accumulated during the twelve years since the publication of the first classification in *Designing out Crime* (Clarke and Mayhew, 1980), an earlier collection of studies undertaken by the Home Office. The new classification provides the main link with the case studies. Not all of these were explicitly undertaken within the framework provided by situational prevention, but all belong there by virtue of their methodology.

Many of the case studies originally appeared as journal articles, but often in journals that would not be readily accessible to the many people — police, security personnel, community leaders, local government officials, business managers and owners — who may be concerned in a practical way with preventing crime and who might be helped by a knowledge of situational prevention. For them, I should repeat some advice given by Marcus Felson (1991) in a recent *Security Journal* editorial: Situational prevention, like the practice of medicine, is as much an art as a science. Hard evidence about things

that work usually has to be supplemented by informed judgement about what is likely to work. This means that the case studies may be a source of ideas, but will rarely show exactly what to do.

In Britain as well as in some other European countries, situational prevention has become an integral part of government policy. In the United States, comparatively less success has been enjoyed by CPTED because of the failure of some ambitious projects funded by the federal government and also, I believe, because CPTED, unlike situational prevention, has generally been confined to projects involving buildings and facilities. Whatever the reason, the concept of reducing criminal opportunities is less widely accepted amongst American criminologists. One day the book will be written that I first had in mind for them. In the meantime, I hope that this collection of case studies, and the successes documented, will stimulate their interest.

Though this is not argued in the book, which seeks only to promote situational prevention on its own merits, there seem few grounds for optimism about any other form of crime control. If we could make our society more like that of Japan or Singapore, where people seem more willing to subordinate their personal wishes to those of the wider community, perhaps we could do without situational prevention. It seems to me, however, that the trend in our society is precisely in the opposite direction. We are daily seeking ways to expand our mobility and freedom of choice, which according to routine activity theory is the main reason for rising crime. Since we may be unable to strengthen generalized internal controls on behavior, we may need to introduce external controls in those specific contexts and situations where the absence of compliance may be particularly damaging.

In conclusion, I should mention two particular advantages of the case study format of the book. First, my publisher believes (and who am I to disagree!) that, by allowing a wider variety of perspectives to be represented, the case study format should make the book more suitable for use as a college text, even if it will need to be supplemented by more detailed treatments of such topics as displacement and difficulties of implementation. Second, it enables the contribution of some of my friends and colleagues whose studies are reproduced here to be more fully recognized. I am grateful to them and to those others whose studies have been reprinted for permission to include their work. I should also like to thank some other colleagues — Derek Cornish, Marcus Felson and Paul Wilson — whose work is not reprinted, but who have nevertheless been the source of inspiration and support.

RONALD CLARKE
Rutgers

About the editor

Ronald Clarke is Professor and Dean at the School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Trained as a psychologist, he holds a master's degree (1965) and a Ph.D (1968) from the University of London. He was formerly Director of the British government's criminological research department (The Home Office Research and Planning Unit), where he had a significant role in the development of situational crime prevention. He also helped to establish the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit and the now regularly-repeated British Crime Survey. He has held faculty appointments in criminal justice at SUNY Albany and Temple University. His books include *Designing out Crime* (1980, with Pat Mayhew), *The Reasoning Criminal* (1986, with Derek Cornish), and *Suicide: Closing the Exits* (1989, with David Lester).

Acknowledgements

The original citations for each of the case studies reprinted are given in the *Editor's Notes* preceding each study.

Case Study #1 is reprinted by permission of the American Society of Criminology.

Case Study #2, #3 and #20 are © British Crown Copyright (respectively 1976, 1988 and 1991) and are reprinted with the permission of the Controller of Her Britannic Majesty's Stationery Office.

Case Study #4, #5, #9, #11, #14, #19 and #21 are reproduced by permission of Butterworth-Heinemann.

Case Study #7 is reprinted from *Police Chief* with the permission of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc., Arlington, Virginia.

Case Study #8 is reprinted with the permission of the National Swedish Council for Crime Prevention.

Case Study #10 is reprinted by permission of the American Library Association.

Case Study #12 is reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

Case Study #13 is reproduced with permission of the Police Executive Research Forum.

Case Study #15 is reproduced by permission of Norman Bottom, *Journal of Security Administration*.

Case Study #17 is reprinted with the permission of Pergamon Press plc.

Case Study #18 is reproduced with permission of the Rand Corporation.

Case Study #22 is reprinted with the permission of Canada Law Book Inc., 240 Edward Street, Aurora, Ontario L4G 3S9.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Preface <i>Ronald V. Clarke</i> | vii |
| Part 1: Introduction <i>Ronald V. Clarke</i> | 3 |
| Definition of Situational Prevention | 4 |
| Defensible Space, CPTED and Problem-oriented Policing | 5 |
| Rational Choice, Environmental Criminology and Routine Activities | 7 |
| The Twelve Techniques of Situational Prevention | 10 |
| The Scope and Effectiveness of Situational Prevention | 21 |
| Issues of Philosophy, Politics and Policy | 27 |
| Implementation Difficulties | 30 |
| The Selection of Case Studies | 33 |
| Part 2: Case Studies | |
| 1. Curbside Deterrence? <i>John F. Decker</i> | 39 |
| 2. Steering Column Locks and Car Theft. <i>Pat Mayhew, Ronald V. Clarke and Mike Hough</i> | 52 |
| 3. Preventing Post Office Robberies in London: Effects and Side Effects. <i>Paul Ekblom</i> | 66 |
| 4. Less Telephone Vandalism: How Did it Happen? <i>Dennis Challinger</i> | 75 |
| 5. Developing More Effective Strategies for Curbing Prostitution. <i>Roger Matthews</i> | 89 |
| 6. Reducing Theft from Shopping Bags in City Center Markets. <i>Barry Poyner and Barry Webb</i> | 99 |
| 7. Cruising Cooper Street. <i>John Bell and Barbara Burke</i> | 108 |
| 8. Macro Measures against Crime. The Example of Check Forgeries. <i>Johannes Knutsson and Eckart Kuhlhorn</i> | 113 |
| 9. Deterring Obscene Phone Callers: The New Jersey Experience. <i>Ronald V. Clarke</i> | 124 |
| X 10. The Halo Effect: Psychological Deterrence of Electronic Security Systems. <i>Mary Jane Scherdin</i> | 133 |

Contents

| | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 11. | The British Columbia Transit Fare Evasion Audit. <i>Scott DesChamps, Patricia L. Brantingham and Paul J. Brantingham</i> | 139 |
| 12. | The Care of Public Transport in the Netherlands. <i>Henk van Andel</i> | 151 |
| 13. | Thefts from Vehicles in Shipyard Parking Lots. <i>John Eck and William Spelman</i> | 164 |
| 14. | Situational Crime Prevention in Two Parking Facilities. <i>Barry Poyner</i> | 174 |
| 15. | Video Cameras and Bus Vandalism. <i>Barry Poyner</i> | 185 |
| 16. | Preventing Convenience Store Robbery through Environmental Design. <i>Ronald D. Hunter and C. Ray Jeffrey</i> | 194 |
| 17. | Crime Prevention and Commercial Burglary. <i>David B. Griswold</i> | 205 |
| 18. | Exact Fare on Buses. <i>Jan M. Chaiken, Michael W. Lawless and Keith A. Stevenson</i> | 216 |
| 19. | Preventing Burglary on a British Public Housing Estate. <i>Ken Pease</i> | 223 |
| 20. | Operation Identification, or the Power of Publicity? <i>Gloria Laycock</i> | 230 |
| 21. | Subway Graffiti in New York City: "Gettin Up" vs. "Meanin It and Cleanin It". <i>Maryalice Sloan-Howitt and George L. Kelling</i> | 239 |
| 22. | From the Panopticon to Disney World: The Development of Discipline. <i>Clifford D. Shearing and Phillip C. Stenning</i> | 249 |
| | References | 256 |
| | Author Index | 269 |
| | Subject Index | 273 |

PART 1

Introduction

Introduction

Ronald V. Clarke

SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION is a term of comparatively recent origin (Clarke, 1980; Clarke and Mayhew, 1980). It refers to a preventive approach that relies, not upon improving society or its institutions, but simply upon reducing opportunities for crime. This approach is thought to be no more than commonsense when, for example, individuals fit locks and bolts to protect their homes from burglary. It becomes controversial only when advocated at a local community or broader societal level. Indeed, considerable skepticism has met the claim, lying at the heart of situational prevention, that coordinated action to make crime more difficult or risky can achieve general reductions in the volume of crime.

This claim might have been better received had it not been made at a time when the limited effectiveness of offender treatments was becoming apparent (Martinson, 1974; Brody, 1976), and when criminologists and policy makers were tending to over-generalize the “nothing works” conclusions beyond rehabilitation to encompass all other forms of crime control. But poor timing is not the only reason for the resistance encountered by situational prevention. It is criticized on theoretical grounds (in particular, because most criminologists believe that opportunity plays a minor role in crime) and it offends both liberal

and conservative philosophies of crime control, the latter by eschewing punishment and the former by seeming to promote an uncaring and authoritarian society. Before exploring these points in greater depth, however, a more detailed account of situational prevention and its theoretical background is needed.

Definition of situational prevention

Situational prevention comprises opportunity-reducing measures that are, (1) directed at highly specific forms of crime (2) that involve the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent way as possible (3) so as to increase the effort and risks of crime and reduce the rewards as perceived by a wide range of offenders. A detailed classification of such measures is offered below, but they include: "target hardening" of the locks and bolts variety; more sophisticated forms of technology including intruder alarms, CCTV, breathalyzers and radar speed traps; the surveillance of specific locations provided by employees such as park-keepers, subway guards and concierges; the use of vandal resistant designs and materials in schools and other public facilities; block watch, neighborhood watch, "defensible space" and other attempts to capitalize upon the natural surveillance provided by members of the public; and some less easily categorized measures such as improved coordination of public transport with pub closing times and the separation of rival soccer fans in different enclosures at the stadium.

While all these measures share the purpose of reducing opportunities for highly specific forms of crime and thus fall within the definition of situational prevention, few have been explicitly developed within a situational prevention framework. Indeed, many originated through the efforts of hard-pressed public and private agencies seeking the most practical ways of solving their particular crime problems. In some instances, mistakes might have been avoided and less time taken to develop solutions had those involved been familiar with the elements of situational prevention. One purpose of this book, therefore, is to consolidate the knowledge obtained through these individual problem-solving efforts and to show how the criminological framework provided by situational prevention enables the lessons learned from dealing with specific crimes in specialized contexts to be more broadly generalized.

In one respect, therefore, situational prevention has been developed to provide a more formal theoretical basis for some practical and commonsense thinking about how to deal with crime. However, situational prevention was not developed in a theoretical vacuum. The genesis of the concept, which originated in the British government's Home Office Research Unit, can be traced directly to lessons learned from research on correctional treatments (Clarke and Cornish, 1983). This demonstrated the importance of immediate environment and

opportunity in accounting for misbehavior within the institution (Tizard *et al.*, 1975). In turn, this resulted in much greater awareness of a substantial literature concerned with the situational determinants of crime and, in an attempt to fill the crime-control policy void created by the demise of rehabilitation, more attention to the possibility of manipulating these to reduce crime (Mayhew *et al.*, 1976).

This “situational” thinking was combined with the action research model (in which researchers and practitioners work together to analyze and define the problem, to identify and try out possible solutions, to evaluate the results and, if necessary, to repeat the cycle until success is achieved, Lewin, 1947) in order to produce the basic elements of situational prevention. The influence of the action research paradigm can be seen in the following specification of the five stages of a situational prevention project:

1. collection of data about the nature and dimensions of the specific crime problem;
2. analysis of the situational conditions that permit or facilitate the commission of the crimes in question;
3. systematic study of possible means of blocking opportunities for these particular crimes, including analysis of costs;
4. implementation of the most promising, feasible and economic measures; and
5. monitoring of results and dissemination of experience.

Defensible space, CPTED and problem-oriented policing

While the concept of situational prevention was British in origin, its development was soon influenced by two independent (Jeffery, 1977), but nonetheless related, strands of policy research in the United States. These involved the concepts of “defensible space” (Newman, 1972) and “crime prevention through environmental design” or CPTED (Jeffery, 1971), both of which had preceded situational prevention, but, because of the trans-Atlantic delay in the dissemination of ideas, had not been the spur to its development.

Oscar Newman’s “defensible space” ideas represented a brilliant attempt to use architectural form to rescue public housing in the United States from the depredations of crime. Newman, an architect, believed that the design of public housing projects discouraged residents from taking responsibility for public areas and from exercising their normal “territorial” instincts to exclude predatory offenders. In particular, he criticized the large scale of the buildings which made

it impossible for residents to recognize strangers, the multitude of unsupervised access points that made it easy for offenders to enter projects and to escape after committing crime, the location of projects in high crime areas, and their stark appearance which contributed to the stigma attaching to them. Newman supported these criticisms with statistical analyses of project crime. He also provided a wealth of detailed design suggestions for creating "defensible space" through reducing anonymity, increasing surveillance and reducing escape routes for offenders.

"Defensible space" has sometimes been described as merely an extension of Jane Jacobs' (1961) ideas about the relationship between crime and the lay-out of streets and land use in American cities. As noted by Coleman (1985), however, this fails to do justice to Newman's unique contribution. He was focused upon buildings and architecture rather than urban planning, he moved beyond description to undertake quantitative analyses of the relation between specific design features and crime, and he was deeply involved in implementing change through the introduction of design modifications in housing projects. Despite the criticisms of methodological inadequacy and theoretical naivete that have been made of his work by social scientists (see Mayhew, 1979a, for a review), Newman's ideas have greatly influenced the design of public housing in many parts of the world (Coleman, 1985).¹ Of particular relevance to the present discussion, they also stimulated efforts by the Home Office researchers engaged in situational prevention to undertake some early tests of "defensible space" notions in a British context (Wilson, 1978; Mayhew *et al.*, 1979).²

In addition to Jane Jacobs, other influences on Newman included architectural ideas about the relation between environment and behavior and ethological writings on "territoriality" by authors such as Ardrey (1966). This mix of ideas was rather different from that giving rise to C. Ray Jeffery's (1971) concept of "crime prevention through environmental design." An unorthodox criminologist, Jeffery claimed that the failures of the criminal justice system (in terms of limited reformatory capacity, cruelty and inequity) stemmed from a flawed model of crime, in which "... the genetic basis of behavior is denied and... the environments in which crimes occur are ignored" (Jeffery, 1977: 10). Drawing upon a "biosocial theory of learning," he argued that punishment and treatment philosophies had to be abandoned in favor of a preventive approach which took due account of both genetic predisposition and the physical environment.

American criminology has been unreceptive to genetic explanations of behavior and Jeffery's general theory of criminal behavior has enjoyed less support than his concept of CPTED. Encompassing a broader set of techniques than "defensible space" and extending beyond the residential context, CPTED was adopted by the Westinghouse Corporation as the more suitable designation

for its program of research to extend the defensible space concept to school and commercial sites, where "territorial" behavior may be less natural (Jeffery, 1977: 45). Jeffery's ideas also provided encouragement to the Home Office team and have been developed in projects undertaken by some of his former students and associates, including Ronald Hunter and Patricia and Paul Brantingham, whose work is represented among the case studies included in this book.

"Problem-oriented policing" (Goldstein, 1979) constituted a somewhat later influence on the development of situational prevention. Goldstein believed that the route to greater operational effectiveness for the police was not through improvements in organization and management, but through the more detailed analysis of the problems that they are called upon to handle and the devising of tailor-made solutions. This process requires "identifying these problems in more precise terms, researching each problem, documenting the nature of the current police response, assessing its adequacy and the adequacy of existing authority and resources, engaging in a broad exploration of alternatives to present responses, weighing the merits of these alternatives, and choosing from among them" (Goldstein, 1979: 236).

Goldstein recognized the need for evaluation and his formulation of problem-oriented policing appears to reflect the same action research paradigm underpinning situational prevention (cf. Goldstein, 1990: 103). Nevertheless, some important differences exist between the concepts. In particular, problem-oriented policing is not exclusively focused on crime and is primarily a police management approach; situational prevention, on the other hand, is a crime control approach that can be utilized within any organizational or management structure and that is open, not just to the police, but to whoever can muster the resources and energy to tackle the problem in hand.

With respect to crime control, therefore, situational prevention represents a broader approach than problem-oriented policing. Because it encompasses the entire range of environments (and objects) involved in crime and because it encompasses legal and management as well as design solutions, situational prevention is also broader than CPTED (which tends to be focused on design of the built environment). For example, server intervention programs to control drunken driving and the provision of "call trace" facilities to private telephone subscribers as a deterrent to obscene phone calling would more readily fall under the definition of situational than CPTED measures.

Rational choice, environmental criminology and routine activities

Brief mention was made above of the theoretical origins of situational prevention, in particular of the stimulus provided by studies of institutional treatments for delinquents undertaken by the Home Office. These showed that

the probability of boys absconding or re-offending while resident in probation hostels or training schools seemed to be much more dependent on the nature of the regime than on the boys' backgrounds or personality (Sinclair, 1971; Clarke and Martin, 1971). Particularly important seemed to be the opportunities to misbehave that were provided by the institutional environment.

These findings, which were interpreted within a social learning theory context (Clarke and Cornish, 1983), did not sit well with the "dispositional" theories of crime prevailing at the time that emphasized the long-term influence on behavior of biological inheritance, of upbringing and personality, and of social and cultural factors. But they were quite consistent with psychological research on personality traits and behavior that was finding a greater than expected role for situational influences (Mischel, 1968), and with a more diffuse body of contemporary sociological theory that paid greater attention to transitory, situational influences. This included work by Matza (1964) who argued against deep motivational commitment to deviance in favor of a "drift" into misconduct, by Briar and Piliavin (1965) who stressed situational inducements and lack of commitment to conformity, and by Yablonsky (1962) and Short and Strodtbeck (1965) who evidenced the pressures to deviance conferred by working class gang membership.

The importance of environment and opportunity was also supported by some criminological research, including: Burt's (1925) studies of delinquency in London, in which he showed that higher rates of property offending in the winter were promoted by longer hours of darkness; Hartshorne and May's (1928) experimental studies of deceit, in which they showed that the chances of dishonest behavior by children depended on the level of supervision afforded; geographical studies which showed that the distribution of particular crimes is related to the presence of particular targets and locations such as business premises, drinking clubs, and parking lots (Engstad, 1975); and demonstrations that fluctuations in auto theft reflect the number of opportunities as measured by the numbers of registered vehicles (e.g. Wilkins, 1964).

Taken together, this body of work suggested a more dynamic view of crime than allowed by dispositional models. It appeared that criminal conduct was highly susceptible to variations in opportunity and to transitory pressures and inducements. It was also becoming clear from studies of residential burglary (Scarr, 1973; Reppetto, 1974; Brantingham and Brantingham, 1975; and Waller and Okihiro, 1978) that the avoidance of risk and effort plays a large part in target selection decisions. This dynamic view of crime provided a much more satisfactory basis for situational prevention than conventional criminological theory and led to the formulation of a simple "choice" model (Clarke, 1980). In addition to information about the offender's background and current circum-