OPPORTUNITIES, PRECIPITATORS AND CRIMINAL DECISIONS: A REPLY TO WORTLEY'S CRITIQUE OF SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

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Abstract: *Clarke's classification of situational crime prevention techniques is designed to provide a conceptual analysis of situational strategies, and to offer practical guidance on their use in reducing criminal opportunities. It has developed in parallel with a long program of empirical research, conducted by many researchers, on the situational determinants and the prevention of a wide variety of crimes. For this reason the classification has been subject to constant revision and updating, of which Clarke's (1997) version, which lists 16 such techniques, is the latest. Recently, Wortley (2001) has suggested the need to augment the existing classification, which deals with the analysis of situational opportunities, with a complementary analysis of situational precipitators. These are factors within the crime setting itself that may prompt, provoke, pressure, or permit an individual to offend. The present chapter examines the assumptions underlying the development of situational crime prevention, and offers some views about the theoretical and practical significance of Wortley's suggested additions and revisions. It concludes by proposing a revised classifica-*

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tion of 25 techniques to take immediate practical account of some of the concerns raised above.

A NEW CRITIQUE OF SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

Until recently, Clarke's (1992, 1997; Clarke and Homel, 1997) classification of situational techniques has been seen as providing a systematic and comprehensive review of methods of environmental crime prevention, and has served to guide practical efforts to reduce offending. Such criticism as has been made of situational techniques has tended to concentrate on their alleged failure to tackle the root causes of crime — that is, to address issues of criminal motivation, and to support programs of social and individual crime prevention — or on the putative threats they pose to civil liberties. These issues have been exhaustively explored elsewhere (von Hirsch et al., 2000) and will not be further examined in this chapter. Recently, however, in a series of carefully argued papers (1996, 1997, 1998, 2001) and in his book, *Situational Prison Control* (2002), Wortley has offered a challenge from within the field of environmental psychology itself to the theory and practice of situational crime prevention.

Wortley[1] s critique centers on what he views as the undue and potentially damaging preoccupation with opportunity variables when discussing offender decision making and situational prevention. He contrasts this with the relative neglect of other situational forces (termed "precipitators") within the crime setting that serve to motivate offenders. He identifies four types of precipitator — prompts; pressures; permissions; and provocations — each of which may provide situationally-generated motivation to the hitherto unmotivated. He goes on to offer a two-stage model of situational crime prevention that views offending as the outcome of two sets of situational forces: precipitating factors and regulating factors. Temporal priority is given to the influence of precipitators in motivating the offender, these being followed by the influence of opportunities in regulating whether or not offending actually occurs. He concludes that controlling precipitators is just as important as regulating opportunities, and provides an additional and complementary set of situational crime prevention techniques to control precipitators, claiming that these supply the missing half of a new and more comprehensive situational approach to crime prevention practice. Lastly, he suggests that the development of such a situational framework might better explain and minimize the iatrogenic effects of situational measures in some circumstances.

In this paper we provide a response to Wortley's complex and wide-ranging critique. Since it is very recent, we will begin by providing a brief description of its main elements, quoting from Wortley's papers.

The Role of Precipitators

In 1998, drawing on a previous article in 1997, Wortley argued that "...there are two distinct kinds of situational forces acting on behavior — those which are responsible for precipitating action and those which regulate behavior by the opportunities they present" (1998:173).

In a recent paper, Wortley (2001:63) suggests that

> ...an examination of psychological and criminological theories that incorporate a role for the immediate environment suggests that in many cases situations are important not because they provide information about the likely outcome of a behaviour (which is the basis of opportunity reduction) but because they actively bring on behaviour. That is, whereas the term opportunity reduction assumes the existence of a motivated or at least ambivalent offender who is ready to give in to criminal temptations, it is argued that the motivation to commit crime may itself be situationally dependent.

This is the nub of Wortley's critique, and the rest of his work explores in detail the ways in which situations may precipitate criminal action, and the implications for criminal decision-making and situational crime prevention. The precipitators he outlines — which as a general class he also terms "situational inducements" (1998:175, note 1), and which he later (2001:65) suggests are "four ways in which situations might precipitate criminal responses" — are outlined below. Each precipitator is further divided into four subtypes, as follows:

Prompts

These are situational cues that prompt an individual to perform criminal behavior. As Wortley (2001:65) puts it, these are "...environmental cues [that] tempt us, jog our memory, create expectations, evoke moods, stimulate us, warn us, and set examples for us to follow." They can be classified under the following subtypes:

- eliciting stimuli (e.g., viewing erotic stimuli triggers sexual arousal);
- discriminative stimuli (e.g., presence of an open window signals that a burglary may be feasible);

- models (e.g., seeing other people shoplifting may cause observers to imitate); or
- expectancy cues (e.g., well-maintained parks may encourage users to treat them properly).

Pressures

These are situations that exert social pressure on the individual to offend (2001:65) or perform inappropriate behavior (2001:68). They include the expectations and demands of others to:

- conform to group norms (e.g., thieving because your friends do it);
- obey the instructions of authority figures (e.g., cooking the books because your boss tells you to);
- comply with requests and persuasive arguments (e.g., "Only wimps take any notice of drink-drive laws"); or
- submerge one's identity in a crowd (e.g., to engage in untypical behavior such as looting when part of a riot).

Permissibility

Situations that weaken moral prohibitions permit potential offenders to commit illegal acts (2001:65). Wortley notes that, "Situational factors can help distort moral reasoning processes and so permit individuals to engage in normally proscribed behaviour. The human conscience is highly malleable and sensitive to the physical and social context in which behaviour is performed" (2001:70). Wortley identifies four broad categories of moral distortion, based on earlier distinctions made by Sykes and Matza (1957):

- minimization of the legitimacy of the moral principle (e.g., "Everyone's on the take.");
- minimization of the degree of personal accountability for the behavior (e.g., "I was drunk at the time.");
- minimization of the negative outcomes of the behavior (e.g., "Stealing from department stores doesn't hurt anybody. They're insured."); and
- minimization of the worth or blamelessness of the victim (e.g., "So I beat her up. She was just another whore.").

Provocations

Features of situations can sometimes produce adverse emotional arousal, which provokes a criminal response. As Wortley puts it: "Situations can induce stress and provoke an anti-social response, particularly some form of aggression" (2001:73). Aversive emotional arousal can be generated by:

- frustration (e.g., lack of options and choices; failures of equipment and services);
- crowding (public transport; housing; leisure settings);
- invasions of privacy (intrusions into personal space; lack of privacy); and
- environmental irritants (e.g., excessive noise and adverse weather conditions).

According to Wortley, then, there are very many features of situations that may precipitate offending in the absence of pre-existing motivation on the offender's part. (They may also enhance existing motivation, but this is not the crucial point of Wortley's argument.) Since these situational factors create motive rather than opportunity, they open up new prospects for theory and practice in situational crime prevention. However, as Wortley acknowledges, in practice some current situational techniques are already engaged in what could be regarded as precipitator control. What is at issue here, then, is not so much practice itself, limited and sporadic though its focus on precipitators may be. Rather, it is the limitations of the theory underpinning practice that is the issue: whether, instead of fulfilling its role of developing practice, it may be stifling it. Since this raises questions about the theoretical status of precipitators, and the significance of their place in situational crime prevention, we will come back to these points later.

Wortley's Two-Stage Model of Offending and Prevention

Wortley argues that consideration of situational sources of motivation takes us "...beyond the concept of opportunity as it is usually employed in the situational crime prevention literature" (1997:74). Instead, the role played by situational factors has to be reviewed and extended: "Situations are conceived as not just enabling crime to occur, but as playing an active role in psychologically readying the individual to offend" (1997:74).'

The temporal order in which precipitators and opportunity factors come into play is significant, too. According to Wortley "...readying events occur prior to cost-benefit analysis and may significantly af-

feet that analysis, but do not necessarily determine the behavioural outcome" (1997:75).

Precipitators, then, may provide the motivation to offend (i.e. aim the gun, so to speak), but — except in the cases of the "highly deindividuated" or "extremely frustrated" individual, perhaps — "opportunity" still pulls the trigger. Whether or not offending occurs depends upon the situationally-motivated offender's subsequent assessment of the opportunities in that same situation. As always, both motivation and opportunity are required. Wortley's two-stage model of situational crime prevention (1998, 2001) builds on this view of the decision-making processes of situationally-motivated offenders to suggest points at which situational measures aimed at precipitator control and opportunity regulation, respectively, may be initiated:

> The first stage of the model involves situational forces that precipitate criminal conduct. Behaviour may be entirely avoided if relevant situational precipitators are adequately controlled. In the event that behaviour is initiated, then, in the second stage of the model, performance of that behaviour is subject to consideration of the costs and benefits that are likely to follow (2001:64).

Later in the same paper Wortley comments that: "Behaviour is first initiated before the likely consequences of action are considered" (2001:75).

Since Wortley's two-stage model raises issues for the ways that some multi-stage models of criminal decision making handle motivation and opportunity factors (e.g., Clarke and Cornish, 1985, 2001; Cornish and Clarke, 1986), we will return to this issue, as well, later.

Controlling Precipitators and Classifying Techniques

As a result of his critique, Wortley suggests that there is a need systematically to address and develop situational techniques that can have an impact on criminal motivation as well as on opportunities. In a recent paper Wortley (2001) brings together his work on precipitators and on his two-stage model to offer a classification of strategies and techniques for controlling situational precipitators of crime that complements Clarke's existing classification of opportunity-reduction techniques:

> The new classification is based on the argument that there are two distinct situational forces acting upon potential offenders — the perceived costs and benefits of intended criminal acts (the basis of Clarke's classification) and the factors that may induce individuals to commit crimes that they would not have otherwise considered (the basis of the present classification) (2001:63).

Table 1: Classification of Precipitator-control Strategies

Controlling Prompts	Controlling Pressures	Reducing Permissibility	Reducing Provocations
Controlling triggers: • gun control • pornography restrictions • environmental self-management	*Reducing inappropriate conformity:* • dispersing gang members • screening children's associates • bolstering independence	*Rule setting:* • harassment codes • staff inductions • "shoplifting is stealing" signs	*Reducing frustration:* • inmate control of comfort settings • improved wet playtimes • efficient road design
Providing reminders: • warning signs • symbolic territorial markers • litter bins	*Reducing inappropriate obedience:* • support for whistle-blowers • participatory management • semi-independent units	*Clarifying responsibility:* • server intervention • assigning discrete tasks • encouraging sense of ownership	*Reducing crowding:* • limiting nightclub patrol density • regulating nightclub patron flow • use of colour, windows, light, etc.
Reducing inappropriate imitation: • rapid repair of vandalism • controls on television content • supervisors as exemplars	*Encouraging compliance:* • persuasive signs • fairness of request • participation in rule-making	*Clarifying consequences:* • copyright messages • public posting • vandalism information brochures	*Respecting territory:* • identifiable territories for residents • privacy rooms for residents • avoiding intrusions into inmates' cells
Setting positive expectations: • pub gentrification • domestic prison furniture • fixing "broken windows"	*Reducing anonymity:* • restricting uniform use (perpetrators) • school dress codes • low-profile crowd management	*Personalizing victims:* • victim co-operation • humanising conditions for prisoners • concern with employee welfare	*Controlling environmental irritants:* • smoke-free nightclubs • air conditioning • noise control

Reprinted with permission (Wortley, 2001:66).

For each kind of precipitator and its subcategories (16 in all), Wortley suggests a range of precipitator-control techniques which match and counter them. These techniques are arranged into a 4-by-4 table (see Table 1) analogous to that produced by Clarke (1997). As the table is self-explanatory, we will not comment further on the techniques themselves at this point,

Wortley concludes that there is a place for both types of techniques in situational crime prevention, that both are equally important, but that they tackle different areas of situational control: "Controlling situational precipitators of crime and reducing opportunities for crime can be understood not so much as competing prevention approaches, but as approaches directed at different stages of the person-situation interaction" (2001:75).

Productive vs Counterproductive Techniques

As well as offering contributions to the theory and practice of situational prevention, Wortley's analysis of the role and control of precipitators also leads him to some interesting speculations about the circumstances under which situational crime prevention techniques may become counterproductive (Wortley, 1998, 2001; see also Wortley, this volume). He notes that over-attention either to controlling precipitators or reducing opportunities may, under certain circumstances, lead to such consequences. On the one hand, trying to control precipitators too closely may restrict the scope for opportunity reduction and fail to regulate unwanted behaviors, while over-control of opportunities may sometimes increase the situational pressures to offend (Wortley, 2001:64). So-called "harder" forms of opportunity reduction, in particular, may suffer from the fact that they are easily noticed and may become provoking. And while more subtle forms of opportunity reduction exist, Wortley argues that precipitator control is usually a "softer" form of situational prevention. This is both because it is more covert in its mode of action, so being more likely to achieve its effects outside the individual's conscious awareness; and because it offers the possibility of preventing even the desire-induced contemplation of the crime in question. It is for these reasons that he suggests that such techniques may be less likely to produce displacement. Theoretical explanations such as these for some of the "unintended consequences of crime prevention" (Grabosky, 1996) are to be welcomed for advancing the debate on this issue.

SCOPE AND IMPLICATIONS OF WORTLEY'S CRITIQUE

Wortley's (2001) paper is one of the first attempts systematically to itemize situational factors that may influence the offender's motivation as opposed to his or her perception of opportunities. Others have touched on these issues — Briar and Piliavin, 1965; Gibbons, 1971; Bennett, 1986; Birkbeck and LaFree, 1993; Wikstrom, 1995; Farrington, 1995 — but Wortley's paper is the first to provide a comprehensive framework. It opens up a new theoretical debate over the relative importance of precipitators and opportunities in offending, and an equally important practical one over the extent to which the reach of situational strategies might be broadened by bringing new sources of regulation and control to bear on criminal behavior. Current strategies still rely largely on the reduction of opportunities, and — with sporadic exceptions (e.g., those of stimulating conscience; or reducing temptation) — have paid relatively little attention to the claims of situational precipitators. Wortley's proposed classification of situational precipitators suggests one direction in which theorizing about situational control could be taken further.

Behind Wortley's comments lie broader and more fundamental questions about the interaction between offenders and their environments, and how this is best conceptualized for crime prevention purposes. The issues raised concern the sources of criminal motivation, the meaning of "situationaT influences, and the nature of criminal decision-making processes — those initial ones that lead to the formation of intention to commit the particular crime in question, and those leading to the actual commission or abandonment of the criminal act itself. The assumptions behind the theory and practice of current situational prevention derive from three main sources — the rational choice approach, routine activities theory and environmental criminology (Clarke and Felson, 1993; Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993) — which have adopted their own working assumptions in relation to these fundamental questions. And further pragmatic simplifications such as the assumption of a motivated offender have also been necessary to provide a "good-enough" theory for practical preventive measures. Any flaws found in, or qualifications that have to be made to such assumptions may have important ramifications for both theory and practice. But by the same token, Wortley's proposals may reveal problematical working assumptions of their own.

In this chapter we will attempt to evaluate the significance of these challenges to current theory and practice. Our discussion will start by noting some points of agreement. It will then attempt to identify points of divergence, and discuss how these may reflect the

influence of contrasting assumptions about the nature of criminal behavior. We will go on to argue that Wortley's contribution, while innovative and theoretically important, imposes quite restrictive assumptions about the nature of offending. These assumptions, we will suggest, do not apply to most criminal behavior, most sources of motivation, or most situations. This may limit the practical significance of precipitators for situational prevention to particular settings, crimes and criminals.

Common Ground

When responding to critiques there is always the danger that basic shared assumptions will be overlooked in favor of exploring differences of view. It is important, then, to list what the debate is *not* about. First, there seems little disagreement about the importance of addressing the interaction between the offender and his or her environment — commonly referred to in criminology as the interaction between motivation and opportunity — when trying to understand the circumstances under which individuals offend or refrain from offending. Nor is there disagreement about the general value of situational crime prevention as a way of controlling crime by trying to understand and manage aspects of this interaction. For example, we strongly agree with Wortley (1998) that even counter-productive examples of situational measures show situations to be important controllers of behavior. Nor is there any disagreement on the fundamental role that motivation plays in readying the individual to offend. This is clear from the attention given by the rational choice perspective's involvement models (Clarke and Cornish, 1985, 2001; Cornish and Clarke, 1986) to the nature, development and channeling of common motives and desires by way of background factors, current circumstances, routines and lifestyles. And although situational crime prevention, with its selective attention to the process of crime commission itself, tends to treat the offender's motivation as a "given," this is only because these other and earlier choices and decisions in the offender's life have traditionally been considered to be the major factors responsible for readying the individual to offend.[2]

In both Wortley's and our approach, there is also agreement about the value of existing situational methods for stopping the motivated offender from realizing his or her criminal objectives. Whether the offender enters the crime setting ready to offend, or whether readiness is precipitated by the setting itself, changing the cost-benefit analysis that the motivated offender engages in when deciding whether or not to commit the crime in question is an important aspect of criminal decision making in both Wortley's and our analyses.

More generally, offending is seen as a multi-stage decision process, of which selecting and evaluating means to achieve desired goals are important components. In a very Humean way, reason is a slave of the passions in both approaches: as with Freud's ego, the job of reasoning is to secure desired objectives at least cost to the offender. And we are in close agreement over the importance of investigating any and all situational cues likely to have an influence upon criminal decision making and crime commission.

As we saw earlier, the debate is not strictly even about the status of precipitators, or the value of trying to control them. As Wortley points out, there have been many scattered references to their role throughout the history of the theory and practice of situational prevention, and recently some systematic attention has been given to incorporating a class of these ("removing excuses") in the current version of Clarke's classification of techniques (Clarke and Homel, 1997; Clarke, 1997). As Wortley himself comments, the immediate practical implications of his work in terms of increasing our store of available techniques may not be great: "The argument for separating crime-precipitating situations from opportunity-related situations is based more on the need for conceptual clarity than on the assumption that there necessarily will be a resultant dramatic increase in available techniques" (Wortley, 1998:183).

And, indeed, we agree over the value of many of the actual techniques, over the fact that there is much overlap between the content of the two classification systems (as noted in Wortley's earlier [1998] Table 1; and Wortley, 2001:75) and on the "...potential for debate about the appropriate categorization of particular interventions" (2001:75).

It is also clear that some techniques of situational prevention are less noticeable to offenders or potential offenders than others and, hence, less likely to provoke counter-productive reactions. Wortley makes a strong case for arguing that, under certain circumstances, some forms of situational prevention may be counter-productive. Assuming that they will always be positive courts the tyranny of good intentions; and trying to provide systematic accounts of the circumstances under which counter-productive outcomes may arise is an important endeavor.

Points at Issue

With so much apparent agreement over fundamentals it might seem that any differences must be relatively trivial ones, and accommodation easy to reach. But in fact the formal identification of a new set of situational variables ("situational precipitators") raises

questions that seem quite fundamental to the theory and practice of situational prevention. These questions can be grouped into six main categories, with some illustrative examples:

Kinds of Offenders and Kinds of Crimes:

- To what kinds of offender are opportunity-reduction and precipitation-control, respectively, most suited?
- For what kinds of crimes are these situational techniques more appropriate?

Motivation:

- What are the sources of offender motivation?
- Under what circumstances is offender motivation likely to be purely "situational"?

Criminal Decision Making:

- How can Wortley's two-stage decision-making process be reconciled with rational choice involvement and event models of criminal decision making?
- How typical is Wortley's two-stage decision-making process of most criminal behavior?

Situation:

- Under what circumstances is the setting alone more likely to contribute to offender motivation?
- Under what circumstances is this less likely to be a factor?

Situational Cues:

- Under what circumstances are situational cues likely to elicit offender motivation?
- Under what circumstances are such cues likely to be used by motivated offenders?

Situational Techniques:

- Do opportunity reduction and precipitator control, respectively, have similar breadth of application?
- How helpful is Wortley's (1998) distinction between "harder" and "softer" situational techniques, and to what extent are they coterminous with precipitator control and opportunity regulation?

These questions exemplify some of the underlying points at issue. As we will discuss in the next section, the fact that they can be raised at all suggests that the differences between Wortley's views and our own, far from simply being a matter of emphasis, reflect the operation of contrasting — and maybe conflicting — assumptions about criminal behavior.

In the remainder of the chapter we will argue the case for adopting a different position on each of these questions to the one we believe that Wortley has taken. On the basis of this we will propose a rather more limited theoretical and practical role for precipitators than the one that Wortley has laid out. Instead of viewing precipitators as separate but equal contributors to the theory and practice of situational prevention, we will suggest that their role may in practice be a somewhat more restricted one. We will argue that the circumstances under which precipitators play an important role in situational crime prevention may be most usefully treated as constituting limiting cases of a more general theoretical position.

We will also argue that the most fruitful way of developing a classification of situational techniques is to start from a set of broad default assumptions about offending derived from the rational choice perspective. These assumptions have their analogs in the situational factors most relevant to the situational prevention of offending: those of effort, risk, and reward. Other situational variables than these may have some impact on criminal behavior, but only in particular circumstances and as a consequence of adopting further restrictive assumptions about offenders and offending. These assumptions are best seen as generating limiting cases relevant to particular subgroups of crimes, committed in particular kinds of settings by particular kinds of people. We will suggest, however, that Wortley's views are fully consistent with a rational choice perspective, and that they identify phenomena that have not as yet been given enough systematic attention. But we will argue that any apparent divergences in our views about the practice of situational crime prevention can be ascribed in large part to differences in the typical crime prevention problems being addressed — in other words to differences between

the specific phenomena of interest addressed by traditional situational prevention and by Wortley.

In conclusion, we will offer some comments on the extent to which the theory and practice of situational crime prevention need to be modified in order to accommodate Wortley's critique. As regards theory, we will argue that the issues raised by Wortley help to identify important assumptions underlying the rational choice perspective and situational crime prevention, and that these require further clarification. And it is further argued that Wortley's identification of situational precipitators as motivating factors makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how person-situation interactions can lead to criminal behavior.

But we will suggest that the practical benefits to situational prevention itself may be more limited. Rather than attempt to develop a comprehensive classification system that incorporates complementary and matching sets of situational techniques based upon opportunities and precipitators, respectively, we favor a more modest and pragmatic approach at this juncture. In short, given the practical purposes of such classifications of techniques we favor an approach that seeks to absorb and integrate situational precipitators within (with some modifications) the existing framework. This will reflect the relative importance of opportunities and precipitators to the generality of situational crime prevention efforts more accurately.

THE NATURE OF THE OFFENDER IN SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

Contrasting Assumptions about Offenders and Offending

Until quite recently, a range of default assumptions about the nature of criminal behavior guided efforts at situational prevention. These assumptions, which stemmed from pragmatic as much as theoretical considerations, included views about the crimes most worth tackling, the nature of offenders, the sources and development of their motivation, the use they made of situations and situational cues, the processes of criminal decision making they engaged in, and the most appropriate situational techniques for disrupting their criminal activities. The expansion of situational crime prevention techniques over the years is a welcome sign of the vigor of this approach to controlling offending. But rapid growth in technical reach often takes place at the expense of continuing theoretical coherence.

As new situational techniques have been developed to deal with an ever-wider range of crime problems, the price of growth has been an increasing uncertainty about how to assess the relative importance, power and applicability of these newer strategies, as compared with the older ones, to the full range of crime problems. Moreover, some of the assumptions made by these newer techniques have tended to qualify, if not directly challenge, many of the earlier default assumptions made by traditional situational crime prevention. Since neither the original nor later contrasting assumptions have for the most been made explicit, conceptual confusion and loss of practical benefits are likely to follow unless the differing perspectives on situational prevention that they represent can be reconciled within one overall coherent conceptual framework.

Assumptions about matters fundamental to the theory and practice of situational prevention have emerged at three particular stages in the development of situational techniques. Since these assumptions seem to us to flow from distinctive views about the nature of the offender to whom situational techniques are to be applied, we will begin by examining what we consider to be the default position on these matters, and then go on to consider ways in which later discussions of situational measures have departed from these defaults in their depictions of offenders and associated matters. At each of these three important points in the development of situational techniques, we will also look at the impact of prevailing assumptions about the nature of the offender on a number of corollaries: the types of crime examined, and the roles assigned to motivation, setting, situational cues, decision making and preferred situational techniques. As well as trying to make explicit the assumptions underlying successive stages in the development of situational techniques, our purpose in doing so will be to provide the basis for an alternative to Wortley's proposal for reconciling his views with our own.

Phases in the Development of Situational Crime Prevention

The development of situational techniques has tended to proceed pragmatically on a crime-by-crime basis. Early attempts at classifying techniques were based on examples of existing practice, such as the effects of steering column locks on car theft, and on studies of crimes to which, it was hoped, situational methods might prove to be applicable. As well as car theft, these included other high-volume offenses such as burglary, robbery and vandalism. Detailed studies of some of these high-volume crimes also shaped initial views about criminal decision making and these, in turn, influenced the rational

choice perspective and its conceptualization of the interaction between motivated offender and facilitating environment. Although situational crime prevention is about preventing or reducing crimes, its links to choice, and later rational choice models of offender decision making, have inevitably generated implicit assumptions about the likely nature of offenders responsible for the particular crimes with which situational prevention was largely concerned during the first two decades of its development.

Over the past 10 years or so, situational crime prevention practice has continued to develop within an overall rational choice framework, but some of its specific working assumptions about the nature of crimes and offenders have subtly changed in response to an increase in the range of crimes being tackled and in associated preventive techniques. At least three phases in the development of situational crime prevention can be identified, each linked to a particular but often unexamined set of views about the nature of the crimes and criminals under investigation. The following descriptions attempt to capture salient aspects of the contrasting sets of assumptions that underpin these "ideal types" of offenders, and the development of techniques intended to address the special problems they pose for situational crime prevention.

There is a danger in introducing the notion of what might be regarded as "a typology of offenders" into a field that explicitly confines its attention to situational determinants of offending. But although situational crime prevention applies its techniques to unidentified offenders, there is an equal danger in ignoring assumptions about their nature that might lie hidden behind this activity. As early as 1980 (Clarke and Mayhew, 1980), situational analysts were discussing the potential of situational techniques to target different types of offender — and, indeed the following "ideal types" are not unlike those identified at that time as committed, part-time, or opportunistic.

The Anti-social Predator

This is, as Wortley (1998:185) rightly suggests, the model or ideal type of the offender that has long driven efforts at opportunity-reduction. It is worth noting that Cohen and Felson's (1979) initial statement of the routine activities approach was based upon similar talk of direct-contact predatory acts. Since situational analysts study crimes rather than offenders, it may be the case that assumptions about an anti-social predator as the archetypal actor in these kinds of crimes have arisen from a consideration of what the "choice-structuring properties" (Cornish and Clarke, 1987, 1989) of these

offenses demand in the way of characteristics from successful offenders — and of what type of offender would tend to choose them. This model of the offender makes a number of assumptions about offending.

Crimes and Criminals

The early crimes studied by situational analysts and used illustratively by the rational choice perspective tended to be predatory ones in which offenders roamed hunting-grounds on the lookout for victims or targets, whether to rob, burgle, or vandalize. In keeping with an early implicit rational choice formulation, offending was regarded as goal-oriented and offenders as rational actors seeking to obtain a variety of satisfactions from their crimes at least risk and effort to themselves. Offenders were assumed to be anti-social, mostly free from moral scruples,[3] and committed to particular types of crime as simply the most satisfactory means to achieve their goals. The road to predatory offending follows — and, indeed, underpins — the standard rational choice account of offending which developed during the latter part of the 1980s. Many of these assumptions about the nature of predatory offenders are also consistent with those made by traditional control theories of crime (Hirschi, 1969; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990): and this is how the psychopathic offender is often depicted.

As well as having these attributes, the predatory offenders whom situational crime prevention wanted to deter were (unsurprisingly) those who were currently successfully committing the predatory crimes in question — that is, those with knowledge, skills and experience enough to minimize risk and effort, and maximize payoffs. Situational techniques directed at this notional group of offenders were expected to be able to disrupt the intentions of a wide variety of offenders, from novices to "professionals" — even if, in the latter case, reduction of offending rather than prevention was the goal.

Motivation

For predatory offenders, the motivation to contemplate offending arises out of the usual commonplace human desires (see Clarke and Cornish, 2001, Table 1). The particular nature of these wants and needs are shaped by the individual's basic physiological drives; by personal priorities and preferences acquired during the course of development; and through those generated by the pleasures and vicissitudes of his or her current lifestyle. In the case of novice offenders, living or contact with marginal lifestyles may selectively expose indi-

viduals to the attractions of crime as a solution to their problems. In the case of committed offenders, their lifestyle may be one in relation to which criminal activity has become an integral part, either as a means to solving a variety of wants that cannot readily be met legally (e.g., to service continual "partying") or as an end in itself (e.g., substance misuse). For novice and committed alike, however, their motivation derives characteristically from long-standing features of their lifestyles, and is not a casual product of one-off situational factors.

Criminal Decision Making

The assumption made by the rational choice approach is that criminal decision making in predatory crimes is a multi-stage process. Once motivated (see above), offenders become ready to commit a particular crime when they reach the decision that a valued goal will be more easily achieved using criminal rather than non-criminal means. Direct or vicarious knowledge gained in the course of everyday life alerts the potential offender to a range of possible solutions — some criminal ones — to the needs and desires in question. These options are evaluated on the basis of whether the potential offender is willing and able to put them into practice and, where offending is being contemplated, by the choice-structuring properties of the crimes being evaluated (Cornish and Clarke, 1987, 1989). If moral scruples are an issue for the offender, they, too, will contribute to the process of evaluating solutions at this juncture. If criminal means are selected as the most suitable for achieving the individual's goals, then he or she is said to be ready to offend. This is the process of criminal involvement; and that of continued involvement (or "habitation") merely transforms these decisions into standing ones.

Once ready to commit a crime, however, the actual process of crime commission will be determined by instrumental considerations and opportunity factors alone. Situational prevention leaves to the rational choice models of involvement (or, indeed, to criminality theories in general) the issues of explaining how "readiness" is achieved, maintained, or reduced. To put it in the traditional language of criminology, it assumes a "motivated offender," and concentrates on disrupting the subsequent instrumental decisions made during crime commission itself. This division of criminal decision making into two basic stages, relating to criminal involvement and the criminal event, respectively, has a number of consequences for the way that predatory offenders are viewed. For one thing, it tends to relegate motivational issues to earlier stages of decision making. Criminal intention or "readiness," on this view, is shaped in the main by motivational processes already present in the offender's life. Readiness also im-

plies a provisional "ruthlessness," since at this point moral considerations (if any) will have been resolved.

The assumption that event decisions should be separated from involvement ones also highlights what offenders do when they commit a crime, and so continues to emphasize the amoral, predatory and calculating aspects of offending. Decisions at this point relate largely to technical aspects of the "hunt," the "kill," and escape from the crime scene.

Since readiness is assumed to have been constructed prior to, and usually in a different place from, the criminal event itself, concentration on the technicalities of the crime script (Cornish, 1994a, 1994b) assumes an offender who is experienced enough not allow reconsideration of readiness to leak into and disrupt later decision making. This lays further stress upon the nature of the offender as predator, and has implications for the way in which situations are defined, and situational cues utilized.

Situations

For the predatory offender, situations are there to be utilized for crime-commission purposes: and the offender selects the situation for the opportunities it is likely to provide. Knowledge of situations and the opportunities they present is gained via the routine activities of day-to-day life (Felson, 2002; Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993; this volume), and by more focused patterns of search. This view of the "situation" as one which is freely chosen and purposefully entered (or not) on the basis of its value in furthering the motivated offender's contemplated offense, is a key default assumption of traditional techniques of situational prevention. It emphasizes the instrumental use that the predatory offender makes of situations, and downplays any independent effect — such as a motivating one — that exposure to setting factors might have on the offender.

Situational Cues

Situations influence criminal decision making by providing cues that alert the predatory offender to the existence of opportunities to carry out the offense he or she is "ready" to commit; and this process of alerting may occur whether the predatory offender is specifically "hunting" or not on that particular occasion. Such cues are looked-for signals or reminders providing the information that an offender needs in order to do something that he or she has already decided to do once the circumstances are right. For predatory offenders, then, situational cues function primarily as discriminative stimuli relating

to opportunities to carry out crimes successfully. The cues in question are those of risk, effort and reward, and these will be the informational aspects of situational cues to which predatory offenders attend. While situations may possess different or additional meanings for other ideal types of offender, it is for the information they provide about the presence or absence of opportunities to commit a particular type of crime that they are important to predatory offenders.[4]

As *Crime as Opportunity* puts it (Mayhew and Clarke, 1976:7), however, there are differences between the "objective, material conditions necessary for an act to be committed" and "the conditions subjectively perceived as favourable to action." Although opportunity cues are grounded in objective facts (a window is either open or it is not), perception of opportunities and their use or rejection is a subjective one and depends upon the offender's skills, experience and degree of involvement in a criminal lifestyle. These will determine the extent to which cues signaling opportunities are noticed, seized, sought, manipulated, or manufactured by the predatory offender. The relationship between predatory offenders and the opportunity cues they utilize, then, is usually not determined simply by the impact of single situations on them, but also by any prior experiences they may have of committing that particular offense.

As to whether opportunity cues are ever more than simply instrumental to the task of crime commission, Wortley has suggested that "prompts" — the class of precipitators having most in common with opportunity cues — may also motivate offending. However, although this seems a reasonable assumption, it is probably true only in limited circumstances. It is certainly possible that a blatantly tempting opportunity to steal, a badly vandalized fence, viewing a pornographic movie, or gaining sudden access to a firearm during a fight, may all put the idea of offending into an individual's mind, or even seem to bring about an offense. After all, there has to be a first time for everything. But in rational-choice terms, when opportunity cues act in this way, they are best seen as feeding into the processes of initial involvement — that is, of providing graphic information about possible criminal solutions as part of the process of becoming ready to offend for the first time. For the most part, however, such cues are utilized in the context of a standing decision to offend, and under these circumstances they simply indicate circumstances more or less propitious for offending.

By the same token, the fact that the involvement and crime-commission decisions may occur quickly and almost simultaneously should not be taken — as it sometimes is — as evidence of the power of situational cues to motivate offending. So-called opportunistic

crimes are either necessarily impulsive, spur-of-the-moment nor situationally-motivated. Where they seem so, it is often because the observer sees only the moment seized and opportunity taken, and remains ignorant of any earlier decisions that might have led to this event or, indeed, of the circumstances that might have made it opportune at that time. And in any case, whatever the issues that "prompts," first-time offenders, and telescoped decision-making processes may pose for theory, as issues for crime prevention practice they are typically dealt with by the same techniques that regulate the basic opportunity cues (those of risk, effort, and reward) themselves.

Applicable Situational Techniques

Given the nature of their motivation, and their lack of concern for the effect of their behavior on others, the only situational techniques with much chance of preventing the criminal behavior of predatory offenders will be those that attempt to disrupt instrumental aspects of the crime-commission process: that is, those that increase perceived effort, increase perceived risks, and reduce anticipated rewards. The techniques associated with these general strategies have been itemized by Clarke (1992, 1997), and also include some of those described by Wortley (2002) as "controlling prompts" (see Table 1). The only other requirement is that situational techniques will be appropriately tailored to the degrees of competence and determination exhibited by the predatory offender; but this is usually achievable via the procedures of crime-specific analysis that are an integral part of effective situational prevention practice.

The Mundane Offender

Alongside the predator, who carries out serious volume crimes with commitment and lack of scruple, another more ambiguous figure has recently emerged in the crime prevention literature (although something of the type had been present in situational crime prevention thinking from the earliest days: cf. Clarke, 1980). These offenders have been characterized in various ways to distinguish them from the predator. They have been termed "occasional offenders," "opportunistic offenders,"[5] or "everyday offenders," each in an attempt to get at the quality of "common-or-garden" offending they display. We have termed them "mundane" offenders in an attempt to describe both their nature and the type of offending in which they tend to engage. They are mundane also in the sense that moral considerations tend to have some influence on their criminal decision making.

Crimes and Criminals

A significant aspect of the crimes committed by mundane offenders can be gleaned from Clarke's (1997) discussion of the situational techniques concerned with "removing excuses" (see also Clarke and Homel, 1997). A salient aspect of most of the offenses in question might be termed their ambiguous criminality. This may be because their criminal status is still widely contested in practice by a majority (e.g., speeding), or a significant minority — usually male — of the population (e.g., drunk-driving; sexual harassment); because the offense in question is considered anti-social rather than strictly criminal (e.g., littering; urinating in a public place); because it is an offense by reason of the offender's status (e.g., under-age drinking); or it is an offense that many us may have committed at one time or another — even if only on a single occasion (e.g., fiddling expenses; "forgetting" to return library books). As well as being ambiguously criminal, some of the offenses in question are also generally considered trivial — or, at least, refer to broad offense groups, some instances of which are considered trivial.

Similar aspects of these crimes are implied by some of Wortley's (2001) precipitator-control strategies to reduce permissibility.[6] These are crimes that are characteristically only intermittently defined as criminal. The situations in which they occur either lack "moral markers" or have so many that they paradoxically reinforce a view that the behaviors they warn against are excusable, and they are often poorly policed and inconsistently sanctioned. These are crimes that predatory offenders will commit alongside their more serious ones (see, for example, Chenery et al. [1999] on violations of disabled drivers' parking bays), as and when convenient and safe to do so and without moral scruples. But since these crimes may be considered excusable on occasion by people with such scruples, they are crimes also likely to be committed by a broader group of offenders: "people like us," many of whom we might be reluctant to consider offenders in the strict sense of the term, and who would themselves be reluctant to commit more serious offenses. Mundane offenders, then, are ordinary and basically law-abiding people with consciences and a stake in society who from time to time commit certain types of "minor" crimes, from pilfering at work, to driving home drunk from the pub, smuggling prohibited items through customs, and making improper sexual advances to employees or co-workers. They are ambivalently criminal people committing ambiguously criminal acts.

Although it is tempting to view these people simply as occasional or opportunistic offenders, neither of these terms adequately or accurately defines the characteristic nature of their criminal behavior,

since these terms relate largely to the issues of risk, effort and reward. Indeed, the term "opportunistic" is probably better regarded as a defining feature of all offending, whether committed by predators or mundane offenders — or, indeed of all strictly instrumental behavior. Nor are mundane offenders necessarily "uncommitted" — a term Wortley (1996:129) has previously used in their regard. Many may, after all, persistently commit the offenses in question. Instead, those who have identified this group of offenses and offenders have tended to view the possession of moral scruples, conscience, or ability to feel guilt or shame as the most important group of (overlapping) characteristics involved. At the very least, these are offenders who feel the need to "make excuses" for their conduct.

Motivation

There is no reason to suppose that the basic motivations of mundane offenders are dissimilar to those of predatory criminals. The main differences lie in the demands and constraints of their respective lifestyles, and in the relative attractiveness of criminal behavior as a means of meeting them. Unlike predatory offenders, whose moral sense is vestigial, and whose commitment to society is weak, mundane criminals have a stake in society to protect. These are offenders whose lifestyles are conventional rather than criminal, and whose needs are largely catered for within an interlocking network of legal solutions. For mundane offenders, on balance the outcomes of their utilitarian calculations usually favor non-criminal behavior. As we will argue below, while the process of becoming ready to offend takes a similar course as for predatory offenders, the continued presence of moral and prudential considerations in the case of mundane offenders makes their readiness a much more selective, revisable and tentative commitment.

Criminal Decision Making

Given the overall utility of legal solutions to the needs and desires of his or her lifestyle, the mundane offender's relationship to criminal activity is inevitably a more ambivalent and contingent one than is the case with predatory offenders. As we saw when we discussed predatory offenders, moral scruples are generally not an important aspect of their decision making. For mundane offenders, however, insofar as moral scruples have a healthy rooting in practical self-interest, they have to be taken more seriously (Clarke, 1980; Wortley, 1996; Clarke and Homel, 1997). They are dealt with during the involvement stage of criminal decision making when readiness is de-

termined. In particular, the opportunity for moral scruples to influence decisions occurs when the offender evaluates solutions to lifestyle needs and demands. It is then, at the same time as they evaluate its more purely instrumental pros and cons, that mundane offenders will tend to consider the moral probity of using a particular criminal means. At this point they have a number of options: they can reject the particular type of crime under consideration as a solution to their needs and select non-criminal means instead; they can employ techniques of neutralization to assuage their guilt and/or provide them with excuses to ignore the moral aspects of their actions; or they can choose a less morally reprehensible criminal activity. Choosing to commit morally ambiguous crimes rather than straightforwardly predatory (and usually more serious) ones, provides a way of both reducing risks and lowering the price of failure. And the more morally ambiguous an offense, as in the examples discussed earlier, the easier it becomes to neutralize or ignore moral scruples.

Given that the utility of criminal means may already be in some doubt, the addition of a moral dimension to the decision-making process is likely to make the mundane offender's "readiness for crime" a much more provisional and ambivalent one than would be the case for a predatory offender. Although mundane offenders may be regarded at the end of the involvement stage as "ready" to commit the offense in question, this may be an altogether more contingent condition, then and in the future, than that exhibited by predatory offenders. One way of putting this is to regard mundane offenders as remaining always only "receptive" to the idea of criminal involvement rather than unqualifiedly ready to offend. Because the readiness decision is a potentially revisable one, committing offenses in settings which exhibit few explicit moral markers helps to permit and excuse the actions taken. Hence the presence of "permissibility" or "excusability" cues in the crime setting may serve to confirm criminal readiness by helping to neutralize continuing moral qualms.

Lastly, it may seem like splitting hairs to assert that permissibility or excusability cues act on readiness rather than on the decision-making processes involved in crime commission. But if true, this has some theoretical importance, since it implies that such cues, rather than creating the motivation to offend in someone otherwise not inclined to do so, simply help to bring about a condition of readiness to offend. They may do so in two ways. For novices in crime, exposure to permissibility cues may be all it takes to clinch their readiness to offend for the first time. In the (provisionally) readied mundane offender, these cues play a role in helping to maintain this somewhat precarious state, so that offending can take place without further

intrusion of moral considerations into instrumental decisions about crime commission.

Situations

If its effect is temporarily to release mundane offenders from moral reservations and permit them to "seize" opportunities to offend, then the mundane offender's relationship to the situation may be less straightforwardly instrumental and proactive than that of the predatory criminal. The state of being provisionally ready to commit a crime is one that may preclude more clearly predatory activities such as the conscious search, manipulation, or invention of opportunities to offend. Instead it suggests a rather more nuanced relationship to criminogenic situations that is attuned and receptive to their moral ambiguity — one where the offender may experience such situations as being encountered rather than deliberately sought out. But although they may label the experience in this way, it is quite possible that they may, in fact, be selecting situations for their enabling role in "allowing" offenses to happen. Given their ongoing provisional readiness to offend, and the self-serving uses to which permissibility cues may be put by mundane offenders, we should not neglect the possibility that, like predatory criminals, they may simply be taking advantage of situations, rather than allowing situations to take advantage of them. Such prudential calculations would make mundane offending merely a rather more complex version of the predatory one. As mundane offenders seek to commit excusable crimes, the view most consistent with the rational choice approach would be to suggest that in most cases, excusability merely adds an additional requirement to the basic decision-making task.

Situational Cues

Both permissibility and excusability cues signal in their own ways an absence of moral structure within particular settings. These are places that help to release the offender from the influence of a variety of moral proscriptions against bad behavior, and bolster any existing neutralizations that the offender may be inclined to use. When Wortley discusses how these cues operate, what he has in mind is that they can precipitate criminal behavior on their own. It seems unlikely from the foregoing discussion, however, that permissibility or excusability cues achieve their effects by increasing the offender's motivation to offend. More probably, they merely permit him or her to do so. This account of the way that permissibility or excusability cues operate is, then, somewhat at variance with the one given by Wortley,

although their influence is still a situational one (Wortley's other precipitators, such as pressures and provocations, play a more ostensibly motivational role). Nor is it likely that such cues could act on their own to permit otherwise prohibited behavior. After all, it is clear from the list of cognitive distortions or neutralizations mentioned by Wortley as permitting offending that these are more likely to be pre-existing habits of thought, susceptible to being strengthened by permissibility cues, than new modes of thinking brought about by one-off situational factors alone.

This issue of how permissibility or excusability cues work is complicated by the fact that cues often relay more than one type of information about a setting — and it may not always be clear to which attributes of the cue the offender is responding. This is often referred to as the difference between nominal and functional cues. Crimes that are widely viewed to a greater or lesser degree as excusable or permissible tend to take place in settings with few clear moral markers and poor relevant situational controls. As well as conveying information about permissibility or excusability, then, such cues may also transmit varyingly subtle instrumental cues relating to risk, effort and reward factors. The lack of roadside speed display boards may suggest that other methods of monitoring may also be absent; time-consuming library checkout procedures may suggest that staff may be too busy to monitor suspicious behavior. This is to say that when permissibility or excusability cues appear to be affecting the behavior of either mundane or predatory offenders, this may in both cases be simply because of the instrumental information they convey — or because each type of offender is responding to different functional cues.

Applicable Situational Techniques

The general strategies involved in tackling the criminal behavior of mundane offenders have been variously described as those of "removing excuses" (Clarke, 1997), "reducing permissibility" {Wortley, 2002) or "inducing guilt or shame" (Clarke and Homel, 1997), although there is considerable agreement over the techniques covered by these labels. What they have in common is the attention they draw to the influence of ostensibly non-instrumental factors on criminal decision making — although, as we have hinted, many of the proposed techniques may also have some impact on the offender's perceptions of risk, effort or reward. What is less clear is the exact nature of the mechanisms involved in these techniques, how they might achieve their effects, and how powerful those effects might be.

According to the rational choice perspective, the influence of moral scruples is likely to be greatest when questions of readiness to offend are being determined (the involvement stage of criminal decision making). It is not immediately apparent, therefore, how moral considerations could be brought to bear with much force at any later points. In particular, the crime-commission process itself — the focus of traditional situational crime prevention efforts — is, after all, the stage by which, again according to rational choice assumptions, decision making is primarily guided by the instrumental considerations of risk, effort and reward, and not by moral ones, which have already been disposed of. If we consider the nature of the crimes and criminals with which we are concerned here, however, there are ways and means whereby non-instrumental considerations might achieve their impact at a later point. First, we suggested earlier that, unlike the predatory offender whose readiness for crime is assumed to take the form of a standing decision, mundane offenders exist in a condition of "qualified readiness" that relates both to the quality of their stake in society, and to the ambiguous status of many of their crimes. This is likely to render them continually sensitive to situational cues denoting the inexcusability or impermissibility of any contemplated action even when in the crime situation itself and on the point of offending. If so, then situational techniques that prod conscience, or remove excuses, may cause the mundane offender to abandon his or her criminal undertaking before it has started — although, of course, the likely effectiveness of these techniques will be determined both by the extent of the offender's readiness to offend, and by the strength of the techniques in question.

As well as challenging the readiness of the offender, such reevaluations of readiness are also likely to affect any instrumental decision making that is being carried out at the same time. They will do this, however, not by directly feeding into tactical decisions about when and where to offend, but by intruding upon and disrupting these decision tasks.

Since these methods make somewhat restrictive assumptions about the nature of the crimes, offenders, and decision making involved, their effects are likely to be limited to particular groups of offenders and offenses — that is, in the main to mundane offenders and others who may be ambivalent about their readiness to offend, and may prefer to commit ambiguously criminal offenses. Beginners, for example, whose readiness to offend may be qualified (at first) by practical as well as moral concerns about the advisability of becoming involved in committing a particular crime, may be especially vulnerable to these approaches. But predatory offenses and predatory offenders may be quite unaffected by such techniques. Indeed,

Wortley (1996) has suggested that these techniques may not be suitable for "traditional" offenders with few moral scruples — that is those "...essentially motivated by external rewards and punishments, and...largely unmoved by social pressure or appeals to their conscience" (128-9). On the other hand they may be more suitable for "relatively uncommitted offenders" (129) or those with "a considerable stake in conformity." Since predators also routinely commit the offenses in question — perhaps more often and with more serious consequences than in the case of mundane offenders — the lack of impact of this class of situational strategies as opposed to those based on risk, effort, and reward may significantly reduce the value of their contributions to practice.

This conclusion, however, can be somewhat qualified if we allow for two important features of criminogenic situations. This is the fact, firstly, that they signal their presence via a wide variety of situational cues; and, second, that these (and, indeed, the majority of the cues in relation to which situational techniques are developed) themselves may simultaneously be transmitting information about a range of factors salient to criminal decision making. (Think, for example, of the cues given off by a broken window.) If this is so, then reducing permissibility for mundane offenders might sometimes also lead to changes in the values of opportunity cues for other offenders. While this would potentially affect the instrumental decision making of a wider group of offenders, including predatory ones, its effects might well be of only marginal value compared with those of techniques designed to concentrate directly on opportunity-reduction.

As to whether or not these techniques are inherently "softer" than opportunity regulation, as Wortley (1998) has suggested, this is a moot question. Although it is true that removing permissibility cues may reduce the mundane offender's readiness to offend, and prevent his or her becoming alert to opportunity factors, it is not so clear whether this will always be the outcome. Tightening up controls by posting instructions, setting rules, establishing codes of behavior, requiring procedures to be followed, controlling drugs and alcohol, clarifying consequences, and so on, may involve still quite obtrusive changes to settings. Tendentious declarations that "shoplifting is stealing" may bring to mind the offense they are intended to prevent. Petty, dictatorial or patently unenforceable rules, regulations and instructions may challenge even the mundane offender, to say nothing of their effects upon predatory ones.

The Provoked Offender

The most recent model of the offender to have emerged from the practical business of situational prevention is one identifiable from Wortley's work (1996, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, this volume) on situational precipitators. A number of names could be found for this type of offender — "the precipitated offender"; "the situational offender";[7] "the unmotivated offender"; "the unintentional offender" — each of which captures something of his or her nature. We have chosen to call this ideal type the "provoked offender" although, as used by Wortley, the name would cover only one of his precipitators. We have done so because the term speaks to two important aspects of Wortley's critique, and one aspect of our rejoinder.

First, it calls to mind the notion of an offender forced to react to circumstances. This exemplifies the view that motivation for offending can be supplied by situational precipitators alone, rather than brought to the crime setting by a previously motivated offender. Second, it suggests that the circumstances in question may often involve involuntary exposure to aversive situational stimuli. Third, we think that the related concepts of provocations and social pressures, taken together, best exemplify the notion of a precipitator, and provide its best test. For this reason we use them to stand in for the others. They are also, in our opinion, the most significant for theory and practice. Our views are reflected in the modifications and additions we make to Clarke's (1997) classification of situational techniques later in this paper (see Table 2). As for prompts and permissibility cues, these seem different from the others in ways discussed earlier. "Prompts" seem less conceptually coherent than the other three groups of precipitators; and "permissibility cues" — with their emphasis on freeing rather than motivating the individual to offend — seem conceptually different. Moreover, both, in one form or another, already influence situational practice — prompts as opportunity cues, and excusability and permissibility ones in ways discussed in the previous section. Lastly, as with the mundane offender, the provoked offender adds a further restriction to the default version of the offender. Just as the mundane offender will not offend unless freed from moral scruples, so the provoked offender will not offend unless precipitated into doing so. This view of offending, with its implicit appeal to the notion of the offender as a victim of circumstances imposes a more deterministic perspective on offending than the voluntaristic perspective of rational choice.

Crimes and Criminals

Wortley has drawn attention to a further set of crimes brought about by offenders' exposure to motivating stimuli in particular settings. He suggests (1998:174) that "there are a variety of psychological processes by which individuals may be actively induced to engage in criminal conduct which they may not have otherwise undertaken." Or, as he put it recently, there are "...factors that may induce individuals to commit crimes that they would not have otherwise considered..." (2001:63). Confining the factors in question to those of the pressures and provocations encountered in some criminogenic situations, Wortley's view calls for a model of the offender quite opposed to that implied by traditional situational techniques. Instead of an active purposeful offender responding to, seeking and creating opportunities, or a mundane offender freed to offend by permissibility cues, we have one whose offending may be evoked by immediate provocations and pressures. Because of the implication that no prior motivation need be involved in these crimes, it is tempting to regard them as typically spur-of-the-moment offenses — crimes of violence that erupt in the heat of the moment; or impulsive ones committed by offenders overcome by temptation, or a temporary failure of self-control. But although a quality of abruptness may often apply to the circumstances under which these offenses emerge, this feature is clearly not primarily what Wortley has in mind. The important quality is, rather, that of reactivity: the responding, or feeling of being required to respond to situational cues not of the individual's own choosing. And, as Wortley has pointed out, while the motivation may arise from situational stimuli alone, the offender's response need not be an unthinking one: it will typically still be moderated by a rational calculation of the costs and benefits of actually committing the crime in question.

While the mundane offender's salient characteristics are those of moral scruples from which he or she has to be freed, it is not immediately easy to identify either a type of offender or crime to which the idea of the provoked offender uniquely applies. In its strong form, the notion could apply to any person as long as he or she was unmotivated to offend before exposure to the precipitators in question; and to any crime as long as it was instigated by situational cues alone. Given that provocations vary considerably according to their noxiousness, dosage and duration, this would suggest that these would have to be quite strong in character. In a weaker, and perhaps more easily defended form, it demotes the role of situational motivation to that of precipitator in the chemical sense, referring to the power of such provocations and pressures to invoke, augment and "precipi-

tate" already-existing brews of motivation and readiness into offending behavior. The offense in this case would be one "waiting to happen," and the offender, someone already primed to respond to the trigger in question.[8] This would allow for the operation of quite weak situational provocations, so long as they were enough to tip the balance into offending. The stronger and weaker forms of the notion represent rather different scenarios for the operation of provocations, the strong form placing most of the burden of explanation upon the situational cues themselves (a question of circumstances), and the weak form placing most emphasis upon the offender (a question of character). In some of Wortley's own examples, both forms seem to be in operation simultaneously — as when inmates are provoked by prison conditions.

Motivation

As in the cases of the other ideal types, there is no reason to suppose that the basic motivations of provoked offenders are any different from those of predatory or mundane criminals. The main difference is not in the type of motivation involved, but how it becomes invoked. For predatory criminals the motivations for offending are assumed to arise from the demands and constraints of their lifestyles; given certain motivational demands, these offenders explore possible solutions and, as a result, become ready to offend in a particular way. The process is a proactive one, driven by offender needs, choices and decisions. For provoked offenders, the processes involved are depicted as largely reactive: a previously unmotivated offender becomes ready to commit an offense as a result of exposure to situational precipitators. As we have seen in the case of permissibility cues, however, the above differences may be more apparent than real.

In order to exert their power to precipitate, these situational cues have to be perceived as pressuring or provoking: an aggressive remark may be perceived differently by a therapist than by a homeboy, and the outcomes are likely to differ, too. As we will argue, the context within which cues are perceived and understood is usually provided by an individual's lifestyle. It is this that is largely responsible for the way in which basic needs and wants are expressed and addressed, and for sensitizing and alerting the individual to the situational cues associated with these needs. Just as the degree of permissibility required for an offense to happen will be related to an individual's prior degrees of moral rectitude, so the amount of provocation experienced by the individual from cues of overcrowding, lack of privacy or personal space, environmental irritants, and other frus-

trations or social pressures will be largely determined by the context in which they occur. If they are one-off events within a lifestyle for which they have little significance, then the individual's response will be minimal. If they touch on motives that are central to the individual's lifestyle (such as challenges to reputation), the response is likely to be swift and severe.

Two tentative conclusions about situational motivation can be drawn from this discussion. First, the concept of an unmotivated offender to whom motivation is supplied is probably not a helpful one. What provocations help to do is ready the offender for action by providing cues that cherished goals or expectations may be under threat. In certain very limited circumstances (for example, threats to life and limb) the very existence of a provocation may be enough on its own to provoke extreme biologically programmed reactions. But by and large the process is more interactive. Offenders are not clockwork toys waiting to be motivated; they already have long-standing needs and desires which they bring with them to each new setting. And it is these existing motives that will generally determine the salience of situational provocations — that is, whether they are noticed at all and, if so, how the offender chooses to react to them. If this is so, then — to come back to the distinction between proactive and reactive offending — the motivation generated by lifestyles may be seen as taking two broad forms: one involving the proactive seeking out of ways to maintain and enhance current lifestyles, the other a more reactive concern to conserve and defend them. The point can be made by a simple example: on one occasion an offender may deliberately pick a fight in order to increase his reputation, and seek out opportunities so to do; on another occasion he may have to respond to a challenge not of his own seeking in order to defend his social standing. In both cases, choices and decisions will have to be made; only the source of the instigation is different. Second, the sense in which situational cues are motivating is also an issue. As we will see later, the power of such cues to instigate offending is drawn not just from the impact of the situation itself, but from the relationship of that setting to the offender's wider environment and lifestyle. It is this wider context that modifies or augments the power of precipitators. This is to say that a broader context of both person and situation variables is required if the influence of precipitators is to be gauged.

Criminal Decision Making

Although Wortley's model implicitly recognizes the importance of criminal decision-making processes (see, for example, his discussion

of a two-stage model [Wortley, 1998, 2001]), these are not necessarily identical with the processes outlined by the rational choice perspective (Clarke and Cornish, 1985, 2001; Cornish and Clarke, 1986). As we have seen, the rational choice approach suggests that criminal decision making is best conceptualized as involving two sets of decisions — involvement and event ones — each of which contains additional stages. Involvement requires needs and desires, the generation of goals, knowledge of means to goals, evaluation and choice of means, and establishment of readiness. Event decision making assumes a readied offender and concentrates on identifying the situational conditions under which the chosen criminal method can be successfully "run off: it evaluates opportunities for criminal action and how this is to be scripted.

On the face of it, Wortley's model, with its stress on the importance of situational motivation, departs from the standard rational choice decision-making models in two ways. First, there is little explicit attention to the issue of how the offender becomes ready to offend — presumably because in these cases offending is assumed to be triggered by situational motivation alone and with little need for discussion of other aspects of the involvement processes. Second, since involvement decisions (if any) and crime-commission ones are both assumed to take place in the crime setting itself, this suggests that the decision process as a whole may be a somewhat atypical and abbreviated one.[9] The question at issue, then, is whether situational motivation and the two-stage model can be fitted into the standard rational choice decision-making framework, or whether it departs too radically from its assumptions.

There are two reasons for thinking that Wortley's account, with some modifications, remains within the rational choice framework. First, the decision-making models are heuristic devices for suggesting how criminal decision making might best be conceptualized for the purposes of situational prevention and other matters. Criminal decision making in the wild, however, insofar as it is a product of bounded rationality and other constraints and contingencies, may sometimes take abbreviated, telescoped, and incomplete forms. This is especially likely under the influence of illegal substances or strong emotions, which may cut short, override or even short-circuit some of the normal decision-making processes; and it may also sometimes occur where pressures and provocations come into play. But this is no reason for abandoning attempts to analyze the decision processes at work systematically. In principle, then, even where the influence of precipitators may sometimes be to compress or curtail decision making, these are not grounds for assuming a departure from rational choice assumptions.

Second, and much as was argued for permissibility cues, an account of the involvement process could be given that located situational motivation within the conventional rational choice perspective. Briefly, this account would argue that, even in the case of precipitated offending, the process of becoming motivated, developing goals to meet the needs created, evaluating alternative solutions, and choosing to become ready (or not) to offend would still be a useful way of looking at the decision process involved. Although this involvement process usually takes place outside the crime setting when proactive offending is under consideration, there are good reasons for extending its reach to provoked offending where it takes place within the crime setting itself. A pragmatic one is that if the defining characteristic of Wortley's provoked offender is that "readiness" cannot be established before entry into the criminogenic situation and exposure to some motivating situational stimuli, then that is where involvement decisions must ultimately be determined. The other reason is more theoretical: a fuller rational choice account of the process would enable Wortley's precipitators to be related not only to the situations within which they occurred but also to the pre-existing motives and lifestyles of the offender. In the following two sections we suggest how these connections might be made.

The Situation

The rational choice approach tends to see offenders as active in selecting, entering and leaving situations that offer opportunities to offend. But offenders, like others, are rarely in a position to choose freely. More usually, only a limited array of situations is available to them, and much of their behavior in a given situation will consist of efforts to make the best of a bad job: choice always exists within limits. Some settings can be entered and exited more or less freely, but others may be imposed on individuals for longer or shorter periods of time. And although we tend to speak of settings as isolated entities, they are always members of larger groupings of settings, characterized as environments (see Pervin, 1978). Where such environments are routinely inhabited by individuals, they can be thought of as forming the physical substrate of a person's lifestyle. Such lifestyles can be viewed as involving repeated trajectories over a long period, through environments consisting of series of linked and nested settings, within which more or less routinized patterns of behaviors are carried out. Lifestyles, like the settings of which they are composed, vary in the extent to which they are chosen or imposed, richly patterned or restricted. But they all share the qualities of routinized and habitual exposure to particular patternings of settings. Some settings

and environments are more central to an individual's lifestyle than others. People may choose where they shop, eat or drink, but they may have less choice over where they work or sleep, or the particular route that they take to get to those locations. This will depend upon the mode of transport available and the influence they have over its routing.

These comments suggest that situations do not exist in a vacuum; they exist in relation to other situations, to environments and to individuals' lifestyles. The notion of the stand-alone "situation" may be a relatively harmless shorthand when discussing the way that offenders choose, use and discard situations in their search for targets.[10] But when situations are imposed, their context becomes crucial in determining how the individual will be affected. This context is supplied by the individual's lifestyle and the salience of the situation in question to that lifestyle. A provocation may be welcome to an offender who has entered a setting with the express purpose of looking for a fight; it may be a threat where perceived by the offender as a challenge to his status — especially if delivered repeatedly along with other provocations under constraining circumstances that offer few choices of effective response, avoidance, or escape.

Context is everything when talking about the impact of provoking situations on individuals — and, hence, their significance in precipitating criminal behavior. It is perhaps significant that a major source of understanding about such situations has come from Wortley's work on issues of prison control (Wortley, 2001, 2002, this volume). Prisons are essentially aversive examples of "capsule environments" (Suedfeld and Steel, 2000) — places where noxious stimuli abound, options for their avoidance or control are limited, and repetitive exposure is common. Prisons are also places where the angry, anti-social and socially unskilled are congregated, where one's place in the inmate hierarchy is a vital source of material and psychic satisfactions, and where the maintenance of crucial aspects of the individual's lifestyle, therefore, becomes dependent on the individual's reaction to the circumstances of prison life. Under such constraints the power of provocations can be expected to be at their highest. The foregoing suggests that when situational preventers talk about the power of situations to provoke, what they often have implicitly in mind is not the power of a one-off freely entered setting to precipitate offending but, rather, that of aversive, long-term inescapable environments and their nested settings and associated aversive cues so to do. Although the provocations concerned are undoubtedly situational ones, then, they are the persistent and repetitive products of ongoing lifestyles which determine both the offender's exposure to them, and his or her perceptions of their significance.

The notion of the provoked offender departs even further from that of the predatory criminal, whose ideal type so closely incorporates the guiding assumptions of the rational choice perspective. Nevertheless, although the offenses of provoked offenders may be characterized as reactive rather than proactive crimes, so long as the responses of offenders to provocation can — like other types of offending — be given an intelligible and reasonable explanation in decision-making terms (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994), there seems no good reason to exclude them from the purview of the rational choice approach. The fact that the rational choice perspective is wary of explanations that assume an unmotivated offender may, in fact, even be of benefit. Indeed, locating these offenses within this framework may enable such accounts to be developed more fully for situational crime prevention purposes.

Situational Cues

At first sight, the frustrations and irritations of everyday life hardly seem likely to be an important influence on offending. But what may be perceived as a quite trivial provocation in relation to one context or when only a single exposure is involved may be a source of (or pretext for) disproportionate responses on other occasions.[11] Earlier we mentioned extreme environments as contexts likely to enhance the power of such provocations. Social pressures, too, may be harder to evade in such environments, and the two groups of precipitators, especially if repeated in concert over long periods of time, may have additive or multiplicative effects. Such effects are not confined to prisons and prison-like environments: conditions of acute poverty and social isolation (for example, homelessness [McCarthy and Hagan, 1992]; or living conditions involving prolonged exposure to overcrowding, noise and other irritants) may provide similar settings.

Outside these settings, the significance of provocations for invoking criminal behavior is less easy to evaluate. In daily life they are probably not an important source of criminal behavior for most people, who can (or can learn to) either avoid them or deal with them. This suggests that although provocations and pressures can undoubtedly be responsible for criminal behavior, they will only be important influences under a rather limited set of conditions. In particular, they will achieve their efforts not by motivating the unmotivated, but by their ability to trigger reactions in those who are already primed by existing motivation to respond. Where provoking cues work, it is because they build on or augment the needs and concerns that the offender brings into the setting. The same expla-

nation applies to social pressures: if bar-room brawlers fight longer and harder when in the company of friends, this is precisely because their friends and their reputations have traveled with them into the setting in question.

To summarize, provocations and pressures become most salient under five conditions:

- When they involve threats to life and limb and invoke reactions of self-preservation;
- When they occur in capsule environments, especially aversive ones;
- When they challenge or threaten the maintenance or fulfillment of needs and desires associated with core aspects of an individual's lifestyle;
- When they are repeated;
- Or where a single exposure provides the final stimulus that tips an already motivated individual into action.

At other times they may provide opportunities or pretexts to offend rather than provocations to do so (see, for example, Graham and Homel, 1996).

Applicable Situational Techniques

Wortley (2001) has suggested a range of techniques for addressing the control of situational precipitators. As we mentioned earlier, many of these techniques are already in use under other names; so, as Wortley himself notes, the additional practical payoff to situational prevention may not be great at this time. As to the importance of controlling pressures and provocations, there is clearly great benefit from doing so under certain circumstances. It is particularly important — a case which Wortley has made excellently in a number of publications (e.g., 1998, 2002, this volume) — to explore and control the various precipitators at work on individuals living in capsule environments such as prisons, and other like settings. These are relatively inescapable environments within which individuals have to live, construct a lifestyle, and (if only at the most basic level) address its needs and requirements. The impact of precipitators is likely to be at its greatest, and the issue of their control most pressing, under these circumstances.

The value of precipitator-control becomes more debatable — at least considered against the claims of traditional situational techniques — when applied to everyday environments and settings, many of which are entered as a matter of choice or, if imposed, from which

escape is relatively quick and easy. Doubts such as these, however, may simply reflect the novelty of these methods, and the relative lack of attention that has been paid to looking for and analyzing their effects in relation to particular settings and crimes. Once situational analysts begin to look more systematically for the effects of precipitators when investigating new crime problems, then the utility of precipitator control will become easier to assess. As well as "cue-blindness" on the part of situational analysts, a further complication — one that we have touched on briefly, and one to which we will return — is that of the problem of "cue-meaning." This occurs where there is a genuine difference of opinion on the part of analysts about the nature of the information being transmitted by a particular cue, or its role in the offense in question: for example, whether the rowdy atmosphere of a bar provokes fights or attracts individuals who like fighting. A proper situational analysis of the problem, looking at the issue of whether different kinds of fights can be distinguished, how they start and who starts them, and under what conditions, might enable questions of this sort to be resolved. But cues can at different times — and sometimes at one time — take on different roles in relation to different offenders and different crimes. As facilitators or precipitators, cues of crowding can provoke, excite, enable, or constrain simultaneously. This cautions against pigeon-holing cues too quickly or tying them too closely to one particular function (as opportunity cues or as precipitators), or purpose (as indicators, of risk, effort, or reward)

For its advocates, the most important practical questions about precipitator control concerns its range of application in comparison with more traditional techniques. As early as 1996, Wortley had suggested some limitations in relation to the reach of some of the new techniques, and in 1998 he repeated his caution that precipitator control might not work with predatory offenders. At the same time, he did claim that, where they were appropriate, they might have added benefits in comparison with traditional opportunity-reduction ones. He described the difference as one between softer and harder forms of situational control. Softer forms, he suggested, by controlling the prompts, social pressures, permissibility cues and provocations that might otherwise precipitate offending, acted to prevent the potential offender from developing the inclination to offend (Wortley, 1998:183). Although he was originally pessimistic about the relevance of some of these "softer" techniques for predatory offenders, Wortley suggested that, even for these offenders, there might be circumstances — such as in prison and other stressful and aversive environments — under which precipitator control might have more impact than opportunity reduction. Harder forms — under which he

subsumed those opportunity-reduction measures that involved obtrusive physical interventions such as locks, and bolts, anti-robbery screens, and dictatorial notices — were more visible, more aggressive, and more likely (in prison or outside) either to challenge the committed offender to try harder, or lead to displacement rather than abandonment of criminal activity.

As Wortley (1998) implies, there are problems with this depiction of opportunity-reduction — whose methods actually include a wide variety of unobtrusive ones — as an exclusively "hard" set of strategies (see, later, Table 2). Indeed, as a glance at Wortley's techniques (Table 1) will show, it is not necessarily the case that precipitator controls are either unobtrusive or soft. But the main difficulty with his argument is that the softer forms may work primarily with provoked offenders, who may only constitute a limited number of offenders and offenses. More generally, while it is plausible to argue that precipitator control will reduce offending, the questions remain: "to whom does this argument apply? and for how much offending is it a relevant and important approach?" And the answers, as we have seen, are that it applies in the main to individuals whose readiness to offend is provisional in some way (mundane offenders, beginners), or to those subjected to the extreme and numerous pressures and provocations delivered by aversive capsule environments. As to whether precipitator control plays a major role in offending as a whole, its lack of impact on predatory offenders must give cause for doubt. We will return to this issue.

THE NEW SITUATIONAL APPROACHES

Traditional Situational Prevention: The Default Mode

Situational prevention has seen its task as the identification, manipulation and control of situational factors associated with offending. But assumptions about the nature of offenders and offending have played a crucial, if largely unacknowledged role in guiding thinking about prevention over the last three decades. The three types of offender discussed above have been used as an attempt to get at views of the relationship between offenders and situations, and how notions about that interaction have changed during this period. Situational crime prevention can be likened to a computer program capable of operating with a series of possible settings that allows it to run in different modes. The simplest mode is the default one, influenced by the practical prevention work carried out by early researchers, and the associated theoretical developments (see, for example,

Clarke, 1980) that culminated in the rational choice approach. We have termed the "predatory offender" the default mode for a number of reasons. First, it conveys the notion of being guided by the original assumptions made by early research and identified by its theorists: these are situational prevention's "factory settings." Second, it suggests that these settings may arguably be regarded as the standard and most generally useful ones. Third, it hints that when playing with the situational prevention "program," it may sometimes be helpful to go back to first principles (switch back to the defaults). But fourth, it cautions that such basic assumptions are inevitably "best guesses" that may need modifying in the light of new understanding or special circumstances.

As we have seen, the default or "predatory offender" mode of situational prevention makes simple and parsimonious assumptions about offenders. These are that they are ready to offend, and that this readiness is determined by a straightforward cost-benefit analysis that occurs prior to entering the crime setting, and during crime commission itself, where the instrumental considerations of risk, effort, and reward dominate decision making. In "mundane offender" mode the defaults are amended by setting the "moral scruples" switch ("off in the default mode) to "on": this has the effect of keeping the readiness decision as a prudentially provisional one, open to being challenged or firmed up by situational cues. If permissibility or excusability cues are present, these will allow offending to occur; if inexcusability or impermissibility ones are there instead, they can abort or disrupt crime commission, or may even prevent it from being considered. The latest, or "provoked offender" mode offers further modifications to the default settings. Here, the offender is assumed not to be ready to offend; but he or she may be made ready by assorted pressures and provocations. Once readied, crime commission will proceed on the usual instrumental basis. If provocations are not present or are removed, then the offender will remain or become unready to offend, and no crime will occur.

The crudity of these characterizations does some violence to the subtleties of real-world offending, where cues come in different strengths and in complex bundles, where offenders vary in their readiness for crime, and in their prior experience of it. They also deliberately ignore the influence of more complex "settings" that involve the simultaneous operation of more than one precipitator at a time — for example, the offender with scruples who is pressured and provoked into offending. But discussion in terms of these three simple "types" of offenders does at least direct attention to some of the points at issue, and at the inferences for theory and practice that can be drawn from them.

The Demise of the Motivated Offender

The traditional (default) approach to situational prevention assumes a motivated — or, more accurately, readied — offender. This assumption is a useful one on a number of counts. While recognizing that offending is a product of person-situation interactions, it suggests that more attention needs to be given to the situational side of this equation. It brings to mind the old adage that crime requires motive and opportunity — criminology's own version of the person-situation interaction — and establishes a division of labor between those whose interest lies in one or other area. In so doing, it clarifies the task of situational prevention as one concerned primarily with the situational side of this equation. This helps to hold the line against those who would dilute the concept of situational prevention and, incidentally, helps to rally the troops under its banner. The value of this division is also underwritten by the rational choice approach, which separates involvement decisions from event ones and treats them as relatively compartmentalized sets of activities. This provides the theoretical justification for a division of labor: involvement processes take care of motivational issues, and event ones handle the technicalities of the crime-commission process, which deals in purely instrumental decisions. The assumption that the offender is a motivated one is also of pragmatic value to the practice of situational prevention. In rational choice terms, it is shorthand for an offender who is not only motivated but also ready to commit a particular type of crime — that is, one who, having the motives, has looked at the means available for their satisfaction, evaluated them, and chosen a criminal over a non-criminal method. This assumption also tends to imply an individual who has some commitment to offending and who will display a reasonable degree of "good practice" in crime commission. Crime-control strategies are then less likely to underestimate the task of trying to prevent or disrupt the offender's activities.

The newer situational strategies work under more complex and restrictive assumptions. The offenders targeted by these strategies are less than fully committed to offending, and only become ready to offend if situational factors are brought to bear on them. This raises problems for the default model which can subtly undermine it in a number of ways. The need for additional conditions before readiness is achieved weakens its core assumption of a motivated offender. This, in turn, risks diverting attention away from the instrumental situational determinants of offending, and of encouraging criminology's (and psychology's) perennial preoccupation with the development of offender motivation — the very perspective that the situ-

ational approach was developed to counterbalance. Making readiness dependent upon non-instrumental factors in the immediate situation also has the effect of suggesting a vacillating offender whose readiness to offend may change with every fortuitous event. And this overly contingent state suggests someone who might be as easily dissuaded from offending by attending to motivational factors — albeit by avowedly situational techniques — as by opportunity ones. This further undermines the default view that changing the motivation of offenders is a difficult task that is beyond the scope of situational prevention.

The mode of operation of these newer situational factors is also problematic. In addition to suggesting that one-off immediate situational cues may be enough to create readiness, it also places the whole involvement-event decision-making process within the crime setting itself. This invites a view of the offender as typically not only reactive to immediate situational demands but also as involved in a hasty, confused or even irrational decision-making process. Not surprisingly these subtly conveyed notions find their apotheosis in the type of offender most clearly suggested by these later models: the beginner in crime — unskilled, inexperienced, ambivalent, weakly motivated, easily influenced and easily dissuaded, morally equivocating, impulsive, poorly equipped to make decisions, and full of excuses. Although this may be a psychologically correct view of many offenders, these may not be among the more serious or persistent ones. And a failure to recognize this possibility may foster unrealistic expectations about the promise of the newer situational approaches.

Situations and Situational Cues

In the default model of situational prevention, the situation plays a relatively narrow role, confined as it is to the presentation of opportunity cues to readied offenders. In the more rbcent approaches, the belief that situations may, under certain conditions, deliver motivating cues as well as facilitating (i.e., instrumental) ones is central to their new techniques. However, the qualification about "certain conditions" is crucial, since the nature of the interaction between situational motivation and offender readiness is not a simple one. As we have argued, there are likely to be only two circumstances under which a precipitator could become strong enough on its own to create a condition of readiness in an offender where one did not exist before. In the cases of provocations and pressures, for example, either the cue would have to be of life-threatening severity, or it would have to be presented on more than one occasion over time. The former condition fulfils the condition of being a situational precipitator in the

usual meaning of the term, but only at the cost of being a relatively infrequent source of offender readiness. But for many pressuring and provoking cues, such as environmental irritants, their effects may be more subtle and cumulative and take time to make an impression. Cues that need repeating to achieve their effects are "situationaT only in the definitional sense that all cues occur in situations. But since their impact in a single instance is weak, "dosage" becomes a crucial aspect of their effectiveness; and, for this, prolonged exposure is required. Such cues relate to important and long-standing aspects of environments, but they are only likely to become effective in readying individuals who are exposed to them over long periods of time, without much prospect of avoidance or escape — that is, where the cues become a part of the offender's environment and an ongoing aspect of his or her life. The examples used to illustrate the effects of precipitators often assume just such conditions of prolonged exposure: lack of participatory management, gang membership, television content, and conditions for prisoners are all persuasive examples of the effects of social pressures on human motivation and behavior over the longer haul. But these are shorthand for the influence of lifestyles and lived-in environments, rather than single exposures to situational precipitators.

This prompts the question as to the circumstances under which precipitator reduction is likely to be an effective situational technique. And the answer seems to be that where precipitators are aversive, cumulative in their effects and inescapable for lengthy periods of time, then precipitator-control may be effective, though its benefits may be confined to a small group of offenders in special environments — and difficult to achieve. Under less restrictive conditions and where precipitators are encountered on single occasions, then the effects of the cues themselves are likely to be inconsistent and self-limiting unless they augment existing motivation or efforts at neutralization. Here, as in the case of gambling (Cornish, 1978), the case for using precipitator control in the interests of a minority has to be balanced against both its cost-effectiveness in this respect, and its impact on the majority who are capable of regulating their reactions to the cues in question.

Although, as Wortley comments, it is true that "...virtually all action must be initiated by an appropriate cue in the immediate environment" (Wortley, 2001:65), this says little about the relative power of opportunity and precipitator cues, and circumstances under which such cues instigate offending. As far as power is concerned, it might be argued that a crucial asymmetry exists between the relative powers of opportunity cues and precipitators to influence the occurrence of crimes. For while only one exposure of a motivated offender to an

opportunity to offend may be necessary, many exposures to situational precipitators may be needed before the individual is sufficiently "readied" to commit a crime. As for circumstances, opportunity cues are relevant to all offenders and offending, while for precipitators the circumstances in question tend to be special ones, and relevant only to a comparatively small group of offenders. For others, exposure to precipitators in the relative freedom of the natural environment may have little immediate effect. Their impact, if any, will be a slow, small, uncertain, and incremental influence on the development of motivation and readiness over a longer term, not the powerful and immediate impact on behavior provided by opportunity cues.

The foregoing discussion should not be taken as suggesting that precipitator control has no place in situational prevention, or that the study of precipitators is valuable only for the light that it may throw on the small-scale, situationally induced shifts that help to develop motivation and produce motivational change. But in practical crime prevention terms, its effectiveness may be restricted to limited circumstances and/or to limited groups of offenders. Even so, there remains one further danger to be avoided. While traditional situational crime prevention programs benefit from the discipline provided by the goal of crime-specific opportunity-reduction, programs designed to reduce offender motivation are notorious for their lack of focus. Unless the measures they advocate are very clearly linked to identified precipitators with recognized impacts on particular aspects of offender motivation under established circumstances, they run the danger — as Wortley (this volume) recognizes — of losing their situational focus and of becoming like the over-ambitious and unsuccessful "social prevention" experiments of the past.

Views on Cues

One of the major differences between the older and newer forms of situational prevention lies in their views on the relationship between cues and criminal behavior. The proactive, voluntaristic traditional view, based on the rational choice perspective, sees criminal behavior as a series of choices in which situational cues are used instrumentally by the offender. The newer developments, while accepting this as a reasonable depiction of the crime-commission process, cavil at the default assumption of an already-motivated offender. Instead they claim that if motivation and readiness are less than adequate to bring on offending, immediate situations may supply the cues needed to create or augment the offender's motivation, as well as supplying the opportunities to offend. We have argued, however, that the implications of this more reactive model for the practical purpose of situ-

ational prevention may be somewhat limited. How, then, can we reconcile this conclusion with the assertions about the wide applicability of these new techniques? One way, as we have already mentioned, is to concede that they may be successful with some subgroups — particularly mundane offenders, or beginners, whose readiness is provisional and easily disrupted. Reducing situational provocations and pressures may also discourage those who seek them out, as well as ceasing to augment any such motivations brought by the offender into the settings in question.

The susceptibility of much offending to being accounted for in both proactive and reactive terms, and according to the theoretical orientation of the observer, makes the task of determining why a particular technique worked a difficult one. It was noted earlier that situational cues are capable of conveying multiple meanings and that different offenders may be responding selectively to the information broadcast by such cues. To take the example of permissibility or excusability cues, for some offenders the information they provide may be used to supplement their evaluation of the risks, effort and rewards available in particular situations. For others, however, they may function, in addition, to excuse the crime and free the individual from moral scruples. Situational techniques, and especially the newer kinds, can suffer from similar difficulties. The issue of exactly which situational cues they are manipulating, and how they are obtaining their effects may not be easy to resolve empirically,[12] and remains the bane of attempts to classify situational techniques definitively.

The Value of Default Settings

Given some of the above arguments, assuming that crimes are committed for the most part from choice rather than being precipitated might be a useful default strategy. While its voluntaristic orientation has its own dangers (see below), it also has a number of advantages. First, it seems best fitted to offer solutions for dealing with the immediate problems posed by predatory offenders. These often involve serious offenses and repeated offending by individuals with few moral scruples and a commitment to a criminal lifestyle. The value of situational methods in these instances is that it takes the offender's readiness, and the difficulty of changing this, for granted and concentrates instead on foiling the offender's attempts to realize his or her criminal intentions. Sticking with the default assumptions offers the standing decisions that provide researchers with built-in defenses against straying into the traditional black hole of trying to reduce motivation to offend in these cases. The assumptions under-

lying the newer situational models of offending, however, free the researcher from these constraints and may encourage unrealistic expectations about the power of situational methods to control motivation as well as opportunity. This danger is especially present in the case of the provoked-offender model which, instead of recognizing the long-term nature and embeddedness of the provocations and pressures that may drive some offenders to crime, may suggest to the unwary that these motives can be as easily induced or changed as opportunities can be presented or controlled.

Two-stage models like Wortley's also run the risk of mistaking the part for the whole — that is, of assuming that, because precipitating cues may help to bring about offending in some cases, their effect must be equally important in all. But, as we have seen, precipitators do not play the same role in relation to readiness as opportunities do to crime commission. While the offender may well be ready enough for offending without the intervention of supplementary precipitating cues, the crime could not occur without the presence of opportunities. Instead of Wortley's two-stage model, which only comes into operation under special circumstances, a more conventional involvement one, such as that provided by the rational choice perspective may offer a more generally applicable picture of how motivation and readiness are usually constructed — that is, outside the immediate situation and based on the requirements of the offender's lifestyle. It is true as Wortley comments (2001:75) that, "Controlling situational precipitators of crime and reducing opportunities for crime can be understood not so much as competing prevention approaches, but as approaches directed at different stages of the person-situation interaction." But as well as representing differences in approaches to situational crime prevention, attempts to control precipitators may also signify its limitations — and, in doing so, highlight the difference between situational prevention and other approaches to preventing crime.

Problems with the Default Approach

As mentioned earlier, traditional situational prevention is based on the rational choice perspective, one that is more comfortable with the notion of a choosing, proactive offender than with someone to whom "things happen." These are the necessary simplifications of a policy-oriented "good-enough" theory — one designed primarily as a theory for practice. The advantages of this decision-making approach are the attention that it pays to how individuals become ready to offend, and to how crimes are committed. It is especially useful for depicting aspects of the person-situation interaction — that is, the role

of opportunity in offending — which are important for the design of situational crime prevention measures along the lines of the default approach. This is no small benefit. But the rational choice perspective has little to say about the construction of motives, desires and preferences, except to indicate that current circumstances, routines, and lifestyles — and their associated needs, motives and opportunities — are the outcome of lengthy developmental processes and person-situation interactions (Clarke and Cornish, 2001). Given this assumption, it is concerned more with the way that such given motives are translated by individuals into purposes, means and actions — and how, where these actions are criminal, they can be frustrated.

To some this may suggest a prudent acknowledgment of its reach; to others, a failure of imagination. As Wortley has commented: "The inclusion of precipitating factors in considerations about the causes of crime presents a much more dynamic view of offender motivation, one which more accurately reflects the person-situation interaction as it is presented in the psychological literature" (Wortley, 1998:183).

If this is the case, the question may be asked whether the rational choice perspective is the most appropriate conceptual framework for expressing the complexity and dynamism of these interactions. It is certainly true that, although it can accommodate the influence of precipitators, the rational choice approach tends to downplay their effects. Except in the cases we have discussed earlier, such situational variables are seen as having only a limited role to play, at least over the short-term, in the construction or reduction of offender motivation. This viewpoint flows from the assumptions of the rational choice perspective and is illustrated by the way its three involvement models have been developed. It is these considerations that explain any preference for prioritizing the default approach to situational prevention over more recent developments. But although the present authors favor this point of view, they are well aware that, powerful though the perspective is, it has the limitations and blind spots common to all such metatheories and sensitizing concepts. One of these concerns the procrustean nature of all such perspectives, which seek to assimilate or accommodate all phenomena to themselves. While the notion of the motivated offender is a basic tenet of situational crime prevention, some offenders may, indeed, be precipitated into offending, though it is difficult at this point either to estimate the size of these subgroups, the frequency of their offending, or their significance in terms of crimes generated.

The power of situational prevention, after all, is that it is driven by crime problems, not by issues of theoretical comprehensiveness. If predatory offending by proactive offenders is the most important source of these problems, then time spent on trying to modify or de-

velop situational approaches for other groups may not be the best way to utilize the strengths of the approach or the resources available to it. It may also be that traditional approaches already regulate the offending of mundane and provoked offenders as much as can be expected. Manipulating risk, reward and effort, in addition to reducing opportunities, may also simultaneously reduce many of the cues associated with precipitators, and there may be little to gain from pursuing attempts to influence these precipitators more directly. The exceptions to this rule relate, as we have seen, to the impact of precipitators on offender readiness under certain well-defined conditions, such as on the provisional readiness of the beginner or mundane offender, or on existing motivation in the case of the pressured or provoked offender.

Implications for a Revised Classification System

Given the growing interest in the potential of the newer methods to increase the range of situational techniques, there are two possible roads that those involved in the classification of such techniques for theoretical, pedagogical and other training purposes could take. Wortley (see Table 1) has produced a set of techniques of precipitator control that match in number of purposes and examples the 16 described by Clarke (1997). Since classifications have pragmatic purposes that must often override theoretical considerations, however, we have suggested instead a revised and extended classification scheme that incorporates Wortley's (and Clarke and Homel's, 1997) techniques as adjuncts to the default ones. This, of course, is just a paper exercise and a provisional one: our version of reality at this time in the development of situational techniques. We have taken this approach for many reasons. First, the newer techniques overlap considerably in places with existing ones, although they were developed by adding new assumptions and qualifications to the default model. Overlooking this overlap in the interests of maintaining the complementarity sought by Wortley would have brought into question the status of situational crime prevention as, before all other considerations, primarily concerned with the reduction of opportunities. The time may very well come when this is no longer the case, but that is for the future to determine. At this point we can only suggest a pragmatic merger of the two classifications, which attempts to relocate the majority of Wortley's techniques somewhere within our revised classification (Table 2). Examples of strategies for reducing permissibility are to be found mainly under the column concerned to "remove excuses," while many of Wortley's strategies for controlling prompts and pressures and reducing provocations have been com-

bined to form a new column, "reduce provocations," adopting a broader sense of this term than the one used by Wortley. Where strategies or examples have been omitted, this has been mainly due to questions of overlap and to the need to limit the size of the classification.

As Wortley (2001:75) has commented, all classifications are problematic. But the endeavor remains a vital part of making theory-for-practice and practice itself more explicit (see also Eck and Clarke, this volume). It is often the case that practical considerations have to trump theoretical claims. And where the concern is primarily to produce a simple classification that will at once contain enough examples of the various techniques to convey a sense of the sheer variety of situational prevention — but not so many as to overwhelm the reader — parsimony is an important consideration. Even reducing the columns to five, however, runs the risk of diluting the role of opportunity factors, although their ordering may give some indication of our own views about the relative importance of opportunity reduction and precipitator control, and that of the respective opportunity factors considered on their own. No attempt has been made, either, to relate the techniques described to the three crude typifications of offenders used to guide discussion throughout this chapter. As we have indicated, situational crime prevention is full of hidden assumptions about the nature or offenders and offending. But in practice it is perhaps best offered free of any such notions. One of the strengths of situational prevention is that it operates on an "unidentified offender." If it is to achieve its purpose of focusing on the situational determinants of offending, this is probably a helpful fiction to employ — and a useful message to convey.

CONCLUSIONS

The gradual widening of situational crime prevention's remit to take on different offenses and offender groups is a very welcome development, and nothing in this chapter is intended to denigrate these efforts. It hardly needs to be said that Table 1 and Table 2 were developed for very different purposes. Richard Wortley's classification of precipitators is useful (perhaps essential) for tackling the difficult problem of reducing the motivation to offend in aversive capsule environments. However, our main purpose here has been to explore how, if at all, these new developments can be placed within the context of existing theory and practice, and to estimate in a preliminary way what their impact is likely to be over all, and in relation to particular types of crime problem. Techniques of precipitator control offer an exciting new direction in both the theory and practice of

Table 2: Twenty-five Techniques of Situational Prevention

Increase the Effort	Increase the Risks	Reduce the Rewards	Reduce Provocations	Remove Excuses
1. Target harden: • Steering column locks and immobilisers • Anti-robbery screens • Tamper-proof packaging	*6. Extend guardianship:* • Take routine precautions: go out in group at night, leave signs of occupancy, carry phone • "Cocoon" neighborhood watch	*11. Conceal targets:* • Off-street parking • Gender-neutral phone directories • Unmarked bullion trucks	*16. Reduce frustrations and stress:* • Efficient queues and polite service • Expanded seating • Soothing music /muted lights	*21. Set rules:* • Rental agreements • Harassment codes • Hotel registration
2. Control access to facilities: • Entry phones • Electronic card access • Baggage screening	*7. Assist natural surveillance:* • Improved street lighting • Defensible space design • Support whistleblowers	*12. Remove targets:* • Removable car radio • Women's refuges • Pre-paid cards for pay phones	*17. Avoid disputes:* • Separate enclosures for rival soccer fans • Reduce crowding in pubs • Fixed cab fares	*22. Post instructions:* • "No Parking" • "Private Property" • "Extinguish camp fires"
3. Screen exits: • Ticket needed for exit • Export documents • Electronic merchandise tags	*8. Reduce anonymity:* • Taxi driver IDs • "How's my driving?" decals • School uniforms	*13. Identify property:* • Property marking • Vehicle licensing and parts marking • Cattle branding	*18. Reduce emotional arousal:* • Controls on violent pornography • Enforce good behavior on soccer field • Prohibit racial slurs	*23. Alert conscience:* • Roadside speed display boards • Signatures for customs declarations • "Shoplifting is stealing"
4. Deflect offenders: • Street closures • Separate bathrooms for women • Disperse pubs	*9. Utilize place managers:* • CCTV for double-deck buses • Two clerks for convenience stores • Reward vigilance	*14. Disrupt markets:* • Monitor pawn shops • Controls on classified ads • License street vendors	*19. Neutralize peer pressure:* • "Idiots drink and drive" • "It's OK to say No" • Disperse troublemakers at school	*24. Assist compliance:* • Easy library checkout • Public lavatories • Litter bins
5. Control tools/ weapons: • "Smart" guns • Disabling stolen cell phones • Restrict spray paint sales to juveniles	*10. Strengthen formal surveillance:* • Red light cameras • Burglar alarms • Security guards	*15. Deny benefits:* • Ink merchandise tags • Graffiti cleaning • Speed humps	*20. Discourage imitation:* • Rapid repair of vandalism • V-chips in TVs • Censor details of modus operandi	*25. Control drugs and alcohol:* • Breathalyzers in pubs • Server intervention • Alcohol-free events

situational prevention, and one that promises new ways of thinking about manipulating situational factors for crime control. The fact that the techniques are directed at the motivational side of the person-situation interaction rather than the opportunity side offers an expanded role for the field. Whether such techniques truly complement conventional situational ones and provide the missing half of a fully articulated situational response, or should be seen, rather, as supplementing them is a more difficult judgment to make at this time. Although there has been an increase in available techniques over the last few years, this does not necessarily entail a parallel increase in the effectiveness of situational crime prevention. This only follows if the additional techniques are truly distinguishable from existing ones and as effective. The susceptibility of much offending to being accounted for in both proactive and reactive terms, and according to the theoretical orientation of the observer, makes the task of determining why a particular technique worked a difficult one. This may be one reason why classifications of techniques remain so much one of judgment. Many of our arguments and caveats have already been raised by Wortley himself (especially, Wortley, 1996, 1997, 1998), so there is much agreement about the points at issue, and substantial agreement on many. Divergence occurs mainly on matters of emphasis, and these may well flow from differences in the problems which situational prevention is now being used to address.

Leaving aside for now its intrinsic value as a new contribution to the theory underlying situational crime prevention, the strongest claims for the future utility of precipitator-control may lie not so much in the promise of increased control of situational factors, as in the implications for crime control in respect of the way in which this control is achieved. Two interesting claims have been made for some of the newer techniques which, if substantiated, offer interesting insights into the nature and impact of situational measures on offenders. First, a better understanding of issues concerning the relative "hardness* and "softness" of the different available techniques might, for example, offer a more nuanced use of situational prevention in relation to particular settings and types of offender. Although hardness and softness are probably not coterminous with opportunity control and precipitator control, respectively, they do, as Wortley points out, suggest possibilities for avoiding counterproductive responses to situational techniques. Wortley's argument is developed in relation to precipitated offenders, and therefore may not apply with the same force to already motivated ones, who are, after all, ready to offend and looking for opportunities. But it is certainly the case that some forms of opportunity reduction (and, indeed, precipitator control) are more obtrusive than others, and may be more likely to pro-

duce counterproductive effects. Second, there may be benefits to be gained from using softer techniques in order to avoid giving the offender extra incitement to displace offending. But here, as elsewhere, techniques of precipitator control assume an unmotivated or unready offender in whom the desire to offend may as yet be a weak one. When applied to motivated offenders looking for opportunities, these techniques — while not further inciting the offender — may merely suggest the need to move on to greener pastures.

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NOTES

1. In 1998, Wortley (1998:175, note 1) replaced the term "readying" by that of "precipitating" — perhaps in order to emphasize the motivational aspects of the immediate situation as opposed to those provided by the demands of the offender's lifestyle.

2. Furthermore, the particular form that a situational strategy takes will be geared to the nature and strength of that motivation, since these are important indicators both of the lengths the offender will go in trying to commit a crime and of the measures required to disrupt these intentions.

3. For the predatory offender, the scruples are vestigial, or suppressed by long-standing and well-developed strategies for permanently holding them in check. Either way, he or she is assumed to be relatively impervious to appeals to the pangs of conscience.

4. Many of Wortley's own cues — especially his "prompts" — also provide information to offenders about opportunities, whatever their additional functions for some criminals may be.

5. The term "opportunistic" is probably better regarded as a defining feature of offending.

6. The concepts of permissibility and excusability overlap sufficiently to be treated as referring to broadly similar aspects of situations. Some

prompts, like "expectancy cues," and pressures, like the anonymity conveyed by being part of a crowd, may also function in a similar way.

7. Garland (1997:190), however, uses the term "situational man" to describe the default rational choice concept of the offender — what we termed above, the "predatory offender."

8. Since this could suggest someone "easily provoked" or "looking for trouble," however, these conditions have to be distinguished from that of the offender who was simply not motivated or ready enough to commit the crime until provoked by situational stimuli.

9. Cornish and Clarke (1986:168-9) briefly noted that under certain circumstances the usual process of involvement, followed by event decision making, may sometimes be intertwined, curtailed, or telescoped.

10. A fuller understanding of the logistics of the offender's use of situations would, of course, have to relate this to their relative availability. This would entail studying the offender's routine activities and movement patterns (see, for example, Brantingham and Brantingham, this volume; Davies and Dale, 1995).

11. Indeed, provocation has long been recognized by the criminal law as a mitigating factor under certain circumstances.

12. This will be especially likely where, as is often the case, a number of different techniques may be being used simultaneously.