EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This second volume of Crime *Prevention Studies,* like the first, consists of a mix of empirical and theoretical pieces.

Four papers report evaluations of a variety of situational measures. The first of these, by Hope, presents three case studies of successful action taken by the police in St. Louis to deal with problems associated with drug houses, and is a valuable addition to the literature on problem-oriented policing. Hope notes the close affiliation between problem-oriented policing and situational prevention, and argues that the measures adopted were, in fact, situational in character. Indeed, the most effective of these seem to have been measures, such as enforcement of building codes or mortgage foreclosure, which were the responsibility of agencies other than the police (though police performed a crucial role in stimulating action).

Willemse's paper also summarizes case studies of successful prevention, but the setting is Holland and the crime problems relate to a public housing project, the public transport system, a shopping center, and a group of three schools. In each case, a key element in the package of preventive measures was provision of enhanced surveillance through employment of additional personnel. On the trams, buses and metros of three of the largest Dutch cities, transport "surveillance officers" were introduced who. in addition to their security function, performed tasks such as checking tickets and providing information. In the three schools, counselors were appointed who monitored truancy and disciplinary problems with the assistance of new computerized truancy registers. In the public housing project, seven resident caretakers were appointed, with one of their functions being to intensify supervision. In the shopping center, two security officers were appointed to provide advice and assistance to both retailers and shoppers. The appointment of these various functionaries not only served to strengthen social controls, but also to reduce unemployment. In the case of public transport. 1.200 new jobs were created, which were given to those who were disadvantaged in the labor market, including minorities women and the young.

The two remaining case studies of successful prevention both involve the automobile. In Smith's report on the control of illegal parking in the United Kingdom, cars are portrayed as crime "facilitators." In Webb's review of auto theft prevention in three countries, autos are the targets of crime. In both cases, evidence is presented documenting the effectiveness

of a simple mechanical device. Smith argues that the introduction of the wheelclamp—or "boot" as it is known in the United States—provided the government with its first major success in dealing with illegal parking in London, and "emboldened" the responsible department to explore a range of cheaper alternative ways of enforcing parking regulations. Webb shows that the introduction of steering column locks in Britain, the U.S. and the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1960s and 1970s succeeded in reducing car theft in all three countries. Differences in the impact of the locks in the three countries reflect the speed with which the vehicle population was protected. In Germany, all vehicles, old and new, were fitted with the locks within a short space of time and the effect was more immediate (even though the immediate impact was not as great as had been previously thought). In the U.S. and Britain, only new vehicles were fitted with the locks, and the positive impact on overall levels of auto theft was therefore delayed. The delay was longer for Britain than for the U.S.. which seems to be due to the slower renewal of the vehicle population in Britain. As would be expected, in none of the three countries did steering locks have any effect on thefts from vehicles, which of course do not depend on the car being moved.

The two remaining empirical studies in this volume examine variations in crime rates in relation to variations in crime opportunities, one (by La Vigne) in the context of gasoline drive-offs from convenience stores, and the other (by Beavon and colleagues) in the context of residential crime and street accessibility. Both find strong relationships that have consequent implications for prevention. La Vigne concentrates on those aspects of the convenience store environment which are susceptible to manipulation by the store management. She concludes that this prevalent form of crime could be reduced by some fairly straightforward changes, including removal of advertisements obscuring the view of the pumps, installation of improved external lighting, and institution of a pay-first policy. Unfortunately, this latter measure is often resisted by the store owners because it deters the impulse purchases that constitute such an important source of profit. Once again, this shows that we cannot avoid economics when thinking about crime prevention.

Beavon. Brantingham and Brantingham examine the implications for street barriers of their finding that criminal opportunities are more likely to be exploited "if they are on accessible and frequently traveled streets." They conclude that barriers may help to prevent crime committed by outsiders, but will have no effect on crime committed by neighborhood

residents. This illustrates one of the most basic principles of situational prevention: Measures must be designed with a clear understanding of the problems that need to be addressed. Unfortunately, measures are often applied wholesale with only a rudimentary analysis of the supposed crime problems. Thus, as communities across the nation scramble to introduce street barriers, it seems certain that many of these will prove to be costly failures.

The three remaining papers are more theoretical in scope. Walsh argues, notwithstanding the successes of situational prevention, that crimes are much more often rendered obsolete by the march of history than eliminated through deliberate efforts at control. While history may be on his side, we may certainly hope that these conclusions themselves will become obsolete as experience of situational measures accumulates! In any case, Clarke and Weisburd assert in their paper that situational measures frequently have unrecognized crime preventive benefits outside the intended scope of their action because offenders either overestimate the increased threat of apprehension or become disproportionately discouraged by the increased difficulty of crime. Criminologists have been slow to recognize the generality of this "diffusion of benefits" because they have been preoccupied by the threat of displacement and demoralized by the "nothing works" orthodoxy of recent times.

Finally, in the most ambitious of the present collection of papers, Ekblom supplies a new classification of crime prevention activity based upon his notion of "proximal circumstances," i.e.. a combination of the immediate situation and the offender's disposition. This provides not only a more complete classification of crime prevention activity than that offered previously, but. in Ekblom's view, may also provide the foundations for crime prevention as a discrete discipline. Whether or not this proves to be the case, his paper is unquestionably an important contribution to thinking about crime prevention.

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