A Two-Dimensional Typology of Crime Prevention Projects; With a Bibliography

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DEFINING CRIME PREVENTION

The term "crime prevention" is a widely used concept with a loosely defined meaning. For some authors the term crime prevention refers to conventional criminal justice policies. We prefer a definition which helps to bring into focus alternative or special crime prevention programs. In this paper crime prevention is defined as: "the total of all private initiatives and state policies, other than the enforcement of criminal law, aimed at the reduction of damage caused by acts defined as criminal by the state."

This definition covers fear reduction programmes, since fear can be seen as a damaging result of (perceived) criminality. It also covers victim assistance policies since these can be viewed as a form of damage control. Included are also the prevention activities of the police, like general surveillance and the treatment or training of (ex) offenders. Excluded are the investigation and prosecution of crimes, sentencing and the execution of conventional punishments.1

A New Typology

In (preventive) medicine a distinction is often made between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention involves attempts to lower rates of new cases by initiating some measures directed at the general public to counteract perceived harmful circumstances before the onset of the illness (e.g. the introduction of a sewage system). Secondary prevention involves some form of intervention directed at groups or individuals diagnosed as having early symptoms of the illness (e.g. prescribing vitamins to persons with minor complaints). Diagnostic techniques are supposed to discover the risk groups. Tertiary prevention is directed at those suffering from a disease.
It consists of both curing the illness and of preventing complications and/or reoccurrences (Johnson, 1987).

This qualification has been applied to drug policies and to crime prevention (Lab, 1988; Brantingham, Faust, 1976). Primary prevention, according to Brantingham and Faust "identifies conditions of the physical and social environment that provide opportunities for or precipitate criminal acts." Examples of primary prevention projects are crime-proof designs of cars or houses, neighborhood watch programs, and mass media campaigns about crime prevention. Secondary crime prevention, according to the authors just mentioned, "engages in early identification of potential offenders and seeks to intervene." This category includes projects aimed at high-crime areas and work with potential problem youths. Finally, tertiary prevention "deals with actual offenders and involves intervention in such a fashion that they will not commit further offenses." Within the realm of tertiary prevention fall rehabilitation and treatment programs for offenders and ex-offenders.

We agree with the authors, cited above, that crime prevention projects attack the problems of crime at different levels or stages of development and can be usefully classified on that basis. We are not satisfied, however, with the lumping together of, for instance, the installation of high-quality locks in buildings and courses on "social responsibility" in primary schools. Both are examples of primary prevention, but otherwise seem to have little in common. Locks offer protection against acts by others. Training courses about social responsibility are aimed at the potential offenders themselves. Likewise, in the area of secondary prevention, we feel the need to distinguish between projects aimed at redesigning high-crime areas and projects directed at assisting potential problem youths. In short, we feel a need to distinguish between situation or victim-related types of crime prevention and offender-related ones.2

Finally, the present models of crime prevention do not give a proper place to activities specifically directed at actual victims (e.g. victim assistance schemes). Interventions aiming at preventing the commission of new offenses by actual offenders are viewed as forms of tertiary prevention. Through aid, information or support for actual victims the reoccurrence of crimes can be prevented too. Therefore, we want to include such programs in our typology as forms of tertiary prevention.

These considerations have brought us to the conclusion that crime prevention projects can best be classified on the basis of two defining characteristics. The first dimension is the conventional distinction derived from the public health model between primary, secondary and tertiary types of prevention (directed at the public at large, groups with a high risk of associating with crime, and core groups that have actually been afflicted by it, respectively). The newly proposed second dimension is inspired by routine-activity theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979). According to this theory, most criminal
acts require convergence in space and time of motivated offenders and potential victims within an insufficiently guarded environment. Preventive efforts can be directed at: (a) reducing the propensities to offend; (b) diminishing the vulnerability of the potential victim; or (c) strengthening the level of guardianship in the environment. A distinction must then be made between offender-oriented, situation-oriented and victim-oriented activities. The combination of these two dimensions leads to a subdivision of crime prevention into nine different types, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: A two-dimensional typology of crime prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>target groups</th>
<th>developmental stage of the crime problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>primary (general public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offenders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>victims</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to our model, offender-oriented crime prevention can be targeted at the public at large as potential offenders (e.g. normative training of schoolchildren), at problem youths (e.g. through streetcorner work), and at actual offenders (rehabilitation programs). This is primary, secondary and tertiary offender-oriented crime prevention (categories 1, 2 and 3).

Situational crime prevention can aim at the improvement of the security provisions in: (a) all houses and buildings in a town, (b) high-crime areas; or (c) so-called "hot spots" (areas that are frequently the site of actual crimes). This is primary, secondary and tertiary situational crime prevention (categories 4, 5 and 6).

Crime prevention can, finally, be victim-oriented. As such, it can be targeted at the public at large as potential victims (e.g. advice about standard safety precautions), at high-risk groups (e.g. training of bank clerks or captains of industry), and at actual victims (e.g. advice and counselling). This is primary, secondary and tertiary victim-oriented prevention (categories 7, 8 and 9).

In the following section we will briefly discuss each of the nine different types of crime prevention distinguished by our model. An extensive bibliography of the literature in English about each of these categories is given in an annex.
A brief discussion of nine types of crime prevention

1. Offender-oriented prevention

1.1 Primary offender-oriented prevention
In theory, all citizens of a society are potential offenders. In practice, a large part of the population does indeed offend against criminal rules in certain phases of their life (e.g., drunken driving, tax evasion). Prevention programs, subsumed under this heading, are aimed at the strengthening of inhibitions to commit crimes in all citizens. Such projects seek, for example, to facilitate effective socialization processes in the family and the education system. Concrete examples are courses in parental skills, and normative training in primary schools (lessons in "good citizenship"). Other programs of this type are truancy prevention projects, projects against schoolyard bullying, and after-school programs for "latchkey children." General information campaigns about vandalism, tax evasion, domestic violence or drugs and alcohol abuse are also directed at the public at large as potential offenders.

1.2 Secondary offender-oriented prevention
Secondary offender-oriented prevention is based upon early identification and prediction of problem individuals. Special programs seek to prevent the development of criminal lifestyles among problem youths through basic education, job training, employment strategies, survival camps to improve self-esteem and social competence, foster parenting and out-of-home placements (child protection measures). Most of these programs try to (re)integrate youngsters at risk into mainstream society. In many countries, some of these programs are targeted at youngsters from ethnic minority groups or other socially marginalized groups.

1.3 Tertiary offender-oriented prevention
The prevention of recidivism among ex-offenders is the traditional goal of probation or rehabilitation services across the world. Conventional programs consist of counselling, psychiatric treatment (including clinics for drug addicts and alcoholics), job mediation and supervision. In recent years new punishments aimed at rehabilitation have been introduced which try to avoid the harmful side effects of custodial sentences (so-called punishment in the community). Innovations in this area are intensive probation supervision, electronically monitored house arrest, victim-offender mediation, training courses for drunken drivers, intermediate treatment for juvenile delinquents (obligatory training in social skills) and community service orders.
2. Situational prevention

2.1 Primary situational prevention

The approaches subsumed here seek to make crime more difficult for the offender and feelings of safety more widespread through environmental and architectural design. Individual houses and buildings are protected against crime through locks, bars, lights and electronic equipment (e.g., burglar alarms, closed-circuit television, access control). Residential security can be promoted through statutory building regulations, security surveys (visits to individual households by crime prevention specialists), and through pressure exerted by insurance companies. Cars and trucks are protected by steering columns locks and alarms. All these technical measures are also known as “target hardening.”

Situational prevention at the level of residential or commercial areas takes a variety of forms. Several checklists for criminologically-sound designs have been made. Important concepts are visibility, restricted access, limitation of mass transit, and the placement of discos and bars in non-residential areas (with nearby stops for public transportation). In some towns, no licenses for the construction of new residential, commercial or industrial areas are issued without a proper assessment of the design’s criminological soundness (a so-called mandatory crime impact statement).

2.2 Secondary situational prevention

Some neighborhoods, towerblocks, commercial areas, schools, hospitals and shopping malls are heavily afflicted by crime, vandalism or disturbances of the peace. Measures intended to remedy the special problems of such high-crime areas can be labelled as secondary situational prevention. Examples are the redesigning of buildings through the closure of access points, and the limitation of semi-public space. In most cases, such changes in the design are combined with increased surveillance by private security guards, caretakers or voluntary groups (e.g., neighborhood watch or block watchers) who collaborate with local police.

2.3 Tertiary situational crime prevention

In many towns, a disproportional part of all local crimes are committed in small parts of the town’s territory. Such “hot spots” can be identified through detailed analyses of computerized data systems of the police (crime mapping). In many cases, such high concentration of crime is caused by the presence of criminogenic functions such as casinos, pornshops, houses of prostitution, betting houses, discos, etc. Sometimes such locations are also the marketplace for drugs or stolen goods. The methods to control such criminal zones are mainly in the domain of law enforcement. However, licensing policies and changes in design can play a part as well. An important consideration is
whether a crackdown on crime in such "hot spots" may lead to its displacement to other, residential or commercial areas. For this reason, tertiary situational crime prevention methods are sometimes deliberately avoided as part of a policy of containment (e.g., the zoning of "red light" districts).

3. Victim-oriented prevention

3.1 Primary victim-oriented prevention

In many countries, media campaigns are launched periodically to inform the public about the most common precautions against crime, such as the purchase and systematic use of sophisticated locks, not leaving valuables in unguarded cars, not opening the door for strangers, etc. Such campaigns are usually backed up by the distribution of leaflets and public conferences. Special information campaigns are designed about "conmen" for the elderly, and about sexual abuse for children. The goal of such activities is to help the public at large to protect itself better against crime by increasing its awareness of victimization risks and its knowledge of simple techniques to avoid crime.

3.2 Secondary victim-oriented prevention

Some groups of the population are, for various reasons, particularly vulnerable to criminal victimizations. Young women who work late at night, such as nurses, run high risks of being attacked in the streets. They are sometimes invited to take a course in self-defense techniques. Other special high-risk groups are high-level politicians and captains of industry. To ensure their personal safety, special VIP-protection methods are applied. A much larger risk group comprises the inhabitants of high-crime areas. As we mentioned during our discussion of secondary situational crime prevention, design changes in such areas are often part of more comprehensive crime prevention programs. In many cases, groups of citizens take the initiative to improve the safety in their crime-ridden neighborhoods by forming neighborhood watch programs. The main goal of such programs is a better cooperation with the local police by alerting the police about suspicious incidents. Special programs also subsumed under this category are escort services for single women or the elderly, "safe houses" to which any child can go for help (block houses), and "whistle STOP" projects (citizens using whistle chains to alert the police to trouble).

3.3 Tertiary victim-oriented prevention

In most criminal law systems, the victim has a marginal role in criminal procedure and stands little chance of receiving compensation from the offender for his/her damages. In recent years, new provisions for crime victims have been created both inside and outside the criminal justice system. The
most common provisions outside the system are state compensation schemes, victim assistance or support schemes (offering emotional support, practical and legal advice), rape crisis centers, shelter homes for battered wives, and self-help groups for victims or family members of the victims of homicide. The aim of these programs is to help victims to overcome their emotional and practical problems. Such help aims to prevent secondary hardship and suffering as well as further victimizations. We define such activities as tertiary forms of prevention.

**DISCUSSION**

In figure 2, we present an overview of the examples given of each of the nine types of crime prevention.

**Figure 2: An overview of nine types of crime prevention according to a two-dimensional model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Stage of the Crime Problem</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Responsible parenting, school classes on civil duties, truancy prevention, information campaigns about drinking/drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Streetcorner work, youth clubs, training/employment, foster parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Rehabilitation, intensive probation, supervision, training/employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target hardening, C.P. through environment, design, lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesigning high crime areas, private security, caretakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of hot spots, zones of prostitution etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information campaigns, special advice for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIP protection, neighborhood watch, block parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State compensation, victim assistance, rape crisis centers, shelter homes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We recommend that each crime prevention program start with a detailed inventory of the crime problems at issue. Victimization surveys and self-report delinquency studies are indispensable tools for such an assessment. Subsequently, the model proposed in this paper can be used as a checklist for the choice of the most appropriate measures to tackle the concrete problems at hand.

Each crime problem requires a unique mixture of the various types of interventions set out in the model. For instance, in the case of a high rate of...
armed robbery, the optimal mix may consist of (a) secondary situational prevention (sophisticated protection of local banks) and secondary victim-oriented prevention (training of bank personnel in coping with a robbery); (b) tertiary victim prevention (victim support to actual victims); and (c) tertiary offender-oriented prevention (intensive probation supervision for bank robbers released from prison). A well chosen combination of such strategies will often be much more effective than isolated measures. In the case of a high rate of vandalism against public property, the optimal mix will of course be quite different. It may consist of special courses in primary schools (primary offender-oriented prevention), target hardening of public buildings at vulnerable spots (secondary situational prevention), and community service orders for young vandals (tertiary offender-oriented prevention). In most instances, the optimal mix of preventive measures must be supplemented by targeted law enforcement efforts (so-called punitive prevention).

The model presented here is used by the Department of Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands in publications, lectures and training courses for crime prevention officers working for either the police or the municipalities. The model may also be useful for crime prevention experts in other countries as a conceptual tool.

Notes

1. Conventional interventions of the criminal justice system can serve preventive purposes, e.g. through norm reinforcement, general deterrence and special deterrence. They should be treated separately, though, as forms of "punitive prevention" (Lejins, 1967).

2. Glaser (1990) proposes a slightly different typology, wherein tertiary crime prevention efforts include the use of guns, alarm systems, locks and hired guards. Glaser sees these devices as last resort attempts to fight off individual victimizations. Such protective measures are usually listed, however, as forms of primary crime prevention. There is apparently no agreement about the place of target-hardening measures within the conventional model. This testifies to the need of a more sophisticated typology.

3. The basic concepts applied by routine activity theory show some resemblance to the distinction made in the public health model between agents (germs) interacting with hosts (the receiving organisms) within mediating physical or social environments. The distinction between victim- or situation-oriented interventions, and offender-oriented interventions, can also be phrased in the terminology of economics. This would mean distinguishing between interventions at the supply side of the criminal market (aimed at increasing the "costs" of crimes by limiting opportunities) and interventions at the demand side (aimed at reducing criminal propensities, Van Dijk, 1991; Mayhew, 1990).
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General literature


Literature On Nine Types Of Crime Prevention

1.1 Primary offender-oriented prevention


1.2 Secondary offender-oriented prevention


1.3 Tertiary offender-oriented prevention


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2.1 Primary situational prevention


### 2.2 Secondary situational prevention


2.3 Tertiary situational prevention


3.1 Primary victim-oriented prevention


3.2 Secondary victim-oriented prevention


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### 3.3 Tertiary victim-oriented prevention


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