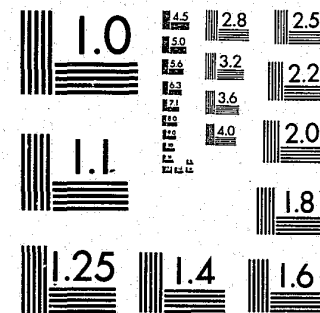


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THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE STUDY OF DELINQUENCY

PLANNING FOR DELINQUENCY?  
WHO PREVENTS CRIME?

A REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF 1977 AND 1978

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## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION By Sheriff Iain Macphail, Chairman, S.A.S.D.	1 - 4
<u>ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1977: PLANNING FOR DELINQUENCY?</u>	5
X "DEFENSIBLE SPACE": A VIEW FROM THE STANDPOINT OF AN ARCHITECT AND PLANNER by Mrs. Kirsteen Holmes, D.A., R.I.B.A., A.R.I.A.S., S.P. Dip., F.R.T.P.I.	6 - 13 64223
X "DEFENSIBLE SPACE": A POLICE OFFICER'S VIEW by Superintendent Archibald MacKenzie, Strathclyde Police.	14 - 20 64224
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND DELINQUENCY Summary of a paper by Professor Terence Lee, Department of Psychology, University of Surrey.	21
GROUP DISCUSSIONS	22 - 24
<u>ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1978: WHO PREVENTS CRIME?</u>	25
X WHO PREVENTS CRIME? Keynote address by Dr. R.V.G. Clarke, Home Office Research Unit.	26 - 49 64225
GROUP DISCUSSIONS	50 - 60
ADDRESS TO THE PLENARY SESSION by The Hon. Lord Stewart, M.C., Conference Chairman.	61 - 64

## WHO PREVENTS CRIME?

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY Dr. R.V.G. Clarke,  
Home Office Research Unit

This morning I want to do two things. First, I will take a rather broad look at the different ways open to society of controlling or preventing crime and, in the light of present criminological knowledge, will assess what sort of gains are likely to be made through each of these various approaches. These include the treatment of offenders, 'decriminalisation', co-called 'containment' or incarceration policies, deterrent sentencing, preventive policing, social reforms, and improvements in security. As there is no firmly established body of professional opinion about how to deal with crime, I will inevitably present a somewhat personal point of view based upon my own reading of the literature and on the research in which I have been directly involved. I will open this part of the discussion, however, by a rather detailed consideration of a subject - the effectiveness of penal treatments - about which there is more agreement among criminologists. This may involve going over ground familiar to many of you, but it is essential background to the topic of the Conference.

The second thing I want to do, and this will be done more briefly, is to consider a number of issues concerning the organisation and implementation of crime prevention effort. As will become clear, I see much crime prevention as of necessity being undertaken at a local level.

As a preface to my discussion, it is important to clarify what can be achieved in respect of the prevention of crime. Crime prevention is a relative term. No one here, I am sure, would quarrel with the proposition that the elimination of crime is an illusory goal. Laws will always be required to regulate behaviour, and there will always be those who break the law. It is not



unrealistic, however, to hope for greater compliance with existing laws. Indeed the experience of Japan, which apparently alone among 'advanced' nations has achieved a substantial drop in levels of crime during the past 15 years, shows that increases in crime for our own society need not be an inevitable consequence of greater numbers of young people, of greater industrialisation, or of greater urbanisation. Nor may it be unrealistic to hope for the more or less complete elimination of certain forms of crime; and I will mention examples of these during the course of my talk.

I. The effectiveness of treatment

It would be true to say that criminologists have devoted very much more attention to the treatment of offenders than to any of the other means of crime reduction. There have by now been literally dozens of studies evaluating the rehabilitative effectiveness of various custodial and non-custodial treatments, and several reviews of this literature are now available. The general conclusion to all this work is that no one treatment is markedly more effective in achieving the rehabilitation of offenders than any other, and none of the measures appear to work at all well.

The reasons for the apparent ineffectiveness of treatments are important and I will discuss them at some length but, first, it may be helpful to outline two studies, undertaken by the Home Office Research Unit, which serve as examples of the work that has been undertaken. (I hope you will forgive me for referring to studies which I know well but which may have been conducted south of the border, rather than to equally relevant work undertaken in Scotland but with which I am less familiar).

The first study was an evaluation of a "therapeutic community" established in one of the three houses of Kingswood Training School, a West Country approved school catering for boys aged 13-15 on admission. This therapeutic community was the responsibility of the school's resident clinical psychologist and it had been set up on classical lines; there were daily group discussions between staff and boys; the staff permitted much 'acting-out' behaviour; the atmosphere was informal; and there were constant attempts by staff to confront boys with interpretations of their behaviour. The experiment began in the mid-1960's, and because of the controversy surrounding what was then a new form of treatment for approved schools, the school's Managers decided that an evaluation of the therapeutic community should be attempted.

The research design was such that the boys being treated in the therapeutic community were compared with boys in another house run on traditional paternalistic lines. So as to ensure the comparability of the two groups of boys they were assigned at random (by the toss of a coin) to one or other of the houses. The experiment was in operation for about 4 years, during which time 280 boys passed through the school. Each boy was followed up for two years after release to obtain information about further offending. There were no differences between the therapeutic community and the control house in the number of boys convicted during the two years immediately following their stay in the school - in fact about 70% of the boys in each house were reconvicted.

The second study, known as IMPACT, was undertaken to see if "high risk" probationers (i.e. typically single, unemployed men who might previously have served a custodial sentence) were likely to be

benefitted by more intensive assistance from probation officers intended to help them solve practical problems concerned with work (or the lack of it), accommodation, leisure, or relationships with families and girl-friends. Some 900 probationers in four areas of England participated in the study. Again, they were randomly allocated either to the 'experimental' intensive casework group or to a 'control' group who were exposed to the more usual form of probation. The majority of cases were followed up for a full two years. In brief, it was found that very similar proportions (about a third) of both experimental and control groups were reconvicted. And there was no evidence that the two forms of intervention being compared were more suited to any one group of probationers than to another.

Before leaving these studies, I should counter the familiar criticism that the measure of effectiveness (i.e. reconviction rates calculated over a comparatively short period after treatment) was inadequate. There are three main reasons why criminologists generally hold that reconviction rates constitute the best available, if not an ideal, measure of rehabilitative effectiveness. First, reoffending is directly relevant to the purposes of treatment. People are given probation or put in prison as a result of offending - not because they are maladjusted in some other way. Second, various studies have shown that recidivism is in fact associated with continuing poor adjustment in other areas of a person's life - for example, failure to hold down a job, or to make successful relationships. Third, reoffending in the period immediately following treatment is predictive of reoffending in later years. The few studies which have followed up people for longer periods following a penal treatment have even more depressing results.

For example, Dr. Hammond found that of some 250 approved schoolboys whom he followed up for nine years, about 40% had received sentences of imprisonment as young adults. I should say in passing, however, that measures of reconviction are not appropriate for evaluating all of the purposes served by penal measures - for example List D Schools have the function of caring for and educating the boys and girls in their charge.

#### The failure of the treatment model

Why, then, have penal treatments proved to be so uniformly ineffective in rehabilitative terms? This is now generally thought to be because the 'disease' concept of criminality inherent in the treatment model is at fault. It is worth spending some time on the attacks that have been made on the 'disease' model of crime because in this way a number of points can be drawn out which have relevance for other means of crime control. There are three main grounds of criticism.

In the first place, it is not the case that people commit crimes merely because of abnormal personality or attitudes which might be corrected by an appropriate 'dose' of treatment. The explanation of criminal behaviour is altogether more complex. This point is best illustrated by considering the diagram in my hand-out where some, but not all, of the factors which have been put forward as contributing to the explanation of delinquency are arranged in groups. Broadly speaking, the top part of the diagram deals with those variables (Groups 1-3) that have been traditionally emphasised by those who subscribe to psychological or disease model of delinquency: the child's early environment and upbringing: the kind of love and discipline received from his parents: the values he has been taught:

and the kind of personality - aggressive, extroverted, impulsive - that he has developed as a result, or to which he has been genetically pre-disposed. Group 4 included features basic to any sociological explanation of delinquency, such as class, and occupational status. These are seen as broadly determining an individual's opportunities for achieving success and personal satisfaction in his life and, hence, whether or not he is likely to turn to crime. Group 5 concerns a more detailed level of sociological analysis: for example, the control that parents exercise over a boy's freedom of movement; the kind of area he lives in; the sort of school he attends; whether his friends are delinquent; and the way he spends his leisure (for example, does he spend a lot of time on the streets?) All of these may be seen as influencing whether or not he 'drifts' into delinquent pastimes or activities.

The variables in Groups 1-5 may thus be seen as conducive to a general predisposition to offend. But even those individuals who have been predisposed by background or environment to behave criminally may only choose to do so rather rarely; and Groups 6-8 deal with variables which more directly influence the decision to commit a particular offence. In the first place, a readiness to commit an act of vandalism or theft may result from feelings of boredom, anger, or frustration, and these in turn may be produced by some recent crises or misfortune (Group 6): the youth may have lost his job, he may have been given up by his girl-friend, or he may have had a crash on his motorbike. In addition, the immediate features of the situation will be important in the choice of target and perhaps even in triggering the behaviour (Group 7): to take the example of vandalism, a boy may be more likely to damage

a telephone kiosk if it has already been damaged, if it is in a secluded area, if he is with a group of his friends, and so on. Whether he decides to do so or not will depend on how he perceives the opportunities in the situation and the judgement he makes about the offence (Group 8): for example, some implicit assessment of the 'morality' of the act in terms of its consequences for other people may be made, and the chances, as well as the consequences, of getting caught may also be calculated. How much weight should be attached to each group of variables in the explanation of crime will vary greatly from instance to instance, but it is clear that any crime prevention measure, such as the treatment of offenders, which takes no account of a large proportion of the explanatory variables, can at best have only limited success.

The second way in which the 'disease' model of crime is inadequate is that it tends to ignore the differences between different kinds of crime. Instead, particular individuals are seen as being generally disposed to break the law. But clearly a disposition to offend must vary from any individual with the nature of the offence. Nearly everyone would be willing to commit a minor traffic offence, but very few would contemplate a serious crime such as robbing a bank. Indeed, as should be clear later, it is of paramount importance for prevention to see crime not as denoting a unitary phenomenon but as a blanket term used to describe a collection of very varied forms of behaviour which have in common only that they are prohibited by the law. While the diagram may be generally useful in describing the forces at play in offending, the content of the boxes, for Groups 4-8 especially, would be very different in explaining, say, computer fraud, than they would be for mugging or telephone-box vandalism.

The third way in which the disease model of criminality is at variance with current criminological knowledge is that under it crime tends to be seen as the prerogative of a small, abnormal group in society. But this is far from reality. There is now a substantial body of research to show that offending is quite widespread among the population. If one takes boys aged 10-17, for example, offending rather than its absence is the norm for the group. Thus Dr. William Belson found in his study of 1400 London boys who were invited under confidential conditions to admit to offences of theft which they had committed, that all had done some stealing and about one quarter were quite heavily involved in various forms of theft. A recent Home Office Research Unit study, in which 600 boys aged 11-15 in a northern city were questioned about the acts of vandalism they had committed, found, again, that vandalism was commonplace behaviour among this group. Table 1 gives the proportion of boys who admitted committing various acts of vandalism within the previous six months. For instance, three out of four boys admitted breaking a bottle in the street or a window in an empty house, and one in four boys admitted more serious acts of vandalism such as damaging telephone boxes, public toilets or bus seats.

Clearly evidence of this sort is not readily compatible with a disease model of crime, but there are some further implications. First, and as it were in parenthesis, it is apparent that as 'treatment' is applied to only a small proportion of offenders it could never be more than a limited solution to crime - even if it were effective. Second, it suggests that the scale of the crime problem is very much greater than is sometimes thought - despite yearly increases in the recorded statistics of crime.

Indeed, in recent years evidence has accumulated about the size of the dark figure of crime that has surprised even some of the most trenchant critics of the official statistics. At present there are about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million indictable offences officially recorded for England and Wales. But victim surveys, in which people are asked about crimes they have experienced but which they may not have reported to the Police, and some other statistical studies, suggest to me that the number of indictable crimes that could be reported are at least 35 million. For instance, Dr. Richard Sparks has estimated on the basis of victim surveys undertaken in London (which admittedly will not be typical of the rest of the country) that there are four times as many burglaries and thefts from dwellings as appear in the Criminal Statistics. Some estimates of the 'dark figure' of crime for certain groups of offences are shown in Table 2. And on the basis of some work undertaken by my colleagues in the Research Unit, we have estimated that there are 100 times as many incidents of shoplifting and 15 times as much criminal damage as appear in the Criminal Statistics. While it may be the case that reported offences contain a greater proportion of the more serious crimes, it is certainly not true that the 'dark figure' is made up of essentially trivial incidents.

I do not quote these figures to induce despondency or alarm. In fact, paradoxically you may think, I do not believe that they represent an overwhelming or even an enormous problem. The point is, I think, that the figures for crime must be set against the almost unlimited opportunities for crime that are represented by the daily activities of a population of some 50 million people. It is, of course, very different to quantify opportunities for crime in any very meaningful way. But if we take the example of residential

burglary, and calculate the risk of being burgled on the basis of my higher annual estimates of burglary in Table 2, the average household in England and Wales is burgled once in every 35 years. Given that the average burglary may take only a few minutes, and setting this against the opportunities inherent in the 24 hours of the day and the 365 days of the year, I would submit that the overall risk of being burgled is indeed rather small. Again, to take the example of shoplifting, even though we have calculated that there may be 100 times as many shoplifting offences as appear in the official statistics, the risk to the average shop is small. We have estimated that the average shop may have about 1000 customers per week, only two of whom will shoplift.

Of course the risk of burglary or shoplifting will be much higher than the average for some houses and for some shops. And the victims of burglary in particular can suffer considerable distress. So I am in no way suggesting that we should not take the problems seriously. Only that a proper consideration of the risks is necessary in order to decide how best to deal with the problems. And there is an underlying point of general importance. This is that despite the apparent size of the problem in aggregate, crime is in fact a rare event. May I ask you to think yourselves how often you have been the victims of crime or how often you have witnessed crime being committed? Rare events are difficult to predict in the sense of knowing where they will occur and when, and events that are difficult to predict may be difficult to prevent.

I will return to this point later, but before leaving the discussion of risks of crime, there are two further things that need to be said. First, just as crime is a rare eve



against a background of substantial opportunities for crime, so crime is a rare behavioural event for any one person. Even if every year a boy commits several acts of vandalism and theft, for the overwhelming majority of the time he may well be behaving in a perfectly responsible and law-abiding fashion. For me, this point reinforces the limited gains that might be made through penal treatments. Second, if the chances of being a victim of crime are in fact still quite small, it would seem that many people's fear of crime is quite disproportionate. It may be at least as important, therefore, to reduce the fear of crime as to reduce the actual risks of becoming a victim. This is not a theme that I shall develop this morning, but it may be one that ought to be pursued in group discussion.

## II. Alternative means of crime prevention

The disappointing results from the research into penal treatments have led criminologists increasingly to examine alternative means of preventing crime. To help you through my discussion, I have classified these various alternatives in Table 3 and have also listed the agencies primarily responsible for their implementation.

### Decriminalisation

The first of the alternatives, decriminalisation, refers to the removal by the legislature of a particular offence from the scope of the criminal law - and given the definition of crime as behaviour proscribed by the criminal law that is a perfectly logical method of crime reduction! It is probably however, of limited potential, except in relation to some "victimless" sex, drinking or drug offences.

On the other hand, schools which do not report pupils to the Police who have been caught stealing, or factories which do not report employees for pilfering, are in effect operating a form of decriminalisation.

### Containment

"Containment", "incapacitation" or "incarceration" refers to a policy - currently the subject of quite intensive debate in American legal and criminological circles - of locking up violent or serious property offenders for quite long periods of time as a preventive measure. Numerous problems attach to such a policy. The first and foremost is an ethical difficulty. Is it right to lock up people for offences they have not yet committed? Linked with this is the practical difficulty of prediction. While it may be possible to classify offenders into broad groups for risks of future offending, such predictions do not hold up at an individual level. In addition, there is considerable controversy over quite how much crime would be prevented through a policy of containment. The difficulty is in knowing how many offences each offender would be likely to commit if he were at large. Dr. Peter Greenwood of the Rank Corporation has recently estimated, on the basis of a careful American study, that in order to achieve a reduction of 1% in the crime rate, imprisonment rates would have to increase by 10%. Particularly in view of the overcrowding in our prisons at present this does not sound very promising, but other researchers have made more optimistic estimates. The Home Office Research Unit is planning a study of the likely effects of various containment policies which might shed some light on the debate.

### DETERRENT SENTENCING



issue is how much crime is prevented through the knowledge that severe sanctions are available for particular forms of offending. While few people doubt that severe penalties deter crime, criminologists have encountered some formidable methodological problems in attempting to study deterrence. What has usually been examined is the relationship between the imposition of severe sentences (which is a different thing from availability) and subsequent levels of crime. The results of much of this research have been equivocal if not negative. For instance, the Home Office Research Unit studied the effect on the level of reported robberies in Birmingham and the North West of England following an exemplary sentence of 20 years' imprisonment awarded in 1973 amidst considerable publicity to a Birmingham boy for mugging. There was found to be no reduction in reported robberies following the sentence. In any case, there are obvious ethical difficulties in encouraging a policy of exemplary sentencing - especially for juveniles. Do people really want to see children of say, 10 or 11, taken away from their parents for several years for acts of vandalising telephone boxes or schools? The evidence of a recent Home Office survey of the public would suggest they do not.

Where researchers have been able to look at the effect on crime rates of removing a severe sentence from the statute books, as in the well-known research into capital punishment and murder, the picture has been complicated by the fact that the sentence has always been replaced by another - such as life imprisonment in the case of murder - which from the offenders' point of view might for all practical purposes be equally severe. In fact, we need to know much more about how potential offenders see the risks of being caught. How far do they take calculated risks after having weighed up the likely penalties of being caught? And how much offending is impulsive and casual, or undertaken in the heat of the moment or under the

consequence are weighed hardly at all? Perhaps the single greatest mistake in thinking about deterrents is attempting to generalise too widely. What we need to study is the effect of specific sanctions for particular offences committed by different groups of offenders.

### Policing

Perhaps the most popular response to rising crime rates is to call for a strengthening of the police force. But we should not overlook the fact that since 1964, during which period crime rates have steadily risen, police manpower in England and Wales has increased by a third and civilian staff have more than doubled. Moreover, recent research - most of it conducted in the United States - is beginning to call into question much that is central to the deterrent or preventive role of the police. For instance, several studies have shown that far from discovering crime for themselves, as much as 90% of the offences the police learn about come to their notice as a result of complaints from the public. Patrolling experiments, notably the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Study undertaken by Dr George Kelling of the Police Foundation, have suggested that even very considerable increases in police presence have no discernible effect on levels of crime. Dr Peter Greenwood's study of CID work in the United States has suggested that very large proportions of this effort are quite fruitless. In most cases there is little chance of crime being cleared up through investigation unless a very definite lead on the offender is given by the victim or by someone else. This will help to explain why the clear-up rate for residential burglary in London is as low as around 10% and a fair proportion of this 10% will be offences taken into consideration. The value of responding very quickly to calls for assistance from the public - to which a great deal of sophisticated computer hardware has been dedicated - has been sharply questioned by recent studies which suggest that victims of crime typically delay some 20-40 minutes before calling the police. The first impulse is to tell someone else - a friend, neighbour, or relation - and to seek advice and comfort from them.

No-one doubts that some police presence is essential to keep crime in check. The experience of some but not all police strikes has demonstrated that. But many commentators now believe that there are few foreseeable changes in policing levels or operational strategies that would be both acceptable to the public and economically viable and which would have a discernible impact on crime. The reasons once again lie in the nature of crime. Much of it is committed in private places, and that committed in public is accomplished quickly, stealthily and without warning by strangers. This, coupled with the fact that crime is a rare event, means that the chances of the police witnessing or intervening in such events - unless they were literally stationed on every street corner - are very small. An example of the small risks of detection is presented by a Swedish study which has calculated that, given present policing levels, a drunken driver could on average go 7 kilometres to and 7 kilometres from the centre of Stockholm once a week for 25 years before being detected.

The view of police effectiveness which I have just sketched out will no doubt be modified in detail by future research. I have little doubt that certain police operations directed against certain forms of crime (perhaps truancy patrols or the supervision of football crowds) will be shown to be quite effective. But I think it unlikely that in 10 or 15 years time people will so generally believe that a strengthening of the police is the surest route to cutting crime.

#### Social prevention

This leaves us with measures that are usually, but confusingly, labelled as crime prevention. There are two groups of these - social measures and physical measures. The first of these are designed to reduce the motivation to commit crime, while the second are designed to restrict the opportunities for crime. Social crime prevention measures can again be divided into two main groups. First, there are very broad social policies designed, for example, to reduce discrimination, to compensate for deprivation, and to improve education, all of which are seen as having crime prevention pay-off. The effects of such policies are very difficult to evaluate, and there may be more disagreement

among criminologists concerning their value than about any of the other ways of dealing with crime that I have discussed. I would point out, however, that some of the generally accepted "social" explanations of crime, such as poverty or lack of education, may be rather less powerful than they originally seemed, especially in the light of generally improving social, economic and educational conditions.

The second group of social prevention measures are local schemes - adventure playgrounds, youth clubs, employment schemes, and a variety of activities going under the heading of "intermediate treatment" - designed to improve the lot of delinquent or pre-delinquent groups in the district. Once again, the theories underlying these approaches are often too narrow and do not take proper account of the multi-causal nature of crime. To take an example: though improved leisure provision is often advocated as a solution to vandalism, it was found, in the Home Office Research Unit study mentioned earlier, that those boys who were more heavily involved in vandalism were already more frequent users of youth clubs and the like. The point is, once again, that it does not take long to commit an act of vandalism and however much one makes provision for the leisure time of boys, there will always be plenty of time on their hands for mischief. In fact it is quite commonly found that boys commit vandalism on their way in groups to and from the local youth club.

Having said all that, I should make one thing clear. I am all in favour of the reduction of discrimination, improved leisure provision, employment schemes and so forth. These are things that are good in their own right. I am personally just not all sure that they have a great deal of pay-off in crime prevention terms.

#### Physical prevention

This leaves us with physical measures to reduce opportunities for crime. There are many varieties of these, the simplest and most direct of which are 'target-hardening' measures such as steering-column locks on cars, metal

the windows of jewellers, and toughened glass in school buildings, all of which make it difficult for the person intent on vandalism or theft. The introduction of steering-column locks on all cars on the road in West Germany in 1963 substantially cut autocrime, whereas the Post Office virtually eliminated thefts from telephone kiosks by the introduction of the steel coin box. Then there are various forms of surveillance including the security patrol, burglar alarms, and CCTV which increase the risk of being seen. A less obvious form of surveillance is that provided by ordinary people going about their daily business. For example, Oscar Newman has proposed that housing estates should be designed so that residents can easily see what is going on outside their dwellings and so that trespassers feel vulnerable. Another group of opportunity-reducing measures consists of various management techniques - for example the rapid repair of vandalised property and the quick re-letting of empty flats so as not to attract additional damage. Other examples would be the location of pay-phones in places such as pubs and laundrettes where they will receive some supervision from staff; the employment of caretakers on housing estates; the provision of living quarters on the premises for school caretakers; the employment of conductors on buses and the supervision of football fans on trains by club stewards, all of which have demonstrable crime prevention value.

Despite their potential, physical preventive measures are still not regarded favourably by criminologists, though it was heartening to see that the recent report from the Scottish Council on Crime supported their use, for example through the suggestion that certain public houses should serve beer in plastic containers rather than in glasses to avoid their use as offensive weapons. One difficulty concerns displacement. This is the idea that reducing opportunities will (i) cause criminals to turn their attention to places where crime is still easy; or (ii) cause them to adopt more extreme methods; or (iii) cause them to commit different kinds of crime. But it should be clear from the model of crime which I discussed earlier that displacement is by no means inevitable. A great deal of criminal behaviour is not the result of determined individuals seeking

particular objectives. Much of it is quite casual and is heavily influenced by particular situational inducements and the balance of risks and rewards involved. Upsetting this balance through measures which make it more difficult to act is unlikely to result in other crimes being committed which serve different needs and for which different internal and external sanctions might apply. To make the point by a somewhat extreme example: if the local supermarkets improved their security so that housewives in the area could no longer do the odd bit of shoplifting, it is most unlikely that they would turn instead to mugging the district's old-age pensioners.

#### Summing-up and practical implications

In the final 10 minutes of my talk I want to draw out some practical lessons from what has been a rather broad discussion. The first point is that there is no panacea which, if introduced, would cut crime at a stroke. Crime will always be with us, and crime prevention is a continuous process of slow, laborious, detailed work in which the gains may be small and difficult to identify. Second, it is much more useful to think about the prevention of specific kinds of offence than the prevention of crime in general. Third, explaining the causes of even narrow categories of offence can be quite complex and there may be a great many ways in which preventive action could be organised. In broad terms, however, I believe that the crime prevention gains to be made through treatment of offenders or social prevention are small. I suspect too that the gains made through policies of containment or deterrent sentencing, and indeed through many kinds of policing, are also likely to be limited. So that leaves us with opportunity-reducing measures, which in the present state of knowledge, to my mind, offer the most manageable ways of preventing crime.

Now there may be quite a number of opportunity-reducing measures which rely on the initiative of a central government body - a case in point is the fitting of steering-column locks to new cars at manufacture. (And, incidentally, I think that developments in electronics will create numerous possibilities for building-in a variety of devices in cars to prevent various forms of offences related to

vehicles. For the most part, however, I believe that effective crime prevention needs to be organised at a local level. The reason is that preventive measures have to be tailored to local crime problems and to local conditions. Vandalism on a particular housing estate, say, in Glasgow or even in Wandsworth is not going to be solved by someone sitting in Whitehall.

There are, of course, numerous practical problems. For action to be effective it may require co-operation between several local bodies—for example, the police, the housing department, and the recreation department. At the very least, these bodies should be involved in a search for the most effective, most publicly acceptable, and cheapest solution. This means that someone is going to have to take the lead in co-ordinating discussion, and perhaps also in co-ordinating action at a later stage. But ideally, other tasks need also to be undertaken which require skills that are at present in short supply. For instance, preventive action is often hampered by a lack of adequate information about the extent of a particular problem, the form it takes, and how much it is costing the community. Thus it may be that the problem of vandalism on a particular estate is magnified by the protests of particularly vocal residents, or it may be that there is indeed a considerable problem but that this affects rather specific targets such as the lifts. Somebody needs to collect and analyse the relevant information. Someone also needs to gather data about the costs and practicability of the various preventive options. Is the solution to employ a resident caretaker? Or to offer large families accommodation more suited to their needs? Or simply to install more robust lifts? Finally, someone needs to monitor the action that has been taken in order to evaluate the results.

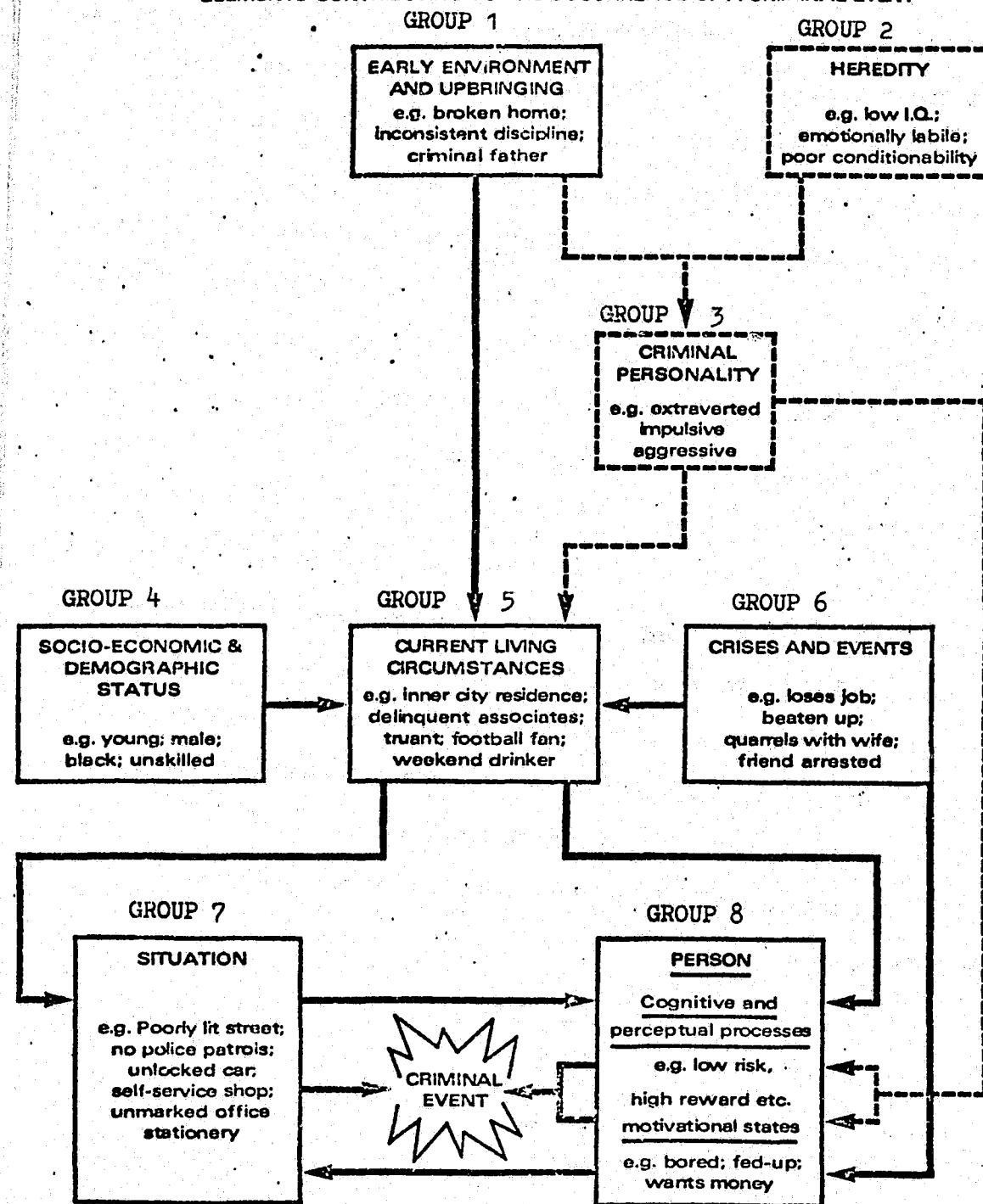
The job I have just sketched out could easily demand the creation of appropriately trained local authority "crime prevention liaison officers". These officers would need to know something about criminology and statistics, as well as having the necessary co-ordinating and negotiating skills. There may be difficulties, however, about such officials being involved in crime prevention efforts that might involve agencies (e.g. the local football club) or property which is outside local authority responsibility, and the job might be more

appropriately taken on board by crime prevention departments of the local police.

But, having said that, one must make some qualifications. The job that needs doing is sufficiently detailed and complex to require additional resources to be allocated to police crime prevention. (These resources could be found from existing complement by re-allocating manpower from some other activities such as - dare I say it - criminal investigation.) Other changes would also be needed, and I expect to be taken up on some of these points by Chief Supt. Snow. Many policemen, even some of those working in crime prevention departments, tend to make a sharp distinction between "criminals" and respectable people, and to see their primary job as ensuring that criminals are brought to book. This, as I have indicated earlier, is not a particularly effective crime prevention stance. Also, the police lack certain skills of data analysis and of objective evaluation which they would need to acquire. There are, of course, many instances of the police successfully making appropriate adjustments in their working methods. This is shown by the community policing experiments which are related to what I have just been talking about, and which have been undertaken in Canada, in Devon and Cornwall, in Liverpool, and, last but not least, Scotland itself. I hope that learning more about this work will be one of the benefits of attending this Conference.



# ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE OCCURRENCE OF A CRIMINAL EVENT\*



AAAAA  
POLITICAL AND  
ECONOMIC FORCES

\*The examples given within each box will have significance only in respect of particular types of crime.

TABLE 1

The prevalence of vandalism amongst adolescent schoolboys

1. Scratched desk at school	85%
2. Broken a bottle in the street	79%
3. Broken a window in an empty house	68%
4. Written on walls in the street	65%
5. Broken trees or flowers in a park	58%
6. Written on the seats or walls of buses	55%
7. Broken the glass in a street lamp	48%
8. Scratched a car or lorry	42%
9. Smashed things on a building site	40%
10. Broken a window in an occupied house	32%
11. Broken the glass in a bus shelter	32%
12. Damaged park building	31%
13. Broken furniture at school	29%
14. Broken a window in a public toilet	29%
15. Broken the glass of a telephone kiosk	28%
16. Broken a car radio aerial	28%
18. Damaged the tyres of a car	28%
19. Broken a window at school	27%
20. Slashed bus seats	22%
21. Broken a seat in a public toilet	20%
21. Damaged telephone in a kiosk	20%
22. Put large objects on a railway line	19%
23. Broken a window in a club	16%
24. Slashed train seats	12%

(Percentages refer to the proportion of boys who admitted to having committed the specified act at least once in the previous six months)

TABLE 2

The 'dark figure' of crime for selected groups of offences

	Criminal Statistics 1977	% reported	Estimates of actual number of offences
Burglary other than in a dwelling	335,725	80% <sup>(1)</sup>	420,000
Taking and unauthorised taking of motor vehicles	310,294	95% <sup>(2)</sup>	327,000
Theft from vehicles	295,411	8% <sup>(3)</sup>	3,693,000
Criminal damage	287,391	7% <sup>(4)</sup>	4,106,000
Burglary in a dwelling	262,131	50% <sup>(5)</sup>	524,000
Shoplifting	217,276	1% <sup>(6)</sup>	21,726,000

Notes: The crimes listed above account for 65% of all indictable crimes known to the police. The biggest category of crimes not included above (72%) is various forms of theft (e.g. theft by employees). The reporting rates shown derive from a variety of sources:

- (1) American Crime Surveys indicate that just over 80% of burglaries against commercial establishments are reported to the police. There are no figures for this country.
- (2) Again, there is no information for this country. American Crime Surveys suggest that 91% of motor vehicle thefts are reported, a high figure no doubt because of insurance requirements.
- (3) This is a figure extrapolated from Sparks' victim survey in London. His data show a reporting rate for theft of, and theft from vehicles combined (Sparks et al., 1977, Table VI.4), and certain assumptions had to be made. These were (i) that these offences in London followed the same pattern as in England and Wales generally where there were about the same number of thefts from, and theft of vehicles reported to the police; and (ii) that 95% of theft of vehicles were reported to the police.
- (4) This figure is based on a Home Office Research Unit study (Sturman, in press) which looked at the proportion of vandalism incidents which appeared in police records of criminal damage in one area in Manchester. Local authority and Post Office records of vandalism were examined to ascertain the number of vandalism incidents repaired in the area, and surveys of householders, school heads and shopkeepers were conducted to see how much vandalism had been committed against their property in a six-month period.
- (5) This is a well-accepted American figure. Sparks' work in London suggests that a lower reporting rate (25%) for residential burglary, but there are difficulties in interpreting his figures, and London may be somewhat atypical.
- (6) This figure is derived from an exercise done in the Home Office Research Unit. Three different estimates were made of the 'hidden' number of shoplifting offences, all of them indicating that at most 1% of shoplifting offences appear in Criminal Statistics. One of the estimates, for instance, compared the value of property taken by shoplifters as shown in Criminal Statistics with reported losses by retailers, taking estimates of employee theft into account.

TABLE 3

Strategies of crime control

	Objective	Agencies involved
DECRIMINALISATION	Removal of certain categories of offence from ambit of the criminal law	Parliament
TREATMENT	Reform of the offender	Prisons, Probation Service, Community Homes, List D Schools, etc.
CONTAINMENT/ INCAPACITATION	Keeping serious persistent offenders out of circulation	Courts/Prisons
DETERRENT SENTENCING	Increasing 'costs' of crime by severe punishment of those who are caught	Courts
POLICING	Increasing the chances of offenders being caught through patrolling, criminal investigation, fast response, etc.	Police
'SOCIAL' PREVENTION	Reducing the motivation for crime through:  (i) Broad social reforms  (ii) Local schemes designed to improve the lot of delinquent or pre-delinquent groups	Parliament/Central Government  Voluntary agencies, local authority departments, schools, etc.
'PHYSICAL' PREVENTION	Reducing opportunities for crime through increased security	Police, local authority departments, businesses, banks, shops, bus companies, etc.etc.

**END**