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Organized crime and the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity Framework

Paul Ekblom

THE CHALLENGE OF PREVENTING ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime is especially challenging to control. It is:

- Complex
- Dispersed and invisible – forming networks more than gangs
- Invasive and progressive
- Subversive and self-protective – disabling and corrupting crime control systems
- Persistent
- Adaptive and durable
- Entrepreneurial and well-resourced
- Innovative

These features confront us with a pernicious combination of moving targets and shifting ground. They set the scene for an arms race between preventers and organized offenders (Ekblom 1997, 1999), especially where social and technological change constantly creates new opportunities for offending – new targets, environments, business models, tools and information sources. Even successful crime control methods eventually weaken as offenders learn to circumvent them. Legislative solutions lag behind changing crime patterns – particularly those requiring international agreement.

We must therefore improve our performance against organized crime – cost-effectiveness, responsiveness, sustainability and scope (the range of crime problems controlled). But beyond incremental advances, we must *gear up* to:

- Catch up with existing crime problems we cannot yet prevent
- Scan for emergent crime problems and stop them early
- Anticipate new crime problems and develop and deploy timely new solutions
- Make solutions durable, striving to maintain them whilst preparing for obsolescence

Gearing up involves treating organized crime control as an *evolutionary* process (Ekblom 1997, 1999) and becoming adaptive and innovative ourselves – aiming to outpace offenders (or at least to follow close behind, for they can take the initiative and have fewer constraints on manoeuvrability). We, too, can organize better – for example through the UK's National Intelligence Model and Europol's Analytical Guidelines. However, the main challenge is to gain the edge and then keep it sharp. What we can do that organized criminals usually cannot.? We can be:

- Systematic – in analysing crime problems and criminal organizations, and in designing solutions.
- Scientific and professional – using evidence and ideas distilled from research on the causes of crime and evaluation of crime reduction, and blending this with the 'craft' competencies of detectives and crime analysts.
- Strategic – analysing, planning and acting at different levels – from preventing individual criminal events to putting criminal organizations out of business, to pursuing career criminals, to disrupting entire criminal markets.
- Contextual – customizing action to local circumstances.
- Cumulative – building reliable and durable knowledge.
- Current – keeping up to date on crime and crime reduction and prepared for obsolescence of existing preventive measures; pursuing a succession of momentary advantages rather than vainly seeking permanent solutions.
- Communicative – sharing know-how and broader capacity.
- Collaborative – working in partnership with diverse agencies, to pool complementary resources (the mirror image of why criminals themselves link up).

The Role of Knowledge in Improving Crime Prevention Performance

Knowledge is vital in gearing up performance. It takes several forms (Ekblom 2002a):

- *Know-about:* crime problems, patterns of criminality; risk factors , theories and causes, consequences.
- *Know-what:* what works in prevention, how cost-effectively and sustainably, in what context.
- *Know-how:* practical processes of analysing crime, its patterns and causes, customizing preventive interventions, implementation, mobilization and evaluation;
- *Know-who:* contacts with generic expertise, access to wider resources, and those in the wider public and commercial community who can take on particular preventive tasks.

This chapter centres on 'know-what'. However, this cannot be detached from 'know-how,' and a single conceptual framework can support all kinds of knowing. A knowledge base of what works should help practitioners maintain the effectiveness of existing interventions, replicate in diverse contexts, innovate and anticipate. The aim is to learn from past experience, so we are neither reinventing the wheel of success nor the flat tyre of failure – and the initiatives we produce are most likely to succeed.

Replication is the main function of a knowledge base, but even that is not straightforward. The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project (Forrester et al. 1988, 1990) was a notable success in 'ordinary' crime prevention. Developed by top academics working with talented police and probation staff, a range of interventions – covering target-hardening, target removal, neighbour surveillance, tackling offender motives and community development – reduced domestic burglary by 65%. Several attempts were made to replicate this – but a major review (Tilley 1994) showed disappointing results. Reasons included:

i) *Transferability* of knowledge is problematic. What works in one context may not work elsewhere – especially if we know little about the influence of contextual factors (like culture, laws, environment). No knowledge base of case studies, however well-evaluated or -populated, can cover all contextual contingencies for replication. We must therefore make the best guess on prior knowledge, pilot the intervention and use rapid and good-quality *feedback* until we get the intervention right, or abandon it. Replication thus resembles innovation – entering the unknown. The necessary knowledge is best distilled into ***generic principles*** to be applied in designing interventions for new contexts. Such principles also resist obsolescence.

ii) The replicators copied the end product, instead of the intelligent process of identifying problems/risks, diagnosing causes, identifying solutions and

customizing these to problem and context. Cookbook replication will not work and 'know-what' is of limited value without 'know-how'.

These are not unusual problems. The current UK Crime Reduction Programme is also finding that implementing successful schemes, originally developed by academics, into routine mainstream roll-out, is extremely challenging (Ekblom 2002a). A similar issue besets Problem-Oriented Policing in UK and USA.

Conceptual Framework Needed

This 'replication gap' partly reflects insufficient practitioner training, wider supportive climate and infrastructure for prevention. But more fundamental is the failure of prevention to develop into a professional discipline (Ekblom 1996), and beneath that, the lack of an overall, integrating conceptual framework.

Without conceptual frameworks to guide the development of good practice, progress is hindered (Ekblom 2002a):

- 'What works' knowledge bases are limited in content and utility, especially if users have different languages and working contexts.
- Communication and collaboration between diverse partners are inhibited: police may use one term, local government another.
- Strategic thinking remains compartmentalised and 'method-oriented' or 'organization-oriented' rather than 'problem-oriented'.
- Practice fails to test and refine theory, and theory to inform practice.
- Education and training lack coherence. Instead of the integrated generic principles advocated above, are a haphazard assortment of cases and 'star' schemes. Practitioners act more like narrow technicians than professional consultants applying a range of knowledge to a problem. Interventions are often superficial and prone to fashion.

THE CONJUNCTION OF CRIMINAL OPPORTUNITY FRAMEWORK

The ***Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity*** (CCO) framework aims to alleviate these problems and support the development of crime prevention as a professional discipline. CCO originated in efforts to describe and classify some 2,000 diverse 'ordinary' crime prevention schemes from England's Safer Cities Programme. The framework has been adapted, and adopted, by various UK committees on training and education of crime prevention professionals, and accompanies the development of 'toolkits' for crime reduction practitioners in the UK (see http://5isframework.wordpress.com/conjunction-of-criminal-opportunity/).

CCO bridges two major 'cultural gaps' in crime prevention**:**

- Between *situational* versus *offender-oriented* prevention – understanding the offender is vital to our capacity to intelligently manipulate the crime situation; and between
- *Criminal justice/ enforcement/ repressive* approaches versus ***'civil'*** prevention.

These gaps have divided practitioners, policymakers and theorists alike. Fijnaut strongly advocates integration of enforcement and civil approaches against organized crime in particular

CCO aspires to serve as a precision tool for:

- Systematic thought in crime prevention policy and practice – for analysis, response, feedback and adjustment and connecting 'know-about' with 'know-what' and 'know-how'.
- Communication and partnership working.
- Supporting detailed to synoptic views, and tactical to strategic action.

More specifically, CCO can supply consistent terminology to describe the content of preventive action, its implementation, and the detailed causal mechanisms by which it works. Specifying such mechanisms of intervention is vital for evaluation and replication (Tilley 1994; Pawson and Tilley 1997). The framework's integrating structure helps to systematically capture descriptive and evaluative information on preventive interventions, support the storage and retrieval of cases, distil generic principles and transfer and apply good practice. This makes it an appropriate platform for a knowledge base (Ekblom and Tilley 1998; Ekblom 2000b, 2002a).

The framework was not designed with organized crime in mind. However, the following version was adapted to accommodate organized crime problems identified during the Falcone-sponsored project. While such evolution will continue, the ultimate proof is the utility of the framework for improving the practice and extending the scope of organized crime prevention – not just by a small margin but in giving practitioners the capacity to gear up to a higher level of performance altogether.

Definitions, Perspectives and Levels

CCO starts by defining crime prevention in an open-ended way that links intervention to *theory* in general, but avoids restriction to specific *theories* in particular. *Crime prevention reduces the risk of occurrence, and the potential seriousness, of crime and disorder events by intervening in their causes.*

There is much scope for preventing organized crime at the level of tackling the many individual criminal events it generates. However, focusing on criminal events exclusively is too tactical and reductionist. The criminal career and planning activity of the individual offender spans multiple events; and the persistence, invasiveness and growth of organizational careers and networks, structure of the market etc, involve

causes operating at higher, emergent levels. Ignoring these higher levels would limit the practical utility of our tools for thought. CCO must therefore evolve to handle them, by starting from the lowest and simplest, namely the molecular approach of criminal events, then rigorously, systematically and parsimoniously building up to higher structures and processes. This chapter aims to begin that development, with special emphasis on knowledge base issues.

The preventive process

This is the central *'*know-how' part of CCO. The competencies and knowledge to convey are less a matter of circumscribed technical skills and universally-applicable 'facts', and more an expert way of viewing the world and applying a problem-identifying and -solving procedure. From the crime event focus the approach adopted is the *preventive process***,** which is closely related to SARA in Problem-Oriented Policing and aspects of NIM:

- Identifying symptoms **–** specific crime problems

- Setting objectives of reducing the frequency or seriousness of the chosen problem.
- Diagnosis **–** interpreting the causes of the problem.

- Specifying the intervention in principle **–** devising preventive action to tackle the most tractable of the identified causes of the problem, using knowledge of cost-effective solutions and sound crime prevention principles, adjusted to local circumstances.

- Implementing the action in practice – through *targeting* of the intervention on the selected causes of the crime problem, *designing a practical intervention method* (the action that actually disrupts the causes), and *insertion* (mobilizing appropriate people or agencies to take responsibility and act).

- Monitoring and fine-tuning implementation.

- Evaluation through
  - assessing *impact* on the target crime problems, and *cost effectiveness*;
  - developing a clear picture of *how it worked* – exactly what changes were needed to trigger the intervention mechanism (Pawson and Tilley 1997) and what aspects of the local context were 'hidden ingredients' necessary to make the intervention work elsewhere.

- Adjustment of the action, abandonment if failing, replication elsewhere if successful

A knowledge base to support replication must capture information on both know-how and know-what.

The Symptoms

In dealing with specific crime problems the first stage identifies crime risks. Figure 1 schematically shows typical results of crime pattern analysis in terms of a 'problem space' covering the nature of the offence, offenders, Modus Operandi and circumstances, for a simple 'non-organized' offence such as domestic burglary or assault. The same set of features can be used to specify operational objectives and targets of crime reduction activity – e.g. 'reduce burglary by young people, by 10 per cent'.

Some criminal events are simple – like spontaneous assaults. Others involve offenders successfully negotiating several *scenes* and employing appropriate *scripts* to attain a sequence of goals (Cornish 1994) – for example:

- Preparation – discover bank's security procedures, steal getaway car, forge

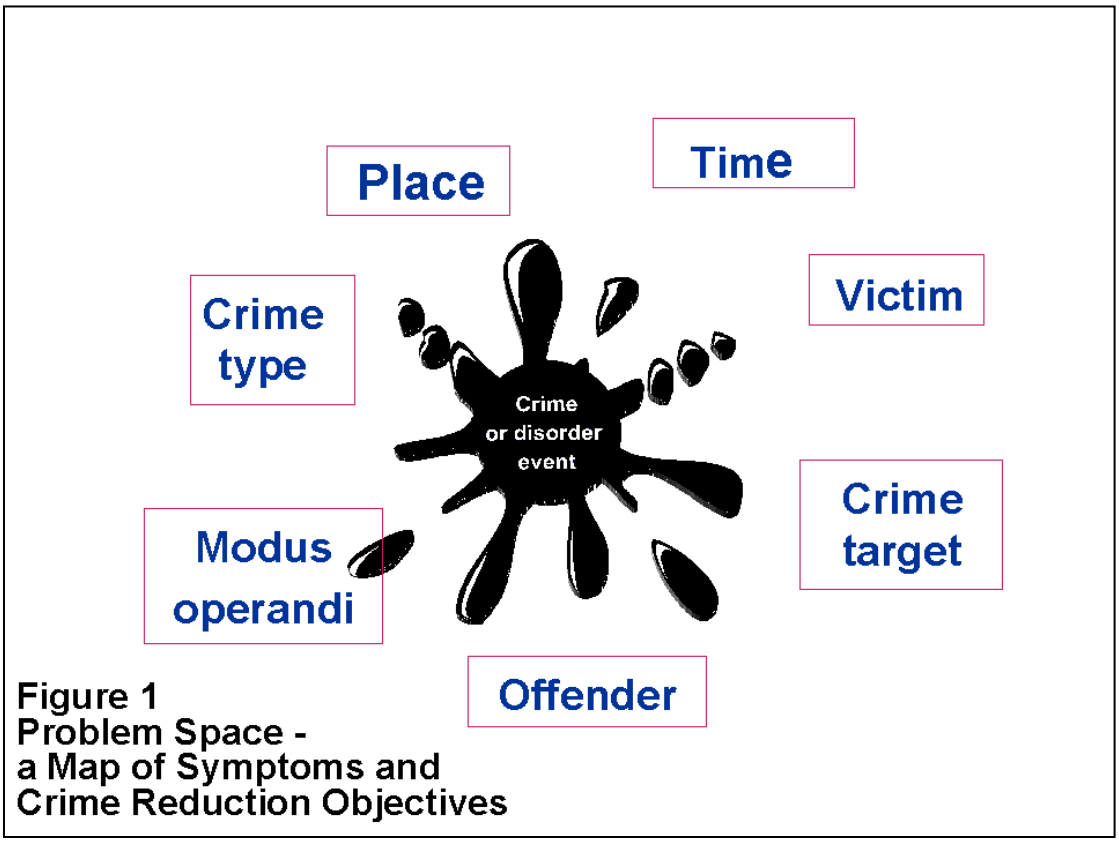


Figure 1
Problem Space -
a Map of Symptoms and
Crime Reduction Objectives

security pass;
- Execution – rob bank;
- Escape – drive off, swap cars;
- Cover tracks – hide weapons, destroy DNA evidence, intimidate witnesses, corrupt officials;

- Consummation – sell stolen goods, enjoy loot, launder money.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis involves identifying the immediate causes that combine to generate the events – the *Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity* itself. This is a 'universal story' of the criminal event, in which a ready, willing and able offender encounters, seeks or engineers a crime situation comprising a vulnerable and attractive target of crime, in a favourable environment and in the absence of alert, motivated and empowered preventers. Remoter causes like the price of car spares, or societal influences on childrearing quality, are diverse and many but all ultimately act through the immediate ones.

The CCO owes much to Cohen and Felson's (1979) Routine Activities Theory, but suitably extended to identify 11 generic kinds of *immediate causal precursor*. On the *offender* side, these comprise:

- Their *criminality* – longer-term, personality-based influences predisposing them to crime – perhaps amplified through recruitment into a criminal career.
- *Lack of skills to avoid crime* – for avoiding conflict, resisting social pressures to offend, or gaining a legitimate living.
- Shorter-term influences on their *readiness to offend* – motives and emotional states (need money, stressed out) as determined by current life circumstances and conflicts, and influence of alcohol and drugs.
- Offenders' *resources for committing crime* – skills, courage, knowledge of targets and M.O.s, tools, weapons and collaborative networks.
- Their perception and anticipation of *risk, effort, reward and attacks of conscience* in the immediate circumstances of the criminal event
- Their *presence* in the crime situation (or telepresence, via electronic means, or through traditional henchmen).

Envisaging *corporate offenders* requires adjusting some precursors (for example, instead of individual criminality the offending organization could have a persistent criminal subculture.) Perhaps the criminal event/transaction could be understood through a *Conjunction of Illegal Business Opportunity*.

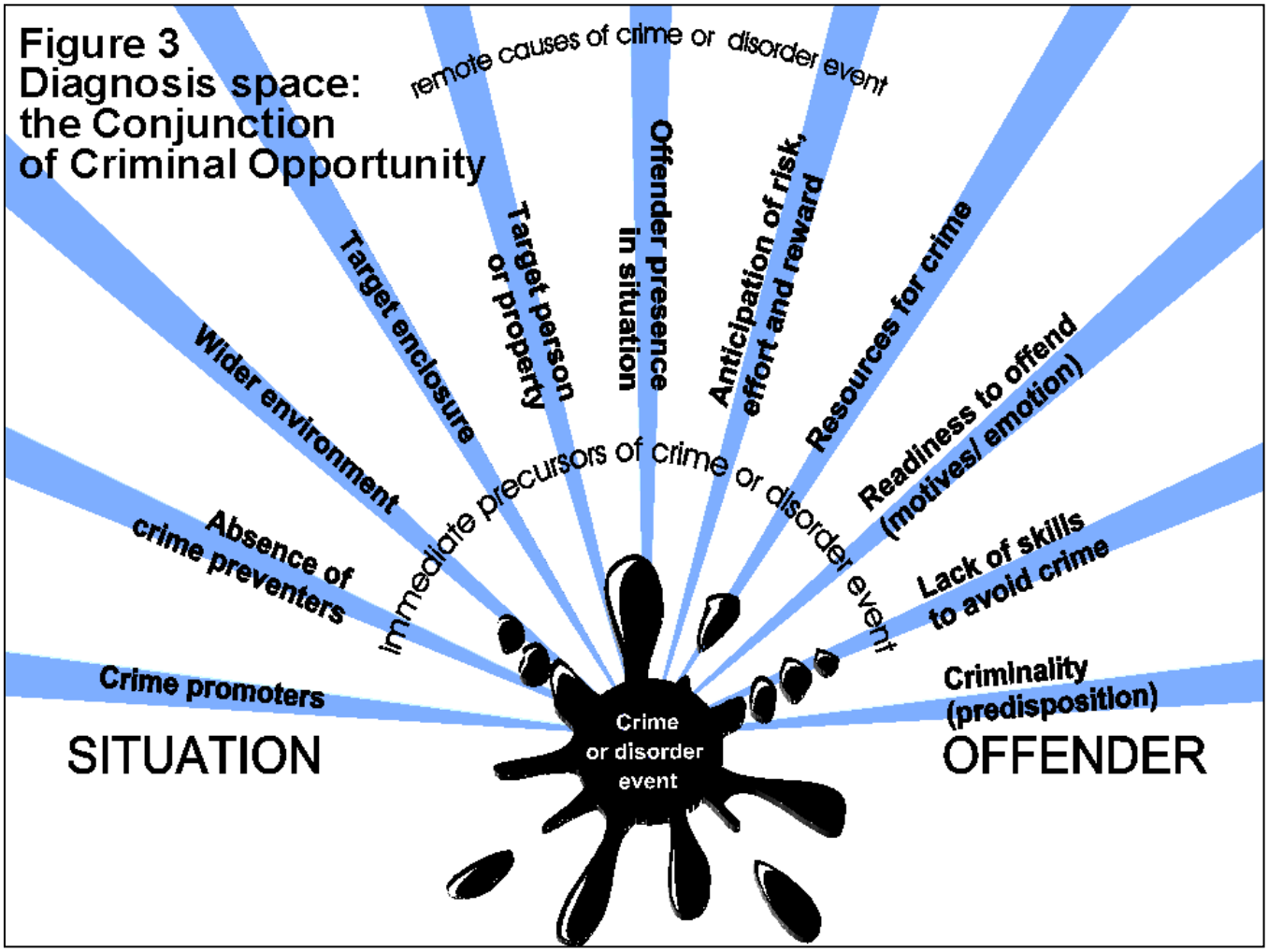
On the *situational* side are:

- The *target* – the central object of the crime (through attack, theft, counterfeiting, illegal transaction, possession or trafficking) – the person, property, service, system or information that is vulnerable, provocative or attractive.
- The *target enclosure* – compound, building or container that is vulnerable to penetration and encloses suitable targets.

- A *wider environment* logistically/ tactically favourable for offenders and unfavourable for preventers, and which may attract or generate the offence eg by containing suitable targets or setting the scene for conflict.
- The absence of *crime preventers* – people or organizations, formal or informal, who make the crime *less* likely by action before it (like locking doors or dissuading youngsters from theft), during it (interdiction or arrest), or after (reporting crime, giving witness statements, remedying revealed vulnerabilities in a financial system).
- The presence of *crime promoters* – who make crime *more* likely, whether unwittingly, carelessly or deliberately – e.g. by supplying tools, information or other criminal services before or after the crime. Promoters may furnish outlets for stolen goods and link up in distinct criminal markets; and supply role models, moral justification for offending, practical help to offenders' families should imprisonment happen, recruitment and training in criminal skills.

Victims feature indirectly because they play remarkably diverse roles: owner of targets of property crime, target of crime against the person, legal complainant, crime preventer and (careless or provocative) crime promoter. Likewise, people acting as *illegal migrants* are promoters – paying to support the crime of trafficking; targets of that crime – the human commodities being illegally transported; and offenders themselves through the crime of illegal entry. The lesson is to unpick the diverse roles people play.

The 11 generic, immediate causes are shown in Figure 2 [note – figures out of sync – this one labelled figure 3, and so on]. (More details are in Ekblom (2000d).) This is a diagnostic map for practitioners deciding how to tackle a particular local crime problem or risk (or alternatively how to conduct a crime impact assessment or crime proofing exercise – Ekblom 2002b).



The causal precursors can be customized for each crime problem addressed (with vehicle crime, for example, cars are the target for the crimes of 'theft of'' or damage, and the target *enclosure* for 'theft from'). Each precursor can be further subdivided to indicate more detailed elements for preventive practitioners to address (for example, in burglary, the home, as target enclosure, can be divided into boundary, entry points and interior). Other aspects of causation particularly connect with organized crime.

Resources for committing crime

'Opportunity' is normally seen as a feature of the environment – something 'out there' to be exploited. In fact, an opportunity is just as much determined by the resources offenders are able to deploy in overcoming resistance and solving various logistical problems in committing the crime (Ekblom and Tilley 2000). An open third-floor window is an opportunity only to someone with courage, agility and a ladder; and a loophole in a financial computer network only to someone knowing the password, the target and how to cover tracks. Through collaboration**,** organized criminals can deploy more, and more diverse, resources; or subcontract, recruit or train specialists.

CCO in cyberspace

The Internet presents a new environment for crime. Cyberspace removes constraints of inertia, time and reproduction of property and information. The CCO can stretch to accommodate this – for example:

- Target – information, pirated electronic commodity, IT system
- Target enclosure – firewall
- Environment – IT/ financial system
- Preventer – intelligent fraud-detecting software
- Promoter – computer virus, intelligent agent
- Offender resources – code-cracking software
- Offender presence – remote hacker

Crime as process

Supplementing the static, *anatomical* picture of causes in Figure 3 is the *physiological* view of crime as a dynamic process:

- Offender, preventer and promoter may *interact* – threat, attack, surrender.
- Each make *decisions* based on their diverse perceptions of risk etc, including what each thinks the others will do.
- They may interact through *move and countermove*. What brings CCO alive is the *Modus Operandi* – the characteristic ways offenders apply their resources in preparing, executing and completing a criminal event to minimize effort and risk and maximize reward. M.O. relates to Cornish's (1994) concept of the *script*.
- Scripts/M.Os may not be linear, but branching and contingent on what offenders encounter during the crime. This ranges from tactical manoeuvring to *displacement* or *strategic adaptation, innovation and crime 'arms races'* between thieves and crime preventers. Organized criminals may be adept at this. They will also be better able to *replace* offenders removed from crime situations through imprisonment, whether new bosses muscling into vacated territories or new recruits replacing arrested 'mules'.
- Many organized crimes involve offenders navigating a series of *scenes* – preparation, execution and consummation.

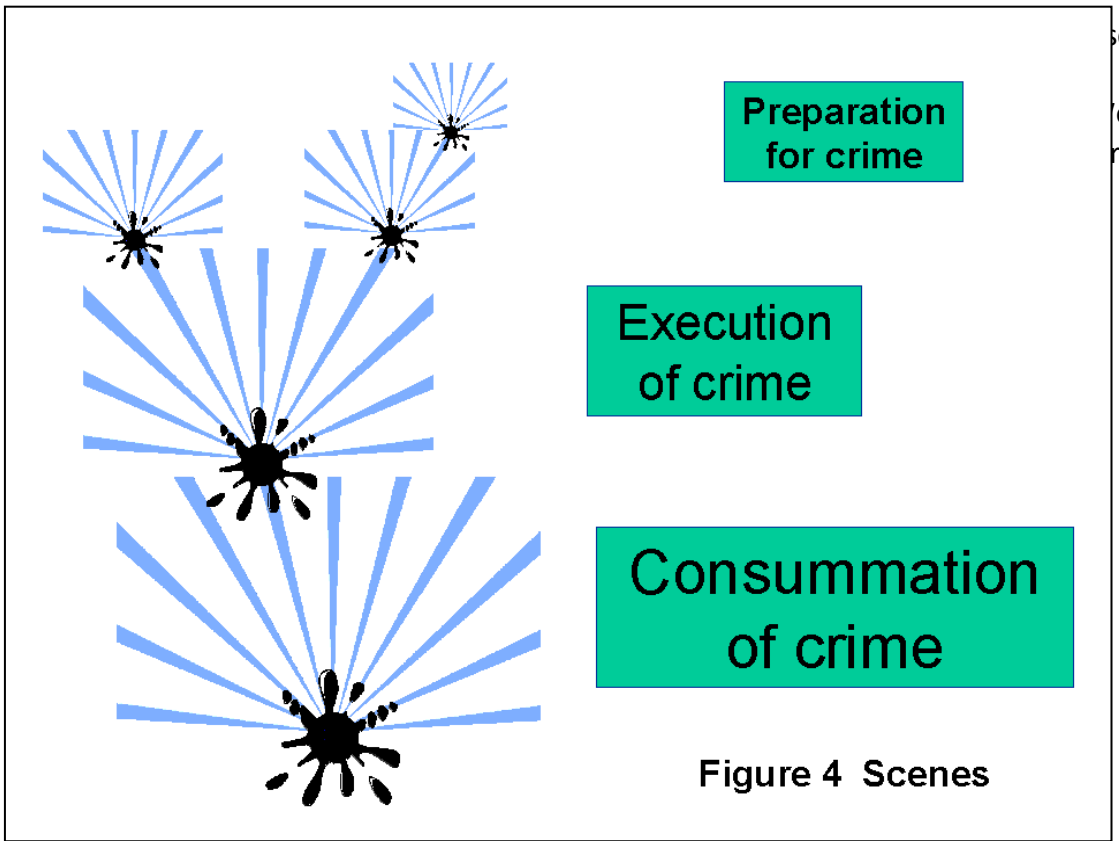


Figure 4 Scenes

Factors bringing the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity together

Remote causes rarely operate through a single, analytic, ray of Figure 3. Nor is the conjunction like tram-lines inevitably converging on the criminal event. The causal prerequisites of the event are brought together through social, economic and psychological processes described by many a criminological theory. These processes involve macroeconomic influences, subcultural factors, and the market demand for goods or illegal services; channelling by the built environment and transport; victims' and offenders' current life circumstances, routine activities and lifestyle which cause them to encounter each another regularly in time and space; and long- or short-term conflicts such as between gangs, or ethnic groups. Of course, active offenders, especially if organized, will be planning and preparing – seeking opportunities and creating them by bringing the causal preconditions of crime together. At one end of the scale they will be setting up a sequence of scenes for specific criminal enterprises; at the other, invasively establishing a supportive environment for crime through building contacts, developing trust and corrupting officials.

A key strategic concept is the *niche* for offending (or for promoting crime, eg via money laundering services). Borrowed from ecology, it is an identifiable concentration or flow of wealth from which offenders can make a living , using the resources at their disposal to exploit it whilst maintaining acceptable levels of effort and risk. The idea of controlling offending by controlling the niche is advanced by Paul and Jeff Brantingham (1991); Cohen et al. (1995) suggest related ideas. The significance of the niche connects with offender replacement – arrest 'Mr Big' the drug dealer, and 'Mr Notsobig' swiftly fills his place, because that place is available for anyone with the resources to exploit it. The Brantinghams argue that cuts in crime that outlast offender replacement require reducing the available niches. Albanese (2000) poses the closely related question: 'do criminals organize around opportunities for crime or do criminal opportunities create offenders?' Answering this question requires considering the causes of organized crime at different levels:

Level 1 – the *components* of the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity or subsidiary scenes (offender, preventer etc).

Level 2 – the *individual scene* and the causes that combine to make it happen.

Level 3 – the ***logistical structure of scenes*** - the flow chart of M.O. and scripts, in which the criminal events are embedded.

Level 4 – the *day-to-day operation of a criminal enterprise* in generating the flow of profitable events/ transactions and associated scenes.

Level 5 – wider structures:

- The *career of the criminal enterprise* – initiation, growth, decline, splitting, merger, adaptation to new threats and criminal/legitimate business opportunities.
- The *niche*.
- *Criminal networks* for transaction, collaboration, and service provision.
- Specific *markets for stolen or illegal goods*.

Level 6 – the *whole ecosystem* of organizational/individual careers in the context of networks, markets and niches.

Specifying Interventions in Principle

Having diagnosed the causes and processes of the crime problem, practitioners must choose how and where to intervene. Figure 4 shows a 'universal story of a preventive scheme' in which an intervention, at some point upstream of the criminal event, disrupts the CCO, reduces the risk of criminal events and if successful, ultimately reduces their actual frequency. Benefits for community safety and economic well-being (such as regeneration or higher tax yield) may follow. From an organized crime perspective multiple interventions in multiple scenes may be desirable, but the same basic descriptive sequence can be used repeatedly and linked together in a structured description.

Again 11 generic kinds of 'molecular' intervention can be mapped onto the causes they are ultimately intended to block, weaken or divert – even if, as with early childhood schemes, the intervention is way upstream of the criminal events to be prevented. On the *situational* side, are:

- *Target hardening, target removal, value reduction* etc.
- *Perimeter access and security*.
- *Environmental design, planning and management* including aiding surveillance, resolving conflicts and setting rules.
- *Boosting preventers* – their presence, alertness, competence, motivation and responsibility whether through formal control (like patrolling), informal social control, self-protection and avoidance. Stopping preventers becoming promoters is important. With organized crime, this may involve preventing corruption and protecting and cultivating witnesses and informants.
- *Discouraging and deterring crime promoters* and awakening their *conscience* – through naming and shaming, civil liability, prohibiting rechipping of stolen mobile phones, tackling criminal subcultures, procedural controls or market reduction; reduction of existing corruption.

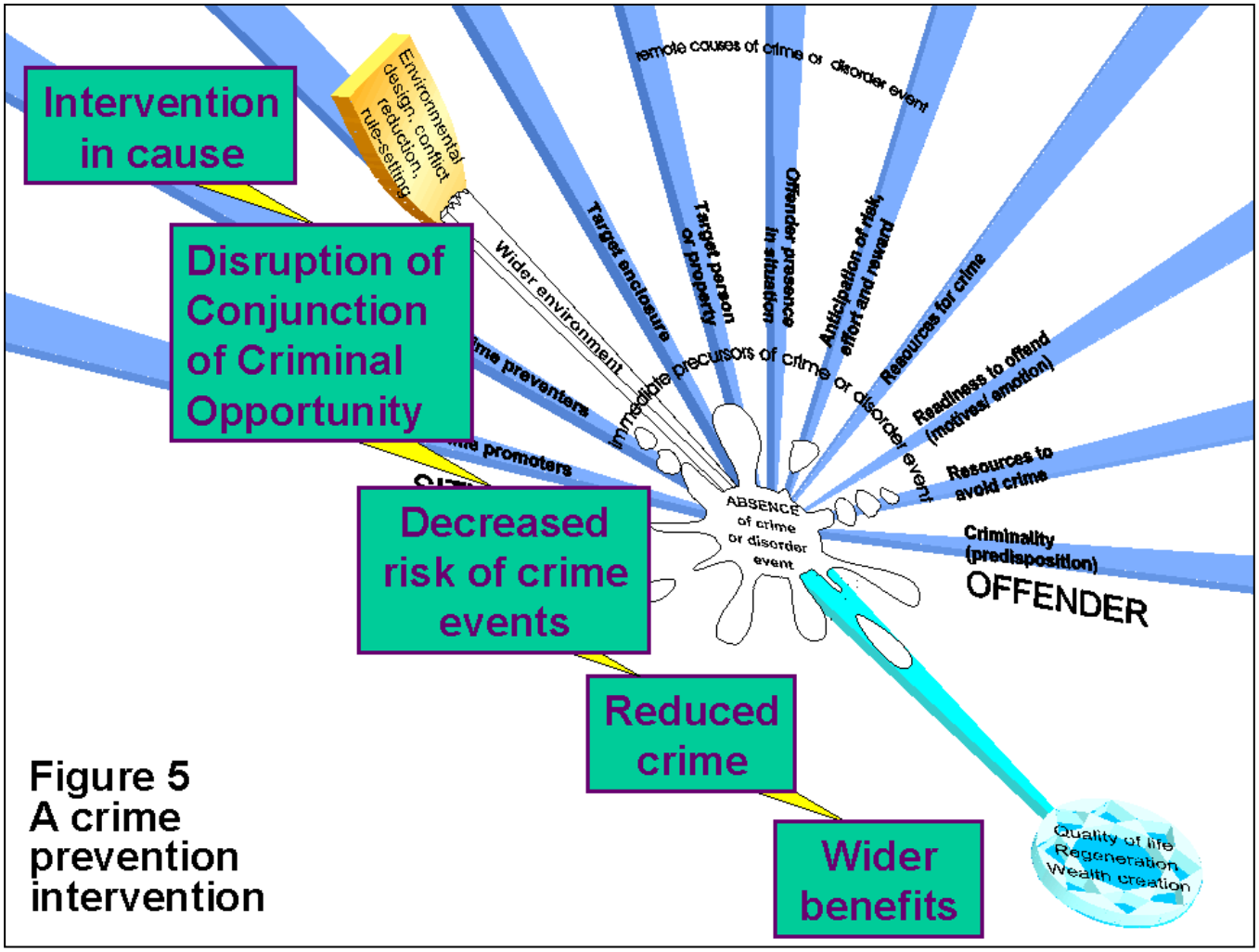


Figure 5
A crime prevention intervention

On the *offender* side are:

- *Excluding offenders* from crime situations – eg keeping young offenders under curfew or incarcerated, stopping corrupt company directors from running businesses, excluding shady companies from winning public contracts or restricting licences to operate printing presses or bureaux de change.
- *Deterrence* – raising perceived risks and costs of detection; *discouragement* – making the effort to offend seem too great and the reward too small; *awakening conscience*.
- *Restricting resources for offending* – control of weapons, tools and information on targets, and transfer of criminal know-how. Control of criminal organizations' recruitment, growth and efficiency by disruption of trust and logistics.
- *Reducing readiness to offend* – changing offenders' current life circumstances – alleviating drug problems, stressors like poor housing, and conflicts; limiting organizational pressures on individual members.
- *Supplying resources to avoid crime* – training offenders in social and work skills. At the corporate level, helping companies verging on illegal behaviour towards legitimate profit (Pettersson and Lundgren 2002).
- *Reducing criminality* – intervening in early lives to reduce known risk factors, enhancing known protective factors through family, school and peer groups; and supplying remedial treatment for those already convicted. These all limit the scope for recruitment to criminal networks and organizations.

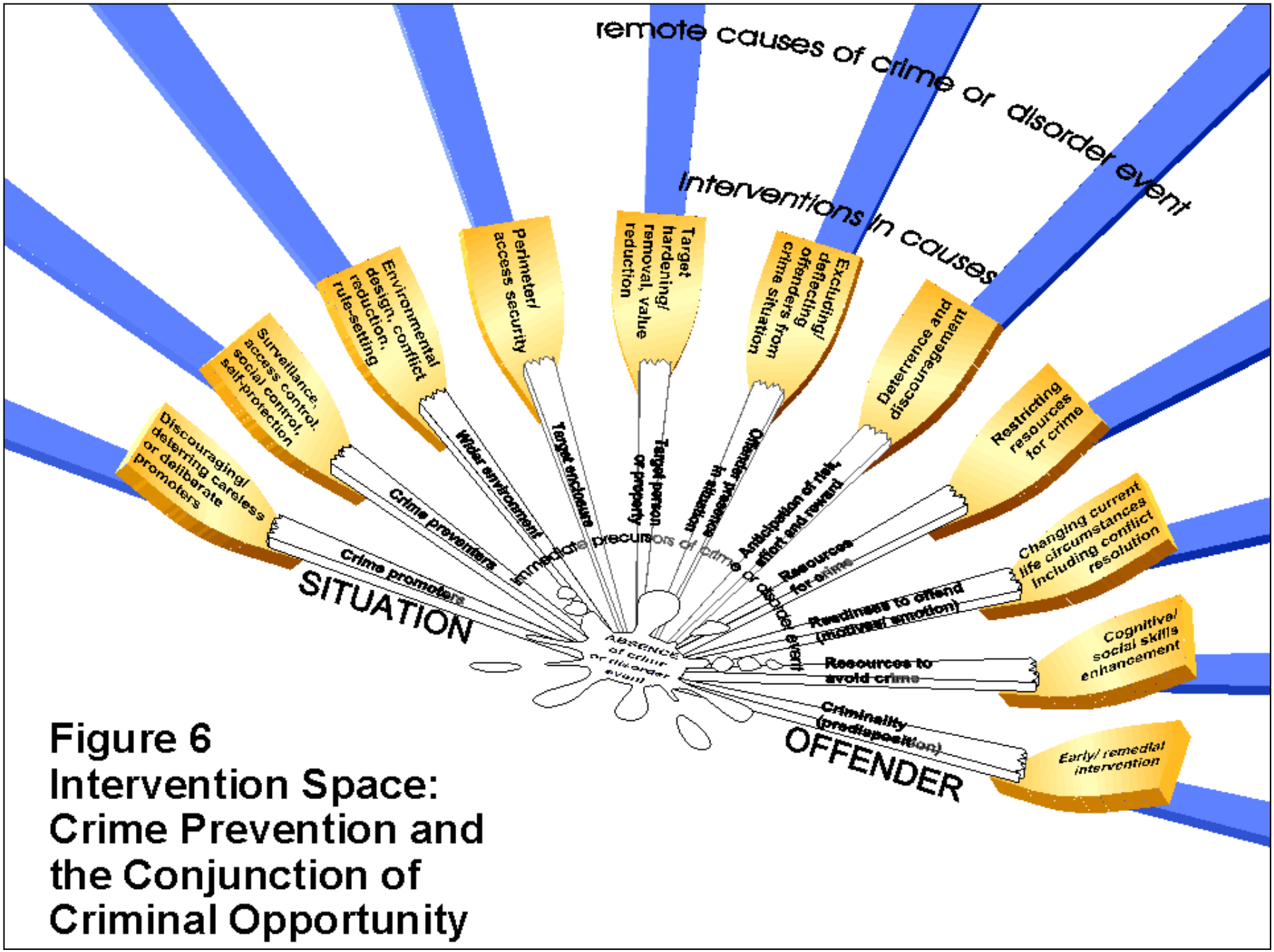


Figure 6
Intervention Space: Crime Prevention and the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity

With the map of interventions in Figure 5, practitioners have the main options laid out, and can then delve into further detail to match interventions to crime problems (and specific scenes), their causes and context. Again, interventions targeted on individual offenders or co-offenders could be complemented by interventions on corporate offenders.

These are highly-specific 'molecular' interventions against specific crime problems. The interventions make specific crime opportunities more risky, more effort and less rewarding, or focus on disrupting, inhibiting, removing or reforming specific offenders. Even repeated, temporary disruption of offending reduces the average yield to criminals and limits the rate of growth of their activities. However, as previously stated, preventing organized crime must extend to higher strategic levels to incapacitate and permanently reduce the activity of illegal enterprise. Without this, we may win the battles but still lose the war. Something more than just single blockages and disruptions is needed because illegal enterprises can circumvent individual barriers, and new organizations will replace those closed down if the niches are still available and the markets persist. Strategic interventions tackling the higher levels of causation include:

- Targeting 'lynchpins' in an offender network.
- Tackling those crimes (eg vehicle crime) that lead to individual criminal careers, aid recruitment to organized crime, or financially nourish more serious and organized crimes like terrorism.
- Considering wider patterns of displacement and offender replacement which may limit the sustainability of specific interventions.
- Tackling multiple scenes in a complex organized crime.
- Simultaneously disrupting several aspects of a market for contraband, stolen or illegal goods.
- Establishing a linked system of barriers collectively hard to bypass. (Damming a stream eventually requires blocking off the whole valley. But studies of displacement of crime (Hesseling 1994; Barr and Pease 1990) suggest that offending does not overflow forever – eventually the effort to maintain the rewards of crime relative to the risk increases so much that offenders choose to channel their activities legitimately.)
- Designing out *niches* for offending – concentrations or flows of wealth which inevitably draw offenders to exploit (eg warehouses full of expensive computer chips, funds flowing routinely through particular channels) – eg by dispersing targets and making the average level of risk and effort unacceptable with the resources available to the offenders.
- Generally tackling crime as a business enterprise (but for limitations see Levi and Taylor 2000) and reversing all central/ local government's knowledge about supporting enterprise *without* harming legitimate companies. Here, the planning and development/construction control systems are strategically important.

- The Market Reduction approach – disrupting specific markets for stolen goods (Sutton 1998).
- Preventing/ resolving sustained *conflicts* between gangs, ethnic groups etc, which generate persistent crime problems.

Despite the importance of these high-level interventions, the last word is that they usuallly work through a structured set of activities at the lower, molecular levels – right down to erecting barriers to individual crime scenes.

Implementing Prevention in Practice

Much that practitioners should know about implementation is prosaic (project management, media handling etc). But know-how and know-what information specific to crime prevention must also be captured. Space prevents covering aspects of implementation such as targeting causes, designing methods and delivering the right interventions to the right causes of crime efficiently, effectively, sustainably and acceptably (see Ekblom 2001, 2002a). However, we must clarify the relationship between interventions in principle and methods in practice.

From interventions in principle to real-world methods
Whether interventions are implemented in a strategic or tactical context, the immediate *principles* or *mechanisms* by which they are intended to work can be described using the 11 generic categories listed above, linked and extended to cover higher-level causes. But real-world *methods* of intervention are more complex. Remote methods may work through long causal chains before influencing the immediate precursors. A single method (like putting fences round a factory) can work through many mechanisms (physically blocking access, discouraging offenders, helping preventers – site guards) – see Figure 6, illustrating this 'solution space'.

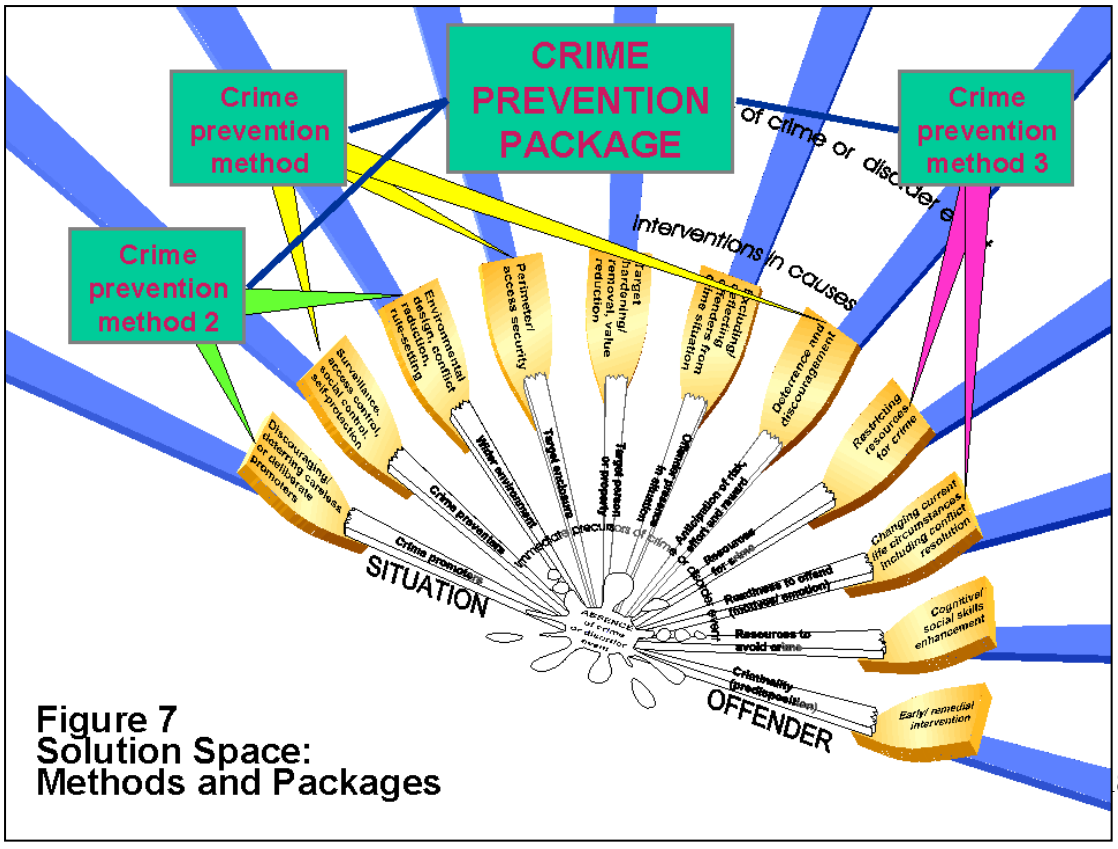


Figure 7
Solution Space:
Methods and Packages

Individual intervention methods may be combined in a package (also in Figure 6) that may combine interventions, sometimes at different levels, which address multiple causes of a particular crime problem; or tackle causes common to diverse crime problems involving use of a common resource such as forged passports, or a criminal network. Holistic approaches can confer synergy and efficiency. But the more holistic a package, the greater care practitioners should take to focus on specific arrays of intervention mechanisms. To avoid are all-inclusive initiatives with unclear and drifting means and ends.

Holistic approaches can confer synergy and efficiency. But the more holistic a package, the more practitioners should focus on specific problems, their causes and interactions. To avoid are all-inclusive initiatives with unclear and drifting objectives.

Insertion of prevention in the community

Formal crime preventers like government agencies and local partnerships, cannot operate alone but must *act at a distance* – mobilizing other public and private institutions and ordinary citizens better-placed to perform particular roles and tasks in prevention. The tasks may involve directly intervening in the causes of crime, or facilitating interventions of others by motivating and enabling them or alleviating constraints. Beside boosting these preventive roles, we must influence those who accidentally or recklessly promote crime by their everyday private, public or commercial activities. We especially need to protect those in positions of formal responsibility for prevention, at risk of corruption into crime promoters.

Acting at a distance involves a sequence of steps to *insert* the crime prevention tasks in the community. These can be systematically planned under the acronym *CLAMED* [1](see Ekblom 2001):

- *Clarify the crime reduction roles and tasks* requiring external agents rather than in-house delivery.
- *Locate the preventive agents* – identify institutions and individuals with the potential to carry out the tasks effectively and acceptably
- Once located, secure their co-operation and enhance their performance by:

[1] Now CLAIMED (I for Informed) – see www.designagainstcrime.com/files/crimeframeworks/05_claimed.pdf and http://5isframework.wordpress.com.

- *Alerting* them to the crime problem;
- *Motivating* them to accept the Crime Reduction task;
- *Empowering* them – building capacity through competence (know-what, know-how and technical aids), operational resources like funds, staff, information and legal powers; alleviating constraints, but establishing checks and balances against excess;
- *Directing* them (if appropriate) to follow particular guidelines, select particular targets or implement particular activities.

Given the many interdependencies within society, and the need to establish multiple barriers, applying CLAMED must go beyond isolated individuals or institutions – engendering an integrated set of actions to co-ordinate a range of agents and establish a climate of collaboration.

THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE BASES

Knowledge bases to support organized crime prevention must switch between the analytic mechanism perspective, and the practical method or package perspectives (Ekblom and Tilley 1998; Ekblom 2002a). They must reflect the five kinds of knowledge identified at the start of this chapter, and particularly cover both know-what and know-how. They should also capture information on the levels at which the interventions act. The 'ordinary' version of CCO confines itself to distinguishing 'social levels' of action. That concept characterizes the methods employed in inserting, implementing and intervening in the causes of criminal events, as acting on or through a diverse set of 'entities' in the wider world. These entities range from the individual offender or target of crime, to family, community, or institutions such as companies and schools, and (already) markets (Ekblom 2001). This structure can be built upon to capture the entities and processes relevant to organized crime prevention.

CONCLUSION

The CCO framework is not based on simple 'aide-memoire'-type slogans and diagrams like the 'Problem Analysis Triangle' (Hough and Tilley 1998). No other profession (public health or architecture, say) would send its practitioners into the field and expect them to deliver with such limited conceptual resources! The CCO philosophy is that high investment in practitioner familiarization and training, produces high yield in geared up performance against organized crime. Once trained, practitioners acquire the general schema, the transfer of individual items of knowledge about particular preventive methods is far more efficient and less of a mental burden than when a whole new way of thinking must be grasped at the point of consulting a knowledge base. Products like the UK's National Intelligence Model indicate that the police are not afraid of complexity where it is judged necessary to help them tackle crime. But the competition between simple and sophisticated frameworks is ultimately a question to be resolved by practical development and evaluation.

The CCO framework can potentially support a 'what works' knowledge base for preventing organized crime in several ways. It can aid the maintenance and replication of good practice, innovation and anticipation by facilitating entry, storage, retrieval and synthesis of knowledge on:

- Crime problems, scene by scene;
- Operational objectives of schemes and programmes;
- The causes of crime (potentially at a range of levels);
- Interventions;
- Practical methods and strategies of prevention, and their implementation and insertion in the community;
- Evaluation of process and impact.

The CCO can also facilitate pooling of knowledge between those who prevent organized and 'ordinary' crime. But the knowledge base can be much more than a dry repository of individual case studies. It can be a dynamic, organized body of evidence-based expertise distilling generic principles that empower professional practitioners to tackle diverse crime problems in diverse contexts. The very structure of the knowledge base can convey the necessary ways of thinking to users. We will need this knowledge and these ways of thinking to keep up with sophisticated, organized criminals.

What are the next steps? The Falcone-funded study (Browne et al., 2001) considered the utility of CCO in structuring a knowledge base on what works in organised crime prevention. CCO appeared to work rather well in handling and capturing the complexity of organised crime in the example of a multi-scene scam involving a range of different actors with diverse resources in the export of stolen Mercedes cars to Africa. However, the Falcone research principally revealed great difficulty in obtaining more than a handful of detailed good practice examples to study. On the one hand, this means CCO has yet to be tested extensively as a knowledge-base framework, promising though it seems. On the other, it suggests further opportunities to try CCO out because behind the lack of good practice examples appeared to be the absence of the kind of routine and systematic approach to reducing organised crimes that CCO can support. For this, CCO would have to be tested and refined at an operational level, and developed into a user-friendly toolkit, for example as an 'intelligence product' within the terms of the UK National Intelligence Model.

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