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DAVIES, CROALL & TYRER'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

DAVIES, CROALL AND TYRER'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE

between personality traits such as extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism with crime (**Eysenck 1977**), while others have looked at the possible relationship between criminality and mental illness. While these factors are related to some individual offences, mental illness, for example, is found only in a minority of offenders and, in addition, the majority of people considered to be suffering from mental illness do not commit crime.

Individuals are also affected by their immediate environment, particularly the family, and much research has explored the relationship between offending and family background. Parental discipline has been seen as important, with inconsistent and erratic discipline in the home having been found to be more likely to be associated with crime than lax or strict discipline (**West and Farrington 1973, 1977**). Much attention has been paid to the quality of parental supervision, and one Home Office study found that supervision was strongly related to offending, with higher numbers of those who were not closely supervised admitting offending. Around one-third of boys who were closely supervised had offended compared with over half of those who were not closely supervised (**Graham and Bowling 1995**). The structure of families may also be important – some studies have found that fewer offenders come from families living with two natural parents, but there is no evidence to suggest that divorce, separation or single parenthood are criminogenic factors as these are widespread throughout society and not always related to crime (**Utting *et al.* 1993**; **Graham and Bowling 1995**).

The quality of relationships within the family is particularly important (**Graham and Bowling 1995**) and the conflict surrounding separation or divorce may be more significant than family breakdown (**Rutter 1985**); a single-parent home may provide the child with a more caring and affectionate environment than one in which two parents are constantly in dispute and have little time to pay attention to their children (**Utting *et al.* 1993**).

Sociologists have focused on the relationship between crime and the wider social structure and on the adverse effects of social and economic change. To Emile Durkheim, for example, writing at the end of the nineteenth century amidst rapid social change, social and economic changes following the Industrial Revolution had led to the decline of communities and religion which provided people with guidance about morality and standards of behaviour. This could lead, he argued, to the development of anomie, or normlessness, in which individuals lacked such guidance. In addition, the growth of materialism led to people developing what he called 'boundless aspirations' which often could not be met (**Durkheim 1970**). These ideas were taken up by the American sociologist Robert Merton. In American society, he argued, goals of material success predominated, and socially approved norms provided guidelines to achieve these goals by legitimate means such as hard work and educational achievement, but not all who work hard would achieve the goals. This strain could produce anomie, in which the norms of hard work are no longer relevant, especially to those at the bottom of the ladder (**Merton 1938**). Many theories developed out of this anomie paradigm, and while its original formulation had many limitations, the view that crime can be interpreted as a 'solution' to the problems of blocked aspirations has continued to influence sociological approaches.

Anomie points to the significance of a culture which values and promotes the pursuit of success and achievement, and sociologists have long pointed to the role

of subcultures in society in which achievement and status may be gained from illegitimate pursuits, among for example groups of young people, drug takers or **joyriders**. These might emerge, for example, out of the strain faced by young people confronted with the difficulties of achieving culturally approved goals such as employment, material success or consumption. Participation in crime may be a 'deviant solution', particularly in the presence of what has been described as the structure of illegitimate opportunities of a particular neighbourhood (**Cloward and Ohlin 1960**), where youth can learn how to engage in activities such as burglary or theft and where there is a pre-existing criminal economy.

Contemporary culture continues to place a high value on young people's consumption of, for example, 'must haves' such as designer goods and clothes, the latest technology and expensive leisure activities, along with values such as speed, risk and thrills (**Hayward and Young 2007**). The urban rioting which dominated the headlines in August 2011 was blamed on precisely this set of circumstances having come to a head: a generation influenced by the glamorisation of criminal culture, without fear of detection, charged with material and consumer desires they were unable to satisfy through legitimate means (**Hall 2012**). Crime itself, argue some, has become a saleable commodity with many products such as books, TV, newspapers and computer games being dominated by crime and violence. These attractions of crime, many argue, must be recognised as they may limit the success of policies which seek to reduce crime – indeed overcoming technological barriers and being given ASBOs may in themselves become part of the risk taking and status associated with illegitimate activities. These cultures have often been associated with economic deprivation, social exclusion and, as **Lea and Young (1992)** argued, with relative deprivation. If people expect and feel entitled to achieve a certain standard of living, they will feel more frustrated if they are denied the opportunity, particularly if they can see others succeeding. This may be exacerbated by the impact of the major social changes of the twentieth century which have led to the decline of traditional industries and, for many, of permanent employment. In communities affected by these changes young people can no longer expect stable full-time employment, which affects their ability to undertake financial and other commitments, such as buying a house or getting married. Many of the most affected communities are also geographically isolated, some in peripheral estates outside towns and cities. This has led to what some see as a situation in which groups and whole communities are effectively excluded from participation in society. This exclusion is not, however, total, and those from excluded areas pass through areas of affluence in which their relative deprivation is made starkly clear (**Young 2005**).

These theories suggested many avenues for reducing crime, and, as will be seen in later chapters, for a large part of the twentieth century the belief that individual offenders could be rehabilitated or 'cured' was a crucial part of criminal justice policy. This criminological 'project', however, came to be questioned as it was found that many rehabilitative programmes had less effect than was assumed and that, as some research suggested, 'nothing works'. Sociological approaches were also questioned by the continuing rise in crime rates despite the development of the welfare state and rising affluence – all of which should theoretically have reduced crime. New approaches were sought which moved away from looking at how offenders might be 'predisposed' to crime and focused on trying to stop

crime before it happened – on prevention rather than cure. Attention was thus directed at the third factor identified above: the situations or circumstances in which crime occurred.

This involved a different approach to offenders' motivation and it was argued that individuals make rational choices whether or not to commit an offence. They may weigh up, for example, the gain they might derive from the crime against their chances of being caught and punished. Thus, crime depends on this evaluation of risk and the opportunities provided by the situation (see, for example, **Clarke 1980**). Faced with an open till in an empty shop, a potential thief is more likely to steal than if the shop is crowded and has publicised video surveillance. Much crime, it was argued, is therefore opportunistic, rather than being related to individual pathologies or sub cultural motivation.

This led to more attention being paid to the relationship between crime and what Felson has described as 'routine activities' (**Felson 2002**). Simply put, this involves looking at crime as involving a triangular relationship between an offender, a victim and a location; change one and the crime will not take place. As Pease explains:

> In a pub (location), someone (offender) assaults someone else (victim) in an argument about whose turn it was to be served. The offender could be banned, the victim may choose to drink in another pub, or the licensee may be encouraged to change bar arrangements or train staff so as to make such disputes less likely. Each option could resolve the problem.
>
> (Pease 2002: 950)

Crime prevention was also related to the work of **Oscar Newman (1972)** who argued that the physical design of estates and public buildings can hamper the community's surveillance of social space and thus reduce its ability to control crime. High-rise buildings and estates that are built so that windows do not overlook public spaces, and buildings with many corridors and exits, help to create conditions conducive to crime because they do not provide the opportunity to be able to see or respond to anti-social behaviour. Thus redesigning housing schemes may produce more 'defensible space' – space which people occupy and feel responsibility for. This prevents crime as it means that strangers can be more readily observed and, therefore, deterred. In any situation in which a crime may occur, levels of surveillance are crucial. Surveillance can be increased informally by altering the design of buildings to ensure greater surveillance by employees or residents, or formally by employing security guards or installing video cameras.

5.3 The growth of crime prevention

Objective 3
Describe the growth of crime prevention

While people have always taken steps to prevent victimisation, institutional responsibility for crime prevention was, until the mid-twentieth century, largely restricted to police crime prevention units; and the police have always had crime prevention as

part of their role, albeit a small and often unrewarded one. Crime Prevention Panels were set up in 1966, although it was not until the 1980s that crime prevention 'took off' (**Tilley 2002**) as a major part of governmental policy. Since then, there has been a large volume of research and different policy initiatives, CCTV has become widespread and partnership arrangements between criminal justice agencies and local authorities have been institutionalised. There were many reasons for this rapid growth, some of which have already been outlined (**Hughes 2002**; **Crawford 1998 and 2007**; **Tilley 2002**; **Newburn 2003**). Rising crime rates created an 'overload' for the criminal justice system, and increased its costs. There was also a rising political and public concern about crime, to which governments wished to respond. In the face of the growing recognition of the limits of the criminal justice system to reduce crime, crime prevention offered an attractive, and relatively inexpensive, means of reducing crime. As Tilley comments:

> 'where cure appears unavailable, and containment is very expensive, prevention looked extremely attractive in the face of a high-profile problem like crime.'
>
> (Tilley 2002: 16)

A major role in the rising focus on crime prevention was played by the development of the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, under Ron Clarke. In an influential publication it detailed the potential of a variety of measures (**Mayhew *et al.* 1976**) which had had some success, and in 1983 the Crime Prevention Unit was set up. Many different research projects, focusing largely on situational crime prevention, were undertaken to establish which strategies affected which crimes in specific circumstances. It was also recognised that crime prevention necessarily involved a range of agencies other than the police, and was best achieved through 'multi agency' working and collaborative partnerships. At governmental level, crime prevention was also encouraged. In 1983, the Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention was strengthened by having a Home Office Minister in the Chair, and a circular in 1984 stated clearly that:

> The primary objective of the police has always been the prevention of crime. However, since some of the factors affecting crime lie outside the control or direct influence of the Police, crime prevention can not be left to them alone. Every individual citizen and all those agencies whose policies and practices can influence the extent of crime should make their contribution. Preventing crime is a task for the whole community.

This, argues **Crawford (1998: 36)**, was a crucial symbolic milestone and following this, central government policy became clearly fixed around the partnership approach.

By the late 1980s many new initiatives had been launched. In 1988, Crime Concern, a charity funded partly by the Home Office and partly by private enterprise, was launched. This organisation has been responsible for a large number of crime prevention projects in conjunction with both commercial and public organisations. The Crack Crime campaign was also launched in 1988. In 1993, a National Board for Crime Prevention was established to bring together representatives of central and local government, business, voluntary agencies, the media, the police and the Probation Service.

A major development was the Safer Cities programme, launched in 1988 with the aim of reducing crime, lessening the fear of crime and creating safer cities where 'economic enterprise and community life can flourish' (**Tilley 1993**). It incorporated not only crime prevention but a concern with other related aspects of community safety. It included the growing concern for crime victims and recognised that crime was related to economic enterprise and community life. If crime rates are high in a particular area and the population has a high fear of crime, people will avoid public places, local shops and community activities. The *Annual Safer Cities Progress Report of 1992/3* stated that, up to 1993, more than 3,300 crime prevention and community safety measures had been initiated involving £20.4 million in Home Office funding. The wide variety of activities included (**Home Office 1993: 7**):

- projects to improve security in homes, businesses and public facilities;
- helping young people as potential offenders, offenders and victims of crime;
- schemes to tackle domestic violence and other women's safety issues;
- action on car crime and racial harassment.

While representing a major development in crime prevention and incorporating many multi-agency groups, the Safer Cities initiative had limitations; it was somewhat ad hoc and was implemented only in selected areas (**Newburn 2003**) and projects often lacked resources. Taken together with other developments of the 1980s, it did not represent a national strategy for crime prevention and, while partnership working was encouraged, there was no clear idea of which agency should take the lead in developing local community safety strategies.

Another major development was **Neighbourhood Watch**, which emerged in the early 1980s, based on the principle that the police and the community can work together to prevent crime. Located in local areas, schemes involve the public looking out for and reporting anything suspicious – being the 'eyes and ears' of the police. By 1988, as many as 14 per cent of households were members (**Mayhew *et al.* 1989**) and by 1996 there were 150,000 Neighbourhood Watch schemes with five million members.

The organisation of individual schemes has varied enormously; however, they normally involve groups of residents with a local coordinator. Members produce and distribute newsletters and leaflets giving general crime prevention advice, often supported by local businesses. Some schemes encourage property marking and security surveys, and members are asked to display their membership by stickers on doors.

Despite its popularity the success of Neighbourhood Watch has been limited. One problem is that schemes are easier to set up and operate more effectively in

areas in which they are least needed. Thus the British Crime Survey found that schemes were most common in affluent suburban areas, with members being drawn from high status and higher income groups (ibid.). The population in multi-racial areas and the poorest council estates, on the other hand, were least likely to join. This survey also found that areas where membership was lower also tended to be those where burglary risks were higher. This may have the effect that schemes divert police resources from high-crime to low-crime areas (**Heal and Laycock 1986**).

In addition, membership of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme may in reality mean very little and involvement often falls off after initial launch meetings (**Bennett 1990**). Three-quarters of members interviewed by the British Crime Survey had put stickers or posters in their windows but 21 per cent had neither attended progress meetings nor knew the name of their coordinator. Many members found it difficult to pinpoint any specific benefits of schemes although there are some indications that burglary risks were lower after joining Neighbourhood Watch. Displacement, discussed above, is also a problem as a successful scheme might prevent crime in one group of streets, but crime may rise in an adjoining area without a scheme. It might well be that the benefit of schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch is to reassure the community that someone is trying to do something about crime.

In 1991, the report of a review carried out by the Standing Conference on Crime Prevention (the Morgan Report) made several recommendations. Local authorities, it was argued, should be given statutory responsibility, working with the police, for the development of community safety and crime prevention. Voluntary groups and businesses should also be involved. New legislation should be monitored by a national body and a community safety strategy group should be set up at the highest tier of local government. There should be a local action group to formulate objectives and a strategic plan, consulting many local and neighbourhood-based groups. This would have provided a coherent structure (**Crawford 1998**), although it was never fully implemented, partly due to the then Conservative Government's reluctance to enhance the role of local authorities. It did, however, highlight the importance of partnership-working and underline the role which local authorities and local agencies could play (**Tilley 2002**). In the event many local community safety partnerships were formed.

Government strategy in the early to mid-1990s was largely dominated by a concern with tough penal strategies, although it continued to advocate the partnership approach and encouraged people to be 'active citizens' by becoming involved in Neighbourhood Watch schemes; and there were plans to increase the use of voluntary special constables (**Newburn 2003**). There was also encouragement for the use of CCTV, and, in 1995, the National Board for Crime Prevention became the National Crime Prevention Agency, whose task was to focus on and coordinate the national agenda, to disseminate good practice and to develop strategies for preventing and reducing crime. It had representation from the Home Office, the Police, Crime Concern and other individuals but no representatives from local government. It was not an independent body, as envisaged by the Morgan Report, nor did it have any agenda-setting powers compared to other National Crime organisations such as those in Sweden, France or the Netherlands (**Crawford 1998**).