

CURBING CRIME

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A colloquium sponsored by the
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INTRODUCTION

A colloquium on crime prevention has to deal with the facts of crime, insofar as they are known. It is helpful to have access to information concerning the circumstances and the personnel involved in it, be they perpetrators, victims, or the members of enforcement agencies.

Several key points emerge in this Adam Smith Institute colloquium on curbing crime. One contributor from the United States remarked on the absence of discussion of the death penalty, pointing out that a similar discussion in the USA would have centred on the twin issues of gun control and capital punishment. The absence of this focus in UK discussion could be taken to indicate that although these might be important issues, their contribution to the prevention of crime was not regarded as a major one. The huge differences in attitudes to firearms between Britain and the US were singled out as a significant cultural divergence.

Much concern was shown with the role played by repeat offenders, a relatively small number of whom account for a large proportion of British crime. Ways in which resources and effort might be applied to this group formed a large part of the deliberations. A further focus of concern was whether there might be effective options to be used as alternatives to prison sentences, alternatives which could not be characterized as "playing ping-pong at a community hall on a Saturday afternoon."

One view was that compensation schemes needed further examination to see whether recompense either to the victim or to society might have a role to play. The view was expressed that the public would be more likely to accept alternatives to prison sentences if it was apparent that something useful was being done. The use of non-custodial sentences implied more imaginative alternatives, "something between prison and ping-pong."

Some concern was with the nature of crime, and with the differences between reported crime as opposed to total crime. The fact that reported crimes account for only one quarter of the total number of incidents leads to the possibility that figures which purport to show rising crime levels might actually be showing a greater tendency to report criminal actions. This, in turn, might denote a less tolerant attitude to certain types of crime. Young men engaging in street fights outside pubs, for example, might not even have been reported in the 1930s. Now it formed part of crime statistics.

It is possible that society's increased sensitivity to violence against women might have led to more crime against them being

recorded, not because there is more of it, but because we are more sensitive to it. Some of the rise in reported cases of rape, for example, could be attributed to an increase in rape not by strangers, but by intimates or acquaintances, including former lovers. Since more women have more ex-lovers, this adds onto the better recording, and to the general feeling that this is less acceptable now than it tended to be in the 1950s when much of it might have been left unrecorded.

Although there is a popular perception that violent crime has increased, there are some factors which suggest that policy and procedural differences might account for some of it. It was pointed out that policing of the East End before the Second World War was carried out by fit young ex-guardsmen who patrolled in threes. Nowadays it might be done by a nineteen year old girl in a uniform.

Finally, the role of technology in finding new ways to fight crime featured as a possible way in which resources might be deployed to good effect. Progress in this field held the prospect of monitoring of goods and situations in circumstances where law enforcement personnel could not be expected to maintain constant surveillance.

No consensus was attempted, although the colloquium was marked by an effort to go beyond sentencing policy in seeking to prevent crime. Many participants took the view that sentencing policy has largely made such contribution as it can make, and it is more profitable to look now at alternative ways of curbing crime.

THE CRIME JIGSAW

John Wheeler, MP
Chairman, Home Affairs Select Committee

At long last in this country we are beginning to have a real debate about the cause of crime and what we should be doing about it, and indeed what we can do about it. For many years we misdirected our thinking and our analysis because the politicians in particular, and the media in general, and the public as a whole, thought that there were simple solutions and that you simply hanged everybody from lamp posts or sent them off to prison, or you had more police officers, then all these awful problems would fade away. Intelligent people have known for a long time that none of those solutions in fact solve any problems at all and at long last we are beginning a journey into reality upon what we should do.

I tackle it by looking at the role, the purpose and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. We have only just begun to question what that immensely expensive institution is really all about. It throws up very provocative questions like "should we have a professional judiciary?" for example, as they do in some countries. Should the training of higher judiciary be such as to integrate the thinking of the higher judiciary with other agencies in problem solving? Should the criminal justice system merely be confrontational or should it be problem solving in its philosophy? A very substantial question to consider.

Then there is the role of the police service; we ask it to do just about anything and everything that no other service or no other institutional group in the country is responsible for. We criticize it when it does not deliver the goods as we think it should, and the police themselves are not always sure what their precise purpose and definition is. Are they as effectively organized as they might be? Those are questions which I am now looking at in some considerable detail: whether the basic structure of the police service is right, whether it is organized in the way that it can really deliver the goods to the public in the way the public seem to want.

What is the face of crime itself? At long last we are beginning to have a real handle on who criminals are and what we should be doing to minimize individuals important in what we call crime. When you look at the statistics of who we imprison you see what I am really getting at; 86,000 receptions during the last twelve months. Sometimes the public think they are all there for murder and rape, or for very serious crimes of violence, and are quite surprised to learn that the majority of them are there because

they are feckless, inadequate and re-offend and earn their way into a prison sentence.

Over eighteen thousand of those receptions were there for burglary, a crime which is preventable by what you do as an individual and what you do collectively in your immediate locality, and what you do institutionally through your housing association, your council, or your private sector housing group. That has more to do with prevention than it does with putting eighteen thousand -- broadly speaking -- young people into prison every year. The other twenty-three thousand who go to prison -- and I have now talked about over half who do go -- are there for theft, handling, fraud and forgery. Some of those offences are serious, some of those people certainly deserve to be imprisoned; on the whole it is a pretty negative experience.

We are back to costs, purpose, function. It costs the taxpayer something like £300 per week to put one of those young men in prison. The question is, does it influence other people not to offend? There is no evidence at all that it does. Does it help to persuade that individual? There is no evidence at all that it does. Does it help to persuade that individual not to do it again? There is no real evidence that it does and very often in the case of the young who are immature, they actually learn how to go out and do it again, and to do it again in a more sophisticated way which may make the work of the police even more difficult.

Big questions are raised about what we think we are achieving by this experience. Look at the positive side. The police service, as it becomes more professional (it is a very professional service now and is going to become even more professional) towards problem solving and working in the community. Look what it can do when that service and other services work together.

Let me give a quick illustration of what I mean. People held on remand account for one quarter of the prison population. Do they need to be held on remand? Some obviously do, given the gravity of the allegations made against them and because of the likelihood of their re-offending or absconding, but some get held on remand simply because nobody knows what to do, or because there is an inadequate way of assessing how they should be kept on remand.

When the police work in a multi-agency basis with the probation and after-care service, with the Crown Prosecution Service and the court clerk, and look a little further into the individual's background, they discover that what really is wanted is somewhere for him to go and stay while he is held on remand. One can actually get him out of that expensive remand situation and you can actually begin to do something with him that is worthwhile and practical. It has a payoff to the taxpayer inasmuch that it is cheaper, has a payoff to the public generally inasmuch that you are beginning to solve a real problem and not just wash your hands of it. It is a very quick simplistic illustration of what

can be done when expensive resources and complicated institutions have a mechanism for working together to solve problems and find real solutions that really do impact on the situation and are not just negative ways of disposing of the problem.

I think we have a long way to go with many of these things. We have a lot more to learn and a lot more sensible, practical applications to apply to how you resolve so-called crime problems. It is a difficult and complicated business. I have been involved in it in one way and another for thirty years of my life, through many different ways too, and there are no easy solutions but there are lots of ways of making it better.

Take sexual offenders for example, it has always puzzled me that we never really try to do anything about the reason why a lonely, inadequate male became a sex offender. And why we get so excited and angry when that lonely, inadequate male commits a crime that comes to our notice. Have we not used all our resources in the wrong way? Should we not have been trying to do something about the problem much earlier on? And should not that have involved, perhaps in a more thoughtful way, people in the educational world too? Identification of when people have got problems and trying to sort them out before they become crime problems with all the negativeness that goes with what happens after that.

What do we do about drugs? I am looking at that now. Drugs are essentially about making lots of money and so one has to do something about getting control of that money. We have to be a great deal more successful at tackling drug demand reduction and I am looking at that now with the police and others. Very big subjects arise here and you almost have to take every facet and type of criminal offence, analyse its cause, analyse who goes in for it and why, and begin to put the jigsaw puzzle together.

The first thing we have to do is to get the police out of the street. The property crime is the most common crime. The majority of the police are busy with property crime, which is a very boring and unexciting job. It is a job that is very important and we have to give that particular attention. The great thing is that property crime is a crime that is very common and it is a crime that is very boring and unexciting. It is a job that is very important and we have to give that particular attention.

Who does the crime? The first thing to say is that it is not women. It is men. It is men who do the crime. The second thing to say is that it is not the poor. It is not the poor who do the crime. It is the middle class who do the crime. It is the middle class who do the crime.

CRIME AND CRIMINALS

Mary Tuck

Home Office Research Unit

My role is to tell you about three things: (1) what is crime (2) who are criminals (3) how might we prevent crime.

It is necessary to start by looking very briefly at 'what is crime'. Crime is understood to be tremendously different things by the average man, by the newspapers or the Daily Mail headlines, by criminologists, by people in the Home Office like me, or by policemen who have to deal with it. I think the definition which is easier to take is this: crimes are contraventions of the criminal law which are reported to the police and which society is asked to do something about; .

It is important to remember that crimes reported to the police these are about one quarter of all the incidents shown to occur by survey evidence. If you talk to people on a survey and ask them to tell you about nasty things that happened to them during the last year, they tell you about four times the number of crimes that actually get reported to the police. Some quite serious crimes are exposed in this way that do not get into crime statistics, so that reservation has to be held. Nonetheless criminal statistics - reported crimes - are a useful picture of the extent of the load on police and of the nature of reported crimes.

The first thing to say is that 95% of what we call 'crime', is property crime. Only 5% of it is violent crime. The ordinary man's understanding of crime is murder, rape, violent hooliganism, and burglary. But the great mass of crime statistics 95% is property crime and a great mass of which is trivial. A large proportion is criminal damage in value under twenty pounds. A quarter of the whole crime in this country is connected with the motor car; it is theft of or from the car, and has grown enormously over the last thirty years because thirty years ago we did not have many cars. Remember when you are talking about crime you are not talking about big dramatic things -- which are of course very important and we have to give them particular attention -- but the great mass is this property crime.

Who does this crime? The first thing to say is that it is men not women. In a ratio of 8:1 it is men. The second thing is that it is young men; the peak age for offending per hundred thousand of the population is fifteen. It is also very important to remember that it is an extremely widespread social habit. We

can show (and it is quite the same result in other countries too) that one third of the male population has been found guilty of a 'standard list' offence by the age of twenty-eight. That is a lot of males and a 'standard list' offence is not a trivial offence. The 'standard list' excludes most magistrates' courts offences but includes "triable either offences" and crown court offences. It excludes driving offences and is only "found guilty" convictions. Many more commit crimes than are picked up or found guilty, so crime is extremely widespread.

Of all these people who are occasional offenders -- it is almost a normal thing for young men to commit a crime -- not all of them turn into repeat offenders. A lot of the bulk of crime is by people who are serious repeat offenders who commit maybe 6 to 10 crimes by the age of 28. Who are the serious repeat offenders? We know that they are 5% of each cohort. (This is 15% of offenders because offenders are one-third of the whole cohort). This smaller group commits about 60% of all the crimes committed by that cohort.

Where are they? Who are they? First of all we know that there is more happening in the inner cities. There is more crime and there are more offenders in the inner city. For instance, burglary risk is 1% if you live in an agricultural area, it is 10% if you live in an inner city, and on certain estates it is 20%. A lot of these offences are committed by people from within the area. The classic picture is offences committed, in the inner city by people who live within the inner city, on their neighbours. Cars are stolen in the same way -- 5% stolen in agricultural areas, 25% in poorer parts of the inner city -- there is a one in four chance of having your car stolen this year in poorer parts of the inner city.

We are concerned with what is crime and who are criminals? The next question is how do we stop them? The usual answer the man in the street would give is that it is policemen, it is deterrence, it is seeing more policemen in the streets, and heavier sentences. Catch more and have better clear up rates then we can all get back to the 1930s and have an ordered society.

It is not quite as simple as that. Over 80% of the crime reported to the police is reported by people who have seen it, and not by policemen seeing it. Policemen walking the streets do not see a burglary. The ones who are caught are usually caught by people catching them and reporting them to the police. The chances of being caught for trivial opportunistic property theft, which is the great mass of it -- whether it is stealing cars or minor property burglary of houses -- are in the nature of events very low. So the clear-up rates for the casual opportunist property theft are low. The police do a good job on the clear-up rates for violent crime or murders -- all in the 70%-80% range. The police can and do catch serious criminals, but for the casual opportunists the chances of being caught are low. Everything we know about deterrence shows again and again that young men are gamblers, risk takers. Length of sentence can be increased but it

not the length that matters it is the chance of being caught.

We also know from well-established results that the rates of re-offending, after various forms of sentence, are extremely similar. We know there are some variations within this but on the whole when you fine somebody, give them community service or send them to prison for a year or five years, the net effect is the same in the end. You have to remember the expense of prison (it costs £13,000 per year to keep someone in prison). Incapacitation has been a favourite way of preventing crime which has been much touted and used by the Americans whose prison population is now by far the highest in the civilised world, hitting the Russian level. President Bush has just asked for more prisons; ten in every hundred black males in Washington are in prison now, at enormous cost. The USA has the highest crime rate in the western world. The Americans have calculated that they would have to increase the current prison population by 38%, in a population which already imprisons very heavily, to cut crime by 1%. So incapacitation is hardly a very reasonable economic strategy.

The figures show that offending is a widespread social habit, but only some will re-offend. Can we identify them early? They can be identified post hoc, after research which tells you something about the kind of person who will turn into repeat offenders. If you try to do it predictively you have a 50% error rate. Californians try to do this and they do not worry too much about justice issues, so that you can get a position where someone who is a good predictive will be sent to prison for longer than someone who is not a good predictive because he is said to be 'likely' to be a criminal. So there can be two little lads of thirteen who have stolen \$10 worth of goods, and one little lad will be sent away for a long time and the other will not be sent away for a long time because the statistical methodology is that one is going to turn into a 'career criminal' and the other is not. The number of false positives are enormous. I do not think that that is a particularly good strategy, it only fills the prisons and it does not get it right.

You can get a picture from the research of the kind of person who is likely to turn into a serious repeat offender. It is British research which is funded by the Home Office and has been done by David Farrington and Donald West, called The Cambridge Cohort Study. It picked up a cohort of all the lads who were at school in South London many years ago and followed them all through. From this work, which is internationally known and pretty crucial in the field, you are already beginning to see at eight those kids that are going to turn into recidivists. This has the proviso that the predictors are statistically right but they do not pick out individuals with any clarity.

The most important predictors at aged eight to ten of aggression and violence fell into six categories: economic deprivation measured by low family income/poor housing/large family size; family criminality, convicted parent or a delinquent sibling,

poor child rearing; harsh and authoritarian discipline, parental disharmony, poor supervision; school failure, low intelligence and attainment, low parental interest in education; hyper-activity, impulsivity, attention deficit (these are professional phrases for the kind of lad who is jumping about all over the place and nobody can stop him). Hyper-activity undoubtedly seems to be a predictor, and anti-social child behaviour, aggression, troublesomeness.

You can go from all this work and similar work, to begin to build up a picture of lower-class, deprived, abnormality in the family, low intelligence, hyper-active and pick all those up as likely to turn into recidivist or violent offenders. I would not like to leave that as a central thought because one has got to realise that the important thing to remember is the extreme widespread nature of it. Just 33% of the male population in every cohort has offended in some form and when you try to think of prevention strategy then you have to try and make that one-third like the two-thirds who do not offend.

The other point is to avoid encouraging repeat criminality in the way offenders are dealt with. We are pretty convinced that custody is an escalation, not in the amount of crime but in the type of crime. This, and the costs of imprisonment, is why the emphasis is on 'punishment in the community'.

There have got to be deterrents -- we all accept that people make decisions about what they do in terms of their trade-offs, what will lead to some good results, what will lead to some bad results. What you have to remember about crime is that too often when thinking of criminal policy people think of the trade-off only in terms of the deterrents and what the criminal justice system itself offers. You have to think of what an American criminologist calls the rewards of non-crime, you have to think about the little lad in the inner city who is fifteen at the peak age of offending, he has got to find more rewards by not doing his casual opportunistic theft -- by finding some way of joining society -- than he finds losses. Crime is only a form of human behaviour, certain behavioural acts which the law has said: 'These you shall not do'. When we want to persuade people not to do something we have to make sure that the rewards of not doing it are good and the deterrent for doing it is bad.

EFFECTIVE ACTION

Barry Poyner

The Tavistock Institute

I am going to talk about prevention of crime. We have been interested in crime research which is concerned with the relationships between the environment and behaviour. We find it very useful to think in terms of the model, which is a useful way of summing up various components of crime. There is always an **offender** and usually a **victim**, and there are a **sequence of events** that leads to some kind of **loss or injury**. And that sequence of events takes place in some sort of **social context** and some kind of **physical setting**.

For example, we need to define the kinds of people who commit the crimes, the kinds of people who are victims, the precise sequence of events which is necessary and the social contact and physical settings that are characteristic of the crime. Once these have been defined it is possible to consider the possible impact of changes to each of these components which would prevent the crime occurring. By using this approach we can greatly extend the number of possible interventions to be considered.

Most traditional criminology has been concerned with changing just one of these components, that is the offender.

Comparatively little has been done to deal with changing victims' behaviour or thinking about the victims' role in crime. In our research we are particularly interested in the sequence of events, the physical setting in which the crime occurs, and the social context. All three are closely linked together. Sometimes you can reduce crime simply by reducing the loss or injury by giving people certain kinds of protection, for example some security staff wear helmets, potential victims can be given advice to carry less money, and so on, so that the loss is reduced.

Many kinds of interventions are possible. When we started work on this kind of thinking the whole question of treatment of offenders, sentencing policies and the treatment of people in terms of social guidance and those sorts of issues, had been fairly well researched and by and large it had produced disappointing results. I think a number of people already have said that this morning.

In our research we are concerned to know which of the many possible interventions that can take place are really effective.

There are lots of ideas around and many suggestions have been put forward but there is not a very strong tradition of evaluating examples of where these ideas have been tried out. We are currently trying to put together a much more sensible summary of evaluations of crime prevention projects and we have a grant from the Leverhulme Trust to do just that.

The types of measure we are interested in primarily in this study are conventional crime prevention measures -- neighbourhood watch, property marking, the idea of having additional locks to houses and premises, the idea of using controlled entry systems, publicity campaigns -- and even such things like distributing newsletters to local communities. All the measures have been looked at and evaluated in a number of different studies both here and in the United States. These conventional crime prevention initiatives are remarkably consistent in their disappointing results. There will be some examples where there have been some successes, but they are remarkably unsuccessful by and large. We feel that conventional ideas of crime prevention really are not particularly satisfactory and do not really work to reduce crime.

We have identified an intermediate level of crime prevention measures which are a little more effective. They are more action oriented, and much more specific to particular localities. They include intensive localised policing activities. Other examples include intensive clean up jobs on housing estates, or putting in security guards, or using television surveillance where there is a real back up of active patrolling or support -- it must be active. The trouble with this kind of preventive measure is that it needs continual topping-up and you have to continue to be active, you cannot just leave it and go away, it has to be manned intensively for the duration of the project as long as it is successful. It has that disadvantage of always having to be active and being well-managed and having a lot of positive effort put into achieve crime reductions.

What we find more exciting is looking at environmental design and system changes in things like transport systems and possibly retail systems. We are short of examples because there is limited work being done. One study showed that the amount of shoes that are stolen from Marks and Spencer is so much greater than it is from any of the shoe shops in Oxford Street and this was because of the way in which they are sold. Shoes are sold personally in most shops but if you just display them on a rack without any kind of supervision, that is an opportunity for theft and the shop lifting figures support this conclusion. I notice that in my local Marks and Spencers quite recently the number of shoes that are on display are much less than they used to be and maybe that is one of the reasons. Because of the system differences in Oxford Street, hardly any shoplifting occurs from shoe shops whereas the shoe departments of the stores where shoes are sold by self service were very heavily reported in the police figures.

We have done a lot of work on housing layout, and I am not

talking so much about the inner city high rise housing, but some new work which has not yet been published. It shows pretty conclusively that one can do a great deal to control crime simply by designing houses the right way. It is good news for modern housing developers that much of what they do now is not far from the right kind of solution but it needs tidying up and thinking about. We have some very good evidence to show that just by house design and the layout itself, considerable differences in crime can be achieved. Even where high crime rates might be expected because of social problems, the physical differences in the housing can make enormous differences to the amount of crime that is committed.

We have a good example of studying violence on the underground -- violence to staff. One of the most common forms of assault on staff was the attack of people who were manning ticket barriers. Now since they have changed to automatic barriers, taking staff away from that particular point, there is no opportunity for that kind of assault or crime. Another advantage from this change is that the amount of revenue that is now taken by the underground has greatly increased so that they can actually put staff back into some of the stations to supervise the operation of these ticket barriers. The point is that by alternating the system, you are eliminating the opportunity, which in the past was quite a serious problem, for attacks on staff who were taking tickets and checking tickets. Simple things like that once done are permanent changes and permanently cut out certain kinds of crime.

The same thing has happened with exact fare systems on buses. Where there was at one time a lot of robbery of bus crews, that was more or less eliminated by exact fare systems.

In summary what I believe is that, for the future, environmental changes of a systematic nature, and changes to transport and retail systems, are the areas where we are going to have the biggest impact on controlling and reducing crime in this country.

PREVENTING CRIME

Dr Madsen Pirie,
President of the Adam Smith Institute.

A fact which emerges clearly from a study of crime in Britain today is that sentencing policy makes no perceptible difference to the crime rate. This is an important fact because it runs directly counter to long perceived notions. It has commonly been supposed that tougher or more appropriate sentences impact directly upon crime levels. The supposition has been that a crime wave can be countered by the award of more severe sentences. In common parlance the talk is of taking particular crimes "more seriously" by imposing heavier sentences.

There have been cases where tougher or "shock" sentencing has been alleged to cut crimes of a special nature. One can point to the heavy sentences handed out in response to the Notting Hill race riots a generation ago, or to the prison terms awarded to students following the violence at the Garden House Hotel in Cambridge a decade later. In both cases it was understood that the severe punishments acted to stop the spread of the type of crime in question.

If this is indeed what happened, it would now seem that the effect might be confined to this special type of novel crime. For the majority of crimes, and especially for those in which ordinary people are most likely to feature as victims, heavier sentences cannot be expected to curb crime levels.

This is not to take up a position against heavier sentences. It may be that society feels the need to punish particular classes of crime, and to express through sentencing its abhorrence of certain types of criminal. It by no means follows that criminals should be allowed to "get away with it" just because sentences do not act to prevent crime.

On the other side, sentencing policy might be used to ease the demands made upon space in prisons, or to reduce the level of overcrowding in them. The substitution of community service orders or probation in place of prison terms might well serve to make punishment more humane both for those in custody and for those kept outside. None of this, however, bears on the subject of preventing crime. It should be dealt with separately.

The only sense in which sentencing policy affects crime directly lies in the physical constraints which detention imposes upon an habitual criminal. While someone is behind bars they cannot be committing most of the crimes they might otherwise be engaged in.

Against this has to be set the effect which prison has in upgrading the seriousness of the crimes committed. A person after detention often moves on to a more serious level of crime. Thus the short term relief which the physical act of detention brings is offset by the tendency of those so punished to graduate to more serious crimes thereafter.

Thus the programme to curb crime levels in Britain starts with the knowledge that sentencing policy is not an effective means. Given the breakdown of crime outlined by the other contributors, it emerges that the overwhelming majority of recorded crimes are against property, and that they are committed typically by young males, often adolescent males. There is, furthermore, a core of habitual repeat offenders responsible for a large proportion of crime, and who can be fitted into broad categories characterized by such elements as poor education and intelligence, inadequate parenting, hyperactivity, and other factors.

Institutional redesign

There are measures, not related to punishment or sentencing, which can work to cut crime levels. One of these might be termed "institutional redesign." It is known that alteration in the physical circumstances associated with crime can result in crime levels being cut. For example, the redesign of housing estates is now known to be a relatively cost effective means of curbing crime levels.

The pioneering work of Professor Alice Coleman, featured in the Adam Smith Institute's publication "Altered Estates," shows how the closing off of access points and the assignment of common space can dramatically cut crime on problem estates. The worst features from a crime point of view are ease of access and exit by strangers, and areas not owned individually.

The lesson here is that housing estate crimes, which include petty theft, attacks on the person, litter and graffiti, can all be cut by systematic attention to the weak points. Most at risk are the multiple level deck access schemes with through access. By closing off some entrances and breaking up the deck walkways, the crime can be cut by figures which approach 80 percent in some cases. Similarly, the assignment of common space into individual gardens with gates can achieve striking improvements.

One attractive feature from the point of view of the taxpayer is that such alteration is relatively cheap to do. It can cost only a fraction of the annual cost of attempting to police problem estates, and brings more lasting results.

Included in the redesign of housing estates is the removal of dark and hidden walkways and other areas where crimes may be committed unseen. Alterations to bring such areas under scrutiny are included in the measures which succeed in cutting crime levels.

Given this information about the efficacy of estate redesign, the police have a role to play in making recommendations. A police specialist unit could survey problem estates, public and private, and make recommendations as to the measures which would be most likely to prove effective in cutting crime there.

It should be noted that there is no evidence to suggest that this kind of institutional redesign serves to move crime rather than to effect genuine reductions. Housing estate crime, like many other kinds, appears to be opportunistic. It is done if it is easy to do, and not if this is not so. The estate criminal does not appear to set out bent upon crime, determined to commit it elsewhere if thwarted by the physical design of the estate.

Streets

Institutional redesign can also work to curb street crime. Some street areas seem to make crime easy to commit by design features which can easily be changed. The presence of poorly lit areas and recessed doorways provide opportunity for crimes to lurk unseen. Again, there is now a body of evidence to suggest that relatively simple changes can have a large impact upon crime levels.

In many cases the inhabitants or shop owners in the areas concerned will be ready to pay the fairly small sums required to upgrade the area by making it more resistant to crime. In some cases it involves doorways being levelled off flush with the street, or lighting improved to cover weak spots. Other changes can require the use of better designed doors, or replacement of windows by toughened glass. In most cases the changes will improve the security of the area in a way which affects insurance rates and property values, and therefore has at least some direct return financially.

Once again, this should be a standard police service available everywhere. A specialist unit should survey and recommend changes most likely to achieve results. Indeed, the police could make major advances in curbing crime if they did not wait to be asked, but instead took the initiative in making systematic surveys of areas where institutional redesign of this nature could achieve appropriate results.

New building

It should be understood that the redesign of existing estates and streets is a poor second best to getting them right in the first place. Such redesign as can be done has to be grafted onto what is already there. Far better if the estate or street were already laid out in accordance with principles designed to minimize crime in the area.

In other words the police specialist unit should be consulted at the planning and building stage of new estates or in the layout of new street frontages. They should be asked to point to the weak spots and suggest improvements in much the same way that we

now design and build acting upon the professional advice of fire safety officers. Similar advice from "crime safety officers" would be more effective and less costly at this stage than as an afterthought in response to unacceptably high levels of crime.

Sales points

A further area in which redesign can act to curb crime levels lies in the layout and plan of sales points. The reason that shoe theft from London's Oxford Street does not take place in shoe-shops lies in the different methods of sale used in shoeshops and department stores.

It often appears to be store policy to accept a level of theft as an incidental which accompanies the kind of layout which brings high turnover. Store crime is seen as an unfortunate consequence of a design which yields high profits. The paraphernalia of crime fighting, which includes store detectives, threats and an active policy of prosecution, are used as adjuncts to a sales design which facilitates crime as well as sales.

More emphasis should be given to redesign of the sale points in a way which reduces crime. Research and empirical testing can be used to establish design features which make theft very much more difficult without having a major adverse impact upon sales. In some cases the variables are basically those of layout; in others the development of technology to monitor goods within the store and improve surveillance levels will achieve results.

As with the redesign of estates and street configuration, there should be expert help and advice available from a specialist police unit with expertise in sales point design. Such a unit could be called in as consultant to assist in the redesign of store sales points to curb crime levels.

Cars

Theft of goods from cars, or the stealing of automobiles themselves, is yet another section of crime where intelligent design can make a difference. It is often claimed that the determined crook can rapidly foil virtually any security system which can be fitted to a car. Not all auto crime is committed by determined crooks, however, and even that which is could see new technology ranged against it.

The insurance companies should take the lead by offering a prize for the development of a simple thief-proof system for securing cars and their contents. They might wish thereafter to offer lower premiums for cars whose manufacturers use the new system. They would certainly face lower claims. In this way the increased cost of redesign can be met in part at least by reduced ongoing payments.

Among the systems which new technology makes possible are those which respond only to the individual owner. The redesign of car

security around such systems as these could make major cuts in opportunist auto crimes, in the same way that opportunist crimes can be cut in redesigned housing estates, streets, and sales points.

Heavy goods vehicles can already make use of a "black box" which uses cellular radio technology to locate the vehicle if it is stolen. This is bulky and expensive at present, but a cheaper technology could be developed to place a transponder in each car which could be activated in the event of theft, and would serve to locate the vehicle. Similar technology is already in use in other countries to aid the prepayment of tolls and to implement road pricing. Its use could easily be adapted to prevent crime in this country.

Detection

All of the foregoing proposals come under the heading referred to as "institutional redesign." There are two other broad areas in which effective measures can be taken to combat crime: one such field is that of detection. While sentencing policy has no effect on crime rates, detection does. Thus, an increase in the sentence for a crime from five years to ten might not affect crime levels, but a large increase in the probability of detection almost certainly would.

It is not the severity of the sentence which alters the crime rate, but the certainty of punishment. Measures which can augment the chance of apprehension and punishment can thus be effective at cutting crime. Just as careful thought given to the redesign of institutions can cut crime levels, so can similarly innovative thinking increase the likelihood of detection and thus reduce crime.

Given that by far the majority of crimes are against property, one group of measures to aid detection would feature more extensive identification of personal property. Measures should be introduced to make labelling of valuable personal items routine. At the time of purchase there should be some incentive, possibly provided by the insurance industry, to ensure that just as the guarantee card is filled in, so the product should be uniquely labelled and records kept centrally of such labelling.

A more promising technology which should be possible to develop within a few years would seek to incorporate a small transponder into all items at risk. In the event of the item being stolen, a signal sent out uniquely tuned to it would elicit a response which served to locate the item. Such devices would be too bulky and too costly to incorporate presently, but a research programme to develop miniaturized versions would find many applications and make crime more difficult in many different ways. The insurance industry should undertake a more innovative role in encouraging the development of such technology. It should establish a "think tank" to pioneer and to sponsor progress of this nature.

Similarly there are opportunities to develop surveillance of property in ways which make the detection of crime more likely. Prototype services already exist which offer electronic home monitoring via telephone lines. The police could play a major role here, too, in providing a consultancy service to provide security for home owners.

This proposal, together with recommendations over their role in institutional redesign, suggests a major new role for the police in bringing down crime levels, in addition to their role in the apprehension of criminals. Part of the thinking is that the police are uniquely placed to undertake such an expanded role, and that it would represent an updating and an upgrading of the more traditional police role.

Surveillance

In addition to the surveillance of property to increase the likelihood of detection of crime, there is much that can also be done regarding the surveillance of people. A very large proportion of crime is committed by repeat offenders. It might be possible to raise the chances of detection for persons drawn from that group.

We routinely store on file the fingerprints of those convicted of crime, for example, to assist in the detection of any future crimes they might commit. Yet fingerprints aid detection in only limited circumstances. It is now possible to store genetic records of those convicted of crime, and to have them available for future investigations. There does not seem to be any great difference in principle between taking and storing fingerprints, and taking and storing genetic type. The difference is that the genetic information is useful for a different range of crimes, including sex offences among others. Moreover as forensic science advances, that range will be extended.

In its 1983 "Omega Report on Justice," the Adam Smith Institute urged the use of electronic 'tags' as an alternative to custody, believing them to be a more efficient and more humane recourse. Those in use abroad have generally operated via the telephone service to alert the authorities if the wearer strays more than a few dozen metres from home. The 'tags' themselves are designed to be tamper proof, sending out an alarm if they are interfered with.

Recent developments in *communications technology have raised the possibility that a new type of tag could be developed, designed not so much to aid domestic custody as to provide a record of movement. The twin relevant facts are that a large proportion of crime is committed by repeat offenders, and increased chances of detection serve to reduce crime levels. If the risk of detection could be substantially raised for those repeat offenders, a major reduction in crime might be achieved.

It might be possible to develop a 'tag' whose movements could be

continually tracked. The information would be electronically stored rather than continuously monitored, and could be accessed if needed. If repeat offenders were offered the tag instead of a heavy sentence, it would be possible in the event of a crime to find if any of them had been in the vicinity at the time. While this might not count as evidence, it would, by telling the police where to look for evidence, substantially increase the detection risk for repeat offenders.

The civil liberties implications could be resolved by making it voluntary, as an alternative to a heavy sentence, and by laying down tight rules under which the information could be accessed by the police. But given the proportion of crime committed by repeat offenders, it would serve as a deterrent if their presence at the scene of a crime could be so established.

The technology is not yet in place, but could probably be developed. The movement of deer and elk across the Canadian tundra is already monitored by satellite as part of conservancy studies. Small boats and even cars can now monitor their position on the earth's surface to within a few metres. It cannot be long before such devices become small enough and convenient enough to serve the purpose. An experimental programme would be needed to ascertain that this system did indeed provide an acceptable and a viable alternative to long terms of confinement, and was indeed more effective at cutting crime levels.

Category shift

After institutional redesign and enhanced risk of detection, the third category of measures which offers the prospect of curbing crime is that of shifting convicted persons out of the criminal categories. Of those mostly young males who will be convicted of a crime, the majority will not be so convicted again. As detailed above, those who form the core of repeat offenders can be broadly identified in several categories, which include low intelligence and poor education, hyper activity and poor parenting.

There would be resistance in Britain to the California expedient of screening convicted criminals to give heavier sentences to those from the at-risk categories. Quite apart from the justice implications of making use of background to determine severity of punishment, there is no reason to suppose that this affects crime levels.

On the other hand, analysis of first offenders would indicate the groups from which subsequent repeat offenders would most likely be drawn. It might be possible at this stage to offer some kind of service which would help the offender to shift out of the at-risk category. The present policy for dealing with offenders seems inadequate in at least one sense; insufficient is done to prevent re-offence. We seem content to impose punishments despite our knowledge that their effect will be in some cases to commit the offender to a lifetime of crime of escalating seriousness.

This is not to suggest that offenders should not be punished. But with the punishment the attempt could be made to remove the offender from the category likely to commit further and more serious offences. Some of the factors which appear to bear on the propensity to re-offend are beyond influence. There is little which can be done to raise intelligence, for example. And for many of those convicted it will be too late to do much about what is termed "poor parenting." But there may be factors which can be influenced, and which can shift the offender into a category less at risk of committing further crimes.

It might be possible to teach a marketable skill, for example. A finding from the US experience of putting prisoners to work from inside detention is that those who emerge with marketable skills are less prone to re-offend. Some US prisoners are now taught to operate as switchboard operators while in prison, booking people onto air flights and into hotels. The skills they acquire enable to find work after release, and reduce recidivism. Other skills taught in the US include those involved in the manufacture of floppy discs and in programming. One very successful scheme involves training prisoners in the skills of toy making.

It might be that this form of training can lift some of those convicted out of the "low education" category from which some repeat offenders are drawn. The findings from overseas make a prima facie case for a research programme to investigate this experimentally.

It might also be possible to raise the self-esteem of some of those convicted by the use of some equivalent of the "outward bound" concept. There might be courses of training which can act to influence or to alter the effects which belonging to the various at-risk categories have achieved. The aim throughout is to take the offender at an early stage, such as first conviction, and take steps to identify those at risk of becoming habitual criminals, and then to alter their circumstances.

Clearly an ambitious project of this nature would need a great deal of research, much of it empirical, to establish which procedures are likely to be effective, and to determine how they can be implemented. The initial observation of the problem suggests, however, that this could well be a rewarding procedure in terms of its ability to decrease substantially the groups from which repeat offenders would have been drawn. Initial observation also suggests that this might well be a learning process, with new expertise being developed by those in charge of such a programme as it unfolds.

Conclusion

The proposals put forward here for consideration all come into three sections: they propose the redesign of institutions, measures to raise the likelihood of detection and conviction, or programmes to identify potential recidivist groups and to shift people out those categories. The evidence put forward here on

types of crime and criminals suggests that each of these three sections of ideas holds the potential to have a beneficial impact on crime rates.

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In the United States, a man sued his brother for calling him a "dirty louse", and a man who jumped under a train sued the train driver. Such an expansion of litigation, says Peter Young, is the result of lawyers being paid by contingency fees. He cautions against following the American model.

LIGHT, LIBERTY AND LEARNING By Philip Malcolm

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A call to extend government proposals for higher education to create a genuine internal market. Universities should compete to attract students, it says, and the fee should follow the student. With far more private sponsorship, it suggests, student numbers can be expanded greatly.

EXTENDING CARE By Dr Madsen Pirie and Dr Eamonn Butler

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With the numbers of elderly set to rise by ninety percent over the next 25 years, new thinking is needed in community care policy. The current system is too fragmented, say the authors. They propose a better co-ordinated system, with funds following the patient in an "internal market", and with more incentive for the elderly to make savings to be independent.

STREETS AHEAD by Nicholas Elliott

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A novel proposal for improving the quality of life in cities. Residents groups should be able to block out traffic with gates, it says, and should be helped to run local security patrols. The proposal draws on evidence from St Louis in Missouri, where over a thousand streets have been "privatized" on the initiative of their residents.

A HOME FOR ENTERPRISE by Douglas Mason

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With Hong Kong set to revert to mainland China in a few years, there is a case for establishing a refuge for Hong Kong citizens who wish to leave. Author Douglas Mason suggests that they might wish to establish a new Hong Kong, and names alternative sites in Mexico, Australia, or the West of Scotland.

QUEST FOR CARE by Dr Madsen Pirie and Dr Eamonn Butler

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As Community Care is put onto a new footing, the report suggests that local authority homes should be converted into independent trusts, operating at arm's length from the local authorities now charged with overall responsibility. Self-regulation by the care industry should be the preferred way of guaranteeing standards.

The European pharmaceutical industry could see its performance adversely affected unless a more realistic approach to regulation and pricing is introduced. Author Heinz Redwood suggests that the choice should be for a pricing policy which allows firms to gain the rewards of innovation and research, rather than for the tight controls of some European countries which inhibit innovation.

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