
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION — POLICING FOR PREVENTION: REDUCING CRIME, PUBLIC INTOXICATION AND INJURY

by

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Like Volume 5 of *Crime Prevention Studies*, this volume had its inspiration in two 1994 Griffith University conferences, "Problem Solving for Crime Prevention" and "The Prevention of Alcohol-Related Road Crashes: Social and Legal Approaches." For this reason the majority of contributors are Australian, and most papers deal with prevention issues from an Australian perspective. The themes, however, are universal: the regulation and control of public drinking; policing alcohol-related violence, drug consumption, and public disorder; accident and injury prevention; the management of police resources; and problem-oriented policing. The Australian case studies are augmented by valuable contributions from Sweden (Knutsson on public order) and the U.S. (Rengert on auto theft), sharpening the focus on how police and regulatory resources can be directed most effectively for the prevention of violence, accidents, disorder, and property crime.

Reflecting a history of high levels of alcohol consumption and abuse (Homel and Clark, 1994), four of the Australian chapters are about the regulation of the licensed drinking environment. Violence, drinking and driving, and other forms of alcohol-related crime and disorder are a continuing problem in Australia and most other Western countries, particularly around major urban and beachside entertainment areas. As Tim Stockwell points out in an overview of his center's program of research and intervention in this area, the traditional responses to alcohol-related crime and injury have been reactive policing and the education and rehabilitation of drinkers. However, a new and apparently more promising approach is being pioneered that focuses on the

drinking *environment*. Australia seems as well-advanced as any other nation on this front, and the West Australian research reported by Stockwell is at the forefront of recent developments.

Stockwell's overview is followed by two chapters that describe work I undertook with colleagues in Surfers Paradise, a popular tourist resort in South East Queensland. The project, which had a major research component, was designed to enlist community resources in an attempt to modify the environments of the many nightclubs in the area and to promote community involvement in their regulation. The emphasis therefore was not on formal policing and regulation, but on self-regulation monitored informally by the local community. This approach worked very well in the short term, with a marked initial reduction in violence, but the decline was followed by a return within two years to pre-project levels of violence and aggression. The chapter by Tim Stockwell highlights the reason for this: the enforcement of the licensing laws by the official agencies just wasn't perceived as credible by the venue managers. Nevertheless, we believe a great deal can be learned from the project about the prevention of alcohol-related violence, crime, and disorder, and for this reason the implementation and evaluation are described at length. The chapter by Stuart Macintyre and me should be read as a specialized sub-study of the Surfers Project, focused on the specific problem of crowding and violence. This study illustrates that regulation has to be understood not just in terms of uniformed police or official licensing investigators, but also in terms of the rules governing the physical design of venues and the effects of design on the movement and interactions of patrons.

The chapter by Marcus Felson and his colleagues describes a coordinated police response to the problem of public drinking and related crime that was developed independently of the work in Surfers Paradise. The basic strategy was to stop "pub hopping" — the movement of large numbers of drunken patrons late at night between the many licensed venues in the center of the city of Geelong, Victoria. "The Accord" was "police driven" and did not involve the community in the comprehensive way attempted in Surfers. Nevertheless, it was an outstanding example of cooperation among police, licensees and the Liquor Licensing Commission, and appears to have had a marked and relatively permanent effect on both pub hopping and serious assaults.

Taken together, the first four chapters in this volume suggest some firm foundations for the prevention of alcohol-related crime,

utilizing community development techniques, scientific problem analysis, and unconventional forms of policing and regulation. The chapter by Johannes Knutsson, on public order in a city park in Stockholm, Sweden, is instructive because it demonstrates that a conventional police "crackdown" can also be effective in dealing with public disorder, this time related more to drugs than to alcohol abuse. Nevertheless, as Knutsson points out, the crackdown represented a missed opportunity to demonstrate the power of problem-oriented policing to deal with the same problem in a scientific manner (Goldstein, 1990), without the use of a specialist narcotics unit.

The chapter by Christine Bond and David Gow on the evaluation of a beat policing project in the Queensland city of Toowoomba provides a nice contrast to the account of conventional policing contained in Knutsson's chapter. In the Toowoomba model, beat policing involved more than foot patrols, incorporating the identification and resolution of community problems, attendance at community meetings, liaison with other government agencies, and, most importantly, the adoption of problem solving as an integral part of the officer's duties. Evaluation showed not only the expected improvements in police and citizen satisfaction with police services, but also a reduction in the incidence of certain types of crime.

An important conclusion drawn by Bond and Gow is that the development of beat policing requires improvements in police management, particularly a more scientific use of calls-for-service data. The scientific management of police resources is the major theme of Mark Leggett's chapter, which addresses the crucial problem of traffic law enforcement. According to a recent report by the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission (1996), management of traffic, traffic law enforcement, and responding to accidents are among the most frequently performed police activities, greatly exceeding the time spent in criminal investigations. Even when the time spent by general-duties police in routine traffic work is excluded, calls for service involving traffic matters are exceeded in frequency only by calls related to "disturbances" and calls to do with general property offenses. Leggett's chapter describes an innovative management system for the prevention of traffic accidents, based on the principles of total quality management and the strategy of randomized scheduled enforcement. The cost-benefit ratios of the approach described by Leggett are so remarkable that one can only wonder why police appear to be so

reluctant to embrace the general principles in all other aspects of their work.

George Rengert's chapter suggests one way police can better manage their resources to reduce the incidence of the specific crime of auto theft. He demonstrates, using data on auto theft in central Philadelphia, that mapping techniques can be used to plan cost-effective enforcement that focuses on localities that are "hot" for auto theft *when* they are "hot" (in other words, he incorporates both time and space into the analysis). A fascinating aspect of Rengert's chapter is the links it draws to other aspects of social policy, including the revitalization of downtown shopping and commercial areas. Auto theft is costly enough to individual victims. But a consideration of the economic impact of the spatial concentration of the crime highlights even more clearly the enormous potential cost-benefit ratio of more efficient and targeted police enforcement.

The final paper in this volume is, like all the other chapters, about regulation and policing. However, the study is unique in that the *police themselves* are proposed as targets for situational and problem-based crime prevention. The specific problem targeted by Tim Prenzler is sex discrimination in police recruitment, now formally illegal in most jurisdictions. He demonstrates that police agencies can, intentionally or unintentionally, circumvent anti-discrimination laws by the way physical ability and firearms handling tests are devised, and by the way interviews are conducted. A number of recommendations are offered for situational solutions to the subtle barriers placed in the path of women seeking a career in policing.

The nine chapters in this volume are offered as a set of diverse contributions to the literature on crime prevention, particularly as it relates to issues of policing and regulation. The potential contribution to prevention of police in particular and the justice system in general is often debated (see, for example, Tonry and Farrington, 1995). It is therefore useful to have available case studies illustrating that *under certain circumstances*, police and regulatory systems (sometimes applied to the police themselves) can make a big difference to the rate of accidents, violence, crime and disorder. Most countries spend billions of dollars on police law enforcement and on non-police regulatory systems, and getting a better return on this investment should be a high priority in times of financial stringency. The various studies reported in this vol-

urae can, I believe, assist in that endeavor and also contribute to the building of a safer and fairer society.



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