

Crime prevention solutions for Europe: Designing Out Crime

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and crime reduction and prevention.
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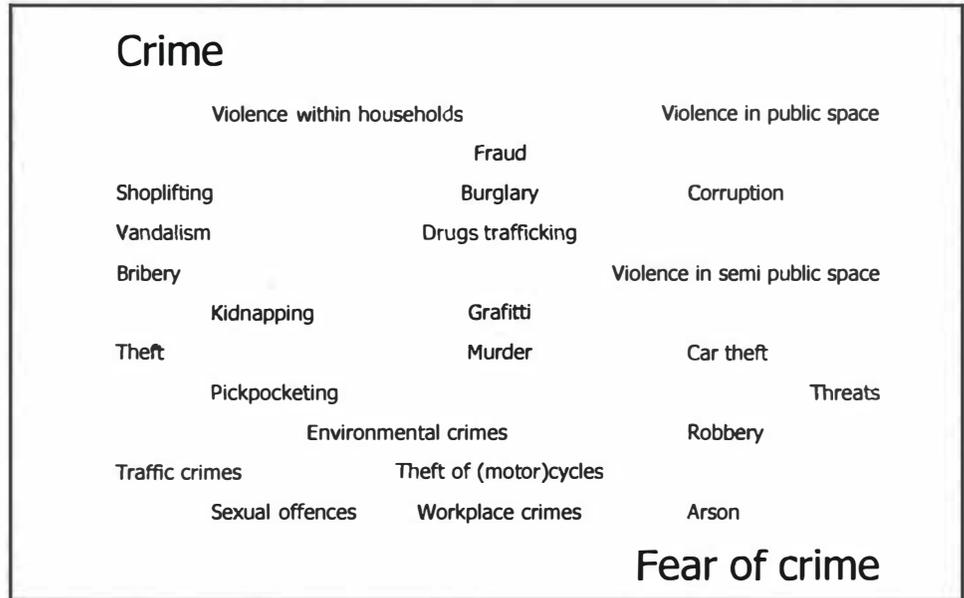
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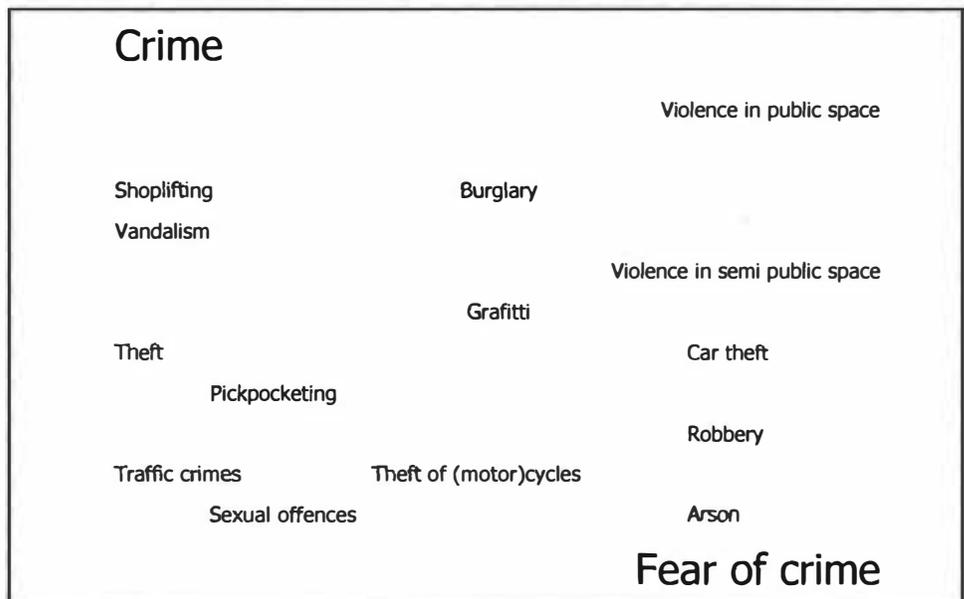
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1 Crime: a diverse phenomenon

Crime is a phenomenon resembling somewhat the famous dragon with several heads. There are more than 25 types of crime to be distinguished. Besides crime there is fear of crime which is a different phenomenon.



In this paper we will focus on the types of crime concentrated in urban environments and having an opportunistic nature. In short: crimes which might be reduced by urban planning and building design.

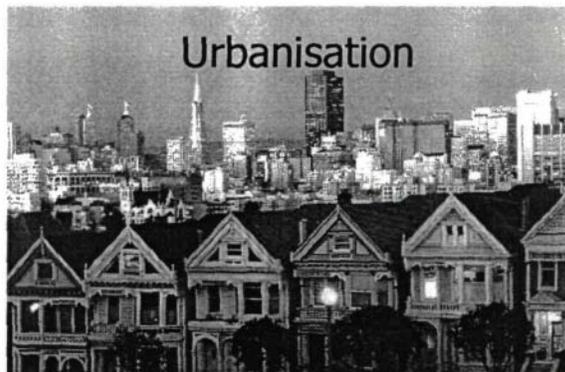


2 Explaining crime

Urbanisation

The strongest factor explaining crime risks across different countries is urbanisation. This was proven – again – by the extensive world wide victim survey in which several European countries participate: the International Crime Victim Survey.

The strongest factor explaining risks
across different countries:



International Crime Victims Survey
Pat Mayhew and Jan van Dijk

Nature or nurture

The traditional explanations for crime fall into the category of the nature versus nurture debate.

Does nature and what it contributes to our biology and heredity influence how people become criminal? Are we affected by diet, body chemistry and our genetic hardwiring just as birds are programmed to migrate south, or as fish return to the same rivers? Are these the factors that create a propensity to misbehave?

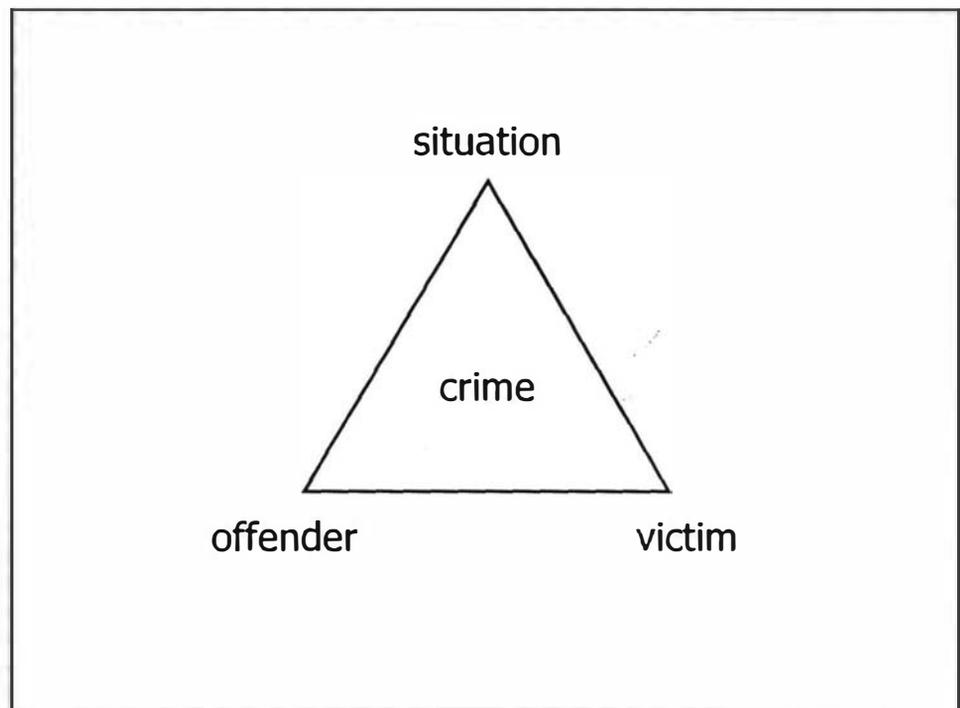
Or is nurture the answer? Does our upbringing determine our behaviour? Do our family and our friends influence us to, or not to, commit crime? We hear our parents warning us about learning bad behaviour by hanging out with the wrong kids. We see children abused by their parents, who then themselves become parental abusers. These are the stories of the nurture debate.

The nature and nurture explanations are still with us today. Nurture explanations are personality theories. Nature explanations are called environment theories. Together with a third approach, opportunity theory, they constitute the major streams of thought that have been created to explain and prevent crime.

What policy-makers needed (and still need) is not so much a scientific

explanation of crime, but a method of tackling crime to make it more manageable. It was these developments in the scientific world and the need of policy-makers for feasible methods that led criminologists to search for alternatives to the personality and environment theories about crime and criminals. This is why opportunity theory emerged in the 1960s and 1970s¹.

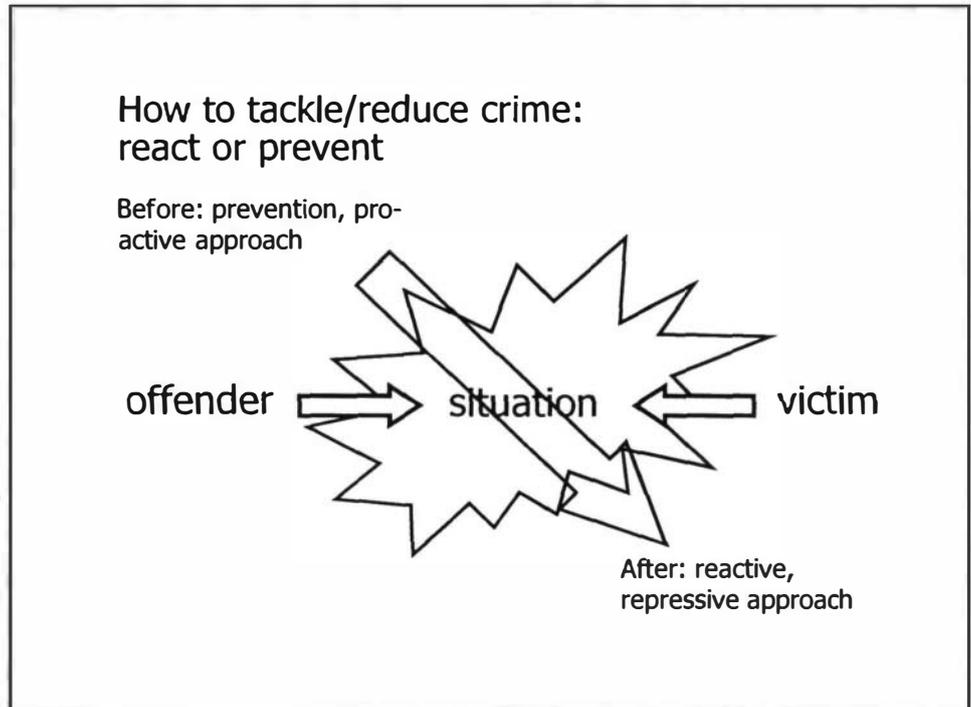
This theory stressed the importance of the triangle offender – situation – victim.



A criminal offence will only take place if all three factors are present. This approach focuses on the situation in which an offender meets – or seeks – a victim; be it a person to assault, a bank to rob or a house to burgle.

Note 1 We should add that the concept of opportunity had already appeared in 19th-century criminological publications. Until the first half of the 20th century however, it was not considered to be very relevant. Opportunity as a useful concept for crime prevention was elaborated upon around 1920 by researchers of the Chicago School (see: Local strategies for the reduction of urban insecurity in Europe, the physical urban environment and reduction of urban insecurity. Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of Europe - Strasbourg 1989, pages 219-234).

In this approach the focus also shifted from a reactive point of view – take action after a crime has occurred – to a more pro-active stand – take action before a crime occurs and prevent the offence –.



One of the most productive areas where the opportunity approach has proved its worth is in urban planning and building design. A great number of experiments have shown that particular types of crime can be reduced by modifying the opportunity for crime in the built environment. Moving the night-time tavern crowd away from vacant storefronts after closing time will inevitably reduce the number of break-ins and vandalism incidents to the stores. Controlling the access into, and natural sightlines through, underground parking areas will increase the opportunity for criminals to be seen and caught. This in turn will reduce the number of assaults and auto crimes in that parking areas. The list of successful opportunity reduction examples goes on. In Canada and the USA this has come to be known as crime prevention through environmental design – CPTED (pronounced sep-ted)².

In Europe the concept is also known as 'the reduction of crime and fear of crime by urban planning and architectural design'. In short Designing out crime (DOC).

Note 2 The concept of CPTED is also used in the world wide association of researchers, specialists and practitioners in this field: the International CPTED Association (ICA; see www.CPTED.net). In fact, most of the text in this paragraph is taken from a draft text of the president of the ICA Greg Saville.

3 Designing out crime: teething troubles

In the beginning the new situational and pro-active approach was hampered by some serious teething problems.

Physical determinism

Some authors lost track of the human – the social – factor. By placing too much emphasis on the physical environment these authors forgot the offender and victim. A securer and safer city is the result of a safety policy aiming at the physical AND the social environment.

Don't:

- lose sight of offender (and victim)
- only look at physical variables

Lesson:

- physical environment
 - social environment
- } = safer securer city

Design and maintenance: two sides of a coin

Some practitioners focussed completely on urban planning and building design forgetting that every new built neighbourhood, public space or building needs good maintenance. Without that every plan and design will deteriorate and will be destroyed.

Don't:

- focus only on planning and design

Lesson:

- + urban planning
 - + architectural design
 - + MAINTENANCE
- } = safer securer city

Structured partnership

In the beginning every group of crime prevention practitioners was too eager to win the battle all by themselves.

It took a while before crime prevention was seen as a joint responsibility of

different sectors of society and therefore needing a broad based multi-agency approach or co-ordination of public authorities, politicians, the private and voluntary sector, police, residents, urban planners, architects and the maintenance sector.

Don't:

see crime prevention as an approach which can be employed by one group practioners (only police, only planners, only architects, etc)

Lesson:

what is needed is a multi agency approach, structured partnership: authorities + police + planners + architects + residents + etc.

All these teething problems have been overcome nowadays resulting in what is often called 'the second generation of designing out crime'.

4 The challenge

Designing out crime is a real, effective and mature crime prevention policy. However, this policy is still little known by local and regional authorities. They still seem to be unclear on:

- what to do; the ingredients, measures, best practices,
- how to do it; the implementation, the process.

Not only local and regional authorities are lacking information. The same goes for all other stakeholder agencies like the police, urban planners, architects, insurers and residents.

This conference will no doubt be an instrument for disseminating knowledge about designing out crime.

But there are more ways to reach this goal: reports, brochures, a CD rom containing best practices, a website or a helpdesk.

The question how to implement a concrete designing out crime project in your city or town is answered by instruments explaining how to structure a building or planning process to incorporate crime prevention.

In the UK, the Netherlands and France there are already examples of such instruments.

National instruments to structure process incorporating crime prevention

- Risk Assessment Models, UK Building Research Establishment, Insurance companies
- Veiligheidseffectrapportage (VER) (secure/crime assessment report), Netherlands – Ministry of Interior
- L'Étude Préable de la Sécurité Publique (EPSP), France
- Also: UK/Netherlands: Police label Safe Housing Secured by Design
- European level: CEN – European Standard

5 European standard on designing out crime

At the European level an interesting initiative is now underway: a European standard on crime reduction by urban planning and building design.

Why standardisation?

The idea of one huge European market will benefit greatly if some products, processes and services are synchronised. Voluntary agreement between countries, institutes and people on what a product or process is, what it must look like, what it should do or accomplish is thus important. For that purpose standards are a key component of the united European market.

Standardisation facilitates communication between different participants or stakeholders working in one process or implementing a project; e.g. crime prevention projects. Standards thus facilitate co-operation and collaboration making processes more transparent. Note: following a standard is something people as well as organisations do on a purely voluntary basis: 'compliance is not compulsory'.

In the mid nineties it was decided to try to draft a general type of standard – in part a process standard. This standard had to focus on the possibilities local and regional authorities, urban planners, architects and building engineers have to reduce crime and fear of crime together with the police, security firms, insurers and residents.

6 A European standard: TC 325

CEN (Comité Européen de Normalisation) is the official body ruling the arena in which a new standard is made. Looking at it from a very long distance the process is rather easy. All one has to do is write a short text – of say 25 pages long – in which is explained how one could reduce crime and fear of crime by urban planning and building design. However, this work takes at least 5 years because 100% consensus and agreement from all European countries and all European stakeholder organisations (police, architects, planners, security, and insurance) is essential. As we said before: a standard is a voluntary agreement.

The political agreement is reached in an official committee (Technical Committee or TC) set up for the purpose of making a standard. Experts in Working Groups do the real work.

In January 1996 the Technical Committee 325 of CEN (TC325) held its first meeting in Denmark.

The scope of TC325 is:

"Preparation of European standards on building design and urban planning to provide performance requirements for the prevention of crime in residential areas at new and existing housing, including local shops, in order to ensure safety and comfort and to minimise fear of violence. Standards on building products and security devices are excluded."

It was decided to organise the work in three Working Groups.

- 1 WG 1 on Terminology. This Working Group concentrates on terms and definitions and is 'fed' by the other two WG's. This WG is chaired by France.
- 2 WG 2 on Urban Planning. The Netherlands (Paul van Soomeren, DSP) chairs this Working Group.
- 3 The UK chairs WG 3 on building design of dwellings, shops and offices.

7 Standard on urban planning and crime reduction

As an example we will concentrate here on the draft standard made by Working Group 2 on Urban Planning.

The aim of Working Group 2 is to provide those engaged in urban planning and environmental crime prevention – as well as all stakeholders like authorities and residents – with advice, guidance and checklists on effective multi-agency action needed to minimise the risk for crime and fear of crime.

Note that the text of the European standard for crime prevention by urban planning must be used in a concrete situation. For example a new building plan on the outskirts of Paris, a plan for the renovation of an old harbour site in Szczecin, or the planning of a city centre in Berlin.

The text of the standard is divided in three main parts:

- The introduction which poses three questions: where, what and who?
- Design guidelines - one might say tips and tricks for urban planners - to help the user of the standard.
- A process flow chart explaining how a good CPTED³ process operates step by step.

Note 3 CPTED: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design; or: the reduction of crime and fear of crime by urban planning and architectural - or building - design.

8 Introductionary questions: where, what and who?

First the introduction of the standard:

Although there may be a variety of actors involved, in theory, the approach is always simple. It starts with answering three questions:

- where? – the identification of the exact location of the area and the type of area;
- what? – the identification of the crime problems occurring in this existing area or the problems that may in future occur in this new area;
- who? – the identification of the stakeholders involved in defining the problem and implementing the measures to prevent and reduce the crime problem.

Where? – type of area

The focus of the European CPTED-standard is on urban areas and within this focus eight types of areas can be distinguished:

- 1 residential;
- 2 schools/youth facilities;
- 3 commercial/industrial/offices;
- 4 shopping/retail;
- 5 parks;
- 6 leisure centres
- 7 public transport facilities, like stations, busstops, car parking, garages used only for petrol stations, etc.;
- 8 city/town centres and public space.

Of course several mixed types are also possible, for example a mainly residential area with some schools, a youth facility, some shops and a small park. Important is that the area under consideration may be new or existing.

What? – problem identification

Having identified the area the next question is: what is the problem in this area or what problems may in future arise in this development. The broad distinction in the standard is that between specific types of crimes and fear of crime.

Crime:

- burglary (residential/commercial);
- vandalism;
- street violence;
- car crime;
- theft;
- arson.

Fear of crime

Who? – stakeholders

To prevent crime and fear of crime in new and existing areas it is inevitable to involve stakeholders - people and organisations having a stake or vested interest in the problem and/or solution. In sum the table presents an overview of possible stakeholders/target groups:

- politicians, authorities;
- designers and urban planners;
- builders, public or private developers;

- police;
- security and risk professionals such as private security firms and insurance companies;
- municipal services;
- social workers;
- residents, shop owners, users, public.

After the 'where, what and who-questions' have been answered there remain two important issues to be solved:

- What guidelines can be given for strategies, measures and actions which are necessary and feasible to make an area more safe and secure?
- How will these strategies, measures and actions be implemented and executed? What will the co-operation process look like in which all stakeholders participate?

9 Urban planning and design guidelines

The standard identifies several guidelines on what measures and action one may take. These measures are presented in a framework using the eight types of environment distinguished earlier. On eight pages – each focussing on one type of environment – the specific types of crime problems identified earlier are presented.

Not all strategies are effective in all environments and in all circumstances. Some strategies help only in specific environments or only help to prevent specific types of crime.

For this reason, the strategies have to be chosen according to their expected effectiveness in certain types of environments and against certain types of crime.

If the stakeholders responsible for the choice of strategies know from the crime analysis or risk assessment which types of crime are relevant in their case, they can look for the best strategies in the list specific for their type of environment.

These lists for all eight types of environments are included in an annex to the standard.

10 Process

The central idea of this European standard on crime prevention by urban planning is that in a given situation all stakeholders involved will discuss the list of strategies and measures presented in the Standard while focussing on a concrete plan for building or refurbishment in say Warsawa, Paris or Amsterdam.

A project team, working team or working group is the platform for this discussion. A definitive set of strategies and concrete measures, will be chosen according to space, time, budget and personal preferences; the definitive measures will be recommended by the working group to a responsible body of authorities taking the final decision.

In the standard a step by step method is presented to help and support an effective and efficient process of implementation, execution and evaluation. This process part of the standard resembles procedures elaborated in the international standards on Quality Management (ISO 9000 series) as well as standards on occupational health and safety management and standards on environmental systems (ISO 14001).

A flow chart is presented showing essential steps:

- The issuing of a general mission statement for a plan or project by the responsible authorities. They must initiate a process aimed at preventing crime and fear of crime in a new or existing environment. This 'mission statement' may be of a rather general and vague nature.
- If not yet in operation a multi-disciplinary working group will be set up which should include representatives of the stakeholder organisations involved in this particular design/planning process. The working group will follow a procedure including six well defined steps:

Step 1: Assessment or analysis

The working group shall analyse the present or future crime preventive and fear reducing performance of the environment specified in the mission statement.

Step 2: Objectives

The working group shall define more precisely the objectives being pursued and the time by which they should be attained (project plan, milestones). It shall establish the objectives in more specific quantifiable figures. To choose realistic anchor points, the working group may use values, taken from a similar city, area or neighbourhood serving as a reference. The working-group could indicate the objective values as @equal to@, @minimum 00% better@ or @maximally 00% worse@ than the reference area.

Step 3: Plan

The working group shall draft a plan which contains three things:

- 1 a proposal of what most probably will happen in the near future if no measures are taken to prevent crime and/or fear of crime; the method of drafting scenarios might prove to be a useful tool in this stage;
- 2 strategies probably most effective to reach the safety and security objectives formulated in step 2;
- 3 measures and actions to be taken including costs and anticipated effects. The ideal would be to present in the standard - or on a separate web site - ideas about possible measures taken from real and concrete

examples from different European countries and cities. However, the resources to search, analyse and present these types of best – or worst – practices are not yet available. The working group shall present the plan to the responsible body of authorities and all stakeholders.

Step 4: Decision by (local or regional) authorities

The authorities shall decide which strategies and measures have to be implemented.

When a final decision on the measures is taken, this will be laid down in a contract between all stakeholders.

Step 5: Action and implementation

During this step the measures described in the contract just mentioned are implemented.

Step 6: Checking and corrective action

In this last step the measures which have been taken will be evaluated. In case crime problems and/or fear of crime occur at an unacceptable level authorities decide upon corrective action, such as taking additional crime preventive measures or further refurbishment of the area.

11 European standard: conclusions

In sum this standard on the reduction of crime and fear of crime by urban planning presents the user with:

- ideas on how to tackle and prevent crime by urban planning;
- a procedure on how to organise the CPTED process in the best possible way.

Again... such a standard is NOT a law; it is not obligatory to use the standard.

But if a group of stakeholders or local/regional authorities are in charge of a concrete building project, they can agree on using this standard. From that moment on the standard becomes a 'voluntary code' followed by all stakeholders in the project.

The drafting of this European standard on Designing out crime by urban planning and building design is now at the halfway stage with several European countries are participating (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain). However there are still countries that seem to be unaware of the importance of such a European standard: some countries do not participate and in some cases specialists participating in the working groups are lacking the necessary governmental back up and funding.

It is also regretted by some that the initiative of drafting a European standard is not combined with e.g. building a website containing best (or worst) practices. Such a website could be used as a kind of helpdesk for local and regional authorities looking for ways to reduce or prevent crime by urban planning and building design.

12 Sharing knowledge and experiences

One can also see other ways and means to share knowledge and exchange best practices amongst researchers and specialists.

In 1996 the International CPTED Association (ICA) started as an forum for specialists, researchers, trainers and practitioners. In 1999 DOCA was born in the UK: the Designing Out Crime Association, again to act as a discussion forum for urban planners, architects, crime prevention experts and police officers (e.g. ALO's; Architectural Liaison Officers).

In April 2000 the UK initiative was followed by a 'look a like' association for continental Europe: E-DOCA, the European Designing Out Crime Association which will be opening it's website soon (www.E-DOCA.net).

13 Conclusion

To conclude one might say that there are several initiatives. Besides forming associations like ICA, DOCA.UK and E-DOCA there is also emerging an official European standard on the reduction of crime and fear of crime through urban planning and building design.

Furthermore there are groups of practitioners doing their individual projects: designing out crime.

However, to end this presentation in a rather provocative way, one might say that local and regional authorities and politicians are not yet active enough in this field. Untill now it has been mainly specialists, planners, police officers and (insurance) risk experts who have been active in this field. Authorities seem to be rather slow to understand that urban planning and building design are not only shaping a new urban environment but may also shape a new local policy for crime prevention and the reduction of fear of crime.

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Curriculum Vitae

Paul van Soomeren (1952) studied Social Geography at the University of Amsterdam and Urban and Regional Planning at the same University. He worked for three years at the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs (National Crime Prevention Institute) and in 1984 founded with Bram van Dijk a private consultancy and research bureau under the name of Van Dijk, Van Soomeren en Partners (abbreviated DSP). Nowadays DSP has a staff of fifty, all of whom are academically qualified and have worked in government, private institutions, universities or commercial organizations. DSP is an independent research and consultancy bureau specializing in urban planning and design, crime prevention and social management. The bureau carries out assignments for local and national government, non-profit organizations and private companies.

Paul van Soomeren is director of the board of the International CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) Association (ICA) and he is chairman of a European working group, working on European Standards on CPTED in new and existing environments.