

## Annex 14 – Criminological Regional Analysis as a crime control database

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Paper presented in London, UK, January 2005

### 1. Introduction

I would like to begin with a question: assuming that we have completed a crime opportunity profile of a street or another local space, the result will be that we have starting points for action. We know the hot spots. We know, to put it in the language of geography of crime, the “attracting area” (Shaw, McKay). What is going to happen then? More police, special squads, private security, CCTV or perhaps town planning measures. The police could be on the scene before the offender. Despite possible effects of displacement there will be a net benefit in reducing the offences concerned. But – and this is the question I would like to raise – what about the “breeding areas”, where the offenders come from?

John Parker, architect and town planner from the UK, ended his lecture 1997 in Erfurt, where the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities held a conference, saying this:

*“Finally, whatever policies you adopt, remember it is not only the physical built elements of design that matter, but also the psychological ones; we must avoid returning to the fortress mentality of our ancestors”.*

To increase the probability of success, strategies for crime control should tackle as many criminogenic conditions, causes and circumstances as possible.

It is state of the art in criminology to use three approaches to identify the criminogenic factors: the person of offender, the situation (meaning the victim’s side) and social control, formal as well as informal control. In other words a prepared offender, a good opportunity or vulnerable victim and the lack of guardians make the offence (Cohen, Felson). These are the fields, in which we have to find out the more or less highly loading criminogenic factors, that are at the same time our starting-points for preventive measures.

There exists an interesting parallel to these three fields. Traffic science for a long time has been working with the three Es – standing for Education, Engineering and Enforcement.

The aim of this introduction is to make us aware that there are more starting-points for action than the opportunity profile and I think we should take this into account. Possibly it means, that our endeavour should be, not to look for the best model, but to compose the best combination of tools.

The following first chapter dealing with the Criminological Regional Analysis (CRA) gives an idea of how we try to improve the database for local crime control, which includes crime prevention and law enforcement. The headline given to the second chapter is Preventive Town Planning and Audits. Both chapters are steps in the same direction with the latter covering only one specific sector of preventive activities.

## **2. Criminological Regional Analysis (CRA)**

### **2.1. Aim**

The background and fundament of the Criminological Regional Analysis (CRA) is geography of crime, which is only a small branch of criminology but nevertheless often has been of interest to practitioners. By choosing this name we wanted to express the close connection of the CRA with Regional Sciences. Regarding the deficiencies of crime statistics the main aim is to provide communities with a sufficient database for their local crime policy, for strategic and operational decision making in the fields of crime prevention and law enforcement.

The idea behind the CRA is that each geographical unit (a town, quarter, street) has its own functions and characteristics, which determine its criminality in volume and structure.

### **2.2. Methodology**

As to methodology the CRA is a mixture of empirical research techniques.

One is the analysis of documents, which mostly are already at hand in municipal authorities, in the justice system, police etc., for example annual reports, statistics, organization plans. Opinion polls play an important role to include offences that have not been reported to the police, and to get information about fear of crime in general and in the geographical space concerned. Some of the sixteen federal states in Germany have standardized questionnaires for these surveys, which have proved to be the most expensive part of the work, unless there is the possibility of cooperation with a university institute (for example Greifswald 2002).

Normally the expenditure of resources decreases when a CRA is repeated, as in Lübeck (1992/2000). The first CRA in one quarter in Hamburg (1996) later has been extended to other quarters. To limit the costs in Osnabrück only the figures at hand are up-dated every year. Heidelberg should be mentioned, because there is an on-line exchange of data between the police and the municipality.

From the experience we have up to now it can be said, that there are differences in quality of the CRA and in the usage of the results as well. One negative example underlines the necessity to concentrate on small geographical units and to limit the written report to a maximum of one hundred pages, to facilitate implementation. Some CRA have given impulses to establish a local crime prevention council or network, others have become the basis of work for the various agencies, bodies and groups involved in crime prevention. In any case the CRA produced additional necessary information unknown before.

### **2.3 Structure**

#### **2.3.1. The elaboration of a CRA starts with a description of the geographical unit.**

The most relevant point of this part is the population: age structure, ethnic minority groups, mobility, housing conditions, public welfare support, unemployment rate, educational level. Especially in relation to young age groups the social infrastructure is important, e.g. providing kindergarten and preschool places and leisure time facilities.

Town administration services within reach can play a vital role, as can be illustrated by an example from Frankfurt/Main. In the Ahornstraße – because of the decline – even refuse disposal, fire brigade and police experienced serious difficulties in carrying out their job; the media and population called Ahornstraße “The Bronx”. Frankfurt town administration, under pressure from various sides, finally decided to place a citizens’ office in the street and managed to turn the situation back to normal by this special attention.

Working out negative and positive characteristics, often possible by using a general index, enables the research team to precise the profile of the geographical unit.

**2.3.2.** The second part of the CRA contains facts and figures about the local crime situation, which includes reported and unreported offences and fear of crime as well. As a first step we get a general overview of the situation, whilst in the next step the offences of main concern are dealt with in detail. Causing fear of crime or a high number of cases could be criteria for the selection of two or three offences of main concern. The special treatment of each of these offences consists of a description (when, where, how, victims, offenders etc.) and explanation, in other words here we have to work out the criminogenic factors. Description and explanation will run into a list of starting points for action. As can be imagined, this criminology of a specific kind of local offence is a piece of work of high practical relevance.

**2.3.3.** In the third part of the CRA the agencies of crime control and their activities are presented because partners working together need to know the organization, tasks and running projects of each other, especially in times of frequent reforms and rapidly changing points of main effort. As a minimum the police and justice system, the crime prevention panel (if existing) and private security companies have to be described. To reduce the workload of the research team facts and figures can be taken for instance from the last annual report. As far as possible, information should be presented in the form of tables and graphs instead of a long text. This line should and can be followed in all parts of the CRA.

Ending this section I would like to add a final remark. The CRA should be seen as a process rather than an end product. This process includes systematic and thorough discussion of all results and recommendations (Bornewasser, 2003). What has been put into practice has to be controlled and evaluated. A repetition of the CRA after three to five years will show to what extent the situation in this geographical unit has changed.

### **3. Preventive town planning and audits**

#### **3.1. Crime prevention and traffic safety**

In the first instance a CRA is determined to be the database for local crime prevention activities, which means that there are a lot of things addressed. In part the results run into town planning measures covering a wide range. Improvement of lighting is an example where a rapid reaction of the town administration can be expected. Other measures require a new plan, e.g. to design a public place in the city. This is a long process with many parties and persons concerned. In Germany federal and state laws have to be obeyed, local by-laws and various regulations and guidelines observed.

The police are one of the partners involved in this procedure. For a long time the police have been commenting on the draft in respect of traffic safety. But it is only a few years ago that the police began to consider aspects of crime prevention. The main reason for this neglect was lack of knowledge. Things have changed in the meantime. In Dortmund as an example, a town in Northrhine-Westphalia with a police staff of 2000, there are two trained experts responsible for town planning matters. They belong to the crime prevention department with a staff of 40.

Prevention experts and traffic advisers are working together in this department. The idea behind it is that offences and accidents have much in common. When addressing children in kindergarten and school, the traffic advisers include crime prevention topics; in this way resources are saved. In policing highways we notice the same tendency. To tackle the problem that can be typified by discos, drinking, drugs and driving, the two topics are combined as well, when the police approach the target group concerned.

Traffic safety seems to have an advantage in comparison with crime prevention. In 1970 the German Traffic Safety Board was founded; the German Forum for Crime Prevention in 2002. The Traffic Safety Board managed to bring all relevant groups of society together in public-private partnership and impacted on all levels, national to local, and in all the three fields of education, engineering and enforcement. In 1970 the number of accidents causing death was 21,000. Since then cars have more than doubled in number, the drivers cover more kilometres than ever before and the statistics now include five new federal states in the East of Germany. The number of lethal accidents in 2004 was 5850. This success is mentioned to encourage all people working in crime prevention. Crime prevention is feasible and measurable as well.

#### **3.2. Combined audits**

In the town planning process a lot of points and positions have to be taken into account. At the end the plan or its implementation will be more or less a good compromise. It might happen that the aspect of

safety finally has been neglected or that the practical proof makes deficiencies apparent. Mistakes made in one stage could later cause enormous financial costs for adaptation and correction. These are the reasons for counter-checking either the stock or the draft, or the plan or the implementation. Traffic safety audits have been introduced as such a form of counter-check, but up to now there are no audits including aspects of crime prevention. To test the possibility of combining these two topics the Polizei-Führungsakademie (German police staff college) and the insurance economy organization initiated and promoted a research project.

An audit is a formalized and standardized procedure and is performed by independent auditors, who gather all information available and all existing materials. Auditors assess the papers at hand, following checklists for traffic safety and crime prevention, they visit and assess the space concerned and they look at the space through the eyes of offenders and victims and guardians to discover the weak points.

The research has shown that crime prevention can be integrated in this audit procedure to reduce disorder, fear of crime and certain offences, which normally are connected with the type of space in question.

#### **4. Conclusions**

- The future of our towns is closely connected with successful crime prevention.
- It must be regarded as a real progress in crime prevention to bring small geographic units into focus.
- The tools for micro analyses and implementation are at hand.
- Coming to a linkage of models the CRA is the first step in providing communities with a crime control database.
- In preventive town planning the combined audit is a suitable instrument to increase safety.
- In combined audits techniques such as visual inspection, virtual reality or crime opportunity profiling of streets (or space) are models of high practical value.