

Chapter 3

A Criminological Approach to Preventing Terrorism: Situational Crime Prevention and the Crime Prevention Literature

by **Kelly A. Berkell**

Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of the ways in which criminology and the crime prevention literature have contributed, and might prospectively contribute, to the study and practice of terrorism prevention. Underlying the discussion is the critical premise that terrorism is, inexorably, a particular form of crime, and that criminological perspectives accordingly function as key components of any comprehensive strategy for terrorism prevention and preparedness. Models and foundational concepts in crime prevention are introduced with a focus on situational crime prevention and its theoretical underpinnings. The application of situational crime prevention (SCP) to terrorism prevention is traced from its promising point of departure in 2006 through its evolution up to the present time. In addition, crime prevention models outside of (or extending beyond) situational crime prevention are considered to afford a broader overview of the maturing criminological perspective on terrorism prevention. Finally, benefits and drawbacks of the foregoing approaches are considered and directions for possible future research are discussed.

Keywords: crime, crime prevention, criminology, terrorism, situational crime prevention

A substantial and growing body of literature applies a criminological framework to the challenges of terrorism prevention. Although other disciplines, including political science and psychology, have played more dominant roles in the development of terrorism studies, criminology and crime prevention literature increasingly lend a critical perspective that complements approaches based in other social sciences. A rigorous crime prevention approach also provides a pragmatic counterbalance to more reactive national security approaches. Strategies derived from crime prevention thus help to address the widening recognition that militarized and repressive measures alone cannot provide the most effective counterterrorism strategies for the long run, rather, a complement of more preventive and constructive approaches is needed.

Crime prevention approaches to terrorism rest on the recognition that terrorism is indeed a particular and egregious form of crime, prohibited (along with its manifestations such as murder and kidnapping) by laws across jurisdictions, and can be addressed fruitfully as such. Within criminology, the crime prevention literature is not monolithic, but employs contrasting perspectives and models. Prominent among these are the social crime prevention (SCP) model, the situational crime prevention model, and the criminal justice model (CJM). Some frameworks essentially parse social prevention into two components – developmental and community prevention – while still recognizing the contributions of situational crime prevention and law enforcement.¹ An alternative conceptualization, rooted in public health literature, classifies crime prevention approaches into primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention. Finally, Tore Bjørgo (2013) offers a nine-point model for crime prevention that combines key elements from the previous approaches into one novel and comprehensive formulation. Each of these approaches merits exploration in terms of its actual and/or potential contribution to terrorism prevention.

In particular, SCP-related factors neatly fit into the literature relating to terrorism prevention, and therefore this overview highlights the SCP approach in the greatest detail as well. SCP applies knowledge of criminal patterns to remove or diminish opportunities for potential perpetrators to commit specific crimes. In the counterterrorism context, SCP aims to prevent specific forms of terrorism by changing environmental circumstances, rather than changing individual terrorists and their particular dispositions.² Clarke and Newman's seminal book from 2006, titled *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, provides a point of departure. The authors persuasively demonstrate the application of SCP to terrorism. In the years since the publication of *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, over 60 additional published works have appeared on that topic.³

Viewing and addressing terrorism through an SCP model provides a range of potential benefits in practical prevention, as well as some possible drawbacks, as discussed herein. For example, using SCP methods, authorities can both prevent attacks in some cases and reduce the harm that results from them in others. Further, addressing terrorism through the lens of SCP may lower expectations for its complete eradication, and contribute to a more balanced perception of terrorism in relation

¹ Tonry, Michael and David P. Farrington, 'Strategic Approaches to Crime Prevention,' *Crime and Justice*, 19, 1995 pp. 1-20.

² Clarke, Ronald C. and Graeme R. Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006.

³ Freilich, Joshua D., et al., 'Situational Crime Prevention and Terrorism: An Assessment of 10 Years of Research,' *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 30(9), 2019, pp. 1283-1311.

to other threats.⁴ On the other hand, a *displacement effect* may cause deterred terrorists simply to redirect their efforts toward other crimes or targets. Further, some critics view differences between terrorism and ordinary crime as highly significant, and argue that current SCP approaches lack the requisite nuance for effective prevention in a terrorism context. Overall, the crime prevention literature in general, and the literature addressing SCP specifically, have much to offer in the related field of terrorism prevention. Indeed, “[b]y focusing on the obvious connections between terrorism and crime, we may be able not only to contribute to a better understanding of terrorism, but also to help formulate more rational policies for combating it.”⁵

The discussion and literature review that follow assess the contributions of the crime prevention literature to the prevention of terrorism to date. First, in order to lay a conceptual foundation for its application in the terrorism context, this chapter broadly describes different strands of crime prevention featuring prominently in the literature. Approaches within crime prevention warranting attention here include social and situational crime prevention; developmental and community prevention; and the criminal justice model. The discussion proceeds to detail the principles of SCP in greater depth, tracing the application of SCP and other crime prevention models in the context of terrorism prevention. In this regard, Clarke and Newman’s groundbreaking application of SCP principles to terrorism prevention feature prominently, as do the related endeavors that followed. For example, researchers have studied the application of crime prevention principles to bioterrorism, eco-terrorism, hostage-taking, and ideologically motivated tax refusal, among many other areas.⁶ Special attention is afforded to Tore Bjørgo’s crime prevention model, as applied to terrorism prevention. Bjørgo’s model integrates key elements from the other crime prevention models discussed above, rendering them compatible and tailoring them for the context of terrorism prevention. Finally, the chapter highlights potential advantages and drawbacks of applying SCP or other criminological approaches in the context of terrorism prevention, and discusses areas for future research.

Key Concepts in Crime Prevention

Overview of the Prevention of Crime and Terrorism

Within the larger field of criminology, crime prevention offers a unique perspective and has emerged as a sub-discipline in its own right.⁷ Crime prevention refers to efforts to forestall crime or criminal offending in the first instance – *before* the act has been committed.⁸ While traditional

⁴ Schmid, Alex P., ‘Terrorism Prevention as Situational Crime Prevention,’ *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT)*, 2012.

⁵ Freilich, Joshua D. and Gary LaFree, ‘Criminology Theory and Terrorism: Introduction to the Special Issue,’ *Terrorism and Political Violence: Criminological Theory and Terrorism*, 27(1), 2015, p. 6.

⁶ See, e.g., Freilich, Joshua D. and Graeme R. Newman (eds.), ‘Reducing Terrorism Through Situational Crime Prevention,’ special edition of *Crime Prevention Studies*, 25, 2009; Gruenewald, Jeff, et al., ‘Assessing the Attractiveness and Vulnerability of Eco-Terrorism Targets: A Situational Crime Prevention Approach,’ *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 38(6), 2015, pp. 433-455.

⁷ Crawford, Adam and Karen Evans, ‘Crime Prevention and Community Safety’; in: Leibling, Alison, Shadd Maruna, and Lesley McAra, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (6th ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 797-824.

⁸ Welsh, Brandon C. and David P. Farrington, ‘Science, Politics, and Crime Prevention: Toward a New Crime Policy,’ *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40(2), 2012, p. 128. According to another definition, crime prevention “comprises

vehicles for addressing crime include institutions such as police forces, courts, and corrections, broader crime prevention efforts often take place outside the formal justice system as well. Thus, crime prevention has been described as an alternative approach to the “dominant crime control model” in the United States and other Western nations, as well as an important component of an overall strategy to reduce crime.⁹

The proactive, whole-of-society orientation of crime prevention places it squarely in line with the post-9/11 policy shift in counterterrorism toward prioritizing the prevention of terrorist acts before they occur. In the United States, this new mandate was shared across law enforcement agencies in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001.¹⁰ In an oft-cited example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) transformed itself after the attacks, adopting a proactive approach to predicting and preventing threats before they could be realized, rather than primarily investigating terrorist crimes after they occurred.¹¹

At the same time, the 9/11 attacks and other high-profile terrorist attacks around the globe in recent decades have resulted in increased funding opportunities for, and scholarly interest in, rigorous social science-based approaches for understanding and addressing terrorism. Many of the studies flowing from the increased levels of funding and engagement have been rooted in criminology, leading to significant progress in this area. It has not escaped many scholars that terrorism prevention stands to benefit from advancements within crime prevention research, and vice versa.¹²

Major Strands in Crime Prevention Literature

In the field of general crime prevention, experts have developed a number of wide-ranging models and typologies, extending into diverse disciplines and fields of discourse. While sometimes overlapping with each other conceptually, these models also embody partially competing perspectives.¹³ Tonry and Farrington identified four different crime prevention strategies; law enforcement on the one hand, and developmental, situational, and community prevention on the other.¹⁴ This four-part framework serves as a helpful tool for considering some basic foundations of crime prevention.

The law enforcement model refers to the formal institutions of criminal justice in society – i.e., police forces and prosecutors, criminal courts, and penitentiary systems. This model is sometimes

strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes.” ESOSOC Resolution 2002/13, *Action to Promote Effective Crime Prevention..* Available at:

https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/resolution_2002-13.pdf.

⁹ Welsh and Farrington 2012, p. 128.

¹⁰ Gruenewald et al. 2015.

¹¹ Bjelopera, Jerome P., ‘*The Federal Bureau of Investigation and Terrorism Investigations*,’ Congressional Research Service, 2013. Available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41780.pdf>.

¹² For example, see Freilich and LaFree 2015, p. 6.

¹³ Bjørgo, Tore, *Strategies for Preventing Terrorism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 11.

¹⁴ Tonry and Farrington 1995.

understood as being focused on the preventive effects of punishment.¹⁵ In their foundational study of strategic approaches to crime prevention, Tonry and Farrington afford comparatively minimal attention to the criminal justice system, while focusing largely on the other three components of crime prevention – developmental, situational, and community prevention. Their rationale for this choice rests with the limited preventive effect of sanctions, and the conclusion shared “in most countries that have an empirical research tradition concerning criminological subjects. ...the direct marginal crime-reductive effects of foreseeable changes in the criminal law or criminal justice processes are modest.”¹⁶

Considering the rationales that underlie the imposition of criminal sanctions in societies – and the methods used to achieve those objectives – may provide additional insights concerning the criminal justice model and its relationship to crime prevention. Within the US federal justice system, for example, the “textbook purposes” for sentencing have long been thought to include retribution, deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation, with those rationales attaining different levels of respective prioritization during different eras of American history.¹⁷ Arguably, the first of those objectives (retribution) is unrelated to prevention, while the last three (deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation) all advance the cause of prevention.

In practice, joint efforts to reduce recidivism have contributed to increasing links between the institutions of criminal justice and organizations implementing prevention-based measures to reduce crime. For certain categories of offenders, some level of in-prison rehabilitation programming exists, as does post-incarceration programming for offenders on supervised release. Indeed, as acknowledged in the *United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime*, preventing recidivism represents one important category of overall crime prevention.¹⁸ When the criminal justice model is understood as a set of tools formed largely to prevent recidivism, its separation from the social and situational prevention models becomes less absolute. Nonetheless, evaluating other preventive models separately from criminal justice is useful for theoretical clarity.

The other three main crime prevention strands may be summarized in their simplest terms as follows. Developmental prevention operates at the individual level. It entails interventions to prevent the evolution of criminal potential in individuals by targeting evidence-based risk and protective factors.¹⁹ Community prevention operates more collectively, and entails interventions designed to change the social conditions that influence offending in residential communities or

¹⁵ Bjørge 2013, p. 9.

¹⁶ Tonry and Farrington 1995, p. 6.

¹⁷ Alschuler, Albert W., ‘The Changing Purposes of Criminal Punishment: A Retrospective on the Past Century and Some Thoughts About the Next,’ *University of Chicago Law Review*, 70(1), 2003, pp. 1-22.

¹⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime*. ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13, Annex, II(6)(d). Available at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/UN_standards_and_norms_in_crime_prevention_at_your_fingertips.pdf ; see also United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, ‘Introductory Handbook on The Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders,’ *Criminal Justice Handbook Series*, New York: UN, 2012, p.7; Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/Introductory_Handbook_on_the_Prevention_of_Recidivism_and_the_Social_Reintegration_of_Offenders.pdf.

¹⁹ Welsh and Farrington 2012, p. 128.

social networks.²⁰ Elsewhere in the literature, the broader construct of social crime prevention is used to encompass both developmental and community prevention concepts.²¹ Social crime prevention attempts to influence the factors that make people criminals or cause them to be involved in crime; it can operate on an individual, group, or societal level.²² Researchers focus on factors such as societal marginalization, troubled childhoods, and other negative influences, in terms of how those factors contribute to an individual's eventual engagement in criminal activity.²³ Finally, based on the premise that much crime is opportunistic, situational prevention endeavors to prevent specific crimes by reducing opportunities to commit them, while increasing the risk and difficulty of doing so.

A contrasting approach to theorizing crime prevention involves importing concepts from the public health literature. This perspective focuses on violence as a threat to community health, rather than primarily as a threat to community order.²⁴ From this vantage point, scholars describe primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention.²⁵ Primary prevention encompasses efforts directed at entire populations. Secondary prevention is directed at specific risk groups. And tertiary prevention, with the greatest specificity, targets individuals and groups already known to engage in problematic behavior.²⁶ When gazing through a public health lens, one may view crimes as “intentional injuries,” which in turn form part of a larger category of public health problems. This perspective on crime emphasizes prevention over reaction, and the reduction of risk factors over the incapacitation of offenders.²⁷

A New Conceptualization of Crime Prevention

Existing crime prevention models, as observed by Tore Bjørgo, are generally narrow in scope, do not incorporate key aspects of other models, and “come across as competing prevention models that cannot easily be integrated with each other, either theoretically or as practical strategies for action.”²⁸ To integrate the strengths of previous approaches into a more holistic model, Bjørgo has put forth a nine-part crime prevention model that incorporates key elements from multiple

²⁰ Crawford and Evans 2017. In some contexts, community safety has been suggested as either overlapping generally with community prevention, or as an umbrella term to substitute for “crime prevention.”

²¹ E.g., Crawford and Evans 2017; Hughes, Gordon, *Understanding Crime Prevention: Social Control, Risk, and Late Modernity*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press, 1998; Sutton, Adam, et al., *Crime Prevention: Principles, Perspectives, and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

²² Bjørgo 2013, p. 9.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Moore, Mark H., ‘Public Health and Criminal Justice Approaches to Prevention,’ *Crime and Justice*, 19, 1995, pp. 237-262.

²⁵ Brantingham, Paul J. and Frederic L. Faust, ‘A Conceptual Model of Crime Prevention,’ *Crime & Delinquency*, 22(3), 1976 pp. 284-296; cf. van Dijk, J.J.M. and J. de Waard, ‘Two-Dimensional Typology of Crime Prevention Projects,’ *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, 1991, pp. 483-503.

²⁶ Bjørgo 2013.

²⁷ Moore 1995. Tonry and Farrington reject an overtly public health-focused typology, arguing that the approach may be less useful, as “only specialists are likely to understand the distinctions being made.” Tonry and Farrington 1995, p. 2. Yet they clarify that developmental, community, and situational prevention all contain elements of the public health approach. Others, such as Bjørgo, incorporate concepts relating to primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention into models containing elements from the other major approaches as well, as discussed below.

²⁸ Bjørgo 2013, Preface.

approaches.²⁹ In his book, *Strategies for Preventing Terrorism*, Bjørgo proceeds to apply this general crime prevention model in the terrorism context. Bjørgo's approach to terrorism prevention is discussed later in this chapter. But in order to reach that point, Bjørgo presents a broad model for crime prevention, and discusses the following critical elements of that model:

1. Establishing and maintaining *normative barriers* to committing criminal acts;
2. *Reducing recruitment* to criminal social environments and activities by eliminating or reducing the social root causes and individual processes that lead to criminality;
3. *Deterrence* by getting potential perpetrators to refrain from criminal acts through the threat of punishment;
4. *Disruption* by stopping criminal acts before they are carried out;
5. *Protecting vulnerable targets* against criminal acts by reducing opportunities;
6. *Reducing the harmful consequences* of criminal acts;
7. *Reducing the rewards* from criminal acts;
8. *Incapacitation* (or neutralization) by denying perpetrators the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts;
9. *Desistance and rehabilitation* by making it possible for people who have been involved in, or punished for, crime to return to a normal life.

The steps enumerated above may function as a chain of successive barriers to committing crimes, in which individuals who proceed past one barrier may be stopped by the next one or another following that. For each of the above mechanisms as applied to each type of crime, Bjørgo asserts that we must determine what kinds of measures can be used to activate the mechanisms; who will be the principal actors in charge of implementing the measures; and who are the target groups for the measures. It is also necessary to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and side effects of activating the preventive mechanisms.

In identifying the target groups for various prevention strategies, Bjørgo embraces concepts derived from the public health model. He refers to primary prevention, secondary prevention, and tertiary prevention (as discussed above). Bjørgo also adds a fourth category, which encompasses prevention targeted at victims of crime.³⁰ Finally, Bjørgo notes the importance of considering unintended side effects of measures implemented to reduce crime.

Although Bjørgo's nine-point model and the other models referenced above differ in their orientations and priorities, they jointly shed light on essential parameters of crime prevention. Each one has been elaborated on in significant depth and occupies a substantial place in the literature. The foregoing theoretical sketch, while elementary, provides a bedrock foundation and point of departure for exploring the contributions of the crime prevention literature for the prevention of terrorism.

²⁹ Bjørgo also discusses the risk management model of crime prevention. This approach involves tailoring prevention efforts in proportion to the threat levels presented by particular crimes. Threat levels, in turn, are measured as the product of the would-be perpetrator's intention, and ability to effectuate that intention. Similarly, the risk of the specified crime is measured as the product of the probability of its occurrence and the magnitude of the consequences, should the event occur. In this model, risk can be diminished by reducing intention, capacity, vulnerability, or consequences. Bjørgo 2013, p. 10.

³⁰ Bjørgo 2013, p. 26.

Bringing Terrorism Prevention into the Picture: Contributions from Situational Crime Prevention and Other Models

The prevention of terrorism, as defined in Chapter 2 of this volume, entails the anticipation of risk factors giving rise to terrorist group formation, terrorist campaign initiation, and/or specific attack preparations. In turn, preparedness entails taking proactive and preemptive measures to reduce risks and threats of terrorist crimes and if that turns out to be insufficient, reducing the negative impact of terrorist attacks through a set of planned precautionary measures aimed at strengthening governmental readiness and societal resilience. Along a similarly proactive and preemptive vein, crime prevention refers to efforts to prevent crime or criminal offending in the first instance – before the act has actually been committed.³¹

Terrorism can be described (though not defined) as a particular form of crime – i.e., crime that has a political motive. Therefore, one logical manner of conceptualizing terrorism prevention is as a form of crime prevention. Yet some researchers, policymakers, and other commentators perceive terrorism as fundamentally different from other forms of crime, pointing to a number of terrorism’s characteristics that purportedly distinguish it from “ordinary” crimes. These individuals argue that terrorists’ ideological motivations, and resulting levels of commitment by often fanatical offenders to their causes, render their cost-benefit calculations essentially incomparable to those of ordinary or traditional criminals.³²

Clarke and Newman have endeavored to refute the perception that terrorism and conventional crime are fundamentally dissimilar.³³ In this pursuit, they consider factors such as the motivations, determination level, funding sources, and scale and organization of events, for both terrorists and conventional criminals. Clarke and Newman conclude that the distinctions between terrorism and conventional crime “rarely stand close scrutiny and from the perspective of situational prevention are of marginal importance.”³⁴ For present purposes, it is worth simply noting two points. First, acts of terrorism are, in legal terms, crimes and as such, are generally prosecuted by the state and punishable within the criminal justice system. Indeed, many definitions of terrorism incorporate illegality as a necessary element - if the act is not illegal i.e., if it is not a crime, then it is not terrorism. In addition, the conceptual differences between various types of conventional crime – such as murder, rape, or assault on the one hand versus perjury, fraud, or trespassing on the other – arguably are at least as substantive as the supposed differences between crime and terrorism.³⁵

Many other researchers, accepting the view of terrorism as a severe form of crime, have increasingly tailored and applied concepts from the crime prevention literature to terrorism prevention in recent years. Within that general framework, many of the resulting studies approach the problem as one of situational crime prevention. Yet other models have been applied in the

³¹ Welsh and Farrington 2012, p. 128.

³² Gruenewald et al. 2015, p. 436.

³³ Clarke and Newman, 2006.

³⁴ Ibid. 2006, p. 6.

³⁵ Newman, Graeme R. and Ronald V. Clarke, ‘Policing Terrorism: An Executive’s Guide,’ US Department of Justice, 2008.

context of terrorism prevention as well. For example, some have advocated a public health approach,³⁶ while others have considered routine activities and social learning theories.³⁷

It is useful to delve into more detail concerning some of the most relevant crime prevention theories prior to considering their application in the terrorism context. Accordingly, the discussion below begins by addressing situational and environmental crime prevention and their underlying criminological foundations. The discussion will then trace some of the ways in which scholars and practitioners have applied these theories toward terrorism prevention. Finally, this section will address some applications of crime prevention theories other than situational crime prevention in the terrorism context.

Situational Crime Prevention

Situational crime prevention (SCP) is essentially “the science of reducing opportunities for crime.”³⁸ This environmentally-focused approach differs fundamentally from forms of crime prevention that seek to bring about lasting change in the criminal or delinquent dispositions of individuals.³⁹ SCP does not focus on dispositions at all, but rather on immediate circumstances as determinants of crime. SCP approaches are thus designed to manipulate environments in ways that make criminal action less attractive by: increasing the difficulties of crime; increasing the immediate risks of getting caught; reducing the rewards of offending; removing excuses for offending; and reducing temptations and provocations.⁴⁰

SCP may be characterized as part of environmental crime prevention, which subsumes both situational approaches and broader planning initiatives. For example, environmental crime prevention may encompass initiatives in urban design and planning. It illuminates temporal and spatial elements that influence offender decision-making,⁴¹ as opposed to social and psychological contributors, and aims to reduce crime by designing or modifying the physical environment to reduce opportunities for crime to occur.⁴² SCP thus benefits from the assumption within environmental criminology that contextual factors shape human behavior, including decisions to engage in delinquency and commit crimes.⁴³ Environmental crime prevention incorporates concepts from place-based approaches including crime pattern theory, routine activities theory, and hot spot analysis, among others.⁴⁴

³⁶ E.g., Bhui, Kamaldeep, et al., ‘A Public Health Approach to Understanding and Preventing Violent Radicalization,’ *BMC Medicine*, 10(1), 2012, p. 16.

³⁷ E.g., Hamm, Mark S. *Terrorism as Crime: From Oklahoma City to Al-Qaeda and Beyond*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.

³⁸ Clarke and Newman 2006, p. 4.

³⁹ Clarke, Ronald V., ‘The Theory and Practice of Situational Crime Prevention’; in: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 2018. Available at: <https://oxfordre.com/criminology/abstract/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264079-e-327?Rskkey=dP2uJ8&result=2>.

⁴⁰ Clarke 2018.

⁴¹ Freilich et al. 2019, p. 1284.

⁴² Sutton et al. 2008.

⁴³ Gruenewald et al 2015.

⁴⁴ Freilich et al. 2019. The relationships of different criminological theories in this arena to one another is described in varying ways in the literature. For example, environmental criminology has been described at times as essentially

SCP similarly rests on a foundation or “family” of related criminological theories.⁴⁵ These include routine activity theory,⁴⁶ crime pattern theory,⁴⁷ and rational choice theory.⁴⁸ Routine activity theory focuses on the circumstances in which individuals commit predatory criminal acts, rather than focusing on the characteristics of offenders. According to this perspective, the structure of the routine activities of an individual’s life influences criminal opportunities and thereby affects trends in crime. For example, individual routines of traveling to and from work, shopping, or engaging in recreational activities influence the likelihood of when and where a crime will be committed and who will be the victim.⁴⁹ According to routine activity theory, the three minimal elements necessary for a crime to occur include a likely offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian.⁵⁰ Somewhat similarly, crime pattern theory holds that crimes do not occur randomly or uniformly in time, in locations, and in society, but rather result from interactions among a set of sociocultural, legal, economic, and physical variables.⁵¹

Finally, rational choice theory highlights the process of offender decision-making, and holds that offenders choose to commit crimes for the benefits they confer.⁵² Criminals are understood to thoughtfully weigh the costs and benefits of alternative courses of conduct prior to their target selection and planning.⁵³ In applying this model to specific crimes, it is helpful to evaluate the choice structuring properties that factor into offender decisions. Choice structuring properties include the characteristics of offenses “such as type and amount of pay-off, perceived risk, skill needed and so on” that the offender perceives as “especially salient to his or her goals, motives, experiences, abilities, expertise, and preferences.”⁵⁴ Understanding and anticipating these decision-making processes enables the prevention of crime.⁵⁵ Together with routine activity theory and crime pattern theory, rational choice theory contributes some of the related foundational tenets underlying SCP.

Applications to Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness

synonymous with crime pattern theory (e.g., Gruenewald et al. 2015), or, alternatively, as resting upon it. Regardless of the precise configuration of the relationships between these theories, they clearly comprise related theories forming a mutually reinforcing branch of criminology.

⁴⁵ Gruenewald et al. 2015.

⁴⁶ Cohen, Lawrence and Marcus Felson, ‘Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach,’ *American Sociological Review*, 44(4), 1979 pp. 588-608.

⁴⁷ Brantingham, Patricia and Paul Brantingham, ‘Environment, Routine, and Situation: Toward a Pattern Theory of Crime’; in: Clarke, Ronald and Marcus Felson (eds.), *Routine Activity and Rational Choice: Advances in Criminological Theory*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993, pp. 259-294.

⁴⁸ Cornish, Derek and Ronald V. Clarke, ‘Understanding Crime Displacement: An Application of Rational Choice Theory,’ *Criminology*, 25(4), 1987, pp. 933-948.

⁴⁹ Madero-Hernandez, Arelys and Bonnie Fisher, ‘Routine Activity Theory’; in: Cullen, Francis and Pamela Wilcox (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminological Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 513.

⁵⁰ Clarke, Ronald V. and Patricia M. Harris, ‘A Rational Choice Perspective on the Targets of Automobile Theft,’ *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health*, 2(1), 1992, p. 26; Cohen, Lawrence and Marcus Felson 1979.

⁵¹ Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993.

⁵² Clarke and Harris 1992, p. 25.

⁵³ Gruenewald et al. 2015.

⁵⁴ Cornish and Clarke 1987, p. 935.

⁵⁵ Gruenewald et al. 2015.

In recent decades, researchers have applied SCP principles to the prevention of terrorism. Clarke and Newman initiated this trend with the publication of their pioneering book, *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, in 2006. Therein, the authors assert that terrorism is a form of crime in all essential respects, albeit crime with a political motive. They set out to view terrorism through the lens of opportunity reduction. The authors argue that by using SCP techniques to remove opportunities for terrorism to occur, societies can reduce the incidence of attacks. However, new opportunities must be continuously re-evaluated as terrorists adapt to their changing environments.

Following publication of *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, researchers have increasingly focused on applying criminological perspectives to terrorism, often through the lens of SCP. While some scholars consider how to change the dispositions of terrorists by exploring “the applicability of traditional sociological theories of crime to terrorism,”⁵⁶ others follow Clarke and Newman’s example by focusing instead on removing opportunities for terrorist crimes. This latter group resolved to “eschew the intractability of individual behavior and note the promise of preventing terrorist crimes by altering their environments.”⁵⁷

The Early Intersection of Situational Crime Prevention with Terrorism Prevention

Analyzing the opportunity structure for terrorism, as described by Clarke and Newman, involves considering the arrangements of everyday life that create opportunities ripe for exploitation by terrorists. Thus, the authors apply the underlying principles of routine activity theory, crime pattern theory, and rational choice theory – all integrated within a SCP approach – to the politically motivated crime of terrorism.

Beginning with the assumption that “all human action is the outcome of an interaction between motivation and opportunity”⁵⁸ – also described as the interaction between organism and environment⁵⁹ – Clarke and Newman focus on the latter component of this equation by analyzing the opportunity structure for terrorism.⁶⁰ To shed light on the concept of terrorist opportunity, they divide such opportunity into four pillars, comprising targets, weapons, tools, and facilitating conditions. The authors additionally distill twenty principles from the crime prevention literature that, taken together, help construct an approach for “outsmarting the terrorists.” Collectively, these twenty principles require experts to “identify the opportunity structure of particular kinds of terrorist attacks, describe the steps that terrorists take from the beginning to the end and aftermath of their terrorist attacks and finally, identify points at which we may intervene in order to interrupt the terrorist’s journey to destruction.”⁶¹

⁵⁶ Freilich, et al. 2019.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Clarke and Newman 2006, p. 7.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁶⁰ Others have argued that this manner of explaining human behavior is overly reductionist, and that the “objective, value-free-terms” encounter particular difficulties in the realm of terrorist activity, which is generally “underpinned by a sense of grievance.” Cf. Fussey, Pete, ‘An Economy of Choice? Terrorist Decision-Making and Criminological Rational Choice Theories Reconsidered,’ *Security Journal*, 24(1), 2011, p. 85.

⁶¹ Clarke and Newman 2006, p. 7. The 20 principles that Clarke and Newman interpret from the SCP literature for outsmarting the terrorists are: 1) We must not rely on changing the hearts and minds of terrorists (i.e., we should focus on reducing terrorists’ opportunities rather than exclusively on reducing their motivations); 2) we must not depend on

To undertake this comprehensive type of SCP analysis, one must “think [like a] terrorist.”⁶² For example, one can attempt to replicate the decision-making process of terrorists in considering the first pillar of terrorist opportunity, which involves the selection of targets. Assessing the relative attractiveness and vulnerability of potential targets in the same manner as a terrorist might do facilitates the establishment of priorities for protection in terms of target hardening.⁶³ For addressing single-terror attacks undertaken by foreign-based terrorists (e.g., the 9/11 attacks), the authors propose an EVIL DONE analytical framework. This acronym indicates that targets considered attractive by terrorists are those which encompass some combination of the following characteristics: Exposed, Vital, Iconic, Legitimate, Destructible, Occupied, Near, and Easy.

After identifying terrorists’ preferred targets, the individuals and organizations charged with outsmarting them – i.e., governments, businesses, and security professionals – should take steps to interfere with terrorists’ abilities to attack those targets at greatest risk. For this purpose, they may impose target hardening measures, or devise ways to reduce the perceived rewards for certain types of attacks. Accordingly, the EVIL DONE framework is designed to facilitate more efficient resource allocation than if all targets in society were considered equally vulnerable and in need of equal levels of protection. Implicitly, the benefits obtained by hardening targets in this manner are contingent upon the strength of the EVIL DONE template as an assessment tool. Other researchers have studied the EVIL DONE template and endeavored to extend Clarke and Newman’s work on terrorists’ target selection further, as discussed in the next section.

Clarke and Newman propose a similar analysis to EVIL DONE for understanding and assessing terrorists’ choices of weapons, for which they use the acronym MURDEROUS. This framework incorporates nine attributes thought to guide terrorist actors’ choices of weapons, including Multipurpose, Undetectable, Removable, Destructive, Enjoyable, Reliable, Obtainable, Uncomplicated, and Safe. The implication is that by understanding which weapons are most attractive to terrorists and why, authorities will be better positioned to interfere with terrorists’ opportunities to obtain those weapons and their perceived rewards for doing so. Roughly speaking, terrorists’ weapons may be grouped into the following three categories: guns and other small arms; explosives; and unconventional weapons, including nuclear-related, chemical, and biological weapons (sometimes referred to as weapons of mass destruction or WMDs). Application of the MURDEROUS template can help illuminate how terrorists make choices within and among these three classes of weapons.

“taking out” the terrorists; 3) we must develop solutions for each distinct form of terrorism; 4) we must accept that terrorists are rational (i.e., incorporating rational choice theory); 5) we must learn how terrorists accomplish their tasks; 6) we must control the tools and weapons of terrorism; 7) we must concentrate preventive resources on the most vulnerable targets; 8) we must formulate separate preventive policies for terrorism at home and overseas; 9) we must accept that the threat of terrorism will never disappear; 10) we must always be one step ahead; 11) we must learn from the past and anticipate the future; 12) we must match the rationality of terrorists in devising solutions; 13) we must beware of the magic bullet; 14) we must make security decisions within the context of predetermined budgets; 15) we must ensure that federal antiterrorism budgets are disbursed according to risk; 16) we must not depend on government to do it all; 17) we must develop dual benefit solutions; 18) we must not take public good will for granted; 19) we must not let secrecy be a cloak for incompetence; and 20) we must not be daunted by the enormous task before us.

⁶² The analogue in the crime prevention literature, which serves as the basis for Clarke and Newman’s terminology, is to “think thief.” Clarke and Newman 2006, p 20.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 15.

Finally, Clarke and Newman afford consideration to tools and facilitating conditions, the remaining two pillars of terrorist opportunity, and the “major factors that bring weapons and targets together.”⁶⁴ While tools are tangible products such as cars, trucks, credit cards, false identification documents and cell phones, facilitating conditions are social and physical arrangements of society that make it easier for terrorists to perpetrate attacks. Three main approaches for tightening controls on tools include: modifying the tools themselves to make them more difficult for terrorists to use; tightening up their supply or reducing their accessibility to terrorists; and tracking their distribution to determine who has acquired them.⁶⁵ The authors conclude that efforts to reduce terrorism have not sufficiently addressed tools as such, and that “much more could be done to make life difficult for the terrorists by developing controls on the many products that they routinely use.”⁶⁶

Regarding facilitating conditions, Clarke and Newman identify five categories - those that make crime Easy, Safe, Excusable, Enticing, and Rewarding (ESEER). The authors argue that analysis of these conditions, much like analysis of the other pillars of terrorist opportunity, can help to identify preventive options. First, one must recognize that facilitating conditions are of varying importance, and not all of them are susceptible to change. Therefore, after identifying relevant facilitating conditions to a given type of terrorism, one should assess the chances of successfully mitigating those conditions, as well as the potential benefits of doing so.⁶⁷ In assessing the potential benefits, one should consider whether the condition facilitates not just the targeted form of terrorism, but other forms as well. For example, Clarke and Newman, writing in 2006, note that certain lax conditions at the border may facilitate terrorists’ opportunities to smuggle plutonium or uranium into the US for the assembly of a nuclear bomb; but in analyzing the relevant border conditions, one should note that the conditions also facilitate the unlawful entry of other weapons of terrorism and even of terrorists as well. By mitigating facilitating conditions, societal actors can increase the risks and difficulty of the targeted form of attack, while reducing its rewards and eliminating excuses and enticements.

An important consideration related to SCP approaches and the environmental changes they produce relates to considering the costs these approaches impose on privacy and civil liberties. Clarke and Newman argue that SCP compares favorably to intelligence-led approaches to counterterrorism, such as those that may be relied upon to “take out” terrorists. Intelligence-led policing “necessitates the collection of enormous amounts of information without any way to assess its relevance in predicting which individuals may commit the next terrorist attack.”⁶⁸ In contrast, when using SCP approaches, there are many instances in which one can insert broad obstacles to terrorist planning and action without needing to know the identities or other personal information about the potential terrorists at all.⁶⁹ The emphasis in SCP is not on predicting a particular attack by any specific individual, but rather on anticipating different *kinds* of attacks and, accordingly, designing and implementing measures that interfere with terrorists’ opportunities to commit those kinds of attacks.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 121.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 125.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 134.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 204.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 207.

An implicit premise when addressing terrorism as crime rather than as a national security threat is that not all terrorist attacks will be stopped, but their likelihood will be reduced. As Alex Schmid has noted, SCP approaches therefore may help to “de-escalate unrealistic expectations” about eradicating the terrorist threat entirely. Similarly, emphasizing SCP can help put the terrorism threat in perspective because, “[l]ike many other forms of crime, terrorism will probably never go away – but it can be made a manageable risk if there is greater focus on situational and structural prevention.”⁷¹

Despite clear differences, SCP and other criminological perspectives are not mutually exclusive.⁷² Rather, environmental and situational approaches, including SCP, may complement perspectives that focus on psychological and social causes of terrorism – sometimes also referred to as “root causes.” Accordingly, counterterrorism professionals may pursue different strands of crime prevention simultaneously.⁷³ Militarized approaches to terrorism prevention – notably, efforts to eliminate or incapacitate known terrorists – may also be pursued simultaneously with crime prevention approaches. However, SCP proponents generally advocate against allowing efforts to “take out” terrorists dominate society’s response to terrorism. Rather, SCP in the terrorism context incorporates the assumption “that there will usually be an unlimited supply of potential terrorists who adhere to aggrieved ideological movements and whose goals are difficult to satisfy”.⁷⁴ In addition, SCP proponents argue from a practical standpoint that efforts to eradicate terrorists are simply unlikely to work, just as imposing severe punishments on conventional criminals has not deterred and stopped crime.⁷⁵

In *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, Clarke and Newman lay the foundation for a new approach to terrorism prevention based on SCP. This approach emphasizes that terrorists confront circumstantial and logistical challenges just as other criminals do, and that societies can diminish the incidence of terrorism by studying and reducing the opportunities to commit terrorist acts. Meaningful analysis of terrorist opportunities is facilitated by breaking such opportunities into their fundamental components – targets, weapons, tools, and facilitating conditions – and then using the concepts introduced by Clarke and Newman to understand, anticipate, and take steps to manipulate terrorist decision-making. However, these foundations, as described by Clarke and Newman, are largely conceptual.⁷⁶ In the intervening years since publication of *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, a few researchers have tested the concepts advanced therein, but most subsequent studies applying SCP to terrorism have not endeavored to empirically assess Clarke and Newman’s claims.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, substantial progress has been made in extending the principles underlying Clarke and Newman’s work and applying crime prevention approaches in a wide array of terrorism contexts.

⁷¹ Schmid, Alex P., ‘Terrorism Prevention as Situational Crime Prevention,’ *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT)*, 2012. Available at: <https://icct.nl/publication/terrorism-prevention-as-situational-crime-prevention/>.

⁷² Bjørge 2013.

⁷³ Freilich, et. al. 2019.

⁷⁴ Freilich, et al. 2019, p. 1285.

⁷⁵ Newman and Clarke 2008.

⁷⁶ Freilich, et al. 2019.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Subsequent Applications: 2006-2019

Researchers have continued to apply SCP and other crime prevention principles to terrorism prevention in the wake of *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (2006). In this section, subsequent studies pertaining to SCP are discussed, a few examples are highlighted, and significant absences are identified. Freilich, Gruenewald, and Mandala add clarity to the developing intersection of SCP and terrorism in 2019, when they published an overview entitled *Situational Crime Prevention and Terrorism: An Assessment of 10 Years of Research*. That article systematically reviews the literature between 2006 and 2016, as it concerns SCP's intersection with terrorism prevention. The table below, reproduced from the article by Freilich et al., indicates the number of relevant publications each year during the designated period. In total, Freilich and colleagues identify 60 such studies. Relevant publications peaked in 2009 with 11 in total that year. This increase was attributable to a special issue of *Crime Prevention Studies* in 2009, focusing exclusively on the application of SCP principles to terrorism and including contributions from several prominent authors.⁷⁸

Table 6. Year of Publication.

Year	Frequency	%
2006	1	1.7
2007	4	6.7
2008	3	5.0
2009	11	18.3
2010	3	5.0
2011	6	10.0
2012	10	16.7
2013	6	10.0
2014	3	5.0
2015	9	15.0
2016	4	6.7
Total	60	100

In their review, Freilich and colleagues analyze selected attributes of the 60 identified publications in order to present an overview of scholarship at the nexus of SCP with terrorism. For each publication, they examine variables related to the professional backgrounds of authors; publication outlets; methods used; and countries and terrorist groups that were the subjects of the studies. Although the studies all relate in some manner to the application of SCP to terrorism, their topics extend to far-ranging subject matters, largely reflecting the broad diversity of acts and events covered under the rubric of terrorism itself. For example, chapters from the special issue of *Crime Prevention Studies* cover areas as diverse as the spatio-temporal modeling of insurgency in Iraq⁷⁹;

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 1292-1293.

⁷⁹ Johnson, Shane D. and Alex Braithwaite, 'Spatio-Temporal Modelling of Insurgency in Iraq'; in: Freilich, Joshua D. and Graeme R. Newman 2009, pp. 9-32.

bioterrorism⁸⁰; and hostage-taking and kidnapping with a case study of Korean hostages in Afghanistan⁸¹, among several others.

Despite increasing interest in the intersection of SCP with terrorism, Freilich and colleagues observe that academics have “generally failed to respond” to the arguments made in *Outsmarting the Terrorists* by subjecting Clarke and Newman’s claims to scientific verification.⁸² To wit, only five of the 60 studies identified by Freilich and colleagues empirically test concepts derived from Clarke and Newman’s EVIL DONE framework for assessing the attractiveness of targets. Only one of the 60 studies empirically tests MURDEROUS, the template Clarke and Newman proposed for assessing terrorists’ choice of weapons.⁸³ And none of the 60 studies endeavored to empirically examine Clarke and Newman’s claims concerning terrorists’ tools,⁸⁴ nor the ESEER framework for facilitating conditions.⁸⁵

While it is not possible to discuss each study that applies SCP principles in a terrorism-related context, it is worth briefly considering a few examples here to illustrate how subsequent works have begun to test and flesh out critical concepts. The examples that follow are limited to the context of terrorist target selection, with a focus on Clarke and Newman’s EVIL DONE framework.⁸⁶ As discussed above, Clarke and Newman describe a theory according to which terrorists’ selection of targets is largely based on tactical considerations. Capturing this view, the EVIL DONE acronym indicates features that terrorists are presumed to most value in their targets. Those targets most aligned with the EVIL DONE framework are considered most attractive and vulnerable. Specifically, targets are ostensibly more attractive and vulnerable to terrorists when they are Exposed, Vital, Iconic, Legitimate, Destructible, Occupied, Near, and Easy.

Subsequent studies have further illuminated the dynamics of terrorist target selection. Rachel Boba’s chapter in the special edition of *Crime Prevention Studies* endeavors to refine the EVIL DONE framework by further deconstructing each of its eight components into a set of items that can be scored easily and measured consistently across targets.⁸⁷ Boba provides a risk assessment methodology for local officials and researchers to evaluate the likelihood of terrorist attacks for

⁸⁰ Clark, William, ‘Bioterrorism: A Situational Crime Prevention Approach’; in: Freilich, Joshua D. and Graeme R. Newman 2009, pp. 93-110.

⁸¹ Yun, Minwoo, ‘Application of Situational Crime Prevention to Terrorist Hostage Taking and Kidnapping: A Case Study of 23 Korean Hostages in Afghanistan’; in: Freilich, Joshua D. and Graeme R. Newman 2009, pp. 111-140.

⁸² Freilich et al. 2019, p. 1296.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 1300. Subsequent to the time period examined by Freilich and colleagues, however, two of the study’s authors tested the MURDEROUS framework in a separate study comparing successful and unsuccessful terrorist assassinations. Consistent with the MURDEROUS framework, they found that assassinations were more likely to succeed when terrorists use firearms rather than explosives. Mandala, Marissa and Joshua D. Freilich, ‘Disrupting Terrorist Assassinations Through Situational Crime Prevention,’ *Crime and Delinquency*, 64(12), 2018, pp. 1515-1537.

⁸⁴ However, as noted by Freilich et al. 2019, pp. 1300-1301, Mandala examined Clarke and Newman’s tools-related claims in her doctoral dissertation. Mandala, Marissa, et al., *An Analysis of Successful and Unsuccessful Terrorist Assassinations: Informing Counterterrorism Through Situational Crime Prevention*. City University of New York, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2018.

⁸⁵ Freilich et al. 2019, p. 1296.

⁸⁶ This target selection framework has received more attention than other concepts relating to terrorist opportunity discussed in Ronald and Newman 2006 .

⁸⁷ Boba, Rachel, ‘EVIL DONE’; in: special issue of *Crime Prevention Studies*, edited by Joshua D. Freilich and Graeme R. Newman, 25, 2009, pp. 71-92.

individual targets, and strategies for aggregate analysis of groups of targets within local jurisdictions. The purpose of these methodologies is to enable officials to prioritize individual targets and groups of targets according to their respective needs for protection. Boba sets forth a scoring system for evaluating the EVIL DONE factors in more detail than previously existed in the literature, bringing the field “another step closer to quantifying and standardizing assessment of vulnerability based on the EVIL DONE approach.”⁸⁸ Thus, while Boba does not actually test the EVIL DONE framework nor apply it to potential targets, she extends the original template as set forth by Clarke and Newman to render it more readily usable by local officials and researchers.

More recently, in 2015, researchers analyzed the EVIL DONE target selection principles in connection with eco-terrorism, seeking to descriptively assess the attractiveness and vulnerability of targets selected by environmental and animal rights extremists.⁸⁹ The authors note that previous applications of SCP to terrorism were largely concentrated in the area of Islamist extremism, and posited (referencing Clarke and Newman) that the target selection process is likely to vary among forms of terrorism rooted in different backgrounds and ideologies. Accordingly, the authors venture away from Islamist ideologies and instead selected the relatively unexplored arena of target selection among eco-terrorists.

While Boba’s work focuses on providing a risk assessment methodology and strategies, Gruenewald and colleagues take the next step by actually applying the EVIL DONE model to targets that had previously been attacked. Their goal is to empirically examine how key characteristics of actual targets influenced the decision-making of eco-terrorists in the United States. Using the eight attributes of EVIL DONE for measurement, the study’s authors evaluate the extent to which eco-terrorists select targets based on vulnerability and attractiveness. Eco terrorism is defined to include ideologically motivated crimes committed by environmental and animal rights extremists, occurring between 1987 and 2012. Data were extracted from the American Terrorism Study (ATS), a database which monitors federal prosecutions of accused terrorist offenders and is housed at the University of Arkansas. In turn, the ATS relies on the definition of eco-terrorism provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): “the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally oriented, subnational group for environmental-political reason, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature.”⁹⁰ Based on their findings about the relative importance of different EVIL DONE attributes in rendering targets attractive and vulnerable, the authors provided preliminary policy recommendations for reducing the vulnerability of potential targets to eco-terrorism incidents.

While researchers have explored the application of SCP principles to terrorism, practitioners and policymakers have in turn utilized those principles for practical terrorism prevention. Some

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 77. A doctoral dissertation by Stacy Paton also explored EVIL DONE as a vulnerability assessment. Primary goals of the thesis were to present the EVIL DONE assessment methodology, test its validity, and evaluate its ability to predict the number of persons killed and injured by a terrorist attack at a specific location. Paton, Stacy, “EVIL DONE Vulnerability Assessment: Examining Terrorist Targets Through Situational Crime Prevention,” Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2013, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁹ Gruenewald et al. 2015.

⁹⁰ Jarboe, James F., ‘The Threat of Eco-Terrorism,’ *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, 12 February 2002. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20080311231725/http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress02/jarboe021202.htm>. Archived from the original on 11 March 2008; cit. Wikipedia (engl.), lemma ‘eco-terrorism-’.

governments have effectively implemented SCP strategies to protect their public spaces. For example, in the United States, the Department of Justice published a guide, *Policing Terrorism: An Executive's Guide*, in which Newman and Clarke provide guidance for police chiefs and other senior executives to utilize methods often reflecting SCP principles. In Britain, the Protect strand of the government's CONTEST strategy for counterterrorism essentially entails the application of SCP principles and target-hardening approaches.⁹¹ The National Counter Terrorism Security Office, a police unit that supports the Protect and Prepare strands of CONTEST, has recommended crime prevention measures to inhibit opportunities for committing terrorist acts. The office's advice booklet for businesses provides guidelines including recommendations for good lighting, closed circuit television (CCTV), perimeter fencing, and removal of exterior planting that obscures surveillance as protective measures, "as the presence of situational factors providing guardianship increases the risk of apprehension."⁹² The development of a protective "ring of steel" consisting of CCTV cameras, linked to real time computer-based analytics around significant locations in London's financial district has also been cited as an example of the implementation of SCP principles to prevent terrorism.⁹³ Other countries have implemented similar approaches to protect financial districts and other urban spaces as well.⁹⁴

Yet some researchers highlight the need for caution in looking to SCP strategies to protect public spaces from terrorism. Fussey contends that while target-hardening strategies clearly hold a place in countering terrorism, awareness of the "caveats and limitations" of these strategies "facilitates a more nuanced, appropriate and effective application."⁹⁵ A study by Robinson, Marchment and Gill examines whether domestic extremist crimes causing property damage were similar to property damage incidents perpetrated by conventional criminals. The results suggest that left-wing extremists do not behave in the same manner as conventional criminals, in that the left-wing extremists studied were "less likely to conform to theoretical expectations regarding the effect of guardianship on target selection decisions."⁹⁶ Specifically, the presence of lighting and CCTV at a target location is found to be less of a deterrent for those engaged in domestic extremist activity (in the form of direct action attacks) than for those engaged in conventional crime. Thus, while the SCP approach to terrorism prevention has gained traction, it may be more effective in relation to some threat areas than others. Continuing research will help to clarify the best applications for SCP in terrorism prevention, and perhaps shed light on the optimal manner of combining these strategies with other crime prevention and counter-terrorism strategies to form a more holistic paradigm.

Benefits, Drawbacks, and Future Directions

⁹¹ Fussey 2011, pp. 86, 88.

⁹² Robinson, Arlene, Zoe Marchment, and Paul Gill, 'Domestic Extremist Criminal Damage Events: Behaving Like Criminals or Terrorists,' *Security Journal*, 32(2), 2019, p. 155.

⁹³ Fussey 2011. However, the "ring of steel" around London's financial district was set up already in the 1990s.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Relatedly, researchers have evaluated the West Bank barrier constructed by the Israeli government from the perspective of SCP (Perry, Simon, et al. 'The Situational Prevention of Terrorism: An Evaluation of the Israeli West Bank Barrier,' *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 33(4), 2017 pp. 727-751.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 88.

⁹⁶ Robinson et al. 2019, p. 154.

In considering the optimal method of combining SCP with other crime prevention approaches – and combining the criminological perspective with those of other disciplines – it is useful to have a sense of the strengths and limitations of SCP in this domain.

One strength of the SCP approach is its pragmatism, reflected in its assumption that there is no possibility of “taking out” all terrorists. Rather, groups will replenish themselves and individuals who leave or are “eliminated” will be replaced by new recruits. Accordingly, SCP eschews the idea of attempting in vain to eradicate every terrorist and focuses more fruitfully on the attainable goal of reducing terrorist opportunities. Similarly, SCP does not endeavor to identify or address the biological or social factors that cause individuals to radicalize, but simply seeks to reduce opportunities across the board for terrorist acts to occur. Thus, to the extent it prevents terrorism, SCP is likely to do so in more immediate and tangible ways than approaches emphasizing criminal “dispositions.” Further, addressing terrorism through the lens of situational crime prevention may lower societal and cultural expectations for its complete eradication, and contribute to a more balanced perception of terrorism in relation to other threats.⁹⁷ Finally, SCP may result in a “diffusion of benefits,” which refers to reductions in crime or terrorism that extend even further than the crimes targeted by preventive measures introduced.⁹⁸

Yet, critics raise important points concerning the limitations and drawbacks of approaching terrorism through an SCP framework. First, some criminologists and others argue that by neglecting the need to explain why people commit crimes of terrorism, SCP incorporates an insurmountable flaw. In this view, by focusing on reducing opportunities through environmental change rather than criminal dispositions, SCP presents an “overly simplistic” approach, while “ignoring the myriad of sociological, psychological, political, and other explanatory factors.”⁹⁹ Another way of expressing this type of criticism is to say that SCP treats the “symptoms” of terrorism rather than the causes.¹⁰⁰ Essentially, it may provide a band-aid solution, but neglects to address the persistent “root causes” that push and pull individuals to commit terrorist crimes.¹⁰¹ Similarly, SCP may be flawed in that it applies a “one-size-fits-all” model, rather than properly accounting for terrorists’ actual motivations and perspectives.¹⁰²

Another perceived drawback of SCP relates to the idea of displacement, though the extent to which this phenomenon occurs is contested. The argument for displacement holds that if an individual is prevented from completing a contemplated or aspirational terrorist act through SCP measures, the individual will simply redirect his or her nefarious efforts to another, softer target. The higher commitment levels presumed to motivate acts of terrorism are seen as support that would-be perpetrators will not be deterred. For example, the trend among perpetrators of international terrorism to target large numbers of defenseless civilians may be perceived as a response to the “hardening” of more symbolic targets through the addition of new layers of security.¹⁰³ Yet Clarke and Newman, among others, argue that the risk of displacement has been overstated.¹⁰⁴ Indeed,

⁹⁷ Schmid 2012.

⁹⁸ Perry et al. 2017, p. 732.

⁹⁹ Gruenewald et al. 2015, p. 449.

¹⁰⁰ Bjørge, Tore, *Preventing Crime: A Holistic Approach*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 222.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Fussey 2011, p. 95.

¹⁰³ Bjørge 2013, pp. 67-68.

¹⁰⁴ Clarke and Newman 2006, p. 27.

Freilich, Gruenewald, and Mandala assert that “[b]ecause different types of terrorism have varying opportunity structures, successful intervention against one form of terrorism attack will usually not result in displacement to another.”¹⁰⁵ One example often cited in support of the argument against displacement relates to the success authorities achieved at reducing aircraft hijackings – without any clear redirection to aircraft bombings – through added security measures following the wave of hijackings in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁰⁶

Researchers sometimes draw a distinction between displacement and adaptation, with displacement perceived as an immediate shift in plans and adaptation occurring along a longer time horizon.¹⁰⁷ Criminal adaptation is the process in which offenders circumvent preventive measures over time.¹⁰⁸ Thus, while Clarke and Newman do not perceive displacement as a realistic drawback to their SCP approach, they nonetheless acknowledge the idea that terrorists will react to changes in their environments and opportunities by attempting to exploit new opportunity structures that present themselves. Accordingly, security professionals should anticipate the new approaches terrorists are likely to take.

SCP may also provide a more realistic strategy in some locations and geopolitical climates than others. Generally, SCP approaches are more suited than military ones to deal with forms of terrorism that appear in stable societies.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the approach is less applicable when terrorism develops into guerrilla warfare, or is part of an insurgency, as in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq.¹¹⁰

One challenge to researching the merits and effectiveness of SCP is the difficulties academics encounter in accessing official, crime-related data to study terrorism in the US and many other countries.¹¹¹ Freilich and colleagues suggest that SCP researchers should “think creatively about strategies to gain the cooperation of official agencies to [gain] access to their terrorism data.”¹¹² Increased access to official data, rather than having to rely exclusively on open source data, could help scholars to devise more effective terrorism prevention strategies in the criminological realm.

Additionally, Freilich and colleagues highlight the dearth of empirical testing to validate the claims and arguments advanced by Clarke and Newman in *Outsmarting the Terrorists*.¹¹³ In particular, the counterterrorism community stands to benefit from empirical evaluations of Clarke and Newman’s four pillars of terrorist opportunity. In connection with target selection, preliminary studies of the EVIL DONE framework shed light on how this type of research can be helpful from

¹⁰⁵ Freilich et al. 2019, p. 1287.

¹⁰⁶ Perry 2017, p. 730; Clarke and Newman 2006, pp. 47-49. Cf. Enders, Walter and Todd Sandler, ‘The Effectiveness of Antiterrorism Policies: a Vector-Autoregression-Intervention Analysis,’ *American Political Science Review*, 87(4), 1993 pp. 829-844.

¹⁰⁷ Freilich et al. 2019, p. 1303; Clarke and Newman 2006, pp. 49-50.

¹⁰⁸ Robinson et al. 2019, p. 164, citing Clarke, Ronald V. ‘Seven Misconceptions of Situational Crime Prevention’; in: Tilley, Nick (ed.), *Handbook of Crime Prevention Community Safety*. London: Routledge, 2005, pp. 39-70.

¹⁰⁹ Bjørgo 2016, p. 191.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Freilich, et al. 2019, p. 1299.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 1296.

a pragmatic and policy standpoint.¹¹⁴ In the study of EVIL DONE's application with respect to target selection for eco-terrorism crimes, Gruenewald and colleagues interestingly observed that some of the eight EVIL DONE measures are likely interrelated, and therefore may reflect overlapping dimensions of target vulnerability and attractiveness. The authors suggest that future research would be well advised to utilize data reduction techniques and multivariate analyses "to identify... conceptually distinct measures of key target attributes."¹¹⁵ In addition, the authors note that a better understanding of target vulnerability and attractiveness may emerge by comparatively studying the relative risks to targets across various terrorist movements (beyond eco-terrorism), such as right-wing terrorism and international terrorism. Similarly, future studies could empirically evaluate Clarke and Newman's ESEER template for facilitating conditions. Freilich and colleagues point out that accounting for ideology in target selection could help to enhance the usefulness of the EVIL DONE template. Studies along the foregoing dimensions require sophisticated methods and a rigorous design.¹¹⁶

Beyond Situational Crime Prevention: The Broader Nexus of Criminology, Crime Prevention, and Terrorism

Scholars have increasingly sought to explore the ways in which criminology and terrorism studies may each benefit from developments on the other side of the disciplinary fence, including but also extending beyond the use of SCP and closely related approaches such as routine activities and rational choice. Some researchers have begun studying the application of other foundational models in criminology, such as strain theory¹¹⁷ and social disorganization theory,¹¹⁸ in terrorism-related contexts. Finally, Tore Bjørgo has developed a broad crime prevention approach that incorporates both SCP principles and other preventive strategies, and has demonstrated how that approach can provide a more comprehensive response than previous strategies to the wide-ranging terrorist threat.

There are many ways in which criminological theories might be applied to the study of terrorism, and researchers have only begun to scratch the surface. In comparison to SCP, however, some other areas of study within criminology are more variable in terms of the directness of their relationship with terrorism prevention. A special issue of the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*, published in 2015, was devoted entirely to criminological approaches to the study of terrorism. In their introduction to that special issue, Freilich and LaFree note that prior criminological studies of terrorism generally employed the perspectives of crime prevention models such as routine activities theory, rational choice theory, and SCP, and that further expansion into other major criminology frameworks would be beneficial. The authors reference social learning, classic strain, social control, life course, and psychological and biological

¹¹⁴ Ozer, M. Murat and Halil Akbas, 'The Application of Situational Crime Prevention to Terrorism,' *Turkish Journal of Police Studies*, 13(2), 2011, pp. 179-194.

¹¹⁵ Gruenewald et al. 2015, p. 451.

¹¹⁶ Freilich, et al. 2019, pp. 1301-1302.

¹¹⁷ PISOIU, Daniela, 'Subcultural Theory Applied to Jihadi and Right-Wing Radicalization in Germany,' *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27(1), 2015, pp. 9-28.

¹¹⁸ Fahey, Susan and Gary LaFree, 'Does Country-Level Social Disorganization Increase Terrorist Attacks?' *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27(1), 2015, pp. 81-111.

perspectives as other models into which terrorism-related research could beneficially expand.¹¹⁹ The special issue itself constitutes a “step in this direction,” with articles addressing anomie/strain, social disorganization, and under-explored routine activities frameworks.¹²⁰

In two related examples of research using criminological theories, Gary LaFree published articles respectively with Bianca Bersani in 2014,¹²¹ and Susan Fahey in 2015,¹²² exploring social disorganization theory in relation to terrorist attacks at the county level within the US, as well as at the country level. The implications of this work highlight the significance of place to finding patterns in the occurrence of terrorist violence. Drawing from the work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim on “anomie,” social disorganization may be conceptualized as the “inability of individuals within communities to self-regulate or to realize shared values and solve commonly experienced problems,” something thought to result from rapid social change.¹²³ A socially disorganized area “is one in which the residents are unable to prevent crime and deviance due to their inability to realize widely shared norms.”¹²⁴

Fahey and LaFree explore the connection between state instability and the incidence of terrorist attacks, focusing on ethnic war, revolutionary war, adverse regime change, and genocide as sources of instability. They found that politically unstable countries consistently experienced high levels of terrorist attacks and resulting fatalities. In considering the geographical concentration of terrorist attacks at the county level within the US, LaFree and Bersani found that terrorist attacks were more common in countries characterized by greater population heterogeneity and more residential instability. However, the findings are contrary to social disorganization theory predictions relating to concentrated disadvantage and its impact. In other words, some measures from social disorganization theory are useful for predicting geographical locations more at risk of terrorist attacks, while other measures are not. Further research along these lines could have important policy implications for the allocation of international and national resources to terrorism prevention.

An alternative approach to preventing terrorism derives from public health models. The roots of the public health approach are intertwined with criminology. Over twenty years ago, Moore wrote that the costs associated with violent crime constitute “an expensive part of the [United States’] overall health bill.”¹²⁵ As applied to terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, this argument is particularly compelling. The US House of Representatives recently passed legislation to extend funding for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund through 2090, covering the lifetime health expenses of first responders to the 9/11 attacks. The estimated cost of fully funding the trust

¹¹⁹ Freilich and LaFree 2015, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ LaFree, Gary and Bianca E. Bersani, ‘County-Level Correlates of Terrorist Attacks in the United States,’ *Criminology and Public Policy*, 13(3), 2014, pp. 455-481.

¹²² Fahey and LaFree 2015.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 82-83 (citing Shaw, Clifford and Henry McKay, *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

¹²⁴ Fahey and LaFree 2015, p. 82.

¹²⁵ Moore, Mark H., ‘Public Health and Criminal Justice Approaches to Prevention,’ *Crime and Justice*, 19, 1995, p. 240 (citing Miller, Ted et al., ‘Victim Costs of Violent Crime and Resulting Injuries,’ *Health Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 186-197).

is US \$10.2 billion,¹²⁶ in addition to the previous funding of nearly US \$7.4 billion.¹²⁷ Recent research has focused on the ways in which public health research and practice can inform the prevention of violent extremism or “violent radicalization.”¹²⁸ Bhui and colleagues argue that, in efforts to prevent terrorism, “epidemiology, psychology, sociology and other behavioral sciences can contribute important data towards prevention strategies, which have been used in public health programs to address violence.”¹²⁹ Public health approaches may be perceived as complementary to criminal justice,¹³⁰ and may be contextualized within a broader framework of “countering violent extremism.”¹³¹

Conclusion

Viewing terrorism fundamentally as crime – and informing policy from a perspective rooted in criminology and crime prevention – represents a shift from traditional approaches to terrorism studies, which more frequently draw from psychology and political science. While researchers and practitioners highlight both pros and cons of linking the prevention of terrorism with that of conventional crime, including organized crime, it is generally acknowledged that criminology holds at least some degree of value for the prevention of terrorism. However, much of that value remains currently untapped and under-explored. Nevertheless, the interdisciplinary nexus of terrorism studies and criminology has been gaining momentum over recent decades.

SCP models have been considered for terrorism prevention purposes with relative frequency as compared with other criminological models. SCP offers pragmatic strategies for reducing the occurrence of terrorism by diminishing opportunities for it to occur. This approach excludes consideration of the reasons why terrorists perpetrate their crimes, and strives only to block their opportunities and reduce their perceived rewards for doing so. In less immediate but still crucially important ways, other models of crime prevention provide valuable strategies as well. Tore Bjørgo’s nine-point crime prevention model recognizes this, and therefore incorporates, but also extends beyond SCP principles.

A review of the developing literature suggests that practitioners, policymakers, and researchers seeking to advance terrorism prevention and preparedness would be well-advised to tailor and incorporate crime prevention approaches into their work. Many criticisms of applying a crime prevention approach to the prevention of terrorism may be addressed through the recognition that approaches rooted in criminology need not be implemented to the exclusion of other methods, and are undoubtedly enhanced through interdisciplinary perspectives. As part of a holistic approach

¹²⁶ Rubin, Gabriel, “House Passes Bill Shoring Up 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 12, 2019. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/house-passes-bill-shoring-up-9-11-victim-compensation-fund-11562953352>.

¹²⁷ Kim, Catherine, “The Battle Over Extending the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, Explained,” *Vox*, July 29, 2019. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/2019/6/20/18691670/jon-stewart-9-11-september-11th-victim-compensation-fund-explained>.

¹²⁸ Bhui et al. 2012.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*; Moore 1995.

¹³¹ Weine, Stevan, et al., ‘Addressing Violent Extremism as Public Health Policy and Practice,’ *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 9(3), 2017, pp. 208-221.

extending across disciplines, additional work grounded in criminology and crime prevention applications stands to offer substantial benefits for the field of terrorism prevention and preparedness.

Kelly A. Berkell is an Attorney practicing Law in New York. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Center on Terrorism at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. She previously served as the National Security Fellow at Fordham Law School's Center on National Security, focusing on terrorism and cybersecurity. A graduate of New York University School of Law and Barnard College, Kelly previously practiced securities and white-collar criminal litigation, and served as Legislative Counsel to a New York State Assembly Member. Her recent research focuses on preventing and countering violent extremism, particularly where initiatives intersect with United States laws and the criminal justice system. Kelly's writing on these topics has appeared in the Harvard National Security Journal and the Journal for Deradicalization.

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