

CITIZENS' EXPERIENCE WITH CRIME PREVENTION

*Ugljesa Zvekic**

I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Among the criminological theories specifically applicable to crime prevention, the economic theory of crime proposed by Becker in 1968¹ asserts that potential offenders constantly move between legitimate and illegitimate activities, depending on the results of a cost-benefit assessment. While making the decision, as whether or not to undertake illegitimate actions, they calculate the risk of being apprehended as costs against the economic benefit if the action is successfully concluded. This theory starts from the assumption that the offender's behaviour is induced by the desire of economic gain. In order for a crime of this type to be committed, three elements are determinant: the presence of a suitable target, skill and opportunity.

According to his theory, further developed by Ehrlich², the offender represents the *supply* side of the crime market. The supply of crime will be based on the costs (the probability of being caught, the amount of sanction envisaged for that particular crime and all possible intervening variables). Depending on the level of the cost, more or less crimes will occur. Such "costs" very much depend on deterrence determined by effective law enforcement.

In more recent years, the rational-interactionist model developed by van Dijk³

also envisages a "crime market", but the presence of motivated offenders is defined as the *demand* side and the availability of suitable and poorly protected targets as the *supply* side.

Although motivated by the same assumption of the existence of a "crime market" as was the case for Becker and Ehrlich, van Dijk reverses the parties and describes the victims as "reluctant suppliers" of opportunities for crime: "*The criminal opportunities offered by potential victims are an undesired side-effect of their possession of certain goods*".

The theory keeps the focus on the offender's behaviour and the cost-benefit analysis which motivates the decision of whether or not to commit a crime. However, in this paradigm, higher opportunity costs for the offender are determined by better protection of suitable targets and increased self-precautionary measures adopted by potential victims (*target hardening*), rather than effective law enforcement alone. In this respect, more attention is paid to the *prevention* of crime rather than the *punishment* of the offender once a crime has already occurred. Potential victims are involved in the scheme, thus shifting from a specialised role for the police in crime prevention to

* Deputy Director, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, UNICRI.

** Authored by Dr. Anna Alavazzi del Frate, Research Officer, UNICRI. Presented by Ugljesa Zvekic, Deputy Director, UNICRI.

¹ G. Becker, "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach", *Journal of Political Economy*, 76:2, 1968, pp. 169-217.

² I. Ehrlich, "Participation in Illegitimate Activities: A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation", *Journal of Political Economy*, May 1973, pp. 521-565.

³ J.J.M. van Dijk, "*Understanding Crime Rates*", *British Journal of Criminology* 34:2, 1994, pp. 105-121.

community-based crime prevention.

The rational-interactionist model helps to understand crime phenomena, which are similar in many countries and are of high concern to the international community. This model is applicable to crimes against the household, but also to property and economic crimes in which shops, office buildings and corporations are increasingly becoming the victim. In both cases - crimes against individuals or households and crimes against business - target hardening is up to the potential victims.

However, an involvement of the "formal" structures in crime prevention activities is still necessary to address the problems which are at the basis of the offender's behaviour. Issues to be addressed include urbanization, migration flows, education and opportunities for employment, especially for young males. Furthermore, urban design, especially in newly built residential areas, should be improved to provide the necessary infrastructure (e.g. schools, shops, recreational areas) as well as services (e.g. street lights, public transport and telephones), which would assist in improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood and of the people who live there.

II. URBAN DESIGN AND TYPE DWELLING

The International Crime (Victim) Survey was carried out on national samples in

Western Europe and the New World, while in other participating countries samples were drawn from large cities.

The type of dwelling most frequently found in the survey was a house, either isolated, semi-detached or in a row. For example, the popular formula of houses in a row represents the absolute majority of cases in Northern Europe.

Apartments rank first as the type of dwelling, except in the group of countries in transition, where the former-socialist model based on extensive urbanization predominates. In these cities the large majority of people live in apartment-buildings. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, the large majority of the respondents live either in houses or in different types of dwellings. Shanties account for 17% in Africa and 13% in Asia, and the inclusion of respondents from these areas in the ICVS sample may also reflect on victimisation rates.

However, it should be noted that the ICVS classification by types of dwelling was meant to identify the type of housing rather than assessing the residential status of the respondent. Obviously, different types of dwelling require different crime prevention devices.

The concept of an isolated or semi-detached house may represent different realities in developed and developing countries. For example, high-income areas

Table 1
Type of Dwelling of ICVS Respondents, by Regions (1996)

	Western Europe	New World	Countries in Transition	Africa	Asia	Latin America
Apartment	29.3	21.2	62.6	9.2	19.9	25.6
House	69.2	73.4	33.1	70.7	66.3	70.4
Other	1.5	5.4	4.3	20.1	13.8	4.0

in some developing countries often consist in compounds that are extremely well protected from the outside by fences, watch dogs and patrols. It was reported by some ICVS national co-ordinators that it was sometimes difficult for the interviewers to obtain access to houses selected for the survey because of the high level of security at the entrance of the compound. The corresponding type of housing will most probably be less protected and patrolled in Western Europe or the New World, where this type of security is less common.

III. BURGLARY

Burglary is the typical household crime. The ICVS questionnaire included questions on victimisation experiences for burglary and attempted burglary. Table 3 shows one-year prevalence victimisation rates at the country and regional levels for burglary and attempted burglary.

The regions in which survey respondents were often affected by these types of crime were Latin America and Africa. Medium risk was observed in the New World and countries in transition, while Western Europe and Asia showed the lowest levels of risk. In most regions, the 1996 one-year burglary rates were either equal to or lower than those observed in 1992. At the country level, both types of crime increased in The Netherlands, Georgia, Russia, India, and in all three Latin American countries which were involved in both sweeps of the ICVS. Rates for burglary and attempted burglary are very close to each other in most regions.

People who live in rural contexts apparently run lower risks of housebreaking in comparison with city dwellers. Higher percentages of residents of urban areas were victims of burglary than respondents from villages and rural areas. However, as van Dijk observed with

reference to the 1992 sweep of the ICVS⁴, the type of housing, more than the surrounding context, is correlated with burglary. Actually, a positive correlation was found between being a victim of burglary and living in a house rather than an apartment. As Table 3 shows, in all regions - with the exception of countries in transition - respondents living in a house run risks of burglary higher than the average.

Very often a break-in also involved damage to doors, locks or windows. This happened more frequently in Western Europe, in Africa and in the New World. A possible explanation for the lower frequency of damage found in countries in transition, Asia and Latin America is that households are less often protected by crime prevention devices, thus making it easier for the burglar to access the house.

Another aspect which was taken into account was whether anything had actually been stolen when the burglary occurred. Actual theft during burglaries happened more frequently in countries in transition and in developing countries. This finding may suggest that the type of objects stolen is different in Western Europe and the New World to those in other regions. According to national co-ordinators from developing countries, stolen goods often included money, food and simple household objects such as cutlery or linen, which were most probably stolen for the personal use of the burglar. In rural areas, cattle were often stolen.

⁴ J.J.M. van Dijk "Opportunities of Crime: A Test of the Rational-Interactionist Model", in *Crime and Economy - Reports Presented to the 11th Criminological Colloquium* (1994), Council of Europe, Criminological Research, Vol. XXXII, 1995, pp. 97-145.

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Table 2
One Year Prevalence Rates for Burglary and Attempted Burglary, by Countries and by Regions, 1992 and 1996, and Risk of Burglary for Type of Area and Type of Dwelling, by Regions, 1996

	Burglary	Attempted Burglary	Burglary	Attempted Burglary	Burglary Rural Areas	Burglary Urban Areas	Burglary Apartment	Burglary House
	1992	1992	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996
Austria	n.a.	n.a.	0.8	0.6				
Belgium	2.3	1.8	n.a.	n.a.				
England and Wales	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.4				
Italy	2.4	1.7	n.a.	n.a.				
Finland	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7				
France	n.a.	n.a.	2.2	2.1				
N. Ireland	n.a.	n.a.	1.6	1.1				
Netherlands	2.0	3.0	2.6	3.2				
Scotland	n.a.	n.a.	1.5	2.4				
Spain	2.7	4.9	n.a.	n.a.				
Sweden	1.5	0.8	1.4	1.2				
Switzerland	n.a.	n.a.	1.7	1.3				
<i>Western Europe</i>	2.1	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.5	2.0	1.6	1.7
Australia	4.1	4.0	n.a.	n.a.				
Canada	3.4	2.9	3.4	2.8				
New Zealand	4.4	3.6	n.a.	n.a.				
USA	3.2	3.9	2.7	3.5				
<i>New World</i>	3.8	3.6	3.0	3.2	2.8	4.0	2.4	
Albania	n.a.	n.a.	3.5	2.9				
Czech Republic	4.7	1.6	2.2	2.7				
Estonia	5.9	3.1	4.0	3.9				
Georgia	2.5	2.0	4.0	3.1				
Hungary	n.a.	n.a.	2.6	1.9				
Kyrgyzstan	n.a.	n.a.	4.6	4.3				
Latvia	n.a.	n.a.	2.6	5.3				
Macedonia	n.a.	n.a.	2.0	1.6				
Mongolia	n.a.	n.a.	9.3	6.1				
Poland	2.2	2.7	2.0	1.7				
Romania	n.a.	n.a.	1.2	2.0				
Russia	1.8	3.6	2.9	4.6				
Slovak Republic	3.4	1.6	n.a.	n.a.				
Slovenia	1.8	2.5	n.a.	n.a.				
Yugoslavia	n.a.	n.a.	2.9	2.7				
<i>Countries in Transition</i>	3.2	2.4	3.4	3.3	2.8	3.5	3.3	2.6
Egypt	3.0	3.8	n.a.	n.a.				
South Africa	7.2	3.9	6.8	3.7				
Tanzania	21.2	13.3	n.a.	n.a.				
Tunisia	7.4	4.5	n.a.	n.a.				
Uganda	14.2	13.0	8.1	10.4				
Zimbabwe	n.a.	n.a.	10.2	7.2				
<i>Africa</i>	10.6	7.7	8.4	7.1	5.5	8.5	5.8	9.0
China	1.5	0.4	n.a.	n.a.				
India	1.2	1.3	2.2	3.0				
Indonesia	4.6	2.0	4.5	2.9				
Philippines	2.9	2.1	1.7	0.9				
<i>Asia</i>	2.6	1.5	2.8	2.3	3.2	2.7	2.1	2.8
Argentina	2.9	3.9	7.5	6.9				
Bolivia	n.a.	n.a.	7.1	9.0				
Brazil	1.4	2.4	2.6	3.5				
Costa Rica	4.4	6.1	7.6	9.3				
<i>Latin America</i>	2.9	4.1	6.2	7.2	5.4	6.3	5.2	6.3

Table 3
Percentages of Burglaries Involving Damage and Actual Theft, by Regions - 1996

	Western Europe	New World	Countries in Transition	Africa	Asia	Latin America
Apartment	58.4	50.0	42.2	55.7	28.9	32.8
Objects Stolen	74.9	72.6	77.9	89.1	91.5	85.9

Vice versa, in the more affluent regions, where most people keep their money in the bank, and often jewelry and other valuable objects are kept in safes and security lockers, burglars take what is available and give preference to objects which are easily re-sold. In this respect, the most frequently stolen objects are those which are easier to place on the market of stolen goods, such as electrical appliances, TV and radio sets, VCRs, hi-fi equipment, as well as furniture and objects of art. The difference in objects stolen between the affluent and poor regions is opportunity determined, in terms of the type of objects available, or the level of protection.

A. Fear of Burglary

The respondents were asked whether they felt that a burglary was likely to occur in their household in the next twelve months. Table 5 shows that the majority of the respondents from Western Europe, the New World and Asia were not concerned about the possibility of a break-in in the near future, while the opposite was the case with the majority of the respondents from Latin America and more than 40% of those from countries in transition and Africa. The higher the rates of victimisation for burglary and attempted burglary, the higher the fear of this type of crime. There is a strong correlation at the regional level between the perceived likelihood of burglary and burglary (0.8232), and even more with attempted burglary (0.9111). Within the regions, similar levels of fear of burglary were perceived by those living in houses and those living in apartments.

B. Crime-prevention at the Household Level

The costs related to burglary may greatly be increased if a household is protected by crime prevention devices. Deterrence is put in place by creating physical or psychological barriers between the offender and the target.

It appears that the patterns of committing burglaries in isolated houses or flats in condominiums are different. An apartment may be better protected from attacks from outside than a house, but once a burglar gets in, he/she is more likely to work undisturbed because of the higher level of anonymity which is found in a condominium.

Crime prevention measures suggested for the two types of dwelling are also different: while a burglar alarm can be advisable in both situations, its effectiveness can be greatly reduced if the house is isolated and the alarm is not connected, for example, to the local police station. Otherwise, if the alarm consists of an acoustic deterrent, it can only work if it is likely to be heard by somebody in the neighbourhood.

Three main types of crime prevention measure are commonly used to protect households and were identified by the ICVS questionnaire. The first type consists of behaviours adopted by the household members in order to prevent crimes. For example, keeping a watch dog, making the house look and sound occupied while away by leaving curtains and shades in their

Table 4
Likelihood of Burglary in the Next Twelve Months, by Regions (1996)

	Western Europe	New World	Countries in Transition	Africa	Asia	Latin America
Very likely/likely	29.6	26.8	41.1	43.7	21.3	56.6
Not likely	63.0	67.5	35.6	33.2	51.7	31.4
Don't know	7.5	5.7	23.3	23.1	27.1	12.0

normal position or lights on, or asking a neighbour or a caretaker to look after the house. In many cultures, households are rarely left unattended and relatives or friends may come along and take care of the home.

A second type consists of physical devices which are put in place in order to make access of unauthorized persons to the household more difficult. This type includes the simplest and more diffused crime prevention devices such as door locks, window grills and fences. Burglar alarms installed to protect the household from break-ins also belong to this category.

Finally, a third type exists at the community level and consists of the establishment of community-based initiatives involving other parties in crime prevention (such as other citizens, but also the police, the municipality or the schools). For example, "neighbourhood watch" schemes involving the residents of a particular area.

Table 5 shows the rates of crime prevention measures observed by the 1996 ICVS. It should be noted that the adoption of crime prevention measures very much depends on the type of dwelling (a correlation of 0.835 was found between an aggregate index of crime prevention measures and living in a house rather than an apartment). In fact, most of the devices or precautions listed in Table 6 are more suitable for a house than an apartment. It

therefore appears that crime prevention measures are least used in countries in transition, the region in which most respondents lived in apartments. In addition, the cost of crime prevention devices that are more suitable for apartments (e.g. burglar alarms) are higher and therefore less in use in less affluent countries even if apartments are more diffused dwelling places for city inhabitants.

It should also be noted that the percentage of those who declared that they did not use *any* of the measures listed by the ICVS ranged from 11.9% in the New World to 36.5% in the countries in transition, reflecting both the suitability of types of devices for types of dwellings, as well as the level of expenditure for crime prevention.

The ICVS revealed that various types of crime prevention measures exist in all world regions, although their use is more frequent where affluence is higher. The most popular crime prevention measure was asking the neighbours to look after the house in case of absence. A minimum of 25% of the respondents in Russia to a maximum of 83% in Northern Ireland and India normally ask their neighbours to look after the household when away.

The second most diffused method was the use of door locks and ownership/use of watch dogs. Keeping a watch dog was mentioned by approximately a quarter of

Table 5
Crime Prevention Measures at the Household Level, by Regions (1996)

	Western Europe	New World	Countries in Transition	Africa	Asia	Latin America
Ask neighbours to look after the house	59.2	97.1	48.6	47.7	76.7	60.5
Door locks	46.2	54.7	26.9	31.9	42.0	41.8
Watch dog	20.4	34.7	20.7	18.9	19.7	39.7
Windows grills	14.5	20.9	8.6	34.2	30.0	34.2
Neighbourhood watch	17.7	36.2	8.4	10.3	22.9	12.1
Fence	16.2	17.5	5.2	38.6	4.2	20.7
Burglar alarm	13.4	20.5	4.4	5.9	1.7	12.3
Caretaker	4.0	8.3	0.9	7.5	10.6	10.4
None	27.5	11.9	36.5	27.2	21.3	15.4

the respondents, with peaks of 65% in Bolivia, 39% in the USA and 38% in The Philippines.

Asking the neighbours and keeping a watch dog are two widely used types of protection by the respondents from all the regions, including more than 20% in countries in transition. It is interesting to observe that watch dogs are not only frequently found in houses, but are also frequently kept in apartments: it appears that even a pet might do some crime prevention work.

Employing a caretaker to prevent crime was indicated by 10% of the respondents in Asia and Latin America. This measure is very much related to the urban and social structure of the country, as well as its habits. It therefore appears that rates vary depending on the local situation. In a few countries, including Costa Rica, Argentina, India, Zimbabwe, Finland and France, rates of employment of caretakers are much higher than in the rest of the participating countries. In all regions, respondents who declared the presence of a caretaker showed a significantly lower

fear of burglary than the average.

Data from the ICVS reveal that "simple" crime prevention measures such as door locks and window grills are used in all the participating countries. The countries in which such devices are less used are those in which there is a low incidence of crime prevention measures in general, as is the case in Finland, Estonia, Albania, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Mongolia and Yugoslavia. As regards Finland, low crime rates may be a possible explanation for a lesser use of household protection. In the other countries, all belonging to the group of countries in transition, it appears that the process of increased protection of residence is much slower than the spread of property crime.

As expected, window grills and fences are very frequent in all regions where the most popular type of dwelling is a house, with the exception of Asia. An aggregate index of crime prevention measures reveals that they are more frequently used in the regions in which burglary rates are higher. These findings suggest that crime prevention measures are adopted where

Table 6
Burglar Alarms, by Countries - 1992 and 1996

	1992	1996	% Difference
England & Wales	22.1	27.2	+5.1
The Netherlands	7.6	10.1	+2.5
Finland	1.0	1.0	0.0
Sweden	5.4	6.7	+1.3
Canada	13.0	20.0	+7.0
Estonia	0.8	3.1	+2.3
Poland	1.4	1.4	0.0
Russia	5.9	7.2	+1.3
Georgia	3.7	3.5	-0.2
Czech Republic	2.9	6.9	+4.0
India	2.7	1.7	-1.0
Indonesia	3.9	0.9	-3.0
The Philippines	2.3	1.8	-0.5
Uganda	5.5	4.6	-0.9
South Africa	9.4	8.0	-1.4
Costa Rica	9.1	8.3	-0.8
Argentina	15.8	26.7	+10.9
Brazil	2.9	0.1	-2.8

and when burglary occurs more frequently. Once adopted, the crime prevention devices tend to reduce the feeling of insecurity, at least initially: the respondents who adopted crime prevention measures more frequently perceived that burglary in the next twelve months is unlikely.

It therefore appears that respondents from high-crime regions feel safer (unlikelihood of burglary) if they use crime prevention measures, while the same feeling of safety is expressed by respondents from low-crime areas who did not adopt any of the crime prevention measures identified by the survey.

C. Burglar Alarms

Table 6 shows the percentages of respondents who owned burglar alarms in

1992 and 1996 in the participating countries. In general, burglar alarms are more frequently installed to protect houses than apartments. Alarms are more diffused in the more affluent regions, i.e, the New World and Western Europe. However, within these regions they are not very popular in Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Austria, which are also the countries with the lowest burglary rates. The apparently high incidence of burglar alarms in Latin America is mostly due to their spread in apparently high incidence of burglar alarms in Latin America is mostly due to their spread in Buenos Aires, where 26% of the respondents owned such a device in 1996.

Between 1992 and 1996 the use or installation of burglar alarms increased in

most countries in Western Europe, the New World and countries in transition. It is hard to tell whether a wider use of burglar alarms can be related to the increase or decrease of burglary rates, although it appears that the majority of the respondents who owned an alarm in 1996 were not victims of burglary in the past five years. Respondents with a burglar alarm who were *not* victims of burglary in the past five years showed the percentages of fear of burglary were markedly lower than the average for the sample.

It thus appears that the respondents believe that alarm systems actually deter burglars. Nevertheless, in ten industrialised countries participating in the 1996 ICVS, an experimental question was posed to victims of burglary who were also owners of burglar alarms to assess whether their alarm was installed before or after the burglary occurred. Results show that the majority of victims who declared that their household is protected by a burglar alarm decided to install it only after the burglary occurred.

Finally, for comparative purposes, it should be taken into account that in several countries insurance companies encourage a wider use of burglar alarms by offering reductions on the cost of household insurance if an alarm system has been installed.

D. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and Examples of Partnership in Crime Prevention

Neighbourhood watch schemes are quite popular in the New World, Asia and Western Europe, but much less so in the other regions. These schemes imply a certain level of social cohesion and that all the participating residents share the objective of preventing and reducing crime by increasing the level of "natural surveillance" in a specific area, thus

promoting informal crime control. This approach, if co-ordinated with the police, helps to limit the use of self-defense and to improve the quality of life in the area.

The ICVS identified huge differences in the country-by-country rates of the use of neighbourhood watch schemes within the six observed regions, and even at the sub-regional level between countries that are otherwise similar to each other. For example, while in England and Wales more than 48% of the respondents said they belonged to such schemes, this was the case with only 28.3% in Scotland and 1.6% in Northern Ireland. This data suggest that "neighbourhood watch" very much depends on programme implementation at the local level.

IX. POSSESSION OF FIREARMS FOR CRIME PREVENTION

The perception that a gun can be considered an effective crime prevention device is frequent in some countries and many people depend on a firearm for protection.

Table 7 shows that rates of ownership of firearms very much vary from region to region. The highest ownership rates were observed in the New World and Western Europe, followed by Latin America and countries in transition. However, the reasons for gun ownership are different and vary very much from country to country. Not all the firearms are meant to be used for crime prevention purposes.

In countries in transition and developing countries hand guns were more widespread than long guns. It should be observed that handguns - which are mostly owned for crime prevention purposes - were more frequently found in large cities than in rural areas and in some cities, especially in Latin America, they represented the

absolute majority of the firearms owned by the respondents.

In the United States, 57% of the respondents said they owned a weapon for hunting, while another 39% said that the purpose of ownership was self-protection and prevention of crime. Although it was possible to provide multiple responses, this proportion of respondents believing in guns for crime prevention is among the highest reported to the survey.

In countries such as Canada and Finland, the relatively high ownership rates were explained by the respondents as being for hunting purposes as they sometimes need to be ready to face wild animals which may attack isolated houses. In these countries, ownership with the purpose of crime prevention was mentioned in less than 1% of the cases.

In Switzerland, 64% of the respondents declared that a firearm was in their household because they belong to the army. This is because the military system in Switzerland envisages that all male citizens remain enrolled with the army until they are 55 years old, thus participating in periodical re-training and taking care of their own military weapon, which is normally kept in the household. The purpose of crime prevention was mentioned by 7 % of the owners only.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia represents a different situation. There is a tradition of ownership of firearms in this

country and furthermore it has recently emerged from a period of disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. War was spreading all around and contributed to increased feelings of fear, on the one hand, and to more availability of weapons on the other. According to the Yugoslav survey co-ordinator, the ownership rate of 30% is an underestimate of the actual number of weapons existing in Belgrade. The main purpose for ownership was reported as being for the prevention of crime, followed by the statement that a weapon has always been in the respondent's family.

Finally, in Argentina the large majority of gun-owners (65%) declared that they owned it to protect themselves from crime. This was the case with most of the firearm owners from Latin America, Asia and Africa, although actual rates of ownership varied, the lowest being in Asia and Africa.

The above examples show different patterns of ownership and use of weapons. While it appears that there is no correlation between burglary and gun ownership as such, a strong correlation was found between both burglary and attempted burglary and ownership with a purpose of crime prevention (.962 and .926 respectively).

Finally, respondents who declared owning a weapon for crime prevention purposes also perceived high chances of burglary (very likely and likely) within the next twelve months (correlation = .728419).

Table 7
Firearms: Rates of Ownership and Crime Prevention Purpose, by Regions (1996)

	Western Europe	New World	Countries in Transition	Africa	Asia	Latin America
Gun ownership	17.8	36.5	11.7	63.6	4.1	15.9
c.p. purpose	8.6	21.8	28.7	79.4	34.6	65.7

V. CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES: BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL

The ICVS data shows that crime prevention measures at the individual level was not a major concern of the respondents from the participating countries. Although burglary in the next twelve months is perceived as likely or very likely by more than 40% of the respondents in most developing countries and in countries in transition, only some basic measures to prevent crime are put in place by those who fear that their household will be broken into soon.

It is hard to assess whether this means that there is not enough protection put in place by individuals or whether crime prevention policies in different countries are based on different strategies which give more or less room to "self-help". "Self-help" may be considered the most informal type of crime control, and is therefore individualised. The "social" mechanisms for crime prevention, such as neighbourhood watch schemes, require the citizens to participate in crime prevention activities organised by groups of peers who work in agreement with the agencies of formal control for the benefit of the community.

It therefore appears that a desirable development would include a broader participation of citizens in crime prevention programmes which would involve several counterparts and tackle various aspects of everyday life.

A. International Work

Within the framework of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1995, a workshop on "Urban Policy and Crime Prevention" was organized. Its final report reflected the indissoluble links established between

urban policies and crime prevention, and stressed that only a global and partnership-based approach may be effective in embracing all the causes of crime, with the participation of all the agents concerned.⁵

The principle of sharing crime prevention responsibilities with the community has been widely accepted and many governments place crime prevention programmes involving citizens, law enforcement and all relevant components of society among the highest national priorities. This implies a significant effort to be jointly undertaken by all the partners involved, including setting an agenda which should focus on local needs without losing track of the experience gained at the national and international level, clearly identifying its objectives and timing, assigning roles and appointing leaders to co-ordinate action, adopt common standards and include proper evaluation of the results achieved.

Long-term plans may not be primarily aimed at the reduction of crime, which is a desirable side-effect. For example, improving the design of the urban environment by providing more street illumination is likely, primarily, to improve the quality of life and secondarily, reduce opportunities for crime.

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) has promoted a review of best practices in the field of urban crime prevention.⁶ This resulted in a collection of model programmes put in place in various cities and local

⁵ United Nations, *Report of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders*, A/CONF. 169/16, 12 May 1995, p. 82.

⁶ The collection of best practices is accessible from the Internet at the ICPC World Wide Web address <www.crime-prevention.org/ipc>

communities around the world. Three main areas for effective prevention have been identified:

- (a) reducing risks of victimization and re-victimization of citizens by increasing formal and informal control;
- (b) preventing offending and re-offending, by targeting groups at risk and providing them with educational and recreational opportunities, as well as possibilities for housing and employment;
- (c) specific target-hardening, through the encouragement of a broader use of self-precautionary measures.

It should be noted, however, that the vast majority of crime prevention programmes have been established in Western Europe and the New World.⁷ Very few cases have been found in developing countries and countries in transition. Among them, one has been reported from Colombia⁸ and consisted of setting up groups of “peace promoters” who assisted in the identification of problematic situations and potential offenders, thus leading to the creation of programmes in law enforcement, public education and social development.

The ICVS is not only useful for providing an informed overview of the international

situation and trends in crime prevention. It also provides an opportunity to analyse particular contexts and to make suggestions as to specific crime prevention programmes. In 1994 UNICRI, in co-operation with the Research Institute of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation, recommended a model crime prevention programme for the city of Moscow.⁹ A comprehensive model of the components of crime prevention highlighted the particular problems of a country in transition towards a market economy. The transition process involves higher rates of crime (in particular property crime), whilst there are scarce financial resources to combat it. The crime prevention strategy should include seven elements:

1. The promotion of active crime prevention policies to accompany law enforcement and criminal justice, based on international experience obtained through effective projects developed by the United Nations and other relevant international organisations.
2. The development of long-term plans, even though public opinion might ask for short-term responses to crime.
3. Improved coordination of crime prevention activities at the national, regional and local levels.
4. The encouragement of the public to be involved in crime prevention, by strengthening the community’s confidence in the police.
5. The promotion by law enforcement and criminal justice of the safety and

⁷ For a comprehensive collection and analysis of crime prevention programmes in Europe and North America, see J. Graham, T. Bennett, *Crime Prevention Strategies in Europe and North America*, European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), 1995.

⁸ The programme is called DESEPAZ, *Programma Desarrollo Seguridad y Paz* (Urban Development, Safety and Peace Programme) and is based in Cali, Colombia.

⁹ M. Alexeyeva, A. Patrignani (eds.), *Crime and Crime Prevention in Moscow*, UNCRI Publ. No.52, 1994.

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security of persons and property.

6. The treatment of victims with respect and understanding of their needs, and the provision of prompt assistance and information about their rights.
7. The regular monitoring of crime prevention programmes, based on reliable information, analysis and public discussion with all parties involved.

The Moscow model, which was also based on the extensive analysis of the results of the 1992 ICVS in Moscow, confirms the potentials of the ICVS as a tool to promote community and victim-centred crime prevention strategies.

Furthermore, improved police-community relations, which may result from a better knowledge of victimisation experiences, will lead to an increased use of crime prevention measures at the individual/household level, as well as within the framework of "social" crime prevention programmes.