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# STRATEGY AND CONCEPT
# ON URBAN CRIME PREVENTION

*For running a successful crime prevention program it is especially important to have a multidisciplinary approach and involvement of different stakeholders of society in crime prevention. Adopting the strategy, as well as (short and long term) programs of crime prevention at the local level is the first step that the local government needs to undertake. These documents should be in line with the national strategy for crime prevention and international norms. They represent the framework for defining the objectives that the local government wants to achieve, indicators of crime and deviant behaviour at the local level, the sectors that will be involved in prevention and their role. Good management and leadership in coordinating body (local government council for crime prevention) composed of representatives of various entities, assessment and evaluation of the measures and activities undertaken for a certain period, and rewarding based on the results achieved, represent activities which should be seen as a cycle.*

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*In the crime prevention council at the local level all relevant stakeholders that can contribute to more effective crime prevention should take part, including police, health care, educational institutions, judiciary, NGOs, religious groups, business sector, etc. Through cross sectoral approach, the council should reduce the overlapping of competencies in specific activities and programs that would consequentially direct human and material resources to crime prevention, but also unify the individual actions of „heterogeneous" subjects in homogeneous team that would be capable to cope with challenges.*

**Keywords: local government, multidisciplinary approach, crime prevention**

„*Prevention is the first imperative of justice*"
(United Nations 2004).

## 1. Introduction

When we understand the causes of criminal activities, then we can proceed to creating an effective crime prevention strategies. For better understanding of the research problem, first we need to define the terms that are used in the paper. There are many definitions of prevention. According to the European Union decision for establishing an European Crime Prevention Network "crime prevention shall cover all measures that are intended to reduce or otherwise contribute to reducing crime and citizens' feeling of insecurity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, either through directly deterring criminal activities or through policies and actions designed to reduce the potential for crime and the causes of crime" (European Union, 2009: 45). This includes the activities of government, competent authorities, the criminal justice system, local authorities and specialized associations, private and voluntary sector, researchers, and the public, supported by the media.

Prevention could be understood as the implementation of all the measures and means of mobilizing the individuals, civic groups, organizations or institutions that are aimed at enabling the phenomena that do not comply with the criminal law and which by their very nature cause harm to the individuals, civil groups or the society as a whole (Стефаноска, 2011). For example, in the Czech crime prevention strategy prevention is defined as an offensive strategy for fight against crime.

The word crime is derived from the Latin word *crimen,* and in the substantive sense it usually refers to a conduct punishable by the law or behaviour for which punishment is provided. Crime is a mass phenomenon, meaning that it is a

phenomenon with a broad social meaning and its manifestations, wide scale and consequences. We could argue that crime is a reaction to unfavourable social and economic position and that its inner structure is impacted by the class and/or social division. The overall relationships in the society are also set on the basis that puts a large number of people in a difficult and unequal position when meeting existential needs. This brings us to the conclusion that crime, as a general and mass phenomenon, is a result of the existing political, economic and social relations, and is embedded in the structure of the society. Emphasized dynamism in structural changes in the society is unfavourably reflected in relation to this problem (Арнаудовски, 2007:69). According to additional sources crime is perceived as a social phenomenon which is understood as a criminal behaviour which occurred in a defined place and time.

## 2. Impact of urbanization on crime

In 2007, for the first time in human history, urban centres became the home to more than a half of the world's population, and this number is expected grow substantially over the next 25 years (UN HABITTAT, 2007). Urbanization brings many challenges, among which are the increasing number of assaults and murders in the urban environment. As a result, reduction of the levels of urban violence and its prevention is one of the key priorities of every government.

Population movements from one socio-cultural environment to another, from one country to another, from rural to urban areas can result in criminal behaviour. In other words, a person leaves one environment where he adapted moral and cultural standards, to another environment with different social norms.

Urbanization, together with unemployment, inflation, unequal rights of the individuals in the community, and low levels of education are main socio-economic factors contributing to the growth of crime in the community (Spalević, Jovanović, 2013:303). It is claimed that as urbanization and number of urban areas increase, crime rates rise as well (Galvin, 2002:130). Therefore, we need a clearer and substantial understanding of urbanization and its connection to crime.

Urbanization is the process where an increasing percentage of a population lives in the cities and suburbs. It also encompasses transformation of rural settlements into urban, that is, expanding urban lifestyles in rural areas.[1] This leads to land transformation for residential, commercial, industrial and transportation

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1    Check http://www.chegg.com/homework-help/definitions/urbanization-47

purposes.[2] This process became a mass phenomenon in the twentieth century due to the industrialization, internationalization and globalization. The process of urbanization has been brought to an end in developed countries, while it is a prevalent trend in Asia and Africa.

Globally, more people live in urban than in rural areas. According to the United Nations, about 54% of the world's population in 2014 resided in urban environment. In 1950, urban dwellers comprised 30% of the world's population; this percentage raised to 47% in 2000; and projections are that in 2050, 67,2% of the world's population will live in urban areas.

**Table 1** *Urban Population and Percentage of Urbanization[3]*

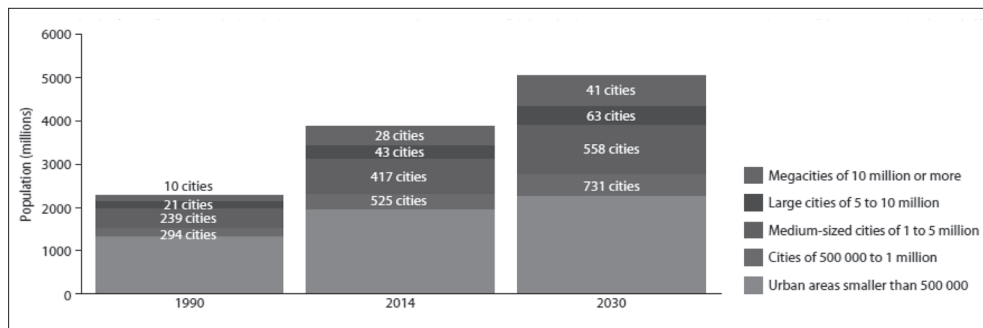| Region | Urban Population (millions) | | | | | Percentage (%) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1950 | 2000 | 2011 | 2025 | 2050 | 1950 | 2000 | 2011 | 2025 | 2050 |
| World | 750 | 2860 | 3632 | 4643 | 6252 | 29,8 | 47,2 | 52,1 | 58 | 67,2 |
| More Developed Regions | 450 | 900 | 964 | 1043 | 1127 | 54,9 | 75,4 | 77,7 | 81,1 | 85,9 |
| Less Developed Regions | 200 | 1960 | 2668 | 3600 | 5125 | 17,8 | 40,4 | 46,5 | 53,6 | 64,1 |
| Northern America | 110 | 243 | 286 | 330 | 395 | 63,9 | 77,4 | 82,2 | 85,0 | 88,6 |
| Latin America | 70 | 391 | 472 | 560 | 650 | 41,9 | 75,4 | 79,1 | 82,5 | 86,6 |
| Oceania | 8 | 23 | 26 | 32 | 40 | 61,6 | 74,1 | 70,7 | 71,1 | 73 |
| Europe | 287 | 534 | 539 | 566 | 591 | 52,4 | 73,4 | 72,9 | 76,1 | 82,2 |
| Asia | 244 | 1376 | 1895 | 2512 | 3310 | 17,4 | 37,5 | 45 | 53,1 | 64,4 |
| Africa | 32 | 295 | 414 | 642 | 1265 | 14,7 | 37,2 | 39,6 | 45,3 | 57,7 |
| Macedonia | | | 1,223 | 1,29 | 1,35 | | | 59,3 | 62,5 | 71,8 |

Megapolises, or as they are called, the Supercities, are distinguished by their size and concentration of economic power, but by the number of households they comprise only one-eighth of the population living in urban areas. In 1990, there were 10 cities with more than 10 million inhabitants (Table 2), home to 153 million inhabitants, representing less than 7% of the world's urban population. Today, the number of megapolises is almost three times higher, (28), and the population living in them has increased to 453 million, representing 12% of the world's urban population.

Tokyo is the largest city in the world with 38 million inhabitants, followed by Delhi with 25 million, then Shanghai with 23 million, Mexico City, Mumbai and São Paulo with 21 million each.

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2    Check http://www.epa.gov/caddis/ssr_urb_urb1.html
3    *Source*: World Urban Prospectus, 2011. Revision

**Graph 1** *Global urban population growth is driven by urban growth of the cities*

Decades ago, most of the world's urban agglomerates were located in developed regions, but today, large cities are mostly concentrated in south of China and India. The fastest growing urban agglomerates are medium-sized cities and cities with less than one million inhabitants in Asia and Africa.

The percentage of the world's population living in an urban environment is steadily increasing, as can be seen in Table 1. This means that crime and crime prevention in urban areas are becoming increasingly important. It is therefore essential to understand the relations between crime and the urban environment.

# 3. Strategies and concepts of crime prevention

There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only reduce crime and abuse, but also promote community (municipality, city) security and contribute to the sustainable development of states (UNODC, 2006: 294). Effective and responsible crime prevention programs improve the quality of life of all citizens. This has long-term benefits in the sense it reduces the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system as well as other social costs of crime. Crime prevention provides opportunities for an effective approach for solving the problems related to crime.

According to the available literature, it has long been considered that the state authorities are the most capable in creating prevention plans. Planning should be at the level of the working organizations, at the level of the local communities, urban regions and cities and cover various areas of social life.

There is a centralized and spatial planning that should reflect the real state of society. Its main objective is to preserve the integrity of a greater number of

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subjects as well as their unity and systematic functioning. It is the responsibility of all levels of government to create, maintain and promote the concept based on relevant government institutions and all segments of civil society that can play significant role in the field of crime prevention.

Crime prevention consists of strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crime and the potential negative effects on individuals and society, including the fear of crime. An effective urban crime prevention strategy requires: strong leadership from the government and local authorities, strategic planning based on problem and cause analysis, comprehensive strategies that include a complete range of services and institutions that affect people's daily lives, maintain order and solve community problems, as well as strong partnership between policymakers, service providers and civil society. It also involves governments to respect the human rights of citizens and work against the exclusion of vulnerable groups, including the poor, young people, women and minorities (Shaw, Travers, 2007: 4).[4]

### 3.1. Concept of opportunity
### – Urban planning and design

The concept of opportunity emphasizes the importance of the attacker-situation-victim relationship. A criminal act occurs if all three factors are present. This approach focuses on the situation of the attacker or if he is in search for a victim (Example: bank robbery, house burglary, assault). In this approach, the focus is on the reactive point, i.e. taking action when a criminal act occurs, taking a proactive course of action, taking action before a criminal act and preventing an attack to occur.

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4    These principles are embedded in many crime prevention projects and strategies in urban areas. A workshop on crime prevention was presented at the 11th United Nations Congress held in Bangkok in 2005. The workshop presented the strategies of 15 different countries from all over the world, as well as a collection of 64 promising case strategies and programs. It is important to highlight as a successful example of Colombia's capital, Bogotá, with strong local leadership that, combined with a comprehensive strategy, can reduce the impact of crime and urban violence (Harvard Gazette, 2004).

**Figure 1** *Schematic representation of the concept of opportunity*
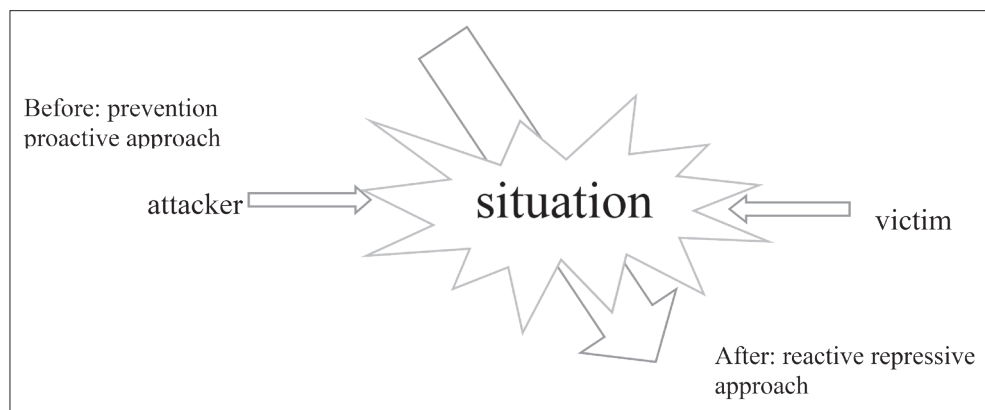


One of the most productive areas where opportunity concept has shown its value is urban planning and design. A large number of experiments have revealed that certain types of crime can be reduced by changing the opportunity of crime to happen in the built environment. Shortening the night-time hours of bars and restaurants will inevitably reduce the number of breaking windows of shops and incidents and vandalism in stores. Controlling an entry and parking increases the ability to spot and capture criminals. This method can, in the long run, reduce the number of attacks and car thefts in the parking lots.

The list of successful examples where the concept of opportunity has achieved positive effects is a long one. This concept in North America is best known for preventing crime through environmental design, and the reduction of crime and fear of crime in Europe is usually realized through urban planning, as well as crime-free design.

### 3.2. A multisectoral approach to urban crime reduction (Trinidad and Tobago case study)

Following the dramatic increase in homicides and criminal activity in Trinidad and Tobago, the Citizen Security Program (CSP) is being implemented. The objective of this program, which is being implemented in 22 communities in Trinidad and Tobago, is to reduce crime and violence and raise citizens' awareness of security. One of the components of this program is the introduction of a multisectoral approach and bringing together the relevant partners from government and international agencies, partner communities, business communities, media

and non-governmental organizations (Sloane-Seale, 2011). This approach creates a dialogue between partners in the local community.

**Figure 2** *Multisectoral approach in crime prevention*
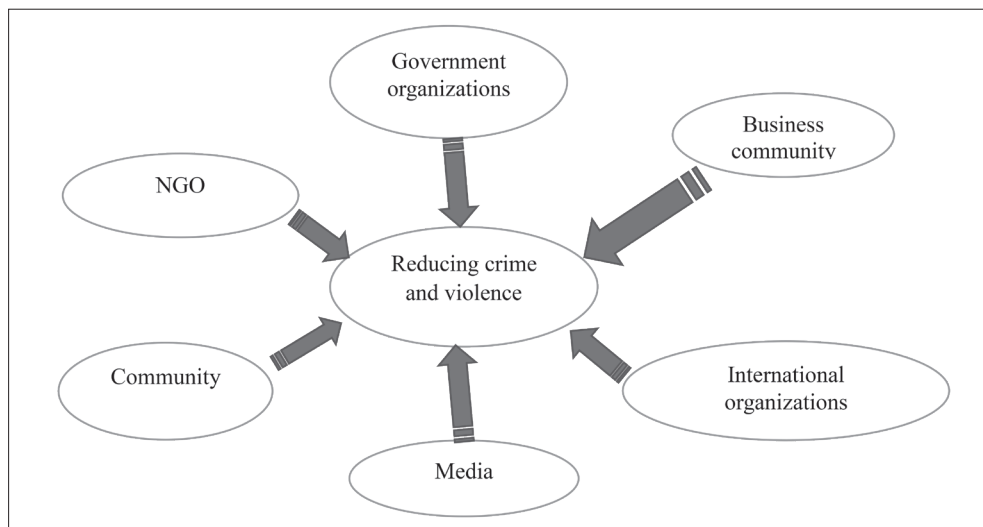


Community involvement and cooperation is an important element in the concept of crime prevention. Also essential to this concept is the involvement of civil society at the local level as an important link in order to achieve the expected effect.

Crime prevention includes a wide range of approaches (ECOSOC Resolution, 2002/13):

1. *Prevention through social development or prevention of social crime.* Promotes well-being and fosters social behaviour through social, economic, health and educational measures, with a particular focus on children and young people, and emphases on the risk and protective factors associated with crime and bullying;
2. *Crime prevention at local level.* Changing conditions in violent and unsafe neighbourhoods, resulting from the reaction to the crime, expertise and commitment of the members;
3. *Situational crime prevention.* Preventing the occurrence of crime by reducing the opportunities for crime. It increases the risk for offenders to be detected, and consequentially the benefits of committing a crime are reduced;
4. *Reintegration program.* Prevention of recidivism (repetition of offenses) by assisting in the social reintegration of offenders and preventive mechanisms.

The CSP program covers the "Seven Steps of Social Change" that help guide the process of social transformation, including: knowledge, desire, skills, optimism, opportunities, stimulation and strengthening. Step 1 "knowledge" refers to identifying risk factors associated with crime and violence, as well as detecting existing issues that require community attention and support. Step 2 "desire" involves maintaining communication with community members on their vision of a desired, healthy, attractive and secure future. At this stage, like-minded people meet to discuss activities to create a homogeneous community. Step 3 "Skills" means that partners are trained in specific skills to start working together. The workshops help in building organizational and community leadership skills, proposing and writing reports, understanding and highlighting issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, mediation, etc. Step 4 "optimism" (*worth a try*) creates the basis for future initiatives and brings together the key players. This step involves identifying and helping to develop progressive leaders, engaging young people and cultivating community projects, as well as connecting with government officials and local councillors. Step 5 "Opportunities" is a phase which connects partners with relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations to achieve a community vision. In Step 6 of the "stimulation" (*I join*) community and its partners implement projects that have an impact on citizens` safety and wellbeing. The last step 7, "strengthening" (*that is, success*) ensures the sustainability of initiatives through public outreach, public recognition, positive reinforcement and work extension.[5]

According to the available literature, it has taken a long time to realize that crime prevention is a shared responsibility in many sectors of society. Crime prevention is not the activity that should be approached through one area (police, organizations, researchers, etc.). What is necessary is a multisectoral approach of structural partnership between local authorities, police, NGOs, citizens, etc.

## 4. Conclusion

In the end, we will present some basic and important concluding marks. First, crime prevention and security strategies should be based on "trust". Therefore, it is very significant to clearly define the responsibilities of the various functions. This should be the first step to be taken when Parliament deals with security policy.

Second, crime prevention and security strategies should be based on the needs of local communities. The main precondition for achieving the safer urban

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5    Several initiatives are funded through the fund CSP s ICON (Inspiring Confidence in our Community)

environments is active citizen participation. It is the community that will decide what form of prevention and security is needed. Also, these functions should be integrated into the global strategy for a specific legal framework, which clearly defines the responsibilities and functions of the various participants.

There are possible risks related to the implementation of a new security and prevention policy where there is a possibility that the police may lose jurisdiction, where the local self-government could intervene, or take over police tasks, when all responsibilities are not clearly defined. It is necessary to give a brief overview of existing crime prevention strategies in the future. The review should include a description of the functions, the initial background, responsibilities of each type of function, their tasks, training instructions, etc. Also, best practices should be centralized and shared between different states, municipalities, other organizations and institutions in order to reduce crime. In this way, local authorities can learn from each other and strengthen their fight against crime. In the end, it can be concluded that urban crime prevention requires approach which is multisectoral, multidisciplinary and integrated.

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