

SafeGrowth

Building Neighborhoods of
Safety & Livability

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the hundreds of participants in SafeGrowth development projects and training courses in Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia since 2007. Your pioneering work to reduce crime and increase livability using SafeGrowth methods in your neighborhoods has been as inspiring as it has been innovative. Your stories demonstrate that, given the training, organization, and native intelligence of neighborhood dwellers along with the professionals who serve them, it is through informed local action where neighborhood safety and imagination flourishes. That is the way forward. Thanks for the reminder.

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I would like to thank the 12 Community Safety Initiative in Calgary for their participation and support for the Summit that led to this book. They are a forward-thinking, nonprofit, crime prevention collaborative that represent the very type of neighborhood organization we envision for the future. Thanks also to the Community Initiatives Program of the Government of Alberta that provided initial funding for our first-ever search conference, what we now call the SafeGrowth[®] Summit.

I would like to thank urban planner Anna Brassard who helped launch that first SafeGrowth[®] Summit, who wrote and edited portions of the book, and who contributed to subsequent brainstorming sessions in Calgary. For years, Anna has promoted a holistic style of neighborhood planning that influenced many ideas in SafeGrowth theory. Her planning work helps communities see the value of the bigger picture and, thus, she is an instrumental part of this story.

Although I take full responsibility for any limitations or mistakes in these pages, each of the 30 Summit participants in Canmore, Alberta, gave their time, energy and considerable expertise to make that event so remarkable. Thank you for that.

Since that first Summit, we have conducted two additional SafeGrowth[®] Summits, one in Sacramento, California and the second in New Orleans, Louisiana. Those subsequent events were sponsored by the Louisiana and California Chapters of the AARP, and we gratefully acknowledge their support, particularly the contribution of Jason Tudor, an organizer of those events and coauthor in these pages. Those events helped reaffirm that we were on the right track with our initial

ideas and those AARP participants were tremendously gracious in sharing their creativity and experience.

The four Summit facilitators wrote chapters in this book. Anna Brassard was a facilitator in all three Summits and a contributor to the book production. Tarah Hodgkinson, Mateja Mihinjac and Jennica Collette facilitated all three Summits and wrote chapters. Their diligence in recording and summarizing participant ideas from each of the Summits brought a rich diversity to these pages. Elisabeth Miller, Steve Woolrich and Jason Tudor wrote chapters regarding their work to bring SafeGrowth, and what is now known as 2nd Generation Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), into their communities. To all coauthors, thank you.

Gregory Saville
2018

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PREFACE

A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

GREGORY SAVILLE

As a lifelong student of crime and its prevention, I long ago heard the term ‘The Great Crime Decline’ to describe the unexpected crime rate declines in cities across the developed world since the 1990s. As a former police officer and research professor of criminology, I was mystified that none of my criminology and policing colleagues (myself included) could predict or explain The Great Crime Decline. And then, just as a bevy of explanatory theories arose, the homicide rates in many cities, just as unexpectedly, stalled and reversed.¹ And yet, and perhaps more importantly, after years of studying the numbers in detail, I knew these changes in crime apply mainly to large-scale crime patterns; they mask the peaks and valleys of crime within neighborhoods where it matters most.

Following that undulating crime landscape we now see, in many parts of the developed world, a resurgence of grass roots social movements calling for change. They show up in race and poverty riots, instigated by disenfranchised youth, triggered by police shootings of civilians, and fueled by strained relations between minority groups and authorities. They include riots in Paris in 2005, London in 2011, Stockholm in 2013 and in a multitude of American cities starting in

Cincinnati in 2001, Oakland, California, 2010, Anaheim, California, 2012, Ferguson, Missouri, 2014, Baltimore, 2015, Milwaukee, 2016, and others.

Although notably more rare, even peaceable Canada has not been immune to waves of social unrest including riots following a Montreal police shooting in 2016 and the G-20 Summit riots in Toronto in 2010. Further, since 2012 there have been over 100 protests by the aboriginal, First Nations movement called Idle No More, including the 2013 protests by thousands in cities across Canada.² In spite of differences in circumstance and nationality, it is not difficult to see growing waves of discontent in urban areas and so, one wonders, are those waves a warning of a future tsunami? After all, in the majority of these cases flare-ups of unrest emanate from broader social movements about poverty, inequity, race, and social justice.

Of course, there is nothing new about social justice movements like Black Lives Matter, inequality movements like Occupy Wall Street, or grass-roots, anti-poverty campaigns. Taken as individual outbreaks in different countries the unrest seems isolated, even inevitable, in the face of diverse, multicultural democracies with such divergent views. But taken on whole, the frequency and prevalence of unrest suggests another possibility. It resembles what futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler called a Third Wave future shock, a period of social and economic turbulence when old practices are upended in a wave of change. Third Wave shocks are moments in history when knowledge about changes in the world becomes, more than ever, a tool of power and control and when the political and economic machinery of long-established customs shift into new gears for organizing city life.

Do these increasing incidents of social unrest prophesize an impending future shock? What is the link between the rise of unrest and the rising and falling of

violence? It is neither new nor surprising that, while the cause of the unrest is complex, whenever street protests arise they inevitably arise within, or emanate from poor, disenfranchised and minority neighborhoods. The Paris riots emanated from the Clichy-sous-Bois suburb, a crime-ridden neighborhood suffering from high unemployment among minority immigrants. The London riots grew out of Tottenham, a neighborhood long known as a drug-infested, gang hotspot. The Montreal riot grew out of a shooting in the Montreal North borough, one of the poorest and most dangerous crime areas of the city. The small city of Ferguson, an inner suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, had long experienced increasing poverty, physical deterioration of the buildings, and higher than average crime. In fact, all too often it is those poor, disorganized and troubled places where, in spite of ups and downs in crime trends, violence and fear is rampant and residents feel they have little power over the shootings, drug dealers or gangs.

Long ago Jane Jacobs described the symbiotic relationships between deteriorating neighborhoods, urban planning and crime in her landmark book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs became the very kind of activist who led protests of her day, back then against urban renewal projects that bulldozed poor neighborhoods to build high density housing, an ill-fated attempt by planners and politicians to remove blighted, crime-ridden slums. It was one of those original 1950s urban renewal projects – the Pruitt-Igoe public housing in St. Louis – that evolved into just such a high crime community. Not only was Pruitt-Igoe torn down due to the high crime and vacancy rates, it became an inspiration for architect Oscar Newman's book *Defensible Space, Crime Prevention Through Urban Design* – one of the concepts that would eventually influence the creation of SafeGrowth. There is no doubt that the failures in public housing and urban redevelopment in that early era only added to

suburban poverty in places like Ferguson, all of which was exacerbated when the Great Recession of 2008 collapsed the housing market.

A half-century after Jane Jacobs, troubled neighborhoods of the poor and disenfranchised still persist in cities everywhere, festering dysfunction and anchoring crime, gangs, and violence. Crime analysts call these places hotspots, but the heat emanating from those places represents far more than crime incidents dotting a map; it is a heat that transforms those neighborhoods into the breeding ground for the unrest we see on the streets today. No matter where we live, that kind of heat burns us all. It brings to mind Einstein's famous dictum; we need solutions of a much different order than those of the past. We write this book in the spirit of solutions of a much different order.

This book documents a series of planning sessions called SafeGrowth[®] Summits, particularly the first Summit that we conducted as a search conference in Canmore, Alberta, in Canada's Rocky Mountains in 2015. The search conference format was chosen for the Summits due to its intensive, future-oriented focus. Search conferences are action-based and they revolve around themes of immediate importance, in this case crime prevention and community development in places suffering violence.

The purpose of these search conferences was to explore a new neighborhood planning theory called SafeGrowth[®], a theory that I developed in 2007.³ In effect, the SafeGrowth[®] Summits herald a different level of solution to urban crime and neighborhood breakdown. Political leaders and others have tried short-term and piecemeal responses already: more police, security cameras in public areas, gated communities, stricter laws, zero-tolerance enforcement, more private security and more prisons. It is time to try something different.

The SafeGrowth[®] Summits occurred at three different locations in 2015 and 2016, including the first in Canmore (coordinated by Anna Brassard and myself), and others in Sacramento, California and New Orleans, Louisiana (coordinated by Jason Tudor and his colleagues). I was joined in these events by a talented team of SafeGrowth advocates that included Anna Brassard, Tarah Hodgkinson, Mateja Mihinjac, and Jennica Collette – contributing authors in this book – who were trained as facilitators and experienced at SafeGrowth programming. Summit participants were divided into teams and, with the help of one of the facilitators, they reviewed the current environment and developed a more holistic, effective and sustainable way to build safe and vibrant neighborhoods in the years ahead.

Each facilitator made contributions to the three Summits that they shared in writing chapters in this book. It is primarily the first Summit in Canmore that comprises Part 2 of this book. There were four teams at that first Summit and their work resulted in the following chapters: ‘Livability Academies’ by Tarah Hodgkinson, ‘The Hub Concept’ by Anna Brassard, ‘Urban Villages’ by Jennica Collette, and ‘Block Level Development’ by Mateja Mihinjac.

In addition to Summit summaries, Tarah Hodgkinson contributed subsequent chapters on two SafeGrowth principles: ‘Social Ecology’ and ‘Action-Based Practice’, the latter she co-wrote with myself. Mateja Mihinjac wrote a chapter on the principle, ‘Neighborhood Activation’, and edited the final version of the manuscript.

We were also pleased to welcome to the Summits three others with special expertise in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)⁴, a strategy that informed some of the earliest SafeGrowth projects. Those talented practitioners join in this book as guest

contributors; they not only attended some of the Summits, but they have been intimately involved in community safety work over the years.

Elisabeth Miller, senior planner with the Municipality of Saskatoon, Canada, wrote ‘SafeGrowth in Saskatoon’. Elisabeth Miller led safety programming in Saskatoon for a decade and her chapter offers a glimpse into how other municipalities might use urban planning as a tool for implementation.

Steve Woolrich, crime prevention specialist from Victoria, British Columbia, wrote ‘Early Steps in Red Deer’. He recounts his years of crime prevention work in a small Alberta city. Red Deer is not yet a SafeGrowth-style city, but Steve’s chapter shows how combining CPTED and social prevention programs (a concept known as 2nd Generation CPTED) might pave the way for later implementation.

Urban planner Jason Tudor wrote ‘Hollygrove – Back from the Brink’. Jason was an integral part of social redevelopment in Hollygrove, a high crime New Orleans neighborhood. He helped lead that redevelopment and adopted SafeGrowth[®] training as a part of that neighborhood’s work to transform a high crime community following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Taken together, these case studies out of small, medium and large cities demonstrate how SafeGrowth fits into neighborhoods of many different shapes and sizes. Combined with the Summit chapters in Part 2, they provide real life examples showing how neighborhood organizing and development, CPTED, and neighborhood planning – concepts not new to city life – are shifting from piecemeal strategies into a coherent philosophy of neighborhood living.

Incidentally, the reader will note our efforts to eliminate the term ‘community’ from our language as much as possible, and replace that with ‘neighborhood’.

This is not an arbitrary or trivial choice since we have noted the regular overuse, and mystification, of the term community in common parlance by those who work in city neighborhoods. It has come to mean everything and anything, a motherhood term that obstructs clear policy and morphs into a catch-all for a whole range of programs. Terms like community-based education, community-policing, and community-based services lead to vexing questions: What community? Isn't all education essentially community-based? How are community-services different than regular municipal services delivered to residents anywhere? How can one possibly know 'community'?

By contrast, we use the term 'neighborhood' to refer to a specific geography within the city, a place with boundaries and a distinct resident population. There might be a debate regarding the boundaries of that place, but to those who live, work and play there, there is seldom debate about what they consider their neighborhood. Ultimately, our view is that what matters most is the physical neighborhood as a geographical place where we live, where we form social bonds, and where we come to call home. That is the true focus of SafeGrowth.

Finally, it is worth noting one other feature from our SafeGrowth work. Those gathered at the first event in Alberta ranged from residents, community developers, activists, criminologists, urban planners, architects, and police officers. They came from communities of all sizes across Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia and Europe. They were invited to attend based on their experience and knowledge in social and urban development, especially in relation to CPTED, in which the authors of this book have considerable expertise. One conclusion from our professional work, and from these Summits, is that if those of us who love cities and livable neighborhoods do not better respond to the

persistent social turbulence, urban violence, crime hotpots, and drugs and gangs, we will face far more serious crises in the years ahead.

Cities everywhere still struggle to tackle the living conditions that submerge violence-prone neighborhoods into places of fear and suffocate a decent quality of life. How, we ask, can cities turn troubled places back from the blight that is the high-crime neighborhood? We hope the following pages provide a blueprint for answering that question.

PART 1

This book presents a new theory in neighborhood development and crime prevention. Soon after our crime prevention work in SafeGrowth began, we realized we needed much more than a compendium of proceedings from a series of conferences (although Part 2 provides that from the Canmore, Alberta Summit). We needed more than case studies about effective ways to prevent crime (although that is offered in Part 3). What we discovered is that we were writing about a more localized way to approach city planning and neighborhood development that better suits the complexities and growth of 21st Century cities. In our research we learned about the many theories of community development and capacity building preceding our work. Further, Summit participants shared stories about dozens of community programs and community-based policing projects. Yet none of those quite captured what we were trying to say because they were either too broad or too undefined. While they took place in specific places, their programmers rarely used the dimension of space as something that mattered. In short, they had neither the precision of a defined neighborhood nor the specificity of a place bounded to a particular population to capture the flavor and impact of SafeGrowth planning.

Then there is the question of theory. The terms theory and philosophy appear interchangeable at times in these pages, as often happens in facilitated community dialogues that have no predictable outcome. This is a result of the embryonic state of SafeGrowth, a concept that we spell out in more detail in later sections. SafeGrowth has a set of principles and concepts, like a

theory, and it also possesses a statement of knowledge and values like a philosophy. But, while a SafeGrowth philosophy of neighborhood living remains a nascent concept, it became clear that the SafeGrowth ideas here represent an emerging theory with four explanatory principles, all of which appear in Part 4. This book is the first full presentation of that theory.

Theories can evolve in different ways. Some emerge incrementally through painstaking data-dependent research while others emerge through intellectual flashes of insight and genius, what science philosopher Thomas Kuhn famously called paradigm shifts. In most cases they emerge directly from, or are reactions to, already existing theories applied to daily life. In that regard SafeGrowth is no different; there are many existing practices and theories that readers will recognize from urban planning, community organizing, crime prevention and criminology. For years we have applied principles from those theories into our fieldwork, yet we found that the real life exigencies in the troubled neighborhoods where we worked stretched the credibility of existing theories beyond their breaking point. Those are some of the paths that led to conceptualizing SafeGrowth as a new theory.

This book is divided into four parts and a short overview appears at the beginning of each part. Part 1 sets the stage for the evolution of SafeGrowth. There is a tendency to see community development and community organizing as just other variations on the urban planning theme. Planning programs, for example, focus on walkable streets or Main Street revitalization and improved architecture. Some strive to reduce homelessness and increase affordable housing. Very few focus on a theory of neighborhood life. That is the path we begin to tread.

Part 1 also describes a part of urban planning history that is relevant to crime and safety. It introduces

the criminology link to urban planning, particularly what has become known as crime prevention science. Finally, the second chapter describes a related 1988 search conference that gave birth to some of the ideas emerging in this book. We have used search conferences since then numerous times, including the Summit in Canmore. For those seeking insight into an intensive, participatory method that has been around for many years, the second chapter describes how the search conference helps residents develop a vision for their neighborhood.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

GREGORY SAVILLE

In the 1960s, at the time of Jane Jacobs' famous book, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, neighborhoods of crime and disorder were targets of slum clearance and urban renewal, an undertaking that Jacobs and her colleagues attacked as failing to eradicate the problem.¹ Architect Oscar Newman later uncovered how urban renewal failed residents as they moved into sterile high-rise towers meant to provide a better life.² Fortunately, as Paul Grogan and Tony Proscio describe in *Comeback Cities*, today's efforts are much more successful due to advances in the rapidly emerging field of community development.³ This is especially true in countries such as the United States where efforts by nonprofit social enterprises such as LISC, the New York based Local Initiatives Support Corporation, have made great progress. Clearly, in spite of the alarming social unrest and economic inequality, there is hope! Blueprints exist for a different future and these pages describe one of them.

This book introduces the next generation of community development in the ideas that coalesced around project work now called SafeGrowth. That work suggests that the success or failure of the 21st Century city resides, directly, uniquely and almost exclusively, within smaller urban neighborhoods. We do not delve

into the (often contradictory) literature regarding specific populations and geographical sizes of small neighborhoods other than to adopt those from the urban planning movement called Smart Growth. In that movement neighborhoods are generally described as compact places of less than 20 city blocks⁴ with a definable center, a diverse collection of land uses within a walkable distance⁵ and populations of between 1,000 and 5,000 residents. This book calls for a coherent, holistic and neighborhood-oriented style of urban planning, community development and city living that exists today in only embryonic form. SafeGrowth, as we discovered repeatedly in our Summits, represents a form of neighborhood planning to guide the governance of cities and help bring to life a more desirable future.

A STREET APPROACH

What is SafeGrowth? In short, it is a planning system combining community development and crime prevention programming in small neighborhoods. While it begins with crime and disorder, like other forms of urban planning it is broad and inclusive and incorporates social development, police, transport planning, education, environmental sustainability, culture and land use.

I developed SafeGrowth in 2007 from research in criminology, urban planning and my experience as a former police officer. It arose from two decades of consulting and training in crime prevention through environmental design.⁶ The SafeGrowth concept was drawn from both CPTED and the urban planning concept called Smart Growth.⁷ Early CPTED training programs were run as classroom exercises, often limited to police. Later those classes grew into collaborative training based on the action research principle of learn-by-doing. People from their own communities used

practical problem-solving, employed crime analysis, tailored existing crime prevention programs and knowledge from criminology, and then came up with their own unique solutions to crime. What started as classroom projects within four walls evolved into community participation, local skills development and innovative projects to deal with problems in troubled neighborhoods. The depth and creativity of those projects suggested that, over and above tactics, it was the process of neighborhood development that produced successful results, a process that will emerge in more detail later in this book. That process is what became SafeGrowth and there are four basic fundamentals:

1. SafeGrowth is rooted in the geography of neighborhoods and it utilizes the native intelligence of local people to formulate plans. It also taps into the latest thinking in crime prevention and community development – such as the planning theory called Smart Growth – and the latest technology like social media, computerized crime mapping, crime hotspot analysis, crowdsourcing, and urban informatics.
2. The SafeGrowth Team, sometimes called the Leadership Team or Problem-solving Panel, is the means by which all these assorted technologies and tactics are brought together. Whatever they are called, collaborative teams work with crime prevention specialists, social and community workers, experts in planning and safety, and urban designers. The teams are diverse and democratic in that they include professionals like police officers, city officials, youth workers, as well as volunteers like shop owners, residents, and community association members. Team members get basic training in the tactics of SafeGrowth, and that can include CPTED, conflict

resolution, tactical urbanism, placemaking, restorative justice, planning, and organizing.

3. Membership rotates into and out of the team every year or two to ensure fresh ideas and wider participation. To sustain staffing, those administering the SafeGrowth teams ensure the availability of a pool of volunteers through a regular livability academy – a voluntary eight-week program, with weekly classes a few hours a week. That includes education and events in various aspects of civics, crime prevention, community inclusion, art and culture, neighborhood resource development, and other elements of community development.
4. SafeGrowth teams initiate annual or biennial neighborhood safety plans that include development goals. We envision this form of neighborhood planning as a permanent fixture in the city planning system. Foremost in each plan is a vision of what neighborhood residents want in both their neighborhood and in the larger city. Some assume this already exists with elected members of the city council; but SafeGrowth assumes a much more inclusive, and activated, neighborhood than found in the ‘neighborhood associations’ in most cities. This is reflected in plans that include urban safety along with urban development and, importantly, plans that avoid the well-known exclusionary bias of NIMBY (not-in-my-back-yard). Plans provide specific strategies to resolve obstacles, such as crime and apathy, or a business plan to address limited resources. Thus, locals themselves learn to tap into assets across the city (where elected officials can help), including other neighborhoods, as they create their own plans for action. In a very important sense, SafeGrowth is different than traditional community organizing because SafeGrowth plans use a scientific, evidence-based process for moving forward.

A PHILOSOPHY FOR LIVING

While the above outlines the practice of SafeGrowth, the philosophical blueprint described in this book arises from the planning and prevention movements emerging from the social turbulence of the 1960s. For students of urban affairs it takes very little digging to uncover the thought-leader in much of this work – Jane Jacobs. It was Jacobs’ ideas that indirectly led to the crime prevention program called CPTED and the urban planning movement known as Smart Growth.

There is a common theme between CPTED and Smart Growth in the belief that, as Schumacher famously noted, ‘small is beautiful’. CPTED took the position it was possible to cut crime opportunities by modifying the built environment at a small scale. Smart Growth takes the position that urban development is more efficient when it “*concentrates growth in compact walkable urban centers to avoid sprawl.*”⁸ In both instances it is at the small scale of the street where positive action most effectively takes hold. Just as Heidi and Alvin Toffler suggested that traditional social, economic and political systems under assault are now shifting into new organizing systems⁹, progressive cities are now shifting into a new form of city building.

The roots of CPTED began with Jane Jacobs’ critique on urban planning in her seminal book *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*¹⁰ and architect Oscar Newman’s observations documented in his book *Defensible Space*¹¹, and his later text *Community of Interest*, that described the infamous Pruitt-Igoe public housing in St. Louis and its later demolition due to crime, vacancy and blight.¹² But oddly, CPTED and crime prevention have been largely absent from planning practice and theory, even though urban crime remains a blight on

cities everywhere. It is not as though planning approaches have not evolved; they certainly have done that under the umbrella of livability, environmental sustainability, and inequity, but crime is seldom mentioned as the reason for those changes.

There are vibrant experiments in planning theory that include the Garden City movement that was developed in response to the blight from industrialization at turn of the last century. Other examples include the rational comprehensive planning model and modernist architecture based on the belief that it was possible to scientifically figure out how to design healthy human interactions. Each theory provides urban forms distinct and powerful; Garden Cities left a legacy of centralized parks, concentric road designs, and walkable neighborhoods. Modernism left a legacy of residential tower blocks, segregated land uses, and large transport hubs. Both triggered unforeseen consequences, often seized upon by writers like Jacobs who noted how distant and removed the public was from these theories, even though it was the public who ended up living in the very urban forms created by those theories.

More recent movements in planning have shifted towards New Urbanism and Smart Growth and they provide a revival of mixed-use neighborhoods with a small-town feel so that residents are able to more easily create local connections. Smart Growth, in particular, draws from ecological sensibilities as planners and architects consider the sustainability of the natural environment an integral part of community wellbeing. Smart Growth offers guidelines for community growth and sustainability by providing a multitude of design choices within neighborhoods. *“Growth is smart when it gives us great communities, with more choices and personal freedom, good return on public investment, greater opportunity across the community, a thriving natural environment, and a legacy we can be proud to leave our children and grandchildren.”*¹³ The means by

which Smart Growth accomplishes that is the concentration of urban development into small, walkable parcels of land with higher population densities found in typical suburbs. Because suburban sprawl makes walking difficult and increased car usage causes excessive fossil fuel use, the densification of land uses makes development far less impactful on the environment.

What SafeGrowth takes from this legacy in planning theory is that the development of cities must not emerge from remote theories in distant places, but rather occur at the neighborhood level in conjunction with those who reside there. Further, neighborhoods are complex entities embedded with a complex exchange between urban design and social relations. Neighborhoods are, as Jacobs notes, social ecosystems linked to the economic and transport networks of the larger city and places where people have opportunities for meaningful social relations. These are the core ingredients for a philosophy of urban living.

But none of that is possible if neighborhoods are dysfunctional, alienating, uninteresting or crime ridden. In fact, they can just as easily turn into breeders of gang behavior, violence and social unrest, like that described at the start of this book. SafeGrowth was developed to provide an antidote to that dysfunction by creating plans and local programs to celebrate the uniqueness within communities and embrace the interplay between the social and the designed.

CRIME PREVENTION THEORIES

Criminologists have been involved in the practice and theory of crime prevention for a long time. As mentioned earlier, one of the dominant prevention models in the latter half of the last century was Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. In an age

before most contemporary prevention theories existed, there was CPTED. In fact, in the language of today's crime theories, CPTED existed before policing was intelligence-led, before broken window demonstrated street incivilities, and before prevention was situational and the routine activities of people led to crime opportunities¹⁴. CPTED was the favored prevention program of the 1970s, originally formulated as an urban design and architectural strategy to cut crime opportunities by modifying the built environment. CPTED offered tactics to make it difficult for offenders to offend with impunity: better lighting, landscaping, street design, building orientation, walking paths, sightlines, and area clean-ups, each tactic tailored in order to improve local feelings of territorial ownership over a risky area.

The central psychology behind CPTED then, and today, remains the concept known as territoriality. Territoriality was the idea that, given the right incentives and welcoming urban designs, residents will take pride and ownership in areas around their places of residence, work and play. In turn, potential criminals will be less able to offend with impunity and find fewer opportunities for crime. Seminal books on the topic emerged by architectural journalist Jane Jacobs in 1961 (*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*), criminologist C. Ray Jeffery in 1971 (*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*) and, in 1972, architect Oscar Newman (*Defensible Space: Crime Prevention Through Urban Design*).

Territoriality held the promise that we can minimize opportunities for crime by influencing how people relate to each other in urban spaces. Jacobs wanted to reduce crime by improving social conditions in neighborhoods, not just improve streets or save historic buildings¹⁵, a sentiment that will resurface later in this book (a sentiment lost to the crime and place theories of

recent years). We build on those ideas in this book by arguing that it is more sensible, and sustainable, to place crime prevention squarely on the shoulders of neighborhood development within a program of community-building and urban planning and less on technologies like security cameras.

CPTED faltered in the 1980s throughout North America (or rather fell off a Top Ten list of popular solutions to crime) before making a comeback in the late 1990s following Oscar Newman's publication *Creating Defensible Space* and the creation of the International CPTED Association (ICA) in 1996. Today CPTED is represented globally by the ICA, a non-governmental association dedicated to advancing its practice and theory with conferences, certification programs and regional chapters around the world. In one way, SafeGrowth is an offshoot of that CPTED history, however, as we discuss in these pages, it has since morphed into a much broader theory about urban living.

To a large extent the growth and development of CPTED represents a kind of theory-through-practice. We will later term this approach 'action-based practice', an action-based style of research that holds a unique position in the world of crime theory. Action-based practice is unique because most crime prevention theories follow a very different path. Usually that path is top-down within criminal justice organizations, or the path leads from theories of those outside troubled neighborhoods and towards those residing within troubled places.

Consider the latest police response to crime and its prevention: intelligence-led policing. This is an idea emerging in the late 1990s to encourage the use of intelligence tactics, like informants, to reduce repeat offences by chronic offenders. Today intelligence-led tactics have evolved to embrace more holistic programs like problem-oriented policing¹⁶ to solve local problems,

and they do so through sophisticated crime analysis and intelligence techniques, presumably to enhance the effectiveness of both. Problem-oriented policing in particular represents an innovative and unique form of action-based crime prevention from which we draw inspiration in SafeGrowth. In that case police officers employ a systematic step-by-step method to resolve intractable problems alongside residents. Both problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing are rooted in policing and that is where many decisions about problems and solutions reside. They are community-based in the sense that they employ the community as a partner but, arguably, seldom as a decision-maker or leader. In SafeGrowth it is neighborhoods and their residents who take the lead.

Another crime prevention example is the routine activity theory. Developed as a rejection of the idea that social solutions are the best way to reduce crime, it instead proposed the idea that the location of crime opportunities matters most, particularly the intersection of the offender, the victim, and the absence of someone (or something) to prevent crime.¹⁷ Routine activity theory recommended removing the place or person where the crime target appears, but it ultimately produced very little proactively in the way of programs to prevent the social roots that motivated criminals in the first place. In other words, the routine activities theory recommended what CPTED had already proposed – cut crime opportunities and modify or remove places where offenders and victims routinely come into contact with each other. It might be reasonably argued that routine activity theory was not developed as a crime prevention theory, except that many researchers and government policy-makers do consider it a crime prevention method.

Routine activities might hold theoretical sway among some academics, but unfortunately it has yet to predict with accuracy where crime will actually happen in

the real world. After all, it is difficult to know with any accuracy what most offenders view as a crime ‘opportunity’ until after the crime has been committed. Thus, routine activity theory remains a retroactive theory requiring crime to occur in order to prove its truth – a cart-before-the-horse argument that ends up in the sticky logic error that social scientists call a tautology.¹⁸

Yet another crime prevention example was the broken windows theory, developed from a 1982 magazine article and blossoming into policing policies such as zero-tolerance enforcement and aggressive tactics to stop street incivilities.¹⁹ Broken windows was the view that street incivilities such as drunkenness, public disorder, litter, and graffiti contribute to an unsafe environment because criminals assume if no one cares enough about that environment to clean it or care for it, no one will intervene in their criminal behavior. Thus, they learn they can act with impunity. When that happens fear increases and unruly behavior leads to more serious crime. Following New York’s example, police everywhere developed similar quality-of-life, zero tolerance enforcement strategies to clamp down on street incivilities and prevent crime before it grew out of control. Aggressive and targeted enforcement of minor offences became the new thing in cities like Toronto (the TAVIS anti-crime program), Cincinnati (the Quality of Life Enhancement Team), and Baltimore (the ‘clear corners’, zero-tolerance campaign). These were cities where urban unrest would later return to haunt broken windows supporters. This was a radical departure from traditional police practice when cops used discretion and looked the other way for minor incivilities.

Initially the efforts to prevent violent crime through broken windows tactics were dramatic. Crime declined across New York City, a metropolis plagued by decades of high murder rates and fear on the street. Later, however, social scientists took note of the fact that crime

declined in neighborhoods across the country with or without broken windows programs. Worse still, too many enforcement tactics led to excessive force, racial profiling and declining respect and trust in public policing, arguably a situation cumulating in the Ferguson anti-police riots and the urban unrest outlined at the beginning of this book. Ultimately the broken windows theory did not actually repair any broken windows because the theory focused strictly on police enforcement and not on the underlying social conditions that led to crime in the first place.

This ebb and flow from one prevention theory to another might give a casual observer the impression that all that really occurs when theory becomes practice is simply a shift from one prevention flavor to the next. Each new policy regime tries their hand at a different approach; after all, new leaders seldom get their job saying they will do the same thing as the previous leader. But does this mean no crime prevention theory works? Surely the theories leading to those programs arose from some larger philosophies on how to prevent crime? To fully appreciate where ideas emerge regarding preventing crime and creating safer neighborhoods it is necessary to look at criminology.

CRIMINOLOGY – THE ELUSIVE TRAIL OF PREVENTION

Traditionally, the study of crime and its prevention falls to the academic field of criminology. Criminology has roots reaching back to 19th Century legal scholars and philosophers, especially those who wrote that crime emerges from deviants trying to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain – the so-called Classical School of criminal behavior. To deter the impulse toward crime the Classical School attempted to

prevent crime by expanding the criminal justice system, improving law enforcement and enhancing the prison system as a way to minimize the gains from crime and maximize the risk for committing it.

Decades later, the introduction of biology and social sciences brought more strategies to the crime prevention repertoire. This second wave of crime theory, the Positivistic School, grew from the Enlightenment philosopher Auguste Comte who believed in replacing random speculation with scientific evidence to uncover positive facts about the world. The offender was not blamed for faulty reasoning, but instead was the victim of biological disorders, family dysfunction or psychological distress. This 20th Century Positivistic School of criminal behavior spawned a multitude of programs attempting to prevent crime with psychological counseling, support programs for those at-risk, substance abuse programs, and dozens of others. The single factor in common with all these programs was that they targeted factors that dispose an individual towards or away from criminal acts.

Therefore, the bulk of contemporary crime theories, and the programs they embody, arise from different versions of these two dominant crime philosophies. Criminology theories like the broken windows and routine activities assume that offenders scan their physical environment for easy opportunities, or search for cues that no one will stop them so that they can offend and not get caught. Law enforcement theories like intelligence-led policing²⁰, (at least its early version), adopt the scientific analysis promoted in Positivism, but then like Classicalism ended up relying on the criminal justice system to prevent crime. These two philosophies, Classicalism and Positivism, dominate contemporary prevention.

However, it was a third wave of crime theories that most closely aligns with SafeGrowth. These theories emerged from social studies at the University of Chicago

in the 1920s and they are called the Ecological School of criminology. Researchers in Chicago began by examining the places where crime occurred across the expanding city of Chicago at the beginning of the last century, at a time when neighborhoods were transforming with new European immigrants, African Americans from the southern states and later Latino American immigrants.

Sociologists at the University of Chicago discovered that rates of juvenile delinquency varied significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood and those rates correlated to social conditions in each neighborhood.²¹ That some areas were worse than others was not new but for the first time evidence pointed not to the biological flaws in offenders nor to pleasure-loving deviants, but rather to the social, demographic, and economic factors – the ecological factors – that triggered crime-causing conditions in each neighborhood. Neighborhoods were viewed as ecosystems within the larger urban system; a view that reemerges in SafeGrowth. The role of place and space, and the ecological conditions within those places, were the mainstay for crime prevention programming in this philosophy. Even today ecology of crime theories remain a powerful way to explain different types of crime. Academics continue to redefine neighborhood boundaries and explore social forces that hold them together, two of the most powerful being social cohesion and collective efficacy. Both of those neighborhood-building concepts exist as integral parts of SafeGrowth and both emerge as central themes in Robert Sampson's 2012 epic study on social ecology, *The Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*.²²

REDISCOVERING ECOLOGY

It is not surprising that ecology of crime theories led to prevention programs still in use today: summer programs for youth, gang prevention at neighborhood schools, urban development to improve neighborhood conditions, and programs to build social and family cohesion within neighborhoods. Many of these programs grew up under the famous Chicago Area Project²³ established to tackle juvenile delinquency by University of Chicago sociologist Clifford Shaw in 1934,²⁴ probably the first-ever American community crime prevention program.

The outcome of all this prevention history is that crime theories show both success and failure at cutting crime, depending on the neighborhood context where they are implemented. In the Classical School there is no doubt that targeted, efficient and fair law enforcement plays a role in cutting crime. In the Positivist School, psychological counseling and developmental school programs remain effective ways to cut crime causes. Arguably, however, it was crime prevention programs in the Chicago Area Project that produced the most lasting neighborhood-based ideas for cutting crime. This is particularly the case with the latest theory called collective efficacy²⁵, a concept that figures prominently in SafeGrowth.

Many contemporary criminologists ignore the theories of the Chicago School, and programs in Chicago have been threatened with defunding.²⁶ The Chicago Area Project survives today, but projects in that third-largest U.S. city still focus mainly on juvenile delinquency and do not transform the way in which city neighborhoods are governed and operated (in fairness, that was not their intention). Consequently, violence in Chicago today soars, the latest policing and prevention programs falter, and gang wars persist. SafeGrowth

emerges to reformulate crime and ecology theories, but this time from a much broader perspective and through using urban planning and neighborhood development. The goal is not only crime prevention, but neighborhood livability.

All of the various crime prevention theories mentioned here are still around; some merged and thrived while others lost popularity. Most programs have something of value to offer, a truism that highlights the central premise of this book – it is the *process of neighborhood development* itself that holds the key. It is the planning and implementation process that matters as much as the theory behind the program. That is why SafeGrowth is a neighborhood planning process for community living, and not simply a theory or a program to prevent crime.

In spite of this shifting prevention landscape, in our day-to-day lives we still rely on the police to do the work that we should all do to prevent crime. Engaged residents, community associations, neighborhood activists, local businesses, community builders and urban developers, and civic officials all have a role to play. But, because those groups typically don't collaborate and muster resources within a coherent, neighborhood-based plan, we turn to our historical standby for preventing crime – the police – and we trust in whatever strategies they possess. Sadly, in spite of some exceptions, those strategies remain retroactive crime investigation, arrest, and responding to calls for service. Given the increasing strain in municipal budgets, not to mention years of urban unrest described earlier, relying on the police is not a sustainable model into the future. Municipalities require a new arrangement for creating environments safe from crime, vibrant community life, and free from the fear that pervades far too many places.

The remainder of this book explains how practitioners and prevention advocates from a wide range

of backgrounds began to envision ways to achieve those goals. Summit participants responded to this central SafeGrowth premise and they came up with ideas on how to begin with the social ecology that is the city neighborhood. The pages that follow outline one possible future emerging from this vision.

