

***Balanced Investing in Proven Crime Prevention:
A Crime Victim Right***

by

Irvin Waller

From: Marc Coester and Erich Marks (Eds.):
International Perspectives of Crime Prevention 5
Contributions from the 6th Annual International Forum 2012
within the German Congress on Crime Prevention
Forum Verlag Godesberg GmbH 2013, Page 21-28

978-3-942865-17-3 (print)
978-3-942865-18-0 (ebook)

Irvin Waller

Balanced Investing in Proven Crime Prevention: A Crime Victim Right

The harm to victims from current levels of crime are unacceptable in the 21st century. We have the compelling and empirical evidence that prevention stops victimization from crime. We know that investing in proven prevention gives us a dividend of less crime but also of less costs to taxpayers.

But we are not applying this knowledge enough to reduce the number of victims. We must balance expenditures on reaction with prevention. We must shift government thinking and investment to guarantee the right to safety - a fundamental human right - for voters who are (potential) victims of crime.

What is balanced investing in proven crime prevention?

Our current expenditures on crime are not balanced. Whatever the rhetoric, they go overwhelmingly to reacting to emergency calls, then trying to catch, convict and incarcerate offenders.

If locking up those who violate the law contributed to safer societies, then the United States should be the safest country in the world.” Horner Committee, 1993

In the USA, they are once again bigger and better at this than anyone else. The USA has taken the over-reliance and so over expenditures on mass incarceration to extremes holding one in four of all prisoners in the world for a country with only five per cent of the world’s population.

Unfortunately, they are not better at stopping crime. Its rates of property crime are little different from countries such as Canada or England and Wales who have made moderate use of more police and prisons. While its murder rates is 200% higher than both of those countries.

If governments and so taxpayers are to pay on the basis of results in reducing crime, we would see a massive shift from traditional policing strategies and mass incarceration to smart problem oriented policing and targeted social crime prevention. I am going to highlight where those investments would provide a return of protecting crime victims and taxpayers.

I am also going to call for balanced investing – for instance matching every additional euro for standard policing, courts and corrections with a euro for prevention. I will also show how to make the shift from where we are now – for instance through the leadership of a crime reduction board.

Crime as harm to victims

In 1985, every government who was a member of the UN General Assembly agreed that resolution that recognised that crime is not just a violation of a national law but causes pain and suffering to victims. Today, we can measure that harm and know that it amounts to hundreds of billions of Euros for a country with the population of Germany.

In my recent book on Rights for Victims of Crime: Rebalancing Justice, I demonstrated that homicide and dangerous driving account for about a quarter of that harm in the USA but the less visible crimes of rape and child abuse remain so frequent that they are estimated each to cause as much pain and suffering. With a lower rate of murder in Germany, this would be even more true.

This means that our investments in effective prevention and smart policing must reduce fatal crimes such as murder and dangerous driving but also rape, child abuse, assault as well as property crime.

Smart Policing and Effective Prevention Reduce Crime

The World Health Organization reviewed the scientific studies on what prevents violence in 2002. It asserts that violence is preventable, not inevitable, and recommends investing significantly in proven and targeted pre-crime prevention and services for victims of crime. Mandela wrote the foreword.

I repeat violence is preventable, not inevitable. Little did he know that just ten years later a plethora of government agencies across the world provide living proof. The World Health Organization again in 2009 and now U.S. Department of Justice have scoured the world to provide even more. In my country, Public Safety Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada – yes the public health agency - have selected best practices and made them publicly accessible.

These vital sources of hope for crime reduction are based on scientific studies that typically use random control trials to test empirically where the projects have worked. They also have a basis in "logic models", where programs are developed to tackle an empirically proven cause or risk factor, such as inconsistent parenting or dropping out of school. These causes have been established through a plethora of longitudinal studies that follow-up thousands of young people from birth into their teenage years and beyond.

We also know that policing that is intelligence led can reduce prolific offending. Importantly, problem oriented policing strategies in collaboration with citizens and local agencies reduce many property crimes.

But despite their scientifically validated success, these effective prevention and smart policing practices have yet to be shared and implemented sufficiently to reduce significantly and nationally the costly harm to victims or limit the growth of the unsustainable costs of police, emergency care and prisons to taxpayers.

Fortunately, a growing number of “super cops” are lining up with the science, albeit with an emphasis on balancing tough-on-criminal and tough-on-cause approaches.

Bill Bratton stresses prevention, saying, “You cannot arrest your way out of [street violence].” Credited with reducing homicides in New York City in the 1990s through tough policing, Bratton knows what he is talking about. He was also chief of police in Boston, and Los Angeles.

Similarly, the chief of detectives for Glasgow, one of the U.K.’s most violent cities, got fed up investigating homicides. Looking for another option, he called in public health specialists, took knowledge from around the world and applied it locally, targeting gang violence.

My fellow countryman, Dale McFee, president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, is wasting no time to adapt these lessons to Canada, where they are very much needed.

Increasingly I hear these leading police executives and their organizations such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police calling for this innovation and for police leaders to argue for the investments in the agencies that can prevent crime and assist victims.

In my book, I have used examples of successful best practices and social science research knowledge to show that national and local governments could reduce the number of crime victims by 50 per cent or more by shifting from over-reliance on traditional policing and corrections to smart use of police and investments in effective prevention. I am going to highlight some of these for you.

We know that programs targeted to priority areas that address inconsistent parenting such Triple P, public health nurse visitations and enriched child care reduce both child abuse and teenage violence.

We know that programs that outreach to youth at risk such as mentoring or youth inclusion projects prevent juvenile offending. In the UK, the success of the youth inclusion projects in 72 areas lead to investments in double the number of projects.

We know that programs that analyse data from hospital emergency admissions to go to the roots of the violence prevent crime. We also know that programs that restrict access to other facilitators of violence such as knives or guns prevent crime.

In Winnipeg for instance, the number of victims of car thefts have been significantly reduced by an Auto Theft Suppression Strategy that combines smart enforcement, victim protection and pre-crime prevention. Since 2005, the investment of \$50 million has been recovered with \$40 million saved each year to taxpayers and likely much more in reduced harm to victims.

There are several other examples of collective efficacy. In Seattle as early as the 1970's, city hall hired outreach workers to create collective efficacy between neighbors and so reduce burglaries by 50% within three years.

In Glasgow, the Scottish government brought in public-health experts and oversaw the installation of programs to limit alcohol abuse, stop youth from carrying weapons, promote mentoring, improve bad parenting, and more. Five years later, these efforts have reduced rates of violent offending by 50 per cent among those engaging with the initiative.

Even the rampant rates of violence against women can be reduced. WHO has identified special courses in school that change male attitudes and so reduce violence against women. An innovative new curriculum in schools called the Fourth R: Relationship-Based Violence Prevention is being used more and more across Canada but could be used yet more to significantly reduce the number of women who are victims of violence.

We know from scientific evaluations of focused restorative justice programs that victims get more satisfaction and offenders recidivate less. The use of this knowledge is spreading these programs across the UK.

Return on Investment

In the early 1990's, the UK Audit Commission analysed the empirical data on projects tackling juvenile offending. Their conclusion was that investments had to be made before juveniles became offenders, because the costs of reacting and catching offenders were huge and very inefficient. Their report was poignantly called Misspent Youth.

Later in the 1990's, the Rand corporation did a similar analysis for adult offending in California. Their conclusion was similar but actually shows that a dollar invested in parent training or programs to help at risk youth stay in school will reduce crime seven times more efficiently than incarceration.

Now in the 2000's, the legislators in Washington State are provided with data on the cost benefits of a range of different interventions and prevention programs. These data measure the benefits separately for reductions in harm to victims and reductions in notional costs to policing and prisons.

In my book, I have used these data to extrapolate the return on investment in “effective violence prevention” over a ten year period for the equivalent of 10% of current expenditures on enforcement and criminal justice. I estimate the reduction at more than 50%.

Harnessing Knowledge to Prevent Crime

But the book is not just enabling legislators, taxpayers, voters and potential victims to understand the potential of prevention. It has led to real action. It has also coincided with the initiatives of WHO, Habitat and UNODC that propose similar actions.

These programs have to be directed by good governance strategies that are sustained, comprehensive and results oriented. These need a responsibility center at highest level, sustained investment in training, standards and capacity development as well as 3 year action plans with ten year vision. These must be multi-pronged (enforcement, design, social ...) and a portfolio of short and long term investments. They need to be multi-agency problem solving:

- Diagnosis, plan, implementation, evaluation
- Collaborative that brings together key agencies such as schools, social services,
- Engages public
- All orders of government – municipalities have key role to play but require financial and technical support from other orders of government
- Measuring outcomes/results independently of justice processes – e.g. using victimization surveys, surveys of violence against women, health data (death and injury), costs and consequences of crime

The United Nations knows that. But so does, Alberta who has a comprehensive, permanent and evidence based crime reduction and community safety strategy balancing smart enforcement, treatment programs and effective pre-crime prevention. This strategy is framed in terms of reducing the numbers of victims of crime and harm to victims. In March 2011, they held a provincial workshop on Community Mobilization that are available on the web and are examining ways to implement the recommendations from that workshop.

The government of the Province of Alberta has invested \$500 million in new dollars over three years into a strategy that balances enforcement, treatment and prevention – the three pronged strategy. It is run by SafeCom which is a modern day responsibility centre that co-locates senior officials from five ministries and is mandated to follow a long term strategy to significantly reduce crime and prevent victimization over a ten year period. This strategy is expected to use surveys such as victimization surveys to measure performance.

Inspired in part by the European Forum for Urban Safety, a National Municipal Network for Community Safety has come together to pioneer municipal partnerships that (i) diagnose the causes of their local problems, (ii) plan sustainable, collaborative and evidence based solutions, (iii) implement those plans, and (iv) where possible evaluate and learn from the results.

Their on-going work follows in part the recommendations of the Safer Cities: Action Briefs for Municipal Stakeholders. These are a significant tool for cities to plan better and invest smartly. They are written for local political leaders and heads of agencies such as schools, policing, health and so on.

The action briefs build on both the empirical evidence and the pioneering efforts of many Canadian cities. One remarkable example is Waterloo Region whose executive director is here today and speaks German. Her council has shifted investment in prevention from 5% to 30%. Another example is my city – our capital Ottawa – whose strategy focuses on reducing youth violence, preventing violence against women and enhancing community safety.

Conclusion

The challenge to policy makers is to make the innovative shift from over-reliance on what is expensive and limited in success to a balance between smart law enforcement and smart investments in what reduces crime and violence. Increasingly, policy makers are making that shift because it protects taxpayers and potential crime victims.

The rights of citizens not to be victims of crime require federal, state and local governments to balance their investment in effective crime prevention and shift to smart policing. They need to get to know the results of scientific analyses of the causes of crime and the results of programs that have succeeded to prevent crime by crackling those causes. They can read this easily in *Less Law, More Order*.

In sum, we have the knowledge to reduce street violence, violence against women, child abuse and property crime. We can reduce gang violence, repeat offending and ultimately reduce the pressures on emergency and reactive systems.

We can achieve these through a combination of investments in effective prevention, that includes smart investment in early childhood, youth outreach services, changing the culture of violence, and restorative justice. These must be paralleled by action to use police resources more smartly by focussing more police time on controlling alcohol and other facilitators of violence such as knives and guns as well as reducing design opportunities and targeting prolific offenders. The police actions must also be partners with, and supporters of, agencies who can implement effective social prevention.

In my book, I provide you a budget to achieve these objectives that uses the equivalent of 5% of your current expenditure on reaction (police, courts and corrections) to invest in the effective crime prevention programs. It also calls for another 3% to invest in services and rights for victims of crime, which I have now explained in the sequel to Less Law, More Order called Rights for Victims of Crime have explained in much more compelling terms.

However, you will notice that I also call for the equivalent of 2% of the reactive budget to help police and municipalities retool as well as get the training and data that are needed. In the book, I have called for legislation to get the governance processes for all orders of government.

In closing, I want to leave you with some concrete ways to balance investing in prevention. Here, I have shown how to do this by matching every additional euro for standard policing, courts and corrections with a new euro for prevention. Whether overall budgets for police, courts and corrections are growing or decreasing, within 5 years 10% of those budgets must be added to be invested in smart policing and effective prevention.

The strategy for prevention must be led by a crime reduction board in every order of government so that the funds are guided to where they are needed. The boards must braid funds from different ministries, develop human capacity, ensure that the data is available and so on.

Less crime and violence means less harm to victims, less costs to taxpayers and relief from heavy workloads for police, lawyers and corrections. It means our municipal, provincial and federal taxes are not side tracked into reacting to crime but can be used to enhance the futures of your men, women and neighborhoods as well as for our economic and social prosperity.

For the harm done by the offender; he is responsible

For the harm done because we do not use the best knowledge when that is available to us, we are responsible

The time has to come to balance investment in effective crime prevention to protect (potential) victims from crime. Thank you for listening.

Further Reading

see www.irvinwaller.org (blog and twitter feed on preventing crime and victim services)

Waller, Irvin, Mehr Recht und Ordnung! – oder doch lieber weniger Kriminalität?, Mönchengladbach, Forum Verlag Godesberg, 2011, Burkhard Hasenpusch und Erich Marks, Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Deutschen Präventions (Translation of Less Law, More Order: The Truth about Reducing Crime into German)

Waller, Irvin, Rights for Victims of Crime: Rebalancing Justice, New York City, Rowman and Littlefield, December, 2010

See also

http://www.preventviolence.info/evidence_base.aspx (World Health Organization, Violence Prevention)

<http://crimesolutions.gov/> (What works ...)

Making Cities Safer: Action Briefs for Municipal Stakeholders (<http://irvinwaller.org/policy-adviser-effective-policies>)

Content

Introduction	5
Lectures and Documents from the 6th Annual International Forum	
ERICH MARKS	
Opening of the 17 th German Congress on Crime Prevention 2012.....	9
IRVIN WALLER	
Balanced Investing in Proven Crime Prevention: A Crime Victim Right.....	21
CAROLINE L. DAVEY / ANDREW B. WOOTTON / MELISSA MARSELLE	
Youth Design Against Crime	
Enabling youth-led innovation in crime prevention.....	29
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME (ICPC)	
2012 International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety	53
TINA SILBERNAGL / PHILIPP KUEHL	
Systemic approaches and collaborative action for realizing community safety-experiences from South Africa.....	61
ALEXANDER BUTCHART	
Preventing Violence: an Overview.....	75
GERMAN CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CONGRESS PARTNERS	
Munich Declaration of the 17 th German Congress on Crime Prevention.....	87
ERICH MARKS / MARC COESTER / FREDERICK GROEGER-ROTH / BURKHARD HASENPUSCH / CLAUDIA HEINZELMANN / ANJA MEYER / SUSANNE WOLTER	
Some experiences by the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC) concerning quality-oriented and evidence-based prevention policies.....	91
Program of the 6th Annual International Forum	105
Authors	109