Situational Crime Prevention and White-Collar Crime

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Theoretical Background

• 1970s – 1980s
  • Routine Activities Theory (RAT)
  • Lifestyle – Routine Activities Theory (LRAT)
  • Rational Choice Theory (RCT)
  • Situational Crime Prevention (SCP)

• Overview of talk
Assumptions of SCP

• Opportunity is a cause of crime
• Offenders are rational
• Situational contingencies matter
Criminal Opportunity

• Suitable target
  • Person
  • Property
  • Other entities

• Lack of guardianship
  • Access
  • Low risk of detection

• \( CO = ST + LG \)
Offenders?

• Largely ignored – assumed to be available
• Criminal dispositions and motivations unimportant
• Rationality assumed
Attractiveness of Criminal Opportunities

• Effort
• Rewards
• Risks
• Provocations
• Excuses
Crime and Criminal Opportunities

• Crime = MO + ST + LG
• Concentrated in time and space
• Depend on routine activities
• Affected by social and technological changes
Strategies to Prevent Traditional Street Crime

• Focus on highly specific forms of crime
  • Increase effort
  • Reduce rewards
  • Increase risk
  • Reduce provocations
  • Remove excuses
Situational Crime Prevention and White-Collar Crime
Applying SCP to White-Collar Crime: Overview

• Requires modifications
• Conceptualizing the nature of white-collar crime
• Rethinking criminal opportunities
The Nature of White-Collar Crime

- Legitimate access to target
- Spatial separation from victim
- Superficial appearance of legitimacy
White-Collar Crime Targets

• Linked to structure of market or industry
• Processes or transactions
• Not obvious to outsiders
White-Collar Crime Victims

- Individuals
- Organizations
  - Private
  - Governmental
- Diffuse effects
- Unaware of victimization
- Willing cooperation
Superficial Appearance of Legitimacy

• Integrated into occupational or organizational activities
• Deception
  • Embellishing (abuse of trust)
  • Mimicking
  • Concealment and conspiracy
• White-collar crime in stock markets
  • Frauds or Ponzi schemes - embellishment
  • Insider trading - Mimicking
  • Stock manipulation – Concealment & conspiracy
Guardianship and White-Collar Crime

• Credible oversight
  • Regulation
  • Criminal law
  • Civil law
  • News media
  • Social media
Strategies for White-Collar Crime

- Increasing effort
- Increasing risk
- Reducing rewards
- Reducing provocations
- Removing excuses
Issues in Using SCP

• Focus on highly specific forms of crime.
• Controls affect legitimate actors.
• Industries, markets, and technologies continually evolve.
• Crime concentration not the same.
• Diffusion of illegal practices likely.
Criticisms of SCP

• Displacement
• Crimes of omission
• Regulation same as SCP
Summary

• Crime control arms race
• Aim for harm reduction