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Chapter 16: Practical Challenges and New Research Frontiers in Retail Crime and Its Prevention

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Introduction

This final chapter is composed of four parts: a summary of the results, the cross-cutting common themes, the book limitations and a future research agenda linked to policy recommendations. This chapter first synthesises and critically reviews the key findings, identifying relevant challenges and lessons learnt by contributors that come from a variety of backgrounds. Then, it outlines the future research in retail crime and provides a number of suggestions for policy recommendations that are linked to different retail issues.

An overview of the book chapters

This book was divided into six parts; the first chapter provides an introduction to retail crime and defines the scope and theoretical framework of the book. In Chapter 2, Bamfield explores the international trends in retail crime and crime prevention interventions, outlining the difficulties in accurately measuring loss from crime as opposed to loss from waste or staff error. Additional measurement complexities are also discussed, not least the issue of levels of apprehensions often reflecting the scale of crime prevention activity as opposed to actual patterns of crime. This chapter highlights the ever changing (and expanding) nature of retail crime that encompasses crimes as varied as shoplifting, fraud, cybercrime and organized crime, and thus the interventions required to target these offences.
Part 2 focuses on the types of products that are most frequently stolen as well as how the product, settings and offenders interplay in a retail environment. This is the micro-scale of retail crime that focuses on products, settings and to some extent, store environmental features. Smith and Clarke explore the extent to which additional variables could enhance the effectiveness of CRAVED as a measure of product risk. Clarke’s (1999) original CRAVED framework asserts that ‘hot products’ will be those that are Concealable, Removable, Available, Valuable, Enjoyable and Disposable. To these, Smith and Clarke add the extent to which products require regular replenishment – for example, razor blades. Other factors include whether products are a brand name, as opposed to the store’s own brand, and whether the product has a known role in illicit drug use, for example, the product provides a high, enhances the effects of drug use, reduces the ill effects of drug use, or can be used as an ingredient for making illicit drugs. In assessing a large sample of 7,468 fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) across 204 supermarkets in the US, Smith and Clarke found that CRAVED explains shoplifting better on its own than with the additional three variables. Although a somewhat disappointing conclusion, they argue that this could be a reflection of the prevention policies already in place to target such goods. As they state: “What is stolen depends not just on what shoplifters would like to steal, but what they are able to steal, which depends to some extent on the anti-theft policies pursued by the stores”.

In Chapter 4, Hunter et al. explore who shoplifts and why. Utilising police recorded data and detailed interviews with offenders from a core city in England, they explore patterns in socio-demographic variables as well as motivations, targets and deterrents. A key finding, and one that resonates with Armitage et al., is that, whilst shoplifters may experience many convictions – the average number for this cohort being 47, this
represents a minor proportion of their offences – many reporting that they committed thousands of undetected offences. Motivations for offending fall largely into the categories of economic (the need to fund drug use, lifestyle), psychological (the thrill of offending), moral (the belief that retailers can afford the loss) and social (being part of a shoplifting community). Offender perceptions of security measures revealed that, whilst formal surveillance (CCTV, security guards, store detectives, EAS) and place managers (store staff) were deterrents, the primary indicator of risk was store design and layout – from the placement of goods to the height of shelving units. Given the cost of many security interventions, this finding is significant and something that should be considered with store planners, ideally, at the planning stage. Whilst retailers have many competing demands, security not necessarily the primary concern, careful consideration of design features and their influence on offender decision making can be incorporated into the design and layout of stores.

Taylor explores the impact that customer operated payment systems (COPS) are likely to have on retail crime. Such technology includes self-service checkouts (SCOs) and scan-as-you-go, these are becoming increasingly popular in supermarkets across the world. Cautioning of the difficulties in ascertaining the true extent of retail theft facilitated by such technologies, Taylor discusses the techniques utilised by shoplifters concealing goods using SCOs, the motivations for such offending and the potential measures to reduce this modus operandi. Methods used to avoid payment at SCOs includes: switching barcode labels so that a cheaper product’s barcode is scanned, manipulating the weight scales, selecting a cheaper item for loose goods and bypassing the scan altogether. In line with many other chapters, Taylor touches here upon the extent to which the layout of the SCO area, designed to facilitate speed and efficiency,
could be manipulated to reduce this risk. Taylor also discusses the motivations for those using this *modus operandi* to shoplift, referring to these offenders as SWIPERS – Seemingly Well-Intentioned Patrons Engaging in routine Shoplifting. Categorising these as: *accidental* (resulting from a once accidental occurrence, these individuals realize how easy it was to get away with this crime); *switchers* (who feel that switching labels is not really a crime, more an application of discount); *compensating* (who believe that the store saves so much by using SCO that this crime is justifiable), and *irritated/frustrated* (who feel that the inconvenience of SCOs makes stealing justifiable).

Part 3 of this book is devoted to crime and perceived safety retail environments. In Chapter 6, Armitage et al. explore the influence of store design and layout on shoplifter perceptions of risk, and consider the relevance of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to the supermarket environment. Using novel techniques to explore offender journeys through two major supermarket chains (using body-worn cameras), ex-shoplifters were asked to explore the store as if committing an offence and to narrate that journey throughout. The findings confirm that surveillance is a key deterrent. The threat of being observed and subsequently challenged is the most referenced deterrent in interviews and walk rounds. Physical security measures appear less effective, with shoplifters easily able to overcome interventions, and clearly winning what Pease (2001) refers to as the ‘arms race’. Although a small sample, the findings reveal clear parallels with other chapters in terms of offenders’ recognition of the importance of design and layout and their awareness of human error – be that in accurately implementing security interventions or what offenders perceive as apathy and disinterest amongst retail staff. An interesting early observation from this chapter is
the clear deterrent effect of immediate apprehension. Where security measures offer a delayed risk of apprehension, offenders were clearly unconcerned. However, any intervention that offered the slightest risk of halting them there and then was considered to be a risk not worth taking. The extent to which this clear and consistent finding is currently incorporated into store security measures is uncertain, however, the impact upon levels of theft could be significant.

The micro analysis of retail crime continues to be the focus in Part 3 with a study from Australia on the nature of shoplifting and its prevention in small stores presented by Paul Cozens. Cozens looks at shoplifting prevention from the perspective of store owners and managers and focuses on small stores with between 1-3 staff. The chapter explores hot products, crime prevention methods and losses from shoplifting. Interestingly, the majority of participants stated that they utilise the design and layout of stores as opposed to the more cost-intensive physical security or target hardening. Measures based upon design and layout included lighting, lowering shelves and units to enhance visibility and positioning the checkout.

In Chapter 7, Ceccato et al. use innovative methods to explore spatial and temporal concentrations of crime in a shopping centre in Sweden. Reminding the reader of the diverse nature of retail environments (ranging from single shops to huge malls) and the variation in crime challenges (ranging from graffiti and public disturbance to violence and property crime). This chapter categorises the mall into five parts: Functional, public, transitional, entrances and immediate surrounding, again reminding the reader that retail spaces do not exist in isolation, and that crime prevention interventions must consider the context in which the retail space is located. Ceccato et al. conclude by
offering CPTED based interventions that address the identified weaknesses in each of these five parts of the mall.

Using the same shopping centre in Sweden, Ceccato and Tcacencu explore perceptions of safety amongst users of that space, revealing that fear is influenced by both personal characteristics and the environmental design of the spaces they frequent. The study found that fear of crime was not directly correlated with experience of crime, with 85% declare feeling unsafe and only 5% experiencing a crime within the shopping centre. The findings also revealed that the spaces in which users felt the most unsafe were not those in which most incidents happened. The chapter concludes by presenting practical recommendations on how to improve feelings of safety in the five key parts of the shopping centre.

*The meso-scale of the analysis* of retail crime is exemplified by Part 4 of this book that deals with retail crime in a wider context, the chapter goes beyond the space of shopping mall and look at street segments, corners, railway stations, neighbourhood and city contexts. Weisburd et al. discuss shopping crime in Israel, investigating the extent to which the law of crime concentration applies to retail crime, and consequently the likely effectiveness of hot-spot policing in addressing this crime type. They conclude that shopping crime follows the general law of crime concentration with 0.4% of streets producing one quarter of shopping crime and 1% of streets producing 50% of shopping crime. As with other crime types, concentrations are reasonably stable over time. These crimes show a slight variation in the stability of those streets segments that experience the highest proportion of shopping crime. The chapter concludes by confirming that the findings do not contradict the need for, or effectiveness of hot-spot policing, however,
with retail crime, it is essential to account for the dynamic development of places and the shifts and variation in land use over time.

In Chapter 11, Newton analyses shoplifting in a different environment – the railway station, and highlights the diverse and changing nature of retail environments and the importance of the context in which they are located. Newton uses data from the British Transport Police to explore patterns and concentrations of shoplifting, revealing that the top ten stations for shoplifting (1.7% of stations) experienced 66% of shoplifting offences; the top station experiencing almost a fifth of all offences. Whilst this chapter explores the data available, it highlights limitations in these data, for example, that it includes no information relating to modus operandi and no time of offence.

Here a macro perspective of supply and demand mechanisms was appropriated to help understand the nature of cargo theft or thefts of medicine as an organised crime against trading. Justus et al. explore the extent, distribution and potential prevention of cargo theft in São Paulo, Brazil. Again highlighting the limitations in data that makes the analysis of this crime problematic, Justus et al. conduct a detailed analysis of spatial and temporal patterns of cargo theft. For urban areas, food (e.g. meat of all types) is the most common target, followed by electronics and pharmaceuticals. For highways, the three most common products are fuel, machines and equipment. Temporal patterns of victimisation times also vary, with urban areas experiencing the most cargo theft between 0600 and 1600 – business hours when products are available. Highways are most vulnerable between 0400 and 0600. For both locations, weekdays are the most vulnerable. Useful for prevention, this chapter highlights the pattern of high monetary return and low probability of failure, suggesting that cargo theft offenders think
rationally in selecting suitable targets.

In Chapter 13, Savona et al. explore the theft of medicines in Italy, asserting and testing two hypotheses: 1) that medicines are laundered and resold on the legal market, and 2) that organised crime plays a crucial role with support from a network of corrupt officials and white collar criminals. As with the majority of contributions, the limitations of crime data are discussed, the analysis for this chapter relying on a systematic review of articles published in Italian newspapers. The chapter explores the drivers, actors and *modus operandi* for this understudied offence. Motivations include *growing demand, restricted access, reimbursement regimes and illegal use of legal medicines*. Factors that predict vulnerability include: *low volume and weight, high price, lack of traceability, price differentials and parallel trade*. Analysis of *modus operandi* and geographical location of offences support the second hypothesis – that this offence is predominantly committed by criminal organisations that exploit loopholes in wholesale and parallel trade and take advantage of the lack of traceability of medicines, steal from vulnerable locations and resell goods on the European legal market. Knowing who is committing these crimes, where they are taking place and what actors are involved is essential in designing prevention interventions.

Part 5 of the book presents examples of theoretical and practical examples when dealing with retail crime prevention. Considering yet another relevant agent in the prevention and reduction of retail crime, Gill interviews twelve loss prevention managers of large high street retailers. The focus is on crime prevention measures and their effectiveness in reducing retail crime. Participants discussed the importance of having the support of the Board in receiving funding for crime prevention, but also in prioritising the loss
from theft amongst other considerations not least customer experience. The interviews revealed mixed responses regarding the effectiveness of security measures such as guarding, CCTV, EAS and partnership working. As was highlighted in Armitage et al., Sidebottom and Tilley and Hunter et al., a key factor in determining effectiveness was the management and training of staff, crucial in the effectiveness of implementation.

In the concluding chapter, Sidebottom and Tilley explore the importance of developing a theory of tagging in retail environments. Aware of the ‘bad press’ that theorising has received, and the ill-founded assumption that theory is irrelevant to practical applications of crime prevention and security, they outline the importance of theory in retail crime prevention and develop a theory specific to retail tagging. Without a clear theory to guide the implementation of security interventions and to evaluate impact, how can we be clear what works, in what circumstances and why? Using findings from a systematic review of tagging within a retail environment, Sidebottom and Tilley explore studies of tagging according to the EMMIE framework (effect, mechanisms, moderators, implementation and economics). Only eight of the fifty eligible studies reported on quantifiable outcomes – five reporting positive outcomes, one no impact and two an increase in shrinkage following the introduction of tagging. A larger number of studies report on the mechanisms, moderators and implementation of tagging and findings are used to develop a tagging theory. Cautious of the extent to which retailers can affect change in some of the relevant factors – for example, stores can influence design and layout, other crime prevention interventions and staff responses, but have little influence on police and criminal justice responses and shoplifter profiles. The theory is presented as work in progress, requiring further exploration in conjunction with academics and practitioners.
Cross-cutting common themes

Whilst these contributions report on a variety of retail environments, from the perspective of a number of relevant agents, in different countries and differing contexts, the findings reveal many common themes that are relevant to both policy and practice in preventing and reducing retail crime. Retail crime encompasses acts as varied as shoplifting, assault, cyber-crime, fraud, graffiti and public disturbance (to name just a few), with the personal and societal impact of these offences extending beyond the criminal act itself (consider violence and drug use). The environments in which retail crime takes place also vary – from small stores to large supermarkets and hospitals to railway stations. Yet whilst context varies, there are many common emerging themes that can be transferred between settings to assist in retail crime prevention.

The first theme relates to issues of data collection and measurement of both retail crime and its prevention. All chapters discussed the limitations in retail crime data, be that missing vital variables specific to time, location or modus operandi, or the inability to distinguish theft from other losses including waste or employer theft. Concerns were raised regarding the extent to which retailers actually report retail crimes, for reasons including negative previous experiences with the police, perceptions of short sentences, fear of being seen as an easy target and the time and costs involved. Others report the need for caution in quantifying levels and patterns of apprehension, which may be a more accurate reflection of prevention activity, as opposed to the actual offences taking place. In order to assess effectiveness and transfer lessons, interventions must be adequately evaluated. While we lack data regarding what works, where and in what circumstances, we cannot confidently assert crime prevention messages, nor can we
guide retailers in how best to protect their store.

A further theme to emerge from the contributions relates to the importance of human factors. Whilst crime prevention technology develops and evolves – be that CCTV, EAS or other innovations, the requirement for staff to implement and manage those technologies adds a potential flaw - one that requires ongoing training to overcome. Contributors highlighted the extent to which offenders are aware of these limitations – shoplifters describing security staff as apathetic, underpaid, uninterested and unwilling to risk their safety for such low wages. Implementing security without consideration for human factors will inevitably limit effectiveness.

Findings also highlight the extent to which retail crime prevention, as with other crime types is an arms race that must continually evolve. As new technologies are introduced, offenders discover ways to mitigate those measures. There is little room for complacency and evaluations of effectiveness should focus as much on what does not work, as that which currently does. Whilst technological solutions received some, albeit mixed, positive responses, what may be considered as simpler design-based responses appeared to produce consistently positive feedback from both those offending and those tasked with preventing these offences. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) has been extensively evaluated in different contexts and whilst retail environments may have unique differences to, for example, residential housing, lessons can be transferred to those designing and managing retail environments.

Contributions highlighted both the varied nature of retail crime itself, as well as the environments in which it takes place. This adds a further complexity to the development of prevention solutions. What may be a crime problem or an adequate response in
ASDA would be quite different to Armani. Equally the extent to which these retailers are willing to accept extensive losses as an inevitable consequence will also differ. Thus selling the crime prevention message must be tailored to suit the needs of these various environments.

Finally, a message emerging from each contribution was that the impact of retail crime goes far beyond the crime itself. Wider societal consequences include fear of crime amongst users of those spaces, violence against staff, elevated pricing and, in some cases, a pathway to more serious crimes. It is understandable that retailers must balance the different needs of users and abusers, yet retailers cannot simply blindly accept the losses because that risk is outweighed by the financial gains of avoiding the implementation of security measures – Roman and Farrell’s (2002) discussion of the Polluter Pays principle is of key relevance here.

**Book limitations**

One of the important contributions of this book has been to provide a systematic report of the trends and patterns in retail crime at various levels with examples from micro, meso and macro scales. However, the book is far from being free of limitations within the scope that has been set in Chapter 1. One of the limitations is that most chapters are written either by academics only or in combination with practitioners; it has not included chapters written by practitioners only, as initially intended. The format of the book, language limitations by contributors and difficulty in accessing and reporting ‘sensitive data’ within the limited timescales were the main problems found by experts that had initially planned to contribute to the book. A way forward is that contributions
can be written by academics and practitioners together, as it was done in Armitage et al and Ceccato et al.

Another limitation of this book is that several chapters have dealt with retail theft committed by non-employees, visitors, shoppers, but much less focus has been given to crimes committed by retail employees. According to Global Retail Theft Barometer they constitute a large share of retail theft, in some countries they composed the largest share of retail losses (Bamfield, 2012; GRTB, 2016). Outside the scope of this book were the following types of incidents: cybercrime, online theft, fraud, online loss, which were covered within other key texts. In addition, this book does not include the politics of retail crime and crime prevention. Although the book touches on issues of crime by employees, terrorism, riots/looting/activism in retail environments, managerial and organisational issues related to crime and crime prevention in retail environment, these topics have not been the focus of this book, see for instance, Bamfield (2014), Beck (2016), Gill (2000).

Moreover, even though this book has attempted to characterise the dynamics of retail crime from an international perspective, our case studies do not include examples from Asia, Africa and South and central Americas.

Finally, equally important is the need to position the conceptual framework, case studies and findings of this book in a wider effort that aims at creating sustainable urban environments. In order to be sustainable, retail environments, be a store or a shopping centre, must be composed of places that are attractive, safe and inclusive.

The next section identifies examples of the remaining research questions and reviews a set of key recommendations for policy that arise as a result of the research presented in
this volume.

**Future research and policy recommendations**

Research into retail crime contains a number of overlapping themes, and, as presented in this book, they have, to some extent, become united into a framework that focus on micro, meso and macro environments where retail crimes take place. This book illustrates a rich multidisciplinary field which, in practice, have each developed within their own paths, from different disciplines and theoretical principles.

The policy recommendations put forward here are separated from the detailed suggestions made in each chapter of this edited volume. Although this book includes examples from retail crime from several countries, this section attempts to highlight policy recommendations that go beyond these national contexts. It is expected that policy recommendations are of relevance for professionals worldwide.

*The role of retailers as victims in preventing crime* – The role of retailers seen as victims rarely attract much attention on the news or in research, yet as suggested by Chapter 3 in this book, without studying victim’s behaviour and their possible roles in increasing their own risks of victimization, it is very difficult to identify and promulgate effective precautions (Felson and Clarke, 2010). Although prevention should focus on offenders and settings, future research should focus on better understanding the interplay between offenders, victims (retailers) and retail settings. This development requires theoretical frameworks that go beyond situational crime prevention or managerial approaches based on supply and demand principles; instead it should be informed by cross-knowledge from different disciplines: psychology, criminology, economy, engineering, just to name a few. It is suggested that this multidisciplinary
approach to retail crime is the way forward, as reality demands more integrated and holistic perspectives to understand, prevent and tackle retail crime.

_Crime and perceived safety in retail environments_ - Studies often consider either the risk of crime in retail (against properties, employees, visitors) or perceived safety (fear of crime, feelings of anxiety, unpleasant feelings), separately. Future studies should instead combine these both dimensions when dealing with safety in retail environment. Rumours about crime, for example, can be equally damaging from a store or a shopping mall than crime itself, because fear is enough to keep visitors and employees away. In practice, a future assessment of safety conditions should engage multiple stakeholders as illustrated in Chapter 1, table 1, depending on the scale (micro, meso and macro analysis).

_The law of crime concentration in retail environments_ – Two chapters from the book provide general confirmation of the research that has been carried out on more general crime categories, that crime is concentrated in space, both in commercial street segments (Tel Aviv-Yafo in Israel) and inside a shopping mall (in Stockholm, Sweden). Also important to note is that these chapters illustrate that specific types of crime show different concentration patterns. Future studies should further examine these differences among crime types and their stability over time. Another research route worthy of investigation is to assess the nature of these places that concentrate crime. Are these crime hot spots (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1995) _crime generators_, or _attractors_, or both? What makes them a _crime magnet_ or a _crime radiator_? (See for example, Bowers, 2014). As it was suggested by Weisburd et al., the police will gain greater efficiency by focusing in on high crime places. In the case of shopping mall, security guards should be placed where and when most crimes happen of a particular type. From
an urban planning perspective, it is important to consider how the economics of shopping will affect the distribution of shopping crime. As suggested by Weisburd et al., the development of large shopping centres influences the locations of high rate shopping crime places; which demands knowledge by the police and policy makers to design crime prevention practices.

*Retail crime prevention must be space and time specific* - Any safety and security intervention should consider the spatial and temporal contexts of the retail environments, from a store, a supermarket in railway station to a major shopping mall or a commercial street. The context is important as interventions need to be both place and time specific as what is effective at peak times might not be at off peak times.

Chapter 1 summarises, for example, the signature of each crime during shopping working hours. Chapter 14 indicates that political-economic contexts are also relevant to understand how managers work with loss prevention managers. For crime prevention, knowing these daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms is fundamental to a better use of resources. Gill’s suggests that “the recession has had an impact (on the way they work)….. it has often made it harder to attract funding for new initiatives. The reduced number of staff on the shop floor also results in less surveillance opportunities and means there is less perceived deterrence for offenders”.

*The importance of technology beyond retail crime prevention* – Chapters of this book highlight that certain technologies, such as CCTV, once were used to ‘just’ combat shoplifting but are now accepted as a mainstream tool to combat terrorism or violence in particular environments. Moreover, these technologies can also be used in retail marketing through store counts and merchandising display analysis (see Bamfield in this book). However, evidence in favour of new generations of CCTV to prevent crime
in the context of retail environment is weak or at least, partial at its best. Chapter 4 indicates that prolific shop theft offenders challenge the existing strategy of loss prevention managers and retail chains investing heavily in formal security devices. They declare not being affected by formal security measures that exert on perceived opportunity structures and risks. Lack of evidence is not only a technological problem but can also be associated with the fact that in some countries, such as Sweden, problems with integrity and private laws do not allow the use of live feed cameras in particular settings. Data permitting, future research should further investigate the potentialities of these security devices not only combat crime as it happens but to also produce better measures of risk, by capturing flow of people at particular settings in space and time for better crime prevention. In practice, this development demands methods that are capable of guiding and dealing with an ever-increasing volume of data coming from different types of technologies (e.g., self-check outs, CCTV, security devices) which constitute perhaps the new frontier in retail research and retail crime prevention in practice.

*Shoplifting prevention must go beyond tagging technologies* - Evidence is generally positive about the use of tagging technologies but according to Sidebottom and Tilley’s chapter, most studies lack rigorous and robust methodologies. This is also confirmed by Beck (2016). This author also suggests that few studies have measured the direct impact of CCTV on retail store losses, therefore future research should systematically evaluate the role of these technologies on retail crime. In the particular case of shoplifting, Beck (2016) suggests that future research should also include the combined effects of store design and layout to facilitate the use of formal mechanisms of surveillance, such as
CCTV and security guards. However, technologies and amplifying risks for shoplifters will have little or no impact on thefts committed by employees.

Challenging the limits of CPTED principles in retail environments – although evidence in favour of CPTED have unanimously been highlighted in several chapters of this book, further researcher is needed (using larger sample size of offenders and/or victims) to confirm the findings presented in this book. Findings of this book confirm some of previous literature (Cardone Hayes, 2012; Clarke and Petrossian, 2013; Carmel-Gilfilen, 2011) on the suggested factors that need to be taken into consideration when thinking about how store design influence offending. For shoplifting, for instance, future research could explore shoplifters’ perceptions of layout, security and guardianship in stores. This could contribute to our understanding of what can be done in practice. New evidence from different types of retailers and/or city and country contexts would also be welcomed, particularly in city and country contexts of extreme high levels of crime. In those, research could highlight the patterns of retail crime concentration at multiple geographical levels. Moreover, a more critical perspective on CPTED as a crime prevention tool is necessary in the future since these environments by nature impose a number of theoretical a practical challenges. For example, retail environments are public spaces that are privately owned. Typical CPTED issues of access control and territoriality can be difficult to implement when the nature of tenure and ownership does not make clear who is responsible for what in terms of preventing crime. Where these responsibilities are not well defined, crime prevails.

From micro to meso and macro scale analysis in retail crime - Several chapters pointed out the advantages of considering micro environments to understand the nature of retail crime, their specific criminogenic characteristics and the extent that these interactions
Link with local as well as regional and international organised criminal networks (e.g. chapters on cargo theft/robbery or robbery of medicines). Whether the causes of crime are local or not, we claim that the complexity of crime in these facilities (and its prevention) can only be fully understood if ‘glocal’ contexts are well assessed in relation to the supply chain of products. Actions demand the cooperation of a range of stakeholders who have responsibility for retail establishments, those who deal with safety and security issues in and around these related establishments and any other actor beyond the local sphere (e.g. cross border policing, transportation companies). Several chapters of this book reveal evidence that the use of economic principles, in particular of rational choice theory, can be particularly helpful in explaining the supply and demand of illicit products and also its nature and geography of retail organised crime.

**Stakeholders and the role of people in retail and retail loss prevention** - There is a need to consider the interaction between people and the retail environment to promote an understanding of crime in these settings and better define retail loss prevention. Knowledge about the role, rights and obligations of different groups of stakeholders in retail can be compared with what they actually do in practice. In particular, more knowledge is needed about the varying degrees of responsibility of individuals for discouraging crime that happen in retail environments. For instance, investigating the role of guardians who keep an eye on targets, handlers who do the same for potential offenders and managers who monitor places (Clarke 1992, Felson, 1986 and Eck, 1994) and why certain individuals decide to commit crime despite crime opportunities being minimal and the chances of being caught are very high. It would be worth carrying out applications of Situational Action Theory - SAT (Wikström, Ceccato, Hardie and Treiber, 2010). A route to a better understanding of the role of people in retail
environments is provided by Gill in this book. He shows, among other things, examples of how actors see each other in a retail environment. In particular, Gill illustrates how security managers value the work done by guards “in providing a human response to issues as they arose and in providing a visible deterrent”. Future research could also focus on comparing the perception of different retail stakeholders which might help identify areas of improvement in cooperation which ultimately can affect retail crime prevention.

*Translational criminology in retail crime prevention* - Regardless of the topic the issue of communicating theory and research results from academia to practitioners is fundamental. This key issue has previously been identified by Laub (2011) who sees a challenge to communicate research to appropriate audiences, experts, and relevant organisations. Methods that can communicate and engage practitioners in research process are a relevant topic for future research. Engaging security managers, security guards and policy makers in the process of research is therefore fundamental in a framework in which academics learn from practitioners and vice-versa. A way forward is that future contributions on retail crime prevention (such as this book) can be written by practitioners and academics together.

*Safe retail environments is an individual right* – Although retailers are targets of crime, customers and their properties are also victims of crime when shopping. Yet, they may not be the only ones. As in many other public places, entrances to stores and shopping malls increasingly accommodate groups of individuals that are often viewed as ‘a security problem’ rather than as individuals who have a right to spend time at the retail entrance. In these circumstances, urban planners, retailers and other stakeholders have to get right who is responsible for what (e.g. delivering security services for whom,
where and when) at shopping facilities and their surrounding areas. Future research should devote time to creating frameworks that are capable of engaging different stakeholders in finding appropriate solutions that make sense locally whilst at the same time can be fair and inclusive.

One of the most important contributions of this book has been to report trends and patterns in retail crime using as a reference real life examples from a variety of contexts and written by a multidisciplinary group of experts. This contribution is far from being free of limitations and is in no way complete, but as the examples illustrated in this book reveal, they go some way towards providing an informative approach to retail crime and its prevention from an international perspective. By incorporating these previously mentioned complexities, this book offers a new take on retail crime by illustrating the interplay between individuals, products and more importantly, the characteristics of crime settings−whatever the scale concerned. Reflections upon ways to better plan retail environments to make them safe are also an integral part of the book. Planning for a safe retail environment is an essential part of creating an enjoyable shopping experience−which is, irrespective of country, one of the most appreciated leisure activities of our time.

References


