



## Engineering Sciences Section - 2014

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### **C42 Urban Design and Crime: The Problem in a Megalopolis**

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The goal of this presentation is to explain how reducing crime and the fear of crime may be possible by proper environmental design.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by increasing awareness of the fact that urban design and proper planning are important elements in developing crime prevention strategies.

This presentation will introduce a new criminological theory that supports the idea of a correlation between the organization of urban space and crime. While it may be possible to achieve crime prevention through urban space design, it has to be included in the strategies of city planning. Such planning can reduce not only the opportunity to commit crime, but also lessen the motivation to offend, achieving more attractive public physical environments. An awareness of rising activity is essential and requires primarily the research of current crime data, with the ultimate goal of implementation based on that aspect. National guidelines, implemented by local governments, should be developed based on the results obtained. Istanbul is a megalopolis with a population approaching 20 million, and is a well-known city centuries old that has served as the capital of empires and continues to be the most important city of the Turkish Republic. It is very difficult to re-plan a historic city, but in reality it is dynamic and changes constantly. Therefore, urban planning with the goal of reducing crime rate is possible and essential.

Based on the fact that crime rates are very much culturally dependent and environmentally affected, the goal of this study is to evaluate two types of crime in an older, larger district of the city of Istanbul called Zeytinburnu (293,228 residents as of 2011). Data was collected and mapped on burglary and prostitution cases from the law enforcement database for a one-year period. The results showed that the crime rates vary significantly between different suburbs. Following this information, an attempt was made to determine the characteristics of urbanization, the building statute, and to evaluate them in terms of building design and lighting in the above-mentioned area. There are primarily two types of residential settlements in the district in question: (1) the classical "old type" neighborhoods; and, (2) the "housing complexes" which are guarded and very well protected by numerous types of technical protection units (cameras, videos, etc). An interesting result obtained was not being able to deduce an outcome and generalize it for all the crime types. As expected, in this study, the very well-protected "housing complexes" certainly had fewer burglary cases. However, the over protected and technically observable residential areas were the most preferable areas for prostitution, because the surveillance equipment served as information-delivering systems for prostitution protection.

It is true that fear of crime affects people's quality of life. Certainly, the role of law enforcement is important, but equally important are the strategies for crime prevention. Within the various practical applications for crime prevention, improving the urban environment will seriously reduce the criminal opportunity even in large and overpopulated cities; however, it should always be kept in mind that crime prevention is a very complex issue.

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#### **Crime Prevention, Urban Design, Istanbul**