Situational Crime Prevention in Correctional Facilities

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Overview

- What is situational prevention?
- Situational analysis of prison disorder
- What works? Examining the literature
- A general model of situational prevention in prison
- Case Study: HM Prison Glen Parva
- Conclusions
What is situational prevention?

- All behaviour is a result of person and situation
- The potential to commit crime is widely distributed in the community
- A great deal of crime is opportunistic
- Even planned crime is governed by situational factors
- Crime is not a random event
- We can’t change offenders but we can change situations
- We can use an understanding of crime patterns to detect and prevent crime
Situational Analysis of Prison Disorder

Traditional focus on:
- Dangerous prisoners – person-centred
- Dangerous institutions – macro approach
- Tightening-up – target hardening
- Responding to crises – reactive

Situational focus on:
- Disorder events – behaviour-specific
- Specific dynamics – micro-analysis
- Causes – not just target hardening
- Problem-solving approach – what, where, when, why?
What?

- breaking down ‘disorder’
  - assaults
  - rape
  - self harm
  - escapes
  - drug use
  - collective disorder
  - vandalism
  - theft

- further breakdowns
  - assaults against prisoners vs against staff
  - assaults with weapons vs without weapons
Where?

- Areas of poor surveillance
  - shared cells (assaults)
  - single cells (self-harm)
  - showers (sexual assault)

- Areas where prisoners congregate/unstructured activity
  - recreation areas (assaults)
  - dining rooms (assaults, riots)
  - queues (assaults)

- Not in areas of supervised activity
  - classrooms
  - workshops
When?

- **time of day**
  - change of shift (assaults)
  - prisoner movements (staff assaults, riots)
  - night (self-harm)

- **day of week**
  - weekends (drug use, self-harm)

- **time of year**
  - summer (assaults)
  - winter (escapes)
Why?

- escapes
  - bad news from home
  - fear
- assaults
  - boredom
  - disputes over resources (e.g., television)
  - theft (e.g., phone cards)
- vandalism
  - lack of environmental control
- rioting
  - grievances
What Works?
Examining the Literature

- Few specific situational studies
- Many ‘quasi-situational’
Prisoner-prisoner assaults

- single cells
- partitioned dormitories
- lockable cupboards
- unit management
- air conditioning
- reduced crowding
- reduced turnover
- age-heterogeneity
- educational/work programs
- ratio non-custodial
- parole provisions
Prisoner-staff assaults

- unit management
- reduce crowding
- age heterogeneity
- staff experience
- staff training
- female staff
- security crackdowns
- supporting staff authority
- matching staff/inmate racial composition
- education/work programs
- Sexual assaults
  - single cells
  - unit management
  - racial balance
  - gender mixed
  - conjugal visits/leave
  - institutional protocols
  - mandatory reporting/prosecution
  - policing consensual sexual activity
  - teaching avoidance strategies
  - segregating vulnerable prisoners
Self-harm
- double bunking
- eliminating hanging points, dangerous fittings etc
- removing dangerous possessions
- improving view into cells
- surveillance protocols
- de-institutionalising cells
- unit management
- reduce crowding
- age heterogeneity
- reduce prisoner turnover
- education/work programs
Drug use
- perimeter security
- rapid prisoner turnover
- drug testing prisoners
- searching/testing staff
- tightening visits (no gifts, greater surveillance, ID checks, searching, restrict physical contact etc)
- drug detection technology
- drug dogs
- monitoring prisoner accounts
- substance free zones
Escapes
- improved perimeter security
- reduce crowding
- graduated security
- structured regime
- publicise risks/punishments
- respond to protection requests
- education/work programs
- pastoral care
- compassionate visits
Riots

- unit management
- new/well-maintained facilities
- security firebreaks
- small prisons
- reduced crowding
- racial balance
- staff experience
- staff-prisoner relations
- security protocols
- humane prison conditions
- grievance mechanisms
A General Model of Situational Prevention in Prison

- ‘Precipitators’ versus ‘opportunities’

- Tightening-up versus Loosening-off
  - ‘Hard’ and ‘soft’ control
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlling Prompts</th>
<th>Controlling Pressures</th>
<th>Reducing Permissibility</th>
<th>Reducing Provocations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Controlling triggers</td>
<td>Reducing inappropriate conformity</td>
<td>Rule setting</td>
<td>Reducing frustration</td>
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<td>• Weapons effect</td>
<td>• Dispersing gangs</td>
<td>• Unit inductions</td>
<td>• Personal controls</td>
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<td>Providing reminders</td>
<td>Reducing inappropriate obedience</td>
<td>Clarifying responsibility</td>
<td>Reducing crowding</td>
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<td>• Warning signs</td>
<td>• Support whistle-blowers</td>
<td>• Ownership of living areas</td>
<td>• Use of colour etc</td>
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<td>Reducing inappropriate imitation</td>
<td>Encouraging compliance</td>
<td>Clarifying consequences</td>
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<td>• Guards as exemplars</td>
<td>• Participation in rule making</td>
<td>• Sense of community</td>
<td>• Privacy rooms</td>
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<td>Setting positive expectations</td>
<td>Reducing anonymity</td>
<td>Personalising victims</td>
<td>Controlling environmental irritants</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Domestic prison furniture</td>
<td>• Smaller prisons</td>
<td>• Humane prisons</td>
<td>• Air conditioning</td>
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## Opportunity Reduction

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<th>Increasing perceived risks</th>
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<td>• Screening visitors</td>
<td>• Restrict personal property</td>
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<td>Identifying property</td>
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<td>• Control gates</td>
<td>• CCTV</td>
<td>• Property marking</td>
<td>• Denial of parole</td>
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<td>Deflecting offenders</td>
<td>Surveillance by employees</td>
<td>Reducing temptation</td>
<td>Increasing social condemnation</td>
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<td>• Staggered release</td>
<td>• Civilian staff</td>
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<td>Controlling facilitators</td>
<td>Natural surveillance</td>
<td>Denying benefits</td>
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<td>• Plastic cutlery</td>
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**Target hardening**
- Vandal-proof furnishings

**Access control**
- Control gates

**Deflecting offenders**
- Staggered release

**Controlling facilitators**
- Plastic cutlery

**Exit-entry screening**
- Screening visitors

**Formal surveillance**
- CCTV

**Surveillance by employees**
- Civilian staff

**Natural surveillance**
- Double-bunking

**Identifying property**
- Property marking

**Reducing anticipated rewards**
- Restrict personal property
- Single cells

**Denying benefits**
- Phone PINs

**Removing privileges**
- Denial of parole

**Increasing costs**
- Non-replacement of vandalised property

**Increasing social condemnation**
- Unit meetings

**Increasing anticipated punishments**
- Making an example
- Publicising punishments
Counterproductive control
- ‘Hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches often contradictory
- getting balance right - ‘fair but firm’

A thought experiment
- Design a prison cell that would remove all opportunities for a prisoner to self harm

- Now design a prison cell that would guarantee that a prisoner would want to self harm
Precipitation control

Opportunity reduction

Crime performed

Crime prevented

successful

unsuccessful

counter-productive

successful

unsuccessful

counter-productive
Examples of tensions:
- Vandal-proof versus domestic furnishing
- Direct versus indirect supervision
- Female versus male officers
- Consensus versus authority
Case Study: HM Prison Glen Parva

- Young Offenders’ Institution, Leicester UK
- 13 units, 780 prisoners
- 1997 unannounced visit by Inspector of Prisons
  - High levels of bullying, self harm, etc
  - High levels of use of force by staff
  - ‘So dissatisfied’ inspections increased
- Problem solving approach by management
  - 3 cases studies
1. Noise pollution

Problem:
- Prisoners in units near boundary shouting from windows, complaints/fines

Intervention:
- Noise monitors on fence line
- In-cell televisions

Results:
- Complaints stopped
- Reduction in adjudications in target units
formal disciplinary procedures introduced
noise meter installed
2. Bullying

- Problem: high levels of bullying, especially of new arrivals

- Interventions:
  - Anti-bullying strategy
  - ‘First night’ packs
  - TV remote controls
  - Phone PINs

- Results:
  - Drop in bullying and fear
3. Staff scalding

- Problem:
  - Prisoners given can of hot water before going to cells, throw over officer

- Intervention:
  - Plastic thermoses

- Results:
  - No further incidents
Conclusions

- Potential for quick, cheap and effective interventions
- Intuitive – do not need complicated theory
- Not a ‘cook book’ – an approach rather than ready-made solutions
References

