Introduction to
Situational Crime Prevention

International Problem-Oriented Policing Conference
Tempe, Arizona October 24th-26th 2016

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The Tylenol Poisonings

- In 1982, seven people died in Chicago as a result of taking Tylenol poisoned with cyanide.
- Mass murder - nowadays might be called terrorism.
- Perpetrators not caught and motivation never discovered.
- Caused widespread fear about safety of such products.
- Significant losses for makers of Tylenol.
- Some copycat offences in US and other countries.
“Tamper-proof” Packaging

- U.S. quickly introduced “Tamper-proof” regulations for food, drugs and cosmetics
- Two guiding principles:
  - Breaks in seal must be highly visible
  - Should be convenient for consumer (!)
- The packaging has been effective (till now) – and is constantly improved
- Classic case of situational crime prevention (SCP)
Overview

- What is SCP?
- How is it deployed?
- Effectiveness of SCP
- Compatibility of SCP and POP
- Thought exercise
- Closing questions/comments
What is Situational Crime Prevention?
Situational Crime Prevention (SCP)

1. Focuses on reducing opportunities for crime
2. Not exclusively for police
3. Like POP, it focuses on specific forms of crime or disorder
4. It analyzes the “opportunity structure” that facilitate these crimes:
   a) the immediate physical and social settings
   b) the wider societal arrangements
5. Identifies design and management changes to block the crime opportunities with fewest economic and social costs.
6. The changes increase the difficulty or the risks of crime, make it less rewarding or excusable and reduce temptations or provocations.
Situational Crime Prevention

These categories of tactics include methods of:

- Increasing the Effort
- Increasing the Risks
- Reducing the Rewards
- Reducing Provocations
- Removing Excuses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase the Effort</th>
<th>Increase the Risks</th>
<th>Reduce the Rewards</th>
<th>Reduce Provocations</th>
<th>Remove Excuses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harden Targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Steering column locks and immobilisers</td>
<td>• Extend guardianship</td>
<td>• Conceal targets</td>
<td>• Reduce frustrations and stress</td>
<td>Set rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Anti-robery screens</td>
<td>• Take routine precautions: go out in group at night, leave signs of occupancy, carry phone</td>
<td>• Off-street parking</td>
<td>• Efficient queues and polite service</td>
<td>• Rental agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tamper-proof packaging</td>
<td>• &quot;Cocoon&quot; neighborhood watch</td>
<td>• Gender-neutral phone directories</td>
<td>• Expanded seating</td>
<td>• Harassment codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control access to facilities</td>
<td>Assist natural surveillance</td>
<td>Remove targets</td>
<td>Avoid disputes</td>
<td>Post instructions</td>
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<td>• Entry phones</td>
<td>• Improved street lighting</td>
<td>• Removable car radio</td>
<td>• Separate enclosures for rival soccer fans</td>
<td>• &quot;No Parking&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Electronic card access</td>
<td>• Defensible space design</td>
<td>• Women's refuges</td>
<td>• Reduce crowding in pubs</td>
<td>• &quot;Private Property&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Baggage screening</td>
<td>• Support whistleblowers</td>
<td>• Pre-paid cards for pay phones</td>
<td>• Fixed cab fares</td>
<td>• &quot;Extinguish camp fires&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screen exits</td>
<td>Reduce anonymity</td>
<td>Identify property</td>
<td>Reduce emotional arousal</td>
<td>Alert conscience</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ticket needed for exit</td>
<td>• Taxi driver IDs</td>
<td>• Property marking</td>
<td>• Controls on violent pornography</td>
<td>• Roadside speed display boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Export documents</td>
<td>• &quot;How's my driving?&quot; decals</td>
<td>• Vehicle licensing and parts marking</td>
<td>• Enforce good behavior on soccer field</td>
<td>• Signatures for customs declarations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Electronic merchandise tags</td>
<td>• School uniforms</td>
<td>• Cattle branding</td>
<td>• Prohibit racial slurs</td>
<td>• &quot;Shoplifting is stealing&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deflect offenders</td>
<td>Utilize place managers</td>
<td>Disrupt markets</td>
<td>Neutralize peer pressure</td>
<td>Assist compliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Street closures</td>
<td>• CCTV for double-deck buses</td>
<td>• Monitor pawn shops</td>
<td>• &quot;Idiots drink and drive&quot;</td>
<td>• Easy library checkout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separate bathrooms for women</td>
<td>• Two clerks for convenience stores</td>
<td>• Controls on classified ads</td>
<td>• &quot;It's OK to say No&quot;</td>
<td>• Public lavatories</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disperse pubs</td>
<td>• Reward vigilance</td>
<td>• License street vendors</td>
<td>• Disperse troublemakers at school</td>
<td>• Litter bins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control tools/weapons</td>
<td>Strengthen formal surveillance</td>
<td>Deny benefits</td>
<td>Discourage imitation</td>
<td>Control drugs and alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>• &quot;Smart&quot; guns</td>
<td>• Red light cameras</td>
<td>• Ink merchandise tags</td>
<td>• Rapid repair of vandalism</td>
<td>• Breathalyzers in pubs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disabling stolen cell phones</td>
<td>• Burglar alarms</td>
<td>• Graffiti cleaning</td>
<td>• V-chips in TVs</td>
<td>• Server intervention</td>
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<td>• Restrict spray paint sales to juveniles</td>
<td>• Security guards</td>
<td>• Speed humps</td>
<td>• Censor details of modus operandi</td>
<td>• Alcohol-free events</td>
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SCP: Key assumptions

- Crimes result from the interaction of criminal propensities and crime opportunities.
- Offenders always decide to commit crime (bounded rationality).
- Opportunity plays an essential part in every form of crime.
- More opportunities lead to more crime and reduced opportunities lead to less crime.
- Easy opportunities draw people into crime.
- Existence of easy opportunities makes possible a "life of crime."
Situational Crime Prevention

- Not all tactics are suitable for all problems and some tactics may serve more than one purpose (for instance, deflecting offenders may serve to increase effort and increase risk of apprehension).

- Requires specificity. Each specific problem is the result of different processes and situational structures, different interventions and their combinations should be tailored to prevent the intended behavior.
How is SCP deployed?
Oriented by Crime Triangle

- Places
- Victims or Targets
- Offenders
- &
- Time
- Systems
The 80-20 Rule

Generally, a small number of things are responsible for a large proportion of outcomes.

- For example, a small number of hurricanes account for a large amount of the overall damage.

- Similarly, small numbers of offenders (20%) are responsible for a large number (80%) of the crimes; or, 20% of the victims may account for 80% of the victimizations; or, 20% of places are the locations for 80% of the crimes.

- The percentages vary by the particular problem, but the rule is important because crime is highly concentrated on particular people, places, and things.
Does the 80-20 Rule Apply?

- Repeat Offenders
- Repeat Targets/Victims (Hot Products)
- Repeat Places or Hot Spots (Risky Facilities)

- Repeat Times – crimes may also be concentrated in time (e.g., DWI on Friday nights).
Fig. 2 Municipality analysis of the number of kidnapped victims in Colombia (2002–2011).
(a) Total kidnappings; (b) group kidnappings.
## Research Findings of Repeat Victimization

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Proportion of Repeats</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>15% w/in 24 hrs</td>
<td>Merseyside, England</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% w/in 5 weeks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank Robbery</td>
<td>33% w/in 3 months</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Burglary</td>
<td>25% w/in 1 week</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51% w/in 1 month</td>
<td>Merseyside, England</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11% w/in 1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33% w/in 1 month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-residential Burglary</td>
<td>17% w/in 1 week</td>
<td>Merseyside, England</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43% w/in 1 month</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School property crimes</td>
<td>70% w/in 1 month</td>
<td>Merseyside, England</td>
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</table>
“Risky facilities”
(80-20 rule)

1. USA Convenience stores: 6.5% have 65% of robberies
2. UK Banks: 4% have robbery rates 4-6 times higher than other banks
3. Stockholm schools: 8% suffered 50% of violent crimes in 1993/4 school year
4. Liverpool bus stop shelters: 9% experience 40% of vandalism
Why Repeat Victims and Places?

- **Risk heterogeneity** - also called a flag explanation; a prior victimization or some other factor identifies the victim or location as an appropriate target for further victimization.

- **Event dependency** - also known as a boost explanation; situations in which (usually) the same offender commits another offense based on the past experiences with that victim or location; successful past offending leads to another attempt against the same target.
How is the crime committed?

1. Adopt the offender's perspective
   - “Think thief” (Ekblom)
2. Study **how** rather than **why**
3. Study the offense, step by step.
   For example, Shoplifters must decide:
   - Which store to hit
   - Which goods to steal
   - How to accomplish the theft
   - How to escape from the store
   - How to sell the items and at what price
   - etc
Effectiveness of Situational Crime Prevention
246 evaluated SCP case studies
(See Popcenter SCP database)

- Responsible drinking practices in Australia
- Cash reduction in US convenience stores
- Anti-robbery screens in London post-offices
- Car immobilizers in Europe and Australia
- Automatic checking of income statements by housing subsidy applicants in Sweden
- Ink tags on merchandise in clothing stores
- Speed cameras and random breath tests in Australia
- Safes with time locks to prevent betting shop robberies
- Removal of gas and electric coin meters from public housing in England to prevent burglary
- Video cameras in housing for retired persons
- And many, many more
Systematic Reviews of SCP and Displacement Effects

- Of 206 SCP evaluations 75% reported effective.
- Review of 102 situational prevention studies in which displacement was examined:
  1. Displacement found in 26% of examinations.
  2. When found, displacement was never complete.
  3. Diffusion of benefits found in 27% of examinations.

Guerette (2009); Guerette & Bowers (2009), respectively.
Cell phone cloning in U.S.

Figure 1

Semi-Annual Fraud Dollar Losses
United States, June 1992 - December 1999
Smartphone thefts drop as kill switch usage grows
But Android users are still waiting for the technology

Published on June 11, 2016 12:15 PM
Alley-gating in Liverpool

- 3178 gates installed
- Burglary reduced by 37% in first year
- No significant displacement
- Cost benefit ratio of gates in first year was 1.86
- Resident satisfaction and preventive gains sustained in later follow-up
Society inadvertently creates crime...

1. Through manufacturing “criminogenic goods”
   - Cars with weak door and ignition locks
   - Credit cards with poor security
   - Unprotected software

2. Through “leaky systems”
   - Inadequate checking of insurance claims
   - Banking systems that facilitate money laundering
   - Inadequate controls on deliveries and shipping

3. Through poor management and design of facilities
   - Shop displays facilitating theft
   - Disorderly, overcrowded pubs and clubs
   - Poorly secured parking lots
Consider the following....

Suppose all situational controls were abandoned: no locks, no custom controls, cash left for parking in an open pot for occasional collection, no library checkouts, no baggage screening at airports, no ticket checks at train stations, no traffic lights, etc.

Would there be no change in the volume of crime and disorder?

Source: Nick Tilley and Gloria Laycock
Compatibility of SCP and POP
Why is SCP helpful for POP?

1. It is a problem solving approach just like POP

2. It provides a sound basis of criminological theory for opportunity reduction:
   a) Routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson)
   b) Crime Pattern theory (Patricia and Paul Brantingham)
   c) Rational Choice perspective (Clarke and Cornish)

3. Helps in thinking about displacement

4. Supplies many ways to reduce opportunities for crime

5. Provides many evaluated examples of successful opportunity reduction
The Crime Triangle
The Methodology of Situational Prevention

- Focus on highly specific categories of crime or disorder
- Focus on crime concentrations
- Understand how the crime is committed
- Use an action-research / problem solving model
- Consider a variety of solutions
Action research

**POP**
- Scanning
- Analysis
- Response
- Assessment

**SCP**
- Data collection
- Analysis of problem
- Choice of solution
- Implementation
- Evaluation
Effectiveness of Policing Strategies

Diversity of Approaches

Great:
Apply a diverse array of approaches, including law enforcement

Little:
Rely almost exclusively on law enforcement

Focus

Community Policing
- Little or no evidence of effectiveness
  - Impersonal community policing (e.g., newsletters)
  - Personal contacts in community policing
  - Respectful police-citizen contacts
  - Improving legitimacy of police
  - Foot patrols (fear reduction only)

Problem-oriented Policing
- Moderate evidence of effectiveness
  - Problem-oriented policing
- Strong evidence of effectiveness
  - Problem-solving in hot spots

Focused Policing
- Inconsistent or weak
  - Repeat offender investigations
- Moderate to strong evidence of effectiveness
  - Focused intensive enforcement
  - Hot-spots patrols

Standard Model
- Little or no evidence of effectiveness
  - Adding more police
  - General patrol
  - Rapid response
  - Follow-up investigation
  - Undifferentiated arrest for domestic violence

Gainesville, Florida
Robbery Case Study
Gainesville, Florida

Convenience Store Robberies

SCANNING

- Police noticed an increase in convenience store robberies in the Spring in 1985
Gainesville, Florida
Convenience Store Robberies
ANALYSIS

- Officers researched what other departments were doing with similar Robbery problems
- Gainesville Robbery data showed:
  - Average of 72 robberies annually
  - 47 different stores were robbed
  - Some robbed as many as 14 times
  - 75% occurred between 7pm - 5 am
  - Only one clerk on duty during 92% of robberies
  - Robber waited for clerk to be alone in 85% of robberies
Gainesville, Florida

Convenience Store Robberies RESPONSE

- a partnership with convenience store owners formed
- improved natural surveillance/ordinance required 2 clerks on duty during late night hours
- improved lighting inside and outside
- window obstructions (sales signs) removed
- limited cash handling policies implemented
- drop boxes installed
- upgraded access control through fences and walls to slow robbers and removal of obstacles to hide
- enhanced formal surveillance through alarm and video cameras; encouraged visits by police to stores
Gainesville, Florida
Convenience Store Robberies

ASSESSMENT

- a 6 month study conducted in 1987
- robberies decreased by 65% from the same period in the previous year
- 1988 study showed 70% reduction from 1986
Thought Exercises

- Scenario 1 – Residential burglaries of condominiums.
- Scenario 2 – Texting while driving fatalities among teens.
- Scenario 3 – Fights between rival football fans as they depart stadium.
- Scenario 4 – Homeless inebriates living in bushes at public park.
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