

## **IMPROVING CAPACITY AND RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION IN POLICE CUSTODY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This PhD project is centered around developing strategies that can improve the resource distribution and, consequently, the capacity in UK custody suites. The budget cuts and lack of resources that UK police forces have been facing have been widely publicized and police custody is no exception.

### **1 PROBLEM DEFINITION**

The police force is the primary law enforcement organization in the UK and is charged with upholding the law and detaining those who break it. The police in England and Wales are broken down into individual county forces with each responsible for maintaining the law in their respective areas. The police are being put under ever increasing pressure as their designated budget is being routinely cut, their officer numbers are decreasing, and the public perceptions of the police are becoming less favorable. With these pressures in mind, it is becoming increasingly necessary for police forces to distribute their resources effectively and this is where academic studies are appropriate. They provide evidence and clear recommendations which can aid police in better distributing their resources, implementing more effective crime prevention methods and responding quicker to emergencies.

This study is focusing on police custody, an area of policing that has been identified by the police as one of their key responsibilities. Every person arrested on suspicion of committing a crime, whether ultimately charged or not, will go through the custody process. These people are usually referred to as arrestees or detainees. The detainees are held in police custody while the initial investigation is undertaken, and so interviews can be performed, and any physical evidence can be collected.

One of the issues identified in police custody was their lack of resources, in terms of staffing and cell capacity. The number of staff was considered to be insufficient to meet the demand, this could be construed as to meet the demand in terms of either the number of detainees or the individual needs of the detainees. The cell capacity fluctuates as often cells are out of order for various reasons so although a custody suite may officially have  $x$  number of cells, in reality it is likely to be less than this.

There has been a distinct lack of research in how best to optimize custody and the work that has been done is qualitative and focuses on the psychological effects of being in custody or solely explores the deaths and accidents that have previously occurred when in police custody. The papers that do address the effectiveness of custody are relatively short and focus on very specific aspects. This leaves a gap in knowledge of methods and recommendations to improve the overall effectiveness of police custody. In order to help bridge this gap, this project will focus on managing capacity and how best to distribute resources within police custody.

The eventual aim of this project is to provide recommendations to the police regarding how they can best manage the demand in custody suites and advise on if they can better distribute their resources. This can be broken down into smaller initial objectives, these may change during the project through discussion with custody staff, if there is a better way of meeting the overall aim or a particular area they feel needs to be explored.

## 2 PROPOSED STUDY

The proposed study for this project will take a mixed methods approach, interweaving qualitative and quantitative methods, to further knowledge in this area. The qualitative aspects of the study will be a series of observations in custody suites in two different East Midlands police forces and interviews conducted with staff working in custody suites, while the quantitative methods employed will be statistical analysis of historical data and a discrete event simulation model.

## 3 PRESENTATION/POSTER

The poster and presentation for this conference will focus on one of the completed stages, the conceptual model for the simulation model. A conceptual model can be defined as ‘...a non-software specific description of the computer simulation model (that will be, is or has been developed), describing the objectives, inputs, outputs, content, assumptions and simplifications of the model.’ (Robinson 2008). A conceptual model is one of the most important stages of a simulation study as it is essentially a bridge between the real-world problem and the computational simulation model. A combination of using hard and soft approaches to developing a simulation model is proposed in the PartiSim approach (Kotiadis et al. 2014; Tako and Kotiadis 2015) and a similar approach has been taken in this project. The conceptual model was developed through the following 3 stages:

- Previous Research
- Custody Records
- Custody Visit

The previous research information was used as it is readily available and is based on a literature search for any models that have been developed for police custody previously. The custody records are the only data recorded by custody stations of the processes and order of the processes a detainee goes through, so they were examined for detail. a series of over 80 recent custody records from a regional UK police force were analyzed. the custody visit involved a tour of a custody suite in a different UK police force. By including information from a custody visit and custody records, in addition to previous research, this helps to make the conceptual model more robust.

In this presentation/poster, an outline of how the final police custody process map was developed will be presented. Each stage of research will be shown and the eventual conceptual model will be included. The previous research will be used as a starting point for the model, followed by the custody records and a visit to a custody suite. The custody records were examined to update the previous research as this research was conducted quite a few years ago and a visit to a custody suite then followed to verify the information first hand and to ensure any stages and tasks not recorded in the previous research or custody record data was included. This will conclude with the final conceptual model.

## REFERENCES

- Kotiadis, K., A. A. Tako, and C. Vasilakis. 2014. “A Participative and Facilitative Conceptual Modelling Framework for Discrete Event Simulation Studies in Healthcare.” *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 65(2):197-213.
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