Comparative Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The Use of CPTED by the Planning Profession in Western Australia

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Brantingham and Brantingham, observed in 1998 (p53), that:

“most planning proceeds with little knowledge of crime patterns, crime attractors, crime generators, the importance of edges, paths and nodes or the site specific solutions that facilitate or even encourage crime”. 

Importantly, it was situated within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

It was an important first step in securing the introduction of designing out crime to WA.

Several crime prevention units came together to form the OCP, and it was assigned the task of coordinating existing crime prevention and playing a leading role in reducing crime in WA.
In 2004, the OCP released the State Community Safety and Crime Prevention Strategy, Preventing Crime (OCP, 2004) describing the how Government would make its communities safer. It outlines five clear goals to achieve this vision:

1. supporting families, children and young people;
2. strengthening communities and revitalising neighbourhoods;
3. targeting priority offences;
4. reducing repeat offending; and
5. designing out crime and using technology.
The Use of CPTED by Planners in WA

Clearly, goals two and five have direct designing out crime implications. To achieve these goals, key staff members were recruited to develop the state’s designing out crime strategy.

The OCP adopted a systems perspective and an evidence-based approach, which conducted a major review of the published findings from recent place-based crime prevention research (Cozens et al., 2005).

A Designing Out Crime Unit was established and Strategy began to be developed.
The Use of CPTED by Planners in WA

In 2004, the Minister for Community Safety requested that the Western Australian Planning Commission prepared *Designing out Crime Planning Guidelines*, incorporating the principles of CPTED (WAPC, 2006a).

These guidelines are supported by the second guidance document, *Planning Bulletin No. 79* (WAPC, 2006b). The guidelines “provide users with an understanding of the principles of designing out crime and a toolbox of possible design approaches to address crime prevention in Western Australia” (WAPC, 2006b, p. 1).
The Use of CPTED by Planners in WA

The *Designing Out Crime Strategy (OCP, 2007)* was endorsed by government in October 2007 and has five key goals to:

1. embed designing out crime principles within all relevant state and local planning policies;

2. manage the built and landscaped environment to reduce crime;

3. increase understanding of designing out crime;

4. apply designing out crime principles in a multi-agency approach, and;

5. use product design and appropriate technologies to reduce crime.

For a detailed review of this Strategy see Cozens et al., (2008).
Paul Ekblom has commented that the strategy is:

“a very professional and impressive with clear rational principles . . . [and] we [the UK] are far behind on the ideas of embedding set out in these publications ”(Ekblom, 2008).
Further DOC guidance was provided in “Reducing Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in Pedestrian Access Ways” (WAPC, 2009).

These guidelines were developed from research (Cozens and Love, 2009) and were designed for use by local governments to:

- provide a brief overview of the problems associated with pedestrian access ways.
- provide a tool for use by local government in assessing and responding to crime risks associated with pedestrian access ways.
- outline general designing out crime guidance for pedestrian access ways.
A ‘No Man’s Land’ for DOC / CPTED?

Following a change in government, Strategic reviews in 2009 and 2010 relocated the OCP under the auspices and control of the WA Police.

The DOC Unit was disbanded – largely since it was considered a ‘planning responsibility’.

The ‘Office of Crime Prevention’ ceased to exist from 1 July 2011.

Teams have been reallocated into two Divisions along functional lines. The Community Engagement Division (CED) and the new Strategic Crime Prevention Division now provide strategic and operational functions previously conducted by OCP.

DOC remains on the periphery and has lost momentum The DOC Strategy remains State policy, but is not being driven by any agency.
A survey was conducted in 2011 to gauge the understanding, use and perceptions of CPTED and DOC. It involved planners and police. I will discuss the responses from 69 planners in WA.

All of the 69 planners stated that good planning could reduce opportunities for crime.

95% agreed that DOC / CPTED were very effective / somewhat effective in reducing crime.

72% reported that they had no formal training in this area.

52% of respondents reported being unaware of the Designing Out Crime Strategy, 51% were unaware of PB79.

However, most respondents (68%) were aware of the State’s Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines.
The Use of CPTED by Planners in WA - Research

Of the 3 key CPTED policy guidance documents:

58% reported that their organisations do not use the Designing Out Crime Strategy.

70% reported that their organisations use PB79.

65% reported that their organisations use the State’s Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines.
• 53% of planners felt that police should be involved at the development approval stage.

• 73% believed that the discipline of planning should NOT have the sole responsibility for DOC / CPTED.

• Their understanding of DOC / CPTED was limited largely to ‘surveillance’ opportunities, although many had quite a sophisticated view – and some understanding of the links with environmental criminology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Planners (69)</th>
<th>Police (39)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas with higher densities provide fewer criminal opportunities</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas with mixed-use provide fewer criminal opportunities</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties located within permeable street provide fewer criminal</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note - different assumptions about crime risks
96% of police surveyed suggested that if police and planners liaised when developing new areas, this could reduce opportunities for crime.

53% of planners felt that police should be involved in the development approval process.

All (100%) of the police and planners surveyed indicated that ‘good’ planning could reduce crime.

82% of police felt that policing will be more difficult in the higher-density urban centres of the future.
Other Research Projects

Situational Crime Prevention and bushfire arson prevention (Cozens and Christensen, 2011). This project will NOT be discussed in this presentation.

New Urbanism and high-density, permeable, mixed-use developments (Cozens 2008, 2011).

The Night-Time Economy (NTE) and Crime Precipitators (Cozens and Greive, 2009; 2011).
## Data from Police Alcohol-Related Incident Forms

### Contrasting Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of analysis</th>
<th>Police Analysis (Hughes and Thompson, 2009)</th>
<th>Western Australian Nightclubs Association (Coakes Consulting, 2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temporal concentration of incidents between 1.00 and 6.00am</td>
<td>Spatial concentration of incidents associated with 6 premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key recommendations</td>
<td>Restrict opening times and trading of all licensed premises to 3.00am</td>
<td>Address venues on a case-by-case basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Night Time Economy (NTE) and the City

• This research reinforces existing UK and Australian research from a different geographical perspective.

• Highlights the contribution that a perspective from environmental criminology can provide in understanding the propensity for NTE districts to act as crime generators and crime attractors as well as functioning to precipitating crime.

• Introduces the idea of the “environmental backcloth”.
The NTE and the Environmental Backcloth

Research using the idea of the environmental backcloth is, as the Brantingham’s (1993) argue, “a different way of thinking about problems”.

Brantingham and Brantingham (1984) discuss the backcloth as being ever-changing “like a flag in the wind”.

This research is a snapshot of a period of time within the NTE - a look at how it ‘flutters’ after dark.
Brantingham and Brantingham (1993, p7) argue “at a minimum, the working backcloth for studying criminal events should have social, cultural, legal, spatial and temporal dimensions. This working backcloth would also explicitly include the physical infrastructure of buildings, roads, transit systems, land uses, design and architecture, as well as the people located within that physical infrastructure”.

This exploratory research sought to investigate governance and the ‘environmental backcloth’, to probe the ‘pulse of the city’ and to identify potential crime precipitators.
Crime Precipitators

…factors within the crime setting itself that may prompt, provoke, pressure, or permit an individual to offend.

…. by providing or facilitating:

situationally-generated motivation to the hitherto unmotivated.

Situational Crime Precipitators

Failure to reduce provocations and remove excuses can create “crime precipitators” which work at the micro and macro scales (Wortley, 2008). There are 4 types:

1. Environmental cues can prompt criminal behaviour

2. Social forces can exert pressure on individuals and encourage offending

3. Situational factors can weaken moral prohibitions and permit criminal behaviour

4. The immediate environment can also provoke criminal behaviour
Consolidation of:

- Observations since 1993
- Land Use Atlases of Central Perth 1991-2004
- Pedestrian Surveys 2003-7
- Taxi Queue Surveys 2007
- Business Hours Surveys Northbridge 2005 – present
- Brief review of key governance issues
Licensed Premises

- 79 licensed premises
- 50 or so are small bars or restaurants
- 20 venues with +200 capacity in close proximity
- 5 venues +1000 capacity
- 6 venues represent 64% of incidents
Potential Crime Precipitators

- Concentration of large ‘drinking sheds’ with 6 venues representing 64% of incidents.
- Limited public transport options (buses / trains)
- Poor taxi services / ranks
- Lack of diversity of land-uses and users
- Many large venues, but few smaller ones
- Insufficient public toilets
- Youth curfew
- Lock-outs
# Northbridge Taxi Ranks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (a.m.)</th>
<th># People in Queue</th>
<th>Average wait in line (minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NTE is dominated by young males after around 10pm.
In design terms, this may look ok......
Northbridge Taxi Ranks

But when we consider use / management?
Managing Crime in Northbridge

CPTED strategies useful in specific locations but limited potential for resolving the bigger issues.

Need to reduce the number of ‘provoked’ offenders in the ‘capsule environment’ of the NTE.

Soft prevention strategies needed to reduce stresses, frustrations, prompts etc.

Multi-agency approaches such as ‘Purple Flag’ initiative in the UK (Davies, 2010).
The environmental backcloth of Northbridge NTE clearly fosters a range of crime precipitators – including ‘anonymity’, various ‘expectations’, ‘frustrations’, ‘irritants’, ‘prompts’ ‘pressures’ etc – which are concentrated in different locations and at different times in the ‘pulse of the city’.

They also precipitate different types of crime - but largely anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related violence.
Perth has not managed well the cultural shift away from drink driving to/from Northbridge – a lack of strategic thinking.

The problems of the NTE go beyond LG level and the Police and arguably should be coordinated at State level.

How to facilitate and manage ‘A Good Night Out for All’ is the right approach NOT a ‘war’ on Northbridge patrons and businesses – which may precipitate crime(s).
Multi-agency thinking and holistic coordinated strategies… working at different scales.

The lens of environmental criminology is useful for planners.

Reflect on Becker’s (1967) point “who’s side are we on?”

Rather than regulating against the NTE that we don’t want – we need to plan for and enable the NTE we do want.
Conclusions

CPTED involves ..“the proper design and effective use of the built environment ...(Crowe, 2000, p1).

It is argued that the ‘use’ dimension has been oversimplified by planners, ignoring any risk assessment.

DOC / CPTED can link with environmental criminology more easily, if it is applied as the design, management and use of space...and not just design.
Final Comments / Observations

• DOC / CPTED must move beyond the idea that promoting surveillance opportunities will always reduce crime.

• It needs to link with the theories and evidence from environmental criminology.

• *It is NOT an outcome* – *it is a process* – where risk assessment should come before the development of any solutions.
For a new perspective on DOC - which includes a detailed discussion of the history, evidence, current status and future directions in CPTED see the forthcoming publication:

References


References


Ekblom, P. (2008) Personal communication via email, received Tuesday, 8 January, 9:24 pm.


Thank you

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www.designoutcrime.org