Is it just a guessing game? Assessing the application of CPTED

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innovative research with impact.
“The proper design and effective use of the built environment, that can lead to a reduction in the fear or incidence of crime and an improvement in the quality of life” (Crowe, 2000 p. 46)
Delivery of CPTED

- 43 police forces
- 1 dedicated officer in each force
- Designing our Crime Officers (DOCOs)
- Work within an active police station
- Serving police officers, retired officers or police staff
Over 300 local authorities in England and Wales
Delivery of CPTED

• National planning policy - crime prevention should be considered in the design and build of new dwellings
• **No** obligation that the police must be involved in the planning process
• **No** systematic process to ensure that the police are involved in the design of new developments
• This applies *across* police forces and *within* the forces:

> There is no force policy. There is no direction…Whatever level of operation we have is down to individual development and partnerships…
CPTED & the planning process

...a lot of developments will bypass us at the pre-planning stage and we won’t see them until it gets to the planning application – which is far too late down the line...
Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

- Design-led consultancy
- Design stage/pre-planning application stage
- Crime Impact Statement (CIS) process – charge a fee
CPTED & the CIS process

All 10 planning authorities in Manchester stipulate that major planning applications must include a Crime Impact Statement.
Key questions!

Before thinking about how DOCOs deliver crime prevention advice, need to ask two key questions:

1) Is there a skill?

2) How is the skill applied?

Evaluations of SBD up to now overlook this basic question.
Consistency of application?

- Concerns about the **application** of CPTED advice by DOCOs

- “**Inconsistency** with which it is applied, depending upon the DOCO involved (p.17)”

1) Is there a skill?

2) How is the skill applied?
CPTED – is it just a guessing game?

- In medicine, medical science is no good unless GPs apply it
- In crime prevention, the principles of CPTED are no good unless DOCOs apply them
- To date, emphasis placed on evaluating initiatives
- Gap - how the principles of CPTED are actually applied
- Prior to thinking about the delivery of CPTED, need to evidence whether there is a skill
- “Need to know whether DOCOs are more like astronomers or astrologers”
Developed an exercise

• The way I chose to do it was to take an already built development that DOCOs didn’t know

• Ask them to predict where crime would have occurred

• Not perfect - the exercise I did could be improved

• Whatever its imperfections, something of this kind is essential to situational crime reduction

• Giving people a medical education and failing to test what they have learned is unthinkable. So it should be with crime prevention practitioners
Assessing the application of CPTED

- 28 of the most experienced ALOs in England & Wales
Assessing the application of CPTED

Property crime:
• Burglary dwelling
• Burglary other

Vehicle crime:
• Theft of motor vehicle
• Theft from motor vehicle
3 key questions

1) Do DOCOs identify different numbers (and hence proportions) of locations in the development as problematic?

2) Was there consensus in the locations chosen?

3) Were the locations chosen actually victimised?
WARNING!

• Place structure is **not** the only determinant of crime

• Would not expect perfect place identification

• However, if place structure is a key factor, performance should be better than chance…
Property crime

Number of locations identified as at risk of burglary

- 0 to 4
- 5 to 9
- 10 to 14
- 15 to 19
- 20 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 35

Number of ALOs
Property crime
Many factors may determine victimisation, but if there is a skill, prediction has to be better than chance

- There is a **skill** (better than chance) **BUT** variation across sample
- Non-police tended to perform better
- Concerns regarding **inconsistent** assessment of vulnerability are founded
- Radical **overhaul of training** and CPD required to help improve predictive skill
- **Training** based on knowledge and results - VR/CAD/case studies
- Way forward? **GMP** - strong case for being a model of delivery
- However, income generated must remain **incidental** (sustain and improve)
Current research…
Thank you

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