

# CPTED and the social city: The future of capacity building

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## Revisiting Jane Jacobs

**W**hat better time to envision a CPTED future than by reflecting on the recent passing of famed urban philosopher Jane Jacobs<sup>1</sup>. It is time to review her pioneering work that planted the seeds for the CPTED movement. As Jacobs argued from the very beginning, the goal has been to strengthen the social forces that make a place safe and secure.

It is sufficient, at this point, to say that if we are to maintain a city society that can diagnose and keep abreast of deeper social problems, the starting point must be, in any case, to strengthen whatever workable forces for maintaining safety and civilization do exist - in the cities we do have. To build city districts that are custom made for easy crime is idiotic. Yet that is what we do. (Jacobs, 1961/31)

Even Oscar Newman, the founder of defensible space – who often disagreed with Jacobs on how to strengthen those social forces – agreed in his later work it was the social interaction between people that influenced the degree to which residents control their environment (Newman, 1980; 1996).

Safety, in the original version of the theory, pivots on minimizing opportunities for crime by influencing how people interrelate to each other in physical places. Jacobs was interested not only in reducing crime opportunities, but also in improving the social conditions of neighborhood life that generate crime motives<sup>2</sup>

Jacobs' famous three point formulation became



Photo 1

**All her life, Jane Jacobs fought against land use structures that destroy opportunities for neighborhood cohesion**

the foundation for the CPTED that followed:

- ▶ She said a city street must have a clear demarcation between public and private space, what later became known as heira chy of space – territorial reinforcement;
- ▶ She said there must be eyes on the street – natural surveillance, and;
- ▶ She said areas need to be well used with good land use diversity, what later evolved into more advanced CPTED planning strategies.

Newman (1972) later added a few other architectural features to Jacob's points:

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He said access into and out of a building or area must be controlled – access control;

He said an area must have a positive “milieu”, it must be clean and well kept, what later evolved into management and maintenance, also known as the broken windows theory<sup>3</sup>.

These basic strategies were established decades ago and they have changed little in the intervening years. We call them First Generation CPTED and summarize them into four strategies:

#### **First Generation CPTED – Basic strategies**

- ▶ Territorial reinforcement
- ▶ Natural surveillance
- ▶ Access control
- ▶ Image (management and maintenance)

There are variations on these themes. For example, some synthesize these to three strategies and imbed image into territorial reinforcement. Others

However, he also reveals that many studies show mixed results, or results that suggest other social factors are at play.

## **Advanced First Generation CPTED**

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s a new group of researchers emerged – environmental criminologists. There were many names given to work in their field including routine activities theory, situational crime prevention, and the geography of crime<sup>4</sup>. Their contributions are considerable. They found a whole new constellation of physical and situational factors to reduce crime opportunities. Each brought their own strategies to the table:

From environmental criminology (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1981) emerges pattern theory regarding the geographical distribution of crime locations and high crime boundary effects between conflicting land use types – most noticeably viewed through the lens of computerized crime mapping and hotspot analysis

From situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1992) emerges research on displacement effects (or, as it turns out, lack thereof). Clarke also created the situational prevention matrix with strategies for deflecting offenders, decreasing crime rewards, increasing crime risks, and others

From routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979; Felson, 1987) emerges opportunities for crime at the junction of a suitable target, a motivated offender and the absence of a capable guardian. In practical terms this translates into compatible land use strategies such as careful placement of movement predictors (roads, walkways, paths) away from high risk areas and providing protective measures (lighting, CCTV or security patrols).

There are many types of advanced strategies and they continue to evolve. A few common one's include:

#### **First Generation CPTED – Advanced strategies**

- ▶ Movement predictors
- ▶ Displacement controls
- ▶ Deflecting offenders
- ▶ Compatible land uses
- ▶ Boundary effects

All first generation strategies share common features. They aim to prevent crime by minimizing physical opportunities for offenders. Most are



Photo 2

**1st Generation CPTED such as lighting, access control, and signage can create a modern day fortress.**

claim that all basic CPTED strategies fall under the single rubric of territoriality because of a shared aim to reinforce territorial control.

In spite of semantic nuances, basic first generation CPTED remains theoretically the same as it was in the 1970s. In fact, practitioners still carry on today as though there is nothing new under the sun. In some ways this is justified. For example, a comprehensive review of first generation CPTED by Cousins (2005) describes the empirical evidence that supports first generation CPTED strategies.



Photo 3

## **improper management and maintenance obstructs territorial feelings and defensible space for a neighborhood.**

offender-based, though a few might be arguably construed as minimizing impacts on victims. None of the strategies aim to minimize the motives for crime.

In all these strategies there is a clear trajectory away from strengthening the social forces that make a place safe and secure. True, they may offer an effective short-term solution. But there is nothing particularly social about lighting a pathway or deflecting offenders. Territorial control that allows residents to take ownership of a place doesn't just happen. It requires social context. Mapping offence patterns and removing suitable targets might be a good initial step, but these strategies do little about the social interactions between people to influence how residents might control their environment. Motive reduction is not the purpose first generation CPTED, it is the goal of Second Generation CPTED.

## **Creating Healthy and Safe Communities**

Interestingly, in recent years there has been a subtle shift by situational crime prevention toward social interaction and motive reduction. For example, the revised situational matrix includes "removing excuses" and "reducing provocations",

strategies that are clearly social in their implication. The reason offenders have excuses or become provoked, by definition, relates to their motive to commit crime in the first place.

In truth, the ingredients for safe and healthy neighborhoods are not a mystery. Such places have similar characteristics. They have a full range of citizen participation (Checkoway and Finn, 1992; Saville and Clear, 2000). They have community dialogue and partnerships (Barton, 1993; National Institute of Justice, 1996) and they have a full measure of, and programs for, social cohesiveness (Brower, 1996; Schorr, 1997). They have a distinct local culture and a diverse population with ample opportunities for positive interactions (Langdon, 1994; Aberley, 1994; Adams and Goldbard, 2001). They have the capacity to provide numerous occasions for residents to work together to reduce opportunities and motives for crime (Wekerle and Whitzman, 1995; Gilligan, 2001). These characterize a safe neighborhood. These are the factors that Second Generation CPTED seeks to cultivate in rebuilding dysfunctional communities. They hearken back to the original values espoused by Jane Jacobs.

Dysfunctional neighborhoods, on the other hand, are places of violence and disorder. They contain significant crime hotspots and risks for victimization (Skogan, 1990; Spellman, 1993). They are places of low social cohesion and high fear, for example places where school absenteeism is rampant, where residents infrequently speak to neighbors, or where people are too afraid to go outside at night (Markowitz et al, 2001; Gibson et al, 2002).

Such places foster both physical opportunities and ample motives for crime. When crime happens, there is no local capacity to respond in an effective fashion (Baba, 1989; Foster, 1995). There are few opportunities for positive and respectful social interactions between people and groups within the community (Green et al, 1998).

Second Generation CPTED seizes on Jane Jacob's original formulation that a sense of neighborliness and community is at the core of safe streets (Colquhoun, 2004). It incorporates a wide range of social crime prevention strategies in a holistic way, but it takes the lessons of First Generation CPTED and does so in specific situations in local places.

Previous social prevention programs took aim at crime through job creation and economic revitalization. Second Generation CPTED does not discount such ideas, but many of those are large-scale, long-term strategies. Instead, Second Generation CPTED focuses on the specific social and cultural dynamics existing in each individual neighborhood. To do this it employs four strategies, known as the four C's:

## **Second Generation CPTED**

- ▶ Social Cohesion
- ▶ Connectivity
- ▶ Community Culture
- ▶ Threshold Capacity

Where First Generation CPTED aims to enhance territorial control and defensible space, Second Generation CPTED extends that by building local capacities and social cohesion. People are not likely to have strong territorial feelings unless they develop a sense of shared standards for positive behavior and neighborliness. They must actually care about the people and place where they work, play, and live, and they cannot limit that caring just to their shared public places.

Competent and balanced crime prevention practice must expand into the private areas of community life if it is to become truly holistic. Only when prevention expands to encompass the four "C"s can sustainable safety emerge from those shared standards of behavior that bring people together for a common purpose.

## **Social Cohesion**

Just as territoriality is the core of First Generation CPTED, social cohesion is the core of Second Generation CPTED. To encourage a safe community it employs a wide range of strategies. These range from emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Salovey, 1990), to the literacy of conflict training, such as showing how to have respectful disagreements without resorting to violence (Cleveland and Saville, 2003).

Cohesion strategies enhance relationships between residents. Neighborhood Watch may create a network of watchers, but it does not teach problem-solving or conflict resolution to those who live in the neighborhood. That is the same reason why the traditional CPTED strategy called "activity support" rarely creates long term social

cohesion.

### **A few of the characteristics that define social cohesion include:**

- ▶ Participation in local events and organizations
- ▶ The presence of self-directed community problem-solving
- ▶ The extent to which conflicts are positively resolved within the community, e.g. restorative justice programs (Zellerer and Cannon, 2002; 2006 forthcoming)
- ▶ Existence of anti-violence and awareness education, e.g. training programs teaching residents how to support women victims of domestic assault and help abusive men become peaceful (DeKeseredy et al, 2004)
- ▶ Extensive friendship networks with positive relations.

Social cohesion further breaks down into two sub-categories: Social Glue and Positive Esteem.

Social Glue involves strategies that bring members of the community together to take responsibility for their street, block, organization, or town. For example neighbors may plan social events or learn new methods they can themselves use to deal with crime (such as First Generation CPTED).

An effective social glue strategy is problem-based learning (PBL). This educational technique has its roots in adult education where facilitators support stakeholders to develop their own hands-on training seminars. They learn prevention principles by crafting actual solutions to real problems in their own neighborhoods, all the while creating links between each other. The links that the learners subsequently forge using PBL have the value of including the very people who have influence to make positive changes.

In the mid 1990s, Saville and Atlas applied this method in Reno, Nevada during traditional CPTED training. The participants identified their own neighborhood problems on which they applied their new CPTED skills. Through this process they learned the city did not have a long-term CPTED planning policy and so they created one. It was approved by city council and today members of that original group conduct on-going CPTED training and participate regular CPTED reviews for development proposals.

Positive Esteem relates to the personal characteristics that people within the neighborhood



need for cohesion to occur. Primary among these are conflict resolution and self confidence skills. As Jacobs notes, when community participants are deficient at resolving conflicts they frequently retreat into their own homes. This can cause social alienation and isolation. If they resolve conflicts in negative ways, such as physical altercations, this leads to violence. That is when conflict resolution skills and self esteem programs apply. There is an example of this approach in the Western Australia Aboriginal capacity building project below.

Another self-esteem strategy for cohesion includes emotional intelligence training. Emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995) provides methods to enhance individual competencies in self-awareness and conflict resolution.

## Connectivity

Connectivity means the neighborhood has positive relations and influence with external agencies, such as government funding sources. For the CPTED practitioner who employs 2nd Generation CPTED, this means teaching grant-writing skills, establishing linked web-communities, and fostering neighborhood empowerment teams for participatory planning.

It is critical a neighborhood does not operate in isolation (Barton and Silverman, 1994). There are important lessons for problem-solving from other neighborhoods. There must be a mechanism to connect and communicate with media outlets to publish success or solicit public support. This means that every organization or neighborhood needs connectivity outside itself. Practitioners should teach participants how to make connections with other groups with similar problems and to forge political links with various levels of government.

### **Some characteristics of connectivity include:**

- ▶ Existence of networks with outside agencies, e.g. shared websites, formal activities with outside neighborhoods and organizations
- ▶ Grant-writers or access to grant-writing services
- ▶ Adequate transport facilities (ride-sharing, bicycle paths, public transit) linking to outside areas

## Community Culture

CPTED practitioners sometimes forget what is significant about Jacob's "eyes on the street" is not the sightlines or the streets, but the eyes. We don't need neighborhoods of watchers; we need a sense of community where people care about who they are watching. Community culture brings people together in a common purpose. This is how local residents begin to share a sense of place and why they bother to exert territorial control in the first place (Adams and Goldbard, 2001).

### **A few of the characteristics that define culture within a community include:**

- ▶ Presence and effectiveness of gender and minority equality strategies
- ▶ Gender-based programs, e.g. violence against women
- ▶ Prevalence of special places, monuments, historical place-making such as landmarks
- ▶ Community traditions and cultural activities, e.g. art fairs, music festivals

For example, Westville is a neighborhood just outside the central core of New Haven, Connecticut. Surrounded by high crime hotspots, the neighborhood is constantly at risk of increasing crime. However for years community organizers encourage local artists to run art festivals and street fairs ([www.westvillect.org/wvra/index.html](http://www.westvillect.org/wvra/index.html)). Working together in 2003 they obtained a historic preservation designation, thereby protecting the neighborhood from impending roadway expansion and the deterioration of walkable streets. Businesses now organize to clean up streets. A walkable and safe street can contribute to a sense of community and help people enjoy the public realm in positive ways. Art festivals and street fairs are cultural events that bring people together in common purpose. These efforts not only help prevent crime but they also have the added benefit of developing a shared sense of purpose and belonging that arises from those efforts.

DeKeseredy reminds us that a major shortfall in traditional CPTED is that it ignores the violence occurring beyond the public street, for example domestic violence against women in public housing projects (DeKeseredy et al, 2004). "Ninety percent of more than 1.27 million U.S. public housing households are headed by women...and that exploratory research shows that many of them are

frequently and severely abused by males intimates and acquaintances” (DeKeseredy et al, 2004:28). No crime prevention strategy can be considered holistic if it ignores such a large portion of the crime problem. He suggests that Second Generation CPTED can address this shortfall by moving beyond gender-neutral CPTED initiatives. In fact it must also move beyond minority-neutral CPTED initiatives. The Western Australia Aboriginal project below provides an example of how to do this.

## Threshold Capacity

Jacobs believed neighborhoods are interconnected, complex social ecosystems. Second Generation CPTED also seizes on the concept of social ecology by establishing balanced land uses and social stabilizers. Stabilizers include safe congregation areas or events for young people while minimizing destabilizing activities that tip an area into crime, such as illegal pawn shops and abandoned buildings.

The concept of the tipping point is another threshold idea (Saville, 1996; Saville and Wong, 1994). This refers to the capacity of any given activity or space to properly support the intended use. Too many abandoned homes in a neighborhood have been shown to act as a magnet for certain types of crime (Spelman, 1993). Too many bars in a small area can generate an exorbitant number of bar related problems like assaults, drunk driving, and disorder incidents (Saville and Wong, 1994).

### Some characteristics of capacity include:

- ▶ Human-scale development, land use density and diversity
- ▶ Balance of social stabilizers, e.g. community gardens, street entertainment, street food vendors for downtown lunches, fairs and outdoor markets
- ▶ Crime generators below critical threshold, e.g. number of abandoned homes per neighborhood, number of bars in an area.

## Case Study #1:

### Revitalizing a Toronto housing project

One of the first full scale efforts to combine Second with First Generation CPTED was in the San

Photo 1

## The neighborhoods around San Romanoway in Toronto



Romanoway apartments in a lower income community in north Toronto. The community has a long tradition of crime and respondents to a victimization survey portrayed a community in crisis (Rigakos, 2002).

A Toronto parapolic company headed by ICA member Ross McLeod provides security services in the San Romanoway Project. In 2000, the property owners were convinced to institute prevention and community-building strate-

gies in a report called the San Romanoway Foundation Document. Between in 2001 preliminary work began to outline this collaborative action research agenda. It marked the first time in Canada that such a comprehensive Second Generation CPTED strategy, in combination with security initiatives and first generation CPTED, was implemented on such a large scale.

San Romanoway comprises high rise apartments with 4,000 residents living in over 800 units in North Toronto. The site includes a recreation center with a swimming pool, though the pool had been inoperable for some time. The three 20 storey tower blocks are designed in a bleak, modernist style with brick and cement exteriors. Most units have a single balcony. There were no gardens or landscaped areas on site except for an area of grass berms obstructing sightlines at the south-west corner.

The grounds were littered, access lights were inoperable, and there were abandoned vehicles in the underground parking lots. The post boxes within the building were located in an alcove creating an entrapment area and elevators were in a state of disrepair. Many locations along walkways were unlit and in other locations lights were broken. These observations reinforced the serious problem with image and poor territoriality on site.

Preliminary recommendations included improving the lighting, installing boarder fencing to reinforce access control, and improving the on site maintenance to enhance image. Recommendations also included second generation strategies such as regular meetings to build local cohesion between residents, activities on site such as community gardens, and social programs.

The property owners were reluctant to spend

their own resources to implement the security or first generation CPTED changes. However, a tennis court and some fencing was improved. Funds from an outside agency were obtained to build a community garden and also construct a safe playground area for children. This reinforced community culture at the site. Other cultural programs included a cultural dance group, tennis clubs, and a homework club.

Connectivity infers a neighborhood should encourage connections with external agencies and San Romanoway was no different. Local politicians were brought into the project and appeared during media photo opportunities. Eventually over \$500,000 federal grant funds were directed to San Romanoway, mostly for Second Generation CPTED initiatives.

These initiatives include social cohesion programs such as an anger management program, youth mentoring, and computer classes in a new computer room. As well they funded a full time teacher and social worker to help students expelled from school.

The Second Generation CPTED strategies began in 2002 and continued through 2004. A follow up study discovered that residents now work together and participate in a non-profit organization called the San Romanoway Revitalization Association to coordinate activities on site. The study also found there were decreases of crime in a number of categories: 23 percent in violent crimes, 31 percent in robberies and 37 percent in sexual assaults. There has also been a 21 percent decline in burglaries. At the same time residents reported their daily interaction with others residents on site increased from 9 to 15 percent in the same time period (Rigakos, 2004).

## Case Study #2:

### Engaging Aboriginal Youth in Western Australia

Another project where Second Generation CPTED strategies had impact is an Aboriginal education program in Western Australia. Starting in 2002, this program focuses on the social cohesion component of 2nd Generation CPTED (in this case renamed capacity building). The objective was to reduce absenteeism by truant students, as well as enhance the overall involvement in community problem-solving.

There is little point in creating safe physical environments in First Generation CPTED if those who

live in those environments choose not to participate in community life. This is particularly the case with young people and the schools they attend. It's not surprising we associate a large majority of social disorder and crime problems with disaffected young people who drop out of school. They find academic activities too boring and quite disconnected to their own lives. Therefore, engaging young people is a crucial component of any community-building strategy, especially where truancy and absenteeism are rampant. Building social cohesion through community involvement of disaffected participants – especially disaffected young people – obviously represents a major test of any program's viability.

Absenteeism: a symptom of community breakdown

Within the education sphere, a high level of absenteeism serves as a significant indicator of the difficulty Aboriginal families face today. Aboriginal students, on average, miss almost one day of school each week. This translates to missing over a year of schooling by the end of primary school and over two years by the end of secondary school (MCEETYA-2001). The failure of Aboriginal students to engage with the schooling process is a significant factor in limiting the access to opportunity that many in the Aboriginal community face. The causes of such a high levels of absenteeism are both varied and complex and no easy solution exists to remedy the problem.

To reduce the problem and enhance the positive esteem aspects of cohesion in these communities, individual competencies (personal capacities) of Aboriginal students, parents and educational staff had to be developed before any improvements were likely to occur.

## The Projects

In addition to the learning sessions, participants undertake problem-based learning (PBL) projects that they implement in their schools, families, or communities. The PBL projects must reflect real life community needs and attempt to resolve issues or problems of importance to participants or other Aboriginal community members. A previous issue of The CPTED Journal provides details on PBL as a method for implementing CPTED (Genre, 2004).

To ensure responsiveness to participant's needs and interests, all facilitators must prepare work that

is specifically relevant to the areas in which they deliver the material. There is little sense offering drug information strategies and crime reduction workshops if Education workers have a focus that lies elsewhere. In most instances, the projects by the participants and the involved agencies include:

## **Education outcomes in Western Australia (How they relate to Aboriginal Australians)**

- ▶ Emotional and Multiple Intelligence awareness Goal setting, assertiveness, conflict resolution and situational control
- ▶ Literacy
- ▶ Substance Abuse
- ▶ Problem Based Learning
- ▶ Preliminary outcomes: the Kimberley Region

Project personnel collected initial evaluation data for one project area, the Kimberly region. Preliminary results are encouraging. Between 2004 and 2005, there was improvement in 21 of 27 schools, in both primary and secondary grades. One school experienced an improvement in attendance of 31.5%<sup>5</sup>

These preliminary results suggest the reversal of a long term serious trend towards lack of involvement by Aboriginal students in their own learning. Aboriginal staff describes being more inclined to take leadership roles and engage with students and staff more readily. In addition, they are now more receptive to managing and developing school and com-

munity projects. To use the terminology of one participant, “we are no longer sitting in the back seat of education at our school. We are driving the bus.”

There is still a need for more data to assess the ongoing impact on attendance, suspensions, and student participation. In addition, there is a need to monitor the overall cohesion, social conditions and crime patterns within the community as the program proceeds.

## **Conclusion**

Second Generation CPTED has become an essential ingredient in the program toolbox of every CPTED practitioner, community worker or urban development professional. For too long our focus has been one-dimensional and too removed from Jacob’s original formulations for safer communities. We may live in physical structures and neighborhoods that we build, but our lives are subject to much more than strategies like better locks and lights. Our lives are successful – or not – based on the quality of our relationships. Any strategy to improve the quality of life and reduce crime that forgets these fundamental truths has little to offer those communities looking for safer, and sustainable, futures. ■

<sup>5</sup> Statistics compiled by Aboriginal Education District office. Kimberley District office.

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## Footnotes

- 1 Jane Jacobs died in April, 2006 at 89. In 1961 she wrote arguably one of the most influential books on urban planning, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which CPTED writers frequently cite as their source for new ideas. Jacobs showed how planning and architecture creates crime opportunities.
- 2 Even in her last book in 2004, *Dark Age Ahead*, she continues to argue about the social impact of dysfunctional neighborhoods. "No functioning community. That is, finally, the gist of it."
- 3 The Broken Window theory later formulated by Wilson and Kelling also adds enforcement strategies of street based incivilities for maximum effect.
- 4 Researchers in each of these fields will justifiably argue that theirs is the primary theoretical umbrella under which others fall. Or they may argue that their theory emerges from other theoretical strains and do not belong under the CPTED umbrella. We yield to this theoretical turf struggle and offer here only a simplified model that we attribute to environmental criminology. Nonetheless, we maintain that all these theories, including environmental criminology, are variations on the opportunity reduction theme and followed Jacob's early writing.