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Public spaces for all
“creating safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces for all.”
Inclusive places. Safe places. Favourite places

Easier said than done?

Focus of the presentation

Focus...on the sometimes
Inclusive places. Safe places. Favourite places
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Socio-economic situation (54 million people)

**INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND**

**Socio-economic situation**

- **Poverty**
  - More than half the population live below the poverty line Less than US$2 per day
  - Almost 22% live in extreme poverty
- **Unemployment**
  - 25% - 35% of the workforce
  - 50% of those between 15 and 24 (almost half the population)
  - In some communities percentages are much higher

**Crime situation**

**INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND**

**Crime situation**

- **Murder**
  - 17 800 during 2014/15
  - 33 per 100 000, almost 50 murders per day
  - Two provinces with the highest rate – 49 and 52 per 100 000
  - World average – 6 per 100 000
  - Less than 10% of murder suspects convicted
- **Aggravated robberies**
  - Almost 130 000 during 2014/15
  - 354 per day
  - More than 20 000 house robberies – 56 per day
  - (violent home invasions and “farm murders”)
Crime and safety are the second most cited challenges faced by South Africans (after unemployment). Leads to high levels of fear, perceptions, urban myths, exaggerations, irrational assumptions...
The effectiveness of technology … dependent on “the human factor”

CPTED FUNDAMENTALS
A local interpretation

Based on principles
- CPTED based on “principles” - may vary slightly depending on specific interpretations and contexts
- Confusing use of terminology – principles, techniques, mechanisms, strategies, tools, methods
- South African interpretation of CPTED – five “principles”
- Performance criteria - qualities to be strived for, objectives to be achieved

Qualities that contribute to the creation of safer spaces relate to the following:
- Surveillance and visibility
- Territoriality
- Access and escape routes
- Image and aesthetics
- Target hardening
Principles and their implementation

- **What** are the objectives we are aiming to achieve?
  Performance criteria – qualities to be strived for, objectives to be achieved

- **How** are we going to do this in practice?
  Give effect to the principles by by means of implementation techniques, tools, mechanisms, strategies
Important considerations

- Objectives may be contradictory
- Take into account the context – don’t view principles in isolation
- When applying a principle, consider the possible implications it may have on any of the others
Uninterrupted lines of sight

Passive surveillance “eyes on the street”

Effective lighting

THE FUNDAMENTALS IN PRACTICE

Do they matter?
Different places, different contexts
- Two initiatives / projects
  - Understanding perceptions of safety in parks
  - Identifying potential crime risk factors in residential neighbourhoods
- Two contexts
  - Inclusive
  - Exclusionary

Assessment of parks
- Case studies of 18 parks in Pretoria
  - Nature (physical form) [spatial/site analysis]
  - Use (function) [participant observation, interviews]
  - Perceptions of users (crime situation) [interviews]
- Prof Karina Landman and honours students of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria
- Identified presence of “principles” to determine common physical characteristics or risk factors

All parks are fairly well used... during the day
All parks are fairly well used... by a range of people

Are measures in place to reduce the attractiveness or vulnerability of potential targets by, for instance, physically strengthening it or installing mechanisms that will increase the effort required to commit an offence?
Target hardening

Do these measures negatively affect other qualities, for instance does it limit opportunities for surveillance?

Surveillance and visibility

Are opportunities for observance of the space maximised, whether by users during the course of their normal activities (passive surveillance) or by police or other security personnel (active surveillance)?

Surveillance and visibility

Uninterrupted lines of sight

Surveillance and visibility

Effective lighting

Mixed activities

Surveillance and visibility

Layout, positioning of facilities, windows
**Surveillance and visibility**

Activity generators

**Territoriality**

Are users taking ownership of, and responsibility for, the use, upkeep and security of public and semi-public areas?

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**Access and escape routes**

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Access and escape routes

Clear signage

Position and design of public toilet facilities

Access and escape routes

Image and aesthetics

Does the physical appearance of an environment create a positive image and instil feelings of safety in users?

Image and aesthetics

"Crime and grime"

Image and aesthetics

Maintenance
Assessment of parks

- Crime and the fear of crime plays a significant role in discouraging people from using the parks, especially after dark
- People also feared the drug dealers in some parks, even though the dealers tended to remain in one particular area in each of the parks
- In some parks drug dealers were observed actively selling drugs.

Assessment of parks

- The presence of homeless people made users feel unsafe. They were regarded by some as being rude and some made improper comments. The areas they occupied tended to be unclean, presenting an image of disorder and decline
- Homeless people and those consuming alcohol tend to keep to more secluded areas

The parks are inclusive, but this makes certain users feel unsafe
Some parks are regarded as a favourite places by many, but certain users are not appreciated by all

Assessment of parks

- Issues related to safety and security featured in most of the interviews
- Most people said that they used the parks during the day but that they were afraid to do so after dark
- Some indicated that they are fearful as they were aware of muggings occurring in certain parks
- The lack of maintenance created perceptions that the area may be unsafe.
- Lack of, or condition of toilet facilities problematic
- Poor lighting in some areas were noted

Assessment of parks

- Certain physical characteristics of the parks contribute to the creation of opportunities for crime and influence people’s perceptions of safety and security.
- Based on information gathered through user interviews, certain characteristics created opportunities in some cases, but in other cases they did not play a role in increasing levels of crime.
- Similarly, some characteristics improved perceptions of safety in certain parks, while the same characteristics did not deter criminal activity in other cases.
Assessment of residential neighbourhoods

- An enclosed neighbourhood since 1 December 2013.
- Well established suburb with road closures.
- Around 1,700 households
- Upper middle class

- Analysis of crime data as reported by residents and captured by Infomerger (and ADT).
- GIS maps (hot spots) – Dr Peter Schmitz
- Visual assessment of the physical environment.
- Interviews and focus group discussions.

THE FUNDAMENTALS IN PRACTICE

Assessment of residential neighbourhoods

- Crimes reported to the residents organisation.
- Total number of incidents - 418
- Most common crimes
  - Burglary at residential premises (228)
  - Theft out of motor vehicle (64)
  - House robberies (14)
Assessment of residential neighbourhoods

- Crime patterns before and after street closures.
  - Property crimes
    - One year period BC: 120
    - One year period AC: 33
  - Vehicle crimes
    - One year period BC: 12
    - One year period AC: 27

Repeat victimisation (3 or more incidents) – 14 houses
Typical street scene

Walls and fences

Electric fences, armed response
Random victimisation – no visible correlation

Access control to neighbourhood

Reactive target hardening

Poor management
CONCLUSION

Theory vs reality
- Inclusive. Safe. Favourite
- Can a place be everything to everybody?
- CPTED principles - sometimes they work, sometimes the don’t
- My perception, or is it real?
- What motivates a criminal to commit a crime when CPTED “logic” dictates that it would not be a wise decision?

Theory vs the South African reality
- Some insight provided by convicted house robbers interviewed by Prof Rudolph Zinn from Unisa*
  - “Money is worth much more than a human life”
  - “Most important factor when selecting a target – inside information”
  - “Security measures will not deter me if the reward is big enough according to the inside info”
- Security measures (including CPTED) often just require a change in MO – will do whatever it takes


Theory vs the South African reality
- The crime situation is exceptional
- Extreme levels of violence
- The apparent willingness of offenders to inflict injury or resort to deadly violence when committing a crime may limit the effectiveness of certain crime reduction measures.
- Levels and effectiveness of policing vary.
- The unwillingness to intervene
- Ineffective criminal justice system
- Corruption

So what?
Easier said than done?

- Creating inclusive, safe, favourite places requires more than just adhering to CPTED principles
- Some principles could lead to a change in MO that involves more violence
- "Choose your crime"
- For our punch drunk citizens, the answer to the question is "yes"

CONCLUSION

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THE END

Acknowledgement – image
Little river image courtesy of Steve Gourlay photography and KR - Gillespies LLP
https://blogisthmus.wordpress.com/2014/02/