

Doctoral (Ph.D) Dissertation

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2020



**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF
UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

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**The examination of using of crime prevention through
environmental design (CPTED) in Hungary**

Theses of the dissertation

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Budapest, 2020



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I. Reason for choosing the topic and the purpose of the research

In recent decades crime prevention professionals have basically focused on the perpetrator and the victim using the prophylaxis and social toolkit. Social crime prevention has focused on the social causes of crime and their treatment. Up to this day its general tool is to educate and enlighten the perpetrator and the victim and change their attitude. **Its essence is based on educational sentences that place the potential victim and the potential perpetrator in the “do” and “do not” relation at the endpoints of an imaginary axis.** Naturally, supporters of social prevention rejected the philosophy of deterrence-based crime prevention long ago. They are well aware that the duality of prohibition and warning is not enough. Empowering the individual with self-defense mechanisms, decision-making and responsibility can lead to real results. However, there has been no significant change in the fact that in some way, but almost without exception, we want to change people directly through the application of these techniques.

In contrast, situational crime prevention does not focus its preventive attention on the individual but on the environment. This way it can be interpreted as a set of activities to reduce crime. Patrolling, improving public lighting, using different alarm systems is an example of situational prevention. Each of them is aimed at dealing with the elements (location, occasion) that provide the physical possibility to commit the crime.

However, this approach has been steadily pushed into the background in recent decades, given that according to its critics (Borbíró et al, 2016; Hesseling, 1994; Juhász, 2015) it does not deal with or eliminate the deep-rooted causes of crime rather, it means only symptomatic treatment. As a result, it only obscures real problems. It does not eliminate crime but shifts and relocates it in space, time, and in the subject matter and method of the crime.

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), which is one of the situational prevention tools, has also fallen prey to this critical clash, which for many decades has been seen by criminology and crime prevention professionals as a collection of simple and universal technical solutions applicable everywhere. The concept of CPTED has become one with CCTV-s, the height of fences, the transparency of parks, the lighting of public spaces, and the maintenance of streets.

In the last few years, however, the repository of CPTED has grown with new elements. New principles such as social cohesion, the human scale, community participation, social relations or even community culture are influencing the way of thinking of those working in this field



(Cleveland-Saville, 1998; Cleveland-Saville, 2008). Because of these the situational nature and classification of CPTED is far from self-evident.

The reason for this is twofold: CPTED has undergone a kind of metamorphosis that has endowed it with social traits as a result of new elements arising from the findings of the co-sciences, including environmental psychology or environmental sociology and this endowed it with social marks. Another reason for blurring borders is the complex, synthesizing mindset required by globalization of the 21st century, which is also true to crime prevention, where **it has long been a theorem that only complex, collaborative programs involving all participants can lead to results.**

The new framework of CPTED also serves to create synergy when the individual and the community play a role alongside the environment. The members of the latter one can also become perpetrators and victims. **Solutions used in CPTED should no longer be interpreted as a goal but as a tool, and they are now mindful of the scene, the perpetrator, and the victim.**

One of the reasons for my choice of topic is the newly surfaced, previously discussed complexity. Another explanation is based on a kind of socio-ecological “hypothesis, according to which the spatial environment has an influence on the society living in it, and the society – though indirectly - can be shaped if its spatial conditions change”. (Kozma, 2001, 52). If we look at the evolution of humanity, an even bolder statement can be made: **the formation, development, present and future of society are also spatial**, so crime prevention must also give a prominent role to the living spaces of society.



II. Structure and brief overview of the dissertation

I present the probative steps of the applicability of CPTED in Hungary, as well as the related topics in ten chapters of the dissertation. Before the chapters I summarize in a preface the strange but actually necessary relationship between architecture and crime prevention, briefly shedding light on the essence of CPTED as well as the purpose of the dissertation.

In the first chapter I describe the reason for my choice of topic, explain the research goals, and formulate my three research hypotheses. **In the second chapter** I present the research methodology, explaining in detail the applied research methodological tools, the reason for their choice. **In the third chapter** I present the disciplinary framework of CPTED, examining its theoretical background in detail, starting with the definition of the concept and the creation of a new definition. I will first deal with its place among the criminological paradigms, then I turn to the connections that can be established in relation to forensics, sociology, psychology, and architecture. **In the fourth chapter** I systematize the practice of CPTED, in other words the methods that can be applied in practice, which can be (also) evaluated as one of the results of my dissertation, considering that I have created a new structure of methods. **In the fifth chapter** I examine criminal data highlighting the delicts that we can influence by applying CPTED. In this chapter I reveal the connections between crimes committed in public spaces and the built environment by analyzing the data partly available on the website of the General Prosecutor's Office and partly requested from the National Police Headquarters. **In the sixth chapter** I examine the normative background of CPTED covering the legal instruments that directly or indirectly affect the applicability of this prevention tool. **In the seventh chapter** I describe the range of participants in CPTED discussing general and special participants separately. **In the eighth chapter** I present the results of the questionnaire research, while **in the ninth chapter** I demonstrate the so-called security risk matrix I have created and the evaluation of a project that is being put into practice.

In the tenth and final chapter, the concluding thoughts and the findings related to the hypotheses can be read along with my suggestions.



III. Hypotheses of the research and the presentation of the methods used to examine them

In most cases an important condition for the commission of a crime is the location, otherwise the occasion. The role of this component, which is often relegated to the background alongside the victim and the perpetrator, becomes particularly important because on the one hand a specific part of the crime is not pre-planned but rather created by the occasion. On the other hand, as I wrote it in the justification of the choice of topic: human existence is spatial that is why most crimes are spatial, too. The term of CPTED, which falls within the scope of situational prevention, suggests that the individual have no role to play in relation to it. Its aim is simply to find technical and construction solutions to make things more difficult for the perpetrators and its only focus is on the scene.

The wording of Endre Dallos makes the picture a little more nuanced: **”crime prevention through environmental design is a set and joint application of architectural, settlement development, landscape and garden construction, traffic engineering, lighting technology, psychological and communication methods, which reduce or eliminate the chances of committing a crime by retrofitting the built environment and by consciously planning and implementing what is to be built”** (Dallos, 2008, 110).

The definition goes beyond the development of simple technical solutions when it also incorporates psychological and communication methods into the toolkit of CPTED, which indirectly make the individual the subject of investigation. However, I believe and assume that the individual does not have only a secondary role in this area either. I believe that the basis of the new approach is the individual because in my view by shaping and changing the environment along appropriate principles man and ultimately the community are formed.

The starting point is not the physical environment but the community living there and its problems. The principles so far, such as **community control** or otherwise **natural surveillance**, **natural territorial reinforcement**, **natural access control** and **image** and **management** also mediate as if a member of the community was not affected by CPTED.

(The principle of community control is an exception, which goes back to the role of the individual, when it expects the common areas to be observed by residents and passers-by in the design of the architectural features of the given area.)

However, I am convinced that the application of CPTED solutions is not a goal but a means to change people's attitudes. All methods of crime prevention must focus on the human being



who changes his attitude by consciously shaping the built environment. The question rightly arises in this way: is CPTED situational or much more social?

According to the above I have come to formulate the following research hypotheses:

1. Crime prevention through environmental design does not belong to situational but to social crime prevention.

2. Crime prevention through environmental design is suitable for reducing the quantity and quality of crime, its non-exclusive result is the relocation of crime, it has a real right to exist.

3. The adaptation of crime prevention through environmental design is possible in Hungary, its application is not hindered by the social and economic conditions in Hungary.

I have used several research methods to test my hypotheses and to prove (or refute) them. First of all the **review of the literature** - domestic and international - should be highlighted, which served as the basis of all further chapters of my dissertation. This also fills a gap, as the study of CPTED in Hungary has been pushed into the background in recent years. The writings and research on the subject did not process the mentioned transformation and paradigm shift.

By examining criminal statistics I wanted to draw attention to the fact that CPTED is indeed not suitable for dealing with all types of delinquency, but has a much more diverse mechanism of action than the profession has considered it suitable in recent years.

Given that architecture is partly an activity subject to official permission, I considered it essential to **present** the Hungarian **normative background** and possible regulatory and intervention tools for **its analysis**.

In my dissertation, I had the opportunity **to secondary process a large sample of 10,000 research material**. The research was commissioned by the National Crime Prevention Council (NBT). Its original aim was to understand the involvement of the population as a victim in crime, the factors influencing victimization and attitudes towards crime, public safety and self-safety. At the same time the NBT allowed me to formulate direct questions related to CPTED. My second research material was data collection using the polling technique among the adult Hungarian population **June 8-19th 2018 in which 1001 randomly selected adults were interviewed using the CATI method**. The research was commissioned by the NBT in this case too. The questionnaire was compiled by me with the permission of the NBT.



The survey was carried out by the Századvég Political School Foundation, which also provided me with the results of the computer-assisted telephone survey and its cross-tabulations.

In addition to the above I have created the **so-called security risk matrix**, which could be the basis of all crime prevention through environmental design studies in the future, as the matrix includes a test criteria system. It also covers a coefficient that influences the security situation in a given area through people's subjective sense of security. The development of the security risk matrix was based on the examination of the first declared CPTED project in Hungary. I conducted a questionnaire survey in the project called Legyen Tered! in the 10th district of Budapest with the involvement of the residents, and I also carried out a comprehensive study of the affected area.



IV. Research results

I have presented in the second chapter of my dissertation that placing CPTED in a theoretical system is by no means an easy task. Nevertheless, we can say that the basis of CPTED was **neoclassical criminological theorems** for a long time. **These theorems are based on the premise that the individual who becomes the perpetrator is a rational-choiced being** who is driven primarily by his or her individual interests to commit the crime.

Hypothesis 1: Crime prevention with architectural tools does not belong to situational but to social crime prevention.

It comes from the former rationality that the change of the built environment influences the behavior of the perpetrator. He or she reconsiders on the basis of circumstances which are more unfavorable for him or her, in case of a decrease in the chance, he or she **decides to withdraw or implement it in another way** (place, time, object).

Partial result I. - Creation of a multidisciplinary framework

Previously the potential effects of CPTED were fundamentally studied from a criminological and / or sociological point of view. However, by examining the theorems of environmental psychology I have highlighted that the environment affects all of us so by shaping the built environment according to the right aspects we can shape the behavior of all members of society and thus the coexistence and behavior of communities.

This is partly why I see my first hypothesis valid and as a result of it I have created a new definition. The system of theories that previously framed CPTED fundamentally ignored these mechanisms of action. This framework was based on the basic premise and theoretical basis that according to the general division of crime prevention can be situational and social. The former one is a set of activities to reduce crime, the latter one also refers to the activity, which is also formulated as a general goal of crime prevention, which aims at the prevention of becoming a perpetrator or a victim.

At the same time there is a generally accepted view that categorizes crime prevention on the basis of health analogy according to levels of intervention, which may presuppose excessive segregation in terms of the effects of each prevention measure.

An examination of the theorems of environmental psychology has revealed that the inter- and transactional relationship between the environment and man is reciprocal, so the interaction is also two-way. Appropriate feedback influences our behavior in this way the physical



environment itself is a socializing factor. Linking to a location is also decisive since people know, love, and protect more the environment that is right for them, while they destroy those that are not right. *The quality environment created in this way has a repercussion on the user's behavior and emotions (Düll, 2010, 23).* We have seen, in connection with the malls or the housing estate environment that the built environment is fundamentally able to support the occurrence of certain behaviors. This included straggling the aimless “hanging around” of young people, but also the poor quarter mentality.

As a final theorem it is worth noting one of the most significant effects of CPTED, in my view, which can be best understood by the theorem of social constructionism. According to **social constructionism**, which is a subject of sociology, what is **perceived and interpreted as reality by individuals and society is constructed, created by the social interaction of individuals and groups** (Giddens, 2008, 132). At the same time, another theorem states that **if people classify a situation as real that situation becomes real in terms of its consequences** (Szöllősi, 2012, 35).

By comparing the two statements I have found that this means that **since all situations believed to be real are constructed, the consequences that become real are also constructed.**

In other words, if we change the built environment, **the constructed picture (or subjective perception) of security, the world and the microenvironment will also change. We can have an effect on the subjective sense of security in this way and by increasing this people's behavior can also be changed.** If our environment can be matched by objective criminal indicators, then we have no reason to be more afraid and consider the world around us more dangerous. It is my firm view that this is exactly as important a goal of crime prevention as specific crimes, or prevention of becoming a victim and / or perpetrator. I managed to prove this effect with my research on the project called Legyen Tere! where it has been clearly demonstrated that making the environment more beautiful and livable is in itself capable of achieving a greater sense of security.

Partial result II. - Creating a new definition

In Chapter III, I examined all domestic definitions and several foreign definitions. I identified the following elements that appear in each case through their examination.



Based on these CPTED

- **refers to the** (own note: mostly urban, by all means) **built environment around the person,**
- **its clear aim is to reduce the number of crimes,**
- **its primary tool is conscious planning, the direct consequence of this is the design and transformation of the environment.**

Of course, there are also elements that can only be found in certain definitions. Such as

- **designation of reducing the fear of crime as a goal,**
- **formulating the improvement of the quality of life as a need and a goal,**
- **and reducing the demand for police forces.**

Consequently, I consider it necessary to redefine the concept of CPTED as follows: **CPTED reduces the opportunities for crime and increases subjective sense of security by consciously planning the design of the built environment and implementing of these plans, and the retrofitting and maintenance of the existing built environment, involving individuals and communities living there, by influencing their behavior, attitudes, attitudes towards their living environment, and perpetrator behavior.**

Partial result III. - Presentation and examination of the Second and Third generation principles of CPTED in Hungary

The validity of my hypothesis is also proved by the newly formulated principles that have appeared abroad in recent years, as a result of which CPTED has undergone a serious transformation, which can even be interpreted as a paradigm shift. While the first generation principles (territoriality, (natural) surveillance, access control, target protection, support for legal activities, maintenance, upkeep) could be interpreted primarily as recommendations of a technical nature, the second generation principles explicitly call on the participants of CPTED to develop responsibilities of the individual and the community.

The writing of **Gerard Cleveland and Gregory Saville** in 1998, containing the second generation principles of CPTED (Cleveland-Saville, 1998) marked this breakthrough a paradigm shift. According to this, CPTED does not exist without the development and **construction of social cohesion, connectivity, and community culture.** The condition of the former ones is the establishment of housing units on a scale that does not exceed the so-called



threshold capacity. According to this, there is a need for living spaces that, in line with Jane Jacobs' original ideas, allow residential communities to connect and a complex social ecosystem to develop. The second-generation principles consider the basics of urban sociology creating a balance between land use and social stabilizers. A stabilizer can be a safe gathering area or a place for young people to spend useful leisure time that minimizes crime-inducing, destabilizing activities in the area.

The **third-generation principles** are also partly related to this. They were evoked by the following two things: on the one hand, the need to reorganize the repetitions and contradictions found in conceptual irregularities, on the other hand the first critical voices in response to such an attempt.

Victoria Gibson presented a new systematization in her PhD dissertation called **Third Generation CPTED? - Rethinking the basis for crime prevention strategies** systematizing the previous - according to her - a total of approximately 60 different formulated principles. The following terms are the most mentioned and used terms in the following order: **access control, territoriality, natural surveillance, surveillance, activity support, target hardening, territorial reinforcement and natural access control** (Gibson, 2016, 171). Gibson stated in this that in her view the second-generation principles essentially derive from the first-generation principles, so she did not see them as a separate element in her own system.

Mateja Mihinjac and **Gregory Saville** later call Gibson's assertion that second-generation principles are not really separate from first-generation principles a false, more unfounded assumption. Gibson argues that there are more supporters (Reynald and Cozens) of this idea, the former one needs further clarification and improvement, and the latter one argues that the effectiveness (workability) of the second-generation principles has never been demonstrated through empirical research (Gibson, 2016, 381-382). Mihinjac and Saville, however, argue that most second-generation CPTED research consistently refers to the same relationships between environmental design and the social context that Jeffery identified in his research in the 1970s. After Gibson, they themselves created their own third-generation principles setting new directions, such as **liveability, human needs, or neighbourhood liveability hierarchy**. These principles take economic, environmental, and social sustainability, infrastructures that serve people, and security-creating communities formed by neighborhoods into account (Mihinjac-Saville, 2019, 3-13).



Latest principles clarify social goals and they also clarify that certain tools of CPTED cannot be interpreted as goals, only as tools. They serve as a tool for community involvement, building social cohesion, increasing the number and quality of social contacts, shaping community culture. It can be clearly stated in this way that CPTED has moved out of the situational framework and become a social prevention tool.

I cannot claim the fundamental inadequacy of the health analogy, but I am convinced that numerous preventive measures are suitable for achieving the goals of each level together, in this way, the sharp boundary line defined by the definitions of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention is rather blurred and not always true. As I have written it in the introduction, CPTED is precisely such a tool, as we are able to address, involve and influence the behavior of the communities that make up society, vulnerable groups, as well as individuals at risk of recidivism.

Hypothesis 2: CPTED is suitable for reducing the quantity and quality of crime, its non-exclusive result is the relocation of crime, its raison d'être is real.

First of all, in order to substantiate this statement, I had to examine what exactly we mean by the toolkit of CPTED, as it is not clear in either the foreign or domestic literature what concrete and tangible measures each principle requires.

Partial result IV. - Systematization of the practice of CPTED

I have examined the possible means of intervention recognizing these shortcomings and developed a system of CPTED practices, as follows:

Lighting	Includes the design of spaces, parks and streets with transparent, lighted, tidy vegetation.
Spatial control	Basically, issues of the use of natural and artificial space separation devices fall within the scope of this method.
Zoning	It contains possible means of creating boundaries between private and public space.
Traffic calming	It includes community control through traffic regulation and a reduction in the number of escape and exit routes.



Community spatial development	The tools of community spatial development necessary to ensure community control and natural surveillance, as well as solutions that help communities to coexist, are included in this topic.
Information	Information is an essential element of the 21st century, so information is a basic requirement in public spaces as well.
Target protection	Basically I mean a set of interventions involving solutions for the use of asset protection tools.
Maintenance	The maintenance of an area can fundamentally determine the security situation of the area and the sense of security of the people, so I see it as an independent tool.
Smartcity devices	Applying the smartcity acquis can further help create security, creating hitherto untapped synergies.

On the one hand, the above tools and methods mean CPTED, which are supplemented by community-building activities that can be derived from the principles of the second and third generations.

This package of interventions may be suitable for counteracting the criticism that a rational-minded offender, if he is unable to commit his act in a given place, will certainly choose another place, destination, time, or form of perpetration. If CPTED is interpreted narrowly and examined solely with a focus on crimes against classical property and only on the perpetrator, then another type of implementation, i.e. the phenomenon of relocation, is likely to be reckoned with. However, it is worth noting that the relocation, **and especially its extent, has not been proven to this day. Let's remember the words of László Korinek: “the general nature of the relocation cannot be considered as established at all, that is, that such a movement could be observed in all categories of criminals and in all types of crime...**

It is now generally accepted that relocation is not a consequence in all cases...

However, it can now be said that crime prevention efforts focused on certain areas and problems are not meaningless and should not be discarded by the fact that only apparent successes can be achieved... ” (Korinek, 2010a, 136).

Others have also raised counter-arguments about the phenomenon of relocation. In a report by the U.S. **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR)** the author in connection with a Minneapolis project argues that certain offenses are so opportunistic crime that offenders will cease all activity due to costs and other constraints, i.e. crime in general will



decrease. He further notes that unconditional acceptance of relocation implies the assumption that the criminal population is constant, predetermined, and that a certain number of offenses will occur even if circumstances change. This is obviously wrong, as not all offenders have the same amount of mobility, time or even tactics.

Beyond questioning the phenomenon of relocation, it must be seen that the much-mentioned and often-mentioned **multidisciplinarity in itself proves that CPTED is more than a set of situational effects**. If CPTED is - in my view correctly - interpreted more broadly and extended to all elements of the criminal triad, it is clear that **transformation in the built environment will also have social effects**. This is mostly proved by **the theorems** and findings of **environmental psychology**, and it is clarified that **one intervention can have an effect on the behavior of both the victim and the perpetrator** with the same effectiveness as general social tools. Theses of sociology are equally important highlighting that urban tissues are habitats with rules of a biological nature and self-sufficiency in their background. This instinct also requires that changes in habitat have an effect on attitude.

In my view, the correctness of my second hypothesis is also supported by the validity of the first hypothesis. Since only the tools of CPTED projects are situational in nature, but their goal is clearly to achieve social impacts, it is thus self-evident that the impact of properly interpreted and well-executed CPTED projects cannot be solely relocation.

In this case, by changing the environment, we have an impact on the behavior of individuals and communities (also), as well as on the verifiability of the behavior itself. In this way, it cannot be, in fact, ruled out that the only result of a CPTED project will be relocation.

Hypothesis 3.: The adaptation of CPTED is possible in Hungary, its application is not hindered by the social and economic conditions of Hungary.

The establishment of this hypothesis was necessary for two reasons. For the first reason, the starting point is the axiom that crime is a (large) urban phenomenon. At the same time, it is acceptable that the application of the newly interpreted CPTED in cities can be really effective, as congestion, lack of communities, low level of social cohesion are really typical in these settlements.

First, it had to be examined whether the crime situation in cities and the growing trend of moving to cities were in line with international experience. In the introductory chapter, I showed that crime in Hungary is also concentrated in cities, and it has also been proven that the decline



of the rural population is continuous, more and more people are moving to an urban environment in Hungary as well. All this means that in this respect the adaptation of CPTED is possible and necessary in Hungary.

Partial result V. - Results of questionnaire research

The necessity is demonstrated by the fact that based on the results of a large-sample survey of 10,000 people, it was found that the size of the settlement influences the safety assessment of the immediate surroundings of the residence. It appears that the lowest security perception is experienced in the capital (3.7 on a scale of 5), while in villages it is 4.1 according to the size of the settlements in terms of the averages of the respondents on the merits.

There was also a clear correlation between the perception of disorder and the perception of public safety. For those who find their living environment more untidy (i.e., they gave a value of 1 and 2 on a five-point scale), 2.8 are the average of the public safety assessment; in the group of those who rated order as average 3.4; and those who see their place of residence as organized 4,3. **We can therefore state that there is indeed a significant difference in the sense of security of the population in an orderly neighborhood compared to an untidy environment.**

The second reason stems from the unfortunate fact that no real CPTED project was implemented (unfortunately) in Hungary before, so it was not clear and self-evident that either the methodology or the principles could be implemented in the Hungarian context. Although scientific papers and criminology textbooks have discussed the method in several places, they could not provide a domestic example. This has changed by now, and it is a huge step forward that both the Safecity project and the Legyen Tere! initiative have declared a goal to apply the methodology and philosophy of CPTED. The testimony of these projects, as well as the results of my questionnaire research, make it clear that if not easily, but with efforts, there is a future for the domestic application of CPTED. As part of the Safecity project, I could see up close that a settlement is able to work together for its safety. Nearly 50 people attended the public forums over several weeks, and much of the city attended the community day organized on 12 April 2019.

The Legyen Tere! project also demonstrated that students and residents alike are able to care for their own environment and even sacrifice their spare time for it. This was accompanied by support at the institutional level, not only in financial terms. There was a wide-ranging



collaboration behind the project, with local government, police, civil guard, NGOs and for-profit companies also contributing to the success.

The results of my questionnaire research conducted here proved that the population also needs and evaluates similar projects. However, we could see in the case of the questionnaires that social responsibility and the understanding that the no longer paternalistic state system does not take care of everything around us are even less typical, volunteering especially in terms of safety awareness is still in its infancy.

Unfortunately, encouraging activity therefore requires a serious effort, but it is not impossible at all. The big task for the future is to shape attitudes, not only at the level of the individual and the community, but also in terms of professional participants.



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