Risky Reports: Crime Risk Assessments and Spatial Governance

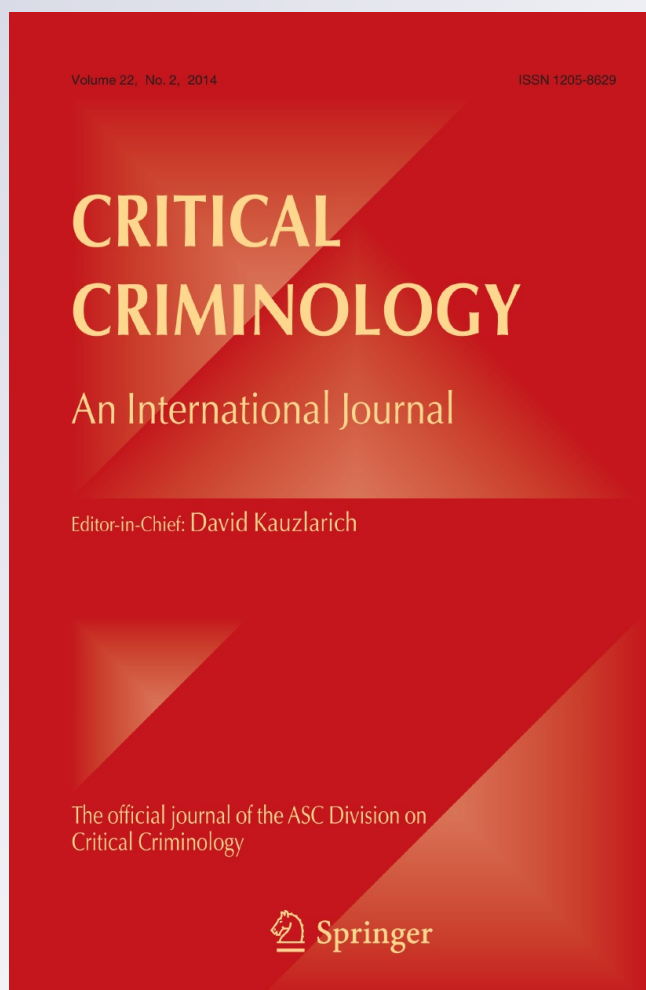# Murray Lee, Garner Clancey & Daren Fisher

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Risky Reports: Crime Risk Assessments and Spatial Governance

Murray Lee · Garner Clancey · Daren Fisher

Abstract The identification, assessment, and minimization of crime risk has permeated practices that extend well beyond traditional criminal justice responses. This article analyses crime risk assessment reports and the guidelines and processes through which they are produced for large-scale commercial and residential developments and redevelopments, taking New South Wales Australia as a case study. The article suggests that although the crime risk assessment guidelines and reports deploy a language of risk, there is a messiness and inconsistency to the crime risk assessment process that raises significant questions its normative utility. The article concludes that the language and promise of risk minimisation can silence or 'black box' what appear to be coherent regulatory process making them little more than symbolic gestures.

Introduction

"Criminologists agree that effective *design can be used to reduce crime* opportunities. A typical offender will assess a potential crime victim or a location before committing a crime. If the design and use of a building or place create the perception that the costs of committing the crime are greater than its benefits, the potential offender is likely to think twice about committing crime" (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001: 1 emphasis added).

"Crime prevention falls under these subsections of 79C. *Councils have an obligation* to ensure that a development provides safety and security to users and the community" (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001: 2 emphasis added).

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In recent times a range of scholars have noted the growing governmental interest in the regulation of space. For example Sloterdijk (2004, 2005) suggests, 'everything has become close, that politics has become a matter of arranging and assembling spaces. … the affair of designers and architects' (see Morin 2009: 68). The governance and prevention of crime too has become increasingly spatialised (Hughes 2007). As is clear from the above governmental crime risk assessment guidelines for development in New South Wales (NSW), security and safety are clearly targets of such governance. Moreover, there is a faith reflected in these guidelines that crime can be prevented and safety enhanced through crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) led spatial governance.

The focus of this article is on the governmental processes and practices through which crime risks are to be 'designed out' of new and re-developments in the Australian State jurisdiction of NSW. This NSW example in a sense provides a case study through which to explore these processes, and we make no claims that the NSW experience is somehow demonstrative of these processes and practices in all or other jurisdictions. However, we would suggest that the conceptual frameworks we deploy in the article could be usefully applied elsewhere to explore the tensions between governmental imaginings of programs and the actual practices that follow.

The guidelines, laws and practices, that constitute the crime risk assessment process in NSW have never been assessed or evaluated since their inception in 2001. Indeed, the process has been largely reduced to sets of inputs (the guidelines under the Act) and outputs (the assessment reports which constitute part of the consent process for particular developments) that have been free of scrutiny. We do not wish to take a normative position on whether or not CPTED is effective here. This is not an evaluation. Rather, this article constitutes a critical analysis of whether the process operates in the ways in which the guidelines imagine or assume.

The crime risk assessment exercise is a complex process (assumed to be) undertaken by a range of stakeholders, but little is known and nothing has been written about the practices and processes that result in the final crime risk assessment document. Such a reduction to inputs and outputs invokes Latour's (1993) concept of 'black boxing'; ignoring the processes of machines, organisms or technologies that appear too complex for proper assessment, and rendering them invisible by focusing only on inputs and outputs. Thus, the aim of the article is to deploy an analytical framework that will allow us to begin to assess what is going on within this particular 'black-box' and why?

To this end we analyse these processes as examples of spatialised security governance drawing on Valverde's (2011) framework of 'questions of security governance'. This framework has three key components; to assess the logic, scope, and techniques of security projects. The concepts of *logic* and *techniques* closely align with the analytical tools deployed in governmentality studies (Foucault 1991; Rose 1996; Dean 1999; Rose and Miller 1992); that is *logic* largely equates with the question or concept of political rationalities, and *techniques* largely equates with particular governmental technologies and, although Valverde does not explicitly suggest it, with *practices*. Valverde's innovation of scope is also useful for our analysis. Scope concerns the 'scale of a project' on the one hand, and the 'jurisdiction(s), formal or informal', that it 'claims or by which it operates' (Valverde 2011: 9). These questions of *scale* (which includes both the temporal and geo-spatial scales) and *jurisdiction* are integral for understanding both the ways in which crime risk assessments operate, and perhaps just as importantly the ways in which they are meant to operate, as forms of spatialised security governance. As Valverde (2011: 10) argues:

> Since so much of what happens today in the name of security is not primarily concerned with the Hobbessian problematic of sovereign control over human objects, but consists of rearranging objects and reshaping spaces. … paying particular attention to the spatial, temporal and jurisdictional scope of security makes sense.

In the following section we outline the facets and claims of CPTED. For the CPTED model informs the crime risk assessment process that is the focus of our analysis.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Crime prevention through environmental design (or CPTED) has been defined as the "proper design and effective use of the built environment" which "can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life" (Crowe and National Crime Prevention Institute (University of Louisville) 2000: 46). More conceptually however, CPTED is a form of spatialised risk governance. CPTED assumes that the design of the physical environment can reduce the risk of some forms of crime by blocking opportunities, creating obstacles or barriers to targets, eliminating spaces for concealment, restricting escape routes, and increasing the surveillance of places and would-be offenders (Rosenbaum et al. 1998: 125–126).

Proponents highlight a range of techniques and strategies associated with CPTED. Drawing on Jane Jacobs' work there is the notion that *natural surveillance* can be provided by 'eyes of the street'. As she notes "… the sidewalk and street peace of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves" (1961: 32–33). Examples of natural surveillance in CPTED practice include improved street lighting, landscaping that provides clear sight-lines, porous fences, glass and clear plastic in bus shelters, activation of the street through alfresco dining, and mixed use developments that result in greater pedestrian traffic day and night.

Newman (1972) developed the concept of 'defensible space' while reviewing housing design on large estates. He suggested that better management of and vigilance over an area arises from clear ownership and demarcation. Fences, barriers and signs highlight privately owned or managed spaces sending cues about appropriate. Uncertainty regarding ownership of territory, purpose of use and responsibility for places and spaces provides, it is suggested, greater potential for conflict and criminal activity to occur.

The restriction of access to specific areas is another common CPTED strategy. While *access control* has been practiced since the beginning of the built form with the use of moats, fences, gated doors, and isolated buildings, modern forms of *access control* include boom gates, bollards, alarms, swipe cards, biometric access, electronically surveillance of entrances, demarcated uses within buildings and other strategies designed to restrict access. Movement can also be channeled through the use of landscaping, public art, water features and the like. It is argued, that by reducing the opportunities to offend and the rewards of offending (Cornish and Clarke 2003), access control measures can prevent crime.

It is suggested that the aesthetics of a place can influence how people use it (Crowe and National Crime Prevention Institute (University of Louisville) 2000). Moreover, the sight of people attracts other people to places (Jacobs 1961). Vibrant well maintained areas provide *spatial activation* and are said to promote passive surveillance. For example, playgrounds can attract children and families; sporting or exercise facilities encourage a

range of healthy activities; facilities can support music and performance attracting audiences; and the mood of a crowd can vary as to how a space is activated.

While some argue that there is increasing evidence demonstrating the success of CPTED (Cozens et al. 2005; Haywood et al. 2009; Armitage et al. 2011), criticisms linger. Shaftoe and Read (2005: 250) suggest that "there is much common sense in a 'designing out crime' approach, but also a danger of overstating its impact". They point to examples of well-designed areas with high crime, and poorly designed areas with low crime, in the United Kingdom. They also suggest that some CPTED concepts (such as symbolic barriers) have not been evaluated in any systematic way. Moreover, Sutton et al. (2008) suggest that "attempts to enhance territoriality (i.e. attitudes among legitimate residents and users that promote ownership of space, and encourages them to assert control over it) may only be effective in neighbourhoods that are characterised by high levels of home ownership" (2008: 65). Shaftoe (2004) suggests that it is possible that offenders do not get the messages or cues sent by symbolic barriers. He states that "defensible space and natural surveillance concepts rely on psychological signals… [that o]utlaws, macho risk-takers and the heavily intoxicated are unlikely to read, or take heed of, these signals" (2004: 78–79).

Despite these and other criticisms, CPTED has gained increasing traction over the last few decades (Minnery and Lim 2005; Atlas 2008; Cozens 2008; Sutton et al. 2008). Many police and local authority staff now receive CPTED training (Kelpczarek 2003; McCauley and Opie n.d.; McDonald and Kitteringham 2004; Cozens et al. 2008; Book and Schneider 2010); rating systems for some forms of built environment operate in some jurisdictions to quantify safety and security (for example, the Secured by Design accreditation process in the United Kingdom); CPTED practitioner professional associations have emerged (for example, the International CPTED Association); and many planning regimes incorporate CPTED design principles.[1] Indeed, in many jurisdictions, the most obvious embodiment of CPTED is through the creation and ratification of specific design guidelines that influence the way that the built environment is developed.

With these CPTED principles and criticisms in mind, the following section examines the guidelines under which crime risk assessments in NSW are produced.

Crime Risk Assessments in NSW

The development of land in NSW is governed by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW). This Act has numerous objectives, including the "promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land" (s5.a.ii). To achieve this, the Act classifies development in three ways:

Development that does not need consent;
Development that needs consent;
Development that is prohibited (Gurran 2007: 242).

For those developments needing consent, various planning controls must be met. These will vary depending upon the nature and location of the development. A range of pan-jurisdictional planning controls set restrictions on the nature, size, type, function, and

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[1] Eg. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004), Scottish Executive Planning Department (2006), New Zealand Ministry of Justice (2005), Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005), South Australian Department of Transport and Urban (2004), Western Australian Planning Commission (2006), Queensland Government (2007).

environmental impact of a proposed development.[2] One consideration within this plethora of planning controls is the assessment of crime risks. In this sense the crime risk assessment process is embedded within a complex multi-jurisdictional development approval regime. The processes include heritage assessments, environmental impact statements, acoustic reports, engineering analyses. Navigating and meeting various planning requirements can take years, especially for larger developments.

In April 2001, the then Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), introduced crime prevention as part of the assessment of development applications: guidelines under section 79c of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (five pages of text). These guidelines were intended to "help councils (i.e. local government compliance authorities) identify crime risks and minimize opportunities for crime through the appropriate assessment of development proposals" (DUAP 2001: 1). The guidelines suggest that "Councils have an obligation to ensure that a development provides safety and security to users and the community" (emphasis in original) (DUAP 2001: 2).

Where a development is said to present a crime risk, the "guidelines can be used to justify the refusal of the development on the grounds that crime risk cannot be appropriately minimized" (DUAP 2001: 2). The guidelines contain two parts—Part A describes a crime risk assessment (1 page), while Part B outlines key crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles (2 pages). Part A defines a crime risk assessment as being a "systematic evaluation of the potential for crime in an area" (DUAP 2001: 1) providing an indication of both the likely magnitude of crime and likely crime type. The consideration of these dimensions (crime amount and types) "will determine the choice and appropriate mix of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) strategies" (DUAP 2001: 3). The guidelines then state that there are two key steps when assessing crime risk: (1) "obtain an understanding of the crime risk of the area, and if required (2) apply (CPTED) treatments that correspond with levels of risk present in the area" (DUAP 2001: 3). It is then stated that:

> These guidelines outline how councils are to assess crime risk in local developments. They are not sufficient in themselves, however, to inform councils how to conduct crime risk assessments. To gain a detailed understanding of how to conduct crime risk assessments and how to apply CPTED, *council planners need to attend approved training courses* (emphasis in original) (DUAP 2001: 3).

Formal crime risk assessments are expected to be undertaken for any development that, in the council's opinion, poses crime risks. This would include "a new/refurbished shopping centre or transport interchange, a large scale residential development (more than 20 dwellings), or the development/re-development of a mall or other public place, including the installation of new street furniture" (DUAP 2001: 2). The guidelines encourage councils and police to develop a local consultation protocol stipulating which developments would require a formal crime risk assessment and state that "typically, crime risk assessments are conducted in cooperation with trained local police" (DUAP 2001: 2). Clearly there is an expectation of police involvement.

The guidelines also suggest that:

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[2] The conditions of the Act will need to be addressed, as will relevant requirements of State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs), Regional Environmental Policies (REPs), Local Environmental Policies (LEPs) and Development Control Plans (DCPs).

when conducting individual crime risk assessments, the consequences and likelihood of crime are identified and measured using recorded crime statistics, hotspot analyses and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) socio-economic data (DUAP 2001: 3).

There is then also and expectation that recorded crime statistics, and perhaps further 'hotspot' type analysis, will also inform the production of a crime risk assessment.

Part B of the guidelines simply provides definitions and examples of the four CPTED principles that should be used in the assessment of development applications to minimise the opportunity for crime (DUAP 2001: 4).

Thus, crime risk assessments are one, often very minor, element of property development projects. The crime risks of a project will be balanced with a variety of other pressing demands. Given that property development is generally undertaken with the intention of generating profit, the longer the process to gain approval for development/re-development, the greater the costs to the developer. Similarly, the more consultants and the longer that they are engaged on the project, the greater the costs to developers—whether they be private or public organizations—and ultimately to end users. In the next section we deploy Valverde's analytical framework to explore in more depth the guidelines and the practices that follow.

Governing and Assessing Crime Risk

Logics

Risk is central to understanding the governance of a range of 'bads' in late modern societies (Beck 1992, 1999), including the governance of crime risks (Feeley and Simon 1992, 1994; Ericson and Haggerty 1997; Ericson 2007; O'Malley 2010). Clearly a risk logic drives this spatialised governance; under the 2001 provisions of the 1979 Act, the NSW government essentially identified a field of crime risks and how they might be governed. However, responsibility for this regulation is vested not with the State Government but is transferred via the various planning instruments to local government. The State *Guidelines* 'encourage' local government to develop Development Control Protocols (DCPs) specific to their locality to facilitate the identification and minimization of crime risks. However, while local government is tasked with responsibility for the identification and management of these risks, ultimate responsibility for minimising or reducing the risk usually falls to the private sector developer. In NSW crime risk assessments are generally produced by private consultancy firms, and sometimes the developers themselves, who must systematically evaluate the potential for crime (DUAP 2001). The management or mitigation of risks identified in any assessment also falls to the private sector (or the taxpayer if the development is a public space or building) given the developer must then make the changes such that the guidelines are met. Failure to do so can potentially provide "[r]efusal of the development on the grounds that crime risk cannot be appropriately minimized" (DUAP 2001: 2). So we can conceptualise web of nodal governance as something of a security assemblage—to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari (1987)—where once discrete attempts to govern spatialise security 'connect up'.

In the governmentality[3] literature this could best be defined then as an example of a neo-liberal logic or rationality of governance. The government of risk here not only attempts to

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[3] See Foucault (1991) for the original formulation of Governmentality, and Foucault (1980) for a discussion of spatial governance.

operate at-a-distance, at arms length from the state, but responsibility for this risk is transferred away from the state and ultimately through a nodal network of actors to the private sector developer—and ultimately to end users. Government is to be undertaken via a range of steering mechanisms so any associated security project is to be achieved in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Nonetheless, at the level of political economy the implementation of the guidelines is in no way at odds with the rhetoric of being tough on crime; a strong political theme in NSW when they were drafted. They do, it seems, sit well with David Garland's (2001) duel themes of the 'cultures of control': the criminologies of the other (also see Pratt 2007), and the criminologies of everyday life. Their situational (CPTED) focus constitutes a criminology of everyday life, reasonably attractive to progressive liberals as the approach appears non-coercive, while not undermining the 'get tough' political rhetoric through being a 'social' solution.

However, O'Malley also implores us to take account of what he calls 'the uncertain promise' or 'ambivalence' of risk. For O'Malley, risk should not be seen as a 'formative element' in the cultures of control. Rather 'the crime control ethos' 'gives to risk techniques specific forms and functions' (O'Malley 2010: 39). This is important, as while preventative techniques and technologies such as CPTED can no doubt be seen as consistent with neo-liberal governmental logics (and cultures of control), this does not render it antithetical to other governing logics. As Hughes (2007) points out, while the 'preventative turn' may incorporate a panoply of developments, including the rise of private security (Loader and Walker 2006; Zedner 2009) and the strengthening of surveillance assemblages (Ericson 2007; Lyon 2007), it is also somewhat uncomfortably aligned to earlier calls by critical criminologists for the heavy hand of sovereign state control to be pared back. As Valverde (2011: 11), notes, logics of security rarely operate in a 'pure' form (also see O'Malley 2010).

Indeed, there are two ways of looking at the processes through which this governance at a distance occurs. On the one hand we could see the guidelines as part of the withdrawal of or rolling back of the state (Hudson 2001) in regard to public safety, the effective privatization of security. Or, on the other hand, is this actually an extended governmentalisation and securitisation of private, semi-public and public property and spaces?

So while neo-liberal logics of government provide conditions of possibility for the security assemblageof which crime risk assessment are a part, it need not necessarily be so. The next question is, however, whether the spirit of these guidelines actually plays out at the level of practice. Does this risk governance—at—a distance actually govern in the ways imagined?

Scope

As discussed above Valverde's notion of *scope* entails the concepts of *jurisdiction* and *scale*. Scale is further broken down into the *spatial* and *temporal*.

Let us begin with the question of *jurisdiction*, which Valverde also sees as a question of the governance of governance (2001: 14).[4] *The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) is an Act of the NSW Parliament. In 2001 the DUAP drafted guidelines which became an amendment to the Act: The Crime prevention and the assessment of development applications: Guidelines under section 79c of the Environmental Planning

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[4] The later concept presumably echoes the idea of governance as the conduct of conduct (Rose 1996).

and Assessment Act 1979. The Act then provides for local government to administer the guidelines and the processes suggested therein.

However, the question of jurisdiction does not end there. Local government consent authorities and other key actors will require training in CPTED principles in order to gain the skills required to administer the process. In NSW, largely by a very specific set of historical circumstances, this training has been monopolised by the NSW Police through a program called *Safer By Design*. NSW Police explain their role as 'to help' consent authorities to identify and reduce crime opportunity during the assessment of development proposals. As they point out, 'NSW Police has been asked to provide Safer by Design training to planners, designers, crime prevention officers and other government agencies' (NSW Police 2012).

Moreover, it is clear that NSW Police see their involvement in, or jurisdiction over, the process somewhat differently than do other actors:

> Councils and local Police are encouraged to identify the types of development that will 'typically' require a crime risk assessment, and prepare a consultation protocol. Protocols are location (need) based agreements which outline the types of development that will be jointly assessed, how consultation will occur and timeframes for consultation. Subject to council discretion, development types not listed in local consultation protocols will not require a formal crime risk (CPTED) assessment…. Planning NSW and NSW Police have also been working with the Australian Building Codes Board to incorporate crime prevention strategies into the Building Code of Australia (NSW Police 2012).

Interestingly, we will explain below this police involvement in the process does not always take place in practice. Police involvement appears minimal—despite what the guidelines suggest.

In some LGAs consent authorities have also developed development control plans (DCPs). These plans vary from location to location and prescribe in further detail the types of CPTED treatment expected for a development to meet approval in the particular LGA. These are essentially an addendum to the 79c Guidelines and, in this sense, constitute that activation of local government in the crime risk minimization process.

Given Valverde's definition of jurisdiction a range of other actors have a role to play. The local community should be consulted and according to the guidelines, developers, architects and others should all be part of the process. Indeed, there are potentially a range of social and private institutions competing for various elements of the control of and input into this security project.

The question of spatiality is intimately intertwined with the question of jurisdiction. While the range of projects subject to the Act will be many, and will be distributed across the territory of the State, the focus of particular projects from the position of local government is much more discrete. While a development may have crime risk implications for the entire local government area—particularly as in NSW crime statistics are generally collected, analysed and released at the spatial level of local government—the crime risk assessment is likely to assess crime risk only at the level of the urban block or, at best, local neighbourhood. These competing questions of scale are magnified by the fact that there is no publicly availability of crime statistics at these more localised levels of collection in NSW.

Moreover, the planner and the architect will have competing visions of the space, which is to be designed 'against crime'. While the architect most likely will be concerned about the security of the building, the planner will be concerned about the spatial level of the

street, neighbourhood and perhaps beyond. Local residents will have different concerns again about the development in terms of public amenity and the like. So while a crime risk assessment is all about aspects of space and how it might best be designed to function against the risk of crime, the parameters of this spatial governance are likely to be contested by competing interests. The territory to be defended is distributed at state level, at local government level, at the neighbourhood level, and at the street level depending on one's jurisdictional viewpoint or stake in the development.

The question of temporality is another key aspect of this security assemblage and takes on varied forms. We focus here on what we consider two key aspects of temporality. First, there is the question of at what point in the development process the crime risk assessment will be conducted? From the spirit of the guidelines it might be considered as 'best practice' to engage a consultant to assess the crime risks when the initial architectural plans are being drafted. This provides an opportunity for iterative procedures to be adopted, whereby design elements can be interrogated, and risk minimizing solutions integrated throughout the design process. This will inevitably be an additional expense to the developer. However, there appears to be a tendency to engage relevant consultants only once the architectural plans have largely been settled. This limits the scope of the assessment or modifications of the plans if crime risks are identified with the only avenue of redress appearing to be if the consent authority were to hold up the development on the basis of the report. This appears to happen rarely if at all. There is then a disjuncture between the temporal imagining that appears inherent in spirit of the guidelines, and the actual temporal point at which the assessment is conducted.

Second, there is the temporal frame through which the success or failure of a specific project might be assessed. While one would assume that design against crime as a security project is future orientated, there is little practical indication that any future follow up occurs. Indeed once a development is passed, the entire process of follow up entails the developments meeting their approved design and so being given final consent. Following this there is no evaluation of the design against crime or CPTED aspects of the development—for future reference or reflection—to test whether indeed crime was designed out. So while the CPTED design principles are imagined to create a safer space into the future there is no evidence on which to base this assumption, nor is there a growth in the evidence base on which to assess future applications. Using CPTED thus appears to become an end in itself. The crime risk assessment essentially appears and disappears at a two temporal points in the planning process, never to be revisited.

Techniques

The final aspect of Valverde's framework concerns the question of techniques. On one level techniques would include 'counting, measuring, reducing to quasi-quantitative abstract denominator [s]' (Valverde 2011: 17), which in our example would include the instruments and measures used to assess crime risk. At another level Valverde is quick to note that the practices of modern government tend to be more reflexive and messy than such a model assumes. She argues, 'today's modern bureaucracies contain many features that do not particularly further efficiency and top-down planning'; indeed, an 'array of techniques' might be used that are 'not hard wired either to governing logic or to the scale and/or jurisdiction of the project (Valverde 2011: 17).

This certainly seems to be the case. As is illustrated in the next section of the article, many of the techniques and practices deployed in the crime risk assessment process little

resemble the guidelines on which they are meant to be based. We begin by outlining our collection of 33 crime risk assessment reports.

A Sample of Crime Risk Assessments

Following the designation of a development as a 'major project' under section 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, all public reports that have been submitted are published in the NSW Department of Planning's active tracking system are put on public display at http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au.

Drawing on reports lodged to the aforementioned website between January 1, 2007 and October 31, 2010 (n = 1,532), purposive criterion sampling (Neuman 2006) was used to assemble a total sample of 33 crime risk assessments reports. From the total number of major projects reviewed during this period, each project with an available crime risk assessment report was collected. Due to the volume of documents in these applications, assessment reports were identified and selected from the available applications that made specific reference to 'crime risk' or 'CPTED' in the title of the report, or as the title of the relevant appendix. Using this method, a total of 33 crime risk assessments reports were identified, and comprise the present sample.

As is evident from the small proportion of development applications that had an identifiable crime risk assessment during the period selected by this study (2.15 %), only a small proportion of developments on the tracking system were subject to having to produce separate crime risk assessment reports. While it is possible that crime risks were discussed within other appendices, it is evident that crime risk assessments were not produced as separate documents for many developments that required them to be completed. Given that this project is solely concerned with 'Major Projects' in NSW,[5] it is arguable that nearly all of the development applications heard during this period were likely to have an impact upon crime risk and trigger the need for an assessment. Despite this apparent trend in the development applications submitted in this period, this method of collection resulted in a sample with a suitably broad variety reports from authors of different backgrounds (Table 1). The present sample also contained a cross section of development types, further indicating that the inclusion of explicit crime risk assessments may have been appropriate for a larger proportion of these development applications.

In order to maintain anonymity, each report has been numbered and generic categories applied to describe the nature of the individual or company responsible for preparing the report and the type of development to which it refers (see Table 1).

Each crime risk assessment was systematically coded to identify the following inclusions and exclusions; the use of crime data, the use of demographic data, reference to the structural plans, the number and variety of site visits conducted, reference to academic CPTED literature, the presence of recommendations, and the presence of positive and negative design critiques.

Further analysis was then conducted on the sample to identify the presence of recommendations, future commitments, adverse findings, reference to the CPTED principles, demographic data, crime data, stakeholder visits, and reference to site plans. According to

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[5] A Major Project has been defined by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure as: a state significant development, state significant infrastructure, a transitional major projects, a development assessed under Part 4 EP&A Act (including advertising signage and developments in the ski resort areas of the Snowy Mountains), or a modifications to approvals for any of the above (NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure 2013).

Table 1 Report author and development type and length of report

Number	Author	Type of development	Report length (pages)
1	Social planning firm	Commercial mixed use	16
2	Social planning firm	Health care facility	35
3	Engineering firm	Art and cultural facility	11
4	Engineering firm	Public thoroughfare	8
5	Property development company	Residential	4
6	Social planning firm	Residential	7
7	Social planning firm	Residential	35
8	Social planning firm	Residential	13
9	Property development company	Residential	4
10	Property development company	Residential	4
11	Crime prevention consultant	Residential	12
12	Property development company	Commercial	7
13	Property development company	Residential	4
14	Social planning firm	Commercial	24
15	Social planning firm	Residential	4
16	Planning firm	Health care facility	10
17	Property development company	Residential mixed use	17
18	Crime prevention consultant	Residential mixed use	19
19	Planning firm	Residential mixed use	12
20	Crime prevention consultant	Residential mixed use	24
21	Architectural firm	Health care facility	7
22	Architectural firm	Residential	2
23	Property development company	Residential mixed use	3
24	Social planning firm	Commercial mixed use	16
25	Architectural firm	Health care facility	3
26	Architectural firm	Residential	4
27	Architectural firm	Licensed venue	14
28	Architectural firm	Lic. venue, mix use res.	3
29	Crime prevention consultant	Residential	13
30	Crime prevention consultant	Commercial mixed use	15
31	Architectural firm	Health care facility	11
32	Architectural firm	Residential	14
33	Architectural firm	Residential	4

the guidelines all these variables should be included in the crime risk assessment report. Data analysts were given specific criteria for identifying the aforementioned characteristics of each crime risk assessment, and the documents were also crosschecked to further ensure internal validity.

What Did the Reports Contain?

The crime risk assessment reports reviewed averaged 11 pages in length. All contained generic information about CPTED. However, a rehearsal of the guideline CPTED

principles tended to be a proxy for any real analysis of the development using the guidelines and principles outlined.

While 69.7 % of the assessments made some reference to the architectural plans of the development a significant minority of the assessments did not. The reader would note that the use of, or reference to, architectural plans was an expectation of the guidelines.

Only about half of the assessments in our sample included any crime data and much of this referred to data so broad in scale as to be near useless to the purpose of assessing a specific development project. Only one in three reports made reference to consultations with key stakeholders. Again, these were meant to be key aspects of the process.

Only 33 % of the assessments made reference to demographic data relevant to the area of the proposed development. This limited use of crime and demographic data seems directly ignore the spirit of the guidelines, which as we outlined above, specify a range of analyses.

Moreover, only 12 reports (36 %) made any mention of consultation with police as part of the assessment process. Given that the guidelines state that "typically, crime risk assessments are conducted in cooperation with trained local police" (DUAP 2001: 2), and given what NSW Police themselves have to say about their role in the jurisdiction of these projects, "Councils and local Police are encouraged to identify the types of development that will 'typically' require a crime risk assessment, and prepare a consultation protocol" (NSW Police 2012), it would seem that this requirement is not routinely undertaken.

Only 20 % reports made any adverse findings regarding the development, although around half contained recommendations about how the development might address potential crime risks. While there was a distinct tendency for assessment to highlight the positive features of a proposed development through the use of CPTED themes and discourse, in practice the level of analysis was minimal. However 30 % of the reports constructively incorporated CPTED practices into a more thorough and far reaching analysis of the proposed development. We note also that one company submitted almost identical crime risk assessment reports for five different developments.

What our data indicates is that in many cases crime risk assessment reports do not bear much resemblance to the spirit of the 79C Guidelines. While a significant minority of our sample constituted well-conducted reports (20 %), and went perhaps beyond the expectation of the Guidelines, these were the exceptions.[6] Yet, without interrogating this process one might suspect that the logics of this security project largely equate with the practices and the production of the crime risk assessment reports.

In short, the techniques and practices ultimately deployed by key actors in the production of crime risk assessments are messy, inconsistent, and ad-hoc—in other words the various nodes of this security project or assemblage do not always connect up. From a normative perspective it is difficult to imagine that these practices bare much resemblance to the imaginings of those who developed the guidelines at the level of state jurisdiction. However, we also note (Clancey 2011; Clancey et al. 2011) that the guidelines themselves lack clarity as to just what practices should be undertaken.

There is one key area through which these documents do meet the expectation of the governing logic. They deploy the language or discourse of risk in a manner that is entirely

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[6] Such reports included inter alia; detailed and relevant demographic and crime data analysis; site visit information; findings from key stakeholder consultation; clear analysis of architectural plans and clearly linked observations (i.e. reference to specific plans); clarity regarding when the crime risk assessment was conducted in overall development process; recommended changes or issues requiring attention; clear reference to relevant design guidelines and planning instruments.

consistent with the neo-liberal political rationalities or logics, and the risk imaginings inherent in these. So while these logics are themselves never what Valverde (2011) calls 'zero sum', there is nonetheless a fit between the logics and techniques at the level of discourse.

Conclusion

Latour (1993) argues that science often engages in a practice of 'black boxing'. Essentially this involves ignoring the processes of machines, organisms or technologies that are too complex and reducing interest in these to the levels of inputs and outputs. The processes around crime risk assessments in NSW have been 'black boxed'. The inputs and outputs have allowed a risk discourse and the political rhetoric of crime prevention to be sustained, consultants have been employed, boxes have been ticked, and development applications passed in the name, in small part at least, of designing out crime.

Given the findings from the analysis of the 33 crime risk assessment reports, and review of the 79c guidelines, it appears these guidelines have been more symbolic than functional. Indeed, they may have been intentionally broad to ensure that there were few real implications beyond a politics of crime control. As Sutton et al. (2008) have argued, "State and local governments, under pressure not to impede investment by imposing additional burdens on the private sector, therefore are likely to be reluctant to require CPTED assessment as a routine part of the development approval process" (2008: 68). The capacity to trumpet the virtues of the guidelines might well have been the intention, rather than to truly alter design practices in NSW.

Whatever the case, there is a significant disjuncture between the governmental logics which provide the conditions of possibility for this security assemblage and the techniques and practices which operate at the local level (Stenson 2005; Lippert and Stenson 2010). Our analysis clearly highlights this disjuncture. By deploying a familiar and sanctioned language of risk, these crime risk assessment reports are generally consistent with governmental rationalities and networks through which they were developed and subsequently function. Yet this language of risk papers over a complex set of jurisdictional, spatial, and temporal issues and conceals the fact that meaningful consultation is minimal, follow up nonexistent, and adverse findings rare if not nil. Perhaps as critical criminologists we should be enthused by just how poor the state can be in enacting strategies of control?

However, black boxing these processes also operates in the interests of developers and state and local bureaucracies unwilling or unable to take on developers who fail to engage in best practices and a system where efficiency is valued over concerns about crime risks. Thus, the appearance of risk being mitigated is established without the private sector actually expending resources; apart from perhaps engaging a consultant to conduct the assessment. This really is the neo-liberal ideal where risk is essentially passed back on to the private citizen. From a normative perspective this is all the more reason to strengthen and clarify the guidelines and have property development more properly regulated.

Valverde's (2011) framework has allowed us to deconstruct this process, this security assemblage, into its component elements. Such a framework provides us with the tools to more accurately locate the various contradictions, conflicts and flaws. On the one level this accurately reflects Valverde's earlier characterisation that:

> …for the consultants who produce them, studies of urban problems are produced to
> justify zoning ordinances are money-making commodities; for the city council that

uses them, they are legal capital; for the appellate courts, they are mainly procedural entities (Valverde 2005: 425).

Our analysis reveals practices that highlight the dangers of a risk discourse or configuration that becomes an end in itself. The techniques of risk assessment discussed here rarely work successfully even in their own normative terms.

While we have been careful here to highlight the 'uncertain promise of risk' and to suggest that this 'security project' need not only dove-tale with a neo-liberal logic, we would not by extension suggest the same is true of all security projects aimed at reducing crime through the governance of spaces and places. Thus, we reiterate the need for such security projects to be analysed in their specificity.

Castel notes of the nineteenth century positivist project and its role in managing risk that it was:

> …a grandiose technocratic rationalizing dream of absolute control of the accidental, understood as the interruption of the unpredictable …a vast hygienist utopia plays on the alternate registers of fear and security, inducing a delirium of rationality, an absolute reign of calculative reason and a no less prerogative of its agents, planners and technocrats, administrators of happiness for a life to which nothing happens (Castels 1991: 289 cited in Lupton 1999).

The dream is still alive, the reality is somewhat more complex.

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