

## The return of displacement CPTED's nightmare

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## Displacement goes back a long way

- Repetto, T.A. 1976. "Crime Prevention and the Displacement Phenomenon." *Crime and Delinquency*

Repetto published one of the first ever studies on displacement – on a police enforcement project in New York. He uncovered numerous kinds of displacement; physical, temporal, functional, tactical, perpetrator.

Mainstream research from situational crime research suggests displacement isn't inevitable, crime levels are cut through displacement and there may even be benefits from displacement – the so-called diffusion of benefits.

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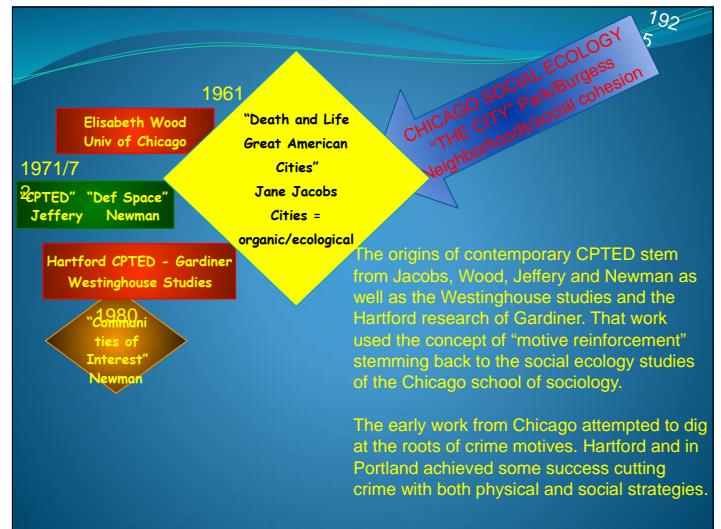
## CPTED, Situational Crime Prevention and Crime Displacement - A re-examination

Catherine Phillips (2011)

Research at Nottingham Trent University in the UK by Phillips discovered that most displacement studies are focused on physical displacement, including a new statistical tool – WDQ. She discovered few researchers actually interviewed offenders to dig deeper.

She also discovered that research supporting the orthodox belief about displacement may be incorrect due to selection bias. She reviewed offender studies and found up to 80% displacement. For situational crime prevention and 1<sup>st</sup> Generation CPTED this is a potential nightmare.

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## The Perfect Storm

The city of Saskatoon in Canada has a long history of CPTED and SafeGrowth training. Students and planners assess crime locations. One crime hotspot suffering street disorder was a McDonald's Restaurant corner.

Police calls for service data were available to study displacement at this corner over a 5 year period. Interviews were also conducted to assess displacement impacts.



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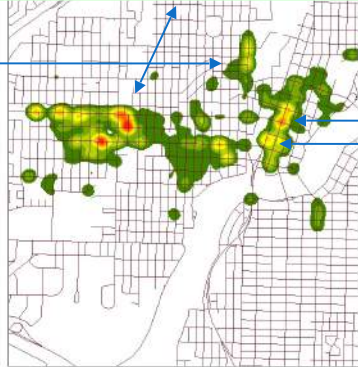


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2010

Calls for service mapping and crime analysis examined the neighborhood a few years before the demolition and a few years after. A large cluster of hotspots to the west comprise an independent and unrelated crime cluster at a hospital

Northwoods Hotel



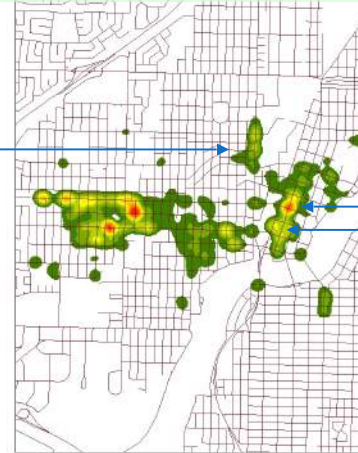
McDonalds Lighthouse

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2011

By 2011 the McDonalds hotspot emerges and remains a trouble spot

Northwoods Hotel



McDonalds Lighthouse

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2012

By 2012 a hotel north of McDonalds emerges as another crime location but McDonalds corner gets worse. The Lighthouse, a homeless shelter to the south, expands. For a year little changes, until the McDonalds shuts down.

Northwoods Hotel



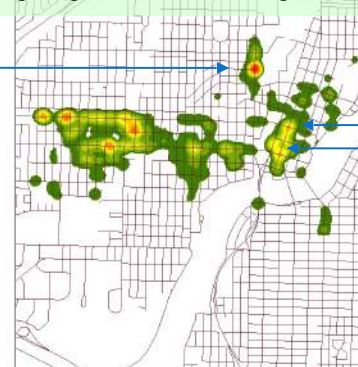
McDonalds Lighthouse

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2013

McDonalds restaurant demolished in 2013 during a decline in overall crimes in the area. The hotel hotspot remains but interviews suggest very few of the McDonalds offenders are migrating north. Rather they are beginning to travel south to the Lighthouse

Northwoods Hotel



McDonalds Lighthouse

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2014

Calls for service drop in all locations. Calls at the McDonalds plummet along with the demolished building. The Lighthouse experiences a significant increase in calls for service, suggesting a "diffusion of detriment". Interviews suggest the increase is unrelated to the hospital or hotel crime decrease.

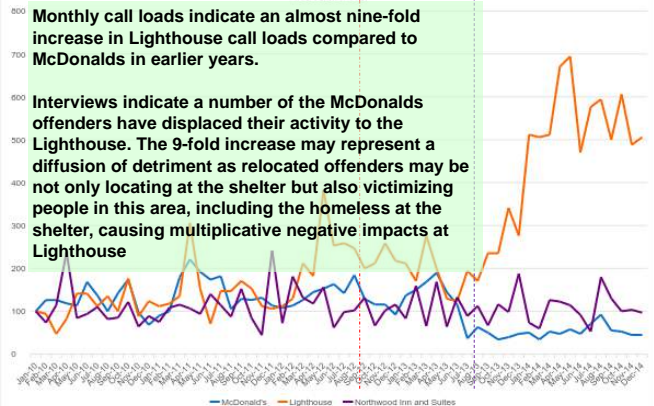
Northwoods Hotel



McDonalds Lighthouse

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Calls for Service, Three Hot Spots 2010-2014 Indexed=100



Monthly call loads indicate an almost nine-fold increase in Lighthouse call loads compared to McDonalds in earlier years.

Interviews indicate a number of the McDonalds offenders have displaced their activity to the Lighthouse. The 9-fold increase may represent a diffusion of detriment as relocated offenders may be not only locating at the shelter but also victimizing people in this area, including the homeless at the shelter, causing multiplicative negative impacts at Lighthouse

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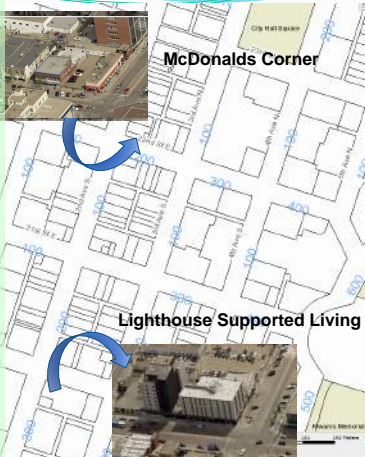
This is on-going exploratory research. Preliminary results suggest Phillips' warning regarding displacement theory may be correct.

Preliminary results also suggest a diffusion of detriment<sup>1</sup> may have emerged from displaced offenders. That in turn may have resulted not in an overall crime reduction, but a crime increase.

More thorough ethnographic research with in-depth offender interviews are needed. Not on spatial displacement, but on all kinds. The WDQ will not reveal the problem of diffusion of detriment.

Displacement remains a major concern for CPTED practitioners.

1. Thanks to Prof M. Sutton for suggesting the name diffusion of detriment



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## Is there convincing research that displacement isn't a nightmare?

### What does displacement mean for the ethical practitioner?

Opportunity reduction tactics like target hardening (or demolishing a building) are vulnerable to displacement problems. That is because they hack at the branches, they don't dig at the roots.

Research on displacement is embryonic, spatially biased, and lacks ethnographic and detailed offender studies. Conclusions from current research are premature.

CPTED practitioners must consider all forms of displacement, prepare communities for its possibility, and ensure they avoid the potential harm from diffusion of detriment.

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