Urban Violence and Security Policies
Local public and private practices for securing the urban space

Action-oriented research in Barcelona and Bogotá

Points for consideration

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Towards Safer Cities

The phenomenon of urban violence and the perception of insecurity derived from it are at the centre of the contemporary urban dynamics. In order to respond to the growing security demands made by citizens, urban policies in large metropolises are relying on a variety of public, private and community-based measures.

We analyse the ways in which violence, insecurity and security are nowadays at the origin of a radical and significant transformation of the urban space and of its uses by its inhabitants. We do so by focusing on urban planning methods that aim at solving the problems and the feeling of insecurity present in cities. While social violence builds territory, urban security policies have, in turn, a significant impact on territory and therefore can be used to justify the transformation of the urban space.

Urban planning policies define security and security itself influences the urban planning agenda, but the mechanisms involved remain poorly understood and the different fields of public action are rarely coordinated. A certain number of questions remain unanswered. Few are the ones who, to date, have analysed what works—in other words what generates conviviality and cohesion—as opposed to what does not work—that is what generates exclusion. Likewise, it is necessary to identify the actors that need to participate in the creation of urban spaces, as well as the modalities of their interventions. Public space has become a priority in the contemporary public security policies of Bogotá and Barcelona. Nevertheless, these cities do not have at their disposal the analytical tools which would allow them to know their needs better and to set up priority lines of action.

The “Urban Violence and Security Policies (VUPS) project; Local public and private practices for securing the urban space; Action-oriented research in Barcelona and Bogotá” intends to respond to this necessity. A key objective of the project is to develop tools that can help design public policies and reinforce local authorities’ capacity for dealing with security issues through urban planning policies that encourage cohesion.

The “Urban Violence and Security Policies” project, funded by the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN) for a period of two years, will publish its results in April 2007. This project is a collaborative effort of the Urban Sociology Laboratory of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (LaSUR/ EPFL), UN-HABITAT’s “Safer Cities Programme,” and the Small Arms Survey project at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.
An integrated approach towards security

The “Urban Violence and Security Policies” project seeks to understand contemporary transformations in cities through the analysis of the role and place of urban violence and insecurity in these processes. It reflects on the capacity of local representatives to make cities safer through urban public policies by focusing on three specific research areas: the analysis of urban violence; political initiatives as well as public or private community-based responses that are meant to address urban security; and the spatial effects of security policies.

The security infrastructure is at the core of urban society concerns, either to denounce the perverted character of security actors or to demand its reinforcement. Nevertheless, no social, political or private actors seem nowadays able to give appropriate solutions to these new preoccupations.

It is rare for these dynamics to be considered in a cause and effect relationship or from a multi-sectorial perspective. Today there is little cooperation between the different sectors and actors are intervening, directly or indirectly, on urban security issues. Also, the “Urban Violence and Security Policies” project stresses the important correlation that exists between security and urban spaces.

The framework of the current research project allows for a better understanding of the relationships between urban transformation and security. The research is based on two case studies, the cities of Barcelona and Bogotá, which are, respectively representative of modernity and emblematic for urban violence. One is a northern city and the other one is a southern one. Both of them are capitals and metropolitan regions. They are both innovators in terms of public security policies that benefit from a certain continuity, but are today at a turning point and are now changing in their approaches.

The principles of action-oriented research

Public policies and private security initiatives: the stakes of the game

The political actors in charge of security are more and more involved in urban policy-making. We will raise the question of urban violence management with a view of studying how public policies, private strategies and community actions form security governance systems. We will also consider the effects of public security policies on urban transformation.

Our research problem is defined by two central questions:

1. What is the origin of the different components of the security governance system? How do the different actors cooperate as far as security is concerned? We will be particularly interested in the definition of the problems to be solved, as well as in the objectives identified, the types of intervention planned, the target groups, the instruments implemented and the concrete modalities of their application.

2. What is the impact of this governance on urban transformation? The risk of fragmentation is important, and we wish to understand if it is the consequence of a lack of harmonization of different security-related interventions.

Although Barcelona and Bogotá are broadly different and do not experiment the same type of violence or criminality, it is interesting to consider their approach towards public policies, private strategies, and community actions to understand if, globally, their policies and actions are similar.

Some analysts (Castells, 1999, Derrida, 2003, Bauman, 2005) put forward the hypothesis that if cities are violent, it is because they are deeply divided, both geographically and socially. They also claim that these divisions come from a particular model corresponding to a new trend of globalization based on the age of information. These
authors show that urban violence are influenced by the nature of the social link: coexistence, gentrification, segregation, etc.

Departing from this problem, we propose three research hypotheses that deepen the two approaches mentioned above: the emergence of public, private, and community initiatives in support of security, and the territorial impact of security policies.

**Hypothesis 1:** Security is a privileged concept increasingly being used to justify public policies in the same field of security or even in the fields of urban planning, education, health... Indeed, when elaborating policy priorities, different public actors understand in very different ways the stakes of urban transformation.

**Hypothesis 2:** Because security is being ‘merchandized’, inclusive public strategies are increasingly loosing ground to exclusive private strategies that separate the rich from the poor geographically. However, when public security policies are based on prevention, they are building social cohesion by using community-level action as their preferred instrument for intervention.

**Hypothesis 3:** The shape of a city influences its security level. The responses put forward (public policies, private strategies, community-based initiatives) vary depending on the shape of the city and evolve in a concentric manner (centre, peri-centre, peri-urban), which aggravates fragmentation within the city. The fragmentation of urban spaces implies a fragmentation of security interventions and vice versa.

**Bogotá and Barcelona: two possible models**

For testing these three hypotheses we have chosen a comparative approach between the two agglomerations of Barcelona and Bogotá. To contrast with Barcelona, a city emblematic of cultural and architectural modernity and benefiting from a positive international image, we have chosen Bogotá, a city that is symbolic of every type of violence.

If Barcelona benefits from many important architectural projects, the transformation of the city does not seem to benefit to its population as a whole. On the contrary, the working-class, immigrants and the disadvantaged tend to disappear from the central neighbourhood and are being relegated to the periphery. Communities, even if united, experience difficulties getting their voices heard and are faced with the determination of the public authorities to transform the urban space by destroying and rebuilding instead of renewing.

In Bogotá public authorities have begun to fight against the idea of fatality - conveyed a priori by the media. Fatality would condemn its inhabitants to violence and war. This move, initiated under the first government of mayor Antanas Mockus (Mockus-Bromberg, 1995-1997), made Bogotá an example of image reversal due to the improvement of the security situation. These results were achieved thanks to programmes relying on the concept of ‘citizen culture’. Nowadays, even if the condition of most Bogotanos remains precarious and most of the root causes have not yet been addressed, it still represents an alternative experience of rejection of violence.

Within each agglomeration, we have studied two districts particularly closely: a district close to the historical centre, and a suburban district. The selection criteria for these spaces are the following:

- Criminality and delinquency indicators with respect to average rates of criminality and delinquency at the district level.
- The recognized impact of public policies and security initiatives for citizens.
- The existence of innovative forms of community-based security strategies.
- The urban transformation practices (reconstruction, renovation, rehabilitation) in progress, already performed or needed.
In each agglomeration the following districts have been chosen:

In Barcelona the districts of Raval and Nou Barris. The Raval, the old Chinese district (barrio chino), is central, historical, and the target of several urban planning and reconstruction projects. Its reputation as a dangerous district has facilitated the emergence of alternative solutions and the creation of neighbourhood organisations or other community initiatives. These solutions aim to fight both against this bad reputation and actual violence (street, gender, and school violence; harassment; environment deterioration, etc.). On the contrary, the Nou Barris district, which is an union of fourteen peri-central “cities”, is typical of 1970’s large scale urban planning and experienced after some years a new type of violence. Violence in Nou Barris is characterised by the formation of “ethnic” gangs and the appearance of territorial community violence, originating from the waves of immigration that have recently affected Barcelona. Nou Barris remains nevertheless one of the localities in Barcelona experiencing the lowest levels of delinquency, thanks notably to its solid social and associative tissue.

In Bogotá, a city perceived as dangerous, we focus on the traditional city centre and more precisely the localities of Santa Fé¹, Mártires and Candelaria, which top the city’s crime indicators. In addition this central area was the object of several urban transformation and security improvement strategies. Urban intervention in the so-called “Cartucho” sector was justified on security grounds. In this sector the old working-class district—Santa Inés—was completely destroyed with the justification that it was affected by urban “decomposition”. It is now substituted by the Third Millennium Park, which was inaugurated on the 28th of July 2005. In addition, this central area shelters the city’s largest commuting population (1.800.000 people come into this part of the city for professional and commercial reasons), and the consequent “invasion” of the public space had led to frequent interventions by the authorities.

Such interventions try to maintain a space exempt from private appropriations (as for instance street sellers). Our work took place also in a suburban working-class district called Suba. Suba is one of the more populated localities in Bogotá with a high rate of personal and property crime, and in the last years has been the target of several urban interventions. Some examples of interventions include the current arrival of the Transmilenium system², and the recent creation of an artificial lake (humedal Juan Amarillo) in an area that was ecologically viable in the past and close to physically deteriorated districts. The field work is developed in two levels: in the Zone Planning Units (UPZ)³ of Rincón, we have studied the barrios (districts) of Costa Rica in the centre of the locality where the majority of social, economic and political exchanges concentrate; and Ciudad Hunza which is host to a socially heterogeneous⁴ population in a relatively reduced territory, thus creating a fragmented space.

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¹ Localities are administrative divisions in Bogotá, which benefit from some autonomy resulting from the decentralisation rules introduced in the statutes of the city: decree 1421 de 1993. Currently the city includes 20 localities
² Bus with High Level of Service (HNS).
³ The Zone Planning Units, UPZ is a way of dividing the territory in the locality with the aim of planning public funding following criteria in order to optimize resources and increase their impact. The UPZ gather many barrios (neighbourhoods) and several UPZ form a Locality.
⁴ According to the National Planning Department (DNP), “socio-economic stratification is the instrument that allows, in a locality, a municipality or a district, to classify a population in terms of strata (layers) or groups of people that share common social and economical features. The municipalities and districts can have between one and six strata, according to the economical and social heterogeneity of their environment. The capital district is classified in six strata. The stratification in the capital district is used for the billing of public services, as a unit for the implementation of social programs, and to assess the rates of council taxes for the lodging, of the contribution to the valorisation of urban grants”.

Towards participative urban sociology

It is necessary to come back to an observation that is both participative and critical of urban phenomena. It can seem paradoxical, but in an effort of epistemological rupture, we have thought it necessary for this research to engage in the political sphere. We also think that the project is innovative in its concern to not detach itself from the world we aim to study and in its conviction that it is necessary to dive into the world under study to take position in it and understand its complexity.

The methodology is essentially qualitative, characterized by a constant exchange between representatives of the different “professions of the urban space” and the multiple actors who live and act in the city (being understood as a macro-entity which hides the process). “Only a transdisciplinary reflection can be useful in the matter, it can’t be contempt with calling upon different disciplines but should associate more broadly not only the different academic and urban actors of the city, but also those active at the institutional and political levels” (Noseda, Racine, 2005 : 102).

For testing the proposed hypothesis, we have divided the research in four phases:

In a first phase, we have reviewed existing knowledge that currently is used by the authorities to design their policies and we highlighted both their qualities and insufficiencies. We have developed the tools which have allowed us to identify and qualify, at the international level, the types of interventions related to security and the actors involved.

At the end of this first phase, we have produced a compilation of reports and analysis which have allowed us to set the basis for an international state of the art that has converted our study cases into possible models.

The second phase was a monograph of the path taken by the studied agglomerations in terms of security and urban planning policies over thirty years. It involved identifying the trajectories and the emergence of past, present and projected local security policies and urban arrangements in each defined urban space. It also had to identify the security problems faced by the agglomerations, the solutions implemented and the results observed.

An understanding of the physical, demographic and social features of the localities under study was essential: it was based on official public data such as the budget situation in the city districts (public expenses in health, education, work and public services, etc.). The characterization of the studied contexts included four essential angles of analysis: territory, security, institutional configuration and participation. Secondary analysis through quantitative surveys and a series of interviews with politicians and high civil-servants in the three metropolitan regions were conducted.

This second phase led to a local assessment or micro-characterization of security (see Box) to allow for the framing of the fieldwork.

In a third phase, field work allowed us to verify the physical and political dimensions of the agglomerations analysed by means of different qualitative tools. Such analysis allowed us to evaluate the soundness of public, private, or community security actions. Our work gives value to participant observation. Some of the works in urban anthropology, such as by the University of Chicago, or the recent works in French sociology (Cefaï, 2003), will help us in decoding the testimonies of the actors – both acting violently or preserving security – in their communities. It is also this methodological care of giving the voice to all the actors that incited us to define the space studied in each chosen locality: “The researcher must resort to the “know-see”, to the “know-say”, and the “know-how” that come with experience, that no technology or methodology can formally transmit, that can be taught only by means of examples, and that are learned only with the exercise. As an artisan, he has to demonstrate his skills in matching the asperities and the gaps of the field without getting lost in swarming details, in withdrawing from typical forms without breaking their adherence
to a concrete and particular material” (Cefaï, 2003, 517-518). Then, the research needed to resort to different ethnographic and sociologic methods employed in human sciences: exploration walks, dialogical interaction with citizens, focus groups, interviews, etc.

At the end of this third phase the comparability of the performed micro-analyses has allowed us to trace some dominant interpretative lines after reflection.

The **fourth phase**, now in progress, is devoted to a general synthesis of the performed analyses. We will present our results in a round table of experts, which will allow us to evaluate our analyses and verify our conclusions. Then, a published report will disseminate the results of the research and take advantage of the World Urban Forum IV to organize a seminar with social, political, economic, public and private actors. This event will close our project by diffusing the results to the public sphere and by ensuring the building and the development of already initiated city to city cooperation.
The assessment. Usually, the elaboration of cities’ security policy begins by establishing a general or thematic diagnosis of the state of urban delinquency and criminality. In this context, the city is considered as urban territory and a framework for analysis and action.

This general assessment, required and useful, finally characterizes and directs the security initiatives of the public authorities. Yet, due to the heterogeneous nature of urban territory, the micro-territories and their own dynamics of delinquency and criminality are not reflected in the assessment, nor are they served by public policies in a direct and efficient way. The alternative to a general assessment is to refer to a methodology that can characterize violence and criminality in the urban micro-territory.

Characterization. In cities, like in its territories (localities, towns, administrative units, neighbourhoods, etc.), the situation of delinquency and criminality changes rapidly because of their own crime and delinquency dynamics and of the impact of public security policies. Such changes can also result from citizens’ ways of reacting to public policies and urban violence.

As a consequence, the general city-wide assessment should be revised regularly or else incoherencies and inefficiencies will emerge from public initiatives. For instance, the stigmatisation of a group or an area as being dangerous.

Micro-characterization acknowledges risk and threat factors, which are mapped territorially according to a quantitative or qualitative approach in addition to the general assessment. It enables the participation of both public and community actors.

Moreover, micro-characterization should be considered an important first step towards the progressive development of a comprehensive assessment.

The dimensions of characterization:

Territory. The territory variable is included in a micro-territorial dimension from the point of view of urban geography. That is to say, taking into consideration the socio-economic and cultural dynamics that build and constitute local communities. Territorial changes put in danger or affect the social tissue of the same urban micro-territories.

The micro-territorial scale also enables us to examine separately punctual interventions in the territory in the case of urban renovation operations, and of recuperation of the public space (e.g. itinerant selling) or of urban planning (e.g. parks and pedestrian areas).

Participation. The participation to the formulation and implementation of public security policy is another variable which our methodological perspective proposes to include. Thus, the citizens have interests, assume the roles and develop the actions against urban violence and the policy or the lack of action from the public authorities.

Community experiences and civil society organizations are research elements that could be valuable as the participation of other actors in public policy. These civil society organizations range from the creation of private security companies or commercial strategies to the organisation of districts in order to face delinquency.

Institutions. Institutionalism exists at the local level both officially and non-officially to deal with the conflicts and includes community justice (mediation, conciliation, peace judges) and the planning of development and public investment (local security councils, local and zone security plans). This offers the possibility of micro-territorial approaches and action. Characterization enables the recognition, development and reinforcement of local institutionalism.

Security policy actors: from the model of Barcelona to that of Bogotá

Security is not a quality that cities will acquire naturally. A citizen’s perception of security (I feel safe/ I do not feel safe) is influenced by the social system. The

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interaction between various actors in a territory defines the state of security and safety of an agglomeration, district, public space or building. Interactions are induced by social practices, which can be influenced by precipitously adopted tactics or from a strategy that is more patiently designed by actors that are generally considered as legitimate politically (representatives, trade unionists), socially (civil associations, social groups that are more or less formal) or economically (companies). These urban actors and the quality of their interactions have an impact on the level of security on the territory where they act as well as the feeling of security or insecurity that the inhabitant or the foreigner will experience living in this territory.

However, actors’ practices are often accompanied or preceded by public policies, which are intended to frame, influence and build the collective attitudes on the subject of security. The importance of local political culture and, in general, of all the elements that can characterize a historic and territorial situation—political regimes, economic dynamics, planning, funds allocated to prevention, and police resources—within particular modalities of “construction” and local and public security policies will always be less influential than global security models.

Yet, even acting under the pressure of global actors, local decision-makers continue to act at the local level, even through imitation. The effects of these actions are first perceptible at the local level.

Barcelona and Bogotá have become essential references in terms of security in urban spaces during the last fifteen years, as they have chosen innovative practices in the fight against insecurity.

In 1986 Barcelona began building its “model” around the security sector, following the publication of a report titled “Socias”, after the name of its coordinator, but more particularly entitled “strategies for a urban security policy”, known as the white book for security and issued from the arrangement of an ad hoc commission.

There are two fundamental aspects in the Catalan urban marketing concept of a “Barcelona model”. First is space. In Barcelona, urban and public spaces, such as squares, parks, roads, the sea side, the old port, and so forth have become a Catalan totem. It is a symbol that every architect, urban planner and ruler wants to worship. The simple principle consists of creating open spaces, that are comfortable, strengthen relationships between citizens, as well as solidarity between citizens capable of responding to conflicts, or even better, able to prevent them. Security in this model comes from the practice of a public space of proximity, which well designed will naturally welcome different social and community groups. If space has been well thought of by the architect, it can propose a solution to conflicts, even before they take place. The cinema adaptation of the security model of Barcelona could be “Minority Report”: crime is pursued inside and outside the specific qualities of space, even before it has occurred. Invented by and for the municipality of Barcelona, it is still the municipality that has enabled the success of the model and its relevance for the city of Barcelona. The Barcelona model is a real marketing product: no other model has really been considered to secure the city and the existing one has not been thoroughly assessed or evaluated. In spite of this fact, it is necessary to recognise the efforts delivered by the city’s public services towards a democratic and efficient security policy.

In Barcelona, the public security policy is based on four major principles: prevention, repression, solidarity and community participation.

By intervening on the causes of delinquency, by considering social perceptions of security, by seeking to improve the justice system, and by incorporating “ordinary” citizens in the elaboration of security policies, Barcelona is without any doubt an example of good governance for many cities all over the world. However, it now faces a rise in levels of delinquency and its tendency towards prevention has been jeopardized by a series of “preventive war” measures taken against criminality.
On the other hand, although in the past Bogotá has experimented all kinds of traumas, violence, political debacles and other periods of physical and moral breakdown, today it seems to have reconciled with urban modernity. The continuity of successive public administrations (Castro, Mockus, Peñalosa, Garzón) that dealt with security both at a coercive and preventive level, has contributed to erect Bogotá as a “model city” during the “Latin-American Meeting on Security and Cohabitation”

Cohabitation and the concept of citizen culture favour the rights, freedom and duties of inhabitants. At the same time, all citizens can take advantage of a modern, viable and productive city.

The following actions have been particularly useful in enabling the transformation of both the city and its uses: educational promotion, social participation, corresponsability, tributary culture, institutional legitimacy (of each civil servant and the mayor), and demarginalization and social interactions.

**The role of public space and the challenge of urban transformation: the iron curtain has fallen on cities**

In the cities where social or spatial reference points are not easily provided, it is almost impossible to produce common norms and values. Practices, like ideas, in spite of being unified by consumption, tend to individualize rapidly to the point where the public space and public opinion are no more than a vague addition of personal opinions and individual actions. When individual situations become too dependant on global developments, urban societies face their symbolic dissolution and bet in the public space so that at least one social place remains alive. It is now expected that public spaces provide visibility to cities and help maintain a certain cohesion in urban territories.

In the great contemporary city, public space is a container of all urban cultures, the integrator of diversity, a source of balance between minorities, and the last place open to all kinds of expression. The heterogeneity of urban cultures is actually brought back to a unique urban form, a single version of public space with squares in their mineral version; and parks in their vegetal form. What is left, as symbolized by shopping malls, is only the alteration and privatisation of spaces that benefits to trade, security, and the security of trade…

In the globalized world, a new paradigm of fragmentation has emerged. This key concept reveals current urban dynamics. Fragmentation has notably been described as a discontinuity of urban tissues and therefore a loss of control over territory by its users. One of the better known effects of the process of fragmentation is the loss of unity in spaces, which are becoming more and more distant from one another. This affects our use of the public space, whose management is also divided. In the search of a vision of the whole urban space, public spaces tend to be more and more privatised. This is of course for security reasons or to alleviate incivils. In Barcelona more parks go from public to private management and maintenance is assured through entrance fees. Meanwhile, in Bogotá, ghettos or ghetted communities are creating wealthy islands that are overprotected despite being surrounded by popular neighbourhoods.
This privatization of the public space is less a paradox than a symbol of its destruction. By depriving space from its public component, we are reducing it to private property. To facilitate the task of those in charge of controlling and securing cities, urban planners have participated since the 90s in this enterprise of destruction which public authorities have largely supported. This trend applies across borders. This strategy promotes the eradication of the public aspect of urbanism, and public now means that space is open for ‘anyone’ to do ‘whatever they want’. The privatisation of the public space goes in the sense of human domestication. Under the joint participation of public authorities and private actors, the city recomposes a movement of great symbolic violence, to close public places and lead people to isolate themselves in new privatised places, where qualified professionals assure the peace and quiet. Moreover, it will be twice as quiet, because it will be neither worrying nor dangerous.

Thus, against the culture of the open window triumphs the theory of the broken window (Kelling, Wilson, 1982). If a window breaks, it degrades the aesthetic of the building and the environment, which becomes hostile and generates a feeling of insecurity. It is then necessary to replace broken windows with bars to prevent break-ins. The world is from now on divided in two parts: those who have access to “public” spaces and define selection criteria for accessing it; and those who roam around the new walls of Jericho, in the hope of finding how to make them fall.

This urban planning postulates the generalisation of perceptions of insecurity, but all citizens do not benefit from security projects in the same way, and not all of them have access to “safe” areas. The urban planning of fear entails a dramatic radicalisation of the process of spatial segregation. In addition to classic urban fragmentation, the planned fragmentation of territories is added, divided according to their degree of security or, inversely, “danger”. It means a redistribution of the land market, notably in city centres, which were privileged before, but nowadays are often abandoned by the State or recuperated through small investments. Territories wait for “rehabilitation” projects, which often simply mean reconstruction, like the third millennium park in Bogotá, which was built on the ashes of Cartucho. Other examples include the Rambla del Raval and the transformation projects in el Barrio Chino de Barcelona.
When it is time to clean areas, inhabitants, who are not always illegal, have to collect their belongings and leave the place to promoters and lodging programmes.

The appearance of security-focused urban planning does not improve the security of the whole city or of the region concerned. It provokes a dualism of security practices that responds to a dualism of the fear and violence of the well-off and the poor classes. They stare, imitate and oppose one another from both sides of the economic iron curtain. This is a trend that affects both the northern and southern cities. These territories have been planned, urbanised, built by urban promoters. They do not appear by chance, wherever. They place themselves within a contemporary dynamic of fragmentation, and strengthen it by dividing society into antagonistic groups, constructing specific spaces for each of these groups, acquiring obsessive security equipment, controlling people, immobilising them the following day. Security is not a political objective. The security of community life, public spaces and individual movements is part of a contemporary society project. This strategy is little respond by...
the actors without a great capacity of organization. It is not surprising; decades ago the authorities have reduced them to a really small group. However, in the same disorganized way, some resisted. They are anyhow motivated to toughen their urgent strategies as attack or defence tactics. District inhabitants respond with limited means to the security operations which directly menace them (police operations in popular districts, real estate operations). They respond with the means that seem to them more adapted to assure their own security. The old dilemma of ‘our personal security stops where the others’ security start’ is valid again. Both from a social and spatial point of view, the tendency to privatise public spaces for security reasons, together with the globalisation of the “tolerance zero” principle (Wacquant, 1999) reinforce the urban segregation map. Also, the security of rich properties through high technology and that of the poor with the sheriffs strengthens, in turn, this segregation and results in a paranoid “strategic planning”.

How to respond to demands for security in urban spaces?

Citizen culture versus civility: the ethics of “cohabitation”

We know that the concept of good governance is widely ideological - more by reason of the word “good” than the word “governance”. Therefore, the political will is nowadays that all the inhabitants of a city could take decisions and become actors of the social and territorial process, which affect positively or negatively the development of this city. This idea, which still ten years ago would seem a little bit revolutionary, is today admitted, praised and implemented with different modalities in a great number of cities, small or big. Since then, even if the conditions that allow for good governance remained often enigmatic, one can run the risk of proposing some ideas to favour the move.

The construction of a favourable situation for governance, where violence and insecurity issues are taken into account, does not differ much from any other construction of a political sphere. It is necessary a more or less stable base, a clear project and a public space that encourages the expression of conflicts, just a little, and a lot, their resolution in the exchange.

In one of the most important phases of our research, the end of our case studies in Barcelona and Bogotá, we are able to name some of the elements favouring the leading of truly democratic public security policies.

Inter-sectoriality

At the end of our field work, we have realized that the expectancies in terms of security are not the same for the citizens: some attribute the security to the economic, educational and health means that they possess. Others attribute this security to the private vigilance that protects their house from acts of vandalism. The cities are not homogeneous, neither spatially nor socially, and the local authorities have to respond to the security demands. In addition, we postulate that the security should be establish according to a federative principle and satisfy at the same time all the security needs. Therefore, we start a new research activity “Human Security. Urban Safety and Security Initiatives: A Guidebook for Local Authorities”. The Human Security is at the same time personal, environmental, sanitary, alimentary, economical, communitarian and political security. We think that the Human Security is then the adequate concept that allows the local authorities to respond to the security demand in its integrity. By assuring the building and solidity of the bridges between the different sectors of public policies, they enable the interaction for the satisfaction of the same objective: enhancing security.

Inter-actors

So as to reach the objective of safer cities, the interaction between the different actors of the city is crucial. It is understood when one talks about inter-sectoriality, the public actors have to work together in order to better target this common security objective. However, it is also essential that this work is carried out with the participation of the community and the private actors.

It is necessary to build and administer the city with those who lived in and kept it alive. By working with gangs, the dynamics and the logics that lead them would be understood, and other means than violence could be proposed to reach their goals.

Micro-characterization (decentralization of the competences)

The communitarian actors have a crucial role to play in the micro-characterization which alone permits the accuracy of the diagnosis. Due to the fact that the city is
socially, spatially, economically, etc. heterogeneous, it is necessary to understand the
diversity and complexity of the already lived experiences and adapt the governmental
responses. The decentralization enables to understand this complexity and consider the
solutions given, when it is accompanied by a decision power and operational means to
carry out the planned actions. It is at the level of localities and districts that the micro-
diagnosis should be performed and regularly tested.

**Participation / Representation**

The citizens’ participation is essential to the implementation of the democratic
principle, for instance, to vote is an act of participation in the public sphere. Nevertheless, it is necessary to be watchful and do not confuse participation and representation. The local authorities can make the private actors to participate individually, to make decisions, as we have often seen in round-tables. However, these actors are not necessarily representative of their community and often even less of the society in which they evolve. It is necessary to be on the alert when attributing a community leading role to a local actor and to be sure of his role and functions in his environment.

**Responsability and citizen culture**

If it is important that the community actors participate in the local decision making, it is also vital that they participate in their implementation and concrete application. This can only be done by taking some responsibilities, which will enable the person playing the role of community leader to take the responsibility, in turn, of the surround. In this way, the community leader, the one responsible and the one giving the responsibility, protects his social and spatially near environment. The ordinary citizen becomes a real citizen.

**Preservation of the public space thanks to the prevention**

The tendencies are easy concerning civility as an organizing principle not only for the
social life in the public space, but also for the form and content of this public space that
the authorities wish to “moralise”. In fact, a public space should permit an infinite
variety of behaviours (in any case, potentially), as many people are susceptible to be
the users of such space. Nowadays, we assist to a physical and social reorganization of
the public space, which is expected to guarantee an individual and group capacity. The
planners seek to define the qualities of the “good” public space, in which the social
practices would also be really good, because they come from appropriate urban and
architectural choices. It is not about playing with words but rather to precise the target.
A repressive policy intended to teach civic uses will be carried out at the expense of a
preventive policy, promoting the civil, creative and integral uses of public places. We
should promote the citizen culture and not zero tolerance.
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THE PARTNERSHIP

The UN-HABITAT’s Safer Cities Programme was launched in 1996 and works within the framework of Habitat developing tools to support municipalities and local communities in designing and implementing local strategies for the prevention of crime and urban violence.
http://www.unhabitat.org/programmes/safercities

The Urban Sociology Laboratory (LaSUR) of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) is engaged in research and teaching in the field of urban studies. LaSUR’s approach comprises sociology, political science, geography, anthropology, environmental studies, engineering, urban planning and architecture.
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