

Acronimo – REDUCING BOUNDARIES

Titolo – Reducing Boundaries - Understanding exclusion through security defensive systems in wealthy urban areas. Porto Alegre, Brussels, Veneto region

Responsabile scientifico – Bonini Lessing Emanuela

Dipartimento – Dipartimento di Progettazione e pianificazione in ambienti complessi

Settore ERC/SSD – ICAR/13

Ruolo Iuav – Capofila di progetto

Durata – 36

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Descrizione – Urban safety and security represent a series of problems dealing with social, anthropological, economical, perceptual and physical problems that are specific to different territories and contexts and do not allow for general solutions. A large part of manifestations of social disease are connected with the perception of an increase in criminal phenomena which brings to the definition of modern society as a "risk society". The paradigm of risk society is used by research on urban security and on perception of risk, proving how contemporary societies are characterised by distrust, anxiety and uncertainty which invest structures and places of everyday life.

Different studies are pointing out how this perception is originated by a progressive shrinking of the welfare state which causes a different viewpoint of administration and politics, shifting the issue of security from a national to a local concern, especially at urban level. If on the one hand governance strategies mix repressive treatment of safety emergencies with security actions aimed at prevention and rehabilitation, on the other hand private, communal, local interventions against insecurity are progressively growing.

But different societies produce different strategies and interventions for securing private and public spaces, which range from spatial segregation to the control of accesses, use of road bollards, installation of closed-circuit television system, and other techniques of crime prevention through environmental design. This approach, largely used in America and exported to Europe, is the base for the paradigm of "designing out crime", which aims at producing spaces that prevent offences by means of control and defence of the areas.

Obiettivi della ricerca – The research aims at:

- studying and comparing the defensive spaces and devices in the chosen case studies (Porto Alegre, Brussels, Veneto region), understanding the socio-political dynamics that lead to their production;
- highlighting how a sense of 'safety' and 'security' is perceived and reproduced by upper classes and how it modifies the urban territory;
- detecting eventual prejudices in the perception of risk and safety
- making specific urban trends 'recognizable' and 'manageable' by local institutions;
- analysing security issue in gated communities with reference to gentrification processes that concern middle and upper classes;
- analysing how security devices modify the urban context in the environments;
- focusing on the different strategies (from material to immaterial) of appropriation and defence of space that the higher classes have developed to consolidate the exclusion through a modification of the lifestyle and the built environment. The final objective is to understand if a sense of safety and security can be produced with other means than building physical obstacles and barriers that result in a highly divided city.

Website: <http://www.reducing-boundaries.net/>

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