

# REDUCING BOUNDARIES

ABSTRACTS  
OF PUBLICATIONS

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Università Iuav  
di Venezia

**LATITUDE**  
PLATFORM FOR URBAN RESEARCH  
AND DESIGN

 **UNILASALLE**   
CANOAS-RS

*I sistemi di  
sicurezza nelle città  
contemporanee*

Emanuela Bonini  
Lessing, Giacomo  
Zonta

The publication presents the research project “Reducing Boundaries” and some investigations conducted in the city of Porto Alegre - a research case study - throughout the project.

The methodological aspects described in the book concern the early steps and the development of Reducing Boundaries as an interdisciplinary research project, as well as the role of the other research institutions involved in the work. Such a complex and long-lasting project reveals the intricacy of the research purpose: “Understanding exclusion through security defensive systems in wealthy urban areas”. This topic has been investigated under different disciplinary perspectives connecting “urban safety” with the organization of the urban space, public services, communication media, etc.

The second part of the book shows some research contents: statistic data used for the detection of the concentration of wealth and criminality in the city, a photographic collection of security and surveillance systems in the investigated areas, and an analysis inspecting how newspapers deal with the urban security and criminality topic. These contributions point out a connection between the social perception of the criminality issues and the trend of isolation of the wealthiest classes, whose most visible reaction is the adoption of sophisticated security systems.

*Segurança urbana e  
prisão: a permanência  
da centralidade da  
prisão na máquina do  
controle social,*

Daniel Achutti,  
Fiammetta Bonfigli

The construction of security as a heterogeneous and complex phenomenon is produced at different levels: cultural, psychological, political and normative, among others. In this paper, the aim is to focus on the prison system as a space where the contradictions of the security discourse in the urban sphere are particularly represented. If we are facing an era in which the prison is not any more the only system of the “Revanchist City”, as it has been described by Neil Smith, it is impossible to forget the role and the specific place that prison plays in the Penal State (Garland), the targeting of specific groups of people and its specific presence in the city. It has to be considered how prison is the ultimate sphere where normative discourses on security based on a “culture of fear”, reproduced and perpetuated by the middle class, are reflected through the incarceration of “neglected bodies “ in the cities. Drawing on data about the incarceration numbers in Brazil and Italy and semi-structured interviews on the field, with a specific attention on Porto Alegre and Veneto Region, the aim of this piece of work is to point the prison as a specific place inside the city, a place both physical and symbolic, where security is produced through the criminalization, enclosure and punishment of specific ‘dangerous classes’ both economically and ethnically: the black poor man subject in Brazil and the immigrant in Italy.

*Cities of fear:  
comparing  
contemporary housing  
models for urban  
elites in Porto Alegre,  
Brussels and the  
Veneto Region*  
Fabio Vanin

Historically, in the most varied contexts, elites have continuously produced architectural and urban models that have directly or indirectly driven, influenced or simply inspired the construction of the city. Observing the transformation of European cities in the last twenty years through the lens of urban safety and security, we can read/survey a process in which the recent socio-economic crises and the growing polarisation of wealth goes hand in hand with a diffuse clustering of urban elites and the strengthening of their defensive systems. At the same time, the recent economic growth of so called “emerging” countries gave birth, in certain cases, such as Brazil, to a new middle-class that in the urban realm might have introduced alternative living conditions, impacting on the infamous classical dual model made of gated communities vs favelas. Studying and reflecting on the comparison between the living standards of urban elites in two prototypical European cities - the compact city (Brussels) and the horizontal, diffuse city (Veneto region) - and a Brazilian one - Porto Alegre - obliges to rise a series of key questions on the transnational influence of urban models, on the impact of elitist socio-cultural organisations and lifestyles on urban (public) spaces in different contexts and on the future city models that urban elites are explicitly or implicitly suggesting. The proposed paper will try to answer these questions taking from the results of the ongoing research “Reducing Boundaries” EU funded program.

*O Papel do Design  
Gráfico no Processo  
de Recuperação de  
Cidades Europeias:  
Alguns Casos*  
Emanuela Bonini  
Lessing

Graphic design draws the form of the interaction among different entities. Citizens, administrators, institutions and local investors are specific categories of entities: they are all users (sometimes also providers) of urban services. Graphic design is a useful tool to visually coordinate the sometimes contrasting interests of city users and stakeholders towards the use of public services and facilities. The graphic design coordination process includes:

- focus on specific local needs (what has to be visually represented)
- highlight on addresses of the design project (communication targets): i.e. inhabitants and/or foreign investors, tourists, etc.
- design output that, according to the previous steps, may include a range of products, from wayfinding system (integrating i.e. public transport, pedestrian walks, monuments’ signage), to social and civic campaign encouraging some habits, like cultural integration (i.e through posters and flyers), to place branding campaign (touristic promotion abroad), etc.

As result, graphic design can contribute to reinforce and rationalize the offer of local services. This affects the way people perceive opportunities and what use they can make of public services and spaces. Best achievements are reached when the graphic design process is integrated to urban design and urban planning strategies. A selection of case studies and best practices will be shown in the following pages. Some Western European cities like Bristol, Amsterdam and Berlin have in the last years adopted a combination of urban design and communication design strategies. The presentation of these case histories may offer interesting methodologies in response to the need of an increment of the quality of the offer of local services and welfare.

*Urban elites and their security strategies in the 'cities of fear': from Brazil to Europe*  
Fabio Vanin

Taking from the results of the ongoing research "Reducing Boundaries" - EU funded - the paper contributes to the understanding of the 'urban geographies of elite reproduction' starting from the North-South comparison between different urban contexts (Robinson, 2011): the Brazilian (Porto Alegre) and the European one (Brussels). Observing and studying socio-spatial discourses, strategies and practices of different urban elites through the lens of urban security, the research aims at unfolding the contemporary mechanisms of spatial occupation, shaping, production and reproductions by those groups in their cities. Initial research findings show how investments in defensive systems and in exclusive real estate projects, processes of concentration, formal-informal occupation and control of public spaces reveal global trends of behaviours and rhetoric. In that frame, the use of urban space plays a central role in elites' reproduction: in the most varied contexts, elites have historically produced architectural and urban models that have directly or indirectly driven, influenced or simply inspired the construction of the city. Recent literature (Beck 1992, Bauman 2003, Low 2004, Goldstein 2010, Casati 2012) has highlighted the impact of elitist socio-cultural organisations and lifestyles on urban (public) spaces in different contexts and the diffuse influence of the 'culture of fear'. Moving from there, the paper aims at unfolding how in the last twenty years the socio-economic crises and the growing polarisation of wealth have had an impact on European cities - such as the compact city of Brussels or the horizontal one of the Veneto region - where it is possible to recognise the diffuse clustering of urban elites and the strengthening of their defensive systems. Comparing contemporary elitist living conditions and standards in Europe with the Brazilian ones - Porto Alegre - is particularly fruitful because it obliges to rise a series of key questions on the transnational influence of urban models, on the future city references that urban elites are explicitly or implicitly suggesting and on the mechanisms of segregation and exclusion that are being introduced. Moreover, on the last topic the paper specifically aims at contributing to the literature on the Brazilian model (Santos 1996, Caldeira 2000, Villaça 2012) highlighting the recent evolution of elitist patterns regarding the perception of security, the construction and the use of urban spaces.

The methodologies that have been used to "do" urban elite research on private spaces in Porto Alegre and Brussels combine two perspectives: the anthropological one (ethnography, interviews) and the one of the architect-urbanist (spatial survey and description). A large number of interviews to a varied group - from inhabitants, to experts, to researchers - have been integrated with behavioural maps, recorded guided safety-tours, the survey of the dwellings and surrounding spaces (photos, videos, drawings), the construction of city maps based on statistical data (crime, income, race, building type etc.). The strength of such method is the possibility to draw relations between socio-cultural, perceptual elements and spatial traces, allowing to record and describe current trends and modifications in urban elites reproductions. At the same time the limited number of collected information, besides being a strong indicator, would need to be integrated in order to complete, precise and straighten the research output.

*Use as Form:  
an open question*  
Fabio Vanin

Use and ways of appropriating space reveal a hidden, less immediate, sometimes invisible architecture that represents its deep meaning and it relates to key social themes such as inclusiveness, accessibility, identity, memory. The article questions the role of designers assuming a labile and open relationship between form, society, use, identity and symbolism, where the “emotional architecture” and the one “of use and appropriation” dominantly emerge.

*Urban Safety  
and Security*  
Emanuela Bonini  
Lessing (eds)

The book *Urban Safety and Security* describes three scientific works lead by IUA University or performed with its scholars.

It gives account of different strategies showing an impact on urban safety and security in European and non-European cities. It reveals the process, the stakeholders as well as the peculiar tools that have been employed. The essays reveal site-specific consequences of the undertaken actions both on the urban fabric and on the lifestyle of different social groups.

The chapter *Reducing Boundaries* presents the objective of the research: the way in which high and upper-middle classes configure as a goal the preservation of their own security, and the ensuring strategies they put in action in order to preserve it.

Also, it concerns the early steps and the development of the research as an interdisciplinary research project, as well as the role of the other institutions involved in the work.

Lastly, it gives account of some initial investigations conducted in the city of Porto Alegre - one of the three research case studies.

*Rendering Security:  
Imagineries of  
exclusivity and  
exclusion in Porto  
Alegre*  
Andrea Facchetti

The paper analyzes the politics of representations implied within the urban security framework produced by specific stakeholders - and for specific clients - in the city of Porto Alegre. First the research focuses on a methodological problem: who are the wealthy classes in Porto Alegre and how do they relate to the urban security issues. Then the investigation move to the analysis of private homes and dwelling as the model of security. Within this context, advertising materials and visual devices produced by stakeholders in the real estate market are analyzed in order to reveal the rhetorical strategies implied in the imaginary of exclusivity. In other words the imaginary of exclusivity, which serves as the backdrop for the upper classes' routine and lifestyle, cannot leave aside exclusion and isolation. These visual designed devices operates thus a veritable symbolic reworking, which is able to transform the reclusion and the isolation into the very image of prosperity and wealth within which the rich and prosperous people of Porto Alegre confine themselves.

*Security in Porto  
Alegre: Actors, Frames  
and Policies*  
Luisa Tuttolomondo

The great attention reserved to the issue of security in Porto Alegre make so that the public policies addressing this theme can play a relevant role in the complex of activities carried out in the city by the municipal administration. The latter created a specific Security Council, which interacts daily with two police departments: the Military Police, managed centrally by the federated state, and the Civilian Police, coordinated at the municipal level. At the same

time the issue of security is particularly felt by the population: many are therefore the forms of institutional and bottom-up participation by means of which the issue is addressed and discussed in the city. From Participatory Budgeting to the neighbourhood committees, these practices appear to be profoundly diversified according to the organisational procedures and the involved subjects.

*Urban Reform Agenda  
in Brazil: the political  
role of cities*  
Giovanna Marconi,  
Maurizio Pioletti

This paper investigates the politicization of the urban issue in Brazil, as it is an essential element in the democratization process of the Brazilian society (Saule and Uzzo, 2010). It presents the main steps of the Brazilian Urban Reform since the '80s - i.e. when democracy returned in Brazil and the National Urban Reform Movement was established - to the launch of the federal housing programme, called *Minha Casa Minha Vida*, in 2009. On the one side, it highlights the most relevant phases of the reform process, such as the federal approval of the City Statute in 2001 and the development of participatory urban master plans. On the other side, it highlights the critical aspects and the weaknesses of the Brazilian social and political system, which are in contrast with the positive change introduced by the reform. This work aims at contributing to a comparative analysis on urban agendas, introducing an emblematic case for exploring the connection between the establishment of national democratic power and the development of local communities. The study is mainly based on the scientific production by Cities Alliance *Cities Without Slums*. It focuses on the right to the city (Saule and Uzzo) on the urban legal framework (Maricato and Fernandes), on the decentralization process and the participatory governance (Donaghy), and on the democratic power at different levels (Santos; Ribeiro and Rolnik).