Reducing Boundaries
Understanding exclusion through security defensive systems in wealthy urban areas

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Different societies produce different strategies and interventions for securing private and public spaces, which range from spatial segregation (e.g. gated communities) to the control of accesses, use of road bollards, installation of closed-circuit television system, and other techniques of crime prevention through environmental design.

Given the worldwide growing economic gap between the lower and the upper classes, human sciences have kept focusing their attention on class differences and its consequences. However, they have mainly concentrated their analysis on how the poor and the low-middle classes inhabit the space or might be evicted from it.
Our research aims instead at highlighting how a sense of ‘safety’ and ‘security’ is perceived and reproduced by upper-classes classes and how it modifies the urban territory. On the one hand, we intend to detect eventual prejudices in the perception of risk and safety and on the other hand we aim to make specific urban trends ‘recognizable’ and ‘manageable’ by local institutions.

The research group will thus concentrate on specific gentrified areas of Brussels, Porto Alegre, Veneto region and analyse the adopted environmental strategies which, in turn, supposedly increased the perception of safety or eventually diminished social anxiety in relation to crime. Through a multidisciplinary approach we aim at focusing on the different strategies (from material to immaterial) of appropriation and defence of space that the higher classes have developed in order to create a secure, comfortable environment for them, their families and businesses. In order to do this, the research aims at highlighting how a sense of ‘safety’ and ‘security’ is perceived and reproduced by these classes and how it modifies the urban territory. 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.

Within the project I focused on 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 focused 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 moved 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 have been 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.
From a practical point of view I’ve produced two chapter for two different books:


REPresents of SECURITY / Symbolic and Cultural Exclusion

Another strategy involved in relation to the cultural background of that is referred to in the context of symbolic and cultural exclusion. The content of this section is shaped by means of symbols and cultural forms which are specific to the local culture and society, and allow to shape the external conditions or the symbolic imagery of the position. An example of this is the case of the representation of an imaginary football stadium, which is a symbol of exclusion and segregation, in which the image is structured with the parameters of the symbolic and cultural organization; a symbol that is linked to a sense of exclusion and separation.

Figure 2, 3

This rendering technique constitutes the peak of the graphic representation these symbolic images, by means of their degree of abstraction and their capacity to represent the symbolic and cultural organizations. In the above image, the apartments are depicted as if they were an imaginary football stadium, with the symbols of exclusion and segregation. The image is structured with the parameters of the symbolic and cultural organization, in which the image is structured with the symbols of exclusion and segregation.

REPRESENTATIONS OF SECURITY / Visual Construction of a Proper Aesthetic of Exclusivity and Exclusion

The drone view service, provided by Rossi Associates, offers a complete description of the essential features of the housing market's communication. As we have seen, the drone view service introduces the flight of a drone on the site, providing a bird's-eye view of the residential complex in the area of the project, located above a hundred meters from the project site. Using an interface that simulates a remote control environment, the drone pilot can pilot the drone using a range of controls, including sensitivity of the camera. Through the drone’s view, the operator introduces itself through the graphical interface of a drone, enabling the user to have an idea of what is happening on the ground. This service also provides a sense of scale, allowing the user to see what is happening on the ground.

Represents of security / Ross DroneView

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