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'The perception of fear conditioning urban space'

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Title of Paper: “The perception of fear conditioning urban space”

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Abstract: The dominant metabolic system within urban environments often involves deep socio-economic inequalities, exploitative productive practices and a persistent sense of alienation among the vast majority of the population. The city itself spawns the conditions both for the development of actual criminality and, more perniciously, for the emergence of an acute perception of fear within the polis.

Over the years, this perception has affected a whole array of societal elements including, quite significantly, the spatial structure of neighbourhoods, urban forms and housing design. The big boom of gated communities signifies the development of social segregation and the tendency to ensure ontological security behind impenetrable walls. The development of off-centre exclusive communities, parallel to the inner city impoverished neighbourhoods establishes the “new ghettos trend”. The new gated suburbs seem to have increased safety measures such as surveillance cameras, security personnel, high fences, moat-like structures, dead-end roads etc., involving a complex defensive architecture, in order to eliminate random and unaccounted movements, to enhance a sense of security and minimize the perception of fear.

This paper examines the complex inter-determinations between perceived fear of urban otherness and spatial appropriation, urban forms and housing design, aspects whose functional attributes address almost exclusively the fear factor. It also presents the results of a comparative field study of the exclusive neighbourhoods of Hampstead and Psychiko, in greater London and Athens respectively, where the material manifestations of the fear – urban character inter-relationship are examined, including road plans, pedestrian areas, home security systems, housing design elements and, perhaps most revealingly, real estate values.

Key words: exclusive suburbs, gated communities, perception of fear, defensive architecture, security.

1. Introduction

Since ancient times the sentiment of fear has been a determinant factor forming urban space. Actually, the history of defensive architectural structures goes back to the existence of human kind (Schneider & Kitchen, 2002). From natural caves and castles to impenetrable walls, fences, moat-like structures and boundaries, human kind invents new structures so as to define his private space and most significantly to exclude the outside danger.

Since the beginning of the existence of fortification walls and acropolis, they typify power, privileges and security (Schneider & Kitchen, 2002) resulting in the existence of gated, exclusive communities, social segregation and economic inequalities. In current globalized cities, where poverty, criminality and economic exclusion seem to be their significant characteristics, reappear defensive structures conditioning private and public

space. The recurrence of defensive architecture implies automatically its prior existence (Virilio, 2007).

The new form of social and residential separation, established by these private communities, signifies the willingness of upper middle classes to exclude other social and economic classes, such as working classes, ethnic minorities, immigrants and so on (Savage & Warde, 1993), so as to preserve their economic status, to ensure their security and privacy, to enhance territoriality and to eliminate the perception of fear (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). In these modern gated, opulent communities the elimination of fear is achieved not only thanks to artificial fortification (walls, fences etc) but also with the help of surveillance cameras and security systems and most significantly through specific spatial and architectural design. The willingness of ontological security creates the “tendency for further fortification of the cities and social exclusion and on the contrary enhances the sentiment of fear and danger” (Klein, 2007:306).

In this paper is examined the complex inter-determinations between the perceived fear and urban aspects. After presenting a theoretical approach, in two opulent neighbourhoods is examined the relationship between the existence of urban fear and space structure and finally how one of these elements affects the other.

2. Economic inequality and Socioeconomic segregation

Socioeconomic segregation, social polarization, economic inequality and exclusion are central concepts that dominate urban reality (Musterd & Ostendorf, 1998). According to Savage and Warde (1993), in modern, capitalist cities, socioeconomic segregation and social inequality are reflected by the existence of inner-city ghettos, exclusive suburbs and restricted communities.

In current globalised, economic systems, all industrialised countries have undergone a deep reconstruction in their economic structure and labour market. The dominance of new technological means of production has led to increased unemployment rates and to the demand of low-skilled or unskilled jobs (Musterd & Ostendorf, 1998). Because of this, exist various economic classes, each one having different social, financial and racial composition, concepts that result in diverse urban and spatial transformations. In other words, different economic backgrounds lead to the existence of different spatial forms and moreover, to economic inequality, polarization and social exclusion.

2.1. Economic inequality

Economic inequality is supposed to be affected by government policies, such as tax and redistributive programs and so on. On the other hand, it is stated that education and industrial relations affect the socioeconomic community structures (Wessel, 2000). Populations with high educational skills often earn an amount of money that enables them to climb to socioeconomic hierarchy. Conversely, people with low educational skills are usually trapped within their class, making it almost impossible to ascend in the social hierarchy.

On the other hand, it is stated that, the two element keys that affect socioeconomic inequality are household composition and labor markets (Tickamyer, 2000). Households and labor markets have a spatial character that affects urban space. For instance, households have sets of social relationships, interaction networks and specific boundaries. Aspatial concepts, such as class divisions, status hierarchies, labor markets etc, are usually described in spatial terms, because they have great impact on space (Tickamyer, 2000). Economic inequality within the urban realm enhances crime rates and the perceived urban fear. In addition, the existence of fear leads high middle income classes to residential isolation, in order to exclude fear of crime. Residential separation for security reasons also leads to the fortification of space and to the erection of physical barriers. Therefore, economic inequalities enhance the residential ones and in a further extent create segregation and exclusion.

Carl Marx on the other hand, asserts, that in capitalist economic systems, the basic source of socioeconomic inequalities is the division of labour, that creates inequalities in the distribution of labour and property (Savage & Warde, 1993). According to Marx, the existence of socioeconomic inequalities will prosper as long as there is inequality in the distribution of resources and labour. Moreover, socioeconomic segregation is being enhanced by the disparities in access to social infrastructure, such as good level of education etc. (Nikolaidou, 1993).

Taking into consideration the above theories, socioeconomic inequalities are a result of the structure and function of today's society. Unequal distribution of labour also creates unequal distribution of income. This situation results in the occurrence of different classes, that are distributed in different spatial patterns within the urban realm. Therefore, segregation is a product of "both income inequalities and discriminatory filters that allocate people in uneven concentrations across the city" (Atkinson & Flint, 2004:876). As stated above, income

inequality creates residential segregation among the existing classes. Thus, different classes construct their own sense of community and territory in various ways. Because low income classes, do not have the opportunity and the means to dominate territory, they are usually “trapped in space” (Harvey, 1987).

2.2 Socioeconomic segregation

Socioeconomic exclusion is highly linked to inequality and segregation and is affected by economic structures. Boat (1998) claims that exclusion may be also caused by unemployment, evolution of family structures and migration. Excluded populations “lose opportunities, the means and the ability to participate in society” (Musterd & Ostendorf, 1998: 2). In addition, they usually lack of good socioeconomic positions in labour and society and deprive of a good level of residence, education, health and so on. Therefore, this situation leads to reproduction of inequality and the existence of different classes. In spatial patterns, that kind of phenomena result in residential segregation and spatial concentration of wealthy and poor (Musterd & Ostendorf, 1998). Ghettos, opulent suburbs, gated communities, restricted neighbourhoods are the reverse side of the same coin. In spatial patterns, areas with inexpensive residencies and therefore poor living conditions, are considered to be areas for the underprivileged. This is called the “fabric effect” and tends to segregate minority groups from the rest of the city (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

According to Savage and Warde (1993), there are two categories of social segregation. First, is the segregation of urban space. This type of segregation exists because urban space is limited. Moreover, in modern, capitalist cities, space is private and the value of land varies according to its position, size and use. On the other hand, there is the segregation of social groups within the urban realm. This type of segregation is a spatial expression of social inequality. “Segregation does not only concern the existing social classes, but also racial minorities and the spatial segregation of families within the city” (Savage & Warde, 1993: 128). In general, Savage and Warde state that in modern, capitalist societies, fundamental source of inequality is employment and assets. In fact, division of labour creates different economic classes, where each one of those have various levels of access in home ownership.

3. Gated Communities

Gated and fortified communities is a worldwide phenomenon that exists from the beginning of human settlement (Landman & Schonteich, 2002; Schneider & Kitchen, 2002;

Low, 2003). “Gated communities” is a form of a residential and enclosed, by walls, fences and other urban and architectural restrictions, community (Landman & Schonteich, 2002; Low, 2003; Vesselinov et al., 2007). Usually, these communities have controlled and restricted access not only to private residences but also to parks, streets and to other neighbourhood amenities (Low, 2003).

Apart from the existence of “gated communities”, a new, quite similar form of spatial separation is being taking place; the “enclave communities”. According to Marcuse (1997: 314), enclaves are “spatially concentrated areas, where its members belong to a particular population group and try to maintain and enhance their economic, social, political and cultural development”. Enclaves are subdivided into three main categories: immigrant enclaves, cultural and exclusionary enclaves (Marcuse, 1997). The residents living in the latter ones, feeling “threatened” by the outsiders, cut off their relationship with them, in order to be protected. This perceived fear does not only concern ontological security, but also the economic, political and social one (Marcuse, 1997).

Enclave communities seem to be a new ghettos trend spreading worldwide. Although in modern times, enclosed neighbourhoods originated in USA, in the early ninetieth century, this phenomenon has now “concurrent” many countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. Gated, walled communities originally started as a means to protect the quality and lifestyle of wealthy residents from the industrialization of the city centre (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Low, 2001; Vesselinov et al., 2007). Although in United States gated and enclosed communities is a widespread fact, in the rest of the world this phenomenon is now taking place. In Europe, the existence of “gated communities” is being consolidated just for the past thirty years and has taken different characteristics. European gated communities are yet, in fact, enclaves, exclusive suburbs and neighbourhoods that usually lack of visible physical barriers in order to entry. Although restrictions and conditions in order to become a resident in these suburbs do exist, there are no physical or artificial barriers, such as big impenetrable walls, moat-like structures and so on. The suburbanization trend, which has its origins to the late 19th century, has as a central concept the “exclusivity” (Marcuse, 1997).

Despite the fact that European exclusive suburbs lack off, symbolically or actually, walls, there are other forms that create boundaries and distinguish the exclusive suburb from the rest of the community. The role of the boundary, usually play the “railroad tracks,

topographical features, such as rivers, slopes etc, a line of building or simply a well-recognised line of demarcation” (Marcuse, 1997: 315).

Although gated and exclusive communities, where established in the modern world, as an idea of suburbanization and escape of the problems that industrialised cities had, substantially these communities functioned as a spatial separation of the upper classes from the lower ones. Due to spatial segregation, gated communities also resulted into social and economic one (Landman & Schonteich, 2002). Gated and enclosed communities derive from socioeconomic inequality but contribute also to its reproduction. Private communities exclude other people from entering and using the amenities offered; although parks and other public spaces are used for socialization and human interaction, in these communities, barriers lead to social exclusion (Landman & Schonteich, 2002). Restrictions conditioning age, race, ethnicity, culture and house building, usually disincline potential residents from becoming members of such communities. Therefore, residential segregation is another aspect of the socioeconomic one.

Gated communities are classified into three main categories: 1. “Lifestyle communities”, where exists a separation for the leisure activities within the enclaves, 2. “Prestige communities”, where the walls and fences try to maintain the residents socioeconomic prestige and 3. “Security zones”, where the primary goal is to maintain and conserve the residents perceived safety (Blakely & Snyder, 1998). Residents who live in exclusive suburbs, are trying to create a sense of community, that actually has a sense of a “place to live in”, creating privacy, security, self-sufficiency (Amin, 1994) and an inward looking space (Ellin, 1996).

3.1 Reasons for the fortification and enclosure of suburban neighbourhoods

Although enclosed communities were established as a form of non polluted, suburban neighbourhoods during the big boom of industrialised cities, nowadays are actually considered to be places that protect their residents from crime and vandalism. Abandoning the city centre for the suburbs was actually an escape from dirt, crime and immigrant populations of the inner city (Low, 2003). Many authors state that places with restricted access preserve neighbourhood’s physical safety from the outsiders. Therefore, people who live in exclusive suburbs actually desire to protect and preserve their assets and their ontological safety. Low (2003) expresses the opinion that people in upper classes have increased potential

victimization sentiments, because their income and lifestyle bring them in a vulnerable position. Another reason for the rise of the exclusive, opulent suburbs is the desired coherence of the community. Many scientists state that the sentiment of coherence, that suburban residents have, plays an important role in the prosperity of the community. The cohesiveness of suburban communities is further enhanced through social networks regarding gardening and sports clubs etc (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

Davis (2008) adds another dimension to this issue, stating that the big boom of fortified communities is not only because people are eager to eliminate perceived fear, but also because they want to preserve and accumulate land values, through the existence of socioeconomic restrictions that disincline the outsiders from living in such neighbourhoods. These restrictions also guarantee the racial, financial and ethnical homogeneity of the suburbs, by forbidding permanent accommodation to those who do not meet the standards. Knox and Pinch (2006) refer to this issue, arguing that suburban residents are possessed by the “status panic syndrome”. Inhabitants fearing financial loss of their community and inability to maintain the socioeconomic status and prestige of their neighbourhood, erect barriers or establish restrictions so as to eliminate the existence of urban otherness (Knox & Pinch, 2006). At the same time, governments have also contributed to the existence of this residential separation through the establishment of zoning laws, design and architectural restrictions and “laws against domestic and interpersonal violence that narrow the range of accepted behavioural norms” (Low, 2003: 18).

Gated communities are also a part of a worldwide privatization trend of public space. Governments are not able to find sources to eliminate social phenomena such as poverty, social segregation, unemployment that lead to the increase of actual crime. The latter one is the reason of privatization of public realm: wealthier residents take the initiative to build private, fortified enclaves so as to eliminate “intruders” entering their private space (Amin, 1994; Low, 2003; Vesselivov et al, 2007). Public goods and amenities, including community parks, road maintenance services, police protection, are normally supported by the taxes paid by local residents (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Vesselivov et al, 2007). Therefore, low income residents lacking the means to pay their dues, usually cannot use these kind of amenities. In USA is a wide spread fact that wealthier residents decide not to share their taxes with the low income ones, in order to ensure the high level of community services provided (Klein, 2007). This phenomenon results in the occurrence of exclusive, private communities, where public

access is denied within the urban space (Low, 2003; Vesselinov et al, 2007). Erection of physical barriers is an almost compulsory factor that guarantees not only the entry ban, but also the exclusivity use of space by the community members (Vesselinov et al, 2007). The design of space with a security perspective leads to the elimination of public realm (Davis, 2008).

Another reason for the spread of enclosed neighbourhoods is the human instinct of privacy (Nikolaidou, 1993). Exclusive suburbs and neighbourhoods with restricted residential access preserve the feeling of privacy through the existence of fences, shrubs, private roads, CCTV cameras and so on. Enclosed communities respond to the desire of upper middle classes for community, surveillance, security, separation and intimacy (Low, 2001). Furthermore, people belonging in upper classes desire to withdraw in “enclaves of territorial defence”, where they can find residents that share the same interests and lifestyle, essentially finding a refuge from “potential harmers” (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

Additionally, many state that is within the human nature the instinct to dominate space and defend our territory (Nikolaidou, 1993; Schneider & Kitchen, 2002). Territoriality and exclusive use of space are often considered to be “laws of nature”; dominance and protection of space against the “unwanted elements, the strangers”, are archetypes that determine the structure of society, through the existence of boundaries (Harvey, 1987; Knox & Pinch, 2006; Nikolaidou, 1993; Schneider & Kitchen, 2002). Therefore, terms of territoriality and space sovereignty are closely linked to terms of property and home ownership. Territoriality has many different forms of expression, with the concept of “home ownership” being the highest one (Schneider & Kitchen, 2002). In middle and upper income populations, dominance of space takes shape through home ownership. In low income populations, since “ownership of even basic means of reproduction, such as housing, is restricted, the way to dominate space is through continuous appropriation” (Harvey, 1987: 371). Home ownership leads to the empowerment of the owner, to the improvement of his mental status, his perceived safety and the empowerment of his life control (Kleinmans & Elsinga, 2010). Moreover, home ownership is considered to be a symbol of social status (Knox & Pinch, 2006; Rohe & Stegman, 1994) thus, in the vast majority of exclusive neighborhoods, it is the basic form of housing, stabilizing and strengthening the community. On the other hand, home ownership has severe impacts on the social geography of contemporary cities, enhancing socioeconomic polarization and residential segregation (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

Furthermore, Oscar Newman was the one to state that human beings desire to live in places that can actually defend and control. Residents themselves are the key agents ensuring their security, without the necessary assistance of the government. Newman (1996) claims that through defensible space inhabitants protect their assets, ideals and values. Moreover, he asserts that a residential area is safer when its residents have a sense of ownership, feeling their area as their own community and therefore they defend it by any means (Knox & Pinch, 2006); an intruder feels less secure when community residents have developed a strong social network among them. Newman adds another dimension to space security and crime prevention through environmental design (Schneider & Kitchen, 2002). The proper design of environmental and architectural aspects are factors that not only deter intruders committing an assault within the community boundaries, but also allow residents to “watch” their property and defend their territory. Finally, Newman formulates the basic factors of defensible space: 1. Territoriality: Place attachment and willingness for the owner to defend his territory, 2. Surveillance: Natural surveillance through design aspects, 3. Boundary definition, 4. Access control and 5. Image and milieu: Other features that play an important role deterring crime (Schneider & Kitchen, 2002: 93).

4. Urban Fear

The structure of urban space plays a significant role in human psychology. For instance, the ownership of space (public, semi-public, private), architectural structures, urban vegetation, street lighting and so on, are some of the factors that accordingly affect the good or bad psychological human state and human behaviour (Austin et al., 2002; Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Kaskela & Pain, 2000; Knox & Pinch, 2006). Therefore, the structure of urban space is a mirror that on the one hand reflects the beliefs, norms and psychology of its users and on the other is a determinant factor affecting human behaviour and psychology.

According to S. Freud, human being is threatened by three different directions: 1. By ourselves, 2. By the others and 3. By our relationship between ourselves and other people (Bauman, 1995:105). Bauman (2002) asserts that the factors leading to an atmosphere of fear are socioeconomic polarization and inequality, disorder, the collapse of protection network like family and neighbourhoods, and uncertainty.

Davis (2008) claims that in the current globalized economic system, that cultivates deep socio-economic inequalities, impressive architectural structures, for example, reflecting

power and welfare of the owner, at the same time may cause counteractive behaviour by the underprivileged. Certain places may also function as “fear generator places” because of their urban and architectural aspects, such as insufficient street lighting or with blocked prospect problems, that enhance fear factor (Kaskela & Pain, 2000; Thomas & Bromley, 2000). There is another dimension added to this issue, that of the reputation of place. It is stated that many places function as “fear generators” just because they have the reputation of a dangerous neighbourhood (Kaskela & Pain, 2000). Usually, places having this kind of reputation are low income and migration neighbourhoods.

The physical deterioration of neighbourhoods, the increasing income gap between rich and poor, rising crime result in a “landscape of fear”, exacerbated by the Media (Low, 1997). According to Glassner (2009), media play an important role in forming peoples’ conscience, enhancing urban fear by creating a “culture of fear”. So, the existence of urban fear and insecurity determine the structure of space and at the same time space itself affects the existence or the lack of fear. Moreover, urban fear is being enhanced and reproduced by security industries (Low, 2003), that provide security equipment and personnel, to protect suburban citizens’ property and ontological security from intruders. These industries are considered to be some of the most profitable companies worldwide. Although there is a wide range of security measures that protect suburban, wealthy citizens from the outside danger, these measures seem to have more of a symbolic effort to appeal to residents than an attempt to create an impenetrable border (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). In addition, it is stated that the levels of perceived fear are not necessarily reduced by the occurrence of safety measures. On the other hand, these safety measures do not seem to enhance the levels of perceived safety, either (Nemeth & Hollander, 2010).

There are three main factors conditioning the perception of fear and the sense of security within the urban realm: 1. Demographic factors, 2. Victimization experiences and 3. Urban and neighbourhood conditions (Austin et al., 2002). Within the demographic factors affecting the perception of fear which are mentioned is sex, age and socioeconomic status. Usually, women seem to experience higher levels of fear than men and on the other hand older people seem to have lower security levels than younger ones. For arguments sake, Davis (2008) claims that apart from socio-economic and race apartheid there is also the age one, where the old stakeholders are the exponents of the opulent gated communities in USA. As far as the socioeconomic status is concerned, it is stated that people belonging in middle and

upper classes seem that they usually have increased feelings of perceived safety (Austin et al., 2002). Finally, urban and neighbourhood conditions play an important role in the elimination of perceived fear and in the assurance of perceived security. In addition, people who live in heterogeneous neighbourhoods seem to have lower levels of perceived safety because they are exposed to socioeconomic changes that usually do not seem to occur often in homogeneous neighbourhoods. This kind of neighbourhoods consist of people belonging in the same economic class, nationality and status, having the same culture, customs and aspirations. Anacker (2010) states that the racial composition of heterogeneous neighbourhoods affects property values, indicating the fear of financial loss. The racial transition of neighbourhoods seems to result in the change of its status and character, increasing the incidence of theft, burglaries and vandalism, affecting in the most revealing way the decline of property values (Anacker, 2010; Austin et al., 2002, Davis, 2008). The actual value of a house is not only defined by the structural characteristics of the district, but also by the socio-economic characteristics, the existence or the lack of minorities, immigrants, the status of the residents, their income etc (Nikolaidou, 1993).

Many scientists state that fear is a mode of social control (Chaput et al., 2010; Davis, 2008); a mode of maintenance of the global capitalist system that contributes to isolation and gives the impression that reality is under threat and in crisis (Chaput et al., 2010). Therefore, people willing to eliminate the sense of threat and yet in some the fear perception, use urban and architectural design aspects in a way that they prevent crime and vandalism, to secure their assets while creating a sense of community within the urban space (Knox, 2011). Generally, the sentiment of fear holds back the freedom of movement within urban space. However, elimination of perceived fear could be achieved by promoting defensive behaviour (Thomas & Bromley, 2000) as well as the aggressive one. Defensive human behaviour is being reflected in urban and architectural aspects of space; moat-like structures, fences, impenetrable walls, surveillance cameras, security systems, design restrictions and so on, are some parameters operating defence towards urban fear. On the other hand, aggressive behaviour is being reflected in many urban spaces; Davis (2008) describes as hostile many public spaces and private buildings in LA (such as parks, pedestrian streets, other public areas, embassy buildings, houses etc) that promote an aggressive manner in order to dissipate the unwanted.

Summing up, the existence of urban fear is not only the fear of ontological security, but also combines the fear of financial loss, the fear of urban otherness and the fear of social and economic diversity within the city. Therefore, middle and upper-middle classes abandon the vital centre of the city moving towards exclusive suburbs, where they can easily create a sense of their own community, having its own housing, financial and structural restrictions that eliminate random, unaccounted movements, making inward looking places and buildings and actually preserving the socio-economic homogeneity of the community. In this way, they ensure their privacy and they proliferate the perceived security.

5. Perceived fear conditioning urban space

Perceived urban fear is a determinant factor of space. Both private and public space are configured based on the occurrence of the fear factor. Many aspects of our everyday life have changed, because of the growing sentiment of fear of crime, of vandalism and assault and of socioeconomic instability. The existence of social unrest, created by the wide range of income inequalities between different classes, is a factor that results in spatial and residential exclusion within the city. Phenomena like vandalism, graffiti, theft etc, are usually the reason and not the cause that upper classes abandon the “instability” of city centre for the “stability” being in suburbs and in other isolated residential spatial patterns (Davis, 2008).

The sentiment of fear is highly associated with rising crime rates, lower levels of ontological security, financial loss of land values, terms of privacy and territoriality, maintain of the status, prestige and homogeneity of the community and so on. There are three main conditions that determine the occurrence of urban crime and assault: the existence of an offender with a motive, an appropriate target and the absence of appropriate security (Knox & Pinch, 2006). Schneider & Kitchen (2002: 6) also add another dimension to this through the existence of laws; without legislation and law there is no crime committed. Place accessibility, visibility, density, security and finally the built and social environment are factors that determine the occurrence of crime (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

Urban fear, cultivated in residents living in exclusive suburbs, conditions many aspects of our everyday life. Spatial and urban design, as well as the architectural one, address elements that could be attributed to fear; residential segregation, restricted access areas, housing design aspects, security personnel and CCTV cameras are some of them. Davis

(2008) claims that nowadays there is a tendency merging architecture and urban design with police and security systems.

Sennett (1990), states that a characteristic about our city-buildings is that they wall of the differences between people; differences that are considered to be more of a threat than a stimulation. *“What we make in our cities is bland, neutralizing spaces, spaces which remove the threat of social contact: street walls faced in sheets of plate glass, highways that cut off poor neighbourhoods from the rest of the city, dormitory housing developments”* (Sennett, 1990: xii).

5.1. Fear conditioning urban aspects

Perceived fear is a determinant factor affecting the structure of urban realm (Davis, 2008). Parks, streets, pathways, public spaces and communal squares are some of the urban aspects that reflect the sentiment of urban fear within the polis. In addition, Davis asserts that, in contemporary cities, security factors act as catalysts in urban design and space structure. Urban planners and architects design places not orientated in serving social needs but “designing out urban fear” by ensuring the desired security level of middle and upper middle classes (Davis, 2008; Nemeth & Hollander, 2010).

Privatization of space, resulting in the shrinking public realm, is considered to be a factor that enhances perceived safety levels, because of the occurrence of entry restrictions (Amin, 1994; Low, 2003; Vesselivov et al, 2007). Erection of gates and the existence of entry bans (Davis, 2008; Nemeth & Hollander, 2010), security personnel guarding the space and ensuring public order, racial and socioeconomic restrictions in order to access a “public space” (Davis, 2008), are some of the most common aspects addressing the fear factor in public realm.

Moreover, many scientists assert that our public spaces promote a hostile attitude in order to “dissipate the unwanted”. Urban planners and architects design hostile public places, promoting an aggressive architecture. Buildings having an ugly exterior appearance, uncomfortable benches, surveillance cameras, undergrowth trees are some aspects that could be defined as ways to deterrent crime and vandalism (Christopherson 1994; Davis, 2008). In this direction, buildings with repellent exterior and luxurious interior are designed so as not to attract crime and offenders. Davis also states that, in United States, a diffuse method to prevent homeless populations from using and staying in public parks is the lack of benches

and public toilets and an automatic system of watering nozzles during the night. Public spaces nowadays have an inward looking manner, restricted access and are detached from the rest of the city life (Christopherson 1994).

5.1.1 Vegetation preventing or reinforcing urban fear?

Urban vegetation plays a primary role in defining space within the urban realm. Trees and plants are structural elements to create space. Apart from the aesthetical contribution of vegetation, there are other important aspects that affect the social and spatial reality. The distribution and the type of vegetation used are not always random; certain plants, shrubs and trees are used for protection and safety reasons, others for enclosure, defining territory and so on (Dee, 2001).

Within the urban space, the use of different types of trees and shrubs varies according to the neighbourhood, their properties and the aesthetical outcome. Usually, in opulent exclusive suburbs vegetation is used so as to create territoriality, fortification and prevention from crime. Shrubs and hedges fortify and enclosure the territory, creating boundaries and a sentiment of privacy to the resident, playing the role of impenetrable walls and barriers. Being “rough, thorny, dark, tall and crisp, hedges and shrubs are conceived as green living walls” (Dee, 2001: 67). The height and density of shrubs can create enclosure, a secure and private environment to the resident, but on the other hand can create a threatening and instable atmosphere to a potential intruder. Conversely, full enclosure of an area could create inward looking and claustrophobic behaviour (Dee, 2001: 42).

Although shrubs and hedges are used in order to define a residential, private space, ensuring the sentiment of security and safety of the owner, preventing at the same time incidents of intrusion, trees are used in a different way. Trees, unlike shrubs and hedges, are not used for fortification reasons, because their “structure”, usually, does not allow them to function as green walls, like shrubs. In exclusive suburbs, trees are usually used in combination with hedges and shrubs, in order to block visibility, from the street to the building. Usually, people wanting to preserve their assets and their security, use large in size and height trees so as not let their property to be easily seen from the street.

5.1.2 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

O. Newman and R. Jeffrey were the first ones to link the criminal behaviour to the physical environment. Jeffrey developed his theory as he was opposed to the theory of Chicago School, that crime rates are exclusively linked to socioeconomic differences, ignoring the impacts of natural and structural environment to humans behaviour (Schneider & Kitchen, 2002). Strategies of CPTED are applied in a worldwide basis in order to reduce crime, to predict and determine human behaviour, reduce crime and perceived fear and improve the quality of life (Crowe, 2000; CPTED Committee of Virginia, 2000).

CPTED has three main strategies: 1. Natural surveillance, 2. Natural access control, 3. Territorial reinforcement (Crowe, 2000; Crowe & Zahm, 1994). Other scientists, also add further strategies, than these three stated above, such as activity support, maintenance and target hardening (Cozens et al, 2005). Many countries in a global basis use CPTED strategies in order to prevent crime and eliminate residents perceived fear. Through their design guidelines, mostly emphasise on natural and artificial surveillance, through the proper design of buildings and their architectural features, the proper landscape features, such as trees and shrubs and their ways to deter violation, street conditions, such as sufficient lighting, proper use of benches etc.

5.1.3 Neighborhood watch

Neighborhood watch is a partnership, bringing citizens together with law enforcement in order to deter crime and make communities safer. It is a surveillance unit preserving the security levels of the neighborhood (Davis, 2008). It evolves police departments, local authorities, Community Safety Departments and families, aiming to protect their community from vandalism, theft and any other threat against the security of the community. According to Davis (2008), this scheme is the absolute contribution of police in determining the urban realm. Restrictions conditioning urban aspects, as well as the use and structure of public and private space, are important elements for the success of the project.

5.2. Fear conditioning architectural aspects

Architectural aspects are, also, highly affected by perceived fear. Buildings reveal an aggressive attitude, so as to deter offenders, promoting a repelling exterior. A whole array of defensive buildings are commonly seen within the urban reality. Actually, “defensive

architecture in individual houses promotes design aspects that may conceal the residents' wealth or projecting a "don't mess with me attitude" (Ellin, 1996: 91).

Residential restrictions play a crucial role in the structure of the neighbourhood because they operate with a distinctive manner. Restrictions are considered a way of protection from perceived danger (Fogelson, 2005). Places providing freedom of movement are considered to be unsafe because of the lack of architectural, design and pedestrian restrictions. The existence of restrictions make a place safer because they create "rules" that everyone should follow, providing stability and certainty.

In many communities worldwide, these kind of restrictions do occur. Residents desiring to keep their lifestyle and financial level, actually forbid the operation of shop within the community, so as to preserve its character. Restrictions in architectural design do exist as well; blocks of flats are forbidden, because inhabitants want to preserve the nuclear family character of community. The architectural aspects of residences are also restricted, in a way to maintain the architectural homogeneity of the neighbourhood (Fogelson, 2005). Many residences avoid having access from the main, public residential street, so as not to attract easily offenders (Newman, 1996). The proper placement and design of windows, doors, physical barriers and lighting increase the ability of the owners to observe intruders as well as regular users. For instance, large panoramic windows facing a major street is a common phenomenon, that enhances visibility of actions and pedestrians. These aspects seem to have affected an array of architectural movements: fences, turrets, moat-like structures, panopticon buildings etc.

5.2.1 Panopticon

Panopticon is a type of building designed to enhance visibility skills of the observer against the potential offender. The original idea of the panopticon derived from the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, concerning maximum security prisons (Davis, 2008). Combining two Greek words, the "panopticon" enables the observer to have a 270 degrees visibility, in one view, to the observed subject. Its architectural structure provides the means to enhance surveillance whilst minimizing the supervision required. "A circular building containing prisoners or workers within cells, radially disposed around the perimeter and a guardhouse in the center, provided the guard to observe the prisoners but not vice versa" (Ellin, 1997: 16). Ellin also states that the idea of panopticon derived from the insecurities

incited by the transition from feudalism to capitalism: the unrest during the French Revolution gave birth to new proposal for building.

Michel Foucault, following J. Bentham, stated that in modern societies where randomness and insecurity conquer our everyday life, a modern panopticon is required so as to eliminate perceived fear and unaccounted movements (Bauman, 1995). He also asserted that this theory could, also, be applied to other hierarchical structures, such as schools, hospitals, factories, workplaces and so on. The fear of being under observation makes people act predictable, without any random moves and in order (Bauman, 1995: 108). Vidler states that the “panopticon” is actually a translation of the city structure into a building: the radial streets, leading to the city center, are the partition walls of the cells; the communal center has given its place to the observer (Ellin, 1997).

6. Case Studies

In order to examine complex inter-determinations between perceived urban fear and spatial appropriation, we focus on two field studies of opulent neighborhoods in London and Athens respectively. First, we examine the case study of Hampstead, in London Borough of Camden and secondly we focus on Psychiko suburb, in Athens.

6.1. Hampstead

A. Hampstead History

Hampstead stands on London’s “Northern Heights” and belongs to the London Borough of Camden. The Hampstead Heath, one of the largest hilly parklands of London, was a substantial feature to attract settlers. Actually, natural features of Hampstead were the ones that permitted its development throughout history: its topography, the Heath and clean water and air, where factors that contributed to its development (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002).

From the beginning of human settlement in Hampstead, wealthy residents were attracted by its peace, calm, isolation of the city center and its beautiful scenery. From the beginning of the 17th century wealthy and famous people chose to abandon the center of London, in order to live within the tranquility of the hills. Lawyers, merchants, bankers, intellectuals, were the residents to be attracted to Hampstead (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002). Nowadays, Hampstead Village is considered to be one of the

wealthiest areas of Britain, an attraction pole of millionaires (Wade, 2004), having an “avant-garde reputation” (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002). The expansion of the railways, also contributed in the development of Hampstead. From the beginning of Hampsteads’ development until nowadays, the occurrence of prestigious houses is its main characteristic (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002).

From 1968, Hampstead is designated as a Conservation Area thanks to its distinct characteristics: its striking topography, the large number of buildings with architectural interest, its street pattern and the proximity of the neighborhood to Hampstead Heath, are the features that make Hampstead a Conservation Area (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002).

B. Hampstead General Profile

Hampstead belongs to the London Borough of Camden, the most polarized borough of London, in terms of deprivation and wealth distribution (Camden play strategy 2007-2012). The two least deprived wards are Hampstead Village and Frognal and Fitzjohns (Camden development plan, 2008). Camden borough covers approximately 22 square kilometers and its population is 198.020 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Although Camden has lots of business centers, within its boundaries, like Holborn, Euston and Tottenham Court Road, is also known for its exclusive residential districts, such as Hampstead and Belsize Park (Camden play strategy 2007-2012). The contrast between exclusive residential districts and business centers is the reason why Camden is considered to be a polarized borough.

According to the Office of National Statistics, Hampstead’s population is 10.617 people and it covers almost 245 hectares. Hampstead Village is considered to be a low density area, with 43.34 persons per hectare, whereas in Borough of Camden density reaches 90.85 persons/ha. The vast majority of people living in Hampstead have higher and intermediate managerial skill and a high level of educational qualifications. For arguments sake, more than 7.000 out of the total 8.348 people, belonging to the economically active group, have higher managerial and supervisory skills. A large portion of them, work in real estate and renting businesses, as well as in other social and personal activities, health and social work etc. The vast majority of the economical active population, aged between 16 and 74 years old, belong to the highest qualification “level 4/5”. In addition, most of Hampstead’s population live in unshared, owned dwellings, whereas only 515 people live in communal establishments.

Finally, it is important to mention that the highest percentage of Hampstead's population is European and especially people born in UK.

Hampstead Town is one of the most expensive areas to live in Great Britain. In comparison to Hampstead's surrounding areas, like Golderns Green and Kilburn, the land values in Hampstead are much higher. While the average price of properties in Hampstead is over £1.500.000, in neighboring areas like Kilburn and Brondesbury, the average price properties do not extend £700.000. Although in Golderns Green the average prices range to £1.300.000, Hampstead's values are still much higher. The average price of detached dwellings in Hampstead are beyond £4.500.000, whereas in other neighboring areas, the average prices range close to £2.500.000.

According to the Metropolitan Police of London, Borough of Camden is considered an area, which crime rates are above average, in comparison to the total crime rates of London. On the contrary, Hampstead Town has medium crime rates; during April 2011 actual crimes and offenses were 133, whereas in Camden Borough were committed almost 3000 crimes. The local Police department of Hampstead and local Neighborhood Watch, may have contributed to the safety of the ward.

C. Hampstead Architectural Aspects

Hampstead's location plays a significant role in the development of the area. The existence of Hampstead Hill is a natural boundary that separates the ward from other neighborhoods. Although Hampstead is considered an exclusive residential area, commercial markets, stores and cafes do exist.

The vast majority of the dwellings are detached houses, following the neo-Georgian style architecture (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002). Gardens and green fences play a significant role in the structure of the neighborhood. High green fences are used to create a territory and a front boundary, between the pavement and the property, but may be also used as a means of fortification, instead of walls and brick fences. Actually, security fences and electronic gates are forbidden, so as not to alter the character of the community. Moreover, alterations to trees and landscape design is permitted only under certain conditions (Conservation & Urban Design Team of Camden, 2002). Despite the lack of gates and security fences, CCTV cameras and securities do exist, in order to eliminate residents' perceived fear. Signs of Hampstead Neighborhood Watch are placed throughout the

neighborhood, creating a sentiment of insecurity to potential offenders, as well as creating a sense of community within the residents. Despite the existence of Hampstead Hill, other communal areas or parks are missing from the Hampstead's' landscape, something that makes the ward an exclusive residential area. In addition, there do not seem to appear strict residential restrictions, but the existing land values and lifestyle of the community declines potential residents from living there.

6.2. Psychiko

A. Psychiko History

Psychiko is an exclusive suburb close to the city center of Athens. The entry of many immigrants from Asia Minor, in 1922, and their installation in the city center of Athens, created a crowded atmosphere. In addition, the existence of socio-economic problems made the upper middle classes moving out to the suburbs, in order to avoid visual contact with immigrants and lower classes (Leontidou, 1989). Although nowadays Psychiko is considered to be quite close to Athens' center, in the early '20s was one of the first areas to be inhabited (Philippides, 2006).

The Psychiko suburb was initially founded by a private construction company (Kafkoura, 2007; Philippides, 2006). The structure and the architecture of the suburb followed the principles of the Garden City (Leontidou, 1989). Until today, the character of the area is maintained and it is considered to be one of the wealthiest areas in Greece. Psychiko is still considered to be a green suburb, still preserving the character of the Garden City movement.

From the beginning of its habitation, Psychiko was an exclusive residential area. Until nowadays, the inhabitants of the suburb meet their commercial needs by the neighboring areas, as there do not exist shops or other commercial markets. Through the existence of laws and regulations, Psychiko is one of the areas that the air pollution is low and one of its basic principles is to offer good quality life (Leontidou, 1989; Municipality of Psychiko, 2010). It is also considered a rather self-sufficient neighborhood. Despite the lack of a commercial center, Psychiko was one of the first areas to develop electricity and water supply systems (Leontidou, 1989; Philippides, 2006). The private company that built the Psychiko suburb also provided private buses to its residents, in order to serve their daily needs in transportation (Philippides, 2006).

B. Psychiko General Profile

Psychiko is a part of the North Suburbs of Athens, which includes wealthy suburbs, and is considered to be one of the wealthiest areas of Greece. According to the National Statistic Institute of Greece, Psychiko has almost 10.000 inhabitants and occupies an area of about 3 km². In Psychiko suburb, are located the largest number of embassies than any other area of Athens, which makes Psychiko one of the best guarded areas of Greece.

The educational level of its residents is one of the highest in the country and they are occupied in high skilled positions. The majority of the population of Psychiko are employers, administrative managers, scientists etc. From its beginning, Psychiko was almost exclusively referring to managers, freelancers, ambassadors, bankers, parliament members etc, creating a “reverse ghetto” (Leontidou, 1989). The number of the low skilled and the laborers is extremely low, indicating the wealthy character of the area. Psychiko suburb is one of the wealthiest suburbs in Greece. Its land values are always increasing, making it impossible for the middle classes or low middle classes to live there. The land values in the suburb range from €5.000 to €8.000 per square meter and in lots of cases reaches €10.000 per square meter (Greek Ministry of Finance, 2011).

Psychiko residents’ have developed the sense of community within their boundaries and have a remarkable cultural activity. The primary objective of the private construction company was to create an aristocratic private suburb profile; from the beginning of its inhabitation, Psychiko was trying to create the proper atmosphere and the proper structures so as to “entice” wealthy residents to live in the neighborhood. Apart from being an exclusive residential area, in Psychiko suburb are located the most expensive and private schools of Athens, preserving its good profile.

C. Psychiko Architectural Aspects

The structure of Psychiko suburb is highly affected by Howards’ philosophy about the “garden city movement”. Its urban plan is designed following the structure of an amphitheatre; the existence of concentric circles and semicircles as well as a radiation following shape, are the basic aspects concerning the urban planning of the suburb (Kafkoulas, 2007; Maloutas, 2000). The main streets of the neighborhood had as a starting point the communal square, in the center of the suburb, reminding the structure of panopticon. Designed in the early ‘20’s, Psychiko suburb was one of the first areas that was not structured

with a disorderly manner, like the rest of the neighborhoods in Athens. On the contrary, Psychiko's urban design was innovative and unprecedented for its time, where there did not exist neither specialized urban planners, nor the knowhow or the proper legislative framework. The existence of private gardens, communal spaces and parks were obligatory during the structure of the suburb, in order to provide to the residents amenities and a healthy atmosphere, away from the pollution of the center (Leontidou, 1989).

Psychiko has strict residential restrictions from the beginning of its inhabitation, which enhances the phenomenon of residential segregation (Leontidou, 1989). The architectural and aesthetic aspects of the buildings are strict and they are determined by laws. The plots had to be large, minimum 500 m² each (Kafkoula, 2007). It is also obligatory to have a garden in the front of the building, which aspects are also defined by law. The highest level of each building must not exceed the third floor and it is allowed only one family per plot and therefore, blocks of flats are forbidden. Moreover, the authorities had the right to reject the buildings that did not meet the aesthetical and architectural standards (Leontidou, 1989). Brick fences or other fortified structures have given their way to green fences, shrubs and trees. Because of the existence of many embassies in the suburb, Psychiko is considered one of the safest neighborhoods, because of the security personnel and CCTV cameras. In addition, the structure of many of the suburb's residences are affected by panopticon; the existence of wide, semicircular balconies may indicate the willingness of the owner to have a wider field of vision. Moreover, it is worth mentioning the existence of turrets in many residences until now (Philippides, 2006). The turrets are a symbol of power and wealth, providing fortification and better field vision.

6.3. Comparison

Both Hampstead and Psychiko suburb are exclusive residential areas, being the wealthiest suburbs of Great Britain and Greece respectively. Although they are not gated suburbs, are fortified through the existence of other measures. Green fences, CCTV cameras, residential restrictions are some of them. Both suburbs are located quite close to the city center and the existence of gardens and green aspects is evident in both cases. In these two suburbs, the educational skills of their residents are in a high level and therefore their economic rewards are equally high. Land values are considered to be very expensive in both cases, which declines other residents from living there. Although in these two suburbs there are lots of differences, as far as the urban design and structure are concerned, in both

neighborhoods residents have an increased feeling of “community” among them. Crime rates in Hampstead are low but for Psychiko suburb there is no such indicator, showing the actual crime within the area. On the other hand, we can assume that due to the existence of embassies, security personnel is high and therefore is difficult to commit a crime within the neighborhood. In both areas there are aspects that indicate the fear factor; strict socio-economic restrictions, CCTV cameras, security personnel and high green fences are some of them. Moreover, in Psychiko suburb there are “panopticon balconies” and turrets, addressing urban fear, that in Hampstead do not exist.

7. Conclusions

Fortified communities exist almost from the beginning of the existence of human settlement. Sentiments regarding self security, territoriality and privacy conquer the human entity. The sentiment of urban fear is cultivated by human beings in an effort to protect their assets and their rights. Therefore, people trying to protect their selves and to defend their territory against intruders, fortify their communities, their neighborhoods and their residences. The urban fortification includes fences, impenetrable walls, moat-like structures, barriers, CCTV cameras, security personnel, restrictions etc. On the other hand, many authors state that the urban fortification is a means to accumulate land values and is driven by racism, xenophobia and fear of the urban otherness.

The existence of economic inequalities and socio-economic segregation also result in the cultivation of fear and, therefore, in residential segregation. Residential segregation is a worldwide phenomenon, taking many different forms; gated communities, residential enclaves and exclusive suburbs are some of them. Although in the United States gated communities is a common phenomenon, in Europe it is still on its way. Despite the fact that in Europe the number of gated communities is quite low, there are lots of areas that are considered to be “exclusive suburbs”. In these suburbs usually fortification methods do exist but take other forms, like green fences, socio-economic restrictions, defensive architecture etc. The existence of these restrictions decline other potential residents to settle in such neighborhoods. This whole array of restrictions and fortified structures address fear of urban otherness; the sentiment of fear influences the structure of our societies and respectively, the city structures enhance or decline urban fear.

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