SECURITY AND THE URBAN PUBLIC SPHERE

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Abstract

Stories of decline have always been told about the city: In the 19th century about the deterioration of morality and order in the modern city, in the 20th century about the destruction of urbanity through functionalist urban development, and today about the loss of public space. This article defends the thesis that, although shifts are taking place in the public and private spheres, it cannot be concluded without further ado that this constitutive polarity of the European city is suffering deterioration. The thesis will be examined by taking the example of new surveillance systems in cities. It is argued that such systems are quite unable to eliminate the fundamental insecurity and ambivalence associated with public space. Fears resulting from social and economic insecurity are projected into public space, which can lead to excessive controls, which can indeed impair the publicness of urban spaces.

Public Space in the European City

"A city is a settlement in which the whole of … life has a tendency to polarise, i.e., to take place either in the social aggregate state of the public sphere or in privacy… The stronger the polarity and interaction between the public and private spheres is, the more urban is … the life of a settlement" (Bahrdt 1998: 83 f.). The polarity between publicness and privacy can be specified in four dimensions (Siebel 2000):

legal: public space is governed by public law, private space is under the private authority of the proprietor – and

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the power to define who may use premises and for what purpose differs accordingly;

functional: the public space of squares and streets is devoted to market and political functions, the private spaces of business and home to production and reproduction;

social: "frontstage" (Goffman 1973) public space is the locale of stylized, reserved behaviour, and that of anonymity. Private space, in contrast, is "backstage" (ibid.), a place of intimacy, emotionality, and "domesticated vital functions" (Gleichmann 1976);

material/symbolic: a broad repertoire of architectural and urban development elements signal the accessibility or exclusivity of spaces. Design, materials, and symbols heighten and spell out the legal, functional, and social differentiation of public and private spaces (Wagner 1999).

With the polarity between publicness and privacy, Bahrdt has developed an ideal-typical concept to characterize the special nature of the European city. But it is more than a heuristic tool for sociological analysis. It is normatively highly charged – at least as far as the functional and social dimensions are concerned. The private sphere is associated with the ideal of the middle-class family with all its promise of life-long intimacy and love, while the public sphere is associated with the ideal of civic publicness, and thus with implemented democracy and societal integration without the exclusion of difference. "We call events public if they are … accessible to all," writes Habermas (1990: 54) and the same is meant by "public places" (ibid.).

There is always a more or less wide gap between ideal and reality. The stories told about the decline of the city are therefore fundamentally questionable, for they explicitly or implicitly assume that this gap did not exist in a better past or that it was then much easier to bridge.

Stories of decline almost always contain elements of truth, but they are very selective, for the gains that went along with the losses and the dark sides behind the façade of a transfigured past usually remain unmentioned.

Public space has never met its normative ideal any more than the private milieu of home and family has always been a refuge of unadulterated peace and harmony. Sexualised violence against women takes places largely in the private sphere, and the perpetrators are usually friends and relatives (Becker 2000). And nowhere are there more murders than among friends and relations. Nor has public space as space always accessible to everyone ever existed in any city. It is always exclusive, as well. Throughout history, cities have differed in whom they choose to deny access to urban spaces, which spaces are off bounds, and how access is denied. Today the homeless, drug addicts, and groups of foreign-looking, male juveniles are affected. In the 19th century it were women and the industrial proletariat. A woman who moved in public space independently and not under the supervision of a male companion ran the risk of being regarded as a *fille publique*, a whore (Wagner 1999: 66). Engels (1970: 70 f.) described Manchester as a city in which one could live for years "without ever … coming into contact with workers," … a "hypocritical" way of building … "sufficient to hide from the eyes of the rich ladies and gentlemen with strong stomachs and weak nerves the misery and dirt that are the complement to their wealth and luxury."

There is good reason to doubt that the gap between the ideal and the reality of public space in the European city is now any wider than in the 19th century. But the quality of the gap has changed. The relationship between publicness and privacy in the city changes continuously, and this change affects all four dimensions, functional, legal, social, and material/symbolic. Somewhat less publicness in one dimension may contrast with more in

another – and the same is true for the other pole, privacy.

With reference to Norbert Elias, Peter Gleichmann (1976) has described the process of civilisation as a process of enclosing corporeality. Since the beginning of the last century, the founding function of the European city, the market function, has been enclosed. It began with shopping arcades and department stores and continues today with the big shopping malls and urban entertainment centres. The number of shopping centres alone in German inner cities and greenfield locations increased from 179 in 1995 to 269 in 2000 (EHI 2000). These modern commercial operating forms can be described as an attempt to enclose the city itself. Everything the potential customer could wish for in the way of goods and services is offered under one roof. These forms of business make themselves independent of an urban environment, the precondition for locating exclusively in terms of the availability of land and accessibility by car.

But there is also a countermovement. With the withdrawal of big industry and the military in the aftermath of deindustrialisation and disarmament, the "forbidden zones" of large industrial and military facilities, previously inaccessible to anyone who did not work there, became open to the public. As derelict industrial sites and former military areas have been transformed into parks, residential neighbourhoods, and office areas, private spaces are becoming public to an extent that can, in sum, compensate the trend towards privatisation of the city. However, this raises the question of the social significance of the spaces that have been privatised or given over to public use. For while barracks or industrial sites never incorporated the functions of public space, the new private public spaces of shopping malls and urban entertainment centres claim precisely to re-stage the public space of cities. These new types of enclosed space are important for the public sphere precisely because they are increasingly popular. Owing to

their mass use and the fact that they become social meeting places and are not restricted to a market function, they take on a new quality. Exclusion from factory premises is likely to have disturbed few people. Exclusion from an urban entertainment centre which has become the focus of leisure activity could impair primary social relations – including those outside working life. If private shopping centres attract more people than public market places they also become the places where the politically weak, medially non-dominant groups have to be present if they are to be heard. In the United States, courts have handed down strongly diverging rulings on the issue of free speech in shopping malls (Friedelbaum 1999). In Germany there has so far been no appreciation of the emerging problem.

The privatisation of the city is paralleled by the societalization of private household functions. Almost all the functions of physical and mental reproduction that have traditionally been performed in the private household can now be handled through recourse to goods and services offered through market or state channels. The infrastructure and merchandise needed to satisfy even the most intimate of bodily and mental promptings are available. The modern city machine with its superabundance of goods, services, and infrastructures can be seen as the complete societalization of the private household. Theoretically, it permits singles to survive without households of their own. However, societalization does not appear to have diminished the importance of a person's own home as a place of repose and withdrawal. The "inner region" of the private sphere (Habermas 1990), which in its present form developed only during industrialisation with the spatial separation of workplace from home, is tending to become even more important. The overall proportion of single-person households (individualised private sphere) is growing, as well as the per capita consumption of living space.

The shift of functions between public and private spaces is accompanied by shifts in legal boundaries. They, too, run in both directions. Derelict sites in the Ruhr District have been transferred to indirect public ownership through the North Rhine-Westphalia Property Fund. Today many of these sites are publicly owned, for example as industrial monuments or public parks. The legal privatisation of the city is illustrated not only by enclosed spaces but in particularly spectacular manner by Celebration City, a town constructed by the Disney Group in Florida for a population of 20,000. As in other so-called common interest developments, the municipality governed by public law is replaced by a private contractual community of owners, public planning by private planning through a big developer, public administration by private management – while the political citizen becomes the private customer of a service provider. Even social control is not restricted merely to a private security service supplementing control by the police and residents. As a "city consumer" the *citoyen* is divested of his self-determinacy: "In Celebration there is a health care service that includes constant monitoring of residents' lifestyle, a school that is controlled by a Disney subsidiary, a fibre optic network linking every home with the central facilities of the town, and courses offered under the title "community integration process" in which Disney employees instruct future residents about the appropriate values system and behaviour for Celebration. (Roost 1998: 322 f.).

Social differentiation between the public and private spheres is also shifting. Every owner of a cellphone can, in principle, be reached anywhere at any time, which means that informal controls by family members and superiors breach the boundaries of home and workplace and penetrate into public space. The air of the city no longer frees a person from the dense informal controls of private life. Vice versa, the telephone, radio, and television have

long since breached the walls of the private sphere. Today the Internet makes it possible to be physically present in the intimate family circle while being mentally and emotionally occupied in a possibly international chatroom (Logemann/Feldhaus 2002). Just as vexing as the rupture of complete integration in the primary family group is the violation of urban codes of behaviour when, for example, mobile phone users and homeless people deal with private matters in public. The cellphone user violates the reserved indifference of Simmel's city dweller with his loud public presentation of business and family affairs no-one wants to hear about. The homeless person who sleeps, eats, washes, and urinates in a public park presents to the eyes of the public what had been banished from public space through a long process of civilization.

Finally, at the symbolic and material levels, public spaces are being increasingly fitted with "exclusive" materials and elitist signs, while, vice versa, spaces that are private from a legal point of view, e.g., the forecourts and atriums of company headquarters, are being designed to resemble public spaces. Materials like marble, granite, and mirrored glass, and design features like elaborate fountain constructions or indoor palm groves act as "social filters" (Carr et al. 1992). Their double social nature makes them both repellent and attractive, depending on the social milieu or social status to which individual city dwellers regard themselves as belonging.

These shifts between public and private spheres are caused primarily by structural processes, but also by technical developments. They include concentration in retailing, the changing role of women, segmentation in the labour and housing markets, the trend towards a service society, the development of modern information and communication technologies, etc. But not all the resulting changes in the public and private spheres are imposed. The homeless are obliged to deal with their private affairs in

public because they have no private space; cellphone users are not. Modern communication technologies expand the options of the individual. The mobile phone and the Internet make the public and private spheres into delocalized spaces that people can access at any time and in any place. The societal structuring of space is to some extent revoked in favour of arbitrary decisions by the individual.

Furthermore, the Internet assures certain elements of public space better than the squares and streets of the city. This is the case, for example, with incomplete integration as a precondition for the city dweller being able to choose what to communicate about himself. In the black ghettoes of American cities, it was found that juveniles never ventured off their turf up to the age of 14, not least of all for fear of discrimination because they were identifiable as ghetto youths by their skin colour, dress, and dialect. They were given access to the Internet and instructed in how to use it. Within two weeks these young people, who had spent their entire lives within their ghettoes, had established contact with people as far away as Australia and England. The Internet gave them the opportunity to construct a self minus the characteristics that could trigger discrimination. The public space provided by the Internet is less predisposed to exclusion on racial grounds. Nevertheless, the Internet is no substitute for the public space of the city. Firstly, financial and cognitive resources are needed to use it. Secondly, "there is literally no room in Internet's 'public space' for a homeless person to live in. Nor can their needs, desires, and political representations ever be seen in the manner that they can be seen in the spaces of the city." (Mitchell 1995: 123). The prime and unique political importance of public space lies in the direct visibility and sensory experience of difference. Rauterberg (2002) points to a second important political aspect that the Internet cannot supplant. Today the interplay of virtual and material

public space often determines the political functions of public sphere. The Internet has a role to play in organising and mobilising social movements, whose protest, however, continues to manifest itself in the streets and squares of cities, regardless who the demonstrators are: globalisation opponents or German neo-Nazis.

These examples show that a change in the form assumed by the polarity between public and private spheres does not automatically mean the polarity is deteriorating. The nature of the polarity differs from social group to social group and from social context to social context. Before it can be said that the gap between normative ideal and empirical reality has widened, it must be determined whether the modalities in which norm and reality diverge have changed. The example of public space and security throws light on this question.

The Ambivalence of Social Control in the City

Within the medieval city, violence was as common as it is today in American cities (Schwerhoff 2000, 147). Nevertheless the city was considered an island of peace. The devil and all conceivable dangers loomed in the surrounding countryside beyond the city walls. In the 19th century the position was reversed: with the establishment of the state monopoly of force and power and the mastering of nature, the countryside became a peaceful pastoral idyll and the city a dangerous place. Danger threatened no longer from without but from within. This brought changes in control strategies. They were now no longer directed outwards but focused inwards on the inhabitants of the city themselves. The civil guard on the city walls was replaced by police ensuring that traffic rules were obeyed in the streets. Only in the de jure private gated new towns that are currently being built for thousands if not ten thousands of residents in the United States, Argentina, or Indonesia, are

outwardly directed controls linked with internal security. Walls are again being built against the outside world, and access is monitored by security personnel through "passport controls" or technically by barcode scanners. Internally, particularist civil-law norms, set forth in so-called "covenants, conditions & restrictions" – which attain the quality of medieval clothing codes – regulate behaviour in the private towns. CCTV surveillance and the security service employed and paid by residents monitor compliance with these norms. The larger gated new towns are, the more frequently separate neighbourhoods are defined in them for socially and culturally homogeneous groups by means of fences or additional walls – as, for example, in the 1,600 hectare private town of Nordelta near Buenos Aires (Janoschka 2002) or in Green Valley, Nevada, built for 60,000 inhabitants (Blakely/Snyder 1997).

Changes in social control in cities are currently taking place in the legal dimension, in organisational form, in technology, and in design (Wehrheim 2002).

In the legal dimension, local and state security and regulatory legislation is currently being amended to provide stronger regulation of the use and accessibility of public spaces. The options of the executive for issuing orders to stay away are being extended and public CCTV surveillance is being placed on a firmer legal basis. The possibility of carrying out controls in places defined as dangerous by the police independently of any suspicion is also a new development from the 1990s. Finally, in connection with the de jure private spaces of malls and urban entertainment centres or the open ground floors of tower buildings, particularist norms are becoming more important under which these new "public" spaces are governed by differing, locally differentiated normativities. Distributing flyers can be forbidden, as well as running, begging, eating, or playing cards. Even "suitable clothing"

is occasional required without being specified.

Forms of organisation and intervention in social control vary in close parallel with legal changes. Private security services organised on market lines are spreading alongside public security institutions. “Security” is one of the biggest growth markets in the world. In addition, mixed forms are emerging in the form of public private partnerships in which cooperation between formal and informal controls is organised in a wide variety of security partnerships (neighbourhood watch, community policing programmes, Bavarian security watch or Brandenburg municipal security partnerships). Moreover, new police strategies like “zero tolerance policing” are under discussion.

In the technical dimension, research is focused mainly on the increase in public closed circuit television surveillance (CCTV). This technique is now widespread in all larger British centres. While surveillance cameras were in isolated use in publicly accessible spaces in German cities as long ago as the 1950s, Gössner (2000) estimates that the number has now grown to 500,000 – although such figures are difficult to verify owing to the large number of private operators. Without any claim to providing a complete list, explicit police CCTV surveillance for crime control purposes is currently in use in Bernau, Bielefeld, Bremen, Dessau, Dresden, Erkner, Flensburg, Frankfurt am Main, Fulda, Halle, Hofheim/Taunus, Leipzig, Mannheim, Potsdam, Rathenow, Regensburg, Stuttgart, Magdeburg und Westerland/Sylt (Nogala 2002).

The architecture and aesthetics of spaces are relevant for the so-called “defensible space” (Newman 1972) and “crime prevention through environmental design” (Crowe 1991) approaches. The use of CCTV also has consequences for the design of public spaces, since it requires places to easy to see into and monitor.

With regard to all four dimensions, however, opinions are divided on whether various new forms of control have an impact, and what sort of impact, on different types of offence, on so-called “quality of life crimes” like begging, graffiti spraying, the public consumption of alcohol, etc., and whether they influence the subjective sense of insecurity (cf., for example, Greene 1999; Schweitzer et al. 1999; Home Office 2002; Boers 1995; Brown 1999).

The new forms of “power intervention in urban space” (De Marinis) are often criticised as threatening the public nature of urban spaces. This criticism is justified, but it is also mistaken because it overlooks that security or at least the sense of security is a basic precondition for the public use of spaces. Parks in which women fear being raped and streets where men fear being mugged are exclusive places to be avoided by the people who suffer from such fears. Security – at least for body, life, and property – is prerequisite for public spaces. Public space requires effective social controls, and without them it is not even conceivable. At the same time, however, all forms of social control threaten to restrict the public sphere. The ambivalent relationship between social control and public space is immanent in the city. The general accessibility of the city’s public space depends on a precarious balance between anonymity and social control, between security and a sense of insecurity, between the familiar and the unknown, between similarity and difference. These ambivalences are the subject of sociological urbanity theories, and are the yardstick for the public nature of urban spaces. Zygmunt Bauman (1997) writes of the discrepancy between what one can know about a situation in public space and what one needs to know in order to control the situation. Hans Paul Bahrdt (1998) writes about incomplete integration in public space, by which he means the fact that everyone who is present there becomes distinguishable to

others only through a very small excerpt from his role repertoire. Public space is a space in which people who know almost nothing about one another have to enter into arrangements. Georg Simmel (edition 1992: 765) writes about the ambivalence between physical proximity and social distance, which is typical for the city as a place where “distance is close.”

Fear of losing control in public space may combine with fear of losing inner control. According to Simmel, the stranger is the “objective human being” (edition 1992: 767). He is first of all an external observer who for this reason is capable of particular reflection. But this objective distance also makes him threatening. Schütz (1972) explains the “disloyalty” of the stranger as due to the fact that he calls in question the self-evident “civilisation patterns,” the routinized procedures of everyday life, the values and norms of the native. The stranger “endangers” the identities of city users not only by confronting them permanently with novelty but even more so by revealing other possibilities of acting and behaving which are tempting to try. The stranger seduces, the self suffers uncertainty. “We are all foreigners: there is a part of us that does not belong to us, something indecipherable and impenetrable. … They [strangers] frighten me because, ultimately, I am afraid of myself” (Elie Wiesel; quoted from: Robins 1995: 56).

The feelings of insecurity engendered by the fear of crime, the fear of losing control, and the fear of the stranger that are inherent in public space can be analytically separated; empirically, however, they blend: “Fear of crime is fear of strangers” (Lofland 1995). The fear of violence and crime is projected onto the figure of the stranger in proportion to how socially and culturally alien he is. In the image of the “African drug dealer” or the “juvenile delinquent” – both of them strangers – the stranger is reduced to the danger he represents. The encounter with

strangers and with differences causes the experience of insecurity in public space and it is why public space is productive. Public space is imbued with the ambivalence of “desire and fear” (Robins 1995; Nahnsen 2002). “The city is the locality of desire and fear, of opportunity and threat. It attracts and repels and cannot do the one without the other.” (Bauman 1997: 223). The stranger is always both enticing and threatening. He arouses curiosity but also aversion, which, according to Simmel, can escalate into hate and hostility. Any attempt by whatever control strategies to eliminate such insecurity objectively from public space diminishes its public nature, imperils its integrative and emancipatory role and its function as a place of learning. In public space, the city dweller learns how to deal with difference in everyday life and with the forms of stylised behaviour prerequisite for civilised coexistence in urban spaces described by Bahrdt and Goffman.

Control in public space is above all else self-control. For Bauman, Bahrdt, and Simmel, it is up to the urbanised individual alone to strike a balance between threat and temptation, between adventure and fear. It is the task of the individual to endure the fundamental insecurity in the public space of the city. Bahrdt (1998) calls the “resigned tolerance” of the city dweller “an urban virtue,” because it grants the stranger, even if he is not understood, an equal and in principle understandable identity. Simmel (edition 1995) writes of the city-dweller self-armoured with indifference, reserve, and even nonchalance. The urban life style as described by the sociological theoreticians of the city is an extremely demanding place. For there is much more to it than pleasurably contemplating rich displays of wares in pedestrian precincts. The basic rule of the urban way of life is: Keep your distance. One does not bother strangers with one’s business, family, or digestive concerns, and, as far as possible, one ignore the affairs of

others, as well. “Civil inattention” prevails (Goffman 1971).

The urban way of life as civilised coping with insecurity is a product of the process of civilisation, which Norbert Elias (1989) has described as a process by which discipline imposed from outside is internalized. Whatever has to be hidden or might have to be ignored changes in the course of time. The subjects of urban self-discipline are historically volatile. And the behaviours that overstretch urban self-control and call for police intervention also shift. In the 19th century urinating in public was quite permissible, but holding hands, kissing, and displaying beringed navels were not. Today the reverse tends to be true. Some authors explain the topicality of security in cities as the result of, among other things, the informalisation of social norms and the relaxation of internalised controls (Keim 1997; Schubert 2000). Although this thesis has not been empirically proven, innovations in the dimensions of urban social control such as those we have mentioned are interpreted as attempts to achieve (or regain?) intrinsic affective control by means of heteronomous state and market constraints. The image of CCTV surveillance as a Benthamesque panopticon in which everyone must constantly reckon with being under observation without ever knowing if, when, or by whom, is an indication of this. The simultaneous deployment of security personnel who issue warnings at the slightest sign of deviant behaviour and of dummy surveillance cameras that neither take nor transmit pictures but are nevertheless intended to impose discipline, concretise this evidence. The simulation of surveillance is supposed to produce social (self-) control.

Change, not Decline

The current changes in social controls parallel general

changes in the service society. The key words are societalization, privatization, and materialization. Meals are no longer brought to the table at home by the housewife but distributed in canteens, bought in restaurants, or taken as industrial finished products from the microwave oven. The old and sick are no longer cared for in the social networks of family and neighbourhood but in city hospitals, by private homecare services, or in a virtual old people's home, in which staff services have largely assumed material form as video cameras, monitors, and computers (Häußermann/Siebel 1995). Similar changes are to be observed in the field of social control. The system of informal control by passers-by, neighbours, and residents in the city street as described by Jane Jacobs (1976) has now been replaced by societalized controls either provided by the state in the form of police, organised on market lines in the shape of private security services, or installed in industrialised and materialized form as alarm systems and surveillance cameras. Informal social control is being increasingly superseded by subject-object relationships between controllers and controlled. A relationship of domination is replacing subject-subject relations among city dwellers.

Societalization, privatization, and materialization characterize change in the modalities in which society ensures security. They provoke new threats to the public space of the city, for they call into question one of its central qualities: anonymity. Anonymity is perhaps the most striking example of the city's ambivalence. The concept symbolises both the danger and the freedom that are associated with the city: the danger of social isolation and of falling victim to criminal acts. In future, CCTV will make the automatic identification of passers-by possible (Norris/Moran/Armstrong 1999). Since electronic information can be stored and transported at will, such identification is in principle possible at any time and by

anyone who gets hold of the information. This threatens a basic prerequisite of public space, anonymity, and the freedom of city dwellers to disclose only an excerpt of their personality. This undermines the freedom associated with the city for even the well-established citizen to adopt unusual political positions, or even to enter less reputable establishments.

The assumption of policing functions by private security services again means a shift in power. Control is transferred from public authorities to private players, who are politically more difficult to supervise. And to the extent that security as a public good becomes a privately acquireable commodity, security becomes another element of social inequity. Cities appear to be fragmenting more and more into places for social groups that have access to security and places for social groups who cannot afford this commodity and who are defined as a risk for others. Preventive policing strategies are directed towards keeping certain modes of behaviour – like drinking beer – and certain social groups out of public spaces. This calls into question another fundamental precondition of public space: its general accessibility.

However real these threats may be, they cannot justify the thesis of the decline of publicness in the supervised city. There are five arguments against it.

It is by no means certain that informal controls by neighbours and relatives do not have a far more repressive and much more comprehensive impact than police, security guards, and surveillance cameras together. The air of the city is free not least of all because the dense informal controls that prevail in village communities have no hold, "only" formal controls. That the police are meanwhile seeking to reactivate informal neighbourhood controls is often said to be due to financial problems. It could also be an indication that the police are aware that informal

controls are more effective. Municipal security partnerships and security watches offer the option of integrating informal and formal social controls.

Social controls are always both a precondition for and a threat to publicness. Every change in the modalities of social control accordingly means a change in the sort of endangerment as well as a change in the how public space is assured. For security is also a condition for the accessibility of urban spaces. Where self-discipline and informal social controls cannot safeguard body, life, and property, formal controls are a prerequisite for accessibility. Even the most blasé of Simmel's city dwellers who has his wallet stolen will abandon his indifferent reserve and call for the police or at least for social workers.

Only in Utopia does the normative ideal of public space coincide with societal reality. In empirical societies, public space is also necessarily exclusive – namely of certain behaviours and of certain social groups.

Individuals and groups that tend to be negative addressees of surveillance develop coping strategies to escape control or exclusion. Surveillance seldom works as completely as desired. Impoverished old women take shopping bags with them into malls so that they can spend time there without actually shopping. Children and adolescents avoid hanging around in groups in one and the same spot within a shopping centre. They keep on the move. Homeless people adapt even to airports by using the sanitary facilities there, which allows them to look less neglected and thus less conspicuous.

The thesis of the decline of publicness is one of a series of decline myths about the big city, for "a myth, I might point out, is not a lie. It is something almost everyone wants to believe. In believing it he sometimes embraces a cold figure too warmly." (De Grazia 1964: 63).

Some critics of the increase in private security services indulge in such embraces. Between 1992 and 2000, the number of companies belonging to the Federal Association of German Property Security Companies almost doubled from 1,290 to 2,500, and the number of people they employed from 97,000 to 130,000 (BDWS 2000). To at least some extent, this figure is due to a statistical artefact which can be explained by increased outsourcing. Department store detectives, railway police, and factory security services have always existed. But the people who perform these functions used to be directly employed by the demanders of security and therefore appeared on the books as employees in commerce, transport, and industry. If they are today in the employ of service providers specialised in security their numbers increase in sectoral statistics. But the actual number of private security personnel need not have increased to the same extent.

Nor can any conclusions be drawn from sales figures for CCTV systems about surveillance in cities. Not every surveillance camera is used for disciplinary purposes or to exclude undesirable elements from public spaces. In fact, cameras are often used only to regulate the flow of traffic, to monitor entrances or delivery zones, or to help ships dock.

Projection of Fears

There is one plausible argument for the thesis that the quality of public space is at greater risk today than in the past, at least in comparison with the 1950s and 1960s, the “golden years” of capitalism. It is concerned not with changes in the modalities of social control but with changes in what gives rise to feelings of insecurity. It claims that the call for greater security in public spaces is to calm quite different fears that have nothing to do with the dangers that

threaten in the public space of the city and which can therefore not be laid to rest by a greater police presence and more CCTV cameras. This could lead to excessive demands for control which, if met, would necessarily erode the publicness of urban spaces. “The first priority in East and West, for young and old, for women and men, and for cities and towns is ‘quiet and order’ in both the literal and figurative senses.” (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2002: 1). 87 per cent of people in villages and 89 per cent of city dwellers state that what they demand of the place where they live is first of all “protection against crime” (ibid.). The high priority given to security in both city and country cannot be attributed to dangers in urban areas alone. It has a whole bundle of causes over and beyond the assumption that crime has really increased in cities.

- Demographic change. Old people cannot run away or defend themselves so well. Naturally, they are therefore more fearful. As the number of old people increases – the over 60s age group in West German cities doubled between 1950 and 1980 (Walther 1998: 27) – the proportion of those who feel unsafe increases as well.
- Migration. It increases the visibility of strangers, thus arousing a sense of threat among the native population.
- Changes in the labour market. Since the 1970s, growing minorities have suffered downward social mobility and exclusion from the labour market. This existential insecurity undermines objective preconditions for the urban way of life (Häußermann 1995). Social integration including material security is a prerequisite for integrative public space, and vice versa.
- Erosion of the welfare state. The increasing threat to jobs and individual careers and cuts in social services cause social insecurity. Fear of downward mobility is redefined as fear of crime.

- Dirt and vandalism. Such symbolic violations of public order can be interpreted as signals of a dangerous relaxation of self-control in a civilised, urban way of life. In keeping with the Thomas theorem, if individuals interpret a situation as threatening, it actually becomes threatening regardless of its "objective" properties.
- Privatisation of the media. It has led to an accumulation of spectacular reports on crime that have dramatised the image of the dangerousness of the city. Violence is part and parcel of the entertainment sector, whether the music industry, video games, reality TV, the daily crime thriller, the TV news in the evening and at breakfast, not to mention Hollywood action films about gangs in American hyper-ghettoes.
- Security is being commodified. A sense of insecurity is the precondition for a flourishing market in locks, security guards, biometric access control systems, photoelectric beam controls, surveillance cameras, etc. Fears are nurtured for economic purposes.
- Changes in crime control. Away from the "penal welfarism" of the 1960s / 1970s with its orientation on the concept of resocialization towards the management of crime risks and the politically instrumentalized demonization of crime and criminals (Garland 2001). "Law and order" is becoming a subject for electoral campaigns across all party lines. Politicians and government players want to demonstrate their ability to take action, which they have lost in other policy areas.
- Urban development processes. The spatial separation of functions and social groups is producing more and more homogeneous spaces in which the experience of difference is no longer an everyday one. This could diminish the ability to deal calmly with alienness.
- Individualization: The erosion of traditional milieus and the pluralisation of life styles make it more difficult to

interpret or classify the social roles displayed by others through their clothing and appearance. Stylised city dweller behaviours are being superseded by the studied staging of individuality. Mistrust, indeed, the assumption that the stranger has criminal intentions, appears subjectively "rational," according to Hitzler (1998: 204), to the extent that the traditional milieus characterised by relative reliability and predictability in social relations dissolve. Disquieting alienness is heightened.

- Splitting of housing markets. The filter mechanisms in urban housing markets guide inmigrants to precisely the neighbourhoods where they come across native Germans living in existentially precarious situations, and who for this reason are least able to embark on the adventure of dealing with strangers in resigned tolerance and urban virtuousness. The same can usually be said of the migrants themselves.

Fragmentation of the city. Three island systems are developing in cities. At the lowest level localized poverty milieus, next the working, leisure, and residential areas of the various middle class lifestyle groups, and above that the milieu of internationally oriented, highly qualified workers. These different milieus overlap in the urban area. Many undesired neighbouring contacts arise whose boundaries are now to be controlled. The deeper the social clefts in society are, the more urgent such controls are felt to be.

The discussion on security in the city is thus nurtured by a fatal mixture of real changes, changed perception patterns, and unconscious projections and shifts. The result could be an excessive demand for security, which the police and CCTV are quite unable to meet in public space. The increasingly marketable product security is directed towards providing protection against crime (itself a promise that can scarcely be kept), and not towards protection

against unemployment.

The fundamental insecurity of the city is still less resolved. It is even likely that the sense of insecurity will be exacerbated by the developments described – the surveillance and homogenisation of inner city places. There are three reasons. First, the productive potential of public space as a place of learning and integration is at risk, so that it is becoming more and more difficult to cope with alienness or to distinguish between real dangers and mere disturbances/insecurities. Second, the will to civil courage is at risk, the will to informal social control by residents and passers-by. This aspect has been discussed particularly with regard to CCTV surveillance (Bannister et al. 1999). The belief that everything can be seen by the electronic eye reduces the willingness to show personal initiative and to exercise informal control through the natural "eyes upon the street" which Jane Jacobs (1976) has described as the precondition for the vitality, security, and economic viability of urban districts. Third, the perception of new control forms differs from social group to social group. They can be interpreted as an increase in security or they can produce feelings of "guilt and fear" (Koskela 1999), thus provoking either negative associations of danger or of permanent surveillance. The supply and demand of security can trigger a spiral which can result in social controls no longer guaranteeing security as the precondition for public space but instead eroding the publicness of urban spaces.

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