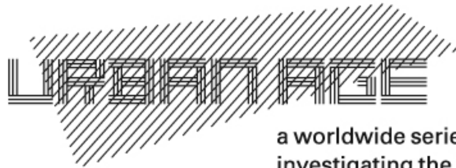

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FEELING SAFE IN THE CROWD. THE CASE OF NEW YORK

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FEELING SAFE IN THE CROWD. THE CASE OF NEW YORK

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Reflection Papers

The Urban Age reflection papers summarize the city specific investigation within each core knowledge area by merging the preliminary research with the debates at each regional conference. They are written for a general audience from a variety of backgrounds and need to inform both urban scholars and practitioners. It is part of the project's mission to provide a high level of interdisciplinary accessibility and practical relevance to all thematic areas while also complying with the rigour of each professional or academic discipline. Each locality is highlighted not to evaluate existing urban practice but to rather learn from both its successes and failures; to put forward a consensus on city development and to identify areas of disagreement. Reflection papers guarantee the continuity of outputs that will ultimately lead to a more general publication as the project's final product.

Abstract

An important virtue of public space is that it transmits a sense of security among strangers. This capacity to make people "feel safe in the crowd" has kept cities cohesive through history and refutes visions that see violence and urban fragmentation as unavoidable. Yet, such public space is now being eroded by new and old threats: new lethal threats of international terrorism and well-known problems such as urban crime and social disorder, and on the other hand, the overreactions to such threats evidenced in the militarization of urban space and its pervasive commercialization. With a focus on the city of New York, this paper analyses these threats as it attempts to answer the following questions: what resources do cities have to deal with major risks and threats by their own in times of great global uncertainty? How do they transmit a sense of safety to both their residents and to the investors, commuters and tourists on whom they depend? Can and should safety be co-produced by institutions and citizens? If so, what shape should this co-production take?

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FEELING SAFE IN THE CROWD. THE CASE OF NEW YORK

Introduction

Two visions permeate the narration on cities since their origins. An anti-urban vision links insecurity, crime, corruption, immorality and violence to the diversity and density of populations in urban places and it justifies social and territorial enclosures supported by market forces and punitive populisms. The threats associated with the city have been most forcefully articulated by Thomas Jefferson but a persistent distrust of the city is also found in intellectual discourses from the eighteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century in the United States. These discourses tend to make the symbolic and material flight to the countryside a central feature of American culture.[1] The second vision, on the opposite, looks at cities as sanctuaries and sites of protection from dangers associated with the hinterland - and contemporarily from real and imagined threats found in the “outside”, in for example the Muslim-Arabic world. Such vision refuses to see violence and urban fragmentation as unavoidable. It emphasizes that throughout history cities have developed techniques and know-how to protect their architectural splendour, their diverse populations, their wealth and their cultures from enemies and all kinds of risks. A "civilizing process" put an end to the masses' tendency to seek justice for themselves and urban safety was delegated to professionals and specialized institutions.[2] All over Europe, the city has traditionally embodied the concept of political space to which citizens relate, a space of deliberation since the Greek polis, a foundation of authority since Rome, the birthplace of communal liberties in the Middle Ages, and a territorial regulator of conflicts without wars since the Renaissance.[3] However, the coherent political meaning of the city as a bounded entity is currently challenged. Unregulated and uncontrolled flows impact on and destabilize cities everywhere; urban spaces inhale and exhale flux. If the city is a mental experience allowing to bring back the outside inside, what are citizens - and in our case New Yorkers - to bring back from the outside if not diffuse fears, a lack of bearings and the feeling that their urban sanctuary is no longer sheltering them from modern-day kamikazes and a hateful radicalism that aims at their destruction?

Despite their structural constraints, what resources do cities have to deal with major risks and threats by their own in times of great global uncertainty? How do they transmit a sense of safety to both their residents and to the investors, commuters and tourists on whom they depend? Can and should safety be co-produced by institutions and citizens? If so, what shape should this co-production take? These questions are relevant in the light of both new lethal threats and well-known problems such as urban crime and social disorder. They should also be posed with regard to responses to such threats that themselves constitute dangers to the public life of cities, namely the militarisation of urban public space and none the least, its pervasive commercialisation.

1. The threats from enigmatic enemies

The irruption of external attacks in the urban fabric of New York City on 9/11 has brought a necessity to rethink security in cities, and to incorporate new, indeterminate dangers in the usual registers of the risks that urban dwellers have to face. It has been argued that uncertain times demand an unconventional analysis –usual dimensions of analysis no longer appear relevant.[4] As David Campbell expresses it: "Danger is not an objective condition... Anything can be a risk; it all depends on how one analyses the danger and considers the event. As Kant might have put it, the category of risk is a category of the understanding; it cannot be given in sensibility or in intuition. Not all risks are equal and not all risks are interpreted as dangers.”[5]
With the above framework in mind, stimulating comparisons can be drawn to assess how state actors in charge of security react to the threat of terrorism. The following paragraphs consider the highly contrastive approaches taken in the United States and France but also highlight the differences that appear at the federal and municipal levels in the provision of

security for a city as important as New York.

While no one would deny that New York, perhaps the most visible urban symbol of American glory, is a continuous target for terrorists, one may question the discourse of war with which the current administration at the national level has reacted to this threat. It is most difficult to wage war to an invisible and fluid enemy, a stealth network hard to identify and locate clearly. Yet it is well known that by invoking security, the state activates what Carl Schmitt called its sovereign right to decide on the exception. State actors declare the problem of terrorism to involve imperatives that call for authoritative decision rather than democratic deliberation (indecision). Hence they warrant the restriction of basic liberties as the price to be paid for the maintenance of public security.

The war on terror has eclipsed previous wars on crime and on drugs in American cities. Fear is nurtured and maintained with care by a conservative regime which finds its historical mission in a new version of the struggle between good and evil and that reinforces its executive power at the expense of civil and institutional democratic controls. Continuous signals urge citizens to be "alert" and fuel an indeterminate feeling of anxiety without an object, which ironically is precisely what terrorists aim for. Such modes of representation also rely on figures of Otherness, the alien and the subversive in the articulation of danger.[6] They also mobilise tropes of "enlightened catastrophism" with people and bureaucracies projected into the future at a point in time when another catastrophe has just occurred in order to minimize or neutralize its reoccurrence. If other attacks are likely to happen, fate should not be challenged, it is thought and many preventive actions must be pursued. This approach was previously used to assess dangers associated with the Cold War and low-intensity conflicts and mobilized ideological as well as military defences. Since 9/11, three elements mark new trends in Washington: a culture of suspicion, a culture of secrecy and the mobilization of citizens as spies to face "the erasure of the markers of certainty."[7]

This type of response is unusual in a country like France which has also been submitted to terrorist attacks in the last three decades. A national silence about threats prevails due to a shared feeling among the highest authorities in charge of security that intelligence reports about terrorism are never 100% reliable. Risks cannot be realistically predicted, neither for the nature of the danger, its scale, its likelihood nor its targets. As a consequence, French political authorities are reluctant to overreact, dramatize risks and create "moral panics" (public psychosis). This parsimony is partially attributable to the secrecy and lack of transparency characteristic of the French bureaucracy, but there are also other reasons behind this policy. Given the large Muslim populations present in large French cities and a xenophobic party with a strong foothold in the country's political life, it is also thought to be hazardous to launch red-level alerts that could potentially create tensions among multicultural crowds sharing public spaces and services. In an age of global unrest and uncertainty, public sector elites seem intent on producing forms of trust and abstract solidarity between strangers that alleviate their anxieties. They see this as a prerequisite to secure and democratic political communities.

The American federal government deploys a rhetoric that emphasises the role of science and technology in the protection of the homeland. This option brings back to mind the controversy occurring after an earthquake and ensuing fire destroyed Lisboa in 1755, when those who putting their hopes in technology and science for future protection as Leibnitz were mocked by Voltaire and his legendary pessimism. Currently, in the U.S. the transformation of a classical reactive system to a one that is proactive relies on advanced new technologies of surveillance, identification and intelligence such as biometric devices, microchips, enormous integrated databases, etc. Yet technologies are not neutral and it is their insertion in a local society which makes them real and confers them with meaning. One may wonder whether this response is not a threat in itself, as it produces misplaced hopes. Such technologies are indeed limited in terms of the human capacity to use them and they are also highly selective. For instance, there have been reports that petro-chemical installations in a range not too distant from the World Trade Centre site were not well protected. Other reports indicated that the FBI had a backlog of 120,000 hours of recorded conversations that have not been analysed because of a lack of human resources and appropriate translators. Such developments raise major questions: How to distinguish the friend from the infiltrated enemy in the current context of indetermination and risk? What is meant by surveillance? What are its main characteristics? Are new techniques categorizing groups at risk more complex now as they combine military and police techniques with those of marketing and efficiency used by corporations? Supposing that the 100 billion dollar market servicing security programs weighs heavily on the choices of the surveillance society, what counter-powers can be mobilized to protect civil liberties?
The federal government has a security strategy for New York and other large cities that is based on four different approaches: the surveillance of urban space;

monitoring of populations and their possessions; protection of critical infrastructures; and direct pursuing of terrorist networks. However, the specific relationship between the federal level, the city and its region remains complex.[8] Local police analysts face constraints when they attempt to access classified federal documents. Trust is missing. Making urban space secure and protecting its populations requires coordination between a wide diversity of actors and overlapping authorities. Some of them are nevertheless bypassed because of structural impediments, slow processing times and organizational rivalries. The magnitude of the Department of Homeland Security – composed of twenty two different agencies each with its own organizational culture – raises questions of fragmentation and efficiency. Not to mention the fragmentary role and lack of coordination among the numerous private security agencies involved. Again, this is to highly contrastive with the single command unit enforced by the Paris Prefect of Police. He is in charge of the established Paris Defence Zone including the city and its region and his services supervise the protection of sensitive infrastructures. Army generals, the general in charge of fire brigades, public hospital chiefs, public transportation authorities, counter-terrorist experts in bio-, radio- and chemical threats all report to him and they dialogue with their counterparts across the vertical hierarchy. Most of all, their work relies on experienced intelligence services with a good knowledge of the Arabic-Muslim world on the field. They are also supported by the judicial level and by Europol mechanisms, although the latter could be more developed. This unit of design, strategy and enforcement which may seem highly centralised and authoritarian to some observers nevertheless produces tangible results. By contrast, the fragmentation of decision-making in the case of New York, which can be interpreted as freer and more democratic, is also counterproductive at times when coordinated action is required to face an external threat or meet a goal. The case of the aborted West Side Stadium in which major public and private actors could not reach an agreement is a clear example of such lack of coordination. In the opinion of some, not being able to provide a stadium is what cost the city its chance of being host for the 2012 Olympic Games.

A positive lesson can be drawn, however, when we look at New York and New Jersey local law enforcers and the "entrenched realism" that they display when confronted to the risks of terrorism.[9] They have an excellent knowledge of city streets and their social environment. Buildings have been identified one after the other as group A or B as critical infrastructures requiring specific types of protection. While specialized sections of the New York Police Department (NYPD) do not minimize the risks perpetrated by dormant networks or determined suicide-bombers, they pointed out in the interviews I carried with them that if terrorist networks are indeed globalised, they do hit strategic sites, symbols and buildings which are highly localized. For instance, Al Qaida was thought to possess weapons of mass destruction, yet all the attacks so far have been performed with conventional tools on specific urban territories. It is therefore legitimate to rely as much on experienced local know-how as on new technologies even if many of the local measures arguably aim at soothing public opinion rather than at impeding further attacks since federal information relative to terrorism is largely kept secret to them. Nevertheless, local initiatives have connected New York City with major players in charge of security all over the world. In that respect, the globalisation of public and private actors beyond traditional international relations carried on by national governments and the wide dissemination and availability of information have been helpful.

2. Crime and deviance as foes of urban life.

Is there a link between new crimes embodied by hyper-terrorism and mill-of-the day crimes? The efficiency of local law enforcers exerting surveillance on buildings, streets, subways answers the question. Whether they are sent the picture of a suspicious building via German Interpol based on information provided by suspected terrorists or they hear about such building from regular informers, their search will still be part of police work and their main goal will still be to guarantee the safety of citizens and to secure law and order in the city. Similarly, when they establish connections with Arab-Muslim organizations at the neighbourhood level, their actions are helpful to both fight terrorism and to prevent gang wars or hate crimes from taking place.

The gains in street safety produced in little more than a decade have been spectacular in New York. Since 1990, homicides have continuously declined in New York City from a rate of 29 for 100 000 residents (2269 murders) to around 6 for 100 000currently (600 murders). Criminologists frequently use this estimator to evaluate overall crime levels because homicide rates are the most serious of crimes and, by their very nature, they are less underestimated than other types of crime. Furthermore, other types of crime have declined as well and this downward trend is confirmed in all boroughs. The decline in crime in New York correlates temporally to an intensification of the city's policing during this period. As some analysts see the latter as the riding cause behind these improvements in New York's safety, others challenge that conclusion.

It is often argued that there have also been spectacular drops in crime rates for cities such as Boston or San Diego which did not use the same New York style "zero tolerance" policies.[10] A number of criminologists look at the downward trend in crime in the context of the three epidemics of gun violence that hit New York periodically over the past forty years and whose break out and receding phases are equally as difficult to explain given the multiple causes to which they respond. In any case, the intensification of policing in New York has had other important consequences.[11] Many people have been arrested by the police and then incarcerated, with numbers growing dramatically since 1973 when strict anti-drugs legislation was passed at the state level. As Fagan shows, "police tactics in this era were controversial and racialised and the racial imbalances in policing were often flashpoints for social tension conflict between minority citizens and police since 1994...In many African American communities, the racial breach was an impediment to police-citizen cooperation."[12] Minorities' distrust of the police has been partly reduced in 2003 after the New York Police Department (NYPD) signed a consent decree prohibiting the practice of racial profiling. An investigation relative to the street crime unit led by U.S. Attorney General M.J. White confirmed the results found by New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer: African-Americans who make 25% of the population formed half of those stopped, Latinos who are just as many were one third of those stopped while Whites or Caucasians, 43,4% of the population were 13% of those stopped. The City of New York has agreed to spend $1.5 million dollars in the creation of files to evaluate the fairness of NYPD procedures; these files are to be filled in by street officers and processed electronically.

It cannot be denied that certain spaces, home to the poorest and the most excluded racial minorities, remain hot spots for crime. Even though crime has been spectacularly reduced in the city after the crack epidemic receded, improvements occurred at a smaller scale in areas requiring a multi-dimensional treatment. For instance, immigrant neighbourhoods, where homicide rates remain low, do not experience problems as acute as African-American neighbourhoods. Also, whether institutions can act efficiently when most citizens think society is unfair indeed remains a basic question. Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia has pointed out that this question applies to New York as to any city where a significant share of the population suffers conditions of economic and social exclusion. In such cities, institutions find themselves lacking in moral authority and legitimacy to punish criminals and are not able to rely on citizens to report trespasses to the law. Such counter-worlds are regulated by parallel norms as residents stretch them to go by and to secure their everyday survival.

What can architecture do for security? Can architects just like community based organizations improve security and the quality of environment? Can they help people take charge of public space via their designs and expertise and bring them a sense of "delight" rather submitting them to dead plazas and security devices? In other words, is participatory design to be advocated?
The evolution of the South Bronx since its lowest point in the 1970s offers an interesting answers to these questions. Security improvements in New York's low-income neighbourhoods relate indeed, at least partially, to the increased economic and social diversity of populations in the new housing developments that have been encouraged by public, private and parochial initiatives and new architectural design. As home-ownership rates increased in the neighbourhood, there was also stake holder growth, coming from the new home-owners in the area. With interests tied to maintaining and even raising their property values, residents found paybacks from the rule of law; they granted more legitimacy to institutions and participated more in social regulation and control with the help of planners and architects.

The case of Red Hook in Brooklyn is less clear in terms of neighbourhood change. As observed by J. Fagan, there, 80% of the minority population lives in public housing, there is a culture of dependency, and drug-related and crime problems are still widespread in the community. But even in this troubled neighbourhood, some decline in crime can be noticed. The establishment of a local court of justice that also provides social services has contributed to this change. Together with this local embodiment of the city's legal system, other physical improvements are noticed in the area, mainly a certain gentrification of commercial and residential properties located in the neighbourhood's edges. Spatial transformation would then be the motor to social mutations, better control and increased civic participation.

But is gentrification such a good solution? This controversial question was raised at the Urban Age conference by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas who denounced an increasing aesthetic over-determination of urban public spaces as functional sites of cultural consumption in parallel with a hyper-nostalgic celebration of public space which he perceives as an emblem of passé, orderly, "deadly" civility. In that case, should not civility be embodied by lively disorder? This is why civility, as the ability of people to live together in dense urban settings, and other such

terms as neighbourhood and community hide wide ideological commitments with their bright and dark sides. Some interpretations mark secession from public life and a retreat in gated communities while other struggle for inclusiveness. This important question leads us to set the problem of the deepening militarisation and thorough commercialisation of urban public space.

3. The militarisation of space

This trend has not spared New York City, it was already well under way but it was aggravated by 9/11. Urban scholar Peter Marcuse refers to the "barricaded" city and to the "citadelisation" of new developments, with the blessing of public authorities.[13] This is not to say obviously that New York now looks like Belfast, Jerusalem or Baghdad. To the pressure for deconcentration, the fear of terrorism has added a justification. "Over-agglomeration" is equated with danger, and Marcuse observes that it is already visible in midtown and in downtown Manhattan where a non negligible number of business men are prompt to think that living and working there means danger since large cities are easy targets for terrorist action. This is nothing new. After World War II, when a possible World War III involving nuclear weapons was conceived by Pentagon experts, the departure of populations from large cities was encouraged by two federal policies, one offering potential homeowners low-cost mortgages for houses in the suburbs and the other building connecting roads from cities to their periphery at the expense of public transportation (the 1956 Interstate Highway Act was originally sold to Congress and the public as a defence program). Currently, securing space is once more an obsession which may lead to less glamorous high rise buildings, more comprehensive centres equipped with high-tech metal detectors, fingerprint card entry, video surveillance with facial recognition, biometrics, large-scale integrated systems for identifying and checking persons getting in and out of buildings. Again, the establishment of a "surveillance society" that affect the lives of ordinary people was already well under way long before 9/11 but the aftermath of the attacks helps see more clearly what is happening.[14] The militarisation of space speeds up and spreads surveillance in ways threatening democratic practices, personal liberties, trust and mutual care. Taxis can no longer idle at the entrance of well-known buildings, deliveries are not taken to offices, observation decks are closed. These forms of enclosure have an impact on the polarization of cities – evidently in a city like Washington where security specialists begin to dominate the urban landscape and their recommendations to the emplacement and connectivity of federal buildings[15] but also in an internationally oriented and cosmopolitan world city like New York. The walls are inside the city, between and among groups.

In that perspective, "public space" becomes less public, as free access and free use becomes more limited. Mobility, especially for racial minorities is restricted and the decline of open popular participation in the decision-making process is observed. The examples that come to mind are that of Union Square where it is more difficult for local organizations nowadays to demonstrate and that of the Republican Party's national convention during the summer of 2005, when the space to march was severely limited by the police. This limitation arose numerous controversies and the intervention of judges.

4. The commercialisation of space

Whose New York is it anyway? Extending Saskia Sassen's argument to our current discussion allows us to see that the agency of powerful actors leads some spaces to be overvalorised while others are devalorised also in the realm of safety.[16] The presence of large-scale investments in Times Square, for instance, leads the private market not only to define the architecture of the place but also to hire its private street security agents and vigils, and to impose CCTVs everywhere in a strategy of crime prevention. The boundary dividing the private from the public sectors is blurred on these de-territorialized spaces now more than ever. Public authorities welcome the new rules that the market dictates according to its requirements since the private provision of certain urban services such as security alleviates public expenditures. Globalisation, deregulation and privatisation are key components in the commercialisation of public space. No investors, businessmen, employees, tourists, clients would use such spaces unless their safety is guaranteed by a zero tolerance approach to deviance. The irony is that while there is so much talk going on about memory and public space, the market does not hesitate to introduce a regime of constant surveillance in the name of the common good, without citizens being alarmed by the consequences of such a change since they are kept in ignorance of security measures forced upon them by privatisation.

Another consequence of such changes, as aptly observed by Sassen, is the "unmooring of identity formation" which used to bind people to places. The new commercial spaces engender different notions of community, membership and entitlement such as electronically based communities of individuals and organizations. But they also create disempowered and disenfranchised residents unable to appropriate such spaces as their own, and even less "to make a society" out of these places.

Several disquieting observations may result from the examination of New York under the heading of globalisation, society and crime.[17] As remarked by Friedmann and Wolff, global cities such as New York "are luxurious, splendid cities whose very splendour obscures the poverty on which their wealth is based. The juxtaposition is not merely spatial; it is a functional relation: rich and poor define each other."[18] It used to be that women, the young, immigrants and minorities were incorporated in the mainstream via labour spheres as well as by discipline, surveillance and conformism to the norms of the social order linking all elements in the city. Currently, the opposition is no longer between law-abiding citizens and those who ignore the rules but about the use that is made of the rules in commercialised spaces. The dichotomy between prosperous corporate service professionals in Manhattan and poorer categories of working classes at the periphery is indeed deceptive: all parts are the deeply intertwined products of the same and underlying processes. It is deviance at the centre of stable/unstable spaces, in the flux of order/disorder and inside financial and communication networks which analysts should examine. The whole is in each part: the golden boys and the drug lords and a whole diversity of individuals in between, the police high-tech maps and the crime maps, all influencing each other in a constant readjustment. Norms and rules emphasize the fractal character of the global set of networks. Some norms are internally produced as in gated communities with guards and cameras, but also in poor areas where mono-racial juries free culprits to protest the global unfairness of the justice system, where residents refuse to answer census takers, where pitbull attack dogs, barbed wires with razor blades over fences, gangs mark their turfs' modes of defence. Safety devices in public buildings also protect people from the "urban jungle" that surrounds them. What is currently repressed is less the fact that people live in ghettoised drug zones than border crossing, the impact that they might have on the status of individuals and groups living outside of their own areas and the interference of offenders with exclusive groups and spaces. The militarisation of space implies that the police and private security agents maintain the criminalized poor in their no-go areas so that they do not interfere with the globalisation processes favouring the haves.

This perspective of a fractal world in which each sphere develops its own norms without caring for a common ground could mark the death of the city as we know it. It is high time, as Alberto Magnaghli suggests[19], to recreate city spaces and collective practices in the world of flux which unrolls under our eyes. In a discontinuous chaos, it is time to mark blurred or bright boundaries once more. Baudelaire wrote that "the shape of a city changes faster, alas, than the heart of a mortal man", the new narration therefore must print itself on the fluid rather than on the stone.

Conclusion

As Tocqueville pointed out, democracy is not just a political regime but it is also a form of civil society. In its past and despite dramatic circumstances, New York has proven to be a remarkably resilient city, borrowing from its own singular path and deciding on solutions out of its own resources. Historical accounts offer examples of individuals and groups resisting, refusing moral panics and acting in positive ways to perceived dangers in times of uncertainty and risk. Many people living in cities refuse to dramatize risks. Challenged by global trends, cities like New York tend to deepen their essence and be more themselves than ever, in a realistic form of utopia. '"L'air de la ville rend libre." In that sense, the term 'crisis' is to be interpreted in its etymological meaning, as a search for solutions. The political meaning of cities remains after all extraordinarily powerful. After the deep traumas of New York (September 11, 2001) and terrorist attacks in Moscow (February 6, 2004), Madrid (March 11, 2004) and London (July 7, 2005), institutions have learned know how to protect their cities better. But just as important, the repertoires of people trying modestly to get along well with one another in their neighbourhoods have never been more important. They join and co-produce solutions, together with their differences, as the Brooklyn characters of Paul Auster often do in their conflictive yet convivial everyday interactions.[20] When the city suffered a blackout in the summer of 2003, people orderly continued their commutes on foot and, when the night fell, street parties and a general climate of conviviality substituted the lootings that characterised the blackout of 1977. This sense of resilience and of feeling safe in the crowd and in the public space that a city as New York offers may be interpreted as a form of nostalgia for Jane Jacobs' legendary types of neighbourhoods. The question of reliance on civil co-production of safety as a successful approach, or Jane Jacobs' advocacy of citizens "being the eyes and ears of the street", has been contested as a way of thinking which should be discarded since this kind of city, and its architectural and social fabrics, has vanished long ago.[21] Views in favour of "the hyper-mutuality of attentiveness and the acute skills people deploy to read off intentions"[22] have many supporters. Praise for Jane Jacobs and her "indelible, correct and essential" statement on urban security and people co-producing their neighbourhoods along with urban planners was heard in the session as well as a defence in favour of grass-roots and community- based organizations' initiatives, but "nice neighbourliness can be

oppressive, especially for those at the social margins...Mere proximity is not necessarily a basis for social solidarities when people are dissimilar...In thinking about terror, surveillance poses dilemmas, not resolutions."[23]

In New York's own singular history, individuals have refused to yield to moral panics and acted positively to perceived dangers. Against a background of crime, fear of crime and indeterminate dangers from enigmatic enemies, a concentration of people due to the density of the city sends a clear message of resilience, "entrenched realism" and trust in their civic repertoires allowing them to feel safe in the crowd. Concerning threats of terrorism, recent surveys show indeed that 60% or more Americans have done nothing to change their modes of living or their mobility after 9/11. The same numbers are found in surveys of Londoners after the July attacks.
Other reasons are needed, however, that allow individuals to overcome their ambivalence about collective commitment and feel ready to get mobilized in case of danger and it is, I think, a common foundation of convictions, cultural values and mutual expectations which, in other words, constitute public space. Public space in New York, Paris, Madrid or London transmits a sense of feeling safe among a crowd of strangers. It embodies indeed a sense of belonging to a wider political community through an architecture of sympathy. City elites then should regard security as a "thick" public good[24], the most basic instrument to the preservation of freedom, based on a combination of institutional efficiency and cultural linkage allowing to be one and together within differences.

Notes

[1] Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual Versus the City*, New York, New American Library, 1962.

[2] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Oxford, Basic Blackwell, 1978

[3] See Richard Sennett, Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization, London, Faber and Faber, 1994.

[4] David Campbell, Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity, Minneapolis, Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1998, p.IX

[5] Campbell, op.cit., p.1-2.

[6] G. Borradori, Le "concept" du 11 Septembre. Dialogues à New York avec Jacques Derrida et Jurgen Habermas. Paris, Galilée, 2003.

[7] The expression is coined by David Campbell after Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology (1976) and Claude Lefort, Democracy and Political Theory (1988) in Writing Security, op.cit., note 12 p. 232. See also David Lyon, Surveillance after September 11, Cambridge, Polity, 2003, pp.41-42.

[8] Interviews with Colonel Rick Fuentes, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police and with M. Sean Waters, Homeland Security, New York City and with numerous persons who want to remain anonymous.

[9] Interviews with M. Jim Fyfe in charge of the training section and with other officers who want to remain anonymous at the New York Police Department.

[10] Fox Butterfield, "Cities Reduce Crime and Conflict Without New York-Style Hardball", in New York Times, March 4, 2000, p. A1.

[11] Judith Greene (1999) "Zero Tolerance: A Case Study of Police Policies and Practices in New York City." Crime and Delinquency, vol. 45, no. 2: 171-187 and Jeffrey Fagan and Garth Davies (2000) "Street Stops and Broken Windows: Terry, Race and Disorder in New York City," Fordham Urban Law Journal 28: 457-504.

[12] Jeffrey Fagan, Garth Davis, Jan Holland, "The Bustle of Horses on a Ship: Drug Control in New York City Public Housing" (to be completed)

[13] Peter Marcuse, "The Barricaded City and Deglobalization", unpublished paper.

[14] David Lyon, Surveillance after September 11, Oxford, Polity, 2003, p.4.

[15] Comments from Andrew Altman, former head of planning in Washington, D.C.

[16] Saskia Sassen, "Whose City Is It ? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims" in R. Beauregard and S. Body-Gendrot (eds.), The Urban Age. Cosmopolitan Essays on the Late-20th-Century City, Thousand Oaks, Ca, Sage, 1999, chapter 5.

[17] See Sophie Body-Gendrot, The Social Control of Cities? A comparative perspective, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000, 21-26.

[18] J. Friedmann and G. Wolff, World City Formation. An agenda for Research and Action, International Journal for Urban and Regional Research, 6, 3, 1982, 332.

[19] Alberto Magnaghi (2000) La progettazione del territorio, Torino, Bollati Bolinghieri.

[20] Besides his numerous novels, two of the films he directed with Wayne Wang portray vividly neighborhood life, Smoke (1995) and Blue in the Face (1995).

[21] See for example Deyan Sudjic (1992) The 100 Mile City. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 20 - 25 or for a more sympathetic critique Marshal Berman (1982) All That Is Solid Melts Into Air. The Experience of Modernity. London: Verso, 324 – 325.

[22] See Harvey Molotch and Noah Mcclain (2003), Dealing with Urban terror: Heritages of control, varieties of intervention, strategies of research, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, vol.27.3, Sept., 688.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ian Loader and Neil Walker, "Necessary Virtues: The Legitimate Place of the State in the Production of Security" in B. Dupont and J. Woods (eds.), Democracy, Society and the Governance of Security, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005.