

New Drawings for the Urbanism

Security and Diversity in Urban Public Spaces in Portugal

Pinto da Silva, Carla

PhD Student

Faculty of Architecture - Technical University of Lisbon

email: carlavaleria@netcabo.pt

Ramos, Tânia Beisl

Researcher CIAUD

Faculty of Architecture - Technical University of Lisbon

email: taniaramos@fa.utl.pt

Abstract

In a holistic approach, urban design aims a good structure of the built environment and believes in the issues of theory and crime prevention.

The current urbanism is not oriented to diversity. There are countless examples of urban ghettos, through spatial segregation, strengthening cultural prejudices and reinforcing racism and xenophobia.

The ostensive police vigilance is one of the measures adopted, but it has been confirmed as an inadequate solution. The model only reinforces the system - violence and crimes -, producing an aggressive environment and, in turn, increasing the costs of security. The theme is often referred in the *midia*. Without no assurance or determinism, but knowing that the relationship between physical form and social practices has mutual influence, it can be possible to minimize any negative impact the security of urban space. The answer is to act on the previous time forcing the proactive action, using the preliminary draft in order to minimize any negative impact of insecurity in urban areas. Being continuous in time, these strategies can reduce the rate of crime and fear.

By the other hand, a large number of studies have shown that certain types of crime, and the fear or feeling of insecurity induced by them, can be reduced throughout the improvement of urbanistic and architectural plans in the maintenance of the built

environment. The relevance of the theme of urban security has increased including Portugal.

The paper aims to identify urban areas from the perspective of urban safety in Portugal and contribute to the knowledge of the binomials: physical and social diversity/urban safety and spatial segregation. The article focuses in two case studies in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area: (a) a critical neighborhood in 'Almada', and (b) a Leisure Centre/Camping in 'Costa da Caparica'.

The analytical form consists in an approach that combines safety, diversity and urban design. Considering that urban space is transformed over time and is characterized by the evolution of morphological and functional form, the study intends to analyze the physical configuration and the metric present on scale of urban design.

Introduction

The urban safety has attracted the attention of the world, and Portugal is no exception. The country has increasing rates of crime, but on the one hand, has sought answers for fighting the problem, supported by studies that explore the relationship between the urban morphology and the use of the space. To seek this purpose the study combines the theory and the effective prevention of crime. The start point consists in knowing that the insecurity generated by an urban area has a double sense: the vulnerability of the victim and the possibility for the offender.

Urban Space, Volumetry and Social Practices

To associate the design of public spaces with urban safety means to examine the physical shape of the city, resulting from the relationship between urban planning and architectural volumetry. If this analysis also includes the social practices of

different groups of people, we'll search for the importance that urban safety assumes, in the use of these spaces.

On the one hand, a large number of experiments have shown that certain types of crime, the fear induced by them or the feeling of insecurity, can be reduced through better urban design or by maintaining built environment (COELHO, 2007). In the other hand, with a social diversity, the spaces do not allow or encourage the coexistence of people (STÜRTZE, 2005). In fact, the current planning is not oriented to diversity. There are several examples of urban ghettos where cultural prejudices, racism and xenophobia are reinforced through spatial segregation. The ostensive police patrolling is one of the measures taken to solve crimes problems, but it has been confirmed as unsuitable solution.

Despite this emphasis in linking physical form and social practices, it cannot be said that there are guarantees or determinisms on trying minimize the negative effect of the security of urban space. The analysis of the issue shows that acting on the previous moment (in the project), can be a solution.

But in the most cases, environments that are already built and inhabited require interventions. How to combat the crimes problems in these cases? The working method consists on redesign proposals supported by urban design, looking for special strategies to encourage the social diversity and reduce crime rate and fear.

Urban Security and Diversity

This paper consists in an analytical approach that associates design responses, pointing out public spaces. First of all, the space studied must establish connections with the adjacent neighborhoods. These 'links' must be attractive to invite people, "clearly providing a hierarchy of spaces from public spaces open to everyone, to semiprivate spaces intended for specific geographical and demographic groups, and

to private spaces intended for individuals dwellings” (MARCUS and SARKISSIAN, 1986). Second, it is not enough to provide urban spaces and assume that residents and visitors will use them appropriately. This concept of territoriality is not only a physical barrier but also a psychological one. In this way, the design solution is not a certainty, but a guideline that will encourage the articulation between the various groups that use the city.

The cities host a significant proportion of population and improve competitiveness, including the immigrants. It is necessary to fight for factors that encourage respect for diversity, knowing that social diversity is based on three realities: (a) the unique nature of each individual; (b) the interdependence of individuals and societies that integrate and; (c) the dynamics of each society, each culture, *i.e.*, the changes can be fast or gradual, but will always affect different members of society, reflecting the differences in terms of status.

It is crucial that the urban design be the link between social justice, mobility, growth of population and immigration. To answer problems of security and diversity in public spaces it is necessary to start solving the small problems, specific actions addressed step by step, whose solution strategies clearly show how we think and produce a pleasure city. One approach is "... to discover special moments in the life of a city, to see that each city can be better." (LERNER, 2003).

Urban Design and crime

The urban design organizes the urban form through the arrangement of morphologic elements of space. It is possible to know the space by the way these elements are sequentially structured. (PRINZ, 1984; KOHLSDORF, 1986; LAMAS, 1993).

To identify the morphologic elements of space means to know their ‘parts’. In the scale of urban design, and in the cases studied in this paper, the design process

involves: (a) the topography of the pavement; (b) the buildings which different typologies allow to organize different spaces recognized in the territory, such as large buildings and small houses; (c) the 'plot' relates how a building is related to the pavement. It indicates the percentage of construction; (d) the block indicates the assemble of buildings; (e) the facade (colors and materials); (f) the streets, considering the way they connect others parts of space; (g) squares when intentionally designed; (h) spaces remains that are not intentionally designed; (i) the trees and the planting, enclosing streets or indicating the routes; (j) urban furniture, considering the lighting, seats, garbage boxes, traffic signals, transport protection of 'bus stop', etc. The proposed analyze focuses on functional and morphological evolution of these spaces, based on the physical configuration and the metric/proportion (KRÜGER and TURKIENICZ, 1986).

A study relating crime, modern neighborhood planning and housing design was developed (RAMOS, 1997). The proposal aimed to know how the modern neighborhood in Lisbon organizes the spaces looking for patterns of relationship between urban design and crime. It concluded that the crimes in these modern neighborhoods occurred in streets with movement, *i.e.*, where the most number of people choose for walking. Otherwise, the cars robbers occurred in streets used by youth and placed far away from the movement.

Two urban spaces in analysis in Portugal

The paper identifies two case studies located in Portugal: the Leisure Centre with Camping in *Costa de Caparica* and the Neighborhood of *Alto da Cova da Moura*. Both cases are situated in Lisbon Metropolitan Area (Figures 1 and 2). Despite the different social and physical characteristics, both examples have the same concerning: the urban safety. The first one is a public association – Inatel (1935) -,

focused to social tourism, cultural and sports activities to the elder people. The second case is an informal urban agglomeration originates in the 1974' Revolution in Portugal, and has an insufficient capacity for social cohesion and existence of marginality. The two cases constitute relevant areas to be analyzed and redesigned looking for a better conditions of safety use.



Figure 1: Map of Portugal

Source: http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/eu_members/portugal/index_pt.htm

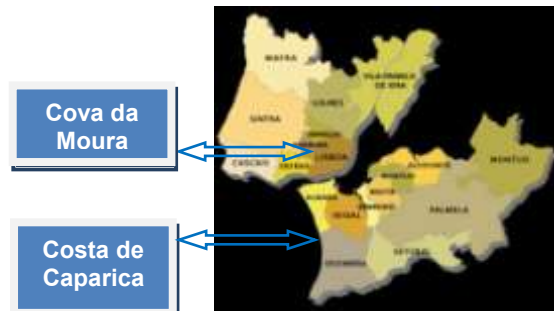


Figure 2: Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Source: <http://www.cm-lisboa.pt/>

Leisure Centre with Camping in *Costa de Caparica*

The Town of *Costa de Caparica* is a coast city in the Municipality of *Almada* (Figures 3 and 4). It is a tourist location with Atlantic beaches in the full length of the western limits. The small urban centre was elevated to town in 1985, and in 2005 the city occupies an area of 10.7 square kilometers, with 11,708 inhabitants, 7,3% of the municipality.



Figure 3: Costa da Caparica/Leisure Centre/Camping

Source: www.inatel.pt



Figure 4: Costa da Caparica/Leisure Centre/Camping

Source: Google Earth

Is the town with the largest number of migrant population, 7.800 inhabitants, and a floating population in the summer months. The town receives 35.000 visitors, in average during the summer. The Inatel Leisure Centre is located around 10 km from Almada in the south bank of the *Tejo* River. It has good quality of leisure infrastructure and equipment for business. The evaluation focused on the influence of physical and morphological organization of leisure facilities in the security of the users (Figure 5). In this context it was given greater importance in the solutions to prevent intrusion, aggression or theft (PINTO DA SILVA, 2010).

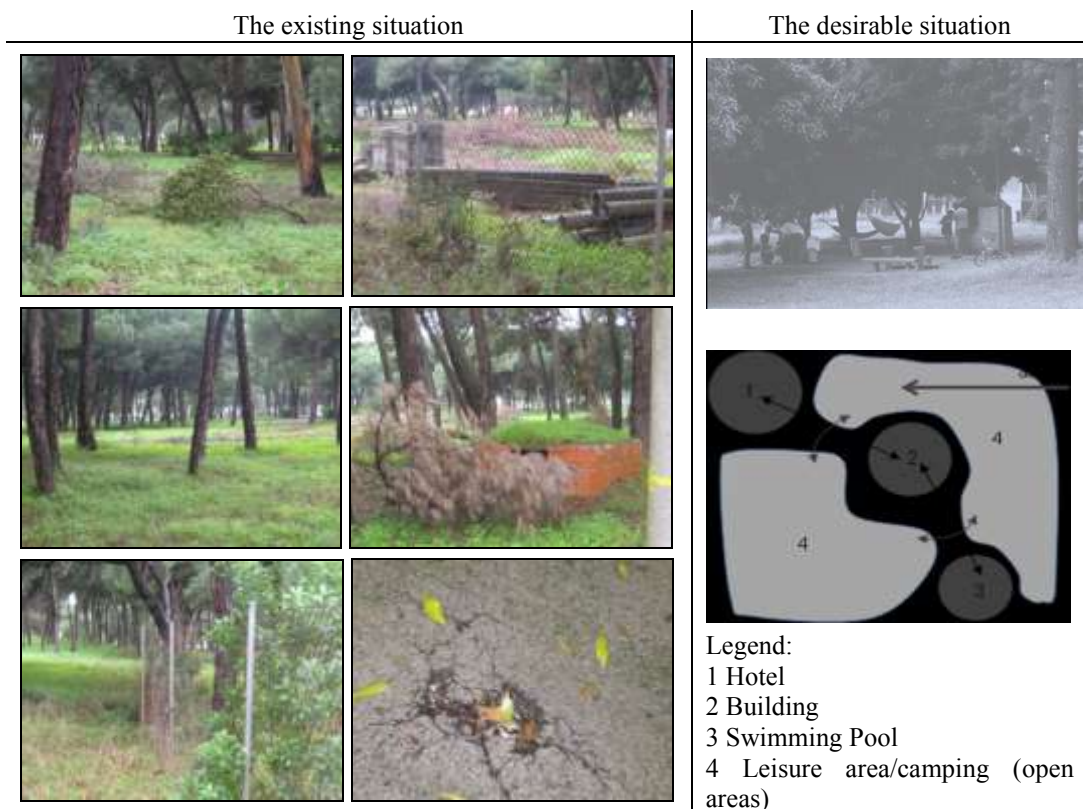


Figure 5: Images of Leisure Centre and Camping of INATEL - The existing situation: neglected areas. Source: Carla Pinto da Silva; The desirable situation: maintenance of equipment of leisure and routes connections linking open areas/buildings/swimming pool.

The evaluation results indicated the following Action Points (Table 1).

Neighborhood *Alto da Cova da Moura*

The Neighborhood *Alto da Cova da Moura*, (*Cova da Moura*), is an illegal urban agglomeration, situated in the Municipality of Amadora (Lisbon Metropolitan Area). It has, nowadays, more than 6.500 inhabitants. It was one of the first city to be built in

Portugal after the Revolution of 25th April, 1974. It is considered a youthful neighborhood: 50% of the population is under than 20 years old (CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DA AMADORA, 2006).

Action points: Inatel Leisure Centre - Costa da Caparica

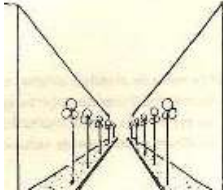
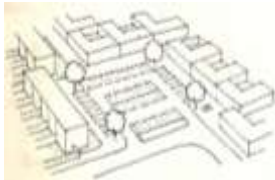

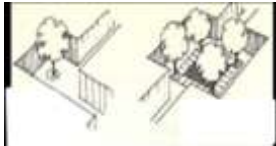

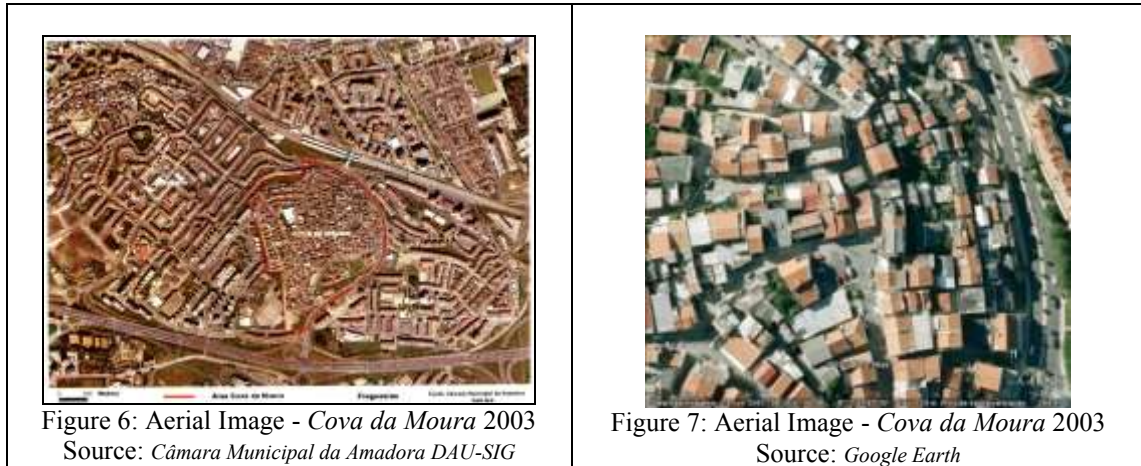
1. Maintenance of the built environment such as: painting buildings and walls, replacing broken tiles, broken windows, and fences in the pedestrian routes;	
2. Public lighting adequate;	
3. Sgnage should be standardized;	
4. Parking well defined both, in terms of number of places and in terms of areas of pedestrian crossing;	
5. Physical barriers should be distinguished clearly - systems of access, footpaths and roads;	
6. Vegetation must be adequate to different uses. And garbage points must be present;	
7. Ambiguous spaces (suitable to more than one type of utilization), should have a clear identification as well as the hours of function;	
8. Spaces suitable for children should have a clear indication of appropriate ages and hours of function. The equipment should be in good condition;	
9. Trees and gardens that provide excessively privacy should be subject of study of security;	
10. Delimited spaces for gardens can be a factor for inclusion, to the extent that there is a lower incidence of graffiti and vandalism;	
11. Elements that are not part of the built environment, causing visual confusion, should be removed, such as the remnants of unfinished works.	

Table 1: Action points and examples of how to create a urban design that increase the security. Source of images: Prinz (1980).

Cova da Moura owes its growth to a privileged location and accessibility, very close to the capital, Lisbon. The area is served by three major highways (IC19, CREL and CRIL) and the suburban train infrastructure of Sintra. The inhabitants majority are Africans: 75% are Cape Verdeans, the others are Guinean, Angolan and Portugueses still coming from the north and center of the country, and in recent years, workers from Eastern countries (MALHEIROS, 2006). The majority of the male labor force

works in civil construction (44.5%), and women work mainly in domestic service. The aerial image of Cova da Moura urban fabric allows us to understand the natural slope (Figures 6 and 7), which defines a particularly steep hill on the North side and lower situation in other points (SPINDLER, 1981).



It is today one of the most troubled area of Lisbon Metropolitan Area, not only for dwellings already illegal (Figure 8), but due to high population density, about 306 inhabitants per hectare.

The existing situation



The desirable situation

Recover the morphologic elements of urban design (street, square, building, etc); care the lighting, the pedestrian routes, gardens, youth leisure spaces

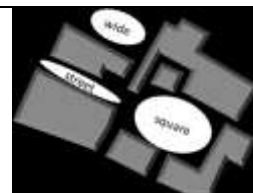


Figure 8: Recent Images of ‘Cova da Moura’ Neighborhood - The existing situation: abandoned areas. Source: Aurélio Nogueira; The desirable situation: urban design that recovers the morphologic elements of built environment (street, square, etc).

The evaluation has showed the following problems (Table 2).

Problems identified: Cova da Moura Neighborhood

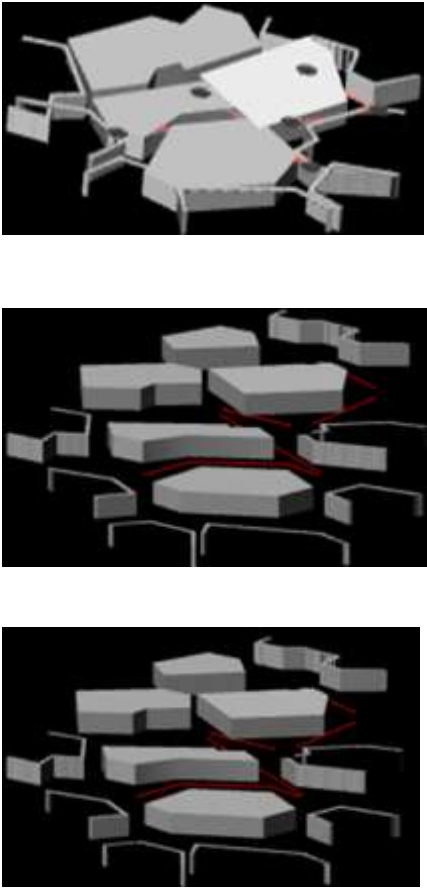
1. Urban infrastructure, social facilities, sports areas and green spaces;	
2. Existence of serious deficiencies in existing buildings regarding to stability and robustness;	
3. The vandalism and sale of illegal drugs is a constant worry that increases the isolation;	
4. High spatial density promotes the spread of social pathologies;	
5. Degree of closure related to the ability to run away from an area, where the surfaces (walls) are too close, is increased by poor or nonexistent public lighting;	
6. Public areas have mixed use without worrying about limits to the private use;	
7. The color or lack thereof, influences the design of spaces;	
8. The streets of the neighborhood do not have sidewalks. It is necessary care the maintenance, lighting, clear signage, promoting the use of urban space through accessibility with movements of connectivity and permeability.	

Table 2: Identifying problems and morphologic elements of urban areas that require actions.

New Drawings for the urbanism in Portugal. A Comparative synthesis

Two case studies were presented in this paper. Both indicated serious problems of safety according to different functional programs: *leisure area* and *housing neighborhood*. The morphologies of the interventions are different. In the first, the topographical situation assumes an important element. The local edges are delimited. The tourism installations, the swimming pool and the hotel building are surrounded by a large green planted area. This ‘green’ area has huge dimensions, and occupies about 75% of total area. This larger space can facilitate different sorts of activities used by camping and daily visitors. It is the first intervention area. The place is also the reason for crimes complains: robbers. The suggestions to improve

this area are presented based on new projects: walking and cycling routes, play areas, sports facilities, barbecues, resting area, children's playgrounds areas, etc. Spaces for recreation should be placed on the border of the neighborhood so they can be used by people outside the neighborhood, fostering interaction. The importance of urban design to avoid the possibility of crime and the social improvement is presented by these measures. The second case, Cova da Moura Neighbourhood, is characterized by grouped housing blocks, structuring informally designed streets. There is a deep lack of everything (Table 3). The main action is to identify morphological elements of space that can be pointed out as references in the local area. Another action consists in regenerating the areas with bad conditions to sports and play areas to youth and to children, the majority of the population. These case studies show that certain types of crime or the fear induced can be reduced, by improving the urban design, or the maintenance of the built environment (COLQUHOUN, 2004; CROWE, 1991). Existence of sanitary infrastructures, education, health, housing, leisure activities, physical environment, including local jobs are the measure of welfare of the citizens. Safety is included too and has attracted the attention of the people by all the world, Portugal included.

	Leisure Centre/Camping (Inatel) <i>Costa de Caparica</i>	Neighborhood of <i>Cova da Moura</i>
Maintenance of Public Spaces	Incipient	Absent
Parking	Without Distinction	Absent
Signaling	Absent	Absent
Streets	No Maintenance	Absent
Physical Barriers	Absent	Absent
Afforestation	No Maintenance	Absent
Green Area	Without Distinction	Absent
Children's Playground	Absent	Absent
Infrastructure	Existing	Incipient

Table 3: Comparative Synthesis

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