

British addition

Walled City

Firozabad

Indraprastha

British New Delhi

Yamuna River

other early settlements



Metropolitan Delhi

Towards Militaristic Urban Planning: the Genealogy of the Post-Colonial European Approach to Social and Urban Insecurity

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Introduction

Over the past twenty years, there has been a radical change of perspective on urban security in Europe and the rest of the industrialized world. Democratic principles such as civil liberties and freedom are today conditioned by elements of security after having been traditionally the pillar of security in modern democracies. The change of paradigm is characterized above all by the weakening of the discourse on poverty and precariousness, their dynamics, actors and spaces of reproduction (Baudouï 2010) 1.

This article sheds light on many historical connections between the securing of 21st century cities and colonial episodes of urban security planning. The first part will describe philosophies behind territorial and social control as well as planning tools at the disposal of France and Great Britain to secure their cities. Referring to concepts such as Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon and the military technique of Tabula Rasa we will revisit the colonial traditions of security planning and risk processing in the urban context of the 19th and 20th centuries. The experience of city planning and physical change in the built environment was then heavily impacted by the industrial revolution's many transitions in which cities became the epicenters of socio-political, economic, and technological revolutions. As a result of transitions to new systems and, in face of growing instability, security policies were reinvented. Greater visibility and legibility within the public space were to become the new fundamentals of control over uncertainty and insecurity.

The second part of the article will focus on the French urban security past-present connections. In France, the failure of a social policies approach to impoverished peripheries of the cities or the banlieues has been emerging, giving way to talks of security policy, sanction and repression. As previous policies have not delivered the kind of prosperity and security they had promised, instances of urban violence are bound to occur. Further as

¹ Have also contributed to the publication of this article: Océane Caffoz, Maria-Isabel Haroon-Perez and Federica Livio

² On this subject, see: Rémi Baudouï, « Panoptique sécuritaire. De l'actualité de Michel Foucault », *Le Visiteur, Revue critique d'architecture*, Paris, In-folio, n° 16, novembre 2010, p. 85-91.

Boneli suggested, within the new security geometry of French cities, “bad-reputation neighborhoods of 1980” have become the “dangerous neighborhoods of 2011”, a new categorization which further shields from public scrutiny and rules of accountability, security authorities’ methods of addressing urban insecurities.

The final part will extend the analysis to historical lineages of urban security policies and practices in Great Britain where, despite many rhetorical references of inclusive urban policies, security-driven planning practices have overtaken a preventive one involving political and urban planning actors. In Britain, a country where social, political, and institutional structures largely differ from those in France, social peace and cohesion contours are drawn along the lines of race and social class. Following the 2011 urban riots, the long-heralded British acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity was sidelined by commentators’ pronouncement of a failing British multicultural model. London and other cities’ riots prompted a series of public inquiries and investigations into the many socio-political and planning ramifications of urban violence. New measures and schemes have been adopted bearing imprints of the colonial practices. These practices deal with improving legibility on the ground, creating a ventilated grid for the selective flow of people, and creating safe havens in which to take refuge in times of violence, all the while insuring a prompt projection of punitive power.

In conclusion, this article will develop a synthesis bringing together the difference and parallels between French and British models of urban security. As such, both France and Great Britain have conserved the cultural and historical memories of the

militaristic urban planning of their colonial past. In many ways, militaristic approaches to urban planning are nurtured by memories of colonial use of coercion to crush discontent and prevent violence through territorial control. In face of deflagration risks of violence within the cities today, as illustrated by urban riots in the French banlieues or cities in Great Britain, urban sites have become privileged laboratories for new security practices with the goal of “flattening” and “smoothing” spaces of contestation and social discontent. Military concepts of the 20th Century are today being enacted and upgraded in order to “pacify cities” and fight against all possible forms of threats by optimizing territorial and social control while minimizing the risk of instability and disruption to the local economy. The use of similar narratives has the potential to further stigmatize the members of contesting communities, a stigmatization reminiscent of the many grievances of indigenous populations in the colonies.

1.1. Urban security, territorial control and Panopticon in France and Great Britain

The recent French and British urban security experiences are rooted in distinctive approaches to threat, violence, and social peace, themselves influenced by both countries’ deeply entrenched views of power. Although the power structures in current France and Great Britain have diverse lineages and deep historical connections, it is within their colonial moments that one can trace the strongest connections to the current geometry of urban security discourses and practices. At the height of the colonial rule, maintaining territorial control by a minority over an in-

indigenous majority resulted in the colonial powers' constant concern to secure their territory by installing segregated social control within the urban space along ethnic origins and nationality lines. Greater visibility and topographic smoothness became rapidly the two key terms associated to securing colonial cities. Smoothing out the urban space in order to make it visible and to track residents' movements in the city provided for greater control over a potentially hostile population and, as a result, greater security to the settlers and likeminded members of the colony.

This logic justified the generalization of the urban concept of "empty spaces" in line with the military tactic of *Tabula Rasa* in order to insure control over territory. As such, the strategy facilitated locating and "chasing" potentially violent individuals within the old colonial cities. As will be illustrated below, it was based on these considerations that French military engineers planned some of the major cities of northern Algeria, following the adoption of militarily inspired "zoning techniques" implemented as an urban planning tool in continental French and British cities.

The need for greater visibility in the colonial urban space is best seen through the lenses of Michel Foucault's analysis of contemporary France and Britain. Foucault's work details the mechanics and tools with the intent to scrutinize and control citizens' bodies and minds. Jeremy Bentham's panoptic system², as analyzed by Foucault, was the foundation of a new political economy of urban security. As Foucault

3 As argued by Foucault, the father of Panopticon - Jeremy Bentham- designed a power technology to resolve the problem of surveillance (1980:148). The system consists of the surveillance of the space while staying unnoticed by the subject matter.

emphasizes, insecurity does not depend solely on a functional analysis of a causal relation between objective facts and punitive tools. Although Foucault conceded that coercion is a reality of the modern state, he further conceptualizes "coercive theory" describing that institutional constraint and violence are consequences of power relations between actors. In order to materialize, power needs the production of knowledge based on the "discourse of truth," "words of power," and finally, all "social internalization processes," thus creating norms. As such everyone ends up internalizing the rules and norms set by the state, to the point that one can assimilate them as intelligible, substantial truths implying the thinkable (authorized) and the unthinkable (forbidden).

Today, the political discourse over insecurity in western countries increasingly stigmatizes the offender on the basis of what is authorized and what is not. Inquiries following recent urban riots in Great Britain are in sharp contrast by their scope and number to the scarceness of independent public investigation of the riots in France. Nevertheless, the reading of security in both countries is based on what the city should be (authorized) rather than what it is, and how its population should behave rather than how it interacts and lives in the environment. Any real explanation of the causes of offenses and motivations of offenders is left on the margins of the debate on security. As such, the provision of security is equated with disciplining individuals within the urban space based on sets of norms. As Foucault suggests in his work *Surveiller et Punir*, visible space creates the conditions of surveillance, thus of imprisonment and closure, and requires the evermore important extension of the visible angle. To see in order to be reassured, or to see in order to control, comes from the necessity to keep an eye on

individuals, on their movements, in order to prevent any potential subversive act, whether it be political or behavioral. On the basis of such a panoptic approach, creating visibility requires altering the built environment to improve legibility within urban space. This was based on a series of detectable and undetectable surveillance mechanisms in conjunction with a series of changes to the built environment designed and implemented differently between France and Great Britain. The conditions of physical alterations in the cities are intimately connected to the local historicity and experience of territorial and social control as suggested by connections between security strategies in colonial France and Great Britain and current urban security practices.

2. Urban (in)security: the French past-present connections

The streets of the French capital, Paris, are historically known for having been spaces of civil unrest and social expression of discontent. The most significant uprisings engulfed Paris in the 19th century. The riots broke out in the overpopulated center of the city. Between 1827 and 1849, the streets of Paris were barricaded eight times; they were blocked with trees, piles of rocks and metal bars. Anything that was found within the location would be used to build barricades. Buildings symbolizing power were burned down and others were damaged. The public and military forces faced the difficulty of circulating, as the streets, alleys and dead ends dating back to the urban fabric of the Middle Ages were not mapped. An “anti-insurrection science” was rapidly to be developed with the goal of establishing social peace for some and territorial control for others. In order to

control urban security after the 1848 Revolution, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte requested the mapping of the street network system. Once he became Emperor, he asked Baron Georges Haussmann, with a background in engineering and transportation, to design a “ventilated plan” for the new Paris. The plan was to be adapted to the functional requirements of the growing transport network system and the underlying speed and free flow needs of the security forces. To complete this task, over one million people from the working classes had to be evicted from the center of the city and relocated to the suburbs to smooth out Paris’s historical urban fabric.

The many security achievements of the planning model contributed to its adoption by scores of other cities in France and across Europe and later by colonial powers in conquered territories. The occupation of Algiers in 1830 as well as the conquest of Algeria suggest the emergence of a colonial military urban planning system that sought greater visibility and accessibility in urban space based on the mainland experience.

The evolution of Algier’s historical city (Kasbah) illustrates the French pacification of an urban area through multiple interventions on its fabric. In 1516, the Ottoman corsair Khair al-Din established his capital in Algiers. The fortified city, namely the “Kasbah”, had imposing fortifications of which six doors insured the link between the Old Town, the port and the rest of the country (Figure 1).

The original city embodied the type of development and built environment that was behind the prosperity of the city. The Bey Khair al-Din made the city prosperous by combining military force and commercial development.

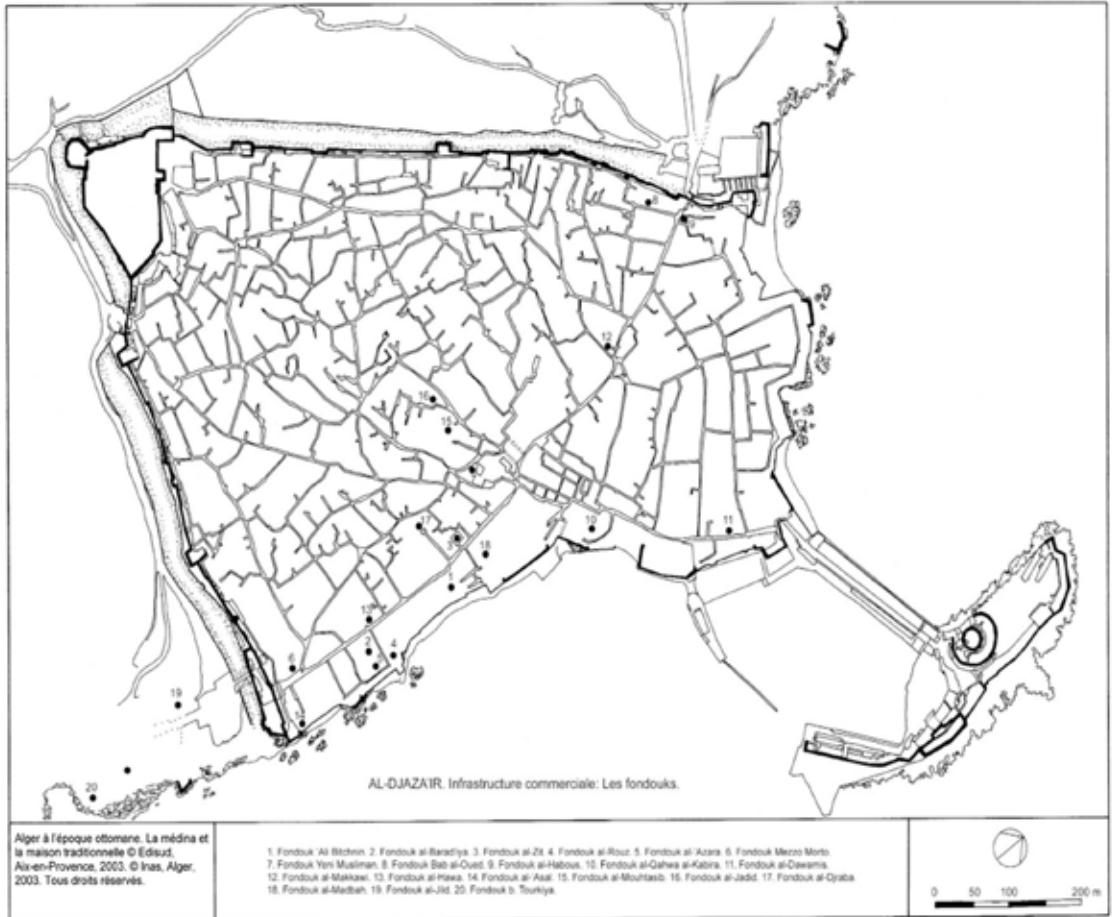


Figure1: Algiers – Ottoman period (Missoum, Sakina 2003. Alger à l'époque ottomane. La médina et la maison traditionnelle. Aix-en-Provence : Edisud)

The old town of el-Djazaïr, the “Kasbah,” remained the seat of Algerian political power until 1830. This area, located between the fort and the sea, contained 30,000 inhabitants. It housed several palaces including residential and religious buildings. It extended over 45 hectares and reflected a heterogeneous urban form in an original and rugged site (118 meters drop).

The Kasbah, similar to other Arab towns, presented a significant handicap for territorial control. The fortified city was indeed formed by a densely built system, characterized by the succession of houses closed on the outside and open onto an interior courtyard. The street system was formed by a maze of pedestrian streets lined on both sides by blind walls. The tortuous and steep streets were also a characteristic feature of the old Arab towns that made them especially dangerous to pedestrians.

Between 1830 and 1870, in order to occupy the city of Algiers and repress any attempt of uprising or rebellion, the French military architects drastically altered the footprint of the Old Town. The lower part of the Kasbah was demolished in order to isolate it from the sea by planning a large square, the current Place des Martyrs. This intervention also facilitated the deployment of the military (Figure 2).

The Haussmanian planning model involved the demolition of fortifications, creating wider streets around the Kasbah and de-densifying urban space. In parallel, the public authorities encouraged the construction of a modern city encircling the older Arab city. Gradually, the Kasbah was emptied of its original population and its perimeter was significantly reduced. Its social and symbolic degradation was complete when the area became dedicated to the many

pleasures of the military including brothels. It was only in the 1930s that the French colonial power proposed to list and preserve what was left of the Kasbah, therefore transforming it into a “museum-city” in the service of the French colonial propaganda, void of its original population and structure (Figure 3).

More than a century later, in today’s France and in the face of increasing urban security issues, policies against social exclusion and poverty in some banlieues –social housing projects - have failed and been replaced by military-inspired security interventions. In 2005 France witnessed a wave of riots starting from the Parisian banlieu of Clichy-sous-Bois, rapidly engulfing other housing projects or HLMs across the country. The state of emergency declared in November 2005 by the government enabled a series of unprecedented security measures with the swift deployment of 18,000 policemen and 1,500 members of rapid intervention forces creating De Facto sanitary lines around areas of unrest to prevent any further contagion.

The reaction to the riots was followed by a series of reflections on how best to prevent such urban unrest in the future, primarily by adopting a new reading of Haussmann’s ventilated concept. As such, a systemic approach to spatial visibility and control over the population is based on optimizing the free flow of movements mostly for security forces, in conjunction with improving visibility by de-densifying areas of violence. As Jean-Pierre Garnier reminds us, urban planning in France has appropriated the *Prévention Situationnelle*³ semantic (Garnier 1999). To reach,

3 The concept of *Prévention situationnelle* refers to methods based on the consideration of security in the design of private and public spaces similar to the concept of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) as practiced in North America.

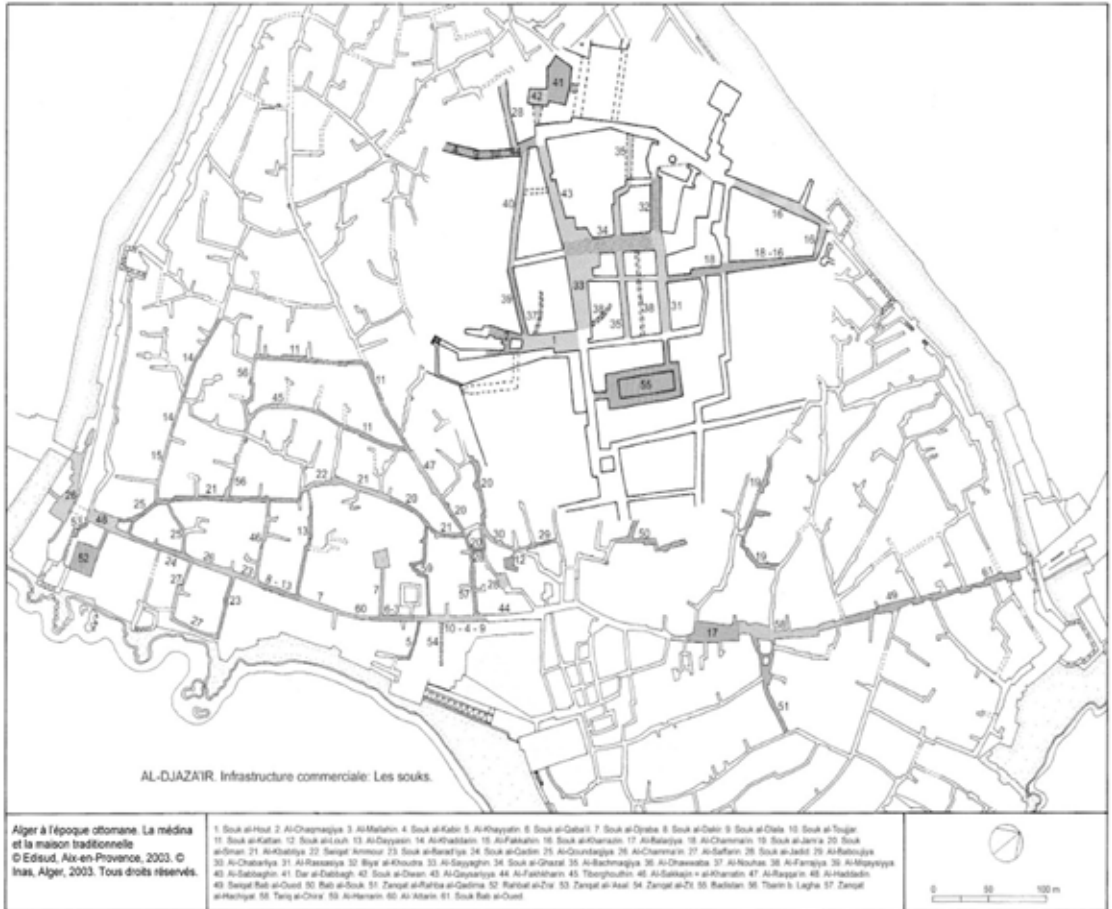


Figure2: Algiers – Beginning of French colonization period (Missoum, Sakina 2003. Alger à l'époque ottomane. La médina et la maison traditionnelle. Aix-en-Provence : Edisud)

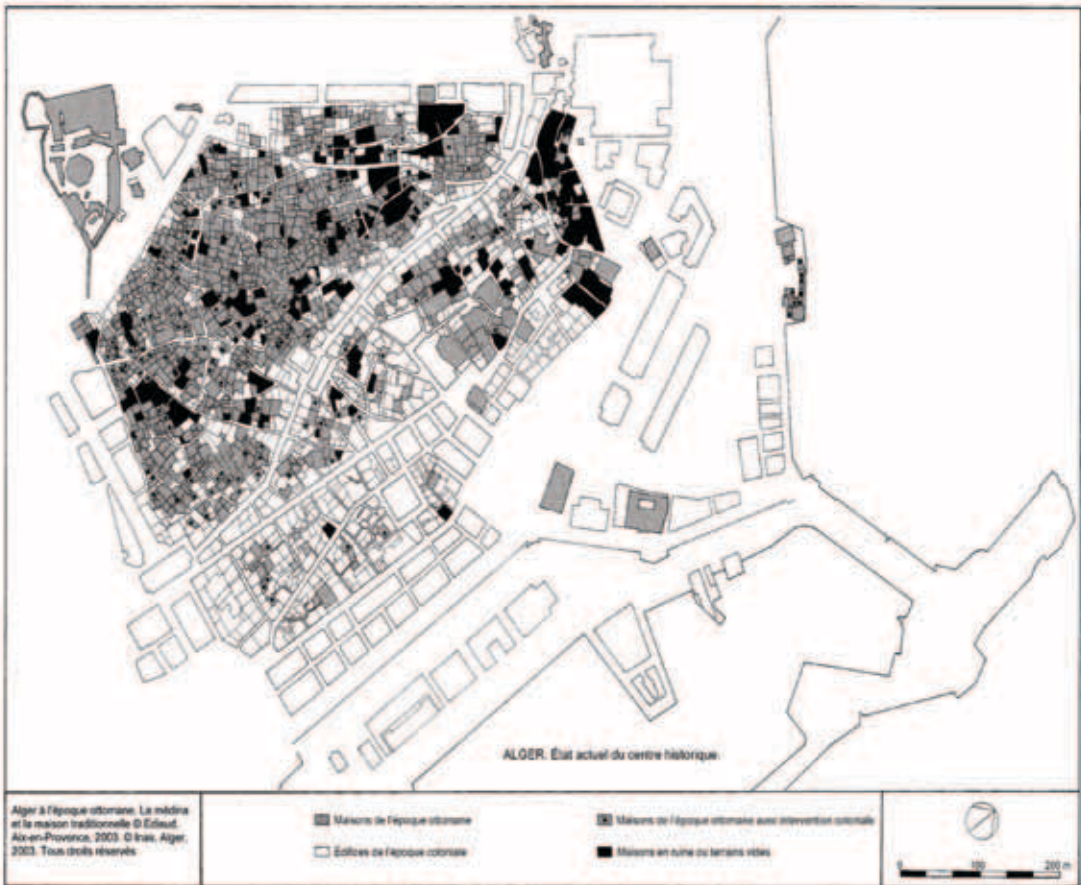


Figure 3: Algiers – At the end on French colonization period (Missoum, Sakina 2003. Alger à l'époque ottomane. La médina et la maison traditionnelle. Aix-en-Provence : Edisud)

to open up, to release, and to ease the flow are the key words of its vocabulary. This can be viewed in an armada of legal texts and legislation adopted within the last decade in France. In the urban planning field, the Orientation and Programming on Security Law (LOPS) of January 21, 1995 had already reaffirmed the “right for security as a fundamental right” and made the public security study compulsory to the preliminary studies framework in the realization of development projects. In 1997 the Local Contracts of Security (CLS) were created. In 2002 the Local Councils of Security and Crime Prevention (CLSPD) were established.

Finally the decree of August 3, 2007 set the boundaries of the Public Security Plan (ESP). These studies of public security are compulsory for all cities/conglomerations/urban agglomerations of more than 100,000 inhabitants in urban development zones for new projects greater than 100,000 square meters. The responsibility of planning for crime prevention is also transferred to the construction sector becoming an obligation for the developers. These proposed crime prevention plans generally aim for lesser congestion and better urban visibility. The result is the application of the concept of residentialisation –developing less dense residential areas and reorganizing the built environment to better distinguish public spaces from private spaces.

The control over territory is also based on surveillance of public areas, streets, and subway stations and loading/unloading points such as the multimodal transportation hubs. The importance given to the principle of continuous flow turns the CPED concept into a kind of functionalist theory’s meta-theory overriding

spatial-cultural thickness and density. Here, insuring greater flow of movements –“fluidifying”- is inseparable from the concept of visibility. This association links intimately CPED and video surveillance systems developed since the 1980s, aimed originally at commercial and private strategic spaces.

In 2007, the French home secretary launched a plan to triple by 2009 the number of cameras for public areas, which stood at 396,000. The new, high performance digital systems are intended to create a wider security net. They combine elements of geo-localization by GPS, infrared detectors, “intelligence” indications allowing, for example, the detection of movements considered abnormal - such as a bag or package left in a public area - with the biometric analysis of facial recognition systems, often augmented by systems of voice recognition (Courtois and Gautier 2008). The potential for mobile “smart video surveillance” systems, derived from drone technologies adapted to a new series of networked and dynamic threats will soon extend their use to the infinite. This airborne video surveillance of hotspots open to movement; “loading/unloading” of vehicles and any persons involved; advanced capacities in data management, in sorting, and in storage, will dissolve the boundaries between public and private spaces. The significant increase in the number of private requests to install CCTV in public spaces relocates the extension of security purposes to gray zones between private and public spaces. Moreover, it shows the complementary functions of private security modalities and public security ambitions.

Like the previous static concepts of surveillance the dynamic visualization of urban space from above improves territorial visibility for those in charge of

security to hold down violence. Such visibility prohibits darkness that encourages potential crime. Foucault denounces the concept of visibility as one of the two terms of modernity's standard of constraint, visibility versus confinement, which becomes an eminently positive value for CPED theorists. The concept of visibility which Foucault presented as a threat and an infringement on difference and otherness in the name of a collective moral and its binding standards, becomes a reference to create a new type of urbanity. To promote the built environment's visibility defines the standards and norms of urban space. The new urban secure space integrates measures of Prevention Situationnelle as norms of legality and legitimacy. Actors of CPED fully endorse the continuity of action between the social control policies and physical intervention in the built environment. As such the "lighting is security" pairing is endorsed as one of the foundations of modern urban planning (Mosser 2007).

In a Foucauldian sense, planning security systems in France have a clear path, rhetoric and power structure support for smoothing out the city to improve legibility of urban space by expanding the periphery of vision. As in the Paris of Haussmann and the old Kasbah, preventing acts of violence is equated to isolating volatile areas from the rest of the city, thus reinforcing territorial insularity of areas of violence. Urban security as such encourages a techno-security based ideology of "spatial smoothness" that affects the daily environment dictating interaction between urban spaces as well as the population's social relations within and between those spaces. It contributes to a new form of security paranoia: the surveillance of all individuals, the evaluation of any suspicious actions, the tracking and repression of any acts of incivility

with violence potential and finally, the surveillance of spatial connections by both the authorities and other residents. From Foucault's point of view, the entire population of the banlieue has become the target of the state's interventions based on the sovereignty-discipline-management triad (Foucault, 1991). First, security is thought of as taking control over individual bodies within the sovereign space of power as in the case of the administration areas of Kasbah. Second, the control over bodies equates to a militaristic disciplinary system that overrides individual freedom and civil liberties. And finally, the management of threats is based on co-surveillance and the panoptical system of control designed to be unnoticed. As such, urban militaristic interventions boost the legitimacy of the authorities of the state by shifting security based rhetoric to action on the ground, reassuring the population's perception of the provision of security by isolating actors and areas of threat. Nevertheless, besides creating a "sanitary line" by isolating communities, the use of a techno-security intervention model in France reinforces binary readings of the population – us and them, as in Algeria -- while altering the authorities' democratic power relations with the citizens. Thus, within the new urban security matrix, freedom, the first of the founding principles of the French republic – Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité -- becomes subordinate to, and conditioned by, security considerations; while Egalité and Fraternité principals could become subject to selective community stigmatization and marginalization.

3. The post-colonial British model of control over territory

Similar to the French experience, the British genealogy of city planning and urban development equally reflects the security approach to urban space experienced across the British Empire. The racial segregation and statutory separation principles of the British colonial rule added to economic expediency of the crown and finally the need for efficient movement of goods and troops conditioned the planned development of colonial cities from South Africa to Rhodesia, Malaya and India at an early stage.

Nevertheless, the close connections between the development of the British city and security imperatives are also rooted in the medieval city environment. They are entrenched in our collective memory, as depicted by the Shakespearean inclusion of the constable and the night watch in medieval urban public space. A historical study of the urban police sheds light on the way industrial cities of the 19th century later became an experimental ground for reorganizing the society in many ways. The police forces as well as their precincts of action were already institutionalized in 1829 with the establishment of the London Metropolitan Police. Quoting Palmer's analysis, Monkkonen describes how British cities became the best spaces for interaction between civil authorities and military rule within the context of industrial revolution. The objective of securing urban space was to subscribe to the militaristic reading of threats while minimizing externalities:

“Robert Peel used his military experience in Ireland to create a social control organization midway between a military and a civil force... The new police solved both tactical

and political problems: they were cheaper than a military force; they created less resentment and they were more responsive to civil authorities” (Monkkonen, 1992, 359).⁴

Based on their perception of threat, the newly established urban security forces reinforced the equation of “non-transparent” and “dark spaces” with insecurity. This perception motivated the exclusion of the “other” within a newly sanitized, transparent and thus secured space (Foucault, 1980:152). Bentham's panoptical concept of space further rationalized the equation of visibility, transparency and security as well as the association of visibility with power.

Through its global expansion, the British Empire transferred the experience of securing urban space and reinforcing power relations from 19th century Britain to colonial cities under its rule. British India perfectly illustrates the extrapolation of a security driven perception of space and city development. From the beginning of the British colonial rule, the heterogeneous capital of the Mughal Empire, Shahjahanabad, underwent major changes, some aesthetically motivated (eg. transforming Persian style Mughal palatial gardens to British gardens), but mostly politically and security driven.

Overall, the fabric of the city was not adapted to the needs of the British when they arrived. The formalized built environment, composed of palaces and sophisticated havelis aside expansive gardens for the rich and nobles, juxtaposed to the unplanned amorphous fabric of residential areas and workshops for

⁴ Monkkonen, Eric, 1992, « History of Urban Police », The University of Chicago

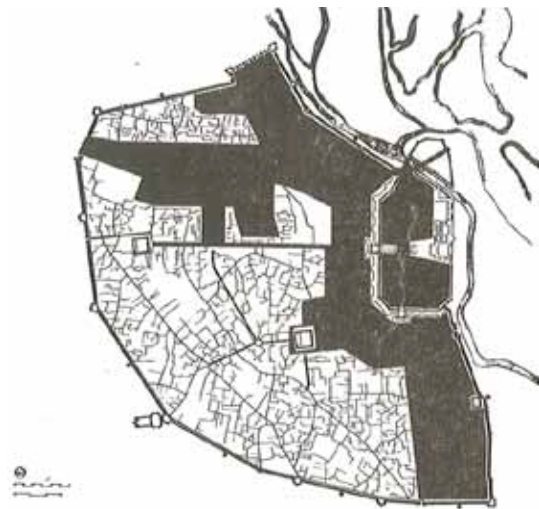
the poor, was in contrast to what was to be generalized as the planned British concept of urbanity. Three phases of transformative measures metamorphosed the Persian inspired capital of Great Mughal to what was to become a more functional, Western inspired and secure capital of British India. Prior to the revolt of 1857, the first phase consisted of organizational changes to reinforce the administrative and economic rule of the British.

With the arrival of additional newcomers - civil servants and Europeans- housing was built or adapted from the old residences north of the old Shahjahanabad. The more dramatic change of the built environment of the old capital was to take place after the revolt of 1857. This second phase of British intervention, although heightened by its punitive dimensions, has left profound and indelible imprints on Delhi's fabric.

“About 80% of the interior of the fort was destroyed (120 acres)...displacing a substantial residential population, the British converted the fort into a military garrison to help protect it from assault.... They cleared as a field of artillery fire an area 300-400 yards broad around its western and southern perimeter” (Samuel,1986, 244).⁵

This phase of transformation altered the urban fabric of Delhi as many neighborhoods or mohallahs, as well as other centers of gravity of the city such as bazaars and the largest mosques in Delhi were eradicated. According to Samuel (1986), as a result of the

5 Noe, Samuel, 1986, « What happened to Mughal Delhi, A morphological Survey » in « Delhi through the ages » edited by R.E. Frykensberg, Oxford University Press



Areas obliterated or redeveloped by the British

Figure 4: Areas obliterated or redeveloped by the British: Delhi through the ages, Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society: What Happened to Mughal Delhi, A Morphological Survey

clearance and of ventilating the old city's fabric around the fort, 10,000 to 12,000 residents were displaced. This phase was followed by a final set of transformations that began in 1860 and lasted until the partition and the end of the colonial rule.

The final phase pursued planning measures and physical alterations based on elements of functionality, security, and mobility. New technologies accelerated the transformation of Delhi during this third phase. For example, railways were built to reinforce the economic and trade role of the capital. Connection to the rest of India guaranteed a prompt supply of munitions and fresh security forces in case of upheaval but also furthered an empire whose power derived from the

control over the markets and routes of international trade. The connection of the railway to the city, with the creation of stations and freight depots, created a major transportation hub and allowed for the creation of expressways. This last episode of successive alterations and modifications resulted in the displacement of the population and assigned a new commercial and economic role to Delhi at the heart of the colonial capitalist system. Furthermore, the city was connected to 175 cantonments and other administrative and strategic centers (King, 1976).

Finally, the physical change was coupled with security driven codes of conduct for prompt identification of indigenous intruders as formalized in the British India cantonments code. Unlike other segregationist social systems, and despite having numerous servants, the Indian colonial household lacked a dedicated entrance for the indigenous workers. The single entrance enabled the owner to implement the panoptical principle of surveillance and maintain the complete territorial control over movements in and outside of any residence.:

“...Chowkidars (watchmen) were posted at the entrance requiring the indigenous passersby to “remove their shoes when walking by... A further means of ensuring they recognized their intrusion to the colonial community, the indigenous were asked to wear the footwear of the dominant culture” (King, 1976, 144)

As a result, changes in the built environment, implementation of the code of conduct, and the alteration of the colonial city’s fabric amplified social control in the new city. The ultimate goal of control over territory and greater security could not have been attained without the subordination of the indigenous

population to the new rules of appropriation and use of public and private urban spaces. Finally, it is thanks to a hub model that the connection of Delhi to the railway network not only secured provision of military supplies and forces to crush upheavals but also secured Delhi’s commercial role within British India.

Today, the British capital dwarfs Shahjahanabad, as a reminder of security driven planning practices in the British colony. London is the largest European capital region, with an area three times larger than that of Paris. Unlike France where the welfare state remains strong, Great Britain experienced a wide-scale retreat of the State from traditional sectors. In part as a result of the transformation of British society, London bears imprints of significant social disparities and precariousness strongly anchored in the typology of its urban fabric. The capital illustrates a divided and fragmented city. London is also a victim of sprawl on the periphery, as Trollope posits, “It is very difficult these days to say where London’s suburbs are completed and where the countryside begins ...” (Trollope, 1857). Furthermore, London’s financial power within the global economy since the 1980’s, confers to it the status of “global city”. London’s global status imposes on the British authority a radical approach to processing risk as a result of many imbalances and differences between London’s center and periphery. For example, a major concern is the divide between the social housing units in East and North London with the inner city’s affluent neighborhoods, and the City. Hence, the pundits’ are witnessing increasing interest on policymakers’ side to “re-qualify” the urban areas of central and East-London.

As in the case of France, the social and spatial inequalities that characterize the British capital have

fuelled social unrest and widespread riots, of which the last took place in 2011. If the 2005 Paris riots initially broke out in the Parisian banlieue, forming a belt around intramural Paris, the case of London has other characteristics in terms of the spatialization of social discontent.

The London riots of 2011 started in Tottenham, north London, following the fatal shooting of a 29-year-old by the police, and spread at an unprecedented speed to other parts of the city as well as Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol. The 111-page report by the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel concluded that the Police had failed to respond quickly and effectively to the spread of violence. A few years earlier, the same perception of inadequate response was raised during the G8 summit. The heads of the city's banks prohibited their then-employees from wearing suits in order to prevent attracting the attention of protesters. Such an unprecedented measure by civilians was an illustration of the failure of public authorities to secure the city. Reinforcements were called in from all parts of the British Isles. Nevertheless, police authorities were not prepared for the velocity and organizational capacity of demonstrators and reached the limits of its capacity to suppress unrest and violence despite the considerable technological means at its disposal. This particular situation of violence sparked anger and criticism towards the authorities who had failed their first and foremost mission; that of insuring public safety and maintaining order. They had largely underestimated the scale of the events in progress, by failing to call in the army and by not declaring a state of emergency.

Both violent riots as well as other isolated acts of violence in the cities triggered a thorough analysis of

the new contours of urban violence in British cities and resulted in the development of multi-approach crime prevention policies and planning across the nation. Some new initiatives reflect the involvement of the population in a new co-surveillance and reporting scheme. Indeed, following the murder of a youngster in 2008, 500 businesses across the country signed off to the City Safe program. Within this scheme, shops and official buildings can become safe heavens and refuges for citizens at risk. They will also pledge to report 100% of incidents and crime to the police.

The idea of creating refuges was also at the heart of the post 2011 riots comprehensive guide entitled "Safer Place, the Planning System and Crime Prevention". The guide was published by the office of the deputy Prime Minister and Home Office and aimed to promote "safer places" through planning whose attributes would include 6:

- Places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security.
- Places that are structured so that different use does not cause conflict.
- Places where all publicly accessible spaces are surveilled.
- Places that include necessary, well designed security features.

The concept of "safe heaven" or "safer places" is not new. In 1972, the architect Oscar Newman had already qualified as "defensible space" any residential area that allows the inhabitants to optimize its control. Thus security can be achieved from an adapted

6 Safer Places , october 2009

urban design layout. Based on Newman's reading of the "safer place vision" of London, the production of visibility refers to a type of political economy of collective living, in which multiple practices lead to a co-surveillance of various spaces by the inhabitants (Newman 1972). The concept of "safe heaven" or "safer places" also takes stock of colonial cities' transformation of strategic spaces of power into privileged spaces of intervention. While protecting individuals from hostile crowds, the safe havens also could become spaces of projection of power and coercion. Delhi's many transformations first enabled the authorities to build a military garrison within the walls to crush any form of uprising. Subsequent measures made Delhi a commercial and transit hub mostly thanks to the connection to the railway system. The combination of greater security and connection to the rest of the country contributed to the greater prosperity of Delhi. The source of power and therefore legitimacy of the British state was to insure the security on land and seas in order to expand commerce and trade throughout the world. The conquest of new territories was synonymous to pacifying the indigenous population who would then contribute to the expansion of the British Empire's economic reach and prosperity with a limited autonomy in terms of governance.

A latter dual approach to security based on coercion and economic development has left its imprint on urban security strategies of Great Britain. Indeed, the 2009 guide promotes physical transformations to create well-defined spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security. Here access and flow are key to securing cities while insuring a smooth running of economic activities. Based on this assumption and in the context of British cities, land use is considered the most

significant factor conditioning the flow and how it needs to be re-conceptualized. The 2009 document suggests for instance that the flow and movement within a city center should be more extensive than within a residential neighborhood or industrial area where a new layout should offer few connections and routes to make it easier to monitor and exercise control over the immediate area. As in the case of old Delhi, the greater flow of movement in the city center insures the prompt supply of fresh security forces while maximizing economic exchange; at the same time, residential areas contain many urban cul de sacs and traps for urban insurgents, preventing them from moving rapidly across the city.

The connection between urban security and economic activity does not circumvent the debate on the British model of urban security. As illustrated by the 2011 governmental document on multi-approach crime prevention policies, Great Britain's urban security techniques tend to disregard the feeling of insecurity as a socio-cultural element. The assumption is that violence cannot be spread out randomly in space. It relates to the theory of "rational choice" elaborated in 1968 by the economist and American Nobel prize Gary S. Becker. The criminal is a "social" actor motivated by acting out "rationality of the judgment": in other words, committing an offence by minimizing the risks of being arrested and by maximizing the chances to bring the deed to a successful conclusion². Here CPED denies any cultural dimension setting itself up as a work of expertise against insecurity (Wekerlé 1999). It is the causal relation established between, on one hand, the violence and the poverty and, on the other hand, the decay of the built environment that serves as the foundation for the predictive postulate of its theories. The violence

fueled by social relegation would be all the stronger and amplified within urban interstices where little or no visibility feeds the precariousness of the space. (i.e., cellars, basements, circulation banisters, streets with deficient lightings, dead ends and dark hidden recesses etc). Beyond what some describe as “cosmetic” interventions, any attempt to physically alter the many interstices of the city needs to be accompanied by, and inline with, policies of poverty alleviation and social inclusion if securing the city durably is the goal.

Finally, a more recent phenomenon is being added to previous layers of the British urban security picture. Past waves of urban violence illustrated the limited capacity of the Police to react to the scale and the scope of the riots. In view of the 2012 Olympics, taking stock of past episodes of urban violence, the British authorities aimed to reassure their guests about their ability to ensure public safety by militarily securing the urban space. Great Britain planned to dissuade public disorder based on a modern version of Panopticon or what we call Neo-Panopticon. This is based on extraordinary technological means and measures comparable to those the military deployed at the time of colonization or of modern time military in a war zone. As illustrated by security arrangements for the Olympics, Neo-Panopticon seeks to add to CPED new techniques of dynamic surveillance. The latter aims to monitor and counter the shifting and dynamic patterns of violence as well as multiplicity of violent individuals simultaneously.

“...Military snipers are to be deployed in helicopters during the Olympics and are required to shoot pilots of low flying aircrafts. The fitting of missiles batteries to apartment blocks close to the Olympic park planned by the

Ministry of Defense place high velocity rockets in a location which has been chosen offering an excellent view of the surrounding area.”⁷

One could argue that urban militaristic strategies in London suggest a new brand of urban interventions altering existing dynamics between neighborhoods’ and their population. This also entails of a new spatial hierarchy of the city based on the location of high profile venues such as the Olympics sites or strategic and symbolic urban areas such as connections between East-London and the rest of the city. Indeed, in face of greater diversity and the mobility of security hazards, as well as past experiences of inadequate responses to urban violence, public authorities are increasingly inclined to rely on more dynamic military urban warfare techniques. These techniques have been widely tested in an asymmetrical warfare environment and within urban war zones.

Nevertheless, aside from the reality of selective measures toward high profile venues and spaces, augmenting the capacity of CPED strategies to deliver greater security is not exclusive of the overall changing geometry of urban security policies. While Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon was a mechanism of surveillance for control within the prisons, its extension to contemporary London connects it to military techniques of insurgency control and multiple simultaneous interventions from above. Military security contributes to the building of a multilayered urban security planning that targets not one single threat but rather aims to counter multiple networked sources of threats. Although seemingly efficient these practices mix the unruly, the social contestant, and

⁷ Editorial 2012. “London 2012: snipers to patrol over Olympic games” The Guardian April 30

the malevolent individuals in what is identified as the new urban threat. Thus, contributing to further stigmatize and marginalize a group that will equate the new security measures to elements of domination, deepens the resentment towards the state and its representatives.

London Mayor's regeneration plan for areas affected by the riots dedicates £70m to alter the built environment in Tottenham and Croydon among other areas securing high streets and "reviving" the city centers. Improvement of connections and routes between key points of the neighborhoods as well as bringing in new commercial outlets are at the heart of the strategy. The question, which remains to be answered, is whether, in considering the income levels within the neighborhoods, such measures do not herald a de facto gentrification of the area and consequently the transfer of the urban underprivileged to the fringes of London, thus furthering social marginalization.

Long-term securitization goals of planners and public authorities in Great Britain cannot override the identification of all the nodes within the network of threats and should accept their mutually reinforcing nature. A regenerating plan should envisage a comprehensive set of security strategies beyond police patrols and/or rehabilitation of the built environment by adding considerations of spatial justice, race and poverty to a comprehensive urban security planning strategy.

Concluding remarks

Both Britain and France share urban histories dominated by strong central states, whose underlying power and security ramifications were reinforced by

their colonial practices. They both experienced the extension of military tactics in securing cities and, since colonial episodes of 19th and 20th centuries, had to come up with new strategies of territorial and social control mostly in urban contexts.

As the examples of Kasbah and Delhi illustrate, both countries perfected security interventions based on militaristic methods of siege and *Tabula Rasa* and physical alteration of the built environment. Thanks to these methods both the French and British techniques improved visibility within the old fabric of the colonial cities and accessibility for the swift intervention of the military to suppress any violent form of social discontent and unrest. At first, this process of urban militaristic securitization resulted in transformations of the cities' geography, their territorial status as well as their spatial organization. Interventions in the city's fabric, and the adoption of a code of conduct, reinforced existing elements of social control. The final goal of control over territory and greater security for colonial powers could not have been accomplished without the adoption of new rules of land use and space appropriation for both the newcomers and the indigenous population as well as new segregated norms of conduct for public and private spaces.

The comparative analysis of France and Great Britain illustrate parallels and differences in their management of urban violence mostly around planning interventions added to the use of new technologies of crowd control (Table 1). The French brand of security driven urbanism finds its lineage in Baron Haussmann's techniques of managing flow and ventilation implemented to design a more legible, smooth, and secure Paris, later perfected throughout

Similar approaches to spatial security	
France	Great Britain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonial experience of spatial segregation along ethnic groups and nationality lines • Military strategic management: creating check points, surveillance of public spaces as well as for strategic buildings, roads and accesses • Territorial de-densifying to create a ventilated grid • Instating a legal framework to support CPED practices 	
Divergent approaches to spatial security	
France	Great Britain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus of control and containment on insecure suburban areas by securing entry and exit points • Insuring free flow to and from the entry and exit points to deploy security forces while reinforcing territorial insularity of affected areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating “safe heavens” across the city while insuring the opening-up of insecure areas • Insuring free flow across the city to deploy security forces, the running of businesses and their related transportation needs

Table No. 1: Parallels and Contrasts between France and Great Britain’s efforts to maintain order in the past and present

the colonial rule. Nevertheless, in face of the new patterns of threats, the current militaristic approach to urbanism in France boosts the authorities intervention capacity, scope of action, and responsiveness by adding to former techniques those of social control. The military strategy of spatial occupation results in besieging a city and establishing a sanitary line around the banlieues. These small territories, which often suffer from urban insularity because of their density and their socio-cultural uniformity, are undergoing important transformations that affect the built environment and the transit grid with a final goal of minimizing uncertainty while maximizing control

through residentialisation and de-densification.

London has been experiencing similar security issues as cities in France. Nevertheless, investigations that followed the London riots of 2011 point to a double track approach to the authorities’ interventions in the city. On the one-hand measures of access and flow management would insure the continuation of colonial practices of urban fabric ventilation. Measures to set up “safe heavens” added to the control of the movement to enable authorities to isolate the potentially dangerous elements of the population

Panopticon	Similarities	Neo-Panopticon
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common concerns about spatial visibility • The use of similar well-lighted spaces to avoid darkness, shadows and the unseen for greater spatial legibility • Reinforcement of binary view of the population (legal vs. illegal) based on behavior 	
Panopticon	Differences	Neo-Panopticon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for front view • Individual surveillance • Dependence on the use of design features to control space • Spatial lock-down (contain) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for a bird's eye view • Co-surveillance by a collective • Dependence on technical tools such as video surveillance • Seek to monitor people and objects on the move

Table No. 2 : Similarities and Differences between Panopticon and Neo-Panopticon

while sheltering those who comply with the rules and the codes of conduct.

The occasion of the Olympics in 2012 has provided the authorities of London with an opportunity to regenerate the less privileged parts of the city. Although laudable in principle, some critics argue that this all equates to displacing the potentially hostile and volatile communities to more controllable areas. By re-arranging the most volatile area of the city, security authorities aim to confine part of its disenfranchised population to areas where security management will be facilitated by warfare implements of control and surveillance. This is precisely where the mismatch between the rhetoric of urban inclusive policies and militaristic planning practices resides.

For the past few years, following the surge in urban violence including acts of terrorism, a new approach

to processing urban violence and insecurity has been on the rise in both countries. Analyzing security measures around high profile venues and studying post-violence investigations have shed light on a progressive implementation of Panopticon military-security systems in marginalized areas of French and British cities. Here the militaristic security approach implies the use of certain tools associated with the real war situation. Talk of the use of drones and snipers in the air for the surveillance of cities in the French banlieues and in British cities illustrates the inclusion of warfare techniques in the provision of urban security. The use of such techniques widens the classical panoptical angle of control to a Post-Panopticon, three-dimensional view from above (Table 2). As for the Panopticon the new system prohibits darkness for the sake of greater legibility. Such measures of social control cannot guarantee safety. Potentially hostile and violent individuals can adapt swiftly to

the heterogeneous built environment of modern cities: underground passages, ground infrastructures, tall buildings, etc. Based on its multiple forms, urban security planning produces just as many Panopticon-inspired glasshouses. The greater visibility enables a real time connection between the population and public authorities upgraded by new technologies of surveillance. By connecting the members of the population it also integrates techniques of co-surveillance in the overall urban security policies. As a technical expertise, security planning and its new militaristic connections generate new norms and rules for urbanity.

The question, which remains to be answered, is whether one can still refer to urbanity in a traditional sense while looking at ventilated urban spaces where, as many interstices are erased, and where individuals as well as public and private spaces are continuously under surveillance.

Foucault demonstrated how the enforcement of the panoptic visibility in prison accompanied the stigmatization of abnormality that commanded confinement and reclusion. The setting up of a citywide “neo-panoptism” based on a militaristic and binary readings of new threats as an element of power seems to create the same level of stigmatization by reinforcing an “us vs. them” view of the city dwellers. Regulating flow, controlling access and widening the angle of surveillance through modern military equipments in today’s Paris or London comes with the collective acceptance of sidelining and marginalization, as it was the case in Kasbah and Delhi. Such acceptance reinforces the unsaid in a system that further polarizes urban spaces and sets new red lines conditioning individuals’ everyday life. The socio-cultural, racial and civil

rights’ consequences of the new security planning practices in France and Great Britain are as many connections with the “conquest” of former colonial territories. In today’s urban settings new practices deal with the conquest of internal hostile territories. Based on the long-term impacts of militaristic planning interventions of the past one could hope that in face of changing dynamics of urban insecurity, planners will debate further the consequences of militaristic approaches to the city. In the absence of alternative planning models to secure the city of 21st century, our urban future will bear the seeds of further tensions, divisions and exclusion, diverting policy makers, planners and the population from the long heralded ideal of urban cosmopolitanism.

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Lead Photograph

Metropolitan Delhi : Delhi through the ages, Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society: What Happened to Mughal Delhi, A Morphological Survey

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