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Foreword.

An Introduction to Urban Safety and Security

Emanuela Bonini Lessing

This book is about three scientific works, two of them led by Iuav University of Venice, the other one by SUPSI and performed with the contribution of Iuav scholars. Although their primary objectives differ from one another, the policies on security and safety in chosen contemporary cities and territories can be indicated as their common thread.

The studies give accounts of the putting into action of different local strategies showing an impact on urban security – being it the main goal or only a ‘secondary effect’ of the observed urban policies, and being their result effective or only perceived. The essays describe the process, the stakeholders involved and their role, as well as the specific tools that have been employed.

The case studies reveal site-specific consequences both on the urban fabric as well as on the lifestyle of different social groups, due to a variety of described undertaken actions. They also encourage new considerations on the significance of only apparently theoretical constructs, like welfare and right to citizenship – the latter intended not only as the right to live in a nation, but also as the right to be part of a broader community and to share the same standards of living. It is put in evidence the existence (or absence) of a space of negotiation among the stakeholders on issues affecting urban assets, like the destination and the use of public space. The quality and the nature of this negotiation, and the degree of interaction between the subjects, can have an impact not only on effective criminality but also on risk perception – which affects in its turn, and even more powerfully, the demand for other public and private interventions on matters concerning safety and security.

Comparing European and non-European case studies revealed itself to be a necessary research methodology considering the increasing economic gap that is progressively characterising the social context of the European countries – traced in previous time only in other continents, like Africa and Latin-America – as well as in areas of many European nations. Also,