

URBAN (IN) SECURITY: BETWEEN APPEARANCE AND REALITY IN BUCHAREST

MIRELA MARIANA NAE

*Department of Geography, Bucharest University, Nicolae Bălcescu Av. 1, 010041, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: mirellanae@yahoo.com*

Social disorganization has become a significant issue for social geography. In addition, the territoriality of urban space is deeply embedded in social relations. At the local level, the type of local support for the social community and the role of the urban actors involved are a critical issue. Moreover, city centre redevelopment emphasises commercial growth that advances private interest entrepreneurs whilst the revitalisation of neglected neighbourhoods is a lower priority for the local authorities. Urban violence and the increasing sense of insecurity are phenomena which affect the quality of life. This article focuses on perceived urban (in)security within Bucharest using the results of questionnaires conducted in 36 districts of the city.

Key words: Insecurity, Perceived insecurity, Community, Urban violence, Territoriality, Bucharest

Introduction

From an economic, social, political and cultural perspective cities are highly heterogenic environments and as a result the different social representations of (in)security are problematic to characterise and differentiate. The complexity of the modern world, based on a “sociology of risk” has induced a sense of fear and anxiety in the urban environment often as a result of (and exacerbated by) mass media coverage (such as neighbourhood attacks or urban “revolts”). The defensive exterior walls that were historically constructed around cities have, according to Zygmunt Bauman, become interior walls in contemporary societies. Contemporary urban fear is provoked by an “interior aggressor”, in comparison with earlier fears of external aggressors that lead to the construction of cities in the first place.

Urban violence and the increasing sense of insecurity have a profound effect on the quality of urban life. These phenomena may be at the root of a

radical transformation and social/spatial fragmentation within the city. Unfortunately, the contemporary (post)modern city no longer offers a sense of true security or the necessary *Sicherheit* (a term which embraces safety, security and certainty). Concern for personal safety is a multidimensional phenomenon and is loaded with diverse meanings. We should not forget the presence of ‘gated communities’ (originally an American concept but now imitated around the world) in which personal security is the principal objective, where mutual avoidance and separation have become survival strategies in the contemporary megalopolis!

Personal security is one of the fundamental attributes on which quality of life is based. This theme is understood and reproduced within everyday life through issues such as criminality, incivility, physical and verbal aggression and damage to the urban infrastructure. This is a heterogeneous topic that is related to broader economic, social and political issues. When talking about the risks of social deviance (such as crime or

violence) two approaches are necessary: one at an individual or personal level and the other at a collective or community level. Such security can be drastically reduced when human rights are neglected or denied; when the right to property is not protected; or when recurrent urban phenomena (such as poverty, disease or accidents) are not covered by insurance or social policies. Reduced security can also lead to poverty, illness, ignorance or stress. In fact, the two notions – individual and collective security – are complementary. The key aspects of this complex and controversial subject are undoubtedly delinquency, criminality and urban violence: in short, profound social deviance, a subject that has been examined in depth by psychologists, criminologists, doctors and geographers.

The “social architecture” of the neighbourhoods characterised by social deviance is underlined by the frequency of ‘incivilities’ (signs of vandalism, the presence of graffiti, abandoned cars etc) which indicate the decline of that district. Herbert (1993) demonstrates the direct correlations between the level of incivility, the perceived level of crime and the fear of crime in urban areas.

The study of urban incivility as a social dimension of deviance, offers considerable potential for further research. Sébastien Roché (1993) defines incivilities as an assemblage of varied social damages that do not involve physical injury to the person but which nevertheless disrupt the elementary rules of social life. These include: spitting, the spraying of graffiti on the walls of the city, damage to public infrastructure, the congregation of groups of potentially threatening individuals, excessive noise from houses and a general disrespect for the elderly. The author also examines their impact on society

through classifying human behaviour by three types of motive: acquisition (profit, benefit), demonstration and conflict.

Between the two extremes of ultra security (such as gated communities) and insecurity, what are the public policies of urban managers that allow the prevention and control of urban insecurity? Urban policies could have a significant impact on urban security if they are based on prevention. Put another way, the sense of security could be dependent upon a certain ‘ecological pressure’, determined by the inherent risks of urban space (Roche 1993). The frequency of criminal activities can influence an individual’s sense of security, even if he or she has not directly been a victim. Moreover, what one individual perceives with fear may be regarded as insignificant by another person.

The term ‘delinquency’ needs to be understood in two senses: firstly that which is directly experienced by individuals and secondly, that which is perceived or imagined to exist. The latter understanding of delinquency starts from the construction of images and symbolic representations of a particular urban area or neighbourhood on the basis of information accumulated from various sources. We are talking here about ‘symbolic geographies’ which can almost entirely reconfigure ‘real’ geographical space to create new imagined territories. In the formation of such imaginative geographies, certain spaces are classified and placed in a hierarchy according to their perceived value (Mitu 2006: 23)

One of the most objective images of the city is created through direct experience of the city in question. This is not a fleeting experience but one that is sufficiently extended to enable the individual to develop a profound understanding of that

particular urban space. Negative experiences of a city can profoundly damage an individual's mental image of that place. On the other hand, positive experiences can result in highly positive evaluations of urban space (Ianoş 2004).

Such images and representations play an important role in evaluating a geographic space as being either 'good' or 'bad' in terms of perceived (in)security. For example, in Bucharest the districts of Rahova, Ferentari or Pantelimon are perceived by non-residents as insecure spaces; however, residents generally consider these districts to be safe (or at least the fear of criminality is not so great).

The way that people assign labels to urban space is directly related to the social morphology of the population in question. Other important considerations are the logic of stereotypes along with the presence of signs of social disorganisation and antisocial acts in those neighbourhoods (such as broken windows, vandalism, graffiti, litter and public disorder). Such elements increase the sense of danger or insecurity in the urban environment. Moreover, many studies have indicated a positive relationship between fear and delinquency (victimisation, discrimination etc). 'The greater individual's perception that strain threatens his or her core values, goals or identity, the greater individual perceives the magnitude of the strain' (Byongook M., Blurton D., 2008:585). A situation of stress can lead to delinquency and crime when it is associated with low levels of social control.

Methodology: General diagnosis of urban insecurity within Bucharest

The data presented in the paper were generated by a face-to-face questionnaire undertaken at the city

level in the summer of 2007. A total of 1350 people were questioned in 36 districts of the city (Bucharest is divided into 6 Sectors, each of which is further divided into 6 districts).

The sampling strategy adopted in the case was simple random sampling: each individual of the reference population has the same probability (which is calculable and not equal to zero) of being selected to take part in the sample). Procedures for delimiting areas and zones were used to compensate for the absence of a sampling frame.

The questions were concerned with aspects of community life; senses of (in)security in the home neighbourhood; the impact of incivilities on the home; the assessments of criminal activity and experiences of crime. The investigation was concerned with senses of (in)security from two perspectives. The first focused on personal experiences of crime; the second was concerned with the dynamic of the relationship between incivilities, criminal behaviour, and the ways in which an increasing sense of insecurity affects the quality of everyday life of the city's inhabitants.

In order to identify the level of (in)security of a particular place it is necessary to examine committed crimes but also the perception of such activities. To assess the ways in which fear affects the quality of life (and implicitly, personal security) respondents were asked about their experiences over the past year. Questions focused on negative social relations; the perceived sense of insecurity in the residential neighbourhood; residential attachment; civic participation; the quality of life in the city; the change in conditions of life; and the image of the neighbourhood. Similarly, in order to investigate the relationships between criminal behaviour and the presence of incivilities which lead to increased

senses of insecurity, respondents were asked if the following issues were 'serious' or 'very serious' in their neighbourhood: the presence of graffiti, begging, vulgar inscriptions on walls, skirmishes and other incidents on the street, verbal insults, and informal commerce.

These primary data were supplemented through a range of secondary data. These included press statements over the past 4 years from the town halls of each sector; reports by the Municipal Police; reports undertaken by leading national newspapers (*Adevărul* and *Cotidianul*); and official statistics produced by the Single National Centre for Emergency Calls. However, the data provided by the police services have their limitations and do not enable comparisons. As a result this analysis focuses on perceptions of security and of incivilities in the zone or neighbourhood in question. The operational data used by the authorities refers particularly to the rate of criminality (the total number of crimes reported per 100,000 inhabitants), crimes against the person, crimes against private property etc. These data also have their limitations: they are often insufficient or distorted due to the differences between the regional statistics units and in some cases are classified.

The role of urban actors in the prevention of delinquency

Romanian society is currently in a state of economic transition (the current phase of which is estimated to continue to 2014) but is also experiencing major political and social transformations. Various Non-Governmental Organizations and other associations have emerged that have attempted to tackle or prevent

delinquency. However, the development of civic participation is considerably delayed or is only at an early stage. The system of urban actors could function more effectively only at the declarative level. A further problem is the lack of a clear and explicit vision for the development and implementation of local policies for the prevention of delinquency, along with an inadequate unified database on which to take decisions. Neighbourhood revitalization must focus on housing, public services and other amenities that improve the quality of life and the built environment in the residential districts.

There has been some attempt to create associations that seek to address urban insecurity through the consolidation of civic security and the promotion of social dialogue (such as the 'Habitat' Association of Property Owners and the 'Civic Action' foundation).

Herbert (1993) underlines the importance of urban communities for improving living conditions within the city. Government initiatives to promote community development in other European states are more visible and reliable through the implementation of numerous city centre policies (urban regeneration, housing improvements, environmental conservation and the creation of new urban and social services). To these can be added other philanthropic and charitable services (such as those provided by churches for the homeless, street children and other socially disadvantaged groups).

Unfortunately, at the level of society in general it is apparent that rates of civic participation and senses of community are weakly developed (due to factors such as the residual mentality of the communist era, general mistrust of institutions and social marginalisation) which further increase senses of uncertainty. Despite the partnerships between

some organizations and NGOs (such as 'Habitat' or the Civic Action Foundation) to prevent juvenile delinquency the results are very limited. Thus the support from the community for the prevention of delinquency is a critical issue.

There has yet to be a detailed study in Bucharest of the impacts of incivility. Such incivilities are not recorded in official statistics and their legal definition is vague, even if their obvious visual presence within the city can increase perceptions of insecurity (Nae 2006).

At the institutional level a Single National Service for Emergency Calls was established according to

EU directives. This is an important development within the telecommunications sector. Thus dialling the number 112 enables rapid communication with the principal emergency services (police, ambulance and fire).

The primary data provided by the police shows a general decrease in criminal activity compared with previous years (see Table 1). Thus instances of delinquency in Bucharest declined from 1725 in 2000 to 872 in 2005, a fall of 49%. On the other hand robberies have increased slightly from 1235 in 2003 to 1364 in 2007 (an increase of 10%).

Table 1. General indicators of criminality in Bucharest (2000-2007)

Type of Crime	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Delinquency	1725	1975	1934	1343	864	872	-
Rape	83	84	70	58	43	47	145
Murder	27	30	31	20	26	27	27
Attempted murder	44	42	49	35	52	55	55
Grievous bodily harm	75	90	98	84	56	96	15
Robbery total	1.268	1.202	1.092	1.235	852	960	1364
With murder	5	2	6	4	1	3	27
With assault	27	40	29	26	32	22	63

Source: Municipal Police

Other types of urban crime that occur frequently in urban areas involve various types of theft and robbery (involving homes, cars etc). Thefts within private dwellings decreased from 4437 in 2000 to

1568 in 2005 but increased again to 2688 in 2007. Thefts from cars decreased slowly between 2000 and 2002 and then decreased more rapidly between 2002 and 2005.

Table 2 Crimes involving private goods (2000 -2007)

Indicators	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007
Theft of private goods (total)	8995	9694	9176	6245	5103	5453	-
Theft from within the home	4437	3720	4078	3557	1856	1568	2688
Theft from private cars	10427	10120	10293	11421	4572	3300	6875
Theft of private cars	2256	1952	1839	1825	1578	1479	1173
Destruction of private goods	1606	1395	1582	1952	988	1042	
Offences against public order	43	43	52	40	40	32	63

Source: Municipal Police

However, the situation in some districts and neighbourhoods is totally different if we consider the number of emergency calls to the national 112 service. The police service declared that the whole city could be declared a special security zone.

According to studies undertaken by leading newspapers (*Adevărul* and *Cotidianul*) the parts of the city that are especially vulnerable to crime are sectors 1, 2 and 3 (where approximately 100,000 appeals to the 112 service were made in response to household intrusions, thefts from and of cars, and disturbance of public order). In addition, data provided by the municipal police indicates a partial coverage of urban space by mobile intervention units or police patrols but not all areas are covered by such services with the result that some part of the city appear to be more safe or peaceful and the sense of (in)security is manifest in a more latent way.

The areas of the city that are dangerous or unsafe are already known to both citizens and police. From existing statistical data (which is, however, not exhaustive) the areas of the city identified as having a higher level of criminality can be identified. The neighbourhoods, streets and intersections with the highest level of criminal activity are as follows. Sector 5: Rahova, Șoseaua Alexandriei and Ferentari (Aleea Livezilor). Sector 6: some parts of Militari (Pasajul Lujerului, Bd. Iuliu – Maniu) and Crângași. Sector 2: Șoseaua Pantelimon and the Obor – Colentina area. Sector 4: Bd. Tineretului, Calea Șerban –Vodă along with Văcărești and Tineretului parks. Sector 3: Vitan – Dristor and Strada Matei Basarab (in which an average of 30-40 thefts are recorded each month); Sector 1: the area around Gara de Nord and on the north along with

Strada Alexandru Șerban - Nicolae Caranfil - Șoseaua Pipera.

In 2006 over 10,000 calls were made to the National Service for Emergency Calls concerning particular conflicts that were happening in the city. The Colentina area (and especially police district 7) figures among the neighbourhoods with the most calls (more than 10,000) concerning incidents on the street requiring police intervention). The Rahova and Ferentari districts generated 9,089 and 7914 complaints respectively, while in the Crângași district the police recorded 8016 incidents of theft, damage to property and other crimes (see Table 3).

In addition, another factor to take into consideration is the role of teenage gangs and the ways that such gangs mark their territory. "Streets are contested spaces. Street gangs tend to define particular territories and to mark these territories though, for example, graffiti on walls, bridges and buildings. Highly visual markers are quite literally placed on the landscape to claim space and to signal control of territory or "turf ownership" (Daniels *et al.*, 2005: 410). In the case of Bucharest we are talking about an important dimension of popular culture that is transferred onto the physical fabric of the city.

According to police sources there are almost 140 gangs (mainly composed of minors) recorded in Bucharest. Of these, 54 include people who have been previously arrested while 122 are known for excessive alcohol consumption and 37 for drug use. These gangs are usually form of 10-15 people (mainly minors) and are found in almost all areas of the city. Their activities include destruction to green spaces, damage to lampposts and arson.

Table 3: List of 112 Calls to the National Emergency Calls Service

Month			Month		
	Total calls	Total cases		Total calls	Total cases
January	257 040	16 661	July	352 238	55 427
February	350 269	21 442	August	357 660	36 948
March	334 019	26 899	September	350 966	34 655
April	322 528	27 536	October	350 551	39 339
May	340 154	11 559			
June	346 555	30 387	Total	3 361 980	300 853
Police section	Police section 7 (Colentina)		Police section	Police section 19 (Rahova-Ferentari)	Police section 20 (Crângași) 8, 016
Total	9,868		16 (Ferentari) 7, 914	8,089	
complaints	Police section 21 (Militari) 7,373				
2006					
Police section	Police section 7 (Colentina)		Police section	Police section 19	Police section
Total	8,335 (whereby)		16 (Ferentari)	7,397 (whereby)	20 (Crângași)
complaints	5,344 Offences against public order		4,930 Offences against public order	5,385 Offences against public order	Total complaints 7,433
2007					

Source: www.112.ro/index and the newspaper *Cotidianul*, 12th October 2006, Police Municipality data

Note: 'Total calls' refers to all calls to 112, regardless of their nature. 'Total complaints' refers only to complaints referred to the police.

There are various projects intended to direct the energies of young people away from crime and vandalism. One of these is "Kartier 2005". According to internal statistics produced by the Youth Centre of the Metropolitan Library there are approximately 17,000 young people between 14 and 20 years of age who are members of street gangs. Some are more aggressive than others but there is a strong influence of hip-hop culture. Although the local authorities may pay little attention to this issue the prefect of Bucharest (Mioara Mantale) has stated "the phenomenon of street gangs cannot be ignored even if, up to now, the local administration has tried to ignore this problem" (*Adevărul*, 28 aprilie 2005)

The evaluation of urban insecurity from the perspective of lived experiences, correlated with the urban morphology and the built environment (derelict buildings or land, areas with social risk and social deviance) remains essential for the identification of geographically unsafe areas. Starting from this point, this article analyses senses

of security at the level of the street, district and dwelling. It also examines victimisation (i.e. experiences of being a victim of crime). Respondents were asked "Are you afraid of physical attacks, break-ins or robbery in the neighbourhood in which you live?" of "Have you been the victim of a physical attack, assault, break-in or robbery during the last year?"

As Table 4 shows, 14.7% of those questioned had been victims of an act of aggression. However this varies considerably by sector ranging from 20.9% in Sector 6 to 8% in Sector 2.

Perceived Urban Insecurity: Interpretation of the Research Findings

In order to examine the way in which dependent variables can be explained through one or more independent variables a multiple regression analysis was undertaken. The following variables were included in this analysis: negative social relations,

residential attachment, sense of insecurity in the home neighbourhood; the impact of incivilities; the presence of graffiti tags; informal commerce; the presence of begging in various forms; offensive inscriptions on the walls of buildings; street incidents, skirmishes between gangs; and verbal insults. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 4 The percentage of respondents who indicated that they had been the victim of physical assault, aggression, robbery, or break-in

District	No	Yes
Sector 1	86,22 %	13,78%
Sector 2	92%	8%
Sector 3	84,4%	15,6%
Sector 4	84,89%	15,11%
Sector 5	83,6%	16,4%
Sector 6	79,1%	20,9%
Total	85,3%	14,7%

Source : questionnaires

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics (Control, Independent and Dependent Variables) used in the Regression Analysis

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Evaluation of quality of life within the city	0.00	1.00	0.55	0.49	0.24
Change in quality of life conditions during the last five years	0.00	1.00	0.71	0.45	0.20
Sense of security in the home neighbourhood	0.00	1.00	0.91	0.28	0.08
Relationships with neighbours	0.00	1.00	0.56	0.49	0.24
Sense of community /Civic participation	0.00	1.00	0.35	0.47	0.22
Negative social relationships	0.00	1.00	0.83	0.37	0.14
Image of the neighbourhood/quality of the built environment	1	5	3.32	0.93	0.88
Skirmishes or brawls on the street	0.00	1.00	0.65	0.47	0.22
Presence of loud music	0.00	1.00	0.48	0.47	0.22
Interior cleanliness of the apartment blocks	0.00	1.00	0.62	0.48	0.23
Presence of syringes associated with drug use	0.00	1.00	0.83	0.36	0.13
Degradation of cars	0.00	1.00	0.66	0.47	0.22
Evidence of vandalism	0.00	1.00	0.69	0.45	0.21
Trivial inscriptions on the walls	0.00	1.00	0.66	0.47	0.22
Informal commerce	0.00	1.00	0.62	0.48	0.23
Begging without violence	0.00	1.00	0.64	0.47	0.22
Evidence of graffiti, tags etc	0.00	1.00	0.59	0.49	0.24
Presence of groups of teenagers	0.00	1.00	0.66	0.47	0.22
Insults or verbal aggression	0.00	1.00	0.69	0.46	0.21
Age	14	88	41.11	16.48	271.84
Gender (female = 0, male =1)	1	2	1.50	0.50	0.25
Studies	1	6	2.87	1.08	1.17
Valid N (listwise)	1350				

A victimization index was created by summing four items that measure the extent to which respondents had experienced particular types of crime: crime related to theft, theft from property, robbery, and physical aggression. The evaluation of urban insecurity from the perspective of lived experience, correlated with elements of urban morphology and the built environment (abandoned buildings, ruins, abandoned land, zones of social risk and deviance) are essential in considering and identifying zones labelled as being unsafe.

It is apparent that fear of crime depends on many factors related to the quality of the built urban environment and of incivilities that take place in this environment.

The base model of the regression analysis includes control variables (negative social relations;

residential attachment to the neighbourhood; sense of insecurity in the home neighbourhood; image of the neighbourhood; the impact of incivilities; and the presence of graffiti and tags) and was initially estimated. Three regression models were undertaken of which the third proved to have the most predictive power. In the model each type of regression is presented, along with the value of the correlation coefficient (R), the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the standard error. The value of R^2 increases when more variables are introduced into the model. In addition, the inclusion of variables that is not relevant leads to an increase in the standard error. As Table 6 shows, this model explains only 14.8% of the variation of the dependent variable (the victimisation index).

Table 6: Multiple Regression (Summary)

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Model				
1	0.385	0.148	0.062	0.866
2	0.385	0.148	0.067	0.864
3	0.385	0.148	0.072	0.862

a Predictors: (Constant), Image of the built environment of the city//neighbourhood; insults; physical assaults; sense of security in the neighbourhood; fear of physical assault; robbery; burglary in the neighbourhood; damage to cars; evaluation of the quality of life within the city; residential attachment; informal types of commerce; cleanliness of buildings; change in the quality of life in the past 5 years; presence of syringes related to drug consumption; incidents on the street; riots; skirmishes; graffiti and other inscriptions; acts of vandalism; congregation of gangs of teenagers; presence of loud music; begging without violence; offensive inscriptions on walls

b Dependent Variable: Situation of victimization during the last year

The base model is estimated in order to illustrate the explanatory force of the control variables used in the model. Model 3 is estimated in order to investigate the effect related to fear of victimisation. The results show that the variable 'insults or verbal aggression' has a significant positive effect in

explain the dependent variable. At the same time, there are some variables (presence of informal commerce, presence of loud music, physical assaults, and changes in the quality of life) that are negatively related to urban delinquency, which is consistent with what was predicted (see Table 7).

Table 7: Coefficients of the multiple regressions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
3	B		Beta		
(Constant)	3.159	.640		4.932	.000
Residential attachment to the neighbourhood	.195	.154	.099	1.262	.208
Image of the built environment of the city/neighbourhood	6.163E-02	.071	.066	.866	.388
Insults	.315	.180	.152	1.751	.082
Presence of gangs of teenagers	-.146	.164	-.073	-.886	.377
Drawings, graffiti, tags	8.404E-02	.148	.045	.567	.572
Begging without violence	.159	.182	.078	.873	.384
Informal types of commerce	-.385	.152	-.205	-2.542	.012
Trivial inscriptions on the walls	-.101	.177	-.050	-.571	.569
Acts of urban vandalism	-8.565E-02	.160	-.041	-.535	.593
Cars degradation	-4.720E-02	.140	-.025	-.338	.736
Presence of syringes and drug consumption	.190	.211	.068	.901	.369
Interior cleanliness of the apartment blocks	-.160	.151	-.085	-1.061	.290
Presence of loud music	-.254	.169	-.116	-1.506	.134
Physical assaults	-.959	.494	-.152	-1.941	.054
Change of quality of life within a city	-.234	.156	-.113	-1.503	.135

These results throw further light on the situation of victimisation. The quality of the built urban environment; the impact of incivilities against urban communities; and the conditions of life (and the improvement of the quality of life) are facts that can explain urban insecurity or fear of being a victim of crime. The way in which real criminality is perceived is closely related with other subjective indicators such as satisfaction with life, the quality of life in the city, or negative social relations (social disorder).

A geographical analysis reveals both similarities and differences in the perception of crime but also in the possibility of experiencing crime. It is possible to talk about a logic in the ways that these take place, especially in those districts or sectors considered as having a potential for delinquency. Analysing the map of responses regarding victimisation certain differences are apparent between the north and the south of the city and between the east and the west (see Figure 1).

The highest percentage of positive responses can be seen in the following districts: Militari (Apusului - Bd. Uverturii); Vitan (Nerva Traian - Timpuri Noi); and Rahova (Șoseaua Alexandriei - Str. Mărganului). The opposite situation is apparent in neighbourhoods considered as having a good image such as Unirii (Unirii - Bd. Decebal) or Floreasca-Calea Dorobanți. There are also differences between neighbourhoods in the same sector. For example, in Sector 1, 22% of respondents in Floreasca, 1 Mai and Domenii declared that they were the victim of a crime in the past year compared to only 4% of residents in the Dorobanți and Primăverii districts.

The area most affected by aggression or various other crimes was Sector 4, particularly the Berceni and Tineretului neighbourhoods (23% and 19% respectively). The northern, central and southern parts of Sector 5 are perceived in a similar way regarding criminality. The vulnerable areas are Rahova-Sebastian (21.7%), Rahova- Alexandriei - Mărganului (20,8 %) and Ferentari- Spătaru Preda.

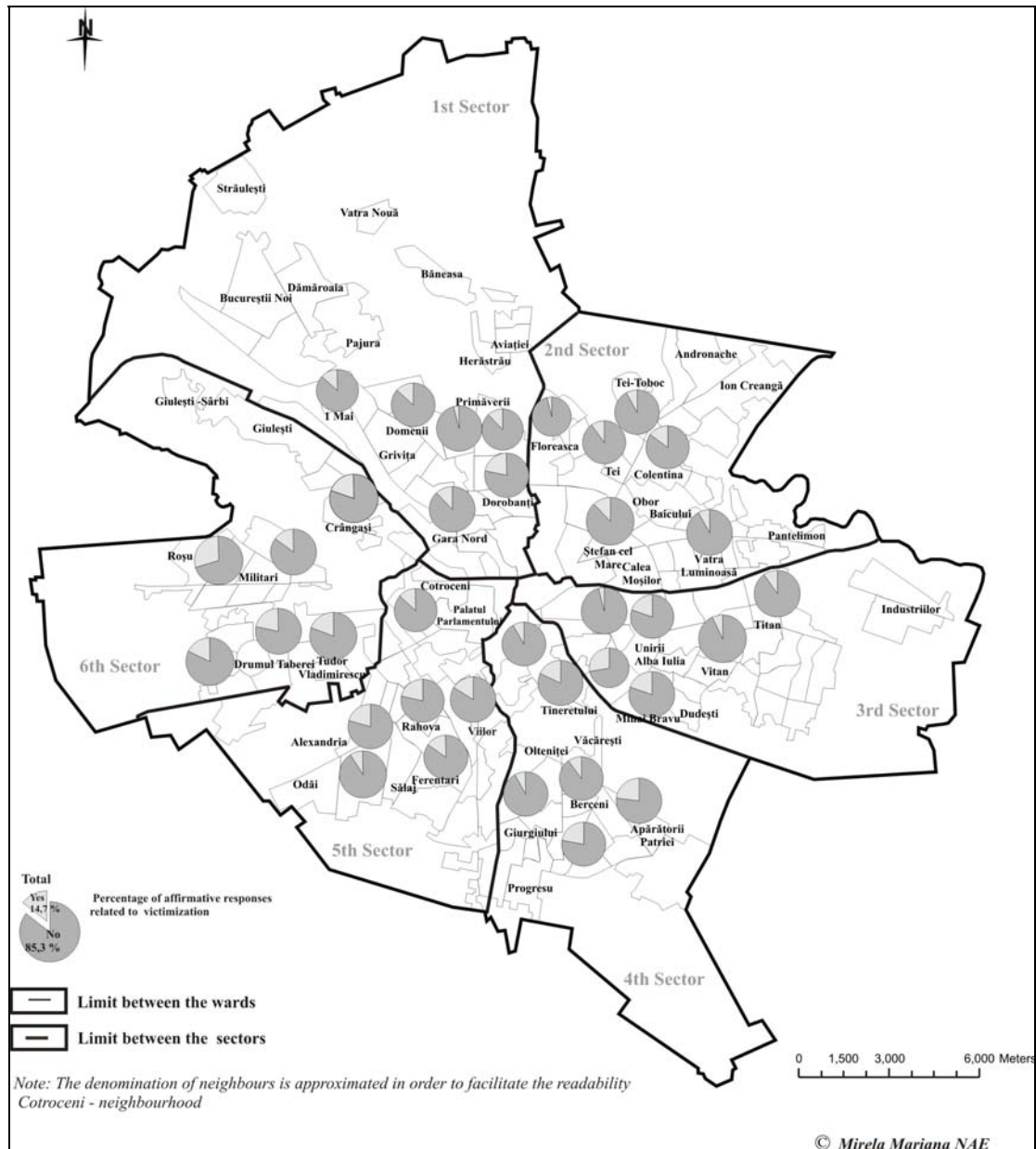


Fig. 1 The situation of victimization in 36 districts of the city

Conclusion

The effects of stress related to fear of being a victim of crime are related to delinquency in general. These research findings suggest that the quality of the built urban environment, the impact of incivilities and changes in the quality of urban life can have significant effects on delinquency.

The spatial differences concerning fear of crime and criminality are considered to be significant, both

at the level of the city as a whole but also at the level of the neighbourhood. These could not be explained in a reductionist manner according to a simple centre-periphery model. Instead, there is a need to take into account the imaginative and symbolic geographies of zones labelled as being ‘better’ or ‘worse’. As such, an important direction for future study is the way in which people form mental images of different parts of the city. The difference between perception of delinquency,

antisocial acts against the urban community and the particular ways in which urban space is appropriated can be observed along two axes of the city: north-south and east-west. The dimensions of life and of social power can be brought together in place. Further research is necessary in order to investigate

other key effects and characteristics concerning fear of delinquency. The study of delinquent phenomena must also take account of policies for tackling and preventing social disorder (particularly drug consumption, prostitution, unemployment and the impact of uncivil behaviour).

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