In the year 1969 Philip Zimbardo, Professor for Psychology at Stanford University, conducted following experiment: two old cars were placed in an urban setting. One car in a rather affluent area next to Stanford University and one in the Bronx in New York City, an area known to be socially problematic. On both cars the license plates had been removed, signaling that they were out of use. Within three days the car in the Bronx was completely stripped. First all useful elements were taken, then it was completely destroyed. However nothing happened to the second car for over a week. Zimbardo decided to pursue with his experiment, took a sledgehammer and destroyed one of the windows of the car. It took only a few hours and the car looked similar to the car in the Bronx. It had been destroyed. The actors in the second car's destruction were described to be white and obviously belonged to the middle class, residents of the area, which previously had been regarded to be safe and calm. What had happened?[1]

In the book "The Fall of Public Man" Richard Sennett describes the change of the words "public" and "private"[2] parallel to a change of society from being turned outwards to being turned inwards, beginning with the fall of the Ancient Régime (18th century). The earliest known English language source used the word public in the sense of "well of society" (publyke wele). An additional meaning was added to the word public in the 16th century: that which is obvious, accessible to common observation. The word "private" was used in the sense of "privileged" at that time. Only toward the end of the 17th century finally the complementary pair "public – private" became more and more used in the sense in which we use it today. Being private is to be at a place, which is closed and restrictedly accessible, normally for just family and friends. Being in public means to be exposed to everyone's view. In 1726 however Joseph Butler in his Sermons[3] still wrote: "Every man is to be considered in two capacities, the private and public; as designed to pursue his own interest, and likewise to contribute to the good of others. Whoever will consider may see that, in general, there is no contrariety between these; but that from the original constitution of man, and the circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But, among the great variety of affections or principles of actions in our nature, some in their primary intention and design seem to belong to the single or private, others to the public or social capacity."

It is the public capacity in man which Richard Sennett describes to have decreased and which has a parallel in the decrease of public space in the city. At the same time an increase in intimate communication is perceivable as well. However, the public capacity is the capacity to communicate and to do this without "undressing" one self, to "perform".

The mass media, also considered to be the "news media", actually presents a mirror of the changes that have taken place. Nowadays the media report more and more on intimate subjects. Talk Shows where people describe their personal problems in every detail and Reality TV, which follows citizens preferably into intimate or embarrassing situations, have become daily media "life." It has also become common in society to be "open", to merely talk about intimate subjects juxtaposing an extremely "closed" tacit behaviour, when transiting the spaces, which are accessible to everyone or at least a larger group of people, which are recognized as strangers.

What is communication? Niklas Luhmann, a German system theorist, defines the term in the following way[4]: communication is a "unity of the difference of information, message and understanding, without being able to communicate this unity. But it uses for retrospective self-observation the difference of information, message and understanding in order to be

able to determine if the subsequent communication has to react on doubts within the information, on assumed message intentions (for example the intention to cheat) or on difficulties in understanding". A social system is an autopoietic system, a recursive system. And communication is the defining part of a social system. Without communication there is no social system, since a system is defined to be always a combination of different elements which interact with each other and which are in fact relating to each other in various ways. The environment begins where there are no interactions anymore.

Philip Zimbardo's car experiment supports Sennett's thesis of the "Fall of Public Man". In contemporary urban society the links in between the different elements are extremely weak. A single object not fitting into the system can lead to an immediate loss of identification within the system and subsequently the system destroys itself. Based on Zimbardo's experiment later a theory which became known as "broken windows theory" was developed. As human's behaviour is strongly influenced by symbols of order and disorder, preventing street crime, it is stated, means preventing the first window being broken, the first graffiti marks and the first drunkard from a public display. The broken windows theory introduced Neighborhood Watch Programs and increased police foot patrols, ironically perhaps merely in order to protect the "good" citizen from his own potential of aggression, perhaps even to protect him from the experience of recognizing his own potential of aggression and this way securing him and assuring identity.

A problem of enforcing hierarchy in order to prevent crime and aggression, is that it is only to a minimal extent capable of re-establishing links, very often it even counteracts communication and the links in between the elements of the system become even weaker (less and less public communication). Subsequently the protection methods have to be augmented permanently, producing not at last extremely high financial strains for the governments.

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The fall of communism is one example, which showed the power of a network against authority, even though the network structure was only perceivable in a very short period of change from one hierarchical system into another hierarchical system. The documentary "Videograms of a Revolution" [5] by Andrei Ujica and Harun Farocki shows the events in December 1989 in Romania and is also a critical approach to the role of mass media to serve in the establishment of hierarchies. The film uses material, which was recorded by different persons, from which most worked for the State's TV station.

On December 21 a public speech by Nicolae Ceaucescu is transmitted on TV. The speech was Ceaucesu's attempt to regain complete authority over a country in which several uprisings had occurred for a few days, not in the main city but in the provinces. The speech took place on the city hall's balcony in Bucharest in face of a mass of people on the square next to the building. No information about the uprisings in the provinces had been officially given. And information to the mass media was generally censored.

Ceaucescu speaks, the cameras show him on the balcony. For some reason suddenly Ceaucescu breaks in his speech. The cameras turn off. The transmission is cut. Shortly after, the cameras go back to transmission but they show the sky. the speech however is audible. Then the speech breaks again. This time the cameras' focus moves to the square and the unrest taking place is transmitted. Ceaucescu is shown how he leaves the balcony.

What had happened? In fact the operators of the cameras had order to turn them off whenever something unpredicted should happen. The shift of the cameras' focus marked the

fall of the Regime and the shift at the same time meant an establishment of links in between the different areas where uprising had ocurred, a network.

A project, which was supposed to enlighten to some extent the vulnerabilities of a linear authoritarian against a network structure, is "Composition for a Web Page Quartet" [6], developed during a workshop in Graz in Austria and a few weeks later performed during the Steirischer Herbst Festival in absence of the responsible artists. To substitute the artists a detailed description for the setting and a score for four voluntary musicians were sent to the perfomance space in the morning of the very same day of the performance. The actual presentation was a concert in the evening performed by the four voluntary musicians who followed the orders of a conductor. The musicians used as instruments four web pages and the conductor gave orders via another web page projected on the wall in front of them. However, no one at the concert space knew anything specific about the performance before it happened.

The score, which was sent in the morning of the performance day, lists: "10 hours before the concert - select the conductor's web page: all the following instructions will be given by the conductor himself - short salutation by the conductor, thanks and encouragement of the co-workers. The conductor points out that he has full confidence into their abilities and therefore dispenses with any control measures, as video surveillance, bugging systems, informants or any potential technology which might be developed in future – determining of the musicians: four musicians either four women or four men, or two women and two men. Asymmetries should be avoided - also pay attention to the body heights. A minimum of musical education is desirable. The four players are asked to wear appropriate clothing - costume, black suit." etc. Five computers and an Internet connection were needed and set up. One of the computers needed a connection to a projector.

The performance was quite successful. The musicians were stressed but happy that the concert had happened to everyone's satisfaction. Only once during the performance the Internet connection broke down, but the musicians waited it to be re-established and continued the performance by trying to catch up with the conductor's orders.

Epilogue: a revolution cannot be provoked.

Notes

* (excerpts of: Westermann, C., "Tactics for the Urban and the Virtual Space. Play." (in Portuguese translation) – in: Redes Sensoriais, Contra Capa Livraria, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2003; ISBN 85-86011-74-6)

(1)Philip Zimbardo has a web page at http://www.zimbardo.com. Compare as well: James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, Broken Windows: http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/crime/windows.htm

(2) compare: Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man, 1974, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., New York (German edition: Verfall und Ende des öffentlichen Lebens. Die Tyrannei der Intimität, 1986, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, p. 31)

(3) the work of Joseph Butler is available on the web at: http://www.farid-hajji.net/books/en/Butler_Joseph/hn-index.html. The excerpt quoted can be found at: http://www.farid-hajji.net/books/en/Butler_Joseph/hn-index.html

(4) compare: Niklas Luhmann, Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft, Erster Teilband, 1997, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, p. 87

(5) Andrei Ujica and Harun Farocki, Videogramme einer Revolution, 1992, Harun Farocki Filmproduktion Berlin, 16 mm, 106 min.

(6) concept and design Kerstin Wagener and Claudia Westermann, http://www.ezaic.de/quartett/