



The Hardening of Urban Space

Week 5

GGRC13



Questions for today's lecture

1. How does the fear of terror, crime, social disorder, or political resistance shape urban space today?
2. What aspects of liberty and community are we willing to give up for the sake of 'security' in our city?
3. How are ordinary urban spaces becoming inflected with military technologies, anti-crime architecture and new forms of surveillance?

(Urban) planning and design for danger and security

- In recent years, urban surveillance and urban security have become a much-researched areas within urban political geography.
- In today's lecture we are going to explore three ways this hardening is taking shape:
 - The 'war on terror' and the militarization of urban space;
 - Income inequality, and practices of urban segregation, gating and securitization;
 - Urban surveillance – of ourselves and others.

Hardening of urban space

- To Davis, 'hardening' refers to the growth of physical, surveillant and imaginative barriers separating different people in cities.
- This hardening does not happen by accident, Sorkin argues;
- Instead of community cohesion, functionality or other planning ideals, the**"presumption of danger becomes the defining criterion for [urban] planning"** (Sorkin p. xiii).

WAR

(and the militarization of
space)

Urban life since 9/11

- As some have pointed out, it is not terrorism, but governments' *responses* to terrorism that have had a significant effect on cities since the attack on the World Trade Centre on 9/11.
- This has not entailed the adoption of entirely new trends, but the *intensification* of trends towards the securitization of urban space that had been well underway for many years.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lKZqqSI9-s>

Fear in/of the city

- The growth of militarized planning in cities was not an inevitable outcome of 9/11, Sorkin argues, but rather has provided justification for a range of measures that have radically altered our character of daily life:
 - Biometric screening at airports
 - Reconstruction of cityscapes with anti-terror architecture
 - The expansion of CCTV networks and surveillance activities



Cross the border faster.

The growing militarization of urban space

- The growing infiltration of urban space by militarized technologies;



<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-police-add-armoured-truck-1.973516>

Canadian police forces that have armoured vehicles

- Calgary
- Durham
- Edmonton
- Hamilton
- Peel
- Sault Ste. Marie
- Toronto
- Victoria
- B.C. RCMP (Vancouver)



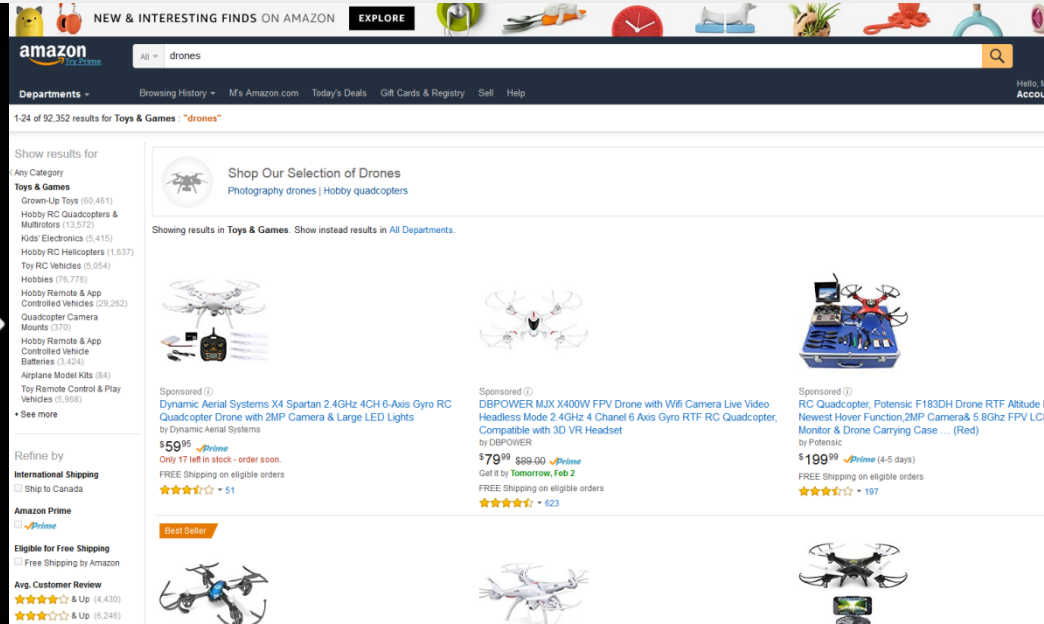
New efforts to secure 'soft targets' and urban infrastructure

- There is a new interface between urban planning and military planning (Sorkin p.x).



London Tube bombing, July 2007
(‘7/7’)

The militarization of everyday life





From state surveillance to self-surveillance

- In what ways do these trends encourage us to surveil ourselves and our neighbours?



Foucault's panopticon

Interior View of Cell House, new Illinois State Penitentiary at Stateville, near Joliet, Ill.—23



“Once the prisoners had been inculcated with the idea of their perpetual exposure, the prison could function even when the guard was absent.”

- (Sorkin p.xi)

- “The panopticon is a ... symbol of the systems of surveillance that leave no corner of the earth unseen and of the mental life they produce.” (Sorkin xi).



Technology

Data-tracking company Media Sonar used by police to monitor peaceful protest groups



By Norman De Bono, The London Free Press
Tuesday, January 17, 2017 9:07:44 EST PM



Media Sonar's David Strucke sent his response by email. (London Free Press file photo)

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<http://www.lfpress.com/2017/01/17/data-tracking-company-media-sonar-used-by-police-to-monitor-peaceful-protest-groups>

- “A new fortress America is being built but its bulwarks are not simply directed... at a threat that can be physically externalized. The barrier turns inward as well, making each of us simultaneously soldier and suspect, enmeshed inextricably in the permanent warfare of all against us.” (Sorkin, viii).



SubTalk

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WEALTH
(and income
inequality)

Growing income inequality

- Almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by just **one percent** of the population.
- The wealth of the one percent richest people in the world amounts to \$110 trillion. That's 65 times the total wealth of **the bottom half** of the world's population.
- The bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 people in the world.
- Increasingly these dynamics are being written into urban landscapes.
- In the US, the wealthiest one percent captured 95 percent of post-financial crisis growth since 2009, while the bottom 90 percent became poorer (Forbes Magazine).

Fortress cities

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvKOCZuZAiM>
- In the city.... “the tendency to merge urban design, architecture and the police apparatus into a single comprehensive security effort.” (Davis 194).

Condos as gated enclaves?



Concierge in lobby (rendering) at Tridel's Blythwood at Huntington condominiums. Most Tridel condos have concierge-controlled access and security monitoring 24/7.

“Even though crime statistics show Toronto to be comparatively safe, security remains a big concern for people. In fact, a poll taken by TD Canada Trust in 2012, the same year as those falling crime statistics were being recorded, found that security was the number 1 concern among people looking to purchase a condominium. “

<http://www.condo.ca/security-important-condo-buyers-though-city-crime-rates-lower/>

(In)defensible spaces



Defensive and fortified architectures: safety for whom?

- Social exclusion can result not only from others doing the excluding, but also from groups choosing to exclude themselves....
- “Self- exclusion can be exercised not only in response to prejudice and stigma, but also in order to preserve or protect existing resources, or to access potential new resources.”
- Beall and Parnell – p.189
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BipKO8wEuAk> 0-6:00.

- A result of danger as a primary concern of urban planning is that “We are being trained to be phobic, to be constantly on guard, to stay at home, to be wary of difference.” (Sorkin p. xv)





Ironically, as Beal and Parnell point out, despite the tendency for people to retreat into the home, “one of the most common sites of crime was the home” (p 179)

Some takeaways

- There has been a rapid growth of new technological and practical moves in recent years to watch and ‘secure’ urban landscapes (... against crime, against terrorism, against mundane but unwanted activities like loitering);
- It is not just the wealthy who use securitization practices and architectures in cities
- Major world events like 9/11 have had a profound impact on the use of militarized tactics, architectures and equipment in cities;
- Our perceptions of what is ‘dangerous’ in cities is always in part subjective, and is shaped in part by stories we hear by the state or the media about what we should fear, or by unfounded fears about some unknown and unfathomable ‘Other’.