



# Spatialities of security and surveillance: Managing spaces, separations and circulations at sport mega events



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## ABSTRACT

The paper explores empirically how contemporary security and surveillance practices and techniques permeate the production and management of everyday urban spaces. It does so from three interrelated perspectives, focusing on separation and access control, the management of circulations, and the internal organisation and monitoring of specific spatial enclaves. This analysis draws upon empirical insights into security governance at the European Football Championships 2008 in Switzerland and Austria (Euro 2008).

The paper also considers a number of more fundamental insights with regard to the intertwined spatialities of surveillance, relating to enclosure and circulation, fixity and fluidity, external separation and internal organisation. Three key issues stand out: firstly, the complex challenges associated with the necessary balancing and reconciliation of the core requirements of mobility and security, circulation and enclosure in contemporary security governance; secondly, the “atmospheric” implications of spatially articulated security and surveillance measures; and, thirdly, the logics and impacts of surveillance with regard to the orchestrations of urban life.

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore empirically how contemporary security and surveillance practices and technologies permeate the production and management of everyday urban spaces. This problematic is addressed from a viewpoint centred on sport mega-event security, drawing upon empirical insights into security governance at the 2008 European Football Championships in Austria and Switzerland (Euro 2008). On this basis, the paper succinctly deals with three interrelated spatial logics of security and surveillance, relating to separation and access control, the management of circulations, and to the internal organisation and monitoring of specific spatial enclaves. Together, these three perspectives elucidate how surveillance, today, contributes to orchestrate urban life.

This analytical focus connects neatly with a growing body of research that now explores the surveillance-relevant role of space and, in turn, the space-producing role of surveillance. A rapidly developing literature suggests that surveillance tends not only to relate to specific persons or social groups (Lyon, 2003) but also to select, differentiate and manage specific categories of space. However, whilst the importance of space as the locus, object and tool of surveillance has been acknowledged, there is to date little reflection aimed at bringing the existing studies together with a

view to approaching the spatialities of surveillance more fully and systematically. This paper aims to fill this lacuna.

Existing literatures on surveillance and space can be organised under at least three broad headings, expressing three complementary perspectives of research. It is worth outlining these in some detail before moving to discuss the research approach adopted here. This will provide the foundation for the analysis of this paper, which aims to elucidate the interdependences of different spatialities of urban surveillance.

The first broad direction of research addresses issues of urban security and surveillance from a viewpoint centred on the “splintering urbanism problematics” (Graham and Marvin, 2001). This literature highlights and problematises current trends towards the increasing fragmentation of the urban environment into a patchwork of “more or less purified insides, separated from more or less dangerous outsides” (Franzen, 2001, p. 207). Studied examples range from secluded inner city zones (Coaffee, 2004) and gated communities (Connell, 1999) to shopping malls (Benton-Short, 2007; Helten and Fischer, 2004), recreational facilities, leisure spaces and bunkered private homes (Flusty, 1994). Thus urban security and surveillance is approached as a combined problematic of enclosure and accessibility. Surveillance is studied and conceptualised as an ensemble of techniques and practices for the monitoring and regulation of the flow of people and objects, crossing inner-city borderlines at particular points in space. The key issue here is access control, implying a spatial logic of power that

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encloses, fixes and keeps “things” apart (where things include places, people, objects, functions, etc.), based on new control and filtering techniques (Bauman, 2000, p. 115; Boyne, 2000).

One of the key lessons derived from this literature is that the distinction between inter-state border control, and the monitoring of spatially more diffuse “everyday borders” and access-points across the national and urban territory is increasingly blurred (from a spatial, functional, technological and organisational viewpoint) and thus quite relative (Walters, 2004; Lyon, 2005; Salter, 2005; Albert and Jacobsen, 2001; Amoore et al., 2008, p. 96). As Graham puts it,

“borders cease to be geographical lines and filters between states (always an over-simplified idea) and emerge instead as increasingly interoperable assemblages of control technologies strung out across the world’s infrastructures, circulations, cities and bodies” (Graham, 2010, p. 132).

Recent investigations have also explored the logics and implications of spatially articulated forms of (self-)encapsulation as a way to manage and monitor distinct “atmospheres”, understood here not in a physical but in a psycho-political sense, as jointly inhabited, self-animated spaces of togetherness (Sloterdijk, 2004). Concerned with the social and psycho-political logics and implications of enclosure and separation, many of these approaches mobilise metaphors that emphasise the internal “spherical volume” of the created spatial entities. Examples range from Don Mitchell’s “S.U.V. model of citizenship” (Mitchell, 2005), to Peter Sloterdijk’s “foam city” (Sloterdijk, 2004) and de Cauter’s “capsular civilisation” (de Cauter, 2004). Access control, from such a viewpoint, is seen not only to separate physical surfaces, but also to create and to defend more or less rigid and exclusive forms of togetherness, thus structuring the urban environment into a patchwork of secluded “spherical conglomerates of co-isolation” (Klauser, 2010).

The second direction of research is concerned not so much with how filtering and surveillance relates to spatial separation and enclosure, but with how – and to what effects – multi-layered “surveillant assemblages” (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000) are coalescing around mobile objects and people themselves. Thus the key concern here is not access control, but the continuous localisation and management of people and objects on the move (Dodge and Kitchin, 2007; Buhr, 2003). These studies provide much-needed critical accounts of how emerging geographies of surveillance work to align the circulation of mobile bodies, data, objects and services with localisation, identification, verification and authentication controls, and of how the practices and techniques of surveillance engage with the key infrastructural networks that aim to filter and manage movements within and between cities. Thus traditionally, this research perspective is concerned strongly with how surveillance relates to (urban) infrastructures, an emphasis that has been confirmed on various grounds and from various perspectives (Debrix, 2001; Wekerle and Jackson, 2005). Furthermore, and especially in more recent years, increased attention has been paid to the “surveillant capacities” of increasingly mobile, ubiquitous and “smart” information and communication technologies (Farman, 2011; De Souza e Silva and Frith, 2012).

Whilst both aforementioned research directions offer important insights into the control and management of inner urban and/or interurban separations and connections, little attention is paid, in most cases, to how precisely surveillance relates to, and permeates, monitored spaces themselves (enclosed enclaves, secured passage points, high-risk buildings, etc.). For example, transport nodes such as airports and railway stations are studied almost exclusively as filtering points for the procession of mobility (Castells, 1996; Fuller, 2002), without according the same type of attention to the

internal structuring and monitoring of these places, as security zones in their own right.

I do not contest the importance of border control and mobility management, but my feeling is that something important is overlooked in this picture. Indeed, all too frequently the study of how particular spaces are organised and shaped by surveillance – in terms of their internal constitution, functioning and architecture – becomes separated from that of surveillance as border- and mobility-control, as if it could somehow be regarded either as a side-show or as a passive side-product to more important and fundamental issues.

The third broad direction of research addresses precisely this research lacuna, studying the logics, functioning and effects of control and regulation in particular geographical locales, from buildings to public squares and larger urban areas. Anna Vemer Andrezejewski offers perhaps the most sophisticated study of the imbrications of architecture and surveillance (in factories, post offices, prisons, religious camps and private homes in Victorian America) (Andrezejewski, 2008). Other investigations have studied the spatial articulation of surveillance in shopping malls (Helten and Fischer, 2004) and football stadia (Bale, 2005; Hagemann, 2007), for example. What matters in all these studies is how space is (internally) organised around surveillance and how, in turn, surveillance is shaped by the specific characteristics of particular places.

This third research perspective underscores that space must be considered as one of the constitutive dimensions of surveillance (as both the product and producer of relevant practices and techniques) rather than as a static background structure. The functions and logics of surveillance operations, their scope, their impact and the risks they pose cannot be understood without referring to the spaces concerned and created by their deployment and performance. Yet in most of these micro-geographical or architectural studies, the wider picture regarding surveillance and inner or inter-city mobilities is lost. Therefore, one central objection is that such studies often ignore the broader urban, national or international networks within which the studied micro-spaces of surveillance are positioned and monitored. In this sense, this research direction both contributes to, and depends on, the previously outlined literatures.

## 2. Aim of the paper

The three directions of research outlined above are not hermetically sealed and mutually exclusive. On the contrary, many studies touch on various spatial logics and scales of surveillance. For example, Jones’s analysis of “checkpoint security” (Jones, 2009) and Graham’s work on “passage point urbanism” (Graham, 2010) powerfully combine the enclosure/access-control and mobility-management dimensions of surveillance. However, Jones and Graham largely overlook how exactly spatial enclaves are organised and monitored internally through everyday surveillance practices. In turn, many studies dealing with gated communities and other enclosures emphasise both the access control to, and internal surveillance of, secluded zones. Yet such studies beg the question of how flows of people and objects are monitored, channelled and filtered on the move in between fortified places.

Despite the wealth of insight provided by recent research on the imbrications between space and surveillance, there is to date no empirically grounded, systematic reflection about the associations and tensions between different spatialities of surveillance, combining different geographical scales and spatial logics. Indeed, little is known about the dissonances and resonances between surveillance practices and techniques relating to enclosure and circulation, fixity and fluidity, external separation and internal organisation.

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