

# Security Zones and New York City's Shrinking Public Space

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## Abstract

*Urban scholars lament the loss of public space due to heightened security and behavioral controls borne of economic priorities and anti-terror concerns after September 11th 2001. Owners and managers of government buildings, banks and courthouses have closed streets and fitted the surrounding space with concrete barriers, bollards and moat-like structures to prevent potential terror attacks. These are reasonable protections in emergency situations, but, as threat levels fall, these zones fail to incorporate a diversity of users, privatizing the space for those with security clearance. The ubiquity of these zones encourages us to consider them as a new type of land use. To test this statement, we describe the results of site visits to two high-profile New York City neighborhoods (one with numerous civic buildings, the other populated with corporate headquarters). Using a simple tool we developed, we find that 27% of aggregate non-building area in the two districts is now in a security zone. Interestingly, the percentage of space within each district that can be classed as a security zone is reasonably similar, providing insight into the way in which terror targets are internally and externally defined and justified. We argue that this new type of land use is an important and permanent feature of twenty-first century global cities.*

## Introduction

As terror levels and the associated fortification of the built environment have become increasingly visible — particularly since September 11th 2001 — some urban scholars claim we have reached the end of public space and are experiencing the slow death of the public realm. Such claims threaten to change the way we view cities. No longer the site of open, democratic expression and relative anonymity, entire districts are seen as potential targets of terror attacks and as such must be protected by any (and all) means necessary.

This article proceeds as follows: First, we provide some brief theoretical assumptions in discussing the importance of open, inclusive public space on urban social life. We then show how the recent prioritization of security over social interaction threatens the diversity and difference present in open cities. Second, we describe the tendency of major cities to implement security zones around high-profile buildings. We provide the results of our own empirical inquiry in two neighborhoods in New York City, detailing various physical and symbolic measures employed in such zones. This analysis reveals the ubiquity of this new land use by calculating the total percentage of public space within a security zone. Third, we discuss potential future research that speculates on the

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impact of different security measures on the experience of public space. We point to some physical solutions for balancing security with openness, suggesting a more flexible vision of public space. This empirical study informs planners, policymakers and property owners of security zones, and argues that this new land use type is an important and permanent feature of global cities in the twenty-first century.

## Public space, social life and democracy

Public spaces are the lifeblood of cities. More than simple physical entities, truly public spaces are sites of interaction in which individuals are sometimes forced to interact with those whom they usually criticize or dislike. Our most open-minded cities are full of freely accessible spaces allowing for unplanned encounters and activities. In this regard, public spaces can educate the city-dweller about the 'other' and can teach true urbanity (Lofland, 2000). Therefore, to be successful — spaces must be universally accessible and inclusive, encouraging interaction between acquaintances and strangers (see Young, 1990; Kohn, 2004). Such ideal spaces serve as 'the material location where social interactions and public activities of all members of the public occur' (Mitchell, 2003: 131).

A number of urban theorists have developed this line of thought. Wirth (1938) theorizes the city as an urban stage and a bastion of freedom and tolerance. Jacobs (1961) contends that planners can increase conviviality by prioritizing the dense, vibrant, street-level action that characterized neighborhoods like Greenwich Village in the mid-twentieth century. Rapoport (1977) argues for cities that accommodate a diversity of uses and users by remaining flexible and adaptable. On balance, truly public spaces allow for the free conduct of social life. They are alive, diverse and accessible to all; in this regard, they are the symbols of a democratic city (Marcuse, 2006: 922).

Critics who lament the loss or end of public space (Sorkin, 1992; Mitchell, 1995; 2003; Kohn, 2004) are often more concerned with the diminution of a democratic public sphere than they are with the actual reduction of physical public space. Some argue that public space takes on meaning only insofar as it is the site of the development of the public sphere, while conversely, the public sphere *requires* 'the occupation or active creation of public space' in order to have one's claims heard (Blomley, 2001: 3). This relationship between public space and the political public sphere is based on notions of citizenship and a conception of who is represented in the public sphere — or who appears in public space. Citizenship and representation are thus directly related to visibility and to making physical appearances in public space (Arendt, 1958; Fraser, 1990; Young, 1990). Mitchell (1995: 15) argues that 'by claiming space in public, by creating public space, social groups themselves become public. *Only* in public spaces can the homeless (for example) represent themselves as a legitimate part of "the public" '.

Public spaces are the loci of power and politics, providing a multitude of opportunities for unmediated interaction and 'the best hope for representation of difference' (Gould, 1996: 185). This ideal of open-mindedness enables free flows of dialogue, promoting active citizenship and enabling universal political representation. Open cities provide the playing field for dissent and protest, where diverse sets of users might declare and deliberate opposing opinions and viewpoints.

## Security, safety and the fortressing of cities

However since September 11th, public and private officials in most cities in the Western world have relied on a discourse of anti-terror security as their rationale for tightening security and fortifying our streets, sidewalks and spaces, thus threatening the very

publicness that makes our cities vital and attractive.<sup>1</sup> Urban managers frequently cite concerns over potential terrorist attacks as their justification to increase security measures like the gates, moats and barriers fortifying many public buildings. Some claim that these measures limit civil liberties by controlling behavior, limiting movement and downgrading the quality of life in cities (Marcuse, 2002). This security response is predicated on ensuring certainty, homogeneity and order. Yet the lifeblood of cities lies in their diversity and difference; without the opportunity to freely engage with strangers, 'urban life withers' (Savitch, 2008: 60).

Marcuse describes how, in New York City in particular, high-profile public space has become distinctly less public as officials have limited access, controlled use and inhibited activities 'normal to a democratic society' (2002: 601). In a 2006 article, Marcuse deftly outlines the way in which the city has been secured *from* the public rather than *for* it, and shows how the limitations on public use were all carried out and legitimated in the name of 'security' (*ibid.*: 923). Both Marcuse (2004; 2006) and Graham (2004) argue that such anti-terror policies are used to limit rights and undermine wider public dissent, social activism and popular protest. Warren fervently argues that officials enacting the War on Terror have used various security policies to legitimize the 'prevention, repression and control of mass citizen political mobilization in cities' (2002: 614–15).

Marcuse makes a crucial distinction between security and safety: the former is the *perceived* protection from danger while the latter refers to *actual* protection from danger (2006: 924). He describes how agents of the War on Terror use a rhetoric of security to authorize limitations on the right to public space, even while concerns for actual safety from threat or danger have not been adequately addressed. Expanding on this logic, levels of fear in public space do not necessarily decrease as security measures increase, just as increases in actual safety do not necessarily increase feelings of overall security. Indeed, some argue that urban fear now derives more from threats of global, ideological terror than from the risk of local or petty crime (Koskela, 2008). While the latter might be avoided by individuals making prudent personal choices (e.g. not to walk down a dark alley), the former is perceived to be out of the public's control.

Experts like federal planners and designers are charged with designing out terror, creating a situation in which 'form follows fear' (Ellin, 1996). Instilling feelings of safety is a necessary component in successful urban design projects (Talen, 2008), but critics often describe how fortified cities actually increase fear and distrust among others. Herein lies the fundamental conundrum: measures taken to secure city space and quell public fear often make urbanites feel less safe, as the 'social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilization itself, not crime rates' (Davis, 1990: 224).

However, the most open or accessible spaces are not always the most successful. Instead, successful public spaces adeptly balance liberty with personal security: while a mother with a small child might prefer a secure and controlled environment, a homeless person or group of teenagers might favor spaces lacking such mediation. Clearly, fear of and in public space is a serious issue, and recent scholarship describes this general sense of 'stranger danger' (Valentine, 1996; Fyfe, 1998; Day, 1999; Lofland, 2000; Pain, 2001; Low, 2003). It would be incorrect, then, to say that public space security is always negative, as the impacts are socially and contextually differentiated (Jackson, 1998). However, we maintain that over-secured public spaces have had a disproportionately negative impact on some of the most marginal groups of society, including (but not

1 Some note that security concerns are nothing new and recent terror alerts 'did not so much launch a new debate about public space as serve to intensify one that already exists' (Mitchell, 2003: 4). Still, Graham (2002), Marcuse (2002) and Warren (2002) each describe how the security apparatus in major cities has been 'intensified', 'modified', 'legitimized', 'normalized', 'accentuated', 'reinforced' and 'aggravated' since September 11th 2001. Fainstein (2002) describes how surveillance cameras previously focused on residents who might rob, mug or threaten visitors to New York City were now directed at visitors and newcomers to the city that might have sinister terror motives.

limited to) the poor, ethnic minorities, the homeless population and alternative subcultures. Therefore, it is important to understand the types of security that are employed in cities.

## The form of security

Boddy characterizes two types of security present in cities. The first he calls 'an architecture of dis-assurance', defined most aptly by the ubiquitous concrete Jersey barrier. Surveillance cameras and bollards comprising this design aesthetic succeed in providing the outward, easily perceived, hardened visual symbols or emblems of security but may be less effective at stopping actual attacks (2008: 278). The second he calls 'a passive-aggressive urban design style', exemplified by the vector-analyzed street made of composite fill set to collapse under the weight of a bomb-laden truck. The latter style of design is normalized in urban design in places such as New York City and Los Angeles, begetting a niche of design firms with names like Rock Twelve Security Architecture. But the imposition of this new layer of public realm security is not limited to New York City and Los Angeles; other cities face similar if not more severe security threats. Savitch (2008) examined 25 major cities throughout the globe and found that they averaged 38 terrorist incidents each during the 15 years from 1990–2005.

This article focuses predominantly on the first type of public space security: the visible and perceived. Cities 'depend upon the cultivation of an open, diverse, and tolerant environment', so the 'most overt security measures such as moveable barriers, patrols, and longer-term fortress construction' often *increase* fear, shrink the public realm and drain the city of its vibrancy and openness (Savitch, 2008: 133–34). Indeed, Washington's National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) expressed its concern publicly that implementing Jersey barriers and bollards would increase 'fear and retrenchment, and undermine the basic premises of an open and democratic society' (Boddy, 2008: 282).

Federal planners often install hard, visible security measures in a piecemeal way, putting up a Jersey barrier here, concrete bollards there. Yet we would argue that these separate measures are felt most acutely when found together in a large area of land surrounding a building or high-profile establishment. Although critics discuss extensively the separate elements of security in the literature on public space management (Flusty, 1994; Ellin, 1996; Németh & Schmidt, 2007), few articles describe the increasing presence or impact of larger 'security zones' (but see Hollander and Whitfield, 2005). These zones are fundamentally different entities and deserve a more forthright discussion.

After the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) issued a report 'Physical Security Criteria and Standards' (U.S. General Services Administration, 1997). Following that report, GSA developed 'Urban Design Guidelines for Physical Perimeter Entrance Security: An Overlay to the Master Plan for the Federal Triangle' (U.S. General Services Administration, 1999a) which introduced the concept of 'security zones'. For the first time, the various layers of land, buildings and streets that excluded civilian use in the pursuit of security were described independently and unique design solutions offered for each. A new category of land use was born (Hollander and Whitfield, 2005).

In both 2001 and 2002, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) — the public agency charged with city planning for the District of Columbia — published a series of reports borrowing GSA's 'security zones' concept in an effort to rethink much of the city's public space. The 2002 report refined the security zone idea further by breaking a site into three zones: building yard, sidewalk, and curb/parking lane. This division was initiated due to new federal set-back requirements for buildings aimed to protect a building from an explosion detonated on an adjacent street or sidewalk. The

NCPC report made each of these security zones subject to various levels of surveillance, obstruction and public uses. The ultimate aim of security zones is to limit access to vulnerable areas at a building or public place and restrict mobility around these areas.

## Lost space

In the previous discussion, we reviewed some critical responses to the hyper-securitization of space occurring in New York City. However, few of these studies discuss the loss of physical space in cities due to the imposition of security measures, focusing instead on the important loss of publicness or openness. For example, Sorkin (2004) describes how high-profile buildings become hardened targets that form a networked 'landscape of fear' (258), and Savitch (2008) shows the shrinking of urban space, but neither empirically quantifies the amount of space limited or closed to public use. The more empirical studies often focus on a space-by-space basis and outline particular measures present in certain spaces, but do not take a broader view and conceptualize the larger impact of security on the city (Kayden *et al.*, 2000; Németh & Schmidt, 2007). By measuring the presence of security zones in New York City we outline for policymakers and planners the extent of 'lost' space in the city and establish baseline data on which to base future work. Our results provide empirical support to reinforce claims by social critics and activists decrying the extent of this fortification.

## Data and methods

We focus our empirical study on two neighborhoods in New York City's Lower Manhattan for a number of reasons. New York City is a populous, high-profile global city that offers large 'payoffs' for urban terrorists in terms of lives, resources and media attention and thus has the highest degree of target proneness of any city in the USA (Savitch, 2008: 18). The city receives the largest share of federal funding through the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) system, which allocates funds based on assessed levels of risk, threat, vulnerability and potential consequence of terror attacks. In 2007, New York City received \$134.1 million — the largest share of UASI funding — while the Los Angeles metropolitan area was allocated the second most at \$72.6 million (Department of Homeland Security, 2007).

Also, Lower Manhattan's concentration of governmental buildings and high-profile corporate and financial headquarters make it a target for terrorists seeking both intense disruption and destruction. Terrorists have struck the neighborhood a number of times since 1993, and some feel 'the neighborhood had been designed for urban terrorism' (Savitch, 2008: 109). This history of attacks and the rich mix of public and private buildings allow us to witness security zones at their most differentiated and pronounced. In addition, New York City is one of very few cities that have created an extensive network of security zones and offers fertile ground to study this phenomenon.

Savitch (2008: 126) notes that security measures are felt most acutely when human movement is blocked. We expand this notion to assess mobility, surveillance and access restrictions in security zones and construct a simple tool to help us remain as objective as possible in our assessments (see Table 1). We recognize that measuring spaces with this 'snapshot' approach allows only static assessment of security presence and intensity, but the simplicity of the tool allows frequent and regular measurements that might demonstrate the changing nature of these zones. To examine the size and type of security zones in Lower Manhattan we apply this tool and combine the findings with Geographic Information System (GIS) data containing a variety of information about public space and building footprint.

Classifications using the tool are based on the desire of owners or managers specifically to close or secure their space or building from terror threats; regular closures or access restrictions for construction or special events were not included in our

**Table 1** Guide for classifying security zones

	Access <sup>a</sup>	Surveillance <sup>b</sup>	Mobility <sup>c</sup>
Closed	Permanent physical impediments to access or entrances blocked/inoperable	Security personnel exhibiting aggressive or menacing behavior <sup>d</sup>	Movement within space limited by both physical and legal restrictions
Limited	No entrances blocked but some temporary physical impediments to access	Security personnel present but unobtrusive <sup>e</sup>	Movement within space limited by either physical or legal restrictions
Open	No physical impediments to access	No security personnel present	Movement within space unrestricted

<sup>a</sup>Access = into space from outside

<sup>b</sup>Surveillance = public or private security personnel

<sup>c</sup>Mobility = impediments to areas within space (e.g. security checks, areas open to employees only)

<sup>d</sup>Aggressive behavior indicated by active patrol of public space or close examination of visitors to space

<sup>e</sup>Unobtrusive behavior indicated by casual body language and/or seated position

assessments. For scoring purposes, if we considered the space *closed* on all three variables we gave it an overall classification of *closed*. If we deemed the space *open* on all three variables we assigned it a classification of *open*. And if the space had any combination of *open*, *limited* or *closed* scores, we gave it an overall classification of *limited*.

The study area includes two distinct neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan: Civic Center and the Financial District (see Figure 1). Civic Center comprises 17.5 hectares (43.2 acres) and is the heart of New York City's local, state and federal government offices. The Financial District is the city's economic hub, home to both the New York and the American Stock Exchanges and a number of global corporate headquarters and financial institutions. Roughly equal in size to the Civic Center, the Financial District comprises 17.4 hectares (42.9 acres).

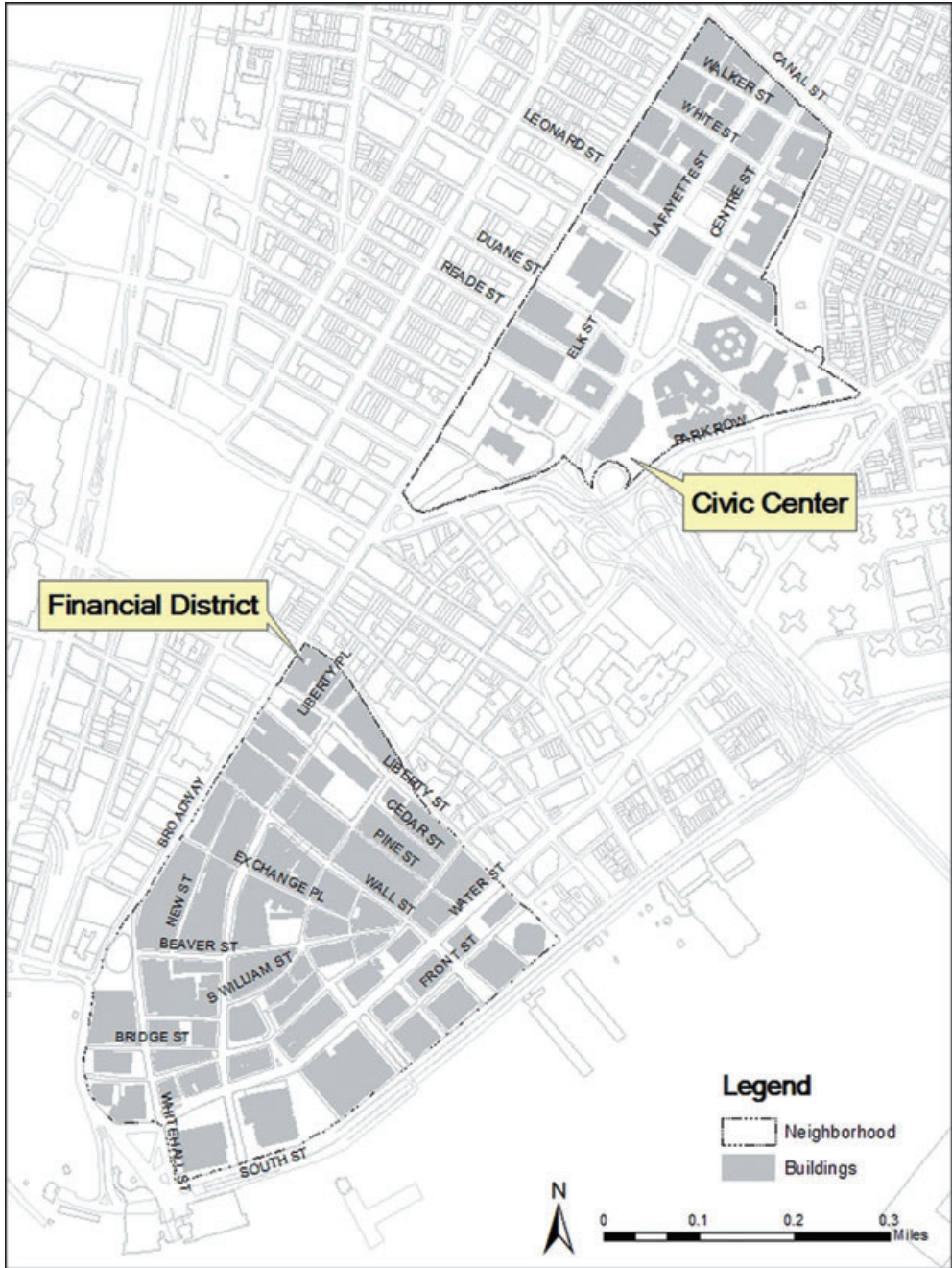
Using the pedestrian equivalent of a windshield survey, two researchers walked the entire street network of both Civic Center and the Financial District independently, making extensive notes about the quality and size of public spaces in each district. The observations occurred on 26 October 2007 between 10 am and 4 pm. At the time of the investigation, the USA was placed on a heightened (yellow) threat level by the US Department of Homeland Security, a heightened (yellow) threat level by the New York State Office of Homeland Security, and a high (orange) threat level by the New York City Office of Emergency Management.

Researchers used the tool in Table 1 to classify all public spaces as open, limited or closed.<sup>2</sup> A third researcher analyzed the notes of the two classifiers. With the aid of building footprint, parcel and public space data, the team made final decisions about the classifications and digitized the information into new GIS data layers.

## Results

The size and severity of security zones in both Civic Center and the Financial District was found to be quite significant. In Civic Center, more than one-third (36.3%) of all public space was limited or closed. In the Financial District, more than one-sixth (17.7%) of public space was in security zones (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

2 We define public space quite generously as all *non-building* space, including all streets, sidewalks, squares, outdoor plazas, alleys and atria.



**Figure 1** Neighborhood map

Civic Center hosts several prominent and well-protected federal, state and local government offices and courthouses. Together, these buildings accounted for the vast majority of the security zones in the district. As a result of high security precautions primarily at these public buildings, 20.2% of the district’s public spaces were closed. For example, much of the immediate space around City Hall was classified as closed and 0.4 hectares of public space around the adjoining Board of Education office building was

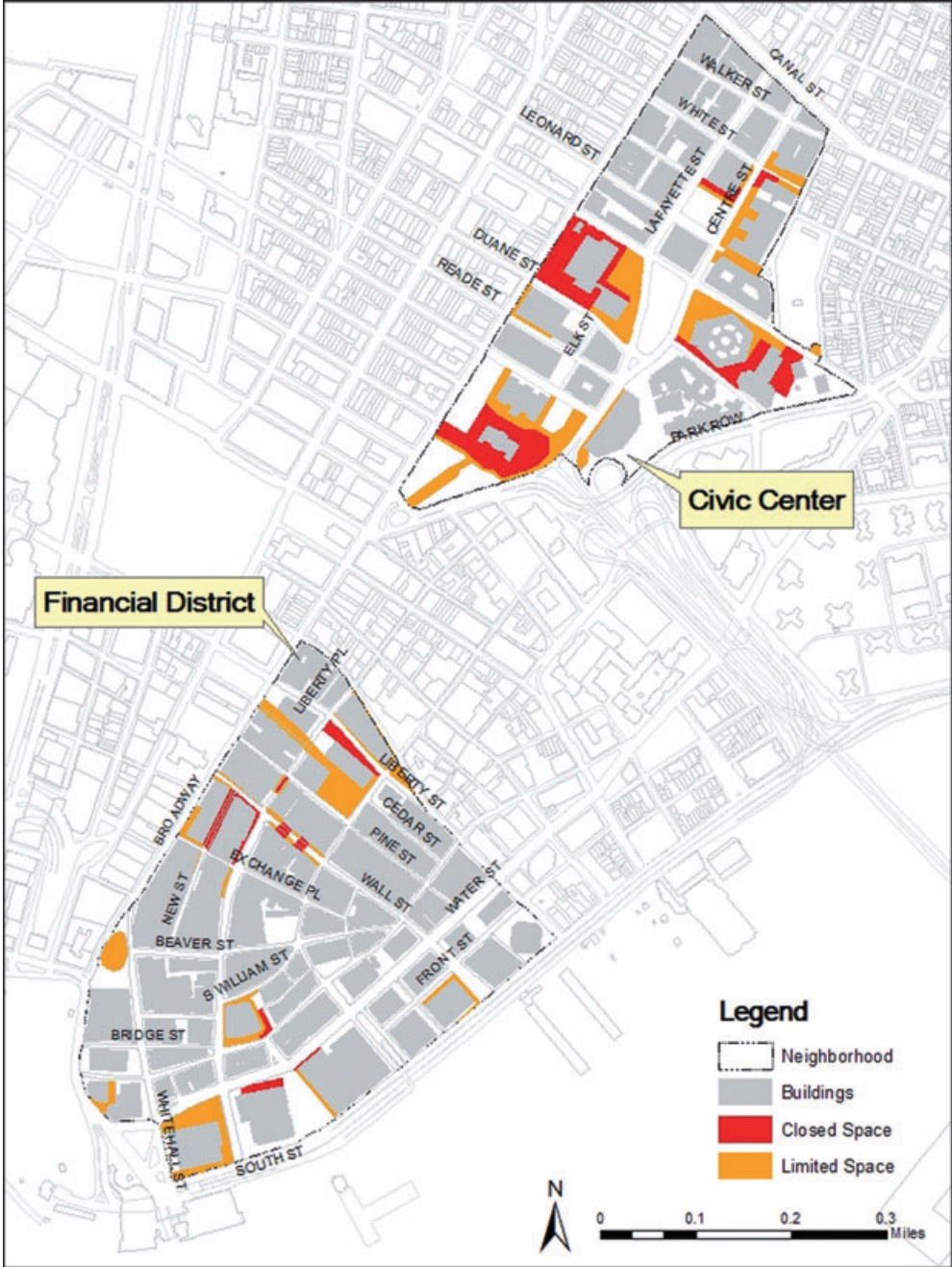


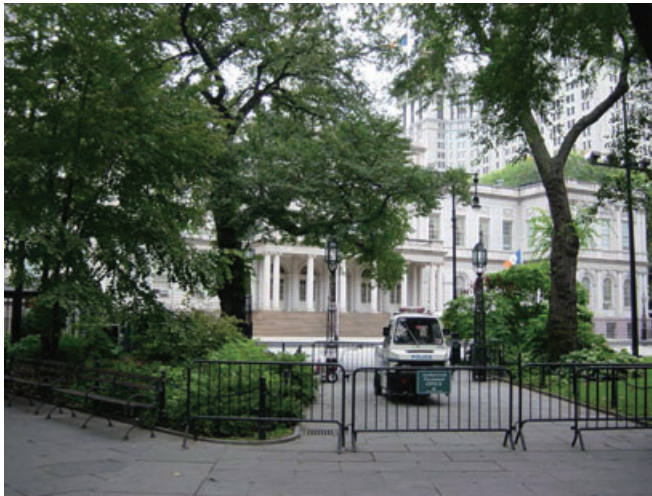
Figure 2 Overview of results for Financial District and Civic Center

classified as limited (see Figure 3). While the City Hall complex and adjacent park are historically significant public spaces in the city, officials closed them shortly after September 11th. Only in the last year have small sections of City Hall Park opened to the public, but a great deal of surveillance still exists and mobility around the park is very limited.



**Table 2** Size of security zones in Financial District and Civic Center

	Financial District	Civic Center	Both Neighborhoods
Total district area minus buildings (m <sup>2</sup> )	173,391	174,959	348,350
Total limited area (m <sup>2</sup> )	24,539	28,065	52,604
Total limited area (% of district area)	14.2	16.0	15.1
Total closed area (m <sup>2</sup> )	6,227	35,385	41,612
Total closed area (% of district area)	3.6	20.2	11.9
Total limited/closed area (m <sup>2</sup> )	30,767	63,449	94,216
Total limited/closed area (% of district area)	17.7	36.3	27.0

**Figure 3** View of the closed portion of City Hall Park, looking north. Metal barricades and a police vehicle keep visitors far from the steps of City Hall (photo by author)

Just a few blocks uptown from City Hall is a state-county government office building at 100 Centre Street. The building sits on a mega-block extending to Leonard Street and encompasses a vast plaza/parking area. While the plaza/parking area is open and accessible, government officials have closed access to an arcade-style public space that stretches the length of the block from Centre Street to Lafayette Street (see Figure 4). Officials appropriated the public space for security purposes, erecting a 3-meter tall wire mesh fence, installing a number of visible surveillance cameras, and instituting around-the-clock security patrols.

The Financial District had a much lower percentage of closed public spaces (3.6%) relative to Civic Center, but considering the virtual absence of any government buildings in the area it is remarkable that so much closed space exists. Even more significant is that we classified 14.2% of the district's public space as limited. We expected to find security zones around the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), but spaces categorized as limited were spread throughout the district and connected to a wide range of corporate land uses.

In the days and weeks following the attacks of September 11th, a number of threats were made on the NYSE. As one of the best-known financial centers on the planet, officials viewed the NYSE as particularly vulnerable given its broad exposure to public



**Figure 4** View looking northwest at a New York State office building located on Centre Street. The public plaza is closed to public access through the use of a ten feet tall wire mesh fence (photo by author)



**Figure 5** Black wrought iron fences and armed security guards close a twelve feet wide sidewalk running east-west along Wall Street just north of the New York Stock Exchange (photo by author)

roadways in a highly congested corner of Manhattan. Working closely with city officials, the NYSE created a vast network of security zones in the abutting sidewalks, roadways, and approaches to its building located at 11 Wall Street. Figures 5 and 6 show how entire sidewalks and portions of roadways were closed entirely or severely limited through the use of wrought iron fences, pop-up barriers and armed security guards.

## Discussion

Our research into security zones in Lower Manhattan revealed an obvious clustering of zones around high-profile public targets. But while much of the security literature discusses the fortressing of public or civic structures, we also observed a distinct



**Figure 6** New York Police Department officers and private security officials monitor pedestrians and patrol a closed street adjacent to the New York Stock Exchange (photo by author)

clustering around high-value private buildings. Around both types of buildings, roads were closed, sidewalks restricted and plazas limited for the sake of security. The equality of treatment for both types of building is the fullest expression of our society's dual commitment to both the market and the polis (Stone, 2002): a desire to fortify both our national treasures (like the historic Bowling Green Courthouse) and Goldman Sachs's global headquarters. However, the constraints and challenges facing those who manage private property are different from those faced by those who manage public property. In this study we looked only at outcomes, but future research should examine the processes undertaken by managers of both types of building in approaching security concerns.

The diminution of the public realm was palpable in both neighborhoods: clearly, the security zone is a new type of land use and deserves more earnest consideration by the planning and development community. Few open public spaces remain for the hundreds of thousands of workers and residents who live in or near Civic Center and the Financial District. With less public space remaining, city workers and dwellers have fewer opportunities for interaction and political expression: the very vitality of the city is put at risk.

The majority of observed security zones contained numerous examples of symbolic, overt and mostly temporary security measures like Jersey barriers and bollards. As stated earlier, these elements have the strongest potential to instill users with fear of potential danger as they mark sites as potential terror targets (Boddy, 2008). Yet we recognize that perceptions of safety and security differ from person to person and group to group, so feel that we need empirical data to support this assertion.

To the pedestrian observer, these neighborhoods still seem rather vulnerable to attack, despite the dramatic loss of public space — to security zones — affecting the residents, employees and visitors to Lower Manhattan. Our relatively untrained eyes witnessed dozens of security weaknesses despite the prodigious fortification in place. Although nearly all visible measures are aimed at preventing vehicle-based bombs, the events of September 11th remind us that those who wish to cause harm and feel thwarted on the ground will look to the skies to stage an attack. Similarly, frequent suicide bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan and transit-based attacks in Japan, London and Madrid reveal our inherent vulnerability to new forms of terrorism. As Boddy argues, 'the pedestrian suicide bomber confounds all of this research and design innovation aimed almost entirely to date at stopping car and truck bombs' (2008: 300).

This begs the question: what is the effectiveness of the closure of public spaces, particularly those overt and visible markers of potential targets? Some argue that this increased control of public space is introduced and maintained in order to undermine democratic practice by manipulating awareness of the threat of terrorism (Warren, 2002; Marcuse, 2006). It is clear to us that the imposition of urban security aims to reassure the general public that the threat of terrorism is being addressed and that these measures make us safer. While the temporary 'hardware' of security may be no more effective than the 'software' of advanced intelligence (Coaffee *et al.*, 2008), the architecture of dis-assurance demonstrates to property developers and business owners that they have found an environment where commerce can once again operate unfettered (see Coaffee, 2004).

## Conclusion

In 1999, several years after the Oklahoma City bombing, the late distinguished US Congressman Daniel Patrick Moynihan organized a national symposium under the banner 'Balancing Openness and Security'. Federal agencies deemed the interdisciplinary symposium a rousing success, because architects, planners, urban theorists and even a Supreme Court Justice representative attended (U.S. General Services Administration, 1999b). Nearly a decade later, this current study demonstrates that security officials in Lower Manhattan have failed to live up to Moynihan's aspirations to balance openness with security.

On some level, the lack of progress might be attributable to the ways in which many security measures are so well integrated into the built environment that they are invisible to the untrained eye. This fading of security apparatus into the background is likely to continue into the future as the number and extent of security zones grow. This raises a key question about whether we should lament the loss of the quality and quantity of the public realm when most ordinary citizens are wholly unaware of its loss.

However, while these security zones are still visible and compromising the public realm, other cities can take the findings from this study and examine their own neighborhoods. The research presented here offers a warning to other cities facing security threats, but which are not willing to lose the openness they cherish. It offers a strategy for conducting an inventory of the public realm and puts in stark relief the consequences of unabated security zones — a shrinkage of public space.

Future studies discussing the process of planning security zones — generally a quite closed undertaking with little to no public input — provide a fruitful avenue for research. Additionally, while the methodology employed in this study was effective in approximating the amount of public space limited or closed for purported anti-terror purposes, future studies might utilize hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices to identify more accurately the dimensions of security zones. Nonetheless, this study establishes an effective baseline for future studies comparing the changing presence and intensity of security zones over time. Researchers might compare results from this New York City case to studies of security zones in cities of varying size, geographical location or target proneness. As stated earlier, public perception of security zones and their effects on public space also deserves more attention. One study might ask how effective these measures are in not only thwarting attacks but imparting a sense of security for the inhabitants these measures aim to protect. Such a study should contrast the impact of temporary, visible measures versus permanent, hidden barriers, or an architecture of dis-assurance versus passive-aggressive urban design strategies.

One positive outcome to report in this otherwise bleak conclusion is that not *all* security zones were turned over to security officials. On Broad Street, abutting the NYSE, local officials have changed one of the more prominent security zones in the city by erecting tables and chairs (see Figure 7). A space that previously limited access, restricted mobility, and employed multiple layers of surveillance was transformed into a



**Figure 7** Street closed to vehicular traffic on Broad Street abutting the New York Stock Exchange; note tables and chairs to the right (photo by author)

vibrant, active public space (still, with multiple layers of surveillance). This is an important lesson: it is possible to convert security zones into useable and useful public spaces. As European and US cities aim to limit severely or even prohibit vehicular traffic in city centers, this tactic encourages downtown pedestrian activity and reclaims space that was previously lost. Barring vehicle traffic in city centers remains a difficult and controversial task in most US cities, but pedestrianizing for purported security purposes might make the technique more palatable from a political perspective. If security zones can be programmed for public uses, if security measures fade to the background, and if users have a say in how spaces are managed and maintained, there is hope for new forms of public space.

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## Résumé

*Les chercheurs en sciences urbaines regrettent la perte d'espace public, incriminant souvent les contrôles accrus de sécurité et de comportement suscités par des priorités économiques ou des préoccupations anti-terroristes depuis le 11 septembre 2001. Propriétaires et gestionnaires de bâtiments publics, banques et tribunaux ont fermé des rues et équipé l'espace environnant d'obstacles en béton, de plots et de quasi-fossés afin de parer aux attaques terroristes potentielles. Ces protections sont normales en situations d'urgence, mais lorsque la menace décroît, les zones concernées ne parviennent pas à diversifier leurs usagers, l'espace étant réservé aux détenteurs de droits d'accès. L'ubiquité de ces zones pousse à les considérer comme un nouveau type d'occupation des sols. Pour vérifier cette affirmation, nous présentons les résultats de visites dans deux quartiers éminents de New York, l'un regroupant de nombreux bâtiments publics, l'autre une multitude de sièges sociaux. Au moyen d'un outil simple développé par nos soins, nous constatons que 27% de la surface cumulée non bâtie dans les deux secteurs sont désormais dans une zone sécurisée. Il faut noter que, dans chaque secteur, la proportion de l'espace qui peut être classé en zone sécurisée est relativement similaire, donnant un éclairage sur la façon dont les cibles terroristes sont définies et justifiées sur les plans intérieur et extérieur. Selon nous, ce nouveau type d'occupation des sols constitue un caractère important et permanent des villes planétaires du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle.*