

A Survey of Proposals for Surveillance in Western Urban Spaces since 1960:

A comparative reading of urbanist texts pertaining to the creation of public space, alongside architectural and military theories for the surveillance and control of cities.

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“Indeed as far as the military is concerned, urban warfare is the ultimate post-modern form of warfare.” Eyal Weizman, “Hollow Land,” 2012, p. 188¹

Introduction

Discussing ‘security’ in ‘urban places’ is an intersection of two incredibly broad subjects of research, of which there are a myriad of academic fields involved in theoretical discourse and applied work. Parallel frameworks for understanding *how cities function* inform parallel ideas of how design works in cities; different beliefs on the limits of design intervention, how much influence different actors hold, and what is sustainable ‘success’ for a city. The varied academic and historical contexts of each field inform how these ideologies of city have come to exist, and to what extent they communicate and do not communicate with each other. It is important to consider these differences because many of these ideologies are at some final point applied and deployed in urban spaces. *Cities* and *safety* are of concern not only to architects and urban planners, but also to communications theorists, geographers, criminologists, military strategists, activists, psychologists – and the average person, who is statistically most-likely to live in a city² (Kilcullen, 2013, p. 29). The differences between the various proposed frameworks for public space will continue to interact with each other, and the ideological pictures they lay out for their respective practitioners will be acted out as parallel silent orders executed in the same spaces, potentially aligning some points and clashing on others: public planners building typical buildings, police officers following protocols, and soldiers on a regular patrol.

1 This is the artistic framework and question from which the project began: how do we understand conflict in cities? How is this a departure from more traditional understandings of conflict?

2 One of the authors presented here, David Kilcullen is particularly concerned with this Malthusian problem from a military perspective, and it is a focal point for the introduction of his text. Kilcullen’s work explicitly references Mike Davis’ “Plant of the Slums,” detailing the rise of sprawling underdeveloped megacities. (Kilcullen, 2012, p. 237). Even in his shorter summaries, like a 2014 lecture he gave at Google headquarters, this obsession with crowded “littoral” (coastal) slums continues. These environments demand high-level technological and operational complexity for modern militaries (Kilcullen, 2014).