Techno-logics of Residential Surveillance[1]

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Abstract
This paper compares experiences of surveillance technologies in both low-income public housing and affluent gated communities in Phoenix, Arizona. Contrary to the popular discourse of surveillance as ensuring protection from external threats, in practice, both groups feel subjected to undesired individual scrutiny and policing of their behaviors, and both groups submit to this scrutiny as a consequence of living in their respective communities. A key difference lies in the relative mobility and minimal personal risk of gated community residents compared to those in public housing. The paper argues that the dissonance between *popular discourse* and *discourse of practice* about surveillance technologies is representative of deeper social instabilities engendered by neoliberal forms of governance.

Introduction
The quest for security permeates modern life. In a world perceived as increasingly unstable and insecure, the hyper-regulation of boundaries and borders has become a dominant response. Boundary regulation in urban settings may be seen most clearly with the rise of private security forces and fortified enclaves, such as gated communities, but little attention has been paid to the ways in which technological surveillance contributes to spatial exclusion by means of its integration into urban space and its enforcement of political norms. Drawing upon interviews with residents in one low-income public housing complex and two gated communities in Phoenix, Arizona (a large and diverse city in the southwestern United States), this paper illustrates how surveillance technologies and their related discourses

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promise a sense of social stability that fails to match the lived experiences of people in these communities. As with gates and walls, electronic surveillance may operate as a less visible but similarly political fortification of urban space, policing residents as well as outsiders, all the while presenting durable barriers to social inclusion within cities.

The primary question addressed in this paper is "What differential practices and power relations are engendered – or rendered visible – by the incorporation of surveillance technologies into residential communities?" I argue that remarkable similarities exist between the experiences of residents in low-income public housing and gated communities. Contrary to the popular discourse of surveillance as ensuring protection from external threats, in practice, both groups feel subjected to undesired individual scrutiny and policing of their behaviors, and both groups submit to this scrutiny as a consequence of living in their respective communities. A key difference lies in the relative mobility and minimal personal risk of gated community residents compared to those in public housing. This difference is important because it underlines the fact that while security regimes may be proliferating throughout public life, the potential negative outcomes of surveillance continue to be more severe for the poor.

Literature Review

The literature on fortified enclaves highlights the ways that architecture and built form function politically to enforce socio-spatial segregation and to send clear symbolic messages about who does and does not belong. Mike Davis (1990), Michael Dear (2000), and Steven Flusty (1994), for instance, enumerate the plethora of design deterrents and exclusions that maintain social order yet also distract public awareness from social problems.[1] While these deterrents may take the form of gated communities or enclosed malls and office buildings, they can also manifest in the more direct, if less visible, forms of benches that cannot be slept upon, sprinkler systems that keep people away from buildings or parks, or inadequate public transportation systems.

In her ethnographic research in São Paulo and Los Angeles, Teresa P. R. Caldeira (2000) interprets "fortified enclaves," such as gated communities and shopping malls, as reactions against the unsettling of social boundaries – whether through the development of political democracy in Brazil or through demographic shifts in California. In both cases, she argues, the privatization of public space allows "new urban morphologies of fear" to acquire durable, material forms that threaten to attenuate democracy and delegitimate public institutions well into the future.[2]

Setha Low's (2003) research on gated communities in the U.S. builds upon these types of observations about the politics of space to

question the reasons why people choose to move into such planned residential environments. While her interviewees do express concerns over security, she discovers that people also base their decisions on a range of other factors, such as property values, convenience, or the lack of non-gated alternatives. This last point is especially salient in cities like Phoenix, where gated communities account for one-third of all new residential construction. Romig (2005) has similarly argued that gated living in Phoenix is motivated more by concerns over social and economic stability rather than over threats of crime. Nonetheless, both Low and Romig assert that patterns of segregation, attenuated social life, and diminished property rights are enforced by such trends toward privatized gated living.

Many public housing complexes can also be thought of as modern fortified enclaves. Under the rubric of "defensible space" (Newman, 1972), architects and planners have designed such spaces with the theoretical goal of deterring crime. The key tenets of defensible space are (1) encouraging territoriality through the use of material and symbolic barriers, and thus catalyzing a sense of ownership by residents, (2) providing clear lines of sight for optimal individual surveillance, (3) creating aesthetically pleasing "images" to symbolically dispel any stigma associated with high-rise or other housing, and (4) situating housing for optimal geographical juxtaposition with areas considered safe.[3]

Since the introduction of the defensible space concept in the early 1970s, there has been significant – and ongoing – controversy about the empirical validity of the findings concerning crime reduction (Coleman, 1985; Hillier, 1986; Hope, 1986; Steventon, 1996; Chih-Feng Shu, 2000). Beyond these debates over efficacy, some have offered counter-evidence suggesting that Newman erred in presupposing that crime was external to public housing in the first place and that residents would trust police officers, when they might have ample historical reasons not to (Musheno, Levine, and Palumbo, 1978). Nonetheless, planners and urban studies scholars continue to mobilize and interrogate the defensible space concept (Cozens, Hillier, and Prescott, 1999; Hillier, 2004; Blomley, 2004), and, as my research in Phoenix finds, housing and urban development (HUD) planners have intentionally designed spaces with these tenets in mind, thus obviating any perceived need for electronic surveillance systems in many locations.[4]

It is unclear how current budget shortfalls in U.S. public housing or different approaches to meeting the housing needs of the poor (e.g., HOPE VI) will affect existing socio-spatial segregation in cities.[5] What is increasingly apparent, however, is that current trends in residential fortification are reflective and co-constructive of social divisions and fears, many of which are media generated (Altheide, 2002; Glassner, 1999),

spawning further desires for the sense of security that gates and walls appear to provide.

Greater residential fortification and social and economic segregation are also coincident with the emergence of new forms of neoliberal governance and hyper-individualized relations to the state. Rather than being the simple outgrowth of individual fears and demands, fortification and other security efforts become articulations of the simultaneous retreat from the welfare state and growth in the state's policing and security functions (Katz, 2001; Kupchik and Monahan, forthcoming). This neoliberal shift can be seen in all public institutions, from education (Monahan, 2005), to welfare (Eubanks, 2004), to healthcare (Fisher, 2005). From this perspective, alterations in spatial relations tie back into broader political economies, state relations, and cultural dispositions; these changes may be grounded in and mediated by local contexts, but they signal shifts in cultural logics and institutional structures that extend beyond any individual city or community of study (Duggan, 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2000; Giroux, 2004).[6]

The integration of information technology (IT) into urban spaces operates within this neoliberal milieu.[7] As with spatial designs, technologies function politically to produce, mediate, and normalize social relations, all the while deflecting critical inquiry into their ramifications by means of their purported neutrality (Winner 1977, 1986).[8] Urban telecommunications networks not only regulate the uneven distribution of goods and services, as other infrastructures do, but they also facilitate monitoring of the public through enhanced data collection (Graham and Marvin, 2001; Reiman, 1995). Technological surveillance systems are a primary form of urban IT being deployed in cities across the globe; these technologies range from the relatively obvious closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems (Norris and Armstrong, 1999) to the almost completely invisible: chemical agent detectors in public places, vehicle sensors build into roads and highways, global positioning systems in vehicles, and radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags embedded in smart cards used to access buildings, garages, or pass through toll stations. When technological surveillance is incorporated into spaces and infrastructures, it increases the amount of data available both for social control functions and capital accumulation imperatives, as can be seen by police profiling and public/private sector data sharing, respectively (Lyon, 2001; Gandy, 2003; O'Harrow, 2005; Marx, 2002; ACLU, 2004).

Working from this theoretical and empirical backdrop, this paper focuses on residents' experiences of surveillance and security systems in low-incoming public housing and gated communities. Surveillance systems provide a focal point that guides interviews, all the while facilitating inquiry into the interplay of personal narratives and institutional developments,

local concerns and global forces. While residential surveillance may function as an electronic fortification that reinforces neoliberal forms of governance, it may have surprisingly similar effects upon the experiences of the poor and the affluent.

Methods

The research presented here on residents' experiences of surveillance systems is part of a larger project on surveillance in cities.[9] This ongoing research project is documenting the manifold forms of surveillance in public and semi-public places, the public and private sector partnerships forged to initiate and manage such systems, and the meanings that individuals on both sides of the camera – so to speak – associate with widespread public surveillance. Thus, interviews are being conducted not only with community residents, housing and urban development administrators, and on-site workers or building managers in communities, but also with city engineers, police, private security personnel, and security industry representatives. Most of the research is being done in Phoenix, Arizona, which is the fifth largest city in the U.S. (City of Phoenix, 2005), is home to heightened class and ethnic polarization, and is proximate to the U.S.-Mexico border, so surveillance and security issues are a clearly identifiable part of the social imaginary in this particular region.

For the portion of the research project presented here (on residents' experiences of surveillance), the sites included one low-income public housing complex of 136 units in downtown Phoenix, one somewhat porous gated community within the Phoenix metropolitan area, and one highly fortified gated community about 40 miles distant from the city. The sites were chosen, primarily, based on the criterion of their actively employing video surveillance, and secondarily, on the communities' receptivity to participating in the research. Because of previous efforts at defensible space planning, which were deemed successful by housing authorities, and because of reduced HUD budgets for security equipment, only one public housing site in Phoenix utilizes – or admits to utilizing – video surveillance. This site serves, for the most part, senior and/or disabled residents, but the population also includes children (some well into their twenties) and non-senior disabled residents. In contrast, the less secure gated community covers about 4 square miles and includes approximately 300-400 homes. The main feature of this community is an elaborate central golf course with an attached country club inn and larger homes surrounding the entire course. Finally, the highly fortified gated community site is an enormous complex that is actually categorized as a "city" in its own right. It covers roughly 225 square miles with several thousand perfectly uniform, homogeneous homes. It also sports a golf

course country club, and all home owners have access to the two golf courses in this community.

The research was carried out from January to August 2005, and the methods combined ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews. At the public housing site, ethnographic observation was conducted at "tenant council meetings," at which residents learn about new policy changes affecting their community and voice concerns over issues like security. At the gated communities, ethnographic research included sitting in a guard booth as residents and visitors were screened before entry and accompanying known residents to common areas such as golf courses, where they socialized with neighbors. In addition to many informal conversations during fieldwork, a total of 21 semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 45 minutes each, were conducted with residents and representatives at the three sites. The interview questions were scripted to elicit residents' impressions of who the surveillance was intended for and experiences of being under surveillance themselves. In this way, data was gathered both on the popular discourses of security and safety *and* on the actual practices of living under the scrutiny of such systems. The tensions and contradictions between discourse and practice, which are analyzed in detail below, point to interesting incongruities on the local level of the community, while, at the same time, they appear to be reflective of mismatches between security discourse and practice on a national level.

"Nothing to Hide" in Public Housing

Questions about security and surveillance in public housing – as with elsewhere – invariably invoke the response that if you are not doing anything wrong then you have nothing to hide. Those who do have something to hide, the discourse continues, are almost exclusively "outsiders" looking to commit crimes or otherwise cause trouble in communities. They are delinquents attempting to steal property, drug dealers looking to sell and users looking for a fix, prostitutes soliciting customers, and homeless people searching for a place to sleep. In public housing, one thing follows rapidly in the wake of such graphic examples and personal claims of nothing to hide: detailed stories of invasive, unwarranted monitoring of residents themselves. The holistic evaluation residents give of surveillance, once the platitudes are dispensed with, is that it is ineffective at preventing crime and ensuring safety and that it facilitates unjust particularism by those doing the monitoring.

As I arrive to interview the property manager of the public housing site, she spies me at the glass door as I fumble with the intercom system and opens the door for me via a remote control. Her office is situated immediately inside the main entrance to the building, where through pulled down Venetian blinds she can keep an eye on people coming and going,

without herself being all that visible. Upon entering her office door, which is also kept locked and is opened via a separate remote control, I see video monitors displaying surveillance feeds from throughout the building and its grounds, including the front door that I just walked through.

The surveillance system at this site consists of approximately half-a-dozen video cameras trained on hallways and points of entry and egress and a card key system for regulating and remotely tracking building and parking lot entry. At least one of the video cameras has pan-tilt-zoom functionality for following individual movements through hallways. All the cameras are hard-wired (as opposed to wireless), and the video feeds are piped into the building manager's office, where they are saved in analog format on VHS video tapes. Unless there is a specific incident worthy of investigation, the tapes are kept for one week before being reused; periodically, the old tapes are replaced with new ones as a way to combat the unavoidable degradation of analog video quality. The card key system, by contrast, is digital, and all data is stored indefinitely on the hard drive of the business manager's computer. This data allows for automated tracking of residents, who are each issued personal cards programmed with unique identification numbers. The data generated by this system includes information on who entered the building or parking lot, what time they entered, and how long the door was left open. The building manager, or others, can then run queries on the data to search for "suspicious" activities, such as someone returning (and thus having left) every night around 3:30 in the morning. Currently, the analog video surveillance and digital key card systems are not synchronized, making it nearly impossible to link what is visible on the tapes with what is readable on the computer screen, respectively.

The building manager tells me that the surveillance systems are intended, foremost, to protect residents from external threats. Surveillance is explicitly part of the defensible space design of the building, which qualifies for classification as a "Phoenix Crime Free Multi-Housing Program" site by demonstrating its compliance with such design criteria as keeping shrubs trimmed below the level of the windows and posting warning signs to potential criminals. The outsiders that the system aims to deter are characterized by the manager as "riff raff" or, simply, "bad guys" who want to engage in theft, drug use, or prostitution. It is her hope that the surveillance will "push some of the riff raff and stuff a little further beyond our boundaries to kind of safeguard our residents."

Residents echo this sentiment, at least initially, by describing external threats that they have experienced or have heard of. One woman in her earlier forties related:

> Oh yeah, my car was stolen February last year. I got it back, thank god. But, god I've had to put oodles and oodles of money into it, to get it right. [The video footage showed] that they jumped the fence, broke the box, the one stayed there at the fence, you know, to make sure the gate stayed open, jimmied open, and they had my car out in 80 seconds.

Another woman described how burglars climb up the side of the building, like "Spiderman," to steal from the residents' apartments:

> Several years ago, my sons were staying with me, one was a caregiver, and one was just staying for a while. And but he went down and they bought brand new bikes, $400 each. And we got permission to put them on the patio and keep them locked up there, because they weren't gonna be leaving. And we were sitting there watching TV one night and low and behold my son went outside to smoke, because I won't allow it my apartment, I'm asthmatic. And he come back and "Mom somebody stole my bike! They came right up on the 2nd floor!"...
>
> When I first moved in, the lady who was the manager then, she said you might want to close your window. No, I said, because you have to be pretty much like superman to be able to come up to burglarize me. She said, oh. No. Spiderman, I said you have to be like Spiderman in order to get up there to do any harm. No, you don't. You know what, one of our ladies, Miss [X], lived up on the 3rd floor and they came up, clear up the 3rd floor from the outside and she was in bed. She wasn't asleep. But she was, it scared her, she kept her patio door open like I do, dumb, dumb, but I do. And they came right in her patio door, and they robbed her, they took, they looked in her drawers, and I mean they got some jewelry, they got her money that she had in there, and they took her TV and her stereo. And they walked right out the front doorway.

As one older man sagely assessed the purpose of surveillance: "I think the problem is just wanting to keep people out. It's gotta be because, you know, you never hear anything about, you know, problems getting out, it's always, you know, [problems getting] in."

Although the surveillance system is intended to protect against such intrusions, and residents are periodically informed about security measures that are being taken, they ultimately place little trust in the deterrence capabilities of surveillance. For instance, when I asked one resident what she thought of the surveillance cameras, she responded:

> I think they just got 'em up there for show. To tell you the god's truth, and I think ummm, I'm imagining probably, that they don't even show them, and sometimes, maybe even forget to turn the suckers on.

When I followed up by asking about the potential of cameras to deter crime, she asserted:

> Don't do no damn good because yeah, it takes a picture of them, and ummm, if no one's monitoring it, you don't know till the next flippin' ass day anyways.

Answers of this sort show that residents are acutely aware of the human limitations of surveillance systems for providing the kinds of security that would be meaningful in their lives, and the kinds of security that the technologies are celebrated for in the first place. This does not mean, however, that they are critical of the technologies themselves or of the technologies' ability to facilitate intrusive monitoring of their activities.

Whenever I ventured to ask a question about resident's feelings about being observed, they would reply in a somewhat conflicted way. First, the popular discourse about wrongdoing came quickly to their lips: "I ain't got nothing to hide" or "If I was doing something wrong I would [feel uncomfortable]." The property manager similarly resorted to this formulation:

> Early on there were [complaints about the surveillance system]. I know when I first got here, you know, it's like we're in a prison, and I, you know, to me, clearly, if you're not doing anything wrong, what do you have, what are you worried about? It's only people that are up to something that should be concerned about it, everybody else should feel better knowing that there's some safeguard measures taken. And you know, since then, not much has been said. Every so often somebody will say something, but I find usually they're the ones that I have to be watching anyhow.

This remarkable statement – that critics of surveillance are more likely than others to be engaged in criminal or otherwise unsavory activities – highlights the conflict that residents express in their secondary responses to the question of being observed. While surveillance systems are not bad in and of themselves, they say, the secondary examples they provide suggest that surveillance becomes one more element of individualized monitoring and social control in their everyday lives.

When I asked one man about who he thought the surveillance systems were trying to keep out, he launched into a detailed personal narrative about his very real fears of individualized scrutiny (I quote it here in length to convey the sense of emotional insecurity that such "security" practices can instill in residents):

Oh, oh, [they're trying to keep out] all kinds of people, who knows, you know? I mean, they even told me today, see, a friend of mine, well see I don't have anymore friends anymore, I just got a couple of acquaintances, and this one guy I know from Value Options [a local discount store], who you know, I've known him for a long time, just about every time I go down there, he's there, and we have the same you know psychiatrist and stuff and uh, he asked me the other day, he says uh, you know uh, I'm in a bind, I didn't get my check, he says uh, you think I could stay at your place tonight? And I says, well I tell you what, I says I'll let you stay at my place tonight, but, all you're gonna do is, you're just gonna sleep there, and then in the morning you're gonna have to leave. And the manager got on me about that this morning. I mean she says, if I see that guy around again, she goes, I'm gonna call the cops and you're going [to be thrown out] too. Now I don't see how she could tell me that, can't, I mean, see, I get paranoid a lot, and I've been thinking about that all damn day now! That I'm gonna get kicked out if the guy comes back! I mean, he's gonna come back, he's gotta pick up his jacket, and you know!

Do you think she was [just] trying to scare you or intimidate you?

I don't know what her trip is with me, it just, she don't like me for some reason, I don't know why, I'm always being, you know, as nice as I can to her and everything, and still she's got something against me, I don't know what, because I haven't done nothing to her, but she's you know...Once I walk in the door here, I feel safe. I feel very safe. But then, especially if [the property manager's] on, on shift, I kinda shake in my boots until I get past her office and up the stairs.

Why are you? Why do you have that reaction?

Like I said, she's threatened me. "I'm gonna call the cops on him and I'm gonna have you thrown out!" I said, "what did I do!"

So you're, but this is just recently, have you –

Today!

Today, yeah.

Today!

So have you been shaking in your boots before today?

Every time I, every time we have a dispute or something, she scares me. I lived on the streets for 2 years and uh, I'll tell you what, I'd kill myself before uh, you know, I mean, I'm Christian, and you know, if I ever did it, I would, I would pray to god for about 5 minutes and tell him why and everything, but I will never live on the streets again. I won't do it.

> *So it's, if she didn't mean it, do you think it was fair to say that?*
>
> She meant it, she like, I don't know, it seems like she likes to do it, I don't know, I don't know what her social life is like, but it must be pretty shitty, you know, to come into an office where you gotta a little bit of power and then flaunt it over people who are disabled and shit.

Rather than this being an isolated sentiment about surveillance of residents, other interviewees arrived at similar conclusions. One woman said:

> It seems to me, they're more concerned of what we're up to, than people coming from the outside in. That's just what it seems like to me. But they're always wanting you to tell on everyone else, when you see something suspicious but then they don't, they don't wanna have to pay you no mind. They act like they don't give a hairy rat's butt, you know?

Finally, the property manager herself confessed to actively spying on residents – using electronic surveillance and other means – to root out the "bad" ones in order to protect the "good" ones:

> For a while there, I had a couple individuals I was trying to evict, and I was using [surveillance] as a means of tracking, dating and all that stuff, and activity of people coming and going, and coming and going... Even out on a criminal (pause) what, way of looking at things, but sometimes fraud, you know, oh no, my boyfriend's not living with me, well he comes in everyday, he leaves everyday, he has his own key. No, no, no, he's not living, so you can put the, you know, the monitor and see everyday when he's coming in, say well, if someone's coming in 7 days out of 7 days, week after week, for all intents and purposes, they're living here, so it has other things that we can document as well.
>
> *And if they don't, if someone's living here, illegally, you request that they leave, if they don't, then you, do you call in police?*
>
> Well if we have an unauthorized person, you know that's one of the hardest things to prove. Yeah, he has a couple shirts here, but every so often stays the night. And this is more common in public housing projects than it is in senior and disabled housing. Again we'll try tracking their history as far as usage of the card, to see if you know it's being randomly used quickly, boom, boom, boom, if there's some kind of history there. We can say okay, we have reason to believe I'm coming in to do an inspection. Now I can open up closet doors, I can open up anything that's [owned by the] City. But as far as their dresser drawers, under their bed, things like that I'm not allowed to touch. I'm not allowed to touch their items. I'll open up the vanity mirror and see if

> there's a men's shaving kit or whatever in there and I'll document those items. I can also ask.
>
> *It sounds uncomfortable.*
>
> Pardon?
>
> *It sounds uncomfortable anyway to –*
>
> Well it is, it's really, really hard to prove [that someone is living there that should not be].

The property manager's description of her practices confirms that resident's concerns of being scrutinized are not without merit. Tellingly, she simply could not hear my question about being uncomfortable looking through other people's belongings – for her, it was an issue of practical difficulty not ethical ambiguity. Thus, the "community" climate that technological surveillance is being inserted into is one already characterized by suspicion. The surveillance system then facilitates and amplifies these internal monitoring practices. Rather than being neutral, the system co-produces unequal power relations by nature of its very design. This is not to say that monitoring of residents is necessarily without just cause. Internal crimes exist, as many residents told me about drugs and prostitutes being brought into the complex. Nonetheless, these surveillance practices do show that the rhetoric of surveillance shielding residents from external threats is a somewhat misleading oversimplification, because the threats are not only external and insiders are being watched far more than outsiders.

"Somewhat Protected, Somewhat Violated" in Gated Communities

As with the examples given of experiences of surveillance in public housing, a similar mismatch exists between what residents say are the intended functions and what are the actual uses of surveillance systems in gated communities. The first discursive move of residents is to explain the surveillance imperative as providing protection from external threats, with often no direct experiences of criminal activity in the neighborhoods. These phantom threats are perceived as being introduced, more often than not, by the many Latino workers maintaining the grounds, engaging in home repair, or building new houses. Soon after providing this rationale for surveillance, however, residents volunteer a series of complaints about being scrutinized, hassled, or made to feel uncomfortable by security personnel operating the systems or by the systems themselves. Unlike residents in public housing, though, those in gated communities perceive security personnel as their disgruntled employees, who – it should be noted – could not afford to live in the same communities that they serve.

Residents rationalize putting up with feelings of intrusion as part of a conscious trade-off, in exchange for feeling (that their property is) safe and secure.

The security systems at the two gated communities studied represent two ends of the surveillance spectrum – nominal and extreme. The smaller site has two guard gate entrances, with small guard stations of about 10 square feet. Only one person is in each station at a time, and they are only staffed from 6 AM to 10 PM. Residents enter either by means of a clicker or by manually punching a code into a number pad. While it is policy that guests be screened by guards, they will often simply "tailgate" a resident's car into the community – entering before the guard gate descends; this is a practice ignored by the security personnel. There are surveillance cameras at these gates, as well as next to gates leading into an adjacent community.[10] The larger gated community site, by contrast, offers 4 gates, two large guard stations which are staffed by four to five guards at all times, card key entry, guards patrolling on bikes, and roaming checkups by the home owners association (HOA) to ensure compliance with community rules and regulations. This second community takes security seriously, and there is no possibility for entrance without gaining clearance from a guard or being in possession of a community member's key card.

At the first gated community, several instances of property theft motivated the installation of video cameras at the gates, as a mechanism for the deterrence of future thefts. One resident explains:

> I believe they were installed because the, so first of all, my, my phase of my community, Phase 2, elected to not have guards on duty from 10 PM to 6 AM, and I believe shortly thereafter there began to be some thefts in people's back yards of like pool equipment, back yard stuff, where people were either accessing the property, tailgating through the gates, or they're coming off the golf course...it was expensive pool equipment, like, not a net, but someone's jumping over the fence, taking filters or hardware.

One security guard in the community added that an incident of theft at the internally located country club inn, where guests can stay when visiting the golf course, for instance, was the primary catalyst for the purchase of surveillance cameras. The second gated community, by contrast, had cameras installed as part of the initial development plan, and residents had no knowledge of any thefts in the four years since the community was opened.

The perceived threats to property or human safety in both gated communities are from individuals who are "external" to the community but nonetheless have regular access to it – namely, Latino workers. When asked about the effectiveness of surveillance technologies, one resident responded:

> Well I think surveillance could be effective in determining potential, crime candidates...To maintain the whole community and the golf courses, and you know. I mean, you know those people, can't, I'm sure, you know, they're minimum wage, or close to minimum wage people that you know, I'm certainly sure they can't screen them to the extent, so they don't know who they exactly hire all the time. So I'd say it's not necessarily residents that they're targeting [with surveillance], but outsiders. Whether it be employees that are working the grounds, like I said, or people that are just coming in contracting.

In this passage, the interviewee reveals that he sees manual laborers as marked in advance as "crime candidates" by means of their status as minimum wage earners and that one alternate response to surveillance might be to "screen" the workers more extensively in advance. The prospect of correcting vast income disparity or of paying workers more is not on the table as a solution to the potential risk to property that these workers pose. Instead, the technological fix of surveillance systems is perceived as a more viable or more conceivable response.

Another resident, although obviously uncomfortable with the question of who the surveillance systems are intended for, responds in a unusually forthright fashion:

> Probably, (pause) depends on how, on your perspective, but I think probably (clears throat) working class individuals and ummm, predators, whether it would be of a sexual nature or a criminal nature...Yeah I think, just in general, just based on the location, and our geography. I think that there's probably ummm, a general stereotype, of what we would consider criminal, predators...I would probably say Hispanic.

What is revealed in this type of response is a disturbing stereotype of workers that is indicative both of a simple lack of exposure to those of other class or ethnic groups but also of the general hostility in the region toward anyone who might be an illegal immigrant. The surprising grouping of Latino workers with "sexual predators" demonstrates not only the extent of the stigma attached to such workers, but, perhaps more importantly, the irrational level of fear engendered by the unknown Other.

When the questions turn to interactions that residents have with security personnel, the narrative of external threats quickly subsides into a series of gripes about living under surveillance. Most of these complaints stem from a general climate of surveillance that includes monitoring by neighbors, HOAs, and security personnel to ensure adherence to community rules and regulations. Technological surveillance, rather than signaling a radical change in living experiences, becomes one more mechanism contributing to this general culture of social regulation.

There are many cases where surveillance-facilitated social regulation can occur. One resident describes breaking community rules by letting a contractor in on a Sunday (which apparently is an official day of rest in the neighborhood) and the shock of being traced back to his house by means of his license plate number:

> I had a contractor come through, try to come through on a Sunday and didn't know exactly all the rules, and apparently, they stopped him and would not allow him to come in, even though I was there in person...And, and they ended up following through, which they I guess because they have my license number of my car, when we took off, I kind of felt like, when they finally let me through, they, they did not follow us, but then later on they showed up at the house, so it's kind of like they do know who you are, even though I didn't really think about that, I thought oh good, they didn't follow us, so I won't have any more issues with them. You know what I mean, but then later on, they showed up at the house...So they have enough information that I kind of feel like they do monitor, they do look at certain things.

Others describe receiving citations for not conforming to HOA rules for acceptable yard vegetation:

> Well we're we knew that there was potentially a rule that there wasn't a certain plant allowed...A palm of any sort, whether it low growing or tall growing. And I kinda [said] "huh?" ... So I, we, decided that being in the back yard, it's a low growing one, we have, we don't have an open fence to the golf course or anything, so, it wouldn't be that big of a deal, we even considered putting them in pots, and regardless, we didn't even plant the thing in a pot or in the ground yet, and the landscapers left the gate open and there was a picture taken of the palm sitting on the side yard, and we were notified that we were in violation and it needed to be corrected.

Other rules prohibit parking on the street:

> [You are] less likely to leave your cars out, you know, it's a rule not to leave your car out on the street, you know, communities that have other Associations, you'll still see people parking in the street, because there's you know, they're not being looked at, they're not being surveilled, you know, surveillanced.

On one level, each of these cases are simple inconveniences that homeowners must put up with in exchange for living in these privatized communities. Still, adapting one's life to such strict rules and being actively corrected if one does not self-police creates a living experience in tension

with the American dreams of home ownership and individual expression. As one resident put it, being under surveillance makes him feel

> Somewhat protected, somewhat violated. Protected from a sense of there's roaming security, there's drive-by security, violated in terms of like CC&R [Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions] violations.

This is an interesting conflation of the two meanings of violation: of experiencing some kind of personal trespass, on the one hand, and of being cited and fined for breaking community rules, on the other. One can interpret this to mean that the condition of living under such strict rules and of having others tell you how to live is experienced as a form of personal violation, especially when these residents are paying so much for the privilege of living in these communities.

Some residents confess that they refrain from walking around adjacent communities because they feel too observed and are worried about being confronted by security personnel:

> I thought about being watched more when I went up to take a walk, when I went up on the ridge where there's the common street that's both [in my community and the adjacent one], I wanted to go walk around the homes under construction, and it became, I got the feeling there, that there was a camera on every corner, that that to me, was more of a, what you would call, invasive, but it was more prevalent, that you saw them on a low post, where I'd only seen the one in my community that I'm aware of... It made me feel a little uncomfortable, that there's one everywhere... it made me think twice because I know they're all centrally monitored and I didn't wanna deal with the hassle of someone saying, you know, technically he's trespassing, if that's the issue. So I did not choose to go walk by any of the houses.

This person's concern about walking around the neighborhood is tied to clearly demarcated, yet artificial, boundaries placed between communities. As he expands upon this theme, he says that it leads to a great sense of isolation in his home life, because he lives alone and does not know any of his neighbors.

Finally, when interviewees begin to discuss surveillance throughout everyday life, not just in their communities, they will confess that they are bothered by the conformity that surveillance practices enforce. As one woman said:

> You pretty much, force people into boxes, they, I think that, that if you wanna create robots, that's exactly what you will do, if you have cameras all over, you will create robots, you know, do this, do that, you know whatever... I think it's inappropriate, again I just mentioned in my

> previous statement, that, I think when it creates an atmosphere where you feel like you're boxed in, into something, I think that people if you continue to box people in, I think that eventually what happens is people rebel, and revolt, and I think that's, that's when you have more harm than good, that it's inappropriate to have that.

Seemingly, one of the things that grates on the nerves of residents in gated communities the most is that the security personnel do not treat them with the degree of respect that they feel like they deserve:

> I don't really know what [training] those guards have. I mean a majority of the time if I ever run into them, I'm not impressed by them personally... I've had a run-in or two with a couple of them just because of their lack of, I guess, of respect, I guess, as a, as either a homeowner, or you know I didn't have the right tags yet on my car or whatever, and it's like I don't really wanna bother with that, of course, because I know I'm a homeowner, and so as I enter, I just expect them to some degree, to just... work with me... it's kind of like they, they almost like, you know, they take it a little bit extreme.

Gate guards, on the other hand, see a lack of respect on the part of some residents who are "always complaining" about the money that they are spending in HOA fees for security or for the guards not being diligent enough at screening people out.

When it comes down to it, though, residents willingly submit to the additional scrutiny, inconvenience, and conformity in order to gain "peace of mind," especially when they are out of town, which many homeowners are for the summer months when temperatures can exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit. One resident put the trade-off into perspective by saying, without any hint of irony, that the community was "like the family living place where you know you could be free." He meant by this that the community embodied the historical ideals and values of "traditional" American neighborhoods, where one need not worry about crime. Technological surveillance is just one more component in the social surveillance apparatus of gated communities, designed to safeguard a restricted form of "freedom" that seems to mean freedom not only from exposure to people from other classes, ethnic groups, or cultural backgrounds, but also freedom from the responsibility of outwardly demonstrating signs of individual difference from one's neighbors.

Conclusion

The embedding of surveillance technologies into residential spaces simultaneously reinforces and masks emerging forms of neoliberal governance. Residential surveillance intrusively polices the poor in public

housing, attempting to root out those who might be plotting to cheat the system in some way. Surveillance also guards the fortified enclaves of private gated communities, under the rubric of keeping out, or at least keeping a close eye on, those who cannot afford to live in such spaces but who are necessary for maintaining them. Interestingly, surveillance also subjects the affluent to a type of scrutiny that heretofore has been reserved for the poor (Gilliom, 2001; Campbell, 2005), and this scrutiny is justified as a necessary sacrifice of rights associated with living in privatized environments. In these ways, residential surveillance operates within and contributes to a neoliberal environment of reduced social services and increased social control throughout public/private life. As with architecture, surveillance technologies function as political tools with agential force to shape human practices and relations. The valence of these surveillance systems is for monitoring internal everyday practices, not external exceptional ones. Nonetheless, the emerging power relations described here may be obscured behind – and naturalized by – popular beliefs in the value-neutrality of architecture and technology.

In the examples provided in this paper, both the poor and the affluent say, initially, that surveillance is intended to protect them from outsiders. Nonetheless, the personal experiences they describe illustrate that much of the monitoring capabilities and control functions of surveillance systems are directed at the residents themselves, whether in public housing or gated communities. I see this as a revealing dissonance between discourse and practice – or, more accurately, between *popular discourse* about the functions of surveillance and the *discourse of practice* about instances and perceptions of being surveilled. It is the space between *popular discourse* and *discourse of practice* where opportunities for awareness and critique are effaced by the ambiguity and supposed neutrality of surveillance technologies themselves. It is also a space where difference resides and is obscured, especially, so it seems, for the affluent. This is probably so because, in a sense, to acknowledge the particularistic uses of surveillance might also imply a recognition of particularism more generally, which, of course, violates the core precept of the American dream: universalist meritocracy.

While the data presented here suggest a *structural* similarity in experiences of being surveilled in public housing and gated communities, clearly this isomorphism does not mean that the life chances, conditions, or concerns of these two groups are comparable. Nor does this similarity imply that the outcomes or emotional effects of surveillance-facilitated interventions can be equated. After all, the ultimate material risks faced by those in gated communities are the inconveniences of fines or of needing to move elsewhere. For those in public housing, as my interviewees confess, the ultimate risks are not risks at all, but are instead the dire dangers of

living homeless on the street or the disturbing "alternative" of suicide. It is also worth introducing a caveat here that these findings may not be representative of other experiences of residential surveillance throughout the U.S. and elsewhere. Indeed, the research was focused on three relatively unique communities in the Phoenix area and was not intended to be generalizable as such. Nonetheless, other research on living in fortified areas indicates that these findings are consistent with larger trends of socio-spatial segregation, strict enforcement of the status quo, and attenuated avenues for democratic practices (Caldeira, 2000; Kuppinger, 2004; Waldrop, 2004; Falzon, 2004).

If the hyper-regulation of boundaries and borders is a response to social instabilities, on local and global levels, then it is worthwhile questioning not only the regulation itself, but the root causes of such instabilities. Rather than being measured responses to threats of terrorism or crime, social regulation in places like Phoenix may be more about contending with the fallout from economic inequalities, which are aggravated by the dismantling of social programs and rise in socio-spatial segregation. As with much anti-terrorism legislation on the national level, it seems that the surveillance and security interventions intended to protect people from external threats require that people in turn subject themselves to greater unwarranted and uninvited scrutiny and control. Thus, it is not surprising that a mismatch would exist between what people say surveillance is for and how it is actually deployed, because it is, in some senses, a technological fix to a complex social problem that it cannot hope to solve.

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Endnotes

[1]See Monahan (2002) and Dear (2002) for reviews of L.A. Studies literature.

[2] See also Mitchell (2003) for an analysis of the relationship between security and exclusion in urban public spaces.

[3] It is highly likely, as Mawby (1977) claims, that many of Newman's ideas were borrowed from Jacobs (1961).

[4] It also deserves mentioning that rather than security emanating in some unidirectional, deterministic fashion from defensible spatial designs, residents also actively appropriate, avoid, and move through spaces of public housing to create a sense of personal security (Gotham and Brumley, 2002).

[5] Elliott, Gotham, and Milligan (2004) argue that the HOPE VI program is bound to the ideology of the New Urbanism movement and that this may *enable* new discourses and opportunities for collective action toward more socially just ways of city planning and living.

[6] The neoliberal agenda in cities manifests, among other ways, in business improvement districts (BIDs), which allow "business and property owners in commercial districts to tax themselves voluntarily for maintenance and improvement of public areas and take these areas under their control" (Zukin, 1995: 33).

[7] On the macro-structural level, Harvey (1990), Sassen (1991), and Castells (1996) assert that information technologies have catalyzed shifts in capital accumulation strategies, leading to spatial changes in cities.

[8] See Hommels (2005) for a review of the complementary overlaps between urban studies and technology studies.

[9]See www.publicsurveillance.com for an overview of this ongoing research.

[10] During the course of the field research, the surveillance cameras at the main guard gates were dismantled because they were unreliable at identifying license plate numbers, which was their primary intended function. At the time of this writing, they are scheduled to be replaced in the upcoming weeks.