

4. Securing the Shopping Mall

When early shopping malls were being conceptualized, the various design elements were mostly geared towards creating some form of communal atmosphere and harmonious continuity between shopping, leisure, and profits. In the contemporary period, the minute elements of standardized shopping mall design have a renewed objective of incorporating the paradigm of security. In response to the prevailing terrorism discourse, anti-terror measures, surveillance, and security have become central to the overall shopping mall architecture and design. Particularly since September 11, 2001, the promotion of the global “war on terror” has meant significant increases in government and corporate spending on the security apparatus in countries all over the world. The mitigation of terrorist activity has become a feature of daily discourse and has been embedded in the very architectural design and atmospherics of public spaces, and especially in shopping malls.

Along with the rise in the number of terror attacks around the world,¹ there has been an increased militant response on the part of authorities—the effect of which is turning cities into spaces with a persistent underlying sense of warfare. Part of this “military urbanism is the paradigmatic shift that renders cities’ communal and private spaces, as well as their infrastructure—along with their civilian populations—a source of targets and threats.”² Along with the seemingly permanent threat against physical spaces, the discourse of war, especially the war on terror, has become “the perpetual and boundless condition of urban societies.”³ Increased fears and security measures work towards instilling notions of war into everyday life and spaces of everyday encounter. Over the years, the security architecture of public space, with particular emphasis on shopping malls, has evolved along the lines of increasing fortification and surveillance in large part driven by increased security concerns.⁴

Since the concept of the shopping mall is presented as a homogenous transnational corporate space, anti-terror responses in one commercial venue become applicable to another, regardless of their specific national contexts. The US army uses al-Shabaab's Westgate Mall attacks as a training case study regarding how terrorist attacks can happen and how to protect against them, noting that "the complexity of four attackers operating in synchronized fashion guided by a central command and control arguably represents the most dangerous scenario should a similar attack occur in the United States."⁵ In 2015, "more terrorist attacks have been carried out with Kalashnikov-type assault rifles this year than with any other device. In the 13 November Paris attacks, suicide bombers killed few but gunmen killed many. Further afield, in Tunisia and Kenya, it was also automatic weapons that did the damage."⁶ Recent terrorist atrocities have involved small coordinated groups of extremists patrolling the hallways and atria of hotels, malls, and restaurants, causing mass casualties. In the military lexicon these are termed "swarm attacks," and "are high-risk, coordinated assaults sometimes directed against multiple targets or building complexes, using mobile groups to circumvent security measures, allowing attackers to inflict casualties, garner news coverage and, in recent years, to inflict considerable damage prior to neutralization of the assailants."⁷

For all public spaces, government and security agencies offer advice on a variety of protective measures that people can employ depending on the attack scenario, and especially if it involves explosives and other hazardous devices. However, they acknowledge that a weapons assault like the one that occurred at Westgate Mall is difficult to predict, control, or avoid.⁸ Westgate Mall's security measures could not forestall al-Shabaab's attack, and the mall's carefully crafted sonic signifiers, architectonics, and systems of circulation designed to control the flow of people were rendered inoperable by the brutal simplicity of the terrorists' use of handheld weapons. Still, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has worked directly with US shopping malls "to test the readiness of SWAT teams by staging fake attacks during hours when malls were closed,"⁹ thus using the mall as a space for rehearsal of impending violence. It has become the norm for organizations and large-scale public events to hold regular anti-terrorism rehearsals.¹⁰ Within this context, shopping malls are increasingly subjected to a variety of military technologies, advanced video analytics, and facial recognition systems.¹¹ Monitoring the mall's population from an unseen and yet all-seeing position, the security apparatus

becomes an automated system that not only observes, but also records and retains information for immediate or future use.¹²

The United States, especially, has been keen on influencing international partners, and is active in transferring its own security strategies to governments of developing countries. Since the Westgate Mall attacks, the US government has been instrumental in shaping the security apparatus of Kenya. The US “Department of State’s Antiterrorism Assistance program focused on building law enforcement capacities in the areas of border security, investigations, and crisis response, and on the institutionalization of counterterrorism prevention and response capabilities.”¹³ The Shopping Center Security Terrorism Awareness Training Program offers further courses and trainings developed by the International Council of Shopping Centers and the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute in collaboration with the National Center for Biomedical Research and Training (NCBRT), among other such security-focused programs.¹⁴

The relationship between the United States and its allies in the war on terror is a strategic one revolving around the central pillars of neoliberal trade and security, and this stance has been adopted by many other supporting institutions. In fighting the war on terror, there has been an increasing affinity between state and private institutions, and business interests are often aligned with government mandates so that “advocates of the neoliberal mindset now occupy positions of considerable influence in education (universities and many “think tanks”), in the media, in corporate board rooms and financial institutions, in key state institutions (treasury departments, central banks), and also in those international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) that regulate global finance and commerce.”¹⁵

By promoting the same anti-terror stance, combined with a neoliberal ideology, the forces of these various institutions are united in strengthening the anti-terror discourse, and promoting security as an integral feature of public spaces. Under the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative in the United States, “public attractions such as sports stadiums, amusement parks and shopping malls report suspicious activities to law enforcement agencies.”¹⁶ Shopping malls often coordinate with national anti-terror stances and surveillance schemes, such as Operation Lightening in the United Kingdom, which is an intelligence gathering operation that records, researches, investigates, and analyzes suspicious sightings

and behavior in public places in order to interrupt or monitor “hostile reconnaissance” missions.¹⁷

In order to further aid in anti-terror campaigns, private businesses have been encouraged to take matters into their own hands by investing in and employing an entirely private security apparatus. Because the security industry has become such an internationally lucrative venture, the contemporary discourse of terrorism is being actively shaped by terrorism opponents. With the privatization of security, there is an increased tendency towards the militarization of shopping malls as they attempt to enact their own protection and guard against terrorist, and other, threats. At the time of al-Shabaab’s attacks, Westgate Mall was regularly guarded by forty private and unarmed security guards who were stationed at various entrances of the building, and who roamed around the mall. Additionally, the mall’s banks and casino employed their own armed private security forces. Westgate’s overall security mechanism and surveillance systems, like the private security guards, were outsourced to third-party organizations, among them the Securex Agencies private security force.¹⁸ Since al-Shabaab’s attack, the number of private security guards in Kenya has shot up to 300,000 “making them the country’s biggest private sector employers. A booming trade has also emerged in closed-circuit television (CCTV) and access control systems.”¹⁹

By comparison, although terrorist acts were rampant in the 1970s,²⁰ a 1978 Burns Security Institute report on security in shopping malls in the United States makes no mention of terrorism, indicating that this particular discursive fixation and its applicability to securing public space is a recent formulation.²¹ At one time, shoplifting and fraud were emphasized as the primary security concerns to be guarded against in shopping malls. The 1978 report notes that “no segment of the business community is more susceptible to or provides more opportunities for thievery, fraud and other crimes than retail stores.”²² The crime of shoplifting is followed by other security issues related to loitering and vandalism.²³ Tellingly, not all the malls surveyed in the 1978 report had “contingency plans—written programs that define courses of action in responding to emergencies, accidents and crimes.”²⁴ The lack of a contingency plan is inconceivable in the current climate where the security architecture has become an integral part of commercial structures, and a central concern of most industries. Through the design of early shopping centers a new relationship developed between how the architecture of a commercial establishment

influences other areas of commerce, including transformed techniques of marketing and retailing, and a revised relationship between the organization and the customer.

The Architecture of Security

Over years of trial and error, shopping center entrepreneurs developed a series of standard practices regarding architecture and design that are constantly being updated and refined in the contemporary era. In J.C. Nichols' 1945 guide for standard shopping center practice, shopping center pioneers identified a multitude of "mistakes" made when first erecting these venues, and gave advice for optimum design, including standardizing ceiling height, temperature control, store front design, signage size, types of lighting, basement usage, width of sidewalks, and width of parking spaces, down to minute details, including advice that "exterior switches for street floor shops should be provided so a night watchman can turn off and on the lights."²⁵ These original security suggestions were amended and improved upon over the years leading to a more or less "standard" for the design of the contemporary shopping mall instituted all over the world.

Today, security is architecturally built into the very structure of shopping malls, from the planning and design phase and even before construction, through such paradigms as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), which is "a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behaviour through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts by affecting the built, social and administrative environment."²⁶ The stated goal of these principles "is to prevent crime by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior. The theory is based on four principles: natural access control, natural surveillance, territoriality, and maintenance."²⁷

Intricate features of the security apparatus have become increasingly integrated into the very architecture and design of shopping malls and other business complexes, including the installation of "shatterproof windows and bomb-resistant trash cans."²⁸ In such ways, inventions intended to bolster war efforts are harnessed for commercial use and enter into the civilian realm. For example, E. R. Weidlein, director of Mellon Institute of Technical Research, proposed that shopping malls should avail of a new liquid being used by the armed forces that "could be applied to show win-

dows and showcases, which enables them to be kept clean for a period of three months by simply rubbing with a dry cloth.”²⁹ Further, the CCTV monitoring systems in place in most shopping malls have their origin in military technology, and utilize “near infrared detection systems that are sensitive to ‘light’ beyond human vision.”³⁰

The placing, degree, and type of lighting was once standardized for aesthetic purposes and to add enhanced visual effect to the commodities on offer, but, in the structure of the contemporary mall, lighting has an added duty: it is key to CCTV monitoring and becomes a prerequisite for effective camera capture. In the contemporary shopping mall, intruder alarms, CCTV, and lighting “systems must be integrated so that they work together in an effective and co-ordinated manner.”³¹ A mall’s anti-terror effort further merges aesthetics and security, where “pruning all vegetation and trees, especially near entrances, fence lines and boundaries” are key to the surveillance operation.³² In the construction of new shopping malls, lighting and CCTV security systems must be installed in tandem to “ensure that appropriate lighting complements the system during daytime and darkness hours.”³³ As such, shopping mall developers are advised that “measures you may consider for countering terrorism will also work against other threats, such as theft and burglary. Any extra measures that are considered should integrate wherever possible with existing security.”³⁴ In the same vein, parking spaces in older shopping centers were aligned according to calculable metrics of traffic congestion and average car size. Today, the parking lot must also answer to how it can mitigate terrorist activity. The UK’s National Counter Terrorism Security Office advises shopping centers to “keep non-essential vehicles at least 30 metres from your building,” as a precautionary measure.³⁵

In addition, mall developers capitalize on combining architectural design with security requirements for increased profits. For example, a deliberate lack of seating areas in malls plays a dual role: to keep people moving—and shopping—and to ensure that explosive devices cannot be hidden if furniture is kept to an operational minimum.³⁶ However, there are instances where the security-conscious policies introduce elements of “irrationality” into the shopping mall setting, including such impractical measures as “avoiding the use of litter bins” to prevent the possibility of terrorists placing explosives within them.³⁷ In addition, to fully enact security measures behind the scenes, the mall’s security apparatus must also promote vigilance as an outward signifier.

Despite these threatening stances, however, the security apparatus of the mall must find a balance between securing and surveying the premises at the same time that it does not disrupt the flow of commerce or inconvenience customers in any way; it must allow shoppers to go about their activates unhindered. A RAND report on terrorism and shopping malls identified potential security measures that can be implemented, but warns that “some of the high-priority security options identified in the analysis are expected to have negative collateral effects that, if great enough, may cause some shoppers to shop elsewhere. On the other hand, were the threat from terrorism to be perceived as increasing, the psychology may be reversed and customers may feel safer in centers with increased security.”³⁸ The report further points out that “screening checkpoints, in particular, could have strong negative collateral impacts if they cause people to wait in line to enter a shopping center.”³⁹ As is evident, within the profit-margin calculus of the private sector business, ensuring the security of customers becomes a question of weighing costs and benefits. “As for more elaborate security improvements, those run into bottom-line resistance. Like all businesses, retail operations have limited dollars. Every mall will be asking itself, ‘Do you invest \$100,000 in security or do you use it to promote an upcoming sale?’”⁴⁰ As such, most shopping malls must balance costs and effects of security measures and check points.

Asymmetrical power relations are increasingly at work in the mall environment, from “minor” to “major” surveillance techniques, whether “voluntarily” through information and communication technologies—credit card data, mobile phone geolocations, personal cameras, and social media updates—or involuntarily through pervasive, and perhaps unseen, private surveillance mechanisms that are turning these venues into latter-day panopticons.⁴¹

The Panopticon of Shopping: Discipline and Purchase

Similar to how the panoptic design of the prison was used to control the behavior of inmates, so thoroughly examined in Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*,⁴² the panoptic architecture of shopping arenas attempts to induce certain behaviors. The panoptic design was introduced by Jeremy Bentham to the prison system as a means of “efficient” surveillance: a single, central and elevated observation tow-

er could effectively survey the prison in its entirety, without the guards themselves being seen.⁴³ This suggestion of constant surveillance was a means of controlling and shaping inmates' behavior; they, in turn, internalized and self-administered the disciplining principle.

While the panopticon was perfected in the prison system, it was originally conceived in the workplace as a means of enhancing efficiency according to a "central inspection principle" which would facilitate the training and supervision of unskilled workers by experienced craftsmen,⁴⁴ and "the atrium construction, with surrounding galleries, had already become an established principle of industrial architecture" of the factory.⁴⁵ There are many similarities that can be drawn between the birth of the panoptic prison and that of the shopping mall, where "the genealogy of the penitentiary parallels a broader order of social differentiation and control within society," including the "desire to instill capitalist work habits and ethics on the working classes. Accordingly, the birth of the modern penitentiary was linked to other social mechanisms that ensured the systematic operation and overall success of capitalism."⁴⁶

The surveillance impulse of the panopticon began to permeate other venues, and was being gradually applied to control certain social behaviors. However, as opposed to the panoptic effect on the penal institution, and the proposed rehabilitation of inmates, the private security apparatus's dictation of human behavior in shopping malls is not "the redemptive soul-training of the carceral project,"⁴⁷ and is not directed at ensuring or encouraging ethical behavior, but is designed to encourage approved consumerist activities. The purpose of surveillance in shopping arenas is not only to guard against criminal or disruptive acts, but is simultaneously aimed at shaping and disciplining behavior towards the smooth and uninterrupted perpetuation of a consumerist culture.

Since the early days of the department store, the panoptic design and the atmosphere of constant surveillance worked towards influencing buying behavior. It is in the enclosed department store that the first concrete panoptic principles of the contemporary shopping mall can be identified, along with how the architecture of a commercial establishment can be used to influence people's behavior. Those frequenting nineteenth century arcades were advised that "entrance to the galleries is strictly forbidden to anyone who is dirty or to carriers of heavy loads; smoking and spitting are likewise prohibited."⁴⁸ A few years on, the open plan of the department store further increased the threat of constant surveillance, and was

used to deter shoppers from criminal activity. In the contemporary period, surveillance and security have become integral concerns of architectural design, where counter terrorism efforts are simultaneously used to deter other types of crime and unwelcome behavior. As with most other public or private spaces, panoptic observation stems from the particularities of the built environment, but also via the integral, indispensable, and all-pervasive—and invasive—technologies of surveillance.

The management of shopping mall environments can be seen as a form of “governance,”⁴⁹ one that is extended beyond the walls of the mall through a variety of partnerships between the mall and its stakeholders, and the collaboration between the private security industry and a nation’s police force. The ultimate goal of mall atmospherics is not only to work towards increasing profits, but to create an enclosed world that abides by its own established rules and principles to be respected with little interference. The surveillance architecture employed in shopping malls is geared towards ensuring that visitors act like “normal” consumers and do what consumers should ideally do: engage in the culture of consumption. Behavior in shopping malls is highly regulated, much more so than in the street or other public places that must often cater to the “abnormal” elements of social life.

This is not to suggest that people who visit malls have no agency, and that they are unwillingly and unwittingly subjected to the mall’s circulation of consumption, but that the design of the mall is carefully orchestrated to encourage, if not produce, certain types of purchasing behavior and movement. The mall functions as a world in miniature, and comes with a series of rules and regulations. Within this architectural logic, “to come to the mall with no intention to shop is counter-consumptive and thus makes the non- or anti-consumer a possible target of suspicion, regulation and even expulsion.”⁵⁰ To this end, the Shopping Center Security Terrorism Awareness Training Program was launched to train security personnel and employees on terrorism awareness and response in which “the first goal in the training program is to recognize people who are acting out of character for a shopping center.”⁵¹ Malachy Kavanagh, a spokesperson for International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), explains that “everyone acts pretty much the same when shopping... So part of the training teaches people to look for anomalous behavior—who is not acting like a shopper.”⁵² Within the enclosed world of the shopping mall, there is a tacit agreement between the mall and visitors to engage in certain accepted

and agreed upon types of behavior—with such “homogeneity of intention comes safety.”⁵³ Unification of purchasing purpose “is the lulling effect of the mall—you are surrounded only by fellow shoppers, all drawn together in a communion of consumption.”⁵⁴ The shopping mall becomes “an exemplar of modern private corporate policing,”⁵⁵ where control strategies are embedded in both environmental features and structural relations.⁵⁶

In order to familiarize people with the ways in which they should function within the mall,⁵⁷ it is common to have normative prescriptions for required behavior, including postings and display notices listing what is deemed to be inappropriate behavior.⁵⁸ The following are examples of prohibited actions listed on the Mall of America website:

- Conduct that is disorderly, disruptive or which interferes with or endangers business or guests is prohibited. Such conduct may include running, loud offensive language, spitting, throwing objects, fighting, obscene gestures, gang signs, skating, skateboarding, bicycling etc.
- Intimidating behavior by groups or individuals, loitering; engaging in soliciting; blocking storefronts, hallways, skyways, fire exits or escalators, and walking in groups in such a way as to inconvenience others is prohibited.
- Picketing, demonstrating, soliciting and petitioning are prohibited.
- Guns are banned on these premises.⁵⁹

The list of prohibited behavior in enclosed, privatized spaces may be as detailed as Disneyland’s prohibition of anyone—child or adult—walking barefoot.⁶⁰ Behavior correction through constant policing can usually induce certain behaviors, but cannot fully predict or guard against the shopping mall’s security façade being attacked using brute force, as was the case with Westgate Mall.

The surveillance system of shopping malls has a simultaneous and dual purpose: to watch people at the same time that it watches out for people. Surveillance of criminal activity, potential and actual terrorist attacks, and shopping behavior has been uniformly integrated using the same security apparatus. Subjecting all these activities to the same system of surveillance effectively muddles the distinction between potential criminal activity and shopping as both become subject to a single observant security system. The UK’s National Counter Terrorism Office advises shopping malls to ensure that “the CCTV cameras in use for the protective security

of your shopping centre [are] integrated with those used to monitor customer movement.”⁶¹ In this sense, disciplinary practices are spread evenly across the public, and surveillance once reserved to deter crime is “targeted at those simply *capable* of transgressing social norms and laws.”⁶² The mall’s visitors are observed by the same surveillance apparatus that does not, initially at least, distinguish between shoppers, criminals, and terrorists. In the contemporary language of the security industry, suspicious behavior becomes framed as “activity inconsistent with the nature of the building” that is performed by “the same or *similar* individuals” who might engage in such suspicious behavior “as staring or quickly looking away,” or who might take more significant interest in observing “parking areas, delivery gates, doors and entrances.”⁶³ Other possible suspects are regarded as “people taking pictures—filming—making notes—sketching.”⁶⁴ Thus, omnipresent surveillance systems becomes justified when any form of behavior that is unrelated to shopping is the subject of suspicion.

In some cases, the surveillance apparatus is the very first concern and is installed before the mall is even constructed. For example, the potential customer can watch Oxford’s Westgate shopping centre being built through a “new development webcam, giving you live pictures of progress on site every 20 minutes from 7am to 7pm.”⁶⁵ Such a benign example of surveillance shows the increasing “blurring distinction between the surveillance and social control practices of the official justice system and those existing in the everyday lives of ordinary people.”⁶⁶ Here, the potential customer is given the opportunity to be inspector of the mall as it is being constructed. Once the mall is complete, this surveillance relationship will be reversed, and targeted at the customer.

During times when the threat, and anticipation, of terrorism is especially high, the profiling and monitoring of the public are greatly enhanced, and lead to the deployment of extra security measures.⁶⁷ In February 2015, a highly publicized threat was issued by al-Shabaab via a video message posted on a variety of social media platforms and circulated by international news networks.⁶⁸ In the footage, the terrorists named several international malls, including the Mall of America and London’s Westfield shopping center, as forthcoming targets. In response, the Willis Retail Practice, a UK insurance and risk advising organization, released a “Security and Terrorism Guidance for Retailers” stating that “it is important to raise awareness and make sure that everyone (including cleaning,

maintenance, contract and concession staff) is vigilant,” and, further, that “all staff should be trained in bomb threat handling procedures or have ready access to instructions, such as a bomb threat checklist.”⁶⁹ By involving all employees in the general surveillance of the mall as well ensuring that they are educated in the technical aspects of explosives—how to deal with bombs and bomb threats and how to evacuate people in emergency situations—the entire labor force of the mall becomes implicated in surveillance and monitoring.

Paradoxically in this case, the staff becomes versed in the accoutrements of terror, and become themselves subject to suspicion. In this regard, to ensure that staff are vigilant of other staff members, the report notes that “some external threats, whether from criminals, terrorists, or competitors seeking a business advantage, may rely upon the cooperation of an ‘insider’. This could be an employee, a contractor or an agency staff member who has authorised access to your premises.”⁷⁰ In the complex web of heightened vigilance, everybody is under surveillance at the same time that everyone is in the service of the surveillance industry. Even the control room where the CCTV footage is monitored and does not escape observation.⁷¹ Such all-pervasive panoptic structures produce a similarly panoptic atmosphere wherein everyone becomes implicated in the elaborate choreography of surveillance, with mall management observing security personnel and employees; security guards observing employees and shoppers; employees observing contractors and shoppers; and shoppers observing each other and simultaneously gazing upon the spectacle of the mall. It is within systems of surveillance that skewed power relations and “information asymmetry” become most apparent,⁷² “where one person, group, or organization gains important information about a person and uses it as leverage to modify their behavior.”⁷³ The mall’s surveillance structure keeps a constant watch on patrons, even as patrons gaze upon the mall, albeit from different vantage points and within different structures of power.

Within increasingly media-saturated spheres, the difference between technologies of surveillance and personal cameras and mobile technologies is further erased, as all are in the service of recording the surrounding environment. Shoppers are further encouraged to not only watch out for signs of suspicion, but to contact the mall’s central security and even to publicly communicate their suspicions through social media.⁷⁴ The Mall of America has set up an Enhanced Service Portal—aptly named ESP—

which centralizes its “website; social media channels; telephone, text and dispatch teams; guest services and security into a newly designed space that will allow the ESP team members to actively listen to consumers and retailers and promptly respond to them.”⁷⁵ In the climate of fear induced by terrorism and the concomitant anti-terror discourse, the “duty” of surveillance is ultimately passed on to the shopper. Additionally, installing security systems is expensive, and “invariably, mall operators pass those costs on to their retail tenants, which then pass them on to the shoppers.”⁷⁶ The cost of security is also passed on to the customer in many other forms of business. For example, “the Passenger Fee, also known as the September 11 Security Fee, is collected by air carriers from passengers at the time air transportation is purchased.”⁷⁷ Thus, the general public must simultaneously bear the violent brunt of terrorism as well as the costs associated with marketing anti-terror measures.

Marketing Violence

Technologies of surveillance are used in the mitigation of terrorist activity, but have also been coopted for marketing purposes. Much of market research stems from technologies of surveillance in shopping malls, the results of which are used to track pedestrian and purchasing behavior, with the ultimate goal of increasing sales.⁷⁸ Retailers watch video analytics for clues on purchasing behavior, monitor CCTV footage, and analyze credit card data to not only record which products have been bought, when, where, and by whom, but to also predict preferences and future purchasing patterns.⁷⁹ In this way, the architecture of the contemporary shopping mall encourages a number of “predatory, often dubious tactics (such as customer tracking devices and focus groups) that allow retailers to sustain consumer demand despite volatile markets and trends.”⁸⁰ Ultimately, generating profits is the key for any corporation, which must align its overall security operation to ensure the smooth running of the business, and the compliance of its clientele. Thus, it is not only the economically weak, or those exhibiting “abnormal” shopping behaviors, who are subject to the disciplining effects of surveillance. In the shopping mall, those who enjoy economic benefits of the corporate system are especially courted, studied, and observed by the marketing discipline.

Through blanket surveillance activities, mall visitors can be “considered as both potential terrorists and a vast consumer market.”⁸¹ Mall vis-

itors are thus treated as both a potential target market to be enticed, and as a potential target threat to be excised. This inherent duality of the term “target market” serves to reveal the underlying violence of marketing activities, even as they attempt to attract custom. In marketing literature, people are recast as objects of study in order to quantify behavior and turn it into data to be used for experimentations geared towards profit maximization. CCTV operations manuals list specific regulations for the monitoring of shopping malls, and, in the hostile language of militarization of public space, refer to the people under surveillance as “targets” and “objects.”⁸² The marketing discipline displays a combative attitude towards conceptualizing the public, and is awash in symbolic violence. When marketers analyze CCTV footage of people in shopping malls, they engage in “object counting” and “object recognition;” societies are segmented into “target markets;” retail arenas too close to each other engage in “cannibalization;”⁸³ and in various studies on markets in Africa, and especially in South Africa, populations are segmented according to race, with black populations termed “black markets”—a term that is shared with illegal markets and all the negative connotations this terminology entails.⁸⁴

The synergizing of violence and consumption has long been a feature of the shopping center. An early shopping center developer, J.C. Nichols, experimented with introducing a shooting gallery as a recreational activity in 1945, but admitted that this was a mistake. The idea was abandoned, not because of the shooting gallery’s association with violence, but because of the noise.⁸⁵ While modern malls might not provide sanctioned shooting galleries, large department stores like Wal-Mart are the United States’ prime retailers selling firearms and ammunition to the public.⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, the biggest sale day for firearms in the United States is “Black Friday”—the nationwide sale day after Thanksgiving.⁸⁷ As customer fight over discounted products, Black Friday sales have produced a cycle of frenzy in the shopping spectacle and especially in the media spectacle that accompanies—and encourages—the histrionic purchasing behavior. The injurious, and sometimes fatal, rough and tumble violence of Black Friday sales have become normalized incidences, a form of organized chaos, that shoppers and television audiences have come to expect. Testament to the globalizing flows of corporate capital practice, and the increasing connectivities of international markets, while the tradition of Black Friday is specific to the United States, and to the Thanksgiving holidays, it is being introduced to other countries, including the United Kingdom, Brazil, and

India.⁸⁸ These countries have adopted the same formula, and conduct the same sales on the same day as the United States, and with it the attempt to garner the same buoyant economic effects.

During such orchestrated special events in shopping malls and other commercial arenas, there is always the possibility of “violence erupting over sneakers or a chance to see a favorite celebrity.”⁸⁹ Even though there might be serious casualties and consequences emanating from these types of events, they are nonetheless framed as not only acceptable, but are geared towards increased publicity of the corporate capitalist model, and are used to spur the notion of consumption as a most coveted contemporary cultural act. Violence, in this case, is good—the epitome of enacting the ideology of consumption at the expense of others. When it is connected to promoting economic activity and is in service of the capitalist project, violence is endorsed by the structure of the mall and by the ideology of the market.⁹⁰

Surveillance for Terrorism

Just as marketers and mall management study the behavior of shopping mall visitors, and isolate particular characteristics for study to mitigate against terrorist activity or to turn such surveillance data into profit-oriented results, the al-Shabaab terrorists used their knowledge of shopping malls to strike Westgate at a day and time—a Saturday at lunchtime—when they could be guaranteed higher numbers of casualties. In this sense, both marketers and terrorists heed the same industry advice by tracking mall visitors, or “target markets,” during times of highest traffic; in the case of marketers, for increased publicity and sales, and, in the case of al-Shabaab, for increased publicity and carnage.⁹¹

While the growing security industry is indispensable for policing authorities and profitable for private enterprises, many of the same technologies of surveillance used in the war on terror are being simultaneously utilized by terrorists to plan and execute their attacks. For example, “open-source intelligence is readily available via the Internet and with the advent of web-based interactive maps and web-sharing media (e.g., photos of public crowded spaces) terrorists can actually view targets at street level.”⁹² The al-Shabaab terrorists “had scouted Westgate before the attack,”⁹³ and, during the assaults, communication and coordination were key features of the operation. CCTV footage of the Westgate Mall attacks show the terror-

ists communicating, presumably with each other or with others coordinating events from outside the mall, over mobile phones. Similarly, during the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, “authorities were caught off guard in a well-orchestrated assault by commandos with superior firepower and technology.”⁹⁴ In the Mumbai attacks, emulated by the Westgate terrorists,

the commandos employed digital technology to conduct preoperational surveillance of the target properties, traversed the Arabian Sea using global positioning systems, quickly located their targets from Google Earth satellite images, and used satellite telephony and voice over Internet protocol to remain in constant contact with their handlers. Instantaneous communication enabled the handlers, watching the events unfold on live television, to alert the commandos to the movements of security forces, thereby prolonging the attack.⁹⁵

In a world in which the corporate capitalist mode of production and consumption defines the structure of everyday life, terrorists cannot but use “business services to advance their operations.”⁹⁶ In an obvious example of the capitalism/terrorism matrix, the September 11 terrorists purchased airline tickets,⁹⁷ but, more profoundly, they also paid fees to rent planes at a flight school.⁹⁸ Similarly, the al-Shabaab terrorists premeditated their attacks on Westgate Mall by utilizing a variety of businesses, both legal and illegal, to aid in their operations: they withdrew money from a bank, they rented a car, they purchased mobile phones and activated sim cards, they obtained weapons, ammunitions, and related military-style gear, they surveyed the mall, and they used social media to publicize the attack.⁹⁹ In a chilling distillation of this regimen of exchange, at one point during the Westgate Mall attacks, those still alive and hiding behind the meat counter of Nakumatt supermarket were approached by one of the al-Shabaab terrorists. Before killing one of the mall employees, the terrorist asked: “where do we find Safaricom scratch cards?”¹⁰⁰ In addition to intricate pre-planning and use of sophisticated surveillance technologies and strategies, terrorists must also engage in everyday acts of consumption to aid in the execution of atrocities.

Shaping Employee Behavior

Constant policing is not just about mitigating crime and controlling customer behavior. Since power is productive, as Foucault has argued,¹⁰¹ sur-

veillance systems in malls are designed to be much more than instruments of repression.¹⁰² Those who work within the mall are especially subjected to the watchful gaze. The disciplining structure of the mall places employees under constant observation in an attempt to modify their behavior according to the particular needs of the institution. Efficiency is high on the list of desirable characteristics, which in turn is translated into greater productivity, predictability, and, ultimately, higher profits for the operation.¹⁰³

Shoprite Holdings, a South African retail multinational, is a major investor bringing shopping malls to countries all over Africa, and with them a new sense of business ethos and integration into the global capitalist economy. In the shopping malls of developing countries, “working in this ‘space of consumption’ puts the employee in the midst of this promise of modernity.”¹⁰⁴ A study of Shoprite employees in Zambia examines how their tailored uniforms serve to distinguish them from the poverty of their surroundings. “Unlike the dreary smokestack environs of the factory worker, the mall employees’ labour power is consumed under glamorised conditions.”¹⁰⁵ The uniforms set Shoprite workers apart as privileged members of a global capitalist culture that extends beyond Zambia, and into a shared global consumer culture.

Similarly, during the Westgate Mall attacks, the uniforms of the Nakumatt supermarket staff served to distinguish them as mall employees and to set them apart from the terrorists. The Kenyan security forces entered the mall with little information about what was happening on the ground—much of which was distorted by the corporate news media networks reporting an inflated number of attackers. Since “there were just a lot of men without badges or any other identification waving guns in different corners of the mall,”¹⁰⁶ it was difficult to know who was a civilian and who was a terrorist. Emerging from their hiding place behind the meat counter, Nakumatt supermarket staff, Edwin Omoding, Daniel Mwongela, and Jared Odhiambo, drew attention to their uniforms for the security forces to see that they served the shopping mall and not the terrorists.¹⁰⁷

Many allegiances to Westgate Mall, however, were short-lived during the attacks, with security guards abandoning their posts and refusing to engage any further in protecting the mall. Private Kenyan security guards do not always have weapons, body armor, or portable radios,¹⁰⁸ and whatever safety mechanisms were in place during al-Shabaab’s attacks—guard

force, bomb screenings, CCTV system—proved to be mostly cosmetic. The only confrontation the terrorists faced “was from a policeman guarding a bank on the first floor who had fired, wounding Sudani [one of the al-Shabaab terrorists] in the lower right leg, leaving him limping.”¹⁰⁹ While security service corporations are some of the fastest growing and lucrative enterprises, security guards themselves are often poorly paid and, in many cases, come from poorer neighborhoods to work in upscale shopping malls and other private complexes. Maurice Adembesa Ombisa, a security guard who died during the Westgate attack, commuted to the mall from the Kawangware slum. Similar to many other “private security guards in Nairobi, Ombisa worked 12-hour shifts, six days a week for the minimum wage of 10,912 shillings (\$123 [per month])—without overtime or sick pay. It was a thankless job that ultimately cost him his life.”¹¹⁰

Especially in the context of developing countries, even though shopping mall workers are employed in a highly consumer-driven environment, many cannot themselves afford to engage in acts of conspicuous consumption. As mall employees are promised entry into a consumer culture, their uniforms simultaneously discipline them into corporate-approved behaviors and salaries. “The suggestive, imaginary reach of the mall brings the expanded global consumptive universe within the reach of the retail worker. Any perceived or real deprivation due to wage levels is thrown into sharp relief when working in such commodity havens.”¹¹¹ Even though retail employees share the space of the mall, they are often excluded as consumers.¹¹²

The Westgate atrocities highlighted the disjuncture between the world presented by the mall and the engulfing environment of poverty and political struggle that define much of Kenya and neighboring Somalia.¹¹³ Kenyan “police officers are badly paid (about \$200 a month) and often deeply corrupt. There is no 911 to call, and even if there were, it might not have mattered ... because most officers do not have cars.”¹¹⁴ A lack of training for government forces meant that there was a total lack of coordination and communication between the Kenyan army and SWAT teams who entered Westgate three and a half hours after the attacks began. When they did arrive, they began shooting at civilians as well as at each other.¹¹⁵ The Kenyan military and the Kenyan police also shot at each other across the corridors, killing a police officer, and wounding two more, in what official reports stated were acts of “friendly fire.”¹¹⁶ It is within the shopping mall and the sharp divisions of the urban environment that “the relations of

capital, technology, labor, and the unequal distribution of wealth engender ... conflict,”¹¹⁷ such as we have seen in the case of Westgate Mall located within the rift of the affluent Westlands neighborhood and surrounding slums.

These complex socioeconomic backgrounds give more context to why, in the aftermath of the Westgate siege, CCTV footage showed several Kenyan soldiers stealing merchandise, and exiting the mall with plastic bags full of goods.¹¹⁸ Ultimately, what was captured by the recorded footage served to reveal much more about the attacks than the simple binaries of victims and terrorists, and terrorists and authorities. The recordings revealed the many complexities that existed within the space of the mall, including the simultaneous abundance of privilege and poverty, the disillusion of the mall’s capitalist imaginary, and the ambiguous fidelities of the privately hired security apparatus and state authorities.

Within the panopticon of the shopping mall, behavior is under constant surveillance and control. The security apparatus becomes absorbed and integrated into the mall’s architecture along with the omnipresent CCTV surveillance systems, which, at times, feeds into the wider media. During the Westgate Mall attacks, there was a wealth of footage captured via the CCTV surveillance system, from wide-shot crowd control angles to high definition close-ups of events on the ground.¹¹⁹ Before al-Shabaab struck the mall, the CCTV footage broadcast on corporate news networks revealed that the cameras were in a “monitor” position, where people could be observed, at some distance, going about their activities. As the attacks commenced, news networks broadcast footage from camera angles that moved into an “identify” setting, where the al-Shabaab terrorists were given close-up treatment as they fully embodied their central role for the cameras as protagonists of the Westgate Mall drama. By analyzing the video footage, it is clear that the CCTV operators followed the surveillance guidelines prescribed by the official CCTV operation requirements manuals.

Ultimately, the Westgate Mall attacks were presented to international audiences “through the mass media in video imagery that has become the primary source of our cultural knowledge.”¹²⁰ The next chapter examines how both state authorities and terrorists use media to broadcast their messages, with an emphasis on “the spectacle of terrorism.”¹²¹ The Westgate Mall tragedy illustrates the degree to which contemporary terrorist organizations compete with mainstream media for a market share

of the promotion and publicity of terror attacks. Even as al-Shabaab broke the “commercial contract” of the shopping mall by disturbing the consumption patterns therein, their actions served to disrupt only the particular, localized capitalist node of the shopping mall. Outside Westgate, the commodification of terror, the deployment of media networks, and the stimulation of the security industry meant that the wider capitalist structure went into overdrive, compensating for the shopping mall’s temporary financial loss.